

Dear parent(s)/guardian(s),

You are receiving this letter because your child's school has been selected to take part in a trial study of the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) Student Census. Please read this letter carefully for details.

What is Ontario's *Anti-Racism Act*?

Ontario's [Anti-Racism Act](#) of 2017 requires all public sector organizations, including school boards, to collect "identity-based" data about the people using their services for the purpose of eliminating systemic racism and advancing racial equity. Identity-based data include a person's: ethnicity, race, Indigenous identity, and religion. [Data standards governing collection of this information](#) also authorize the collection of gender, sexual orientation, disability, status in Canada, and socioeconomic status, to learn how these parts of a person's identity intersect with their ethnicity, race, Indigenous identity, and religion. Public sector organizations combine this information with outcomes data about the services they provide, to find out about unequal experiences of people from different identity groups. Unequal experiences are caused by systemic racism and discrimination. Once unequal experiences are found, organizations can work to remove them.

What is the DPCDSB Student Census?

DPCDSB is a public sector organization that serves students. **To meet the requirements of the *Anti-Racism Act*, DPCDSB will ask students in Grades 4 through 12 to complete an online survey, called the DPCDSB Student Census, that will collect the information described above during class time. Parents/guardians will be asked to complete the census on behalf of younger children (Kindergarten to Grade 3), or for their older children with special needs or other exceptionalities who may not be able to fill out the census themselves.**

Why do we want to hear from your child/children?

The purpose of the DPCDSB Student Census is to ask students in Grades 4 through 12 questions about their ethnicity, race, Indigenous identity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and status in Canada. The *Education Act* also authorizes collection of Indigenous identity, gender, and disability in terms of learning exceptionalities, with consent. Please note that sexual orientation will only be asked of students in Grade 8 and older, as guided by the timing of this topic in [The Ontario Curriculum Grades 1 to 8: Health and Physical Education, 2019](#) and the *Fully Alive* resource developed by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario and used in DPCDSB's Religion and Family Life program. Parents/guardians will be asked to provide information about their younger children's ethnicity, race, Indigenous identity, religion, gender, disability, and status in Canada. **All school boards in Ontario must collect this information.** Students will also be asked about experiences like: belonging and treatment at school, seeing their identity represented at school, and their well-being.

How will we get the information?

DPCDSB will implement the DPCDSB Student Census this May in a test, or “pilot”, study at 10 schools. This smaller study will test:

- how the census is shared with students and parents/guardians,
- the questions and the way students answer them,
- the way the information will be protected,
- the analyses to look for unequal experiences and outcomes.

Findings will help DPCDSB prepare to run the DPCDSB Student Census in all schools during the next school year. The DPCDSB Student Census will be open from **May 5, 2021 until the end of the school day on June 2, 2021**.

How will students in Grades 4 and older complete the DPCDSB Student Census?

Participating students in Grades 4 and older will complete the DPCDSB Student Census online during class under the supervision of school staff. **Your child will receive an email to their student email account.** This email will contain a personalized survey link they can use to complete the census during class. Completing the census using the link in the email will automatically record your child’s student number along with their census responses. Note that the link your child receives is only for them and should not be shared with or completed by anyone else.

How will we get the information for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3?

Parents and guardians of students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 will complete the DPCDSB Student Census online using a personalized survey link for each child. An email containing this link will be sent to your child’s student email account, where you can access it just like how you received your child’s report card during the COVID-19 pandemic. Student emails contain each student’s 9-digit student number (used to access DPCDSB’s computer network and electronic devices), followed by @educ.dpcdsb.org. You will also need to know your child’s email account password. Please contact your school and/or child’s classroom teacher if you have difficulty locating your child’s DPCDSB student number and/or password.

Completing the census using the survey link in the email will automatically record your child’s student number along with answers you provide about them on the census. Note that the link sent to each child’s email account is only for them and should not be shared. **If you have more than one child in Kindergarten through Grade 3, you will need to complete one census for each child** and to make sure you are answering the census items for the correct child.

How will we get the information for students with special needs who need their parents and guardians to complete the DPCDSB Student Census?

Parents and guardians may need to complete the DPCDSB Student Census for their children who may have exceptionalities, depending on the individual child’s strengths and abilities. DPCDSB special education staff will work with local schools to identify students who may need their parents and guardians to complete the census for them. **If you feel your child needs your assistance to complete the census, please contact the school.**

Parents and guardians of students with special needs will complete the DPCDSB Student Census online using a personalized survey link for each child. An email containing this link will be sent to your child’s

student email account, where you can access it. Student emails contain each student's 9-digit student number (used to access DPCDSB's computer network and electronic devices), followed by @educ.dpcdsb.org. You will also need to know your child's email account password. Please contact your school if you have difficulty locating your child's student number and/or password.

Completing the census using the survey link in the email will automatically record your child's student number along with answers you provide about them on the census. Note that the link sent to each child's email account is only for them and should not be shared. **If you have more than one child with special needs requiring your support, or also have a child in Kindergarten through Grade 3, you will need to complete a separate census for each child** and to make sure you are answering the census items for the correct child.

How will the DPCDSB Student Census data be used?

In order to understand how well students from different identity groups are doing, DPCDSB needs to link individual student outcomes to their census responses. Student responses will be linked to their achievement, attendance, program of study, incident information, and other learning outcomes stored in DPCDSB's student management system, using their student number. In addition, socioeconomic information from the Census of Canada will be linked to students' census information using postal codes, to help understand how these data impact student outcomes.

How is my child's privacy protected?

The information collected with the DPCDSB Student Census is confidential, but it is **not anonymous**. This means that although the census does collect the identity of a student, individual student responses will never be shared. The data will be analyzed and results will be reported only showing findings from groups of students. Reporting results by groups of students ensures that a student's identity remains confidential.

The only staff to access the collected responses are those authorized within the DPCDSB Equity, Policy, Strategy, and Research Department. The response data from the census is accessed by this group of staff to summarize results by census question or student group, and to explore trends within the data. All information will be private and confidential, and kept in a secure computer network accessed only by the authorized staff. School staff will not have access to your child's individual census answers at any time, and no information from the DPCDSB Student Census will be added to your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR) or the student management system. For questions or concerns related to the privacy of your child's census data, please contact the school principal or Gina Coish, DPCDSB's Manager, Records Management, Access, and Privacy at gina.coish@dpcdsb.org.

Does my child have to participate in the DPCDSB Student Census?

Participation in the DPCDSB Student Census is strictly voluntary. Staff will tell students about the purpose of the census and students will have a chance to decide whether they wish to participate. Even if they decide to participate, they can skip any questions they do not wish to answer, or they may choose to stop participating at any time. If your child does not participate, they will work on regular schoolwork. Parents and guardians who are completing the census for younger students or for students with special needs may also choose whether or not they participate. Parents and guardians can skip any questions they do not wish to answer, or can stop answering at any time. **The choice to participate or not participate will not affect your child's marks or treatment in their classroom or school, and it will not affect any services that your family receives from the school or from DPCDSB.**

What if I do not want my child to participate in the DPCDSB Student Census?

If you DO NOT wish your child in Grade 4 or older to participate, [please click this link](#) and enter their full name, school, and student number by Sunday, May 2, 2021. It is also your choice whether or not you complete the census for your child in Kindergarten to Grade 3, or for your child with special needs who needs you to do the census for them.

Where can I get more information on the study?

If you have any questions or concerns about the DPCDSB Student Census, please contact your child's school principal. You can also contact Michelle Coutinho, DPCDSB Principal of Equity and Inclusive Education at michelle.coutinho@dpcdsb.org.

May God continue to bless you and your family,

Max Vecchiarino



Superintendent of Equity, Policy, Strategy, Research
Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board