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POLICY: INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

INDIGENOUS
EDUCATION
POLICY
2024

ABSTRACT

“We come from truth holders and truth tellers. We carry history. We come from the ancients, from the villages of our Ancestors. We represent the new village. As we walk forward to a brighter future knowing our collective potential, we know that we can do anything. We will find the protection of Peace at the base of that white pine tree. Our homes will be strengthened and protected. Our minds will be straight, like smoke that rises. We are still here. We will always be here”.

- E. Doxtater (2023) to CC:ROSE Learners

Our relationships are grounded in our shared treaty agreement responsibilities.

By virtue of nation-to-nation and Indigenous-Crown relationships, symbolized in wampum, every treaty partner has a moral, ethical, and fiduciary responsibility to maintain the spirit and intent of these original agreements.



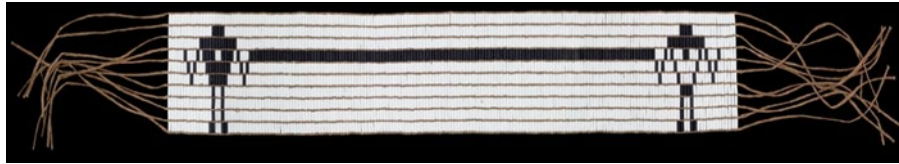
We recognize our location within the **Sewatokwà:tshera, One Dish wampum** treaty territory. This treaty recognizes the responsibility of everyone to harvest only what is needed and to share what is harvested. The agreement conveys that the Earth provides for everyone, so no one should go hungry. It also includes the understanding that anyone who benefits from what the Earth provides has a responsibility to care for and protect “all of the entities on her body”. Restorative Journey, Indigenous Educational Wellness, OCT. 2021.

The local Indigenous host nations are the Six Nations of the Grand River and the Mississaugas of the Credit. We acknowledge the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the three guiding principles of the Great Law of peace, power, and a good mind. We also acknowledge the Anishinaabe Three Fires Confederacy and their guiding Seven Grandfather Teachings of love, respect, bravery, truth, honesty, humility, and wisdom.

Tékeni Niyothatátye Kahswéntha (The Two Row Wampum)

The treaty agreement represents “the two vessels, they in their ship, and we in our canoe travelling down the river of life. The two purple stripes represent our respective ways of being. Each having our own governance ways, cultures, language, and beliefs. The three white stripes would represent peace, friendship and equality...We would respect each other and not interfere with each others ways, or try to steer the others vessel. This living document would last forever as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers run. We would be ‘brothers’ as equals” (Tehahenteh).

Silver Covenant Chain¹



Another agreement symbolizing friendship and relational accountability was also introduced and it is called **Teyontatenentshónteron (We are connected by our arms)**. Iron would not be used as it would rust, and so silver would be used because when it would tarnish, the two brothers would get together to polish the chain and renew their covenant. It is said when there would be an issue that would arise, one would tug on the chain and request a meeting where they would resolve the issue that came before them.

This became our relationship and our covenant to each other, not just with the Dutch but all settlers (Tehahenteh).

¹ The second part of the Two Row Wampum agreement, the Silver Covenant Chain is also widely referred to as the Friendship Belt and both terms are used interchangeably.

PURPOSE:

Education systems have been built upon dominant Eurocentric ideologies which has reinforced Indigenous erasure. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to cultivate and nurture meaningful relationships between Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB or the Board) and the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) to action the shared goal of Indigenous Educational Wellness in a restorative education system.

As we untangle the legacies of colonial schooling systems, and the contemporary consequences of the deprivation of Indigenous Knowledges, we approach this work in peace, friendship, and mutual respect. The Two Row Relationship Framework² is rooted in relational accountability. We walk forward together, recognizing the learning journey we are all on: *Every Child Matters*.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) maintains the conditions for ethical engagement and consultation with Indigenous Peoples and communities (i.e., the IEC) and respects their inherent rights to self-determination and free, prior, and informed consent.

HWDSB is located *between two important rivers*: the Credit River is fed by Lake Ontario at the location now known as the city of Mississauga, the original village site of the Mississaugas of the Credit; and The Grand River is the marker for the Haldimand Deed of 1784³, which promises to protect 6 miles deep on each side of the Grand River, for the people of the Five Nations, from the ‘mouth to the source’.

“Between two rivers” translates as:

- *Edooying mijoonoon niizh ziibiin*⁴. Ojibwe
- *Tsi nya'tekyátere ne tekahyónhake*⁵. Mohawk

HWDSB understands and upholds our shared Treaty Partner responsibilities to the Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan's (IECSAP) purpose and vision:

Honouring Our Ancestors: We will revitalize, reclaim, renew, restore, and celebrate Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing to foster intergenerational healing and wellness.

Within HWDSB, each person makes a meaningful commitment towards “Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by

² The Two Row Wampum treaty belt is the original relationship framework between the Haudenosaunee and the Europeans, with emphasis on mutual respect and non-interference (see Appendix A).

³ [Haldimand Deed](#)

⁴ We credit and extend gratitude to Nokomis Martina Osawamick, Ojibwe/Odawa from Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory, amik/beaver clan, for this Anishinaabemowin language translation.

⁵ We credit and extend gratitude to Tehahenteh, Mohawk, turtle clan from Six Nations of the Grand River for this Kanyen'kéha translation.

cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system” (Multi-Year Strategic Plan [MYSP]). HWDSB continues to foster an honest understanding of Indigenous host nations’ cultures, which includes their traditional role as the original “stewards of these lands”. In friendship with Six Nations of the Grand River, Mississaugas of the Credit, and the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC), HWDSB will continue to nurture this alliance, recognizing everyone has a responsibility to carry out their roles and responsibilities.

In a restorative education system, we make meaningful space for our shared but distinct perspectives regarding commemorating historic experiences, contemporary realities, and intergenerational healing and wellness⁶. We do this to benefit current students, families, the whole HWDSB community, and the ‘approaching faces’/future generations. We carry these truths forward.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB approaches the Indigenous Education Policy in friendship with Indigenous Peoples. We make intentional space to first honour, recognize, and affirm the guiding philosophical principles of the host nations and the IEC, who, co-determine Indigenous Education Standards at HWDSB, for-Indigenous-by-Indigenous. We then take our place alongside the IEC to outline the philosophical principles that inform our work in-relationship.

Host Nations’ Natural Laws & Guiding Principles:

- A shared commonality across many Indigenous worldviews is our path to connectedness and interconnectedness, interdependency, and inter-relationality.
- HWDSB understands the importance of recognizing host nations Mississaugas of the Credit and Six Nations of the Grand River. We honour their distinct and inherent laws, rich cultures, languages, philosophies, traditional governance models and ways of knowing, being, and doing.
- Haudenosaunee Great (Natural) Law:
 - *Ka’nikonhrí:yo* - The Good Mind
 - *Skén:nen* -Peace (healthy mind, healthy body)
 - *Ka’satsténhsera* - Strength through Unity
- The Anishinaabe, Three Fires Confederacy and the Seven Grandfather Teachings:
 - Zaagidwin - Love
 - Mnaadendimowin - Respect

⁶ Commemoration, Education, Healing, and Wellness are main components of the Federal Indian Day School Class Action Lawsuit.

- Aakwa'ode'ewin - Bravery
- Debwewin - Truth
- Gwekwaadziwin - Honesty
- Dbaadendiziwin - Humility
- Nbwaakaawin - Wisdom

Broader Contextual Principles:

- We are guided by the international [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples \(the Declaration\)](#)
- We are guided by Canada's [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) and [The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act: Action Plan](#)
- We are guided by the national [Truth and Reconciliation Commission's \(TRC's\) 94 Calls to Action](#) and make explicit connections to [Education](#)
- We are guided by provincial [Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness \(OCT\)](#)
- We are guided by the provincial [Ethical Standards & the Standards of Practice of the Teaching Profession \(OCT\)](#)

IEC Guiding Principles:

- The IEC is guided by the principles of the host nations and broader contexts.
- [Indigenous Education Councils](#) guide school boards and schools in building stronger relationships with communities, sharing information, identifying promising practices and enhancing collaborative work to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement and well-being. All school boards must have formal structures such as IECs to support Indigenous [E]ducation in school boards (Ontario Ministry of Education).

HWDSB Guiding Principles:

- We proceed with open minds, a willingness to learn, conscious of the gaps in historic truths.
- We are mindful of the need for sincere engagement, and we commit to our own ongoing learning.
- We are guided in the spirit of educational wellness, and in consultation and collaboration with the Indigenous Education Department as the liaison with local Indigenous community partners.
- We value each learner by actively seeing, hearing, and listening to them and reflecting their educational wellness needs. (Every Child Matters).

"I see it... [engaging with Indigenous Peoples in friendship] ...as initiatives created by Indigenous people for everyone. In that way, we transform the way Indigenous people in this country are perceived from a burden to a resource" (K. Doxtater, 2024).

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

HWDSB will support and provide guidance to every learner, honouring peace, friendship, and respect. As treaty partners, we each represent a *Pillar in the Palisade*. We work together with the intent to protect Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. We value the unique *gifts/strengths* and distinct cultural identity of each learner and provide them with the tools to:

- Identify their gifts/strengths.
- Nurture their gifts/strengths.
- Value their gifts/strengths.
- Identify, nurture and value their gifts/strengths and their whole selves in relation to: their own respective Indigenous communities, HWDSB community, and broader community contexts.
- Coauthor an individualized learning and wellness plan with learners to reach their full potential.
- Create innovative approaches to reflect and respond to the needs of learners (e.g., Indigenous Critical Incident Response Team).
- Improve well-being and achievement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners.
- Promote restorative Indigenous educational wellness and educational equity of access, opportunity, and outcome for Indigenous learners in the areas of:
 - Strength-based learning to promote self-esteem.
 - Identifying, honouring and nurturing the gifts that each learner brings to contribute to our village (i.e., classroom, school, HWDSB and broader community environment/context).
 - Fostering creativity, choice, and individualized learning plan.
 - Indigenous epistemologies, methodologies, pedagogies and wholistic learning opportunities.
 - Literacy and numeracy.
 - Retention of students in school.
 - Increased commencement/graduation rates.
 - Engagement.
 - Advancement to post-secondary studies reflective of all pathways.

We work together with the intent of nurturing meaningful and trusting relationships with caregivers, parents, families, communities, host nations, and bands to:

- Honour their inherent rights to self-determination and free, prior, and informed consent.
- Ensure they are seen, heard, respected, and that their contributions are valued.
- Make meaningful space to actively listen to understand their needs, ideas, and contributions to Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness that is responsive and reflective.
- Practice ethical engagement, consultation, and collaboration in school and system-based initiatives to ensure content and perspectives are locally informed, reflected, and responsive.
- Integrate accuracy, authenticity, and accountability to Indigenous communities as cultural norms and protocols to working in-relationship with local Indigenous community members.
- Enable them to inform culturally relevant and responsive and nation-specific approaches to school and system policies, practices, and procedures.

We work together with the intent to make space to foster reciprocity rooted in ‘relational accountability’ between the HWDSB Governance Structure and the IEC Kahwát:sire, Zaagi’idiwin Family Structure (as referenced in the Responsibility section) on Indigenous Education and Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness and Truth and Reconciliation by:

- Reaffirming the historic covenant of peace, friendship, and respect as our foundation (The Two Row Wampum and the Silver Covenant and Friendship belt).
- HWDSB will entrench the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (the Declaration) into these relationships.
- HWDSB will action the Calls to Actions from the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
- HWDSB centers the host nations: Mississaugas of the Credit and Six Nations of the Grand River
- HWDSB acknowledges guest First Nations (Status and Non-Status), Métis and Inuit Peoples.
- Indigenous Peoples, Knowledges, authentic protocols, resources, and contributions are treated with care, protection, respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility.
- During this monumental time of Truth and Reconciliation, HWDSB maintains their commitment to peace, friendship, and respect by bringing authentic Indigenous Education leadership and voice at the helm of our institution to ensure accuracy and accountability to the IEC, host nations, as well as urban and collective HWDSB.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Two Row Relationship Framework is a tool to enable us to consider the relational accountability between the IEC - Indigenous Education Kahwà:tsire, Zaagi’idiwin, Family, and ~~the~~ HWDSB.

The Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) - Indigenous Education Kahwà:tsire, Zaagi'idiwin, Family Structure Indigenous Learners (CC:ROSE and Shakowennkará:tats) Elders, Knowledge Holders, Language Speakers Parents, Aunties, Uncles, Families (Kinship relations; extended clan families)		HWDSB Governance Structure Director of Education, Board of Trustees Executive Council Principals, Vice-Principals, System Leaders
Local urban Indigenous community partners Host Nations Neighbouring Nations Indigenous staff employed by HWDSB Indigenous Education Lead, accountable to the learners, IEC, the Indigenous Education Office (IEO) of the Ministry of Education, and the HWDSB Governance Structure		School and System-based Support Staff Administrators, Custodial Staff Educators, Teachers Parents, Families, and Communities Students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous Learners)

TERMINOLOGY:

Autonomy: Indigenous Peoples, in exercising their right to self-determination, have the right to autonomy or self-government in matters relating to their internal and local affairs, as well as ways and means for financing their autonomous functions (UN, Discussion Paper Indigenous Peoples' Autonomy and Self-Governance, 2022).

Collective Rights: the inherent rights which Indigenous peoples have practiced and enjoyed since time immemorial. Each First Nation historically functioned as a distinct society, so there is no one official overarching 'Indigenous' definition. In general, they include rights to the land, rights to sustenance and subsistence resources and activities, the right to self-determination and self-government, and the right to practice one's own culture and customs including language and 'religion'. Collective rights are the result of Indigenous peoples' own occupation of their ancestral home territories as well as their ongoing social

structures, patterns, political and legal systems. Therefore, collective Indigenous rights are separate and distinct from rights afforded to non-Indigenous citizens under Canadian common law and were to be protected in Indigenous/Crown treaties. It should be noted that inherent rights were entrenched with responsibility. For example, Sewatokwà:tsera/the One Dish treaty agreement outlines the rights to utilize the entities that Mother Earth carries on her body, to share the sustenance and to protect her, in order to protect this same right for the coming faces.

Colonialism: The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with ‘*unsettlers*’⁷, and exploiting it economically. In Canada, this historically and currently means that Western European-derived ways of being, believing, knowing, and doing are implicitly or explicitly imposed as the standard or norm. Colonialism remains embedded in the legal, political and economic context of Eurocentric Canada today and in the lived experience of marginalized and systematically oppressed Indigenous peoples. For example, the Indian Act and the Canadian institutions known as Indian Residential “Schools”, historic provincial child welfare misapplications, and non-Indigenous peoples’ refusal to acknowledge the land and treaty rights of Indigenous people continues to contribute to this legacy.

Compassion: Leading with peace, friendship and love creates space for compassionate accountability, where we are responsible to one another in creating a culture of care (HWDSB [MYSP](#), Value).

Cultural genocide: is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next (p. 1, TRC, Honouring the truth, reconciling for the future: summary of the final report of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015](#)).

Decolonization: In Canada, decolonization is related to Indigenous people reclaiming and restoring their culture, land, language, laws, relationships, knowledge, and a reaffirmation of traditional governance. Decolonization is also associated with other relationships between groups of people within Canada and in other countries and contexts around the world and can be linked to broader principles of inclusion and equity. Canada’s identity as an ‘*unsettler*’, colonial state complicates the task of decolonization, since the original colonizers are still here and acts of colonization continue to persist. Graham Smith resists the term to describe transformational change, as the term decolonization is a “reactive notion; it immediately puts the colonizer and the history of colonization back at the “centre”. In moving to transformative politics we need to understand the history of colonization but the bulk of our work and focus must be on what is it that we want, what [it] is we are about and to “imagine” our future (G. Smith in S. Cote-Meek, Colonized Classrooms, p. 162).

Dignity: Reciprocity, anti-racism and anti-oppression lead to a just and equitable learning community,

⁷ Term used in place of “settler” as Indigenous Peoples don’t see colonization as settling anything.

where every person is included, respected and valued (HWDSB [MYSP](#), Value).

Dominant group: The group at the top of the social hierarchy. In any relationship between groups that define each other (men/women, able-bodied/person with disability), the dominant group is valued more highly...Dominant groups set the norms by which the minoritized group is judged. Dominant groups have greater access to the resources of society and benefit from the existence of the inequality (Sensoy and DiAngelo. 2017. *Is everyone really equal?*, p. 223)

Eurocentric ideology (Eurocentrism): Eurocentrism has been defined as an attitude, conceptual apparatus, or set of empirical beliefs that frame Europe as the primary engine and architect of world history, the bearer of universal values and reason, and the pinnacle and therefore model of progress and development. In Eurocentric narratives, the superiority of Europe is evident in its achievements in economic and political systems, technologies, and the high quality of life enjoyed by its societies (J. Sundberg in International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, 2009). Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair talks about the twin myths of European superiority and Indigenous inferiority. Verna St. Denis references Ng (1993)'s assertion that the *ideology of European superiority* was deployed to justify the subordination of Aboriginal People and had material consequences, as it justified the taking of Indigenous land, the confinement of Aboriginal people to reserves, and their subjugation to Christian education ([V. St. Denis, Aboriginal Education and Anti-Racist Education: Building Alliances Across Cultural and Racial Identity, Canadian Journal of Education 30,4 \(2007\): 1068-1092, p. 1072](#)). Other such examples of Eurocentric ideologies include the assertions that Indigenous peoples were uncivil, child-like and dependent upon the paternalistic control of Europeans, and inconsequently justified actions such as assimilative education [E. Bagshaw, L. Cherubini and J. Dockstader. \(2002\). Truth in Education. From Eurocentrism to Decolonization. www.ntssconf.org.](#)

Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC): emphasizes the importance of recognizing and upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples and ensuring that there is effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous peoples in decisions that affect them, their communities and territories. More specifically, FPIC describes processes that are *free* from manipulation or coercion, *informed* by adequate and timely information, and occur sufficiently *prior* to a decision so that Indigenous rights and interests can be incorporated or addressed effectively as part of the decision-making process - all as part of meaningfully aiming to secure the consent of affected Indigenous peoples (Department of Justice, Canada).

Genocide: any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;

- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (Article II, United Nations, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide).

Guest nation members: Indigenous peoples who are guests and/or visitors to this territory.

Hegemony: The imposition of dominant group ideology onto everyone in society. Hegemony makes it difficult to escape or to resist believing in this dominant ideology, thus social control is achieved through conditioning rather than physical force or intimidation (Sensoy and DiAngelo. 2017. *Is everyone really equal?*, p.224).

Ideology: The big, shared ideas of a society that are reinforced throughout all of the institutions and thus are very hard to avoid believing. These ideas include the stories, myths, representations, explanations, definitions, and rationalizations that are used to justify inequality in society. Individualism and Meritocracy are examples of ideology (Sensoy and DiAngelo. 2017. *Is everyone really equal?*, p.224).

Indigenous: a Latin term meaning “born of the land” or “springs from the land”. When you create something from an Indigenous perspective, you are creating it from that environment, from that land that it sits on. Indigenous peoples’ traditions and customs are shaped by the environment, the land, their relationship; their spiritual, emotional, and physical relationship to that land. It speaks to them; it gives them their responsibility to stewardship (Lewis in S. Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, p.88). Currently the preferred collective name for the original people within Canada and their descendants. This includes First Nation (Status and Non-status), Métis and Inuit peoples.

Indigenous Education Circle (IEC): is also referred to as the Indigenous Education Kahwà:tsire, Zaagi’idiwin, Family and is a structure that recognizes all of our kinship relations that we are accountable to. It is inclusive of participation of host nations (Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee) and local urban Indigenous community of Hamilton, Indigenous students, families as well as extended community support networks ranging from Indigenous community service agencies to Elders/Knowledge Guardians to cross-sector representation in the fields such as Health, Justice, and higher Education.

[Indigenous Education Councils](#): guide school boards and schools in building stronger relationships with communities, sharing information, identifying promising practices and enhancing collaborative work to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement and well-being. All school boards must have formal structures such as IECs to support Indigenous [E]ducation in school boards (Ontario Ministry of Education).

Indigenous Educational Wellness: There is opportunity to create space for this initiative. We can work collaboratively to develop an understanding of the relationship between education and wellness, and the historic legislative abuses that our communities continue to heal from. We can use the frame of mind of our ancestors when they were in the ancient villages. Then we foster understanding that education is a part of total wellness and reframe Indigenous education discourse using rich Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies (Restorative Journey).

Joy: Curiosity, play and fun are catalysts for meaningful student learning outcomes and support joyful and

enriching experiences (HWDSB [MYSP](#), Value).

Local Host Nations/Communities: Refers to the responsibility of ethical engagement with Anishinaabe (Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation), Haudenosaunee Confederacy (Six Nations of the Grand River) and local urban Indigenous communities that call Hamilton-Wentworth home.

Palisade Model: Our message to learners is that we each represent *a pillar in the palisade* that surrounds our ancient village. Even though we do not live in the ancient villages anymore, we can understand they are homelands where we can still carry ourselves with the dignity of our ancestors. We are responsible for individual contributions to protecting what our ancestors placed in that canoe as part of the Two Row Wampum treaty of eternal peace and friendship: language, culture, ceremony, governance, and territory. We are also responsible for fulfilling the original instruction “to help the people” (*Restorative Journey*).

Protected knowledge: refers to respecting and honouring the collective knowledge of all Indigenous nations and communities passed on by Elders/Knowledge Holders/Traditional Teachers, storytellers, artists, musicians, architects, botanists, astronomers, scientists, law makers, traditional governance keepers etc. from generation to generation in the areas of Ancestral Knowledge, wisdom, traditional teachings and cultural practices. Local Elders typically share information when the recipient is considered ready and willing.

Reconciliation: In Canada, the term was used by the federal government when it was required to establish the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. It has come to describe attempts made by individuals and institutions to raise awareness about colonization and its ongoing effects on Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation also refers to efforts made to address the harms caused by various policies and programs of colonization. For some, the word represents an opportunity to reflect on the past, to heal and to make right. For others, however, current gestures of reconciliation are merely performative and lack meaningful action to address the harms done by colonization. Ideally, reconciliation is something that both parties would agree to, as opposed to having it announced, ordered, or proclaimed.

Relational Accountability: being accountable to your relations means that the researcher has a vested interest in the integrity of the methodology (*respectful*) and the usefulness of the results if they are to be of any use in the Indigenous community (*reciprocity*) (S. Wilson, p. 77). The methodology needs to be based in a community context (*be relational*) and has to demonstrate respect, reciprocity and responsibility (be accountable as it is put into action) (S. Wilson, p. 99).

Restorative Indigenous Education: We celebrate Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies, ways of knowing, ways of celebrating, ways of expressing and applying that knowledge while no longer living in fear from reprimand or punishment. This restorative education model offers a tempered learning environment that reflects true reconciliatory actions and the re-emergence of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies that communities were deprived of for so long (*Restorative Journey*).

Revillagize: displace decolonize and is the next step toward healing. The people will have the frame of mind our ancestors had when living in the ancient villages.

Self-determination: The right of Indigenous Peoples to manage their affairs, provide stewardship over the land, maintain a cultural and political community, and uphold government-to-government relations with all other nations, including present-day nation states. The criteria for maintaining nationhood status, language, culture, ceremony, governance, and territory, must be honored.

Settler colonialism: a structure that assumes the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples into mainstream society (S. Pete, p. 41, *Decolonizing Equity Praxis* in 'Decolonizing Equity', B. Allen & V.C. R. Hackett, 2022).

Sovereignty: Indigenous peoples maintain a distinct identity as the only group who have nation-to-nation agreements with the Crown. Treaty and other rights and freedoms entrenched in *The Royal Proclamation of 1763* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* related to land resources and protections, as well as the right to deal directly with the Crown. The preferred term is *autonomy*.

Strength-based learning: to nurture, acknowledge and empower Aboriginal learners to develop their own talents based on their individual strengths through differentiated teaching, learning and assessment practices.

Syncretism: the blending of our best tools.

Treaty: a legal, nation-to-nation agreement. Indigenous/European treaties were expressed as promises and conveyed in wampum (purple and white beads of quahog shell) between peoples. They are sacred and are to be honored forever – “as long as the sun shines, as long as the grass grows, as long as the rivers flow”.

Treaty Partner: Everyone has a role and a responsibility as a treaty partner as we take this restorative journey towards Indigenous Educational Wellness together.

Trust: Humility and transparency build the trusted relationships, connections and education system necessary for growth, change and evolution (HWDSB [MYSP](#), Value).

ACTION REQUIRED:

In their respective areas of influence, enable every individual in each department to practice vigilance in identifying the gaps and areas of Indigenous omission and work collaboratively with the Indigenous Education Department on restorative solutions for meaningful inclusion and integration of Indigenous thought, pedagogy, voice, perspectives, and contributions.

- A full-time dedicated Indigenous Education Lead
- Indigenous Education Councils: Review and maintain the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) as the formal governing structure for Indigenous Education at HWDSB
 - Review and Revisit the Board Action Plan (BAP) on Indigenous Education and ensure alignment between HWDSB and Ministry of Education Priorities

- Review the Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification Policy including student, parent/caregiver/guardian, and community engagement (e.g, IEC) adjacent to Student Census.
 - Review the Indigenous Education Procedures
 - Review the Smudging Policy and Procedure to reflect the IECSAP and importance of protecting sacred Ancestral Knowledges, Ceremonies, Sacred Medicines, etc.
 - Revise and revisit an Indigenous Research Methodology Framework
 - Develop Indigenous Education Standards that are locally relevant and responsive to land/territory and the worldviews and aspirations of the host nations and the IEC
- Trustees will read and absorb the IECSAP, Restorative Journey, and the TRC Final Report and Calls to Action to begin to reframe their knowledge and understandings of Indigenous Educational Wellness through local Indigenous community-driven and community-informed approaches.
- HWDSB System Leaders will integrate all five Strategic Directions of the MYSP into their Board Improvement Plans and School Improvement Plans, recognizing that everyone has a responsibility to action this work and contribute to meaningful change and transformation.
- Enable individuals to position themselves in relation to Indigenous learners, families, communities, along historical and contemporary contexts to build an understanding and appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.
- Enable individuals to recognize their own gifts/assets to nurture *syncretism* to support instructional practice, cross-curricular Indigenous teaching and learning approaches, and to contribute to Indigenous Educational Wellness.
- Foster, maintain and continuously evaluate structures of accountability, accuracy, and authenticity by working collaboratively with and alongside the Indigenous Education Department on curriculum development, course delivery, unique program development (i.e., teacher selection, lesson plans, activities, vetting resources/learning materials), guest speakers, and assessment/evaluation approaches, etc.
- Generate collaborative and proactive solutions and strategies to practice respectfulness, maintain friendships and restore the “peace”.
- System-wide improvement and proficiency on the protection of Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogies, and the care of all students, staff, educators, system leaders, community partners, and learners on the restorative journey of Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Preamble:

Research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada has been defined and carried out primarily by non-Indigenous researchers and often supported colonial goals. The approaches used have not generally reflected Indigenous worldviews, and the research has rarely benefited Indigenous peoples or communities. As a result, Indigenous peoples continue to regard research, particularly research originating outside their communities, as extractive and exploitative.

In support of autonomous Indigenous nations, in an effort to build trust, and to re-villagize and re-Indigenize research, assessment and, more generally, the measurement of progress within HWDSB, the progress indicators listed below aim to reorient indicators to align more closely with the values of respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility, as well as an Indigenous worldview centered on interdependence, and interconnectedness.

For these reasons, some of the assessment measures listed below will include Indigenous methodologies and approaches, which may look very different from assessment measures in other HWDSB policies.

Through individual and collective commitment to professional learning and development and ongoing capacity-building with respect to Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, being and doing, and through ethical engagement, cooperation and partnerships with the IEC: Indigenous learners, families, communities, host nations and organizations; and the Ministry of Education's Indigenous Education Office, HWDSB will:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Improved Indigenous student achievement and well-being.	Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Learning Nest and Strengthening Hamilton Aboriginal Education (SHAE) Native Youth Advancement With Education Hamilton Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) and Shakowenna'kará:tats Native Second Language Indigenous Education and Indigenous Studies NBE Course Development Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of Indigenous Learners Continuous Learning and Improvement (CLI) Student Census Disproportionality Data Graduation/Commencement Rates Credit Accumulation

Promote Indigenous educational wellness and educational equity of access, opportunity and outcome for Indigenous learners.	Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Learning Nest and Strengthening Hamilton Aboriginal Education (SHAE) Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) and Shakowenna'kará:tats Native Second Language NBE Course Development Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of Indigenous Learners Continuous Learning and Improvement (CLI) Student Census Disproportionality Data Graduation/Commencement Rates Credit Accumulation
Enhanced knowledge and awareness about First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives for all students.	Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) NBE Course Development Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) and Shakowenna'kará:tats Native Second Language
Continued cultivation and nurturing of meaningful relationships alongside local urban Indigenous community of Hamilton-Wentworth and host nations.	Increased understanding of roles and responsibility as Treaty Partners. Increased individual and collective system-capacity of reconciliatory efforts towards Indigenous Educational Wellness. Increased appreciation, acceptance and validation of Indigenous Education, Ancestral Knowledges and Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing as beneficial for everyone. Strengthened relationship with Indigenous Education Circle and the Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) and Shakowenna'kará:tats Friend/Advisor to the Board of Trustees

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