

TDSB's Student & Parent Census: *Understanding Student Needs to Ensure Equity in Education*

AERO 2018 Fall Conference - Equity, Human Rights and Data:
Putting Identity at the Centre of Decision-making

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(December 7, 2018)



2

Some Historical Context

- The first system-wide collection of student demographic data in Toronto can be dated back to 1970 when the former Toronto Board of Education (TBE) conducted its *Every Student Survey (ESS)*.
- The initial mandate (1970) was to answer a trustees' question: ***"Do a disproportionate number of the children of poor people and immigrants go to special classes?"***
- Over the three decades (1970-1998), *ESS* was conducted in the former TBE periodically, with the collection of race data for the first time in 1980, and with the broadening mandate and scope each round until the amalgamation in 1998.



Six years after amalgamation

- **TDSB's Board motion - November 2004**

That staff in consultation with the OHRC and educational experts develop research proposals that identify the factors within the school system which may inhibit student achievement. Such factors should include, but not be limited to, differences in gender, race, ethnicity, mother tongue, income and place of residence.

- That is, to collect system-wide data in order to understand the demographic backgrounds and the needs of the students served by the TDSB.



TDSB's Initial Challenges to Collect Identity-based Data

- Political will
- Sensitivity to questions about student demographic and family background
- Concerns about use of the information
- Human rights, confidentiality and privacy concerns
- Logistical issues
- Cost
- Gaining buy-in from the system and the community:
 - Securing support of key staff groups including union and employee groups
 - Securing trust of students and parents



Strategies to Overcome Initial Challenges

- High profile Advisory Committee (early 2005)
- Staff Committee support (legal, human rights, equity, community, communications, principals, superintendents, research) (2005)
- Wide consultation (teachers, principals, senior staff, union and employee groups, parents, community representatives)
- Communication strategies to build awareness and support amongst staff, students and parents



To Have Clear Census Goals

- Identify and remove systemic barriers to student success (to determine if and what gaps exist among students based on demographic backgrounds)
- Allocate resources to where most needed
- Develop more effective programs
- Advocate for funding and resources for students, families and communities
- Assess effectiveness of programs and services



In 2006, TDSB conducted its very 1st system-wide Census

The Census consists of two main sections:

1. Demographics – e.g., gender, ethno-racial background, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and parents' place of birth and education
2. Experiences in school *and* outside of school – e.g., school climate and safety, relationships with school adults, inclusive school experiences, after-school activities, homework, parent involvement, physical health, self perceived abilities, and post-secondary aspirations

Questions on emotional well-being were asked for the first time in the 2nd Census in 2011

Student &
Parent Voices



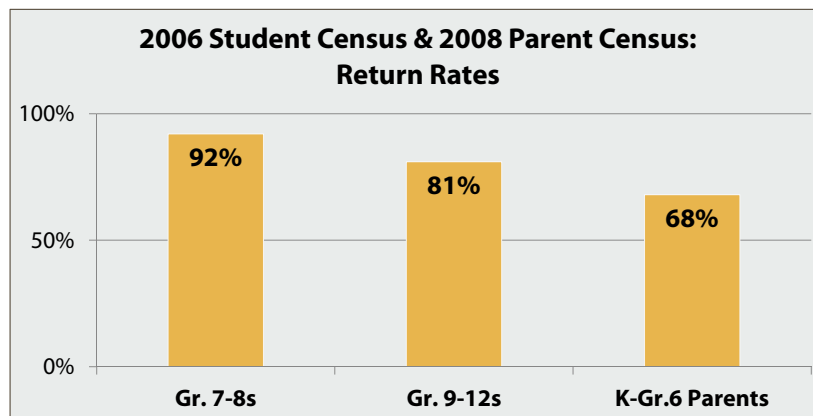
Methodology

- For the Grade 7-12s: *Student Census*
- For the JK – Grade 6s: *Parent Census*
- Confidential but not anonymous - so that the Census data can be linked to other Board information sources and be tracked over time.



First *Census* Implementation

- *Student Census* – November 2006 - “Census Week”
- *Parent Census* – May 2008



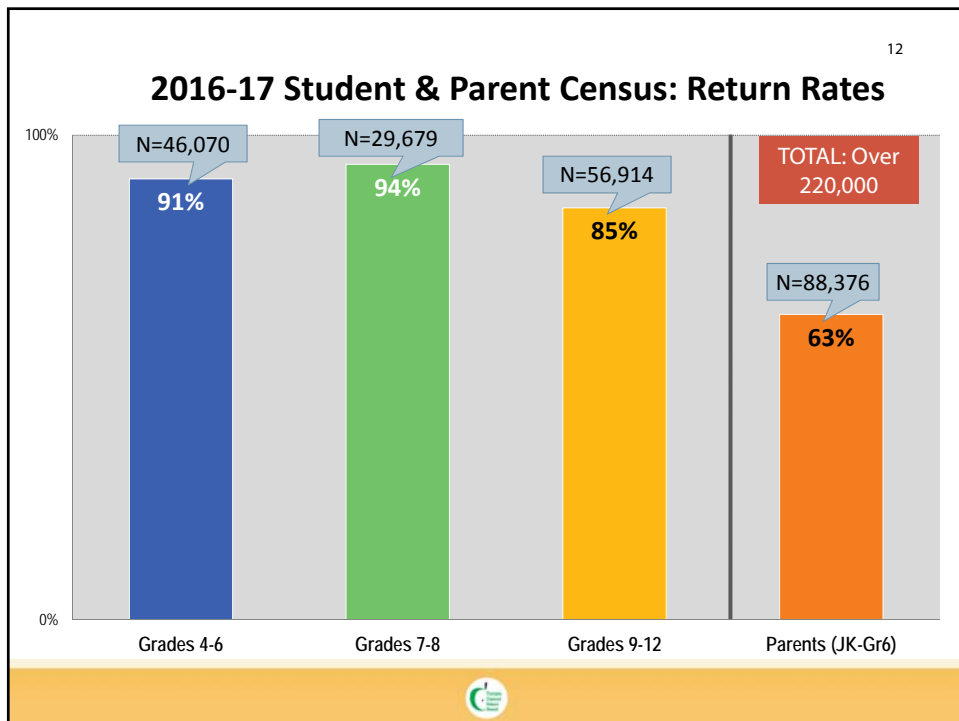
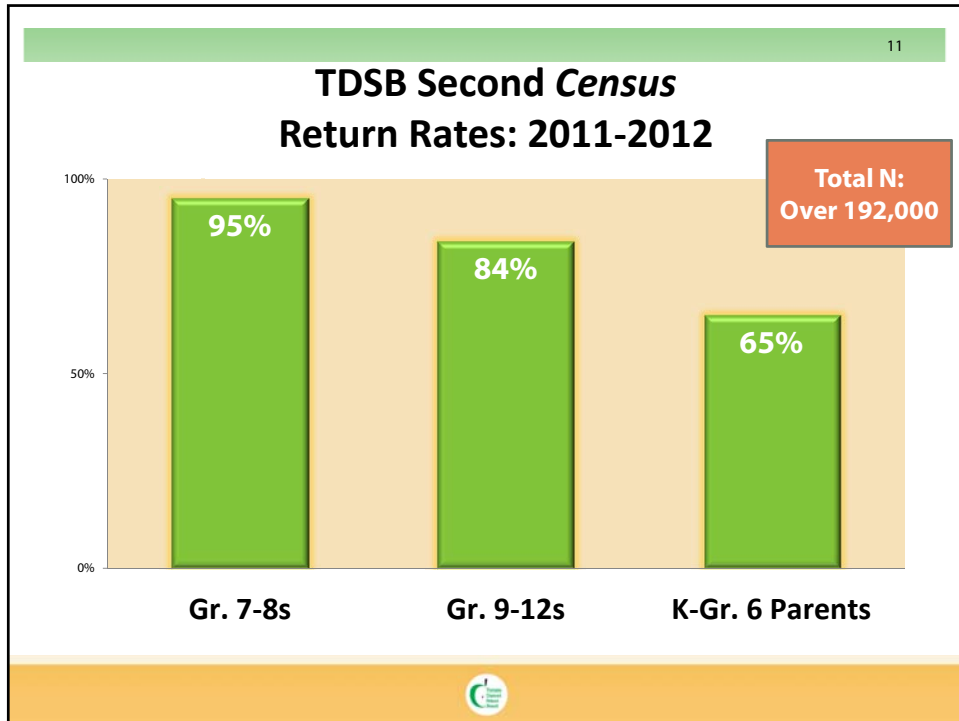
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10

Implementation of Student & Parent Census on a 5-year cycle

In May 2009, having considered the value of the first Student and Parent Census, the Board decided that the *Student and Parent Census* “be implemented on a 5-year cycle and that the next [Census] be conducted in school year 2011-12”.

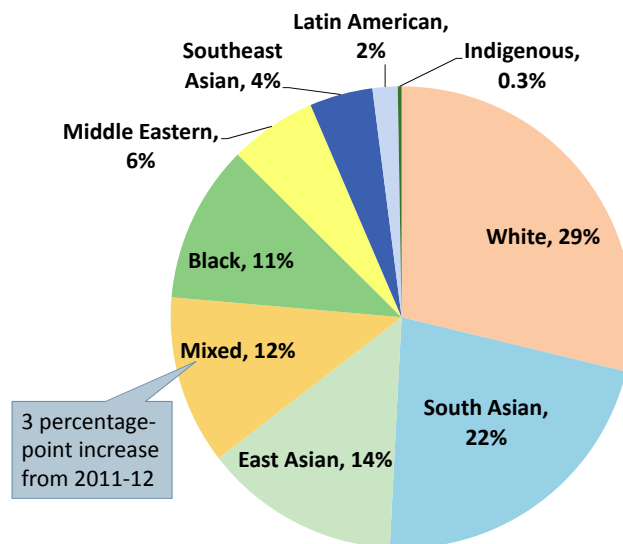




Student Demographics: Some Sample Findings



Racial Background (JK–Grade 12)

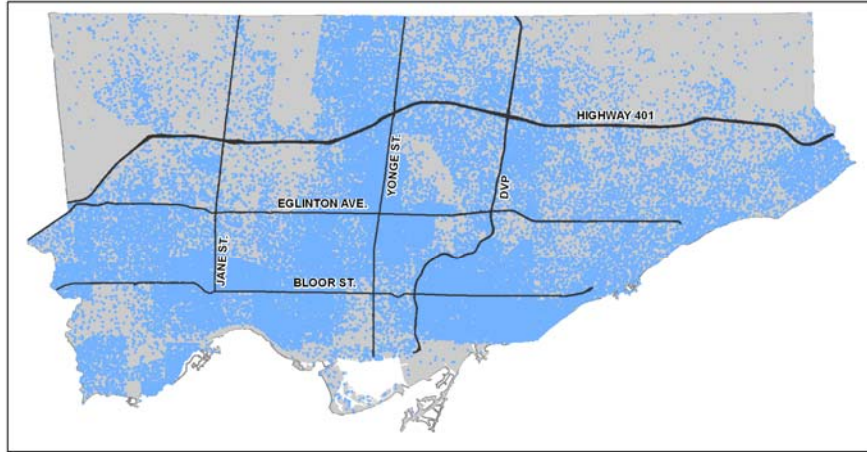


Source: 2017 Student and Parent Census





TDSB Student Population by Ethno-racial Background (2012 Parent Census: Kindergarten to Grade 12)



Date: 13/03/2013

TDSB Student Population

1 Dot = 1 Student

● Black	● South Asian
● East Asian	● White

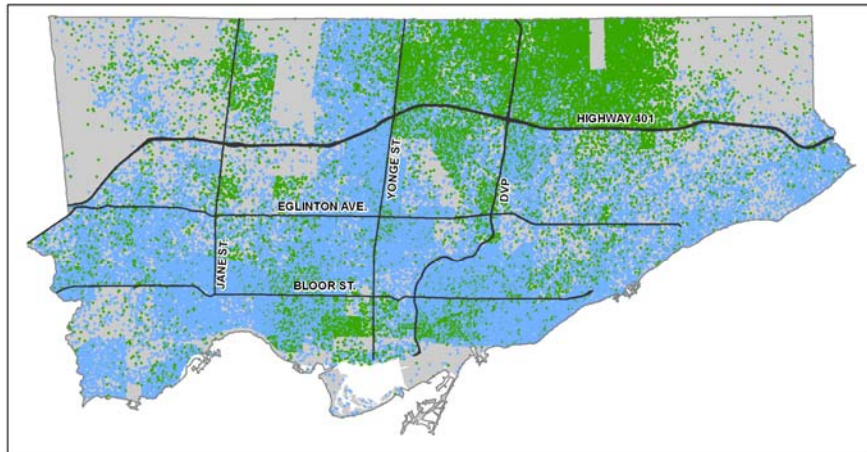
— Major Road

0 2.5 5 Km

Produced by: Research and Information Services
Sources: TDSB Facilities Planning



TDSB Student Population by Ethno-racial Background (2012 Parent Census: Kindergarten to Grade 12)



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TDSB Student Population

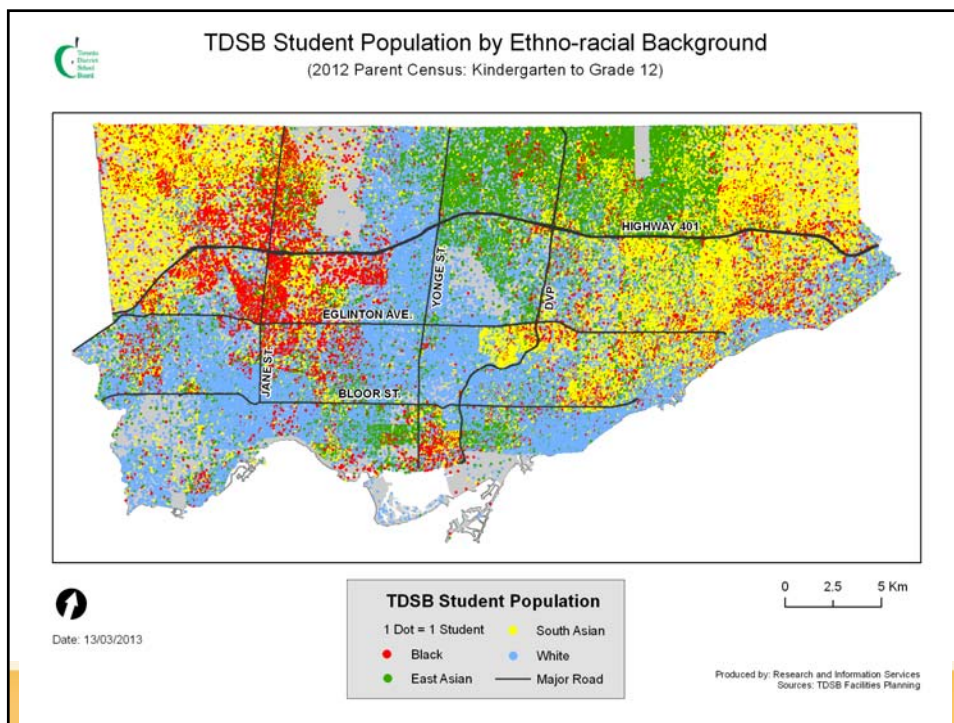
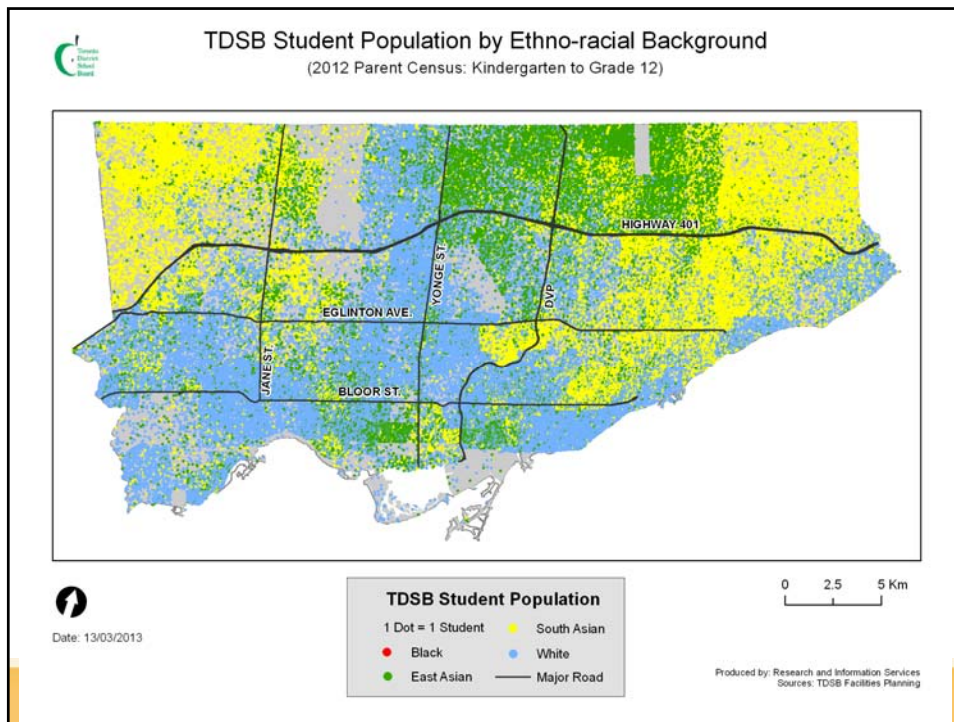
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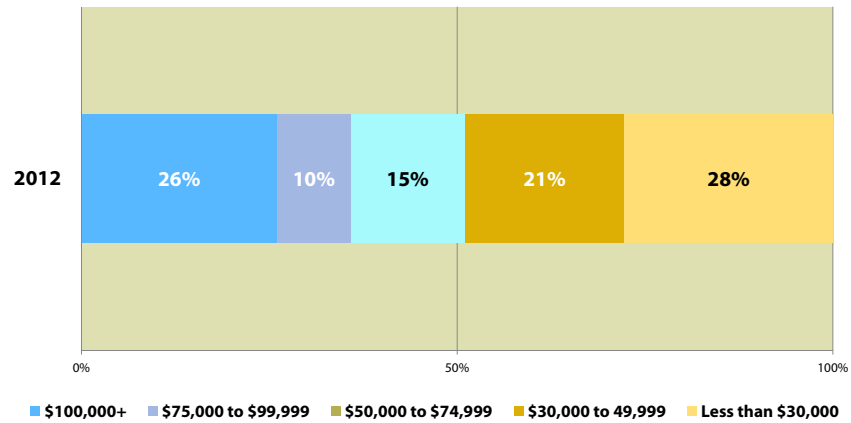
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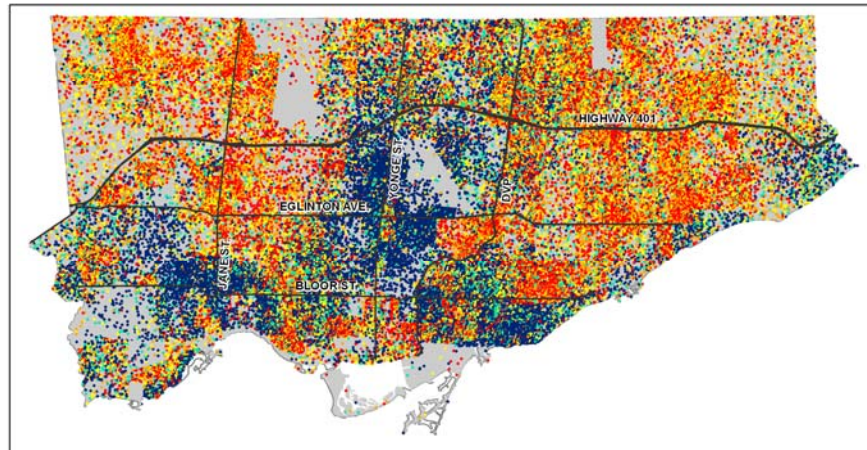
Produced by: Research and Information Services
Sources: TDSB Facilities Planning



Family Income: Kindergarten to Grade 6 (2012)



TDSB Elementary Student Population by Annual Household Income (2012 Parent Census: Kindergarten to Grade 6)



TDSB Elementary Student Population

1 Dot = 1 Student

- \$100,000 or More
- \$75,000 to \$99,999
- \$50,000 to \$74,999

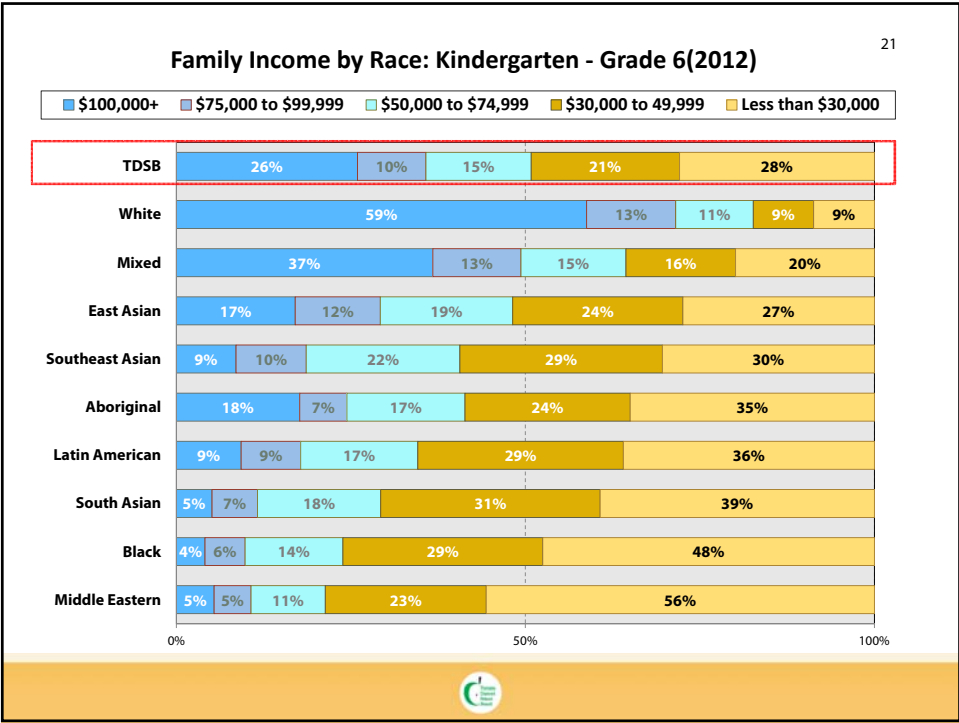
- \$30,000 to 49,999
- Less than \$30,000

— Major Road

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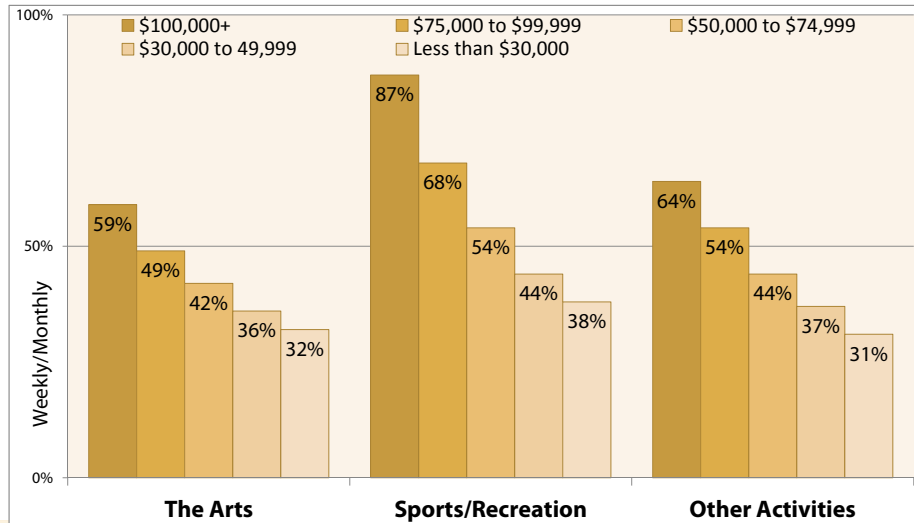
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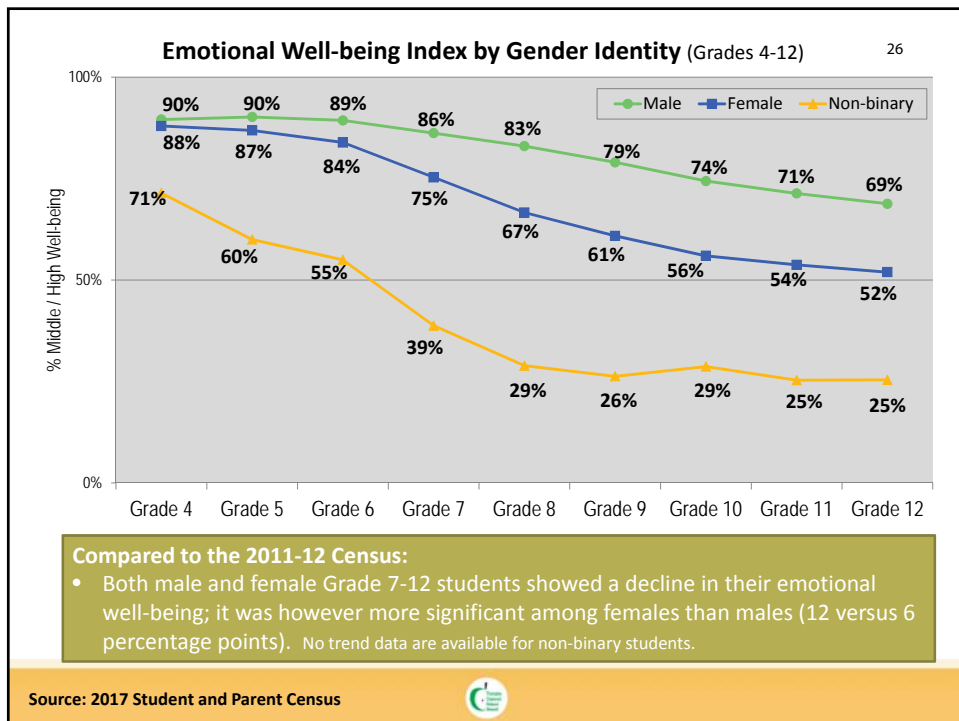
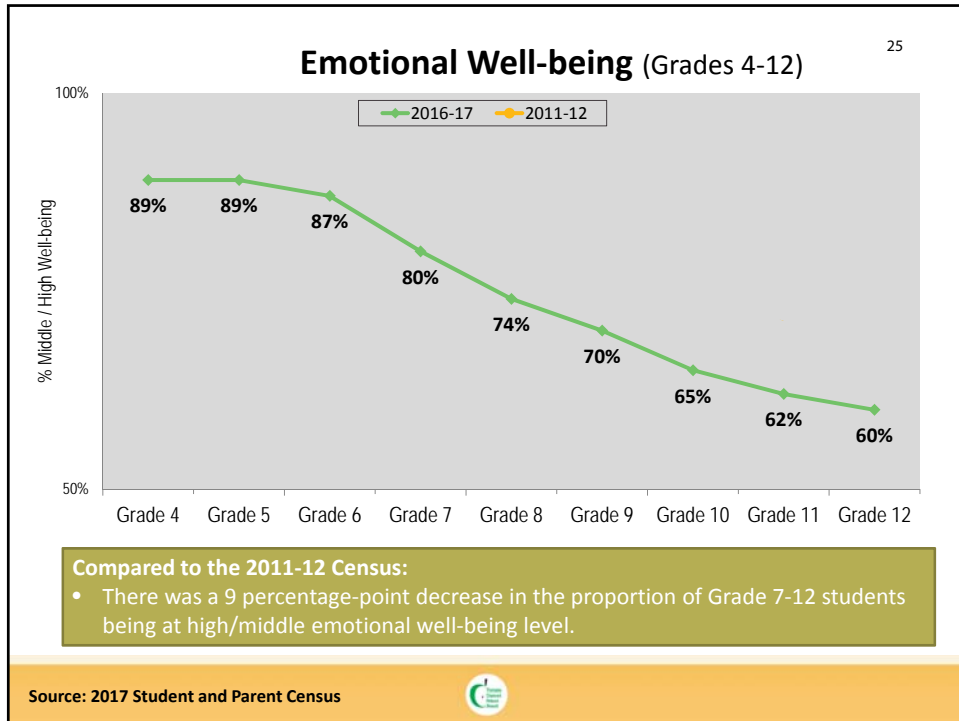
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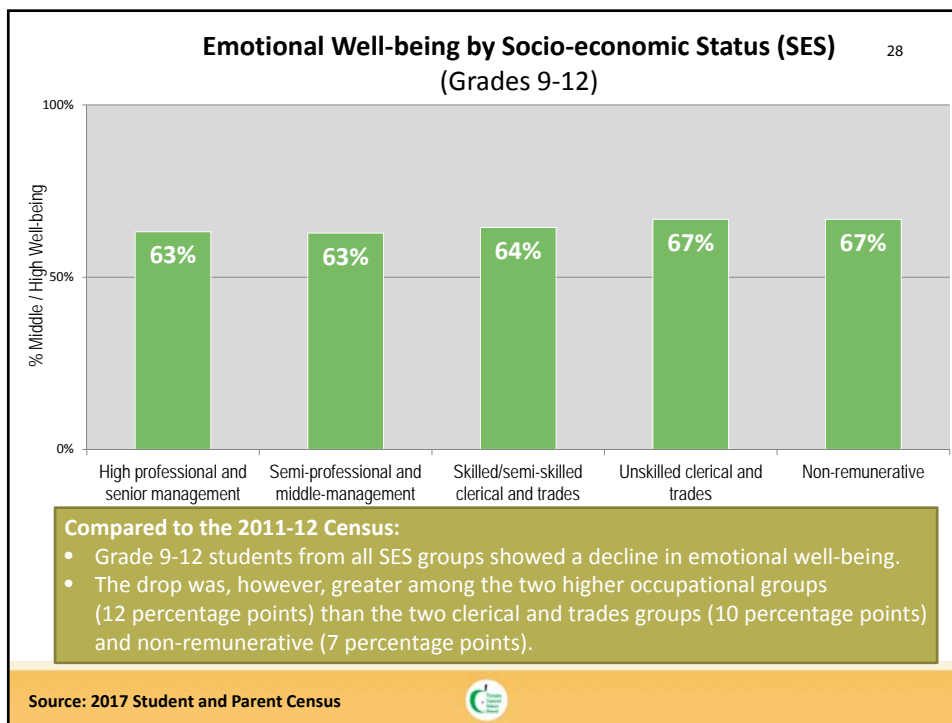
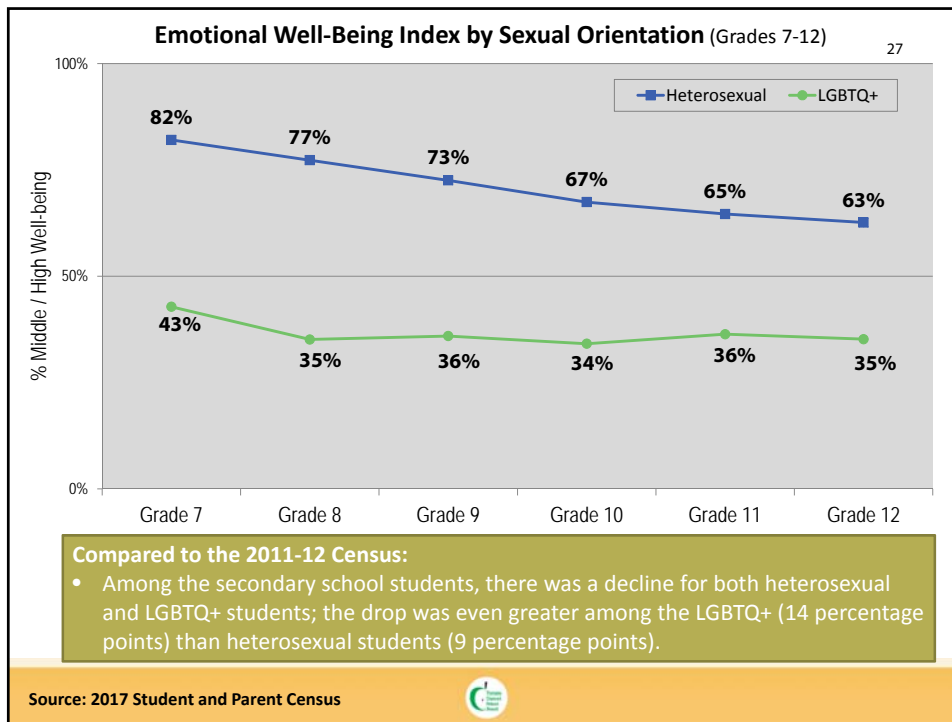
**Detailed analysis of Census data further reveals:
*Wide Opportunity Gaps Outside of School by SES***

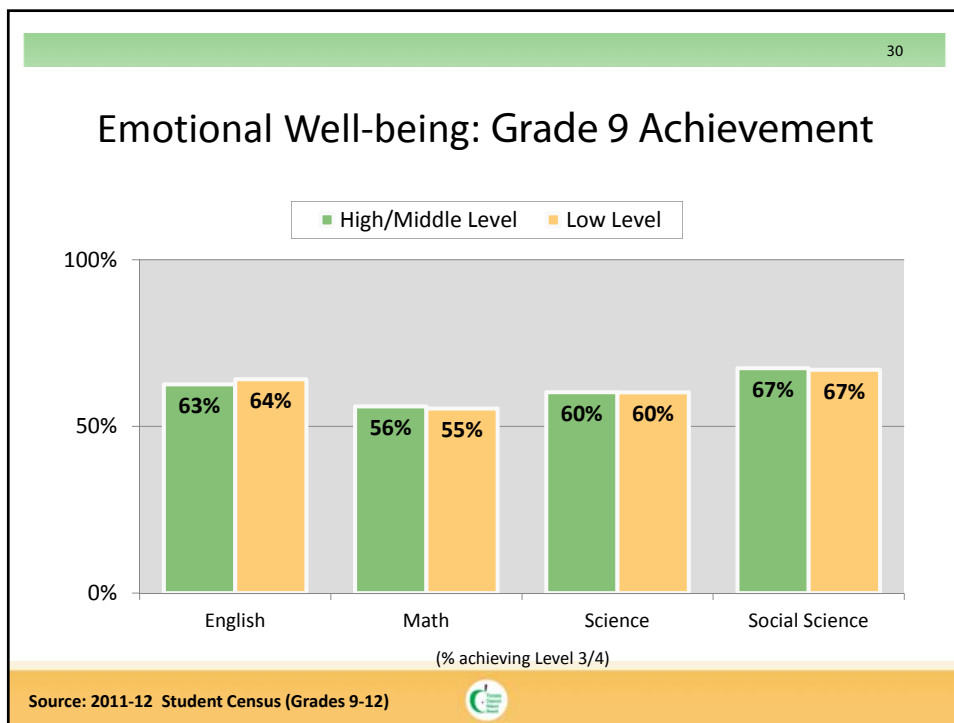
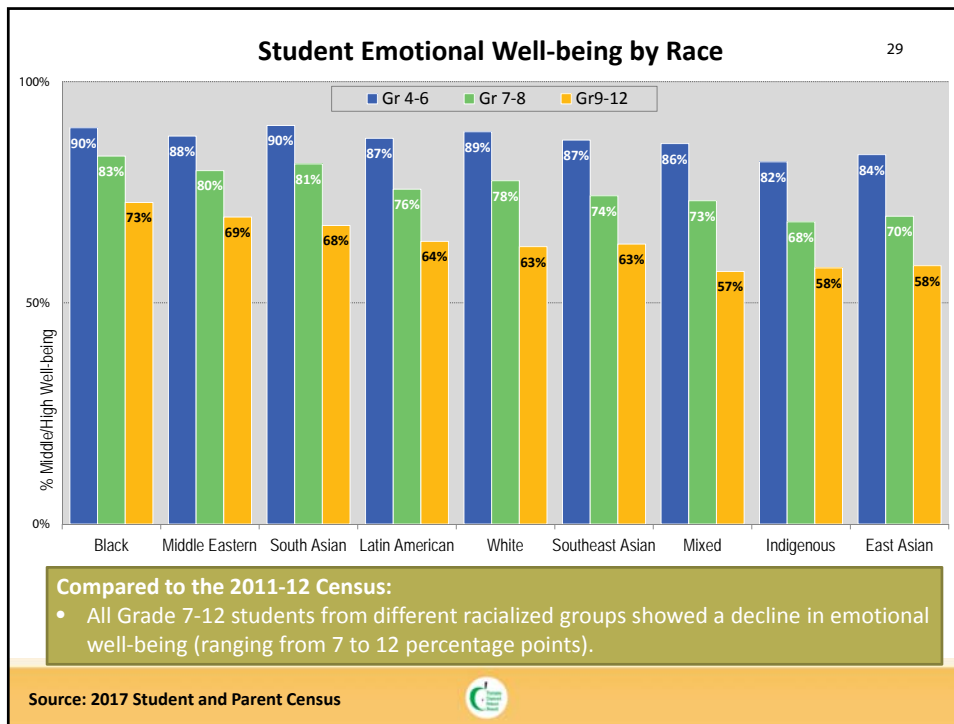
Students' Out-of-School Activities by Family Income: 2012 (Kindergarten – Grade 6)



Emotional Well-being







So What? (1)

Knowledge transfer

- Presentations:
 - Press conferences to raise public awareness
 - Workshops within and without the school board to share the information and knowledge for planning and programming purposes
- Publications:
 - *Census School Reports* comparing the results of the school with those of the system
 - *Census Fact Sheets* with detailed analysis on a range of topics
 - *Census Portraits* based on identified groups
 - Research reports
- Further research:
 - Linking Census data with existing data sources for identifying achievement gaps and for other spin-off studies



32

Census School Reports

Knowledge Mobilization Workshops

FACTS

2011-12 Student & Parent Census

ISSUE 1, May 2013

33

Census Fact Sheets

TDSB Students and Families: Demographic Profile
 ISSUE 1, May 2013

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Emotional Well-being (Part 1 of 2)
 ISSUE 2, June 2013

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Emotional Well-being (Part 2 of 2)
 ISSUE 3, June 2013

TDSB Students: Physical Activity and Screen Time
 ISSUE 4, April 2014

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Overall Experience and Participation at School
 ISSUE 5, June 2014

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): Relationships at School
 ISSUE 6, June 2014

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): School and Community Safety
 ISSUE 7, June 2014

TDSB Students (Grades 7-12): School and Community Safety

- This Fact Sheet describes the TDSB's 2011 Student Census findings on students' sense of safety at school and in the community including some related findings from the TDSB's 2012 Parent Census about parents' perceptions of their child's sense of safety. Bullying incidents experienced by Grade 7-12 students at school are also presented.
- Comparisons are made for items common to the TDSB's 2006 Student Census, and areas of significant change are highlighted.
- Since 2006 there has been a positive shift in students' sense of school and community safety. The number of students reporting having been bullied at school have remained relatively stable.

Census Portraits

Understanding Our Students' Backgrounds

34

Ethno-Racial Series:
Aboriginal Students Report

Aboriginal

Middle Eastern

Black

South Asian

East Asian

Southeast Asian

Latin American

White

Toronto District School Board 2011-12 Student and Parent Census

Research & Information Services

Toronto District School Board
June 2015
Report No. 14/15-14

Ethno-Racial Series

Gender

Sexual Orientations

Socio-economic Status

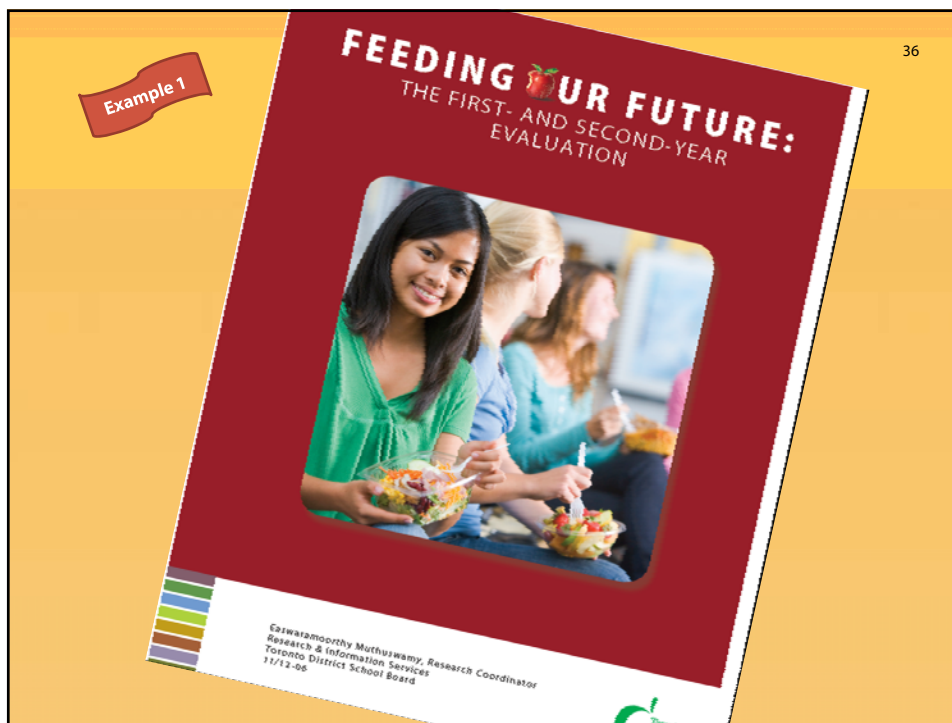
Students with Special Education Needs

So What? (2)

Knowledge mobilization

TDSB's *Census* data have been used for:

- School Improvement Plan (SIP) - e.g., data on students' needs, well-being, achievement and opportunity gaps (with PD on how to interpret and use the data)
- Board Improvement Plan (BIP) – e.g., data on students' needs, well-being, achievement and opportunity gaps
- Informing the system's equity work – e.g., Enhancing Equity Task Force; Model Schools for Inner Cities; Black Students Achievement Advisory Committee; Equity forums; etc.
- Policy making – e.g., Homework Policy; Mental Health and Well-being Strategic Plan
- Program development – e.g., Feeding Our Future; Beyond 3:30 After-school Program



Example 2

37

BEYOND 3:30: A MULTI-PURPOSE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR INNER-CITY MIDDLE SCHOOLS, PHASE III EVALUATION



Academic, Research & Information Services
Toronto District School Board
Research Report No. 14/15-04
November 2014

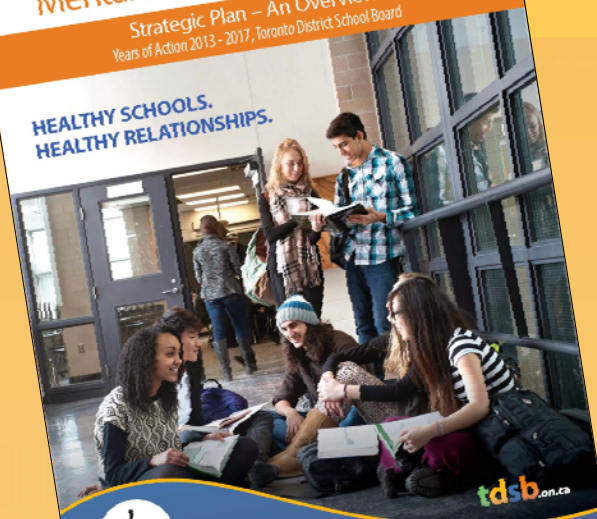


Example 3

38

Children and Youth Mental Health and Well-Being Strategic Plan – An Overview Years of Action 2013 - 2017, Toronto District School Board

HEALTHY SCHOOLS.
HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS.



tdsb.on.ca

Examples of the use of TDSB Census Data for other equity-related studies

- Parekh 2013- Structured Pathways
- Brown et al 2017- Post-secondary Pathways for the 2011-2016 cohort
- Example of the Grade 9 Cohort Dataset (James, Brown, Parekh)
- McMaster Gateway Cities Project (Prof. Karen Robson)
- Following the Grade 9 cohort *into and through* post-secondary: new collaborative partnerships (U of T, York, McMaster, HEQCO, Guelph, Statistics Canada)



Thank You!

