



Date: **February 28, 2023**
Prepared by: **Lisa Demers, Superintendent of Education**
Subject: **Stronger Together Student Census**

Background

For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. (Jer. 29:11)

The government established a regulation under the Anti-Racism Act, 2017 to collect personal information in compliance with Anti-Racism Data Standards. Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism, also known as Ontario’s Anti-Racism Data Standards (Standards), were established to help identify and monitor systemic racism and racial disparities within public sectors including education, child welfare and justice.

The Standards establish consistent, effective practices for producing reliable information to support evidence-based decision making and public accountability to help eliminate systemic racism and promote racial equity. Mandatory data requirements under the Anti-Racism Act include Indigenous identity, Ethnic origin, Race and Religion. Additional categories consistent with the protected grounds under the Ontario Human Rights Code such as First Language, Status in Canada, and Disability could be asked.

Research tells us that student achievement is influenced by many factors, including students’ lived experiences related to their ethnic and cultural background, gender, socioeconomics, parental education and engagement, safety, and sense of belonging. The data gathered from the Student Census in May 2022 will help us understand how these factors impact student success. An important way to ensure success is to know and understand students in the richness of their diversity and uniqueness. An essential component of this work is gaining a better understanding of the intersectionality of social identities on student achievement. The information provided will help us better identify the barriers to student success and what we need to do to create more equitable and inclusive learning environments as we work to improve equity, achievement, and well-being for all students.

We are committed to helping to create an inclusive and equitable society for all students. By identifying and monitoring systemic racial disparities, our board will be better able to close gaps, eliminate barriers, and advance the fair treatment of everyone. The findings from the Student Census will inform planning, decision-making, resource allocation and the delivery of programs and resources at all levels of the school board.

The Stronger Together Student Census remained open from Monday, May 16 through to Friday, May 27, 2022, for students from K-12. The summary data report for Elementary and Secondary is attached. To protect the privacy and confidentiality of students and their families, report findings from the Stronger Together Student Census will only contain data about groups of students and not individual students. Individual student data or information from the Stronger Together Student Census will not be released.

It is important to note that the response rates for elementary aged students was very, very low from a statistical perspective with a response rate of 3.5% and interpretation of results and report back of the results is not recommended by the research team. The secondary responses by grade range from 33.9% - 64.2% and the overall secondary response rate is 44.3%. This is high enough to report back on but there should be a statement about interpreting the results with caution because it does not represent the majority of students. The information provided from the 44.3% who did respond is still very valuable and provides insights for further discussion and next steps.

Information gathered from our census, school climate surveys and Ontario's Education Equity Plan, we have created a Board Equity Action Plan that focuses on four key priority areas;

- School and Classroom Practices
- Leadership, Governance and Human Practices
- Positive Culture and Well-being
- Data Collection, Integration and Reporting

It is a critical component of our commitment to the success of every student and child in Ontario.

Our work as a system moving forward will continue to focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion because these are critical components of our commitment to the success of every student and child in our Catholic schools.

Recommendations

That the St. Clair Catholic District School Board receive the report: *Stronger Together Student Census* for information.