HWDSB

Program Committee
Thursday June 1, 2017
Room 340-D

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

AGENDA: 4:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of the Agenda

3. Mountain Secondary School Transitions Update

4. Identifying High Needs Schools – A Risk and Asset Model Approach

5. Adjournment

curiosity · creativity · possibility

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: **Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education**

DATE: **Thursday, June 1, 2017**

PREPARED BY: **Michael Prendergast, Superintendent of Leadership and Learning**

RE: **Mountain Secondary School Transitions Update**

Action ☐   Monitoring x

Rationale/Benefits:

The Secondary Program Strategy supports the vision of the Board and provides the foundation for future secondary programming. It is based on the following principles:

- All secondary schools are great schools
- Students will have choice within their home schools
- Expanded access for students for specialized programs

This transition plan aligns with the program strategy and the HWDSB Student Learning and Achievement priority goal of all students achieving and graduating in HWDSB

Background:

In June 2012, HWDSB concluded the extensive accommodation review that culminated in Board decisions to close seven secondary schools, build two new secondary schools, renovate one secondary school and upgrade remaining schools. An underlying purpose of this strategy is to diversify our secondary school communities by providing all pathways at each schools. Trustees approved the consultation process for the program strategy at the April 15, 2013 Standing Committee and it was passed by Board in June 2013. Mountain Secondary School is scheduled for closure in June 2017. Since 2014, students who were attending Mountain Secondary have been able to remain in their school and work towards graduation including students from Parkview Secondary who chose to attend Mountain in 2014 when it was closed. No new students were admitted into Grade 9 beginning in 2014 at Mountain Secondary so we currently have 69 students in total attending this year who are all working towards graduation.

Our Program Strategy supports equity of access for students to all programs. We want each student to find what they need for success in their local school. We want every school to support and value each pathway after graduation – apprenticeship, college, community, university and work. We want all students to find what they need in every one of our schools. In schools where we have fewer than 300 students, providing access to program to meet the needs of all students is challenging. By accommodating students with a variety of learning needs in their home school regardless of their exceptionality, they can be offered a wider range of programs through the Arts, Co-op, experiential learning and they have access to Tier 3 programming based on their interests. Students benefit from being part of their local community and have the opportunity to be part of their community school where they can develop the social and emotional skills with their peers and become part of their local neighbourhood.

Student success should not be determined by how a student learns or where a student lives. The research is clear – when students of various socio-economic or academic backgrounds are unequally distributed between schools there are lower student outcomes. A great school has students from different backgrounds and various levels of academic abilities because it improves student success. Further, students should not be segregated unnecessarily within schools themselves. Students are to be provided with the support they need in the most inclusive way. Inclusive education is found throughout Ontario school boards and other Hamilton schools.

Whether it's specialized literacy and numeracy programs, small class sizes or special spaces for our students to gather, we will be providing the supports for our students to be successful. Former Parkview students are being supported in inclusive schools because of the supports they receive, whether they choose to go to Delta, Mountain or their home school. We want to do this in the most inclusive way possible. A great school provides students with the technologies, tools and environments that support learning, working and living in the 21st century. We know that school closures are an emotional process and we understand the concerns raised by those most affected by the transition process. We recognize that many students have come from elementary school with challenging experiences and they have been supported during their time at Parkview and Mountain and those supports will continue in any school they choose to attend in HWDSB.

We are currently working closely with our staff, to raise the bar in terms of expectations for our students in all of our schools. Students who have transitioned out of Mountain or Parkview Secondary into their home schools have been monitored closely at both the system and school level. Students with learning exceptionalities have been integrated into their home schools since 2014 as was always an option for families over a vocational setting offered at Parkview and Mountain Secondary. Our target graduation rate is increasing to 82% and this includes students with learning exceptionalities. This strategy will see more students, regardless of socio-economic background and learning styles, studying at the most appropriate level for them. This would increase the number of students studying at the applied and academic level and ensure that students with special needs are educated effectively at every school. In all of our secondary schools beginning in 2014 we offer the literacy and math intervention programs to meet the needs of every student. We know in great schools, where students have access to engaging programs, all students will achieve their full potential.

Prominent Canadian researcher Dr. Douglas Willms notes that research across 30 countries found "the more inclusive the system is, the better everyone does." Benefits of inclusion, according to the research are:
• Respect for difference/opportunities for students to learn in ways best for them
• High levels of staff collaboration (e.g., joint problem solving)
• Respect for staff shown by diverse students
• Presence of specialists in regular classrooms, not pulling few students out for supports
• Presence of committed staff members throughout the school
• Presence of positive relations between the school and the parents/community
• Social competence and communication skills improve in inclusive settings
• Academic skills improved
• Quality of IEPs improved in inclusive programs compared to self-contained programs
• Friendships between students with disabilities and their typical peers in inclusive settings
• Friendships and memberships are facilitated by longitudinal involvement in inclusive, routine school activities

We know students with similar profiles to students from Parkview and Mountain are performing well at other schools. At Sherwood and Orchard Park, for example, 59 per cent of students who are supported with an Individual Education Plan are graduating compared with 36 percent at Parkview. Some students will continue in self – contained programs elsewhere within the HWDSB so the graduation rate of eligible students currently attending at Mountain Secondary School for 2017 will be 71%.

Ontario's government has declared that the integration of students with special needs to be the norm in the province's schools through its Learning for All document. Over the past five years, we have implemented our K-2 strategy to make sure students are reading by the end of grade 1. We are providing supports much earlier and have reduced the number of self-contained classrooms for students with learning disabilities and mild intellectual delays from 41 to 31. As a system, we are creating the conditions for each student to learn in a more inclusive learning environment in their home community.

Mountain Secondary School Transition Process:
There are presently 68 students currently attending Mountain Secondary. We have worked to ensure that all of our students and families have been supported through this process. As we began our transitions meeting in the early fall, representatives from our composite schools were right beside us in working to develop the appropriate plan to support a welcoming transition into the spring of 2017. Beginning in October 2016 the home schools have worked with Mountain Secondary staff including administration, learning resource, guidance and student success to ensure that all of our students and families have been supported through this process. Staff from all schools have been learning and sharing best practices to meet the needs of the students who currently attend Mountain Secondary including programming, course accommodations and modifications and understanding the learner profile of our students. Students have been visiting the new school they will attend in the fall with parents and Mountain staff to ensure smooth transitions. A detailed student profile and individual transition plan have been created for every student moving to their home school. As we began our transitions meeting in the early fall a representative from our composite schools were right beside us in working to develop the appropriate plan to support a

welcoming transition into the spring of 2017.

The plan for these students is outlined in the table below:

# of Students	Destination
4	- moving out of the HWDSB - had been placed in a program with a community partner and the program was relocated in January 2017 - these students will be graduating with their Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC)
35 Students will graduate in June 2017	**6** have already transitioned into the Community Integration through Co-Operative Education Program (CICE) at Mohawk College * **5** more will begin CICE in September 2017 **6** additional graduates have been accepted into The Career Pathways Program at Mohawk College ** for September 2017 **18** graduates headed towards the workplace and community extensive work has been done through co-operative education experiences and connecting families to community agencies like Developmental Services Ontario and the Ontario Disability Support Program
30 Students will continue to be part of the HWDSB next year	**2** students will continue in a self-contained classroom in the HWDSB similar to their current program at Mountain Secondary **8** students will continue in a self- contained classrooms based on system IPRC's completed to ensure we meet their individual needs in all areas of their development **20** students will be accommodated into programs already existing in our schools (Senior Support Programs, Co-Operative Education, smaller class sizes, specialized programming in literacy and numeracy, additional social and emotional supports are available to all students who require these supports in any of our secondary schools). | # of Students	Destination | |---|---| | 7 | MacNab | | 2 | Sir Winston Churchill | | 1 | Saltfleet | | 2 | Delta | | 6 | Sir John A Macdonald | | 1 | Sherwood | | 1 | Westdale |

* The CICE Program provides students who have intellectual disabilities and other significant learning challenges the opportunity to pursue a postsecondary education, develop skills to help prepare for employment, and experience college life

** This program will provide a supportive and empowering postsecondary pathway for those who may not otherwise have considered higher education for a variety of reasons. It will prepare our graduates for both job and educational opportunities and students will graduate with the requirements for admission to several other College programs.

EXECUTIVE REPORT TO
PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: **PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

FROM: **Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education**

DATE: **Thursday, June 1, 2017**

PREPARED BY: **Brandy Doan, Manager of Evidence-Based Education Services Team (E-BEST)**
Peter Joshua, Executive Superintendent of Leadership and Learning

RE: **Identifying High Needs Schools – A Risk and Asset Model Approach**

Action ☐   **Monitoring x**

Background:

HWDSB like other Canadian school boards are motivated beyond obligation to ensure we are providing the best possible quality educational experiences for all students. For many HWDSB students who are dealing with the challenges associated with low socio-economic circumstances, this premise is even more vital. These students are more likely to be Indigenous, racialized, recent immigrants, have disabilities, or be living in a lone-parent family (People for Education, 2013). Compromised learning pathways translates to difficulty with post-secondary routes and subsequently reduced employment opportunities (Banarjee, 2016).

High needs schools are often plagued with low rates of achievement on standardized tests, and lower than average graduation rates. Students in these communities are less likely to be prepared for school in Kindergarten, and these early learning gaps in literacy and numeracy continue to grow with cascading effects on graduation rates, and meaningful post-secondary destinations (Guhn, Janus, & Hertzman, 2007). Schools are proposed to be sociodemographic equalizers where disadvantaged or vulnerable students can gain access to supports, relationships and resources (Quinn, Cooc, McIntyre & Gomez, 2016). Given HWDSB's mission is to "empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world" this work is foundational to our Annual Plan.

There are a number of factors that contribute the overall success of a school in addressing achievement gaps. According to the District Effectiveness Framework, school districts that are characterized as "strong" have broadly shared missions, visions and goals, clear instructional practices and professional development programs as well as comprehensive approaches to leadership development for example (Leithwood, 2011a). School conditions such as high academic expectations, the nature of the disciplinary climate, safe and orderly environments or how much impact staff they have with the students, and the use of instructional time can predict achievement (Hannah & Lester, 2009; Leithwood, 2011b; Grissom, Rubin, Neumerski, Cannata, Drake, Goldring & Schuermann, 2017).

In sum, school communities that have a higher proportion of students dealing with the multiple challenges associated with low socio-economic conditions, it is critical that HWDSB has a firm understanding of each schools' available assets and needs. When we know the assets and needs of each school we can then make evidence-based decisions about delivering targeted educational interventions and allocate resources appropriately. A deep understanding of our school communities can give us the best chance to support our vulnerable HWDSB students and eliminate possible achievement gaps.

Rationale:

In order to identify a high need school, we must consider both internal and external factors that are unique to each learning community. Externally, we need to understand the demographic variables inherent to a specific geographic location. By acknowledging the external factors that exacerbate student achievement, we can liaise with our community partners in supporting the communities to bolster a vulnerable school. Internally, we need to identify what factors support a successful school, assess potential gaps, and then through an asset-based approach, begin to provide specific structures and resources to address existing inequities.

External Learning Opportunity Index to Identify Risk for High Needs Schools

Currently, HWDSB employs the Learning Opportunity Index (LOI) to identify high need schools from an external perspective. The LOI is a mathematical model that combines several sources of community data to collectively describe the demographics around each school community. The LOI model includes data such as the median family income from the 2006 Canadian Census, and academic performance from previous EQAO assessments. HWDSB currently uses the LOI to identify which school communities are in the most at-risk neighbourhoods. We will be updating the data in this model to include 2016 Census Data, and we will be including the data from the Early Developmental Instrument (EDI). The EDI is a province-wide population level assessment that evaluates every five-year old student's developmental readiness in five global domains (Figure 1). The five domains are physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, cognitive and language ability, communication and general knowledge ability. The EDI identifies if students have a vulnerability on one or more domain (Guhn, et al., 2007). The EDI is collected every three years. The EDI is a population-based standardized assessment of developmental readiness for school that both provides HWDSB with a provincial comparator, which also allows us to identify communities with a high number of vulnerable children by geographical location.

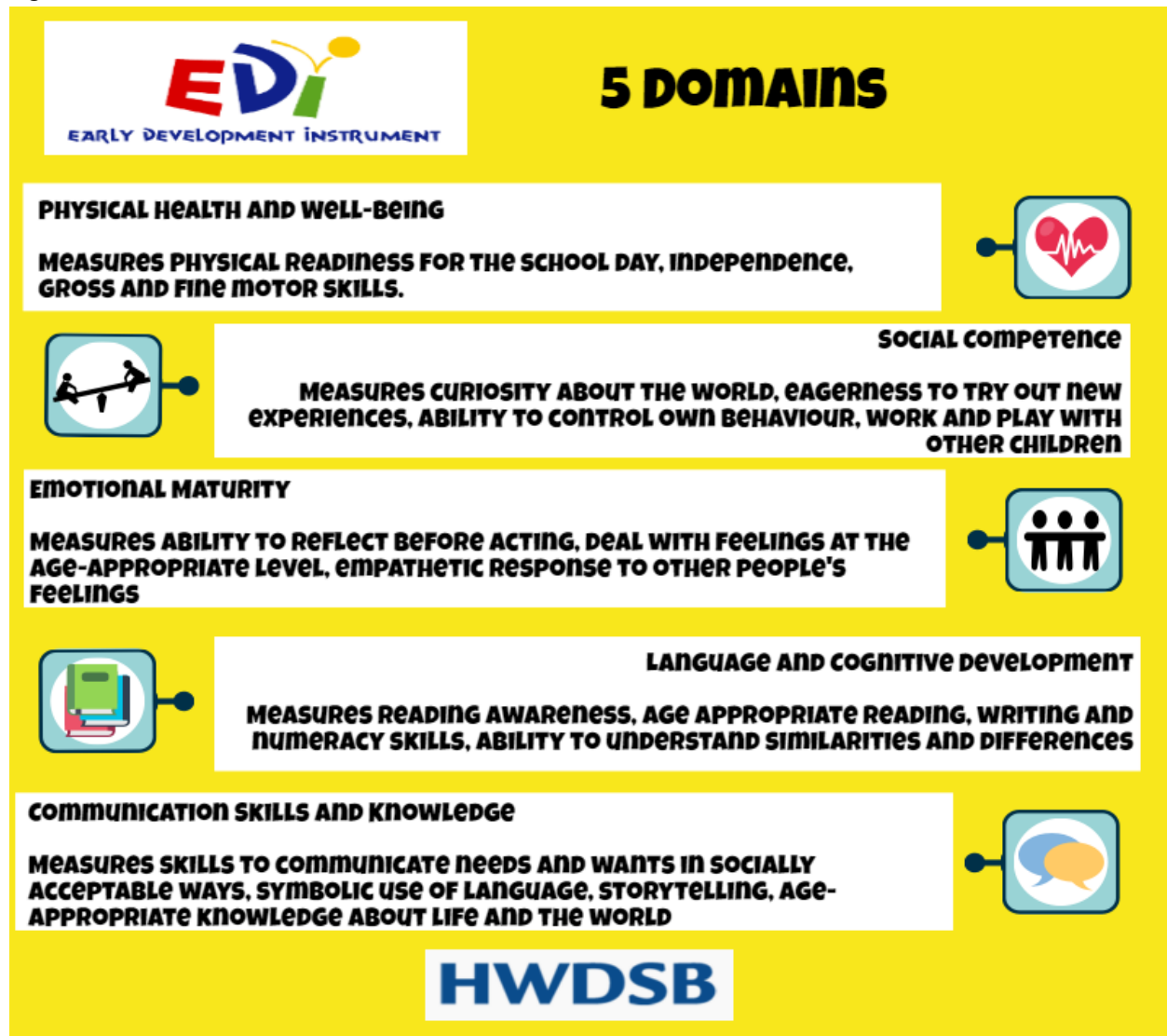Internal School Asset Index in Identifying High Needs Schools

Theoretically, HWDSB ought to have more influence over internal factors that are operating within a school community. We currently collect student, staff and parent data to indicate how safe, inclusive, engaged, and connected individuals feel about a particular school through Positive Climate surveys. There are causal links between school climate assessments and academic performance indicating that perceptual data like this is an important determinant for decision-making (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner & Wrabel, 2016). We are starting to analyze student and staff attendance data in relation to the climate survey data in order to identify patterns in absenteeism in our schools (Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017). Internal variables about school conditions such as leadership, academic expectations of the staff, and alignment of the School Annual Plans with the Board Annual Plan also need to be included and collected as contributing assets.

Benefits:

Our new comprehensive model to identify high needs schools focuses on both internal and external variables. We will be able to use additional evidence to help us examine observed versus expected achievement, i.e., which schools are performing higher or lower than expected. We can track school progress systematically and intentionally over time with a consistent metric about each school community's progress, assets and needs. Implementing targeted program supports can then be monitored for impacts and alignment with board's Annual Plan. As we analyze the available evidence, we can make evidence-based decisions about what structures we need to put in place to make meaningful changes where they are needed.

In conclusion, to identify high needs schools we will include both an external LOI and the internal school assets index to provide HWDSB with consistent data for making decisions about funding and programming allocations. We also expect that through the identification of high needs schools, we can help our community partners to allocate additional resources and supports to neighbourhoods of high need school communities.

Figure 1. The EDI Five Domains

5 DOMAINS

PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

MEASURES PHYSICAL READINESS FOR THE SCHOOL DAY, INDEPENDENCE, GROSS AND FINE MOTOR SKILLS.

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

MEASURES CURIOSITY ABOUT THE WORLD, EAGERNESS TO TRY OUT NEW EXPERIENCES, ABILITY TO CONTROL OWN BEHAVIOUR, WORK AND PLAY WITH OTHER CHILDREN

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

MEASURES ABILITY TO REFLECT BEFORE ACTING, DEAL WITH FEELINGS AT THE AGE-APPROPRIATE LEVEL, EMPATHETIC RESPONSE TO OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS

LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

MEASURES READING AWARENESS, AGE APPROPRIATE READING, WRITING AND NUMERACY SKILLS, ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

MEASURES SKILLS TO COMMUNICATE NEEDS AND WANTS IN SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE WAYS, SYMBOLIC USE OF LANGUAGE, STORYTELLING, AGE-APPROPRIATE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LIFE AND THE WORLD

HWDSB

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