

Dr. Jason Locklin, Ph.D.

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Waterloo Region District School Board
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Regarding Posting: Executive Manager, Research and Organizational Transformation, Waterloo Region District School Board

Dear Hiring Committee, I would welcome the opportunity to be considered for the Executive Manager position in the Research and Organizational Transformation Department. The Waterloo Regional District School Board is a glowing example of an organization committed to making use of evidence-based practices to inform innovative policy with the central goal of improving education by identifying gaps and planning initiatives to end the pattern of student identity and social location driving outcomes. I am proud to be a part of this organization in the Research and Organizational Transformation department, which has been a key component of both evidence-based planning to achieve this goal, as well as program evaluation and monitoring to help realize the board's strategic plan

As Research Officer, I work closely within the department team, as well as colleagues across the WRDSB, connecting with nearly every project the department contributes to. This role has ranged from informal support, such as providing suggestions or guidance to colleagues about analytical approaches or communication strategies, to taking the lead on several large projects. These, and the many other smaller projects I have been involved with, have all been carefully planned to make efficient use of staff resources, operate thoughtfully with regard to research ethics and community needs, and maximise impact as well as communicated products that can be directly used for Board initiatives, interventions, and strategic planning.

As you will see, my qualifications and experience make me the ideal candidate to maintain the inertia of the Research and Organizational Transformation Department and ensure continuity of the support that has been provided to the WRDSB leadership with as minimum disruption as possible:

- I have a Ph.D. in Psychology, Behavioural and Cognitive Neuroscience from the University of Waterloo with a research thesis completed.
- I contribute to strategic and resource planning through monitoring of the outcomes of the WRDSB's Strategic Plan, and contributing data products for the Board Improvement and Equity Plan and Student Achievement Plans leading to effective implementation of plans, policies and communication with various stakeholders in our organization.
- I have a proven track record in all aspects of research, facilitating and change management, from engaging with stakeholders and administration for impactful program evaluation, data collection, interpretation, representation and communication of a wide array of data sources, including the translation of complex data sources like student socio-economic, demographic, school-climate, and roadmap to 100 "at-risk" indicators for multiple audiences.

- I have experience in research, assessment and program evaluation, educational design and evaluation methodologies in the large-scale educational environment of the WRDSB, including the Safe Caring and Inclusive School Survey, the Student Equity Index, and Guarding Minds at Work. These are used to inform and assess the suitability of programs and resource allocations and involve knowledge translation that takes into account new insights from the field of education research in ways that carefully consider the needs of department and organizational leadership.
- I have excellent interpersonal, consultation, and oral/written communication skills with a proven ability to translate complex research and statistical concepts to a variety of audiences. I demonstrated these abilities while communicating WRDSB research to staff, such as when sharing the Middle Years Development Inventory results with administrators at yearly Family of Schools meetings, and through previous work consulting with stakeholders and colleagues in the multi-professional research team associated with the Centre for Family Medicine about research projects.
- I have spent more than 5 years establishing a positive rapport with members of the Research and Organizational Transformation department team based on a culture of respect. I know the strengths and preferences of each member, and while the new role will come with a new relationship, that history will enable a smooth transition. I also have strong connections with members across the WRDSB community, developed via cross-department work as well as support of administrators and senior team.
- I have demonstrated the ability to work productively and strategically through efficient resource management of projects for cost effective delivery of results. I had also been tasked with the management of financial resource and budget development, forecasting and reporting for a large research grant application I completed for the Centre for Family Medicine.
- I have nearly two decades of experience with research design, including ethics protocols and legislation, survey development, measurement and statistical analysis of quantitative and qualitative data including use of Qualtrics for data collection and reporting, PowerBI, Python, SPSS, and the “R” statistical software package for analytics and data visualisation. I have demonstrated project management and organizational skills with several ongoing products, including data sharing products for external organizations, annually updated tools like the Student Equity Index, and regular system surveys that are reported broadly across the organization.
- I have experience supervising research assistants at the University of Waterloo and co-op students at the Centre for Family Medicine.
- As an active part of the wider Ontario educational research community through my role as an executive of The Association of Educational Researches of Ontario, I can represent the WRDSB well and connect with resources that can benefit board initiatives and learning opportunities.

I would use this opportunity to employ what I have learned to facilitate strategic planning of school board capacity-building and improvement planning processes. I would strive to promote a spirit of inquiry among organization leaders, as well as an organizational culture of evidence-based decision making through respectful and inclusive practices, innovations, and policies.

I am eager to step forward to lead the team and I appreciate the opportunity to advocate for why I am the ideal candidate to continue this important work. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jason Locklin, PhD
 Research Officer, Research and Organizational Transformation
 Waterloo District School Board