



Policy Committee

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

6:30 pm

BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.



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

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

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

Policy Committee Workplan

Policy Committee Meeting Date	Policies
March 3, 2026	Educational Excursions Staff Engagement Indigenous Education
April 1, 2026	<i>Shaping Direction: How Policies Reflect Your Leadership</i> Procurement Integrated Accessibility Standards Notice of Motion



Indigenous Education Policy

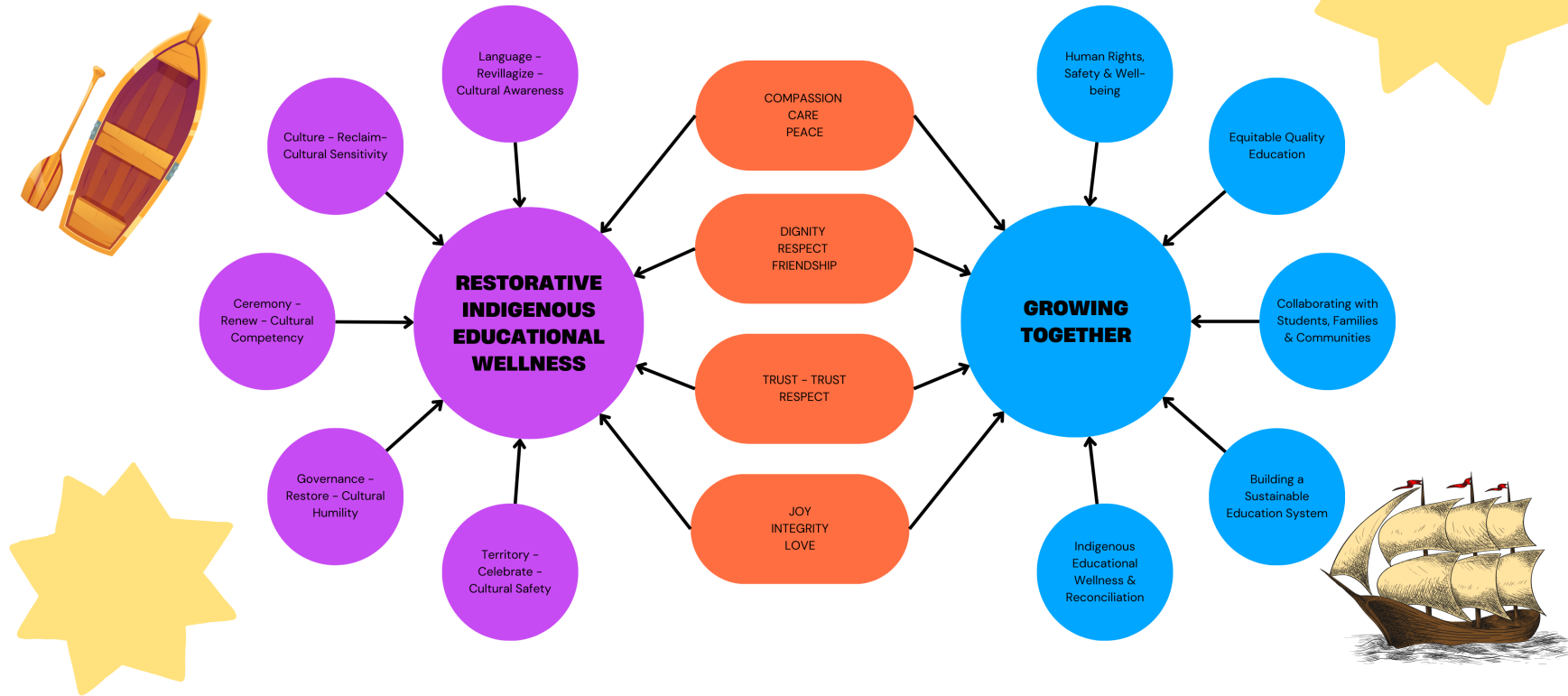
"We live our learning; we don't teach our learning"

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Background

The Indigenous Education Policy, approved by the Board in May 2024, was scheduled for review after its first year to incorporate refinements. Following this review, staff, *alongside the Indigenous Education Circle (IEC)*, have made targeted updates to strengthen the reconciliation focus within the Guiding Principles, emphasize relationships with learners, families, kinship networks, and Treaty Partners, and align the policy framework with the Two Row Relational Accountability Framework and Ethical Space of Engagement.

LIVING INTO OUR VALUES, ETHICAL STANDARDS & TWO ROW WAMPUM AGREEMENTS





Pillars of the Palisade: Restorative Indigenous Educational Wellness Framework

Cultural Pillars



Tenets of Indigenous Sovereign Nationhood
Status
Kahwà:tsire, Zaagai'idiwin, Family

Language
Culture
Ceremony
Governance
Territory

Indigenous Educational Wellness Pillars



Syncretism
"We blend our tools together with care as we walk forward together"

Revillagize
Reclaim
Renew
Restore
Celebrate

Safety Pillars



ICS Continuum
HWDSB Staff, Canadians, All Treaty Partners

Cultural Awareness
Cultural Sensitivity
Cultural Competency
Cultural Humility
Cultural Safety



Revisions, Continued...

- Guiding Principles, p. 6
- Dates of Significance, p. 7-8

Responsibility & Action

<p>The Indigenous Education Circle (IEC) Family Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Learners (CC:ROSE, Our Sustenance, and, Shakowennakarà:tats) • Elders, Knowledge Guardians, Language Speakers • Parents, Caregivers, Aunties, Uncles, Families (Kinship relations, extended clan families) • Local urban Indigenous community partners • Host Nations • Neighbouring Nations • Indigenous Staff employed by HWDSB • Indigenous Education Lead, accountable to the learners, IEC, the Indigenous Education Office (IEO) of the Ministry of Education, and the HWDSB Governance Structure. 	<p>Ethical Space of Engagement:</p> <p><i>Is where Indigenous and non-Indigenous Knowledge systems, worldviews, and values respectfully coexist and interact to foster meaningful dialogue, collaboration, and mutual understanding.</i></p> <p>Syncretism:</p> <p><i>We blend our tools with care as we walk forward together</i></p>	<p>HWDSB Governance and Leadership Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board of Trustees are accountable to: the constituents of their Wards, the Province of ON under the Education Act, Code of Ethics, and the Ministry of Education • Director of Education, Secretary to the Board of Trustees • Executive Council • Principals, Vice-Principals, System Leaders • School and System-based Support Staff • Administrators, Custodial Staff • Educators, Teachers • Parents, Families, and Communities • Students (Indigenous and non-Indigenous Learners)
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ACTION REQUIRED:

In their respective areas of influence, as competent and committed [Treaty Partners](#), every individual in each department will practice vigilance in identifying the gaps and areas of [Indigenous](#) omission and work collaboratively with the Indigenous Education Department on restorative solutions for meaningful inclusion and integration of [Indigenous](#) thought, pedagogy, voice, perspectives, and contributions.

We CALL EACH OTHER IN:

- For this we must...
- To further support these initiatives and engage in reciprocal engagement and action....
- We can all...



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Reinforcing Restorative Educational Wellness and Reconciliation (MYSP)

Grounded in the legacy of racist and gender-based legislation that systematically oppress Indigenous Peoples, HWDSB Board and Staff Members share a critical responsibility - and an opportunity - to advance change. Together, we must move forward with a unified purpose by embedding this Policy into practice. Let us commit to meaningful action that centers Indigenous voices and ways of knowing, ensuring we actively contribute to - and benefit from – *Reinforcing Restorative Educational Wellness and Reconciliation (MYSP)*.

Recommendation

The Indigenous Education Policy be approved, as amended, in peace, friendship, and mutual respect.

Motion

HWDSB welcomes the space for an update of the Indigenous Education Policy during the 2026-2027 school year at the discretion of the IEC.



Educational Excursions

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Educational Excursions Policy

- **6.0** Student Learning and Achievement Pillar
 - **6.4** Educational Excursions
 - **Procedure:** Educational Excursions
- Reviewed as part of the policy review cycle.
- Returning to the Policy Committee Table (March 2025)
- Final report on the review of the Toronto District School Board's excursions policy and procedure

Policy Committee Feedback

- The committee requested staff look at a **macro approach** to ensure educational excursions are accessible to all classrooms.
- **Directly connect** the Human Rights Policy to the Educational Excursions Policy.
- **Maintain the importance** of our local community and richness of experiences within Hamilton; promote across classrooms.
- **Identify the role** principals and vice-principals in educational excursions.
- **Importance of the Superintendents** to periodically review excursion plans to ensure barriers to participations are addressed.

Purpose

- HWDSB values the connection between educational excursions and the curriculum in extending and enriching the educational experience to assist students in their learning.
- HWDSB further affirms that educational excursions must prioritize student well-being and safety, including both physical and emotional safety, through proactive planning and clear communication.

Guiding Principles

- Every effort will be made to ensure that equitable inclusion is incorporated in the planning and execution of *all excursions in accordance with the HWDSB Human Rights Policy 1.1 and Equity and Inclusion Policy 5.4*
- The central role of educational excursions in the access to land-based learning and cultural experiences in *promoting Indigenous Educational Wellness and Reconciliation is recognized.*
- Every educational excursion is *age-appropriate, and meets Board policies, procedures, Ontario curriculum expectations* and adhere safety guidelines.
- *Clear, timely, and transparent communication* with parents, guardians, and caregivers is an essential component of all educational excursions.

Intended Outcomes

- Ensure that educational excursions are accessible to all students, with barriers identified and addressed through *intentional planning and system supports*.
- *Promote consistency* and equity of opportunity for educational excursions across classrooms and schools.
- *Ensure educational excursions are directly aligned* with Ontario curriculum expectations and HWDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan.
- Strengthen student well-being by ensuring excursions are planned and supported to protect physical safety and emotional safety through anticipatory planning and communication.

Progress Indicators

- *Principals will provide oversight to ensure schools take a coordinated, school-wide approach to educational excursions, and that approval practices are applied consistently across classrooms. Superintendents will periodically review excursion patterns and approvals to monitor equity of opportunity across schools.*

Recommendation

- That the Educational Excursion Policy be recommended for approval.



Staff Engagement

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Staff Engagement Policy

- 4.0 Human Resources Pillar
 - 4.7 Staff Engagement
 - **Procedure:** Right to Disconnect
- Reviewed as part of the policy review cycle

Purpose

- The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) is committed to fostering a culture of staff engagement that advances student success, well-being, belonging, and excellence.
- It is understood that meaningful staff engagement is essential to creating the conditions for impactful learning, identity-affirming practices, and responsive systems that support every learner and every staff member in shaping an inclusive and supportive workplace.

Guiding Principles

- Involve, respect, recognize and value *staff members as partners* in student success and well-being . ensuring identity-affirming and inclusive workplaces where staff feel a sense of belonging.
- Foster trustful, respectful, and collaborative relationships across schools, departments, and roles, reflecting the *interconnected nature of our work*.
- *Promote transparent, two-way communication and intentionally gather, respond to, and act on staff voice to strengthen HWDSB as a learning organization*

Responsibility

- Addition of principals, vice-principals and managers

Terminology

- Staff: “...*who contribute to the achievement of the Board’s priorities*’.
- Staff Engagement
- Professional Learning

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Recommendation

- That the Staff Engagement Policy be recommended for approval.