



DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

NOTICE OF MEETING

**STANDING COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SESSION**

Monday, January 8, 2024

Chairperson: Deb Oldfield

Vice-Chairperson: Tracy Brown

Director of Education and Secretary to the Board: Camille Williams-Taylor

Recording Secretary: Kathy Fitzpatrick

DATE: Monday, January 8, 2024

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Boardroom

ATTACHMENTS: Agenda

Copies to:

All Trustees

Director of Education

All Superintendents

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Monday, January 8, 2024
7:00 p.m.

		PAGE
1.	<u>Call to Order</u>	Verbal
2.	<u>Land Acknowledgement</u>	Verbal
	<p>The Durham District School Board acknowledges that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships, both historic and modern, with the territories upon which our school board and schools are located. Today, this area is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island. We acknowledge that the Durham Region forms a part of the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, the Mississauga Peoples and the treaty territory of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation. It is on these ancestral and treaty lands that we teach, learn and live.</p>	
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u>	Verbal
4.	<u>Motion to Approve Agenda</u>	Verbal
5.	<u>DDSB Presentations</u>	
	(a) Effective Literacy Instruction (Superintendents Erin Elmhurst, Andrea McAuley)	1-6
7.	<u>Director's Update</u> (Director of Education Camille Williams-Taylor)	Verbal
8.	<u>Recommended Actions</u>	
	(a) Ignite Durham Learning Foundation, Charity of Choice (Trustee Donna Edwards)	7
9.	<u>Information Items</u>	
	(a) Student Trustee Report (Student Trustees Ben Cameron, Kayla Hoare, Neha Kasoju)	Verbal
	(b) Ignite Learning Multi-Year Strategic Plan (Final Draft) (Executive Lead Robert Cerjanec)	8-54

- (c) Student Census 2023 55-97
(Superintendent Margaret Lazarus, Manager of Research Chris Conley, Research Analyst Gloria Leung)
 - (d) School Year Calendar Planning 2024-2025 98-106
(Associate Directors Jim Markovski, David Wright, Manager of Research Chris Conley, System Lead Jeff Maharaj)
 - (e) OPSBA Report Verbal
(Trustee Donna Edwards)
10. Adjournment Verbal

**DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT****REPORT TO:** Durham District School Board**DATE:** January 8, 2024**SUBJECT:** Effective Literacy Instruction**PAGE:** 1 of 6**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Education
Andrea McAuley, Superintendent of Education**1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the **Board of Trustees** with an overview of effective literacy instruction in the Durham District School Board (DDSB) as it relates to the implementation of the updated Language Curriculum and the impact on student learning and engagement.

2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

- Effective literacy instruction ensures all students acquire fundamental literacy skills which provide access to knowledge across various subjects, fostering intellectual growth, critical thinking and problem-solving while instilling self-respect, dignity, and self-efficacy.

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

- Strong literacy skills promote a sense of well-being by increasing student confidence, social-emotional learning skills and self-efficacy which in turn leads to improved learning outcomes.

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

- Effective literacy instruction with anti-oppressive pedagogical approaches, aligned with human rights principles, systematically removes barriers, and supports the diverse needs of all students.

Engagement – Engage students, parents, and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.

- Student engagement and improved learning outcomes are critical to increasing community/public confidence in the DDSB.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 The right to learn how to read is an undeniable human right that intertwines closely with human dignity, serving as a gateway to knowledge, information, and ideas. Developing foundational literacy skills empowers individuals to make informed decisions, think critically, solve problems, and effectively communicate their thoughts with others. The capacity to engage deeply and express ideas fosters a sense of agency, instilling self-respect, dignity, and self-efficacy.
- 3.2 During the 2021-2022 school year, the Teaching and Learning Department and Inclusive Student Services Department collaborated to undertake an examination and implementation of structured literacy instruction. This initiative included providing professional development for educators in Kindergarten through Grade 3 and initiating an Early Reading Literacy Pilot Project. Literacy Coaches, Facilitators, and Speech and Language Pathologists collaborated and used research to work in partnership with schools to participate in job-embedded co-planning and co-teaching. The emphasis was on delivering systematic and explicit instruction to build foundational literacy skills. Educators felt the project work increased their efficacy in implementing effective literacy practices and students demonstrated significant growth in letter-to-sound skills (reading), sound-to-letter skills (writing) and phonemic skills (working with individual sounds).
- 3.3 On February 28, 2022, the Ontario Human Rights Commission published the [Right to Read report](https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report) (<https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report>), following a public inquiry addressing human rights concerns impacting students with reading disabilities in Ontario's public education system. The report findings emphasize that learning to read is not a privilege but a fundamental and essential human right. The Right to Read inquiry report advocates for a shift towards "science-based" or "evidence-based" approaches in teaching "word-level reading and the associated early reading skills" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022).
- 3.4 In response to recommendations from the Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read Report, the updated [Grade 1-8 Language](https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/vision-goals) (<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-language/context/vision-goals>) and de-streamed [Grade 9 English](https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-english/courses/enl1w) (<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-english/courses/enl1w>) Curricula were released in June 2023. Grounded in the belief that all students can succeed through the development of language and literacy knowledge and skills, the Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Language, 2023 aims to equip students with foundational knowledge essential for the development of strong literacy skills. It prioritizes evidence-based, systematic, and explicit instruction in foundational components, including oral language, word-level reading and spelling, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension.
- 3.5 Informed by extensive research, the curriculum uses evidence-based methodologies to teach these competencies systematically and explicitly, emphasizing the cultivation of critical thinking skills. This approach enables students to deeply comprehend, appreciate, and assess texts in real-world contexts, fostering reflective, critical, and independent learning to allow students to thrive.
- 3.6 The impact of the 2021-2022 Early Reading Literacy Pilot Project, and the work that continued throughout the 2022-2023 school year, informed the support model being utilized to facilitate system-wide implementation of effective literacy instruction and the updated Grade 1-8 Language Curriculum and Grade 9 English Curriculum.

4.0 Analysis

Educators across the District have embraced the updated Language Curriculum and are diligently working to shift practice to include the explicit teaching of foundational skills in both oral and written language that are necessary to support more complex skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. This shift includes new learning on how the brain learns to read and how effective literacy learning blocks are structured and included throughout the flow of the day.

The Central Literacy Team has supported the educators by creating new responsive resources and providing ongoing professional development opportunities centred on evidence-based systematic instruction in word-reading skills using anti-oppressive approaches.

4.1 Professional Learning

School leaders actively participate in continuous learning during monthly Family of Schools (FOS) meetings, bringing the learning/knowledge back to school staff meetings. This ongoing professional development aids school teams in the development and implementation of School Learning Plans focused on improving student well-being and achievement.

The Central Literacy Team offers various learning opportunities, including school-based, after-school, and Family of School Hub sessions, concentrating on assessment techniques (screeners, diagnostic assessments, progress monitoring) and responsive pedagogical practices, particularly emphasizing word-reading skills.

Additionally, Literacy Leads from each school engage in bi-monthly central professional development sessions alongside school leaders, acting as mentors within their respective schools.

4.2 Curated Resources and On-Demand Learning

The Central Literacy Team has created the Structured Literacy Launch Pad, a virtual learning and resource space for educators to support effective literacy instruction. This site includes:

- On-demand professional learning opportunities for both French and English educators.
- French and English resources to support assessment of foundational literacy skills (K-9) in the areas of:
 - vocabulary/morphology (study of words and their parts);
 - fluency;
 - phonics;
 - phonemic awareness;
 - grammar/syntax; and
 - comprehension.

- French and English resources to support the implementation of foundational literacy skills (K-9) including:
 - instructional materials;
 - lesson slide decks;
 - educator guides;
 - model lessons;
 - templates; and
 - curated supplementary resources.

4.3 Collaborative Teaching and Learning Teams

Collaborative interdepartmental Teaching and Learning Teams, which include Grades K-12 Facilitators, Literacy Coaches, Speech and Language Pathologists, ECE Facilitators, Grades K-6 Support Teachers, and De-streaming coaches, are assigned to each FOS. Their primary purpose is to actively support co-planning and co-teaching through a well-structured job-embedded model, organized within a 5 to 6-week coaching cycle. These cycles are explicitly designed to focus on the effective implementation of the 2023 Language Curriculum, focusing on Foundations of Literacy and establishing robust phonics and word work routines incorporating anti-oppressive approaches to ensure inclusivity and equity in education.

5.0 Financial Implications

In 2023-2024, Ministry of Education funding was allocated to support effective literacy instruction from several Transfer Payment Agreements. The funding sources accessed to support the Effective Literacy Instruction and the roll-out of the updated Grades 1-8 Literacy Curriculum and Grade 9 de-streamed English Curriculum are:

- Licenses for Reading Interventions
- Education Staff to Support Reading Interventions
- Early Reading Enhancement: Reading Screening Tools
- Staff to Support De-streaming to Transition to High School

6.0 Evidence of impact

6.1 Literacy teams have supported 53 schools so far this year through the 5 to 6-week coaching model. Through survey data, educators indicated their comfort level with implementing a phonics routine increased from 34% to 90% within the initial 5-6-week cycle. They also reported a change in their understanding of structured literacy from 38% to 91%.

6.2 Anecdotal impact from educators:

"I will continue using the literacy launchpad, as well as other online reading resources."

"We also want to help teachers integrate phonics concepts into the rest of their curriculum so that students can see the application of these skills and concepts throughout their entire day of learning. We started at a good place prior to the Literacy Team's visit and intend to continue on that positive trajectory with the rest of the staff."

“With help from the literacy team, we were able to identify [these] gaps and come up with solutions to close the gaps in instruction to effectively implement the routine each day.”

“As a junior teacher, I feel like my students are on the road to reading rich texts, having rich discussions and are critical readers - which I think is extremely important and at this age should be the main goal. On the other hand, I appreciate that you reminded me I should dig a little deeper into the phonics piece for my struggling readers and writers in order to catapult them further. I think we need to remember that we teach to individual needs.”

“I’m going to keep working on phonics instruction with the whole class with mini lessons and continue it into small group instructions.”

“I appreciated the feedback on my implementation of a phonics routine as there were gaps that I didn’t realize. With help from the literacy team, we were able to identify these gaps and come up with solutions to close the gaps in instruction to effectively implement the routine each day.”

7.0 Communication Plan

Timeline	Details
Throughout the 2021-2022 school year	Ongoing system professional learning on phonological awareness and early reading shared via bi-weekly Curriculum Currents newsletter.
Throughout the 2022-2023 school year	Ongoing system professional learning on structured literacy shared via bi-weekly Curriculum Currents newsletter. Structured Literacy Launch Pad was created and shared with all educators.
June 21, 2023	Updated Language and Grade 9 English Curricula released and shared via a system email.
June 26, 2023 System Leadership Meeting	System Leaders began to explore the updated curriculum documents and highlight the key changes.
August 2023 PD Day	School Leaders and Educators engaged in learning around the Updated Language and English Curriculum utilizing the resources shared.
Monthly School-Based Staff Meetings (ongoing)	Communication and resources to guide and support learning are provided.
Curriculum Currents Newsletters (ongoing)	Bi-weekly email communication to all educators sharing resources and learning to support implementation of the updated Language and English curricula.
Throughout the 2023-2024 school year	Ongoing system professional learning related to the updated 2023 Language curriculum. Structured Literacy Launch Pad is consistently updated with new resources.

8.0 Conclusion and/or Recommendations

This report is provided to Trustees for information.

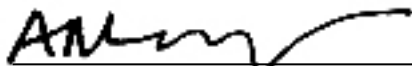
9.0 Appendices

N/A

Report reviewed and submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CW Taylor", written over a horizontal line.

Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "AMcCauley", written over a horizontal line.

Andrea McCauley, Superintendent of Education

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Erin Elmhurst", written over a horizontal line.

Erin Elmhurst, Superintendent of Education



DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

January 8, 2024

Standing Committee Meeting

MOTION

Ignite Durham Learning Foundation (IDLF), Charitable Organization of Choice

Moved by: Trustee Donna Edwards

Rational:

The Ignite Durham Learning Foundation is the only charitable organization that “serves to remove financial barriers to create equitable opportunities that empower DDSB students to achieve academic and personal success”. This charitable organization was a result of much work and support of previous boards of trustees. It is important when selecting a charity of choice for a business or organization is that employees, students, and families can relate to the charity. Since the sole purpose of this organization is to support DDSB students, it would be easy to see the strong relationship between IDLFs mission and values to the DDSB’s mission statement and strategic plan.

Selecting the IDLF as a charity of choice would not limit schools or the board to support other charities. This motion seeks to recognize that the DDSB fully supports IDLF’s mission and goals, and where possible IDLF would be considered as the charity of choice. It would give opportunities to engage staff, students and communities with a charity that has integrated values while supporting the students and families we serve.

Motion:

THAT THE DDSB BOARD OF TRUSTEES RECOGNIZE IGNITE DURHAM LEARNING FOUNDATION (IDLF) AS THE CHARITY OF CHOICE FOR DDSB. THE DDSB WILL PROMOTE THE IDLF AS THE CHARITY OF CHOICE TO STAFF, STUDENTS AND ITS COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board

DATE: January 8, 2024

SUBJECT: Ignite Learning Multi-Year Strategic Plan (Final Draft) **PAGE:** 1 of 9

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with a final draft of DDSB's new Multi-Year Strategic Plan for information and feedback. Pending incorporation of any additional feedback or direction, the Multi-Year Strategic Plan will be presented for approval at the January 22, 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

Engagement – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

Innovation – *Re-imagine learning and teaching spaces through digital technologies and innovative resources.*

3.0 Background and Analysis

The Ontario Education Act requires that every school board develop a Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) spanning a minimum of three years. The purpose of the MYSP is to help school boards articulate shared values, set long-term commitments, and establish strategic priorities. It is a compass that guides collective actions for ongoing improvement across the learning organization.

DDSB's previous Ignite Learning Multi-Year Strategic Plan was adopted in September 2018 following a thorough consultation across our community. As the 2021 expiry of the plan approached, the Board of Trustees approved an extension of an additional two years to help provide stability for the District during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The work to establish the Durham District School Board’s (DDSB) new strategic plan began in the fall of 2022. Reports were presented to the Board of Trustees on October 3, 2022, November 21, 2022, April 17, 2023, June 19, 2023, and November 6, 2023.

Throughout an extensive public consultation phase that took place from May to October of 2023, we appreciated hearing the aspirations, priorities, and feedback of students, parents, guardians, caregivers, staff, trustees, partners, unions/federations, leadership associations, advisory and community groups and others to help us answer big questions like:

- What do we want our schools to be?
- What do we want for students who enter our schools?
- What brought staff to the work of education, and what will keep them here?
- How can we build confidence in families and the public?

Development of the MYSP followed four phases, each briefly summarized below. The full timeline of MYSP development is included in Appendix A.

Figure 1: MYSP Development Phases and Timeline



Phase 1 – Review, Reflect and Visioning

Visioning sessions took place through April 2023, where Trustees, Student Trustees and senior staff engaged in workshops guided by the consultant to review the current MYSP, share aspirations and begin identifying priorities for the next term.

Following introductory and visioning sessions, a Trustee Working Group was formed to guide the strategic plan consultation and development process. The Trustee Working Group was open to all trustees and student trustees. The working group met on the following dates:

Table 1: Trustee Working Group Engagement Summary

Meeting Date
April 12, 2023
April 18, 2023
May 8, 2023
October 4, 2023
November 8, 2023
December 18, 2023

The Trustee Working Group provided direction and clear feedback around the expectations for consultation, which resulted in a detailed and multilayered plan that was launched in May 2023.

A Staff Working Group was also formed to ensure effective resourcing and coordination of the consultative process, communication plan, operational alignment and the back-end work required to develop the strategic plan. The Staff Working Group coordinated the feedback from the Trustee Working Group, and with the guidance of the external facilitator, shaped that feedback into a draft for trustee consideration. The Staff Working Group was made up system staff representing:

- People and Culture
- Human Rights and Equity
- Teaching and Learning
- System Leads/Administrators
- Managers

The group met on the following dates:

Table 2: Staff Working Group Engagement Summary

Meeting Date
April 26, 2023
May 3, 2023

October 5, 2023
November 22, 2023
December 1, 2023
December 11, 2023

Phase 2 – Consulting and Gathering Information

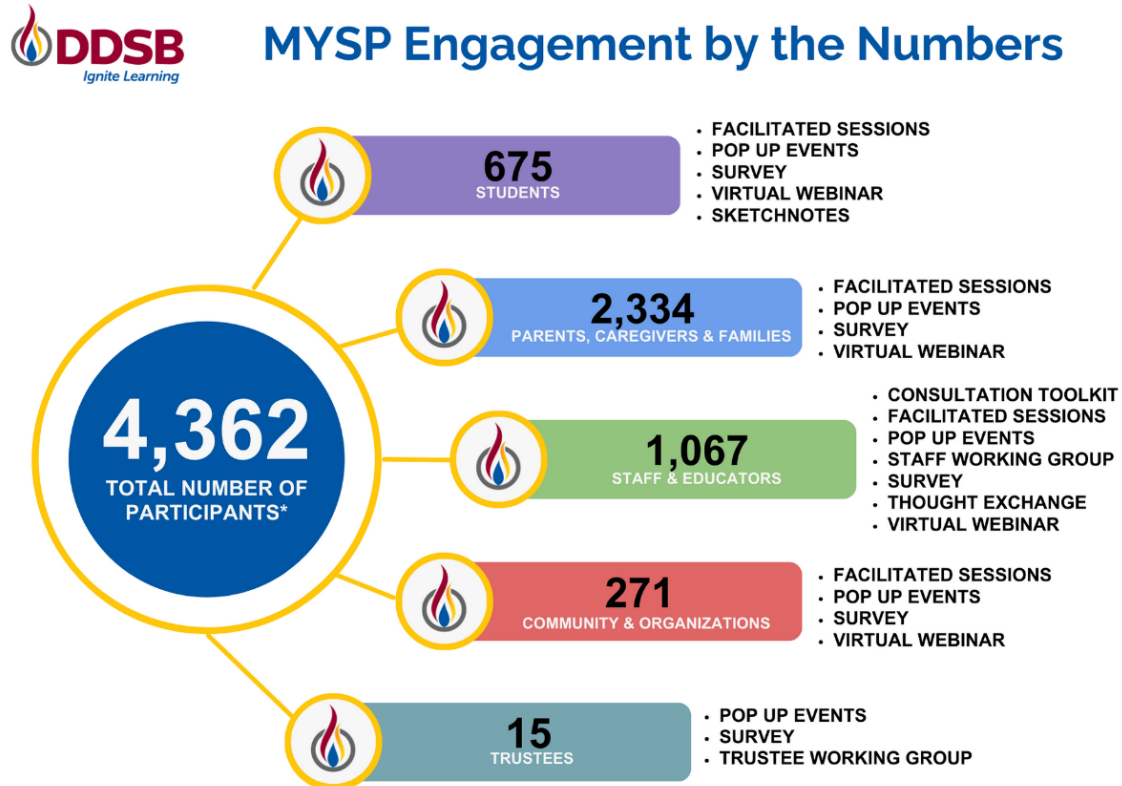
The consultation period was launched in mid-May and closed in mid-October of 2023. A detailed summary of engagement including methods of consultation, audience and type of feedback received is included in Appendix B, the Phase 2 Consultation Report.

Consultation strategies were informed by findings from external and internal board scans, aspirational thinking, and the lived experience of students, families, staff, and community members. The goal of the consultation phase was to involve and collaborate with as many individuals and groups connected to the DDSB as possible for the purpose of creating a strengthened plan developed through multiple engagement pathways.

Throughout Phase 2 the consultation process remained dynamic and progressive, with efforts taken to address any gaps in feedback. Follow-ups and additional reach outs took place in early-September to coincide with the start of the new school year to ensure that many groups and individuals had an opportunity to participate.

Staff and Trustee Working Group members provided suggestions and guidance on how to incorporate the feedback gathered into the new draft plan.

Figure 2: Engagement Summary



* Participants were able to provide feedback in multiple forums

Phase 3 – Synthesis and Development

Themes

Following completion of the consultation phase, all feedback was analyzed and nine initial themes were drawn from the data:

- Indigenous Rights and Ways of Knowing
- Advancing Equity
- Dissatisfaction and Disengagement
- Learning and Living in Community
- Meaningful Learning
- Multiple Pathways
- Multi-Year Strategic Plan Structure and Monitoring
- Staff Support and Development
- Well-being and Knowing Your Students

Phase 3 spanned a critical time for the working groups in progressing towards the final steps of MYSP development, which included a November 30, 2023 Virtual Public Information Session where draft directions for the new MYSP were shared publicly. Following feedback received on the November 6, 2023 MYSP Update Report and during the November 30 webinar, working groups continued synthesis and distillation of the nine themes into a conceptual draft that saw multiple iterations and content specific recommendations towards the final draft MYSP.

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Final Draft

The draft MYSP includes three strategic priorities, three guiding principles and nine strategic objectives and received feedback and additional recommendations for revisions from the Trustee Working Group on December 18, 2023:

Strategic Priorities identify the goals of the District:

Meaningful Learning

Connected Communities

Well-Being

Guiding Principles underpin and guide all of the work we will do and make the strategic priorities possible as outcomes:

We recognize and uphold distinct Indigenous Rights

We affirm and uphold Human Rights

We care about and strive to Know Each Other

Strategic Objectives connect to each of the three priorities and direct the actions and measures to be included in the MYSP:

Meaningful Learning

- Provide high quality teaching and learning for every student and staff member
- Centre students and match educational experiences to their interests and goals to prepare them for a changing world
- Recognize and support staff as professionals and collaborators

Connected Communities

- Engage students, families, staff, and community members as valued contributors to our growing community
- Build trust and a shared purpose through listening, communication, and action
- Foster opportunities to meet, learn from and inspire each other

Well-Being

- Create safe, caring, and respectful environments where people can thrive
- Support the physical and mental health of students and staff
- Honour every individual's identity and inherent dignity

Term of New MYSP: 5 years, 2024 to 2029

Staff recommend that the DDSB's new MYSP span five years from its adoption:

- Year 1 – building awareness – baseline or change due to alignment
- Year 2 – full implementation – first point of change due to practice
- Year 3 – second point of change showing direction
- Year 4 – third point of change showing trend
- Year 5 – consultations for new MYSP

Years 1 and 5 are orientation years for MYSP consultation and communication processes. A plan spanning less than 5 years becomes challenged by whether there is enough time for the actions to reasonably have had an impact or, if there is impact, there are not enough years to establish both a direction and a trend.

Phase 4 – Communication, Implementation and Monitoring

Following approval of the new MYSP by the Board of Trustees, Phase 4 will formally begin. Ongoing and future discussions will focus on monitoring, implementation and design elements that illustrate the connection and interrelatedness between the new strategic priorities.

Development of a District and community-wide rollout plan for the new MYSP is underway that will spread awareness of the new plan, reiterate key messages and embed the new plan in everything the DDSB does. The communications plan will consist of various forms of internal and external communication including e-mails, social media, web content, advertising, pitches to media outlets, videos and new virtual and printed materials that will be shared through departments and schools.

The monitoring plan will outline the relationship between the organizational priorities, clear actions, expected outcomes, metrics, schedules, responsibilities and accountability for review and reporting.

The senior team will collaborate and determine the key operational initiatives needed to implement the MYSP. This work will take place throughout winter and spring 2024 and will be presented to the Board of Trustees as part of our regular operational planning.

4.0 Financial Implications

A budget of \$95,000 has been allocated to the MYSP process and is estimated to include all costs associated with facilitation of consultations and the creation of the new strategic plan.

5.0 Evidence of impact

Staff will report on progress of implementation of the new MYSP and actions taken towards the identified goals through an annual operational plan development and reporting process.

6.0 Conclusion

This report is provided to the Board of Trustees for information. A final report will be presented for consideration at the January 22, 2024 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

7.0 Appendices

Appendix A: MYSP Development Roadmap
Appendix B: Phase 2 Consultation Report

Report reviewed and submitted by:



Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



Robert Cerjanec, Executive Lead, Strategic Initiatives and External Relations

Durham District School Board

Multi-Year Strategic Plan Road Map



Durham District School Board MYSB

Phase 2 Consultation Report
December 2023

Prepared by Maximum City



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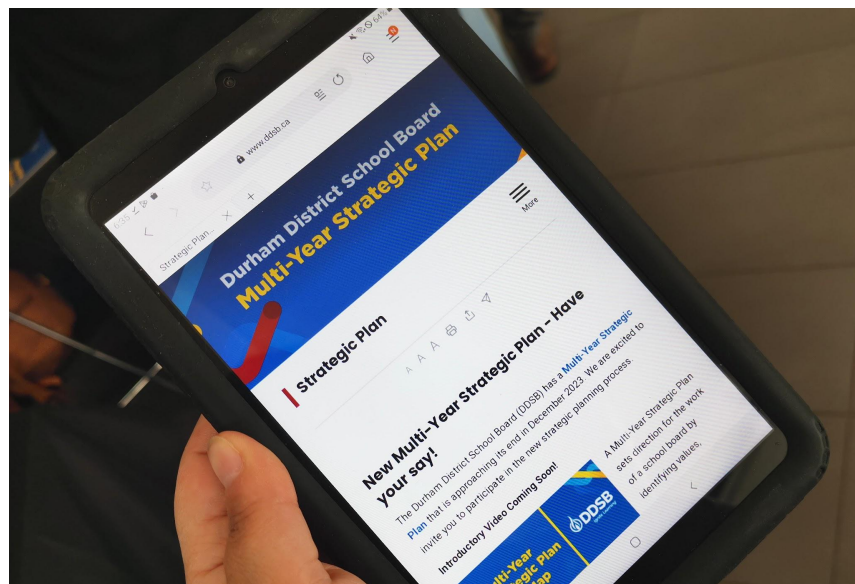
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Introduction

Background

In February 2023, Maximum City was contracted by the Durham District School Board to assist with the development of its next Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). This report summarizes the results of what we heard during the Phase 2 consultation, including a list of themes to inform the development of the new MYSP.

The development of the MYSP is following four phases, and we are currently in Phase 3.

Figure 1: MYSP Development Phases



Summary of Engagements

In collaboration with staff and trustees, Maximum City engaged students, staff, families, community members and organizations regarding their experience in the DDSB. From April through October, we led or supported more than 35 consultation forums with over 4,300 participants in both online and in-person modes, which are summarized in Table 1 below. Additionally, there were several consultations facilitated independently by DDSB staff. Available data from these sessions were included in our analysis for this report.

Table 1: Summary of Engagements

Method	Audience	Description / Purpose	Number of Participants* (*approximate for some events)	Date
Visioning Sessions (x2) & Visioning Survey (x2)	Trustees and Senior Staff	Establish a common vision and goals for the project	26	May 2023
Trustee Working Group (x2)	Trustees	Ongoing strategic support	15	May - June 2023
Staff Working Group	Senior Staff	Ongoing strategic and operational support	14	May 2023
Thought Exchange	School Leaders	Low-barrier digital forum for safely sharing ideas and feedback among school administrators	159	June 2023
Online Survey Conducted in six languages	All Participant Groups	Collect input from a broad audience of participants on their DDSB experience.	2,834	May - Sept 2023
Facilitated Sessions (x6) Led by Maximum City & DDSB Staff. Supported by DDSB staff & trustees	Key Participant Groups	Convene focused discussions with specific participant groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Senate • Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee • Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) (DDSB-led) • Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) • Durham Region Anti-Racism Task Force • Indigenous Education Advisory Committee 	281	June - Oct 2023

<p>Pop-Ups (x7)</p> <p>Led by Maximum City and supported by DDSB staff & trustees</p>	<p>All Participant Groups</p>	<p>Reach participant groups where they are already spending their time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Living Compendium Community Engagement Evening ● Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium ● Cypher Black Male Empowerment Conference (DDSB-led) ● Student Art Gallery ● Summer School Sessions at Sinclair Secondary School (x3) 	<p>491</p>	<p>June - July 2023</p>
<p>Self-Facilitation / Group Consultations (x15)</p> <p>Led by DDSB and supported by staff & trustees</p>	<p>All Participant Groups</p>	<p>An invitation for a variety of groups to lead engagement through existing structures and events. Toolkit provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchasing & Distribution Department ● Union / Federation Partners ● People & Culture Team ● Senior DDSB Team ● Grade 2/3 Class Focus Group ● Elementary School Sketchnotes (x5) ● Black Fathers Network ● Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference ● Affinity Networks (including but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General Session ○ Keenanow Indigenous Employees Network 	<p>379</p>	<p>June - Sept 2023</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Durham East Asian Network of Employees 		
Consultation Webinars (x2) Led by Maximum City and supported by DDSB Staff	All Participant Groups	Digital forum for informing and gathering feedback on key questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All-Staff Consultation ● Public Consultation 	188	Sept 2023

Engagement by the Numbers

In total, over 4,300 participants provided nearly 12,000 comments through the various consultation forums. It should be noted that the totals do not represent unique respondents as the participants could provide input in multiple ways.

Figure 2: Engagement by the Numbers

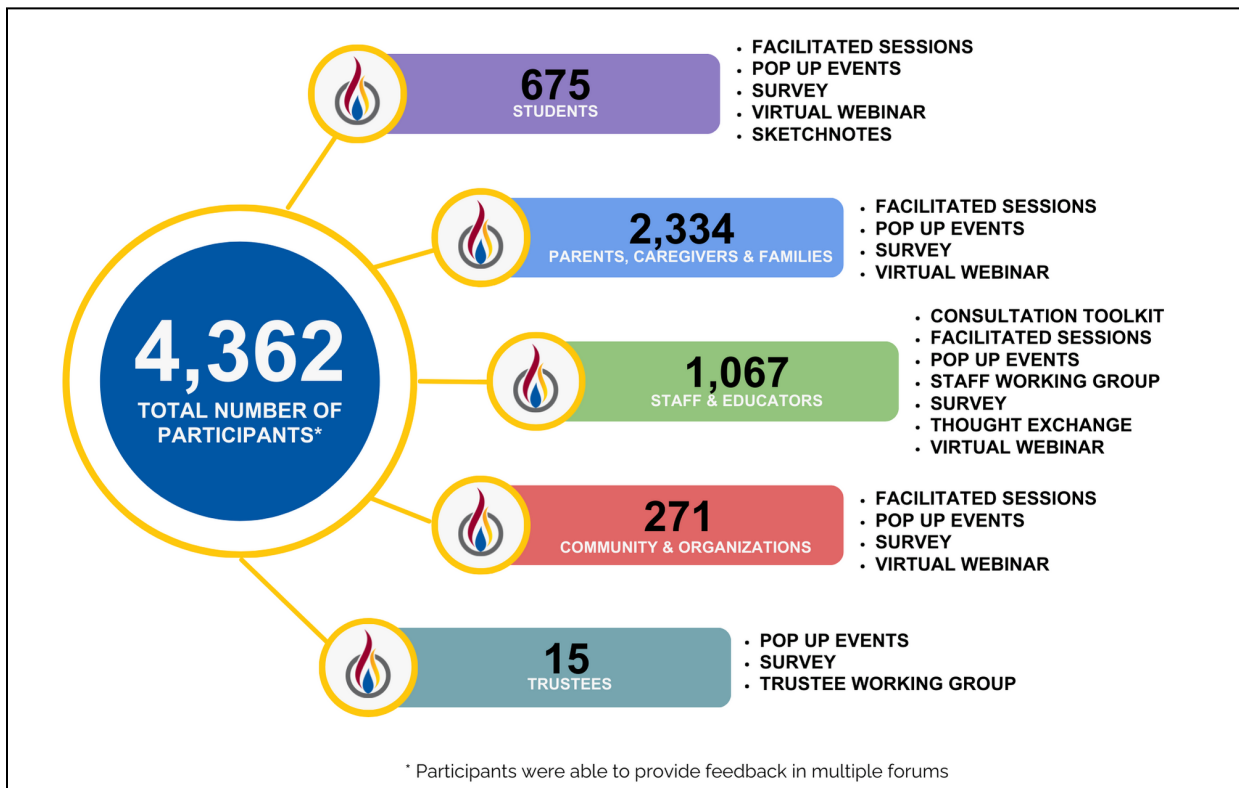


Image 1-2: Pop-Up Sessions at the Living Compendium



Image 3-4: Summer School Pop-Up Consultations at Sinclair Secondary School



Image 5: Pop Up at Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium



What We Heard: Summary of Results

The nearly 12,000 comments from 4,362 participants represent a very robust qualitative data set from students, staff, parents, and community members that complements other quantitative measures in assisting the DDSB to develop a multi-year plan that is responsive to local needs, as per the Ministry of Education's recent memorandum on the *The Better Schools and Student Outcomes Act*. In our experience as MYSP consultants, this compares favourably to the reach of consultation efforts in other southern Ontario school districts.

Through an analysis of the nearly 12,000 comments collected in the consultation period, we have identified the following **themes** in terms of common priorities, challenges, and values across participant groups to inform the development of the multi-year plan.

LIST OF THEMES IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

- Advancing Equity
- Dissatisfaction & Disengagement
- Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing
- Learning & Living in Community
- Meaningful Learning
- Multiple Pathways
- MYSP Structure & Monitoring
- Staff Support & Development
- Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

Image 6: Pop Up at Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) & Durham Partners Symposium



Below is a count of consultation comments organized by the themes, followed by summaries of themes. It should be noted that the themes can and often do overlap. Many comments warranted two themes and were coded as such. Additionally, the table presents qualitative data quantitatively, which can lead to misinterpretation or overlooking the content in individual comments.

Table 2: Count of Themes by Participant Group and Number of Comments

	THEMES	Advancing Equity	Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing	Meaningful Learning	Disengagement & Dissatisfaction	Learning & Living in Community	Multiple Pathways	MYSP Structure & Monitoring	Staff Support & Development	Well-Being & Knowing Your Students	Additional Insights	Inflammatory Language	TOTAL
		1,582	140	3,606	569	4,105	344	212	2,927	2,944	122	44	16,595
STUDENTS	SUBTOTALS	39	2	868	109	582	195	1	168	557	43	4	2,568
	Survey	16	2	705	108	520	180	1	132	455	42	4	2,165
	Facilitation	23	0	163	1	62	15	0	36	102	1	0	403
PARENTS OR CAREGIVERS	SUBTOTALS	1,232	10	2,433	384	3,007	81	20	1,507	2,085	53	38	10,850
	Survey	1,151	9	2,342	381	2,866	75	19	1,439	2,028	53	38	10,401
	Facilitation	81	1	91	3	141	6	1	68	57	0	0	449
STAFF	SUBTOTALS	163	37	220	55	293	38	147	1,178	216	16	0	2,363
	Survey	94	3	158	53	130	10	6	930	150	15	0	1,549
	Facilitation	49	31	43	2	127	28	127	56	50	0	0	513
	Thought Exchange	20	3	19	0	36	0	14	192	16	1	0	301
COMMUNITY	SUBTOTALS	142	91	78	21	198	21	15	74	76	10	2	728
	Survey	36	3	41	21	72	8	1	26	40	6	2	256
	Facilitation	106	88	37	0	126	13	14	48	36	4	0	472
TRUSTEES	SUBTOTALS	6	0	7	0	25	9	29	0	10	0	0	86
	Facilitation	6	0	7	0	25	9	29	0	10	0	0	86

Methodology

Our process for analyzing the qualitative data started by reading the comments and identifying key words that led to the development of **themes**. The themes then became the categories we used to group and code comments from all participants in order to help us make sense and meaning out of the data set. Theme coding captured both positive and negative comments that were either supportive or critical of the theme topic, which has been elaborated on in the summaries. The key words and themes were updated multiple times throughout the coding process, which took place over the summer and fall months. Three people reviewed the data set to check for errors and mitigate bias, with one person leading the coding and two assisting. It should be noted that themes can and often do overlap, and are not to be treated as siloed categories. Therefore, some key words appear in more than one theme and many comments were assigned two themes. The names of the themes were reviewed and revised based on input from the staff and trustee working groups.

All comments were treated equally from facilitated sessions and the survey, and are presented at an aggregate level, but can be disaggregated by participant groups if desirable. We were careful not to overlook individual or isolated comments even if they only appeared once, and included them as additional insights. A small number of comments with inflammatory language from the survey were omitted from the analysis. Blank, "NA" and incomplete responses were not coded, as well as a small number of comments we could not make sense of. It should be noted that parents and caregivers are proportionally overrepresented as a group in the data set, which is common in a process such as this. Intentional effort was made to include and centre student voice throughout the consultation process.

The majority of the consultations were conducted in May, June and July. In September and early October, consultations were conducted with specific groups and students to give a more complete picture of different DDSB experiences, a deeper understanding of what students are thinking about, their values, and what directions the district should pursue to best prepare them for what is ahead. Additionally, we included methodological recommendations from Board resources where appropriate, such as the DDSB Listening Tour Report Feb 2023, Workforce Census and Listening Tour and Additional Analysis May 2022. We also pulled recommendations from the Indigenous Staff and Families Engagement Summary Report Fall 2022, directly referenced in the Indigenous Rights and Ways of Knowing theme summarized on page 18-19.

Theme: Advancing Equity

Figure 3: Word Cloud of Key Words for Advancing Equity



Many comments in this category acknowledged the good work the DDSB is doing on Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion, but signalled the need for an ongoing process to advance equity through an anti-oppression approach. Many comments expressed a desire for a firm, action-based commitment that continuously improves equity, diversity, and inclusion in the academic program and the learning organization, aligning with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Many comments from parents in particular wanted to see more culturally relevant pedagogy and a more diverse curriculum, including texts and materials that honour the diversity of the DDSB community. Some parents wanted to expand Afrocentric programming, such as the Black Excellence Made Evident (BeMe) program, to other schools. Some students wanted more of a curricular and co-curricular focus on topics such as gender & sexuality, anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and women's rights. Other students noted that there has been good support from their peers and staff who have taken an interest and active role in supporting Black student success encompassing academic, extracurricular, and well-being domains.

Many comments highlighted the importance of equity-focused events and programming, such as Critical Consciousness Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI), The Living Compendium of Action for Black Student Success, Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) Conference, Black Excellence Made Evident (BeMe), Cypher Black Male Empowerment Conference, and many others. These events play a key role in honouring, affirming, and communicating values and

accomplishments related to advancing equity. Some comments suggested an expansion of similar programming to address anti-Indigenous racism and the unique needs of other groups and communities, such as addressing anti-Asian racism, and including events like Iftar dinners at schools. Some comments from students, parents, and staff focused on their positive feelings of belonging through the representation of multiple religious holidays and perspectives in and out of the classroom, and were interested in the further inclusion of different secular and faith-based holidays. Some comments requested additional support for prayer space and halal food options, while others expressed a concern for certain practices such as fasting or religious absences impacting academic and classroom activities. Some comments noted the importance of coming together as a community to have uncomfortable conversations, including having dialogue opportunities, healing circles, listening sessions, as well as community safety town halls and forums with students in leadership roles.

Many comments recognized the diversity of DDSB staff that reflects the communities in which they live and learn, including the hiring and promotion of diverse leadership teams. Some comments specified a need to continue anti-racism training, cultural awareness, and unconscious bias. Some commenters recommended that administrators should be better trained in how to address particular incidents of anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism, while others provided advice on how to get help outside of the DDSB system. Many comments from students and parents also expressed the need for staff to consistently address bullying, racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia in school communities. Some comments from students expressed ongoing issues with anti-2SLGBTQI discrimination and hate and the need for more outreach and education, especially regarding gender and the trans community in high schools. Some comments from students spoke to repeated and unresolved incidents of harassment and stalking towards girls from other students.

Some parents in particular expressed concern over their perception that the DDSB is ideologically driven to promote equity at the expense of student learning and the overall student experience. Their comments included requests for more communication and transparency on gender, sexuality, and 2SLGBTQI studies, as well as having the school require consent in allowing their child to participate in these discussions. The majority of inflammatory comments were found in this category, and were removed. Some parents requested age-appropriate curriculum, while others asked for more recognition of other world religions and home values in the classroom.

Many comments from students, parents, staff, and community members focused on the need to ensure better accessibility and inclusion, which are perceived as ongoing unresolved barriers. Many comments focused on the need to enhance support for students with disabilities, exceptionalities, Individual Education Plans (IEP), and other learning and access needs. Many comments focused on the importance of staff support towards them, while others focused on updates to building and school infrastructure such as the function of elevators and doors, and not making accessibility an afterthought in campus facilities.

Many comments from students focused on listening more to student voices and better inclusion of student agency at all levels of education (K-12). Some comments from students focused on taking on leadership roles within their community to become a voice for their peers, particularly from marginalized groups. Distinct child rights were also addressed, as some students noted a perceived lack of equality for students themselves, mirrored in some parent comments stating that students' human rights were also at risk.

Illustrative Quotes for Advancing Equity

"The DDSB is ahead of other Boards when it comes to equity. Equity is moving in the right direction by recognizing needs, creating an inclusive learning environment."

- Community

"I feel supported by the Superintendent and System Lead. I appreciate the work that is being done with Human Rights, Anti-Black Racism and the Indigenous Education Policy and the support we are given to do the work."

- Staff

"Something that's working well is knowing you have commitments such as CCPI and The Living Compendium, GSA Conference, etc. within the Board and that you are putting significant resources towards Anti-Oppression work. I am very grateful for this and that you are also ensuring that all schools are doing this work."

- Parent

"I use events like the Living Compendium to embrace Blackness and feel connected to my community, despite not always having other Black students and staff in my everyday experiences."

- Student

"Equity can't just be words in a plan, not just empty policy – needs to be grounded in action."

- Staff

"What's important to me is supporting our students' identities in every way. Intersectionality as living beings with many strengths. How can the DDSB embed that with everything we do?"

- Community

"I would like to see concrete solutions that name an action plan to combat anti-Black racism in our system. It needs to be named and addressed in this plan. The last census made it clear that we are not doing enough and it deserves a place in this plan."

- Staff

"School would be better if we were equal."

- Student

"The most important thing for me is being a voice for POC [people of colour] students who may not be provided with the same opportunities as other students do."

- Student

"Sadly, you have to advocate, advocate, advocate. The daily stresses of having a child with exceptionalities shouldn't, in my opinion, be compounded by having to use up your reserve tank to campaign for basic rights that are available to other students."

- Parent

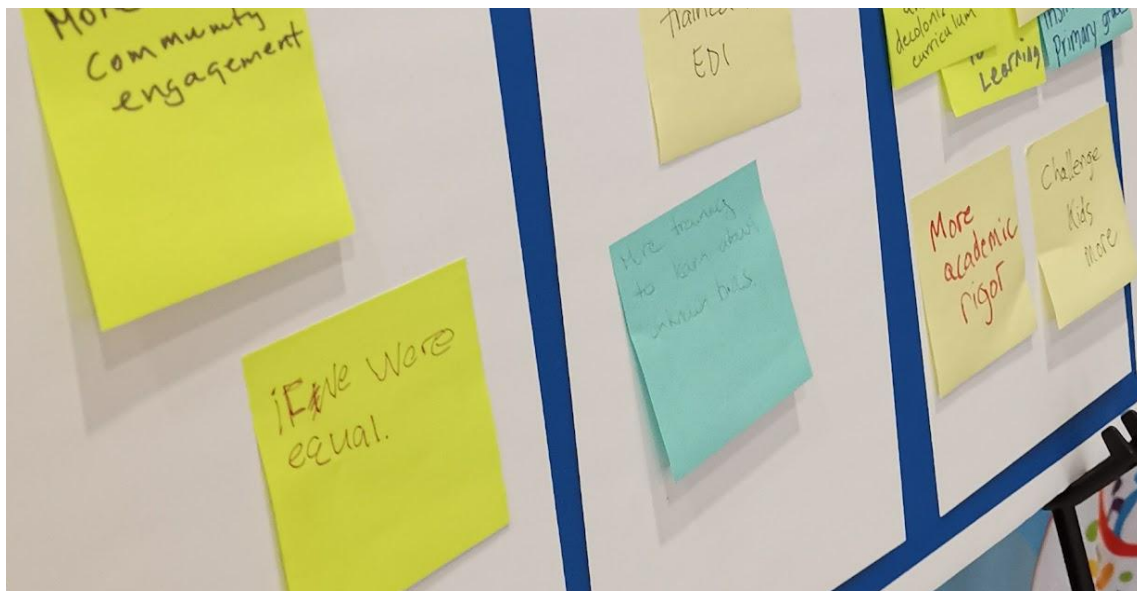
"Listen to the students better, as it's all about 'equality' 'till it comes to us."

- Student

"I would like to see more communication and transparency on gender studies. Also, include that 'we understand these values may not align with all world religions, but we create a space of love and respect for everyone regardless of our differences.'"

- Parent

Image 7: Responses from Parent Involvement Committee & Durham Partners Symposium



Theme: Dissatisfaction & Disengagement

Figure 3: Word Cloud of Key Words for Dissatisfaction & Disengagement



Comments in this category spoke to a general frustration and disengagement from school matters. Comments included responses that nothing was working well, being bored at school, or totally burned out from work and looking to leave the profession.

Some comments from students advised their peers not to enrol in the DDSB, and these were usually grounded in experiences of being bullied or not feeling heard by staff. Similarly, some comments from staff expressed feelings of dissatisfaction and disengagement from a lack of trust, not being valued or respected, and burned out from overwork and lack of purpose. Some staff comments noted that aside from their positive relationships with students and other staff, not much else was working, while others noted that the prevalence of behaviour and relationship issues in their school community was detrimental to their well-being. Some specifically noted an absence of support or poor communication from administrators as a contributor to stress. Some comments, specifically from staff who had been teaching for decades, marked a change in the last few years that shifted their ability to do the work effectively and meaningfully, while seeing little progress in the right direction. This and other similar comments from staff indicated that system-wide concerns related to teaching and lack of support may be causing a push to leave the profession.

Comments in this category from parents and caregivers expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of progress year-over-year in student learning, or a perceived lack of educational quality in the DDSB. Some comments spoke of seeking alternatives through tutoring and school choice, including leaving the Board for homeschooling, private or Catholic education.

Illustrative Quotes for Dissatisfaction & Disengagement

"I can't remember the last time I thought that things were working well at work."

- Staff

"Explore the possibility of attending a different board or make sure you understand educational procedures and human rights so that you can fully advocate for your child."

- Parent

"Every year is more upsetting than the previous. No learning, just wasting time and resources."

- Parent

"Not much is working well for me right now. I feel unsupported, isolated and without resources to serve the needs of my school and class. I do NOT feel valued."

- Staff

Theme: Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing

Figure 4: Word Cloud of Key Words for Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing



Many comments in this category spoke to the need to recognize distinct and inherent Indigenous Rights. These rights should be regarded as separate from Equity, Diversity, and Human Rights, with a focus on centring Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing in the DDSB. Many comments in this category acknowledged the importance of implementing the new Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure, while expressing the need for honouring treaties between Indigenous nations, recognizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and addressing the DDSB's response to the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission related to education. Comments appreciated the updates to the [Operational Plan 2021-2022](#) that centre Indigenous and human rights, while at the same expressing a desire to ensure that the Indigenous Education Policy and Indigenous Rights inform the MYPSP, with demonstrable commitments beyond tokenism.

While many staff comments in this category recognized that the existing Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure was well written and useful in building capacity, some comments also signalled further action was needed. Some staff communicated gaps in the implementation of the policy, noting the need for specific direction on Indigenous education during staff meetings, additional training around cultural sensitivity, and appropriate education methods, as well as professional development geared specifically to Indigenous educators. Some comments from staff noted benefits to working with a team that centres Indigenous rights, encouraging opportunities for connecting with other Indigenous staff regularly and sharing their identity.

Across this category, there was an interest in embedding Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing across departments and disciplines, not just within specific Indigenous courses or programs. And while some parents in this category expressed concern over what

they perceive as the promotion of Indigenous education at the expense of student learning and the overall student experience, many parents, staff, and community members wanted further incorporation of Indigenous education, narratives, training, and visibility into the school community. Some students, as well, wanted more of a curricular and co-curricular focus on topics such as Indigenous rights. Some suggestions for achieving this included, by celebrating the art, knowledge, history and resilience of Indigenous communities, with a renewed focus on Indigenous language revitalization.

Some comments from community members spoke to the need for an enhanced Indigenous Education Department to support Indigenous learners by maintaining and elevating what Indigenous students need to graduate as they face educational and structural barriers within colonial education systems. There was a desire for Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in the classroom, and for addressing incidents of anti-Indigenous racism and microaggressions. Community members in particular shared concerns around funding and resourcing of the Indigenous Education Department, noting unequal experiences between schools across the Board, along with the funding challenges of bringing Indigenous voices into the classroom. Some comments spoke to the need to engage Indigenous leadership to help facilitate and implement the work of incorporating Indigenous rights and ways of knowing, including a superintendent who identifies as Indigenous and is focused on Indigeneity.

Some comments in this category spoke to the challenges experienced by Indigenous students and families, which include consultation fatigue, distrust, using colonial approaches to consultation, the intersectionality of Indigenous identities, timing, and lack of capacity or resources. Comments recommended engaging Indigenous groups earlier in the process to build trust and co-create methods. Other comments spoke to the Board's responsibility to include Indigenous voices in an era of Truth and Reconciliation, particularly Indigenous student voices. Other comments suggested that a review of the content and recommendations from the Indigenous Staff and Families Engagement Summary Report (ISFES 2022) would be an additional way to include more Indigenous perspectives to inform the development of the MYSP.

Based on the above suggestion, a review of the ISFES report was conducted with the goal of pulling relevant MYSP recommendations. In the report, self-identified Indigenous staff, students, and families expressed a desire for an overall organizational community culture that reflects and respects their diverse cultures, languages and truths. There was specific reference to the DDSB honouring the Board's Indigenous Education Policy through a regular operational review "to ensure that programs, procedures and practices reflect an Indigenous focus."

The ISFES report affirms much of what was heard in the survey and facilitated sessions in this category, with additional insights such as:

- Recommendations for ongoing connection opportunities for youth and family voice, including Indigenous family cultural events, and working with the Indigenous Education Department for direct engagement;
- Specific recommendations on integrating Indigenous content and pedagogical practices into classrooms, including knowledge of Indigenous contributions, treaties, residential schools, and true histories of Indigenous peoples;
- A desire to work with elders and traditional knowledge keepers to teach skills, cultural traditions and community values to students and staff, including advising the Board on policy and procedures.

Illustrative Quotes for Indigenous Rights & Ways of Knowing

"What works well is that there is an Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure in place that has been well written and is thoroughly comprehensive."

- Staff

"Ensuring the Indigenous Education Policy, and Indigenous Rights continue to be at the centre of the strategic plan. There needs to be a demonstrable commitment to this, and not for tokenistic purposes."

- Community

"What could be improved is recognizing inherent Indigenous rights, honour treaties and the 94 calls to action of the truth and reconciliation report specifically education."

- Parent

"This Board is doing a lot to get Indigenous language and culture out there, with outdoor education, other programming. But not every school can do it, and it's not part of the official curriculum. Woven in but not on paper."

- Community

"Communication with teachers and principal and the support of the Indigenous Education department is working well."

- Parent

"As an Indigenous education coach, I like feeling welcomed into schools. I like when teachers WANT to make changes to their practice."

- Staff

"Education regarding social issues (Indigenous rights in Canada, education of gender & sexuality, anti-black racism, women's rights, etc.) is working well."

- Student

"I would like to be able to comfortably share my Indigenous History without parameters."

- Staff

Theme: Learning & Living in Community

Figure 5: Word Cloud of Key Words for Learning & Living in Community



Many comments in this category focused on the importance of the DDSB connecting students, staff, parents and caregivers, and the community in intentional and meaningful ways. Improving communication in all forms was central to this category, as the word “communicate” and its variants appeared over 750 times. There was a clear thread from parents who expressed the need for a stronger connection and better communication between home and school on topics such as their child’s learning progress, as well as more transparent decision-making and policy at the Board level. Many parents suggested more consistent communication through improved report cards and more parent-teacher interviews, as well as occasional fun community events that include the entire school community. Some wanted to see schools become community hubs and act as anchor institutions in local neighbourhoods.

Many parents expressed a desire for a single, consolidated resource to find all information and to communicate with the Board, school and teachers. While some parents saw the benefits of the many communication channels and tools (School Calendar, Remind App Parent Portal, School Messenger, etc.), others noted that some processes seem dated, redundant, inaccessible, or nonfunctional. Some suggested that consistency in the tools used, or an investment in a single central digital tool, would be helpful. Some community members noted that dissemination of messaging is happening, but not equitably across the system, while others noted mixed messaging from the Board compared to staff. A community member suggested that the DDSB website be set up with nested questions and answers targeted to parents or other groups, making it easier for them to find information.

Parents expressed that the onus was too often on them to reach out and advocate for their children by communicating with staff, noting long waits for support systems to come to them. Some community members had concerns about access for newcomers, parents, or staff getting to decision makers, while others noted that ongoing support for parents, caregivers, and families is important, suggesting more notice for introducing events or programs to provide adequate support to families. Some comments from community members in particular expressed that parents may be interested in learning from credible professionals how to best ask questions about schooling, reduce anxiety, and manage their own mental health issues. Others noted that students, parents, and staff should reach out to their local settlement agency for support. Yet another community member suggested having an open house at the beginning of the year to gather resources and support for students and families.

Many comments discussed the need for consistency within and between schools, as well as increased funding for events, facilities, and infrastructure. Many students and parents provided feedback on preferred times for school start and end time, as well as the length of classes, citing a balance for extracurricular activities, employment, and the sleep needs of adolescents. Some parents noted the impacts on quality of life and the learning experience of distance to school, access to after-school programs, and school placement. Some comments also focused on the benefits and challenges of the modified calendar system, with some requesting further promotion and others suggesting its cancellation. Some comments provided feedback on access to French Immersion, noting that it is a desirable program and should receive more resources and support.

Community members in particular noted the importance of the Board establishing agreements and ongoing communication with organizations to facilitate co-ops, internships, after-school programs, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) programs, and in-classroom placements for students, as well as more opportunities and spaces for community partners to engage with staff and students. Community members also wanted more partnerships and collaboration with municipalities and other agencies for joint problem-solving and sharing goals.

Many comments from students and parents expressed a need to improve access to and maintenance of facilities and other state-of-good repair concerns, including working air conditioning and heaters, affordable food and events, clean bathrooms, inclusive bathrooms, portables, better wifi for chromebooks, and public elevators for multiple floor schools. Some students requested improvements in the school environment for comfort and focus such as taller desks, wheely chairs, and more freedom to wear hats and chew gum in the classroom, while others wanted more consistent support for menstruation, including the restocking of sanitary napkin dispensers and the need for a comfortable place to rest during cramps or sensory overload. Some comments from students and parents noted the benefits of dress codes and school uniforms, while others saw them as too restricting. The concepts of

collaboration, building relationships, and finding support in community were evident in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Learning & Living in Community

"It is critical for staff to make connections with students and families in order to be successful both academically and non-academically."

- Staff

"More school communication and more school/community engagement would be my biggest requests. I also feel it is important for the board to plan proactively for the growing population in Oshawa. The new schools that are being built are overpopulating so quickly and the shortage of space and resources is really being felt by students."

- Parent

"By the time events trickle down to me as a front line community partner I have less than a week's notice. There is often no space / meeting room to present the idea of the event/program face to face (and an email inbox is a bad place to land a brand new concept)"

- Community

"I wish there was a communication app or program that is the hub for EVERYONE and EVERYTHING."

- Parent

"Sometimes it's a challenge to keep track of everything and remember passwords. E.g. Parent portal vs Remind app vs School messenger vs DSTS account vs Email vs Twitter vs Instagram vs Text messaging vs voicemail etc."

- Parent

"Something that would improve my school experience is less expensive ways to participate in school events. I really can't afford this."

- Student

Image 8-g: DDSB Living Compendium & Student Art Gallery



Theme: Meaningful Learning

Figure 6: Word Cloud of Key Words for Meaningful Learning



Many comments in this category focused on the need to continuously pursue a responsive and high quality teaching and learning program for all staff and students. Many comments from staff in particular wanted to see more room for creativity and flexibility in instructional practices and curricular content in order to best reach their students. Many comments centred students and student success, including different definitions of success, as what they valued most in their work. There was a strong sense that building both academic and life skills for students should regain a more prominent position as a priority for the DDSB in the face of many competing priorities. Student comments emphasized that their learning and schooling should be meaningful to their lives as young people, better reflect the world they live in, and the values they hold. Even the youngest students expressed a desire for teachers who can help them learn new and important skills and knowledge that reflect their changing world.

While many comments in this category had a curricular focus, or expressed a desire to return to core subjects such as Math and Language Skills in tandem with a renewed focus on student achievement, others wanted to move beyond narrow or traditional definitions of learning and success in order to promote all kinds of learning both in and out of the classroom. Common examples include service learning, field trips, students co-designing inquiry topics or guest speaking events, integrating technology, athletics, programs like SHSM or STEM, small group learning, tutoring or coaching. The comments spoke to the importance of events like the Living Compendium as essential for sharing and celebrating

the remarkable work of students guided by teachers under the right conditions. There was also a desire to focus on evidence-based instructional practices such as phonics.

Some comments focused on staffing issues, staff to student ratios, and class sizes. Though these matters can fall outside the purview of Board decisions, many comments noted that having more staff available and smaller classes would make a significant positive difference in students' lives, which is the core objective of the work they do. Some parents noted that DDSB@Home and other hybrid options have continued to be beneficial for students, especially in providing additional focus for learning and a safe environment. Some students noted that online options should eliminate barriers such as those students being restricted from on-campus events like outdoor sport meets.

Student comments in particular focused on the importance of maintaining good grades while also expressing a strong desire for more engaging and creative ways to learn. Many students wanted better coordination of assessments among teachers and improved access to technology and resources. Many students wanted a more balanced workload, reduced homework they don't see value in, and more in-class support for improved learning.

Many parent comments in this category focused on the need for supportive teachers who spend time getting to know students, consistent and transparent assessment and evaluation practices, and the importance of preparing students for postsecondary and career opportunities. Some parent comments wanted to see a return to core subjects and less of a focus on equity and gender issues in the curriculum, which they perceive as overemphasized. Other comments focused on the importance of students learning how to learn rather than straight knowledge acquisition, developing transferable skills such as problem solving and communication, and more opportunities for experiential, active and play-based learning rather than relying on technology and rote learning.

Illustrative Quotes for Meaningful Learning

"Personally, the most important thing about my experience in school is that I'm in a respectful, equality based, represented, understanding, compassionate, kind, professional environment, to achieve and perform at my best."

- Student

"The most important thing to me is that there is space for me as an educator to be creative and think outside of the box."

- Staff

"We are failing them terribly by letting the students who may need a bit more help academically fall through the cracks. We just continue to push them through without the skills they need to succeed, not only in school but in life itself."

- Staff

"Some instructors refuse to meet obligations involving reading and discussing IEPs with extraordinary students leaving some students lacking the support meant for them as decided by the DDSB."

- Student

"Not saying I'm an irresponsible student, I just feel there is far too much workload and pressure placed on students to compete with their colleagues and meet expectations. Lessen the stress."

- Student

"The current system favours a business model that is not designed with student learning in mind but rather achievement. The two should not be conflated."

- Staff

"Something that would improve my child's school experience is standardized marking strategies for fair and consistent marking, not based on how the teacher feels in the moment or how they feel about the student."

- Parent

"The most important thing is real education. Primary focus of actual things important in life. Language, grammar, spelling, math, science. Kids need education on academics. Not personal beliefs."

- Parent

"The most important thing to me is academics accompanied by student voice, having a say in what you're learning and how you're learning it."

- Student

"What would make school better for me is expanding on more learning of the world and things that actually matter for us to individually, but unitedly learn how to be our best person our own way."

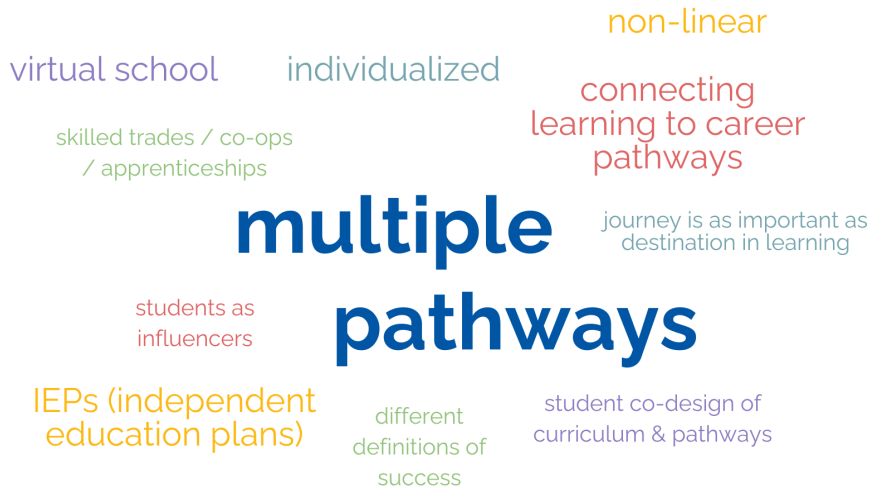
- Student

"The most important thing is that I and my fellow students have many opportunities to engage in fun, visual and hands-on learning."

- Student

Theme: Multiple Pathways

Figure 7: Word Cloud of Key Words for Multiple Pathways



Comments in this category focused on the importance of recognizing and valuing the different pathways students may take on their journey. Success can be defined differently, as students enter school with different goals, knowledge levels, expectations, abilities, disabilities, needs and wants. Many student and parent comments in this category spoke to what they see as the limitations of secondary education because of a lack of real-world learning and experience, and limited options for flexibility. Students wanted better preparation for the future, such as school and life transitions, financial literacy, guest speakers, co-op placements, and field trips. Students and parents were appreciative of the flexibility and support they received from guidance counsellors, and the ability to take advantage of Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM), online schooling via DDSB@Home, or a modified calendar, as methods for opening up these pathways.

Some student comments noted barriers to their career interests due to how challenging certain courses are, with others suggested that the classroom should be a space to explore learning and different fields of study in an immersive and hands-on environment. Some students also spoke of the lack of time in their day to engage in more exploratory learning or life activities due to the amount of time spent on school work, noting impacts on their mental health and well-being. Others struggled with the expectations of school as a defined pathway towards a linear future of graduation and post-secondary studies. Many comments from parents in this category also indicated that students with disabilities or exceptionalities required additional support or adapted programs to meet specific learning needs and follow individualized pathways.

Illustrative Quotes for Multiple Pathways

"Having a wider choice in courses and different paths to take would make school better."

- Student

"I want to have the ability to gain experience in the possible careers I want. Being able to be ready for university."

- Student

"As a student, I would like to have more people such as guidance counsellors at school to help my educational development and guide me in the right direction."

- Student

"Being a part of ICT SHSM has been working well for me as a student in the DDSB."

- Student

"I'd like a completely different system that will almost definitely not be achievable within the next 30 years. The whole grading system and course selection seems ridiculous. School would be better if teens didn't have to decide a path in life. School would be better if universities did not look at high school grades."

- Student

"Cater to the children the reality of going to school and learning about the things to help them become great citizens and leaders."

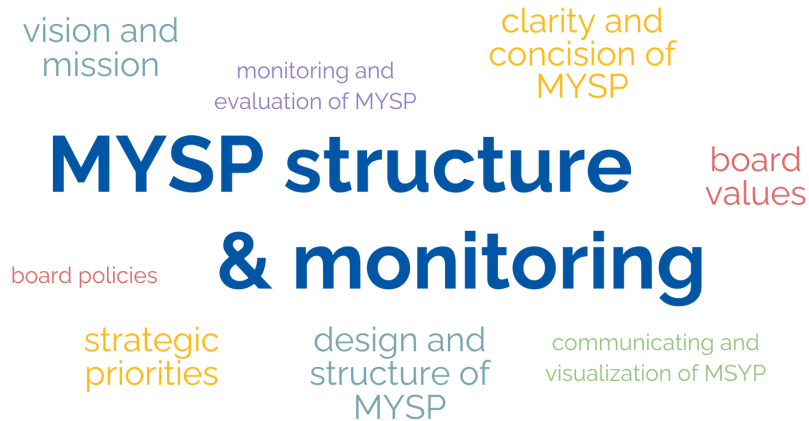
- Parent

"Keep virtual school (DDSB@Home) a permanent choice for all families, not based on numbers but always as an option so those who do not wish to attend in person for whatever reason can still learn but from the comfort of their own home."

- Parent

Theme: MYSP Structure & Monitoring

Figure 8: Word Cloud of Key Words for MYSP Structure & Monitoring



Comments in this category focused on ways to improve the structure, communication, implementation, and monitoring of the next MYSP. Most of the comments in this category came from staff, with a small number from parents and community members.

Many comments in this category spoke to the desire to have a concise, clear, resonant MYSP that includes relevant and representative images of students and staff. While some comments appreciated the distinctiveness of the current six strategic priorities as pillars of the plan, others wanted to see more interrelatedness across pillars and specific updates to language such as “Success” and “Innovation,” which felt outdated. Some comments expressed that “Ignite Learning” was a recognizable and resonant wordmark that was distinct to DDSB. An Indigenous community member specifically asked to use the Ignite Learning symbol as a way to teach about the Three Fires Confederacy.

Staff comments in this category noted the challenge of aligning board-wide policies and initiatives with the daily work done with students in the classroom. Others felt they were able to understand the core priorities and how they fit into their work as educators, which made them more achievable. There was an advantage to having a short list of clear priorities; however, some staff felt that, on the operational side, competing priorities were diluting focus and core priorities. There was a sense that small, purposeful, intentional “inches” to action would be more successful as opposed to big, daunting, overwhelming plans and goals. Some staff noted that for the DDSB to have a meaningful mission and values, there is a need for stronger implementation of Board policies, seeing them in practice, and identifying when leaders are not aligning with them.

In terms of communication, staff comments appreciated that the current MYSP is easy to communicate to other staff, students, and families, and would like to see this clarity and precision continue. Comments expressed a desire for Board policies to be clearly communicated in common language, with a renewed focus placed on the importance of the DDSB being present and visible in the community.

In terms of implementation, comments expressed a desire to see greater alignment and clear direction around three DDSB policies (DDSB Indigenous Education Policy, 2021; DDSB Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Racism Policy, 2022; DDSB Safe and Respectful Workplace and Harassment Prevention Policy, 2022) to give strategic-level policy more teeth through action-based and operational plans.

In terms of monitoring, comments spoke to the need to include qualitative measures rather than relying on quantitative data. Some staff requested open-ended goals to tailor more to the needs of individual schools, while others acknowledged that leaving certain responsibilities with the school community means harmful systemic practices may remain. Some staff noted that it takes a strong and healthy workplace culture to achieve departmental and organizational goals towards the MYSP.

Illustrative Quotes for MYSP Structure & Monitoring

"I want staff who work in and for our schools to have demonstrated commitment to the MYSP and Policies."

- Staff

"For the multi-year strategic plan: I would like to see concrete solutions that name an action plan to combat anti-Black racism in our system. It needs to be named and addressed in this plan. The last census made it clear that we are not doing enough and it deserves a place in this plan."

- Staff

"Ensuring the Indigenous Education Policy, and Indigenous Rights continue to be at the centre of the strategic plan."

- Community

"A nurturing, supportive learning environment accepting of all students through action, not just empty policy."

- Parent

"Continue to build upon the incentives and policies that the DDSB is in the process of implementing, but also make sure that they are being carried out effectively."

- Parent

"Be prepared to have numerous initiatives thrown at you that will claim to improve student learning and teachers' delivery, but in reality you need to figure out what works best for you in the classroom to get your students to actually attend and submit work."

- Staff

Theme: Staff Support & Development

Figure 9: Word Cloud of Key Words for Staff Support & Development



Many comments in this category focused on the paramount importance of staff feeling safe, supported, trusted, heard and valued. The word "safety" appeared over 50 times in staff comments, referring to both staff and students needing to feel safer in their working and learning environments. There was a strong sense of moral purpose in the comments, with many staff speaking to their commitment to make a positive difference in students' lives as what they value most about their work. Many staff underscored the importance of autonomy and flexibility in determining the best ways to support students' growth and development. Teachers and administrators expressed that feeling valued and supported as professionals is essential for student success.

While many comments spoke to feeling supported by colleagues, leadership, and resources, others expressed that they experienced a lack of support and resources, or too many competing demands and initiatives that diluted their primary commitment to centring and supporting students. Many comments wanted to see more resources dedicated to supporting all learners, including students at risk and those with disabilities and exceptionalities. Some instructional staff expressed that consumable budgets were too low and too restricted by approved vendor lists. Others wanted to see more professional development opportunities for new curriculum roll outs, structured literacy, STEM, best practices, and equity, diversity, anti-racism, and anti-colonialism. Many comments expressed that there were good opportunities for collaboration and professional development, while

others noted that professional development would be better scheduled during school hours rather than after school or evenings. Some comments spoke to the need for better onboarding, networking and knowledge sharing for new and existing staff, and more consistent direction from leadership both at the school and system level, including firmer decision making.

Similarly, many comments from students focused on the importance of developing good relationships with educators, with many sharing praise for the care, commitment and expertise of their teachers. Students noted that some teachers encouraged engagement with leadership opportunities and other co-curriculars, while others were disappointed in uneven experiences depending on which teachers were assigned. Some students felt well supported by staff and recommended other students to connect if there were concerns, while others noted a lack of action from staff when students are reaching out for help. Some comments from students spoke to a perceived lack of trust and privacy from teachers.

Many comments from staff focused on the need to protect and promote staff mental health and well-being, noting that staff who are not well cannot lead schools or classrooms effectively. Some comments expressed an appreciation for staff and student wellness initiatives, and for the greater awareness of mental health in general, while others wanted to see more resources devoted to mental health and well-being. Some comments spoke to the workload becoming unmanageable, leading to feelings of burnout and low morale, stress, or feeling overwhelmed and not able to focus on what matters most.

Staff raised concerns about consistent expectations and consequences around student behaviour and discipline, noting that they sometimes feel unsupported by administrators and parents in their professional judgement, and at times there is no consistent follow through on discipline and academic integrity matters.

Many comments from parents focused on the desire to have more training for teachers who are skilled at creating safe and engaging learning environments. Some comments from parents focused on a perceived shortage of qualified teachers and supply staff impacting the stability of learning in the classroom. Some comments from parents noted that students with diverse learning needs were not receiving the support they were promised in the classroom. The concepts of feeling heard, collegial support, and well-being were evident in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Staff Support & Development

"Something that's working well is our kind, caring, supportive principal who respects my professional judgement and shows appreciation for the work that I do. He also is protective of our mental health and prioritizes our wellbeing, which in turn, makes us happier, healthier, and more productive."

- Staff

"I wish I felt safe, respected and supported in my workplace."

- Staff

"The most important thing to me is I want to feel I have made a difference in the lives of my students, and to help them realize their hopes and dreams for the future."

- Staff

"I want teachers to be involved in the teaching experience, to want to be a teacher."

- Student

"The most important thing to me is that I feel supported, given autonomy and have the resources to do my job well."

- Staff

"The support I'm getting from my admin has been phenomenal. Working together with team teachers certainly lightens the load."

- Staff

"Administrators have more diverse responsibilities than ever before. Administrators want to do well in all aspects of their work but when focus gets too divided it is difficult and stressful."

- Staff

"Stop parent-pleasing, and start student-pleasing!"

- Staff

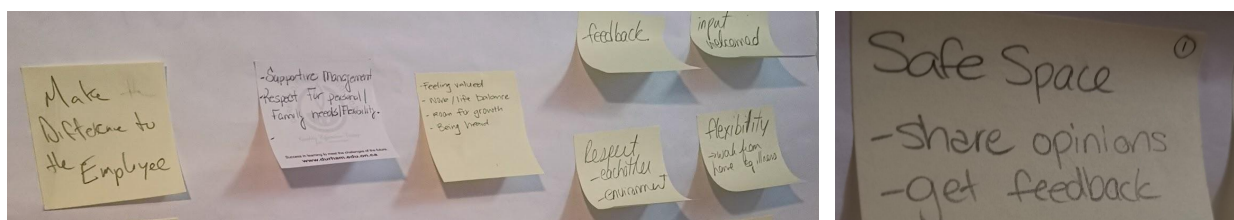
"There is not enough training for the average teacher or even for many SERTS. There are not enough EA's. Not providing these necessary supports and expertise makes it difficult for all kids to function in a classroom, and it makes it difficult to be understanding of different needs when the needs are negatively impacting them."

- Parent

"My children have had so many disruptions to their learning this year because of staffing issues and this has been a major challenge as they have just come back to in person school this year after having been online for 3 years. A year that should have been offering stability for them became very stressful and chaotic because of staffing shortages."

- Parent

Image 10-11: Staff Consultation (Union & Federation Partners)



Theme: Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

Figure 10: Word Cloud of Key Words for Well-Being & Knowing Your Students



Many comments in this category focused on the importance of knowing and understanding students for their full selves. Many comments from staff in particular expressed the need for safe, healthy, inclusive and welcoming school environments to honour the different gifts students bring as individuals. At the core of many of the comments in this category was the foundational importance of relationships in schooling: teachers knowing their students and students knowing their peers and teachers. There was a strong desire to see more effort and emphasis on building relationships in order to create the best social and academic environment for students to thrive. Additionally, some younger students wanted their teachers to provide more advice during times of transition, such as entering a new grade.

Many comments focused on the need to provide more support and services for students with disabilities and exceptionalities, students at risk, vulnerable students, and students with ill health. Many comments from parents in particular wanted to see teachers intentionally invest in getting to know their students, building social and life skills such as confidence and resilience, and creating safe and inclusive learning environments where students can express their ideas freely. The word "included" appeared over 80 times in comments from parents in this category. Students and parents wanted clear pathways to care, and for students to be known by as many adults in their school buildings as possible.

Some comments wanted to see more efforts to reduce bullying, discrimination, and bias from social and academic environments, while others wanted to see more of an emphasis on behavioural norms, holistic health, getting more sleep, and healthy movement — noting that physical health, well-being and learning are all strongly linked. Many comments from students in particular wanted to see personal growth opportunities, increased trust, as well

as staff and peer support for mental health and a sense of belonging. Some students felt unable to take care of their personal needs due to being overwhelmed with the school environment and expectations, while other students recommended putting effort into interpersonal relationships through friendship and socialization as well as learning about their own identity. The concepts of care, kindness and understanding were evident throughout the comments in this category.

Illustrative Quotes for Well-Being & Knowing Your Students

"Caring teachers who can understand the needs and changing behaviours of their students. Teachers should focus less on labelling students as problem kids and try to identify what may be the cause. Praise students rather than put them down. The world does enough of that."

- Parent

"Personally, I believe school would be a better place if students wouldn't feel the need to give and or feel peer pressure whether it's acting a certain way, hiding who they truly are, feeling the need to impress someone whether it's their friends, family, teachers etc."

- Student

"The most important thing is that my child feels safe and included."

- Parent

"Improving the mental health and inclusive student services supports for schools is ESSENTIAL."

- Parent

"Something that is working well is teachers talking to each other, clubs, recess, friends, teachers being chill understanding this generation and building bonds with each student and being easy to talk to,"

- Student

"I would like to see more emphasis on curiosity, self-determination and holistic well-being of our students and staff. More time outdoors for everyone, integrating principles of land-based learning and land-connection is a very inexpensive way to focus on curiosity and self-determination."

- Staff

"Do not be afraid to speak your mind. Always be respectful with your delivery, but know your voice is just as important as anyone else's. Just because you are a student, a young teen or teenager, does not mean your opinions and thoughts don't matter. Remember to respect those who are preparing you for the world and ask as many questions as you feel fit."

- Student

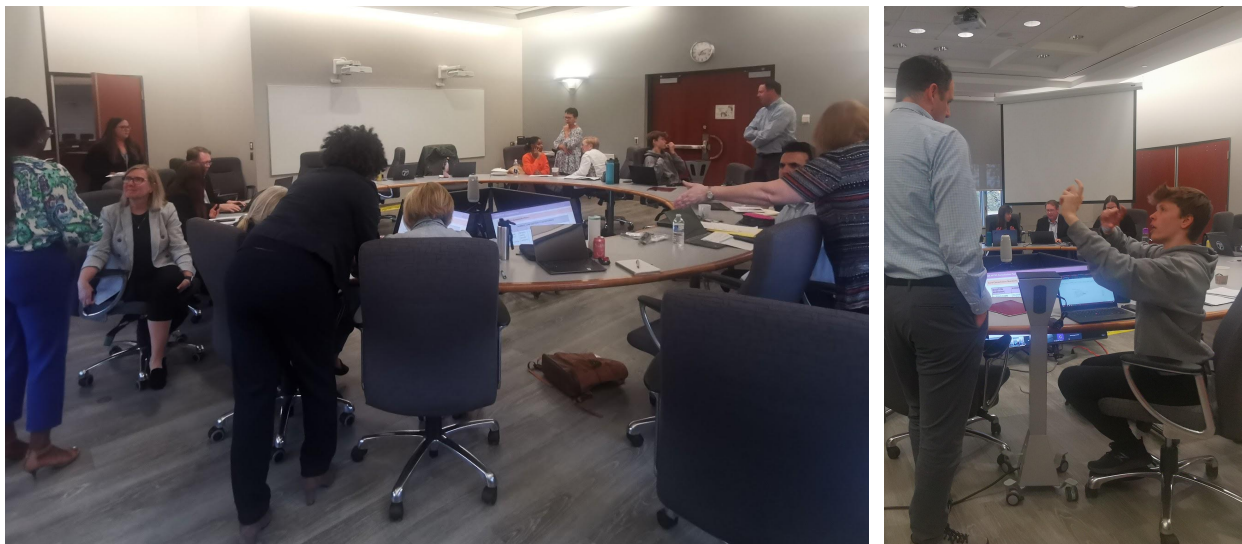
"Students need mental health support after the pandemic. Teachers need to understand them so they have someone to talk to."

- Parent

Image 12-13: Student Art Gallery Pop-Up Consultation



Image 14-15: DDSB Trustees Working Group Meeting



Next Steps

With the completion of the Phase 2 consultation period in October, we have begun to work with staff and trustees to draft directions for the new multi-year plan based on the synthesis of the consultation results summarized in this report and other board data. The staff and trustee working groups have shared their feedback on this report, along with recommendations for incorporating its findings in the new MYSP. On November 30, there was a Community Information Session to share the results of the consultation and draft directions for the new MYSP with the DDSB community.

The new MYSP is scheduled to be presented to the Board in January 2024.

Table 3: Next Steps

Milestones	Timeline
Phase 3 Synthesis & Development	September - December 2023
Community Information Session	November 30, 2023
MYSP Final Draft	December 18, 2023
MYSP Presentation to the Board	January 2024
Phase 4 Implementation, Communication & Monitoring	February 2024 and beyond

**DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT****REPORT TO:** The Durham District School Board,
Standing Committee**DATE:** January 8, 2024**PAGE:** 1 of 6**SUBJECT:** Student Census 2023**ORIGIN:** Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Equitable Education
Chris Conley, Manager of Research and Strategic Analytics
Gloria Leung, Research Analyst**1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Board of Trustees regarding the results of the the Student Census conducted in the Spring of 2023.

2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

- School curriculum content, learning materials, assessment and evaluation practices, teaching styles, and classroom practices will centre human dignity to identify and eliminate barriers to learning.
- Ensure equitable access and practices are reflected in our policies and programs to create an inclusive environment where all students have a sense of belonging and feel that they matter.

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

- Students will be empowered to thrive at school and in life.

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

- Provide safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environments that support positive academic, mental, and physical growth.

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders, and responsively support current leaders.*

- Engage students in authentic learning experiences to grow and develop their leadership skills.

3.0 Background

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) is committed to protecting, upholding, and promoting Indigenous and human rights and to preventing discrimination and discriminatory barriers in all learning and working environments. Protecting, upholding, and promoting Indigenous and human rights are necessary to meet the mandate of the DDSB and to create and foster a culture of care where students can thrive and have a sense of safety, well-being, engagement, and belonging. The analysis of the information gathered through the student census helps us move the system forward to meet the DDSB's commitments. As publicly funded provincial institutions, all school Districts in Ontario are required to collect and report publicly, by January 2023, identity-based data to identify and address systemic racism and discrimination in student experiences and outcomes. This data collection is consistent with privacy legislation and the Ontario Human Rights Commission's policy guidance and best practices on identity-based data collection and is authorized by Ontario law.

The DDSB engaged in its first collection of **56** city-based student data in the Spring of 2019, and the information gathered was foundational to the development of many key policies, including the [Indigenous Education Policy and Procedure](#) and the Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism [Policies and Procedures](#). Data collection is also a requirement under the [Human Rights Policy, Procedures, and Accountability Framework](#). The Student Census supports these Policies and Procedures by providing the necessary metrics and insights that allow us to meet our responsibilities to protect, uphold, and promote human rights, prevent discrimination and discriminatory barriers in all DDSB learning environments, and demonstrate accountability for upholding these responsibilities.

3.1. Analyses Completed with the First Student Census:

An analysis of outcomes was completed using data from the first DDSB Student Census for the following identities:

- Racial Identity: White, Black, and South Asian
- Sexual Orientation: Straight and 2SLGBTQI
- Religion: Christianity, No Religion, Muslim

These identities were selected for use in the analysis because there were large enough numbers of students who shared these identities to provide a system-level summary. Using de-identified data, research staff conducted analyses and provided system level summaries in the following areas:

- Attendance
- Student Achievement
- Programming (IEP, ELL, French Immersion)
- Pathway Selection
- Suspension
- Graduation
- Confirmation of Post-Secondary University Choice

It is important to note that the experience of the first DDSB Student Census underscored the significance of understanding how identity informs the experiences of students and families. The District has undertaken measures in classrooms, schools, and across the system that have amplified perspectives and opened spaces for new learning, leadership, partnership, growth, and excellence:

- The data was foundational to the design of the Critically Conscious Practitioner Inquiry (CCPI) currently operationalized in 96 DDSB schools;
- The data was foundational to action items outlined in the Compendium of Action for Black Student Success;
- Student Voice Groups have been created to ensure student feedback is incorporated into decision-making;
- Centrally run, board-wide virtual and in-person support programs were created to support students' identities;
- Changes have been made to policies, procedures, training, and resources for educators and staff;
- Community Engagement Sessions were held with the Indigenous community and the Black community to share the findings of the census specific to their communities.

The following data was shared at the sessions:

- How Indigenous and Black students are achieving;
- What staff are doing to respond and act;
- Based on the Student Census, what staff are planning so that the system can reduce disproportionate outcomes and experiences for Indigenous and Black students.

The second administration of the Student Census, DDSB Student Census 2023 meets the requirements of the Anti-Racism Act, 2017, and Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan on collecting identity-based data. This 2023 Student Census builds on the learning from the first census and the student demographics information that has been gathered will help to understand who we serve so the system can continue to address the disproportionate experiences and outcomes experienced by specific (and intersectional) identity markers (for example, ancestry, race, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, creed/religion, etc.). The information will be used to inform board and school planning to improve student achievement and well-being, identify and eliminate barriers, and create more equitable and inclusive school and learning environments so that all students reach their full potential and feel that their well-being is supported.

4.1. How the Student Census was completed:

- Parents/guardians of children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 received the Student Census link and were invited to complete it on behalf of their child(ren). Parents/guardians with multiple children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 were invited to fill out a separate questionnaire for each child.
- Students in Grades 7 to 12 were invited to complete the Student Census either at school or at a time and location of their choosing. An invitation was sent to each student through student email and included a unique random ID that students used to access the census.
- The census was available online and was translated in a variety of languages that were identified as the most used other than English: French, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Simplified Chinese, Tamil, and Urdu. Hard copies and alternative formats were made available upon request and were also available in the previously mentioned translations. A space for parents/guardians to access a computer at the school was provided, as necessary.

4.2. Summary of the data collected:

- The DDSB Student Census 2023 was administered over 8 weeks from May to June . The response rate of the 2023 census was as follows:
 - Total response rate: 23%
 - Grades K–6: 27% of all students (11,634 participants)
 - Grades 7 – 12: 20% of all students (7,249 participants)
- **Indigenous Identity:** 3% shared an Indigenous identity.
- **Ethnic/Cultural Origins:** The 10 largest responses for the self-identified ethnic/cultural origins included Canadian (41%), Indian (14%), English (10%), Pakistani (8%), Muslim (8%), Scottish (6%), Irish (6%), Jamaican (6%), Tamil (6%), British (5%), and Sri Lankan (5%).
- **Racial Background:** The 5 largest responses for the self-identified racial background were White (42%), South Asian (33%), Black (11%), Middle Eastern (7%), and East Asian (5%).
- **Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief:** The 5 largest responses for the self-identified religious, creed, or spiritual beliefs were: Christian (24%), Muslim (20%), Hindu (16%), "No Religion" (15%), and Agnostic (7%)

- **Gender Identity:** “Girl/Woman” and “Boy/Man” were equally selected (48%) as the most self-identified gender identities and about 2% selected a gender-diverse identity.
- **Sexual Orientation (Grade 7 to 12 students only):** Among the 7,158 respondents, 74% selected Straight/Heterosexual and 17% selected an 2SLGBTQI sexual orientation.
- **Different Abilities:** About 8% (1,246) of students self-identified as a disabled person, a person with different abilities, or person with a disability. Furthermore, of those 4,496 students who responded to the different abilities question, the most frequently selected categories were: Mental Health Challenges (43%), ADHD (33%), Learning Disability (20%), Autism (17%), and Neurodiverse (12%).
- **First Language(s) Learned:** Almost three-quarters (74%) selected English as one of the first languages they learned to speak at home. The 3 largest responses for languages other than English were Urdu (8%), Tamil (7%) and Hindi (3%).

4.3. How will the data be used ?

The DDSB will continue to engage and consult with Indigenous partners and communities for guidance on how the census results related to Indigenous students will be analyzed, communicated, and used.

The data collection is based on identity categories provided by the Ministry of Education and informed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS) and will assist the school board to identify, prevent, and address inequitable experiences and outcomes, and systemic barriers to student achievement, learning and well-being by:

- Developing, evaluating, and/or revising operational strategies, programs, services, and other initiatives to prevent and address achievement disparities and disproportionalities among groups of students;
- Planning and allocating resources, including for students who may need additional learning supports or specific interventions;
- Supporting accountability, decision-making, and the implementation of DDSB’s Indigenous Education and Human Rights policies and procedures, by providing additional analyses on disparities and disproportionate experiences and outcomes. The data is included (when there is sufficient data) in Board reports. (i.e., Positive School Climates Report);
- Measuring system improvements in educational outcomes for all students.

This data is confidential. Individual student responses will not be shared.

5.0 Communication Plan and Timeline

A Student Census Coordinating Team shall be struck to establish timelines for communication of the results to students, parents/guardians, staff and with the community; to explore, “How our students are doing” by engaging with the four areas for data collection and reporting: enrolment, credits granted, any special education received, and suspensions and expulsions [reporting ([The Anti-Racism Act](#), 2017(ARA), section 2, [Ontario Regulation 267/18 under Anti-Racism Act](#)), 2017, S.O. 2017 c. 1, and in accordance with the Human Rights Policy and procedures]; and to establish a focus for further analysis.

The Student Census data will be shared with the DDSB community as follows:

Date	DDSB Community
January 2024	With the Board of Trustees at the January 8, 2024 Standing Committee Meeting. The data will be posted on the DDSB website.
February/March	System Leaders (Managers, Principals, Vice-Principals). Student Senate
April/May	Parent Involvement Committee

6.0 Financial Implications

The funding for the DDSB Student Census 2023 was included in the 2022-2023 budget.

7.0 Evidence of Impact

The analysis of the information gathered through the Student Census will help us continue to move the system forward to meet DDSB’s commitments and responsibilities by identifying, challenging, addressing, and dismantling systemic barriers to student success. This work will require ongoing learning, development, and reflection in evolving existing frameworks and pedagogical practices that will significantly impact student learning and well-being.

The impact will be visible across the District through the implementation of systems and structures that challenge, mitigate, or remove barriers for students and families.

We anticipate that adjustments to educator professional learning and to student programming will impact student experience and address some of the disproportional outcomes revealed in the census data.

The initiatives and strategies implemented for students and staff will support learning by identifying and removing negative and discriminatory stereotypes and assumptions, making the learning and working environments more inclusive, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

8.0 Conclusion

This report has been provided to the Board of Trustees for information.

9.0 Appendices

- Appendix A – Student Census 2022-2023 Full Report (Includes the Student Census 2023 Questions)
- Appendix B - Student Census Board Infographic
- Appendix C - Comparison (Student Census 2018-2019 and 2022-2023)

The report was reviewed and submitted by:



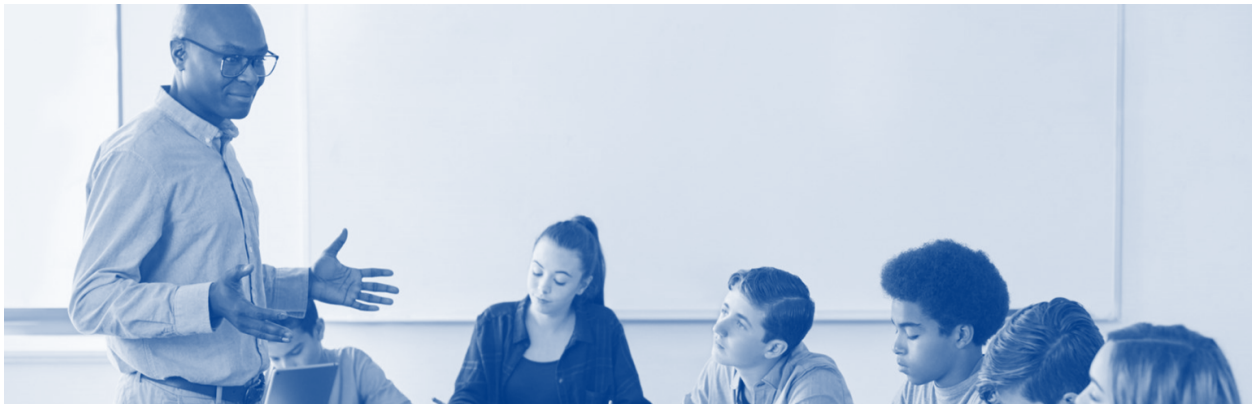
Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board



Margaret Lazarus, Superintendent of Equitable Education

DDSB STUDENT CENSUS

2022-23



Board Summary Report of the Student Census Findings
September 2023

Prepared by: Research and Strategic Analytics



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Summary of Results

Durham District School Board (DDSB) is committed to ensuring the success of all our students.

To gain a clearer understanding of who our students are in order to uphold Indigenous and human rights, student achievement, and well-being, the second *DDSB Student Census* was conducted from the beginning of May 2023 to the end of June 2023.

The Student Census findings are helping the board and schools to:

- Better understand student populations and school communities.
- Identify barriers to student success, engagement, and well-being.
- Address barriers and to improve experiences and outcomes for students.

Parents/guardians were invited to voluntarily complete the census on behalf of Kindergarten to Grade 6 students. Grade 7 to 12 students were invited to voluntarily complete the census at school or at home.

Overall, 23% of all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the DDSB participated in the Student Census (18,883 respondents). Below is a summary of the results:

- **Indigenous Identity:** 3% shared an Indigenous identity
- **Ethnic/Cultural Origins:** The 10 largest responses for the self-identified ethnic/cultural origins were Canadian (41%), Indian (14%), English (10%), Pakistani (8%), Muslim (8%), Scottish (6%), Irish (6%), Jamaican (6%), Tamil (6%), British (5%), and Sri Lankan (5%).
- **Racial Background:** The 5 largest responses for the self-identified racial background were White (42%), South Asian (33%), Black (11%), Middle Eastern (7%), and East Asian (5%).
- **Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief:** The 5 largest responses for the self-identified religious, creed or spiritual beliefs were: Christian (24%), Muslim (20%), Hindu (16%), “No Religion” (15%), and Agnostic (7%).
- **Gender Identity:** “Girl/Woman” and “Boy/Man” were equally selected (48%) as the most self-identified gender identities and about 2% selected a gender diverse identity.
- **Sexual Orientation (Grade 7 to 12 students only):** Among the 7,158 respondents, 74% selected Straight/Heterosexual and 17% selected an LGBTQ2S+ sexual orientation.
- **Different Abilities:** About 8% (1,246) of students self-identified themselves as a person with a disability. Furthermore, of those 4,496 students who responded to the different abilities question, the most frequently selected categories were: Mental Health Challenges (43%), ADHD (33%), Learning Disability (20%), Autism (17%) and Neurodiverse (12%).
- **First Language(s) Learned:** Almost three-quarters (74%) selected English as one of the first languages they learned to speak at home. The 3 largest responses for languages other than English were Urdu (8%), Tamil (7%) and Hindi (3%).

**Please note that percentage on each identity may not sum to 100% as respondents may select more than one category/option as appropriate.*



Survey Development and Communication

A Census Action Team (CAT) was developed to monitor the progress of the student census development during the planning process. The CAT was led by the Superintendents of Equitable Education. Staff members from Human Rights and Equity, Community and Partnership Development, Communications and Public Relations, Application and Development, and Research and Strategic Analytics (formerly Assessment and Accountability) presented and provided support at the CAT. A review and discussion of data collection tools (questions, response options, and approaches to collection) from other Ontario school boards was also conducted. Additionally, learnings from the DDSB Workforce Census in 2021-2022 were used to inform data collection for the Student Census. Data collection practices and guidelines were also reviewed and adhered to from the Anti-Racism Directorate (ARD), Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC), and the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario (IPC).

To build collaboration and trust with the DDSB communities, a webpage on the DDSB website with the Student Census questions, links to frequently asked questions (FAQs), authorization and confidentiality statements, copies of the census on the following languages (Arabic, Dari, English, Farsi, Simplified Chinese, Tamil and Urdu) and a video discussing the Student Census were posted on the Board website prior to the launch date to clarify the purpose and intent of the Student Census.

The Student Census was communicated to parents/guardians through various channels. Parents/guardians were contacted through letters sent home, School Messenger (voice mail and email) and DDSB social media channels (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram).



Census Design

The Student Census consisted of eight questions based on identity categories provided by the Ministry of Education and guided by Ontario's *Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS)*:

- Indigenous Identity
- Ethnic/Cultural Origins
- Racial Background
- Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief
- Gender Identity
- Sexual Orientation (*Grade 7-12 students*)
- Disability (Two parts)
- First Language(s) Learned at home

There were two versions of the census: one for parents/guardians of students in Kindergarten - Grade 6 (K-6), and one for students in Grades 7-12 (7-12). Both versions had the same questions based on their intended audiences with the exception of one question; the 7-12 Student Census invited students to share their sexual orientation. For all questions, participants could select more than one option.

Parents/guardians and students were provided the option to decline the participation of the Student Census, skip or choose not to answer any question in the Student Census and could exit the module of the online census at anytime.

The census was available in online and paper formats. The paper version of the census was available upon request. To address potential barriers due to language, the online versions of the census were translated into six languages other than English: Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Simplified Chinese, Tamil, and Urdu. In total, 253 responses (1.3%) were completed in an online translated version and no request of the paper format was received.

On average, the online version of the K-6 census took parents/guardians approximately 3 minutes to complete, and the online version of the 7-12 census took students approximately 4 minutes to complete. Examples of both versions of the census can be found in Appendix A and B.



Access and Security

Access to the full census dataset has been restricted to select staff members in the Research and Strategic Analytic. In addition, storage of the data has followed the security protocols outlined in the PIA.



Census Administration

Starting in September 2022, DDSB developed a communication plan to emphasize the value of the Student Census as well as the importance of the co-operation and support from the staff (superintendents, principals, and teachers), students, families, and the community partners. The DDSB Student Census 2022-23 was launched on May 10, 2023 and remained open until June 28, 2023. Please note that responses received after the closing date were also included in this report.

Parents/guardians of students in K-6 were invited to complete the census on behalf of their child. Students in 7-12 were invited to complete the census at school or at home. Students and parents/guardians were provided with an individualized ID for each child to access the census.

In the weeks prior to the census launch, school leaders were informed through email communication and provided with supportive resources about the upcoming Student Census.



Analysis

The analyses in this report include quantitative (number and percentage of respondents) summaries for each identity question. Each question has been summarized by the number of individuals who responded to the question and the percentage represented in each of the identity categories. Percentages may not sum to 100% because respondents were able to select more than one option for all questions. Identity categories that had fewer than 15 respondents have been excluded from reporting unless otherwise stated.

Several questions had open-ended options for respondents to input identities that were not listed. Data cleansing, such as removing duplicates or recoding, was performed on the open-ended responses to ensure the quality and accuracy of the census data. As well, these results represent 23% of the student population and generalizations or assumptions are not recommended.

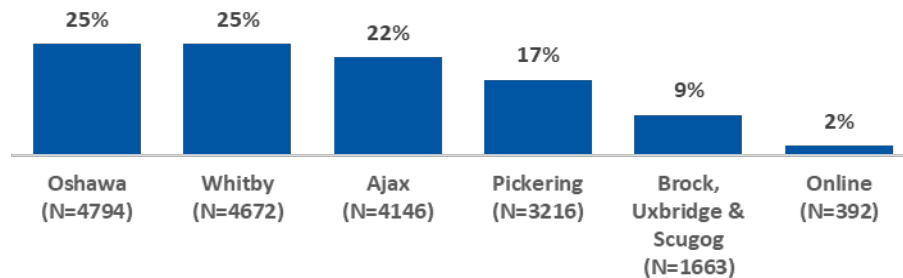


Census Participation

Overall, 23% of all K-12 students in the DDSB participated in the Student Census and that equivalent to 18,883 respondents. Participation for the two versions of the census varied between 20% and 27%:

- K-6 (27% or 11634 respondents)
- Grade 7-12 (20% or 7,249 respondents)

Total participation in the census also varied throughout the region from 9% to 25% and the participation rate of online students was approximately 2% (392 respondents):



For the students and parents/guardians (18,883 respondents) who chose to participate in the Student Census, they had the option to skip any question. The following are the numbers and percentages of respondents for each question.

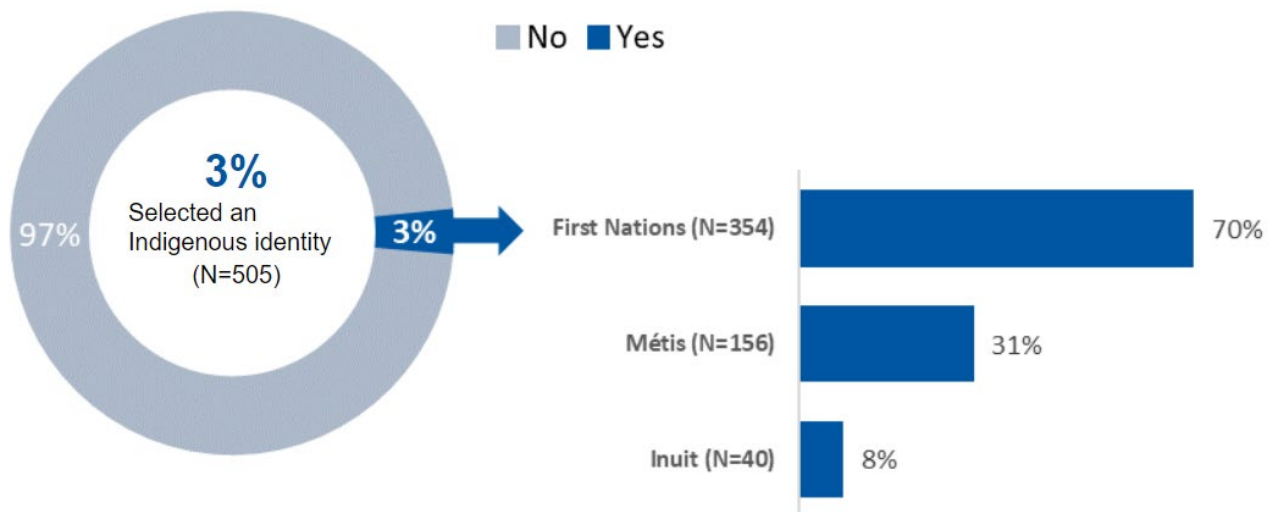
Question	Number of Respondents to Question	Percentage of Total Respondents
Indigenous Identity	18,597	98%
Ethnic or Cultural Origin	18,799	99%
Racial Background	18,674	99%
Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief	18,585	98%
Gender Identity	18,763	99%
Sexual Orientation (Grade 7 to 12 only)	7,158	99%
Disabilities (Different Abilities)	16,523	88%
First Language(s) Learned to Speak	18,770	99%



Indigenous Identity

As guided by the Data Standard 13, participants were asked whether they identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit. Of the 18,597 respondents who responded, 3% identified one or more Indigenous identities. Of this group of respondents, “First Nations” was the most frequent response (70%) followed by “Métis” (31%) and “Inuit” (8%).

Percentage of Students by Indigenous Identity



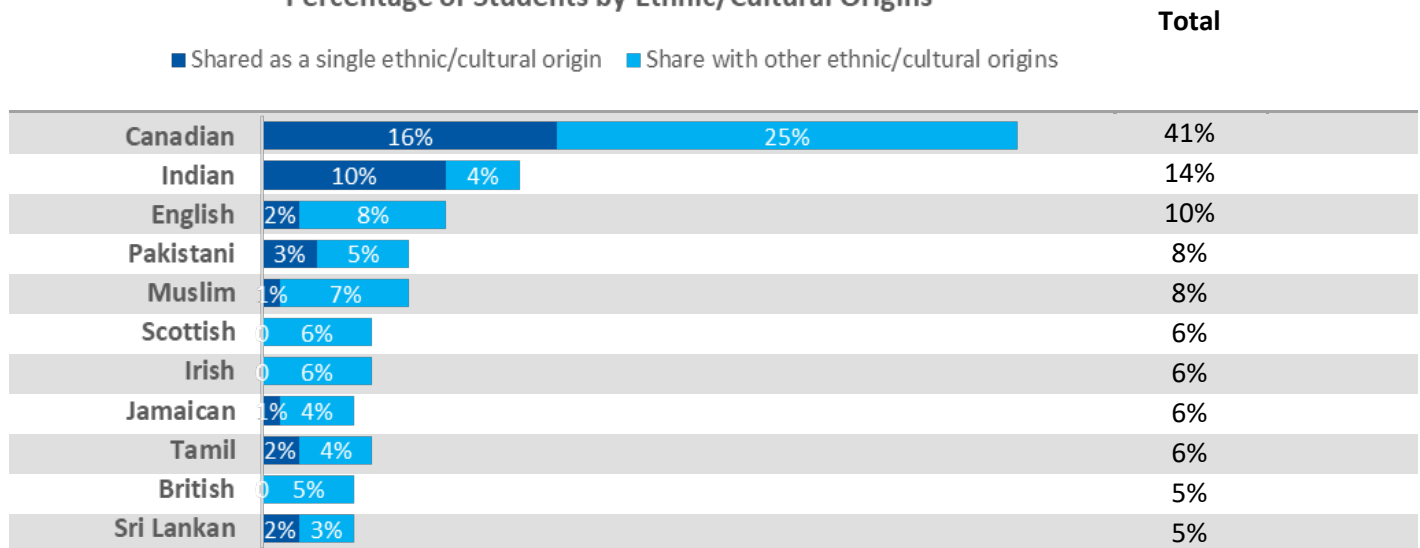


Ethnic/Cultural Origins

As guided by the Data Standard 17, participants were asked to self-identify their ethnic/cultural origins. Nearly half (46%) of the respondents stated more than one ethnic/cultural origin in their response. Of the 18,799 respondents, the largest group of respondents (41%) stated “Canadian” as part of their ethnic/cultural origins. For more detailed ethnic/cultural origins, please see the graphical presentation below.

Along with Canadian, the other largest responses for the self-identified ethnic/cultural origins were followed by the Indian (14%), English (10%), Pakistani (8%), Muslim (8%), Scottish (6%), Irish (6%), Jamaican (6%), Tamil (6%) and British (5%) and Sri Lankan (5%).

Percentage of Students by Ethnic/Cultural Origins



Note: Percentages may not sum exactly to ‘Total’ percentages due to rounding

Percentage of Students by Ethnic/Cultural Origins

Ethnic/Cultural Origin	Ethnic/Cultural Origin	Ethnic/Cultural Origin
Canadian (N=7652)	41%	Ukrainian (N=333)
Indian (N=2696)	14%	African (N=635)
English (N=1867)	10%	Guyanese (N=629)
Pakistani (N=1534)	8%	German (N=620)
Muslim (N=1423)	8%	Afghani (N=585)
Scottish (N=1209)	6%	Italian (N=581)
Irish (N=1191)	6%	French (N=514)
Jamaican (N=1093)	6%	Trinidadian (N=480)
British (N=1019)	6%	Bangladeshi (N=426)
Tamil (N=1024)	5%	Filipino (N=409)
Sri Lankan (N=978)	5%	Arab (N=400)
Chinese (N=873)	5%	Dutch (N=363)
		Ethnic/Cultural Origin
		Not listed (N=1514)

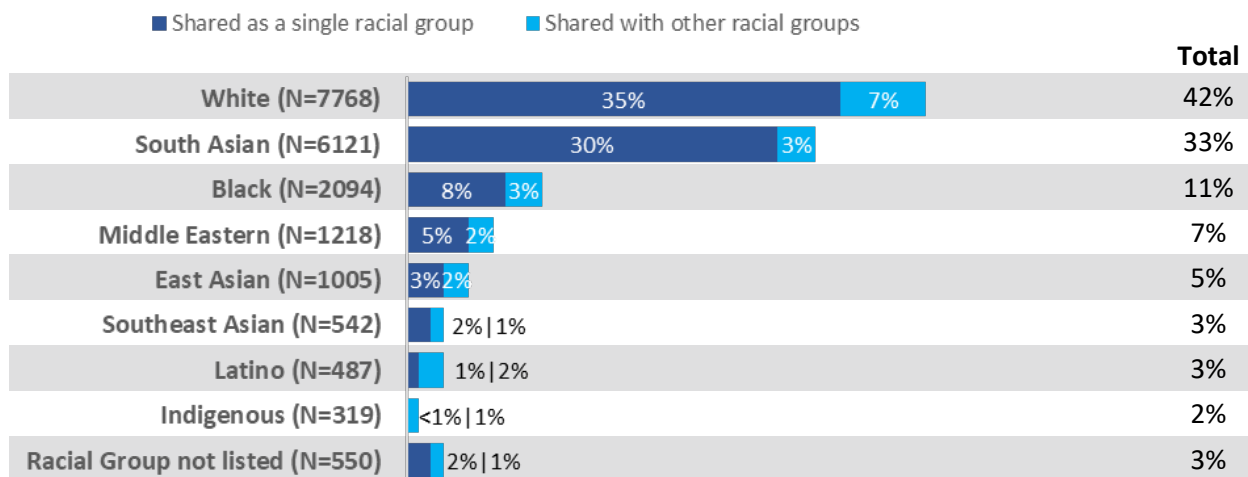
Note: Only ethnicities with percentages equal to or greater than 1% shown.



Racial Background

As guided by the Data Standard 15, participants were asked to self-identify their racial background. Of the 18,674 respondents who shared their racial group, 42% selected “White”, 33% selected “South Asian”, and 11% selected Black as part of their racial background. About 10% (1,923 respondents) selected multiple racial groups. For more detailed racial background, please see the graphical presentation below.

Percentage of Students by Racial Group



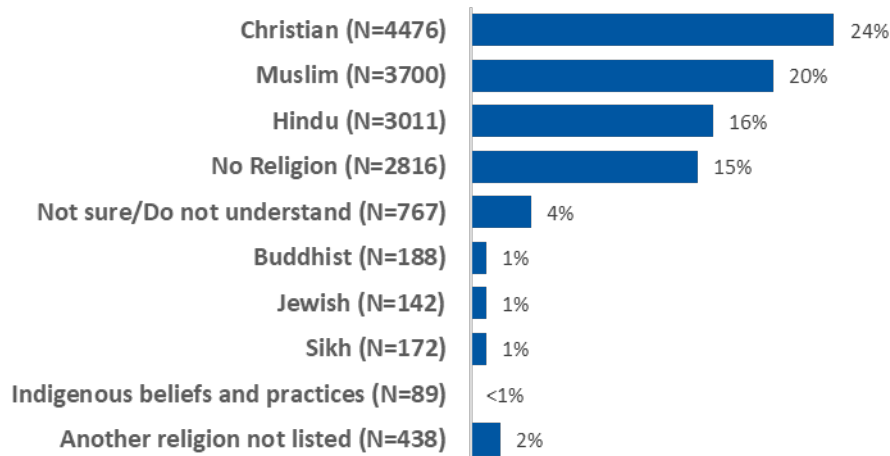
Note: Percentages may not sum exactly to ‘Total’ percentages due to rounding.



Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief

As guided by the Data Standard 16, participants were asked to self-identify their religious affiliation. Of the 18,585 respondents who shared their religious affiliations, 24% selected “Christian” as part of their religious or spiritual beliefs. This was followed by 20% “Muslim”, 16% “Hindu”, 15% “No religion”. For more detailed religious affiliation, please see the graphical presentation below.

Percentage of Students by Religious Affiliation



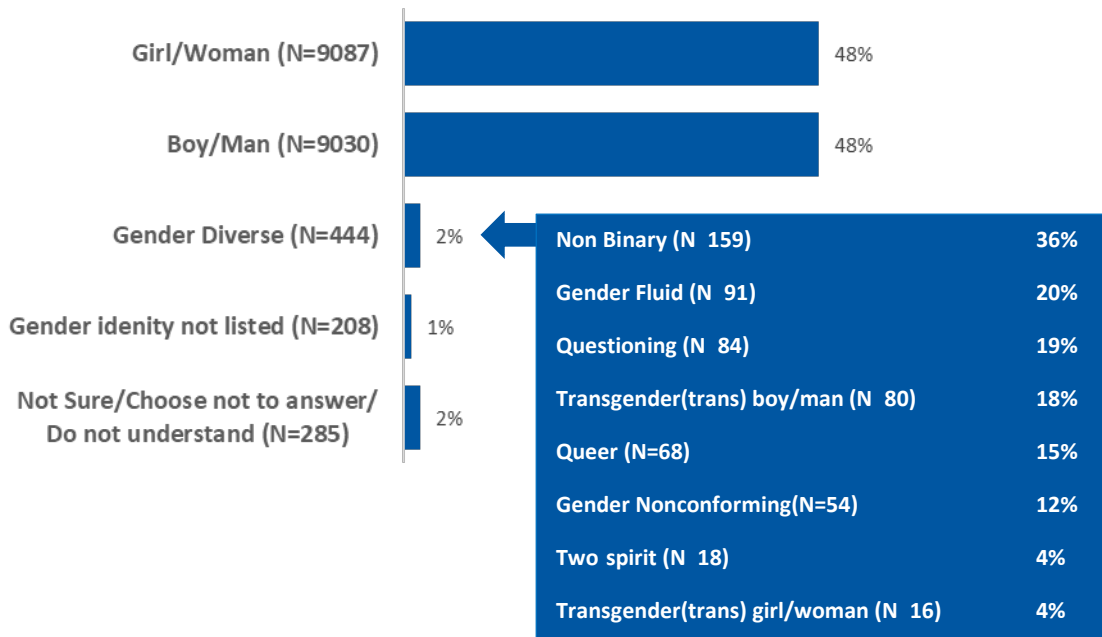
Note: For this question, subcategories were included in the response options to be responsive, inclusive and help individuals select the appropriate response. Those responses have been mapped back to nine categories as prescribed by the ARDS for analysis and reporting. The categories “Not sure/Do not understand” were included by the DDSB Research and Strategic Analytics. For subcategory mapping and the full list of response options and results, please see Appendix C.



Gender Identity

Of the 18,763 respondents who shared their gender identity, 48% selected “Girl or Woman” and “Boy or Man” as part of their gender identity. Of the 444 respondents (2%) who selected a (or multiple) gender diverse identity, 36% selected “Non-Binary”. For more detailed gender diverse identity, please see the graphical presentation below.

Percentage of Students by Gender Identity

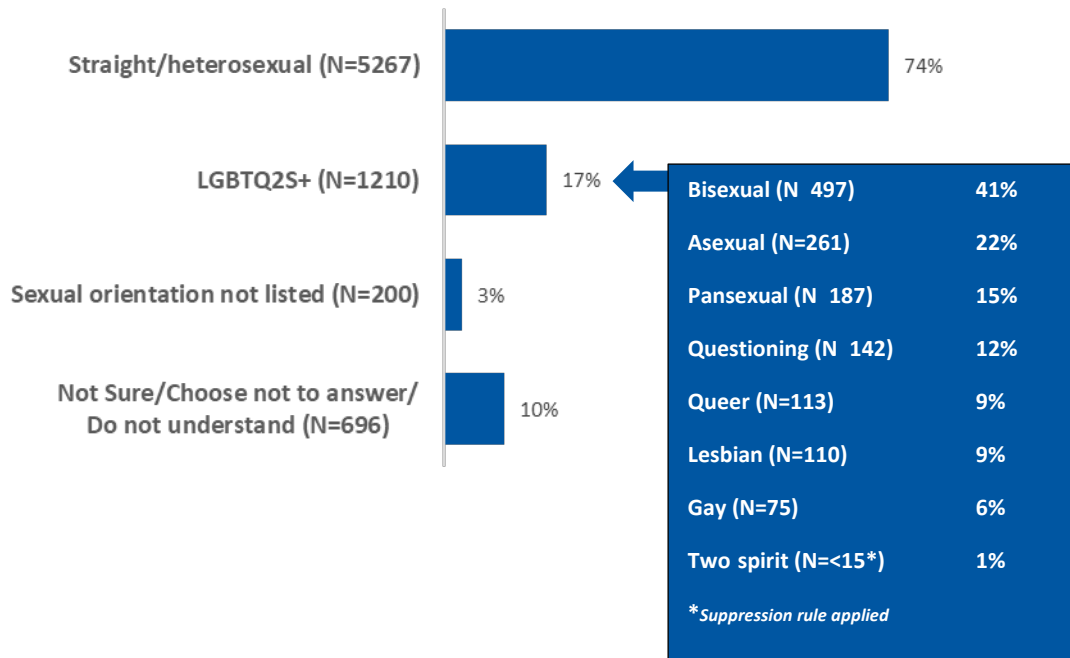




Sexual Orientation (Grade 7-12 Students)

Of the 7,158 respondents Grade 7-12 students who shared their sexual orientation, 74% selected “Straight/heterosexual” as part of their sexual orientation. Of the 1,210 respondents (17%) who selected an (or multiple) LGBTQ2S+ sexual orientation identity, 41% selected “Bisexual”. For more detailed sexual orientation identity, please see the graphical presentation below.

Percentage of Grade 7-12 Students by Sexual Orientation

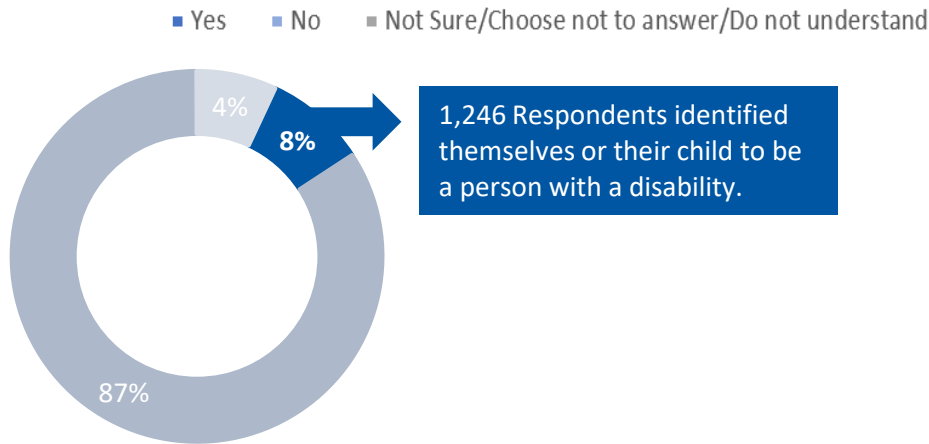




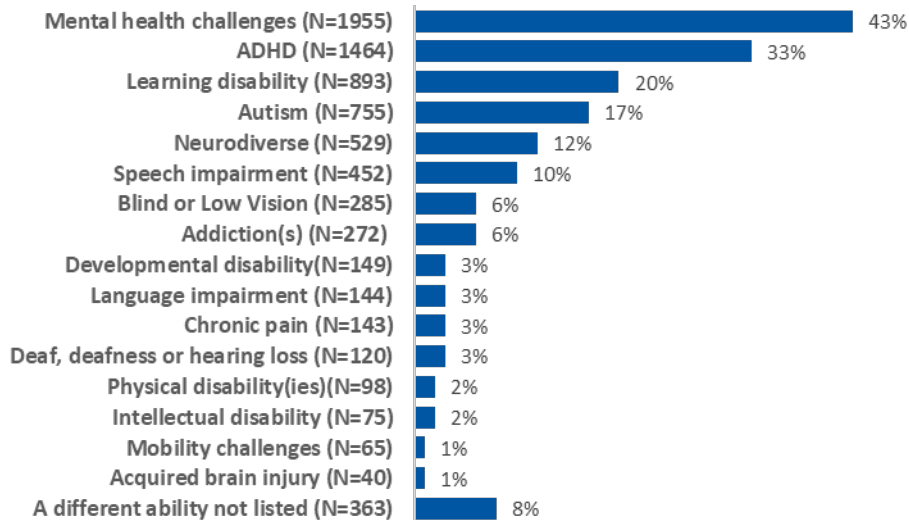
Different Abilities

Participants were asked if they or their child identified as a disabled person or a person with a disability. Of the 16,523 respondents who provided a response, 8% said “Yes” that identified themselves or their child to be a person with a disability.

Percentage of Students by Disability



Furthermore, the most frequently selected categories among the 4,496 respondents who responded to the different abilities question were: Mental Health Challenges (43%), ADHD (33%), Learning Disability (20%) and Autism (17%). For more detailed different ability conditions, please see the graphical presentation below.





First Language(s) Learned

Of the 18,770 respondents who shared the language(s) they first learned how to speak at home, 74% selected “English” as one of their first languages. Of those who selected “English”, 22% selected an additional first language as one of their first languages.

Slightly over a quarter (26%) of respondents selected a language other than English. The top three most frequently selected languages other than English were “Urdu” (8%), “Tamil” (7%), and “Hindi” (3%). For more detailed first languages learned at home, please see the table presentation below.

Percentage of Students by First Language(s) Learned at Home

First Language(s) Learned	Percentage	First Language(s) Learned	Percentage
English (N=13799)	74%	Telugu (N=311)	2%
Urdu (N=1447)	8%	Dari (N=292)	2%
Tamil (N=1376)	7%	Spanish (N=264)	1%
Hindi (N=640)	3%	Punjabi (N=260)	2%
A Language Not Listed (N=432)	2%	Farsi (Persian) (N=234)	1%
Bengali (N=406)	2%	Cantonese (N=203)	1%
Gujarati (N=385)	2%	Malayalam (N=161)	1%
Mandarin (N=364)	2%	Pashto/Pashtu (N=141)	1%
French (N=341)	2%	Tagalog (N=101)	1%
Arabic (N=340)	2%		

Note: Only languages with percentages equal or greater than 1% shown.



References

- Government of Ontario. (2019). Data standards for the identification and monitoring of systemic racism. Retrieved from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/data-standards-identification-and-monitoring-systemic-racism/introduction>
- OHRC. (2010). Count me in! Collecting human rights-based data. Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved from: <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/count-me-collecting-human-rights-based-data>
- Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario. (2016). De-identification guidelines for structured data. Retrieved from: <https://www.ipc.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Deidentification-Guidelines-for-Structured-Data.pdf>



Appendix A: Student Census Questions for Grades K-6



Student Census 2023 Questions for Grades K-6

The questions and response options in this survey come from (or are informed by) direction, guidance and/or best practices from the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Racism Directorate, other Ontario school boards, Indigenous partners and community organizations that reflect the diverse communities we serve. We recognize students' and families' unique and intersectional identities, and surveys cannot reflect all lived identities. We continue to learn from diverse communities to better understand the different ways people may choose to identify. Student Census response options and language will also continue to evolve to respond to and be inclusive of the diverse communities we serve.

1. Does your child identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

If yes, select all that apply:

- No
- Yes, First Nations
- Yes, Métis
- Yes, Inuit

If you wish, please specify/describe your Indigenous identity (e.g., you may choose to name your nation, status or non-status) in the space below:

Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic and/or religious characteristics.

2. What is your child's ethnic or cultural origin?

Please select as many ethnic or cultural origins as apply:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afghani | <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> African | <input type="checkbox"/> German | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American | <input type="checkbox"/> Greek | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arab | <input type="checkbox"/> Guyanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Scottish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Barbadian | <input type="checkbox"/> Indian | <input type="checkbox"/> Sri Lankan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> British | <input type="checkbox"/> Irish | <input type="checkbox"/> Tamil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Trinidadian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese | <input type="checkbox"/> Jamaican | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch | <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish | <input type="checkbox"/> Welsh |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Macedonian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> European | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino | <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani | |
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- An ethnic or cultural origin not listed above (please specify): _____

*Race is a social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics and affects how some people are perceived and treated. Race is often confused with ethnicity (a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background); there may be several ethnic groups within a racialized group

In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background.

3. Which racial group(s)* best describes your child?

If your child has a mixed background, please select all that apply.

- Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit descent)
- Latino/Latina/Latinx (Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent, e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.)
- South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri-Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, other Southeast Asian descent)
- White (European descent)
- Not Sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A racial group not listed above (please specify): _____

People can be treated differently based on their religion, or perceived religion, which can lead to negative impacts and unequal outcomes. Islamophobia and antisemitism are examples of the way religion can be racialized. People can experience racism not only based on skin colour but also other perceived characteristics that are associated with religion.

4. Indicate any religion, creed, spiritual affiliation, or belief with which your child identifies.

Please select all that apply:

- Agnostic (a person who holds a view that the existence of a God or gods is unknown or unknowable, claims neither faith nor disbelief in a higher power)
- Atheist (a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods)
- Bahá'í
- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Christian (Church of the East Nestorian/Persian, Oriental Orthodoxy, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestant, etc.)
- Church of Christ, Scientist
- Hindu
- Humanist (a person who believes that human experience and rational thinking provides the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by)
- Indigenous beliefs and practices (Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices can vary significantly among different First Nation, Métis and Inuit groups and individuals, and across different regions)
- Jainism
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Rastafarian
- Sikh
- Spiritual, but not religious belief/faith without a religious framework, emphasizing personal growth and inner peace.
- Wiccan
- Zoroastrian
- No religious or spiritual affiliation
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A religion, spiritual affiliation, creed, or belief not listed above (please specify):

*A person's internal and deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither or having another identity on the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be different from the sex assigned at birth (e.g., female, intersex, male).

5. What is your child's gender identity?

Please select all that apply:

- Girl/Woman
- Gender Fluid (relating to, or being a person whose gender identity or expression changes or shifts along the gender spectrum)
- Gender Nonconforming (refers to a person whose gender identity is not in line with the cultural associations made in a given society about a person's sex assigned at birth)
- Boy/Man
- Non Binary (refers to a person whose gender identity does not align with the binary concept of gender such as man/boy or woman/girl)
- Transgender (trans) boy/man (refers to a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a boy/man)
- Transgender (trans) girl/woman (refers to a person who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a girl/woman)
- Two-Spirit
- Queer (refers to ideas, practices, persons or identities that go against the standards that form the cisnormative social model)
- Questioning (refers to a person who is unsure about their gender identity)
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A gender identity not listed above (please specify): _____

*Some people identify as a disabled person, a person with a disability(ies) or a person with different abilities because of a permanent or long-term health condition(s) (e.g., a physical, mental, behavioural, developmental, sensory, communicational or combination of any of these conditions). A person's different abilities/disabilities may be diagnosed or not diagnosed and may be hidden or visible. Some Students who have different abilities/disabilities may have an accommodation plan at school to help them (an individual Education Plan or IEP), but some do not.

Learning spaces (e.g., schools, classrooms) that are not fully inclusive and accessible can create barriers for people with different abilities/disabilities and can make it difficult to fully participate, engage in and learn at school.

For some people, different ability(ies) and/or disability(ies) may be a core aspect of their identity and/or the communities with which they identify.

6. Does your child identify as a disabled person or a person with a disability(ies)?

Please select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question

Do you consider your child to be a person who is, with or experiencing any of the following? If yes, please select all that apply to your child. If no, please select “No, none of the above”.

Please select all that apply:

- Addiction(s)
- Attention Deficit and Hypersensitivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic/Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Neurodiverse/neurodivergent traits
- Acquired brain injury
- Blind or Low Vision
- Deaf, deafness or hearing loss
- Developmental disability(ies)
- Intellectual disability
- Learning disability(ies)
- Mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression)
- Mobility challenges
- Chronic pain
- Physical disability(ies)
- Language impairment/developmental language disorder
- Speech impairment (e.g., speech sound production, voice disorder, dysfluency/stuttering)
- No, none of the above
- My disability(ies) is not listed above (please specify): _____

7. What is the first language(s) your child learned at home?

Please select all that apply:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afrikaans | <input type="checkbox"/> Gujarati | <input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akan (Twi) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hakka | <input type="checkbox"/> Ojibway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Albanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Haudenosaunee | <input type="checkbox"/> Oji-Cree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algonquin | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew | <input type="checkbox"/> Oromo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi | <input type="checkbox"/> Pashto/Pashtu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amharic | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Ilokano | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anishinaabemowin | <input type="checkbox"/> Indo-Iranian languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic | <input type="checkbox"/> Innu/Montagnais | <input type="checkbox"/> Romanian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Armenian | <input type="checkbox"/> Inuktitut | <input type="checkbox"/> Rundi (Kirundi) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atikamekw | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bengali | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Rwanda (Kinyarwanda) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bantu languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Kannada | <input type="checkbox"/> Serbian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berber languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Khmer (Cambodian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sindhi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackfoot | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Sinhala (Sinhalese) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bosnian | <input type="checkbox"/> Kurdish | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Lao | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cree languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Lingala | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatian | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Swahili |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech | <input type="checkbox"/> Macedonian | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dari | <input type="checkbox"/> Malay | <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch | <input type="checkbox"/> Malayalam | <input type="checkbox"/> Tamil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Maltese | <input type="checkbox"/> Telugu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Estonian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin | <input type="checkbox"/> Thai |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farsi (Persian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Marathi | <input type="checkbox"/> Tigrigna |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish | <input type="checkbox"/> Mi'kmaq | <input type="checkbox"/> Tlicho (Dogrib) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flemish | <input type="checkbox"/> Nepali | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Niger-Congo languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fukien | <input type="checkbox"/> Ninimowin | <input type="checkbox"/> Urdu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose not to answer | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not understand this question | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A language(s) not listed above (please specify): _____ | | |



Appendix B: Student Census Questions for Grades 7-12



Student Census 2023 Questions for Grades 7-12

The questions and response options in this survey come from (or are informed by) direction, guidance and/or best practices from the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Anti-Racism Directorate, other Ontario school boards, Indigenous partners and community organizations that reflect the diverse communities we serve. We recognize students' and families' unique and intersectional identities, and surveys cannot reflect all lived identities. We continue to learn from diverse communities to better understand the different ways people may choose to identify. Student Census response options and language will also continue to evolve to respond to and be inclusive of the diverse communities we serve.

1. Do you identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

If yes, please select all that apply:

- No
- Yes, First Nations
- Yes, Métis
- Yes, Inuit

If you wish, please specify/describe your Indigenous identity (e.g., you may choose to name your nation, status or non-status) in the space below:

Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic and/or religious characteristics.

2. What is your ethnic or cultural origin?

Please select as many ethnic or cultural origins as apply:

- Afghani
- African
- American
- Arab
- Bangladeshi
- Barbadian
- British
- Canadian
- Chinese
- Dutch
- English
- European
- Filipino

- French
- German
- Greek
- Guyanese
- Hungarian
- Indian
- Irish
- Italian
- Jamaican
- Jewish
- Macedonian
- Muslim
- Pakistani

- Polish
- Portuguese
- Russian
- Scottish
- Spanish
- Sri Lankan
- Tamil
- Trinidadian
- Ukrainian
- Welsh

- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- An ethnic or cultural origin not listed above (please specify): _____

*Race is a social construct that groups people on the basis of common ancestry and characteristics and affects how some people are perceived and treated. Race is often confused with ethnicity (a group of people who share a particular cultural heritage or background); there may be several ethnic groups within a racialized group.

In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background.

3. Which racial group(s)* best describes you?

If you have a mixed background, select all that apply.

- Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent)
- East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese descent)
- Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit descent)
- Latino/Latina/Latinx (Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent, e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.)
- South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri-Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.)
- Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Filipino, Indonesian, Thai, Vietnamese, other Southeast Asian descent)
- White (European descent)
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A racial group not listed above (please specify): _____

People can be treated differently based on their religion, or perceived religion, which can lead to negative impacts and unequal outcomes. Islamophobia and antisemitism are examples of the way religion can be racialized. People can experience racism not only based on skin colour but also other perceived characteristics that are associated with religion.

4. Indicate any religion, creed, spiritual affiliation, or belief with which you identify.

Please select all that apply:

- Agnostic (a person who holds a view that the existence of a God or gods is unknown or unknowable, claims neither faith nor disbelief in a higher power)
- Atheist (a person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods)
- Bahá'í
- Buddhist
- Catholic
- Christian (Church of the East Nestorian/Persian, Oriental Orthodoxy, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestant, etc.)
- Church of Christ, Scientist
- Hindu
- Humanist (a person who believes that human experience and rational thinking provides the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by)
- Indigenous beliefs and practices (Indigenous spiritual beliefs and practices can vary significantly among different First Nation, Métis and Inuit groups and individuals, and across different regions)
- Jainism
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Rastafarian
- Sikh
- Spiritual, but not religious belief/faith without a religious framework, emphasizing personal growth and inner peace.
- Wiccan
- Zoroastrian
- No religious or spiritual affiliation
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A religion, spiritual affiliation, creed, or belief not listed above (please specify):

*A person's internal and deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither or having another identity on the gender spectrum. A person's gender identity may be different from the sex assigned at birth (e.g., female, intersex, male).

5. What is your gender identity?

Please select all that apply:

- Girl/Woman
- Gender Fluid (relating to, or being a person whose gender identity or expression changes or shifts along the gender spectrum)
- Gender Nonconforming (refers to a person whose gender identity is not in line with the cultural associations made in a given society about a person's sex assigned at birth)
- Boy/Man
- Non Binary (refers to a person whose gender identity does not align with the binary concept of gender such as man/boy or woman/girl)
- Transgender (trans) boy/man (refers to a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as a boy/man)
- Transgender (trans) girl/woman (refers to a person who was assigned male at birth and identifies as a girl/woman)
- Two-Spirit
- Queer (refers to ideas, practices, persons or identities that go against the standards that form the cisnormative social model)
- Questioning (refers to a person who is unsure about their gender identity)
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A gender identity not listed above (please specify): _____

*Sexual orientation is the direction of one's sexual interest or attraction. It is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. It covers the range of human sexuality and is different from gender identity.

6. What is your sexual orientation?

Please select all that apply:

- Asexual (*refers to a person that experiences no sexual attraction to other people*)
- Bisexual (*refers to a person who is physically/sexually and emotionally attracted to people of more than one gender*)
- Gay (*refers to a person who is physically/sexually and emotionally attracted to someone of the same gender. The term "gay" typically refers to boy/man who are attracted to boys/men, but in some contexts can be used for girls/women who are attracted to girls/women*)
- Lesbian (*refers to a woman who is attracted physically/sexually and emotionally to women*)
- Pansexual (*refers to a person who is attracted physically/sexually and emotionally to others, without being limited by gender*)
- Queer (*the term "queer" refers to ideas, practices, persons or identities that go against the standards that form the heteronormative social model*)
- Straight/heterosexual (*refers to a person who is physically/sexually and emotionally attracted exclusively to someone of the opposite (binary) gender*)
- Two-Spirit
- Questioning (*refers to a person who is unsure about their sexual orientation*)
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question
- A sexual orientation not listed above (please specify): _____

*Some people identify as a disabled person, a person with a disability(ies) or a person with different abilities because of a permanent or long-term health condition(s) (e.g., a physical, mental, behavioural, developmental, sensory, communicational or combination of any of these conditions). A person's different abilities/disabilities may be diagnosed or not diagnosed and may be hidden or visible. Some Students who have different abilities/disabilities may have an accommodation plan at school to help them (an individual Education Plan or IEP), but some do not.

Learning spaces (e.g., schools, classrooms) that are not fully inclusive and accessible can create barriers for people with different abilities/disabilities and can make it difficult to fully participate, engage in and learn at school.

For some people, different ability(ies) and/or disability(ies) may be a core aspect of their identity and/or the communities with which they identify.

7. Do you identify as a disabled person or a person with a disability(ies)?

Please select one answer only.

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Choose not to answer
- I do not understand this question

Do you consider yourself to be a person who is, with or experiencing any of the following? If yes, please select all that apply to you. If no, please select “No, none of the above”.

Please select all that apply:

- Addiction(s)
- Attention Deficit and Hypersensitivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autistic/Autism/Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Neurodiverse/neurodivergent traits
- Acquired brain injury
- Blind or Low Vision
- Deaf, deafness or hearing loss
- Developmental disability(ies)
- Intellectual disability
- Learning disability(ies)
- Mental health challenges (e.g., anxiety, depression)
- Mobility challenges
- Chronic pain
- Physical disability(ies)
- Language impairment/developmental language disorder
- Speech impairment (e.g., speech sound production, voice disorder, dysfluency/stuttering)
- No, none of the above
- My disability(ies) is not listed above (please specify): _____

8. What is the first language(s) you learned at home as a child?

Please select all that apply:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afrikaans | <input type="checkbox"/> Gujarati | <input type="checkbox"/> Norwegian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Akan (Twi) | <input type="checkbox"/> Hakka | <input type="checkbox"/> Ojibway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Albanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Haudenosaunee | <input type="checkbox"/> Oji-Cree |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algonquin | <input type="checkbox"/> Hebrew | <input type="checkbox"/> Oromo |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Sign Language | <input type="checkbox"/> Hindi | <input type="checkbox"/> Pashto/Pashtu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amharic | <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Polish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Ilokano | <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anishinaabemowin | <input type="checkbox"/> Indo-Iranian languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Punjabi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic | <input type="checkbox"/> Innu/Montagnais | <input type="checkbox"/> Romanian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Armenian | <input type="checkbox"/> Inuktitut | <input type="checkbox"/> Rundi (Kirundi) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atikamekw | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bengali | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese | <input type="checkbox"/> Rwanda (Kinyarwanda) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bantu languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Kannada | <input type="checkbox"/> Serbian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Berber languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Khmer (Cambodian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sindhi |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackfoot | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean | <input type="checkbox"/> Sinhala (Sinhalese) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bosnian | <input type="checkbox"/> Kurdish | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian | <input type="checkbox"/> Lao | <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cantonese | <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian | <input type="checkbox"/> Somali |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cree languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Lingala | <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Croatian | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian | <input type="checkbox"/> Swahili |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Czech | <input type="checkbox"/> Macedonian | <input type="checkbox"/> Tagalog |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dari | <input type="checkbox"/> Malay | <input type="checkbox"/> Taiwanese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch | <input type="checkbox"/> Malayalam | <input type="checkbox"/> Tamil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English | <input type="checkbox"/> Maltese | <input type="checkbox"/> Telugu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Estonian | <input type="checkbox"/> Mandarin | <input type="checkbox"/> Thai |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farsi (Persian) | <input type="checkbox"/> Marathi | <input type="checkbox"/> Tigrigna |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish | <input type="checkbox"/> Mi'kmaq | <input type="checkbox"/> Tlicho (Dogrib) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flemish | <input type="checkbox"/> Nepali | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French | <input type="checkbox"/> Niger-Congo languages | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukrainian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fukien | <input type="checkbox"/> Ninimowin | <input type="checkbox"/> Urdu |
| <input type="checkbox"/> German | | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greek | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Choose not to answer | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not understand this question | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A language(s) not listed above (please specify): _____ | | |



Appendix C: Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief Responses

Subcategories were mapped back to the nine categories as prescribed by the Anti-Racism Act (2017) in the following way:

ARA Category	Subcategories
Christian	Christian Catholic
No religion	No religious or spiritual affiliation Atheist
Another religion or spiritual affiliation	A religion, spiritual affiliation, creed, or belief not listed (please specify) Agnostic Baha'i Church of Christ, Scientist Humanist Jains Rastafarian Spiritual Wiccan Zoroastrian

The full list of response options and results were as follows:

Percentage of Students by Religious Affiliation (N=18,585)

Religious Affiliation	Percentage	Religious Affiliation	Percentage
Muslim (N=3700)	20%	Humanist (N=158)	1%
Christian (N=3376)	18%	Jewish (N=142)	1%
Hindu (N=3011)	16%	Indigenous beliefs and practices (N=89)	<1%
No religious or spiritual affiliation (N=2816)	15%	Church of Christ, Scientist (N=84)	1%
Agnostic (N=1276)	7%	Wiccan (N=49)	<1%
Catholic (N=1243)	7%	Jains (N=30)	<1%
Atheist (N=962)	5%	Rastafarian (N=18)	<1%
Spiritual (N=662)	4%	Baha'i (N=10)	<1%
Religious affiliation not listed (N=438)	2%	Zoroastrian (N=6)	<1%
Buddhist (N=188)	1%	Choose not to answer (N=977)	5%
Sikh (N=172)	1%	Not sure/Do not understand (N=767)	4%

DDSB STUDENT CENSUS



2022-2023 Analysis

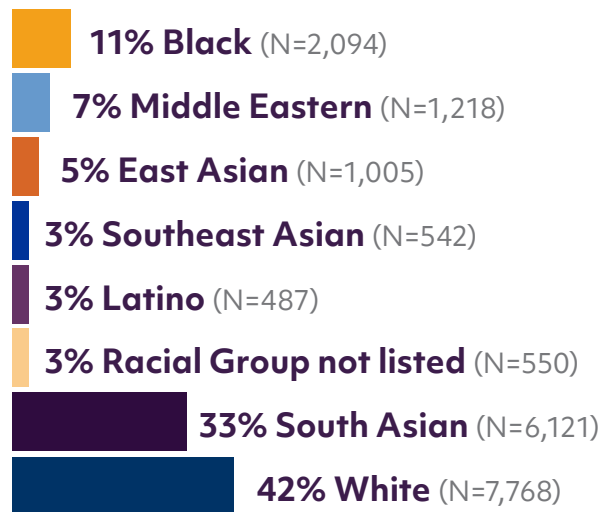
23% (or 18,883 respondents) of all K-12 students in the DDSB participated in the Student Census. *N=Number of Respondents*

Kindergarten to 6
11,634
or 27%

Grades 7 to 12
7,249
or 20%

Racial Background

Of the 18,674 who responded, about 10% (or 1,923) selected multiple race groups. N counts include respondents who selected a single race group and multiple race groups.



Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding or respondents choosing more than one category. Summaries are provided for individual categories. Intersectional analysis in progress.



Indigenous Identity

505 Respondents (3%) identified one or more Indigenous identities

70% First Nations (N=354)

31% Métis (N=156)

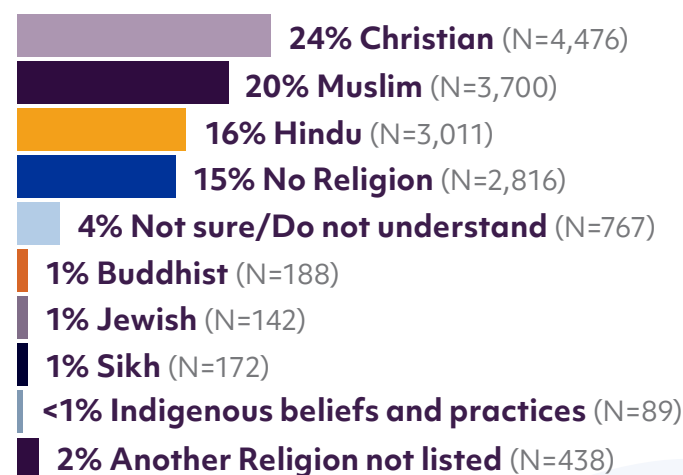
8% Inuit (N=40)

The DDSB will continue to engage and consult with Indigenous partners and communities for guidance on if and how the census results related to Indigenous students will be analyzed, communicated, and used.

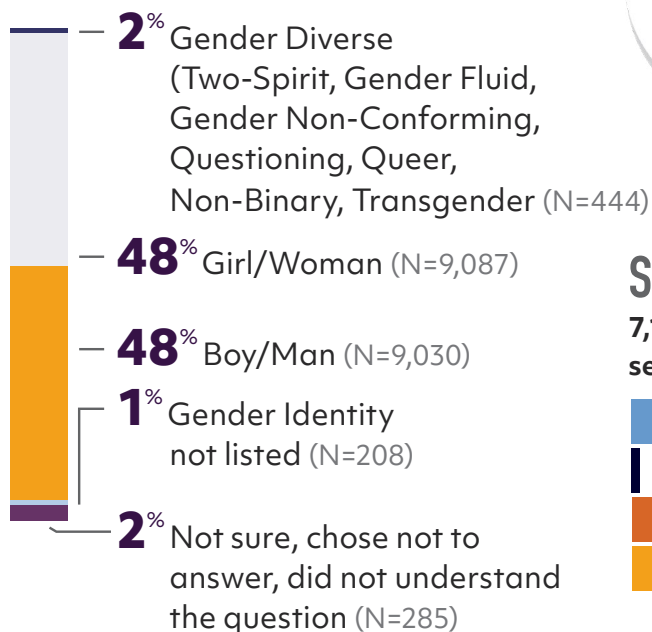
Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief

Of the 18,585 respondents who responded, about 7% (or 1,317) selected multiple religious affiliations. N counts include respondents who selected a single and multiple religious affiliations.

*Responses have been mapped back to nine categories as prescribed by the Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS) for analysis and reporting.



Gender Identity 18,763 respondents identified one or more gender identities

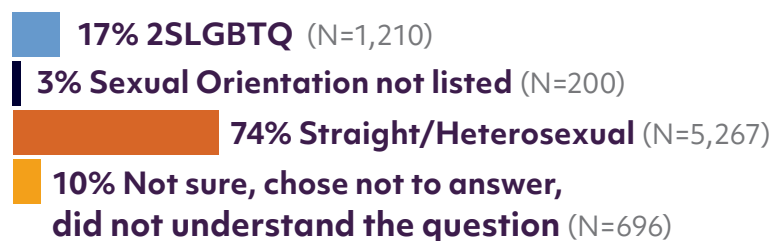


95 First Languages learned at home by students in addition to English

GUJARATI URDU TAMIL
 CANTONESE BENGALI SPANISH
 ARABIC FARSI MANDARIN FRENCH
 DARI HINDI MALAYALAM PUNJABI
 PASHTO/PASHTU TELUGU TAGALOG

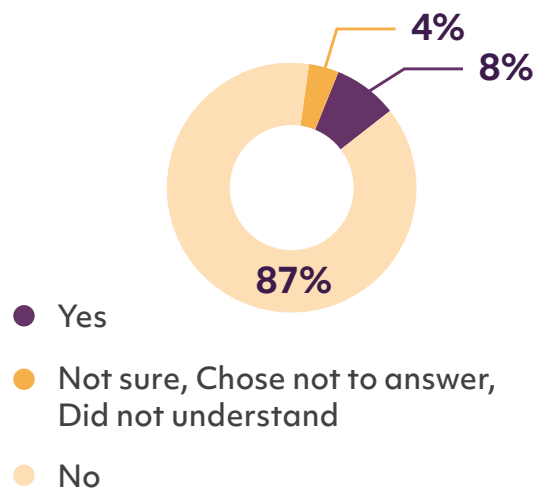
Sexual Orientation (Grade 7-12 students only)

7,158 respondents identified one or more sexual orientation identities

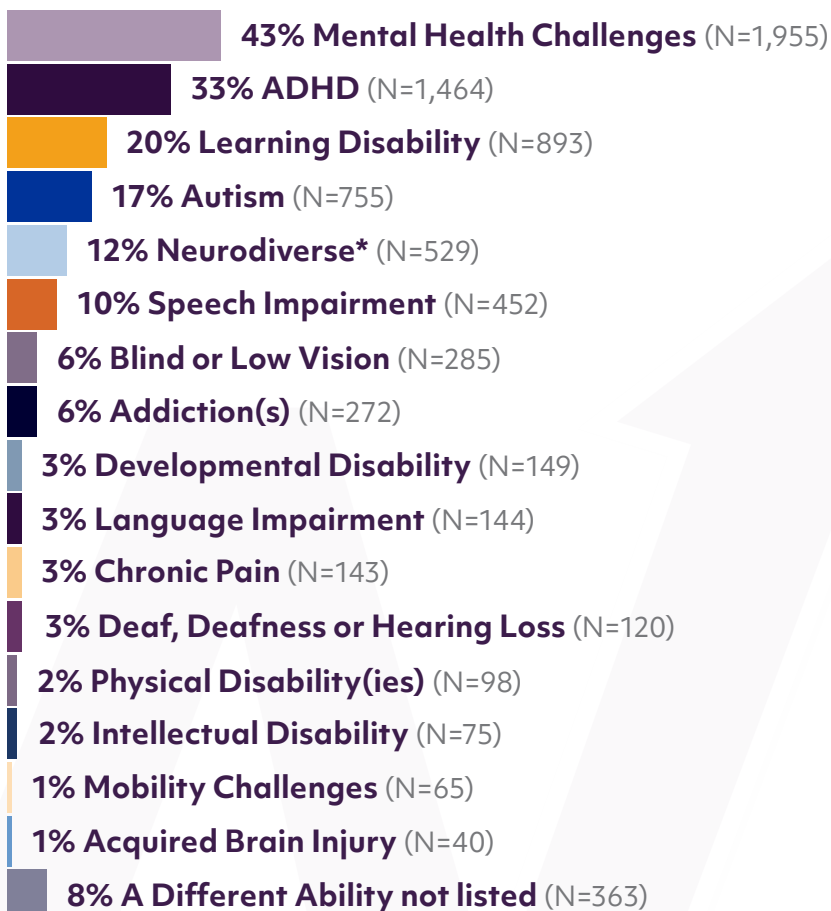


Different Abilities

Participants were asked if they or their child identified as a disabled person or a person with a disability. Of the 16,523 respondents who provided a response, 8% (1,246 respondents) said "Yes"- they identified themselves or their child to be a disabled person or a person with a disability.



As many as **4,496 respondents** responded to the different abilities below:



* Neurodiverse is often used in the context of autistic identity/ autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental differentiation such as ADHD or learning disabilities.

Comparison (Student Census 2018-19 and 2022-23)

Student Census	2018-19	2022-23
Total Participants	26,034	18,883
Overall Response Rate	37% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● K-6 (N=11,527, 30%) ● 7-12 (N=14,507, 46%) 	23% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● K-6 (N=11,634, 27%) ● 7-12 (N=7,249, 20%)
Question	2018-19	2022-23
Indigenous Identity	3%	3%
Ethnic or Cultural Origin	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canadian (52%) ● English (16%) ● Irish (11%) ● Scottish (11%) ● Jamaican (7%) 	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Canadian (41%) ● Indian (14%) ● English (10%) ● Pakistani(8%) ● Muslim (8%)
Racial Background	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● White (57%) ● South Asian (20%) ● Black (12%) ● Middle Eastern (6%) ● East Asian (5%) 	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● White (42%) ● South Asian (33%) ● Black (11%) ● Middle Eastern (7%) ● East Asian (5%)
Religion, Creed, Spiritual Affiliation or Belief	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Christian (33%) ● No Religion (24%) ● Muslim (14%) ● Hindu (9%) ● Not sure/Do not understand (8%) 	5 largest Responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Christian (24%) ● Muslim (20%) ● Hindu (16%) ● No Religion (15%) ● Agnostic (7%)
Gender Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Girl or Woman (49%) ● Boy or Man (49%) ● Gender Diverse (1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Girl or Woman (48%) ● Boy or Man (48%) ● Gender Diverse (2%)

<p>Sexual Orientation (Grade 7 to 12 only)</p>	<p>Among the 14,182 respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight/Heterosexual (85%) • 2SLGBTQ (11%) • Sexual orientation not listed (1%) • Not sure/Choose not to answer/Do not understand (6%) 	<p>Among the 7,158 respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight/Heterosexual (74%) • 2SLGBTQ (17%) • Sexual orientation not listed (3%) • Not sure/Choose not to answer/Do not understand (10%)
<p>Different Abilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9% (2,269) considered themselves to be a person with a disability • For those students who considered themselves a person with a disability, the most frequent selected disabilities: Learning Disability (38%), Autism (23%), Behaviour (14%) and Speech/Language Impairment (12%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8% (1,246) self-identified themselves to be a person with a disability • The most frequently selected categories among the 4,496 students who responded to the different abilities question were: Mental Health Challenges (43%), ADHD (33%), Learning Disability (20%), Autism (17%) and Neurodiverse(12%).
<p>First Language(s) Learned to Speak</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% selected English as one of the first languages they learned to speak at home • The most frequently selected languages other than English: Urdu (6%), French (5%), Tamil (4%), “A Language Not Listed” (2%), and “Arabic” (2%). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% selected English as one of the first languages they learned to speak at home • The most frequently selected languages other than English: Urdu (8%), Tamil (7%), Hindi (3%).

DURHAM DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

REPORT TO: Durham District School Board **DATE:** January 8, 2024

SUBJECT: School Year Calendar Planning 2024-2025 **PAGE:** 1 of 9

ORIGIN: Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board
 Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education
 David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services
 Chris Conley, Manager of Research and Strategic Analytics
 Jeff Maharaj, Family of Schools/Operations System Lead

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Trustees with information about the planning and consultation process to develop the 2024-2025 school year calendars. District staff will provide reports and updates to the Board of Trustees as the calendar development process continues, as follows:

- January 8, 2024 (*current*): Preliminary information on the school year calendar process, including requirements, considerations, and planned community engagement and consultations;
- February 20, 2024: Results of the engagement and consultation process and recommendation for the draft school year calendars for the Board of Trustees' consideration;
- March 1, 2024: Submission of school year calendars to the Ministry of Education for approval.

2.0 Ignite Learning Strategic Priority/Operational Goals

Success – *Set high expectations and provide support to ensure all staff and students reach their potential every year.*

- To determine how the work staff is doing supports academic success and equitable outcomes for students and staff.

Well-being – *Create safe, welcoming, inclusive learning spaces to promote well-being for all students and staff.*

- To gather feedback on our commitment to providing safe, inclusive, and respectful learning and working environment.

Leadership – *Identify future leaders, actively develop new leaders and responsively support current leaders.*

- To support leaders in creating inclusive and respectful environments and practices that honour diverse identities in DDSB schools and workplaces.

Equity – *Promote a sense of belonging and increase equitable outcomes for all by identifying and addressing barriers to success and engagement.*

- To use the feedback from DDSB community members to help identify, prevent and address barriers and support equitable outcomes for students, families, and staff.

Engagement – *Engage students, parents and community members to improve student outcomes and build public confidence.*

- To engage and honour community voice to help inform system decisions that directly impact students, families, and staff.

3.0 **Background**

The Durham District School Board (DDSB) recognizes Indigenous rights are distinct. In the exercise of those rights, Indigenous staff and students shall not be subjected to actions with the aim or effect of depriving these distinct rights.

The DDSB is committed to providing learning and working environments that centre human rights and equity and are safe, welcoming, respectful, equitable, accessible, inclusive and free from discrimination.

The DDSB acknowledges that the education system and related structures may perpetuate dominant narratives and perspectives. This includes school year calendars, which reflect:

- The Gregorian (solar) calendar; and
- National and provincial statutory holidays, which include some days of significance for Christian people¹.

School year calendars² can therefore create barriers for, and have a negative effect on, DDSB community members who may require time away from school or work to observe days of religious, spiritual, or cultural significance that fall on instructional days.

Given the DDSB's commitments to upholding Indigenous rights and human rights, District staff are closely examining historical and ongoing practices for potential inequitable barriers that may negatively impact the diverse communities the District serves. The DDSB has responsibilities under the Ontario Human Rights Code to identify, prevent and address potential discriminatory barriers, and to meet its legal duty to accommodate Human Rights Code-related needs (including needs based on the protected grounds of creed/religion and ancestry).

¹ The Ontario Human Rights Commission's *Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed* states that "work and service schedules in Ontario have traditionally been structured around a Christian calendar. Many creeds require their members to engage in specific acts of worship and celebration at particular times of the [...] year. When these observances do not coincide with existing work or service schedules [...] and statutory holidays, people may be adversely affected. Organizations have a duty to accommodate sincerely held creed observances to the point of undue hardship, including by providing time off for religious holidays, leaves, [...] and observances."

² This also applies to modified calendars, which are an effort to move away from typical school year schedules to better support families' changing needs, circumstances, and preferences. It is important to note that for modified calendars, the District must also factor in statutory holidays, requirements set out in Regulations, and other considerations outlined in this report.

Prior to the approval of last year's school year calendars, the Board of Trustees requested that staff explore possibilities and consider options to prevent or mitigate potential barriers by considering the placement of Professional Development days on creed-based days of significance.

In response to the Board of Trustees' request, staff:

- Reviewed the:
 - Days of religious significance for DDSB community members;
 - District's current practices to support creed-based days of significance;
 - Purpose and intent of Professional Development days;
 - Legislative and contractual requirements for school year calendars that must be met; and
 - Community engagement and consultation process;
- Conducted a preliminary jurisdictional scan of other boards' school year calendar consultation and development processes; and
- Assessed additional operational considerations and financial impacts of alternative schedules.

Days of Religious Significance for DDSB Community Members

The DDSB's Student Census and Workforce Census data indicate that the DDSB currently serves and employs people from many diverse religious, faith, and spiritual communities.

Within specific faith communities, there may be variations in which day(s) are significant, which specific day(s) should be observed, and how they are observed. In addition, dates of significance for some faith communities may not fall on a single day, or on the same day, in the same month or at the same time of year (for example, because the observance is based on a lunar calendar).

Supporting Days of Creed-Based Significance

Human rights, Inclusive Design, and Accommodation

The DDSB has set out its commitments and responsibilities for preventing discriminatory barriers, including barriers based on creed/religion, and the duty to accommodate in its:

- *Human Rights, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Racism Policy* (the "Human Rights Policy");
- *Human Rights Inclusive Design and Accommodation Procedure* (the "Accommodation Procedure"), which includes a specific section on creed-based inclusion and accommodating days of religious/creed-based significance; and
- *Accommodating Creed in Schools: An Inclusive Design Approach* guideline (the "Creed Accommodation Guideline") which provides further information and guidance on flexible and inclusive creed-based practices and accommodations in schools.

Current Practices

The Human Rights Policy, Accommodation Procedure and the Accommodation Guide set out current expectations and ongoing processes for school teams to engage local communities, and to work with students and families to identify dates of significance they wish to observe.

To minimize potential barriers and maximize inclusion and participation, school staff are encouraged to:

- Know students, families, and communities, reach out to inquire about potential dates of significance, and provide opportunities for families to identify needs.³
- Review dates identified by families as well as the Days of Significance Calendar with their respective communities before planning and scheduling school-based activities (including tests/exams, events and meetings, excursions, graduation ceremonies, etc.).

In addition, the District continues to facilitate creed-based accommodations for students and staff who require time away from school or work to observe days of religious significance:

- Parents/guardians can enter a special code for religious days when reporting a student absence related to a day of religious/creed-based significance.
- Staff may work with the People & Culture Department to request accommodation for religious dates of significance.

Purpose of Professional Development Days

Professional Development days are mandated by regulation to provide opportunities for school teams to learn and engage on:

- Provincial priorities such as the implementation of new or revised curriculum, Ministry of Education policy directives and initiatives that directly support student learning and well-being, etc.
- Board and District priorities (i.e., Multi-Year Strategic Plan, Student Achievement Plan, Operational Plan, school learning plans, policies, procedures, etc.).

Professional Development is critical for staff in schools because it directly supports:

- Enhancing student learning and well-being.
- Ongoing learning and growth in teaching and learning practices, including but not limited to requirements under professional standards for educators and other accredited professional staff who work in schools (i.e., requirements under respective governing bodies).
- The expectations for roles, responsibilities, accountability, and performance.

School staff are required to participate in Professional Development days to fulfill Ministry, Board, District, school, and professional commitments and expectations.

³ Note: Information about the availability of Ontario Human Rights Code-related accommodations is also promoted and shared with DDSB community members at the start of the school year, and at various other points throughout the year.

As noted below, Professional Development days are scheduled to support specific educational tasks and touchpoints with families throughout the school year (i.e., report cards, parent/guardian and teacher interviews, etc.).

Developing School Year Calendars

Legislative and Contractual Requirements, Collective Agreements

In addition to the DDSB's responsibilities under the Human Rights Code, the DDSB must also meet requirements under the Education Act and related regulations. Regulation 304 of the Education Act states that:

- A regular school year is the period between September 1 and June 30;
- The school year shall include a minimum of 194 school days. Of these 194 school days:
 - Three days must be designated as professional development/activity (PA) days that are devoted to specific provincial education priorities;
 - School boards may designate up to four days as board-designated PA days; and
 - The remaining school days shall be instructional days. A school board may designate up to ten (10) instructional days as examination days for secondary schools.

For the 2024-2025 school year calendars, Regulation 304 requires school boards to submit proposed school year calendars to the Ministry for approval on or before March 1, 2024.

In addition to the requirements set out in Regulation 304, Professional Development days within the school year calendar are placed to align with the requirements of collective agreements. Specifically, these are intended to support the cycles of teaching and learning that take place throughout the school year, including but not limited to:

- Preparing and collaboratively planning for the school year.
- Professional learning.
- Staff engagement and team building.

Professional Development days need to align with key dates within semesters to build in time for assessments and exams prior to developing progress, mid-term, and final report cards, and to conduct parent/guardian and teacher interviews.

Engagement and Consultation Process

When developing school year calendars, the District typically seeks input from students, families, staff, unions and associations, and community partners. School year calendars are posted on the DDSB's webpage, and on social media platforms in order to share information and invite feedback.

The District shares our proposed calendars with Durham Catholic District School Board (DCSDB) in order to align transportation costs. The District recognizes that days of significance for DDSB students, families, and staff may differ from days of significance for DCDSB community members.

In past consultations, families have shared feedback indicating that they appreciate, wherever possible, some consistency in school calendars year over year to help plan ahead for childcare, other family responsibilities and needs, work schedules, etc. Some working families also plan their vacation days around statutory holidays and typical school calendars. Staff recognizes that these considerations may not apply to all families, and that addressing discriminatory barriers based on all Human Rights Code grounds is a priority.

Jurisdictional Scan

A jurisdictional scan was conducted to provide a broader perspective on our consultation process and the development of school calendars. In several instances, board consultations gathered feedback on draft calendars in an effort to understand the impact a calendar may have in the board and school communities. In other instances, consultations involved the compilation of dates of significance that were then shared with the staff.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

The HWDSB uses an online platform to engage in consultations, seeking input from parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members on the key dates proposed in the draft calendar. Of interest are the considerations families assign to childcare, work schedules, and religious and creed days of significance.

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB)

Board staff consulted with Employee Resource Groups, religious leaders and groups, the spiritual care committee, and other members of the community. Although input is invited, they were clear to clarify that it is not always possible to reflect all requests within the school year calendar.

Waterloo District School Board (WRDSB)

This work is engaged through a School Year Calendar committee which includes participation from union representatives.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB)

A policy is currently in development around the recognition of culturally significant observances. There is currently no draft available and no consultations have been conducted.

York Region District School Board (YRDSB)

YRDSB provides guidelines to help prevent scheduling events on faith days. These protected days are intended to honor the faith diversity in schools and workplaces and provide a resource that can be used to support accommodations.

4.0 **Analysis**

We recognize that current structures and school year calendars may pose and/or perpetuate barriers for students, families, and staff based on creed/religion.

To help address these barriers, the District's current practices are informed by the Human Rights Policy, the Accommodation Procedure, the Creed Accommodation Guideline and the Days of Significance Calendar. Together, these documents provide direction and guidance to help identify, prevent, and mitigate potential religious and creed-based barriers for students, families, and staff, and to provide appropriate accommodations under the Ontario Human Rights Code, where required. School-based consultations with families further support these efforts.

The development of a school year calendar is not an arbitrary process. District staff must adhere to the placement of statutory holidays and regulations. Staff must also consider contractual requirements and additional operational factors to inform the process.

The District therefore has very limited flexibility when developing school year calendars. Despite these constraints, staff continue to engage with DDSB community members for their input and feedback to help inform decisions within this restricted scope.

In addition, the Regulations and the number of faith days that fall within the school year further limit the District's ability to set Professional Development days on days of religious significance for many (or even a few) faith communities.

Variations in when and how dates of significance are observed within faith communities pose additional difficulties in assessing which dates may or may not be suitable for scheduling as Professional Development days.

Concerns may also be raised if Professional Development days are scheduled to coincide with some days of religious significance (that do not already fall on statutory holidays), but not others.

In addition, moving a Professional Development Day to align with dates of religious/spiritual significance may create barriers for staff who would wish to observe that day. Staff would have to make a difficult decision to choose to either participate in their observance or take part in important professional learning.

Next Steps

To enhance existing processes, and in order to better serve DDSB school communities, staff will operationalize the following two items:

- 1) The expansion of the community consultation process;
- 2) The development of a Dates of Significance reference tool.

Expanded Community Consultations

As part of the expanded consultation process for the school year calendar, the four proposed calendars (elementary and secondary, regular, and modified) will be shared with DDSB communities for input and feedback, utilizing an online survey tool.

The calendars and survey tool will be shared for consultation with:

- Individual schools (both in-person and DDSB@Home), will share the appropriate calendar and consultation tool with their respective School Community Council, parent/guardian groups, and school staff;
- Student Senate;
- All employee groups (including CUPE, DSAA, DESA, ETFO, OPC, OSSTF, and MPA);
- Employee Affinity groups;
- DDSB Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) and the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC);
- DCDSB (to attempt to align calendars and PA/PD/Board Designated Holiday days as closely as possible to optimize transportation and minimize related costs).

The results of the community consultation will be used to help finalize the calendar, including recommended Professional Development days, within the limitations described above.

Dates of Significance Resource Tool

A Dates of Significance Resource Tool will be developed and shared at the beginning of each year and will be made available to staff and families to supplement current practices, support inclusive design, and to inform decision-making. This resource tool is expected to help apply the existing policy, procedure, guideline, and dates of significance calendar more consistently across the system.

5.0 Financial Implications

The DDSB strives, where possible, to align our school year calendars with DCDSB. As our busing arrangements are integrated with the DCDSB, there is a financial cost of \$147,123.00 per day if the DDSB runs school buses without DCDSB's participation. The DDSB works with DCDSB and Durham Student Transportation Service (DSTS) to minimize transportation impacts and costs, wherever possible.

6.0 Communication Plan

A Board report will come forward to Trustees with the results of the expanded consultation in February 2024, to seek approval of the four calendars (Elementary Regular and Modified, Secondary Regular and Modified) prior to submission to the Ministry of Education.

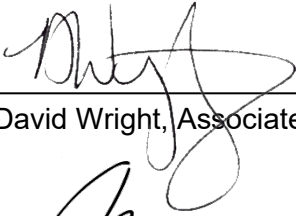
7.0 Conclusion

The report is being shared with Trustees for information.

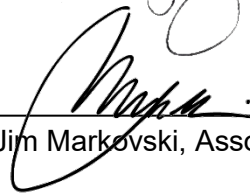
Report reviewed and submitted by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "CW Taylor", written over a horizontal line.

Camille Williams-Taylor, Director of Education and Secretary to the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Wright", written over a horizontal line.

David Wright, Associate Director of Corporate Services

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Markovski", written over a horizontal line.

Jim Markovski, Associate Director of Equitable Education