|  |
| --- |
| Ubc |
| Analytical Reflection |
| LGBTQ+ Policy Report |
|  |
| **Frank Ashley** |
| **11/17/2014** |

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Analytical reflection on the LGBTQ Policy**

**Frank Ashley**

The policy examined was the LGBTQ + Policy. Currently there is no ministry policy, and it was selected by the group to bring forth the argument of whether or not the ministry should provide a dedicated LGBTQ policy, or if it should remain that schools produce their own LGBTQ+ policies.

The current ministry policy can be found in the diversity policy framework document. The policy reads as follows, “The school system should strive to ensure that differences among learners do not impede their participation in schools, their mastery of learning outcomes, or their ability to become contributing members of society.” (BC Ministry of education, 2004). More specifically, the section that directly relates to LGBTQ reads, “taking into account the different beliefs, customs, practices, languages, behaviors and physical differences of individuals and cultural groups” (BC Ministry of education, 2004). In order to implement this policy the ministry advises that “education leaders should examine board of education and school policies, procedures and practices.  This diversity should be addressed in both the educational and operational aspects of schools.” (BC Ministry of education, 2004).Since it is advised that education leaders should examine school policies, the premise of our presentation was to view what different school districts had as their policy and whether or not there was a large degree of variation among school boards.

In order to gain a broad understanding of the LGBTQ policies, we as a group decided that we would cover policies from a broad range of school districts including rural and urban environments. Using the ministry policy as what we deemed a very basic policy, we sorted through multiple policies and ranked them as either good or bad based on what we thought were good from a social justice perspective. After sorting through the policies, we selected two that we felt were particularly good and that set the standard for what an LGBTQ policy should look like. The policies in question were SD48 – Sea to Sky, and SD63- Saanich. Both policies improve extensively upon the ministry policy. The Sea to sky policy for example, approaches their policy from a social justice perspective in that the goal is to inform the public about LGBTQ in such a way that prevents prejudice. Key policy points include that staff and students: “Support inclusion of all students and employees in all aspects of school life, irrespective of their real or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity”, “Improve understanding of the lives of LGBTQ+ people and their positive contributions to society.”, and “Define appropriate terms, behaviors and actions to promote greater awareness of, and responsiveness to, the deleterious effects of homophobia, transphobia, anti-gay harassment and exclusion.” (Schoold District 48 (Sea to Sky), 2013). The policy also includes a glossary of terms to help individuals familiarize themselves with LGBTQ+ to help with understanding, and to prevent harassment due to a lack of knowledge. This can be particularly important in that the definition of LGBTQ+ alone is just scratching the surface, and being unaware or uniformed of the surface issues could certainly build fear or hatred. Much like the little Caucasian boy in Mr. Cherian’s class who had never been called the “N” word before, understanding of a particular topic allows for a different perspective and hopefully leads to equality. (Cherrian, 2001). Finally, the policy offers procedures for the implementation of the policy, which are as follows: “Promote a systemic response through staff and professional development which strives to identify and address educational practices, policies, and procedures that perpetuate homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism.”; “Make resources and support services available and visible for LGBTQ+ students and staff throughout schools”; “Act collectively to reduce homophobia, transphobia and other systemic barriers that are faced by LGBTQ+ students and staff who are faced by LGBTQ+ students and staff who feel they must hide their true selves”; and “Commit to ongoing, constructive and open dialogue with communities who identify themselves on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity to increase co-operation and collaboration among home, school and the community”. (Schoold District 48 (Sea to Sky), 2013, pp. 1-2). In comparison, a policy that poorly represents social justice would appear much like the SD33 – Chilliwack policy on LGBTQ+, which much like that of the ministry policy, groups LGBTQ+ under a general harassment policy without offering much detail. The policy reads as follows; “In accordance with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the British Columbia Human Rights Code and the district’s collective agreements, the Board of Education values all of its students and employees without discrimination because of the race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation or age of that person or that group or class of persons.” (School District 33 (Chilliwack), 2010, p. 1).

An issue that may arise with a policy that is so broad is that it can be difficult for teachers to implement in their classroom. LGBTQ+ identity development models and theories identify a group of individuals with defined needs (Talburt, 2004). Knowing this, it is critical then that we identify LGBTQ+ youth as unique from youth of different ethnic backgrounds, or youth from different religious beliefs and so on. If teachers are to promote true social justice in their classrooms, policies need to be in depth and need to include procedures for implementation, thus encouraging teachers to promote an inclusive classroom environment. A policy much like that of SD 48 would seem ideal then, but if the overseeing ministry policy is inadequate, what is stopping school districts from just maintaining the status quo? Our group argues that at the very least, the ministry policy should offer an acceptable level of detail in a dedicated LGBTQ+ policy based on recent research about the development of LGBTQ+ youth to help promote social justice in B.C. schools.

# Works Cited

BC Ministry of education. (2004, March). *British Columbia Education.* Retrieved November 15, 2014, from http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/topic.page?id=73EF8BB83CF043A59CB80D9DAE941E28

Cherrian, F. (2001). Really teaching social justicce. *Orbit* , 54-58.

School District 33 (Chilliwack). (2010). *514 Policy Safe schools.*

Schoold District 48 (Sea to Sky). (2013). *Policy 400.3 Sexual orientation and Gender identity.*

Talburt, S. (2004). Constructions of LGBTQ youth: opening up subject positions. *Theory into Practice* , 116-121.

* No standalone provincial education policy on gender identity
* Only mentioned in Diversity policy: “taking into account the different beliefs, customs, practices, languages, behaviors and **physical differences** of individuals and cultural groups”
* From the *Human Rights Code*: “The BC Human Rights Code identifies 13 protected grounds. People are protected by virtue of their race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, **sexual orientation**, age (applies to persons 19 to 64 years of age), and unrelated criminal or summary convictions.”