



**REPRESENTING  
OURSELVES,  
REPRESENTING OUR  
STUDENTS!**



**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
FALL 2019**

## **ACTING ON OUR EQUITY AND INCLUSION COMMITMENTS**

The WRDSB Workforce Census (the Census) was developed to support key strategies under the WRDSB's Operational Goal for Wellbeing in the Board's 2016-2019 Strategic Plan. The Census aligns with our commitments to equity and inclusion as described in board policies and procedures, including our Equity and Inclusion Policy and our First Nations, Metis and Inuit Self-Identification Policy. In recent years, legislation and guidelines from the Province of Ontario have been established that encourage school boards to collect identity-based information for the purposes of better understanding equity and identifying any evidence of discrimination within their systems. The WRDSB Workforce Census was heavily informed by Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and Ontario's Anti-Racism Act.

## **PLANNING AND CONSULTING**

Prior to launching the Census, the WRDSB engaged in a planning and consultation process to inform the census questions, the privacy procedures, and the implementation strategy. Stakeholders included in the planning and consultation process included employee group representatives, WRDSB system leaders, research staff from other Ontario school boards, and Ontario's Education Equity Secretariat. The community-based Equity and Inclusion Advisory Group and Waterloo Region Aboriginal Academic Advisory Committee were also consulted in the planning of the Census.

WRDSB staff also conducted a review of our data privacy and security protocols to ensure that we are always protecting the personal information of all our employees. Our protocols were aligned to our legal responsibilities under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Our Census protocols and procedures were communicated to all employees via email and on our staff intranet.

## **ENGAGING OUR EMPLOYEES**

Based on guidance from employee group representatives and system leaders, the WRDSB used a variety of strategies to encourage participation in the survey. We received endorsements from employee groups and they supported communication about the Census to their members. The Census survey link was distributed via email to all employees and was also accessible through the staff intranet and a QR code. The Census was hosted on our online survey platform Qualtrics and was accessible in multiple languages via computer, tablet, or mobile device. WRDSB research staff made presentations to employee groups at meetings and professional development sessions. All employees were encouraged to use work time to complete the survey.

In total, 3844 employees participated in the Census. The 40% response rate was the highest participation rate the board has seen on a system-wide employee survey in recent years.

## **WRDSB WORKFORCE CENSUS EMPLOYEE PROFILE**

Employees from all WRDSB employee groups participated in the Census. Approximately three-quarters of the participants (2766 in total) were full-time employees. Though their participation rates were slightly lower than full-time employees, nearly 1,000 part-time, occasional, casual, and temporary employees participated in the Census.

A total of 59 employees in the Workforce Census identified as First Nations, Metis, and/or Inuit (1.6% of Census participants). The vast majority of the employees in our Workforce Census identified their ethnic or cultural identity as North American and/or European. Approximately 7%

of all employees indicated at least one ethnic or cultural identity from outside of North America or Europe.

The racial identities of WRDSB employees were reflective of their ethnic and cultural origins. WRDSB employees were more likely to identify as white when compared to the population in Waterloo Region as reported in the 2016 Canadian Census. Across all racialized identities, WRDSB employees identified as a racialized less than half as frequently as the citizens in Waterloo Region as a whole.

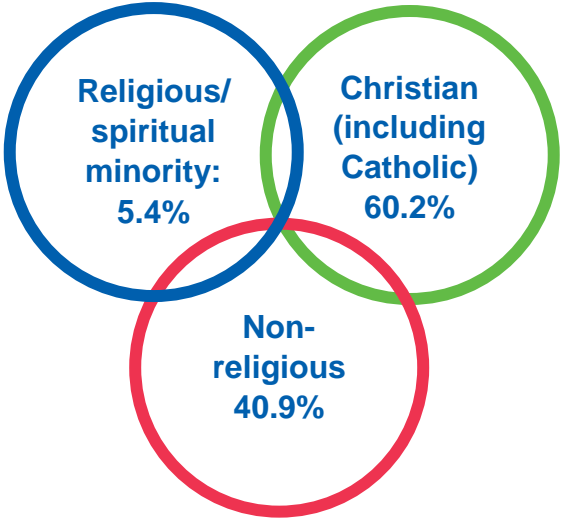
**Racial identity profile of WRDSB Employees and the Region of Waterloo**

Racial identity	WRDSB employees	Waterloo Region
Black	1.2%	2.9%
East Asian	1.3%	3.7%
Indigenous	0.7%	1.6%
Latino/Latina/Latinx	1.1%	1.8%
Middle Eastern	0.8%	2.2%
South Asian	2.7%	5.2%
Southeast Asian	0.6%	1.6%
White	92.1%	80.7%

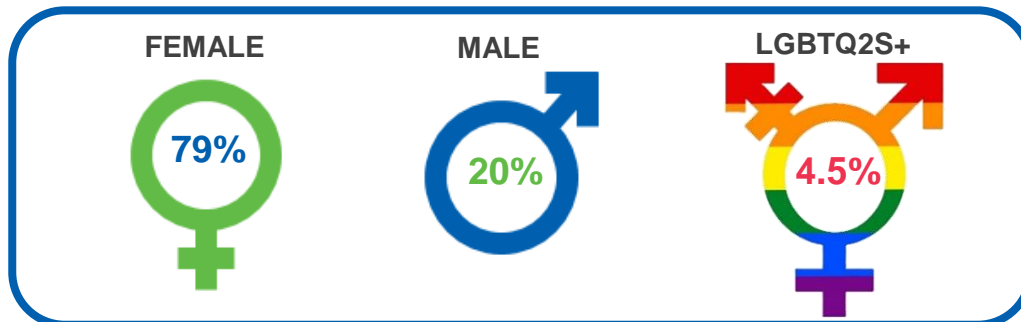
Nearly all employees who participated in the Workforce Census (98.6%) were Canadian citizens. Approximately 12% indicated that they were born outside of Canada, while less than 1% first arrived in Canada after 2010. Almost 90% of employees in the census identified English as their first language. The most frequent first languages other than English were French (4.3%), German (2.5%), Spanish (1.0%), and Portuguese (1.0%). The most common non-European languages were Chinese and Punjabi both reported by 0.7% of employees.

The majority of WRDSB employees identified as Christian (including Catholics). Approximately two-fifths identified as non-religious (including ‘agnostic’, ‘atheist’, ‘spiritual, but not religious’, and ‘no religious affiliation’). Nearly one in twenty employees were affiliated with a religious minority such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Indigenous Spirituality, Judaism, Islam, or Sikhism.

**Religions, spiritualities, and creeds of WRDSB Employees**



More than three-quarters of WRDSB employees identified as female. The gender profile in the Workforce Census is comparable to the gender profile as documented in our employee records. Nearly 5% of employees identified as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community (including both minority gender identities and sexual orientations).



In total, 516 employees (14.4%) identified at least one disability or health condition. Approximately half of all employees who identified a disability or health condition indicated that they had a mental health disability or condition. Physical disabilities were reported by almost 3% of employees, while disabilities and conditions including learning disabilities, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, chronic health conditions, addictions, and speech impairment were each reported by less than 2% of the employees in the census.

### PERCEPTIONS AND DIFFERENCES

The Census asked employees about their perceptions and experiences as an employee of the WRDSB. These questions helped us to gain a better understanding of how perceptions and experiences differ for employees with different identities. The survey found that minority identified employees (such as racialized employees, employees affiliated with a religious minority, LGBTQ2S+ employees, and minorities with a disability or health condition) more frequently indicated that they have felt marginalized in the workplace than did majority identified employees. Examples of these differences are presented in this executive summary, but are explored more extensively in the full report.

The percentages of how frequently different minority identified employees reported feeling marginalized 'Sometimes', 'Often', or 'All the time' in the workplace were as follows:

- 34% of racialized employees
- 24% of religious minority employees
- 24% of LGBTQ2S+ employees
- 36% of employees with a disability or health condition

For the board as a whole, 80% of employees agreed that they felt a sense of belonging in the workplace, and 67% agreed that they felt well supported. On the other hand, nearly one-quarter of employees indicated that they have experienced barriers that would prevent them from advancing their career with the WRDSB, and 13% indicated that they felt socially isolated in the workplace.

For employees who agreed that they feel the need for more personal support services, there were differences based on the gender identity and sexual orientation of employees:

- 34% of female identified employees
- 25% of male identified employees
- 42% of LGBTQ2S+ employees
- 31% of heterosexual employees

The extent to which employees agreed that they experienced social isolation in the workplace also differed based on a variety of different identities. Employees with a disability or health condition were almost twice as likely as employees in the board as a whole to agree that they felt isolated in the workplace:

- 13% of all employees
- 16% of racialized employees
- 14% of LGBTQ2S+ employees
- 26% of employees with a disability or condition

## **GOING FORWARD**

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The WRDSB is committed to taking action based on what we have learned from the WRDSB Workforce Census. During the 2018-2019 school year the WRDSB implemented a range of initiatives that address equity and inclusion for employees through the system. Key initiatives implemented in 2018-2019 include:

- Professional learning sessions on Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy and anti-racism/anti-oppression principles for teachers and system leaders.
- Networking opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous employees to participate in Indigenous learning sessions.
- The establishment and verification of gender neutral washrooms in most WRDSB schools.
- Promoting awareness of WRDSB employee Wellness Services, such as Homewood: Employee and Family Assistance Program, the LifeSpeak mental health and wellness platform, the alive@work - natural health and wellness information, the Guarding Minds at Work wellness survey, and the Workplace Accommodation Program.
- The Indigenous and Racialized Teacher (IRT) for Leadership program and the Indigenous and Racialized Administrators Mentorship and Support Program (IRAMS).
- The hiring of a Workforce Equity Officer committed to supporting the establishment of equitable hiring and promotion practices, and the creation of inclusive work environments.

Following what we've learned from the Census the WRDSB is revisiting and updating the commitments laid out in the 2014 Moving Forward: Building an Inclusive Workforce Action Plan. We have also identified new initiatives aligned to the new strategies in our 2019-2020 Strategic Plan. Our 2019-2020 staff wellbeing strategies to support workplace equity and inclusion include:

- Increase staff capacity and confidence to support the needs of all students and staff.
- Develop system leaders' capacity to build and sustain healthy, high performing positive and inclusive workplace cultures.
- Provide all staff with awareness and educational opportunities that support the areas of physical health and safety, mental health and positive workplace culture.
- Enhance hiring and promotion of school staff and system leaders to ensure fair and equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion.
- Update Administrative Procedure focused on hiring practices that are fair, equitable, and inclusive and aligned with our current strategies related to equity.
- Ensure Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA) compliance for physical spaces in buildings and services.
- Support physical resources in classrooms to ensure a productive learning environment for staff and students.

For more information on the actions implemented and future initiatives, please see the 'Actions and Next Steps' section of the full report.