

# Census Portrait

## East Asian 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 5% (527) of all G.E.C.D.S.B students identify as East Asian. 38% of these students were born outside of Canada.

There is a great deal of diversity among students who identify as East Asian.

### Demographic data

#### *Ethnic Origins*

The top 10 ethnic origins for East Asian students are:

- Chinese 72%
- Canadian 26%
- Korean 6%
- Vietnamese 5%
- Hong Konger 5%
- Japanese 4%
- English 2%
- Irish 2%
- Scottish 2%
- German 2%

#### *Language first spoken*

The top 10 languages first spoken as a child for East Asian students are:

- English 51%
- Mandarin 45%
- Cantonese 13%
- Japanese 4%
- Korean 4%
- French 4%
- Vietnamese 3%
- American Sign Language 1%
- Tagalog 1%
- Khmer 1%

#### *Disability*

The breakdown for disability among East Asian students is as follows:

- Yes 9%
- No 81%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 10%

#### *Religious identity*

The breakdown for religious identity for East Asian students is as follows:

- Christian 18%

- Non-Christian religions 13%
- No religious affiliation 52%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 17%

**Sexual Orientation**

The breakdown for 2SLGBTQ+ identity for East Asian students is as follows:

- Straight / Cisgender 66%
- 2SLGBTQ+ 22%
- Not sure / I don't understand this question / Prefer not to answer 12%

## 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 East Asian students 82% were on track for graduation, while 18% 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, East Asian students 86%, all students 69%
- Grade 3 EQAO Writing, East Asian students 84%, all students 67%
- Grade 6 EQAO Reading, East Asian students 89%, all students 80%
- Grade 6 EQAO Writing, East Asian students 91%, all students 78%
- O.S.S.L.T, East Asian students 85%, all students 74%

**SUSPENSIONS (Grades 4-12)**

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

For East Asian students 94% had no suspensions while 6% 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, East Asian students 91%, all students 69%
- For Math, East Asian students 91%, all students 63%
- For science, East Asian students 90%, 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 East Asian students, always and often 69%, sometimes 25%, rarely and never 6%
  - 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 East Asian students, always and often 72%, sometimes 20%, rarely and never 8%
  - Of all students, always and often 69%, sometimes 22%, rarely and never 9%
- When asked if students feel accepted by adults at school
  - Of East Asian students, always and often 77%, sometimes 15%, rarely and never 8%

- 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 East Asian students, always and often 9%, sometimes 14%, rarely and never 76%
  - 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 68% of East Asian students felt they had one or more trusted adults they could go to, while 32% 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 East Asian students is as follows:

- Bullied physically by being physically hurt 12%
- Bullied physically by having their things damaged or stolen 15%
- Bullied verbally 36%
- Bullied socially 30%
- Bullied electronically 16%
- Bullied racially / ethnically 30%
- Bullied by being called racial slurs 22%
- Bullied because of their appearance 20%
- Bullied because of their weight 12%
- Bullied because of their gender expression or perceived gender presentation 12%
- Bullied because they are out, or have been outed, as being 2SLGBTQIA+ 9%

## **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:** Those consulted with were concerned that the Census data did not reflect the full experience of East Asian students. They shared that students and their parents/guardians may be reluctant to share information about poor experiences at school. There may also be language barriers keeping them from understanding and completing the Student Census.
- **Anti-Asian racism:** Students shared experiences of bullying, including the use of racial slurs, which they feel increased with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They also shared that some poor experiences with their peers resulted from ignorance and the lack of understanding about people from diverse communities, backgrounds, and identities. Many students also reported feeling that they need to change who they are to fit in at school.
- **Academic supports outside of school:** Many felt that the high academic achievement evident in the data reflected the supports they receive from parents/guardians and private tutors rather than the supports they receive in school.
- **Bullying under-reported:** Many felt that there are higher amounts of bullying and mental health issues than are reported. They shared that many East Asian parents tell their children not to report their experiences of bullying or anti-Asian racism.
 

***“These issues are not talked about due to stigma. They are afraid to say there is an issue.”***
- **Barriers for newcomer parents:** Newcomer parents may not have the information about the education system or the language skills necessary to navigate the school system and effectively advocate for their children. Many also place a great deal of trust in the education system and may not understand the importance of engaging with the

school system. Many families also experience other barriers to engaging with the education system including poverty, immigration status, and mental health.

- ***Biases of educators and staff:*** Concern was also raised about the conscious and unconscious biases of staff, school administrators, and system administrators, which impact the expectations they have of East Asian students. In addition, there was concern shared that the academic or mental health supports needed may be overlooked because East Asian students are seen as “model minorities.”

## Recommendations

- Set clear goals to increase the number of East Asian educators and staff.
- Provide more information to parents/guardians to help them understand and navigate the G.E.C.D.S.B.
- Provide ongoing professional learning for educators, staff, school administrators, and system leaders regarding anti-Asian racism.
- Better equip all staff to foster inclusive learning environments and address Anti-Asian racism when it occurs.
- Educate and engage with East Asian students and parents/guardians on the topic of mental health in ways that are culturally appropriate.
- Reflect Asian people and cultures in the curriculum, including celebrating Asian Heritage Month.
- Better communicate and engage with East Asian families.
- Provide opportunities for East Asian students, parents/guardians, and staff to share concerns anonymously.