

HWDSB

Equity and Well-being

Equity Action Plan

2019/20-2021/22



Mission

We empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world.

Commitment

We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation.



Overview

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services and operations with a mission to empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world.

Capitalizing on the Board's strategic priorities – specifically, student learning and achievement, as well as positive culture and well-being – HWDSB launches a three-year **Equity Action Plan (2019/20-2021/22)**. The action plan applies anti-oppression and human rights perspectives with a goal to address inequities in achievement and well-being outcomes among students from equity-seeking groups. At the individual and institutional levels, the action plan is intended to identify and address systems of oppression, for example: ableism, racism, sexism, classism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, homophobia, transphobia, etc.

The HWDSB Equity Action Plan serves as a roadmap for creating learning and working environments where all students and staff are safe, supported and accepted. Aligning with Ontario's Education Equity Plan (2017), the plan focuses on four key priority areas:

- School and Classroom Practices
- Leadership, Governance and Human Resource Practices
- Positive Culture and Well-being
- Data Collection, Integration and Reporting

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Identify and eliminate biases, systemic barriers and discriminatory practices
- Support positive learning and workplace environments where all students and staff are safe, supported and accepted
- Ensure inclusive community partnerships and engagement
- Ensure accountability regarding the Board's commitment to equity and communicating results to the public

School and Classrooms

Goal — *Removing barriers to ensure that school and classroom practices reflect and respond to the diversity of students, staff and the community.*

1

Strengthen inclusive and culturally responsive pedagogy, assessment and resources

- Develop and integrate Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP) approaches to promote teaching, curriculum and assessment that are responsive to students' needs and lived experiences.
- Provide guidelines/exemplars on the selection of learning materials which represent the diversity and lived experiences of the student population.
- Provide tools to schools and educators to assess and identify stereotypes and biases in learning materials.
- Support educators to ensure equitable, accessible and inclusive teaching practices by establishing an equity and inclusive education (EIE) professional development series, including CRRP.
- Create, update and share decision support and screening tools and other resources.
- Develop community partnerships with experts from diverse communities to provide resources and enrich curriculum that represent diverse voices and perspectives.
- Implement the HWDSB Indigenous Education Action Plan.
- Implement the HWDSB Specialized Services Action Plan.
- Implement the HWDSB Mental Health & Well-Being Action Plan.

2

Supporting student pathway choices

- Engage staff to review the current approach to secondary course selection and pathways.
- Establish guidelines for planning conversations between students, families and staff to maximize opportunities for secondary students (e.g. including high expectations for racialized and Indigenous students).
- Engage grades 7 to 10 students (e.g. newcomers, immigrants, racialized communities, students with disabilities, LGBTQI2S+) and their families about pathway choices to support them in making fully informed decisions.

3

Improved and inclusive community-school partnerships to enhance school and classroom practices

- Identify and strengthen community partnerships that engage communities from diverse backgrounds and organizations that serve equity-seeking groups (e.g. newcomers, immigrants, racialized communities, students with disabilities, LGBTQI2S+) and Indigenous communities.
- Build on the 2016/17 and 2017/18 Supporting Racialized Students Ministry project and operationalize the recommendations from the students, including establishing a racialized students' council.

4

Increase parent engagement

- Collaborate with parents and community partners to identify gaps and barriers for families from diverse backgrounds from engaging with schools (e.g. newcomers, immigrants, racialized communities, students with disabilities, LGBTQI2S+, Indigenous communities, etc.)
- Identify strategies for reaching out and ensuring representation of diverse communities on school councils and other committees/platforms.
- increase diverse parent engagement through system-level advisory committee structures.

"A key aspect of removing barriers is to ensure that schools & classroom practices reflect & respond to the diversity of students & staff."

*Ontario Education
Equity Action Plan*



LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Goal – *To create safe, inclusive and engaging learning and working environments where:*

- 1) Staff make-up reflects student diversity;*
- 2) All staff are knowledgeable, committed and accountable to equity.*

1

Accountability for equity and human rights

- Add accountability for equity and human rights in principal, vice-principal and supervisory officer performance appraisals by including equity goals in performance plans.
- Promote equity and human rights criteria in director performance appraisals.
- Have the Director of Education report on progress in meeting equity goals in the annual report, including efforts to increase diversity of staff and those in leadership roles.

2

Enhance diversity in hiring and promotion at all levels

- Conduct a workforce census to paint a picture of who is HWDSB as a workforce community.
- Respond and communicate the workforce census findings.
- Develop an action plan for equitable hiring including:
 - Conduct an equity audit (Employment Systems Review) to assess current hiring, promotion and mentorship practices to identify gaps.
 - Develop employment equity policy and procedures.
 - Grow recruitment outreach to diverse communities through partnerships and faculties of education.
 - Develop selection criteria for all levels of system and school leadership that ensure competencies in equity and inclusivity practices.

Cont'd

- Ensure that knowledge, skills and evidence-based practice pertaining to human rights and equity are part of the success criteria for all staff performance appraisals.
- Consult community partners to explore integration of internationally-trained teachers.
- Develop a mentorship and leadership program for equity-seeking (e.g. black, racialized, LGBTQI2S+, persons with disabilities, etc.) and Indigenous staff groups.

3

Professional development focused on equity, inclusion and human rights

- Build administrators' and system leaders' capacity in understanding an anti-oppression framework to help them critically analyze existing processes and develop improvement plans including equity priorities in their schools and/or departments.
- Build staff capacity through learning opportunities on human rights and equity topics (e.g. Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-black racism, LGBTQI2S+, Ontario Human Rights Code, religious and creed accommodation, disability and other related legislation, other current issues that may impact student well-being, etc.).
- Enhance educators' and leaders' capacity and knowledge of Indigenous histories and Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action as per the HWDSB Indigenous Education Action Plan.
- Communicate and champion the message of inclusion and equity through days of significance.
- Work with HWDSB Advisory Committees and parent groups, Student Senate and School Councils to support education on religious and creed-based accommodations.
- Develop and implement a human rights and equity training module for new employees by integrating human rights and equity learning in employee on-boarding sessions.

4

Establish equity and human rights support structures

- Establish a system-level Equity Leadership Team to explore structures to support creating equitable and inclusive environments in schools and service departments.

POSITIVE CULTURE AND WELL-BEING

Goal – *Create a positive organizational culture and environment where all students and staff feel safe, supported and accepted.*

1

Review board policies and procedures

- Establish a Human Rights and Equity Advisory (HREA) Committee to advise Trustees and staff on equity policies, procedures and projects and to identify gaps and barriers.
- Review board policies and procedures, to identify and remove systemic barriers and discriminatory biases.
- Provide orientation to Trustees on the Board's commitment to equity.
- Provide responsive equity learning opportunities to Trustees.

2

Establish and/or strengthen community, staff and/or student advisory committees and groups

- Establish a Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee.
- Strengthen the Faith Community Advisory Committee and establish faith/creed-based staff working group.
- Strengthen the System Positive Space Committee.
- Strengthen the Indigenous Education Circle.
- Establish student voice councils: Racialized Students Council, Indigenous Students Council, LGBTQI2S+ Students Council.
- Establish a Racialized Staff Network.

3

Develop safe and inclusive reporting structures

- Assess discrimination and harassment reporting policies, procedures and processes.
- Improve and/or establish a process that enables students and staff to safely report incidents of code-based discrimination and harassment.
- Explore the need for a human rights policy and procedure to support and improve protocols used in handling code-based complaints and allegations.

4

Increased commitment to school and workplace environments free from discrimination and harassment

- Collect data on positive school and workplace climates using surveys and other tools.
- Use data on positive school and workplace climates to inform and monitor school and system improvement equity and well-being goals.
- Develop a training strategy on harassment and discriminatory practices that includes learning opportunities on prevention strategies for students, caregivers and staff.

Equity is a critical component of our commitment to the success of every student.



DATA COLLECTION, INTEGRATION & REPORTING

Goal — *Collect and analyse data to address barriers to student success and create safe and inclusive learning and working environments.*

1

Develop a consistent approach to data collection

- Collect and report identity-based employee data.
- Collect and report student identity-based data based on the Ministry's principles and objectives.
- Collect data on positive school and workplace climates using surveys and other tools.

2

Data integration, utilization and reporting

- Engage students, families, staff and community partners to communicate the need for data collection and evidence-informed decision making.
- Analyze, use and report identity-based data tied to academic and social outcomes and achievements, students' daily experience in schools, issues of over-representation and under-representation of equity-seeking students in certain programs.
- Report on equity gaps using identity-based data (student and staff) to inform local decision-making.

RESOURCES

Resources

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017)

Ontario's Aboriginal Education Strategy (2017)

Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision of Education in Ontario (2014)

Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for all Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (2013)

Ontario Equity and Education Inclusion Strategy (2009)

HWDSB Alignment

Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan (2019)

HWDSB Specialized Services Action Plan (2019)

Equity and Inclusion Policy (2018)

Indigenous Education Action Plan (2018)

HWDSB Reimagined: Strategic Priorities (2018)



For more information, contact:

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