



Policy Committee

Thursday, December 4, 2025

6:00 pm

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.



The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board acknowledges our presence on ancestral Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacy land as determined by the Dish with One Spoon treaty.

The intent of this agreement is for all nations sharing this territory to do so responsibly, respectfully and sustainably in perpetuity.

We respect the longstanding relationships with the local Indigenous communities, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River.

Policy Committee Workplan

Policy Committee Meeting Date	Policies
December 4, 2025	Indigenous Education Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environment
February 5, 2026	Political Activities in Schools Student Behaviour & Bias-Free Progressive Discipline
March 3, 2026	Educational Excursions Staff Engagement



Indigenous Education Policy

"We live our learning; we don't teach our learning"

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Background

The Indigenous Education Policy, approved by the Board in May 2024, was scheduled for review after its first year to incorporate refinements. Following this review, staff, alongside members of the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC), have made targeted updates to strengthen the Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness focus within the Guiding Principles, emphasize relationships with learners, families, kinship networks, and Treaty Partners, and align the policy framework with the Two Row Relational Accountability Framework and Ethical Space of Engagement. Ka'satsténhsera - Strength through Unity.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Two Row Relationship Framework is a tool to enable us to consider the [relational accountability](#) between the IEC - Indigenous Education Kahwà:tsire, Zaagiiidiwin, Family Structure - and HWDSB.

<p>The Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) Family Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indigenous Learners (CC:ROSE, Our Sustenance, and, Shakowennakarà:tats)• Elders, Knowledge Guardians, Language Speakers• Parents, Caregivers, Aunties, Uncles, Families (Kinship relations, extended clan families)• Local urban Indigenous community partners• Host Nations• Neighbouring Nations• Indigenous Staff Employed by HWDSB• Indigenous Education Lead, accountable to the learners, IEC, the Indigenous Education Office (IEO) of the Ministry of Education, and the HWDSB Governance Structure.	<p>Ethical Space of Engagement: <i>Is where Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems, worldviews, and values respectfully coexist and interact to foster meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding.</i></p> <p>Syncretism: <i>We blend our tools with care as we walk forward together</i></p>	<p>HWDSB Governance Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board of Trustees are accountable to: the constituents of their Wards, the Province of ON under the Education Act, Code of Ethics, and the Ministry of Education• Director of Education, Secretary to the Board of Trustees• Executive Council• Principals, Vice-Principals, System Leaders• School and System-based Support Staff• Administrators, Custodial Staff• Educators, Teachers• Parents, Families, and Communities• Students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous Learners)
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ACTION REQUIRED:

In their respective areas of influence, as competent and committed Treaty Partners, every individual in each department will practice vigilance in identifying the gaps and areas of [Indigenous](#) omission and work collaboratively with the Indigenous Education Department on restorative solutions for meaningful inclusion and integration of [Indigenous](#) thought, pedagogy, voice, perspectives, and contributions.

We CALL EACH OTHER IN:


- For this we must...
- To further support these initiatives and engage in reciprocal engagement and action....
- We can all...
- In the spirit of truth and reconciliation, this is how we can call each other in...



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Progress Indicators: Indigenous Data Governance

Canoe Assessment	Intended Outcome	Ship Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Board Action Plan (BAP) on Indigenous Education Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of Indigenous Learners PowerBi data Graduation/Commencement Rates Credit Accumulation 	Improved Indigenous student achievement and well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Board Improvement Plan (BIP) Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Student Census Disproportionality Data School Climate Survey Health and Peer Relations Survey School Improvement Data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Board Action Plan (BAP) on Indigenous Education Voluntary Confidential Self-Identification of Indigenous Learners Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE); Our Sustenance; and; Shakowanna'kará:tats Graduation/Commencement Rates Credit Accumulation 	Promote Indigenous educational wellness and educational equity of access, opportunity and outcome for Indigenous learners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Board Improvement Plan (BIP) Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) Student Census Disproportionality Data School Climate Survey Health and Peer Relations Survey School Improvement Data



DID YOU KNOW?

The First Nations Principles of OCAP® assert that First Nations have control over data collection processes, and that they own and control how this information can be used.



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Broader Contextual Policies, Principles, Legislation & Legislative Abuses

Grounded in the legacy of racist and gender-based legislation that systematically oppress Indigenous Peoples, HWDSB Board and Staff Members share a critical responsibility - and an opportunity - to advance change. Together, we must move forward with a unified purpose by embedding this Policy into practice. Let us commit to meaningful action that centers Indigenous voices and ways of knowing, ensuring we actively contribute to - and benefit from – *Reinforcing Restorative Educational Wellness and Reconciliation (MYSP)*.

Recommendation

- That the Indigenous Education Policy be received in peace, friendship and mutual respect.



Barrier Free Physical Learning Environments for Students

(Post Consultation)

Background

- The Policy focused on one type of barrier for students with disabilities – the physical learning environment
- **DRAFT** Policy was shared with the Policy Committee in April, 2025
- Consultation at the time included:
 - Special Education Advisory Committee
 - Principal and Vice Principal Special Education Advisory Committee
 - Principal and Vice Principal Policy Working Group
- Policy Committee expressed an interest in broader consultation which staff undertook

Fall Consultation

- Centred our *Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool* and Trustee feedback regarding student voice.
- **Consultation:**
 - Student Advisory Circles (3 elementary, 10 secondary)
 - ENGAGE HWDSB
 - Sharing Your Thinking – Online Drop-In Session
 - Direct Email – specialeducation@hwdsb.on.ca

Post-Consultation: Summary of Revisions

- Clarity on who the Policy applies to.
- Accountability on timelines and responsiveness
- Intersectionality should be a Guiding Principle.
- Strengthen commitment to student and parent/guardian voice and collaborative decision-making.
- Include environmental comfort and sensory needs when planning for barrier removal. Environmental and sensory needs are part of the physical learning environment.

Post-Consultation: Summary of Revisions

- Reference commitment to human rights and privacy legislation.
- Additional definitions: *Duty to Accommodate, Environmental Comfort, Intersectionality, Sensory Accessibility, Universal Design for Learning.*
- Create a student friendly version of the Policy.
- Several comments will be reflected in the Procedure.

Recommendation

- That the *Barrier Free Physical Learning Environment for Students Policy* be recommended for approval.

Notice of Motion