

What are trustees working on at HDSB?

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Trustees from the Halton District School Board are assessing a number of strategies and initiatives that have been on the go since September 2017.

Associate director David Boag and a senior team of trustees presented their update on the school board's operational plan at the J.W. Singleton Education Centre on March 7.

"We're looking at the strategies and what impact they are having on our charts and multi-year plans and making decisions around whether they need to be modified, changed or beefed up," Boag said.

Here's what you need to know:

Elementary Schools

The Halton District School Board's (HDSB's) emergent literacy program has engaged 41 elementary schools in providing teachers with the necessary knowledge to support students who may be struggling with reading and writing. In addition to this, the 2017-2018 school year marks the second year the HDSB has been involved in the Closing the Gaps in Mathematics initiative for students with learning disabilities - a project that initially involved 19 schools. It has since grown to include 40 additional schools and HDSB trustees

say they hope for all elementary schools to be participating by next year. The work in this initiative includes understanding psychology and assessment, building learning profiles and developing individual education plans.

HDSB is also offering a number of extracurricular opportunities for elementary-aged students including primary math club, junior flexible thinkers in math, literacy development for primary and junior students, an after school math and technology program for Grades 7 and 8, a code summer learning program for primary students and summer math camp for students transitioning from Grades 6 to 7.

High Schools

This year, HDSB has been working with a number of focus groups across the board to determine the best practices to engage students. The board is continuing to work on its renewed math strategy, which includes partnering with the Learning Disability Project (50 per cent of HDSB high schools are involved this year and the other 50 per cent are scheduled for next year).

History and Social Studies

In both primary and secondary schools, the curriculum has been updated to reflect the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations, including changes to social stud-

ies classes in Grades 4 through 6, history classes in Grades 7 and 8 and high school history classes, most notably Canadian history since the First World War. As part of these revisions, students will be learning more in depth material on treaties, the residential school system and The Indian Act.

Student Mental Health

The Healthy Transitions program has been implemented to promote awareness and reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues, while providing students with necessary coping mechanisms.

Social Media

A growing number of schools in HDSB are increasing their online presence through Twitter and other forms of social media, as well as blogs such as the SHIFT blog.

IEP Improvements

Administrative staff, teachers and student emergency response team (SERT) members in 86 HDSB elementary schools have received additional training regarding individual education plans and an FAQ document has been created.

Equity and Well-Being

Thirty leadership teams across the board have been involved in promoting the creation of LGBTQ+ positive classrooms and spaces.

What the quack? Halton Hills looks at bylaw for 'lame duck' council periods

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In the months leading up to municipal elections, council may have less power than usual, based on how many councillors wish to run again.

With the introduction of Bill 181, nomination periods for municipal elections are longer than before, and if less than 75 per cent of council is seeking re-election, their capacity to make major decisions is diminished.

This is called a 'lame duck' council period. Like a maimed bird, or declawed cat, the function around the horseshoe is limited in the months before the election.

In a lame duck period,

council cannot appoint or remove any officers from the municipality, hire or fire employees, sell any property over \$50,000 or incur any expenses at that same cost.

A report brought forth to council suggests that certain authorities should be delegated to the chief administrative officer during this period, including authorizing expenses associated with projects previously approved by council before the lame duck period.

"This authority would only be exercised should a matter warrant expedited action," wrote staff in the report.

If this measure is taken, a report would be drafted to notify the council.

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