

# Census Portrait

## 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ Students

### Academic Achievement and Well-being

As required by the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Racism Act, the Greater Essex County District School Board (G.E.C.D.S.B) conducted its first Student Census in the 2023-2024 school year. The analysis of the data will help the Board understand the experiences of students who have been historically underserved by the education system and put programs in place to close any gaps in academic achievement and well-being.

Of the almost 36,000 students in the G.E.C.D.S.B in 2023-2024, parents/guardians completed the Student Census for 18% of students in JK-Grade 8, while 58% of students in Grades 9-12 completed the Student Census.

The data shows that about 20% of all G.E.C.D.S.B students identify as 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+, i.e., as gender diverse or with a sexual orientation other than straight/heterosexual (for secondary students only).

There is a good deal of diversity among students who identify as 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+.

#### Demographic Data

##### Gender Identity

The breakdown for gender identity among students is as follows:

- Girl/woman 41%
- Boy/man 47%
- Gender diverse 4%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 5%

##### Sexual Orientation

The breakdown of sexual orientation among students is as follows:

- Straight / Cisgender 72%
- Asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, queer, Indigiqueer, Two-Spirit, and/or questioning 18%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 10%

##### Racial Identity

The breakdown for racial identity among 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students is as follows:

- Black 7%
- East Asian 5%
- Latino/Latina/Latinx 4%
- South Asian 4%
- Southeast Asian 4%
- Middle Eastern 4%
- White 62%
- Prefer not to answer 4%

##### Disability

The breakdown for disability among 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students is as follows:

- Yes 28%
- No 46%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 26%

#### Academic Achievement

##### CREDIT ACCUMULATION

A student is considered to be on track to graduate within four years if they have accumulated at least 16 credits by the end of Grade 10.

For 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 75% were on track for graduation, while 25% were not on track. This is compared to all students, of which 72% were on track for graduation, while 28% were not.

### **LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT**

EQAO scores assess a student's reading and writing skills against provincial standards. The breakdown provides the percentage of students who met or exceeded the provincial standard on the Grade 3 and 6 EQAO reading and writing tests as well as the O.S.S.L.T.

The breakdown is as follows:

- Grade 3 EQAO Reading, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 74%, all students 69%
- Grade 3 EQAO Writing, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 75%, all students 67%
- Grade 6 EQAO Reading, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 85%, all students 80%
- Grade 6 EQAO Writing, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 83%, all students 78%
- O.S.S.L.T, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 83%, all students 74%

### **SUSPENSIONS (Grades 4-12)**

Percentage of students who have been suspended at least once between Grades 4 and 12.

For 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 84% had no suspensions while 16% had at least one suspension. This is compared to all student, of which 80% had no suspensions while 20% had at least one.

### **ACADEMIC COURSES IN GRADE 10**

Percentage of students who have taken academic level English, Math, and Science, which allows them to go on to university.

- For English, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 70%, all students 69%
- For Math, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 62%, all students 63%
- For science, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students 67%, all students 68%

## **Well-Being**

### **Sense of belonging at school**

Students were asked questions about their well-being in school. They could answer always and often, sometimes or, rarely and never. The breakdown is as follows:

- When asked if students feel like they belong at school
  - Of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students, always and often 46%, sometimes 35%, rarely and never 19%
  - Of all students, always and often 67%, sometimes 22%, rarely and never 11%
- When asked if students feel accepted by other students at school
  - Of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students, always and often 45%, sometimes 35%, rarely and never 20%
  - Of all students, always and often 69%, sometimes 22%, rarely and never 9%
- When asked if students feel accepted by adults at school
  - Of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students, always and often 64%, sometimes 24%, rarely and never 12%
  - Of all students, always and often 75%, sometimes 17%, rarely and never 7%
- When asked if students felt that adults at school treat them differently (worse than) other students
  - Of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students, always and often 8%, sometimes 18%, rarely and never 74%
  - Of all students, always and often 10%, sometimes 16%, rarely and never 74%

### **Trusted School Adult (Grades 4-12)**

Students were asked, do you feel that there is an adult at school who they feel comfortable to go to for personal support, advice, or help?

In response 69% of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students felt they had one or more trusted adults they could go to, while 31% said there were no trusted adults at school. In comparison 70% of all students said they had one or more trusted adults they could go to, while 30% said there were no trusted adults at school.

## Experiences of Bullying (Grades 4-12)

Students were asked since September have you experienced bullying? The breakdown gives the percentage of students who indicated any level of bullying to the categories provided.

The breakdown for 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.+ students is as follows:

- Bullied physically by being physically hurt 22%
- Bullied physically by having their things damaged or stolen 20%
- Bullied verbally 57%
- Bullied socially 57%
- Bullied electronically 32%
- Bullied racially / ethnically 19%
- Bullied by being called racial slurs 14%
- Bullied because of their appearance 43%
- Bullied because of their weight 28%
- Bullied because of their gender expression or perceived gender presentation 35%
- Bullied because they are out, or have been outed, as being 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ 33%

## Input From Consultations

To help understand the data, input was sought from students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members. The following summarizes the main themes from these consultations and the recommendations made.

- **Data from the Student Census tells only part of the story:** Many consultation participants felt that the Student Census data did not reflect the full experience of 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students, given that there is a great deal of diversity within this group.
- **Normalization of homophobia and transphobia:** 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students expressed that they regularly experience homophobia and transphobia at school. This includes deadnaming and misgendering from both students and teachers despite multiple corrections from the 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ student harmed. They also shared that they experience the continued use of slurs, inappropriate jokes, and inappropriate language, all of which serves to bully and marginalize 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students. This impacts their mental health, well-being, and sense of safety and belonging at school.

Many 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students shared that it is unsafe for them to be open about their identities at school and that they do not join Gender and Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) out of fear of being bullied or outed.

***“It’s genuinely hard coming to school knowing I might hear a slur.”***

- **Lack of consequences for students:** Concern was expressed that there are little to no consequences for inappropriate language or behaviours directed at 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students. 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students felt there must be real consequences for students’ inappropriate behaviours which foster a toxic learning environment.
- **Lack of consequences for staff:** Concern was also expressed about a lack of consequences for staff who exhibit inappropriate behaviours or who ignore the problematic behaviour of students. Participants also discussed the negative impact on their well-being that came from the protests that occurred at their school, particularly when they didn’t feel supported by their teachers.

***“When the protests were going on, it was so hard to be at school and see the empty chairs and teachers wearing black to show that they hate me.”***

- **Worries about parents:** Some students expressed concerns about unsupportive parents. Their own parents may not be supportive of their 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ identities, and they would like school to be a safe space for them. They were also concerned about the behaviours of the parents of other students, who may not hold their children accountable for their inappropriate behaviours at school or in the community.
- **Need for supports:** Because of the homophobia and transphobia they experience, 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students shared the need for in-school supports such as social workers and GSAs. There was also concern that access to these supports varies depending on which school one attends.

## Recommendations

- Provide students with lessons and workshops regarding 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ identity and anti-bullying.
- Advocate to the Ministry of Education to incorporate queer inclusive sexual education curricula and increase the knowledge and level of comfort of teachers who teach health and sexual education.
- Advocate for funding for ongoing and mandatory professional learning and additional resources regarding 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ identity, mental health, and anti-bullying.
- Better equip staff to interrupt and address homophobia when it occurs.
- Ensure students experience consequences for homophobic and transphobic behaviours and that there are consequences for staff who ignore these behaviours.
- Provide 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students with better access to specialized in-school supports, such as social workers and GSAs, regardless of which school they attend.
- Provide 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students, parents/guardians, and staff a place where they can share their concerns anonymously.
- Develop policies and procedures that will foster positive and supportive learning environments for 2.S.L.G.B.T.Q.I.A+ students.