



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AN ANALYSIS OF EQUITY POLICIES FROM 72 SCHOOL BOARDS ACROSS ONTARIO, CANADA

OBJECTIVES

This project aimed to:

- Explores what resources are being mobilized to address equity and inclusive education in Ontario school boards as a result of the large scale provincial Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (2009).

KEY DEFINITIONS

- Equity in education means that personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin, or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential and that all individuals reach at least a basic minimum level of skills.
- Inclusive education is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

LITERATURE TRENDS: CANADA IS LEADING THE CHARGE, BUT THERE IS STILL WORK TO DO

- Canada has consistently been recognized as one of the top education performers according to international assessments (OECD, 2010; OECD 2012).
- Canada has been shown to be more equitable than many other countries in relation to educational outcomes for diverse students (Figure 1, OECD, 2012).
- But, even in Canada, “there remains a plethora of problems and issues related to equity, diversity and human rights” (Carr, 2007, p. 4). Carr (2007) notes three times the number of black compared with white youths drop out in the Toronto Board. Visible minorities report experiencing discrimination at 3-4 times the rate of White Canadians (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007).

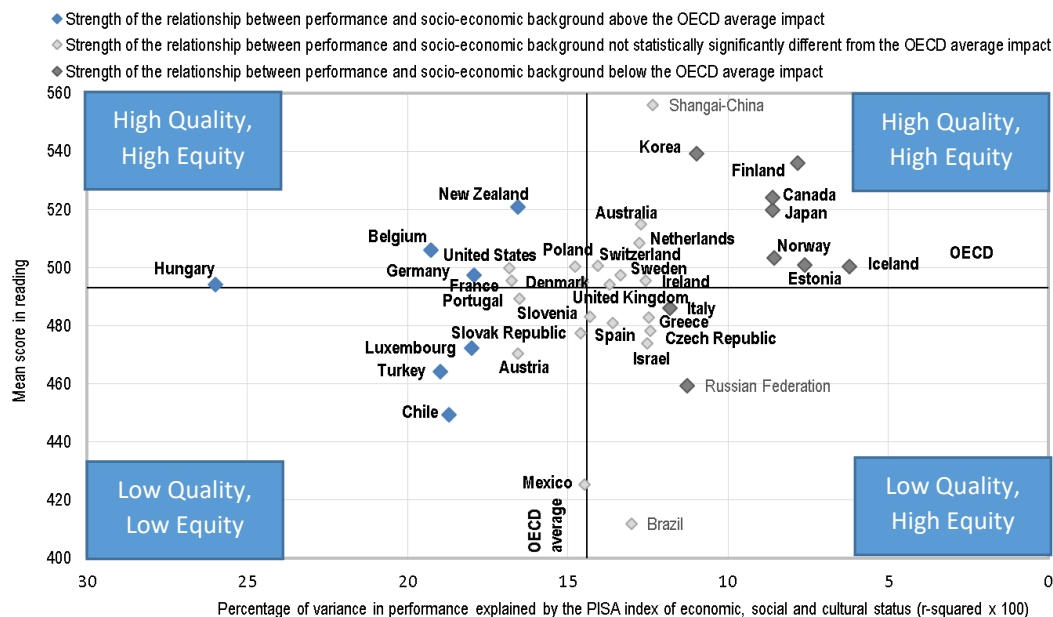


Figure 1. Adapted from OECD, 2012 (StatLink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932560816>)

THE STUDY: AN ANALYSIS OF EQUITY POLICIES FROM SCHOOL BOARDS ACROSS ONTARIO

1. How many school boards have resources and events in place in relation to equity in Ontario?
2. Who is involved in the collaborative process? How can these stakeholders access information on equity issues?
3. What commitment exists to provide training for teachers, educational leaders and other educational stakeholders?
4. How do educational leaders shape an equitable and inclusive culture within their schools?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & METHOD

Websites of each school board were explored for all documentation and descriptions of initiatives related to equity.

Microsoft Excel was utilized to record which boards had equity policies and administrative procedures, document properties, explicit topics addressed, as well as links to descriptions of equity initiatives occurring in schools.

Descriptive statistics were calculated using Excel. All policies and administrative procedures were uploaded into NVivo in order to conduct further qualitative analysis

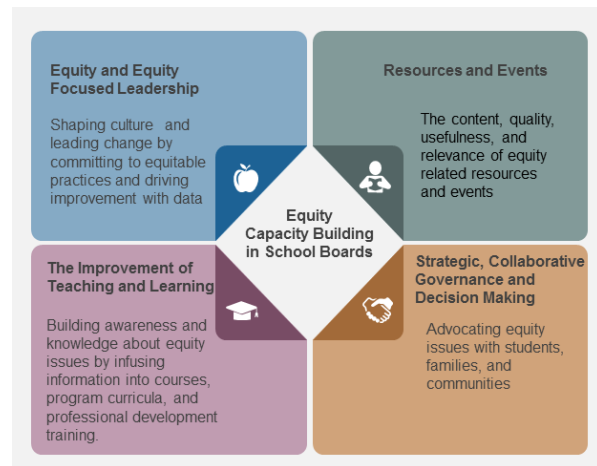


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

FINDINGS

- Ontario has made positive steps forward with equitable and inclusive education
- Some school boards are creating resources to address and inform about equity issues
- Many of the most difficult issues in diverse schools (such as discrimination based on ethnicity, race, and sexual orientation) are still not addressed substantively.

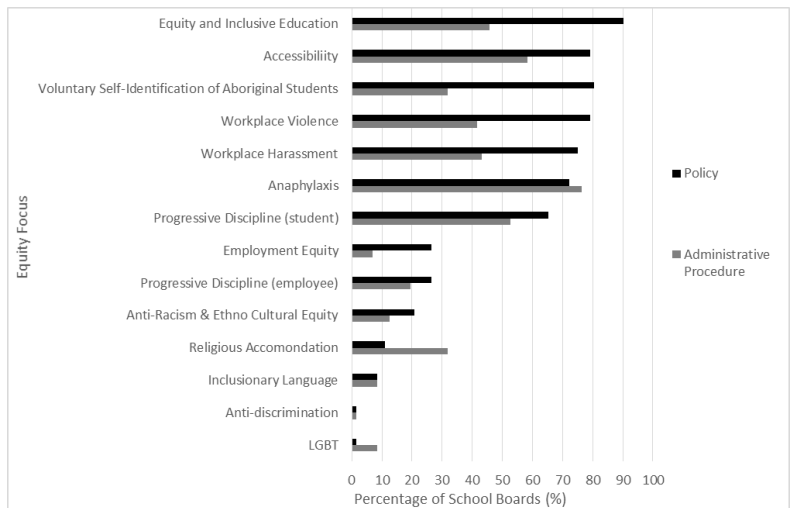


Figure 3. School board policies and administrative procedures related to different equity issues