

Census Portraits

Understanding Our Students' Ethno-racial Backgrounds



Research & Information Services

Aboriginal Students

Black Students

East Asian Students

Latin American Students

Middle Eastern Students

South Asian Students

Southeast Asian Students

White Students



Census Portraits: Understanding Our Students' Ethno-racial Backgrounds

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The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has the world's most racially diverse student population. While earlier TDSB studies have shown diversity *among* racialized groups, there is also great diversity *within* racialized groups, as each is made up of sub-groups from varied cultural, linguistic and/or religious backgrounds or countries of origin. 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 racialized group; and
- to target interventions to ensure the needs of all students are addressed effectively and equitably.

Content

The *Census Portraits* folder contains individual portraits for the following groups represented in the TDSB's student population:¹

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| ● Aboriginal | ● Middle Eastern |
| ● Black | ● South Asian |
| ● East Asian | ● Southeast Asian |
| ● Latin American | ● White |

Each portrait describes the background, experiences, and achievement levels of the major ethno-cultural sub-groups within each racialized group² under the following sections:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Historical Context ³ | • Life in School |
| • Ethno-racial/Family Background | • Student Success |
| • Life Outside of School | • Highlights of Census Findings |

Data Sources

The findings generated in these portraits are based on data combined from three internal sources - *2006 Student Census*, *2008 Parent Census*, and the Board's central academic achievement databases. Information on students' cultural backgrounds is derived from the Board's Census data and is based mainly on their parents' country of birth. For more information about the *2006 Student Census* and *2008 Parent Census*, refer to the TDSB website: www.tdsb.on.ca/studentcensus.

Acknowledgements

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- Black – Dr. Carl James, Professor, Faculty of Education, York University
- East Asian – Maria Yau, Research & Information Services, TDSB
- Latin American – Dr. Rubén Gaztambide-Fernández, Assistant Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), & Cristina Guerrero, Graduate Student, OISE, University of Toronto
- Middle Eastern – Dr. Sarfaroz Niyozov, Associate Professor, OISE, University of Toronto
- South Asian – Sangeetha Navaratnam, Graduate Student, OISE, University of Toronto
- Southeast Asian – Maria Yau, Research & Information Services, TDSB
- White – Lisa Rosolen and Dr. Rob Brown, Research & Information Services, TDSB

¹ Students identifying as having a Mixed racial background were not included in the analysis because the varied combinations within this group were so great that it was not possible to identify a few major sub-groups for comparison.

² For Aboriginal students, no sub-group breakdown is provided due to the small number of students who identified themselves as Aboriginal in the *Census*. Therefore, the Aboriginal portrait compares the findings for Aboriginal students as a whole with those of the overall population.

³ Historical background is provided for a better understanding of the various racial groups and does not imply causality of student experiences and academic achievement.



Census Portraits East Asian Students

Aboriginal • Black • East Asian • Latin American • Middle Eastern • South Asian • Southeast Asian • White

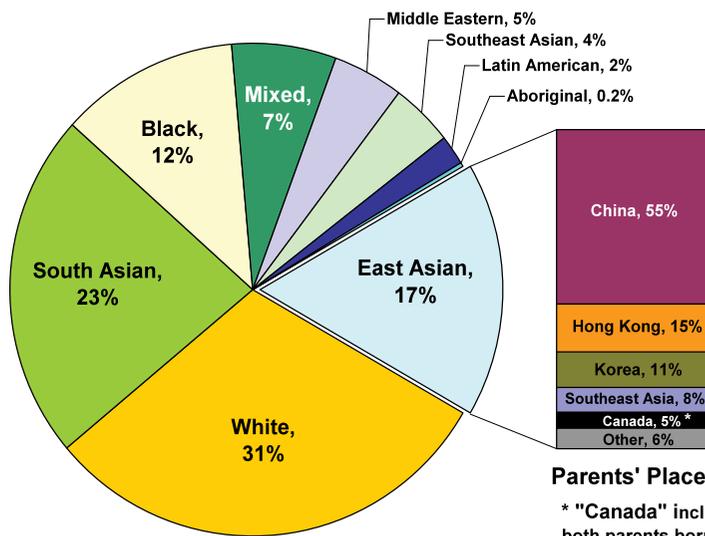
Some Historical Context

The first wave of East Asian immigration to Canada was marked by the arrival of Chinese male laborers in the mid-19th century as railway workers in British Columbia. After the completion of the railway in the late 19th century, the door for Chinese immigration was virtually closed until 1967 when Canada's Immigration Act was amended. Japanese immigrants, mainly young males, were the second group of East Asians arriving in the 1890s as farmers, fishermen, and merchants in the West. During the Second World War, Japanese immigration stopped altogether and resumed again after 1967.

The second wave of Japanese immigrants were mostly educated and worked in the service sector and skilled trades. South Korean immigration to Canada, especially to Toronto, also began in the late 1960s. But the largest East Asian immigrants, between the late 1960s and the 1990s, were from Hong Kong (then a British colony). In the 1970s and 1980s, growing numbers of young adults from the colony came as visa students to attend post-secondary institutions. After graduation, many stayed and established themselves in Ontario. Today, they are the parents of many of our second-generation immigrant children. Immigration from Hong Kong continued to grow (more as families or independents) until the return of the colony to Chinese sovereignty in 1997. In the 2000s, with its open-door policy, mainland China has surpassed Hong Kong as the largest source of East Asian immigration. East Asian students also made up nearly half of the total visa students in Canada in the late 1990s – with South Korea being the largest supplier of international students to Canada (21%), followed by China (16%) and Japan (8%).

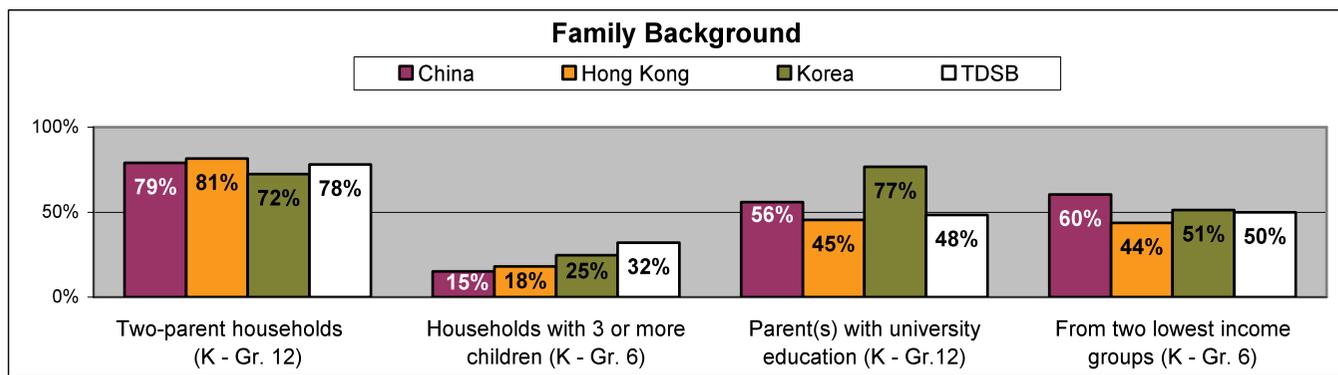
Ethno-racial and Family Background

- East Asian students make up 17% of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) population (about 45,000 students).
- Most of their parents are from China (55%), Hong Kong (15%), Korea (11%), and Southeast Asia (8%). Just 5% have one or both parents born in Canada.
- Most students with Hong Kong parents were born in Canada (78%). However, most students with parents from China (64%) and Korea (70%) were born outside of Canada (this includes a small percentage of international students).



Compared to the overall population:

- East Asian students are as likely to live with two parents (this includes those living with step-parents or living half-time with each parent), except for Korean students (with 10%, likely international students, living with other adults);
- East Asian students are less likely to have multiple siblings;
- more East Asian parents, except those from Hong Kong, have university degrees;
- students with parents from China are more likely to be in the two lowest income groups (i.e., with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 or between \$30,000-\$49,999).

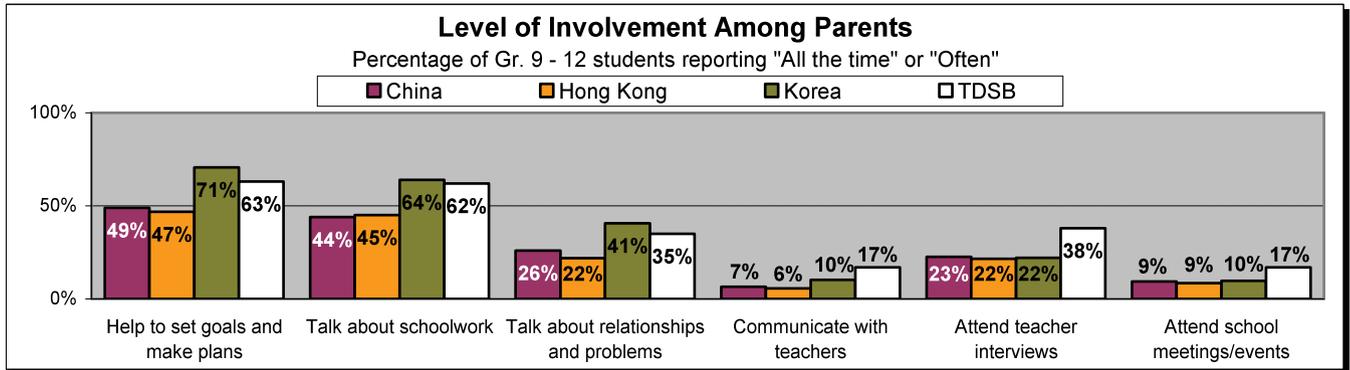


Life Outside of School

Parent Involvement In and Outside of School

Compared to the overall population:

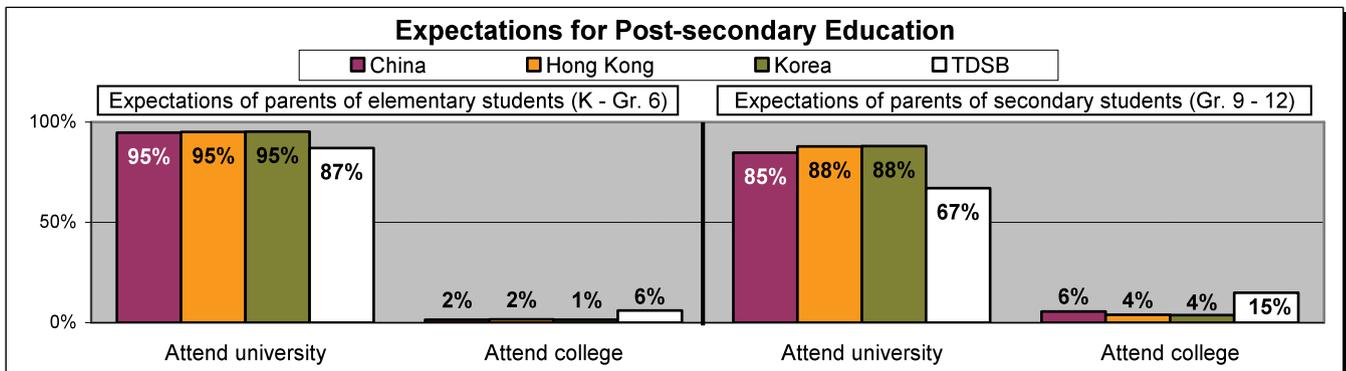
- parents from both China and Hong Kong are less likely to help their children set goals and make plans, or to talk to them about school work, or relationships and problems; they also have less contact with their children's school;
- Korean parents are as or more likely to be involved in helping their children directly, but also have less involvement with teachers or school events.



Post-secondary Expectations

Compared to the overall population:

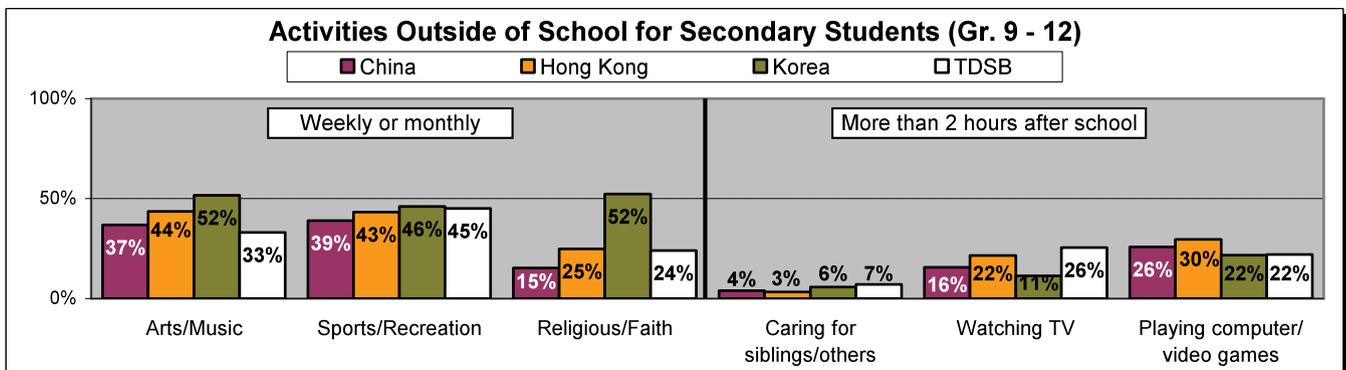
- East Asian parents are much more likely to expect their children to go to university;
- a much lower percentage of East Asian parents expect their children to go to college.



Activities and Opportunities Outside of School

Compared to the overall population:

- students with parents from China are less active in sports or recreation and religious activities;
- students of Hong Kong background participate more frequently in arts or music;
- students of Korean background are more active in arts or music and much more religiously active;
- students with parents from China and Korea spend less time watching television; students of Hong Kong background spend more time playing computer/video games;
- East Asian secondary school students spend more time per week on homework and studying (15 hours for Chinese students with parents from China or Hong Kong, and 14 hours for Korean students versus 12 hours for the overall population).

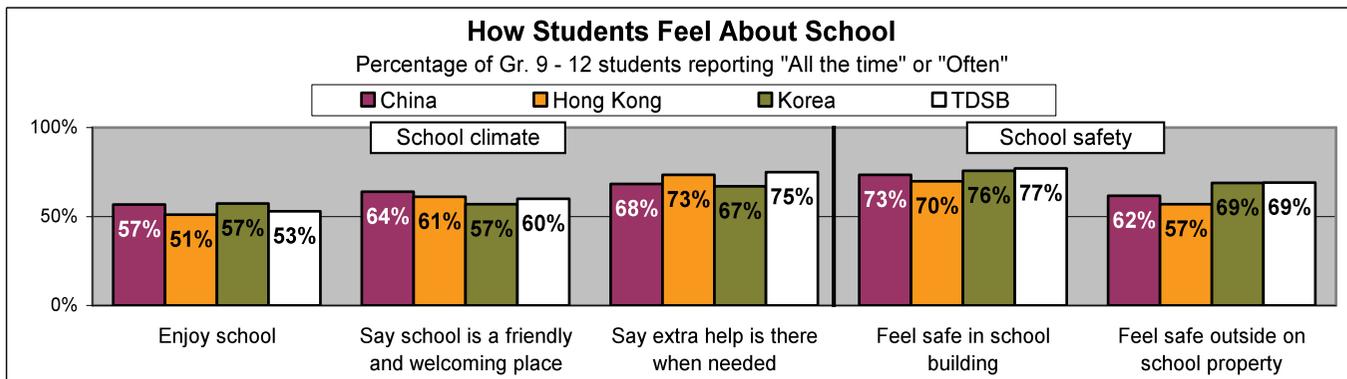


Life in School

School Climate and School Safety

Compared to the overall population:

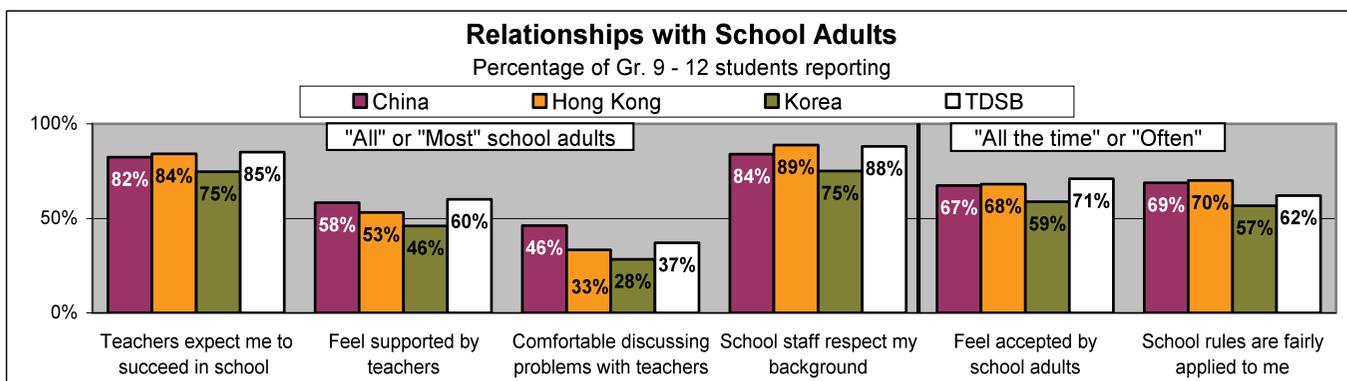
- East Asian students have similar opinions about school climate, but those with parents born in China and Korea are less likely to feel that extra help is available when needed;
- East Asian students, except those of Korean background, generally feel less safe at school.



Relationships with School Adults

Compared to the overall population:

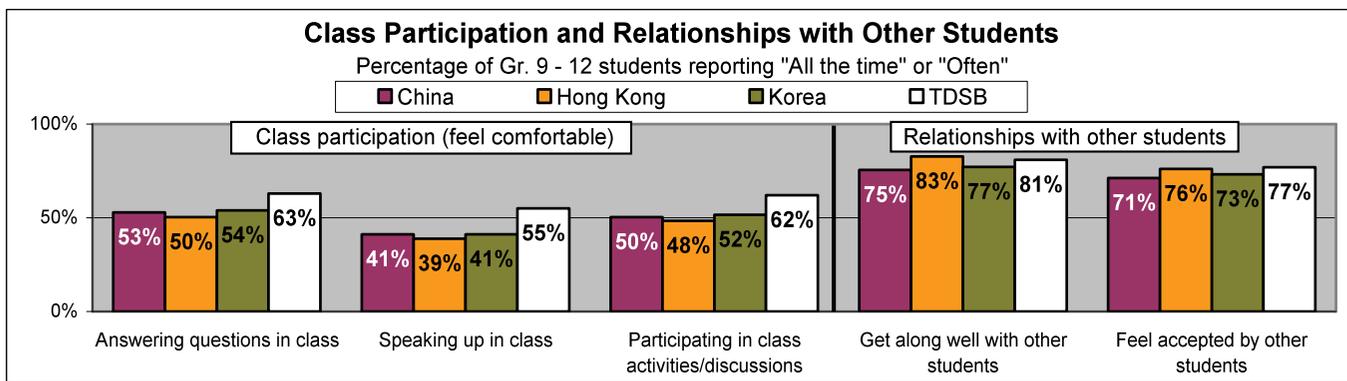
- students with parents from China feel equally positive about school adults, and are more likely to feel comfortable discussing a problem with teachers, and to feel that school rules are fair;
- students of Hong Kong background are as or more positive about school adults and school rules, but they are less likely to feel supported and encouraged by teachers;
- students of Korean background are less positive about school adults and school rules.



Class Participation and Relationships with Other Students

Compared to the overall population:

- East Asian students are less comfortable answering questions, speaking up, or participating in class;
- East Asian students are as positive about relationships with other students, except those with parents from China.



Learning about One's Culture/Race

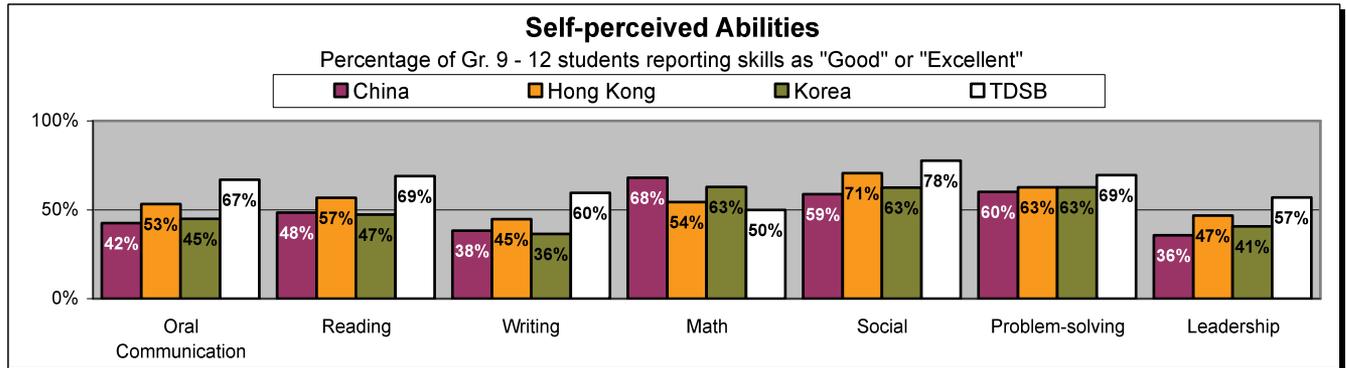
The majority of East Asian students, except for those of Hong Kong background, say that learning more about their own culture would make their learning more interesting (71%), help them enjoy school more (60%), and help them do better in school (53%).

Student Success

Self-perceived Abilities

Compared to the overall population:

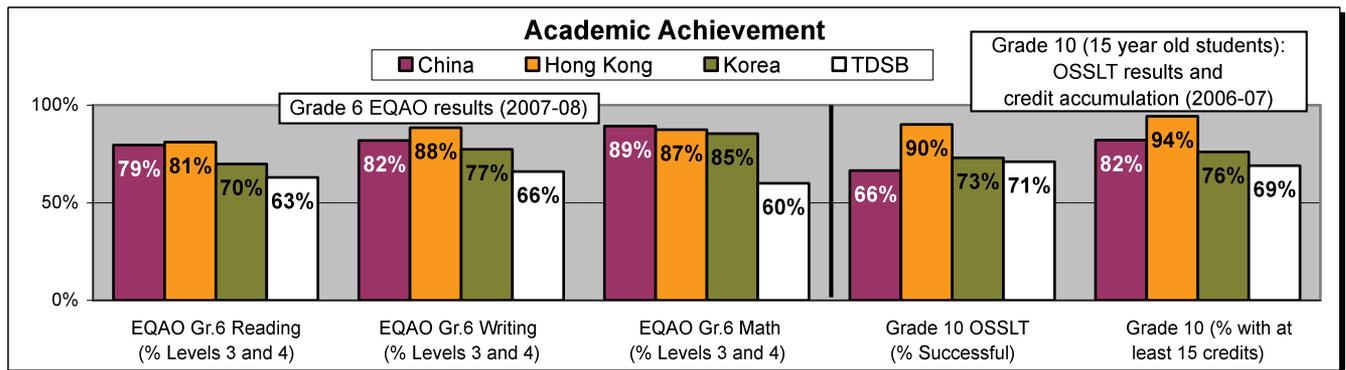
- East Asian students are less confident about many of their skills, including their communication, reading, and writing skills, social skills, problem-solving skills, and leadership skills;
- East Asian students tend to rate their abilities in math higher, especially those with parents from China and Korea.



Academic Achievement

Compared to the overall population:

- more East Asian students meet or exceed the provincial standard (Level 3) on Gr. 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Reading and Writing tests, and many more meet the standard on the Gr. 6 EQAO Math test;
- on the Gr. 10 EQAO Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), many more students of Hong Kong background are successful; for students from China, many (mostly recent arrivals) need to defer the test until they have better language skills;
- East Asian students are more likely to earn the expected number of credits (at least 15) by the end of Gr. 10, meaning they are more likely to graduate on time.



Highlights of Census Findings

The three main sub-groups of East Asian students share several commonalities. Compared to the overall population:

- all three groups achieve well academically, and their parents are much more likely to expect them to attend university;
- very few of these secondary school students reported that their parents are connected with their teachers or school;
- all three groups are as likely to say that they enjoy school, and that their school is a friendly and welcoming place;
- all three groups feel much less comfortable in class participation, and less confident in many of their abilities.

There are also some differences among the sub-groups. For example:

- Most students with parents from China are first-generation immigrants. They are less likely to feel accepted by or get along well with other students.
- Most students whose parents are from Hong Kong are Canadian-born. They feel less safe at school, and tend to spend more time playing computer/video games after school.
- The majority of Korean students are either first-generation immigrants or visa students. Compared to both groups of Chinese students, Korean students are much more likely to have university educated parents. Their parents are also much more involved in talking with them about their schoolwork, relationships and problems, and goals; although not in terms of connecting with schools (probably due to the higher percentage of visa students). It should be noted that Korean students are also less positive about school rules and their relationships with school adults.

Census Portraits

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