

## Information for Researchers

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### Research in the Waterloo Region District School Board

Thank you for your interest in including Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) students, staff, and/or families in your research. The guidelines included in this document apply to all individuals or agencies requesting permission to conduct research with the WRDSB. This includes research that:

- takes place in-person with WRDSB students, staff, or families on school property;
- involves the recruitment of research participants from WRDSB school communities (e.g., students, staff, or families) for research that takes place outside of school property; or
- utilizes existing WRDSB student or staff data only.

All applications to conduct research with the WRDSB are reviewed by the WRDSB Research Review Committee, which consists of one representative from the Waterloo Region Assembly of Public School Councils, school administrators, and Learning Services and Research and Evidence-Based Practice staff. The role of the committee is to support and encourage research that contributes to the goals of the WRDSB, and educational knowledge more broadly, while keeping in mind that our first priority is to the education of our students.

### Application Guidelines

Applications to conduct research with the WRDSB must be submitted through the [online application system](#). As you prepare to submit an application to conduct your research with the WRDSB, you should keep the following guidelines in mind:

- All research conducted with the WRDSB must be approved by the committee. Incomplete applications and late submissions will not be considered for review.
- Research-related activities (including contacting schools for expressions of interest) **may not** commence until your research has been approved by the committee. Researchers who do not follow this protocol may have their access to schools restricted.
- Receiving approval from the committee **does not** guarantee that your research will be accommodated by WRDSB schools. The final decision for any WRDSB school to participate in research rests with the school principal. When requesting a school's participation in your research, you should be prepared to present a copy of your approval letter to the school principal as proof that your research has been approved.



- As a general rule, research may not be conducted in schools during the months of May, June, or the first half of the month of September.
- A current **Police Vulnerable Sector Records Check** (within the past 6 months) is required for all researchers and assistants who will be conducting research in-person with WRDSB students, staff and/or families on school property. This includes any research personnel who join your research team after you have received approval from the committee to conduct your research.
- Active, informed consent (i.e., written permission) must be sought when conducting research with WRDSB students, staff, and/or families. Researchers should note that:
  - parental consent is required for all students under the age of 18 years;
  - additional consent, beyond consent to participate, must be sought when audiotaping, videotaping or photographing participants is a component of your research methodology; and
  - the collection of personal information that is extraneous to the provision of consent (e.g., birth date, telephone number, email address, language spoken at home) is not permitted on consent forms.
- The privacy and confidentiality of WRDSB students, staff or families participating in your research must be assured. Neither individual participants nor participating schools may be identified in the presentation or reporting of your research results. Researchers must inform participants about:
  - what information will be collected and how it will be used;
  - who will have access to their information;
  - the protections in place to ensure their privacy and confidentiality; and
  - any circumstances where their privacy and confidentiality cannot be assured.
- Where your research methodology involves only partial disclosure of the true purpose of your research or deception, participants must be debriefed. Participant debriefing must include: an explanation about the true purpose of your research, why this research approach was used, and an explicitly stated opportunity for the participant to withdraw their consent for you to use their data in your research.

## Review & Approval Process

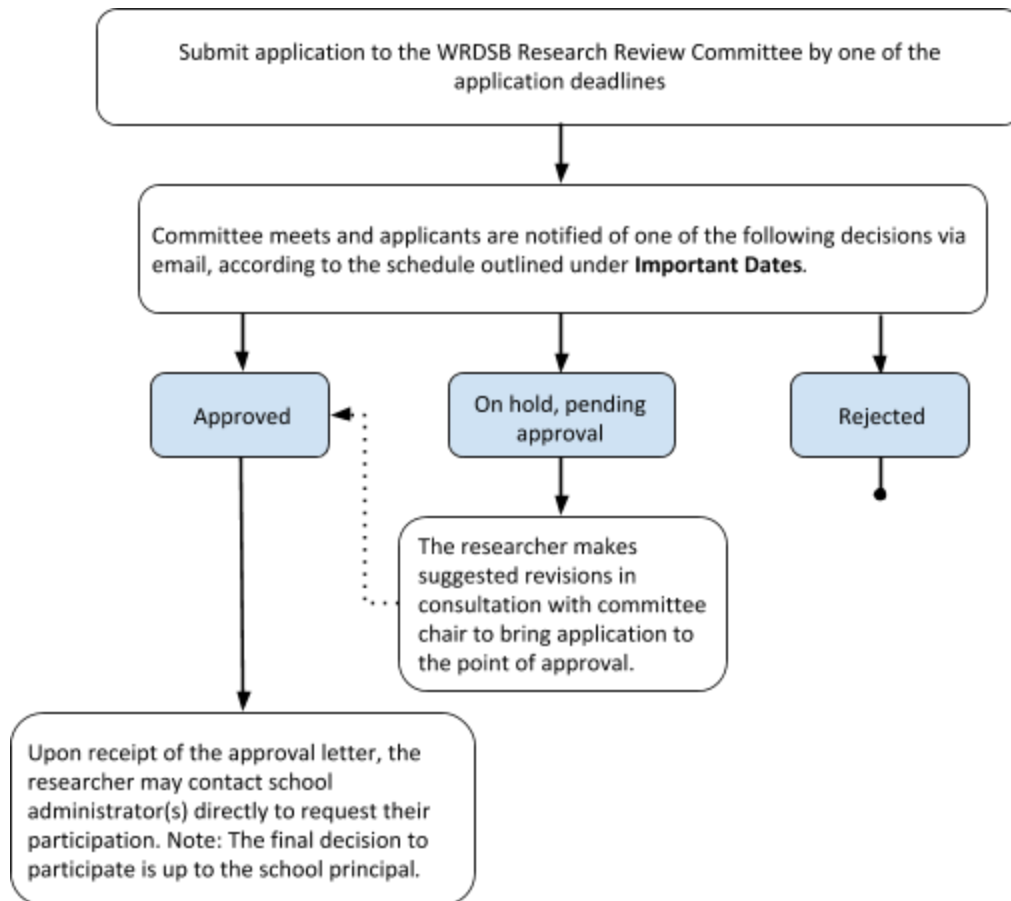
The WRDSB Research Review Committee considers the following questions in reviewing each research application. Does the proposed research:

- adhere to the ethical guidelines set out by the most recent [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)?



- align with the strategic priorities and operational goals of the WRDSB and have educational value for students, staff, parents/guardians, or the field of education in general?
- place realistic demands on participants (e.g., amount of time required for participation) with minimal disruption to normal school programming and student learning?
- require a reasonable number of participating schools/students, based on the goals of the research?
- provide sufficient detail about the specific study or series of studies to be conducted?
- meet [WRDSB Policy 4007-Approval of Research Projects](#) and WRDSB research application guidelines?

### *Diagram of the Review and Approval Process*



### **Questions?**

Please call or email: Julie Scott, Research Officer (WRDSB Research Review Committee Chair)  
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