

Waterloo Region District School Board:

Annual Community Report

The Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB) Annual Community Report shares how WRDSB ensures all students achieve their goals and feel seen and included.

This aligns with **WRDSB's North Star** that identity and social location no longer predict outcomes, and to ensure success for all.



To learn more about the Annual Community Report, visit wrdsb.social/AnnualCommunityReport

January 2025

\$21,000

in grants for 15 student projects



2,000

newcomer students registered

7,000+

elementary students screened for early literacy



5,719

students enrolled in experiential learning programs (OYAP, SHSM)

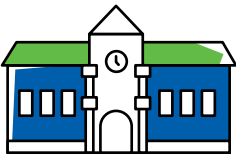
\$640K

in scholarships for >20 students



4,000

Grade 7 and 8 students provided "Sources of Strength" sessions coordinated with the Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council



87%

106 of 122 WRDSB sites fully accessible. Remaining 13% have projects underway. By 2026, complete accessibility projects at partially and non-accessible schools



4,900

students enrolled in 75 extended day childcare programs. **1** of the largest licensed affordable, high-quality child care providers in Waterloo Region



731

caregivers joined **27** online mental health sessions for families
175 caregivers participated in monthly Assistive Technology webinars



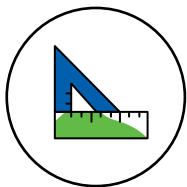
Structured literacy training provided to families

Achieved full destreaming in Grade 9 and 10 English and Math



WRDSB Leaders

trained to create psychologically safe workplaces and committed to implement them

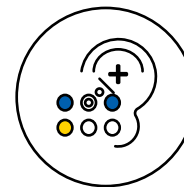


Partnered with universities and colleges to offer hands-on post-secondary STEM programs and other career pathways



\$26,000

raised by students at **15** schools for KidsAbility



Developing a design standard for vision and hearing impairment related accessibility upgrades. This creates truly accessible spaces for students, staff and communities



Centring Students



Increase student learning through engagement



Equitable opportunities and outcomes



Strengthen connections through family and community engagement



Collaboration and compassion for transformation



Support for student and staff well-being



A Shared Commitment to Student Success and Well-being

The Waterloo Region District School Board's (WRDSB) Annual Community Report shares the efforts of staff as they support students to:

- Work towards their goals
- Feel seen and included

This aligns with WRDSB's North Star: that identity and social location no longer predict outcomes, and to ensure success for all.

Student achievement and well-being is a result of:

- Engaged students
- Family and community involvement
- Innovative education practices

Central staff supported students in learning to read using a structured literacy approach. This was done in partnership with families, caregivers and community groups. Staff provided resources and tools to allow them to support their child's learning.

A number of strategies are focused on supporting students' reading skills. Over 900 educators volunteered to be trained to use a tool to screen the literacy skills of students. This led to the screening of more than 7,000 students in five months. 95% of students assessed showed improvements in their reading skills. In Grade 2, 70% of students are reading at grade level by the end of the school year.

Families and caregivers are our partners in educating students. Together with community agencies, we provided families with learning opportunities. These focused on supporting their child's literacy. Another 27 sessions focused on using assistive technology. Participation in these sessions continues to grow:

- 111 participants in 2022-23
- 127 participants in 2023-24

Families have shared positive feedback about these opportunities. They said it helped them learn more about the technology available to support their child's learning.

WRDSB is committed to supporting students on their pathway to graduation and beyond. Our strategies include:

- Access to post-secondary institution information sessions and classroom experiences
- Participation in career-focused programs like the annual Build a Dream Career Fair for Grade 7-12 female and female-identifying students
- Co-op placements within the WRDSB
 - Starting with two positions in the Communications Department
- Universal access to dual credit opportunities for Grade 9 to 12 students
- Virtual Desktop program gives 7,756 students in 66 courses access to specialised software at home

These strategies have helped to increase our five-year graduation rate to 86.9% from 85.2%.

WRDSB students have varied personal successes, including 21 who received approximately \$640,000 in scholarships. This year sets a benchmark for future tracking of student achievements in academics, arts and athletics.

All students are supported in exploring their strengths and interests to help them choose their post-secondary pathways. One program offered students the chance to learn about systems thinking to address complex problems. In addition, WRDSB's Student Agency and Voice program encourages students to:

- Tell their stories in their own voices
- Access funding for student-led initiatives
- Have a means to affect change in our schools and board

Together, these efforts support students' confidence and their ability to self-advocate.

The physical spaces where students learn support the achievement and well-being of all. 87%, or 106 out of 122 WRDSB sites are fully accessible. The remaining 16 include 8 partially accessible and 8 not accessible. Staff are working hard to make all sites fully accessible by 2026. This is

bolstered by developing a design standard for accessibility upgrades focused on vision and hearing impairment.

Our schools and classrooms are also healthy spaces. 95% of schools have full mechanical ventilation and 5% have partial mechanical ventilation.

We're also making the WRDSB more energy efficient by:

- Building a network of electric vehicle charging stations
- Expanding the number of electric Facility Services vehicles

We developed a balanced budget. This allows us to:

- Continue to invest in our strategic priorities
- Meet our legislative requirements for fiscal responsibility
- Support the success of students and staff

WRDSB also obtained approval and funding to plan and build new schools in:

- Cambridge
- South Kitchener

We're supporting families across Waterloo Region in accessing high-quality and affordable childcare. Offered at 75 of our schools, we serve 4,900 students between Junior Kindergarten and Grade 6. This has grown from 4,156 students in 69 programs in 2022-23. It also means that our childcare programs are fully registered. We are working to provide 137 new spaces for infants to pre-Kindergarten age children through independent providers.

WRDSB celebrates the achievements of students and staff. However, we know there is still work to be done to improve:

- Student and staff well-being
- How we deliver education
- Engagement with families

