

# 2024-2025 BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN



**HWDSB**  
**BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.**

# FOREWORD

Since launching our Board Improvement Plan in March 2024, we have been deliberately implementing new programs and initiatives that support the Pillars (Strategic Directions) of our [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), centre the needs of every student, and refine how we approach our work.

## **Belonging At HWDSB**

Our objective is to ensure that every student feels a deep sense of belonging and achieves their potential in spaces that are inclusive, safe and supports their Human Rights and well-being.

To do this we will continue to advance down our pathway of confronting bias, racism and oppression. This journey will continue to develop and refine programming, professional development, and strategies that create and uphold equitable learning experiences for all HWDSB students.

As a Board, we have had many opportunities for valuable learning that are reshaping programming, creating new streams of professional development, and collectively refining what we do and how we do it.

This revitalized focus weaves inclusive practices and student-centred approaches into our work to foster improved literacy, numeracy, future preparedness, well-being and engagement – for all.

## **Collaborating For Change**

Our efforts to collaborate unite our strengths and unlock opportunities that spark meaningful change.

We are intentionally reflecting on our practices to ensure they embody our Vision, Mission, and Values. Through these efforts, we seek to create and foster learning spaces that support every student's well-being, affirm their identities, and uphold their Human Rights.

We have been deliberate in establishing our Mission, Vision, Values as the lens through which employees can see and align their work. This refreshed approach enriches our thinking, builds connections across our Board and enhances how we approach our work. Our actions are helping to identify additional opportunities that will continue to support HWDSB students, staff and families.

The biggest impact of improved system-wide collaboration and departmental coordination can be found in our schools. Principals and their staff are enabled to support their school communities with tailored student-centred approaches that uplift learning outcomes and celebrate progress.

At HWDSB, improvement may look different from school to school, and that's perfectly okay. Each school has its unique strengths, challenges, and community needs, and as we move forward, we embrace a variety of approaches to growth.

Our goal is to support every school in finding the best path to progress, knowing that there are multiple ways to achieve success.

## **Our Culture of Continuous Improvement**

Reviewing last year's efforts included a clear focus on the implementation of our work and the outcomes that those efforts achieved.

This process of monitoring our impact allows us to address potential gaps and respond to changing needs. As we continue to refine our practices and forge new priority projects, it is our ongoing ambition to build and maintain a healthy, inclusive, and effective school board that supports every student's learning journey.

Our work and commitments remain grounded in our Multi-Year Strategic Plan and are centred on every student having a deep and meaningful sense of belonging while experiencing impactful learning outcomes.

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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear HWDSB Students, Staff and Families,

As we reflect on a year of growth, learning, and collaboration at HWDSB, I am pleased to share our updated 2024-2025 Board Improvement Plan (BIP).

This plan represents not only our commitment to academic excellence, but an unwavering belief in the power of public education to transform lives, enhance social equity, and carve a pathway of possibilities for every HWDSB student.

The essence of this belief lives in our powerful Mission: ***“To ensure that every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future.”***

Our Mission was created as part of HWDSB's 2023-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Our 5-year strategy reflects HWDSB's Board of Trustees' leadership, staff input and the voice of community. It guides the work of the BIP and unifies our collective purpose through the following 5 Pillars (Strategic Directions):

- **Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being**
- **Providing Equitable Quality Education**
- **Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities**
- **Building a Sustainable Education System**
- **Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation**

HWDSB's BIP is a living document that steers the course for learning, achievement and student well-being across our Board. The BIP will continue to evolve in response to emerging community needs, student learning outcomes and modern teaching practices.

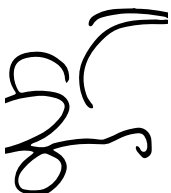
While this document will change over time, what will never waiver is HWDSB's commitment to upholding the Human Rights of every student in a system that also seeks to restore Indigenous Educational Wellness and weave Indigenous perspectives into curriculum - further enriching the lives and learning for every HWDSB student while also upholding our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

As Director of Education, I want to emphasize how important it is that we transparently and consistently share the outcomes of our efforts with the communities that we proudly serve. And this year, I am thrilled to share the positive upward traction HWDSB's teachers, educators and staff are seeing in almost all areas of student learning, academic performance and future-readiness. And none of this would be possible without HWDSB dedicated teachers, educators and staff.

As a public institution we take our responsibility to students, families and caregivers extremely seriously. I want to thank HWDSB's family and caregiver community for trusting – and choosing HWDSB – to support your child's educational and academic journey.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and collaboration. I look forward to continuing to build and grow HWDSB as the place where you can **Be You. Be Excellent.**

Sincerely,



Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini  
Director of Education, HWDSB



# 2023-24 EQAO RESULTS: CELEBRATING IMPROVEMENT

**“No matter your post-secondary plans there are lots of opportunities for you.”  
-HWDSB Student**

The Education and Accountability Office (EQAO) has released 2023-24 assessment results in the areas of Primary and Junior Reading, Writing and Mathematics, as well as results of the Grade 9 Mathematics assessment and Grade 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

These are the first EQAO results to be shared since Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board’s (HWDSB) Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) was released with a powerful new Mission:

**To ensure every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future.**

The MYSP has helped to inform a Board Improvement Plan (BIP) with five measurable goals that are updated annually. Here is how three of these goals relate to improved EQAO results:

## LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT:

- Enhance educators’ skills to improve students’ reading and writing.
- Offer K-12 professional learning and coaching to promote a love for reading, writing, and oral storytelling using effective literacy strategies.
- Provide tailored literacy supports and resources to ensure high-quality, personalized instruction and intervention.

**“A big part of feeling welcomed in a new space is feeling empathy for everyone and also accepting everyone for who they are, or want to be.”  
-HWDSB Student**

**“It’s important for me to see my culture represented in everything I do.”  
-HWDSB Student**

## NUMERACY ACHIEVEMENT:

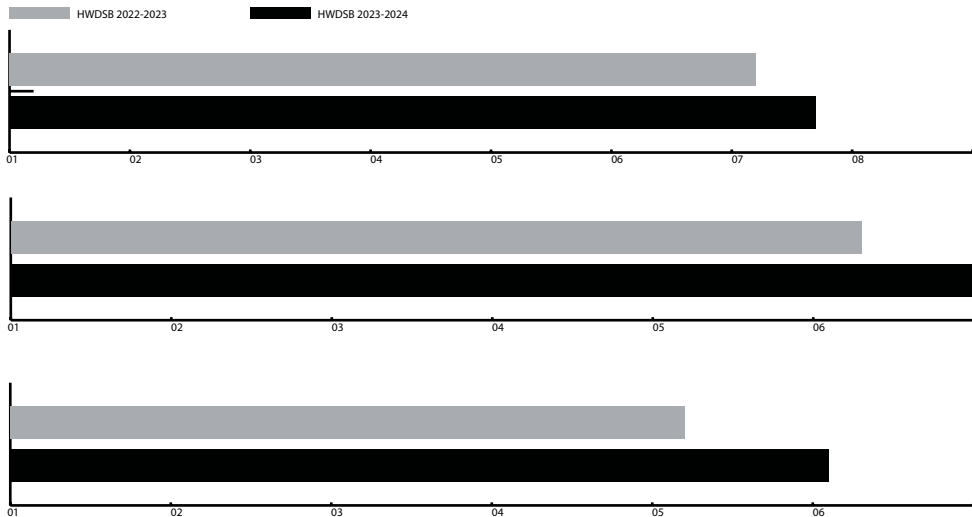
- Deliver professional learning and coaching to enhance educators’ math knowledge and teaching methods.
- Boost student competence and confidence in mathematics.
- Regularly collaborate to apply effective, evidence-based assessment practices to identify student strengths and growth areas.

## PREPAREDNESS:

- Work with students and families to provide resources and support for Individual Pathways Plans.
- Form innovative partnerships with industries and post-secondary institutions to support student pathways and experiential learning.
- Implement various programs and resources to help secondary students meet credit accumulation benchmarks for graduation.
- Integrate land-based learning to deepen students’ understanding of their relationship with the land and Indigenous connections.

**“My teachers and guidance counsellor gave me the confidence to reach beyond what I thought I was capable of.”  
-HWDSB Student**

# GRADE 3



UP 5%



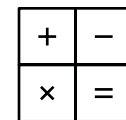
READING

UP 7%



WRITING

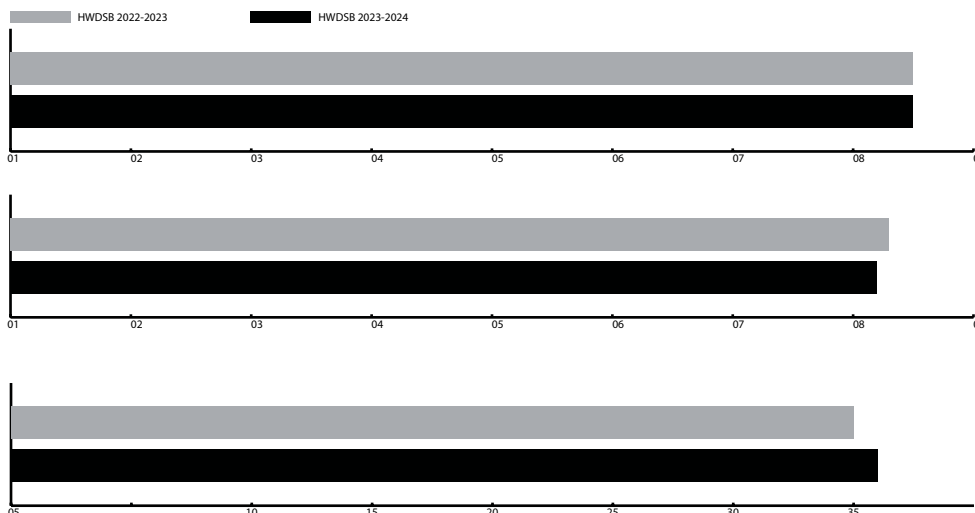
UP 9%



MATHEMATICS

**Improvement Indicators:** Literacy achievement for every student, Numeracy achievement for every student

# GRADE 6



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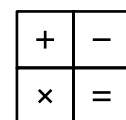
READING

DOWN 1%



WRITING

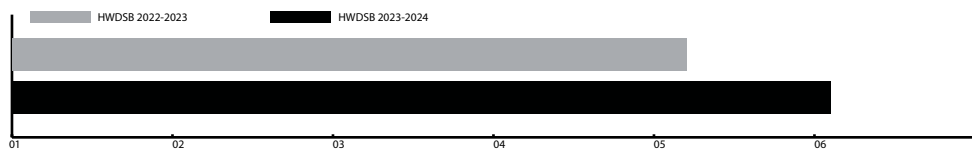
UP 1%



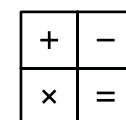
MATHEMATICS

**Improvement Indicators:** Literacy achievement for every student, Numeracy achievement for every student

# GRADE 9



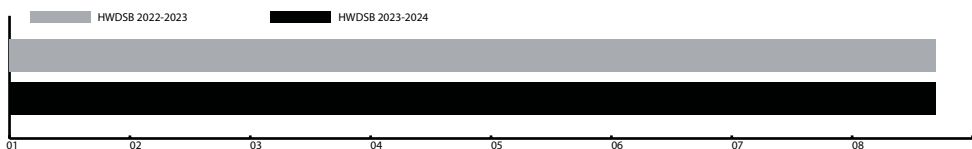
UP 1%



MATHEMATICS

**Improvement Indicators:** Numeracy achievement for every student, Preparedness for the future for every student

# ONTARIO SECONDARY SCHOOL LITERACY TEST



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LITERACY

**Improvement Indicators:** Literacy achievement for every student, Preparedness for the future for every student

# MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

**Vision:** Growing Together

**Mission:** Every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future.

**Values:** Our values of Compassion, Dignity, Trust, and Joy guide our daily work and ensure that we honour the unique identities and needs of all.

<p><b>Compassion:</b></p> <p>Leading with peace, friendship and love creates space for compassionate accountability, where we are responsible to one another in creating a culture of care.</p>	<p><b>Dignity:</b></p> <p>Reciprocity, anti-racism and anti-oppression lead to a just and equitable learning community, where every person is included, respected and valued.</p>
<p><b>Trust:</b></p> <p>Humility and transparency build the trusted relationships, connections and education system necessary for growth, change and evolution.</p>	<p><b>Joy:</b></p> <p>Curiosity, play and fun are catalysts for meaningful student learning outcomes and support joyful and enriching experiences.</p>

## Our Pillars

### **Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-being**

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

### **Providing Equitable Quality Education**

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

### **Collaborating with Students, Families and Communities**

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

### **Building a Sustainable Education System**

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

### **Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation**

We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.



# GOAL: IMPROVE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

## What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will build the capacity of educators to strengthen students' literacy development in reading and writing in the following ways:
  - › Implement [screening measures](#) to assess every student in K-2 for their literacy strengths and needs followed by development and implementation of plans to support student progress
  - › Provide professional learning and coaching
  - › Collaborate with students and families
- We will provide professional learning and coaching across K-12 to model teaching practices that foster the joy of reading and writing as well as valuing oral language and storytelling using effective literacy strategies including:
  - › [Culturally Relevant, Responsive Pedagogy \(CRRP\)](#)
  - › [Differentiated Instruction \(DI\)](#)
  - › [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)
  - › [Indigenous Pedagogies](#)
- We will provide differentiated literacy supports and resources for students to meet their needs to ensure, high-quality, personalized, evidence-informed instruction and intervention (CRRP, DI, UDL, Indigenous Pedagogies).

## How will we measure our progress?

- % of students at level 3/4 in EQAO Grade 3 Reading
- % of students at level 3/4 in EQAO Grade 3 Writing
- % of students at level 3/4 in EQAO Grade 6 Reading
- % of students at level 3/4 in EQAO Grade 6 Writing
- % of first-time eligible students who are successful on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or Grade 10 students

**“Embracing diverse perspectives in the curriculum is important to me.”  
-HWDSB Student**



# GOAL: IMPROVE NUMERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

## What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will provide professional learning and coaching to build educator capacity in Mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy using effective numeracy strategies including:
  - › [High Impact Instructional Practices \(HIIP\)](#)
  - › [Culturally Relevant, Responsive Pedagogy \(CRRP\)](#)
  - › [Differentiated Instruction \(DI\)](#)
  - › [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)
  - › [Indigenous Pedagogies](#)
- We will support student competence and confidence in Mathematics by:
  - › Collaborating with students and families
  - › Providing rich problem-solving and experiential tasks for students
  - › Making student thinking explicit through Math conversations in the classroom
  - › Small group instruction
  - › Providing [Mathematical thinking tools](#) such as manipulatives
- We will collaborate regularly to implement effective, evidence-based assessment practices to identify strengths and areas for growth in student learning.

## How will we measure our progress?

- % of students at level 3/4 on EQAO Grade 3 Math
- % of students at level 3/4 on EQAO Grade 6 Math
- % of students at level 3/4 on EQAO Grade 9 Math

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**“Quadratics are OK, but the math I really enjoy feels like it’s preparing me for the future.”**  
**-HWDSB Student**

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# GOAL: IMPROVE PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FUTURE OF EVERY STUDENT

## What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will collaborate with students and families around the resources, information, and supports that students need to build their [Individual Pathways Plans](#).
- We will create innovative partnerships with diverse industries and post-secondary institutions to remove barriers, support student pathways choices and build experiential learning opportunities including:
  - › [Apprenticeship](#)
  - › [Co-operative Education](#)
  - › College
  - › [Dual Credit](#)
  - › Community
  - › [Specialist High Skills Major \(SHSM\)](#)
  - › Workplace
  - › Continuing Education
  - › University
  - › Six Nations Polytechnic
- We will implement a variety of approaches, programs and resources to support secondary school students to meet yearly credit accumulation benchmarks on their way to graduation.
- We will embed land-based learning experiences to build student understanding of our relationship to the land, and recognition of the deep connection between Indigenous peoples and the land.

## How will we measure our progress?

- % of students graduating within 5 years
- % of students on track to graduate with 16 credits by end of Grade 10
- % of students participating in job skills programs (SHSM, Dual Credits, OYAP)
- % of students enrolled in one of Grade 12 Math or Grade 11 or 12 Science
- % of students who feel prepared for the next step in their learning

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**“I like how our school invites different presenters,  
so we know about our choices for the future.”**  
**-HWDSB Student**

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# GOAL: IMPROVE WELL-BEING FOR EVERY STUDENT

## What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will provide intentional and culturally relevant teaching and supports on mental health so that K-12 students can recognize their own mental health needs and seek supports, including:
  - › [Lesson plans for all Grade 7 & 8 teachers](#)
  - › Professional learning and coaching for all schools
  - › Reimagining Wellness 3.0
  - › School-wide mental health promotion
- We will support students and families to navigate external mental health resources, care and support that provide culturally responsive and relevant care and collaborate with communities.
- We will provide learning for students to understand their [Human Rights](#), roles and responsibilities related to their safety and well-being.
- We will increase system capacity and understanding of the impact of colonial education and intergenerational trauma, and Indigenous approaches to student well-being through the implementation of the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan \(IECSAP\)](#).

**“I appreciate connecting with teachers and how they seem to care about me and my success.”**  
-HWDSB Student

## How will we measure our progress?

- % of students who feel like they belong in their school
- % of students aware of available mental health supports and services

**“The library is a space to relax when I’m getting overwhelmed.”**  
-HWDSB Student

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**“We get to talk about our feelings and ask if we need help.”**  
-HWDSB Student

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# GOAL: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

## What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will provide professional learning for educators that is focused on [descriptive and timely feedback](#) and making explicit the next steps in each student's learning as part of assessment.
- We will provide students with dynamic academic and experiential learning opportunities that center student voice and choice informed by:
  - › [Culturally Relevant, Responsive Pedagogy \(CRRP\)](#)
  - › [Differentiated Instruction \(DI\)](#)
  - › [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)
  - › [Indigenous Pedagogies](#)
- We will create and leverage innovative physical spaces to enhance student engagement and safety. This will be accomplished through:
  - › Safe Schools Action Plan (SSAP)
  - › [HWDSB Accessibility Plan \(AP\)](#)
  - › [Long-Term Facilities Master Plan \(LTFMP\)](#)
  - › [Education Development Charges Background Study \(EDC\)](#)
- We will provide professional learning for system leaders on progressive discipline practices, effective conflict resolution and restorative strategies especially in response to all forms of hate, bias, discrimination and harassment in schools. This will be informed by:
  - › [Human Rights](#)
  - › [Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression \(ARAO\)](#)
  - › [Equity](#)
  - › [Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness](#)
- We will ensure that [student voice](#) and [lived experience](#) informs the classroom environment, learning, engagement and leadership experiences by:
  - › Collaborating with students and families
  - › Identifying and removing barriers to learning
  - › Supporting school leaders and educators

## How will we measure our progress?

- % of students attending school 90% of the time
- % of students suspended at least once

**"It's important for students to feel safe speaking up. We are the voices that truly understand our situation."  
-HWDSB Student**

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AT HWDSB

Mental health affects us all – and has real impacts on our lives.

We know that student achievement is deeply intertwined with mental health, as well-being provides the foundation for focus, resilience, and overall academic success.

Our plan to improve student achievement cannot be fully realized without supporting and fostering the overall well-being of students, as their ability to thrive in an academic environment is directly linked to the quality of their mental health.

At HWDSB, we do this in a variety of ways – guided by our [We Help: Mental Health and Addiction Strategy](#) which is a comprehensive three-year strategy that seeks to ensure that every student feels safe and secure in their classrooms and school communities.

From consultation, intervention, capacity building, system navigation, and supportive resourcing to address harmful experiences, we seek to provide intentional and culturally relevant supports.

*We Help.*



## HWDSB Helps

An anonymous way for students to find help for themselves and one another.

We all have the power to help.

## Get help or share anonymous tips.

- Text message to 905-963-0066. Standard rates apply.
- App for iOS and Android
- Web chat at [www.hwdsb.on.ca/hwdsbhelps](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/hwdsbhelps)

## Questions?

Please contact your school principal.

[www.hwdsb.on.ca/hwdsbhelps](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/hwdsbhelps)





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