

AGENDA: 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. HWDSB Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Review of the Committee Workplan

Delegations:

- Amy Borkwood re: SageQuest

5. [Growing our Commitment to Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation - Update](#)
6. [Program Review: A Phased Approach to K–12 Program Planning](#)
7. Adjournment



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

May 21, 2026

Progress Update: Growing Our Commitment to Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead
Monique Lavallee, Executive Director, Niwasa Kendaawin Teg

Endorsed By: Indigenous Education Circle (IEC)

Recommendation:

That the Progress Update: Growing Our Commitment to Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation report be received.

Background:

On June 5, 2025, HWDSB's Program Committee unanimously approved "Growing Our Commitment to Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation", which outlined the Indigenous Education Department's plans to develop an Indigenous School through a culturally relevant and sustainable framework, building on the Indigenous Education Circle's "[Pillars of the Palisade: Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness](#)" framework.

The plan is a collaboration with the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) and Niwasa Kendaasiwin Teg. It addresses the urgent need identified by students, families, communities, and staff. It aims to contribute to Truth and Reconciliation in education by maintaining distinct nationhood identity within Canada's educational systems (i.e. HWDSB). Our [Indigenous Education Policy](#) outlines the Two Row Relationship Framework, emphasizing relational accountability between the IEC and the Board of Trustees.

This relationship is rooted in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act Action Plan and the Ontario Human Rights Commission. It creates meaningful space for Indigenous autonomy, self-determination, and "nested sovereignty", enabling equitable access to local host nations' languages, cultures, ceremonies, governance, and territory connections. The local Indigenous Host Nations are the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River. This work fosters self-respect, positive

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affirmations of diverse nation-specific identities, cultural pride, and a sense of belonging among Indigenous learners.

Status:

The work to-date has focused on foundation setting. This includes: building teams with subject-matter expertise, wisdom and gifts to support the work, as well as developing guiding principles and an engagement framework.

To date, the team has:

- Formed two working groups, co-led by the Indigenous Education Lead and Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg. The first working group focuses on internal system-level alignment both locally and provincially. The second working group focuses on engagement with students, families/caregivers and local Host Nations.
- Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg secured additional funding from Hamilton Community Foundation to support an Indigenous Research Consultant hired to lead community engagement.
- Developed and hired Systems Navigator and Project Manager to guide capacity building on both the academic and business sides of the organization.
- Co-led engagement framework and plan; and relational agreement with external funding partner.
- Initiated environmental scan of other project structures and wise practices the team can learn from provincially, nationally and internationally. Some examples include:
 - Māori education system (Kura Kaupapa Māori) with Māori Leaders from the Māori Education Board of Trustees);
 - Akwesasne Freedom School;
 - Wandering Spirit School (Toronto District School Board);
 - Dufferin-Peel School Board;
 - Yukon First Nations School Board;
 - Six Nations Polytechnic Secondary School (SNPSS);
 - Everlasting Tree School;
 - Kawenniio/Gaweniyo School; and
 - Nations/New Start Program

Community engagement will begin over the summer. Analysis from the community engagement and environmental scan will inform recommendations. Additional status updates will be provided in the 2026-2027 school year.

Financial Implications:

The actions and initiatives described in this report have been and will be undertaken using Indigenous Education funding contained in Core Education funding to advance the goals and initiatives of the Indigenous Education Circle's Strategic Action Plan and Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education.

Strategic Directions:

While this Indigenous School is primarily rooted in the *Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation*, it is inherently interconnected and interrelated with all the Pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). This school will be best actualized through the integration of all Pillars and through the many Pillars of the Palisade, cross-departmentally leading the work in meaningful and innovative ways across our schools, classrooms and the broader system.

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

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.



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

May 21, 2026

Program Review: A Phased Approach to K–12 Program Planning

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Michelle Lemaire, Superintendent of Program, Equity and Innovation
Brian Goodram, Superintendent, Equity and Student Achievement, FOS3

Recommendation:

That the report outlining the phased approach to implementing and integrating the Program Review recommendations within a broader K–12 program vision be received.

Background:

HWDSB launched its Secondary Program Strategy in 2013 followed by the introduction of its Elementary Program Strategy in 2016.

Over the past year, R.A. Malatest & Associates conducted a comprehensive review of HWDSB's Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Program Strategy and the Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process, the first in fourteen years. Their [final report](#) was presented to the Program Committee on December 11, 2025, and received by the Board of Trustees on February 2, 2026.

The consultant summarized 10 key findings and 27 recommendations aimed at improving HWDSB's Elementary Focus Programs (6 recommendations), Secondary Program Strategy (15 recommendations) and French Immersion Program (6 recommendations). As noted in the report, many of the recommendations could lead to changes for some students, staff, and families. The consultant emphasized the importance of a phased approach and additional engagement with affected communities, based on the experiences of other school boards undertaking similar work.

In March of this year, the Board of Trustees approved Guiding Principles to provide a consistent framework for responding to the recommendations from the Program Strategy Review. These Board-approved Guiding Principles support HWDSB's five pillars of the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan \(MYSP\) 2023-2028](#) and our [Board Improvement Plan, 2025-2026](#), ensuring a comprehensive

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approach to responding to the Program Strategy recommendations. Staff committed to return to the May Program Committee with an implementation plan for the proposed recommendations to begin in the 2027-2028 school year.

As staff continues to deepen implementation of the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), it is important to ensure that our programs are responsive to the evolving needs of today's learners and designed to support a modern, coherent, and future-focused system of education. Staff will require time to develop an action plan to review, modify or implement the recommendations in a strategic manner that best supports students' needs.

Status:

The recommendations of the Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Program Strategy, and the Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process present a significant opportunity for HWDSB. Some recommendations are operational in nature and, once implemented by staff, will further enhance student, staff, parent, caregiver and family voice. Other recommendations are much broader and require further engagement with affected communities and should be implemented strategically, as part of a larger vision for K-12 education and French Language Learning in HWDSB. Thanks to the incredible participation in this review, staff see further opportunities that are not captured explicitly as recommendations. As a result, our new vision for K–12 learning in HWDSB will focus on:

- A consistent foundation outlining what every elementary and secondary school and system program will provide for students.
- Equitable access to dynamic programming, including the learning opportunities available for every student.
- Learning supports and facilities available for every school community.

Staff are prioritizing a visionary approach for education in HWDSB that is fully aligned with our vision of 'Growing Together' and anchored in HWDSB's Mission to ensure every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in meaningful learning to build their own future. Students entering our schools this September will graduate in June 2040, as such, the decisions before us must reflect a long-term commitment to student achievement, well-being, equitable outcomes and inclusion for every student. Staff will implement the Program Review recommendations as a phased and strategic approach that will provide a coherent framework through which all recommendations can be considered, in alignment with HWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and our ongoing commitment to student achievement, well-being, and equitable outcomes for every learner.

Phase 1 Implementation Plan

As we develop a new vision for K-12 learning in HWDSB, it is important we move forward with concrete next steps adopting several of the recommendations from the review using a phased approach.

As a first phase, staff will:

- Use the data gathered to advance a system-wide vision for French Language Learning by improving consistency in the delivery of French Immersion from Grade 1 to Grade 8 in 2027-2028, explore the possibility of offering Core French earlier than Grade 4, and gather student voice data to understand why some students do not continue into Grade 9 secondary French Immersion programming from Grade 8.
- Explore and create a geographic approach to elementary and secondary specialized programs to improve access, reduce transportation barriers, and expand opportunities for students. Staff will meet with current focus and specialized programs to learn more about why their programs have been successful for students as staff study a new model in HWDSB.
- Explore the use of elementary and secondary school facilities including technology and skilled trades spaces to provide elementary students with earlier access to hands-on, experiential learning environments that support pathway development and student engagement.
- Develop a Framework with a three-year review cycle to monitor continued alignment of each program with its intended vision and to monitor program viability, including enrolment, retention, student outcomes, and cost efficiency, and to inform decisions on expansion, relocation, or closure.

Next Steps

Staff will return to the Program Committee with two separate reports:

- Vision for K-12 learning in HWDSB (beginning to encompass the recommendations for the Elementary Program Strategy and Secondary Program Strategy).
- K-12 French Language programming.

Financial Implications:

There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

Staff are committed to the guiding principle of fiscal responsibility and sustainability. As staff move forward to implement next steps, staff will be able to calculate financial implications and report back to the Program Committee.

Strategic Directions:

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