



Policy Committee
Wednesday, April 22, 2026
EC-340D & Virtual Meeting

AGENDA: 7:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order/Roll Call
2. HWDSB Land Acknowledgement
3. Approval of the Agenda
4. Review of the Committee Workplan

Policy Reviews:

5. Procurement
6. Integrated Accessibility Standards

7. Adjournment

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

Subject: Procurement Policy

Executive Council Member Responsible: Matthew Gerard
Associate Director, Business Services and
Treasurer of the Board



BACKGROUND

The Procurement Policy has been reviewed as part of the policy review cycle with revisions to language throughout the policy that aligns with current practices.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Procurement Policy be recommended for approval.

	POLICY NO: 3.8
Adopted	2021
Projected Review Date	2025
Revisions	2021, 2025

POLICY: PROCUREMENT

PURPOSE:

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) supports the procurement of products and services that meet the needs of students, educators, and staff while supporting the ethical, fair and transparent treatment of all suppliers of goods and services. The school board utilizes central Procurement Department as a means of obtaining maximum value for each dollar spent consistent with the educational goals of the Board.

Procurement staff shall adhere to the procurement ethics established by the Ontario Public Buyers Association (OPBA) and Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC) in respect of all procurement processes. The Board adheres to, and insists upon adherence to, a strict ethical standard in all of its purchasing acquisitions by all bidders and vendors.

HWDSB is committed to procurement practices that uphold human rights, equity, accessibility, reconciliation, and inclusion, and that do not create systemic or disproportionate barriers for Indigenous Peoples, equity deserving groups or community based suppliers.

This procurement policy applies to all employees, and School Council members involved in the procurement of goods and services. This policy applies to all goods/services acquired using HWDSB budgets, school generated funds, school council funds, donations or any other funds generated on behalf of the HWDSB.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB is committed to conducting all Procurement operations in accordance with the following guiding principles:

- Compliance with all applicable legislation (including but not limited to those listed in the References section below), trade agreements, policies and procedures
- Use of open, ethical, fair and transparent processes and a commitment to substantive equality or equity to all qualified suppliers
- Achieving best value for dollar by considering all appropriate procurement methods and following commercially reasonable business practices
- Evaluating the total cost of the procurement (ie.g., acquisition, operating, disposal) and other factors such as availability, supplier qualification and supplier's commitment to fair business practices when contemplating procuring goods or services

- Balancing accountability with operational efficiency
- Maintaining the highest standards of ethical conduct
- Commit to a procurement process that is inclusive, transparent and rooted in Indigenous self-determination.
- “Best Value” shall be assessed using a holistic evaluation that considers not only price, but also quality, durability, accessibility, human rights impacts, cultural relevance, supplier diversity, environmental sustainability, and community benefit.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

The intended outcomes of the Procurement Policy are to:

- Obtain the maximum value for each dollar spent consistent with the educational goals of the Board and to provide a procurement service that meets the needs of students, educators, and staff.
- Establish standards for goods and services to ensure an acceptable level of quality for the system, and to promote efficiencies with respect to cost and service.
- Establish appropriate budget controls and procurement approval processes that ensure fiscal responsibility.
- Maintain a procurement process that is fair, open and transparent when acquiring goods and services from suppliers

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education

TERMINOLOGY:

Board: Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA): An inter-governmental trade agreement regulating trade within Canada.

Comprehensive and Economic Trade Agreement (or CETA): A trade deal between the European Union and Canada.

Education Act: The main piece of legislation, or “statute”, governing public education in Ontario.

ACTION REQUIRED:**Ethical Conduct & Human Rights Compliance**

The Board shall ensure that all procurement activities are conducted with integrity, transparency and accountability, and in a manner consistent with this Policy, applicable legislation, and recognized professional standards.

The Board shall not conduct business with suppliers whose practices, conduct or products are inconsistent with the Board's Human Rights Policy or applicable human rights legislation. Suppliers are expected to operate in a manner that upholds respect, dignity, inclusion, and non-discrimination.

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcome	Assessment
Obtain the maximum value for each dollar spent consistent with the educational goals of the Board and to provide a procurement service that meets the needs of students, educators, and staff.	Exhibit the prudent and transparent use of the Board's financial resources through quarterly interim financial reporting and annual audited financial statements.
Establish standards for goods and services to ensure an acceptable level of quality for the system, and to promote efficiencies with respect to cost and service.	Ensure appropriate application of the Procurement Policy, Procedure and compliance to mandated Ministry legislation and collaborative purchasing through various cooperative opportunities.
Establish appropriate budget controls and procurement approval processes that ensure fiscal responsibility.	Ensure purchases are made within budget allotments and that only authorized staff approve purchases.
Maintain a procurement process that is fair, open and transparent when acquiring goods and services from suppliers.	Show that procurement processes are managed consistently and provide feedback to suppliers when requested.

REFERENCES:**Government Documents**

Broader Public Sector Accountability Act 2010 (BPS)

Education Act

Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA)

Canadian Free Trade Agreement (CFTA)

Supply Chain Management Act (Government, Broader Public Sector and Health Sector Entities), 2019

Subject: Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

Executive Council Member Responsible: Sharon Stephanian
Superintendent of Special Education, Inclusion and Equity, K-12



BACKGROUND

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy has been reviewed as part of the policy review cycle with revisions to language throughout the policy that aligns with current practices.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy be recommended for approval.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to support the creation of inclusive and accessible environments by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities. The policy outlines HWDSB's commitment to meeting the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (Regulation 191/11)*, while promoting the school board's values: compassion, dignity, trust, and joy.

This policy works alongside *Policy 1.1 Barrier-Free Physical Learning Environments for Students* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

HWDSB is committed to:

- Complying with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and Ontario Regulation 191/11, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, specifically:
 - Information and Communication Standards
 - Employment Standards
 - Transportation Standards
 - Design of Public Spaces Standards
 - Customer Service Standard
- Providing an environment that promotes independence, dignity, integration, equal opportunity and respect for students, parents/guardians/caregivers, the public and staff.
- Making all appropriate and reasonable efforts to create policies, practices and procedures consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equity of opportunity.
- Recognizing the importance of upholding the rights and educational wellness of Indigenous students, families and community. This includes acknowledging the unique histories, cultures, and experiences of Indigenous communities when addressing accessibility.
- Recognizing and understanding that barriers to equity and inclusion are often intensified by intersecting identities such as race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other dimensions of diversity.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

HWDSB will:

- Establish and maintain accessibility policies, develop a multi-year accessibility plan, provide accessibility training to employees and volunteers, and consider accessibility when procuring goods, services or facilities as required under Ontario Regulation 191/11.

- Endeavor to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, through the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act (2005)*, in the service areas of customer service (i.e. support for students), information and communication, employment, physical environment, and student transportation.
- Provide equitable opportunities for access to services and physical spaces.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures related to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* are made available to the public in accessible formats.
- Work collaboratively across the organization to implement the actions contained in this policy.

RESPONSIBILITY:

Director of Education

Members of Executive Council

TERMINOLOGY:

Accommodation: is a means, through reasonable efforts, of preventing and removing barriers that impede individuals with disabilities from participating fully in the services of the Board.

Barriers: According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), a barrier is not the disability itself, but rather any external obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society.

Barriers may be:

- Physical – such as inaccessible buildings or spaces.
- Attitudinal – including stereotypes, stigma, or discriminatory attitudes.
- Systemic – embedded in policies, procedures, or practices.
- Technological – such as digital platforms that are not accessible.
- Communication – including formats or methods that are not inclusive of all abilities.

Duty to Accommodate: A legal obligation under the Ontario Human Rights Code requiring organizations to identify and remove barriers and make necessary adjustments to policies, practices, and physical environments so that individuals protected under the Code, such as people with disabilities, can participate equally and fully.

Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation: An Ontario regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* that brings together multiple accessibility standards into one unified regulation. It sets out requirements that public and private organizations, including school boards, must follow to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities.

Intersectionality: Recognized as the understanding that each person simultaneously exists within multiple

and overlapping identities.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan: A written plan required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation)* that outlines the Board’s strategy to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. The plan is developed in consultation with persons with disabilities, is updated annually, and progress is reported publicly through an annual accessibility report available in accessible formats.

ACTION REQUIRED:

- Use appropriate and reasonable efforts to ensure that all of the Board’s policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- Maintain procedures that foster independence, dignity, and respect for students, parents/guardians/caregivers, the public, and staff.
- Provide applicable training related to this policy and as required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, *Ontario Regulation 191/11*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it relates to persons with disabilities for all employees, volunteers and other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of HWDSB.
- Publicly share progress on accessibility through the HWDSB Annual Accessibility Report on the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Review policy effectiveness through inclusive consultation as part of the Policy review process

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Intended Outcomes	Assessment
Establish and maintain accessibility policies, develop a multi-year accessibility plan, provide accessibility training to employees and volunteers, and consider accessibility when procuring goods, services or facilities.	As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables on an annual basis.
Endeavor to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, through the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act (2005), in the service areas of customer service (i.e. support for students), information and communication, employment, physical environment, and student transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups

Integrated Accessibility Standards

Policy No: 1.4

<p>Provide equitable opportunities for access to services and physical spaces.</p>	<p>As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables on an annual basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups
<p>Ensure that the policies and procedures related to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 are made available to the public in accessible formats.</p>	<p>As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables on an annual basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Voice Surveys • Parent and Family Voice Surveys • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • Student and Staff Affinity Groups • Student Advisory Circles • Staff Advisory Groups
<p>Work collaboratively across the organization to implement the actions contained in this policy.</p>	<p>As a part of the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, staff will assess progress against these deliverables within the HWDSB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan on an annual basis.</p>

REFERENCES:

Government Documents:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) Integrated Accessibility Standard, Ontario Regulation 191/11 Ontario Human Rights Code