2023-24: A YEAR OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND WELL-BEING



We are proud of the collaborative work between students, staff, families and community members to support student achievement and well-being. We continue to transform education and maintain our focus on supporting all students in reaching their full potential. I truly believe we will change the trajectory of public education from right here in Waterloo Region!

- jeewan chanicka

Director's Message

The Board of Trustees is committed to centring student academic success and well-being in its decision-making. We work collectively with families and community members to best support WRDSB students and staff to meet the Strategic Plan objectives.

- Joanne Weston



Chairperson Message

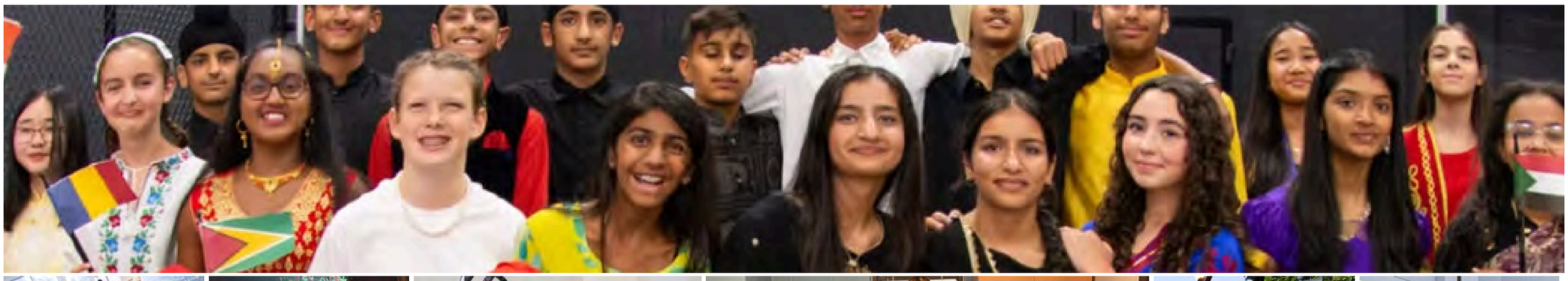




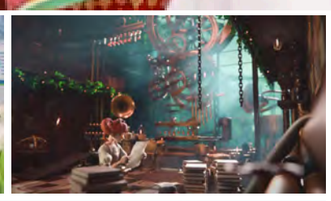
We feel that every WRDSB student should have a voice in shaping the future of their education. We are motivated by helping to connect students across schools and build community throughout the WRDSB.

Devansh Lakhanpal and Feiyang Luo

Letter from Student Trustees







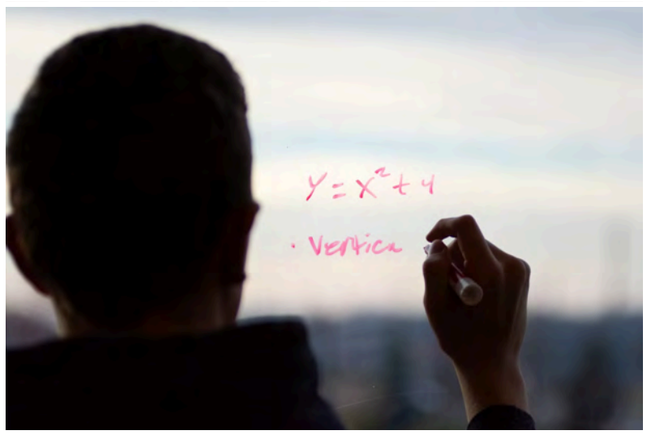




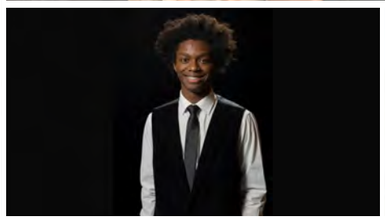














Stories of success from our Board Improvement and Equity Plan

We are proud of the collaborative work of students, staff, families, caregivers and community members in support of the WRDSB Strategic Plan and Board Improvement and Equity Plan. We continue to build on the knowledge and voices from the communities we serve on how we can centre students' voices, set high expectations and better support student academic achievement and well-being. In an effort to support transparency, we released the 2023 Community Report Card to share an update on our progress towards achieving the Strategic Directions. This Report Card will be an annual commitment to the students, staff, families and communities we serve to help you understand our progress towards the Strategic Plan. Together, we are creating schools where all students are able to reach their full potential on their chosen pathway in learning and life.

The following provides an overview of achievements and outcomes from the Board Improvement and Equity Plan for the 2023-24 school year.



Achievement

Every student will succeed academically

Learn More

Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity

Every student and staff member has equitable opportunities in an environment free from discrimination

Learn More





Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement

Every student and staff member will learn and work in environments that engage them and support their mental health and well-being

Learn More

Pathways and Transitions

Every student is prepared for the next step in their elementary and secondary education and their postsecondary pathway

Learn More



Transforming Education

We are transforming education to prepare students for success in the future. The world is changing and we know that students upon graduation will be faced with new opportunities and challenges that we haven't even considered. We also know that the current education system does not serve all students well. Often a student's identity and socioeconomic status predict their outcomes in school. In order to foster global citizens who are prepared for their future pathways, we need to re-envision the education system. At WRDSB, we are committed to Transforming Education. This is not work we can do alone and invite students, families, community members, educators and service leaders, as well as other industry and thought leaders to join us in transforming education to better serve all students.

BOARD IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY PLAN



In 2023-24, the WRDSB continued to support the implementation of the Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP). The BIEP is the roadmap to accomplishing the Strategic Directions of the Strategic Plan. The WRDSB has incorporated the Student Achievement Plan requirements within the BIEP.

The BIEP is one of the ways WRDSB reviews its progress and the outcomes of specific strategies to support student achievement and well-being in alignment with the Strategic Plan.
We focused on the use of evidence-based instructional practices and implementation of:

- **Multi-year Structured Literacy Plan**
- **Math Achievement Action Plan**

We continue to build on our commitment to improving well-being, equity and student pathways, and to transform education, including:

- **Supporting WRDSB schools to create environments where students feel a sense of connection and belonging**
- **Sovereignty-affirming and equity leadership competencies**

The four areas of the BIEP are:

- **Achievement**
- **Sovereignty, human rights and equity**
- **Mental health, well-being and engagement**
- **Pathways and transitions**

Read more about the results of our 2023-2024 Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP).

Learner Profile

The learner profile is made up of the skills and attributes students need to be successful in learning and in life as we move toward the 22nd century. The Learner Profile is designed to ensure students have the ability to succeed academically in the classroom, and have the skills to excel in their future careers, whatever their chosen pathway. It was developed in direct consultation with students, to ensure it responds to their needs.

When they graduate, WRDSB students will be:



Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON
N2C 2R5

Find us on social media

A Message from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am pleased to celebrate the incredible accomplishments of staff and students throughout the 2023-24 school year as we continue to work together to implement our multi-year Strategic Plan.



Each day, we are focused on our vision of "Celebrating the gifts of each and every student by creating limitless opportunities for them to flourish, grow and become their best selves."

As a Board of Trustees and in the decisions that we make to support student success and well-being, we focus on the six Strategic Directions to guide our work:

- Centring students
- Support for student and staff well-being
- Equitable opportunities and outcomes
- Strengthen connections through family and community engagement
- Increase student learning through engagement
- Collaboration and compassion for transformation

As Chairperson, I am proud of the way we work together with WRDSB staff to help the students we serve reach their full potential. Throughout the 2023-24 school year we have received updates and highlights of the WRDSB's progress on its Board Improvement and Equity Plan, the Math Achievement Action Plan and Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan. We know that change takes time to take root and we are proud of the collective work of students, staff, families, caregivers and community members to improve academic outcomes and opportunities for all of the students we serve.

Increasing knowledge and understanding of literacy and math will ensure WRDSB students are set up on a path for success. Although there is still work to do, we have put in place the structures and plans to create meaningful change. WRDSB staff continue to build their learning and capacity to ensure that they are able to meet the needs of each student. We are proud of the dedicated staff who work tirelessly each day to create welcoming and engaging learning environments for all our students. Staff demonstrate a commitment to supporting student achievement and well-being inside and outside the classroom; from running a volunteer hockey program, hosting family and caregiver support sessions on using assistive technology tools and information and resources from psychology staff, to keeping our school facilities updated and accessible and providing engaging educational and extracurricular activities. We continue to provide learning opportunities that will expand students' postsecondary pathways.

It has been my pleasure to lead Trustees and Student Trustees as we engage in governance and decision-making to help all WRDSB students reach their full potential. An important part of our work includes providing accountability and transparency for the public we serve. To do this, we will continue to work together with staff, parents and caregivers, and community members to support student achievement and well-being.

We are continuously improving the ways we communicate with families and communities as partners in students' education. We remain committed to keeping you informed about our progress and measuring our success. Our Community Report Card highlights our progress with the Strategic Plan. We also continue to highlight progress through our BIEP, which incorporates several performance indicators to measure our progress. Our process for policy review includes regular feedback opportunities from the community and the live stream of Board Meetings helps to make Board decisions and governance accessible and transparent to all. Families and caregivers can also visit EngageWRDSB to learn about community engagement opportunities.

The WRDSB is transforming education and working to ensure that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. The many stories and highlights from the 2023-24 school year that are highlighted in this year's Annual Report showcase the way that WRDSB is supporting students to thrive and the work is grounded by the foundation set by our Strategic Plan.

Trustees are also engaged in ongoing professional development offered by the Ministry of Education and the Ontario Public School Boards Association, as well as a human rights training series where trustees engaged in learning alongside senior staff, union, professional association leaders and senior management. Together, the WRDSB is building a culture of human rights and moving from words to actions.

We know it is important for all WRDSB students to feel a sense of belonging in their school communities in order to learn and support their overall well-being. Together, we continue to promote equitable and inclusive learning opportunities to foster a culture of sovereignty, human rights and equity in the WRDSB.

Students are at the center of all of our decision-making and we continue to work together with parents and caregivers as partners in their education to ensure student success. Throughout the past year, Trustees engaged with students, parents, families and caregivers, staff and the community, listening and responding to feedback.

We continue to advocate for the constituents we serve on both local and provincial issues, from the funding available to school boards to issues that are important to our communities. We are committed to creating a culture of consultation and transparency with the communities we serve.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I want to extend my appreciation to all WRDSB employees, Senior Leadership and Director chanicka for their continued commitment to supporting WRDSB students' academic success and well-being. Together, we will create learning environments where all students excel as they become skilled, caring, and compassionate global citizens.



Joanne Weston
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

The Waterloo Region District School Board of Trustees



Joanne Weston
Chairperson
Municipality:
Kitchener



Kathleen Woodcock
Vice-Chair
Municipality:
Waterloo/Wilmot



Bill Cody
Municipality:
Cambridge/North Dumfries



Samantha Estoesta
Municipality:
Waterloo / Wilmot



Carla Johnson

Municipality:

Cambridge / North Dumfries



Joe Meissner

Municipality:

Woolwich / Wellesley



Scott Piatkowski

Municipality:

Waterloo / Wilmot



Maedith Radlein

Municipality:

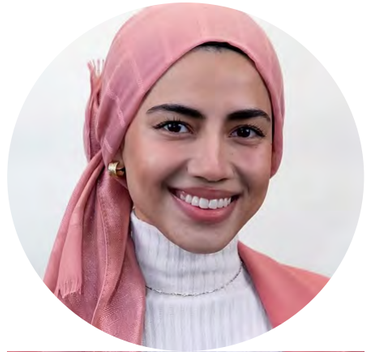
Kitchener



Mike Ramsay

Municipality:

Kitchener



Meena Waseem

Municipality:

Kitchener



Cindy Watson

Municipality:

Cambridge/North Dumfries

Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON
N2C 2R5

Find us on social media

Trustees



Maedith Radlein

ROLE: Chair
MUNICIPALITY: Kitchener
PHONE: 519-635-1670
EMAIL: maedith_radlein@wrdsb.ca (mailto:maedith_radlein@wrdsb.ca)

I'm looking forward to representing the interests of parents, staff and students as a trustee. I worked as a teacher and principal with the WRDSB. My two children graduated from Bluevale C.I. where I served on the School Council. On retirement I continued my involvement in education as a Field Supervisor in the Faculty of Education at Wilfrid Laurier.

Waterloo Region has been my home since immigrating from Jamaica in 1987. Over the years I have been continuously involved in the community, volunteering with many organizations including Waterloo Minor Soccer, K-W YWCA, the Child Witness Centre and Mennonite Central Committee as well as the Region and cities of Waterloo & Kitchener. My commitment to all students is to create a positive learning environment; to value you for who you are; to nurture your uniqueness and work to ensure that you achieve successful outcomes. My commitment to parents is to listen and work to give your child the resources and conditions to optimize learning. My commitment to school staff is to value your contributions and hard work while working to build/support partnerships that give you the support you need.

I will work with staff and parents to facilitate respectful and open communication. Each school is its own community and the best support for its students lies in that relationship.

View correspondence sent on behalf of the Chairperson of the Board of the Trustees (https://www.wrdsb.ca/trustees/chairperson-correspondence/)



Meena Waseem

ROLE: Vice-Chair
MUNICIPALITY: Kitchener
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EMAIL: meena_waseem@wrdsb.ca (mailto:meena_waseem@wrdsb.ca)

I am honoured to work with staff, families, and students to create an inclusive and accessible working and learning environment at the WRDSB. With over a decade of experience working directly with families in our community, I believe every student's unique skills and talents thrive when they are holistically supported in environments that nurture their growth.

My background is at the intersection of education and health equity. I've designed and facilitated literacy, well-being, nutrition, and leadership development programs in our region to holistically improve child and family outcomes. For 6 years, I was also a facilitator and public speaker through the Canadian Mental Health Association of Waterloo-Wellington, visiting schools in our region to educate students and educators on topics such as mental health, disabilities, bullying, and more.

I am passionate about driving the oversight of our Board's Strategic Plan and creating an inclusive learning environment for every student in our system. My goal as a trustee is to show up with empathy at the board table, provide transparency, and build bridges of understanding within our community. I love working with families from all walks of life so I encourage you to connect with me.

When I'm not at the Board table, you can usually find me reading a good book, trying new cuisines, or spending quality time with my friends and family.



Bill Cody

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It is a privilege and honour to be elected as School Trustee for Cambridge and North Dumfries. Offering my time and skills to help ensure our children receive the best education possible is the best investment I can make in my community. Cambridge is where I was born and raised, where I went to school, and where our children went to school. Professionally and over the course of a few decades, I have worked in various aspects of the transportation industry and volunteered within our community.

A good education is essential, contributing to personal success and mental well-being. As an alternative to college and university, trades offer students well-paying, meaningful careers and I will support and promote opportunities in our schools that bring back skilled trades as a solid career path. In schools and within our communities, I will prioritize safety for all students to ensure that we have a safe learning environment. Our ability to communicate is critical to keeping us connected, understanding one another, and respecting differences among us.

Our youth are our future leaders and their success depends on what is taught, and as your trustee, I will focus on our most important asset – our children's education. I hope to bring another perspective to the board and will serve with understanding, integrity and hard work.



Samantha Estoesta

MUNICIPALITY: Waterloo / Wilmot
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EMAIL: samantha_estoesta@wrdsb.ca (mailto:samantha_estoesta@wrdsb.ca)

It is an honour to represent the communities of Waterloo and Wilmot. As a Trustee on the Waterloo Region District School Board, my primary objective is to foster an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students. I firmly believe that every student should have access to quality education, regardless of their background or lived experiences. To achieve this, I will advocate for policies and initiatives that work towards ensuring that every student receives the opportunities needed to thrive.

In this rapidly evolving digital age, I am enthusiastic about integrating emerging technologies into our educational landscape. By embracing innovative tools and approaches, we can empower our diverse student community, preparing them to face the challenges of the future. As we explore cutting-edge technologies, I am dedicated to ensuring that they are utilized inclusively, catering to the unique needs of each student. This can only be achieved if our educators and staff are supported with the tools and resources that they need.

Beyond my role as a Trustee, I actively engage with the community and collaborate with local organizations to enhance the educational experience for our students. Listening to the voices of parents, educators, and community members guides my decision-making process, ensuring that we create a student-centric and equitable educational system.

When I'm not busy helping to create a more equitable world, you can find me walking the trails around Waterloo Region with my family, including a child who just started her WRDSB student journey in the fall of 2022, and our rescue dog, Rosie.



Carla Johnson

MUNICIPALITY: Cambridge / North Dumfries
PHONE: 226-753-7292
EMAIL: carla_johnson@wrdsb.ca (mailto:carla_johnson@wrdsb.ca)

It is truly an honour to serve Cambridge & North Dumfries as a Trustee. The WRDSB was my employer for my career as a middle school teacher. I have seen firsthand how vital our public education system is to our whole community. I look forward to championing all the creative and genius things happening in our schools. In spite of the many challenges these last few years, teachers and education workers continue to bring compassion and creativity to their classrooms every day. Our schools embrace every student that walks through our doors and nurtures the intelligence and growth of each individual. I will listen closely to our community and advocate for the needs and concerns. Together, we have the crucial job of preparing our students to be astute leaders for the future and I am very proud to be a partner in this great work.



Joe Meissner

MUNICIPALITY: Woolwich / Wellesley
PHONE: 226-750-6199
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I am honored to serve as the trustee representing Woolwich and Wellesley townships, with a strong commitment to advocating for inclusive, accessible, and safe learning environments at the board table. Collaboration is a cornerstone of my approach, as I firmly believe in working hand in hand with parents, families, and community groups to develop and implement policies and initiatives that align with our shared vision of an inclusive and equitable education system.

With over a decade of experience as an educator in the post-secondary sector and a career dedicated to academia, I deeply understand the importance of creating safe and affirming spaces for students and staff within the classroom. During my Masters of Education, I conducted research on understanding the impact of student affect on experiential learning environments, utilizing evidence-based practices. This academic foundation equips me with a strong grasp of educational principles and practices, enabling me to make effective contributions to the betterment of our school system.

Furthermore, I am a proud advocate for all education workers, recognizing the invaluable expertise they bring to our educational system. It is essential that they receive the support, resources, and recognition they deserve for their pivotal role in shaping the future of our students. Together, we can create an environment where every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

I firmly believe that by aligning our efforts with the board's **strategic plan (https://www.wrdsb.ca/learning/strategic-plan/)** and maintaining a commitment to learning, we can collectively pave the way for a brighter future for our students and our community as a whole.



Scott Piatkowski

MUNICIPALITY: Waterloo / Wilmot
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In October 2018, I was honoured to have been chosen by the voters of Waterloo and Wilmot Township to represent them on the Waterloo Region District School Board. In October 2022, I was re-elected to a second term. My tenure as a Trustee has included serving as Vice-Chair for 2020/2021 and Chairperson of the Board for 2021/2022.

I currently serve on the following committees:

- Business Services Standing Committee (Chair)
- Student Achievement and Well-being Standing Committee
- Agenda Development Committee
- Audit Committee
- Discipline Committee
- Committee Structure Ad Hoc
- Consultation Ad Hoc

Previously, I have served on the Policy Working Group, the Trustee Self-Evaluation Committee, the Past Director's Bursary Committee, the School-Year Calendar Committee, the School Resource Officer Review Ad Hoc Committee, the Suspension Review Ad Hoc Committee (as Co-Chair), the Trustee Code of Conduct Review Committee, the French Immersion Review Committee, and the Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. Board of Directors.

I also serve as the WRDSB's Delegate to the Ontario Public School Boards Association, and previously served on both their Board of Directors and Policy Development Work Team.

I'm a proud graduate of both Eastwood Collegiate and Wilfrid Laurier University, and the proud parent/step-parent of four KCI graduates.

In my professional life, I work for a national non-governmental organization that promotes the growth and sustainability of affordable housing communities across Canada. I have also served as the Vice-President of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, as a minor soccer coach, and as a volunteer facilitator with the Co-operative Young Leaders program.

Feel free to follow me on **Bluesky (https://bsky.app/profile/scottpiatkowski.bsky.social)** or **Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/ScottPiatkowskiWRDSB)**, or to contact me at the email and phone number provided above.



Mike Ramsay

MUNICIPALITY: Kitchener
PHONE: 519-502-8449
EMAIL: mike_ramsay@wrdsb.ca (mailto:mike_ramsay@wrdsb.ca)

I have served as a Trustee since 1989, not because of what I could gain but for what I could give. Having served the Canadian public for over 35 years as a soldier, police officer, public servant, trustee and a community volunteer, I have gained a variety of valuable knowledge and experience that I believe helps me to make sound decisions as a trustee. My story is not uncommon. I immigrated to Canada in my early teens and soon found myself living on my own while trying to get an education and make something of myself. The dedicated staff of Kitchener Collegiate Institute invested in me and this helped form the foundation for my successes in life. They put my interests ahead of their own and taught me that it was my responsibility to pay it forward. That's why I serve you as a trustee. While I always aim to strike a balance that meets everyone's needs, student and public interest are my priority governing all of my decisions as a trustee. The decisions made by trustees today can affect an entire generation; they need to be the right decisions for the right reasons.



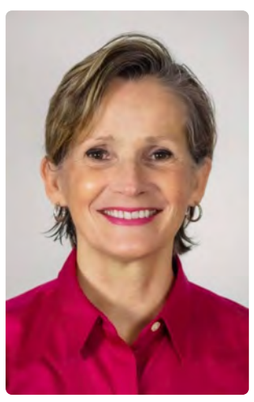
Joanne Weston

MUNICIPALITY: Kitchener
PHONE: 226-752-7781
EMAIL: joanne_weston@wrdsb.ca (mailto:joanne_weston@wrdsb.ca)

It is my honour to serve as the Vice-Chair on the Waterloo Region District School Board and to be elected for my second term as a Trustee in Kitchener. My focus continues to be supporting quality public education, safe, inclusive learning and working environments for students and staff, and engaging with families and the community.

I am currently serving on the Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. Board of Directors, Agenda Development, Director's Performance Appraisal, Discipline and Past Director's Bursary committees, the Policy Working Group and as a Student Trustee Mentor. I have served as Vice Chair, Past Chair and on the Parent Involvement, French Immersion Review and Suspension Review Ad Hoc committees, as well as as the WRDSB's representative on the Board of Directors of the Ontario Public School Boards Association.

I am the proud mother of three graduates of the WRDSB. I have lived, worked and volunteered in Waterloo Region for 25+ years: currently residing in Kitchener and working in post-secondary education. Prior to being elected as a Trustee, I was a long-serving WRDSB volunteer where I advocated for programs that support student achievement and wellbeing, equity, and parent engagement. I look forward to working with my fellow trustees, families, staff and the community to support staff and help students reach their full potential.



Cindy Watson

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Each and every student is valued, belongs and their academic achievement and well-being should be our primary focus according to the Education Act. Success is demonstrated by students who achieve their full potential, students with disabilities are given the best support, parents are treated as valued partners, staff has been given adequate resources and feels supported and all voices are valued and included in the decision-making process.

Students need strong literacy and numeracy skills; mental health supports and gaps in education need to be addressed. Students with disabilities need early intervention and resources that help them succeed.

All student, parent/guardian, staff and community members deserve to be included in the decision-making process with two-way communication that is open, transparent and accountable. I believe boards make better policy when students, parents/guardians, staff and community voices are valued and included.

Boards that embrace diversity of opinion and a culture of freedom generate new and creative ideas and solutions. Freedom that allows the sharing of different ideas and opinions in a respectful manner create a culture that acknowledges and understands that “everyone” plays a part and no contribution is insignificant.



Kathleen Woodcock

MUNICIPALITY: Waterloo / Wilmot
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I am honoured to be elected for a sixth term as Trustee for Waterloo/Wilmot. During my years on the Board, I have actively participated as a member of a variety of standing, statutory and ad hoc committees including strategic planning, audit, agenda development, superintendent selection, school year calendar and Director’s performance review. I have served as WRDSB chair, vice-chair and past chair. I am currently serving a two-year term as First Vice-President of the Ontario Public School Boards Association.

As an advocate for public education, I put students first to ensure that schools provide a safe, inclusive learning environment so all students achieve success. As the WRDSB continues to implement the strategic plan, I engage with stakeholders on issues that impact our students and school communities. I believe in a strong public education system that is the cornerstone of democracy. I have experienced an excellent public education system, starting in a one-room schoolhouse many years ago. My children have also experienced and benefited from a public education. It is exciting to watch my grandchildren as they experience their public education. As a trustee, having the opportunity to be involved in the ongoing success of kids in Waterloo Region and to celebrate their achievements in school and in life allows me to give back to my community.

I have lived in Waterloo Region since 1975, the last 30+ years in Westvale. I am a graduate of WLU (MSW 2003 (Retired), BA 1978). I am retired from the Community Services Department with the City of Kitchener. I am an associate member of the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 113, Dresden, an avid gardener, an ‘enthusiastic’ golfer, and a proud mother and grandmother.

This information expires once printed. Please always refer to the online version for the most current information.

A Message from Director of Education jeewan chanicka

The 2023-24 Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Annual Report highlights the work of students, staff and community members in support of the six strategic directions laid out in our Strategic Plan. It focuses on telling the stories behind the Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP), as we work together in service of supporting student achievement and well-being.



I am proud of all of the work we accomplished together in the 2023-24 school year. We shared a collective vision for Transforming Education and create an education system that serves all students. We also invited thought leaders, educators and students to join us in the DreamEd conversation to dream about an education system that centres student voice and prioritizes equitable opportunities and outcomes for students.

In the second year of the implementation the WRDSB Strategic Plan and Conditions for Learning, we continue to prioritize evidence-based instructional practices.

We aligned the Board Improvement and Equity Plan with the Ministry of Education's Student Achievement Plan. We also built on our commitment to ensuring that identity and social location no longer predict outcomes for students, WRDSB's North Star. We have summarized our performance indicators and reflected on the outcomes of the strategies and actions we put in place.

EQAO Assessments

We continue to grow as a district to build a better and stronger public education system that works for all children.

As we continue on this trajectory of growth we are shifting pedagogical practices in math and literacy, we know that there will be some opportunities and challenges. Research on organizational change suggests that implementation dips occur when organizations such as our school board engage in these full-scale, system-wide changes.

We also know that students are still recovering from the learning loss experienced as a result of the global pandemic. Something that we take seriously and continue to prioritize as we work on a system that is focused on both student achievement and well-being.

However, as we build the capacity of educators and system leaders, we are noticing increased confidence in teaching a structured approach to literacy and targeted interventions and tiered instructional strategies to support math learning.

We know there is still work to do, as evidence in the 2023-24 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results. We continue to set high expectations for all students and these EQAO results highlight areas for each school to focus on to enhance and further improve student learning and well-being. But this is only one piece of the broader picture. We also look to other data points, including the Acadience Early Screener, reading diagnostic assessments (e.g., Oral Reading Fluency, Core Phonics etc.), and math assessments (e.g., Leaps and Bounds and centrally developed diagnostics), as well as observation, conversation, and demonstrations of student learning, to build a more comprehensive understanding of student learning.

Read more about the WRDSB's 2023-34 EQAO assessment results.



Student Achievement

We know it will take time to see system-wide changes, but we are proud of the feedback we are receiving from students, families and staff on how the evidence-based approach to literacy and math instruction and interventions are fostering a love of learning.

At the heart of the work of every WRDSB staff member is supporting student academic achievement and well-being. We are committed to creating welcoming and inclusive schools where all students can feel a sense of belonging and thrive.

In 2023-24, we publicly shared two multi-year plans that are leading our work to support literacy and math:

- Multi-year Structured Literacy Plan
- Math Achievement Action Plan

WRDSB continues its multi-year plans to overhaul our approach to teaching literacy - an approach that spans Kindergarten to graduation. Our work to implement the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan is guided by:

- Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Report
- Ministry of Education directives and curriculum

Educators are building students' learning and experiences to:

- Develop foundational reading skills
- Progressively increase fluency

We know that developing literacy skills at a young age has lifelong impacts. This is why we are focused on students reading at grade level by the end of Grade 2 and have built this focus area into our Board Improvement and Equity Plan. To do this work, we are building administrator and educator capacity and we are pleased with the results to date. Teachers who completed professional learning reported feeling more comfortable teaching a structured approach to literacy. Educators feel more competent with how to facilitate the diagnostic assessments.

We continue to see an increase in the number of educators engaging in the implementation of evidence-based approaches to literacy. We are also seeing students demonstrating improvement in their reading skills when using evidence-based reading intervention initiatives (Lexia). The positive responses from educators and students tells us that we are on the right track.

For example, Grade 2 students at Stewart Avenue Public School are approaching reading and writing with a sense of curiosity and exploration, unafraid to make mistakes, ask questions, and learn from one another.



In the Fall of 2023, we launched the WRDSB Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP). The objectives of the MAAP are to improve mathematics achievement and success to better prepare students for success in the classroom and in their futures. We focus on a tiered approach which targets the math learning needs of each individual student. The plan is structured on:

- Curriculum implementation
- Educator math content training
- Knowing the mathematics learner

We have placed Grades 7 and 8 math intervention specialists in targeted schools to work alongside administrators and educators to build instructional strategies and support for implementing the MAAP.

The benefits of our focused efforts in improving students' mathematics literacy include:

- Increased mathematical understanding

- Increased sense of belonging and confidence

Students like those at Huron Heights Secondary School's de-streamed Grade 10 math class are benefitting from learning experiences offered by small group instruction opportunities. Students have the opportunity to discuss their thinking and learn from each other.



We value families and caregivers as important partners in their children's education. In order to support school-to-home connections, we provided information and resources to help families support their children's learning. In May 2024, we launched new resources to support Multilingual Language Learners (MLL), families and caregivers. We also challenged community organizations to join us in A Region that Reads Together, as we all benefit when we support literacy for students and their families in Waterloo Region. Additional math resources for families and caregivers were shared as part of the MAAP. Together, we will help students meet their educational goals and be prepared for their future pathways.



Suspensions and Expulsions

We continue to take an anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-carceral approach to suspensions and expulsions. Furthering administrator and educator capacity in a progressive discipline approach has had positive results. We are

fostering a human rights culture at WRDSB so that all students feel a sense of connection and belonging at school. Read the Board Improvement and Equity Plan for specific actions related to suspensions and expulsions.

Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement

Every student and staff member should be provided with positive learning and work spaces that promote their mental health and well-being. We know that students' mental health has a direct impact on their academic achievement, which is why WRDSB continues to prioritize support and services that will help all students reach their full potential.

This spring, WRDSB students in Grades 4-12 completed the Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey. The survey results help us to better understand and respond to the needs of our students.

We continue to see students leading the conversation about their mental health and well-being. In April 2024, approximately 150 WRDSB students from secondary schools across WRDSB gathered for the second annual Student Wellness Conference. Through centring students' voices in the conference, we equip them with the tools they need to increase their mental health literacy and share information with their peers.

In February 2024, I was honoured to be the keynote speaker and panelist at the Harmony Movement Educators Anti-Racism Conference in Toronto. Joined by a WRDSB social worker and the Psychology and Social Work Lead, we discussed the challenges, barriers and limits of equity and inclusion practice school boards face when working to ensure schools are welcoming to all students.

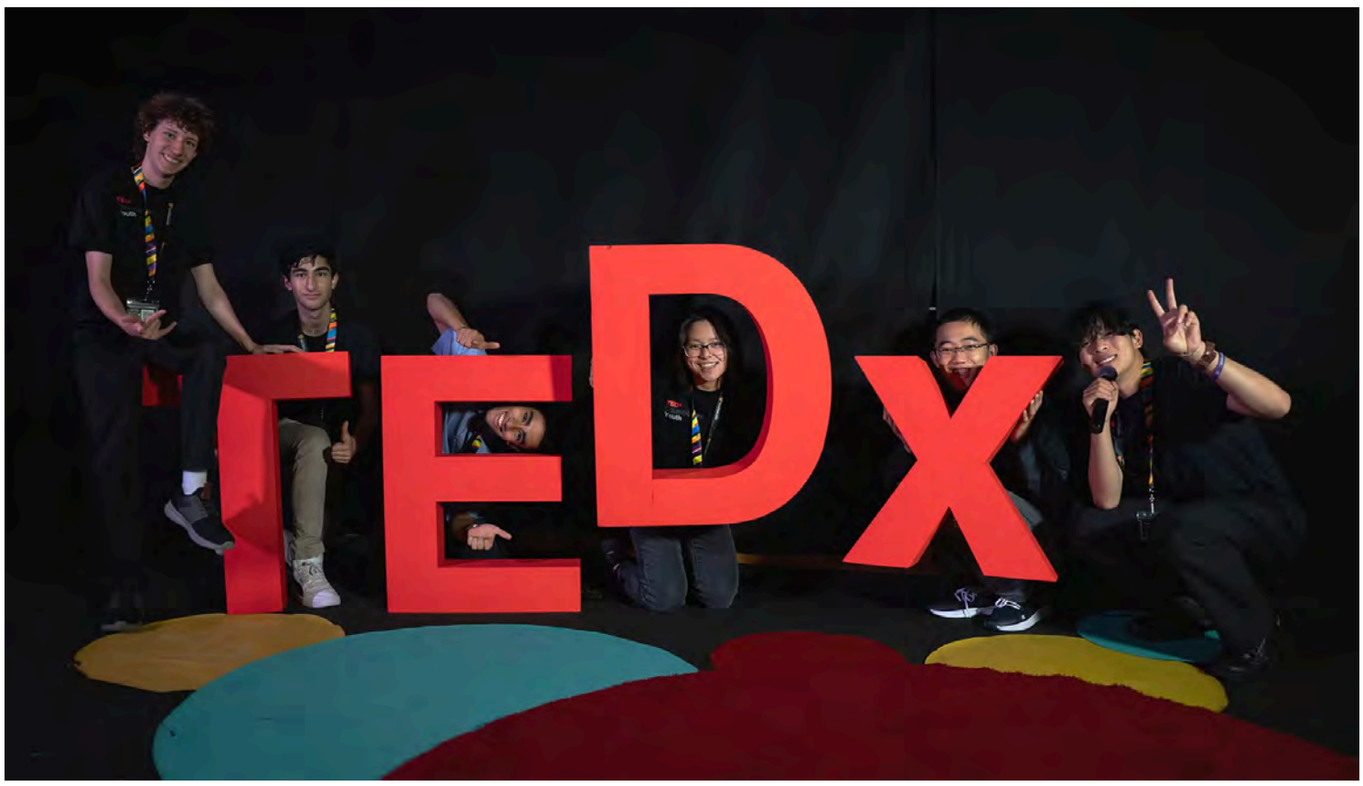


We also provide opportunities for students to connect with their peers across the system throughout the school year, such as Black Brilliance and school-based groups (e.g. Affinity Groups, GSAs, Student well-being teams). WRDSB also promotes equity, human rights, inclusion education and understanding through recognition of Dates of Importance and Creed Accommodation Days.

As outlined in our WRDSB Engagement Charter, we commit to transparency, accountability and keeping families informed. Supporting student achievement and well-being is a shared goal with families and community members and we have outlined in our framework to transform education through engagement how we will meaningfully engage in an open, accessible, inclusive and responsive way.

I am thankful for the many ways our communities come together and offer support for students to thrive. In December 2023, the WRDSB community raised more than $46,000 to provide healthy and nutritious foods to students. Waterloo Education Foundation Inc. (WEFI) reaffirmed its commitment to funding our partners at Nutrition for Learning, Food4Kids Waterloo Region and the May Court Club of Kitchener-Waterloo to address food insecurity. WEFI also provided funding to support WEFI

Winter Wear, which provides students equitable access to warm clothing. At the end of the school year, we celebrated a successful fundraising campaign for KidsAbility, which raised more than $26,025 to support students and families in Waterloo Region to reach their communication, social, physical and behavioural goals. Thank you to everyone who contributed to make a difference for youth in our area.



Student Voice

Helping students to succeed academically and reach their full potential is at the core of our daily work. WRDSB serves approximately 65,000 students and one of the ways that we are ensuring that we are meeting their needs is by intentionally centring student agency and voice in decisions about their education. By empowering students to take an active role in transforming the education system, they will have an increased sense of connection and belonging, as well as agency in their academic trajectory.

Student Roundtables hosted across the system this year discussed issues that are most important to WRDSB youth. It is an important opportunity for staff to hear first-hand from students how to transform education to better support their learning.

I love every opportunity I have to visit schools and connect with students, staff and families. Last year I invited students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 to submit questions to me to learn more about myself, and the Board's accomplishments and district plans. We had so many submissions, we had to split it into two video responses!

We are also inviting students to share their experiences and reflections on events happening in their schools and communities through #StudentVoice articles. It is important to bring student voice into the Director's Office, and we were fortunate to welcome two students into the Communications Department this past year as co-op students and lend their skills and expertise to our work. There are outstanding students in the WRDSB who are demonstrating leadership amongst their peers, receiving international awards, tackling global issues and finding solutions to create change in their communities and beyond.



Building a Culture of Human Rights

We are building a culture of human rights within the WRDSB. This is not always easy, but it is important work to ensure that all students and staff feel welcome, safe and a sense of belonging. The Human Rights Branch Annual Report is an opportunity for us to share with students, staff and families our progress in this work. We know that we must continue to support staff in their learning journey and to help turn words into actions. Trustees, senior staff, union, professional association leaders and senior management gathered for focused learning about Human Rights. We continue to grow our Sovereignty Affirming and Equity Competencies for system and school leaders, we are moving from learning to embedded practice. We continue to focus on this very important professional development and capacity building because we understand that it is the right thing to do in service of our students, as well as reinforces our obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.



From job fairs to recruit Indigenous, Black and racialized employees, updating our hiring policy to support fair, equitable and inclusive hiring, to hosting our first Advancing Anti-Ableism in Education Symposium in May 2024, these are some of the examples of how WRDSB is building a culture of human rights. The results of the 2024 Workforce Census will help to inform

whether our actions are making a difference in the demographic makeup of our staff to better reflect the students and families we serve.

These changes are also extending to how we build new schools. For example, we held a land ceremony for the New South Kitchener Elementary School, led by Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Myeengun Henry, before any work began on the site. Board-wide, our Facilities Services Team is busy improving accessibility so that students and families have equitable access to programs and services to all of our buildings. As our website is one of the main forms of communication with students, families and caregivers, we have integrated the AccessiBe Accessibility Interface on our main website and secondary school websites to provide easier access to information based on individual needs, including accessibility modifications to provide more equitable and accessible communications.

There are many more big and small structural and systemic changes that we continue to make in order to ensure create equitable opportunities for students, staff and families in environments free from discrimination or barriers.

Dreaming about the Future of Education

2024 gave us an opportunity to reflect on the work we are doing to shift the organization, update systems and structures and build a shared vision for an education system that prepares students for success towards the 22nd century. To prepare students for life in a globalized society, we aim to be a world leader in transforming education from WRDSB. We released the Transforming Education: How the WRDSB is preparing students for a changing world Thought Paper, which outlines the five areas we believe are necessary for building an education system of the future:

- Building strong foundations for learning
- Centring students and their well-being
- Supporting students' pathways
- Innovating through design thinking
- Collaborating with families and communities

Our commitment is to change the trajectory of public education and build something new that supports all students to be successful. In order to do this, we have to dare to dream together so we can innovate, transform and create something new for all of us.

As we work together to transform education, we continue to invite others to join our conversation and to dream about what a future education system could and should look like. It has been incredible to watch how educators, industry and thought leaders join the DreamEd initiative to reimagine how we teach and engage students in their learning. I have been speaking with other leaders through the DreamEd Podcast in order to listen and learn from the diverse perspectives and expertise on how to support a 22nd century learner to fulfil their full potential. I encourage you to subscribe and join the conversation!



Looking Ahead

We accomplished so much during the 2023-24 school year and I am proud of the partnerships between students, staff, families, caregivers and community members to support student success and well-being. Our Strategic Plan, Board Improvement and Equity Plan, Multi-year Structured Literacy Plan and Math Achievement Action Plan have created a solid foundation for the system and we will continue to build capacity, measure our success and share our learning with the community. As partners in education, we continue to work with families, caregivers and community members to support accessible and transparent engagement in their child's learning.

Together, we will transform education, centre student voice and lead our system from a culture of human rights.

If last year was any indication of what we can do when we work together in service of students, I am excited for what the 2024-25 school year brings.



Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
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A Message from Student Trustees Devansh Lakhanpal and Feiyang Luo



We are honoured to serve the students of the Waterloo Region District School Board as their voices on the Board of Trustees.

It is hard to believe that we are well into the 2024-25 school year and have completed a few months in our roles as Student Trustees.Representing our peers and bringing student perspectives to the forefront of the Board's decisions has been a privilege.

We are motivated by helping to connect students across schools and build community throughout the WRDSB. One of the key ways we do this is through the Student Roundtables, which allow us to hear directly from students and understand what matters most to them. However, we recognize that not everyone can participate in this format. That's why we encourage all students to engage in their school communities. By doing so, they can spark meaningful change locally, creating ripples of impact throughout the WRDSB.

WRDSB students are making positive and meaningful changes in their schools and communities. From tackling real-world problems, such as developing an app for early diagnosis and treatment amblyopia (commonly known as 'lazy eye'); to engaging in conversations about environmental sustainability, Artificial Intelligence and improving newcomers' experiences; demonstrating leadership in eliminating discrimination at school; and receiving international recognition for their films, poetry, robotics and electric vehicle challenge, students continue to use their voice to make the WRDSB and their communities better.

As Student Trustees, we are advocates for all WRDSB students. We work to echo and amplify student voices at the Board table and across the school board every day.

A significant part of our advocacy involves participating in various WRDSB committees. Alongside passionate students, staff, and community members, we are honored to contribute to:

- Student Roundtable
- Equity and Inclusion Committee
- Environmental Sustainability Committee
- Policy Working Group
- Internet Content Filtering Committee
- Tim Walker Memorial Award Committee

As we continue through the 2024-25 school year, we will continue to work as dedicated advocates for all WRDSB students. We feel that every WRDSB student should have a voice in shaping the future of their education. Reflecting on the past year, we are proud of how students have collaborated with staff to support learning and well-being while actively shaping their communities.

We encourage all WRDSB students to connect with us through email or Instagram to provide feedback, ask questions, or seek support.

On behalf of current, future, and past Student Trustees, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported our mission to prioritize students. To the wonderful students of WRDSB, it has been, is, and will forever be an honour to serve you!

Devansh Lakhanpal and Feiyang Luo
2024-25 Student Trustees

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By the Numbers

At the June 12, 2024 Special Board Meeting, Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) trustees approved a balanced budge. The 2024-25 school year budget includes $899.5M in operating budget and a capital budget of $91.4M. The total budget is $991 million.

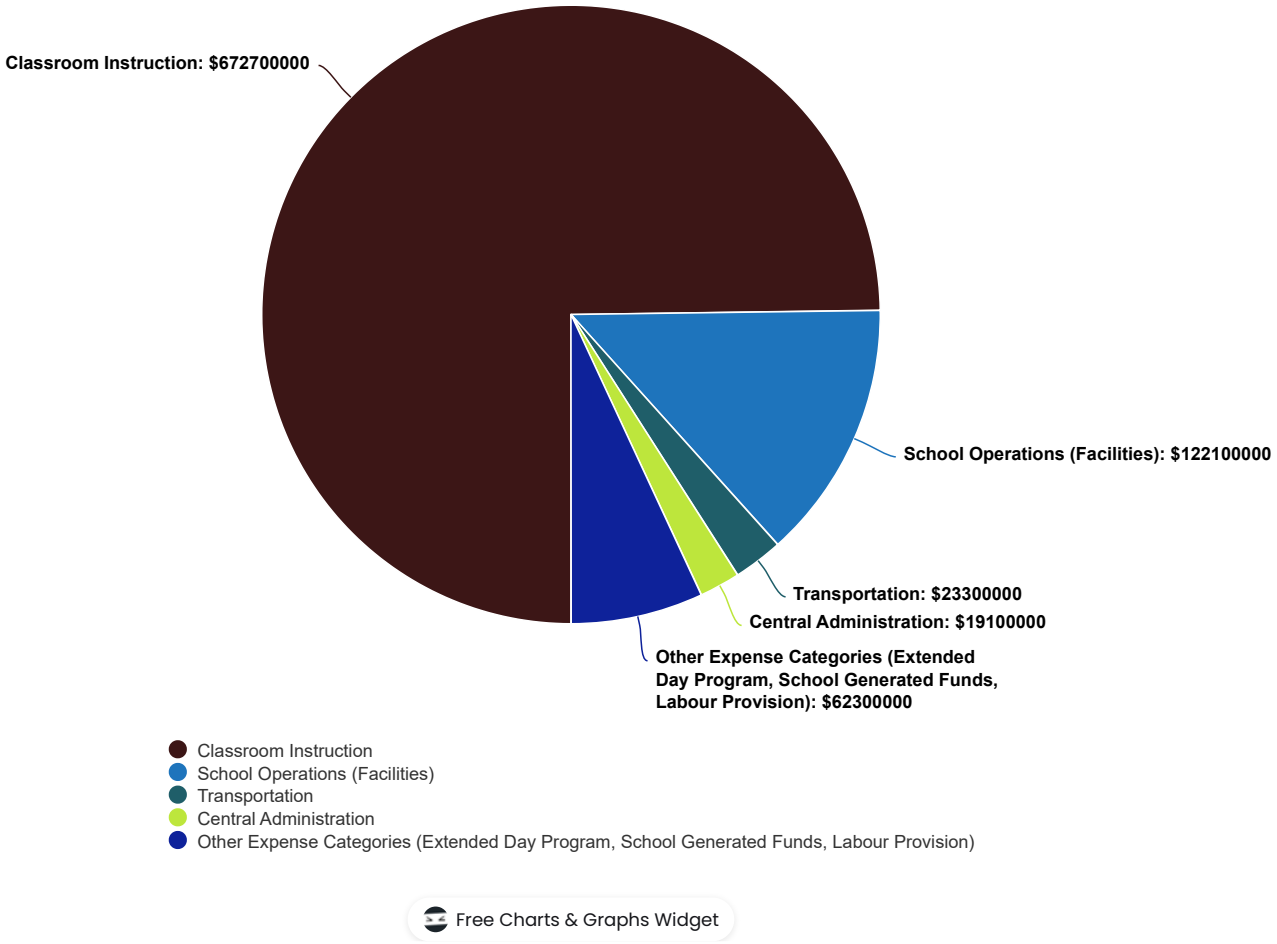
The WRDSB's budget is more than just numbers – it represents staff and facilities that support the academic success and well-being of students each day. The WRDSB has been prudent and fiscally responsible in its spending for several years. WRDSB maintains support for literacy, math, staff and student well-being, while ensuring a balanced budget.

The development of the WRDSB's operating budget includes many factors which can change over the course of a school year. The process to develop the annual operating budget include:

- Obtaining Ministry funding and directives
- Establishing the WRDSB's financial position (accumulated surplus and deficit)
- Alignment with the WRDSB's Strategic Plan

WRDSB created a Budget Summary to increase transparency, accountability and to help families, caregivers and community members better understand our expenses, sources of revenue, and provincial funding.
How we spend our funding is directly connected to our operational goals:

- Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan
- Math Achievement Action Plan
- Graduation Pathways and Transitions
- Mental Health, Well-Being and Engagement



Enrollment in WRDSB

65,070

Total Students

44,678

Elementary Students

20,393

Secondary Students



123

Total Number of Schools



~11,000

Total Number of Employees



4,939

Extended Day Enrolment

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Achievement



For all students to succeed academically, we must work collectively with families, caregivers and community members to transform education. We continue to prioritize centring student agency and voice in their learning and teach skills and ways of thinking that will benefit them beyond graduation as they take their next steps on their chosen pathway.



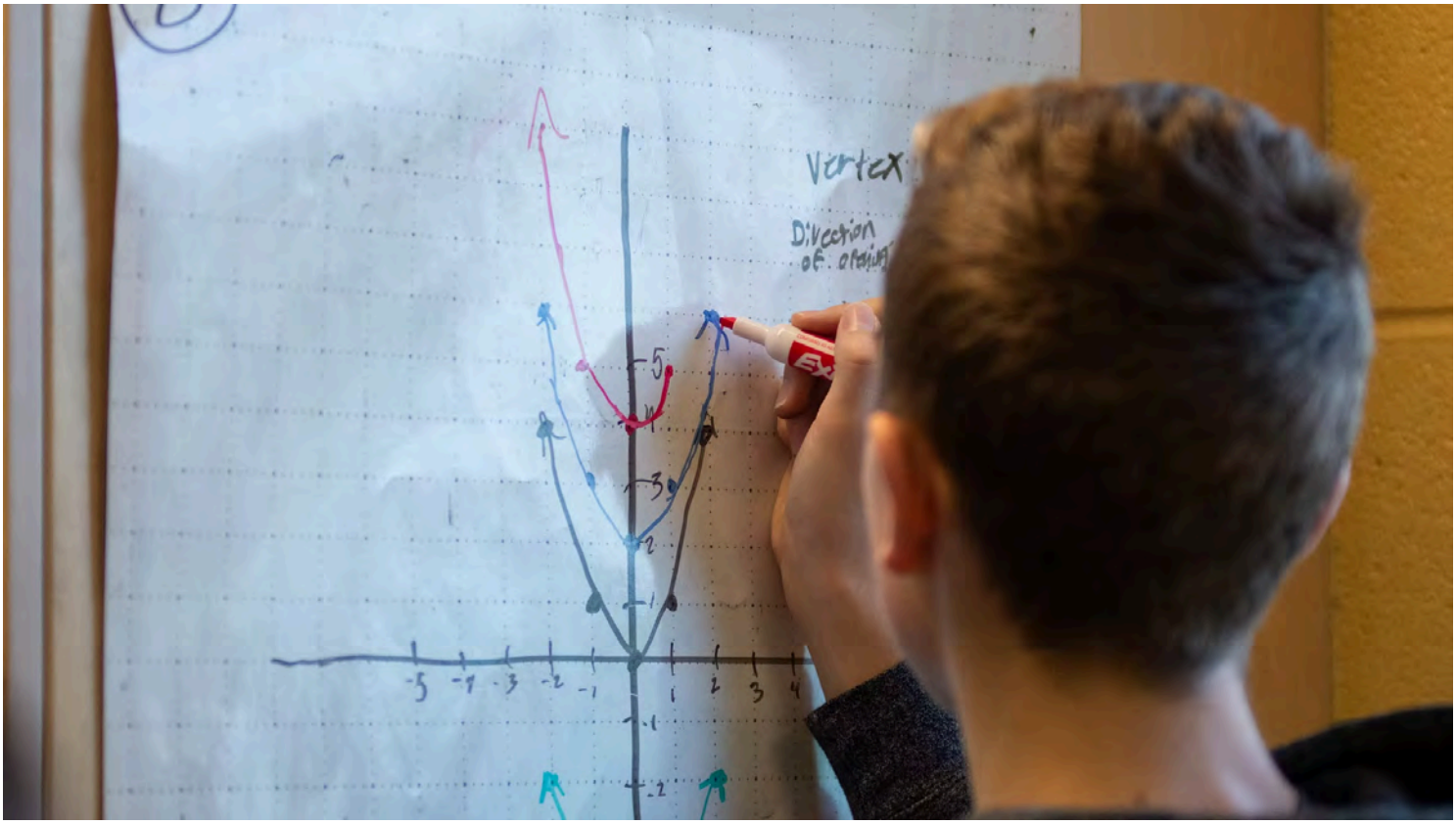
Literacy is a fundamental human right and it is important to ensure that all students have the literacy skills they need to succeed personally and academically. The WRDSB's Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan builds on the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Report to help:

- Build capacity amongst educators and administrators across the WRDSB
- All students develop necessary language and literacy skills for academic success and well-being

Although WRDSB is focused on implementing the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan across all grade levels, we recognize that building a strong foundation at a young age is crucial to success further in life. One of the key indicators for ensuring all students succeed academically is the number of students reading at grade level by the end of Grade 2. As such, WRDSB is using this indicator in the Board Improvement and Equity Plan. Through implementation of the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan, we continue to build administrator and educator capacity, and implement and monitor evidence-based practices in classrooms.

The approach of the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan is transforming how students engage with reading and writing. We provided educator training on using an early reading screener and provided professional learning for administrators and staff with a focus on structured literacy. As part of our investment in supporting the structured literacy plan, we placed Reading Resource Teachers in 37 elementary schools to support the development of early reading skills and provided professional learning for educators on the implementation of reading intervention programs (i.e. Lexia and Empower).

We continue to coordinate with families and caregivers, as well as community resources through community-based programs, such as A Region That Reads Together.



Supporting students to develop a foundational understanding of mathematics is an essential skill. The WRDSB has developed the Math Achievement Action Plan to support all students throughout the system through an approach centred on:

- Learning mathematics by understanding the needs of each individual student

- Using data-driven instructional and assessment practices to enhance student achievement
- Actively building new knowledge and supporting interventions based on students' experiences and prior knowledge

To support schools with the implementation of the Math Achievement Action Plan, we provided professional learning for administrators and staff, as well as supported educators to complete the Math Part 1 additional qualifications course. We are working with Grades 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 math educators to develop a tiered intervention plan.

We also know that students' needs vary and we are committed to ensuring that all students have access to high-level, equitable and inclusive math instruction. We have aligned our strategies to the priority actions outlined by the Ministry of Education.



The intervention model includes:

- Collaborating with classroom teacher to build capacity through coaching
- Using data to inform small group (classroom embedded) targeted instruction
- Providing targeted support for students in key content areas

To support this work, we have School Math Facilitators, Math Intervention Specialists and Student Intervention Coaches. We are working to build administrator and educator capacity in instructional strategies and a tiered learning approach. Through evidence-based practices and interventions, we will empower students to reach their full potential.



We know that we must take a system-wide approach to support literacy and mathematics, and there is still much work ahead that we are committed to doing as it benefits students. The results of the 2023-24 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment provide us with one of multiple data points to build a comprehensive understanding of student achievement and determine areas of focus. We also use the Acadience Early Screener, reading diagnostic assessments (e.g., Oral Reading Fluency, Core Phonics etc.), and math assessments (e.g., Leaps and Bounds and centrally developed diagnostics), as well as observation, conversation, and demonstrations of student learning. Together, they help us create a more fulsome picture to guide us in better supporting students to achieve their full potential.

We know that change takes time and recovery from learning loss due to the global pandemic takes time. With new learning happening across the system to shift pedagogical practices both in math and literacy, it is not unusual that an implementation dip may occur. This is consistent with research on implementing system-wide changes. While it is not something to celebrate, it indicates shifts in our practices are occuring. These shifts, we believe, will best support our students to grow, improve and succeed upon graduation. Our plans are consistent with guidance from the Ministry of Education and the Right to Read report. As we develop new learning and approaches to literacy and math, we have engaged in district-wide professional development and capacity building. We are confident that the Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan and Math Achievement Action Plan, de-streaming and single-stream courses, as well as set specific and measurable goals in our annual Board Improvement and Equity Plan, have us on the right path to build a stronger education system that works for all students.

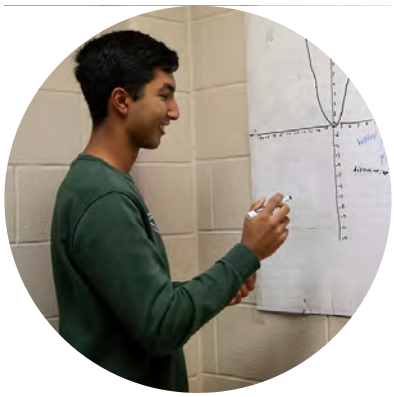
We celebrate students' and WRDSB graduates' achievement and success alongside their families and communities. Built on a strong foundation of support, WRDSB students are accomplishing incredible things, including receiving the Lincoln M. Alexander Award for dedication to eliminating discrimination at school; the Past-Directors' Bursary to support trade

education; the KW Legacy Scholarship for outstanding leadership in schools and communities; Awards of Excellence for academic achievements, leadership and community volunteerism; and overall student achievement.

Read more about how we're supporting student achievement:



Transforming Literacy: Stewart Avenue Public School's Journey with Structured Literacy



Moving All Students Forward in Single Stream Math Class



Grade 11 English Course Supports Steps Toward Truth and Reconciliation

Board Improvement and Equity Plan Key Areas

Achievement

Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity

Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement

Pathways and Transitions

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Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity



WRDSB is committed to transforming education - systems, structures, physical environments and practices - to ensure that identity and social location no longer predict outcomes. Building a culture of human rights is foundational to supporting all students to reach their full potential in their chosen pathways of learning and in life.

A focus on human rights is foundational to creating learning environments where student achievement and well-being improves and we become the best system we can be. What follows are examples that highlight our human-rights embedded approach to support students' success and create a better education system.



Research has shown that various forms of streaming such as applied level programs severely affected students' ability to choose the post secondary destination of their choice, and reduced graduation rates. The implementation of de-streaming and single-streaming courses provides more equitable graduation and academic outcomes for students.

WRDSB extended de-streaming into Grade 10 to ensure students have rich learning opportunities and expanded pathways.

In support of the implementation of de-streaming and single streaming courses, WRDSB has provided job-embedded support with itinerant teachers focused on effective instructional strategies and assessment practices in de-streamed classrooms. As well, educators and education workers have had opportunities to engage in subject-specific learning, such as learning to support the implementation of the NBE (English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices) board-wide.



We believe literacy is a human right, as reinforced by the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) Right to Read inquiry report. WRDSB was already well along the path to change our literacy practices before this report was released. We know it will take a collective approach to ensure that students and their families across Waterloo Region have equitable access to literacy resources and opportunities for youth to build their reading skills. In June 2024, WRDSB launched A Region That Reads Together, an initiative to work with community organizations to work collectively to support literacy throughout Waterloo Region. This initiative builds on the WRDSB's Structured Literacy Multi-Year Plan and is in support of WRDSB's Board Improvement and Equity Plan focus on the number of students reading at grade level by the end of Grade 2.

In 2024, WRDSB also launched new resources to support Multilingual Language Learners (MLL), families and caregivers.

The WRDSB is committed to providing equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students to succeed and eliminate barriers so that identity and social location no longer predict outcomes. Events, learning opportunities, and student affinity groups centre students' voices and provide students with identity-affirming spaces and resources to support their academic achievement and well-being.

The Indigenous Learning Team hosted an event in June 2024 for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit secondary students, which focused on fire teachings, medicine and healing with the land through language, and Pow Wow drumming with KW Youth Drum. The event celebrated the rich and diverse cultural heritage, knowledge and traditions of Indigenous Peoples.



WRDSB aims to create an environment where African, Caribbean and Black-identifying (ACBi) students and staff see their brilliance highlighted, represented and celebrated. Events such as the Black Brilliance Conference provide ACBi students an opportunity to celebrate Black joy, identity and connect with peers who share their identity and similar lived experiences. System Navigators support more than 100 African, Caribbean and Black identifying students. WRDSB also has a Graduation Coach to support Black students.

Families and caregivers are key partners in students' education. The Listening Forums Final Report shares what we heard from participants and outlines the actions we're committed to taking to support positive change. Through ongoing conversations with community groups, organizations and community roundtables, we are able to better understand and address the needs within Waterloo Region.

Some of the 2023-24 events and activities to promote Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity:

- Black Brilliance
- DIASPORA – Black Brilliance Month 2024
- Groh Global Gala
- Islamic History Month
- Multilingual Language Learners Build Confidence and Community at Camp
- National AccessAbility Week 2024
- Visibility: Celebrating 25 years of Trans Pride
- WRDSB Student Nominates Director chanicka for Day of Pink award



As we build students' capacity to be successful global citizens and graduate with the skills and attributes outlined in the Learner Profile, we encourage them to consider how they can each make an impact to promote equity, human rights, and a sense of belonging.

From an international Memory Portrait Project; writing about the Meaning of Home; coaching for the Special Olympics; growing a community garden and acting as a Waterloo Councillor for a Day, to fundraising for Haven House Women's Shelter; KidsAbility and Nutrition for Learning, WRDSB students, staff and families are making a difference in their communities and the world.



Guided by the obligation under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Ontario Human Rights Code, Calls to Action identified in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, and Ministry of Education directives, WRDSB staff provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in learning and professional development in support of Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity. This year, we announced our intention to build as parallel a pathway as possible to support Indigenous Education and uphold the Calls to Action.



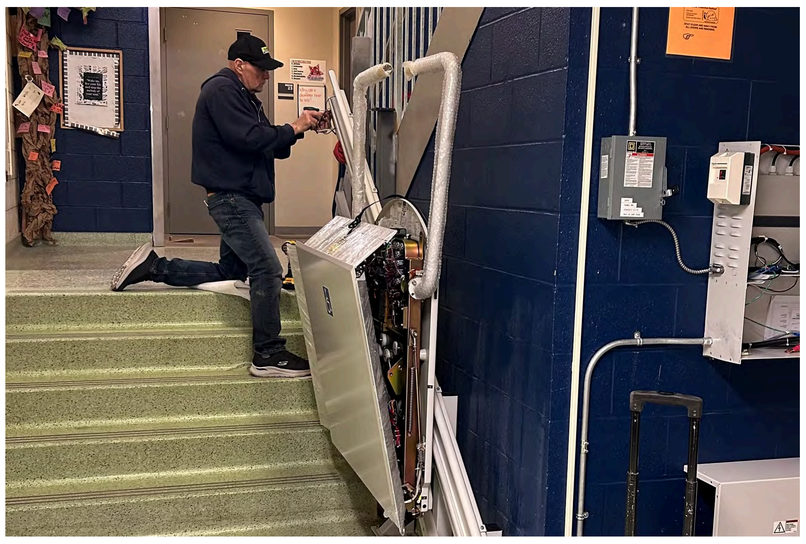
In June 2024, Indigenous Knowledge Keeper Myeengun Henry led WRDSB in a land ceremony for the New South Kitchener Elementary School, before any work began on the site. The design of this school reflects an ongoing commitment of WRDSB to deepen our understanding and relationship with the environment as taught to us by the Indigenous people who have been its stewards from the beginning. The design partnership between the Architects at WalterFedy, a locally headquartered multidisciplinary firm with a long history in school design, and an Anishinaabeg-owned and operated architectural firm, supported WRDSB in establishing the design for the project and gathering input from students, families, caregivers, and community members.

We promote a holistic approach to supporting inclusive learning and work environments to ensure that all students and staff have the opportunities and resources they need to be successful. We have provided Human Rights learning for some trustees and all senior leaders, including union leaders and leaders of management groups, Principals and Managers.

Additionally, the Human Rights Branch released its Annual Report, which outlines how the WRDSB and specifically the Human Rights Branch, is building a culture of human rights. In alignment with the WRDSB's Strategic Direction to provide "Equitable opportunities and outcomes," the report shares how the department is:

- Addressing human rights complaints in compliance with Ontario's Human Rights Code
- Leading and supporting the WRDSB through human rights and accessibility education, learning and professional development.

We know that representation and hiring staff who reflect the diversity of the students and families we serve is important. We also continue to support fair, equitable and inclusive hiring, as outlined in Board Policy 5000. In addition to hosting and attending job fairs to recruit Indigenous, Black and racialized employees, WRDSB conducted a Workforce Census in spring 2024 to gain detailed insight into the cultural, social and demographic makeup of our workforce. The WRDSB plans to publicly release Workforce Census results later in the 2024/25 school year.



The WRDSB continues progress on its Accessibility Plan, which outlines our plans to meet obligations as outlined under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and promotes and ensures respect for every person's human rights, dignity and independence.

WRDSB Facility Services staff are improving accessibility and maintaining the spaces where students learn and grow each day. This ensures equitable access to our buildings, programs and services for all of the students, families, staff and community members who learn and work in the WRDSB.

The WRDSB hosted its first Advancing Anti-Ableism in Education Symposium in May 2024. This event brought together educators, community members, families and caregivers, students, and local leaders to learn more about ableism and how to dismantle it in education systems and throughout the community.

In 2024, WRDSB launched the AccessiBe Accessibility Interface on our main website and secondary school websites to provide easier access to information based on individual needs, including accessibility modifications to provide more equitable and accessible communications.

We know that there is still work to be done to ensure that all students and staff feel a sense of belonging and well-being, and students to have equitable access to education and postsecondary pathways. We remain committed to working together to

transform education to better serve all students.

Read more about how we're supporting Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity:



Black Excellence Program Helps Students Build Connections and Community



Student Artwork Chosen for City of Waterloo Pride Month Banners



Students Come Together to Celebrate Islamic History Month

Board Improvement and Equity Plan Key Areas

Achievement

Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity

Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement

Pathways and Transitions

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Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement



WRDSB wants to ensure that all students and staff are able to learn and work in environments that engage them and support their mental health and well-being.

We know that students' academic achievement is directly impacted by their mental health and well-being. The WRDSB engages in multiple strategies in support of students' mental health and well-being. This includes increasing the capacity of administrators, educators and staff in topic areas such as:

- Mental health literacy
- Mentally healthy classrooms

We also work together with community organizations to provide wraparound support for students, families and caregivers within and outside the classroom. One of the ways we continue to improve student achievement and well-being is through meaningful engagement that is open, accessible, inclusive and responsive. In 2023 we published the WRDSB Engagement Charter which outlines our commitment to transparency, accountability and keeping families informed, as directed by the Education Act. We also launched EngageWRDSB, a hub to support families and caregivers with quick and easy access to resources and information to support community engagement.



To help us better understand students' thoughts, feelings and experiences in school and in the community, the WRDSB uses the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) as our Safe, Caring and Inclusive School (SCIS) Survey. In April 2024, WRDSB invited students in Grades 4-12 to voluntarily complete the Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey. It consists of measures relating to children's physical health and social and emotional development that are of critical importance during the middle years:

- Optimism
- Happiness
- Self-Esteem
- Absence of Sadness
- General Health

We also shared the summary report of the 2022-23 Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey (individual school results are posted on each school website).



We are committed to centring students' voices in order to transform the education system to better serve all students. We want all WRDSB students to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion at school, particularly those who are historically marginalized, as we know this will support their overall academic success and well-being. These supports include:

- System Navigators
- Black graduation coach
- Social workers with an Indigenous focus
- Community engagement tables
- Community partnerships to support student mental health and well-being
- School mental health clinicians led learning opportunities for staff to develop mental health literacy
- Professional learning sessions related to resources from School Mental Health Ontario
- School-based groups (e.g. Affinity Groups, GSAs, Student well-being teams)
- Free period products in all schools
- Partnerships in support of student nutrition

On September 13, 2023, as part of Welcoming Week, WRDSB hosted a student orientation night for international students, families and caregivers.

Throughout the 2023-24 school year, WRDSB supported Student Roundtable discussions to engage students on issues important to transforming education to better serve all students. It is an opportunity to centre student agency and voice, as well as bridge connections between staff and students, and foster student leadership.

On April 16, 2024, approximately 150 WRDSB students from secondary schools across WRDSB gathered at The Family Centre to participate in the 2nd annual Student Wellness Conference. The event brought together students, staff, and community partners for a day focused on mental health and well-being. The intention behind this conference is to equip students with the knowledge and tools to not only support their own mental health, but also to share this information with other students at their schools.



Taking a trauma-informed approach, we engage in meaningful conversations with students, especially those from marginalized communities. We provide messaging and resources to students, families and caregivers to promote their mental health and well-being throughout the school year, such as Lunch and Learn sessions. While we continue to address issues as they arise, we want to continue to be more proactive and solutions-focused.



Professional development supported by the Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Department, Human Resources and Employee Wellness; network learning opportunities for educators and administrators; and Staff Affinity groups foster safe, inclusive and caring work environments for all staff. WRDSB also promotes equity, human rights, inclusion education and understanding through recognition of Dates of Importance and Creed Accommodation Days.

Communication was shared with families and caregivers in September 2023 regarding the Disconnecting from Work Protocol, which sets parameters for employees' availability (e.g., responding to emails) and supports a positive shift in our organizational culture.

The WRDSB conducted a Workforce Census in Spring 2024 to gain detailed insight into the cultural, social and demographic makeup of our workforce. The Census helps WRDSB to better support staff through training, resources and the creation of staff affinity groups. The WRDSB plans to publicly release Workforce Census results later in the 2024/25 school year.

The Guarding Minds at Work survey was paused during the 2023/24 school year to allow for the completion of the WRDSB Workforce Census. Mental Health and Well-Being supports are available to staff through the Employee and Family Assistance Program.

Read more about how we're supporting Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement:



Black Brilliance: Supporting the Achievement and Well-being of All Black WRDSB Students



2024-25 Student Trustees Share a Drive to Represent Student Voice at the Board Table



Supporting Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools

Board Improvement and Equity Plan Key Areas

Achievement

Sovereignty, Human Rights and Equity

Mental Health, Well-being and Engagement

Pathways and Transitions

Waterloo Region District School Board
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, ON
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Find us on social media

Pathways and Transitions



WRDSB is preparing students for the next step in their elementary and secondary education and their postsecondary pathway.

We are proud of the ways that WRDSB students are making an impact on Waterloo Region and beyond. We continue to help students develop a sense of agency, which will help them to succeed in the future. Students are demonstrating leadership, engaging in different learning experiences and educational opportunities outside of the classroom to pursue their interests and ideas.

WRDSB students are making their mark on the world. We are proud of the innovative ways that students are using their agency and voice to explore potential postsecondary pathways.



Students from Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute were recognized at the South by Southwest (SXSW) EDU Student Impact Challenge in Texas for their ReAlign app, which diagnoses and treats amblyopia, commonly known as "lazy eye."

Grade 12 WRDSB student Karina gained international acclaim for her 3D animated film Nix's Symphony. It has received awards at the Berlin International Art Film Festival, the Cannes Art Fest and the Accolade Global Film Competition. Karina wrote the script, composed the music and designed the characters herself.



Bluevale Collegiate Institute's Electric Car Club raced to victory at the Waterloo High School Electric Vehicle (EV) Challenge. Hosted by the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Waterloo, the Waterloo High School Electric Vehicle (EV) Challenge encourages students to design and test their own electric car in an annual endurance competition. Teams from Laurel Heights Secondary School (LHSS) and Waterloo Collegiate Institute (WCI) also took part in the event.

Members of the Elmira District Secondary School robotics team, 4917 Sir Lancerbot, attended the First Robotics Championship in Houston, Texas. The First Robotics Competition teaches students valuable STEM and business skills through hands-on learning experiences.

Extracurricular learning opportunities provide students with the chance to engage in STEAM activities, develop friendships and build leadership capacity. Students at Blue Heron Public School have a Girls Who Game Club who engage in Esports.

As we prepare students for graduation, we are focused on strategies focused on credit accumulation. For example, we provide opportunities for "Reach Ahead" credits for Grade 8 students. To help support positive transitions between schools, WRDSB offers Grade 6 to 7 and Grade 8 to 9 transition support to students. Staff, including System Navigators and a Graduation Coach to support Black students, build connections between students, families and their communities. As well, supportive intervention programs are available in secondary schools for credit rescue and credit recovery.

We know that not all students will follow traditional pathways of learning. Through "Build a Credit" and e-learning opportunities, students are able to expand their ways they earn credits towards their diploma. WRDSB continues to expand offerings available through Specialist High School Majors (SHSM), Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programs (OYAP), and Cooperative Education. Additional job skills training programs were offered through Dual Credit (College) programs and School Within a College (SWAC) program with Conestoga College.





As a way to integrate student voice into the Communications Department, student journalists joined the team for co-operative experiences to help their peers tell their stories. They, along with other students featured in #StudentVoice articles, shared personal experiences and stories about their schools and communities in their unique voices. Kyo Lee was also honoured as being the youngest winner of the CBC Poetry Prize and credits her WRDSB educators for fostering her creativity and professional writing success.

As we continue to transform education from within Waterloo Region, WRDSB students are at the forefront of those conversations. WRDSB students organized the TEDxColumbia Lake Youth conference at the University of Waterloo on October 14, 2023, where youth engaged in conversations about reinventing education. Student roundtables, such as those hosted at Laurel Heights Secondary School, connect students and staff to discuss issues that are important to them and engage in creating change. Fostering student leadership opportunities, such as engaging in Student Roundtables, representing their peers as a Student Trustee, or being a City Councillor for a Day open windows into the many different pathways and opportunities for students to share their voice and impact their communities.



In April 2024, Black and Muslim students from six WRDSB secondary schools experienced what it was like to be a chemistry student for a day, including attending a lecture, getting hands-on lab experience and touring the science building. This was thanks to a partnership between our Indigenous, Equity, and Human Rights Department and the University of Waterloo Chemistry Department.

Students at Groh Public School in Kitchener are taking the lead in their learning journey thanks to a design thinking approach used by their teachers and in partnerships with Smart Waterloo Region Innovation Lab (SWRIL). One of the ways they were able to showcase their learning was through the development of the Groh Global Gala, aimed at providing a meaningful experience to help improve the experiences of newcomers.

Students from 12 WRDSB schools competed in the Earth Day Amazing Race 2024 at Camp Heidelberg Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre, where 48 environmentally-minded students engaged in environmental and wildlife challenges and hands-on learning.

We know that supporting students in their learning through to graduation is a collective effort, and involves partnerships with families, caregivers and communities. The WRDSB's commitment to community engagement reinforces ways to work together to ensure students can reach their highest potential.

Read more about how we're supporting Pathways and Transitions:



The Blue Heron Builders' Esports Experience



Grade 12 Student Recognized at International Film Festivals



EDSS Robotics Team Goes to World Championship in Houston

Board Improvement and Equity Plan Key Areas

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WRDSB Senior Team

In 2023-24, every member of the Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) Senior Team continued to demonstrate their commitment to supporting all parts of our organization in our most important work: providing every student we serve with the opportunity to learn, grow and reach their fullest potential in our schools.

With this in mind, Senior Team members successfully completed part one of the Global Innovation Management Institute's certification in partnership with Smart Waterloo Region. The Senior Team participates in professional development and engagement opportunities as we continue to promote a culture of human rights and build our leadership framework based on the sovereignty affirming and equity competencies. We continue this work and take what we've learned to transform education to better serve our students and communities.

During the 2023-24 school year, WRDSB published the Transforming Education: How the WRDSB is preparing students for a changing world Thought Paper, which outlines how we transform how we teach and engage with students in their learning as we look toward the 22nd century. To help students to be successful in the changing world, our vision is focused on:

- Building strong foundations for learning
- Centring students and their well-being
- Supporting students' pathways
- Innovating through design thinking
- Collaborating with families and communities.

As we continue to transform education from within the WRDSB, we are leading conversations with educators, government officials and thought leaders in education provincially, nationally and globally to really move the needle in order to make systemic change. The DreamEd initiative, which was launched in June 2024, highlights ways we can work together across the education sector, alongside industry thought leaders, to reimagine the future of the education system. Listen to the DreamEd Podcast for engaging conversations with education thought leaders as we dream together about the future of education.



jeewan chanicka
Director of Education



Alison Gaymes-San Vicente
Associate Director, Student Achievement and Well-being



Scott Miller
Associate Director, Business Services



Eusis Dougan-McKenzie
Executive Officer, Corporate Services and Strategic Initiatives



Lauren Agar
Senior Manager, Planning Department



Deepa Ahluwalia
Human Rights & Equity Advisor



Jodi Albrecht
Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being



Miruna Armellini
Controller, Financial Services



Justin Brown
Senior Manager, Human Resources Services



Bobbie Chatha
Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being



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Nick Landry

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Services & Treasurer



Bill Lemon

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David Lane

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Michelle Newlands

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Chris Sagar

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Find us on social media





WRDSB is continuing our core work of supporting the academic achievement and well-being of the students we serve, as we reimagine a public education system that truly provides equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

- jeewan chanicka

Director's Message

Students are at the center of all decision-making for the Board of Trustees and we continue to work together with parents and caregivers as partners in their education to ensure student success.

- Joanne Weston

Chairperson Message



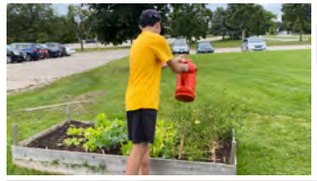


Looking ahead to 2024, we will continue to work as dedicated advocates for all WRDSB students at the Board Table and beyond. Every student the WRDSB serves should have a voice in shaping the future of learning that supports their success.

Abdullah Awan and
Casper Dong

Letter from Student Trustees


#GROHGALA




Terry Fox
Lives Here










THEY
REPRESENT
YOU!
MEET THE STUDENT TRUSTEE CANDIDATES



Stories of success from our Strategic Plan

2023 gave us countless examples of students, staff, families and community members embracing the objectives of the WRDSB Strategic Plan. It's a plan built with the wisdom and knowledge shared by more than 10,000 of those it serves. The results have seen students and families more engaged with their neighbourhood schools, students and staff working together to empower student leadership, and the skills students learn in the classroom making a positive difference in their own communities. Together, we are creating schools where all students are able to reach their full potential on their chosen pathway in learning and life.

Read more about our Strategic Plan.



Centring Students

All students' voices are important
Learn More

Support for student and staff well-being

Students and staff experience positive well-being as part of a caring and inclusive community
Learn More





Equitable opportunities and outcomes

Create opportunities for everyone to succeed
Learn More

Strengthen connections through family and community engagement

Better relationships with families and community partners

Learn More





Increase student learning through engagement

Better relationships with families and community partners

Learn More

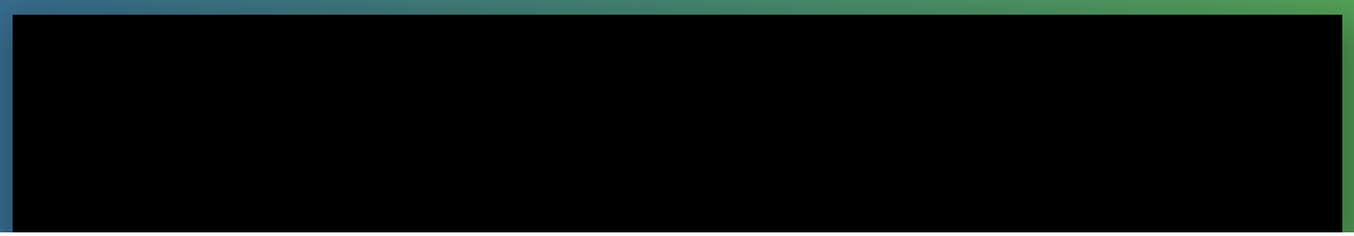
Collaboration and compassion for transformation

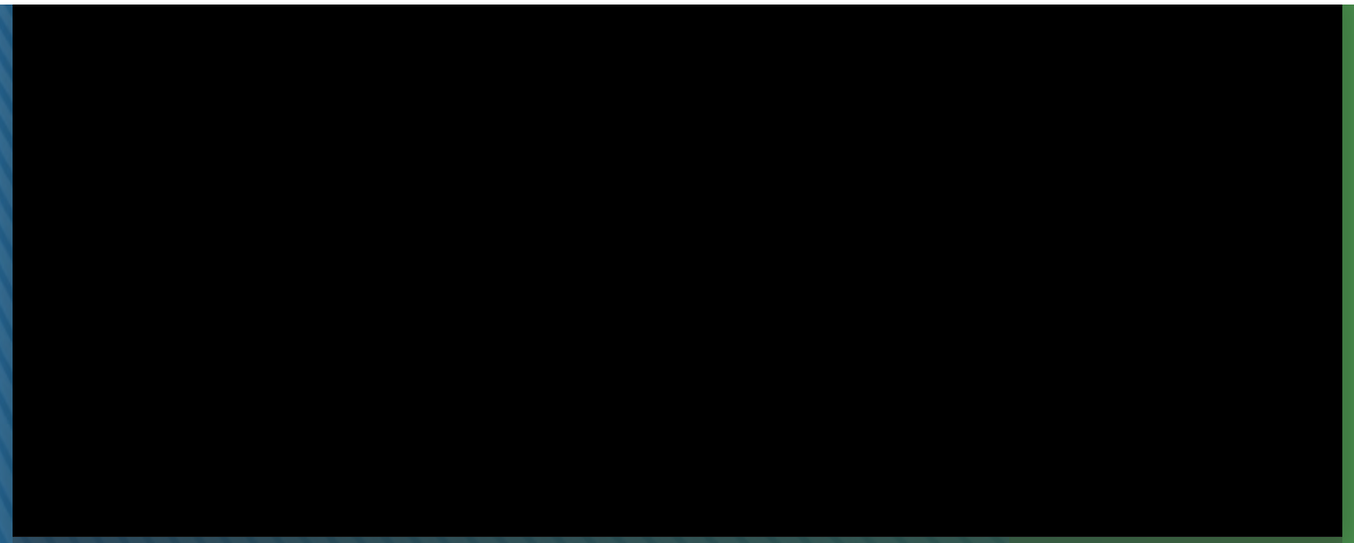
Better relationships with families and community partners

Learn More



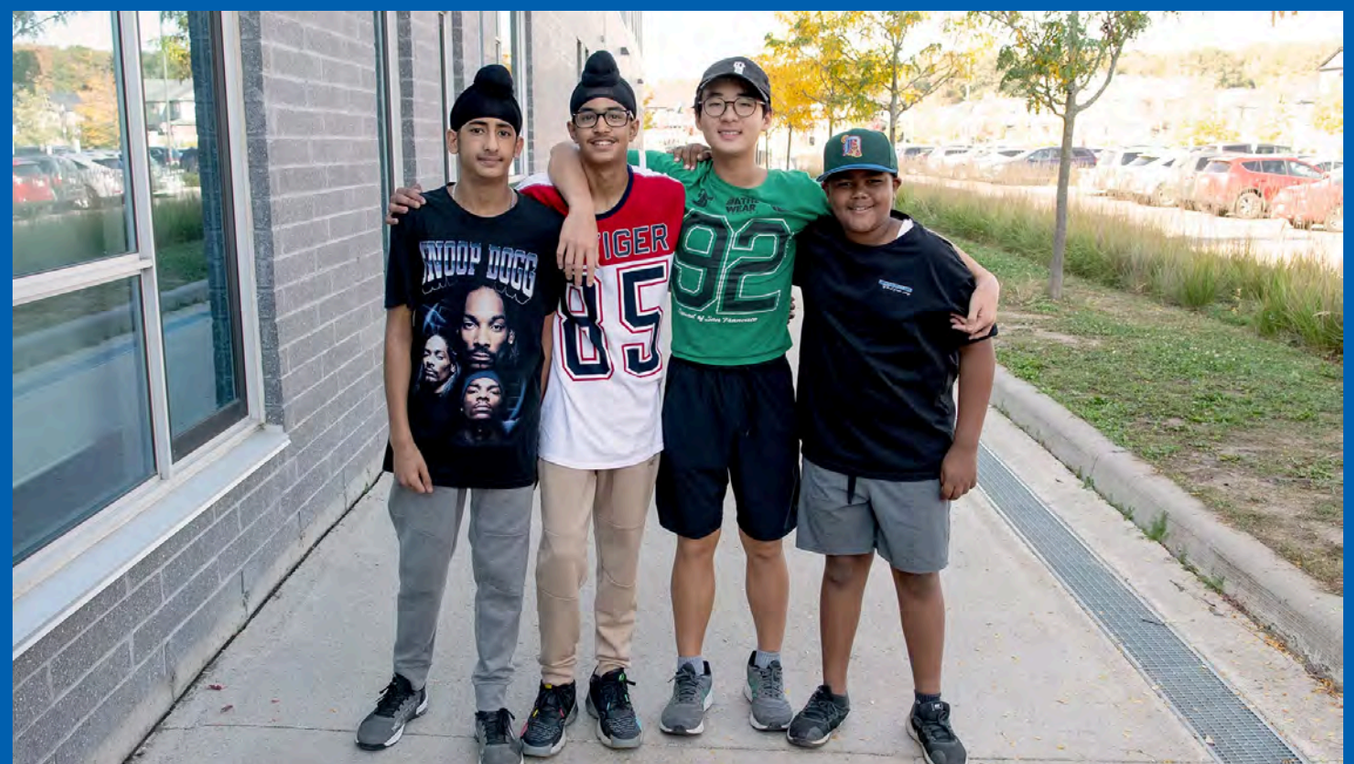
Transforming Education





We are transforming education to prepare students for success in the future. When we think about schools and learning, we imagine how reading and math can be part of a new education system. We understand that these subjects are essential for students' learning. But, what if students had more say in how they meet expectations in subjects and curriculum? What if teachers were guides and collaborators in student learning, rather than instructors? At WRDSB, we are committed to Transforming Education.

BOARD IMPROVEMENT AND EQUITY PLAN



In 2023, we saw the results of the first full school year implementation of the Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP). The indicators showed growth in student achievement, particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

The BIEP is one of the ways WRDSB reviews its progress and the outcomes of specific strategies to support student achievement and well-being in alignment with the Strategic Plan.

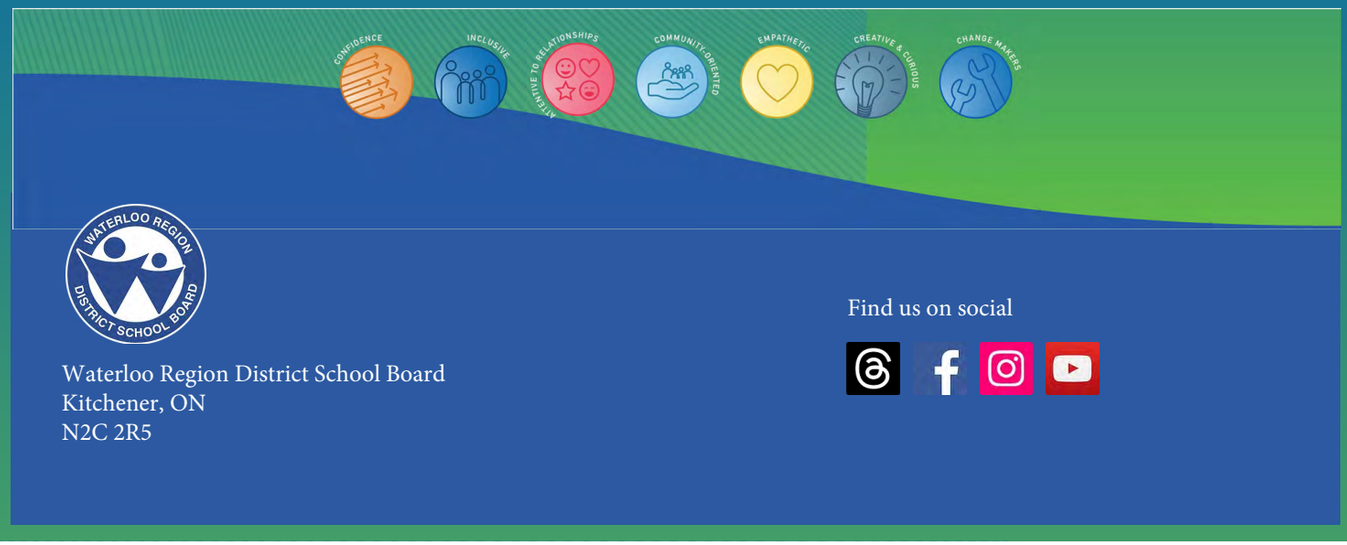
The four areas of the BIEP are:

- **Achievement**
- **Sovereignty, human rights and equity**
- **Mental health, well-being and engagement**
- **Pathways and transitions**

Read more about the results of our 2022-2023 Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP).

Learner Profile

The learner profile is made up of the skills and attributes students need to be successful in learning and in life as we move toward the 22nd century. The Learner Profile is designed to ensure students have the ability to succeed academically in the classroom, and have the skills to excel in their future careers, whatever their chosen pathway. It was developed in direct consultation with students, to ensure it responds to their needs.




CONFIDENCE
INCLUSIVE
ATTENTIVE TO RELATIONSHIPS
COMMUNITY-ORIENTED
EMPATHETIC
CREATIVE & CURIOUS
CHANGE MAKERS