



PROCEDURE

SO-039

OPENING AND CLOSING EXERCISES AT SCHOOL

Superintendent Responsible:
Superintendent of Education

Initial Effective Date: 2019/05/27

Last Updated: 2023/06/15

Last Updated: 2025/05/26

Purpose:

To outline the process to create inclusive opening or closing exercises that provide the opportunity for building cross-cultural awareness, responsible citizenship and a global perspective.

Guiding Principles:

- 1.0 The Administrator(s) will ensure that opening or closing exercises are held in the school, in accordance with the requirements set out in S.304 of the *Education Act* and in Ontario Regulations 435/00 and 298(4).
- 2.0 The opening or closing exercises will include the singing or playing of "O Canada".
- 3.0 Schools will include the Grand Erie District School Board (Grand Erie) Land Acknowledgement Statement in their opening exercises.
- 4.0 The opening or closing exercises may include:
 - The recitation of a pledge of citizenship
 - Readings that impart social, moral or spiritual values which are representative of Ontario's multicultural society
 - A period of silence
- 5.0 Annually, the Administrator(s) may decide, in consultation with the School Council, whether the opening or closing exercises will include a pledge of citizenship:
- 6.0 A pupil is not required to sing "O Canada" or recite the pledge of citizenship in the following circumstances:
 - in the case of a student who is less than 18 years old, if the pupil's parent(s)/caregiver(s) applies to the school Administrator(s) to be exempt from doing so; or
 - in the case of a student who is at least 18 years old, if the student applies to the Administrator(s) to be exempted from doing so.

Reference(s):

- Honouring Indigenous Knowledges, Histories and Perspectives (PR-02)
- Honouring Indigenous Knowledges, Histories and Perspectives (PR-002)
- [Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2](#)
- Ontario Regulations 435/00 and 298(4)