

## Student Equity Inventory – Questions and Answers

### 1. Does this inventory meet ethical standards?

Yes - This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board.

Any concerns or questions are to be sent to McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat at 905-525-9140, ext. 23142 or email [ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca).

### 2. What are you going to do with this data?

The data will be used to accurately review what programs and resources will best meet the needs of our students so that they may achieve their full potential.

Let's be clear. This initiative is not for racial profiling or creating a program specific school.

### 3. Why does the Board need more of this type of information? Don't they already have this data?

When students enrol at school, their parents/guardians complete a Registration Form. This form is validated each year by parents/guardians. The Equity Committee is reviewing this form and is recommending an expansion of fields to gain a more comprehensive picture of our student population (e.g., include aboriginal self-identification). This is an important phase of the equity data collection initiative.

In addition, we would like to hear from students by way of the survey to help us to understand their perceptions about their school experience.

This information will assist us in specific school-level programming. This is the reason that the Student Equity Inventory has been developed. At this time, the survey is being piloted with grade 10 and 11 students. It may be expanded to other grades at a later time.

Improving student achievement is our ultimate goal.

### 4. How will this survey support our students?

This survey will address the students for who they are and what their needs are.

HWDSB is committed to providing learning and working environments that encourage collegiality, support and respect. Students will flourish when they feel welcomed and accepted.

As educators, we have a responsibility to reduce the number of barriers that students have when it comes to their education.

As an organization dedicated to public education, we must ensure our students have equitable opportunities based on who they are as well as what their needs are in order to ensure student success. The Inventory will guide our organization to look at resource allocation to make sure we are meeting the needs of our students.

We are committed to removing achievement gaps for all our students.

### 5. How are you going to get accurate information?

We must provide a safe environment in order for a student to provide accurate information – and we're doing that.

If students know the value of what they have and they are comfortable with the content, they will respond as accurately as possible.

Cultural proficiency and professional development have been offered to staff.

Students will receive information to prepare them for survey administration.

E-BEST is aware that the value of the survey will depend on a large enough sample of participants at a school and district level, but we are balancing this with the need for informed and active parent consent, and student assent, so we anticipate that survey response may be lower than desired in this pilot year. Participation is voluntary, and we will work with the results that we receive.

The survey is reviewed by McMaster's Research Ethics Board prior to administration.

#### **6. Are parents/guardians going to see the survey before they get it? Will that help or hinder the success of this initiative?**

Parents/guardians will receive communication about the survey and a consent form for their child if he or she is under 18. The survey is posted on the board website so that parents/guardians and students can view it prior to giving consent/assent.

Students can withdrawal their participation even if their parents/guardians have given permission for their child to write the survey.

#### **7. What kind of programs do the Board have to enforce equity?**

HWDSB has implemented a number of policies, directives and programs including ones that address equity.

In fact, everything that we do is done through an equity lens.

For example:

- Provided staff development opportunities related to racism and classism in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and Settlement and Integration Services Organization.
- Implementation of the Equity Policy Supporting Guidelines:
  - Anti-racism and Ethno-Cultural Inequity
  - Anti-classism and Socio-economic
  - Status
  - Gender
  - Sexual Orientation[Please note that schools may be implementing supporting guidelines and that all schools may at different stages in the implementation process.]
- At the system level, Board Committees include: Interfaith Advisory Committee, Anti-poverty Task Force, Compensatory Education, Hamilton Aboriginal Education Committee
- Staff Diversity Audit – Implemented during the 2006-2007 school year.

- Community Organizations: Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition, Settlement Workers in Schools – Hamilton, Settlement and Integration Services Organization, Hamilton’s Centre for Civic Inclusion, LGBTQ, SPRC
- At the system level, various Programs and events that celebrate diversity and equity include: Equity Workshops, Hamilton Me to We Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Lincoln Alexander Day, Character Builds, HWDSB’s Days of Significance
- At the school level, programs, resource material, and extra curricular activities exist to support diversity and equity.
- Professional Development and cultural proficiency training has been ongoing at Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

**8. Once the information is collected, who has access to this data?**

We appreciate the data is highly sensitive and have taken several precautions to protect the information (e.g., anonymous survey).

The information collected will be stored on a secure server that can only be accessed by members of the research team. Aggregated summaries of the data will be shared with school and senior administrators (individual school results, board report). A report will also be made available to the public, through the Board of Trustees.

Students must also feel safe. Supports will be in place in the school through Student Success and Student Services for the students during the administration of the survey if they are needed.

**9. Will students have to give their OEN (Ontario Education Number)?**

No. The OEN (Ontario Education Number) will NOT be required to complete the survey. Responses are anonymous.

**10. Why have you waiting so long to implement this survey in a two-phased approach? Why don’t you do it all at once?**

The committee originally planned to implement this survey in a two-phased approach, however they carefully changed this decision as they have included abilities into the survey and we will accommodate socio-economic status at a later time.

We intend to implement this survey every year and build on the survey wherever necessary.

The inclusion of mental health information will be addressed as the Board completes a comprehensive mental health strategy.

**11. How much will this cost?**

We are currently using Board allocated resources throughout the Board including existing professional development opportunities.

We have hired additional clerical support for each secondary school for two days and five teacher release days for additional support to implement the survey.

The Ministry of Education provided a grant to the Equity Department in support of this initiative.

Community members who have been working with the Committee are doing so as volunteers.

**12. Who will this survey go out to?**

All Secondary Students who have been invited in grades 10 and 11 will fill out the survey.

**13. How are you effectively communicating with your current diverse population?**

In addition to the English versions, we are printing the Parent/Guardian Information Letter, the Parent/Guardian Consent Form and the Student Equity Inventory Brochure in *Arabic, Urdu, Chinese, Karen, Korean, Punjabi, Somali, and Farsi.*

We are awaiting the translated documents and will post them on the website as soon as we receive them.

**14. Who have you consulted regarding the Student Equity Inventory?**

**Community Partners**

- Hamilton Executive Director’s Aboriginal Coalition
- Hamilton Regional Indian Center
- Hamilton Aboriginal Education Committee
- The United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton
- Settlement Workers in Schools – Hamilton
- Settlement and Integration Services Organization
- Hamilton Positive Space Collaborative
- The Well, Hamilton’s LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Questioning) community
- Social Planning and Research Council
- Student Senate
- Hamilton’s Centre for Civic Inclusion
- Parents

**Committee Members’ Affiliation**

PC-21	Executive Council
OSSTF	Chair of the Board
Director of Education	Student Success
Social Planning and Research Council	SJAM
PASS	Community
HR Department	EBEST
LIUNA	HWETL
SPRC	CUPE
LGBTQ Wellness Centre	HCCI
McMaster University	SISO
HWPA	Inter Faith Advisory Committee
Student Trustee	ETFO
Equity	Trustees
PSSP	COPE
Student Senate	Corporate Communications
The Well, Hamilton’s LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Questioning) community	SEAC

**15. How many times have you consulted these people throughout the process?**

We want to build trust and relationships in our community with key partners to support us every step of the way.

That's why we held two major public community consultation opportunities for our partners to be part of the process: November 13, 2009 and February 4, 2009.

There were also a series of smaller consultations that took place over the course of the school year.

Individuals and community members provided feedback and we listened. Their contribution and expertise has helped us to conduct the inventory with dignity.

#### **16. What type of Professional Development has been given?**

Administrators were invited to participate in opportunities for cultural proficiency and professional development.

Equity Leaders in all secondary schools have had cultural proficiency training: March 26, 2009, throughout April and in May, 2009.

#### **17. Why isn't Mental Health being addressed on the survey?**

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is working towards a comprehensive Mental Health strategy for the Board.

The inclusion of mental health information will be addressed when this strategy is in place.

#### **18. What are the next steps once you have the information?**

Every school will receive a profile that outlines the information based on the survey. The Board will also receive a district-wide profile.

A report will be presented to Executive Council and Trustees in the fall of 2009.

Programming decisions will be made after the report has been released.