

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

Maria Yau, Jan O'Reilly, Lisa Rosolen, and Bryce Archer
Research & Information Services, TDSB
(Spring 2011)

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

For the Historical Context section, the TDSB would like to acknowledge the contribution and expertise of the following individuals:

- Aboriginal – Catherine Pawis, Aboriginal Education, TDSB
- 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 Latin American Students

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

Some Historical Context

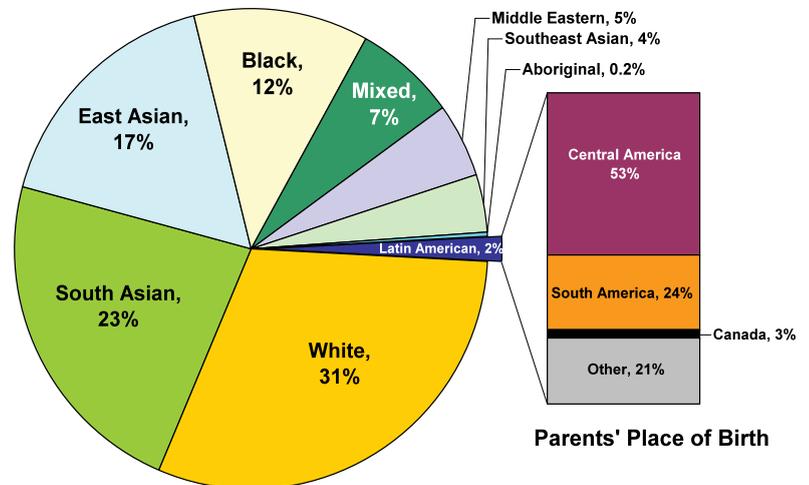
Students from Latin America (Central and South America as well as the Spanish-speaking Caribbean) are culturally and ethnically diverse depending on their countries of origin. Over the past six decades, there have been four major waves of immigration from Latin America to Canada.

- The “first wave” occurred during the 1970s from South American countries like Chile, Argentina, and Ecuador, with many escaping political persecution associated with a series of *coup d'états* at that time.
- A larger “second wave” of immigrants from Central America came during the 1980s and 1990s, spurred by civil war in countries like El Salvador.
- During the 1990s, a “third wave” of immigration from Latin America was driven primarily by economic challenges, with large numbers of immigrants from México, Colombia, and Perú.
- In the last decade, both economic and political changes in Argentina, Cuba, and Venezuela have led to a substantial increase in the number of immigrants to Canada. Unlike previous waves however, which primarily involved refugees, this “fourth wave” of immigrants includes larger numbers of professional “economic class” immigrants, which is beginning to shift the economic characteristics of Latin American immigrants as a group.

While most of Canada’s Latino population is foreign-born (74%), there is a growing population of second (18%) and even third (8%) generation Canadian-born Latinos. It is estimated that one-third of Latin American immigrants have settled in Toronto.

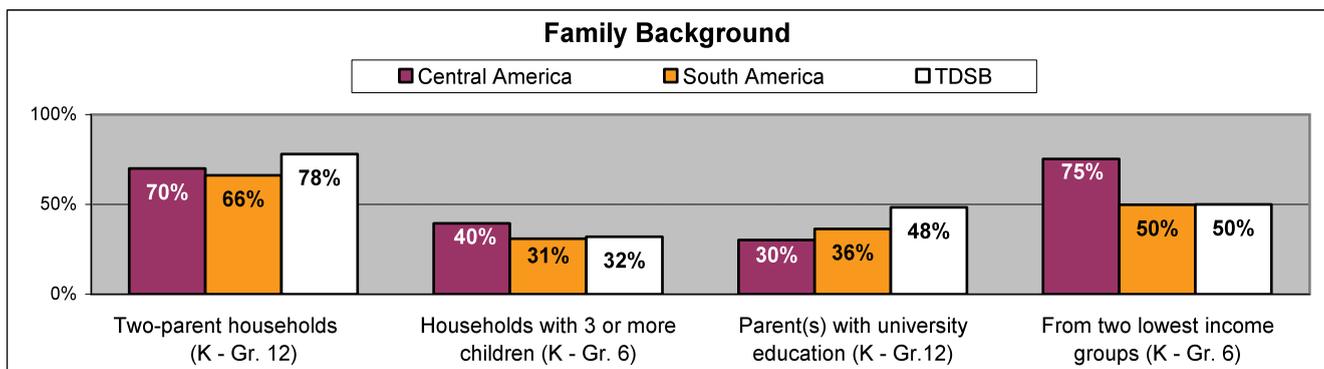
Ethno-racial and Family Background

- Latin American students make up 2% of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) population (about 5,300 students).
- Most of their parents are from Central America (53%) and South America (24%). Just 3% have two parents born in Canada.
- The majority of students with Central American (57%) and South American (62%) parents were born in Canada.
- In this portrait, Central America includes countries such as El Salvador, Colombia, and México; South America includes countries such as Ecuador, Argentina, and Chile.



Compared to the overall population:

- fewer Latin American students live in a two-parent household (this includes those living with step-parents or living half-time with each parent), or have university educated parents;
- students of Central American background are more likely to have multiple siblings, and much more likely to come from the two lowest income groups (i.e., with annual household incomes of less than \$30,000 or between \$30,000-\$49,999).

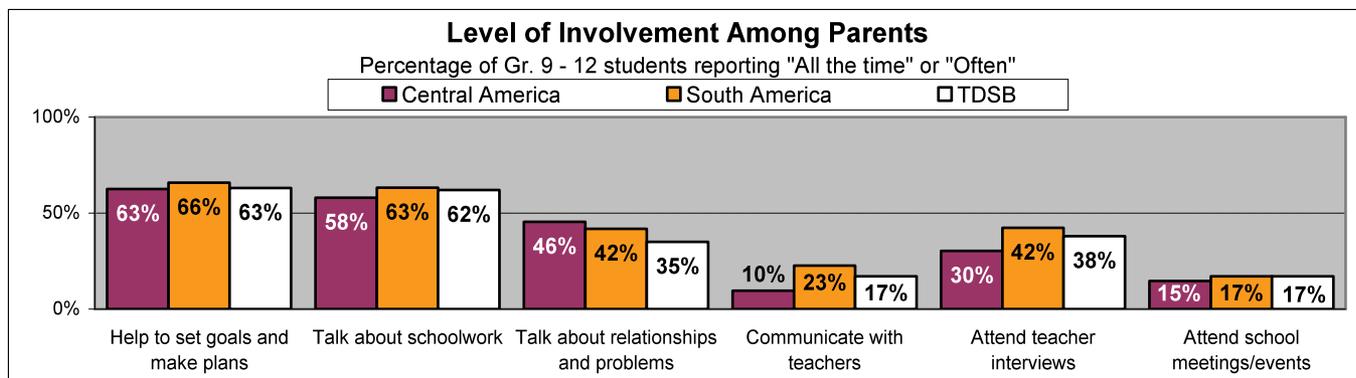


Life Outside of School

Parent Involvement In and Outside of School

Compared to the overall population:

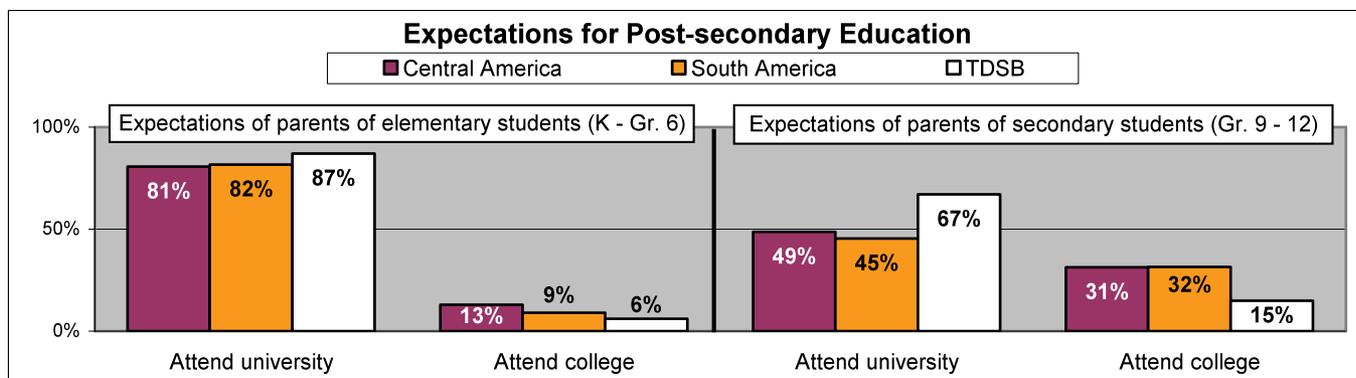
- outside of school, Latin American parents are as likely to help their children set goals and make plans, or talk about school work; and are more likely to talk to their children about relationships and problems;
- Central American parents are less likely to connect with their children's teachers, while South American parents are more likely.



Post-secondary Expectations

Compared to the overall population:

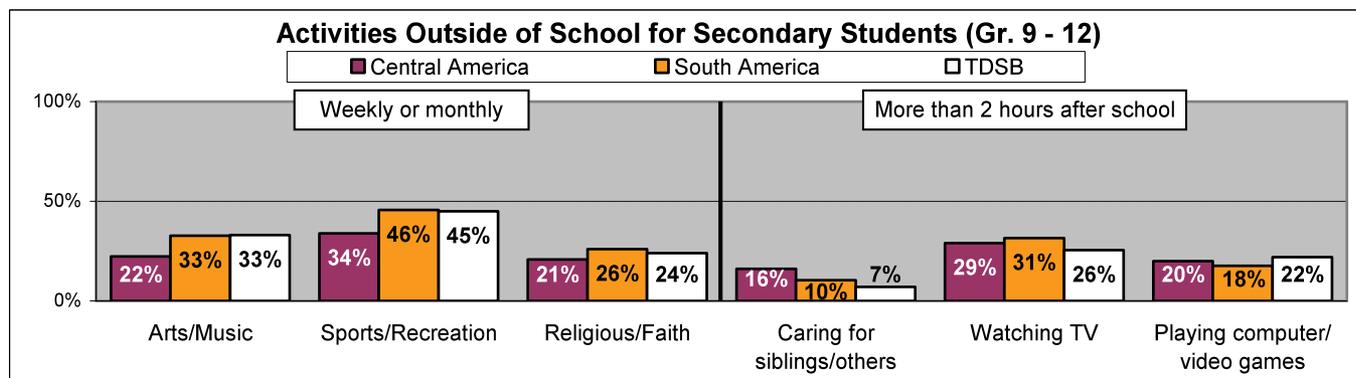
- Latin American parents are much less likely to expect their children to attend university, and more likely to expect them to attend college.



Activities and Opportunities Outside of School

Compared to the overall population:

- fewer students of Central American background are active in arts and music or sports and recreation after school, and more spend time looking after siblings;
- students of South American background are more likely to spend time watching television;
- both groups of Latin American students spend less time per week on homework and studying (9 hours for students of Central American background and 8 hours for students of South American background), compared to 12 hours for the overall population.

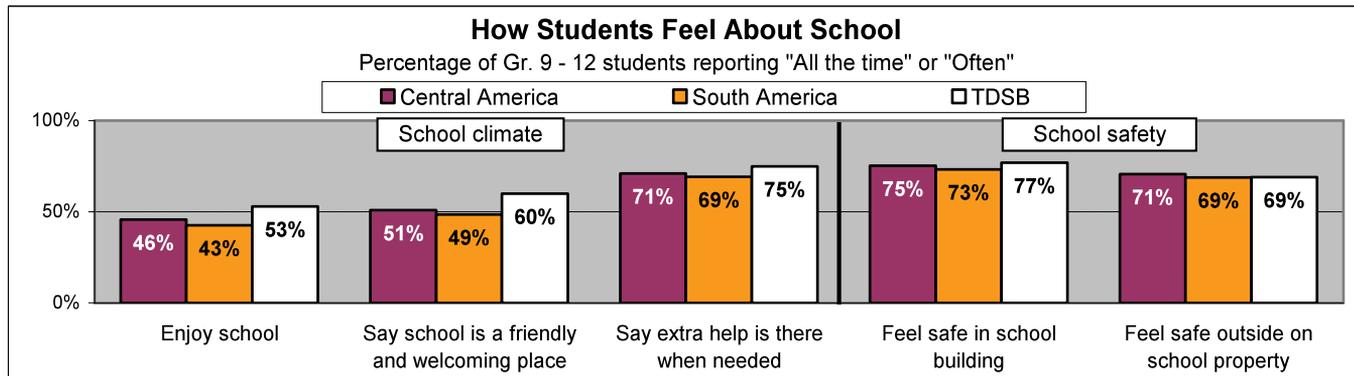


Life in School

School Climate and School Safety

Compared to the overall population:

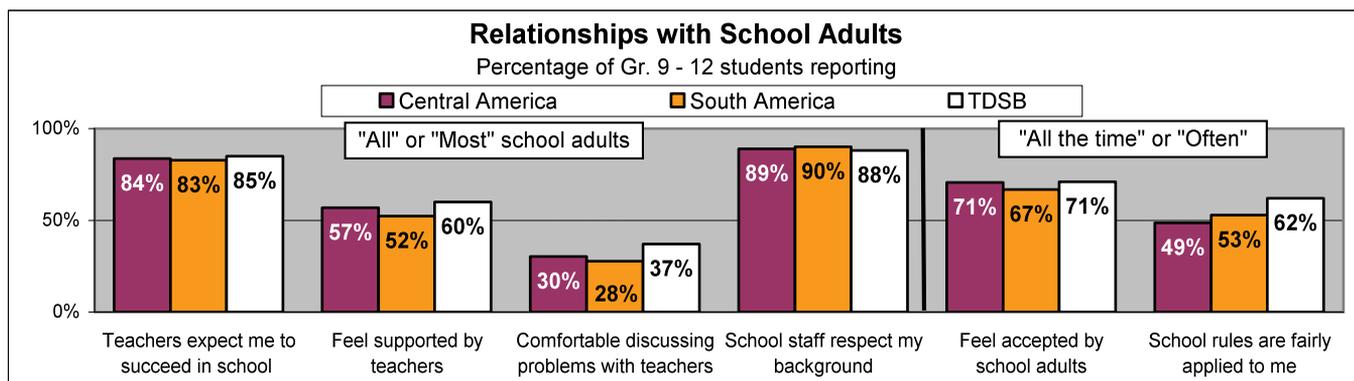
- Latin American students are as likely to feel safe in school;
- fewer Latin American students reported enjoying school or finding school a friendly and welcoming place;
- students of South American background are less likely to say extra help is available when needed.



Relationships with School Adults

Compared to the overall population:

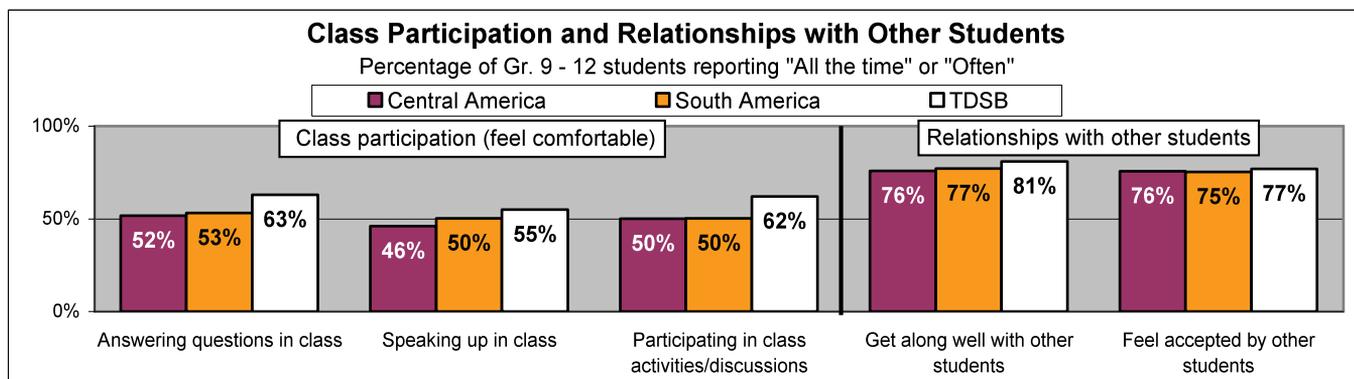
- Latin American students are generally as likely to hold positive views about school adults, though they are less likely to feel comfortable discussing a problem with teachers, and fewer feel that school rules are fairly applied;
- students of South American background are less likely to feel supported by teachers.



Class Participation and Relationships with Other Students

Compared to the overall population:

- Latin American students are less likely to feel comfortable answering questions, speaking up, or participating in class;
- Latin American students are generally as positive about relationships with other students.



Learning about One's Culture/Race

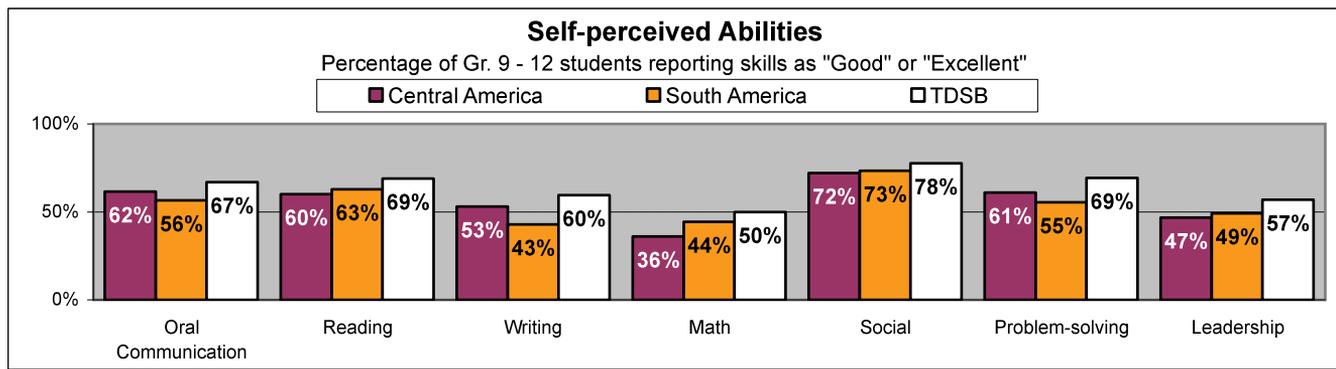
Most Latin American students say that learning more about their own culture or race would make learning more interesting for them (75%), help them enjoy school more (66%), and help them do better in school (53%).

Student Success

Self-perceived Abilities

Compared to the overall population:

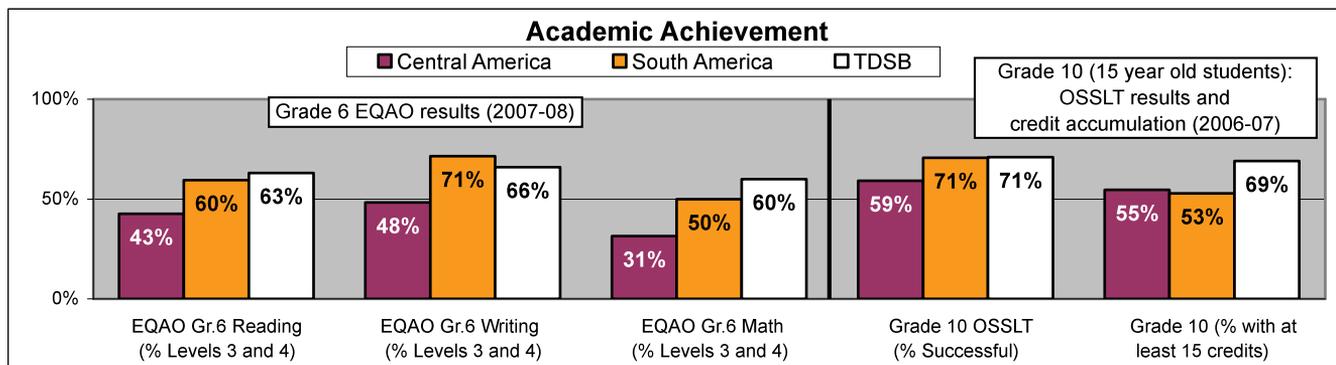
- Latin American students are less likely to feel confident about their oral communication, reading, writing, math, social, problem-solving, and leadership skills.



Academic Achievement

Compared to the overall population:

- students of South American background are doing as well or better on the Gr. 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) Reading and Writing tests and the Gr. 10 Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), but not on the Gr. 6 EQAO Math test, nor in terms of accumulating at least 15 credits by the end of Gr. 10 in order to graduate on time;
- fewer students of Central American background meet or exceed the provincial standard (Level 3) on the Gr. 6 EQAO Reading, Writing, and Math tests, or are successful on the Gr. 10 OSSLT, and fewer earn the expected number of credits (at least 15) by the end of Gr. 10, making them less likely to graduate on time.



Highlights of Census Findings

The two main sub-groups of Latin American students share several commonalities. Compared to the overall population:

- they are less likely to live with two parents or to have university educated parents;
- their parents are as likely to talk to them about goals and plans, school work, and especially relationships and problems;
- their parents are less likely to expect them to attend university, and more likely to expect them to attend college;
- they are generally less positive about school climate, and are less likely to feel comfortable discussing problems with teachers, or that school rules are fairly applied;
- they feel less comfortable participating in class, spend less time on homework, and are less confident in their abilities;
- they have lower Gr. 6 EQAO Math results, and are less likely to earn the expected number of credits by the end of Gr. 10.

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

- Students of Central American background are more likely to have multiple siblings and to come from the two lowest income groups.
- Central American parents are less likely to connect with teachers, while South American parents are more likely.
- Students of Central American background are less likely to be involved in arts and music or sports and recreation, and spend more time caring for siblings, while students of South American background spend more time watching TV.
- Students of South American background are less likely to feel supported by teachers.
- Students of Central American background are less likely to meet or exceed the provincial standard on the Gr. 6 EQAO tests for Reading and Writing, and are less often successful on the Gr. 10 OSSLT.

Census Portraits

Maria Yau, Jan O'Reilly, Lisa Rosolen, and Bryce Archer

Copyright © May 2011 Toronto District School Board

Reproduction of this document for use in the schools of the Toronto District School Board is encouraged.

For any other purpose, permission must be requested and obtained in writing from:

Research and Information Services
Toronto District School Board
1 Civic Centre Court, Lower Level
Etobicoke, ON M9C 2B3

Every reasonable precaution has been taken to trace the owners of copyrighted material and to make due acknowledgement. Any omission will gladly be rectified in future printings.

RESEARCH & INFORMATION SERVICES

For further information, please visit
www.tdsb.on.ca/studentcensus

