



Program Committee
Thursday, October 16, 2025
EC-340D & Virtual Meeting

AGENDA: 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. HWDSB Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Review of the Committee Workplan
5. Program Review
6. Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025 Report
7. Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026
8. Maintaining Safe and Secure School Environments
9. Adjournment

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Program Committee Workplan.

Cmt Mtg Date	Agenda Items
Oct. 16	Summary Report on MYSP Goals 1-5 Indicators for the previous school year Math Action Plan 2025-26 (draft) *board approval required by Nov. 15th (Ministry) Program Review Update Safety in Schools
Dec. 11	Program Strategy & French Immersion Review (final)
Feb. 19	<i>Information Session (50 minutes): Learning for Life: A look at Continuing Education (EJ)</i> Suspension & Expulsion data, 2024-2025 Caring & Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027 Update
Mar. 26	Student Achievement Action Plan (Ministry Requirement) MYSP - Progress Rpts Goals (1-3): Literacy, Numeracy, Future Preparedness Human Rights & Equity Action Plan 2023-2027 rpt (incl. hate-based incident tracking tool data)
Apr. 30	Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, 2025-2026 Program Review Follow Up Report
May. 21	<i>Information Session (50 minutes): Walking Together: Unlearning and Relearning in Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation (Indigenous Education Department) (JJ)</i> Growing our Commitment: K-12 Indigenous School (update?) MYSP - Progress Rpt (Goals 4 & 5): Engagement, Well-Being Nutrition Strategy



PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

October 16, 2025

Update: Review of the Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Program Strategy & Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Michelle Lemaire, Superintendent of Program, Equity and Innovation
Brian Goodram, Principal, Westdale Secondary School

Recommendation:

That the update on the review of the Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Program Strategy and review of the Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process be received.

Background:

On June 10, 2024, the Board of Trustees passed the following Motion:

The Elementary Program Strategy, including the French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process, and the Secondary Program Strategy be reviewed over the next year to ensure alignment with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), that both strategies meet the needs of HWDSB students and ensure balance, fair and equitable distribution of resources delivered in a fiscally responsible manner.

Together, the consultant and staff will ensure that human rights and equity, anti-colonialism, anti-racism, anti-oppression are considered throughout the review and include consultations with community throughout the review. Staff will provide updates on the review process to the Board of Trustees throughout the process. The review is expected to take at least one year.

Status:

Staff competitively procured the consulting services of Malatest Consulting to conduct the review. The review encompasses the Program Strategy Review Scope ([Appendix A](#)) as approved by the

Program Committee on October 21, 2024. The consulting firm has developed a detailed workplan for this project divided into four phases:

Phase	Focus	Timeline	Status
Phase 1	Project Planning and Scoping	November 2024 – January 2025	Complete
Phase 2	Primary Data Collection	February – May 2025	Complete
Phase 3	Analysis	September – October 2025	In Progress
Phase 4	Report of Findings and Recommendations	December 11, 2025	

Staff are currently in the third of four phases, and we are on track to deliver the findings of this review at the Program Committee on December 11, 2025.

To date, Malatest Consulting has gathered extensive input from our community to inform ongoing work of this review. A total of 2,352 parents, 294 students, and 1,692 staff completed surveys. In addition, Malatest Consulting held 11 focus groups and conducted 14 individual interviews through the end of June 2025, including a dedicated in-person focus group with the Indigenous Education Council (IEC) and a virtual session with community organizations. Site visits were conducted at Bellmoore Elementary School, Bernie Custis Secondary School, and Westmount Secondary School to capture a range of school experiences, accompanied by additional focus group sessions with students at each location. A supplementary parent focus group was also held at Prince of Wales to address gaps in representation from the spring survey.

Through this work, we have gathered a variety of perspectives across diverse communities and school settings. Currently, Malatest is analyzing all collected data from surveys, interviews, focus groups, and school visits, to develop comprehensive recommendations.

Our next steps include hosting a variety of validation meetings with interested parties who engaged in large focus groups. Validation meetings provide Malatest an opportunity to confirm the information that was shared by participants, prior to the development of recommendations. There will also be a final opportunity for families to engage with Malatest virtually on HWDSB Engage before they finalize their recommendations, ensuring continued transparency and inclusion in the process.

Financial Implications:

In the 2024-2025 budget, Trustees approved \$150,000 in one-time funding to support the Program Strategy review. In addition to the approved budget, an additional \$12,000 has been spent to support an expansion of the consultation conducted with focus groups as well as an enhanced environmental scan.

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.

Appendix A: Scope of the HWDSB Program Strategy Review

Board Approved Motion: June 10, 2024

That the current Elementary Program Strategy including Elementary French Immersion and Secondary Program Strategy be reviewed over the next year to ensure alignment with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), ensure both strategies meet the needs of HWDSB students and ensure balance, fair and equitable distribution of resources delivered in a fiscally responsible manner.

Scope of the Program Strategy Review:

- [HWDSB Secondary Program Strategy](#) (June 10, 2013)
- [HWDSB Elementary Program Strategy](#) (November 10, 2016)
- [Elementary French Immersion](#) (November 10, 2016)
 - French Immersion Application Process
 - French Immersion Location Strategy

- **Background Study:** Creating Secondary Education of the Future
- **Vision:**
 - All secondary schools will be great schools
 - Students will have choice
 - Equity of access, opportunity and outcome across our system (Tier 3 programs)
- **Variety of Program Offerings:**
 - Students work towards their goal, at their local schools. These choices include the five pathways.
 - Student voice is captured before option sheet distribution.
- **Tiered program offerings to address student needs**
 - Tier 1 Schools – All Students
 - Tier 2 Schools – Some Students
 - Tier 2 programs and interventions are offered in some schools if there is enough student interest within a school. Student interest will be captured through the option sheet process. These are programs that do not require specialized facilities or equipment and are offered to students living within the catchment of their home school.
 - Tier 3 Schools – Few Students
 - Programs and interventions requiring specialized facilities, equipment or funding enhancement. Strategically located in a few school sites. Transportation provided according to Board policy.
 - Programs: Arts & Culture: Digital Media, ArtSmart, Aviation/Aerospace, Construction, Cosmetology, ESL/ELD (4 schools), French Immersion (2 schools), Horticulture, Hospitality/Tourism (Food Services), Information/Communication Tech, International Baccalaureate (IB) (3 schools; now 2), Manufacturing, Ontario Public Service Program, Performing Arts (auditioned program) (1 school), Transportation
 - Westmount Secondary School (no transportation provided).
- **Targeted Interventions:** All schools will offer targeted interventions to meet the needs of students who require them. The interventions will include programs and/or supports to students who are struggling academically, socially and emotionally. (for example, Literacy intervention programs Empower High School, Wilson Reading Program, Numeracy intervention programs Jump Math (with other strategies), In-school alternative education, credit recovery, self-directed/self-paced, specific Co-op and/or experiential learning Workplace placements, job shadowing)

- **Strategy comprises of three specific areas:**
 - **Specialized Programming**
 - We will provide focus programs for all elementary students.
 - The Viability Criteria for Maintaining Optional Programs:
 - Program maintains the original intent /mandate of the program
 - Sufficient student enrolment to assign a teacher
 - Ontario Curriculum is embedded in the delivery model
 - Feasibility of maintaining on-going operating costs, including fees to external organizations
 - Continuation of exemplary program delivery and sustainability
 - The following focus programs will be maintained and reviewed every two years to determine the continued interest and viability of the programs, according to the criteria listed above:

▪ Hockey Program	Tapleystown
▪ Mandarin (Language Transition Program)	Cootes Paradise
▪ Sage	Strathcona
▪ Sagequest	Kanétskare
▪ Sports Academy; Basketball	R.A. Riddell
 - **Instrumental Music**
 - Ensure instrumental music programming is offered at the grade 7 and 8 level in all elementary schools, as outlined in the HWDSB Arts Strategy. This will include the provision of band instruments, appropriate facilities and qualified staff to deliver the program and will allow the equity of access for all intermediate students so that they can make an informed choice for music programming at the secondary level.
 - **Interventions in special education**
 - Every school will have shared spaces designated to support student needs, such as:
 - Assessment and Intervention space (System Staff and Community Partners)
 - Student Success space (For alternative programming, calming spaces, quiet setting)
 - Sensory space
 - Fitness space (Gross Motor Development)
 - Calming space (Specialized locations only as determined by the Superintendent of Specialized Services)

- **Vision:** All students communicating and interacting with growing confidence in French.
- Program begins in Grade 1. HWDSB also offers Core French beginning in Grade 4.
- **Core Priorities:** HWDSB's FSL programming is guided by the three core priorities set out in [*A Framework for French as a Second Language in Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 1-12:*](#)
 - Increase student confidence, proficiency and achievement in FSL
 - Increase the percentage of students studying FSL until graduation
 - Increase student, educator, parent, and community engagement in FSL
- French Immersion requires that French must be the language of instruction for a minimum of 50 per cent of the total instructional time and provide a minimum of 3,800 hours of French instruction by the end of grade 8. At HWDSB, we strive to offer more than the minimum requirement each year from grades 1 to 6. In grades 7 and 8, 50 to 60 per cent of the program is taught in French.
- Currently 18 elementary schools offer French Immersion programming, Grade 1 – 8. 8 elementary schools are associate schools for Sherwood Secondary School and 10 elementary schools are associate schools for Westdale Secondary School.
- Transportation to a French Immersion program is offered according to [HWDSB's Transportation Policy](#).
- The French Immersion Application Process is in accordance with a Board approved report (November 10, 2016) which specifically outlines:
 - **Timelines for the Application Process**
 - The system application process for grade 1 students entering French Immersion would be promoted each year with specific dates attached to the applications. Where there are accommodation pressures, all FI boundaries and school locations will be displayed on the application form. The schools that do not have accommodation pressures will have a notation on the application form that grade 1 students living within the FI catchment for these schools will be automatically accepted into the program at the FI catchment school. Parents will still need to complete the application form. For all other Grade 1 FI applications for schools with accommodation pressures, program locations will be offered by Mid-December.
 - **Late Applications:**
 - If the application deadline is missed, then placement at the FI catchment school will only be offered, if space is available. Transportation will be provided according to the transportation policy. If there is no space in the FI catchment school, the placement will be offered in another school with FI programming, and no transportation will be provided.
 - **Admissions beyond Grade 1 Entry:**
 - Students presently in HWDSB or moving to HWDSB from another board may be offered a French Immersion program location for grades other than the grade 1 entry after a review of student records or confirmation of an equivalent background in French, as determined by Program staff from French as a Second Language. The staff application review committee will also review late these admissions to determine student placement. Students who are deemed ready will be offered a placement in their FI catchment school if space permits. Transportation will be provided according to the transportation policy. If there is no space in the FI catchment school, the placement will be offered in another school with FI programming, and no transportation will be provided.

- **Criteria for Grade 1 French Immersion Program Placement Offerings:**
 - Availability of the program closest to the student's home address, based on the French Immersion boundary:
 - Grade 1 siblings entering French Immersion may attend the same school as their older sibling currently in FI,
 - space permitting and providing they remain in FI.
 - Balance of English and FI enrolment in dual track schools (50-60% in English or French)
 - Year over year impact as pupils progress through grades 1-8



PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

October 16, 2025

HWDSB Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025 Report

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services,
Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Student Achievement and Equity, K-12,
Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead,
Estella Jones, Superintendent, Board Math Lead,
Sally Landon, Manager, Research and Analytics,
Michelle Lemaire, Superintendent of Program, Equity and Innovation,
Gerry Smith, Superintendent of Safe, Compassionate and Equitable Schools

Recommendation:

That the report on the implementation of the 2024-2025 Board Improvement Plan be received.

Background:

In October 2023, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Board of Trustees approved a new [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) 2023-2028 which was officially launched in January, 2024. The Strategic Directions of the MYSP helped to inform a new [Board Improvement Plan \(BIP\)](#) with five measurable goals. Since this launch, staff worked collaboratively as interdisciplinary teams to meet both the five over-arching pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and address the goals in the Board Improvement Plan. Grounded in our commitment to a culture of improvement, the Board Improvement Plan will be reviewed this fall, updated with new progress indicators, and published as the Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026.

This report will focus on the progress that we have made on all five goals of the 2024-2025 Board Improvement Plan:

- Improved literacy achievement for every student,
- Improved numeracy achievement for every student,
- Improved preparedness for the future of every student,
- Improved engagement for every student, and,
- Improved well-being for every student.

Status:

Staff have identified improvements in:

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- Students reading in Full-Day Kindergarten and Grade 2,
- Percentage of students in Grade 3, 6, 9 and 10 achieving the provincial standard in mathematics on report cards,
- Percentage of students who are taking Grade 11/12 mathematics and Grade 12 science,
- Percentage of students who are on track to graduate with 16 credits by the end of Grade 10,
- Percentage of students participating in job skills programs (Specialist High Skills Major Programs, Dual Credits and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs),
- Percentage of students who attend school 90% of the time (especially primary students), and
- Percentage of students who feel like they belong in their school and are aware of available mental health supports and services.

Summative Report: Actions and Outcomes

Goal: Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Staff worked across all schools to improve literacy achievement for every student. The performance indicators for this goal and the improvements made in the 2024-2025 school year are noted in *Literacy Outcome Measures* ([Appendix A](#)). Staff are currently awaiting the release of 2024-2025 EQAO assessments to complete the assessment of our progress indicators for this goal.

What have we done?

- Staff successfully implemented the Acadience reading screener to assess the reading progress of students in Kindergarten through Grade 2. Appendix A provides the results of this assessment.
- Staff provided professional development and training on K-2 Acadience, and system-level PD for Junior-Intermediate educators.
- Staff implemented tiered reading interventions across all schools. For example, we implemented a Tier 2 Reading Program designed for students who require targeted support beyond the universal Tier 1 classroom instruction. using Lexia in Grades 2–5, while Wilson Just Words was used for Grades 6–8, with materials and training provided to 66 schools. We further offered a Tier 3 Empower Reading program which reached 778 students in 78 schools. A These programs are typically delivered in small groups and focus on foundational reading skills. Tier 3 interventions are intensive, individualized programs for students. These are often delivered one-on-one or in very small groups.
- Staff implemented the Wilson Reading program in seven secondary schools through an Interdisciplinary Language Studies model. Additional reading support was offered through after-school and summer programs like Camp Power, Camp Climb, Phonics Academy, and Head Start to High School.

What have we learned?

- Reading progress improved the most for Kindergartners, followed by Grade 2 students and, finally, for Grade 1 students. The largest opportunity for growth and support is Grade 1 students' reading.
- Staff saw incremental improvement in achievement at the provincial standard in Language for students in Grades 1 through 8. A similar trend can be seen for the achievement of students receiving Special Education supports, and English Language Learners in ESL or ELD Programming. Report card data for secondary students also demonstrates an upward trend for students in Grade 9 English, including students receiving Special Education supports and English Language Learners. Students in Grade 10 Academic English demonstrated incremental improvement in the number of

students meeting provincial standard, while students in applied and locally developed programs dropped slightly.

What are our next steps?

- We will implement the HWDSB Reading Strategy, K-12, to build the capacity of educators to strengthen student literacy development in reading and writing in the following ways:
 - Ensure there is an effective Tier 1 reading program in every classroom that is informed by comprehensive assessment practices.
 - Engage every Kindergarten to Grade 2 student in early reading screening to determine literacy strengths and needs and develop and implement plans to support student progress.
 - Provide professional learning for educators on implementing reading intervention programs (i.e. Lexia, Empower, Wilson Just Words).
 - Allocate a Reading Specialist in every elementary school to support the development of early reading skills.
 - Collaborate with students and families about student strengths, needs and progress in meeting the reading target.
- We will employ literacy intervention supports in every secondary school.
- We will engage in intentional and focused professional development with Principals and Vice-Principals to enable school leaders to effectively implement Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with strategic leadership, impactful assessment systems, and evidence-based Tier 1 instruction.

Goal: Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Staff worked across all schools to improve numeracy achievement for every student. This goal and the specific strategies align with the Ministry's focus on improving mathematics achievement provincially and our own Math Achievement Action Plan, 2024-2025. The performance indicators for this goal and the improvements made between the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years are noted in *Numeracy Outcome Measures* ([Appendix B](#)). Staff are currently awaiting the release of 2024-2025 EQAO assessments to complete the assessment of our progress indicators for this goal.

What have we done?

- Staff provided professional learning for Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 teachers. These sessions focused on building teacher practices with small group instruction, use of tools and representations, and direct instruction. There was also deep learning in key content areas such as operations (+, -, x, ÷), fractions, and algebra. In elementary math priority schools, Math Facilitators worked extensively with students to close gaps and improve confidence.
- To build upon this learning, additional qualifications courses in mathematics were subsidized for educators with over 120 educators taking part. Furthermore, the after-school programs, Math Academy (Grades 2-6) and High School Prep (Grades 7-8), served approximately 1,000 students through intensive small group support.
- Efforts to extend math engagement beyond the classroom included school-wide math challenges, Family Numeracy Nights and an active social media presence highlighting math activities and classroom learning.

What have we learned?

- Staff note increases in math achievement at the provincial standard on report cards for students in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10. A number of schools stood out because of increases in achievement at the provincial standard by 10% or more.
- Improvements were also noted in the percentage of Grade 9 students with IEPs who achieved the provincial standard. Staff believe this is related to the focus on using representations and various math tools in class. There was also a marked improvement in achievement in Grade 10 Academic and Applied courses across the system. As this was the first year we provided system-wide professional learning for Grade 10 teachers, these results are encouraging (See Appendix B).
- Focusing small group instruction on key concepts provided direction and a means to measure growth in student learning. This led to improved achievement, increased engagement and improved confidence. Student feedback (e.g., “Are we going to do this again? I felt a lot more heard than in regular class!”) validated this approach.
- Family Numeracy Nights have been an effective way to engage families in many schools. High numbers in attendance, and participation from a more diverse group of families compared to other events were common observations shared by principals that suggest Family Numeracy Nights were a great success.

What are our next steps?

- We will implement Year 3 of our Math Achievement Action Plan.
- We will focus on providing more supports for all schools, including professional learning for all teachers of Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10, as well as elementary school math leads and secondary math department leaders.
- We will ensure every school has a designated Math Lead.
- We will incorporate Indigenous educational wellness in math learning and build math instructional practices with Learning Resource Teachers and Math Facilitators to support students with special education needs.

Goal: Increase Preparedness for the Future for Every Student

Preparing our students for their future is a critical part of our Board Improvement Plan. The performance indicators for this goal and the improvements made between during 2024-2025 are noted in *Future Preparedness Outcome Measures* ([Appendix C](#)).

What have we done?

- Staff implemented Robotics in every school whether at the classroom, club or competition level. To support this implementation plan, staff invested in system supports including robotics kits, and an Exploration Trailer in addition to focused professional development on robotics, climate action, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) projects.
- Staff expanded apprenticeship training with Mohawk College, LiUNA, and MLITSD in trades like electrician and carpenter. Community partnerships with post secondary institutions, trade unions, and industry further expanded opportunities and mentorships. We grew our Co-op partnerships, anchoring job-skills programming.
- Staff provided Grade 7 and 9 students with exposure to pathway planning supported by the online platform, myBlueprint.
- Staff provided an engaging and informative opportunity for Grade 10 students in every secondary school to engage in career conversations with professionals.

- Staff expanded the ELLevate program to offer flexible scheduling, pathway planning, and post-secondary access for multilingual learners (MLLs) aged 18–21.

What have we learned?

- The online platform, myBlueprint, achieved 100% adoption across all schools—the highest rate in the province.
- Baseline data collected through the Healthy Peer Relations survey and the Grade 12 Exit Survey indicate encouraging feedback that students feel prepared for the next step in their learning and feel supported throughout their pathway planning, understanding their choices and requirements to get there (See Appendix C).
- SHSM cross-panel connections increased early pathway awareness, and OYAP participation reached a record 804 students, with 98 apprentices sponsored by co-op employers and 52 in Level 1 training at Mohawk College, compared to 683 participants and 87 apprentices the previous year.
- Growth in SHSM programs—both tech and non-tech—reflects rising participation in sector-recognized certifications, experiential learning, and co-op placements, supporting the Board’s commitment to equitable access and future readiness. 445 students earned dual credits, an increase from 417 in 2023–24.
- Co-op placements anchor job-skills programs, and OYAP participation is at its highest, with strong family engagement. Appendix C visualizes these findings with 40% of students engaging in job-skills participation, an increase from 2023-2024, and a 7% jump to 63% of students opting to study grade 11/12 Science and/or grade 12 Math courses.
- While HWDSB’s graduation rate dipped to 82%, credit accumulation for grade 10 students show a marked improvement of 87%, a reflection of the collective efforts of staff to help keep students on track with their graduation journey. Further, the students who graduated in 2024-2025 were the students who missed their Grade 8 to Grade 9 transition due to COVID and we believe this emphasizes the importance of our work to ensure an effective transition from elementary to secondary.
- HWDSB students are increasingly interested in college pathways, with top applications to Mohawk, Sheridan, Niagara, Fanshawe, and Conestoga, and popular programs in Police Foundations, Early Childhood Education, Pre-Health Sciences, and skilled trades.

What are our next steps?

- We strengthen our relationship with Mohawk College through mentorships, dual credit options, and campus visits, while also creating and distributing visual pathway maps and multilingual resources to engage families through culturally responsive communication.
- We will implement a variety of approaches (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, multidisciplinary learning such as STEAM and Robotics), programs (e.g., Dual Credit, Specialist High Skills Major, Apprenticeships, Co-operative Education), and resources (e.g., Credit Recovery) to support secondary students in meeting yearly credit accumulation benchmarks on their path to graduation.
- We will embed land-based learning experiences within outdoor education and experiential learning opportunities to deepen student understanding of our relationship to the land and to recognize the enduring connection between Indigenous peoples and the land.
- We will develop a system-wide experiential learning framework which will emphasize the inclusion of hands-on learning opportunities such as makerspaces and re-envisioned Grade 9 Tech classrooms to foster innovation and design thinking.

Goal: Improved Well-Being for Every Student

Staff worked across all schools to improve well-being for every student. The performance indicators for this goal and the improvements made during 2024-2025 are noted in *Well-Being Outcome Measures* ([Appendix D](#)).

What have we done?

- We amplified student voice by actively engaging distinct and diverse perspectives, especially those of Indigenous, Black, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ youth, to help shape an inclusive school culture and work towards cultural safety, through Student Leadership groups.
- We collected and utilized student feedback through diverse platforms to authentically inform and enhance programs and school planning with relevance. This included a Student Leadership Conference, and Student Advisories (to support developing tool kits for Mental Health Literacy and Mental Health Promotion for year two of the Mental Health and Addiction Strategy).
- We centered student and staff voice in all mental health and well-being efforts by maintaining a relevant, inclusive, and responsive approach. This includes fostering ongoing engagement with Student Leadership Advisories, Mental Health and Well-being representatives, and the Principal/Vice-Principal Advisory on Mental Health, with the aim of integrating lived experiences, co-designing resources, and shaping strategies that reflect the diverse needs of school communities.
- Staff completed year two of the multi-year implementation of the Grade 11 NBE3 English Course: Understanding First Nations, Metis and Inuit Voices. They formed Professional Learning Communities (PLC), co-developed promotional lesson plans, and a course shell to be ready for the 2025-2026 school year.
- The SKENNEN Program, in partnership with St. Josephs, presented a two-eyed seeing approach to care by grounding traditional teachings and western clinical psychology and Social Work. This program enables Indigenous students to access support for anxiety, low mood, mental health, stress and cultural-identity related issues. Participants met for 10 weeks.

What have we learned?

- Students are learning about mental health and how to access support through classrooms and school-based resources (See Appendix D). However, they are not consistently seeking help when needed or effectively using the strategies provided.
- Belonging and identity-affirming environments are essential to student engagement. When students feel seen, valued, and safe to express themselves, both participation and achievement increase (See Appendix D).
- Students are turning to various caring adults for support, particularly parents and caregivers. Each caring adult at school requires tailored resources and learning opportunities to effectively support the students who come to them (See Appendix D).
- Through the iterative and multi-pronged approach of the NBE3 Professional Learning Community, teachers have played an active role in their own learning journeys, which translates to the improved well-being of every student enrolled in the NBE3 Course. Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, being and doing provide strong cross-cultural connections that can enable every student to strengthen their own sense of belonging and well-being tied to their identity.

What are our next steps?

- We will implement Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (Year 2). We will further implement both a Student and Parent/Caregiver Toolkit needed to support and affirm students seeking help.
- We will extend the wise practice of the Cultivating Community: Reclaiming Our Spaces in Education (CC:ROSE), an Indigenous student leadership and learning community. We are co-developing a CC:ROSE parent/ guardian edition. Our objective is to strengthen parent engagement and contribute to intergenerational healing and wellness for parents, students, and community members.
- The Indigenous Education Department will implement a Runner Model in the 2025-2026 school year to enable one staff member from each school to participate in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) over 5 sessions. Runners will carry the messages of the Indigenous Education Department to advance the shared goals of the IECSAP, BIP and the MYSP in their home schools.
- In syncretism with the Department of Social Work, we will support the co-development of a local Indigenous approach to Life Promotion.

Goal: Improved Engagement for Every Student

Staff worked across all schools to improve engagement for every student. The performance indicators for this goal and the improvements made during the 2024-2025 school year are noted in *Engagement Outcome Measures* ([Appendix E](#)).

What have we done?

- We supported schools to engage in Healthy Schools programs which emphasize respect, belonging, and resilience in daily school life. Activities and lessons help students manage relationships, reflect on fairness, and interact positively with peers and adults. Activities include school-wide health awareness campaigns, Healthy Action Team (HATs) student-led activities, and student voice groups.
- We continued to provide educational pathways through Alternative Education programming highlighting the James Street Program and the Supervised Alternative Learning Program (SAL). The James Street Program serves students in all academic pathways from grades 10 to 12 who are struggling to meet success in composite schools due to ongoing issues related to anxiety. The Supervised Alternative Learning Program supports students to overcome barriers to regular attendance by offering educational programming in smaller groups (or on a 1 to 1 basis) in schools and/or in community settings.
- The Graduation Coach Program for Black Students worked in partnership with guidance departments, classroom teachers and community partners (including Mohawk College and MacMaster University) to support 224 Black and racialized students in 6 high school in our school board. In the 2024/25 school year, graduates were successfully supported by Graduation Coaches to transition to Wilfrid Laurier University, Toronto Metropolitan University and the University of Waterloo (See Appendix E).

What have we learned?

- Fully supporting students with programming and learning environments that meet their needs includes working in collaboration with community partners.
- The Healthy Schools certification, sponsored by the Ontario Physical and Health Association (OPHEA), recognized 50 schools across the district with participation from 27,306 students. Forty-six schools earned the gold level of certification, and four schools earned the silver level of certification.

- The Graduation Coach Program for Black Students is making a difference in HWDSB. The Coaches have developed relationships with industry and post-secondary institutions to help to facilitate educational pathways that support Black graduates as they explore new and exciting education and career opportunities.
- Students who participate in school activities beyond the classroom experience increase opportunities for belonging and an improved sense of well-being (Appendix E).

What are our next steps?

- We will continue to provide professional learning for all school staff on progressive discipline practices, effective conflict resolution and restorative strategies especially in response to all forms of hate, bias, discrimination and harassment in schools. This will be informed by:
 - [Human Rights](#)
 - [Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression \(ARAO\)](#)
 - [Reimagining Wellness – Top 5 Lessons](#)
 - [Anti-Black Racism Policy](#)
 - Anti-Black Racism Strategy
 - [Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness](#)
- We will ensure that student voice and lived experience informs the classroom environment, and learning, engagement and leadership experiences by:
 - Uplifting Student Advisory and Student Affinity Groups
 - Collaborating with students and families
 - Identifying and removing barriers to learning
 - Supporting school leaders and educators

In 2025-2026, we will go deeper with implementation by continuing to collaborate across departments in order to implement and monitor each pillar in the MYSP and the five goals in the BIP. We will continue to build staff capacity, principal and vice-principal instructional leadership, and ensure that every student is fully included, experiences a sense of belonging and is well supported to meet with academic success and the ability to make choices about their future.

Financial Implications:

All actions articulated in this report were supported by the funding provided through both Core Education Funding and Responsive Education Program grants and in accordance with the 2024-2025 school year budget passed by Trustees in June 2024.

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.



Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Goal:

Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

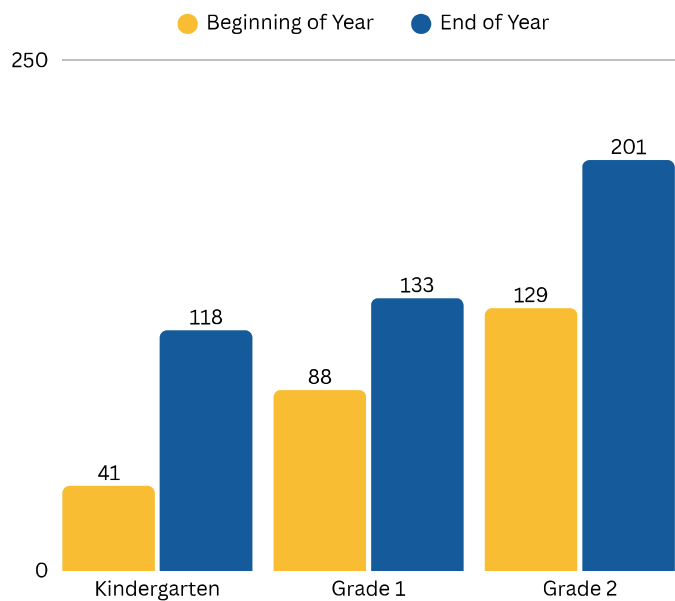
Indicators:

% at level 3-4 in EQAO Reading and Writing in grades 3 and 6

% of First Time Eligible (FTE) students passing OSSLT

Acadience Reading Progress

Average Composite Scores

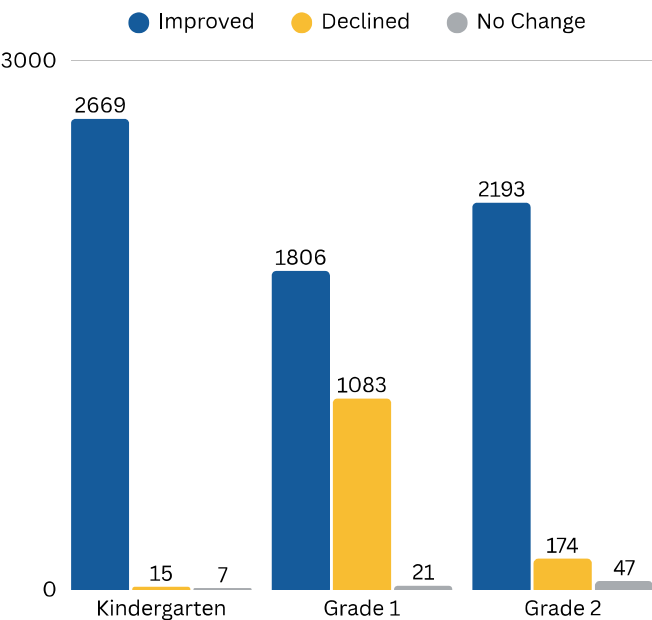


This data includes the average of all composite scores for students who were screened at both the beginning and end of the year

10,218 students were screened at the beginning of the year. 8,015 of those students were screened again at the end of the year. This chart shows the score status of those students screened both times.

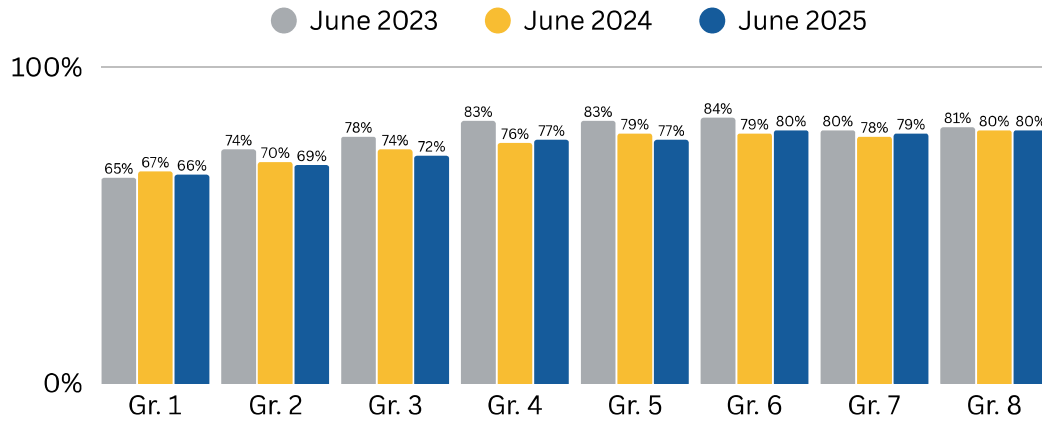
Note: Increases in composite scores mean students improved but do not mean they achieved their reading comprehension goals.

Composite Score Change by Count of Students



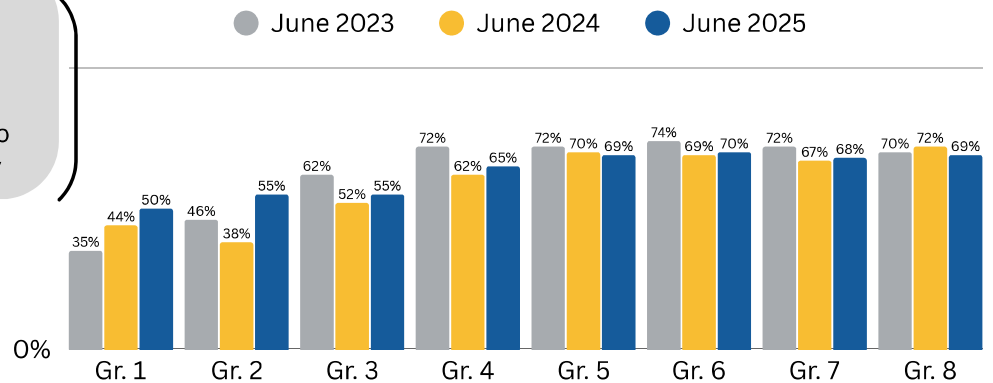
Report Card: Final Language Grades - Elementary

% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Language All Students

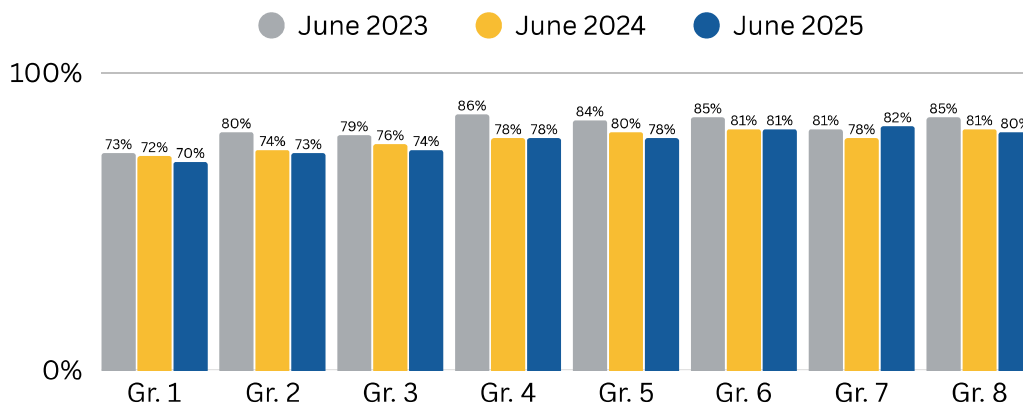


% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Language: Students Receiving Special Education Supports

The June 2023 data is percentage at Level 3-4 in Reading. After that year, the Reading, Writing and Oral Communication strands were no longer assessed independently

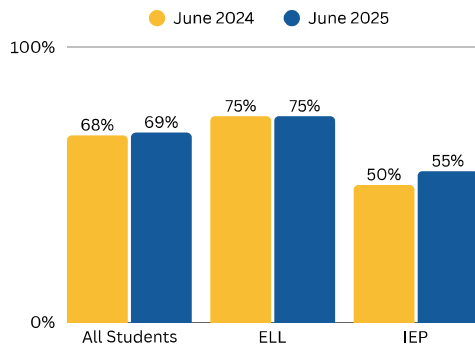


% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Language: English Language Learners in ESL or ELD Programs



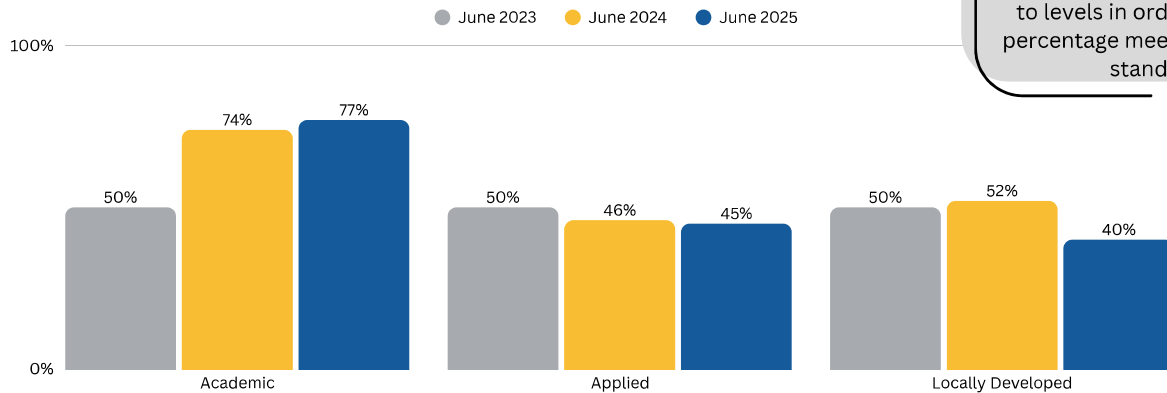
Report Card: Final English Grades - Secondary

Grade 9 English
% at Provincial Standard (L34)



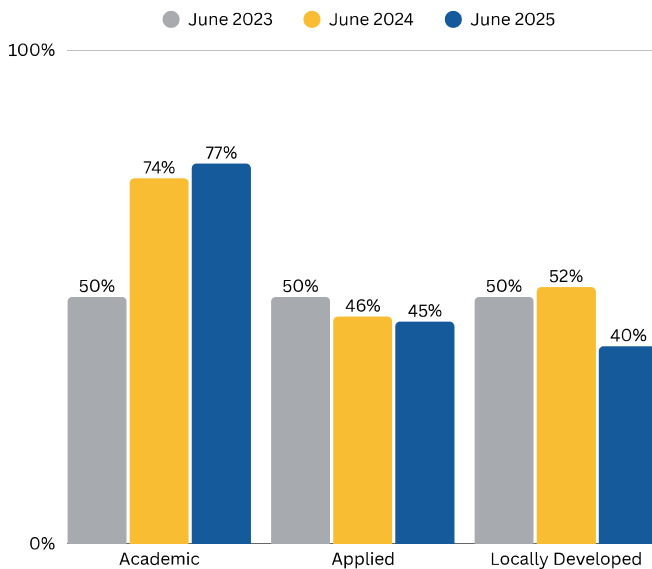
The Grade 9 English course, ENL1W was introduced in 2023-2024. It's a de-streamed course, meaning it is designed for all students, and the curriculum was updated to align with recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read inquiry report.

Grade 10 English
% at Provincial Standard (L34) - All Students

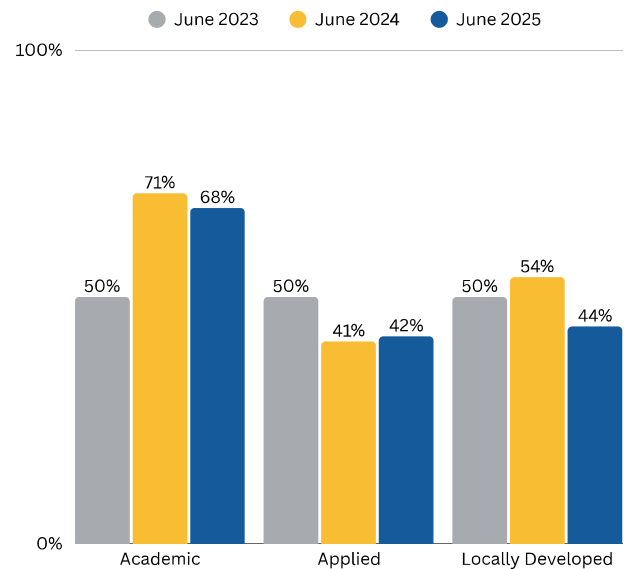


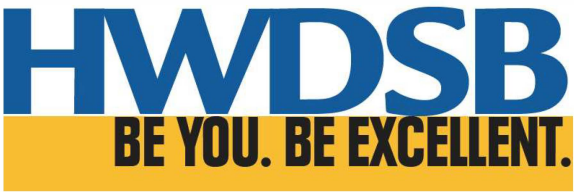
Although secondary students are assessed using number grades out of 100, we have converted them to levels in order to present percentage meeting provincial standard.

Grade 10 English
% at Provincial Standard (L34) - English Language Learners in ESL or ELD Programs



Grade 10 English
% at Provincial Standard (L34) - Students Receiving Special Education Supports





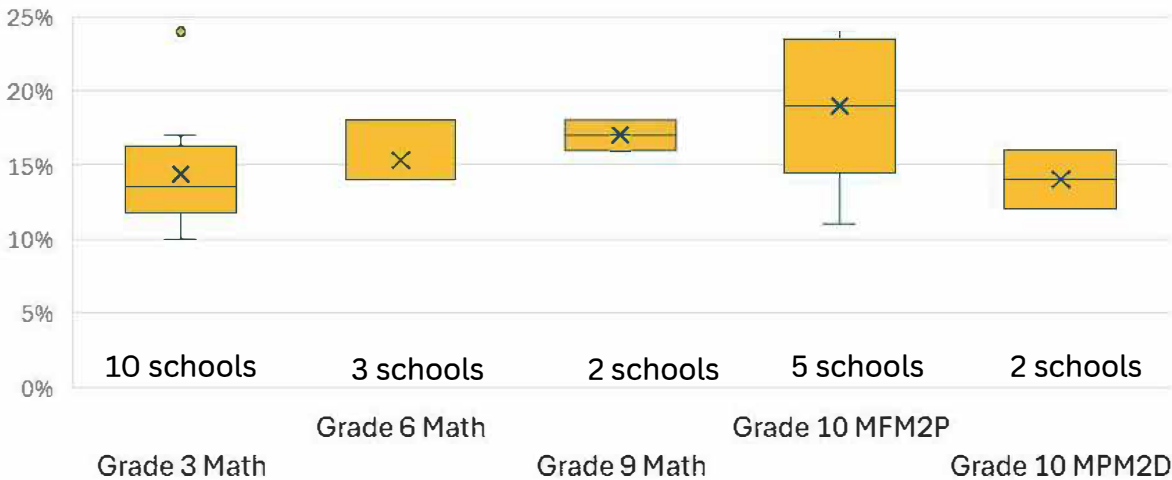
Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Goal:
Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Indicators:
% at level 3-4 in EQAO Mathematics in Grades 3, 6 and 9

Report Card: Final Mathematics Grades

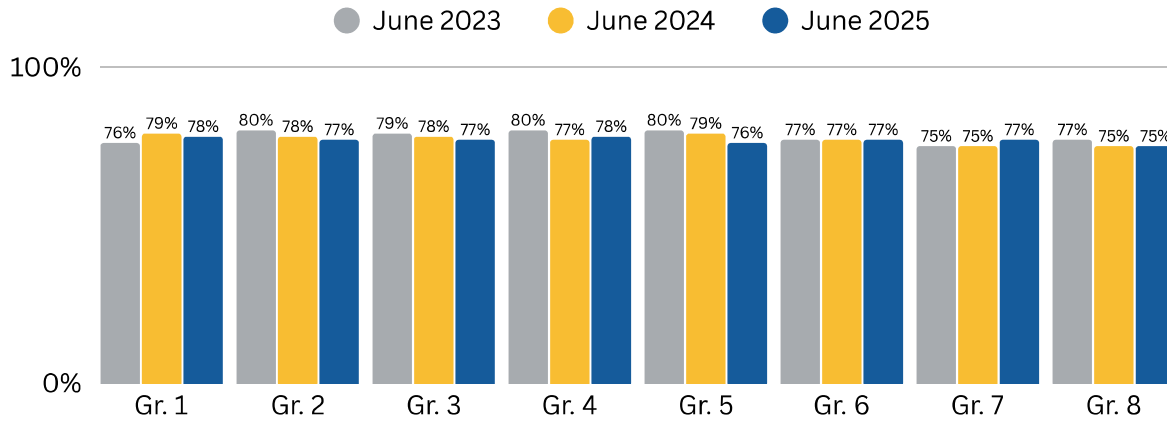
Schools Improving by at least 10%
in Proportion of Students Achieving at Level 3-4



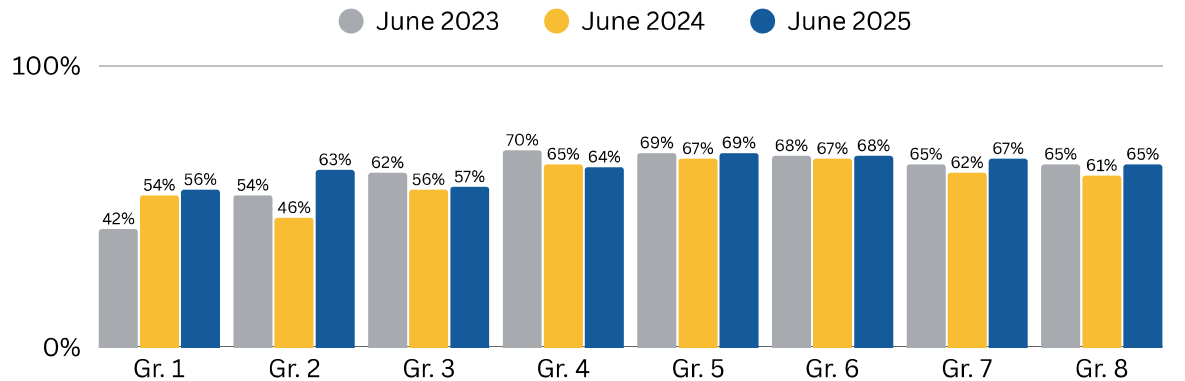
We've used boxplots to help celebrate marked student achievement increases in schools compared to the previous year. The boxplots above visualize the distribution of improvement indicating the 5 number summary: the minimum, first quartile (Q1), median (Q2), third quartile (Q3), and maximum values. X marks the average increase.

Report Card: Final Mathematics Grades - Elementary

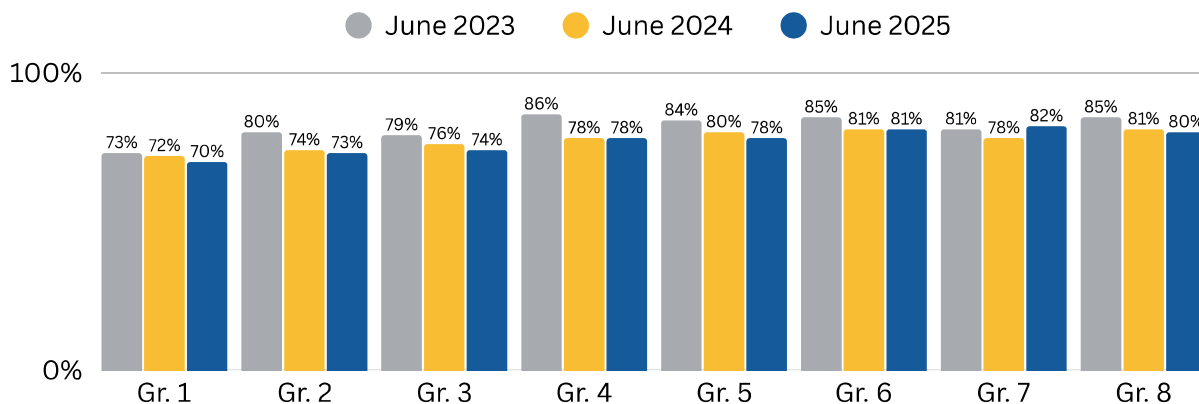
% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Mathematics All Students



% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Mathematics: Students Receiving Special Education Supports

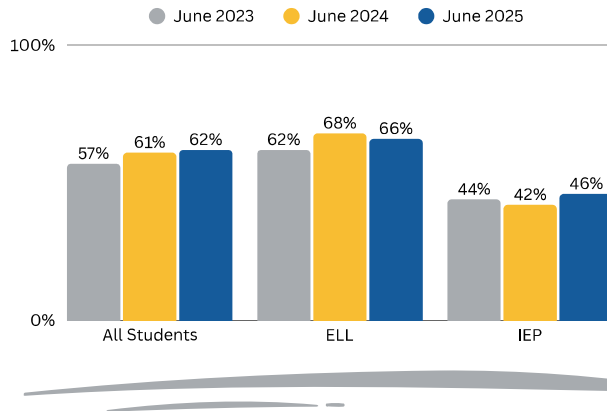


% at Provincial Standard (L34) in Mathematics: English Language Learners in ESL or ELD Programs



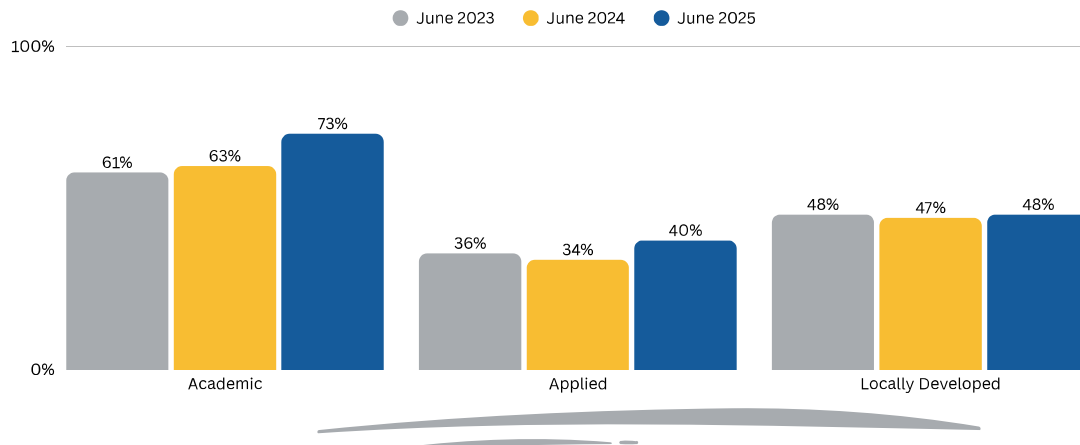
Report Card: Final Mathematics Grades - Secondary

Grade 9 Mathematics % at Provincial Standard (L34)

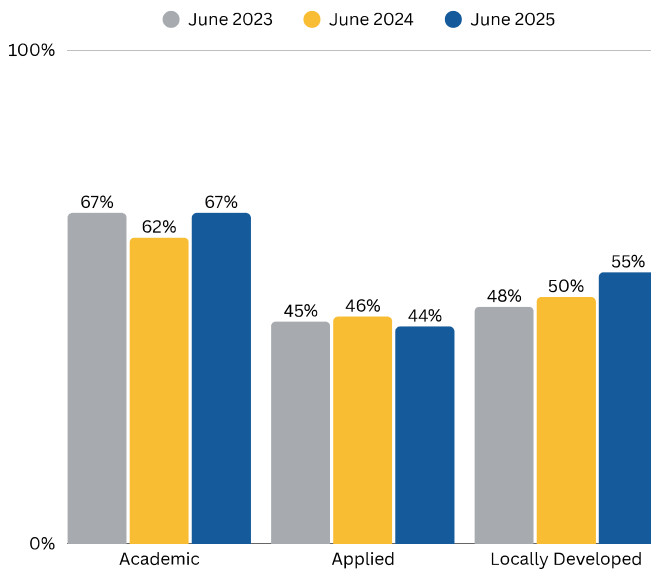


Although secondary students are assessed using number grades out of 100, we have converted them to levels in order to present percentage meeting provincial standard.

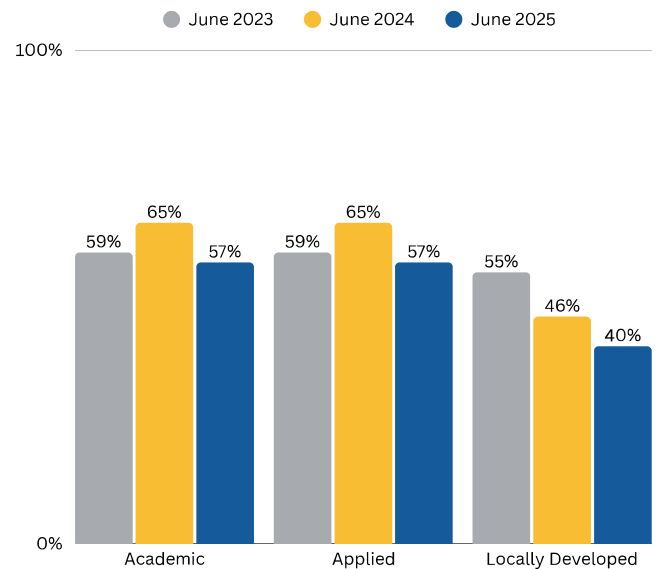
Grade 10 Mathematics % at Provincial Standard (L34) - All Students



Grade 10 Mathematics % at Provincial Standard (L34) - English Language Learners in ESL or ELD Programs



Grade 10 Mathematics % at Provincial Standard (L34) - Students Receiving Special Education Supports





Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Goal:

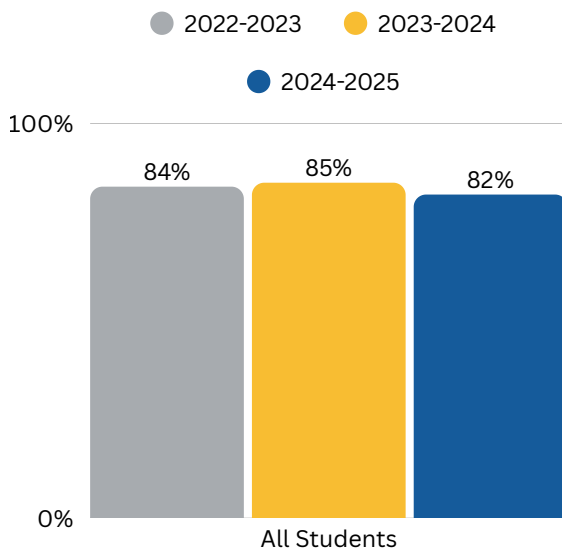
We Will Improve Preparedness for the Future of Every Student

Indicators:

- % of students graduating within 5 years
- % of students on track to graduate with 16 credits by the end of grade 10
- % of students participating in job skills programs (SHSM, Dual Credits, OYAP)
- % of students enrolled in one of: grade 12 Math or grade 11|12 Science
- % of students who feel prepared for the next step in their learning

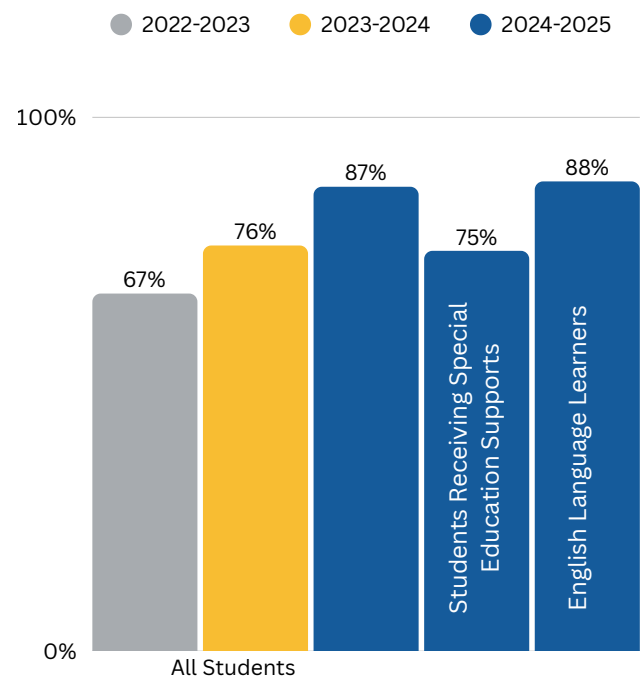
Students Graduating and On Track to Graduate

5 Year Graduation Rate

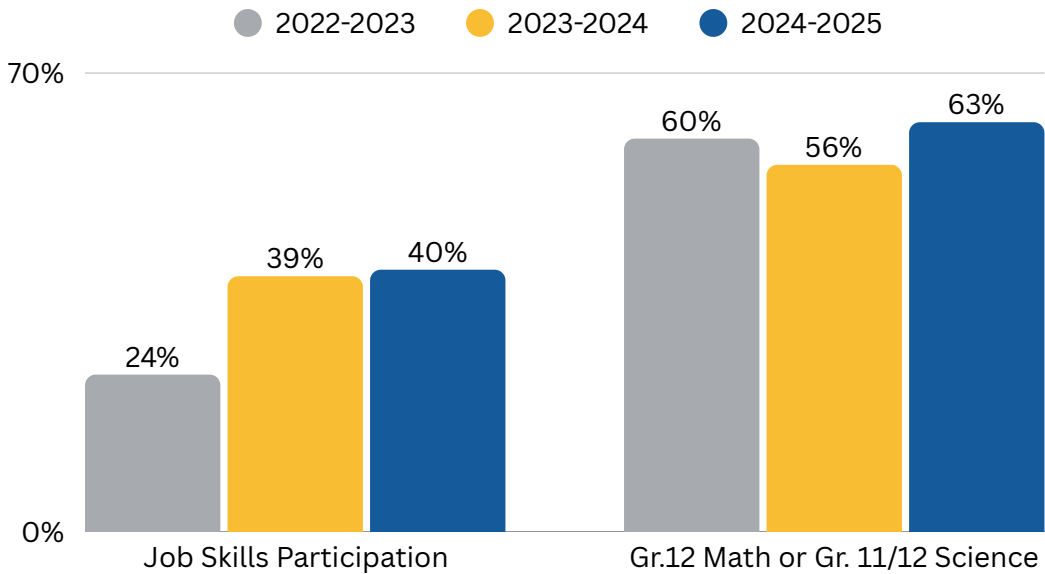


Graduation rates include all diploma types: Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), OSSD-SHSM, Ontario Secondary School Certificate and Certificate of Accomplishment. Credit Accumulation includes only students striving for an OSSD where 16/16 credits is a necessary benchmark.

Grade 10 Credit Accumulation % with 16/16 Credits



Students Participating in Job Skills Programs
and Grade 12 Math or Grade 11 or 12 Science:



Students feeling prepared for the next step in their learning was 74% in 2023-2024.
Students feeling supported through their pathway planning was 64% in 2023-2024.

Students feeling prepared for the next step in their learning
(source: School Climate Spring 2025)

Students feeling supported through their pathway planning, understanding their choices and requirements to get there
(source: Gr.12 Exit Survey June 2025)



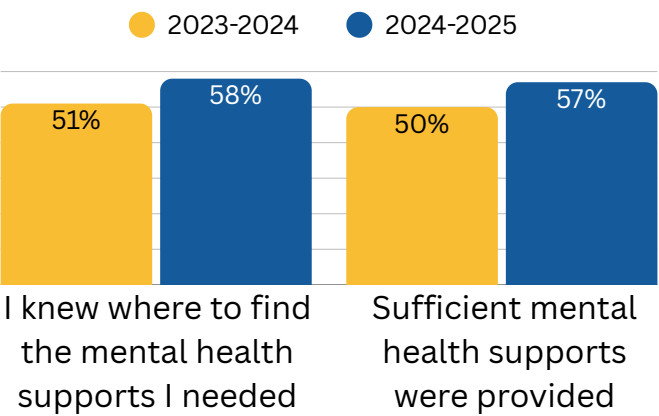
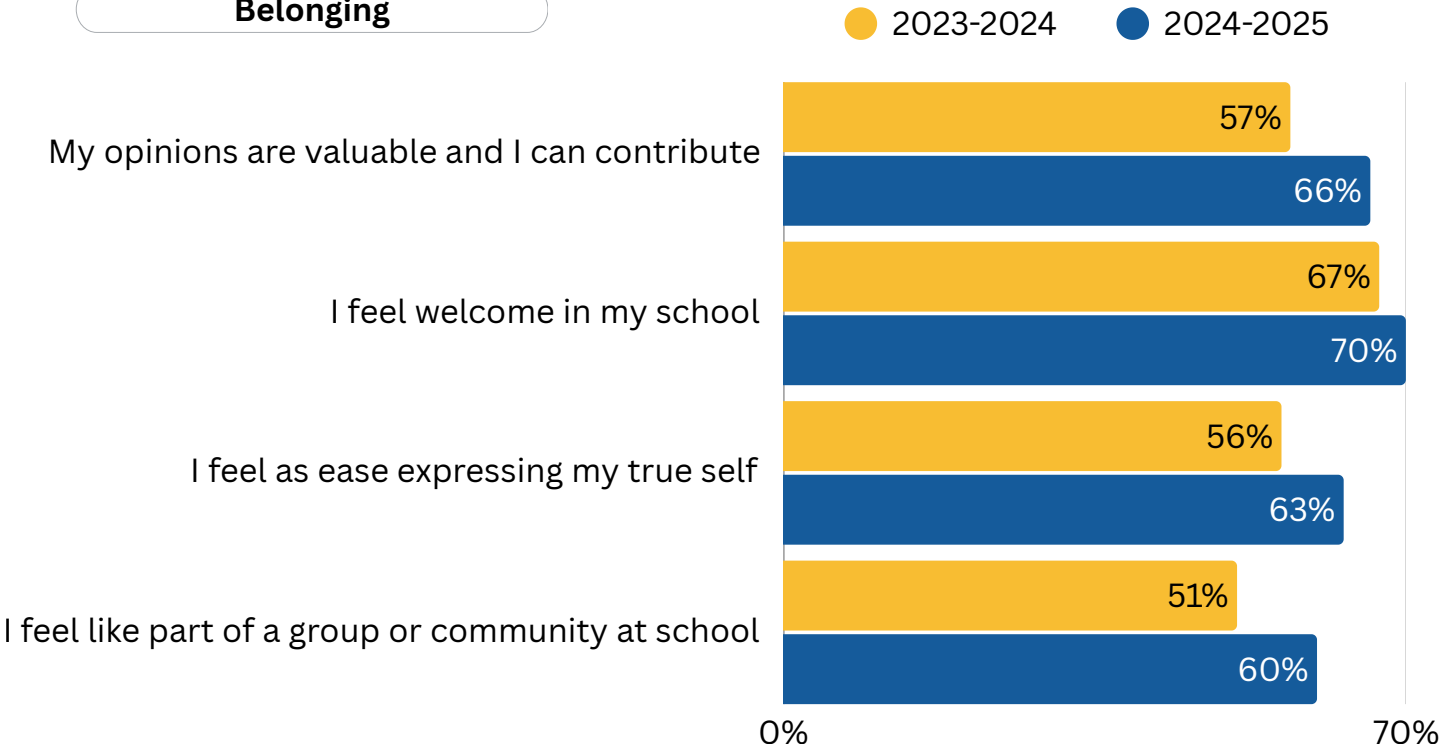
Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Goal:
We Will Improve Well-Being for Every Student

Indicators:

- % of students who feel like they belong in their school
- % of students aware of available mental health supports and services

Belonging



Mental Health Supports

Responses are percent of graduating Grade 12 students who assessed the board at Level 3-4 for providing a learning environment that made them feel like they belong in various ways and provided mental health information and support.



Board Improvement Plan 2024-2025

Goal:

We Will Increase Engagement for Every Student

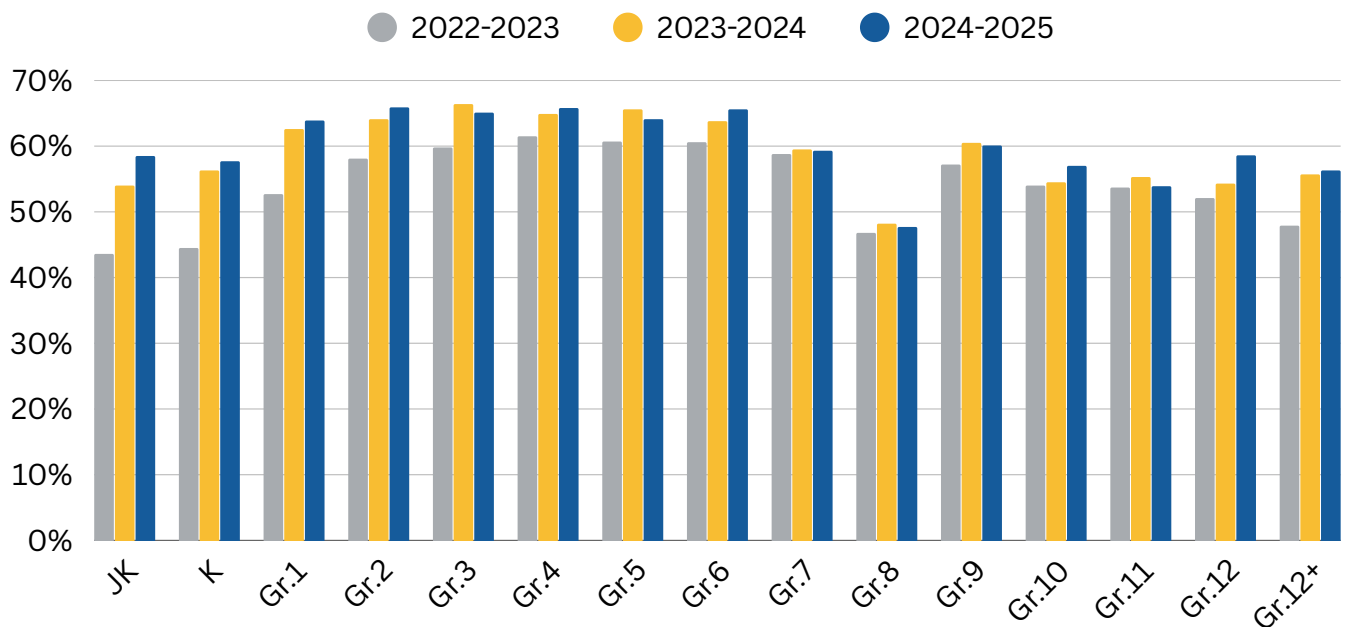
Indicators:

% of students attending school 90 percent of the time

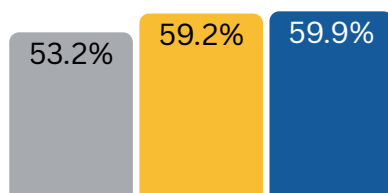
% of students suspended at least once

Student Attendance

% Students Attending School 90 Percent of the Time

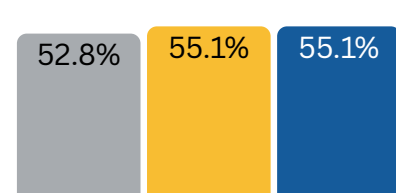


2022-2023	43.6%	44.5%	52.7%	58.1%	59.8%	61.5%	60.7%	60.6%	58.8%	46.8%	57.2%	54.0%	53.7%	52.1%	47.9%
2023-2024	54.0%	56.3%	62.6%	64.1%	66.4%	64.9%	65.6%	63.8%	59.5%	48.2%	60.5%	54.5%	55.3%	54.3%	55.7%
2024-2025	58.5%	57.7%	63.9%	65.9%	65.1%	65.8%	64.1%	65.6%	59.3%	47.7%	60.1%	57.0%	53.9%	58.6%	56.3%
	JK	K	Gr.1	Gr.2	Gr.3	Gr.4	Gr.5	Gr.6	Gr.7	Gr.8	Gr.9	Gr.10	Gr.11	Gr.12	Gr.12+



Elementary

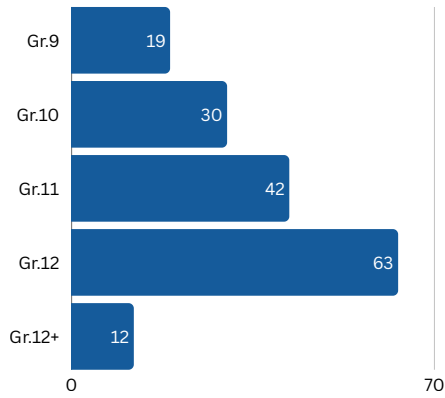
% Students Attending School 90 Percent of the Time by Panel



Secondary

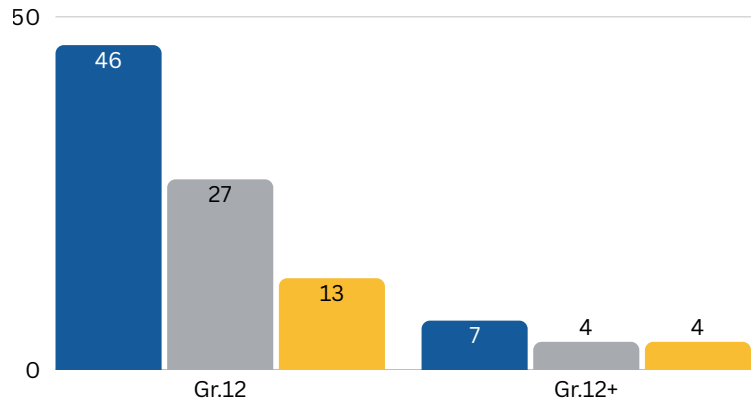
Graduation Coaching Program for Black Students

Students Participating in the Graduation Coaching Program for Black Students



● # Graduated ● # Applied to Post Secondary

● # Accepted into Post Secondary

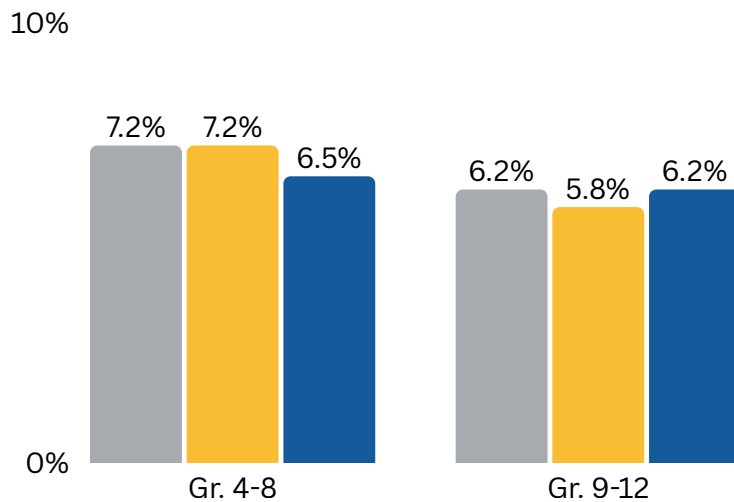


Student Suspensions

Suspension Rates by Panel
Excluding Primary Students

● 2022-2023 ● 2023-2024

● 2024-2025



Our overall suspension rate for Grades 4 to 12 is 6.4%. For the last 2 years it has been 7%. The rate from K to 12 is 4.3%. Excluding primary grades gives a more realistic picture of suspension activity because there are so few suspensions from K to Gr. 3.



PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

October 16, 2025

Math Achievement Action Plan, 2025-2026

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Estella Jones, Superintendent, Board Math Lead, K-12

Recommendation:

That the HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026 report be received.

Background:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's [2023-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) is centred on students having a deep and meaningful sense of belonging while experiencing impactful learning outcomes for all. The MYSP informs our [Board Improvement Plan](#) (BIP) with five measurable goals including improved numeracy achievement for every student. Informed by the [Ministry of Education's Ministry Achievement Action](#) (2024) and building upon the momentum of mathematics in our schools, and previous action plans, staff ensured our HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP), 2025-2026, further supports student achievement and improved academic achievement in mathematics in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 across HWDSB. Our MAPP is crucial to realizing our commitments for improved numeracy achievement as outlined in our BIP.

Status

The MAPP 2025-2026 ([Appendix A](#)) builds on the efforts from the 2024-2025 school year and continues to focus on the use of proven evidence informed strategies and approaches to address the needs identified in schools. Upon reflection of our progress indicators and our student achievement outcomes last year, staff have identified the following three priority actions for this year's plan:

- **Curriculum Fidelity:** Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation and use of instructional and assessment practices with a proven track record of enhancing student achievement. For example, the action plan focusses on supporting teachers with using

long-range delivery plans that align with the curriculum and high impact instructional practices.

- **Math Content Knowledge for Teaching:** Engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching. For example, the action plan includes professional development for teachers to better understand key mathematical concepts through the use of multiple representations and flexible thinking.
- **Knowing Your Student:** Knowing each mathematics learner and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions, and supports are relevant and responsive. For example, the action plan focuses upon working with teachers to support students with special educational needs and building student confidence and engagement by making connections to student identities and interests.

HWDSB's MAPP is structured to support all schools in addition to directly supporting Ministry of Education identified priority schools.

Math Priority Schools

The Ministry of Education has identified forty-three (43) HWDSB schools as priority schools for mathematics. This year, these schools include thirty-eight (38) elementary and five (5) secondary schools. To support these Math Priority Schools, nineteen (19) elementary and 4.3 full-time secondary Math Facilitators have been assigned to work directly with students and classroom teachers in grade 3, 6, and/or 9 classes. Math Facilitators have been instrumental in the implementation of our MAPP, building student and teacher confidence, closing gaps in student learning through small group instruction, as well as building teacher capacity through in-class support. As part of ongoing learning, Math Facilitators will continue to build their understanding of Indigenous Educational Wellness as well as culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy in mathematics.

All Schools

Within the Math Achievement Action Plan, there are several supports for all schools. With the support of a school math lead, professional learning in mathematics will continue to occur within schools. School math leads will participate in system learning and be provided with resources to share foundational learning to all. School math leads will be working alongside principals who will be participating in regular learning sessions about math leadership and effective math practices. In addition, grade 3, 6, 9 and 10 teachers from all schools will take part in ongoing professional learning throughout the 2025-2026 school year.

Key Changes

Based on the achievement of our students in the previous school year, the HWDSB MAPP has been revised to support and enhance student achievement and confidence in mathematics through/ or in the following ways:

- The use of a common Long-Term Delivery Plan, K to Grade 8;
- Professional learning sessions with Learning Resource Teachers and Math Facilitators to provide more intensive math support for students with special education needs;
- Embedding STEAM and cross-curricular connections within mathematics; and,
- Placing a greater emphasis on collaboration with students, and families.

Financial Implications:

For the 2025-2026 school year, the HWDSB received approximately \$2.1 M in funding through the Responsive Education Program (REP) grants to support our MAPP. Further, approximately \$1.5 M in funding has been allocated from the Core Education grants to support our MAPP. All activities articulated in this report are within the approved 2025-2026 HWDSB budget of approximately \$3.6 M.

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.

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.

HWDSB MATH ACHIEVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2025-2026

DRAFT



HWDSB Math 
Joy in Numbers 

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan 2025-2026

Table of Contents

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Math Achievement Action

Plan Math Priority Action Areas

- Key Performance Indicators & Monitoring

- Improving Numeracy for Every Student

- Measuring Progress

- Reporting

Supports and Professional Development Plan for The Math Achievement Action Plan

- The Math Team

- Math Priority Schools

- Overview of Professional Learning Plans

- Long Range Plans

- Support for High Priority Math Schools

- Professional Learning Structure for All Schools

- Additional Learning Opportunities

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Math Achievement Action Plan

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to creating the conditions for students to experience a sense of belonging and be engaged in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future. The HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan places the student at the centre with a focus on understanding and meeting individual needs to improve student achievement.

The HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan is informed by the Ministry's Math Achievement Action Plan (2023) and is designed to support student achievement and results in mathematics across the province in Grades 3, 6, and 9.

As we move into its third year, evidence suggests that the HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan is supporting staff with understanding the complexities and pedagogies related to effective practices in the classroom and improved achievement by students. Evidence-informed strategies and targeted learning will be used to deepen understanding of key content areas. The foundation of this learning will be based on human rights and equity, including, understanding biases, prejudices and the impact of systemic racism on outcomes in mathematics. In addition, we will further our learning alongside the Indigenous Education team to improve Indigenous educational wellness and advance efforts towards truth and reconciliation.

Math Priority Action Areas

Curriculum Fidelity:

Ensuring fidelity of curriculum implementation including the intentional use of proven strategies that support academic math achievement

Math Content Knowledge for Teaching:

Engaging in ongoing learning to strengthen mathematics content knowledge for teaching

Knowing Your Student:

Knowing the mathematics learning, and ensuring mathematical tasks, interventions and supports are relevant and responsive

	Specific Actions to Support Growth in Curriculum Fidelity	Specific Actions to Support Growth in Math Content Knowledge for Teaching	Specific Actions to Support Growth in Knowing Your Student
Classroom	Connect instruction and assessment to curriculum expectations and long-term essential mathematical understandings using developmental continuums and math processes	Access resources, experts, and professional learning to continuously develop content knowledge for teaching	Plan, teach, and assess learning in culturally responsive and relevant ways that motivate students to take ownership of their learning of, and progress in, mathematics
School	Engage in ongoing professional learning on the curriculum, including making connections across strands connecting long-range plans, course outlines, lesson plans and reporting to curriculum expectations	Engage in collaborative meetings to deepen knowledge of mathematics, curriculum, instructional starting points and interventions	Monitor and respond to students' perception of and confidence in math
Board	Prioritize understanding of the curriculum and the continuum of learning across grades	Utilize student achievement data and student work to establish focus areas for mathematics professional learning	Provide a digital math tool to support student mathematics learning at home and/or at school, that can be used by teachers to understand current student learning levels and provide targeted supports for students

To support the Math Priority Action Areas, Math Facilitators will be leading math instruction and directly supporting students in 38 elementary and 5 secondary math priority schools. Professional learning will focus on building understanding and skills that align with the action areas through various opportunities such as system learning, after-school sessions, and Additional Qualifications in math.

Key Performance Indicators & Monitoring

As outlined by the Ministry, the following key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to assess impact schools:

- Number of students who progressed in their level of achievement on math report cards for the Gr 3, 6, and 9 cohort
- Percentage of students who progressed in their level of achievement in math EQAO
- Number of students whose individual attendance rate in math class is equal to or greater than 90 %
- Number of Grades 3, 6, and 9 math students who report positive attitudes and confidence in mathematics
- Number and levels of achievement of students supported through curriculum modifications based on report card outcomes in mathematics

Monitoring of progress in implementation and impact will include:

- Educator reporting of learning and use of High Impact Instructional Practices
- Number of educators engaging in professional learning around curriculum implementation
- Number of educators engaging in professional learning to deepen math content knowledge
- The number of students with the IEP box checked in Math at each level of achievement
- Number of students accessing the digital math resource, Knowledgehook in Grades 3, 6, and 9
- Number of teachers using MathUP as part of their math programming
- Student achievement by level in key mathematical concepts in Grades 3, 6, and 9
- Number of educators participating in collaborative meetings and professional learning
- Educator reporting use of a variety of regular assessment practices to inform programming
- Students reporting positive results regarding math attitudes and confidence as indicated by their response to the statement 'I am good at math' in Grades 3, 6, and 9
- Educators self-reporting of planning, teaching and assessing in culturally responsive, relevant ways, and through an Indigenous Educational Wellness approach
- Data collected regarding student understanding of key concepts through small group instruction

Improving Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Improving numeracy achievement for every student is one of the goals within the HWDSB multi-year strategic plan. To provide equitable, quality education opportunities:

- We will provide professional learning and coaching to build educator capacity in Mathematics content knowledge and pedagogy using effective numeracy strategies including: [High Impact Instructional Practices \(HIIP\)](#); [Culturally Relevant, Responsive Pedagogy \(CRRP\)](#); [Differentiated Instruction \(DI\)](#); [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#); [Indigenous Pedagogies](#)
- We will support student competence and confidence in Mathematics by: Collaborating with students and families; Providing rich problem-solving and experiential tasks for students; Making student thinking explicit through Math conversations in the classroom; Small group instruction; Providing [Mathematical thinking tools](#) such as manipulatives; and
- We will collaborate regularly to implement effective, evidence-based assessment practices to identify strengths and areas for growth in students.

Measuring Progress

Expected Outcomes
Increase the percent of students achieving provincial standard or above on report cards for current cohort of Grades 3, 6, and 9 students
Increase the percent of students achieving provincial standard or above on the 2025-26 mathematics portion of EQAO assessment by reducing the gap between board and provincial results
Increase the number of students in Grades 3, 6 and 9 who report positive attitudes and confidence in mathematics

Reporting

School boards are required to complete and submit to the Ministry their Math Achievement Action Plan three times a year which is approved by the Director and endorsed by the Program Committee and Board of Trustees. As part of this expectation, regular updates will be provided to Executive Council and the Board of Trustees.

November: Initial strategies and key performance indicators

March: Progress report including data from Semester 1

June: Final report including data from Semester 2

Supports and Professional Development Plan for The Math Achievement Action Plan

The Math Team

School Math Lead

Elementary schools are encouraged to have a School Math Lead. The School Math Lead should be someone who is willing to participate in system learning, share the learning with other educators, and support the use of MathUP within their school, in collaboration with the Principal. The role of the School Math Lead is voluntary and is determined by the Principal each year. While the School Math Lead can have any role within the school, it is important to note that the focus of the Board Math Action Plan is on Grades 3 and 6. In Secondary schools, the Department Head of Math would have the role of instructional leader and math lead.

Math Facilitators

Math Facilitators play a crucial role within math high priority schools in identified Grades 3, 6, and 9 classes. They are responsible for helping teachers and students improve their understanding and achievement in mathematics. For the 2025-26 school year, there are 19 elementary and 4.3 full time equivalent secondary math facilitators who support a total of 43 schools. Their responsibilities include:

- Supporting effective math instruction through professional development and training
- Collaborating with teachers to plan and implement math lessons
- Observing and providing feedback to teachers on their math instruction
- Assisting teachers in analyzing student data to guide instruction and improve student learning
- Modeling effective math instruction for teachers
- Providing resources and materials to support math instruction
- Working directly with students, either individually or in small groups, to provide additional math instruction and support
- Keeping up-to-date with current research and best practices in math
- Participating in school and district meetings related to math instruction

Math Consultants

The Math Consultants plan and facilitate professional learning across the system for various educators and staff including classroom teachers, math facilitators, and Principals and Vice-Principals. While the consultants work as a team, each consultant will take the lead on the areas listed in their respective portfolio.

Susan Willis	Daniel Morrison	Ray Perkins
Focus Grade 3	Focus Grade 6	Focus Grade 9
K-Grade 3	Grades 4-7	Grades 8-10
FOS 1, 3, 4	FOS 2, 5	Secondary school support
Special Education Classes	LRT Math Intervention UDL	Math Facilitator Lead
Family Engagement	Digital Math Tools	Partnerships
NTIP	Data	Grade 8 to 9 progression
After-school/summer learning	STEM, coding	Continuing Education, AQ

Superintendent and Principal

The Superintendent of Quality Math Instruction and Equity, and Program Principal responsible for numeracy, are leading and supporting the HWDSB Math Achievement Action Plan.

Math Priority Schools

Math priority schools were identified by the Ministry based on cumulative EQAO mathematics achievement data since 2021-22. At HWDSB, this includes 38 elementary (with 25 schools focusing on grade 3 and 33 schools focusing on grade 6) and 5 secondary schools with direct support for teachers and students in grades 3 and/or 6, or grade 9.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	FOS	Grade 3	Grade 6
AM Cunningham (FI)	4	x	
Bennetto (FI)	4	x	x
Buchanan Park	5	x	x
Cathy Wever	5	x	x
C.B. Stirling	2	x	x
Central	4	x	
Chedoke	5		x
Collegiate	1	x	x
Dr. Davey	1	x	x
Eastdale (FI)	1		x
Franklin Road	3		x
G.L. Armstrong	3	x	x
Gordon Price	2	x	x
Guy Brown (FI)	4		x
Helen Detweiler	2	x	x
Hess Street	4		x
Highview	3	x	x
Hillcrest	2	x	
Huntington Park	3	x	x
James Macdonald	2		x

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS	FOS	Grade 3	Grade 6
Janet Lee	1		x
Lake Ave	3	x	x
Lawfield (FI)	3		x
Lisgar	3	x	x
Memorial	5	x	x
Parkdale (FI)	2	x	
Pauline Johnson	3		x
Prince of Wales	5	x	x
Queen Mary	2	x	x
Queen Victoria	1	x	
Queensdale	3	x	x
R.A. Riddell	2		x
Ridgemount	2		x
Sir Wilfrid Laurier	3	x	x
Viola Desmond	3	x	x
Viscount Montgomery	2		x
W.H. Ballard (FI)	2	x	x
Westview	2		x
Westwood	2	x	

SECONDARY SCHOOLS	FOS	Grade 9
Bernie Custis	4	x
Glendale	3	x
Nora Francis Henderson	2	x
Sir Allan MacNab	2	x
Sir Winston Churchill	2	x

Overview of Professional Learning Plans

Long-Range Plans

The following long-range plans are intended to support educators within HWDSB to plan and participate in professional learning throughout the year. This plan also aligns with the HWDSB Long-Range Math Delivery plan for teachers. Schools may also refer to this plan with designing learning opportunities at the school level. Learning will continue to focus on the high impact instructional practices (HIIP) with direct curriculum connections. Assessment For Learning will be a common thread throughout the year, as will Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP), Differentiated Instruction (DI), Indigenous education, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) within the context of teaching and learning mathematics.

Division	Focus	September-October-November	December-January-February	March-April-May-June
Primary	HIIP	Small Group Instruction Math Conversations Learning Goals, Success Criteria and Descriptive Feedback	Small Group Instruction Direct Instruction	Small Group Instruction? Problem Solving Tasks & Experiences Teaching About Problem Solving
	Curriculum	Addition Subtraction	Multiplication Division	Proportional Reasoning
Junior/ Intermediate	HIIP	Small Group Instruction Math Conversations Learning Goals, Success Criteria and Descriptive Feedback	Small Group Instruction Direct Instruction	Small Group Instruction? Problem Solving Tasks & Experiences Teaching About Problem Solving
	Curriculum	Multiplication Division	Fractions Decimals	Spatial Sense Data
		Assessment For, As and Of Learning CRRP, DI, Indigenous Education, UDL		

Division	Focus	First Half of Semester	Second Half of Semester
Secondary	HIIP	Math Conversations Tools and Representations Direct Instruction	Small Group Instruction Problem Solving Tasks & Experiences Teaching About Problem Solving
	Curriculum		Number sense, Fractions, Algebra
		Assessment For, As and Of Learning CRRP, DI, Indigenous Education, UDL	

Making Math Connections

Embedding STEAM and cross-curricular connections within mathematics enhances relevance, creativity, and deeper conceptual understanding. This foundation supports future preparedness by equipping students with the skills and adaptability needed to thrive in complex and rapidly changing environments.

Support for High Priority Math Schools

High Priority Math Schools will have a Math Facilitator supporting specific staff in grades 3, 6, or 9 (as identified) and working with students in small groups. Math facilitator support with teacher learning will be primarily job-embedded, while the small group instruction will focus on gap closing. Math Facilitators are expected to attend full day learning sessions every 3 weeks on Day 5 (as needed) and will also be expected to participate in online Ministry learning sessions. It is recommended that Principals meet regularly with the Math Facilitator to check-in on needs, monitor student progress, and support with next steps. Principals are also asked to lead this work through the school improvement plan. This might include math specific classroom visits, creating collaborative teams, developing a plan to support students with EQAO, and monitoring student progress. Math facilitators will also be able to support full staff learning at staff meetings and PA days by participating in the planning and facilitating. In Secondary schools, in addition to supporting Grade 9 teachers and students, some professional learning opportunities will be extended to include teachers of Grade 10 classes. Schools are also encouraged to participate in Ministry learning sessions. These webinars focus on grade specific mathematics content knowledge for teaching and the use of high-impact instructional and assessment practices to improve student achievement in mathematics.

Professional Learning Structure for All Schools

For grades 3, 6, 9 and 10 teachers in all schools, a series of professional learning sessions will be provided at the system level provided by Math Consultants. Learning sessions will align with the long-range plans above and will involve small groups of teachers from multiple schools. Math Facilitators will attend along with their school teams. School Math Leads will also be invited to participate in specific learning sessions that will focus on how they can support instructional learning and effective math pedagogy within the school.

Additional Learning Opportunities

Educators across the system will have the opportunity to access a variety learning opportunities. After-school learning sessions will be offered throughout the year focusing on developing specific instructional practices and gap closing measures. Optional learning days will also be available based on school needs and interest. In addition, the HWDSB will be offering Math Additional Qualifications (AQ) in math. For more information on any of these opportunities, please reach out to a member of the math team.

DRAFT



Program Committee Report

October 16, 2025

Maintaining Safe and Secure School Environments

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
 Gerry Smith, Superintendent, Safe, Compassionate, and Equitable Schools, K-12
 Jason Rizza, System Principal, Caring and Safe Schools

Recommendation:

That the Maintaining Safe and Secure School Environments report be received.

Background:

In October 2023, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Board of Trustees approved a new [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) (MYSP) 2023-2028. The Strategic Directions of the MYSP helped to inform the creation of our [Board Improvement Plan](#) (BIP) which specifically identifies five important goals for students. Two of the goals are: 1) increase engagement for every student and 2) improve well-being for every student. These goals demonstrate our commitment to build upon the work rooted within the Safe Schools Action Plan, 2021-2023 across HWDSB schools and learning sites. To further the work and our commitments, staff have developed a Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan, 2024-2027, with 17 deliverables.

HWDSB is committed to ensuring that all students and staff feel safe, supported, and prepared for emergencies in school environments. The Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027 ([Appendix A](#)) continues to prioritize identity, equity, and human rights as key elements to create safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments. This approach recognizes the importance of relationships and partnerships, reflected through the Two Row Wampum, which emphasizes mutual respect and shared responsibility. The plan affirms the significance of diverse voices and identities, aiming to foster a sense of belonging for all students while acknowledging the vital role that each community plays in supporting and maintaining human rights and promoting equity. Guided by HWDSB's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), this framework also integrates the [Human Rights and Equity Action Plan 2023-2027](#), [Special Education Action Plan 2024-2025](#), [Mental Health and Addiction Strategy 2024-2027](#), and [Indigenous Education Circle Action Plan 2021-2025](#).

This report highlights our collective leadership to maintain safe and secure school environments. It will summarize current initiatives, data, protocols, safety measures, and school-based supports

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that collectively contribute to safe and inclusive schools. All efforts are grounded in trauma-informed practice(s), equity, and human rights principles. The report is written in four parts: student voice, classroom learning and professional development, physical learning environments and safe and caring school response protocols.

Student Voice

Safety is a shared responsibility. Staff, students, and families reinforce a culture of preparedness, trust, and care, contributing to safe and inclusive school environments. HWDSB continues to regularly collect and analyze data to monitor school safety, student experiences, and staff perceptions. Current data from HWDSB's Grade 12 Exit Survey ([Appendix B](#)) and Healthy Peer Relations Survey indicate that while many students report feeling safe and respected at school, experiences of belonging, peer relationships, and perceptions of adult-student respect vary across schools. Principals use the data collected from these surveys to set school-wide goals, create supervision schedules and monitor student progress and well-being, and reflect on their School Improvement Plan.

In addition, feedback from student voice conferences, affinity and advisory groups, the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), and the Safe Schools Advisory Committee continues to provide important insight into how safety, respect, and inclusion are experienced in schools and across our system. These engagement processes continue to inform our data while strengthening inclusive, caring, and responsive school cultures, ensuring that every student feels safe, valued, and supported.

Classroom Learning and Professional Development

School safety is a foundational element of the Ontario curriculum, integrated across all grades and subject areas through mandated expectations and program planning considerations. At HWDSB, staff prioritizes student safety, emotional well-being, and cultural humility through CIR: Creating the Conditions – Identity-Affirming approaches that support flexible and adaptive Responses to meet student needs. The Ministry of Education emphasizes that all staff are responsible for ensuring all reasonable safety procedures are followed in courses and activities, modeling safe practices, and fostering environments where students assume responsibility for their own safety and that of others. This commitment is reflected in curriculum documents such as the Health and Physical Education curriculum, which includes strands on safe behaviours and practices.

We provide school-based educators with additional HWDSB resources to compliment the delivery of curriculum including mental health literacy. For example, *On The Horizon: Moving Toward More Inclusive and Safer Classrooms* is a resource that guides educators in fostering inclusive and safer classrooms. It emphasizes cultural humility, recognizing varied lived experiences and knowledge gaps, and encourages compassionate engagement with sensitive topics. The goal is to support educators in facilitating inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms where students can engage with challenging social, historical, and contemporary issues, fostering understanding, empathy, and responsible citizenship.

Professional Learning

Professional Activity Days offer the ability to reinforce safety through staff training on progressive discipline, trauma-informed approaches, anti-sex trafficking, and bullying prevention. Aligned to such Ministry directives such as [Erin's Law](#): (mandating education on child sexual abuse prevention and reporting), [Provincial Code of Conduct](#) (reinforcing expectations around student behavior, discipline, and safety), and various Policy/Program Memorandums (PPMs): Including [PPM 144 \(Bullying Prevention\)](#), [PPM 145 \(Progressive Discipline\)](#), and [PPM 166 \(Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols\)](#), we are dedicating professional development days to caring, safe, and inclusive schools, reviewing key policies, safe school's requirements, and progressive discipline. The learning will highlight proactive strategies and resources to help prevent violence and bullying; supports for gender-based violence and sex trafficking prevention; and equity responsive, trauma-informed approaches that promote student engagement, belonging, and well-being. These initiatives align with the HWDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the Ministry's directives, ensuring that safety is not only a compliance requirement but a core component of student well-being and inclusive education.

Guide for Programs and Speakers (GPS)

Who we welcome in school spaces is key. Aligned to [Policy/Program Memorandum \(PPM\) 170: School Board Communication with Parents](#), the Guide for Programs and Speakers (GPS) provides structured guidance for staff when inviting external programs or guest speakers. Recognizing that each school and classroom has unique needs, the GPS serves as a resource to support educators in selecting programs and resources that are appropriate, safe, and responsive. It offers clear direction for staff across all schools and work sites in the planning, implementation, and follow-up of external programs and guest speaker engagements. The goal is to deliver programs and speakers safely, respectfully, and meaningfully, enhancing student learning while safeguarding well-being and inclusion.

Physical Learning Environments

Creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming physical spaces is a core priority of the Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan. We have the following measures in place in our schools:

- **Environmental Safety Measures:** HWDSB schools are equipped with updated emergency protocols including evacuation, lockdown, shelter-in-place, and bomb threat procedures. These protocols are regularly communicated and practiced to ensure preparedness (for example, code lockdown, hold and secure and fire drills).
- **Infrastructure and Accessibility:** Facilities projects are aligned with capital priorities to improve accessibility and safety. This includes upgrades to gymnasiums, classrooms, and common areas to support student engagement and well-being.
- **Trauma-Informed Design:** Physical environments are shaped by trauma-informed principles, ensuring that spaces promote calm, dignity, and emotional safety for all students.
- **Security:** Secondary schools maintain operational cameras in key areas to support real-time monitoring and incident review.

- **Supervision Schedules:** Staff supervision schedules are strategically aligned to cover entry/exit points, common areas, and outdoor spaces.
- **Emergency Equipment:** Schools ensure first-aid kits, Automated External Defibrillators, and other emergency tools are accessible and checked regularly as part of joint health and safety committee site inspections.
- **Access Control:** Visitor protocols and secure entrances reduce unauthorized access. We have implemented access control in both elementary and secondary schools. All visitors to school sites must report to the Main Office and identify the reason for their visit.

Secure Schools Month

New this fall, Secure Schools Month (mid-October to mid-November) provides structured opportunities for school communities to engage with safety protocols, emergency preparedness, and prevention strategies. Activities include principal-led case study exercises, scenario-based staff discussions, and student-led awareness campaigns. Weekly focus areas include fire evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure, privacy hold, shelter-in-place and school safety tours and finally bomb threat procedures. Surveys and reflection questions are being collected from students and staff to assess experiences, identify support needs, and inform improvements. Templates to track emergency drills have also been shared to record dates, observations, and follow-up actions to ensure accountability.

Caring and Safe Schools Response Protocols

HWDSB's response protocols are grounded in transparency, collaboration, and equity.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention:

Our updated HWDSB Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan aligns with [Ministry PPM 144](#) and HWDSB policies. It promotes shared responsibility among students, staff, and families to foster positive school climates. The plan outlines evidence-based strategies currently available in schools, Ministry requirements, and school responsibilities to prevent and respond to bullying, emphasizing student safety, well-being, and inclusive school environments.

In Ontario, Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week occurs in late November. In HWDSB, we use this week as an opportunity to raise awareness about bullying and its effects on student learning and well-being. Schools focus on creating safe, inclusive, and accepting learning environments while helping students, staff, and families understand how to interrupt and resolve bullying and other harmful behaviours, such as teasing and aggression. Resources and supports are shared across the board to help everyone in the HWDSB community learn how to support one another, encourage positive interactions, and maintain healthy relationships. Students also learn about the HWDSB Helps tool through lessons and hands-on practice, giving them a safe and private way to report bullying, teasing, aggressive behaviour, or other issues that makes them feel unsafe. Families are provided with similar resources and tools to help facilitate conversations with their children about healthy relationships and ways to respond if bullying does occur. These activities help students, staff, and families work together to make schools caring, safe, and respectful teaching and learning environments.

Transparent Communication and Reporting Mechanisms

HWDSB continues to develop clear reporting pathways for threats, safety concerns, and incidents of sexual behaviour or violence. For example, students and staff can make an anonymous report through HWDSB Helps or Crime Stoppers. In addition, staff have developed a Human Rights and Hate-Based Incident Tracking Form to document incidents. This complements the Ministry's Safe Schools Incident Forms and ensures accountability in addressing discrimination and harm.

Students, families and staff can raise concerns through HWDSB's Whistleblower Policy or Human Rights reporting processes, ensuring that all reports are addressed confidentially, fairly, and in alignment with HWDSB policy and procedures.

Provincial and Local Police/School Board Protocols

HWDSB currently is operating from an existing *2016 Hamilton Police/School Board Protocol*. An updated protocol is currently under development in conjunction with three other local school boards. In 2024, the Ministry indicated that an updated [Provincial Model for a Local Police or School Board Protocol](#) is under development.

Continuous Improvement and Accountability

HWDSB has adopted a multi-pronged approach to school safety—combining policy, training, infrastructure, partnerships, and student voice. The emphasis on equity, trauma-informed care, and community collaboration reflects a holistic vision for safe and inclusive schools. Staff continues to evaluate and enhance safety protocols through feedback from Secure Schools Month surveys, student voice opportunities, staff input, and community partners. Ongoing professional development in trauma-informed responses equips staff to implement interventions safely and consistently and will continue to be a priority in our Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan.

Financial Implications:

The Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan, 2024-2027, was developed within the resources allocated in the 2024/2025 and 2025/2026 school year budgets. Future actions stemming from the action plan will be undertaken within the 2025/2026 school year budget approved by Trustees in June 2025.

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.

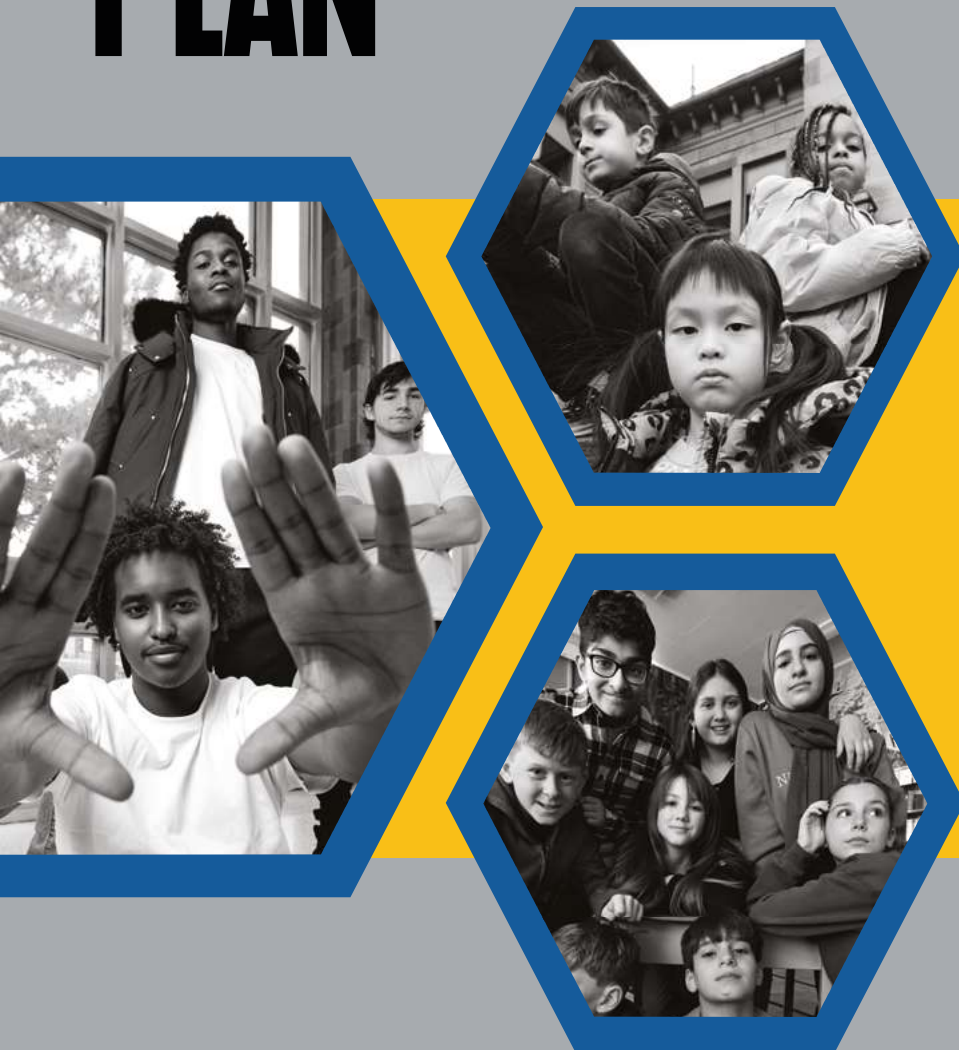
Building a Sustainable Education System

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.

2024-2027 CARING & SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

HWDSB'S MISSION STATEMENT	3
HWDSB'S VALUES	3
GUIDING PRINCIPLES	3
GOALS: 2024-2027 CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN.....	5
2024-2027 CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN.....	5
CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN: A HOLISTIC APPROACH	8

HWDSB's **2024-2027 Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan** commits to fostering a positive, inclusive, and supportive educational environment where student identity and voice are centered, relationships are nurtured, and safety and well-being are prioritized. HWDSB is dedicated to transparent communication and accountability in decision-making, ensuring that all students and families feel safe, secure, valued, and supported. Through active involvement, HWDSB aims to create and support environments where every voice is heard and listened to.

HWDSB's Mission Statement:

"Every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future." ([HWDSB 2023-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#)).

HWDSB's Values:

Compassion: Leading with peace, friendship and love creates space for compassionate accountability, where we are responsible to one another in creating a culture of care.	Dignity: Reciprocity, anti-racism and anti-oppression lead to a just and equitable learning community, where every person is included, respected and valued.
Trust: Humility and transparency build the trusted relationships, connections and education system necessary for growth, change and evolution.	Joy: Curiosity, play and fun are catalysts for meaningful student learning outcomes and support joyful and enriching experiences.

Guiding Principles:

The following principles guide HWDSB's work in implementing **the Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan** by having a shared understanding of the work and its application to our mission:

- We honour local Indigenous knowledge and practices, recognizing that cultural disconnection has adversely affected community wellness and healing across generations.
- We prioritize safety and care for all, deeply valuing the well-being of every individual in our educational community.
- We commit to ethical consultation and collaboration, actively engaging with students, families, staff, and the community to create a supportive environment.
- We intentionally seek input from individuals and communities historically underserved by the education system, acknowledging our responsibility to learn from their experiences.

Guiding Principles continued:

- We openly share our engagement processes with students, families, staff, and the community, as we believe in nurturing trusting relationships founded on transparency.
- We embrace a consensus-building approach to decision-making, ensuring that every voice is heard, valued, and honoured within our community.
- Our work is dedicated to benefiting students, families, staff, and the community, respecting and promoting self-determination at all levels.
- We strive to communicate in accessible language, ensuring that our messages resonate with and are understood by everyone in our community.

Impacts when Students Feel Safe and Secure:

- **Engaged School Communities:** School communities actively participate in practices that establish and sustain safe, equitable, and inclusive classrooms, fostering a secure environment for all students.
- **Amplified Voices:** Students from historically marginalized communities feel safe to share their perspectives, promoting collaboration and inclusivity among students, staff, families, and the community.
- **Profound Sense of Belonging:** Students feel safe to explore their identities, experiencing acceptance and honour that fosters a deep sense of belonging and authenticity.
- **Connected Relationships:** Students build secure and meaningful connections with responsive adults and peers, which enhances their learning experience through nurturing relationships.
- **Recognition of Value:** Students feel that they matter and are valued within their school community, receiving the support and attention necessary for their health and wellness.
- **De-stigmatized Mental Health Conversations:** Conversations about mental health are encouraged and normalized, creating a safe space for understanding and support among students.



GOALS: 2024-2027 CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS ACTION PLAN

- We will foster positive, inclusive environments where student identity, voice, and relationships are prioritized, ensuring every student feels valued and empowered to succeed.
- We commit to maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, families, and caregivers with transparent communication and collaborative approaches to addressing safety concerns.
- We will amplify student and family voices in decision-making, creating inclusive structures that reflect the needs and experiences of the entire school community.

2024-2027 Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan:

This section provides an overview of the key objectives and actions at the system and school levels under the following five priority areas and commitments:

- Creating the Conditions for Learning
- Identity Affirming Curriculum and Teaching Practices and Learning Environments
- Responding to Student Need
- Secure Schools Awareness and Response
- Accountability and Transparency

Creating a nurturing and secure environment is essential for fostering well-being and enabling every student to thrive within our school communities. A sense of safety and belonging shapes how students learn, interact, and develop. It is vital to recognize and address the systemic barriers that can impact students' experiences, ensuring that every individual has the resources they need to succeed.

Implementing an identity-affirming curriculum and inclusive teaching practices fosters a sense of belonging, allowing students to feel valued and engaged in their learning journeys. Every student's experience is unique and influenced by their diverse identities, including age, race, gender identity, socioeconomic status, and ability. Embracing these identities helps create an environment where everyone feels respected and understood.

By actively responding to the needs of students and promoting a culture of safety within schools, we cultivate a supportive atmosphere where all individuals feel secure and empowered. Our commitment to accountability and transparency ensures that our actions are continuously assessed and refined, leading to an equitable and caring educational experience for everyone.

1. Creating the Necessary Conditions for Learning

Objective:

To create student-centred learning environments where identity, voice and lived experience are affirmed and honoured, contributing to safety and the development of positive, caring and respectful relationships.

Actions:

- Establish regular opportunities for students to share their voices and lived experiences through discussions, forums, or focus groups, fostering an environment of trust and understanding.
- Encourage cooperative learning activities that build community and mutual respect, helping students develop positive relationships with their peers.
- Recognize and implement strategies to mitigate disproportionalities and inequities observed in student achievement, attendance, disciplinary actions, and well-being, aiming to foster a more equitable learning environment for all students.
- Ensure access to resources and support systems that address students' emotional and social needs, reinforcing their sense of safety and belonging within the school community.

2. Identity Affirming Curriculum and Teaching Practices and Learning Environments

Objective:

To create identity-affirming curricula and learning environments that ensure every student feels safe and secure. By celebrating diverse backgrounds and voices, we foster a culture of belonging and positive relationships, prioritizing students' well-being and success in a supportive learning environment.

Actions:

- Enhance inclusivity and cultural relevance across teaching, curriculum, assessment, and resources to ensure responsiveness to diverse student needs and backgrounds.
- Design and implement a curriculum that reflects diverse identities and cultures, allowing students to see themselves represented in their learning materials.
- Involve students and families in the planning and decision-making process regarding educational pathways that provide diverse pathway options, ensuring every student has opportunities to achieve success and fulfillment in their educational journey.

3. Responding to Student Need

Objective:

To foster a responsive educational environment that meets diverse student needs through bias-free progressive discipline, ensuring that all students feel safe, respected and supported.

Actions:

- Provide role -embedded learning for all staff on recognizing and addressing implicit bias, and systemic racism, and how these factors influence student discipline.
- Involve student voice in the development and revision of school policies related to discipline, ensuring they reflect the lived experiences and needs of diverse student populations.
- Expand and further develop anti-bullying resources that are informed by student voice, and foster and strengthen compassion, dignity, trust and joy for every student.
- Develop clear, consistent communication mechanisms that allow students and caregivers/families to report safety concerns, biases, or other needs. This should include anonymous reporting options and appropriate follow-up support(s).

4. Secure Schools Awareness and Response

Objective:

Ensuring that school emergency procedures, including evacuation, hold and secure, shelter in place, lockdown, and bomb threat protocols, are communicated and practiced for student safety and security.

Actions:

- Develop and maintain a clear reporting system to transparently communicate the implementation of secure school procedures and emergency readiness, using comprehensive data collection to assess safety outcomes, support inclusive practices, and enhance preparedness across all HWDSB sites.
- Provide regular progress updates on the organization's website and at board meetings to ensure accessible information on both equity initiatives and emergency preparedness for all HWDSB community members.
- Actively seek feedback from students, staff, and families on safety, inclusivity, and emergency protocols to guide future planning and enhance accountability and effectiveness in creating secure, inclusive learning environments.

5. Accountability and Transparency

Objective:

To consistently evaluate and adapt our Caring and Safe Schools commitments, using auditing tools to assess secure environments, identity-affirming practices, and inclusive responses. We will remain accountable to our community by transparently communicating progress and evolving with the educational landscape and student needs.

Actions:

- Conduct regular audits of secure schools practices and inclusive environment initiatives, using findings to refine policies and practices. This continuous assessment ensures our response evolves alongside the needs and experiences of our students, staff, and community.
- Provide accessible, periodic updates on the implementation of Caring and Safe Schools initiatives, including secure schools protocols. By sharing this information through multiple channels, we foster transparency, trust, and accountability across the community.
- Actively invite and incorporate feedback from students, families, and staff on safety and inclusion practices, using these insights to shape future planning and decision-making.

Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan: A Holistic Approach

HWDSB's continuous and ongoing commitment to creating a caring and safe learning and work environment is linked to the work of all departments in the organization, including:

- [HWDSB's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy](#)
- [Equity Action Plan](#)
- [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan](#)
- [Special Education Action Plan](#)

Braided together, these initiatives promote a holistic approach to student well-being, ensuring every student feels valued and supported. We recognize that collaboration can create a cohesive framework that fosters safety, belonging, and equitable outcomes for every student.

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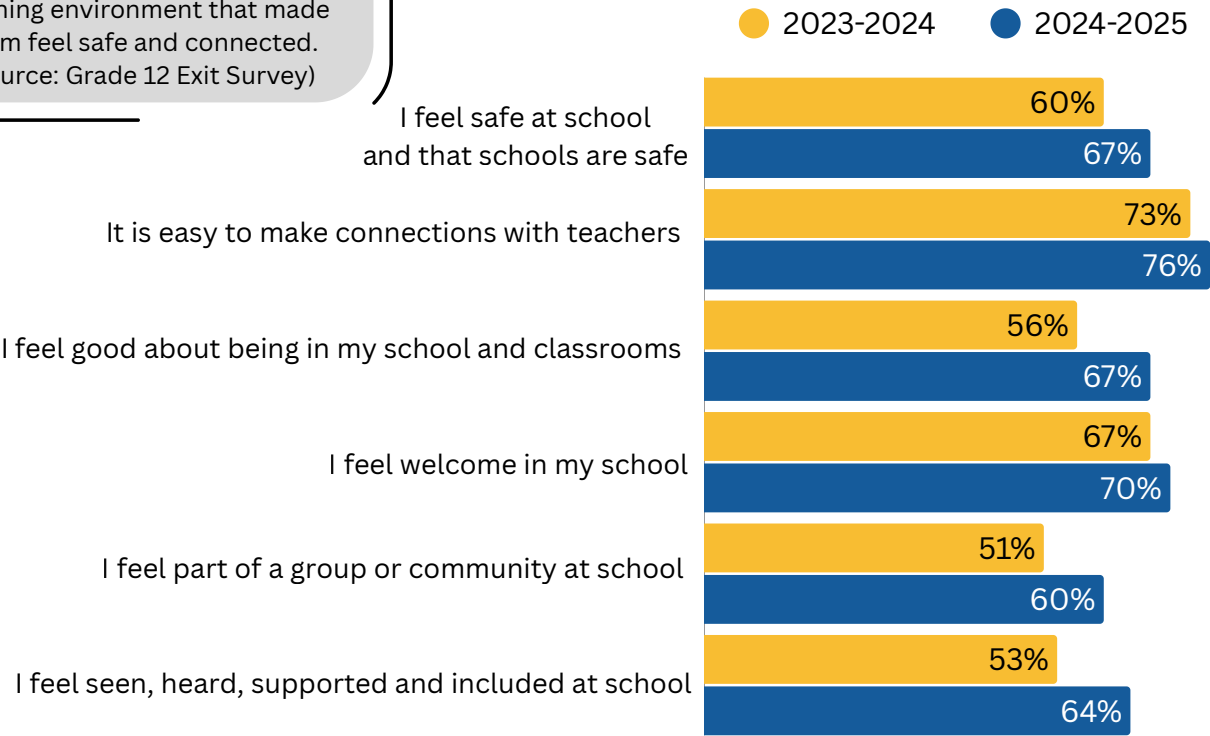


Secure Schools Awareness and Responses

We commit to maintaining a safe and secure environment for students, families, and caregivers with transparent communication and collaborative approaches to addressing safety concerns.

Grade 12 Student Exit Survey Data

Responses are percent of graduating Grade 12 students who assessed the board at Level 3-4 for providing a learning environment that made them feel safe and connected.
(Source: Grade 12 Exit Survey)



Health and Peer Relations Study Data

