

## 28 ANTI-POVERTY

The Sunshine Coast Board of Education commits to ensuring that barriers to education are recognized and addressed in all of our schools. Further, the Board believes that an equitable public education is an experience that is free from systemic discrimination and is necessary to break the cycle of poverty.

Poverty for our students is the condition by which an individual or a family does not have sufficient social and/or economic resources to achieve holistic wellbeing and dignity and who is limited in their choices to fully participate in all educational opportunities.

Poverty has profound, adverse social consequences including discrimination, hatred, bullying, harassment, physical and sexual violence, social and emotional isolation, substance use, homelessness, school absences, physical and mental illness, self-harm, and suicide.

The Board has developed this policy in accordance with its Foundational Statements<sup>1</sup>, Mission Statement<sup>1.2</sup>, and Affirmation Statement<sup>1.3</sup>. It is in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Poverty Reduction Strategy Act – Government of BC, Together BC Poverty Reduction Strategy, Canada without Poverty-Human Rights and Poverty Reduction Strategies, and the BC Child Poverty Report Card.

- 28.1 The Board expects each member of the school district community to support equitable access to education by:
- a. recognizing that poverty is multi-faceted and complex;
  - b. respecting the dignity of people living in poverty;
  - c. listening to people who experience poverty;
  - d. recognizing the vast range of experiences of people living in poverty;
  - e. identifying the groups within the community who are especially and/or uniquely impacted by poverty;
  - f. providing a safe and welcoming environment for every student and family free from stigma;
  - g. supporting strong relationships with community agencies supporting families in poverty;
  - h. ensuring equitable access to all school opportunities;
  - i. ensuring food security during the school day;
  - j. providing supports to enable maximum attendance and engagement in education.
- 28.2 The Board and executive staff will use a poverty-based analysis when making decisions that impact our students. Incorrect assumptions can lead to unintended and unequal impacts on particular groups of people. We can begin to challenge our assumptions and

apply a Poverty-Based Analysis Lens to the work we do as a district by asking these key questions:

- a. Do I believe that the issues I work on are poverty neutral? *Or culturally neutral? Ability neutral?* Is this based solely on my own experience?
- b. Is it possible that my assumptions prevent me from asking questions and hearing or understanding answers that are outside my own experience?
- c. How might attitudes and norms, my own, those of my organization, and those of the institutions and society that surround me, limit the range of policy options I consider and propose?

Board Policy: June2021

Revised: