



Program Committee

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Virtual Meeting – will be posted online the following day
Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board
20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558
Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

AGENDA: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Elementary Focus Programs Review
4. Safe Schools Action Plan 2021 – 2023 (part of the Positive Culture & Well-Being Priority)
5. Adjournment



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: Tuesday, September 21st, 2021

PREPARED BY: Sue Dunlop, Associate Director of Education, Learning Services
Bill Torrens, Superintendent of Student Achievement, Program

RE: Elementary Focus Programs Review

Action X

Monitoring

Recommended Action

That a review of Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Elementary Focus Programs be conducted during the academic year 2021-22.

Rationale

A review of Elementary Focus Programs is a part of the implementation of the [HWDSB Equity Action Plan](#), which communicates the HWDSB's commitment "to the principles of equity through inclusive programs, curriculum, services and operations with a mission to empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world." As well, the Focus Programs are also due for a review under the Elementary Program Strategy.

The review will focus on whether each program's mandate, practices, and procedures align with the outcomes of the Equity Action Plan and continue to meet the guiding principles and viability criteria outlined in the Elementary Program Strategy. It may result in recommendations regarding the future of the programs.

Each program will be reviewed individually. Key considerations for the review may include but are not limited to the following:

- Does the program underserve any population of students, and is it accessible and welcoming to all HWDSB students?
- How do the program's practices reflect and respond to the diversity of students, staff, and the community?
- Does the program maintain its original intent /mandate?
- Does the program have sufficient student enrolment to assign a teacher?
- How is the Ontario Curriculum is embedded in the program's delivery model?
- What is the feasibility of maintaining the program's on-going operating costs, including fees to external organizations?
- Can exemplary program delivery and sustainability be continued?

Through the review process, the following data may be collected and analyzed:

- Student demographic data (e.g., enrollment, demographics, etc.);
- Student achievement data (e.g., grades, EQAO, etc.);
- Stakeholder perception data (e.g., Community, parent, staff, and student voice);
- Program data (e.g., admission criteria, programming, etc.);
- Financial data (e.g., funding, costs, etc.).

Executive Council will act as the review's steering committee and a working group will be struck to conduct the review. That working group will collect the data, engage stakeholder, and contribute to a June 2022 report to the Program Committee.

A review process for secondary programs will occur in 2022-23.

Background

The Elementary Program Strategy's guiding principles are:

1. All elementary schools provide equity of access and outcome;
2. All elementary schools offer a balance of evidence-based and innovative instructional practices;
3. We will work toward a preferred structure of K-8 in our schools while recognizing local parent, student, and community needs;
4. All elementary schools be accessible and include flexible and specialized learning environments;
5. All elementary schools intentionally build parent and community engagement to support our students;
6. All elementary schools provide core programs and some identified schools across the system will also offer focused programs;
7. All elementary schools will be safe, inclusive, welcoming environments.

Elementary Focus Programs are optional programs that had a specific criterion attached to them when they originally opened. Students from across the board can apply to enroll in a focus program, and may be accepted if space is available and they meet the criteria. Transportation is not provided for focus programs. Under the Elementary Program Strategy, there is no plan to expand the number of, or enrolment in, these programs. The programs may be relocated if space in the host school is needed for in-catchment students.

As outlined in the Elementary Program Strategy, a review is required every two years (delayed due to job-action and COVID-19), and the programs need to meet the following Viability Criteria for Maintaining Optional Programs:

- The program maintains the original intent /mandate of the program;
- There is sufficient student enrolment to assign a teacher;
- The Ontario Curriculum is embedded in the delivery model;
- On-going operating costs, including fees to external organizations, are financially feasible to maintain;
- The program continues to provide exemplary program delivery and sustainability.

The following table outlines each program, its location, and its public description at:

<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/programs/all/>.

HWDSB Elementary Focus Programs

Program	Location	Public Description
Hockey program	Tapleystown	The HWDSB Hockey Canada Skills Academy provides an opportunity for students to participate in the Grade 7-8 Hockey Canada Skills Curriculum, which will improve and develop overall fitness and hockey skills during the school day. The program values student academic achievement within its structured, organized, active learning environment. Male and female students in the program grow through specific training on and off the ice.
Mandarin Language Transition Program	Cootes Paradise	The Mandarin Transition Language Program offers students in Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 programming using their first language. Students access curriculum content effectively by using Mandarin to clarify concepts and develop increased proficiency in English.
Sage	Strathcona	SAGE is built around family participation and community building. Teachers and families work in cooperation, using innovative teaching methods to deliver the Ontario curriculum in an interactive, child-centred manner that emphasizes global education, arts, and recreation. Students can continue this program at SAGE Quest at the middle-school level.
Sagequest	Ryerson	Sage Quest is an innovative specialized learning program. The goal of Sage Quest is to foster a culture of inquiry amidst a community of care, with a particular focus on critical thinking and the global issues facing our world today. Our successful students are motivated and committed to learning about justice in the world around them; collaborating with peers; achieving their

		academic potential, and; being kind community members to everyone in their school community.
Sports Academy and Basketball Program	R.A. Riddell	<p>The Sport Academy at the middle-school level provides a supportive learning environment and flexible timetabling to allow students enrolled in the program the opportunity to significantly advance their athletic skills while achieving a high level of academic success. Students in Sport Academy benefit from a strong partnership with McMaster University. This elementary program can lead to the Sport Academy at Westmount secondary and to a Health and Wellness Specialist High Skills Major.</p> <p>Offered at R.A. Riddell, the Sport Academy features two Specialized Learning Programs, The Basketball Academy and High Potential Athlete Program. This innovative learning program was created in 2006 to engage HWDSB student athletes by meeting their unique academic and athletic needs. Student athletes from all over the district are welcome to apply to the R.A. Riddell Sport Academy.</p> <p>The Riddell Basketball Focus is an outreach program that falls under the umbrella of the HWDSB Sport Academy. Designed to meet the needs of the highly motivated player in Grade 6, 7 and 8, the program focuses upon the development of a solid fundamental skill base necessary to grow in the game. The progressions in training will be in line with the Long Term Athletic Development Model utilized by Basketball Canada.</p>
Sports Academy	Hillcrest	Closed due to low enrollment.



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: September 21, 2021

PREPARED BY: Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent on Special Assignment

RE: Safe Schools Action Plan 2021 – 2023 (part of the Positive Culture & Well-Being Priority)

Action

Monitoring X

Background:

In April 2021, trustees received an overview of the *Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Safe Schools Action Plan* which was developed from the *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel's Report (Report)* ([Building Healthy Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment](#)). This *Monitoring Report* will provide an update on progress within the plan.

Paramount within the *Report* was an emphasis on authentic and transparent engagement of community with HWDSB. To support that, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to responding to the voices of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community. This means:

- a relentless focus on building positive and inclusive cultures in all classrooms and schools – a place where everyone belongs, everyone is safe and everyone achieves;
- creating learning environments where student identity and voice are centered – students' lived experiences are honoured and an essential part of learning;
- relationships are positive, supportive, caring and kind;
- creating structures to gather, listen and respond to student voice – student voice must inform school and board plans;
- safety is paramount and incidents of bullying are addressed with active involvement of students and families – this includes the student who experiences bullying, the student who displays bullying behavior and the student who witnesses bullying.

We will do this by:

- being transparent with students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community – Implementation Plans, Outcomes Measures and Timelines related to the *Safe Schools Action Plan*, will be shared and updated regularly;
- creating structures to ensure student, parent/guardian/caregiver, staff and community voice inform school and board plans and that these plans are publicly shared and reported on;
- improved engagement with attention to working with those impacted by decisions;
- building relationships and trust through our actions – listening and responding and
- being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being.

HWDSB appreciates the support of the Hamilton Community Foundation as we explore and introduce new ways to work alongside, and in collaboration with, students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community.

Immediate Actions from the Report (Phase 1):

Area of Focus	Progress Monitoring
1. Reflect upon findings and recommendations and share widely	Complete – <i>Safe Schools Pop-Up</i> sessions held in the spring. Three sessions – students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community.
2. Create lead staff position	Complete
3. Coordinate efforts – align with other student well-being initiatives and work such as, Equity Action Plan and Mental Health Strategy	Ongoing – Aligning work through Safe Schools Structures and the introduction of Reimagining Wellness and On The Horizon: Moving Towards Safer and More Inclusive Classrooms , during the first six weeks of the school year
4. Make a commitment – develop commitment statement, establish core organizational values, establish timelines and clear, measurable outcomes	Ongoing – work to be completed through Structures. Core organizational values to be determined through the Board Strategic Planning process through the Governance Committee.
5. Ensure specialized supports for students affected by bullying	Ongoing – new role – Positive Culture and Well-Being Support Child and Youth Care Practitioner (5) Youth Facilitator Re-defined focus – Elementary Student Success Teachers and Racialized Equity Consultant Nurturing Safer Schools Pilot
6. Increase supervision outside of the classroom – pursue creative solutions	Phase 2 – Work Group focus area
7. Collect and widely report on school-level data on bullying	Ongoing – Middle Years Development Instrument to be administered in late October. Suspension data collected and will be shared as part of Safe Schools Data Reporting (February)
8. Design and distribute bullying awareness materials	Ongoing – initial material to be shared in November during Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week – November 21 – 27, 2021
9. Form a high-level steering committee with wide representation to oversee implementation	Ongoing – part of engagement structures
10. Form a high-level steering committee with wide representation to oversee implementation	Ongoing – partnership with Hamilton Community Foundation for development based upon research and promising practices

COORDINATE EFFORTS

Safe Schools Action Plan Structures

The engagement structures have been informed by student, parent/guardian/caregiver and community voice as shared through the *Report* and by one-on-one meetings with students, parents/guardians/caregivers, community partners, HWDSB union leadership and school administrators. Details on structures are included in *Appendix B*.



Reimagining Wellness

The Pandemic has had a different impact on everyone – we have all been in the same storm, but have had very different experiences. At the same time as COVID-19 has spread through the community, incidences of racism, hate and violence have increased. The goal *Reimagining Wellness* is the prioritizing of wellness through a system-wide approach impacting every learning space and supporting the fostering of community & team building, physical activation and social emotional skill development for all students and staff.

Reimagining Wellness activities are designed to ease students and staff into the school year with an intentional focus on three areas of wellness: community and team-building, physical activation, and social-emotional skill development. Developed by school-based staff, this resource is intended to support a successful start that focuses on developing and maintaining healthy relationships which is key in bullying prevention.



Community
& Team Building



Physical
Activation



Social Emotional
Skill Development

- ✓ **Overall Goal:** students and staff feeling safe and supported to begin the 2021/2022 school year with a successful start
- ✓ **Approach:** Educators and students in each division will engage in daily activities; three times a day for thirty days. (Elementary 3 x 30 minutes; Secondary 3 x 10 minutes)
- ✓ Activities selected within the categories of Community & Team Building, Physical Activation and Social Emotional Skill Development.

Serving an important function for both students and staff, the benefits of this dedicated time each day include but not are not limited to:

- ✓ Developing a sense of identity and belonging
- ✓ Recognizing sources of stress and coping with challenges
- ✓ Thinking critically and creatively
- ✓ Expressing their feelings and understanding the feelings of others
- ✓ Fostering a sense of optimism and hope
- ✓ Aligns with curriculum and is foundational to learning

The *Reimagining Wellness* approach will continue and evolve to include a focus on character education.

On the Horizon: Moving Towards Safer & More Inclusive Classrooms

To support staff in engaging in conversations that come into the classroom –planned and unplanned – *On the Horizon: Moving Towards Safer & More Inclusive Classrooms* resource has been developed. The *Horizons* document refers to the challenging issues that may arise in any school subject.

These may include:

- Discussion of social justice issues connected to a person’s identity e.g., racism, classism, ableism, sexism/misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, faith, and many more.
- Presenting historical and cultural events through the lens of colonialism. Be aware that many issues are presented through a historical lens rather than understanding them as contemporary and ongoing (e.g., Indigenous issues/experiences, slavery, and many more).

While difficult conversations have continued to increase as a result of world events in classrooms, staff often struggle with how to facilitate these conversations in ways that feel safe and inclusive. While staff are struggling with these conversations, this also means that students and families are feeling the effects as well. As part of their work in support of students, social workers were often asked how to support these conversations in a safe way. This resource/toolbox supports that need.

SPECIALIZED SUPPORTS FOR SAFE SCHOOLS

New Staffing Supports

Positive Culture and Well-Being Child and Youth Care Practitioners

Five newly created "Positive Culture and Well-Being Child and Youth Care Practitioner" positions to support schools and administrators in the development and implementation of a range of bullying prevention, intervention and responsive strategies. This work will be done collaboratively as an integral member of an interdisciplinary educator team within each Family of Schools and could include: Principals, Vice Principals, Teachers, Educational Assistants, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, and other system resource staff.

Youth Facilitator

The role of the *Student Advisory Youth Facilitator* will include planning for and facilitating monthly *Student Advisory Committee* meetings. This role was developed in response to student voice which indicated youth respond best when led by youth. This will involve guiding discussions between the group members, participating in sharing student voice and perspective from the lens of lived experience. The facilitator will work collaboratively with others to review resources and documents being developed by Working Groups for student voice/input. The Facilitator will also organize and develop plans with the *Student Advisory Committee* related to the development of “Safe Schools Pop Ups” and a “Safe Schools Drop Box” in terms of platform and/or medium.

Refocused Staffing Supports

K-12 Safe Schools and Racial Equity Consultant

This role supports the implementation of the Board's *Strategic Directions, Equity Action Plan* and the *Safe Schools Action Plan* by building sustainable capacity with school and system staff regarding safe and inclusive schools, including Bill 13 (Accepting Schools Act) through explicit, integrated culturally responsive approaches. The consultant works collaboratively as a member of a multidisciplinary team to assess and develop safe and inclusive reporting structures as well as support the development of clear communication and awareness strategies. This role will begin to translate and coordinate the development and distribution of bullying awareness teaching and learning resources and supports that are aligned with the *Safe Schools Action Plan* (i.e. supervision, stopping hallway harassment, Bullying Prevention and Intervention Week, student safety planning, school bullying prevention and intervention planning).

Elementary Student Success Teachers

The Elementary Student Success Teacher (ESST) role has existed for several years and traditionally supports students in grades 7 and 8 in the transition from elementary to secondary school. ESST's have also played an important part of supporting Positive Culture and Well-Being in their schools. They have done this by informally building capacity with staff, providing direct support to students and families regarding effective academic, transition, pathways, and well-being programming and practices. This role will now formalize and enhance many of the supports ESST's have undertaken with respect to supporting a "Whole-School" approach to bullying prevention and intervention. This will include supporting Administrators in their responding efforts within schools, establishing Safe, Inclusive School Teams, developing bullying prevention and intervention plans based on identified school needs and supporting student safety planning in cases where bullying has been identified. ESSTs work with one or two High Priority Schools.

Peer Victimization Supports

Nurturing Safer Schools

Nurturing Safer Schools: A Social Work Intervention is a six-session therapeutic protocol for grade 6-8 students, who have engaged in or been impacted by peer-victimization (i.e. bullying). The protocol, evidence informed and developed by HWDSB staff, is informed by Cognitive Behavioural Therapy and is designed to be delivered on an individual basis in schools by the school Social Worker. The sessions include psychoeducation, cognitive coping skills, behavioural coping strategies & healthy relationship skills. The primary outcomes for participants with concerning behaviour and impacted students are decreased feelings of distress, the development of positive relationships with self and others, and increased feelings of connection to the school community. Secondary goals include increased empathy, a sense of hope and lasting behavioural changes. The program maintains the same intervention goals for both sets of participants, however the pathway to achieving these differ based whether the student has impacted others through their use of peer-victimization or whether the student has been impacted directly. *Nurturing Safer Schools* aims to start as a pilot in 8-10 elementary schools in the fall of 2021. Further development involves curriculum for supporting and fostering safer bystander interventions.

Appendix A

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN 2021 - 2023

MISSION

We empower students to learn and grow to their full potential in a diverse world.

COMMITMENT

We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation.

OVERVIEW

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to responding to the voices of students, parents/guardians/caregivers, staff and community as shared within that report. This means:

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- building relationships and trust through our actions – listening and responding and
- being accountable at the school and system-level for improvement in student safety and well-being.

The *Recommendations* and *Action Steps* within the Panel's Report align with the *Positive Culture and Well-Being* focus (We will build student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies and supportive relationships) in the Board Annual Plan.

HWDSB 2021 – 2022 Board Annual Plan

Goal: Improve the well-being of all students and staff and close the gap for those currently and historically underserved.

Target: At least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities.

STRATEGIES:

Investing in People:

1. Provide differentiated professional learning on **culturally relevant and responsive** pedagogy, **Indigenous Cultural Safety** and Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild @HWDSB with a **focus on relationships and conditions** impacting learners who are historically underserved.
2. Provide differentiated professional learning to system leaders on human rights, systems of **oppression, privilege, and anti-racism** and implications within the learning and working environments.

Leveraging Effective Practices:

1. Implement differentiated strategies to provide targeted and enhanced support to **Black, Indigenous, Racialized and Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ students and students requiring special education supports and/or services**.
2. Implement **Emotion Coaching** (i.e. Validation), to enhance **student-staff relationships** (i.e. caring adult).
3. Implement **Employment Equity Action Plan**.

Refining Measures of Progress:

1. Develop and implement the tools required to collect student identity-based data as part of the **Student Census**, and updated annually.
2. **Develop and implement a Safe Schools Action Plan to respond to the recommendations from the Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel.**

The *Building Health Relationships and an Inclusive, Caring Learning Environment Report* identifies 11 broad recommendations based on advice from experts and findings from the community consultation and survey. Each recommendation has a number of recommended action steps which provide the basis for the **Safe Schools Action Plan**.

Students

Recommendation #1: Increase Student ownership and seek out and listen to student perspectives

Parents/Guardians/Caregivers

Recommendation #2: Involve parents, guardians and caregivers in bullying prevention and response in meaningful ways.

Schools

Recommendation #3: Develop multi-tiered supports and programming

Recommendation #4: Support schools so they can establish their own bullying prevention and intervention plans

Recommendation #5: Examine special education practices from a student-centred learning perspective

Recommendation #6: Review policies and procedures from equity, anti-racism and anti-oppression perspectives

Recommendation #7: Ensure policies and procedures are followed consistently

HWDSB Organization – System Level

Recommendation #8: Set the foundation for a culture of learning

Recommendation #9: Strengthen the leadership skills needed for culture change

Hamilton Community

Recommendation #10: Work with a wide range of community partners

Ministry of Education

Recommendation #11: Ask the Ministry of Education for support

DRAFT

Appendix B – Safe Schools Structures

Membership should reflect those who have experienced the greatest incidences of bullying including, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, Gender Diverse, students with accessing special education supports.

“Lived Experience” refers to an individual who has experienced bullying, demonstrated bullying behaviour, witnessed bullying or is committed to addressing bullying in schools

Working Groups Areas of Focus (10 areas) – students, parents/guardians/caregivers, community, staff, unions, administrators – meet as needed to respond to the Action Items in the *Safe Schools Action Plan* – co-chair structure – representation from *Advisory Tables* and engagement with *Advisory Tables*

- Student Voice – system and school
- School Improvement Planning
- Bullying Response
 - Commitment Statement
 - Materials
 - Supports including Student Success
 - Reporting
 - Interactive resources
 - Responding
 - Staff Training
 - Documentation
- Supervision
- Character Education
- Special Education
- Bullying Policy and Procedures
- Data – collecting, reporting, accountability, transparency, tools
- Privacy
- Performance Monitoring

Advisory Tables

- *Student Advisory Table* – students from existing HWDSB student voice networks/structures and students from the broader HWDSB community. Participate in Working Groups and provide advice to all other tables. Represent the *Student Advisory* on the *Steering Committee*.
 - Co-chaired by students or recent graduates with lived experience
 - 2 students from each HWDSB student table/network
 - CC:ROSE
 - Racialized
 - Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+
 - Student Senate
 - Student trustees
 - 2 students from HWDSB or recent graduates accessing special education supports/services
 - students from each FOS – lived experience related to bullying (number to be confirmed based upon interest)

- **Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Advisory Table** – parent/guardian/caregivers from existing *HWDSB Advisory Committees* – determined by members of the existing structure – provides a two-way link between the committees. Additional representation outside of the existing structures. Participate in Working Groups and provide advice to all other tables. Represent *Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Advisory* on *Steering Committee*.
 - Parent Involvement Committee
 - Special Education Advisory Committee
 - Home and School Association
 - First Nation, Métis and Inuit Advisory
 - Equity and Human Rights Advisory
 - Faith Community Advisory
 - Rural Schools Advisory
 - French as a Second Language Advisory
 - Parent/Guardian/Caregivers with lived experience related to bullying (number to be confirmed based on interest)
- **Community Advisory Table** - participate in Working Groups and provide advice to all other tables. Represent *Community Advisory* on *Steering Committee* (number to be confirmed based on interest)
 - Grassroots bullying prevention/advocacy organizations
 - Community organization seats (focus on organizations providing direct support/service to Indigenous, Black, racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and students accessing special education supports and services)

Organizational Advisory Table (OAT) – representation from each Working Group, unions and leadership from departments that impact all areas (e.g. Communications, Mental Health, Research/Privacy). Focus on operationalizing of strategies and alignment with other Board strategies.

- Meet every 2 weeks initially then moves to meeting monthly
- Alignment with other Board strategies
- Direct advice and connection to the strategies – linked with Working Groups
- Seek advice from Advisory Tables
- Co-Chair by SOSA on Special Assignment/System Principal of Safe Schools and one other member

Safe Schools Steering Committee – includes students, parents/guardians/caregivers, community, staff, unions, partners, and bullying advocacy group representation. Supports monitoring implementation of the *Safe Schools Action Plan*.

- Meets 3 times a year
- All members connected to OAT, Advisory or a Working Group
- Co-chaired by non-HWDSB staff

Ongoing Community Connections

Safe Schools Pop Up – Pop up as necessary – engagement opportunity – updates on progress and input into areas identified as needing broader input – open to the community – no limitation on members

Safe Schools Drop Box – opportunity to provide ongoing feedback virtually through text or spoken structures – open to the community

Community-Led Independent Table Under Development – advise on implementation at the highest level – from Recommendations