



CHRIS SPENCE
Director of Education
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April 15, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian:

RE: Student Equity Inventory

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is conducting a Student Equity Inventory for secondary students in Grades 10 and 11 during the period of May to June and we would like your permission for your child/children to participate.

The purpose of the Student Equity Inventory is to:

- Give information to the Board about the diversity of our student population
- Use this information to expand programs or give learning resources to help students from all cultures, faith groups, learning exceptionalities and sexual orientation
- Ensure that HWDSB continues to support learning in safe and inclusive environments

With your permission, your child will be able to fill out a survey that has a series of questions about their unique identity (culture, faith, sexual orientation, learning exceptionalities) and about their experiences at school (perceived academic progress, discrimination, school climate, hopes for the future). The survey is completed in the computer lab, on-line, with teacher supervision, and takes about 15 minutes of class time. Your child's name will not appear on the survey nor will s/he be identified by any code that links to identifiable information. The survey is anonymous.

Diversity awareness and training has been evolving in each secondary school. We believe that participation in the survey will have benefits for our student participants. By completing the survey, students may also become more aware of issues related to diversity and equity. Schools will benefit by learning more about the students in the community as well as their needs.

While there are no physical risks to participation in the study, some students may feel uncomfortable completing some of the questions. Your child can choose whether or not she/he wants to complete the survey, and she/he has the right to skip a question or stop filling out the survey at any time. If you and/or your child choose not to participate, this will not affect his/her grades or other school outcomes in any way.

Please complete the attached form indicating whether or not you give permission for your child to participate. School office staff will organize the consents as they come in, and will store the forms securely in a locked file cabinet in the main office. If you consent to your child's participation, we will invite him/her to participate.

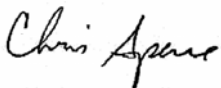
The Student Equity Inventory is supervised by the Board's research department (E-BEST, Evidence-Based Education and Services Team). If you have questions about the Student Equity Inventory, please contact Dr. Kathy Short at Kathy.Short@hwdsb.on.ca or 905-304-8722, extension 201.

If you would like to see a copy of the survey, please contact your school Principal or visit www.hwdsb.on.ca to view the survey online. After all schools have completed the survey, a report will be sent to every secondary school that summarizes the results for their school.

This study has been reviewed and approved by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, you may contact: McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat at 905-525-9140, ext. 23142 or email ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

From start to finish, the Student Equity Inventory will be conducted with the highest integrity. Your child's best interest and protection has been at the heart of this initiative. We do hope that you will grant us your full confidence in this matter and we thank you for your involvement.

For our students,



Dr. Chris Spence
Director of Education