



Standing Committee

Monday, October 17, 2016

Trustee Board Room

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

20 Education Court, P.O. Box 2558

Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1

AGENDA: Immediately following Board Meeting

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Declarations of Conflict of Interest

Reports from Staff:

4. Effective Communication Report
5. Adjournment

Meeting times and locations are subject to change. Please refer to our website for the latest information.

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/trustees/meetings/>

Executive Summary

Topic: Effective Communication Report

Context

HWDSB's Board of Trustees have approved new Strategic Directions for 2016-20 and staff has developed an Annual Plan for 2016-17. The five priorities are positive culture and well-being, student learning and achievement, *effective communication*, school renewal and partnerships.

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

Commitment: We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation

Priority: [Effective Communication](#) *We will improve our communication through comprehensive strategies.*

Summary

The following report includes:

- Effective Communication Report: the current implementation of the strategic direction priority as part of the 2016-17 HWDSB Annual Plan (Aug. 15 to Oct. 17, 2016)
- Appendix A: a review of the 2015-16 Corporate Communications strategic plan
- Appendix B: examples of impact of the 2015-2016 Corporate Communications strategic plan

In the 2015-16 school year, the Corporate Communications strategic plan had six organizational goals aligned to the previous strategic directions; within this framework, improvement was made in many areas. During the same period, Corporate Communications adopted and implemented a new process (RACE) which schools and departments could request communication supports, services, and products.

HWDSB has heard from stakeholders that improving communication is a priority for internal and external audiences. To begin this journey, an objective, comprehensive third-party audit of HWDSB's communications program is underway. The audit's results will inform a new HWDSB Communication Strategy based on data and best practices. We have also learned that this process, while led by our Corporate Communications department, must be owned by all departments and schools if we are to improve.

As a result, Executive Council has developed and started to implement goals, strategies and targets found in the new HWDSB Annual Plan for the [Effective Communication](#) priority. For this reason, this report provides an update on the implementation of Effective Communication within the 2016-17 HWDSB Annual Plan as well as a summary of the 2015-16 Corporate Communications strategic plan.



HWDSB Annual Plan Report

Name of Report: Effective Communication Report

Date: October 2016

Priority: Effective Communication

We will improve our communication through comprehensive strategies

Goal #1: Improve internal communication

Strategy: Establish a baseline of internal stakeholder attitudes of effective communication through the communications audit.

HWDSB has retained the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) to conduct a communications audit. A communications audit is an in-depth, independent review of an organization's overall communication program that will include focus groups and surveys for stakeholders. It is conducted by communication experts who have hands-on experience running communication programs. The goal is to identify weaknesses and communication gaps by reviewing current strategies, gathering feedback from staff. The audit will also recommend cost-effective tactics to ensure we are using our communications budget effectively. The audit is on track for completion in November 2016.

Strategy: Create and implement a communications plan that reflects the recommendations of the communications audit.

The communication audit will uncover any communication gaps that exist and help identify important factors affecting the effectiveness of HWDSB's communications program. The top three recommendations for internal communication will be incorporated in a communications plan to be completed by December 2016.

Strategy: Inventory and standardize all communication platforms so staff have access to relevant information.

An inventory of communication platforms/tools will be completed as part of the communications audit. Recommendations stemming from the audit will be incorporated in the internal communications plan.

Staff are **on target** to develop an enhanced internal communications plan by December 2016

Goal #2: Improve public confidence with external stakeholders

Strategy: Establish a baseline of external stakeholder attitudes of effective communication through the communications audit.

Through feedback collected via focus groups and surveys, the communication audit will help to identify current stakeholders' attitudes regarding the effectiveness of the current communications program. The top three recommendations for external communication will be incorporated in a communications plan to be completed by June 2017.

Strategy: Develop communications and an awareness campaign for the new Strategic Directions.

A communications plan was developed to launch HWDSB's new strategic directions. The goal of the plan is to inform students, staff, parents and community members about HWDSB Reimagined (www.hwdsb.on.ca/Reimagined). The plan involves the development of a new visual identity for HWDSB as well as identified tactics used to share the new directions with key stakeholders. The plan was launched on August 30, 2016 and implementation will continue throughout the year. Tactics include creating multimedia visuals to share with schools as well as creating a microsite outlining our new strategic directions.

Strategy: Invest in people by developing comprehensive professional learning opportunities to help educators improve their communications to parents about what their children are learning.

A survey will be conducted with principals and service leaders to identify priority areas for communications training. The data from the survey will be used to develop a professional learning plan. The survey will be administered in October/November and the plan developed in December. Learning sessions will be offered beginning in January 2017.

Strategy: Continue to pilot a parent portal through "The Hub" so parents and students have access to relevant information.

The parent portal in "The Hub", our learning management system, was piloted in one secondary and one elementary school last year. The parent portal allows parents to view attendance, timetable and report card data as well as use School Cash Online. Links help parents navigate to the Hamilton Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) and school based documents. We are now ready to expand the pilot to phase two for secondary schools. The elementary pilot is ongoing and will continue as schools add more content to the Hub.

Staff are **on target** to develop an enhanced external communications plan by June 2017.



Corporate Communications

Strategic Plan 2015/2016

Achievement Matters – Engagement Matters – Equity Matters				
Direction	Organizational Goal	Communication Objective	Strategy	Measurement
Achievement Matters	Prepare all secondary students to be ready for success in their chosen pathway – Improving transitions	By the end of June, establish a baseline of survey respondents reporting an understanding of the variety of options at the secondary level.	Creating awareness campaigns through events such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Path, My Way event • Grade 8 info nights • Option sheet nights • French Immersion nights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent voice survey • Student voice forums • Exit surveys at key events • Data collected from focus groups
What We Did Corporate Communications created campaigns for My Path, My Way, Grade 8 Nights and Option Sheet Nights. Exit cards were distributed at the My Path, My Way event with respondents reporting the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96% Strongly Agree to Agree about receiving materials they can use • 94% Strongly Agree to Agree to learning about programs available • 86% Strongly Agree to Agree to receiving valuable information about the transition to high school • 82% Strongly Agree to Agree about services available 				
Achievement Matters	Prepare all early learners to be ready for success in elementary - Improving transitions	Following Kindergarten Open Houses, establish a baseline of respondents indicating they are satisfied with the information provided	Educating and informing parents about the Kindergarten experience through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kindergarten Open Houses • Welcome to Kindergarten package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collected from focus groups • Survey through kindergarten blogs
What We Did Corporate Communications created Countdown to Kindergarten campaign <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kits delivered to each school to support Kindergarten Open Houses • Social media campaign designed around #hwdsbfirstday, which generated over 1,000,000 impressions • Survey postponed in 2015 because of central bargaining job action . Looking to send out survey to new Kindergarten parents in 2016. 				

Countdown to Kindergarten material attached as a sample.				
Engagement Matters	Achieve high levels of parent engagement in our school communities– Improving system communications	Increase school website subscribers by 50 per cent	Creating awareness of the tools and resources available to parents to gather information about their school and HWDSB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FAQ • Board website • Parent portal • Synrevoice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google analytics • Parent portal registration data
What We Did Created materials to support schools in subscribing to school websites <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website subscribers have increased from 4918 to 10702, an increase of 117.61% from September 2015 to September 2016 				
Engagement Matters	Achieve high levels of parent engagement in our school communities– Improving school communications	Create a baseline of how often schools are posting to their website.	Educating and informing school staff about the importance of using school website as a strategic communications tool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal/staff workshops • Training sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop participant data • Training session data • Monthly website reports
What We Did <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training sessions on improving school communications offered at Principals’ Conference and Summer Institute • Created a Principal Communication Guide • Across the entire system, school websites averaged 116.8 posts per week during the 2015/2016 school year. This number is our baseline and we are hoping to see an increase in the 2016/2017 school year to an average of 125 posts per week. 				

Achievement Matters – Engagement Matters – Equity Matters				
Direction	Organizational Goal	Communication Objective	Strategy	Measurement
Engagement Matters	Achieve high levels of student, parent & community engagement in HWDSB	Increase engagement in Reimagine campaign by 10 per cent	Creating an awareness campaign highlighting the ways stakeholders can participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation data

<p>What We Did Corporate Communications worked closely with Joudrie Consulting to create awareness during the remaining phases of the Reimagine campaign</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Imagine phase, the Board received feedback from 3,394 parents, 171 students, 750 staff, 42 community members and 128 others for a total of 4,485 participants. This was an increase of 422 per cent over the Explore phase. • Launched new strategic directions • Rebranded HWDSB with new visual identity 				
Equity Matters	Ensure equitable resource allocation to schools, staff and students.	By June 2015, identify and communicate clear Corporate Communications roles and expectations to the system	Educate and inform internal stakeholders about Corporate Communications services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • myhwdsb • Managers Cabinet 	• Client feedback survey
<p>What We Did Corporate Communications created new process for engaging with the department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information shared through Managers' Cabinet, myHWDSB and Executive Council. 				



2015-2016 Participant Feedback on the Grade 7 & 8 Student Pathways Night -

Session held at the Education Centre



Background:

On a yearly basis, the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) hosts a grade 7 & 8 information night for students, parents/caregivers/guardians, and other interested stakeholders. The purpose of the night is to provide information on the various pathways available to high school students.

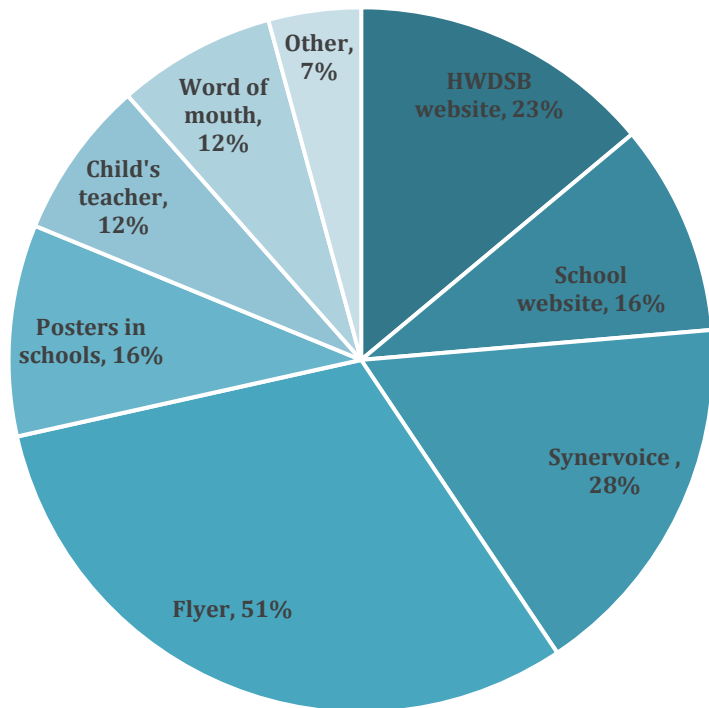
A total of **58** attendees provided feedback on the 2015-2016 pathways night. Of these, 50% (N=29) were parents/guardians/caregivers, 48% (N=28) were current HWDSB students while 2% (N=1) was a future HWDSB student.

Summary of findings:

Participants were provided with a feedback card which asked four questions. The feedback received is summarized below:

➤ **Question 1: Attendees were asked to comment on how they had learned about the event.**

- **51%** of the respondents were informed about the event via 'flyers that came home with students'.
- Synervoice (28%) and the HWDSB website (23%) were the second most endorsed options.
- Respondents endorsed other options on a less frequent basis:
 - school website (16%)
 - posters (16%)
 - word of mouth (12%) and
 - child's teacher (12%)
 - other (7%) option but none were specified
- **Zero** attendees reported being informed about the event through newspaper advertising.





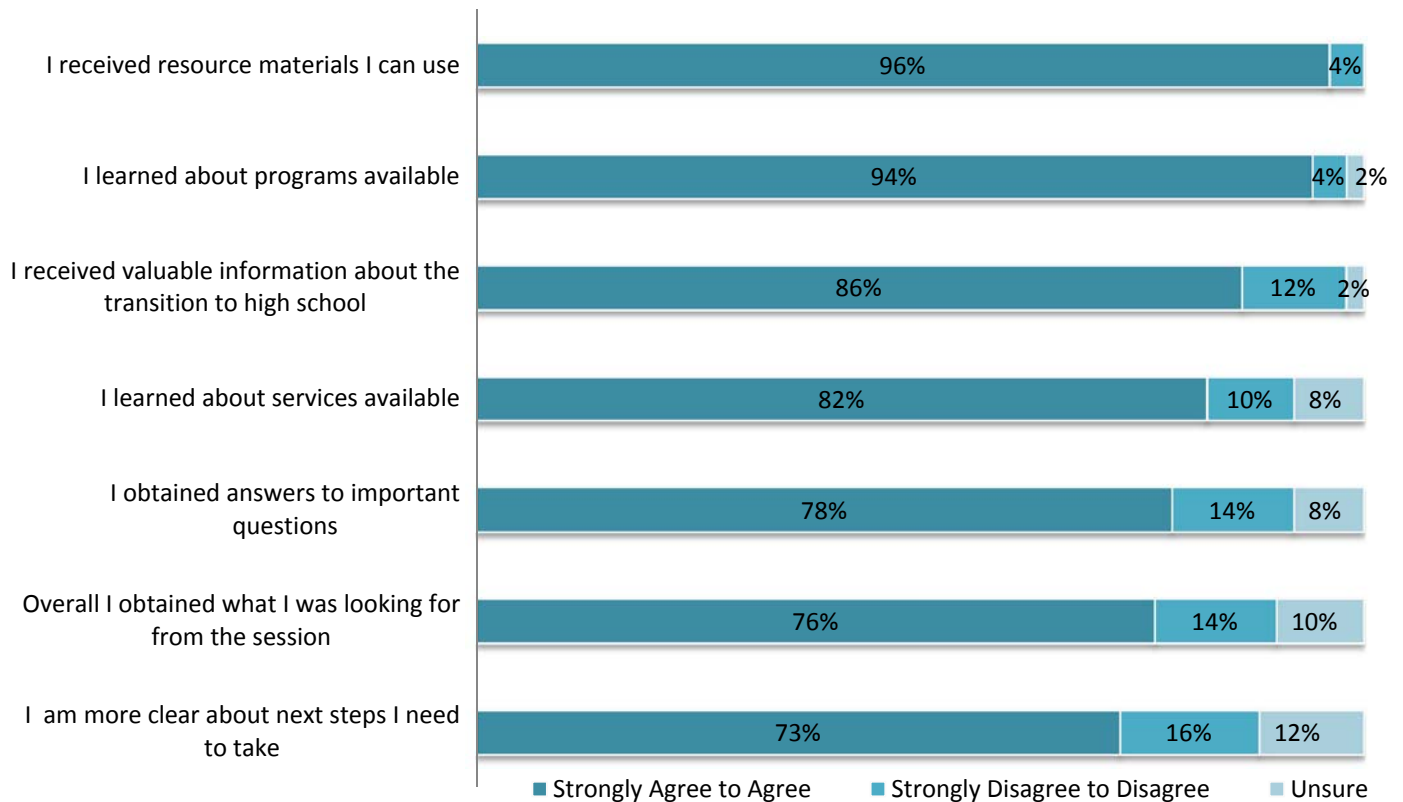
2015-2016 Participant Feedback on the Grade 7 & 8 Student Pathways Night -



Session held at the Education Centre

➤ **Question 2: Attendees were asked to comment on the various outcomes they felt came out of attending the event.**

- **73% to 96%** of respondents endorsed the **'Strongly Agree to Agree'** across all of the various outcomes.
- The most frequently endorsed outcomes were the following:
 - I received resource materials I can use
 - I learned about programs available





2015-2016 Participant Feedback on the Grade 7 & 8 Student Pathways Night -



Session held at the Education Centre

- **Question 3: Attendees were asked to rate the event across several characteristics.**
 - Majority of respondents endorsed the **'Very Good to Good'** response options with respect to the following:
 - Information shared/provided (92%)
 - Format of the evening (78%)
 - Organization of the event (77%)
 - Venue (75%)

- **Question 4: Attendees provided the following comments with respect to what worked well and ways the event could be improved:**
 - **Areas of strength:**
 - Respondents were pleased that the event was interactive, they also indicated being pleased with how easily accessible the staff and the student panel were.

 - **Areas of improvement:**

Concerns with the venue

 - Respondents expressed concerns about the size of the venue in light of the large crowd of attendees.
 - Some respondents expressed that the event was too crowded.
 - Some suggested the possibility of splitting the event into two separate nights with attendance based on registration.
 - An additional suggestion pertained to renting a bigger venue (similar to what was done in previous years).

Overall organization of event

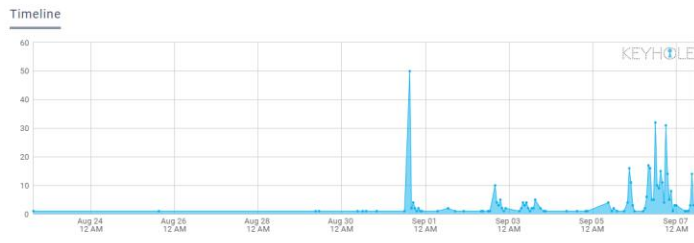
 - Some respondents felt that the information was not easily accessible, that there were not enough booths, and not enough opportunities to ask questions.
 - Some expressed feeling lost, unsure of the format of the event, and found themselves wandering around trying to figure out where to go and who to ask for information.
 - Some respondents were concerned that refreshments were not provided.

Real-time Tracker: **#firstdayHWDSB** AUG 22 - SEPT 7

- Dashboard
- Streaming NEW
- Influencers
- Media

PDF XLS

409 POSTS 200 USERS 91,277 REACH 1,153,168 IMPRESSIONS



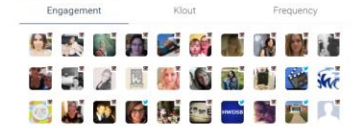
Top Posts

- | RT / Likes | Klout | Recent |
|------------|-------|--------|
| 66 | | |
| 62 | | |
| 60 | | |
| 56 | | |
| | | |

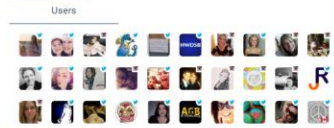
Related Topics



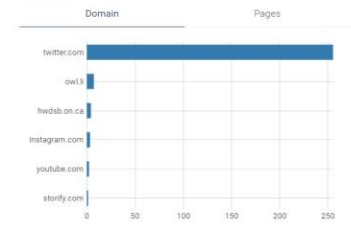
Most Influential



Recent Users



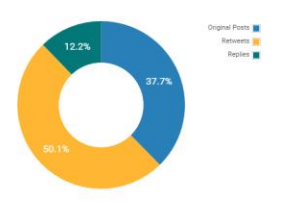
Top Sites



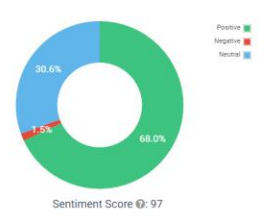
Location



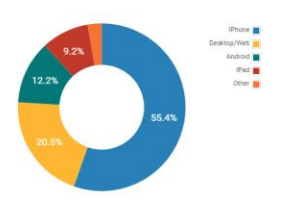
Share of Posts



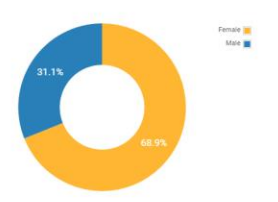
Sentiment



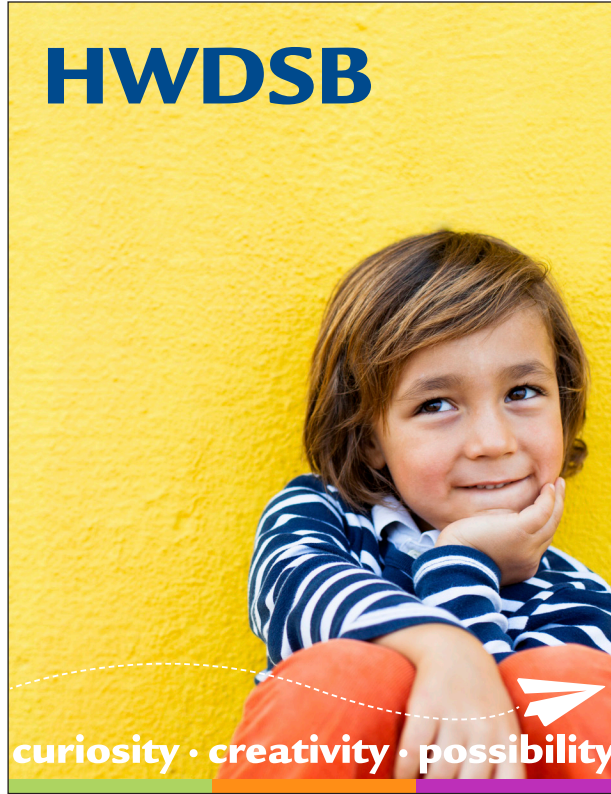
Top Sources



Demographics



Help



curiosity · creativity · possibility



Pantone 367C
HTML: A5D867
RGB: 165, 216, 103



Pantone 1495C
HTML: FF9133
RGB: 255, 145, 51



Pantone PurpleC
HTML: B634BB
RGB: 182, 52, 187

Photoshoot: HWDSB staff, teachers and students holding paper airplanes on colourful backgrounds
Staff and students wearing colourful clothing on solid coloured backgrounds



How does Corporate Communications work?

We use the communications process known as RACE - which stands for Research, Analysis, Communication and Evaluation. Each phase is detailed below.

STEP 1 *Research*

To start, we ask a lot of questions about your goals, needs and target audience. Then, we listen. When we have all the vital information, we'll make educated suggestions for the best communications strategies to help you achieve your goals. This will help us develop a communications plan.

STEP 2 *Analysis*

In this phase, we take what we have learned and create a plan that outlines the actions required to meet your needs. This is where we work with you to define strategies and tactics for your project. At this point, we will need you to agree on the scope of work to be completed.



STEP 4 *Evaluation*

How did we do? This is where we work with you to measure the program against your objectives. Did you reach your audiences? Did they provide feedback about the materials? How can we improve communications for your next project... because we want you to succeed!

STEP 3 *Communication*

This is where we execute our plan – sharing materials we have developed with your audiences. We will help you ensure that your message reaches your audience. We will also help you make plans to gather feedback so the plan can be adjusted or improved.

What to consider first?

What to consider before working with Corporate Communications

To start any project, we ask a lot of questions about your goals, needs and target audience. Then, we listen. When we have all the vital information, we'll make educated suggestions for the best communications strategies to help you achieve your goals. This will help us develop a communications plan.

Please note that materials can take 4-6 weeks to finish and deliver.

THE RESEARCH PHASE

First, we will want to DEFINE YOUR PROJECT:

- What is your GOAL – how will this project make the world better?
- What STRATEGIC DIRECTION does this align with - and who approves it?
- What CHALLENGES stand in the way?
- What does RESEARCH tell us about solutions?

Then, we will help you DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCES:

- For communicators, there is no such thing as the 'general public.'
- We need to know WHO your audiences are.
- What do we know about them?
- HOW does each audience prefer to receive information?
- WHEN do you need to reach them?

Only then will we help you to DEFINE STRATEGIES:

- What do you want your audience to DO? (Awareness, Attitude, Action)
- HOW will you reach your objectives?

Finally, we will DISCUSS TACTICS:

- What tasks and materials need to be completed?
- We create a work plan for tactics, timelines, responsibilities, budget etc.

How do you get in touch with us?

HWDSB Corporate Communications is happy to share the expertise its staff have regarding web design, graphic design and multimedia.

Staff, need support?



Contact:
Jackie Penman x2301



(if more assistance is required)

Communications Officer

(if more services are needed, the Communications Officer will work directly with the appropriate person listed below)

Corporate Communications - *Internal Process*



Webmaster
*works only with
Communications Officer*

**Graphic
Designer**
*works only with
Communications Officer*

**Multimedia
Technician**
*works only with
Communications Officer*

What else do you need to know?

HWDSB Corporate Communications is happy to share the expertise its staff have regarding web design, graphic design and multimedia.

Here are some steps to understand how to access these services:

1. First, note that materials can take **4-6 weeks** to finish and deliver.
2. Contact Communications Manager well in advance of your deadlines.
3. Manager assigns project to Communications Officer as contact for your project.
4. Communications Officer works with you to finalize your (undesigned) material.
 - a. This is the time to make any changes to your content.
 - b. We will work with you to proof for spelling, grammar and punctuation.
 - c. We will also work with you to make sure your audience can understand your content.
 - d. Communications Officer gathers your input on the desired design of material and involves web, graphics and multimedia staff when necessary.
 - e. Only when your content is finalized will it be passed on to web, graphics and multi media staff. No content changes will occur after this step.
5. Communications Officer works directly with web, graphics and multimedia staff on designed material.
 - a. You will receive drafts of designed material for input on the design. (*Not for more edits to the content.*)
 - b. Communications staff and client (**this is you**) both sign off on final designed material before sending to print.
6. ***We deliver your final materials***