

Toronto District School Board Adult Students: In-school Experiences by Student Groups

In October 2014, there were 6,172 students registered in the five Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) Adult High Schools. This Adult Student Census Fact Sheet incorporates findings from the Adult Student Census (ASC) survey that was administered to 4,787 students resulting in a response rate of 78%. A total of 4,616 adult students completed the ASC and were linked to the TDSB's School Information Systems; results and percentages reported in this Fact Sheet are based on this group of 4,616 adult students with slight variations in the number of responses for some questions.

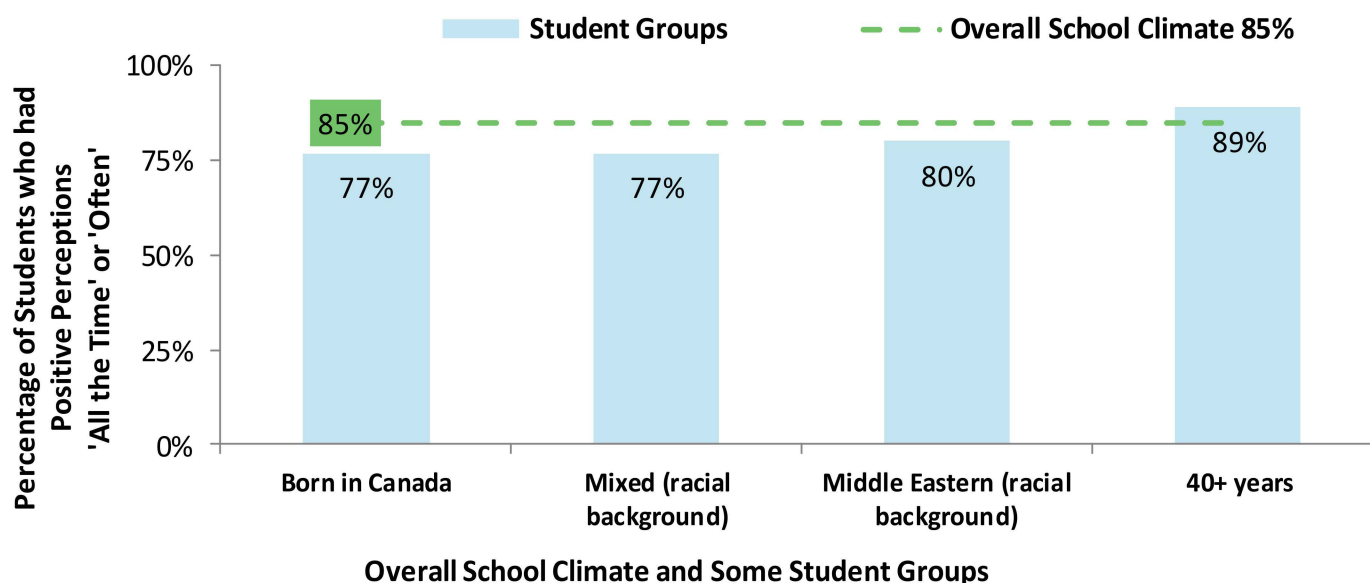
The purpose of this Fact Sheet is to identify various student groups who had higher or lower results than the overall ASC population across key variables regarding In-school Experiences. The student groups shown in the graphs or discussed in the text are *not being compared to each other* but are used to show differences within the ASC population and In-school Experiences. The groups that are presented in this Fact Sheet have larger differences from the overall ASC results in different categories.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

Across the five categories for overall School Climate¹, 85% of the respondents felt a positive experience at school 'All the time' or 'Often'. Figure 1 presents a comparison between the entire ASC population and the lowest and highest results for some student groups by key demographic categories.

Figure 1: Overall School Climate Results Compared to Some Student Groups (Demographics)



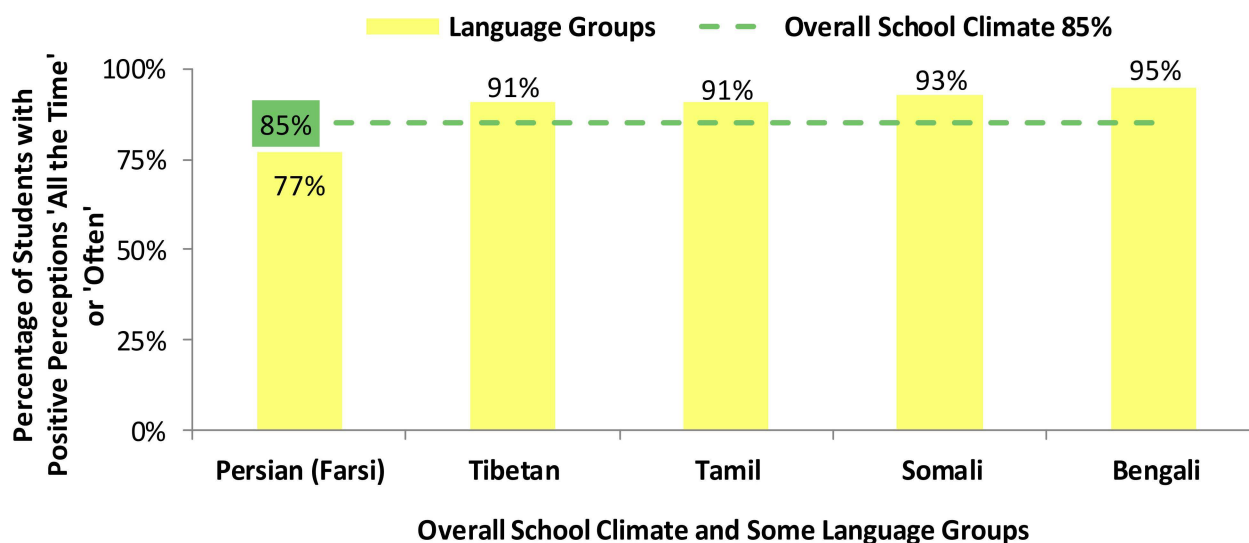
1. Overall School Climate combines responses from the following five ASC variables: students enjoyed school, school was a friendly and welcoming place, school was well looked after, staff got along well with each other, and staff respected students. Combining these variables resulted in 85% of ASC respondents feeling this way 'All the Time' or 'Often'. The result for School Climate within each student group is compared to an overall School Climate result of 85%.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

OVERALL SCHOOL CLIMATE AND LANGUAGE GROUPS

Of the 11 language groups (each of which represent 3.0% or more of the entire ASC population), some had higher results for positive perceptions of School Climate (see Figure 2). Most language groups were close to or above the overall School Climate result of 85% with the exception of Persian (Farsi) (77%).

Figure 2: Overall School Climate Results Compared to Some Student Groups (Languages)



OVERALL SCHOOL CLIMATE AND RACIAL BACKGROUND

Of the 10 self-identified Racial Background groups most had positive results equal to or higher than the ASC overall result for School Climate (85%). The two Racial Background groups that had lower results when compared to the overall ASC results include Mixed (77%) and Middle Eastern (80%).

STUDENT SAFETY

POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT SAFETY AT SCHOOL AND AWAY FROM SCHOOL

A high percentage of adult students (84%) felt safe 'All the Time' or 'Often' while *at school*² and most student groups showed little to no fluctuation from this overall positive Student Safety result.

Student Safety *while away from school*² had an overall result of 74% for the ASC population. There was little to no difference in the positive perceptions of Student Safety while *away from school* across groups. One Racial Background group showed lower results in both student safety categories compared to the overall ASC population: Southeast Asian students *at school* (78%) and Southeast Asian students *away from school* (61%).

In comparison to this overall result, most student groups had similar or higher results. Two student groups with lower results include WSIB claimants' (70%) and students who reported feeling 'unsure' about their future plans (68%).

2. Student Safety at school combines responses from the following three ASC variables showing student's feelings of: safety in the classroom, safety in other parts of the school building, and safety outside on school property. Combining these variables resulted in 84% of students feeling safe 'All the Time' or 'Often' at school. Student Safety away from school combines responses from the following two variables: feeling safe travelling to and from school, and feeling safe on their street or in their neighbourhood; with overall results of 74%.

STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS

POSITIVE PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS

Overall ASC responses showed that in the category of Student-teacher Interactions³ 81% of respondents had positive experiences 'All the Time' or 'Often'. Within the age group variable, one group with higher results included students over 50 years of age (88%) while 21 to 25 year olds had lower results (77%).

OVERALL STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS AND LANGUAGE GROUPS

In comparison to the ASC overall results for Student-teacher Interactions (81%), some language groups with the highest scores were Bengali (88%), Somali (89%), and Tamil (93%). The language group with the lowest result included Persian (Farsi) (73%).

OVERALL STUDENT-TEACHER INTERACTIONS AND RACIAL BACKGROUND

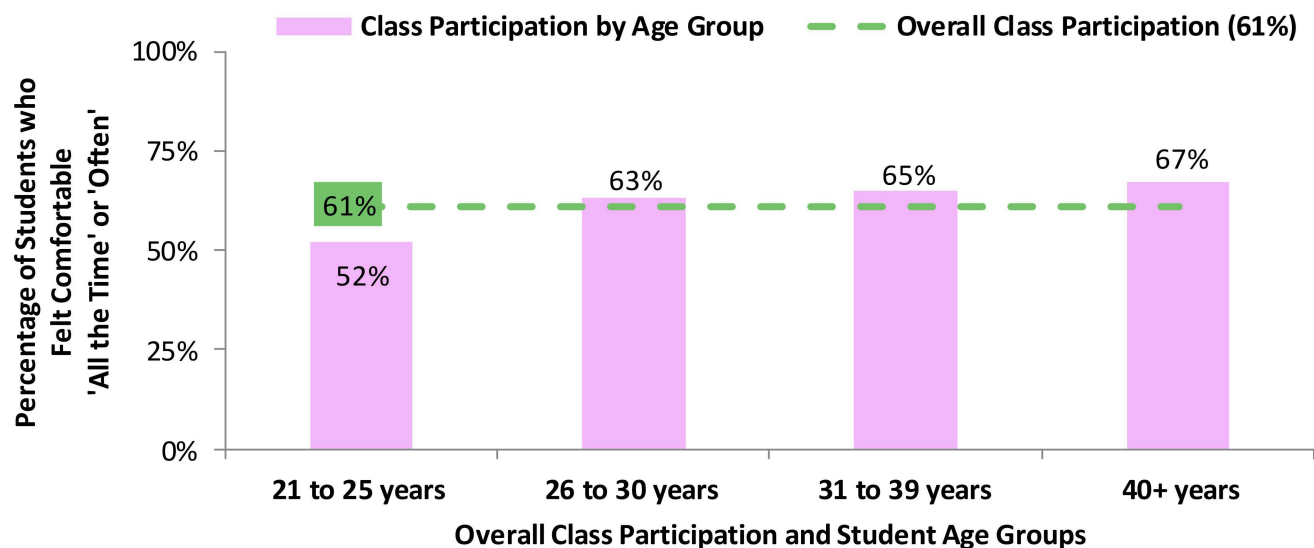
Most self-identified Racial Background groups responded positively regarding their Student-teacher Interactions with little difference compared to the overall ASC result (81%). The highest result was in the Racial Background group South Asian (87%) and lower results were reported for Mixed students (71%).

CLASS PARTICIPATION

POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH CLASS PARTICIPATION

Overall ASC responses showed that in the category Class Participation⁴ 61% of respondents felt comfortable with various classroom activities 'All the Time' or 'Often'. Figure 3 shows the different results for positive experiences in Class Participation across student age groups; Class Participation results increase as student age increases.

Figure 3: Overall Class Participation Results Compared to Student Age Groups



3. Student-teacher Interactions combines responses from the following seven ASC variables with feelings that: teachers care about students, classes stayed busy, difficult work was explained well, a lot was learned in class, classes were interesting, teacher's comments were helpful, and extra help was available. Combining these variables shows that 81% of ASC respondents felt positive about these interactions 'All the Time' or 'Often' with their teachers. The results for Student-teacher Interactions within each group is compared to this overall Student-teacher Interactions results of 81%

4. Class Participation combines responses from the following four variables which showed students' feeling comfortable in class answering questions, speaking up to give an opinion, participating in group discussions, and participating in study groups. The result for Class Participation within each group is compared to an overall Class Participation result of 61%.



CLASS PARTICIPATION

OVERALL CLASS PARTICIPATION AND TIME THAT STUDENTS HAD LIVED IN CANADA

Compared to the Overall Class Participation (61%) differences were found in the category 'time that students had lived in Canada'. The following groups of students were all equal to or slightly higher than overall results:

- students who had arrived in Canada within the last four years
- students who had arrived in Canada between 5 and 9 years, or
- students who had lived in Canada for more than 10 years.

However, in the one category of students born in Canada, Class Participation was lowest with results at 51%.

OVERALL CLASS PARTICIPATION AND LANGUAGE GROUPS

Compared to the overall ASC results on Class Participation (61%) some of the language groups with the highest results included the following: Dari (70%), Bengali (73%), and Tamil (77%). The language groups with the lowest comfort levels for Class Participation included Spanish (49%) and Tibetan (55%).

OVERALL CLASS PARTICIPATION AND RACIAL BACKGROUND

Compared to the overall ASC results on Class Participation (61%) the self-identified Racial Background group with the highest result was South Asian (71%). The three Racial Background groups with the lowest results in Class Participation include Latin American (49%), Southeast Asian (51%), and East Asian (54%).

SELF-CONFIDENCE

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One ASC question asked students if they felt confident about their upcoming school year. Results showed interesting results for students who reported 'lacking confidence'. These students had the:

- lowest result for positive School Climate perceptions (66%) compared to the overall ASC population (85%)
- lowest result for Student Safety *while away from school* (65%) compared to the overall ASC population (74%), and

KEY FINDINGS

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Most Adult students reported positive experiences at school (85%). Students born in Canada, of self-identified Mixed race, of Middle Eastern background, and speaking Persian (Farsi) were less likely to report positive experiences while students speaking Tibetan, Tamil, Somali, and Bengali were more likely.

A high percentage of students felt safe at school (84%) and most felt safe away from school (74%). Students of self-identified Southeast Asian background reported feeling somewhat less safe.

Most students (81%) reported positive Student-teacher Interactions, with older students being more positive and younger students being less positive. Persian-Farsi-speaking students and students of Mixed background were less positive, while those of South Asian background and those speaking Bengali, Somali, and Tamil were more positive.

A majority of students (61%) reported positive experiences with Class Participation; students between 21 and 25 years of age reported less positive experiences and students over 40 years of age had higher results. Students born in Canada, speaking Spanish and Tibetan, and from Latin, Southeast Asian and East Asian backgrounds were less likely to report positive experiences with Class Participation. Students from South Asian backgrounds and those speaking Dari, Bengali, and Tamil, were more likely to report positive Class Participation.

4. Class Participation combines responses from the following four variables which showed students' feeling comfortable in class answering questions, speaking up to give an opinion, participating in group discussions, and participating in study groups. The results for Class Participation within each group is compared to overall Class Participation results of 61%.

