



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: April 6, 2021

PREPARED BY: Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent on Special Assignment

RE: Safe Schools Action Plan 2021 – 2023 (part of the Positive Culture & Well-Being Priority)

Action

Monitoring X

Background:

Following the tragic death of Devan Bracci-Selvey, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) trustees created the *Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel*. The Panel's purpose was to gather qualitative and quantitative community feedback, summarize research and create recommendations for HWDSB, the Hamilton community and government to address bullying. The Panel's comprehensive report ([*Building Healthy Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment*](#)) was shared with Trustees on January 25, 2021.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to responding to the voices of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community as shared within that report. This means:

- a relentless focus on building positive and inclusive cultures in all classrooms and schools – a place where everyone belongs, everyone is safe and everyone achieves;
- creating learning environments where student identity and voice are centered – students' lived experiences are honoured and an essential part of learning;
- relationships are positive, supportive, caring and kind;
- creating structures to gather, listen and respond to student voice – student voice must inform school and board plans;
- safety is paramount and incidents of bullying are addressed with active involvement of students and families – this includes the student who experiences bullying, the student who displays bullying behavior and the student who witnesses bullying.

We will do this by:

- being transparent with students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community – Implementation Plans, Outcomes Measures and Timelines related to the *Safe Schools Action Plan*, will be shared and updated regularly;
- creating structures to ensure student, parent/guardian/caregiver, staff and community voice inform school and board plans and that these plans are publicly shared and reported on;
- improved engagement with attention to working with those impacted by decisions;
- building relationships and trust through our actions – listening and responding and
- being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being.

The attached *Safe Schools Action Plan* provides an overview of the implementation timelines of the recommendations and actions essential to transform the cultures within our schools. Next steps include the development of:

- *Implementation Plan(s)* for each Recommendation;
- *Communications and Engagement Strategy* – structures which will be established to support involvement of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community throughout the implementation process;
- *Transparency and Accountability Strategy* – processes and structures to ensure the work is transparent and staff are accountable for progress and outcomes and
- *Monitoring and Measuring Strategy* – clarity of anticipated outcomes and how we will measure improvement in school culture.

An update will be provided to Trustees in September, 2021.

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2023

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

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- being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being.

The *Recommendations* and *Action Steps* within the Panel's Report align with the *Positive Culture and Well-Being* (We will build student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies and supportive relationships) focus in the Board Annual Plan.

HWDSB 2021 – 2022 Board Annual Plan

Goal: Improve the well-being of all students and staff and close the gap for those historically underserved.

Target: At least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities.

STRATEGIES:

Investing in People:

1. Provide differentiated professional learning on **culturally relevant and responsive** pedagogy, **Indigenous Cultural Safety** and Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild @HWDSB with a **focus on relationships and conditions** impacting learners who are historically underserved.
2. Provide differentiated professional learning to system leaders on human rights, systems of **oppression, privilege, and anti-racism** and implications within the learning and working environments.

Leveraging Effective Practices:

1. Implement differentiated strategies to provide targeted and enhanced support to **Black, Indigenous, Racialized and Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ students and students requiring special education supports and/or services**.
2. Implement **Emotion Coaching** (i.e. Validation), to enhance **student-staff relationships** (i.e. caring adult).
3. Implement **Employment Equity Action Plan**.

Refining Measures of Progress:

1. Develop and implement the tools required to collect student identity-based data as part of the **Student Census**, and updated annually.
2. **Develop and implement a Safe Schools Action Plan to respond to the recommendations from the Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel.**

The *Building Health Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment Report* identifies 11 broad recommendations based on advice from experts and findings from the community consultation and survey. Each recommendation has a number of recommended action steps which provide the basis for the **Safe Schools Action Plan**.

Students

Recommendation #1: Increase Student ownership and seek out and listen to student perspectives

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Recommendation #2: Involve parents, guardians and caregivers in bullying prevention and response in meaningful ways.

Schools

Recommendation #3: Develop multi-tiered supports and programming

Recommendation #4: Support schools so they can establish their own bullying prevention and intervention plans

Recommendation #5: Examine special education practices from a student-centred learning perspective

Recommendation #6: Review policies and procedures from equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression perspectives

Recommendation #7: Ensure policies and procedures are followed consistently

HWDSB Organization – System Level

Recommendation #8: Set the foundation for a culture of learning

Recommendation #9: Strengthen the leadership skills needed for culture change

Hamilton Community

Recommendation #10: Work with a wide range of community partners

Ministry of Education

Recommendation #11: Ask the Ministry of Education for support

TIMELINES

Phase 1 **March, 2021 to August, 2021**

Phase 2 **September, 2021 to August, 2022**

Phase 3 **September, 2022 to August, 2023**

Note: Action Steps highlighted in yellow were identified in the Report as Immediate Actions

<h2>STUDENTS – Action Steps</h2>

ALL PHASES

- 1.1 Involve students in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of all HWDSB bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives at the school-level and system level, including reviewing and updating related policies and procedures. (Phase 1 – Student Voice Structure(s) established)
- 1.11 Students to play a central role in developing and implementing all of the review panel's recommended action steps. (Phase 1 – Student Voice Structure(s) established)

PHASE ONE AND TWO

- 1.9 When engaging students, consider and include the perspectives and experiences of the student experiencing bullying, the student with bullying behaviours and the student who witnesses. Important given the HWDSB Safe School Survey findings that indicate bullying tends to happen among groups of students who are involved in all three roles and who struggle with the same developmental, safety and relationship issues.

- 1.10 Ensure action steps are aligned with and included in the Equity Action Plan as well as other appropriate student well-being initiatives, such as Mental Health Strategy and Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety.

PHASE TWO

- 1.2 Build on HWDSBs current expertise with student voice initiatives by establishing regular and consistent mechanisms for capturing student voices on the subjects of bullying and school climate. Both school and system levels and use a range of accessible and interactive methods, with School Climate Survey being only one example.
- 1.3 Ensure student voices are sought out and incorporated into the school's response to incidents of bullying. This includes asking student victims to identify what solutions they want to see put into place.
- 1.5 Share student voice data with full school community, including parents, guardians, caregivers and community partners. In keeping with the principles put forth in the Culturally Responsible and Relevant Pedagogy framework, demonstrate how student voices are used to inform school improvement processes and plans using clear, relatable examples. Co-develop these strategies with students and potentially with community partners.

- 1.7 Have students from Grades 4-12 participate as leaders on existing school improvement teams. With input from students, reflect upon the process, including criteria, for selecting student reps to ensure a range of identities are offered the opportunity to participate, especially those whose cultural, racial, faith, sexual, gender, ability or other identity is outside of the dominant socio - cultural norms. Clearly outline student roles and contributions as well as the mechanisms that will be put into place. Collect age-appropriate data from younger children, for example, by asking them how they feel in school. (ensure data can be disaggregated)

PHASE TWO AND THREE

- 1.4 Include student voice and student-centred bullying metrics, such as bullying prevalence, descriptors of students who are being bullied, school belonging, and caring adult, in HWDSB's performance monitoring framework.
- 1.6 Within the context of a whole-school approach, develop interactive resources that provide students with concrete examples and scripts for being an ally or bullying upstander. Develop these with students. For examples, see WITS Program's Bystander Quiz and PREVNet's What Kids Need to Know resources.
- 1.8 Ensure all student-led activities and processes are implemented with appropriate adult allyship. Provide training in the importance of adult support and what constitutes an effective adult ally to educators, other school staff and school volunteers such as volunteer coaches.

PARENTS, GUARDIANS and CAREGIVERS – Action Steps

PHASE ONE AND TWO

- 2.1 Share available educational resources on bullying with all parents, guardians and caregivers, including information on the types of bullying (including cyberbullying); the difference between bullying, aggression and teasing; impact of bullying; specific examples of how to respond to bullying; and what they can do if their child bullies. Suggested resources: PREVNet, WITS, and Fourth R. websites.
- 2.2 Share new and emerging educational resources on cyberbullying with parents, guardians and caregivers as they become available over the coming months.

PHASE TWO

- 2.3 Involve parents, guardians and caregivers in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives as outlined under Recommendation #3 and #4.

PHASE TWO AND THREE

- 2.4 Establish ongoing, representative and accessible mechanisms for seeking parent input and feedback on bullying prevention and intervention initiatives and activities at both the school and system levels. Should include seeking feedback on bullying reporting and response processes from parents, guardians and caregivers, including those whose children have been involved in bullying in any role.

PHASE THREE

- 2.5 Expand the ways parents, guardians and caregivers can get involved within HWDSB (such as school councils, PIC and Indigenous Education Councils) to participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of school climate initiatives and strengthen school-parent communication

HWDSB SCHOOLS – Action Steps

ALL PHASES

- 4.1 Ensure that school improvement plans prioritize positive culture and well-being and contain a feasible number of goals with clear measurable targets, for example a maximum of two goals with one already included in the board's Annual Plan.
- 4.3 Each school, including fully remote learning programs, should establish its own bullying prevention and intervention plan and be provided with the necessary resources and expertise to develop and implement a

whole-school approach. Direct more resources to schools with the greatest needs based primarily on a review of School Climate Survey results, particularly bullying prevalence, and principal reports. Key components of a whole-school approach include:

- (a) Capacity and resources at the school level. These should be sufficient to coordinate the safe school team as well as build new and strengthen existing school-level partnerships with local community groups, programs and service providers.
- 4.7 Establish consistent funding for ongoing board-wide professional learning opportunities for educators on bullying prevention and intervention. Examples include education and coaching to address complex peer interactions and challenging students; concrete, specific and effective strategies for early detection and intervention; forms of power abuse, whether by students, educators or parents, guardians and caregivers, and the forms of protection needed within classrooms and schools; and learning about educator roles and responsibilities for reporting bullying. Ensure the professional learning plan establishes and evaluates measurable outcomes. Use what is learned from past professional learning opportunities to select, develop and implement subsequent opportunities.
- 5.5 Identify ways to enhance supportive inclusion to mitigate the behaviour of some students with special education needs who have difficulty with self-regulation. Examples include developmental strategies, staffing levels and activities that foster students' empathy and support of peers.

PHASE ONE

- 3.1 Establish a bullying prevention and intervention lead position at the board. Will lead system-level content and process efforts to create a culture of caring. Accountability shared with Exec Council.
- 3.2 Create Board-wide framework that establishes overarching expectations and procedures for a multi-tiered system of supports and programming including:
 - (e) Continue with existing practices that were identified as important and successful during the community consultations - including restorative approaches, TipOff, HWDSB Helps and We Help campaign.
- 3.3 Support students involved in bullying. Ensure selective and indicated supports, including mental health supports and other professional assistance, are made available to students who have been bullied or who have witnessed bullying. Ensure students who have engaged in bullying also receive appropriate supports. For example, continue to support the implementation and evaluation of the Nurturing Safer Schools: A Social Work Intervention pilot project in Grades 6 to 8. Expand the program's availability beyond the pilot sites if warranted by evaluation findings.
- 4.2 Immediately explore alternative sources of additional adult supervision outside of the classroom during non-instructional time. Options include parent volunteers; lunch buddy mentoring approaches (see Gregus et al., 2015 as one example); and staff from local recreation programs and youth-serving agencies, starting with the agencies already providing before and after school programming within schools. These alternative adult supervisors could offer unstructured opportunities to connect during recess as well as an additional caring adult in the hallways during breaks. Ensure these supervisors are involved in the co-creation of the role and expectations and are adequately trained in bullying prevention and intervention, as well as related school protocols and codes of conduct.
- 5.1 Review current research on the impact of placement in self-contained classes on student learning, belonging and engagement.
- 6.2 Address the areas of concern identified during the review panel consultations. Specific suggestions include:
 - (c) Ensuring students can report incidents of bullying in a safe, welcoming and accessible way that is both efficient and minimizes the possibility of reprisals. Reporting procedures must apply to victims of bullying and those who witness bullying. They must encourage parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, coaches and other staff to report incidents of bullying. Examples include anonymous tip phone numbers, anonymous letter templates, and an independent student ombudsperson who listens to complaints and provides protection for and advice to students affected by misconduct and harassment.

- (g) Documenting bullying incidents, for example, in an education file, so they are on record for the student victim as well as the student or school adult who bullied.
- (h) Ensuring existing policies and guidelines do not punish student upstanders for intervening and trying to help.

- 6.4 Reaffirm the role of HWDSB's Equity Policy as a permanent guide to relations between HWDSB and the police.
- 6.6 Align and integrate the above action steps with HWDSB's Equity Action Plan where appropriate.
- 7.1 The new bullying prevention and intervention lead at the board should establish a review process to address inconsistent and ineffective application of safe schools policies and procedures and related guidelines or codes of conduct. The lead should establish clear timelines and accountabilities for any review committee.

PHASE ONE AND TWO

- 3.2 Create Board-wide framework that establishes overarching expectations and procedures for a multi-tiered system of supports and programming including:
 - (d) Application of an intersectional lens to bullying prevention and intervention. Consider a student's multiple identity layers and the role of social and structural inequities. Recognize and work to remedy interlocking systems of oppression. Seek opportunities to align with other well-being initiatives, including Equity Action Plan, Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety, Mental health, special education and other safe schools activities.
- 3.7 Collect school-level disaggregated data by identity on all reported incidents of bullying, both formal and informal, every six months. This data should be supplied at regular intervals to the dedicated lead position and annually to the board of trustees. Encourage full participation in School Climate Surveys and share results with students, parents, guardians, caregivers and the general public. This incident documentation should be broader and not limited to bullying- examples human rights and hate related incidents can be included. Invest on a data management tool that can capture this or PowerSchool
- 4.5 Ensure that students who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, whether or not they have been bullied, are supported in a variety of ways, for example, through a formal initiative that involves a designated staff member.
- 4.8 Collect school-level disaggregated data by identity on all reported incidents of bullying, both formal and informal, and report every six months to the dedicated lead position.
- 4.9 Encourage full participation in School Climate surveys and share results with students, parents, guardians, caregivers and community partners.
- 4.11 Ensure school-level plans are developed using an intersectional approach to bullying prevention and intervention so they reflect the co-occurrence of bullying and discrimination in its many forms. Plans should align closely with other student well-being activities at the school-level, including those connected to the Equity Action Plan, Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety, mental health, special education and other safe schools initiatives.
- 5.2 Identify evidence-informed best practices to maximize student learning, belonging and engagement.
- 5.3 Review student achievement data in the context of HWDSB's priority goals, such as early reading and graduation.
- 5.4 Continue to review and refine the special education plan, including programs and services, in keeping with research on equity and inclusion for students with disabilities.
- 6.3 Ensure there is a plan to address, monitor and report on gaps in staff diversity and inequities in professional outcomes at all levels in the board. Examples of inequities in professional outcomes include higher turnover rates and fewer opportunities for promotion experienced by diverse staff.

- 7.9 Consider creating an independent student ombudsperson position for hearing incidents of bullying where the student, parents, guardians and caregivers do not feel safe following the line of authority from teacher to principal, superintendent and trustee. The ombudsperson would report to senior leadership and could be affiliated with HWDSB's Human Rights and Equity office.

PHASE TWO

- 3.2 Create Board-wide framework that establishes overarching expectations and procedures for a multi-tiered system of supports and programming including:
- (a) Supports at three levels, leveraging universal, selective and indicated programs and activities (examples provided within report pages 69-70).
 - (b) Broad, representative student involvement to guide the selection of supports and co-create activities, initiatives and solutions at both the school level and individual incident level.
 - (c) Engagement of key stakeholder groups in the development and implementation process. Identify and recognize the bullying prevention and intervention expertise within the Hamilton community.
- 3.4 Develop the tools and resources to support schools in developing their own bullying prevention and intervention plans using the PREVNet whole-school approach and other whole-school resources. (see Recommendation #4).
- 3.8 Create clear lines of accountability and oversight for school plans, including expectations for monitoring and evaluation.
- 4.3 Each school, including fully remote learning programs, should establish its own bullying prevention and intervention plan and be provided with the necessary resources and expertise to develop and implement a whole-school approach. Direct more resources to schools with the greatest needs based primarily on a review of School Climate Survey results, particularly bullying prevalence, and principal reports. Key components of a whole-school approach include:
- (b) Ongoing, interactive education for all students and staff offered at least annually. Cover types of bullying; the difference between bullying, aggression and teasing; the impact of bullying; and how to respond to bullying, including specific examples. Material should acknowledge that bullying occurs between students, between staff and students, and between staff members. Incorporate role-playing scenarios and provide scripts for intervening in a positive way, for example, as a bullying upstander. Educational resources should be shared broadly with all school staff, including non-teaching staff, administrators, custodial staff, bus drivers and crossing guards, as well as parents, guardians and caregivers.
 - (c) Essential structures and processes. These should support building and strengthening school-level partnerships with those who share a common interest in addressing bullying. Should use outside expertise and resources; augment existing safe school teams with student, parent, educator and community representation; identify a leader or leaders within the school administration; and integrate bullying prevention into classroom learning curriculum
 - (d) Assessment. Suggestions include conducting an environmental scan of bullying frequency, including when and where bullying happens in a school; collecting and using school-level, disaggregated data to identify at-risk situations and students in ways that assure the confidentiality of those involved; and completing a bullying prevention needs assessment.
 - (e) School-level prevention and intervention. Each school plan should include a range of developmentally attuned and effective bullying prevention and intervention activities and approaches. These should be tailored to the school's needs by matching the level of risk to the level of intervention. They should also draw from the multi-tiered system of programming and supports discussed in Recommendation #3.
 - (f) Communication and evaluation of the school plan. Share the school's plan with all school stakeholders, including students, parents, guardians, caregivers, staff, unions and community partners. Evaluate how school initiatives are regarded by students, staff, parents, guardians and caregivers at least annually and make adjustments accordingly. Evaluations should incorporate standardized school level data collection and analysis on key bullying indicators, such as bullying prevalence, school belonging and caring adults.

- 4.4 Ensure student voices are sought out and incorporated into the school's response to incidents of bullying. This includes asking student victims to identify the solutions they want to see implemented.
- 6.2 Address the areas of concern identified during the review panel consultations. Specific suggestions include:
- d. Creating and documenting a student safety plan for the student experiencing bullying victimization when high-risk bullying involvement is reported. An example is PREVNet's Bullying Identification and Intervention Tool.
 - e. Clearly articulating and widely sharing the role played by each administrator and school staff member in bullying prevention and intervention. Include practical examples or case studies to illustrate how to respond in different situations and help distinguish bullying from other behaviours. PREVNet's tip sheet for differentiating between bullying, aggression and teasing is an example.
 - f. Creating clear communication guidelines and expectations for reporting and response that ensure parents, guardians and caregivers (especially those connected to the victims) are kept informed at every step of the bullying reporting and response process. This includes notifying them at the time of a reported bullying incident (or even earlier when concerning behaviours are identified), seeking their input with respect to an appropriate response, and communicating the outcome in a way that maintains privacy.
 - j. Ensuring each school has a full checklist of existing policies, guidelines, statutory duties and responsibilities and ensuring, in a systemic way, that staff, including temporary staff, are trained on them all.
 - k. Examining policies, guidelines and current practices related to progressive discipline through an equity lens, as well as according to inclusive education and human rights principles (Ontario Ministry of Education & Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). This examination should also take into consideration the concerns regarding discipline that were shared during this review and the need to provide clarity and consistency regarding how, when and for whom discipline is imposed. Consequences need to be educational or developmental to ensure that students are learning and developing optimally. Furthermore, when a student is suspended as a result of a bullying incident, there should be an articulated and shared re-integration strategy to promote healing and the student's positive development. HWDSB should monitor disciplinary outcomes, check in with involved students and their parents, guardians and caregivers, and seek feedback to improve protocol and process as needed.
- 7.2 The review process must proactively address the real and perceived unequal application of bullying policies and guidelines based on a student's identity.
- 7.3 The review process must address the need for accountability and transparency when a staff member is not following proper protocol, including identifying and addressing the abusive behavior of school staff toward students, other staff, and parents, guardians and caregivers.
- 7.4 The review process should examine ways to enhance understanding and support more consistent application of mitigating factors, as defined by the Ministry of Education policy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018b) on suspension and expulsion, when principals are making progressive discipline decisions about incidents of bullying.
- 7.5 Administration and staff should work together to develop a clear understanding of what information will and will not be shared, based on privacy obligations, and incorporate this understanding in updated policies and procedures. Policies and procedures should ensure that teachers, parents, guardians, caregivers and, where appropriate, other staff who regularly interact with students are not unnecessarily left "in the dark" about a student's involvement in a bullying incident, whether alleged or proven, and the outcome of the response. Such an understanding is consistent with the need to protect a student's privacy and prevent unnecessary disclosure.

PHASE TWO AND THREE

- 3.6 Use data collection tools and procedures, including standardized tools, for more localized periodic school-based climate assessment between School Climate Survey cycles.
- 3.9 Establish a board-wide mechanism to positively acknowledge and share models of good practice at the

school level. For example, create a peer review team that reviews and provides guidance and feedback on school bullying prevention and intervention plans and shares what has worked well at other schools in the spirit of continuous quality improvement. This team's work should be guided by the board's dedicated lead position.

- 4.6 Ensure that assistance is available to parents, guardians and caregivers, including workshops, an inventory of available resources and information on all aspects of bullying. This assistance should be offered to parents, guardians and caregivers whose children have been bullied, witnessed bullying and engaged in bullying, as well as to those who are concerned about bullying.
- 4.10 Use available PREVNet resources to train all staff who have contact with students to respond appropriately when they observe bullying. Include non-teaching staff, administrators, janitors, bus drivers and crossing guards. Consider creating an online code of conduct for all staff that is specific to bullying prevention and intervention.
- 6.1 Establish a review process with representation from administration, educators and other school staff, principals, students, student councils, parents, guardians, caregivers, unions, Indigenous Education Councils, and community advocacy and service provider partners.
- 6.2 Address the areas of concern identified during the review panel consultations. Specific suggestions include:
 - (a) Using a consistent and comprehensive definition of bullying and the ways in which it can take place, including appropriate and inappropriate use of technology and social media. Ensure racist bullying, particularly micro aggressions, is explicitly defined.
 - (i) Providing schools with sufficient autonomy and flexibility to respond to the needs of their students and school community within the context of a whole-school approach (see Recommendation #4).
- 7.6 To prevent situations that cause inequities for students, encourage senior leadership, with input from unions, students and educators, to develop consistent messages about staff roles and responsibilities with respect to bullying prevention and intervention, including active supervision standards such as scope and quality of supervision. Consider union representatives as allies in the process and seek their assistance in providing consistent messages and sharing resources with their members.
- 7.8 Explore the feasibility of and costs associated with developing an electronic decision-tree resource for educators and school administrators based on PREVNet resources. This resource will guide the user through standardized bullying assessment, intervention and response protocols, including assessment questions and scripts; suggested response options to match the level of risk; and suggested next steps, including reporting and follow up requirements. Involve educators and school administrators in identifying user needs and system requirements. Consider developing a business case and seeking Ministry of Education funding for its development and implementation across school boards, with HWDSB serving as a pilot site.
- 7.10 Create a formal process for periodic review at multiple levels with a public accountability component. This review should include an examination of the overall procedures being implemented to ensure they effectively fulfill their intended purpose without creating bureaucratic gridlock.

PHASE THREE

- 3.5 Work with the Ministry of Education to explore the effectiveness of additional digital monitoring tools specific to cyberbullying and cyber safety. Incorporate effective tools into HWDSB's multi-tiered system of supports and programming for bullying prevention and intervention.
- 6.5 Create a formalized process for periodic review of policies and procedures with feedback from educators, other school staff, principals, students, student councils, parents, guardians, caregivers, Indigenous Education Councils, unions and community partners. This review should take place every two years as per Ministry requirements and more frequently as improvement opportunities arise.
- 7.7 Determine, with the help of educators and administrators, what is required to increase uptake and maximize potential of available electronic tools so that critical student background information related to bullying behaviours and incidents is captured and can inform future decisions as the student moves through

the system, for example, as they change schools and transition between elementary and secondary. These tools can be used for reporting bullying incidents (for example, the digital safe schools infraction reporting tool), and capturing student log notes (such as the Student Information System). This may require developing documentation standards and protocols in partnership with educators and administrators.

HWDSB ORGANIZATION: SYSTEM-LEVEL – Action Steps

ALL PHASES

- 9.4 Ensure there is a plan to address, monitor and report on the gap in staff diversity and inequity of professional outcomes at the senior leadership level, for example turnover rates and opportunity for promotion.

PHASE ONE

- 8.1 Develop, together with students, a commitment statement specific to bullying prevention and intervention that acknowledges the right of every child to have an education that is free from violence and discrimination. The commitment statement should state that identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers at all levels are key activities to support positive school climates and decrease bullying. The statement should include clear and measurable goals.
- 8.3 Establish oversight and accountability structures at the school, system/HWDSB, governance and community levels. Build on existing, aligned structures where appropriate and indicate where new structures are needed. Structures should be:
- School level: for example, revitalized school climate teams with refreshed expectations.
 - HWDSB system-level: for example, a system-level steering committee charged with overseeing the implementation of review panel recommendations, with broad membership that includes students, parents, educators, unions and community partner representatives, plus at least one community advocacy group specifically focused on bullying. Consider a student and/or advocacy group co-chair.
 - Governance level: for example, a sub-committee aligned with current strategic directions.
 - Community level: for example, a community-led group (see Recommendation #10-3).
- 9.6 Consider using an external facilitator for the board's transformation process in order to add credibility and authenticity to the process in the eyes of the community

PHASE ONE AND TWO

- 8.2 Establish, with input from students, parents, guardians, caregivers and staff, a set of core organizational values and operational principles that will ensure a culture of caring and respect.

PHASE TWO

- 8.4 Incorporate consistent, standardized bullying outcome measures in the HWDSB performance monitoring framework. Examples of measures are bullying prevalence, demographic characteristics of students who are bullied, school belonging, caring adults and student voice.
- 8.5 Establish a transparent and timely monitoring system for reporting to the Board of Trustees and the broader community on HWDSB's bullying prevention and intervention efforts. This should be created in partnership with the review panel external advisors. Include targets and measures at the school and system level that are tracked between School Climate Survey cycles to ensure HWDSB knows where it is making progress and where it needs to improve. Localized school-based climate assessments will help schools tailor their bullying prevention and intervention activities and approaches
- 9.3 Leverage opportunities to reinforce the organizational values and culture shift described under Recommendation #8.

PHASE TWO AND THREE

- 9.1 Identify and build upon current leadership best practices to create a culture of caring and positive school climate within HWDSB. Establish systems and processes to continuously spread these practices throughout the whole organization, for example, professional learning communities.
- 9.2 Identify the leadership competencies that will enable a whole-child, student-centred, nurturing environment

and incorporate them in current and future leadership and performance development opportunities throughout the organization. Examples include relational leadership, facilitation, coaching, integrated thinking and a continuous quality improvement mindset.

- 9.5 Establish the desired leadership performance outcomes for the board's leadership strategy. Then, using a model of continuous improvement, deliver training and support, monitor practice and measure to see if these outcomes have been achieved.
- 9.7 Recognize and celebrate great relational leadership work.

HAMILTON COMMUNITY – Action Steps

PHASE ONE

- 10.3 Establish a community-led, independent table with broad representation, including from HWDSB, to oversee implementation of review panel recommendations at the highest level. This entity should also identify and address barriers to school-community working relationships that are specific to bullying prevention and intervention and overall student well-being. Ensure the entity's terms of reference give it moral authority for and public recognition of its oversight role without impinging on the board's authority. Consider building upon existing community structures that bring together a range of partners to address the health and well-being of children and youth in Hamilton.

PHASE TWO AND THREE

- 10.1 Co-create, implement and evaluate the bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives in Recommendations 3# and #4 in collaboration with a wide range of new and existing community partners. This action will reinforce HWDSB's strategic direction on Partnerships and enhance the range of bullying prevention and intervention resources and expertise available to students.
- 10.2 Utilize existing HWDSB community involvement structures such as parent councils, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), SEAC, Indigenous Education Councils and HWDSB Community Advisory committees to support a strengthened focus on school climate.
- 10.4 Identify and learn from schools that have established strong working relationships between community and school for the purposes of bullying prevention and intervention and positive school climate work. Share lessons learned across HWDSB.
- 10.5 Identify and support opportunities to work with community partners to address the needs and gaps identified in the review panel process and implement the review panel's recommendations. Examples include:
 - Developing or enhancing an alternative suspension program with local youth-serving organizations.
 - Re-examining the use of restorative practices with local youth justice organizations.
 - Participating in the co-creation of educational curriculum, for example through the City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative.
 - Partnering with local recreation and children/youth-serving organizations to provide additional adult supervision during non-instructional time such as recess, lunch breaks and in hallways. Start with the organizations and programs already providing school-based programming before and after school.
 - Continuing to participate in and contribute to Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan at both the strategic and operational levels.
- 10.7 Assess, monitor and evaluate investments in bullying intervention and prevention programs in partnership with academics to improve programs and continuously align them with the recommendations in this report.

PHASE THREE

- 10.6 Share strategies and experiences related to bullying prevention and intervention with the four local school boards.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – Action Steps**PHASE ONE**

- 11.1 Ask the Ministry for centralized, sustained funding for bullying prevention and intervention and positive school climate work, including a dedicated safe schools lead for each school board and resources to implement evidence-informed bullying prevention and intervention programs in schools.

PHASE ONE AND TWO

- 11.4 Ask the Ministry for funding for ongoing professional learning targeted at bullying prevention and intervention and safe schools.
- 11.5 Ask the Ministry to review current supervision policy to address the finding that areas and times of low or no supervision, such as breaks and outdoor recess, present the greatest risk for students.

PHASE TWO

- 11.2 Ask the Ministry to make centralized bullying prevention and intervention expertise and supports available to school boards over the long term. This could include guidance documents, standardized tools for school climate and supports for data analysis and interpretation.
- 11.3 Ask the Ministry to continue to update learning curriculum with additional emphasis on social-emotional learning, including empathy and perspective taking, that is implemented through an anti-racist, culturally responsive and relevant lens. This could include citizenship education and 21st century skills.

Safe Schools Action Plan, 2021 - 2023

Note: Recommendations and Action Steps will be developed through system structures however implementation may be at the school, system or both levels as identified in the chart.

This Action Plan is a “fluid” document which may change throughout the implementation timelines

DRAFT Timelines

Phase 1 March, 2021 to August, 2021

Phase 2 September, 2021 to August, 2022

Phase 3 September, 2022 to August, 2023

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (highlighted throughout chart)

1. *Reflect upon findings and recommendations and share widely*
2. *Create lead staff position*
3. *Coordinate efforts – align with other student well-being initiatives and work such as, Equity Action Plan and Mental Health Strategy*
4. *Make a commitment – develop commitment statement, establish core organizational values, establish timelines and clear, measurable outcomes*
5. *Ensure specialized supports for students affected by bullying.*
6. *Increase supervision outside of the classroom – pursue creative solutions*
7. *Collect and widely report school-level data on bullying*
8. *Design and distribute bullying awareness materials*
9. *Form a high-level steering committee with wide representation to oversee implementation*
10. *Develop a community-led, independent committee to advise on implementation at the highest level*

Students

Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #1 <i>Increase student ownership and seek out and listen to student voices</i>	1. Involve students in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of all HWDSB bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives at the school-level and system level, including reviewing and updating related policies and procedures. (Phase 1 – student voice structure established)	X	X	X	Both
	2. Build on HWDSBs current expertise with student voice initiatives by establishing regular and consistent mechanisms for capturing student voices on the subjects of bullying and school climate. Both school and system levels and use a range of accessible and interactive methods, with School		X		Both

	Climate Survey being only one example.				
	3. Ensure student voices are sought out and incorporated into the school's response to incidents of bullying. This includes asking student victims to identify what solutions they want to see put into place.		X		School
	4. Include student voice and student-centred bullying metrics, such as bullying prevalence, descriptors of students who are being bullied, school belonging, and caring adult, in HWDSB's performance monitoring framework.		X	X	System
	5. Share student voice data with full school community, including parents, guardians, caregivers and community partners. In keeping with the principles put forth in the Culturally Responsible and Relevant Pedagogy framework, demonstrate how student voices are used to inform school improvement processes and plans using clear, relatable examples. Co-develop these strategies with students and potentially with community partners.		X		School
	6. Within the context of a whole-school approach, develop interactive resources that provide students with concrete examples and scripts for being an ally or bullying upstander. Develop these with students. For examples, see WITS Program's Bystander Quiz and PREVNet's What Kids Need to Know resources.		X	X	Both
	7. Have students from Grades 4-12 participate as leaders on existing school improvement teams. With input from students, reflect upon the process, including criteria, for selecting student reps to ensure a range of identities are offered the opportunity to participate, especially those whose cultural, racial, faith, sexual, gender, ability or other identity is outside of the dominant socia-cultural norms. Clearly outline student roles and contributions as well as the mechanisms that will be		X		School

	put into place. Collect age-appropriate data from younger children, for example, by asking them how they feel in school.				
	8. Ensure all student-led activities and processes are implemented with appropriate adult allyship. Provide training in the importance of adult support and what constitutes an effective adult ally to educators, other school staff and school volunteers such as volunteer coaches.		X	X	School
	9. When engaging students, consider and include the perspectives and experiences of the student experiencing bullying, the student with bullying behaviours and the student who witnesses. Important given the HWDSB Safe School Survey findings that indicate bullying tends to happen among groups of students who are involved in all three roles and who struggle with the same developmental, safety and relationship issues.	X	X		School
	10. Ensure action steps are aligned with and included in the Equity Action Plan as well as other appropriate student well-being initiatives, such as Mental Health Strategy and Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety.	X	X		System
	11. Students to play a central role in developing and implementing all of the review panel's recommended action steps. (Phase 1 – student voice structure established)	X	X	X	Both

Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #2 <i>Involve parents, guardians and caregivers in bullying prevention and response in meaningful ways.</i>	1. Share available educational resources on bullying with all parents, guardians and caregivers, including information on the types of bullying (including cyberbullying); the difference between bullying, aggression and teasing; impact	X	X		Both

	of bullying; specific examples of how to respond to bullying; and what they can do if their child bullies. Suggested resources: PREVNet, WITS, and Fourth R. websites.				
	2. Share new and emerging educational resources on cyberbullying with parents, guardians and caregivers as they become available over the coming months.	X	X		Both
	3. Involve parents, guardians and caregivers in the co-creation, implementation and evaluation of bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives as outlined under Recommendation #3 and #4.		X		System
	4. Establish ongoing, representative and accessible mechanisms for seeking parent input and feedback on bullying prevention and intervention initiatives and activities at both the school and system levels. Should including seeking feedback on bullying reporting and response processes from parents, guardians and caregivers, including those whose children have been involved in bullying in any role.		X	X	System
	5. Expand the ways parents, guardians and caregivers can get involved within HWDSB (such as school councils, PIC and Indigenous Education Councils) to participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of school climate initiatives and strengthen school-parent communication.			X	Both

HWDSB Schools

Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #3 <i>Develop multi-tiered supports and programming</i>	1. Establish a bullying prevention and intervention lead position at the board. Will lead system-level content and process efforts to create a culture of caring. Accountability shared with Exec Council.	X			System
	2. Create Board-wide framework that establishes overarching expectations and procedures for a multi-tiered system of supports and programming including:				
	a) Supports at three levels, leveraging universal, selective and indicated programs and activities (<i>examples provided within report pages 69-70</i>).		X		System
	b) Broad, representative student involvement to guide the selection of supports and co-create activities, initiatives and solutions at both the school level and individual incident level.		X		Both
	c) Engagement of key stakeholder groups in the development and implementation process. Identify and recognize the bullying prevention and intervention expertise within the Hamilton community.		X		System
	d) Application of an intersectional lens to bullying prevention and intervention. Consider a student's multiple identity layers and the role of social and structural inequities. Recognize and work to remedy interlocking systems of oppression. Seek opportunities to align with	X	X		Both

	<p>other well-being initiatives, including Equity Action Plan, Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety, Mental health, special education and other safe schools activities.</p> <p>e) Continue with existing practices that were identified as important and successful during the community consultations - including restorative approaches, TipOff, HWDSB Helps and We Help campaign.</p>	X			Both
	<p>3. Support students involved in bullying. Ensure selective and indicated supports, including mental health supports and other professional assistance, are made available to students who have been bullied or who have witnessed bullying. Ensure students who have engaged in bullying also receive appropriate supports. For example, continue to support the implementation and evaluation of the Nurturing Safer Schools: A Social Work Intervention pilot project in Grades 6 to 8. Expand the program's availability beyond the pilot sites if warranted by evaluation findings.</p>	X			Both
	<p>4. Develop the tools and resources to support schools in developing their own bullying prevention and intervention plans using the PREVNet whole-school approach and other whole-school resources. (see Recommendation #4).</p>		X		School
	<p>5. Work with the Ministry of Education to explore the effectiveness of additional digital monitoring tools specific to cyberbullying and cyber safety. Incorporate effective tools into HWDSB's multi-tiered system of supports and programming for</p>			X	System

	bullying prevention and intervention.				
	6. Use data collection tools and procedures, including standardized tools, for more localized periodic school-based climate assessment between School Climate Survey cycles.		X	X	School
	7. Collect school-level disaggregated data by identity on all reported incidents of bullying, both formal and informal, every six months. This data should be supplied at regular intervals to the dedicated lead position and annually to the board of trustees. Encourage full participation in School Climate Surveys and share results with students, parents, guardians, caregivers and the general public.	X	X		System
	8. Create clear lines of accountability and oversight for school plans, including expectations for monitoring and evaluation.		X		System
	9. Establish a board-wide mechanism to positively acknowledge and share models of good practice at the school level. For example, create a peer review team that reviews and provides guidance and feedback on school bullying prevention and intervention plans and shares what has worked well at other schools in the spirit of continuous quality improvement. This team's work should be guided by the board's dedicated lead position.		X	X	System
Recommendation #4 <i>Support Schools so they can establish their own bullying prevention and intervention plans</i>	1. Ensure that school improvement plans prioritize positive culture and well-being and contain a feasible number of goals with clear measurable targets, for example a maximum of two goals with one already included in the board's Annual Plan.	X	X	X	System

	<p>2. Immediately explore alternative sources of additional adult supervision outside of the classroom during non-instructional time. Options include parent volunteers; lunch buddy mentoring approaches (see Gregus et al., 2015 as one example); and staff from local recreation programs and youth-serving agencies, starting with the agencies already providing before and after school programming within schools. These alternative adult supervisors could offer unstructured opportunities to connect during recess as well as an additional caring adult in the hallways during breaks. Ensure these supervisors are involved in the co-creation of the role and expectations and are adequately trained in bullying prevention and intervention, as well as related school protocols and codes of conduct.</p>	X			System
	<p>3. Each school, including fully remote learning programs, should establish its own bullying prevention and intervention plan and be provided with the necessary resources and expertise to develop and implement a whole-school approach. Direct more resources to schools with the greatest needs based primarily on a review of School Climate Survey results, particularly bullying prevalence, and principal reports. Key components of a whole-school approach include:</p> <p>a) Capacity and resources at the school level. These should be sufficient to coordinate the safe school team as well as build new and strengthen existing school-level partnerships with local community groups, programs and</p>	X	X	X	Both

	<p>service providers. (Phase 1 – Structures)</p> <p>b) Ongoing, interactive education for all students and staff offered at least annually. Cover types of bullying; the difference between bullying, aggression and teasing; the impact of bullying; and how to respond to bullying, including specific examples. Material should acknowledge that bullying occurs between students, between staff and students, and between staff members. Incorporate role-playing scenarios and provide scripts for intervening in a positive way, for example, as a bullying upstander. Educational resources should be shared broadly with all school staff, including non-teaching staff, administrators, custodial staff, bus drivers and crossing guards, as well as parents, guardians and caregivers.</p> <p>c) Essential structures and processes. These should support building and strengthening school-level partnerships with those who share a common interest in addressing bullying. Should use outside expertise and resources; augment existing safe school teams with student, parent, educator and community representation; identify a leader or leaders within the school administration; and integrate bullying prevention into classroom learning curriculum.</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p>		<p>System</p> <p>Both</p>
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	<p>d) Assessment. Suggestions include conducting an environmental scan of bullying frequency, including when and where bullying happens in a school; collecting and using school-level, disaggregated data to identify at-risk situations and students in ways that assure the confidentiality of those involved; and completing a bullying prevention needs assessment.</p>		X		Both
	<p>e) School-level prevention and intervention. Each school plan should include a range of developmentally attuned and effective bullying prevention and intervention activities and approaches. These should be tailored to the school's needs by matching the level of risk to the level of intervention. They should also draw from the multi-tiered system of programming and supports discussed in Recommendation #3.</p>		X		System
	<p>f) Communication and evaluation of the school plan. Share the school's plan with all school stakeholders, including students, parents, guardians, caregivers, staff, unions and community partners. Evaluate how school initiatives are regarded by students, staff, parents, guardians and caregivers at least annually and make adjustments accordingly. Evaluations should incorporate standardized school level data collection and analysis</p>		X		Both

	on key bullying indicators, such as bullying prevalence, school belonging and caring adults.				
	4. Ensure student voices are sought out and incorporated into the school's response to incidents of bullying. This includes asking student victims to identify the solutions they want to see implemented. (duplicate)		X		School
	5. Ensure that students who are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable, whether or not they have been bullied, are supported in a variety of ways, for example, through a formal initiative that involves a designated staff member.	X	X		School
	6. Ensure that assistance is available to parents, guardians and caregivers, including workshops, an inventory of available resources and information on all aspects of bullying. This assistance should be offered to parents, guardians and caregivers whose children have been bullied, witnessed bullying and engaged in bullying, as well as to those who are concerned about bullying.		X	X	Both
	7. Establish consistent funding for ongoing board-wide professional learning opportunities for educators on bullying prevention and intervention. Examples include education and coaching to address complex peer interactions and challenging students; concrete, specific and effective strategies for early detection and intervention; forms of power abuse, whether by students, educators or parents, guardians and caregivers, and the forms of protection needed within classrooms and schools; and	X	X	X	System

	learning about educator roles and responsibilities for reporting bullying. Ensure the professional learning plan establishes and evaluates measurable outcomes. Use what is learned from past professional learning opportunities to select, develop and implement subsequent opportunities.				
	8. Collect school-level disaggregated data by identity on all reported incidents of bullying, both formal and informal, and report every six months to the dedicated lead position.	X	X		System
	9. Encourage full participation in School Climate surveys and share results with students, parents, guardians, caregivers and community partners.	X	X		Both
	10. Use available PREVNet resources to train all staff who have contact with students to respond appropriately when they observe bullying. Include non-teaching staff, administrators, janitors, bus drivers and crossing guards. Consider creating an online code of conduct for all staff that is specific to bullying prevention and intervention.		X	X	Both
	11. Ensure school-level plans are developed using an intersectional approach to bullying prevention and intervention so they reflect the co-occurrence of bullying and discrimination in its many forms. Plans should align closely with other student well-being activities at the school-level, including those connected to the Equity Action Plan, Indigenous Education and Indigenous Cultural Safety, mental health, special education and other safe schools initiatives.	X	X		System
Recommendation #5 <i>Examine special education practices from a student-</i>	1. Review current research on the impact of placement in self-contained classes on student learning, belonging and engagement.	X			System

<i>centred learning perspective</i>	2. Identify evidence-informed best practices to maximize student learning, belonging and engagement.	X	X		System
	3. Review student achievement data in the context of HWDSB's priority goals, such as early reading and graduation.	X	X		System
	4. Continue to review and refine the special education plan, including programs and services, in keeping with research on equity and inclusion for students with disabilities.	X	X		System
	5. Identify ways to enhance supportive inclusion to mitigate the behaviour of some students with special education needs who have difficulty with self-regulation. Examples include developmental strategies, staffing levels and activities that foster students' empathy and support of peers.	X	X	X	Both
Recommendation #6 <i>Review policies and procedures from equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression perspectives</i>	1. Establish a review process with representation from administration, educators and other school staff, principals, students, student councils, parents, guardians, caregivers, unions, Indigenous Education Councils, and community advocacy and service provider partners.		X	X	System
	2. Address the areas of concern identified during the review panel consultations. Specific suggestions include: a) Using a consistent and comprehensive definition of bullying and the ways in which it can take place, including appropriate and inappropriate use of technology and social media. Ensure racist bullying, particularly micro aggressions, is explicitly defined.		X	X	System

	<p>b) Ensuring those connected with schools, including students, educators, other school staff and volunteers clearly understand their obligations to not participate in bullying and the expectations if they witness bullying or related conduct, including the misuse of social media to further demean the person bullied.</p>		X		System
	<p>c) Ensuring students can report incidents of bullying in a safe, welcoming and accessible way that is both efficient and minimizes the possibility of reprisals. Reporting procedures must apply to victims of bullying and those who witness bullying. They must encourage parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, coaches and other staff to report incidents of bullying. Examples include anonymous tip phone numbers, anonymous letter templates, and an independent student ombudsperson who listens to complaints and provides protection for and advice to students affected by misconduct and harassment.</p>	X			Both
	<p>d) Creating and documenting a student safety plan for the student experiencing bullying victimization when high-risk bullying involvement is reported. An example is PREVNet's Bullying Identification and Intervention Tool.</p>		X		School
	<p>e) Clearly articulating and widely sharing the role played by each administrator and school staff member in bullying</p>		X		System

	<p>prevention and intervention. Include practical examples or case studies to illustrate how to respond in different situations and help distinguish bullying from other behaviours. PREVNet's tip sheet for differentiating between bullying, aggression and teasing is an example.</p>				
	<p>f) Creating clear communication guidelines and expectations for reporting and response that ensure parents, guardians and caregivers (especially those connected to the victims) are kept informed at every step of the bullying reporting and response process. This includes notifying them at the time of a reported bullying incident (or even earlier when concerning behaviours are identified), seeking their input with respect to an appropriate response, and communicating the outcome in a way that maintains privacy.</p>		X		System
	<p>g) Documenting bullying incidents, for example, in an education file, so they are on record for the student victim as well as the student or school adult who bullied.</p>	X			School
	<p>h) Ensuring existing policies and guidelines do not punish student upstanders for intervening and trying to help.</p>	X			System
	<p>i) Providing schools with sufficient autonomy and flexibility to respond to the needs of their students and school community within the context of a whole-</p>		X	X	School

	<p>school approach (see Recommendation #4).</p> <p>j) Ensuring each school has a full checklist of existing policies, guidelines, statutory duties and responsibilities and ensuring, in a systemic way, that staff, including temporary staff, are trained on them all.</p> <p>k) Examining policies, guidelines and current practices related to progressive discipline through an equity lens, as well as according to inclusive education and human rights principles (Ontario Ministry of Education & Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013). This examination should also take into consideration the concerns regarding discipline that were shared during this review and the need to provide clarity and consistency regarding how, when and for whom discipline is imposed. Consequences need to be educational or developmental to ensure that students are learning and developing optimally. Furthermore, when a student is suspended as a result of a bullying incident, there should be an articulated and shared re-integration strategy to promote healing and the student's positive development. HWDSB should monitor disciplinary outcomes, check in with involved students and their parents, guardians and caregivers, and seek feedback to improve</p>		<p>X</p> <p>X</p>		<p>System</p> <p>System</p>
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	protocol and process as needed.				
	3. Ensure there is a plan to address, monitor and report on gaps in staff diversity and inequities in professional outcomes at all levels in the board. Examples of inequities in professional outcomes include higher turnover rates and fewer opportunities for promotion experienced by diverse staff.	X	X		System
	4. Reaffirm the role of HWDSB's Equity Policy as a permanent guide to relations between HWDSB and the police.	X			System
	5. Create a formalized process for periodic review of policies and procedures with feedback from educators, other school staff, principals, students, student councils, parents, guardians, caregivers, Indigenous Education Councils, unions and community partners. This review should take place every two years as per Ministry requirements and more frequently as improvement opportunities arise.			X	System
	6. Align and integrate the above action steps with HWDSB's Equity Action Plan where appropriate.	X			System
Recommendation #7 <i>Ensure policies and procedures are followed consistently</i>	1. The new bullying prevention and intervention lead at the board should establish a review process to address inconsistent and ineffective application of safe schools policies and procedures and related guidelines or codes of conduct. The lead should establish clear timelines and accountabilities for any review committee.	X			System
	2. The review process must proactively address the real and perceived unequal application of bullying policies and guidelines based on a student's identity.		X		System
	3. The review process must address the need for accountability and transparency when a staff member is not following proper		X		System

	protocol, including identifying and addressing the abusive behavior of school staff toward students, other staff, and parents, guardians and caregivers.				
	4. The review process should examine ways to enhance understanding and support more consistent application of mitigating factors, as defined by the Ministry of Education policy (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018b) on suspension and expulsion, when principals are making progressive discipline decisions about incidents of bullying.		X		Both
	5. Administration and staff should work together to develop a clear understanding of what information will and will not be shared, based on privacy obligations, and incorporate this understanding in updated policies and procedures. Policies and procedures should ensure that teachers, parents, guardians, caregivers and, where appropriate, other staff who regularly interact with students are not unnecessarily left “in the dark” about a student’s involvement in a bullying incident, whether alleged or proven, and the outcome of the response. Such an understanding is consistent with the need to protect a student’s privacy and prevent unnecessary disclosure.		X		Both
	6. To prevent situations that cause inequities for students, encourage senior leadership, with input from unions, students and educators, to develop consistent messages about staff roles and responsibilities with respect to bullying prevention and intervention, including active supervision standards such as scope and quality of supervision. Consider union representatives as allies in the process and seek	X	X		System

	their assistance in providing consistent messages and sharing resources with their members. (Phase 1 – Union engagement structures)				
	7. Determine, with the help of educators and administrators, what is required to increase uptake and maximize potential of available electronic tools so that critical student background information related to bullying behaviours and incidents is captured and can inform future decisions as the student moves through the system, for example, as they change schools and transition between elementary and secondary. These tools can be used for reporting bullying incidents (for example, the digital safe schools infraction reporting tool), and capturing student log notes (such as the Student Information System). This may require developing documentation standards and protocols in partnership with educators and administrators.			X	Both
	8. Explore the feasibility of and costs associated with developing an electronic decision-tree resource for educators and school administrators based on PREVNet resources. This resource will guide the user through standardized bullying assessment, intervention and response protocols, including assessment questions and scripts; suggested response options to match the level of risk; and suggested next steps, including reporting and follow up requirements. Involve educators and school administrators in identifying user needs and system requirements. Consider developing a business case and seeking Ministry of Education funding for its development and implementation across school		X	X	System

	boards, with HWDSB serving as a pilot site.				
	9. Consider creating an independent student ombudsperson position for hearing incidents of bullying where the student, parents, guardians and caregivers do not feel safe following the line of authority from teacher to principal, superintendent and trustee. The ombudsperson would report to senior leadership and could be affiliated with HWDSB's Human Rights and Equity office.	X	X		System
	10. Create a formal process for periodic review at multiple levels with a public accountability component. This review should include an examination of the overall procedures being implemented to ensure they effectively fulfill their intended purpose without creating bureaucratic gridlock.		X	X	System

HWDSB Organization: System-level

Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #8 <i>Set the foundation for a culture of caring</i>	1. Develop, together with students, a commitment statement specific to bullying prevention and intervention that acknowledges the right of every child to have an education that is free from violence and discrimination. The commitment statement should state that identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers at all levels are key activities to support positive school climates and decrease bullying. The statement should include clear and measurable goals.	X			System
	2. Establish, with input from students, parents, guardians, caregivers and staff, a set of core	X	X		System

	organizational values and operational principles that will ensure a culture of caring and respect.				
	<p>3. Establish oversight and accountability structures at the school, system/HWDSB, governance and community levels. Build on existing, aligned structures where appropriate and indicate where new structures are needed. Structures should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School level: for example, revitalized school climate teams with refreshed expectations. • HWDSB system-level: for example, a system-level steering committee charged with overseeing the implementation of review panel recommendations, with broad membership that includes students, parents, educators, unions and community partner representatives, plus at least one community advocacy group specifically focused on bullying. Consider a student and/or advocacy group co-chair. • Governance level: for example, a sub-committee aligned with current strategic directions. • Community level: for example, a community-led group (see Recommendation #10-3). 	X			System
	4. Incorporate consistent, standardized bullying outcome measures in the HWDSB performance monitoring framework. Examples of measures are bullying prevalence, demographic characteristics of students who are bullied, school belonging, caring adults and student voice.		X		System
	5. Establish a transparent and timely monitoring system for reporting to the Board of Trustees and the broader community on HWDSB's bullying prevention and intervention efforts. This should be created in partnership with the review panel		X		System

	external advisors. Include targets and measures at the school and system level that are tracked between School Climate Survey cycles to ensure HWDSB knows where it is making progress and where it needs to improve. Localized school-based climate assessments will help schools tailor their bullying prevention and intervention activities and approaches				
Recommendation #9 <i>Strengthen the leadership skills needed for culture change</i>	1. Identify and build upon current leadership best practices to create a culture of caring and positive school climate within HWDSB. Establish systems and processes to continuously spread these practices throughout the whole organization, for example, professional learning communities.		X	X	System
	2. Identify the leadership competencies that will enable a whole-child, student-centred, nurturing environment and incorporate them in current and future leadership and performance development opportunities throughout the organization. Examples include relational leadership, facilitation, coaching, integrated thinking and a continuous quality improvement mindset.		X	X	System
	3. Leverage opportunities to reinforce the organizational values and culture shift described under Recommendation #8.		X		Both
	4. Ensure there is a plan to address, monitor and report on the gap in staff diversity and inequity of professional outcomes at the senior leadership level, for example turnover rates and opportunity for promotion.	X	X	X	System
	5. Establish the desired leadership performance outcomes for the board's leadership strategy. Then, using a model of continuous improvement, deliver training and support, monitor practice and measure to see if		X	X	System

	these outcomes have been achieved.				
	6. Consider using an external facilitator for the board's transformation process in order to add credibility and authenticity to the process in the eyes of the community	X			System
	7. Recognize and celebrate great relational leadership work.		X	X	System

Hamilton Community					
Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #10 <i>Work with a wide range of community partners</i>	1. Co-create, implement and evaluate the bullying prevention and intervention activities and initiatives in Recommendations 3# and #4 in collaboration with a wide range of new and existing community partners. This action will reinforce HWDSB's strategic direction on Partnerships and enhance the range of bullying prevention and intervention resources and expertise available to students.		X	X	System
	2. Utilize existing HWDSB community involvement structures such as parent councils, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), SEAC, Indigenous Education Councils and HWDSB Community Advisory committees to support a strengthened focus on school climate.		X	X	System
	3. Establish a community-led, independent table with broad representation, including from HWDSB, to oversee implementation of review panel recommendations at the highest level. This entity should also identify and address barriers to school-community working relationships that are specific to	X			System

	bullying prevention and intervention and overall student well-being. Ensure the entity's terms of reference give it moral authority for and public recognition of its oversight role without impinging on the board's authority. Consider building upon existing community structures that bring together a range of partners to address the health and well-being of children and youth in Hamilton.				
4.	Identify and learn from schools that have established strong working relationships between community and school for the purposes of bullying prevention and intervention and positive school climate work. Share lessons learned across HWDSB.		X	X	Both
5.	Identify and support opportunities to work with community partners to address the needs and gaps identified in the review panel process and implement the review panel's recommendations. Examples include: a) Developing or enhancing an alternative suspension program with local youth-serving organizations. b) Re-examining the use of restorative practices with local youth justice organizations. c) Participating in the co-creation of educational curriculum, for example through the City of Hamilton's Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative. d) Partnering with local recreation and children/youth-serving organizations to provide additional adult supervision during non-instructional time such as recess, lunch breaks and in hallways. Start with the organizations and programs already providing school-based programming before and after school.		X	X	System

	e) Continuing to participate in and contribute to Hamilton's Early Years Community Plan at both the strategic and operational levels.				
	6. Share strategies and experiences related to bullying prevention and intervention with the four local school boards.			X	System
	7. Assess, monitor and evaluate investments in bullying intervention and prevention programs in partnership with academics to improve programs and continuously align them with the recommendations in this report.		X	X	System

Ministry of Education					
Recommendations	Recommended Action Steps (summarized)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Implementation (School, System, Both)
Recommendation #11 <i>Ask the Ministry of Education for support</i>	1. Ask the Ministry for centralized, sustained funding for bullying prevention and intervention and positive school climate work, including a dedicated safe schools lead for each school board and resources to implement evidence-informed bullying prevention and intervention programs in schools.	X			System
	2. Ask the Ministry to make centralized bullying prevention and intervention expertise and supports available to school boards over the long term. This could include guidance documents, standardized tools for school climate and supports for data analysis and interpretation.		X		System
	3. Ask the Ministry to continue to update learning curriculum with additional emphasis on social-emotional learning, including empathy and perspective taking, that is implemented through an anti-racist, culturally responsive		X		System

	and relevant lens. This could include citizenship education and 21st century skills.				
	4. Ask the Ministry for funding for ongoing professional learning targeted at bullying prevention and intervention and safe schools.	X	X		System
	5. Ask the Ministry to review current supervision policy to address the finding that areas and times of low or no supervision, such as breaks and outdoor recess, present the greatest risk for students.	X	X		System

HWDSB ALIGNMENT

HWDSB Equity Action Plan 2019/20 – 2021/22
 HWDSB Employment Equity Action Plan 2020
 HWDSB Mental Health and Well-Being Action Plan (2019)
 HWDSB Indigenous Education Action Plan (2018)
 HWDSB Reimagined: Strategic Priorities (2018)
 HWDSB Equity and Inclusion Policy (2018)
 HWDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (2015)
 HWDSB Code of Conduct Policy (2019)
 HWDSB Student Behaviour and Discipline Policy (2015)

PHASE ONE - COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW:

- **Timelines:**
 - March – June, Inform on Report and Action Plan and Consult on communications;
 - September onwards, new communications/engagement *Building Healthy Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment Plan* based on the March-June work
- **Topics:**
 - Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel's Final Report, Roadmap, Initial Action Plan, and future communication opportunities/products
- **Communication tactics/tools:**
 - Video (thank you/panelists share overview),
 - One-pager 2021 edition *Building Healthy Relationship and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment Action Plan* ([summary](#) not [booklet](#)),
 - Powerpoint based on [Community Summary](#),
 - Graphic Roadmap
- **Website presence:**
 - [Safe Schools Review Panel](#) (Suggesting we keeping working through this page, remove 'panel', and until we can officially change to this page [Safe Schools](#))
- **Branding:**
 - Purple until we give Safe Schools rebrand through our communications research
- **Platform for engagement:**
 - MS Teams (virtual sessions)
- **Lead HWDSB committees (existing):**
 - Safe Schools Advisory Committee
- **Communications and Engagement Plan Development:**
 - Research (March-June),

- Planning - goals, objectives, strategies (July/August);
- Implementation – tactics and timelines (2021-22 school year); and
- Evaluation (spring 2022)
- **Other consideration:** What is the intersection between this plan with other positive culture and well-being priorities

Audience	Engagement	Dates
Students	Student Senate Student Networks The Hub	May/June
Parents	School Council Parent Portal (tbd)	School Council meetings in May
HWDSB Committees	Mandated, Trustee, Community Advisory committees	May/June
Staff	Principals meeting Staff meeting	May Admin. Learning May Staff meeting
Partners	Unions Global Sharing opportunity via Teams (model after City's vaccine example) All parties invited through review	May/June 1. Early May 2. Mid-June