

2024 WRDSB WORKFORCE CENSUS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 WRDSB Workforce Census was conducted between April and June 2024. The objective of the Workforce Census is to support the commitments as described in the WRDSB's Human Rights Policy (Board Policy 1017): "The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) is committed to providing working and learning environments that are free of discrimination and harassment, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity, and can thrive and fully contribute. We recognize the dignity and worth of every person and provide equal rights and opportunities without discrimination."¹ The Ontario Human Rights Commission has stated that "data collection can play a useful and often essential role in creating strong human rights and human resources strategies for organizations in the public, private and non-profit sectors."² In 2018, the Province of Ontario released Regulation 267/18³, made under the Anti-Racism Act. The regulation currently authorizes school boards to apply the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.

This Executive Summary highlights key findings and considerations from the three summary documents posted on the WRDSB Workforce Census page on the WRDSB website:

- [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - Background and Support Documents](#)
- [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - All Responses Data File](#)
- [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - Experiences and Perception Summary](#)

Privacy and confidentiality were an important part of the Workforce Census data collection process. Protocols and procedures established as a result of the privacy and data security assessment included:

- collecting data in a manner that does not individually identify any staff members (i.e. not including any questions that ask personal identifying information such as names, contact information, schools, employee numbers, dates of birth, or IP addresses),
- restricting access to individual survey responses (raw data) to members of WRDSB's Research and Organizational Transformation Department (the Research Department),
- not linking census results to existing databases which include personal identifying information,
- applying a data suppression protocol wherein results that include less than 15 individual responses are not made available to anyone outside of the Research Department,

¹ WRDSB Human Rights Policy: <https://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/1017-Human-Rights.pdf>

² OHRC Count Me In! Guidelines (p. 3):

http://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/Count_me_in%21_Collecting_human_rights_based_data.pdf

³ Ontario Regulation 267/18: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r18267>

- seeking informed, expressed, voluntary consent and providing links to background information and contact information for board researchers to allow employees to ask questions, and
- adhering to the board's policy on Records Information Management. The [WRDSB Records and Retention Schedule](#) guides how we safely dispose of data in a secure and responsible fashion. Keeping data for a specific number of years allows us to track changes in our system over time.

For more information on how the Workforce Census was conducted and how we ensure privacy and data security, please refer to the [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - Background and Support Documents](#).

FINDINGS FROM THE 'ALL RESPONSES DATA FILE'

The 'All Responses Data File' includes the individual responses to each question from both the 2019 WRDSB Workforce Census (the 2019 Census) and 2024 WRDSB Workforce Census (the 2024 Census) data collections. The release of this data is aligned with our commitment to the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism.

A total of 2415 employees completed the 2024 Census compared to 3844 employees in 2019. In the following paragraphs, we share key findings from the demographic comparison of the participants 2019 and 2024.⁴ For a more detailed breakdown of the data presented in this section, please refer to the [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - All Responses Data File](#).

In the 2024 Census, 63.5% of respondents to the Workforce Census surveys identified as teachers (permanent and occasional). Approximately 13% of respondents identified as educational assistants and 10% as education support staff. About 8% of respondents identified as system leaders (i.e., principals, managers, and superintendents). Designated early childhood educators, custodial and maintenance staff, professional student support personnel, supervision monitors and cafeteria assistants, and non-union/casual employees each represented fewer than 5% of the Census respondents.

The percentage of staff who identified with several racial groups was higher on the 2024 Census participants when compared to the 2019 Census:

- 1.9% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as Black compared to 1.2% on the 2019 Census
- 1.7% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as East Asian compared to 1.4% on the 2019 Census

⁴ As the total number of responses in the 2019 Census was 59% higher than in the 2024 Census, it is important to consider that some differences in the percentage of responses from 2019 to 2024 may be explained by differences in response rates (especially for responses that represent a relatively small number of employees).

- 1.6% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis (Michif) compared to 0.7% on the 2019 Census
- 0.9% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as Latino/Latina/Latinx compared to 1.1% on the 2019 Census
- 1.1% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as Middle Eastern/North African/West Asian compared to 0.8% on the 2019 Census
- 3.3% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as South Asian compared to 2.8% on the 2019 Census
- 0.8% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as Southeast Asian compared to 0.6% on the 2019 Census
- 90.4% of employees on the 2024 Census identified their racial identity as White compared to 92.1% on the 2019 Census

The percentage of employees who reported that they were born outside Canada on the 2024 Census was slightly lower than on the 2019 Census (10.6% compared to 11.7%). The percentage of employees who reported English as their first language on the 2024 Census was slightly higher than on the 2019 Census (90.3% compared to 89.3%).

There were small increases in the percentage of participating employees who identified as being agnostic, atheist, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Sikh, as following Indigenous Spirituality, and having no religious affiliation on the 2024 Census when compared to the 2019 Census. There were slight decreases in the percentage of participating employees who identified as Christian, Catholic, Muslim, and as spiritual, but not religious.

The percentage of participating employees who identified as members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community was higher on the 2024 Census than on the 2019 Census. 1.6% of participating employees identified as having a gender that was different than their assigned sex at birth on the 2024 Census compared to less than 0.5% on the 2019 Census. On the 2024 Census 90.3% of participating employees identified as straight or heterosexual compared to 95.7% of employees in 2019.

The percentage of participating employees who did not identify as a person with disability decreased from 85.6% on the 2019 Census to 62.8% in the 2024 Census. Most of this change is due to the number of staff members who identified as having a mental health disability. In the 2019 Census, 7.2% of participating employees identified as having a mental health disability compared to 19.0% of employees in 2024.⁵

⁵ Additional information and definitions were added to the 2024 Census questionnaire which may have contributed to the increase in the percentage of employees who identified as a person with a mental health disability.

FINDINGS FROM THE 'PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES REPORT'

This section highlights key findings related from the [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - Perceptions and Experiences Summary](#).

The following list shows the percentage of employees who reported that they felt affirmed in their identity 'All the time' or 'Often' for each identity category on the 2024 Census:⁶

- Less than 40% of First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis (Michif) identifying employees felt well affirmed in their Indigenous identity in the workplace.⁷
- 47.6% of employees felt well affirmed in their ethnic/cultural origin in the workplace.
- 52.7% of employees felt well affirmed in their racial identity in the workplace.
- 47.1% of employees felt well affirmed about their place of birth in the workplace.⁸
- 80.2% of employees felt well affirmed about their first language in the workplace.
- 26.7% of employees felt well affirmed in creed, religion, spirituality, worldview in the workplace.
- 67.5% of employees felt well affirmed about their gender identity in the workplace.
- 64.9% of employees felt well affirmed about their sexual orientation in the workplace.
- 17.4% of employees felt well affirmed as a person with a disability or health condition in the workplace.⁹

At the end of the 2019 and 2024 questionnaire, employees were asked how much they agree with a series of statements related to their experiences and perceptions in the workplace. The list below shares the percentage of employees who strongly agreed with each statement in 2019 compared to those who strongly agreed in 2024:

- 18.3% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "have a sense of belonging in the workplace," compared to 25.2% in 2019
- 5.0% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "feel socially isolated in the workplace," compared to 1.5% in 2019
- 11.9% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "feel well supported in the workplace," compared to 16.6% in 2019
- 27.0% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "feel the need for more professional development opportunities," compared to 19.3% in 2019
- 16.4% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "feel the need for more personal support services," compared to 8.1% in 2019
- 13.4% of employees in the 2024 Census strongly agreed that they "Experienced barriers to career advancement at WRDSB," compared to 6.7% in 2019

⁶ The question about affirmation was not included on the 2019 Workforce Census questionnaire.

⁷ This percentage includes only employees who identified as First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis (Michif). For privacy reasons a more accurate percentage can not be shared.

⁸ This percentage includes only employees who identified as someone born outside Canada.

⁹ This percentage includes only employees who identified as a person with a disability or health condition.

A sense of belonging in the workplace is an important concept in terms of understanding employee wellbeing. The list below highlights the percentage of employees with selected identities that agreed or strongly agreed that they feel a sense of belonging in the workplace:

- 47.6% of Black identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 60.5% of East Asian identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 54.3% of First Nations, Inuit, and/or Métis (Michif) identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 67.6% of South Asian identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 66.1% of White identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 54.5% of all racialized employees felt a strong sense of belonging¹⁰
- 65.8% of men/male identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 66.9% of women/female identifying employees felt a strong sense of belonging
- 42.9% of employees identifying with a gender different from their assigned sex at birth felt a strong sense of belonging
- 54.7% of employees identifying as having ADHD felt a strong sense of belonging
- 46.7% of employees identifying as having a learning, perceptual, or cognitive disability felt a strong sense of belonging
- 54.9% of employees identifying as having a mental health disability felt a strong sense of belonging
- 73.9% of employees identifying as having a physical disability felt a strong sense of belonging

More detailed analyses of the Workforce Census results are included in the [2024 WRDSB Workforce Census - Perceptions and Experiences Summary](#).

NEXT STEPS

The WRDSB will mobilize and implement a range of initiatives as a commitment to supporting all employees throughout the WRDSB. Through the results of the 2022/23 Guarding Minds at Work survey staff identified several priority interventions to support staff wellbeing:

- Procedures and support for staff to effectively engage with parents and caregivers in challenging circumstances.
- Formalize a debriefing process for staff that have been involved in a difficult or distressing situation.
- Support and training for staff on behavioural management in schools.
- Networking opportunities with colleagues and staff.
- Professional leadership development and training with a focus on building a positive and psychologically safe workplace culture.

¹⁰ Due to privacy protocols, Details for other racial identity groups could not be shared. The 'All racialized employees' count included Black, East Asian, First Nations/Inuit/Métis, Latino/Latina/Latinx, Middle Eastern/North African/West Asian, Southeast Asian, South Asian, and multiracial identified employees.

These key priorities will serve as a basis for ongoing support and engagement with employees as we continue to create safe and healthy environments for all employees. Additionally, the WRDSB remains committed to implementing key objectives and actions as identified in our [Board Improvement and Equity Plan](#). Including:

- Implementing practices that support equitable application, hiring, and promotion processes
- Monitoring changes in the identities of individuals who have applied to, are hired by, and are promoted within WRDSB
- Hosting and attending job fairs
- Offering network learning opportunities for educators and administrators (e.g., Aspiring Leaders, Administrator Mentoring Program, Network Learning Series, and Employee Affinity Groups)
- Provide ongoing Behaviour Management System training and support for staff

For more details and information related to the information in this report please visit the WRDSB Workforce Census website. For questions about the Census, please feel welcome to contact the WRDSB Research Department at research@wrdsb.ca.