

**Media Release**

**For Immediate Release**

## **Dates Set for Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel**

**Hamilton, Ontario – January 31, 2020:** Public feedback about how to stop bullying and support students will be front and centre at a series of community sessions led by the independent experts on the Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel.

The panel is co-ordinating, facilitating and gathering input about bullying from students, families, staff and community partners. The 15 sessions – recognizable with the tagline *Let's Talk About Bullying* – will occur in February and March, for general and group-specific audiences.

“In response to community concern, the panel’s work will provide authentic consultation and timely results to help all students and staff feel safe, supported and accepted,” said Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education. “*Let's Talk About Bullying* is an opportunity to listen and learn from our general community and people with a unique voice in the bullying conversation.”

At each session, attendees are invited to share their thoughts on what HWDSB and its schools should stop doing, start doing or continue doing as it relates to bullying prevention, intervention, reporting and responding in order to maintain a positive school climate. The panel engagement will be framed around healthy school relationships as bullying is about relationships.

Community feedback will become part of the panel’s findings to be summarized in an interim report due in May, 2020. There will be an opportunity for more public feedback before this interim report leads to a final report due to the Board of Trustees by September 30, 2020.

The review panel consists of respected community members with decades of experience, knowledge and skills: Dr. Jean Clinton, Brenda Flaherty and Dr. Gary Warner. They will have access to a team of independent advisors and experts, as well as leading consultancy firm KOJO Institute, with expertise in equity, human rights, anti-racism and organizational culture change. The panel’s work is possible due, in part, to the support of the Hamilton Community Foundation.

Learn more and find details about the sessions at [www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschoolsreview](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/safeschoolsreview)

**Note to Media:** If attending a session, please identify yourself at the door. Personal stories about bullying can be difficult to share. Please ask attendees for permission before sharing their stories. Panel members are available for interviews upon request.

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