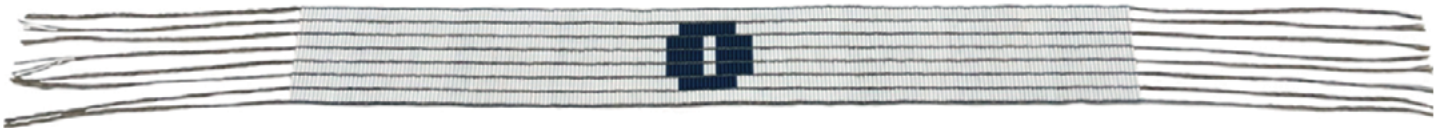


HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY ACTION PLAN 2023-2028



HWDSB
BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

HWDSB LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



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.

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Equity is at the heart of our work at HWDSB. Our role as educators is to uphold human rights, safety, and well-being, and to ensure that every student in the board is enriched through our programs, services, and operations.

Over the past several years, we have taken tangible steps towards ensuring that principles of equity are embedded in everything we do. We created a three-year Equity Action Plan (2019/20-2021/22) to guide us in creating safer, supportive, and accepting environments for both students and staff, and implemented different strategies to tackle biases, systemic barriers, and discriminatory practices.

Some highlights from this plan include ongoing learning about anti-oppression in schools, reviewing our employment system to make it more inclusive, supporting employees via equity hiring and supporting practices, developing Human Rights and Anti-Black Racism Policies, and collecting identity-based data to spot and address disparities.

Changing these systems to be more inclusive and equitable is an ongoing journey. We know that inequities in opportunity and achievement still exist in our education system. That's why I'm very pleased to share this updated plan, now called the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan, which builds on our previous work.

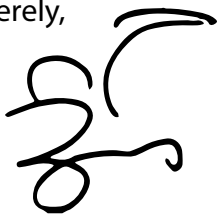
The Human Rights and Equity Action Plan 2023-2028 works alongside our Multi-Year Strategic Plan to focus on key areas for identifying and addressing inequities and systemic barriers. Our vision is to ensure every student knows they belong and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential, build their future, and embody our values of dignity, trust, compassion, and joy.

Based on feedback from students, staff, parents, caregivers, and community partners, we've identified six commitment areas in this plan. These will help us focus on actions to proactively identify and eliminate barriers that impact student achievement and well-being.

Creating an equitable education system is a long-term effort. This action plan aims to continue to embed the principles of human rights, equity, Truth and Reconciliation, anti-racism, and anti-oppression into HWDSB's classrooms, schools, and systems. The Human Rights and Equity Action Plan is a living document that will evolve and adapt to the needs of the HWDSB community over time, informed by students, families, staff, and the community.

Thank you for being a part of this important journey towards fairness and equity for all.

Sincerely,



Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini
Director of Education



MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan for 2023 to 2028](#) is centered on students having a deep and meaningful sense of belonging while experiencing impactful learning outcomes for all.

Vision: Growing Together.

Mission: To ensure every student experiences a sense of belonging and engages in dynamic learning to reach their potential and build their own future.

Values:

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

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 and 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 and 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.

PRINCIPLES

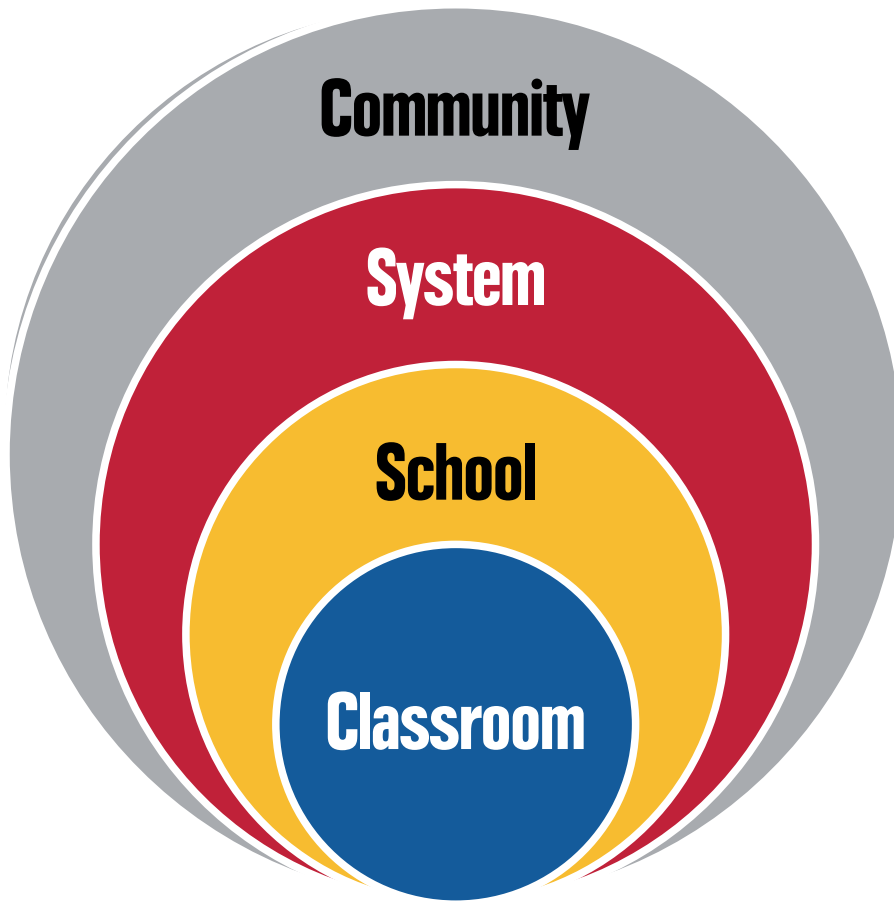
The following principles guide HWDSB's work in implementing the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan by having shared understanding, language, and leadership towards our mission.

Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation:

As treaty partners, we commit to listen, understand, and cultivate reciprocal trusting relationships with Indigenous students, staff, families, and communities. We recognize decolonization as an approach for Indigenous self-determination while at the same time understanding the interdependence and solidarity of different groups that have experienced inequities and oppression under colonial systems. True reconciliation requires listening to Indigenous people when they say 'nothing about us without us' and requires restorative steps based on renewed friendships, hope, honesty, mutual respect, peace, and trust. Indigenous Educational Wellness is the untangling of education from trauma and the understanding that education can now be part of total wellness and that Indigenous knowledges will be celebrated. Honoring and respecting distinct Indigenous rights, including right to self-determination, we acknowledge that human rights systems and equity work founded on colonial systems also require decolonization to help us move towards restorative Indigenous Education Wellness. As such, HWDSB's commitment to reinforcing Indigenous Education wellness and reconciliation is distinct from this plan and is outlined in the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan \(IECSAP\) 2021-2025](#).

Human Rights:

The right to education is a human right and indispensable for the realization of other human rights. Fostering and maintaining a culture of human rights at HWDSB requires providing equitable and inclusive services grounded in the principles of equity, inclusive design, anti-racism, anti-colonialism, and anti-oppression, as well as identifying and addressing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers. The Board commits to governance and services grounded on a human rights-based approach centered on principles of participation, inclusion, belonging, transparency, and accountability.



Collective Responsibility:

Everyone within HWDSB, at the classroom, school, and system levels, has roles and responsibilities in contributing towards achieving the objectives outlined in the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan.

This work must occur at every level of the organization (learning and working environments). Shared responsibility is essential to achieve the commitments laid out within the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan.

Accountability and Transparency:

Accountability and transparency are critical components of ensuring the Board remains committed to improved and equitable outcomes for all students. Both organizational and individual accountabilities are required in implementing mechanisms to measure progress, conduct regular equity audits, and address any disparities that arise, adjusting based on the evolving community needs and educational landscape. A commitment to a posture of practice and consistent refinement allows all staff to work together towards improvement and work through unintentional missteps that may cause harm. All HWDSB staff are responsible for this work. Accountability and transparency ensure that equity is not merely an aspirational goal but a tangible one and ongoing commitment that leads to equitable outcomes.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUITY ACTION PLAN

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

- Indigenous Educational Wellness
- Inclusive Classroom Pedagogies and Learning Environments
- Dismantling Anti-Black Racism
- Anti-racist and anti-oppressive learning and working environments
- A culture of addressing human rights barriers, discrimination, and harassment
- Employment Equity, Workplace Diversity, and Inclusion.

INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL WELLNESS

Objective: To work in peace, friendship, and respect to support the implementation of the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan \(IECSAP\)](#) and address the historic and current barriers faced by Indigenous students and staff.

Actions:

- Build system leaders capacity and knowledge as Treaty Partners in order to understand their roles and responsibilities in implementing the IECSAP.
- Support the Implementation of the IECSAP's five pillars – Revitalize, Reclaim, Renew, Restore and Celebrate – and alongside Indigenous peoples, create the opportunity to honour commemoration, education, healing, and wellness.
- Continue to build authentic partnerships with diverse Indigenous communities, nations, and knowledge keepers, incorporating Indigenous perspectives, histories, and cultures into HWDSB learning environments to promote a more inclusive and accurate representation.

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM PEDAGOGIES AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Objective: To create learning environments that are culturally responsive, identity-affirming, welcoming, and inclusive, ensuring students are engaged, can achieve impactful learning outcomes, and feel a sense of belonging.

Actions:

- Enhance inclusivity and cultural relevance across teaching, curriculum, assessment, and resources to ensure responsiveness to diverse student needs and backgrounds.
- 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.
- 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.

DISMANTLING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

Objective: To dismantle structural and institutional anti-Black racism by identifying, addressing preventing, and removing barriers in all HWDSB environments.

Actions:

- Build capacity and knowledge among leadership to identify, interrupt and address anti- Black racism in both learning and working environments.
- Implement Black-affirming and culturally inclusive/responsive programming and assessment practices, taking proactive instructional steps to identify and prevent anti-Black Racism in all learning environments.
- Develop and implement an Anti-Black Racism Strategy that includes an intersectional anti-oppressive approach to address racial disparities in HWDSB learning and working environments.

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE AND ANTI-RACIST LEARNING AND WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

Objective: Enhance learning and working environments to be free from hate and discrimination by identifying, addressing and challenging systems of oppression and colonialism through inclusive practices for intersectional identities.

Actions:

- Build capacity and knowledge among system leaders and staff to identify, interrupt and address to all forms of racism, oppression, and prejudice (e.g. ableism, ageism, anti-Asian racism, antisemitism, biphobia, classism, homophobia, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression).
- Ensure ongoing implementation and monitoring of HWDSB's protocol on Responding to Hate, Bias and Prejudice in all learning and working environments.
- Implement strategies to gather feedback, and perspectives from students belonging to communities that often experience discrimination and oppression, and then respond accordingly.



DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS BARRIERS AND DISCRIMINATION

Objective: Foster a positive learning and working climate that is free from discrimination through education, human rights-based policies, and accountability mechanisms.

Actions:

- Build capacity among system leaders and staff, as well as providing supports and resources to be accountable as duty-bearers in responding to and resolving human rights incidents and discriminatory practices as outlined within the HWDSB Human Rights Policy.
- Develop and implement a system-wide approach to tracking hate and human rights incidents to identify trends and publicly report the data.
- Champion and provide human rights education to students through the curriculum and other strategies.

EMPLOYMENT EQUITY, WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Objective: To identify and remove barriers in order to create equitable employment and a diverse workforce that reflects and values the diverse experiences of our student population.

Actions:

- Collect staff identity-based data to measure progress using the 2018 staff census baseline to support the update for the Employment Equity Action Plan.
- Update and implement the [Employment Equity Action Plan](#) and the related recommendations.
- Build capacity and knowledge among system leaders and staff, to ensure bias free hiring practices at all levels of the organization.

ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARANCY

We will regularly assess measures of progress through auditing tools and adjust these commitments based on the evolving needs of the community and educational landscape. We will hold ourselves accountable through transparency and communication.

Actions:

- Establish a transparent reporting mechanism to communicate publicly the progress and implementation of the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan. Collect comprehensive data and metrics to gauge outcomes and monitor progress towards the action plan's objectives.
- Issue regular progress reports on the organization's website and through board meetings, ensuring accessibility and transparency for all HWDSB community members.
- Seek input from students, staff and families and integrate their feedback into future planning and decision-making processes to bolster accountability and enhance the effectiveness of upcoming plans.

POLICY AND STRATEGY REFERENCES

[Human Rights Policy](#)

[Equity and Inclusion Policy](#)

[Anti-Black Racism Policy](#)

[Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan](#)

[Safe Schools](#)

[Mental Health and Well-Being](#)

[Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#)



HUMAN RIGHTS & EQUITY
HAMILTON

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