

REVISED

AGENDA: 6:30 pm

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement
2. O Canada
3. Meeting Roll Call
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
6. Presentation: Educational Development Charges (for information)
7. [Confirmation of the Minutes: January 15, 2024](#)
8. [Correspondence – Elliot Biro re: how HWDSB is supporting and addressing antisemitism](#)

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

9. [Finance & Facilities – December 19, 2023](#)
10. [Policy – January 10, 2024](#)

Reports from Staff

11. [March 2024 Professional Activity Day – Date Change](#)
12. HWSTS Update – no copy

13. Report from Committee of the Whole (private) – January 29, 2024

14. [Written Notices of Motion – Trustee Buck re: National School Food Program](#)

15. Oral Reports from:

- A. Student Trustees' Report – Local Activities & Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) Report
- B. Director's Report
- C. Chair's Report

16. Adjournment

Meeting times and locations are subject to change. Please refer to our website for the latest information.

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/trustees/meetings/>

Trustees: Kathy Archer (electronically), Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab, Dawn Danko, Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller, Ray Mulholland, Graeme Noble, Paul Tut, Todd White, and Elizabeth Wong (electronically). Student Trustees Thomas Lin and Harry Wang.

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement

Maria Felix Miller, Chair of the Board, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and recited the land acknowledgement.

2. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #24-01: Trustees Noble/Danko moved that the agenda be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour
Trustee Mullholland was not present for the vote

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest – None

4. Confirmation of the Minutes:

RESOLUTION #24-02: Trustees Dahab/Buck moved that the minutes from December 18th, 2023 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

5. Correspondence:

A. Waterloo Region DSB re: letter to Minister – Toronto Youth Council Mental Health

RESOLUTION #24-03: Trustees Noble/Dahab moved that the Chair write a similar letter directly to the Minister in support of the letter from Waterloo Region DSB and Toronto Youth Cabinet regarding child and youth mental health concerns in Ontario.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

B. Paul Berton re: Proposed Trustee Policy Manual Revisions

RESOLUTION #24-04: Trustees White/Dahab moved that the correspondence from Paul Berton re: Proposed Trustee Policy Manual Revisions (item 7B) be referred to the Governance Committee for review and further discussion.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

Reports from Legislated Committees:

6. Parent Involvement Committee – December 12, 2023

RESOLUTION #24-05: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that the Parent Involvement Committee report from December 12, 2023 be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

7. Faith Community Advisory Committee – December 5, 2023

RESOLUTION #24-06: Trustees Buck/White moved that the Faith Community Advisory Committee report from December 5, 2023 be received.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

8. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Request for Trustee representation

Trustee Miller thanked Trustee Dahab for her ongoing commitment to SEAC and acknowledged she could no longer serve on the committee due to scheduling conflicts. The committee can accept up to two Trustee appointments and Trustees were asked if there was any additional interest from the Board in filling the available spot, as Trustee Danko is also a current member of SEAC.

RESOLUTION #24-07: Trustee Miller be appointed to the Special Education Advisory Committee for the remainder of the Trustee term.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

9. Report from Committee of the Whole (private) – January 15, 2024

RESOLUTION #24-08: Trustee Tut/Buck moved that the Committee of the Whole report from January 15, 2024, be received including an update related to personnel matters.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustees Lin and Wang voted in favour

10. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

A. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations

- Trustee Danko thanked the PIC Chairs and Superintendent Goodacre for inviting HWCHSA to the PIC Startup Event and PIC December meeting. Parent engagement is extremely important and they will continue to support in all its various forms.
- HWCHSA also met with the Director and both Associate Directors regarding the fundraising policy draft and the issues around lack of consultation and have provided their feedback.
- The School Year Calendar's public survey has gone out and has been shared with all their Associations noticing the calendar reflects the suggestions made by HWCHSA and they look forward to the results of the public feedback.
- An informal conversation with Safe Schools Superintendent Gerry Smith regarding families concerns about critical communication going out to caregivers during stressful and dangerous times. They will follow up with the Safe Schools committee and Communications to improve how information is shared with parents.
- There has been discussion regarding HWDSB trustees and the intent to restrict their abilities to communicate on social media and to the media. As publicly elected officials, they represent the voices and concerns of their constituents, and it is the voting public's right to know how their ward trustees are representing them.

B. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

- Trustee Buck shared that OPSBA sent a modified [version](#) of its 2024-25 Education Funding Consultation Guide/ Grants for Student Needs (GSN) submission to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. The Association reminds all trustees to participate in the province's 2024 Pre-Budget Consultation [online survey](#) – the deadline is January 31, 2024.
- Reminded Trustees of the upcoming OPSBA Public Education Symposium and registration is still open, if interested contact Trustee Officer Miller.
- Bill C-322 National Framework for a School Food Program Act the legislation has been sent to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. OPSBA would like to remind trustees/member boards to use the template letter and send it to their local Members of Parliament supporting the legislation and its passage.

The meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm.

Reference: [Agenda Package](#) and [Recording](#)

Jan 12, 2024

HWDSB Board of Trustees,

During the Dec 18th board meeting, Trustee Buck asked for clarification on how the HWDSB was supporting and addressing antisemitism after reading submission 7C (Elena Neiterman re: parent meeting and follow up regarding anti-Semitism). In response to the question, the Director mentioned that the HWDSB has a comprehensive human rights policy (which I assume is referring to policy A1.1). I agree that this policy is comprehensive in protecting human rights as it affirms:

- To treat all human rights concerns seriously and not tolerate, condone or ignore discrimination and harassment issues in all HWDSB environments.
- Put in place adequate measures in identifying and addressing adverse human rights impacts through inclusive design, prevention, mitigation and, where appropriate, remediation.

Furthermore, it states that it would be a policy violation to:

- Allow inappropriate behavior to continue, and fail to remedy and restore the environment.

As I have submitted to the board on previous occasions (Dec 18/24 – 7D, and Nov 17th – amended to the document package of the Nov 20th meeting), my [REDACTED] (who attends [REDACTED] Secondary School) has been repeatedly subjected to verbal harassment, and on at least two occasions threats. These incidents have been reported to the vice-principal, so the school administration team is well of the antisemitism that my [REDACTED] has been facing. In discussions with other parents in the Jewish community, I have heard that other Jewish students who attend both [REDACTED] Secondary School and [REDACTED] Secondary School have also been subjected to harassment. Considering the repetitive and apparent wide-spread issues with antisemitism in the HWDSB, I am wondering how the principles of the *Human Rights Policy* (A1.1) are being applied. According to the HWDSB's *Human Rights Complaints Resolution Procedure* section on Data Collection and Reporting (2.7):

- Supervisory/managerial staff that receive and address human rights concerns and complaints are responsible for properly documenting human rights incidents, the complaints resolution process they used and the outcomes.

and

- The Human Rights Office is responsible for collecting and reporting annual, anonymized, aggregate data on the number of human rights concerns and complaints reported and resolved through the Human Rights Office.

My [REDACTED] who goes to [REDACTED] Elementary School has seen HWDSB's *Human Rights Policy* effectively enforced earlier this year when an outside group was asked to visit to present two assemblies addressing a homophobia/transphobia issue at the

school. Based on a conversation that I had with [REDACTED] principal at the time of the assemblies, this decision was based on two (2) incidents that occurred in the school. In comparison, it seems that the antisemitism faced by Jewish students has progressed much further than the issue at [REDACTED]. So, this leads me to ask the following questions:

- Does the HWDSB have an accounting of the antisemitic incidents (especially student-to-student) that have occurred since the events of October 7th?
- How widespread do antisemitic events need to be before the HWDSB implement a program aimed at students to “remedy and restore the environment”?
- Are the issues that the Jewish students in the HWDSB facing actually being addressed using the HWDSB’s *Human Rights Policy*, or are they being addressed using the *Code of Conduct* (Policy 5.3), which has: more lenient repercussions for violators, no reporting requirements, and no obligation to “remedy and restore the environment”?

From the seriousness that the HWDSB took the issues at [REDACTED], I have seen that the HWDSB values human rights. As a Jewish parent, I ask that the HWDSB apply its *Human Rights Policy* equally to all groups within the code-protected grounds.

Respectfully yours

Elliot Biro (Ward 2)

c.c. [REDACTED]

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: January 29, 2024

From: Finance and Facilities Committee

Date of Meeting: December 19, 2023

The committee held a hybrid meeting from 6:05pm to 7:05pm on December 19, 2023 with Trustee Paul Tut presiding as Chair.

Members participating were: Trustees Becky Buck, Amanda Fehrman, Paul Tut and Todd White

Regrets were received from: Trustees Maria Felix Miller

ACTION ITEMS:

A. Eastdale Accommodation Strategies

Staff are aware on concerns and pressures at Eastdale Elementary School and will continue to monitor. Staff are looking at various options and will report in early 2024.

On the motion of Todd White, the Finance and Facilities Committee **RECOMMENDS: that staff report back on the Eastdale Elementary School Accommodation Strategy in the new year.**

CARRIED

MONITORING ITEMS:

B. 2023-24 Average Class Size - Elementary

Staff provided an update on HWDSB's submission to the Ministry of Education related to Average Class Size for elementary students as of September 30, 2023. HWDSB is in compliance with Ministry elementary average class size requirements in 2023-24.

C. 2023-24 Enrolment Summary – October 31, 2023

Staff provided an update on enrolment. Enrolment has increased approximately 307 students from projections. Staff will continue to monitor enrolment and expenditures.

D. Capital Projects Construction Update

Staff provided an updated summary of all the capital projects in process. The report included a summary of the capital projects underway and their status, categorized by each projects' funding source and project initiative. Staff provided a verbal project specific update for Sir Isaac Brock renewal work, New Nash project is still on hold, Binbrook II is also on hold while waiting to purchase the land. Staff also provided an update that the Board is no longer pursuing the land severance in Ancaster.

E. Regulatory and Policy Reforms to Support the Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act, 2023 – Maximizing School Board Capital Assets

Staff share a Ministry memo and the regulation, which will come effective on December 31, 2023. Staff will bring back further explanation to Trustees.

F. Development of Budget Priorities to Guide 2024-25 Budget Development

In October 2023, the Board approved its new vision, mission, values and strategic directions for the 2023-2028 school years and will launch these new strategic directions to the system in January 2024. The committee is supportive of relying on the consultation process that the Board engaged in to support the development of the multi-year strategic plan to assist in the development of the budget priorities for the 2024-25 budget.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Tut, Chair of the Committee

Reference: [Committee Package](#) and [Recording](#)

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: January 29, 2024

From: Policy Committee

Date of Meeting: January 10, 2024

The committee held a meeting from 6:34 p.m. to 8:36 p.m. on January 10, 2024, at 20 Education Court, Room EC-340D with Trustee Todd White presiding.

Members present: Trustees Kathy Archer (electronically), Sabreina Dahab (electronically), Graeme Noble (electronically), and Todd White.

Regrets: Trustee Becky Buck

POLICY REVIEW:

A. Fraud Prevention and Management

Associate Director Nunn shared the Fraud Prevention and Management policy has been reviewed by staff as part of the four-year-cycle review. Staff made minor updates to the language throughout the policy. Associate Director Gerard shared that three bullets had been added to the intended outcomes to be consistent with the Whistleblower policy.

On the motion of Trustee Noble, the Policy Committee recommends that: **the Fraud and Prevention Policy be recommended for approval as amended.**

CARRIED

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

B. Policy Development Process Review - Draft Policy & Stakeholder Consultation

Associate Director Nunn shared that staff reviewed the proposed updates to the policy development process, focusing on draft policy development process and stakeholder consultation. The committee supported the proposed changes to the draft policy development section whereby removing the word “stakeholder” and replacing it with “public”. This section was approved. Associate Director Nunn will bring back the public consultation section of the document to the next meeting to include further detailed information on the size, scope, and duration of the consultation process given the discussion at the meeting.

C. Policy Committee Meeting Dates:

Trustees and staff discussed the policy committee meeting dates for the duration of the year. Staff will work to seek new committee dates based on the availability of the committee all the while ensuring our commitment to deliver upon the policy work plan for this school year.

Respectfully submitted,
Todd White, Chair of the Committee

Reference: [Committee package](#) and [Meeting Recording](#).

Fraud Prevention and Management

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to protecting its assets and maintaining public trust through a system of internal controls designed to prevent, detect, investigate, and report instances of fraud.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- This policy applies to trustees, employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors/consultants.
- The Board is committed to preventing fraud, protecting its revenue, property, proprietary information and other assets.
- If fraud is found to have occurred, the Board shall make every reasonable effort to seek restitution and obtain recovery of any and all losses from the offender(s), or other appropriate sources, including the Board's insurers. In the event of criminal misconduct, the police shall be notified, as determined by the Director or their designate and/or the Chair of the Board.
- This policy prohibits reprisals against individuals who, acting in good faith, report incidents of suspected fraud, or who are witnesses in any subsequent investigation.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Increase awareness of key fraud indicators, the diverse types of fraud and fraud schemes that may exist and the roles/responsibilities of all staff in fraud prevention, deterrence, and detection.
- Establish and maintain a system of internal control to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, the prevention and detection of fraud.
- Ensure that there is no reprisal against an individual who, acting in good faith, reports wrongdoing under this policy.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council

TERMINOLOGY:

Fraud: A deliberate act of deception, manipulation, or trickery, with the specific intent of gaining an unfair or dishonest personal gain or advantage. It may be perpetrated by one individual or done in collusion with others. It involves wilful misrepresentation or deliberate concealment of material facts.

Fraud Prevention and Management

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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Types of fraud could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) forgery or alteration of cheques or other banking documents and records;
- b) theft, embezzlement or misappropriation of funds, supplies and services, resources, other assets or time;
- c) any irregularity in the handling or reporting of money transactions, including the falsification, destruction or removal of corporate records;
- d) any computer-related activity involving the alteration, destruction, forgery, manipulation of data or unauthorized access for fraudulent purposes;
- e) any claim for reimbursement of business expenses that is either intentionally inflated or not a legitimate business expense of the Board;
- f) any claim for compensation/pay (inflated timesheet);
- g) any claim for reimbursement of benefit expenses under the Board benefit plans (provided to employees that is either intentionally inflated or falsified);
- h) the unauthorized use of Board money, property, resources, or authority for personal gain or other non-Board related purposes;
- i) misuse or abuse of authority in the context of purchasing goods or services;
- j) false claims for grants, contributions or any program/service payments, including refunds and rebates;
- k) seeking or accepting anything of material value from vendors of the Board (bribes, commissions) in violation of the conflict of interest;
- l) making personal purchases on Board Purchasing or Credit Cards.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Staff will implement and maintain procedures to operationalize this policy to create a system of internal controls designed to prevent, detect, investigate, and report instances of fraud.
- The Director of Education, or representative, will provide a report to the Audit Committee on the implementation of this policy and any findings.
- The Board will provide the necessary information and training to ensure that staff is familiar with fraud, its prevention and its detection.
- Address and remedy all instances of fraud as defined by the policy, appropriately and in an independent, transparent, fair and timely manner.
- Ensure that a person who, in good faith, reports suspected wrongdoing or fraud and anyone associated with the investigation, including witnesses, are protected from reprisal, including harassment, retaliation or adverse employment consequences.

Fraud Prevention and Management

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Increase awareness of key fraud indicators, the diverse types of fraud and fraud schemes that may exist and the roles/responsibilities of all staff in fraud prevention, deterrence, and detection.	Develop and implement internal awareness of all techniques aimed at staff to reveal specific information or perform a specific action for illegitimate reasons. Incorporate fraud prevention into ongoing regular training of staff.
Establish and maintain a system of internal control to ensure, to the fullest extent possible, the prevention and detection of fraud.	The Director of Education or designate will provide updates to the Audit Committee.
Ensure that there is no reprisal against an individual reporting a wrongdoing under this policy.	The Director of Education or designate will review the process regularly to ensure no reprisals have occurred through feedback received and the complaint process.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

- The Education Act
- Ontario Regulation 361/10: Audit Committees
- The Criminal Code of Canada (RS., 1985, c. C-46)



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO BOARD

DATE: January 29, 2024

TO: BOARD

FROM: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

PREPARED BY: Simon Goodacre, Superintendent of Student Achievement

RE: March 2024 Professional Activity Day – Date Change

Action X Monitoring

Recommendation:

That the amendment of the 2023/2024 School Year Calendar be approved by moving the Professional Activity Day scheduled for Friday, March 1, 2024 to Monday, April 8, 2024.

Background:

School Year Calendar Requirements

The 2023 – 2024 School Year Calendar for HWDSB was approved by the Board and Ministry of Education last spring. Regulation 304, which sets out parameters for the approval and amendments to the School Year calendar, does provide for changes to scheduled Professional Activity Days to be considered following Ministry approval should a circumstance arise which was unforeseen at the initial time of approval. Changes to a Professional Activity Day do not require additional Ministry of Education approval. Any changes to the Professional Activity Days would need to be shared with parents, school community partners and the Ministry of Education as early as possible.

Status

Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse will cross North America, passing over southern Ontario. The City of Hamilton is expected to experience a deep partial solar eclipse with the timing of this event presenting a significant concern. The solar eclipse will begin at approximately 2:00 p.m. and end around 4:30 p.m., corresponding with student dismissal times.

A total solar eclipse happens when the moon passes between the sun and earth, completely blocking the face of the sun. The sky will darken as if it were dawn or dusk. These events can pose potential risks and severe damage to eyesight if proper precautions are not taken. Viewing the sun directly during an eclipse can lead to solar retinopathy, permanently damaging the retina's light-sensitive cells.

In addition to the physical risks associated with viewing the solar eclipse directly without proper protection, a period of increased darkness will occur, presenting additional challenges for students during dismissal time. This peak period of darkness (referred to as the mid-eclipse) will occur at approximately 3:20 p.m., which presents safe dismissal concerns for many school sites.

Hamilton Public Health Department understands that there are significant risks associated with unprotected viewing of the solar eclipse and are supportive of the HWDSB's desire to mitigate potential risks.

Professional Learning and School Operations

The amendment requests will provide for HWDSB staff to engage in the originally scheduled Professional Activity Day learning on Monday, April 8, 2024 instead of Friday March 1, 2024. Staff and students will attend school as a regular day on Friday March 1, 2024. Shifting the Professional Activity Day from March 1, 2024 to April 8, 2024 is a proactive preventative measure the Board can take to support the safety and well-being of students, families, and staff.

Other School Boards

Joint planning regarding a Professional Activity Day is occurring with the co-terminus board. This cooperation is important to coordinate costs around transportation. This amendment can occur and maintain the same number of Professional Activity Days aligned between the two school boards.

This amendment is also consistent with changes that other school boards within Southern and Eastern Ontario have made or are currently considering.

Financial Implications

The primary financial implication would be related to transportation costs. Financial implications would be dependent upon the final decisions of the co-terminus school board. Our decision was made in consultation with Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS).

Communication

A communication plan will be implemented to ensure that families and members of the community are aware of the change in date of the Professional Activity Day.

Hamilton Public Health Department is working with HWDSB staff to provide information for families regarding safety considerations. This information will be shared with families as part of the communication plan regarding the date change.

Notice of Motion:
January 29, 2024 Board Meeting

Re: Sending a letter to local MPs in support of Private Member's Bill C-322 – National Framework for a School Food Program Act.

Submitted by: Trustee Becky Buck

Whereas: Too many families in Hamilton are struggling to obtain enough nutritious food;

Whereas: A healthy diet in childhood is important to maintaining good health and well-being;

Whereas: Domestic and international evidence shows that school meal programs act as social equalizers;

Whereas: Food security is a nation-wide issue that is being keenly felt here in Hamilton;

Whereas: There is currently a federal Private Member's Bill (C-322 – National Framework for a School Food Program Act) that has gone through a second reading in the House of Commons;

Where: Development of a national school food program will require the collaboration of all levels of government with the federal government.

Whereas: The Ontario Public School Board Association and Canadian School Boards' Association have already been in collaboration and discussion supporting the inclusion of committed funding in the 2024 federal budget;

Whereas: HWDSB's values of dignity, compassion, trust, and joy should be reflected in our advocacy for the most basic needs of Hamilton students;

Be it resolved: That the Chair of the Board write a letter to be distributed to all local Hamilton Members of Parliament that supports the legislation and its passage in the House of Commons.