



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Thursday February 12, 2015
Education Centre, Room 181B

AGENDA

3:00 pm.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Delegation
 - a. Secondary School Transition issues that affect program availability to students.
Marney Campbell & Lyn Hanna-Folkes, 10 minutes
4. Student Engagement Report
5. Update on Transitions
6. Next Program Committee Meeting: March 12, 2015 at 6:00 pm
 - a. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Report
7. Adjournment



Annual Work Plan Report

Name of Report: Student Engagement Report

To: Wayne Joudrie, Director of Education

From: **Executive Council**

Prepared by: Michael Prendergast, Superintendent of Student Achievement

Date: January 19, 2015

Organizational Alignment

Strategic Direction

Achievement Matters

HWDSB will prepare all elementary students to be ready for success at the secondary school level.
 HWDSB will prepare all secondary students to be ready for success in their chosen pathway:
 apprenticeship, college, community, university or workplace

Equity Matters:

HWDSB will ensure that our diverse learners receive the appropriate programming and support to achieve their full potential.
 HWDSB will provide safe, inclusive and respectful learning environments for all staff and students.

Engagement Matters:

HWDSB will achieve high levels of student engagement in our schools.
 HWDSB will maintain and strengthen collaborative relationships with community partners.

Annual Operating Plan:

Knowing Our Students

Student Voice
 Engaging/re-engaging all students
 Student leadership
 Continued enhancement of program pathways

Director's Performance Appraisal:

Provide safe, equitable and inclusive learning environments for each student.
 Ensure that a tiered approach to effective instruction and intervention is in place in all schools, and is implemented according to best practices.
 Ensure a range of accessible program pathway options across the system to meet the needs of all learners.

Overview/Context

Student engagement is a necessary condition for learning and achievement. It encompasses intentional decisions, processes, and structures that teachers, schools and the Hamilton – Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) undertake in order for students to develop a sense of belonging, express student voice and

participate in leadership, instructional and extra – curricular opportunities / activities. An inclusive education takes place when all students have the necessary resources to feel supported, respected, and confident in order to learn and develop to their full potential. Our engagement strategies vary and we invite students to share information, ideas and thoughts (student voice) and allow students to turn their ideas into action through student leadership. Our Secondary Program Strategy, Arts, Positive School Climate and Transforming Learning Everywhere are examples of how we support the development of critical and creative thinking, collaboration, and problem solving, increasingly integrating and using technology to respond to the needs of students.

Research has shown that by including students as partners in decisions about their learning, motivation and perseverance grow resulting in improvement as “student voice is a metaphor for student engagement and participation in issues that matter to learning.” (Student Achievement Division, Ontario Ministry of Education, Sept. 2014) We must listen to our students, and then deliver high-interest resources based on this individual feedback. We are creating a system of inclusion that responds to individual student needs (social-emotional, academic and intellectual) and helps form a foundation for a welcoming and supportive education system.

- ✓ **Social-emotional engagement:** when a student feels a sense of belonging and participates in school life. A student who is socially engaged participates in extra-curricular activities, school events, and has positive friendships.
- ✓ **academic engagement:** when a student participates in the requirements of school for success. A student who is institutionally engaged arrives to school on time, attends class regularly, completes homework and values school because he/she believes that it is important for their future.
- ✓ **intellectual engagement:** when a student participates in learning in with a deep psychological and cognitive investment. He/she is highly motivated and puts forth extra effort. The student uses high order thinking skills to increase his/her understanding and to solve complex problems.

2014 – 2015 Action Plan

Process	Area of Focus
<p>Through the school level continuous learning and improvement cycle and ongoing discussions focused on student achievement at the classroom, school and system level we prepare all students in both elementary and secondary panel for success.</p> <p>School teams monitor and measure student growth and engagement through structured and purposeful strategies.</p> <p>Student voice is sought and valued as part of the classroom, school and system to inform decisions at all levels.</p> <p>Capacity building for teachers and administrators in the gathering, analysis and implementation around student voice supports the conditions for engagement and achievement.</p>	Achievement Matters
	<p>Student well – being is part of the school improvement process and academic, intellectual and social engagement are monitored as part of the cycle of continuous improvement K – 12 (A)</p>
	<p>Strategies to reach out to potential early leavers, to encourage credit accumulation and increase graduation diploma completion (B)</p>
	Engagement Matters
	<p>Schools will participate in system and school events to gather student engagement and student voice data. (C)</p>
<p>Schools will be supported to build capacity of staff and students in developing strategies to gather student voice and engagement. (D)</p>	

Achievement Matters:

A. *Preparing students for success through the school level continuous learning and improvement cycle.*

We need engagement at all levels as achievement is directly linked to student’s playing an active role in their education both in the classroom and school community with the goal being a caring and safe school culture. Through the school level continuous improvement process we consider student achievement and well – being with a focus on knowing each of our students. Transforming Learning Everywhere (TLE) has become a guide for all schools in the improvement process. By knowing our students through the analysis of data and the use of effective instructional and assessment strategies, staffs continue to work to provide the appropriate program supports. (e.g. Individual timetabling in Grades 9-12 for in risk students, a tiered approach in our program delivery model, hands-on experiential learning such as the Homebuilder’s course, a renewed focus on the Arts, including instrumental music in all grade 7 and 8 classes as well enhancing teacher and student skill in using the Arts as a means of expression, and Leveled Literacy Intervention K- 2). With the principal as the instructional leader supported by the system capacity builders and support personnel we provide responsive, job-embedded support for academics and student well – being.

“When I was in elementary school I loved to go on school trips because they were so engaging and motivated me to do my best at the task at hand. When we went to the Golden Horseshoe Festival with music, it almost forced me to reflect and work harder to my goals.”

What We Did

Transforming Learning Everywhere was introduced in the district in June 2014. When students own their learning supported by the expertise of the teacher and enabled by technology, student engagement and achievement improves, and our students become contributing citizens in our physical and digital world. Each school identified multiple student learning foci, a staff instructional focus, and a capacity building plan through the self-assessment process. This work will continue in 2015 – 2016 and focus on transforming classrooms, transforming relationships and transforming learning opportunities. It is based upon the following premises that we are working to develop in all of our schools.

- *The positive relationships between the student and the teacher and between students is critical for student achievement and well-being to improve.*
- *Students learn most effectively when their interests, questions and ideas are a priority in the learning process, and when they are engaged in conversations about learning and are asked to voice their opinions about how they learn best.*
- *Students learn in unique ways. Different learning opportunities both individually and collaboratively need to be provided and created by both teachers and students. Effective instruction and engagement in deep learning tasks remain our priority.*
- *Teachers play a significant role in assisting students to engage in the inquiry process, always keeping in mind curriculum expectations. Because of this pivotal role, support for teachers and their access to appropriate learning resources is paramount. This support includes the effective use of technology to enhance creativity, critical thinking, communication and the development of our students as citizens in a digital world.*

We are focusing our work on the instructional tasks that students are being asked to complete. We are not broadening the work with new initiatives; rather we are attempting to deepen the work with greater focus on building a strong culture of practice in all classrooms through a focus on the instructional core. (*see glossary*) In its simplest terms, the instructional core is composed of the teacher and the student in the presence of content. It is the *relationship* between the teacher, the student, and the content – *not* the qualities of any one of them by themselves – that determines the nature of instructional practice, and each corner of the instructional core has its own particular role and resources to bring to the instructional process. Simply stated, the instructional task is the

actual work that students are asked to do in the process of instruction. The task will lead to greater learning and improvement in learning and we continue to make sure we reflect and analyse our teaching.

“What engages me to learn is when I get to create a project with guidelines but no limits allowing me to be creative and take a risk.”

We are currently engaging in the following projects to assist our implementation and we will research their impact on student achievement and well-being as we look forward to transforming learning everywhere in the HWDSB by 2019. In the North cluster, 7 of our elementary schools – Adelaide Hoodless, A.M. Cunningham, Cathy Weaver, Dr. Davey, Memorial City, Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria – began last year with grades 4-6 classrooms. Teachers were issued their own iPad along with a class set of 6 and received the professional learning and coaching for effective instructional practice in this new approach to learning. This year, all teachers and students in grades 4-8 will receive their own iPad. We are excited to see how this next phase will positively impact the culture of learning in these schools. We have also embarked on our journey in secondary schools with the 1:1 deployment of iPads to all staff and students in grades 9-12 at Nora Henderson and Mountain Secondary Schools. Through collaborative learning and professional development, we are confident that we will meet the individual needs and interests of all of our learners so that they can develop the skills to be successful within and beyond the classroom.

Impact of What We Did

We are engaged in a process to enhance instruction, to invite students to engage in rich learning tasks and to rely on students to drive the learning environment, supported by technology. Teachers have a significant role to play in this transformation. In the spring of 2014 we shared the document for the first time and this fall our work with school administrators, capacity builders and consultants and teachers at each school is to promote an environment where we will see that when teachers and students engage in deep learning, they partner with each other in more personal and transparent learning processes where high expectations are achieved through challenging deep learning tasks. The focus has become on ensuring that students master the process of learning. Helping students learn about themselves as learners and continuously assess and reflect upon their own progress is essential to this process.

“I also learn best when a teacher is enthusiastic and highly passionate about their teaching because it will make myself as a learner to care about the learning and make me want to learn it because of the interest a teacher has with it.”

What We Learned

We are examining how the learning process in our classrooms encourages creativity, promotes critical thinking and problem solving and invites students to ask questions, search for answers, apply their learning in multiple situations and communicate their learning to others. In other words, inquiry is at the core of this commitment. The relationship between teachers and students as well as students with their peers is changing in every classroom. This change is an opportunity to enhance our students’ engagement and achievement. It is early in the process and we will continue to see how TLE is monitored through students’ capacities to build new knowledge and to lead their own learning effectively, develop proactive dispositions and their abilities to persevere through challenges, and the development of citizens who are life-long learners.

“In my grade 12 English writers craft class my teacher let all the students make up a topic lesson of interest and we got to teach a class.”

Teachers have a new active role, more engaged with students and other teachers than ever before. Teachers who play dynamic, interactive roles with students – pushing students to clearly define their own learning goals, helping them gain the learning muscle to effectively pursue those goals, and supporting them in monitoring how they are doing in achieving those goals – have extremely strong impacts on their students’ learning. Such teachers help them master the difficult and demanding process of learning. Our students have the opportunities

to collaborate with classmates, teachers, and others beyond the classroom. Collaboration in learning is easy to consider on the surface, but tough to do well in practice. One of the most complex transitions for students and teachers to make is the move from a pedagogy that centres on *individuals* demonstrating their learning to a pedagogy that embraces *groups* demonstrating their learning. Yet in modern workplaces, success most often depends upon the ability of everyone to work together to integrate complex parts and ideas into a coherent product, solution, policy or program. This requires individuals to share responsibility for their work, to make decisions together, and to work interdependently. We are expanding our classrooms in TLE through experiential learning, blended learning and learning in a virtual environment all the while focusing on the instructional core.

“I learn better in environments with some struggling peers. When they need help, I myself proceed deeper into the concept of our subject while exploring the term with them.”

Since the start of the 2014-2015 school year, cluster principals have worked closely with the K-12 Team (Consultants, Instructional Coaches, etc.) on how they incorporate student voice when the K-12 team is working within a teacher inquiry. The K-12 Team meets monthly and they discuss various strategies to support teachers to use student voice in the classroom. Various activities are modelled to the K-12 Team for them to potentially use when working with teachers. While there is no formal Director’s Student Voice Forum in the 2014-2015 school year, the goal is to encourage student voice every day in our local schools and classrooms to improve student achievement, engagement and well-being.

B: Strategies to reach out to potential early leavers and to encourage graduation diploma completion.

Our Annual Operating Plan speaks to every student graduating from Secondary School and reaching their full potential. Numerous reports and data collections are used to determine and monitor students who are at-risk, in-risk, disengaged in school or have left the school system without a diploma. We use the Ministry Report, Taking Stock to assess our student progress with respect to indicators such as credit accumulation, literacy requirements and community involvement hours—factors that for some students become challenges for acquiring a graduation diploma. Other impactful strategies highlighted in the Taking Stock report connections to caring adult, personalized timetable, pathways planning and student profile with respect to strengths and interests. Students may now begin to acquire their community hours in the summer following their grade 8 year and this is part of the Grade 8 to Grade 9 transitions planning in all of our schools to raise awareness. We must continue to identify at – risk students and engage them through ensuring they are connected to caring adults in their school, create an individual timetable for them if necessary, know each student and develop a profile for staff based on student strengths and needs and ensure they receive additional pathways support to ensure they graduate and chose the right career.

“What engages me to learn is when I get to create a project with guidelines but no limits allowing me to be creative and take a risk.”

What we did

Below are approaches that were used across the system to re-engage potential early leavers (still in the building) and early leavers (outside the building) to provide programming to meet student needs. While some are secondary specific, many of the strategies (those in **bold**) are applicable K – 12.

Communication Strategies

- ***Calls to home/work/parents/emergency contacts***
- Letters to invite students back
- ***Parent and student meetings***
- ***Home visits conducted when no phone, or emergency information***
- ***“Check-in” appointments to monitor progress and coach students to success***
- ***Communication to teachers regarding supports and strategies for specific students***
- ***Regular check-ins with students and parents/guardians***
- Link on school website outlining options to graduate

- *Mailing positive notes home*

Positive School Connections

- *Use of Restorative Justice practices*
- *Connections to school clubs or teams*
- *Engaging students in Speak Up Projects*

“We can speak our mind but not all the time do we really have a chance to speak out creatively. In my class there are some people who I am afraid to speak my mind around because I feel that they will make fun of what I say. Sometimes my opinion is laughed at, silenced or brought down. But when I get a chance to express my creativity, it makes me feel unique and appreciated.”

Mentoring

- *Collaboration with other educational staff: guidance, VP, LRT, social worker, office staff, Student Success teachers and mentoring education assistants*
- *Link to caring adult (touching base/counseling)*
- *Peer tutor mentoring*
- *Creation of school based groups to address needs*
- *Contracts with administration*

Community/Other Supports

- *Referral to the Social Worker or other community supports*
- *Consulting with community partners; e.g., Probation, CAS/CCAS*
- *Financial support through Bursaries, community supports*
- *Links to community programs/supports e.g. Grace Haven, Cornerstone*
- *Providing opportunities to gain Community Involvement Hours (40 hours of CIH is a graduation requirement)*

Programming

- *Creation of individualized timetables and re-timetabling as required*
- *Enrolment in in-school/off-site Alternative Education programming*
- *Enrolment in GLD, GLN, Credit Recovery*
- *Credit rescue supports*
- *Enrolment in cooperative education – full day, half day and or paid coop*
- *Connections to SHSMs; Dual credit; Specialized Pathways*
- *Creation of opportunities for work experiences in existing programs*
- *Establishing a Literacy/Numeracy after school program*
- *Enrolling students in part-time studies to complete required credit material*
- *Enrolment in e-learning/Blended learning environments*
- *Home study/modified day schedule (SAL/in-house SAL)*
- *Career pathways guidance*
- *Enrolment in system alternative education/student success programming, Return to Learn*
- *Enrolment in continuing education (night school, summer school, eLearning)*
- *Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)*

Impact of What We Did

Every secondary school has been provided a list of in – risk students transitioning in June 2014 to Grade 9 that is monitored at the school and system level by Superintendents of Student Achievement and Executive Council. Through the careful monitoring of each student to ensure they are connected to a caring adult, attending regularly and accumulating credits towards graduation we are ensuring our Program Strategy to make all of our schools great schools is being implemented. We are not waiting for students to struggle after

entering secondary school then responding with interventions. We are now identifying students earlier before they enter to ensure they are supported with programs and supports for success.

Based on the strategies implemented we were able to re-engage some of our Early Leavers at the semester start up. We were successful in contacting over 900 students. Over 400 students were re-engaged back to system programs, Turning Point, (*see glossary*) their home school or Community and Continuing Education (CCE) (*see glossary*) depending on student learning needs and circumstances this semester. We continue to track the progress of students in all pathways and look for opportunities to expand our programs to meet student needs as they move towards graduation and ensure personalized learning environments are accessible.

What We Learned

The best level of success for schools came when students were contacted by staff members who knew them (guidance counselor, student success teacher, administrator or coach). Next steps include looking at a continuous re-engagement process that allows students multiple entry points throughout the school year back into their home school or another educational learning environment specific to meeting the needs of the student. Many of the students participating in the Dual Credits (*see glossary*) program return to school to participate, as they start to see the value of earning a high school diploma. Participating in a college program opens their eyes to the possibilities, and helps them realize that they can be successful in finishing high school, and they see themselves as potentially attending college. We continue to track the progress of students in these pathways and look for opportunities to expand our programs to meet student needs as they move towards graduation and ensure personalized learning environments are accessible. Our past practice has restricted the re-engagement of Early Leavers to semester start-ups. Students need to be welcomed back when there is a readiness to return to school. We have begun that process this year where Student Success Teams meet monthly to examine early leaver reports and review Taking Stock data to ensure at-risk and in-risk students are identified, re-connected to school in a timely manner and monitored to sustain engagement. This is an ongoing process throughout the semester to ensure students who leave are contacted regularly.

Engagement Matters:

C: Gather and analyze student voice to create increased choice in school offerings in all schools.

Our Program Strategy reflects the way we want to offer programs and design facilities, so that we can best meet the needs of each of our students in the 21st century. We want all of our schools to be great schools, where students have choice, support and success within their local school communities. We are restructuring what we offer, where we offer it and how we can help students achieve their full potential by accessing the programs they want. We know today's learners require new approaches, and that we must respond with engaging programs and safe, nurturing and innovative learning environments for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

What We Did

Student Voice Option Sheet Survey

HWDSB is making important changes to what we offer, where it's offered and how we can best help students reach their goals in great schools. We heard from hundreds of our students at the Director's Student Voice Forum last year about what creates a great school. Each of our students should be able to find what they need for success in their local school. Every school should support and value each pathway after graduation – apprenticeship, college, community, university and work. One of our ways of doing this is through our student-voice option sheet. Last year, three secondary schools piloted a survey to capture student voice to identify the types of courses/pathways students would like on their option sheet (at that specific school). The survey was designed by E-BEST in collaboration with a small group of Secondary Principals and Student Services team members. The survey was piloted at Parkside and Highland (Dundas Valley), Westmount and Orchard Park. All secondary schools will use this survey by September 2016.

In preparation for the 2014-2015 option sheet process, schools were encouraged to continue to gather student voice in preparation of their option sheet. School teams are encouraged to use tools that you feel are best suited to your school community: paper surveys, Student Voice Forums, or other strategies to capture student interest. In collaboration with eBEST, schools designed a survey and inquired:

HWDSB is seeking input from students regarding the elective courses you would like to take during the 2014-2015 school year. The elective course choices you make may determine the course offerings at your high school. In the spirit of the board's new Program Strategy, it is the school board's intention to offer tailored elective programming in each high school depending on the level of student interest for each elective course. In order to determine student interest in elective courses, we are inviting students in Grade 10 to complete this questionnaire. The survey should take you about 10 - 20 minutes to complete. Please be aware that the elective courses you choose today are not your final elective course choices. Your choices today will simply let your secondary school staffs know if there is enough student interest at your school to offer a specific elective course in the future.

Approximately half the secondary schools have started this process of capturing student voice on a small scale (by surveying a grade or subject area of students), whereas half the secondary school designed surveys for two or more grades (or the entire school). In the spring of 2015, schools will share their results and the tool they created for others to consider in the 2015-2016 school year.

Interdisciplinary Studies

Last February, secondary school teams were invited to meet and discuss the interdisciplinary program/courses (see *glossary*) offered on their course option sheet. Many secondary schools shared their experiences offering such 2/4 credit packages focused on certain area or topic. Schools who attended this session also explored various possibilities for future course offerings. This year, schools are encouraged to continue to offer such opportunities in their schools. Schools are also encouraged to use student voice in the design of the interdisciplinary course offerings. For example, if a school team was creating a student voice option sheet survey, the following question could be added:

At _____ we want to learn more about your interests to help us plan which courses we will offer next year. We will use your answers to potentially create an interdisciplinary package of courses in the 2015-2016. Please tell us: What topic or idea would you like to learn more about?

Student Voice Transition Forums

Throughout the fall of 2014, we held a variety of Student Voice Forums to help engage students in the transition process. The goal of the forums was to garner information that will help students adjust to their new school communities, identify concerns, inform us about what they like in their current school and what they would like to be retained in their new school. Students also identified what they could do to help ease the transition for those students attending a new school. Forums took place in 2014 at Parkview Secondary School, Mountain Secondary School, Hill Park Secondary School, Barton Secondary School, Delta Secondary School and Sir Allan MacNab Secondary School.

As part of these events, the K-12 team supported students who filled out surveys and participated in conversations. Students were asked to comment on several questions. Given differences in circumstances across school communities (e.g., some schools closing, others amalgamating etc.,) the questions differed across schools so that students could provide feedback that best reflected the changes they will experience in the near future. At most schools student leaders were fully engaged and acted as trained facilitators who led small-group discussions and a variety of activities that focused on three questions:

- 1) How do we help you adjust/feel welcome in a new school community?
- 2) What do you like at your school now that you'd like to see continue in the new school community?
- 3) What are your concerns/suggestions about adjusting to a new school community?

The data was collected collated by EBEST and shared with the Transition Committees to act upon. Approximately 3,000 students participated in the forums. Following these Student Voice Forums, various transition activities

occurred based on the feedback of students. Some events were large scale, while others were smaller in nature. For example, on Wednesday, June 4, students at Hill Park Secondary School went to their new secondary school (in September) for the day and enjoyed an opportunity to meet new staff, learn about extra-curricular activities, tour the school and learn more the school year ahead. At the same time students at Parkview and Mountain came together at Dofasco Sports Park and enjoyed a major transition event of similar nature.

Various transition events also continued throughout HWDSB as school communities came together to celebrate the closing of schools and mark the start of new school communities in September. Staffs have done an outstanding job as they remain focused on building their new school culture. As an example, Jenny Dupuis facilitated circles at Parkview where students were encouraged to talk about transitions (fears, and other issues) and had an opportunity to provide input on future programming. Marilyn Wright from the Aboriginal Health Centre also led the Aboriginal students last school year in a program called, "The Native Circle".

Student Voice Transition Forum: French Immersion

One of the major focuses of this phase of the Secondary Program Strategy is the start of another secondary French Immersion program at Sherwood in September 2015. On Monday, November 10, we hosted a FI Student Voice Forum at Sherwood. This forum provided students from Norwood Park, Lawfield, Glen Brae and Michelle Jean the opportunity to learn more about the program, tour the school community and begin their exciting transition into Grade 9. Almost 100 students, staff and administrators attended this event and provided their feedback to further help the implementation and start of the FI program.

elearning/Blended learning

We are doing a pilot implementation of blended learning (*see glossary*) with the Grade 10 careers course in seven schools semester 2 with the goal of implementing the blended learning environment in every high school next year. The long term goal is for all grade 10 students to have experienced a blended learning/elearning platform so that they can make informed decisions for elearning options in senior grades. We are moving to incorporate the student selection of eLearning courses into the current option sheet process and allow students and guidance counsellors access to elearning registration when course selections are made.

	2013-2014	2012-2013	2011-2012
HWDSB students enrolled in HWDSB e learning courses (<i>see glossary</i>)	436.5	396	371
HWDSB students enrolled in an OeLC partner Board elearning course (<i>see glossary</i>)	208	138	108
Total number of HWDSB students enrolled in an elearning course	644.5	534	479

(168 Full-time day school students enrolled in elearning courses through the Community and Continuing Education department for the 2013-2014)

Impact of What We Did

The Student Voice Option Sheet work has enabled students the opportunity to provide direct feedback to their principal and school staffs the courses, programs and pathways they want to see on their Option Sheet. In some secondary schools, principals have greatly altered their option sheet by removing courses that are no longer of interest to students and added courses that are new and/or aligned to student interest within that school. Students have appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback on the design of their option sheet; therefore, we believe we will have a higher level of engagement of all students. The transition work has allowed us to have input from all stakeholders, and to hear and address concerns as soon as they are brought forward. The themes identified by students through the Student Transition Forums (and French Immersion Student Voice Forum)

have provided direction for much of Phase 1 and now Phase 2 of the Secondary Program Strategy implementation.

What We Learned

We learned that we need to continue to help parents and students to have a very clear understanding of the program strategy as it relates to their schools. We also reaffirmed the need to continue to communicate significant changes in a timely and multi-faceted way. We also must be deliberate and share with students and parents when we make discussions based on their input. We want students to understand we act upon the data we collect at various events and through various means. In transitioning from Grade 8 to secondary school we learned that careful and deliberate communication around transportation needs to be a focus for 2015 in the spring to ensure students and families are well prepared for a smooth transition. The implementation of elearning/blended learning in the Grade 10 Careers Course will be underway in seven schools semester 2 with the goal of implementing the blended learning environment in every high school next year. The long term goal is for all grade 10 students to have experienced a blended learning/elearning platform so that they can make informed decisions for elearning options in senior grades.

D. Collection of qualitative and quantitative data to understand effective student engagement.

“Student voice” is a metaphor for student engagement and participation in issues that matter to learning. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to creating a personalized, collaborative inquiry based learning environment for each student. We believe these learning conditions support student achievement and well-being and prepare our students to participate effectively in our physical and digital world. We engage our students. We enhance their love of learning. Our students have the opportunities to collaborate with classmates, teachers, and others beyond the classroom. Developing reciprocal relationships with students, parents and colleagues is critical for sharing ownership for learning. Many observe that as students are made partners in decisions about their learning; motivation and perseverance grow, resulting in new and more in-depth learning. With a renewed focus on capacity building for consultants, instructional coaches, administrators and teachers at the classroom level in all schools around student voice we are moving to embed student voice into the classroom. In the fall of 2014 training for all of these groups has occurred to consolidate their understanding of student voice and its role in Transforming Learning Everywhere. As we work to better understand current student voice strategies in schools and classrooms we are learning from and with colleagues about your next best moves to transform relationships through student voice.

What We Did

The Director’s Forum consisted of school-based events with one off-site location at Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School where Dr. Malloy interacted with our students about their experiences in our schools. Rather than holding three forums, the event was held in one central location and expanded to grades 7-12. To accompany this event, schools were encouraged to hold their own student voice forums in their own buildings on the same day. These forums were held simultaneously with the event at Sir John A. Macdonald (thus giving students from various schools an opportunity to engage with students on site at the forum). In February 2014, more than 450 students representing every HWDSB school with grades 7 to 12 attended. Each school was invited to have a “home” and “away” team so every student from every school had the opportunity to participate. This year, the theme and focus was "Unleashing Creativity and Innovation" and our students were trained as group facilitators and leaders to run the event. Students were given every possible opportunity to express themselves, their way. They did so by writing, speaking and in creative forms such as photo essays, song, poetry, or dramatizations. Students were invited to explore their desired form of expression and show us how they learn best. We asked them about what matters most to them as learners. Specifically, students to provide feedback by answering one of the following 5 questions/statements:

1. How do you learn best? What engages you?
2. Share a learning experience(s) that was fun, engaging and motivated you to do your best.

3. Tell your teachers what activities and experiences you would like to do in order to share what you are learning and understand.” Explain.
4. Do you have opportunities to have fun and be creative when sharing what you are learning and understand? Explain.
5. How do digital tools and technology support you in your learning?

Our schools continue to partner with Free the Children through their educational We Act Program. Currently we have more than doubled since last fall as we have now have 42 schools participating. This promotes leadership, social justice and humanitarian support for students to become global citizens and focus on community initiatives locally to support others in need. Our my.Leadership Conference in December 2014 and Junior Empowerment Conference for Grades 3 to Grades 6 in January 2015 engage in total more 1500 students who will develop their leadership skills. The focus of these events for elementary students is to empower our students and help them recognize how they make can impact the larger world through good character, provide confidence to make good choices and understand how their relationships with peers and others influences our local and global community. Many schools have already been involved with Eco Schools, Terry Fox, United Way, and the collection of non- perishable food items, have a recycling program or are part of Raise the Roof. It is important that we collect the data to share what our Board is doing collectively to make our world better and empower our students. All schools in the HWDSB are being asked to report what is being done at their schools this year for a culminating celebration event for all schools K- 12 in May of 2015.

Impact of What We Did

Students from K- 12 have had various opportunities to share and engage in telling us what matters to them as learners. Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to creating a personalized, collaborative inquiry based learning environment for each student. We are expanding our classrooms through experiential learning, blended learning and learning in a virtual environment. Transforming Learning Everywhere is about effective instruction accelerated by technology to support student achievement and well-being, preparing our students to participate effectively in both the physical world of the classroom as well as in the digital world beyond the classroom. The learning process in our classrooms encourages creativity, promotes critical thinking and inquiry. Students are invited to ask questions, search for answers, apply their learning in multiple situations, and communicate their learning to others. Students learn most effectively when their interests, questions and ideas are a priority in the learning process, and when they are engaged in conversations about learning and are asked to voice their opinions about how they learn best. The relationship between teachers and students as well as students with their peers is changing in every classroom, with opportunities to collaborate with classmates, teachers, and others beyond the classroom.

“I really love it when I work ...on our Chromebooks, it really engages all of us, especially me because I’m working with my peers and classmates while I am using something that I always use and that I am very experienced with.”

What We Learned

What matters most to our students as learners? E-BEST performed a content analysis on all the qualitative data from the Director’s Forum collected: graffiti walls, blog posts, audio recordings, group discussions, tweets and video testimonials. The major themes were identified across all of the topic areas and in all of the types of responses (individual, blog responses, etc.):

1. Instructional practices:
 - Experiential learning opportunities (e.g., field trips, learning through physical activity, co-op)
 - Hands-on experiences
 - Creative forms of instruction/learning (e.g., debates)
 - Creative forms of assessment (e.g., project based)
2. Consideration for students’ learning styles and interests within the classroom and school

3. School Environment:
 - Teacher characteristics (e.g., demonstration of enthusiasm)
 - Individual attention supporting students' learning
 - Presence of caring adult
 - Safe, supportive environment
4. Use of technology to support learning:
 - Making learning more efficient, engaging and differentiated
 - Ensuring it does not act as a distraction
 - Ensuring that everyone has access

“They help me do things that books and the classic paper and pencil can’t do. An example of this is finding useful information quickly, rather than looking through many books until I finally find what I need.”

Students reported that, as long as teachers are clear about learning expectations, providing choice over the topics they write about, projects they work on, and ways they choose to present their learning allows them to be creative and learn more in the process. All staff and students need their own technology to make this vision a reality, but the focus of our efforts is changing and learning for everyone in HWDSB. Effective instruction and engagement in deep learning tasks remain our priority. Teachers play a significant role in assisting students to engage in the inquiry process, always keeping in mind curriculum expectations.


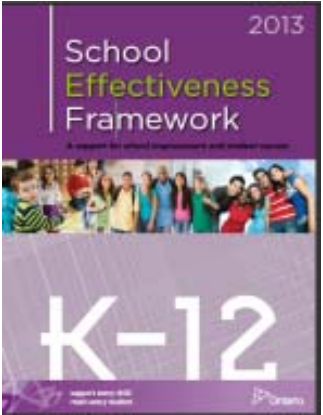
2015 – 2016 Action Plan





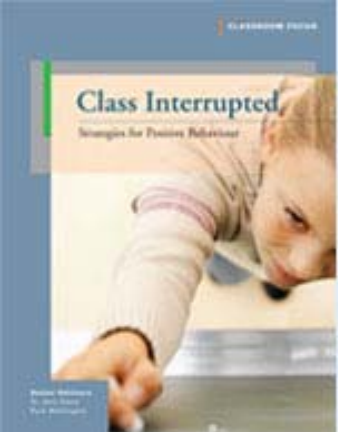
We are not broadening the work with new initiatives; rather we are attempting to deepen the work with greater focus on building a strong culture of practice in all classrooms through a focus on the student voice and engagement strategies currently underway. This will allow schools time to deepen their teaching through TLE and embed student voice into the school level.

Process	Area of Focus
<p>Through the school level continuous learning and improvement cycle and ongoing discussions focused on student achievement at the classroom, school and system level we prepare all students in both elementary and secondary panel for success.</p> <p>School teams monitor and measure student growth and engagement through structured and purposeful strategies.</p> <p>Student voice is sought and valued as part of the classroom, school and system to inform decisions at all levels.</p> <p>Capacity building for teachers and administrators in the gathering, analysis and implementation around student voice supports the conditions for engagement and achievement.</p>	Achievement Matters
	Student well – being is part of the school improvement process and academic, intellectual and social engagement are monitored as part of the cycle of continuous improvement K – 12 (A)
	Strategies to encourage credit accumulation and increase graduation diploma completion and to reach out to potential early leavers (B)
	Engagement Matters
	Schools will participate in school and system events to gather student engagement and student voice data. (C)
	Schools will be supported to build capacity of staff and students in developing strategies to gather student voice and engagement. (D)

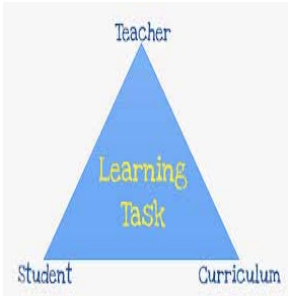
Appendix A

Student Voice and Engagement Resources for Schools

Name of Resource	Focus
<p>Transforming Learning Everywhere</p> 	<p>Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to creating a personalized, collaborative inquiry based learning environment for each student. We believe these learning conditions support student achievement and well-being and prepare our students to participate effectively in our physical and digital world. We engage our students. We enhance their love of learning. Our students have the opportunities to collaborate with classmates, teachers, and others beyond the classroom. We expand our classrooms through experiential learning, blended learning and learning in a virtual environment. We believe our students will achieve, through effective instruction accelerated by technology, by inviting them to learn in both the physical world of the classroom as well as in the digital world beyond the classroom.</p>
<p>School Effectiveness Framework</p> 	<p>The School Effectiveness Framework (K-12) is a self-assessment tool for schools. It serves to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help educators identify areas of strength, areas requiring improvement and next steps. • act as a catalyst for shared instructional leadership through collaborative conversations focused on high levels of student learning and achievement. • promote inquiry focused on student learning, achievement and well-being that informs goals and effective teaching and learning practices/strategies. • support educators in determining explicit, intentional and precise improvement planning decisions which inform monitoring and feedback for continuous improvement and future planning in relation to enhanced student learning, achievement and well-being. • maintain communication with stakeholders to foster increased public confidence about school effectiveness. • build coherence in and across schools and districts.

	<p>Capacity Building Series- Student Voice Student voice and supports for staff to collect and implement strategies to create responsive learning environments.</p>
<p>Promoting a Positive School Climate Ministry of Education</p>	 <p>This offers a range of practical suggestions for activities/practices that can be applied to the entire school, the classroom or to students</p>
	<p>Inquiry Based Learning - Capacity Building Series As educators we are charged with the great challenge and responsibility of engaging students in learning so that they develop the skills and knowledge they need to function in today's world. Questions and concerns abound. How do we instill the skills and the values necessary to experience success in the present and in the future?</p>
<p>Caring and Safe Schools Document</p>	 <p>Ministry document focusing on ongoing efforts to build and maintain a caring and safe school culture. The document is for staff to address issues of student behavior through instruction and interventions to meet individual student needs.</p>
<p>Class Interrupted, by Avis Glaze (book set) Book set given to schools in 2013</p>	 <p>3 books in the set that focus on strategies for promoting school wide, classroom and individual positive learning environments.</p>

Appendix B - Glossary of Terms

<p>Instructional Core (p.3)</p> 	<p>The instructional core is composed of the teacher and the student in the presence of curriculum. It is the <i>relationship</i> between the teacher, the student, and the content – <i>not</i> the qualities of any one of them by themselves. At the core is the learning task, the actual work that students are asked to do in the process of instruction. Increased student learning happens as a result of improvement in teacher knowledge and skill, the level and content of the learning task or finally the level of student engagement in the instructional process. It is the actual work students are doing in the task, their ability to know what is expected (learning goal) and how they know they will be successful (success criteria). To do what they are expected to do, students must know not only <i>what</i> they are expected to do but also <i>how</i> they are expected to do it, and what <i>knowledge and skill</i> they need to learn.</p> <p>Reference: <i>Instructional Rounds in Education</i> By Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman, and Lee Teitel (Harvard University. Press, 2009)</p>
<p>Turning Point (p. 7)</p>	<p>System Alternative Education Program developed in conjunction with Mohawk College to help students who need an alternative (location, structure, time, function, organization, program delivery) to the traditional classroom environment. Students have gained over 20 credits and are over 18 years old. Program is at Mohawk and students have access to co-operative education credits, dual credits and complete secondary school.</p>
<p>Community and Continuing Education (CCE) (p. 7)</p>	<p>Adult Day School Program that will help upgrade a mark, obtain credits for College or University or to complete your High School Diploma. This program is offered to adult learners, ages 18 and older that are not registered with a Secondary School and have achieved at least 16 credits. King William site offers college and workplace level courses in 12 week sessions. Red Hill site offers college and university level courses in 6 week sessions.</p>
<p>Dual Credits (p. 7)</p>	<p>These programs are full-day, full-semester programs that combine “in-school” credits (usually 2) and 2 or more additional credits through Co-op. These programs typically occur off-site, through various community partnerships. (Turning Point at Mohawk College, Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, Military Co-Op, Limeridge Community Co-Op).</p>
<p>Interdisciplinary Studies (p.8)</p>	<p>A package of 2 or 4 credits from various areas offered as a package to meet student interests and program needs. An example is Waterdown District HS offers Outward bound that is a one semester Grade 12 environmental studies program where students obtain 1 credit in each of English, Science, Geography and Physical education.</p>
<p>Blended Learning (p.9)</p>	<p>Blended learning uses the tools of the HWDSB Hub to teach and support learning in a face-to-face class. Through blended learning, K-12 students can access high-quality course materials, course calendars, and assignments during and outside school hours. Students can also communicate with their teacher and classmates using a suite of secure online tools inside the password-protected Hub. These tools help students learn or review key concepts, stay organized, show what they have learned, submit assignments, track their achievement, and communicate with others. Unlike e-learning classes where students are physically separate from their teacher and classmates, blended learning combines the support of classroom learning with the flexibility of e-learning.</p>
<p>e Learning (p.9)</p>	<p>E Learning credits are gained in a virtual environment under the direction of a qualified teacher on – line. Assignments, communications, blogs and information are all shared electronically and the same number of hours is required of a student as would be in a face to face model to gain a credit. HWDSB is a partner with local Boards to enroll students in the Ontario E Learning Consortium (OeLC) where students can enroll in a variety of courses from any pathway (workplace, college, apprenticeship, university).</p>