



Student Achievement Pillar Policy

Date Approved: November 2011

Projected Review Date: November 2014

Purpose:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board strives to ensure that all students are learning and achieving their full potential.

Guiding Principles:

1. All students can learn and achieve given appropriate supports.
2. Improving student achievement requires the collective effort of the entire school, school and system staff, students and the community as well as the active engagement of parents/guardians.
3. Students achieve best when they are engaged in a variety of activities, experiences and learning opportunities provided by a challenging and relevant and inclusive curriculum.
4. Success in achieving high expectations for student achievement is best provided within a positive, safe caring, collaborative, equitable and accessible learning culture.
5. Success in achieving high expectations for staff professional development is best provided within a positive, collaborative, equitable and accessible working and learning culture.
6. Evidence-based instructional practices improve student achievement.
7. Tiered interventions and ongoing communication enable teachers to adjust the learning environment, instruction, assessment, and evaluation to meet each student's existing and emerging needs.
8. Assessment, evaluation and reporting practices must be fair, transparent and equitable for all students.
9. Effective assessment is directly linked to the learning and curriculum expectations and to the interests, learning preferences, needs and experiences of all students.
10. Student learning is enhanced when assessment feedback is clear, specific to success criteria, meaningful, timely, transparent and continuous and involves student input.
11. Building in capacity for professional development equips teachers and support staff with the knowledge, skills and competencies to improve instructional and assessment practices and results.
12. System, school and department improvement plans focus on a process of continuously developing the quality of instruction to further enhance student achievement.

Intended Outcomes:

The implementation of the *Student Achievement Pillar Policy* together with specific related policies will:

1. Provide system understanding of learning and curriculum expectations.
2. Result in improved levels of student achievement.

3. Provide equity of outcomes for all learners regardless of factors which include but are not limited to ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.
4. Prepare elementary students for success at secondary school and secondary students for success in their chosen pathway – i.e. community, workplace, college, apprenticeship, and university.
5. Provide teaching and learning strategies that incorporate 21st Century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies for all students.
6. Empower teachers, school and system administrators to be responsible for improving student learning utilizing all available resources.
7. Result in the development and implementation of system, school and department improvement plans that:
 - a. Are aligned to the Board's Strategic Directions;
 - b. Build board and school capacity by identifying strengths as well as areas that require improvement;
 - c. Focus on the goal of improving student achievement across all operations of the Board;
 - d. Allocate resources to support the goal of improving student achievement;
 - e. Result in the implementation of high yield evidence-based strategies; and
 - f. Determine the monitoring and feedback strategies necessary for accountability.
8. Ensure instructional and support staff assess student learning and use a tiered approach to plan programs and support students with special education needs and English language learners including accommodations, modifications and alternate programs.
9. Enable students to engage in assessment activities to become aware of their own learning processes and support them in becoming independent and autonomous life-long learners.
10. Provide all students with standard progress reports that contain clear, detailed, straightforward information regarding how well the student is achieving and progressing in relation to provincial learning expectations, curriculum expectations, and the learning skills/work habits required for effective learning and/or alternative expectations as well as next steps for learning.
11. Support high levels of meaningful parent/guardian engagement in the school community.

Responsibility:

The Director.

Definitions:

Assessment for Learning: *The ongoing process of gathering and interpreting evidence about student learning for the purpose of guiding instruction and providing feedback to students.*

Assessment as Learning: *The process of developing and supporting student metacognition. Students monitor their own learning, use assessment feedback from the teacher, self and peers to determine next steps and set individual learning goals.*

Assessment of Learning: *The process of collecting and interpreting evidence for the purpose of summarizing learning at a given point in time, to make judgements about the quality of student learning on the basis of established criteria, and to assign a value to represent that quality.*

Curriculum: *The sum of all formal and informal activities, experiences and learning opportunities in which students engage as part of the educative process.*

Equity: *A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. It does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.*

Equity of Outcomes: *Student outcomes are different with respect to achievement and pathways. All outcomes are valued as they are a result of students achieving their full potential. Equity of outcomes requires differentiated, individualized instruction, support and intervention.*

Evaluation: The process of judging the quality of student work on the basis of established criteria to identify how well students have achieved the curriculum expectations.

High Yield Evidence-Based Strategies: Instructional and assessment strategies that have been verified through research to correlate with high student achievement.

Learning and Curriculum Expectations: The knowledge and skills in a grade and subject which student are expected to develop and demonstrate in all their learning, work and activities upon which their achievement is assessed and evaluated.

Metacognition: The process of thinking about one’s own thought process. Metacognitive skills include the ability to monitor one’s own learning.

Reporting: The process of providing students and parents/guardians with clear, detailed, straightforward information regarding how well the student is progressing and achieving in relation to provincial learning expectations, curriculum expectations, and the learning skills/work habits required for effective learning.

Tiered Intervention: A process which sequentially increases the intensity of instructional interventions that respond to each student’s needs.

Action Required:

The development and implementation of specific policies, policy directives, programs and staff development programs that will enhance instructional and assessment practices and contribute to student success.

Progress Indicators:

Data will be collected to measure the degree to which the intended outcomes contained in the Pillar Policy, specific policies and related policies have been achieved. The review will include but not be limited to the following key areas and related components:

Key Areas	Components
Improved levels of student achievement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide equity of outcomes regardless of factors but not limited to ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. 2. Prepare elementary students for success at secondary school and secondary students for success in their chosen pathway – i.e. community, workplace, college, apprenticeship, and university. 3. Provide teaching and learning strategies that incorporate 21st Century content, global perspectives, learning skills, resources and technologies.
Empower teachers, school and system administrators to be responsible for improving student learning utilizing all available resources.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide system understanding of learning and curriculum expectations. 2. Develop and implement system, school and department improvement plans that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are aligned to the Board’s Strategic Directions; b. Build board and school capacity by identifying strengths as well as areas that require improvement; c. Focus on the goal of improving student achievement across all operations of the Board; d. Allocate resources to support the goal of improving student achievement; e. Result in the implementation of high yield evidence-based strategies informed by research, teacher practice and student perspectives; and f. Determine the monitoring and feedback strategies necessary for accountability.
Effective use of assessment and reporting practices.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure instructional and support staff assess student learning and use a tiered approach to plan programs and support students with special education needs and English language learners including accommodations, modifications and alternate programs

Key Areas	Components
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Enable students to engage in assessment activities to become aware of their own learning process and support them in becoming independent and autonomous life-long learners. 3. Provide standard progress reports that contain clear, detailed, straightforward information regarding how well the student is achieving and progressing in relation to provincial learning expectations, curriculum expectations, and the learning skills/work habits required for effective learning and/or alternate expectations.
Improve parent/guardian Engagement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify strategies for achieving high levels of meaningful parent/guardian engagement in the school community.

References:

Government Documents

Growing Success 2010
 School Effectiveness Framework 2010
 Learning for All K-12 2009
 Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy 2009
 Education for All 2005
 Education Act and Curriculum Policy Documents
 English Language Learners. ESL and ELD Programs and Services 2007.
 Policies and Procedures for Ontario Elementary and Secondary Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12. 2007
 Ontario First Nation, Metis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. 2007

HWDSB Strategic Directions

Achievement Matters
 Engagement Matters
 Equity Matters

Related HWDSB Policies

Curriculum Processes Policy
 Diversity and Equity Policy
 Equity Policy
 Early Identification Process Policy
 French Immersion Policy
 Information Technology Policy
 Programs of Choice Policy
 School Councils
 School Library Information Centre Policy
 Selection of Learning Resources
 Special Class Admission and Demission Criteria
 Special Class/Program Locations
 Education Excursion Policy