

EQUITABLE EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT PROCEDURE

Please note: In response to the recent passage of the [Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025](#), and amendments to [Ontario Regulation 521/01: Collection of Personal Information](#), this procedure is undergoing review and revision to ensure it remains compliant and consistent with current statutory requirements.

RATIONALE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) strives to attract, recruit, retain and promote a diverse, qualified workforce to support the achievement of its Strategic Directions (2018), Equity Action Plan (2019), and Workplace Equity Action Plan (2020). The Board is committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive, caring, and safe learning work environment through recruitment, selection and promotion practices that are consistent, equitable, transparent-free from discrimination and that support the Board's mission, vision, and values. This procedure assists the Board to attract, promote and retain a workforce that is reflective of its community and the students and families it serves.

HWDSB believes in:

- Establishing and maintaining discrimination-free environments.
- Maintaining the highest level of ethical and professional standards.
- Developing a workforce that is representative of the diversity of the student body in the Hamilton-Wentworth community. This may include the development of Special Programs recruitment strategy available through the Human Rights Code.
- Recruiting and hiring highly skilled and qualified employees to support student achievement.
- Exercising due diligence throughout the hiring process to align with all legislated requirements to maintain a safe and secure working and learning environment.
- Providing bias-free, equitable and fair treatment of current and potential employees throughout the internal and external promotion and hiring processes.
- Providing support and training to employees who are involved in the hiring process.
- Adhering to the provisions of the collective agreements, where applicable.

TERMINOLOGY:

Accommodation: A reasonable modification or adjustment to a job, the work environment or the hiring process based on individual personal circumstance.

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Applicant: A person who applies to a vacant position. This could be an applicant who is not currently working for the Board, or an internal applicant seeking another opportunity.

Candidate: An applicant who is engaged in the selection process for a position. This may include an existing employee or external applicant.

Conflict of Interest: A potential, apparent, or actual conflict where an employee's financial or other personal interest, whether direct or indirect, conflicts or appears to conflict with the employee's responsibility to the Board, or with the participation in any recommendation or decision pertaining to hiring within the Board.

Conflict of Interest – Relationship: Relationship means any relationship of the employee to persons of their immediate family whether related by blood, adoption, marriage, or common-law relationship, and any relationship of an intimate and/or financial nature during the preceding five years, any student-supervisor relationship, or any other past or present relationship that may give rise to a reasonable apprehension of bias.

Confidentiality: The requirement for all participants of the recruitment process to maintain any information in confidence, including, but not limited to, not sharing information gathered through participation in the recruitment and interview process with other participants in the process.

Employee: Full-time or part-time employees of the Board.

Employment Mobility: Process for enabling all teachers who have relocated from other school boards to be eligible to apply for any posted teaching position for which they possess the required qualifications.

Equity: A condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. It does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences.

External Activity: Any activity of an employee outside the scope of their employment with the Board undertaken as part of a commercial or volunteer enterprise.

Human Rights: Refers to the Board's obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Qualifications and Merit: Adhering to qualifications pursuant to the Education Act, Regulation 298, Operations of Schools General, and valuing applicants' additional experiences such as skills, background, lived experience and work experiences including foreign-trained experience.

Special Programs: The Ontario Human Rights Code enables organizations to create temporary special measures, referred to as "Special Programs", to address the effects of systemic discrimination. Special Programs help to promote substantive equality by creating opportunities for people and groups who face disadvantage and discrimination. Where people from specific marginalized communities are demonstrably under-represented in a board's workforce, well-designed Special Programs can allow

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boards to preferentially hire people from these communities. Such programs are expressly protected under the Code.

PROCEDURES:

HWDSB is an equal opportunity employer and recruitment and hiring processes are applied consistently as follows:

1.0 General Requirements

- 1.1 To be considered for employment, an applicant must:
 - 1.1.1 Be a Canadian citizen, landed immigrant, or possess an employment visa or other authorization to work in Canada if not a Canadian citizen or landed immigrant.
 - 1.1.2 Produce a Social Insurance Number issued by the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission.

2.0 Equity and Human Rights

- 2.1 No applicant shall be discriminated against in any way based on citizenship, race, ethnic origin, place of origin, color, creed, age, gender, sex/pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, marital status, family status, disability, receipt of public assistance, record of offences or socio-economic status.

3.0 Conflict of Interest

- 3.1 All employees involved in recruitment and hiring have an obligation to disclose to the Human Resource Services' Designate or Director of Education any conflict of interest by completing a Conflict of Interest Form and submitting it to Human Resources Services when any of the following situations apply:
 - 3.1.1 Where there could be a direct, indirect or perceived conflict of interest.
 - 3.1.2 There is a relationship to a candidate. Refer to the definition "Conflict of Interest – Relationship" in the Terminology section of this procedure.
 - 3.1.3 Participating in, or influencing the outcome of the appointment, hiring, promotion, supervision, or evaluation of a person with whom the employee has, or has had, a relationship.
 - 3.1.4 Acceptance by an employee of a gift from any of the following persons or entities if a reasonable person might conclude that the gift could influence the employee when performing hiring duties with the School Board:

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- 3.1.4.1 A person, group, or entity that has dealings with the Board.
 - 3.1.4.2 A person, group, or entity to whom the employee provides services in the course of their duties to the Board.
 - 3.1.4.3 A person, group, or entity that seeks to do business with the Board.
 - 3.1.4.4 An employee who is offered a gift in the circumstances described in 3.1.4 above shall, in writing, notify their supervisor.
- 3.2 The employee must disclose in writing (using the Conflict of Interest Form) as soon as they could reasonably be aware that a conflict of interest exists. The existence of a conflict of interest does not necessarily preclude involvement in the issue which has given rise to the conflict (“the Matter”).
- 3.3 The employee must refrain from taking part in any discussion or decision-making in relation to the Matter and withdraw from any meeting or process when the Matter is being discussed until a decision has been reached regarding how the conflict of interest will be addressed.
- 3.4 The Human Resource Services designate in consultation with the Director of Education will investigate to determine if a conflict of interest exists. Where appropriate, the Human Resources designate or Director of Education may consult with the employee and/or others.
- 3.5 If the Human Resource Services designate or Director of Education determines there is a conflict of interest, the Human Resource Services designate or Director of Education should resolve the Matter and shall document, in writing, any remedies that have been applied.
 - 3.5.1 If the Matter pertains to paragraph 3.1.4 above, and where the employee may be knowledgeable and have information central to the discussion, the employee with a conflict or appearance of conflict may be permitted to be involved in the Matter without participating in the final decision described in paragraph 3.1.4 above.
- 3.6 Adherence to the conflict of interest process, in letter and in spirit, is crucial to the relationships of trust that exist between the Board, its employees, and the public. Contraventions of this process, whether arising from dishonesty or inattention, undermine these relationships and may lead to disciplinary action. For employees, disciplinary sanctions for breach of this conflict of interest process may take a range of forms appropriate to the nature of the contravention and could include dismissal from employment.

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4.0 Recruitment

4.1 Any employees involved in any aspect of recruitment and selection must be aware of and act in accordance with applicable policies, procedures, legislation, and collective agreements.

4.2 Accommodation for applicants is available in the recruitment process. Applicants are required to advise the Board in advance of any accommodation needs as outlined in every job posting:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to equity in employment. We are committed to creating a qualified workforce that is reflective of the diverse population we serve. We value employees with an equity-mindset and international experience. HWDSB is committed to providing accommodation throughout the recruitment and selection process, based on any human rights protected ground. If you require accommodation, please notify us in advance and we will work with you to meet your needs.

4.3 All HWDSB job postings are posted on Apply to Education.

4.4 Application requirements are indicated on each job advertisement. Job applications will be accepted in varying formats as outlined on individual job postings.

4.5 Applications for vacant positions are solicited from individuals who reflect the diversity of the region whenever possible by:

4.5.1 Seeking and inviting applications with diversity of lived experience within the region and who are capable of understanding and responding to the lived experiences of the diverse communities within the Board's jurisdiction.

4.5.2 Seeking and inviting applications from a variety of post-secondary institutions, settlement agencies, under-represented/equity-seeking groups and associations.

4.5.3 Advertising for positions on Apply to Education, community newspapers, community distribution lists, websites and HWDSB Careers page and/or HWDSB Intranet.

4.5.4 The following Equity and Accommodation statement is included on every job advertisement:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to building inclusive learning and working environments where students see themselves reflected in the curriculum, staff population, physical surroundings and the broader community.

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HWDSB's mission is to empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world. Guided by this mission, HWDSB strives to build a workforce that embodies the values of human rights, equity, diversity and inclusion, while reflecting and welcoming the diverse and distinct identities, experiences and needs of our students and our communities.

HWDSB seeks qualified candidates who share our commitment to equity and inclusion, and who will contribute to the vision of creating inclusive and equitable outcomes. HWDSB especially invites and welcomes applications from:

- Indigenous Peoples (e.g., First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples).
- Members of groups that commonly experience discrimination due to race, ancestry, colour, religion and/or spiritual beliefs, or place of origin; (e.g., Black and racialized communities, immigrant communities, etc.).
- Persons with visible and/or invisible (physical and/or mental) disabilities.
- Persons who identify as women.
- Persons of marginalized sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions (e.g., Two-spirit and LGBTQIA+)

As part of HWDSB's commitment to employment equity and removing barriers to groups that have faced and continue to face barriers in employment, we invite all applicants to complete voluntary question(s) to collect identity-based information. The voluntary question(s) are on the Apply to Education application page for this position.

HWDSB is committed to providing accommodation throughout the recruitment and selection process, based on any human rights protected grounds. If you require accommodation, please notify us in advance and we will work with you to meet your needs.

- 4.6 Any employee whose employment with HWDSB has been terminated is prohibited from any future employment opportunities with the Board.

5.0 Job Advertisements

- 5.1 External Job Advertisements include the following:

5.1.1 Background information about HWDSB.

5.1.2 Job title.

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- 5.1.3 Bona fide job requirements and qualifications, including professional registrations.
- 5.1.4 Additional experience, skills, backgrounds and knowledge considered for this position.
- 5.1.5 Full-time equivalency and/or hours of work (if applicable).
- 5.1.6 Location (if applicable).
- 5.1.7 Salary range / Hourly wage.
- 5.1.8 Application package requirements.
- 5.1.9 Deadline for application.
- 5.1.10 Unbiased and inclusive language.
- 5.1.11 Equity and Accommodation Statement.
- 5.1.12 Land Acknowledgement.
- 5.1.13 Self-Identification statement.
- 5.2 Internal Job Advertisements include the following:
 - 5.2.1 Job title.
 - 5.2.2 Bona fide job requirements and qualifications, including professional registrations.
 - 5.2.3 Additional experience, skills, backgrounds and knowledge considered for this position.
 - 5.2.4 Full-time equivalency and/or hours of work.
 - 5.2.5 Location (if applicable).
 - 5.2.6 Salary information.
 - 5.2.7 Application package requirements.
 - 5.2.8 Deadline for application.
 - 5.2.9 Unbiased and inclusive language.
 - 5.2.10 Equity and Accommodation Statement.
 - 5.2.11 Land Acknowledgement.
 - 5.2.12 Self-Identification statement.

6.0 Shortlisting Process

- 6.1 Hiring for all positions is determined based on the individual requirements, qualifications, merit, experience, lived experience, knowledge, ability and any other relevant criteria required to successfully meet the expectations of the position as outlined in the job advertisement.
- 6.2 Internal staffing follows legislation, collective agreements and/or contract terms and conditions.

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7.0 Interview Process

- 7.1 Shortlisted candidates are provided an opportunity to identify any needed accommodations. Shortlisted candidates are provided an outline of the interview/practicum when invited to the interview as stated below:

HWDSB is committed to providing accommodation throughout the recruitment and selection process, based on any human rights protected ground. If you require accommodation, please notify us in advance and we will work with you to meet your needs.

- 7.2 Upon request, assessment and selection material are provided in accessible formats.
- 7.3 Interview panels consist of two or more supervisors who have the knowledge and experience to reflect the needs and interests of the position. The Board will strive to have a diverse interview panel team.
- 7.4 All candidates within the same job competition are provided the same interview structure.
- 7.5 Applicant information and discussions/decisions during the recruitment and selection process are to be held in the strictest of confidence.
- 7.6 All documentation relating to recruitment and selection must be treated with confidentiality in accordance with HWDSB policies and relevant legislation.
- 7.7 Evaluation of candidates is based on the criteria outlined on the job advertisement.
- 7.8 Before making a formal offer of employment of the job competition, the hiring supervisor must check a minimum of two references. Reference checks are critical for verifying and further exploring work-related information from individuals who have direct knowledge of the candidates. They are also crucial to validate or clarify information collected through the interview process. At least one reference must be obtained from the candidate's current supervisor or where appropriate from a recent past supervisor.
- 7.9 Some job competitions may require successful completion of a practical skill tests and/or a physical testing before a formal offer of employment can be extended.

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- 7.10 A candidate who is not successful through the interview process, is entitled to request time with members of the interview panel to obtain feedback on their individual interview.

8.0 Retention

- 8.1 HWDSB recognizes the importance of employee retention and is committed to creating a supportive and inclusive work environment that promotes job satisfaction, growth, and professional development.
- 8.2 Supervisors and managers regularly communicate with employees to identify their needs, concerns, and opportunities for growth within their positions.
- 8.3 HWDSB provides ongoing professional development and training opportunities to enhance employee skills, knowledge and job satisfaction.
- 8.4 In cases where employees face challenges or experience barriers in their work environment, HWDSB provides accommodations to support their continued employment and success.
- 8.5 Employee feedback and engagement is encouraged through surveys, focus groups, and other mechanisms to assess the work environment and identify areas for improvement.
- 8.6 Performance evaluations are conducted regularly and fairly to provide employees with constructive feedback, recognize their achievements, and identify opportunities for improvement and professional growth.

9.0 Advancement

- 9.1 HWDSB is committed to providing equal opportunities for career advancement to all employees based on their qualifications, merit, and performance, in alignment with applicable legislation, collective agreements, and policies.
- 9.2 Transparent and equitable processes are established to identify and promote internal candidates for available advancement opportunities within HWDSB.
- 9.3 HWDSB provides employees with access to professional development and training programs that enhance their skills and competencies, preparing them for potential advancement opportunities.

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- 9.4 HWDSB encourages and supports employees' pursuit of additional education and qualifications that are relevant to their career goals and the needs of the organization.
- 9.5 Vacant positions are advertised internally to provide existing employees with an opportunity to apply and compete for advancement opportunities.
- 9.6 The selection process for internal candidates is fair, transparent, and based on qualifications, merit, and relevant experience.
- 9.7 HWDSB provides employees with constructive feedback and guidance on areas for improvement to enhance their chances of advancement.
- 9.8 HWDSB regularly reviews and evaluates its advancement processes to ensure fairness, inclusivity, and alignment with the organization's strategic goals and values.

10.0 Pre-Employment Screening

- 10.1 During the hiring process, prospective employees are required to complete and submit all pre-employment documents prior to commencing employment with HWDSB:
 - 10.1.1 Criminal Background Check
 - 10.1.2 Vulnerable sector screening as applicable.
 - 10.1.3 Appropriate certification/documentation and proof of education, as required.
 - 10.1.4 Payroll information, such as tax forms and banking information.
 - 10.1.5 Social Insurance Number.
 - 10.1.6 Staff record form.
- 10.2 All costs for the pre-employment screening documentation with the exception of the physical testing appointment (if applicable) are to be paid by the prospective employee.

11.0 Staff Onboarding

- 11.1 Once all paperwork is received and a formal job offer is made, employee onboarding must be completed before commencing work. Onboarding includes training for Occupational Health and Safety, Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, Workplace Violence and Harassment Prevention and other relevant workplace training that is determined by the Board.

Revisions:

May 2025 – template migration

January 2026 – procedure under review for legislation compliance