

AGENDA: 6:15 pm

1. Call to Order and Land Acknowledgement
2. O Canada
3. Meeting Roll Call
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Declarations of Conflict of Interest
6. Confirmation of the Minutes: February 2, 2026

Reports from Trustee Special Committees:

7. [Policy – February 5, 2026](#)

Reports from Legislative Committees:

8. [Special Education Advisory Committee – January 28, 2026](#)

Reports from Community Advisory Committees:

9. [Faith Community Advisory Committee – February 3, 2026](#)

Reports from Staff:

10. [School Year Calendar 2026-2027 Elementary & Secondary](#)

11. Resolution Into Committee of the Whole (Private Session) as per the Education Act, Section 207 (2)

- a) the security of the property of the board;
- b) the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian;
- c) the acquisition or disposal of a school site;
- d) decisions in respect of negotiations with employees of the board; or
- e) litigation affecting the board. *R.S.O. 1990, c. E.2, s. 207 (2); 2021, c. 4, Sched. 11, s. 7 (1).*

Meeting Resumes in Public Session

12. Report from Committee of the Whole (Private) – February 23, 2026

13. [Written Notices of Motion - Enhancing School-Area Traffic Safety for Students in Ward 4 \(Trustee Zaitley\)](#)

14. Oral Reports from Liaison Committees:

- A. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

15. Oral Reports from:

- A. Student Trustees' and Shakowennakarátats
- B. Director's Report
- C. Chair's Report

16. Adjournment

Trustees: Kathy Archer*, Becky Buck, Sabreina Dahab^(R), Dawn Danko*, Amanda Fehrman, Maria Felix Miller, Graeme Noble, Paul Tut^(R), Todd White, Elizabeth Wong*, Abby Zaitley^(R). Student Trustees Sanad Bizanti, Evelyn Watson, and Shakowennakara:tats Daunte Hillen.

*electronic participation, ^(R) regrets

1. Call to Order

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

RESOLUTION #26-01: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that Trustees Dahab, Tut and Zaitley be approved as absent for the February 2, 2026, Board Meeting.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

2. Approval of the Agenda

RESOLUTION #26-02: Trustees Buck/Fehrman moved that the agenda be approved.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

3. Confirmation of the Minutes

RESOLUTION #26-03: Trustees White/Buck moved that the Minutes from December 15, 2025, be confirmed.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

4. Policy

RESOLUTION #26-04: Trustees Noble/White moved that the Policy Committee report from December 4, 2025, be approved including:

- The Barrier-Free Physical Learning Spaces Policy.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

5. Program

RESOLUTION #26-05: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that the Program Committee report from December 11, 2025, be received.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

6. Finance & Facilities

RESOLUTION #26-06: Trustees Buck/Noble moved that the Finance & Facilities Committee report from December 16, 2025, be received.

RESOLUTION #26-07: Trustees White/Noble moved that the Finance & Facilities Committee explore a budget from Proceeds of Disposition that could be allocated towards HVAC upgrades and scope a set of guiding principles to determine how schools should be prioritized for HVAC improvements.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

RESOLUTION #26-08: Trustees Fehrman/Noble moved that the Finance & Facilities report from January 13, 2026, be approved including:

- A. Key Parameters and Assumptions to Guide the Development of the 2026-2027 Budget
- B. Budget priorities for public consultation
- C. Waterdown Boundary Review
 - i. That the geographic area described below becomes the boundary for the new Waterdown Elementary School and is removed from the Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School current attendance boundary:

Commencing at the corner of Dundas Street East and Hamilton Street South, running southeast on Hamilton Street South to 50 Hamilton Street South, then east around the property lines of 50 Hamilton Street South, then southeast along the eastern edge of the property lines of 56 Howard Boulevard to 320 Hamilton Street South, then east along the southern edge of the municipal boundary to Kerns Road, north on Kerns Road to Dundas Street East, and finally west along Dundas Street East back to the corner of Dundas Street East and Hamilton Street South.
 - ii. That the boundary change comes into effect with the opening of the new Waterdown Elementary School. At that time, all Regular Track JK to 8 students located within the new boundary will attend the new Waterdown Elementary School.
 - iii. That students in Grades 7 and 8 residing within the boundary described in Part A be provided the option to remain at their current home school (Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School or Flamborough Centre Elementary School) with no transportation provided. Siblings of these students will attend the new school. In accordance with the Ontario Education Act and all applicable Ministry of Education directives, should the Boundary Review transition planning process determine that viable Grade 7 and 8 programs cannot be established at the new Waterdown Elementary School upon opening, these students will attend their current home school (Allan A. Greenleaf Elementary School or Flamborough Centre Elementary School). For the purpose of this recommendation, a viable program is defined as the ability to deliver the curriculum and required instructional components as intended by the Ministry of Education, including program organization, assessment, and reporting practices and supports for students learning and transitions.
 - iv. That all new JK to grade 4 students registering for the 2026-2027 school year within the new school boundary (described in Part A) be redirected to Mary Hopkins Elementary School, until the new Waterdown Elementary School is opened.
 - v. That Mary Hopkins Elementary School retain the Regular Track Grade 5 cohort, effective for the 2026-2027 school year.
 - vi. That Mary Hopkins Elementary School retain the French Immersion Grade 5 cohort, becoming a dual track JK- 5 school, effective in the school year that the new Waterdown Elementary School is opened.
 - vii. That a Transition Committee for each of the affected schools currently operating is struck by the Superintendent of Equity and Student Achievement upon approval of the boundary change.
 - viii. All student transportation will be provided in accordance with Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's [Transportation Policy No. 3.10](#).

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

7. Parent Involvement Committee

RESOLUTION #26-09: Trustees Fehrman/Buck moved that the Parent Involvement Committee report from December 9, 2025, be received.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

8. Special Education Advisory Committee

RESOLUTION #26-10: Trustees Fehrman/Noble moved that the Special Education Advisory Committee report from December 17, 2025, be received.

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

9. Resolution Into Committee of the Whole (Private Session)

RESOLUTION #26-11: Trustees White/Fehrman moved that the Board move to Committee of the Whole (Private Session) be approved for matters related to S207.2 (b) of the Education Act, that include *the disclosure of intimate, personal or financial information in respect of a member of the board or committee, an employee or prospective employee of the board or a pupil or his or her parent or guardian.*

CARRIED

Student Trustees Bizanti, Watson and Shakowennakara:tats Hillen voted in favour.

10. Committee of the Whole (Private)

RESOLUTION #26-12: Trustees Buck/Noble moved that the Committee of the Whole report from February 2, 2026, be approved, including:

- The Finance & Facilities Committee Report from December 15, 2025, noting a property matter.
- The Finance & Facilities Committee Report from January 13, 2026, noting property matter actions to support Metrolinx's Hamilton LRT project at the Westdale and Dalewood school sites.

CARRIED

11. Hamilton Foundation for Student Success

Trustee Fehrman provided an update as follows:

- HFSS held its AGM on January 13, 2026, reporting a strong fiscal year with a surplus, welcoming two new Board members (Jen Pearson and Katie Nicolson) and thanking outgoing members Brent Foreman and Lorraine Valmadrid.
- Streamlined processes for Student Support Grants have improved fiscal oversight, and unlike 2024–25, no suspension of grants is anticipated this year.
- Prom Project Hamilton is confirmed for March 28, 2026, at Sir Winston Churchill; student and volunteer registration and donation information are now live.
- The Fall Cycle of Enhancement Grants awarded \$1,000 each to 13 schools; Winter Cycle applications are under review, and a recent Arkells social media post boosted visibility for an HFSS-supported school fundraiser.

12. Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)

Trustee Buck provided an update as follows:

- The Legislative Assembly of Ontario remains on winter recess until March 23, 2026.
- OPSBA submitted feedback to the Minister of Education on proposed regulations related to police access to schools and SRO programs under Bill 33.
- OPSBA hosted the Public Education Symposium featuring sessions on generational research, climate leadership, ombudsman insights, and workshops on special education, reconciliation, and student well-being.
- Regional Council Meetings were held during the symposium where trustees discussed proposed governance changes to the structure of regional councils. An OPSBA's Board of Director's special meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 12 to consider amendments to By-Law No. 5.

13. Student Trustees Report

Shakowennakara:tats Hillen provided the following update:

- Recognized Black History Month and highlighted his work to uplift Afro-Black-Indigenous student voices and announced his role as a guest speaker on Feb. 26 for the Hamilton Public Lecture Series on local Black history.
- Attended Toronto Metropolitan University's Screen Break initiative, focused on digital literacy and healthy screen use and participated in a conversation with Trey Yesavage, hearing insights on screen awareness, discipline, and balance in the digital world.
- Attended the OPSBA Public Education Symposium, engaging in meaningful conversations, professional learning, and networking with trustees and staff.
- Co-facilitated a keynote panel through the *Possibility Seeds High School 2* project, discussing student-led work and the importance of youth partnership in change-making.

Student Trustees Bizanti and Watson provided the following update:

- Team 2056 began its robotics build season with strong engagement, emphasizing teamwork, innovation, and problem-solving.
- Planning for Future Preparedness Day progressed, finalizing workshops, guest speakers, and hands-on activities focused on career pathways, life skills, and post-secondary readiness.
- Student trustees will participate in the February 19-22 OSTA-AECO Education Action Conference in Ottawa.
- Highlighted the HWDSB-YMCA Winter Break Food Drive, with 8 secondary schools participating, significantly expanding last year's initiative; five schools conducted a food drive for the first time, supporting leadership growth and sustainability of future initiatives.

14. Director's Report

Director Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini provided her [monthly update](#) and highlighted HWDSB's literacy focus, noting strong structured instruction, targeted interventions, and improved student outcomes. She thanked staff for their leadership and noted the publication of the February *From the Director's Desk*, which centres on themes of love, belonging, and community, and acknowledged significant cultural observances taking place throughout February, including Black History Month, Ramadan, Lunar New Year, and Family Day.

15. Chair's Report

Chair Miller highlighted Trustee Kathy Archer's recent receipt of the Order of Hamilton, recognizing her decades of community service, volunteer leadership, and longstanding commitment to supporting children and families.

The Chair also thanked trustees, student trustees, and staff for representing HWDSB at the OPSBA Public Education Symposium; acknowledged February observances, including Black History Month; and expressed appreciation to custodial and school-based staff for their work during recent snow days and for maintaining safe school operations.

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Reference: [Agenda Package Recording](#) and [Recording 2](#)

COMMITTEE REPORT

Presented to: Board

Date of Meeting: February 23, 2026

From: Policy Committee

Date of Meeting: February 5, 2026

The committee held a hybrid meeting on February 5, 2026, at 6:00 pm with Trustee Dahab presiding.

Members: Trustees Sabreina Dahab, Maria Felix Miller*, Graeme Noble*, Elizabeth Wong^(R), and Abby Zaitley. Also in attendance: Todd White.

* electronic participation, ^(R) regrets

ACTION ITEM(S):

A. Use of School Board Resources During Elections

The Use of School Board Resources During Elections Policy (formerly Political Activities in Schools During Elections Policy) has been reviewed as part of the policy review cycle and in accordance with the Municipal Elections Modernization Act, 2016. Staff proposed a title change and changes to language throughout the policy that reduce ambiguity, align with current practices and provide detailed election-specific constraints.

The intent of this policy is to provide clear direction regarding the use of school board resources and applies to trustees, staff, students, candidates for any elected office, registered third-party advertisers, volunteers, school councils, committees, and community users of facilities during all municipal, provincial and federal elections and by-elections.

The committee requested that staff make some minor changes to the policy based on committee discussion, including re-ordering sections to foreground student learning and civic engagement, adding language supporting debate, discussion and curriculum based political learning, adding explicit reference to board property as a resource, and clarifying expectations for trustees and community groups. Staff committed to circulating the revised policy to the committee prior to its presentation to the Board for approval.

On the motion from Trustee Zaitley, the Policy Committee **recommends that the Use of School Board Resources During Elections Policy be recommended for approval as amended.**

CARRIED

B. Student Behaviour & Bias-Free Progressive Discipline Policy

Staff have reviewed the policy and followed up with the feedback received from the Policy Committee last year where staff were asked for additional edits to the language throughout the policy, including adding “language accessibility” under Guiding Principles, and to expand on the language around Student Voice and Equity.

The committee requested that staff strengthen language on communication with parents, families and caregivers, add the definition of Caring and Safe School Action Plan, and include the list of activities which lead to a possible suspension or expulsion. Staff committed to circulating the revised policy to the committee prior to its presentation to the Board for approval.

On the motion from Trustee Noble, the Policy Committee **recommends that the Student Behaviour and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline Policy be recommended for approval as amended.**

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,
Trustee Dahab, Chair of the Committee

Reference: [Committee Package](#), [Recording](#), [Presentation](#)

Use of School Board Resources During Elections

POL. 6.7

PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) supports civic learning and engagement while ensuring non-partisanship and compliance with applicable legislation.

HWDSB is committed to fairness, neutrality and the integrity of the learning environment during municipal, provincial and federal election periods, including by-elections.

The intent of this policy is to provide clear direction regarding the use of school board resources and applies to trustees, staff, students, candidates for any elected office, registered third-party advertisers, volunteers, school councils, committees, and community users of facilities during all municipal, provincial and federal elections and by-elections.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- HWDSB supports student engagement in curriculum-aligned civic learning that reflects Ministry expectations for fostering engaged, informed and active citizens.
- Students have opportunities to gain experience in political affairs through study, discussion debate, curriculum and co-curricular activities in an open, informed and reasoned manner.
- Trustees receive support in fulfilling their responsibilities as members of the Board of Trustees.
- School Board resources shall not be used for campaign-related purposes by trustees, candidates, registered third-party advertisers, staff members, committees, school councils or community users during all municipal, provincial and federal elections and by-elections.
- HWDSB maintains strict non-partisanship during all election periods.
- Political activity shall not interfere with normal school operations or safety.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

Ensure that schools remain impartial and encourage real-life learning and experiences related to politics during any election period.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council
Trustee Services

TERMINOLOGY:

Bias: An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective or accurate judgments.

Campaign Period:

- For municipal elections, the campaign period is defined as May 1 until Voting Day in a regular municipal election year.
- For provincial/federal elections, the campaign period begins the day of issuance of the writ or dissolution of Parliament to Voting Day.
- For any by-election, the campaign period is determined by the appropriate legislation, including the [Municipal Elections Act](#), [Election Act](#) and/or the [Canada Elections Act](#).

Candidate: Any person who has filed a Nomination Form as a candidate in the municipal or school board trustee election or by-election, or a person who is a candidate or who is seeking nomination in a provincial or federal election or by-election.

Non-partisanship: Refers to not being biased towards any particular political group or individual.

Registered Third-Party Advertiser: As defined in the Municipal Elections Act; an individual, corporation or trade union registered to incur expenses for advertisements or other election-related messaging.

Safe Welcome Program: A Ministry-funded program that puts in place access device systems such as locking outside doors, security cameras and buzzers at schools.

School Board Resources: Any HWDSB-issued item, staff time, or Board-owned property and infrastructure, including computers, laptops, phones, tablets, websites, newsletters, email systems, Wi-Fi, Board or school social media accounts, logos/branding, phone numbers and contact lists.

ACTION REQUIRED:**Campaign Involvement*****Students***

HWDSB encourages student engagement aimed at increasing political awareness through civics-related learning, debate and Student Voice-style activities during any election period, provided that the activities are non-partisan and curriculum-related.

Students who choose to be part of an election campaign must ensure that their campaign work is outside of HWDSB school hours and must not use any HWDSB-issued resources.

Use of School Board Resources During Elections

POL. 6.7

Staff

During campaign periods, it is important that all Board staff are mindful of their responsibilities as representatives of the Board, and refrain from activities or actions that may appear to be in favour of one candidate or party over another.

Staff who choose to be part of an election campaign must ensure that their campaign work is outside of HWDSB work hours and must not use any HWDSB-issued resources.

School Visits and Events

Candidates

Individual candidates who are running for an elected position are not permitted to make presentations to students, school councils or staff, or take part in any school or Board function as an official guest.

Current Elected Trustees

Current elected Trustees may continue to participate in school-related visits and events in their official (non-campaign) capacity as part of their regular duties. Trustees shall not campaign or conduct themselves in any way which may be perceived as campaigning for themselves or another individual running for an elected position.

Campaigning or engaging in partisan activities on school or Board property at any time, by any individual, is not permitted.

The only exception to campaigning on school or Board property is at an all-candidates' meeting.

All-Candidates' Meeting

An all-candidates' meeting may be organized by students during the school day (with support from the school Principal) or by school councils/community organizations after school hours. These meetings may take place at schools or other Board facilities.

Community Use of Schools rentals during campaign periods must comply with this policy.

Campaign-related materials are not permitted on board property, except within designated areas noted by school staff or election officials (e.g., polling stations).

Use of School Board Resources

Trustees and candidates shall not use school board resources for any campaign-related purpose. This includes, but is not limited to, Board email, voicemail, websites, newsletters, mass communication tools, social media accounts, logos/branding, imagery, phone numbers or contact lists.

Schools used as polling stations

The *Canada Elections Act*, *Ontario Elections Act* and *Municipal Elections Act* stipulate that Returning Officers/City Clerks may designate schools as polling stations. Schools as polling stations are usually selected because they are located centrally in ridings/wards and are easy to access for the voting public.

Use of School Board Resources During Elections

POL. 6.7

Distribution of Political Information

Political Information, such as but not limited to, newsletters, flyers, speeches/greetings, brochures, bulletin boards, and information tables, shall not be distributed through schools, workplaces, committees, or school councils.

Non-partisan information from Elections Canada, Elections Ontario and municipalities about the election process may be shared but will be limited to the HWDSB website (not individual school sites).

Compliance and Monitoring

Outside election periods, HWDSB welcomes elected officials and government representatives who are engaging in authentic, official government business that supports student learning, school improvement, and community partnership. These visits may take place in schools or board facilities when they align with their formal duties and contribute positively to our learning environments.

To maintain fairness and neutrality for all members of our community, any partisan political activities on board property, including events, announcements, visits, or photo opportunities conducted on behalf of a political party, leader, or candidate are not permitted.

Any concerns or potential breaches should be reported to the Director and Trustee Services for review and corrective action.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Ensure that schools remain impartial and encourage real-life learning and experiences related to politics during any election period.	This will be measured through a sample of schools to capture what activities took place during the election period.

REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Education Act

Elections Act (Canada)

Elections Act (Ontario)

Municipal Elections Act (Ontario)

City of Hamilton By-Law No. 22-031, *Hamilton Sign By-Law respecting Election Signs*

PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to protecting students' human rights, supporting their well-being, and promoting inclusion for all. Schools must be free from harassment, discrimination, and any form of bias. Every student has the right to learn in a safe and respectful school environment. This policy guides how the HWDSB and schools will use a continuum of strategies – a range of supportive and corrective actions – to encourage positive behaviours, address interfering behaviours fairly, and provide interventions that respect every student's identity. It considers known disproportionalities and works to address inequities in student experiences and outcomes. By applying these principles, HWDSB will continue to work towards ensuring that discipline is equitable, culturally responsive, and restorative, helping students learn from their actions and grow in an environment where every student feels safe, respected, and able to reach their potential.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Provide fair and inclusive learning opportunities that help students build positive social skills and prevent bullying through restorative and bias-free practices.
- Prioritize relationships and community-building when addressing harm, recognizing that behaviour often reflects how students feel or express themselves.
- Center student voice and identity in behaviour-related decisions. Include students in conversations about solutions and next steps to help increase ownership, as well as ensure their perspective has been heard.
- Use restorative and bias-free approaches that focus on healthy relationships, inclusion, and learning from mistakes.
- Respond to behaviours in ways that match a students' age and needs, focusing on learning, accountability and safety.
- Ensure equity in all responses to behaviour by reviewing interventions through an equity lens and addressing bias, prejudice or disproportionality. These practices should be linked directly to ongoing monitoring of data and outcomes.
- Maintain sensitive and supportive communication between the school, home, and students to build trust and support student well-being and learning. Schools will use inclusive and accessible approaches to ensure all families have a voice and are able to fully participate.
- Consider individual needs and mitigating circumstances when responding to student behaviour to ensure fair and appropriate responses.
- Protect every students' rights to a fair, respectful, and inclusive learning environment, consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- Create and maintain safe, inclusive and caring learning environments where every student feels valued, respected, and supported to reach their full potential. This includes upholding human rights and ensuring fairness, safety and belonging are at the centre of every school experience. Encourage and reinforce positive student behaviour by teaching and modelling social-emotional skills, empathy, and respect for all identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status.
- Honour HWDSB's ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners. Schools will integrate Indigenous histories, cultures and contributions into learning and community activities, supporting understanding and intergenerational healing.
- Use fair, equitable, and identity-affirming strategies to support positive social interactions and address

behaviour in ways that recognize each student's unique experiences and needs to promote learning, well-being, and trust between students, families, and staff.

- Provide interventions and supports that reflect students' identities and lived experiences, helping to build stronger relationships and more equitable learning environments across all schools.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education
Members of Executive Council
School Principals

TERMINOLOGY:

Adult Pupil: For the purpose of this policy, an "adult pupil" who is 18 years of age or older or who is 16 or 17 and has withdrawn from parental control.

Bias: An opinion, preference, prejudice, or inclination that limits an individual's or a group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgement.

Bias-Free: The absence of opinions, preferences, prejudices, or inclinations that limit an individual's or group's ability to make fair, objective, or accurate judgments; an approach, practice, or environment that actively promotes equity, impartiality, and fairness for all.

Bias-free progressive discipline: A comprehensive, school-wide approach that emphasizes creating a positive and inclusive learning environment while addressing student behavior issues fairly and equitably. It focuses on using a range of strategies, from prevention and early intervention to consequences, to promote positive behavior and address inappropriate actions without discrimination.

Bullying: Aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a student where:

- a) The behaviour is intended by the student to have the effect of, or the student ought to know that the behaviour would be likely to have the effect of:
 - i. Causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation, harm to the individual's property or;
 - ii. Creating a negative environment at a school for another individual, and
- b) The behaviour occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance between the student and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family dynamic.

Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan: A multi-year, board-wide plan that outlines goals, priorities, and actions to support safe, inclusive, and positive learning environments, aligned with Ministry of Education safe and accepting schools' requirements.

Committees:

- (i) **Expulsion Hearing Committee:** A committee of three or more Trustees of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, established to hear a recommended expulsion of a pupil.
- (ii) **Suspension Appeals Committee:** A committee of three or more Trustees of Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, established to hear an appeal of a principal's decision to suspend a pupil.

Discrimination: Any form of unequal treatment based on a Code ground, whether imposing extra burdens or denying benefits. It may involve direct actions that are discriminatory on their face, or it may involve rules, practices or procedures that appear neutral, but have the effect of disadvantaging certain groups of people. It can be direct or indirect, individual or systemic. It may be intentional or unintentional, and it may take obvious forms (direct), or occur in very subtle ways (indirect). In any case, even if there are many factors affecting a decision or action, if discrimination is one factor, that is a violation of this policy. Hate activities and harassment are forms of discrimination. Putting measures to correct, relieve or remedy hardship or systemic discrimination experienced by persons or groups in an attempt to achieve equity, is not discrimination.

Harassment: Defined in the Code as engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known, or ought reasonably to be known, to be unwelcome. This policy covers code-based harassment, which is a type of harassment that is directed towards a person or group on the basis of a protected code ground(s). It can involve words or actions that are known or should be known to be offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning, or unwelcome. More than one event may take place for there to be a violation of the Code. However, one incident could be significant or substantial enough to be interpreted as harassment. Some examples of harassment are name calling, unwelcome remarks, jokes, slurs, displaying derogatory or offensive messages, and bullying. This policy covers Code-based harassment. Other types of harassment are addressed through other policies (e.g., Workplace Harassment and Prevention Policy).

Hate Activity: Comments or actions against a person or group motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on factors connected to one or more code grounds. Examples include: hate incidents (non-criminal activities), hate crime (criminal activities), hate propaganda, advocating violence, bullying, promoting hate, and publicly displaying hate in notices, signs, symbols, and emblems.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): A plan that provides modifications or accommodations to program of Exceptional students, or, in some cases, students who have specific learning needs.

Mitigating Circumstance: These are factors that lessen the severity or culpability of an act requiring a suspension or expulsion.

Parent/Guardian: Where there is a reference to involving a parent/guardian it means the custodial parent or guardian of a minor who is under 18 years of age or is not 16 or 17 years old and removed from parental control.

Positive School Climate: School climate is the learning environment and relationships found within a school and school community. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community (staff, students, parents, community members) feel safe, included, and respected, and actively promote and address the needs of the student population, particularly those currently and historically underserved. Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment to promote a positive school climate and a culture of mutual respect.

Prejudice: An opinion against a group or an individual based on insufficient facts and is usually unfavourable and/or intolerant.

Progressive Discipline: A framework that fosters learning, responsibility, and restoration by addressing student behavior through a continuum of prevention programs, interventions, and supports. It emphasizes the importance of considering the context of behaviour, including trauma, ableism, racism, and other systemic factors that may impact students. This approach does not involve escalating punishments but focuses on appropriate consequences that encourage positive behaviour, while providing learning opportunities that help students make better choices and reinforce positive behaviours.

Restorative Practice(s): Used to build, maintain, and repair relationships between individuals. These practices focus on fostering belonging, accountability, and mutual respect, aiming to resolve conflicts and promote healing through open

communication and/or actions.

Whole-School Approach: A whole-school approach involves all members of the school community, including, but not limited to, staff, students, administrators, community members and parents. It supports efforts to ensure that schools are safe, inclusive and accepting. It involves the development of respectful and caring relationships between staff, students, parents and community. All aspects of school life are included in a whole-school approach, such as curriculum, school climate, teaching practices, policies and procedures.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Maintain and implement the Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan to promote student and staff well-being and reduce disproportionality in suspension and expulsion data. The plan will align and be informed by other departments (Human Rights and Equity, Mental Health and Wellness, Indigenous Education, Special Education, Inclusion and Equity) action plans and strategies.
- Strengthen school climate through relationship-focused approaches that reflect the unique needs of each school community. These approaches will engage students, families and staff in creating positive, welcoming, and respectful environments that promote inclusion, pro-social behaviours and belonging.
- Work collaboratively with students, teachers, educators, community partners, including School Council and Home and School Association, to develop and implement bullying prevention and intervention plans.
- Provide ongoing professional development for all school staff on positive behaviour supports, restorative practices, trauma-informed care, and bias-free decision making. Training will focus on equitable responses and skill-building strategies that strengthen relationships and student success.
- Embed culturally inclusive and inclusive teaching practices that remove systemic barriers, reflect student identities, and promote equitable outcomes in every classroom.
- Seek and act on feedback from students, staff, and the community through surveys, consultations, and engagement opportunities. Insights from this feedback will inform ongoing improvement to HWDSB practices and programs, and findings will be shared publicly to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Use accessible and culturally responsive communication practices to ensure every parent, guardian or caregiver can fully participate in decision-making processes.
- Ensure that all members of the school community (students, staff, parents/guardians/caregivers, community agencies, school bus drivers and operators and volunteers) understand and uphold this policy and its commitment to creating a safe, respectful, and identity-affirming environments. Schools will share this information through accessible communication tools (newsletters, assemblies, and orientation sessions).
- Communicate with students, staff and families the types of behaviours that may lead to a suspension or expulsion under this policy. This would include a review of *Activities Leading to Possible Suspension or Expulsion* (Appendix A).

Student Behaviour and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
<p>Create and maintain safe, inclusive and caring learning environments and teaching environments where every student feels valued, respected, and supported to reach their full potential. This includes upholding human rights and ensuring fairness, safety and belonging are at the centre of every school experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement in School Climate Survey results related to safety, belonging, and inclusion. • Increased percentage of students reporting feeling safe and respected, disaggregated by identity where appropriate. • Reduced incidents related to harassment, discrimination, or exclusion. • Improved clarity of behaviour expectations reflected in student and family feedback. • Reduced disproportionalities in suspension, expulsion, and incident data.
<p>Encourage and reinforce positive student behaviour by teaching and modelling social-emotional skills, empathy, and respect for all identities, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and socioeconomic status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented instruction and modelling of social-emotional learning and positive behaviour strategies across schools. • Documentation reflects the use of restorative and relationship-based approaches. • Reduction in repeat behaviour incidents following early intervention. • Staff survey data indicates increased confidence in supporting inclusive behaviour practices
<p>Provide interventions and supports that reflect students' identities and lived experiences, helping to build stronger relationships and more equitable learning environments across all schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of student participation in school Code of Conduct development and school climate initiatives. • Increased opportunities for student feedback through surveys, forums, or school-based processes. • Documentation shows student input informs prevention and intervention strategies. • Students report feeling heard and included in school decision-making. • Reduced disproportionalities in suspension, expulsion, and incident data.
<p>Use fair, equitable, and identity-affirming strategies to support positive social interactions and address behaviour in ways that recognize each student's unique experiences and needs to promote learning, well-being, and trust between students, families, and staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear roles, responsibilities, and procedures communicated through board-approved resources. • Increased consistency in documentation, reporting, and record-keeping practices across schools. • Evidence of coordinated planning and shared accountability among Human Rights and Equity, Indigenous Education, Mental Health and Well-Being, Special Education, and Safe Schools teams. • Increased consistency in the application of bias-free progressive discipline practices system-wide. • Student and family feedback indicates increased trust in fairness and transparency • Staff feedback indicates improved clarity, access to supports, and understanding of processes.

Student Behaviour and Bias-Free Progressive Discipline

Pol. 5.7

<p>Honour HWDSB’s ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by nurturing respectful and reciprocal relationships between Indigenous Peoples and Treaty Partners. Schools will integrate Indigenous histories, cultures and contributions into learning and community activities, supporting understanding and intergenerational healing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of schools implementing Indigenous-informed learning and restorative practices. • Participation data reflects engagement with Indigenous-led learning opportunities. • Feedback from Indigenous partners, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers informs continuous improvement. • Discipline data demonstrates reduced disproportionate outcomes for Indigenous students over time
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REFERENCES:

Government Documents

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Part XIII of the Education Act (300.0-316.0): Student Behaviour, Discipline, and Safety

An Act to Amend the Education Act (Accepting Schools Act), 2012

Policy/Program Memorandum 141, Programs for Students on Long Term Suspension Policy/Program

Memorandum 142: Program for Expelled Students

Policy Program Memorandum 145: Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour

Policy Program Memorandum 119: Developing and Implementing Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools 2009

Policy Program Memorandum 166: Keeping Students Safe: Framework for school Board Protocols to Combat Sex Trafficking (2021)

Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act (Bill 157) 2010

Ontario Regulation 472/00 Shaping A Culture of Respect in Our Schools 2008 Ontario Regulation 181/98

“Identification and Placement of Exceptional Pupils” Access to School Premises – Ontario Regulation 474/00

OCT Standards of Teaching Practice

Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario: Supporting Students with Special Education Needs Through Progressive Discipline, K-12 2010

English Language Learners: ESL and ELD First Nation, and Inuit Education Policy Framework 2007 Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009

Ontario Human Rights Code

Ontario Criminal Code

United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights Convention on the Rights of the Child

Appendix A: Activities leading to possible Suspension or Expulsion

<p align="center">SUSPENSION (1 to 20 days)</p>	<p align="center">EXPULSION</p>
<p>A principal shall consider whether to suspend a student if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the student has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related event, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:</p> <p>Education Act 306 (1):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person. 2. Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or cannabis (unless the individual has been authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes) 3. Being under the influence of alcohol, or cannabis (unless the individual has been authorized to use cannabis for medical purposes). 4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority. 5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the student's school or to property located on the premises of the student's school. 6. Bullying. 7. Non-consensual sharing of intimate image(s). 8. Any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a student under a policy of the Board. <p>HWDSB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Violations of the Code of Conduct, school and Board policy, e.g. repeated disrespect of authority. Using social media in such a way that negatively impacts others or school climate. 10. Inappropriate behaviours, including biting, spitting, kicking, etc. 11. Physical fighting and assault (not requiring medical treatment). 12. An act harmful to one's physical/mental well-being. 13. Being under the influence of drugs. 14. Making a bomb threat. 	<p>A principal shall suspend and consider referring a student to an expulsion hearing if they have reasonable grounds to believe that the student has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or event, or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:</p> <p>Education Act 310 (1):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm. 2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person. 3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner. 4. Committing sexual assault. 5. Trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs. 6. Committing robbery. 7. Bullying (<i>if the student has been previously suspended for engaging in bullying and the student's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person</i>). 8. Any activity listed in Ed Act Subsection 306(1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hate (An activity in violation of the Equity and Inclusion Policy or any human rights violation under the Human Rights Code (pending Human Rights Policy, e.g., use of racial slurs, homophobic/transphobic language; etc.). 9. Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor. 10. Any other activity for which a student may be expelled under Board policy. <p>HWDSB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Serious violations of the Standards of Behaviour in the Code of Conduct, e.g. Repeated disrespect of authority 12. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to Board property 13. Continuous pattern of behaviour injurious to learning or safety. 14. Their presence constituting an unacceptable risk.

Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting Date: Monday, February 23, 2026

From: Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Meeting Date: Wednesday, January 28, 2026

The Committee held a meeting in room 308, Education Centre on Wednesday, January 28th, beginning at 5:34 pm, ending at 7:49 pm, with Chair Judy Colantino presiding.

Present

Dawn Danko, Trustee Ward 7, Judy Colantino, Down Syndrome Association of Hamilton, SEAC Chair, Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair, Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario, Nancy Silva Khan, Autism Ontario (Central West Chapter), Samantha Sweet, Centre for Diverse Learners, Susi Owen, CNIB Hamilton and Niagara, Tracy Sherriff, Community Living Hamilton (alternate), Vanessa Doslea, Lynwood Charlton Centre

Regrets

Danielle Dion-Broadley, FASD Parent & Caregiver Support Group, Sarah Pennington, Community Living Hamilton

MONITORING ITEMS

A. Bias Free Progressive Discipline Policy Input

Jason Rizza, System Principal, Caring and Safe Schools

- The Committee provided detailed feedback on the Policy to support the development of the Procedure
- The Policy promotes safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environments for all students by providing guidance that ensures responses are bias free, equitable, and restorative
- It incorporates a range of strategies including prevention, intervention, support, and consequence designed to foster understanding, accountability, and learning from mistakes
- The guiding principles of the policy include building positive social skills through inclusive programs, centering student voice and identity in decision making and using bias-free approaches that are appropriate to each student's age and individual needs
- Jason will return to SEAC to gather more input around the Procedure

B. Revitalizing the Special Education Plan

Sharon Stephanian, Superintendent, Special Education, Inclusion & Equity

- The Committee provided feedback on the current Special Education Plan, using a set of guiding questions to reflect on what is working well and identify specific areas where improvements can be made
- Staff will review the Committee's feedback and incorporate feedback into the 2026-27 Plan
- General feedback included a digital, multi-part document which included a section for students, families and Ministry
- The 2026-27 Plan will be brought back to SEAC for further review and approval

C. MEMBERS' UPDATE

Trustee Update - Dawn Danko, Trustee, Ward 7

- Trustees attended the Ontario Public Education Symposium, where HWDSB staff delivered a session focused on special education

Association Updates

Lindsay Bray, McMaster Children's Hospital Developmental Pediatrics and Rehabilitation Portfolio, SEAC Vice Chair

- The Speech and Language team is holding collaborative meetings with both Boards and the French Board, following an annual rotation schedule

Melanie Roberts, Association for Bright Children of Ontario

- ABC elected a new Board, resulting in more parent events and an updated website

- CDL has several upcoming [programs](#) including social skills development, executive functioning, literacy, mathematics and individual intensive support

Superintendent's Update

- A total of 128 people attended our virtual Entry to Kindergarten session for families of children who may require special education supports and services. An in person session will be held on February 19th at the Education Centre
- Year three of the Ministry's four year SIP and SEA funding monitoring process is underway. Ministry staff will visit Glenwood and Mount Albion, followed by a debrief meeting
- The CEC has paused the Yes I Can Awards – based on positive feedback from last year's in school presentations, staff will meet to discuss possible plans for this year and will share updates with the Committee once more information is available

Respectfully submitted by
Judy Colantino, SEAC Chair

Committee Report

Presented to: Board

Meeting date: February 23, 2026

From: Faith Community Advisory Committee

Meeting date: February 3, 2026

The committee held a meeting at 20 Education Court, Room 308 on February 3, 2026, from 6:05-7:45 pm.

Members: Nick Sahami, Charles Chiarelli, Meaghan Dummer, Pooja Mathuria, Mahendra Deonarian, Nabihah Nadeem, Geoffrey Cameron, Ala Mohamad, Sukhi Dhillon and Angelina Hassan. Trustees Buck and Dahab attended.

Regrets: Rabbi Miriam Wajnberg

MONITORING ITEMS:

A. Review of 2025 Committee Work

Staff discussed the Committee’s focus in providing recommendations to the Board regarding Holy Days and Days of Significance for the 2026/27 school year. Members were asked to consult with relevant faith-based community and asked to provide their recommendations for the next Faith Advisory Committee meeting being held April 28, 2026.

B. School Board Updates

Staff provided updates to the Committee with regards to Artificial Intelligence in HWDSB discussing tools available to educators and examining practical strategies for integrating AI with a focus on ethically, equitably and responsibly enhancing professional learning and learning environments.

Staff advised that Kindergarten registration for the 2026 2027 school year is currently open.

The 48th Annual Hamilton Community Prayer Breakfast will occur on Tuesday May 5th and staff shared this information with the Committee Members noting that their attendance would be supported.

The Committee received information regarding the Student Nutrition Programs in Schools including the update that 4 new programs were launched in December and a commitment from HWDSB to launch programs in an additional 8 schools by March of 2026, bringing program coverage to 90%.

Staff alerted the committee to the upcoming HWDSB School Climate Survey which will run from February 9 2026 to March 13 2026 and will allow students (Grade 4 to 12) to anonymously provide feedback regarding their safety, bullying, relationships health and behaviour.

C. Trustee Update

Trustee Buck provided an update regarding the Program Strategy Review and shared that 10 findings and 27 recommendations resulted from the review. The next step is for staff to bring forward Guiding Principles to ensure that any changes made are purposeful in nature.

Trustee Buck also shared that the Finance Department is conducting a Budget Consultation Survey from January to June which will allow for Community Voice.

Trustee Dahab provided an update regarding Trustee attendance at the recent Public Education Symposium hosted by the Ontario Public School Board Association (OPSBA), referencing a Vaping Session she attended and feels HWDSB could benefit from and highlighting Daunte Hillen’s (Shakowennakara:tats/ Student Trustee) involvement as a Panel Member.

Respectfully submitted by
Nick Sahami and Charles Chiarelli (Co-Chairs)

**Board**

Monday, February 23, 2026

2026-2027 Draft School Year Calendars

Submitted by: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared by: Adnan Shahbaz, Superintendent of Equity and Student Achievement

Recommendation:

That the Draft 2026-2027 School Year Calendars be approved for submission to the Ministry of Education.

Background:

The 2026-2027 School Year Calendars ([Appendix A and B](#)) are prepared in consultation with the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee, the public, our co-terminus school board (HWCD SB), and neighbouring school boards, and are endorsed by Executive Council. The calendars meet all Ministry requirements. Specifically, the calendars comply with Ontario Regulation 304, School Year Calendars, and Professional Activity (PA) Days.

Ontario Regulation 304, School Year Calendars, and Professional Activity Days sets out the requirements for preparation and submission of school year calendars to the Ministry of Education. This includes a minimum of 194 school days between September 1 and June 30. Due to Labour Day falling on September 7, 2026, only 192 instructional days are available between September 8 and June 30. Therefore, two PA days must be scheduled before September 8, 2026.

Development of the Draft 2026-2027 School Year Calendars has been undertaken in consultation with the School Year Calendar Advisory Committee which consists of members representing: Elementary and Secondary Principals (HWPC); Elementary and Secondary Teachers (HWETL, OSSTF, HWOTL); Parents (Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations; HWDSB Parent Involvement Committee); Educational Assistants and Child and Youth Care Practitioners (COPE), Early Childhood Educators (HWDECEL), Professional Student Services (PSSP), and School Office Assistants (OCTU).

The School Year Calendar Advisory Committee reviewed and provided feedback on the draft elementary and secondary calendars on November 3rd, 2025. The committee met again on January 28, 2026, to review the results of the public consultation process and provide further input. The consultation process also included discussions with the co-terminus board to align PA days wherever possible to reduce transportation costs and disruption.

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

For the 2026-2027 Secondary Draft Calendar, an instructional day has once again been positioned after the exam period and the end of semester Professional Activity Day. The inclusion of this day is in response to student and parent feedback regarding the benefit of a designated time to review the final assessment and evaluation of courses at the end of each semester with school-based staff.

Status

Ontario Regulation 304, School Year Calendar, Professional Activity (PA) Days sets the requirements for preparation and submission of school year calendars to the Ministry. This includes a minimum of 194 school days between September 1 and June 30. In addition, Boards may designate up to seven (7) PA days and up to ten (10) examination days which leaves 187 instructional days.

As of the date of this report, the Ministry of Education has not yet released detailed guidance regarding the requirements of Professional Activity Days for 2026-2027.

Ontario Regulation 304, Section 4, establishes holidays for the school year. The following chart outlines the holidays for the 2026-2027 school year aligned with this regulation.

Holidays as determined by Reg. 304	2026/2027 School Year
Labour Day	Monday, September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving Day	Monday, October 12, 2026
Winter Break	December 21, 2026 – January 1, 2027
Family day	Monday, February 15, 2027
Mid-Winter Break	March 15 to March 19, 2027
Good Friday	Friday, March 26, 2027
Easter Monday	Monday, March 29, 2027
Victoria Day	Monday, May 24, 2027

As directed by the Board of Trustees, public consultation took place from December 17th, 2025, and January 14th, 2026, to receive community feedback regarding the draft calendars. The consultation involved both an online survey as well as the EngageHWDSB online platform. A School Messenger notification was sent to all families and Social Media posts were made regarding the consultation.

Consultation Report

The 2026–2027 School Year Calendar consultation saw strong community engagement, with 1,815 respondents, marking an increase of over 850 participants from the previous year. The EngageHWDSB platform also drew approximately 2,900 visitors, with over 1,200 downloads of the draft calendars, demonstrating significant public interest in shaping the school year. Most responses came from parents and caregivers (83%), with an expanded opportunity for staff who are also parents contributing to a combined staff-identified respondent group of 14%. Feedback

was provided across both elementary (78%) and secondary (22%) draft calendars, offering a broad representation of community perspectives.

Overall, the consultation reflected strong support for the majority of proposed dates, with high agreement across key elements in both calendars. Elementary respondents expressed especially high approval for mid-and late-year PA days, and secondary respondents endorsed start dates, exam schedules, and most PA days at rates consistently above 90%. While some early-September PA days generated mixed views, the overarching theme of the feedback was constructive and affirmed the overall structure of the proposed calendars.

Elementary

Start and End Dates for Students	Tuesday, September 8, 2026 Wednesday, June 30, 2027
Professional Activity Days	Wednesday, September 2, 2026 Thursday, September 3, 2026 Monday, October 26, 2026 Friday, November 27, 2026 Friday, January 22, 2027 Friday, June 4, 2027 Wednesday, June 30, 2027

Secondary

	Semester 1	Semester 2
Start and End Dates for Students	Tuesday, September 8, 2026 Tuesday, February 2, 2027	Wednesday, February 3, 2027 Tuesday, June 29, 2027
Examination Days (5)	January 25 -29, 2027	June 21–25, 2027
Future Preparedness Day	Tuesday, February 2, 2027	Tuesday, June 29, 2027
Professional Activity Days	Wednesday, September 2, 2026 Thursday, September 3, 2026 Monday, October 26, 2026 Tuesday, February 2, 2027	Friday, April 16, 2027 Monday, June 28, 2027 Wednesday, June 30, 2027

Professional Activity (PA) Days:

School boards must dedicate three (3) PA days to provincial education priorities and may provide up to four (4) additional PA days per school year.

Dates for Professional Activity (PA) days have been determined to prioritize timely professional learning opportunities that adhere to provincial requirements, including the completion of any required programs and legislated training.

For the 2026/2027 school year, the Ministry of Education has not yet provided information regarding the topics for the required Ministry priority Professional Activity Days. We anticipate receiving further information this spring.

PA days will also focus on learning related to school improvement. Educators will engage in professional learning at the beginning, middle and end of the school year to review student data, complete reporting, identify student needs and skill gaps, as well as plan for purposeful instruction to address these needs. Continued learning about human rights, anti-racism, anti-oppression and Indigenous Education will be integrated across all professional learning.

Summary of Professional Activity Days in Elementary and Secondary (2026/2027)

Elementary	Secondary
Wednesday, September 2, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	Wednesday, September 2, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
Thursday, September 3, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	Thursday, September 3, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
Monday, October 26, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	Monday, October 26, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
Friday, November 27, 2026 – Elementary caregiver communication	*Monday, February 1, 2027 – End of Exams – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
Monday, January 22, 2027 – Elementary Reporting and Assessment	Friday, April 16, 2027 - Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
Friday, June 4, 2027 – Elementary Reporting and Assessment	*Monday, June 28, 2027 – End of Exams - Ministry and/or Board Priority Day
*Wednesday, June 30th, 2027 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	*Wednesday, June 30, 2027- Ministry and/or Board Priority Day

All PA dates currently align with the draft HWCDSB school year calendar except for those indicated with an asterisk *

Financial Implications

There is an additional cost to the HWDSB when Professional Activity Days differ between co-terminus school boards that share transportation. Consultation between co-terminus boards occurs to align as many Professional Activity Days as possible.

For the 2026/2027 school year, Professional Activity days are aligned except:

- Monday, February 1st (Secondary only);
- Monday, June 28th (Secondary only); and
- Wednesday, June 30th (both Elementary and Secondary).

The cost of these unaligned days is approximately \$65,000 for the 2026/2027 school year.

Strategic Directions

Upholding Human Rights, Safety and 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 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.

School Year Calendar 2026 – 2027

DRAFT Elementary

Legend ▶ **H** - Statutory Holiday **E** Scheduled Examination Day **P** Professional Activity Day **B** Board Designated Holiday Half Day



Month	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Professional Activity Days	Number of Scheduled Examination Days	1 st Week					2 nd Week					3 rd Week					4 th Week					5 th Week				
				M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
August 2026	0	0		3 H	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28	31				
September 2026	17	2			1	2 P	3 P	4	7 H	8 F	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30		
October 2026	20	1					1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12 H	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26 P	27	28	29	30
November 2026	20	1		2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27 P	30				
December 2026	14				1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21 B	22 B	23 B	24 B	25 B	28 B	29 B	30 B	31 B	
January 2027	19	1						1 B	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22 P	25	26	27	28	29
February 2027	19			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 H	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26					
March 2027	16			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 B	16 B	17 B	18 B	19 B	22	23	24	25	26 H	29 H	30	31		
April 2027	22						1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30
May 2027	20			3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24 H	25	26	27	28	31				
June 2027	20	2			1	2	3	4 P	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29 L	30 P		
July 2027							1 H	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30

Note: The 2026-2027 calendar provides for 196 possible school days between September 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days of which three days must be designated as professional activity days with respect to specific provincial education priorities as outlined in the Policy/Program Memoranda 151 and up to four extra days may be designated by the board as professional activity days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days. The boards may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days

School Year Calendar 2026 - 2027

DRAFT Secondary

Legend ▶ **H** - Statutory Holiday **E** Scheduled Examination Day **P** Professional Activity Day **B** Board Designated Holiday Half Day

Month	Number of Instructional Days	Number of Professional Activity Days	Number of Scheduled Examination Days	1st Week					2nd Week					3rd Week					4th Week					5th Week				
				M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
August 2026	0	0	0	3 H	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24	25	26	27	28	31				
September 2026	17	2	0		1	2 P	3 P	4	7 H	8 F	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21	22	23	24	25	28	29	30		
October 2026	20	1	0				1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12 H	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26 P	27	28	29	30
November 2026	21	0	0	2	3	4	5	6	9	10	11	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	23	24	25	26	27	30				
December 2026	14	0			1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21 B	22 B	23 B	24 B	25 B	28 B	29 B	30 B	31 B	
January 2027	15	0	5					1 B	4	5	6	7	8	11	12	13	14	15	18	19	20	21	22	25 E	26 E	27 E	28 E	29 E
February 2027	18	1	0	1 P	2	3 Sem 2 Day 1	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 H	16	17	18	19	22	23	24	25	26					
March 2027	16			1	2	3	4	5	8	9	10	11	12	15 B	16 B	17 B	18 B	19 B	22	23	24	25	26 H	29 H	30	31		
April 2027	21	1					1	2	5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16 P	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30
May 2027	20			3	4	5	6	7	10	11	12	13	14	17	18	19	20	21	24 H	25	26	27	28	31				
June 2027	15	2	5		1	2	3	4	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	16	17	18	21 E	22 E	23 E	24 E	25 E	28 P	29 L	30 P		
July 2027						1 H	2		5	6	7	8	9	12	13	14	15	16	19	20	21	22	23	26	27	28	29	30
TOTAL	177	7	10	<p>Note: The 2026-2027 calendar provides for 196 possible school days between September 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027. The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days of which three days must be designated as professional activity days with respect to specific provincial education priorities as outlined in the Policy/Program Memoranda 151 and up to four extra days may be designated by the board as professional activity days. The remaining school days shall be instructional days. The boards may designate up to ten instructional days as examination days</p>																								

Purpose of Consultation

Every year, school boards across Ontario must submit school year calendars to the Ministry of Education for approval. According to Regulation 304, school board calendars for elementary and secondary schools must include 194 school days (including up to seven Professional Activity Days) between September 1st and June 30th, with up to 10 days designated as examination days for secondary schools.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) asked members of the public to comment on the Draft 2026-2027 School Year Elementary and Secondary Calendars through the completion of an online survey and the EngageHWDSB platform. The consultation ran from December 18th, 2025, until January 15th, 2026, and garnered a total of 1815 responses, an increase of over 850 respondents from last year.

The survey asked respondents:

- a) whether or not they agree with the proposed dates in the elementary and secondary calendars, and
- b) to comment on each of the key dates.

The EngageHWDSB calendar project was visited by approximately 2,900 people. On the site, visitors were able to access draft versions of the elementary and secondary calendars, and to provide additional feedback on the proposed dates. The calendars were downloaded 1,218 times (elementary: 957; secondary: 261).

Respondent Characteristics

The largest number of responses came from parents/guardians (n = 1,514, 83%), while 7% (n = 131) identified themselves as HWDSB staff members, another 7% (n = 125) came from HWDSB staff members who are also parents of HWDSB students, and 2% (n = 37) came from community members.

When asked which calendar they would like to provide feedback on, 78% (n = 1409) indicated elementary. 22% (n = 391) indicated secondary.

Of note, we have observed a shift in the demographic makeup of respondents over the past five years. Whereas in the consultations for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 calendars the number of respondents who identified themselves as HWDSB staff was over 30% (31% and 44% respectively), that number dropped to 9% for the 2024-5 consultation, and further to 5% for 2025-2026. This year, respondents were given an additional option to describe their connection to HWDSB – as both staff member *and* parent/guardian of an HWDSB student member – alongside the singular options of parent/guardian or staff member. When both staff categories are combined, 14% of respondents identified as HWDSB staff.

Summary of Findings

In keeping with principles of equality, equity, and non-discrimination, we have examined the consultation responses through an equity lens. From this perspective, our findings elevate voices that might otherwise be overwhelmed by a statistical majority.

Elementary

Members of the public were invited to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with key dates in the draft Elementary School Year Calendar. The following is a summary of the feedback:

Table 1. Results for Elementary Calendar Dates

	Total # of responses	Agree	Disagree
Start Date for students: September 8, 2026	1,249	84% (n = 1,052)	16% (n = 197)
End Date for students: June 29, 2027	1,241	76% (n = 940)	24% (n = 301)
PA Day 1: September 2, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	1,229	68% (n = 831)	32% (n = 398)
PA Day 2: September 3, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	1,234	67% (n = 824)	33% (n = 410)
PA Day 3: October 26, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day (Placement recommended by the Ministry to accommodate municipal elections).	1,224	86% (n = 1,054)	14% (n = 170)
PA Day 4: November 27, 2026 – Caregiver Communication	1,225	95% (n = 1,168)	5% (n = 57)
PA Day 5: January 22, 2027 – Reporting and Assessment	1,229	94% (n = 1,161)	6% (n = 68)
PA Day 6: June 4, 2027 – Reporting and Assessment	1,228	94% (n = 1,159)	6% (n = 69)
PA Day 7: June 30, 2027 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	1,232	84% (n = 1,032)	16% (n = 200)

Elementary Calendar Comments

Members of the public were further invited to offer comments regarding each of the key dates in the Elementary Calendar.

The proposed **Start Date (September 8)** for students generated considerable feedback and reflects a range of perspectives. Although a majority of respondents (84%) agreed with the date, many of those in disagreement suggested that it is too late and preferred an earlier start, ideally in the first week of September, *before* the Labour Day weekend. Others disagreeing with the later start date raised concerns about childcare, namely the cost of care and the difficulty in finding appropriate arrangements. (Childcare is a concern that appears throughout participant comments.) A number of respondents suggested that September 8th be designated as a professional activity day for staff rather than the student start date, while a similar number of respondents voiced support for starting the year after Labour Day. Of note, multiple respondents suggesting the school year start earlier demonstrated apparent confusion about when Labour Day falls in 2026, incorrectly assuming it to be in the first week of September.

There are predictable similarities between the comments relating to the proposed elementary start date and **PA Days 1 and 2 (September 2nd & 3rd)**, although PA Days 1 and 2 had considerably lower approval rates. Respondents most frequently commented that PA Days 1 and 2 are scheduled too early in the year and would be more beneficial if used later, particularly to provide students with a break. Some respondents also questioned the purpose of the PA days altogether, suggesting that there is no need for them.

The range of respondent views is reflected in complementary positions. The number of respondents raising concerns about childcare necessitated by the PA days is roughly equal to the number suggesting that September 2nd and 3rd should be instructional days. Similarly, the number of respondents stating that staff require the days before Labour Day to prepare classrooms and plan for the year, is approximately the same as those maintaining that staff should not be required to begin formal work (i.e., scheduled PA days) before that date. Thirdly, a number of respondents voiced their support for PA days before the onset of instructional days, suggesting that they will be less disruptive. A similar number questioned whether the PA days could be moved earlier to allow an earlier first day of school.

Compared to PA Days 1 and 2, **PA Day 3 (October 26th)** had an approval rate nearly 20% higher. Those commenting on PA Day 3 most frequently suggested that PA days should be consistently scheduled on Fridays, with numerous respondents noting that it is more difficult to take time off work on Mondays. A number of respondents proposed scheduling PA Day 3 adjacent to Halloween or the Thanksgiving weekend. Others also presented various perspectives regarding using schools for polling stations and/or scheduling a PA day on an election day.

The proposed dates for **PA Days 4 (November 4th)**, **5 (January 22nd)**, & **6 (June 4th)** were approved by a large majority of respondents (at least 94%). Of those respondents in disagreement with the timing, the most frequent criticisms were that

PA Day 4 is scheduled too late in the year, PA Day 5 falls too close to the Winter Break, and that PA Day 6 should be scheduled earlier in year – particularly between February and May.

A large majority (84%) of respondent also agreed with the placement of **PA Day 7 (June 30th)**. The most common comment regarding PA Day 7 was that the school year should end earlier. Some respondents questioned the purpose of the day or suggested that training should take place outside of instructional days. Others wanted to see the PA Day placed earlier in the year.

Although a minority of total respondents, roughly half of those in disagreement with the **End Date (June 29th)** for students argued that the last day of school should fall at the end of the previous week. Numerous respondents questioned the rationale for scheduling a partial last week, with some citing childcare concerns. Others suggested that school stay in session until June 30th.

Secondary

Members of the public were invited to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with key dates in the draft Secondary School Year Calendar. The following is a summary of the feedback:

Table 2. Results for Secondary Calendar Dates

	Total # of responses	Agree	Disagree
Semester 1 Start Date for students: September 8, 2026	338	94% (n = 317)	6% (n = 21)
Semester 1 End Date for students: February 2, 2027 – Future Preparedness Day	332	83% (n = 277)	17% (n = 55)
Semester 1 Exam Days: January 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 2027	327	95% (n = 311)	5% (n = 16)
PA Day 1: September 2, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	330	69% (n = 228)	31% (n = 102)
PA Day 2: September 3, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	330	69% (n = 227)	31% (n = 103)
PA Day 3: October 26, 2026 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day (Placement recommended by the Ministry to accommodate municipal elections.)	332	87% (n = 289)	13% (n = 43)
PA Day 4:	332	93%	7%

February 1, 2027 – End of Exams: Ministry and/or Board Priority Day		(n = 309)	(n = 23)
Semester 2 Start Date for Students: February 3, 2027	281	92% (n = 258)	8% (n = 23)
Semester 2 End Date for Students: June 29, 2027 – Future Preparedness Day	278	71% (n = 198)	29% (n = 80)
Semester 2 Exam Days: June 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 2027	278	93% (n = 259)	7% (n = 19)
PA Day 5: April 16, 2027 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	275	96% (n = 264)	4% (n = 11)
PA Day 6: June 28, 2027 – End of Exams: Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	280	86% (n = 242)	14% (n = 38)
PA Day 7: June 30, 2027 – Ministry and/or Board Priority Day	281	87% (n = 245)	13% (n = 36)

Secondary Calendar Comments

In keeping with the trend from prior years, response numbers for the Secondary Calendar were considerably lower than those for the Elementary Calendar; however, there were some commonalities. All proposed dates were met with agreement by the majority of respondents, and like the Elementary Calendar, PA Days 1 and 2 were the least popular dates. Of note, the approval rating for the June Future Preparedness Day was also considerably below the average.

The **Semester 1 Start Date (September 8th)** for students, **Semester 1 End Date (February 2nd)** for students, and **Semester 1 Exam Dates (January 25-29)** all received high levels of support, with over 90% of respondents approving the proposed start and exam dates. A small number of respondents suggested that the semester start date was late; conversely, a small number also suggested the PA Day be scheduled on September 8, thus delaying the student start date. With regards to the exam dates, a number of respondents held that the exam period should be broken up by a weekend. Of note, while the majority of respondents agreed with the first semester’s **Future Preparedness Day** (semester 1 end date), more than half of those who commented on the date objected, arguing that it served no useful purpose and that students will likely not attend.

Like the corresponding dates in the Elementary Calendar, **PA Days 1 (September 2nd) & 2 (September 3rd)** received the lowest approval levels. Respondents argued that PA days should not be scheduled before Labour Day, with some suggesting that it is unfair to staff. Others questioned their purpose and advocated for their placement later in the year when they would be more useful.

PA Days 3 (October 26th) and 4 (February 1st) also had high approval rates – near or above 90%. Some respondents advocated for PA days to be consistently scheduled on Fridays or placed adjacent to existing long weekends.

There is a significant difference between the approval levels for the proposed **Semester 2 Start Date (February 3rd)** for students and **End Date (June 29th)** for students, with 20% fewer respondents in agreement with the **Future Preparedness Day** (second semester end date). Whereas the most frequent comments about the start date referenced its placement in the calendar – namely that the semester should start on a Monday or Tuesday – like the Semester 1 Future Preparedness Day, most comments referring to the semester end date suggested that the Future Preparedness Day was unnecessary, a wasted instructional day, and that students would not attend.

There was not a considerable amount of feedback on the **Semester 2 Exam Days (June 21-25)**, **PA Day 5 (April 16th)**, **PA Day 6 (June 28th)**, and **PA Day 7 (June 30th)**. A few respondents wanted to see the exam period broken up and moved earlier, while comments concerning PA Days 6 and 7 were largely connected to the Semester 2 End Date.

Additional Comments

Finally, the public was invited to enter general comments about the draft Elementary and Secondary calendars. There are several points of overlap between the most frequently addressed topics in the open-ended comments and the responses to the individual dates above. This feedback again was mixed. Overall, however, the consultation responses reflect a strong interest in how the school year calendar affects family routines, student well-being, and instructional time. Participants emphasized the practical challenges created by professional activity (PA) days, particularly the difficulty of securing childcare, with a considerable number questioning both the number of PA days and whether they should occur during instructional time. Related to this, respondents expressed multiple views on the timing of PA days. Participants voiced differing perspectives on scheduling PA days before Labour Day, with a number of respondents advocating for scheduling PA days on Fridays, or alongside long weekends to reduce disruption for families.

There was also considerable discussion about the broader structure of the school year. Some participants advocated for spreading PA days more evenly throughout the year to provide students with regular breaks and support well-being, while others supported changes that would start the school year earlier in September and/or end it earlier in June. A number of respondents suggested rethinking the calendar more fundamentally by exploring alternative calendar models.

In addition, some participants highlighted the importance of inclusivity and equity in calendar planning, with suggestions to better recognize holidays from a wider range of religious and cultural traditions. Taken together, the feedback demonstrates a desire for a school calendar that balances operational needs with family logistics and student wellness, while minimizing disruption and promoting fairness and predictability.

Notice of Motion: Enhancing School-Area Traffic Safety for Students in Ward 4

Trustee Zaitley

February 23, 2026

Whereas student safety around schools in Hamilton’s lower east city has become an increasing concern due to higher traffic volumes, narrow streets, and limited drop-off and pick-up space. In one survey, 78% of Ontario parents reported witnessing unsafe driving behaviours in school zones, and only 37% consider the roads around their child’s school to be safe (CAA South Central Ontario, 2022).

Whereas families and school communities in Ward 4 have raised concerns regarding incidents involving vehicles and students, underscoring the need for proactive, collaborative approaches to school-area safety

Whereas the City of Hamilton and community partners such as the Daily School Route have experience and expertise in school-area traffic safety and active transportation initiatives (walking, biking, using a wheelchair, etc).

Be it resolved that the Board initiate exploratory discussions with the Ward 4 City Councillor’s office and the Daily School Routes Program Manager to identify opportunities for collaboration related to active transportation, and school-area traffic concerns for Ward 4 schools, with a view to the 2026/2027 school year using the existing ward 12 initiative as a framework.

Be it further resolved that staff report back to the Board by spring