

## TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Overall Experience and Participation at School

- This Fact Sheet examines the TDSB's 2011 Student Census findings on students' perceptions of their overall school experience and the support they received from school, as well as their participation in class and school activities.
- Comparisons are made for items common to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census, and areas of significant change are highlighted.
- As shown in this document, one of the significant findings in the TDSB's 2011 Student Census is the overall positive shift in students' perceptions of their school and their overall school experience.

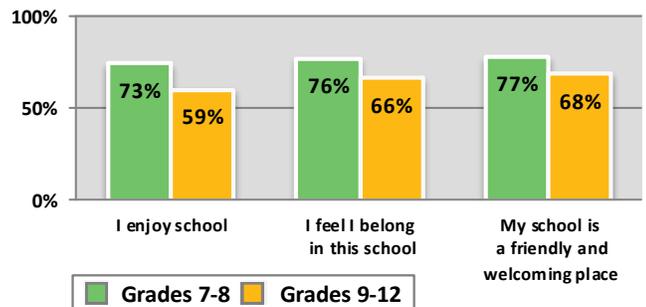
### Student Perceptions about Overall School Experience

#### General Population

*Since 2006, increasing proportions of Grade 7-12 students felt positive about their overall school experience; these proportions were, however, higher among students in Grades 7-8 than those in secondary school.*

- Compared to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census, more students in the TDSB's 2011 Student Census, in both the middle- and secondary-school grades, reported enjoying school and found their school a friendly and welcoming place (with increases ranging from 6-9%).
- While the majority of Grade 7-12 students reported that they enjoy school (64%), feel they belong in school (69%), and find their school a friendly and welcoming place (71%), there were noticeable proportions who felt less positive, especially among secondary school students. For instance, about three quarters of Grade 7-8 students reported positively about their overall school experience, whereas the proportion for secondary school students were lower - about two thirds (59-68%).

**Student Overall School Experience by Grade Grouping (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")

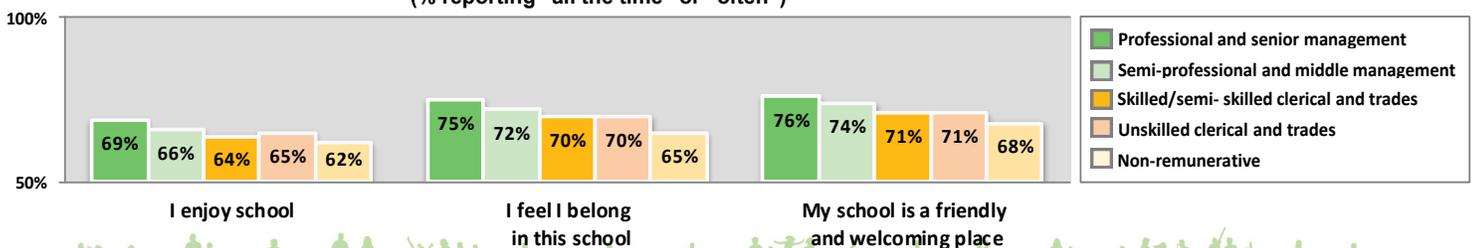


#### Differences by Demographic Groupings

*Students who identified themselves as Black, Latino, and/or LGBTQ, as well as students from the lowest socio-economic status sector were less likely to feel positive about their overall school experience.*

- Further analysis shows no gender differences in students' overall school experience in terms of enjoying school, feeling that they belong, and feeling welcome at school.
- Among racialized groups, South Asian students reported most favourably (over 70%), while the corresponding percentages for Black students were significantly lower (56-63%) and Latino students (59-66%).
- Regarding sexual orientation, high school students who identified themselves as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, or queer) were less positive (by at least 10%) than their heterosexual counterparts.
- The percentages of students with positive feelings about their school experience seemed to decline steadily along the socio-economic status (SES) continuum (according to parent/guardian occupations as reported by students), with the smallest proportions among those from the lowest SES sector (see graph below).

**Student Overall School Experience by SES (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")



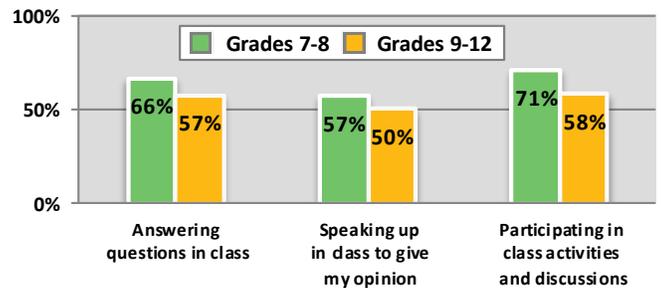
## Student Participation in Class

*Secondary school students felt less comfortable than Grade 7-8 students in class participation. In fact, since 2006 decreasing proportions of Grade 9-12 students reported feeling comfortable participating in class.*

### General Population

- Grade 7-8 students were more likely than Grade 9-12 students to feel comfortable participating in class.
- Compared to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census, there were lower percentages of Grade 9-12 students who felt comfortable answering questions (-6%), speaking up to give opinions (-5%), or participating in activities and discussions (-4%) in class all the time or often.

Comfort Level in Class Participation by Grade Grouping (2011)  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")

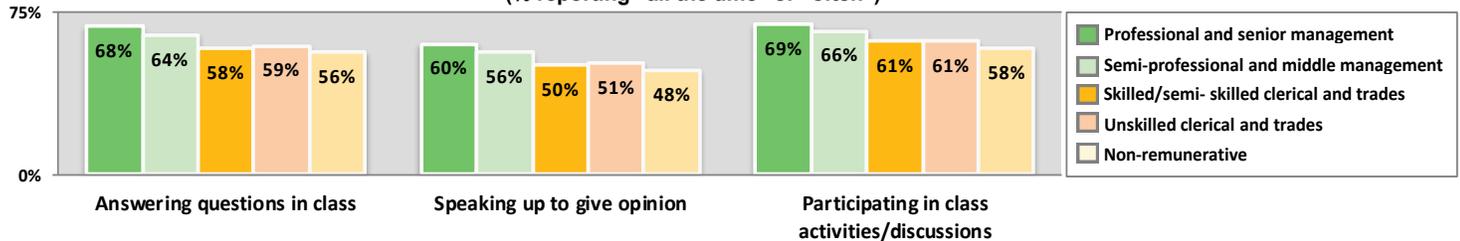


### Differences by Demographic Groupings

*Students who felt less comfortable tended to be female, East Asian, Southeast Asian, Aboriginal, and/or from lower SES backgrounds.*

- Female students were less comfortable than their male counterparts in answering questions (54% versus 66%), speaking up to give opinions (47% versus 57%), or participating in activities and discussions (57% versus 66%) in class.
- Among racialized groups, Middle Eastern (65%), White (62%), and South Asian (61%) students felt most comfortable participating in class; East Asian (47%), Southeast Asian (48%), and Aboriginal (49%) students felt least comfortable.
- Heterosexual and LGBTQ students reported a similar comfort level in terms of class participation.
- Students from higher SES backgrounds were more likely to feel comfortable in class participation than those from lower SES sectors (see graph below).

Comfort Level in Class Participation by SES (2011)  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")



## Students Taking on Helping or Leading Roles at School

### General Population

*Grade 7-8 students were more likely than Grade 9-12 students to have played a helping or leading role at school.*

- Grade 7-8 students were more likely than their secondary school counterparts to have taken on specific roles to help other students (62% versus 47%) or to have led an activity, a group, or a team at school (80% versus 73%).
- Similar percentages of Grade 7-8 and Grade 9-12 students took on such helping roles as tutors (14-18%), peacemakers (15-17%), mentors (9-11%), and school ambassadors (6-8%). While 38% of Grade 7-8 students had been reading buddies, the percentage for secondary school students was lower (14%).

### Differences by Demographic Groupings

*Aboriginal or Latino students, and/or students from lower SES backgrounds were less likely to have taken on helping or leading roles at school.*

- While there was little variance by gender or sexual orientation regarding students taking on leading or helping roles at school, LGBTQ students were somewhat more likely to have been peacemakers than other students (22% versus 16%).
- At school, Aboriginal students were least likely to have led an activity, a group, or a team compared to other students (58% versus 75%), while Latino students were least likely to have taken on a helping role (41% versus 55%). On the other hand, East Asian students were most likely to have tutored other students at school (28% versus 19%).
- The percentages of students who took on leading roles at school decreased gradually along the socio-economic status (SES) continuum, from 80% among students from the highest SES sector to 71% among students from the lowest SES background. A similar trend was found in terms of helping roles (from 56% to 49%).

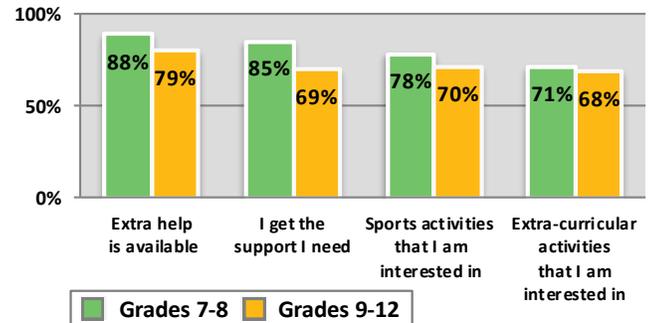
## Student Perceptions about Support and Activities Offered at School

### General Population

*Most students, especially those in Grades 7-8, agreed that their school offered them extra help and the support they needed, as well as the sports and extra-curricular activities they were interested in.*

- Similar to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census findings, Grade 7-8 students agreed that their school had offered them extra help and the support they needed, as well as extra-curricular or sports activities they were interested in.
- Since 2006 there was a slight (4%) increase in the proportion of Grade 9-12 students who indicated that their school offered them extra help, and extra-curricular activities that they were interested in. Nonetheless, their percentages as a whole were still lower than those of their Grade 7-8 counterparts, especially with regard to getting the support they needed to learn to the best of their ability (69% versus 85%).

**Support and Activities at School by Grade Grouping (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")

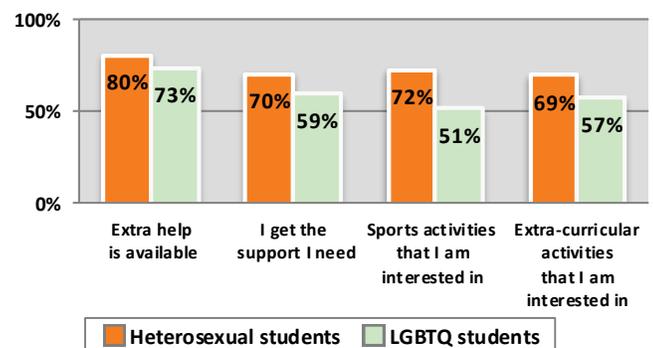


### Differences by Demographic Groupings

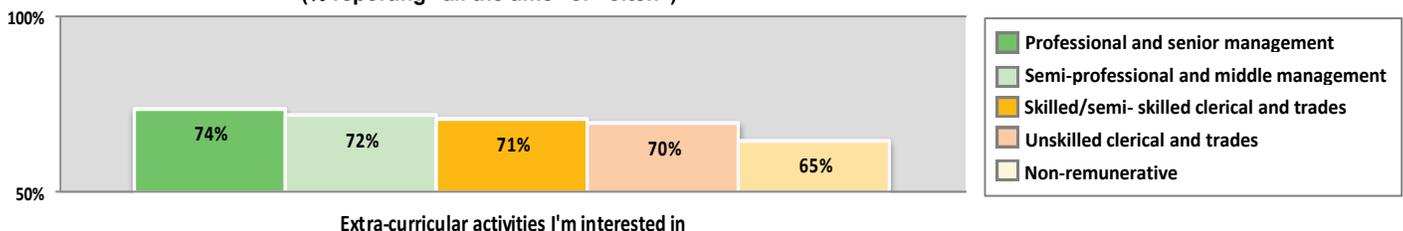
*Students' perceptions about the support and activities offered at their school differed in varying degrees by gender, race, sexual orientation, and SES.*

- There was not much gender variation in how Grade 7-12 students perceived what their school offered. The only slight difference was that male students were more likely than female students to agree that their school offered sports activities that they were interested in (76% versus 70%).
- Similar proportions of Grade 7-12 students across all racialized groups agreed their school offered them extra help (82%) or the support they needed to learn to their best ability (74%). However, Aboriginal students were less likely to feel their school provided the type of extra-curricular activities they were interested in (60%) compared to the overall student population (69%). Furthermore, while 73% of all students indicated that their school offered sports activities they liked, Aboriginal and East Asian students were less likely to agree (61% and 65%), and Black students were most likely to agree (79%).
- At the secondary school level, LGBTQ students were much less likely than heterosexual students to agree that their school offered them extra help and the support they needed, or the extra-curricular and sports activities they were interested in. This is particularly the case in sports with a difference of 21 percentage points (see graph at right).
- All Grade 7-12 students, regardless of SES background, agreed similarly about the extra help, support, and sports activities their school offered them. The only noticeable difference was that students from the lowest SES background were least likely to indicate that their school offered them extra-curricular activities they were interested in (see graph below).

**Support and Activities at School by Sexual Orientation (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")



**Extra-curricular Activities by SES Background (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")

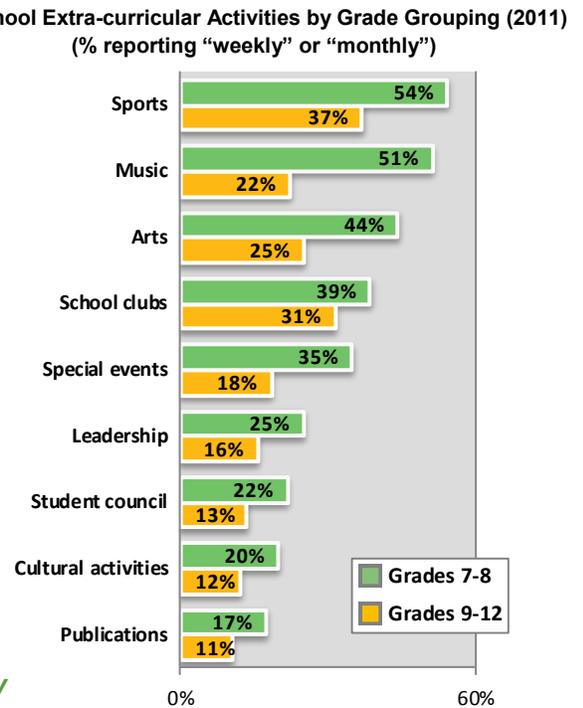


## Student Participation in School Extra-curricular Activities

### General Population

*Participation rates in school extra-curricular activities were higher among Grade 7-8 students than their secondary school counterparts. In fact, since 2006 participation rates among the middle-school students have increased in many areas, while increases for Grade 9-12 students were smaller and in fewer areas.*

- Consistent with the TDSB's 2006 Student Census findings, Grade 7-8 students were more actively involved than the Grade 9-12 students in extra-curricular activities at school.
- Among the Grade 7-8 students, the most regularly attended activities (weekly or monthly) were sports, music, and arts (e.g., visual arts, drama, and dance), followed by school clubs, school special events, leadership, and school council activities. Cultural group activities and student publication activities/clubs were attended regularly by less than 20% of Grade 7-8 students.
- Compared to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census, extra-curricular participation rates among Grade 7-8 students had increased by 5-10%, especially in school clubs, arts, leadership programs, cultural group activities, and music.
- At the secondary school level, 22-37% of the students regularly attended sports, school clubs, arts, and music. Compared to the previous Census, the two areas which showed some higher participation rates were school clubs (+7%) and arts (+4%) (see graph at right).



### Differences by Demographic Groupings

*Differences in patterns of extra-curricular participation were found by gender, racialized background, sexual orientation, and SES.*

- Female students were much more likely than male students to participate in arts programs (38% versus 25%) and school clubs (38% versus 30%), while the reverse was true with respect to sports activities (34% females versus 49% males).
- While relatively even proportions (31%) of racialized groups participated in arts, participation patterns in other extra-curricular activities varied from group to group. For instance, Black (49%), White, and Middle Eastern (46%) students had higher participation rates in sports, whereas East Asian and Southeast Asian (34-35%) students had the lowest rates in this area. On the other hand, East Asian students had the highest participation rate (38%) in music, and Middle Eastern students had the lowest (25%). East Asian (42%) and South Asian (39%) were more likely to take part in school clubs than others, while Aboriginal and Latino students were least likely to participate. South Asian students had the highest participation rate (24%) in leadership programs, but East Asian students had the lowest (13%). Regarding cultural group activities, Aboriginal students had a higher participation rate than the rest of the population (27% versus 14%).
- Compared to the overall population, LGBTQ students were more likely to participate in arts activities (34% versus 24%), but were much less likely to take part in sports (27% versus 38%).
- Further analysis shows that students from higher SES backgrounds were more likely to participate regularly in school sports, music, and school clubs than students from lower SES sectors (see graph below).

**Participation in Extra-curricular Activities in School by SES (2011)**  
(% reporting "all the time" or "often")

