

The DPCDSB Student Census: Quick Reference Guide for Parents and Guardians

"You are the people of God; he has loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

Colossians 3:12

Anti-Racism Act, 2017

Ontario's Anti-Racism Act, 2017, requires public sector organizations, **including school districts**, to collect identity-based data to identify and address systemic racism.



 Fighting systemic racism and discrimination reflects the Catholic social teachings of:

- **Human dignity**
- **Solidarity**
- **Living in community**
- **Rights and responsibilities**

How will we get the information?

- **Parents and guardians** will do the census for their children in **Kindergarten to Grade 3**, and for students with special needs who cannot complete it themselves.
- **Students in Grades 4 through 12** will do the **census online**, during class.
- The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) would like everyone to participate, but the census is still **voluntary**.

Who?

- All students in Kindergarten through Grade 12

What do we have to ask?

- First language(s)
- Indigenous language(s)
- Indigenous identity
- Ethnicity
- Race
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual orientation*
- (Dis)ability
- Birth, status, and time in Canada
- Socio-economic status**

What else do we want to find out?

- Peer inclusion
- School inclusion
- Participation in school activities
- Representation of equity-seeking groups at school
- Positive reflection of identity at school
- Exclusion at school
- Experience of bullying
- Emotional state

Why are we collecting this information?

- Collecting identity-based data **for each student**, that can be linked to their achievement, lets us compare school outcomes by specific student groups. Note: the census is **not anonymous**.
- This comparison may find **disproportionality** (i.e., over- or under-representation of a group compared to its proportion of the population) and/or **disparity** (i.e., disproportionate representation of a group compared to another group in terms of an outcome).
- Disproportionality and disparity are indicators of systemic racism and discrimination. Finding these problems is the first step to dismantling them.

*Implementation consistent with content and timing in *The Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education* (August 2019). Asked of/about students in Grades 8 and older.

**Students will not be asked about socio-economic status; a proxy measure linked to student postal code of residence will be substituted.

Identity Items: Languages, Ethnicity, and Race



"All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him."

Psalm 22:27

Why ask about first language(s) spoken?

It is important to identify students' first language(s) as "...there is almost inevitably a link between the language we speak or the accent with which we speak a particular language on the one hand, and our ancestry, ethnic origin or place of origin on the other".*



You can help by:

- Reminding your child of the first language they learned to speak

We are also asking about first Indigenous language(s)

If a student says they **first learned an Indigenous language**, a second question (with a list of the Indigenous languages most commonly spoken in this region) will ask them to say which one(s) they first learned.

You can help by:



- Reminding your child of the first Indigenous language they learned

Why are we asking about ethnicity?

All students are asked (1) if they identify as Canadian, and (2) to list their ethnic or cultural origins. Note that "perceived differences based on ethnic origin may be racialized and lead to adverse impacts and unequal outcomes."**



You can help by:

- Discussing your **family's ethnic background**, including the place(s) and cultural group(s) parents, guardians, and grandparents are from

Why are we asking about Indigenous identity?

Disparity and unequal treatment have been documented for Indigenous peoples living in Canada. Asking students to show their Indigenous heritage is the first step to doing a better job of meeting their needs and supporting their success.

You can help by:



- Discussing and **celebrating your family's First Nation, Métis, and/or Inuit identity**

Why are we asking about race?

Race is a **social creation, not based in science or biology**, which broadly groups people based on physical similarities (e.g., skin colour).** A person's race affects many things in their life, such as how they may be treated by others and by institutions. Asking students about their race is the first step toward breaking down barriers to student success.



You can help by:

- Understanding that **race is an important part of identity**, as others may not always treat you equally based on this social category
- Talking about the races of parents, guardians, and grandparents, to help your child be better able to list their race(s)
- Reminding your child to indicate their race(s); instead of leaving the information blank or, in the case of more than one race, simply typing "mixed"

*Ontario Human Rights Commission. No date. <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-discrimination-and-language/language-related-grounds-discrimination-ancestry-ethnic-origin-place-origin-race>

**Anti-Racism Directorate. (2017). A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan.

Identity Items: Religion, Gender, Sexual Orientation, Disability, and Status in Canada



"Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law."

Romans 13:10

Why are we asking about religion in a Catholic school district?

"People can experience racism based on their religion, or perceived religion, which may lead to unique adverse impacts and unequal outcomes."* Although DPCDSB is a Catholic school district, not all of our students and families are Catholic.



You can help by:

- Talking about your family's Catholic or other **faith at home**

Why are we asking about disability?

Some people with disabilities face barriers related to physical access, inclusion, negative attitudes, and/or access to information.



You can help by:

- Talking about any disabilities your child may have had **diagnosed by a doctor** or specialist
- We specifically refer to "disability", based on the language of the protected grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Why are we asking about gender?

School districts are **required** to offer students the opportunity to identify their gender.



- Students will be asked to pick their gender or type it in an open text field.

Why are we asking about sexual orientation?

As a Catholic system, DPCDSB recognizes that each person is uniquely created by God and deserving of dignity. DPCDSB recognizes that each individual's human dignity must be respected and protected.

School districts are **required** to offer students the opportunity to identify their sexual orientation.**



- Consistent with The Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education, 2019, students in **Kindergarten to Grade 7 will not be asked this question**
- Students will be asked to pick their orientation, or to type another response.



For this sensitive topic, you can help by:

- Reminding your child that **Jesus calls us to love God and our neighbour**
- Showing this love of all neighbours by rejecting homophobia and transphobia



Why do we ask about status in Canada?

It is important to ask students about their birth, status, and time in Canada, as some people experience unfair treatment and/or outcomes related to their immigration status.



You can help by:

- Talking about **where your child was born** and when they came here if they weren't born in Canada

What about socio-economic data?

DPCDSB will link students to Statistics Canada census data using their postal codes.

*Anti-Racism Directorate. (2017). A Better Way Forward: Ontario's 3-Year Anti-Racism Strategic Plan.

**Ministry of Education. (2019). School Board Identity-Based Data Projects Application for Project Funding – Pilot Boards: Appendix C

Attitudinal Items: Inclusion, Participation, Representation

WELCOME

"For where two or three are gathered
in my name, I am there among them."

Matthew 18:20

Why ask attitudinal* items?

Linking identity-based data to things like achievement and attendance may show disparity and disproportionality. However, these data alone do not describe the daily experiences of students in DPCDSB. By adding items about attitudes and school experiences, we can get a better idea about how students' attitudes, identity, and outcomes are related. These findings can suggest ways to improve experiences and support success for all students.



We will ask students about:

Inclusion at School

Feeling included at school by friends, other students, and staff are important to supporting student well-being and sense of belonging.**

Participation

Getting involved in organized activities helps to support student well-being.*** Students are asked about the types of school extra-curricular programs they have joined.



- Depending on COVID-19 restrictions, students may need to think about activities they have **done in past years**.

Representation of Indigenous and Equity-Seeking Groups

Seeing and learning about Indigenous and equity-seeking groups in schools, classrooms, and class materials is important to student identity, motivation, and school belonging. Learning about the positive accomplishments and/or achievements of these groups is especially important.****



- Students are asked:

- (1) how often they **learn about the history and accomplishments of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups** at school;
- (2) how often **their own identity is shown in a good way** at school; and
- (3) which parts of their identity they do not see at school.

*Attitudinal items on the DPCDSB Student Census come from the following tools:

- DPCDSB Catholic Community, Culture, and Caring (CCCC) School Climate Survey
- DPCDSB Ensuring Equity Survey
- Peel District School Board (PDSB) Student Census "Count Me in Peel"

**Willms, J. D. (2003). Student engagement at school: A sense of belonging and participation. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

***Schonert-Reichl, K.A., Guhn, M., Gadermann, A.M., Hymel, S., Sweiss, L., & Hertzman, C. (2013). Development and Validation of the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI): Assessing Children's Well-Being and Assets across Multiple Contexts. *Social Indicators Research*, 114, 345–369.

****Kumar, R., Zusho, A., & Blondie, R. (2018). Weaving cultural relevance and achievement motivation into inclusive classroom cultures, *Educational Psychologist*, 53(2), 78-96.

Attitudinal Items: Exclusion, Bullying, and Emotional Well-Being



"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone."

1 Corinthians 12:6

We will ask students about:

Exclusion at School

Being excluded or treated badly by friends and others at school are linked to disengagement and lower achievement.* Given this link, the DPCDSB Student Census has an item about exclusion. Students are asked to rate how often they have felt excluded or "left out" at school due to specific parts of their identity.



-  **You can help by:**
- Letting your child know they will be asked about whether they feel left out of things at school and why they may feel this way
 - Talking with your child about these feelings and helping support your child

Experience of Bullying

Bullying behaviour can have negative impacts on student learning and well-being.** The DPCDSB Student Census asks students how often they:

-  **i**
- worry about being bullied;
 - have been bullied;
 - have had belongings stolen or damaged;
 - felt comfortable reporting bullying to teachers or others.

-  **You can help by:**
- Letting your child know they will be asked if they have been bullied and why
 - Talking with your child about these experiences and helping support your child

Emotional Well-Being

Stress and anxiety can have negative impacts on student achievement, sleep, substance use, satisfaction with life, and physical and mental health.*** The DPCDSB Student Census asks about student emotional well-being, such as:

-  **i**
- positive opinions of themselves
 - being hopeful
 - negative emotions such as loneliness, anxiety, sadness, tiredness, and stress

-  **You can help by:**
- Letting your child know they will be asked about these feelings
 - Talking with your child about these feelings and supporting your child

*Buhs, E. S., Ladd, G. W., and Herald, S. L. (2006). Peer Exclusion and Victimization: Processes that mediate the relation between peer group rejection and children's classroom engagement and achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1): 1-13.

**Tippett, N., Houlston, C., and Smith, P. K. (2010). Prevention and response to identity-based bullying among local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

***Pascoe, M. C., Hetrick, S. E., and Parker, A. G. (2020). The impact of stress on students in secondary school and higher education, *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25:1, 104-112.