



STUDENT CENSUS 2022

RESULTS REPORT



March 2023

Research and Development Services

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Background

At the Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB), we are committed to creating safe and inclusive work and learning environments where every member of our community feels welcome, valued, included, and respected. In line with these commitments, our HCDSB Equity and Inclusion Policy, and our [Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#), we administered our first ever *Leave your Mark: Student Census* last year. This data collection also aligns with provincial legislation and policy, including [Ontario's Anti-Racism Act](#) (2017), [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan](#) (2017), and the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). To execute the action plan, the Ministry of Education created the Education Equity Secretariat, which supports the identification and removal of systemic barriers in education. Additionally, [the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism \(ARDS\)](#) are a set of 43 standards setting out requirements, rationale, and guidance for the collection of identity-based data. These data guidelines were guiding principles for designing, conducting, and analyzing the HCDSB's student census.

Purpose

Human rights and equity are values consistent with Catholic social teachings and the Human Rights codes. At HCDSB we are dedicated to providing spaces free of discrimination, harassment, and violence for all members of our community. Moreover, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated, condoned, or ignored. The collection of identity-based data helps us to uphold our commitment to creating safe, inclusive, and welcoming learning environments.

The purpose of our collecting identity-based data then is to help us better understand our students' identities and experiences and to "verify, measure, address and monitor gaps and systemic disparities affecting students' experiences and outcomes" (Ministry of Education). This data will enable us to help every student in the HCDSB through the creation and promotion of more equitable and inclusive learning environments, where all students can [achieve, believe, and belong](#). We know from research that understanding how identity-based data can impact students' outcomes and experiences at school is important. Information about the research behind collecting student identity data can be found in our literature report, [The Importance of Collecting Identity-Based Information](#).

Survey Development and Administration

Research and Development Services staff began planning for the Student Census data collection in Fall of 2020 and piloted the process of collecting Student Census information with a sample of students and parents/guardians in the Spring of 2021. Between November 2021 and February 2022, a public awareness campaign was conducted on social media and within board-wide communications. Information sessions were conducted across the system and were recorded and posted on the public website. The census was administered from February 28th to April 4th, 2022. Staff then organized, tested, and analyzed the census data between April and December 2022.

The elementary and secondary panel each received a separate survey through the SurveyMonkey online platform (See Appendices [A](#) and [B](#) for a copy of the elementary and secondary survey, respectively). For our students in Junior Kindergarten to grade 8, parents/guardians were asked to

fill out the survey for each child, with or without their child's assistance, which was a requirement of the Ontario Education Equity Secretariat. In addition to the online English-language survey, parents/guardians were able to request Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Tagalog, or French versions of the survey, as well as paper copies. All respondents expressed consent before beginning the survey; participation in the census was voluntary.

Research and Development Services engaged in targeted follow-up e-mails to increase participation. Students and parents who had not completed the survey were sent reminder e-mails on multiple occasions. As well, general e-mails were sent to reinforce the importance of completing the census.

Privacy and Security

The Student Census was confidential, but not anonymous. Parents' and students' responses were linked to the student's Ontario Education Number (OEN). This enabled the collected identity-based data to be used in conjunction with student achievement and well-being data. The census data underwent a process of de-identification, consistent with subsection 7(9) of the Anti-Racism Act. Identifying information, including OEN, student names, parent e-mails, and school names, was stripped from the data. In order to connect our census data with student achievement data, Research and Development Services staff created an anonymous identifier, linked back to student OENs via a key. This key is stored on an encrypted thumb drive and encrypted folder. Census data is stored on a secure database server in its de-identified state. Additional details about privacy measures can be found in [Appendix C](#).

Analysis

Analysis of the aggregated data was carried out by Research and Development Services staff. As all questions on the survey were optional, all survey responses were retained for analysis, regardless of the number of questions answered. As a result, counts differ for each question. Respondents were able to enter text responses for most items to ensure data reflected all student identities. Response data was cleaned to ensure that data was accurate (i.e., no spelling errors) or was not repeating existing response options. All response categories with fewer than 15 respondents were re-categorized into an 'Additional' category. To reflect the complexity of identity, multiple choices were allowed. As such, many charts show a total of over 100%; this is marked in the report with a ^.

Data was analyzed using statistical software to check for data validity and to determine margins of error and other tests of accuracy and precision by Research and Development Services staff. Additional details about the analysis can be found in [Appendix C](#), including a detailed breakdown of margins of error. Analysis of student survey responses involved comparison with the results of our 2022 HCDSB Workforce Census, as well as the 2021 Census of Canada for Halton Region. As well, a comparison was carried out with limited data about the racial composition of the Roman Catholic population of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Please see [Appendix D](#) for these comparisons.

Consultation with Equity Deserving Groups

As part of the Census analysis process, the ARDS requires public service organizations, such as school boards, to engage in meaningful consultations with groups that may be impacted by the release of the data. As such, Research and Development Services staff engaged in this consultation process from the Fall of 2022 into the Winter of 2023; we heard from over 75 stakeholders, including students, staff, and

community members. Preliminary results from the census were presented, and feedback was collected from groups that included members of the Indigenous~, Black, Gender Diverse, and Persons with Disabilities communities. The feedback received at these consultations informed the decisions around the dissemination and interpretation of data for these equity deserving groups.

Response Rates

For the Elementary Panel, the survey was sent to the parents of **22,759** of our elementary students. **5,370** respondents consented to the survey and answered at least one question, for a response rate of **23.6%**.

For the Secondary Panel, the survey was sent to **12,984** of our secondary students. **4,987** respondents consented to the survey and answered at least one question, for a response rate of **38.4%**.

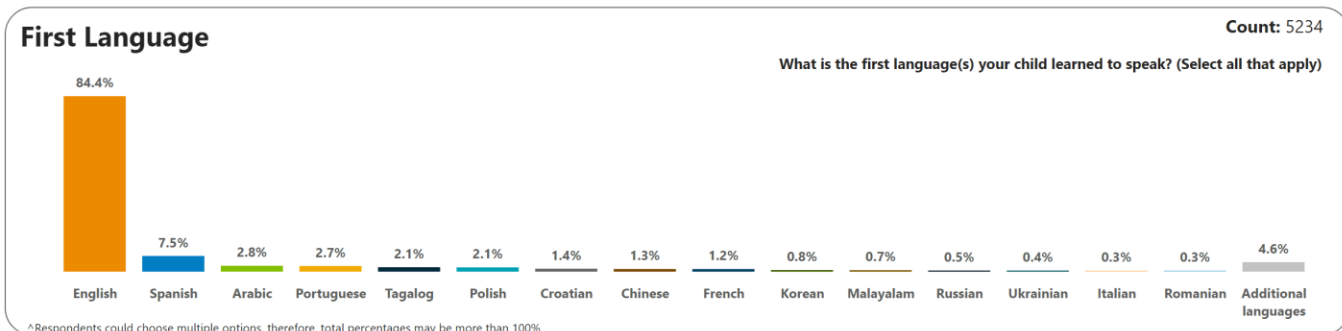
Based on the response rates, the survey data is considered representative of the HCDSB population. The response rates are sufficient to produce a relatively small margin of error and enable comparisons between underrepresented populations in the board.

~ additional consultation needed for this group; results will not be released at this time.

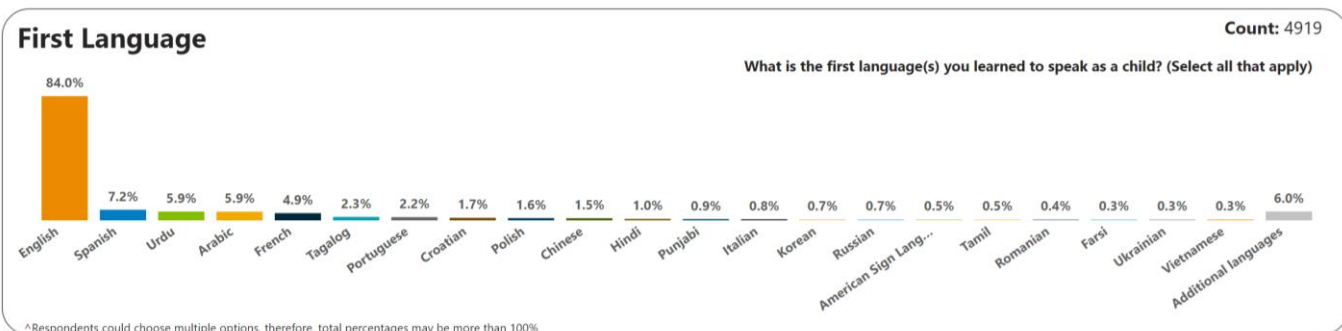
FIRST LANGUAGE(S)

A student’s first language (or mother tongue) is the language they first learned to speak.

Elementary Panel



Secondary Panel



HOME LANGUAGE(S)

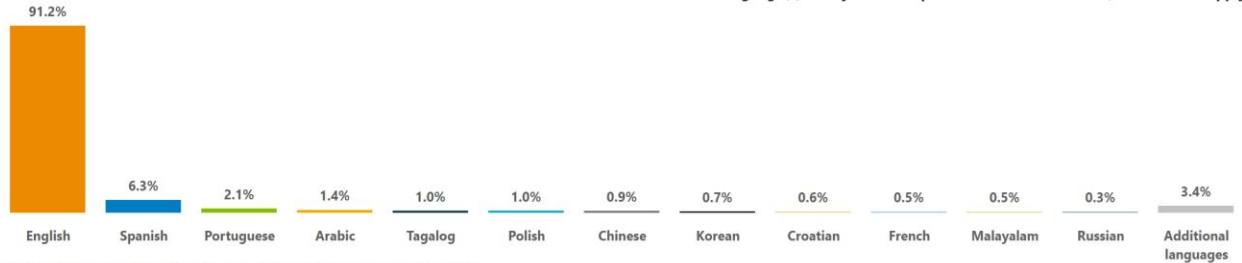
This is the language a student speaks most often at home.

Elementary Panel

Home Language

Count: 5144

What language(s) does your child speak most often at home? (Select all that apply)



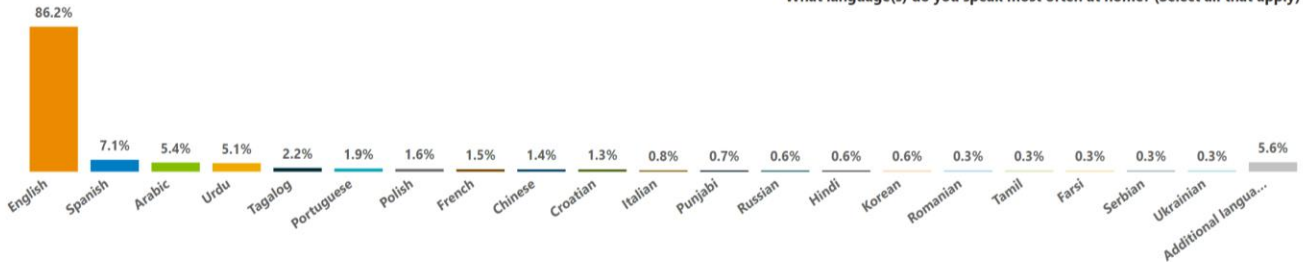
^Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

Secondary Panel

Home Language

Count: 4865

What language(s) do you speak most often at home? (Select all that apply)

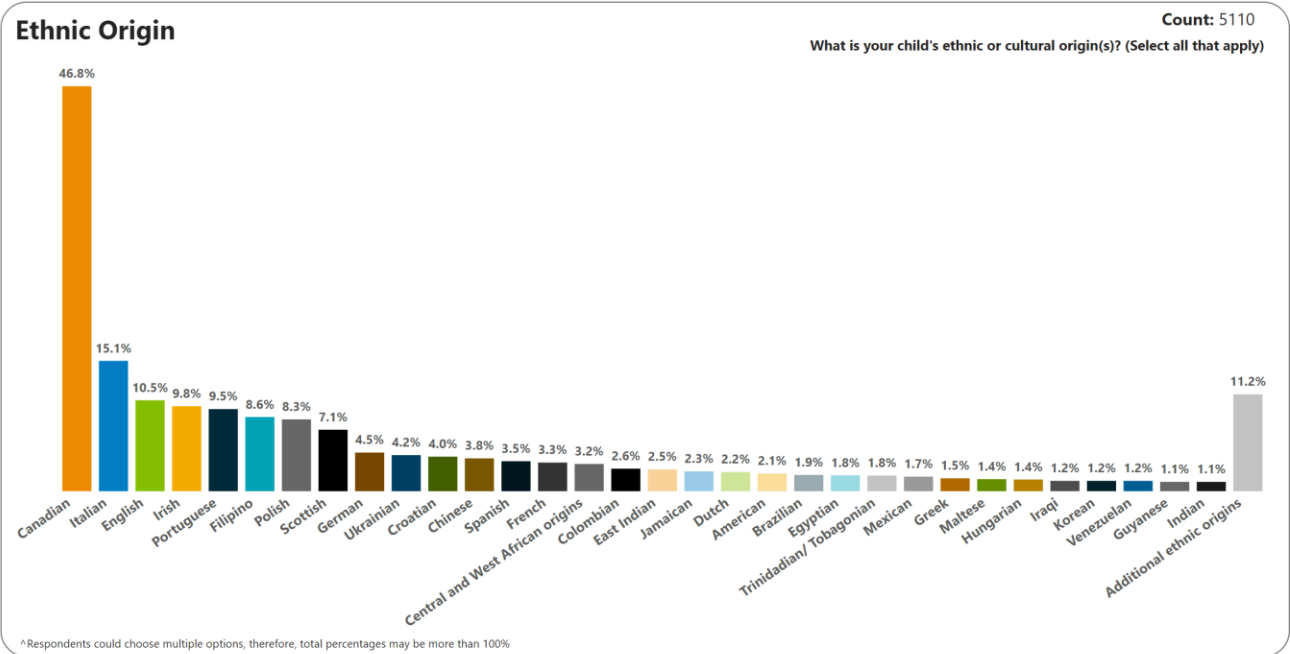


^Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

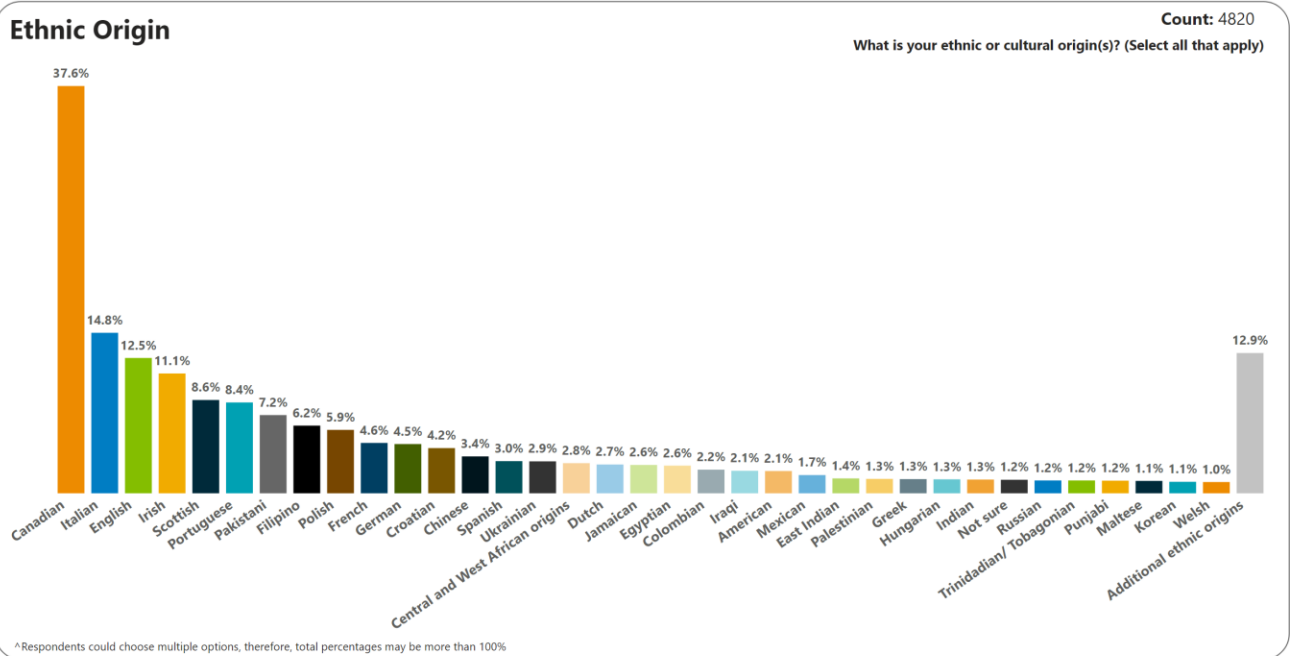
ETHNIC ORIGIN

Ethnic origin refers to a person’s ethnic or cultural background. Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic, and/or religious characteristics.

Elementary Panel



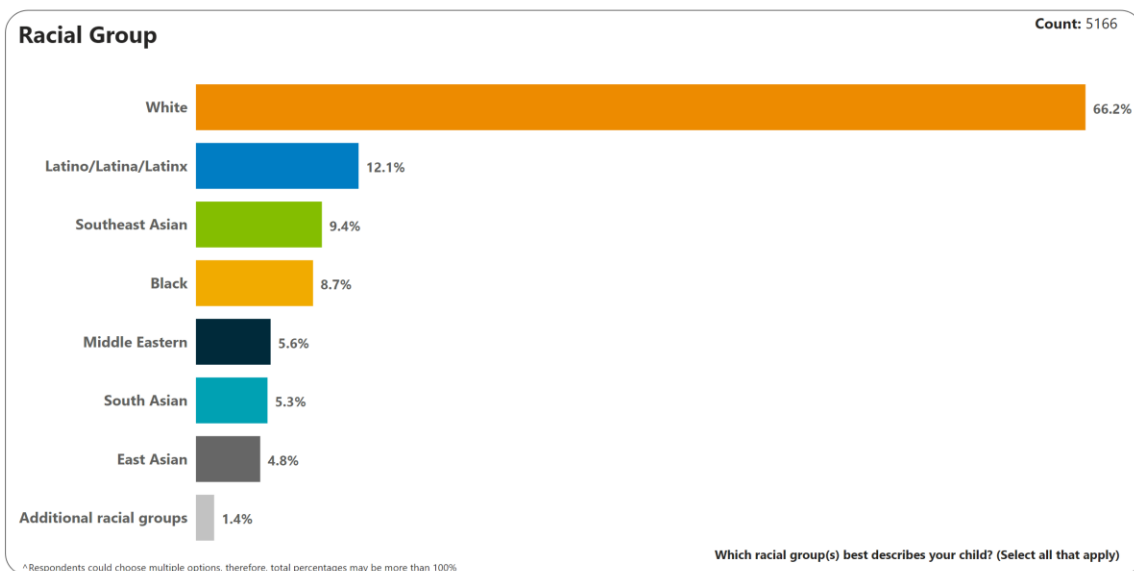
Secondary Panel



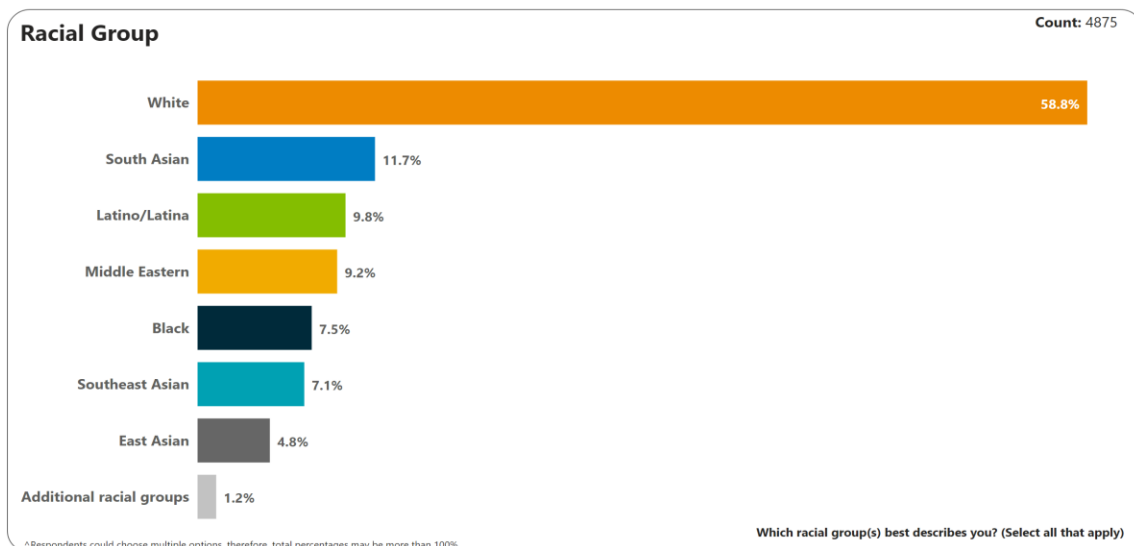
RACE

People are often described as belonging to a certain “race” based how others see and behave toward them. These ideas about who belongs to what race are usually based on physical features such as skin colour. Ideas about race are often imposed on people by others in ways which can affect their life experiences and how they are treated. Race is often confused with ethnicity, but there can often be several ethnicities within a racialized group.

Elementary Panel



Secondary Panel



RELIGION AND/OR SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION

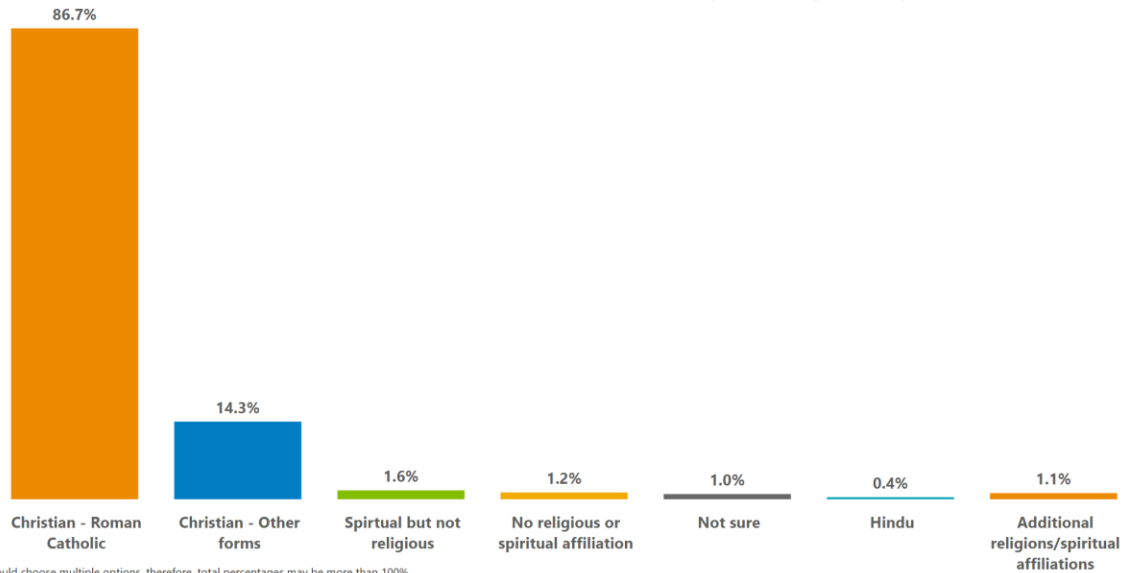
Religion refers to an individual’s self-identification or affiliation with any religious denomination, group, or other religiously defined community or system of belief and/or spiritual faith practices.

Elementary Panel

Religion and/or Spiritual Affiliation

Count: 5134

What is your child's religion and/or spiritual affiliation? (Select all that apply)



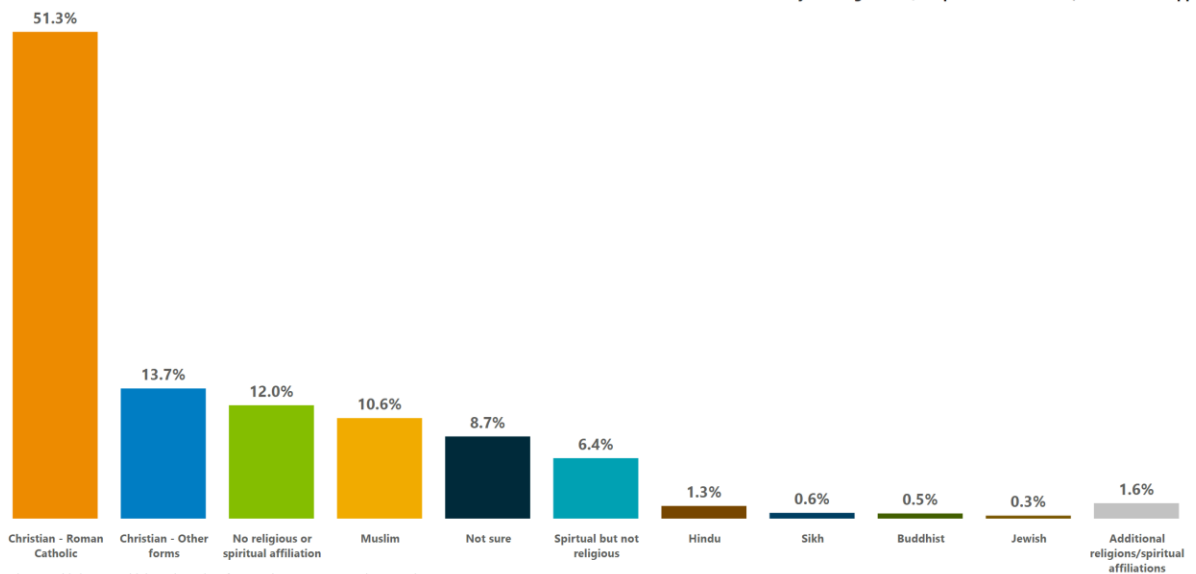
^a Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

Secondary Panel

Religion and/or Spiritual Affiliation

Count: 4802

What is your religion and/or spiritual affiliation? (Select all that apply)

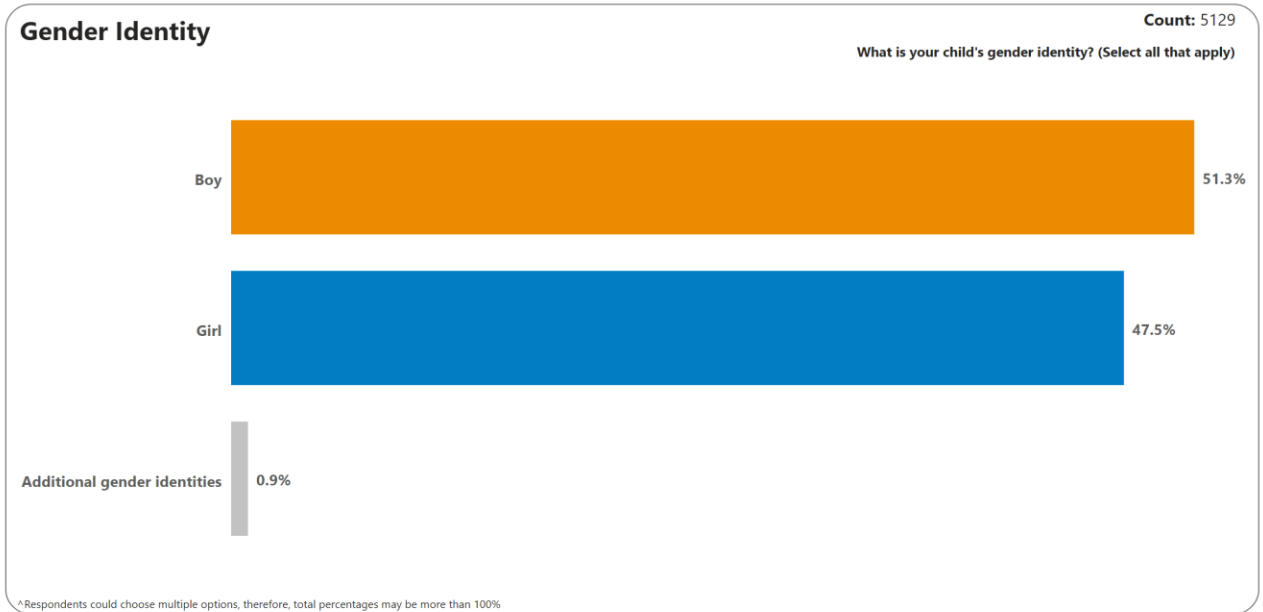


^a Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

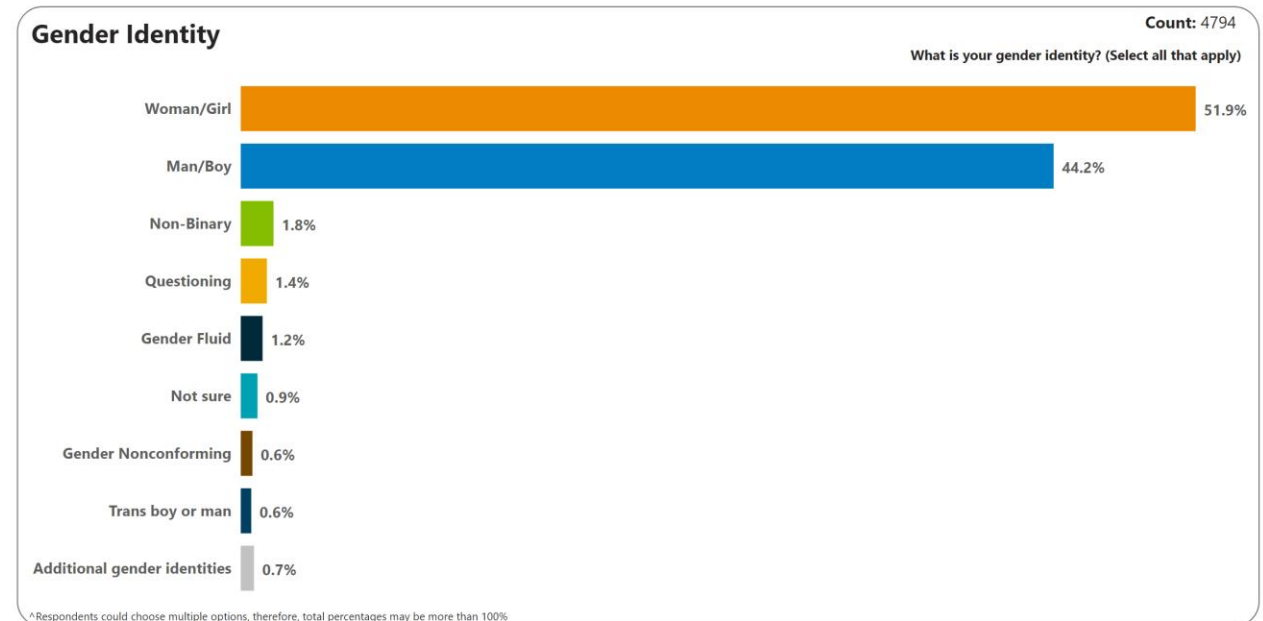
GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling of being a woman, a man, both, neither, or on the gender spectrum. This may not be the same as a person's sex assigned at birth (e.g., male, female, intersex).

Elementary Panel



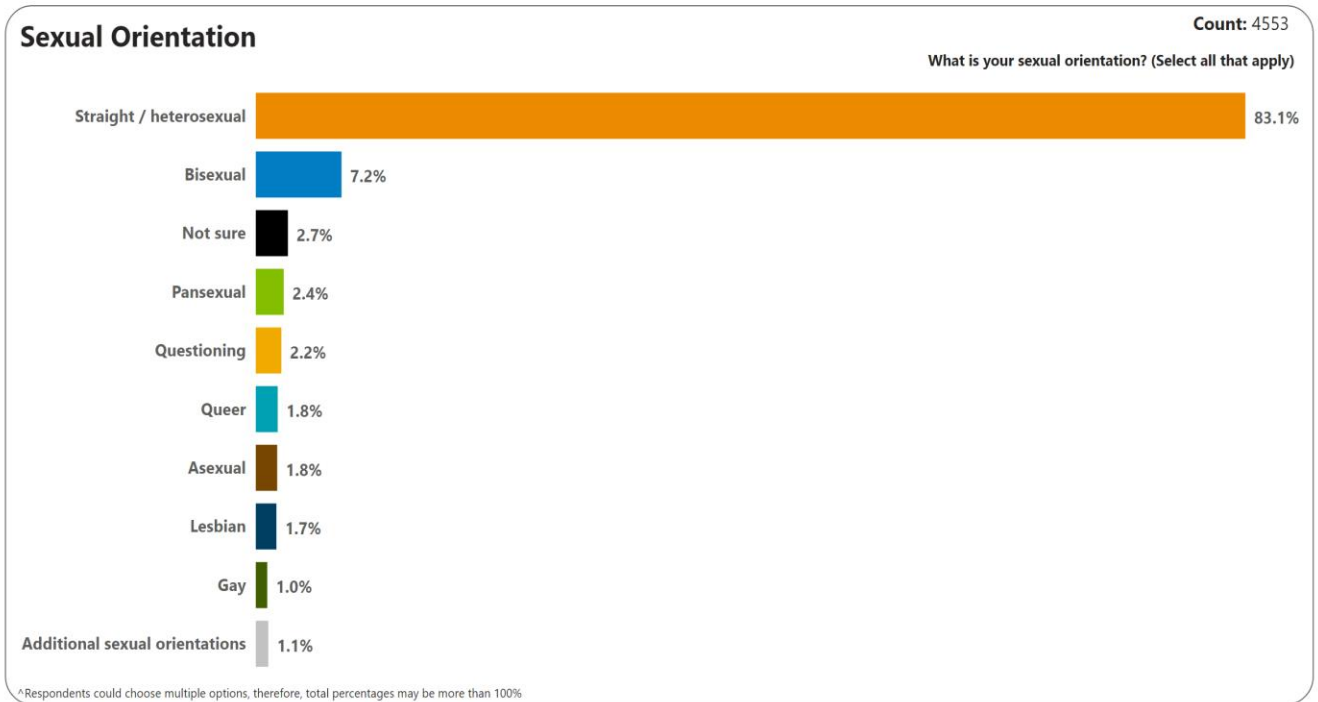
Secondary Panel



SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation refers to a person’s sense of sexual attraction to people of the same or different gender. This question was only asked of secondary students.

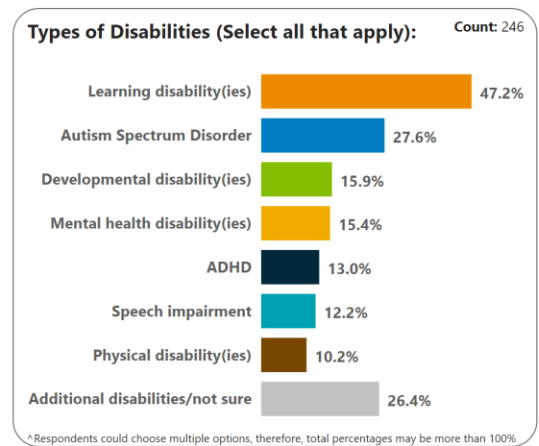
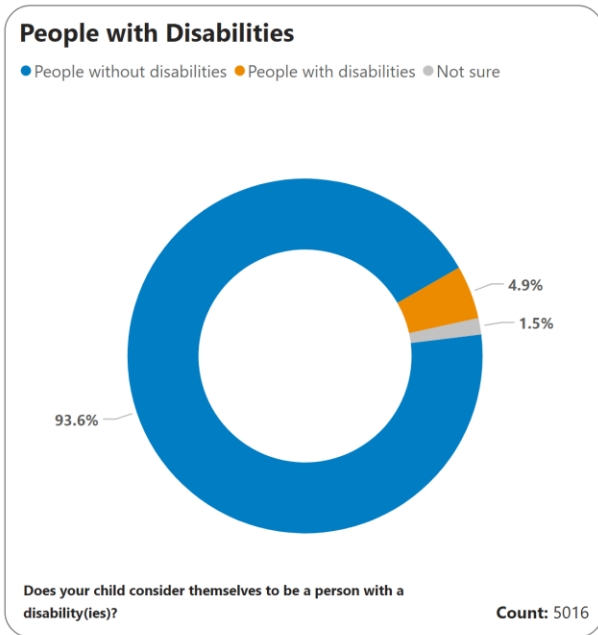
Secondary Panel



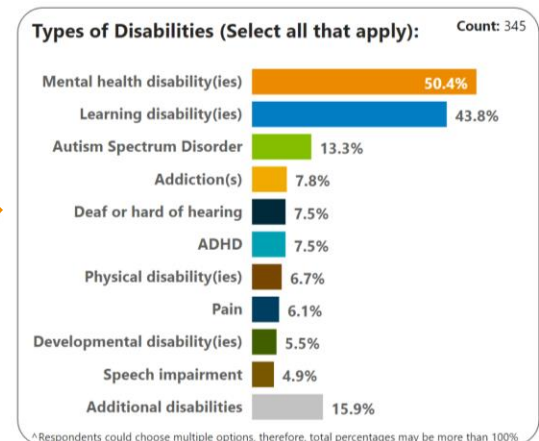
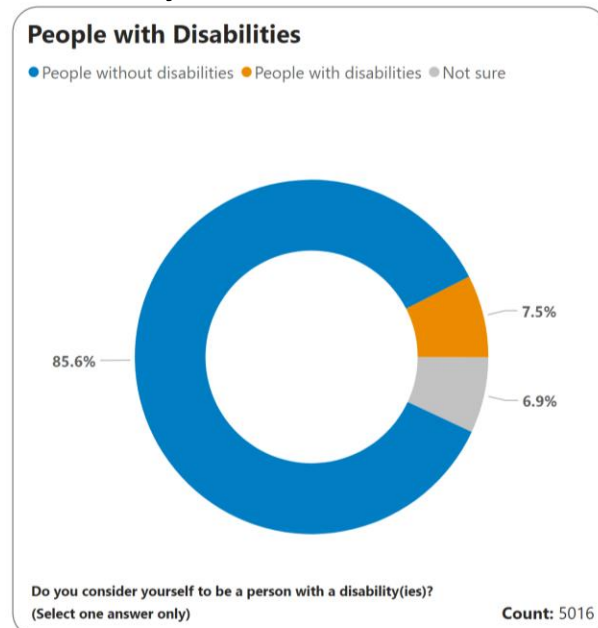
DISABILITY

Some people identify as having a disability because of a permanent or long-term health condition that makes it difficult for them to function in an environment that is not fully inclusive and accessible. Not all people with a long-term or permanent health condition identify as having a disability. A person’s disability may be diagnosed or not diagnosed. It may be visible or concealable. Some students who have disabilities may have a special plan at school to help them (such as an Individual Education Plan), but some do not. The personal nature of some disabilities might have an impact on the parent and guardian reporting for elementary students.

Elementary Panel



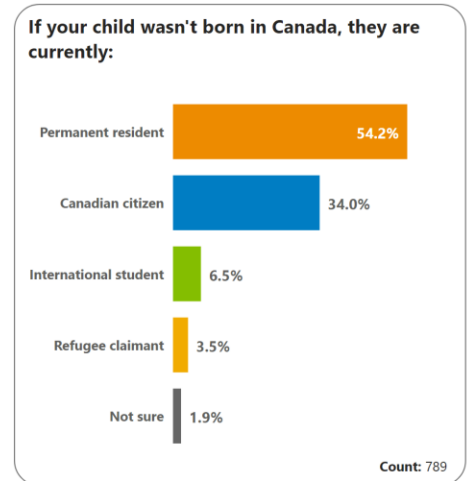
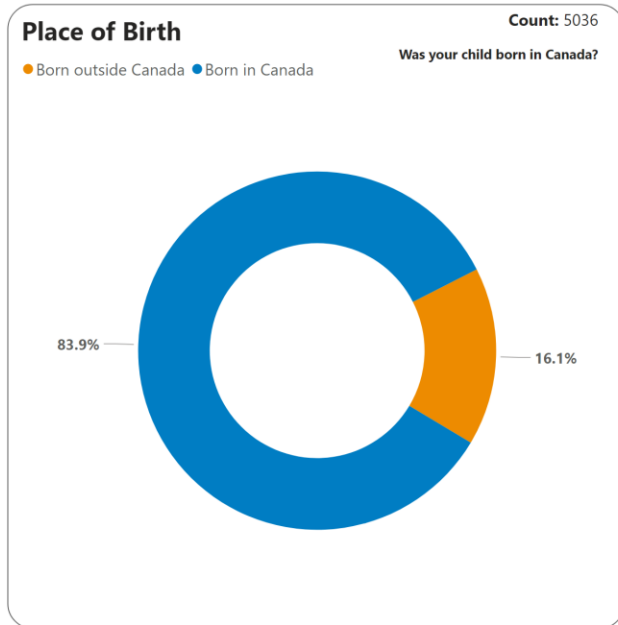
Secondary Panel



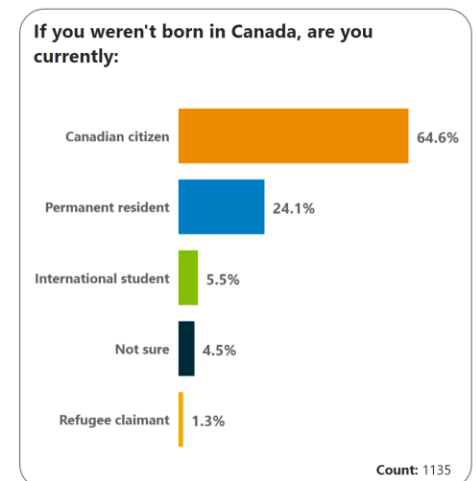
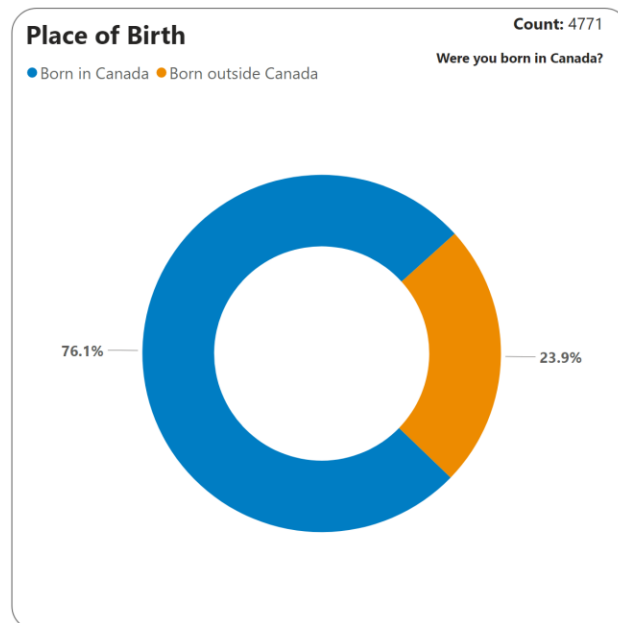
STATUS IN CANADA

This question refers to a student’s place of birth (inside or outside of Canada) and their current immigration status in Canada.

Elementary Panel



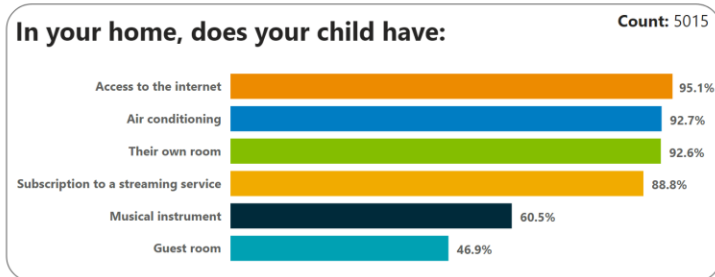
Secondary Panel



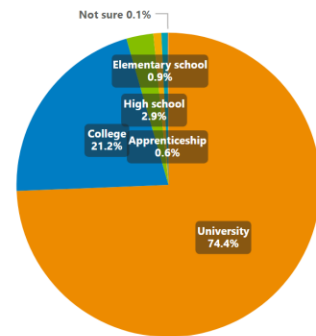
SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Socioeconomic status is tied to levels of income, education, and household attributes. Parents and students were asked a series of questions about items in their home and the level of educational attainment. These responses are presented separately; they are considered indicative of the socioeconomic status of respondents.

Elementary Panel

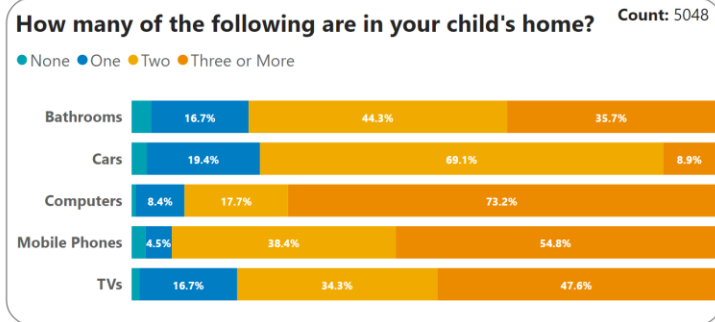


Household Highest Educational Attainment

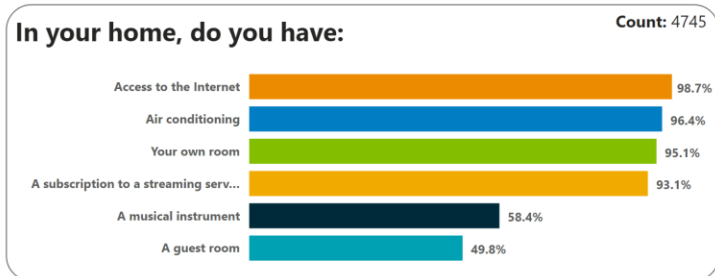


Please check the highest level of education completed by a parent/guardian in your child's household.

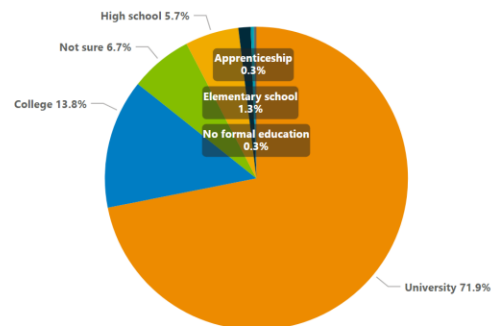
Count: 4926



Secondary Panel

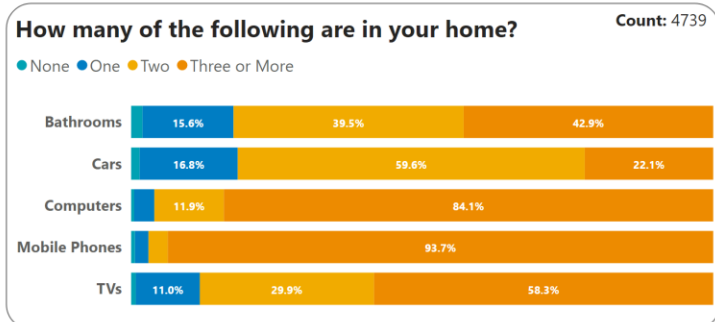


Household Highest Educational Attainment



Please check the highest level of education completed by a parent/guardian in your household.

Count: 4664



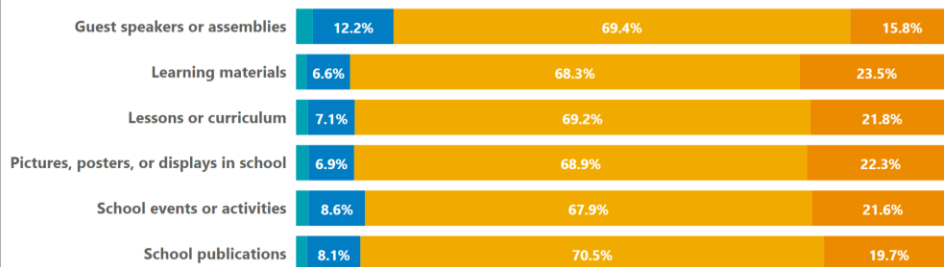
Perceptions about Student's Identity being Reflected at School

Parents and students were asked several questions about their perceptions of how their identity(ies) were reflected or taught about in school.

Elementary Panel

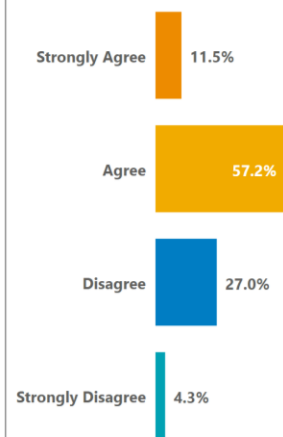
At your child's school, do you see your child's identity reflected positively in:

● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Agree ● Strongly Agree



Count: 4823

At my child's school, my child has opportunities to learn about their cultural/racial background:

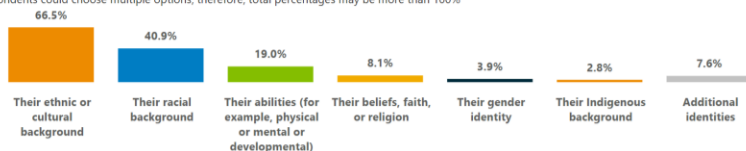


Count: 4792

Which of the following do you feel is not being reflected at your child's school? (Select all that apply):

^ Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

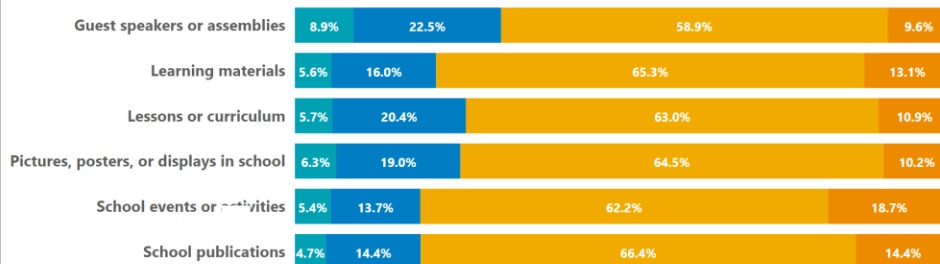
Count: 814



Secondary Panel

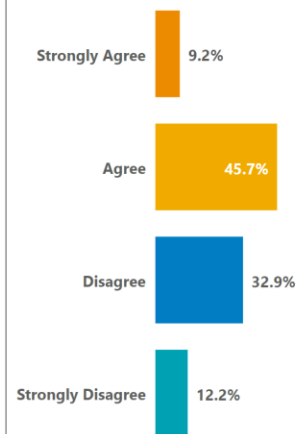
At your school, do you see yourself/your identity reflected positively in:

● Strongly Disagree ● Disagree ● Agree ● Strongly Agree



Count: 4551

At my school, I have opportunities to learn about my cultural/racial background:

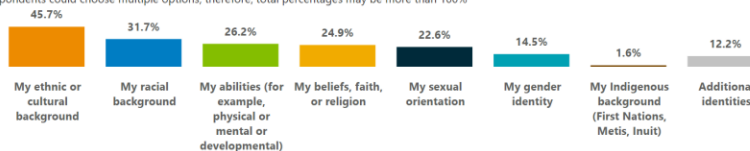


Count: 4607

Which of the following do you feel is not being reflected at your school? (Select all that apply):

^ Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

Count: 1723

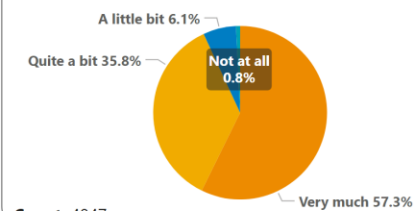


Perceptions about Student's Experience at School

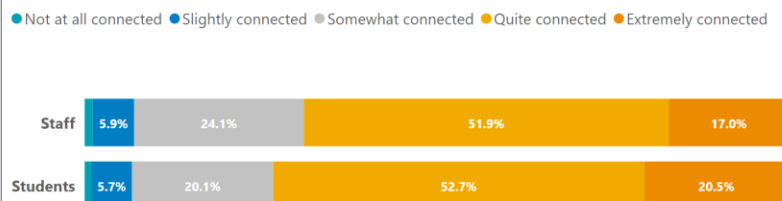
Parents and students were asked several questions about their perceptions of their child's/their experiences at school.

Elementary Panel

How safe does your child feel at school:

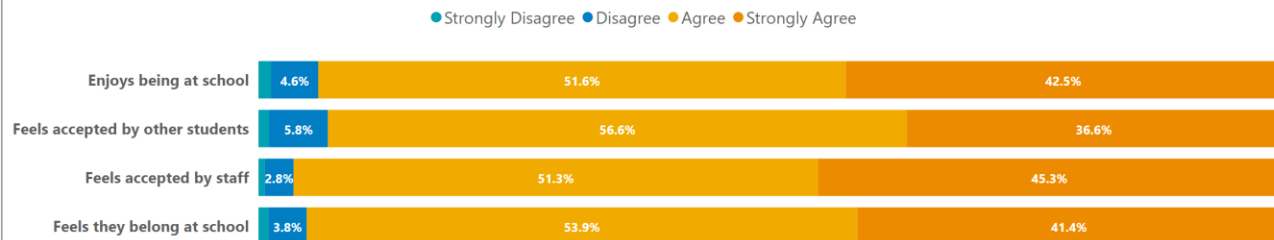


How connected does your child feel to the following groups at school? Count: 4835



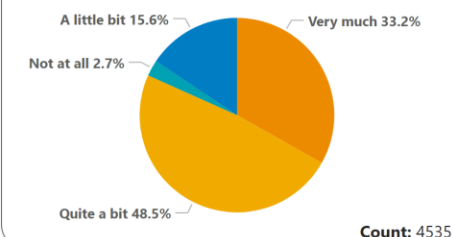
In your opinion, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child? My child...

Count: 4901

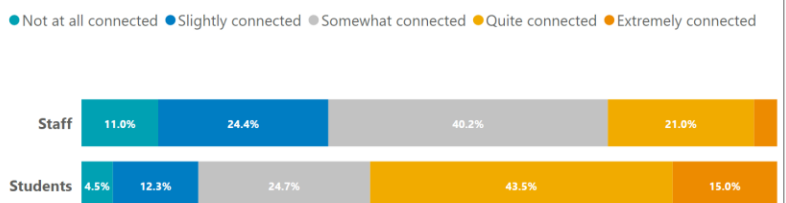


Secondary Panel

How safe do you feel at school:

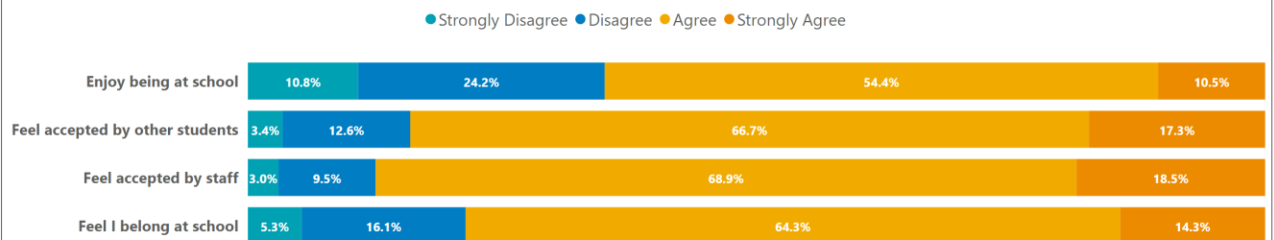


How connected do you feel to the following groups at school? Count: 4549



In your opinion, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? I...

Count: 4550



Perceptions about Feeling Welcome and Seeking Support

Parents and students were asked several questions about their child's/their feelings of belonging and acceptance at school.

Elementary Panel

My child never feels unwelcome:

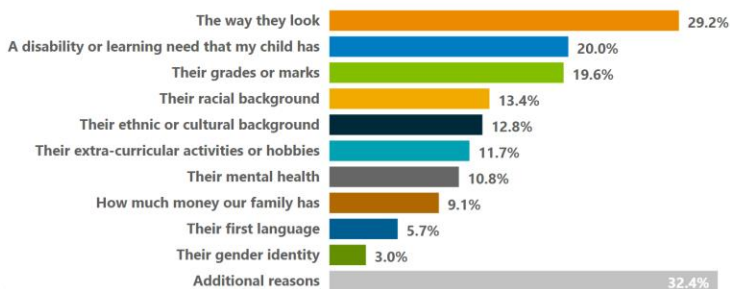
Count: 4261

Does your child ever feel unwelcome at their school because of any of the following?



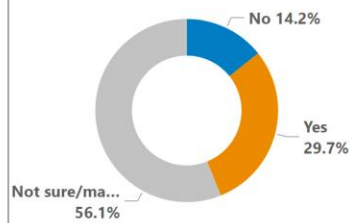
Does your child ever feel unwelcome at their school because of any of the following? (Select all that apply)

Count: 1017



* Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

My child would feel comfortable seeking mental health support at their school:



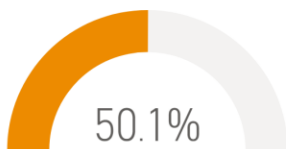
Count: 4779

Secondary Panel

I never feel unwelcome:

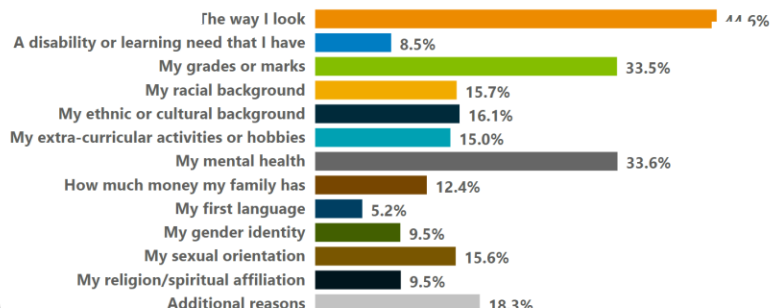
Count: 3749

Do you ever feel unwelcome at your school because of any of the following?



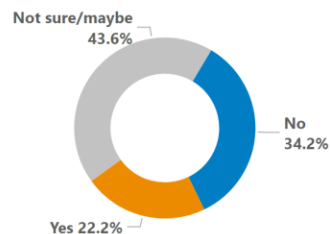
Do you ever feel unwelcome at your school because of any of the following? (Select all that apply)

Count: 1869



* Respondents could choose multiple options, therefore, total percentages may be more than 100%

I would feel comfortable seeking mental health support at my school:



Count: 4459

Introduction

The following section provides a breakdown of the responses to the perceptual questions by responses to particular identity-based data categories.

Methods

Using data from the preceding section, crosstabulations were conducted and show a breakdown for specific identity groups. However, for ease of use, only a single variable of interest was tracked for each group, typically the most positive response. These are labelled as such in each table.

The values in each table are compared with the total percentage for HCDSB. As such, they are labelled in relation to that value (see Legend). The highest and lowest values in any chart refer to the scale or item being measured.

While most of the questions analyzed are identical to those in the preceding section, the final table, 'Identity Reflection' provides a composite of each of the Identity Reflection options (in picture, at assemblies etc.) due to the cohesive nature of the individual questions as a single construct.

Analyses

In line with the Ontario Anti-Racism Act, 2017, these crosstabulations were shared during consultations with equity-deserving groups within our HCDSB Community. The analyses presented in this section reflect both the statistical analyses carried out as well as the consultative evidence provided to Research and Development Services Staff during these collections.

The crosstabulations represent a subset of all perceptual questions. This subset was chosen using two key criteria:

1. Most scores had a statistically significant difference between each identity group's score and the overall HCDSB score; and
2. Consultations with HCDSB communities suggested the importance of further study and analysis for each variable.

Please note, a "*", "**", or "***" next to any group name in the tables means that there is a statistically significant difference between that identity group's average score and that of the combined average of the other identity groups within each variable (i.e., White as compared to all other racial groups combined) at 90%, 95%, and 99% levels respectively.

Positive Identity Reflection at School

Parents and secondary students were asked if their child's/their identity was positively reflected in guest speakers or assemblies, pictures, posters, or displays, lessons, learning materials, school events and activities, or school publications. The scale shown here is an average of all scores for those who answered three or more of the six questions shown on page 17.

Legend



Elementary Panel

My child's identity is positively reflected at school

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	89.6%
Black***	67.2%
East Asian**	84.4%
Latino/Latina	89.1%
Middle Eastern	85.9%
South Asian***	82.7%
Southeast Asian***	83.1%
White***	93.6%
Additional Racial Groups***	77.0%
Born in Canada***	90.4%
Born outside of Canada***	85.4%
Boy	89.6%
Girl	89.8%
Additional Gender Identities***	75.0%
With Disability***	83.5%
Without Disability***	90.2%
Christian - Other forms***	85.7%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	90.0%
Hindu***	62.5%
No religious or spiritual affiliation**	78.9%
Spiritual, but not religious***	79.2%
Additional Religions***	68.0%

Secondary Panel

My identity is positively reflected at school:

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	74.2%
Black***	65.7%
East Asian	69.8%
Latino/Latina**	68.9%
Middle Eastern***	65.7%
South Asian***	67.8%
Southeast Asian***	66.7%
White***	79.0%
Additional Racial Groups**	60.7%
Born in Canada***	75.8%
Born outside of Canada***	69.3%
Boy/Man***	76.4%
Gender Fluid***	44.4%
Gender Nonconforming***	36.7%
Girl/Woman***	75.6%
Non-Binary***	42.3%
Questioning***	34.9%
Trans boy or man***	43.5%
Additional Gender Identities***	39.3%

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	74.2%
Asexual***	58.7%
Bisexual***	60.0%
Gay***	46.5%
Lesbian***	50.0%
Pansexual***	48.5%
Queer***	38.5%
Questioning**	62.2%
Straight / heterosexual***	77.9%
Additional Sexual Orientations***	53.7%
With Disability***	58.4%
Without Disability***	76.4%
Buddhist	64.0%
Christian - Other forms	74.7%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	80.2%
Hindu	81.7%
Jewish*	53.3%
Muslim***	66.4%
No religious or spiritual affiliation**	64.6%
Sikh	65.4%
Spiritual, but not religious***	62.6%
Additional Religions***	54.1%

Results revealed:

- Perceptions around one's identity being positively reflected at school are lower among non-Catholics and Black students in the elementary panel.
- Perceptions around one's identity being positively reflected at school are much lower among non-cisgender and non-heterosexual students. Community members pointed to a lack of discussion about gender expression and sexuality beyond simple binaries of male-female and gay-straight. Concerns were also raised about the lack of information around sexuality and gender within the curriculum.
- While the agreement rates are lower for racialized students than HCDSB total, members of HCDSB's Black community pointed to ongoing positive effects of student-run cultural events as being one possible reason for the relatively small differences. However, concerns were raised about the lack of positive stories of Black and other racialized people within the curriculum.

Safety at School

Parents and secondary students were asked about how safe their children/they felt at school. Note that this includes a wide range of understandings of safety, from physical to emotional.

Legend



Elementary Panel

My child feels quite to very safe at school

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	93.1%
Black***	89.5%
East Asian**	96.9%
Latino/Latina	93.4%
Middle Eastern*	90.0%
South Asian	95.0%
Southeast Asian**	95.7%
White	92.7%
Additional Racial Groups***	83.6%
Born in Canada**	92.7%
Born outside of Canada**	94.8%
Boy	93.0%
Girl	93.4%
Additional Gender Identities***	81.6%
With Disability***	76.8%
Without Disability***	94.1%
Christian - Other forms*	90.9%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	93.5%
Hindu*	80.0%
No religious or spiritual affiliation	87.9%
Spiritual, but not religious***	83.5%
Additional Religions**	83.9%

Secondary Panel

I feel quite to very safe at school

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	81.7%
Black***	72.4%
East Asian	81.4%
Latino/Latina	78.3%
Middle Eastern	83.9%
South Asian	83.5%
Southeast Asian	78.2%
White*	81.9%
Additional Racial Groups	77.2%
Born in Canada	81.5%
Born outside of Canada	82.5%
Boy/Man***	87.1%
Gender Fluid***	41.8%
Gender Nonconforming***	51.7%
Girl/Woman	80.2%
Non-Binary***	48.1%
Questioning***	53.2%
Trans boy or man***	45.8%
Additional Gender Identities***	62.1%

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	81.7%
Asexual***	61.0%
Bisexual***	68.7%
Gay***	58.1%
Lesbian***	55.8%
Pansexual***	48.0%
Queer***	57.0%
Questioning***	69.9%
Straight / heterosexual***	85.2%
Additional sexual Orientations***	51.2%
With Disability***	67.5%
Without Disability***	84.4%
Buddhist	80.0%
Christian - Other forms	80.5%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	85.7%
Hindu***	94.6%
Jewish	73.3%
Muslim	82.8%
No religious or spiritual affiliation**	77.1%
Sikh	73.9%
Spiritual, but not religious***	67.1%
Additional Religions***	45.8%

Results revealed:

- Perceptions around safety at school are lower for secondary students than for elementary students but follow a similar pattern.
- There is a particularly stark difference between gender identities. Among secondary students, boys feel the most safe, and girls feel slightly less safe. Students with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations feel the least safe of all our students.
- Black students feel significantly less safe than their peers. In the consultation, community members suggested that Secondary students might have based their answers on racist language in social media that is left unaddressed as well as the lack of intervention within the secondary school environment of in-school incidents.

Sense of Belonging at School

Parents and secondary students were asked if their children/they felt they belong at school. The idea of belonging is a broad one that encompasses sense of connectedness, esteem, reciprocal acceptance, caring, and valuing to others.

Legend



Elementary Panel

My child feels they belong at school

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB Total	95.3%
Black***	91.9%
East Asian**	98.7%
Latino/Latina	95.5%
Middle Eastern	94.8%
South Asian**	98.1%
Southeast Asian*	97.0%
White	95.2%
Additional Racial Groups	95.0%
Born in Canada	95.3%
Born outside of Canada	95.7%
Boy	95.3%
Girl	95.6%
Additional Gender Identities***	77.6%
With Disability***	79.8%
Without Disability***	96.3%
Christian - Other forms	93.9%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	95.6%
Hindu	93.3%
No religious or spiritual affiliation**	86.4%
Spiritual, but not religious***	85.9%
Additional Religions**	89.1%

Secondary Panel

I feel I belong at school

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB	78.6%
Black***	64.3%
East Asian	77.0%
Latino/Latina	75.2%
Middle Eastern**	73.3%
South Asian	78.8%
Southeast Asian	76.9%
White***	81.1%
Additional Racial Groups**	66.7%
Born in Canada**	79.5%
Born outside of Canada**	75.9%
Boy/Man***	84.7%
Gender Fluid***	41.8%
Gender Nonconforming***	41.4%
Girl/Woman*	76.5%
Non-Binary***	45.6%
Questioning***	41.0%
Trans boy or man***	54.2%
Additional Gender Identities	65.5%

Identities	Agreement
HCDSB	78.6%
Asexual***	59.2%
Bisexual***	58.2%
Gay***	46.5%
Lesbian**	48.1%
Pansexual***	53.8%
Queer***	46.2%
Questioning***	63.8%
Straight / heterosexual***	83.3%
Additional sexual Orientations***	46.5%
With Disability***	64.2%
Without Disability***	81.9%
Buddhist	72.0%
Christian - Other forms	76.1%
Christian - Roman Catholic***	85.2%
Hindu	85.7%
Jewish**	53.3%
Muslim	75.7%
No religious or spiritual affiliation**	70.6%
Sikh	70.8%
Spiritual, but not religious***	61.9%
Additional Religions***	42.3%

Results revealed:

- In both panels, students with disabilities ranked their feelings of belonging much lower than the HCDSB total. Members of this community found this result to be reflective of their experience and pointed to a lack of knowledge around disabilities and accommodations in schools. In the community consultations, students noted that there is a great deal of misunderstanding and a lack of knowledge around disabilities that makes them feel uncomfortable in schools.
- Black students had lower rates of agreement than their peers. In the community consultation, members pointed to a lack of diversity amongst both students and staff as one key reason why their sense of belonging was lower.
- Students with diverse gender identities and sexual orientations had lower scores than their peers. Members of this community pointed to an atmosphere around these issues and identities that had gotten worse since the COVID-19 pandemic began and has been exacerbated by social media.