

Census Portraits

Understanding Our Students' Backgrounds

Ethno-Racial Series: Black Students Report

Aboriginal

Middle Eastern

Black

South Asian

East Asian

Southeast Asian

Latin American

White



Toronto District School Board 2011–12 Student and Parent Census

Research & Information Services

Toronto District School Board

June 2015

Report No. 14/15-15



Ethno-Racial Series

Gender

Sexual Orientation

Socio-economic Status

Students with Special Education Needs

tdsb.on.ca



TDSB's 2011-12 Student & Parent Census

Having recognized the value of the Board's very first *Student Census* (2006) and *Parent Census* (2008), the TDSB conducted its second *Student and Parent Census* in 2011-12.

The *Census* data has offered the Board hard evidence for:

- **Needs identification**
identifying achievement gaps and determining barriers to achievement;
- **Programming and intervention**
reviewing and implementing effective systems, supports, and initiatives across the system; and
- **Accountability**
establishing a baseline of data to measure improvement over time.

Data Sources

The findings generated in this series of *Census Portraits* are based on data combined from three sources – *TDSB's 2011 Student Census* (103,000 students in Grades 7-12), *TDSB's 2012 Parent Census* (90,000 Kindergarten-Grade 6 parents), and the Board's central academic achievement databases.

Information on students' cultural backgrounds is based mainly on their parents' country of birth derived from the Board's *Census* data. For more details about *TDSB's 2011-12 Student Census and Parent Census*, refer to the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca/Census

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About the Census Portraits

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has one of the world's most culturally and demographically diverse student populations. While earlier TDSB studies have shown diversity *among* student identities and family backgrounds, there is also great diversity *within* these groups. Each group is made up of sub-groups from varied ethno-racial backgrounds (cultural, linguistic and/or religious backgrounds or countries of origin), gender identities, sexual orientation, and family socio-economic status. Additionally, differences are explored among students with Special Education Needs.

The *Census Portraits* examine the unique characteristics of these sub-groups.

The purpose is:

- to provide a better understanding of the similarities and differences within each sub-group; and
- to target interventions to ensure the needs of all students are addressed effectively and equitably.

Content

Each *Census Portrait* describes and compares the background, experiences, and achievement levels of the students of each sub-group under the following sections:

- Context (including group description or historical factors)
- Family Background
- Life in School
- Life Outside of School
- Student Health and Wellness
- Self-Perceived Abilities and Academic Achievement

Historical Context

Black presence in Canadian territory dates back to the early 1600s, but the population remained low until the late 17th century. Severe labour shortages prompted the importation of Africans; most of them came as slaves from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. A number of freed and escaped slaves also entered Canada; in Ontario many came through the Underground Railroad. Until the early 1970s, there were modest increases in the Black population in Canada.

The 1967 immigration policy which eliminated the preference for Europeans with the introduction of the point system saw an increase in the number of Black Caribbean people entering Canada. As a consequence, the Black population, estimated to be just 34,400 in 1971 grew to 289,500 by 1981.

Between 1991 and 2001 the population further grew by 31% to make it 2.2% of the Canadian population, and continued to grow to represent 2.5% by 2006 (2006 Federal Census). More recent origins include:

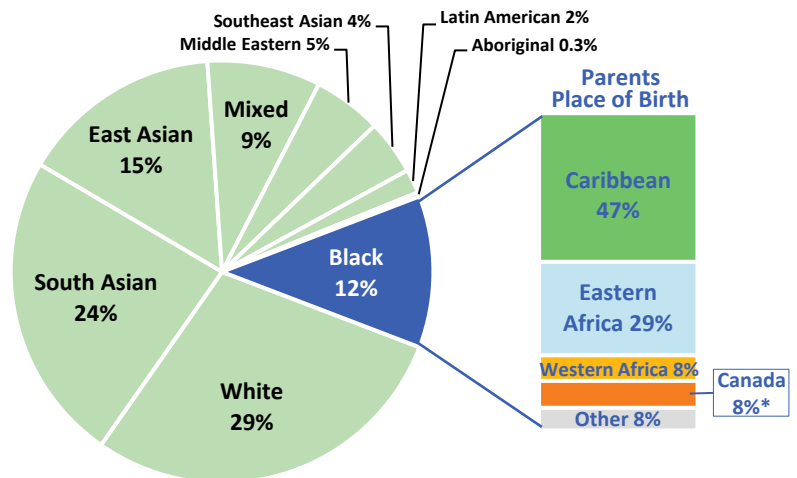
- West Africans – most of whom came in the late 1970s and 1980s from places like Nigeria and Ghana.
- East Africans – most of whom came in the 1990s and 2000s, many as refugees from Ethiopia and Somalia.

Today's Black population is diverse in terms of place of birth, language, religion, origin, and generational cohort. The majority is of Caribbean origin (mostly Jamaicans), and as such comprise most of the third plus generation of Black Canadians. In fact, it is estimated that more than half of the Black population is Canadian-born (2006 Federal Census). It is also estimated that well over half of Canada's Black population lives in Toronto.

Ethno-Racial and Family Background

Black students were the third largest visible minority group in the TDSB. They were less likely to report living in two-parent households. Fewer students had parents with a university degree and the majority of families were in the two lowest income brackets.

- Students who self-identified as Black made up 12% (about 29,700 students) of the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) population.
- Most of their parents were from the Caribbean (47%) and Eastern Africa (29%). About 8% were from Western Africa and the same percentage of students had one or both parents born in Canada (8%), and another 8% were from other countries.
- Most students with Caribbean (78%), Eastern African (77%), Western African (62%), and Canadian-born Black (97%) parents were born in Canada.



*Canada includes one or both parents born in Canada

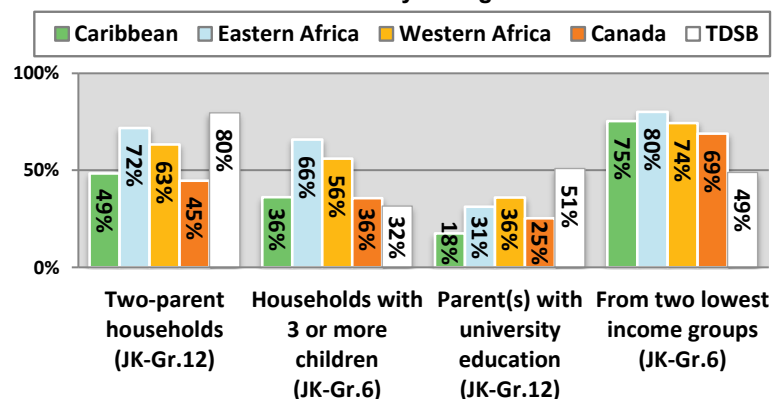
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students were less likely to live with two parents (this includes those living with step-parents or living half-time with each parent), particularly those with Canadian-born (45%) and Caribbean parents (49%);
- students with family origins from both Eastern and Western Africa were much more likely to have multiple siblings;
- Black parents were less likely to have university degrees, especially those who were born in the Caribbean or Canada;
- more Black students came from families in the two lowest income groups (i.e., with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 or between \$30,000-\$49,999).

Learning about One's Culture (Gr. 7-12 Students)

Black students were more likely to agree learning more about their own culture would make their learning more interesting (71%) as well as help them enjoy school more (59%) compared to the general TDSB student population (65% and 52% respectively). This is especially the case for those with origins outside of Canada. Notably, Black students regardless of origin, were more likely to agree that learning about their culture would help them do better in school (50%) compared to the general TDSB student population (42%).

Family Background



Census Portraits: Black Students

Life in School

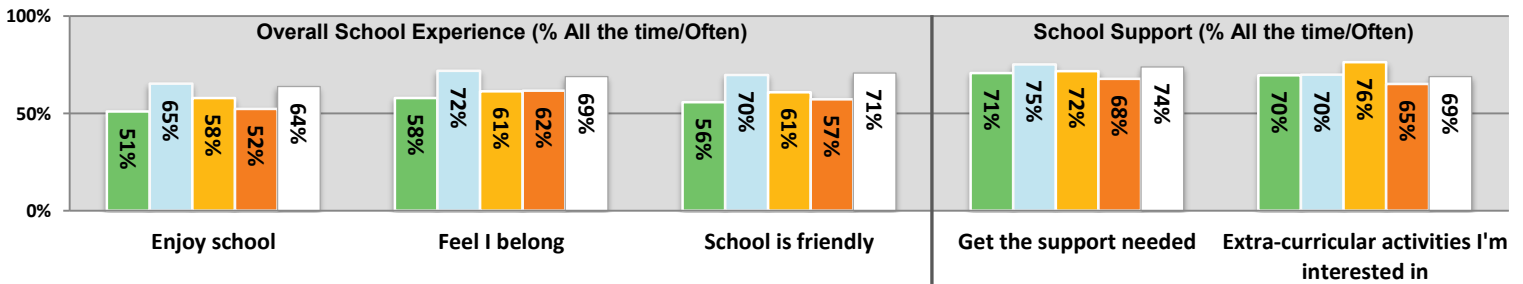
■ Caribbean ■ Eastern Africa ■ Western Africa ■ Canada ■ TDSB

Student Perceptions of School

Eastern African students were as or more satisfied than the general TDSB student population about their overall school experience and the support they received from school, while Black students from other backgrounds were less satisfied.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Students of Eastern African background were as or more likely to feel positive about their school experience - in terms of enjoyment of school, sense of belonging, school being a friendly place, and getting the support they needed from school or the extra-curricular activities they were interested in at school;
- those with Caribbean, Canadian-born and Western African parents were less likely to enjoy school or feel they belong at school;
- Black students with Canadian-born parents were also less likely to feel they get the support they needed or feel there were extra-curricular opportunities that interested them at school.

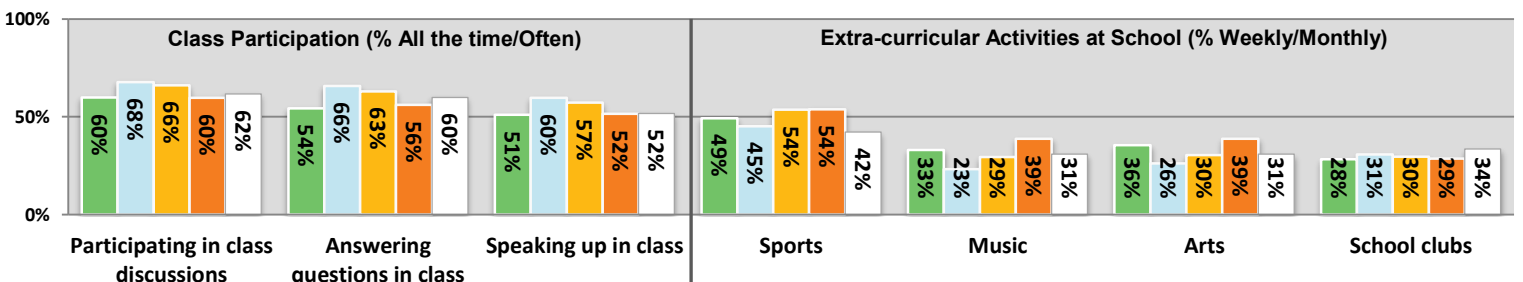


Student Participation at School

Black students felt as or more comfortable participating in class compared to the overall TDSB student population. They were more active in sports, and those with Canadian-born and Caribbean parents were also more likely to participate in arts and music activities.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Eastern and Western African students felt more comfortable participating, answering questions, and speaking up in class;
- regarding extra-curricular activities, Black students were more likely to be active in sports at school;
- Black students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents were also more engaged in music and arts activities, while those of Eastern African origin were less active in these areas;
- Black students were slightly less likely to join school clubs.

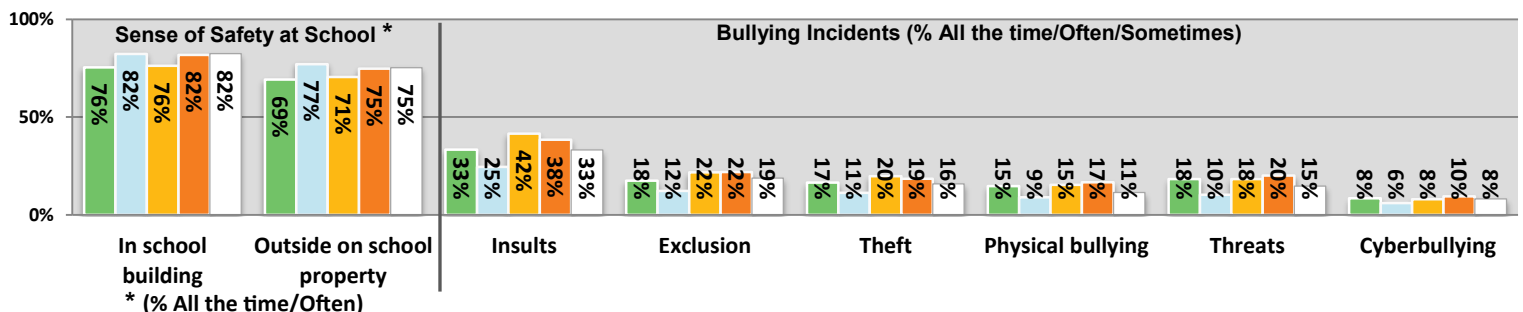


Safety at School

Black students from Caribbean and West African backgrounds felt less safe than others at school. Also, Western African students and Black students with Canadian-born parents were more likely to report having been bullied at school.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- among Black students, those with Caribbean and West African backgrounds felt less safe inside the school building or outside on school property;
- while East African students reported lower levels of bullying incidents, Western African students and those with Canadian-born parents were more likely to report having experienced such incidents as insults, theft, physical bullying, and threats.



Census Portraits: Black Students

Life in School (Cont'd)

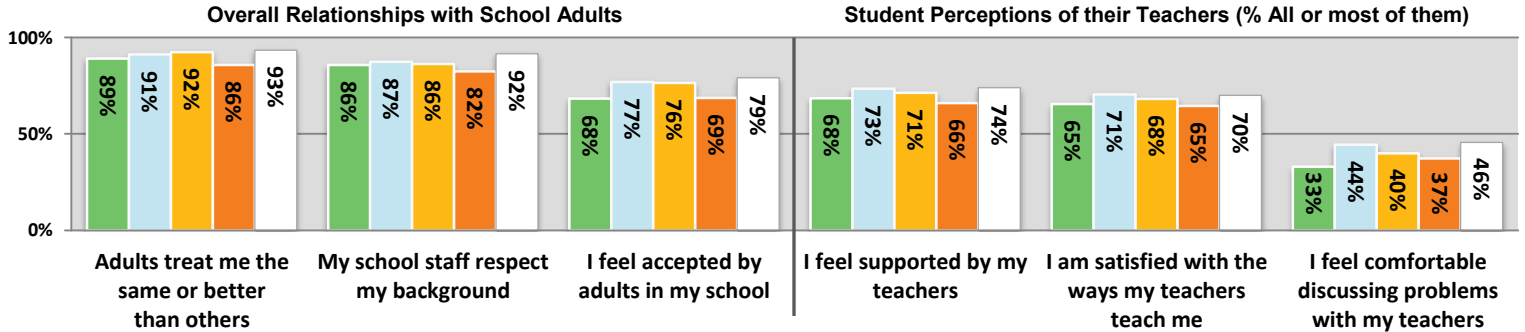
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Relationships with School Adults

Black students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents felt less positive than others about their relationships with school adults. However, Black students were as likely as others to have a school adult(s) that they could turn to for personal support, except for East African students who were much less likely to have one.

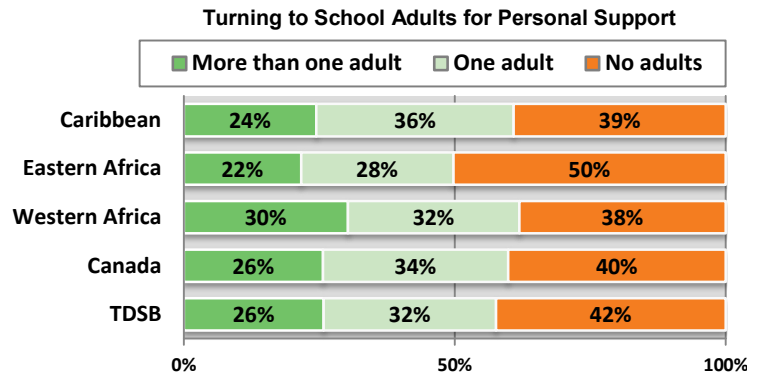
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Eastern and Western African students were as likely to report being treated fairly or feeling accepted by school adults, although they were less likely to report their background being respected;
- Black students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents felt less positive about their school adults;
- similarly, while Eastern and Western African students were as positive in their perceptions about their teachers, other Black students felt less positive, less supported, less satisfied with the ways they were being taught, and less comfortable discussing problems with their teachers.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- most Black students were as or more likely to have one or more school adults that they could turn to for personal support, help or advice;
- the only exception was about half of Eastern African students did not have a school adult they felt comfortable to turn to.

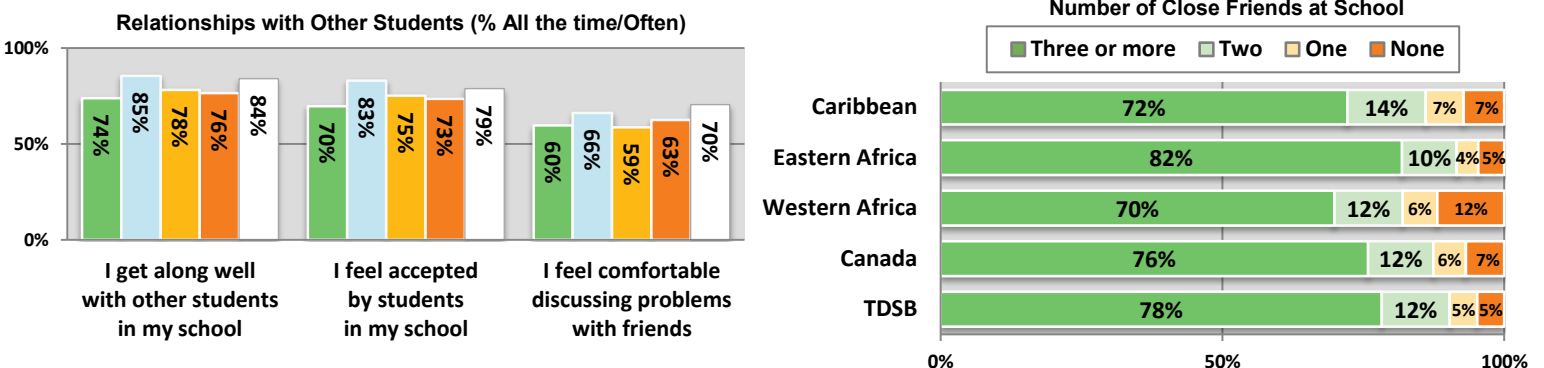


Relationships with Peers

Black students, other than those of Eastern African descent, generally felt less positive than others about their peer relationships at school. They had about the same number of close friends as others at school, except for those of Western African and Caribbean descent who reported fewer.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- with the exception of East African students, Black students felt less positive about their relationships with other students in terms of getting along well with others, feeling accepted by students, and feeling comfortable discussing problems with friends at school;
- regarding the number of close friends at school, Eastern African students were more likely to report having three or more close friends at school, Black students of Western African and Caribbean backgrounds were less likely.



Census Portraits: Black Students

Life Outside of School

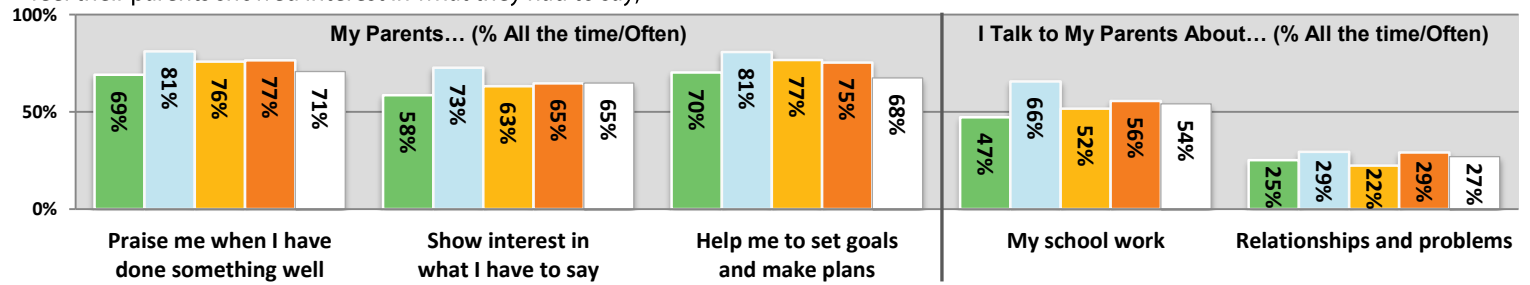
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Relationships with Parents

Black students were as or more likely than others to report having positive relationships with their parents. An exception was that Caribbean students were less likely to report that their parents showed interest in what they had to say, or that they talked with their parents about their school work.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students were as or more likely to report that their parents often praised them when they had done well, showed interest in what they had to say, and helped them to set goals and make plans; the only exception was Caribbean students who were less likely to feel their parents showed interest in what they had to say;
- while a higher proportion of East African students talked with their parents about school work, fewer Caribbean students did;
- also Western African students were less likely to talk with parents about their relationships and problems.

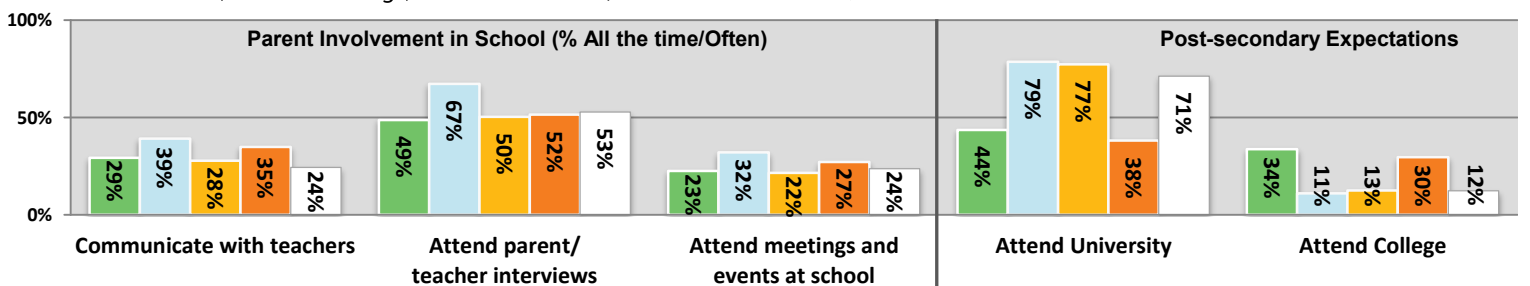


Parent Involvement and Expectations

Black parents were as or more likely than others to be involved at their child's school. Parents of African descent tended to expect their children to attend university, while more Canadian-born and Caribbean parents expected their children to attend college.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black parents were more likely to communicate with their child's teachers;
- Eastern African parents were much more likely to attend parent/teacher interviews, school meetings, and school events;
- parents from Eastern and Western Africa were much more likely than Black parents from the Caribbean and Canada to expect their children to attend university; the latter groups of parents were more likely to expect their children to attend college.

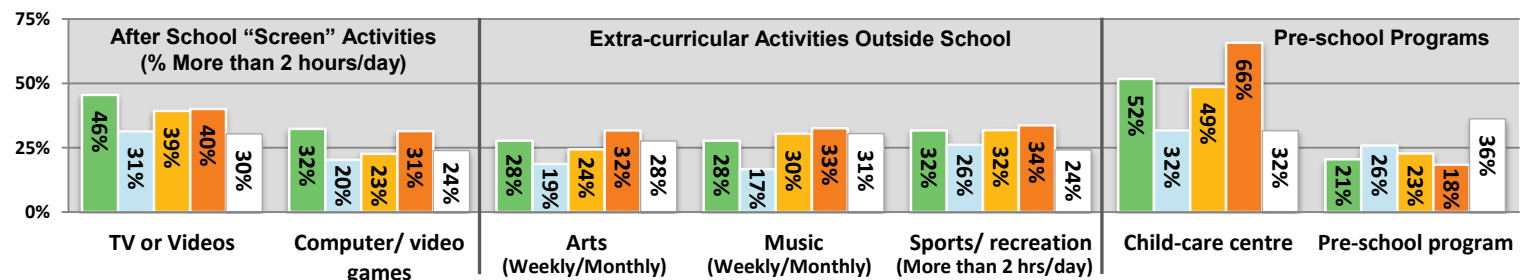


Activities and Opportunities Outside of School

Black students spent as or more time than others on screen activities. They were also more active in sports/recreation activities outside of school. Black students, except for Eastern African students, were much more likely to have attended a child-care centre rather than pre-school programs when they were young.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students, especially those with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents, were more likely to spend over 2 hours per day watching TV or videos and/or playing computer games;
- in contrast, Eastern African students were as or less likely than others to be engaged in the same amounts of screen activities;
- Black students were more actively involved in sports/recreation outside of school, except for Eastern African students who were as involved as others in sports but were much less involved in out-of-school arts and music activities;
- Black students, except for those of Eastern African descent, were more likely to have attended child care centres, but fewer Black students regardless of origin had attended pre-school programs.



Census Portraits: Black Students

Student Health and Wellness

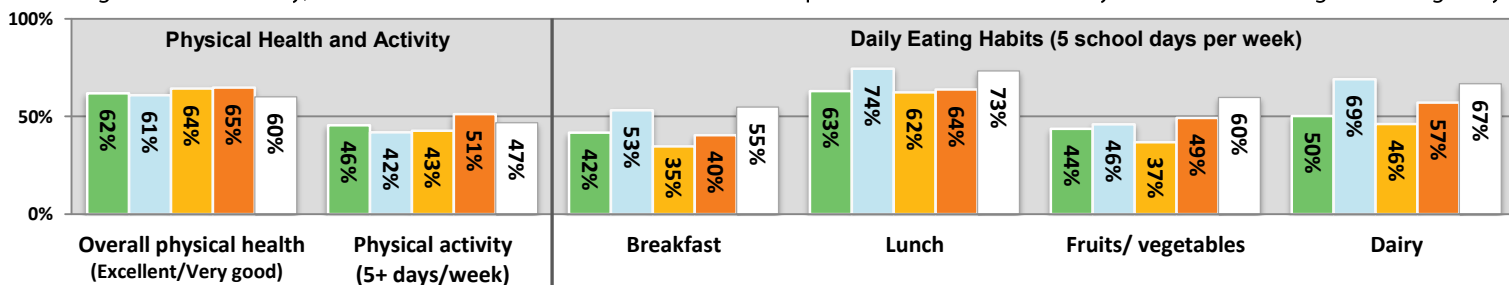
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Physical Health

Black students reported being as or more physically healthy, but as or less physically active than others. They were less likely to eat breakfast and lunch or have fruits, vegetables and dairy foods daily, with the exception of Eastern African students, who were as likely as others to have daily meals and regular intake of dairy foods.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- similar percentages of Black students reported their physical health being excellent or very good;
- those with Caribbean or Canadian-born parents were as likely to have daily physical activity, but those of Eastern and Western African origins were less likely;
- Black students, except for those of Eastern African background, were less likely to have breakfast and lunch or eat fruits and vegetables and dairy foods at least five school days a week;
- Eastern African students were as likely to have daily meals and dairy products but much less likely to eat fruits and vegetables regularly.

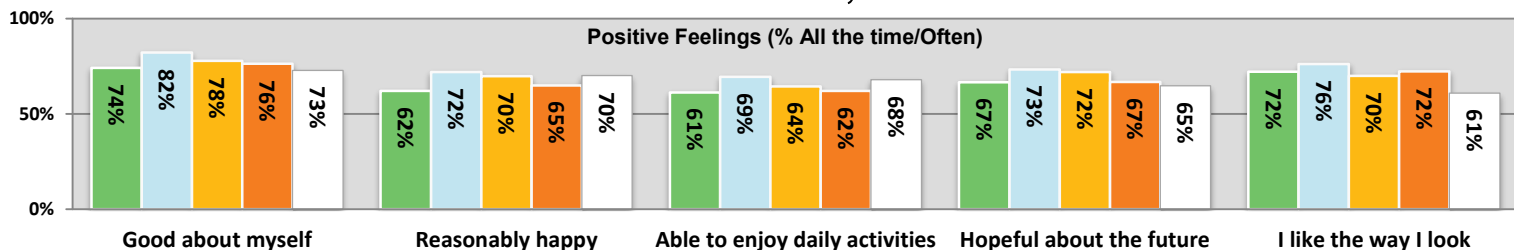


Social and Emotional Well-being

Black students seemed to feel more positive about themselves and to have experienced less emotional challenges, although those with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents tended to feel less happy. Black students generally worried more about family matters, and Eastern and Western African students also tended to worry more about their future and school work.

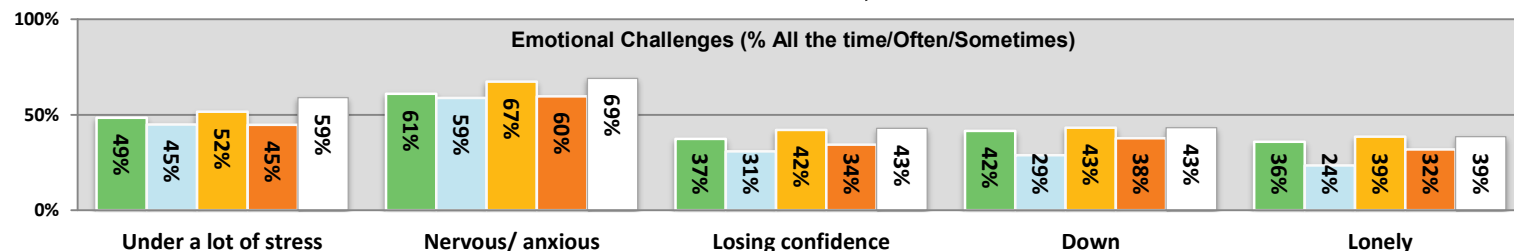
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents were as likely to feel good about themselves and hopeful about the future, but they seemed less happy or less able to enjoy daily activities;
- Eastern and Western African students felt more positive about their themselves and the future, and were as reasonably happy;
- Black students, regardless of origin, were more likely to like the way they look.



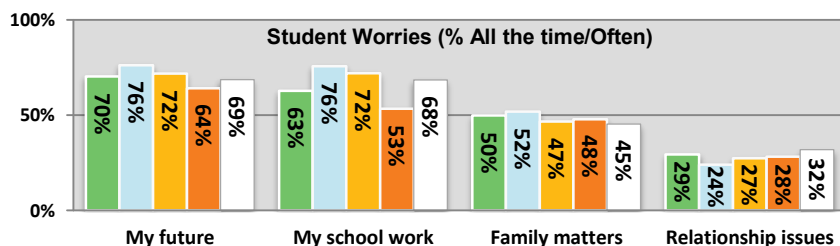
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students in general were less likely to report feeling stressed, nervous, anxious, lonely and down, or losing confidence in themselves;
- an exception was Western African students who were as likely to report feeling nervous or anxious, losing confidence, down, and lonely.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- higher percentages of Eastern and Western African students worried about their future and school work, while Black students with Canadian-born parents worried less;
- although Black students worried less about relationship issues, they worried more about family matters, especially among those from Eastern African and Caribbean backgrounds.



Census Portraits: Black Students

Self-Perceived Abilities and Academic Achievement

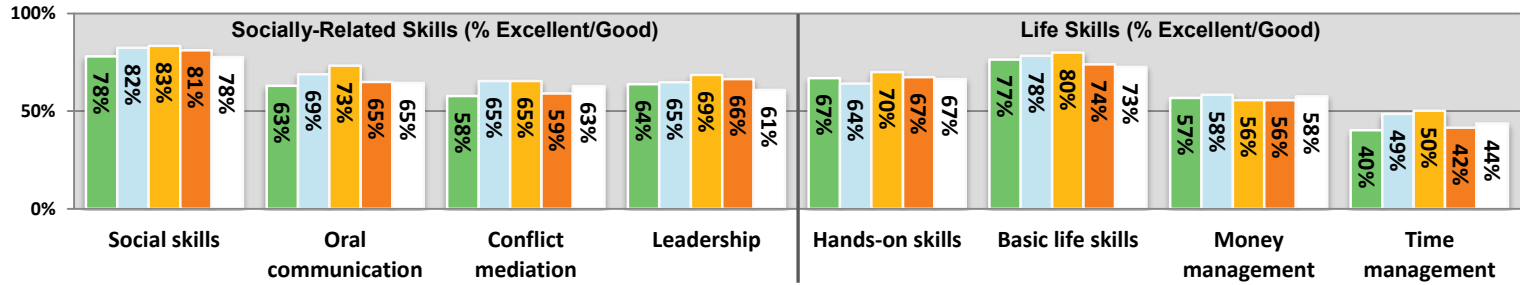
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Self-Perceived Abilities: Social Skills and Life Skills

Black students were as or more likely to rate themselves highly in socially-related skills and various life skills. Students from Caribbean backgrounds reported slightly lower self-ratings in relation to conflict mediation and time-management skills.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Black students, particularly those of Western African descent, were as or more likely to rate themselves excellent or good at social skills, oral communication, and leadership skills;
- students from Caribbean background reported lower self-ratings in relation to conflict mediation;
- Black students reported similar or higher self-ratings for their hands-on and basic life skills, as well as money- and time-management; the self-ratings among Western African students were even higher;
- Caribbean students rated themselves slightly lower in the area of time management.

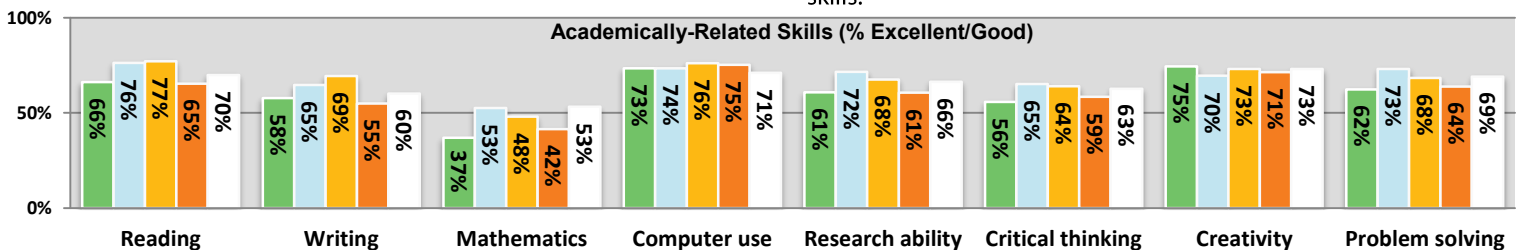


Self-Perceived Abilities: Academic Skills

Eastern and Western African students felt as or more confident in their academically-related skill areas. Students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents were less confident, especially in mathematics, research ability, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, while they did rate their creativity and computer skills higher than others.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Eastern and Western African students were as or more likely to rate themselves excellent or good in all academic areas, particularly reading, writing, and research;
- on the other hand, Caribbean and Canadian Black students were less likely to rate themselves highly in such areas as mathematics, reading, writing, research, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.



Academic Achievement (2011-12)

Black students tended to underperform academically, especially among those with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Eastern and Western African students performed slightly lower on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Grade 6 test in Reading and Writing, and much lower in Mathematics;
- Black students with Caribbean and Canadian-born parents underperformed on the EQAO Grade 6 test in all areas, particularly Mathematics;
- at the secondary school panel, Eastern and Western African students also performed somewhat lower on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) and in terms of Grade 10 credit accumulation;
- Caribbean and Canadian Black secondary school students lagged further behind in their Grade 10 achievement.

