



Program Committee
Thursday, March 26, 2026
EC-340D & Virtual Meeting

AGENDA: 6:00 p.m.

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

Delegations:

- Heather Lambert-Hillen re: French Immersion, Program Review Advocacy
- Julie Sadonoja re: Inequity for French Immersion
- Amy Borkwood re: SAGE Quest

4. Review of the Committee Workplan
5. [Board Improvement Plan: Literacy, Numeracy & Future Preparedness \(Goals 1-3\)](#)
6. [Human Rights & Equity Action Plan 2023-2027](#)

7. Adjournment

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**PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT:
HWDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) Progress Report
(Literacy, Numeracy and Future Preparedness)**

March 26, 2026

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services
Estella Jones, Superintendent of Quality Instruction in Mathematics and Equity, K-12
Michelle Lemaire, Superintendent, Program, Equity, and Innovation
Sally Landon, Manager, Research and Analytics

Recommendation:

That the progress report on the implementation of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and three goals of the goals of the Board Improvement Plan for the 2025-2026 school year be received.

Background:

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Trustees approved the [Multi-Year Strategic Plan \(MYSP\) 2023-2028](#) which was officially launched by staff in January 2024. The strategic directions of the MYSP continue to inform our [Board Improvement Plan, 2025-2026](#). Staff are deeply committed to this work as they work collaboratively within interdisciplinary teams to meet the objectives identified in the five pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan. This report will focus on the progress that we have made in relation to the following three goals of the [Board Improvement Plan, 2025-2026](#):

- Improved literacy achievement for every student
- Improved math achievement for every student
- Improved preparedness for the future for every student

In May 2026, staff will report on the progress of the remaining two goals of the [Board Improvement Plan, 2025-2026](#):

- Improved well-being for every student
- Improved engagement for every student

Status:

With a decisive focus on a culture of improvement, staff continue to support student learning and achievement, leading to a myriad of examples of improvement at the student and school levels throughout

HWDSB. The following progress report outlines our work on three of the goals in our [Board Improvement Plan, 2025-2026](#) along with selected monitoring measures at this point in our implementation (See [Appendix A – C](#)). It is our third year reporting on our Board Improvement Plan goals. In October of last year, we reported on our work following the second year of implementation of the Board Improvement Plan, 2024-2025. Within that report, we celebrated and recognized improvements in all five areas; however, we also noted areas for future monitoring and improvement in the three goals highlighted in this report:

Improved Literacy Achievement for Every Student

- We will implement the HWDSB Reading Strategy, K-12, to build the capacity of educators to strengthen student literacy development in reading and writing in a variety of ways.
- We will employ literacy intervention supports in every secondary school.
- We will engage in intentional and focused professional development with Principals and Vice-Principals to enable school leaders to effectively implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) with strategic leadership, impactful assessment systems, and evidence-based Tier 1 instruction.

Improved Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

- We will implement Year 3 of our Math Achievement Action Plan.
- We will focus on providing more supports for all schools, including professional learning for all teachers of Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10, as well as elementary school math leads and secondary math department leaders.
- We will ensure every school has a designated Math Lead.
- We will incorporate Indigenous educational wellness in math learning and build math instructional practices with Learning Resource Teachers and Math Facilitators to support students with special education needs.

Improved Future Preparedness for Every Student

- We strengthen our relationship with community partners through mentorship opportunities, dual credit options, and campus visits, while also creating and distributing visual pathway maps and multilingual resources to engage families through culturally responsive communication.
- We will implement a variety of approaches (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition PLAR, multidisciplinary learning such as STEAM and Robotics), programs (e.g., Dual Credit, Specialist High Skills Major, Apprenticeships, Co-operative Education), and resources (i.e. Credit Recovery) to support secondary students in meeting yearly credit accumulation benchmarks on their path to graduation.
- We will develop a system-wide experiential learning framework which will emphasize the inclusion of hands-on learning opportunities such as makerspaces and re-envisioned Grade 9 Tech classrooms to foster innovation and design thinking.

Staff are on track and have implemented each of the identified next steps above from the October 2025 report and will comment on these areas and other identified next steps relative to how our students are currently achieving at this point in the 2025-2026 school year. Staff continue to inform principals, vice-principals, system staff and educators on the impact of the Board Improvement Plan on school improvement planning and departmental plans.

Disproportionality Data

The HWDSB Research and Analytics Department is actively working to provide accurate disproportionality data. Currently, staff are in the third and final year of a multi-year data collection cycle that, upon completion, will provide a robust dataset to better inform our work with all students. Analyses will go deeper as we are able to explore intersectionalities that will illuminate for us the nuances behind the initial 2021-22 [Disproportionality Data Report](#) findings. While we look forward to this information, more importantly, we remain committed to creating the conditions that better support every learner to ensure they experience success in our schools and school communities. Our work to address disproportionality is an ongoing priority as we will continue to report on disproportionalities and how we actively address them. As an example, where possible we are highlighting the known disproportionalities that exist in our current student achievement data (Appendices A-C) reported upon within this report.

Monitoring Report: Actions, Outcomes, and Next Steps

Goal: Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Staff continue to work across all schools to implement the three strategies identified in the [Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026](#) to improve literacy achievement for every student.

What have we done?

Staff collaborated across multiple departments and disciplines (Equity, Special Education, English Language Learners, Indigenous Education, and Psychological Services) to implement our HWDSB K-12 Reading Strategy. The Reading Strategy focuses on three areas: high-quality, evidence-based instruction to support every learner, effective assessment practices to inform reading intervention, and effective reading interventions in response to identified gaps in reading. To support this goal, we have:

- Continued to implement reading screeners for Year 2 Kindergarten, Gr. 1 and Gr. 2 students to identify interventions early, with the use of Beginning of Year (BOY) and Middle of Year (MOY) screenings.
- Refined reading intervention and supports for students. For example, 950 Year 1 Kindergarten students participated in a Year 1 Kindergarten: Oral Language Pilot, and 310 students participated in a Grade 1 Phonics Academy.
- Prepared for the full implementation of English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices (NBE3E/C/U) as the compulsory Grade 11 English credit, replacing ENG3E/C/U effective September 2026. Students across all pathways—apprenticeship, college, university, or workforce—will gain essential literacy, critical thinking, and intercultural competencies for future success. This milestone reflects our commitment to Indigenous educational wellness and Reconciliation and celebrates Indigenous voices and perspectives at the heart of student learning.
- Engaged staff to build a strong foundational literacy learning base in K-12 classrooms. For example, staff provided professional development to Junior and Intermediate Teachers to review Tier 1 instruction and work with a multi-disciplinary team to receive guidance on how to respond to specific literacy needs for some students who required additional support.
- Engaged students, staff and community in the love of reading through various book clubs, the Hamilton Public Library and after-school reading programs.

What have we learned?

Staff have critically reflected upon the supports and interventions we provide educators and students, and on how we work together, across departments. Staff have learned a considerable amount in the past year including:

- The need to address foundational oral language, reading and writing skills as early as possible. Early intervention has most significant impact on long-term achievement. For example: Gr. 1 Acadience BOY screening show that 5% more students are at or above benchmarks this year compared to last year's cohort, and fewer numbers of students who are at the below or well below benchmark (-4%) (see Appendix A, page 2) Gr. 2 Acadience BOY screening reflected a 9% increase in the number of students who are at or above benchmark, and fewer numbers of students who are at the below or well below benchmark (-8%) (Appendix A, page 2).
- A multi-tiered approach that blends high-quality Tier 1 instruction with strategic Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, supported by multi-disciplinary team can help close gaps in a timely and targeted supported way. For example, Elementary language achievement maintained positive improvement from Gr. 1 to Gr. 8, a consistent trend over the last three school years (Appendix A, page 1). Staff further observed gains especially for language achievement of students with exceptionalities, especially in Grades 2, 3, 4,5 and 6 (Appendix A, page 1). In addition, HWDSB saw gains in EQAO achievement across the board in Gr. 3, 6, and OSSLT performance, closing the gap between the Board average and the Provincial average (Appendix A, page 4).
- The Interdisciplinary Literacy Studies (ILS) Program in secondary is making a difference in the literacy skills of who had significant gaps in their literacy skills. For example, in the second year of implementation of the ILS Program, more students were successful at earning 4 credits in the first semester (+5%) (Appendix A, page 5).

What are our next steps?

- Continue to strengthen and expand early intervention by prioritizing foundational oral language, reading, and writing instruction in the early years.
- Continue to use early screening and data to identify students needing support sooner and match them to the right interventions.
- Embed explicit instruction that links reading comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency to writing development.
- Use EQAO cohort data to design a clear, strategic support pathway for students from Grades 7–9 in preparation for the OSSLT.

Goal: Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

While continuously promoting the joy of numbers, staff continue to work across all schools to implement the three strategies identified within the [Board Improvement Plan](#) to improve numeracy achievement for every student: curriculum fidelity, math content knowledge for teaching, and knowing our students. This goal and the specific strategies align with the Ministry's focus on improving mathematics achievement provincially and our third year of HWDSB's Math Achievement Action Plan (Appendix B).

What have we done?

Over the past few years, evidence indicates improved student achievement in mathematics in grades 3, 6 and 9. Key strategies focus on teacher and principal professional learning, support from Math Facilitators in math priority schools, and the creation of robust math resources. As part of the Ministry Math Action Plan, 38 HWDSB elementary and 5 HWDSB secondary schools were identified as 'math priority schools' and additional resources were provided to support these 43 schools. The focus within these schools continues to be building teacher capacity and knowledge, small group instruction for students, and creating an inclusive learning environment. These schools are specifically supported by 24 Math Facilitators who work specifically with Grades 3, 6 and 9 teachers and students. Specifically, we have:

All Schools

- Ensured there is a designed Math Lead in every school.
- Offered a variety of professional development sessions for educators. For example, there have been over 1,050 release days to enable Grade 3, 6 and 9 teachers to engage in learning about High Impact Instructional Practices (HIIP) in the content areas of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
- Provided professional development to all Secondary Mathematics Department Heads and Assistant Heads on direct instruction, small group instruction and the curriculum continuum of expectations.
- Ensured that over 80 new teachers participated in learning to deepen their understanding of the math curriculum and strategies to engage students.

Math Priority Schools

- Provided ongoing professional learning with Math Facilitators focusing on the use of HIIP, developing facilitation skills, and engaging students. In addition, over 1000 students participate in small group sessions led by the Math Facilitator to close gaps in key math concepts.
- Participated in ongoing collaboration with the Indigenous Education team to build Math Facilitator understanding and make relevant and meaningful connections between teaching math and Indigenous education.
- Supported many schools to offer Numeracy Family Events and school-wide initiatives to build math community such as Crack the Code, Treasure Hunt, and Tetris.

What have we learned?

The ongoing professional learning focus on the HIIP continues to shift thinking and practices across HWDSB classrooms. We have learned specifically from teachers and school leaders that:

- Students with special education needs have improved achievement especially in grades 3, 9 and 10 (Appendix B, Pages 1 & 2)
- Math digital tools such as *KnowledgeHook* and *MathUp* continue to be used in classrooms and help educators to identify student learning needs and improve educator conceptual knowledge and understanding.
- Teachers agree that professional learning has increased their understanding and confidence in delivering the mathematics curriculum (97-99%), and increased understanding of direct instruction and small groups (89-97%).

- The slight decline observed in elementary report card marks, in conjunction with our increasing EQAO data suggests that our work around implementing the math curriculum with fidelity is having a positive impact (Appendix B, Page 1).
- Student confidence is increasing as a result of school-wide math activities, more engaging lessons, small group targeted instruction, and embedding games for practice (Appendix B, Page 3).
- Gap closing efforts in Math Priority Schools has improved student understanding (Appendix B, Page 4).

What are our next steps?

All Schools

- Continue to build math leadership and community through professional learning opportunities for school leaders, Learning Resource Teachers and Kindergarten teachers. Over the next few months, Consultants will work with Math Leads in schools to support individual professional development planning and continue to build capacity in elementary and secondary school regarding the implementation of high impact instructional practices.
- Support the many schools that are building math communities through numeracy events for families this spring as part of ongoing efforts to build confidence in mathematics and strengthen partnerships with families.

Math Priority Schools

- Continue to build teacher capacity and small group instruction in Math Priority Schools. For the remainder of the year, Math Facilitators will continue to be in schools and address misconceptions in key concepts such as proportional thinking, spatial sense, measurement and geometry, as well as reviewing effective strategies to support student understanding, while continuing to build engagement and confidence with teachers and students.

Goal: Increase Preparedness for the Future for Every Student

Preparing our students for their future is a critical part of our [Board Improvement Plan](#). Staff have identified four specific strategies to achieve this goal.

What have we done?

- Strengthened Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) processes (e.g., tracking tools, updating documentation, improving data access for administrative teams, and providing targeted support and training to staff for consistent and effective implementation).
- Delivered targeted professional development to support the new cross-curricular approach in Science, Math, Art, and Technology, with a focus on interdisciplinary connections and the Engineering Design Process, including the introduction of the HWDSB Exploration Trailer framework to provide hands-on technology learning and help staff integrate trailer experiences with curriculum expectations.

- Expanded Outdoor Education initiatives included board-wide professional learning, community partnerships, ready-to-use activities, and cross-panel alignment, significantly enhancing educator capacity and providing authentic, experiential land-based learning opportunities for students.

What have we learned?

- There is an increased number of students who are on track to graduate. For example, more secondary students are on track to graduate by the end of Semester 1 this year than last year. This includes English Language Learners and most students with exceptionalities. (Appendix C, page 1). More Gr. 12 students are on track to meet their graduation requirements in terms of their credit accumulation, required community service hours, and successfully completing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, or OSSLT (Appendix C, page 1).
- Through clear links between curriculum and experiential learning, effective use of *myBlueprint*, and a multidisciplinary approach to pathway planning, students are reporting an increase in their readiness for the future. For example, the majority of students who participated in the secondary survey delivered at the end of Semester 1 reported they have some ideas or have a clear plan for their next steps (see Appendix C, page 2). The majority of students who participated know who to talk to if they need help planning their next steps (69%) (Appendix C, page 2). Students are more aware of SHSM (60%) and Co-op (67%). There is opportunity for HWDSB to improve awareness of OYAP (42%) and other specialized programs (21%) (Appendix C, page 3). There is also an increase in the number of students enrolled in Gr. 12 Math, or Gr. 11 or 12 Science, and in job skills opportunities (e.g., SHSM, OYAP, Co-op) (Appendix C, page 1).
- Continued support is necessary to help teachers fully integrate new Technology Curriculum expectations and coding concepts using hands-on, cross-curricular activities that link classroom learning to real-world applications.
- Dual Credit programs provide valuable hands-on experiences that enhance student engagement, confidence, and post-secondary readiness, though improved communication will ensure that students and families are aware of all available options.
- Expanded student access to PLAR has led to improved graduation rates and increased participation in system programs like OYAP, Dual Credit, and experiential learning opportunities.
- Collaboration with Graduation Coaches for Black Students at specific Board events has supported Black and racialized students in pursuing apprenticeship pathways and making informed course selections.

What are our next steps?

- Deliver targeted, curriculum-aligned professional learning, coaching, and co-teaching in Technology Education, Robotics, STEAM, experiential and land-based learning, with explicit focus on transferable skills, digital fluency, and student-led inquiry.
- Scale and coordinate system programs (Technology Education, Exploration Trailer, Robotics, SHSM, Outdoor Education) so every school has sustainable access to tools, resources, and learning environments that support applied, hands-on learning.
- Increase intentional Grade 6–8 exposure to technology, SHSM sectors, and career exploration, and improve transitions through consistent pathway messaging, early planning (PLAR, Dual Credit, OYAP), and strong cross-panel collaboration with families.

- Align classroom learning with career exploration, co-op, apprenticeship, and post-secondary pathways by leveraging and expanding partnerships with industry, post-secondary institutions, Indigenous partners, and community organizations.
- Strengthen data collection and use of student and staff voice to monitor student engagement, skill development, and pathway outcomes, while improving communication, consistency, and system alignment to inform Future Preparedness planning for 2026–27.

Financial Implications:

Staff continue to fully utilize all applicable and available funding in both the Core Education and Responsive Education Priorities (REP) budgets as approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2025 to support the implementation of the strategies connected to each of these three goals in the Board Improvement Plan.

Strategic Directions:

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & 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 & 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.

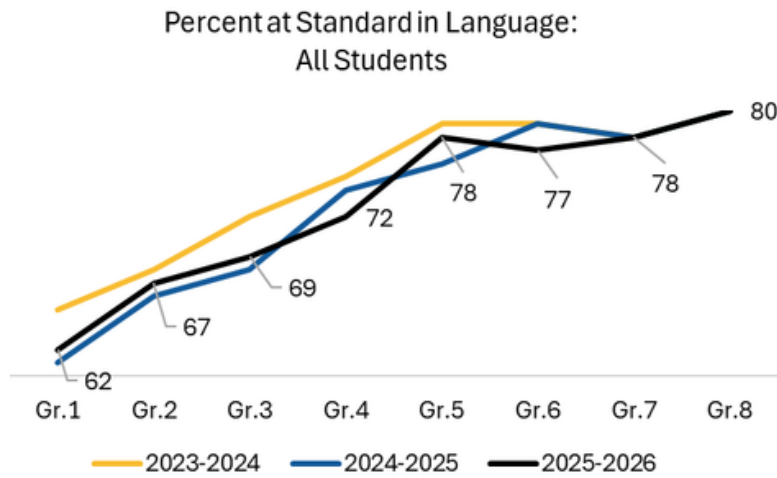


Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

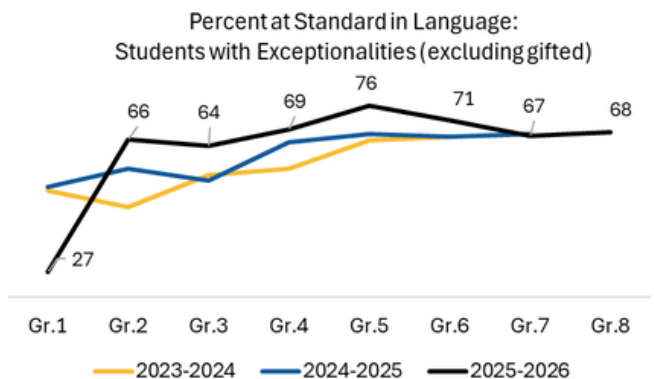
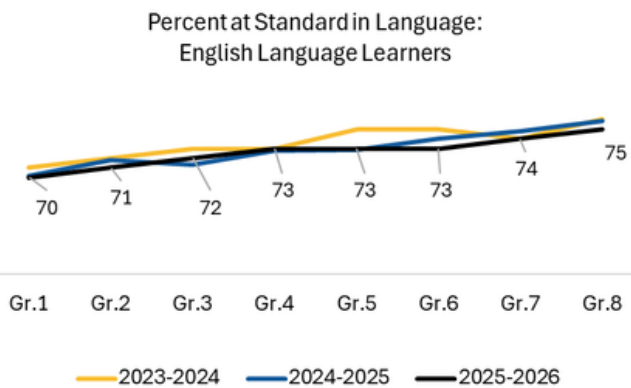
We Will Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Elementary: Language Achievement at Report Card 1



All Students

| | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | 2025-2026 |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Gr.1 | 65 | 61 | 62 |
| Gr.2 | 68 | 66 | 67 |
| Gr.3 | 72 | 68 | 69 |
| Gr.4 | 75 | 74 | 72 |
| Gr.5 | 79 | 76 | 78 |
| Gr.6 | 79 | 79 | 77 |
| Gr.7 | 78 | 78 | 78 |
| Gr.8 | 80 | 80 | 80 |





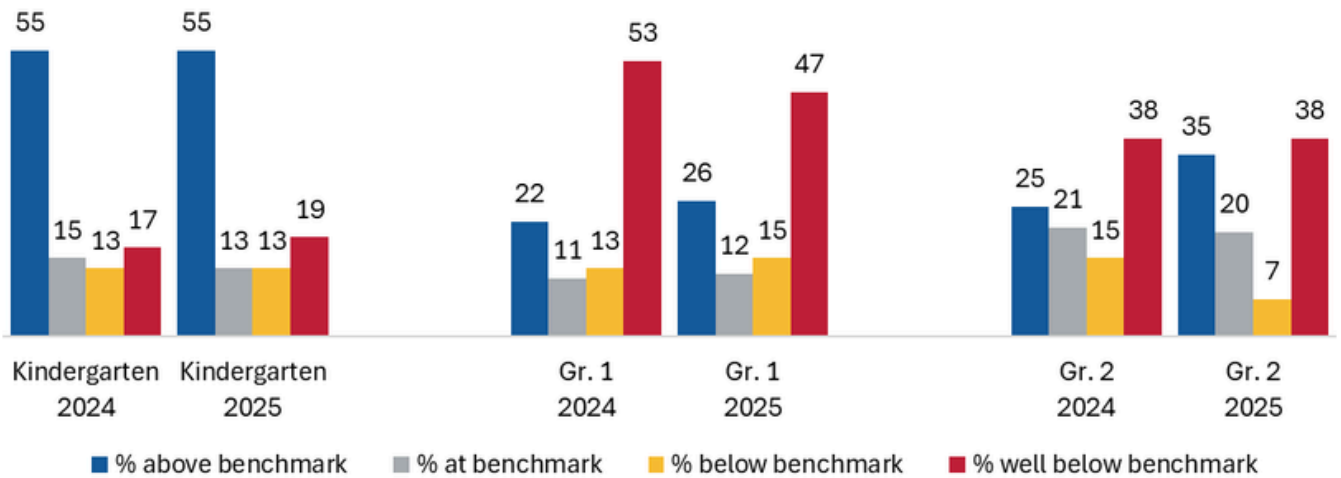
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

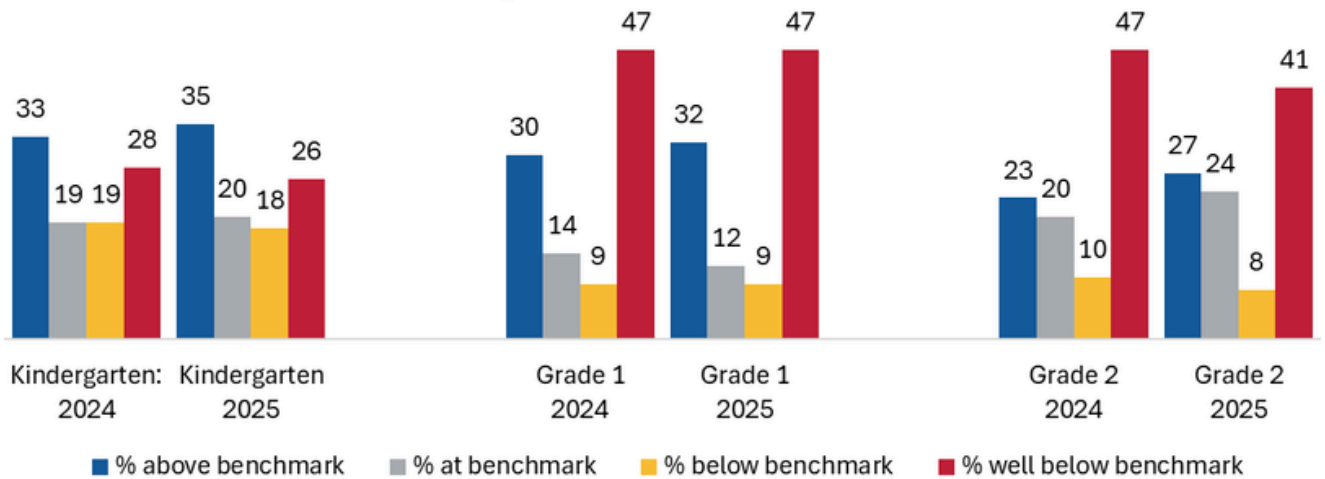
We Will Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Elementary: Early Reading Screening

Beginning of Year Screening:
Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2



Middle of Year Screening:
Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2



Source: Acadience



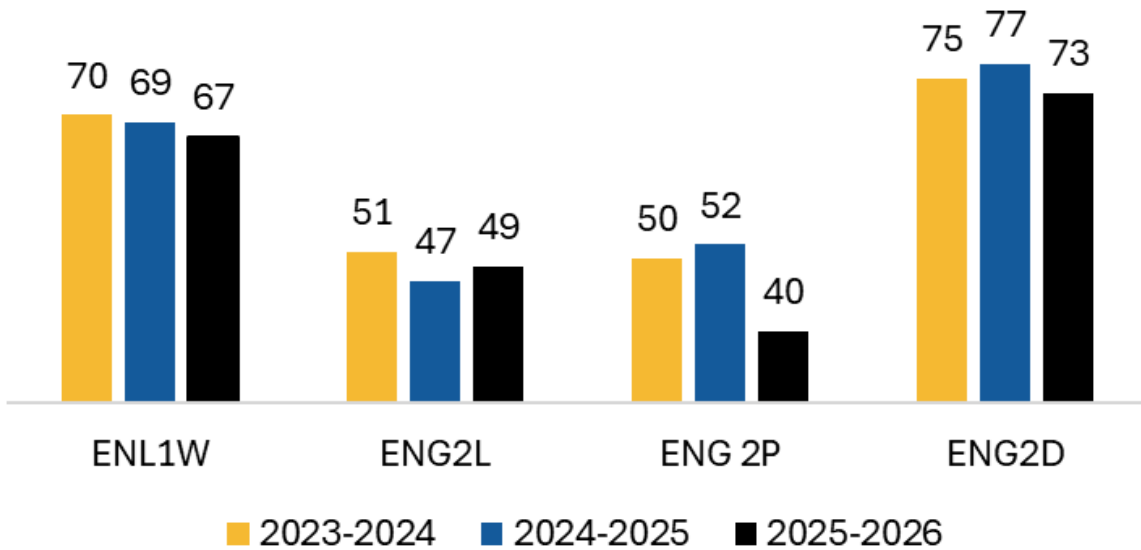
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

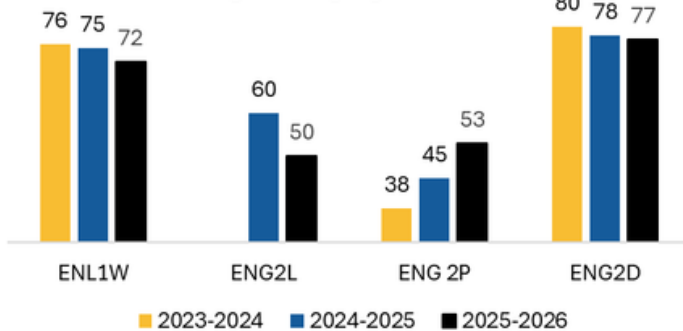
We Will Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: English Achievement at Semester 1

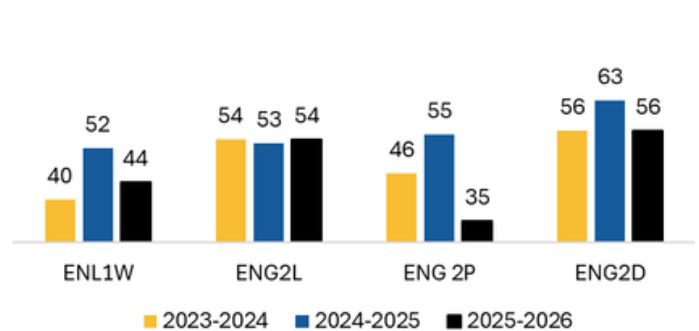
Percent at Standard in English:
All Students



Percent at Standard in English:
English Language Learners



Percent at Standard in English:
Students with Exceptionalities (excluding gifted)



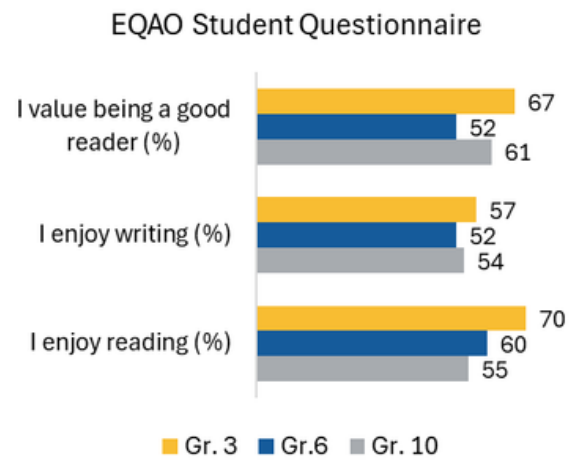
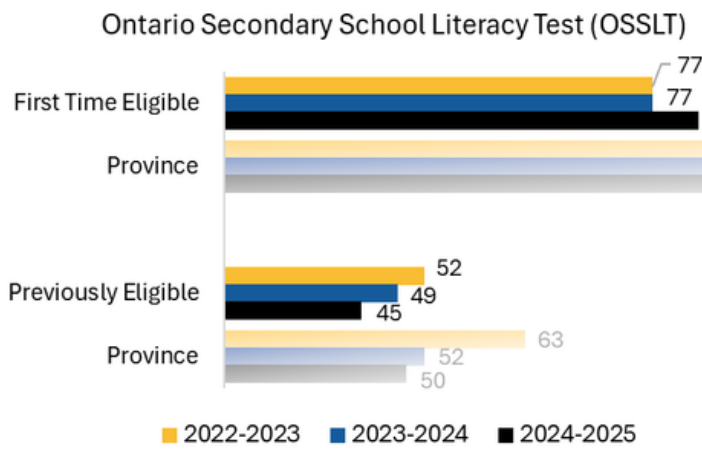
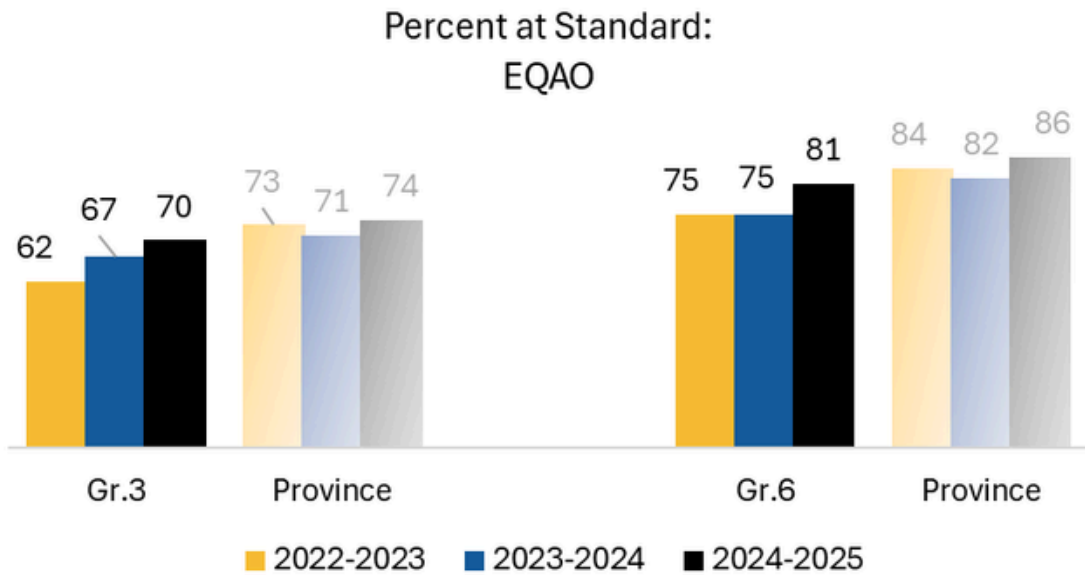


Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

We Will Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: EQAO Reading and Literacy



Source: EQAO



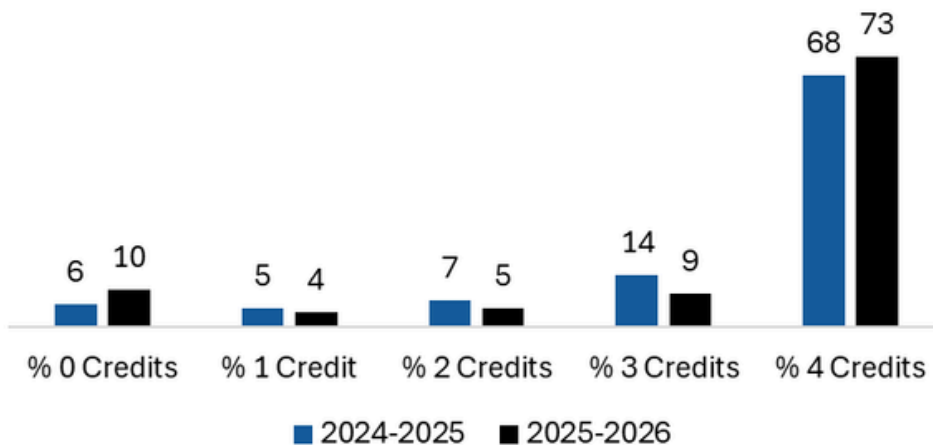
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

We Will Improve Literacy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: Interdisciplinary Reading Program

Credits Accumulated During Semester 1:
Interdisciplinary Reading Program Students



source: report cards and administrative data



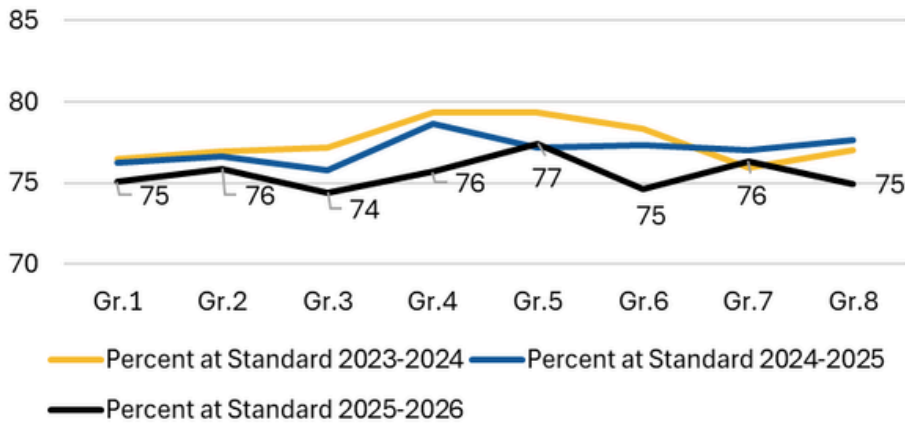
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

We Will Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Elementary: Mathematics Achievement at Report Card 1

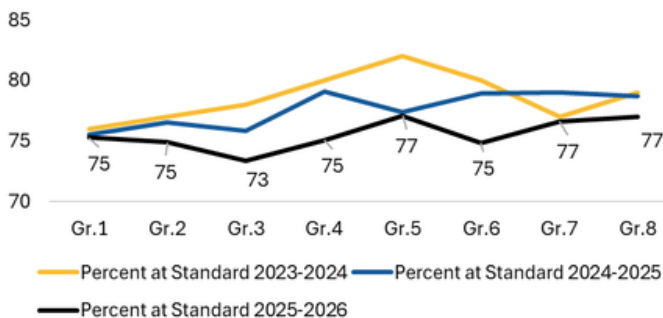
Percent at Standard in Mathematics:
All Students



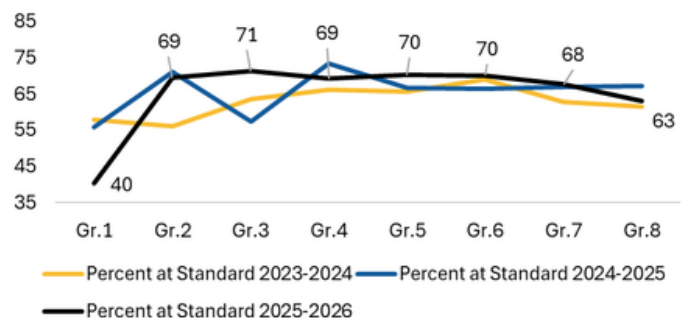
All Students

| | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 | 2025-2026 |
|------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Gr.1 | 76 | 76 | 75 |
| Gr.2 | 77 | 77 | 76 |
| Gr.3 | 77 | 76 | 74 |
| Gr.4 | 79 | 79 | 76 |
| Gr.5 | 79 | 77 | 77 |
| Gr.6 | 78 | 77 | 75 |
| Gr.7 | 76 | 77 | 76 |
| Gr.8 | 77 | 78 | 75 |

Percent at Standard in Mathematics:
English Language Learners



Percent at Standard in Mathematics:
Students with Exceptionalities (excluding gifted)



Source: report cards and administrative data



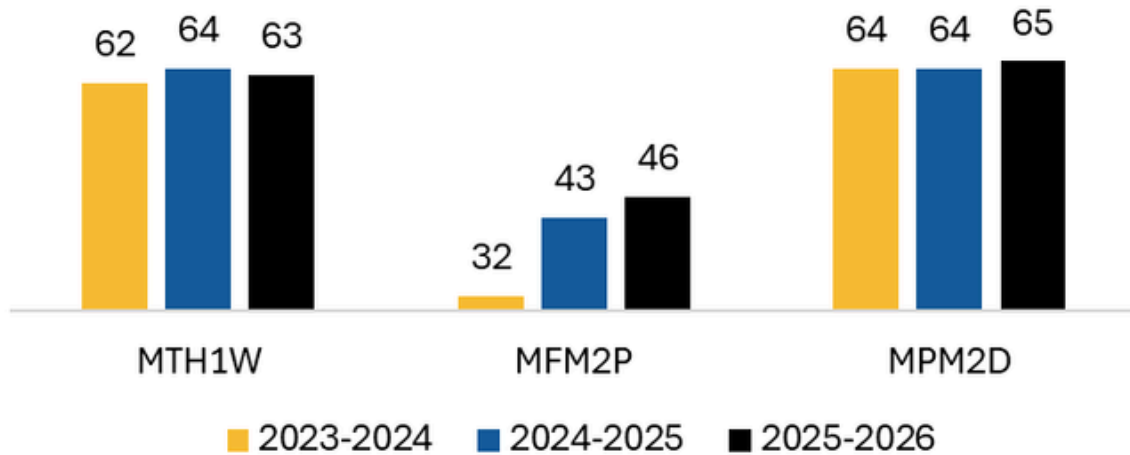
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

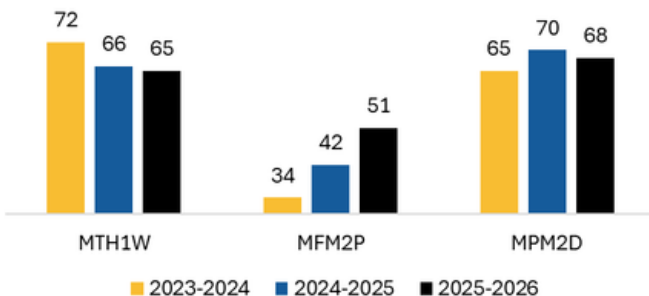
We Will Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: Mathematics Achievement at Semester 1

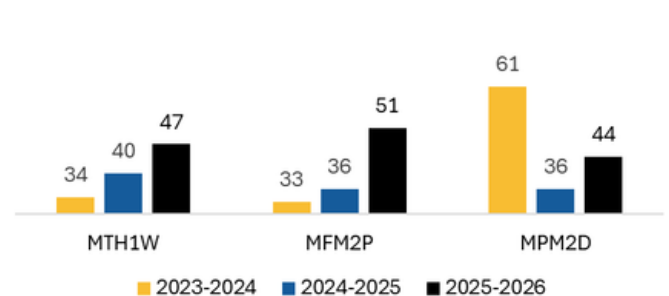
Percent at Standard in Mathematics: All Students



Percent at Standard in Mathematics: English Language Learners



Percent at Standard in Mathematics: Students with Exceptionalities (excluding gifted)



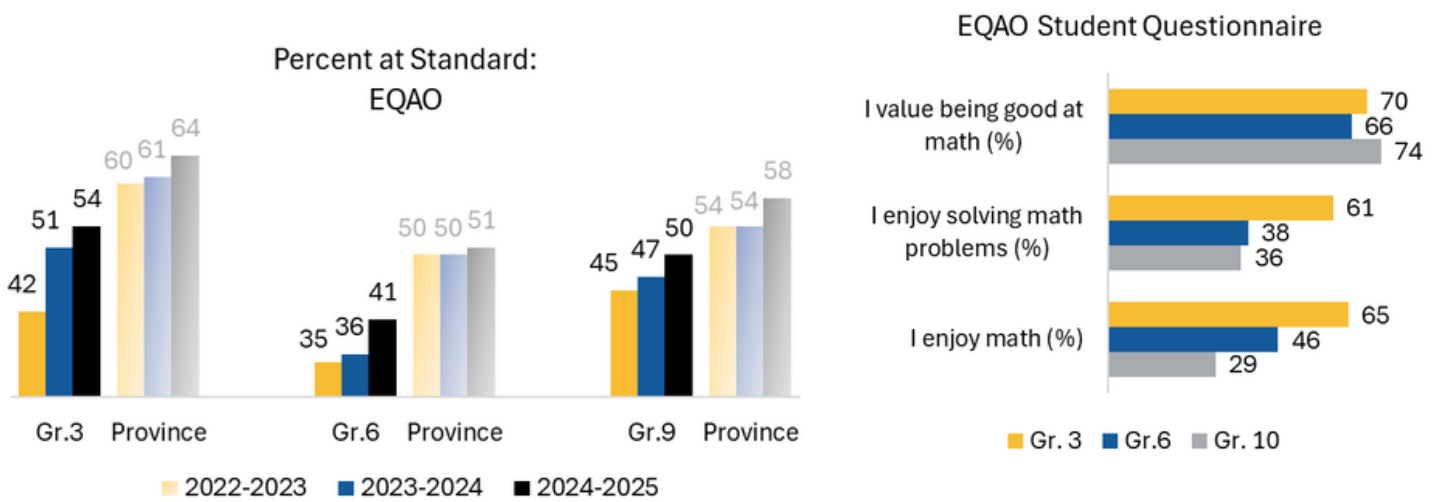
Source: report cards and administrative data



Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

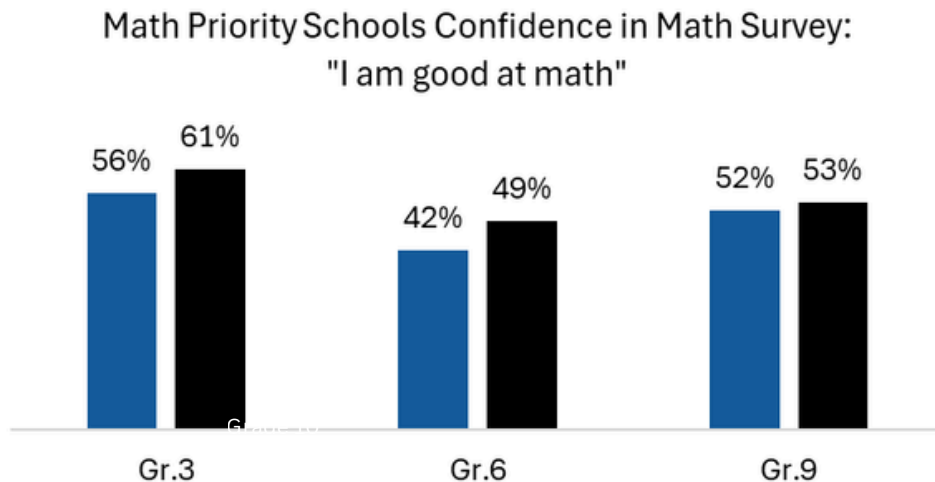
Goal:
We Will Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring: EQAO



Source: EQAO

Progress Monitoring: Math Priority Schools



Source: Confidence in Math Survey



Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:
We Will Improve Numeracy Achievement for Every Student

Progress Monitoring: Math Priority Schools

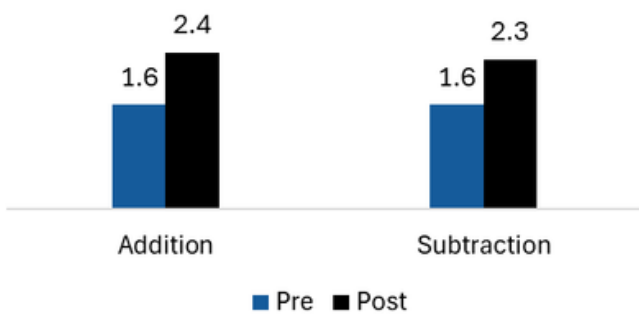


Subconcept or Skill Tracking

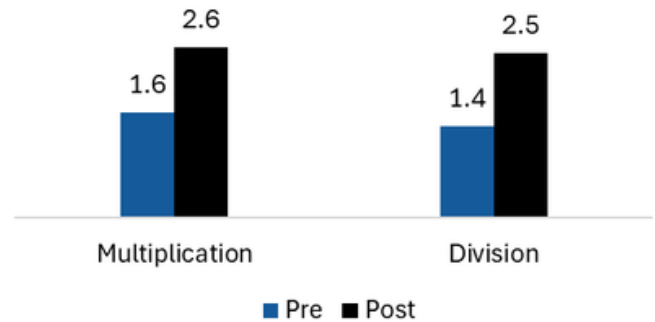
Student demonstrates:

1=no knowledge 2=some or progressing knowledge 3=understanding

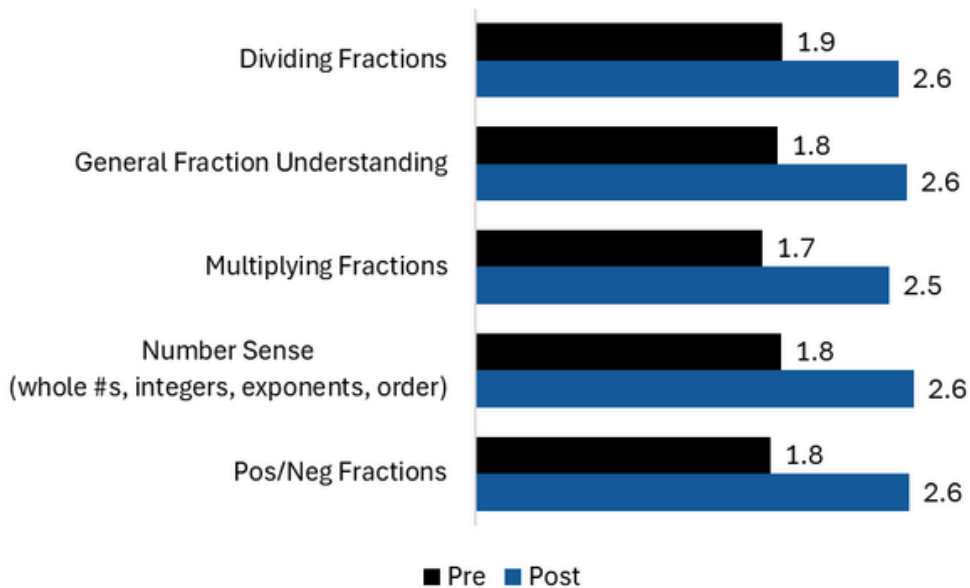
Gap Closing in Small Groups:
 Grade 3 Addition and Subtraction



Gap Closing in Small Groups:
 Grade 6 Multiplication and Division



Gap Closing in Small Groups:
 Grade 9 Fractions



Source: Math team tracking data

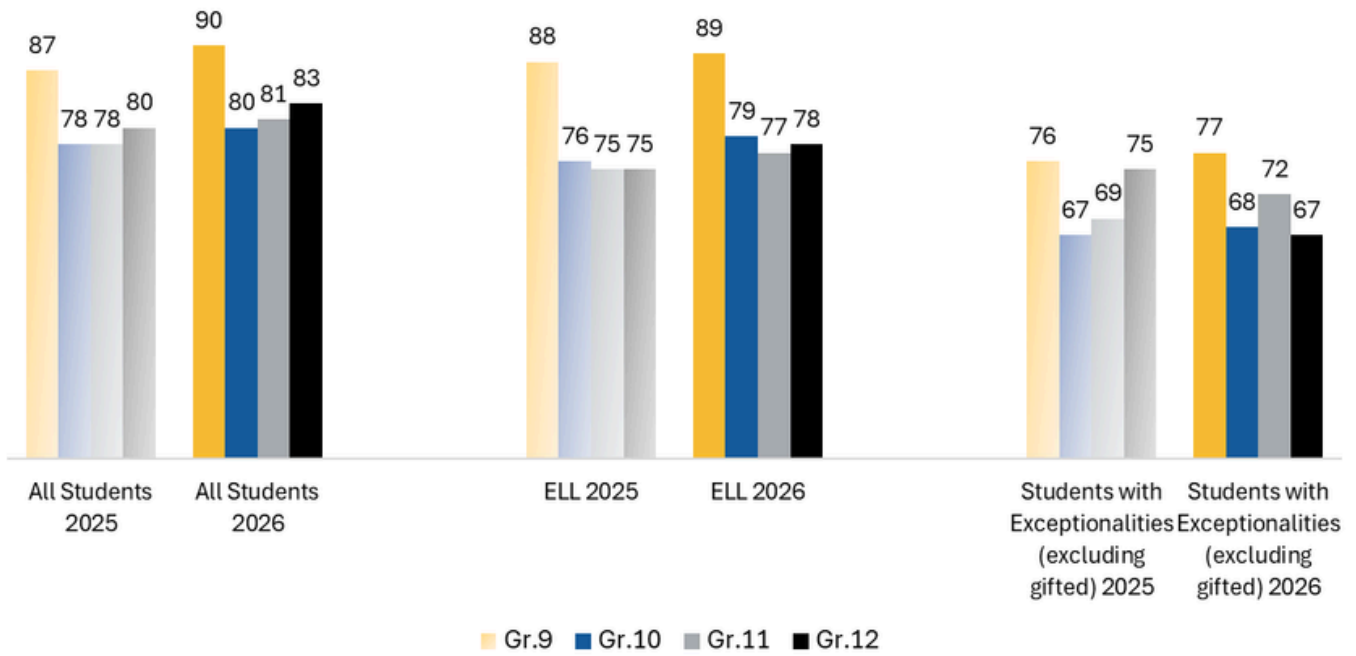


Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

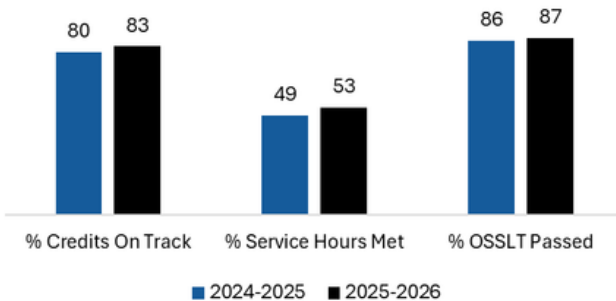
Goal:
We Will Improve Preparedness for the Future of Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: Future Preparedness at Semester 1

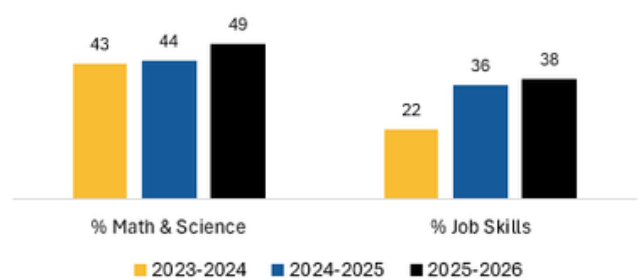
Percent Credits on Track by End of Sem 1



Graduation Requirements: Current Gr.12 Students Semester 1



Enrolment in Gr.12 Math or Gr.11 or 12 Science; Enrolment in SHSM, Dual Credit, OYAP



Source: report cards and administrative data

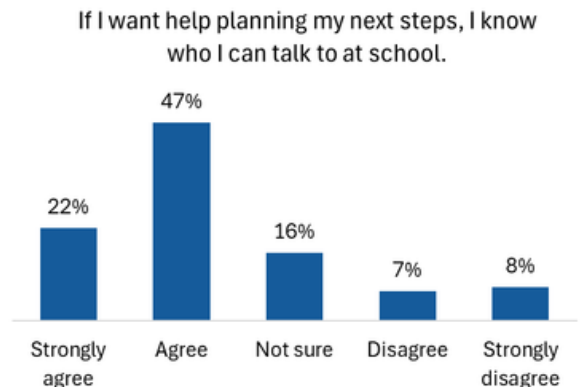
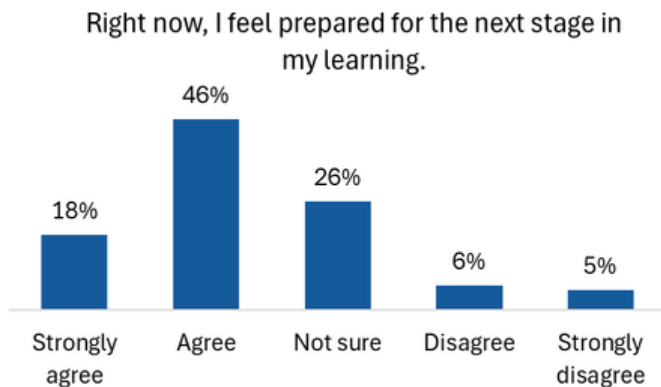
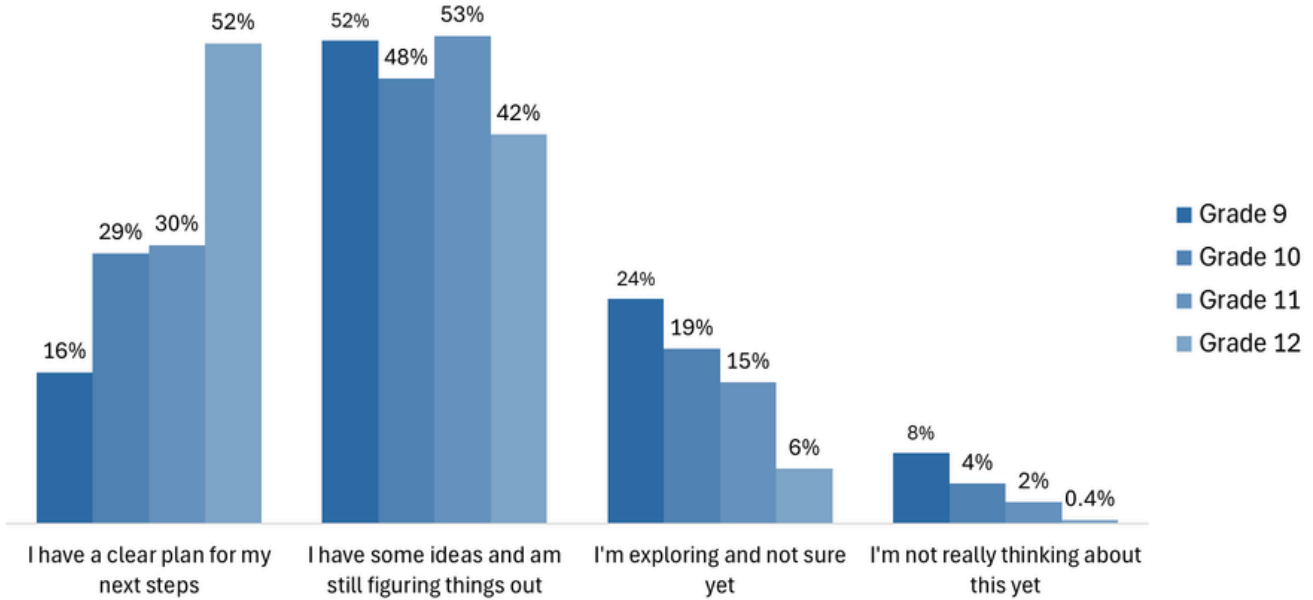


Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

We Will Improve Preparedness for the Future of Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: Future Preparedness at Semester 1



(Source: secondary survey at end of Semester 1)



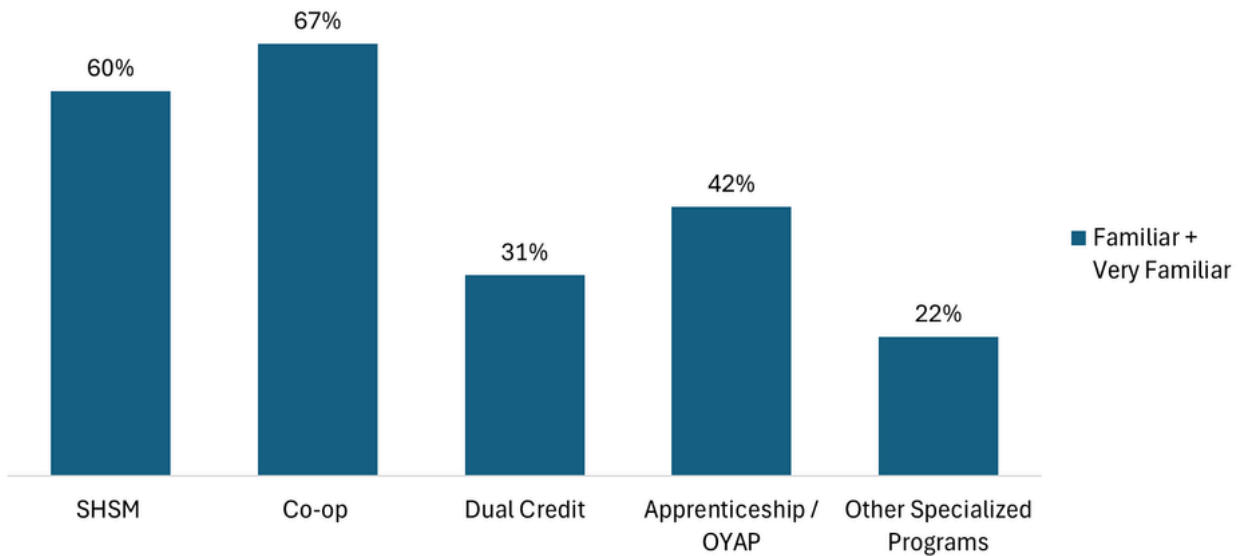
Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026

Goal:

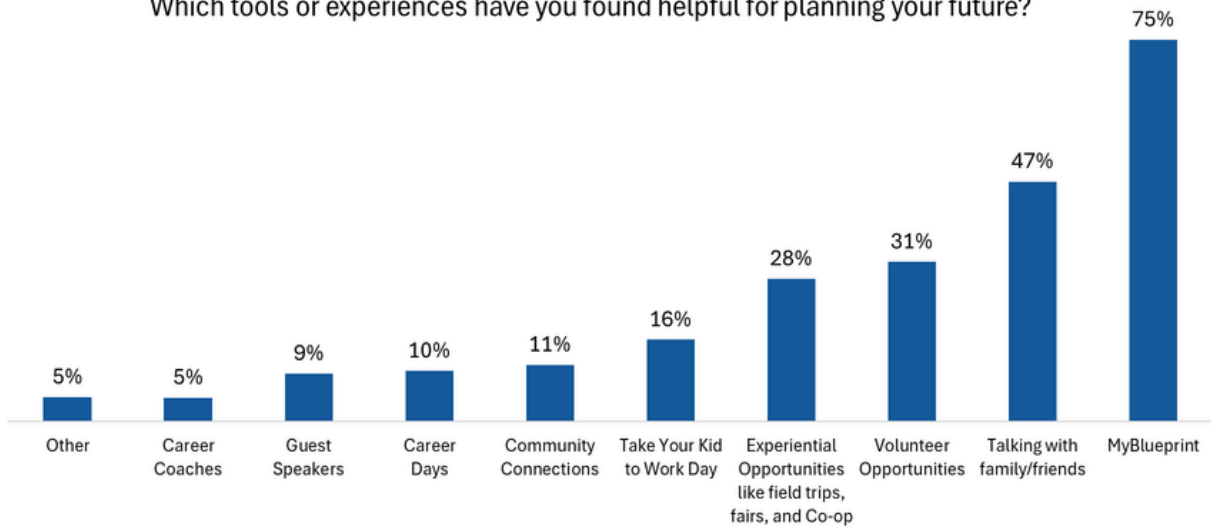
We Will Improve Preparedness for the Future of Every Student

Progress Monitoring Secondary: Future Preparedness at Semester 1

Familiarity with Specialized Programs



Which tools or experiences have you found helpful for planning your future?



(Source: secondary survey at end of Semester 1)



Program Committee Report

March 26, 2026

Human Rights and Equity Action Plan, 2023-2028

Submitted By: Sheryl Robinson Petrazzini, Director of Education

Prepared By: Yohana Otite, Human Rights and Equity Advisor
 Gerry Smith, Superintendent of Student Achievement, Safe, Compassionate and Equitable Schools
 Jolene John, Indigenous Education Lead
 Jamie Nunn, Associate Director, School Improvement, Learning Services

Recommendation:

That the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan report be received.

Background:

The [Human Rights and Equity Action Plan 2023-2028](#) builds upon the previous work of the Human Rights Office (HRO) and Equity Department, with a renewed commitment aligned with HWDSB's [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) and [https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/multi-year-strategic-plan/board-improvement-plan/Board Improvement Plan 2025-2026](https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/multi-year-strategic-plan/board-improvement-plan/Board%20Improvement%20Plan%202025-2026). The HWDSB Human Rights Office and the Equity Department collaborates with many other HWDSB departments and teams in the creation and implementation of the plan focusing on the six key priorities and commitments identified:

- Indigenous Educational Wellness
- Inclusive Classroom Pedagogies and Learning Environments
- Dismantling Anti-Black Racism
- Anti-racist and anti-oppression learning and work environments
- A culture of addressing human rights barriers, discrimination, and harassment
- Employment equity, diversity, and inclusion

Status:

Indigenous Educational Wellness

Focusing on the importance of aligning and integration of the [Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan 2021-2025](#) (IECSAP) and [Human Rights and Equity Action Plan 2023-2028](#), staff continue to advance the implementation of the [Indigenous Education Policy](#), including deepening understanding of

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the system's responsibilities to action the recommendations in the final report of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(TRC\)](#).

Grounded in the Pillars of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan, staff continue to emphasize that Human Rights and Equity are complementary to Indigenous Education. For example, The Human Rights Impact Assessment Tool provides a critical and systematic approach for developing HWDSB policies and procedures that align with both the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan and the IECSAP.

This work underscores the essential need for equitable inclusion and integration of Human Rights, Equity and Indigeneity across all processes. In doing so, we strengthen the capacity and knowledge of system leaders as both Human Rights Duty Bearers and UN Declaration Bearers (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples), as we are all [Pillars of the Palisade](#), responsible for providing care and protection for every student and staff.

Inclusive Classroom Pedagogies and Learning Environments

This past year, through various professional development opportunities, we have deepened our implementation of inclusive classroom pedagogies and learning environments with respect to CIR: **Creating the Conditions for Learning, Embedding Identity-affirming Classroom-based Teaching and Learning Strategies and Responding to Student Needs**. This cross-departmental collaboration includes the Indigenous Education, Social Work, Equity, Human Rights, Special Education and Program Departments. Utilizing the Two Row Framework, we intentionally add relevant Indigenous Education components to the implementation of CIR. Teams continue to collaborate and co-learn in order to co-facilitate professional learning sessions that are designed to impact the teaching practice of educators in our system. Through School Improvement Plans and school visits, staff are seeing evidence of the impact of CIR in student achievement and well-being.

Dismantling Anti-Black Racism

The focus of this area has been to continue to create the conditions, both in schools and departments, to address and dismantle anti-Black racism. In December 2025, we introduced a new strategy, [Addressing Anti-Black Racism in HWDSB: Strategy for Black Students' Success and Well-Being, 2025-2028](#). The strategy outlines seven action areas with outcomes that support three main goals:

1. Create conditions for Black students to learn in school environments free from racial discrimination and harassment.
2. Provide Black students with equal opportunities to benefit from the education system, supporting their full potential.
3. Address disproportionalities reported in academic achievement, disciplinary actions, well-being and opportunity gaps.

A draft Interim Implementation Process (in its final stages) will support the implementation of the new strategy as we continue to address Anti-Black Racism across the system. All HWDSB Principals and Vice-

Principals have engaged in learning about this strategy and have taken initial steps for school-based implementation.

Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry is a process whereby educational practitioners lead their own inquiry within the context of building their critical consciousness and supporting the building of critical consciousness for their students (West-Burns, 2014 as cited in West-Burns & Murray, 2016). Educators from the 2024-2025 cohort have been instrumental in sharing guidance, their teaching and learning strategies with the 2025-2026 cohort as we continue to work to create conditions that support Black student academic achievement and wellbeing.

Our second cohort of 30 schools teams continues their work to deepen their understanding of Anti-Black Racism and what strategies, at a school level, best support Black-identifying students. Both secondary and elementary educators continue to work through the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI) process.

Anti-racist and anti-oppression learning and work environments

Anti-racist and anti-oppression learning and work environments is a key priority in our Human Rights and Equity Action Plan. For example, our Consultant teams have been active across the system to support teachers to develop and implement Identity-Affirming teaching and learning strategies. Examples of this work include:

- Redrafting lessons to embed student inquiry, voice and interest.
- Building classroom norms and environments that support anti-oppressive dialogue, interrupt discrimination and stereotyping.
- Examining texts and including works that draw upon perspectives that represent the cultural, racial and gender diverse students who make up our school populations.

HWDSB schools have experienced an increase in Student Affinity Groups where students, especially racialized students, and students representing the Two Spirit LGBTQIA+ community, come together and help shape learning and school culture. In March 2026, 84 teachers/educators representing 74 schools took part in a learning session for staff members who were interested in learning strategies to help students begin and/or enhance student-led affinity groups in schools across the district.

Developing a culture of addressing human rights barriers, discrimination, and harassment

HWDSB has continued to implement the Human Rights Impact Assessment (HRIA) process to proactively identify human rights barriers and potential adverse impacts in policies, procedures and practices. Staff has utilized the HRIA as they support policy updates, update or create procedures and develop new strategies. Examples of implementation this year include reviewing the Barrier Free Physical Environments Policy, developing the AI Strategy Framework, and updating the Student Excursion Guidelines.

A year ago in March 2025, the Human Rights and Hate-Based Incidents Response Tracking Tool was developed and implemented. Schools have been using the tool to track and document both the hate-based and human rights incidents that occurred in their schools as well as how they have responded to these incidents. The purpose is to be able to publicly report the data to our community, in order to identify and respond to trends and develop strategies to address barriers to students' learning, achievement and success. Our first annual report on the Human Rights and Hate-Based Incidents Response Tracking Tool can be found in Appendix A.

The following is a summary of the Human Rights and Hate-Based Incidents Response Tracking Tool Annual Report (March 2025 to February 2026):

- **325** total incidents reported between March 18, 2025 – February 28, 2026
- Reports were submitted from **7** secondary schools and **56** elementary schools.
- **Race, colour, sexual orientation** and **ethnic origin** were the most cited protected grounds for incidents.
- **Racism (212)**- (specifically, **anti-Black racism (178)**)- homophobia (**60**) **antisemitism (30)** were the most reported types of discrimination, following by **Islamophobia (18)** and **anti-Asian racism (17)**
- Most incidents involved name calling, unwelcome remarks, inappropriate jokes, slurs or derogatory or offensive messages.
- Of the 325 incidents, the majority (**86%**) of them were substantiated after further investigation.
- The **most common outcomes** of incident investigations were **education** and **suspensions**.
- However, 7 incidents resulted in **expulsions**. Of these 7 incidents, 4 were related to racism, 1 was related to homophobia, 1 was related to antisemitism, and 1 was gender-based racism.
- Like expulsions, many of the incidents that resulted in suspensions (total of 167) were related to racism (115). Anti-Black racism was found in 98 of these incidents, and homophobia was found in 38 of these incidents.
- The two incidents that resulted in police charges were a hate-based incident and an Anti-Black Racism incident.

The Human Rights Office (HRO) continues to oversee the Human Rights Complaints Resolution Procedure to investigate and resolve human rights issues brought to the HRO directly. In 2025, the HRO received **36** submissions, with steady reporting across the year and a slight increase in the fall months. The most frequently cited grounds were **disability, age, creed/religion, and race**. The HRO continues to respond to the submissions following the human rights complaints resolution procedure, which seeks to resolve matters via either an early resolution or investigation process. In addition, the HRO is working towards increasing human rights awareness among students and families through outreach and information sessions. Through the system navigation services, supports are also being provided to students and families to navigate the school system and proactively address human rights barriers, thereby focusing on preventative strategies.

Employment equity, diversity, and inclusion

HWDSB continues to advance and measure employment equity, diversity and inclusion efforts through recruitment efforts to develop a workforce that reflects the communities we serve. Further, staff continue to collaborate to continuously improve staff recruitment, hiring, retention and engagement practices and processes at HWDSB. Guided by the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan (2023-2028), this work focuses on fostering equitable and inclusive practices aligned with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

During the 2024-2025 school year, HWDSB conducted the Have Your Say: Staff Voice survey that included both employee demographic and experience questions, which provided HWDSB with valuable data related to staff identity and experience. Results of the identity (census) based questions, can be found on HWDSB's [Human Rights and Equity website](#).

Furthermore, in collaboration between Human Resources, Indigenous Education and the Human Rights Office, staff are undertaking an updated Employment Equity and Indigenous Representation Audit, that will provide HWDSB with valuable data to inform and improve Human Resources policies, procedures and practices, in alignment with our commitments under the Human Rights and Equity Action Plan and the Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP).

Financial Implications:

The initiatives outlined in this report have been implemented by multiple HWDSB departments. These initiatives have been undertaken within the existing departmental budgets contained in the 2025/2026 budget approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2025.

Strategic Directions:

Upholding Human Rights, Safety & Well-Being

We will support all students and staff to feel safe and secure in our classrooms and school communities.

Providing Equitable Quality Education

We will offer equitable quality educational opportunities to improve student engagement, learning and achievement for future-readiness.

Collaborating with Students, Families & 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 & 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.

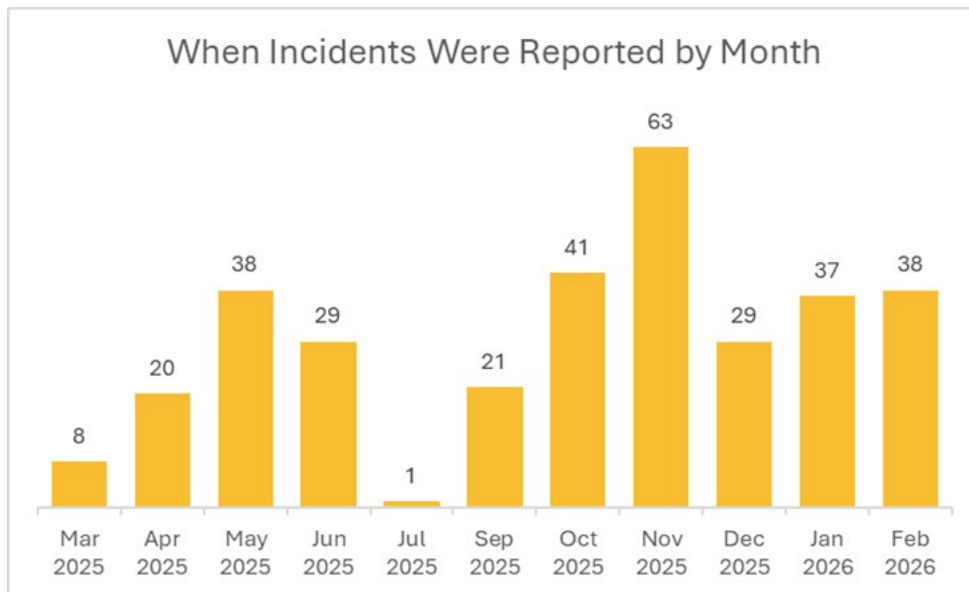
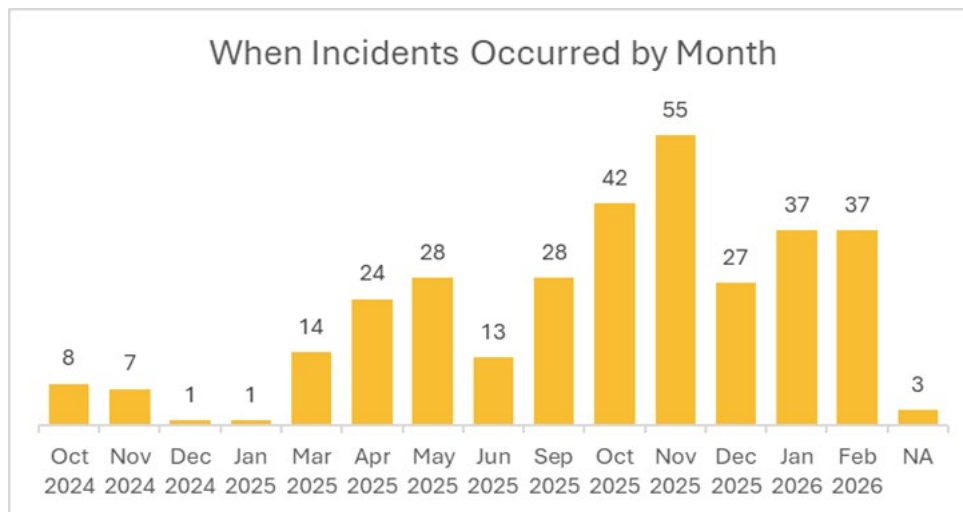
Appendix A

Human Rights and Hate-Based Incidents and Responses Tracking (March 2025 - February 2026)

Overview

- **325 total incidents** reported between March 18, 2025 – February 28, 2026, 319 completed, 2 active, 4 cancelled.
- Reports were submitted from **7 high schools** and **56 elementary schools**.

When Incidents Occurred and Were Reported



Incident Frequency by Protected Grounds

Note regarding frequencies throughout this report: since many of the questions asked school leaders to “check all that apply”, frequencies will not equal the total number of incidents (325).

| Protected Ground | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Age | 3 |
| Ancestry | 13 |
| Citizenship | 4 |
| Colour | 94 |
| Creed (includes religion) | 33 |
| Disability (including mental, physical, developmental, or learning disabilities) | 14 |
| Ethnic Origin | 43 |
| Family status (such as a parent-child relationship, elder relationships) | 0 |
| Gender Identity and Gender Expression | 22 |
| Marital Status | 0 |
| Place of Origin | 10 |
| Race | 128 |
| Sex | 5 |
| Sexual Orientation | 48 |
| Record of Offences | 0 |
| Socio-economic Status | 0 |
| Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the protected grounds | 2 |
| Perception that one of the above grounds applies | 1 |
| Unsure | 1 |
| Any additional comment | 4 |

- **Race, colour, sexual orientation** and **ethnic origin** were the most reported protected grounds for incidents.

Incident Frequency by Type of Discrimination

| Discrimination | Frequency |
|----------------|-----------|
| Ableism | 13 |
| Ageism | 3 |
| Antisemitism | 30 |
| Biphobia | 0 |
| Classism | 1 |
| Homophobia | 60 |
| Islamophobia | 18 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Racism | 212 |
| Anti-Asian | 17 |
| Anti-Black | 178 |
| Anti-Indigenous | 2 |
| Anti-Palestinian | 2 |
| Other Includes: Anti-Afghan, Anti-Indian, Anti-Muslim/Anti-Arabic, Anti-Asian, Anti-South-Asian, Anti-Southeast-Asian, Indian, and White person. | 14 |
| Sexism | 4 |
| Transphobia | 7 |
| Other | 8 |
| Unsure | 2 |
| Any additional comment | 0 |

- **Racism** (specifically, **anti-Black racism**), **homophobia**, **anti-Semitism** were the most reported types of discrimination.

Perpetrator Frequency and Impacted Frequency

| Perpetrator | Frequency |
|-------------|-----------|
| Community | 4 |
| Caregiver | 2 |
| Staff | 11 |
| Student | 293 |
| Unsure | 24 |

| Person Impacted | Frequency |
|-----------------|-----------|
| Community | 21 |
| Caregiver | 6 |
| Staff | 72 |
| Student | 257 |
| Unsure | 33 |

- **Students** were most frequently identified as **perpetrator** and as the **person impacted**.
- **Staff** were also impacted in **many cases**.

Perpetrators and Those Impacted

| Perpetrator to Impacted | Frequency |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| Student to Student | 243 |
| Student to Staff | 53 |
| Student to Unsure | 23 |
| Student to Community | 12 |
| Student to Caregiver | 3 |
| Staff to Student | 4 |
| Staff to Staff | 8 |
| Staff to Community | 1 |

| | |
|------------------------|----|
| Usure to Student | 11 |
| Unsure to Staff | 12 |
| Unsure to Community | 6 |
| Unsure to Unsure | 9 |
| Unsure to Caregiver | 2 |
| Caregiver to Staff | 1 |
| Caregiver to Student | 2 |
| Caregiver to Community | 1 |
| Caregiver to Caregiver | 1 |
| Community to Community | 2 |
| Community to Staff | 1 |
| Community to Student | 1 |

- Most **incidents** reported were **peer-to-peer** between **students**.

Protected Grounds and Discrimination by Perpetrator

| Perpetrator | Protected Grounds | Frequency |
|-------------|--|-----------|
| Student | Ancestry | 11 |
| Student | Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the protected grounds | 1 |
| Student | Citizenship | 4 |
| Student | Colour | 84 |
| Student | Creed (includes religion) | 25 |
| Student | Disability | 14 |
| Student | Ethnic origin | 38 |
| Student | Gender Identity and Gender Expression | 21 |
| Student | Perception that one of the above grounds applies | 1 |
| Student | Place of origin (may include language) | 6 |
| Student | Race | 117 |
| Student | Sex (including pregnancy and breastfeeding) | 5 |
| Student | Sexual Orientation | 44 |
| Student | Unsure at this time | 1 |
| Student | Add additional comment | 2 |
| Staff | Age | 5 |
| Staff | Colour | 2 |
| Staff | Ethnic origin | 1 |

| | | |
|-----------|--|----|
| Staff | Gender Identity and Gender Expression | 1 |
| Staff | Race | 3 |
| Staff | Sexual orientation | 1 |
| Staff | Add additional comment | 1 |
| Unsure | Ancestry | 2 |
| Unsure | Association or relationship with a person identified by one of the protected grounds | 2 |
| Unsure | Citizenship | 1 |
| Unsure | Colour | 4 |
| Unsure | Creed (includes religion) | 11 |
| Unsure | Ethnic origin | 8 |
| Unsure | Perception that one of the above grounds applies | 1 |
| Unsure | Place of origin (may include language) | 7 |
| Unsure | Race | 10 |
| Unsure | Unsure at this time | 2 |
| Unsure | Add additional comment | 1 |
| Community | Colour | 1 |
| Community | Creed (includes religion) | 2 |
| Community | Ethnic origin | 1 |
| Community | Gender Identity and Gender Expression | 1 |
| Community | Place of origin (may include language) | 1 |
| Community | Race | 2 |
| Community | Sexual Orientation | 1 |
| Caregiver | Colour | 1 |
| Caregiver | Race | 2 |

- The most common incidents were discrimination by **students** based on **race, colour, sexual orientation** and **ethnic origin**.

Discrimination Type by Perpetrator

| Perpetrator | Discrimination Type | Frequency |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------|
| Student | Racism | 193 |
| Student | Homophobia | 57 |
| Student | Antisemitism | 23 |

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|----|
| Student | Islamophobia | 16 |
| Student | Ableism | 13 |
| Student | Transphobia | 6 |
| Student | Classism | 1 |
| Student | Sexism | 4 |
| Student | Other (please specify) | 8 |
| Student | Any additional comments | 1 |
| Student | Unsure at this time | 2 |
| Staff | Racism | 5 |
| Staff | Ageism | 5 |
| Community | Antisemitism | 1 |
| Community | Islamophobia | 1 |
| Community | Racism | 2 |
| Community | Transphobia | 1 |
| Caregiver | Racism | 2 |
| Unsure | Antisemitism | 10 |
| Unsure | Racism | 12 |
| Unsure | Islamophobia | 3 |
| Unsure | Homophobia | 2 |

The most common cases reported were **racist incidents by students**. Many cases were also **homophobic** and **antisemitic incidents by students**.

Incident Descriptions

| Incident description | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Name-calling, unwelcome remarks, inappropriate jokes, slurs, displaying derogatory or offensive messages | 279 |
| Bullying, intimidation, uttering threats, physical threats etc. | 25 |
| Hate-based activities and vandalism (e.g., graffiti, social media posts) | 33 |
| Denying of human rights-based accommodations | 0 |
| Denial of access to supports, services, space and/or other activities | 3 |
| Reprisal (punishment and retaliation against a person for reporting an issue or complaint) | 2 |
| Bad faith allegations, complaints, or accusations | 1 |
| Avoidance or distancing based on a protected identity | 1 |
| Other <i>Others includes: use of slurs (including the N-word), removal of a turban, incorrect pronoun uses and misgendering, colouring a hand</i> | 13 |

| | |
|---|--|
| <i>black and making comments, playing a Nazi marching song, threats referencing a school shooting, swearing toward targeted groups, and a negative academic comment from a teacher.</i> | |
|---|--|

- Most incidents involved name calling, unwelcome remarks, inappropriate jokes, slurs or derogatory/offensive messages.

Responses to Incidents

| Response Description | Frequency |
|---|-----------|
| Initiated/Conducted an investigation | 264 |
| Informed Superintendent | 90 |
| Informed families of students involved (as applicable) | 228 |
| Asked for support from the HWDSB HRO (as applicable) | 0 |
| Asked for support from other departments (Equity, Safe Schools, HR etc.) (as applicable) | 21 |
| Provided learning opportunities for those involved | 169 |
| Applied student progressive discipline policy and procedure | 208 |
| Applied staff progressive discipline policy and procedure (if staff is involved) | 3 |
| Applied restorative practice or other approaches to repair harm | 47 |
| Made a referral for support services (e.g. mental health services) | 4 |
| Other(s), please specify <i>Others includes: meetings with families and staff, suspensions and Back-on-Track support, removal of graffiti, caring adult support, time provided for staff to step away, communication with affected staff, outside-agency involvement, parent contact, discussions about behaviour and impact, system and wrap-around supports (BCBA, CYCP, Family Services), a community letter to families, use of a Human Rights video, development of a safety plan, and consideration of mitigating circumstances.</i> | 21 |

- The **most common responses** to incidents were to **investigate, inform the families of students involved, and apply progressive discipline procedures for students.**
- Other **frequent responses** to incidents included **providing learning opportunities for those involved and informing a superintendent.**

Police Reporting

| Reported to Police | Frequency |
|--------------------|-----------|
| Yes | 23 |
| No | 290 |

| | |
|-------------|----|
| No Response | 12 |
|-------------|----|

- Of the 325 incidents reported, **23 (7%) were reported** to police. **10** of the incidents reported were described as **hate-based activities**.
- Most incidents were **not reported to police**.

External Resources

| External Resources Used | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Community Organization | 10 |
| Community Members | 8 |
| None <i>This response option was added because many people wrote in "none" "no" or "n/a" as an "other" response. It was suggested that this response be added to the EBASE form.</i> | 200 |
| Other <i>External resources named includes police services, union groups, child protection services (CAS), outside clinical and therapeutic agencies, Family Services, the AIM program, the Phoenix program, CCPI/anti-bullying supports, equity consultants and equity-focused board teams, mental-health specialists, graduation coaching supports.</i> | 85 |

Investigation Results

| Investigation Results | Frequency |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Substantiated | 279 |
| Unsubstantiated | 7 |
| Inconclusive | 24 |
| Other | 12 |

- Of the 325 incidents, the **majority (86%)** of them were **substantiated** after further investigation.
- Of the 24 of the **inconclusive investigations**, **18** were related to **name calling and other derogatory/offensive messages**, **8** were related to **hate-based activities**, **one bullying**, and **one other**.

Investigation Outcomes

| Investigation Outcomes | Frequency |
|--|-----------|
| Charges were made | 2 |
| Education | 204 |
| Expulsion (please review Section 310 of the Education Act) | 7 |
| Restorative practices | 95 |
| Suspension (please review Section 306 of the Education Act) | 167 |
| Unresolved, looking for support | 2 |
| Other <i>Other outcomes described include investigations (including 20-day pending expulsion processes), therapeutic withdrawals, in-school consequences and progressive discipline, family meetings and education-focused follow-up, additional support from CYCP/BCBA and behaviour/mental-health teams, police reports and police investigations, graffiti removal and facility work orders, equity and anti-racism learning (e.g., Top 5 Lessons, All Roads Lead to No), schedule adjustments and wrap-around support planning, and continued school-wide education to address harmful language and bias.</i> | 50 |

- The **most common outcomes** of incident investigations were **education** and **suspensions**.
- Of the 7 incidents that resulted in **expulsions**, 4 were related to **racism**, 1 was related to homophobia, 1 was related to antisemitism, and 1 was gender-based racism.
- Like expulsions, many of the incidents that resulted in **suspensions** (total of 167) of were related to **racism** (115) (specifically, **anti-Black racism** (98)) and **homophobia** (38).
- The two incidents that resulted in **police charges** were a **hate-based incident** and an **Anti-Black Racism** incident.