Welcoming Schools Seal of Excellence Benchmarks

Schools that are interested in pursuing the Welcoming Schools Seal of Excellence (SOE) will demonstrate, with documentation, the following benchmarks:

1. **Policies and Procedures**
   
   Policies/Regulations/Procedures are in place and enumerated to include SOGIE (sexual orientation, gender identity and expression).
   
   **Documentation example:** Submit policies and procedures for review.
   
   **Sample policies for consideration:** Anti-bullying/harassment, non-discrimination, dress codes, policies and procedures to support transgender and non-binary students.

2. **Leadership Team**
   
   Welcoming Schools Leadership Team is established or integrated into an existing committee. The Leadership Team will include a cross-section of the school community including administration, classroom teachers, non-instructional staff and possibly family members. The team will meet monthly throughout the academic year.
   
   **Documentation examples:** Submit names of committee members and sample meeting agendas, meeting schedule and/or minutes.

3. **Staff Development**
   
   School staff must participate in a minimum of 12 hours of staff development training to include, but not limited to, the following Welcoming Schools Modules:
   
   - Intersectionality
   - LGBTQ+ Inclusive Schools
   - Embracing All Families
   - Gender Inclusive Schools
   - Supporting Transgender and Non-Binary Students
   - Preventing Bias-Based Bullying

   Staff development sessions will take place over a period of 3 or more years and must be delivered by an authorized Welcoming Schools Facilitator.

4. **Planned Lessons and Activities**
   
   Annually, every student in the school must be provided with a minimum of one Welcoming Schools lesson plan, book or activity each month, as a part of the structured curriculum.
   
   **Documentation examples:** Scope and sequence, samples of student work, reflective statements by classroom teachers, videos of student activities, etc.
5. **Bulletin Boards/Newsletters**
   School will have ongoing public displays (bulletin boards, newsletters, and artwork portraying Welcoming Schools’ themes/mission).

   **Documentation examples:** Pictures of the artwork or display.

6. **Family Nights**
   School will host, minimally, one Family Night, for family members/community sharing the Welcoming Schools approach through panels, movie nights, book readings, and information sessions. This can be combined with an already existing family event for the school.

   **Documentation examples:** Event flyer, session evaluations, pictures, videos, or agendas.

7. **Books and Resources**
   Books from Welcoming Schools booklists are publicly available to all students in the library/media center and classrooms.

   **Documentation examples:** Photos of books on shelves, students reading books.

8. **School Climate Assessment**
   A Welcoming Schools Climate Assessment will be used to gauge the success of developing a more inclusive school by working with the Welcoming Schools Program.

9. **Additional Artifacts**
   Demonstration of larger community based support for this work.

   **Documentation examples:**
   - Documentation of Welcoming Schools Training being provided to non-instructional and support staff.
   - Establish a Rainbow Club, Ally Team or Gender and Sexuality Alliance (GSA).
   - School concerts/assemblies promoting Welcoming Schools themes.
   - Integration of the Welcoming Schools approach with other social and emotional learning and/or bullying prevention efforts in the school.