



YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey

Themed Research Reports

# Special Education

November 2021

**Source:** Chief Lady Bird is an Anishinaabe artist based in Toronto. Her work is also seen across the city as public murals.

We affirm that we are all treaty people and acknowledge that the York Region District School Board is located on the lands of two treaties. These treaties have been signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the First Nations of the Williams Treaties who are: the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island; and the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Rama, and Georgina Island who is our closest neighbour and partner in education.

To honour this agreement we will take up our responsibility to be respectful of their traditions, knowledge and inherent rights as sovereign nations.

We will respect their relationship with these lands and recognize that our connection to this land is through the continued relationship with these First Nations, and we acknowledge our shared responsibility to respect and care for the land and waters for future generations.

**Title:** YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey Themed Research Reports. Special Education



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### Report Accessibility

Feedback regarding this Every Student Count Survey Themed Research Report is both encouraged and essential for advancing accessibility at YRDSB in a way that recognizes the needs of all learners and community members.

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**Report Citation:**

York Region District School Board, Research and Assessment Services (2021). *YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey Themed Research Reports*. Special Education. (Research Report No. 01.30.08-21). York Region District School Board. York Region. ON.

## Acknowledgements

**We would like to thank and acknowledge the support of Data Analytics and Reporting Advisory Group (DARAG), the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee, The Indigenous Education Advisory Council (IEAC), Supervisory Officers Network, Corporate Communications, and Senior Leadership Team members in general and the following groups in particular:**

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# YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey, Themed Research Reports: Special Education

York Region District School Board (YRDSB) is committed to improving student achievement and well-being by working to ensure equitable, accessible, inclusive and healthy learning environments. The Board recognizes that marginalized students face systemic barriers through policies, programs and practices that create or maintain disadvantages for these students. Ensuring equitable, accessible and inclusive learning environments, therefore, requires the intentional identification and removal of systemic barriers to student success and well-being. To this end, in 2018, YRDSB conducted the Every Student Counts Survey (ESCS) to:

- Identify and eliminate systemic barriers to student success;
- Create more equitable and inclusive school environments; and
- Improve student achievement and well-being.

As outlined in this report, findings from the ESCS point to disparities, or differences, in student experiences and outcomes based on socio-demographic characteristics including, but not limited to, gender identity, race, and special education needs. YRDSB recognizes that the disparities across demographics are the result of inequities within and beyond schools and school boards and are not a reflection of deficits within students and families. As such, it is important to review findings in this report with the understanding that:

- Biases must be examined to ensure that students, families and communities are not further marginalized or stigmatized in reviewing and interpreting data;
- Disparities in student experiences and outcomes reflect systemic inequities; and,
- Responses to disparities in student outcomes must focus on strategies and initiatives to promote equitable institutional structures and practices.

**Engaging with ESCS Data**

The following questions are intended to support readers of this report in using an anti-oppression framework to review the ESCS findings:

- What do you notice about the data? What stands out for you?
- How does your social location influence how you interpret the data?
- How will you shift or maintain your focus on looking at systems and structures (e.g., school practices, school environment, Board practices) rather than attributing students' experiences and outcomes to deficits within students and families?
- What does the data suggest about the experiences of students and their families?
- What assumptions or inferences might you be making about students and their families based on the data?
- Whose voices may not be represented in the data?
- In what ways are the data similar to, or different from, other data sources (e.g., municipal, community agencies, and other school boards)?
- What additional data sources are needed to understand both complementary and divergent perspectives regarding educational experiences?

## Report Overview

Collecting identity-based data through the ESCS supports the identification of groups of students who may likely be experiencing systemic barriers such as racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and other forms of oppression. Methot (2019) reminds us that when school board statistics show that certain groups of students have higher rates of, for example, suspensions, dropouts and absenteeism or require special education needs services, as is the focus of this report, it becomes clear that the education system is not responding to their needs.

Drawing on findings from the ESCS, which was collected from YRDSB as of November 2018, the aim of this report is to prompt critical dialogue that will contribute to positive change for students who experience such barriers at an individual, collective and systemic level and, as a result, have historically been underserved, with the intention of better serving these students.

The report is structured with ten parts:

- **Part A** provides an introduction, report overview, YRDSB approach to promote inclusive Special Education programs, and strategies and actions in Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) and Director's Action Plan (DAP).
- **Part B** provides a list of key findings in special education at YRDSB.
- **Part C** outlines a broad overview of YRDSB students identified with Special Education Needs (SEN).
- **Part D** provides a general description of all YRDSB students identified with and without SEN.
- **Part E** identifies patterns in Special Education Needs for students in Grades 7 to 12 according to key socio-demographic variables.
- **Part F** includes a brief overview of selected achievement indicators.
- **Part G** examines differences in Self-perception of Special Education Needs collected from Every Student Counts Survey and those obtained from Student Information System.
- **Part H** examines the equity measures using disproportionality indices.
- **Part I** includes limitations and implications for future research.
- **Part J** includes explanations of the key terms used throughout the study.

This report fits into the YRDSB's Director's Action Plan (DAP) goals to help address opportunity gaps regarding underserved students. It will allow policymakers to see where opportunity gaps regarding achievement exist so that they can be addressed, resulting in more equitable and inclusive education outcomes for all students. Regular dissemination of these types of reports will also help show parents, students, and other community stakeholders what progress is being made towards achieving these goals.

Students identified with Special Education Needs in this report refers to "Students who have been formally identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), as well as students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students whose sole identified exceptionality is giftedness are not included" (EQAO, 2019, p.38). Special education needs is a classification of students for school to provide specialized or intensive programing and support. It is closely associated with Program of Study (Brown & Sinay 2008; Brown & Parekh, 2010) or "streaming" and is widely considered to be strongly connected to postsecondary access.

## YRDSB Approach to Promote Inclusive Special Education Programs

York Region District School Board's Special Education planning, program development and service delivery processes have a strong tradition of including students identified with special needs as an integral part of our culture. This tradition is based on a belief that every student can learn and succeed with appropriate supports that address individual strengths and needs. Inclusiveness relies on strong learning communities that promote a respect for differences and communities that recognize, value and validate all children's right to belong at school and have access to a meaningful education. The practice of inclusion is more than full integration in regular classrooms. It goes beyond the continuum of service placements available to address the whole student and includes meaningful participation and interaction with others and a sense of belonging in a school community. This begins with inclusive design and a recognition of the rich and diverse experiences that each student brings to school.

Schools demonstrate inclusivity when they work in partnership with families and communities and invite students to be active participants in all aspects of school life, both inside and outside the classroom. Inclusive schools foster understanding, compassion and social-emotional intelligence. They multiply these benefits to school culture when they engage all staff, students, parents and other partners to focus on shared understandings and common goals. Classroom and Special Education Resource Teachers, Educational Assistants, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational and Physical Therapists, Psychologists, Social Workers and others collaborate with families and community organizations to ensure wraparound and seamless support for students who require it.

To support individual students, YRDSB provides students with a wide range of placement options and a variety of programs. We strive to provide programs for students that are precise and personalized through their Individual Education Plan (IEP). To provide personalized programs, we employ our Interdisciplinary teams (comprised of Psychologists, Social Workers, Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational and Physical Therapists, Special Education Techers, Consultants, Intervention Support Workers, Applied Behaviour Analysis Facilitators) as well as our tiered mental health supports to collaboratively provide proactive problem solving and early intervention. Inter-departmental work with Inclusive School and Community Services, Curriculum and Instructional Services, and Information and Technology Services is critical to the success of our programs and initiatives. The In-School Team (ISTM) provides a process which is designed to be collaborative and proactive, where the inclusion of several voices, ensures robust thinking and varied approaches to support individual students. Central to this process is the inclusion of the voices of families and students.

In YRDSB support structures, programs and resources are continually reviewed and examined for effectiveness and changed as appropriate and necessary. These changes are designed to address gaps in student opportunity (individual or identity based), as each gap is named.

The diversity of ability in our schools poses opportunities for all. Inclusiveness is so much more than the absence of segregation. It is purposeful, intentional, and committed action to ensure that everyone is made to feel that they matter and belong. Further, inclusive environments are fundamentally altered, not only for those whom we initially strive to "include", but, importantly, for the benefit of all.

## Moving forward: Strategies and Actions in Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Director's Action Plan

To support the achievement and well-being of students and to remove barriers to meaningful education for all students we will:

- Place both the individual and group of students at the centre of our actions.
- Conduct interdisciplinary In School Team Meetings that focus on proactive interventions and supports.
- Ensure active family and student voice in the proactive planning to support students.
- Continue to expand the Executive Function Pilot and empower students through the realization of the strengths they bring to learning and ways in which they can build critical executive functioning skills.
- Through critical culturally consciousness, engage in anti-oppressive assessment practices that are evidence informed, culturally responsive and identity affirming from a strengths-based approach with an emphasis on mattering and belonging.
- Provide culturally relevant and responsive care and ensure family friendly and translated communications.
- Engage in an interdepartmental review of effectiveness and appropriateness of the Student Support Centre structure of support.
- Support de-streaming of math through a pilot in partnership with Curriculum & Instructional Services, geared towards closing the learning gaps for students in a Student Support Centre placement for math.
- Ensure the full implementation of the Educational Assistant (EA) Strategy in order to ensure EAs are able to support students in positive, proactive ways that promote independence.
- Continue to support the Empower Reading program to support students identified with severe learning disabilities learn to read.
- Support system understanding and appropriate application of mitigating circumstances when considering suspension and expulsion of students identified with Special Education Needs.
- Create and implement a protocol to support school-based teams with decisions about modified days and exclusions for students identified with Special Education Needs.
- Review Special Education placement options within the board to ensure equitable access to services for all students.
- Examine the impact of intersecting social identities for students identified with Special Education Needs in the areas of programming, services and supports.
- Address and reduce disproportionality of representation where it exists in special education programs and identifications.
- Build collaborative relationships with external organizations and agencies that provide critical services to students identified with Special Education Needs (e.g., Children's Treatment Network, Kinark, Mackenzie Health).
- Update Learning Disabilities Strategic Plan to ensure alignment with goals in the DAP.

The Director's Action Plan goals focus on raising the learning outcomes of students who are being underserved and underperforming. This aligns with the Ministry of Education's Learning for All, which outlines that "assistance targeted at a specific group can help everyone". When we focus on raising the learning outcomes and well-being of students who are underserved and underperforming, all students benefit.

**Anti-Oppression Note**

The disparities and disproportionalities outlined in this list of key findings are the direct result of inequities within and beyond schools and school boards. It is important for us to reiterate, however, that the differences across the demographic variables included in this report are not a reflection of deficits within students and families. As such, it is important to review these findings within this report through an anti-oppressive framework. Before reading any further, we encourage readers to re-read the anti-oppressive prompts listed in the introduction of this report and ask readers to keep them front and center when engaging with ESCS data and thereafter.

## Overall Picture of Special Education in YRDSB

Our analysis indicates that the structure of Special Education in YRDSB is different than that identified in Special Education data for Ontario. Overall, 3% of students in YRDSB identified with a Gifted exceptionality, 13% identified with another exceptionality, and 84% of students were without Special Education Needs (SEN). This data suggests that YRDSB appears to have noticeably higher proportions of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality than the province (3% compared to 1% for the province).

The proportion of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) is lower in YRDSB (13%) than the province (15%-16%). In part, this may be due to the numbers and proportion of students identified with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) only, but no exceptionality (what had been referred by the Ministry of Education until recently as “Unidentified” Special Education Needs). These students account for the highest number of students identified with SEN in Ontario out of all SEN categories but are comparatively rare in YRDSB (and due to small numbers were not included in the Student Information System (SIS) for this 2018-19 analysis). Specifically, YRDSB requires formal assessment at a minimum and typically implements IEP’s once a student is Identified through IPRC.

This report uses the Ministry of Education Terms to allow comparability across Ontario.
In Ontario, students identified with Special Education Needs are categorized as receiving instruction in either:

a) Special Education classes (more than half of class instruction in placement of fully self-contained or partially integrated classes), or

b) Regular classes (less than half instruction in placement of indirect service, resource assistance or withdrawal assistance).

Despite the structure of Special Education identification and support being different at YRDSB, patterns of YRDSB students identified with SEN appear to be generally similar to those found in previous analyses of TDSB data (e.g., Sinay 2017; Brown and Parekh, 2010). In both boards, for example, male students are much more likely to be identified with both a Gifted exceptionality as well as most other exceptionalities, compared to female students. Students born in Canada and who speak English are overrepresented in Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted).

Outside of the public school system, most large-scale studies of disability rely upon measures of self-reported disability (e.g., the Canadian Survey on Disability). YRDSB’s *Every Student Counts Survey* had a question on perceived disability as well. There appears to be at least a partial discrepancy between the official record of Special Education Needs according to Ministry of Education criteria, and the self-reporting of student disability of Grade 7-12 students. Self-reported responses indicated 29% of students identified with SEN agreed that they had a disability, while 47% of students identified with SEN said they did *not* have a disability, and 17% were unsure. Additionally, a third of the students who said they had a disability had no record of Special Education Needs.

There are also differences according to exceptionalities. These findings are generally similar to earlier findings of Grade 9-12 students in the TDSB’s 2006 and 2017 Student Census (see Parekh and Brown, 2020).

## Socio-demographic Patterns

Data from the ESCS (Grades 7-12) allowed us to examine key socio-demographic differences between students identified with and without Special Education Needs. As detailed below, our analysis led to several key findings related to demographics including race, Indigenous identity, sexual orientation, parental education, neighbourhood income, gender identity and family structure.

### Racial Identity

- Students self-identified as Black (1% in Gifted versus 3% in YRDSB), Latino/Latina/Latinx (<1% in Gifted versus 1% in YRDSB), Middle Eastern (2% in Gifted versus 7% in YRDSB) and South Asian students (9% in Gifted versus 13% in YRDSB) were disproportionately underrepresented in Gifted exceptionality.
- Self-identified White students were also less likely to be identified with a Gifted exceptionality and to be in gifted Special Education classes; although their representation in gifted regular classes was similar to their representation in YRDSB (30% of self-identified Gifted students in regular classes were White, compared to 28% of YRDSB's official record on self-identified White Gifted students in regular classes).
- Students self-identified as East Asian were twice as likely to be in gifted Special Education classes (they are a majority at 53% of all students in gifted Special Education classes) and they were almost twice as likely to be in regular classes with a Gifted exceptionality identification.
- Students self-identified as Black (3% of the YRDSB population) were overrepresented in SEN regular classes (4%) and almost twice as likely to be placed in Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) (6%).
- Self-identified East Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern students were less likely to be found with Special Education Needs – either in regular or Special Education classes.
- Compared to their overall representation in YRDSB at 28%, White students were more likely to be in SEN regular classes (excluding Gifted) (41%) but less likely to be in SEN Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) (24%).
- Notably, students in Grades 7-12 with Special Education Needs are two to three times less likely to indicate their race ("No Race Selection") compared to the general Grades 7-12 population. We do not know the degree to which student non-response will influence the overall picture of race amongst students identified with and without Special Education Needs.

### Indigenous Identity

Students identified with Indigenous identity are less likely to be identified with a Gifted exceptionality. However, they are twice as likely to be identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted), and almost four times as likely to be in Special Education Classes (excluding Gifted). They are overrepresented in most exceptionalities.

### Sexual Orientation

Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Regular classes were more likely to describe themselves as being 2SLGBQ+ (15%). Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Special Education classes did not differ greatly from those without SEN.

- Students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) in Regular classes were somewhat more likely to describe themselves as being 2SLGBQ+ (13%);
- Students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) in Special Education classes did not differ from those without SEN. However, nearly half of these students were not sure (13%), did not understand the question (11%), or preferred not to answer (22%).

### Parental Education

There were noticeable differences in parental education levels (e.g., University, College, Apprenticeship, High school, Elementary school) across the categories of students with Special Education Needs. The vast majority of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality had parents/guardians with university education (84%) - a pattern seen in both Gifted Special Education and Regular classes. However, the parental education levels of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) were much lower at 46% with parents/guardians with university education. The differences between students in Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) compared to

Regular classes was pronounced: 50% of students in Regular classes, 27% of students in Special Education classes, had parents with university education.

### Neighbourhood Income

Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality were overrepresented in higher income neighbourhoods. There was little difference between those with a Gifted exceptionality in Regular or in Special Education classes. Students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) were underrepresented in lower income neighbourhoods, but this was most pronounced among those in Special Education classes, where almost twice as many living in the lowest quintile of income compared to the highest quintile.

### Gender Identity

Overall, 48% of YRDSB students identified as Woman/Girl, 49% identified as Man/Boy, and 3% identified with gender identities other than Man/Boy or Woman/Girl. Compared to students identified without SEN, students identified with SEN (both Gifted and others) were more likely to identify as Man/Boy and were also slightly more likely to indicate gender identities other than Man/Boy or Woman/Girl.

### Family Structure

While the majority of YRDSB students lived with two parents/guardians, the range varied from those in Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) (76%) to students identified with a Gifted exceptionality (92%).

## Student Learning Outcome Patterns

The relationship of Special Education Needs to student learning outcomes varies across the groups and different achievement indicators. YRDSB students identified with a Gifted exceptionality tend to be assessed at a level similar to students identified without an exceptionality. That is, the vast majority of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality do well in all elementary and secondary learning outcome variables, enroll in Academic courses, and are assumed to transition to postsecondary education. Furthermore, students who were identified with a Gifted exceptionality had the lowest suspension rates, while those who had other Special Education Needs had the highest suspension rates across the three grade panels (K-6, 7-8, 9-12) and were highly overrepresented with a Disproportionality Index of 2.87 (an index of 1 represents an equal proportion).

### Special Education Programming

The learning outcome trajectories of students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) are somewhat unclear. Patterns of students taking Special Education classes (excluding Gifted and Partially Integrated at the YRDSB) seem consistently connected to lower learning outcomes. However, judging from grade patterns seen in Section D, many students taking Special Education classes in Grade 8 will change to Regular classes in Grade 9 – a finding that invites further exploration into the relationship between Special Education Needs and learning outcomes.

Patterns of students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) in Regular classes appear to differ according to subject. Generally, students assessed at or above the provincial level (i.e., Levels 3 and 4) should have generally positive future learning outcome patterns. That is, learning outcomes of Level 3-4 tends to lead to Levels 3-4 in future academic years. Notably, however, when we look at the learning outcomes of Grade 6 students identified with SEN in Regular Classes in the Grade 6 provincial test, we find that the majority of these students are indeed assessed at the provincial level in writing but are assessed *below* the provincial level in mathematics. Elementary achievement results of these students therefore differ by subject results from Grade 8 elementary report cards.

### Program of Study

The decision to enroll students in the Grade 9 Applied program of study has strong implications for students' futures in postsecondary access. Most Grade 9 students identified with Special Education Needs take courses at the Applied and Locally Developed levels. Findings from the available Grade 9 and Grade 12 credit accumulation patterns suggest that the majority of these students will complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (O.S.S.D.) requirements. However, existing research from the Province and the YRDSB shows that postsecondary options of students placed into Applied and Locally Developed courses are greatly limited compared to the students placed into Academic courses (e.g., Sinay 2017; Brown and Parekh, 2010).

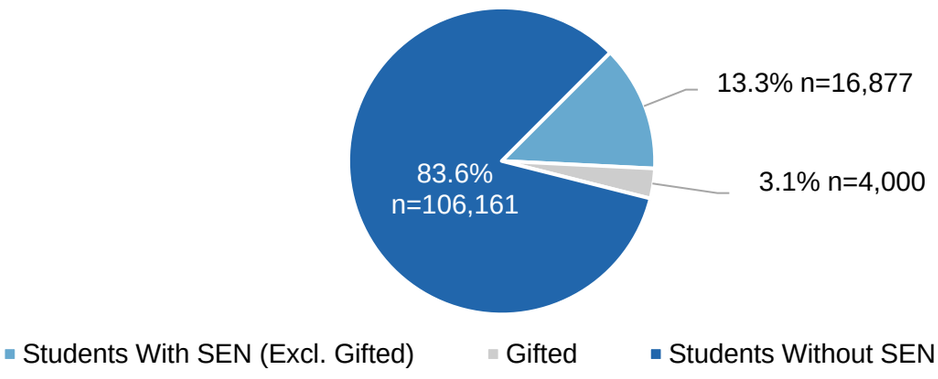
**Postsecondary Access**

According to a recent study using TDSB data, the gap in postsecondary access between those students identified with and without Special Education Needs has increased over time, although differences in high school graduation have declined as high school graduation has become widespread across different school populations (Robson et al, 2019). It is unclear whether this is also the case with YRDSB students. It will therefore be important to examine the progression of students through YRDSB in more detail, preferably through an elementary to postsecondary longitudinal cohort study. Results of the Grade 10 OSSLT showed that the majority of first-time eligible students in Special Education classes were exempted from writing the test (students are generally exempted when it is thought that high school graduation is unlikely). Few students in Special Education classes had completed 30 credits by the end of four years of secondary school (although it is quite possible that students may complete their secondary school requirements in Years 5 and 6 of secondary study). The long-term pathways of these students invite further study.

## Overall Status of Special Education Needs

Figure 1 shows the number and percentage of students identified with Special Education Needs as of November 2018. Students who enrolled in the YRDSB as of November 2018 and primarily identified with an exceptionality during the 2018-19 school year are included in this report. Overall, 3% of students who were identified with a Gifted exceptionality, 13% were identified with an exceptionality excluding Gifted, and 84% were students identified without SEN. Notably, in YRDSB, almost all students identified with Special Education Needs have an exceptionality whereas in Ontario, around half the students identified with Special Education Needs do not have an exceptionality but possess an Individual Education Plan[1].

**Figure 1: Distribution of Special Education Needs in YRDSB, November 2018**




Source: Student Information System

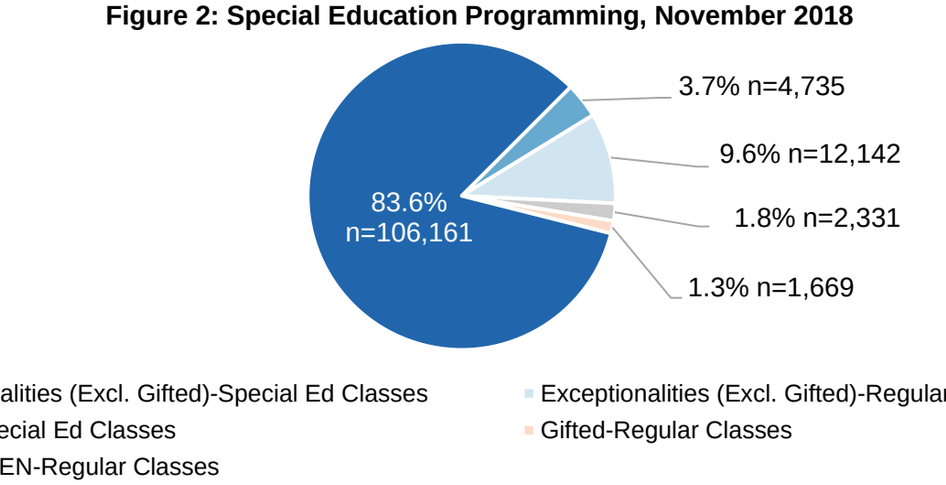
## Special Education Programming

Figure 2 below outlines the number and percent of students according to placement in educational programming. In Ontario, students identified with Special Education Needs are categorized as receiving instruction in either:

a) Special Education classes (more than half of class instruction in placement of fully self-contained or partially integrated classes), or
b) Regular classes (less than half instruction in placement of indirect service, resource assistance or withdrawal assistance).

In the YRDSB there is no Special Education instruction in fully self-contained classes. Rather, all students in Special Education classes have partially integrated placement. Most students identified with Special Education Needs receive instruction in Regular classes. Less than half of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality receive instruction in Regular classes but almost two-thirds of students identified with Special Education Needs other than Gifted are in Regular classes.

**Figure 2: Special Education Programming, November 2018**



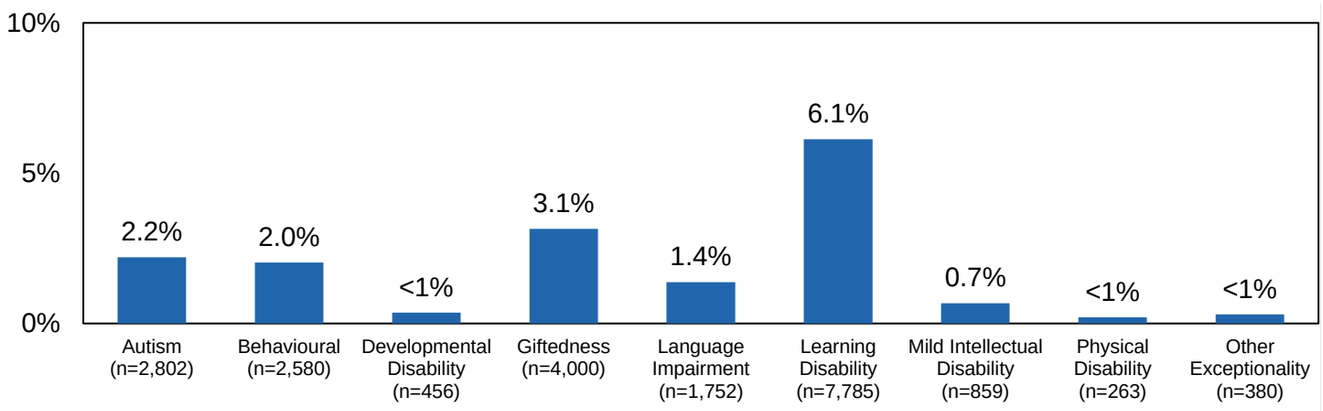

Source: Student Information System

[1] During this analysis it was found that several hundred students also have IEPs without exceptionalities, however, the information was not available for 2018-19 students. We will include information on these students starting with the 2020-21 school year.

## Key Exceptionalities

Figure 3 provides the most common exceptionalities among YRDSB students. The vast majority of students identified with SEN have exceptionalities of Learning Disability (7,785 or 6% of all students), Gifted (4,000 or 3%), Autism (2,802 or 2%), Behavioural (2,580 or 2%) and Language Impairment (1,752 or 1%).

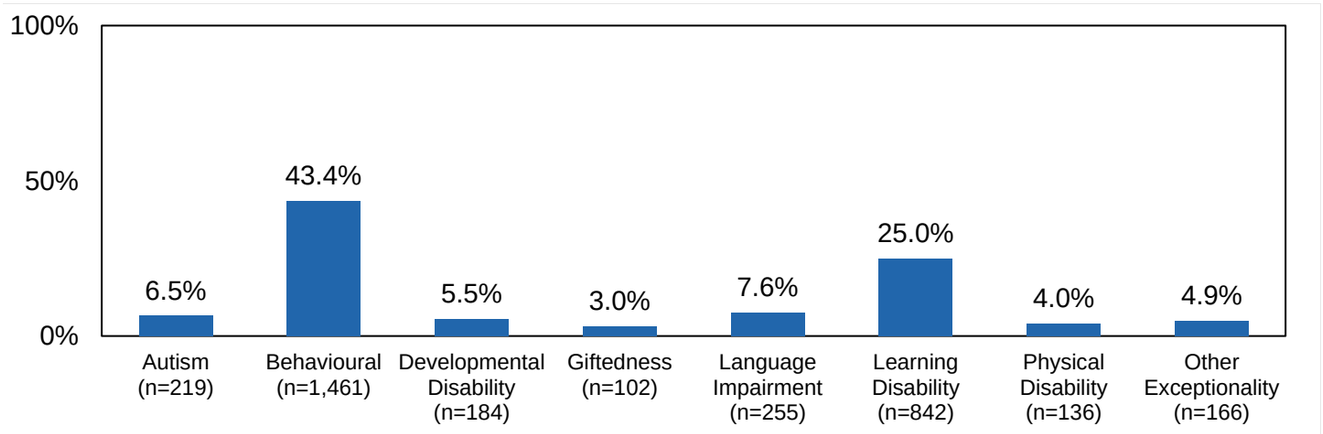
**Figure 3: Key Exceptionalities, November 2018**
**Percentage of YRDSB Students Identified with an Exceptionality**




Source: Student Information System

In addition, 3,365 or 2.6% of all YRDSB students also were identified with a second exceptionality, which is not reported to the Ministry of Education. As seen in Figure 4, students identified with Behavioural (1,461) and Learning Disability (842) are the largest groups among those students identified with a second exceptionality.

**Figure 4: Second Exceptionality*, November 2018**
**Distribution of Exceptionality among Students Identified with Second Exceptionality**




*Refers to a second exceptionality not reported to the Ministry of Education.
Source: Student Information System

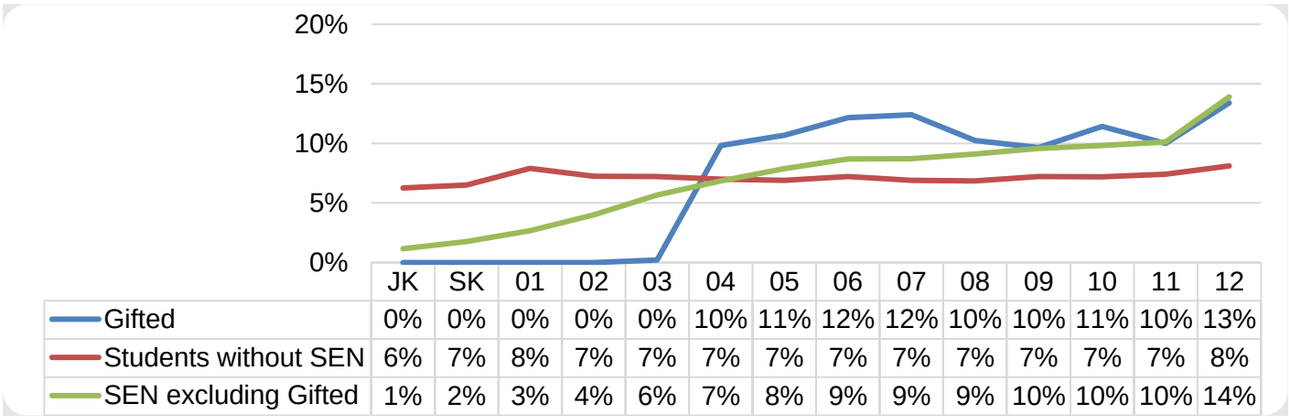
Notably, when the first and second exceptionalities are combined, YRDSB students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality (4,041) are almost tied with students identified with Gifted (4,102) as the second most frequent exceptionality. Learning Disability remains the largest exceptionality when first and second exceptionalities are combined, with 8,627 students.

This section presents information on Special Education Needs by student grade, gender, birthplace and language spoken at home. This information is retrieved from the YRDSB Student Information System for students in Grades K-12.

### Grade

There is a generally linear rise in Special Education Needs status and grade. That is, the number of students identified with a SEN increases with higher grades. For example, as noted in Figure 5 below, 1% of students in Junior Kindergarten (JK) are identified with a SEN compared to 14% of Grade 12 students. Most students identified with a SEN are in Grades 6-12.

**Figure 5: Grade and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students Grade by Special Education Needs Status, Gr. K-12**




| | JK | SK | 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | 07 | 08 | 09 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gifted | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 10% | 11% | 12% | 12% | 10% | 10% | 11% | 10% | 13% |
| Students without SEN | 6% | 7% | 8% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% | 8% |
| SEN excluding Gifted | 1% | 2% | 3% | 4% | 6% | 7% | 8% | 9% | 9% | 9% | 10% | 10% | 10% | 14% |

Source: Student Information System

There are pronounced differences in terms of Special Education versus Regular programming. Specifically, the majority of Grade 8 students taking Special Education programming (excluding Gifted) change to Regular programming in Grade 9. Additionally, all students identified with a Gifted exceptionality take Regular programming in Grades 11 and 12. As a result, most students identified as Gifted in Regular programming are found in Grade 11 (24%) and Grade 12 (32%).

**Table 1: Grade and Special Education Programming**
**Distribution of Students Grade in Regular and Special Education Classes, Gr. K-12**

| Grade | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| JK | 1.1% | 1.2% | <1% | <1% | 6.3% | 5.4% |
| SK | 1.8% | 1.7% | <1% | <1% | 6.5% | 5.7% |
| 01 | 3.2% | 2.5% | <1% | <1% | 7.9% | 7.0% |
| 02 | 5.6% | 3.4% | <1% | <1% | 7.2% | 6.6% |
| 03 | 8.6% | 4.6% | <1% | 0.5% | 7.2% | 6.8% |
| 04 | 10.6% | 5.4% | 13.9% | 4.1% | 7.0% | 7.1% |
| 05 | 12.7% | 6.0% | 14.7% | 5.0% | 6.9% | 7.2% |
| 06 | 12.9% | 7.0% | 17.8% | 4.3% | 7.2% | 7.6% |
| 07 | 12.4% | 7.3% | 17.5% | 5.3% | 6.9% | 7.3% |
| 08 | 12.0% | 8.0% | 13.9% | 5.1% | 6.8% | 7.3% |
| 09 | 4.3% | 11.6% | 10.0% | 9.1% | 7.2% | 7.6% |
| 10 | 4.4% | 11.9% | 12.1% | 10.5% | 7.2% | 7.7% |
| 11 | 2.7% | 13.0% | <1% | 23.9% | 7.4% | 7.9% |
| 12 | 7.7% | 16.3% | <1% | 32.1% | 8.1% | 9.0% |
| Total n | 4,735 | 12,142 | 2,331 | 1,669 | 106,161 | 127,038 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Note: Grade 12 includes students who attended in Years 4-7 of secondary school, until they turn 21, and therefore “Grade 12” as a grade is larger than other grades.

Source: Student Information System

The relationship of grade to exceptionalities is also complex, and indeed, each exceptionality has its own unique trajectory.

There are few students identified with a Learning Disability between JK to Grade 2, but there is a gradually increasing proportion of students identified with a Learning Disability from Grade 3 (3%) to Grade 12 (16%).

Gifted programming begins in Grade 4, and the proportion of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality is consistent across grades (10-12%), except for Grade 12 where the proportion of Gifted students slightly increases to 13%.

Students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality are rarely found in Kindergarten and Grade 1; but by Grade 3 the proportion has increased to nearly 9%. The highest proportion of students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality are found in Grades 11-12 (over a quarter are in those two senior grades).

Unlike many other exceptionalities, students identified with Autism are well represented across all grades, with around 6-8% per grade from SK to Grade 11 (increasing to nearly 10% in Grade 12).

Language Impairment has the most unusual pattern across grades. There is almost no representation of Language Impairment in JK, but the number of students rises sharply in Grades 3 and 4, with each grade having about 14% of the 1,752 students identified with a Language Impairment. After Grade 4 there is a gradual decline in the percentage of Language Impairment identifications, with Grade 12 students accounting for only 3% of students identified with that exceptionality.

In future research, it may be useful to examine reasons for these distinctive grade distributions.

**Table 2: Grade and Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students Grade by Exceptionality Type, Gr. K-12**

| Grade | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| JK | 5.4% | <1% | 1.1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 5.7% | 3.9% | 6.3% | 5.4% |
| SK | 7.4% | 0.9% | 2.4% | <1% | 1.7% | <1% | <1% | 3.4% | 5.3% | 6.5% | 5.7% |
| 01 | 7.5% | 2.2% | 4.2% | <1% | 6.2% | <1% | <1% | 6.5% | 7.6% | 7.9% | 7.0% |
| 02 | 7.9% | 5.0% | 3.9% | <1% | 11.9% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 4.9% | 9.2% | 7.2% | 6.6% |
| 03 | 7.9% | 8.6% | 4.8% | <1% | 14.0% | 2.5% | 2.3% | 4.6% | 6.1% | 7.2% | 6.8% |
| 04 | 7.7% | 7.4% | 5.9% | 9.8% | 14.3% | 5.1% | 4.0% | 6.1% | 6.1% | 7.0% | 7.1% |
| 05 | 7.6% | 9.2% | 5.9% | 10.7% | 11.5% | 7.3% | 4.5% | 5.7% | 7.6% | 6.9% | 7.2% |
| 06 | 7.8% | 9.8% | 9.0% | 12.2% | 8.9% | 8.8% | 8.1% | 6.1% | 8.7% | 7.2% | 7.6% |
| 07 | 6.7% | 7.1% | 5.3% | 12.4% | 8.2% | 10.3% | 10.2% | 6.5% | 6.3% | 6.9% | 7.3% |
| 08 | 6.9% | 6.9% | 8.6% | 10.3% | 5.8% | 11.4% | 11.2% | 6.1% | 7.9% | 6.8% | 7.3% |
| 09 | 5.8% | 7.5% | 6.6% | 9.7% | 6.1% | 12.4% | 12.9% | 7.2% | 7.1% | 7.2% | 7.6% |
| 10 | 6.1% | 9.1% | 7.5% | 11.4% | 4.4% | 12.6% | 12.2% | 10.6% | 7.4% | 7.2% | 7.7% |
| 11 | 5.5% | 11.4% | 8.1% | 10.0% | 3.3% | 12.8% | 13.5% | 9.1% | 6.6% | 7.4% | 7.9% |
| 12 | 9.8% | 14.8% | 26.8% | 13.4% | 3.4% | 16.1% | 19.9% | 17.5% | 10.3% | 8.1% | 9.0% |
| Total n | 2,802 | 2,580 | 456 | 4,000 | 1,752 | 7,785 | 859 | 263 | 380 | 106,161 | 127,038 |

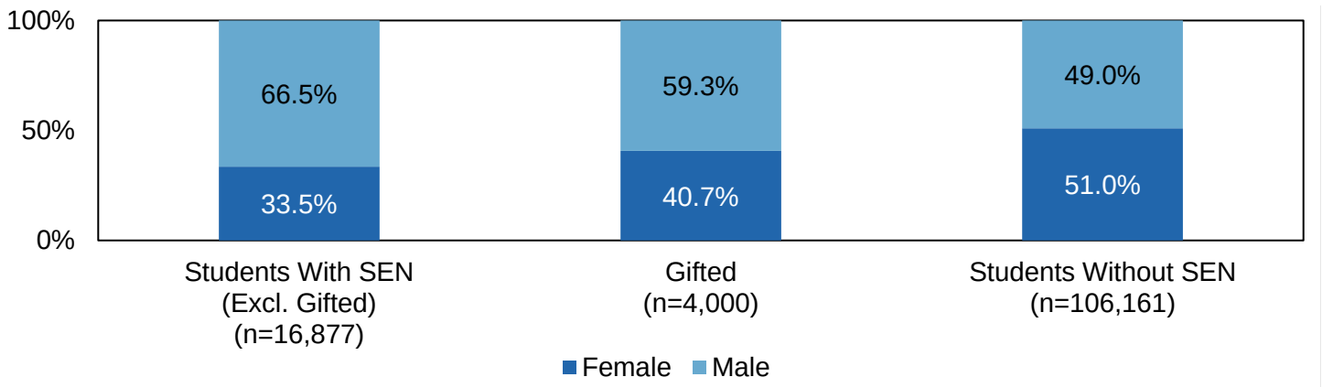
†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

## Gender

The gender information presented here is from the Student Information System (SIS) collected at student registration. At the time of the ESCS (2018-2019 school year), only male and female binary options were available on registration forms and therefore on SIS, but the current registration forms include the expanded options for gender which could be used for future analyses. A more in-depth look at gender identity using student responses on the ESCS appears later in this report.

Gender patterns in YRDSB are generally consistent with other Special Education trends in North America. The gender distribution of all YRDSB students is the same as the province: 52% male and 48% female. Our analysis indicates that two-thirds (67%) of students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) and 59% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality were male; and slightly fewer than half (49%) of students identified without SEN were male (See Figure 6).

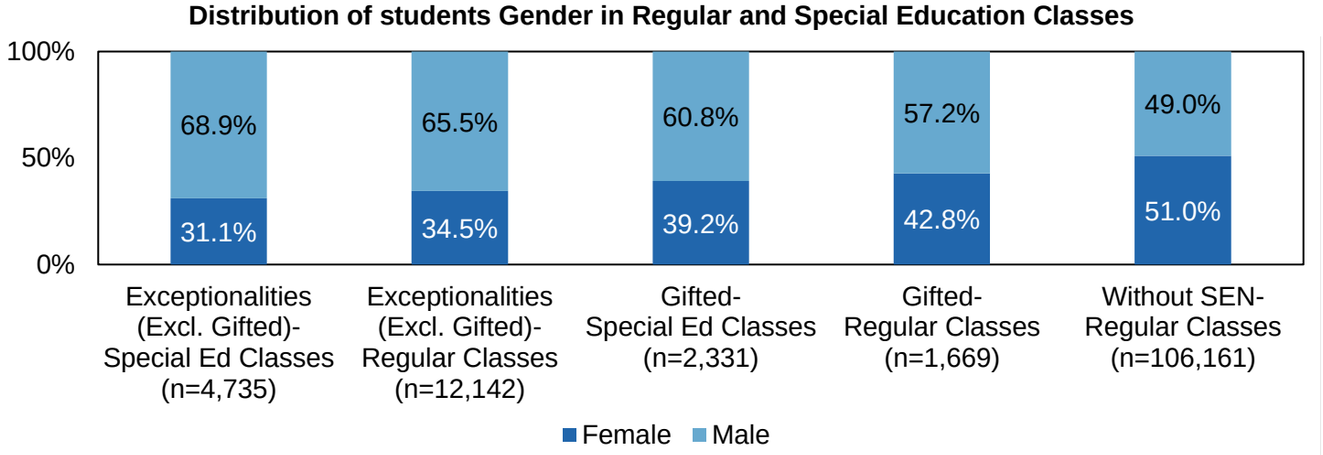
**Figure 6: Gender and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students Gender by Special Education Needs Status (Exc. Gifted)**




Source: Student Information System

The gender pattern is generally the same regardless of whether students identified with SEN were in Regular or Special Education classes (See Figure 7).

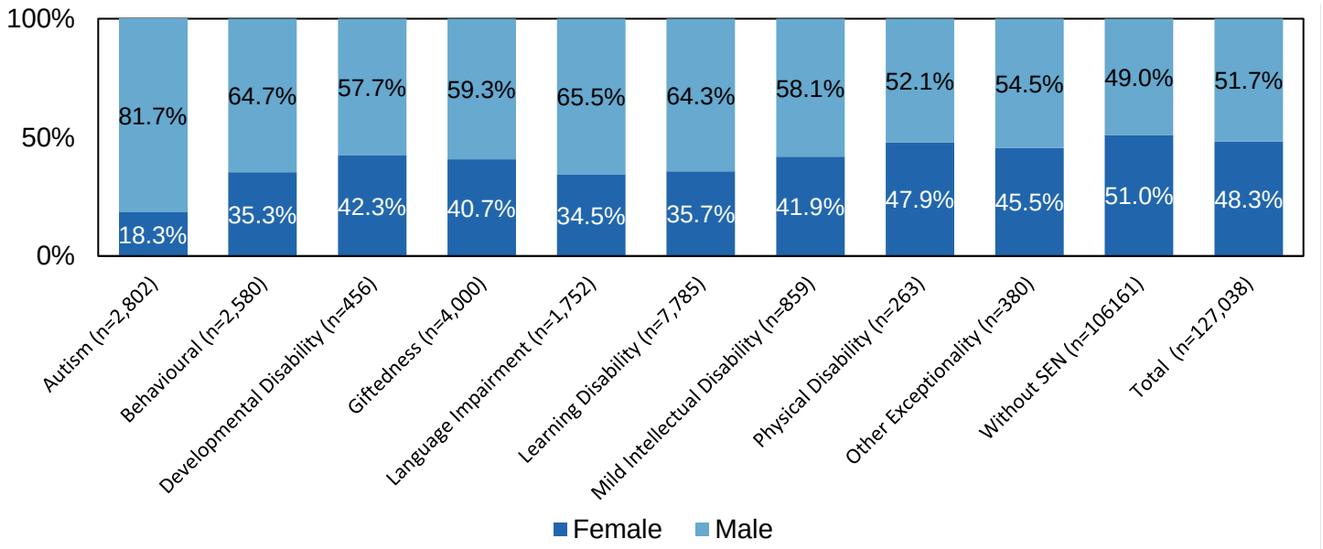
**Figure 7: Gender and Special Education Programming**
**Distribution of students Gender in Regular and Special Education Classes**




Source: Student Information System

However, there are wide variations according to exceptionality. Students identified with a Physical Disability were 52% male, representative of the total YRDSB population. All other exceptionalities had a disproportionality male population, including students identified with Autism being 82% male (See Figure 8).

**Figure 8: Gender and Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students Gender by Exceptionality Type**

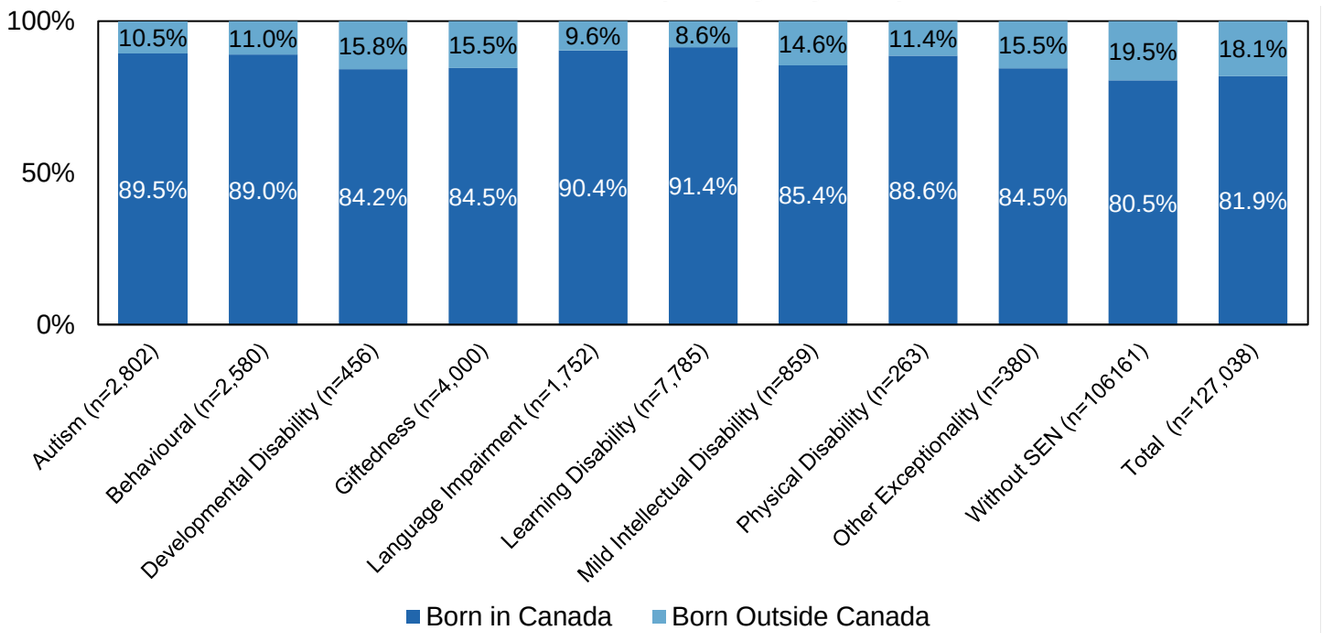



Source: Student Information System

## Birthplace (Canada, Outside of Canada)

Slightly under one-fifth of YRDSB students (18%) were born outside of Canada, but there is a noticeable difference between those students identified with and without SEN. That is, 20% of students identified without SEN, 10% of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted), and 16% of students with a Gifted exceptionality were born outside Canada. There was little difference whether students are in Regular or Special Education classes. There is however, some variation according to exceptionality. Specifically, students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (15%), those identified with a Developmental Disability (16%), and those identified with a Gifted exceptionality (16%) were almost twice as likely to be born outside of Canada as those identified with a Learning Disability (9%).

**Figure 9: Birthplace and Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students Birthplace by Key Exceptionalities**




Source: Student Information System

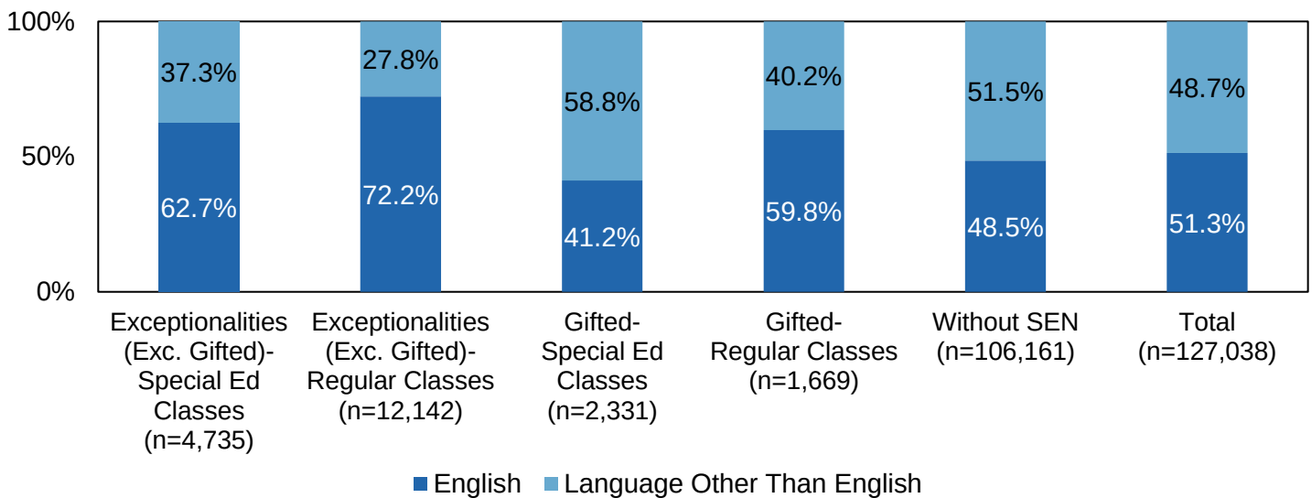
## Language Spoken at Home (English, Not English)

Overall, YRDSB students were roughly split between those speaking English at home (51%) and those speaking a language other than English (49%). This even distribution disappears however, when we look at Special Education patterns. Specifically, almost three-quarters of YRDSB students identified with SEN (70%)

spoke English at home. By comparison, slightly over half of students identified without SEN and those with a Gifted exceptionality spoke an additional language at home.

As outlined in Figure 10, students identified with SEN in Regular classes were more likely to speak English at home (72.2%) compared to students identified with SEN in Special Education classes (62.7%). Most students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Special Education classes spoke English and an additional language (41.2%), while most students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Regular classes spoke English at home (59.8%).

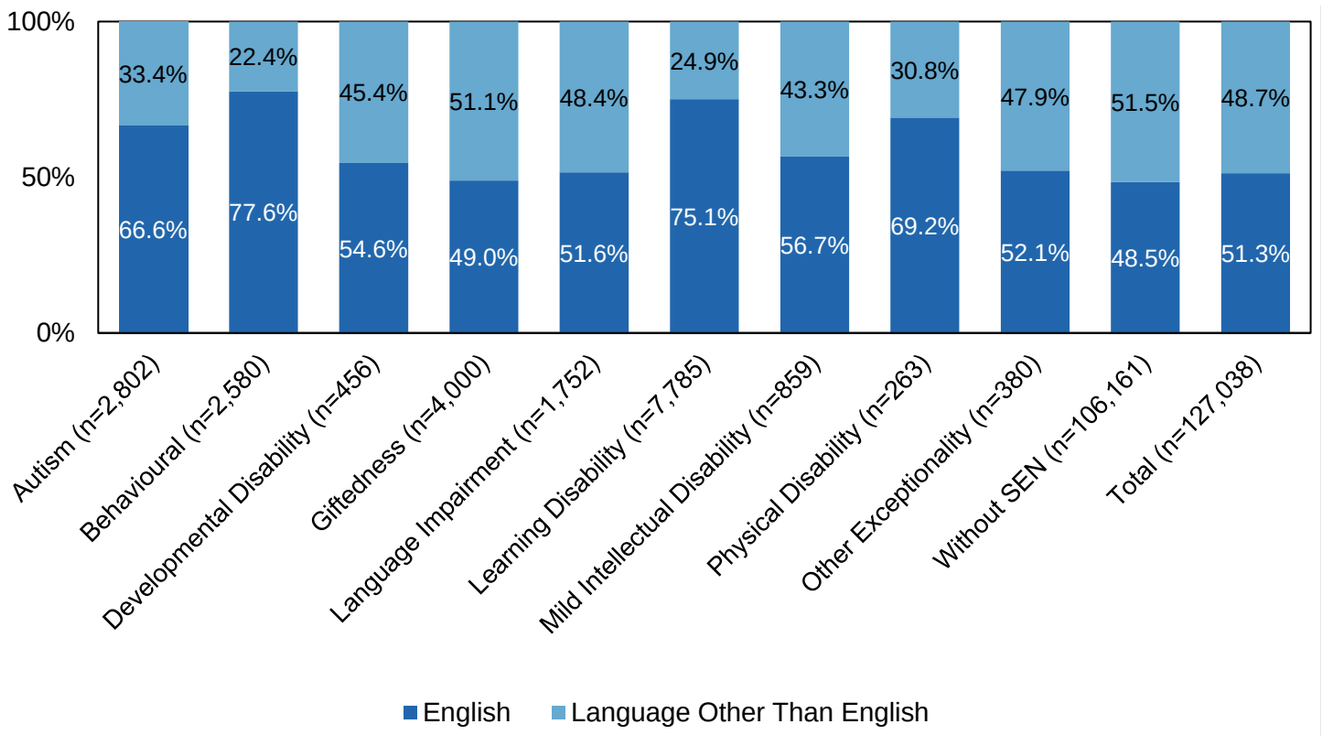
**Figure 10: Language Spoken at Home and Special Education Programming**
**Distribution of Students Language Spoken at Home by in Regular and Special Education Classes**
**Gr. K-12**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

There are also wide language variations across exceptionalities. Fifty-one percent of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality spoke English and an additional language at home, while 78% of those students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality spoke English at home (see Figure 11).

**Figure 11: Language Spoken at Home and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students Language Spoken at Home by Key Exceptionalities**




Source: Student Information System

As part of the *Every Student Counts Survey*, students in Grades 7-12 completed a number of key socio-demographic questions, including parent/guardian education, self-identified race (ethno-racial background), Indigenous identity, family structure, gender identity and sexual orientation. In this analysis we also examined the income of neighbourhoods in which students live.

## Parental Education

Parental education levels have generally been considered among the strongest predictors of postsecondary access and completion (e.g., Robson et al, 2019). Almost two-thirds of YRDSB students (61%) indicated that their parents/guardians had university education. However, as outlined in Table 3 and Table 4, our analysis indicates that there are noticeable differences in parental education levels according to Special Education Needs.

**Table 3: Parental Education and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Parental Education by Special Education Needs Status**

| Parental Education | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| University | 46.1% | 84.0% | 62.1% | 60.6% |
| College | 0.6% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| Apprenticeship | 17.2% | 5.9% | 14.5% | 14.5% |
| High School | 0.9% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| Elementary School | 3.9% | <1% | 1.8% | 2.1% |
| No Formal Education | 9.2% | 2.4% | 7.2% | 7.3% |
| No Selection | 22.0% | 7.1% | 13.2% | 14.3% |
| Total | 8,269 | 2,445 | 41,830 | 52,544 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

The vast majority of YRDSB students identified with a Gifted exceptionality had parents/guardians with university education (84%), a pattern seen in both Gifted Special Education and Regular classes. However, the parental education levels of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) were much lower at 46%. Moreover, in Table 4, the differences between students in Special Education classes compared to Regular classes was pronounced: 50% of students in Regular classes, and 27% of students in Special Education classes had parents/guardians with university education[2].

**Table 4: Parental Education and Special Education Programming**
**Distribution of Parental Education in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Parental Education | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| University | 26.5% | 50.2% | 82.9% | 85.0% | 62.1% | 60.6% |
| College | 14.4% | 17.8% | 5.5% | 6.3% | 14.5% | 14.5% |
| Apprenticeship | 0.9% | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| High School | 12.2% | 8.6% | 1.8% | 2.9% | 7.2% | 7.3% |
| Elementary School | 7.8% | 3.1% | <1% | <1% | 1.8% | 2.1% |
| No Formal Education | 1.7% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| No Selection | 36.5% | 19.0% | 9.4% | 5.0% | 13.2% | 14.3% |
| Total | 1,405 | 6,864 | 1,173 | 1,272 | 41,830 | 52,544 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

[2] One limitation is the proportion of students who didn't participate in the ESCS or didn't respond to the specific questions; students identified with SEN (Excl. Gifted) in Special Education classes have a proportion of students twice that of the full YRDSB sample (37% compared to 14% for all students). However, it is known from TDSB research, that students who do not provide information on parental education consistently have lower achievement. Therefore, examination of parental education, with a focus on university background, is consistently connected to achievement even with this limitation.

In Table 5, with respect to exceptionalities (excluding Gifted), only those students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality (61%) and a Physical Disability exceptionality (59%) had parental education levels similar to the YRDSB as a whole (61%). Other exceptionalities ranged from 17.1% (Developmental Disability) to 47% (Autism) of parents/guardians with university background.

**Table 5: Parental Education and Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Parental Education by Exceptionality, Gr. 7-12**

| Parental Education | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Giftedness | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Students Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| University | 46.7% | 60.5% | 17.1% | 84.0% | 34.2% | 47.2% | 21.2% | 58.5% | 51.8% | 62.1% | 60.6% |
| College | 16.0% | 16.1% | 8.9% | 5.9% | 16.7% | 18.0% | 18.2% | 9.4% | 19.4% | 14.5% | 14.5% |
| Apprenticeship | 0.8% | 0.6% | 0.7% | <1% | 1.0% | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | 1.4% | 0.6% | 0.5% |
| High School | 7.3% | 6.1% | 19.9% | 2.4% | 11.7% | 8.6% | 18.9% | 8.5% | 7.9% | 7.2% | 7.3% |
| Elementary School | 2.8% | 1.7% | 2.1% | <1% | 6.3% | 3.8% | 10.8% | 1.9% | 1.4% | 1.8% | 2.1% |
| No Formal Education | 1.0% | <1% | 1.4% | <1% | 2.3% | 0.7% | 1.7% | 2.8% | 1.4% | 0.6% | 0.6% |
| No Selection | 25.4% | 14.7% | 50.0% | 7.1% | 27.9% | 21.2% | 28.8% | 18.9% | 16.5% | 13.2% | 14.3% |
| Total n | 780 | 1,148 | 146 | 2,445 | 480 | 4,898 | 572 | 106 | 139 | 41,830 | 52,544 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

### Racial and Indigenous Identity

YRDSB students provided information about self-identified ethno-racial identity and Indigenous identity. Our analysis indicates that there are noticeable ethno-racial differences in Special Education categories. This can be seen in detail in Table 6, showing both single and multiple racial categories and

Table 7, showing Special Education classes. Notable findings from Table 6 related to Special Education and race and Indigenous identity include:

- Black, Latino/Latina/Latinx, Middle Eastern and South Asian students were less likely to be identified with a Gifted exceptionality.
- White students were also less likely to be identified with a Gifted exceptionality and to be in Gifted Special Education classes, although their representation in Gifted Regular classes was around the same as their representation in YRDSB (30% of Gifted students in Regular classes were White, compared to 28% of YRDSB).
- East Asian students were twice as likely to be in Gifted Special Education classes (they are a majority at 53% of all students in Gifted Special Education classes) and they were almost twice as likely to be in Regular classes with a Gifted exceptionality identification.
- Black students at 3% of the YRDSB population were more likely to be students identified with SEN in Regular education classes (4%) and almost twice as likely to be in Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) (6%).
- East Asian, South Asian and Middle Eastern students were less likely to be found with Special Education Needs in either Regular or Special Education classes.
- Compared to their overall representation in YRDSB at 28%, White students were more likely to be in SEN Regular Classes (excluding Gifted) (41%) but less likely to be in SEN Special Education Classes (excluding Gifted) (24%).

Notably, students identified with “No Race Selection” accounted for 10% of YRDSB students but they were twice as likely to be in SEN Regular classes (excluding Gifted) (20%) and over three times as likely to be in SEN Special Education classes (excluding Gifted) (34% and accounting for a third or more of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability or Developmental Disability). As a result, racial patterns of Special Education may be somewhat distorted due to this high proportion of missing information.

**Table 6: Racial and Indigenous Identity and Special Education Needs Status**
**Percentage of Racial and Indigenous Identity Groups by Special Education Needs Status**

| Racial & Indigenous Identity | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-Identified Indigenous Identity | | | | |
| Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) | 5.2% | 0.7% | 1.7% | 2.2% |
| Self-Identified Race Identity | | | | |
| Black (single race) | 4.4% | 0.6% | 3.1% | 3.2% |
| Black (multiple races) | 2.4% | 0.9% | 1.9% | 1.9% |
| East Asian (single race) | 10.1% | 48.5% | 27.4% | 25.6% |
| East Asian (multiple races) | 2.4% | 4.6% | 3.0% | 3.0% |
| Latino/Latina/Latinx (single race) | 1.3% | <1% | 0.9% | 0.9% |
| Latino/Latina/Latinx (multiple races) | 1.6% | 0.7% | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| Middle Eastern (single race) | 5.5% | 2.3% | 7.7% | 7.1% |
| Middle Eastern (multiple races) | 2.4% | 1.9% | 2.5% | 2.4% |
| South Asian (single race) | 7.0% | 8.7% | 14.2% | 12.8% |
| South Asian (multiple races) | 1.3% | 1.5% | 1.8% | 1.7% |
| Southeast Asian (single race) | 1.7% | 1.8% | 2.8% | 2.6% |
| Southeast Asian (multiple races) | 1.5% | 2.6% | 2.0% | 1.9% |
| White (single race) | 39.0% | 23.7% | 26.5% | 28.4% |
| White (multiple races) | 5.7% | 5.5% | 5.0% | 5.1% |
| A Racial Category Not Listed (single race) | 1.7% | 0.7% | 1.3% | 1.3% |
| A Racial Category Not Listed (multiple races) | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.8% |
| Not Sure | 12.2% | 2.7% | 5.0% | 6.0% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 5.9% | 0.5% | 1.6% | 2.2% |
| Did Not Respond | 4.1% | 1.9% | 1.8% | 2.2% |
| Total | 8,239 | 2,447 | 41,859 | 52,545 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 7: Racial and Indigenous Identity and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Percentage of Racial and Indigenous Identity Groups in Regular and Special Education Needs Classes**

| Racial & Indigenous Identity | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-Identified Indigenous Identity | | | | | | |
| Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) | 7.8% | 4.6% | <1% | 1.0% | 1.7% | 2.2% |
| Self-Identified Race Identity | | | | | | |
| Black | 6.3% | 4.0% | 0.6% | 0.5% | 3.1% | 3.1% |
| East Asian | 9.9% | 9.9% | 52.9% | 43.9% | 27.2% | 25.5% |
| Latino/Latina/Latinx | 1.0% | 1.3% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| Middle Eastern | 5.9% | 5.3% | 2.2% | 2.4% | 7.7% | 7.1% |
| South Asian | 10.1% | 6.2% | 10.5% | 6.8% | 14.1% | 12.7% |
| Southeast Asian | 2.0% | 1.6% | 2.3% | 1.3% | 2.8% | 2.5% |
| White | 24.1% | 41.4% | 16.4% | 30.2% | 26.3% | 28.1% |
| A Racial Category Not Listed | 1.9% | 1.6% | 0.7% | 0.7% | 1.2% | 1.2% |
| Multiple Races | 4.7% | 8.8% | 8.0% | 9.3% | 8.4% | 8.4% |
| No Race Selection | 34.0% | 19.9% | 6.0% | 4.3% | 8.4% | 10.4% |
| Total | 1,401 | 6,838 | 1,174 | 1,273 | 41,859 | 52,545 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 8: Racial and Indigenous Identity and Key Exceptionality**
**Percentage of Racial and Indigenous Identity Groups by Key Exceptionalities, Gr. 7-12**

| Racial & Indigenous Identity | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit) | 5.6% | 4.4% | 8.2% | 0.7% | 4.8% | 4.9% | 9.7% | NR | NR | 1.7% | 2.2% |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Black | 1.9% | 3.1% | 7.6% | 0.6% | 4.0% | 4.6% | 8.9% | 2.8% | 2.9% | 3.1% | 3.1% |
| East Asian | 15.7% | 7.8% | 12.5% | 48.2% | 17.0% | 8.7% | 7.7% | 11.3% | 21.0% | 27.2% | 25.5% |
| Latino/Latina/ Latinx | <1% | 0.8% | 0.7% | 0.5% | 1.0% | 1.5% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 2.9% | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| Middle Eastern | 3.1% | 4.6% | 5.6% | 2.3% | 7.7% | 5.5% | 7.7% | 1.9% | 5.8% | 7.7% | 7.1% |
| South Asian | 5.7% | 4.3% | 16.7% | 8.6% | 17.7% | 5.3% | 14.0% | 7.5% | 14.5% | 14.1% | 12.7% |
| Southeast Asian | 2.3% | 1.0% | 2.8% | 1.8% | 4.8% | 1.3% | 1.9% | 1.9% | 2.9% | 2.8% | 2.5% |
| White | 40.0% | 51.1% | 9.0% | 23.6% | 17.9% | 40.6% | 18.4% | 41.5% | 31.9% | 26.3% | 28.1% |
| A Racial Category Not Listed | 0.9% | 1.7% | 2.1% | 0.7% | 1.7% | 1.8% | 1.7% | 0.9% | 1.4% | 1.2% | 1.2% |
| Multiple Races | 7.8% | 10.6% | 4.2% | 8.7% | 6.9% | 8.1% | 5.8% | 12.3% | 3.6% | 8.4% | 8.4% |
| No Race Selection | 22.2% | 15.0% | 38.9% | 5.1% | 21.4% | 22.7% | 32.7% | 18.9% | 13.0% | 8.4% | 10.4% |
| Total n | 778 | 1,146 | 144 | 2,447 | 481 | 4,874 | 572 | 106 | 138 | 41,859 | 52,545 |

†Where percentages are less than 1%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

Information on Indigenous status is also seen in Tables 6 to 8. Findings suggest that students identified with Indigenous identity are less likely to be identified as Gifted, but are twice as likely to be identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted), and almost four times as likely to be placed in Special Education Classes (excluding Gifted) (see Table 7 and Table 8).

Notably, students identified with Indigenous identity are overrepresented in most exceptionalities, and in particular, Mild Intellectual Disability (see Table 8).

### Neighbourhood Income

Student postal codes were matched to the dissemination area in which the students live to provide the median income of the immediate neighbourhood of where the students' homes are located. For Grades 7-12 students, this neighbourhood income was then categorized into quintiles, or groupings of 20%, from the lowest 20% or quintile of income, to the highest 20% or quintile of income.

Assuming no noticeable differences in Special Education Needs, there should be limited difference between students identified with and without Special Education Needs. That is, each quintile should have 20% of the students. This is not the case, however. Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality were less likely to be in the lowest quintile of income (16%) but were almost twice as likely to be in the highest quintile of income (25%). This pattern was generally the same whether Gifted students were in Special Education or Regular classes.

Patterns of students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) are somewhat more complex. There does not appear to be a strong pattern with Regular classes: 21% of students in Regular classes were in both the lowest income quintile, 19% were in the highest income quintile. However, there is a pronounced difference when looking at students in Special Education classes (excluding Gifted). That is, almost twice as many students are found in the lowest income quintile than in the highest income quintile (27% of the lowest income decile, 16% of the highest income decile). Notably, students identified with a Developmental Disability and Mild Intellectual Disability are approximately twice as likely as to be found in the lowest income than highest income neighbourhoods.

**Table 9: Family Income and Special Education Needs Status**
**Percentage of Households in Quintiles of Income by Special Education Needs Status**

| Income Quintile* | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quintile 1 (Lowest Income) | 22.0% | 15.9% | 19.7% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 2 | 19.8% | 16.2% | 20.3% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 3 | 20.0% | 20.3% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 4 | 19.5% | 22.7% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 5 (Highest Income) | 18.7% | 24.8% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Total | 10,249 | 2,665 | 45,773 | 58,687 |

*Income Quintiles are calculated based on the median (middle-most) after-tax family income. Each student is assigned the median household income associated with their postal code.
Source: Student Information System, Census Canada and Environics Analytics Data

**Table 10: Family Income and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Percentage of Households in Quintiles of Income in Regular and Special Education Needs Classes**

| Income Quintile* | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quintile 1 (Lowest Income) | 27.3% | 20.7% | 15.7% | 16.1% | 19.7% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 2 | 22.5% | 19.2% | 16.5% | 16.1% | 20.3% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 3 | 18.3% | 20.4% | 22.1% | 18.7% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 4 | 16.1% | 20.3% | 21.1% | 24.0% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 5 (Highest Income) | 15.9% | 19.4% | 24.5% | 25.1% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Total | 2,035 | 8,214 | 1,239 | 1,426 | 45,773 | 58,687 |

*Income Quintiles are calculated based on the median (middle-most) after-tax family income. Each student is assigned the median household income associated with their postal code.
Source: Student Information System, Census Canada and Environics Analytics Data

**Table 11: Family Income and Key Exceptionality**
**Percentage of Households in Quintiles of Income by Key Exceptionalities**

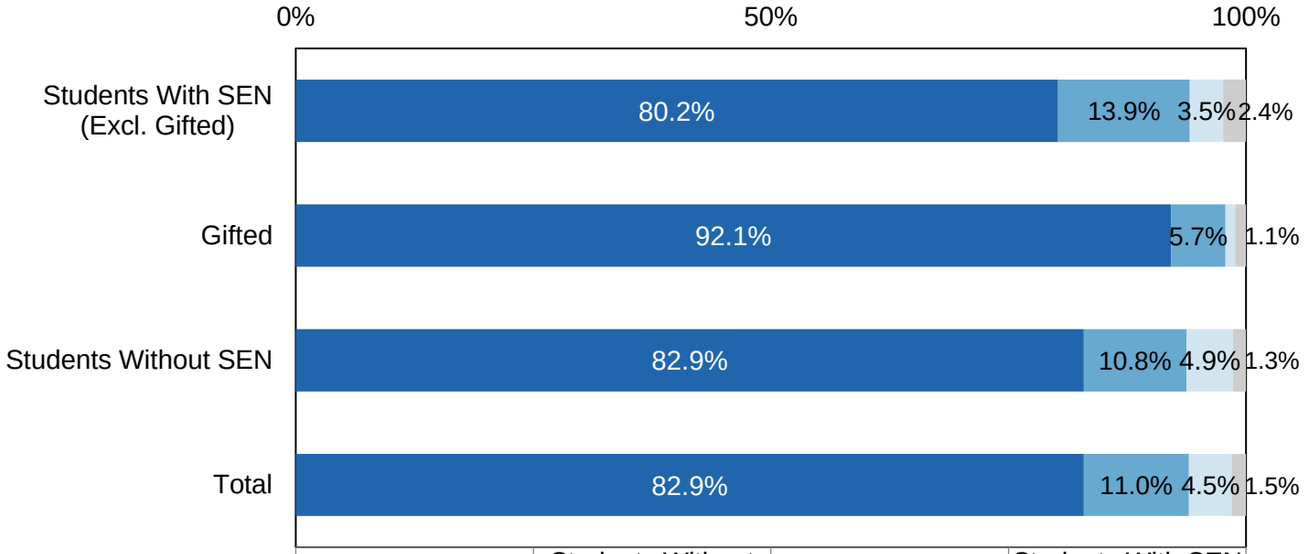
| Income Quintile* | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quintile 1 (Lowest income) | 21.7% | 20.6% | 25.7% | 15.9% | 21.5% | 21.4% | 28.5% | 28.4% | 23.1% | 19.7% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 2 | 19.6% | 17.0% | 21.1% | 16.2% | 24.1% | 19.6% | 25.1% | 15.5% | 17.9% | 20.3% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 3 | 18.9% | 19.4% | 21.1% | 20.3% | 23.1% | 20.2% | 18.9% | 16.9% | 19.7% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 4 | 20.8% | 21.1% | 16.4% | 22.7% | 15.6% | 20.0% | 13.4% | 19.6% | 18.5% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Quintile 5 (Highest income) | 18.9% | 21.8% | 15.7% | 24.8% | 15.7% | 18.8% | 14.1% | 19.6% | 20.8% | 20.0% | 20.0% |
| Total | 1,132 | 1,450 | 280 | 2,665 | 540 | 5,845 | 681 | 148 | 173 | 45,773 | 58,687 |

*Income Quintiles are calculated based on the median (middle-most) after-tax family income. Each student is assigned the median household income associated with their postal code.
Source: Student Information System, Census Canada and Environics Analytics Data

## Family Structure

In Figure 12, the majority of YRDSB students live with two parents/guardians (83%), but there are differences according to Special Education status. Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality were much more likely to live with two parents/guardians than YRDSB students in general (92%) and students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) were somewhat less likely to live with two parents/guardians (80%). Notably, in Table 12, students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) in Special Education classes were less likely to live with two parents/guardians (76%). Likewise, noted in Table 13, students identified with a Developmental Disability (75%) and a Mild Intellectual Disability (73%) were less likely to live with both parents/guardians.

**Figure 12: Family Structure and Special Education Needs Status**
**Percentage of Students in Family Structure Groups by Special Education Needs Status**




| | Total | Students Without SEN | Gifted | Students With SEN (Excl. Gifted) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two Parents | 82.9% | 82.9% | 92.1% | 80.2% |
| One Parent | 11.0% | 10.8% | 5.7% | 13.9% |
| Others | 4.5% | 4.9% | 1.0% | 3.5% |
| No Response | 1.5% | 1.3% | 1.1% | 2.4% |

Two Parents  One Parent  Others  No Response

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 12: Family Structure and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Percentage of Students in Family Structure Groups in Regular and Special Education Needs Classes**

| Family Structure | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two Parents | 75.8% | 81.1% | 92.3% | 91.9% | 82.9% | 82.9% |
| One Parent | 15.2% | 13.6% | 5.1% | 6.3% | 10.8% | 11.0% |
| Others | 6.3% | 2.9% | 1.3% | 0.8% | 4.9% | 4.5% |
| No Response | 2.6% | 2.4% | 1.3% | 1.0% | 1.3% | 1.5% |
| Total | 1,406 | 6,876 | 1,174 | 1,274 | 41,915 | 52,645 |

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 13: Family Structure and Key Exceptionality**
**Percentage of Students in Family Structure Groups by Key Exceptionalities**

| Family Structure | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Two Parents | 79.8% | 81.8% | 74.7% | 92.1% | 82.7% | 80.7% | 72.6% | 82.7% | 79.2% | 82.9% | 82.9% |
| One Parent | 12.7% | 14.3% | 15.8% | 5.7% | 10.8% | 13.6% | 18.8% | 13.7% | 15.1% | 10.8% | 11.0% |
| Others | 4.1% | 2.0% | 9.6% | 1.0% | 4.6% | 3.3% | 5.6% | 2.2% | 2.8% | 4.9% | 4.5% |
| No Response | 3.5% | 1.9% | <1% | 1.1% | 1.9% | 2.4% | 3.0% | 2.8% | 1.4% | 1.3% | 1.5% |
| Total | 781 | 1,150 | 146 | 2,448 | 481 | 4,905 | 574 | 106 | 139 | 41,915 | 52,645 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

### Gender Identity

Overall, 48% of Grade 7-12 students who participated in the Every Student Counts Survey, 2018-19 identified themselves as Woman/Girl, 49% identified as Man/Boy, and 3% identified with gender identities other than Man/Boy or Woman/Girl. Compared with students not identified with SEN, students identified with SEN (including Gifted) were more likely to identify as Man/Boy (56% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality, 61% of those with other exceptionalities, compared to 46% of students not identified with SEN, see Tables 14-16).

**Table 14: Gender Identity and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Gender Identity by Special Education Needs Status**

| Gender identity | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Fluid | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Gender Nonconforming | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Man / Boy | 60.8% | 56.2% | 45.9% | 48.7% |
| Non-Binary | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | <1% | 0.5% | <1% | <1% |
| Transgender | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Two-Spirit | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Woman / Girl | 34.6% | 40.0% | 51.0% | 48.0% |
| A Gender Identity Not Listed | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Not Sure | 0.6% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 1.2% | 1.2% | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| Total | 8,071 | 2,401 | 41,258 | 51,730 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 15: Gender Identity and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Gender Identity in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Gender Identity | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Fluid | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Gender Nonconforming | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Man / Boy | 64.8% | 60.0% | 58.8% | 53.9% | 45.9% | 48.7% |
| Non-Binary | <1% | 0.6% | <1% | 0.6% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | <1% | <1% | 0.5% | 0.6% | <1% | <1% |
| Transgender | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Two-Spirit | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Woman / Girl | 29.9% | 35.6% | 38.4% | 41.5% | 51.0% | 48.0% |
| A Gender Identity Not Listed | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Not Sure | 0.6% | 0.6% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 0.9% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 2.0% | 1.0% | 1.0% | 1.4% | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| Total | 1,380 | 6,691 | 1,155 | 1,246 | 41,258 | 51,730 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 16: Gender Identity and Key Exceptionalities**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Gender Identity by Key Exceptionalities**

| Gender Identity | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Fluid | 0.7% | 0.5% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0.5% | 1.0% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Gender Nonconforming | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Man/boy | 79.3% | 54.3% | 51.0% | 56.2% | 65.7% | 60.5% | 54.2% | 49.0% | 52.9% | 45.9% | 48.7% |
| Non-Binary | 1.3% | 0.8% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | <1% | 0.5% | <1% | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.0% | 1.4% | <1% | <1% |
| Transgender | <1% | 0.6% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.0% | 1.4% | <1% | <1% |
| Two-Spirit | <1% | <1% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Woman/girl | 14.8% | 40.8% | 43.4% | 40.0% | 32.3% | 35.0% | 41.1% | 46.2% | 43.5% | 51.0% | 48.0% |
| A Gender Identity Not Listed | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.0% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Not Sure | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | 0.5% | <1% | 0.6% | 1.3% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | <1% | <1% | 2.8% | <1% | <1% | 0.5% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 1.7% | 0.9% | 0.7% | 1.2% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 1.6% | 1.0% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.9% |
| Total | 758 | 1,121 | 145 | 2,401 | 470 | 4,776 | 559 | 104 | 138 | 41,258 | 51,730 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

### Sexual Orientation

Grades 7-12 students also described their sexual orientation in the *Every Student Counts Survey*. Slightly less than three-quarters described themselves as Heterosexual (74%), a tenth (10%) described themselves as having an orientation that falls under the 2SLGBQ+ group, 0.6% identified their orientation as not listed, while 15% were not sure, did not understand the question, or preferred not to answer.

**Table 17: Sexual Orientation (Detailed Categories) and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Sexual Orientation by Special Education Needs Status**

| Sexual Orientation | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2SLGBQ+ | 12.0% | 12.5% | 9.7% | 10.2% |
| Asexual | 3.9% | 3.3% | 3.8% | 3.8% |
| Bisexual | 4.1% | 5.0% | 3.4% | 3.6% |
| Gay | 0.9% | 0.6% | <1% | 0.5% |
| Lesbian | 0.6% | 0.8% | <1% | <1% |
| Pansexual | 1.0% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.8% |
| Queer | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | 0.8% | 1.8% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| Two-Spirit | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Heterosexual | 65.5% | 72.4% | 75.9% | 74.1% |
| A Sexual Orientation Not Listed | 0.8% | 1.2% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| Not Sure | 6.3% | 5.8% | 3.8% | 4.3% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 5.6% | 1.7% | 4.2% | 4.3% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 9.8% | 5.8% | 5.5% | 6.2% |
| Total | 7,886 | 2,379 | 40,544 | 50,809 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

Our analysis in Table 18 indicates that there were differences in Special Education placement according to sexual orientation:

Students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Regular classes were more likely to describe themselves as 2SLGBQ+ (15%); students identified with a Gifted exceptionality in Special Education classes did not differ from those without SEN.

Students identified with a SEN (excluding Gifted) in Regular classes were more likely to describe themselves as 2SLGBQ+ (13%).

Students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) in Special Education classes did not differ from those without SEN. However, nearly half of these students were not sure (13%), did not understand the question (11%), or preferred not to answer (22%).

**Table 18: Sexual Orientation and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Sexual Orientation in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Sexual Orientation | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2SLGBQ+ | 9.6% | 12.5% | 9.9% | 15.0% | 9.7% | 10.2% |
| Asexual | 3.3% | 4.0% | 3.2% | 3.3% | 3.8% | 3.8% |
| Bisexual | 3.4% | 4.3% | 3.8% | 6.1% | 3.4% | 3.6% |
| Gay | 1.0% | 0.9% | <1% | 1.0% | <1% | <1% |
| Lesbian | <1% | 0.7% | <1% | 1.2% | <1% | <1% |
| Pansexual | <1% | 1.1% | 0.6% | 1.2% | 0.8% | 0.8% |
| Queer | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0.6% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | <1% | 0.9% | 1.6% | 2.0% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| Two-Spirit | 0.5% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Heterosexual | 44.6% | 69.8% | 71.8% | 72.9% | 75.9% | 74.1% |
| A Sexual Orientation Not Listed | 0.8% | 0.8% | 1.4% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| Not Sure | 13.0% | 5.0% | 6.7% | 5.0% | 3.8% | 4.3% |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 10.6% | 4.5% | 3.0% | 0.6% | 4.2% | 4.3% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 21.9% | 7.3% | 7.1% | 4.5% | 5.5% | 6.2% |
| Total | 1,342 | 6,544 | 1,142 | 1,237 | 40,544 | 50,809 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Table 19: Sexual Orientation and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students Self-Reported Sexual Orientation by Key Exceptionalities**

| Sexual Orientation | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2SLGBQ+ | 12.8% | 16.0% | 10.7% | 12.5% | 8.5% | 11.9% | 8.0% | 14.4% | 7.4% | 9.7% | 10.2% |
| Asexual | 3.5% | 3.8% | 3.6% | 3.3% | 3.7% | 4.2% | 2.4% | 3.1% | 2.9% | 3.8% | 3.8% |
| Bisexual | 4.0% | 6.8% | 2.9% | 5.0% | 2.0% | 4.0% | 2.8% | 5.2% | 0.7% | 3.4% | 3.6% |
| Gay | 2.0% | 0.6% | 0.7% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 2.1% | 1.5% | <1% | <1% |
| Lesbian | 0.7% | 1.1% | <1% | 0.8% | <1% | 0.6% | <1% | 1.0% | <1% | <1% | <1% |
| Pansexual | 1.1% | 1.9% | <1% | 0.9% | <1% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 2.1% | 0.7% | 0.8% | 0.8% |
| Queer | <1% | 0.5% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% |
| Questioning | 0.5% | 1.3% | <1% | 1.8% | 0.7% | 0.8% | <1% | 3.1% | 2.2% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| Two-Spirit | <1% | <1% | 1.4% | <1% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0.7% | <1% | <1% |
| Heterosexual | 50.6% | 72.0% | 28.6% | 72.4% | 60.1% | 69.5% | 53.4% | 55.7% | 68.4% | 75.9% | 74.1% |
| A Sexual Orientation Not Listed | 1.3% | 1.0% | 1.4% | 1.2% | <1% | 0.8% | 0.6% | 1.0% | <1% | 0.5% | 0.6% |
| Not Sure | 11.1% | 3.0% | 18.6% | 5.8% | 8.2% | 5.3% | 10.1% | 11.3% | 5.1% | 3.8% | 4.3% |
| I Do Not Understand Question | 8.1% | 3.5% | 17.9% | 1.7% | 7.4% | 4.9% | 7.3% | 6.2% | 5.9% | 4.2% | 4.3% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 16.9% | 4.2% | 24.3% | 5.8% | 15.2% | 7.6% | 21.2% | 9.3% | 11.0% | 5.5% | 6.2% |
| Total | 741 | 1,117 | 140 | 2,379 | 461 | 4,657 | 537 | 97 | 136 | 40,544 | 50,809 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Anti-Oppression Note**

While the tables and figures below demonstrate correlations between students identified with Special Education Needs and student achievement outcomes, it is important to remember that correlations do not imply causal relationships between the two variables.

Lower academic achievement is best interpreted as indicators of underservice received by particular groups of students. The negative impact of streaming on student motivation, self-worth, and disposition towards should also be considered as we interpret the available data and work to intervene in support of all students, but most especially those students who are underserved.

## Elementary Achievement Patterns

### EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics

EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics achievement is strongly connected to Special Education Needs status. Almost all students identified with a Gifted exceptionality (97%) were assessed at or above the provincial standard (Level 3 or 4) with nearly three-quarters at Level 4 (73%). Over two-thirds of students identified without SEN were assessed at the provincial level, with nearly half (46%) at Level 3. By contrast, nearly three-quarters of students identified with SEN were assessed at Level 2 or below, with 40% at Level 1 or below. Indeed, the majority of students assessed at Level 1 and below were students identified with SEN (523 out of 945 or 55%) The vast majority of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability (88%) were assessed at Level 1 or below in Mathematics.

**Table 20: EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Mathematics | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 40.2% | 0.6% | 5.7% | 10.3% |
| Level 2 | 33.5% | 2.1% | 23.7% | 24.0% |
| Level 3 | 22.1% | 24.3% | 46.4% | 41.8% |
| Level 4 | 4.2% | 73.0% | 24.2% | 23.9% |
| Total | 1,302 | 478 | 7,383 | 9,163 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 21: EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics Result in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Mathematics | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 69.4% | 23.3% | 0.7% | <1% | 5.7% | 10.3% |
| Level 2 | 24.1% | 38.9% | 1.7% | 4.2% | 23.7% | 24.0% |
| Level 3 | 6.1% | 31.4% | 24.3% | 23.9% | 46.4% | 41.8% |
| Level 4 | <1% | 6.4% | 73.2% | 71.8% | 24.2% | 23.9% |
| Total | 477 | 825 | 407 | 71 | 7,383 | 9,163 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 22: EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Mathematics Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| Mathematics | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 30.3% | 24.8% | 83.3% | 0.6% | 36.9% | 44.5% | 88.1% | 10.0% | 26.7% | 5.7% | 10.3% |
| Level 2 | 31.0% | 34.6% | 16.7% | 2.1% | 36.9% | 35.1% | 6.8% | 50.0% | 36.7% | 23.7% | 24.0% |
| Level 3 | 31.0% | 33.3% | <1% | 24.3% | 22.8% | 17.5% | 5.1% | 40.0% | 26.7% | 46.4% | 41.8% |
| Level 4 | 7.6% | 7.3% | <1% | 73.0% | 3.4% | 2.9% | <1% | <1% | 10.0% | 24.2% | 23.9% |
| Total | 145 | 234 | 12 | 478 | 149 | 663 | 59 | 10 | 30 | 7,383 | 9,163 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### EQAO Grade 6 Writing

Nearly all students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and students identified without a SEN were assessed at the provincial level in Grade 6 Writing. Seventy-three percent of those with a Gifted exceptionality were assessed at Level 4 and 55% of students identified without SEN were assessed at Level 3. Notably, almost three-quarters of students identified with SEN were assessed at Level 3 (63%) or Level 4 (8%). The majority of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) were assessed at Level 3 or 4, in both Regular and Special Education Classes. This was the case for all exceptionalities except for Mild Intellectual Disability (58% assessed at Level 2 or below). The difference between Grade 6 Writing and Mathematics requires further exploration.

**Table 23: EQAO Grade 6 Writing and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Writing Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Writing | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 2 and Below | 29.2% | 1.5% | 4.4% | 7.8% |
| Level 3 | 62.6% | 25.7% | 55.3% | 54.8% |
| Level 4 | 8.2% | 72.8% | 40.4% | 37.5% |
| Total | 1,298 | 478 | 7,370 | 9,146 |

Source: Student Information System

**Table 24: EQAO Grade 6 Writing and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Writing Result in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Writing | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 2 and Below | 45.9% | 19.6% | 1.5% | 1.4% | 4.4% | 7.8% |
| Level 3 | 51.8% | 68.9% | 23.6% | 38.0% | 55.3% | 54.8% |
| Level 4 | 2.3% | 11.5% | 74.9% | 60.6% | 40.4% | 37.5% |
| Total | 475 | 823 | 407 | 71 | 7,370 | 9,146 |

Source: Student Information System

**Table 25: EQAO Grade 6 Writing and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in EQAO Grade 6 Writing Result by Exceptionalities**

| Writing | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 2 and Below | 32.6% | 23.2% | 63.6% | 1.5% | 22.8% | 29.2% | 58.3% | 10.0% | 26.7% | 4.4% | 7.8% |
| Level 3 | 54.9% | 63.5% | 36.4% | 25.7% | 68.5% | 65.4% | 40.0% | 80.0% | 53.3% | 55.3% | 54.8% |
| Level 4 | 12.5% | 13.3% | <1% | 72.8% | 8.7% | 5.4% | 1.7% | 10.0% | 20.0% | 40.4% | 37.5% |
| Total | 144 | 233 | 11 | 478 | 149 | 661 | 60 | 10 | 30 | 7,370 | 9,146 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics

The vast majority of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality (87%) were assessed at Level 4 in Elementary Report Card Mathematics[3], and almost two-thirds of those without SEN (61%) were assessed also at Level 4. Elementary report card marks of students identified with SEN sharply diverged according to programming: the vast majority of students in Special Education classes received Modified Programming (86%), while the majority of students in Regular classes were assessed at the Provincial Level 3 (37%) or Level 4 (22%). Modified Programming (MP) was most noticeable amongst those students identified in with a Mild Intellectual Disability (83%) and Developmental Disability (94%). By contrast, 19% of those students identified with a Behavioural exceptionality had Modified Programming.

**Table 26: Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Mathematics | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 3.6% | 0.5% | 2.5% | 2.6% |
| Level 2 | 12.7% | 0.7% | 9.5% | 9.7% |
| Level 3 | 26.6% | 12.0% | 26.5% | 25.9% |
| Level 4 | 14.6% | 86.8% | 61.2% | 54.7% |
| Modified Programming | 42.4% | <1% | <1% | 7.2% |
| Total | 1,501 | 410 | 7,235 | 9,146 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 27: Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Math Result In Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Mathematics | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 0.9% | 5.1% | 0.6% | <1% | 2.5% | 2.6% |
| Level 2 | 2.6% | 18.4% | 0.9% | <1% | 9.5% | 9.7% |
| Level 3 | 8.6% | 36.8% | 10.8% | 16.5% | 26.5% | 25.9% |
| Level 4 | 2.0% | 21.6% | 87.7% | 83.5% | 61.2% | 54.7% |
| Modified Programming | 85.9% | 18.2% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 7.2% |
| Total | 538 | 963 | 325 | 85 | 7,235 | 9,146 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

[3] Analysis of Mathematics marks on Elementary Report Cards uses an average of the marks each student received in the five mathematics strands on the Ontario Provincial Report Card

**Table 28: Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Mathematics Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| Mathematics | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 1.1% | 8.0% | <1% | 0.5% | 1.0% | 4.1% | 1.0% | <1% | <1% | 2.5% | 2.6% |
| Level 2 | 5.1% | 18.4% | <1% | 0.7% | 10.8% | 15.3% | 1.0% | 7.1% | 8.0% | 9.5% | 9.7% |
| Level 3 | 20.3% | 27.6% | 6.5% | 12.0% | 32.4% | 28.8% | 13.5% | 35.7% | 36.0% | 26.5% | 25.9% |
| Level 4 | 25.4% | 27.0% | <1% | 86.8% | 13.7% | 11.0% | 1.0% | 28.6% | 44.0% | 61.2% | 54.7% |
| Modified Programming | 48.0% | 19.0% | 93.5% | <1% | 42.2% | 40.8% | 83.3% | 28.6% | 12.0% | <1% | 7.2% |
| Total | 177 | 174 | 31 | 410 | 102 | 882 | 96 | 25 | 14 | 7,235 | 9,146 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 8 Report Card Writing

The vast majority of Grade 8 students identified with a Gifted exceptionality were assessed at Levels 3 or 4 in Writing (77% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and 50% of students identified without SEN were at Level 4). Among students identified with SEN, the vast majority in Special Education classes received Modified Programming (82%). By contrast, 17% of students across the YRDSB received Modified Programming. There was wide variation among exceptionalities in the proportion of students receiving Modified Programming, from Behavioural (17%) to Mild Intellectual Ability (75%) and Developmental Disability (81%).

**Table 29: Grade 8 Report Card Writing and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Writing Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Writing | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 2.2% | <1% | 0.9% | 1.1% |
| Level 2 | 12.9% | 1.7% | 8.4% | 8.8% |
| Level 3 | 32.5% | 21.0% | 40.6% | 38.4% |
| Level 4 | 12.3% | 76.5% | 49.9% | 44.9% |
| Modified Programming | 40.1% | 0.5% | <1% | 6.8% |
| Total | 1491 | 409 | 7239 | 9139 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 30: Grade 8 Report Card Writing and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Writing Result in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Writing | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 0.9% | 2.9% | 1.2% | <1% | 0.9% | 1.1% |
| Level 2 | 3.7% | 18.0% | 1.2% | 1.9% | 8.4% | 8.8% |
| Level 3 | 12.2% | 43.9% | 25.9% | 19.8% | 40.6% | 38.4% |
| Level 4 | 1.7% | 18.2% | 70.6% | 78.1% | 49.9% | 44.9% |
| Modified Programming | 81.5% | 17.0% | 1.2% | <1% | <1% | 6.8% |
| Total | 534 | 957 | 85 | 324 | 7,239 | 9,139 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 31: Grade 8 Report Card Writing and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Writing Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| Writing | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 1.1% | 5.3% | <1% | <1% | 2.9% | 2.2% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 0.9% | 1.1% |
| Level 2 | 4.6% | 22.9% | 3.1% | 1.7% | 5.9% | 14.5% | 10.6% | <1% | 3.7% | 8.4% | 8.8% |
| Level 3 | 25.1% | 32.9% | 12.5% | 21.0% | 34.3% | 35.9% | 12.8% | 28.6% | 55.6% | 40.6% | 38.4% |
| Level 4 | 22.3% | 21.8% | 3.1% | 76.5% | 6.9% | 9.8% | 1.1% | 42.9% | 22.2% | 49.9% | 44.9% |
| Modified Programming | 46.9% | 17.1% | 81.3% | <1% | 50.0% | 37.6% | 75.5% | 28.6% | 18.5% | <1% | 6.8% |
| Total | 175 | 170 | 32 | 409 | 102 | 877 | 94 | 14 | 27 | 7,239 | 9,139 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 8 Report Card Science

For students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and those without SEN, Grade 8 elementary report card marks in science are generally similar to those for mathematics, with nearly all assessed at or above the provincial standard of Levels 3 or 4, and 81% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and 53% of students identified without SEN assessed at Level 4. As with mathematics and writing, there is a difference between those in Special Education classes, with 58% receiving Modified Programming, and those in Regular classes, where 61% of students were assessed at or above the provincial level. Notably however, the proportion of students in Special Education classes receiving Modified Programming in science, while still a majority, is noticeably lower than with mathematics and writing. The range of students identified with Modified Programming in science goes from Behavioural (10%) to Mild Intellectual Disability (65%) and Developmental Disability (73%).

**Table 32: Grade 8 Report Card Science and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Science Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Science | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 5.0% | 0.7% | 2.4% | 2.7% |
| Level 2 | 17.7% | 2.7% | 10.2% | 11.1% |
| Level 3 | 35.2% | 15.6% | 34.4% | 33.7% |
| Level 4 | 15.2% | 81.0% | 52.9% | 48.0% |
| Modified Programming | 26.9% | <1% | <1% | 4.5% |
| Total | 1,489 | 410 | 7,235 | 9,134 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 33: Grade 8 Report Card Science and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Science Result in Regular and Special Ed Classes**

| Science | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 3.7% | 5.7% | 0.9% | <1% | 2.4% | 2.7% |
| Level 2 | 11.2% | 21.3% | 2.2% | 4.7% | 10.2% | 11.1% |
| Level 3 | 22.8% | 42.2% | 13.5% | 23.5% | 34.4% | 33.7% |
| Level 4 | 4.7% | 21.2% | 83.4% | 71.8% | 52.9% | 48.0% |
| Modified Programming | 57.6% | 9.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 4.5% |
| Total | 536 | 953 | 325 | 85 | 7,235 | 9,134 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 34: Grade 8 Elementary Report Card Science and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 8 Report Card Science Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| Science | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 4.0% | 6.6% | <1% | 0.7% | 4.0% | 5.6% | 3.2% | <1% | <1% | 2.4% | 2.7% |
| Level 2 | 9.1% | 25.9% | 3.0% | 2.7% | 14.9% | 20.0% | 10.6% | 6.7% | 3.7% | 10.2% | 11.1% |
| Level 3 | 28.6% | 34.3% | 21.2% | 15.6% | 44.6% | 37.9% | 18.1% | 26.7% | 40.7% | 34.4% | 33.7% |
| Level 4 | 18.9% | 23.5% | 3.0% | 81.0% | 9.9% | 14.1% | 3.2% | 40.0% | 40.7% | 52.9% | 48.0% |
| Modified Programming | 39.4% | 9.6% | 72.7% | <1% | 26.7% | 22.3% | 64.9% | 26.7% | 14.8% | <1% | 4.5% |
| Total | 175 | 166 | 33 | 410 | 101 | 878 | 94 | 15 | 27 | 7,235 | 9,134 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

## Secondary Achievement Patterns

### Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics

There is a strong relationship between EQAO Grade 9 Mathematics outcomes and Special Education Needs. The majority of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality are assessed at Level 4 (59%) and the majority of those without SEN are assessed at Level 3 (64%). Students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) are split between Level 2 (21%) and Level 3 (42%). However, there was a difference according to SEN programming: two-thirds of students in Special Education classes did not write the EQAO test, while a majority of students in Regular classes were assessed at Levels 3 or 4 (see tables 35 to 37).

**Table 35: Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| Mathematics | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 13.6% | <1% | 3.1% | 4.7% |
| Level 2 | 21.4% | 0.5% | 6.7% | 8.9% |
| Level 3 | 42.2% | 40.0% | 63.7% | 59.2% |
| Level 4 | 6.0% | 58.7% | 21.3% | 20.3% |
| Did Not Write the Test | 16.7% | 0.8% | 5.3% | 7.0% |
| Total | 1,590 | 385 | 7,618 | 9,593 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Note: This data is based on only the Grade 9 students who wrote the Grade 9 EQAO test in 2018-19. Those who “Did not write the test” had no information on EQAO Grade 9 in 2018-19
Source: Student Information System

**Table 36: Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 EQAO Math Result in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Mathematics | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)- Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities(excl. Gifted)- Regular Classes | Gifted- Special Ed Classes | Gifted- Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 and Below | 9.9% | 14.2% | <1% | <1% | 3.1% | 4.7% |
| Level 2 | 9.4% | 23.1% | 0.9% | <1% | 6.7% | 8.9% |
| Level 3 | 10.3% | 46.9% | 45.5% | 31.6% | 63.7% | 59.2% |
| Level 4 | 3.0% | 6.5% | 52.8% | 67.8% | 21.3% | 20.3% |
| Did Not Write the Test | 67.5% | 9.3% | 0.9% | 0.7% | 5.3% | 7.0% |
| Total | 203 | 1,387 | 233 | 152 | 7,618 | 9,593 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Note: This data is based on only the Grade 9 students who wrote the Grade 9 EQAO test in 2018-19. Those who “Did not write the test” had no information on EQAO Grade 9 in 2018-19
Source: Student Information System

**Table 37: Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 EQAO Mathematics Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| Mathematics | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Level 1 or Below | 8.1% | 8.0% | 3.3% | <1% | 14.2% | 15.4% | 21.8% | 5.3% | 7.4% | 3.1% | 4.7% |
| Level 2 | 6.3% | 17.1% | 3.3% | 0.5% | 29.2% | 25.2% | 18.2% | 5.3% | 18.5% | 6.7% | 8.9% |
| Level 3 | 38.1% | 56.7% | <1% | 40.0% | 42.5% | 44.6% | 8.2% | 68.4% | 48.1% | 63.7% | 59.2% |
| Level 4 | 7.5% | 11.2% | <1% | 58.7% | 4.7% | 5.7% | <1% | 5.3% | 11.1% | 21.3% | 20.3% |
| Did Not Write the Test | 40.0% | 7.0% | 93.3% | 0.8% | 9.4% | 9.1% | 51.8% | 15.8% | 14.8% | 5.3% | 7.0% |
| Total | 160 | 187 | 30 | 385 | 106 | 951 | 110 | 19 | 27 | 7,618 | 9,593 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Note: This data is based on only the Grade 9 students who wrote the Grade 9 EQAO test in 2018-19. Those who “Did not write the test” had no information on EQAO Grade 9 in 2018-19.
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 9 Program of Study

Secondary Program of Study or “streaming” is widely considered to be strongly connected to postsecondary access. That is, the majority of students taking Academic courses in Grade 9 go to university or college, while most students taking Applied courses do not progress to postsecondary studies (see MOE information, cited in (Quan, 2017).

Special Education Needs is a classification of students for schools to provide specialized or intensive programing and support. It is closely associated with Program of Study (Brown & Sinay 2008; Brown & Parekh, 2010), and this is clearly seen in YRDSB data. Nearly all Grade 9 students identified with a Gifted exceptionality (99%) and those without Special Education Needs (93%) took the majority of their courses in the Academic program of study, while less than half of students identified with SEN did (41%). Almost half (47%) of students identified with SEN took Applied courses, and 7 % took Locally Developed courses. Students identified with SEN make up only 17% of Grade 9 students (1,614 out of 9,668), yet they account for the majority of students taking Applied and Locally Developed courses. Students identified with SEN in Regular classes are fairly evenly split between those taking Academic and Applied courses (47% Academic and 49% Applied) while only 5% of students in Special Education classes take Academic courses.

**Table 38: Grade 9 Program of Study and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 Program of study by Special Education Needs Status**

| Program of Study | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic | 41.3% | 99.2% | 92.8% | 84.5% |
| Applied | 46.7% | 0.8% | 6.7% | 13.1% |
| Locally Developed | 7.1% | <1% | <1% | 1.4% |
| Undefined | 4.9% | <1% | <1% | 1.0% |
| Total | 1,614 | 386 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 39: Grade 9 Program of Study and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 Program of study in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Program of Study | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic | 4.9% | 46.6% | 99.6% | 98.7% | 92.8% | 84.5% |
| Applied | 33.0% | 48.6% | <1% | 1.3% | 6.7% | 13.1% |
| Locally Developed | 23.6% | 4.7% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.4% |
| Undefined | 38.4% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.0% |
| Total | 203 | 1,411 | 234 | 152 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 40: Grade 9 Program of Study and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Students in Grade 9 Program of study by Key Exceptionalities**

| Program of Study | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic | 29.2% | 70.5% | <1% | 99.2% | 35.5% | 42.9% | 5.4% | 68.4% | 48.1% | 92.8% | 84.5% |
| Applied | 36.6% | 27.5% | 6.7% | 0.8% | 58.9% | 52.3% | 52.3% | 15.8% | 37.0% | 6.7% | 13.1% |
| Locally Developed | 16.8% | 1.0% | 6.7% | <1% | 4.7% | 4.3% | 32.4% | <1% | 3.7% | <1% | 1.4% |
| Undefined | 17.4% | 1.0% | 86.7% | <1% | 0.9% | 0.5% | 9.9% | 15.8% | 11.1% | <1% | 1.0% |
| Total | 161 | 193 | 30 | 386 | 107 | 966 | 111 | 19 | 27 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 9 Credit Accumulation

A generation of research has consistently demonstrated a strong relationship between “achieving” eight credits in Grade 9 and graduation from high school at the end of five years (Brown, 1993; Brown & Sinay 2008; Sinay, 2017; Brown et al,2019). In YRDSB, the vast majority of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and those without SEN graduate from secondary school. Our analysis revealed that 98% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality, and 95% of those without SEN achieve eight or more credits in Grade 9. For students identified with SEN, based on Grade 9 credits, graduation is the majority pathway (79%) although for over one-fifth, this may not be the case (22%). A more detailed examination according to SEN programming shows a clear trend: among students in Special Education classes, 22% had eight or more credits. Among students in Regular programming, 87% had eight or more credits. Students identified with fewer than eight credits were most noticeable among those students identified with a Developmental Disability (93%), Autism (53%) and Mild Intellectual Disability (48%).

**Table 41: Grade 9 Credit Accumulation and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Grade 9 Students by Number of Credits and Special Education Needs Status**

| Number of credits | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 8 | 21.5% | 2.3% | 5.3% | 7.9% |
| 8 or More | 78.5% | 97.7% | 94.7% | 92.1% |
| Total | 1,614 | 386 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

Source: Student Information System

**Table 42: Grade 9 Credit Accumulation and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Grade 9 Students by Number of Credits in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Number of Credits | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 8 | 77.8% | 13.4% | 2.6% | 2.0% | 5.3% | 7.9% |
| 8 or More | 22.2% | 86.6% | 97.4% | 98.0% | 94.7% | 92.1% |
| Total | 203 | 1,411 | 234 | 152 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

Source: Student Information System

**Table 43: Grade 9 Credit Accumulation and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Grade 9 Students by Number of Credits and Key Exceptionalities**

| Number of Credits | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 8 | 53.4% | 17.1% | 93.3% | 2.3% | 15.0% | 12.8% | 47.7% | 21.1% | 11.1% | 5.3% | 7.9% |
| 8 or More | 46.6% | 82.9% | 6.7% | 97.7% | 85.0% | 87.2% | 52.3% | 78.9% | 88.9% | 94.7% | 92.1% |
| Total | 161 | 193 | 30 | 386 | 107 | 966 | 111 | 19 | 27 | 7,668 | 9,668 |

Source: Student Information System

### Grade 10 OSSLT

Successful completion of the Grade 10 OSSLT for first-time eligible students is also very strongly connected to high school completion within five years (Brown, 2005). Nearly all first-time eligible students identified with a Gifted exceptionality (99.1%) and students identified without SEN (91%) were deemed successful on the completion of the test. Amongst students identified with SEN, there is a clear delineation between those in Special Education programming (15% successful) and those in Regular programming (62% successful). Indeed, the majority (57%) of first-time eligible students in YRDSB Special Education Classes were exempted from taking the OSSLT since their studies were unlikely to lead to an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (this included 94% of students identified with a Developmental Disability, 28% of students identified with Autism, and 24% of students identified with a Mild Intellectual Disability).

**Table 44: Grade 10 Literacy Test (OSSLT) and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of First-Time Eligible Students in OSSLT Result by Special Education Needs Status**

| OSSLT Result | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Successful | 55.7% | 99.1% | 90.6% | 84.8% |
| Unsuccessful | 29.7% | <1% | 6.3% | 10.2% |
| Absent | 1.4% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.7% |
| Deferred | 6.0% | <1% | 2.5% | 3.0% |
| Exempt | 7.2% | <1% | <1% | 1.3% |
| Total | 1,628 | 457 | 7,062 | 9,147 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Student Information System

**Table 45: Grade 10 Literacy Test (OSSLT) and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of First-Time Eligible Students in OSSLT Result in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| OSSLT Result | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Successful | 14.6% | 61.6% | 98.9% | 99.4% | 90.6% | 84.8% |
| Unsuccessful | 15.1% | 31.8% | <1% | <1% | 6.3% | 10.2% |
| Absent | 0.5% | 1.5% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.6% | 0.7% |
| Deferred | 12.7% | 5.0% | 0.7% | <1% | 2.5% | 3.0% |
| Exempt | 57.1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.3% |
| Total | 205 | 1,423 | 281 | 176 | 7,062 | 9,147 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

**Table 46: Grade 10 Literacy Test (OSSLT) and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of First-Time Eligible Students in OSSLT Result by Key Exceptionalities**

| OSSLT Result | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Successful | 42.0% | 79.3% | 3.0% | 99.1% | 50.0% | 58.7% | 11.9% | 59.3% | 77.8% | 90.6% | 84.8% |
| Unsuccessful | 14.8% | 14.1% | <1% | <1% | 47.4% | 34.8% | 45.5% | 11.1% | 14.8% | 6.3% | 10.2% |
| Absent | 1.2% | 1.3% | <1% | <1% | <1% | 1.7% | 2.0% | <1% | <1% | 0.6% | 0.7% |
| Deferred | 13.6% | 4.8% | 3.0% | <1% | 2.6% | 4.1% | 16.8% | 7.4% | 3.7% | 2.5% | 3.0% |
| Exempt | 28.4% | <1% | 93.9% | <1% | <1% | 0.7% | 23.8% | 22.2% | 3.7% | <1% | 1.3% |
| Total | 169 | 227 | 33 | 457 | 76 | 968 | 101 | 27 | 27 | 7,062 | 9,147 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Student Information System

### Grade 12 (Year 4) Credit Accumulation

The vast majority (89%) of students in Year 4 of secondary school completed 30 or more credits by the end of summer school 2019. Generally, this will lead to a high school diploma given the completion of certain types of courses, the completion of the high school literacy requirement, and completion of 40 or more hours of accredited community services.

Grade 12 credit accumulation patterns are almost identical to Grade 9 credit accumulation patterns, with 99% of students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and 90% of students identified without SEN completing 30 or more credits. Among students identified with Special Education Needs, the 30-credit completion rate of students in Regular programming was 85%, only slightly lower than that of students identified without SEN. By contrast, only a very small proportion of students in Special Education programming completed 30 credits. Overall, our analysis indicates that secondary school graduation for students in secondary Special Education classes appears less likely within the generally accepted timeframe of five years of secondary school.

**Table 47: Grade 12 (Year 4) Credit Accumulation and Special Education Needs Status**
**Distribution of Grade 12 Students by Number of Credits and Special Education Needs Status**

| Number of Credits | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 30 | 20.2% | 1.2% | 9.9% | 11.3% |
| 30 or More | 79.8% | 98.8% | 90.1% | 88.7% |
| Total | 1,736 | 520 | 7,509 | 9,765 |

Source: Student Information System

**Table 48: Grade 12 (Year 4) Credit Accumulation and Special Education Needs Programming**
**Distribution of Grade 12 Students by Number of Credits in Regular and Special Education Classes**

| Number of Credits | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)-Regular Classes | Gifted-Special Ed Classes | Gifted-Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less Than 30 Credits | 97.3% | 14.8% | <1% | 1.2% | 9.9% | 11.3 % |
| 30 Credits or More | 2.7% | 85.2% | 100.0% | 98.8% | 90.1% | 88.7 % |
| Total | 112 | 1,624 | <10 | 519 | 7,509 | 9,765 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Student Information System

In terms of exceptionalities, those with lower credit accumulation patterns were students identified with a Developmental Disability (93% did not complete 30 credits), Autism (59% did not complete 30 credits) and Mild Intellectual Disability (39% did not complete 30 credits).

**Table 49: Grade 12 (Year 4) Credit Accumulation and Key Exceptionality**
**Distribution of Grade 12 Students by Number of Credits by Key Exceptionalities**

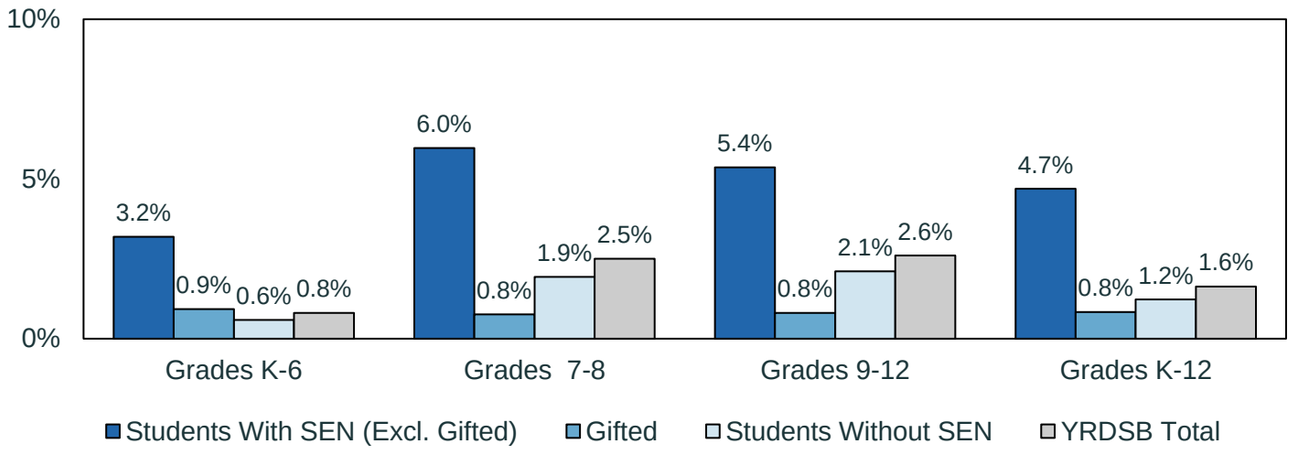
| Number of Credits | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 30 | 58.6% | 14.3% | 93.1% | 1.2% | 14.0% | 13.7% | 38.9% | 22.2% | 12.5% | 9.9% | 11.3% |
| 30 or More | 41.4% | 85.7% | 6.9% | 98.8% | 86.0% | 86.3% | 61.1% | 77.8% | 87.5% | 90.1% | 88.7% |
| Total | 128 | 307 | 29 | 520 | 50 | 1,063 | 108 | 27 | 24 | 7,509 | 9,765 |

Source: Student Information System

### Suspensions

Suspension rates for students identified with Special Education Needs were highest in Grades 7 and 8 (6.0%) compared to Grades 9 to 12 (5.4%) and K-6 (3.2%). Students identified without SEN had the lowest suspension rate in Grades K-6 (0.6%). Suspension rates for students identified as Gifted were lowest in Grades 7 and 8 (0.8%) and Grades 9-12 (0.8%).

**Figure 13: Suspension Rate by Special Education Needs Status, 2018-19, Gr. K-12**

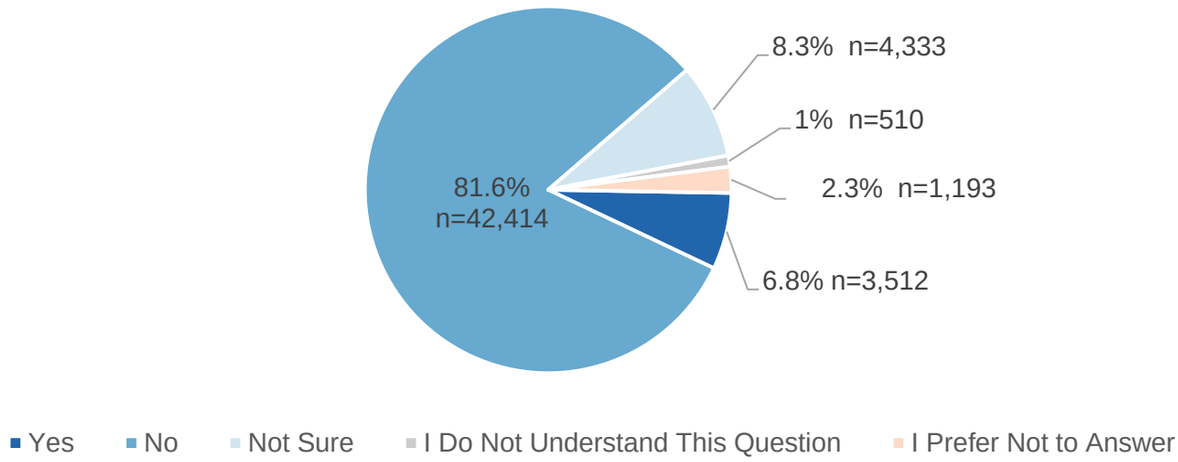



Source: Student Information System

### Self-Identification on Every Student Counts Survey

In the ESCS, Grades 7 through 12 students were asked whether they considered themselves to be a person with a disability. Seven percent of participants reported that they did have a disability, 82% said they did not, and 8% were unsure (as well, 1% did not understand the question while 2% preferred not to answer). Among those who said they did have a disability, 4% said they had a Learning Disability, 2% suffered from Mental Health, while all other defined disabilities were under 1% (see Table 50).

**Figure 14: Self-Identification of Disability Status**
**Count and Percentage of Students Responses to Question:**
Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?




Source: Every student Counts Survey

**Table 50: Self-Identification of Specific Disabilities**
**Count and Percentage of Students Who Identified Themselves With a Disability**

| Self-Reported Disability | Percentage of Students | Number of Students |
|---|---|---|
| Addiction(s) | <1% | 183 |
| Autism | 0.9% | 482 |
| Blind or Low Vision | 0.5% | 252 |
| Deaf or Hard of Hearing | <1% | 189 |
| Developmental | <1% | 145 |
| Learning Disability | 3.5% | 1,826 |
| Mental Health | 1.6% | 823 |
| Physical | 0.6% | 317 |
| Speech Impairment | <1% | 216 |
| A Disability Not Listed Above | 0.9% | 471 |
| Total | 9.4% | 4,904 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Note: Respondent could choose all that applied.
Source: Every Student Counts Survey

Notably, there was a discrepancy between the official record of Special Education Needs according to Ministry of Education criteria, and the self-reporting of student disability from the ESCS. As seen in Figure 15, 29% of students identified with SEN agreed that they had a disability, 47% said they did not have a disability, and 17% were unsure. In other words, almost twice as many students identified with SEN disagreed that they had a disability than those who agreed that they had a disability. These findings are similar to the results of TDSB secondary students identified with SEN in the 2006-07 and 2016-17 Student Censuses (see Parekh and Brown, 2020). As well, slightly under one-third of students who said they had a disability were Students

identified without SEN (1,049 out of 3,512 or 30% of students self-identifying with a disability were without official Special Needs status).

**Figure 15: Self-Identification of Disability and Special Education Needs Status**
**Percentage of Students Responses to Question:**
Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?


| | Total (n=51962) | SEN Excluding Gifted (n=8104) | Students Without SEN (n=41437) | Gifted (n=2421) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 6.8% | 28.7% | 2.5% | 5.6% |
| No | 81.6% | 47.4% | 88.2% | 84.0% |
| Not Sure | 8.3% | 16.7% | 6.7% | 8.5% |
| I do not understand the question | 1.0% | 1.7% | 0.9% | <1% |
| I prefer not to answer | 2.3% | 5.4% | 1.7% | 1.6% |

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Self-Identification and Special Education Programming

As presented in Table 51, 36% of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) in Special Education Classes identified themselves as having a disability and 36% did not consider themselves to be a person with a disability. On the other hand, 27% of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) who attend Regular Classes self-identified as having a disability and 50% did not consider themselves as a person with a disability.

**Table 51: Self-Identification of Disability and Special Education Programming**
**Percentage of Students in Regular and Special Education Classes with Responses to Question:**
Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?

| Response | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)- Special Ed Classes | Exceptionalities (excl. Gifted)- Regular Classes | Gifted- Special Ed Classes | Gifted- Regular Classes | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 35.6% | 27.3% | 4.8% | 6.4% | 2.5% | 6.8% |
| No | 36.2% | 49.7% | 83.5% | 84.4% | 88.2% | 81.6% |
| Not Sure | 17.3% | 16.6% | 9.5% | 7.6% | 6.7% | 8.3% |
| I Do Not Understand the Question | 2.5% | 1.5% | <1% | <1% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 8.4% | 4.8% | 1.8% | 1.4% | 1.7% | 2.3% |
| Total | 1,378 | 6,726 | 1,163 | 1,258 | 41,437 | 51,962 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Self-Identification and Key Exceptionalities

As seen in Table 52, there was a wide variation amongst exceptionalities. Two-thirds (67%) of students identified with a Physical Disability, 56% of those students identified with a Developmental Disability, and 43% of those students identified with Autism agreed that they had a disability; and among those identified with these three exceptionalities, more agreed than disagreed that they had an exceptionality. For all other most frequent exceptionalities, more students disagreed than agreed that they had an exceptionality. Thus, 50% of students identified with a Learning Disability disagreed and 26% agreed, and 49% of those identified with a Behavioural exceptionality disagreed and 26% agreed. This disassociation of self-identity of disability and Special Education status is something that should deserve further study.

**Table 52: Self-Identification of Disability and Key Exceptionality**
**Percentage of Students Responses by Key Exceptionalities to the question:**
Do you consider yourself to be a person with a disability?

| Response | Autism | Behavioural | Developmental Disability | Gifted | Language Impairment | Learning Disability | Mild Intellectual Disability | Physical Disability | Other Exceptionality | Without SEN | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Yes | 42.9% | 26.1% | 55.6% | 5.6% | 19.4% | 26.1% | 23.4% | 67.0% | 60.3% | 2.5% | 6.8% |
| No | 33.9% | 49.2% | 17.4% | 84.0% | 58.8% | 50.1% | 50.4% | 16.5% | 19.9% | 88.2% | 81.6% |
| Not Sure | 13.9% | 18.2% | 15.3% | 8.5% | 16.7% | 17.1% | 15.9% | 11.7% | 12.5% | 6.7% | 8.3% |
| I Do Not Understand the Question | 1.4% | 1.7% | 4.9% | <1% | 1.1% | 1.6% | 2.5% | 1.0% | 2.2% | 0.9% | 1.0% |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 8.0% | 4.8% | 6.9% | 1.6% | 4.1% | 5.1% | 7.8% | 3.9% | 5.1% | 1.7% | 2.3% |
| Total | 765 | 1,129 | 144 | 2,421 | 468 | 4,807 | 552 | 103 | 136 | 41,437 | 51,962 |

†Where percentages are less than 0.5%, "<1%" is shown

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Disproportionality Index

Following Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS) guidelines and through internal and external consultations, we established methods to use a valid measure to quantify inequalities within various identity groups. One of these measures is Disproportionality Index.

### Definition

Disproportionality Index is “a measure of an identity group’s overrepresentation or underrepresentation in a program, service, or function relative to the group’s representation in the reference population” (ARDS). Disproportionality Index is a reliable and valid measure that is widely used to quantify inequalities within a program, service, or function. When reviewing special education, our intention is to examine the overrepresentation or underrepresentation of students within certain identity groups by calculating the Disproportionality index.

### Calculation

The Disproportionality Index is calculated using this equation:

$$\text{Disproportionality Index (Group A)} = \frac{\left(\frac{\text{\# of Group A in an SEN Program}}{\text{Total \# of Students in an SEN Program}}\right)}{\left(\frac{\text{\# of Group A in an SEN Program}}{\text{Total \# of Students in Population}}\right)}$$

### Interpretation Using a Threshold

Disproportionality Index can be compared to “1” as the basic threshold and interpreted using the following rule:

If Disproportionality Index (Group A)

**>1** Group A is overrepresented in an SEN program.

**=1** Group A is equitably represented in an SEN program.

**<1** Group A is under-represented in an SEN program.

In order to use Disproportionality indices for planning purposes, thresholds will be determined through consultation with Community partners and other stakeholders.

## Disproportionality by Race Identity

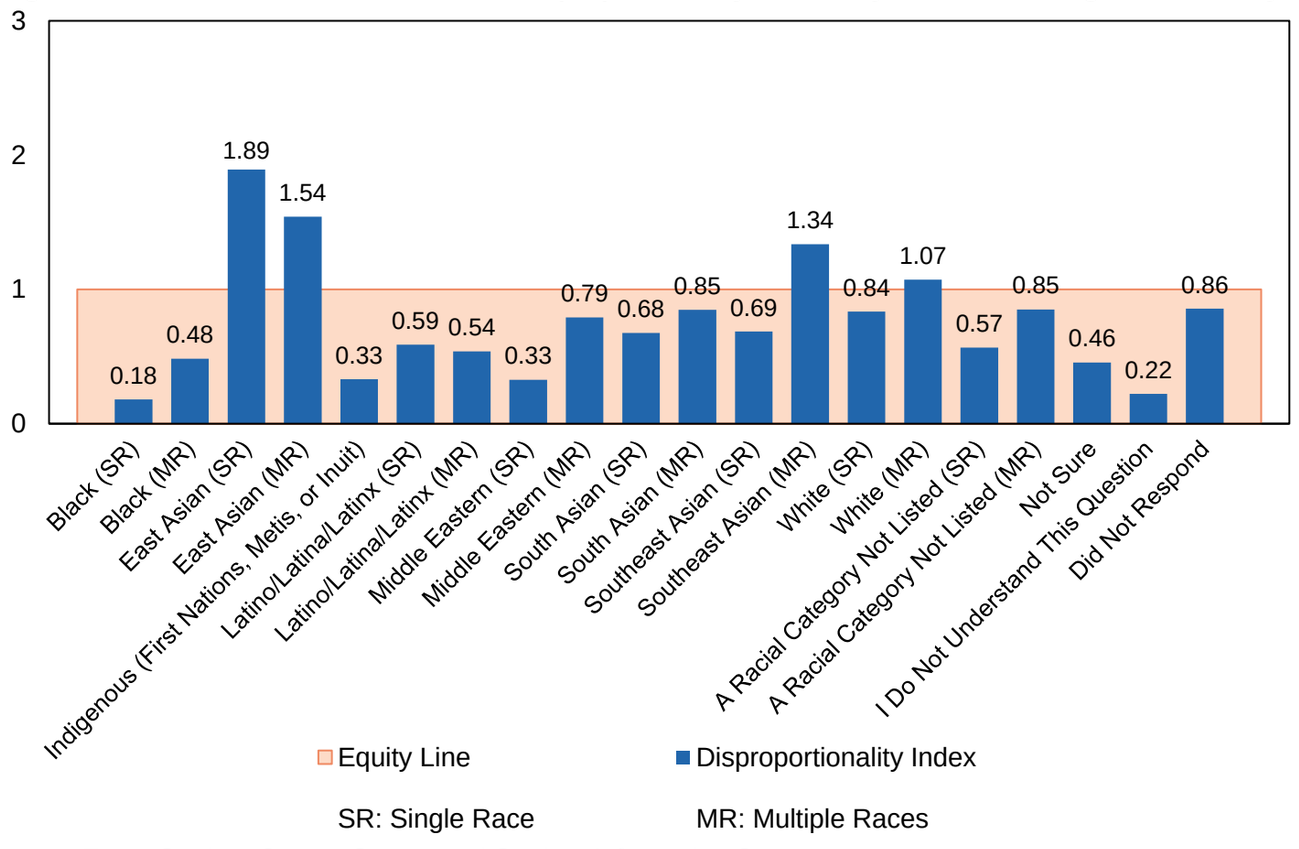
Looking at Disproportionality by race we can see that among students who identified with a Gifted exceptionality, those who identified as East Asian, were the most overrepresented with a Disproportionality of 1.89 for single race, and 1.54 for East Asian (multiple races). Among students not identified with SEN, the index for most racial groups are fairly close to 1 indicating that there is not particularly strong over-, or under-representation. For students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted), those who identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit) or answered “Not Sure”, or “I Do Not Understand This Question” or did not respond when asked about race were the most overrepresented groups with Disproportionality Index of 2.33, 2.03, 2.68 and 1.87 respectively.

**Table 53: Disproportionality Indices by Racial and Indigenous Identity and Special Education Needs Status**

| Self-Identified Indigenous and Racial Identity | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Self-Identified Indigenous Identity | | | |
| Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, or Inuit) | 2.33 | 0.33 | 0.78 |
| Self-Identified Race Identity | | | |
| Black (single race) | 1.40 | 0.18 | 0.97 |
| Black (multiple races) | 1.25 | 0.48 | 0.98 |
| East Asian (single race) | 0.39 | 1.89 | 1.07 |
| East Asian (multiple races) | 0.82 | 1.54 | 1.00 |
| Latino/Latina/Latinx (single race) | 1.41 | 0.59 | 0.94 |
| Latino/Latina/Latinx (multiple races) | 1.27 | 0.54 | 0.97 |
| Middle Eastern (single race) | 0.77 | 0.33 | 1.08 |
| Middle Eastern (multiple races) | 1.00 | 0.79 | 1.01 |
| South Asian (single race) | 0.54 | 0.68 | 1.11 |
| South Asian (multiple races) | 0.76 | 0.85 | 1.06 |
| Southeast Asian (single race) | 0.66 | 0.69 | 1.08 |
| Southeast Asian (multiple races) | 0.76 | 1.34 | 1.03 |
| White (single race) | 1.38 | 0.84 | 0.94 |
| White (multiple races) | 1.12 | 1.07 | 0.97 |
| A Racial Category Not Listed (single race) | 1.32 | 0.57 | 0.96 |
| A Racial Category Not Listed (multiple races) | 1.25 | 0.85 | 0.96 |
| Not Sure | 2.03 | 0.46 | 0.83 |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 2.68 | 0.22 | 0.72 |
| Did not Respond | 1.87 | 0.86 | 0.84 |
| Total | 8,239 | 2,447 | 41,859 |

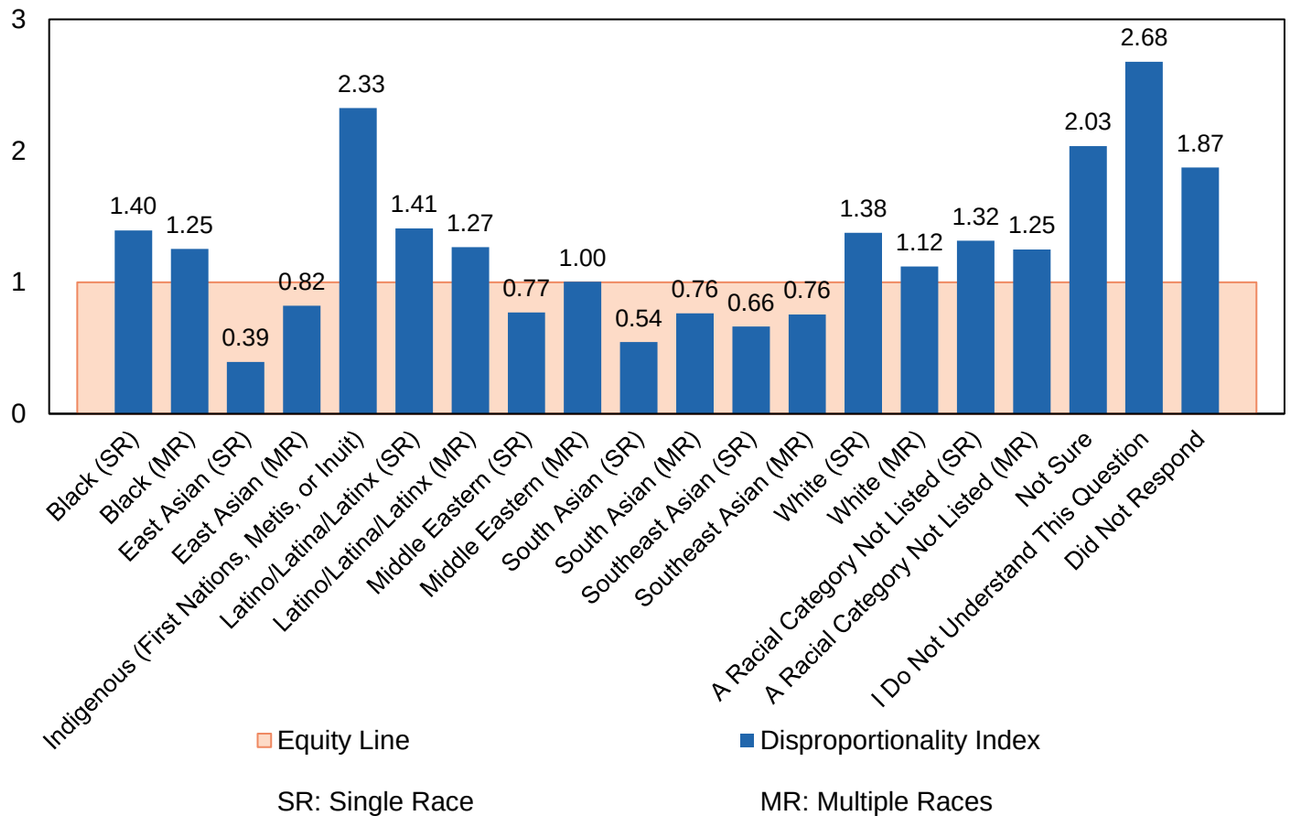
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 16: Students Identified as Gifted: Disproportionality Indices by Racial and Indigenous Identity**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 17: Students Identified With SEN (excl. Gifted)**
**Disproportionality Indices by Racial and Indigenous Identity**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

### Disproportionality by Gender Identity

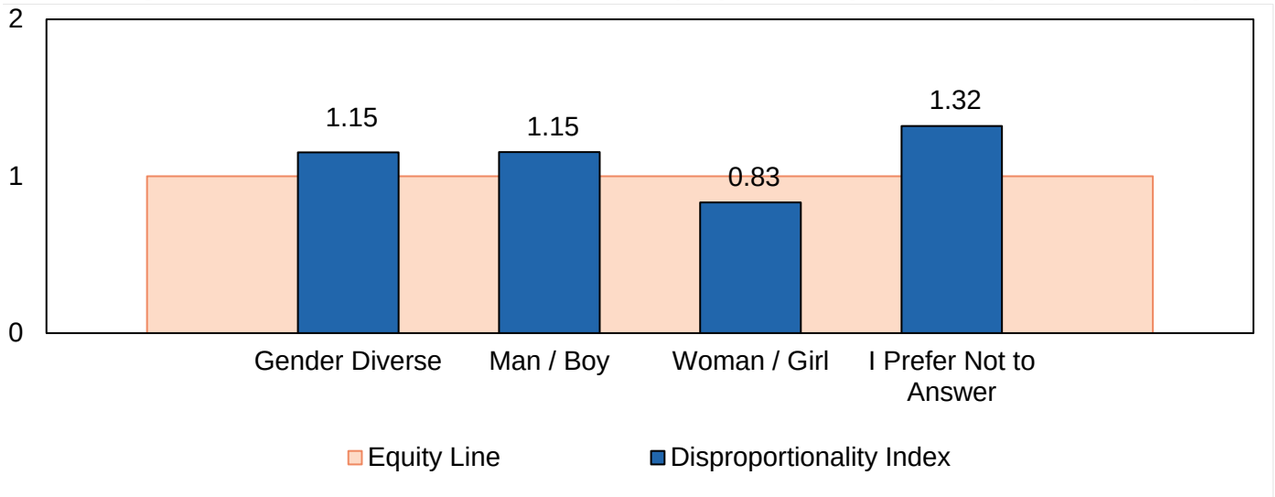
Students who preferred not to answer when asked about their gender identity were the most overrepresented group among those students identified with a Gifted exceptionality at 1.32. While this ambiguity should be noted, the total number of students who make up the “I Prefer Not to Answer” group is fairly small so it does not greatly skew the results of the other groups. Among students identified without SEN, those who identified as non-binary are the most underrepresented with an index score of 0.76. On the other hand, those who identified as non-binary are the most overrepresented among those with SEN (excluding Gifted) with an index score of 2.14.

**Table 54: Disproportionality Indices by Gender Identity and Special Education Needs Status**

| Gender Identity | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender Fluid | 1.31 | 0.40 | 0.97 |
| Gender Nonconforming | 0.94 | 2.59 | 0.92 |
| Man / Boy | 1.25 | 1.15 | 0.94 |
| Non-Binary | 2.14 | 1.37 | 0.76 |
| Questioning | 0.91 | 1.66 | 0.98 |
| Transgender | 1.67 | 0.78 | 0.88 |
| Two-Spirit | 1.51 | 0.97 | 0.90 |
| Woman / Girl | 0.72 | 0.83 | 1.06 |
| A Gender Identity Not Listed | 1.64 | 0.84 | 0.88 |
| Not Sure | 1.37 | 1.10 | 0.92 |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 1.21 | 0.70 | 0.98 |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 1.32 | 1.32 | 0.92 |
| Total | 8,071 | 2,401 | 41,258 |

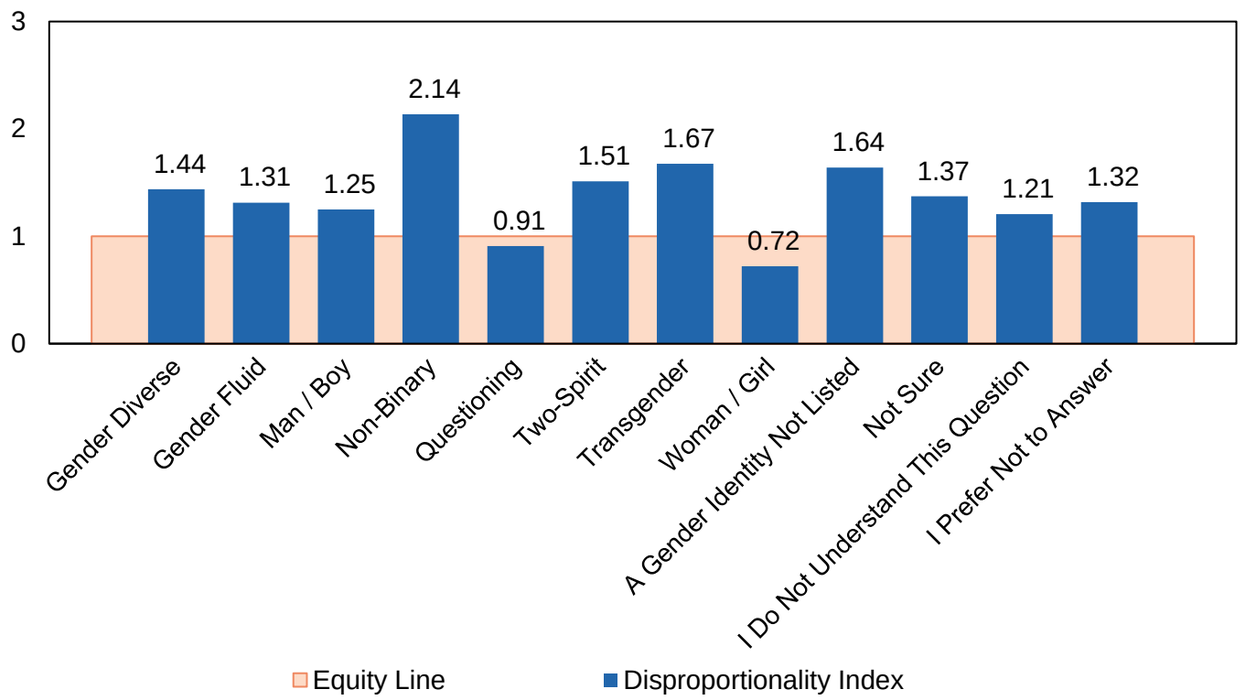
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 18: Students Identified as Gifted: Disproportionality Indices by Gender Identity**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 19: Students Identified With SEN (excl. Gifted): Disproportionality Indices by Gender Identity**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

### Disproportionality by Sexual Orientation

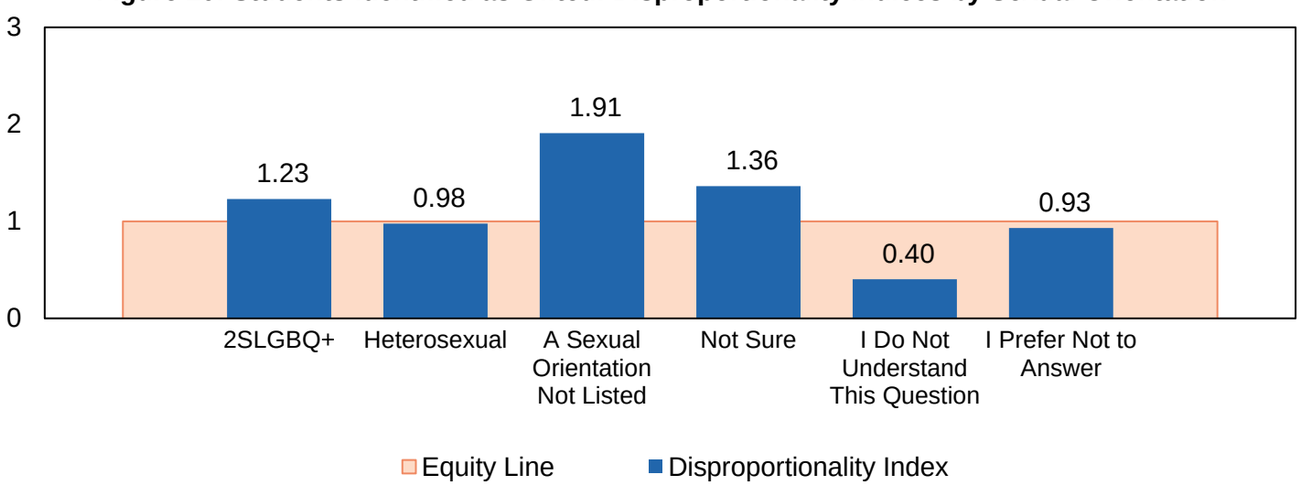
Among students identified a with Gifted exceptionality those who were identified as “Questioning” or “A Sexual Orientation Not Listed Above” were the most overrepresented at 1.89 and 1.91, respectively. By sexual orientation, no group was particularly over- or under-represented among students identified without SEN. Among students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) those who identified as “Gay” or “Two Spirit” had the greatest overrepresentation at 1.95 and 1.70 respectively.

**Table 55: Disproportionality Indices by Sexual Orientation and Special Education Needs Status**

| Sexual Orientation | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2SLGBQ+ | 1.18 | 1.23 | 0.95 |
| Asexual | 1.03 | 0.86 | 1.00 |
| Bisexual | 1.14 | 1.39 | 0.95 |
| Gay | 1.95 | 1.33 | 0.80 |
| Lesbian | 1.43 | 1.71 | 0.87 |
| Pansexual | 1.19 | 1.14 | 0.96 |
| Queer | 1.35 | 1.64 | 0.89 |
| Two-Spirit | 1.70 | 1.88 | 0.81 |
| Heterosexual | 0.88 | 0.98 | 1.02 |
| A Sexual Orientation Not Listed | 1.36 | 1.91 | 0.88 |
| Questioning | 0.86 | 1.89 | 0.98 |
| Not Sure | 1.49 | 1.36 | 0.88 |
| I Do Not Understand This Question | 1.30 | 0.40 | 0.98 |
| I Prefer Not to Answer | 1.58 | 0.93 | 0.89 |
| Total | 7,886 | 2,379 | 40,544 |

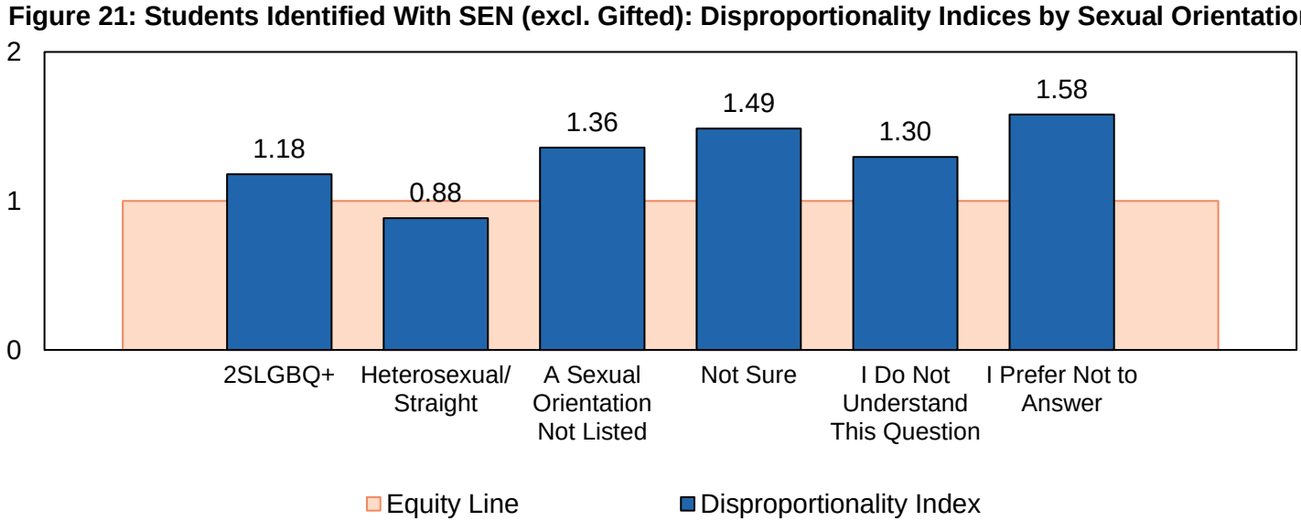
Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 20: Students Identified as Gifted: Disproportionality Indices by Sexual Orientation**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 21: Students Identified With SEN (excl. Gifted): Disproportionality Indices by Sexual Orientation**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Disproportionality by Family Structure

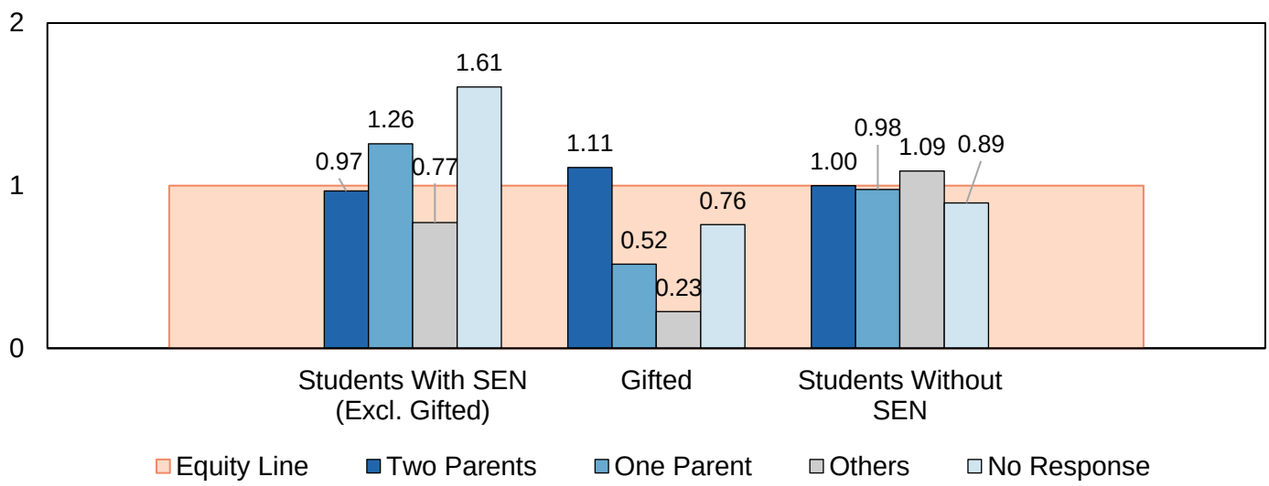
Students who listed their family arrangement as “Others” were the most underrepresented among those students identified with a Gifted exceptionality. Among those with SEN (excluding Gifted) those who did not give a response and those who only live with one parent were the most overrepresented at 1.6 and 1.3, respectively.

**Table 56: Disproportionality Indices by Family Structure and Special Education Needs Status**

| Family Structure | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| Two Parents | 0.97 | 1.11 | 1.00 |
| One Parent | 1.26 | 0.52 | 0.98 |
| Others | 0.77 | 0.23 | 1.09 |
| No Response | 1.61 | 0.76 | 0.89 |
| Total | 8,239 | 2,447 | 41,859 |

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 22: Disproportionality Indices by Family Structure and Special Education Needs**

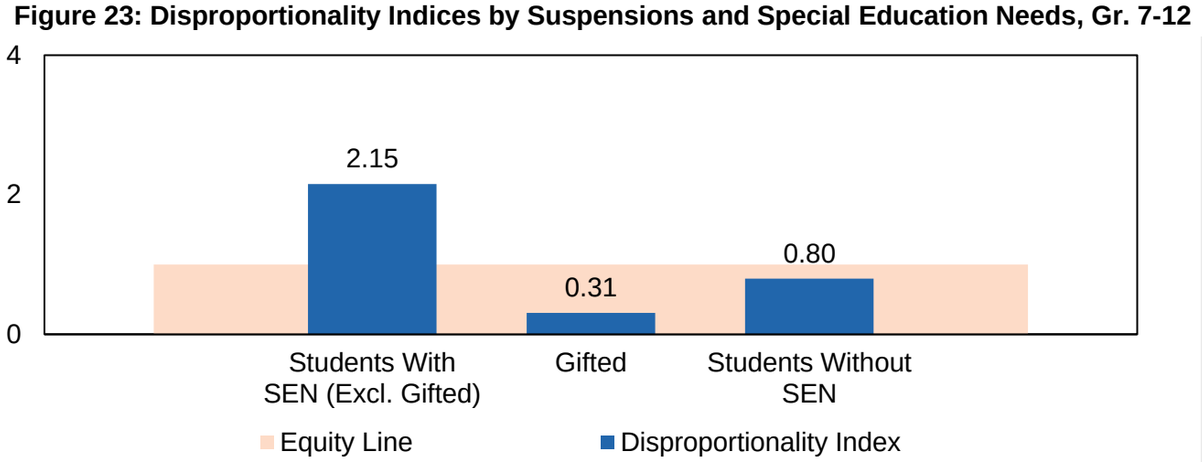



Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Disproportionality by Suspensions

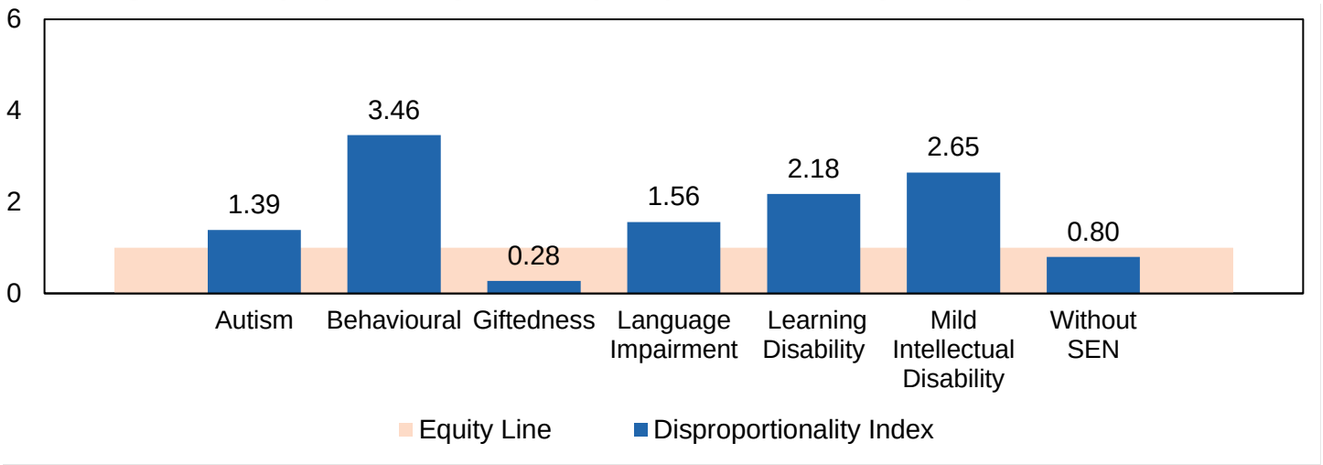
Students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) were overrepresented among those who received suspensions at 2.15. Of those, students identified with a behavioural exceptionality were the most overrepresented with an index score of 3.46. On the other hand, those students identified with a Gifted exceptionality and with no SEN were underrepresented.

**Figure 23: Disproportionality Indices by Suspensions and Special Education Needs, Gr. 7-12**




Source: Student Information System

**Figure 24: Disproportionality Indices by Suspensions and Key Exceptionalities, Gr. 7-12**

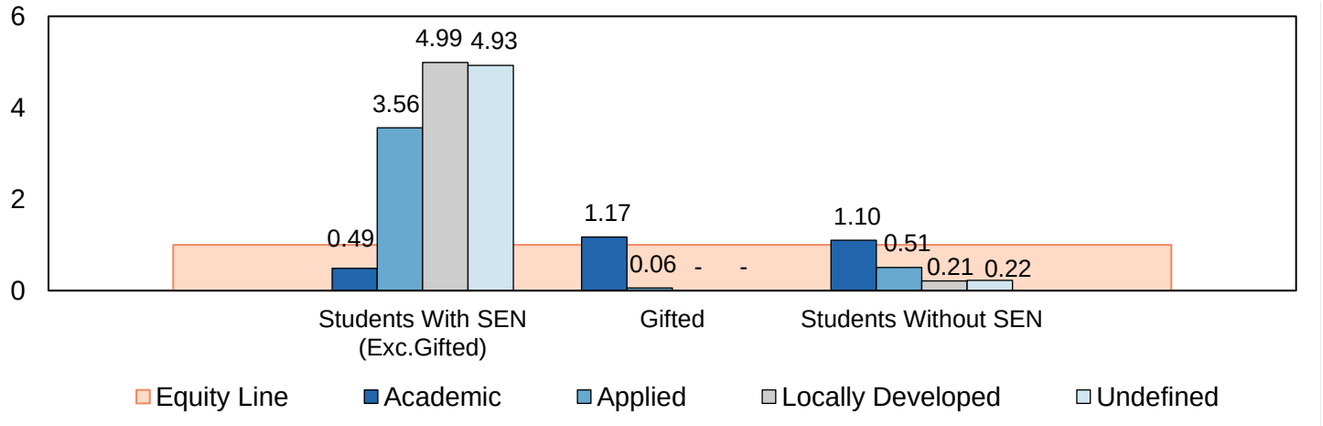



Source: Student Information System

## Disproportionality by Program of Study

There are stark differences between a student's program of study and their SEN status. Students in the Academic classes were far less likely to be identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) (0.49), whereas these students were overrepresented in every other program of study (Applied, Locally Developed, and Undefined).

**Figure 25: Disproportionality Indices by Program of Study and Special Education Needs Status, Gr. 9**




Source: Student Information System

## Disproportionality by Parental Education

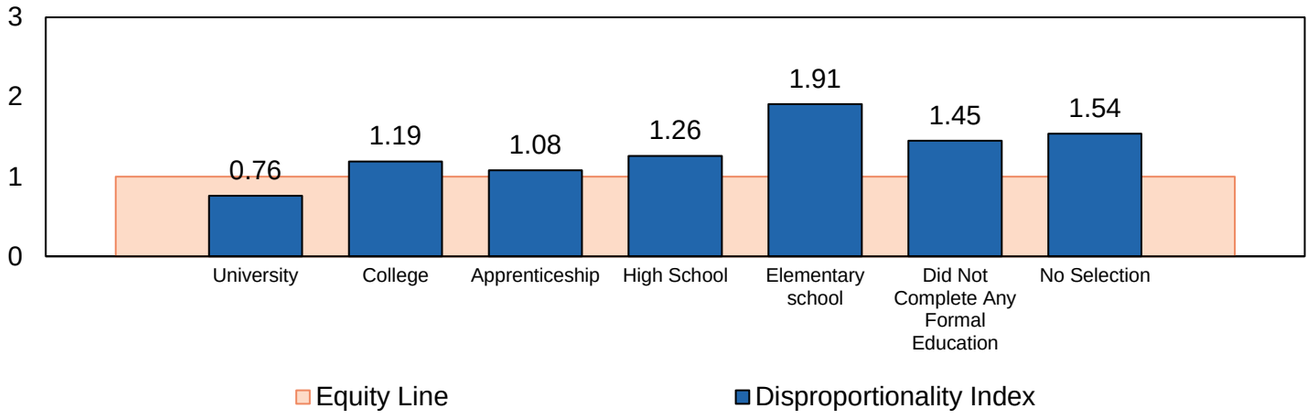
Among students identified with a Gifted exceptionality, those whose parents attained a university degree are overrepresented at 1.39, while those with a high school diploma are the most underrepresented at 0.32. Students whose parents obtained an Elementary School level education were the most overrepresented among those with SEN (excluding Gifted) (1.91), followed by those who did not list their parents' highest level of education at 1.54.

**Table 57: Disproportionality Indices by Parental Education and Special Education Needs Status Gr. 7-12**

| Parental Education | With SEN (excl. Gifted) | Gifted | Without SEN |
|---|---|---|---|
| University | 0.76 | 1.39 | 1.02 |
| College | 1.19 | 0.41 | 1.00 |
| Apprenticeship | 1.08 | 0.22 | 1.03 |
| High School | 1.26 | 0.32 | 0.99 |
| Elementary school | 1.91 | 0.08 | 0.87 |
| Did Not Complete Any Formal Education | 1.45 | 0.55 | 0.94 |
| No Selection | 1.54 | 0.50 | 0.92 |
| Total | 8,269 | 2,445 | 41,830 |

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

**Figure 26: Student With SEN (Excl. Gifted): Disproportionality Indices by Parental Education**




Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

## Disproportionality Indices at a Glance

When examining Disproportionality Indices by identity-based data, it is important to recognize that these disproportionalities are the result of inequities within and beyond schools and school board and are not a reflection of deficits within students and families.

The following table shows Disproportionality Indices by identity-based data for students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted). In this context, high Disproportionality Index for an identity group refers to the overrepresentation of those students in SEN (excluding Gifted).

### Overview of Disproportionality Indices

Overall Disproportionality Indices seen in Table 58 range from 0.39 to 2.68. When examining Disproportionality Indices for students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) based on racial and Indigenous identity, students who identified as Indigenous have the highest Disproportionality of 2.33 among all other identified races, however, students who did not understand the race question had the overall highest index of 2.68. Following those are students Not Sure or Did Not Respond to the race question on the survey with indices of 2.03 and 1.87, respectively. The second highest disproportionalities (1.4) are observed for students who identified themselves as Latino/Latina/Latinx (single race), Black (single race) and White (single race).

On the other hand, East Asian (single race), South Asian (single race), and Southeast Asian (single race) have the lowest indices of 0.39, 0.54, and 0.66, respectively and underrepresentation in SEN (Excluding Gifted).

Students in Locally Developed, Undefined, and Applied program of study are highly overrepresented in the group of students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) with Disproportionality indices of 4.99, 4.93, and 3.56, respectively.

Disproportionality Indices for gender identities range from 0.72 to 2.14 with Woman/Girl having the lowest representation and Non-Binary category having highest representation within students identified with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted). Man/Boy with the index of 1.25 is slightly overrepresented in SEN (excluding Gifted).

Indices for sexual orientation identities fall within the range of 0.88 for Heterosexual, to 1.58 for those who preferred not to answer the sexual orientation question on the survey. Students who identify as 2SLGBQ+ are slightly overrepresented in SEN (excluding Gifted) with the index of 1.18.

Looking at parental education of students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted) reveals that, Disproportionality Indices range from 0.76 to 1.91 with university education showing the lowest and Elementary School education showing the highest representation.

Looking at family structure, students living with One Parent and students in “No Response” group have the highest representation in SEN (excluding Gifted) with indices of 1.26 and 1.61, respectively. Students living with Two Parents or Others are equally or underrepresented within SEN (excluding Gifted).

Overall, students suspended during the 2018-2019 school year had a Disproportionality Index of 2.86. In particular, students Suspended Multiple Times with Disproportionality Index of 3.98 and those Suspended Once with a Disproportionality Index of 2.53 are overrepresented within students identified with SEN (excluding Gifted).

**Table 58: Overview of Disproportionality Indices for Students Identified With Special Education Needs (Excl. Gifted)**

| Legend: | (SR) Single Race<br>(MR) Multiple Races | Disparity < 1.0 | Disparity = 1.0 | 1.0 < Disparity | Not Enough Data |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

| Racial & Indigenous Identity | Racial & Indigenous Identity | Gender Identity | Gender Identity | Sexual Orientation | Suspension | Parent/ Guardian Education | Parental Presence at Home |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Not Sure<br>2.68 | A Race Category Not Listed (MR)<br>2.03 | Non-Binary<br>2.14 | Transgender<br>1.67 | I Prefer Not to Answer<br>1.58 | Suspended Multiple Times<br>3.98 | Elementary school<br>1.91 | No Response<br>1.61 |
| I Do Not Understand This Question<br>1.87 | Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, & Inuit)<br>1.41 | A Gender Identity Not Listed<br>1.64 | Two-Spirit<br>1.51 | Not Sure<br>1.49 | Suspended Once<br>2.53 | No Selection<br>1.54 | One Parent<br>1.26 |
| Black (SR)<br>1.40 | Southeast Asian (MR)<br>1.38 | Not Sure<br>1.37 | I Prefer Not to Answer<br>1.32 | A Sexual Orientation Not Listed<br>1.36 | | No Formal Education<br>1.45 | |
| White (MR)<br>1.32 | Latino/Latina/Latinx (SR)<br>1.27 | Gender Fluid<br>1.31 | Man/boy<br>1.25 | I Do Not Understand This Question<br>1.3 | | High School<br>1.26 | |
| Black (MR)<br>1.25 | A Race Category Not Listed (SR)<br>1.25 | I Do Not Understand This Question<br>1.21 | | 2SLGBQ+<br>1.18 | | College<br>1.19 | |
| White (SR)<br>1.12 | Middle Eastern (SR)<br>1.00 | | | | | Apprenticeship<br>1.08 | Two Parents<br>0.97 |
| East Asian (MR)<br>0.82 | Latino/Latina/Latinx (MR)<br>0.77 | Questioning<br>0.91 | Woman/girl<br>0.72 | Heterosexual<br>0.88 | Not Suspended<br>0.97 | University<br>0.76 | Others<br>0.77 |
| South Asian (SR)<br>0.76 | Southeast Asian (SR)<br>0.76 | | | | | | |
| South Asian (MR)<br>0.66 | Middle Eastern (MR)<br>0.54 | | | | | | |
| East Asian (SR)<br>0.39 | Did Not Respond<br>0.16 | Gender Nonconforming | | | | | |

Source: Every Student Counts Survey and Student Information System

As Peterson et al., (2016) explain, “Inherent within research methodologies are assumptions about knowledge creation that shape how data are gathered and analyzed and how findings are disseminated” (p. 22). One limitation of this report relates to methodology and its assumptions about knowledge, which has shaped how the data was “gathered, analyzed and disseminated.” (Peterson et al., 2016, p. 22). Findings in this report are based primarily on quantitative analyses, which only answer questions about “what”, “who”, or “how many” and therefore, cannot by themselves, answer questions about “why” or “how”. As a result, these alternatives, yet crucial, perspectives, or truths, are often missing in quantitative research. We also recognize that findings have been reported in a way that maintains the idea of neutrality so commonly used as a validity and reliability metric in quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Historically, quantitative analyses are often seen as “truths” because of the false assumption that quantitative researchers remain “neutral” when working with numbers.

Qualitative research methods, on the other hand, allow for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the marginalized groups that the numbers claim to represent. In fact, qualitative research does not claim to represent or generalize to particular groups of individuals or provide an objective “truth”. Rather, qualitative research claims to provide a “rendition of how life is perceived” (Bold, 2012, p. 17), often inviting participants as co-researchers to retell stories as faithfully as possible. This collaboration, coupled with reflexivity - a technique used by many qualitative researchers that questions one’s own taken for granted assumptions about lived experiences and makes transparent multiple interpretations, or “truths”, of the lives explored - offers readers a more balanced representation of lived experience(s) (Bold, 2012).

For this reason, in the next series of themed reports, we plan to use a mixed methods study design with intersectionality analyses and frameworks in order to further understand the perceptions and experiences of marginalized groups. In so doing, we plan to inquire about and report whether students identified with Special Education Needs are, indeed, provided their accommodations, which would strongly impact any findings on Special Education Needs data. This approach in addition to reflexivity will help illuminate that education systems are not, and cannot be conceptualized as, unbiased or neutral enterprises (Parkay et al., 2012). Exploring these themed reports through a reflexive dialogue can also provide readers the room to make their own meanings “with the lived stories that they know . . . and the stories that are common in many ways to others” (Bold, 2012, p. 145); because through a reflexive dialogue, readers are provided with multiple interpretations of findings such as, the need to consider the high values placed on the Gifted exceptionality and the great lengths some parents go through for the identification of this exceptionality for their child(ren) (e.g., repeated diagnostic testing for identification and intense test preparation). This approach will contextualize information about students’ experiences and their socio-cultural environment to enrich findings (Goswami and Rutherford, 2009).

The objective of these initial and ongoing themed reports is to promote critical dialogue that leads to positive social change for the marginalized and underserved students. Offering multiple perspectives through reflexivity in the writing of our reports is a crucial step toward this goal. For the current themed reports, however, a reflexive dialogue in the reporting structure was not feasible beyond this section of the report. Instead, prompts that guide readers towards using an anti-oppression perspective when reviewing the data can be found within the introduction of each report. These prompts may be used to promote critical dialogue amongst education stakeholders.

An additional consideration for readers pertains to the categories used to conceptualize social identities. The identity categories used in this report are based on the responses to questions in the ESCS and data available from YRDSB’s Student Information System. Some limitations pertaining to the use of these data are:

- Findings indicate that participants who did not provide identity information for certain categories or whose information could not be linked to the Students Information System were, at times, more likely to be identified with Special Education Needs however, we do not know the identity groups to which they belong. This means that disproportionalities for some groups may actually be higher than reported.
- The social identity categories used in this analysis may not align with how individual students describe their identities. For instance, the sexual orientation and gender identity questions were single-selection, meaning that students could only select one gender identity category. As a result, students whose gender identity is best described by more than one category were unable to fully identify their gender identity.

The use of culturally biased standardized tests as a metric for student achievement and diagnostic purposes is another consideration for this study as the contents of standardized assessments, which more often than not are designed to favour students of European heritage in urban settings, cannot reflect concepts, perspectives and values that are familiar to non-European students (Dench, Cleave, Tagak, & Beddard, 2011; Eriks-Brophy, 2014; Noggle, 2014, Peltier, 2011; Peterson et al., 2016). In the future, we hope to use more culturally relevant and responsive assessment tools (e.g., Eisazadeh et al., 2021; Peterson, et al., 2021; 2018), that draw on students' funds of knowledge (Hedges et al., 2011; Moll et al., 1992) and, in turn, affirm their individual identities.

Additionally, using Report Card information as an accountability measure departs from its intended use: to support ongoing communication between teachers and families about students' progress in their learning. This can be viewed as problematic as it not only departs from its original design, but there is also no established procedure to evaluate alternate uses (Ungerleider, 2006). It is important to unpack and be transparent about how alternate uses interact with individual student outcomes and between group comparisons (Koch, 2013).

Lastly, although we engaged in a series of comprehensive community consultations in the development of this report, we hold the belief that there is always room for growth to better partner with communities, particularly in co-constructing the themed reports. In efforts to best collaborate and hear the voices of community members, we welcome any feedback on this report or any suggestions for next steps regarding the current and ongoing reporting structures. If desired, you may contact research.services@yrdsb.ca with your feedback.re

**Anti-Oppression Framework:** An approach that places equity and human rights at the forefront of actions by intentionally identifying, addressing and changing the values, structures, policies, attitudes and practices that result in discrimination against individuals or groups. The framework promotes an understanding of how power, privilege and oppression operate within institutions.

**Anti-Racism Data Standards:** Anti-Racism data standard were established by the Government of Ontario to help identify and monitor systemic racism and racial disparities within the public sector in order to create an inclusive and equitable society for all Ontarians. The standards establish consistent, effective practices for producing reliable information to support evidence-based decision-making and public accountability to help eliminate systemic racism and promote racial equity.

**Asexual:** Asexual refers to a person who does not experience sexual attraction.

**Autism:** The Ontario Ministry of Education defines autism as a learning disorder that is characterized by disturbances in the rate of educational development; ability to relate to the environment, mobility, perception, speech, and language. Autism is also characterized by a lack of the representational-symbolic behaviour that precedes language (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Behavioural:** The Ontario Ministry of Education defines behavioural (or behavioural disorder) as characterized by specific behaviour problems over such period of time, and to such a marked degree, and of such a nature, as to adversely affect educational performance. This may be accompanied by one or more of the following: a) significant difficulty to build or to maintain interpersonal relationships; b) excessive fears or anxieties; c) a tendency to compulsive reaction; and d) an inability to learn that cannot be traced to intellectual, sensory, or health factors, or any combination thereof (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a). It also includes, but is not limited to, anxiety, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and mood disorders/depression.

**Bisexual:** Bisexual refers to a person who experiences attraction to both male-identified and female-identified people.

**Cisgender:** “Cisgender described the identity of people whose sex assigned at birth corresponds with their gender expression and identity” (Center for Intersectional Justice, 2020, p.16).

**Class:** Class refers to “a group of people within society who have the same economic and social position” (dictionary.cambridge.org, 2021).

**Critical Cultural Consciousness:** “…the ability to recognize and analyze systems of inequality and the commitment to take action against these systems” (El-Amin et al, 2017, p. 18). Based on the work of Paulo Freire (1970), critical consciousness is developed through: “gaining knowledge about the systems and structures that create and sustain inequity (critical analysis), developing a sense of power or capability (sense of agency), and ultimately committing to take action against oppressive conditions (critical action)” (El-Amin et al, 2017, p. 20).

**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:** Culturally Responsive Pedagogy or Culturally Responsive Teaching acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates students’ cultures, languages, and life experiences in all aspects of students’ learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994; 1995).

**Data:** “Data is defined as facts, figures, and statistics objectively measured according to a standard or scale, such as frequency, volumes or occurrences. Data does not include information like reports or manuals.” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Developmental Disability:** The Ontario Ministry of Education defines developmental disability as a severe learning disorder characterized by: a) an inability to profit from a special education program for students identified with mild intellectual disabilities because of slow intellectual development; b) an ability to profit from a special education program that is designed to accommodate slow intellectual development; and c) a limited potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment and economic self-support (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Disability:** Disability is a term that covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and others not (e.g., physical, mental, and learning disabilities; hearing or vision disabilities; epilepsy; environmental sensitivities). A disability may be present from birth, may be caused by an accident, or may develop over time. A disability may be temporary, sporadic or permanent.

**Discrimination:** Discrimination is the distinction between individuals not based on legitimate terms; refers to arbitrary bias for or against an individual or a group, or the unjust and inequitable treatment of an individual or group. Discrimination can be based on age, birth, socioeconomic class, colour, creed, ability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender identity, language, marital status, political or other opinion, race, religion or faith belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

**Disparity Index**: This numerical index is a measure of the relative difference between the outcome of one group compared to the outcome of another. In this report, outcomes for each group are compared to the combined outcomes of all students who are not in that group. The calculation of disparity and Disproportionality indices is a requirement of the Antiracism Data Standards (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**EIAC:** EIAC is an acronym that refers to the Equity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee.

**EQAO:** EQAO is an acronym that refers to Education Quality and Accountability Office.

**Equity:** Equity refers to "the systemic fair treatment of all people. It results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. It contrasts with formal equality where people are treated the same without regard for differences" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Ethnicity:** Ethnicity refers to ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic and / or religious characteristics.

**Exceptionality:** The Education Act sets out five categories of exceptionalities in the definition of an exceptional pupil including: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that will affect a student's learning needs. (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 63).

**Exclusion:** Exclusion is defined as "denying access to a place, group, privilege, etc." (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 57).

**Fully Self-Contained Classroom:** A full-time special education class where the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for the entire school day. The exceptional student receives all of the program (100%) in a special education setting. Special education personnel as defined by the Individual Education Plan provide support to the student. Students are included in the academic and social life within the school community (York Region District School Board, 2018).

**Funds of Knowledge:** Funds of knowledge in education refers to any culturally rooted knowledge found within communities (Moll et al., 1992).

**Gay:** Gay refers to a person who experiences attraction to people of the same sex and / or gender. Gay can include both male-identified individuals and female-identified individuals or refer to male-identified individuals only.

**Gender Expression: "**Gender expression is how a person publicly expresses or presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender. Others perceive a person's gender through these attributes." (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2014, p. 3)

**Gender Fluid:** Gender fluid refers to a person whose gender identity or expression changes or shifts along the gender spectrum.

**Gender Identity:** Gender identity is a person's internal and deeply felt sense of being a man, a woman, both, neither, or having another identity on the gender spectrum (i.e., gender fluid, gender nonconforming, non-binary, questioning, transgender, two spirit). A person's gender identity may be different from the sex assigned at birth (i.e., female or male).

**Gender Nonconforming:** Gender nonconforming refers to a person not being in line with the cultural associations made in a given society about a person's sex assigned at birth.

**Gifted:** The Ontario Ministry of Education defines gifted as an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Heterosexual:** Heterosexual refers to “people whose enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction is to people of the opposite sex. See Heterosexual” (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 62).

**Identity-Based Data: “**Identity-based data refers to information about various aspects of students’ identities (e.g., racial / ethnic background, and sexual orientation). In the educational context, students from historically and currently marginalized communities face systemic barriers through policies, programs and practices that create or maintain disadvantages for these students. Collecting identity-based data is important for evaluating how well programs, resources and practices support students, and identify the groups of students who may be underserved in order to develop and revise programs, strategies, policies and teaching practices, as well as allocate resources and supports to improve school environments and help students succeed. The Ontario Human Rights Code permits and encourages the collection and analysis of identity data for the purposes of identifying and removing systemic barriers, preventing discrimination, and promoting equity and inclusivity” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**IEAC:** IEAC is an acronym that refers to the Indigenous Education Advisory Council.

**Inclusive**: “Inclusive processes, policies, services, program and practices are accessible to and useable by as many people as possible, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, language, etc. An inclusive environment is open, safe, equitable and respectful. Everyone can enjoy a sense of trust, belonging and involvement, and everyone is encouraged to contribute and participate fully” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Indigenous:** “Indigenous people identify as being descended from the Original Peoples of what is currently known as Canada. In this context, Indigenous peoples include people who may identify as First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and/or Inuit and any related identities” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Indirect Services:** A regular class with indirect support where the student is placed in a regular class for the entire day and the classroom teacher receives specialized consultative services (York Region District School Board, 2018).

**Individual Education Plan (IEP):** IEP is an acronym that refers to an Individual Education Plan. “An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and demonstrate learning” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2021).

**Intersectionality:** “Intersectionality is the way in which people’s lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances. In the context of race and Indigenous identity, this means recognizing the ways in which people’s experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one group, may vary depending on the individual’s or group’s relationship to additional overlapping or intersecting social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities or citizenship and immigration status. An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the impacts of any one particular systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**IPRC:** IPRC is an acronym that refers to Identification, Placement, and Review Committee.

**Islamophobia:** “Islamophobia is racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear, or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a greater security threat on an institutional, systemic, and societal level” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Language Impairment:** The Ministry of Education defines language Impairment as a learning disorder characterized by an impairment in comprehension and/or use of verbal communication or the written or other symbol system of communication, which may be associated with neurological, psychological, physical or sensory factors (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Learning Disability:** The Ministry of Education defines learning disability as one of a number of neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently and significantly has an impact on the ability to learn and use academic and other skills (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Lesbian:** Lesbian refers to a female-identified person who experiences attraction to female-identified people.

**Marginalization:** “Marginalization is a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. Marginalized groups become permanently confined to the fringes of society.

Their status is perpetuated through various dimensions of exclusion, particularly in the labour market, from full and meaningful participation in society" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Mild Intellectual Disability (MID):** Mild intellectual disability refers to a learning disorder characterized by: a) an ability to profit educationally within a regular class with the aid of considerable curriculum modification and supportive service; b) an inability to profit educationally within a regular class because of slow intellectual development; and c) a potential for academic learning, independent social adjustment and economic self-support (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Mixed Methods:** Mixed methods involve the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Modified Program:** A program for individual student based on learning expectations that are modified from the expectations for the regular grade level.

**Non-Binary:** Non-binary refers to a person whose gender identity does not align with the binary concept of gender such as man or woman.

**Not Reported (NR):** NR denotes where in tables or graphs there were less than 10 students in a particular group and therefore the resulting figure is Not Reported (NR) to preserve the privacy of the students.

**Oppression:** Oppression refers to the "a situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom" (dictionary.combridge.org, 2021).

**OSSLT:** OSSLT is an acronym that refers to Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test.

**Pansexual:** Pansexual refer to a person who experiences attraction to people of diverse sexes and / or genders. The term pansexual reflects a desire to recognize the potential for attraction to sexes and / or genders that exist across a spectrum and to challenge the sex / gender binary.

**Partially Integrated or Partially Self-Contained:** A special education class with partial integration where the student is placed by the IPRC in a special education class in which the student-teacher ratio conforms to Regulation 298, section 31, for at least 50% of the school day, but is integrated with a regular class for at least one instructional period daily. The Special Education Resource Teacher provides support in a specialized setting called the Student Support Centre, while a special education teacher provides support in a Community Class. The exceptional student receives instruction time in the regular classroom with appropriate modifications and/or accommodations (York Region District School Board, 2018).

**PEAC:** PEAC is an acronym that refers to the Parent, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Committee.

**Physical Disability:** The Ministry of Education defines physical disability as a condition of such severe physical limitation or deficiency as to require special assistance in learning situations to provide the opportunity for educational achievement equivalent to that of students identified without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021a).

**Power:** Power is defined as "access to privileges such as information/knowledge, connections, experience and expertise, resources and decision-making that enhance a person's chances of getting what they need to live a comfortable, safe, productive and profitable life (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 61).

**Prejudice:** Prejudice is defined as a "negative prejudgment or preconceived feelings or notions about another person or group of persons based on perceived characteristics" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 61).

**Privilege:** Privilege is defined as "unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. Can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 61).

**Program of Study:** The course level in which the student took the majority of their courses in their Grade 9 year.

**Provincial Standard**: In Ontario, there are four different degrees of student achievement for any given subject/subject. "Level 3 is the 'provincial standard'. Level 1 identifies achievement that falls much below the provincial standard. Level 2 identifies achievement that approaches the standard. Level 4 identifies achievement that surpasses the standard (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 143).

**Queer:** Queer refers to some members within LGBTQ communities, particularly youth, as a symbol of pride and affirmation of diversity. This term makes space for the expression of a variety of identities outside of rigid categories associated with sex, gender or attraction. It can be used by a community to encompass a broad spectrum of identities related to sex, gender or attraction, or by an individual to reflect the interrelatedness of these aspects of their identity.

**Questioning:** Questioning refers to a person who is unsure about their own sexual orientation.

**Race:** "Race is a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., "socially constructed"), with significant consequences for people's lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place and can overlap with ethnic, cultural or religious groupings" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Racialized (person or group): "**Racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as "visible minorities" under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Racism: "**Racism includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain or perpetuate the racial superiority or dominance of one group over another" (Government of Ontario, 2021). These ideas and practices are maintained when racial prejudice is so often backed by systems of power (Oluo, 2018)

**Reflexivity:** Reflexivity is a technique used in qualitative research involving the practice of questioning one's own taken for granted assumptions. This may involve making transparent multiple perspectives or interpretations in the written report, particularly ones beneath the master narrative. It involves staying "awake" (Clandinin et al., 2010, p. 82) to what is provided and was it not, what is heard as well as the silence. It also involves the ability to disclose biases rooted from personal experiences.

**Reliability and Validity:** Reliability and validity are measures used to evaluate the rigour of quantitative research. These terms are reconceptualized, however, within qualitative research, challenging the notion of a single objective truth that can be "accurately," or close to "accurately," measured (Bold, 2012). Through a qualitative lens, the trustworthiness of research resides in readers' ability to find their own truth through "the relevance of lives explored" (Bold, 2012), and rejects that of a single truth to be applied or replicated to multiple contexts for generalizability or "accuracy" purposes.

**Resource Assistance:** A regular class with resource assistance where the student is placed in a regular class for most or all of the day and receives specialized instruction, individually or in a small group, within the regular classroom from a qualified Special Education Resource Teacher (York Region District School Board, 2018).

**SEAC:** SEAC is an acronym that refers to the Special Education Advisory Committee.

**Sexism:** Sexism is defined as "discrimination based on sex" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 62).

**Sexual Orientation:** Sexual orientation is a personal characteristic that forms part of who you are. It covers the range of human sexuality and is different from gender identity.

**Social Identity:** Social identity refers to a person's sense of who they are based on the social groups the person was born into and belongs to. People can identify or be identified by others on the basis of their social identity (and their intersections). This aspect of an individual's self-conception is not based on their personal qualities (e.g., skills and abilities).

**Social Location:** Social Location (Positionality) refers to the recognition that where you stand in relation to others in society shapes what you can see and understand. It is how people are impacted by social relations of inequity (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, disability, class, age, etc.) as well as their intersections (see Vosko, 2006). Social location emphasizes that inequity is complex, and that people hold positions of dominance and subordination in different contexts (Anthias, 2012)

**Stereotypes:** Stereotypes is defined as "Qualities ascribed to individuals or groups that are based on misconceptions, false generalizations, and/or oversimplifications that potentially result in stigmatization. A race-based stereotype is a quality ascribed to individuals/groups related to race. Stereotypes can perpetuate racism and racial discrimination and give rise to racial inequalities." (Government of Ontario, 2021)

**Stigma:** Stigma is defined as a harmful negative stereotype (Canadian Mental Health Association, 2021).

**Streaming:** Steaming refers to the separation of students into different course types (streams). In Ontario, students are currently streamed for Math, English, Science, Geography, History and French. The course types (streams) for these Grade 9 and 10 courses are Academic, Applied and Locally Developed (York Region District School Board, 2021b).

**Students Identified with Special Education Needs:** “Students who have been formally identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), as well as students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students whose sole identified exceptionality is giftedness are not included” (EQAO, 2019, p.38). Special Education Needs is a classification of students for school to provide specialized or intensive programing and support. It is closely associated with Program of Study (Brown & Sinay 2008; Brown & Parekh, 2010) or “streaming” and is widely considered to be strongly connected to postsecondary access.

**Systemic Barriers:** “Systemic barriers are policies, programs and practices that result in particular groups of students receiving inequitable access to opportunities or being excluded in a way that creates or maintains disadvantages for these marginalized groups” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Systemic Racism: “**Systemic racism consists of organizational culture, policies, directives, practices or procedures that exclude, displace or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers for them to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others” (Government of Ontario, 2021).

**Transgender:** Transgender refers to a person whose gender identity differs from the one associated with their birth-assigned sex.

**Two-Spirit:** Two-spirit refers to an Indigenous person whose gender identity, spiritual identity or sexual orientation includes masculine, feminine, or non-binary spirits.

**2SLGBQ+:** 2SLGBQ+ is an acronym used in this report to refer to two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer or questioning. 2SLGBTQ+ is an acronym often used as an umbrella term to encompass a much wider range of identities and experiences related to sex, gender and attraction that fall outside the dominant norms of heterosexual and cisgender. In this report, the “T” for transgender is not included when the acronym is used in reference to Sexual Orientation. Transgender is included under gender identity.

**Withdrawal Assistance:** A regular class with withdrawal assistance where the student is placed in a regular class and receives instruction outside the classroom, for less than 50% of the school day. Support is provided to the student by special education personnel (i.e. educational assistant (EA), SERT, regional support staff; PT/OT) as defined by the Individual Education Plan. The exceptional student receives instruction from a Special Education Resource Teacher for a portion of his/her time (York Region District School Board, 2018).

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