

# HWDSB

Media Release

For Immediate Release

## HWDSB Dedicates Learning Day to Bullying Prevention and Intervention

**Hamilton, Ontario – November 26, 2019:** Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) educators will participate in a Professional Activity (PA) Day on Friday, November 29, which will address prevention and intervention of bullying behaviour.

“The death of Devan Bracci-Selvey gave HWDSB pause to recommit our efforts on bullying prevention and intervention practices within our positive culture and well-being priority,” said Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education. “As caring adults in our students’ lives, staff are well-positioned to help them feel safe and accepted. Staff acknowledge that it is a shared responsibility to stop bullying from happening within school communities.”

Figueiredo made the request to repurpose the PA day directly with the Ministry of Education as a result of community concerns about the issue of bullying. The original professional learning activity was focused on math. The Ministry of Education consented to the change in response to the local need and allowed HWDSB to prioritize its learning on bullying prevention and intervention.

Despite work-to-rule strike action set to begin November 26, members of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation (OSSTF) and Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (ETFO) in Hamilton maintain their continued support for bullying prevention and will participate in the learning opportunity.

The PA day will provide essential learning on the bullying prevention policies and procedures. Educators will advance their knowledge related to the importance of healthy relationships and positive school climates. Staff will also enrich their learning related to building safe, inclusive and caring environments as well as refreshing their understanding related to how to respond and report inappropriate behaviour related to bullying.

HWDSB developed a Bullying Prevention and Intervention handbook, which aims to create a help-seeking and helping culture in schools. The handbook informs students, staff and parents of actions they can take to create a safe environment for student learning where respect, equity and inclusion are present.

Additionally, as announced recently, HWDSB has appointed an independent and specialized team to lead the work of a Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel. The review panel will provide independent feedback and recommendations on how to prevent, intervene, respond to and report bullying.

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The Review Panel's role is to coordinate, facilitate, and gather input and feedback from stakeholders about the broader concern of bullying in HWDSB and our community. Stakeholders will include students, parents/caregivers/guardians, staff, community partners, and partners. The resulting report, expected in May 2020, will be made public.

Learn more about Safe Schools at HWDSB online at [www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschools](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschools)

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