



A Message to the Hamilton Community

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is writing this letter in support of and in solidarity with Hamilton's LGBTQI2S+ communities after the violent attack by white supremacists at the Hamilton Pride festival in Gage Park on June 15.

HWDSB believes *We All Belong*. We are deeply concerned about any hate-fuelled attacks – we believe that an attack on one is an attack on all. We stand by our values of equity, diversity and inclusion. We cannot allow white supremacy, racism, homophobia, transphobia and biphobia to grow in our community. The most disturbing and recent example of this is the hateful and violent attack against our LGBTQI2S+ communities in Gage Park during Pride celebrations.

These aggressive acts of homophobia, biphobia and transphobia impact our students, staff and families. Some of them have been harmed by what they experienced at Hamilton Pride and the aftermath. They have witnessed and suffered from homophobic and transphobic slurs, physical violence and intimidation by members of hate groups. Some of these students are young and were attending their first Pride event.

Over the summer months, as schools close, a safe and welcoming community becomes even more important. School Positive Space Groups provide much-needed support during the school year. In the summer, many students rely heavily on community-based supports. We have information that some of the community support programs and meetings that youth typically attend have been cancelled or reduced due to fear, disruption and concerns about safety.

This is not acceptable. This must end.

HWDSB is committed to equity and works towards creating safe and supportive environments for all students, staff and families. We want everyone to be safe, supported and accepted in our schools and in our community.

As members of the Hamilton community, we are speaking up and standing up to condemn these acts of hate, intimidation and exclusion that target LGBTQI2S+ communities. Together, we must work towards instilling the value of inclusion and make Hamilton known for inclusion, not intolerance.

In solidarity with the Hamilton LGBTQI2S+ community,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Johnstone".

Alex Johnstone
Chair, Board of Trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Manny Figueiredo".

Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education