

STUDENTS' WELL-BEING PROFILED IN HDSB CENSUS DATA

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The "richness" of data collected in a student census conducted last year is something the Halton District School Board has never seen before, according to its associate director.

"There is a huge amount of information there. It's really helping us to provide a little bit of insight into who our students are, and what are their experiences like at school," said David Boag at the May 18 meeting of the HDSB.

In March, trustees were given a demographic profile of students and staff of the board, as the "phased approach for release" of the data was launched.

This time around, HDSB research specialist Rossana Bisceglia presented a perceptual data overview, delving into students' sense

of belonging and well-being at school.

• In trying to determine students' assessments of their school climate, they were asked: if they are treated fairly and listened to by the adults at school; if teachers care about students; if school is a welcoming place to learn and if extra help for learning is available. At both the elementary and secondary school level, the vast majority of students — 92 per cent of elementary and 87 per cent of secondary — agreed that their school offered a welcoming environment.

• In terms of how happy and accepted students feel at school, 75 per cent of elementary students said they felt this way often or all the time, compared to 61 per cent of secondary school students.

• When students were



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The Halton District School Board's student census was rich with data, says associate director David Boag.

asked how often they felt good about themselves, hopeful about the future, if they like the way they look, if they are lonely, nervous or worried, sad, or experiencing stress, a similar pattern emerged across elementary and secondary levels with 60 per cent and

62 per cent respectively, responding often/all the time.

• There was high endorsement from students at both levels in terms of having opportunities to learn about human rights and social justice issues, but a gap between elemen-

tary (94 per cent) and secondary (79 per cent) students when it came to opportunities to learn about the history and present realities of Indigenous people.

• Ninety per cent of elementary students felt positively represented at school

in pictures, materials, topics and activities, while 82 per cent of secondary students saw themselves reflected positively.

• Further breaking down the data revealed that Black, Indigenous, gender diverse, sexually diverse and IEP (Individual Education Plan) students were less likely to feel a sense of belonging or a welcoming school climate, while Latinx students did not feel represented in pictures, materials, topics or events.

"Next steps for the system are to digest all this information and identify priority areas to target, to review interventions, and to further target ongoing strategies," said Bisceglia.

A total of 64,613 students were invited to complete the voluntary census. The highest participation rate was among Grade 4 to 8 students at 93 per cent, followed by 84 per cent for Grade 9 to 12 and 59 per cent for kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

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