

2022-23 INTERMEDIATE STUDENT VOICE SURVEY REPORT

April 2023

WE ALL BELONG



Prepared by

Equity, Inclusion & Diversity
Research Department
Upper Canada District School Board

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Message from Equity and Inclusion</i> | 4 |
| <i>Survey Highlights</i> | 5 |
| <i>Introduction</i> | 7 |
| <i>Objective</i> | 8 |
| <i>Background: Survey Pilot testing</i> | 9 |
| <i>Consultation & Development</i> | 10 |
| Table 1: Consultations with Stakeholders | 11 |
| <i>Survey Design</i> | 11 |
| Translation | 12 |
| Accessibility | 12 |
| Data Management: Access & Storage | 13 |
| <i>Survey Administration</i> | 13 |
| Communication | 13 |
| Consent | 13 |
| System Support & School Teams | 14 |
| Table 2: Communication Strategy & Data Collection Timeline | 14 |
| <i>Data Processing & Verification</i> | 15 |
| <i>Data Analysis</i> | 15 |
| Rounding | 15 |
| Multi-mentions | 15 |
| <i>Response Rates: Survey Population</i> | 16 |
| <i>How to Read & Interpret the Data Tables</i> | 17 |
| <i>Survey Results</i> | 17 |
| <i>Language(s) First Spoken</i> | 17 |
| <i>Indigenous Identity</i> | 19 |
| <i>Ethnic Origin</i> | 20 |
| <i>Status in Canada</i> | 22 |
| <i>Race</i> | 23 |
| <i>Religion or Spiritual Affiliation</i> | 24 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| <i>Gender Identity</i> | 25 |
| <i>Disability</i> | 26 |
| <i>Household Information: Socio-Economic Status</i> | 27 |
| Household Access..... | 27 |
| Family Structure | 28 |
| Homelessness | 29 |
| Education Background of Parent/Guardian | 30 |
| Employment Status of Parent/Guardian..... | 31 |
| <i>Student Experiences in School and Outside of School</i> | 32 |
| <i>Sense of Belonging</i> | 33 |
| Opinions of School | 33 |
| Opinions of Teachers/Staff | 34 |
| Experience of Discrimination | 35 |
| Student Feelings..... | 36 |
| Seeking Mental Health Support | 37 |
| Positive Self-Reflection..... | 37 |
| Learning About Gender, Diversity and Inclusion | 38 |
| <i>Learning Topics</i> | 39 |
| Participation in School Activities..... | 40 |
| Reason for School Absence(s) | 41 |
| <i>Learning Skills & Pathways</i> | 42 |
| Learning Skills | 42 |
| Preparedness for Secondary School | 43 |
| <i>Safety & Bullying</i> | 44 |
| Experience with Bullying | 44 |
| Feelings of Safety | 45 |
| <i>Methodological Considerations</i> | 46 |
| <i>Next Steps</i> | 47 |
| <i>References</i> | 49 |
| <i>Appendix</i> | 49 |

MESSAGE FROM EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Dear UCDSB community,

It is with great pleasure to announce that the Upper Canada District School Board is releasing the *2022-23 Intermediate Student Voice Survey Report*. As you know, our school board is committed to ensuring all students report that school is safe and inclusive, and positively influences their mental health, wellness and sense of belonging.

We would like to emphasize the importance of collecting identity-based data in our school system. Understanding the demographic makeup of our student population and their school experience, and how they are being served, will help us to reduce achievement gaps and improve learning outcomes for all students.

Hearing from our intermediate students is important. These young learners are in the transition years of their education as they carry with them the experiences of elementary while preparing academically and socially to join their peers in secondary school. We know grade 7 and 8 students have unique identities, experiences, educational and social-emotional needs separate from other grade levels. This is why it's essential to capture their voice.

We heard from intermediate students that the majority feel there is at least one caring adult at school. While there is work to be done, many of our students also report feeling their identity is welcome at school and that they can express their identity. Students report that teachers encourage students and many feel supported by their teachers. Students also report feeling safe at school and are interested in learning more about careers, Real-World Learning (RWL), and mental health and wellness.

Gathering demographic and climate school data allows us to celebrate the diversity of our school community and create inclusive learning spaces for all. By understanding the individual needs and experiences of our students, we can continue to build safe and inclusive learning environments, promoting equity and accountability in education.

This milestone report outlines specific, intentional actions we are taking to ensure that the voices of our students are included as the board plans meaningful next steps to make our schools better for all students. Together we can work towards ensuring that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed as 'we prepare all students for a successful life'.

Sincerely,



Marsha McNair
Superintendent of Equity, Inclusion &
Diversity



Dan McRae
Principal of Equity, Inclusion & Diversity

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

We heard from our students that there are encouraging and positive interactions occurring in our schools and there are strengths to be seen in students feeling safe and feeling there is a caring adult at school. This section provides survey highlights by focusing on student experiences at school and opportunities for growth and improvement.



2022-23 INTERMEDIATE STUDENT VOICE SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

2,363 students in Grades 7 & 8 completed the survey = 61% response rate.

Our Students



94%

speak English as their first language.

77%

say their identity is welcome at school & that they can express their identity often/all the time.

How students identify

7%

Identify as Indigenous, of that 5% identify as First Nations, 1% Métis and 1% Inuit.

- boy/man (47%)
- girl/woman (44%)
- non-binary/gender fluid (5%)



3/5



students report being hopeful about the future often/all the time.

Student Experiences in School

82%

always/often feel they have the same opportunities for a quality education as other students.

87%

of students say they have at least one caring adult at school.

12%

identify as a person with a disability.

65%

say they feel a sense of belonging at school often/all the time.

55%

say they often learn about the experiences of Indigenous Peoples.

49%

say they often learn about people of many races, cultures, and skin colours.

45%

of students say they often learn about mental health and wellness.

77%

of students feel accepted by all/most staff and adults in the school.

7/10 students feel safe in various locations throughout the school.

Learning Skills

Students want to learn more about :

- Careers (62%)
- Real-World Learning (52%)
- Academic Skill Preparedness (37%)



97% of students have access to the internet at home, 96% of students have access to computer at home.



73% say they feel welcome or comfortable at school.



49% of students are participating in extra-curricular activities at school often/all the time.



Opportunities for Growth & Improvement

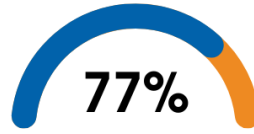


34% are comfortable asking for help with mental health, if they required mental health support.

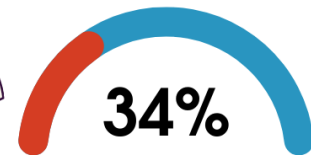


4.2/10

★★★★★☆☆☆☆☆
of students say they feel comfortable discussing a problem with all/most of their teachers or guidance counsellors.



of students feel tired in the morning often/all the time.



of student were absent from school because they were too tired.

Next Steps

| |
|--|
| Baseline Assessment / Data Analysis |
| Student Voice & Interests / Building Relationships |
| Action Plans: We Asked / You Said / We're Doing |
| Indigenous |
| Equity / CRRP |
| Wellness |



Board Improvement & Equity Plan

100% of students will report that school is safe and inclusive, and positively influences their mental health, wellness and sense of belonging.

HOW?

Holding 'How Do I Sessions' for leaders on how to read, interpret and action school survey data.



Expanding the use of culturally appropriate, relevant and engaging texts in classrooms.

Support earlier start times for elementary students and a later start time for secondary students.



District Wide Time-Table structure with the potential to deliver mental health and wellness workshops by our Mental Health team.

Expanding RWL as a means for engaging students with more meaningful course experiences.



Continuing to increase and strengthen community partnerships

NEW

Course offerings in the Mohawk language.



Addition of 4 new Social Emotional Learning workers to provide support in lesson planning and promote mental health and social-emotional skill building.

INTRODUCTION

The Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) is one of the largest public-school boards in Ontario in terms of geographical area. The Board is comprised of 78 schools serving the Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, and Prescott-Russell counties, providing educational services to over 27,600 students in a 12,000 square-kilometre area.

The Upper Canada District School Board delivers educational services in an environment that emphasizes character and respect. Our school board aligns its goals and objectives with the Ministry of Education and reflects the priorities of our local communities. All staff and students are guided by our mission, vision, values, and credo, which show commitment to student and staff achievement, wellness, equity and inclusion, and Real-World Learning (RWL). These values centre our [Board's Work Plan](#) which sets out four priority areas and specific goals which are Graduation/Student Success, Student Culture, Staff Culture, and Community. Through this work, the Intermediate Student Voice Survey Report demonstrates our continuing focus on these overarching principles during the 2022-2023 school year.

As part of this critical work and in response to [Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan \(2017\)](#), and in accordance with the Policy/Program Memorandum 144 from the Ontario Ministry of Education, the Upper Canada District School Board launched an identity-based initiative to better understand our students, their needs and ensure they feel safe and accepted within our school system.

The identity-based survey was created within the context of the [Anti-Racism Act \(ARA\)](#) passed by the Ontario Government in 2017. Standards for the collection of identity-based data by public sector institutions in Ontario are described in the [Anti-Racism Data Standards \(ARDS\)](#), which guide boards in the collection, storage and use of demographic data. The ARA and ARDS permitted the collection of student identity data beginning in May 2018, and mandated that as of January 1, 2023, for school boards to collect student identity data (O. Reg. 267/18).

The identity-based survey data also helps us monitor progress in our own [Board Improvement and Equity Plan](#) which includes a goal that all students will "*report that school is safe and inclusive, and positively influences their mental health, wellness and sense of belonging.*" To help achieve this goal, the *We All Belong Student Survey Report* actions '**We Asked, You Said, We're Doing**'. Following this direction, the UCDSB surveyed students, students shared their voices, and we are mobilizing this knowledge for action planning.

The purpose of this report is to present descriptive results of the Intermediate Student Voice Survey, including an overview of the demographic makeup of our student population served by our school board, as well as school climate data. These results are presented based on students in Grades 7-8.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of demographic data collection and the collection of school climate data is to identify and address systemic barriers and inequalities that have socially and historically disadvantaged or marginalized certain communities, for example, Indigenous peoples, people from Black and other racialized communities, people with disabilities, 2SLGBTQIA+ people. The Ontario Human Rights Commission has stated that collecting demographic data is necessary to monitor and evaluate potential discrimination, identify and remove systemic barriers, address historical disadvantage, and promote equitable outcomes for Indigenous and equity-seeking communities (OHRC, 2010). Collecting demographic data and responding appropriately if the data reveals potential discrimination can help school boards uphold the rights of students, staff and families under the Ontario *Human Rights Code*.

Data collected from the UCDSB Intermediate Student Voice Survey will help the UCDSB find gaps in our school system and see where biases exist. Understanding the demographic makeup of UCDSB's student population and their school experience, and how they are being served, will help UCDSB to reduce achievement gaps and improve learning outcomes for all students, regardless of class, gender, ethnicity, disability, race, religion or sexual orientation. The initiative supports equity and student achievement through evidence-informed decision-making in the following areas:

- identifying and addressing any systemic discrimination
- to improve learning outcomes for all students
- making evidence-informed decisions
- establishing effective programs
- addressing any barriers to student achievement and success
- allocating resources according to student needs to create conditions for student success



WE ASKED



BACKGROUND: SURVEY PILOT TESTING

In spring 2022, 10 randomly selected secondary schools were invited to participate in a Demographic Snapshot across the Board to pilot the survey instrument and get a sense of our student response rates. The pilot survey opened mid-April and closed the end of May 2022. The response rate for the survey was 65%, with 3,091 students participating.

School leaders at the selected secondary schools were provided with additional board resources to prepare for the administration of the pilot survey. These resources included a school engagement strategy with the following direct supports from board staff:

- School leadership strategy sessions
- Staff meeting information sessions
- School Council presentation
- Student classroom presentations
- Direct support from centrally assigned staff

Students at each school were visited by board staff with classroom presentations explaining the reason for the survey as well as the voluntary and confidential process.

With this student and staff voice we mobilized information and knowledge heading into a fall 2022 survey administration with the goal to improve the survey tool. There were several take-aways from the spring pilot that informed the survey tool and data collection process in the fall. These included:

- ✓ A more defined and intentional communication strategy to increase response rates and provide more awareness of the survey so students, parents and the school community did not feel rushed or unaware of the fall survey administration.
- ✓ Scaling back and refining the survey instrument from 65 questions to 31.
- ✓ More questions focusing on mental health and well-being, safety and bullying, learning skills and pathways, and overall school climate.
- ✓ Translation of top 5 student languages.
- ✓ Actively seeking to reach and engage all learners (i.e., Special Education, Distance Learners, and English Language Learners).
- ✓ Planning the fall administration later in the school year, gives students time to reflect on school climate questions.
- ✓ Inviting all students JK-12 in the UCDSB to voluntarily participate.

- ✓ Satisfying Ministry requirements to be actively collecting data in the field by January 2023.

Throughout this process, we engaged in multiple internal and external consultations with board staff, parent groups, and various community stakeholders. For feedback, we provided the 10 participating schools with a customize infographic highlighting their own school data along with grouped data from the 10 selected schools. Schools were encouraged to share the findings from the pilot with their school teams for actioning or assisting with completing their School Improvement and Equity Plan.

The We All Belong Pilot was administered during the pandemic and during a period where schools were managing very challenging staffing shortages and student absenteeism. The school leaders and staff are to be commended for their efforts supporting this important work during this extraordinarily challenging time in schools.

CONSULTATION & DEVELOPMENT

Forum Research Inc. was contracted in the fall of 2022 for data collection, analysis, and reporting of the Intermediate Student Voice Survey findings. Forum Research Inc. is a Canadian-owned market research firm with over 29 years of experience conducting research with expertise in developing and implementing educational surveys. UCDSB staff worked in consultation with Forum Research Inc. on all phases of the survey administration process.

The We All Belong Survey Team oversaw all phases of the research process such as data collection, analysis, report writing and dissemination, action planning, privacy and records management, and data security measures. The Survey Team was a multi-disciplinary team comprised of board staff with representation from the following departments: Research, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Information and Records Management, Information Technology, Communications, and Mental Health and Well-being.

The We All Belong Steering Committee was created with representation from community partners and stakeholders, and school staff. The Survey Team provided Steering Committee members with regular updates on the progress of the survey which included timelines and deliverables. The Steering Committee was comprised of members across the Board who reflect various roles such as the Parent Involvement Committee, Special Services Counselor, Teaching and Learning, Special Education, Research, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Indigenous Education, one Trustee, Human Resources Specialist, ETFO, ETFO-OT, OSSFT, OSSFT-OT, Ontario Principals' Council, Superintendents, and Communications.

The UCDSB consulted and provided updates to both internal and external community partners and stakeholders including:

Table 1: Consultations with Stakeholders

| Parent Involvement Committee | Superintendent of Schools- Equity, Inclusion & Diversity |
|---|--|
| | Research Officer |
| Student Focus Groups | Principal of Equity & Inclusion |
| Community Consultation Process | Special Education Advisory Committee |
| Student Equity & Inclusion Committee | Survey Steering Committee |
| Information & Records Management Specialist | Student Mental Health & Wellness |
| Communications Department | Principal of Indigenous Education |
| Special Services Counsellor | Board Trustees |
| Teaching & Learning | Human Resource Specialist |
| ETFO Vice President | PSSP |
| ETFO-OT President | Ontario Principals' Council |
| OSSTF | Schools Operation Committee |
| OSSTF-OT President | Leadership Learning Modules for Administrators |
| CUPE President | Student Senate |
| CUPE-OT | Executive Council |

SURVEY DESIGN

The UCDSB wanted to hear from students in Grades 7-8 as this data would complement the data from the We All Belong Student survey where parents were invited to complete that survey with or on behalf of their child(ren). The UCDSB followed the same guidelines as set out by the Ministry for collecting identity-based data. We asked intermediate students the same 9 demographic questions that are asked in the We All Belong Student Survey JK-8. Both the We All Belong Student Survey (JK-8) and the Intermediate Student Voice Survey (7-8) had identical questions to make comparisons between the two surveys possible.

The Intermediate Student Voice Survey consisted of 31 questions for Grades 7-8, with 9 questions based on identity categories provided by the Ministry of Education and informed by Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS).

The 9 required questions are:

- First Language
- Indigenous Identity
- Status in Canada
- Ethnicity

- Race
- Religion
- Gender Identity
- Disability
- Socio-Economic Status

UCDSB added school climate questions in the following areas: sense of belonging, student experiences, mental health and wellness, safety and bullying, and learning skills (see Appendix for survey questions). Intermediate students were provided in class time to complete the survey or to complete the survey on their own time. For the majority of the questions, participants could select more than one options.

Students were provided the option to decline to participate in the survey, skip or choose not to answer any question in the survey and could exit the online survey at any time. Survey participants also had the option of leaving the survey and picking up at another time to complete the survey through the personalized school email link.

Translation

The survey was translated to provide students and parents the opportunity to complete the survey in their preferred language. These were translated into 4 languages other than English: Arabic, French, Tamil, and Urdu – reflecting the most common languages spoken by UCDSB students. For the language breakdown, 2,361 surveys were completed in English, and 2 responses were completed in an online translation version in French.

Accessibility

The survey platform used by Forum Research Inc. supported survey completion using both mobile and all electronic devices. The system was compatible and fully accessible according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AAA. The survey was also compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA). The system was compatible with a range of assisted technology supports and programmed to work with accessibility software such as Zoomtext, Read&Write, and Kurzweill, which is widely used in the UCDSB by special education students and English language learners. The surveys were also compatible with screen recognition software such as Jaws, NVDA and Voiceover.

On average, it took participants 18.34 minutes to complete the 7-8 survey.

Data Management: Access & Storage

The survey was voluntary and confidential, but not anonymous. Surveys did not include student names, but each participant was emailed an individualized survey link with a unique survey ID for data linkages to other datasets.

Survey data can only be accessed by authorized UCDSB staff and Forum Research Inc. for the purposes of analyzing and reporting findings. All data will be collected and stored in a secure manner in accordance with our Privacy Impact Assessment, applicable privacy legislation and guidelines, and best practices.

In accordance with the Data Standards, an Open Data file (de-identified data set) containing the number and percentage of respondents selecting each response category for each question in the survey will be made available on the UCDSB We All Belong website with the public release of the final report.

Following the Data Standards, public sector organizations must retain personal information that is stored in electronic databases for at least five years after the day it was last used, or for as long as reasonable and necessary for the purposes of identifying systemic racism and advancing racial equity unless an individual requests removal of their personal information.

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

Communication

The UCDSB had a robust Communications Strategy for students and families which began in early November 2022 through an Introduction letter, social media posts (Facebook and Twitter), survey details on the Upper Canada District School Board website in a dedicated section, and information provided in school newsletters. School principals and vice-principals received information and a resource guide to share with school teams to promote student and staff awareness in November 2022.

Information letters distributed to students outlined the Ministry requirements for collecting identity-based data, the purpose of collection, how data would be used, who to contact with questions, and advised of the voluntary and confidential nature of the collection.

The UCDSB Intermediate Student Voice Survey was launched November 14, 2022, and remained open until January 23, 2023, whereby all intermediate students had the opportunity to voluntarily participate and complete the survey. All participants were provided with a personalized school email link for each student to access the survey.

Consent

Students and families received a letter and an email from the UCDSB informing them about the survey. Students in Grades 7 and 8 consented to participate in the

Intermediate Student Voice Survey through the completion and submission of the survey. The survey included a click-through notice that required respondents to consent to the collection and use of personal information before they proceeded. The UCDSB provided the opportunity for a positive click-through action at the beginning of the survey to indicate the participant's consent. Students also had the option to withdraw consent from participating in the survey by contacting the school directly (school would fill out an opt-out form) or by not submitting the survey (see Appendix for Introduction letter).

System Support & School Teams

Intermediate schools were asked to organize a school survey team to lead the administration of the survey in their school. In the weeks leading up to the survey launch, school leaders were supported with a series of workshops on how to administer the survey in schools, provided with survey information at our professional development sessions, and a School Leaders Guide which included a checklist of items to review and accomplish before the start of the survey administration (see Appendix for School Leaders Guide). Intermediate schools were asked to make arrangements for students to voluntarily complete the survey during class time.

Schools were asked to reach out to students who did not have home access to electronic devices (i.e., laptops, computers, mobile device) or Wi-Fi and make arrangements to have students and families complete the survey at school. Schools were also tasked with ensuring those students requiring support completing the survey would have school support through assisted technology or by using school resources.

Classroom teachers were asked to review the purpose of the survey and the voluntary nature of it with their students before administering the survey in the classroom. To monitor survey response rates, all schools had access to a response rate dashboard individualized for the school which included student name, grade level and survey status. School staff did not have access to any confidential student survey responses, the dashboards only displayed whether a student had completed the survey, were screened out, or had not started the survey.

Table 2: Communication Strategy & Data Collection Timeline

| Survey Communication | Date |
|---|-------------------|
| Introduction Letter to Trustees- sent from Director's Office Introduction Letter sent to Parents and Guardians Messaging sent to schools each month (Nov 2022-Jan 2023) to include in school newsletters. | November 10, 2022 |
| Launch of student survey- survey link emailed to student email addresses. (see Appendix) | November 14, 2022 |

| | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Reminder notification to students via student email address- sent by Forum Research (see Appendix) | November 28, 2022 |
| Extension of survey to Jan 04, 2023 Reminders sent to students via student email and reminder shared on school Facebook pages | November 28- December 8, 2022 |
| MIR 3 survey reminders sent to all students and parents via text messaging, email and/or phone | December 15, 2022 |
| Extension of survey to Jan 23, 2023- Email notification that the survey was extended until Jan 23. Notifications also went out on social media platforms | January 5, 2023 |
| Closure of data collection for student survey | January 23, 2023 |

DATA PROCESSING & VERIFICATION

After the survey administration closed, the survey response data was cleaned and verified.

Answers to individual questions were removed where:

- Too many answer options were selected in multiple-response questions, suggesting sabotaged responses.
- Open-ended answers were inappropriate or unrelated to the question.

No cases were removed from the dataset.

Once the data cleaning and verification process was complete, the open-ended responses were then recoded into existing response options or into new response options.

DATA ANALYSIS

The analyses in this report include descriptive summaries for each question. For each question, the data is presented in either a tabular or graphical format with percentages representing the number of students who selected an answer option. Percentages may not necessarily add up to 100% for questions where students were to select more than one answer option.

Rounding

Due to rounding, numbers presented throughout this document may not add up to the totals provided. For example, in some cases, the sum of all question values may add up to 101% instead of 100%. Similar logic applies to TOP2 and BTM2 values.

Multi-mentions

In some cases, more than one answer option is applicable to a respondent. Multiple mention questions allow respondents to select more than one answer category for

a question. For questions that ask for multiple mentions (e.g., *“If you do not feel welcome or comfortable at school, why do you feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at school? Select all that apply.”*), it is important to note that the percentages typically add to over 100%. This is because the total number of answer categories selected for a question can be greater than the number of respondents who answered the question.

The data presented are only of those students who answered the question and do not include those who did not answer the question or those were removed due to inaccurate data.

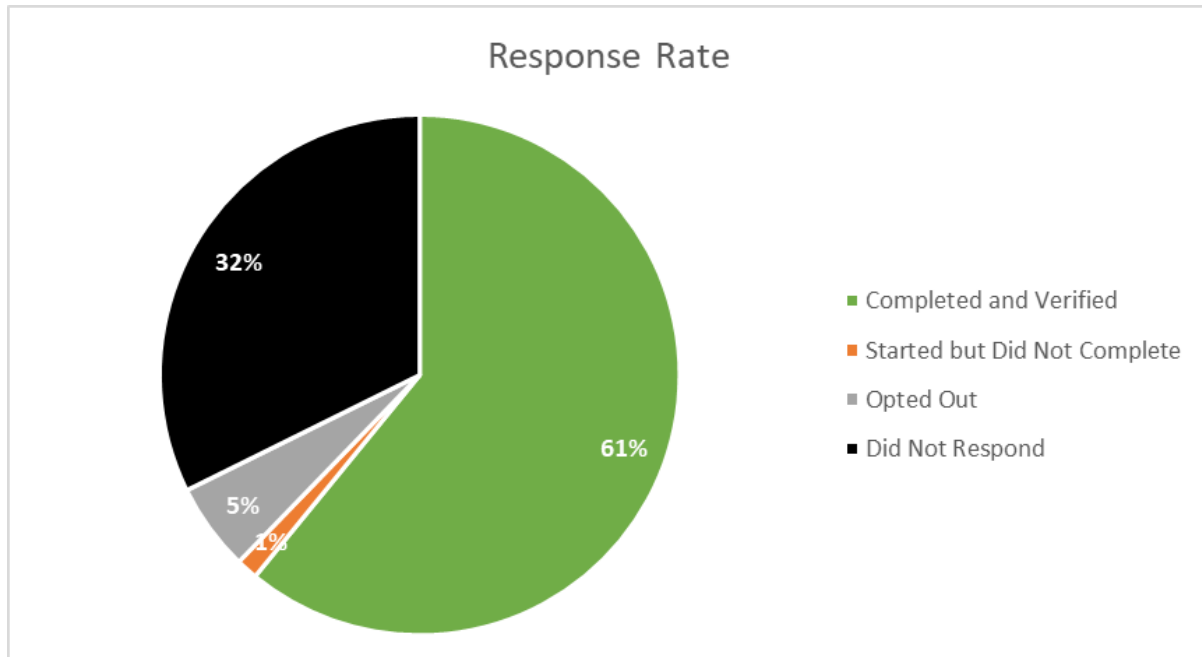
RESPONSE RATES: SURVEY POPULATION

A total of 3,879 survey emails were sent to Grade 7 and 8 students.

Of those who were invited to complete the survey:

- 2,363 students completed the survey and were verified
- 52 students opted out from participating in the survey
- 211 students started the survey but did not complete it
- 1,253 students did not respond to the survey

The resulting response rate of the survey is **61%**.



HOW TO READ & INTERPRET THE DATA TABLES

The table format in this report presents data from the Intermediate Student Voice Survey. Demographic questions that have a comparable data reference in the Statistics Canada Census were included as a Census column. The Census column includes the Brockville, Clarence-Rockland, Cornwall, and Carleton Place Census subdivisions.

There are data tables which include a TOP2 column to the right of the table. This indicates that the response categories 'Often' and 'All the Time' have been combined and recoded to produce a TOP2 percentage column. When describing the results in the report, TOP2 is used to describe an indicator which includes the response categories 'Often/All the Time'.

There are also data tables which include a BTM2 in the description of the data. This indicates that the response categories 'All the Time' and 'Often' have been combined and recoded to produce a bottom (BTM2) percentage. When describing the results in the report, BTM2 is used to describe an indicator which includes the response categories 'All the Time/Often'.

While both these recoded categories (TOP2 and BMT2) combine the same response categories ('Often/All the Time'), they are used in different ways when describing the data for a richer and more meaningful data interpretation.

Important to note, the TOP2 and BTM2 values are calculated using the unrounded values for accuracy. For example, in Q17 for the response category, 'I feel I belong in this school' the unrounded TOP2 values are "32.5206791467131%" and "32.5206791467131%" and they add up to "65.0413582934%." This is how 65% is calculated.



YOU SAID



SURVEY RESULTS

LANGUAGE(S) FIRST SPOKEN

Over 9 in 10 students (94%) speak English as their first language. More than 1 in 10 students (15%) learned to speak French as their first language as well.

| LANGUAGE(S) FIRST SPOKEN | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|------------------|--------|
| | Total Number | Total Percentage | Census |
| English | 2217 | 94% | 69% |
| French | 343 | 15% | 24% |
| Spanish | 30 | 1% | <1% |

| | | | |
|------------------------|----|-----|-----|
| American Sign Language | 25 | 1% | <1% |
| Arabic | 22 | 1% | <1% |
| Urdu | 14 | 1% | 1% |
| German | 12 | 1% | <1% |
| Russian | 12 | 1% | <1% |
| Indigenous language(s) | 11 | <1% | <1% |
| Hindi | 9 | <1% | <1% |
| Japanese | 6 | <1% | <1% |
| Dutch | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Punjabi | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Tagalog | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Gujarati | 4 | <1% | <1% |
| Hebrew | 4 | <1% | <1% |
| Malayalam | 4 | <1% | <1% |
| Tamil | 4 | <1% | <1% |
| Bengali | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Chinese | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Italian | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Polish | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Portuguese | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Ukrainian | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Farsi | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Greek | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Hungarian | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Serbian | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Vietnamese | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Albanian | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| Other (Final) | 35 | 1% | 0% |
| No / None / Refused | 1 | <1% | |
| Not sure | 17 | 1% | |

Q1. (7-8) What is the first languages(s) you learned to speak as a child? Select all that apply.

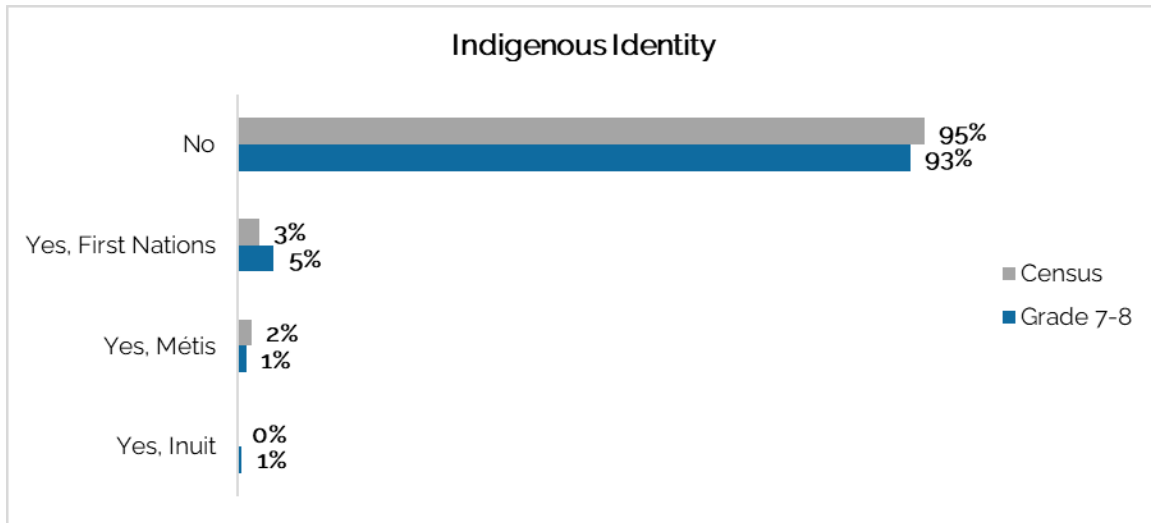
Sample size: N=2,354

Framework: All respondents

Note: Based on top languages spoken in Ontario (2016 Census Data).

INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

Less than 1 in 10 students (7%) identify as Indigenous, with 5% identifying as First Nations.



Q2. (7-8) Do you identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

Sample size: N=2,336

Framework: All respondents

Of those who identify as Indigenous, the distribution for which Indigenous community the students belong to is diverse with Mohawk leading at 16%.

| INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY | | | |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------|
| | Total Number | Total Percentage | Census |
| Mohawk | 8 | 16% | |
| Nation / First Nations - Other or unspecified | 7 | 14% | 60% |
| Oji / Ojibwa / Ojibwe | 6 | 12% | |
| Aboriginal / Native - Other or unspecified | 6 | 12% | |
| Cree | 5 | 10% | |
| Inuit | 3 | 6% | 2% |
| Métis | 3 | 6% | 34% |
| Algonquin | 2 | 4% | |
| Mi'kmaq / Mi'kmaw | 2 | 4% | |
| Nunavut / Iqaluit | 2 | 4% | |
| Iroquois | 1 | 2% | |
| Other (Final) | 3 | 6% | 4% |
| No / None / Don't know / Refused | 10 | 20% | |

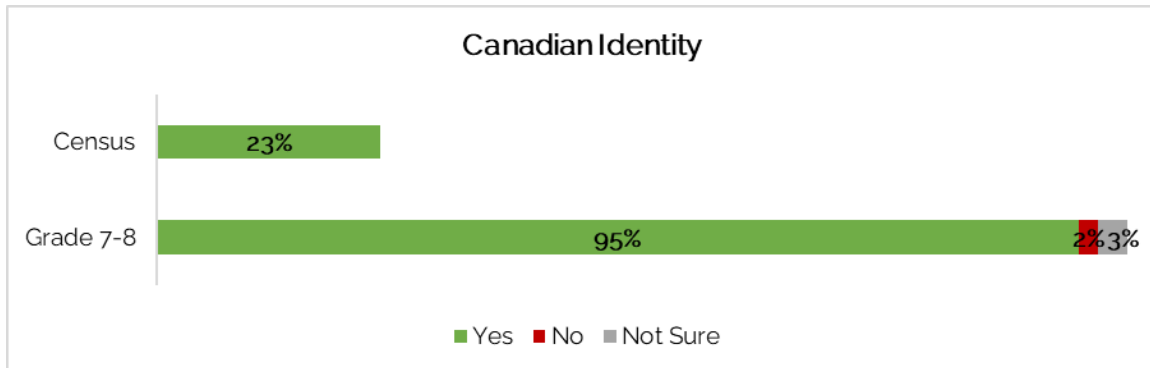
Q2B. (7-8) If yes, you may provide additional information about the band, nation, territory, region, or community to which you belong:

Sample size: N=50

Framework: Respondents who identify as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit

ETHNIC ORIGIN

The vast majority (95%) of students identify as Canadian.



Q3. (7-8) Do you consider yourself Canadian?

Sample size: N=2,317

Framework: All respondents

Three-quarters (75%) of students in the survey identify as Canadian. The other most common ethnic or cultural origins include English (29%), Irish (14%), Scottish (12%) and French (11%).

| ETHNIC ORIGIN | | | |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|--------|
| | Total Number | Total Percentage | Census |
| Canadian | 1731 | 75% | 23% |
| English | 675 | 29% | 18% |
| Irish | 326 | 14% | 20% |
| Scottish | 266 | 12% | 18% |
| French | 255 | 11% | 23% |
| German | 140 | 6% | 7% |
| Dutch | 99 | 4% | 3% |
| Italian | 77 | 3% | 1% |
| Polish | 35 | 2% | 2% |
| Ukrainian, | 33 | 1% | 1% |
| Jewish | 26 | 1% | <1% |
| East Indian | 20 | 1% | 1% |
| Pakistani | 19 | 1% | <1% |
| Inuit | 17 | 1% | <1% |
| Ojibwé | 15 | 1% | 2% |
| Métis | 14 | 1% | 1% |
| Chinese | 13 | 1% | <1% |
| Portuguese | 11 | <1% | <1% |
| Cree | 10 | <1% | <1% |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Lebanese | 10 | <1% | <1% |
| Sri Lankan | 9 | <1% | <1% |
| Colombian | 7 | <1% | <1% |
| Filipino | 7 | <1% | <1% |
| Iranian | 7 | <1% | <1% |
| Mi'kmaq | 7 | <1% | <1% |
| Guyanese | 6 | <1% | <1% |
| Korean | 6 | <1% | <1% |
| Anishnaabe | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Haudenosaunee | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Jamaican | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| First Nations | 5 | <1% | <1% |
| Somali | 4 | <1% | <1% |
| Danish | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Russian | 3 | <1% | <1% |
| Hungarian | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| Indigenous | 2 | <1% | <1% |
| American | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| Australian | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| British | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| Greek | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| Japanese | 1 | <1% | <1% |
| Other (Final) | 181 | 8% | |
| No / None / Don't know / Refused | 6 | <1% | |

Q4. (7-12) What is your ethnic or cultural origin(s)? Please specify as many as applicable.

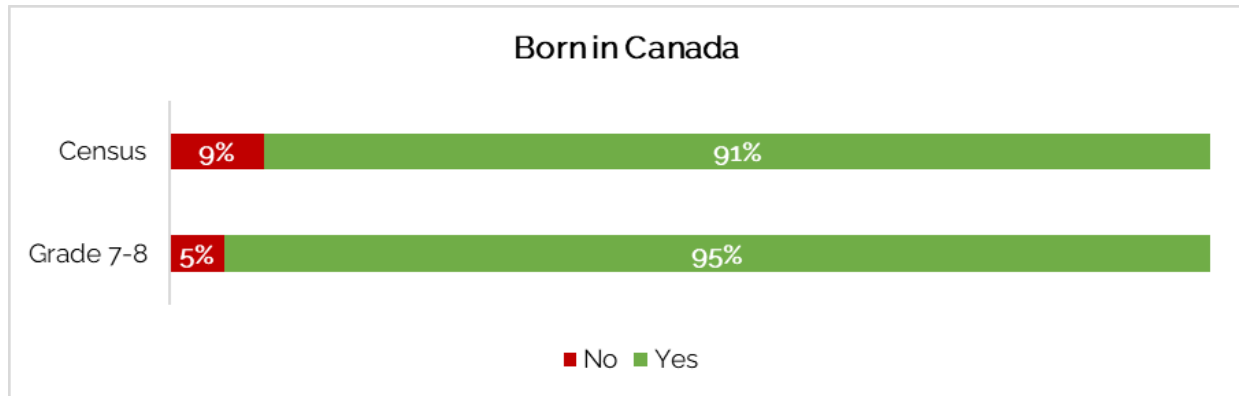
Sample size: N=2,303

Framework: All respondents

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

STATUS IN CANADA

The vast majority (95%) of students are born in Canada.

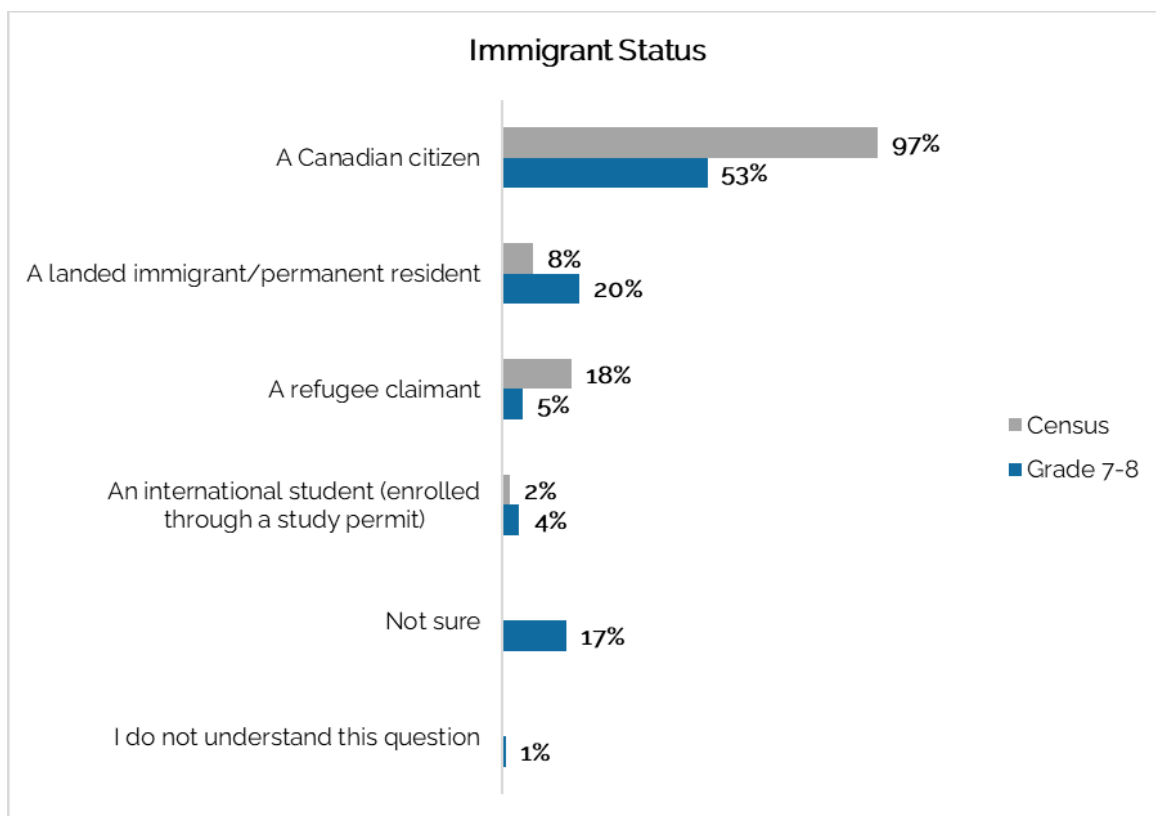


Q5. (7-8) Were you born in Canada?

Sample size: N=2,354

Framework: All respondents

Among the students that are not born in Canada, around half (53%) are Canadian citizens and 20% are landed immigrants/permanent residents.



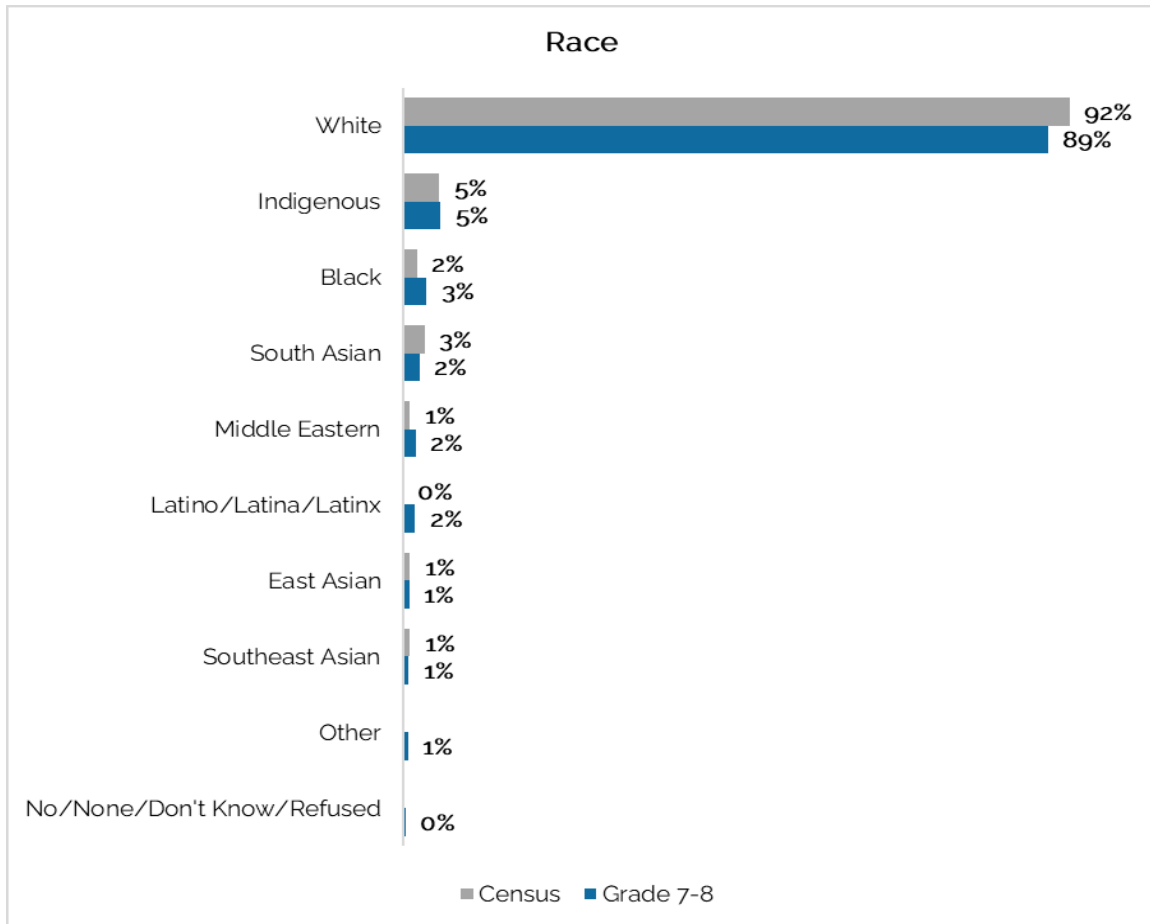
Q5B. (7-8) If no, are you currently:

Sample size: N=115

Framework: Respondents who are not born in Canada

RACE

Nearly 9 in 10 students (89%) describe their racial background as White.



Q6. (7-8) In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. Which racial group(s) best describes you? Select all that apply.

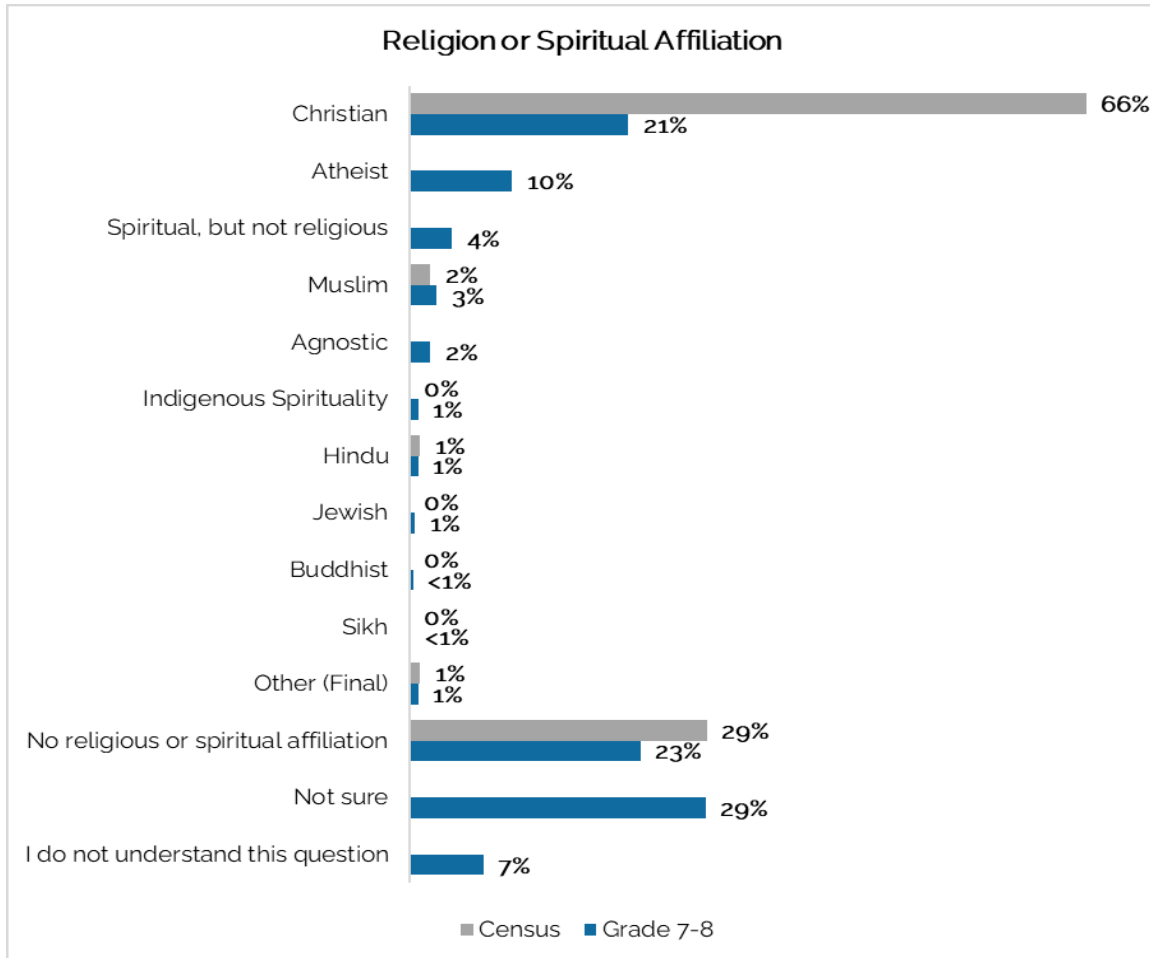
Sample size: N=2,261

Framework: All respondents

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

RELIGION OR SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION

About 2 in 10 students (23%) have no religious or spiritual affiliation. A similar proportion of students are Christian (21%). Meanwhile, around 3 in 10 students (29%) are not sure.



Q7. (7-8) What is your religion, faith, creed, and/or spiritual affiliation? Select all that apply.

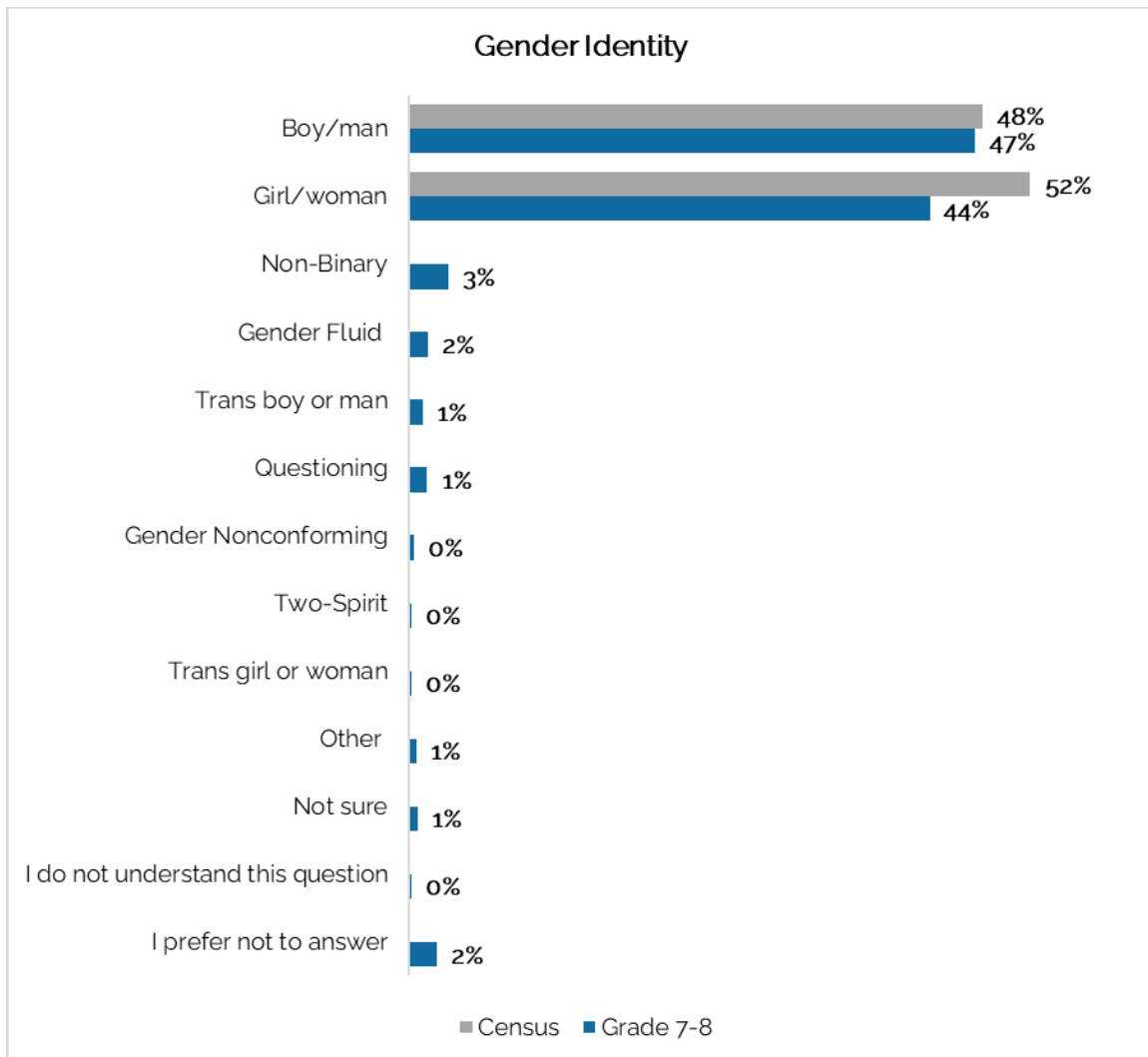
Sample size: N=2,309

Framework: All respondents

Note: 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.

GENDER IDENTITY

47% of students identify as a boy/man and 44% identify as a girl/woman. In addition, 3% of students identified as non-binary.



Q8. (7-8) What is your gender identity? Select all that apply.

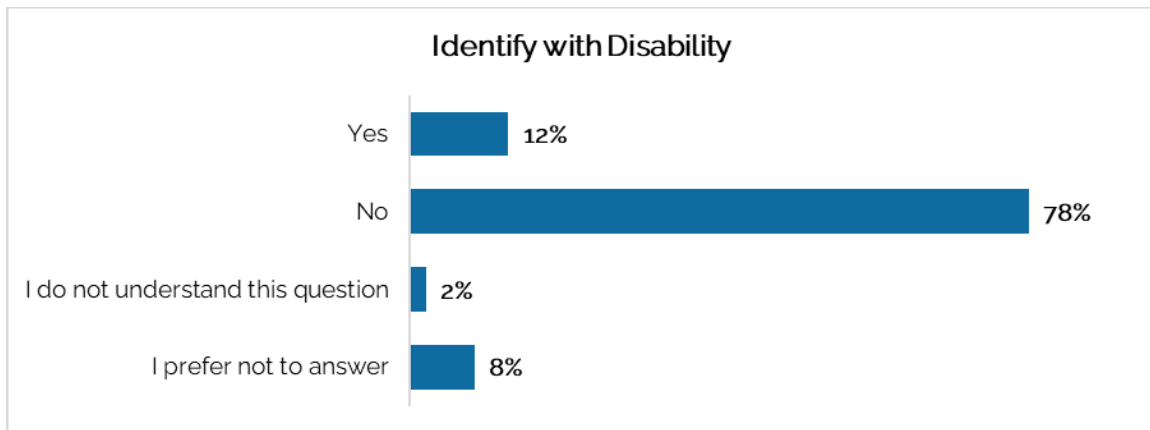
Sample size: N=2,346

Framework: All respondents

Note: Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense or feeling of being a woman, a man, both, neither or anywhere on the gender spectrum, which may or may not be the same as the person's sex assigned at birth (e.g., male, female, intersex). It is different from and does not determine a person's sexual orientation.

DISABILITY

Around 1 in 10 students (12%) consider themselves to be a person with a disability or disabilities.



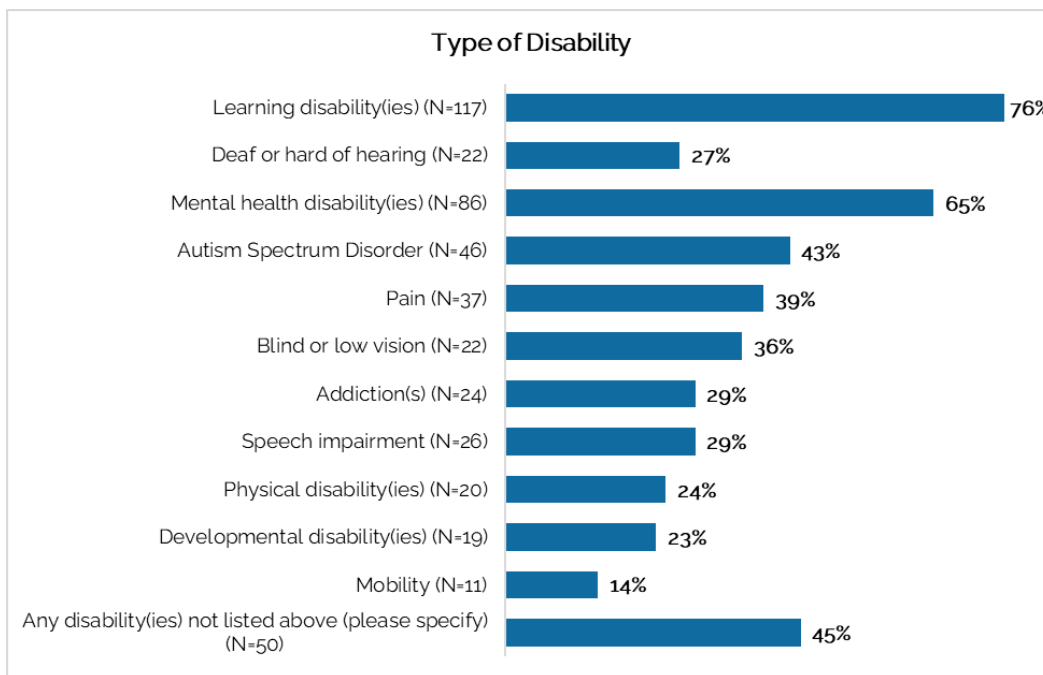
Q10. (7-8) Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability or disabilities? (Select one answer only)

Sample size: N=2,342

Framework: All respondents

Note: A disability may be physical, mental, behavioural, developmental, sensory, communicational or a combination of any of these. Barriers such as settings that are hard to access (like school, shops or public places), negative attitudes, and barriers to information contribute to a person's experience of having a disability.

Among those who consider themselves to be a person with disability, learning disability (76%) and mental health disability (65%) were the most commonly selected disabilities.



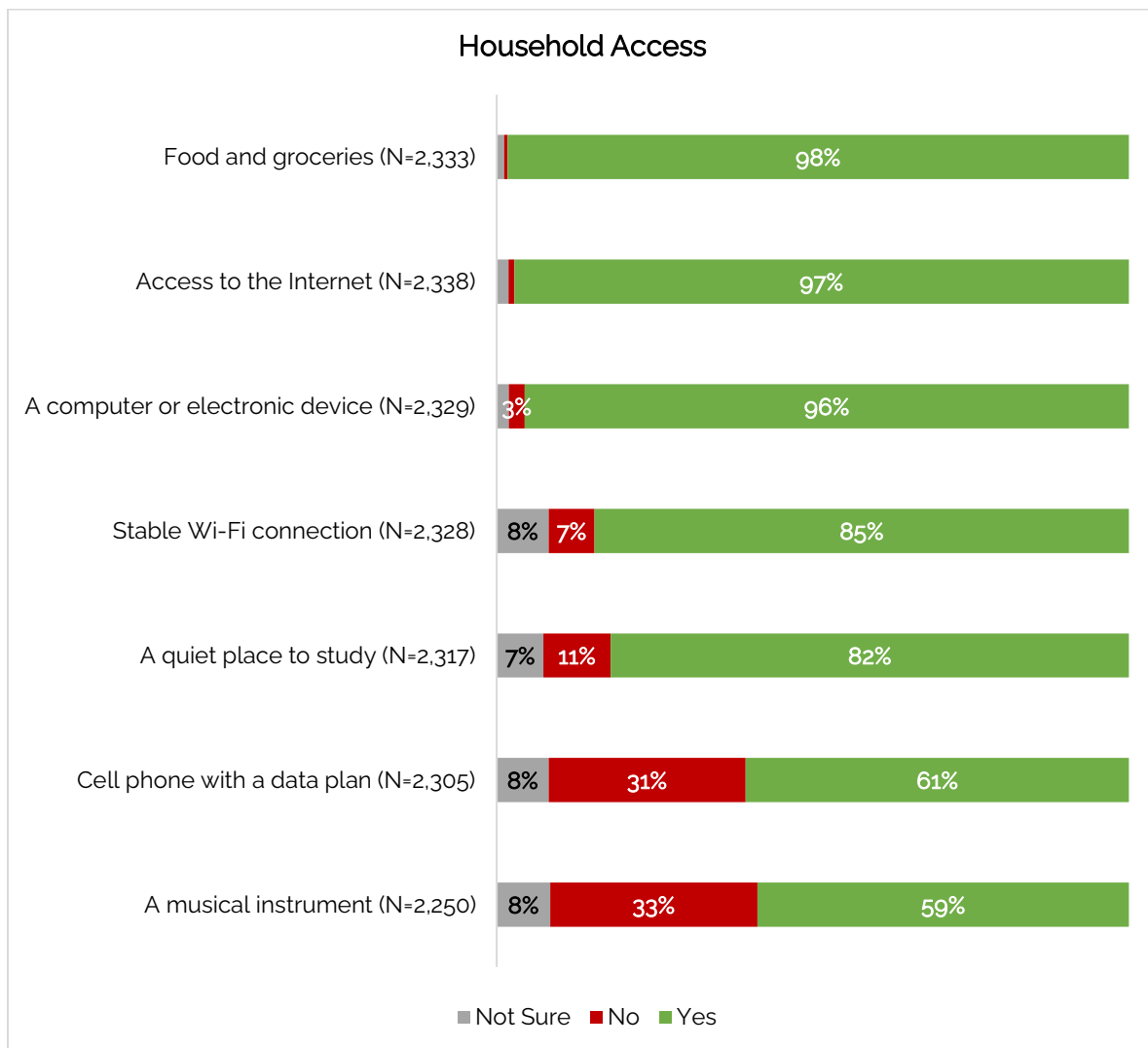
Q10B. (7-8) If yes, select all that apply.

Framework: Respondents who have a disability

HOUSEHOLD INFORMATION: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

Household Access

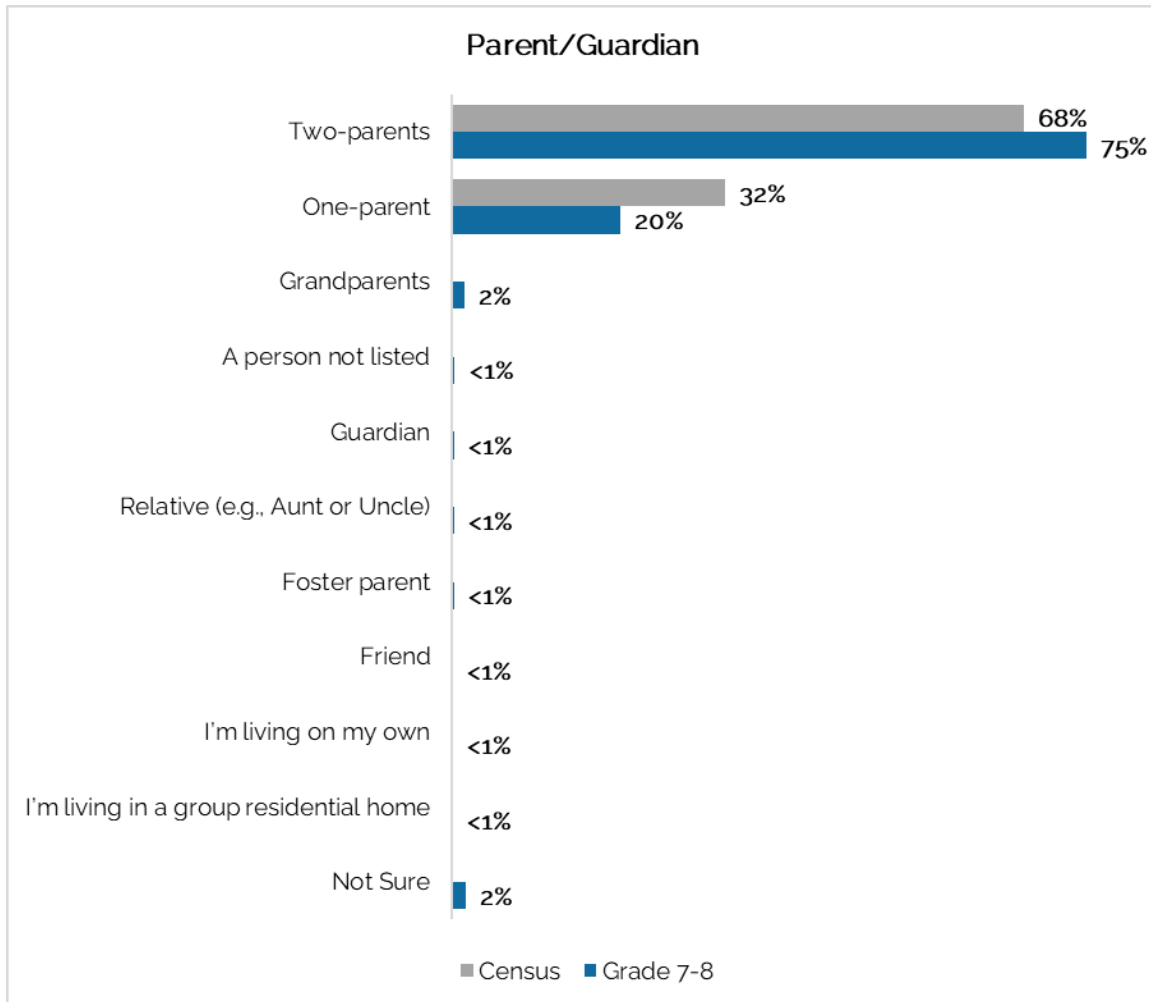
Nearly every student had household access to food and groceries (98%), the internet (97%), and a computer or electronic device (96%). Around a third of students do not have access to a musical instrument (33%) or a cell phone with a data plan (31%).



*Q11. (7-8) In your home do you have access to:
Framework: All respondents*

Family Structure

Three quarters of students (75%) live with two-parents. Meanwhile, 20% of students live with only one parent most of the time.



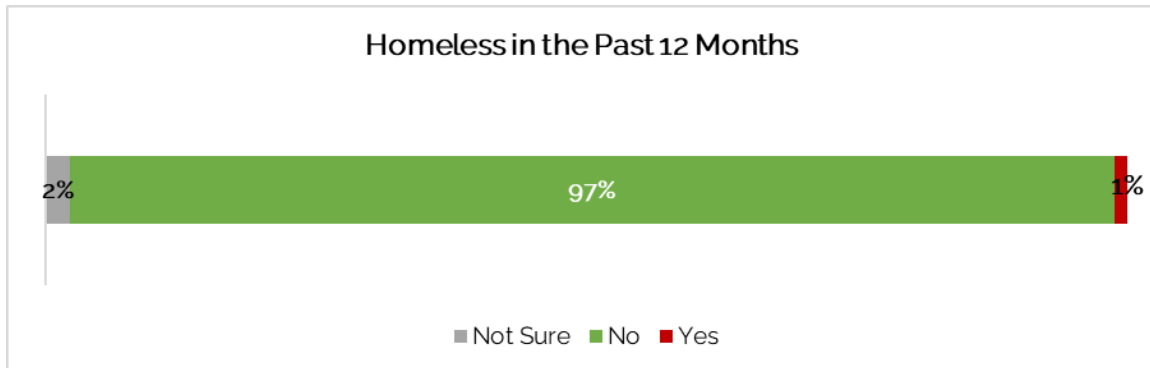
Q12. (7-8) Who do you live with most of the time? (Select one answer only)

Sample size: N=2,343

Framework: All respondents

Homelessness

A vast majority (97%) of students were not homeless in the past year. On the contrary, 1% of students considered themselves to be homeless.



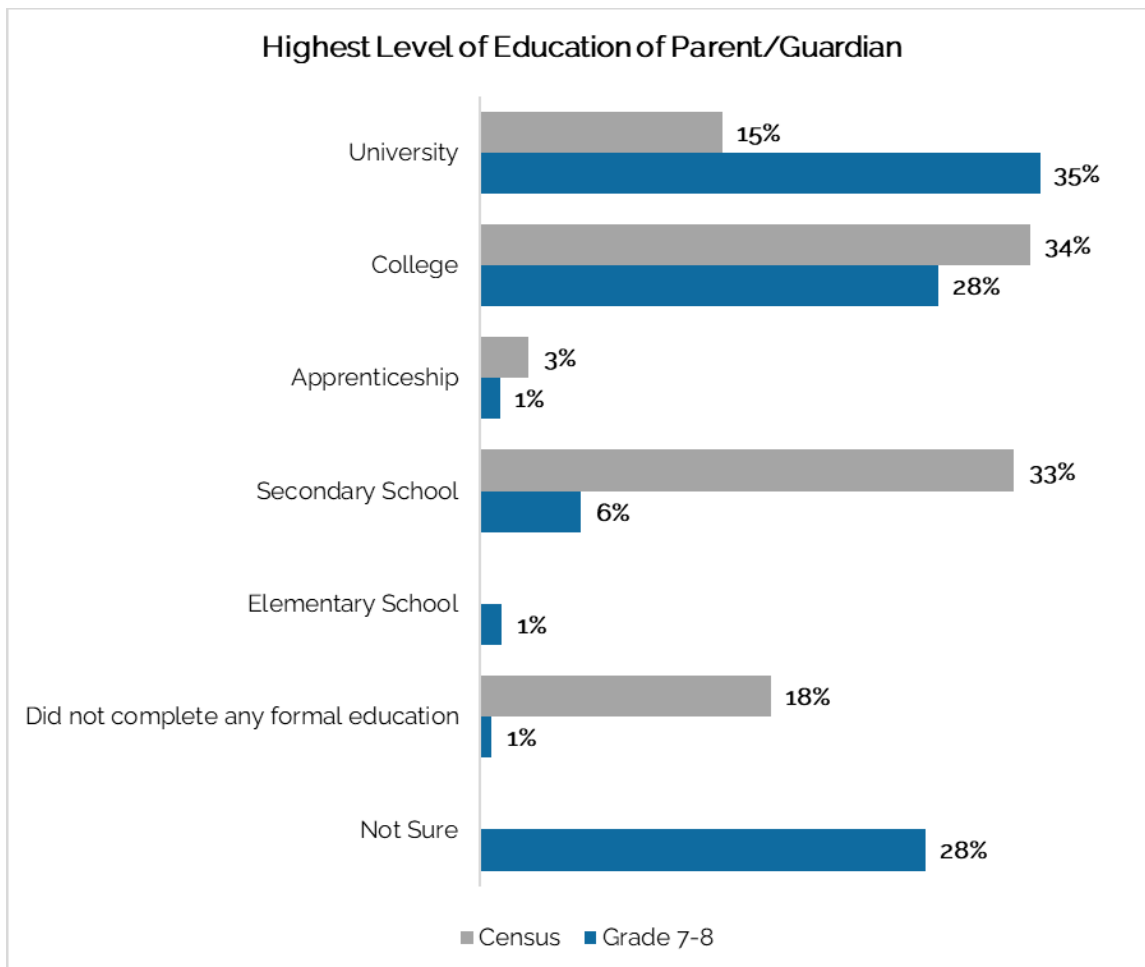
Q13. (7-8) Have you considered yourself to be homeless in the last twelve months (e.g., living in shelters, living in cars, abandoned buildings or couch surfing)?

Sample size: N=2,353

Framework: All respondents

Education Background of Parent/Guardian

About a third of students (35%) say their parent/guardian has a University degree as their highest level of education. Meanwhile, 28% of students say their parent/guardian has a College diploma and 28% are not sure.



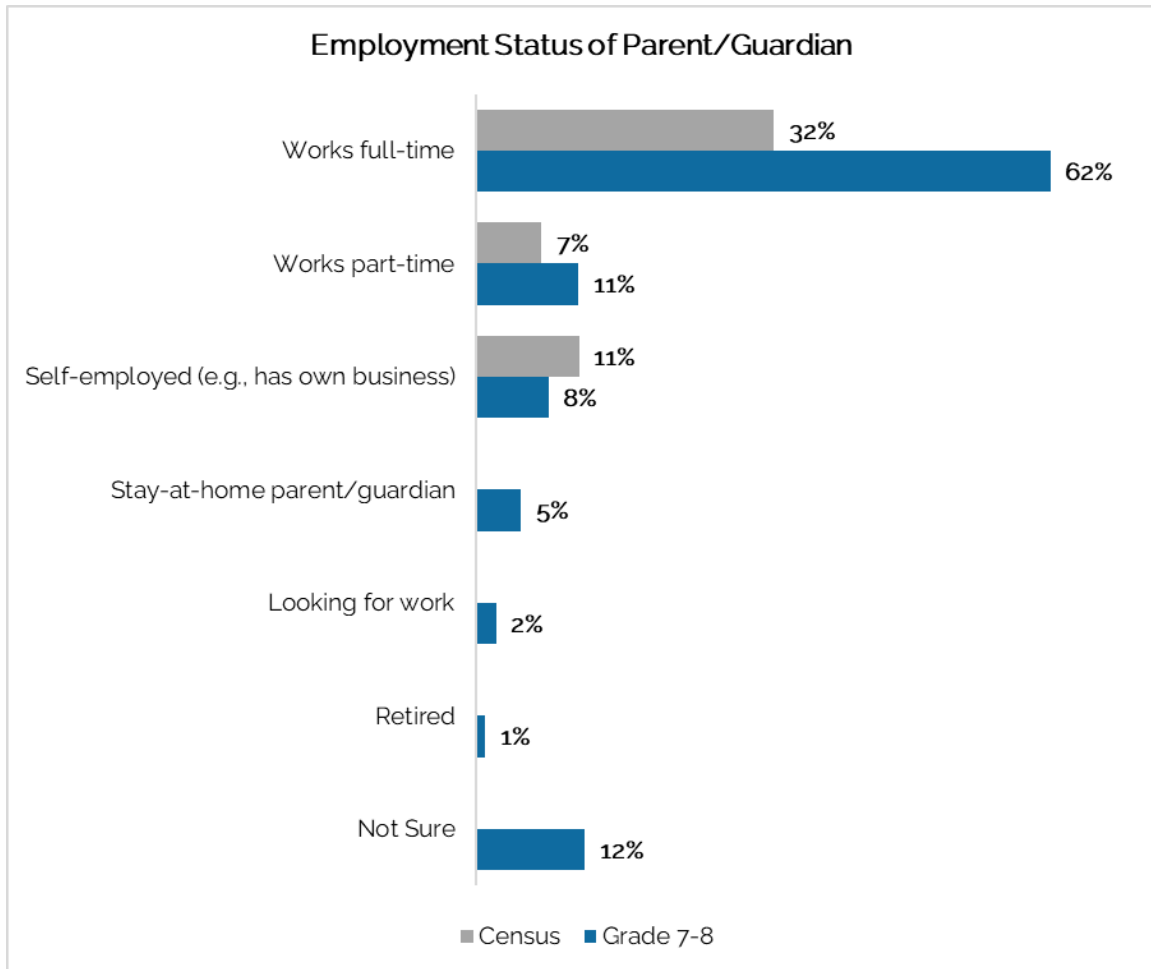
Q14. (7-8) What is the highest level of education of the person you live with? If you live with two people, choose the person with the highest level of education.

Sample size: N=2,349

Framework: All respondents

Employment Status of Parent/Guardian

Around 6 in 10 students (62%) said their parent/guardian works full-time, while 1 in 10 students say they work part-time (11%) or are self-employed (8%).



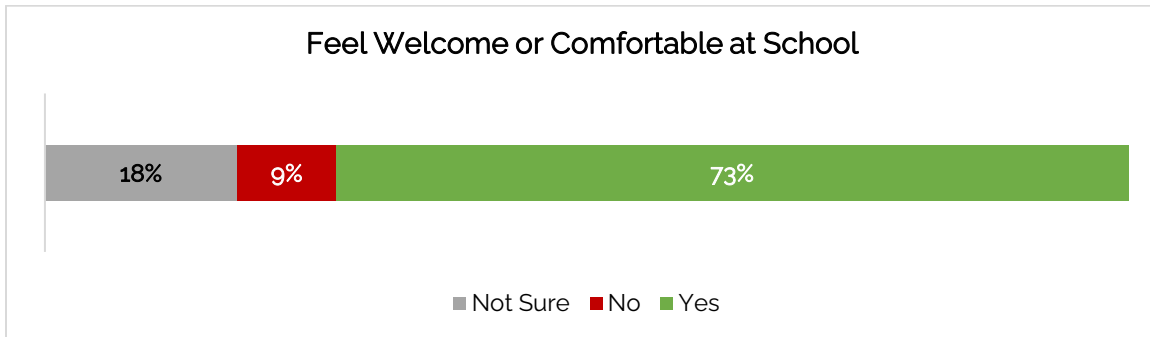
Q15. (7-8) What is this person's employment status?

Sample size: N=2,322

Framework: All respondents

STUDENT EXPERIENCES IN SCHOOL AND OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

About three quarters of students (73%) feel welcome or comfortable at school.

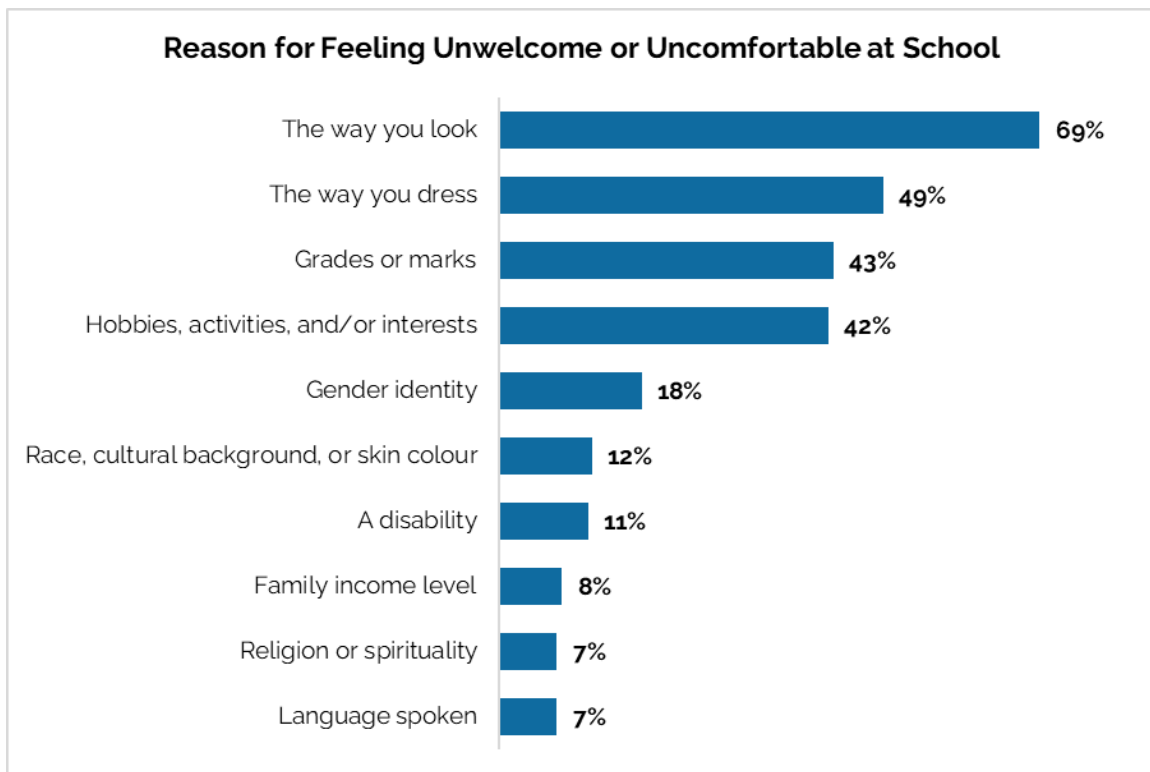


Q16A. (7-8) Do you feel welcome or comfortable at school?

Sample size: N=2,350

Framework: All respondents

Among the students who feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at school, they most commonly mentioned that the way they looked (69%) and the way they dressed (49%) were reasons for feeling this way.



Q16B. (7-8) If you do not feel welcome or comfortable at school, why do you feel unwelcome or uncomfortable at school? Select all that apply.

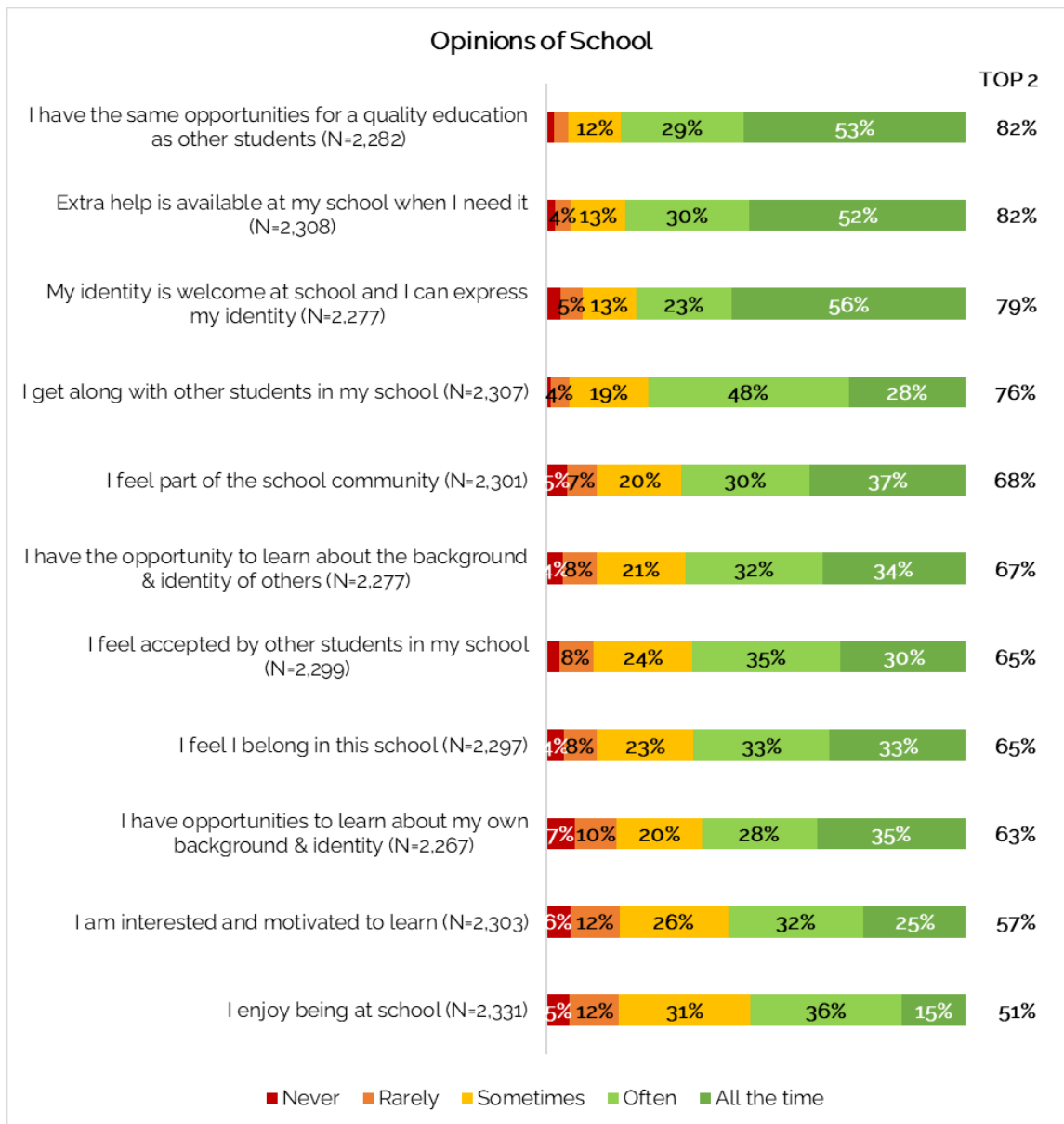
Sample size: N=176

Framework: Respondents who do not feel welcome or comfortable at school

SENSE OF BELONGING

Opinions of School

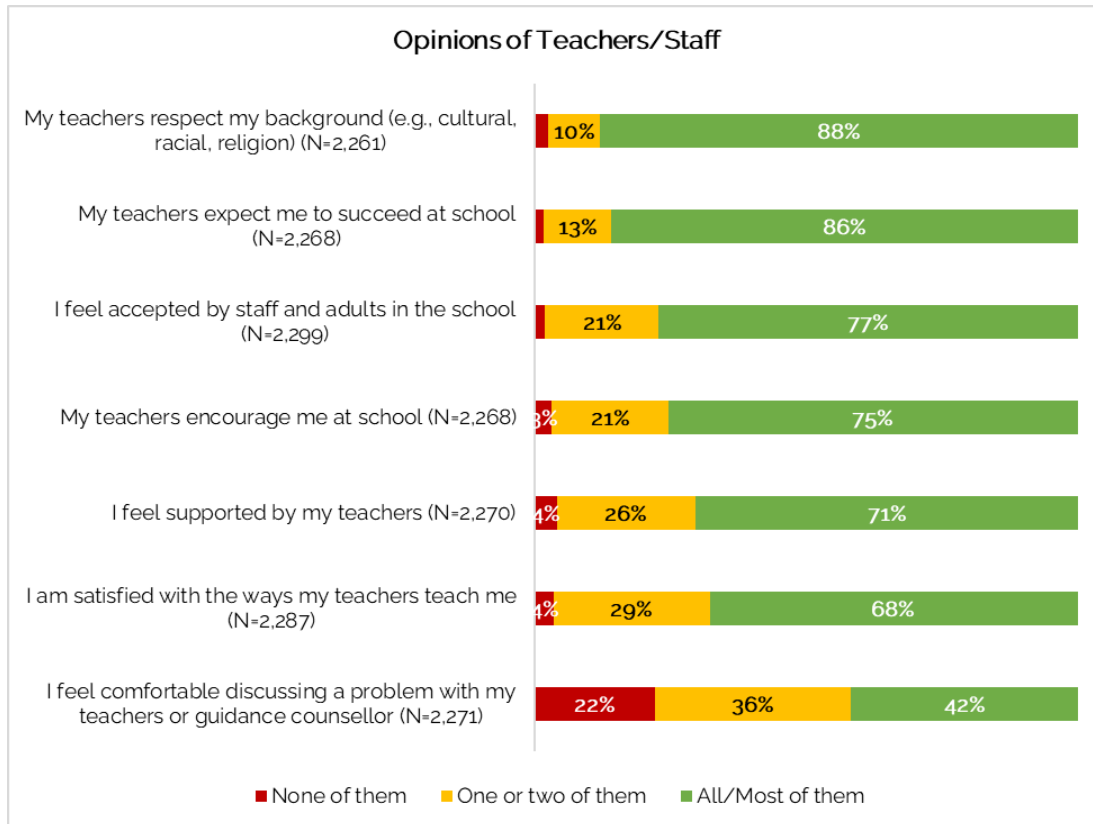
Around 8 in 10 students say they feel all the time/often that they have the same opportunities for a quality education as other students (TOP2: 82%), that extra help is available when they need it (TOP2: 82%) and that their identity is welcome at school (TOP2: 79%). On the contrary, only half (TOP2: 51%) of students feel that they enjoy being at school often/all the time.



Q17. (7-8) How do you feel about your school:
Framework: All respondents

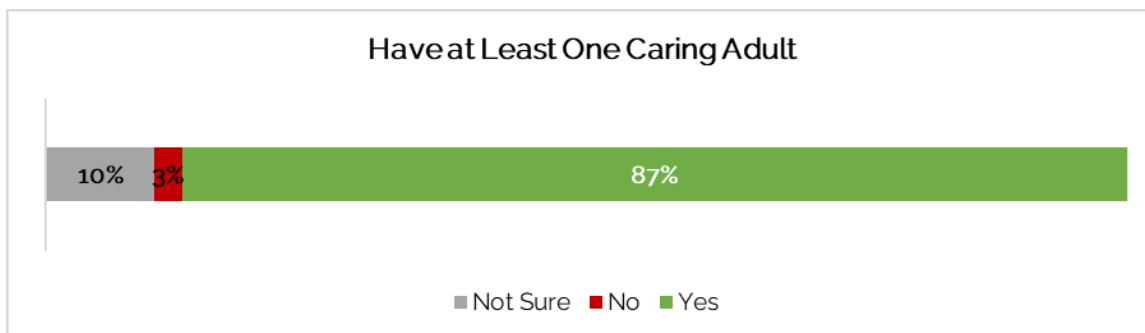
Opinions of Teachers/Staff

Nearly 9 in 10 of students (88%) say all/most of their teachers respect their backgrounds and 86% expect them to succeed at school. Only around 4 in 10 students (42%) say feel comfortable discussing a problem with all/most of their teachers or guidance counsellors.



Q18. (7-8) How do you feel about your teachers and school staff?
Framework: All respondents

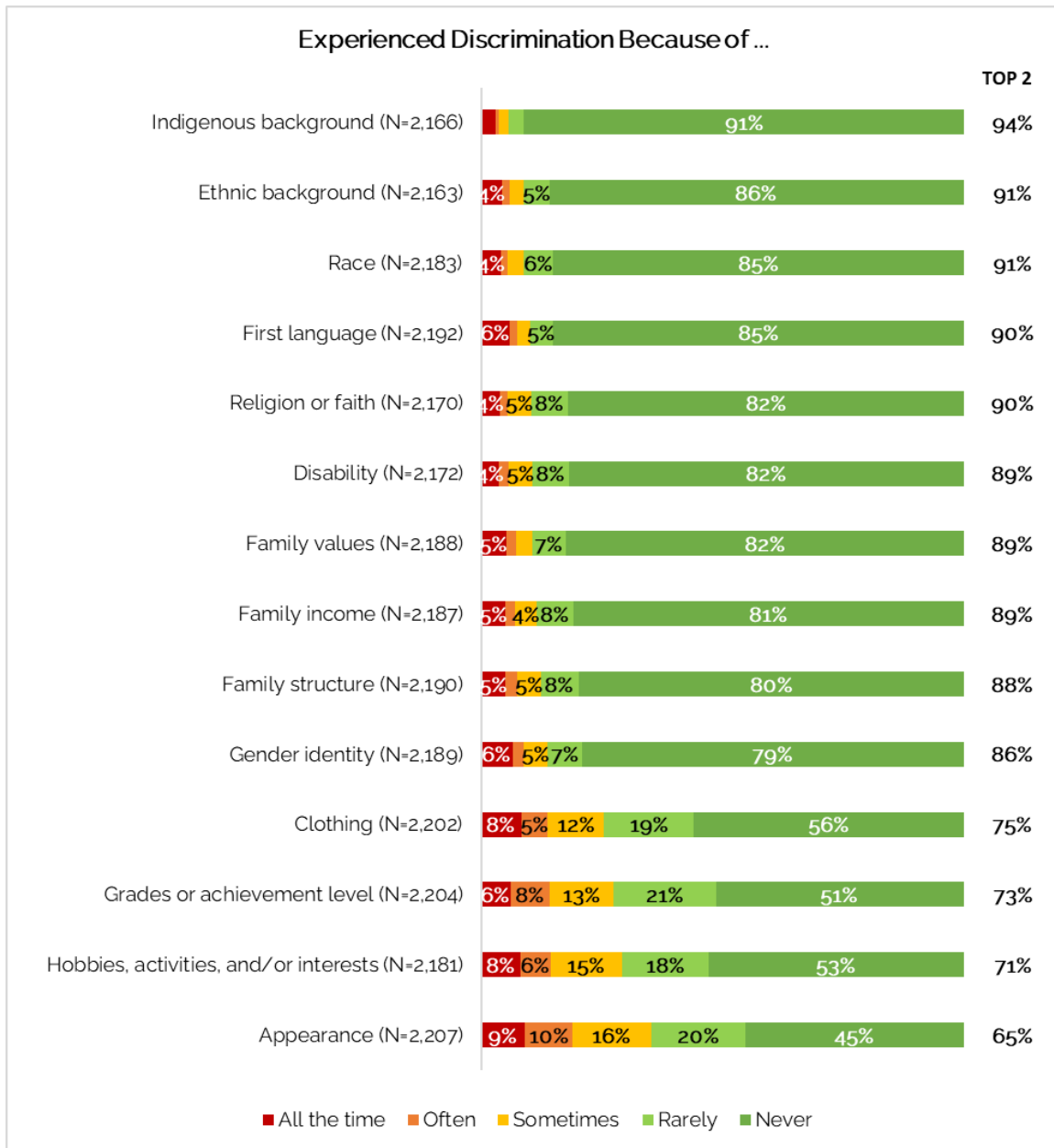
Nearly 9 in 10 students (87%) have at least one caring adult at their school.



Q19. (7-8) Do you feel that there is at least one caring adult who cares about you, wants you to do well and helps you to do well at school?
Sample size: N=2,346
Framework: All respondents

Experience of Discrimination

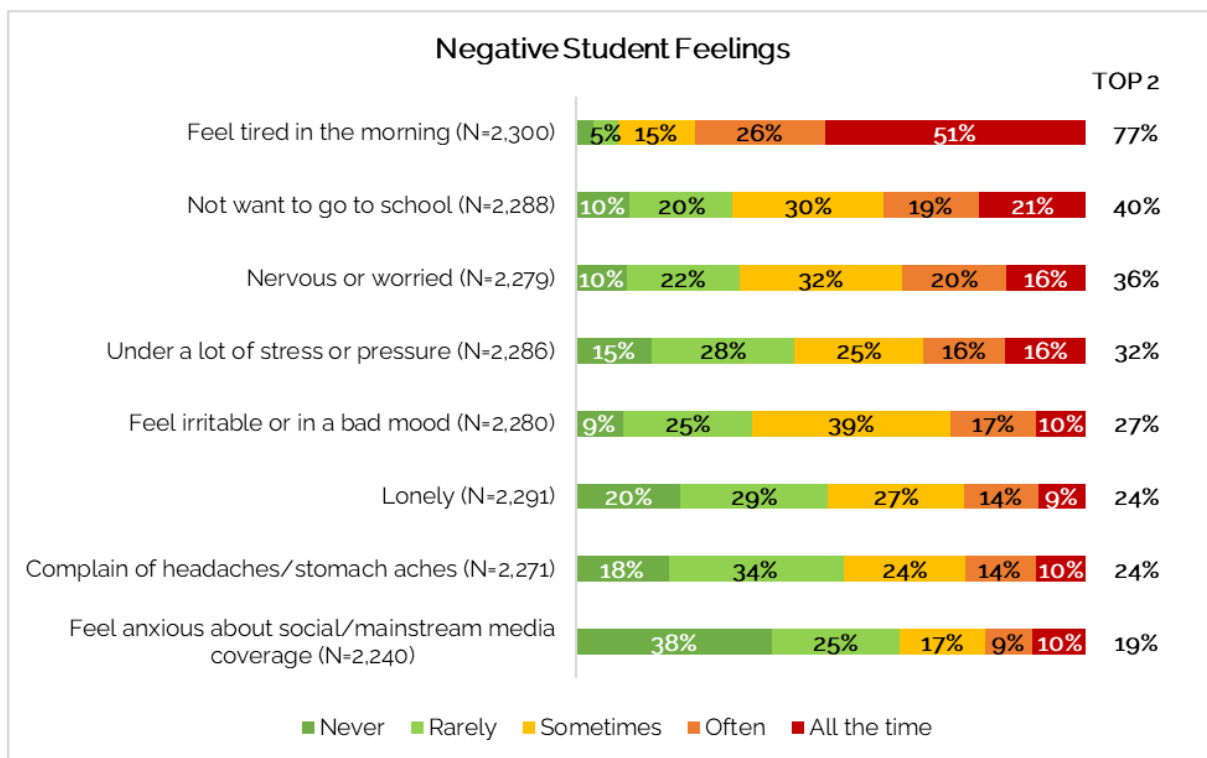
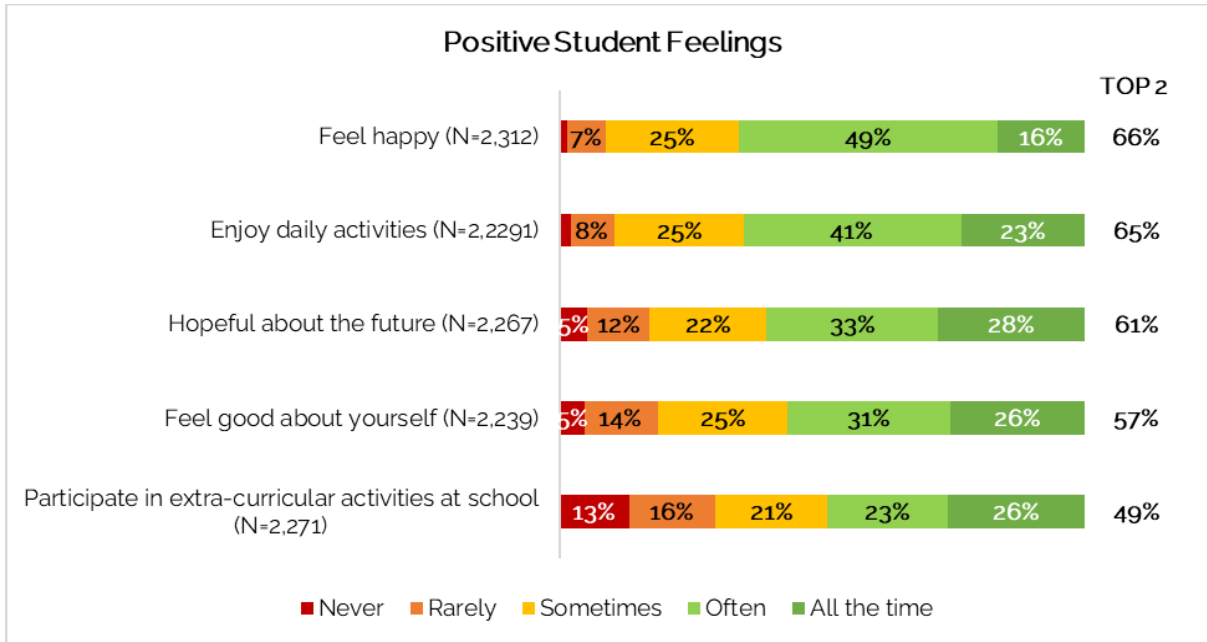
The majority of students have rarely or never experienced discrimination. However, around 1 in 6 students say they often/all the time experienced discrimination as a result of their appearance (BTM2: 19%), hobbies/activities/interests (BTM2: 14%), grades (BTM2: 14%) and clothing (BTM2: 13%).



Q20. (7-8) Have you experienced being stereotyped, prejudice or discrimination at school as a result of your:
Framework: All respondents

Student Feelings

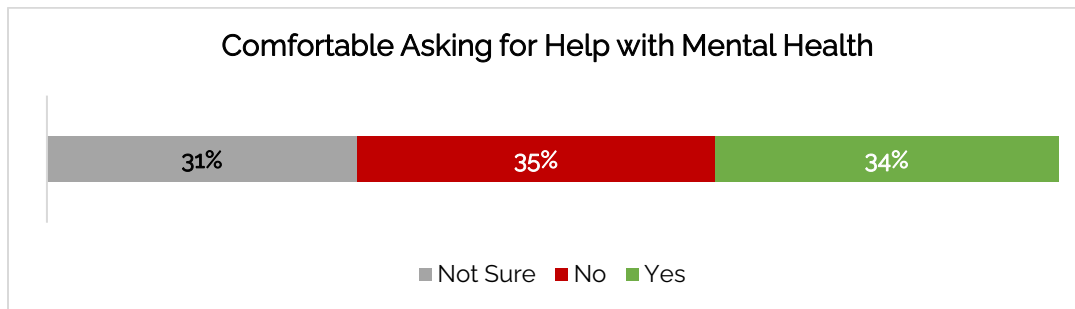
Around two-thirds of students feel happy (TOP2: 66%) and enjoy daily activities (TOP2: 65%) often/all the time. However, about three-quarters of students (TOP2: 77%) often/all the time feel tired in the morning.



Q21. (7-8) In general, how often do you:
Framework: All respondents

Seeking Mental Health Support

Students are almost evenly distributed on being comfortable asking for help with mental health – a third say they are comfortable (34%) while another say they are not (35%).



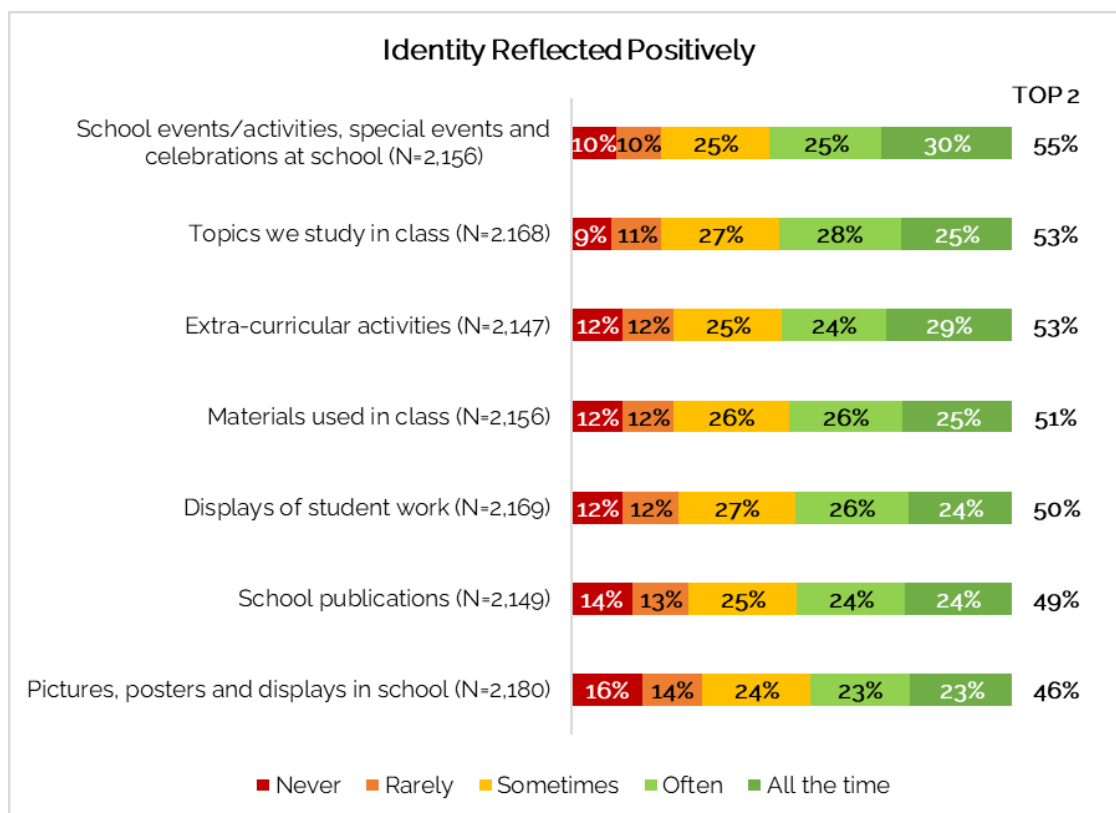
Q22. (7-8) If you required mental health support, would you feel comfortable asking for help with your mental health at school?

Sample size: N=2,329

Framework: All respondents

Positive Self-Reflection

Around half of students often/always see themselves reflected positively at school, especially at school events (TOP2: 55%), in topics they study in class (TOP2: 53%) and extra-curricular activities (TOP2: 53%).

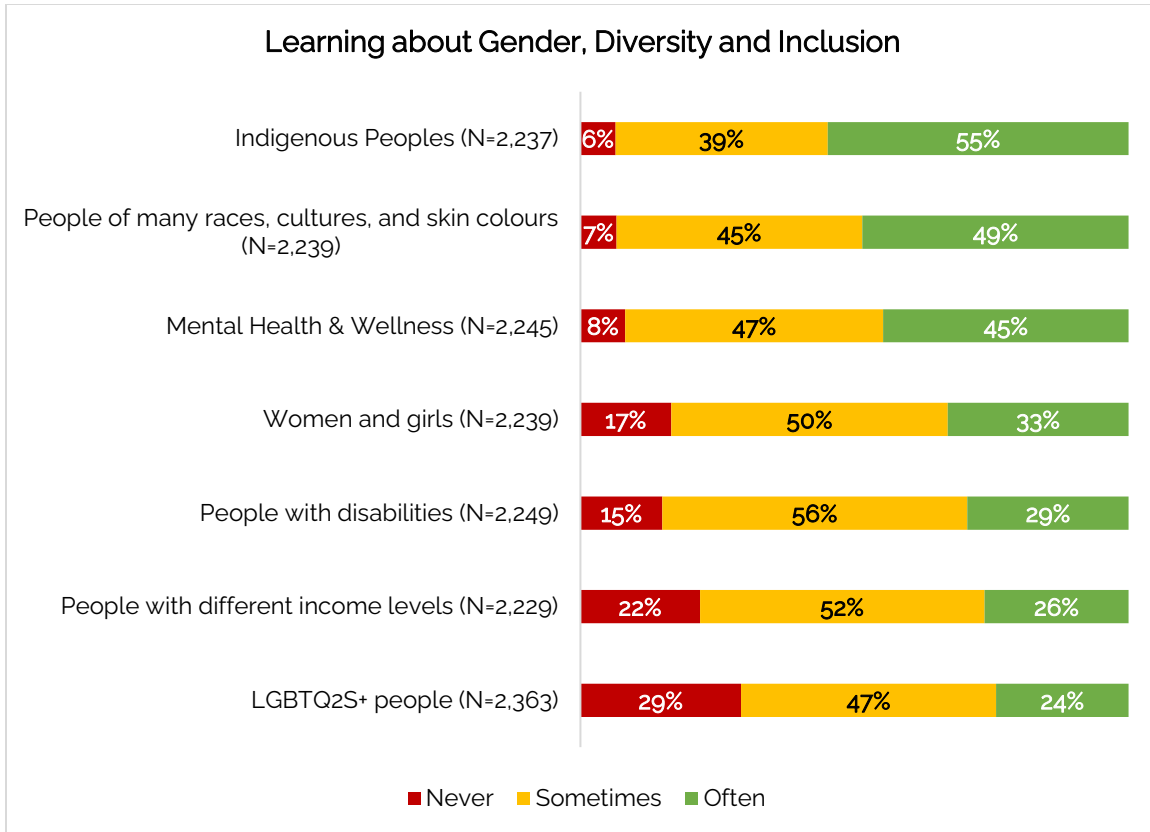


Q23. (7-8) At my school, I see myself/my identity reflected positively in:

Framework: All respondents

Learning About Gender, Diversity and Inclusion

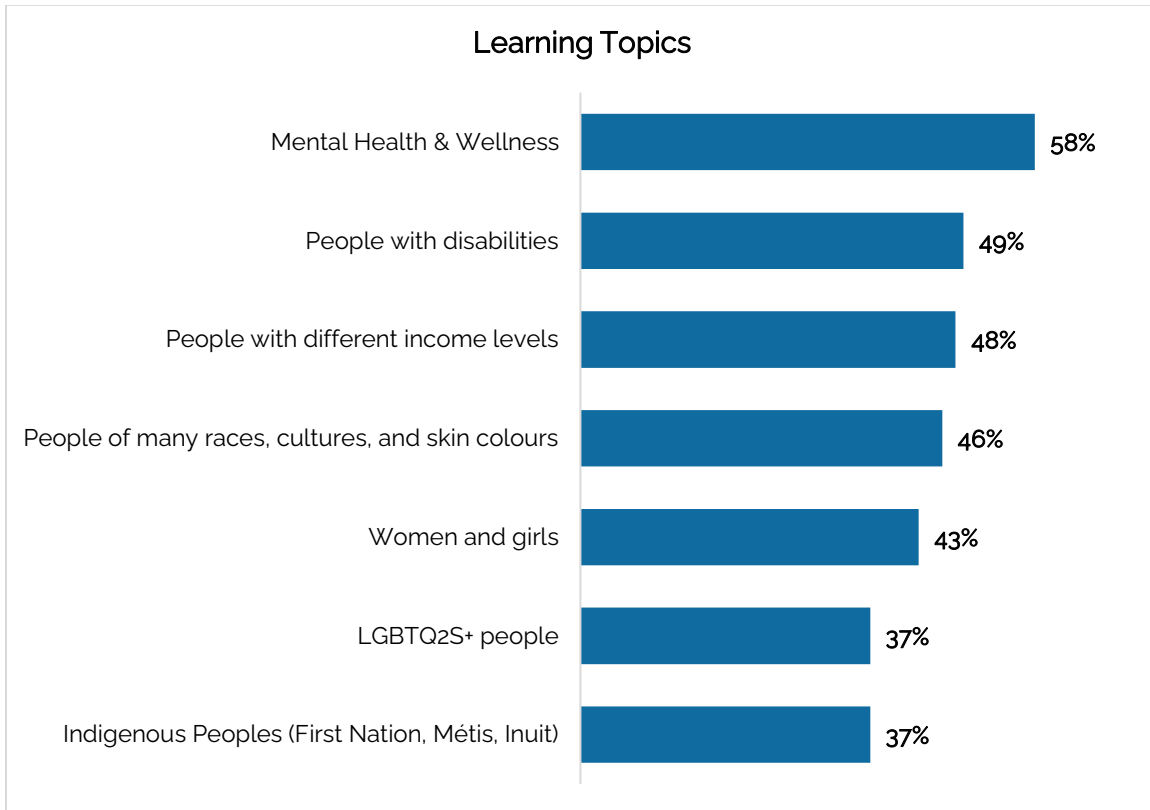
Around half of students say they often learn about the experiences of Indigenous Peoples (55%), while 45% report often learning about mental health and wellness. About 3 in 10 of students (29%) say they have never learned about 2SLGBTQIA+ experiences at school.



Q24. (7-8) In your school, how often have you learned about the experiences and/or achievements of:
Framework: All respondents

LEARNING TOPICS

A majority of students (58%) want other students to learn more about mental health and wellness and for teachers to teach this in the classroom.



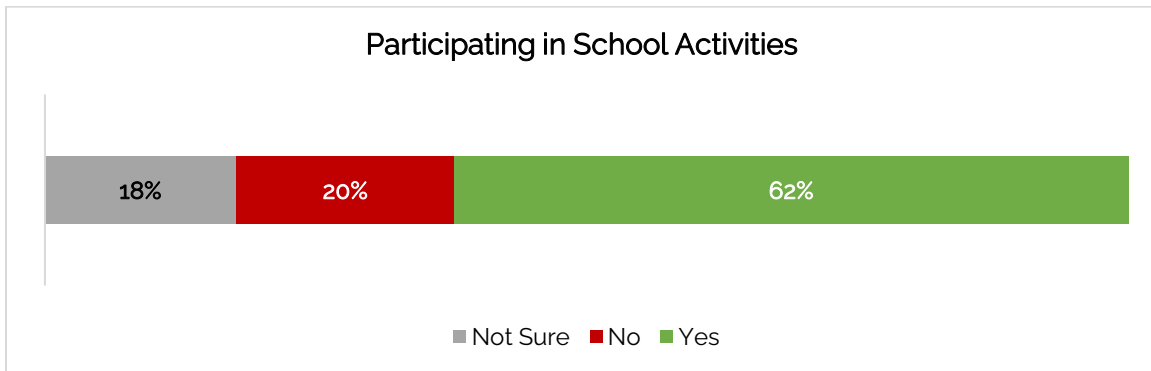
Q25. (7-8) In your school, what would you want other students to learn more about and for teachers to teach in the classroom?

Sample size: N=2,081

Framework: All respondents

Participation in School Activities

Around 3 in 5 students (62%) are participating in school activities this school year.

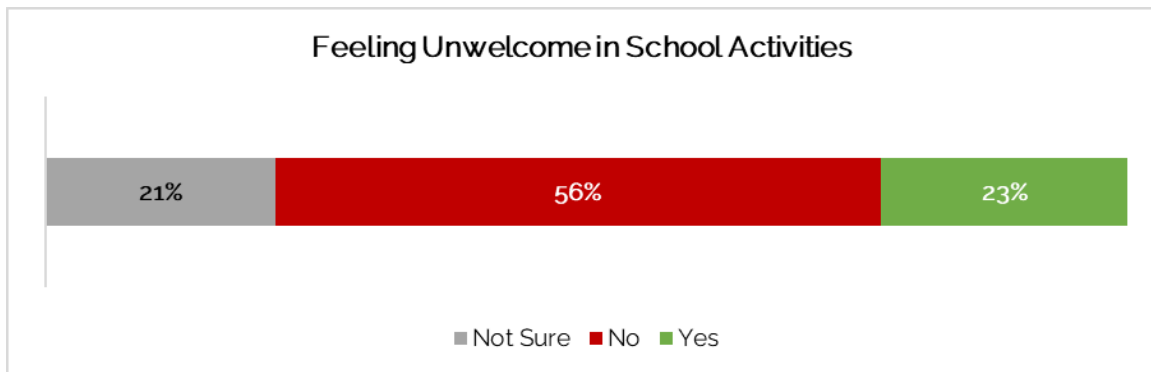


Q26. (7-8) This school year, are you participating in school activities, teams or clubs?

Sample size: N=2,336

Framework: All respondents

However, there are a quarter of students (23%) who say they would like to join a school activity but do not feel welcome there.



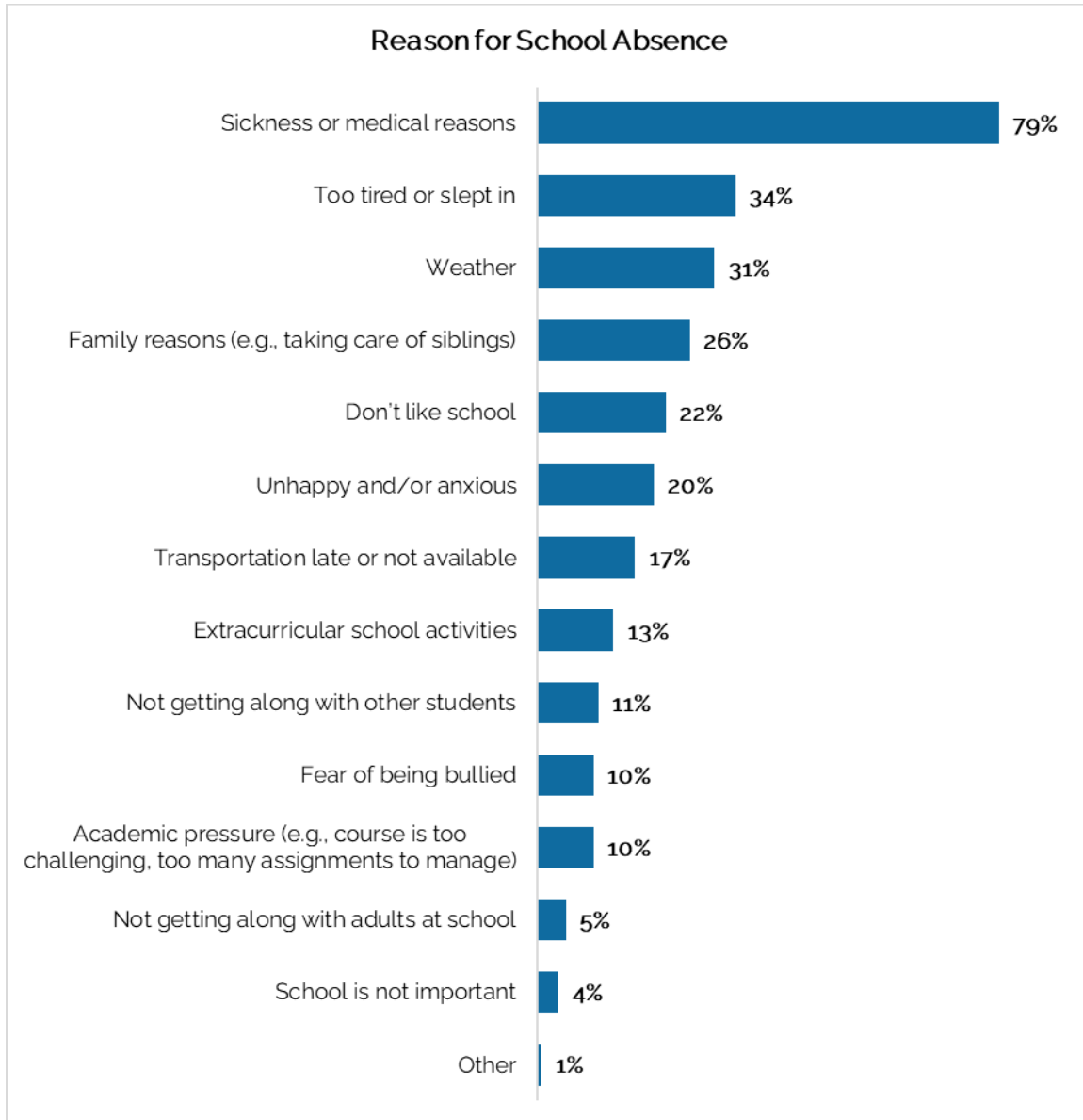
Q27. (7-8) Are there school activities, teams or clubs that you are part of or would like to take part in but do not feel that you are welcome or that you belong?

Sample size: N=2,271

Framework: All respondents

Reason for School Absence(s)

A vast majority of students (79%) were absent from school due to sickness or medical reasons. Other common reasons for students being absent were that they were too tired (34%), the weather (31%) and family reasons (26%).



Q28. (7-8) If you have been absent from school this year, please select all that apply.

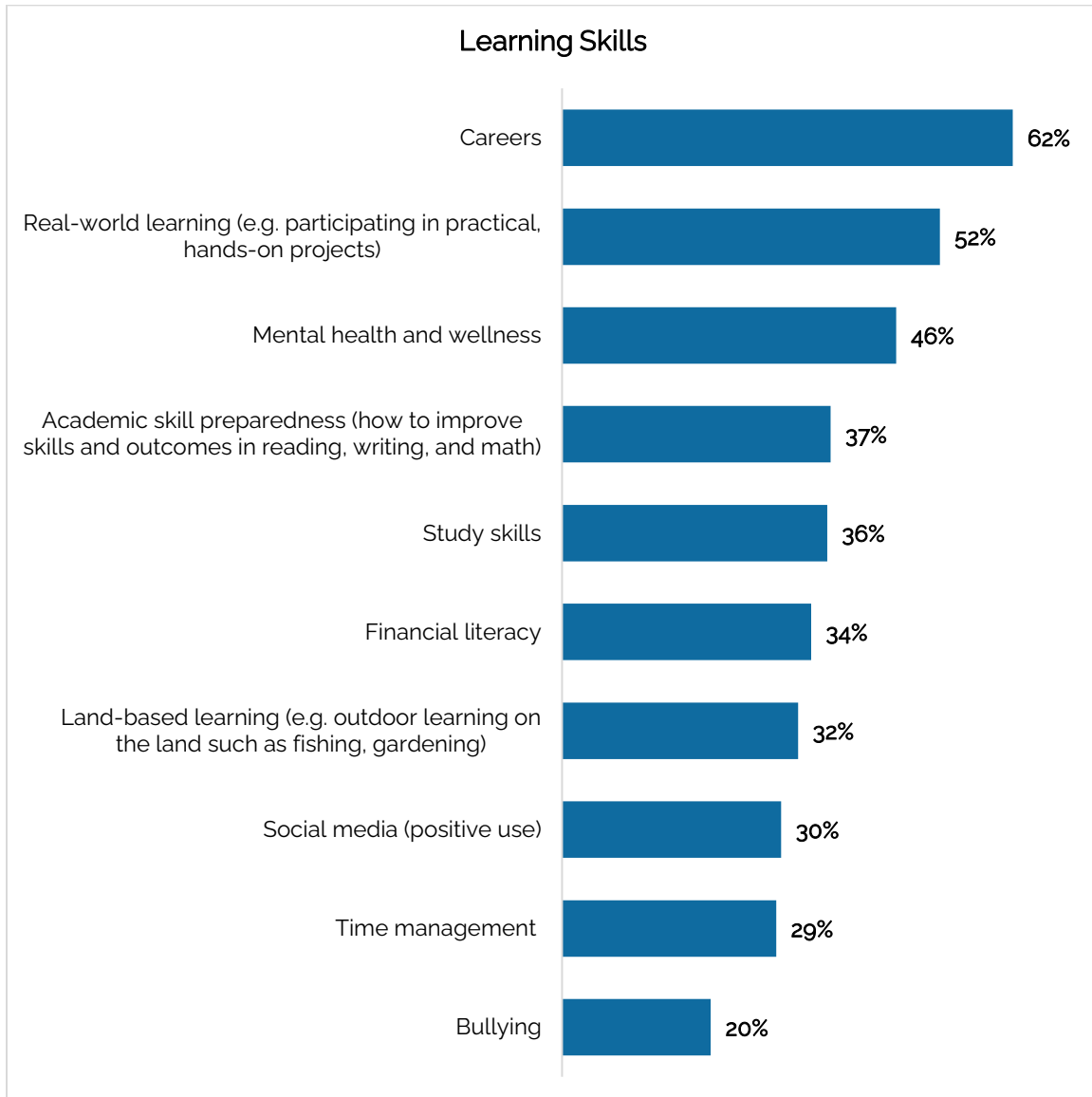
Sample size: N=2,203

Framework: All respondents

LEARNING SKILLS & PATHWAYS

Learning Skills

Students want to learn more about careers (62%), Real-World Learning (52%) and mental health and awareness (46%) the most.



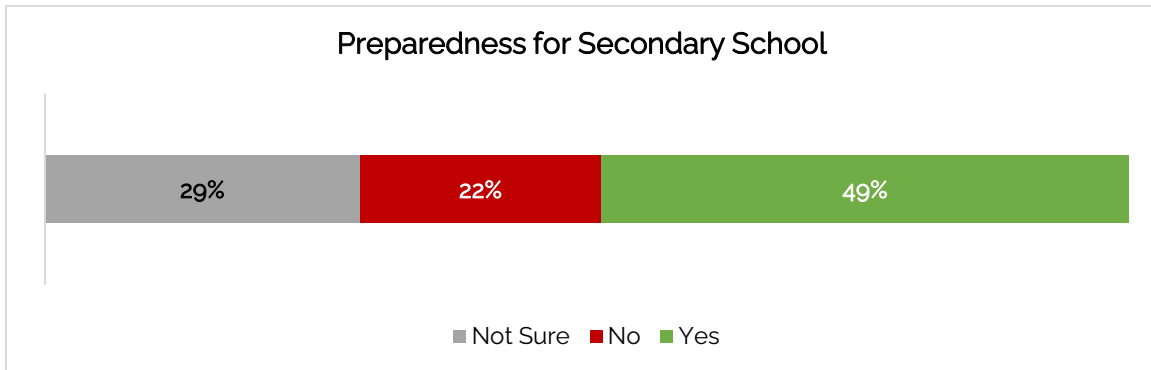
Q29. (7-8) What do you want to learn more about? (Select all that apply)

Sample size: N=2,175

Framework: All respondents

Preparedness for Secondary School

Half of grade 8 students (49%) feel they are prepared for secondary school. The other half say they are not prepared (22%) or are not sure (29%).



Q30C. (Gr 8) As a grade 8 student, do you feel prepared to enter secondary school?

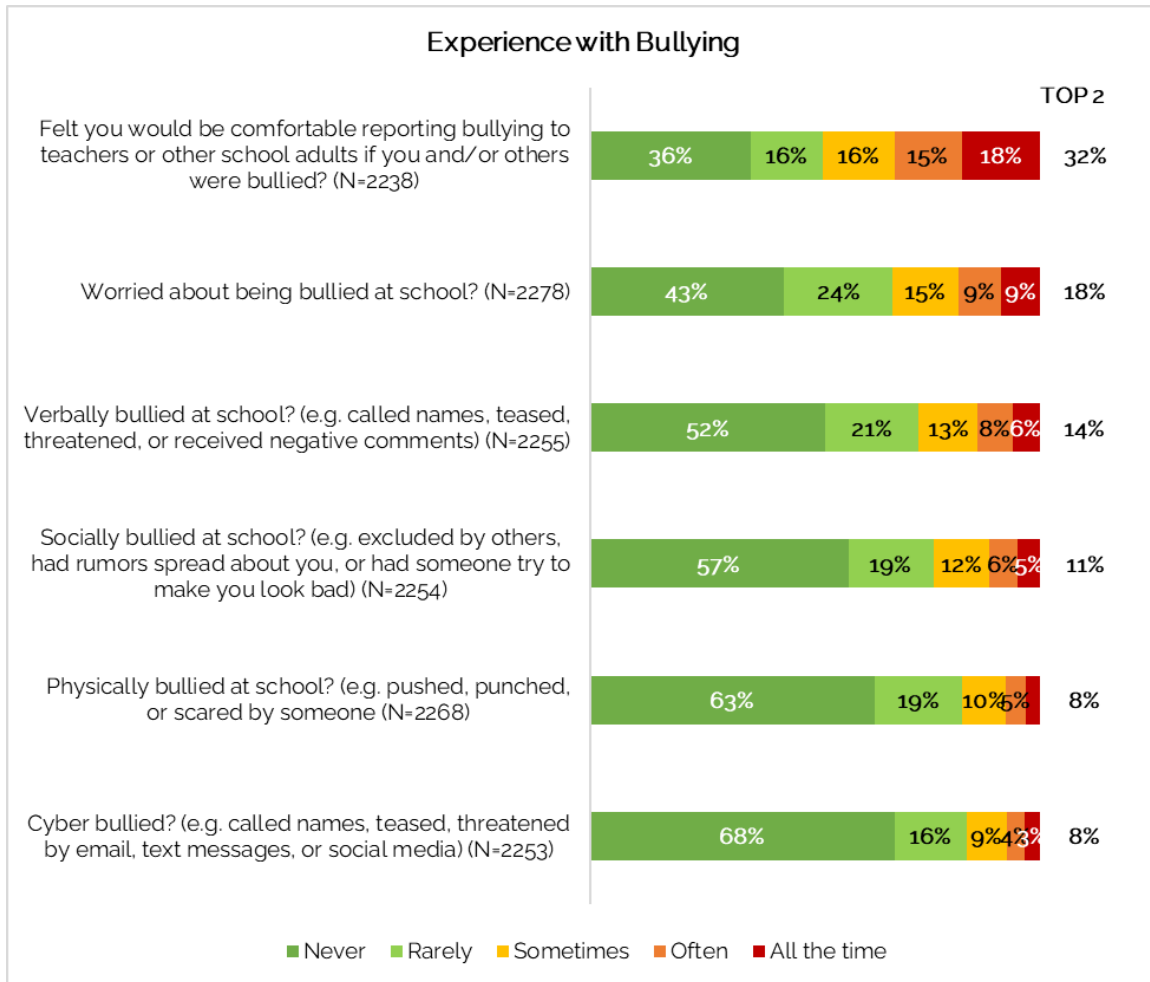
Sample size: N=1,194

Framework: Grade 8 respondents

SAFETY & BULLYING

Experience with Bullying

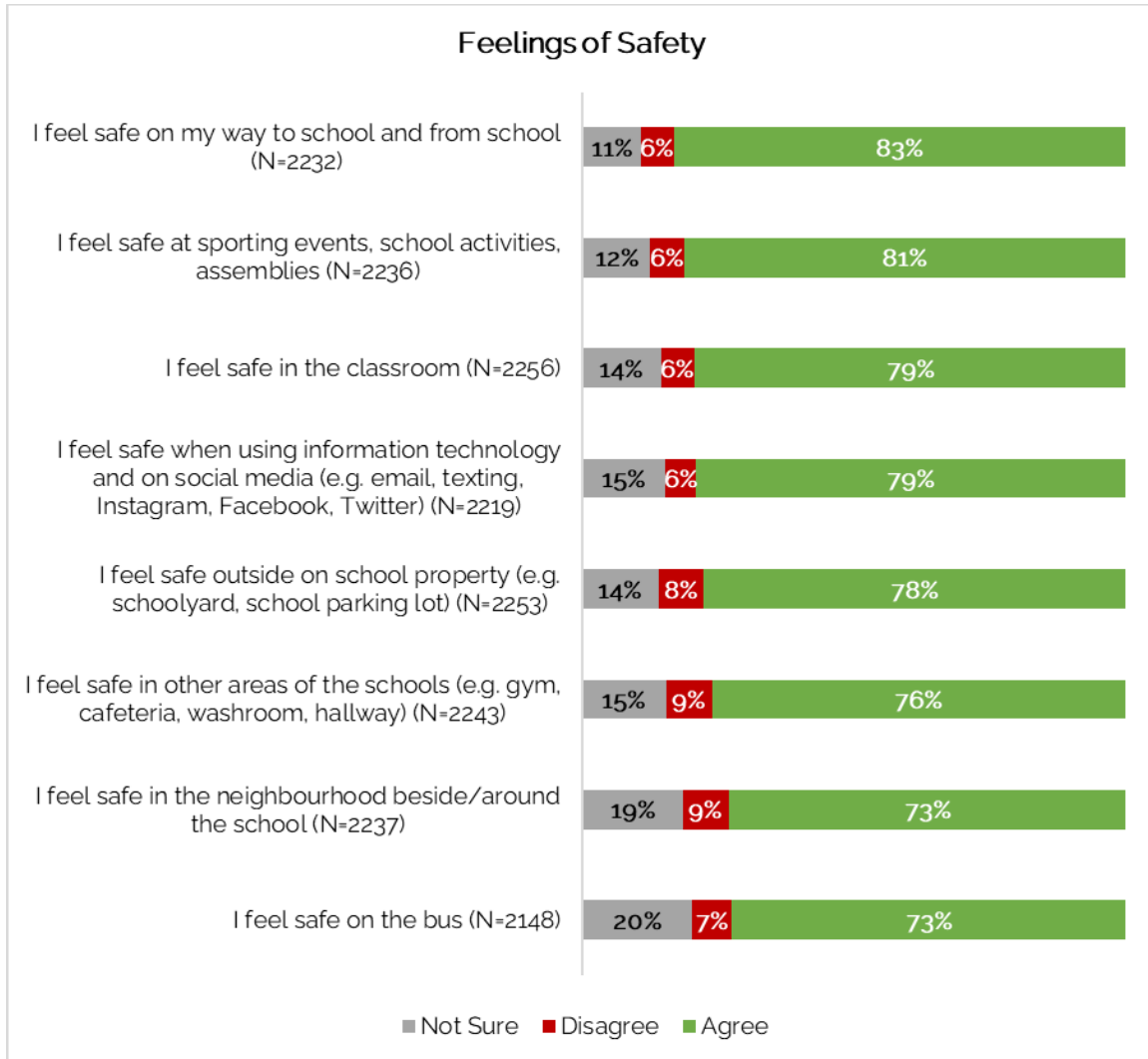
About 1 in 10 students say they are often/all the time been verbally (TOP2: 14%), socially (TOP2: 11%), physically (TOP2: 8%) and cyber bullied (TOP2: 8%). Nearly 2 in 10 students (TOP2: 18%) say they often/all the time worry about being bullied. Meanwhile, only 3 in 10 students (TOP2: 32%) feel comfortable reporting bullying to their teachers.



Q31 (7-8) To the best of your knowledge during the school year, how often have you been:
Framework: All respondents

Feelings of Safety

At least 7 in 10 students feel safe in various locations throughout the school, especially on their way to and from school (83%) and at sporting events, school activities and assemblies (81%).



Q32. (7-8) Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements regarding your sense of safety:

Framework: All respondents

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

A number of strengths and limitations emerged throughout the implementation, data collection and data analysis of the surveys. These include:

- This was the first UCDSB student voice survey collecting identity-based data for Grades 7-8 to be administered in class.
- The response rate for Grades 7-8 was 61%
- District level data will inform the Board Improvement and Equity Plan (BIEP).
- School level data from the dashboards will inform School Improvement and Equity Plans (SIEP).
- As the survey was not completed by 100% of UCDSB students in Grades 7-8, there may be gaps in the data which might not provide a complete picture of the UCDSB's student population.
- The survey was conducted in November 2022. Any demographic or perceptual changes that have occurred since then are not incorporated within the current report.
- Factors that may have affected student responses include lack of students' knowledge in a particular area and the sensitive nature of some of the questions.
- Non-responses, whether participants skipped particular questions or did not complete the survey, may disproportionately represent certain social identity groups. As a result, the survey data may not represent these missing voices.
- Translation of specific concepts or terms may also influence how someone responds to a question. For example, despite the preamble provided before the Race and Ethnic/Cultural background questions, the nuance between how you are perceived by others (i.e., Race) and how you identify yourself (i.e., ethnic/cultural background) may not have been clear to some respondents, as these terms are often used interchangeably.
- Paper copies of the survey were not administered.
- New registrations were not captured after Nov 18, 2022.
- Students in Grades 7-8 were not asked about sexual orientation.
- Students were not asked questions about income or sexual assault.
- Communication with students relied on the student data available in PowerSchool (Student Information System) at the time of the survey launch. The student data did not always reflect all the information in the school records. If there was inaccurate or incomplete student information in the system, this could impact the response rate for a school.
- Survey was translated into top 5 languages, students speaking another language other than the top 5 would not have completed the survey.
- COVID-19 pandemic created some logistical issues when planning and implementing the pilot in spring 2022.

- Administration was pushed back in Nov 2022 with CUPE strike action. The possibility of further CUPE strike action occurred during the first week of the administration which could have impacted early response rates.



WE'RE DOING



NEXT STEPS

The Upper Canada District School Board is committed to preparing all students for a successful life. We are actively working towards reducing achievement gaps and improving learning outcomes for all students, regardless of class, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other historical forms of marginalization. To achieve these goals, **'We Asked, You Said, We're Doing'**- we are working to ensure student voices are heard and remain at the centre of the process and solution(s) for academic and social success.

Some specific actions we are taking to support student equity and inclusion, well-being and student achievement are as follows:

- Holding 'How Do I Sessions' for leaders on how to read, interpret and action school survey data.
- Engaging students in various ways to provide more insights into data by collecting climate data annually which supports school improvement planning and the Board Improvement and Equity Plan.
- Support culturally responsive teaching and learning environments, including Reconciliation in Education.
- Expanding the use of culturally appropriate and meaningful, relevant and engaging texts in classrooms.
- New course offerings in the Mohawk language.
- Support school teams in the development of goals related to equity and wellness, and safe schools and supporting the actioning of these goals (i.e., strengthening staff and student relationships and improving school culture).
- Maintain and strengthen community partnerships with the Indigenous community, and people from Black and other racialized communities, and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.
- Incorporate a well-being focus into professional learning opportunities bringing attention to a student-centred approach focusing on all areas of wellness such as emotional, social, physical, cognitive, and behavioural.
- The UCDSB will be initiating discussions and consultations with various stakeholders (i.e., Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario and Catholic School Board of Eastern Ontario) to explore earlier start times for elementary

students and a later start time for secondary students. Survey findings on student tiredness and reasons for absenteeism support this motion.

- Establishing a UCDSB Student Trustee Equity and Inclusion Sub-Committee.
- Expanding Real-World Learning (RWL) as a means for engaging students with more meaningful course experiences.
- Addition of four new Social Emotional Learning workers to provide school teams with guidance and support in the delivery of evidence-based lesson plans and other activities that promote mental health and social-emotional skill building.
- District Wide Time-Table structure with the potential to deliver mental health and wellness workshops by our Mental Health team.
- Increase awareness of how to access school and community based mental health services.
- Maintain and strengthen community partnerships to support mental health and wellness.
- Engage parents in meaningful ways, including through the Parent Involvement Committee, to build stronger relationships with parents and school community.

The Director's Work Plan and Board Improvement and Equity Plan set direction by outlining priority areas and specific goals which include using identity-based data to identify wellness concerns and act on inequalities found in the system. Creating a school culture that is welcoming and inclusive and that fosters a sense of belonging and overall well-being continues to be a priority of the UCDSB. The development of safe and mentally healthy school and classroom environments will allow for optimal learning and will contribute to student success. "A learning environment of this kind supports not only students' cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development but also their sense of self and/or spirit, their mental health, their resilience, and their overall state of well-being" ([Ministry of Education, 2020-23](#)).

Knowing our student population allows us to create equitable and safe learning environments so we are better prepared to identify and address systemic discrimination and any barriers to student achievement and success. The survey data provides valuable insight into how students and parents feel, reflecting areas of strength and areas for change and improvement.

REFERENCES

Anti-Racism Act (2017). Government of Ontario. Retrieved from:

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/17a15>

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>

Ontario Human Right Commission (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>

Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan (2017). Ministry of Education. Retrieved from:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-education-equity-action-plan#section-1>

School Mental Health Ontario (n.d.). About student mental health in Ontario. <https://smho-smso.ca/about-student-mental-health-in-ontario/#:~:text=In%20Canada%2C17%20%E2%80%93%2040%20per.can%20experience%20positive%20mental%20wellness.>

Statistics Canada. [Table 13-10-0817-01 Socioeconomic characteristics of the lesbian, gay and bisexual population, 2015-2018.](#) <https://doi.org/10.25318/1310081701-eng>

Statistics Canada. 2023. (table). Census Profile. 2021 Census of Population. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001. Ottawa. Released March 29, 2023. Retrieved from:

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed March 29, 2023).

APPENDIX

The following supporting documents [can be found on our website:](#)

We All Belong Survey K-8

We All Belong Survey 9-12

Introduction Letter to Parents & Guardians

Email invitation (from Forum Research Inc.)

Reminder email (from Forum Research Inc.)

UCDSB School Leaders Guide