

HWDSB

PIC Meeting
February 10th, 2026
Minutes

Members Present (20): Adriana Baker, Mani Bhandari, Kailey Crowther, Mohamed Khamis, Heather Lambert-Hillen, Amanda Levesque, Amanda Lloyd, Tim Louks, Amanda Neale-Robinson, Vanessa Ozer, Mike Palma, Michele Quinn, Leora Sas Van Der Linden, Danielle Schwalm, Meagan Shanahan, Emma Simpson, Cindy Stranak, Leigh Ann Sutherland, Lisa Veloce, and Terry-Ann Virtue. Trustees Kathy Archer, Amanda Fehrman and Abby Zaitley.

Regrets (10): Matthew Adams, Kristina Collier, Kruti Desai, Andrea Hamilton-Coulson, Cheryl Hue, Sue-Anne MacQuarrie, Heidi Oglesby, Meghana Oza, Christine Sandor, and Damian Kalu Ude.

Agenda Item	Decision/Action Taken	Person(s) Responsible
Call to Order	The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.	Amanda Lloyd
Land Acknowledgment		Paul Denomme
Approval of the Agenda	Mike Palma/Cindy Stranak moved that the agenda be approved. CARRIED.	Amanda Lloyd
Declaration of conflict of interest	None.	Amanda Lloyd
Matthew Gerard, Associate Director, Business Services and Treasurer of the Board and Jagoda Kirilo, Senior Manager, Financial Services- Overview of Budget Priorities to Guide the Development of the 2026-2027 Budget Consultation, Wenqi Zhou- Manager of Budget	The Associate Director provided an overview of the budget development process, outlining key activities occurring from January through June and detailing the work completed each month. As part of this process, consultations are held through a public information session with several committees, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent Involvement Committee • Student Senate • Special Education Advisory Committee • Human Rights & Equity • Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations • Indigenous Education Council • Town Hall <p>The Associate Director also reviewed the budget development objectives, emphasizing alignment with the Board’s mission, values, strategic directions, and Board Improvement Plan. Additional objectives include ensuring effective service to students, aligning resources with Ministry of Education priorities, meeting collective</p>	Matthew Gerard, Jagoda Kirilo and Wenqi Zhou

	<p>agreement obligations, supporting the capital plan, adhering to enveloped funding requirements, and upholding transparency, accountability, and fiscal responsibility. Following this, the Associate Director presented current enrolment trends for both elementary and secondary panels.</p> <p>Senior Manager Kirilo provided a detailed explanation of the six core pillars of the education funding model:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Staffing Funding • Learning Resources Funding • Special Education Funding • School Facilities Funding • Student Transportation Funding • School Board Administration Funding <p>The Associate Director then highlighted ongoing funding pressures, including supply costs, special education needs, school operations, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) costs, statutory benefits, learning materials, technology, classroom supplies, student supports, and responsive education program grants.</p> <p>Lastly, the Budget Consultation Survey was discussed, with clarification on areas that interested parties can influence—such as student well-being and mental health initiatives, and special education supports etc.—and areas that cannot be influenced, such as class size ratios, health and statutory benefit costs, and pension obligations etc.</p> <p><u>Some of the questions/suggestions/comments:</u></p> <p>It would be helpful for parents if further breakdowns were provided to show how specific sections of the budget were being spent for instance the Classroom Staffing Funds (CSF).</p> <p>How is the pupil count determined? Does it include every child with an IEP or students with learning disabilities? - Every student who is a pupil of the Board generates revenue.</p>	
<p>Yohana Otite, Human Rights and Equity Advisor and Mouna Bile, Human Rights Early Resolution Supervisor- Overview of Human Rights and Human Rights in HWDSB</p>	<p>Human Rights and Equity Advisor Otite spoke about the Human Rights Office at HWDSB, outlining how the department supports the HWDSB community and the work they do. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building system-wide capacity to understand and apply human rights at all levels. • Overseeing and supporting the internal human rights resolution process. • Reviewing policies, procedures, and practices • Supporting system navigation 	<p>Yohana Otite, Mouna Bile</p>

HWDSB

She further explained the purpose and role of the Human Rights Office (HRO), the HWDSB Human Rights Policy, the Complaint Resolution Procedure, reporting mechanisms, and the supports available to students, staff, and families.

Human Rights and Equity Advisor Otite also reviewed the five protected social areas—goods, services and facilities; employment; contracts; accommodation; and unions and professional associations—as well as the 17 prohibited grounds of discrimination, such as age, ancestry, and race.

In addition, she highlighted the pillars of the HWDSB Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

- Upholding human rights
- Promoting safety and well-being
- Providing equitable, high-quality education
- Collaborating with students, families, and communities
- Building a sustainable education system
- Reinforcing Indigenous educational wellness and reconciliation

The Human Rights Policy is available on the HWDSB website. Human Rights and Equity Advisor Otite emphasized that upholding human rights is a shared responsibility. All HWDSB community members have roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities in promoting and protecting human rights, as outlined in the Human Rights Policy. While all students, staff, and caregivers are rights holders, Board employees have enhanced responsibilities as *duty bearers*, based on their roles, positions, and authority. This includes educators, principals, and all service providers in schools.

Human Rights Early Resolution Supervisor Bile spoke about the meaning of discrimination. She explained that discrimination is an action or decision that treats someone unfairly or negatively because of a protected ground, such as race, gender, religion etc. Discrimination can be direct or

indirect, individual or systemic, and it does not need to be intentional to cause harm.

She outlined the steps to take if a child is experiencing discrimination or harassment at school:

1. Start by consulting and reporting the concern to your child's educators, teacher, principal, or vice-principal.
2. If the concern is not resolved at the school level, the Human Rights Complaints Resolution Procedure outlines the next steps available.

Human Rights Early Resolution Supervisor Bile walked the group through a chart showing the pathways students and parents can follow if they experience or witness discrimination or harassment based on a Human Rights Code ground.

How to submit a Human Rights concern to the HRO:
Include:

- Details about the incident(s) (what happened, when, and who was involved)
- The Human Rights Code ground(s) of discrimination
- The respondent(s) involved
- Any supporting documentation

What happens when the HRO receives a complaint:

- An initial meeting
- A threshold assessment
- Early resolution efforts
- An investigation (if required)
- An outcome meeting

Lastly, Human Rights Early Resolution Supervisor Bile explained what system navigation is and who can access it. This service supports students and families who may be experiencing barriers in navigating the education system, helping to bridge gaps and connect them with appropriate resources.

Some of the questions/suggestions/comments:

Does an incident have to take place during school hours?

- No. An incident does not have to occur during school hours, but it must be connected to the school community. For example, if a student was participating in an off-site game and an incident occurred involving individuals connected to the School Board it would still fall within our responsibility to address.

HWDSB

	<p>What are the timelines, and how do you protect applicants throughout the process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timeline for processing a complaint is within 90 days. This means the Human Rights Office has up to three months from the moment a complaint is received to the point at which a decision is issued, and an outcome report is provided. However, there are instances where the process may take longer. <p>How do we protect applicants?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have a range of interim measures available to ensure safety and reduce harm while the investigation is underway. For example, we may remove an individual from a particular space or put other safeguards in place to protect anyone who may be experiencing harm during the investigation. <p>Incident Tracking Tool</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are using the existing Safe Schools mechanisms already in place. Also, we have the Human Rights and Hate-Based Incident Response Tracking Forms at the school level. These tools help us identify general patterns and trends within schools and document the steps taken in response to each incident. 	
<p>Gerry Smith, Superintendent of Safe, Compassionate and Equitable Schools- Overview of Safe School Action Plan</p>	<p>Superintendent of Safe, Compassionate and Equitable Schools, Smith, provided an overview of the 2024–2027 Caring and Safe Schools Action Plan, which had been shared with all PIC members via email prior to the meeting. The first group activity invited members to elaborate on lockdowns in schools and to share their reflections or personal experiences with the group. The second activity focused on students’ pre-reflections about the differences between teasing, aggression, and bullying from different age grade perspective. The final activity asked members to describe what a safe and caring classroom looks, sounds, and feels like from their own perspectives and cultural backgrounds.</p> <p><u>Some of the questions/suggestions/comments:</u></p> <p>Communication with families during emergency situations For example, when police are involved, we must ensure that all communication is coordinated with them. Police are</p>	<p>Superintendent Smith</p>

	<p>our community partners, and at times their timelines or information release protocols differ from ours. As a result, communication with families must align with police direction to ensure accuracy, safety, and confidentiality -release protocols differ from ours. As a result, communication with families must align with police direction to ensure accuracy, safety, and confidentiality.</p>	
Approval of Minutes	<p>Heather Lambert-Hillen noted that the moment of silence held in honour of Trustee Judith Bishop took place during the meeting and it had not been reflected in the minutes.</p> <p>Adriana Baker/Amanda Levesque moved that the PIC Minutes from December 9, 2025, be approved.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED.</p>	Amanda Lloyd
Business Arising from the Minutes	<p>The Chair explained that during the December PIC meeting, the motion to form a subcommittee to review the Parent Involvement Committee Bylaws had passed. She further clarified that the requirement for approval is a two-thirds quorum voting in favour.</p> <p>The Chair then informed the committee of the formation of a subcommittee to conduct the bylaw review.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED.</p>	Amanda Lloyd
Reports	<p>A) <u>Trustees- Trustee Fehrman</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2026-2027 Budget and the Waterdown Boundary Review for implementation for September 2027 was approved by the Trustees on February 2, 2026. • The Public Education Symposium was attended by seven Trustees, along with the Indigenous Student in Toronto in January. • Student Trustees Election opens on February 17 for students in Grades 7–12. Students have the opportunity to vote for next school year’s Student Trustee. More information is available on the HWDSB website, including promotional videos featuring the 11 candidates. • Prom Project 2026: Registration is open until March 25, with the event taking place on March 28. Donations of new or gently used clothing, shoes, and accessories are welcome. <p>B) <u>Hamilton-Wentworth Council of Home & School Associations</u></p> <p>Heather Lambert-Hillen- informed that the next meeting is scheduled for April 9th, 2026.</p> <p>Approached The Committee was asked to participate by Associate Director Gerard to participate in the budget</p>	

HWDSB

	<p>consultation, which will be taking place at the end of February to meet the required deadline.</p> <p>Participating in supporting schools as they work through their school council templates, including clarifying how the Home and School Association fits within their school council structure. If a school has a Home and School Association, it is represented on the school council.</p> <p>A founding member of the Home and School Association, who also contributed to the school’s nutrition program, has passed away after 15 years of service. The Association supported the school at its Home and School meeting, where a small observance was held. Several members of the Home and School Council also attended the celebration of life. The Association will continue to support the school community during this time.</p> <p>The Ministry of Education released information about the Menstrual Equity Initiative, which is a partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart to provide free menstrual products to all schools. They are distributing millions of products with the goal of reducing period poverty and eliminating stigma.</p>	
Reminders	<p><u>PIC Meeting</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 10, 2026, 6:30-8:30 pm • Education Centre/MS Teams 	Amanda Lloyd
Adjournment	<p>Mike Palma/Adriana Baker moved that the meeting be adjourned.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED.</p> <p>The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM.</p>	Amanda Lloyd