

**AGENDA: 7:00 pm**

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement
2. O Canada
3. Meeting Roll Call
4. Swearing-In Student Trustees and Shakowennakara:tats for 2025-2026
5. Approval of the Agenda
6. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
7. [Confirmation of the Minutes: June 16, 2025](#)

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

8. [Audit – September 16, 2025](#)
9. [Finance & Facilities – September 23, 2025](#)

Reports from Legislated Committees:

10. [Parent Involvement Committee – June 10 and September 9, 2025](#)
11. [Special Education Advisory Committee – September 10, 2025](#)

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

12. [Faith Community Advisory Committee – June 10, 2025](#)

13. Report from Committee of the Whole (Private) – September 29, 2025

14. Back to School Presentation (no report)

15. Trustee appointment to Committees (for the remainder of the 2024-25 term)

- A. Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- B. Trustee Special Committee – Finance & Facilities

16. 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)

17. Oral Reports from:

- A. Student Trustees' and Shakowennakará:tats Report
- B. Director's Report
- C. Chair's Report

18. Adjournment

---

**Trustees:** Kathy Archer, Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab, Dawn Danko, Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller, Graeme Noble, Paul Tut, Todd White, Elizabeth Wong, Abby Zaitley. Student Trustees Oluwafikunayomi (Fikun) Alabi, Victoria Li, and Shakowennakara:tats Daunte Hillen.

\*electronic participation, <sup>(R)</sup> regrets

---

#### 1. Call to Order

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

#### 2. Celebration of Student Trustee Leadership

The Chair of the Board, Director and Student Trustee Mentor shared comments on behalf of the Board of Trustees and staff, thanking Student Trustees Li, Alabi, and Shakowennakara:tats Dillen for their contributions as student leaders this year. The students were commended for their innovation, creativity, and ability to advocate for student issues while staying true to themselves. Speakers remarked that the students embody HWDSB's core values and for their remarkable contributions, which continue to inspire and elevate the standard for student leadership each year.

Shakowennakara:tats Hillen was recognized for his advocacy and leadership, including co-leading Joy Day, participating in community engagement, and being named Chair of the Indigenous Student Trustee Council.

Student Trustee Alabi was praised for strong advocacy and leadership at Orchard Park, receiving multiple awards, and heading to Carleton University to study Aerospace Engineering.

Student Trustee Li was commended for her planning and coordination as a student trustee, continuing a family legacy, and heading to McMaster University to study Life Sciences.

#### 3. Approval of the Agenda

Trustees Danko/White moved that the agenda be approved.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

#### 4. Confirmation of the Minutes

**RESOLUTION #25-62:** Trustees Danko/Zaitley moved that the minutes from June 9, 2025, be confirmed.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

#### 5. Audit Committee

**RESOLUTION #25-63:** Trustees Danko/Archer moved that the Audit Committee report from June 4, 2025, be received.

#### 6. Program Committee

**RESOLUTION #25-64:** Trustees Danko/Noble moved that the motion be amended (bold text):

- That a Working Group be formed and co-led by the Indigenous Education Lead, **to explore the opportunities for** a new K-12 Indigenous School in HWDSB, driven by and alongside the local Indigenous community with **updates to Trustees**.

The motion was **CARRIED** on the following division:

In Favour (9): Trustees Buck, Dahab, Danko, Fehrman, Miller, Noble, White, Wong, Zaitley  
Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

Opposed (2): Trustees Archer and Tut

**RESOLUTION #25-65:** Trustees Fehrman/Wong moved that the Program Committee report from June 5, 2025, be approved as amended including that a Working Group be formed and co-led by the Indigenous Education Lead, to explore the opportunities for a new K-12 Indigenous School in HWDSB, driven by and alongside the local Indigenous community with updates to Trustees.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **7. Finance & Facilities**

**RESOLUTION #25-66:** Trustees Tut/Noble moved that the Finance & Facilities Committee report from June 10, 2025, be approved including that:

- Staff provide an updated report on the projected costs of a gymnasium expansion at Billy Green Elementary School, including any changes to site plans, costing assumptions, or Ministry funding eligibility, and report back at the first Finance & Facilities Committee meeting of the 2025-2026 school year.
- The Board approve the 2025-2026 Operating Budget expenditures in the amount of \$750,803,443 and that the Associate Director, Business Services and Treasurer be authorized to proceed with the expenditure of funds (*Appendix C: 2025-2026 Summary of Expenditures by Economic Classification, June 10, 2025*)
- The Board approve the 2025-2026 Capital Budget expenditures in the amount of \$95,328,000 and that the Associate Director, Business Services and Treasurer be authorized to proceed with the expenditure of funds. The Associate Director, Business Services and Treasurer is further authorized to secure short-term financing for project expenditures until such time as permanent funding is secured, if required. (*Appendix D: 2025-2026 Capital Budget, June 10, 2025*)

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **8. Special Education Advisory Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-67:** Trustees Archer/Buck moved that the Special Education Advisory Committee report (SEAC) from June 11, 2025, be approved, including that Vanessa Doslea represent Lynwood Charlton Centre on SEAC.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.  
Trustee Danko left the meeting and did not participate in this vote.

## **9. Reports from Committee of the Whole (Private) - June 16, 2025**

**RESOLUTION #25-68:** Trustees Tut/Fehrman moved that the Committee of the Whole report from June 16, 2025, be approved, including:

- That the Audit Committee report from June 16, 2025, be approved, including the 2025-2026 Regional Internal Audit Plan.
- That the Minutes of Settlement between the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and the Canadian Office and Professional Employees (COPE) Union, Local 527, regarding the mid-term amendment, be approved and amended effective the date of ratification to August 31, 2026, as per the School Boards Collective Bargaining Act.

- That the Governance Committee report from June 4, 2025, be approved.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustees Alabi, Li and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen did not participate in the vote.

#### **10. Student Trustees' and Shakowennakara:tats report**

Shakowennakara:tats Hillen provided a verbal update:

- June is National Indigenous History month – a time to celebrate the history, cultures and contributions of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples.
- Youth Voices from Ontario video from OSTA-ACEO fall general meeting is now available to watch on YouTube.
- Earlier in May, represented OSTA-AECO at the Education Promise Summit.
- Shared appreciation to all that have supported him this past year, and looks forward to coming back next year for a second term.

Student Trustees Alabi and Li provided a verbal update:

- They brought forward their final report for the school year and reflected on their experiences as student Trustees with HWDSB. They shared their appreciation to everyone for the guidance, leadership and support throughout their term, noting it has been an honour to be the voice of students at HWDSB.

**RESOLUTION #25-69:** Trustees Wong/Buck moved to extend the meeting to 10:10 pm.

**CARRIED**

#### **11. Director's Report**

Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini presented the [Director's Update](#) which highlighted Our Values: Compassion, Dignity, Trust and JOY. The Director noted that at HWDSB, the work isn't just about outcomes, it's about how we engage and how we show up - with care, patience, kindness and love. She expressed her appreciation and admiration for the three Student Trustees who are such a beautiful representation of why they are student leaders in our system, and also offered her deep gratitude to the Chair, Trustees, staff and all members of the HWDSB community. She shared a quote from Maya Angelou "we delight in the beauty of the butterfly but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty." This quote really speaks powerfully to the journey that we've been on together here at HWDSB.

#### **12. Chair's Report**

Chair Miller shared her update and provided thanks to the Board of Trustees, students, staff and our families for all their hard work this past school year and for the way they show up for our communities. On behalf of the Trustees and staff, she wished everyone a wonderful restorative and relaxing summer break and looked forward to seeing everyone in the Fall.

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Reference: [Agenda Package](#), [Recording](#) and [Recording2](#)

8-1  
**COMMITTEE REPORT**

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: September 29, 2025

From: Audit Committee

Date of Meeting: September 16, 2025

The committee held a hybrid meeting from 6:00pm on September 16, 2025, with Trustee Dawn Danko presiding.

Members were Trustees Dawn Danko, Paul Tut <sup>(R)</sup> and Todd White\*. External Member Angela Zehr\*.

\*Electronic participation, <sup>(R)</sup>Regrets

\*\*\*\*\*

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**A. Election of the Chair**

On the motion of External Member Angela Zehr, **the Audit Committee appoints Trustee Dawn Danko as Chair of the Audit Committee for 2025-2026.**

**CARRIED**

**B. Annual Reports to the Board of Trustees and Ministry for 2024-25**

Staff presented the two annual reports that are required under Regulation 361/10.

On motion of External Member Angela Zehr, the Audit Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the “**Annual Report to the Board of Trustees for the year ended August 31, 2025**” be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for information.

**CARRIED**

On motion of External Member Angela Zehr, the Audit Committee **RECOMMENDS** that the “**Annual Report to the Board of Trustees and Forwarded to the Ministry of Education for the year ended August 31, 2025**” be sent to the Ministry.

**CARRIED**

**MONITORING ITEMS:**

**C. Review of Audit Committee Work Plan and Audit Committee Terms of Reference**

Committee members reviewed both items. Staff will revise both documents as needed to reflect any changes.

**D. Update on School Board Sector Issues**

Staff provided an update on transportation for the start of the school year.

Staff explained expense policy and the layers of sign off for expenditures.

**E. Update from Regional Internal Audit Team**

Andrea Eltherington provided an update on the continued professional development completed by the Regional Internal Audit Team.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dawn Danko, Chair of the Committee

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

## **Annual Report to the Board of Trustees For the year ended August 31, 2025**

This report summarizes the audit committee's actions for the year ending August 31, 2025.

### **Audit Committee Members**

The audit committee consisted of 5 members listed below:

- Trustee Dawn Danko – Chair effective September 17, 2024
- Trustee Paul Tut
- Trustee Todd White
- Angela Zehr - External representative
- Divya Iyengar - External representative, until end of November 2024

In addition, regular attendees at the Committee meetings were:

- Andrea Eltherington – Regional Internal Audit Manager
- David Marks – Partner, Audit, KPMG LLP
- Rodrigo Ruezga Gutierrez, KPMG LLP
- Sheryl Robinson-Petrazzini – Director of Education HWDSB
- Matthew Gerard – Associate Director, Business Services HWDSB
- Jagoda Kirilo – Senior Manager, Financial Services HWDSB

### **Administrative Tasks**

At the beginning of the year and in accordance with recommended good practice various administrative tasks were completed. These included:

- Annual review of the Audit Committee's Terms of Reference
- Developing a work plan
- Developing a meeting schedule and agenda for the year
- Signing off on the Declaration of Conflicts of Interest form

### **Meetings**

It was agreed to hold three meetings throughout the year with a fourth meeting, from September to June, if necessary. All meetings have been held as planned.

The members in attendance at each meeting were as follows:

<i>Member's Name</i>	<i>Sept 17, 2024</i>	<i>Nov 12, 2024</i>	<i>Mar 18, 2025</i>	<i>June 4, 2025</i>
<i>Dawn Danko</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Paul Tut</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Todd White</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Angela Zehr</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>
<i>Divya Iyengar</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>Term Ended</i>	<i>Term Ended</i>

## **Governance**

The audit committee operated throughout the fiscal year ending August 31, 2025. All of the members satisfied the eligibility requirements in accordance with Ontario Regulation 361/10.

## **External Auditors**

The relationship with the external auditors has been satisfactory and private meetings were held during the year. The external auditors *KPMG* presented the scope and extent of their work to the committee. The external auditors confirmed their independence in the letter dated November 12, 2024. The audit committee reviewed and recommended the approval of the annual audited financial statements on November 12, 2024. The audit committee supported the reappointment of the external auditors for the next fiscal year as per the result of a competitive process completed with a term of May 1, 2023, to August 31, 2026.

## **Internal Auditors**

The relationship with the internal auditors has been satisfactory and private meetings were held during the year. The Committee reviewed the results of the risk assessment, as well as the annual audit plan for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The internal auditors performed the following work during the year:

### **PLANNED AUDITS:**

- Education Development Charges
- Student Well-being

### **FOLLOW UP AUDITS:**

- BAS 2000 Data Analytics
- IT Vulnerability
- Health and Safety
- Back-up, Disaster and Recovery



- Capital Projects
- Privacy Audit
- Records Management
- Staff Utilization
- Sparkrock O365 Logical Security Review (on hold)

For all completed audits, the following is a summary of risks and findings made by the internal auditor:

<b><i>Audit</i></b>	<b><i>Risks</i></b>	<b><i>Findings</i></b>
BAS 2000 Data Analytics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Zero high risk items open</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Two remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
IT Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Four high risk items open</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Four remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One high risk item open</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Four remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
Back-up & Disaster Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No rating provided</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One remaining open action item</i></li> </ul>
Capital Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Zero high risk items open</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One remaining open action item</i></li> </ul>
Privacy Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Three high risk items open</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Six remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
Records Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One high risk item</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eleven remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
Staff Utilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Eight high risk items</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Twelve remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>
Education Development Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Two high risk items</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Two remaining open action items</i></li> </ul>

The audit committee endorsed each report, including management's action plan, and advised the board of trustees to accept it. Presentation of all audit reports were discussed in-camera.

The audit committee received reports from internal audit that assessed the progress toward management's implementation of action plans developed in response to previous audit findings. This enabled the audit committee to engage management in a discussion regarding findings not satisfactorily actioned, as well as encouraging renewed efforts on overdue action plans.

## Summary of the work performed

In addition to the items noted above, the following outlines further work performed by the audit committee in the last 12 months:

- Received a report from the internal auditors on their review of the effectiveness of controls across the school board;
- Confirmed that the external and internal auditors did not encounter any difficulties in the course of their work;
- Undertook a review of the external auditors' performance;
- Obtained confirmation from the Director of Education that the school board was compliant with all current federal and provincial Acts, Regulations and Statutes.
- Undertook an evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal audit function, including the performance of the regional internal audit manager and her team;
- Queried management on their approach to risk management as well as their strategy to manage such risks; and

By the signature noted below, we attest that we have discharged our duties and responsibilities under Ontario Regulation 361/10.

On behalf of the audit committee,

---

Audit Committee Chair

**Annual Report to the Board of Trustees and Forwarded  
To the Ministry of Education  
For the year ended August 31, 2025**

**District School Board Name:** Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

**Fiscal Year:** 2024-2025

**Re:** Annual audit committee report to the Ministry of Education as per Ontario Regulation 361/10

During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the following internal audits or other engagements were started by the regional internal audit team but not completed by August 31st:

- *Education Development Charges*
- *Student Well-being*

In addition to those listed above, the following audits were completed in the 2024-2025 fiscal year:

- *Staff Utilization*

**AND**

Based on the internal audit plan, we are not expecting any enrolment audits to be performed.

_____	_____	<u>Audit Committee Chair</u>
Date	Signature	Title

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: September 29, 2025

From: Finance and Facilities Committee

Date of Meeting: September 23, 2025

The committee held a hybrid meeting on September 23, 2025, at 6:00pm with Trustee Paul Tut presiding.

Members present: Trustees Kathy Archer\* Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller and Paul Tut.

Also in attendance: Trustees Becky Buck\*, Sabreina Dahab, Todd White and Abby Zaitley.

\*Electronic participation, <sup>(R)</sup> Regrets

\*\*\*\*\*

### ACTION ITEMS

#### A. 2025 Capital Priorities Projects Submission

On September 8, 2025, the Ministry of Education released Memorandum 2025: B04 – Launch of 2025-26 Capital Priorities Program (CPP). CPP provides school boards with an opportunity to submit detailed project proposals to address current accommodation needs related to accommodation pressures, school consolidations, facility condition with health and safety considerations and access to French Language schools. Boards are expected to provide high level summary information on future long-term enrolment projections linked to municipal growth plans and provide priority ranking for the proposals. The submission deadline for all capital funding requests is October 8, 2025.

On the motion of Maria Felix Miller, the Finance and Facilities Committee **RECOMMENDS that the Board approve the following 2025-26 Capital Priorities Projects for submission to the Ministry of Education for funding consideration, as per Memorandum 2025: B04 – Launch of 2025-26 Capital Priorities Program.**

- Lake Avenue Elementary School Addition
- New Hess Street / Strathcona Elementary School on the former Sir John A. Macdonald site.

**CARRIED**

### MONITORING ITEMS

#### B. 2023-2024 Average Class Size - Secondary

Reporting Secondary Average Class size is an annual requirement of the Ministry of Education. Ministry Regulation 132/12 outlines class size limits and requirements by grade/panel. HWDSB is compliant with the Ministry's secondary average class size requirements for both in-person classes and online classes for 2024-25.

#### C. Capital Projects Update

Staff provided an updated summary of all the capital projects, by category, in various phases. The summaries are categorized by each project's general scope of work description and project initiative. In August 2025, the Ministry of Education issued a memo providing details on new 2025-26 School Renewal Funding: Accessibility and Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Staff continue to review the details and eligibility of projects currently underway as they relate to the new accessibility funding and

will provide an update in Fall 2025. Staff will endeavour to use these new funds fully prior to the use of any Proceeds of Disposition (POD) previously approved.

#### **D. Queensdale Gymnasium Project Update**

In June 2025, staff were directed to *“provide an updated report on the projected costs of a gymnasium expansion at Queensdale Elementary School, including any changes to site plans, costing assumptions, of Ministry funding eligibility, and report back at the first Finance & Facilities Committee meeting of the 2025-2026 school year.”*

The proposed Queensdale gymnasium expansion includes not only the additional space of a new gymnasium designed to approximately 4,500 square feet but also renovates or repurposes other areas within the school such as the existing gymnasium and Learning Commons. The on the ground (OTG) capacity of the school of 317 pupil places, and enrolment projections over the next 9 years suggest that the enrolment is trending down, to approximately 370 students in 2034. The current Ministry template would suggest a floor area of 3,000 square feet for the gymnasium and stage. The total project is now expected to cost approximately \$6.0 million to complete, based on an ‘order of magnitude’ estimate completed by a third-party consultant in September 2025.

At present, there are no funding sources available to support a gymnasium addition outside of a Minister exemption to utilize proceeds of disposition (POD), which has been unsuccessful in the past. Staff will provide Trustees with a more fulsome list of projects for consideration that may be funded by POD in January 2026.

#### **E. Billy Green Gymnasium Project Update**

In June 2025, staff were directed to *“provide an updated report on the projected costs of a gymnasium expansion at Billy Green Elementary School, including any changes to site plans, costing assumptions, or Ministry funding eligibility, and report back at the first Finance & Facilities Committee meeting of the 2025-2026 school year.”*

The proposed Billy Green gymnasium expansion includes not only the additional space of a new gymnasium designed to approximately 5,000 square feet but also renovates or repurposes other areas within the school such as the Science and Art rooms. The on the ground (OTG) capacity of the school of 400 pupil places, and enrolment projections over the next 9 years suggest that the enrolment is trending down, to approximately 340 students in 2034. The current Ministry template would suggest a floor area of 4,000 square feet for a gymnasium and stage. The total project is now expected to cost approximately \$5.1 million to complete, based on an ‘order of magnitude’ estimate completed by a third-party consultant in September 2025.

At present, there are no funding sources available to support a gymnasium addition outside of a Minister exemption to utilize proceeds of disposition (POD), which has been unsuccessful in the past. Staff will provide Trustees with a more fulsome list of projects for consideration that may be funded by POD in January 2026.

Respectfully submitted,  
Paul Tut, Chair of the Committee

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

Priority	Project	Project Type	Accommodation Review Completed	Accommodation Pressures	Facility Condition	School Consolidation	Child Care	Rationale
1	Lake Avenue ES Addition	Addition	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HWSDb is requesting capital funding for an 8-room addition/renovation at Lake Avenue ES. It would address the current and long-term accommodation pressures. Lake Avenue’s utilization has increased approximately 29% since 2020 pushing the school to 140% utilization. Enrolment is expected to remain at 140% utilization requiring no less than 12 portables on site long-term.
2	New Hess Street ES/ Strathcona ES on the Sir John A. Macdonald site	New School	June 5, 2017	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HWDSB is proposing a JK-8 elementary school as per Trustee decision June 5 2017. The new school would replace Hess Street ES and Strathcona ES consolidating students from both schools on the Sir John A. Macdonald site. Closing the two facilities would remove approximately 100 underutilized pupil places in the West Hamilton City planning area, and alleviate approximately \$3.8 million in renewal cost.

**Evaluation Criteria** (as per Ministry memo 2025:B04 Launch of the 2025-26 Capital Priorities Program)

**Accommodation Pressures:**

- Projects will accommodate pupils where enrolment is presently or projected to persistently exceed capacity of the school or within a group of schools, and students are currently housed in non-permanent space (for example, portables).
- Assessment of the projects will include reviewing capacity of the impacted schools, as well as those in close proximity, historical enrolment trends, enrolment forecasts, and geographic distribution of students.
- Assessment of projects will also include consideration of alternative non-capital solutions to addressing accommodation pressures.
- Priority consideration for funding purposes will be given to the projects with a utilization equal to or greater than 100% (including area schools) in the 5th year after the proposed school opening date as per the business case template.

**Facility Condition/Consolidation :**

- Projects that support the replacement of existing facilities in order to reduce excess capacity or eliminate renewal needs.
- Projects that demonstrate the needs for a new facility due to health and safety issues.
- Clearly indicate whether or not the issue can be addressed through facility renewal, and if not, to provide rationale. This includes potential issues of load-bearing components like walls, beams, or trusses or any events that may have render the facility unstable and dangerous.
- Assessment of the projects will include reviewing detailed assessment reports from qualified professionals to determine the extent of the hazards and the feasibility of repairs versus replacement.
- Expected cost savings include the reduction in ongoing operating costs, reduction in ongoing renewal costs and the elimination of renewal backlog for the school(s) identified to be closed.
- The school(s) identified to be closed in the solution are expected to be closed and removed from the board’s assets within two years of completion of the new school or addition project.
- Consolidations that have not already been approved as part of a previous Pupil Accommodation Review (PAR) are not eligible. Projects subject to a future PAR are not eligible for funding consideration.

**French-Language School Access:**

- Projects that will provide access to French-language facilities where demographics warrant.
- Such projects will only be considered for funding if the school board can demonstrate that a French-language population is not being served by existing French-language school facilities.
- Project requests associated with French-language facilities in existing geographic areas experiencing accommodation pressures will be reviewed for funding consideration based on the Accommodation Pressure criteria.
- Assessment of projects will include enrolment forecasts, geographic distribution of students, reviewing school-level capacity of impacted schools including those in proximity and with potential alternative solutions.
- Establishing or improving a community infrastructure space in a school serving an Official-language minority community, so long as the province invests the equivalent amount elsewhere in the school.
  - The costs of the community infrastructure space should be lower or equal to the construction cost of the new school or the school addition.

**Child Care Criteria for Capital Priorities Submissions:**

- The ministry will consider funding child care centre capital projects in schools where there is a need for new child care construction and/or renovations to existing child care spaces for children 0-3.8 years of age.
- All submissions must be linked to a larger capital priorities project submission.
- All child care projects must have support from their local Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSM) or District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSAB).
- School boards will have to attest that they have the full support of the CMSM or DSSAB and must also complete the Child Care Space Template.

**Additional Ministry Consideration (highlights)**

- Project Readiness Assessment , Site Ownership, Land Priorities for Site Acquisitions, Alternative Projects, Project Milestones, Cost Estimates, Historical Board Performance, Long-Term Projections

## Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: September 29, 2025

From: Parent Involvement Committee

Meeting date: June 10, 2025

The committee held a PIC meeting on June 10, 2025, from 6:39 p.m. to 9:10 p.m. with Amanda Lloyd presiding.

**Members Present:** Amanda Lloyd, Matthew Adams, Kristina Collier, Andrea Hamilton-Coulson, Ariana Harris, Emma Haslam Topping, Stacey Johnson, Mohamed Khamis, Heather Lambert-Hillen, Laura Mulder, Heidi Oglesby, Vanessa Ozer, Mike Palma, Michele Quinn, Christine Sandor, Danielle Schwalm, Meagan Shanahan, Cindy Stranak, Lisa Veloce, Angela Ayeni, Trustee Amanda Ferhman. Also, in attendance Trustee Dawn Danko.

**Regrets:** Amanda Levesque, Nikki Carter, Erin Copeland, Jennifer Csele Lynne, Alissa Fairley, Anita Fonseca Becar, Cheryl Hue, Celine Link, Tim Louks, Lorraine Lowry, Alissa Shuker, Lisa Zhao, Amy Leaming Cote.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MONITORING ITEMS:

#### A. New Business

##### Communications

Allison Reynolds, Corporate Communications Manager, shared updates and valuable information regarding the responsibilities of the communications department, information on the creation and launching of the new public-facing websites and answered questions from members of the committee.

##### Nutrition

Chrissi Vooy, Student Nutrition Coordinator, shared updates on the HWDSB Nutrition Strategy to support student health and well-being and answered questions from members of the committee.

##### Pro Funding Feedback

Chair Amanda Lloyd requested feedback on how schools can apply for pro funding in the new school year. Two options were presented and voted on. The preferred option recommended by PIC is to maintain the same process as last year.

#### B. Trustees Report

Trustee Danko provided the following updates:

- Approval of the 2025-2026 Finance and Facilities budget.
- Approval of the updated volunteer policy.
- The Program Strategy Review Survey is still open.
- Trustees are scheduling to attend commencements.
- Childcare license rates have been approved at the same level.
- An increase in community rental use rates was approved.

#### C. Reports from other Committees

##### Rural Schools Community Advisory Committee

Heidi Oglesby shared that Matthew Gerard presented at the April 30<sup>th</sup> meeting on transportation and budget, with mention of the boundary reviews in 2025 and new school openings for 2027.

Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School

Heather Lambert Hillen shared they are working on updating all associations onto Google workspaces and a new fundraising platform called ZEFFY.

The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations are working through some of the new policies and procedures.

Month of June will be electing new officials.

Parent Conference Update

Angela Ayeni shared gratitude for all the support given to help run a successful event.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Lloyd, Chair



## Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: September 29, 2025

From: Parent Involvement Committee

Meeting date: September 9, 2025

The committee held a PIC meeting on September 9, 2025, from 6:29 p.m. to 8:13 p.m. with Amanda Lloyd presiding.

**Members Present:** Kailey Crowther, Emma Haslam Topping, Heather Lambert-Hillen, Amanda Levesque, Amanda Lloyd, Tim Louks, Sue-Anne MacQuarrie, Amanada Neale-Robinson, Heidi Oglesby, Meghanna Oza, Mike Palma, Michele Quinn, Christine Sandor, Leora Sas Van Der Linden, Daneille Schwalm, Meagan Shanahan, Cindy Stranak, Leigh Ann Sutherland, Terry Anne Virtue, Trustees Amanda Ferhman and Abby Zaitley.

**Regrets:** Kristina Collier, Matthew Adams, Mani Bhandari, Erin Copeland, Kruti Desai, Andrea Hamilton-Coulson, Adriana Harris, Cheryl Hue, Damian Kalu Ude, Mohamed Khamis, Erin Partheniou, Jeffrey Sykes, Lisa Veloce.

\*\*\*\*\*

### MONITORING ITEMS:

#### A. New Business

##### Elections

Amanda Lloyd and Heidi Oglesby will be the PIC co-chairs for the 2025-2026 school year. The Committee welcomed new members to the meetings.

##### PIC Norms

Amanda Lloyd shared the Norms and Values for PIC.

##### PIC Members Attendance

Amanda Lloyd shared the importance of attending meetings and informed them about tracking of regrets for attendance purposes.

##### PIC Topic

The committee asked members to provide topics for planning future agendas. Some topics noted included.

- Transportation
- School Communication methods
- School Zone Safety
- Mental Health

##### School Council Start-Up Session

The School Council Start-Up session will take place on October 14, 2025, at the Education Centre. Members of PIC and School Councils are encouraged to attend to learn more about supports and resources available to School Councils.

##### Bill 33- Supporting Children and Student Act, 2025

The Chair of Parent Involvement Committee was asked to write to the Chair of the Board of Trustees and request that a letter be sent to the Ministry of Education outlining concerns regarding parent involvement, parent voice, and the proposed legislation in Bill 33- Supporting Children and Students Act, 2025.

## **B. Trustees Report**

Trustee Fehrman and Zaitley provided the following updates:

- First Board Meeting on September 29, 2025.
- Students Trustees will be sworn in.
- Trustees to participate in the program strategy review.
- Some Trustees have set up school visits with their Superintendents.
- French as a Second Language Advisory Committee and Rural Schools Community Advisory Committee have not met yet to select a representative.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Lloyd, Chair

**Committee Report**

Presented to: Board

Meeting Date: Monday, September 29, 2025

From: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Meeting Date: Wednesday, September 10, 2025

The Committee held a virtual meeting on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, beginning at 5:32 pm, ending at 6:45 pm, with Chair Judy Colantino presiding.

**Present**

Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, SEAC Chair, Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair, Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario. Samantha Sweet, Centre for Diverse Learners, Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton, Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara, Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

**Regrets**

Danielle Dion-Broadley, Hamilton FASD Collaborative, Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7, Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3, Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter)

\*\*\*\*\*

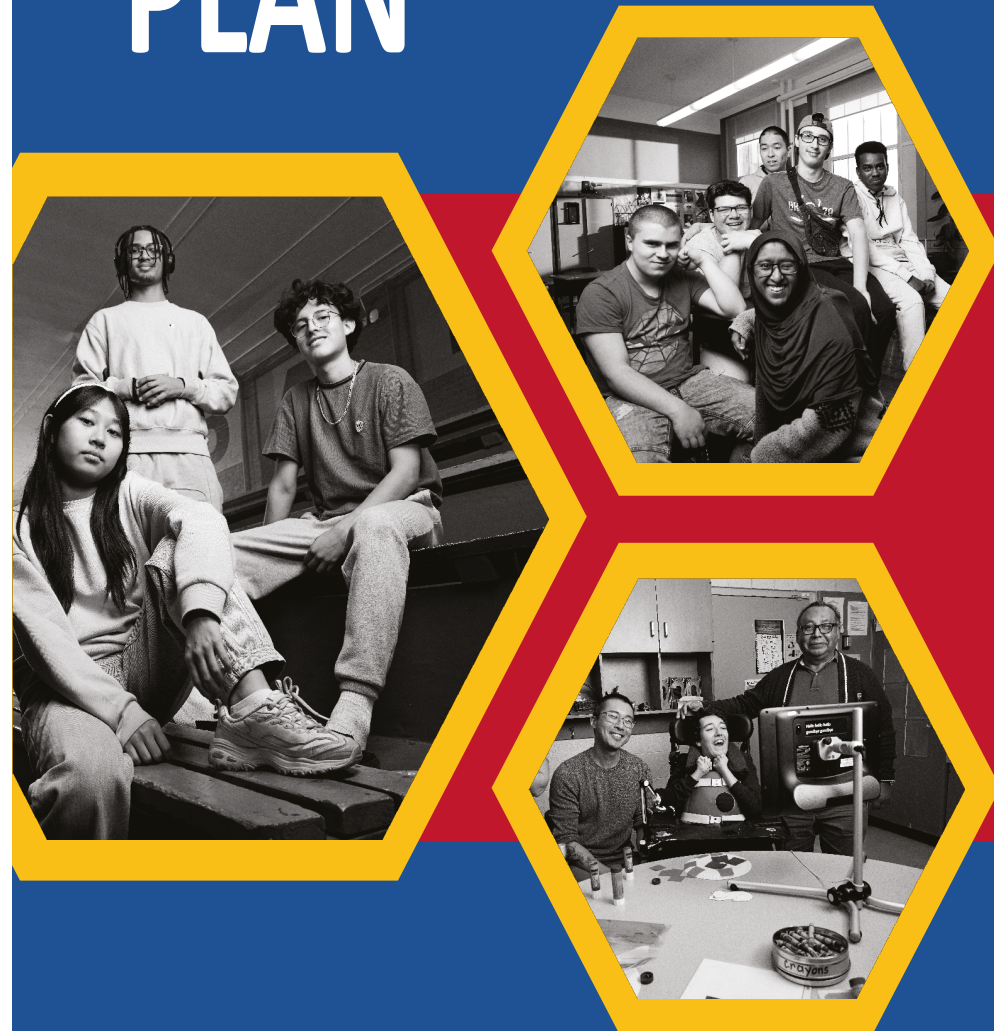
**A. ACTION ITEM:****HWDSB 2025-26 Special Education Plan****Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion & Equity**

- The Committee received and reviewed an overview of the HWDSB 2025–2026 Special Education Plan, outlining key updates, priorities, and areas of focus for the upcoming school year.

On the motion of Sarah Pennington, seconded by Lindsay Bray, the Committee **recommends that the HWDSB 2025-26 Special Education Plan be approved by the Board of Trustees as presented.**

**CARRIED.**

# 2025-2026 SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN



## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

#### Introduction

Section 1	Model for Special Education	3
Section 2	Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) Process	6
Section 3	Special Education Placements provided by the Board	9
Section 4	Individual Education Plans (IEP)	15
Section 5	Special Education Staff	23
Section 6	Specialized Equipment	25
Section 7	Transportation for Students with Special Education Needs	27
Section 8	Transition Planning	29

### **PROVINCIAL INFORMATION**

Section 9	Roles and Responsibilities	30
Section 10	Categories and Definitions of Exceptionalities	32
Section 11	Provincial and Demonstrations Schools in Ontario	36

### **OTHER RELATED INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR COMMUNITY**

Section 12	The Board's Consultation Process	39
Section 13	Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	40
Section 14	Early Identification Procedures and Intervention Strategies	42
Section 15	Educational and Other Assessments	45
Section 16	Coordination of Services with Other Ministries or Agencies	46
Section 17	Specialized Health Support Services in School Settings	48
Section 18	Staff Development	51
Section 19	Accessibility (AODA)	53
Section 20	Parent Guide to Special Education	54

## Introduction

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Special Education Plan is grounded in the Board Mission, Vision and Values and is part of the HWDSB Human Rights and Equity Action Plan.

This Plan has been developed to meet the requirements of the Standards for School Boards' Special Education Plans as outlined by the Ministry of Education in the policy and resource document *Special Education in Ontario Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2017*. The Plan follows each noted standard and provides the required information.

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Special Education Plan complies with all relevant legislation including the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, the Ontario Education Act and regulations made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Upon request, copies of this Plan may be made available in alternate formats in compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We welcome communication from all interested parties, including students, parents/guardians, caregivers, and community organizations, on the information provided in the Special Education Plan. <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/contact/>

## SECTION 1 – MODEL FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's approach to Special Education aligns with its Mission Statement:

Every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future.

"Every student" is our public commitment to considering every student's lived experience, identity, strengths, gifts and needs as we create a sense of belonging and dynamic learning.

Our plan's Mission is underpinned by HWDSB's new guiding Values:

### **Compassion, Dignity, Trust and Joy.**

HWDSB Strategic Directions are focused on improving outcomes for students, including those requiring special education programs and services, by focusing on the following priorities:

### **Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being**

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

### **Providing Equitable Quality Education**

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

### **Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities**

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

### **Building a Sustainable Education System**

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

### Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

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

With a commitment to equity for all, Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Department continues its work to support the best outcomes for all students.

The work on equity for students requiring special education programs and services is brought to life through the following shared beliefs outlined by the Ministry of Education in *Learning For All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12*, 2013:

#### Our Shared Beliefs

- All students can succeed.
- Each student has his or her own unique patterns of learning.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students.
- Fairness is not sameness.

(Adapted from *Education for All, K-6*, pp. 4–5.)

To ensure we narrow the achievement gaps for students, evidenced-based strategies are necessary. HWDSB is exploring disproportionality data and specific strategies to address.

There are several teaching strategies that support all learners, including those requiring special education programs and services.

*'Instruction that both responds to the characteristics of a diverse group of students and is precisely tailored to the unique strengths and needs of each student can be achieved using the principles and guidelines associated with three instructional approaches:*

- *Universal Design for Learning (UDL),*
- *differentiated instruction, and*
- *the tiered approach to prevention and intervention)' (Learning For All, K-12, EDU).*

HWDSB supports equity of outcomes through the provision of a spectrum of special education programs and services for students. This spectrum includes both in-school as well as itinerant support, short-term intervention services, and placements in Regular Class as well as Special Education Class.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

The Board endeavours to meet the needs of all students accessing special education programs and services in the most enabling environment, in accordance with parental preference. The Board's practice, consistent with the Ministry direction is that, wherever possible, student's needs are addressed within the Regular Class at the home school with appropriate special education services.

Supporting students who require special education programs and services is an interdisciplinary effort that involves collaboration across multiple departments within the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB). In addition to the Special Education Plan, HWDSB has four key Action Plans and Strategies that guide and enhance support for students:

- **Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP)**
- **Human Rights and Equity Action Plan**
- **We Help: Mental Health and Addictions Strategy**
- **Caring and Safe Schools**

HWDSB is also actively exploring ways to ensure that processes with families are culturally relevant, responsive, and inclusive (ie., IPRC, Entry to School).

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board adheres to Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act and has established practices to reflect this regulation. This regulation outlines the responsibilities of the Board in identifying and placing students who have been identified as exceptional through an IPRC.

### IPRC Referrals, Reviews and Appeals

The following referrals, reviews and appeals have taken place in the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, as of June 2025, from September 2024-June 2025

	Behaviour	Communication	Intellectual	Physical	Multiple	Total
<b>New IPRCs</b>	2	558	224	10	10	804
<b>IPRC Reviews</b>	1	1177	651	31	33	1893
<b>Appeals</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

Prior to the IPRC being convened, parent/guardian will receive a copy of the *HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee*. This guide includes in-depth information about the IPRC process, names and addresses of provincial and demonstration schools and a list of local associations that are on SEAC.

*HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee* outlines the IPRC process in detail.

### The Identification Placement and Review Committee

Regulation 181/98 of the Education Act requires all school boards to set up Identification, Placement and Review Committees. An IPRC is composed of at least three persons, one of whom must be a principal or supervisory officer of the Board. The third committee member may be another principal, vice-principal, learning resource teacher or another educator or professional.

The purpose of the committee is to make two decisions

- Whether or not a student be identified as an exceptional pupil and states the exceptionality and
- If it is determined that a student should be identified as exceptional, decide on a placement that will best meet the needs of the student

After the initial meeting, the identification and placement are reviewed by an IPRC at least once per school year.



## SECTION 2 – IDENTIFICATION, PLACEMENT, AND REVIEW COMMITTEE (IPRC) PROCESS

### IPRC Process

The IPRC process, as per Regulation 181/98, is as follows:

#### a) Referral to an IPRC

The school principal may refer a student to an IPRC when the principal and the student's teacher(s) believe that the child may benefit from a special education program. A parent/guardian will receive a letter to inform them of the referral to an IPRC.

Parent/guardian can request an IPRC meeting for their child if they think it would be appropriate. This is done by writing a letter to the principal of the school to request an IPRC meeting.

Within 15 days of receiving written request or giving notice of referral, the principal must:

- Acknowledge parent/guardian request
- Let parent/guardian know in writing approximately when the IPRC will meet
- Give parent/guardian a copy of the school board's Parents' Guide to Special Education

In addition to the notification of an initial IPRC meeting, the parents/guardians of the student are to receive the *HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee* in the appropriate format. The handbook is available on the HWDSB [website](#)

#### b) Parent/Guardian Involvement

The school will provide the parent/guardian with a copy of any information that will be considered by the IPRC. The parents/guardians will be invited to attend and participate in all committee discussions and decisions and have the right to request the attendance of others at the IPRC meeting. To support better understanding of the process, HWDSB has developed two videos for parents/guardians regarding the IPRC process:

What is an IPRC

( <https://youtu.be/ypRYQDzg37g> ) and

What Happens at an IPRC

( <https://youtu.be/pqcEqGtyKgM> )

#### c) Gathering Information

Upon making the decision to proceed to an IPRC meeting, the school begins gathering information for the IPRC to consider in making its decision. Information from educational and other assessments conducted with the student, and possibly relevant information such as:

- Student's educational background;
- The Individual Education Plan (if one has been previously developed);
- Any previous system meeting or IPRC documentation;
- Parent/guardian information form;
- Medical or outside agency reports, as appropriate;
- Standardized test/reports;
- Report cards;
- Work samples; and
- Statement of strengths and need

**d) Identification**

The IPRC will issue a written Statement of Decision which will state:

- Whether the committee has determined that the student should be identified as exceptional; and
- The specific exceptionality/exceptionalities as per Ministry of Education definitions

**e) Statement of Strengths and Needs**

The Statement of Strengths and Needs should:

- Include individualized statements addressing academic, social/emotional and/or physical skills;
- Be completed in draft form by the referring school with parent/guardian and/or student input;
- Be included in draft form in the IPRC referral package;
- Be reviewed in its draft form at the IPRC meeting; and
- Be revised at the IPRC meeting, if necessary

**f) Recommending Placement**

The IPRC shall consider whether placement in a Regular Class, with appropriate special education services, will meet the student's needs. If, after considering all the information, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a Regular Class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's/guardian's preferences, the IPRC will decide in favour of placement in a Regular Class (Reg. 181/98 s.17). If, after considering all the information, the IPRC is satisfied that placement in a Special Education Class would meet the student's needs and is consistent with the parent's/guardian's preferences, the IPRC will decide in favour of this placement.

The decision of the committee, and the reasons(s) for the decision, will be written on the *Statement of Decision* form, issued by the committee.

**g) Annual Review Meetings**

A Review IPRC meeting is to be held at least once in each school year unless the parent/guardian of the student gives a written notice to the principal of the school, dispensing with the annual review at which the special education program is being provided. A Review IPRC considers the same information as an Initial IPRC. The committee will review the placement and identification and decide whether they should be continued or whether changes should be made.

**h) Requests for Reviews**

A Review IPRC meeting may occur if parents/guardians request, in writing, for a review or if the principal of the school gives written notice to the parents/guardians regarding a review. Such requests may be made at any time after a placement has been in effect for three months but may not be made more often than once in every three-month period. (Reg. 181/98 s. 21(2)).

**i) Communicating the IPRC Decision**

As soon as possible after the IPRC meeting, the chair shall send a copy of the *Statement of Decision* to:

- The parents/guardians,
- The student if the student is 16 years of age or older; and
- The principal of the school that made the referral, for inclusion in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR)

**j) A Guide to Special Education and Special Education, Inclusion and Equity**

The *HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee* is a document that schools provide to parent/guardian before an IPRC meeting, or at any time, to provide parent/guardian with information regarding HWDSB services, and information about the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process. The document is available [online](#)

**k) Process for Resolving Disputes**

Throughout the entire IPRC process, schools work with parent/guardian to resolve any disputes. The principal is responsible to ensure that parents/guardians understand their rights, that they have a copy of HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to The Identification, Placement, and Review Committee, and that any concerns are addressed in an atmosphere of cooperation and respect. K-12 Special Education Consultant, the principal with responsibility for special education, the school's supervisory officer and/or the superintendent with responsibility for special education are available to assist both schools and parent/guardian with the process for resolving disputes. The Ministry document, [Shared Solutions](#) may also help all parties to resolve issues that arise.

**l) Pre-Appeal Process**

If the parent/guardian agrees with the IPRC's determination, they will be asked to indicate, by signing their name(s) that they agree. If the parent/guardian does not agree with the decision, they have 15 days following receipt of the decision to give written notification to the secretary of the board (director of education).

The following steps will be offered to parent/guardian in the event that they wish to consider an appeal of the IPRC decision regarding exceptionality and/or placement:

- The chair of the IPRC will offer to re-convene the members of the committee so that the parent/guardian can share their concerns. If this meeting is requested, it will occur prior to the dates for the formal appeal process as outlined in Regulation 181/98;
- If the parent/guardian is satisfied with the results of this meeting, the process leading to an appeal will end at this point;
- If parent/guardian is not satisfied with the results of the meeting, or do not wish to have this meeting, the board will offer the parent/guardian an opportunity to discuss their concerns with an impartial mediator who has no previous knowledge of the case and who has a background in special education. The chair of the IPRC will coordinate this meeting. The board will pay the expenses of the mediator.
- If the parent/guardian wishes to have this meeting, it will occur prior to the dates for the formal appeal process as outlined in Regulation 181/98;
- If parent/guardian is satisfied with the results of the meeting with the mediator, this mediation process is complete;
- If parent/guardian is not satisfied with the results of the meeting with the mediator, or do not wish to have this meeting, the appeal process as described in Regulation 181/98 will begin.

**m) Appeal Process – Regulation 181/98**

If parent/guardian does not agree with the IPRC decision, a written notice of appeal may be filed with the secretary of the board within 30 days of the original decision or within 15 days of receiving the decision of a review meeting. This notice of appeal must indicate the decision with which the parent/guardian disagrees and must include a statement explaining why they disagree.

The appeal process involves the following steps:

- The board will arrange for a special education appeal board to be established to hear the appeal;
- The appeal board will be composed of three people: one member selected by the board; one member selected by the parent/guardian of the student; and a chair, who is selected jointly by the first two members. If those two members cannot agree, the appropriate district manager of the Ministry will select a chair;
- The first two selections shall be made within 15 days of the Board receiving notice of appeal. The chair shall be selected within 15 days of the first two members being chosen;
- Members of the appeal board may not have any prior knowledge of the matter under appeal;
- The chair of the appeal board will arrange for a meeting, which will be conducted in an informal manner, to take place at a convenient time and place within 30 days of his/her selection unless written consent is received from both the parent/guardian and the board agreeing to a later date;
- The chair may invite to the meeting anyone who can contribute information with respect to the matters under appeal;

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

- The appeal board shall make its recommendation(s) in writing within 3 days of completing the meeting, stating whether it agrees or disagrees with the original IPRC decision, make recommendations about the pupil's identification and/or placement and give reasons for its decision and recommendations.
- The board shall provide written notice within 30 days indicating what action it will take after considering the appeal board's decision and recommendations.
- Parent/guardian may accept the appeal board's decision, or, if they do not accept the appeal board's decision, they may file a written request for a Special Education Tribunal.

### **SECTION 3 – SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS PROVIDED BY THE BOARD**

#### **Involvement of SEAC**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) provides advice regarding the programs and services offered by HWDSB, at monthly meetings and through the review of the Special Education Plan.

#### **Regular Class Placement and Inclusion of Exceptional Students in Regular Classes**

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board offers placement options for students with special education needs. Exceptional Pupils, as defined by the Ministry of Education, are served in the most enabling environment.

Placement of a student in a Regular Class is the first option considered by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). A range of placements are available in HWDSB:

- Regular Class with Indirect Support
- Regular Class with Resource Assistance
- Regular Class with Withdrawal Assistance
- Special Education Class with Partial Integration
- Special Education Class Full Time

The special learning needs of all students, wherever possible, can and should be addressed in Regular Class placement within the home school. Thus, before considering the option of placement in a Special Education Class, the board considers whether placement in a Regular Class, with appropriate special education services, will meet the student's needs. Consideration of Special Education Class placement generally occurs only after differentiated strategies and/or modified programs and/or short-term interventions have been implemented, documented and evaluated in the Regular Class setting but have not proven sufficient to meet the student's needs. Parents/guardians are always given the option, if that is their preference, to have the student's placement remain in a Regular Class in the home school, regardless of the student's individual needs.

Every Special Education Class placement recommendation is made to allow the student's needs to be met in the most enabling environment. Most exceptional students attend programs with their age-appropriate peers, with a focus on integration opportunities in Regular Classrooms that are in accordance with student's strengths. Once an IPRC has recommended Special Education Class placement, and parent/guardian has consented, the Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Department informs the current school of the program offered, as well as the location of the program offered.

Students are offered Special Education Class placements in accordance with their needs and profiles. Parent/guardian is given the opportunity to visit the potential receiving school. At any time, parent/guardian may withdraw the placement and request a change of placement.

Once in a Special Education Class placement, the school team should be seeking opportunities for the student to receive some educational programming in the Regular Classroom. Planning for integration should involve communication with the parent/guardian and the student, where appropriate, to determine which subject areas incorporate areas of interest as well as strengths.

## **Services and Programs**

### **Overall Structure**

Special Education, Inclusion and Equity is structured in a Family of Schools (FOS) model.. This model blends the previous Autism & Neurodevelopmental Services and Behavioural Analytic Services into one team, allowing system staff to focus and support more intensely across a smaller number of schools. This multi-disciplinary team (MDT) of professionals support all students who access special education supports and services, regardless of diagnosis, reducing waitlists and referrals. This approach supports clearer pathways for support and prevents duplication of services.

Each Family of Schools (there are five) is supported by a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) which includes:

- Special Education Manager (shared)
- Special Education Principal (shared)
- Special Education Consultants (2)
- Trio Resource Team (3) - Special Assignment Teacher, Educational Assistant, Child and Youth Care Practitioner
- Speech and Language Pathologists (2-3)
- Communication Disorders Assistants (2)
- Psychoeducational Consultants (2-3)
- Behaviour Analysts (2)
- Designated Early Childhood Educator (1)

The MDT provides support to schools on a consistent basis, with opportunity to consult and work alongside school staff in support of all students who require special education supports and services. This team is embedded in the practices of the schools they support. MDTs meets with school staff (as a collective) three times a year to review complex student scenarios and to collaborate on next steps. Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Managers are part of the Family of Schools MDT but also provide leadership and clinical support within their area of speciality (e.g. psychology, speech and language, behaviour and analytic services and autism and neurodevelopmental services). Special Education Managers and Principals are shared across two and a half Family of Schools.

Service across the five Family of Schools will continue to be provided by:

- Gifted Centre Teachers
- Centre for Success Teachers
- Blind/Low Vision Team
- Deaf/Heard of Hearing Team
- ABA Consultant
- Autism Advisor/Peer Support Worker
- SEA Consultant
- Intensive Support Child and Youth Care Practitioners
- Learning Resource Teachers
- Special Education Classroom Teachers
- Educational Assistants
- Occupational Therapists
- Kinesiologist
- Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Transition Navigator
- Visual Aid Assistant

**MDT Trio Resource Team Services**

This team supports 5 - 7 schools within their Family of Schools. The team includes a Special Assignment Teacher, Educational Assistant, and Child and Youth Care Practitioner. They provide supports and services to enhance the academic achievement and well-being of students with complex communication needs including self-regulation, behaviour and social/emotional learning. They are school-focused roles providing support directly in classrooms alongside the educator team. Using a Plan, Act, Assess, Reflect Framework, this team will coach and model strategies and approaches with a gradual release to the educator team and collaborate on follow up and next steps.

This model will enhance supports to students with Autism, FASD, ADHD and other genetic and neurodevelopmental conditions. Ongoing training in best practices in support for students with special education needs, including ABA, was provided to these system teams. The Special Assignment Teacher scheduled days in school, providing consistent and ongoing support throughout the school year. The EA and CYCP work directly with students and build capacity in educators as identified by the Manager and Special Assignment Teacher. Behaviour Analysts collaborate with the MDT in classroom wide supports in all Special Education classrooms and programs, and individualized student supports. Dedicated Early Childhood Educators (DECEs) (Kindergarten only). Student specific referrals to Behaviour Analysts will be accepted via the Special Assignment Teacher.

**Speech, Language & Communication Services**

The development of communication is foundational to the development of oral and written language skills, which subsequently impact students' academic success and well-being. The Speech, Language & Communication Services team, composed of Speech-Language Pathologists (SLPs) and Communicative Disorders Assistants (CDAs), work with educators and parents/guardians to support K-12 students. Service delivery operates in a tiered model, prioritizing prevention and early intervention of oral and written language challenges. Access to services can be universal, with sharing of instructional strategies that support the communication development of all learners in a classroom, but may also include a more personalized approach, involving individual assessment. As appropriate, referrals may be made to community agencies. SLPs set goals in conjunction with educators and parents/guardians and work with CDAs to provide consultation and/or intervention in small groups or 1:1 to meet those goals.

**Speech and Language Program**

Provides intensive support for Grade 1 students with language delays, which are accompanied, in many cases, by a speech impairment. The students' speech/language assessments must indicate profound expressive language and/or articulation delays with average receptive language skills and/or average cognitive skills. Instruction is based on the grade one curriculum with a speech and language focus. (Maximum class size: 12). Two additional classes have been added for 2025/26.

**The Elementary Social Communication Program (ESCP)**

The Elementary Social Communication Program (ESCP) provides intensive intervention for junior and senior elementary students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) whose most significant challenges are in the realms of social communication and higher-order thinking. The ESCP student continues to attend their home school 4 days per week and attends the program school 1 day per week for direct instruction in social communication, self-regulation and social problem-solving skills. The ESCP Teacher (2) and Educational Assistants (4) provide weekly support in achieving those goals in the students' home school, collaboratively with the school team. The program runs for 2 years. There are 2 classrooms with a maximum of 10 students per class (40 students total)

**Secondary Social Communication Program (SSCP)**

The Secondary Social Communication Program supports students with autism who are unable to reach their full potential without specialized support for social thinking, executive function, and self-regulation. Students have accommodated programming or programming modified at grade level.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

Students in SSCP benefit from direct teaching in how to have successful relationships and social interactions at home, at school and in their community. Skill areas addressed include: understanding emotions of self and others, communication, relationship development, understanding of self as a learner, and self-advocacy. Transition supports to post-secondary and community opportunities are planned and facilitated. Students earn a customized learning strategy credit each semester for 4 years. The program runs out of two secondary schools.

### **AIM: Child and Youth Support Program (Elementary)**

The AIM program offers support for students who have had frequent difficulty in their regular classroom setting because of significant social, emotional or behavioral issues that have interfered with their own academic success and the success of their peers. The goal of AIM is to have students in their regular classroom, following school expectations and demonstrating behaviour that supports academic success and positive peer relationships. The student works together with the AIM Child and Youth Care Practitioner (CYCP) in developing specific skills to better prepare themselves to participate in the classroom and school. The AIM space is maintained and supervised by the assigned CYCP. The program is individualized with students' values, school expectations, and a goals-based reinforcement system. The AIM program is based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis, psychological flexibility, and the implementation of evidence-based strategies.

### **Child and Youth Support Program (Secondary)**

This program in secondary schools provides support for students who have frequent difficulty with success in the classroom and participation within the school due to significant behaviour that interferes with their social, emotional, or self-regulation development. The goal of this program is to provide an opportunity for students to collaborate with a Secondary CYCP in the development or strengthening of skills to promote more successful participation in school. The program is individualized for each student and is based on the principles of applied behaviour analysis, psychological flexibility, and the implementation of evidence-based strategies.

### **Gifted Services**

Four Itinerant Teachers for the Gifted work with classroom teachers, support staff and administration to provide enhanced program strategies that support the learning profile of students who meet the Gifted criteria. Itinerant teachers build capacity to understand the complexities of the gifted learner.

### **Gifted Enrichment Centre**

HWDSB operates three Enrichment and Innovation Centres. These Centres provide enrichment programming for students with a Gifted identification 5-6 times per year. Instruction focused on helping students to learn more about their strengths and challenges, their learning style and self-advocacy.

### **Project SEARCH**

In the fall of 2020, HWDSB's Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Department launched a new school-to-work transition program called Project SEARCH.

With almost 650 sites worldwide, HWDSB is the fourth school board in Canada to implement the program. Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led, one-year program for young people with special education needs who are in their last year of high school. The main objective is to prepare students for employment with job skills training through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on career training.

In partnership with the YMCA/YWCA, Hamilton Health Sciences, and Ron Joyce Children's Hospital/General Hospital, internship opportunities are provided at a variety of host sites. These locations offer students daily employability skills training and focused internships where students develop competitive, marketable, and transferable job skills. They are supported by the three Project SEARCH Teachers, three Educational Assistant Skills Trainers, as well as Managers and Mentors from the various site departments. Three different worksite internships are completed throughout the school year with interns working alongside staff.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

Upon graduation, interns are supported by local employment services providers in their journey to secure meaningful jobs in the community.

### **Transition Work Experience Program (TWE)**

TWE supports short-term work experiences for students in Special Education Classes.

### **Intensive Transition Work Experience Program (ITWE)**

The Intensive – Transition to Work experience (ITWE) program was developed to ensure that students who require special education programs and services have every opportunity to learn and grow to their full potential with the goal of future employment at its forefront. The goals of this program allow students the opportunity to explore options on an ongoing basis and to develop appropriate job-related skills. To facilitate the transition from school to workforce and to establish links and provide partnership within the community between education and business.

## **ExSL (Excellence in Social Learning) Services**

### **ExSL Classroom Programs**

The ExSL Classroom Programs are elementary Special Education Class interventions. Students referred to this program experience significant self-regulation and behavioural difficulties that present a barrier to their learning. The program combines grade-level appropriate academic curriculum with the delivery of a readiness skills-based program. A team of classroom and special education system staff collaborate on programming and work with community support agencies as appropriate, to assist in social, emotional, and resiliency skills development.

### **ExSL Connections Program**

This program is designed to change current patterns of interfering behaviour through the development and practice of positive ways of responding, develop and practice organization and adaptive skills, and allow for additional academic assessment. The program is designed for intensive programming for 13 weeks in a dedicated classroom with daily reach back support to the student's home school. The program is staffed by a Teacher and Child and Youth Care Practitioner.

### **SAFE Intervention Elementary and Secondary**

The Safe Intervention program is designed for students who present with medical, mental health, behavioural, and academic complexities who require an alternate learning space for behavioural stabilization, school re-engagement, and assessment. This program is designed for limited length of enrollment and progression planning. The program is staffed with a Teacher and Child and Youth Care Practitioner.

### **Centre for Success Program**

The Centre for Success Program is a strength-based, strategy-focused tiered intervention program, designed to enable students with diagnosed learning disabilities to be able to identify and explain their personal learning profiles, develop a thorough understanding of the use of their assistive technology to maximize opportunities to demonstrate their learning, and to self-advocate for the implementation of specific strategies to support their learning Itinerant and centres.

### **Empower™ Reading Program (Program Department)**

The Empower™ Reading Program, developed by the Learning Disabilities Research Program (LDRP) at SickKids, Toronto <http://www.sickkids.ca/LDRP/Empower-Reading/>, provides a direct instruction, multi-strategic reading program for students with reading difficulties. Empower™ Reading is a reading program that addresses core learning problems by teaching a set of five effective strategies for decoding and spelling words and for understanding text. (Empower™ Teacher Guide, 2009, pp.13-14) HWDSB currently offers two Empower™ Reading modules in elementary schools:

- Empower™ Reading Decoding and Spelling: Grade 2-5 [110 Lessons]
- Empower™ Reading Decoding and Spelling: Grade 6-8 [90 Lessons]



## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

### **Wilson Reading System to support reading instruction**

In Secondary Schools, HWDSB uses Wilson Reading System. It is Ministry recommended and mastery-based; it supports students to progress on their reading journey in a personalized learning structure.

#### **Wilson Reading System Just Words**

HWDSB is piloting the use of Wilson Just Words in various elementary schools and secondary Special Education Classrooms, Just Words emphasizes phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, and spelling.

### **Lexia® Core5® Reading (Program Department)**

Lexia® Core5® Reading is a comprehensive, technology-based literacy program that provides tier two reading instruction for students with a Learning Disability or other specific learner profiles. The Lexia® Core® program has two distinct modules that provide explicit, systematic and personalized learning for students in different skill areas. The Lexia® Core5® program supports learning in the areas of phonological awareness, phonics, structural analysis, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. The Lexia® Core® PowerUp program supports skill building in the areas of word study, grammar and comprehension.

### **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services**

Itinerant teachers within the Deaf and Hard of Hearing services team support students with hearing needs in both elementary and secondary schools. Itinerant teachers work collaboratively with classroom educators, language acquisition support workers (LASWs), SLPs and other professionals, to ensure an optimal learning environment and to support the recommendation and implementation of necessary instructional, environmental and/or assessment accommodations to foster student learning. Students are provided with direct service within the regular classroom or through small group withdrawal and typically focuses on supporting and developing auditory management, supporting the development of language and academic skills. Hearing assistive technology care and maintenance is also provided. Audiology consultation is delivered through a contract service.

### **Blind and Low Vision Services**

The Blind/Low Vision team supports students with low vision and are legally blind, across both elementary and secondary schools. They work in collaboration with educators, parents/guardians and other professionals to ensure access to the curriculum. Some of their responsibilities include: providing direct Braille instruction and transcription; accommodating and modifying curriculum; supporting assistive technology; transitioning students to Secondary and Post-Secondary education/careers; assisting with the IPRC process and working as a liaison with system personnel. Services for Orientation and Mobility are delivered through a contract service.

### **Child Youth Care Practitioner Services**

School-based programming led by Child and Youth Care Practitioners designed to support the development of resilience, social behaviours, and psychological flexibility in elementary and secondary aged students who are served in the Regular Classroom.

### **IPRC Placements: Special Education Classes**

#### **Autism Special Education Class**

Supporting students with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder, and significant needs in both expressive and receptive communication skills. Programming is individualized, with a focus on augmentative and alternative communication strategies to promote independence and sensory regulation.

#### **Comprehensive Special Education Class**

Supporting students with similar learning profiles with a focus on increasing learning skills, the use of technology as compensatory tool and self-awareness as a learner. Opportunities for integration into Regular Class programs may be provided, based on interest and capacity. Students at the secondary level may be supported to receive credits from integration.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

### **Developmental Disability Special Education Class**

Supports students with significant intellectual disabilities and alternative communication needs, with a focus on significantly modified curriculum expectations.

### **Elementary Multiple Special Education Class**

Supports students with multiple exceptionalities with significant physical, communication and cognitive needs.

### **Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Transition Navigation**

Building on the foundation of post-secondary navigation, services will expand to include entry to, between and out of school. This will include expanding connections with families, employers and community services to support the future readiness of students with disabilities.

- Creation of a Student Advisory Council
- Enhanced entry to school processes
- Transition supports between schools and/or programs internally and externally
- Expansion of Project Search, TWEP (Transition Work Experience Program)
- Introduction of ITWEP at the HWDSB Education Centre (Intensive Transition Work Experience Program)
- Working with schools and community on co-op experiences for students with disabilities
- Community, Employment, and Resource fairs and events
- Elementary to Secondary transition support and programming for students, staff and families
- Development of a comprehensive website dedicated to supporting and informing student transitions
- Broadening of video and print resource library for students, parents/guardians on transition planning in all pathways
- Support for educators on transitions, pathways and supports
- Diversifying networks and connections
- Ongoing study and refinement of best practices
- Staff development and training (transitions/accessibility)
- Job readiness programming
- College/University readiness programming and campus tours
- Collaboration across and with other HWDSB departments
- Ongoing engagement with SEAC
- Evaluation of all activities and trends through ongoing data collection and analysis

## **SECTION 4 – INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN**

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. More information about the IEP can be found in a video for parents/guardians:

<https://youtu.be/uDfUgNyulnw>

An IEP is based on the student's strengths and needs as identified through appropriate assessment tools. The IEP identifies accommodations and/or modified expectations from the Ontario Curriculum or alternative expectations that make up a student's program. This document also includes special education services needed to assist the student in achieving their learning goals. The IEP is a working document. This means that revisions or updates are part of a cycle of continuous assessment. Parent/guardian is consulted in the development of the IEP and are informed of any changes to the plan.

If the IPRC identifies a student as an exceptional pupil, and if the parent/guardian agrees with the IPRC identification and placement decisions, then an IEP will be developed for the student within 30 school days of the student's placement in a special education program based on the statements of strengths and needs determined at the IPRC.

2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

An IEP may also be developed for a student who has not been deemed exceptional through the IPRC process. In this case, the school may determine an IEP is necessary if the student *requires special education program or service in order to attend school or to achieve curriculum expectations and/or to demonstrate learning* (Special Education in Ontario, 2017, p. E11).

If a parent/guardian has questions or concerns about their child's program, progress or concerns about the IEP, it should be noted in writing. The teacher who leads the IEP development will arrange a time to meet to review questions or concerns. Agreed upon changes will be made and a copy of the revised IEP sent home.

The HWDSB is committed to meet the Ministry of Education Standards for IEPs. The school board has introduced an informal IEP Process which will continue to be done annually. The internal review will provide next steps for training of learning resource teachers.

Any remaining questions or concerns should be discussed in a meeting with the principal or vice-principal. The principal will assist in answering parent/guardian questions and will work with the parent/guardian to serve the student.

# HWDSB

## Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Individual Education Plan

### Student Information

Student Name:

Student Number:

School:

OEN:

Principal:

Date of Birth:

IEP Completed:

Grade:

Current School Year:

IEP Coordinated By:

### Rationale for developing the IEP

☒ Student identified as exceptional by IPRC

☐ Student not identified by IPRC but requires special education program/services, including accommodations and/or modified/alternative learning expectations

### Placement Information

Identification:

Placement:

Last IPRC/Continuation Date:

Placement Date:

### Principal Signature

This IEP has been developed according to the ministry's standards and appropriately addresses the student's strengths and needs. The learning expectations will be reviewed and the student's achievement evaluated at least once every reporting period.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Parent/Guardian Signature

I was consulted in the development of the IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian

I have declined the opportunity to be consulted in the development of the IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian

I have received a copy of the IEP

☐ Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian and Student Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

# HWDSB

## Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Sources/Strengths/Accommodations/Assessments

### Student Information

Student Name:

Current School Year:

Grade:

Date of Birth:

School:

### Sources Consulted in the Development of the IEP

☒ IPRC Statement of Decision (if applicable)☒ Previous IEP

### Assessment Summary

Source	
Description:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date Administered:

### Relevant Medical Conditions

☐ Yes (list below) ☒ No

### Health Support Services

☐ Yes (Indicate type below) ☒ No

### Student's Strengths and Needs

Strengths	Needs

### Accommodations

Accommodations are assumed to be the same for all subjects/program areas unless otherwise indicated.

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations

### Individualized Equipment

Item	Description
No records exist	

### Provincial Assessments

This is a provincial assessment year ☐ Yes ☒

No Name of Assessment:

**Student Information****Student Name:****Current School Year:****Grade:****Date of Birth:****School:****Subjects, Courses or Alternative Programs to which the IEP Applies**

This section is completed only if the student has Modified or Alternative Programming.

Course	Teacher	Program Type

**Evaluation****Reporting Dates:** November February June**Reporting Format:** ☐ Provincial Report Card ☐ Alternative Report**IEP Staff Development Team**

# HWDSB

Hamilton Wentworth District School  
Board Program  
Language - Reading

## Student Information

**Student Name:** F. Smith

**Current School Year:** 2020-21

**Grade:** 04

**Date of Birth:** 03/31/2011

**School:**

## Baseline Level of Achievement

Typically from June Report Card.

**Letter Grade/Mark:**

**Source:**

**Curriculum Grade  
Level:**

## Description of Achievement Level

**Date from last report card:**

## Annual Program Goals

.

Term/Semester	Learning Expectations	Strategies, Resources and Support Services	Assessment Methods
No Learning Expectations Entered			



## Hamilton Wentworth District School Board Transition Plan

### Student Information

Student Name:

Student Number:

Student Number:

OEN:

School:

Date of Birth:

Identification:

Grade:

Principal:

☐ No Transition Support is required at this time.

### Transition Goals

#### Next steps to achieve this goal

Actions	Responsibility	Timelines
No Actions entered		

#### Future Recommendations (if applicable)

Actions	Responsibility	Timelines
No Actions entered		



# HWDSB

## Hamilton Wentworth District School Board IEP Consultation Log

### Student Information

**Student Name:**

**Current School Year:**

**School:**

**Date of Birth:**

**Grade:**

### Log Information

Date	Person Contacted	Type of Contact	Actions or Outcomes
No log information entered.			

The information gathered on this form is gathered pursuant to the Education Act. The information will be used for the purpose of planning and programming. Any general questions about the information gathered on this form may be discussed with the Principal of your child's school.

**SECTION 5 – SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF**

<b>Special Education Staff: ELEMENTARY Panel</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>Staff Qualifications</b>
Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Consultant	0.5	0.5	Special Education Specialist
Autism Peer Support Worker	0.5	0.5	Secondary degree, graduate of HWDSB and Lived experiences ASD
Behaviour Analysts (BCBA)	9.0	9.0	Masters Degree & Certification with Behaviour Analyst Certification Board or CPBAO
Centre for Success Special Assignment Teachers	2.0	2.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Child & Youth Care Practitioners	60.0	60.0	CYCP Qualifications
Communicative Disorders Assistants	9.0	10.0	B.A; Post Diploma Program
Deafblind Intervener	0.5	0.5	Deafblind Support Specialist Diploma
Educational Assistants	556.5	556.5	College Training Certificate or equivalent
Gifted Enrichment Centre Special Assignment Teachers	3.0	3.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Gifted Itinerant Special Assignment Teacher	0.5	0.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Blind/Low Vision	1.5	1.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Centre for Success	6.0	6.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Deaf/Hard of Hearing	2.0	2.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Kinesiologist	0.5	0.5	B.A.; Kinesiology Certification
Language Acquisition Support Worker	1.0	1.0	ASL Proficiency and College Diploma
Learning Resource Teachers	133.0	139.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Manager: Special Education, Inclusion and Equity	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree & Certification with Behavior Analyst Certification Board or College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO)
Manager: Psychological Services	0.5	0.5	Certified Psychologist
Occupational Therapist	1.0	1.0	Masters in Science & Occupational Therapy
Principals: Special Education, Inclusion & Equity	1.5	1.0	Principal Qualifications Parts 1 & 2: Special Education Preferred
Psychoeducational Consultants	10.0	10.0	Masters in Psychology
SEA Consultant	0.5	0.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
SEA IIT Assistant	0.5	0.5	Project SEARCH Graduate
Special Education Class Teachers	36.0	29.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications-
Special Education Consultants	8.0	6.0	Special Education Specialist
Speech-Language Pathologists	17.0	17.0	Masters in Speech-Language Pathology
System Dedicated Early Childhood Educators	5.0	8.0	Early Childhood Educator Qualifications
Team Lead Behaviour Analyst	0.5	0.5	Masters Degree & Certification with Behaviour Analyst Certification Board or CPBAO
Visual Aid Assistant	0.5	0.5	Project SEARCH Graduate
Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) Teachers	7.5	7.5	Special Education Qualifications
Manager: Speech-Language & Communication	0.5	0.5	Masters in Speech-Language
Special Education Programs: ExSL	5.0	5.0	Special Education Qualifications
Special Education Programs: Social Communication	2.0	2.0	Special Education Qualifications
Special Education Programs: SAFE	1.0	1.0	Special Education Qualifications
Special Education Programs: Speech & Language	2.0	4.0	Special Education Qualifications
Assistant SEA Technician	1.0	1.0	College Diploma
Administrative Assistant: SEA	0.5	0.5	College Diploma
Administrative Assistants: SEIE	2.0	2.0	College Diploma
Itinerant Educational Assistants	6.0	6.0	College Training Certificate or Equivalent

**SECTION 5 – SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF**

<b>Special Education Staff: SECONDARY Panel</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>	<b>Staff Qualifications</b>
ABA Consultant	0.5	0.5	Special Education Specialist
Behaviour Analyst	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree and Certification with Behaviour Analyst Certification Board or CPBAO
Behaviour Analyst (BCBA)	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree and Certification with Behaviour Analyst Certification Board or CPBAO
Child & Youth Care Practitioners	20.0	20.0	CYCP Qualifications
Communicative Disorders Assistant	1.0	1.0	B.A.; College Post Diploma
Deafblind Intervener	0.5	0.5	Deafblind Support Specialist Diploma
Educational Assistants	144.0	139.0	College Training Certificate or Equivalent
Gifted Itinerant Special Assignment Teacher	0.5	0.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Blind/Low Vision	1.5	1.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Itinerant Teachers: Deaf/Hard of Hearing	2.0	2.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Kinesiologist	0.5	0.5	B.A.; Kinesiology Certification
Language Acquisition Support Workers	2.0	2.0	ASL Proficiency and College Diploma
Learning Resource Teachers	27.0	27.34	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Manager: Special Education, Inclusion and Equity	1.0	1.0	Masters Degree & Certification with Behavior Analyst Certification Board or College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario (CPBAO)
Manager: Psychological Services	0.5	0.5	Certified Psychologist
Occupational Therapist	1.0	1.0	Masters in Science & Occupational Therapy
Principals: Special Education, Inclusion & Equity	1.5	1.5	Principal Qualifications Parts 1 & 2: Special Education Preferred
Project SEARCH/ITWEP Teachers	3.0	3.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Psychoeducational Consultants	5.0	5.0	Masters in Psychology
SEA Consultant	0.5	0.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
SEA IIT Assistant	0.5	0.5	Project SEARCH Graduate
Special Education Class Teachers	48.0	53.0	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Special Education Consultants	5.0	5.0	Special Education Specialist
Speech-Language Pathologists	2.0	2.0	Masters in Speech-Language Pathology
Team Lead Board Certified Behaviour Analyst	0.5	0.5	Masters Degree & Certification with Behaviour Analyst Certification Board or CPBAO
Transition Work Experience Program (TWEP EAs)	2.0	3.0	College Training Certificate or equivalent
Visual Aid Assistant	0.5	0.5	Project SEARCH Graduate
Autism Peer Support Worker	0.5	0.5	Secondary degree, graduate of HWDSB and Lived experiences ASD
Itinerant Teachers: Centre for Success	0.0	1.0	Special Education Qualifications
Multi Disciplinary Team (MDT) Teachers	7.5	7.5	Special Education Additional Qualifications
Manager: Speech-Language & Communication	0.5	0.5	Masters in Speech-Language
Special Education Programs: SAFE	1.0	1.0	Special Education Qualifications
Special Education Programs: Social Communication	2.0	2.0	Special Education Qualifications
Assistant SEA Technicians	1.0	1.0	College Diploma
Administrative Assistant: SEA	0.5	0.5	College Diploma
Administrative Assistants: SEIE	1.5	1.5	College Diploma
Itinerant Educational Assistants	3.0	6.0	College Training Certificate or Equivalent

## SECTION 6 – SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT

### Special Equipment Amount (SEA)

HWDSB purchases specialized equipment for students with special education needs in order for these students to be able to access the Ontario Curriculum and/or to attend school. As per Ministry of Education direction, HWDSB is expected to make cost effective choices about acquiring appropriate equipment and will ensure that students (where appropriate), teachers and board staff who work with the student have received training in order to make the best use of the equipment.

HWDSB responsibilities include ensuring that:

- Equipment is functioning properly and that the equipment is meeting students' needs;
- Equipment is replaced as required when students outgrow equipment or when equipment wears out through use;
- Upgrades and refurbishment are considered as an option before replacement;
- Equipment is reused by/transferred to other students when no longer required by the student for whom it was purchased;
- Efforts are made to share equipment among several students when appropriate and possible;

### Special Equipment Amount (SEA) Funding

HWDSB allocates internally funds to support the costs associated with purchasing equipment for students with special needs who require it. In addition, the Ministry of Education provides Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding to school boards to assist with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs where the need for specific equipment is recommended by a qualified professional.

### Formula Component and Claims-Based Components of SEA

The Board receives SEA funding through a formula-based allocation. The formula component is calculated as follows: \$200 000 per board + (\$51.10 x average daily enrollment). Any individual piece of equipment that exceeds \$5000 is funded by the Ministry through the Claims-Based component of the funding formula.

The Board is responsible for:

- The purchase of equipment that costs less than \$5000 for students;
- The purchase and claim submission for individual items exceeding a cost of \$5000
- Insurance costs;
- The cost of parts for upgrading or refurbishing equipment; and
- Staff costs for managing and purchasing equipment, set-up, repairs, and training

### Tracking Formula Component and Claims-Based Components

All claims are tracked on a Master SEA Spreadsheet and reported to the Ministry annually. The Ministry requires school boards to retain SEA records for the current school year and the previous 3 school years.

### Portability of SEA Equipment

When a student for whom SEA equipment was purchased moves to a new school board in Ontario, the equipment must move with the student, unless in the opinion of the new school board it is not practical to do so. The receiving board will make a formal request to the sending board for the transfer of equipment and is responsible for the shipping and handling costs associated with moving the equipment. Equipment does not transfer to private schools or post-secondary institutions, employment settings, or home- schooling or out of province/country moves. In most cases, school boards no longer request the transfer of per pupil amount claims as technology used in individual boards is not always compatible with the new board's technology. It is more beneficial to assign new technology from our own inventory.

### **Claims-Based SEA Claims**

#### **Criteria for Eligibility**

Whether through the Formula Component or Claims-Based component, school boards can only use Specialized Equipment Allocation funding to make purchases for eligible students with special education needs. Eligible students are those for whom specialized equipment is determined to be directly required and essential for attending school, accessing the Ontario curriculum, and/or supporting or augmenting a board determined alternative program and/or course. Demonstrating a student's need is a requirement.

Specialized equipment is to provide students with special education needs with accommodations that are directly required and essential for attending school, accessing the Ontario curriculum, and/or supporting or augmenting a board determined alternative program and/or course. As such, Specialized Equipment Allocation purchases must be made for students with documented special education needs (e.g., current Individual Education Plan (IEP) and other supporting documentation as outlined in the requirements and documentation sections below).

For clarity, students do not have to be identified as exceptional pupils through the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) process to be eligible for equipment funded through SEA. However, students must be receiving special education programs and services, and the use of SEA-funded equipment must be documented in the student's IEP.

#### **Examples of Claims-Based Equipment**

Eligible equipment includes items required to meet students' academic needs, personal care and safety needs, mobility needs, hearing, vision, and sensory needs. This may include but is not limited to the following items:

- Computer/tablet and associated peripherals
- Print enlargers for students with low vision
- Computer hardware for Blind Low Vision students
- Adjustable desks
- Specialized chairs
- Braille
- Symbol or letter voice translators
- FM systems
- Therapy equipment (balls, wedges, rolls, etc.)
- Sensory input equipment (weighted vests, blankets, etc.)
- Fine motor equipment (pencil grips, fidget devices, etc.)
- Positioning devices for sitting, standing, and lying
- Personal care items such as change tables or commodes
- Ceiling lifts, portable person lifts and / or harnesses for moving students
- Warranties, service contracts, training associated with specific equipment

Ineligible expenses are as follows:

#### **Capital Expenditures**

Specialized Equipment Allocation funding is intended to help cover the costs of portable equipment to be utilized by students with special education needs. Fixed and/or hard-wired equipment remain capital expenditures and are ineligible for SEA funding (both formula and claims-based components). Building modifications such as physical accessibility modifications or features built into classrooms such as sound systems or noise-reducing surface treatments (e.g., carpets, ceiling tiles) are not eligible. Elevators and stair climbers do not qualify as lifts for Specialized Equipment Allocation funding and will not be eligible for SEA funding as they are not considered personal care aids or devices. An exception to this policy is permitted for the installation of dividers to create privacy rooms and beams that are required to support lifting devices

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

### **Curriculum materials**

Software or digital programs used solely as an alternative curriculum program or course are not eligible. The cost of transcribing textbooks into Braille is also not eligible. These should be paid for out of a board's regular day school supply and/or computer purchasing budget as are other textbooks and audio-visual materials.

### **Goods and Services Tax/ Harmonized Sales Tax (GST/HST)**

### **Assessments**

Costs of assessments required to support Specialized Equipment Allocation funding are not eligible regardless of whether they are covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP).

### **Regular Day School Expenses Budget**

Regular day school expenses incurred for all students in a classroom should include students with special education needs. Therefore, when a school purchases technology for all students in a classroom, using a board's regular day school supply and/or computer purchasing budget, SEA funding cannot be used. When a student with special education needs in the same classroom requires additional software or an enhancement to the equipment to meet their needs, these items for the student with special education needs, including enhancements, can be funded through SEA. Similarly, consumable materials should be funded by a board's regular day school supply and/or computer purchasing budget.

## **SECTION 7 – TRANSPORTATION FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

The Board-designated school for Special Education students will be the school at which the student is placed in a Special Education Classroom as determined by the Identification Placement and Review Committee, which may be the student's home school or another school location. Eligibility for transportation services will be dependent on an assessment of the individual student's physical and/or intellectual capabilities. This may result in the placement being in the closest accessible environment, should the home school not meet the student's accessibility requirements.

Students in Special Education Classes in HWDSB are eligible for transportation based on HWDSB's Personalized Transportation Procedure for Transportation Policy 3.10

If a student does not meet the eligibility distance criteria based on Policy 3.10 above, an assessment of the individual student's physical and/or intellectual capabilities are reviewed by the school and a personalized transportation plan is developed in collaboration with the Special Education, Inclusion & Equity Department and the Transportation Department.

Students with special needs who attend their home school, but are limited by conditions relating to intellectual, physical, emotional, or severe communication challenges may also receive personalized transportation to and from school. The request for this personalized transportation service is initiated by the school principal and must be supported by the appropriate Superintendent of Student Achievement or the Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity.

To enhance efficiency at the school and system levels, HWDSB is expanding a multi-year approval pilot project with transportation services this spring for both students in Regular Class and in Special Education Classes requiring Personalized Transportation. Multi-year approval for personalized transportation includes all students with Personalized Transportation requests submitted for mobility/accessibility and/or safety needs in Regular Class as well as the following Special Education Classes: Autism Special Education Classes, Developmental Special Education Classes, Multiples Special Education Classes and Elementary Comprehensive Classes. The multi-year approvals process has shown improvements by reducing the paperwork burden at the school level as well as improving efficiencies at both the board and transportation services levels.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

Students in Education and Community Partnerships Programs (ECP), Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) and students attending Provincial, and Demonstration Schools are eligible to receive transportation services. Access to transportation is initiated through a request by the principal through Special Education, Inclusion and Equity to Transportation Services.

Students still require an approval before transportation can be provided. The request for this personalized transportation service is initiated by the school principal and must be supported by the Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity.

For students enrolled in the Phoenix program (for suspended and/or expelled students), the parent/guardian will arrange for the transportation of their child to and from this temporary placement. However, personalized transportation may be considered for the Phoenix program or other Ministry of Education programs if extenuating circumstances exist, as long as it is supported by the appropriate Superintendent of Student Achievement.

We do receive requests to provide HSR bus tickets for the short term/long term Phoenix programs, which we do supply as long as the student exceeds the eligibility distance criteria. If a student is not capable of bus tickets and requires more support or they do not have access to the HSR system, then the school principal initiates the request through the appropriate Superintendent for personalized transportation on minibus/taxi.

For students attending elementary Centre Programs transportation is offered to these locations if necessary. In most cases, students are transported in the most cost-effective manner possible. However, from time to time, students may be transported in smaller groups, or individually. Decisions regarding mode of transportation are made by Transportation Services, in consultation with the school and/or Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Department and the parent/guardian.

Increased emphasis will be placed on developing skills through targeted interventions to support students to ride in the most inclusive form of transportation possible for the student.

With approval, the Consortium will supply booster seats, seatbelt covers (where seatbelts are available) and harnesses/harness straps to the Operator as required. On occasion, if the family has their own booster seat, they can opt to use their own.

The Operator and/or schools will return this equipment to the Consortium upon request. Harness straps are installed in the vehicle, and the harness, seatbelt covers and booster seats are given to the family to hold onto for the school year.

It is the sole responsibility of the Operator to ensure harness straps are installed and used properly in accordance with manufacturer specifications. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian/school staff to ensure booster seats and harnesses are installed and used properly in accordance with manufacturer specifications.

The Operator must equip each vehicle with a device that ensures continuous communication with the main Dispatcher throughout the scheduled bus routes. Additionally, the Operator must ensure that a Dispatcher is available to provide appropriate support during peak times and inclement weather.

All vehicles used for transporting students must prominently display an 'empty' sign when not in use. School buses must predominantly display this sign in a clearly visible rear window of the vehicle and passenger vans/cars must predominantly display the sign in visible window location.

The flashing signal lights shall be activated when the vehicle is stopped to pick up or drop off students where permitted.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

In the case of wheelchair vehicles, this will also include the loading and unloading of students, manual ramp operation and tie-down procedures.

The driver shall ensure that the safety latches on all passenger doors are in use when any students are in the vehicle.

Each driver shall always have and maintain in good standing, a valid driver's license for the class of equipment driven as required by the *Public Vehicles Act* and the *Highway Traffic Act (Ontario)* and the regulations thereunder, and local municipal by-laws.

Upon Consortium request, the Operator will make available for review their driver training manuals. In addition, upon Consortium request, training records will be made available at the Operator's place of business for review. The Consortium retains the right to request changes or additions to the Operator's training programs for drivers at its sole discretion.

All drivers shall successfully complete all pertinent training with respect to First Aid, Epi Pen and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act prior to transporting students under this agreement. Additional mandatory training requirements to enhance service may be introduced by the Consortium at its sole discretion during the term of this contract at the Operator's expense.

### SECTION 8 – TRANSITION PLANNING

Transition Planning involves many staff and is led by the Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Transition Navigator. *Policy and Program Memorandum 156. Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Needs* requires transition plans for all students with special education needs. HWDSB is committed to developing and supporting effective transition processes for all students and works in compliance with provincial regulations and policies.

Transition planning for students with special education needs begins with the student's entry to school and continues throughout their school career until the student exits school. School teams within HWDSB work collaboratively with the student (as appropriate), parent/guardian and relevant community agencies and other professionals involved with the student to develop and implement transition plans for all students entering and exiting our district. This collaborative process was built to ensure that the program and/or services and support that are available to students are communicated to families.

The transition plan is incorporated into HWDSB's IEP template and is part of the IEP review. As stated in Policy Program Memorandum 156, "transition plans are developed, implemented, and maintained for all students who have an IEP, whether or not they have been identified as exceptional by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC), and including those identified as exceptional solely on the basis of giftedness". At the discretion of the Board, a transition plan may also be developed for students who receive special education programs and/or services and supports but do not have an IEP and have not been identified as exceptional. When students enter school without an IEP, the HWDSB Transition Planning Template in Special Programs is used.

Key transitions that a student may experience can include:

- Entry to school
- The transition between grades
- The move from elementary to secondary school
- The transition from secondary school to post-secondary activities
- A move to a school following a prolonged absence for medical reasons or after receiving care, treatment, or rehabilitation at another institution
- The transition from community-based ABA to school
- The transition from Regular Class to special education placements
- A change from one school to another



## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

HWDSB has transition planning activities and resources (from the Ministry of Education and internally developed) available to support staff, students and families with the various transitions that can occur from school entry to exiting school. The resources include: the Ministry of Education's, *Planning Entry to School: A Resource Guide* as well as *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide*. 'Parents as Partners' series and 'Transitions for Inclusive Pathways' (TIPS).

### Resources

Ministry of Education (2017) [Special Education in Ontario](#): Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Ministry of Education (2005) [Planning Entry to School](#): A Resource Guide

Ministry of Education (2013). [Policy and Program Memorandum 156](#): Supporting Transitions for Students with Special Education Needs.

Ministry of Education (2007). [Policy and Program Memorandum 140](#): Incorporating Methods of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) into Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

## SECTION 9 – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clearly defined roles and responsibilities are an essential part of delivering special education programs and services. The roles and responsibilities within special education are outlined below.

### The Ontario Ministry of Education

- Defines, through the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda, the legal obligations of school boards regarding the provision of special education programs and services, and prescribes the categories and definitions of exceptionality;
- Ensures that school boards provide appropriate special education programs and services for their exceptional pupils;
- Establishes the funding for special education through the structure of the funding model. The model consists of the Foundation Grant, the Special Education Grant, and other special purpose grants;
- Requires school boards to report on their expenditures for special education;
- Sets province-wide standards for curriculum and reporting of achievement;
- Requires school boards to maintain special education plans, review them annually, and submit amendments to the Ministry;
- Requires school boards to establish Special Education Advisory Committees (SEACs);
- Establishes Special Education Tribunals to hear disputes between parents and school boards regarding the identification and placement of exceptional pupils;
- Establishes a provincial Advisory Council on Special Education to advise the Minister of Education on matters related to special education programs and services;
- Operates Provincial and Demonstration Schools for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind, or who have severe learning disabilities.

### The district school board or school authority

- Establishes school board policy and practices that comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- Monitors school compliance with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- Requires staff to comply with the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- Provides appropriately qualified staff to provide programs and services for the exceptional pupils of the board;
- Obtains the appropriate funding and reports on the expenditures for special education;

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

- Develops and maintains a special education plan that is amended from time to time to meet the current needs of the exceptional pupils of the board;
- Reviews the plan annually and submits amendments to the Minister of Education;
- Provides statistical reports to the ministry as required and as requested;
- Prepares a parent guide to provide parents with information about special education programs, services, and procedures;
- Establishes one or more IPRCs to identify exceptional pupils and determine appropriate placements for them;
- Establishes a Special Education Advisory Committee;
- Provides professional development to staff on special education.

### **The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)**

- Makes recommendations to the board with respect to any matter affecting the establishment, development, and delivery of special education programs and services for exceptional pupils of the board;
- Participates in the board's annual review of its special education plan;
- Participates in the board's annual budget process as it relates to special education;
- Reviews the financial statements of the board as they relate to special education;
- Provides information to parents/guardians, as requested;
- SEAC participates in a wide range of committees.

### **The school principal**

- Carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/ program memoranda, and through board policies;
- Communicates Ministry of Education and school board expectations to staff;
- Ensures that appropriately qualified staff are assigned to teach Special Education Classes;
- Communicates board policies and procedures about special education to staff, students, and parents;
- Ensures that the identification and placement of exceptional pupils, through an IPRC, is done according to the procedures outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and board policies;
- Consults with parents and with school board staff to determine the most appropriate program for exceptional pupils;
- Ensures the development, implementation, and review of a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), including a transition plan, according to provincial requirements;
- Ensures that parents are consulted in the development of their child's IEP and that they are provided with a copy of the IEP;
- Ensures the delivery of the program as set out in the IEP;
- Ensures that appropriate assessments are requested if necessary and that parental consent is obtained.

### **The teacher**

- Carries out duties as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/ program memoranda;
- Follows board policies and procedures regarding special education;
- Maintains up-to-date knowledge of special education practices;
- Where appropriate, works with special education staff and parents/guardians to develop the IEP for an exceptional pupil;
- Provides the program for the exceptional pupil in the Regular Class, as outlined in the IEP;
- Communicates the student's progress to parent/guardian;
- Works with other school board staff to review and update the student's IEP.

### **The special education teacher, in addition to the responsibilities listed above under “the teacher”**

- Holds qualifications, in accordance with Regulation 298, to teach special education;
- Monitors the student's progress with reference to the IEP and modifies the program as necessary;
- Assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils.

**The parent/guardian**

- Becomes familiar with and informed about board policies and procedures in areas that affect the child;
- Participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other relevant school activities;
- Participates in the development of the IEP;
- Becomes acquainted with the school staff working with the student;
- Supports the student at home;
- Works with the school principal and teachers to solve problems;
- Is responsible for the student's attendance at school.

**The student**

- Complies with the requirements as outlined in the Education Act, regulations, and policy/program memoranda;
- Complies with board policies and procedures;
- Participates in IPRCs, parent-teacher conferences, and other activities, as appropriate.

**SECTION 10 – CATEGORIES AND DEFINITIONS OF EXCEPTIONALITIES**

The Education Act identifies five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students:

- Behaviour
- Communication (Autism, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Learning Disability)
- Intellectual (Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability)
- Physical (Physical Disability, Blind and Low Vision)
- Multiple

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Behaviour</b>	
Behavioural Exceptionality	<p>A learning disorder characterized by specific behaviour problems over such a period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance and that may be accompanied by one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. an inability to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships;</li> <li>b. excessive fears or anxieties;</li> <li>c. a tendency to compulsive reaction;</li> <li>d. an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or other health factors, or any combination thereof.</li> </ul>
<b>Communication</b>	
Communication - Autism	<p>A severe learning disorder that is characterized by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. disturbances in: rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment; mobility; perception, speech, and language;</li> <li>b. lack of the representational symbolic behaviour that precedes language.</li> </ul>
Communication - Deaf and Hard of Hearing	<p>An impairment characterized by deficits in language and speech development because of a diminished or non-existent auditory response to sound.</p>
Communication - Language Impairment	<p>A learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or the use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors, and which may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. involve one or more of the form, content, and function of language in communication; and</li> <li>b. include one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• language delay;</li> <li>• dysfluency;</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>voice and articulation development, which may or may not be organically or functionally based.</p>
Communication - Speech Impairment	<p>A disorder in language formulation that may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical, or sensory factors; that involves perceptual motor aspects of transmitting oral messages; and that may be characterized by impairment in articulation, rhythm, and stress.</p>

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
Communication - Learning Disability	<p>One of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills and that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affects the ability to perceive or process verbal or non-verbal information in an effective and accurate manner in students who have assessed intellectual abilities that are <i>at least</i> in the average range;</li> <li>• results in (a) academic underachievement that is inconsistent</li> <li>• with the intellectual abilities of the student (which are at least in the average range), and/or (b) academic achievement that can be maintained by the student only with extremely high levels of effort and/or with additional support;</li> <li>• results in difficulties in the development and use of skills in one or more of the following areas: reading, writing, mathematics, and work habits and learning skills;</li> <li>• may typically be associated with difficulties in one or more cognitive processes, such as phonological processing; memory and attention; processing speed; perceptual- motor processing; visual-spatial processing; executive functions (e.g., self-regulation of behaviour and emotions, planning, organizing of thoughts and activities, prioritizing, decision making);</li> <li>• may be associated with difficulties in social interaction (e.g., difficulty in understanding social norms or the point of view of others); with various other conditions or disorders, diagnosed or undiagnosed; or with other exceptionalities;</li> <li>• is <i>not</i> the result of a lack of acuity in hearing and/or vision that has not been corrected; intellectual disabilities; socio-economic factors; cultural differences; lack of proficiency in the language of instruction; lack of motivation or effort; gaps in school attendance or inadequate opportunity to benefit from instruction.</li> </ul>

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

Category	Ministry of Education Definition
<b>Intellectual</b>	
Giftedness	An unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated.
Mild Intellectual Disability	A learning disorder characterized by:  a. an ability to profit educationally within a Regular Class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and support services; b. an inability to profit educationally within a Regular Class because of slow intellectual development; c. a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self- support.
Developmental Disability	A severe learning disorder characterized by:  a. an inability to profit from a special education program for students with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; b. an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; c. a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment, and economic self-support.
<b>Physical</b>	
Physical Disability	A condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of students without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level.
Blind and Low Vision	A condition of partial or total impairment of sight or vision that even with correction affects educational performance adversely.
<b>Multiple</b>	
Multiple Exceptionalities	A combination of learning or other disorders, impairments, or physical disabilities that is of such a nature as to require, for educational achievement, the services of one or more teachers holding qualifications in special education and the provision of support services appropriate for such disorders, impairments, or disabilities.

## SECTION 11 – PROVINCIAL AND DEMONSTRATION SCHOOLS IN ONTARIO

### **Provincial Schools and Provincial Demonstration Schools are operated by the Ministry of Education**

- Provincial Schools Branch oversees the policies and operation of these schools;
- Qualified teachers who are employed by the Provincial Schools Authority or seconded from District School Boards deliver the educational programs;
- The Provincial Schools Resource Services Department provides a range of services to families and school boards in support of students who are blind, deaf-blind, low-vision, deaf, hard of hearing or who have a severe learning disability;
- Programs include workshops, on-line learning opportunities and early intervention programs designed to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas so that students across the province are able to achieve their full academic potential
- Provide an alternative education option;
- Serve as regional resource centres for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- Provide preschool home visiting services for students who are deaf or deaf-blind;
- Develop and provide learning materials and media for students who are deaf, blind, or deaf-blind;
- Provide school board teachers with resource services;
- Play a valuable role in teacher training;
- Provide residential services and programs for those students living outside the day travel area.

### **W. Ross Macdonald School: School for the Blind and Deaf-Blind**

W. Ross Macdonald School is located in Brantford and provides education for students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind. The school provides:

- A provincial resource centre for the visually impaired and deaf-blind;
- Support to local school boards through consultation and the provision of special learning materials, such as Braille materials, audiotapes, and large-print textbooks;
- Professional services and guidance to ministries of education on an interprovincial, cooperative basis.
- Programs are tailored to the needs of the individual student and:
- Are designed to help these students learn to live independently in a non-sheltered environment;
- Are delivered by specially trained teachers;
- Follow the Ontario curriculum developed for all students in the province;
- Offer a full range of courses at the secondary level;
- Offer courses in special subject areas such as music, broad-based technology, family studies, physical education, and mobility training;
- Are individualized, to offer a comprehensive “life skills” program;
- Provide through home visiting for parents and families of preschool deaf-blind children to assist in preparing these children for future education;
- The Resource Services Library, which provides Braille and alternate print formats for students across Ontario. For more information on this service please go to [aero.psbnet.ca](http://aero.psbnet.ca);
- A learning centre that offers information to parents, students, educators and other professionals.

### **Provincial Schools for the Deaf**

The following Provincial Schools offer services for deaf and hard-of-hearing students:

- Sir James Whitney School for the Deaf in Belleville (serving eastern Ontario)
- Ernest C. Drury School for the Deaf in Milton (serving central and northern Ontario)
- Roberts School for the Deaf in London (serving western Ontario)
- Centre Jules-Léger in Ottawa (serving francophone students and families throughout Ontario)

The Provincial Schools Admission Committee in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation 296 determines admittance to a Provincial School. These schools provide elementary and secondary school programs for deaf students from preschool level to high school graduation. The curriculum follows the Ontario curriculum and parallels courses and programs provided in school boards. Each student has their special needs met as set out in their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **Schools for the Deaf**

- Provide rich and supportive bilingual/bicultural educational environments which facilitate students' language acquisition, learning, and social development through American Sign Language (ASL) and English;
- In the elementary grades, the ASL curriculum is fully implemented to provide the student with an understanding of their first language (American Sign Language);
- Operate primarily as day schools;
- Provide residential facilities five days per week for those students who do not live within reasonable commuting distance from the school

Each school has a Resource Services Department, which provides:

- Consultation and educational advice to parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing children and school board personnel;
- Information brochures;
- A wide variety of workshops for parents, school boards, and other agencies;
- An extensive home-visiting program delivered to parents of deaf and hard-of-hearing preschool children by teachers trained in preschool and deaf education.

### **Provincial Schools for those with Learning Disabilities**

Application for admission to a provincial Demonstration School is made on behalf of students by the school board, with parental consent. The Provincial Committee on Learning Disabilities (PCLD) determines whether a student is eligible for admission.

Although the primary responsibility to provide appropriate educational programs for students with learning disabilities remains with school boards, the Ministry of Education recognizes that some students require a residential school setting for a period of time. The Demonstrations Schools were established to:

- Provide special residential education programs for students between the ages of 5 and 21 years;
- Enhance the development of each student's academic and social skills;
- Develop the abilities of the students enrolled to a level that will enable them to return to programs operated by a local school board within two years
- Deliver specialized educational instruction;
- Residential services and programs;
- Specialized programming in association with Attention Deficit hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD);
- Teacher training and consultation services to school boards who have similar services and programs serving the needs of LD students in their local community.

In addition to providing residential schooling for students with severe learning disabilities, the provincial Demonstration Schools have special programs for students with severe learning disabilities in association with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD). These are highly intensive, one-year programs.

The mandate of these programs is to return students to their home boards at the end of one year (2 semesters). Service agreements will be signed by all parties shortly following admissions, and transition planning will be initiated during the first semester of the program.

### **Program interventions include**

- Individualized instruction in academic and social skills;
- Frequent use of computers;
- Low stimulus, structured environments;
- Physical activities that promote pro-social and team values;
- Support and counseling programs that focus on understanding, accepting and coping with ADHD and learning disabilities;
- Cognitive behaviour modifications and cognitive behaviour therapy;



## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

- Ongoing psychiatric assessment and monitoring by a specialist in this area;
- Effective medication control;
- Parent education and support groups that focus on understanding and managing behaviour; and
- A partnership with the home, the school board and the provincial demonstration school to facilitate the return of the student to an appropriate school placement, including teacher training in understanding and accommodating the needs of the ADHD student in the school setting.

**Transportation**

HWDSB provides transportation to and from Provincial Demonstration schools upon approval from a Superintendent of Student Achievement. Transportation to and from E.C. Drury or W. Ross Macdonald School occurs daily from a pupil's residence to either E.C. Drury or W. Ross Macdonald respectively. With respect to Trillium Demonstration School, transportation occurs from a pupil's residence Monday morning of the school week and return to a pupil's residence on Friday afternoon of the same school week.

**School for the Deaf and Deaf-Blind**

W. Ross Macdonald  
School 350 Brant  
Avenue Brantford ON  
N3T 3J9 Phone: (519)  
759-0730

**Schools for the Deaf**

Ernest C. Drury School  
255 Ontario Street South  
Milton ON L9T 2M5  
Phone: (905) 878-2851  
TTY: (905) 878-7195

Robarts School  
1090 Highbury Avenue  
P.O. Box 7360, Station E  
London ON N5Y 4V9  
Phone & TTY: (519) 453-4400

Sir James Whitney School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON K8P 1B2  
Phone & TTY: (613) 967-2823

**Francophone School for the Deaf and for those with Learning Disabilities**

Centre Jules-Léger  
281 rue Lanark  
Ottawa ON K1Z  
6R8  
Phone (613) 761-9300  
TTY: (613) 761-9302 & 761-9304

**Demonstration Schools for English-speaking students with ADHD and Severe Learning Disabilities**

Sagonaska School  
350 Dundas Street West  
Belleville ON K8P 1B2  
Phone: (613) 967-2830

Trillium School  
347 Ontario Street South  
Milton ON L9T 3X9  
Phone: (905) 878-8428

Amethyst School  
1090 Highbury Avenue  
London ON N5Y 4V9  
Phone: (519) 453-4408

Each provincial Demonstration School has an enrolment of forty students. The language of instruction at the Amethyst, Sagonaska, and Trillium schools is English; at Centre Jules-Léger, instruction is in French.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

Number of Students from HWDSB Attending the Provincial Schools

School Name	Number of HWDSB Students Attending the School
E.C. Drury School for the Deaf	8
Trillium Demonstration School	5
W. Ross Macdonald School for the Blind	13

Note: student placement in a Provincial School is reviewed annually.

The home school is responsible for compiling the application package. The Principal(s) of Special Education Services is responsible for submitting the application package to the provincial or demonstration school and acts as Board contact with the provincial or demonstration school.

## SECTION 12 – THE BOARD’S CONSULTATION PROCESS

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) is consulted in the development of this Plan including the programs and services provided by the board on an ongoing basis at SEAC meetings. SEAC members who represent local associations and community organizations are invited to provide input from their organizations. The final draft is presented to SEAC at the final June meeting. (**Note for 2025/26:** The final draft will be presented in September 2025 to align with the timing of staffing approvals within the broader annual budget process).

Annually, the Special Education Plan undergoes an internal review by Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Staff to ensure compliance with the Special Education Plan Standards. Changes are incorporated into the revised Plan and then presented to SEAC. The Special Education Plan is then posted to the Board’s website <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/special-ed/#tabs-115>

There is an opportunity for the broader community to provide feedback on the Special Education Plan <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/contact/>

In 2025-26 HWDSB will be working with SEAC on the development of a framework to support broader consultation with students and families. In addition, student and staff advisory committees will be established.

### SECTION 13 – THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

In accordance with Education Act Regulation 464/97, every district school board shall establish a Special Education Advisory Committee.

#### Names, Affiliations and Contact Information for Voting Members

PRIMARY MEMBERS	ALTERNATE MEMBERS
Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton <a href="mailto:judycolantino@gmail.com">judycolantino@gmail.com</a>	Laura Rudolph Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton <a href="mailto:laurainhamilton@hotmail.com">laurainhamilton@hotmail.com</a>
Lindsay Bray, SEAC Vice Chair McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio <a href="mailto:braylind@hhsc.ca">braylind@hhsc.ca</a>	
Danielle Dion-Broadley Hamilton FASD Collaborative <a href="mailto:Danielle.dion-broadley@contacthamilton.ca">Danielle.dion-broadley@contacthamilton.ca</a>	
Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair Trustee Ward 3 <a href="mailto:mfmiller@hwdsb.on.ca">mfmiller@hwdsb.on.ca</a>	Dawn Danko Trustee Ward 7 <a href="mailto:ddanko@hwdsb.on.ca">ddanko@hwdsb.on.ca</a>
Melanie Roberts Association for Bright Children of Ontario <a href="mailto:melshops@hotmail.com">melshops@hotmail.com</a>	Cecile Santos-Ayrault Association for Bright Children of Ontario <a href="mailto:santosayrault.cecile@gmail.com">santosayrault.cecile@gmail.com</a>
Nancy Silva Khan Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter) <a href="mailto:nancyosk@outlook.com">nancyosk@outlook.com</a>	Michelle Campbell Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter) <a href="mailto:michelle.campbell@visiontravel.ca">michelle.campbell@visiontravel.ca</a>
Susi Owen CNIB Hamilton and Niagara <a href="mailto:susik.owen@gmail.com">susik.owen@gmail.com</a>	
Sarah Pennington Community Living Hamilton <a href="mailto:spennington@clham.com">spennington@clham.com</a>	Tracy Sherriff Community Living Hamilton <a href="mailto:tsherriff@clham.com">tsherriff@clham.com</a>
Vanessa Doslea Lynwood Charlton Centre <a href="mailto:vdoslea@lynwoodcharlton.ca">vdoslea@lynwoodcharlton.ca</a>	
Samantha Sweet Centre for Diverse Learners <a href="mailto:samantha_sweet@diverselearners.ca">samantha_sweet@diverselearners.ca</a>	

**Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board SEAC has established the following parameters:**

#### **Mission Statement**

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to working in partnership with the staff and resources of the Board to assure quality educational services for all students.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

SEAC speaks on behalf for students with special education needs by:

- assisting students to receive the programs that meet their educational, social, physical, and emotional strengths and needs;
- advising the Board about evidence based practices; and
- working to ensure that all students are welcomed and included within their schools.

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meets on the last Wednesday of each month from September until June (unless otherwise noted). Meetings are open to anyone wishing to attend. SEAC meetings are held at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Education Centre, 20 Education Court, Hamilton. The appropriate rules of the Board shall govern the order and conduct of the meetings of the Committee.

At the first meeting of the Committee following the Board's initial meeting, the members shall elect one of their members as chair and one of their members as vice-chair for a one-year term. The vote is conducted by secret ballot unless a member is acclaimed to a position. Recruitment of new members is conducted as needed.

### **HWDSB SEAC adheres to the following Code of Ethics:**

- shall promote a positive environment in which individual contributions are encouraged and valued;
- shall treat all other members and guests with respect and allow for diverse opinions to be shared without interruption;
- shall recognize and respect the personal integrity of each member of the committee, and of all persons in attendance at the meetings;
- shall act within the limits of the roles and responsibilities of the Special Education Advisory Committee as identified by the Education Act of Ontario, and by the Board of Education in the Terms of Reference;
- shall become familiar with the Board of Education policies and operating practices and act in accordance with them;
- shall acknowledge democratic principles and accept the consensus of the committee;
- shall use established communication channels when questions or concerns arise;
- shall promote high standards of ethical practice at all times

HWDSB will make available to SEAC personnel and facilities necessary for the proper functioning of the committee. The Board shall provide the members of SEAC with timely information and orientation regarding the role of SEAC and the Board in relation to special education as well as Ministry of Education policies and Board decisions related to special education.

The revised Special Education Plan has been reviewed by SEAC. Representatives have been asked for improvements to the Plan. As well, SEAC members have been asked to share the plan with their local associations.

The development of the special education budget is based on ongoing and newly recognized needs. Budgetary development involves program considerations, negotiations, staffing levels and are developed in consultation between Special Education, Inclusion and Equity and Executive Council.

In a typical year, SEAC is provided with information on the budget, including revised estimates, by Associate Director, Support Services and Senior Manager of Business Services by mid to end of April. Budget presentations are based on updated Special Education programs, services and financial information.

SEAC's involvement in the budget process is supported by:

- presentations from the Associate Director of Finance and Facilities or Manager of Finance to attend SEAC meetings, upon the request of SEAC members and/or the suggestion of the Superintendent responsible for Special Education Services to give updates about funding and budget;
- presentations on information that affects the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board e.g. provincial grants, staffing needs;
- presentation on the overall budget for the upcoming school year and within it the Special Education budget

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

To support SEAC's understanding of special education in the board, a variety of presentations on various programs and services are presented at monthly meetings e.g. Project SEARCH, EA Onboarding.

All SEAC meetings are open to the public and are posted on the HWDSB [website](#), along with SEAC contact information and this Plan.

The Ministry of Education has created an e-Learning resource for SEAC. This [resource](#) is intended to provide information which assists SEAC in their advisory role to the school board.

### SECTION 14 – EARLY IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

#### Guiding Principles

HWDSB strongly supports an early identification and intervention process for students with special education needs. The early identification process and planning for intervention begins before the student enters school, particularly for students identified with special needs. As indicated in the Ministry of Education Policy and Program Memorandum No. 11, early identification is “a part of a continuous assessment process and program planning process which should be initiated when a child is first enrolled in school or no later than the beginning of a program of studies immediately following kindergarten and should continue throughout the child's school life”.

HWDSB is committed to the information shared in Ministry of Education's *Learning for All: K-12 document*. This document shares research informed and evidence-based approaches to support the learning of all students. It describes an integrated process of assessment and instruction that supports improved student learning at both the elementary and secondary levels.

The shared beliefs are:

- All students can succeed;
- Each student has his or her unique patterns of learning;
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience;
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students;
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development;
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students;
- Fairness is not sameness.

The processes for early identification and ongoing assessment used by HWDSB recognizes the importance of collaboration with parent/guardian, community partners, and the educators and support staff within schools.

#### Parent and Educator Role in Early Identification

Parents/guardians play a key role in the early identification process as they can provide detailed information to help understand early learning needs. Parents/guardians are encouraged to have open, clear and timely communication with the classroom educators about their own observations as well as the student's involvement with community agencies or services being received outside of school.

As indicated in Policy and Program Memorandum No. 11, “teachers in consultation with parents/guardians must strive to know each child as soon and as thoroughly as possible in order to provide learning opportunities that will help each child”. HWDSB recognizes the importance of maintaining communication with parent/guardian about student growth, development and learning. Classroom educators document observations, use ongoing assessment and screening tools to know their learners. Kindergarten Educators reference the Early Learning for Every Child Today (ELECT) document to determine developmental age and assist in understanding the learner and offering appropriate programming. Based on the information gathered, classroom educators implement strategies and processes that support the

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

learning needs of all students in the classroom. They engage in informal communication regarding their program and student learning and formal communication of learning through progress reports and report cards and informal communication with parents/guardians. Regular communication takes place between home and school to ensure families are well-informed about their child's learning.

### **Procedures for Early Identification**

HWDSB's Kindergarten registration process is called '*Count down to Kindergarten!*' Registration opens in February of each school year for September enrollment. When registering for school, parents/guardians are asked to complete the 'Student Registration and Information Form', the 'Child Information Form' and the Ministry of Education's survey, 'Early Years Experience at Kindergarten (EYE@K)'. These documents provide HWDSB with student demographic information, basic medical information, student strengths and needs and participation in childcare and activities in the community. Prior to school entry, parents/guardians are also encouraged to complete the Nipissing District Developmental Screening Tool. If concerns exist, families are encouraged to contact their family doctor or childcare provider for supports and/or intervention programs prior to school entry.

Parents/guardians with previous participation in community supports or identifying special needs at registration are invited to attend an Entry to School Meeting at the school board to support additional information gathering about their child. Information about this process is found in the 'Transitions' section of this document. Once a child enters school, ongoing communication between the parent/guardian and the classroom teacher are maintained in order to continue to learn about the student and to offer the best programming options for each individual learner.

If the classroom educator observes that a child is having difficulty in the classroom, conversations would be initiated with the families to discuss the child's needs. Information about supports available in the classroom would be shared as well as how the family could support the child at home or within the community. The open communication and collaborative process between home and school provides families with an understanding of their child's learning needs and opportunities for support. The classroom educator would continue to gather documentation about the child's learning and needs.

Students requiring additional supports to have their needs met within a Regular Classroom setting can be brought forward for discussion at an in-school meeting. These meetings are attended by the school principal, learning resource teacher, and classroom teacher. A review of student progress is completed, assessment data shared, and recommendations made. The recommendations may include the need for additional assessment data (classroom based or more formal assessments), new supports/strategies to use in the classroom, etc. Ongoing communication is maintained with families about supports provided to students.

Following the in-school meeting, the parent/guardian may be invited to attend a case conference that includes school and Special Education, Inclusion and Equity staff. Following one or more of these meetings, parent/guardian may receive notice that their child is being considered for a special education program and related services. The program or service may or may not require an IPRC. Referral to an IPRC generally takes place in later primary grades except for students who enter HWDSB with very clear needs. At the request of the Principal or parent/guardian, the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process begins. HWDSB follows the protocols shared by the Ministry of Education to inform parents/guardians of IPRC meeting and in conducting the meetings. Parents/guardians would receive notice that their child is being considered for an IPRC during school meeting and through written notice. At this time, *HWDSB's Guide for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee* is also provided.

### **Assessment Tools/Strategies**

The Ministry of Education's document, *Growing Success*, outlines the policies and practices used in Ontario schools related to assessment, evaluation and reporting. HWDSB recognizes the three different sources of information, observations, conversations and students products, as evidence of student learning and achievement. As stated in *Growing Success*, "teachers need to:

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

- plan assessment concurrently and integrate it seamlessly with instruction;
- share learning goals and success criteria with students at the outset of learning to ensure that students and teachers have a common and shared understanding of these goals and criteria as learning progresses;
- gather information about student learning before, during, and at or near the end of a period of instruction, using a variety of assessment strategies and tools;
- use assessment to inform instruction, guide next steps, and help students monitor their progress towards achieving their learning goals;
- analyze and interpret evidence of learning;
- give and receive specific and timely descriptive feedback about student learning;
- help students to develop skills of peer and self-assessment.

HWDSB strives to ensure that all assessment, evaluation and reporting practices and procedures in schools guide instruction, promote student engagement, improve student learning and are transparent to staff, students, and parents/guardians. Educators in HWDSB use a variety of diagnostic assessments within the classroom to identify student learning needs, track progress and supplement instruction. Tools may be selected from the Board's approved list (PPM155). The information is used to guide students in focusing their learning efforts, setting and monitoring goals and determining next steps.

Should additional information, outside of classroom assessments, be required in order to offer successful programming, more formal assessments may be recommended and completed by the Learning Resource Teacher. HWDSB Learning Resource Teachers have access to a variety of standardized education assessments such as the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (KTEA-3), basic skill inventories, as well as assessments in specific academic areas. If further information is needed to understand the learner, provide successful programming and possibly identify students with special education needs, professional assessment from the Board's Psychological Services, Speech and Language Services or Autism and Neurodevelopmental Services or Special Education, Inclusion and Equity in the community would be requested. Informed written parental/guardian consent is received for all assessments that are completed by staff other than the classroom teacher.

### Early Intervention Strategies

HWDSB offers a variety of early intervention strategies to support students prior to referral to an IPRC. The first step in early intervention takes place in the child's Regular Classroom. The principles outlined in *Learning for All K-12, 2013*, specifically differentiating the content, process and product, are implemented by the classroom teacher. Strategies for classroom differentiation may also be provided by the learning resource teacher to support the classroom teacher in meeting the student's learning needs.

Students may have the opportunity to participate in evidence-based programs, such as Empower™ Reading. Other supports, but not limited to, may include involvement from a Speech Language Pathologist, Communication Disorder Assistant (CDA), as well as assistant with ESL/ELL learners, behavioural programs or other targeted interventions to support specific learning needs. School teams may also access school board and/or community agencies for specialized consultation and support.

### References

Ministry of Education (2013). [Policy and Program Memorandum 155](#): Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning.

Ministry of Education (2010). [Growing Success](#): Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting in Ontario Schools.

Ministry of Education (2014). Excerpts from [ELECT](#): Foundational knowledge from the 2007 publication of Early Learning for Every Child Today: A framework for Ontario early childhood settings.

Ministry of Education (1982). [Policy and Program Memorandum 11](#): Early Identification of Children's Learning Needs.

## SECTION 15 – EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board considers assessment as an integral part of the instructional process. Classroom teachers and learning resource teachers (LRTs) regularly use educational assessments to determine student achievement and student progress.

Teachers use a variety of assessment tools as an ongoing part of the instructional process. These include observation, journaling, running records, ongoing review, curriculum-based assessments, and standardized achievement tests. There are numerous assessment tools used to evaluate the reading skills of students at the elementary level. Parental/guardian consent is not obtained for regular, ongoing curricular assessments that are part of the instructional process. Parents/guardians are informed through the regular reporting and interview process of their child's progress.

All schools in HWDSB use a variety of assessments to support the reading instructional process. Please see the HWDSB Reading strategy for more information on relevant and responsive assessments, instructional tools and intervention resources used in HWDSB.

EQAO assessments are conducted during grade 3 (reading, writing and mathematics), grade 6 (reading, writing and mathematics), grade 9 (mathematics) and grade 10 (literacy) by classroom teachers and LRTs as part of the instructional process.

Psychoeducational consultants, board certified behaviour analysts, and speech-language pathologists conduct specialized assessments to determine learning needs. These professionals are governed by various pieces of legislation including the Education Act, the Regulated Health Professions Act, Municipal Freedom of Information Act, the Protection of Privacy Act, and with the Personal Health Information Protection Act.

Informed parental/guardian consent is required for all assessments that are undertaken by professionals that are not employed as teaching staff (e.g. speech/language pathologists, psychoeducational consultants, board certified behaviour analysts). Consent is obtained and filed with the report in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR). Information regarding students or student data is shared with outside agencies only through signed, informed parental/guardian consent.

### **Psychological Services**

Psychological Services helps promote an understanding of a student's intellectual, academic, social, emotional, and adaptive functioning. Members of Psychological Services hold advanced degrees in Psychology (Masters or Ph.D.), with specialized training relevant to school psychology. Psychological Services staff are either members of or supervised by a member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario. Psychological Services provides a range of support to schools including consultation and, psychological assessments to support student success and socio-emotional well-being. Our goal is to complete psychological assessments within a year of screening for a referral. Criteria for accepting a referral for a psychological assessment are well established. Assessment may include standardized measures of cognition, academic achievement, memory, executive function and many other areas of processing. Results of an assessment are provided to parents/guardians both written and verbally either through a meeting at the school or by telephone. Assessments results are shared with relevant school and system staff with custodial consent.

### **Speech-Language and Communication Services**

Speech and language assessments, completed by a qualified Speech-Language Pathologist, provide educators with an understanding of the student's speech and language skills. This data informs the instructional practices of educators so that students can progress in their learning. Speech-Language Pathologists are registered members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists in Ontario. Our goal is to complete speech/language assessment within a year of referral.



The Speech-Language and Communication Services department operates in a tiered model of service delivery so all children who are waiting for a professional assessment are provided with classroom and instructional strategies and resources, as appropriate. Informed consent is required for any service provided by an SLP that is personalized for a student. Parents/Guardians are active participants in the assessment process and in the provision of speech/language services. The SLP will share results of an assessment through a meeting at school or by telephone. Parents/guardians also provide important information to the SLP on how their child communicates at home. Assessments are also shared with relevant school and system staff.

## **SECTION 16 – COORDINATION OF SERVICES WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OR AGENCIES**

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has strong working relationships with a variety of community agencies and ministries to ensure a smooth transition for students with special needs who are entering or leaving school.

### **Child Care and Early Learning**

#### **Entry to School**

HWDSB Entry to School process has been designed to meet the needs of children for whom developmental and/or medical concerns have been identified during their preschool years. Ongoing planning and coordination occur to facilitate a smooth transition from preschool agencies to the school system. The agencies involved in this process are as follows:

- Affiliated Services for Children and Youth, Early Words
- Blind-Low Vision and Infant Hearing Programs
- School Based Rehabilitation Services
- Home and Community Care Support Services, Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant
- Community Living Hamilton
- McMaster Children's Hospital Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre (Children's Developmental Rehabilitation Program (CDRP), Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation (DPR), Autism Spectrum Disorder Service and Child and Youth Mental Health Program, Specialized Developmental and Behavioural Services (SDBS), Ron Joyce Ontario Autism Program (OAP) Entry to School Program (ETS)
- Red Hill Regional Family Day Care
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services

Members of the Special Education, Inclusion and Equity team meets with parent/guardian to gather information about their child and share information about the entry to school process. Parents/guardians are invited to share information about their child, including professional assessments, required equipment and organizations involved in their child's care. Assessments that accompany the student from these programs are accepted by HWDSB however, if the information is insufficient, HWDSB may conduct further assessments. Each student's interests, strengths and needs are presented, and plans are made for September programming.

Determination of the need for system resources is made during the Entry to School Process. Board staff involved in the meeting is dependent on the specific needs of the child and may include any of the following:

- School Administrator
- Learning Resource Teacher
- Speech and Language Pathologist
- Special Education, Inclusion and Equity K-12 Learning Consultant
- Special Education, Inclusion and Equity K-12 Low Incidence Learning Consultant

### **Connections for Students with Autism**

- Connections for Students is a short term, collaborative service between McMaster Children's Hospital and local school boards funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Based on student strengths and needs, Connections work with HWDSB staff to support the sharing of information between home and/or clinical settings and the school environment. The eligibility requirements to participate in the Connections for Students program are: Children and youth registered in the Ontario Autism Program (OAP), who are transitioning from clinical settings to school, including those receiving OAP services from private providers
- Children and youth registered in the OAP who are enrolled in school and require brief targeted support for in-school transitions

HWDSB will work with McMaster Children's Hospital Autism Program and families to find a service option that best suits the needs identified. Connections for Students is a brief consultation model, over approximately 9 weeks, which may include any of the following components:

- Gathering information from the family, the school and any OAP providers who may be involved
- In-home observations and/or consultations
- A meeting with the family and the school team to share strategies
- Follow up consultations or observations with the family and/or school to discuss progress

Each student's 'Connections' team is chaired by the student's school administrator (or designate) and includes parent/guardian, teacher(s), the classroom teacher (and, if applicable, Educational Assistant) the school's Learning Resource Teacher, a MCH Autism Program consultant, member(s) of HWDSB Special Education, Inclusion & Equity team, and other relevant community or school board personnel. A member of the Special Education, Inclusion and Equity (SEIE) team is invited to all meetings and copied on Connections minutes. Where necessary, the manager of SEIE team also meets with the school administrator and relevant school staff to introduce the Connections process and their roles on the Connections student's team.

Following the conclusion of the Connections for Students process, the designated members of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's SEIE Team, in collaboration with the school and other special education staff, continue to provide ongoing classroom and school support to the student.

### **Ontario Autism Entry to School (ETS) Program**

The ETS program offers individualized programming with virtual, in-person, and group-based service elements. The ETS program commenced in March 2022 and families may access a six-month (half day), group-based (maximum 10 children per group with a 1:2 ratio), skill-building program, focused on developing school-readiness skills in six areas; communication, play, social interaction, functional routines, behavioural self-management and pre-academics, learning and attention. McMaster Children's Hospital Autism Program is the local ETS program provider. Individualized transition supports and consultation for the first six months of the school will be available. Special Education, Inclusion and Equity are working with the local ETS program to ensure families consent to the sharing of information and support students in a successful entry to school-like Connections for Students process.

### **Urgent Response Services**

As of April 2022, the Ministry of Ontario began to offer urgent response services (URS) for students registered with the Ontario Autism Program. URS consists of up to 12 weeks of free services and supports to families to address a specific behaviour. Service response may include short-term interdisciplinary consultation to a child/youth's intervention team and/or family and/or educator(s), respite services, direct support to the family and/or professionals involved to implement behavioural and therapy strategies with the child/youth using a mediator model approach.

Children and youth who are experiencing a specific, urgent need can access supports to; help stabilize the situation, prevent crisis, reduce the risk of the child or youth harming themselves, others and property. School board personnel, with consent of the family may support this referral. Contact Brant is the local URS provider. A similar process to Connections for students will be implemented.

### **Education and Community Partnership Programs and Care and Treatment Education Programs (CTEP)**

Education and Community Partnership Programs (ECP) provide critical support for students that have been court-ordered into a youth justice facility. Students in these programs have their confidentiality and privacy protected by the Youth Criminal Justice Act and the Provincial Offences Act.

Care Treatment Education Programs (CTEP) provide education programming for students who have a primary care need for care and treatment. These students are considered pupils of the board and remain attached to their home school for the duration of their time in the program.

The following is a list of the partner agencies of the Education and Community Partnership Programs:

- Banyan Community Services
- Hamilton Health Sciences
- Hatts Off Inc.
- Lynwood Charlton Centre
- The Governing Council of the Salvation Army in Canada
- The John Howard Society of Hamilton, Burlington & Area
- Safe Harbours

### **Students Coming from Other Boards of Education**

It is HWDSB's practice to accept assessments accompanying the students from other programs, including preschool nursery programs, preschool programs for students who are Deaf, preschool speech and language programs, intensive early intervention programs for children with autism and ECP and CTEP agencies.

However, if additional information is required, HWDSB may choose to reassess the student. Wait times vary based on the reassessment that is in question.

### **Person Responsible:**

The Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity is responsible for ensuring the successful admission or transfer of students from one program to another.

## **SECTION 17 – SPECIALIZED HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN SCHOOL SETTINGS**

Through our collaborative partnership with the Ontario Health atHome School Health Support Services and the Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre (RJCHC), HWDSB ensures that students receive the necessary medical and therapeutic supports required to participate in a school setting. Through consultation and referral to the above agencies, supports are provided in nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, nutrition, speech and language therapy, speech correction and remediation, administering prescribed medications, catheterization and suctioning. With appropriate training, HWDSB staff offer support in lifting and positioning, orientation and mobility, feeding and toileting.

A description of the specialized health support services provided in HWDSB schools as well as the agency providing the support, eligibility criteria, determination of eligibility, and criteria for determining when the service is no longer needed is available below.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

**Specialized Health Support Services**

Specialized Health Support Service	Agency or position of person who performs the service	Eligibility criteria for students to receive the service	Position of person who determines eligibility to receive the service and the level of support	Criteria for determining when the service is no longer required	Procedures for resolving disputes about eligibility and level of support (if available)
Nursing	Ontario Health atHome- School Health Services	Nursing service is determined based on the nursing intervention and the independence of the pupil	Ontario Health atHome School Health Services Care Coordinator	Based on independence of patient or when the medical intervention is no longer needed	School and or family can raise disputes around eligibility or level of care with the School Health Services care coordinator. If concerns cannot be resolved, then the manager through Ontario Health atHome can intervene. Internal complaints mechanism exists or the Action Line of the MOHLTC can be called.
Occupational therapy	McMaster Children's Hospital-Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre through Ron Joyce staff and SE Health, contracted Service Provider	OT health based consultative services determined for child to access the curriculum by attending school. Services include the recommendation and training on equipment for lifting and positioning, mobility, fine motor, OT support for school staff to assist student	MCH-RJCHC Co-ordinator School Based Rehabilitation Services	Based on change in student's condition (i.e. Student has achieved goals), student's needs have changed and service is no longer appropriate, physical environment is no longer appropriate to service delivery	School or family can contact MCH- RJCHC SBRS Intake clinician around eligibility concerns or level of care. If concerns cannot be resolved, manager/coordinator can intervene Internal complaints via Patient Experience
Physiotherapy	McMaster Children's Hospital-Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre through CBI and SE Health, contracted Service Providers	PT consultative services determined in order for child to access the curriculum by attending school, PT support for school staff to assist student	MCH-RJCHC Co-ordinator School Based Rehabilitation Services	Based on change in student's condition (i.e. student has achieved goals), student's needs have changed and service is no longer appropriate, physical environment is no longer appropriate to service delivery	School or family can contact MCH- RJCHC SBRS Intake clinician around eligibility concerns or level of care. If concerns cannot be resolved, manager/coordinator can intervene. Internal complaints via Patient Experience

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

Nutrition	Registered Dieticians Provided by the Ontario Health atHome	Concerns in regards to a pupil's nutrition intake that are school based	Ontario Health at Home School Health Services Care coordinator	Programming has been provided and implemented and or patient has improved and no longer requires services	
Speech and language therapy  Speech, Voice, and Fluency (PPM 81)  Speech and Language-School Board  Speech correction and remediation	McMaster Children's Hospital-Ron Joyce Children's Health Centre through Ron Joyce staff and SE Health, contracted Service Providers  Speech Language Pathologists, Communicative Disorders Assistants, employees of HWDSB See above	Referral from School Board SLP Students have to have moderate delays in speech or voice or fluency disorders  Referral from classroom educators with consent from parents/guardians	MCH-RJCHC Intake Clinician  Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity and System Principal: Intervention in Reading & Writing	Student has achieved goal (s); Student is no longer moderate or more significant level of need, self-regulation needs not conducive to therapy  Student no longer requires the service due to achieving the goal(s); educators/parents do not have a need	School or family can contact MCH- RJCHC SBRS Intake clinician around eligibility concerns or level of care. If concerns cannot be resolved, manager/coordinator can intervene. Internal complaints via Patient Experience  Parents/guardians would speak to their educator and SLP to resolve the issue; if the issue is not resolved they would speak to the Principal and System Principal: Intervention in Reading & Writing. If not resolved at that point, speak to their SOSA for their school
Administering of prescribed medications	Medication that is administered via injection is a nurses' role. Nursing is provided by the Ontario Health at Home School Health Services Medication administered orally is the responsibility of the school board Pupil or parent can also administer	Nursing service is determined based on the nursing intervention and the independence of the pupil	Ontario Health atHome School Health Services care coordinator	Intervention is no longer required, changes from deep to shallow or pupil becomes independent in own care	School and or family can raise disputes around eligibility or level of care with the Ontario Health at Home care coordinator. If concerns cannot be resolved then manager can intervene. Internal complaints mechanism exists or the Action Line of the MOHLTC can be called

## SECTION 18 – STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is a learning organization that strives for excellence through a continuous cycle of learning and improvement with staff. The goal of staff development is to improve outcomes for students. Therefore, our staff development model provides ongoing in-service and job-embedded learning opportunities for staff related to learners who require special education programs and services.

To ensure that Staff Development meets the needs across the system, a combination of learning opportunities are provided:

- School-based support embedded in classrooms working with school staff and students
- Board-provided workshops/programs (e.g., Learning Resource Teacher in-service, asynchronous learning modules, guest speakers, webinars)
- Opportunities to attend Ministry of Education funded and Third Party Conferences and Training through the Geneva Centre, Association for Special Education Technology, London Region Special Education Regional Coordinator and Consultant Conference

Special Education, Inclusion and Equity and Human Resource Services provide ongoing training to specific staff in Behaviour Management Systems. We continue to provide specialized professional development relating to Assistive Technology for students and staff; these resources are being integrated into classroom programming.

Special Education, Inclusion and Equity work to provide in-services that relates to *Learning for All: A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013* from the Ministry of Education. Program and Special Education, Inclusion and Equity ensure training opportunities are incorporated in students' learning profile and in professional development opportunities.

In 2025-26 HWDSB will continue with the Educational Assistant Onboarding Program (piloted in 2024-25), which includes opportunities for job shadowing.

There are many learning opportunities provided throughout the school year. The professional learning sessions are based on the goals of the annual plan of the board as well as needs identified throughout the system. The following are examples of learning sessions provided this year:

- AAC Ally modules
- ABC Data
- Acadience/ Wilson Just Words -Reading Strategy PD
- ADHD
- AIM Program: Acceptance and Commitment Training
- AQ Course: Teaching Students with Communication Needs, ASD
- AQ Course: Special Education Part 1
- ASD Special Education Classroom Look Fors for Effective Classroom Set Up
- Authentic AAC: Learn, Play, Thrive modules
- Autism Navigator training modules
- Assistive Technology
- Basic ASL Vocabulary for the Classroom
- Behaviour Management Systems
- Big 4: Behaviour Prevention Skills new EA onboarding
- Boardmaker Basics and Beyond
- Building a Calm Classroom: Social Emotional Development, Coregulation and Self-regulation in full day kindergarten
- C4S 3 Tier Support model
- CCAT Training for New LRTs
- Centre 4 Success 3 Tier Model and Application Process
- Centre 4 Success Open House – Richard Beasley
- Centre 4 Success Open House – Chedoke

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

- 
- Classroom Based Morphological Awareness Instruction
  - Communication with OneNote Class Notebook
  - Connecting Oral Language to Writing Instruction
  - CRRP
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - Duty to Accommodate- Sensory Friendly Classroom Environments
  - Duty to Accommodate – The IEP Process
  - Duty to Accommodate- The IPRC Process
  - Effective ABA Strategies to Support Students with Toileting Readiness and Routines
  - Effective Education Practices for Students with ASD
  - Emotion coaching: Moving from Skill to Stance
  - Empower™ Reading
  - Entry to School Parent Information Session
  - Everything FASD
  - Families Worrying Less Together Information Sessions
  - Features of Morphological Awareness Instruction
  - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Best Practices
  - Function Based Behaviour Support Plans
  - Getting the most out of OneNote Class Notebook
  - Handwriting Instruction in Grades K-3: An evidence Based Investigation
  - Health and Safety: Prevention through Behaviour Management Systems
  - Homewood Health: Employee and Family Assistance Program
  - How to Reduce Stress with a Structured Environment
  - HWDSB Staff Wellness Program
  - Identification, Placement, Review Committee review for PVPs
  - Information Session – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
  - Intensive Phonological Awareness
  - Introduction to Applied Behaviour Analysis- new EA Onboarding
  - K-TEA Training for New Learning Resource Teachers
  - Knowledge Hook and How it can be used for Math Assessment and Intervention
  - Leveraging AI in the Special Education Classroom
  - Lexia Core 5
  - Lexia Core 5 and/or PowerUp Reading Intervention Program
  - Love Builds Brain
  - On the Horizon: Safe and Inclusive Schools
  - OneNote Class Notebook:
    - Helping Families Navigate Ontario Autism Program (OAP)
    - PD for Educators Supporting Students with Hearing Loss
  - Personal Hygiene and Toileting 101
  - Planning for Student Sensory Preferences in a Meaningful Way- new EA onboarding
  - Post Secondary Navigation/ Post- Secondary Pathways Planning
  - Reading screeners, Assessments and Intervention for Students with Special Education Needs
  - Ron Joyce- CDRP and Supports and Programs available for Families
  - Secondary Special Education Department Planning
  - Planning for Success: UDL Self-Directed Hub Course
  - PowerSchool Special Programs
  - Proloquo2 GO app
  - Prompt Your Way to Less Stress
  - Psychological Processes Information Sessions
  - Psychological Processes related to Mathematics
  - Secondary Learning Resource 4 part PD sessions
  - Separation Anxiety
  - Sexual Education for individuals with Autism and Developmental Disability
  - Software: Boardmaker 7

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

- Sonderly Online Autism Training
- Sonderly Online Enhanced Autism Training Program
- Speech and Language Development of English Language Learners
- Speech, Language & Literacy: What to Look for in Kindergarten – Grade 1
- Elementary LRT Sessions 4 days
- Secondary LRT Day Sessions- 4 days
- Structured Literacy
- Summer Institute: Effective Education Practices for Students with ASD
- Summer Institute: IEP Standards for Classroom Teachers
- Summer Institute: It's not "Out of the Blue" - A Circumstances View of Problem Behaviour
- Summer Institute: Understanding the OT Referral Process with SBRS
- Supporting DHH students in the Classroom
- Supporting Emotional Regulation and Kinder Look Fors
- Supporting Students with FASD and Developmental Trauma
- Supporting Students with Special Education Needs and Students with Disabilities
- Teaching a New Skill/Independence
- Teaching Students with Communication Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorders)
- Tier 2 Reading Intervention
- Tiered Approaches to Effective Self-Regulation Teaching
- Toileting Independence as a Skill for Life
- Translation tools within OneNote Class Notebook
- Understanding Math Learning Disabilities
- Universal Design for Learning Self Directed Course
- Use of Sensory and Calming Spaces
- Wellness Within: Practical Self Care
- Wilson Reading System

## SECTION 19 – ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)

### Accessibility of School Buildings

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to improving accessibility to its buildings, grounds and administrative offices. The HWDSB multi-year Capital Plan incorporates budgeting to increase the overall accessibility of the facilities through ongoing maintenance repairs, Capital project expenditures and special accommodations projects. Given the large inventory and age of the facilities, various factors are considered in developing the plan such as Facility Condition Index, results of Pupil Accommodation Reviews, proximity and special accommodation requests. The Facilities Services Division works closely with Special Education, Inclusion and Equity to create, monitor and continually update the plan.

With Capital Priorities projects underway, all new HWDSB facilities are designed and constructed to the latest Accessibility requirements as identified in the Ontario Building Code. In addition to new construction, the multi-year plan includes:

- Barrier Free Parking
- Barrier Free path of travel
- Installation of door operators
- Barrier Free and universal washrooms
- Installation of lifts and elevators



## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

The following is a summary of the Board's progress to date:

2024-2025	2025-2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned renovations of existing washrooms and changerooms to accommodate accessibility</li> <li>Planned installation of stage lifts at various locations</li> <li>Planned integration of accessible parking where feasible</li> <li>Planned renovations of existing exterior and doors</li> <li>Interior signage updates to include Braille during interior renovations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to plan renovations of existing washrooms and changerooms to accommodate accessibility</li> <li>Continue to plan integration of single use universal washroom</li> <li>Continue to plan integration of single use accessible changerooms</li> <li>Continue to plan installation of stage lifts where required</li> <li>Continue to integrate accessible parking where feasible</li> <li>Continue to plan renovations of existing ramps and doors</li> <li>Continue to complete interior signage updates to include Braille during renovations</li> </ul>

For more information, the public can access the HWDSB Long Term Facilities Plan through the following link <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/school-renewal/facilities-plan/>

### Physical

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board continues to access the Ministry of Education Special Equipment Amount (SEA) funding, which assists with the costs of equipment essential to support students with special education needs.

Each year the Board allocates an amount from the annual School Renewal Allocation(SRA), provided by the Ministry of Education, through Core Education funding, to address school accessibility issues (ie: washroom upgrades, auditorium upgrades), or to meet the emerging needs of a specific ability (accessibility upgrades – ramps, visible fire alarms, acoustic treatments).

A Student Facilities Accommodation Request Form and process were introduced to the system to assist in responding to student specific accessibility requests.

### Systemic

As policies/procedures are developed and/or revised, they will be examined to reflect Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board directions regarding accessibility.

System staff in leadership roles continue to enhance learning and understanding related to Human Rights.

## SECTION 20 – PARENT GUIDE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION

Education is a responsibility shared by parents/guardians, school staff, and the students themselves. Regular, ongoing communication, initiated by families or staff, is a valued part of the team approach. Students, parents/guardians, and educators all play important roles in the planning and implementation of a student's special education program.

Special Education, Inclusion and Equity information for parents/guardians is available on the HWDSB [website](#)

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board has developed A [Guide](#) for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee.

## 2025–2026 HWDSB Special Education Plan

---

To make the document accessible to the communities within the Hamilton-Wentworth area, the document will be translated into several languages. After browsing through the web site, should further information about programs, services and supports in special education or student services be required, parents/guardians are directed to contact their local school.

After browsing through the *HWDSB Guide for Parents and Guardians to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee* and the Special Education Plan, should further information about programs, services and supports in special education or student services be required, parent/guardian is directed to contact their local school.

There are several versions of the guide (including an interactive version) located on that site. It is hoped that the information summarized there and on the connecting pages is helpful to families. After browsing through the web site, should further information about programs, services and supports in special education or student services be required, parents/guardians are directed to contact their local school or call 905-527-5092 x 2625 to have their call directed to the appropriate staff/department.

Print copies of the guide are available to schools or parents/guardians, by contacting the Special Education, Inclusion and Equity Department.

12-1  
**Committee Report**

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: September 29, 2025

From: Faith Community Advisory  
Committee

Meeting date: June 10, 2025

The committee held a meeting on June 10, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

Members: Geoffrey Cameron, Charles Chiarelli, Pooja Mathuria, Nick Sahami, Mahendra Deonarian and Lauraline Gardner.

Regrets: Meaghan Dummer, Ala Mohamed, Rabbi Miriam Wajnberg, Sukhi Dhillon Mishel Tahir and Trustee Becky Buck.

Guests: Staff members Tanya Tymkiv, System Principal, Equity K-12 and Lindsay Sierdsma, K-12 Equity and Well-Being Consultant

\*\*\*\*\*

## **MONITORING ITEMS:**

### **A. Religious and Creed Observances and Days of Significance**

Superintendent Smith provided a copy of the 2025-2026 Religious and Creed Observances and Days of Significance document for final review and advised that it will be shared this coming Thursday with Principals and Vice Principals to support their planning for the 2025-2026 school year. The information will also be made available on the HWDSB website for the public. He thanked the Committee for their input, feedback and participation in creating the document for the 2025 -2026 school year.

### **B. Committee Member Terms**

Terms for existing Members were reviewed, Committee members thanked for their participation and contributions and the process for connecting with members whose terms have come to an end was shared.

### **C. Gender Equity and Gender Expression Procedure**

Staff provided a Gender Equity presentation and shared an overview of the Gender Identity and Gender Expression Procedure with a focus on students and the process that supports student learning and well-being. Staff emphasized the key values of belonging, engagement and prioritizing dignity and the importance of Human Rights and the safety and well-being of every student. Three key areas of the Procedure were presented: Names and Pronouns, Access to Washroom and/or Changerooms and Confidentiality and staff answered questions from the Committee members.

### **D. Updates**

Staff shared that Commencements for the 2024-2025 school year have begun at HWDSB and the next couple of weeks will see dozens of Commencement celebrations.

Staff advised that HWDSB is presently working through the 2025-2026 school year budget.

### **E. Advisory Discussion**

Committee Member shared their observations and offered their congratulations to HWDSB stating that they have witnessed a lot being done in the last few years to support our schools being a safe place for students with an intentional focus on fairness, equity and gender.

Respectfully submitted by  
Charles Chiarelli and Nick Sahami  
Co-Chairs