



every **STUDENT COUNTS** **SURVEY**

YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey Research Brief

Students' Sense of Belonging at School

March 2022

Research and Assessment Services



Title: YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey Research Brief. Students' Sense of Belonging at School

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Introduction

This Research Brief highlights the YRDSB's 2018 Every Student Counts Survey findings on Grade 7 to 12 students' experiences at school within the following three categories: (1) feeling a sense of belonging, (2) relationship with adults and (3) relationship with peers. By examining the survey data relevant to these three categories, our aim is to better understand the experiences of YRDSB students to inform professional practice for the implementation of intentional interventions and strategies that aim to close opportunity gaps among various groups of students.

Engaging with ESCS Data through an Anti-Oppressive Framework

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, school 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, other school boards)?
- What additional data sources are needed to understand both complementary and divergent perspectives regarding educational experiences?

Research Questions

In this research brief, we focused on answering the following research questions:

1. What are some of the overall trends regarding participating students' perceptions of belonging at school?
2. Which group(s) of students are being underserved from the education system the way it is currently functioning?
 - a. What are some notable findings regarding students' perceptions of belonging by grade, racial and Indigenous identity, special education needs, gender and sexual orientation?
 - b. What are some notable findings regarding students' relationship with adults by grade, racial and Indigenous identity, special education needs, gender and sexual orientation?
 - c. Are there any associations between participating students' perceptions of belonging and relationship with adults at school?
 - d. Are there any associations between participating students' perceptions of belonging and relationship with peers at school?
 - e. Are there any associations between participating students' perceptions of belonging at school and culturally relevant learning experiences?

Key Findings and Implications

This research brief illuminates several key findings that have important implications for future research and practice. These key findings throughout this report most especially warrant the use of a mixed methods study design with further intersectionality analyses and frameworks in order to explore and understand more deeply the perceptions and experiences of underserved groups of students. This intersectional approach in addition to a more transparent dialogue that makes visible multiple interpretations of lived experiences will further contextualize information about students' lives and enrich the investigation under study (Goswami & Rutherford, 2009).

Several additional implications for research as well as practice linked to the notable findings presented within this report are:

Overall Trends

- Although across the two grade panels majority of students reported feeling a sense of belonging, having caring adults and one or more friend at school, there is a strong need to investigate the minority of students who reported feeling excluded, having no caring adults or no friends at school with the intention of better serving these group of students.

Quartile Analysis for Students' Sense of Belonging at School by Demographic

Across the two grade panels, the following demographics consistently reported the lowest rates of sense of belonging compared to their peers:

- Students who did not select an option to self-identify their Indigenous or racial identity (73% for Grades 7-8 and 77% for Grades 9-12);

- Students who were identified with Autism (66% for Grades 7-8 and 72% for Grades 9-12) or a Behavioural exceptionality (66% for Grades 7-8 and 72% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who indicated that their gender identity was not listed as an option on the ESCS survey (50% for Grades 7-8 and 61% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who self-identified as Lesbian (55% for Grades 7-8 and 68% for Grades 9-12).

Quartile Analysis for Students' Relationship with Adults at School by Demographic

Across the two grade panels, the following demographics consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school compared to their peers:

- Students who did not select an option to self-identify their Indigenous and racial identity (70% for Grades 7-8 and 66% for Grades 9-12) as well as those who self-identified as Southeast Asian (70% for Grades 7-8 and 71% for Grades 9-12) and East Asian (74% for Grades 7-8 and 71% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who indicated that their gender identity was not listed as an option on the ESCS survey (57% for Grades 7-8 and 54% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who indicated that their sexual orientation was not listed as an option on the ESCS survey (70% for Grades 7-8 and 67% for Grades 9-12).

Intersections Between Students' Relationship with Adults and Their Sense of Belonging at School

Findings showed a consistent association between students' relationship with adults and their sense of belonging at school. Among those who reported having no caring adults at school, the following demographics reported the lowest rates of sense of belonging compared to their peers:

- Students who were self-identified as Indigenous (52% for Grades 7-8 and 50% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as having special education needs, excluding Gifted (54% for Grades 7-8 and 62% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as gender diverse (41% for Grades 7-8 and 46% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ (52% for Grades 7-8 and 59% for Grades 9-12).

Intersections Between Students' Relationship with Peers and Their Sense of Belonging at School

Findings showed a consistent association between students' relationship with peers as well as their sense of belonging at school. Among students who reported having no friends at school, the following demographics reported the lowest rates of sense of belonging at school compared to their peers:

- Students who self-identified as Black and Southeast Asian in Grades 7 to 8 (42% each) and Indigenous as well as those who did not select their Indigenous and racial backgrounds in Grades 9 to 12 (46% each);
- Students who were identified as having special education needs, excluding Gifted (36% for Grades 7-8 and 48% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as gender diverse (5% for Grade 7-8 and 41% for Grades 9-12);

- Students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ (42% for Grades 7-8 and 51% for Grades 9-12).

Intersections Between Culturally Relevant Learning Experiences and Students' Sense of Belonging at School

Findings showed a consistent association between culturally relevant learning experiences as well as students' sense of belonging at school. For instance, those who (strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about Indigenous peoples, race, ethnicity and culture, special education needs, gender identity and sexual orientation reported higher percentages regarding their sense of belonging compared to those who (strongly) disagreed, with the exception of students who self-identified as Latino/a/x within the Grade 7-8 panel. Among those who (strongly) disagreed that they had culturally relevant learning experiences, the following demographics reported the lowest sense of belonging at school:

- Students who self-identified as Indigenous compared to their non-Indigenous peers (62% for Grades 7-8 and 63% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who self-identified as Southeast Asian (50% for Grades 7-8) and those who were identified as Indigenous (60% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as having special education needs, excluding Gifted (66% for Grades 7-8 and 73% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as gender diverse (48% for Grades 7-8 and 57% for Grades 9-12);
- Students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ (63% for Grades 7-8 and 69% for Grades 9-12).

These findings point to the need to enhance students' relationship with adults and peers at school while providing learning experiences that are culturally relevant and identity affirming, especially for those students who reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging. Students who self-identified as **Indigenous**, were identified with **special education needs (excl. Gifted)**, as **gender diverse**, or **2SLGBQ+** must take centre stage in these efforts alongside with their peers.

Overall, findings also indicate that participants who did not provide identity information for certain categories (e.g., racial or Indigenous identity) are more likely to be underserved by the system in terms of the way it is currently functioning; however, we do not know the identity groups to which they belong. This means that the percentages for some identity groups may actually be higher than reported. Thereby, there is a need to further investigate why this may be so.

What are some of the overall trends regarding participating students' perceptions of belonging?

This report analyzes nine survey prompts pertaining to students' sense of belonging, relationship with adults as well as relationship with peers at school. Five of these nine survey prompts were used to develop a sense of belonging index, all with the same agreement scale (strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, not sure). These five survey prompts are:

1. This school is a welcoming place.
2. I feel like I belong at this school.
3. I enjoy being at this school.
4. I get along well with other students at this school.

5. I feel accepted by students at this school.

Three of the nine survey prompts were used to develop a relationship-with-adults index, all with the same agreement scale (strongly agree, agree, strongly disagree, disagree, not sure). These three survey prompts are:

1. There is at least one caring adult at my school who supports me.
2. There is an adult at my school who expects me to do well.
3. In general, adults at my school treat me the same or better than other students.

The final survey prompt with the scale none, one or two, three or more reflects the broad theme: students' relationship with peers:

1. How many close friends do you have at school?

This section of the report examines the overall trends found for the students' sense of belonging index (Figure 1), the relationship-with-adults index (Figure 2) as well as the broad theme: students' relationship with peers (Figure 3). Figures 1, 2, and 3 show the overall findings for these three research areas.

Figure 1. Overall Students' Sense of Belonging at School

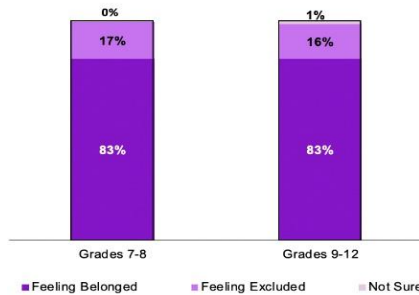


Figure 2. Overall Students' Relationship with Adults at School

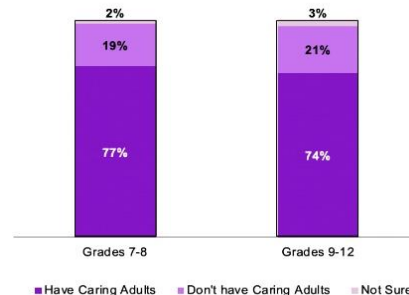
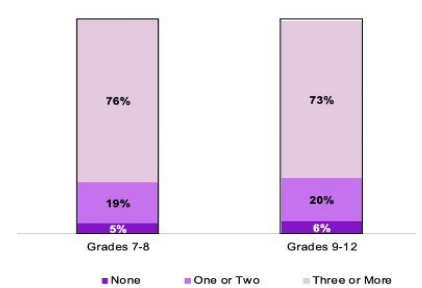


Figure 3. Overall Students' Relationship with Peers at School



The following key finding surfaced:

- The majority of students reported feeling a sense of belonging at school across the two grade panels.
- Majority of students reported having caring adults at school across the two grade panels.
- Majority of students reported having three or more friends at school across the two grade panels.

What are some notable findings regarding students' perceptions of sense of belonging at school by their Demographic?

This section of the report more closely examines students' perception of their sense of belonging at school disaggregated by their Indigenous and racial identity, special education needs, gender identity and sexual orientation. In so doing, we calculated quartiles to determine the groups of students most underserved by the system in terms of the way that it is currently functioning. The quartiles were calculated by dividing the set of values (percentages) into 4 equal parts. For example, in Figure 4, under sense of belonging by racial and Indigenous identity for the Grade 7-8 panel, the data was first

arranged in ascending order from 72.5% (minimum value) to 84.8% (maximum value), then was grouped into quartiles by first calculating the median (the middle value, 79.9%). The cutoff point for the first quartile (75.3%) lies in the middle of the minimum value (72.5%) and the median (79.9%). The median is the cutoff point for the second quartile. The middle value lying between the median (79.9%) and the maximum value (84.8%) is the cutoff point for the third quartile (81.6%). The fourth quartile represents the highest 25% of the values. Thereby, any value equal or lower than 75.3% was considered the 25th percentile and grouped in the first quartile (lowest). Likewise, any value equal or lower than 79.9% but higher than 75.3% was considered the 50th percentile and grouped in the second quartile, and any value equal or lower than 81.6% but higher than 79.9% was considered the 75th percentile and grouped in the third quartile. Those values higher than 81.6% was grouped in the fourth quartile (highest).

Anti-oppression Note

Throughout this section of the report, purple arrows and prompts are used on each figure to draw your attention to the quartiles that represent the groups of students who are most underserved at the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) with the intention of better serving these groups of students. It is important for us to reiterate that these findings are not to be viewed through a deficit lens, but through an anti-oppressive framework that draws particular attention to the inequities faced by groups of students in terms of the way the education system is currently functioning.

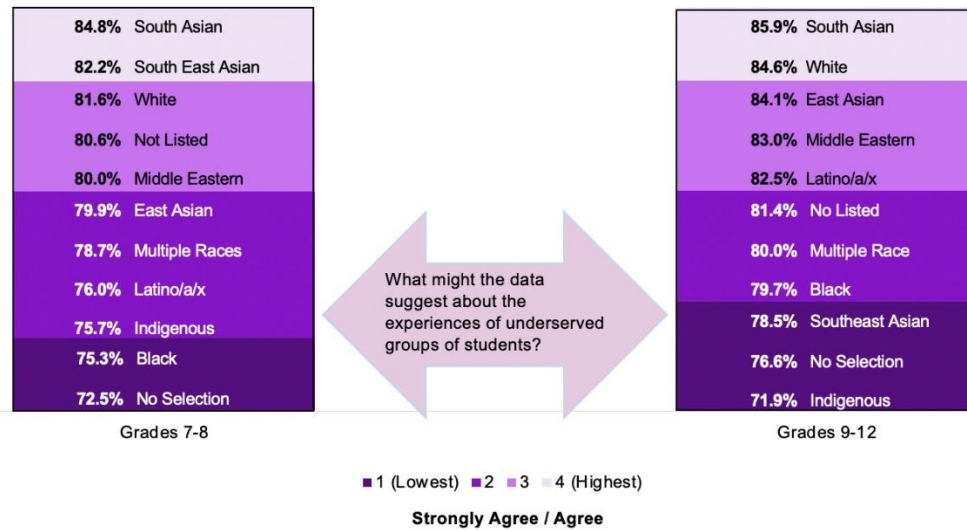
Indigenous and Racial Identity

Figure 4 shows students' sense of belonging disaggregated by racial and Indigenous identity. It should be noted that identification data for Indigenous identity were drawn from YRDSB student information system (SIS).

The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who did not select an option to self-identify their Indigenous or racial identity consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school across the two grade panels.
- The Grade 7 to 8 students who self-identified as Black as well as the Grade 9 to 12 students who self-identified as Indigenous or Southeast Asian were also among those who reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school.

Figure 4. Students’ Sense of Belonging at School by Racial and Indigenous Identity



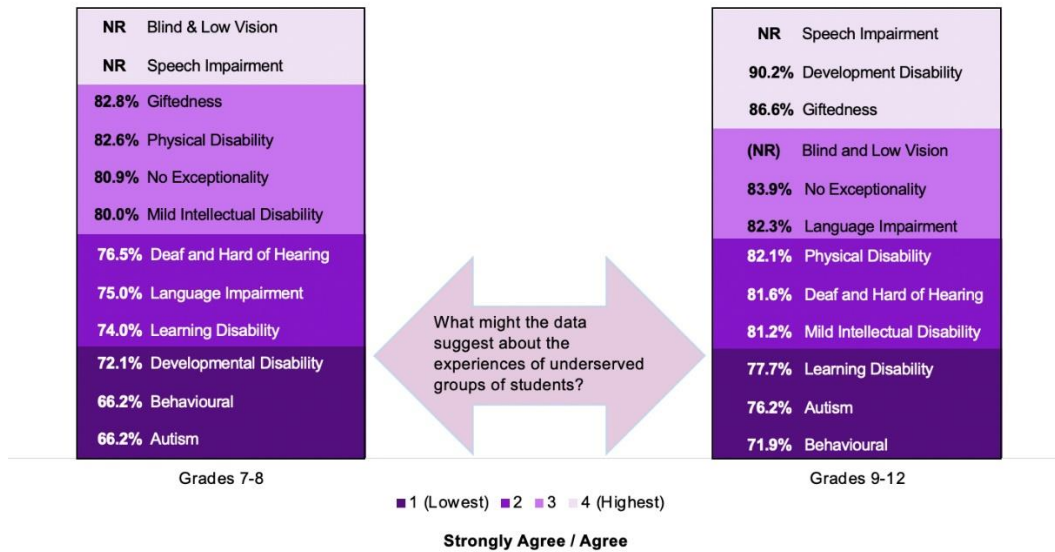
Special Education Needs

This section examines the 2018 ESCS data for the sense of belonging index disaggregated by special education needs (SEN). Identification data for special education needs were drawn from YRDSB student information system (SIS). Those students grouped under “no exceptionality” refer to students who are not identified with a special education need in the system. Additionally, “NR” denotes there were less than 15 students in a particular group and therefore the resulting figure is Not Reported (NR) to preserve the privacy of the students.

Figure 5 shows students’ sense of belonging disaggregated by special education needs. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who were identified with Autism and a Behavioural exceptionality consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging across the two grade panels.
- The Grade 7 to 8 students who were identified with a Developmental Disability as well as the Grade 9 to 12 students who were identified with a Learning Disability were also among those who reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school.

Figure 5. Students' Sense of Belonging at School by Special Education Needs

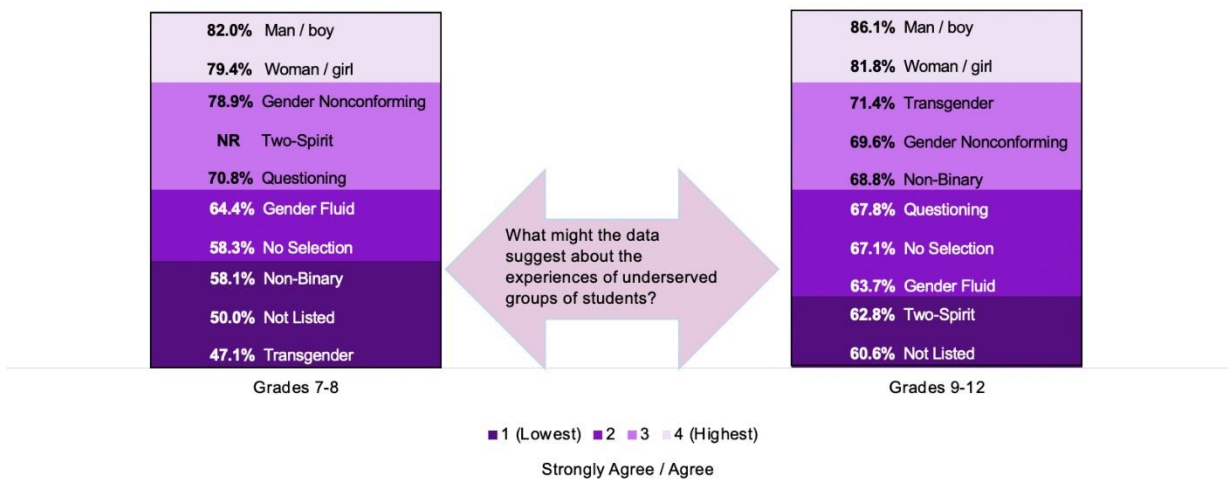


Gender Identity

Figure 6 shows students' sense of belonging disaggregated by gender identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who indicated that their gender identity was not listed as an option on the ESCS survey consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school across the two grade panels.
- The Grade 7 to 8 students who self-identified as Transgender or Non-Binary, and the Grade 9 to 12 students who self-identified as Two-Spirit also reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school.

Figure 6. Students' Sense of Belonging at School by Gender Identity



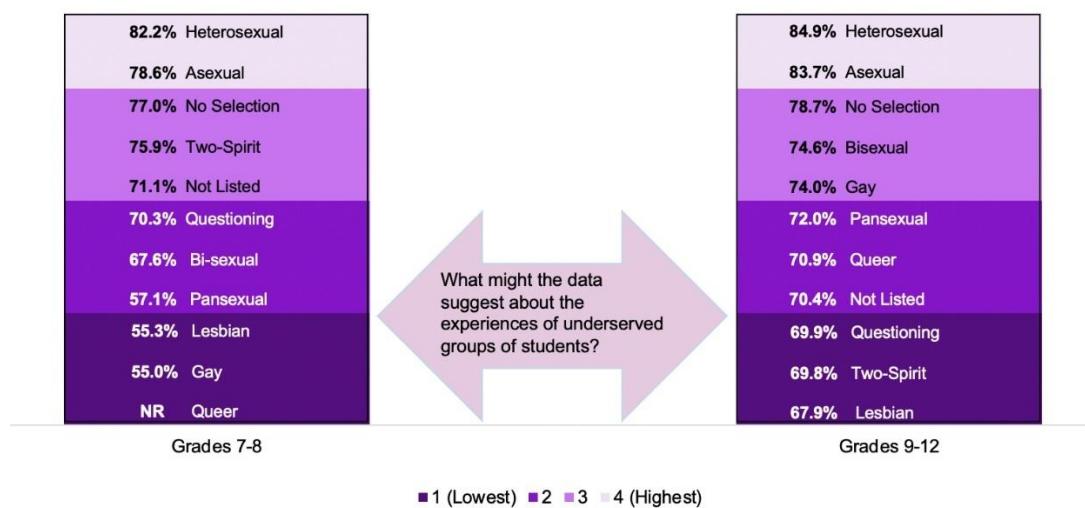
Sexual Orientation

Figure 7 shows students' sense of belonging at school disaggregated by sexual orientation.

The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who self-identified as Lesbian consistently reported the lowest rates of agreement regarding their sense of belonging across the two grade panels.
- The Grade 7 to 8 students who self-identified as Queer or Gay, as well as the Grade 9 to 12 students who self-identified as Two-Spirit or Questioning were also among those who reported the lowest agreement rates regarding their sense of belonging at school.

Figure 7. Sense of Belonging Index by Sexual Orientation



What are some notable findings regarding students' perceptions of their relationship with adults at school by demographic?

Figure 8 shows students' perceptions of their relationship with adults at school disaggregated by Indigenous and racial identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across the two grade panels, students who did not select an option to self-identify their Indigenous or racial identity as well as those who self-identified as Southeast Asian or East Asian consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.

Figure 8. Relationship with Adults by Indigenous or Racial Identity

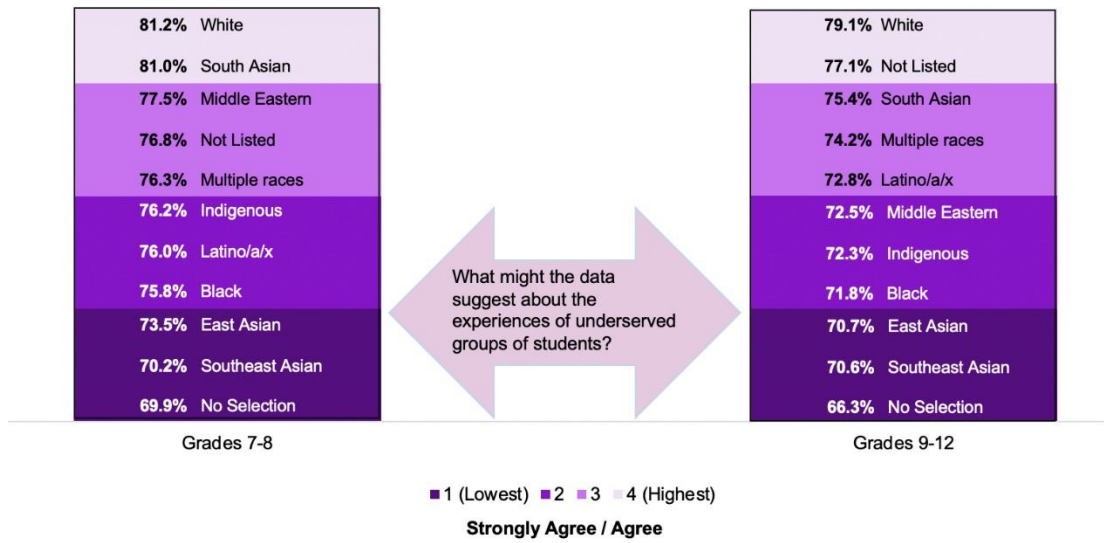


Figure 9. Relationship with Adults by Special Education Needs

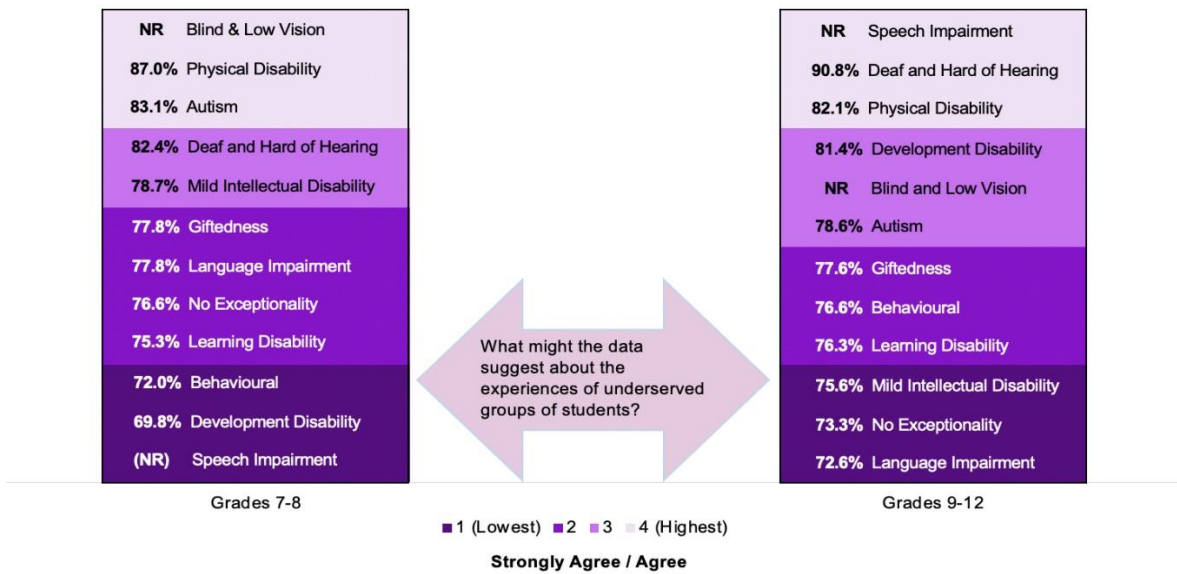


Figure 9 shows students' perceptions of their relationship with adults at school disaggregated by special education needs. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Within the Grade 7 to 8 panel, students who were identified with a Speech Impairment, Developmental Disability or Behavioural exceptionality were among those who reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.
- Within the Grade 9 to 12 panel, students who were identified with a Language Impairment or a Mild Intellectual Disability, as well as those with no exceptionality also reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.

Figure 10. Relationship with Adults by Gender Identity

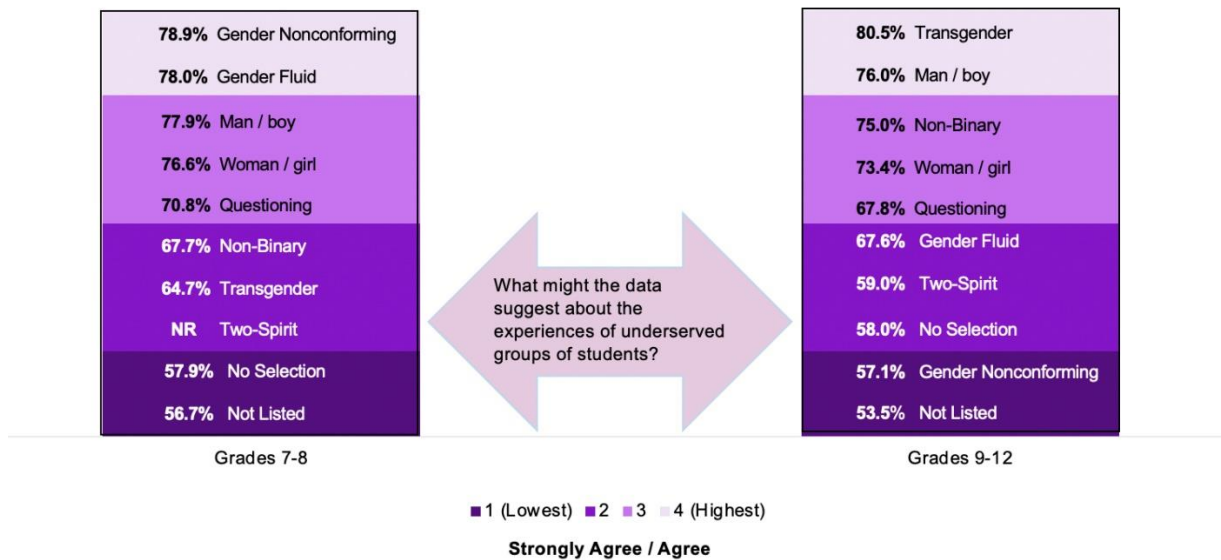


Figure 10 shows students' perceptions of their relationship with adults at school disaggregated by gender identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

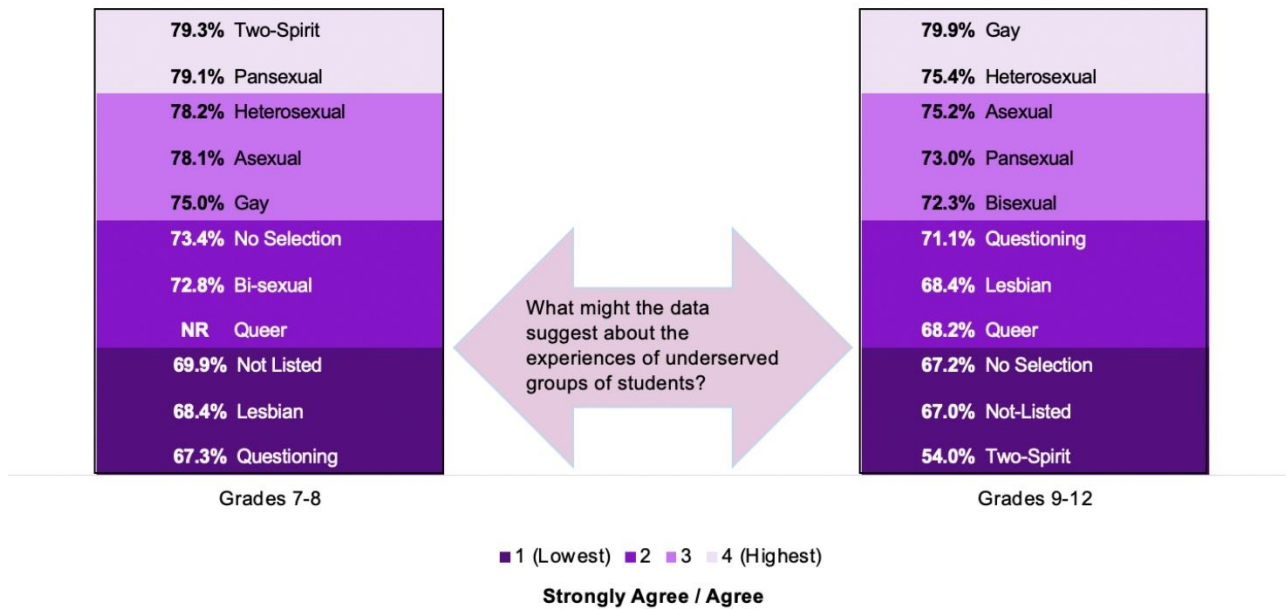
- Across the two grade panels, students who indicated that their gender identity was not listed in the list of option on the ESCS survey consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.
- The Grade 7 to 8 students who did not select an option to self-identify their gender identity, and the Grade 9 to 12 students who self-identified as Gender Nonconforming were also among those who reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.

Figure 11 shows students' perceptions of their relationship with adults at school disaggregated by sexual orientation. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across the two grade panels, students who indicated that their sexual orientation was not listed in the list of option on the ESCS survey consistently reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.
- Students who self-identified as Lesbian or Questioning within the Grade 7-8 panel and students who self-identified as Two-Spirit or those who did not select an option to self-identify their sexual

orientation within the Grade 9-12 panel also reported the lowest agreement rates regarding having caring adults at school.

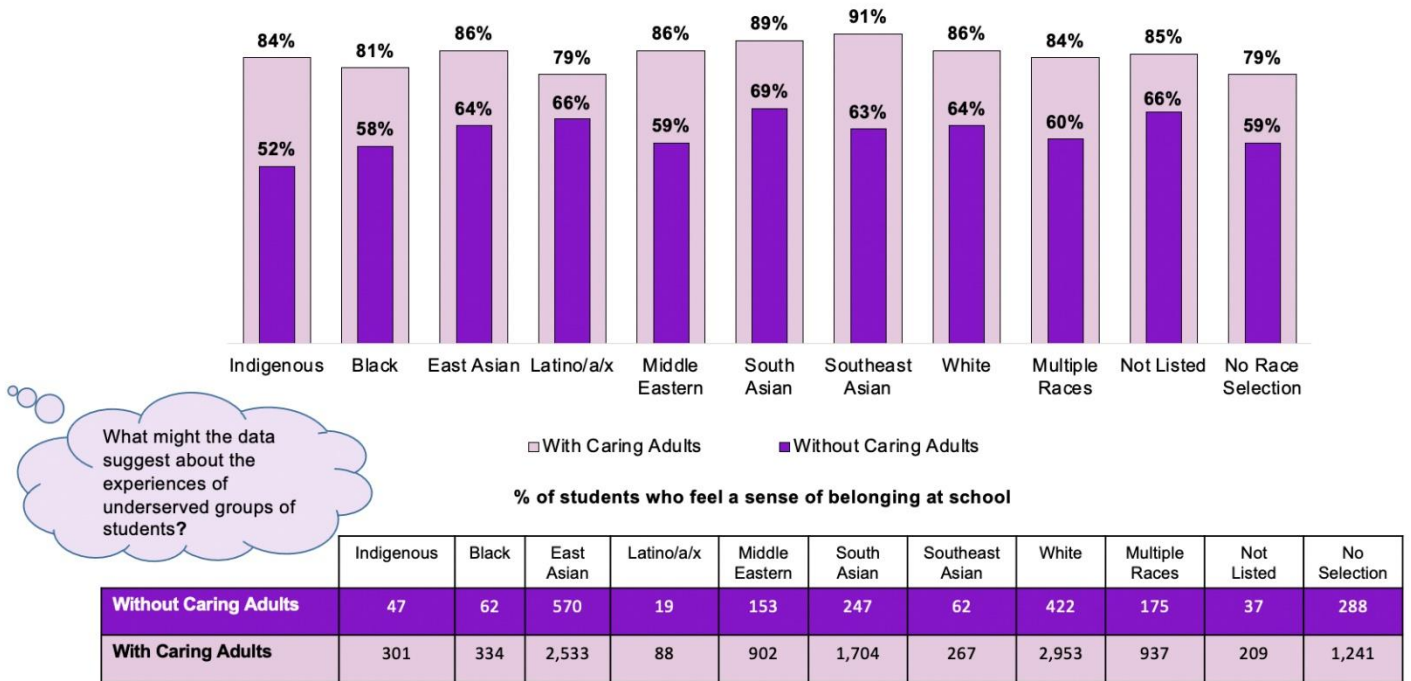
Figure 11. Relationship with Adults by Sexual Orientation



What associations are found between participating students’ relationship with adults and their sense of belonging at school?

This section provides an intersectional analysis on students’ relationship with adults and their sense of belonging at school. Overall, there was a notable and consistent association between having caring adults at school and students’ sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who reported having caring adults at school compared to those who reported having no caring adults at school.

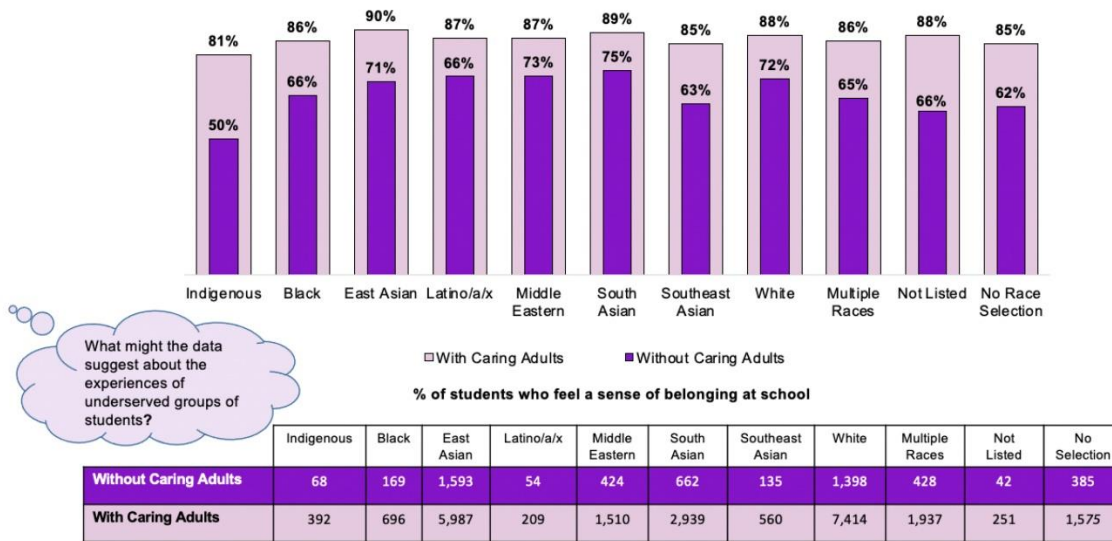
Figure 12. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Indigenous and Racial Identity (Gr. 7-8)



Figures 12 and 13 show the association between students' sense of belonging and having caring adults at school disaggregated by Indigenous and racial identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who were self-identified as Indigenous across the two grade panels had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no caring adults at school.
- In Grades 7 to 8, students who self-identified as Southeast Asian had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having caring adults at school.
- In Grades 9 to 12, students who self-identified as East Asian had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having caring adults at school.

Figure 13. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Indigenous and Racial Identity (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 14 and 15 examine the association between students’ sense of belonging and having caring adults at school disaggregated by special education needs. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who were identified as having special education needs (exc. Gifted) across the grade panels had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no caring adults at school.
- Students who were identified as Gifted across the grade panels had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having caring adults at school.

Figure 14. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Special Education Needs (Gr. 7-8)

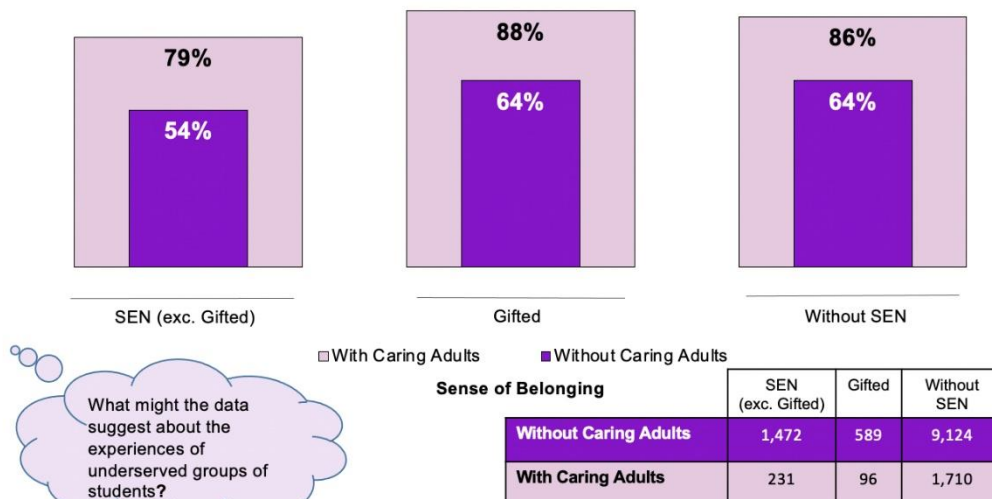
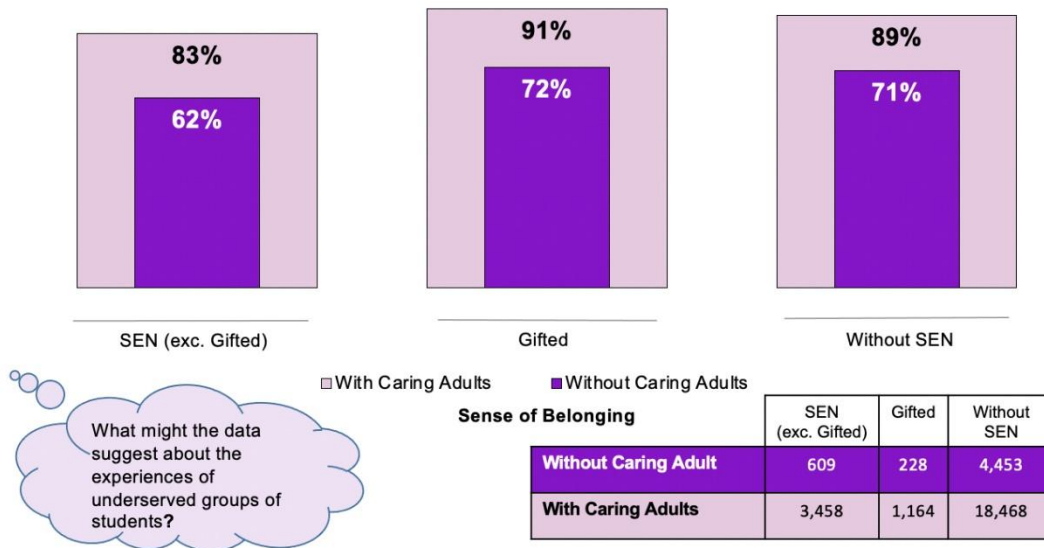


Figure 15. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Special Education Needs (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 16 and 17 show the association between students’ sense of belonging and having caring adults at school disaggregated by gender identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across grade panels, students who were identified as gender diverse had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no caring adults at school.
- Students who self-identified as Man / Boy had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having caring adults at school across the grade panels.

Figure 16. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Gender Identity (Gr. 7-8)

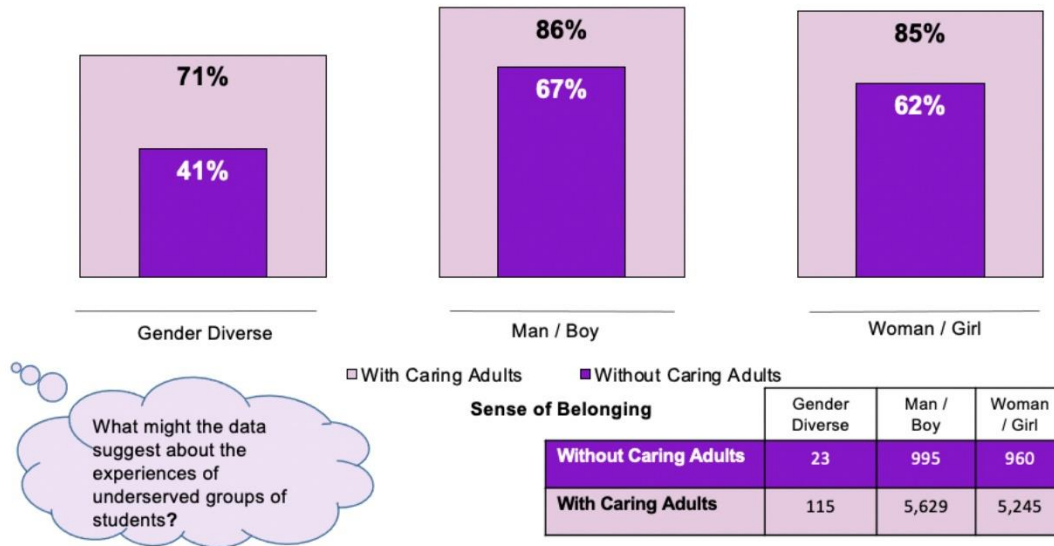
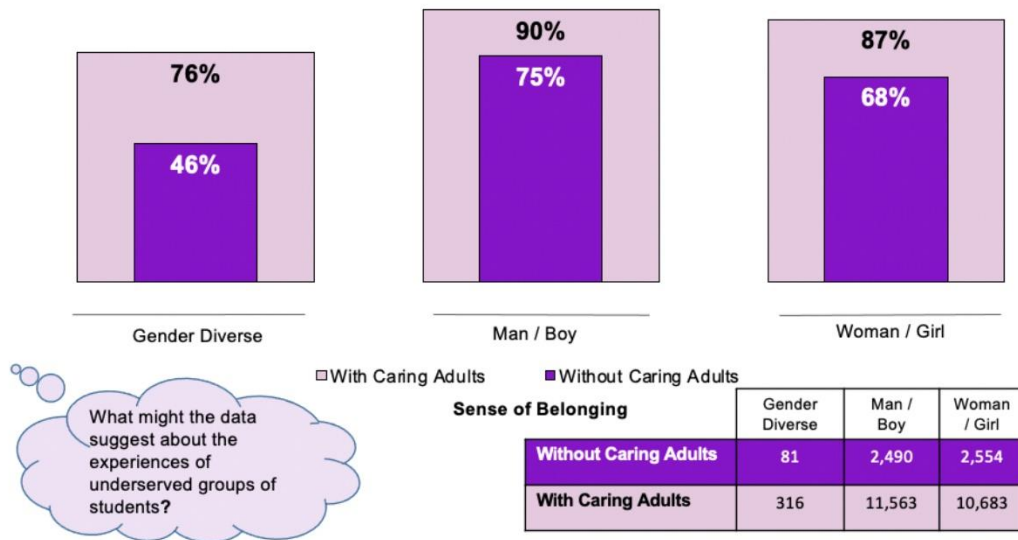


Figure 17. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging by Gender Identity (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 18 and 19 display the association between students’ sense of belonging and having caring adults at school disaggregated by sexual orientation. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across the grade panels, students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no caring adults at school.
- Students who self-identified as Heterosexual across the grade panels had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having caring adults at school.

Figure 18. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging Index by Sexual Orientation (Gr. 7-8)

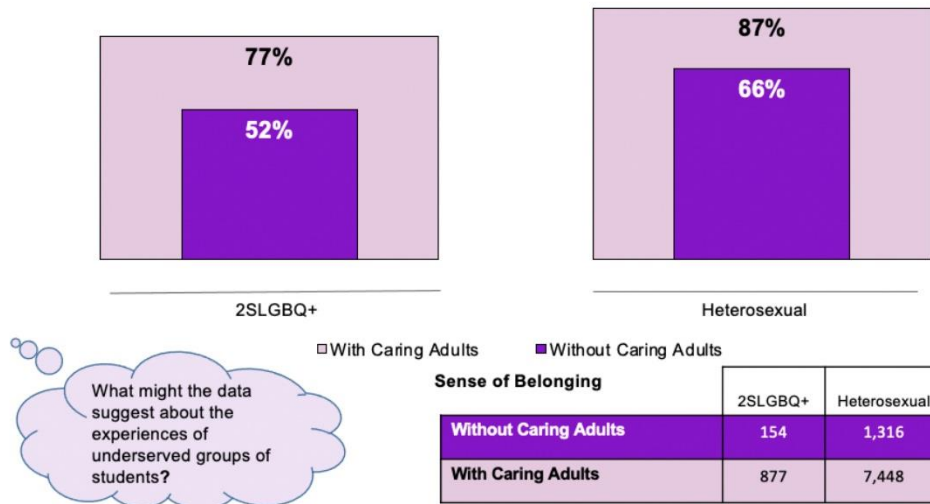
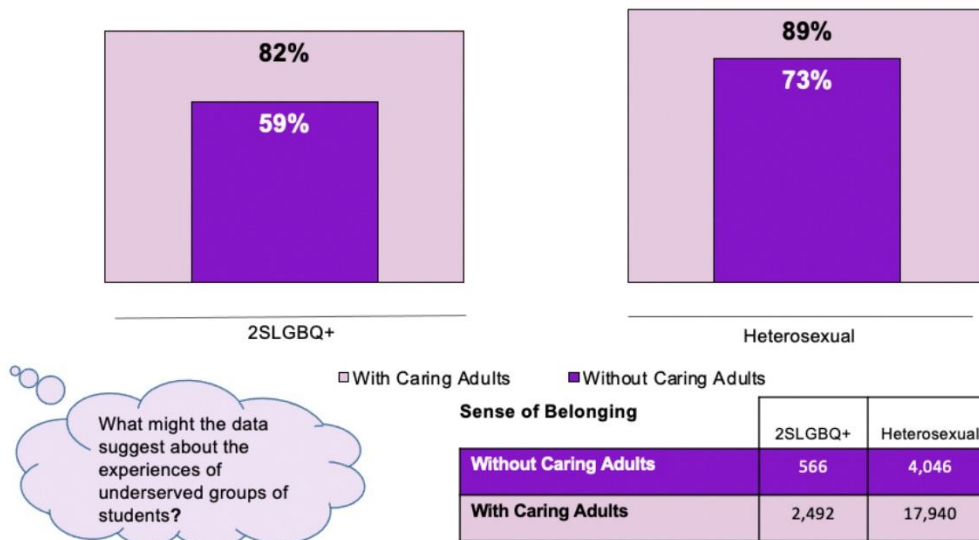


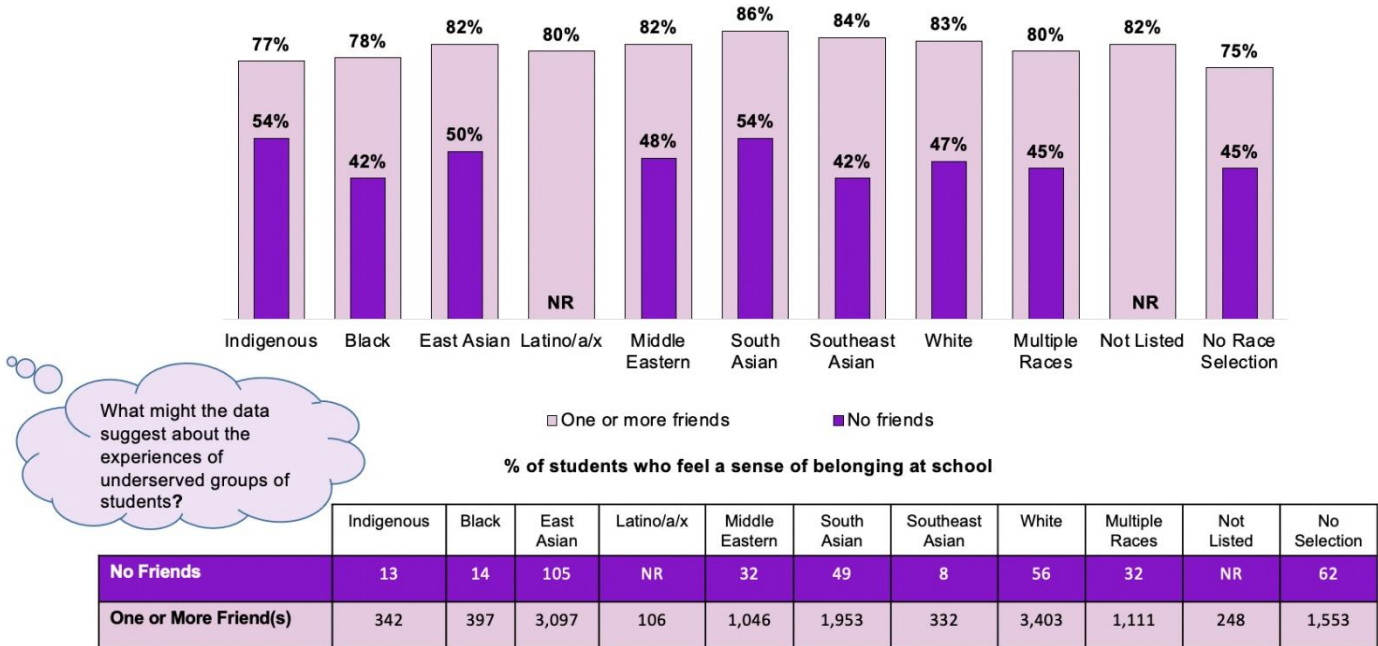
Figure 19. Relationship with Adults at School and Sense of Belonging Index by Sexual Orientation (Gr. 9-12)



What associations are found between participating students’ relationship with peers and their sense of belonging at school?

This section provides an intersectional analysis on students’ relationship with peers and their sense of belonging a school. Students’ relationship with peers at school was measured by the number of friends they have. Overall, there was a notable and consistent association between students’ number of friends and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt belonged at school was higher among those who reported having one or more friend(s) at school compared to those who reported having no friends.

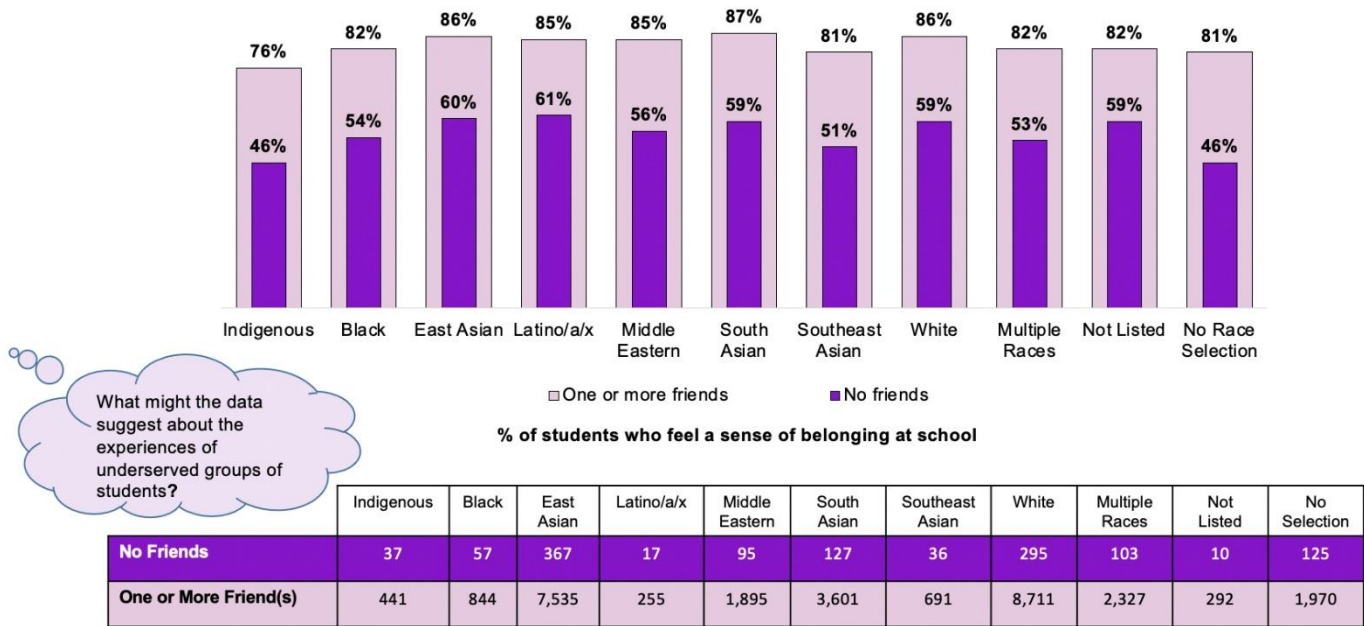
Figure 20. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Indigenous and Racial Identity (Gr. 7-8)



Figures 20 and 21 display the association between students’ sense of belonging and having friends at school disaggregated by Indigenous and racial identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Within the Grade 7 to 8 panel, students who self-identified as Black or Southeast Asian had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no friends at school.
- Within the Grade 9 to 12 panel, students who self-identified as Indigenous and those students who did not select a racial category had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no friends at school.
- Across both grade panels, students who self-identified as South Asian had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having one or more friends at school.

Figure 21. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Indigenous and Racial Identity (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 22 and 23 display the association between students’ sense of belonging and having friends at school disaggregated by special education needs. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across grade panels, students who were identified as having special education needs had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no friends.
- Students who were identified as Gifted had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having one or more friend(s) at school across grade panels.

Figure 22. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Special Education Needs (Gr. 7-8)

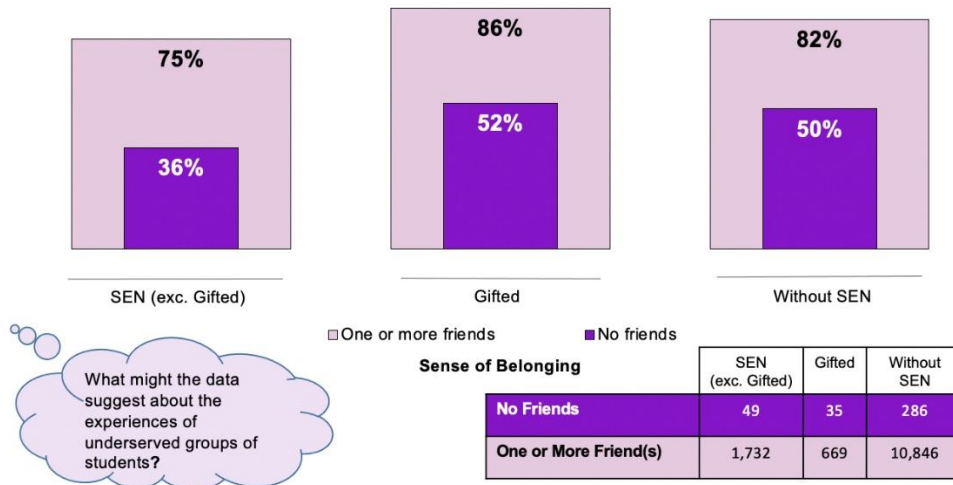
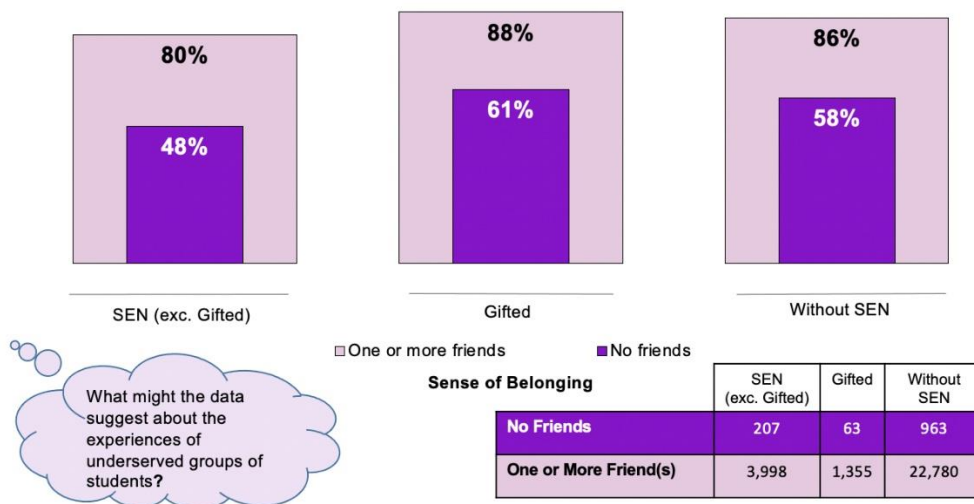


Figure 23. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Special Education Needs (Gr. 9-12)

How many close friends do you have at school? (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 24 and 25 display the association between students' sense of belonging and having friends at school disaggregated by gender identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Students who were identified as gender diverse across grade panels had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no friends.
- Students who self-identified as Man / Boy across grade panels had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having one or more friend(s) at school.

Figure 24. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Gender Identity (Gr. 7-8)

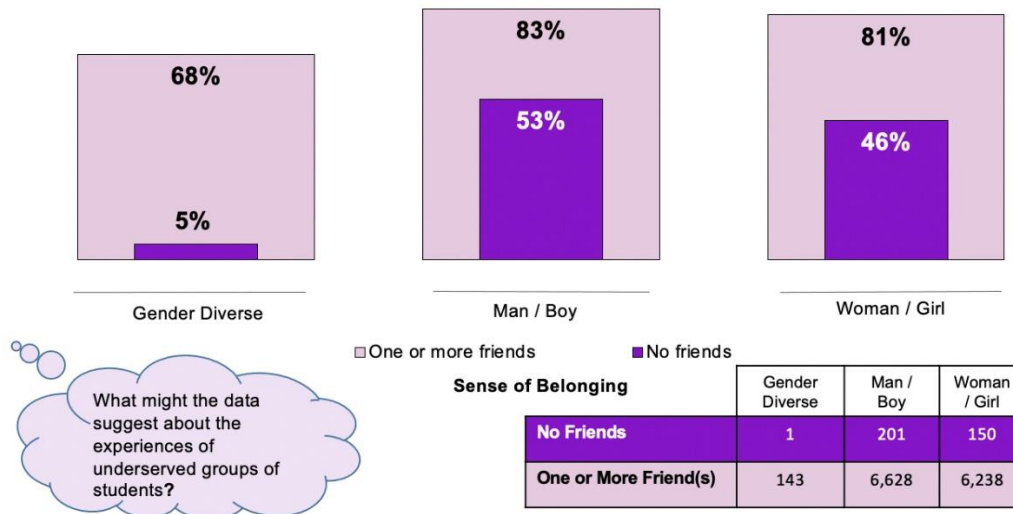
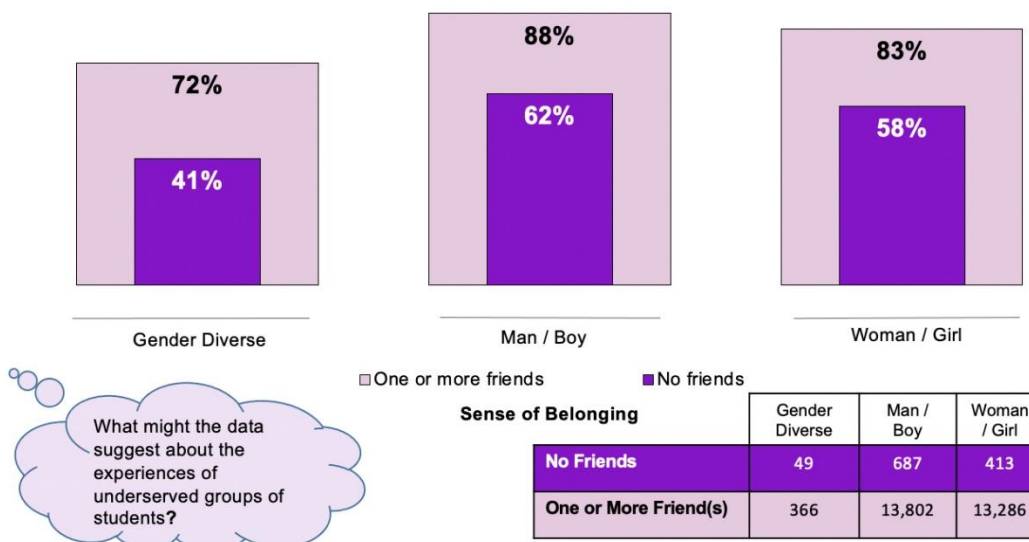


Figure 25. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Gender Identity (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 26 and 27 display the association between students' sense of belonging and having friends at school disaggregated by sexual orientation. The following notable findings surfaced:

- Across grade panels, students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ had the lowest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having no friends.
- Students who self-identified as Heterosexual across grade panels had the highest percentages regarding their sense of belonging at school among those who reported having one or more friends at school.

Figure 26. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging by Sexual Orientation (Gr. 7-8)

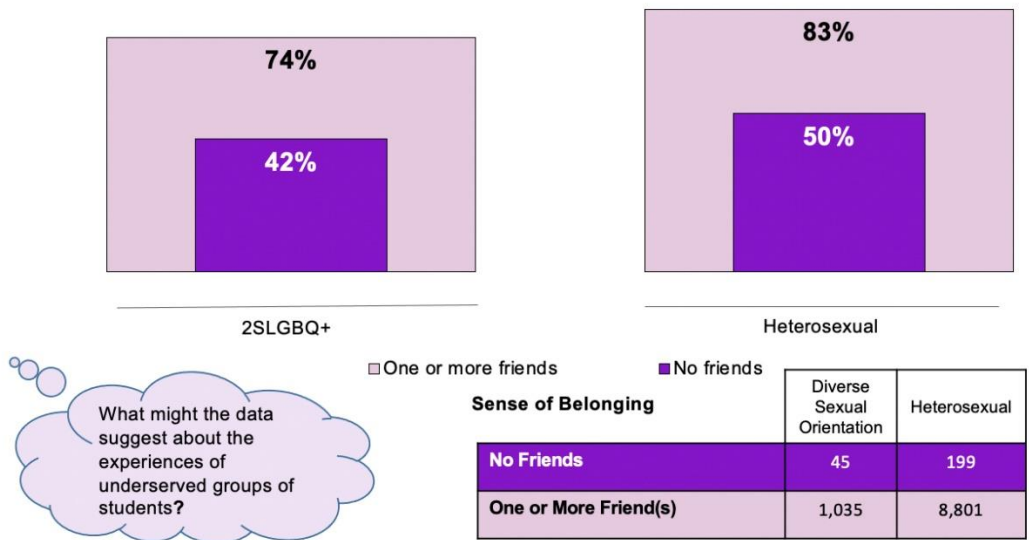
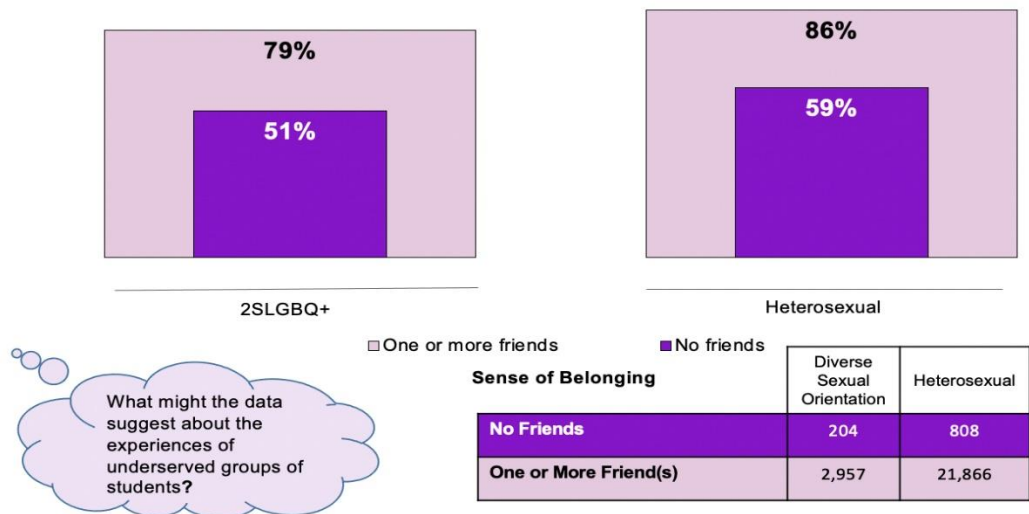


Figure 27. Relationship with Peers and Sense of Belonging Index by Sexual Orientation (Gr. 9-12)



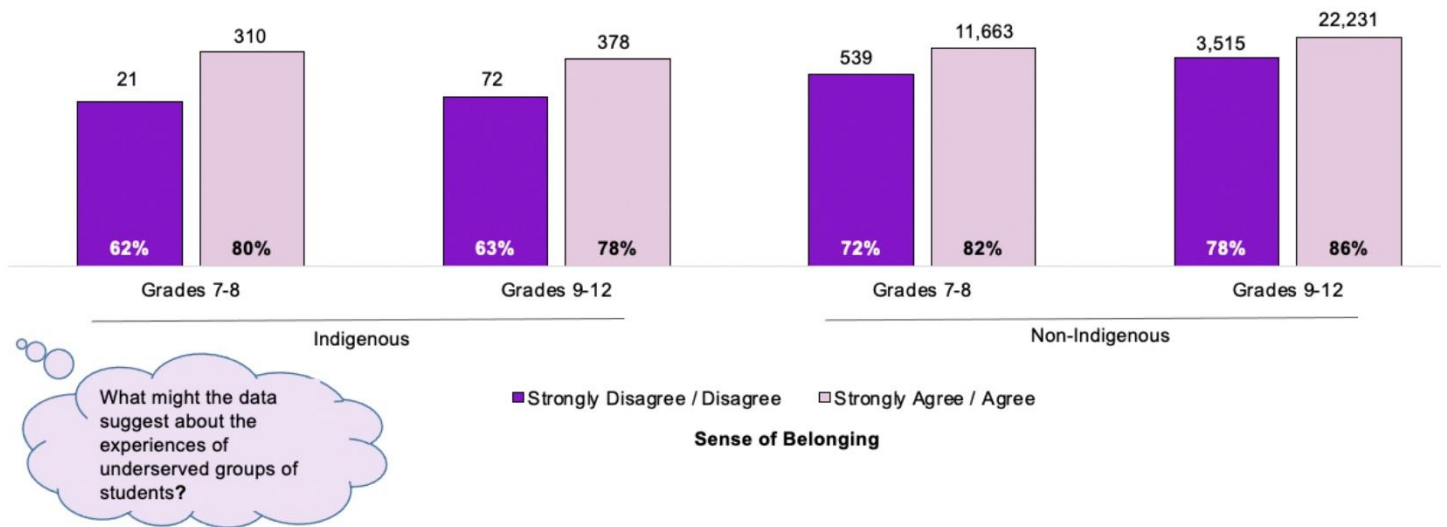
What associations are found between participating students’ perceptions of their sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences?

This section provides an intersectional analysis on students’ perceptions of their sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences at school. Overall, there was a consistent association between students’ sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences at school.

Figure 28 displays findings regarding culturally relevant learning experiences about Indigenous Peoples disaggregated by grade and Indigenous identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- There was a consistent association between students being encouraged to learn about human rights/social justice issues related to Indigenous Peoples and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who (strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about Indigenous Peoples compared to those who (strongly) disagreed.
- Overall, students who self-identified as Indigenous reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their non-Indigenous peers across grade panels.

Figure 28. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Indigenous Peoples by Students’ Indigenous, Non-Indigenous Identity and Their Sense of Belonging



Figures 29 and 30 examine the association between students’ sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences pertaining to Indigenous and racial identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- There was a strong association between students being encouraged to learn about human rights/social justice issues related to race, ethnicity and culture and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who (strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about race, ethnicity and culture compared to those who (strongly) disagreed, with the exception of students who self-identified as Latino/a/x within the Grade 7 to 8 panel.
- In Grades 7 and 8, students who self-identified as Southeast Asian reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) disagreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to race, ethnicity and culture.
- In Grades 9 to 12, students who self-identified as Indigenous reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) disagreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to race, ethnicity and culture.
- Across grade panels, students who self-identified as South Asian reported higher rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) agreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to race, ethnicity and culture.

Figure 29: Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Race, Ethnicity and Culture by Indigenous and Racial Identity and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 7-8)

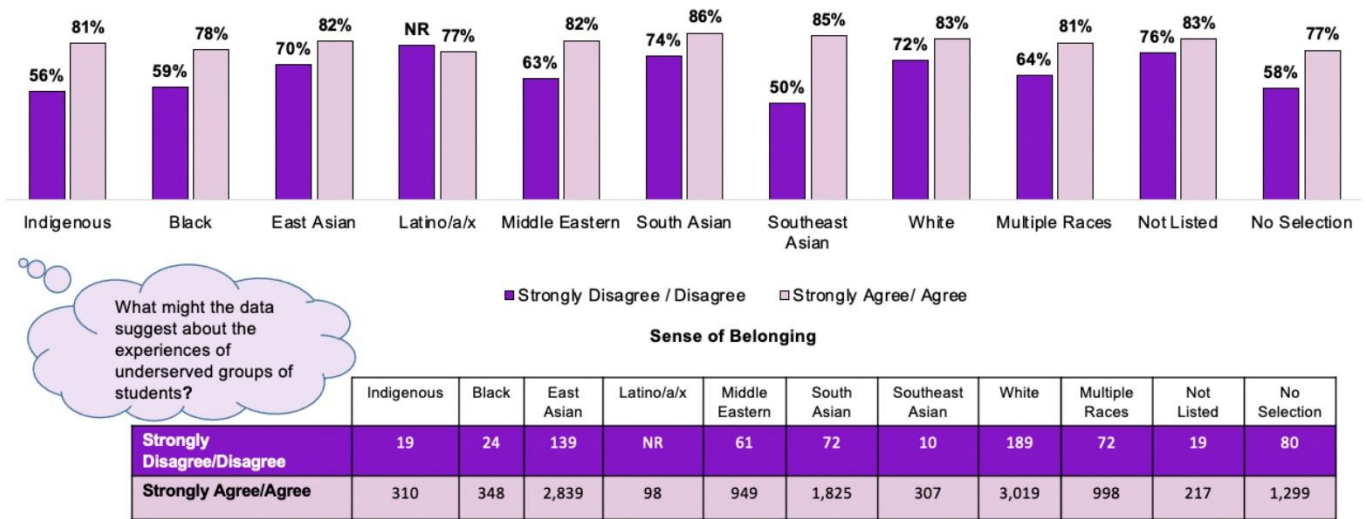
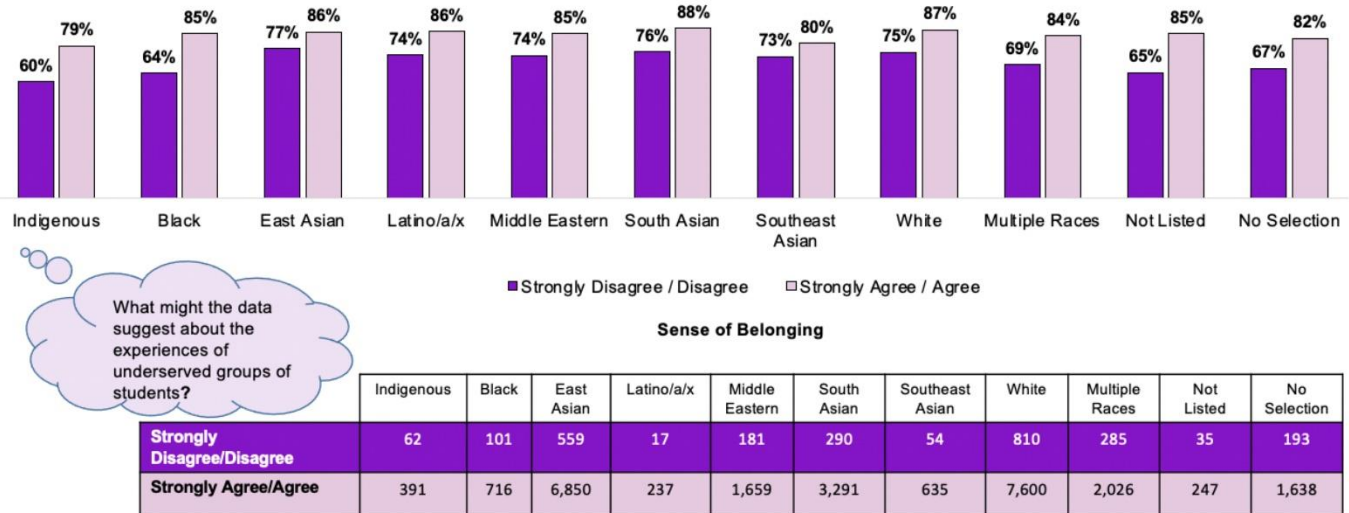


Figure 30: Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Race, Ethnicity and Culture by Indigenous and Racial Identity and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 31 and 32 examine the association between students’ sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences pertaining to special education needs. The following notable findings surfaced:

- There was also a strong association between students being encouraged to learn about human rights/social justice issues related to special education needs and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who

(strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about special education needs compared to those who (strongly) disagreed.

- Overall, students who were identified as having special education needs reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) disagreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to people with disabilities.
- Students who were identified as Gifted reported higher rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) agreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to people with disabilities.

Figure 31. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to People with Disabilities and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 7-8)

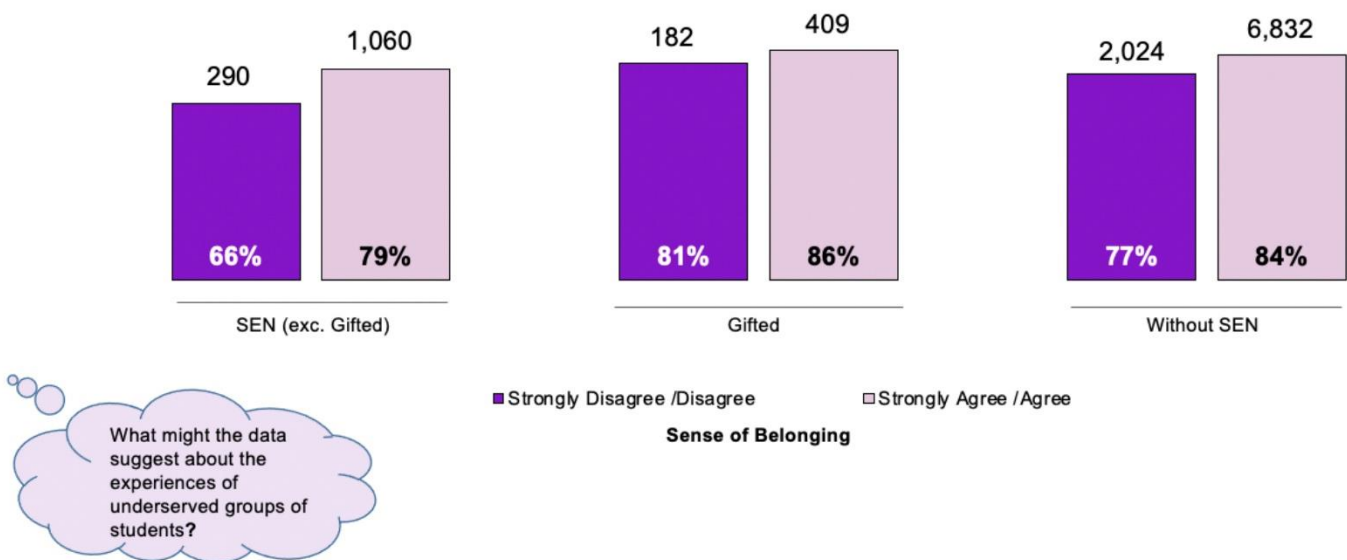
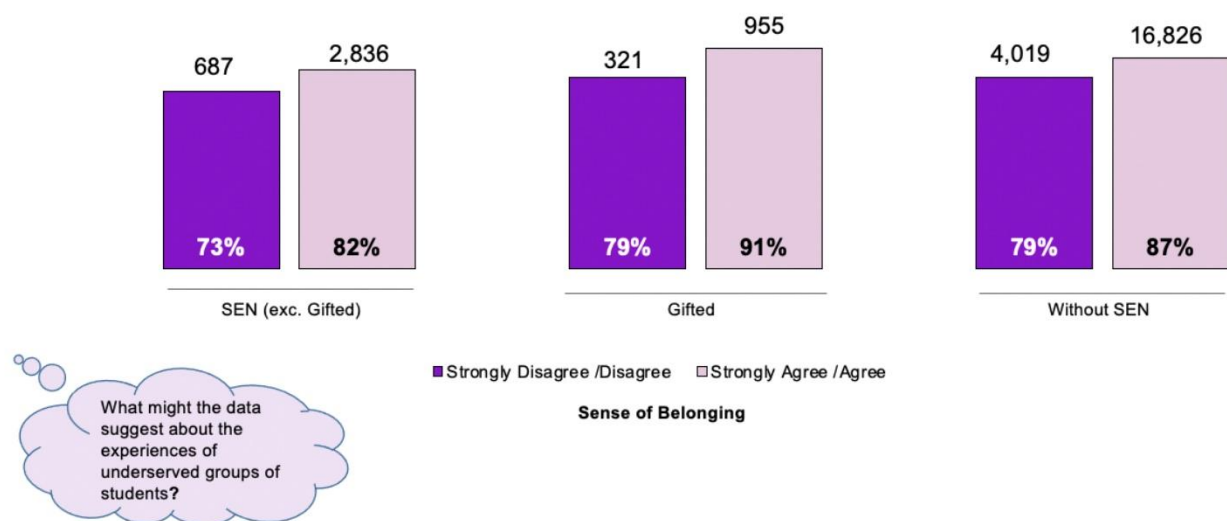


Figure 32. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Special Education Needs and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 33 and 34 examine the association between students' sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences pertaining to gender identity. The following notable findings surfaced:

- There was a strong association between students being encouraged to learn about human rights/social justice issues related to gender identity and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who (strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about gender identity compared to those who (strongly) disagreed.
- Overall, students who were identified as gender diverse reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging at school compared to their peers among those who (strongly) disagreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to gender identity.
- Students who were identified as Man / Boy reported higher rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) agreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to gender identity.

Figure 33. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Gender Identity and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 7-8)

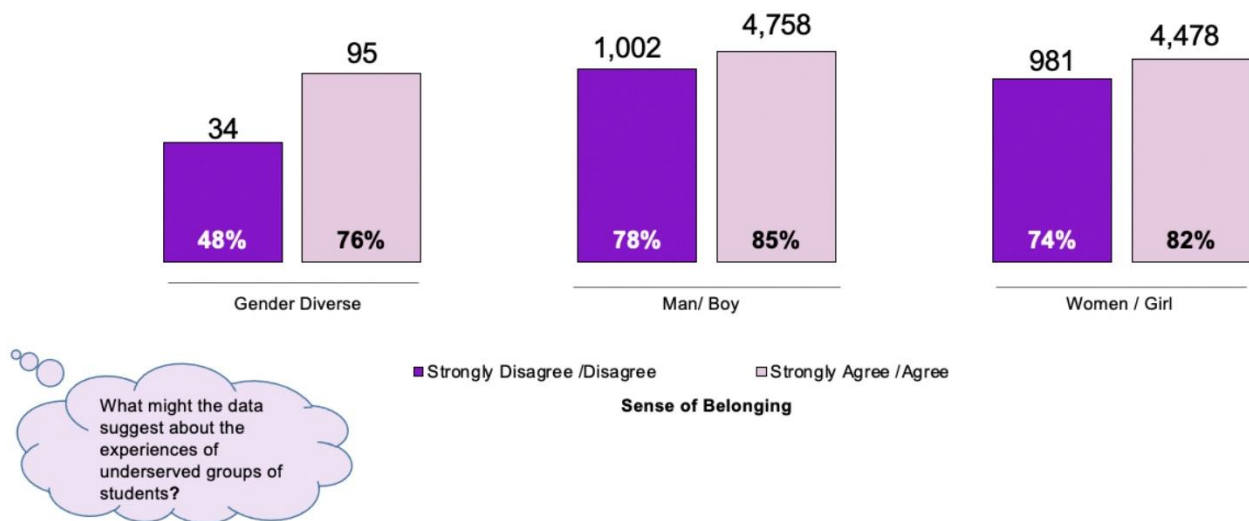
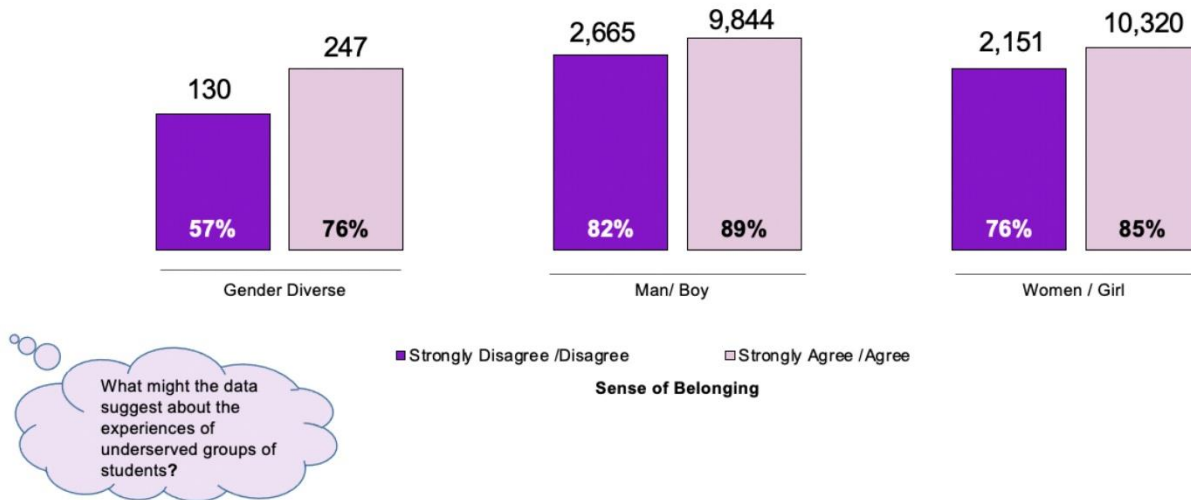


Figure 34. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Gender Identity and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 9-12)



Figures 35 and 36 examine the association between students' sense of belonging and culturally relevant learning experiences pertaining to sexual orientation. The following notable findings surfaced:

- There was a strong association between students being encouraged to learn about human rights/social justice issues related to sexual orientation and their sense of belonging: the percentage of students who felt a sense of belonging at school was higher among those who (strongly) agreed that they were encouraged to learn about sexual orientation compared to those who (strongly) disagreed.
- Overall, students who were identified as 2SLGBQ+ reported lower rates of feeling a sense of belonging at school compared to their peers among those who (strongly) disagreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to sexual orientation.
- Students who were identified as Heterosexual reported higher rates of feeling a sense of belonging compared to their peers among those who (strongly) agreed that they learn about human rights/social justice issues related to sexual orientation.

Figure 35. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Sexual Orientation and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 7-8)

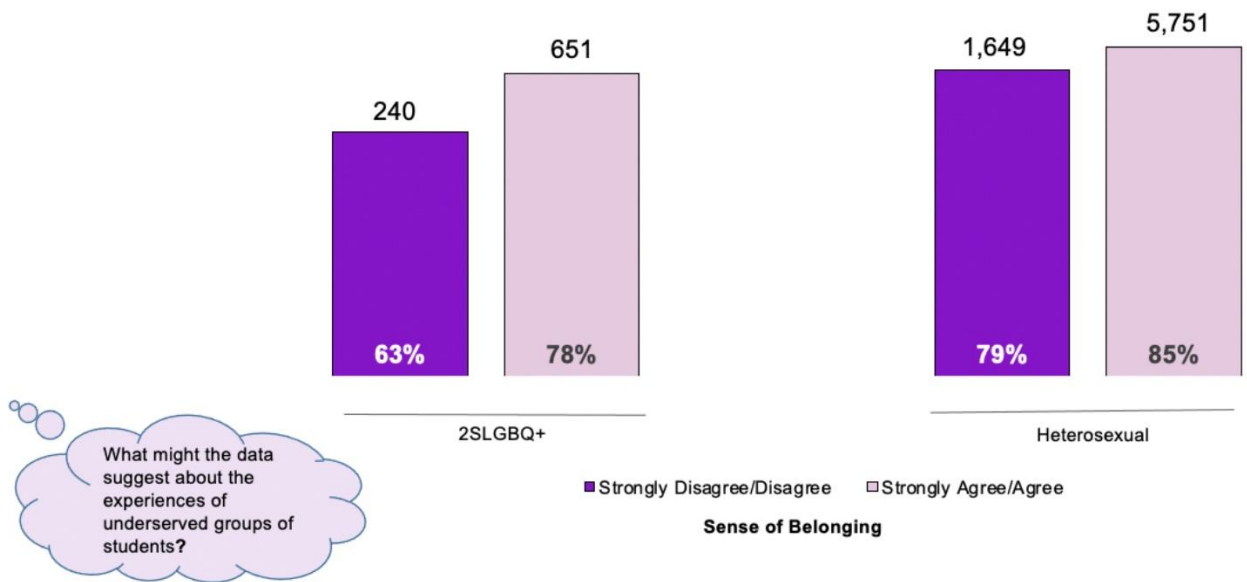
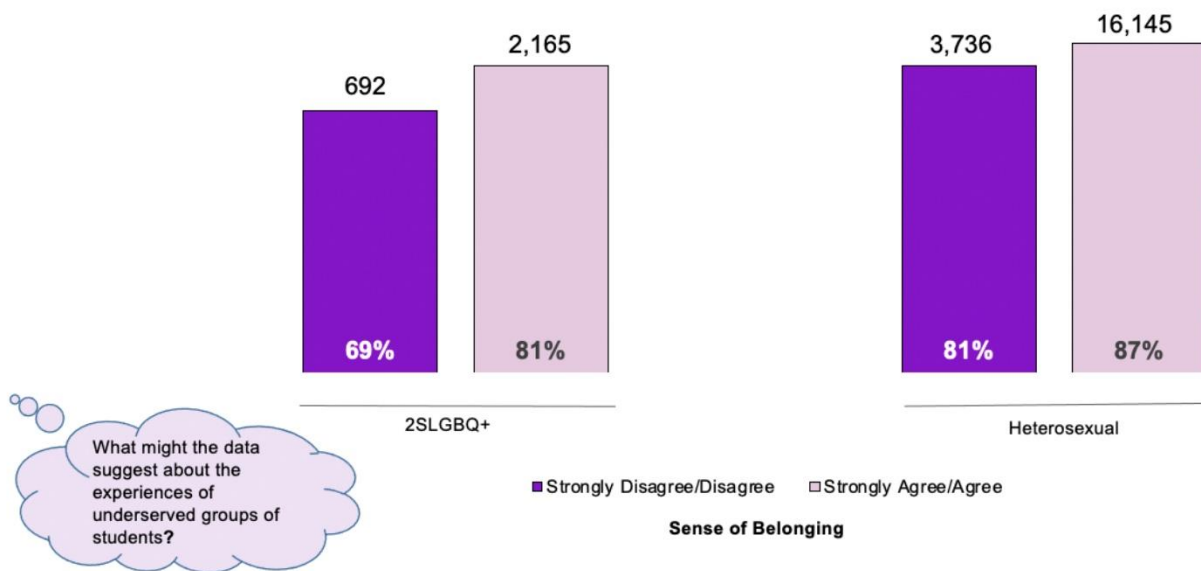


Figure 36. Being Encouraged to Think or Learn About Human Rights/Social Justice Issues Related to Sexual Orientation and Their Sense of Belonging (Gr. 9-12)



Explanation of Terms

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.

Autism: The 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 characterised by a lack of the representational-symbolic behaviour that precedes language (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021).

Behavioural: The 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 2021).

DABRS: DABRS is an acronym that refers to YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy.

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 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 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, 2021).

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.

Disaggregated Data: "Disaggregated data is broken down into component parts or smaller units of data for statistical analysis. In the context of race-based data, this means breaking down the composite (aggregate) "racialized" category into its component parts such as Black, South Asian, East/Southeast Asian, Latino, Middle Eastern, White, etc." (Government of Ontario, 2021).

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.

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

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. (Government of Ontario, 2017, p. 63).

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).

Giftedness: The Ministry of Education defines giftedness 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, 2021).

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.

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

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).

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).

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, 2021).

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, 2021).

Mild Intellectual Disability: 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, 2021).

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

Not Reported (NR): NR denotes where in tables or graphs there were less than 15 students in a particular group and therefore the resulting figure is Not Reported (NR) to preserve the privacy of the students.

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).

RESOLVE: YRDSB’s RESOLVE tool will be used to document and collect information and data for incidents of hate, racism and discrimination.

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 without exceptionalities who are of the same age or development level (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021).

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

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).

Special Education Needs: Special education needs is a classification for students who have idiosyncratic strengths, needs and abilities that may require more specialized or intensive programming and support.

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.

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).

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