

AGENDA: 6:00 pm

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Review of the Program Committee Workplan
5. [Indigenous Education](#)
6. [Nutrition Strategy Update](#)
7. [Ministry Student Achievement Action Plan](#)
8. Adjournment



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

April 22, 2025

Indigenous Education Report

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead

In consultation with: Kayla Jenkins, IEC Co-Chair
 Rebecca Cove, IEC Co-Chair
 Elizabeth Doxtater, Auntie, Critical Friend, Witness, Advisor and Day School Survivor
 Nokomis Martina Ozawamick, Ojibwe/Odawa, Elder,
 Anisinaabemowin Translator & Protector
 Tehahenteh Miller, Kanienkeha, Indigenous Knowledge Guardian
 Lyndsy Baillie, System Principal, Restorative Educational LeaderSHIP

Recommendation:

That the Indigenous Education report on the Indigenous Education Policy and the Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) be received.

Background:

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Board of Trustees approved the new [Indigenous Education Policy](#) in June 2024, with the provision to “polish the chain” on an annual basis. The Indigenous Education Policy has been described as a critical learning resource, which offers insights to local Indigenous Knowledges, original agreements and guiding principles of the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, the original caretakers of these lands as outlined in the Sewatokwà:tshera - One Dish wampum treaty agreement. The Policy also guides the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan](#) (IECSAP) 2021-2025.

This year marks the 10th year anniversary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s (2015) [Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future](#). The IECSAP was co-created by-and-for the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC), the Indigenous governing body, which is comprised of students, parents and guardians, staff, members of the local Indigenous community of Hamilton, and host nation communities located between two important rivers:

...the Credit River is fed by Lake Ontario at the location now known as the city of Mississauga, the original village site of the Mississaugas of the Credit; and The Grand River is the marker for the

Haldimand Tract as outlined in the Haldimand Deed of 1784 , which promises to protect 6 miles deep on each side of the Grand River, for the people of the Five Nations, from the ‘mouth to the source’. “Between two rivers” translates as: Edooying mijoonoon niizh ziibiin (Ojibwe); Tsi nya'tekyátere ne tekahyónhake (Mohawk) ([Taken from the Indigenous Education Policy](#)).

The spirit and intent of the IECSAP is that it is an embodiment of the IEC’s reconciliation action plan and vision for Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness, as outlined in the Indigenous Cultural Safety Report and the [Restorative Journey: Indigenous Educational Wellness](#) (OCT) document. The IECSAP is a reconciliation action plan, as it is intended to have both short and long-term goals to correct the legacies of Canada’s Indian Residential Schools and Federal Indian Day Schools for the critical advancement of systematic change and transformation. The IECSAP also served a critical purpose in helping to inform the vision of *Growing Together*, along with the pillars of the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) 2023-2028.

As per the Kahswéntha (Two Row Wampum Treaty), the MYSP and the IECSAP journey in parallel, guided by peace, friendship and respect. MYSP reaffirms the IECSAP in “Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation” as a Strategic Direction, demonstrating the institutional commitment and *will* of HWDSB’s Board of Trustees, and senior administration. Together, we “honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system”. Through the processes of ethical engagement and ongoing consistent consultation with the Indigenous Education Lead who serves as the senior: Epenmandaagaazod - Shakowennakará:tats (raise their voices), and members of the IEC, HWDSB’s MYSP also serves as a reconciliation action plan. It realizes the necessity for an *equal right to education* for-and-by Indigenous learners, families and communities, honouring the distinct Indigenous nationhood status, while benefiting all Treaty Partners during this monumental time of reconciliation in education: *Every Child Matters*.

Status:

The following report outlines our work on the [Indigenous Education Policy](#) and the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan](#) (IECSAP). We are approaching the first-year anniversary of the Indigenous Education Policy, while nearing the fifth and “final” year of the IECSAP (2021-2025). As the IECSAP is intended to build upon lasting and systemic change as a reconciliation action plan, it is up for review and revitalization. It is important for us to establish a greater environmental, historical and contemporary context surrounding Indigenous Education and the implications for Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation at HWDSB. Please refer to the “Broader Historical & Contemporary Context” subsection below to learn more.

Indigenous Education Policy Update

The Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) met three times this year, including a gathering on March 27–28 to "polish the chain" on the Indigenous Education Policy. Staff shared their efforts in advancing professional learning, while the community provided valuable feedback. The following is a summary of progress, insights, and next steps:

Highlights

- Policy Approved: Unanimously accepted by HWDSB Board of Trustees in June 2024.
- Professional Learning: All major learning events since fall have been anchored in the Policy, using it as a foundational resource rooted in local Indigenous knowledge and principles.
- Leadership Engagement: Executive Council explored their roles in advancing the Policy as "Pillars of the Palisade," within their spheres of influence.
- Implementation: Consultant teams are embedding the Policy system-wide, beginning with foundational teachings about original agreements between Indigenous Nations and Treaty Partners.

Key Learnings

- The Policy has helped focus efforts and build internal capacity.
- Clearer communication is needed across departments about roles, responsibilities, and identifying systemic gaps in Indigenous inclusion.
- Sustainable change requires embedding practices beyond individual leadership.
- Cultural accuracy is critical when translating Indigenous knowledge into Western policy formats.
- Colonialism must be explicitly named—its absence reinforces harmful norms.
- Many non-Indigenous staff remain unaware of the Policy; treaty responsibilities must be better understood.
- Professional development should be layered, ongoing, and land-based.
- Indigenous staff carry a heavy burden ensuring safe, accurate cultural learning.

Next Steps

- Clarify and communicate guiding values more effectively.
- Define accountability and consequences for not upholding the Policy—particularly when harm occurs.
- Develop an Indigenous Critical Incident Response Process.
- Strengthen the "Action Section": specify responsible roles and highlight Indigenous Studies (N-line) courses.
- Make community engagement a measurable indicator.
- Explore a complementary Reconciliation Policy for Treaty Partners.
- Increase student voice in the Policy—potentially via a "Junior Reader" version.

- Offer training on Indigenous research methods and Ownership Control Access Possession - [OCAP](#) principles.

Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP)

Executive Summary – Reflection, Renewal, Revitalization

The Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP) is a legacy and reconciliation action plan, co-developed by and for the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC). Grounded in community, culture, and ceremony, the IECSAP serves as a living document for systemic transformation. As we move through a period of reflection and renewal, we honour the work accomplished across the Family Fires: **Language, Culture, Ceremony, Governance, and Territory**.

Language - Revillagize

Returning to the mindset of our Ancestors when they lived in ancient villages based on systems of reciprocity.

Accomplishments:

- Expansion of Indigenous Education Kahwà:tsire, Zaagi'idiwin, Family staffing.
- Strong elementary Mohawk language programming at Prince of Wales rooted in Haudenosaunee epistemology.
- Ongoing development of authentic and accountable practices with Treaty Partners.

Key Learnings:

- Urgent need for more certified Indigenous language teachers.
- We need to recognize and credential fluent speakers outside traditional certification.
- Curriculum must reflect Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee perspectives.
- Teachers need AQ courses on the Great Law to guide sensitive teachings.

Next Steps:

- Develop Language Nest programs.
- Create a writing system for Indigenous languages.
- Support fluent speakers in Professional Development and curriculum co-development.

Culture - Reclaim

We displace intergenerational shame, fear and trauma with our inherent intergenerational wellness as we reclaim our knowledges, pedagogies, cultures, languages and laws.

Accomplishments:

- Learning Nest Program supporting graduation and post-secondary transition.
- [NBE3](#) English Pilot implementation and Professional Learning Community (PLC) creation.
- Robust cross-departmental Pillar P.D. sessions and cultural initiatives.

Key Learnings:

- Culturally immersive programs improve outcomes and engagement.
- Educators need support with Indigenous pedagogies and assessment practices.
- P.D. must be continuous, relationship-based, and multidisciplinary.

Next Steps:

- Broaden implementation of NBE3 and introduce [NAC20](#) PLC.
- Build capacity with “Runners” in every school.
- Sustain ongoing professional learning into summer and fall terms.

Ceremony – Renew

Renew respectful relationships with treaty partners, reaffirming that our shared roles and responsibilities continue.

Accomplishments:

- SKENNEN Program offers a two-eyed seeing approach to wholistic health and well-being.
- Expansion of Ceremonial Family Fire with Elders, Aunties, Survivors, etc.
- Integration of Holy Days and Days of Significance.

Key Learnings:

- Two-eyed seeing is a powerful model for culturally grounded care.
- Growing Elder Endorsement Circles ensures ethical engagement.
- Communication around sacred days needs strengthening.

Next Steps:

- Strengthen promotion of programs like SKENNEN.
- Co-develop protocols for ceremonial days and sacred knowledge.
- Align ceremonial cycles with 13 Moons teachings.

Governance – Restore

Restore our original instructions to provide guidance and support to every learner to protect Mother Earth and to help the people

Accomplishments:

- Regular IEC and Family Fire meetings.
- Indigenous Student Governance structures (CC: ROSE, Shakowennakará:tats...).
- Integrated support for the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).

Key Learnings:

- Need for clearer policies around Indigenous Human Rights and Indigenous Cultural Safety.
- Systemic racism and policy misalignment must be addressed.
- Student voice is strong and growing in representation and impact.

Next Steps:

- Renew or create key policies around self-identification, ceremonies, vetting, data sovereignty, and credentialing lived experience, and Indigenous Education Standards.
- Improve coordination and implementation of CC:ROSE Parent Guardian Edition (PGE).
- Strengthen preschool-to-postsecondary pathways.
- Continue to uplift Indigenous student leadership and governance.

Territory – Celebrate

Celebrate accuracy, authenticity, and accountability to local/host Indigenous communities, by advancing Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness, while reconciling our roles as either Indigenous Peoples and/or treaty partners.

Accomplishments:

- 20th Anniversary of NYAWEH with Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg.
- Strengthened partnership with Hamilton Regional Indian Centre (SHAE Program).
- Staff training and ongoing implementation of the [Mocassin Identifier](#) Project.
- In friendship, continued land acknowledgment efforts with Treaty Partners.

Key Learnings:

- Clearer, more respectful contract language is needed to honour OCAP.
- Partnerships thrive with transparent, reciprocal communication.
- Need to better support cultural autonomy in community-driven programs.

Next Steps:

- Improve coordination and shared professional learning with partners.
- Decolonize contractual practices and language.
- Embed OCAP and Indigenous research principles in policy and practice.

Broader Historical & Contemporary Context

- We approach the 10th anniversary of the 2015 release of the TRC Final Report. We continue to untangle the trauma from what was historically implemented in Indigenous communities under the guise of education. The [Mohawk Institute](#) is located on Six Nations land, within the city limits of Brantford, and was opened in 1828 as a boy's school. It opened in 1831 and became Canada's longest running residential school, closing in 1970. During the residential school era, students were referred to as 'inmates' by Canadian officials. Many did not return home, while many carry the scars, and many others make the term 'survivor' arguable. We understand that silencing authentic Indigenous voice is historic and therefore systemic. More work is required.
- We also acknowledge this 6th anniversary of the 2019 release of the [Reclaiming Power and Place](#): The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, Two-Spirit+ (MMIWG2S+). The continuum of silenced, violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit+, should underscore the need for understanding, and implementing actionable steps for prevention, protection and community-building. This epidemic is so important to acknowledge that there is time dedicated to pause nationally for reflection twice annually on May 5th and October 4th.
- This year marks the six-year anniversary of when the 2019 class action lawsuit against Indian day school was announced. This part of our collective experience has been muted. Indian day school survivors are residential school students that were allowed to go home at night. The reserve system was designed to control the movement of Indigenous people, policed by the

RCMP. The schools within the Indian reserve system were guided by the same legislation as the residential school system.

- We acknowledge the 215 potential gravesites identified through ground penetrating radar in 2021, at the former Kamloops BC residential school site. This report was the first media coverage of unidentified graves at sites formerly used for residential schools, although Volume 4 of the Truth and Reconciliation Report was entitled, [“Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials”](#) released in 2015. It was not surprising for Indigenous communities, but our collective voices had again been silenced. For instance, in 1922 [Dr. Peter Bryce](#), the former chief medical officer for the Department of the Interior and the Department of Indian Affairs published [The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada](#), citing the conditions and astonishingly high death rates that he witnessed. His calls for change over decades were also muted.
- Legislative abuse such as the Indian Act 1876-present, and legislated genocide fostered and festered the intergenerational trauma that perpetuates as Indigenous children being over-represented in the child welfare system, higher rates of incarceration, and a higher dropout rate.
- Indigenous communities represent the highest national rates of youth suicide, many that can be attributed to this history of institutionalized racism, genocide, oppression, dispossession and systemic poverty. This is essential in understanding the stark trauma that many of us experienced and still carry.
- The outcome of our collective and shared experiences, called ‘intergenerational trauma’ is not recognized as a determinant of health by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- The current population of Indigenous students attending elementary school are the first generation of our children to not live under the genocidal residential school policy that targeted Indigenous children from 1831 until it was removed from the Indian Act in 2014.
- This means that as of 2025, the status-Indian students in grade 6 are the first generation of students who do not live under the threat of the residential school policy.
- HWDSB’s 2021-2022 [Disproportionality Data Report](#) findings helps us to understand how the education system is doing in serving distinct and diverse groups of students. Indigenous learners face the greatest disproportionalities and are the consistently over-represented group across all student outcomes including suspensions and expulsions, academic achievement, attendance and well-being. This harsh truth outlines evidence of the perpetuation of systemic oppression experienced by Indigenous learners and necessitates meaningful actions towards ethical community engagement to foster restorative Indigenous educational wellness across the system.
- We have also identified a sentiment of 'not belonging.' This manifests as some Indigenous parents and students placing zero value on the education system resulting in dropping out early (i.e. grades 6-8 non-attenders).
- While Indigenous Peoples in Canada only represent 5% of Canada’s total population, [Indigenous peoples and communities](#) are the fastest growing population (grew by 9.4%

between 2016 and 2021) and are also the youngest population in Canada (about 28% were under the age of 25 according to the 2021 Census). For this reason, it is important for us to shift traditional normative practices in schooling. We cannot be complacent with maintaining the status quo, business-as-usual, system, for the sake of efficiency, productivity, and comfortability. We need to take a deep look at the institutional practices that continue to reinforce harm, silence and target the most vulnerable populations.

- This increased Indigenous population is impacted by legislation changes in criteria for registration as a Status Indian. Meaning, a person needs documented proof of one registered great-grandparent to be registered as an Indian. With exception, this can limit the lived-experience narrative of who now can, by law, represent Indigenous community.
- Since there were Indigenous children who were lost in the system, Indigenous self-identification impacts these numbers. This also creates another discussion concerning Indigenous authenticity (i.e. [Buffy Ste Marie](#)).
- The Yellowhead institute shares ideas to highlight a troubling trend that has recently emerged: “[Pretendians and Publications](#)”, which threatens the integrity of Indigenous Studies. This work is “a call to action to more formally challenge the academy to address these harms – not just through policy enforcement, but by safeguarding Indigenous self-determination and communities themselves from exploitation...and championing the authenticity and dignity of Indigenous peoples”.
- Two facts that can alter the narrative are as follows:
 - Blend into this, the experiences of preceding and the current post WWII generations and the many and intentional disparages that were placed on Indigenous peoples, were not the lived experience of those born into the generations;
 - Generation X and Millennials. This increases the complexities to ‘repatriation’ of knowledge of history and culture.

Financial Implications:

The actions and initiatives described in this report have been undertaken using funding in the Indigenous Education allocations that are contained in the Core Education Funding model.

Strategic Directions:

This work is inextricably linked, interconnected, and interwoven into each Pillar of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. They are complementary and compatible. We cannot uphold Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being without considering the distinct Indigenous nationhood status and nation-specific identities of Indigenous learners and their unique rights to an equitable education. Equitable Quality Education includes legitimizing, normalizing and making Indigenous Knowledges and pedagogies credible and equivalent to high quality educational practices. Indigenous Education is informed by-and-for Indigenous learners, families, and communities, with the responsibility to ‘pass the paddle’ to the approaching faces, or future generations. As the world is rapidly

changing, so is the Indigenous population growing. Thus, we need to think about how we are responsibly and respectfully investing in a reconciliatory education system that is sustainable and responsive to this rapidly changing world, while maintaining cultural integrity. Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation requires a multi-pronged and multifaceted approach, wherein Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners can be enriched by a restorative education system that honours the ethical space to reconcile the past and prepare for the future.

Remember, we are not a minority group. We are Anishinaabe, Onkwehónwe, the Original Peoples in our homelands, representative of distinct nations within a nation.

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

April 22, 2025

Nutrition Strategy Update

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Equity and Student Achievement, K-12
Amber Aquin, Officer, Community Engagement

Recommendation:

That the Nutrition Strategy Update be received.

Background:

Student Nutrition Programs (SNP) significantly impact student success, and we are very grateful to the many volunteers, school-based staff, principals, and vice-principals who work tirelessly to offer these important programs across our schools. On June 24, 2024, the Board of Trustees passed the following motion:

HWDSB envision to have nutrition programs in all schools (RESOLUTION #24-107).

Since this time, staff have worked on the development of a nutrition strategy to increase the accessibility of SNPs in schools, and hired a Student Nutrition Coordinator, to further develop and implement a Board-wide Nutrition Strategy.

Status:

Federal Government Announcement

On Friday, November 22, 2024, the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada [announced](#) an agreement that includes investments in both Student Nutrition Programs and Ontario's First Nations Student Nutrition Program (FNSNP). Through the National School Food Program, Ontario will receive \$108.5 million over three years to support programs across Ontario, with an allocation of approximately \$15.8M in 2024-25 for SNP, and approximately \$2.8M for FNSNP.

Ontario's Student Nutrition Program (SNP) is delivered by 13 lead agencies, funded through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), that work with schools and other community partners to provide funding and support to deliver healthy breakfasts, snacks and lunches to school-aged children across the province. Tastebuds, Hamilton's Student Nutrition

Collaborative, received its allocation from the National School Food Program funds this month. Tastebuds will use this funding to ensure the stability and continued success of existing HWDSB school-based programs. Over the coming weeks, Tastebuds will work directly with schools to distribute funding based on needs, scale, and capacity.

Student Nutrition Coordinator

Staff recognize the importance of having a dedicated leader to advance the vision of having a Student Nutrition Program in every school. To support this work, a temporary Student Nutrition Coordinator was hired and began on February 11, 2025. Since then, the Coordinator has been actively supporting the development and implementation of HWDSB's Nutrition Strategy by engaging with school leaders, department managers, public health, and community partners. In addition, the Coordinator developed and launched a system-wide survey. This exploratory work has offered valuable insight into the range of nutrition programs across HWDSB and has highlighted key areas of need.

By engaging directly with schools, community partners, and other school boards, the Student Nutrition Coordinator is laying the groundwork for a streamlined and supportive approach to student nutrition across the system.

Community Engagement

Key community partners such as Tastebuds, Food4Kids, and Hamilton Public Health have been engaged to build relationships and better understand the resources available to support SNPs. These partnerships are crucial for ensuring community backing and access to the resources needed to sustain the programs.

School Engagement

One-on-one meetings with Family of Schools Superintendents have been conducted to gain insights into the nutritional climate within their schools. Additionally, 13 schools have been visited to observe existing SNPs, meet with school principals, shadow a public health inspector, and provide support where needed. These visits have proven valuable in identifying the trending needs in schools and the areas where effective assistance can be offered.

Growth of HWDSB Student Nutrition Programs in Schools

A follow-up survey was conducted in April 2025 to build on the insights gathered from the initial survey completed in May 2024. Last year's survey was designed to establish an understanding of the nutrition landscape across Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. The goal of the second survey was to gather information on current practices, challenges, and needs to inform the development of the HWDSB Nutrition Strategy, the Student Nutrition Toolkit and to identify key actions that will support Student Nutrition Programs.

April 2025 Nutrition Survey Results

Out of 96 schools surveyed, 79% reported having a Student Nutrition Program. The types of programs offered varied, with 68 schools providing snack programs, 11 offering breakfast

programs, 5 having lunch/nutrition break meals, and 31 schools having partnered with Food4Kids, who provide weekend food bags.

Additionally, 40 schools indicated that funding did not allow for full program operation in the 2023-2024 academic year. Due to a lack of funds, these schools limited the number of meals/snacks offered, relied on lower-cost food, and reduced portion sizes.

Also of note, 39 schools reported having sufficient funding for their Student Nutrition Program to fully meet the needs of their students.

In 2024-2025, HWDSB schools provided 39 additional nutrition offerings (snack program, lunch program, etc) per week, compared to the previous year—a total of 1,482 additional program days in the school year. Furthermore, a net increase of 3 new Student Nutrition Programs were launched in 2024-2025.

The following highlights the operational status of existing Student Nutrition Programs and the level of interest in expanding or establishing new ones.

Current Program Status and Interest

Satisfied with current program (meets school needs)	Existing Program - No expansion due to barriers	Existing Program - Interested in Expansion	No Program - Interested in starting one	No Program – No current plans to implement one	2024/2025 Needs Assessment
21	31	22	9	11	28

Several key takeaways emerged from the responses in this survey:

- Most schools reported having an active Student Nutrition Program.
- Limited funding remains a common barrier and has affected the ability to operate programs at their desired capacity.
- Many schools require logistical and operational support to sustain or expand their nutrition programs (e.g., space, equipment).
- Food sourcing, volunteer recruitment and community partnerships were the most requested forms of support.

A summary of the survey findings is attached to this report ([Appendix A](#)).

Next Steps:

Based on the responses in the April 2025 survey and the exploratory work that has been completed, the following actions are being taken to strengthen and support Student Nutrition Programs across HWDSB. These next steps focus on addressing challenges, increasing program sustainability, and providing schools with tools and resources needed to operate successful programs.

1. **Food Handling Certification:** Options for food handling certification for SNP volunteers are being explored. After consulting with Student Nutrition Ontario, an online certification course, recognized by the Ministry of Health, has been identified as the most efficient and accessible option. Further consultation is needed to determine feasibility and implementation across schools.
2. **Funding and Resources:** Allocation of donations made to school-based nutrition is currently being explored. Site visits and survey results have helped identify needs; however, no funds have been allocated at this time. Discussions are ongoing to determine the most effective approach to support the improvement of existing programs and the implementation of new Student Nutrition Programs. The Hamilton Foundation for Student Success (HFSS) will also be instrumental in future fundraising endeavors to support nutrition programs across HWDSB.
3. **SNP Toolkit:** The goal of this resource is to help schools overcome common challenges by providing practical tools, guidance, and best practices to support Student Nutrition Programs. Collaboration with various departments, community partners, school staff, and other school boards has taken place to gather insights and resources. A soft launch of the toolkit is planned for May, allowing time to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments before the start of a new school year.

Financial Implications:

Hamilton Foundation for Student Success is the HWDSB's charitable organization. HFSS will be an important component of the Student Nutrition Program as the HWDSB fundraises to support existing and new Student Nutrition Programs.

Strategic Directions:

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

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Providing Equitable Quality Education

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Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

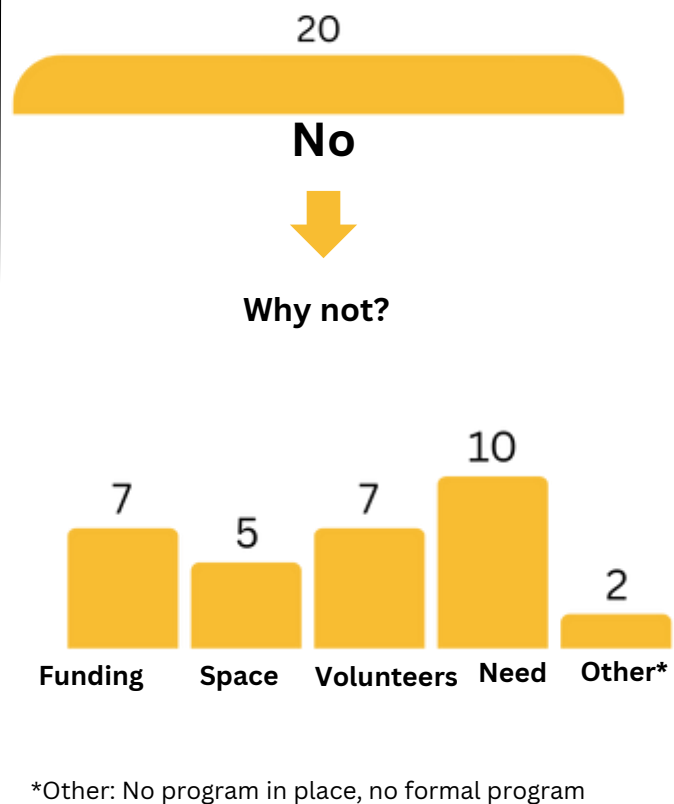
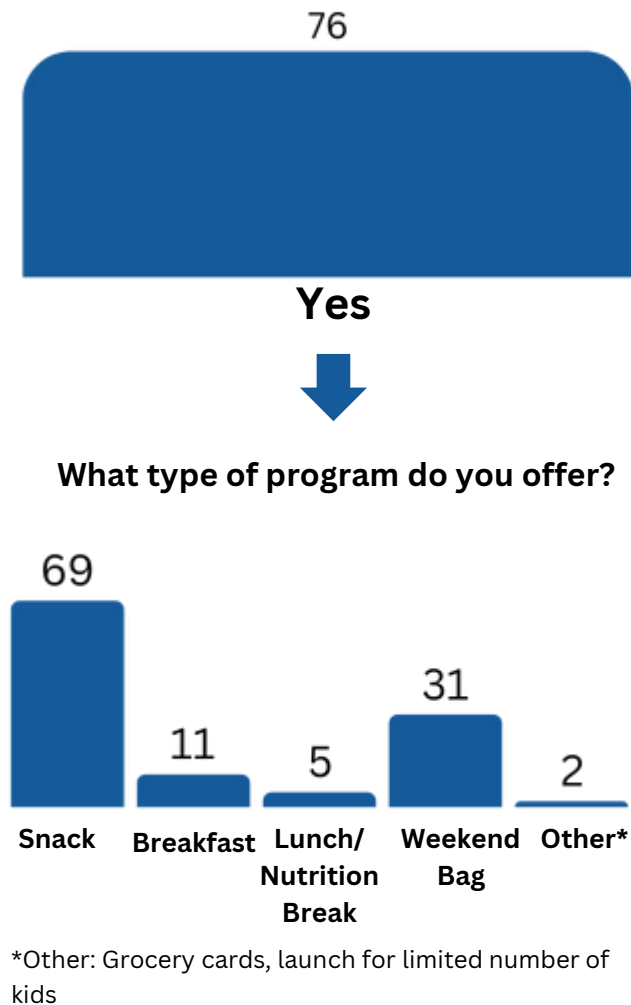
Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.

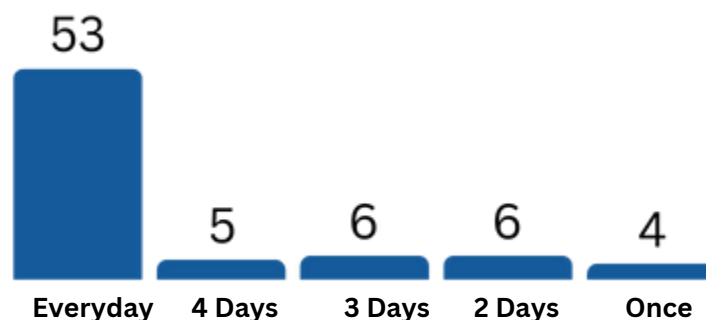


2025 Follow-Up Nutrition Survey

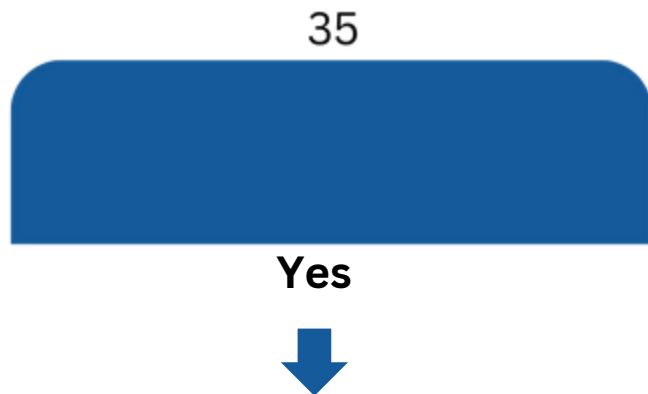
Do you have a student nutrition program currently operating in your school?



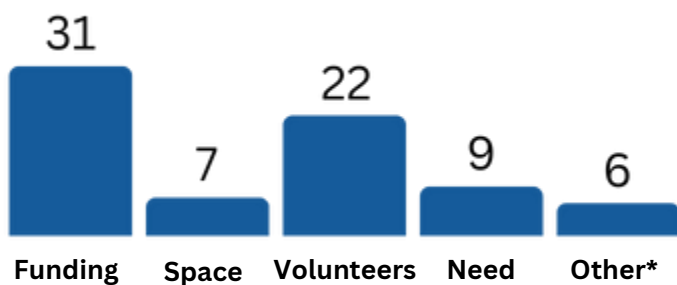
How often do you offer your nutrition program(s) per week?



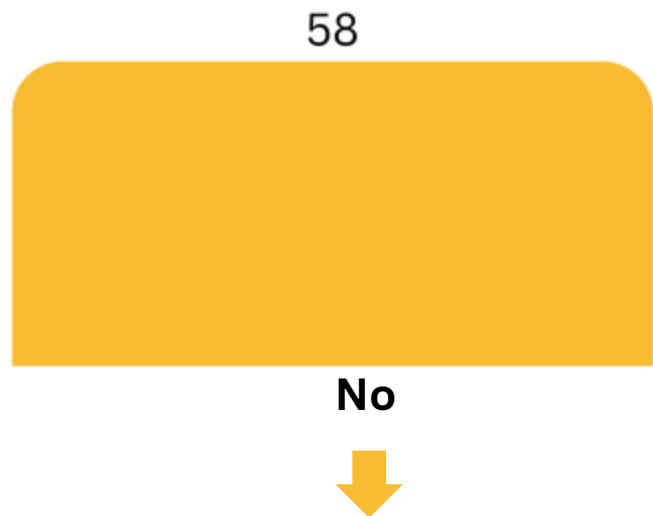
Do you have plans to start, expand and/or enhance your nutrition program?



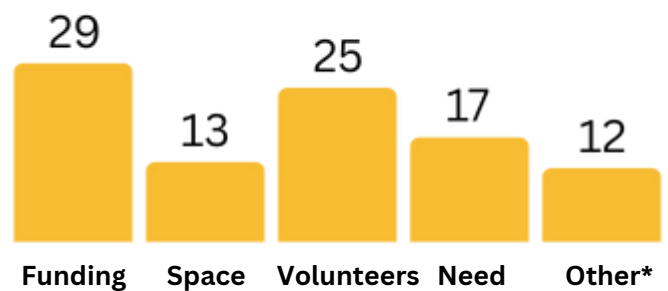
What areas of the program do you plan to start, expand and/or enhance?



*Other: increasing number of days per week, change in type of food, plans to expand pending funding.

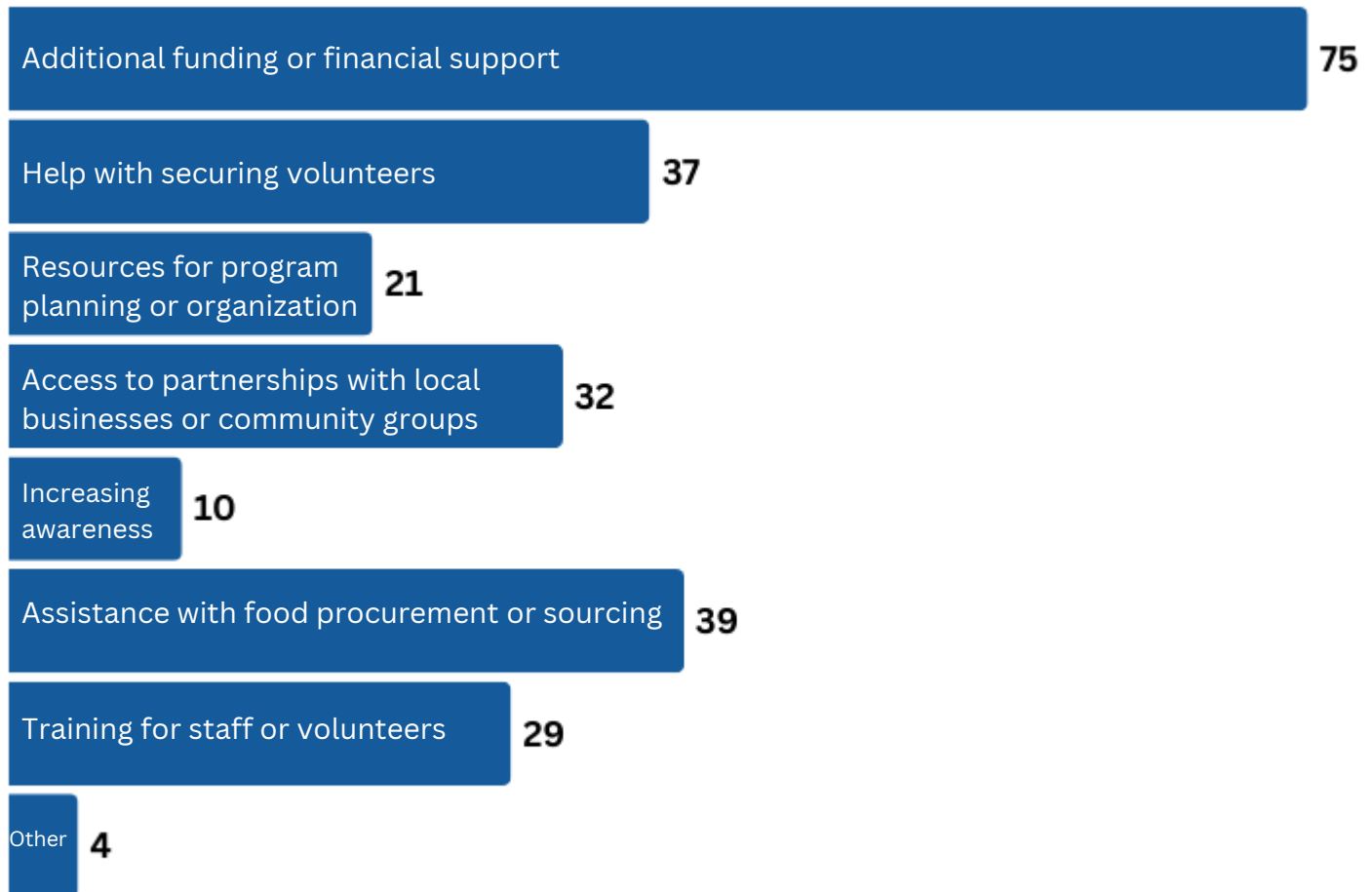


Why not?



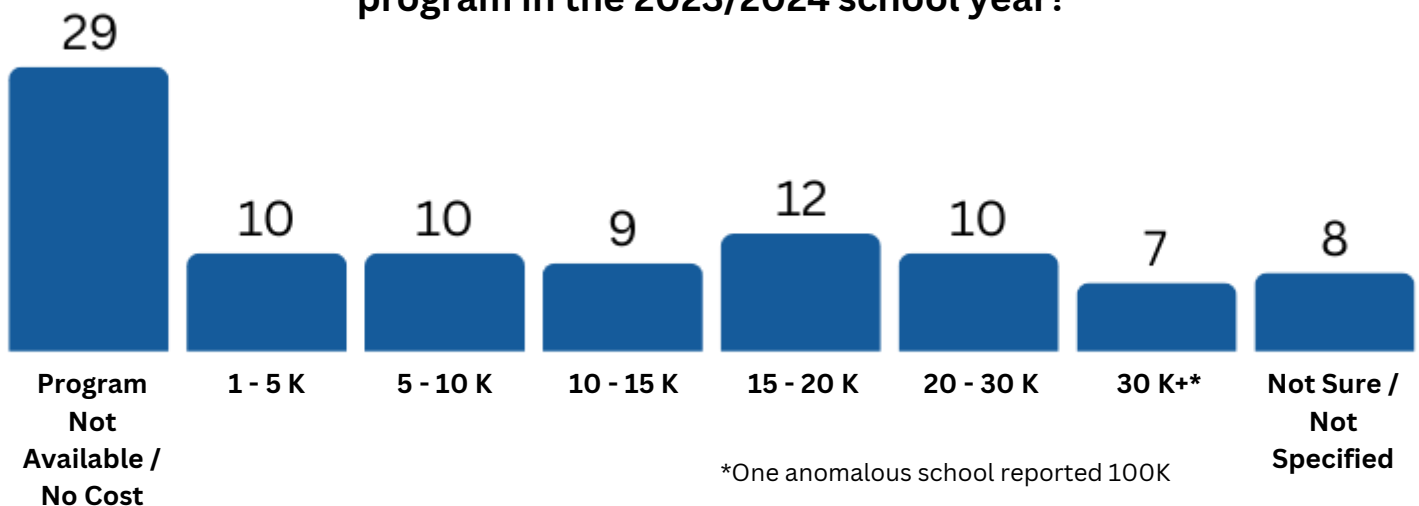
*Other: The current program is effective, adequately funded, limited human resource, and there is no immediate need for changes.

What type of support would help you start, expand and/or sustain your nutrition program?

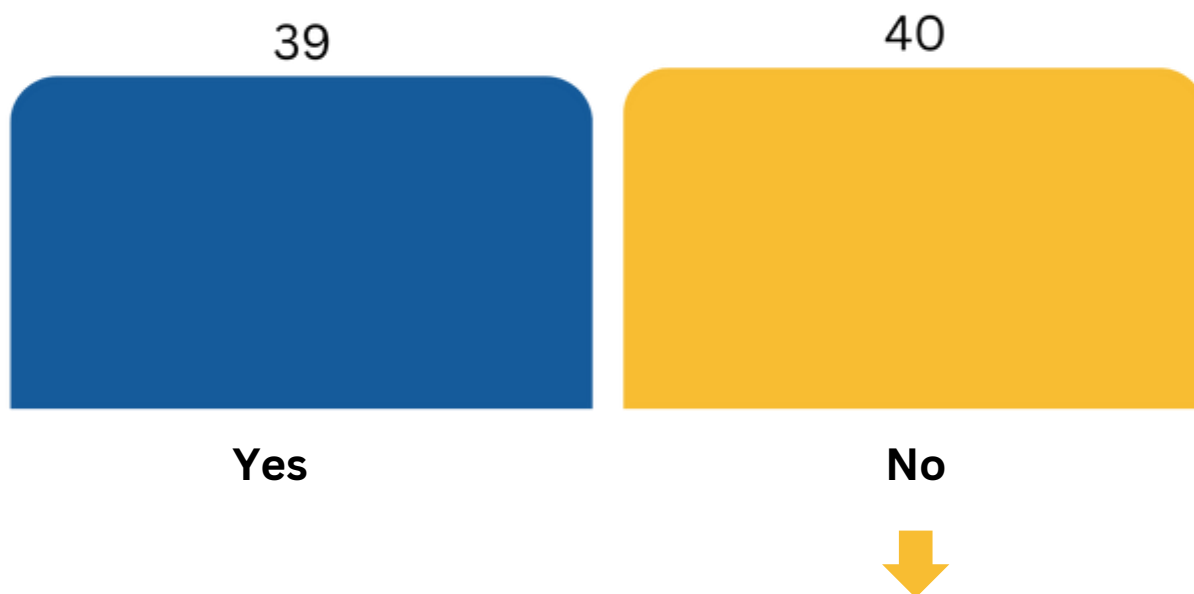


*Other: need for human resource, space, storage, and equipment to run the program

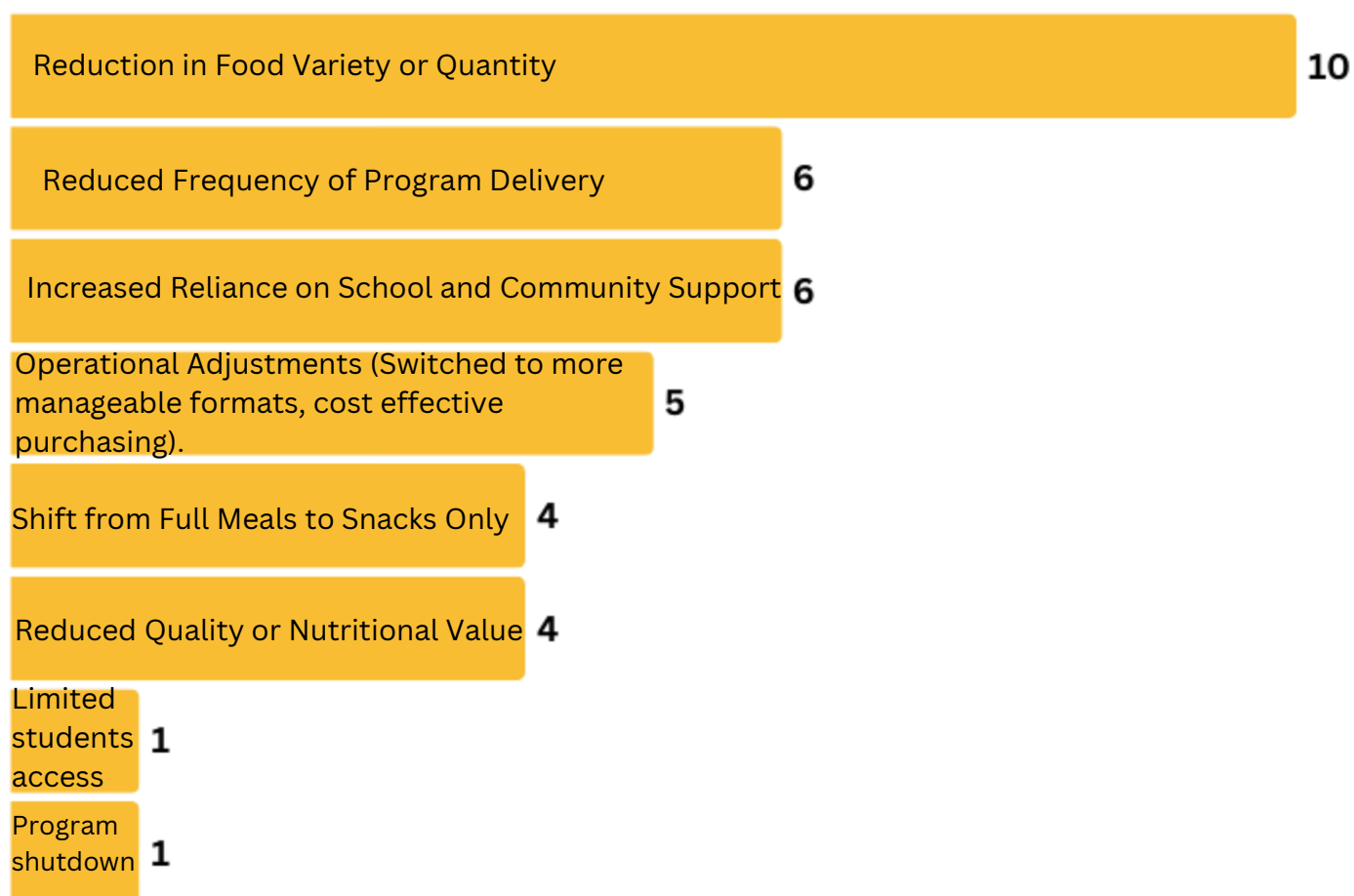
How much did it cost (approximately) to operate your student nutrition program in the 2023/2024 school year?



Did these funds allow you to operate your nutrition program at full capacity?



In what ways did you have to adjust your program because of limited funds?



Schools share their thoughts and suggestions on how HWDSB can develop its Nutrition Strategy and Student Nutrition Program Toolkit.

Infrastructure & Physical Space Needs	<p>Many schools lack dedicated space for food preparation and storage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one sink available or nutrition rooms not meeting public health requirements. • Need for full kitchens to prepare hot meals and support dietary needs. • Desire for dedicated spaces for prep and food delivery operations. • Storage remains a consistent barrier across responses.
Funding Challenges & Suggestions	<p>Strong call for increased, ongoing, and consistent funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some schools had to shut down programs due to budget cuts. <p>Current funding often insufficient to run full programs(e.g., received \$10K but need \$12K).</p> <p>Requests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ School-specific nutrition purchase cards (e.g., Costco gift cards). ◦ Reinstatement of previously helpful grants like PCC. ◦ Centralized systems to secure and manage funding sources.
Staffing & Volunteer Capacity	<p>Heavy reliance on school staff and volunteers is unsustainable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff already feel "maxed out" and overstretched. <p>Requests for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Built-in staff roles/time to support the program. ◦ Central staffing support or a dedicated school nutrition consultant. ◦ Training programs for both staff and volunteers.
Food Procurement & Cost Management	<p>Schools struggle with shopping for sales and accessing affordable food.</p> <p>Desire for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Centralized pre-set ordering options or vendor lists. ◦ Access to bulk suppliers like Costco or wholesalers. ◦ Central donation pick-up and distribution systems based on needs. ◦ Subsidized cafeteria models like SWC's (offering free breakfast/dinner).
Toolkit & Administrative Support Suggestions	<p>Suggestions for the Nutrition Strategy Toolkit include:</p> <p>A "how-to" manual for administrators covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How programs run ◦ Vendor/funding contacts ◦ Menu planning ◦ Clear routines, policies, and volunteer code of conduct <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-designed menu plans or preset food order templates. • Shared best practices or mentorship between schools. • Workshops/meetings for schools to exchange ideas and strategies.
Community & System-Level Coordination	<p>Support for more centralized or system-wide coordination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized donation systems to reduce waste and effort. • Streamlined funding and delivery logistics to reduce load on individual schools. • Encouragement for building community partnerships to access food or volunteers.
Mindset, Mission, Equity, Inclusion & Dignity	<p>Acknowledgment of the importance and impact of school nutrition programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seen as essential for student wellbeing, learning, and equity. • Recognition that programs promote healthy eating habits even in schools with fewer students in need. <p>Calls for ensuring dignity and respectful access to food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align program implementation with the board's broader equity goals. • Eliminate physical and administrative barriers that prevent student access.



PROGRAM COMMITTEE

April 22, 2025

Ministry Student Achievement Action Plan

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Sally Landon, Manager, Research and Analytics

Recommendation:

That the Ministry Student Achievement Plan, 2024-2025, be received.

Background:

In 2023, the Ontario Ministry of Education announced [Bill 98, Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act](#). As part of the requirement of the bill, school boards are required to complete a Ministry of Education Student Achievement Plan template and report, publicly, this template to their community. The Achievement Plan outlines three key provincial priorities as its foundation:

- Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills,
- Preparation of Students for Future Success, and
- Student Engagement and Well-Being.

The overarching objectives of this province-wide initiative are to:

- Provide a consistent set of performance indicators emphasizing student achievement and mental health and well-being outcomes.
- Ensure strategic planning and policy development are data-driven.
- Facilitate involvement of families and communities in the process, promoting transparency from school boards.

For the 2024-2025 school year, school boards are required to complete and post their Ministry of Education Student Achievement Plan by April 30, 2025. The final 2024-2025 Student Achievement Plan Tool must be completed and sent to the ministry by June 30, 2025. Further, as per the Education Act, school boards must consult with parents, guardians and caregivers and their school communities about their Student Achievement Plan in the first two and last two months of the school year.

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

Status:

The Ministry of Education Student Achievement Plan directly aligns to the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) 2023-2028 which was officially launched on January 17, 2024. The Strategic Directions of the MYSP continues to inform our [Board Improvement Plan, 2024-2025](#) (BIP). Staff are deeply committed to this work as they work collaboratively with and among interdisciplinary teams to meet the five pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Staff continue to report on these areas.

Staff have completed the Ministry Student Achievement Plan Template ([Appendix A](#)) and are on track to post this Plan on our school board website by April 30, 2025. The template comes to us prepopulated with data which the Ministry derives from the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and from the Ontario Student Information System (ONSIS). We use the same measures to report on our Board Improvement Plan progress with some slight differences in methodology. This results in our two plans containing marginally different results for the same indicators. The Ministry calculates outcomes using its cohort methodology (i.e., Ministry calculations include only students who began Grade 9 in the board before October 31st). Our school board's calculations include all students in our schools regardless of when they started with us.

Staff continue to closely monitor our progress indicators for each of our five Board Improvement Plan goals and report publicly the steps we have taken to support student achievement and well-being, what we have learned and what our next steps are through Program and Board reports. The Ministry Student Achievement Plan further reports on these measures and goals using its own methodology. Regardless, both our Board Improvement Plan and Ministry Student Achievement Plan guide us as we implement and monitor our various action plans for improving outcomes for students related to achievement in literacy, numeracy, preparation for future success, engagement and well-being.

Community engagement will be essential to this process in the upcoming months. In May, we will launch a community consultation through our HWDSB Engage platform. We will share our progress to date and, in keeping with Bill 98, invite feedback on our work throughout the year. In September, we will launch this consultation again, this time providing our plans for the upcoming school year, inviting community feedback on our proposed strategies and actions.

Financial Implications:

Staff continue to fully utilize all available funding in the Core Education expenditures and Responsive Education Priorities (REP) funding as approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2024 to support the implementation of the strategies connected to each of the goals in the Board Improvement Plan and Ministry Student Achievement Action Plan.

Strategic Directions:**Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being**

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & Communities

We will build reciprocal relationships and partnerships to enhance access and engagement for students, families, and communities.

Building a Sustainable Education System

We will adapt to a rapidly changing world through responsible fiscal management, investing equitably in accessible and sustainable facilities, and supporting a robust workforce.

Reinforcing Indigenous Educational Wellness & Reconciliation

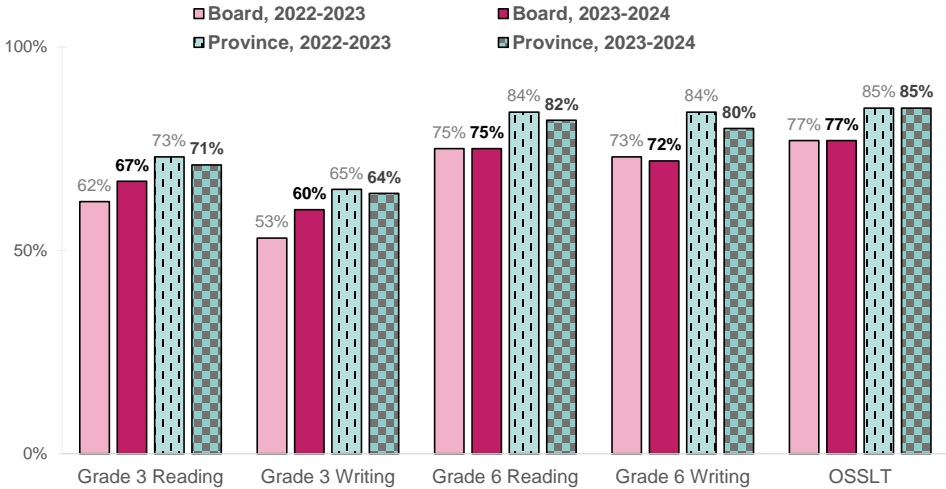
We will honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships among Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners, and by cultivating intergenerational healing and wellness in a restorative education system.

2023-2024 Academic Year

Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills

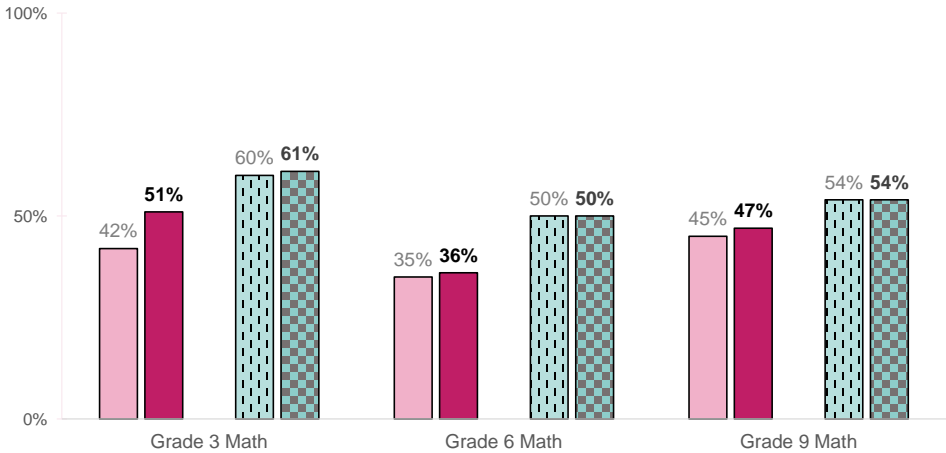
Goal: Improve students’ literacy learning and achievement

Measure: % of student who met or exceeded the provincial standard on EQAO Assessments for Grade 3/6 Reading and Writing and % of first time eligible students who were successful on the OSSLT/TPCL.



Goal: Improve students’ math learning and achievement

Measure: % of students who met or exceeded the provincial standard on EQAO Assessments for Grade 3/6/9 Math



2023-2024 Academic Year

Preparation of Students for Future Success

Goal: Improve students’ graduation rates and preparedness for future success

Measure: % of students graduating with an OSSD within five years of starting Grade 9

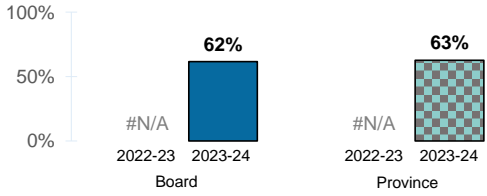
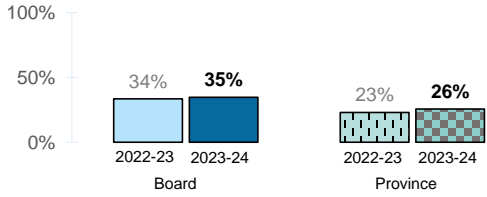
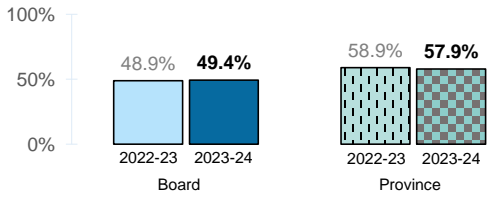
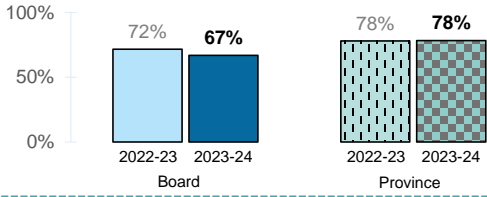
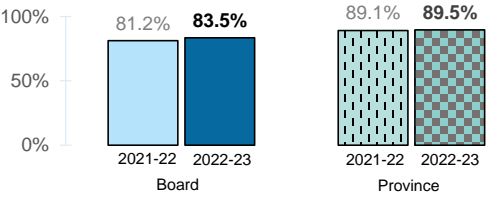
Includes students who began Grade 9 in 2018-2019 and tracks their progress until 2022-2023.

Measure: % of students who earn 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10

Measure: % of students enrolled in at least one Grade 12 math or Grade 11 or 12 science courses

Measure: % of students participating in at least one job skills program (Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credits or Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program)

Measure: % of students who believe their learning has prepared them for the next step in their learning experience (i.e. next grade, post secondary, etc)

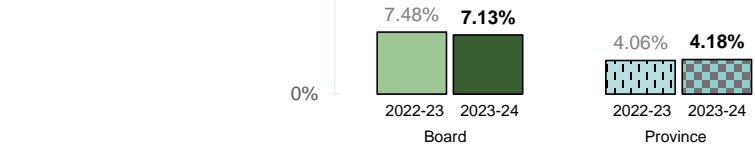


2023-2024 Academic Year

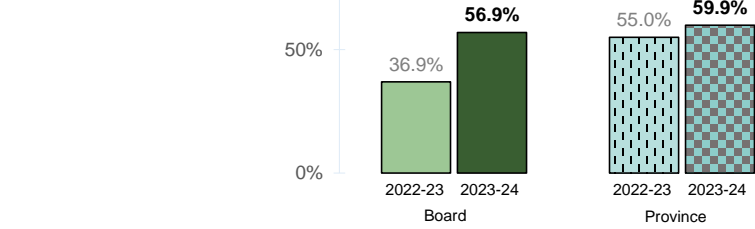
Student Engagement & Well-Being

Goal: Improve students’ participation in class time and learning

Measure: % of students in Grades 4-12 who were suspended at least once

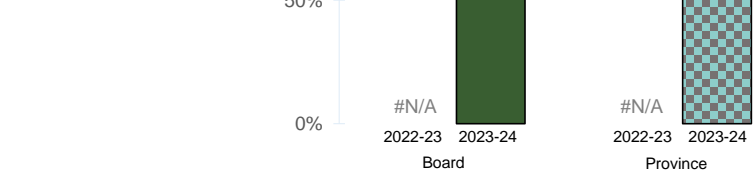


Measure: % of students in Grades 1-8 whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent



Goal: Improve student well-being

Measure: % of Grade 6, 9 and 10 students who report being aware of mental health supports and services in order to seek supports for mental health



Source: As reported by schools through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 2021-2022 to 2023-2024, and the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.
#N/A: Not applicable. Secondary student indicators are not available for elementary only school boards. Learning Preparedness and Mental Health Awareness data is not available for 2022-2023.

Student Achievement Plan: Hamilton-Wentworth DSB

2023-2024 Academic Year

Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills

Goal: Improve students’ literacy learning and achievement

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on:		
Grade 3 EQAO Reading	67%	71%
Grade 3 EQAO Writing	60%	64%
Grade 6 EQAO Reading	75%	82%
Grade 6 EQAO Writing	72%	80%

% of fully participating, first-time eligible students who are successful on the OSSLT/TPCL	77%	85%
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Goal: Improve students’ math learning and achievement

% of students who meet or exceed the provincial standard on:		
Grade 3 EQAO Math	51%	61%
Grade 6 EQAO Math	36%	50%
Grade 9 EQAO Math	47%	54%

Additional School Board Measures	School board

Actions our School Board Will Take to Improve

7-5

2023-2024 Academic Year

Preparation of Students for Future Success

Goal: Improve students’ graduation rates and preparedness for future success

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students...		
who earn 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10	67%	78%
who participated in at least one job skills program (Specialist High Skills Major, Dual Credits or Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program)	35%	26%
who graduated with an OSSD within five years of starting Grade 9 (2022-2023)	83.5%	89.5%
who enrolled in at least one Grade 12 math or Grade 11 or 12 science courses	49.4%	57.9%
who believe their learning has prepared them for the next step in their learning experience (i.e.next grade, post secondary, etc)	62%	63%

Additional School Board Measures	School board

2023-2024 Academic Year

Student Engagement & Well-Being

Goal: Improve students’ participation in class time and learning

	School	
	Board	Province
% of students...		
in Grades 1-8 whose individual attendance rate is equal to or greater than 90 percent	56.9%	59.9%
in Grades 4-12 who were suspended at least once	7.13%	4.18%

Goal: Improve student well-being

% of Grade 6, 9 and 10 students who report being aware of mental health supports and services in order to seek supports for mental health	58%	60%
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Additional School Board Measures	School board

Source: As reported by schools through the Ontario School Information System (OnSIS), 2021-2022 to 2022-2023, and the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO), 2022-2023 to 2023-2024.

#N/A: Not applicable. Secondary student indicators are not available for elementary only school boards. Learning Preparedness and Mental Health Awareness data is not available for 2022-2023.