2024-2028 Multi-Year Strategic Plan: Community Engagement Report

Halton District School Board

EMBER EXPERIENCE

Table of Contents

1 Executive Summary 3

2 Engagement Overview 11

3 External Environment Scan 18

4 Internal Environment Scan 24

5 Community Engagement Results 31

6 The Future of Education 66

7 Appendix 71

Executive Summary

This section provides a high-level of the report findings.

Introduction

In March 2024, the Halton District School Board (HDSB) engaged Ember Experience to lead a comprehensive engagement to inform their Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2024–2028.

To facilitate meaningful input and feedback, we collaborated with members of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan Steering Committee (MYSPSC) to identify and engage key parties. Together, we aimed to engage diverse voices through authentic and in-depth conversations, creating collaborative spaces where participants authentically connected with others to build on common ideas. The consultation put the experience of community members at the centre and encouraged them to curiously explore possibilities that will inform the Board of Trustees' considerations when developing the new MYSP.

Additionally, we conducted an environmental scan to examine both internal factors (such as past surveys and available organizational data) and external factors to understand the broader educational context and landscape. This dual approach positions the Board to effectively anticipate and navigate future challenges and opportunities.

This report summarizes key aspects from the environmental scan, provides the aggregated themes from consultations and outlines considerations to assist with the creation of the new MYSP.

***Note:** "Parties" refer to HDSB's internal and external community, including but not limited to students, parents/guardians, staff and diverse communities such as Indigenous Peoples and Communities, Black, Racialized, 2SLGBTQIA+, multilingual language learners, Advisory Groups and Affinity networks.

Engagement Overview

Through focus groups, world café-style town halls, interviews, and surveys, we engaged over 3,000 individuals, including:

1800+ Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers participated through the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), school councils, town halls, and surveys.

450+ students from grades K-12, apprenticeship classes, dual credit classes, destreamed classes, college-destination classes, university-destination classes, former and current dual credit/School Within A College (SWAC) students, Student Senate, student councils, elementary student leaders, in-person school engagements (Craig Kielburger Secondary School, Aldershot High School, Captain R. Wilson Public School, Acton District School, Burlington High School), town halls, online focus groups, and surveys.

650+ Teachers, Staff, Administrators, Trustees and Senior Leadership team members contributed through in-person and virtual focus groups, facilitated discussions, town halls, committees/councils, and surveys.

40+ community members and partners provided their input to inform the MYSP. This included Community Committee Members, community service organizations, post-secondary institutions, and a variety of not-for-profit student service providers.

There is intersectionality among the respondents due to the nature of the engagements. The counts are approximate because some individuals (e.g., parents who also identify as staff) provided feedback from multiple perspectives, which has not been separated. Additionally, school councils and groups, which include students, staff, and community members, provided single feedback or responses as a collective.

Key Observations

Overview

The insights gathered through this process provide a broad perspective on issues, strengths, and opportunities affecting the entire HDSB community, which will inform the deliberations for the new MYSP.

The information below highlights the key observations that were identified from the review of external and internal data and the HDSB community engagement.

Observations

- Academic success, critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and integrating interdisciplinary studies emerged as priorities across all engagements with various participants.
- While parents focus on interdisciplinary studies and STEAM as important skills to develop, it is noteworthy that staff and students considered trades and intercultural competencies among the top skills and understandings to develop.
- Additionally, a common theme across all engagements was the need for a greater focus on social interactions and connections for students through extracurricular activities, hands-on learning, and outdoor learning experiences.
- To achieve optimal academic outcomes for all students, several respondents urged the Board to allocate adequate funding for special education, address the needs of diverse learners, and use data to develop effective interventions for equity-deserving and Indigenous students. Participants identified that this approach is crucial for ensuring equitable academic success.
- Many parents emphasized the importance of close engagement with the school to support their child's success. They also highlighted the need for effective communication between the school and families, with 46% of survey respondents believing that positive outreach from schools to families is crucial for achieving equitable opportunities for academic outcomes.

Key Observations

- Shifts in global power dynamics and family economics were identified as key areas of concern and focus by 47% of student survey respondents. These themes also surfaced during in-person engagements, where financial literacy and affordability were top concerns, reflecting a desire to enhance students' readiness for successful futures.
- Student and staff self-care and well-being were highlighted as essential for the HDSB to consider in its planning.
- While most parents, teachers, and staff advocate for caution with social media and cell phone use, students support using these tools responsibly, emphasizing their potential for better communication, connection, and engagement.
- During the engagements, there were concerns about how inclusion and diversity initiatives, as well as the political issues, were being approached. However, most agreed that prioritizing social interactions and respectful behaviour and interactions was essential.
- Some, particularly parents, believe that shifting the focus from Indigenous education and EDI work back to fundamentals with a strong emphasis on academic achievement is the most effective path forward. Meanwhile, others feel that EDI work, along with Truth and Reconciliation efforts, are crucial for developing the whole child, ensuring that every student has access to opportunities, achieves academic success and experiences a sense of belonging and safety within the school environment.
- Interpersonal skills centred on empathy, respect, trustworthiness, and supportive relationships between staff and students, along with well-being strategies, were deemed essential in fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging. These factors were deemed crucial by over 60% of survey respondents.

Key Observations

- Physical and psychological safety emerged as a major concern within school environments from the student's perspective. It was also one of the top concerns among parents, guardians, caregivers, and teachers.
- Additionally, basic facilities such as clean washrooms, sufficient classroom resources, and manageable class sizes with a good teacher-to-student ratio were identified as focus areas to improve the school environment.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and increased technology integration were major topics of discussion. Parents expressed a strong preference for reducing technology use in classrooms to foster more social interactions. They advocate for the responsible use of AI but urge caution against over-reliance on technology.
- Almost 70% of staff survey respondents felt that supportive leadership and collaboration are key to their success and, ultimately, to student success. This theme also emerged during other engagements as well.
- A clear relationship between the Ministry of Education, Board, and School initiatives needs to be developed in a cohesive and integrated way. This will support the alignment of the work for staff.
- It is important to note that potentially hurtful and discriminatory comments were shared, especially related to Indigenous Education and 2SLGBTQIA+. We reference this feedback as it is important to acknowledge the discrimination and racism encountered by these students and staff given the nature of the commentary shared by some participants with us.

Considerations for MYSP 2024 - 2028

Overview

The following is a list of recommendations that may be beneficial for HDSB to consider during the MYSP creation process. These recommendations result from the in-depth data analysis and review of data collected during the extensive community engagement and the external and internal environmental scan of HDSB.

Considerations

1. Continue to prioritize academic excellence and development of future readiness and life skills (e.g., critical thinking).

2. Address the tensions between polarized opinions and beliefs that are creating barriers for student, staff, and family safety and sense of belonging.

3. Prioritize student and staff physical and psychological safety.

4. Foster greater cohesion and integration of the MYSP commitments to create a greater understanding of the relationship between the priorities.

Considerations for MYSP 2024 - 2028

5. Consider the role and impact of technology (e.g., AI, social media, learning software) and broaden opportunities for hands-on and outdoor experiences to support student learning and well-being.

6. Focus on fostering a deeper understanding, alignment and commitment to values that create greater empathy, respect and social connection.

7. Centre human and Indigenous rights in the development of the MYSP.

Engagement Overview

This section provides a summary of the approach taken and the parties engaged in the MYSP process.

Engagement Overview

We heard from over 3,000 parents, guardians, caregivers, students, teachers, school staff, administrators, trustees, senior leaders, community partners, organizations, and members through various methods, including focus groups, world café-style town halls, interviews, and surveys.

1800+ Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers participated through the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), school councils, town halls, and surveys.

450+ students from grades K-12, apprenticeship classes, dual credit classes, destreamed classes, college-destination, university-destination classes, former and current dual credit/School Within A College (SWAC) students engaged through the Student Senate, elementary student leaders, school councils, in-person school engagements (Craig Kielburger Secondary School, Aldershot High School, Captain R. Wilson Public School, Acton District School, Burlington High School), town halls, online focus groups, and surveys.

650+ Teachers, Staff, Administrators, Trustees and Senior Leadership team members contributed through in-person and virtual focus groups, facilitated discussions, town halls, committees/councils, and surveys.

Community Groups and Committee Engagement

We engaged with various committees, councils, and affinity networks to gather perspectives relevant to their mandates. After a brief presentation from our team, each group was asked to either fill out a qualitative feedback form or participate in a facilitated 60-90-minute discussion.

Engagement Overview

Some committees and community groups opted for facilitated conversations and surveys to ensure all members had the chance to participate. While several more committees and groups were invited, the following participated:

- Environmental Leadership & Sustainability Committee (ELSC)
- Parent Involvement Committee (PIC)
- School Councils
- Student Councils
- Student Senate
- Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee (HREAC)
- Queer & Trans Affinity Network (QTAN)
- System Administrators and Managers (SAM)
- Mental Health Strategy Advisory Committee
- Indigenous Rights & Education Network (IREN)
- Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC)
- Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)
- HDSB Employee Groups (HUC)
- Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Voices (IBRV)
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Inclusion Committee (SOGIC)
- Black Male Educators Committee

Engagement Overview

External Community Engagement

Feedback was also gathered from organizations and partners to understand various perspectives from HDSB's external community. These parties engaged in the process through focus groups, online forms, and/or the survey.

40+ community members and partners provided their input to inform the MYSP. This included Community Committee Members, community service organizations, post-secondary institutions, and a variety of not-for-profit student service providers.

Engagement Overview

Committees and Councils

Committee/Council	Method	Participation Count
Environmental Leadership & Sustainability Committee	Online form	4
Parent Involvement Committee	Virtual Focus group	13
School Councils	Online form	267 (29 councils: 207 parents/guardians/caregivers, 20 students, 39 HDSB staff, 1 community member/partner)
Student Senate	Virtual Focus group	38
Student Councils	Online form	66 Group Forms
Human Rights and Equity Advisory Committee (HREAC)	1 Virtual Focus group and 1 interview	2
System Administrators and affinity groups	Virtual Focus group and Online form	200+
Mental Health Strategy Advisory Committee	Virtual Focus group	15+

Engagement Overview

Committee/Council	Method	Participation
Indigenous Rights & Education Network (IREN)	3 Virtual Focus groups	10+
Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC)	1 Virtual focus group	6
Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)	Virtual Focus group	6+
Halton Union Council (HUC)	Virtual Focus group	36
IBRV (Indigenous, Black, and Racialized Voices)	Feedback Form	1 Group Form
SOGIC (Sexual Orientation and Gender Inclusion Committee)	Feedback Form	9
Black Male Educators Committee	Feedback Form	1 Group Form

Note: In cases where committees/staff groups/community groups did not provide an exact participant count, their response was counted as one collective input. Many committees chose to submit a single, unified response on behalf of all members to streamline the data collection process.

Engagement Overview

Community Partners/Organizations

Community Partner/Organization1	Method	Participation
Indigenous Education Advisory Committee (IEAC) and Indigenous Treaty Partner	Virtual engagement	3
Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF)	Survey	N/A
Royal Botanical Gardens	Survey	N/A
Halton Black Voices (HBV)	Online form	N/A
Jewish Community Members	Virtual Focus group	3
Canadian Caribbean Association of Halton (CCAH)	Virtual Focus group	1
Royal Botanical Gardens	Survey	N/A
Mohawk College	Survey	N/A

Engagement Overview

Townhalls

Engagement Type	Method	Participation
World Café style townhall	4 In-person - Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Halton Hills	68
World Café style Townhall	Virtual Focus group	10
Staff Only townhall	Virtual Focus group	4

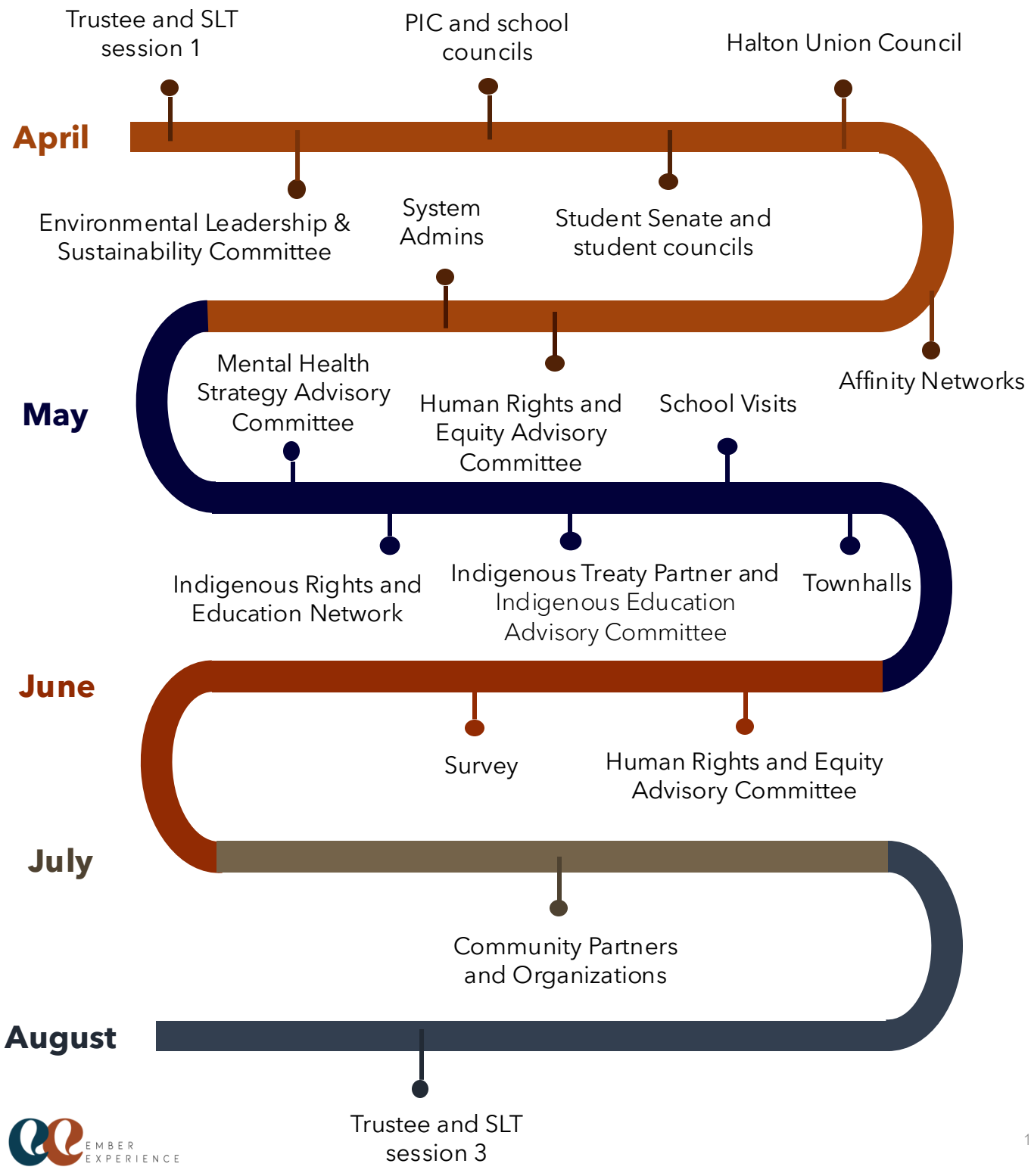
School Engagements

Engagement Type	Method	Participation
Schools Visit	In-person - Craig Kielburger Secondary School, Aldershot High School, Captain R. Wilson Public School, Acton District School, Burlington High School	140+

Survey

Survey Type	Participation
General Survey	2093
Community Partner Survey	14

Engagement Overview



External Environmental Scan

This section provides a summary of International, National, and Provincial factors (e.g., population, economic) that may influence the development of the Multi-year Strategic Plan.

Economic Overview: Halton Region

Economic Overview[1]

- Overall, the average income for Halton Region families was significantly statistically better than the average for Ontario.
- In a 2020 Food Insecurity Report, 13% of Halton respondents said they could not afford balanced meals over the past 30 days compared to 21% nationally.
- Halton Region experienced a 40% average increase in monthly shelter costs of owned private dwellings between 2011 and 2021. This increase is 8% higher than the Ontario average.
- Halton Regional experienced a 74% average increase in monthly shelter costs of rented private dwellings between 2011 and 2021, which is 22% higher than the Ontario average.

1. Environics Analytics: Halton Trade Area, https://en.environicsanalytics.com/Envision/About/1/2023#15

Socio-Cultural Landscape

Overview

Over the past decade, evolving community expectations for education have been reflected and documented in the following ways:

- Media reports of grassroots groups holding school boards publicly accountable for upholding human rights.[2]
- Expectations by different groups via social media for school boards to weigh in on complex political and social events.[3]
- Research highlighting the divisiveness of social media and the challenge it presents in creating opportunities to understand different perspectives and engage in trusting dialogue empathetically.[4]

2. CBC News, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/anti-black-racism-reporting-tool-ontario-schools-1.5933508

3. Toronto Star, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/parents-urge-toronto-school-board-to-combat-anti-palestinian-racism-and-observe-nakba-day/article_d1435e40-12c1-11ef-b935-53d9e25022ab.html%e2%80%8b

4. Lee AH. Social Trust in Polarized Times: How Perceptions of Political Polarization Affect Americans' Trust in Each Other, 2022

Ontario's education within a global context

Overview

This section examines how Ontario's education system compares academically to other provinces and countries and examines leading practices within education. Ontario is generally a strong jurisdiction in mathematics, language, and science, especially when one considers the diversity within Ontario's public school system, which is not evident in most of the other top-performing jurisdictions.

Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)[5]

- PISA evaluates a random sample of 15-year-olds' performance in mathematics, science and reading in 81 jurisdictions internationally.
- Four Canadian provinces were ranked in the top 13 jurisdictions for mathematics with the following scores: Quebec 514, Alberta 504, British Columbia 496, and Ontario 495.
- Out of the 81 countries that participated in both PISA 2012 and PISA 2022, mathematics performance improved in only three countries, declined in 39, and remained status quo in the others.
- Mathematics scores declined in Canada and all provinces except Prince Edward Island and Alberta between 2012 and 2022.
- Canada was ranked as 13th in PISA for Reading with Alberta and Ontario leading the way in the 2nd and 7th positions respectively within all participating countries and economies.
- In Science, Canada was ranked 11th led by Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

5. PISA-2022_Canadian_Report_EN.pdf

Summary of Educational Research

Employability and Life Skills Research[6]

- Workplaces now seek employees whose strengths are identified as non-routine interpersonal skills and non-routine analytical.[7] This is a shift in the last two decades from routine manual and routine cognitive which had dominated desired workplace skills since the 1960s.
- Society is changing rapidly based on the accelerated developments in technology including cyber physical technology, robotics, social media, and artificial intelligence.
- Shift to view humanity as part of an eco-system and focus on the importance of shared responsibility.
- Those who demonstrate skills in adaptability, critical thought, and collaboration are in demand in post-secondary environments.
- Knowledge and technical skills are still important, but not the most important indicators of success.

6. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: Learning Compass Notes 2030, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/about/projects/edu/education-2040/1-1-learning-compass/OECD_Learning_Compass_2030_Concept_Note_Series.pdf

7. Non-routine skills require more than rote application and make use of abstract reasoning, collaborative and systems thinking.

Employability and Life Skills Research (cont'd)

Key Skills to teach in K-12 for future success[8]

Additionally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development identified five key employability skills and a focus on well-being that help individuals succeed in the workplace[4]:

- Task performance
- Emotional regulation
- Collaboration
- Open-mindedness
- Engagement with others
- Well-being

Other emerging trends to consider are:

Growing interest in outdoor learning, outdoor classrooms, and play-based learning as beneficial for student well-being and academics.

- New genre of climate fiction, with greater emphasis on humans within the ecological system.
- Limiting exposure to technology, especially in younger years. There is also an increased focus on developing connections and self-soothing techniques that are not technologically based.
- Anxiety & dysregulation are prevalent as barriers to learning.
- Continued emphasis on critical thinking in the age of AI.
- Greater recognition of student and parental voice.

8. PISA Vocational Education and Training (VET) Assessment and Analytical Framework, 2024

Ontario Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education has specific expectations that every District School Board in Ontario will focus on:

- Indigenous Rights and Education
- Achievement of Learning Outcomes in Core Academic Skills (Language and Mathematical Literacies)
- Preparation of Students for Future Success
- Equity of Opportunities for All Students
- Student Engagement & Well-Being

Internal Environmental Scan

This section provides a summary of factors within HDSB (e.g., EQAO, funding, student mental health) that may influence the development of the Multi-Year Strategic Plan.

Halton District School Board

At a Glance

Overview[9]

- Predicting growth of 3% in enrollment between 2022-2027.
- Milton will be the area of greatest growth within the District and is projected to experience school capacity challenges as enrollment continues to grow .
- HDSB has conventional school configurations with 90 grades K-8 schools and 20 grades 9-12 schools.
- Enrollment shifts have not yet resulted in any K-6, 7-12 or other configured schools.
- Two-thirds of the parents who completed a survey on school-parent collaboration feel positive about their interactions with their children's schools and feel that there is a collaborative approach.
- 94 schools have outdoor learning spaces.
- French Immersion, Special Education Programs, and Advanced Placement Courses are offered in all regions of the district.
- The International Baccalaureate Program is offered in Burlington, Milton, Georgetown and Oakville.
- HDSB has an Innovation, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (ISTEM) program with almost 900 secondary students enrolled.
- HDSB offers access to 16 SHSM programs.

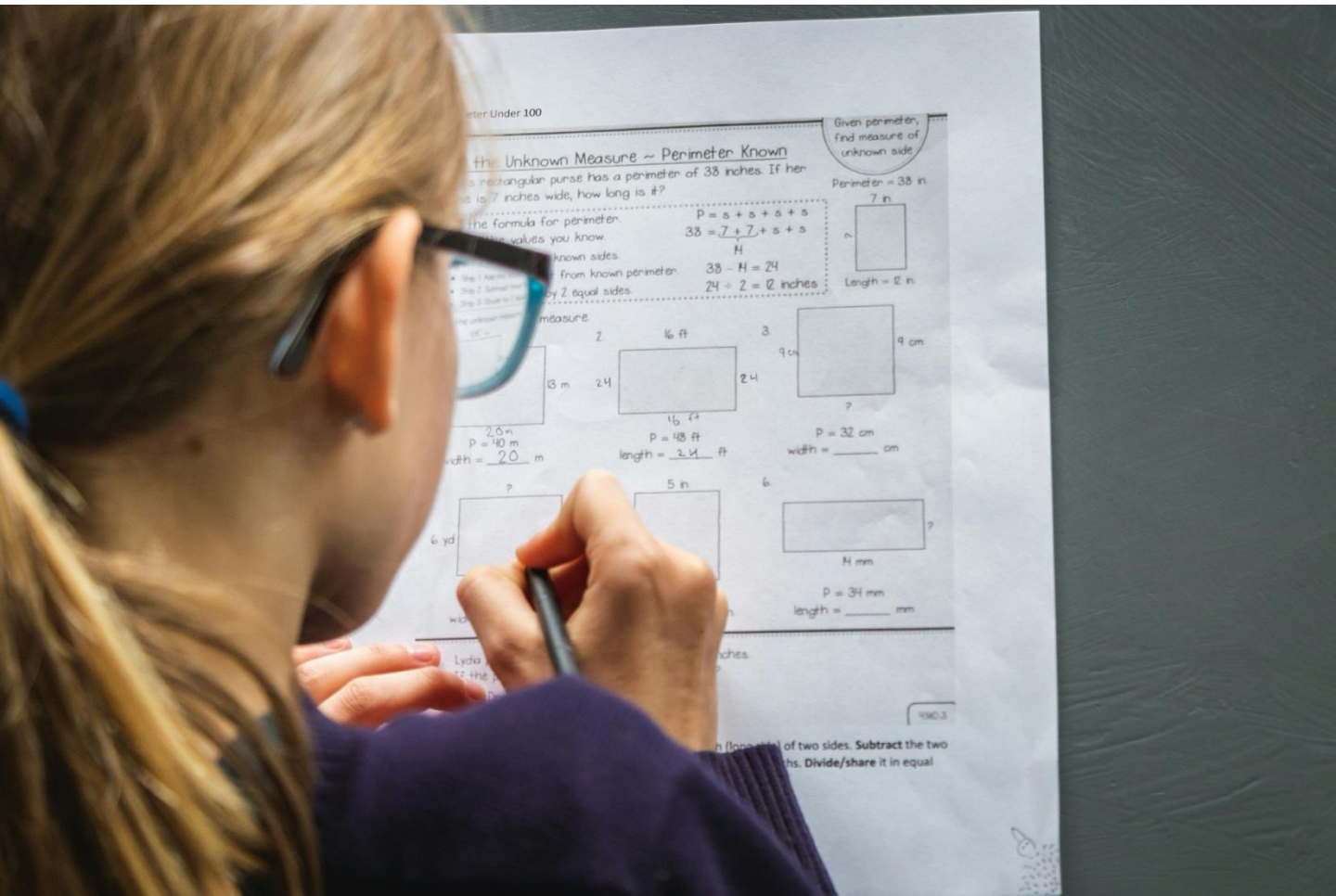
9. DSB Long-Term Accommodation Plan

Halton District School Board

At a Glance

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

- EQAO assesses students' learning of the curriculum in grades 3,6, and 9 and functional language literacy at grade 10.
- HDSB outperforms the province on all academic indicators.
- The decline in mathematics results between grade 3 and 6 is less at HDSB than in the rest of Ontario.
- HDSB students have a strong sense of efficacy, with 92% of grade 3 students, 90% of grade 6 students indicating a growth mindset and attribute increased academic success with effort.



Halton School District Board

The Economical Landscape[10]

Funding Pressures

- A new funding model for student transportation has resulted in reduced funding to HDSB by $2M.
- Top-up funding for school operations has been removed, resulting in $2.6M in lost funding for HDSB.
- For more than 10 years, funding for temporary accommodations (e.g., portables) has been capped at $40M provincially despite growing needs.
- Federally mandated enhancements to CPP/EI, which are not funded provincially, have caused increased costs of $7M for HDSB.
- Inflation pressures and increased market costs are not reflected in the funding, with costs of contracted goods and services increased by 10-30%.

loss of approximately $20M in special education funding

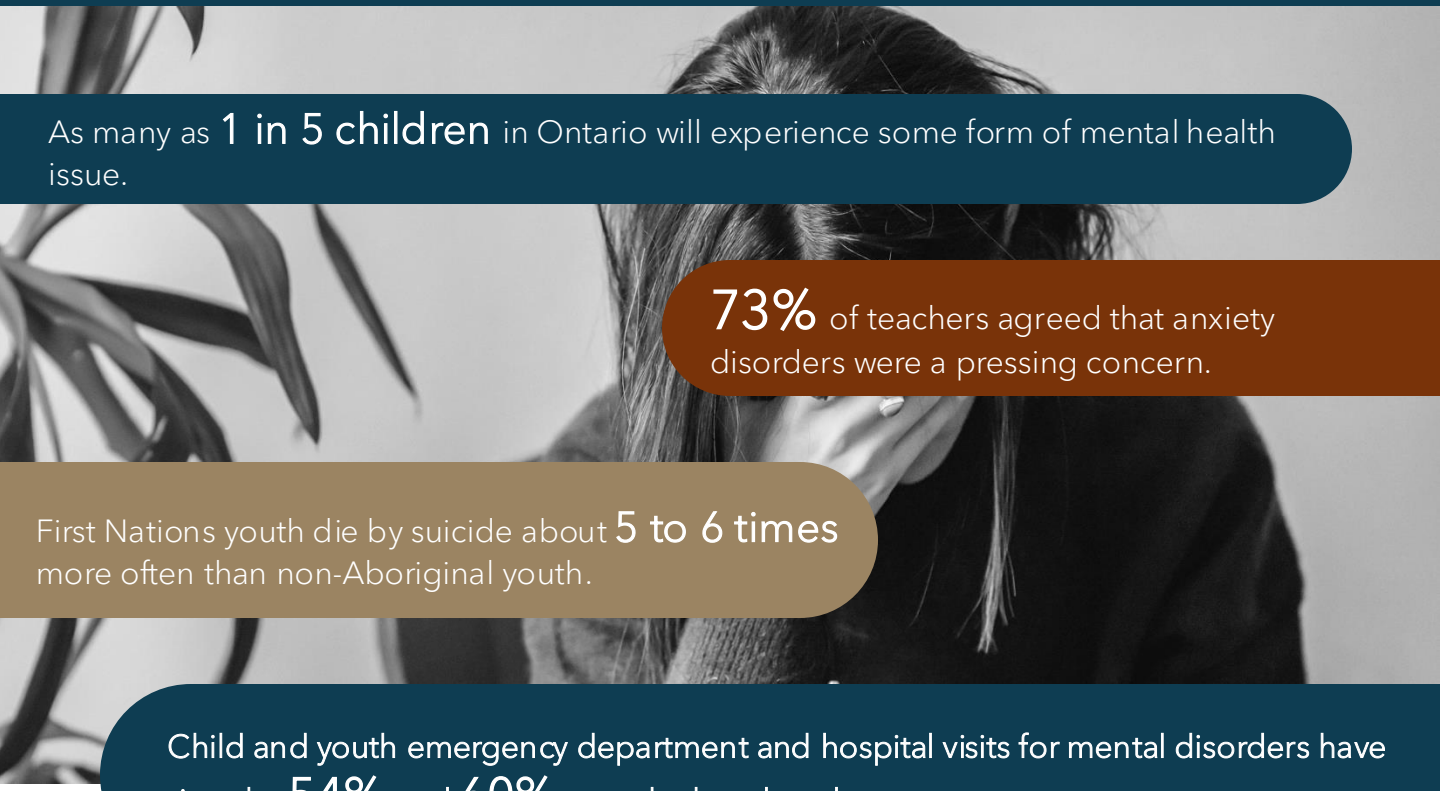
Budget Pressures

- There are several factors placing additional pressure on HDSB's financial budget. The top ones are:

- Student mental health and well-being
- Special education
- Supply staffing costs
- Smaller than mandated class size
- Student transportation (eligibility parameters and optional programs)
- Demand on central staff support (e.g., staff instruction, safe schools)
- Temporary accommodations (portables/temporary learning spaces)

10. 2024-2025 HDSB Budget Infographic.

Mental Health in Ontario Schools[11,12]



As many as **1 in 5 children** in Ontario will experience some form of mental health issue.

73% of teachers agreed that anxiety disorders were a pressing concern.

First Nations youth die by suicide about **5 to 6 times** more often than non-Aboriginal youth.

Child and youth emergency department and hospital visits for mental disorders have risen by **54%** and **60%** over the last decade.

In the last 30 years, hospitalizations for eating disorders have increased by **34%** among young women **under 15**.

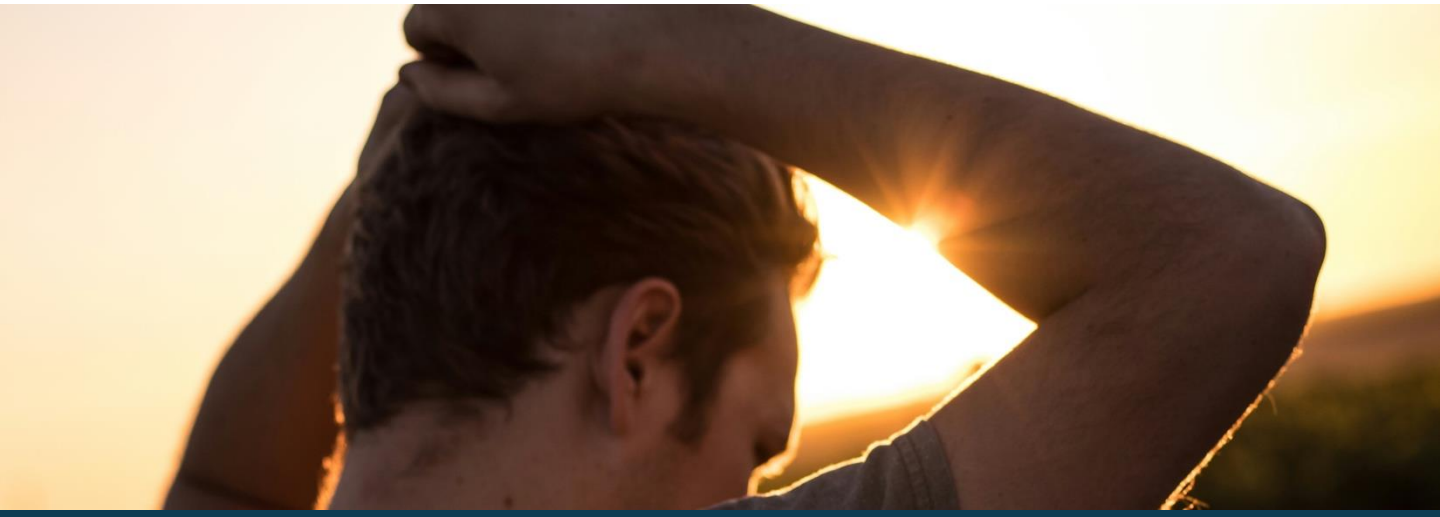
2SLGBTQIA+ youth face approximately **14 times the risk** of suicide and substance abuse than heterosexual peers.

11. Children's Mental Health Ontario (n.d.). Facts & Figures: Key facts and data points. https://cmho.org/facts-figures.
12. From Awareness of Mental Health and Well-Being Resources: HDSB Student Survey Results , 2023.

Mental Health in Ontario Schools

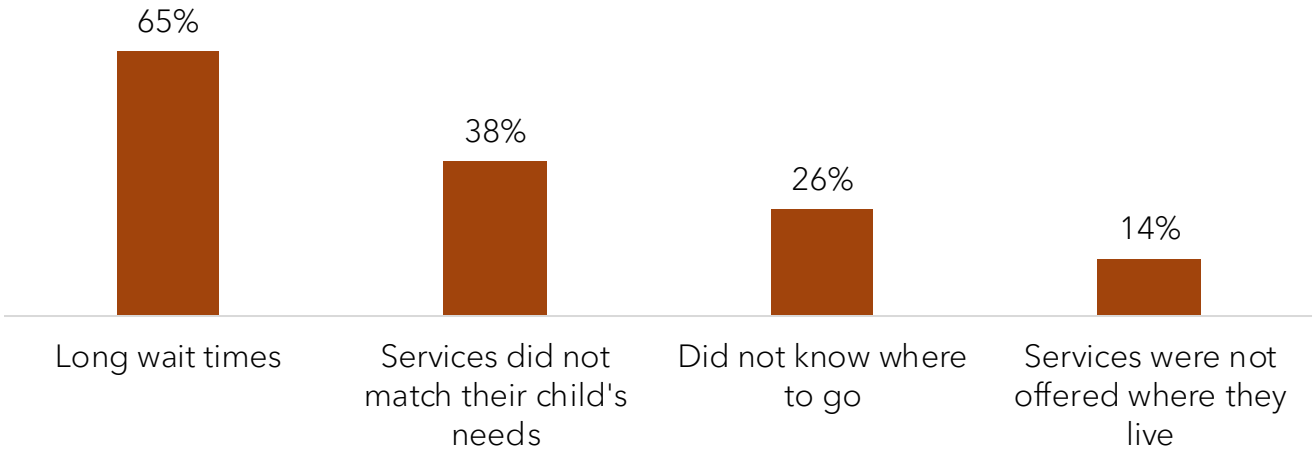
Support for mental health

- 36% of Ontario parents have sought help for a child who is struggling with their mental health, and 40% of those parents did not receive the help they needed.



76% of the families indicated it was very or extremely difficult to know where to find help.

Ontario parents reported the primary barriers as being:



Halton District School Board

Student Mental Health[11] (cont'd)

Student Mental Health at HDSB

- HDSB data generally aligns with provincial reporting from Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO).
- Almost a third of HDSB students identified that seeking support for their mental health and well-being was suggested to them as being in their best interest.

The primary reasons students to not seek mental health support are:

- Lack of trust in mental health experts.
- Lack of knowledge on how to access resources.
- Too expensive.
- Too busy with school life and other activities.
- Social anxiety around speaking with new people.
- Supports/coping mechanisms already in place (e.g., family and/or friends).
- Discomfort talking about mental health, fear of being judged by others, embarrassment, stigma.
- Parents do not want their children to see a professional and/or don't understand mental health.

77% do not seek support for mental health.

Community Engagement Results

This section provides a summary of the data collected throughout the community engagement with key parties (e.g., trustees, staff, parents, and students at HDSB).

What we heard about Current MYSP

Overall Satisfaction with Current MYSP

- Many respondents feel the current MYSP has a strong foundation that should be built upon rather than comprehensively redesigned.
- There is a desire for explicit cohesion and interdependence between the current commitments and an elimination of siloed efforts.

Equity and Inclusion

- While equity and inclusion initiatives are seen as a success, there is a need for clearer and more consistent integration at the classroom level. Comprehensive training and resources for educators are essential.
- Strengthening anti-racism and anti-oppression efforts is required. Addressing systemic issues courageously and innovatively is crucial.
- Continued focus on engaging with community partners and involving parents and caregivers in school events is important.
- Adding a human rights component to the concepts of equity and inclusion could enhance the focus.
- Encouraging bold and courageous leadership to address systemic issues and promote inclusivity is essential.
- Schools need to be flexible and responsive to societal changes and the needs of their students. This includes adapting school policies and practices to be more inclusive and reflective of diverse cultures and communities.
- Many parents who participated didn't understand the need for equity and inclusion work and felt the focus on identities was divisive.

What we heard about Current MYSP

Mental Health and Well-being

- Parents and students emphasize the importance of continuing to remove stigmas and providing access to more support.
- Staff believe there is still significant work needed to address staff mental health and well-being. Many expressed that they are currently experiencing burnout and feeling overwhelmed due to resource constraints and increased expectations from families and the Ministry of Education.
- There is a need to improve physical safety and security in school environments for both students and staff. This includes ensuring that the environment is safe and supportive for all, including those from equity-deserving groups.

What we heard about Current MYSP

Learning and Achievement

- Ensure that literacy and numeracy remain clearly articulated priorities. There is a need for a more consistent application of interventions across schools.
- Most respondents emphasized the need to incorporate more hands-on, practical opportunities, and incorporating more life-skills education, such as financial literacy.
- More awareness and education around skilled trades and diverse career paths for parents, students and staff is needed.
- Encourage parents/guardians/caregivers to get involved in classroom activities and events.
- Address concerns about achievements by
    - Increasing the budget to help reduce class sizes
    - Providing appropriate support for unique learners to meet their diverse learning needs.
    - Providing sufficient support and funding for special education.

Environmental Leadership

- Environmental leadership is seen as an area that could benefit from more attention and emphasis.
- While respondents acknowledged that environmental stewardship - related activities and clubs exist, they feel there is a need for more focused efforts in this area and that it is in the preliminary stages of implementation.
- There is a desire for more integration of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals within the goal.

What we heard about Current MYSP

Indigenous Perspectives and Awareness

- Incorporating Indigenous commitment as a distinct element within the new MYSP is crucial. This focus not only underscores the importance of this commitment but also ensures that the momentum of initiatives is maintained and continues to be prioritized.
- Centre Indigenous rights and education, using frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Address disparities in the experience and academic outcomes for all Indigenous students and ensure opportunities align with Ministry objectives and requirements.
- Shift the language and goals from perspectives to rights, truths, responsibilities, reconciliation, treaties and contributions. There is also a potential desire to change the title of the current commitment, which may require further consultation with Indigenous parties.
- Provide sufficient funding and support to maintain momentum and continue to make progress in this important work.

Overview of Listening Tour Themes

This section of the report provides an overview of themes that emerged from the engagement process. The diverse insights collected are crucial in developing a deeper understanding of issues, strengths, and opportunities that impact members of the HDSB community and need to be considered when finalizing the plan.

Below are the primary and secondary themes identified. These were identified by analyzing the sentiments for common meaning and data saturation. The common themes were then grouped into themes and sub-themes.

1. Learning Outcomes

- Academic success and excellence
- Life-skills and professional readiness

2. Learning Environment

- Learning opportunities
- Extracurriculars
- Safety
- Accountability
- Politically neutral classroom
- School and classroom infrastructure

3. Student Well-being

- Mental health
- Physical health

4. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- Cultural responsiveness
- Accessibility
- Tension

5. Indigenous Knowledge and Education

- Indigenous curriculum
- Indigenous student experience

Overview of Listening Tour Themes

6. People and Culture

- Learning staff support
- Development and training
- Staff hiring and retention
- Staff mental health and well-being

7. Environmental Stewardship

- Sustainability

8. Community Connection

- Parent Involvement and Engagement
- Community Partnerships

Learning Outcomes:
Academic Success/ Excellence

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach prioritize academic success/excellence, ensuring that students are well-prepared for higher education and future careers.

Summary of Theme Findings

Basic academic proficiencies

- Strengthen students' abilities in areas such as science, mathematics, and physics to build a solid foundation for academic and professional success.
- Some participants felt that it would be useful to conduct a thorough analysis of student census results to identify and address student groups impacted by literacy gaps and feel that this should inform strategies for improved student achievement.
- There is also a call from some participants for the curriculum to go “back to the basics” by emphasizing core technical, academic competencies, hard and soft skills development over social issues such as education about equity, inclusion, diversity, societal inequalities, gender identities, etc.
- Reintroduce homework and practice sheets to reinforce learning and improve academic performance through regular practice.
- Implement a whole-child approach that offers enriched education tailored to each student’s level and learning path, with additional support for students with special needs.

Learning Outcomes:
Life-skills and Professional Readiness

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach should focus on both academic and personal growth, ensuring that students are well-rounded and prepared for future challenges.

Summary of Theme Findings

Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- Foster the ability to assess information, identify truths, form informed knowledge and opinions, understand primary and secondary sources, and recognize bias.
- Teach how to think, not what to think.
- Instruct how to debate and disagree in a respectful manner.

Financial Literacy

- Focus on budgeting, taxes and other essential financial skills.

Work Ethic and Persistence

- Challenge students to work hard and encourage true potential, try new things, and encourage ideas, innovation, and curiosity.
- Enable students to fail without losing self-esteem and perseverance.
- Set contexts that model the importance of delayed gratification.

Global and Economic Awareness

- Provide learning opportunities for students to experience and understand the world around them.
- Ensure students have an understanding of the global economy and its impact

Learning and Achievement:
Life-skills and Professional Readiness

Hard and Soft Skills Development

- Integrate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) within the curriculum.
- Develop skills such as kindness, empathy, emotional intelligence, communication, public speaking and leadership abilities.

Social Cohesion and Community Involvement

- Build opportunities for connections and encourage social interactions, particularly for introverted students.
- Provide structured time to develop multi-grade positive peer groups.
- Teach how to work with students of varying needs and abilities
- Enhance community partnerships, connections and involvement

Preparation for Life After School

- Prepare students for exams and ensure they are ready for post-secondary education.
- Build skills such as interviewing, email, and resume writing.
- Teach about career pathways and explore various career options available after school.
- Ensure students understand the importance of deadlines and workplace expectations.

Learning Environment
Learning Opportunities

Overview

Participants expressed that the schools need to provide a diverse range of learning experiences that balance technology use with traditional and hands-on methods while catering to individual needs and interests.

Summary of Theme Findings

Diverse Learning Opportunities

- Implement integrated STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) programs to foster interdisciplinary learning.
- Provide access to the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at more schools.
- Improve iSTEM programs across schools. Currently, it appears to be inconsistent, indicating a need for more focused attention to implementation with the necessary funding.

Balanced and Responsible Use of Technology

- Emphasize the importance of reducing screen time and balancing it with other activities such as sports and arts.
- Develop and teach screen etiquette to help students use technology responsibly.
- Encourage tech-free lunch periods, especially for lower grades.
- Provide guidance on positive and responsible use of social media.
- Teach digital literacy and citizenship to prepare students for responsible online behaviours.

Learning Environment
Learning Opportunities

Skilled Trades

- Educate teachers and parents about careers in the skilled trades to reduce stigma and create a better understanding of how specialized, necessary and potentially financially rewarding these careers are.
- Expand opportunities for skilled trades pathways, apprenticeships, Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), and School Within A College (SWAC) programs.
- Ensure that students are aware of these alternate career pathways in a timely manner.

Experiential Learning

- Provide engaging and interactive learning experiences within classrooms.
- Increase Hands-On and Project-Based Learning
- Organize more field trips to provide experiential learning opportunities.
- Enhance outdoor learning experiences by increasing the appropriate staff to support outdoor play and by incorporating more community gardens and nature walks.
- Integrate outdoor volunteer work and environmental stewardship.
- Invite guest speakers to provide experiential work insights.

Learning Environment
Accountability

Overview

Participants expressed the need for clear accountability mechanisms are in place to support positive student behaviour and increase board and staff accountability.

Summary of Theme Findings

Improving Disciplinary Actions

- Strengthen current disciplinary measures and ensure that serious incidents, such as assaults and hate crimes, receive appropriate consequences.
- Implement clear and effective consequences for students who exhibit disruptive or destructive behaviours.

Reporting Mechanisms

- Strengthen accountability measures by establishing clear protocols for reporting and addressing incidents of racism, bullying, and other discriminatory or harmful behaviours and actions. Regularly review these protocols to ensure effectiveness and provide timely responses.
- Students, particularly those from equity-deserving and Indigenous backgrounds, may face barriers in expressing their identities or reporting complaints and incidents, which can lead to these issues potentially going unreported.
- Ensure an anonymous process for reporting individuals who actively hinder change and safety within schools. One suggestion was to implement a link on the website or Google Classroom that allows students to report bullying confidentially, without fear of retaliation or getting into trouble, and to schedule a private meeting with the administrator.

Learning Environment
Accountability

Meaningful Support

- Ensure timely responsiveness to student and parent reports of concerns regarding unprofessional or disruptive behaviours that cause harm.
- Ensure adequate support, such as counselling and therapy, to affected students and staff.
- Ensure necessary support is available before and after investigations/disciplinary actions.
- Enhance safety measures for students who report incidents. Ensure they do not feel ignored and that their concerns are addressed seriously.

Transparency

- Ensure budget allocation aligns with key focus areas identified in the MYSP and that there is transparency in how resources are distributed and utilized within the schools.
- Some parents emphasized the importance of the board sharing all results and relevant information without censorship, ensuring transparency in surveys and feedback mechanisms.

Learning Environment
Extracurriculars

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational experience include a well-rounded student experience through a diverse range of extracurricular activities.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Provide opportunities for students to engage in art and music.
- Encourage participation in physical activities and sports to promote physical health and teamwork.
- Offer activities such as debates, dances, and team-building exercises to enhance social skills, collaboration, and enjoyment for students.
- Students are concerned about the reduction in these opportunities at some schools as there appears to be a decline in staff willing/able to lead clubs and other activities, presumably due to other work priorities. They suggest motivating teachers to lead extracurricular clubs and activities by providing incentives, thereby improving the range and quality of programs available to students.

Learning Environment
Politically Neutral Classroom

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach should maintain a politically neutral environment to ensure that teaching and content are balanced and focused on education rather than personal or political ideologies.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Ensure that staff members provide education without political or religious bias, maintaining a neutral stance on political issues.
- Keep political and religious content out of the school environment to maintain neutrality.
- Present a balanced view on issues by considering multiple perspectives.
- Check with external organizations before introducing content and informing parents for approval when external content or speakers are involved.
- Avoid the introduction of gender education, sex education, and other identity topics before senior elementary grades.
- Prioritize traditional academic goals rather than focusing on social justice ideologies.
- Shift focus from diversity, social justice, and “oppressor/oppressed narratives” issues to celebrating individual uniqueness and academic achievement.

Learning Environment
Safety

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach ensures a safe environment where staff and students feel both physically and psychologically safe.

Summary of Theme Findings

Focus on Physical Safety

- Implement security measures to protect students from physical harm. Suggestions include employing security guards, police patrols, and more administrators and staff support to address harm.
- Create safer washrooms by prevent vaping, drug use, and other behaviours that cause harm to students.
- Provide more support for communities impacted or facing harm due to geopolitical issues.

Focus on Psychological Safety

- Ensure students feel heard and valued.
- Allow the freedom to express themselves, ask questions, and provide input while celebrating diverse viewpoints.
- Create a safe environment where students feel respected and accepted for who they are regardless of race, ethnicity, or other differences.
- Encourage open dialogue and respectful discussions on social justice topics by creating spaces within classrooms.

Learning Environment
Safety

Bullying Prevention

- Ensure a safe environment for students and staff by addressing issues such as bullying and violence in schools.
- Conduct anti-bullying and inclusion workshops to promote positive interactions.
- Address bullying and violence by ensuring teachers and administrators listen to and resolve concerns.
- Enforce strict anti-bullying and anti-racism policies.
- Encourage the development of friendships, resilience, and responsibility among students.
- Incorporate more asset-based language, such as practicing kindness, which could provide a way for students to develop and demonstrate positive behaviours.

Learning Environment
Infrastructure and Systems at School

Overview

Participants expressed that the board ensure that the school's infrastructure and systems are effectively managed to support student learning and well-being.

Summary of Theme Findings

Classroom Resources

- Implement smaller class sizes and better teacher-to-student ratios to enhance learning outcomes.
- Ensure availability of essential classroom resources and supplies such as Chromebooks, pencils, etc.
- Utilize funding models that align with actual demographics to ensure adequate classroom resources where they are most needed.
- Reintroduce librarians and increase the availability of Child and Youth Counsellors (CYCs).
- Ensure sufficient Teaching Assistants (TAs), Educational Assistants (EAs), and Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs).
- Improve access to technology in classrooms. If textbooks are not used in elementary schools, provide more online resources and purchase necessary online licenses.

Facilities

- Address issues with broken chairs, hygiene in washrooms and shared spaces, and misuse of school facilities including in washrooms.
- Prioritize health and safety issues in older schools by addressing issues such as asbestos, mould, and lack of air conditioning.
- Improve air quality with HEPA filters and ensure proper air conditioning.

Student Well-being
Mental Health

Overview

Participants expressed the importance of prioritizing the mental health and well - being of students through a focus on holistic development.

Summary of Theme Findings

Emotional Health

- Support emotional regulation by reducing student overstimulation from devices and allowing time and space for quiet reflection.

Support for Challenging Situations:

- Support students' mental health challenges through wellness programs, counselling and/or onsite mental health professionals, especially during local and global conflicts/incidents or personal tragedies.
- Increase the number of permanent CYCs for proactive mental health support.
- Partner with external community partners to provide access to social workers and other mental health professionals as support for students/families.

Student Well-being
Physical Health

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach prioritize students' physical health and well-being, ensuring they are supported in all aspects of their development.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Create more opportunities for physical exercise.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with nature.
- Improve health and nutrition by establishing nutritional guidelines for schools and encouraging parents to send healthy lunches, promoting good physical health.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Cultural Responsiveness

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach foster an environment where diversity is embraced, and all students feel included and valued.

Summary of Theme Findings

Create a Welcoming Space

- Listen to diverse perspectives, ensuring staff and students feel heard and respected.
- Engage students, staff, and the community in decision-making process by creating platforms for voices to be heard.
- Create an environment where everyone feels accepted and included, regardless of their background.
- Remove stigmas associated with different identities. Suggestions include incorporating books and materials about varying needs and identities (e.g., learning disabilities, Indigenous education, various cultures) and promoting understanding and empathy.

Celebrate Diversity

- Celebrate the identities of students and teachers, ensuring that everyone's identity is included and validated in the classroom.
- Foster a sense of belonging through positive interactions and learning about different cultures, encouraging students to appreciate and respect diversity.
- Recognize and celebrate multicultural holidays to enhance cultural awareness.
- Consider holiday celebrations inclusively, without excluding certain traditions like Christmas.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Cultural Responsiveness

EDI Framework and Approach for HDSB

- Ensure board and school level accountability in advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work by setting clear goals, tracking progress, and taking responsibility for outcomes.
- Commit to an educational environment that actively opposes colonial, oppressive, and racist practices, promoting equality and justice for all staff and students.
- Promote diversity and inclusion by fostering an educational environment that is anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist.
- Establish clear protocols for reporting and addressing incidents of racism, bullying, and inequity in a safe manner. Regularly review the effectiveness of these protocols.
- Hold administrators accountable for the consistent implementation of these measures with measurable metrics.
- Increase efforts to educate about the complexities of intersectionality.

Equitable Distribution of Resources

- Achieve a balanced and equitable distribution of resources between older and newer schools.
- Ensure consistent educational approaches and experiences across schools. Standardize programs, such as reading programs, across all schools within Halton.
- Ensure accessibility for students to all program offerings by providing busing for rural schools.
- Provide support for the most vulnerable families in the current economic climate, addressing issues such as food insecurity and housing insecurity.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Accessibility

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach foster an environment where resources and opportunities are accessible to all students.

Summary of Theme Findings

Support and Resources for Special Education

- Reintroduce special education experts with specific expertise for direct support.
- Provide special educations classes that are specific to student needs.
- Act swiftly to recognize and address learning challenges or disabilities.
- Balance support for students with extra needs to ensure it does not disrupt the learning of all students. Separate classes tailored to different needs could provide better outcomes.
- Prioritize funding for more EAs and SERTs.

Physical Design of Facilities

- Ensure playgrounds, ramps, and elevators are accessible to all students.

Busing

- Improve busing routes to ensure that students from all municipalities have access to the courses and programs available.

Indigenous Education
Indigenous Education

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach should incorporate Indigenous education, ensuring that students learn about and appreciate Indigenous rights, treaties, truths, reconciliation, treaties, and contributions.

Summary of Theme Findings

Curriculum Integration

- Provide comprehensive content on Indigenous truths, rights, and contributions throughout the curriculum to foster respect and understanding.
- Integrate Indigenous education into both the curriculum and school culture with an appreciation of Indigenous contributions and excellence.
- Continue to build on progress from the past few years by establishing Indigenous knowledge and truths as a focus in the new MYSP. It is important to continue building on this momentum, ensuring that the work is appropriately funded and resourced.
- Some participants expressed concern that the focus on the Indigenous curriculum is excessive, especially in grade 11 English classes.
- Train staff to incorporate Indigenous learning and content within their classrooms in an appropriate manner and provide relevant resources.

Indigenous Education
Indigenous Student Experience

Overview

Participants expressed the need to consider resources to enhance the experience of Indigenous students.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Implement specific programs and initiatives to support the overall success of Indigenous students and increase graduation rates.
- Analyze student achievement data, particularly those in special education, to identify needs and commit to their academic achievement through formalized support and targeted programs.
- Ensure special education programs are adequately resourced to meet the needs of all students, including Indigenous students.

People and Culture
Staff Support

Overview

Participants expressed the need to ensure that leaders and board staff are accessible and supportive.

Summary of Theme Findings

Leadership Approach

- Ensure direct leaders/supervisors are available and approachable for staff support.
- Exhibit courageous and visionary leadership that proactively challenges funding cuts, seeks alternative resources and advocates for the rights and needs of students and staff.
- Encourage a supportive environment where staff can take risks and learn from failures without fear of repercussions, knowing they will be supported by leadership.
- Establish better communication channels between school and central staff, ensuring clear, timely, and effective information exchange.
- Return to the lead teacher model for principals to promote mentorship and distributive leadership.
- Make staff mentoring programs more effective.
- Ensure staff feel supported by their direct leaders and the HDSB during challenging interactions with parents, guardians, etc.

People and Culture
Staff Support

System Support

- Allocate enough time for teachers to plan and prepare lessons.
- Enhance opportunities for staff to connect with colleagues from other schools for idea exchange and collaboration.
- Provide more release time for developing resources.
- Ensure there are adequate resources and funding for implementing new curricula.
- Integrate MYSP commitments to assist teachers in creating a cohesive and sustainable approach.
- Provide opportunities to explore and discuss the appropriateness of teaching resources with support from Instructional Program Leaders (IPLs) and other staff.

People and Culture
Staff Training and Development

Overview

Participants expressed that the board should ensure that staff receive adequate training and development to effectively teach students and manage classrooms.

Summary of Theme Findings

Social and Culturally Responsive Skills

- Train staff to recognize and address microaggressions and anti-Indigenous racism.
- Offer training in the pedagogical approaches (Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogical Training for Staff) to keep teaching methods up-to-date.
- Offer training on neurodiversity, cultural competencies, anti-Semitism, DEI, racism, Islamophobia, and other relevant topics to enhance teachers' skills and awareness.
- Focus on addressing the increasing social-emotional health needs, aggression, and violence in classrooms.
- Assist teachers in enforcing school policies, such as no phone access, by providing clear guidelines and support.
- Equip teachers with tools to identify concerning behaviours and ways to reach out to parents for early intervention.
- Implement trauma-informed training for all educators.

People and Culture
Staff Hiring and Retention

Overview

Participants expressed that the board should focus on effective staff hiring and retention strategies to maintain a stable and experienced teaching workforce.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Focus on the recruitment and retention of diverse staff and administrators to reflect and support community diversity.
- Make efforts to ensure that the teaching and school staff reflect the student body's diversity. Students should see themselves in their administrators, teachers, educational assistants, early childhood educators, and support staff.
- Reduce the frequency of Long-Term Occasional (LTO) positions and high staff turnover by implementing strategies to retain experienced staff and provide stability in classrooms.
- Develop and refine hiring practices to attract and retain qualified and committed educators, ensuring a consistent and skilled teaching staff.
- Add Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) -trained EAs and ECEs to the supply list automatically.

People and Culture
Staff well-being

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach address the mental health and well-being of staff, recognizing their critical role in student development.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Address staff burnout by managing expectations and workload to ensure that educators are not overwhelmed by too many responsibilities.
- Provide access to mental health professionals within schools to offer support and resources for staff.
- Reduce the number of roles and expectations placed on staff to prevent them from being pulled in multiple directions, ensuring they can focus on their “core responsibilities” and perform effectively.

Environmental Stewardship
Sustainability

Overview

Participants expressed that the educational approach prioritize environmental stewardship and ensure a healthy and sustainable learning environment.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Promote practices that support environmental sustainability and educate students about their role in protecting the environment.
- Align school programs and activities with the UN *Sustainable Development Goals* to foster global awareness and responsibility among students.
- Invest in building staff capacity to focus on environmental and outdoor learning.
- Provide training and resources to integrate sustainability into the curriculum and school culture.

Community Connection
Community Partnerships

Overview

Participants expressed that access to services and support for students and families be enhanced through strategic community partnerships.

Summary of Theme Findings

- Collaborate with community organizations to provide students and families with access to additional services, such as mental health support, extracurricular programs, and other resources that complement the educational experience.
- Develop internships and mentorship programs in collaboration with local businesses.
- Increase community involvement hours required each year to enhance resume building and promote community contribution.
- Continue partnerships with community partners to provide services and education to students (e.g., partnering with Learning for a Sustainable Future for PD, resources, Youth Forum, and Sustainable Future Schools).
- Additionally, Mohawk College extends an invitation to the HDSB team to explore how, by combining efforts, you can co-design and develop innovative practices and delivery models that support student achievement and success for every student from K-12.

Community Connection
Parent Involvement and Engagement

Overview

Participants expressed that schools should actively involve parents/guardians/caretakers in the learning process, fostering collaboration and transparent communication.

Summary of Theme Findings

Curriculum and School Awareness

- Share detailed information about the child's curriculum and educational materials with parents to help them support their child's learning.
- Ensure parents receive adequate information about various sports and cultural events their child can participate in to prevent the loss of opportunities.
- Provide detailed information regarding subject selection and the university admission process, especially for new immigrants.

Community Connection
Parent Involvement and Engagement

Connection to Student Education

- Implement more frequent teacher meetings or feedback sessions to inform parents about their child's progress.
- Ensure open and transparent communication between parents, teachers, and students.
- Create more opportunities, online classes, and workshops for parents on topics such as disciplining children, dealing with unwanted behaviours, raising kind and compassionate individuals, and collaborating with teachers and schools..
- Engage with parents as allies in their child's education, particularly for those with special needs.
- Offer more infographics and easily accessible information explaining what Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) entail and how they are implemented in classrooms. Also, provide a clear path for parents to understand their role in supporting their child’s educational plan, and outlining what steps are necessary to facilitate this support.
- Few respondents express that decisions regarding their child's gender identity choices made at school should involve parents. Additionally, they want to be informed about the content their child is receiving regarding gender identity, political and social issues, as well as the nature of the surveys their children are asked to complete and provide input on during classes.

The Future of Education

This section highlights key trends that participants identified as important considerations for the future of education.

Considerations for the Future of Education

Use of AI

- Teach students to use AI responsibly and effectively to enable their learning.
- Use AI to assist educators in planning and resource allocation, and to create individualized learning plans for students. This would provide more opportunities and capacity for staff to connect with students.

Cybersecurity and Safe Interactions Online

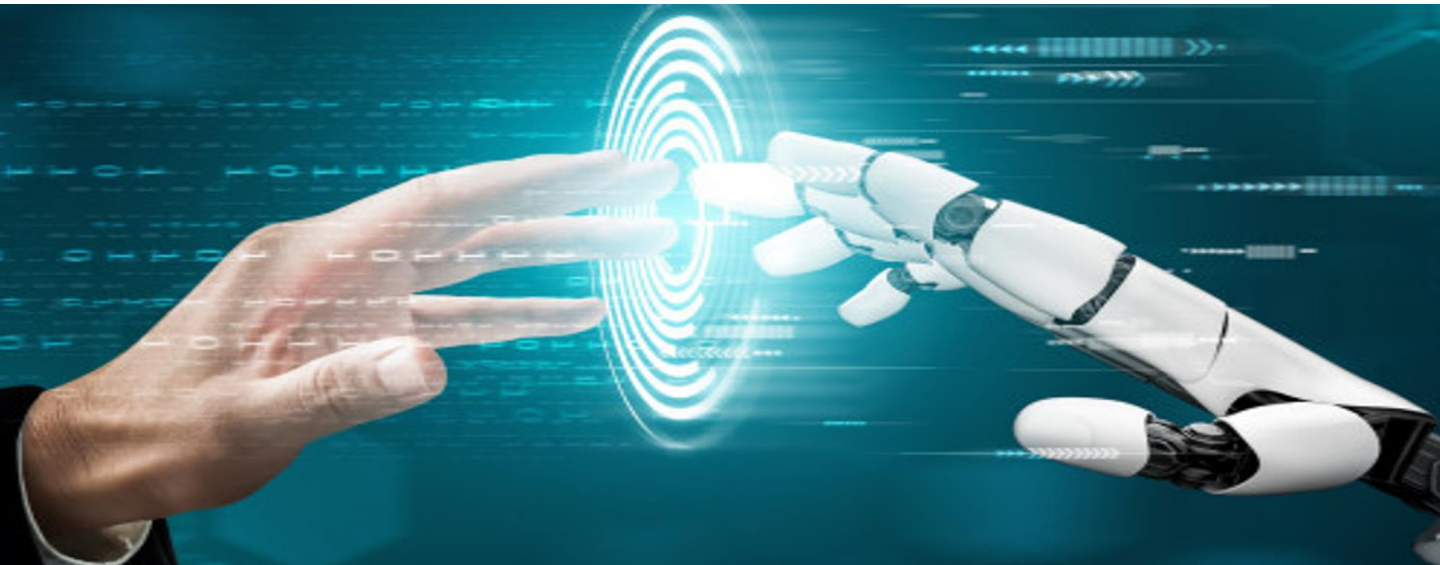
- Ensure that students and staff are educated about cybersecurity and safe online interactions on social media to protect against digital threats and ensure responsible use of technology.

Coding and Data Analytics

- Integrate coding and data analytics into the curriculum to equip students with essential skills for future careers in technology and data-driven fields.

Robotics

- Expand robotics learning to foster skills in technology, engineering, and innovation.



Considerations for the Future of Education

Sustainability

- Incorporate sustainability practices and education to promote environmental responsibility and prepare students for a future focused on sustainable development.

Disinformation

- Educate students about disinformation and how to critically evaluate sources to navigate the digital landscape effectively.

Ethics

- Teach ethics related to technology use, data privacy, and digital citizenship to ensure students make responsible and informed decisions.

Alternate Learning Models

- Explore and adopt innovative learning models used in other countries to enhance educational practices and outcomes.

Entrepreneurship

- Encourage entrepreneurship by integrating business skills and innovative thinking into the curriculum to prepare students for future entrepreneurial endeavours.

Considerations for the Future of Education

Other Languages

- Promote learning additional languages to enhance global communication skills and cultural understanding.

Political Divisiveness

- Address political divisiveness in the classroom by fostering open, respectful dialogue.

Interdisciplinary Learning

- Promote interdisciplinary learning to integrate knowledge across different subjects and foster a holistic and comprehensive understanding of complex issues.

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Appendices

1. Appendix A: MYSP survey results
2. Appendix B: Student feedback
3. Appendix C: Parent, guardian, and caregiver feedback
4. Appendix D: Teacher and staff feedback
5. Appendix E: Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Appendix A: MYSP Survey Results

This section provides detailed results of the survey.

Participation Breakdown

A total of 2093 respondents completed the survey. They were allowed to select multiple options, resulting in a total of 2455 selections made.

Option	Frequency	Respondents %
Parent/Guardian/Caregiver	1517	72.51
Staff member	233	11.14
Student	223	10.66
Resident	222	10.61
Teacher	171	8.17
Prefer not to answer	53	2.53
Community Agency	19	0.91
Other	17	0.81

Of 171 teachers, 35% also identified as a parent/guardian/caregiver.

Of 233 staff members, 42 (18%) were system staff and 191 (82%) were school staff.

Among the 223 students

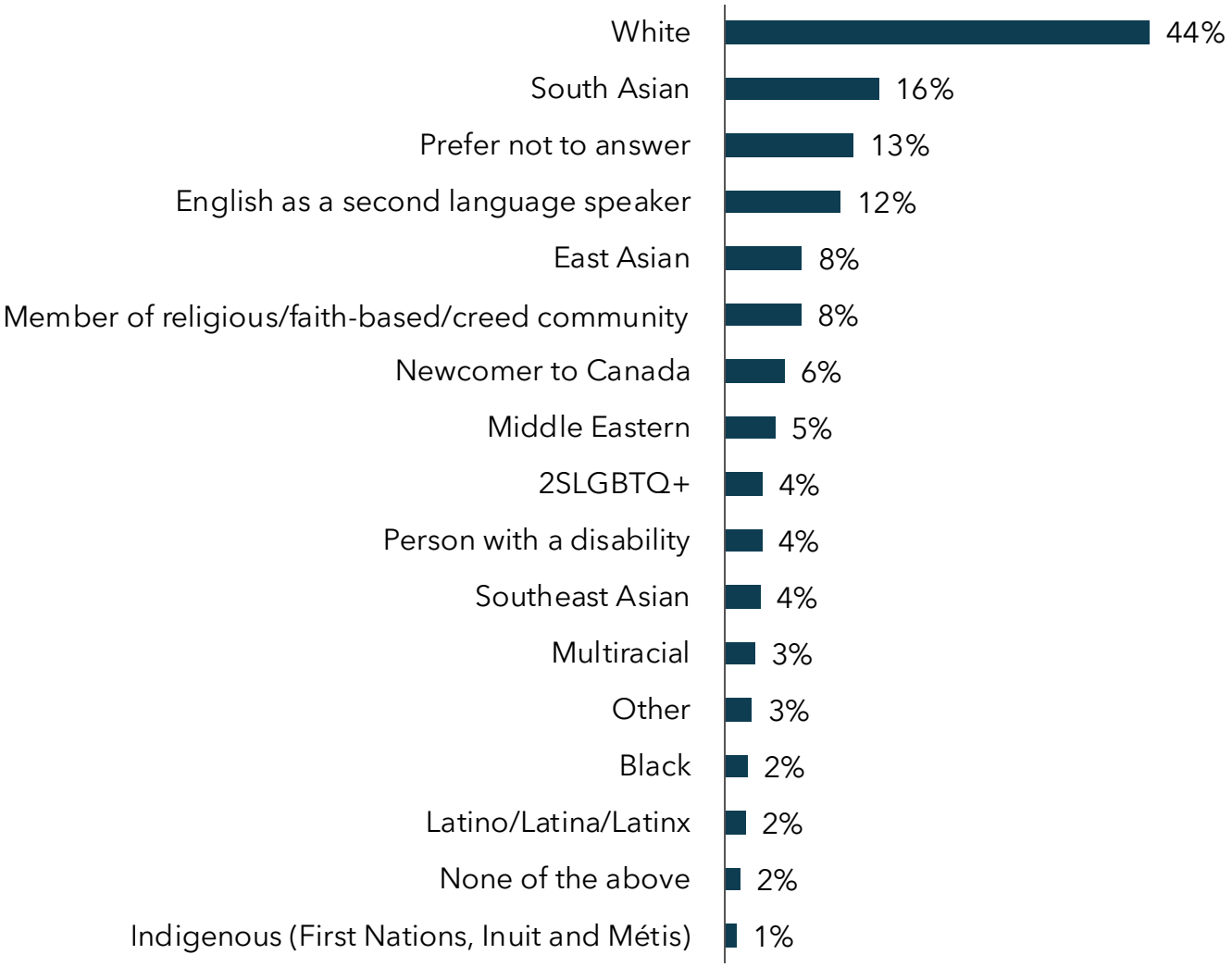
- 85 (38%) were in grades 11-12,
- 108 (48%) were in grades 9-10,
- 9 (4%) were in grades
- 7-8, 8 (4%) were elementary students (K-6), and;
- 13 (6%) preferred not to answer.

Survey Results

Demographic Breakdown

Question

Help us better understand our survey respondents. Do you identify as someone with the following characteristics? Select all that apply.



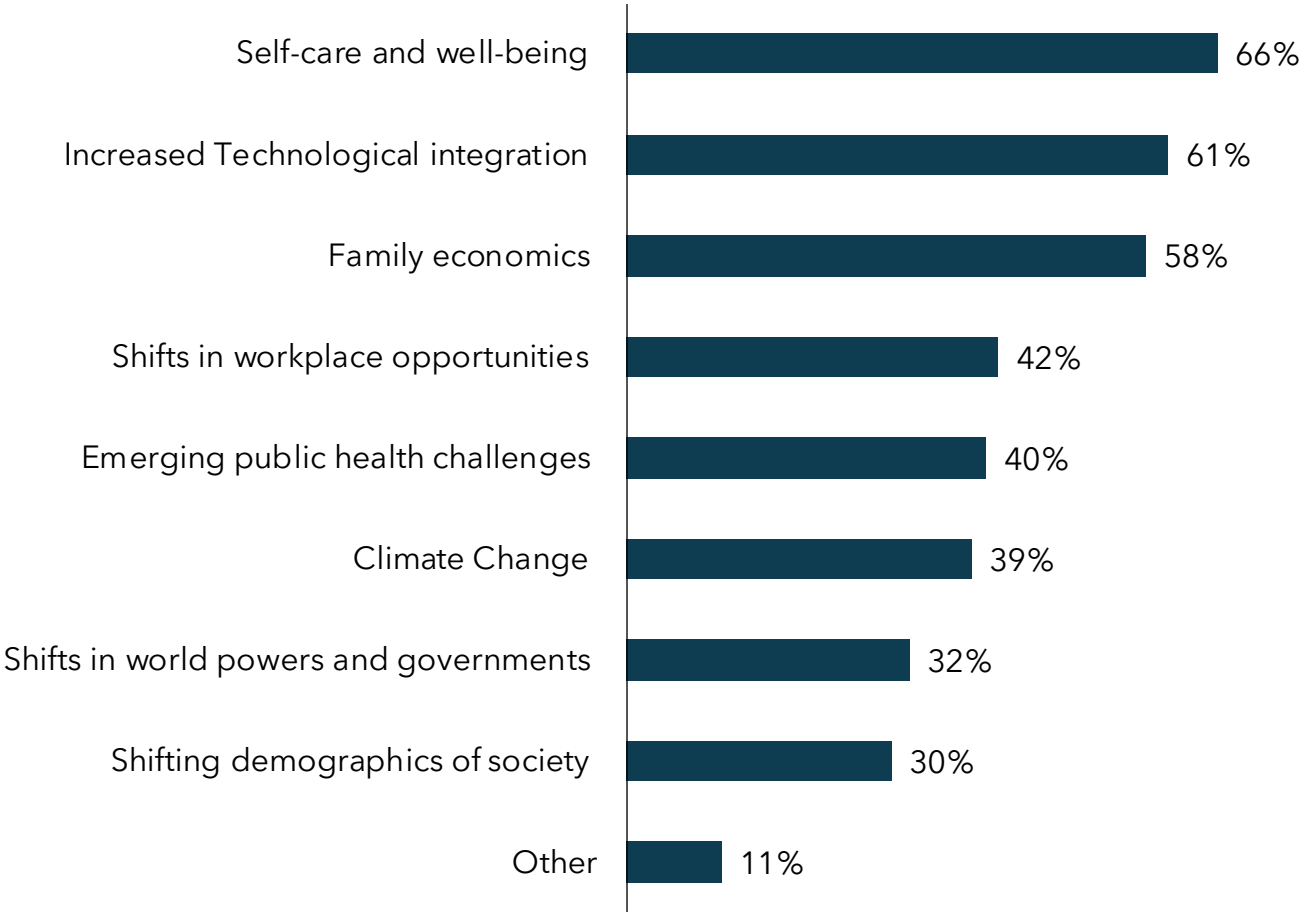
Survey Results

Societal Trends

Question:

What are the societal trends that will impact education that the HDSB needs to consider in their planning?

Please select your top 5.



Survey Results

Societal Trends Group Results

Parents

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Self-care and well-being	1039	68%
Increased Technological integration	984	65%
Family economics	882	58%
Shifts in workplace opportunities	645	43%
Emerging public health challenges	611	40%

Teachers and Staff

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Self-care and well-being	268	75%
Family economics	221	62%
Increased Technological integration	177	50%
Shifting demographics of society	176	49%
Shifts in workplace opportunities	163	46%

Survey Results

Societal Trends Group Results

Students

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Family economics	136	61%
Self-care and well-being	115	52%
Increased Technological integration	110	49%
Shifts in world powers and governments	104	47%
Emerging public health challenges	98	44%

Options Provided in the Question

- Family economics (e.g., affordability of basic needs, housing, school expenses)
- Self-care and well-being (e.g. personal boundaries, use of social media)
- Increased Technological integration (e.g. Incorporating Artificial Intelligence Systems, Virtual reality and immersive experiences, coding)
- Shifts in world powers and governments (e.g. emerging geopolitical issues, such as cyber warfare, space exploration, and climate diplomacy)
- Emerging public health challenges (e.g., pandemics, mental health challenges)
- Climate Change (e.g. adverse weather events, food production)
- Shifts in workplace opportunities (e.g. flexible and non-traditional career paths)
- Shifting demographics of society (e.g. diverse identities)

Survey Results

Student Skills

Question:

In addition to Core Academic Skills (Language and Mathematical literacies) what other skills/understandings do you believe are important for students to develop?

Please select your top 5.

Survey Results

Student Skills Group Results

Parents

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Critical thinking	1188	78%
Interdisciplinary Studies	881	58%
Collaborative Problem Solving	851	56%
Digital Literacy	822	54%
Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship	725	48%

Teachers and Staff

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Critical thinking	247	69%
Collaborative Problem Solving	233	65%
Intercultural Competencies	198	56%
Digital Literacy	154	43%
Trades Industries	140	39%

Survey Results

Student Skills Group Results

Students

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Critical thinking	135	61%
Collaborative Problem Solving	113	51%
Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship	92	41%
Interdisciplinary Studies	91	41%
Trades Industries	90	40%
Intercultural Competencies	90	40%

Survey Results

Student Skills (cont'd)

Options Provided in the Question

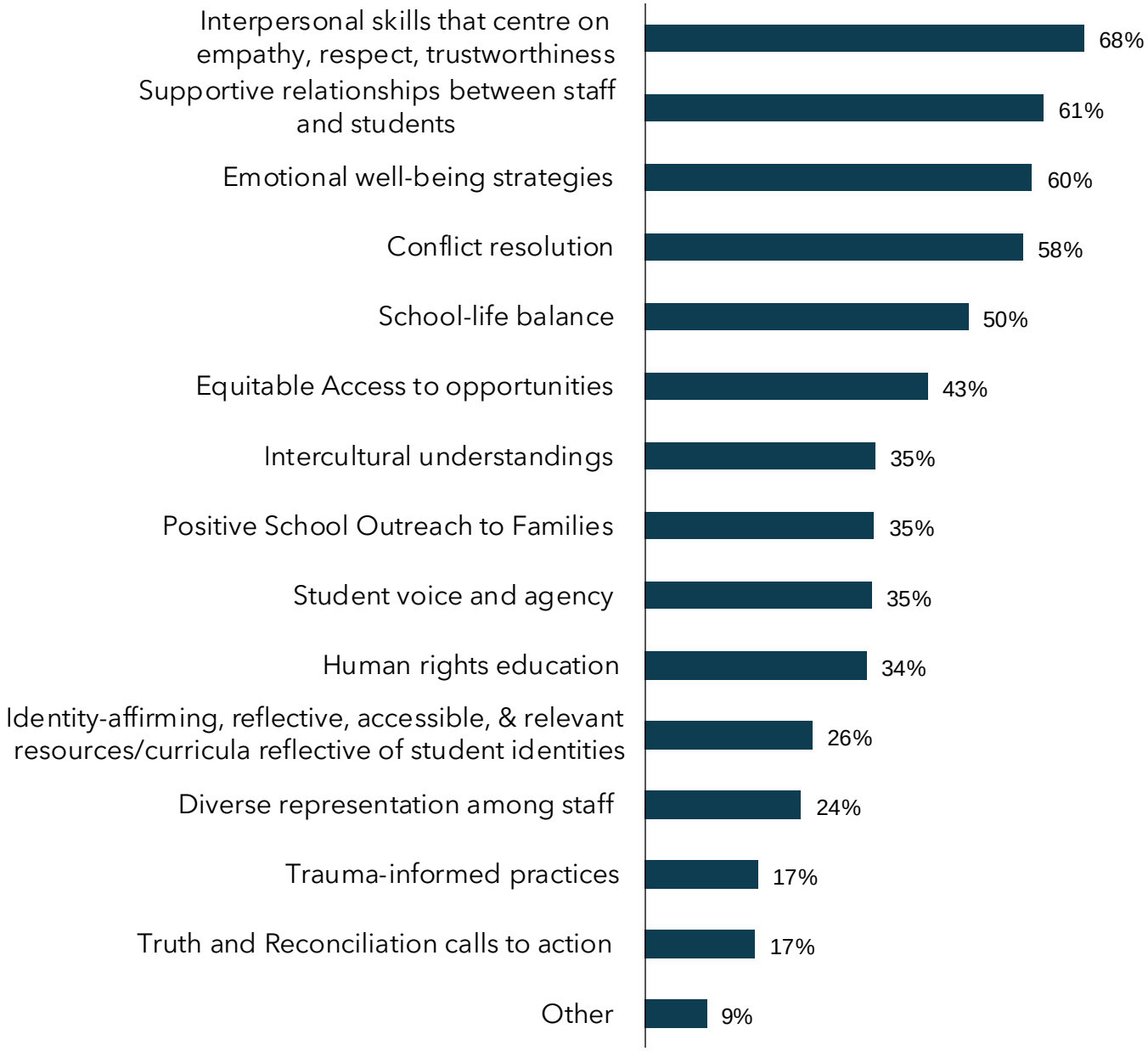
- Critical thinking (e.g., data literacy, Analytical skills to evaluate information, question assumptions, and make informed decisions)
- Collaborative Problem Solving (e.g., teamwork, leveraging diverse perspectives and skills to tackle challenges)
- Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (e.g., eco and sustainable entrepreneurship skills)
- Interdisciplinary Studies (e.g., Integration of knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines, such as science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM))
- Trades Industries (e.g., carpentry, foods and hospitality, hairdressing, electrical work, or automotive repair)
- Intercultural Competencies (e.g. social skills, adaptability, curiosity, empathy)
- Understanding of current local and global conditions and events (e.g. climate impact on lives and economies, social justice)
- Digital Literacy (e.g., cybersecurity, coding, Artificial Intelligence)
- Environmental Education (e.g. UN Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable living practices)
- Civic & Community Participation (e.g., volunteering, community organizing, advocacy)
- Other

Survey Results

Inclusion and Belonging

Question:

Please indicate what you believe are the top 7 factors in creating a sense of inclusion and/or belonging and/or well-being for all students.



Survey Results

Inclusion and Belonging Group Results

Parents

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Interpersonal skills that centre on empathy, respect, trustworthiness	1085	72%
Supportive relationships between staff and students	958	63%
Emotional well-being strategies	957	63%
Conflict resolution	953	63%
School-life balance	722	48%

Teachers and Staff

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Supportive relationships between staff and students	232	65%
Interpersonal skills that centre on empathy, respect, trustworthiness	230	65%
Emotional well-being strategies	212	60%
Conflict resolution	174	49%
School-life balance	171	48%

Survey Results

Inclusion and Belonging Group Results

Students

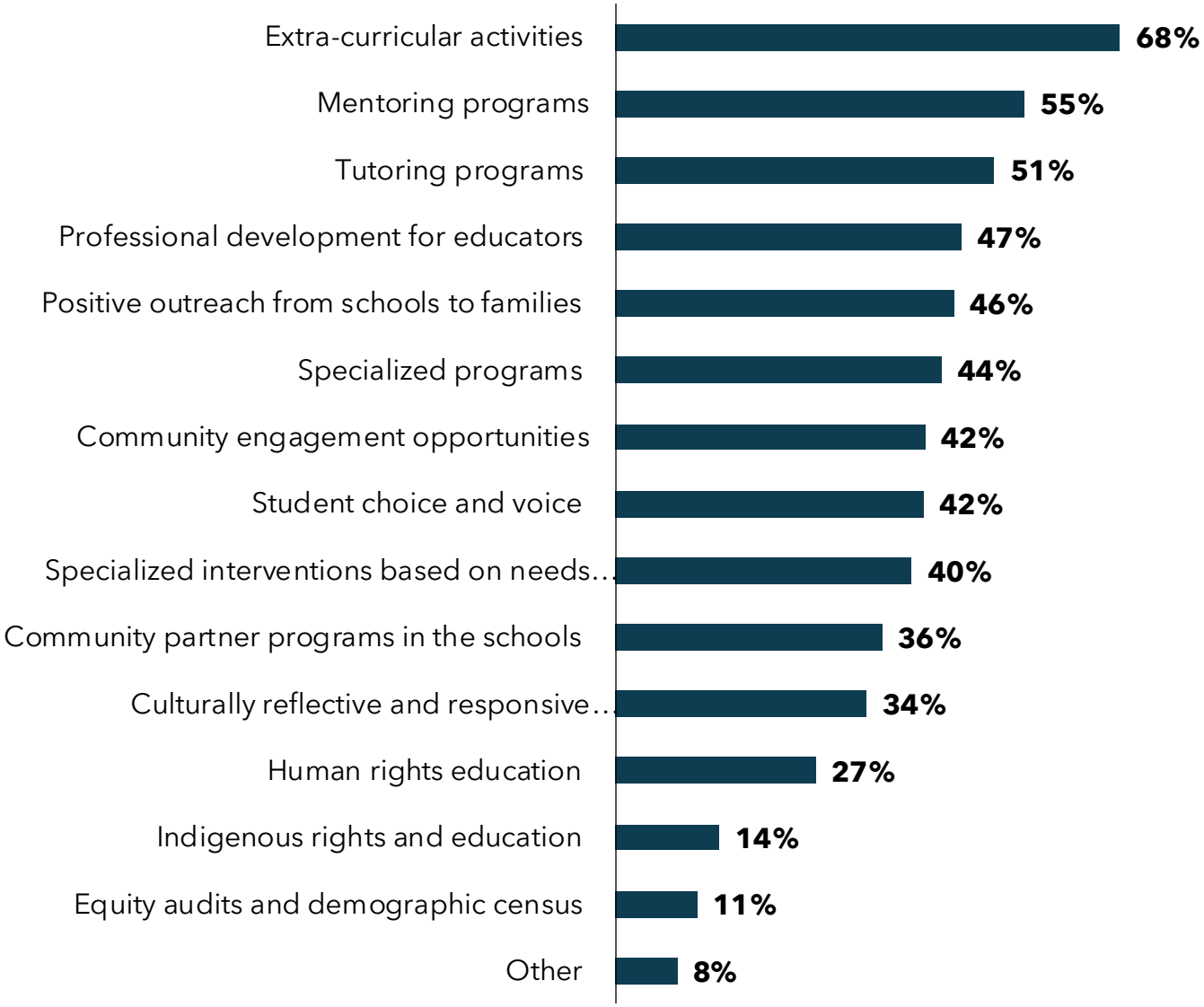
Response	Frequency	Respondents %
School-life balance	169	76%
Supportive relationships between staff and students	124	56%
Student voice and agency	113	51%
Interpersonal skills that centre on empathy, respect, trustworthiness	108	48%
Conflict resolution	94	42%

Survey Results

Equitable Academic Outcomes

Question:

What do you think are the top 7 successful interventions that assist students in overcoming barriers and achieving equitable academic outcomes?



Survey Results

Equitable Academic Outcomes Group Results

Parents

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Extra-curricular activities	1088	72%
Mentoring programs	914	60%
Tutoring programs	862	57%
Professional development for educators	735	48%
Positive outreach from schools to families	724	48%

Teachers and Staff

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Extra-curricular activities	203	57%
Professional development for educators	195	55%
Culturally reflective and responsive resources/teaching/curriculum	189	53%
Specialized interventions based on needs (Early intervention programs)	188	53%
Student choice and voice	187	53%

Survey Results

Equitable Academic Outcomes Group Results

Students

Response	Frequency	Respondents %
Extra-curricular activities	158	71%
Student choice and voice	131	59%
Tutoring programs	117	52%
Specialized programs	111	50%
Mentoring programs	101	45%

Survey Results

Supporting Staff Success

Question:

If you are an HDSB staff member, please respond to the following. What are the top 5 factors within HDSB's control that will support your success?

Note: Only staff and teachers responded to this question.

Appendix B: Community Partner and Organizations Survey Results

This section provides detailed results of the modified MYSP survey provided to community partners and organizations.

Survey Results

Participant Breakdown

Question

OPEN BOX : To help us better understand our survey respondents, please indicate the institution/entity/agency you represent (e.g., University, College, community partner)

Response	Frequency
Community Partner	5
Mohawk College	2
Royal Botanical Gardens	2
Child Care operator	1
Community Partner - Outdoor Learning School & Store	1
Interfaith Council of Halton (community partner)	1
Learning for a Sustainable Future	1
School Screening Association - community partner	1
Town of Oakville administration	1
TOTAL	15

A total of 15 community partners and organizations completed the survey. Other community partners and organizations participated in other forms of engagement (e.g., focus groups, townhalls)

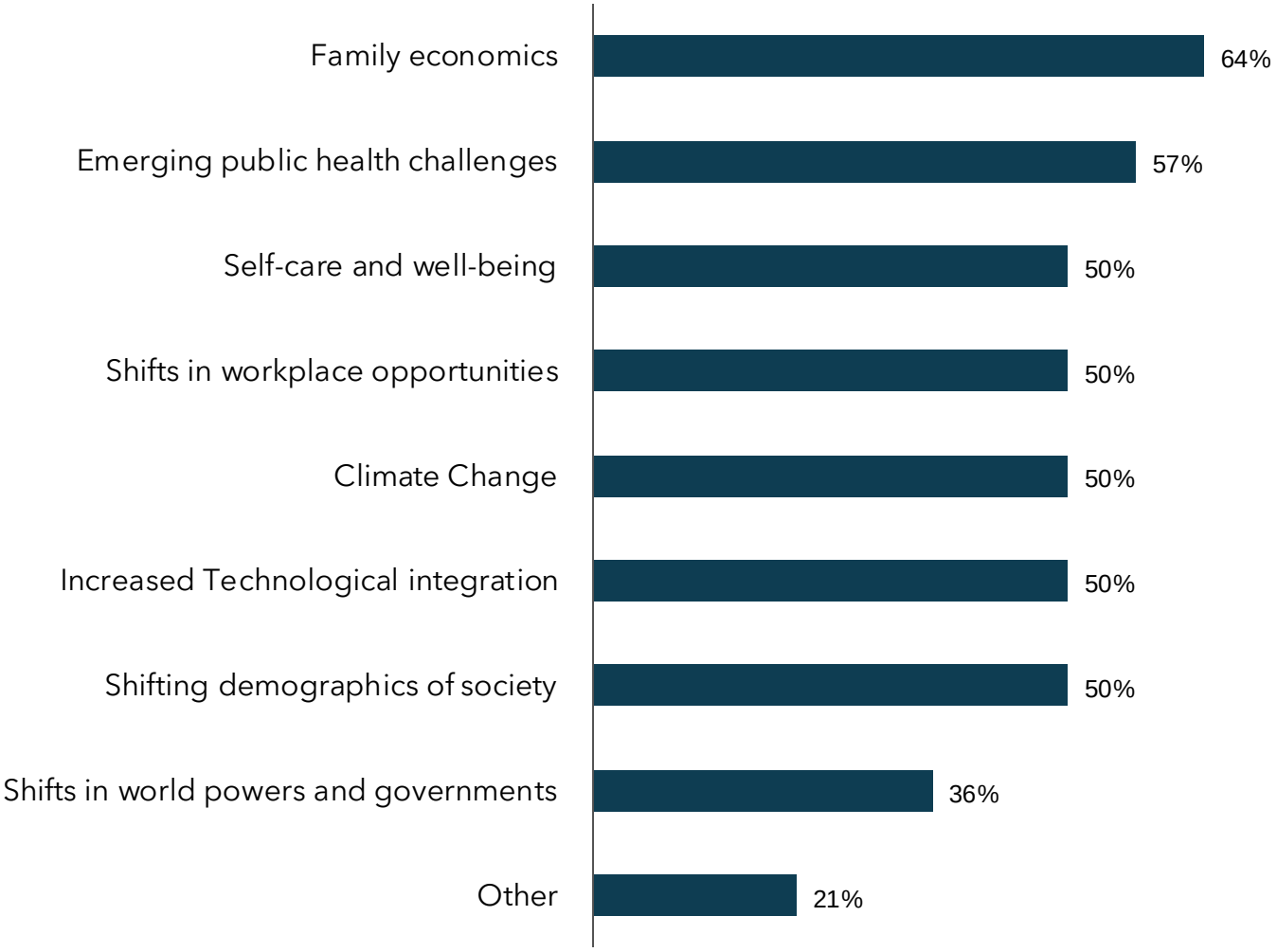
Survey Results

Societal Trends

Question:

What are the societal trends that will impact education that the HDSB needs to consider in their planning?

Please select your top 5.



Survey Results

Societal Trends (cont'd)

Options Provided in the Question

- Family economics (e.g., affordability of basic needs, housing, school expenses)
- Self-care and well-being (e.g. personal boundaries, use of social media)
- Increased Technological integration (e.g. Incorporating Artificial Intelligence Systems, Virtual reality and immersive experiences, coding)
- Shifts in world powers and governments (e.g. emerging geopolitical issues, such as cyber warfare, space exploration, and climate diplomacy)
- Emerging public health challenges (e.g., pandemics, mental health challenges)
- Climate Change (e.g. adverse weather events, food production)
- Shifts in workplace opportunities (e.g. flexible and non-traditional career paths)
- Shifting demographics of society (e.g. diverse identities)

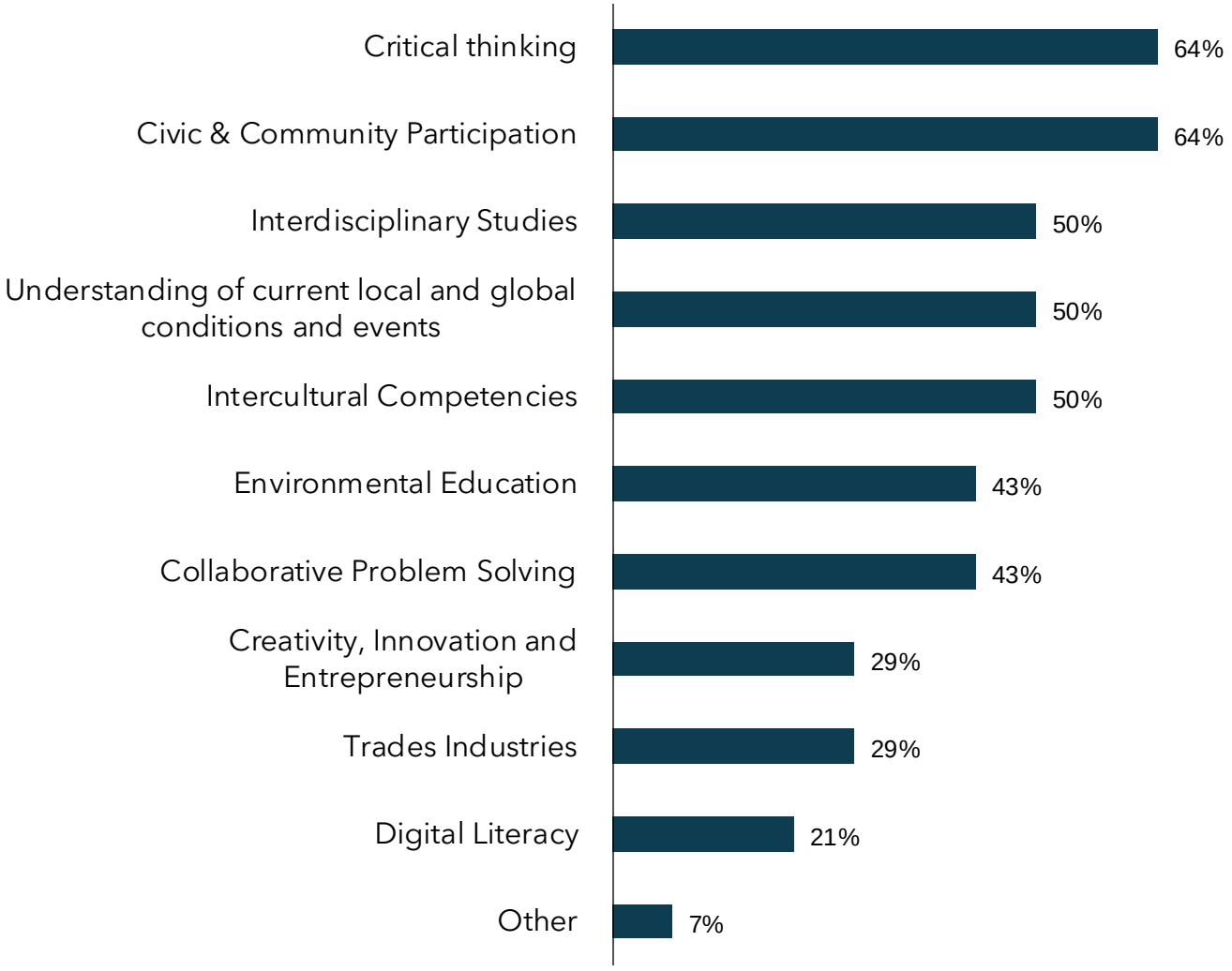
Survey Results

Student Skills

Question:

In addition to Core Academic Skills (Language and Mathematical literacies) what other skills/understandings do you believe are important for students to develop?

Please select your top 5.



Survey Results

Student Skills (cont'd)

Options Provided in the Question

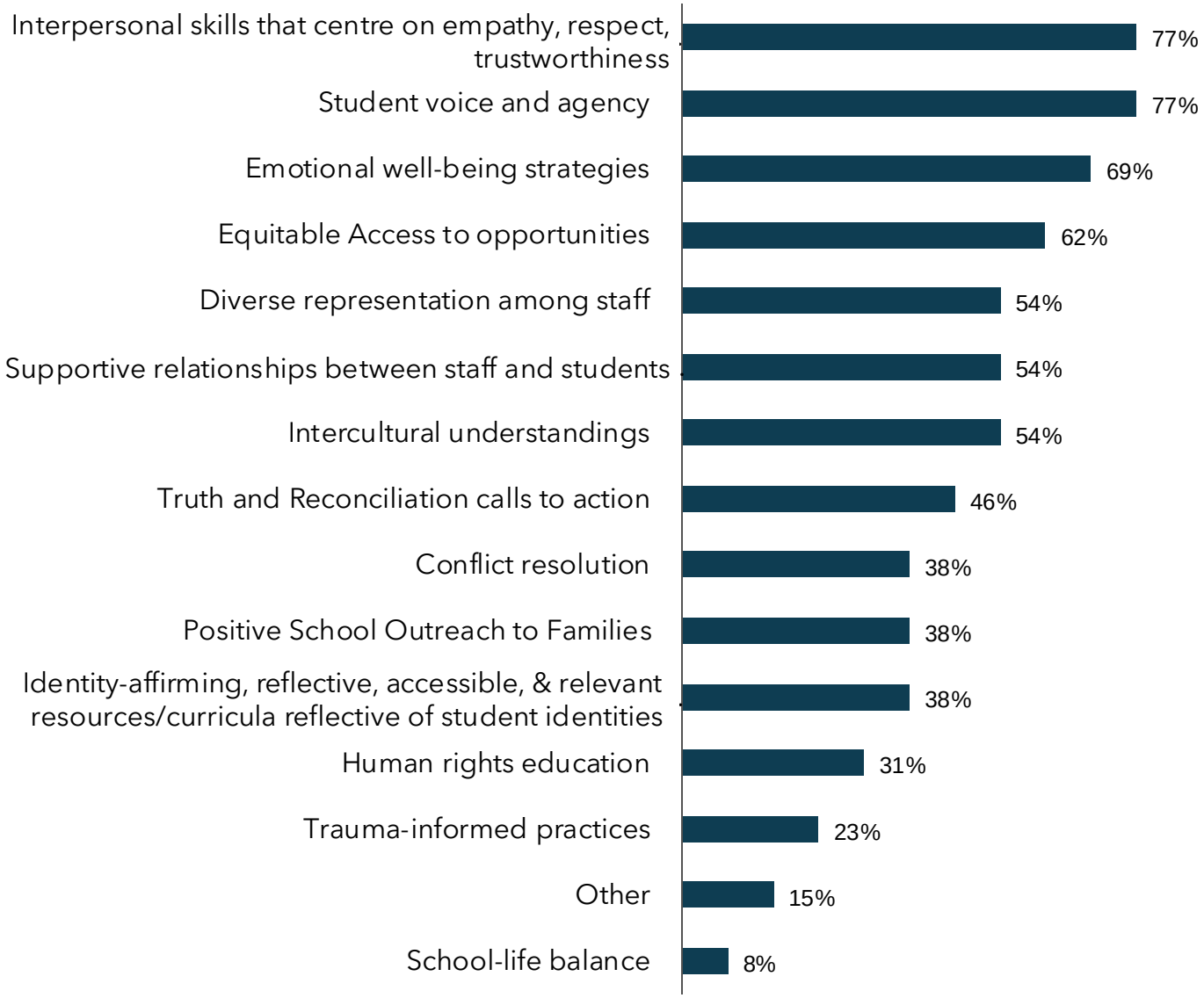
- Critical thinking (e.g., data literacy, Analytical skills to evaluate information, question assumptions, and make informed decisions)
- Collaborative Problem Solving (e.g., teamwork, leveraging diverse perspectives and skills to tackle challenges)
- Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (e.g., eco and sustainable entrepreneurship skills)
- Interdisciplinary Studies (e.g., Integration of knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines, such as science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (STEAM))
- Trades Industries (e.g., carpentry, foods and hospitality, hairdressing, electrical work, or automotive repair)
- Intercultural Competencies (e.g. social skills, adaptability, curiosity, empathy)
- Understanding of current local and global conditions and events (e.g. climate impact on lives and economies, social justice)
- Digital Literacy (e.g., cybersecurity, coding, Artificial Intelligence)
- Environmental Education (e.g. UN Sustainable Development Goals, Sustainable living practices)
- Civic & Community Participation (e.g., volunteering, community organizing, advocacy)
- Other

Survey Results

Inclusion and Belonging

Question:

Please indicate what you believe are the top 7 factors in creating a sense of inclusion and/or belonging and/or well-being for all students.

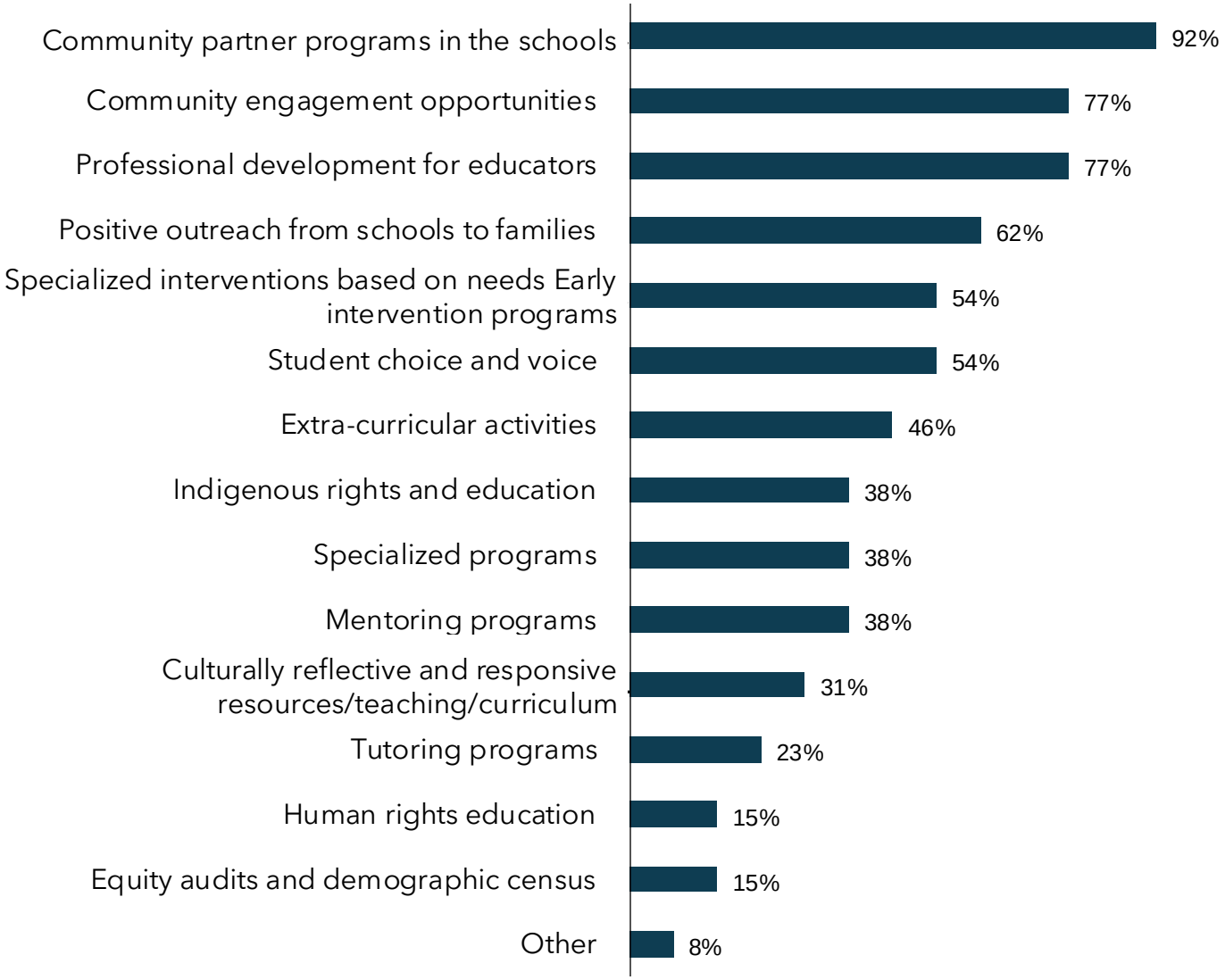


Survey Results

Equitable Academic Outcomes

Question:

What do you think are the top 7 successful interventions that assist students in overcoming barriers and achieving equitable academic outcomes?



Appendix C: Student Feedback

This section provides the key themes based on the information collected from the student's perspective.

Students Feedback

Overview

450+ students from grades K-12, apprenticeship classes, dual credit classes, destreamed classes, college-destination, university-destination classes, former and current dual credit/School Within A College (SWAC) students engaged through the Student Senate, elementary student leaders, school councils, in-person school engagements (Craig Kielburger Secondary School, Aldershot High School, Captain R. Wilson Public School, Acton District School, Burlington High School), town halls, online focus groups, and surveys.

Below are the key themes that students feel would better address their needs

Key Themes

Emphasis on Hands-On Learning

- Students prioritize hands-on, creative, and social learning experiences. They advocate for increased outdoor learning, field trips, and community engagements.

Future Readiness Skills

- There is a strong desire among students to develop skills for future readiness, including financial literacy, budgeting, resume building, interviewing, and email writing.

Cater to diverse learners

- Students believe that teaching should be tailored to meet the individual needs of each student.
- Ensure that the available programs such as iSTEM are resourced appropriately to ensure high-quality student learning.
- Students in dual credit, apprenticeship, SWAC, and other skilled trades pathways report positive experiences and advocate for increased awareness and information about these options as the current emphasis is heavily on traditional academic paths. They believe that many peers would benefit from better access to information about these pathways.

Students Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

Safety and Sanitation Concerns

- One of the main concerns among students is the safety and sanitation of school washrooms. Students highlight issues with vandalism, substance use, and vaping, which contribute to this concern.
- Implement effective reporting mechanisms for students to report harmful experiences confidentially.

Disciplinary Measures

- Students feel that disciplinary actions against bullying and disruptive behaviours need to be more effective. There is a call for teachers and staff to be better trained to identify and address such issues.

Student Engagement

- Students want to have a voice in school decision-making processes.
- Provide adequate support for programs and activities that actively engage students, such as buyouts, semi-formals, proms, sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities.
- Encourage and incentivize teachers to lead clubs and other activities that are crucial for student learning and experience.

Mental Health Awareness

- Addressing mental health and removing stigmas associated with mental health and disabilities is crucial. More education about different learning disabilities and mental health issues is needed in classrooms.
- Consider the presence of social workers in schools to support student mental health and wellbeing.

Students Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

Environment and Sustainability

- Continue to prioritize environmental education and sustainability practices within the school system.

Facilities

- Enhance school infrastructure, including parking facilities, air-conditioning systems, cafeteria, and sports equipment.
- Invest in better technology to support modern learning needs.

Phone Use

- Educate students on responsible phone use rather than banning them.

Equitable Access to Resources

- There is a call for equitable access to course options, technology, and extracurricular activities. Disparities between schools in terms of resources, opportunities and experiences were noted.

Appendix D: Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver Feedback

This section provides the key themes based on the information collected from the Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver perspectives.

Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver Feedback

Overview

1800+ Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers participated through the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC), school councils, town halls, and surveys.

Key Themes

Future Readiness

- Emphasize the development of key skills, including social connections through community engagement and peer interactions across different grades.
- Focus on critical thinking, problem-solving, and a balance of hard and soft skills, such as kindness, empathy, and effective communication.
- Integrate practical life skills into the curriculum, especially financial literacy.

Concerns About Curriculum

- There is a desire to reduce the emphasis on political and social justice topics, including identity issues, in favour of traditional academic subjects.
- Specific concerns were raised about the teaching of gender identities and 2SLGBTQIA+ topics, with some parents feeling these are introduced too early or are overly emphasized in schools.

Focus on Core Academics

- Parents seek a stronger focus on core academic subjects, particularly in science, math, reading, and writing.
- There is a call for more homework and academic rigour to challenge students sufficiently.
- Requests for more hands-on, experiential learning opportunities and an increase in extracurricular activities.

Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

School Infrastructure

- Participants advocate for improved school facilities, including better bathrooms, the installation of vape monitors, and ensuring a safe, comfortable environment.
- Concerns about the physical state of schools, including cleanliness, security, and better handling of issues like bullying and substance use.
- Improved air quality through better ventilation and filtration, requests for air conditioning and other facility improvements, with concerns about maintaining a clean and safe learning environment.
- Smaller class sizes and less reliance on portables are highlighted.
- There is also a desire for more outdoor education opportunities and time for physical activities and practical experiences.

Funding and Resources for Special Education

- There is a call for more support for diverse learners and students with special needs, including hiring more Educational Assistants (EAs).
- The need for more Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) services and appropriate classroom balance is emphasized.

Discipline

- Parents seek more consistent discipline measures and support for students and for better approaches to managing behavioural issues.

Health and Well-Being

- Recommendations for improving food options in schools, including establishing clear nutritional guidelines.
- There is a strong concern about the impact of social media on student isolation, with suggestions for reducing technology use in classrooms.

Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

Parental Involvement and Communication

- Improved communication between schools and parents, including regular classroom updates, is requested.

Inclusivity and Diversity

- Participants express a need for balanced inclusivity, including a greater focus on Canadian culture and traditions, while ensuring equitable treatment and protection for all students.
- Mixed feelings are expressed on inclusivity topics, with some parents suggesting a focus on traditional subjects over gender identity and 2SLGBTQIA+ education.
- There are concerns about perceived bias and "agenda-pushing" in the current education system.
- A more consistent approach to celebrating cultural and religious events is requested, with concerns about balancing recognition with a focus on academic fundamentals.

Equity

- There is a desire to ensure older schools receive technology updates to match newer schools, addressing resource disparities across different areas/regions/schools.
- There is a demand for more consistent teaching methods and practices across different schools.

Teacher Quality and Support

- Participants emphasize the need for teachers to be well-trained with a call for continuous professional development and support.
- Concerns are raised about teacher morale and involvement in extracurricular activities post-COVID.

Parent, Guardian, and Caregiver Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

Safety

- Physical and psychological safety appears to be a significant concern.
- Parents seek stronger measures to address bullying and violence in schools, with some feeling that current efforts are inadequate.

Appendix E: Staff Feedback

This section provides the key themes based on the information collected from the Staff perspective.

Staff Feedback

Overview

650+ Teachers, Staff, Administrators, Trustees and Senior Leadership team members contributed through in-person and virtual focus groups, facilitated discussions, town halls, committees/councils, and surveys.

Key Themes

Mental Health and well-being

- Prioritize mental health support for both students and staff.
- Address issues of bullying, racism, and harmful comments within the school environment.
- Staff emphasize social-emotional learning and resilience-building for students.
- Provide targeted support for students with special needs, as well as addressing literacy gaps and diverse learning needs.

Teacher and Staff Support

- Address teacher workloads, burnout, and absenteeism by providing adequate resources and support.
- There is a need for more support (EAs) to address and manage increasing behavioural challenges and violence in the classrooms.
- It could be beneficial to facilitate collaboration opportunities among staff from different schools to improve teaching practices.
- Offer effective professional development, particularly in trauma-informed practices and culturally responsive education.
- Focus on attracting and retaining staff to support student learning and ensure that the diversity of staff is reflective of the student population.

Staff Feedback

Key Themes (cont'd)

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Integrate equity, diversity, and inclusion into all aspects of education.
- Address the intersectionality of identities, ensuring that multi-language learners and special education students are included in equity initiatives.
- Focus on anti-oppression, decolonization, and the importance of Indigenous rights, 2SLGBTQIA+ safety, and human rights in the curriculum.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Enhance literacy and numeracy education through Tier 2 and 3 interventions.
- Integrate the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) commitments and goals into everyday learning and provide necessary support and education to staff and teachers to focus on the priority areas.
- Incorporate emerging trends such as AI, green technology, and digital citizenship into the curriculum.
- Establish clear success criteria for educational programs and ensure consistent application of interventions across schools.
- Align educational goals with current trends and realities, ensuring they are responsive to the evolving needs of students and society.

Community and Family Engagement

- Build robust connections between schools, families, and communities
- Strengthen engagement with families, particularly those who are vulnerable, to support students' education.

Appendix F: Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

This section provides an overview of the engagement with the trustee and senior staff.

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 1

Session Details

Date: April 11, 2024

Location: Halton School Board Office – JWS Room

Length: 2 hours

Number of Sessions: 2 (one trustee and one senior staff)

Session Objectives:

- Foster a common understanding of terminology, needs, and wants for the MYSP engagement.
- Reflect and ensure alignment on the HDSB's vision.
- Develop an understanding of the experiences Trustees envision for HDSB students.

Questions

What are the potential barriers to developing an impactful MYSP?

Internal Barriers

- Clarity and vision (e.g., lack of clarity of purpose, not thinking big).
- Personal biases and agendas (e.g., personal agenda, unconscious biases).
- Trust and relationship issues (e.g., lack of trust, poor relationships).
- Resistance to change and innovation (e.g., unwillingness to change, narrow-mindedness).
- Engagement and buy-in (e.g., difficulty getting buy-in, unintentional exclusion of views).
- Time constraints (e.g., short timeline, competing priorities, time management).
- Communication and collaboration challenges (e.g., lack of listening, not feeling heard, lack of collaboration).

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 1 (cont'd)

What are the potential barriers to developing an impactful MYSP?

External Barriers

- Financial constraints (e.g., lack of funding, budget restraints).
- Political and organizational influences (e.g., political agendas, ministry direction, provincial interference).

Both internal and external barriers

- Cultural and ideological differences (e.g., polarized views, diversity, differing expectations).

What does your group need to prevent/overcome these barriers?

- Ensure clarity and alignment.
- Focus on actionable plans and implementing accountability measures.
- Leadership commitment and clear processes for collecting and integrating input from all parties.
- Allocate sufficient time and resources.
- Focusing on collaboration and relationship building.
- Embrace a growth mindset - being open to change, learning from mistakes, and being willing to challenge existing thinking.
- Consider diverse perspectives, dismantling oppressive thinking, centring equity and inclusion, and creating spaces for all voices to be heard.
- Effective communication and listening - active listening, respectful dialogue, seeking to understand, transparency, and openness to different perspectives.
- Prioritize students' needs, voices, and achievements.

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 1 (cont'd)

What experience are you striving to create for students at HDSB?

- Engaged
- Inspired and Motivated
- Sense of belonging and inclusion
- Safety and support

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2

Session Details

Date: May 13, 2024

Location: Halton District School Board Office – JWS Room

Length: 3 hours

Number of Sessions: 1 (combined trustees and one senior staff)

Session Objectives:

- Consider student competency models
- Review leading practices for identifying strategic priorities
- Identify emerging factors that may impact the future of education
- Brainstorm areas for improvement
- Identify our current strengths and consider data sources to challenge/confirm our assumptions

Questions

What competencies you believe may be critical for students to effectively to navigate the future environment?

Factor	Number of Votes
Human skills	31
Critical thinking	18
Curious	17
Mental health	12
Adaptable/flexible	10
Communication	8
Innovation	7
Motivation/self-directed	4
Purpose	1

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

What is something that HDSB is not planning for today that would be a critical factor for the future of education?

Factor	Number of Votes
Tech advances	10
AI	6
Changes to education	5
Global conflict	5
Politics	4
Social economic status (SES)	4
Biomedical	4
Environmental	3
Financial literacy	2
Modern family	2
Future skills	2
Resource depletion	1
Reading	1
Time	1
Whole person	1
Mental health	1
Digital literacy	1

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

Within each area , what do we do incredibly well today?

Area of focus	Factors
Human resources, people, and culture	• Experienced qualified staff • Desirable organization/employer • Interpersonal relationships, responsiveness, and supportive • No hierarchy, flattened/linear org structure • Diversity
System and school leadership	• Strategic alignment (e.g., MYSP, BIPSA) • Healthy recruitment and retention • Communication • Cohesive senior team/trustees (e.g., culture of unity and support) • Mentorship • Principal efficacy

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

Within each area , what do we do incredibly well today?

Area of focus	Factors
Information technology and data management	• Cyber security • Talented staff • Data protection • Records management • Strong tech inventory • Digital service and solutions • Capacity building • Future casting • Digital literacy
Facility planning and management	• Sustainable and green standards • LTAP • Retrofitting old buildings to current standards • Strategic planning for opening and closing schools • Strong community partnerships • Reciprocal agreements with communities • Cyclical renewal of capital projects • Responsive to crisis • Responsive to elevated levels of lead

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

Within each area , what do we do incredibly well today?

Area of focus	Factors
Communication and public relations	• Balanced and positive storytelling • Strong team and highly integrated • Timely responsiveness (INT/EXT) • Inspire awards process (e.g., Retirement dinner, student excellence) • Crisis management • Creative and innovative • Proactive PR and industry awareness • Flexible adaptable • Transparent and focused • Consistent standards and implementation • Variety of communication channel
Other	• Equity • Relationships • Programs - academic achievement • Commitment to environmental leadership • Celebrate excellence in all capacity • Risk Taking • board culture (collaborative)

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

Within each area, are there improvements necessary to support student outcomes? What are the improvements required?

Area of focus	Factors
Human resources, people, and culture	• Capacity building leadership • Succession planning • Hiring practices • Equipping people with knowledge and skills • Staff mental health • Creating spaces of belonging
System and school leadership	• Human skills prioritization • Co-curricular activities • Narrow thinking/perspective
Information technology and data management	• Cybersecurity • AI • Equitable accessibility (disability) • Affordability • Responsible use of tech/data • Internet access • System standardization

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 2 (cont'd)

Within each area, are there improvements necessary to support student outcomes? What are the improvements required (cont'd)?

Area of focus	Factors
Facility planning and management	• Equitable facilities/learning spaces • Accessibility • Responsive infrastructure to environmental changes • Old/unsuitable facilities/deferred maintenance
Communication and public relations	• Social media + representation of the board • Polarization • Complexity of messaging • Media communications decentralized • Access points of communications (e.g., Language, tech barriers)
Other	• Learning and achievement • Disproportional outcomes

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Session Details

Date: August 19 and August 20, 2024

Location: Halton District School Board Office – JWS Room

Length: August 19 (7 hours) and August 20 (3 hours)

Number of Sessions: 2 (combined trustees and senior staff)

Session Objectives:

- Identify the priorities for the next four years and provide ideas on how they will be defined.
- Develop key objectives and measures that align with and support those priorities
- Generate ideas for the look and feel of the multi-year strategic plan logo.

Questions

Group Reflection 1:

- As a group reflect and discuss the various types of data available to you (e.g., board reports, ad hoc conversations, MYSP consultation).
- Using this information, take 30 minutes to brainstorm up to 10 priorities with your group, and have one person at your table write them on the sheet of paper provided.
- We invite you to consider making these priorities directional and high-level themes (e.g., mental health and well-being).

Group Reflection 2:

- Once you have written your priorities, take 15-20 minutes to consider how well your priorities stand up to the following questions:
  - Is this priority inspiring?
  - Does it limit people's thinking in any way?
  - Is it open/adaptable enough for changing environments?
  - Would there be anything you would change to ensure longer-term sustainability and growth of the organization? If so, How would you change them?
  - Is it compliant/aligned with legislation, regulation and Policy Program Memorandum (PPM) ?
- As a group, are there any you would change or remove?

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Top Priorities identified by participants

- Addressing Economic Disparities
- Community Connection
- Consistent Educational Resources - Accountability and Ensuring Equal Access to Information
- Environmental Leadership
- Experiential Learning
- Future-Ready (AI, broader pathways to success, skilled trades)
- Foundation of Hope and Positivity for Students
- Global Competencies
- Honest and Transparent Communication - Providing Evidence-Based Information
- Human Rights and EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion)
- Individualized Education
- Innovation
- Kindness, Empathy, Understanding, Care, and Respect
- Learning and Achievement
- Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Safety (physical and psychological safety)
- Resource and Funding Allocation - Planning
- Social and Emotional Learning
- Social Responsibility and Empathy
- Staff Engagement, Capacity, and Leadership
- Student Voice and Leadership

Brainstorm: Activity

- Reflect on the alignment between the current MYSP commitments and:
  - the available data.
  - the priorities developed in block 2.
- Validate the priorities of the existing MYSP.
- Brainstorm elements that may need to be added to improve how it is defined.
- Explore if new priorities need to be considered.
- If needed, we will reflect on how well the proposed MYSP commitments align with:
  - the available data.
  - the priorities developed in block 2.
- If needed, we will validate the priorities of the existing MYSP.

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Key priorities identified by the working groups are :

GROUP 1:
- Indigenous Rights and Realities
- Human Rights and Inclusion
- Learning, Engagement, and Success
- Mental Health and Wellbeing for All
- Global Competencies and Environmental Citizenship

GROUP 2:
- Student Voice (at the centre)
- Kindness and Empathy
- Environmental Stewardship
- Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Safety
- Indigenous Rights and Realities
- Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion (Outer Circle that ties into all priorities)

GROUP 3:
- Human Rights and Indigenous Rights (As Foundational Elements)

Focus on Three Commitments:
  - Mental Health, Wellbeing, and Belonging
  - Learning and Student Success
  - Global Competencies and Citizenship (Environmental Leadership, Future-Ready Schools)
- Student Voice Student Voice (at the centre)

GROUP 4:
- Engagement for Staff and Community
- Wellbeing and Engagement
- Sustainable Futures (Global Competencies, Digital Literacy, AI, Environmental Leadership)
- Belonging (Human Rights, Equity, Physical and Psychological Safety)
- Relationships (Pivotal to the Work)

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Voting 1:

- We will go through each priority, and vote on whether we validate it or not.
- We will announce the priority to be voted on, then you will have 2 minutes to finalize your thoughts.
  - As you reflect, consider the theme and direction of each priority, not how it is currently defined.
- You will then be asked to raise your hand, holding your selected paper, all at the same time.
- We will then count the numbers in real-time.
- Please keep your hand raised until we say you can lower them.
- We will share the score for each priorities after taking the votes for all of the current priorities.

I strongly disagree.	I disagree	I can accept but have some questions	I agree	I strongly agree
Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Green

Results:

Keep the priorities of the previous MYSP with refinements to the title, definitions and objectives

Idea Generation (5 Minutes Per Priority):

- For each priority that we established alignment, take 5 minutes to brainstorm ideas that could enhance its definition.

Documentation:

- At your table, write the name of the priority at the top of the page.

Detailing Enhancements:

- Make note of key aspects, descriptors, or factors you believe are essential for improving the clarity and definition of the priority.

Rotation:

- After 5 minutes, we will rotate to the next priority.

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Adding New Priorities: Group Poll

- Are there any priorities, that your table identified earlier that you would like to take time to further discuss?
- We will give you 5 minutes to reflect and decide how you will vote.
- You will then be asked to raise your hands holding your selected paper, all at the same time.
- We will then count the numbers in real-time.
- Please keep your hand raised until we say you can lower it.
- Note: for individuals that vote something is missing we will be inviting them to identify the priority and rationale why it should be considered.

Voting 2:

- We will go through each of the presented priorities one at a time.
- We will announce the priority to be voted on, then you will have 2 minutes to finalize your thoughts.
  - As you reflect, consider the theme and direction of the proposed priority.
- You will then be asked to raise your hand, holding your selected paper, all at the same time.
- We will then count the numbers in real time.
- Please keep your hand raised until we say you can lower them.
- We will share the score for each priorities after taking the votes of all priorities

I strongly disagree.	I disagree	I can accept but have some questions	I agree	I strongly agree
Red	Orange	Yellow	Blue	Green

Results :

Add Community, Kindness and Connection

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Alignment Check: Key Priorities identified by the group

Environmental and Global Citizenship

- Environmental practices
- Global & economic awareness
- Critical thinking, problem solving
- Experiential learning
- Intercultural competencies

Mental Heath, Well-being and Safety

- Student and staff self-care
- Physical and psychological safety
- Social media responsibility
- School facilities

Learning, Engagement, and Success

- Rigor in academic areas
- Focus on STEAM.
- Foster supportive leadership
- Staff PD
- Preparation for life after school

Kindness, Community and Connections

- Foster interpersonal skills
- Connection to community
- Parental involvement
- Social cohesion
- Staff Mentorship

Indigenous Rights and Reconciliation

- Hurtful and discriminatory comments
- Continue truth and reconciliation efforts

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion

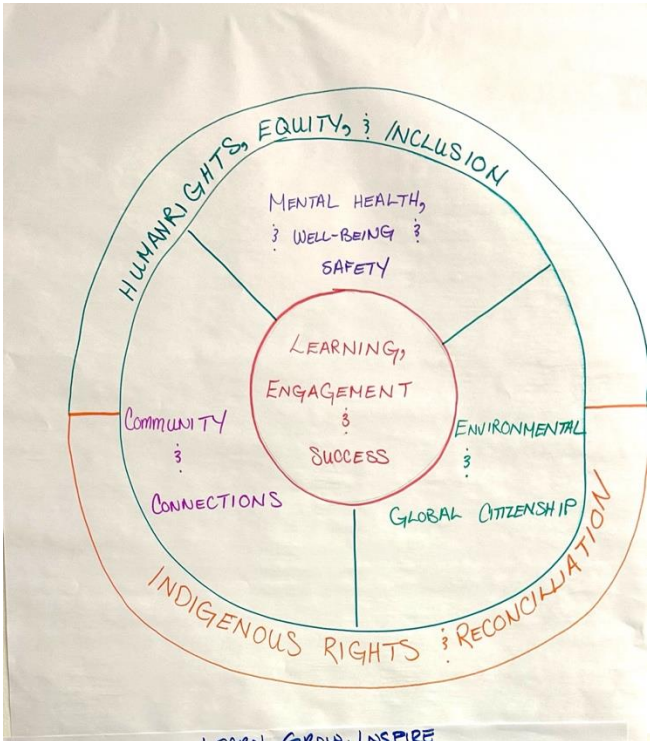
- Continue to build on EDI
- Support for Special Education and diverse learners
- Accountability Framework
- Culturally responsive skills

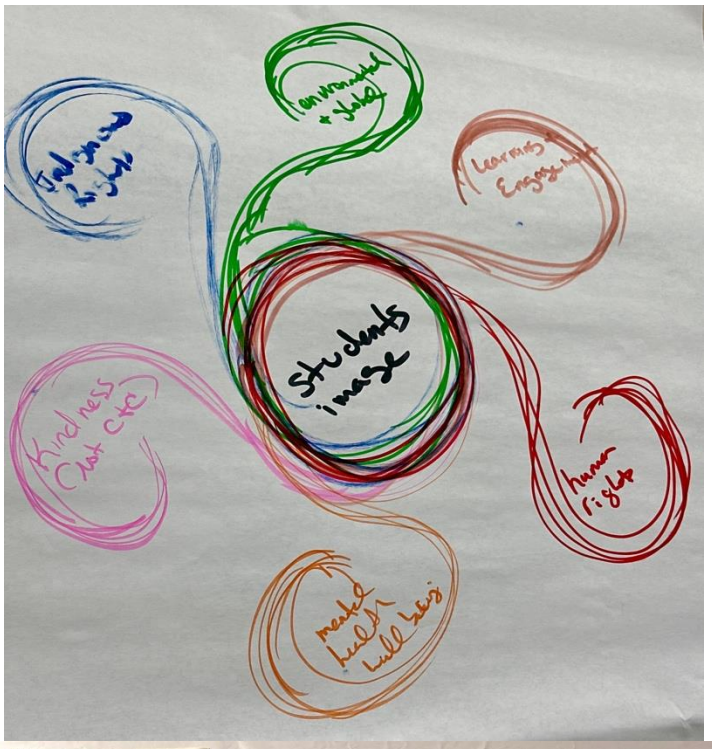
Depicting HDSB Priorities

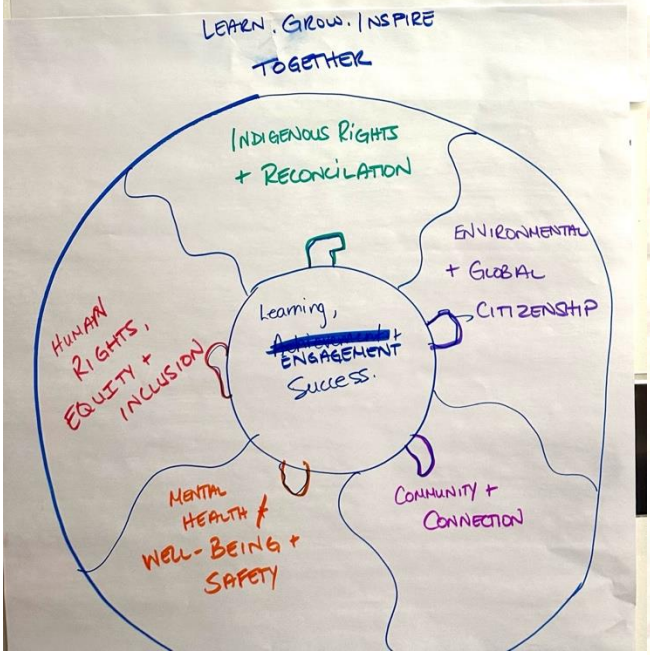
- Your groups **will have 25 minutes** to create a vision board that a visual representation of the priorities developed yesterday.
- Use images, words, and symbols to represent your ideas.
- After completing the boards, each group presents their vision board to the entire group, explaining the choices they made and how their board aligns with the strategic priorities.
- We will then display all the boards around the room and give **5 minutes** everyone to walk around and view the different interpretations.
- We will then gather everyone for a final reflection and invite you all to share insights or common themes noticed across the boards.

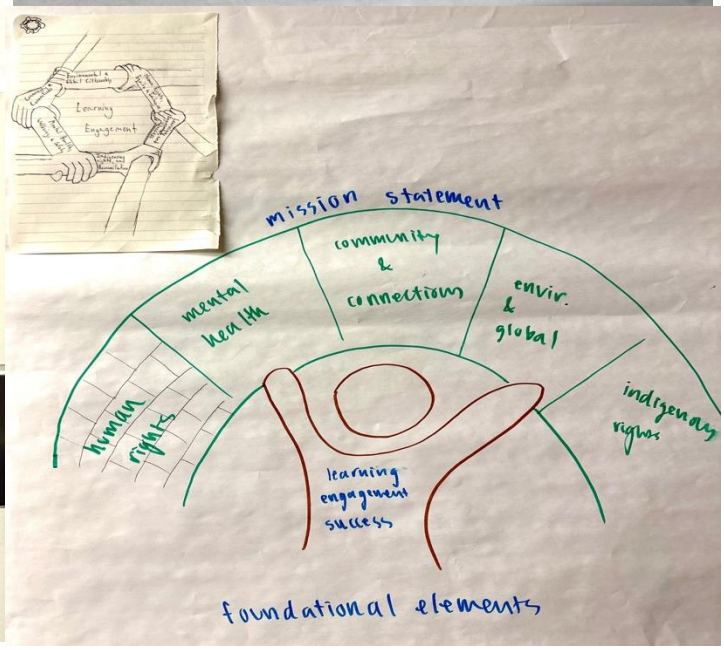
Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3









Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

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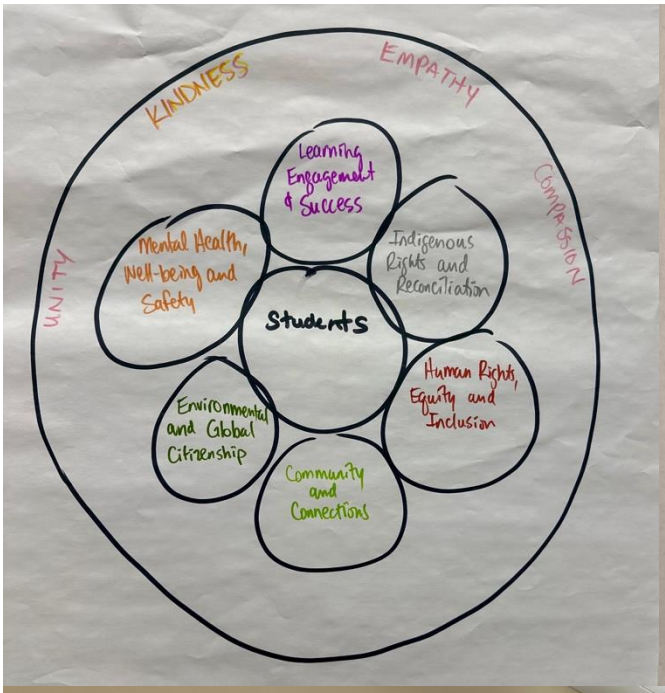

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Group Work:

- To do this, we will be answering the following questions:
  - What is the thing or things that need to be accomplished that indicate HDSB is moving towards a given priority?
  - When does it need to be accomplished?
  - How will you know it is accomplished and what are the indicators/measures that it has been accomplished?

Some additional prompting questions that can help you answer the primary questions are:

- Who will be impacted by it?
- Who is responsible for it?
- How will people feel once it is implemented (satisfaction)?
- What will people do differently?
- What would people see that is different in the organization (change in process, usability, accessibility)?
- What will people say (reported happiness, reported engagement, etc.)?

Sample:

Question	Answers
What is the thing or things that need to be accomplished that indicate HDSB is moving towards a given priority?	• Staff well-being • Staff engagement • Staff mental health issues
When does it need to be accomplished?	• By 2026
How will you know it is accomplished and what are the indicators/measures that it has been accomplished?	• Staff engagement scores • Workplace Health and Safety Reports
Working statement	• Improve employee well-being

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions

Session 3

Group Work:

- On the sheet of paper provided, create a chart to answer each of the questions below for the priority identified at your table:
    1. What is the thing or things that need to be accomplished to achieve the objective for a given commitment (e.g., increase student sense of safety)?
    2. When does it need to be accomplished?
    3. How will you know it is accomplished and what are the indicators/measures that it has been accomplished?
- After you have written a response for each question, write a statement at the bottom that would capture the answers to the above questions.
- After 20 minutes we will rotate in a clockwise direction to the next table. Once there your group will repeat the above steps for the new commitment.

Establishing Objective Statements: Group Polling

- We have posted draft objectives for each commitment/priority.
- You have been given 18 stickers.
- You will be placing the smiley stickers on the objective statements that most resonate with you.
- Please place 3 stickers per priority.
- While walking the room, feel free to discuss your thoughts with colleagues; however, we ask that you refrain from disclosing your individual responses for each statement

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

NOTE: Not all rows were filled out; some participants left them blank, especially if the information was covered elsewhere. The titles and objectives below were generated during the session. Subsequently, the MYSP committee, along with the Ember team, refined these based on the additional rounds of consultation and feedback.

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion – Objective 1	
What	Create safe and inclusive learning and working spaces and experiences for all to support success
Working Statement 1	All members of the HDSB feel a sense of belonging in an environment that is barrier-free
Working Statement 2	Acknowledge and respond to the disproportionate representation of student identities in all areas of achievement and experience
When	By 2028
How	• Reduction of disproportionality for all student groups • Range of pathway opportunities • Improved accommodation • Student and staff surveys • Staff and student retention • Community feedback (SEAC/Accessibility Committee) • Suspension data • Human rights complaints • PD for staff on accessibility
Votes	24

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion – Objective 2	
What	A sense of belonging is evident in every space
Working Statement 1	
When	Forever
How	
Votes	10

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion – Objective 3	
What	• Affirming the Dignity and Humanity of All. • Human Rights are Upheld for All. • Sense of Equity and Belonging. • Advocacy and Action for Those with Disproportionate Outcomes.
Working Statement 1	Equitable outcomes for all students
When	
How	
Votes	4

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Session 3

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion – Objective 4	
What	• Affirming the Dignity and Humanity of All. • Closing Achievement Gaps. • Having/Meeting High Expectations for All.
Working Statement 1	Equitable outcomes for all students
When	Annually, June 2025
How	N/A
Votes	22

Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion – Objective 5	
What	• Increase Diverse Representation of HDSB Staff at All Levels of the Organization. • Remove, Identify, and Address Barriers.
Working Statement 1	
When	Ongoing - June 2028
How	
Votes	14

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Session 3

Environmental and Global Citizenship

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 1	
What	Broaden understanding and critical analysis regarding evolving technology and AI
Working Statement 1	Design and manage learning environments that demonstrate commitment to the innovative use of technology to solve environmental and global challenges
When	2028
How	• Positive Survey Results – Comfort in AI Safety. • Community feedback and parent feedback
Votes	21

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 2	
What	Sustainable schools
Working Statement 1	Each HDSB school will improve their carbon footprint
When	
How	Each school should share their footprint and how it was accomplished
Votes	11

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Session 3

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 3	
What	Environmental and Global Citizenship
Working Statement 1	Equip students and staff with competencies to be able to thrive as contributing global citizens
Working Statement 2	Provide students and staff with expected practices to become contributing global citizens and be able to understand global issues, environmental, social, technological, political
When	2028
How	Students and staff demonstrate environmental and citizenship awareness and engage, understand, adapt to their issues
Votes	20

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 4	
What	Educate and empower students and staff regarding the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).
Working Statement 1	Students leave the HDSB with the tools they need to be global citizens and environmental stewards
When	2028
How	• Course Content Across All Grades Contains UN SDGs. • Increased Opportunities to Engage in Practical Activities Related to UN SDGs.
Votes	22

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 5	
What	• Embed Environmental Practices in All School Improvement Plans and Accountability (SIPSA). • Annual HDSB Environmental Day. • Priority for Student Senate.
Working Statement 1	
When	Jun-25
How	• SIPSA monitoring • Full participation by all schools in the environment day
Votes	3

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 6	
What	Intentional demonstration of environmental leadership through policy and practice
Working Statement 1	Every school shows action commitment to environmental sustainability through global competencies
When	Every year
How	• An annual report highlighting changes in policy and practice
Votes	0

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Session 3

Environmental and Global Citizenship – Objective 7	
What	All schools should have eco school certification or maintain highest level of certification
Working Statement 1	
When	July 2026
How	Certification
Votes	0

Indigenous Rights and Education

Indigenous Rights and Education – Objective 1	
What	Every HDSB staff member will actively engage in professional development (PD) focused on Indigenous Rights and Voice throughout the school year and share their learning with others.
Working Statement 1	
When	Every year
How	• Fewer Requests for Support from Indigenous Department. • Increase in the Variety of Authentic Resources. • Repository of Authentic Resources – Centrally Located. • More Frequent Evidence in Alternative Learning Plans (ALP), Teacher Performance Appraisals (TPA), and Professional Practice Assessments (PPA). • Street Data.
Votes	21

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Session 3

Indigenous Rights and Education – Objective 2	
What	• Realization of Our Commitments to Truth and Reconciliation. • Reconciliation Through Indigenous Histories and Realities Embedded in Classroom Learning. • Increase Education of Indigenous Truths and Current Realities from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12).
Working Statement 1	Increase education of indigenous truths and current realities K-12
When	2028
How	• Participation Rates in Professional Development (PD) Offered. • Relationships with Indigenous Partners. • Teaching Sections Offered. • Survey Data. • Resources K-12 – "Recommended/Required" List. • Disaggregated Data – Indigenous Students See Themselves in Classroom Learning. • Implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action. • Identity Groups Reflected in Resources.
Votes	21

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Indigenous Rights and Education – Objective 3	
What	Increase Indigenous voice in the HDSB
Working Statement 1	
When	Oct 2026, 2028
How	• Establish Formal Mechanisms to Listen to Indigenous Student Voice (e.g., Youth Council). • Increase Staff Representation – Conduct Staff Census/Survey. • Stronger Relationship with Neighbouring Indigenous Communities – Gather Data and Feedback. • Opportunities for Students in NBE3U/C Course – Focus on Refinement.
Votes	21

Indigenous Rights and Education – Objective 4	
What	• Closing Achievement Gaps for Indigenous Students. • Reviewing Achievement Data and Graduation Rates of Indigenous Students. • Indigenous Narrative Plentitude.
Working Statement 1	
When	2028
How	• Increase in graduation rates by X amount
Votes	17

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Learning, Engagement and Success

Learning, Engagement and Success – Objective 1	
What	Differentiate Teaching and Learning Approaches (e.g., Myers-Briggs) to Support Each Unique Learner Using Evidence-Based, Data-Driven, Current Content, Strategies, and Tools.
	All students and staff achieve success through reaching their individual and collective goals
Working Statement 1	
When	2028 (sooner!)
How	• Staff Participation in Professional Development (PD) and Outcomes. • Staff/Student Attendance. • Have Your Say – Student Experience. • School Reporting – Graduation Rates. • Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Results – Reading Screenings. • Exit Survey of Graduating Students. • Participation in PD Opportunities Focused on Primary Literacy, Junior Math, and Addressing Disproportionate Outcomes.
Votes	24

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Learning, Engagement and Success – Objective 2	
What	• Build Leadership and Engagement at All Levels Across the System to Support all areas of the MYSP • Provide Awareness and Opportunities. • Increase Staff Alignment and Sense of Connection with Board and Administration Priorities.
Working Statement 1	Build leadership and enagagement at all levels across the system
When	Ongoing
How	
Votes	20

Learning, Engagement and Success – Objective 3	
What	Exposure to Multiple and Diverse Pathways at Early Stages of the Educational Journey.
Working Statement 1	Students Will Have Opportunities Presented for Pathways in Their Futures (Global Competencies).
When	Ongoing
How	
Votes	24

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Learning, Engagement and Success – Objective 4	
What	Close the gaps
Working Statement 1	Decrease disproportionate outcomes
When	every year
How	
Votes	9

Kindness, Community and Connection

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 1	
What	Increased positive relationships and connections within and across all HDSB communities (classroom, school, department, board, broader community)
Working Statement 1	To increase positive relationships and connections within and across all HDSB communities
When	2028
How	
Votes	10

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 2	
What	Schools as community
Working Statement 1	• Create positive spaces to engage in critical conversations that divide us. • Focus on relationships
When	2028
How	
Votes	19

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 3	
What	• Improve kindness and respect through intentional focus on promoting empathy and appreciation of diverse opinions • Implementation of a campaign of kindness (a delivery model for change)
Working Statement 1	
When	every year
How	
Votes	21

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 4	
What	Foster communities of kindness, empathy and resilience in a constantly changing world
Working Statement 1	HDSB school communities are communities of kindness
When	
How	Survey data Community feedback
Votes	21

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 5	
What	• Build Better/Improve Community Relations Through Outreach. • Incorporate Regular Activities in Schools that Build Empathy, Kindness, and Interpersonal Skills – Both in the Classroom and School-Wide.
Working Statement 1	Improve overall social cohesion with community within schools
When	
How	
Votes	2

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Session 3

Kindness, Community and Connection – Objective 6	
What	• Strengthening community relationships • Understanding of self and others through compassion, kindness and respect
Working Statement 1	Create an environment of civility at all levels of the organization
When	
How	
Votes	4

Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental Health and Well-Being – Objective 1	
What	Increase a sense of calm and control in staff by providing a myriad of supports, resources, professional development
Working Statement 1	
When	every year
How	
Votes	2

Trustee and Senior Staff Sessions
Session 3

Mental Health and Well-Being – Objective 1	
What	• Normalize Everyday Wellness. • Increase Mental Health Literacy and Awareness. • Equip Students with Mental Health Strategies. • Implement Preventative, Proactive Strategies that Support Safety.
Working Statement 1	Building nurturing and affirming school spaces, learning and work
When	2028
How	• Have your say • Welcoming Environment • Reducing stigma • Reduction in need to access resources • Less suspensions and Less office referrals
Votes	23

Mental Health and Well-Being – Objective 2	
What	Develop/improve responsible and positive use of social media
Working Statement 1	Improve positive use of social media
When	2028
How	• Implementation of Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) and Staff Survey. • Have Your Say -Questions Regarding Impact on Learning and PPM. • Disciplinary Data – Infraction Code.
Votes	9

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Session 3

Mental Health and Well-Being – Objective 3	
What	Safe and supportive spaces Student and staff sense of safety and support
Working Statement 1	Improve staff and student mental health and well-being and safety
When	2028
How	• Survey Data for Staff and Students. • Less Vandalism. • Improved Attendance for Staff and Students. • Enrollment Data – Collect Exit Data. • Disciplinary Data/Incident Data. • Programs to Engage Students and Staff – Feedback from Programs, Training Programs. • Retention Rates of Staff and Students. • Support Services Data.
Votes	18

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Session 3

Mental Health and Well-Being – Objective 5	
What	All members of school community feel a sense of belonging and connection
Working Statement 1	
When	2026
How	• Have Your Say – Consider more connection-type questions. • Welcoming and Safe Schools. • Open Doors – Areas/avenues to seek suggestions. • Continuation of Anti-Bullying Campaigns in Secondary. • Communication and Follow-Up. • Listening to Voice. • Increase in Student Registration.
Votes	24