



**COMMUNITY LETTER: Community
News, Updates and Reminders
January 30, 2026.**



Principal: Kwame Djan

Vice-principal: Lynda Southon

Email: helendetwiler@hwdsb.on.ca

Parent council co-chairs: Lora Wall and Candice Perez

SAFE ARRIVAL LINE: 1-844-506-4350

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers,
Below are the updates for January 30, 2026.

Have a great weekend!

Regards,
Kwame Djan & Lynda Southon

Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation

At today's assembly, representatives from every class shared their collective commitments to Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation. Some of the goals shared include:

- Learning Indigenous Stories, not just facts and timelines
- Improve understanding culture, the land, and relationships
- Writing a land acknowledgement that helps us to better understand the importance of recognizing Indigenous peoples and their connection to the land
- Learning that Indigenous peoples are not one group, but different communities
- Learn stories through Indigenous art
- Improve stewardship of the land
- Engage in deeper learning about the Wampum Belt

At Helen Detwiler, we will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating Intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.

We look forward to hearing more about how our students are working towards their goals and sharing their learning with the school community.

FOOD

We have many options for students to purchase food, including PIZZA, POPCORN, WRAPS, and COOKIES. Please login to School Cash Online to review dates and cut



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off times for ordering.

Kindergarten registrations

Kindergarten registration officially opens February 2, 2026. If you have any questions, please call our office. [Click here for additional information.](#)

**Term 1 Report Cards (Grades 1-8) Communication of Learning (Kindergarten),
Term 2 IEPs**

On February 13, Term 1 Report Cards and Communication of Learning will be sent home to all families. Term 2 IEPs will also be sent home for families to review.

Parent council meeting

Date: February 19, 2026

Time: 6:30-7:30 (library)

Access to school: Front entrance

Format: Hybrid (see below for MS Teams link)

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 255 774 889 525 45

Passcode: kA7Jd7fz

Speech arts competition for grades 4-8 students

February 24, 2026, from 1:30-2:30, we will be having "Helen Detwiler Speech Arts" competition. All families are invited.

Pink Shirt Day (Anti-Bullying)

February 25, **Pink Shirt Day**; students and staff are encouraged to wear **pink** to promote kindness and raise awareness about preventing bullying. Classes will take part in activities that support inclusion and caring school communities.

Grad photos

February 27, 2026 in the 9:00 AM

May 5-22

EQAO for grades 3 and 6 students

June 11, 2026



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Year-end trip for grade 8 students

June 18, 2026

Grade 8 convocation at Helen Detwiler!

Fundraising

Did you know that you can support **Helen Detwiler** when you place any order with Mabel's Labels? These labels are ideal for all your child's belongings, including water bottles, clothing, backpacks, shoes, etc. Best of all, they are a local business operating right here in Hamilton!

To order visit the website <https://mabelslabels.ca/>

Select "**Support a Fundraiser**"

Enter "**Helen Detwiler**" and select it then click "**Shop Now**"

Parking By-Laws

This is a reminder that there is no stopping from 6am-7pm on the school side of Brigade Dr., from Bonaparte Way to Bastille St. These by-laws are in place to keep pedestrians and drivers safe. By-law officers will be on-site throughout the year to ensure compliance. **Additionally, the staff parking lot is for staff only – this is not a space for student drop off or pick up.** We appreciate your support in this as we prioritize the safety of our students on a daily basis.

Kiss 'N Ride

The Kindergarten loop is a no-stopping zone, as indicated by the City of Hamilton bylaw signs posted. When dropping off, students must immediately exit the vehicle safely and *independently*. At the end of the day, parents must park in the lot or on the opposite side of the street to wait for students.

Volunteering in 2025-2026 school year

All applicants looking to volunteer are now required to present a Vulnerable Sector Screening **specific to HWDSB** before they will be able to begin their volunteer activities. The original copy of this will be kept on file in the office. A new VSC is required every 5 years. A letter to be presented to the respective police department can be obtained through the office.



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Reading – Quick Facts

- Daily reading provides transformative academic, cognitive, and emotional benefits for children.
- **Multi-Subject Success:** Frequent reading between ages 10 and 16 leads to greater progress in **mathematics** (not just vocabulary and spelling) than rarely reading.
- **Brain Structure:** Children who start reading for pleasure by age nine show **larger total brain volumes** in regions critical for cognitive functions.
- **Stress Reduction:** Reading for just **six minutes** can reduce stress levels by up to **68%**
- **Mental Health:** Frequent readers report lower levels of **anxiety** compared to infrequent readers (23% vs. 32%). High literacy engagement is also linked to better **resilience and self-esteem**
- **Empathy:** Reading fiction specifically enhances a child's **emotional intelligence (EQ)** and their ability to understand others' perspectives and mental states
- **Future Earnings:** Reading proficiency in elementary school is a strong predictor of **career success**
- **Brain Health and Function:** Regular reading keeps the brain active, enhancing cognitive functions like concentration, critical thinking, and decision-making. It acts as a workout that builds a reserve of neuronal connections
- **Expands Vocabulary and Knowledge:** Frequent readers encounter millions more words per year than non-readers, which naturally builds a broader vocabulary and deepens general knowledge

Please prioritize daily reading with your children. If your child is reading independently, engage them in conversation about what they're reading.



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