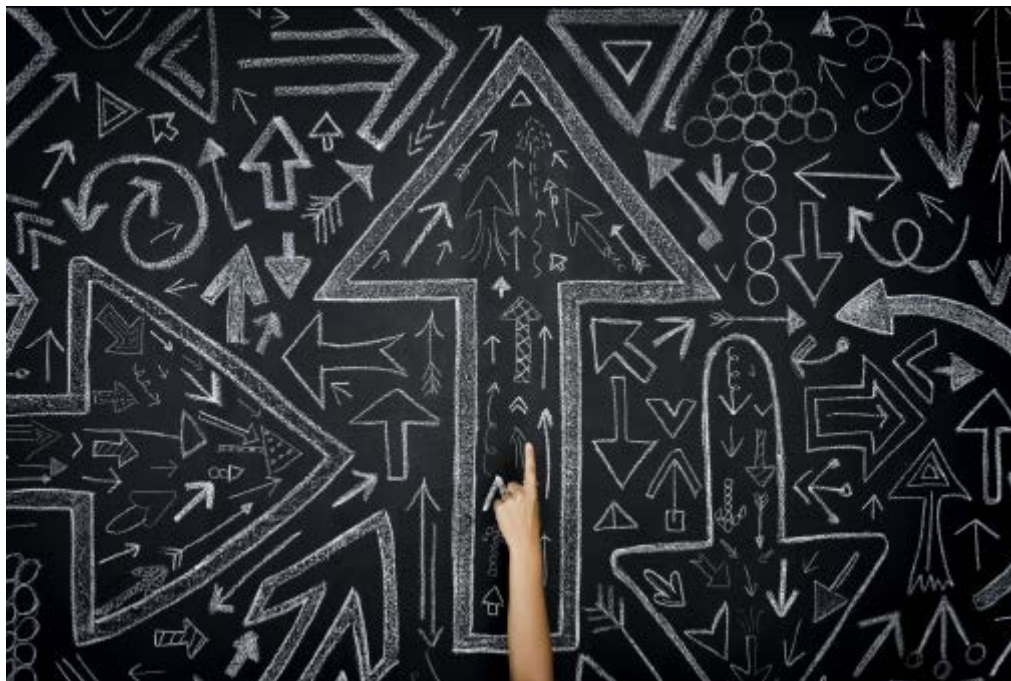




**STRUCTURED PATHWAYS: *An Exploration of Programs of Study, School-Wide and In-School Programs, as well as Promotion and Transference across Secondary Schools in the Toronto District School Board***



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**TITLE:** *Structured Pathways: An Exploration of Programs of Study, School-wide and In-school Programs, as well as Promotion and Transference across Secondary Schools in the Toronto District School Board*

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**Note:** This report was written as a part of Gillian Parekh's doctoral thesis: *A study on inclusive citizenship and its relationship to the organizational structure of education.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

**Purpose:** Highlighting important relationships between school-level organizational strategies, structures, and students' experiences provides key insights into potential policy directions and program action.

**Programs of Study:** The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) offers secondary school students the opportunity to enroll in classes within various Programs of Study (POS). Generally, POS refers to courses taken across three levels of study in Grades 9-10 where students can enroll in courses within Academic, Applied, and Locally Developed/Essentials (Essentials) POS - Academic level courses being the most academically rigorous. Similarly, for Grades 11-12, students can enroll in courses at the University, Mixed, College, and Workplace Preparedness levels - University Preparedness courses being the most academically challenging (Brown, 2008).

In this study, students are classified into Programs of Study according to the majority of courses taken. For example, if the majority of a student's courses are in the Academic POS, the student is classified as an "Academic" student. "Undefined" POS are students for which no clear Grades 9-10 POS could be identified, including Special Education Needs, taking non-credit courses, and students entering the TDSB in Grade 11 or 12.

Often complicated by the presence of privilege or social challenge, students' pathways through secondary school are critically important in determining graduation and post-secondary outcomes. For students in Grade 9 (2011-12) who were enrolled in the Academic POS and who had also been in the TDSB for Grade 8, 93% had been promoted to Grade 9 and 4.5% had been transferred. The proportion of students promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 dropped for both the Applied (43.4%) and Essentials (3.3%) Programs of Study. Conversely, the proportion of students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 rose to 53.5% for students in the Applied and 91.4% for students in the Essentials Programs of Study<sup>1</sup>.

### Pathways across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

#### **Link between Grade 9-10 Programs of Study and Courses taken in Grade 12**

- 77.8% of students who were in the Academic POS in Grades 9-10 went on to take the majority of their courses at the University level in Grades 11-12.
- Over half of students in the Applied POS went on to take the majority of their Grade 11-12 courses at the College level.
- 59.6% of students in the Essentials POS went on to take the majority of their Grade 11-12 courses at the Workplace level.
- Although not complete, notable trajectories across Grades 9-10 POS and the majority of

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<sup>1</sup> Analysis of transference and promotion from Grades 8-9 only employs student data for students in Grades 8-10.

courses taken in Grades 11-12 were established.

- Of students who took the majority of their Grade 11-12 courses at the University level, 90.2% had been in the Academic POS for Grades 9-10.
- 74.9% of students who took College level courses had been in the Applied POS for Grades 9-10.
- Of students taking Workplace level courses, similar proportions of students had been in either the Applied (43.4%) or Essentials (48.4%) Programs of Study.

### ***Link between Grade 9-10 Programs of Study and Graduation***

Graduating on time (after 4 years of secondary school) varied across Programs of Study: 81.6% of students who took the Academic POS in Grades 9-10 graduated on time, whereas only 39.2% of students who had taken the Applied POS and 20.3% of students who had taken the Essentials POS graduated on time.

### ***Link between Level of Courses taken in Grade 12 and Access to Post-secondary Education***

Confirmation of an offer to university is closely tied to the level of study taken in Grade 12:

- Grade 12 students who took the majority of their courses at the University level, 59.4% confirmed an offer to an Ontario university; whereas, 25.8% of students who took a majority of Mixed level courses confirmed an offer to an Ontario university. There were no university confirmations for students who took the majority of their Grade 11-12 courses in the College, Workplace, or Undefined Programs of Study.
- Although 21.7% of students taking University level courses did not apply, this number rose to 53.2% for students taking Mixed level courses, 82.7% of students taking College level courses, and 97.4% of students taking Workplace level courses.

Students who took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University level had far greater post-secondary education (PSE) options than students who took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the Mixed, College, or Workplace levels.

- Students who confirmed an offer to university, 88.2% had taken the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University level and 11.8% at the Mixed level.
- Only 34.3% of students who accepted an offer to college took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the College level. In fact, the majority of students who accepted an offer to college took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University and Mixed level.

### **Student Demographics across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study**

**Gender:** There is a 5.8% gender difference between the total number of females (47.1%) and males (52.9%) in the secondary school panel. However, gender proportions are close to equal in the Academic POS, demonstrating a slight over-representation of female students. There are notable disparities in gender representation in both the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study by a substantial over-representation of male students. The gender proportions for students with an Undefined POS mirror the gender proportions of the total population.

**Race:** Proportionate representation of race across POS is another important issue of equity.

- Despite a slight under-representation in the Applied POS (23.8%), students who self-identified as White are generally equitably represented across the Academic (29.9%) and Essentials (26.5%) Programs of Study.
- Both self-identified East Asian (17.9%) and South Asian (21%) student groups were over-represented in the Academic POS; however, self-identified East Asian students were notably under-represented in both the Applied (10.5%) and Essentials (5.1%) Programs of Study. Self-identified South Asian students were also under-represented in the Applied (16.9%) and Essentials (15.9%) Programs of Study.
- The overall self-identified Black population is 12.6% across the secondary school panel; however, 29.3% of the student population taking the Essentials POS has self-identified as Black. Self-identified Black students are also over-represented in the Applied POS at 22.7% and are under-represented in the Academic POS at 8.8%.
- Self-identified Aboriginal students are notably under-represented in the Academic POS (0.1%), more than doubly represented in the Applied POS (0.7%), and have quadrupled representation in the Essentials POS (1.2%).

**Students' First Language:** In an analysis of student language, students most likely to be in the Academic POS are students whose first language was Bengali, Hindi, Korean, Romanian, Russian, and Serbian. Students who spoke Dari, Pashto, and Spanish had notably less representation in the Academic POS and were over-represented in the Applied POS. Language groups over-represented (5%+) in the Essentials POS were Dari, English, Pashto, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish.

**Sexuality:** Sexuality is a more recently explored demographic characteristic in terms of its relationship to Programs of Study. The results demonstrated that 93% of students enrolled in the Academic POS self-identified as Heterosexual and 7.1% of students self-identified as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Not sure/questioning, or Other. The proportion of students self-identifying as Heterosexual dropped in both the Applied (90.5%) and Essentials (83.5%) Programs of Study. Students with an Undefined POS self-identified as Heterosexual at a rate of 87.3%.

**Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** The overall proportion of students identified with Special Education Needs (SEN) (excluding Gifted) across the TDSB's secondary school panel is 15.9%; however, this proportion varies across Programs of Study. The proportion of students identified as having SEN in the Academic POS is 5.5%. This proportion rose to 32.9% (double the overall average) for students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Applied POS. For students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Essentials POS, the proportion of students with SEN is over four times the TDSB's average at 67.6%.

**Special Education Needs (including Gifted):** Of students with SEN in the Academic POS, students who only have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (no formal identification) make up 29.1%. Students identified as having a Learning Disability (LD) represent 21.8%, students with

Giftedness represent 44.4%, and a small proportion of students with a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) (0.3%) make up the majority of students with SEN in the Academic POS.

- The proportion of students identified as having a Learning Disability (40.4%), MID (5.5%), and students who only have an IEP (40.4%) rose in the Applied POS.
- Of students enrolled in the Essentials POS, 39.6% were students identified as having an MID, over a quarter (25.9%) were identified as having a Learning Disability and 17.5% were students who only had an IEP.

**Parental Occupation:** Of students in the Academic POS, 28.7% have parents who were employed in professional positions. This proportion dropped dramatically for both the Applied (9.2%) and Essentials (6.4%) Programs of Study. At the other end of the parent occupational spectrum, of students whose parents were non-remunerative (17.2% of students in the secondary school panel), only 14.1% were represented in the Academic POS compared to 26.4% in the Applied and 35.6% in the Essentials Programs of Study.

**Parental Education:** Over half of students enrolled in the Academic POS (55.4%), the pathway intended to lead towards University preparedness courses, had parents who previously attended university. Comparatively, less than a quarter (23%) of students in the Applied and only 16% of students in the Essentials Programs of Study had parents who had attended university. Close to half (48.2%) of students in the Essentials POS indicated that they did not know their parents' highest level of educational attainment compared to 16.9% of students in the Academic POS.

**Parental Presence:** Of students in the Academic POS, 80.7% lived with both parents (this includes shared custody). The proportion dropped within the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study to 63.7% and 59.2% respectively. Conversely, the proportion of students who lived with their mother only, father only, and who lived in alternate situations was lowest in the Academic POS.

**Family Income:** Students who are enrolled in the Academic POS are more likely to come from higher income households than students in both the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study. Conversely, students in the Essentials POS are much more likely to come from lower income households. Only 7.2% of students in the lowest income decile are in the Academic POS, compared to 13.2% in the Applied POS and 18.2% in the Essentials POS. Students from the highest income decile represent 11.7% of students in the Academic POS, 3% of students in the Applied POS, and 2.1% of the Essentials POS.

**Learning Opportunity Index:** The Learning Opportunity Index (LOI) is a scale measuring external challenges facing students within the TDSB. It is a composite scale that includes median income, percentage of families whose income is below the Low Income Measure (before tax), percentage of families receiving social assistance, adults with low education, adults with university degrees, and lone-parent families.

- The minimum mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.001 which represents the least level of external challenges. The maximum mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.956 which represents the highest level of external challenges. The mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.45.
- The LOI score for students who have been promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 was substantially higher at 0.386 than for students who had been transferred at 0.541.
- Similar trends of stratification are observed across Programs of Study. The mean LOI for the Academic POS is 0.379 which rises to 0.571 for the Applied and 0.698 for the Essentials Programs of Study. The rise in the mean LOI score across Programs of Study demonstrates the rise in external challenges facing students in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study compared to the Academic POS.
- Students with the least access to university or post-secondary opportunities (students who did not apply) had a substantially higher average LOI score (0.529) than students who confirmed an offer of admission to university (0.342).

### Achievement and Belonging across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

**OSSLT:** Results of the OSSLT revealed that 87.8% of students in the Academic POS passed the first time they were eligible to write. However, the pass rate for first-time eligible students dropped dramatically for students in the Applied POS (37.4%) and even further for the Essentials POS (3.9%).

**Absenteeism:** The average Grades 9-12 absenteeism rate for the 2011-12 school year was 9.5%. However, there was a very wide range across Programs of Study. Of students taking a majority of their courses in the Academic POS, the average absenteeism rate was 6.5% which rose to 15.3% for students in the Applied POS and 17.8% for students in the Essentials POS.

**Suspensions:** Only 3.6% of the secondary school student population has been suspended. However, rates of suspension change across Programs of Study. Only 1.8% of students in the Academic POS have ever been suspended from school. This proportion rises for students in the Applied (7.1%) and Essentials (11.5%) Programs of Study.

**Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** Based on a scale which captures students' experiences of safety, shared power, inclusion, and acceptance within their school communities, students in the Academic POS were more likely to experience a sense of **belonging** at 60.5% compared to students in the Applied POS at 50.7%. Conversely, the rate of student reported **exclusion** dropped from 49.3% of students in the Applied POS to 39.5% of students in the Academic POS. Students in the Essentials POS were more likely to experience **exclusion** (50.9%) than to experience **belonging** (49.1%) within their school communities.

## Selected School-wide Structures

**School-wide Structures:** Secondary school level school-wide structures are explored for their relationship to student demographics, achievement, and students' sense of belonging. School-wide structures are defined as programming decisions and strategies that affect the entire school population not only a particular segment. The selected school-wide structures explored in this report are not exhaustive but include:

- Specialty Arts schools,
- Alternative schools,
- Special Education schools, and
- Schools that offer limited Academic and University Preparedness courses.

Through a detailed comparison, an exploration of school-wide structures revealed not only demographic trends in program participation, but also a strong relationship between school-wide programming decisions, student achievement, and students' sense of belonging and citizenship within their school community.

## Pathways across School-wide Structures

**Transference and Promotion across School-wide Structures:** For students in Specialty Arts schools, 94.7% are successfully promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. This rate dropped to 64% for students attending Secondary Alternative schools, and further dropped to 14.5% for students in schools with Limited Academics. Only 0.6% of students attending Special Education schools were successfully promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. In regards to student rates of transference, students attending Special Education schools had the highest at 82.9%, followed closely by schools with Limited Academics at 81.8%. Students attending Alternative schools had a rate of transference of 32%, while students attending Specialty Art schools were transferred at a rate of 3.4%

**Link between Grade 9-10 Programs of Study and School-wide Structures:** The proportion of students taking the Grades 9-10 Academic POS ranged from 88.7% of students in Specialty Arts schools, to 46.6% of students in Alternative schools, to 10.8% of students in Limited Academic schools to 0% of students in Special Education schools.

- Schools that had the highest proportion of students in the Grades 9-10 Applied POS were Alternative schools (45.5%) and Limited Academic schools (59.2%).
- The proportion of students in the Essentials POS rose from 0% of students in Specialty Arts schools, to 3.4% of students in Alternative schools, to 25.2% of students in Limited Academic schools, to 67.3% of students in Special Education schools.

**Link between School-wide Structures and Graduation:** Across selected school-wide structures, students attending Specialty Arts schools had the highest rate of graduating on time at 84.8%. The highest rate of returning students was found in Special Education schools (74.3%), followed by schools with Limited Academics (52.5%), and Alternative schools (48%). Arts schools had the

lowest rate of students dropping out at 2.3%; whereas, schools with Limited Academics had the highest rate at 29.6%.

**Link between School-wide Structures and Access to Post-secondary Education:** Across selected school-wide structures, students attending Arts schools were most likely to confirm an offer to an Ontario university at 35% followed by students attending Alternative schools at 8.8%. Students attending Specialty Arts schools had the highest proportion of students applying without confirmation (21.5%), indicating an unsuccessful application or applications outside of Ontario. There were no confirmations of university offers for students attending Special Education schools or schools with Limited Academics. The highest rate of students not applying for any post-secondary education were schools with Limited Academics at 96.5%, followed by Special Education schools at 99.2%.

### Student Demographics across Selected School-wide Programs

**Gender:** The gender proportion in schools with Limited Academics roughly mirrors the overall gender proportion across the TDSB's secondary school panel. The proportion of female students is slightly higher in Alternative schools (50.4%) bringing the proportion of the two genders to near equal. The proportion of female students is notably higher in Specialty Arts schools (68.5%) and substantially smaller in Special Education schools (31%).

**Race:** Racial proportions vary across the selected school-wide structures. For example, the proportion of self-identified White students is over doubly represented in Specialty Arts schools (73.4%), close to double in Alternative schools (54.4%) and schools with Limited Academic opportunities (37.6%).

- Self-identified South Asian students are under-represented across all school-wide structures, most notably within the Specialty Arts schools (1.5%) and Alternative schools (8.3%).
- The second largest racial category represented within Specialty Arts schools was self-identified Mixed students at 12.6%.
- As a group, self-identified East Asian students were largely under-represented across Alternative schools (4.2%), Special Education schools (8%), and schools with Limited Academics (7.1%).
- Self-identified Black students are the largest racial category represented in Special Education schools (30.2%) and are over triply represented. Self-identified Black students are also over-represented in schools with Limited Academic opportunities (19.3%), but are under-represented in both Alternative schools (10.4%) and are only a third represented within Specialty Arts schools (3.2%).

**Student First Language:** The primary student language represented in Specialty Arts schools is English. Students who spoke English were the only key language group over-represented in Alternative schools. English and Pashto were the only two languages to have a notable over-representation in schools with Limited Academics; whereas, students who spoke English,

Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Tamil were over-represented in Special Education schools.

**Sexuality:** Interestingly, this proportion changes across each school-wide structure explored in this analysis. For example, 78.4% of students in Alternative schools and 84.5% of students in Specialty Arts schools self-identified as Heterosexual. Likewise, 77.8% of students within Special Education schools and 82.5% of students within Limited Academic schools self-identified as Heterosexual. One confounding factor within this analysis is the response option of “Not Sure/Questioning” as it is believed that many students may select this response as they interpreted the response option as “Not sure of the question” as opposed to an identification of sexuality.

**Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** Across the TDSB’s secondary school panel, 15.1% of students have been identified with SEN; however, this proportion fluctuates across school-wide structures. Students attending Alternative schools were slightly less likely to be identified with an SEN compared to the average (12.5%). Students attending Specialty Arts schools had a slightly higher proportion of students identified with SEN (17.3%). Whereas, students attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities were more than twice as likely (35.5%) to be identified with SEN. Understandably, close to all students attending Special Education schools were identified with SEN (99.2%).

**Generational Status:** The proportion of first generation students attending Specialty Arts schools was close to a third (24.9%) and Alternative schools was close to half (41.8%) of the total population (71.5%). The proportion of first generation students remained notably reduced for students attending Specialty Arts schools, Special Education schools, and schools with Limited Academics. Conversely, the proportion of third generation students was disproportionately over-represented within each of the school-wide structures presented in this analysis, most notably in Alternative schools (40.9%) and schools with Limited Academics (36.2%) as compared to the total at 19.8%.

**Parental Education:** For example, 71.1% of students attending Specialty Arts schools had parents whose highest level of education was university. Though still slightly higher than the overall total, the proportion of students whose parents had achieved a university education dropped to 48.1% of students attending Alternative schools. Students attending schools with Limited Academics and Alternative schools had the highest rates of parents who had college as their highest level of education.

**Parental Occupation:** Students in Arts schools had the largest proportion of parents working in professional positions (39.9%) and semi-professional positions (38.7%). Students attending schools with Limited Academics had the largest proportion of parents who were non-remunerative (19.4%). Students attending Special Education schools had the largest proportion of parents working in skilled/semi-skilled clerical positions (31.9%) and unskilled clerical trades (19.4%).

**Parental Presence:** Students attending Specialty Arts schools are more likely to live with two parents than any other school-wide structure (including the average for the TDSB’s secondary school panel); whereas, students attending schools with Limited Academics were the least likely to live with both parents (20.3% less likely than the total average). However, aside from students attending Specialty Arts schools, over a quarter of students within each of the other school-wide structures lived with only their mother.

**Family Income:** Students attending Specialty Arts schools are much more likely to come from higher income households and much less likely to come from lower income households compared to students attending Special Education schools or schools with Limited Academic opportunities.

**Learning Opportunity Index:** Both the minimum and maximum LOI ranges as well as the mean LOI fluctuated across school-wide structures. For example, the LOI range for students in Specialty Arts schools ranged from 0.046 to 0.161 with a mean of 0.058 which indicated far less external challenges than those facing students who were attending schools with Limited Academics (LOI range of 0.693 to 0.913, mean of 0.8). A mean LOI of 0.8 signifies a high level of external challenges. Although Alternative schools demonstrated a wide range of LOI and a higher than average mean (0.542), Special Education schools closely mirrored the LOI of schools with Limited Academics with a high range of 0.632-0.943 and mean of 0.776.

### **Achievement and Belonging across School-wide Structures**

**OSSLT:** Results for the OSSLT are varied across school-wide structures. For example, 94.4% of first-time eligible students in Specialty Arts schools passed the OSSLT upon their first attempt compared to 53% of students in Alternative schools, and 12% of students in schools with Limited Academics. While only 2% of students in Special Education schools successfully passed the OSSLT, it is important to remember that 91.3% of students in Special Education schools were either Deferred or Exempt from writing.

**Suspensions:** While the overall proportion of students being suspended across the TDSB’s secondary school panel is 3.6%, students attending Specialty Arts schools was close to a third of the average at 1.5%. Students attending Alternative schools had a suspension rate equal to the TDSB’s secondary school average at 3.6%. The rate of suspension was just over double at 7.3% for students attending schools with Limited Academics. Students attending Special Education schools had a suspension rate of 10.7% which was close to three times the TDSB’s secondary school average.

**Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** In terms of experiencing a sense of belonging, students attending Specialty Arts schools demonstrated the highest sense of belonging (72.4%) of all school-wide structures. Alternative schools were close behind at 71.8% of their student population experiencing a sense of belonging. Just over half of students attending Special Education schools (55.6%) and schools that only offered Limited Academics (54.1%) demonstrated the lowest sense of belonging and the highest sense of exclusion.

## Selected In-school Programs

***In-school Programs:*** In the exploration of school structures and their relationship to student demographics, achievement and students' sense of belonging, in-school programs at the secondary school level were investigated. The TDSB offers a myriad of programming options for students at the secondary school level. Many programs are intended to support students in their learning needs as well as provide students with highly valued, marketable skills, and opportunities for greater post-secondary access (PSE). This section looks exclusively at selected programs offered within schools, paying close attention to the relationships between selected programs, the role programs play within students' academic pathways, the representation of student demographic characteristics as well as program connections to students' sense of belonging. An analysis into the relationship of programs to LOI will also be explored. Although not exhaustive, this analysis includes the following programs: Congregated Gifted and Special Education programming, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, French Immersion (FI), Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities, the Elite Athlete program, the Specialist High Skills Major program (SHSMP), and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship program (OYAP).

## Pathways across In-school Programs

***Transference and Promotion:*** The proportion of students being promoted or transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 varied across programs. The proportion for promotion ranged from 98.2% of students in the Gifted program, to 96.6% for students taking IB, to 98.5% of students in French Immersion, to 88.6% of students taking Advanced Placement courses, and 97.3% of students in the Elite Athlete program. This proportion drops dramatically for students in congregated Special Education programs to 2.3%. Promotion and transference rates could not be established for students in SHSMP or OYAP as they generally begin in Grade 11.

***Grade 9-10 Programs of Study:*** Over 95% of students in the Gifted, IB, French Immersion, Advanced Placement, and Elite Athlete programs are enrolled in the Academic POS. This proportion dropped for students taking the SHSMP (53.8%) and OYAP (40.4%). Half or more than half of students in SHSMP (53.8%) or OYAP (50%) were enrolled in the Applied POS. For students in congregated Special Education programs, the proportion of students taking Academic dropped to 2.5%, while the proportion of students taking Applied rose to 30.1% and 41.1% for students enrolled in the Essentials POS.

***Graduation:*** The proportion of students graduating after 4 years, varied dramatically across secondary school programs. For students in the Gifted, IB, or Advanced Placement programs, the rate of graduation after 4 years is close to 30% higher than the TDSB's average. Students in French Immersion and the Elite Athlete program also have a higher than average rate of graduation. Students taking OYAP and SHSMP have a lower rate of graduation after 4 years and a much higher rate of students returning for a fifth year of high school. The rate of graduation after 4 years for students in congregated Special Education programs was about a third of the average at 22.6% and close to triple the average proportion of students returning for a fifth year.

**Post-secondary Access:** The program that had the highest proportion of students confirming an offer to an Ontario university the year after graduation was the IB program at 83%, with the Gifted program close at 79.8%, the Advanced Placement program at 77.4%, and the French Immersion program at a 62.5% confirmation rate. For students taking the OYAP, SHSMP, or congregated Special Education programs, the rate of university confirmations was less than the average, while the rates of students not applying for PSE was substantially higher than the average. However, students enrolled in OYAP were almost three times as likely to confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario college.

### Student Demographics across Selected In-school Programs

**Gender:** Female students are over-represented in French Immersion (61.3%) and the International Baccalaureate program (58.5%). More equitably distributed programs across gender lines are Advanced Placement where female students make up 50% of the population, the Elite Athlete program (46.2%), and the OYAP where female students make up 44.9% of the population. The programs that are greatly over-represented by male students are congregated Special Education programs (69.6%), students in congregated Gifted programs (63.8%), and students taking the SHSMP (62.5%).

**Race:** Students who self-identified as White are over-represented in the Gifted, French Immersion, Elite Athlete, OYAP, and congregated Special Education programs and are under-represented in the IB, AP, and SHSMP programs.

- Students who self-identified as South Asian were over-represented in the IB program as well as slightly in the SHSMP. However, self-identified South Asian students were notably under-represented in Gifted, French Immersion, Elite Athlete, and congregated Special Education programs and slightly under-represented in AP and OYAP.
- Students who self-identified as East Asian were over-represented in the Gifted, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs. Self-identified East Asian students were notably under-represented in the French Immersion, Elite Athlete, SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education programs.
- Students who self-identified as Black were over-represented in the congregated Special Education program, SHSMP, and OYAP and were notably under-represented in the Gifted, IB, AP, Elite Athlete programs, and slightly under-represented in French Immersion. Although these groups represent the majority of TDSB students, it is important to note other incidences of over and under-representation for racial groups across programs (please see full report).

**Student Language:** In a general sense, language groups are stratified across in-school programs. For example, students who spoke Chinese are over-represented in the Gifted, IB, and AP programs but under-represented in French Immersion, the Elite Athlete program as well as SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education. Similarly, students who spoke English are over-represented in all programs with the exception of IB and AP.

**Sexuality:** The proportion of sexuality did not vary much across programs. Roughly all programs had similar proportions of sexuality representation. The only notable variance was for students in the congregated Special Education program who responded that they were ‘not sure/questioning’. Past research in the TDSB has led investigators to believe that some students select this answer when they were not sure of the question as opposed to whether they were questioning their sexuality. This was evident also for students who were taking English as a Second Language courses.

**Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** Although the rate of students with SEN is 15.9% across the TDSB’s secondary school panel, the proportion of students with SEN fluctuates across programs. The proportion of students with SEN is notably less than the TDSB’s average within programs such as Gifted, IB, French Immersion, AP, and Elite Athlete. Conversely, the proportion of students with SEN is greater than the TDSB’s average for programs such as SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education.

**Generational Status:** The TDSB’s secondary school population is predominantly first generation students (71.5%). However, the proportion of students falling into the categories of first, second, or third generation varies across secondary school programs. Variations from the overall average were noted in the Elite Athlete program where only 27% of students are first generation; as well as French Immersion at 43.6%. However, students taking the AP program (78.6%) as well as the IB program (84.3%) were more likely to be first generation. The programs with the greatest proportion of third generation students were French Immersion (36.8%), Elite Athlete (53%), OYAP (28.2%), and congregated Special Education (31.9%) which were notably higher than the 19.8% average across the TDSB’s secondary school panel.

**Parental Education:** Students enrolled in the Gifted program had a proportion of 81.1% whose parents have an university education (33.6% higher than the average) while students enrolled in French Immersion had a proportion of parents with university education at 72.5% (25% higher than the average). Conversely, students enrolled in SHSMP and OYAP, had lower than the average proportion of parents with university education and a higher than average proportion of parents having high school as their highest level of education.

**Parental Occupation:** The proportion of students in congregated Gifted programs whose parents were employed as professionals was 48.6%. Likewise, 43.7% of students enrolled in French Immersion, 38.4% of students in the Elite Athlete program, 38% of students enrolled in IB, and 31% of students enrolled in AP had parents who worked as professionals. The proportion of students who had parents employed in professional positions dropped below the TDSB’s secondary school panel average for students enrolled in SHSMP (16.1%), OYAP (12.8%), and congregated Special Education (11.1%). Conversely, these trends were reversed when looking at students whose parents were non-remunerative at the time of the survey.

**Parental Presence:** Although the TDSB average of students living with two parents at the secondary school level is 75.9%, students in the Gifted, IB, French Immersion, AP and Elite Athlete programs had a higher than average proportion of students living with two parents while students in SHSMP, OYAP ,and congregated Special Education programs had a lower proportion than average.

**Family Income:** Programs such as Gifted, French Immersion, and the Elite Athlete had a notable over-representation of students from higher income deciles. For students in the Gifted program, 54.7% of students came from the highest three income deciles, similarly to 55.1% of students in French Immersion and 53.1% of students in the Elite Athlete program. Conversely, for students in SHSMP, only 17.6% of students came from the highest three income deciles, similarly to 24.8% of students in OYAP and 19% of students in congregated Special Education.

**Learning Opportunity Index:** The LOI range for students enrolled in French Immersion is 0.001 to 0.682 with a mean of 0.135. This indicates that there were no students enrolled in French Immersion that experienced the highest one third of possible external challenges. The mean LOI signifies that students in French Immersion, on average, face the lowest degree of external challenges across all programs. A close second to the representation of external challenges was evidenced within congregated Gifted programs. Similarly to French Immersion, the LOI range only included students from the lowest two thirds of the scale and has a mean of 0.186. While programs such as Elite Athlete, Advanced Placement, and OYAP were more closely representative of the average TDSB's LOI, students participating in programs such as the International Baccalaureate, SHSMP, and congregated Special Education, on average, demonstrate to experience greater external challenges.

### **Achievement and Belonging across Selected In-school Programs**

**OSSLT:** The average pass rate of the OSSLT for first-time eligible (FTE) students across the TDSB's secondary school panel was 73.1%. Although data for students in OYAP could not be collected, all programs except congregated Special Education programs demonstrated higher than average pass rates.

**Suspensions:** The suspension rate across programs was substantially lower for students in Gifted (0.5%), IB (0.1%), AP (0.6%), and Elite Athlete (0.9%). Suspension rates were below but closer to the average for students in French Immersion (2.7%). Suspension rates were slightly higher than the average for students in SHSMP (4.1%) and OYAP (4.4%), but notably higher for students in the congregated Special Education program (9.4%).

**Belonging and Exclusion:** Students who experienced the greatest levels of belonging were students taking Advanced Placement courses at 65.7%. Conversely, students who experienced the greatest level of exclusion were students taking the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program at 51.2%. Programs with the levels of belonging over the average were Gifted, International Baccalaureate, French Immersion, Advanced Placement, and Elite Athlete. Programs in which students sense of belonging fell below the average were the Specialist High Skills Major

Program, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, and students placed in congregated Special Education classes.

### Promotion and Transference

Due to the correlation between the processes of promotion/transference and secondary school pathways, it was important to explore the demographics of students experiencing promotion and transference into Grade 9. The following analysis provides a brief overview of the representation of student demographics across promotion or transference from Grade 8 to Grade 9 for the school 2011-12 year (only including students followed from Grades 8-10 in the analysis).

**Gender:** Although male students represent 52.6% of the student population moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9, the proportion of promoted male students was slightly below the average at 49.4%. However, the proportion of transferred male students from Grade 8 to Grade 9 was notably higher than the average at 62.4%.

**Self-identified Race:** In terms of the proportion of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9, each racial group was roughly appropriately represented. However, for students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 racial representation was varied. For example, self-identified White students (22.5%), self-identified South Asian students (19.7%), and self-identified East Asian students (11.7%) were under-represented among students who were transferred, while self-identified Black students were over-represented at 22.2%.

**Student Language:** Students with the lowest proportion of promotion from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were students who spoke Dari and Pashto (less than 60% promotion rate). In contrast, 93.7% of students who spoke Hindi were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

**Self-identified Sexuality:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were generally appropriately represented across self-identified sexuality categories.

**Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** Among students who moved from Grade 8 to Grade 9, 18.2% had been identified as students with Special Education Needs (SEN). Students with Special Education Needs only represented 7.1% of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9; whereas, they represented 62.9% of students who were transferred.

**Generational Status:** The proportion of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 roughly mirrored the proportion of students across generational status aside from second generation students being slightly over-represented. Of students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9, first generation students were slightly over-represented while second generation students were under-represented.

**Parent Education:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 roughly represented the proportions across all parental education categories. However, the proportion of students transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 varied across parental education categories. For example, for students who had been transferred, the proportion of students whose parents have a university education was almost half the average (26.2%) while the proportion of students whose parents' highest level of education was high school was notably over-represented.

**Parent Occupation:** There were slight variations across parental occupation categories for students who had been promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Students who were promoted were slightly more likely to have parents who had professional or semi-professional employment and slightly less likely to have parents employed as skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled clerical or trades, or to be non-remunerative. Students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were notably less likely to have parents who were employed as professionals and almost twice as likely to have parents who were non-remunerative.

**Family Income:** Income trends present very differing trajectories for students who were promoted compared to students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Students who were promoted were more likely to come from higher income households than students who had been transferred. The trajectories of income intersect at approximately the sixth income decile.

**Parental Presence:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 had similar proportions of parental presence compared to the overall average. However, students who had been transferred were less likely to live with two parents and far more likely to either live with their mother only, their father only, or within another living situation.

**Parents Living Outside of Canada:** Although students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were slightly more likely to have both their parents living in Canada than the average, students who were promoted were far more likely to have both their parents living outside of Canada.

**The Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 reported a greater sense of belonging at 57.6% than students who were transferred at 46.6%.

## PURPOSE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

After establishing relationships between student demographics and program placement in Special Education (Brown & Parekh, 2010; 2013), it was important to broaden the exploratory lens and investigate possible correlations between student demographics and secondary school program pathways across the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). Drawing correlations between student characteristics and program pathways constructs an important depiction of equity within the board. Ensuring equitable access to post-secondary opportunities is a key priority for educators and policy makers. Clues as to how and why students may be encountering barriers in Post-secondary Pathways (PSE) access could be revealed by closely examining their secondary school pathways. Although this report is exploring co-linearity and not causality, significant relationships between the ways in which schools operate and how student populations are organized, could offer insight into targeted and effective program action.

This study of secondary school pathways, program participation, and outcomes present a vital analysis of school structures and the ways in which students negotiate the secondary school panel. The report is divided into four distinct chapters. The first chapter explores Grade 9-10 Programs of Study including an analysis of program pathways, student demographics, achievement, and a sense of belonging. The second chapter looks at school-wide structures (e.g., program decisions that affect entire school populations such as Specialty Arts schools, Special Education schools, schools with Limited Academic opportunities, and Alternative schools). The foci of the third chapter are selected in-school programs (e.g., programs that affect a portion of the school population such as Gifted and Special Education programming, Advanced Placement programming, International Baccalaureate programming, French Immersion, Elite Athlete programming, Specialist High Skills Major Programming, and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Programming). The final chapter reviews student demographics across the mechanisms of promotion and transference from Grade 8 into secondary school.

In addition to exploring student trajectories from Grade 8 to post-secondary confirmations, one purpose of this report is to provide a comparative analysis of proportionate representation of selected student demographic variables. In cases where there are notable over- or under-representations of specific demographic characteristics represented within a program or pathway, further investigation is required to uncover aspects of causality. Illuminating what drives program pathways reveals rich opportunities for innovative creative policy interventions towards more equitable outcomes.

## CHAPTER 1: PROGRAMS OF STUDY

The exploration of students' secondary school pathways is a sensitive issue. Historically, the relationship between social privilege, perceived ability, and greater academic opportunity has been well documented. Critics advocating for education reform have identified structured academic pathways afforded to certain social and cultural groups as key to the replication of social privilege and marginalization. According to the Ministry of Education, streaming does not officially exist (Brown, 2008). In fact, organizational strategies such as programs of choice and Mixed level Academic courses are considered functions of a de-streamed system. However, research conducted at the TDSB reveals that students are often set along structured Academic pathways beginning before Grade 8 and ultimately shaping post-secondary access.

### Overview of Programs of Study

Within the TDSB, secondary school students can enroll in classes within various Programs of Study (Brown, 2008). Across the secondary school panel, the TDSB offers seven possible course levels in which students can participate. For students in Grades 9-10, they can enroll in courses at the Academic, Applied, and Locally Developed (Essentials) levels of study; Academic level courses being the most academically rigorous. Similarly, for Grades 11-12, students can enroll in courses at the University Preparedness, Mixed, College Preparedness, and Workplace Preparedness levels; University Preparedness courses being the most academically challenging (Brown, 2008).

The proportion of students taking the majority of their courses in each Program of Study (POS) breaks down as follows<sup>2</sup>:

**Table 1: Proportion of Students across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Program of Study	Academic	Applied	Essentials	Undefined
Total	65.7%	25.4%	4.1%	4.8%

Academic courses explore essential concepts within specified disciplines at the Grade 9 and 10 levels. They promote abstract and critical thinking as well as encourage students to learn and apply theory to facilitate future learning. For students in Grades 11-12, looking for post-secondary access to university, the TDSB offers University Preparation level courses. These courses are designed to ensure that students are adequately prepared for entrance into university. University Preparation courses promote independent learning while developing students' research skills.

Applied POS courses focus primarily on practical, real-life applications of course material and theory and are offered in Grades 9-10. Applied programs offer students an opportunity to engage with course material. For students in Grades 11-12 hoping to be eligible for college, the

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<sup>2</sup> POS descriptions were retrieved from the TDSB's Choices 2012-2013 document (pp. 36-37).

TDSB offers College Preparation courses. In consultation with colleges, these courses have been developed to ensure that students are adequately prepared for entrance into college.

To be considered enrolled in the Essentials POS; students must be taking a majority of Locally Developed Courses in Grades 9-10. The Locally Developed compulsory credit courses have been geared towards students who demonstrate significant barriers to learning within other Programs of Study. These courses are designed to cover core areas with additional support. For students hoping to enter the workforce directly after high school, the TDSB offers Grades 11-12 Workplace Preparation courses. Workplace Preparation courses are geared towards preparing students to transfer directly into the workforce or into other vocational/apprenticeship programs.

Students also have the opportunity to take Mixed courses or University/College Preparation courses which offer programming that prepares students to meet the requirements for certain university and college degrees or programs as well as specific occupational fields. Theory and application are promoted in these courses.

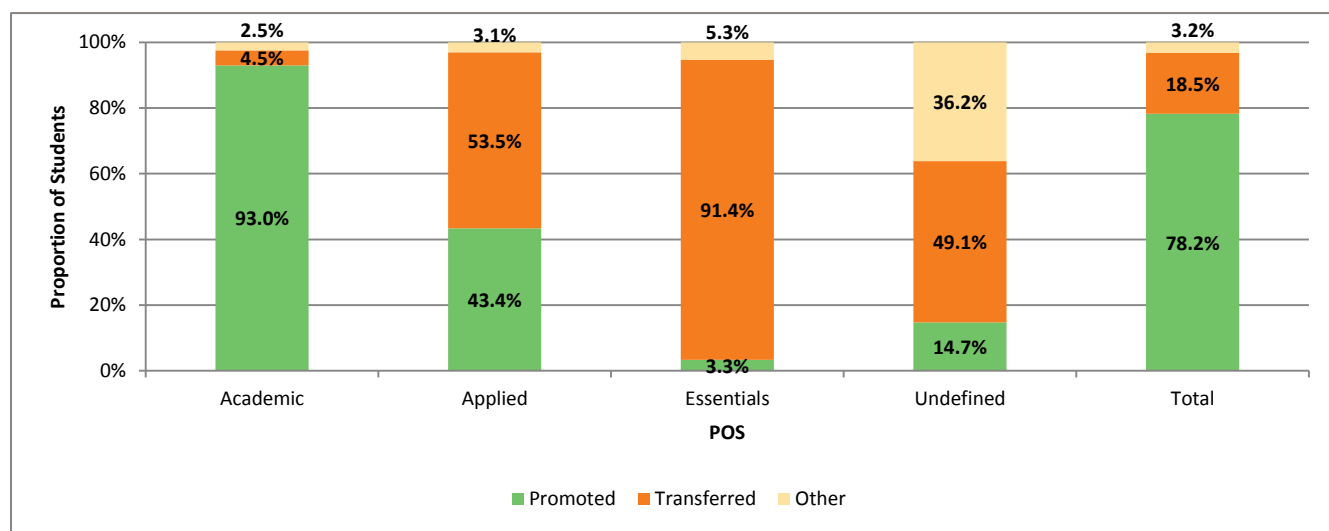
Students who are identified as having 'Undefined' or 'No Program of Study' are generally students who have taken a majority of their courses as non-credit courses, have recently arrived to Canada, or are students who have entered the TDSB after Grade 10.

### **Pathways across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study**

#### ***Transitions to Secondary School***

Although students may be set along an Academic trajectory long before they enter secondary school, the point of origin for this analysis begins with students' transitions from intermediate to secondary school. Transitioning from Grade 8 to Grade 9 is a pivotal event in a student's program pathway. If students are successful in their Grade 8 studies, they are promoted to Grade 9. Due to policies restricting schools from grade retention, unsuccessful Grade 8 students will be transferred to Grade 9. There is a strong relationship between students' successful and unsuccessful transition to Grade 9 and the majority of courses taken within the Grade 9 and Grade 10 Programs of Study. In the 2011-12 school year, 78.4% of overall students in Grade 8 were successfully promoted to Grade 9 while 18.6% were transferred. For students in the Academic POS, 93% were promoted and 4.5% were transferred. The proportion of students promoted to Grade 9 dropped dramatically for both the Applied (43.4%) and Essentials (3.3%) Programs of Study. Conversely, the proportion of students who were transferred rose to 53.5% of students in the Applied and 91.4% of students in the Essentials Programs of Study.

**Figure 1: Rates of Promotion and Transference across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study**



The analysis on transitions from Grade 8 to Grade 9 and the established relationship between academic achievement and POS in Grades 9 and 10 challenges the embedded discourse of student choice around academic pathways. Student achievement in the elementary or intermediate school panels closely relates to POS in Grades 9-10. The philosophy behind offering courses at varying levels of academic challenge is that each student will be enrolled in a POS in which they will be successful. As previously seen, encountering success in Grade 8 sets students on a pathway to more rigorous academic programming in the Academic POS. Conversely, the failure to successfully transition from Grade 8 to Grade 9 sets students on a pathway to less rigorous and basic programming in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study.

However, the rhetoric of choice persists for student pathways despite the evidence that once set many students do not deviate from their established academic trajectories. While some students do diverge from their initial pathway, most do not. As shown in the Table 2, the proportion of students remaining in their projected academic pathway is largely intact. For example, of students who took the majority of their courses in the Academic POS for Grades 9-10, 77.8% went on to take the majority of their courses at the University Preparedness level for Grade 12. Of students who took University Preparedness level courses in Grade 12, 90.2% had taken the majority of their courses in the Academic POS in Grades 9-10.

There is a similar connection between the Applied POS in Grades 9-10 and the College Preparedness level courses in Grade 12. Of students in the Applied POS, over half (52.5%) pursued College Preparedness level courses in Grade 12 and almost three quarters (74.9%) of students taking the majority of their courses at the College Preparedness level in Grade 12 took the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Applied POS.

Whereas, 59.6% of students in the Essentials POS in Grades 9-10 took the majority of their courses at the Workplace level in Grade 12, just under half (48.4%) of students taking the majority of their courses at the Workplace level had taken the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Essentials POS. Interestingly, a large proportion of students (43.4%) who ended up taking the majority of their courses at the Workplace level in Grade 12 had taken the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Applied POS.

**Table 2: Proportion of Grade 12 (Year 4 Only) Students' Grades 11 and 12 Level of Courses across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study**

Program of Study in Grade 9-10 to Courses taken in Grade 12	University	Mixed	College	Workplace	Undefined
Academic	77.8%	17.2%	4.5%	0.2%	0.3%
Applied	12.5%	23%	52.5%	7.1%	4.9%
Essentials	2.9%	6.7%	16.5%	59.6%	14.3%
Undefined	50.8%	14.3%	11.7%	3.9%	19.3%
All Grade 12 Students	58.5%	18.1%	16.6%	3.9%	2.9%

**Table 3: Grade 9-10 Programs of Study across Majority of Courses taken in Grade 12, Year 4 Students Only**

POS in Grades 9-10 to POS in Grade 12	University	Mixed	College	Workplace	No POS
Academic	90.2%	64.5%	18.2%	2.8%	7.3%
Applied	5.1%	30.1%	74.9%	43.4%	41%
Essentials	0.2%	1.2%	3.1%	48.4%	15.7%
Undefined	4.6%	4.2%	3.8%	5.4%	36%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

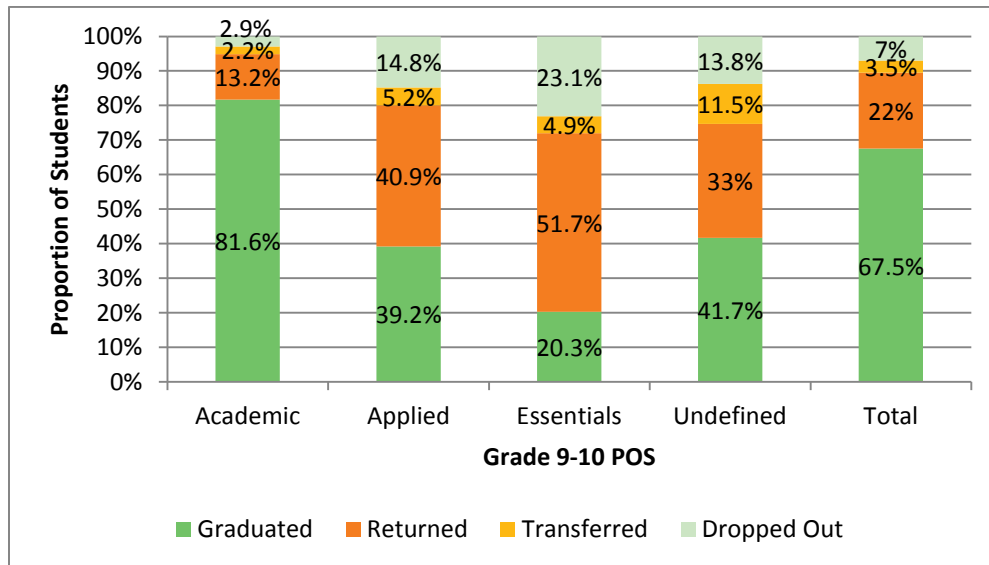
An analysis of the graduation rates reveals similar trends supporting the existence and effects of established secondary school pathways. Graduation rates dropped across Programs of Study while rates of students returning to and dropping out of the TDSB rose. For example, 81.6% of students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Academic POS graduated on time. This proportion dropped to less than half (39.3%) of students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Applied POS, and even further, to less than a quarter (20.3%), for students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Essentials POS.

In contrast to falling graduation rates, rates of returning students and students dropping out of the TDSB rose. While only 13.2% of students in the Academic POS returned to the TDSB, 40.9% of students in the Applied and 51.7% of students in the Essentials Programs of Study returned for a fifth year. While only 2.9% of students in the Academic POS dropped out of the TDSB prior to graduation, this proportion rose to 14.8% for students in the Applied and 23.1% of students in the Essentials Programs of Study.

**Table 4: Proportion of Students Graduating on Time across Programs of Study, Grades 9-10, Year 4 Students Only**

Graduation in 4 yrs.	Graduated	Returned	Transferred	Dropped Out
Academic	81.6%	13.2%	2.2%	2.9%
Applied	39.2%	40.9%	5.2%	14.8%
Essentials	20.3%	51.7%	4.9%	23.1%
Undefined	41.7%	33%	11.5%	13.8%
Total	67.5%	22%	3.5%	7%

**Figure 2: Graduation Rates across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study**



Having established strong evidence of established secondary school pathways beginning with students' transitions from Grade 8 to Grade 9 and across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study and Grade 12 course levels, the question then becomes one of equity for post-secondary access. There are two points of consideration in the discussion of equity regarding post-secondary access:

1. Do post-secondary outcomes mirror secondary school Programs of Study expectations?
2. Do students leave secondary school with equitable access to a variety of post-secondary education opportunities?

The trajectory of post-high school pathways is well documented (Anisef et al., 2010). For example, students who take the majority of their courses at the University Preparation level in Grade 12 can assume that, upon graduation, they will be eligible to pursue post-secondary education at a university. Similarly, students who successfully complete the majority of classes at the College Preparation level in Grade 12 should be eligible, upon graduation, to pursue post-secondary education at a college. Likewise, students in Grade 12 who enroll in the Workplace POS can assume that they will be given the opportunity to learn essential skills to move successfully from secondary school to the workplace.

The analysis conducted at the TDSB revealed that the outcomes of established academic pathways both prevent students from equitable access to post-secondary opportunities and that academic outcomes are not reflecting the goals embedded in secondary school Programs of Study. The following data looks at students who are in their fourth year of secondary school (i.e., first year in Grade 12) and PSE confirmations for the year following graduation<sup>3</sup>. Overall, 39.5% of students confirm an offer of admission to a university in Ontario, while 6.4% confirm an offer to an Ontario college. Although 11.4% of students applied to PSE but did not confirm, this does not mean that they were not accepted into a PSE institution. A portion of this group includes students who applied and confirmed PSE offers outside of Ontario. Finally, 42.7% of students did not apply to PSE at all.

The following data is parsed out in two ways. The upper table breaks down the proportion of first time Grade 12 students in each POS across PSE outcomes. The lower table breaks down the proportion of first-time Grade 12 students in each PSE outcome category across Programs of Study.

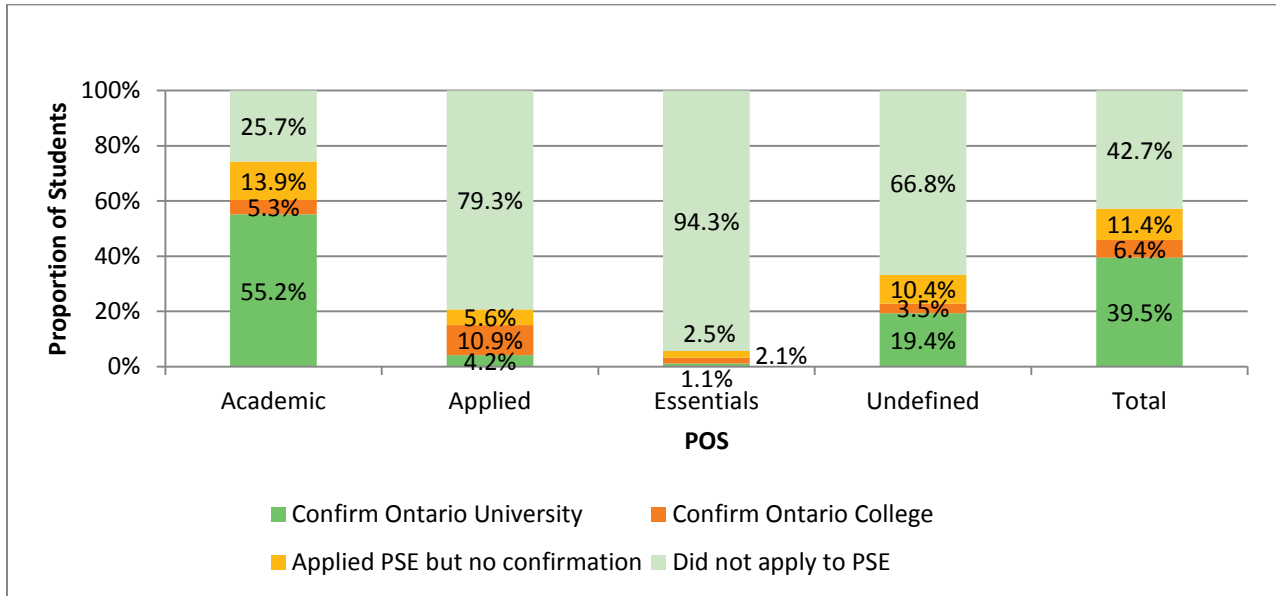
For students in the Academic POS, 55.2% confirmed an offer of admission to a university in Ontario while 5.3% accept a confirmation to an Ontario college. Although 13.9% of students in the Academic POS applied to a PSE institution with no confirmation, 24% of students did not apply to any PSE opportunities. Of students who did confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario university, 94.8% had taken the majority of their courses in the Academic POS. Likewise, over half (55.6%) of students confirming an offer of admission to an Ontario college had taken the

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<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that there is a proportion of students who do not apply to PSE their first year after graduation, but will apply the following year (Brown, 2010).

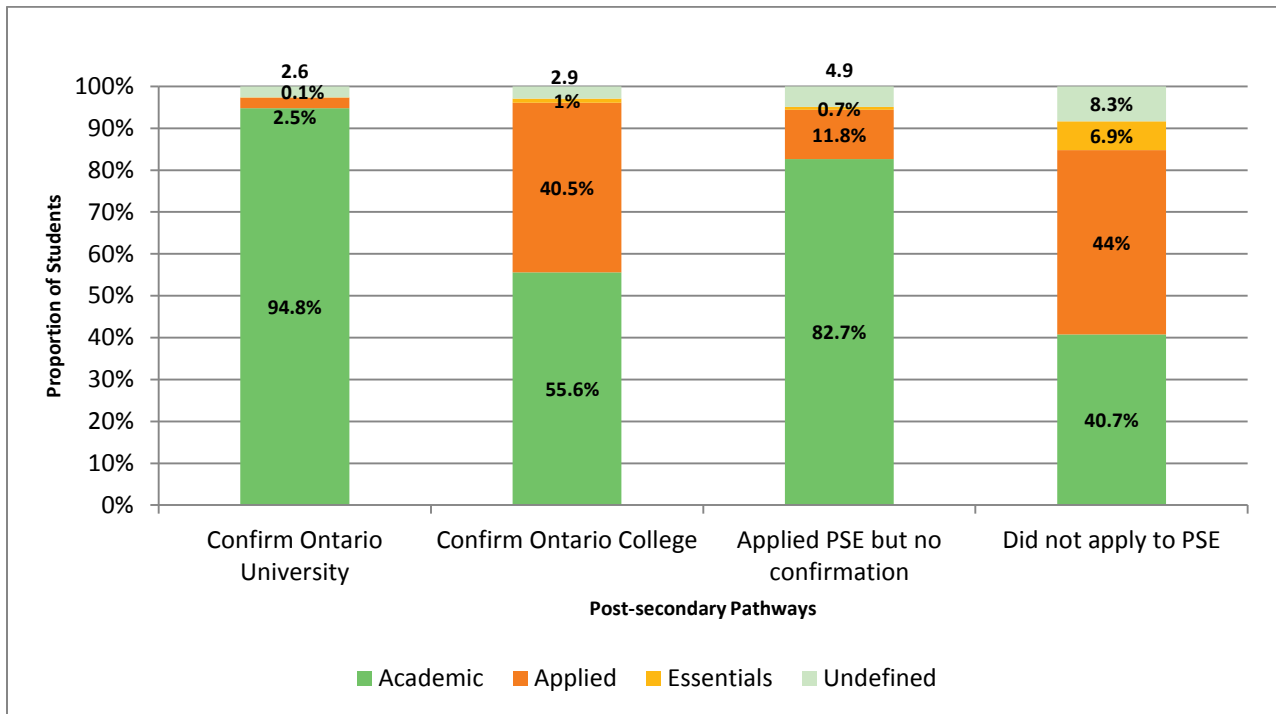
majority of their courses in the Academic POS. Interestingly, a higher proportion of college-bound students had taken the majority of their courses in the Academic POS as opposed to the Applied POS (40.5%).

**Figure 3: Ontario Post-secondary Confirmations across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



Of students who took the majority of their courses in the Applied POS, 4.2% confirmed an offer of admission to an Ontario university, 10.9% confirmed an offer to an Ontario college, and 5.6% applied to a PSE institution without confirmation of an offer. Although the Applied POS is often a precursor to the College Preparedness POS for Grades 11-12, a surprising 79.3% of students did not apply for PSE at all. For the Essentials POS, only 5.7% of students applied to any PSE institution (1.1% confirming an offer to an Ontario university), while 94.3% did not apply.

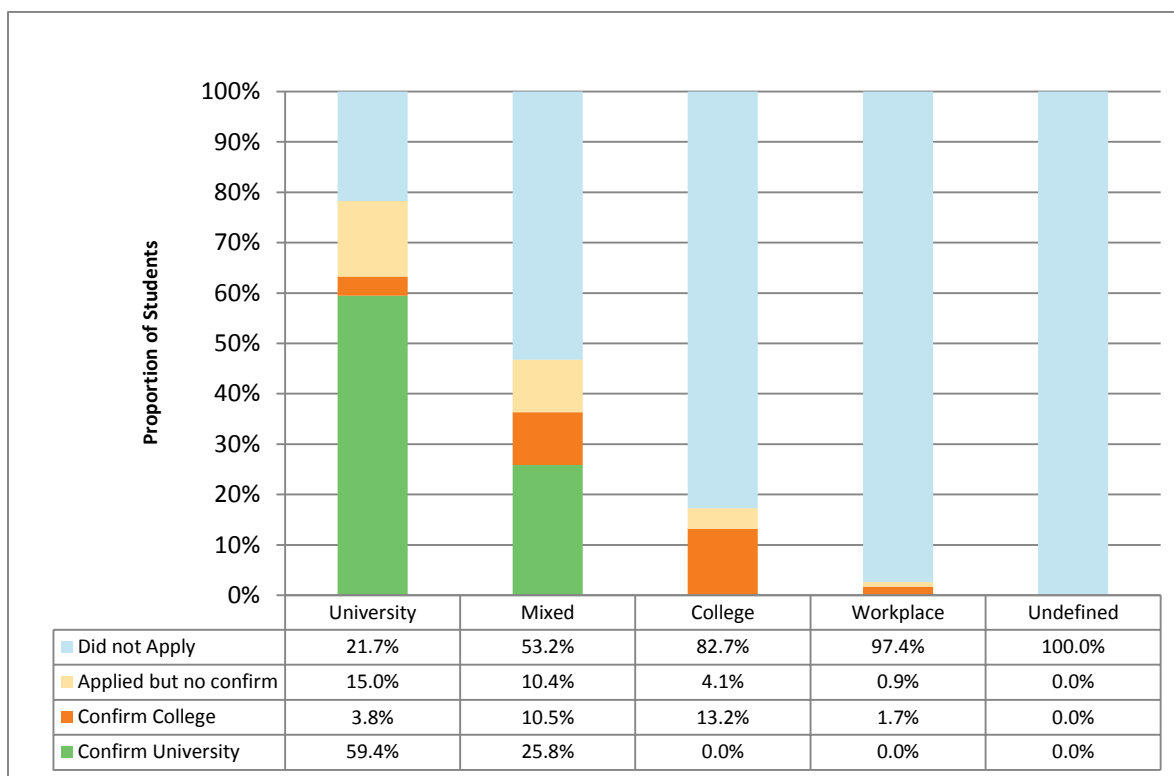
**Figure 4: Proportion of Students Confirming Post-secondary Pathways across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



A similar analysis looks at the majority of courses taken by students in their first year of Grade 12 and PSE confirmations. Similar patterns emerge when comparing PSE access and POS for students in Grades 9-10. Over half of students (59.4%) taking the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University level confirmed an offer of admission to a university in Ontario. Only 3.8% of students taking University level courses in Grade 12 confirmed an offer of acceptance to an Ontario college. Results revealed that 15% of students taking Grade 12 courses at the University level had applied and had either confirmed an offer of acceptance to a PSE institution outside of Ontario or were unsuccessful in their application. Only 21.7% of students taking University level courses in Grade 12 did not apply to any PSE institution.

Based on expectations of College preparedness courses (that they are a PSE pathway to college), it is surprising that only 13.2% of these students confirmed an offer of acceptance to an Ontario college and a staggering 82.7% did not apply to any PSE institution at all. For students who have taken their Grade 12 courses at the Workplace level, 1.7% confirmed an offer to an Ontario college and 0.9% had applied with no confirmation. However, 97.4% of students taking Workplace level courses in Grade 12 did not apply to any PSE institution.

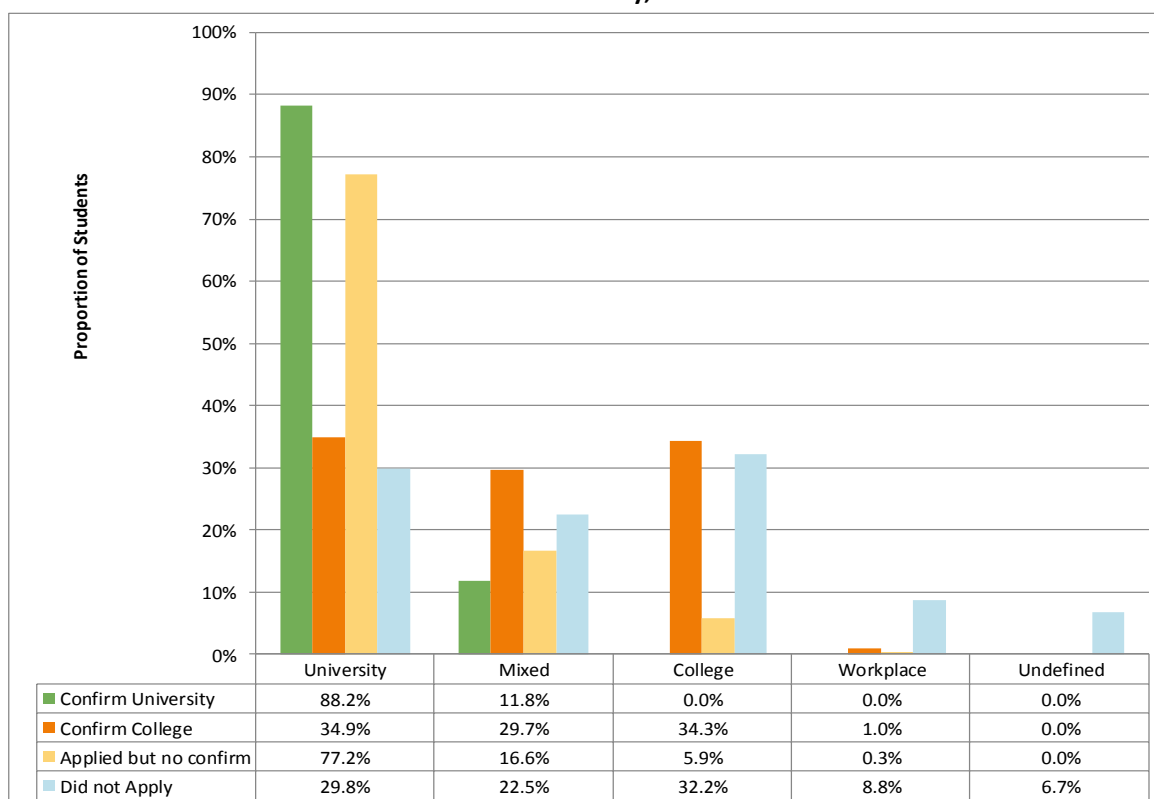
**Figure 5: Ontario Post-secondary Confirmations across Grade 12 Level of Study, Year 4 Students Only, 2011-12**



The relationship between Grade 12 level courses and PSE confirmations strongly suggests that established academic trajectories prevent equitable access to PSE opportunities. Aside from students who took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at either the University or Mixed levels, less than a fifth of students went on to confirm an offer of admission to any PSE institution.

Exploring the data by category of confirmation, the relationship between Grade 12 courses and PSE access is reinforced. Of students who have confirmed an offer to an Ontario university, 88.2% took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University level while the remaining students (11.8%) took the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the Mixed level. For students who confirmed an offer to an Ontario college, only 34.3% had taken the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the College preparedness level while the largest proportion of students (64.6%) had taken the majority of their Grade 12 courses at the University or Mixed level. Of students who had applied without confirmation, the majority (77.2%) had taken courses at the University level, followed by Mixed level (16.6%), the College Preparedness level (5.9%), and the Workplace level (0.3%).

**Figure 6: Ontario Post-secondary Confirmations across Grade 12 Level of Study, Year 4 Students Only, 2011-12**



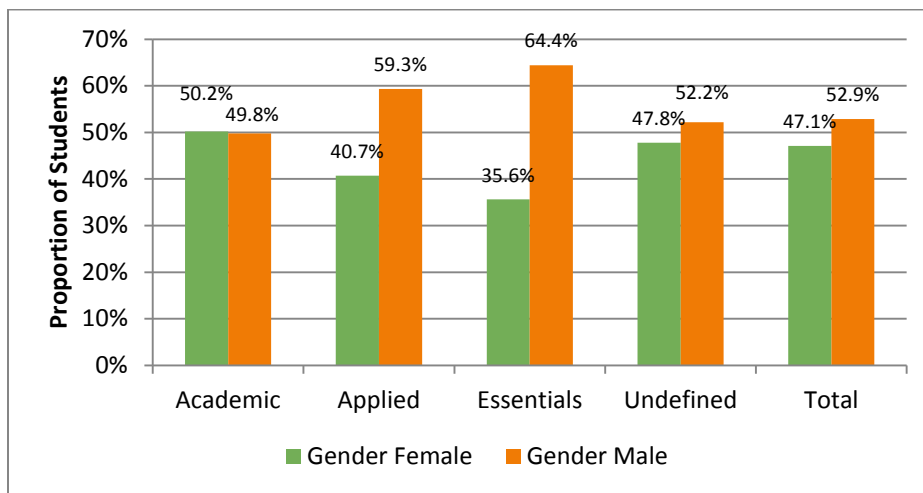
This initial analysis has determined the existence of established academic pathways from the transition process in Grade 8, to the Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, to the academic level of study in Grade 12, and to PSE confirmations. Not only are PSE opportunities largely reserved for students taking the Academic POS and University level courses in Grade 12, but the constructed College pathway is only successfully completed by 13.2% of students. Over half of students (53.2%) taking Mixed level courses, and the vast majority of College (82.7%) and Workplace (97.4%) bound students do not apply to PSE institutions within the year.

The next point of analysis uncovers whether there are certain student demographic characteristics that are disproportionately disadvantaged by this sorting mechanism. The following report details the representation of students across Programs of Study by gender, race, sexuality, disability or Special Education Needs, generational status, parent education, parent occupation, income, parental presence, parents living inside and outside of Canada, the Learning Opportunity Index, achievement, and students sense of belonging and exclusion.

## Student Demographic Variables across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

**Gender:** There are substantive differences in gender divisions across Programs of Study. There is roughly a 5% difference between the total number of female and male students in the secondary school panel with female students representing 47.1% and male students representing 52.9% of the population. However, gender proportions are almost equal in the Academic POS, demonstrating a slight over-representation of female students. There are notable disparities in gender representation in both the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study with a substantial over-representation of male students. The gender proportions for students with an Undefined POS mirror the gender proportions of the total population.

Figure 7: Gender Proportions across Programs of Study, 2011-12



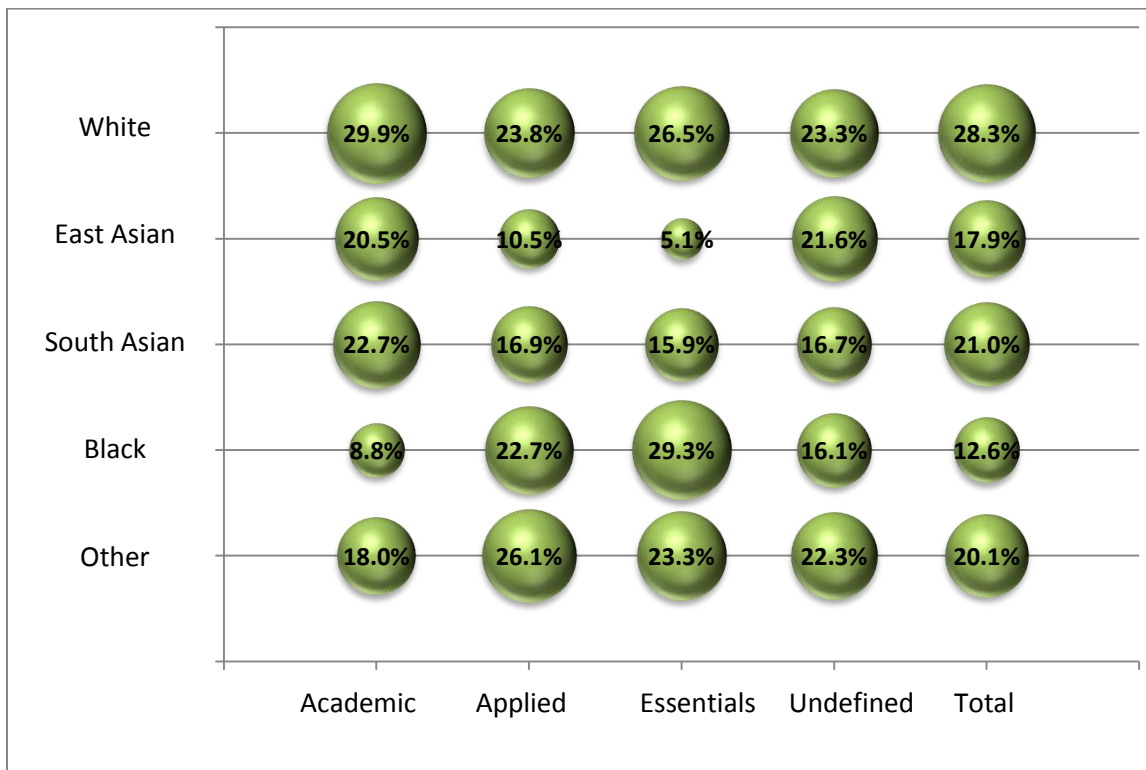
**Race:** There are notable differences in self-identified racial representation across Programs of Study. For example, the overall self-identified Black population was 12.6%; however, self-identified Black students represented 29.3% of students taking the Essentials POS. Self-identified Black students were also over-represented in the Applied POS (22.7%) and are under-represented in the Academic POS. Aside from a slight under-representation in the Applied POS (23.8%), students who self-identified as White were generally equitably represented across the Academic (29.9%) and Essentials (26.5%) Programs of Study.

Both self-identified East Asian (17.9%) and South Asian (21%) students were over-represented in the Academic POS; however, self-identified East Asian students were notably under-represented in both the Applied (10.5%) and Essentials (5.1%) Programs of Study. Self-identified South Asian students were also under-represented in the Applied (16.9%) and Essentials (15.9%) Programs of Study.

The number of self-identified Aboriginal students in the secondary school panel was quite small in comparison to other groups (0.3%). However, self-identified Aboriginal students were notably under-represented in the Academic POS (0.1%), more than doubly represented in the Applied POS (0.7%), and have quadrupled representation in the Essentials POS (1.2%).

For students who did not have a defined POS, patterns were unclear. There was notable over-representation of students self-identified as Black, East Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, and Southeast Asian and under-representation of students self-identified as Mixed, South Asian, and White within the undefined category of POS.

**Figure 8: Proportion of Students by Self-identified Race across Programs of Study, 2011-12**



**Table 5: Self-identified Race across Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Race Across POS	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White
Academic	0.1%	8.8%	20.5%	1.7%	4.9%	6.6%	22.7%	4.7%	29.9%
Applied	0.7%	22.7%	10.5%	3.8%	7.9%	7.9%	16.9%	5.8%	23.8%
Essentials	1.2%	29.3%	5.1%	3.5%	7.6%	7%	15.9%	4%	26.5%
Undefined	0.4%	16.1%	21.6%	2.9%	8.1%	5.5%	16.7%	5.4%	23.3%
Total	0.3%	12.6%	17.9%	2.2%	5.8%	6.9%	21%	4.9%	28.3%

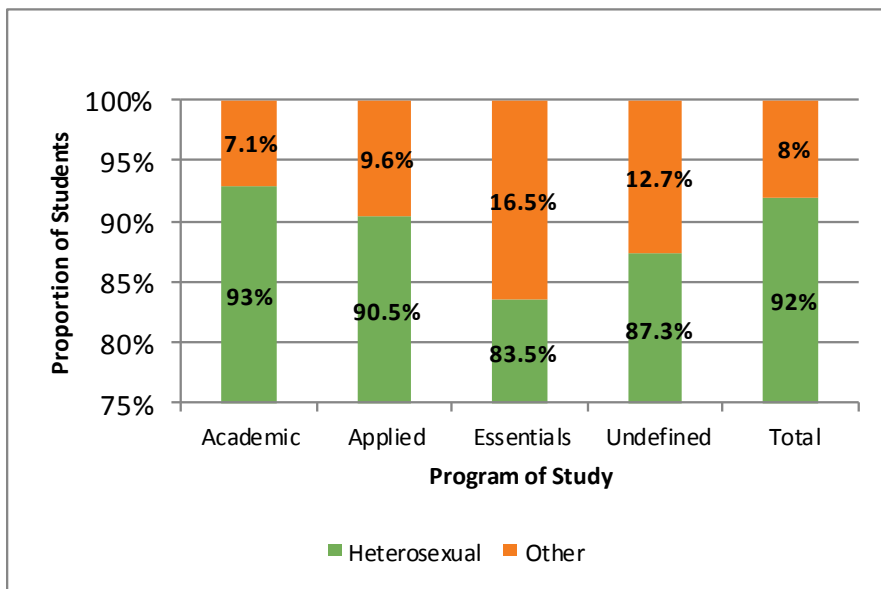
**Students' First Language:** In an analysis of student language, students most likely to be in the Academic POS are students whose first language was Bengali, Hindi, Korean, Romanian, Russian, and Serbian. Students who spoke Dari, Pashto, and Spanish had notably less representation in the Academic POS and were over-represented in the Applied POS. Language groups over-represented (5%<) in the Essentials POS were Dari, English, Pashto, Portuguese, Spanish, and Turkish.

**Table 6: Student Language across Programs of Study, 2011-12**

First Language	Academic	Applied	Essentials	Undefined
Albanian	75.2%	18.5%	2.1%	4.2%
Arabic	60.8%	28.3%	4.8%	6.0%
Bengali	83.6%	10.9%	1.4%	4.1%
Chinese	79.1%	14.9%	1.1%	4.9%
Dari	40.2%	46.9%	9.1%	3.9%
English	60.6%	30.4%	5.2%	3.8%
French	70.5%	16.9%	4.0%	8.6%
Greek	71.2%	22.2%	3.0%	3.6%
Gujarati	76.3%	18.0%	2.6%	3.0%
Hindi	80.7%	14.1%	1.4%	3.8%
Korean	85.8%	9.4%	0.8%	4.0%
Pashto	48.7%	40.8%	7.1%	3.3%
Persian	60.8%	27.8%	4.7%	6.6%
Portuguese	51.5%	35.8%	7.3%	5.3%
Punjabi	72.7%	22.6%	2.3%	2.4%
Romanian	80.9%	12.8%	3.0%	3.3%
Russian	80.8%	14.5%	0.9%	3.8%
Serbian	87.5%	9.9%	0.7%	1.9%
Somali	65.6%	24.7%	3.5%	6.2%
Spanish	47.3%	39.4%	6.0%	7.2%
Tagalog	54.6%	37.1%	2.7%	5.7%
Tamil	79.4%	15.3%	2.5%	2.7%
Turkish	54.7%	34.8%	5.9%	4.7%
Urdu	71.9%	20.4%	3.4%	4.3%
Vietnamese	75.2%	19.0%	2.3%	3.5%
<b>Total TDSB</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	<b>25.4%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>

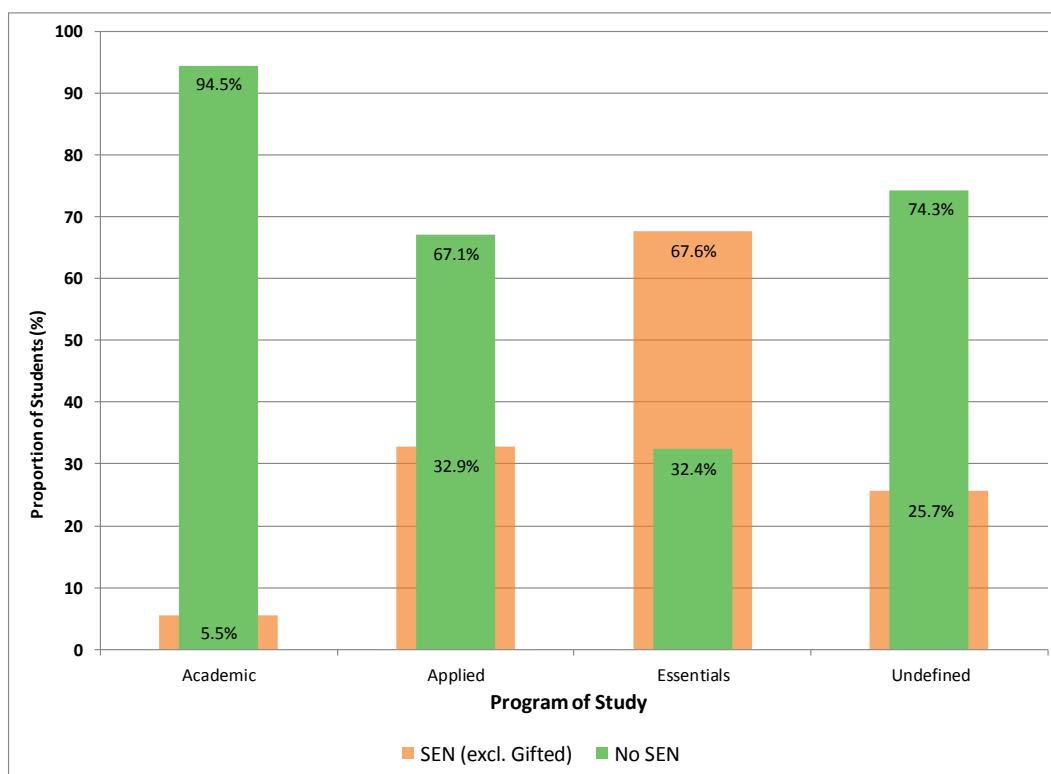
**Sexuality:** Sexuality is a more recently explored demographic characteristic in terms of its relationship to POS. The results demonstrated that 93% of students enrolled in the Academic POS self-identified as Heterosexual, while 7.1% self-identified as either Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Not sure/questioning or Other. The proportion of students self-identifying as Heterosexual dropped in both the Applied (90.5%) and Essentials (83.5%) programs of study. Students with an undefined POS self-identified as Heterosexual at a rate of 87.3%.

**Figure 9: Sexuality Categories across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



**Students with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** Students with Special Education Needs (SEN) are students who have been identified either informally or formally as students requiring additional support to their learning. Students with SEN can include students who have been formally identified through an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) or who have been identified by educators as requiring extra support and placed on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) without a formal identification of exceptionalty. Following is the breakdown of students identified as having SEN (excluding the identification of Giftedness). As seen in the following section, the overall proportion of students identified with SEN across the TDSB’s secondary school panel is 15.9%; however, this proportion varies across Programs of Study. In the Academic POS, the proportion of students identified as having an SEN is 5.5%. This proportion rose to 32.9% (double the average) for students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Applied POS. For students taking the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses in the Essentials POS, the proportion of students with SEN is over four times (67.6%) the TDSB average.

**Figure 10: Proportion of Students with and without SEN (excluding Gifted) across Programs of Study, 2011-12**



Students with Special Education Needs (SEN) are stratified across all Programs of Study. Students who have not gone through a formal identification process (IPRC), but who do have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) make up 31.4% of all students with SEN. The four largest categories of students who have SEN are students who only have an IEP, students who have been formally identified with a Learning Disability, students formally identified with Giftedness, and students who have been identified as having a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID). There are eight other categories of exceptionalities which cumulatively make up 11.5% of students with SEN (see Table 7).

Of students with SEN in the Academic POS, students who only had an IEP (no formal identification) made up 29.1%. Students identified as having a Learning Disability represented 21.8%, students with Giftedness represented 44.4%, and a small proportion of students with MID at 0.3% made up the majority of students with SEN in the Academic POS. Aside from students identified as Gifted (0.1%), the proportion of students identified as having a Learning Disability (40.4%), MID (5.5%), and students who only have an IEP (40.4%) rose in the Applied POS. Of students enrolled in the Essentials POS, 39.6% were students identified as having an MID, over a quarter (25.9%) were identified as having a Learning Disability and 17.5% were students who only had an IEP. There were no students identified as Gifted enrolled in the

Essentials POS. Identifications of Autism (12.8%), Development Disability (37.1%), and Physical Disability (5.8%) were over-represented in the Undefined POS.

**Table 7: Proportionate Representation of Key Exceptionalities across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

SEN across POS	IEP Only	Autism	Deaf	LD	Lang Impair	Gifted	MID	Dev. Disability	Blind and Low Vision	Physical Disability	Multiple Exception	Behaviour
Academic	29.1%	1.8%	0.5%	21.8%	0.3%	44.4%	0.3%	0%	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.8%
Applied	40.4%	1.8%	0.6%	45.9%	1%	0.1%	5.5%	0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	3.9%
Essentials	17.5%	5.2%	0.4%	25.9%	1.1%	0%	39.6%	3%	0.1%	2%	0.2%	5%
Undefined	12.8%	12.8%	1.3%	8%	0.4%	1.4%	17.5%	37.1%	0.3%	5.8%	0.2%	2.5%
Total	31.4%	3%	0.6%	32.2%	0.8%	15.4%	9.5%	2.9%	0.1%	1.1%	0.1%	2.9%

### Family Factors across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

Family factors play a role in shaping students' academic pathways and have demonstrated to have important relationships to achievement and PSE outcomes (Suarez-Orozco, et al., 2008). This section of the report explores family factors and their relationship to students' participation in school-wide structures.

**Generational Status:** Generational status is determined based on the student responses from the TDSB's 2011 Student Census. Students who indicated that both their parents were born in Canada were listed as third generation students. Students who indicated that they had one parent born in Canada and one born outside of Canada were listed as second generation. First generation students were identified as having both parents born outside of Canada.

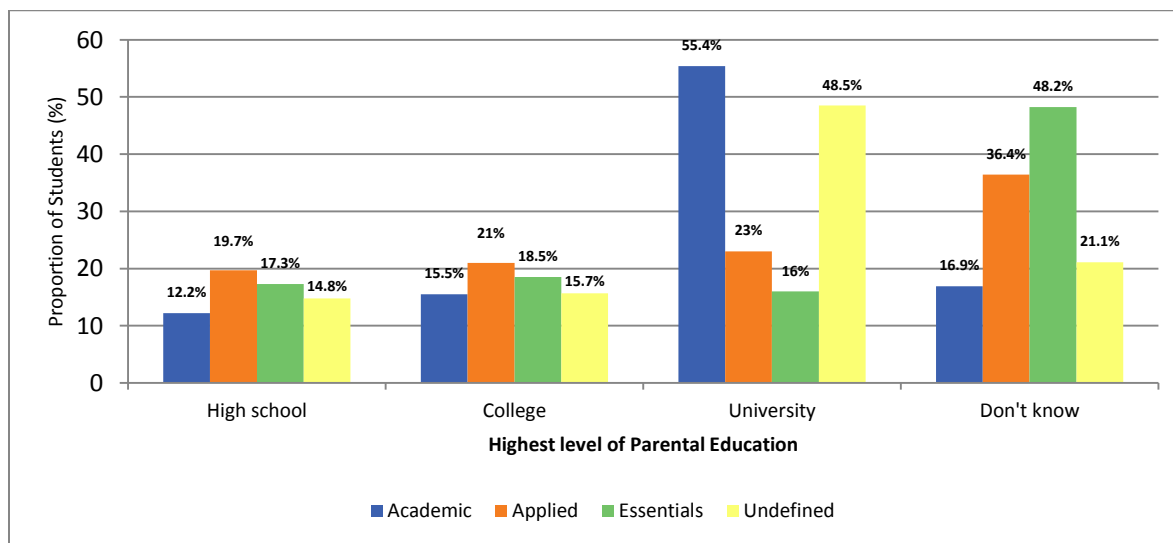
There were some changes across Programs of Study for generational status; however, the variance was minimal. Interestingly, the proportion of students in both the first and third generation categories were almost identical; whereas, second generation students were slightly more likely to be taking courses in the Academic POS and slightly less likely to be taking Applied, Essentials, or have an Undefined POS.

**Table 8: Proportionate Representation of Students' Generational Status across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Generational Status	3rd Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation
Academic	71.8%	77%	72.1%
Applied	22.1%	18.9%	21.8%
Essentials	4.1%	2%	3.1%
Undefined	2%	2%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**Parent Education:** Despite discussions on whether parents' own experience of education influences that of their children or whether the privileged access associated with higher education is reproduced within the public education, the relationship between the two variables is clear. Over half of students enrolled in the Academic POS (55.4%) had parents who had themselves attended university. Comparatively, less than a quarter (23%) of students in the Applied and only 16% of students in the Essentials Programs of Study had parents who had attended university. Close to half (48.2%) of students in the Essentials POS indicated that they did not know their parents' educational status compared to 16.9% of students in the Academic POS.

**Figure 11: Parental Education across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

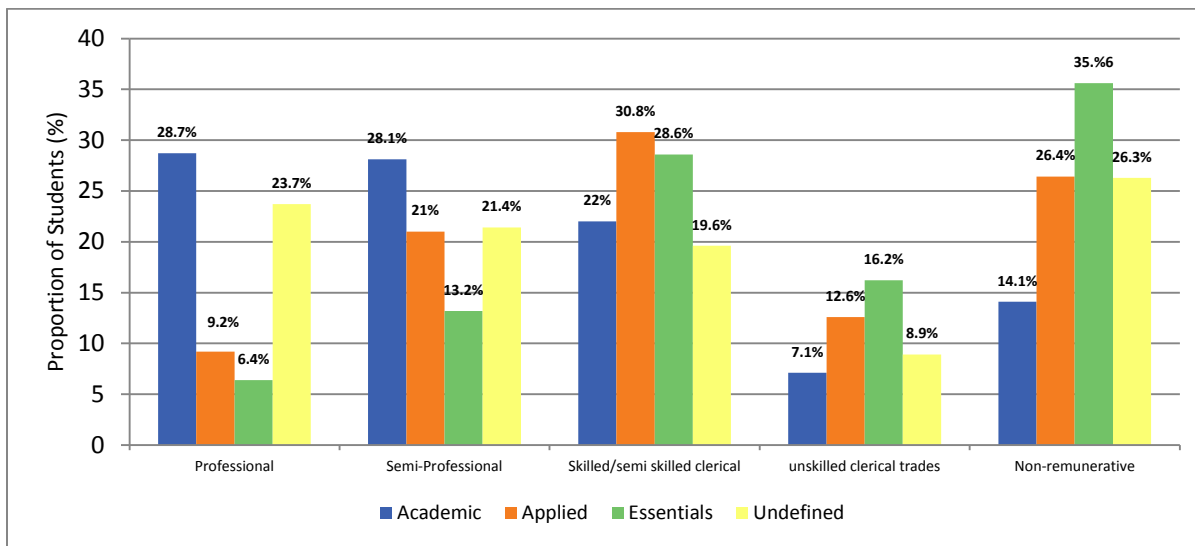


**Parent Occupation:** Similarly with parental occupation, notable differences are clear across Programs of Study. There is a great deal of literature that documents trends in social reproduction as a result of academic programming at the secondary school panel (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992). Of students in the Academic POS, 28.7% had parents who were employed in professional positions. This proportion notably dropped for both the Applied (9.2%) and Essentials (6.4%) Programs of Study. Of students whose parents are currently non-remunerative (17.2% of students in the secondary school panel), only 14.1% were represented in the Academic POS compared to 26.4% in the Applied and 35.6% in the Essentials Programs of Study.

In terms of disproportionate representation, many parental occupation categories varied widely from the total proportion of students. Noting that the category of unskilled clerical/trades is only 8.3% of the total student population, this category is almost doubly represented in the Essentials POS. Likewise, for students whose parents were, at the time of the TDSB's 2011 Student Census survey, non-remunerative (17.2%), are more than doubly represented in the Essentials POS; whereas, only a quarter (6.4%) of students whose parents had professional positions were in the Essentials POS. Students whose parents held skilled or

semi-skilled clerical or trades positions were over-represented in the Applied POS and constituted 30.8% of students. Students whose parents held professional or semi-professional positions were over-represented in the Academic POS.

**Figure 12: Parental Occupation across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



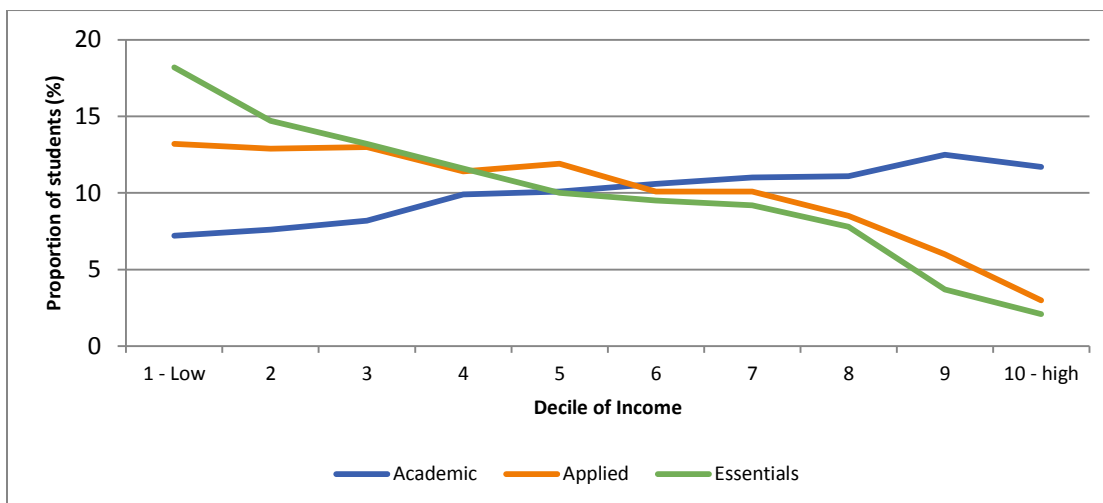
**Family Income:** The analysis of family income presented clear trends across the Grade 9-10 Programs of Study. Students who were enrolled in the Academic POS were more likely to come from higher income households than students in both the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study. Conversely, students in the Essentials POS were much more likely to be from lower income households. Students who did not have a defined POS were also more likely to come from lower income households. The proportion of students in the lowest income decile in the secondary school panel was 9.4%. However, only 7.2% of students in the lowest income decile were in the Academic POS, compared to 13.2% in the Applied POS, and 18.2% in the Essentials POS. Though, students from the highest income decile represented 11.7% of students in the Academic POS, 3% of students in the Applied POS, and 2.1% of the Essentials POS.

**Table 9: Family Income Deciles across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Income Across POS	1 - Lowest Income	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Highest Income
Academic	7.2%	7.6%	8.2%	9.9%	10.1%	10.6%	11%	11.1%	12.5%	11.7%
Applied	13.2%	12.9%	13%	11.4%	11.9%	10.1%	10.1%	8.5%	6%	3%
Essentials	18.2%	14.7%	13.2%	11.6%	10%	9.5%	9.2%	7.8%	3.7%	2.1%
Undefined	11.4%	12.3%	11.4%	11.2%	9.7%	10.6%	9.7%	8%	9.5%	6.3%
Total	9.4%	9.5%	9.8%	10.4%	10.6%	10.5%	10.6%	10.1%	10.3%	8.8%

At each income decile point, differences in income are observed. However, overall trends revealed notable disparities in income representation across Programs of Study. As seen in the Figure 13, trends within the Academic POS revealed an almost linear positive correlation with income. Conversely, income in the Essentials POS, had an almost linear negative correlation with income.

**Figure 13: Income Trends across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

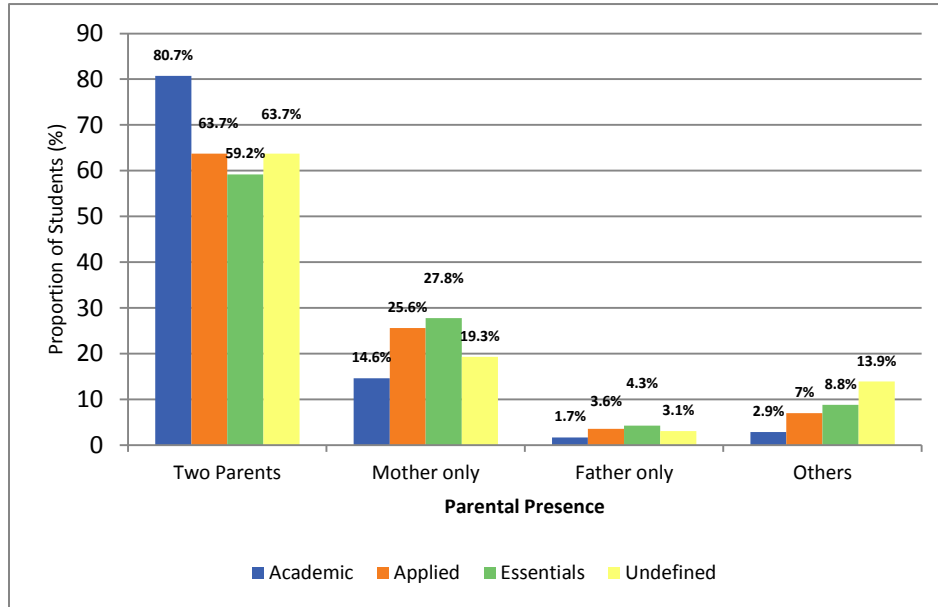


**Parental Presence:** In terms of family structure, parental presence also had a close relationship with Programs of Study. Of students in the Academic POS, 80.7% lived with both parents (this included shared custody). This proportion dropped for students within the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study to 63.7% and 59.2% respectively. Conversely, the proportion of students living with their mother only, father only, and who lived in alternate situations is lowest in the Academic POS. These proportions almost doubled or more than doubled in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study. For example, 14.6% of students in the Academic POS lived with only their mother, however, that proportion close to double in the Applied (25.6%) and Essentials (27.8%) Programs of Study.

**Table 10: Parental Presence across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Parental Presence	Two Parents	Mother only	Father only	Others
Academic	80.7%	14.6%	1.7%	2.9%
Applied	63.7%	25.6%	3.6%	7%
Essentials	59.2%	27.8%	4.3%	8.8%
Undefined	63.7%	19.3%	3.1%	13.9%
Total	75.9%	17.5%	2.3%	4.3%

**Figure 14: Parental Presence across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



**Parents Living in Canada:** Not all students live with their parents nor do their parents live in the country. The majority of secondary school students have both parents who live inside of Canada (87%). However, it is interesting to note that there is a relationship between whether a student’s parents live in the country and their Grade 9-10 POS. Students in the Academic POS had the highest proportion of both parents living in Canada (89.8%), while students in the Essentials POS had a notably lower proportion (76.7%). Students who have an Undefined POS sometimes include students who have recently arrived to the TDSB. It is interesting to note that only 65.7% of this group had both parents living in Canada.

Since this is a newly explored variable, the column figures were also included. Students whose parents were both in Canada were most likely enrolled in the Academic POS (75.2%) and much less likely enrolled in the Applied (20.1%) or Essentials Programs of Study (2.7%). It appears that when students had one parent living outside of Canada their likelihood of being enrolled in the Academic POS dropped to 60%, and their likelihood of being enrolled in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study rose to 30% and 4.8% respectively. If students had both parents living outside of Canada, their rate of enrolment in the Academic POS fell to less than half (48.9%) and their likelihood of enrolment in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study increased to 30.3% and 7.5% respectively.

**Table 11: Parents Living Inside and Outside of Canada across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Parents in Canada	One Parent	Both Parents	No Parents outside Canada	Total
Academic	8.1%	2.1%	89.8%	100%
Applied	13.7%	4.5%	81.8%	100%
Essentials	15.4%	7.9%	76.7%	100%
Undefined	18.8%	15.5%	65.7%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>100%</b>
Parents in Canada	One Parent	Both Parents	No Parents outside Canada	
Academic	60%	48.9%	75.2%	
Applied	30%	30.3%	20.1%	
Essentials	4.8%	7.5%	2.7%	
Undefined	5.2%	13.3%	2.1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	

**The Learning Opportunity Index:** The Learning Opportunity Index (LOI) is a critical scale in measuring external challenges facing students within the TDSB. It is a composite scale that includes median income, percentage of families whose income is below the Low Income Measure (before tax), percentage of families receiving social assistance, adults with low education, adults with university degrees, and lone-parent families. Each of these indicators is measured for each student at the neighbourhood level. Cumulatively, a score is collected upon which each school is ranked according to level of need. At the secondary school level, 109 schools were included in the LOI analysis. Each school was ranked based on each students' neighbourhood level of need. A rank of 1 represents the lowest level of external challenges, while 109 represents the highest level of external challenges. The following analysis explores the mean LOI score for students across each POS. The minimum mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.001 which represents the least level of external challenges. The maximum mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.956 which represents the highest level of external challenges. The mean LOI across the secondary school panel is 0.45.

Along the trajectory of secondary school pathways presented at the beginning of this report, the mean LOI score varied dramatically. For example, the LOI score for students who have been promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 was substantially higher at 0.386 than for students who had been transferred at 0.541.

**Table 12: The Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Grade 8 to 9 Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Promotion or Transference	Minimum	Maximum	Mean LOI
Promoted	0.001	0.956	0.386
Transferred	0.001	0.956	0.541
<b>Average Across Secondary Schools</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.956</b>	<b>0.45</b>

Similar trends of stratification are observed across Programs of Study. Table 13 demonstrates the variance of the mean LOI score across Programs of Study. The mean LOI for the Academic POS was 0.379 which rose to 0.571 for the Applied and 0.698 for the Essentials Programs of Study. The rise in the mean LOI score across programs of study demonstrates the rise in external challenge facing students in the Applied and Essentials Programs of Study as compared to the Academic.

**Table 13: The Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

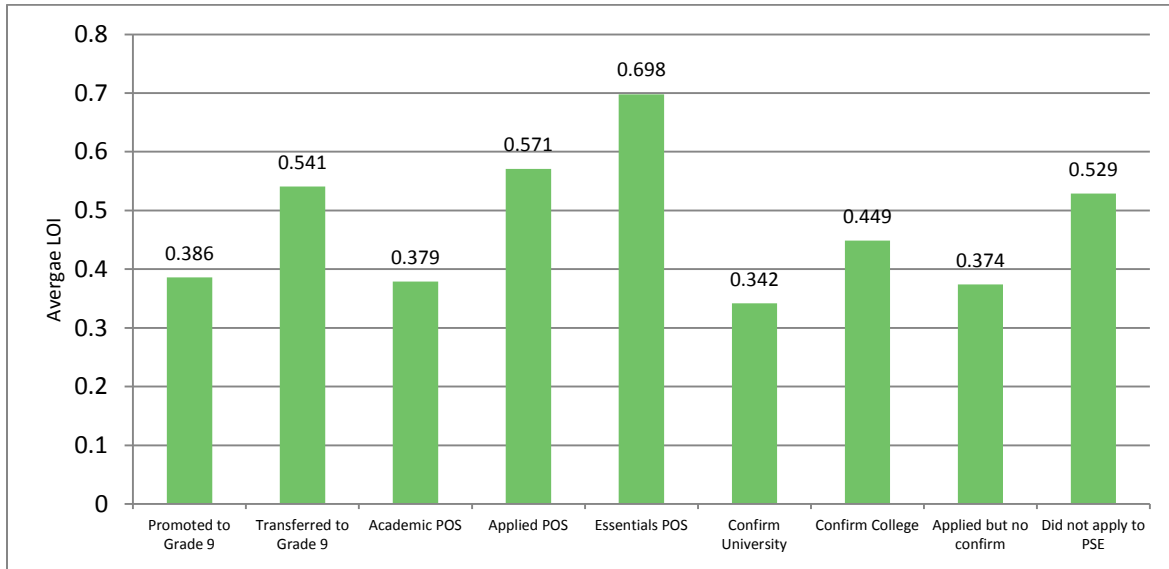
Program of Study	Minimum	Maximum	Mean LOI
Academic	0.001	0.956	0.379
Applied	0.001	0.956	0.571
Essentials	0.001	0.956	0.698
Undefined	0.001	0.956	0.57
Average Across Secondary Schools	0.001	0.956	0.45

Table 14 looks at the variation of the mean LOI scores across post-secondary confirmations. Again, similar trends emerge. Students with the least access to university or post-secondary opportunities (students who did not apply) had a substantially higher average LOI score (0.529) than students who confirmed an offer of admission to university (0.342).

**Table 14: The Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Post-secondary Pathways, 2011-12**

Post-secondary Confirmations	Minimum	Maximum	Mean LOI
Confirm University	0.001	0.956	0.342
Confirm College	0.001	0.956	0.449
Applied but no confirm	0.001	0.956	0.374
Did not apply	0.001	0.956	0.529
Average Across Secondary Schools	0.001	0.956	0.45

**Figure 15: The Learning Opportunity Index across Programs of Study and Post-secondary Education Indicators, 2011-12**



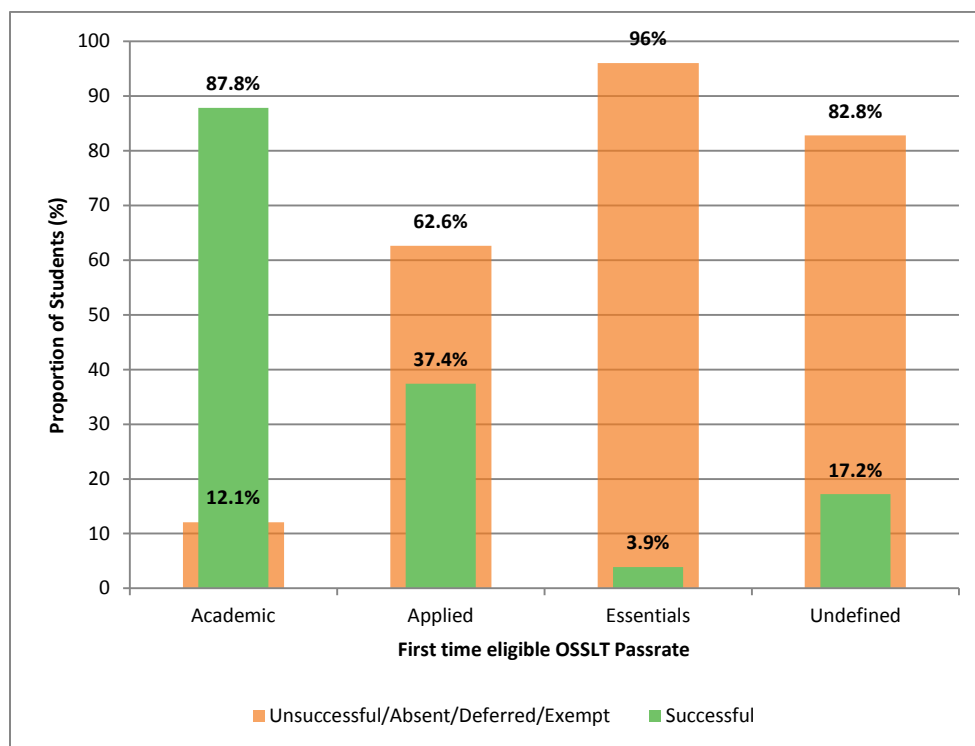
### Achievement and Belonging across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test:** For the analysis on Programs of Study, achievement variables were of significant importance. A measure of academic success employed in the TDSB is a successful pass of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). The OSSLT is considered a high-stakes test as it requires a pass in order to be eligible to graduate with a secondary school diploma. For students who continue to receive unsuccessful results for the OSSLT, an optional course is available as a proxy for the test and will also allow students to pursue a diploma. In the case of the OSSLT, 87.8% of students in the Academic POS passed the first time they were eligible to write. However, the pass rate for first-time eligible students dropped dramatically for students in the Applied POS (37.4%) and even further for the Essentials POS, dropping to a surprising 3.9%.

**Table 15: OSSLT Pass Rate for First-time Eligible Students across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

OSSLT Rate Pass FTE	Successful	Unsuccessful/Absent/Deferred/Exempt
Academic	87.8%	12.1%
Applied	37.4%	62.6%
Essentials	3.9%	96%
Undefined	17.2%	82.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.1%</b>	<b>27%</b>

Figure 16: OSSLT Results for First-time Eligible Students across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12



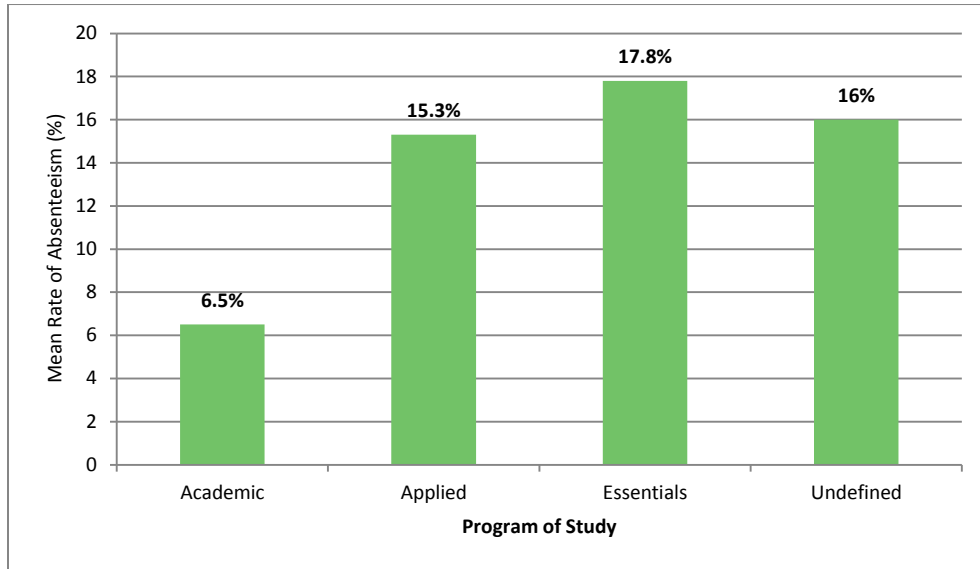
**Suspensions:** In terms of suspensions, only 3.6% of the secondary school student population has been suspended. However, rates of suspension changed across Programs of Study. Only 1.8% of students in the Academic POS had ever been suspended from school; whereas, this proportion rose for students in the Applied (7.1%) and Essentials (11.5%) Programs of Study.

Table 16: Suspensions across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12

Suspensions	No Suspension	Suspended
Academic	98.2%	1.8%
Applied	92.9%	7.1%
Essentials	88.5%	11.5%
Undefined	96.7%	3.3%
Total	96.4%	3.6%

**Absenteeism:** The average Grade 9-12 absenteeism rate for 2011-12 was 9.5%. However, there was a very wide range across Programs of Study. The absenteeism rate for students in the Academic POS was 6.5% which rose to 15.3% for students in the Applied and 17.8% for students in the Essentials Programs of Study.

**Figure 17: Absenteeism across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

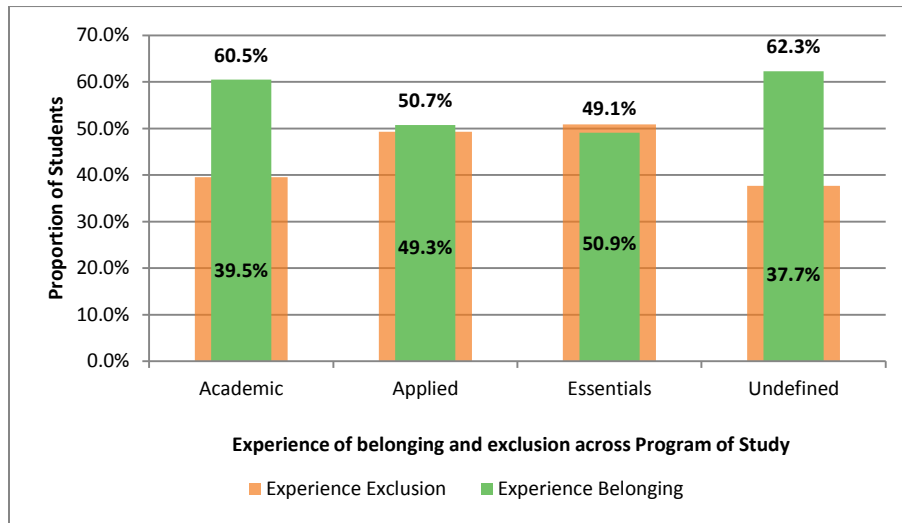


**Experiences of Belonging and Exclusion:** Many indicators explored in this report focused on established secondary school pathways, student demographic characteristics, levels of external challenge and academic achievement across programs of study. The investigation into students’ experience of belonging and exclusion draws from students self-reported experiences in school captured in the TDSB’s 2011 Student Census. For this exploration, a scale was created employing variables that addressed students’ experiences of inclusion, acceptance, safety, and shared power in the classroom. The scale deliberately focused on passive experiences of the students and veered away from aspects of achievement or individual identity. Student responses were merged into a scale by their mean and truncated. Across the Grade 9-12 student population who filled out Form A of the TDSB’s 2011 Student Census, 58.1% reported experiencing a sense of belonging and 41.9% of students experienced exclusion in school. However, the experience of belonging and exclusion varied across Programs of Study. Students in the Academic POS were more likely to experience a sense of belonging at 60.5% compared to students in the Applied POS at 50.7%. Conversely, the rate of student-reported exclusion dropped from 49.3% of students in the Applied POS to 39.5% of students in the Academic POS.

**Table 17: The Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**

Program of Study	Experience Belonging	Experience Exclusion
Academic	60.5%	39.5%
Applied	50.7%	49.3%
Essentials	49.1%	50.9%
No POS	62.3%	37.7%
<b>TDSB Total</b>	<b>58.1%</b>	<b>41.9%</b>

**Figure 18: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Grade 9-10 Programs of Study, 2011-12**



## Conclusion

The institution of public education, not unlike other systems of redistribution, is intended to function as an equalizer of opportunity for students facing social disadvantage. As demonstrated throughout this report, the existence of established secondary school pathways leading to varying levels of academic Programs of Study and post-high school opportunities disproportionately disadvantages historically marginalized groups. Outcomes revealed that certain groups of students are accessing post-secondary opportunities while others encounter barriers.

Despite the Ontario Ministry of Education’s claims that the process of streaming has been dismantled (Brown & Sinay, 2008) through the restructuring of course offerings, this analysis has demonstrated clear and consistent trends pointing to established secondary school pathways for students. Evidence from the data demonstrates that, as early as Grade 8, students are set on a trajectory of achievement traversing across Programs of Study, to Grade 12 course enrolment, to PSE access. Most concerning are findings that demonstrate the disproportionality of marginalized groups identified by race, gender, ability, and class that appear to be congregated along limited academic trajectories.

Although POS is the most widely recognized mechanism involved in the process of establishing secondary school and post-secondary pathways, this report also explores school-wide and within-school programming. As an excerpt from a much larger project challenging the notion of choice in students' academic trajectories, the exploration of school-wide and within school programming demonstrates the congregation of students included and excluded from valued programming.

## CHAPTER 2: SCHOOL-WIDE STRUCTURES

In the exploration of school structures and their relationship to student demographics, achievement, and students' sense of belonging, school-wide structures at the secondary school level were investigated. School-wide structures are defined as programming decisions and strategies that affect the entire school population as opposed to a particular segment (analysis of specific programs to follow in Chapter 3). Although not an exhaustive list, the school-wide structures explored in this report include Specialty Arts schools, Alternative schools, Special Education schools, and schools that offer Limited Academic and University Preparedness courses. Through a detailed comparison, an exploration of school-wide structures revealed not only demographic trends in program participation, but also a strong relationship between school-wide programming decisions, student achievement, and students' sense of belonging and citizenship within their school community.

### Description of School-wide Structures

**Alternative Schools:** There are currently 19 elementary and 22 secondary Alternative schools in the TDSB<sup>4</sup>. The TDSB cites that “TDSB Alternative schools offer students and parents something different from mainstream schooling. Each alternative school, whether elementary or secondary is unique, with a distinct identity and approach to curriculum delivery. They usually feature a small student population, a commitment to innovative and experimental programs, and volunteer commitment from parents/guardians and other community members. While the schools offer Ministry approved courses, these courses are delivered in a learning environment that is flexible and meets the needs of individual students. Each alternative school is a school of choice and has its own distinct culture. With such a wide range of alternative schools representing a host of different program delivery models, it is important for students and their families to visit a variety of Alternative schools before choosing one that best meets their needs.”<sup>5</sup>

For this analysis, each secondary school identified as Alternative through School Planning was selected and merged with data from the Student Information Systems and the TDSB's 2011 Student Census survey.

**Specialized Arts Schools:** Specialized Arts Schools are known for their prestigious programming. Admission is based upon a competitive application and/or audition process. The current TDSB website dedicated to Specialized Arts programming states that “[t]hese programs are for students who wish to pursue visual arts and performing arts at a professional level. This program consists of intensive programs within select schools as well as specialized schools focused solely on the arts.”<sup>6</sup> Only two secondary Arts Schools were included in this analysis.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=122&menuid=490&pageid=379#>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=122&menuid=490&pageid=379#>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=11&menuid=23538&pageid=20405>

**Special Education Schools:** Schools selected as Special Education Schools were identified through School Planning. This analysis included all secondary schools identified as Special Education Schools. Special Education Schools comprise of students identified as having Special Education Needs and are resourced as Intensive Support sites. At the time of analysis (2013), there were six secondary Special Education Schools.

**Limited Academic Schools: Schools with Limited Academic/University Preparedness Opportunities:** Through the exploration into school structures and previous research findings (Parekh, Killoran & Cameron, 2011), it was revealed that there are secondary schools in the TDSB that do not offer Academic or University Preparedness level courses or too few to support students seeking eligibility for post-secondary education at the University level. Schools selected for this analysis were included if they did not offer any English or Mathematics courses at the University level. Initial observations revealed that every secondary Special Education school also fell within the category of Limited Academic schools. For this analysis, Special Education schools were removed from the Limited Academic school category which left 12 schools as part of the analysis.

**Total Schools:** For each category of analysis, overall results from the secondary school level in the TDSB were included as a baseline.

**Overview of Analyses:** This section of the report first explores school-wide structures through a lens of equity by investigating the proportion of students promoted or transferred to each school type, students' POS, achievement, and post-secondary pathways followed by an analysis of student demographics. The conclusion of this section looks at students' sense of belonging and exclusion within these school-wide structures.

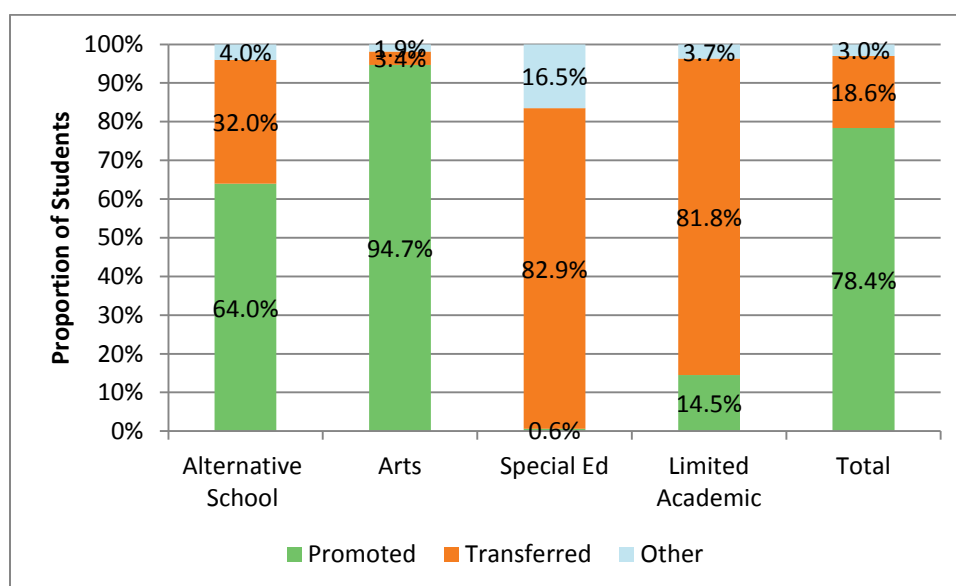
### Pathways across Selected School-wide Programs

**Promotion and Transference:** For the majority of students, the transition process from Grade 8 to Grade 9 is often a successful one. Overall, 78.4% of students are successfully promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9, while only 18.6% are transferred. However, these proportions radically differ across school-wide structures. For students in Specialty Arts schools, 94.7% are successfully promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. This rate drops for students attending secondary Alternative schools down to 64%, and further drops to 14.5% for students in schools Limited Academics. Only 0.6% of students attending Special Education schools were successfully promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. In regards to students' rates of transference, students attending Special Education schools had the highest at 82.9%, followed closely by schools with Limited Academics at 81.8%. Students attending Alternative schools had a rate of transference of 32%, while students attending Specialty Art schools were at 3.4%.

**Table 18: Rates of Promotion and Transference across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Promotion and Transference	Promoted	Transferred	Other
Alternative Schools	64%	32%	4%
Arts Schools	94.7%	3.4%	1.9%
Special Education Schools	0.6%	82.9%	16.5%
Schools with Limited Academic	14.5%	81.8%	3.7%
Average Across TDSB	78.4%	18.6%	3%

**Figure 19: Proportion of Promotion and Transference across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12, Grade 8-10 Students Only**

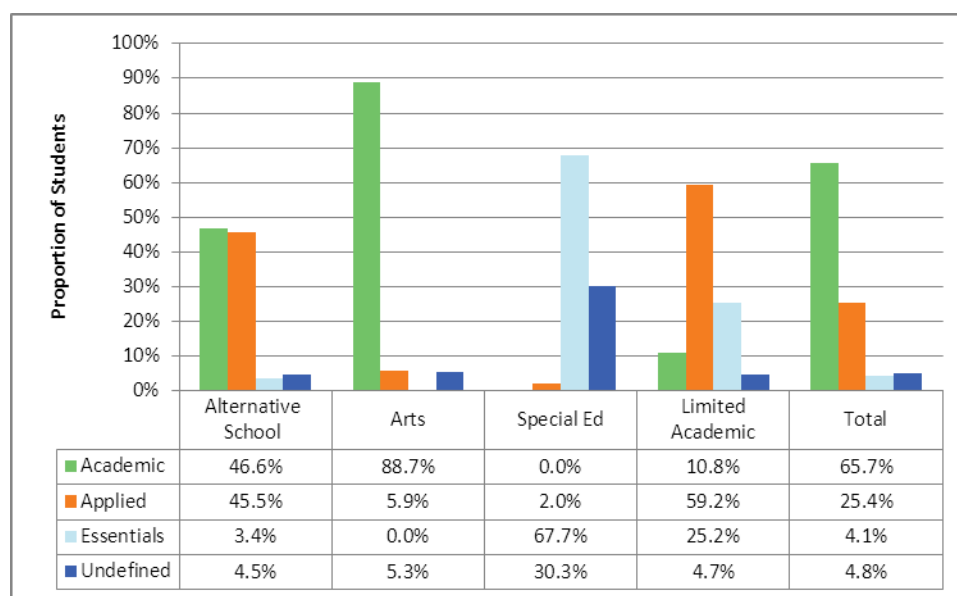


**Programs of Study:** Across school-wide structures, there is a large variance of participation within levels of Programs of Study. Overall, 65.7% of students in Grades 9-10 take the majority of their courses in the Academic POS while 25.4% take the majority of their courses in the Applied POS. Less than 10% of the student population take the majority of their courses in the Essentials POS (4.1%) or have an Undefined POS (4.8%). The proportion of students in each POS varies across school-wide structures. As an example of this variance, the proportion of students taking the Academic POS ranged from 88.7% of students in Specialty Arts schools, to 46.6% of students in Alternative schools, to 10.8% of students in schools with Limited Academics to 0% of students in Special Education schools. Conversely, the proportion of students in the Essentials POS notably rose from 0% of students in Specialty Arts schools, to 3.4% of students in Alternative schools, to 25.2 % of students in schools with Limited Academics, to 67.3% of students in Special Education schools. Schools that had the highest proportion of students taking the majority of their courses in the Applied POS were Alternative schools (45.5%) and schools with Limited Academics (59.2%).

**Table 19: Grade 9-10 Programs of Study across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Program of Study	Academic	Applied	Essentials	Undefined
Alternative Schools	46.6%	45.5%	3.4%	4.5%
Arts Schools	88.7%	5.9%	0%	5.3%
Special Education Schools	0%	2%	67.7%	30.3%
Schools with Limited Academic	10.8%	59.2%	25.2%	4.7%
Average Across TDSB	65.7%	25.4%	4.1%	4.8%

**Figure 20: Grade 9-10 Programs of Study across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

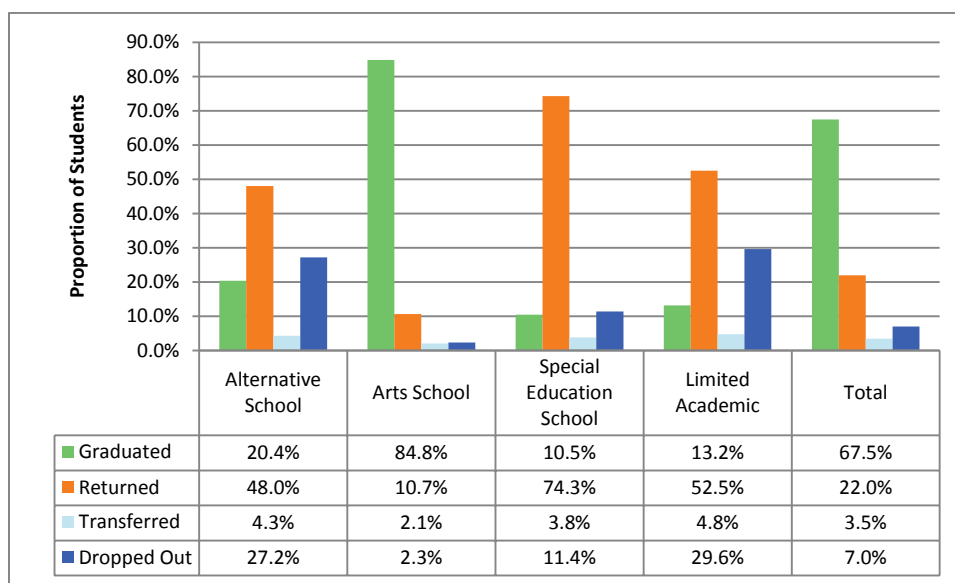


**Graduation:** Graduation is a key achievement variable in the exploration of academic pathways. Of students who were in Grade 12 for the first time in the 2011-12 school year, 67.5% graduated while 22% returned for a fifth year in the TDSB. Overall, 3.5% of Grade 12 students transferred outside the TDSB and 7% dropped out. Across school-wide structures, graduation rates varied dramatically. For students attending Specialty Arts schools, 84.8% graduated on time, 10.7% returned for a fifth year, 2.1% transferred out of the TDSB, and 2.3% dropped out. Graduation rates fell for students attending Alternative schools to 20.4%, as well as for students attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities to 13.2%, and to 10.5% for students attending Special Education schools. The rate of students dropping out prior to graduation rose to over a quarter for students attending Alternative schools (27.2%) and schools with Limited Academic opportunities (29.6%), but were notably lower for students attending Special Education schools (11.4%). The highest proportion of returning students was for Special Education schools, a rate that stood at 74.3%.

**Table 20: Graduation Rates across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Graduation	Graduated	Returned	Transferred	Dropped Out
Alternative Schools	20.4%	48%	4.3%	27.2%
Arts Schools	84.8%	10.7%	2.1%	2.3%
Special Education Schools	10.5%	74.3%	3.8%	11.4%
Schools with Limited Academic	13.2%	52.5%	4.8%	29.6%
Average Across TDSB	67.5%	22%	3.5%	7%

**Figure 21: Graduation Rates across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



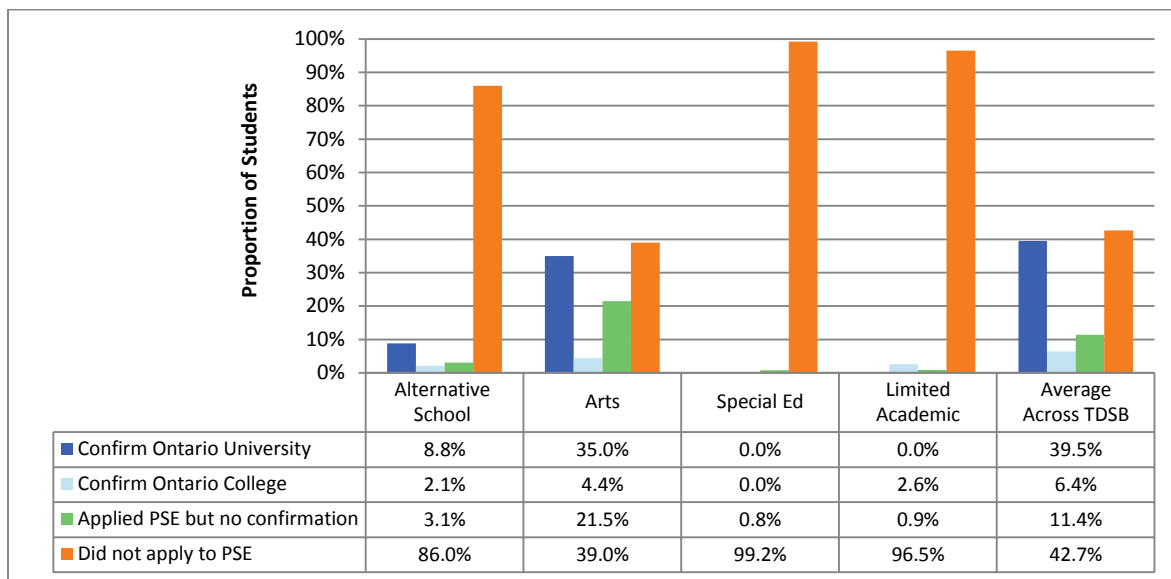
**Post-secondary Confirmation:** As discussed in the chapter on Programs of Study, post-secondary access is the outcome of many embedded programmatic decisions and opportunities. Overall, 39.5% of students at the secondary school level in the TDSB will confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario university while 6.4% will confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario college. Students who applied to a post-secondary education (PSE) institution but who either accepted an offer outside of Ontario or were not successful made up 11.4% of the secondary school student population. However, 42.7% of secondary school students did not apply to either college or university. Students attending Specialty Arts schools were slightly less likely to confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario university (35%) and much more likely to apply to a PSE institution without confirming an offer (21.5%). Only 39% of students attending Specialty Arts schools did not apply to any PSE institution. Aside from the Specialty Arts schools, the three remaining school-wide structures resulted in a far smaller proportion of students confirming offers of admission to an Ontario university or college or in applications to any PSE institution. Only 8.8% of students in Alternative schools confirmed an offer of admission to an Ontario university and 2.1% confirmed an offer of admission to an Ontario college. No students

attending a Special Education School confirmed an offer of admission to an Ontario university or college. Although there were no confirmations of offers of admission to an Ontario university for students attending schools with Limited Academics, 2.6% did confirm an offer to an Ontario college. The proportion of students who did not apply to any PSE institution were 86% of students in Alternative Schools, 96.2% of students in schools with Limited Academics, and 99.2% of students in Special Education schools.

**Table 21: Proportion of Post-secondary Confirmations across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Post-Secondary Confirmations	Confirm Ontario University	Confirm Ontario College	Applied PSE but no confirmation	Did not apply to PSE
Alternative Schools	8.8%	2.1%	3.1%	86%
Arts Schools	35%	4.4%	21.5%	39%
Special Education Schools	0%	0%	0.8%	99.2%
Schools with Limited Academic	0%	2.6%	0.9%	96.5%
Average Across TDSB	39.5%	6.4%	11.4%	42.7%

**Figure 22: Proportion of Post-secondary Confirmations across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



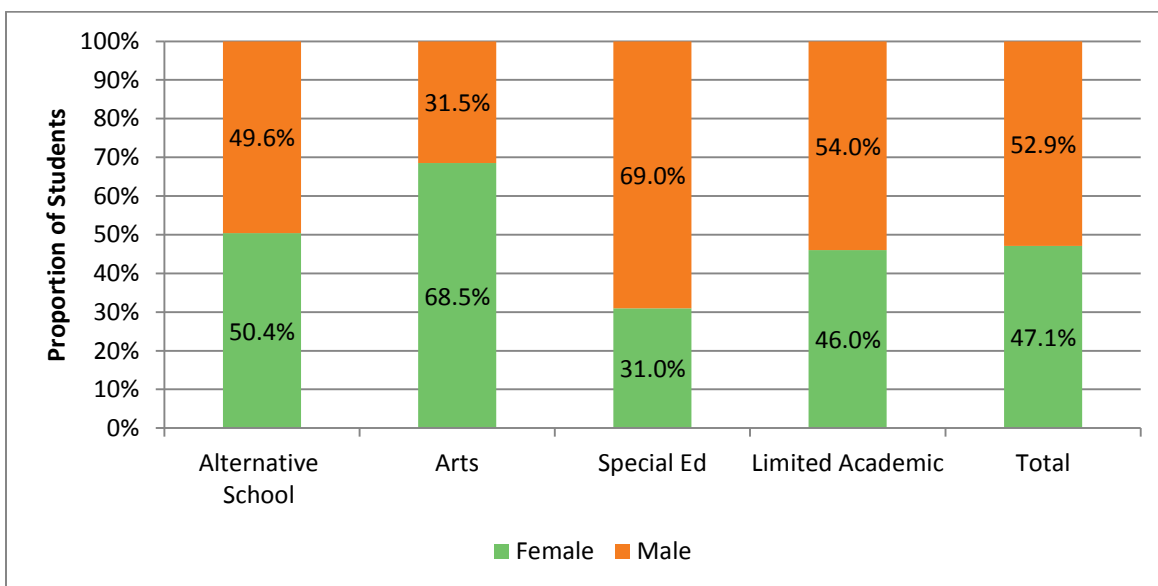
## Student Demographic Variables across Selected School-wide Structures

**Gender:** Gender proportions varied across school-wide structures. In the TDSB’s secondary school panel, there is a gender divide where there is roughly 5% more male than female students resulting in proportions of 47.1% female and 52.9% male. The gender proportion in schools with Limited Academics roughly mirrored the overall gender proportion across the TDSB’s secondary school panel. The proportion of female students was slightly higher in Alternative schools (50.4%) bringing the proportion of the two genders to near equal. The proportion of female students was notably higher in Specialty Arts schools (68.5%) bringing the proportion of the two genders to near equal. The proportion of female students was notably higher in Specialty Arts schools (68.5%) and substantially smaller in Special Education schools (31%).

**Table 22: Gender across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Gender	Female	Male
Alternative Schools	50.4%	49.6%
Arts Schools	68.5%	31.5%
Special Education Schools	31%	69%
Schools with Limited Academic	46%	54%
Total Across TDSB	47.1%	52.9%

**Figure 23: Gender across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



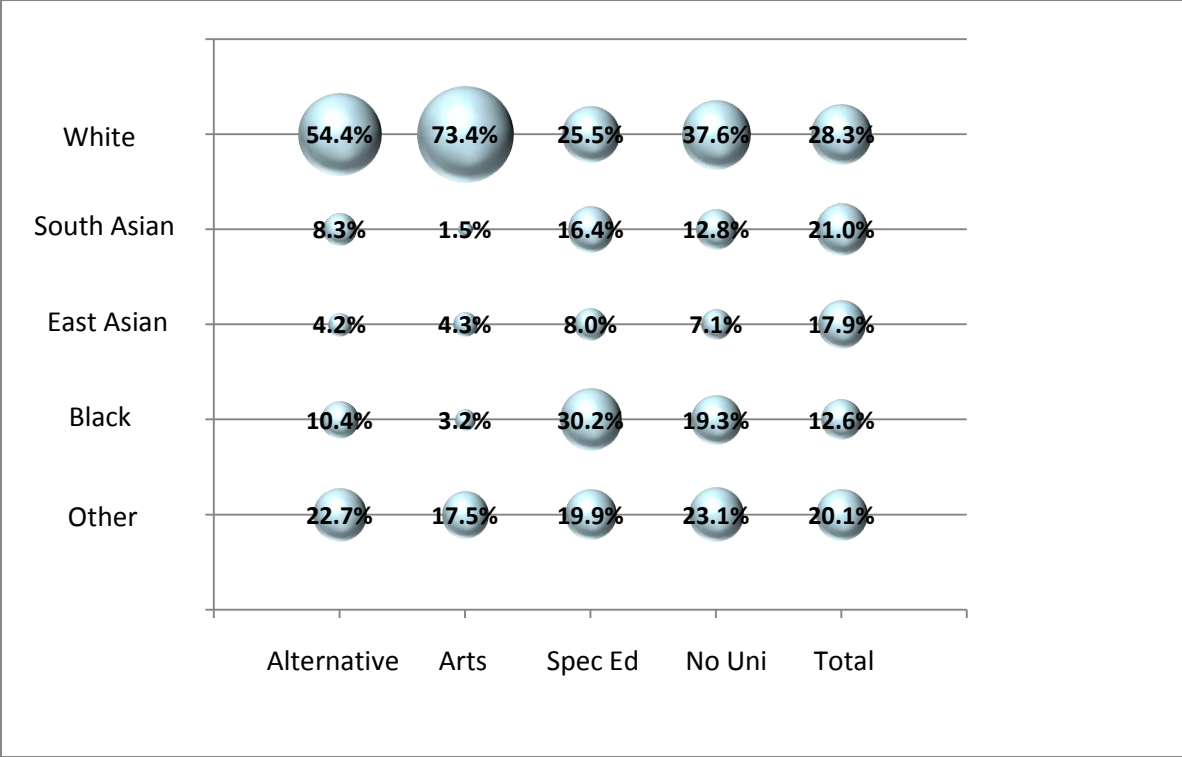
**Race:** The four largest self-identified racial categories across the TDSB’s secondary school panel are White (28.3%), South Asian (21%), East Asian (17.9%), and Black (12.6%). Racial proportions varied across the school-wide structures, which were included in this analysis. For example, the proportion of self-identified White students was close to triply represented in Specialty Arts School (73.4%), doubly represented in Alternative schools (54.4%) as well as over-represented in Specialty Arts schools (46.5%) and schools with Limited Academic opportunities (37.6%). Self-identified South Asian students were under-represented across all school-wide structures, most notably within the Specialty Arts schools (1.5%) and Alternative Schools (8.3%). The second largest racial category represented within Specialty Arts schools was self-identified Mixed students at 12.6%. As a group, self-identified East Asian students were largely under-represented across Alternative schools (4.2%), Special Education schools (8%), Specialty Arts schools (4.3%), and schools with Limited Academics (7.1%). Self-identified Black students were the largest racial category represented in Special Education schools (30.2%) and were over triply represented. Self-identified Black students were also over-represented in schools with Limited Academic opportunities (19.3%), but were under-represented in both Alternative schools (10.4) and were only a quarter represented within Specialty Arts schools (3.2%).

**Table 23: Racial Categories across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Racial Categories	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White
Alternative Schools	1.2%	10.4%	4.2%	2.8%	3.2%	12.6%	8.3%	2.9%	54.4%
Arts Schools	0.5%	3.2%	4.3%	2.3%	0.7%	12.6%	1.5%	1.4%	73.4%
Special Education Schools	1%	30.2%	8%	4.5%	6%	6.1%	16.4%	2.3%	25.5%
Schools with Limited Academics	2.3%	19.3%	7.1%	2.8%	6.1%	8.5%	12.8%	3.4%	37.6%
<b>TDSB Average</b>	0.3%	12.6%	17.9%	2.2%	5.8%	6.9%	21%	4.9%	28.3%

Figure 24 provides a visualization of the proportionate representation of racial categories across school-wide structures. The columns represent each school type within the analysis, while the rows represent the proportion of self-identified racial groups. The final column on the right represents racial proportion across the TDSB’s secondary panel.

**Figure 24: Racial Categories across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



**Student First Language:** The student language most notably over-represented in Specialty Arts schools is English making up close to ¾ of the population. Students who spoke English were the only key language group over-represented in Alternative schools. English and Pashto were the only two languages to have a notable over-representation in schools with Limited Academics whereas students who spoke English, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, and Tamil were over-represented in Special Education schools.

**Table 24: Student Language across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

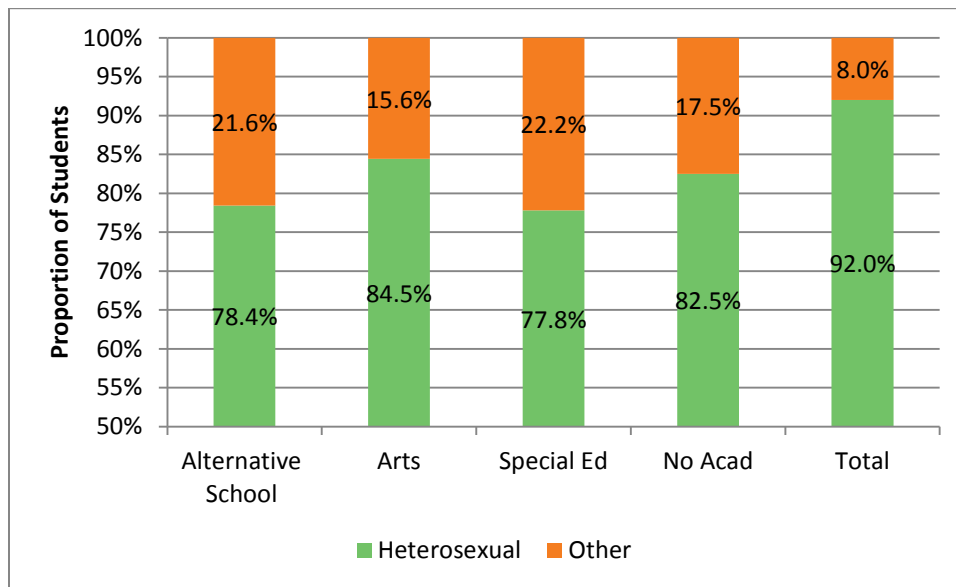
First Language	Arts Schools	Alternative Schools	Schools with Limited Academics	Special Education Schools	Total
Albanian	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%
Arabic	0.1%	1.2%	1.7%	0.9%	1.6%
Bengali	0.2%	0.8%	1.1%	0.6%	2.0%
Chinese	2.7%	2.7%	4.6%	5.3%	13.3%
Dari		0.7%	1.7%	0.7%	0.8%
English	79.0%	75.3%	65.4%	59.8%	44.3%
French	3.4%	1.0%	0.9%	0.5%	0.8%
Greek	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.8%
Gujarati	0.1%	0.5%	0.8%	1.4%	1.8%
Hindi		0.5%	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%
Korean	0.6%	0.4%	0.6%	0.4%	1.6%
Pashto		0.1%	0.7%	0.3%	0.4%
Persian	0.4%	1.1%	1.6%	2.1%	2.2%
Portuguese	0.7%	0.4%	0.5%	1.3%	0.6%
Punjabi	0.1%	0.3%	0.4%	1.1%	1.4%
Romanian	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%	0.3%
Russian	1.4%	1.0%	0.2%	0.4%	1.4%
Serbian	1.0%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.7%
Somali	0.1%	0.7%	0.9%	2.9%	2.6%
Spanish	2.4%	2.4%	2.4%	3.6%	2.4%
Tagalog	0.5%	1.7%	2.3%	0.9%	2.2%
Tamil	0.2%	2.1%	3.4%	5.6%	5.2%
Turkish	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Urdu		1.4%	1.6%	3.5%	3.5%
Vietnamese	0.5%	0.5%	0.3%	1.1%	1.9%

**Sexuality:** From the results of the TDSB’s 2011 Student Census, students were given the opportunity to self-identify their sexuality. Across the TDSB’s secondary school panel, 92% of students self-identified as Heterosexual. Interestingly, this proportion had a slight variation across each school-wide structure explored in this analysis. For example, 78.4% of students in Alternative schools and 84.5% of students in Specialty Arts schools self-identified as Heterosexual. Likewise, 77.8% of students within Special Education schools and 82.5% of students in schools with Limited Academics self-identified as Heterosexual. One confounding factor within this analysis is the response option of “Not Sure/Questioning” as it is believed that many students may select this response because they interpreted the statement as “Not sure of the question” as opposed to an identification of sexuality (Brown & Sinay, 2008).

**Table 25: Sexuality Categories across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Self-identified Sexuality	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Other	Not Sure/Questioning
Alternative Schools	78.4%	3.2%	9.2%	3.6%	5.6%
Arts Schools	84.5%	2.5%	4.5%	2.2%	6.4%
Special Education Schools	77.8%	1%	0.9%	1.2%	19.1%
Schools with Limited Academics	82.5%	2%	5.8%	1.6%	8.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>92%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>4.4%</b>

**Figure 25: Sexuality Categories across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



**Students with Special Education Needs:** Students with Special Education Needs include students who have been formally identified through an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) as well as students who have not been formally identified, but who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The following analysis looks at the proportion of students across school-wide structures who have been identified as having Special Education Needs (SEN) (excluding Gifted). Across the TDSB’s secondary school panel, 15.1% of students have been identified with SEN; however, this proportion fluctuated across school-wide structures. Students attending Specialty Arts schools were slightly more likely to be identified with an SEN (17.3%). Students attending Alternative schools were slightly less likely to have been identified with an SEN (14.7%). Whereas, students attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities were more than twice as likely (35.5%) to be identified with SEN. Understandably, close to all students attending Special Education schools were identified with SEN (99.2%).

**Table 26: Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted)	No SEN	SEN
Alternative Schools	85.3%	14.7%
Arts Schools	82.7%	17.3%
Special Education Schools	0.8%	99.2%
Schools with Limited Academic	64.5%	35.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>

**Figure 26: Proportion of Students with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) across School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

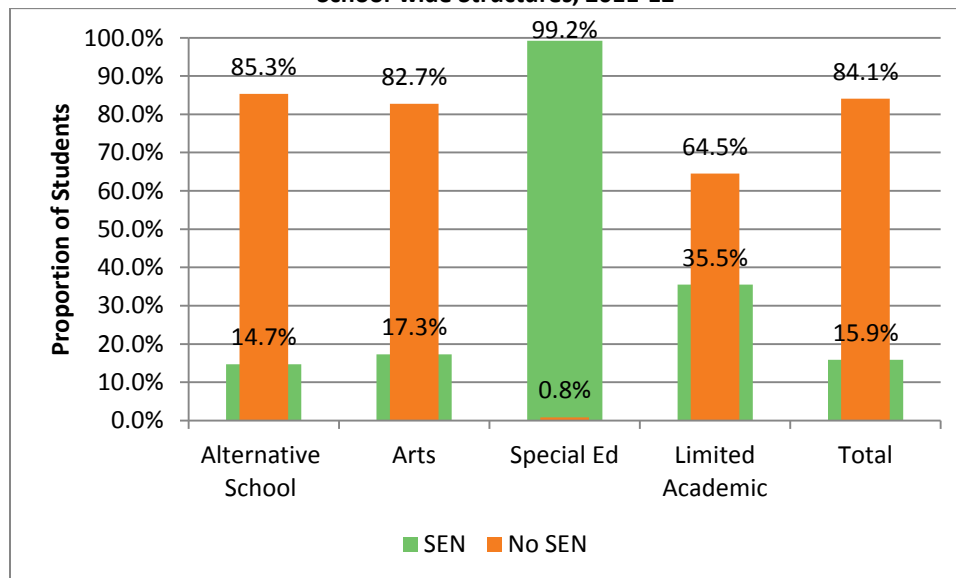


Table 27 demonstrates the proportion of students identified either formally or informally with Special Education Needs (SEN) across both SEN categories and school-wide structures. The greatest proportion of students with SEN attending Alternative schools was largely students who only have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) (42.9%) and students who have been identified as having a Learning Disability (36.9%). Although the proportion of students who only have an IEP is greater in Specialty Arts schools (37.1%) than across the entire secondary school panel (31.4%), the proportion of students with a Learning Disability (LD) is smaller at 30.7%. Just over a quarter of students with SEN (26.6%) attending Specialty Arts schools have been identified as Gifted. The three largest proportions of SEN categories represented within schools with Limited Academics were students who only have an IEP (33.6%), students identified with a Learning Disability (34.8%), and students identified as having a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID) (18.8%). The proportion of students who had an IEP and LD closely mirror the proportions across the TDSB's secondary school panel; however, the proportion of students with MID was almost double that of the total (9.6%). For students attending Special Education schools, SEN categorical proportions varied from overall trends. There was a marked increase in students identified as having Developmental Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability, Autism, and Physical Disability in Special Education schools. With Special Education schools, students identified with Developmental Disability (16.7%) and Physical Disability (5.9%) were represented at over five times the total. Students with MID (49.1%) and Autism (10.8%) were between 2-3 times represented in Special Education schools.

**Table 27: Special Education Needs (including Gifted) across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Special Education Needs	IEP Only	Autism	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Learning Disability	Lang. Impair	Gifted	MID	Develop Disability	Blind and Low Vision	Physical Disability	Multiple Exception	Behave
Alternative Schools	42.9%	1.1%	0.2%	36.9%	0.7%	10%	3.1%	0%	0%	0%	0.4%	4.7%
Arts Schools	37.1%	0.6%	0.4%	30.7%	0.0%	26.6%	0.4%	3.1%	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%	0.8%
Special Education Schools	3.2%	10.8%	0.8%	7.5%	0.8%	0%	49.1%	16.7%	0.2%	5.9%	0.3%	4.7%
Schools with Limited Academics	33.6%	3.1%	0.2%	34.8%	0.9%	0.3%	18.8%	0.9%	0%	0.6%	0.2%	6.7%
Total	31.4%	3%	0.6%	32.2%	0.8%	15.4%	9.5%	2.9%	0.1%	1.1%	0.1%	2.9%

## Family Factors across Selected School-wide Structures

**Generational Status:** The TDSB is unique in that close to three quarters (71.5%) of its secondary school student population hold first generation status. However, across the selected school-wide structures, the proportion of first generation students was greatly reduced. The proportion of first generation students attending Alternative schools was close to half (41.8%) of the total (71.5%). The proportion of first generation students remained notably reduced for students attending Specialty Arts schools, Special Education schools, and schools with Limited Academics. Conversely, the proportion of third generation students was disproportionately over-represented within each of the school-wide structures presented in this analysis, most notably in Specialty Arts schools (50.2%), Alternative schools (40.9%), and schools with Limited Academics (36.2%) compared to the total at 19.8%.

**Table 28: Generational Status across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

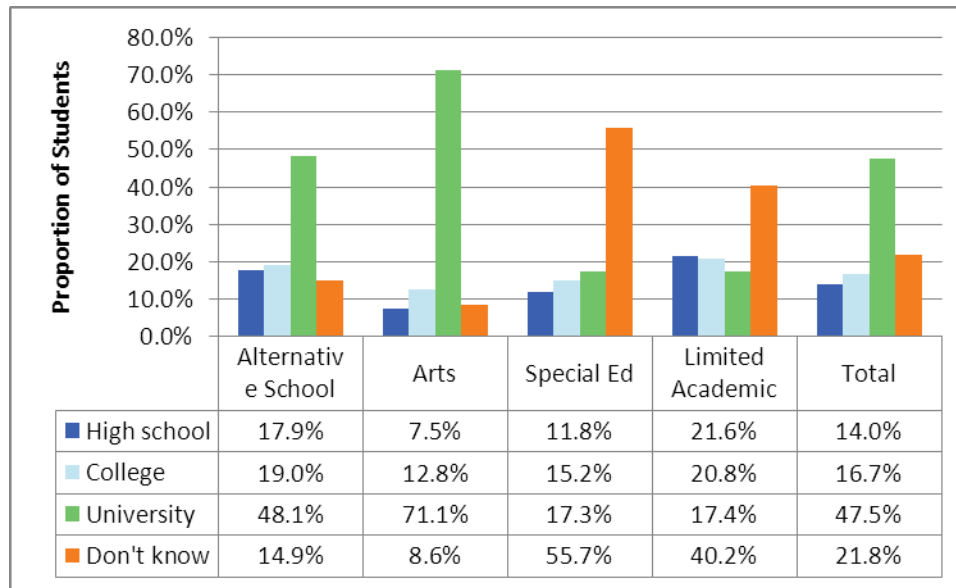
Generational Status	Third Generation	Second Generation	First Generation
Alternative Schools	40.9%	17.3%	41.8%
Arts Schools	50.2%	24.9%	24.9%
Special Education Schools	28.9%	5.7%	65.4%
Schools with Limited Academic	36.2%	7.6%	56.1%
Total	19.8%	8.7%	71.5%

**Parent Education:** As discussed earlier, parent education has been established as one of the most critical variables in relation to student success and academic outcomes. Here, the relationship between parent education and school-wide structures was explored. Across the TDSB's secondary school panel, 14% of students' parents had a high school education, while 16.7% of students' parents had a college education as their highest level of education achieved. Although 21.8% of the student population noted that they did not know their parents highest level of education, 47.5% recorded that their parents had achieved a university education. These proportions varied across school-wide structures. For example, 71.1% of students attending Specialty Arts schools had parents whose highest level of education was university. Though still slightly higher than the overall total, the proportion of students whose parents had achieved a university education dropped to 48.1% of students attending Alternative schools. Although the proportion of students whose parents' highest level of education was university were substantially lower for both Special Education schools and schools with Limited Academics, it is important to note that these two school-wide structures also had a notable proportion of students who reported not knowing their parents' highest level of education – 55.7% of students attending Special Education schools and 40.2% of students attending schools with Limited Academics.

**Table 29: Parent Education across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Parent Education	High School	College	University	Don't Know
Alternative Schools	17.9%	19%	48.1%	14.9%
Arts Schools	7.5%	12.8%	71.1%	8.6%
Special Education Schools	11.8%	15.2%	17.3%	55.7%
Schools with Limited Academics	21.6%	20.8%	17.4%	40.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>

**Figure 27: Parent Education across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

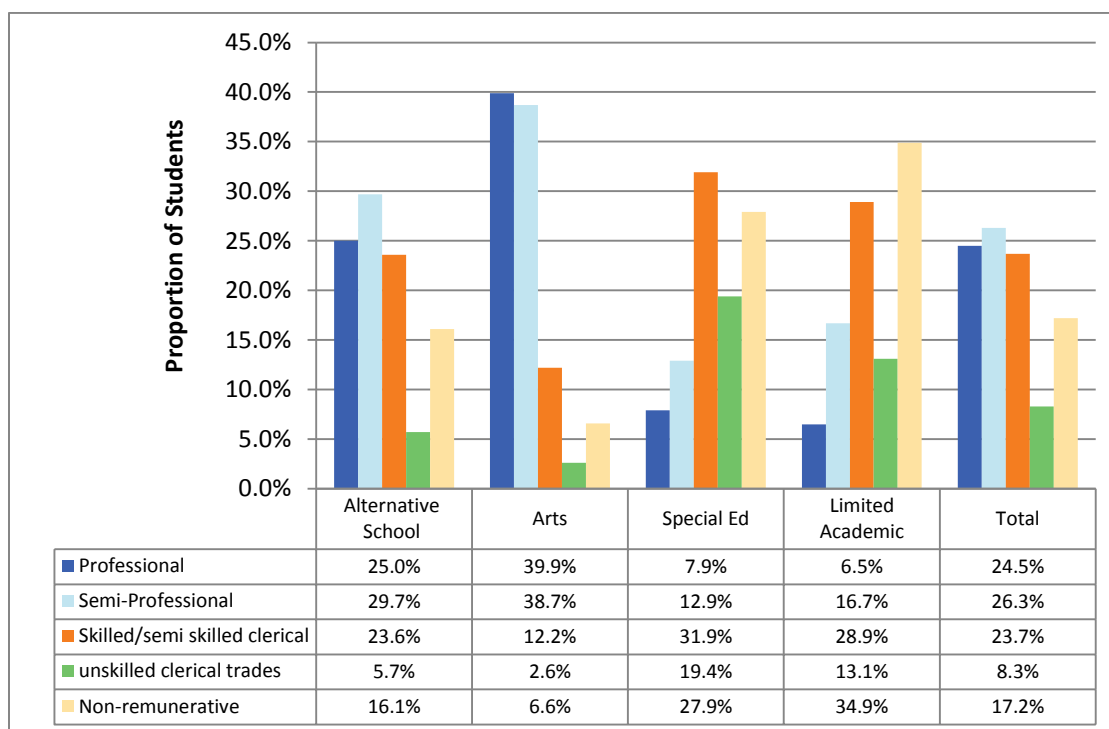


**Parent Occupation:** Table 30 and Figure 28 demonstrate the relationship between parent occupation and school-wide structures. The data revealed interesting results. For example, while just under a quarter (24.5%) of the overall total of the TDSB’s secondary school panel were students whose parents were employed in professional positions, over a third of students (39.9%) in Specialty Arts schools had parents who were employed as professionals. Of all the school-wide structures, the Specialty Arts schools, which require admission based on a successful application and auditions, were considered to occupy a privileged space within public education (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Saifer & Desai, 2013). Based upon the literature, it should be of no surprise that 78.6% of students in Specialty Arts schools have parents from higher social class standings and have a smaller proportion of students (6.6%) whose parents were non-remunerative at the time of the survey. Students attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities had the smallest proportion of students whose parents were employed as professionals (6.5%) and the highest proportion (34.9%) of students whose parents were non-remunerative at the time of the survey.

**Table 30: Parent Occupation across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Parent Occupation	Professional	Semi-Professional	Skilled/Semi-Skilled Clerical	Unskilled Clerical Trades	Non-remunerative
Alternative Schools	25%	29.7%	23.6%	5.7%	16.1%
Arts Schools	39.9%	38.7%	12.2%	2.6%	6.6%
Special Education Schools	7.9%	12.9%	31.9%	19.4%	27.9%
Schools with Limited Academics	6.5%	16.7%	28.9%	13.1%	34.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>

**Figure 28: Parent Occupation across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

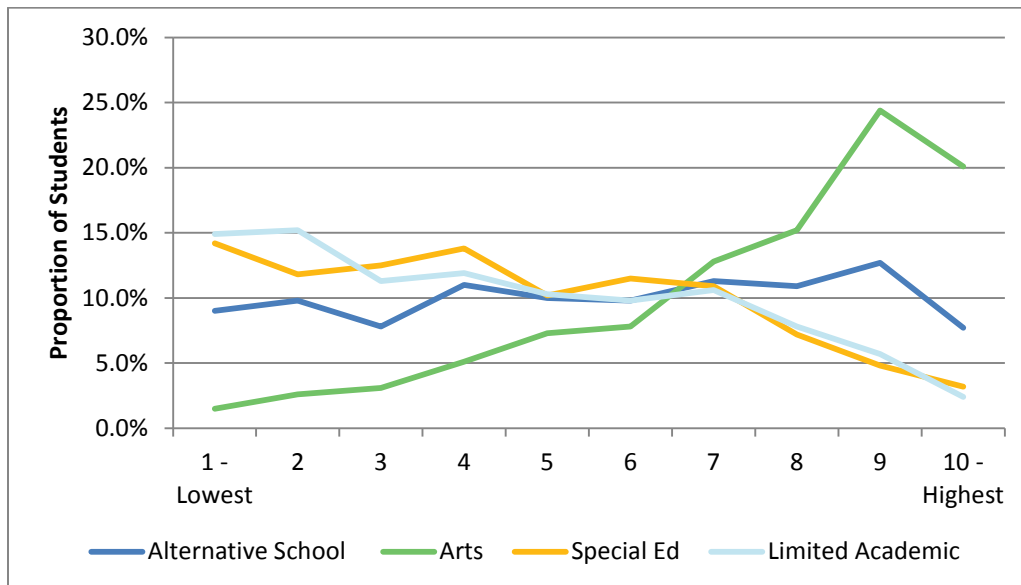


**Income:** As with parent occupation, family income demonstrated similar trends. Students attending Specialty Arts schools were much more likely to come from higher income households and much less likely to come from lower income households compared to students attending Special Education schools or schools with Limited Academic opportunities.

**Table 31: Deciles of Income across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Deciles of Income	1 - Low	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - High
Alternative Schools	9%	9.8%	7.8%	11%	10%	9.8%	11.3%	10.9%	12.7%	7.7%
Arts Schools	1.5%	2.6%	3.1%	5.1%	7.3%	7.8%	12.8%	15.2%	24.4%	20.1%
Special Education Schools	14.2%	11.8%	12.5%	13.8%	10.2%	11.5%	10.9%	7.2%	4.8%	3.2%
Schools with Limited Academic	14.9%	15.2%	11.3%	11.9%	10.3%	9.8%	10.6%	7.8%	5.7%	2.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>

**Figure 29: Deciles of Income across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

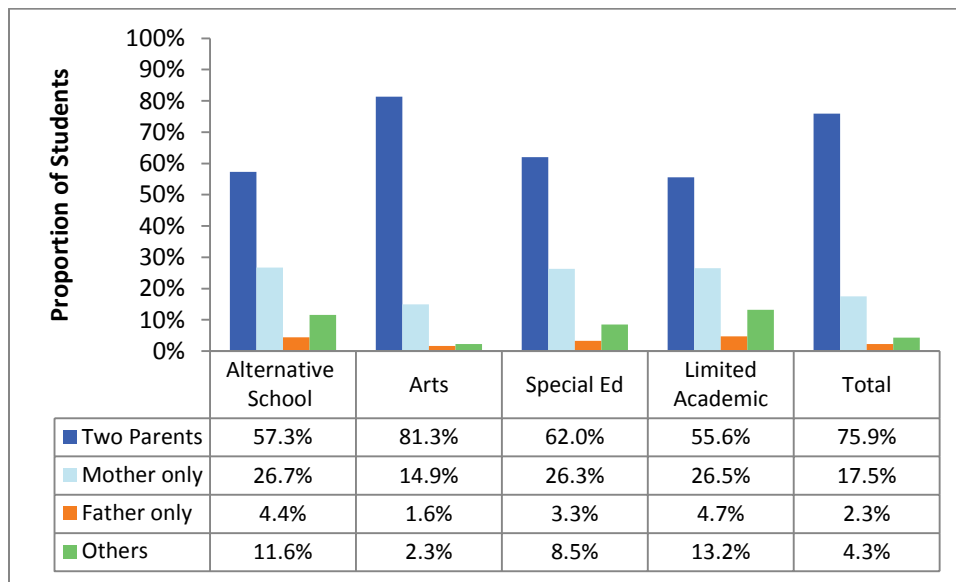


**Parental Presence:** As with parental education, parental occupation, and family income, similar trends emerged for parental presence. Students attending Specialty Arts schools were more likely to live with two parents than any other school-wide structure (including the average for the TDSB’s secondary school panel); whereas, students attending schools with Limited Academics were the least likely to live with both parents (20.3% less likely than the total average). However, aside from students attending Specialty Arts schools, over a quarter of students within each of the other school-wide structures lived with only their mother.

**Table 32: Parental Presence across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

Parental Presence	Two Parents	Mother only	Father only	Others
Alternative Schools	57.3%	26.7%	4.4%	11.6%
Arts Schools	81.3%	14.9%	1.6%	2.3%
Special Education Schools	62%	26.3%	3.3%	8.5%
Schools with Limited Academics	55.6%	26.5%	4.7%	13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>75.9%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

**Figure 30: Parental Presence across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



**Parents Living Outside of Canada:** As a new variable, the proportion of parents living inside and outside of Canada has revealed some interesting findings. For example, students who attend Special Education schools are 2.4 times as likely to have both parents living outside of Canada compared to the TDSB’s secondary school average. Students attending Specialty Arts schools were the most likely to have both parents living in Canada (94.1%) followed by students attending Alternative schools (90.8%).

**Table 33: Parents Living Outside of Canada across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

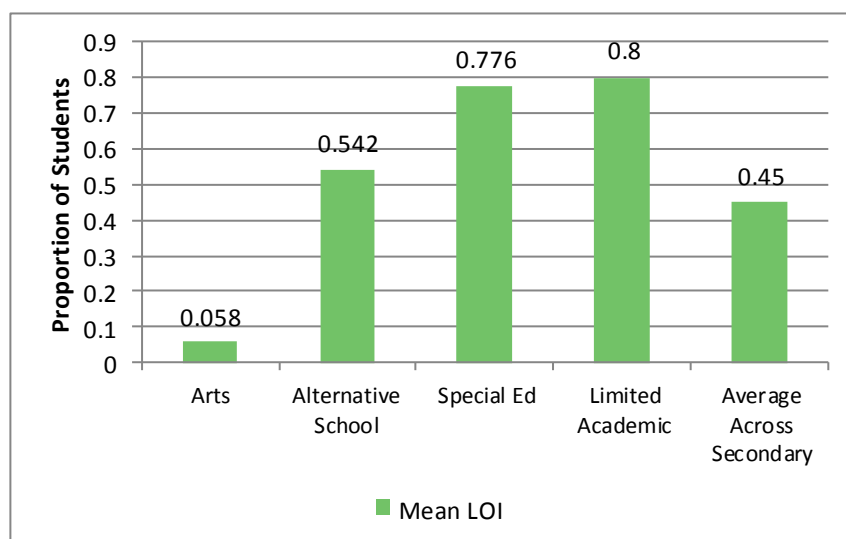
Parents Outside of Canada	One parent	Both Parents	No Parents
Alternative Schools	7.4%	1.8%	90.8%
Arts Schools	4.8%	1.1%	94.1%
Special Education Schools	14.6%	7.7%	77.6%
Schools with Limited Academics	11.3%	7.2%	81.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>87%</b>

**The Learning Opportunity Index:** As discussed in the chapter on Programs of Study, the LOI is a critical scale measuring external challenges at the neighborhood level based upon six socio-economic factors. Across the secondary school panel, the range of external challenges begins at 0.001 and reaches to 0.956, while the mean is 0.45. The closer the LOI score is to 1.0 the more extreme the external challenges. Both the minimum and maximum LOI ranges as well as the mean LOI fluctuated across school-wide structures. For example, the LOI range for students in Specialty Arts schools was from 0.046 to 0.161 with a mean of 0.058 which indicates far less external challenges than those facing students who were attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities (ranges of 0.693 to 0.913 and mean of 0.8). A mean LOI of 0.8 signifies a high level of external challenges. Although Alternative schools demonstrate a wide range of LOI and a higher than average mean (0.542), Special Education schools closely mirror the LOI of schools with Limited Academic opportunities with a high range from 0.632-0.943 and a mean of 0.776.

**Table 34: Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

School-wide Structures	Minimum	Maximum	Mean LOI
Arts Schools	0.046	0.161	0.058
Alternative Schools	0.077	0.913	0.542
Special Education Schools	0.632	0.943	0.776
Schools with Limited Academics	0.693	0.913	0.8
<b>Average Across Secondary Schools</b>	<b>0.001</b>	<b>0.956</b>	<b>0.45</b>

Figure 31: Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12



### Achievement Variables across Selected School-wide Structures

Achievement as conceived as promotion to Grade 9, POS, level of courses taken at the Grade 12 level, and PSE access was discussed at the beginning of this chapter. Two more achievement variables were explored across school-wide structures – Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) for first-time eligible Grade 10 students and Rate of Suspensions.

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test:** Results for the OSSLT are varied across school-wide structures. For example, 94.4% of first-time eligible students in Specialty Arts schools passed the OSSLT upon their first attempt compared to 53% of students in Alternative schools and 12% of students in schools with Limited Academics. While only 2% of students in Special Education Schools successfully passed the OSSLT, it is important to remember that 91.3% of students in Special Education schools were either Deferred or Exempt from writing.

Table 35: OSSLT Pass Rate (FTE) across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12

OSSLT FTE	Successful	Unsuccessful/Absent/Deferred/Exempt
Alternative Schools	53%	47%
Arts Schools	94.4%	5.6%
Special Education Schools	2%	98%
Schools with Limited Academics	12%	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>73.1%</b>	<b>27%</b>

**Suspensions:** While the overall proportion of students being suspended across the TDSB’s secondary school panel is 3.6%, students attending Specialty Arts schools was less than half of the average at 1.5%. Students attending Alternative schools had a suspension rate equal to the TDSB’s secondary school average at 3.6% while the rate of suspension was just over double at 7.3% for students attending schools with Limited Academic opportunities. Students attending Special Education schools had a suspension rate of 10.7% which was close to three times the TDSB’s secondary school average.

**Table 36: Suspensions across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

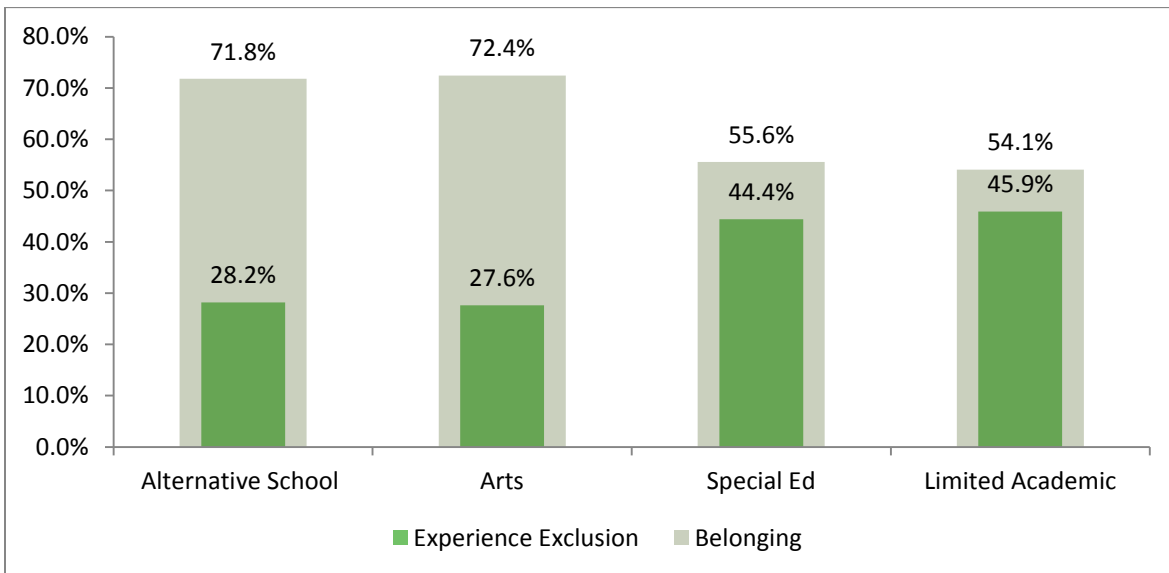
Suspensions	No Suspension	Suspended
Alternative Schools	96.4%	3.6%
Arts Schools	98.5%	1.5%
Special Education Schools	89.3%	10.7%
Schools with Limited Academic	92.7%	7.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

**Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** The scale measuring students’ experience of belonging and exclusion was also applied to the evaluation of school-wide structures. Interesting results ensued. In terms of experiencing a sense of belonging, students attending schools defined as Specialty Arts schools demonstrated the highest sense of belonging (72.4%) of all school-wide structures. Alternative schools were close behind at 71.8% of their student population experiencing a sense of belonging. Just over half of students attending Special Education schools (55.6%) and schools that only offered Limited Academics (54.1%) demonstrated the lowest sense of belonging and the highest sense of exclusion. What is particularly interesting about this analysis is that belonging does not appear to be necessarily tied to academic achievement. For instance, students attending secondary Alternative schools often struggle with aspects of achievement; however, they reported very high levels of belonging. Alternative schools also adopt different pedagogical strategies which, in light of these findings, should be explored more fully.

**Table 37: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**

School-wide Structures	Experience Belonging	Experience Exclusion
Alternative Schools	71.8%	28.2%
Arts Schools	72.4%	27.6%
Special Education Schools	55.6%	44.4%
Schools with Limited Academics	54.1%	45.9%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>58.1%</b>	<b>41.9%</b>

**Figure 32: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Selected School-wide Structures, 2011-12**



### Conclusion

The comparative analysis across school-wide structures draws important conclusions regarding equity. There are strong relationships between school-wide structures, achievement, student demographics, and students’ intrinsic sense of belonging. As seen from this analysis, schools that offer more highly valued programming and enhanced PSE access, such as the Specialty Arts schools, have an over-representation of students whose demographic characteristics mirror those of historically recognized privilege. Conversely, in schools with more limited academic opportunities, racialized students and students living in poverty were notably over-represented. The results of the LOI analysis demonstrate a stratification of external challenges closely correlating with student participation across school-wide structures.

Such stratified outcomes could be resulting from a culmination of educational policy and curriculum decisions, educator expectations, and significant societal pressure promoting competition in a time of tightening public resources. However, these outcomes highlight the role of school-wide structures in the process of congregating students along established lines of privilege which could lead to the reproduction of marginalized groups in society. Although the analysis of school-wide structures revealed significant trends regarding race, ability, gender, and class, TDSB educators, policy writers, and partners have a tremendous opportunity to create innovative interventions to counter the continuation of disparate outcomes.

## CHAPTER 3: SELECTED IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

The TDSB offers a myriad of programming options for students at the secondary school level. Many programs are intended to support students in their learning needs as well as provide students with highly valued, marketable skills, and opportunities for greater post-secondary education (PSE) access. Earlier in this report, the outcomes associated with Programs of Study as well as school-wide structures were explored. This section of the report looks exclusively at programs offered within schools particularly the relationships between selected programs, the role programs play within students' academic pathways, the representation of student demographic characteristics, as well as program connections to students' sense of belonging and exclusion. An analysis into the relationship of programs to LOI will also be explored. Although this is not an exhaustive list, this analysis includes the following programs: Congregated Gifted and Special Education Programming, the International Baccalaureate program, French Immersion, Advanced Placement opportunities, the Elite Athlete program, the Specialist High Skills Major program, and the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship program. To begin, descriptive statistics are provided followed by two logistic regression analyses exploring the connection between programs and the likelihood of students confirming an offer to an Ontario university and experiencing a sense of belonging and citizenship within their school community.

### Description of Selected In-school Programs

**Special Education/Gifted Programming:** Special Education programming is available for students who have been identified either formally or informally as having Special Education Needs (SEN). Students can have formal identifications of exceptionalities such as Learning Disability, Giftedness, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability, Autism, Behavioral Disorder, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Blind and Low Vision, Language Impairment, Speech Impairment, Physical Disability, and Multiple Exceptionalities.<sup>7</sup>

Programs can be designed to target the needs of students that fall within these exceptionality categories. The ways in which programs can be delivered are varied. Students can receive in-class support through indirect or withdrawal service as well as support within a Home School Program (Special Education class for up to 50% of the day) or Intensive Support Program (Special Education class for up to 100% of the day). For the purpose of this report, all students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), specialized placement, and/or Special Education programming will be incorporated as variables. For the analysis of congregated Special Education programs, students who were taught within congregated programs identified as both Gifted as well as students identified with other exceptionalities (excluding Gifted) were included as separate variables.

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[http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/parents/special\\_education\\_2/docs/Special%20Education%20Report%202011%20FIN AL.pdf](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/wwwdocuments/parents/special_education_2/docs/Special%20Education%20Report%202011%20FINAL.pdf)

**The International Baccalaureate Program:** The International Baccalaureate (IB) Program is an internationally renowned program for its academic rigour. The IB program provides students with first year university courses while they are still in high school and recognized accreditation in over 125 countries. Geared towards Grades 11 and 12, the TDSB offers the IB diploma program at six secondary schools: Parkdale CI, Vaughan Road Academy, Monarch Park CI, Victoria Park SS, Sir Wilfrid Laurier CI, and Weston CI. Students prepare for the IB diploma program by enrolling in a preparatory program in Grade 9. Exams are sent to a central office and marked externally.<sup>8</sup> The IB diploma is a highly competitive, highly valued program by post-secondary institutions around the world. For this analysis, students identified as participants in the IB program were students taking the IB preparatory program in Grade 9 and 10 as well as the diploma program for Grades 11 and 12.

**French Immersion:** The French Immersion (FI) program offers students, who do not speak French as their first language, the opportunity to learn French through immersion at school. Both Early Immersion and Middle Immersion programs offer 100% of course material in French outside of some specialized courses such as Physical Education. Secondary Immersion requires students to obtain 10 credits in French in order to graduate with a Certificate of Bilingual Studies in French Immersion (TDSB, French Immersion, 2012). In the TDSB, Early Immersion begins in Senior Kindergarten and is offered at 56 schools across the Board (TDSB, French Immersion, 2012). Middle Immersion programs, which begin in Grade 4, are offered at three locations while Secondary Immersion programs are offered at ten schools across the Greater Toronto Area. The TDSB also offers a Grade 7 continuation program which allows students to take 50% of their academic courses in French. The TDSB offers this program within 22 schools (TDSB, French Immersion, 2012). French Immersion programming, which provides students with a firm conversational and academic foundation in a second language, can be considered one of the most marketable programs offered within the TDSB broadening future academic and economic opportunities for participating students (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992; Parekh, Killoran, & Crawford, 2011). Students included in this analysis for French Immersion were students who were enrolled in French Immersion programming at the secondary school level.

**Advanced Placement:** Similar to the IB program, Advanced Placement (AP) courses also offer students the opportunity to accrue university accreditation while still in high school. Advanced Placement courses provide students with highly valued opportunities to advance their education and increase their access to PSE. Quoting from the AP website, “Widely respected for their rigour, these courses remain the only courses that the Ivy League universities in the U.S. will accept for admission to their institutions, and are recognized for credit by all Canadian universities.”<sup>9</sup> Students included in this analysis on Advanced Placement were identified through the Advanced Placement course codes at the secondary school level.

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<sup>8</sup> (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?siteid=123&menuid=2829&pageid=2282>)

<sup>9</sup> (<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/yorkmemorial/advancedplacementap.aspx>)

**Academic Program for Gifted Athletes (APGA or Elite Athletes Program):** The APGA or Elite Athletes program provides flexible secondary school timetabling and support for students who are competing in athletics at the provincial, national, and international levels.<sup>10</sup> Students must have a B average in order to be eligible for entrance into the program in addition to recognized competitive athletic standings.<sup>11</sup> Only four schools in the TDSB host the Elite Athlete program (Birchmount Park CI, Northview Heights SS, Silverthorn CI, and Vaughan Road Academy). Students identified as participating in the Elite Athletes program were included based on their course codes. Unfortunately, data from Northview Heights SS was unavailable at the time of this report.

**Specialist High School Major Programs:** Specialist High Skills Majors Programs (SHSMP) are approved programs by the Ministry of Education. Each program has five components which include 6 to 12 (generally Grade 11-12 level) required credits within a particular post-secondary pathway. The program includes a co-op opportunity as well. The program makes use of the Ontario Skills Passport as well as “Reach Ahead” opportunities to monitor achievement and provide students with post-secondary experiences<sup>12</sup>. Areas of specialization include art and culture; aviation and aerospace; business; construction; energy; environment; health and wellness; horticulture and landscaping; hospitality and tourism; information and communication technology; justice, community safety, and emergency services; manufacturing; non-profit; sports; and transportation.<sup>13</sup> Students included in this analysis of SHSMP were identified through their course codes.

**Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program:** The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) provides students with the chance to pursue apprenticeship and workplace opportunities post-high school. “The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) is a School to Work program that opens the door for students to explore and work in apprenticeship occupations starting in Grade 11 or Grade 12 through the Cooperative Education program. Students have an opportunity to become registered apprentices and work towards becoming certified journeypersons in a skilled trade while completing their secondary school diplomas.”<sup>14</sup> Students included in this analysis of the OYAP were identified through their course codes.

**Total Schools:** For each category of analysis, overall results from the secondary school level in the TDSB were included as a baseline.

**Overview of Analyses:** There are many ways to evaluate the effectiveness of school programs and institutional organization. Commonly employed strategies for program evaluation include a comparative analysis of program outcomes such as academic achievement and post-secondary access. Are certain programs leading to greater academic and PSE success? Although academic achievement is a critical factor leading to post-secondary opportunities, there are alternate

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<sup>10</sup> <http://www.apga1.com/apga.htm>

<sup>11</sup> (<http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/northviewheights/departments/apga.html>).

<sup>12</sup> (<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?pageid=30599>)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/site/ViewItem.asp?pageid=30599>

<sup>14</sup> (<http://www.oyap.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=content&PageID=9&PageCategory=8&SchoolBoardID=100>)

program outcomes to consider. Students’ sense of citizenship and belonging among their peers, within their school and classrooms has also demonstrated to be directly related to academic outcomes as well as students’ own sense of intrinsic value.

Comparative analysis of program outcomes raises the question of access. Who is participating in these programs and what is the relationship between program access and historically marginalized groups? What correlations can be determined between student demographics and access to highly valued or, conversely, more restrictive programming?

This analysis looks at specialized programming through the lens of academic pathways, student success and post-secondary outcomes; however, it also explores the role of programs in their relationship to student belonging within their school community. First, selected programs will be deconstructed in terms of their connection to established academic pathways. Following the analysis on academic pathways, student demographic characteristics will be explored looking closely at who is accessing the programs offered throughout the TDSB. Finally, an analysis as to the relationship between specialized program and students’ sense of belonging within their school community will be explored.

### Pathways across Selected In-school Programs

**Promotion and Transference:** A key aspect to streaming in the TDSB is the process through which students arrive to Grade 9. Having successfully completed all the requirements for Grade 8, students are promoted to Grade 9. However, students who were not successful in Grade 8 are transferred to Grade 9. Of students moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9 (2010), 78.2% had been promoted while 18.5% had been transferred. The proportion of students being promoted or transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 varied across programs. The proportion for promotion ranged from 98.2% of students in the Gifted program, 96.6% for students taking IB, 98.5% of students in French Immersion, 88.6% of students taking Advanced Placement courses, and 97.3% of students in the Elite Athlete program. This proportion dropped dramatically for students in congregated Special Education programs to 2.3%.

**Table 38: Promotion and Transference across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

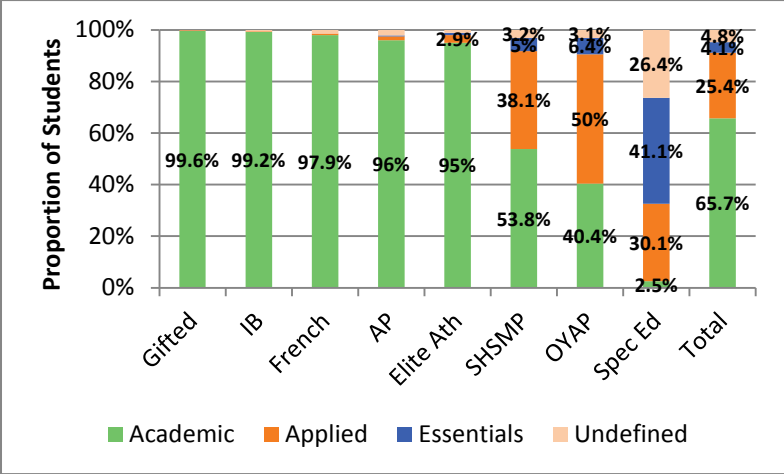
Promotion and Transference	Promoted	Transferred	Other
Gifted	98.2%	0.3%	1.5%
IB	96.6%	0.7%	2.7%
French	98.5%	1%	0.5%
AP	88.6%	8.6%	2.9%
Elite Athlete	97.3%	0%	2.7%
Special Education	2.3%	81.5%	16.2%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary</b>	<b>78.2%</b>	<b>18.5%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>

**Programs of Study:** Student’s POS is determined through the academic level in which students take the majority of their Grade 9-10 courses. The proportion of students taking the majority of their courses at either the Academic, Applied, or Essentials levels varied widely across selected secondary school programs. Table 39 has been organized by the proportion of students taking the Academic POS. Although the average proportion of students in the Academic POS was 65.7% across the secondary school panel, the proportion of students taking Academic in the Gifted, IB, French Immersion, Advanced Placement, and Elite Athlete programs averaged over 95%. This proportion notably dropped for students taking SHSMP (53.8%) and OYAP (40.4%). Across the secondary school panel, 25.4% of students took the majority of their courses in the Applied POS. However, these proportions are far greater for students taking the SHSMP (53.8%) and OYAP (50%) programs. For students in congregated Special Education programs, the proportion of students taking Academic fell to 2.5%, while the proportion of students taking Applied reached 30.1% and 41.1% for students taking the majority of their courses in the Essentials POS. The greatest proportion of students who have an undefined POS was for students in congregated Special Education programming.

**Table 39: Grade 9-10 Programs of Study across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Program of Study	Academic	Applied	Essentials	Undefined
Gifted	99.6%	0.2%	0%	0.2%
IB	99.2%	0.2%	0%	0.6%
French	97.9%	0.6%	0%	1.4%
AP	96%	1.4%	0.4%	2.2%
Elite Athlete	95%	2.9%	0.9%	1.2%
SHSMP	53.8%	38.1%	5%	3.2%
OYAP	40.4%	50%	6.4%	3.1%
Special Education	2.5%	30.1%	41.1%	26.4%
Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools	65.7%	25.4%	4.1%	4.8%

**Figure 33: Grade 9-10 Programs of Study across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**



**Graduation:** The discussion of streaming often connects students' POS to graduation rates and post-secondary access. Table 40 explores graduation rates for students enrolled in specific secondary school programs as to offer possible links between program opportunities and academic success. The following data looks at students who were in their first year of Grade 12 and were eligible for graduation in June 2012. Table 40 demonstrates student status as of October 31, 2012. Of all eligible Grade 12 students across the TDSB, 67.5% graduated after 4 years while 22% came back for a fifth year. Overall, 3.5% transferred out of the TDSB and 7% dropped out. The proportion of students graduating on time (after 4 years) varied dramatically across secondary school programs. For students in a Gifted program, the IB program, or taking Advanced Placement, the rate of graduation after 4 years is close to 30% higher than the average. Students in French Immersion and the Elite Athlete program also have a higher than average rate of graduation. Students taking the OYAP and SHSMP have a lower rate of graduation after 4 years and a much higher rate of students returning for a fifth year of high school. The rate of graduation after 4 years for students in congregated Special Education programs was about a third of the average at 22.6% and close to triple the average proportion of students returning for a fifth year.

**Table 40: Graduation Rates across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

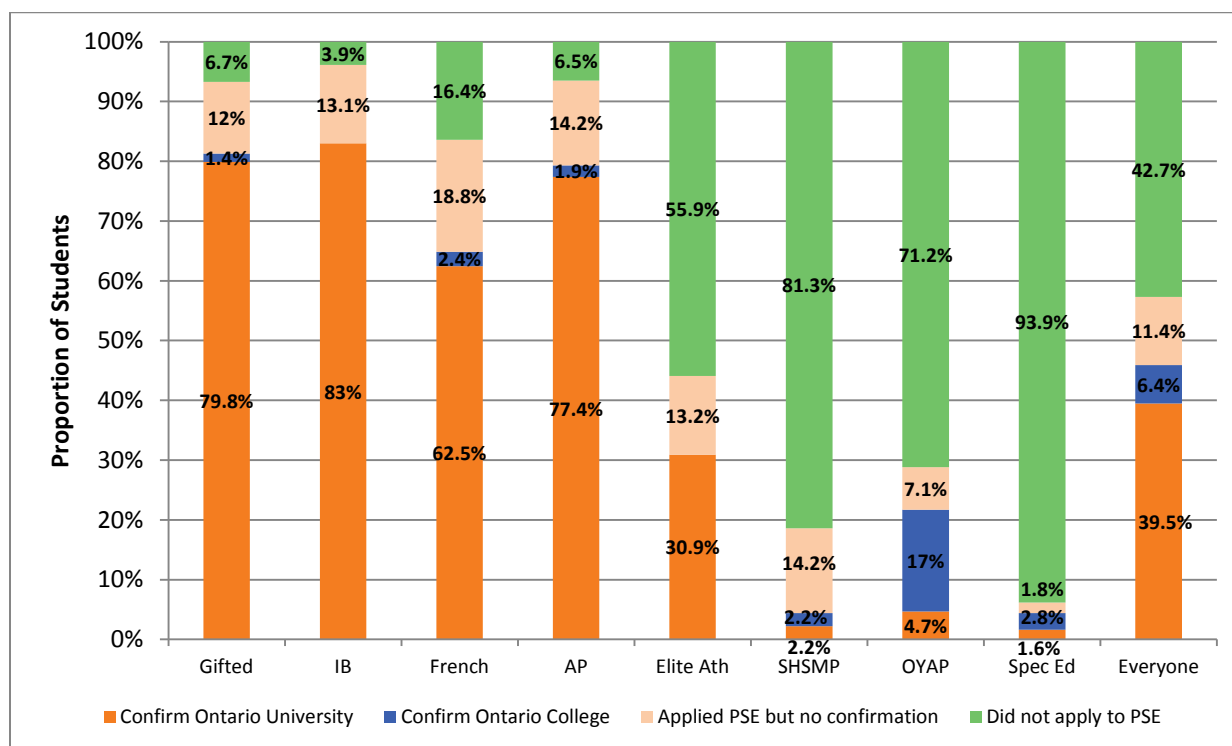
Graduation	Graduated	Returned	Transferred	Dropped Out
Gifted	96.6%	2.4%	0%	1%
IB	98.7%	0.7%	0%	0.7%
French	88.5%	8.6%	1.1%	1.9%
AP	94.5%	3.9%	0.3%	1.2%
Elite Athlete	77.9%	8.8%	4.4%	8.8%
SHSMP	46.2%	46.2%	2.2%	5.4%
OYAP	62.5%	26.6%	3.6%	7.3%
Special Education	22.6%	64.8%	2.8%	9.9%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>67.5%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3.5%</b>	<b>7%</b>

**Post-secondary Confirmation:** One aspect of the study of secondary school pathways is exploring how access to opportunities in secondary school can further enable access to post-secondary opportunities. Across the TDSB's secondary school panel, 39.5% of students will confirm an offer of acceptance to an Ontario university while 6.4% will confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario college for the year following graduation. The proportion of students who applied to post-secondary education (PSE), but who had not confirmed an offer (either due to non-acceptance or offers coming from outside Ontario) was 11.4%, while 42.7% did not apply to PSE. The program that had the highest proportion of students confirming an offer to an Ontario university the year after graduation is the International Baccalaureate program at 83%, with the Gifted program close at 79.8%, the Advanced Placement program at 77.4%, and the French Immersion program with a 62.5% university confirmation rate. Interestingly, despite the high proportion of students enrolled in the Academic POS and the high proportion of students graduating on time, students enrolled in the Elite Athlete program were less likely to confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario university and only slightly more likely to apply with no confirmation. This could be in part explained by students' participation in high-level competitive sports post-high school. For students taking the OYAP, SHSMP, or congregated Special Education programs, the rate of university confirmations the year following graduation was notably smaller than the average while the rates of students not applying for PSE was substantially higher than the average. However, students enrolled in the OYAP were almost three times as likely to confirm an offer of admission to an Ontario college.

**Table 41: Post-secondary Confirmations across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Post-secondary Confirmations	Confirm Ontario University	Confirm Ontario College	Applied to PSE but no Confirmation	Did not Apply to PSE
Gifted	79.8%	1.4%	12%	6.7%
IB	83%	0%	13.1%	3.9%
French	62.5%	2.4%	18.8%	16.4%
AP	77.4%	1.9%	14.2%	6.5%
Elite Athlete	30.9%	0%	13.2%	55.9%
SHSMP	2.2%	2.2%	14.2%	81.3%
OYAP	4.7%	17%	7.1%	71.2%
Spec Education	1.6%	2.8%	1.8%	93.9%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>11.4%</b>	<b>42.7%</b>

Figure 34: Post-secondary Confirmations across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12



### Student Demographic Variables across Selected In-school Programs

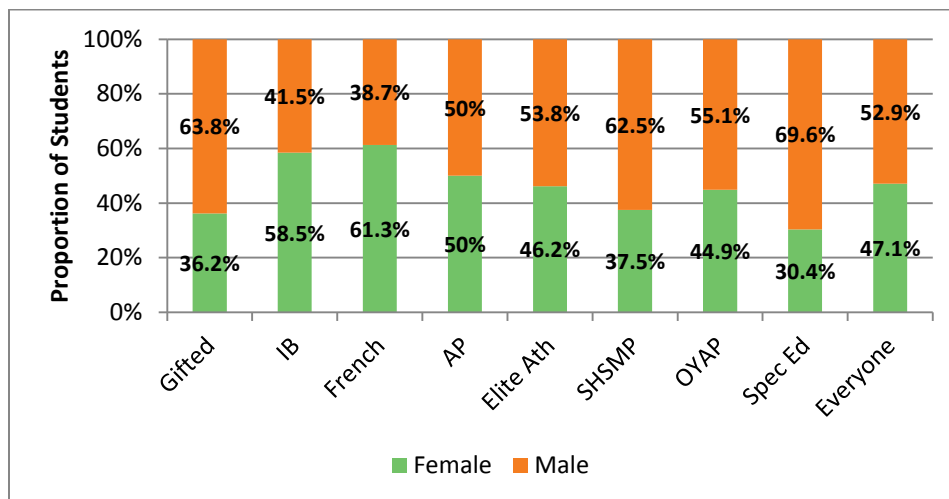
**Gender:** Although the proportion of female students in the TDSB’s secondary school panel is lower than males at 47.1%, there are a number of programs in which female students were over-represented. Female students were over-represented in the French Immersion (61.3%) and International Baccalaureate programs (58.5%). More equitably distributed programs across gender lines were Advanced Placement where female students make up 50% of the population, the Elite Athlete program (46.2%) and the OYAP where female students make up 44.9% of the population. The programs that were greatly over-represented by male students are students in congregated Special Education programs (69.6%), students in congregated Gifted programs (63.8%), and students taking the SHSMP (62.5%).

**Table 42: Gender across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Gender	Female	Male
Gifted	36.2%	63.8%
IB	58.5%	41.5%
French	61.3%	38.7%
AP	50%	50%
Elite Athlete	46.2%	53.8%
SHSMP	37.5%	62.5%
OYAP	44.9%	55.1%
Special Education	30.4%	69.6%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>47.1%</b>	<b>52.9%</b>

Figure 35 is a visual demonstration of the gender representation across programs. Interestingly, in three of the highest performing academic programs, female students are over-represented. Conversely, programs that have been linked to decreased rates of graduation and post-secondary access have a higher proportion of male students (SHSMP and congregated Special Education). However, male students are also greatly over-represented in congregated Gifted programs (63.8%) which have demonstrated to have one of the highest rates of graduation and post-secondary access.

**Figure 35: Gender across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**



**Race:** Table 43 represents the proportion of self-identified racial groups across secondary school programs. All things being equal, the proportions highlighted in orange at the bottom of the table should be reflected across all programs. However, notable variations were observed. The four largest self-identified racial groups are White, South Asian, East Asian, and Black. Students who self-identified as White were over-represented in the congregated Gifted, French Immersion, Elite Athlete, OYAP, and congregated Special Education programs and were under-represented in the IB, AP, and SHSMP programs. Students who self-identified as South Asian were over-represented in the IB program and slightly in the SHSMP, but were notably under-represented in the Gifted, French Immersion, Elite Athlete, Special Education programs and slightly under-represented in AP and OYAP. Students who self-identified as East Asian were over-represented in the congregated Gifted, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs. Self-identified East Asian students were notably under-represented in the French Immersion, Elite Athlete, SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education programs. Students who self-identified as Black were over-represented in the congregated Special Education, SHSMP, and OYAP programs and were notably under-represented in the Gifted, IB, AP, Elite Athlete programs, and slightly under-represented in French Immersion. Although these groups represented the majority of TDSB students, it is important to note other incidences of over and under-representation for racial groups across programs.

**Table 43: Self-identified Race across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Self-identified Race	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White
Gifted	0.1%	3.2%	31.1%	0.9%	2%	6.8%	12%	2.4%	41.6%
IB	0%	5.9%	23%	0.5%	4.1%	4.3%	40.8%	4.8%	16.5%
French	0.1%	11.1%	8.4%	1.9%	3.8%	12.2%	4.9%	2.2%	55.4%
AP	0%	6%	37.3%	0.9%	2.6%	4.4%	17.9%	5.9%	25%
Elite Athlete	0%	7.4%	1.1%	0.4%	1.5%	12.6%	3%	1.1%	73%
SHSMP	0.1%	21.3%	9.1%	4.8%	6.5%	10.3%	21.6%	5.3%	20.9%
OYAP	0.7%	16.7%	8.6%	2.7%	4.8%	7.7%	18%	5.2%	35.6%
Special Education	0.8%	24.4%	9%	3.4%	5.4%	7.4%	14.4%	3%	32.2%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	0.3%	12.6%	17.9%	2.2%	5.8%	6.9%	21%	4.9%	28.3%

**Student Language:** In a general sense, language groups are stratified across in-school programs. For example, students who spoke Chinese are over-represented in the Gifted, IB, and AP programs but under-represented in the French Immersion, the Elite Athlete programs as well as SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education. Similarly, students who spoke English are over-represented in all programs with the exception of the IB and AP programs.

**Table 44: Student Language across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

First Language	Gifted	IB	French	AP	Elite Athlete	SHSMP	OYAP	Spec Ed	Total
Albanian	0.0%	1.0%	0.2%	0.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%
Arabic	0.7%	1.6%	1.4%	0.5%	0.9%	2.0%	1.1%	1.2%	1.6%
Bengali	1.3%	4.8%	0.3%	2.8%	0.0%	1.7%	0.9%	1.0%	2.0%
Chinese	24.6%	20.4%	4.6%	33.5%	0.9%	7.4%	6.6%	6.4%	13.3%
Dari	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.4%	0.7%	0.6%	0.8%
English	49.4%	26.9%	67.3%	29.3%	83.2%	49.3%	59.0%	60.2%	44.3%
French	0.7%	1.0%	5.8%	0.7%	2.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%	0.8%
Greek	0.2%	0.0%	1.9%	1.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.8%	1.0%	0.8%
Gujarati	0.8%	3.4%	0.4%	3.3%	0.3%	2.0%	0.9%	1.1%	1.8%
Hindi	0.6%	2.9%	0.1%	1.1%	0.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.7%
Korean	2.2%	1.6%	0.9%	2.1%	0.0%	0.2%	1.0%	0.6%	1.6%
Pashto	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.7%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
Persian	0.7%	0.9%	1.5%	0.9%	0.3%	2.3%	2.0%	1.9%	2.2%
Portuguese	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.6%	1.5%	1.1%	1.1%	0.6%
Punjabi	0.5%	2.5%	0.2%	1.4%	0.0%	1.4%	1.2%	0.9%	1.4%
Romanian	1.0%	0.8%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%
Russian	1.9%	1.1%	1.8%	2.0%	1.5%	0.1%	1.8%	0.5%	1.4%
Serbian	1.7%	0.3%	2.2%	0.9%	3.0%	0.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.7%
Somali	0.3%	1.5%	0.6%	2.2%	0.0%	2.8%	2.2%	2.7%	2.6%
Spanish	0.7%	0.6%	2.2%	1.0%	0.6%	4.8%	2.9%	3.3%	2.4%
Tagalog	0.2%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	2.3%	1.9%	0.8%	2.2%
Tamil	4.4%	13.6%	0.6%	3.6%	0.0%	4.5%	3.8%	4.2%	5.2%
Turkish	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.3%	0.6%	0.4%	0.4%	0.5%	0.6%
Urdu	1.2%	4.3%	0.2%	1.6%	0.0%	4.9%	2.7%	2.6%	3.5%
Vietnamese	1.2%	3.0%	0.6%	5.3%	0.3%	3.1%	1.6%	1.8%	1.9%

**Self-identified Sexuality:** The proportion of sexuality did not vary much across programs. Roughly all programs had similar proportions of sexuality representation. The only notable variance was for students in the congregated Special Education program who responded that they were ‘not sure/questioning’. Past research in the board has led investigators to believe that some students select this answer when they were not sure of the question as opposed to whether they were questioning their sexuality. This was evident also for students who were taking English as a Second Language courses (Brown & Sinay, 2008).

**Table 45: Self-identified Sexuality across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Sexuality	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Other	Not sure/Questioning
Gifted	91.1%	0.8%	1.8%	1.6%	4.7%
IB	93.8%	0.4%	1.2%	1%	3.6%
French	93.9%	0.3%	1.6%	1.1%	3.1%
AP	91.2%	0.8%	2%	2.3%	3.6%
Elite Athlete	93.4%	0.8%	0.8%	1.5%	3.5%
SHSMP	90.9%	0.8%	1.7%	2.2%	4.3%
OYAP	91%	0.8%	3.2%	1.2%	3.7%
Special Education	82.6%	0.9%	1.5%	1%	13.9%
Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools	92%	0.7%	1.8%	1.1%	4.4%

**Students with Special Education Needs:** Students with Special Education Needs (SEN), as noted earlier, are identified either formally or informally. Students with a formal SEN identification have gone through an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) and have been formally identified with an exceptionality. Students who have not been identified with an exceptionality but who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) are also included in the group of students with SEN. Table 46 looks at the proportion of students with SEN (excluding Gifted) across programs.

Although the rate of students with SEN (excluding Gifted) is 15.9% across the TDSB’s secondary school panel, the proportion of students with SEN fluctuated across programs. The proportion of students with SEN was notably less than the TDSB’s average within programs such as Gifted, IB, French Immersion, AP, and Elite Athlete. Conversely, the proportion of students with SEN was greater than the TDSB’s average for programs such as SHSMP, OYAP, and congregated Special Education.

**Table 46: Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

SEN (excluding Gifted)	No SEN	SEN
Gifted	100%	0%
IB	98.9%	1.1%
French	96.1%	3.9%
AP	97.7%	2.3%
Elite Athlete	94.1%	5.9%
SHSMP	77%	23%
OYAP	71.8%	28.2%
Special Education	0%	100%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>15.9%</b>

Table 47 explores the proportion of exceptionalities across programs and includes students who have been identified as Gifted. The proportions highlighted in orange at the bottom of the table represent the proportion of exceptionalities or students on IEPs across the TDSB's secondary school panel. However, exploring proportions across programs revealed notable incidences of over and under-representation. For example, the proportion of students with SEN identified as Gifted was 15.4% across the TDSB; however, the proportion of students with SEN identified as Gifted dramatically increases in programs such as French Immersion to 38.5%, 42.9% in Elite Athlete, 87.3% in International Baccalaureate, 89.2% in Advanced Placement, and 100% in congregated Gifted. For students in the congregated Special Education programs, there are a much higher proportion of students with Autism, Mild Intellectual Disability, and Developmental Disability.

**Table 47: Special Education Needs Identification across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

SEN	IEP Only	Autism	Deaf	Learning Disability	Lang Impair	Gifted	Mild Int. Disability	Dev. Disability	Blind	Physical Disability	Multiple Exceptionality	Behaviour
Gifted	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
IB	5.1%	1.3%	0.6%	5.7%	0%	87.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
French	39.8%	1.2%	0%	19.3%	0%	38.5%	0%	0%	0%	0.6%	0%	0.6%
AP	5.4%	0.9%	0%	4.5%	0%	89.2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Elite Athlete	11.4%	2.9%	0%	31.4%	0%	42.9%	0%	0%	0%	8.6%	0%	2.9%
SHSMP	35.6%	1.3%	0%	42.2%	1.8%	3.6%	13.3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.2%
OYAP	36.3%	1.7%	0.7%	40.8%	0.9%	2.2%	12%	0.2%	0%	1.4%	0.2%	3.8%
Spec Ed	2.7%	10.8%	1.6%	27.9%	1%	0%	31.2%	14.9%	0.1%	4.9%	0.1%	5.3%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>31.4%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>32.2%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>15.4%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>

## Family Factors Across Selected In-School Programs

This section of the report explores family factors and their relationship to students' participation in in-school programs.

**Generational Status:** The TDSB's secondary school population is predominantly first generation students (71.5%). However, the proportion of students falling into the categories of first, second, or third generation varied across secondary school programs. Variations from the overall average were noted in the Elite Athlete program where only 27% of students were first generation as well as French Immersion where only 43.6% were first generation. However, students taking the AP program (78.6%) as well as the IB program (84.3%) were more likely to be first generation. The programs with the greatest proportion of third generation students are French Immersion (36.8%), Elite Athlete (53%), OYAP (28.2%), and congregated Special Education (31.9%) which were notably higher than the 19.8% average across the TDSB's secondary school panel.

**Table 48: Generational Status across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Generational Status	3rd Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation
Gifted	25%	13%	62%
IB	9.9%	5.9%	84.3%
French	36.8%	19.7%	43.6%
AP	14.8%	6.5%	78.6%
Elite Athlete	53%	20%	27%
SHSMP	18.2%	8.4%	73.4%
OYAP	28.2%	10%	61.9%
Special Education	31.9%	7.6%	60.5%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>8.7%</b>	<b>71.5%</b>

**Parent Education:** Although the average proportion of students who have parents with university education is 47.5% across the TDSB's secondary school panel, proportions fluctuated heavily across programs. For example, for the top five programs with the highest academic outcomes, the proportions of students who have parents with university education were substantially higher. Students enrolled in the Gifted program had a proportion of 81.1% of students whose parents have university education (33.6% higher than the average) while students enrolled in French Immersion had a proportion of parents with university education at 72.5% (25% higher than the average). Conversely, students enrolled in SHSMP and OYAP, programs linked to lower academic outcomes, had lower than the average proportions of parents with university education and higher than average proportions of parents having high school as their highest level of education.

**Table 49: Parent Education across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Parent Education	High school	College	University	Don't know
Gifted	4.1%	7.9%	81.1%	6.9%
IB	8.9%	13.6%	67.2%	10.3%
French	5.6%	13.4%	72.5%	8.5%
AP	10.2%	12.6%	66.2%	11.1%
Elite Athlete	8.4%	19.5%	63.7%	8.4%
SHSMP	20.9%	20.1%	31.7%	27.4%
OYAP	22.7%	22.2%	27.8%	27.3%
Special Education	13.3%	15.6%	21.6%	49.5%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>47.5%</b>	<b>21.8%</b>

**Parent Occupation:** In terms of parental occupation, similar divisions to parent education were observed. Again the top five performing programs in academic outcomes had a higher than average proportion of students whose parents were employed as professionals. The average proportion across the TDSB’s secondary school panel is 24.5%; however, this proportion rose to 48.6% for students enrolled in congregated Gifted programs, 43.7% of students enrolled in French Immersion, 38.4% of students in the Elite Athlete program, 38% of students enrolled in IB, and 31% of students enrolled in AP. The proportion of students who had parents employed in professional positions notably dropped below the TDSB’s secondary school panel average for students enrolled in SHSMP (16.1%), OYAP (12.8%), and congregated Special Education (11.1%). Conversely, these trends were reversed when looking at students whose parents were non-remunerative at the time of the survey.

**Table 50: Parent Occupation across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Parent Occupation	Professional	Semi-Professional	Skilled/Semi-skilled clerical	Unskilled Clerical Trades	Non-remunerative
Gifted	48.6%	30.7%	10.4%	3.3%	7%
IB	38%	29.1%	18.3%	5.2%	9.5%
French	43.7%	32.2%	14%	3.4%	6.7%
AP	31%	30.4%	22.8%	4.3%	11.5%
Elite Athlete	38.4%	34.2%	20.7%	3.4%	3.4%
SHSMP	16.1%	23.4%	26.7%	9.4%	24.4%
OYAP	12.8%	24.1%	31.9%	11.4%	19.8%
Special Education	11.1%	16.3%	30%	15.3%	27.3%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>26.3%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>17.2%</b>

**Income:** Looking through a lens of equity, it appears that certain programs have greater representation of students from higher or lower income households. As an example, programs such as Gifted, French Immersion, and Elite Athlete have a notable over-representation of students from higher income deciles. For students in the Gifted program, 54.7% of students come from the highest three income deciles, similarly to 55.1% of students in French Immersion and 53.1% of students in the Elite Athlete program. Conversely, for students in the SHSMP, only 17.6% of students came from the highest three income deciles, similarly to 24.8% of students in OYAP and 19% of students in congregated Special Education.

**Table 51: Deciles of Income across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

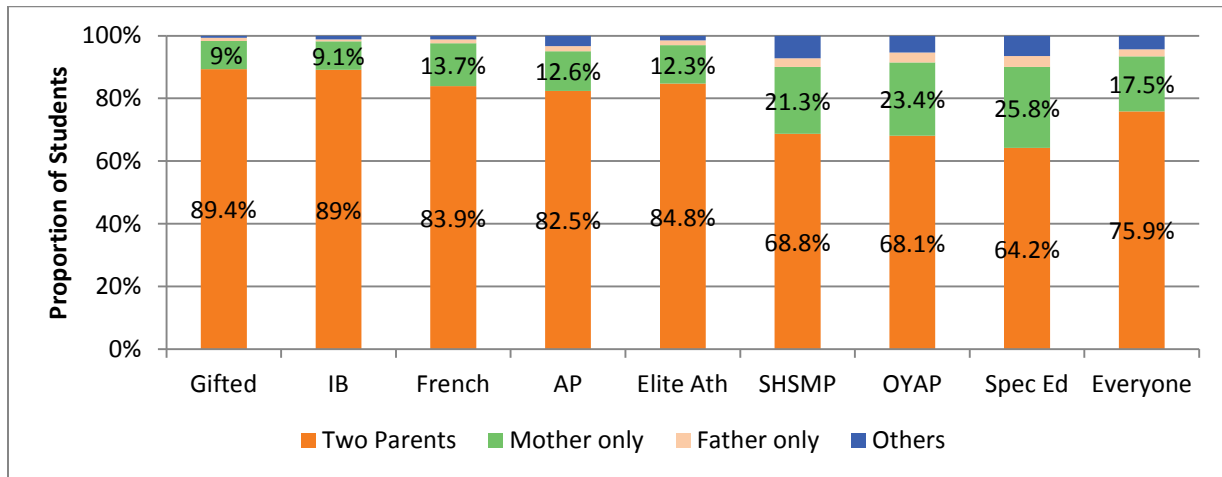
Deciles of Income	1 - Lowest	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Highest
Gifted	1.8%	3%	3.9%	6.6%	8.5%	8.2%	13.2%	11.9%	18.9%	23.9%
IB	6.3%	9.7%	7.6%	8%	12.5%	12.1%	12.7%	13%	12.2%	5.9%
French	3.1%	4.4%	4.2%	5.1%	7.8%	8.9%	11.4%	13.1%	19.6%	22.4%
AP	5.7%	6.5%	9.2%	10.1%	11.9%	12.6%	9.8%	9.7%	12.2%	12.2%
Elite Athlete	0.9%	1.8%	3.3%	5.3%	5.3%	9.5%	20.8%	17.2%	19.3%	16.6%
SHSMP	12.2%	10.7%	10.8%	11.7%	17.2%	9.7%	10.1%	9.3%	5.9%	2.4%
OYAP	8.6%	10.8%	9.9%	11.2%	12%	11.5%	11.3%	10.9%	9%	4.9%
Special Education	14.1%	11.6%	11.2%	11.7%	10.8%	11%	10.6%	8.2%	6.4%	4.4%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>9.4%</b>	<b>9.5%</b>	<b>9.8%</b>	<b>10.4%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>10.6%</b>	<b>10.1%</b>	<b>10.3%</b>	<b>8.8%</b>

**Parental Presence:** Although the TDSB average of students living with two parents at the secondary school level was 75.9%, students in the Gifted, IB, French Immersion, AP, and Elite Athlete programs had a higher than average proportion of students living with two parents while students in SHSMP, OYAP, and the congregated Special Education programs had a lower proportion.

**Table 52: Parental Presence across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Parental Presence	Two Parents	Mother only	Father only	Others
Gifted	89.4%	9%	1%	0.7%
IB	89%	9.1%	0.6%	1.2%
French	83.9%	13.7%	1.2%	1.2%
AP	82.5%	12.6%	1.7%	3.3%
Elite Athlete	84.8%	12.3%	1.5%	1.5%
SHSMP	68.8%	21.3%	2.8%	7.2%
OYAP	68.1%	23.4%	3.1%	5.4%
Special Education	64.2%	25.8%	3.5%	6.5%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>75.9%</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>4.3%</b>

Figure 36: Parental Presence across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12



**Parents Living Outside of Canada:** As a new variable to the TDSB, an analysis of parents living outside of Canada resulted in interesting outcomes. For example, 3.2% of students in the secondary school panel had both parents living outside of Canada. For the majority of students within the selected programs, the proportion of students whose parents lived outside of Canada was notably smaller for students enrolled in the Gifted, IB, French Immersion, AP, Elite Athlete, and OYAP programs. However, for students in SHSMP and congregated Special Education, the proportion of students with parents living outside of Canada was notably higher.

Table 53: Parents Living Outside of Canada across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12

Parents Outside of Canada	One Parent	Both Parents	No Parents
Gifted	4.9%	0.4%	94.8%
IB	4.6%	0.7%	94.7%
French	3.7%	0.3%	95.9%
AP	7.1%	2%	90.9%
Elite Athlete	4.1%	0.4%	95.5%
SHSMP	9.8%	3.5%	86.7%
OYAP	9.8%	2.6%	87.7%
Special Education	11.4%	5.5%	83.1%
Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools	9.8%	3.2%	87%

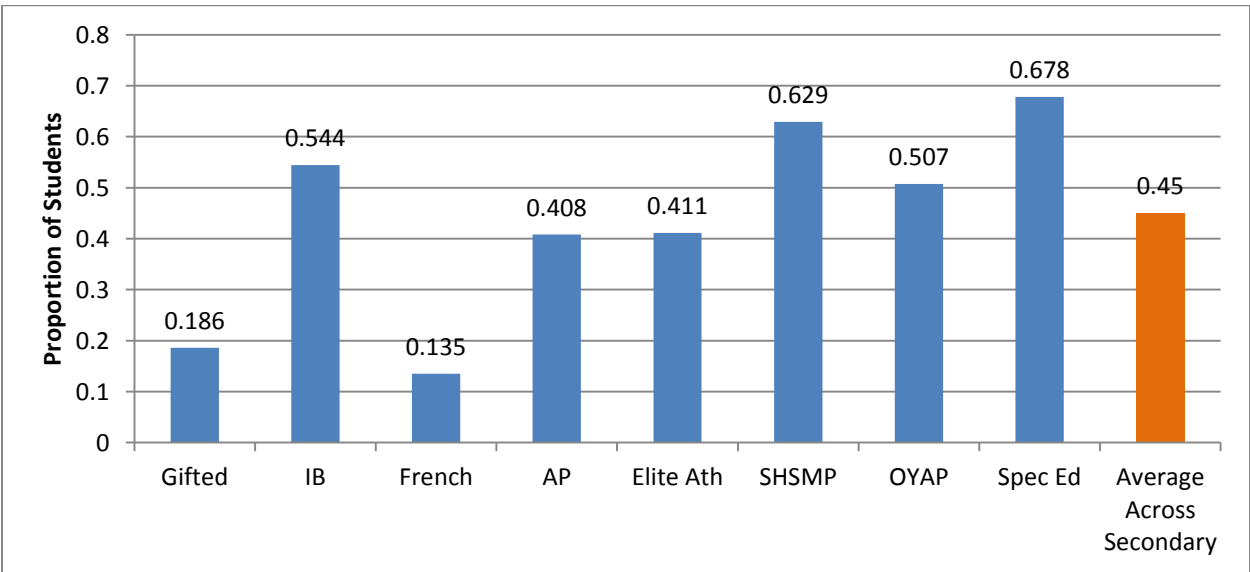
**The Learning Opportunity Index:** As discussed in previous chapters, the LOI is a scale based upon six socio-economic factors measuring external challenges at the neighborhood level. The range of external challenges across the TDSB's secondary school panel has a mean of 0.45 but begins at 0.001 and extends to 0.956. Extreme external challenges are indicated the closer the Mean is to 1.0. The range between minimum and maximum LOI varies across programs and is highly indicative of the participating population. For example, the LOI range for students

enrolled in French Immersion was 0.001 to 0.682 with a mean of 0.135. This indicates that there were no students enrolled in French Immersion who experienced the highest one third of possible external challenges experienced by other students in the TDSB. The mean LOI signifies that students in French Immersion, on average, faced the lowest degree of external challenges across all programs. A close second to the representation of external challenges was within congregated Gifted programs. Similarly to French Immersion, the LOI range only included students from the lowest two thirds of the scale and had a mean of 0.186. While programs such as Elite Athlete, Advanced Placement, and OYAP were more closely representative of the average LOI. Students participating in programs such as the International Baccalaureate, SHSMP, and Congregated Special Education, on average, demonstrated to experience greater external challenges.

**Table 54: Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

Program	Minimum	Maximum	Mean LOI
Gifted	0.036	0.67	0.186
IB	0.22	0.798	0.544
French	0.001	0.682	0.135
AP	0.001	0.929	0.408
Elite Athlete	0.136	0.56	0.411
SHSMP	0.023	0.956	0.629
OYAP	0.001	0.956	0.507
Spec Education	0.217	0.956	0.678
Average Across TDSB Secondary Schools	0.001	0.956	0.45

**Figure 37: Mean Learning Opportunity Index across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**



## Achievement and Belonging across Selected In-school Programs

**Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test:** The average pass rate of the OSSLT for first-time eligible (FTE) students across the TDSB’s secondary school panel was 73.1%. Although data for students in OYAP could not be collected, all programs except congregated Special Education programs demonstrated higher than average pass rates.

**Table 55: OSSLT Pass Rate (FTE) across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

OSSLT FTE	Successful	Unsuccessful	Absent	Deferred	Exempt
Gifted	99.1%	0%	0.6%	0.3%	0%
IB	98.2%	0.4%	1%	0.4%	0%
French	92.7%	4.7%	1.6%	1.1%	0%
AP	85%	5%	2.5%	7.5%	0%
Elite Athlete	94.3%	4.6%	1.1%	0%	0%
SHSMP	81.6%	16.3%	0%	2%	0%
Special Education	12.3%	37.9%	2.9%	25.4%	21.6%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>73.1%</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7.1%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>

**Suspensions:** The suspension rate across the TDSB’s secondary school panel is 3.6%. The suspension rate across programs is substantially lower for students in the Gifted (0.5%), IB (0.1%), AP (0.6%), and Elite Athlete (0.9%) programs. Suspension rates were below but closer to the average for students in French Immersion (2.7%). Suspension rates were slightly higher than the average for students in SHSMP (4.1%) and OYAP (4.4%) but notably higher for students in congregated Special Education programs (9.4%).

**Table 56: Suspensions across Selected In-School Programs, 2011-12**

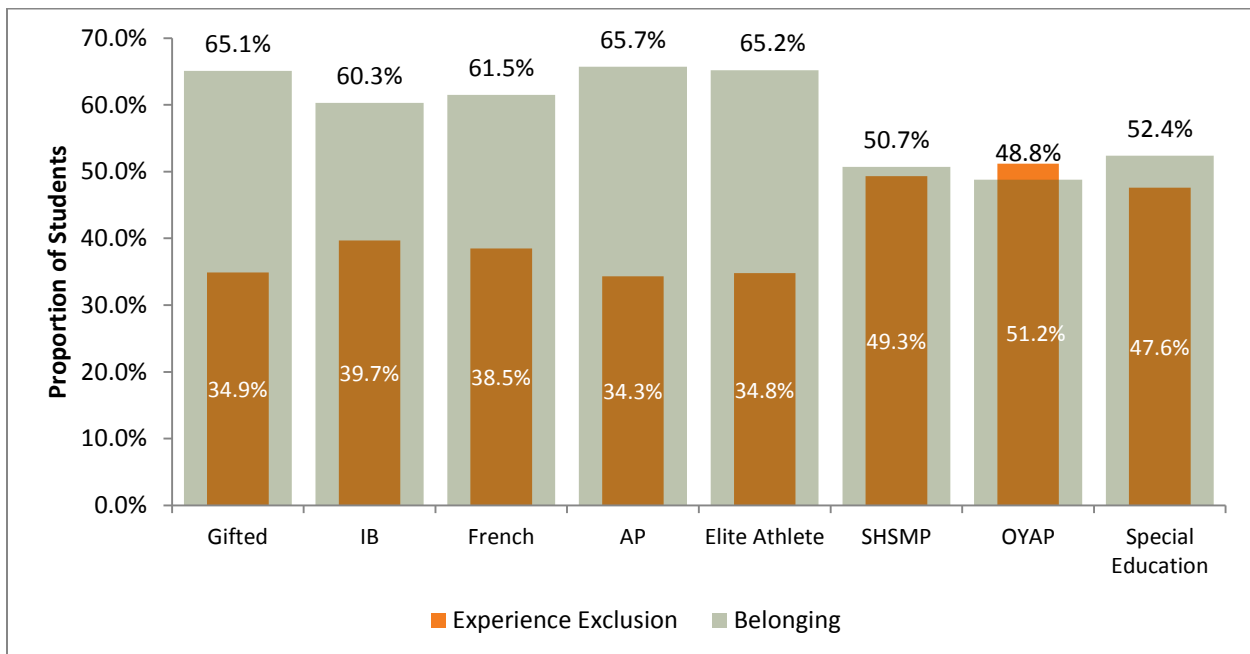
Suspensions	No Suspension	Suspended
Gifted	99.5%	0.5%
IB	99.9%	0.1%
French	97.3%	2.7%
AP	99.4%	0.6%
Elite Athlete	99.1%	0.9%
SHSMP	95.9%	4.1%
OYAP	95.6%	4.4%
Special Education	90.6%	9.4%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>96.4%</b>	<b>3.6%</b>

**The Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** The scale measuring students' experience of belonging and exclusion was also applied to the evaluation of in-school programs. Students who experienced the greatest levels of belonging were students taking Advanced Placement courses at 65.7%. Conversely, students who experienced the greatest level of exclusion were students taking the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program at 51.2%. All other programs fell in between. Programs with the levels of belonging over the average were Gifted, International Baccalaureate, French Immersion, Advanced Placement, and Elite Athlete. Programs in which students sense of belonging fell below the average were the Specialist High Skills Major Program, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, and students placed in congregated Special Education classes.

**Table 57: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**

In-School Programs	Experience Belonging	Experience Exclusion
Gifted	65.1%	34.9%
IB	60.3%	39.7%
French	61.5%	38.5%
AP	65.7%	34.3%
Elite Athlete	65.2%	34.8%
SHSMP	50.7%	49.3%
OYAP	48.8%	51.2%
Special Education	52.4%	47.6%
<b>Total Across TDSB Secondary Schools</b>	<b>58.1%</b>	<b>41.9%</b>

**Figure 38: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Selected In-school Programs, 2011-12**



## Conclusion

This chapter of the report provided a comparative analysis across eight selected within-school programs. As seen throughout the deconstruction of achievement, pathways, student demographics, and student sense of belonging, these programs function as a part of establishing secondary school pathways. Academic outcomes and student demographics were strongly correlated to these selected programs. As noted at the beginning of the chapter, each program carries differently weighted value in terms of academic rigour and marketable skills. Gifted and French Immersion programming are highly valued based on their challenging curriculum and transferrable skills. Likewise, Advanced Placement courses and the International Baccalaureate diploma program position students as highly competitive when applying for post-secondary education at the most academically rigorous institutions. The Elite Athlete program can only be accessed through demonstrated academic ability and gifted athleticism. However, Apprenticeship and Co-op programs such as the OYAP and SHSMP as well as congregated Special Education programs are conceived as more academically limited and do not carry the same social value in outcome as students entering the competitive market of post-secondary education. Correlations with Programs of Study and PSE access support the observed stratification in programming outcomes.

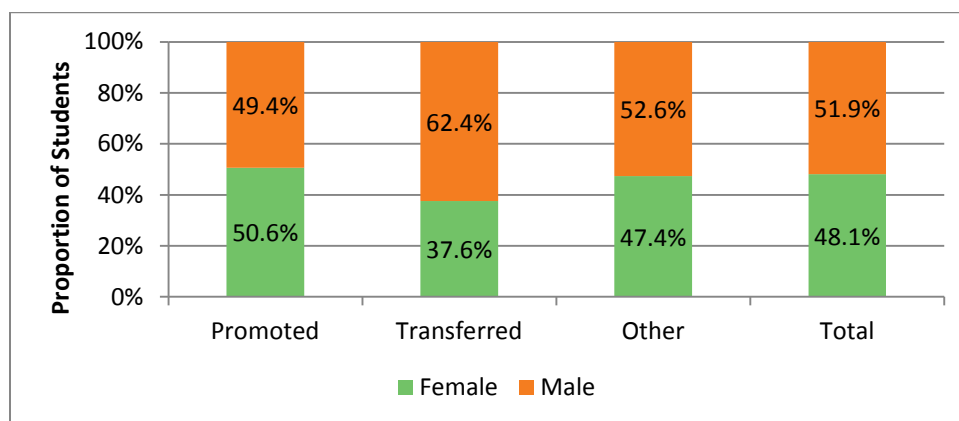
What is striking about this comparative analysis is the continuation of the same demographic trends seen across Programs of Study and school-wide structures. Although the IB and AP programs demonstrated to be the most equitably distributed across demographics, access to programs such as Gifted, French Immersion, and Elite Athlete continues to be largely reserved for a very specific, historically privileged demographic. Conversely, enrolment in OYAP, SHSMP, and Special Education demonstrates pronounced incidences of disproportionate representation of historically marginalized populations.

## CHAPTER 4: PROMOTION AND TRANSFERENCE

Due to the correlation between the processes of promotion and transference and secondary school pathways, it was important to explore the demographics of who experienced promotion and transference into Grade 9. The following analysis provides a brief overview of the representation of student demographics through the experience of promotion or transference from Grade 8 to Grade 9 for the 2011-12 school year. (Only a cohort of students followed from Grade 8 to Grade 10 was included in this analysis.)

**Gender:** Although male students represent 52.6% of the student population moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9, the proportion of males who were promoted was slightly below the average at 49.4%. However, the proportion of male students transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 was notably higher than the average at 62.4%.

Figure 39: Gender across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12 (Grade 8-10 Students Only)



**Self-identified Race:** The four largest self-identified racial groups are White (27.9%), South Asian (23%), East Asian (16.7%), and Black (12.8%). In terms of the proportion of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9, each racial group roughly mirrored the total. However, for students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 racial representation was varied. For example, self-identified White students (22.5%), self-identified South Asian students (19.7%), and self-identified East Asian students (11.7%) were under-represented among students who were transferred, while self-identified Black students were over-represented at 22.2%.

Table 58: Self-identified Race across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12

Race	Aboriginal	Black	East Asian	Latin American	Middle Eastern	Mixed	South Asian	Southeast Asian	White
Promoted	0.2%	10.9%	17.9%	1.6%	4.7%	7.4%	23.8%	4.7%	28.7%
Transferred	0.8%	22.2%	11.7%	3.1%	9.4%	7.2%	19.7%	3.3%	22.5%
Other	0%	12.1%	12.9%	1.9%	5.6%	8.1%	17.7%	3.5%	38.2%
Total	0.3%	12.8%	16.7%	1.9%	5.5%	7.4%	23%	4.4%	27.9%

**Student Language:** Students with the lowest proportion of promotion from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were students who spoke Dari and Pashto (less than 60% promotion rate). In contrast, 93.7% of students who spoke Hindi were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9.

**Table 59: Student Language across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

First Language	Promoted	Transferred	Other
Albanian	87.2%	11.6%	1.2%
Arabic	72.4%	24.4%	3.2%
Bengali	85.8%	10.9%	3.4%
Chinese	85.4%	12.9%	1.7%
Dari	58.8%	41.2%	0.0%
English	75.8%	20.5%	3.7%
French	82.9%	15.4%	1.6%
Greek	82.9%	15.4%	1.7%
Gujarati	79.3%	19.1%	1.6%
Hindi	93.7%	5.6%	0.8%
Korean	82.3%	9.3%	8.4%
Pashto	59.1%	38.6%	2.3%
Persian	69.1%	26.4%	4.5%
Portuguese	66.7%	30.9%	2.5%
Punjabi	86.3%	11.8%	1.8%
Russian	85.4%	10.8%	3.8%
Serbian	88.7%	6.8%	4.5%
Somali	73.9%	23.4%	2.7%
Spanish	69.3%	29.1%	1.6%
Tagalog	81.1%	16.7%	2.2%
Tamil	84.2%	13.8%	2.0%
Turkish	65.9%	32.9%	1.2%
Urdu	80.3%	18.2%	1.5%
Vietnamese	85.1%	12.5%	2.4%

**Self-identified Sexuality:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were generally appropriately represented across self-identified sexuality categories. Students who identified as Heterosexual were slightly under-represented among students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 while students who responded as “Not Sure/Questioning” were over-represented.

**Table 60: Self-identified Sexuality across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

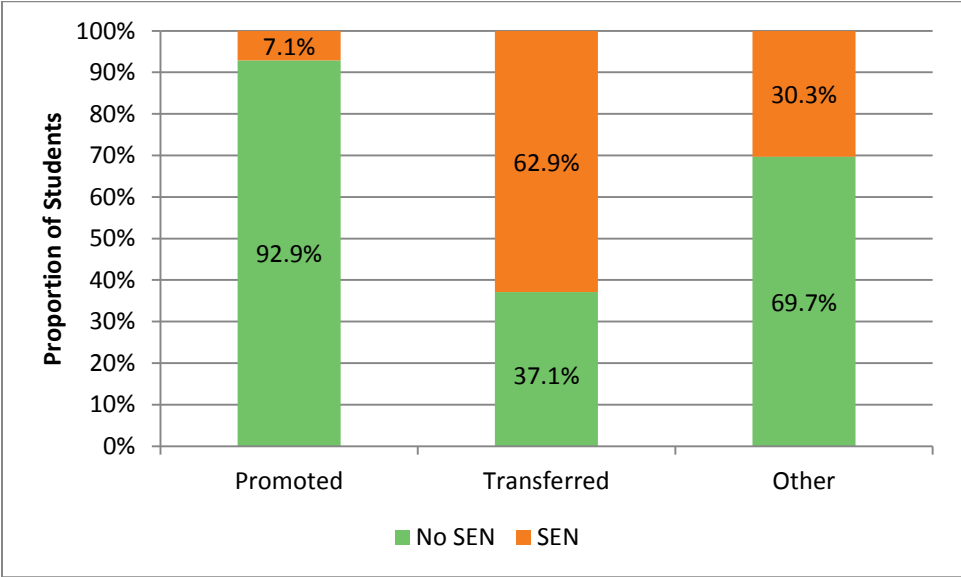
Sexuality	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Bisexual	Other	Not Sure/Questioning
Promoted	94.1%	0.6%	1.3%	0.7%	3.2%
Transferred	89.5%	0.7%	1.8%	0.5%	7.4%
Other	90.2%	0.3%	2.8%	1.1%	5.6%
Total	93.3%	0.6%	1.5%	0.7%	3.9%

**Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted):** Among students who moved from Grade 8 to Grade 9 in the 2011-12 school year, 18.2% had been identified as students with Special Education Needs (SEN). Students with Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) only represented 7.1% of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9; whereas, they represented 62.9% of students who were transferred.

**Table 61: Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Promotion or Transference	No SEN	SEN
Promoted	92.9%	7.1%
Transferred	37.1%	62.9%
Other	69.7%	30.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.8%</b>	<b>18.2%</b>

**Figure 40: Special Education Needs (excluding Gifted) across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**



Of students who were promoted and identified as having SEN (including Gifted), certain categories were over-represented such as students who only had an IEP, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Gifted, Blind or Visually Impaired; whereas, students identified with Autism, Learning Disability, Language Impairment, Mild Intellectual Disability, Developmental Disability, Physical Disability, and Behavioral Disorder were under-represented. Conversely, among students who were transferred, students identified as having Autism, a Learning Disability, a Language Impairment, Mild Intellectual Disability, Physical Disability, and Behavior Disorder were over-represented; whereas, students who only had an IEP, identified as Deaf or Hard of Hearing, Gifted, and a Developmental Disability were under-represented.

**Table 62: Special Education Needs (including Gifted) across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Special Education Needs	IEP Only	Autism	Deaf	Learning Disability	Lang Impair	Gifted	Mild Int Dis	Develop Dis	Blind	Physical Dis	Multiple Exceptionality	Behav
Promoted	34.7%	1%	0.8%	19.6%	0.4%	41.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	1.1%
Transferred	28.2%	2.9%	0.3%	47.4%	0.7%	0.3%	12.8%	2.2%	0.1%	1.2%	0.1%	3.8%
Other	15.9%	12.7%	0%	25.9%	0%	5.3%	4.2%	25.9%	0%	3.2%	0.5%	6.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.3%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>0.5%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0.1%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>

**Generational Status:** The proportion of students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 roughly mirrored the proportion of students across generational status aside from second generation students being slightly over-represented. Of students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9, first generation students were slightly over-represented while second generation students were under-represented.

**Table 63: Generational Status across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

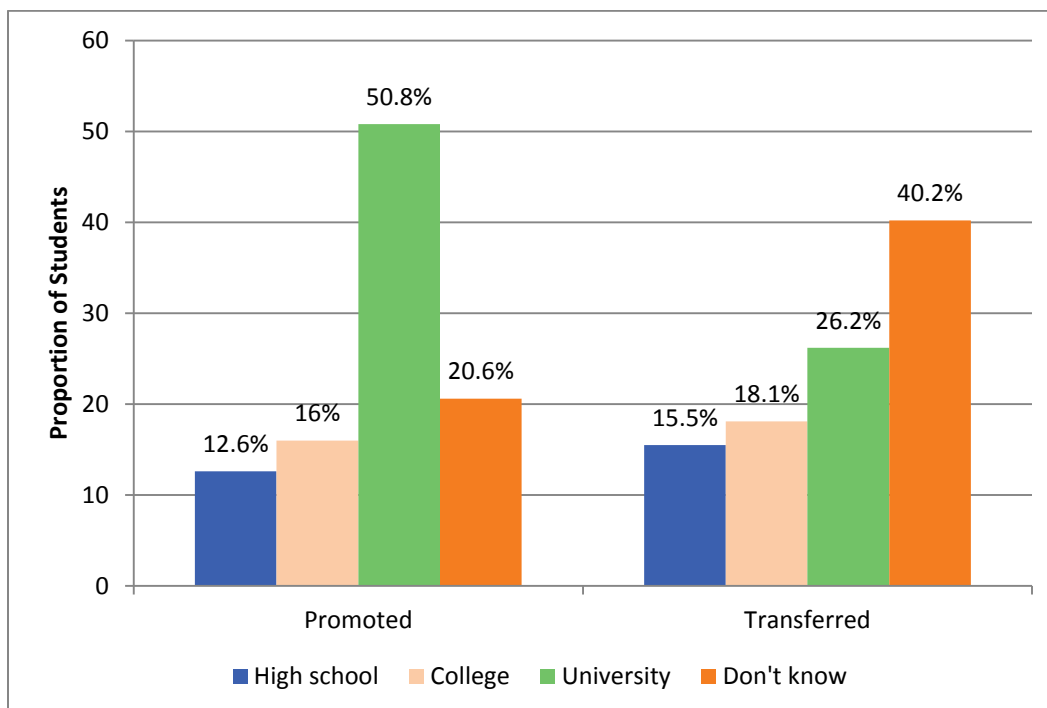
Generational Status	3rd Generation	2nd Generation	1st Generation
Promoted	19.6%	9.8%	70.6%
Transferred	19.9%	6.8%	73.3%
Other	28.6%	10.8%	60.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.9%</b>	<b>9.3%</b>	<b>70.8%</b>

**Parent Education:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 roughly represented the proportions across all parental education categories. However, the proportion across parental education categories varied for students who had been transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9. For example, for students who had been transferred, the proportion of students whose parents have a university education was almost half the average (26.2%) while the proportion of students whose parents' highest level of education was high school was over-represented.

**Table 64: Parent Education across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Parent Education	High school	College	University	Don't know
Promoted	12.6%	16%	50.8%	20.6%
Transferred	15.5%	18.1%	26.2%	40.2%
Other	7.8%	13.9%	58%	20.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.9%</b>	<b>16.3%</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>23.7%</b>

**Figure 41: Parent Education across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**



**Parent Occupation:** There were slight variations across parental occupation categories for students who had been promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9. Students who were promoted were slightly more likely to have parents who had professional or semi-professional employment and slightly less likely to have parents employed as skilled, semi-skilled, unskilled clerical or trades, or to be non-remunerative. Students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were notably less than half as likely to have parents who were employed as professionals and almost twice as likely to have parents who were non-remunerative. Students who were transferred were also less likely to have parents employed as semi-professionals, but more likely to have parents who were employed as skilled/semi-skilled or unskilled clerical or trades.

**Table 65: Parent Occupation across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

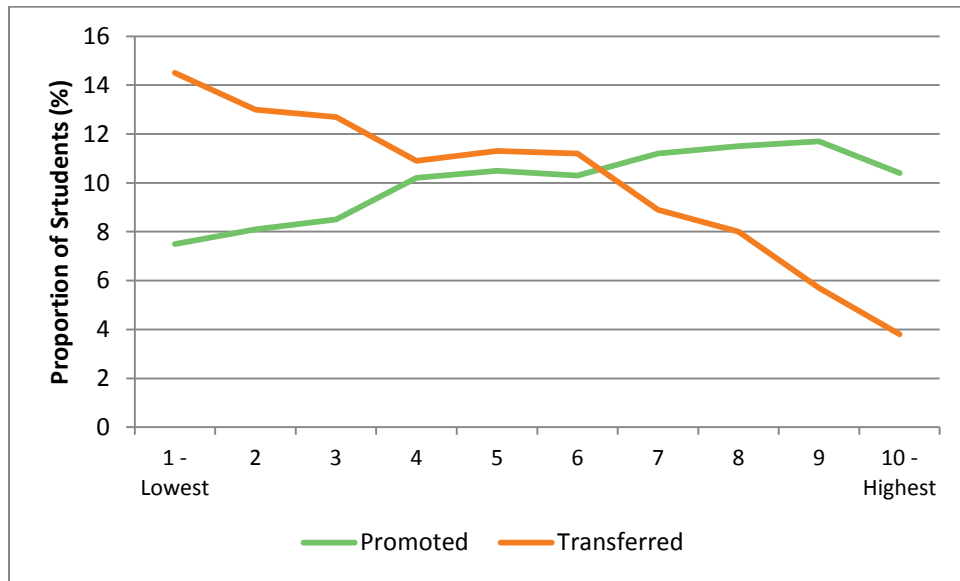
Parent Occupation	Professional	Semi-professional	Skilled/Semi-skilled Clerical	Unskilled Clerical Trades	Non-remunerative
Promoted	27%	27.5%	24%	7.8%	13.7%
Transferred	10.4%	20.2%	28.3%	12.3%	28.8%
Other	30.2%	24.2%	20%	9.8%	15.8%
Total	24.8%	26.4%	24.5%	8.5%	15.8%

**Family Income:** Income trends presented very differing trajectories for students who were promoted compared to students who were transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9. As shown in both Table 66 and Figure 42, students who were promoted were more likely to come from higher income households than students who had been transferred. The trajectories of income intersected at approximately the sixth income decile.

**Table 66: Family Income across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Deciles of Income	1 - Lowest	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 - Highest
Promoted	7.5%	8.1%	8.5%	10.2%	10.5%	10.3%	11.2%	11.5%	11.7%	10.4%
Transferred	14.5%	13%	12.7%	10.9%	11.3%	11.2%	8.9%	8%	5.7%	3.8%
Other	9.8%	6.6%	10.2%	11.4%	7.2%	10%	10.4%	5%	11.2%	18.2%
Total	8.9%	9%	9.3%	10.4%	10.5%	10.5%	10.7%	10.7%	10.6%	9.4%

**Figure 42: Family Income across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**



**Parental Presence:** Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 had similar proportions of parental presence compared to the overall average. However, students who had been transferred were less likely to live with two parents and far more likely to either live with their mother only, their father only, or within another living situation.

**Table 67: Parental Presence across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Parental Presence	Two Parents	Mother Only	Father Only	Others
Promoted	82.6%	14.2%	1.5%	1.8%
Transferred	68.3%	23.9%	3.2%	4.6%
Other	75.9%	20%	1.9%	2.2%
Total	80%	15.9%	1.8%	2.3%

**Parents Living Outside of Canada:** Although students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 were slightly more likely to have both their parents living in Canada than the average, students who were promoted were far more likely to have both their parents living outside of Canada than the average.

**Table 68: Parents Living Outside of Canada across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

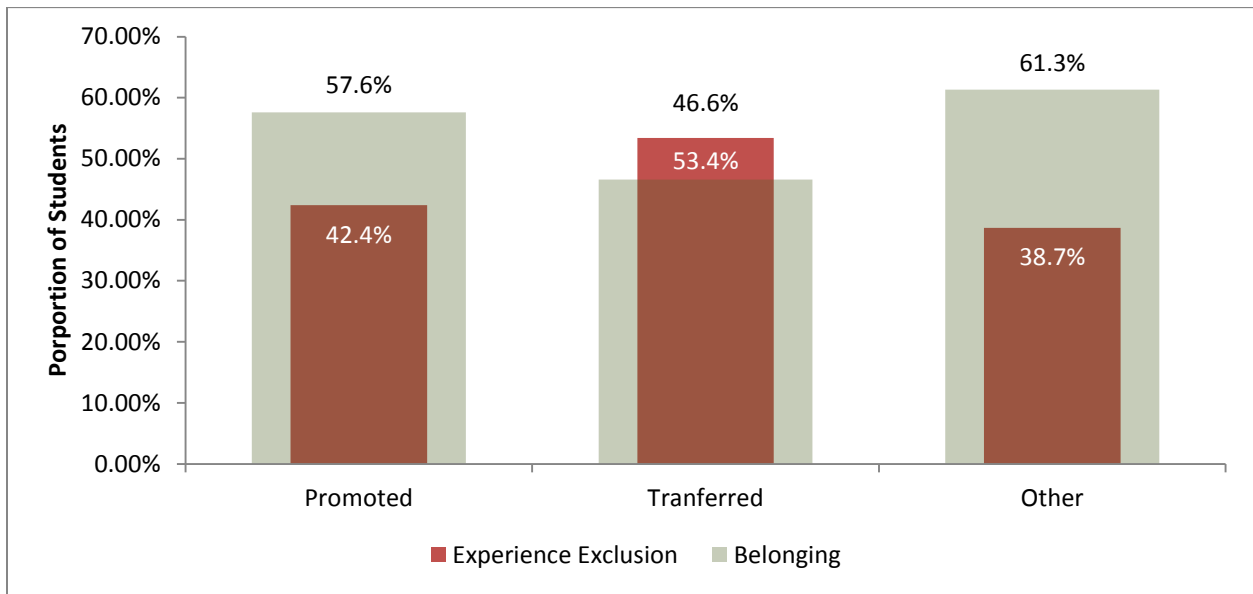
Parents Outside of Canada	One Parent	Both Parents	No Parents
Promoted	6%	0.9%	93.1%
Transferred	13%	4.6%	82.4%
Other	12%	1.6%	86.3%
Total	7.3%	1.5%	91.2%

**The Experience of Belonging and Exclusion:** The scale of belonging and exclusion demonstrated interesting results. Students who were promoted from Grade 8 to Grade 9 reported a greater sense of belonging at 57.6% than students who were transferred at 46.6%.

**Table 69: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**

Promotion and Transference	Experience Belonging	Experience Exclusion
Promoted	57.6%	42.4%
Transferred	46.6%	53.4%
Other	61.3%	38.7%
Total	55.9%	44.1%

**Figure 43: Experience of Belonging and Exclusion across Promotion and Transference, 2011-12**



### Conclusion

As evidenced throughout this report, establishing academic pathways includes the process of promotion and transference from Grade 8 to Grade 9. This final chapter of the report simply explored the student demographics involved in the transition pathways to Grade 9. In line with the other results from this report, the demographic trends are consistent. Students who are transferred from Grade 8 to Grade 9 are much more likely to share historically marginalized characteristics than students who are promoted.

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