



**Program Committee**  
**Thursday, February 19, 2026**  
**6:15 pm**

**BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.**



The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board acknowledges our presence on ancestral Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee Confederacy land as determined by the Dish with One Spoon treaty.

The intent of this agreement is for all nations sharing this territory to do so responsibly, respectfully and sustainably in perpetuity.

We respect the longstanding relationships with the local Indigenous communities, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the Six Nations of the Grand River.

# Program Committee Workplan

| Program Committee Meeting Date | Program Committee Reports   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| February 19                    | Draft Guiding Principles to Respond to the Recommendations of the Program Strategy Review, Suspension & Expulsion 2024-2025, Caring & Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027 Update   |
| March 26                       | Student Achievement Action Plan (Ministry Requirement)<br>MYSP - Progress Goal 1-3: Literacy, Numeracy, Future Preparedness<br>Human Rights & Equity Action Plan 2023-2027 (including Hate-Based Incident Tracking Tool data) |
| April 30                       | Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan, 2025-2026<br>Nutrition Strategy Update  |



**2025  
PROGRAM  
STRATEGY  
REVIEW**



**HWDSB**

**Draft Guiding Principles to  
Respond to the  
Recommendations of  
the Program Strategy Review**



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# MYSP 2023-2026 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.



# Final Report

- **10 Key Findings**

- **27 Recommendations**

- HWDSB Elementary Program Strategy (6 recommendations),
- Secondary Program Strategy (15 recommendations),
- Elementary French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process (6 recommendations).

# Recommended Action

That the Review of Elementary Program Strategy, Secondary Programs Strategy and the French Immersion Location Strategy and Application Process report prepared by R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. be received, and that staff be directed to **develop Guiding Principles to support consideration of the recommendations.**

These Guiding Principles will be presented to the Committee in February 2026 for review, discussion, input, and a recommendation for approval.

# Strategic Reflection and Action

| Timeline          | Structure                | Action   |
|-------------------|--------------------------|--|
| February 17, 2026 | Program Committee        | Draft Guiding Principles                             |
| May 21, 2026      | Program Committee        | Draft Implementation Plan<br>Various Recommendations |
| Fall 2026         | Fall Engagement Sessions | Initiate Implementation Plan<br>for 2027-2028        |

# Program Committee Trustee Feedback

- **Draft Guiding Principles:** Prepare a clear set of guiding principles for program decisions, aligned with the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and focused on equity, fiscal responsibility, and phased implementation.
- **Vision Statement:** Include an overarching vision aligned to our Multi-Year Strategic Plan
- **Financial Sustainability:** ensure cost-effective implementation.
- **Phased Approach:** Consider a phased implementation approach for recommendations once the guiding principles are approved.
- **Community Engagement:** Continue to have a strong communication plan as we move forward and decisions are made and schedule additional engagement sessions for affected communities
- **Program-Specific Considerations:** Explore equitable access and possible expansion the Self-Paced, Self-Directed Program; review French Immersion entry point, staffing strategies, and instructional consistency.

**Students entering FDK in September this year will walk across the stage in June 2040.**

**2040**

What will our schools and system programs look like, sound like, feel like?

What will the student experience look like, sound like, feel like?

# Draft Guiding Principles to Respond to the Recommendations of the Program Strategy Review

*These Draft Guiding Principles will guide HWDSB's process of program development and review.*



# Principle #1

## **Student Achievement and Well-Being**

*Students will engage in dynamic, inclusive learning that fosters achievement, well-being, and joy in learning. All programs will support diverse pathways and enhance the overall student experience in every HWDSB classroom.*



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## Principle #2

### Continuous Improvement and Alignment with Student Outcomes

*Program offerings will directly support the [HWDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and [Board Improvement Plan](#) priorities in literacy, numeracy, and future preparedness. Programs will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect student voice, post-secondary options, and local workforce and community needs.*



## Principle #3

### **Evidence-Informed Decision Making**

*Program decisions will be guided by evidence. We will use qualitative and quantitative data to monitor outcomes, inform improvements, and ensure resources are distributed equitably to meet the diverse needs of HWDSB students.*

*Ethical Indigenous education research will be conducted in partnership with local Indigenous communities, ensuring reciprocity, accountability, and full respect for Indigenous data sovereignty (OCAP).*



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## Principle #4

### Equity of Access

*Programs will be designed, reviewed and distributed to reduce barriers and inequities in access and participation. Geographic and demographic considerations will ensure all students have equitable access.*



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## Principle #5

### **Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability**

*All program decisions will be evaluated for long-term viability, fiscal sustainability, responsible and equitable use of resources. Programs with high costs or low enrolment will be reviewed regularly. New initiatives will be piloted with clear cost-benefit analysis.*



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## Principle #6

### **Inclusive Community Engagement and Lived Experience**

*Program decisions will promote inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments where every student experiences belonging and meaningful opportunities.*

*Transparent engagement processes will ensure student, parent, staff, and community voices are sought to inform program creation, expansion, and closure.*



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# Principle #7

## Phased and Communicated Implementation

*Implementation will prioritize listening to voices that have not historically been centered and addressing barriers to engagement. Clear, accessible communication will keep families and staff informed about programs, processes, and changes.*

*Implementation plans will be phased, strategic, and responsive, prioritizing urgent equity and sustainability needs while minimizing disruption to student learning.*



# Draft Guiding Principles

- Student Achievement and Well-Being
- Continuous Improvement and Alignment to Student Outcomes
- Evidence-Informed Decision Making
- Equity of Access
- Fiscal Responsibility and Sustainability
- Inclusive Community Engagement and Lived Experience
- Phased and Communicated Implementation

# Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027

February 19, 2026



# Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027

## Foundational

- Belonging and inclusive school cultures
- Student voice and identity
- Safety and well-being



# Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan 2024-2027

## Five (5) key priority areas:

1. Creating the Conditions for Learning
2. Identity Affirming Curriculum and Teaching Practices and Learning Environments
3. Responding to Student Need
4. Secure Schools Awareness and Response
5. Accountability and Transparency

# Creating the Conditions for Learning:

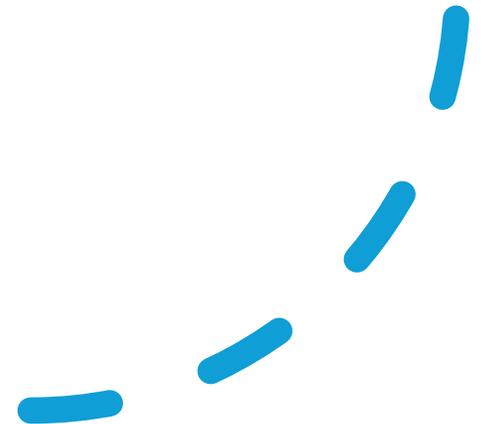
- Focus on strengthening classroom and school-wide conditions that promote belonging and positive relationship for every student.
- Consistent focus on proactive communication and prevention.
- Ongoing professional learning to support classroom practices that foster trust, dignity and healthy relationships.

**Revillagizing  
Systems of  
Interdependence  
and Collaborative  
Work**

**C**    **Creating the Conditions for Learning and Well-Being**

**I**    **Identity-Affirming Curriculum and Practices**

**R**    **Responding to Student Needs**



# Growing Together: Garden Ecosystem Analogy

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- CIR is not a linear process
- It not a step-by-step process. It's cyclical, dynamic, and deeply responsive.
- It requires staying in relationship, being open, and adjusting with care.



# Responding to Student Need:

- Culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy supported through professional learning
- Identity—affirming student spaces and programming

# Classroom Learning & Professional Development

Safety and well-being are embedded across the Ontario curriculum, with staff prioritizing emotional wellness and cultural humility:

- Staff prioritize emotional well-being and cultural humility
- Staff implement CIR: Creating the Conditions to support flexible, identity-affirming responses
- Resources like “**On The Horizon**” guide inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms
- Professional learning focuses on trauma-informed practice, progressive discipline, anti-sex trafficking, and bullying prevention

# Secure Schools Awareness and Response

- Continued review of safety procedures and protocols
- Staff learning of incident response and reporting
- Clarification of violent incident reporting expectations
- Strengthened communication and coordinated responses

# Response, Reporting, & Secure Schools Month

- HWDSB Helps implemented; Human Rights and Hate-Based Incident Tracking Form implemented.
- HWDSB Bias, Discrimination, and Hate Response Tool.
- Secure Schools Month features case studies, staff scenario discussions, and student-led awareness campaigns.
- Weekly safety focus includes fire evacuation, lockdown, hold and secure, privacy hold, shelter-in-place, and bomb threat procedures.



# Accountability and Transparency:

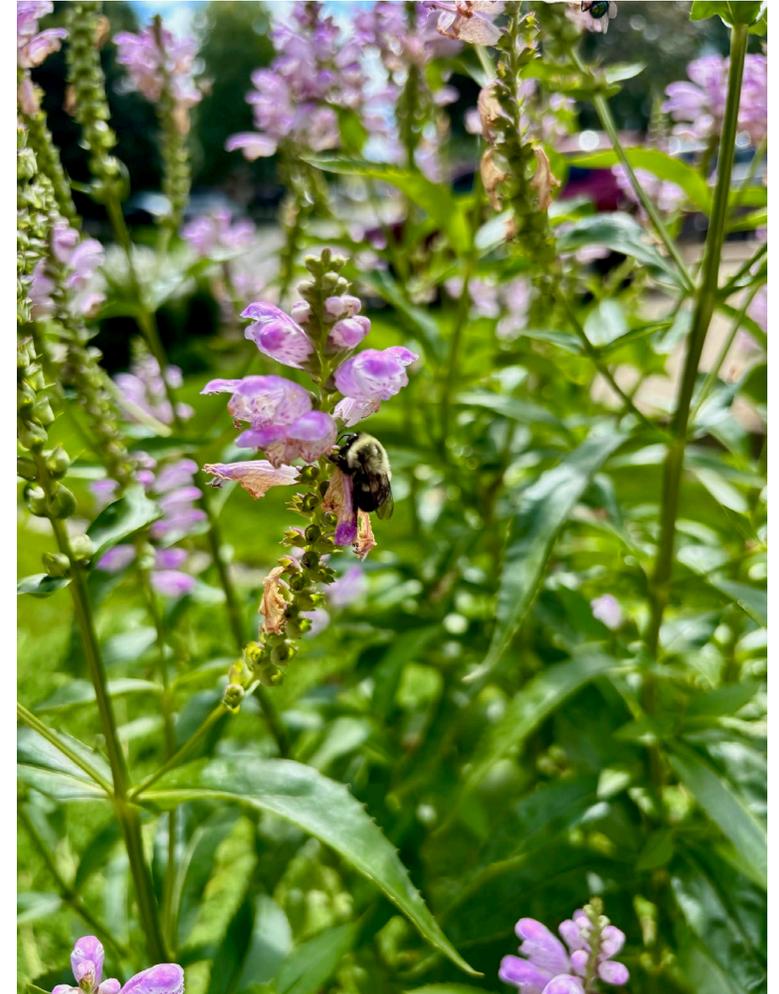
- Multi-year data cycle for suspension and expulsion trends
- Integration of discipline, school climate and census data
- Policy 5.7: Student Behaviour and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline Policy

# Monitoring the Impact of our Actions

- Board Improvement Plan Reports
  - What have we done?
  - What have we learned?
  - What are our next steps?
- School Climate Data
- Grade 12 Exit Survey
- EQAO Student Questionnaires
- Other Data Sources
- Parent, Guardian and Caregiver Survey (April 2026)

“Belonging isn’t passive. It’s mutual. It means giving as much as receiving, listening as much as speaking, supporting as much as being supported. When this dynamic takes hold in a classroom or school, something transformative happens. Students begin to trust – not only others, but themselves. They take more risks, share more freely, and engage more deeply. Their confidence grows. Their voices strengthen. And their potential, once unlocked by a sense of belonging, flourishes.”

- **Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini**



# 2024-2025 Student Suspension and Expulsion Data

February 19, 2026



# 2024-2025 Suspension Data:

- Total suspension incidents decreased compared to the 2023-2024 school year.
- HWDSB recorded a 6.4% suspension rate for registered students.
- A continued trend of fewer suspensions than investigations in both elementary and secondary panels.
- Increase in suspensions among students with exceptionalities, particularly those with learning disabilities, Autism, and mild intellectual disabilities.
- Grade-specific trends:
  - Increase: Grade 10 & Grade 11
  - Decrease: Grade 7, 8 & Grade 9

# Addressing Disproportionality: Equity Responsive Practice:

- Multi-year data cycle
- Integration of discipline, climate and census data
- Policy updates: Student behaviour and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline and Code of Conduct
- Administrator learning grounded in principles of bias-free progressive discipline

# Areas for Continued Focus:

- **Increase** in expulsions (38 --> 44)
- **Higher** suspension rates for students with exceptionalities (learning disabilities, Autism, and mild intellectual disabilities)
- **Increase** in Grade 10 and 11 suspensions
- Numbers of repeat suspensions (two or more) have **increased** in secondary, **decrease** in elementary
- Overall suspension rate(s) remains **stable**

# Our Next Steps

- Focus remains on prevention, belonging, and early intervention as outlined in our Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan.
- Bias-Free Progressive Discipline Policy approval sets the stage for development of procedure