

2025-2026 BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN



HWDSB
BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear HWDSB Families and Communities,

I am proud to share Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's 2025–2026 Board Improvement Plan. This plan reflects our shared commitment to ensuring that every student can thrive in classrooms and schools that are engaging, safe, and welcoming. Guided by our values and our belief in *Be You. Be Excellent.*, we continue to focus on learning, equity, human rights, and well-being as cornerstones of student success.

Across HWDSB, there is real momentum. We are seeing meaningful learning gains in classrooms, driven by the dedication of staff who continue to innovate and bring joy to learning. Whether through purposeful small-group instruction, land-based learning, or creative uses of technology, our educators and support staff are working together to make sure that every student can excel.

The goals in this plan are not just statements on paper—they represent purposeful daily work. At HWDSB we seek to see improvement for every student in:

- **Numeracy** – Educators are deepening math learning through small-group instruction, real-world problem solving, and digital tools that build confidence and understanding for all students.
- **Literacy** – Students are engaging with texts that reflect identity, culture, and voice, while evidence-based reading and writing practices help them build strong foundations and a love of learning.
- **Well-Being** – Schools are creating safe, welcoming, and joyful learning environments supported by mental health resources, extracurriculars, outdoor education, and caring adult relationships.
- **Future Preparedness** – Students are gaining the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world: critical thinking, collaboration, and problem solving, while also growing as citizens ready to contribute to a just and inclusive society.
- **Engagement** – Families and community partners are essential to student success. We are strengthening these relationships so that every student, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, benefits from a connected network of support.

We pursue each of these goals through the **lens of Human Rights and Restoring Indigenous Education**, ensuring that our work is rooted in equity, reconciliation, and belonging for every student. Together, these commitments help bring to life the direction of **HWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan**, which continues to act as the foundation for this work.

This progress is only possible through the dedication and creativity of our staff, educators, leaders, support staff, and those who work behind the scenes. We see this work reflected in school improvement planning and meaningful professional growth. Their efforts, alongside the commitment of families and partners, make our shared vision a reality.

As we look ahead, I am proud of what we are accomplishing together and excited for the year to come. With our continued momentum, we will keep building learning environments where every student is encouraged to *Be You. Be Excellent.*



Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini
Director of Education, HWDSB



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.

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.	Dignity: Reciprocity, anti-racism and anti-oppression lead to a just and equitable learning community, where every person is included, respected and valued.
Trust: Humility and transparency build the trusted relationships, connections and education system necessary for growth, change and evolution.	Joy: Curiosity, play and fun are catalysts for meaningful student learning outcomes and support joyful and enriching experiences.

Strategic Directions

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

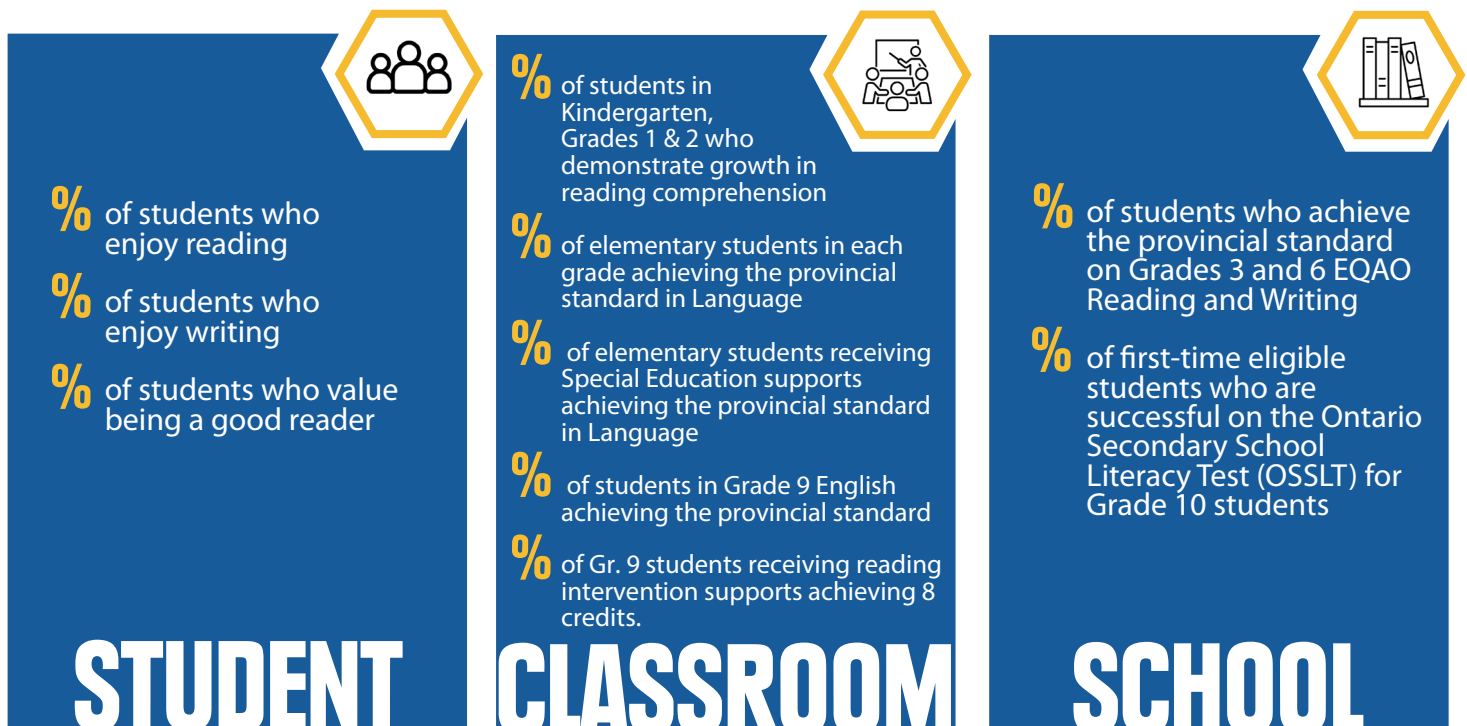
We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.

GOAL: IMPROVE LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will implement the HWDSB Reading Strategy to build the capacity of educators to strengthen student literacy development in **reading and writing** in the following ways:
 - › Ensure there is an effective Tier 1 reading program in every classroom that is informed by comprehensive assessment practices.
 - › Engage every Kindergarten to Grade 2 student in early reading screening to determine literacy strengths and needs; develop and implement plans to support student progress.
 - › Provide professional learning for educators on implementing reading intervention programs (i.e., Lexia, Empower, Wilson Just Words).
 - › Allocate a Reading Specialist to every elementary school to support the development of early reading skills.
 - › Collaborate with students and families about student strengths, needs and progress in meeting the reading target.
- We will provide **professional learning and coaching** across K-12 to model **structured literacy** practices that foster joy of reading and writing, and value oral language and storytelling using **pedagogical practices** including:
 - › [Culturally Relevant, Responsive Pedagogy \(CRRP\)](#)
 - › [Differentiated Instruction \(DI\)](#)
 - › [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#)
 - › [Indigenous Pedagogies](#)
- We will employ reading **intervention supports** in every secondary school.

We will monitor improvement using the following progress indicators:



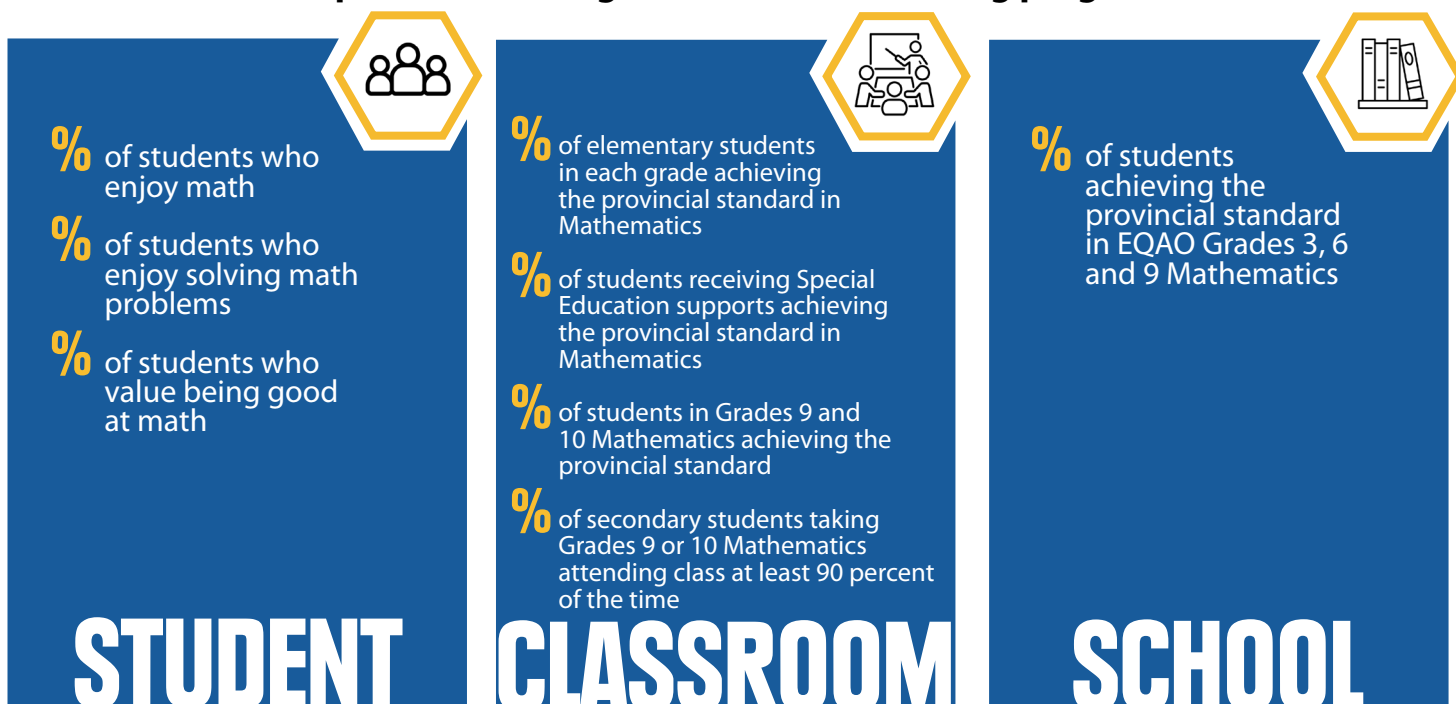
GOAL: IMPROVE NUMERACY ACHIEVEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will **grow student competence and confidence in Mathematics** by:
 - › Offering hands-on learning opportunities by leveraging robotics and STEAM,
 - › Collaborating with students and families,
 - › Providing rich problem-solving and experiential tasks for students,
 - › Expanding career connections with math.
- We will implement the third year of our Math Achievement Action Plan, 2025-2026.
- We will ensure every school has a designated Math Lead.
- We will place Mathematics Facilitators and/or Math Consultant support in all Grades 3, 6, and 9 classrooms in priority schools identified by the Ministry of Education.
- We will provide ongoing professional learning for all Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 teachers that aligns with the priority action areas of: curriculum fidelity, math content knowledge for teaching, and knowing your student.
- 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 continue to refine effective, evidence-based **assessment practices**.

We will monitor improvement using the follow-

ing progress indicators:

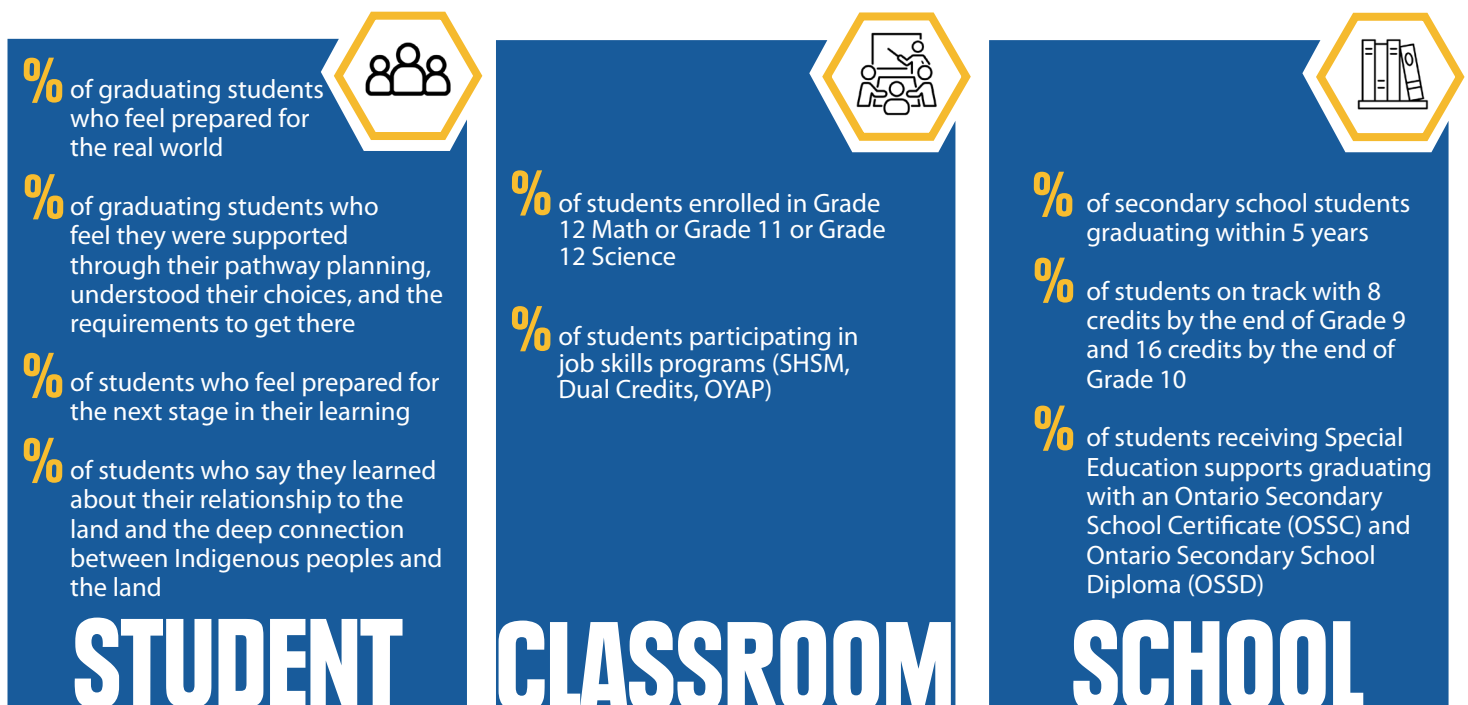


GOAL: IMPROVE PREPAREDNESS FOR THE FUTURE OF EVERY STUDENT

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](#).
- We will ensure a smooth and effective **progression from Grade 8 to Grade 9**.
- We will ensure every secondary school offers **credit recovery interventions** or **credit rescue opportunities**.
- We will provide a wide range of programs and create innovative partnerships with diverse industries and post-secondary institutions to remove barriers, **expand access to pathway opportunities**, and support student choice through experiential learning.
- We will implement a variety of approaches (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, multidisciplinary learning such as STEAM and Robotics), programs (e.g., Dual Credit, Specialist High Skills Major, Apprenticeships, Co-operative Education), and resources (e.g., Credit Recovery) to **support secondary students in meeting yearly credit accumulation** benchmarks on their path to graduation.
- We will embed **land-based learning** experiences within outdoor education and **experiential learning** opportunities to deepen student understanding of our relationships to the land and to recognize the enduring connection between Indigenous peoples and the land.

We will monitor improvement using the following progress indicators:



GOAL: IMPROVE WELL-BEING FOR EVERY STUDENT

What will we do to achieve this goal?

- We will implement the [Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#) (Year 2) and the three priority areas in the Action Plan.
- 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.
- We will approach student learning through CIR: Creating the **C**onditions for Learning; **I**ntity-Affirming Curriculum and Practices; **R**esponding to Student Needs.
- We will support students and families to navigate external mental health resources, care and support that provide identity-affirming care and nation-specific approaches.
- We will facilitate students' understanding of their [Human Rights](#), **roles and responsibilities** related to their safety and well-being.
- We will deepen system **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).
- We will foster a positive learning and working climate that is free from discrimination through education and human-rights accountability mechanisms.



We will monitor improvement using the follow-

ing progress indicators:



% of students who feel like they belong at their school

% of students who feel they can be themselves at school

% of students who know where to get help for their mental health

% of students who understand their rights and responsibilities as a member of a school community that upholds safety and well-being

STUDENT



% of parents and guardians who have the information they need to navigate mental health services and resources to support their children

% of parents and guardians who feel their child's school is inclusive and respects different cultures, ethnicities, abilities, and identities

FAMILY



% of schools creating the conditions for learning by offering Student Nutrition Programs.

% of human rights and hate based incidents reported and resolved.

SCHOOL

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 Plan \(LTFMP\)](#)
 - › [Education Development Charges Background Study \(EDC\)](#)
- We will continue to provide professional learning for all school staff 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 and Equity Action Plan](#)
 - › [Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression \(ARAO\)](#)
 - › [Reimagining Wellness – Top 5 Lessons](#)
 - › [Anti-Black Racism Policy](#)
 - › Anti-Black Racism Strategy
 - › [Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness](#)
 - › [Special Education Plan](#)
- We will ensure that [student voice](#) and [lived experience](#) **informs the classroom environment**, learning, engagement and leadership experiences by:
 - › Uplifting Student Advisory and Student Affinity Group structures,
 - › Collaborating with students and families,
 - › Identifying and removing barriers to learning,
 - › Supporting school leaders and educators.

GOAL: INCREASE ENGAGEMENT FOR EVERY STUDENT

We will monitor improvement using the follow-

ing progress indicators:



% of students who say they use teacher feedback to improve their work

% of students who assert they stay on task in class without teacher reminders

% of students who believe that the voices and opinions of all students in their classes are valued

STUDENT



% of students who see evidence that different cultures are represented in the materials used in their class

% of students who feel safe at school

% of students who feel the rules in their school are fair

% of students who are aware of Affinity Groups in their classrooms or school

CLASSROOM



% of students who attend school at least 90 percent of the time

% of students suspended one or more times

SCHOOL



2025-2026 BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN DATA SOURCE

Goals and Indicators	Data Sources
Improve Literacy Achievement For Every Student	
Percentage of students who enjoy reading	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who enjoy writing	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who value being a good reader	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students in Kindergarten, Grade 1, and 2 who demonstrate growth in reading comprehension	• Acadience
Percentage of elementary students in each grade achieving the provincial standard in Language	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of elementary students receiving Special Education supports achieving the provincial standard in Language	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of students in Grade 9 English achieving the provincial standard	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of Grade 9 Interdisciplinary Reading Program students achieving 8 credits	• School-based knowledge
Percentage of students who achieve the provincial standard on Grade 3 and 6 EQAO Reading and Writing	• EQAO
Percentage of first-time eligible students who are successful on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for Grade 10 students	• EQAO
Improve Numeracy Achievement For Every Student	
Percentage of students who enjoy math	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who enjoy solving math problems	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who value being good at math	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of elementary students in each grade achieving the provincial standard in Mathematics	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of students receiving Special Education supports achieving the provincial standard in Mathematics	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of students in Grade 9 and 10 Mathematics achieving the provincial standard	• School Improvement Dashboard: final Report Card mark
Percentage of secondary students taking Grade 9 or 10 Mathematics attending class at least 90 percent of the time	• School-based knowledge
Percentage of students achieving the provincial standard in EQAO Grade 3, 6, and 9 Mathematics	• EQAO

2025-2026 BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN DATA SOURCE

Improve Preparedness For The Future Of Every Student	
Percentage of graduating students who feel prepared for the real world	• Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of graduating students who feel they were supported through their pathway planning, understood their choices, and the requirements to get there.	• Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who feel prepared for the next stage in their learning	• EQAO student questionnaire • School Climate • Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who say they learned about their relationship to the land and the deep connection between Indigenous peoples and the land	• Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students enrolled in Grade 12 Math or Grade 11 or Grade 12 Science	• School Improvement Dashboard: Graduation Progress
Percentage of students participating in job skills programs (SHSM, Dual Credits, OYAP)	• School Improvement Dashboard: Graduation Progress
Percentage of secondary students graduating within 5 years	• School Improvement Dashboard: Graduation Progress
Percentage of students on track with 8 credits by the end of Grade 9 and 16 credits by the end of Grade 10	• School Improvement Dashboard: Graduation Progress
Percentage of students receiving Special Education Supports graduating with an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) and Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD)	• School Improvement Dashboard: Graduation Progress
Improve Well-Being For Every Student	
Percentage of students who feel like they belong at their school	• School Improvement Dashboard: School Climate • EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who feel they can be themselves at school	• School Improvement Dashboard: School Climate
Percentage of students who know where to get help for their mental health	• School Improvement Dashboard: School Climate • Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who understand their rights and responsibilities as a member of a school community that upholds safety and well-being	• Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of parents and guardians who have the information they need to navigate mental health services and resources to support their children	• Parent Voice Survey
Percentage of parents and guardians who feel their child's school is inclusive and respects different cultures, ethnicities, abilities, and identities	• Parent Voice Survey
Percentage of schools creating the conditions for learning by offering Student Nutrition Programs	• School-based knowledge • Community Engagement Department
Percentage of human rights and hate-based incidents reported and resolved	• School-based knowledge • Human Rights Department

2025-2026 BOARD IMPROVEMENT PLAN DATA SOURCE

Increase Engagement For Every Student	
Percentage of students who say they use teacher feedback to improve their work	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who assert they stay on task in class without teacher reminders	• EQAO student questionnaire
Percentage of students who believe that the voices and opinions of all students in their classes are valued	• EQAO student questionnaire • Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who see evidence that different cultures are represented in the materials used in their class	• EQAO student questionnaire • Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who feel safe at school	• School Improvement Dashboard: School Climate • Gr.12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who feel the rules in their school are fair	• School Improvement Dashboard: School Climate
Percentage of students who are aware of Affinity Groups in their classrooms or school	• Gr. 12 Exit Survey
Percentage of students who attend school at least 90 percent of the time	• School Improvement Dashboard: Attendance
Percentage of students suspended one or more times	• School Improvement Dashboard: Incidents