



## Board Meeting

Monday, February 2, 2026

Trustee Board Room

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board  
20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558  
Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

### AGENDA: 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement
2. O Canada
3. Meeting Roll Call
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
6. Confirmation of the Minutes: December 15, 2025

#### Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

7. Policy – December 4, 2025
8. Program – December 11, 2025
9. Finance & Facilities – December 16, 2025, and January 13, 2026

#### Reports from Legislative Committees:

10. Parent Involvement Committee – December 9, 2025
11. Special Education Advisory Committee – December 17, 2025
12. Resolution Into Committee of the Whole (Private Session) as per the Education Act, Section 207.2  
(b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian;

#### *Meeting Resumes in Public Session*

13. Report from Committee of the Whole (Private) – February 2, 2026
14. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:
  - A. Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations
  - B. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success
  - C. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
15. Oral Reports from:
  - A. Student Trustees' and Shakowennakará:tats
  - B. Director's Report
  - C. Chair's Report
16. Adjournment

**BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.**

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**Trustees:** Kathy Archer\*, Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab, Dawn Danko<sup>(R)</sup>, Amanda Fehrman<sup>(R)</sup>, Maria Felix Miller, Graeme Noble, Paul Tut, Todd White, Elizabeth Wong<sup>(R)</sup>, Abby Zaitley. Student Trustees Sanad Bizanti<sup>(R)</sup>, Evelyn Watson, and Shakowennakara:tats Daunte Hillen.

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

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

**RESOLUTION #25-114:** Trustees Tut/Buck moved that Trustees Danko, Fehrman and Wong be approved as absent for the December 15, 2025, Board meeting.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### 2. Approval of the Agenda

**RESOLUTION #25-115** Trustees Tut/Buck moved that the agenda be approved.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### 3. Confirmation of the Minutes

**RESOLUTION #25-116:** Trustees Tut/Buck moved that the minutes from November 17, 2025, and November 24, 2025, be confirmed.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### 4. Tribute to former Trustee Judith Bishop, Wards 1 & 2

Trustee White, on behalf of the Board of Trustees, paid tribute to former Trustee Judith Bishop, who was an extraordinary trustee whose dedication and work ethic set her apart. She devoted countless hours to serving students, often working up to 60 hours a week as chair, and consistently prioritized what was best for children above all else. Her contributions were far-reaching, including leadership in special education, childcare, EQAO data analysis, and policy development, as well as initiating major initiatives such as the program committee, field revitalization strategy, and the navigator position. Judith's impact is evident across HWDSB—from the policies that guide the board to the very building it occupies—leaving a legacy that underscores the vital role of publicly elected MPP trustees.

### 5. Director's Annual Report to the Community

The Director presented the [2024–2025 Annual Report](#), highlighting system-wide progress guided by HWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Board Improvement Plan. Key achievements included gains in literacy, numeracy, well-being, future preparedness, and engagement, supported by targeted interventions, professional learning, and expanded student opportunities. The report celebrated staff dedication, community partnerships, and a culture of continuous improvement, with data showing year-over-year growth in student achievement.

### 6. Finance & Facilities Committee

**RESOLUTION #25-117:** Trustees Tut/Buck moved that the Finance & Facilities Committee report from November 25, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **7. Governance Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-118:** Trustees Buck/Tut moved that the Governance Committee report from December 1, 2025, be approved and that:

- The Human Resources Committee (reports) be redistributed to the most aligned committees of the board, including standing or committee of the whole as appropriate, until reviewed, and
- That feedback be collected from Trustees and staff regarding the pilot with a summary report be provided to the Governance Committee by June 2026 to inform next steps.

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

In Favour (6): Trustees Archer, Buck, Miller, Noble, Tut and White.

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

Opposed (2): Trustees Dahab and Zaitley.

## **8. Parent Involvement Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-119:** Trustees Zaitley/Buck moved that the Parent Involvement Committee report from November 11, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **9. Special Education Advisory Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-120:** Trustees White/Noble moved that the Special Education Advisory Committee report from November 26, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **10. Faith Community Advisory Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-121:** Trustees Dahab/Buck moved that the Faith Community Advisory Committee report from November 25, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **11. Human Rights & Equity Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-122:** Trustees Dahab/Buck moved that the Human Rights & Equity Committee report from November 27, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

## **12. Rural Schools Advisory Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-123:** Trustees Noble/Buck moved that the Rural Schools Advisory Committee report from October 22, 2025, be received.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### **13. Standing Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-124:** Trustees Tut/Noble moved that the Standing Committee report from November 24, 2025, be approved including that the Draft 2026-2027 School Year Calendars be approved for public consultation.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### **14. Appointments to Trustee Special Committee – Governance Committee**

**RESOLUTION #25-125:** Trustees Buck/White moved that Trustee White be appointed to the Governance Committee.

**CARRIED**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

### **15. City/School Board Liaison Committee**

Trustee White reported on the recent meeting with City representatives and HWDSB staff. Key updates included:

- Childcare Development Charges: The City amended its development charges by-law to support childcare, and HWDSB expressed appreciation.
- Dundas Valley Secondary School Proposal: A delegation proposed revitalising unused tennis courts into a multi-use space under a shared-use agreement with the City. No financial or operational impact to HWDSB beyond standard agreement terms.
- LRT Construction Updates: The City presented communication plans for ongoing LRT work. HWDSB provided feedback to improve information sharing with schools.
- Bright Side Park: The Chair requested an update on the former Dominion Glass site project, which could provide significant green space for Bernie Custis Secondary School.

### **16. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)**

Trustee Buck provided an update as follows:

- EQAO released 2024–2025 provincial, board, and school-level assessment results; the Ministry announced an expert advisory body to review EQAO testing and student achievement.
- Ontario Legislature has adjourned until March 23, 2026; pre-budget consultations are underway, and OPSBA encourages boards to participate via written submissions and surveys.
- OPSBA award recipients announced, including HWDSB's Judith Bishop, honoured with the Alumni Award for her outstanding contributions.
- OPSBA Board of Directors meeting scheduled for December 18 to consider proposed structural changes.

### **17. Student Trustees Report**

Student Trustee Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen provided the following update:

- Indigenous Student Trustee Council partnered with *Possibility Seeds* to develop consent education initiatives and promote culturally responsive approaches in schools.
- Emphasized the importance of Human Rights Day, advocating for inclusive spaces, reconciliation, and action to uphold Indigenous human rights in education.
- Student Senate provided feedback on HWDSB's website redesign and future preparedness planning to ensure student voice informs system priorities.
- Secondary Senate is preparing leadership workshops for elementary students; high schools continue hosting collaborative events to strengthen engagement.

- Students led Human Rights Day activities, including panel discussions and art displays focused on inclusion and equity.
- Ongoing efforts include amplifying student perspectives through social media and planning for upcoming student trustee elections in January.

## **18. Director's Report**

Director Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini provided the [monthly update](#) and reflected on system-wide progress and achievements guided by HWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Board Improvement Plan. She expressed gratitude to staff and community partners for their dedication and emphasized the importance of communication, collaboration, and continuous improvement. The report concluded with seasonal greetings and encouragement for rest and renewal over the winter break.

## **19. Chair's Report**

Chair Miller expressed gratitude to staff and student trustees for their dedication and leadership throughout a challenging fall season. She acknowledged the uncertainty in public education at the provincial level and emphasized the importance of stability, collaboration, and maintaining focus on HWDSB's values. The report concluded with encouragement for rest and renewal over the winter break and appreciation for the continued commitment to student success.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

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

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: February 2, 2026

From: Policy Committee

Date of Meeting: December 4, 2025

The committee held a hybrid meeting on December 4, 2025, at 6:00 pm with Trustee Dahab presiding.

Members: Trustees Sabreina Dahab, Maria Felix Miller\*, Graeme Noble\*, Elizabeth Wong (R), and Abby Zaitley. Also in attendance: Trustee Todd White and Shakowennakarats Daunte Hillen

\* electronic participation, (R) regrets

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### **ACTION ITEM(S):**

#### **A. Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environments for Students**

The committee reviewed the revised policy following public consultation and student advisory input. Staff noted that key updates included clearer accountability for timelines, stronger emphasis on intersectionality and collaborative decision-making, expanded definitions for barriers and sensory accessibility, and a commitment to create a student-friendly version of the policy.

Trustees suggested defining Student Advisory Circles, refining language on accountability and individualized needs, and linking to the multi-year accessibility plan which is now reflected in the policy.

On motion from Trustee Zaitley, the Policy Committee **recommends that the Barrier-Free Physical Learning Spaces Policy be approved.**

**CARRIED**

### **MONITORING ITEM(S):**

#### **B. Indigenous Education**

The Committee reviewed the current Indigenous Education Policy. Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead, in partnership with the Indigenous Education Council (IEC), made several significant updates to strengthen the reconciliation focus within the Guiding Principles, emphasize relationships between learners, families, kinship networks, and Treaty Partners, and align the policy framework with the Two Row Relational Accountability Framework and Ethical Space of Engagement. Staff noted that the changes include clearer shared responsibilities, outcomes that integrate academic and cultural learning, and improved terminology.

The Committee engaged in a rich discussion about the policy and continued importance of this policy aligned to our Multi-Year Strategic Plan and our ongoing commitment to Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation. The Committee agreed that the policy will return with additional updates reflecting the feedback and discussion.

#### **C. Notice of Motion: Policy Gap Analysis**

The committee considered a motion to conduct a gap analysis of board policies to identify areas not currently reflected in policy but present in board-approved strategies, action plans, and/or processes. Trustees clarified expectations for the analysis, emphasizing that the analysis should:

- Review existing strategies and operational documents
- Map these documents against current policies to identify gaps and ensure alignment.
- Inform potential restructuring of policy pillars for clarity and consistency.
- Track gaps for future policy development rather than drafting new policies immediately.

Staff confirmed that a gap analysis would be completed and returned to the Policy Committee in spring 2026 for further discussion.

On motion of Trustee Zaitley, the Policy Committee requests that staff perform a gap analysis of the Board's policies and identify any potential policy areas that may be absent from its policy structure.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trustee Dahab, Chair of the Committee

<sup>7-2</sup>  
**Barrier-Free Physical  
Learning Environments for Students**

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**PURPOSE:**

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to providing learning and working environments that are welcoming, respectful, accessible, and free from discrimination and harassment.

We will strive to have learning environments that are physically and culturally accessible, equitable, inclusive and learner-centered by removing and preventing physical accessibility barriers impeding students with disabilities from fully participating in and fully benefitting from all aspects of education. Barrier-free physical learning environments should be considered in the development of other policies related to physical space on and off school property (including school excursions). HWDSB is committed to meeting the physical accessibility needs of students with disabilities in a timely and responsive manner to ensure all students can fully participate and thrive in learning spaces.

HWDSB recognizes the importance of upholding the rights and educational wellness of Indigenous students and families. This includes acknowledging the unique histories, cultures, and experiences of Indigenous communities, and support the development of barrier-free physical learning environments that reflect and support Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing (e.g., land-based learning, use of circles).

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

- Building inclusive, barrier-free learning environments begins with valuing, seeking out and integrating student perspectives.
- Ensuring students and parents/guardians/caregivers are active partners in the shared decision-making process for students with disabilities.
- Ensuring students with disabilities have the right to dignity, respect, equality, choice, voice and full participation in a barrier-free environment.
- Identifying and removing physical barriers that impede students' access to educational services to ensure our duty to accommodate. This may include environmental comfort and sensory accessibility.
- Collaborating and proactive planning with students and parents/guardians/caregivers for student accommodations as part of the student's transition planning.
- Designing physical learning spaces and instructional practices from a Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Ensuring every effort will be made to accommodate students in their home school. Where this is not possible, HWDSB will collaborate with students and parents/guardians/caregivers on placement within programs or classrooms throughout Hamilton Wentworth District School Board.

<sup>7-3</sup>  
**Barrier-Free Physical  
Learning Environments for Students**

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- Recognizing and committing to understanding that barriers to equity and inclusion are often intensified by intersecting identities such as race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of diversity.
- All decisions within this Policy will align with the Ontario Human Rights Code and HWDSB's Human Rights Policy, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and HWDSB's Privacy Policy.

**INTENDED OUTCOMES:**

- Student voice will inform the planning and evaluation of barrier-free physical learning environments.
- Students and parents/guardians/caregivers will be active partners in the shared decision-making process for students with disabilities.
- HWDSB will provide students with disabilities an environment which maximizes inclusion, integration, full participation, dignity, respect and honours voice and lived experiences.
- Accessibility needs of students will be met in a timely way, which is clearly communicated with the student and parents/guardians/caregivers.
- HWDSB will have an ongoing plan for new construction and renovation projects that includes barrier-free physical learning environments.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

Director of Education  
Members of Executive Council

**TERMINOLOGY:**

**Barriers:** According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), a barrier is not the disability itself, but rather any external obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society.  
Barriers may be:

- Physical – such as inaccessible buildings or spaces.
- Attitudinal – including stereotypes, stigma, or discriminatory attitudes.
- Systemic – embedded in policies, procedures, or practices.
- Technological – such as digital platforms that are not accessible.
- Communication – including formats or methods that are not inclusive of all abilities.

## <sup>7-4</sup> **Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environments for Students**

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HWDSB recognizes these barriers and is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing them to support full participation, dignity, and inclusion for all students with disabilities.

**Duty to Accommodate:** A legal obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requiring organizations to identify and remove barriers and make necessary adjustments to policies, practices, and physical environments so that individuals protected under the Code—such as students with disabilities—can participate equally and fully. Accommodation must be provided up to the point of undue hardship.

**Environmental Comfort:** The degree to which a physical space supports the well-being, safety, and full participation of students with disabilities. This area of barrier removal considers the unique and individualized needs of students with disabilities to promote inclusion.

**Intersectionality:** Recognized as the understanding that each person simultaneously exists within multiple and overlapping identities.

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan:** As part of the Ontario with Disabilities Act (2002), all school boards in Ontario are required to prepare an annual accessibility plan, after consultation with people with disabilities, and to make the plan public in December. This plan is used to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), where all public-sector organizations, as well as private and non-profit organizations with 50 or more employees, must create written multi-year accessibility plans, update them annually and post them on their websites, if they have one.

**Sensory Accessibility:** The intentional adaptation of physical and learning environments to support individuals with diverse sensory processing needs. This includes minimizing sensory overload and providing options that promote comfort, regulation, and engagement for every student. This area of barrier removal considers the unique and individualized needs of students with disabilities to promote inclusion

**Student Advisory Circles:** Student Advisory Circles provide a platform for students with disabilities to share their direct experiences, offer feedback, and contribute to decisions that shape welcoming, more accessible and inclusive learning environments in HWDSB. They are small, safe groups where students with diverse disabilities and backgrounds can talk about special education support, services, and programs with a trusted adult they already know.

**Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** A conceptual and instructional framework designed to make learning accessible to all students by avoiding a “one-size-fits-all” approach. It is based on the core principles of multiple means of engagement, representation of information and action and expression.

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

- Update and maintain a Procedure aligned to this policy that is accessible and culturally responsive to the HWDSB community and communicated annually.
- Develop communication material on Policy and Procedures for students.
- Accessibility training for students and staff.

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**Barrier-Free Physical  
 Learning Environments for Students**

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- Publicly share progress on barrier-free physical learning environments through the HWDSB Annual Accessibility Report on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This report will be posted on the HWDSB website by January 1st each year, in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- Actively seek feedback from the Student Advisory Circles and Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) to inform and strengthen programs, services, and supports for students with disabilities.
- Review policy effectiveness through inclusive consultation as part of the Policy review process.

**PROGRESS INDICATORS:**

<b>Intended Outcome</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
Student voice will inform the planning and evaluation of barrier-free physical learning environments.	Student Voice Surveys  Student Advisory Circles
Students and parents/guardians/caregivers will be active partners in the shared decision-making process for students with disabilities.	Student Voice Surveys  Parent and Family Voice Surveys  Student and Staff Affinity Group(s)  Student Advisory Circles  Staff Advisory Groups
HWDSB will provide students with disabilities an environment which maximizes inclusion, integration, full participation, dignity, respect and honours voice and lived experiences.	Student Voice Surveys  Parent and Family Voice Surveys  Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)  PowerSchool Special Programs – Facility accommodation tracking  Student and Staff Affinity Groups  Student Advisory Circles  Staff Advisory Groups
Accessibility needs of students will be met in a timely way, which is clearly communicated with the student and parents/guardians/caregivers.	Student Voice Surveys  Parent Voice Surveys  SEAC  PowerSchool Special Programs – Facility accommodation tracking  Student and Staff Affinity Groups  Student Advisory Circles  Staff Advisory Groups
HWDSB will have an ongoing plan for new construction and renovation projects that includes barrier-free physical learning environments.	Multi-Year Accessibility Plan  Long-Term Facilities Plan

<sup>7-6</sup>  
**Barrier-Free Physical  
Learning Environments for Students**

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**REFERENCES:**

**Government Documents**

Education Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

OHRC – Policy: Accessible Education for Students with Disabilities

Proposed K-12 Education Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA),

Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and HWDSB's Privacy Policy.

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: February 2, 2026

From: Program Committee

Date of Meeting: December 11, 2025

The committee held a hybrid meeting on December 11, 2025, at 6:00 pm with Trustee Fehrman presiding.

Members: Trustees Kathy Archer\*, Becky Buck\*, Sabreina Dahab, Amanda Fehrman, and Abby Zaitley. Also in attendance: Trustees Maria Felix Miller, Graeme Noble\*, and Todd White.

\* electronic participation, (R)regrets

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### **MONITORING ITEM(S):**

#### **A. Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Program Strategy & Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process Review (Final Report)**

Staff highlighted for the Program Committee that the Program Review has been completed and that the final report provided by Malatest Consulting summarizes 10 Key Findings and 27 Recommendations to help improve the HWDSB Elementary Program Strategy (6 recommendations), Secondary Program Strategy (15 recommendations) and the Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process (6 recommendations).

Malatest highlighted the following in their presentation to the committee:

##### *Elementary Program Review – Key Findings*

- The review revealed that elementary focus programs, such as Sage, Sage Quest, Hockey, and Mandarin, currently serve only about 1% of students. While demand for these programs is evident through growing waitlists, overall awareness among families remains low, and access is inequitable, with most participants coming from higher-income neighbourhoods and transportation posing a significant barrier. Financial impact on the Board is minimal. These findings led the Consultants to recommend the need for a formal process to create, expand, or sunset programs and to improve communication and alignment with board priorities.

##### *Secondary Program Review – Key Findings*

- The review highlighted that specialized secondary programs, including SHSM, Arts, IB, and Westmount, account for a significant portion of student registrations and generally lead to positive outcomes for students. However, access remains uneven across the Board, awareness among families is limited, and there is no strategic blueprint guiding program development for new programs, resulting in ad hoc decisions and duplication. Financial sustainability is a concern, as some programs have high per-student costs. The Self-Paced, Self-Directed Program at Westmount faced challenges related to perceived inequities in its application process and lack of flexibility for at-risk students to enter the program. These findings led the Consultant to recommend the need for a coordinated strategy that links programs to labour market needs, improves equity of access, and establishes clear criteria for program creation, expansion, or closure.

##### *Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process – Key Findings*

- The review found that French Immersion enrollment has remained stable at approximately 9–10% in elementary and 6–7% in secondary, but only one-third of elementary students transition to secondary FI programs, largely due to distance from FI secondary sites. The Consultant noted that the current Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process is effective. Upon review of the French Immersion and Core French program, the Consultant recommended the need for a sustainable model that addresses program quality, standardizes instructional targets, improves teacher recruitment, and considers adjustments such as later entry points or enhanced core French programming to balance demand and capacity.

The committee discussion related to next steps included:

- Draft Guiding Principles: Prepare a clear set of guiding principles for program decisions, aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and focused on equity, fiscal responsibility, and phased implementation.
- Vision Statement: Include an overarching vision aligned to our Multi-Year Strategic Plan

- Financial Sustainability: ensure cost-effective implementation.
- Phased Approach: Consider a phased implementation approach for recommendations once the guiding principles are approved.
- Community Engagement: Continue to have a strong communication plan as we move forward and as decisions are made, schedule additional engagement sessions for affected communities
- Program-Specific Considerations: Explore equitable access and possible expansion of the Self-Paced, Self-Directed Program; review French Immersion entry point, staffing strategies, and instructional consistency.

Next steps include developing guiding principles focused on equity, fiscal responsibility, and phased implementation. These principles will be presented to the Program Committee in February 2026

On motion of Trustee Kathy Archer, the Program Committee requested that the Review of Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Programs Strategy and the French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process report prepared by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. be received, and that staff be directed to develop Guiding Principles to support consideration of the recommendations. These Guiding Principles will be presented to the Committee in February 2026 for review, discussion, input, and a recommendation for approval.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Fehrman, Chair of the Committee

Reference: [Committee Package](#), [Recording](#), [Presentation](#)

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: February 2, 2026

From: Finance and Facilities Committee

Date of Meeting: December 16, 2025

The committee held a hybrid meeting on December 16, 2025, at 6:00pm with Trustee Becky Buck presiding.

Members present: Trustees Becky Buck, Amanda Fehrman <sup>(R)</sup>, Maria Felix Miller \*, Paul Tut \* and Abby Zaitley <sup>(R)</sup>.

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

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### **MONITORING ITEM(S):**

#### **A. Analysis of Heating, Ventilation and Cooling in Schools**

Staff provided the following response to Resolution #24-110:

- The Board continues to enhance heating, ventilation and air conditioning capacity through ongoing capital upgrades and renovations, where possible, ensuring improved climate control across our schools.
- All HWDSB schools have some form of air conditioning, and as spaces are renovated that percentage continues to increase.
- Staff reviewed the list of schools that have limited cooling and are providing a revised estimate of approximately \$180-\$200 million to provide cooling to approximately 95% of the building are in all schools, as per new school construction standards within the Board. This estimated value is expected to increase at a rate of no less than CPI (Consumer Price Index) on an annual basis.
- Staff are suggesting a phased approach be considered to address the lack of cooling in schools, while utilizing POD (Proceeds of Disposition) available with Ministry approval.

On the motion of Trustee Paul Tut, the Finance and Facilities Committee requested that staff bring back the four-phase approach to Heating, Ventilation and Cooling in Schools to the Finance and Facilities Committee in February 2026, to allow the Committee time to contemplate the proposed use of the POD (Proceeds of Disposition) contained in the report.

#### **B. Enrolment Summary as at October 31, 2025**

Staff provided an update on enrolment. Elementary enrolment has decreased by 209.50 FTE (Full Time Equivalent). Secondary enrolment has decreased by 216.15 FTE (Full Time Equivalent). The decrease in October 2025 enrolment will reduce the Board's CORE Education Funding. The decrease in enrolment will be offset by secondary staffing adjustments for semester two and reductions in discretionary budgets.

#### **C. Interim Financial Status Report as of November 30, 2025**

The interim financial status report as presented is based on information available and assumptions as of November 30, 2025. Budget to actual trends were reviewed in order to forecast the Boards August 31, 2026, year-end position from a financial, staffing and enrolment perspective. Actual enrolment for October 31, 2025, has been used to revise the projected enrolment for the 2025-26

school year. The 2025-26 revised revenue budget shows a decrease in projected revenue of \$7.7 million. Operating Grants have decreased by \$5.4 million over the original estimates. Capital and Debt revenue decreased as a result of a decrease in amortization. Staffing adjustments were implemented to align with decreased enrolment and maintain compliance with class size requirements. The revised budget and forecast are balanced and no surplus or deficit is projected. The contingency is intact and is projected to remain intact until the end of the year. Supply costs continue to trend upward, and if this pattern persists, it may result in the Board being in a deficit position by year-end. Staff will continue to monitor these expenditures closely and implement mitigation strategies where possible to maintain a balanced budget. As with all forecasts, as new information is received or as assumptions change, the resulting Interim Financial Reports will be updated accordingly.

#### **D. Capital Projects Update**

Staff provided an updated summary of all the capital projects in process, by category, in various phases. The Ministry of Education increased the total project commitment for two new HWDSB schools (Binbrook II Elementary and new Waterdown Elementary) and one addition at Mount Hope Elementary school.

#### **E. Key Parameters and Assumptions to Guide the Development of the 2026-27 Budget (Generative Discussion)**

The identification of parameters and assumptions to guide the development of the 2026-27 budgets are used to prepare the preliminary budget scenario and ensure it aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan; remain fiscally responsible and align resource allocation to our school board's priorities which is necessary for many staffing and expenditure decisions to be made in the next few months to prepare for a smooth startup of the 2026-27 school year. As the budget development process continues and key information including the 2026-27 CORE Education funding announcement is provided, these parameters and assumptions will be reviewed and revised for inclusion in the final budget to be approved by June 30, 2026.

#### **F. Budget Priorities to Guide the Development of the 2026-27 Budget Consultation**

In the past, the Board has approved budget priorities to assist in the development of the following years budget and often the Board has done public consultation to affirm the budget priorities. Along with public consultation, staff will identify opportunities to raise awareness of this survey with various school board committees. The survey results will inform the budget priorities presented to the Board by the end of April 2026.

Respectfully submitted,  
Becky Buck, Chair of the Meeting

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

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: February 2, 2026

From: Finance and Facilities Committee

Date of Meeting: January 13, 2026

The committee held a hybrid meeting on January 13, 2026, at 7:10pm with Trustee Amanda Fehrman presiding.

Members present: Trustees Becky Buck, Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller\*, Paul Tut <sup>(R)</sup> and Abby Zaitley. Also in attendance: Trustee Todd White.

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

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### **ACTION ITEM(S):**

#### **A. Key Parameters and Assumptions to Guide the Development of the 2026-2027 Budget**

The identification of parameters and assumptions to guide the development of the 2026-2027 budget are used to prepare the preliminary budget scenario and ensure it aligns with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan; remain fiscally responsible and align resource allocation to our school board's priorities which is necessary for many staffing and expenditure decisions to be made in the next few months to prepare for a smooth startup of the 2026-2027 school year. As the budget development exercise continues, and key information including the 2026-2027 Core Education funding announcement, these parameters and assumptions will be reviewed and revised for inclusion in the final budget to be approved by June 30, 2026.

On the motion of Trustee Becky Buck, the Finance and Facilities Committee RECOMMENDS **that the Key Parameters and Assumptions to Guide the Development of the 2026-2027 budget be approved.**

**CARRIED**

#### **B. Budget Priorities to Guide the Development of the 2026-2027 Budget Consultation**

Financial Services staff will be working with the Research Department to develop the Budget Consultation survey for the 2026-2027 budget. Staff will identify opportunities to raise awareness of this survey with various committees.

The goals of a public consultation for the 2026-2027 budget are as follows:

- To create and improve awareness of the Core Education Funding Model and areas of spending truly at the HWDSB's discretion;
- To garner feedback from the community on where the HWDSB might allocate resources at its discretion; and
- To garner feedback from the community on where the HWDSB might identify cost savings and efficiencies in order to maintain a balanced budget.

The survey results will inform the budget priorities presented to the Board by the end of April 2026.

On the motion of Trustee Becky Buck, the Finance and Facilities Committee RECOMMENDS **the approval of the budget priorities for public consultation.**

**CARRIED**

#### **C. Waterdown Boundary Review Final Report**

The purpose of the Boundary Review was to establish the attendance boundary for the new Waterdown Elementary School and to honour the Board's commitment to revisit and address the changes resulting from the 2023-2024 Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

Through detailed analysis of enrolment projections, facility capacities, and community feedback, the review identified strategies that balance accommodation needs while minimizing disruption for families. The recommended action reflects the consensus of the Advisory Panel and incorporates key considerations raised during public consultation, including maintaining program viability, limiting student moves, and ensuring equitable access to schools. The Committee provided feedback regarding the [Final Report](#), which has been included and posted online.

On the motion of Trustee Maria Felix Miller, the Finance and Facilities Committee RECOMMENDS **that the following recommendations for the Waterdown Boundary Review be approved:**

**A. That the geographic area described below becomes the boundary for the new Waterdown Elementary School and is removed from the Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School current attendance boundary:**

Commencing at the corner of Dundas Street East and Hamilton Street South, running southeast on Hamilton Street South to 50 Hamilton Street South, then east around the property lines of 50 Hamilton Street South, then southeast along the eastern edge of the property lines of 56 Howard Boulevard to 320 Hamilton Street South, then east along the southern edge of the municipal boundary to Kerns Road, north on Kerns Road to Dundas Street East, and finally west along Dundas Street East back to the corner of Dundas Street East and Hamilton Street South.

[Refer to Map - Appendix A](#)

**B. That the boundary change comes into effect with the opening of the new Waterdown Elementary School. At that time, all Regular Track JK to 8 students located within the new boundary will attend the new Waterdown Elementary School.**

**C. That students in Grades 7 and 8 residing within the boundary described in Part A be provided the option to remain at their current home school (Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School or Flamborough Centre Elementary School) with no transportation provided. Siblings of these students will attend the new school. In accordance with the Ontario Education Act and all applicable Ministry of Education directives, should the Boundary Review transition planning process determine that viable Grade 7 and 8 programs cannot be established at the new Waterdown Elementary School upon opening, these students will attend their current home school (Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School or Flamborough Centre Elementary School). For the purpose of this recommendation, a viable program is defined as the ability to deliver the curriculum and required instructional components as intended by the Ministry of Education, including program organization, assessment, and reporting practices and supports for students learning and transitions.**

**D. That all new JK to grade 4 students registering for the 2026-2027 school year within the new school boundary (described in Part A) be redirected to Mary Hopkins Elementary School, until the new Waterdown Elementary School is opened.**

**E. That Mary Hopkins Elementary School retain the Regular Track Grade 5 cohort, effective for the 2026-2027 school year.**

**F. That Mary Hopkins Elementary School retain the French Immersion Grade 5 cohort, becoming a dual track JK-5 school, effective in the school year that the new Waterdown Elementary School is opened.**

**G. That a Transition Committee for each of the affected schools currently operating is struck by the Superintendent of Equity and Student Achievement upon approval of the boundary change.**

**H. All student transportation will be provided in accordance with Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's [Transportation Policy No. 3.10](#).**

**CARRIED**

Note: The Committee requested that the Proceeds of Disposition Update report be deferred to the February 2026 committee meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Fehrman, Chair of the Meeting

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

# Waterdown Boundary Review, 2025-2026

## STAFF RECOMMENDED OPTION

## STAFF RECOMMENDED OPTION

# New Waterdown Elementary



## School Boundaries

- Allan A. Greenleaf
- Guy B. Brown
- Balaclava
- Mary Hopkins
- Flamborough
- Proposed
- Centre
- Waterdown
- Elementary



## New Elementary School



## Jr. Elementary School



## Elementary School



## Middle School



## Secondary School



0 220  
Meters

## Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: February 2, 2026

From: Parent Involvement Committee

Meeting date: December 9, 2025

The committee held a PIC meeting on December 9, 2025, from 6:35 p.m. to 8:21 p.m. with Amanda Lloyd presiding.

**Members Present:** Adriana Baker, Mani Bhandari, Kailey Crowther, Andrea Hamilton-Coulson, Heather Lambert-Hillen, Amanda Levesque, Amanda Lloyd, Tim Louks, Amanda Neale-Robinson, Heidi Oglesby, Meghana Oza, Mike Palma, Michele Quinn, Christine Sandor, Leora Sas Van Der Linden, Danielle Schwalm, Emma Simpson, Cindy Stranak, Leigh Ann Sutherland, Jeffrey Sykes, Lisa Veloce, and Terry-Ann Virtue. Trustees Kathy Archer, Amanda Fehrman and Abby Zaitley.

**Regrets:** Matthew Adams, Kristina Collier, Kruti Desai, Cheryl Hue, Mohamed Khamis, Sue-Anne MacQuarrie, Vanessa Ozer, Meagan Shanahan, and Damian Kalu Ude.

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### **MONITORING ITEMS:**

#### **A. Presentations**

##### Overview of Secondary and Elementary Programs

Superintendent Lemaire and team provided an overview of Secondary and Elementary programs, such as SHSM and Outdoor Education, through interactive stations. They highlighted experiential and land-based learning initiatives, pathway programs like Co-op, Dual Credit, OYAP, and SHSM, and partnerships supporting outdoor education.

##### Human Rights and Equity Action Plan

Superintendent Smith presented an overview of the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan, highlighting the Human Rights Policy. The presentation highlighted initiatives such as equity-aligned classroom visuals, the Top 5 lesson series for safe and inclusive environments, and tools like Responding to Bias, Prejudice and Hate, along with resources for Human Rights Day.

#### **B. PRO Grant Funding**

Superintendent Denomme provided a breakdown of the 2025/2026 PRO Grant Funding noting for the committee that a total of sixty-one applications were received and funds totaling \$48,498 would be distributed to school applicants in the coming weeks.

#### **C. Trustees Report**

Trustee Fehrman shared the following with PIC:

- **Acknowledgement:** Former HWDSB Trustee Judith Bishop (1988-2014), Wards 1&2.
- **Board Updates:**
  - Maria Felix Miller (Ward 3) was re-elected as Chair for 2025-2026.
  - Committee Chairs:
    - Policy- Sabreina Dahab,
    - Program- Amanda Fehrman,
    - Finance & Facilities- Paul Tut,
    - Human Resources-Dawn Danko,
    - Governance-Trustee Buck

- **EQAO Results:**

Released by the Minister of Education and available on EQAO website. Trustees reviewing results with Superintendents.

- **Program Strategy Review:**

Initiated in 2024; final report completed by Malatest, would be presented to Program Committee on Dec. 11. Guiding Principles will be drafted and return to committee for further discussion in February and recommendations in May 2026.

#### **D. Representative Committee Report**

##### French as a Second Language Advisory Committee:

- Amanda Lloyd- noted that the committee is seeking a representative from PIC and Kailey Crowther to reach out to the Committee.

##### Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations:

- Heather Lambert-Hillen noted that the next meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2026. They are pleased to welcome Trustee Graeme Noble as the Board representative.
- The Association is working on hosting a Conference on May 1, 2026, which will be held in Hamilton.

Respectfully submitted,  
Amanda Lloyd, Chair

## Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting Date: February 2, 2026

From: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Meeting Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025

The Committee held a meeting in room 180A, Education Centre on Wednesday, December 17, 2025, beginning at 5:39 pm, ending at 7:31 pm, with Chair Judy Colantino presiding.

### **Present**

Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group, 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, Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter), Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton, Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara.

### **Regrets**

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7, Maria Felix Miller, HWDSB Chair, Trustee Ward 3, Samantha Sweet, Centre for Diverse Learners, Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre.

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## **MONITORING ITEMS**

### **A. Reimagining HWDSB's Websites-Engagement Session**

Blaze Dumitrescu-Forgie, Communication & Community Engagement Officer

- The Committee shared feedback and suggestions to improve user experience and accessibility across HWDSB's websites

### **B. Annual Accessibility Report**

Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

- As part of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, the Annual Accessibility Report is prepared each year and posted on the website, highlighting new initiatives and key accomplishments
- Key Highlights for 2025:
  - Accessible Communication & Design: Improved readability, contrast compliance, and use of accessibility testing tools in all designed materials
  - New AODA-Compliant Website: Development underway to meet and exceed WCAG standards, with consultation from SEAC and student advisory circles
  - Inclusive Employment Practices: Demographic survey revealed 27.6% of staff identify as having a disability; continued support for accommodations and Project SEARCH transition-to-work program
  - Accessible Transportation: Multi-year approval process implemented for students requiring specialized transportation, reducing delays and improving efficiency
  - Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environment Policy: This policy supports HWDSB in creating learning environments that are physically and culturally accessible, inclusive, and learner-centered
  - Physical Environment Enhancements: Renovations included accessible washrooms, stage lifts, ramps, tactile warning pads, and installation of elevators and chairlifts
  - Assistive Technology Support: Centre 4 Success provided coaching and workshops to help students leverage SEA-funded technology for equitable access to curriculum

### **C. MEMBERS' UPDATE**

#### Trustee Update

**Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity on behalf of Trustees**

- The 2026–27 school year calendar is now available for public consultation on the Engage website

#### Association Update

**Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC**

#### **Vice Chair**

- The Speech and Language team is holding collaborative meetings with both Boards and the French Board, following an annual rotation schedule

Superintendent's Update

- Visiting special education classrooms at various schools
- Brian Mason has been elected as the President-elect for the Ontario Association for Behavior Analysis (ONTABA). This is a significant achievement that reflects Brian's leadership, expertise, and commitment to advancing best practices in Applied Behavior Analysis across Ontario. As President-elect, Brian will play a key role in shaping the future of ONTABA and supporting professionals dedicated to improving outcomes for individuals through evidence-based approaches
- EQAO results are out – we're seeing improvements in many areas year over year
- Work has started on reviewing the Plan of Care Procedure
- Angela Giardino has begun her role as a system principal for Special Education, Inclusion & Equity and will attend future meetings

Respectfully submitted by  
Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair