THE DPCDSB STUDENT CENSUS 2022

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

Colossians 3:12

Summary of Student Attitudes Grades 4 through 12

The DPCDSB Student Census: Summary of Student Attitudes

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Purpose of this Report

This report describes attitudinal findings observed for students in Grades 4 through 12 who completed the census themselves. A summary of information gathered via the parent- and guardian-completed census is available at www.dpcdsb.org.

Findings about Student Attitudes

In addition to gathering the required identity data, DPCDSB staff also felt it was important to **examine attitudes and experiences of students**. The DPCDSB Student Census asked about student perceptions of belonging and inclusion, participation in extra-curricular activities, sense of school climate, experiences of exclusion, and representation at school. The following sections summarize these attitudes and perspectives reported by students in Grades 4 through 12 on the census.
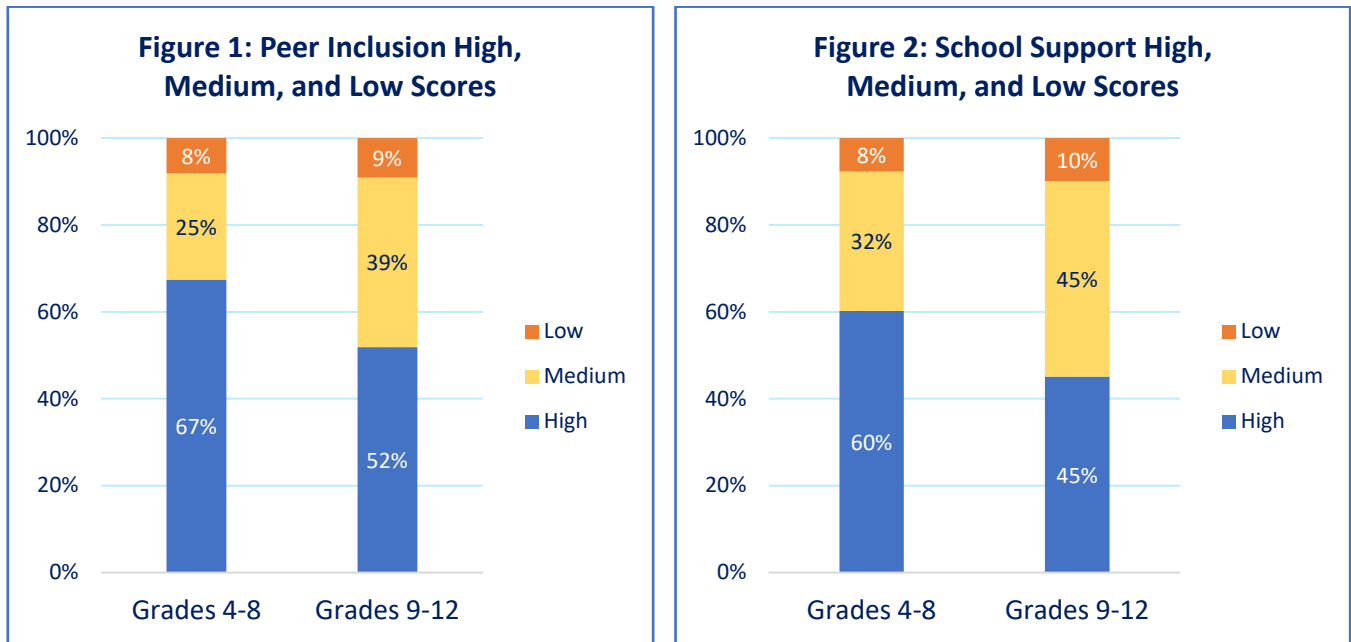
Peer Inclusion and School Support

Peer and school inclusion are important to supporting student well-being and sense of belonging (Willms, 2003; Gray et. al., 2018). Peer inclusion items allowed students to rate the impact of student behaviours related to inclusion at school. School support items related to the role of adults and school rules in terms of student sense of support and inclusion. Table 3, below, lists the items that make up each scale.

Table 3: Peer Inclusion and School Support Census Items

Peer Inclusion Scale Items	School Support Scale Items
I feel accepted by other students at school.	There is an adult at my school who listens to me when I have something to say.
My school is a friendly place.	School rules are fair.
I feel accepted for who I am at school.	Adults at school believe all students can be successful.
I make friends easily at school.	There is an adult at school who I feel comfortable talking to about things that are bothering me.
I feel safe in my school.	I help decide things like class activities and/or rules.
Students help each other, even if they are not friends.	Adults in my school help students feel safe.
School is a place where I feel like I belong.	

Figures 1 and 2 (below, following page) illustrate the proportions of students scoring high, medium, or low for peer inclusion and school support. High scores were noted more often among students in Grades 4-8 compared to Grades 9-12. Ideally, all students would have high scores in both peer inclusion and school support.

Figure 1: Peer Inclusion High, Medium, and Low Scores

	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12
Low	8%	9%
Medium	25%	39%
High	67%	52%

Figure 2: School Support High, Medium, and Low Scores

|	Grades 4-8	Grades 9-12
Low	8%	10%
Medium	32%	45%
High	60%	45%

Representation of Indigenous and Equity-Deserving Groups

Representation of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups in schools, classrooms, and learning materials is important to student identity, motivation, and school belonging, particularly the **positive** representation of accomplishments and/or achievements (Gray, et. al., 2018; Kumar, et. al., 2018; Usher, 2018). The DPCDSB Student Census asked students about how often they learn about: (1) the historic and (2) current accomplishments and/or experiences of the following Indigenous and equity-deserving groups: Indigenous peoples, different cultural groups, women and girls, different faith groups, members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, people experiencing poverty, and people with differing abilities. In general, students reported learning about the accomplishments of Indigenous people and of people from diverse cultures and faiths more frequently and learning about the accomplishments of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community and of people with differing abilities less frequently.

Representation of Students' Indigenous and Equity-Deserving Identities

Learning becomes more meaningful when students' identity groups are legitimized at school (Kumar et. al., 2018). Given this impact on learning, staff asked students how much they agreed that their own identities were positively reflected in various aspects of the learning environment at school. Students were asked to rate how often they saw their identities positively reflected at school in pictures and posters, displays of student work, class materials and resources, discussion topics, school publications, special events, guest speakers, and course offerings.

Figure 3 (below, following page) shows the proportions of students whose overall responses indicated high, medium, and low agreement that their identities were positively reflected at school. Ideally, all students would have high levels of agreement that they saw their identities positively reflected at school.

Figure 3: Positive Representation of Student Identities at School High, Medium, and Low Scores
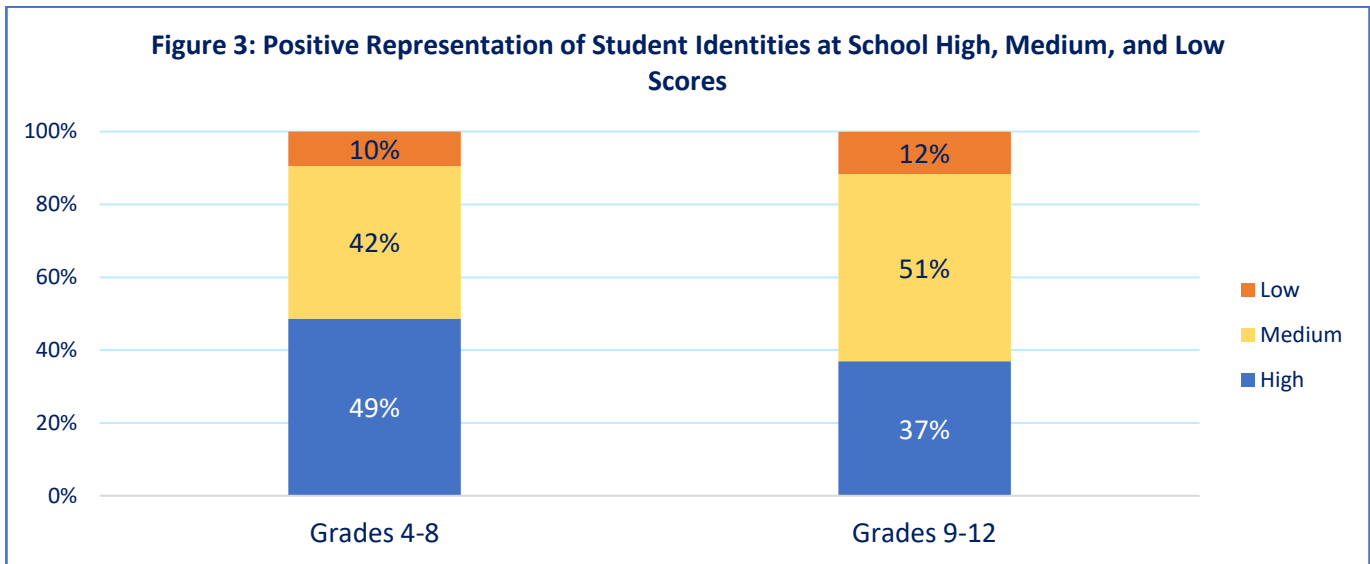
Exclusion at School

Peer exclusion and poor treatment are associated with disengagement and even reduced achievement (Buhs et. al., 2006). Given this association, the DPCDSB Student Census included an item asking how often they felt excluded at school due to a variety of aspects of their identity. Students were asked how often they felt excluded at school because of reasons related to their identity. Table 4 (below) shows the percentage of students indicating any experience of exclusion by reason.

Table 4: Experience of Exclusion by Student-Reported Reason

| Reason for Exclusion	Percentage of Students Reporting any Exclusion (Grades 4-8)	Percentage of Students Reporting any Exclusion (Grades 9-12)
Appearance	39%	33%
Marks, grades, achievement	31%	27%
Mental health	25%	27%
Interests, hobbies	35%	25%
Learning abilities	30%	24%
Race, ethnicity, culture, skin colour	21%	23%
Physical abilities	31%	21%
Beliefs, faith, religion	18%	17%
Perceptions about family income	18%	16%
Gender identity	21%	14%
Sexual orientation	15% (Grade 8 only)	13%
Indigenous identity	10%	8%
Not sure why I get excluded	36%	30%

Emotional Well-Being

Academic stress and anxiety can have negative impacts on student achievement, sleep, substance use, satisfaction with life, and physical and mental health (Pascoe et. al., 2020; OECD, 2017). Given the importance of managing stress and anxiety to support student mental health and well-being, the DPCDSB Student Census asked students about their overall emotional well-being. Table 5 (below) lists the well-being questions that students were asked.

Table 5: Positive and Negative Well-Being Census Items

How often do you…	How often do you…
Feel good about yourself?	Feel lonely?
Feel hopeful?	Feel nervous or worried?
Like how you look?	Feel sad?
	Feel tired for no reason?
	Feel stressed?

Figures 4 and 5 (below, following page) show the proportions of students with high, medium, and low scores for the positive and negative overall well-being. Ideally, all students would have high scores for positive well-being and low scores for negative well-being.

Figure 4: High, Medium, and Low Scores for Positive Well-Being

Figure 5: High, Medium, and Low Scores for Negative Well-Being
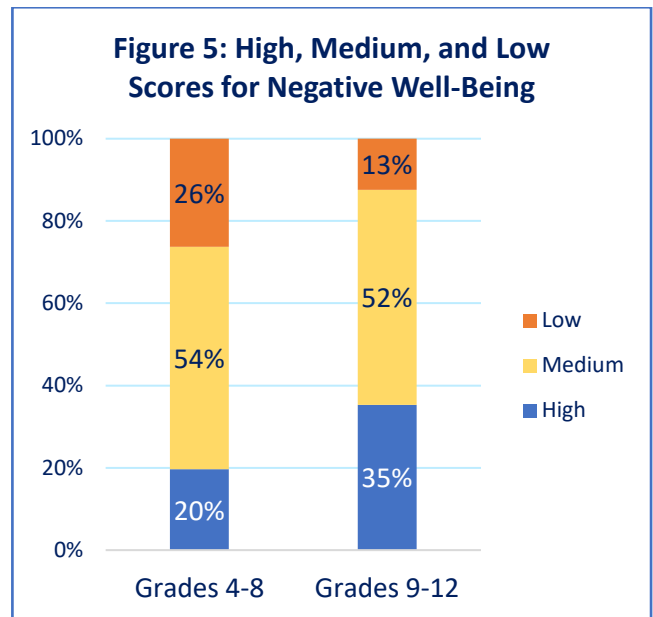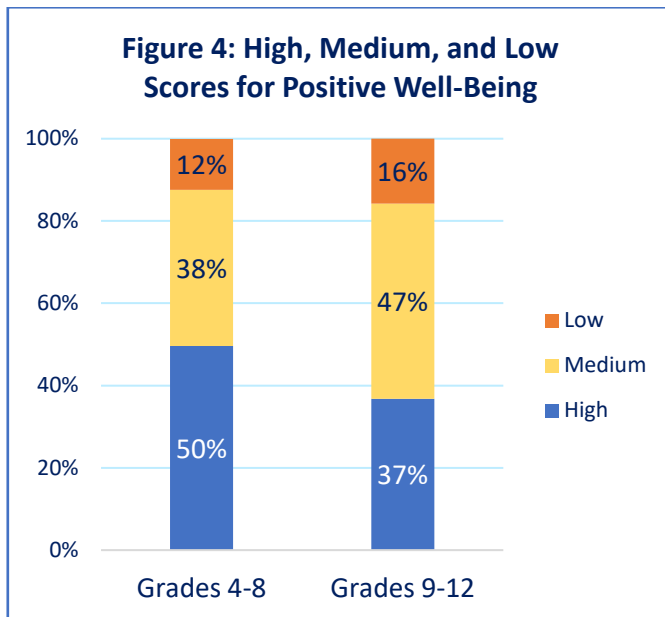
Participation

Participation in organized activities is an asset that supports student well-being (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2013; Human Early Learning Project, no date). Therefore, the DPCDSB Student Census asked students about the types of school extra-curricular programming in which they have participated. Students most frequently reported participating in school sports outside of their physical education classes, followed by school clubs and committees. Table 6 (below, following page) summarizes students' participation by type of extracurricular activity.

Table 6: Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Type of Extracurricular Activity	Percentage of Students Reporting Participation (Grades 4-8)	Percentage of Students Reporting Participation (Grades 9-12)
Sports (outside of physical education classes)	40%	35%
Clubs and/or committees	15%	26%
Social justice groups and/or charitable activities	10%	14%
Performance groups	20%	14%
School faith-based groups	8%	9%

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