

Census Portraits

Understanding Our Students' Backgrounds

Ethno-Racial Series: Latin American 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. 14/15-17



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

Students from Latin America (Central and South America as well as the Spanish-speaking Caribbean) are culturally and ethnically diverse depending on their countries of origin. Over the past six decades, there have been four major waves of immigration from Latin America to Canada.

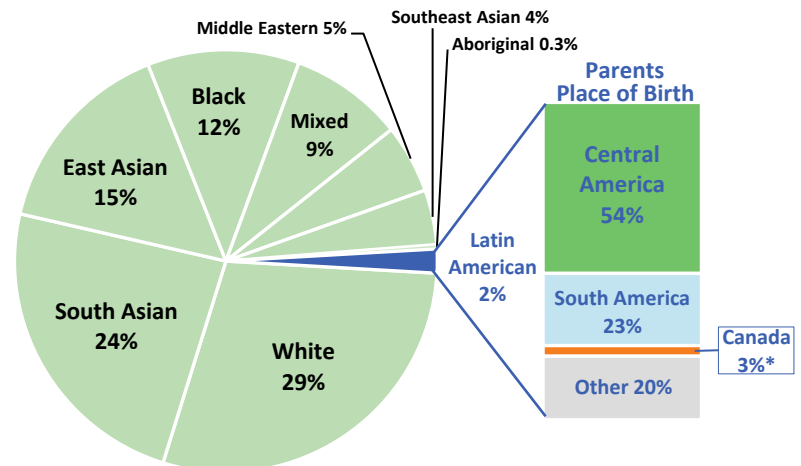
- The “first wave” occurred during the 1970s from South American countries like Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador, with many escaping political persecution associated with a series of coup d'états at that time.
- A larger “second wave” of immigrants from Central America came during the 1980s and 1990s, spurred by civil war in countries like El Salvador.
- During the 1990s, a “third wave” of immigration from Latin America was driven mainly by economic challenges, with large numbers of immigrants from Mexico, Colombia, and Peru.
- In the last decade, both economic and political changes in Argentina, Cuba, and Venezuela have led to a substantial increase in the number of immigrants to Canada. Unlike previous waves however, which primarily involved refugees, this “fourth wave” of immigrants includes larger numbers of professional “economic class” immigrants, which is beginning to shift the economic characteristics of Latin American immigrants as a group.

While most of Canada’s Latino population is foreign-born (74%), there is a growing population of second (18%) and even third (8%) generation Canadian-born Latinos. It is estimated that one-third of Latin American immigrants have settled in Toronto.

Ethno-Racial and Family Background

Latin American students were the second smallest visible minority group in the TDSB. Just over one-third (36%) had parents with university degrees, and about two-thirds (65%) of the families were in the two lowest income brackets.

- Self-identified Latin American students made up 2% (about 4,700 students) of the Toronto District School Board’s (TDSB) population.
- Over half of Latin American students had parents originating from Central America (54%) and South America (23%). Just 3% had one or both parents born in Canada while 20% had their parents emigrating from other countries.
- Over half of students with parents from Central America (54%) and 64% of students with parents from South America were born in Canada.



*Canada includes one or both parents born in Canada

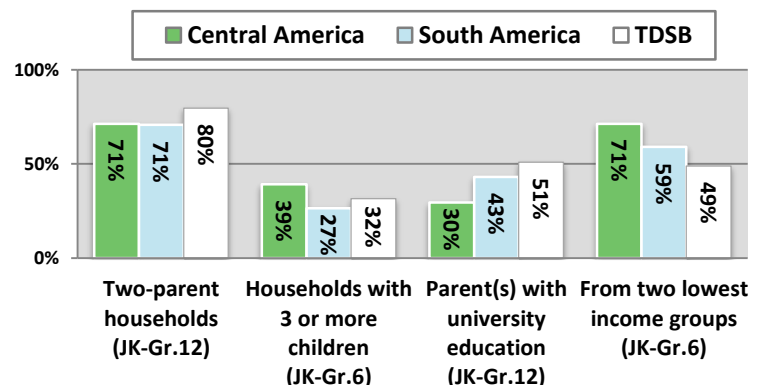
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Central and South American students were less likely to live with two parents, including those living with step-parents or living half-time with each parent (71% in each group);
- Central American students were more likely to have multiple siblings, South American students were less likely;
- both Central and South American parents were less likely to have university degrees;
- more Latin American 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), particularly those with Central American background.

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

Compared to the general TDSB student population, Latin American students were more likely to agree that learning more about their own culture would make their learning more interesting (73%), help them enjoy school more (63%), and help them do better in school (51%).

Family Background



Census Portraits: Latin American Students

Life in School

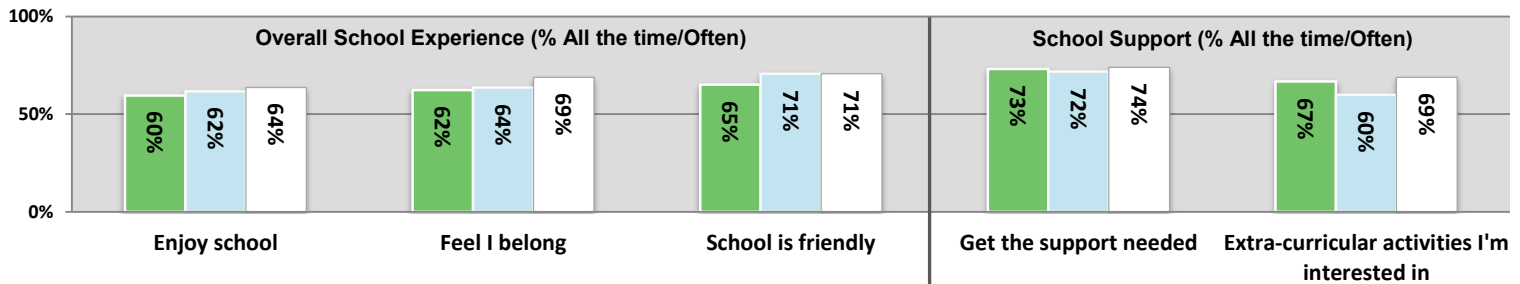
■ Central America ■ South America □ TDSB

Student Perceptions of School

Latin American students' perceptions of their overall school experience and school support were mixed.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- while Central American students were as likely to report enjoying school and having the support needed and the extra-curricular activities they were interested in from school, they were less likely to feel they belonged in school or that school was a friendly place;
- on the other hand, while South American students were as likely to report enjoying school, feeling school was a friendly place and that they received support from school, they were less likely to feel the sense of belonging to school, and that the school offered the extra-curricular activities they were interested in.

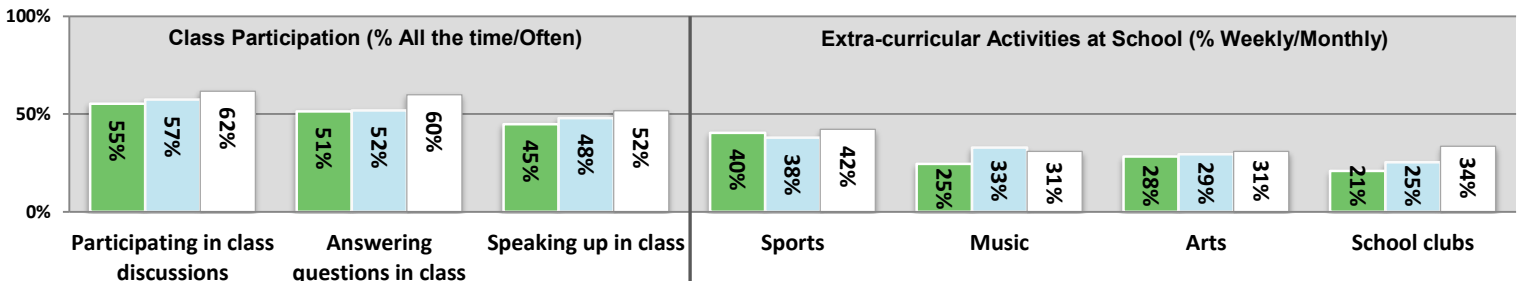


Student Participation at School

Latin American students felt less comfortable participating in class than the general TDSB student population. They were as active as others in sports and arts activities, but less in school clubs.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- both Central and South American students felt less comfortable participating, answering questions, and speaking up in class;
- but they were as likely to participate in extra-curricular activities involving sports or arts;
- Central American students were less likely to take part in music, whereas South American students were as likely;
- both Central and South American students were less likely to join school clubs.

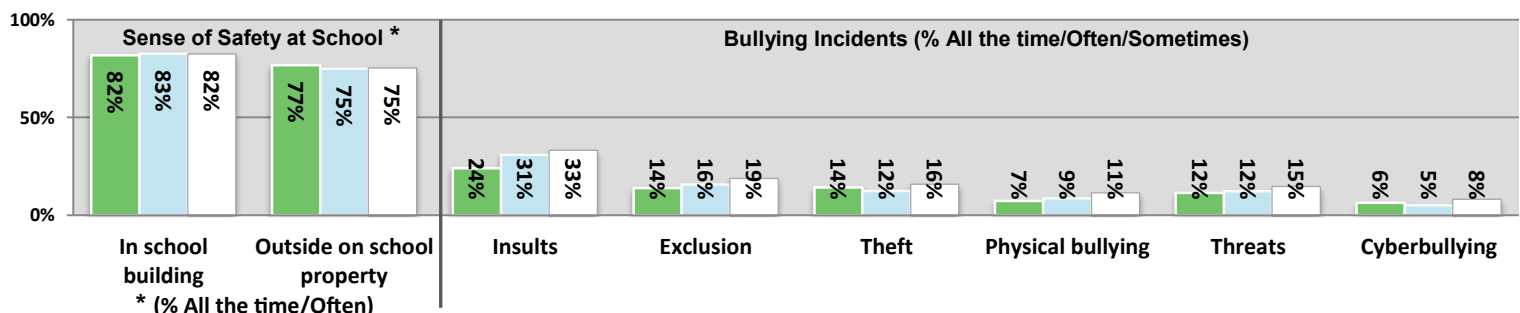


Safety at School

Latin American students felt as safe as others in school and were as or less likely to experience bullying incidents.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students felt as safe as others inside the school building and outside on school property;
- they did not experience more bullying incidents; Central American students indeed reported lower levels of insults and exclusion.



Census Portraits: Latin American Students

Life in School (Cont'd)

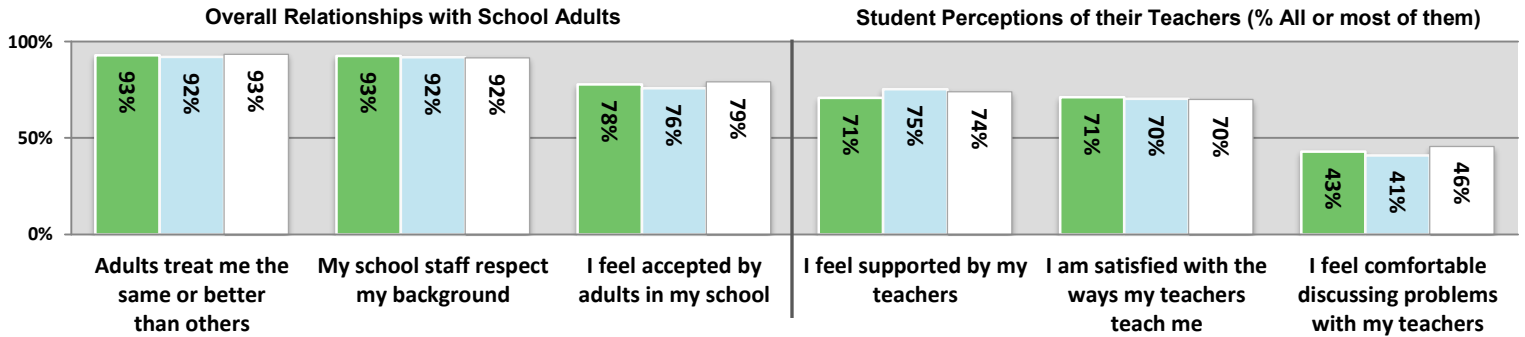
■ Central America ■ South America □ TDSB

Relationships with School Adults

Latin American students generally felt as positive as others about their school adults and teachers, but those from South American backgrounds felt less comfortable discussing problems with their teachers. Latin American students were more likely to have an adult whom they could turn to for personal support.

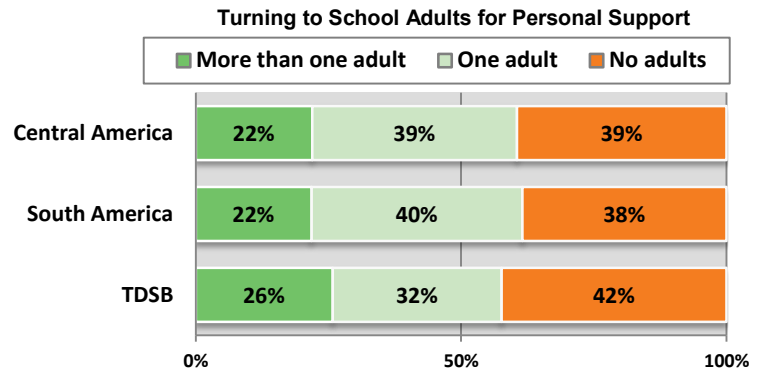
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students felt equally positive about their school adults in terms of how they were being treated, their background being respected, and feeling accepted;
- Latin American students generally felt supported by their teachers and satisfied with the ways they were taught, but students of South American descent felt less comfortable discussing problems with their teachers.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students were more likely to have one adult who they could turn to for personal support, help or advice, but less likely to have more than one adult;
- similar proportions of Latin American students reported having no adults that they felt comfortable to turn to.

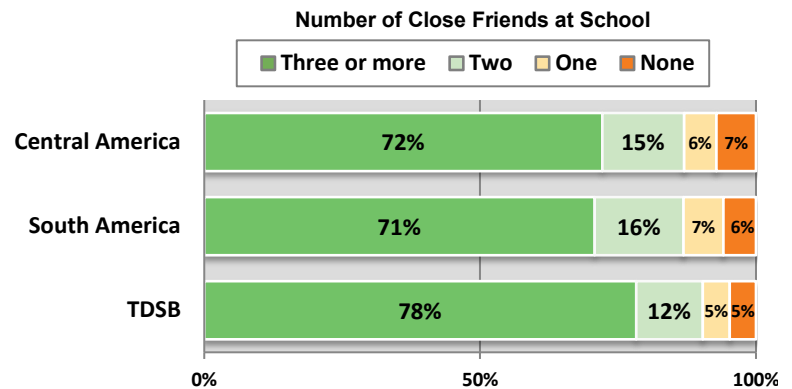
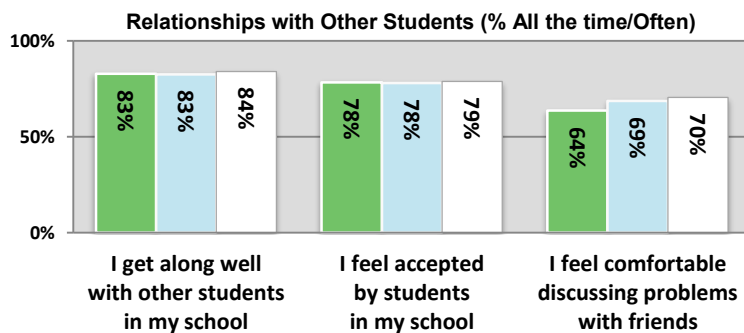


Relationships with Peers

Latin American students generally felt as positive as others about their peer relationships at school, however those with Central American backgrounds felt less comfortable discussing problems with their friends. Fewer Latin American students had three or more close friends at school, but they were as likely to have one or two close friends at school.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students felt as positive about their relationships with other students in terms of getting along well and feeling accepted by their peers;
- Central American students were less likely than South American students to feel comfortable discussing problems with their friends;
- Latin American students were as likely to have one or two close friends at school, but less likely to have three or more friends.



Census Portraits: Latin American Students

Life Outside of School

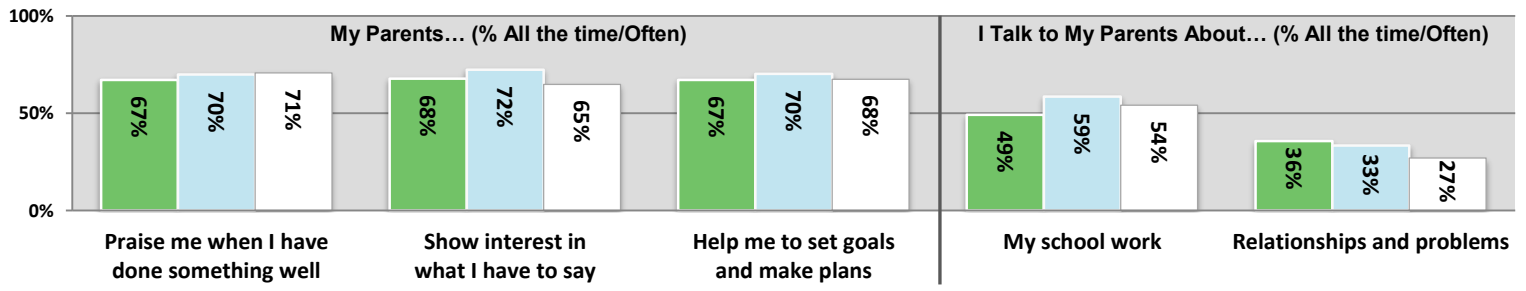
■ Central America ■ South America □ TDSB

Relationships with Parents

Latin American students were as or more likely to report having positive relationships with their parents. The only exception was that Central American students were less likely to talk with their parents about school work.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American 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 make plans or set goals;
- while Central American students were less likely to report talking with their parents about school work, South American students were more likely;
- both Central and South American students were more likely to talk with their parents about relationships and problems.

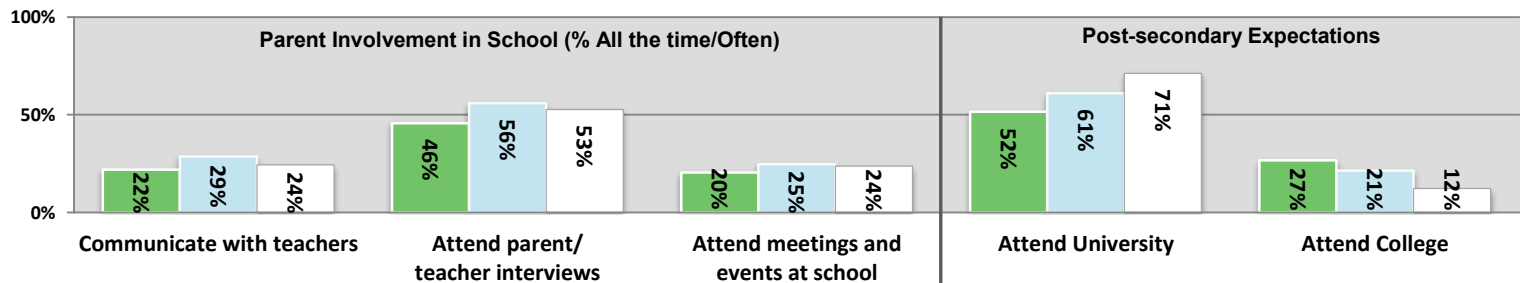


Parent Involvement and Expectations

Comparatively, South American parents were more involved than their Central American counterparts at their child's school. Both groups of parents were less likely to expect their children to attend university and more likely to expect them to attend college.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Central American parents were as likely to communicate with teachers and attend school meetings or events, but were less likely to attend parent/teacher interviews;
- South American parents were more likely to communicate with teachers, and as likely to attend parent interviews and school events;
- Latin American parents, especially the Central American, were much less likely to expect their child to attend university.

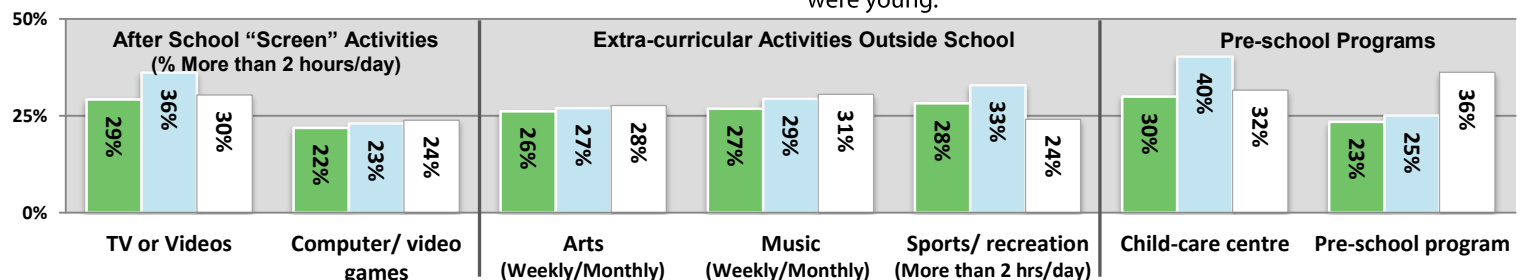


Activities and Opportunities Outside of School

South American students spent more time than others watching TV and participating in sports outside of school. When young, they were more likely to have attended child-care centres, but they, along with Central American students, were less likely to have participated in pre-school programs.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- South American students were more likely to spend over 2 hours per day watching TV or videos;
- Latin American students were as likely to play computer games, and participate in music and arts activities outside of school, but were more likely to be involved in sports and recreation activities;
- a higher proportion of South American students had attended a child-care centre, but both they and Central American students were less likely to have attended pre-school programs when they were young.



Census Portraits: Latin American Students

Student Health and Wellness

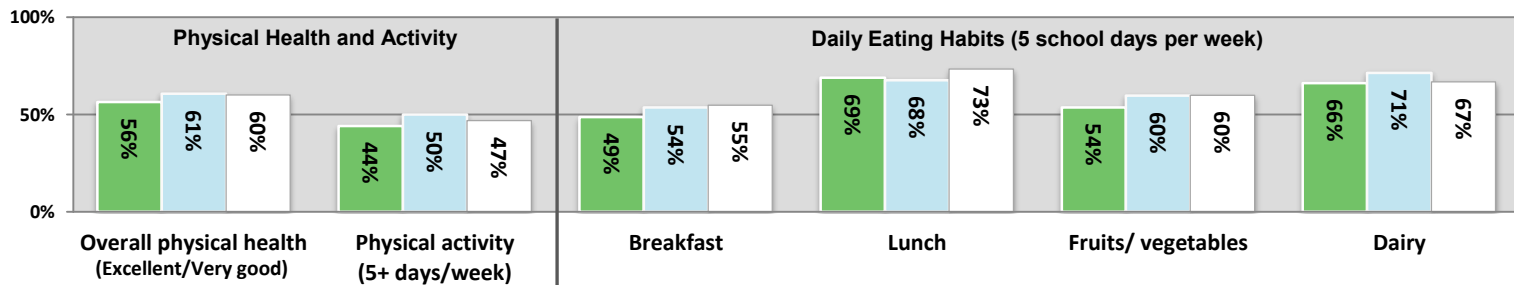
■ Central America ■ South America □ TDSB

Physical Health

Latin American students reported being as physically healthy and active as other students. But they were less likely to have lunch, and those of Central American descent were also less likely to eat breakfast, fruits and vegetables daily.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students reported similar levels of physical health and daily physical activities;
- fewer Central American students ate breakfast five days a week or had fruits and vegetables daily;
- South American students were less likely to have lunch, but were more likely to have dairy products on a regular basis.

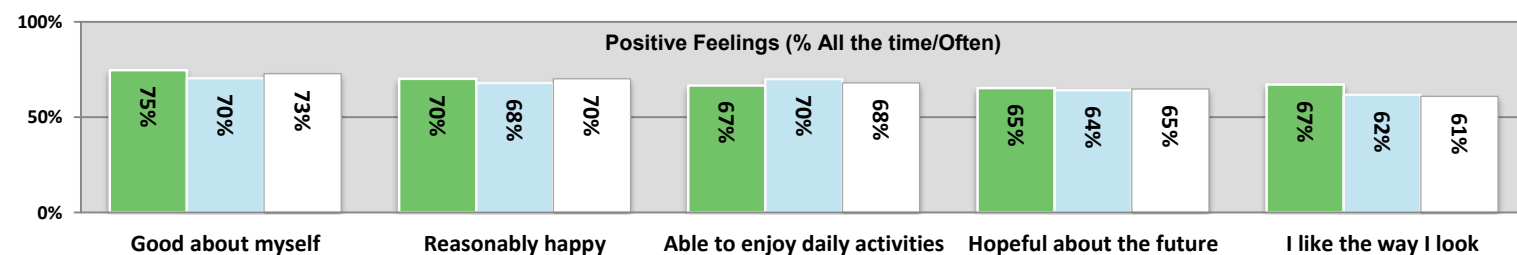


Social and Emotional Well-being

Latin American students were as likely as others to feel positive about themselves and were as or less likely to experience emotional challenges. However, they were generally more worried about their future, school work, family matters, and relationship issues.

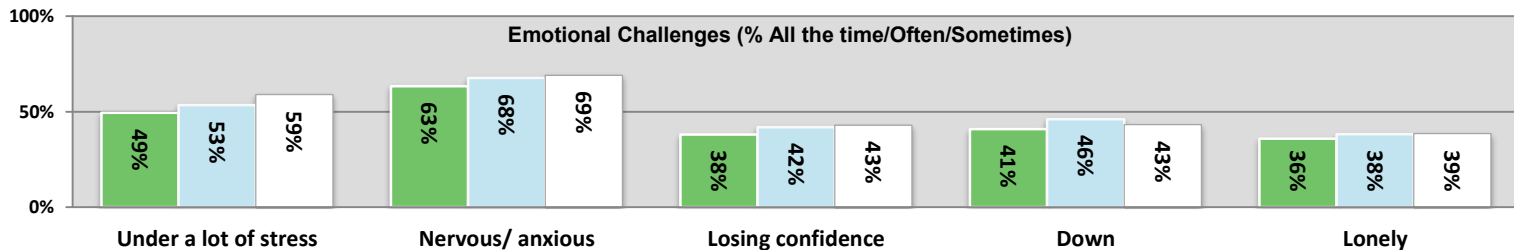
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students were as likely to feel positive about themselves, to enjoy daily activities, and to be hopeful about the future;
- Central American students were more likely to like the way they look.



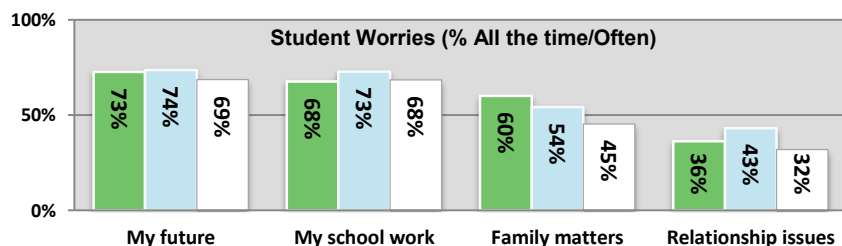
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Central American students were less likely to report having experienced emotional challenges, especially in terms of stress, nervousness, anxiety, or losing confidence;
- South American students were as likely to have experienced various emotional challenges, but less likely to be under a lot of stress.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Central American students were as worried about their school work, somewhat more worried about their future and relationship issues, but much more worried about family matters;
- higher percentages of South American students worried about all four areas including their future, school work, family matters, and relationship issues.



Census Portraits: Latin American Students

Self-Perceived Abilities and Academic Achievement

■ Central America ■ South America □ TDSB

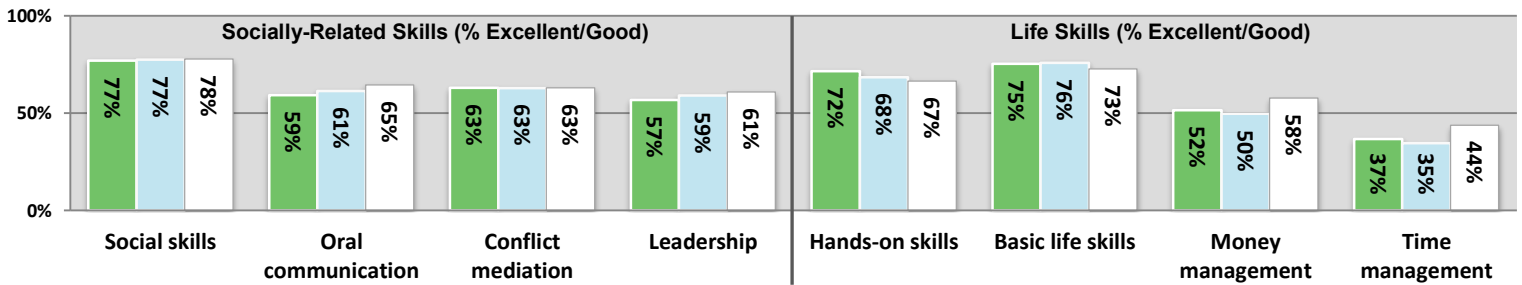
Self-Perceived Abilities: Social Skills and Life Skills

In general, Latin American students rated themselves similarly to others in socially-related skills and basic life skills, but lower in time and money-management skills.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students were as likely to rate themselves excellent or good at social skills, conflict mediation, leadership skills, and basic life skills;
- Central American students were, however, less likely to rate

- themselves highly in oral communication skills and more likely in hands-on skills;
- both Central and South American students rated themselves much lower in terms of money- and time-management skills.



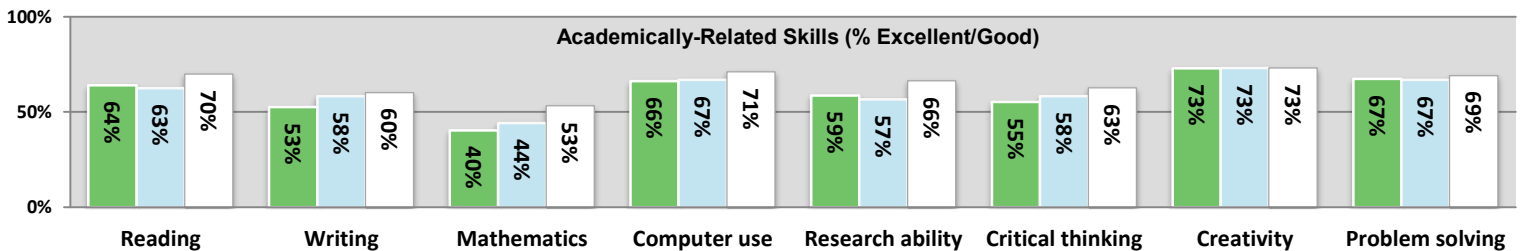
Self-Perceived Abilities: Academic Skills

Latin American students seemed less confident than others in most academically-related skill areas, except in creativity and problem solving.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students were much less confident about their reading, computer use, research, and critical-thinking abilities; they were the least confident about their mathematics skills;
- while South American students were as likely to rate themselves as

- excellent or good at writing skills, Central American students were less likely;
- Latin American students were as likely to rate themselves highly in creativity and problem-solving skills.



Academic Achievement (2011-12)

Latin American students generally under-performed academically, with the exception of South American students who performed as well as others on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Latin American students performed significantly lower on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Grade 6 tests in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics;
- while South American students were as successful on the OSSLT,

- fewer had earned 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10;
- Central American students were much less successful in secondary school in terms of both the OSSLT and Grade 10 credit accumulation.

