

Census Portraits

Understanding Our Students' Backgrounds

Ethno-Racial
Series

Gender

Sexual
Orientation

Socio-
economic
Status

Students
with
Special
Education
Needs

Ethno-Racial Series:

Southeast Asian 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. 14/15-20



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

Southeast Asian immigration to Canada is a relatively new phenomenon.

- The first wave was sparked by the fleeing of many South Vietnamese business and government officials in early 1975 just before the fall of South Vietnam to the Communist North Vietnam.
- The next wave began in the late 1970s after the Vietnam War and continued until 1981 with a large influx of refugees, commonly known as the "boat people", arriving from Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Many of these young refugees are now parents with children born in Canada.
- The 1980s witnessed only the "continuous flow wave" through family-reunification, and after 1991, immigration from these countries declined as economic conditions in Southeast Asia began to improve. During the 1980s, Canada also saw an influx of Filipino contract workers, many who found work as live-in caregivers and later became landed immigrants under the *Live-In Caregiver Program*.
- During the 1990s, more Filipinos came as families and independents instead of being sponsored by family or being recruited as contract workers. From 1990 onwards, there has been a steady flow of Filipinos entering Canada, particularly Toronto, with about 10,000 to 20,000 arriving each year. As of 2008, the Philippines surpassed China as Canada's leading source of immigrants.

Ethno-Racial and Family Background

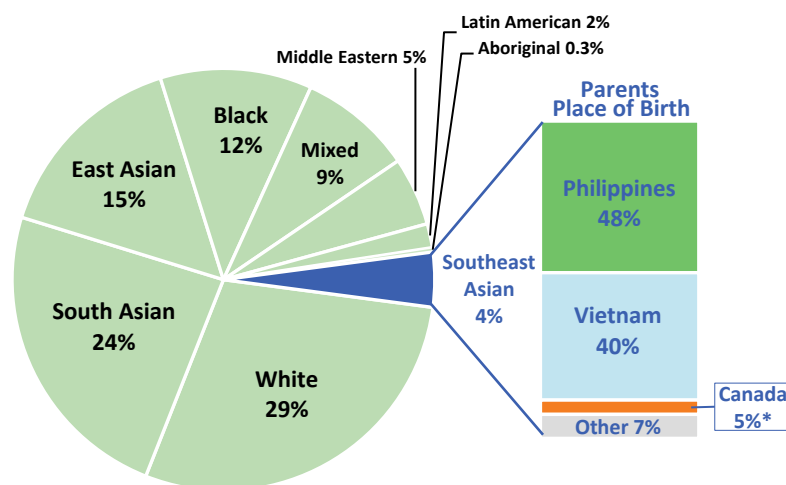
Southeast Asian students were among the smaller visible minority groups in the TDSB. Over one-third (35%) of these students had parents with university degrees, and nearly 60% of the families were in the two lowest income brackets.

Self-identified Southeast Asian students made up 4% (about 10,700 students) of the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) population.

- About 40% of Southeast Asian students had parents who originated from Vietnam, and 48% from the Philippines. Just 5% had one or both parents born in Canada, while 7% had parents who emigrated from other countries.
- Most (88%) of the students with parents from Vietnam and 46% of students with parents from the Philippines were born in Canada.

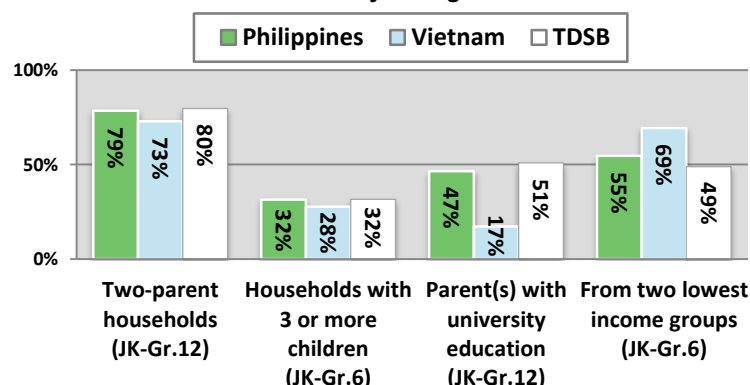
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Filipino students were as likely to live with two parents (79%), including those living with step-parents or living half-time with each parent, whereas Vietnamese students were less likely (73%).
- both Filipino and Vietnamese students were as likely to have multiple siblings;
- Filipino parents were as likely to have university degrees, whereas Vietnamese parents were significantly less likely;
- the majority of Southeast Asian students, particularly those of Vietnamese origin, came from the two lowest income groups (i.e., with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 or between \$30,000-\$49,999).



*Canada includes one or both parents born in Canada

Family Background



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

Compared to the general TDSB student population, students of Filipino descent were more likely to agree that learning more about their own culture would make their learning more interesting (76%), help them enjoy school more (67%), and help them do better in school (60%). Students of Vietnamese origin were less likely to agree with any of these statements; about 60% said it would make their learning more interesting, 43% said it would help them enjoy school more, and only 36% said it would help them do better in school.

Census Portraits: Southeast Asian Students

Life in School

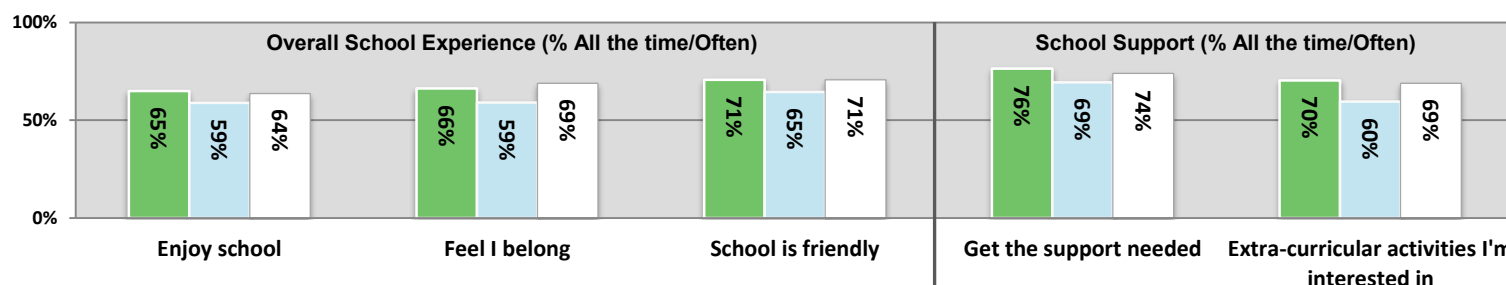
■ Philippines ■ Vietnam □ TDSB

Student Perceptions of School

Filipino students were as satisfied as the general TDSB population about their overall school experience and the support they received from school. Vietnamese students were, however, less satisfied.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Filipino students were as likely to feel that they enjoyed or belonged in school, that school was a friendly place, that they received the support they needed from school, or that there were extra-curricular activities they were interested in;
- on the other hand, students of Vietnamese descent were less likely to feel positive about their overall school experience or the support and extra-curricular activities offered at their school.

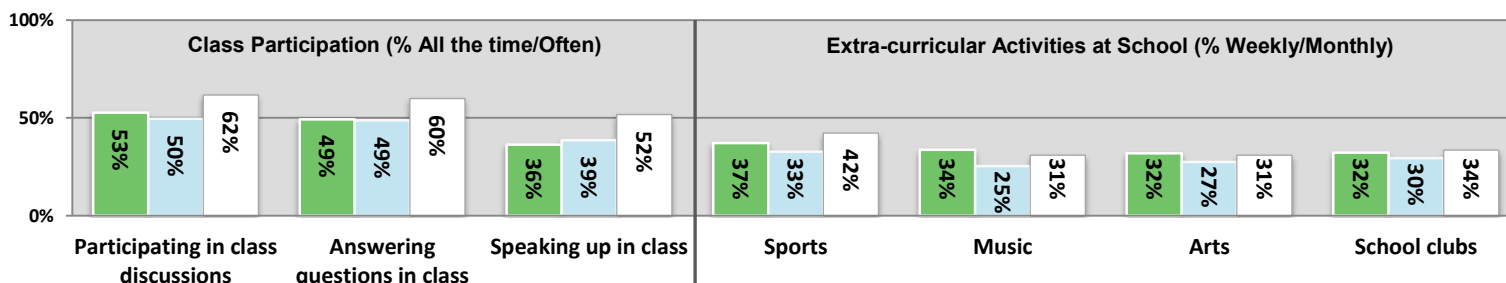


Student Participation at School

Southeast Asian students felt less comfortable participating in class compared to others. Vietnamese students were less involved in extra-curricular activities, particularly sports. Filipino students were also less active in school sports, but were as active as others in arts, music, and school clubs.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students felt less comfortable participating in class discussions, answering questions, and speaking up in class;
- while Filipino students were as likely to participate in music, arts, and school clubs at school, Vietnamese students were less involved in extra-curricular activities at school;
- both Filipino and Vietnamese students were less active in school sports.

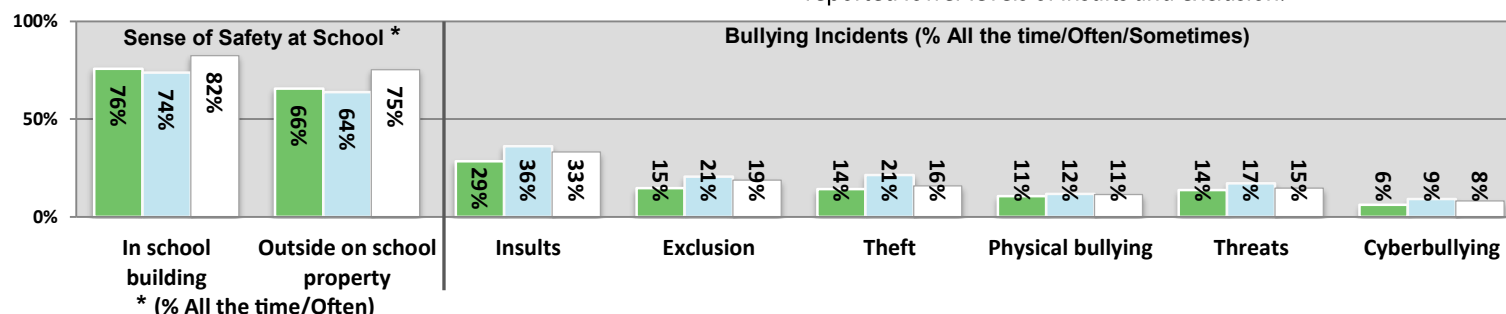


Safety at School

Southeast Asian students felt significantly less safe than others in school, although they did not experience higher levels of bullying incidents.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students felt less safe than others inside the school building and outside on school property;
- Southeast Asian students in general did not experience more bullying incidents than others; Filipino students particularly reported lower levels of insults and exclusion.



Census Portraits: Southeast Asian Students

Life in School (Cont'd)

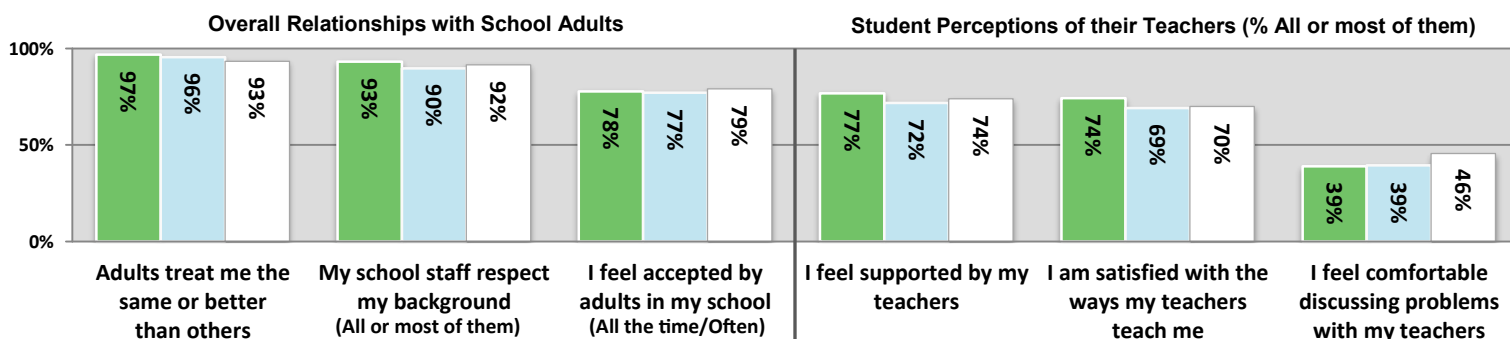
■ Philippines ■ Vietnam □ TDSB

Relationships with School Adults

Southeast Asian students generally felt as or more positive than others about their school adults, but felt less comfortable discussing problems with their teachers. Students of Vietnamese descent were much less likely to have an adult(s) whom they could turn to for personal support.

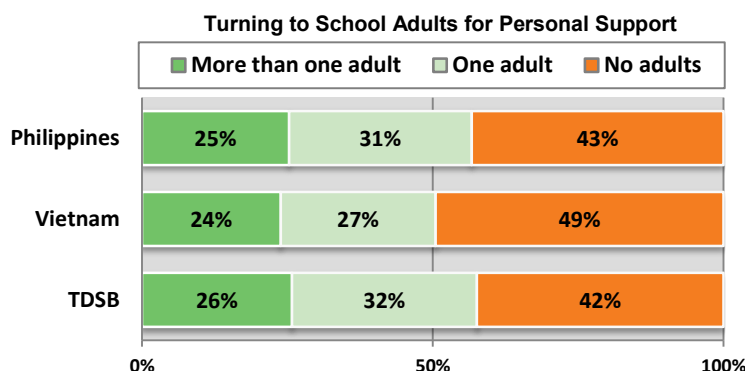
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students felt as or more positive about their school adults in terms of how they were treated, their background being respected, and feeling accepted;
- Filipino and Vietnamese students generally felt supported by their teachers and satisfied with the ways they were taught, but both groups of students felt less comfortable discussing problems with their teachers.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Filipino students were as likely to have at least one adult who they could turn to for personal support, help, or advice;
- considerably fewer Vietnamese students reported having a school adult(s) who they felt comfortable to turn to.

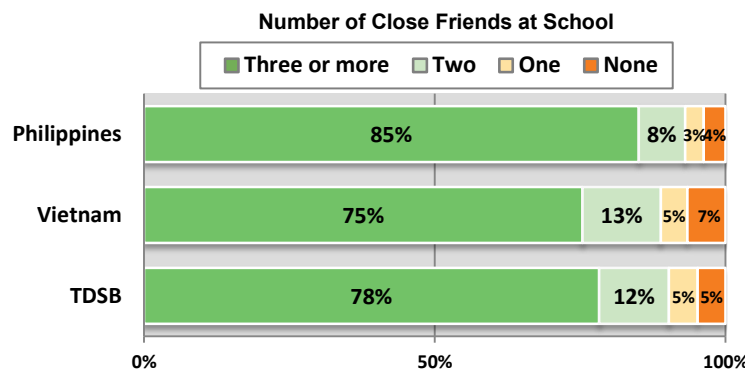
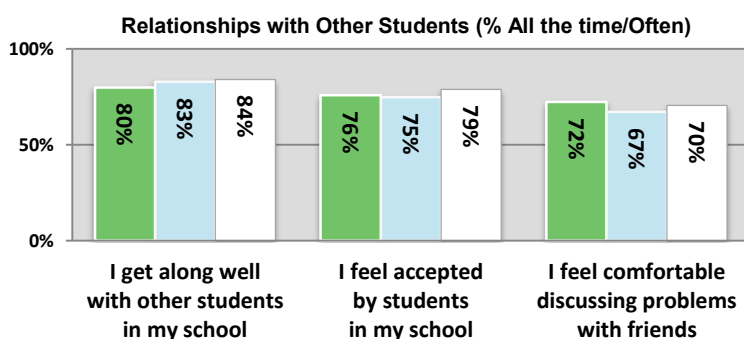


Relationships with Peers

Southeast Asian students generally felt as positive as others about their peer relationships at school. Filipino students felt more comfortable than Vietnamese students discussing problems with their friends. Filipino students were indeed more likely than others to have many close friends at school.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students felt as positive about their relationships with other students in terms of getting along well and feeling accepted by their peers;
- Vietnamese students were less likely than Filipino students to feel comfortable discussing problems with their friends;
- Vietnamese students were as likely to have one or more close friends at school, whereas Filipino students were more likely to have three or more friends.



Census Portraits: Southeast Asian Students

Life Outside of School

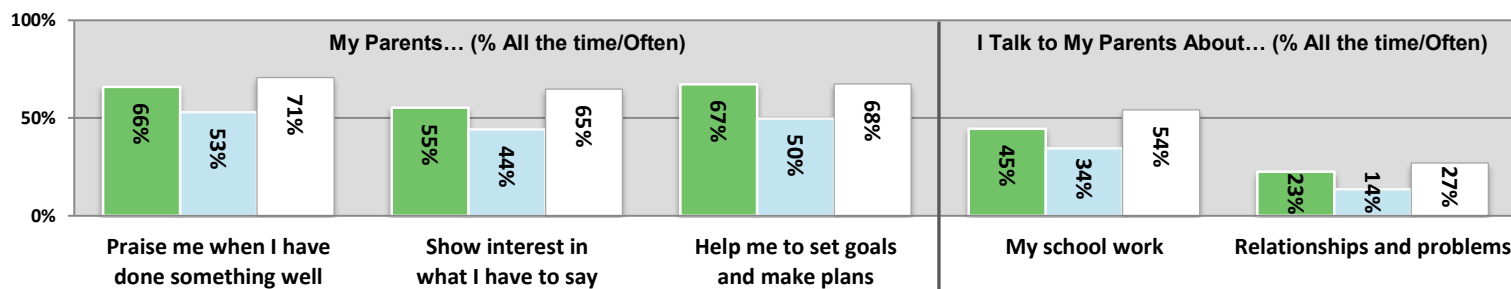
■ Philippines ■ Vietnam □ TDSB

Relationships with Parents

Southeast Asian students, particularly Vietnamese students, reported significantly less positive relationships with their parents.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- fewer Filipino students reported that their parents often praised them when they had done well or showed interest in what they had to say, but were as likely to report that their parents helped them make plans or set goals; Filipino students were also less likely to talk with their parents, particularly about their school work;
- Vietnamese students were considerably less likely to report that their parents praised them, showed interest in what they had to say, helped them set goals or make plans, or that they talked with their parents about school work, relationships, and problems.

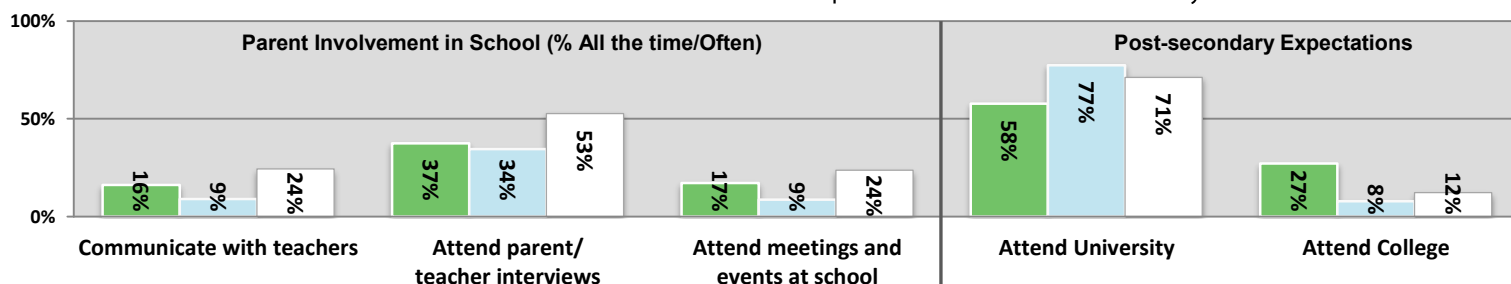


Parent Involvement and Expectations

Southeast Asian parents were less involved than others at their child's school. Regarding post-secondary expectations, Vietnamese parents were more likely to expect their children to attend university, whereas Filipino parents were much less likely.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian parents were much less likely to attend parent/teacher interviews at school, to communicate with teachers, or attend meetings and events at school;
- Filipino parents were less likely to expect their child to attend university, and were much more likely to expect their child to attend college; in contrast, Vietnamese parents were more likely to expect their child to attend university.

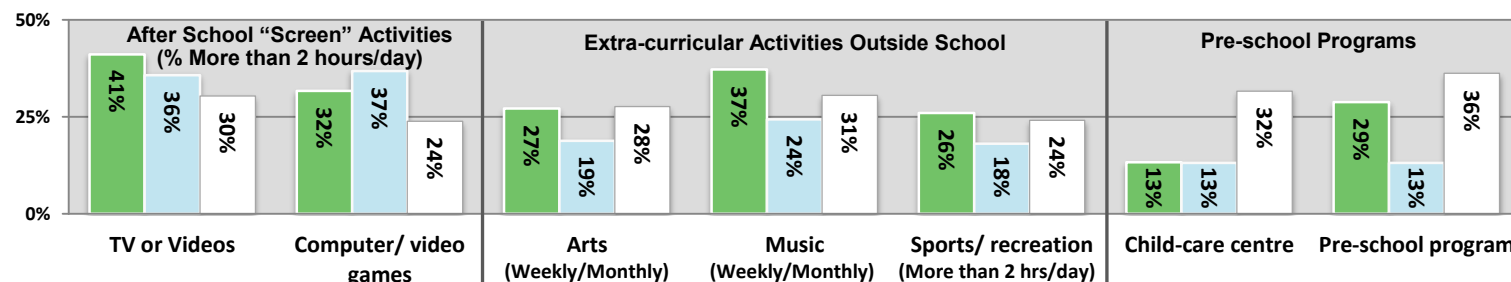


Activities and Opportunities Outside of School

Southeast Asian students spent more time than others on screen activities. While Filipino students were more likely than others to participate in music activities outside of school, Vietnamese students were less involved in out-of-school activities. Southeast Asian students were also less likely to have attended child-care centres and pre-school programs when they were young.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students were more likely to spend over 2 hours daily watching TV or videos, and playing computer or video games;
- Filipino students were more likely to participate in music, and as likely in arts or sports and recreation activities outside of school;
- Vietnamese students were less likely to participate in any of these activities;
- Southeast Asian students were less likely to have attended a child-care centre or pre-school programs when they were young.



Student Health and Wellness

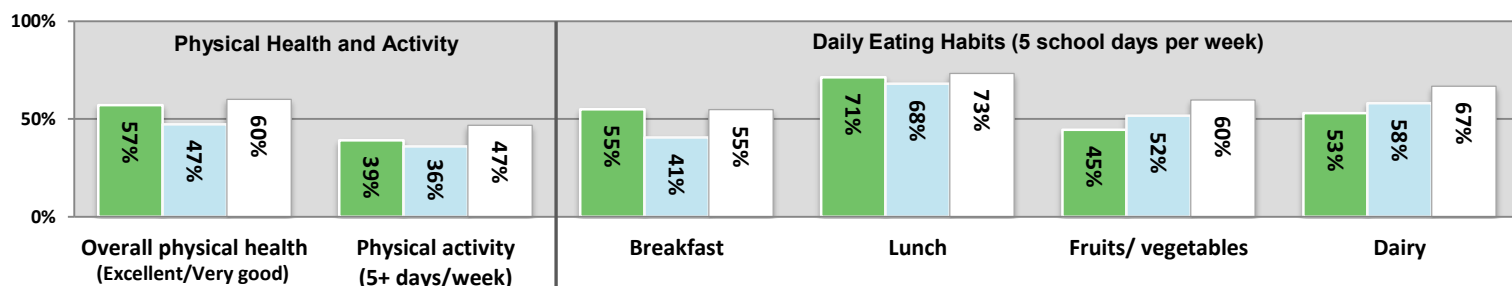
■ Philippines ■ Vietnam ■ TDSB

Physical Health

Southeast Asian students reported being less physically healthy and active than other students. In terms of eating habits, Vietnamese students were much less likely than others to eat breakfast or lunch five days a week. Generally, Southeast Asian students were less likely to have regular intake of fruits, vegetables, and dairy products.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Filipino students reported slightly lower levels of physical health, whereas Vietnamese students reported much lower levels;
- both groups reported lower levels of daily physical activities;
- Vietnamese students were less likely to eat breakfast or lunch daily, or to have fruits, vegetables, and dairy products regularly;
- Filipino students were as likely to have breakfast and lunch but less likely to have fruit, vegetables, and dairy products daily.

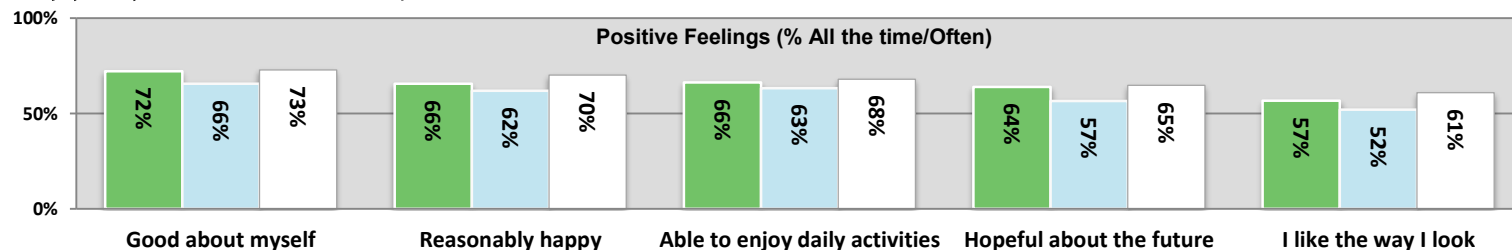


Social and Emotional Well-being

Compared to others, Filipino students were as, but Vietnamese students were less, likely to feel positive about themselves; both groups were more likely to experience emotional challenges, and Vietnamese students seemed more worried about their future, school work, and family matters.

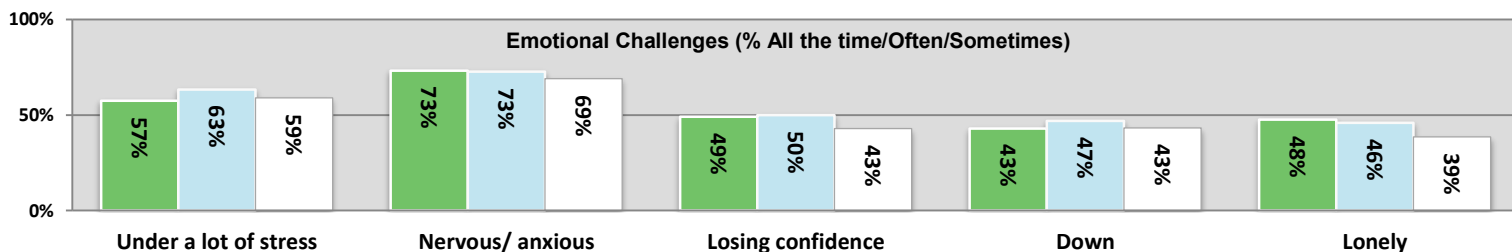
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Filipino students were as likely to feel positive about themselves, to enjoy daily activities and to be hopeful about the future, whereas Vietnamese students were much less likely to feel this way all the time or often.



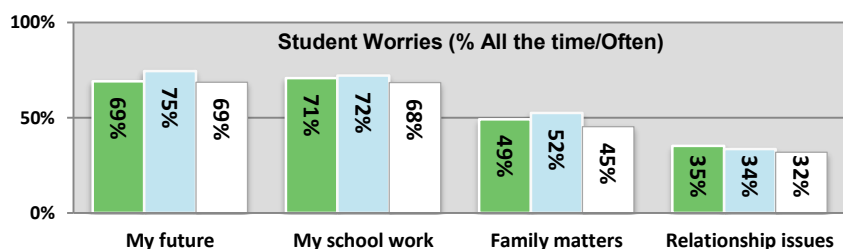
Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Vietnamese students reported that they were more often under a lot of stress, nervous and anxious, losing confidence in themselves, or feeling lonely or down;
- Filipino students were as likely to report feeling stressed or down, but were more likely to report having experienced other emotional challenges.



Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- higher percentages of Vietnamese students worried about their future, school work, and family matters;
- Filipino students were as likely to worry about their future or school work, but more likely to worry about family matters.



Census Portraits: Southeast Asian Students

Self-Perceived Abilities and Academic Achievement

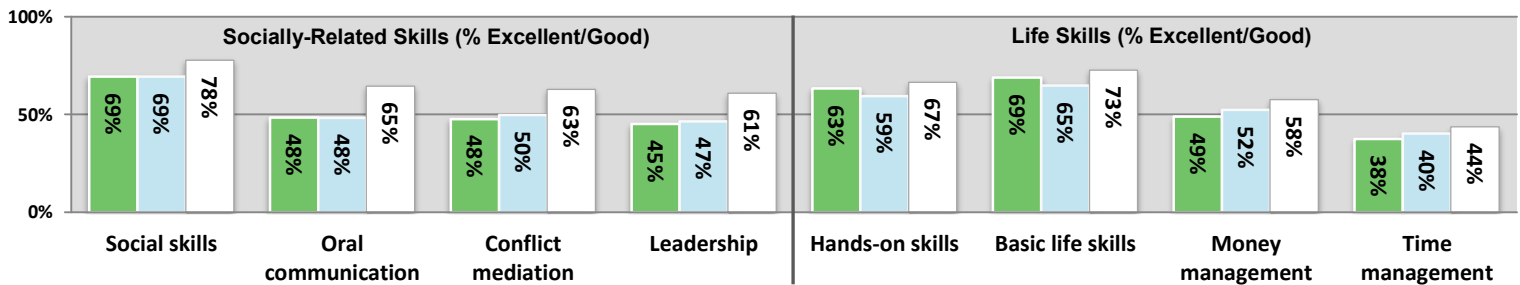
■ Philippines ■ Vietnam ■ TDSB

Self-Perceived Abilities: Social Skills and Life Skills

Southeast Asian students rated themselves lower than others in their socially-related skills and various life skills.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students were much less likely to rate themselves excellent or good at social skills, oral communication, conflict mediation, leadership skills, and basic life skills;
- both groups, particularly Filipino students, rated themselves lower in money- and time-management skills;
- Vietnamese students were less likely to rate themselves highly in hands-on and basic life skills.

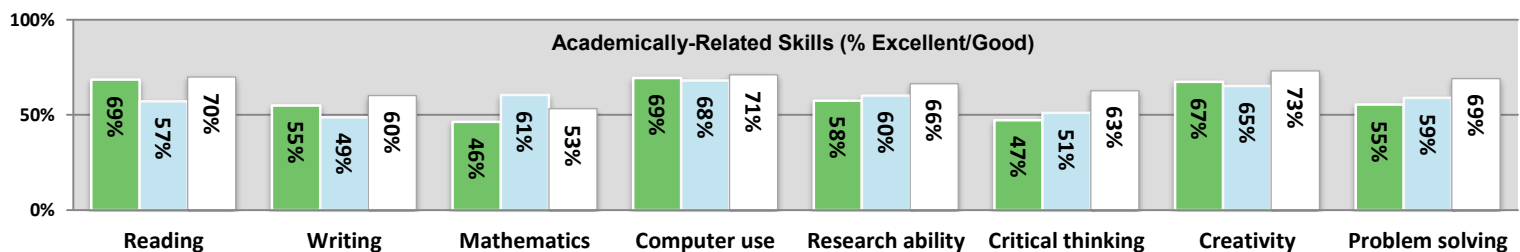


Self-Perceived Abilities: Academic Skills

Southeast Asian students were less confident than others in most academically-related skill areas.

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Southeast Asian students were much less confident about their writing, research, critical-thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities, but were as likely to rate themselves as excellent or good at computer use skills;
- Filipino students were as likely to rate themselves well in reading, whereas Vietnamese students were significantly less likely;
- Vietnamese students were more likely to rate themselves highly in mathematics, whereas Filipino students were much less likely.



Academic Achievement (2011-12)

Southeast Asian students, particularly Vietnamese students, performed as well or better than the general TDSB population academically, with the exception of Filipino students with a lower success rate on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT).

Compared to the overall TDSB student population:

- Vietnamese students performed higher on the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Grade 6 tests in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics;
- Filipino students performed better in Writing, and similarly as other students in Reading and Mathematics;
- Filipino students were much less successful on the OSSLT, whereas Vietnamese students were more successful;
- a similar proportion of Filipino students earned 16 or more credits by the end of Grade 10, whereas a higher proportion of Vietnamese students did.

