

AGENDA: 7:00 pm

REVISED

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. Confirmation of the Minutes: March 25, 2024
7. Correspondence Received
 - A. J. Weresch
 - B. E. Biro
 - C. S and A. Waller
 - D. H. Alexander

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

8. Policy – March 6, 2024
9. Finance & Facilities – March 28, 2024

Reports from Staff:

10. Student Trustees and Shakowennakará:tats 2024-2025
11. Update on Dress Guidelines (Resolution #23-165)
12. Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation System (HWSTS) Update – no copy
13. Report from Committee of the Whole (Private) – April 8, 2024
14. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:
 - A. City/School Board Liaison Committee
 - B. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations
 - C. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success
 - D. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
15. Adjournment

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

Regrets: Trustee Ray Mulholland

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:39 and moved to recess in observation of Ramadan.

RESOLUTION #24-34: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that the board move into recess until 7:55 pm.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

2. Land Acknowledgement and Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #24-35: Trustees Buck/Fehrman moved that the agenda be amended to move item #10 the Report from the committee of the whole (private session) be moved to the last item on the agenda.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest – None

4. Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLUTION #24-36: Trustees Danko /Fehrman moved that the minutes from February 26, 2024 be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

5. Correspondence

RESOLUTION #24-37: Trustees Danko/Tut moved that the correspondence – E. Biro re: March 8 Protest at the Education Centre be received, filed and be referred to the Human Rights Office.

The motion **CARRIES** on the following division:

In Favour (11): Trustees Archer, Buck, Danko, Fehrman, Miller, Noble, Tut, White, Wong
Student Trustees Lin and Wang

Opposed (1): Trustee Dahab

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

6. Policy Committee – February 22, 2024

RESOLUTION #24-38: Trustees White/Noble moved that the Policy Committee report from February 22, 2024 be approved including the Use of Board Facilities Policy.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

7. Governance Committee – March 5, 2024

RESOLUTION #24-39: Trustees White/Danko moved that the Governance Committee report from March 5, 2024 be approved including the Board of Trustees Governance Manual.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

8. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

A. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations

Trustee Danko shared that the HWCHSA has been focusing on supporting association with their ongoing business. They are currently waiting to hear from the Policy Committee regarding the Fundraising draft policy. Trustee White shared that he has been in contact with HWCHSA regarding the Fundraising policy and a timeline was confirmed through the Director for the end of April. The next meeting is scheduled for April 11, 2024.

B. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success

Trustee Archer reminded everyone that Prom Project is coming up on Saturday April 13th, 2024. There are 20 locations across town receiving donations and they are still in need of clothing for small to extra-large, plus sizes for young men and women. More information can be found on the Prom Project website.

C. Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA)

- Trustee Buck attended a Board of Directors meeting in Toronto on March 1 and 2 noting presentations were provided from a TDSB teacher who recently published a book titled Black Boys Like Me (Matthew R. Morris) which shares his experience growing up and working in Toronto as a black man. A second presentation was related to OMERS and thinking about pensions as a social infrastructure.
- During reports from the different OPSBA Regions TDSB shared about their call to restrict promotion of gambling in all media, particularly that which is seen or used by a great number of children. The ban they are calling for is like that of cigarettes and alcohol.
- The deadline for the 2023-24 student trustee leadership scholarship is April 29, 2024. The award recognizes outstanding achievement in a leadership role and provides financial support to a graduating public board student trustee to assist with their post-secondary education plans. The scholarship is based on outstanding initiative accomplished during the student trustee's term and how the initiative positively impacted the students in their board. Two scholarships of \$500 each will be awarded. Trustee Buck will share the link if anyone is interested.

9. Oral Reports from:

A. Student Trustees' – Local Activities & Ontario Student Trustees' Association (OSTA) Report

- Both Student Trustees are collaborating with staff to organize the Be It Change Conference tentatively scheduled in May. It will focus on preparedness for the future, and the Multi Year Strategic Plan.
- Student Trustee Lin is working with the Public Board cabinet to formulate their strategic directions, which focus on artificial intelligence in education and diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Student Trustees' continue to work with the Student Senate. They have asked them what education means to you and to design their ideal education system. Some areas that came up were inclusive environments, a safe space and teachers who are understanding and compassionate.
- Student Trustee Wang presented a proposal to Executive Council for consideration on Mental Health Today which focuses on giving students time and space to recollect themselves and find out what their priorities are and to take some time to breathe. Provide resources and opportunities to learn about mental health, what stress is and time management and most importantly themselves.

B. [Director's Report](#)

- A welcome was provided to Acting Superintendent Lindsay Snell.
- HWDSB's 2023-2024 Board Improvement Plan has launched and is available on the website. This is a living repository of what we will do and how we plan to improve student achievement and a sense of belonging. The Strategic Directions are the pillars/objectives which is what we want to accomplish through the goals set out in the Board Improvement Plan. The Director shared the circular graphic which is a representation of all the pieces fitting together. Acknowledging in many indigenous cultures the circle is a sacred symbol of interdependence of all forms of life. Acknowledgement to indigenous knowledge and ways of being

elaborates on where we're going as a board, and it is important to see how all the different components of the multi-year strategic plan work together.

- The Director thanked everyone who participated in the Great Big Crunch in support of Taste Buds a local nutrition partner who helps HWDSB students.
- The Director shared Student Trustee Wong joined the Executive Council team to discuss his perspective proposal to further support secondary school students with managing academic stress and feedback from students, indicate that academic responsibilities are the most significant source of stress for students, and so moving forward, Executive Council will take the information and reflect on the ways that we're going to further assist.

C. Chair's Report

- The Chair shared that trustees also participated in the Great Big Crunch and is excited to hear about the challenge to have nutrition programs in all HWDSB schools.
- March 8th, 2024 was International Women's Day. Chair Miller, Trustee Fehrman, the Director of Education and Superintendent Lemaire attended Bellmoore School where they were interviewed for the PodMoore podcast. Other schools are now creating their own podcasts.
- Chair Miller acknowledged Trustee Archer for her 25 years of community leadership and contribution to the Mountain Kids Club.
- Chair Miller acknowledged the work of Trustees around the new Governance manual and that the Trustees collectively are eager to further develop and focus on labour union relationships.

10. Resolution into Committee of the Whole (Private session) – at 8:39 pm

RESOLUTION #24-40: Moved by Fehrman/Dahab That the Board of Trustees move into Committee of the Whole (Private) as per the Education Act, Section 207.2 (b) disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board, a pupil or his or her parent or guardian.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY
Student Trustee Lin and Wang voted in favour

The Board returned to public session at 11:57 pm. Trustee Noble did not return to public session.

11. Report from Committee of the Whole – Private Session – March 25, 2024

RESOLUTION #24-41: Trustees Tut/Buck moved that the tentative local Collective Agreement between the Designated Early Childhood Educators, Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO HWDECE), and Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) for the term of September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2026, be approved and amended as per the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

RESOLUTION #24-42: Trustees Tut/Buck moved that the report of the Committee of the Whole (Private) – March 25, 2024 be received noting that Trustees have considered a proposed breach of the Trustee Code of Conduct. The Board of Trustees confirms the conclusion of a formal inquiry report where Trustee Dahab has been found to have breached the code of conduct, specifically:

Respect for confidentiality

10. Trustees shall keep confidential any information disclosed or discussed at a meeting of the Board of Trustees or committee of the Board of Trustees, or part of a meeting of the Board of Trustees or a committee of the Board of Trustees, that was closed to the public as outlined in the Education Act, and keep confidential the substance of deliberations of such meeting closed to the public, unless required to divulge such information by law or authorized by the Board of Trustees to do so.

The reasoning for the determination of this breach is that confidentiality is important to ensuring public trust when making decisions and as such, must be maintained to protect the decision-making process until matters can be brought forward to the public forum.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Trustee Dahab did not participate in the vote.

RESOLUTION #24-43: Trustees Tut/Buck moved that based on the finding of the breach, any public post containing confidential information be removed from their own social media or the Trustee will be barred from private sessions for board and committees until this breach is resolved.

The motion **CARRIES** on the following division:

In Favour (7): Trustees Archer, Buck, Danko, Fehrman, Miller, Tut, Wong

Opposed (1): Trustee White

Trustee Dahab did not participate in the vote.

Meeting adjourned at 12:07 am.

Reference: [Agenda Package](#) and [Recording](#), [Recording 2](#)

From: [J. C. Weresch](#)
To: [Heather Miller \[Staff\]](#)
Subject: Letter to Board
Date: March 28, 2024 2:04:30 PM

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Heather:

Below, please find a letter to the Board. Please distribute it to all trustees and post it on the public agenda of the next meeting of the HWDSB's trustees. Thank you very much.

Kindly,

Joshua Weresch

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

To the trustees of the HWDSB:

I write as a parent of four students in the Board's elementary schools.

I am appalled at the recent resolution of many of the Board's trustees to ban a sitting, democratically-elected trustee from attending private meetings of the Board and its committees unless she deletes her social-media post that documented the decision of the public Board to investigate her for that post. It is particularly appalling that such a resolution was made after the Policy committee reviewed the Board's Equity and Inclusion policy on the 6th of March, 2024. I am grateful that Trustee White was the lone objector to this resolution and voted against the ultimatum.

As the Trustee Code of Conduct states, in its preamble, trustees govern publicly-funded school Boards in the province. How is Trustee Dahab, who was democratically elected by constituents in her ward, able to govern, to discharge faithfully the duties of her office, if the HWDSB's trustees have banned her from attending private meetings of the Board and its committees? Further, trustees are the public's representatives. How else is the public, not only those constituents in her ward, who may have children as students in the

HWDSB, to be represented to the Board? Effectively, Ward 2 will no longer have representation on its most important issues of land, housing, and community support as stewarded by the Board. Given these aspects of the Code of Conduct, I would submit that the ultimatum issued by the Board's trustees is in fact in itself forcing the Trustee Code of Conduct to be broken by forcing a sitting trustee to be unable to govern or represent, is, thus, an unactionable motion, and should be ruled out of order, if not re-considered by one who voted on the prevailing side, at the next meeting of the Board.

I ask that the Board's trustees consider again the effects of this ultimatum on the ability of trustees to govern and to represent the public and on the way that such an ultimatum is a hindrance to democracy. I ask that ultimatum be over-turned.

Respectfully,

Joshua Weresch

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Received Monday April 1, 2024

To the HWDSB's trustees:

I write as a parent of 4 students in an HWDSB elementary school.

On the agenda of the Board's meeting on 25 March, 2024, the Board shared correspondence from Elliott Biro, regarding the 8 March, 2024, protest at the Education Centre. I wish to echo Elliott's concerns that Jewish students have not yet been able to communicate their experiences to the HWDSB and request that the Board facilitate this communication as swiftly as possible.

It is important to hear from all students for whom their religious identity is an integral part of their being in the world. It is also important that all students feel safe, supported, and welcomed in the HWDSB's schools.

Thank you for your time and attention in these regards.

Respectfully,

Joshua Weresch

April 1, 2024

HWDSB Board of Trustees,

I would like to submit correspondence to communicate my disappointment with Trustee Dahab with regards to the discussion concerning my previous correspondence from the March 25th HWDSB Board Meeting. That letter questioned whether the HWDSB was upholding their responsibilities to maintain an “accessible, respectful, and inclusive learning and working environments free of discrimination and harassment” as described in the HWDSB Human Rights Policy (A1.1). Specifically, it asked whether board leadership had instructed its employees (specifically security personnel) on restricting chants that could be considered hate speech. As well, it questioned what responsibility Trustee Dahab had (who attended the rally) to prevent the chants mentioned in the letter. I fully agree that discussion on my letter should occur; this is why I sent it. I had hoped that discussion would have been done in an open and transparent manner.

Trustee Dahab objected to my correspondence being filed because students were filmed on school property without their consent. When Vice-Chair Tut motioned that the correspondence should be forwarded to the Human Rights Office (HRO), as it concerned the safety of Jewish students and whether HWDSB was following the Human Rights Policy to protect its Jewish students, Trustee Dahab objected to the motion. Trustee Dahab objected again even after Vice-Chair Tut said forwarding the correspondence was the standard response. Afterwards, Trustee Dahab objected to the filing of my correspondence due to its “tone”.

While I agree that student safety is of the utmost concern, I question whether the discussion on student safety was sincere. The Ontario Federation of Labour states in their *An Activist's Guide to Safer Protesting*, “In a public setting there is no expectation of privacy”; during the meeting this was hinted at by Director Robinson Petrazzini. Why was Trustee Dahab not aware of this, and did she voice these concerns directly to the students? After all the CHCH filmed the protest and aired footage on social media. However, what Trustee Dahab did not mention is that my letter questioned what was expected from her to maintain “the integrity and dignity of office” as a HWDSB trustee. Rejecting my correspondence from being filed would prevent scrutiny of this question.

I understand that although Trustee Dahab did not declare a conflict of interest (agenda item 5), she was not obliged to do so. The conflicts of interest noted in the Trustee Code of Conduct only concerns the receiving of gifts and conflicts of a financial nature. Failure to note that she was mentioned in my letter is neither of the above. However, this may be construed as a conflict of interest by Canada's Conflict of Interest Act, governing federal public office holders, as one of the prohibited activities is *using their position to influence a decision to further private interests*. Avoidance of scrutiny may be encompassed by this. While this law does not apply to HWDSB trustees, I would like to highlight the limitations of the current provisions in only considering financial issues. I would like to ask the Governance Committee to examine whether the definition of

Conflict of Interest in the Trustee Code of Conduct should be expanded and include more of what is commonly seen as a conflict of interest.

I take no pleasure in writing this letter. I am deeply concerned and frustrated with Trustee Dahab's attempt to suppress my previous letter to the board. My goal has always been the restoration of a safe and inclusive learning environment for my children and other Jewish students within the HWDSB. From my numerous appeals to the board (Mar 25/24, Jan 29/24, Dec 18/23, and Nov 17/23), Trustee Dahab is well aware of the on-going harassment and threats my child is facing within HWDSB, and that we reside in her ward. Why is my own ward councillor trying to suppress my concerns about the environment within the HWDSB, when I have been very clear that there are on-going human rights issues concerning a Jewish student within her ward?

Respectfully yours

Elliot Biro (Ward 2)

c.c. [REDACTED]

To: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), Board of Directors
From: HWDSB student Parents: Suad and Andrew Waller
Subject: The March 8th Secondary Students Walkout and [REDACTED]
Harmful Correspondence.

Dear Board of Directors,

On March 8th, the “Hamilton Out for Palestine” protest was held in front of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Education Centre (HWDSB). HWDSB secondary students left their classes at 11:30 am to bring attention to the ongoing atrocities in Palestine and to advocate for human rights and justice. They sought to highlight the effects of genocide on the well-being of youth, particularly those who have lost family members to the on-going genocide, displacement, or have had their entire families decimated.

A key focus of their protest was to challenge the censorship, the suppression of student voices and the silencing of Palestinian, Muslim, and Arab students, upholding their right to express their anguish, cultural attire, and symbols within the school.

To all HWDSB members, this protest served as a reminder of a genocide that has killed over 15,000 children, left 20,000 children orphaned, and thousands under the rubble. It appears that the painful history of the children of Turtle Island, who remain affected by the legacy of colonial residential schools, has not yet imparted its intended lessons. We have not fully reconciled with the past or with the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Instead, we persistently deny the existence of ongoing genocides and atrocities in our modern lives, silencing those impacted by these grave injustices. We must not wait another century to address these issues openly and honestly.

Unfortunately, students are being censored, monitored, and restricted from discussing these critical issues within the school, even as they watch the genocide live streamed. Their voices deserve to be heard, and their concerns should not be silenced by their school system.

The students followed all established protocols and were backed by parents and community members who provided security. They organized a walkout, proceeding directly to the HWDSB building to send HWDSB a message to stop students’ censorship and raise awareness of the ongoing genocide and its impact on

their well-being. Contrary to expectations, the board members remained inactive and unsupportive and did not reassure the students that their voices were heard.

Moreover, [REDACTED] exhibited hostility toward these students. [REDACTED] intentionally tried to suppress their deeply held feelings about events that profoundly and personally affect them. [REDACTED] sole purpose in being there seemed to be causing trouble for the more-than-one-hundred students. Furthermore, [REDACTED] was filming the children on HWDSB property—a very sensitive matter and a violation of HWDSB children’s safety and security. Such behavior is considered inappropriate and raises concerns and [REDACTED].

Is this [REDACTED], who has no direct connection to the students’ lives or the protest, acting inappropriately? Would [REDACTED] allow a stranger to film [REDACTED] and post it online? The same standards should apply to all children, regardless of their immigrant or Arab Palestinian background.

This occurred in a space where children, staff, and visitors should feel protected, especially with security officers present. HWDSB also accepted a letter from the same [REDACTED] who admitted filming the children and allowed its online publication without proper scrutiny or concern for the privacy and safety of the minors involved. They accepted the letter and kept it on the HWDSB website without addressing the evident prejudice, the historical distortions and biased language it contained.

The board’s actions not only compromised the safety and security of the students who sought to communicate with them but also defended the filming during a board meeting when discussing [REDACTED] letter about the March 8th walkout. The board refused to dismiss [REDACTED] letter, which included harmful and potentially illegal activities such as photographing children.

By endorsing a narrative that denies historical facts and is anti-Indigenous, the board neglected to acknowledge that such sentiments have a global impact. [REDACTED] reference to “from the water to the water” during the Palestinian chants at the walkout accurately reflects the sentiment of the indigenous people of Palestine. However, misrepresenting this as a call for genocide against Israelis is both prejudiced and damaging. Palestine is an Arab country, and the indigenous Arabs of Palestine, whether Jewish, Muslim, Christian, or of other faiths, have a history that predates Israeli colonization. Denying their existence and historical presence

before 1948 is not only discriminatory but also negates their legitimate historical significance.

This situation reflects a troubling reality at HWDSB, characterized by bias, ethical violations, discrimination, racism, historical denial, and bigotry. It is a harsh reality, indeed. How can trust be placed in a board that first allows the filming of children, specifically Palestinian and marginalized children of immigrant parents, causing them harm? How can trust be placed in a board that seeks advice from an equity department that learned about Anti-Semitism in the occupied territories of Jerusalem, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]? This demonstrates a clear pattern of bias on the part of HWDSB!

This situation goes beyond mere harm—it is deeply troubling. How can we reconcile the fact that HWDSB seemingly colluded with [REDACTED], allowing [REDACTED] to film and endorsing [REDACTED]? There are several pressing concerns here.

The evident lack of awareness among board members and trustees must be addressed seriously and immediately. We demand that the board issue an apology to every student who participated in the protest and felt unsafe. The censorship on students must be lifted, and any form of censorship against students, board members, or staff should never be allowed. [REDACTED] must surrender all copies to the police or/and the board. Furthermore, the board must assure all students, particularly female and transgender students, that they are protected and that any unauthorized photos of students posted online will be reported.

Sincerely,

Suad and Andrew Waller

Hamilton ON

To: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB), Board of Directors
From: HWDSB students Parent: Heather Alexander
Subject: The Investigation of Trustee Dahab

Dear Board of Directors,

As a concerned parent within the HWDSB I feel compelled to address recent events surrounding Trustee Dahab's tenure as an elected trustee. The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) has placed Trustee Dahab under a private investigation—an action that raises serious questions and ethical concerns.

Trustee Dahab was elected by the people of Ward 2 to represent the most diverse and vulnerable community—a beacon of hope and advocacy for those often unheard. However, the board's decision to subject her to a private investigation has left many puzzled. This investigation aims to limit Trustee Dahab's voice on her personal social media accounts regarding Gaza and her support for Palestine.

Why was this investigation initiated in the first place? Trustee Dahab, like others, has the right to express her views. Shouldn't we apply the same scrutiny to anyone who publicly expresses support for Israel given that the International Criminal Court is investigating them for the crime of genocide?

Trustee Dahab had always been a vocal champion for human rights, her voice a powerful instrument for change. The board's insistence on silencing her, demanding the erasure of her statements, struck us as a denial of her—and our—democratic rights. The board's initiation of an investigation into Trustee Dahab violates the code of ethics. This action infringes upon her right to free speech, which is safeguarded by our charter, allowing us to express and stand up for human rights. Trustee Dahab has caused no harm to anyone, and supports human rights is noble and commendable.

Trustee Dahab has been intentionally intimidated by the very institution that should have supported her stance on human rights. They sought to silence her, to keep her voters, us, the parents, in the dark, away from the truth that unfolded behind closed doors.

But Dahab is not just a trustee; she is the embodiment of honesty and care. Her campaign was a testament to her commitment to making our education system better, to ensuring our children thrive. She empowers thousands, bridging gaps and ensuring everyone's voices are heard. She is a guiding light for newcomers, for parents who struggled with the language, for all of us who sought a voice within the chambers of governance and sought a better understanding of the HWDSB system.

This pattern of discrimination is not new to the HWDSB. We remember Ahona Mehdi, the student trustee from 2019-2020, who bravely came forward with her concerns, echoing the same battles Trustee Dahab is now facing. The board in this case following an investigation admitted

to having failed this student trustee and instead of learning from the mistakes of this failed past, is simply repeating them.

If our officially elected trustees are in an environment where the boards own written policies on equity and inclusion are not modeled (“Support positive learning and workplace environments where all students and staff feel safe, support and accepted” [Equity and Inclusion Policy 5.4](#)) but instead bullied, silenced, and marginalized —how can we expect to build trust in the establishment of the HWDSB to build a foundation for our children and the community?

On December 4, 2023, a student-led Board Motion addressing acts of anti-Palestinian racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism was received and passed by the HWDSB Board of Trustees. The motion was put forward by student trustee Thomas Lin and trustee Sabreina Dahab after extensive consultation with Palestinian and Muslim students. These students cited increased levels of anti-Palestinian racism within schools as a significant concern.

However, while the motion aimed to address anti-Palestinian racism (APR) within the HWDSB system, it remains insufficient and ineffective. Notably, the motion was passed while Trustee Dahab is under investigation for the very same issue the motion addresses in the first place. The board’s decision to move a motion to tackle APR while simultaneously perpetrating it against one of their colleagues seems contradictory and leaves one to assume it was passed for purposes of optics and image rather than genuine action and change.

As parents, we will continue to rally behind Trustee Dahab as our voice within the board. We demand transparency and accountability and will continue to advocate for her rights as well as those of ALL children and staff at the HWDSB as expressed in the [policies](#) the current board claims to stand behind.

With that in mind I ask that you implement the following actions:

- 1. Drop all investigations and sanctions against Trustee Dahab.**
- 2. Advocate for transparency, justice, and respect for Trustee Dahab and all of us.**
- 3. Publicly apologize to her and her voters.**

Sincerely,

Heather Alexander
Hamilton, ON

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: April 8, 2024

From: Policy Committee

Date of Meeting: March 6, 2024

The committee held a meeting from 6:32 p.m. to 8:04 p.m. on March 6, 2024, at 20 Education Court, Room EC-340D with Trustee Todd White presiding.

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

ACTION ITEM:

A. Equity and Inclusion

Associate Director Nunn shared the Equity and Inclusion policy was presented last month and is before the committee again to review the changes discussed including updates to the guiding principles. Terminology was updated to reflect only the terms referenced in this policy and a footnote was added to highlight the sources.

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

CARRIED

B. Performance Appraisal

Associate Director Nunn shared the minor changes made to the Performance Appraisal policy which aligns with the human rights, anti-black racism and equity and inclusion policy honouring the guiding principles. Through further discussion additional changes were made to the language and terminology.

On the motion of Trustee Buck, the Policy Committee recommends that: **the Performance Appraisal Policy be recommended for approval as amended.**

CARRIED

C. Professional Learning

Associate Director Nunn shared the minor changes made to the Professional Learning policy with some being carried over from the Performance Appraisal policy to keep these two policies in alignment and to honour the guiding principles. Through further discussion additional changes were made to the language and terminology.

On the motion of Trustee Buck, the Policy Committee recommends that: **the Professional Learning Policy be recommended for approval as amended.**

CARRIED

MONITORING ITEMS:

D. Policy Development Process - Procedures & Implementation Sections

Associate Director Nunn presented to the committee the revisions discussed at the February 22, 2024 Policy Committee meeting. There were some additional changes captured to create a better flow of the Procedure & Implementation process.

E. Policy Development Process – Policy Evaluation and Review

Associate Director Nunn presented to the committee the Policy Evaluation and Review which is a new section. The policy evaluation and review results from a variety of factors depending on the policy. Those factors provided further discussion on who should be making the recommendations and to who (Board or Committee). The language in this policy was updated to reflect those discussions. Updates will be presented at the next policy committee meeting. Staff will further share their work in the development of a Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool for the development of Board policies and procedures.

Respectfully submitted,
Todd White, Chair of the Committee

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



Equity and Inclusion

Date Approved: XXXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXXX

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to the principles of equity through inclusive programming, services, and operations, in achieving the goal of providing equitable quality education for all students. This policy aligns with the Board's Human Rights Policy, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Education Act and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The Equity and Inclusion Policy affirms the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) in that Indigenous peoples have an inherent and collective right to sovereignty, self-determination and self-government, and as such, this policy is complementary to the Indigenous Education Policy.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Recognizing our responsibilities as Treaty Partners on the pathway towards Indigenous Educational Wellness, in friendship with sovereign host nations and the urban Indigenous communities of Hamilton.
- Fostering an anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning and working environments through acknowledging, understanding, and addressing systems of oppressions that can result in systemic inequalities and inequitable educational outcomes.
- Implementing equitable and inclusive education strategies that are fundamental in providing quality education and addressing inequities in educational opportunities, student achievement and well-being outcomes, through high quality educational practices that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive.
- Promoting employment equity by identifying and removing barriers to equitable employment to develop a diverse workforce that reflects and is responsive to the diverse experiences of the student population.
- Creating a culture of human rights and anti-discrimination by identifying, challenging, and responding to discriminatory practices, biases and systemic barriers to ensure that students and staff learn and work in environments free from discrimination and harassment.
- Strengthening inclusive school community partnerships by building reciprocal and meaningful relationships with families and community partners.
- Improving mental health and well-being outcomes through supportive, respectful, inclusive, and culturally relevant learning and working environments.
- Providing shared leadership through independent and collaborative commitment to continuous learning and professional development to embed equity and inclusion.
- Fostering accountable and compassionate leadership in developing and maintaining appropriate mechanisms to openly communicate the Board's actions in addressing inequities.



Equity and Inclusion

Date Approved: XXXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXXX

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INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Students and staff feel a sense of belonging and can learn and work in inclusive and equitable environments.
- Identify and address systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that reproduce disproportional educational outcomes.
- Nurture reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners in a shared effort towards a restorative education system.
- Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of the Board's policies, operations, learning and working environments.
- Support inclusive community partnerships, engagement and communication of ongoing progress.
- Establish mechanisms to measure progress towards equity and inclusion.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
 Members of Executive Council
 System and School Leaders
 HWDSB Staff

TERMINOLOGY:ⁱ

Accountability: Refers to the process whereby organizations and institutions as members of a diverse community are subject to the obligation to maintain a certain level of ethics and responsiveness and reporting regarding the quality, effectiveness and relevance of their service or practices and the method of delivery.

Anti-oppression: A proactive and consistent process of acknowledging different forms of oppression (colonialism, racism, ableism, classism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, classism, islamophobia, antisemitism, and other forms); and of seeking to identify, challenge, disrupt and eliminate oppressive ideologies, practices, and outcomes.

Anti-racism: A proactive and consistent process of acknowledging racism; and of seeking to identify, challenge, disrupt and eliminate racism in all its forms (individual, institutional, systemic racism).

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person or groups of people with shared identities from fully taking part in all aspects of society, including physical, architectural, information or communications, attitudinal, economic and technological barriers, as well as policies or practices.

Bias: An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgements.



Equity and Inclusion

Date Approved: XXXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXXX

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Community Partnerships: Collaborative relationships between institutions and groups within the community in which there is recognition of the experience of participants and evidence of their involvement in the decision making of the institutions.

Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogies: An inclusive education system, students must see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, so that they can feel engaged in and empowered by their learning experiences. Students need to experience teaching and learning that reflect their needs and who they are. To ensure that this happens, educators in Ontario schools embrace culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP), which recognizes that all students learn in ways that are connected to background, language, family structure, and social or cultural identity. ([Ministry of Education](#))

Discrimination: Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, disability, gender expression, gender identity, receipt of public assistance, record of offences (in employment only), as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors. Discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, has the effect of preventing or limiting access to opportunities, benefits, or advantages that are available to other members of society. Discrimination may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Employment Equity: A program designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcome in employment by identifying and eliminating discriminatory policies and practices, remedying the effects of past discrimination, and ensuring appropriate representation of designated groups, i.e., women, Indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. Employment equity programs usually involve setting goals and timelines in order to ensure that defined objectives are met by a specified date.

Equality: The principle that each person must be treated equally by and under the law. In Canada, the right to equality is enshrined in provincial and federal human rights legislations and the Charter. Equality is often understood by the notions of both formal equality (treating everyone the same in all situations) and substantive equality (treating some differently than others in order to treat some equally).

Equitable: Just or characterized by fairness or equity. Equitable treatment can at times differ from same treatment.

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

Identity-based data: Refers to the socio-demographics information about a person including, but not limited to, their race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity and so on.

Inclusion: While diversity is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society, inclusion is about people with different identities feeling valued, accepted and welcomed within an environment. Having diversity doesn't mean there is inclusion.



Equity and Inclusion

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Inclusive Education: Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected.

Indigenous Educational Wellness: An approach fostered by Indigenous communities to work collaboratively to develop an understanding of the relationship between education and wellness, and the historic legislative abuses that Indigenous communities continue to heal from while fostering an understanding that education is a part of total wellness and reframe Indigenous Education discourse using rich Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogies.

Ontario Human Rights Code: A provincial law that gives everyone equal rights and opportunities, without discrimination, in special areas such as education, jobs, housing, and services. The goal of the Code is to address and ultimately prevent discrimination and harassment. ([Ontario Human Rights Code](#))

Racism: A set of erroneous assumptions, opinions and actions stemming from the belief that one race is inherently superior to another. Racism may be evident in organizational and institutional structures, policies, procedures, and programs, as well as in the attitudes and behaviours of individuals.

Restorative Indigenous Education: A tempered learning environment that reflects true reconciliatory actions and the reemergence of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies that communities were deprived of for so long.

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.

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.

Systemic barrier: A barrier embedded in the social or administrative structures of an organization, including the physical accessibility of an organization, organizational policies, practices, and decision-making processes, or the culture of an organization. These may appear neutral on the surface but exclude members of groups protected by the Human Rights Code.

Systemic discrimination: Patterns of behaviour, policies or practices that are part of the social or administrative structures of an organization which create or perpetuate a position of relative disadvantage, advantage, or privilege for people of certain for groups.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Review, update and implement the Board's Human Rights and Equity Action Plan.
- Review, update and implement the Equity and Inclusion Procedures



Equity and Inclusion

Date Approved: XXXXX

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PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Students and staff feel a sense of belonging and learn and work in inclusive and equitable environments.	Student Voice Surveys Staff Voice Surveys Parent Voice Survey
Identify and address systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that reproduce disproportional educational opportunities outcomes.	Student Census Staff Census Disproportionality Reports
Nurture reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners in a shared effort towards a restorative education system.	Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan Board Improvement Plan Disproportionality Reports School Improvement Plans
Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in all aspects of the Board's policies, operations, learning and working environments.	Policy reviews Board Improvement Plan School Improvement Plans
Support inclusive community partnerships, engagement and communication of ongoing progress.	Partnership Database Parent Voice survey
Establish mechanisms to measure progress towards equity and inclusion.	Identity-based data collection (Staff and Student Census) Disproportionality Reports Human Rights and Equity Action Plan Implementation Reports

REFERENCES:

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)
[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)
[Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#)
[Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandum 119 Education Act](#)
[United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People](#)
[HWDSB Human Rights Policy](#)

ⁱ Sources for definitions are Ontario Human Rights Commission, Ontario Anti-racism Directorate, Ontario Education Equity Action Plan, Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness



Performance Appraisal

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) believes that all students receive the benefit of an educational system staffed by competent and effective staff who have received the assistance of management in their professional growth and support with identifying career goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Support all employees with carrying out their responsibilities in a cooperative and professional manner, working in compliance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, HWDSB policy, and procedures, the Education Act and other relevant legislation.
- Foster an anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning and working environment through acknowledging, understanding, and addressing systems of oppressions that can result in systemic inequalities and inequitable educational outcomes.
- Value employees by respecting their concerns, responding to their needs, encouraging professional growth, and recognizing their accomplishments.
- Provide staff with professional and leadership development to strengthen employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies to embed equity, and inclusive practices into their daily classroom and workplace practices.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Performance appraisals of all staff are conducted in accordance with one of the following Ministry mandated/HWDSB processes for their appropriate employee group:
 - Director of Education's Performance Appraisal (DPA)
 - Employee Performance Appraisals
 - Principal/Vice Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA)
 - Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal (SOPA)
 - Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) and New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP)
- Employee professional learning, leadership development, and performance appraisal processes promote continuous engagement and improvement for all employee groups.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council



Performance Appraisal

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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TERMINOLOGY:

Professional Learning: A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving employee effectiveness.

Performance Appraisal: An assessment of an employee's performance to gauge progress toward predetermined goals.

ACTION REQUIRED:

The performance of employees is appraised based on the procedures and guidelines indicated within the performance appraisal system as legislated or mandated for each employee group at HWDSB.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Performance management of all staff is conducted in accordance with one of the following Ministry mandated/HWDSB processes for their appropriate employee group: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Director's Performance Appraisal (DPA) o Employee Performance Appraisal (TBD) o Principal/Vice Principal Performance Appraisal (PPA) o Supervisory Officer Performance Appraisal (SOPA) o Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) and New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) 	Completion of performance appraisals in accordance with legislated guidelines and HWDSB appraisal processes, which will be reported to the Board of Trustees annually.
Employee professional learning, leadership development and performance management processes promote continuous improvement and engagement for all employee groups.	Growth/Development/Continuous Improvement Plans in place for employees who have completed performance appraisals, which will be reported to the Board of Trustees annually.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Education Act

Education Act Regulations

Ontario Leadership Framework



Professional Learning

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to fostering an environment of continuous learning and improvement for all its employees, through various supports and programs that align with HWDSB's strategic directions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Deliver learning programs and supports that are driven by the HWDSB Strategic Direction, system initiatives, legislated regulations, school, and service department plans and identified staff needs.
- Create a culture of human rights and anti-discrimination by offering professional development opportunity which identify, challenge, and respond to discriminatory practices, biases, and systemic barriers to ensure that students and staff learn and work in environments free from discrimination, and harassment.
- Foster an anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning and working environments through acknowledging, understanding, and addressing systems of oppressions that can result in systemic inequalities and inequitable educational outcomes.
- Promote a professional learning culture that is focused on the development of collective and distributed leadership that builds a culture of academic optimism.
- Provide a variety of in-person and virtual learning opportunities that foster collaboration, are accessible and meet the diverse learning needs of all employees.
- Provide staff with professional and leadership development to strengthen employees' skills, knowledge and competencies to embed equity and inclusive practices into their daily classroom and workplace practices.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

Effective employee professional learning promotes a climate of continuous improvement, and engagement for all employee groups.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council

TERMINOLOGY:



Professional Learning

Date Approved: XXXX

Projected Review Date: XXXX

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Professional Learning: A comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving employee effectiveness.

Distributed Leadership: Leadership as a product of the interactions of leaders, their followers and their situation.

Academic Optimism: Collective efficacy, trust and high expectations for staff and students.

ACTION REQUIRED:

The Board Improvement Plan, through Ministry guidelines and other legislated requirements, will guide the priorities for developing and delivering professional learning.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Effective employee professional learning promotes a climate of continuous improvement and engagement for all employee groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional learning for employees will be assessed through the employee survey, focusing on continuous improvement opportunities and staff engagement. • Student and staff voice survey

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Education Act Regulations

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: April 8, 2024

From: Finance and Facilities Committee

Date of Meeting: March 28, 2024

The committee held a hybrid meeting from 6:01pm to 6:31pm on March 28, 2024, with Trustee Paul Tut presiding as Chair.

Members participating were: Trustees Becky Buck, Amanda Fehrman, Paul Tut and Todd White
Regrets from: Trustee Maria Felix Miller

ACTION ITEMS

A. 2024-25 School Based Staffing Report

Staff presented the 2024-25 full-time equivalent school-based staffing positions. Staffing levels change due to changes in enrolment, Ministry class size regulations, budget adjustments and/or programming needs. Due to the uncertainty of the Priority and Partnership Funding, some positions supported by this allocation have been reduced from the preliminary budget. The Ministry of Education is expected to provide information regarding the 2024-25 education funding through the Grants for Student Needs (GSN). The impact of this funding announcement will be calculated once the Funding Model Technical Paper and Grant Estimate forms are available. As the budget development exercise continues, it may be necessary to increase or decrease staffing levels.

Staff indicated that the staffing approved in the recommended action will provide for a smooth start up to the 2024-25 school year and enables the staffing process to ensure collective agreement compliance and effective school-based staffing decisions.

On the motion of Amanda Fehrman, the Finance and Facilities Committee RECOMMENDS: **that the preliminary allocation of the following full-time equivalent positions for the purpose of 2024-25 school-based staffing be approved:**

Elementary Teachers	2,135.00
Secondary Teachers	948.16
Early Childhood Educators	277.00
Educational Assistants	693.50
Principals/Vice Principals	158.00
School Office Administration	201.00
School Custodial	357.00

CARRIED

MONITORING ITEMS

B. Interim Financial Status Report – January 31, 2024

The interim financial status report as presented is based on information available and assumptions as of January 31, 2024. Budget to actual trends were reviewed in order to forecast the Board’s August 31, 2024, year-end position from a financial, staffing and enrolment perspective. At this point, the budget

is balanced. The contingency is intact and is projected to remain intact until the end of the year. As with all forecasts, as new information is received or as assumptions change, the resulting Interim Financial Reports will be updated accordingly.

C. Capital Projects Update

Staff provided an updated summary of all the capital projects in various phases. The summary was categorized by each project's source of funding and project initiative. Staff continue to deliver several Capital projects, which include school renewal work, Elementary and Secondary Facility Benchmark Strategy, Elementary and Secondary Program Strategy, and new Capital Priorities projects. The project status updates are current as of March 15, 2024. Staff will continue to update Trustees as to the status of these projects on a regular basis.

Respectfully submitted,
Paul Tut, Chair of the Committee

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



BOARD REPORT

April 8, 2024

Student Trustees and Shakowennakarátats 2024-2025

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini

Prepared By: Estella Jones, Superintendent, Board Math Lead K-12

Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead

Heather Miller, Officer of Trustee Services

Recommendation:

That the following students be confirmed to stand as Student Trustees and Shakowennakarátats with HWDSB for the term of office August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025.

- Oluwafikunayomi (Fikun) Alabi (Student Trustee)
- Daunte Hillen (Shakowennakarátats)
- Victoria Li (Student Trustee)

**names above are listed in alphabetical order by last name*

Background:

Similar to previous years, the election process for the two Student Trustee representatives was completed via electronic ballots and provided an opportunity for every Grade 7-12 HWDSB student to participate in voting for their top two (2) candidates to represent their voice at the boardroom table. Following the individual student submissions, the votes at each school were tallied and each school (with grades 7-12) submitted a final ballot with the school's top two (2) choices that was used in determining the successful candidates voted as Student Trustees for 2024-2025.

Student Trustee Election candidates were invited to submit video recordings of themselves answering questions related to the role of Student Trustee. The videos and candidate bios were made available on the HWDSB website for students to review prior to casting their vote for Student Trustees.

Raising Shakowennakarátats (they raise/lift the voices of their community)

Phonetic Pronunciation: Saw-go-wanna-gah-LAW-duts

Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE) is a student-driven leadership and learning initiative (for Indigenous learners, by Indigenous learners) which began in 2018-19.

The Governance Structure has been influenced by '*Our Sustenance*', Corn, Beans and Squash (also known as *The Three Sisters*), a shared leadership model of interdependence, cooperation and collaboration. '*Our Sustenance*' reminds us that each plant has a role and responsibility to contribute towards their individual and collective optimal health, growth and well-being. Inspired by natural laws, these symbiotic relationships represent 'unity of strength' and inform how we come together in-relationship.

The position representing Indigenous Students was selected based on consensus decision-making from active participants of CC:ROSE.

CC:ROSE has raised Daunte Hillen, Anishinaabe from Fort William First Nation to the title of Shakowennakarátats.

Status:

A total of eleven (11) applications were received and all candidates moved on to the Election Assembly as they all met the eligibility criteria. Applications were received from Ancaster High, Glendale, Nora Frances Henderson, Orchard Park, Saltfleet, Sherwood, Westdale and Westmount secondary schools (some schools had multiple applications submitted).

[O. Regulation 7/07](#), states that each school board is to have a minimum of two, but no more than 3 student trustees. Shakowennakarátats represents the third student trustee position. However, to be respectful of and responsive to the '*Our Sustenance*' CC:ROSE Governance Model, should the need arise for two (2) or more Indigenous Student representatives to support the role of Shakowennakarátats, the Board of Trustees and HWDSB staff will work in friendship with the Indigenous Education Department to determine meaningful involvement and participation.

Financial Implications:

Financial implications are within the student trustee funding allocation provided by the Ministry of Education through the Grants for Student Needs.



BOARD/COMMITTEE REPORT

April 8, 2024

Update on RESOLUTION #23-165 (Dress Guidelines)

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Student Achievement – Equity, Mental Health, and Well-Being

Recommendation:

That the update on Dress Guidelines (RESOLUTION #23-165) be received.

Background:

RESOLUTION #23-165 was passed on December 4th, 2023 as a Notice of Motion regarding Anti-Palestinian Racism. The motion requires school staff to be provided with the updated Student Dress Guidelines, which protects students from discrimination against cultural dress or headwear requirements including the Keffiyeh, to support religious/creed accommodations.

Clarification on the Student Dress Guidelines were sent to all staff on December 21, 2023, that included cultural dress or headwear requirements. The Student Dress Guidelines have been updated and the implementation plan is currently in the development stage. The Student Dress Guidelines will be implemented in the fall of 2024.

Status:

Catalyst

There has been discrimination in how dress codes/guidelines in school boards are worded and implemented in the past. Some school dress codes/guidelines are outdated and adhere to sexist ideas and practices. When dress codes/guidelines are vague, they can be interpreted in ways that target certain students and perpetuate ongoing systems of discrimination.

Consultation

Public consultation was sought through an online survey. The HWDSB Community was invited to share thoughts and ideas on the current Student Dress Guidelines and to provide suggestions for future guidelines on Engage HWDSB platform. A total of 588 people accessed the Engage HWDSB platform to provide feedback.

Elementary and Secondary Student Senate attended sessions to review the HWDSB temporary Student Dress Guidelines and provide feedback. Union Leaders, Hamilton Wentworth Principal Council (HWPC) and the Parent Involvement Committee were also asked to provide feedback.

All the feedback collected varied within perspectives. Using a lens of anti-racism and anti-oppression, a new Student Dress Guideline was drafted in consultation with students.

Dress Guidelines in Student Friendly Language

Students from grades 8-12, including members from HWDSB student voice groups, were invited to collaborate on the creation of a Student Dress Guideline in Student Friendly Language.

The students started their review by examining the history of such guidelines and what led to the draft of a new Student Dress Guideline. The students reviewed Dress Codes and Guidelines from seven different school boards in Ontario. They discerned their personal preferences associated with the sample Guidelines and built consensus through whole groups discussion. The students reviewed HWDSB's Temporary Dress Guidelines and drafted student friendly language while focusing on their collective preferences. They generated various ways to organize the student friendly language and considered how to communicate the guidelines most clearly. Appendix A is an example of the draft Student Dress Guidelines they created.

Next Steps

Staff are working with the Communications Department to develop a publish ready poster that aligns with HWDSB's colours and branding.

In the fall of 2024, the Student Dress Guidelines will be released to students, staff and communities, with additional resources created by the Equity Department to support implementation.

Financial Implications:

Posters will be printed for all schools and are estimated to cost \$500.00. Staff are currently exploring the creation of an informational video, and what it would cost.

Strategic Directions:

The action to update the Dress Guidelines supports our Strategic Direction to Collaborate with Students, Families and Communities to ensure barriers that affect student engagement are removed. This action is steeped in the core value of dignity, which is an unconditional right of HWDSB students, staff, families, and communities and demonstrates our commitment to ensure every student can bring their authentic selves to school and be respected, valued and included.

Appendix A:

STYLE YOUR CREATIVITY!

HWDSB STUDENT DRESS GUIDELINES

Headwear	Tops	Bottoms
Can Wear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hats Durags Bandanas Head scarves Religious/creed-based headwear 	Can Show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms Shoulders Bellies Neck lines Chest Straps 	Can Show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legs Thighs Hips Straps Waistbands
Examples Include: Burqas, hijabs, turbans, kippahs, yarmulkes, niqabs, fezzes, keffiyehs, tuques, ballcaps, etc.	Examples Include: T-shirts, vests, hoodies, midriff-bearing shirts, crop tops, strap tops, tube tops, etc.	Examples Include: Pants, dresses, shorts, jeans (including ripped), sweatpants, leggings, fitted pants, skirts, etc.
Cannot Show: Fully covered face (Religious/creed-based headwear excluded), underwear as outerwear, nipples, groin, butts.		
Cannot Promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drugs/alcohol Illegal activity Hate/discrimination Pornography Profanity Violence 		

Note: Additional health and safety exceptions may apply.

To learn more about Student Dress Guidelines visit:
hwdsb.info/student-dress

HWDSB
 BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

