



Update on the Implementation of Multi-Year Strategic Action Plan: Academic Pathways

To: Program and School Services Committee

Date: 19 January, 2022

Report No.: 01-22-4237

Strategic Directions

- Transform Student Learning
- Provide Equity of Access to Learning Opportunities for All Students

Recommendation

It is recommended that the update on the implementation of the Multi-Year Strategic Action Plan: Academic Pathways be received for information.

Context

The Toronto District School Board is committed to continuing the work to eliminate all forms of systemic racism and oppression that leads to inequitable outcomes for Black and Indigenous students, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and students identified with special education needs.

We are committed to continuing to identify, disrupt and dismantle the systemic structures that create barriers for students. Building from the actions of 2020-2021 related to the Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Academic Pathways K-12 specifically, as well as implementing the TDSB COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan to support students and schools demonstrates our commitment to have inclusive classrooms where streaming is disrupted in all its forms. We are committed to building capacity in elementary school staff to strengthen inclusive classrooms from Kindergarten to Grade 8 as part of the system-wide approach to Destreaming. We are also striving to ensure that Destreaming in Grades 9 and 10 leads to informed course choices in Grades 11 and 12.

Agenda Page 92

The pursuit for inclusive secondary school programming has made significant progress. Consider the following two Figures, Figure 1 and 2, that outline the overall participation rates of Grades 9 and 10 students in their program of study over the past 7 years.

Figure 1. Grade 9 Overall Program of Study Participation

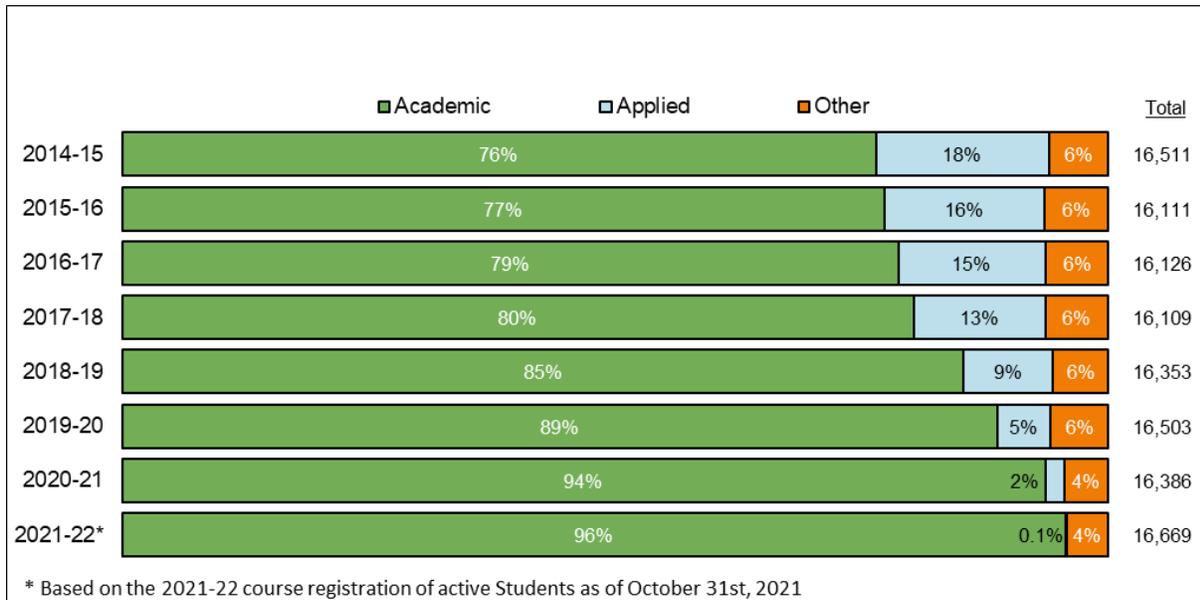
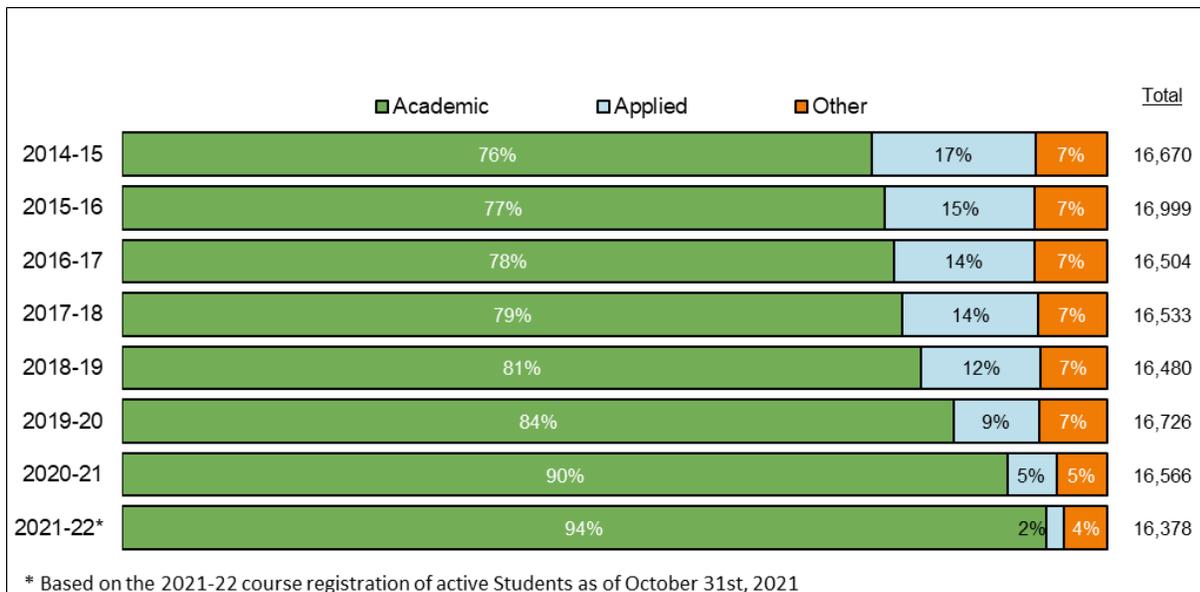


Figure 2. Grade 10 Overall Program of Study Participation



Since 2014-15 school year the TDSB has moved from a system that had over 5,600 students in Applied Programs of Study (POS) to a system with only just over 300 students now participating in the Applied Programs for Grade 9 and 10.

Academic programming can change life chances and career trajectory. For some families it will mean generational change. Previous TDSB trajectory studies have shown that successful outcomes for students in the Academic POS are critical indicators of

potential future post secondary school participation and future success. (citation needed here). Likewise, the equivalent value in relation to post secondary school access of achieving an 'A' in an Applied course is achievement of a 'D' in the Academic POS. That the TDSB has moved significantly forward in providing access to the Academic POS for a much broader population of students is a critical indicator of success in this pursuit.

We continue to work with both panels to understand and build skills to implement differentiated lessons in the classroom. Through professional development we will continue to build capacity around instruction and culturally responsive and relative curriculum.

The Ministry of Education has introduced for the 2022-2023 school year that Grade 9 Core Subjects will be delivered at the academic level. The Ministry has implemented Destreamed curriculum in grade 9 Science (SNC1W) and Math (MTH1W). English, Geography and French will be instructed at the academic level. September 2022 the TDSB will be introducing core grade 10 subjects at the academic level. Therefore, almost all grade 9 and 10 students will be studying at the academic level in the 2022-2023 school year.

Grade 9-10 Program of Study: Enrolment Trends

As detailed at the outset. Enrollment in both Academic Programs of Study (POS) and Applied Programs has shifted significantly over the past decade. The table below outlines participation proportions for both Academic and Applied programs from 2018-2022.

Table 1. Enrolment Trends for Academic, Applied, and Other (re: Locally Developed)

School Year	Academic Grade 9	Applied Grade 9	Other Grade 9	Academic Grade 10	Applied Grade10	Other Grade 10
2018-19	85%	9%	6%	81%	12%	7%
2019-20	89%	5%	6%	84%	9%	7%
2020-21	94%	2%	4%	90%	5%	5%
2021-22*	96%	0.1%	4%	94%	2%	4%

* Based on the 2021-22 course registration of active Students as of October 31st, 2021

While participation rates in the Academic Program of Study have increased by 11 percentage points in Grade 9 and 13 percentage points in Grade 10, pass rates in these years have stayed relatively stable. The figures below show course pass rates for the Academic Program of Study for both Grade 9 and 10.

Figure 1. Pass Rates for Grade 9 Courses in Academic Pathway

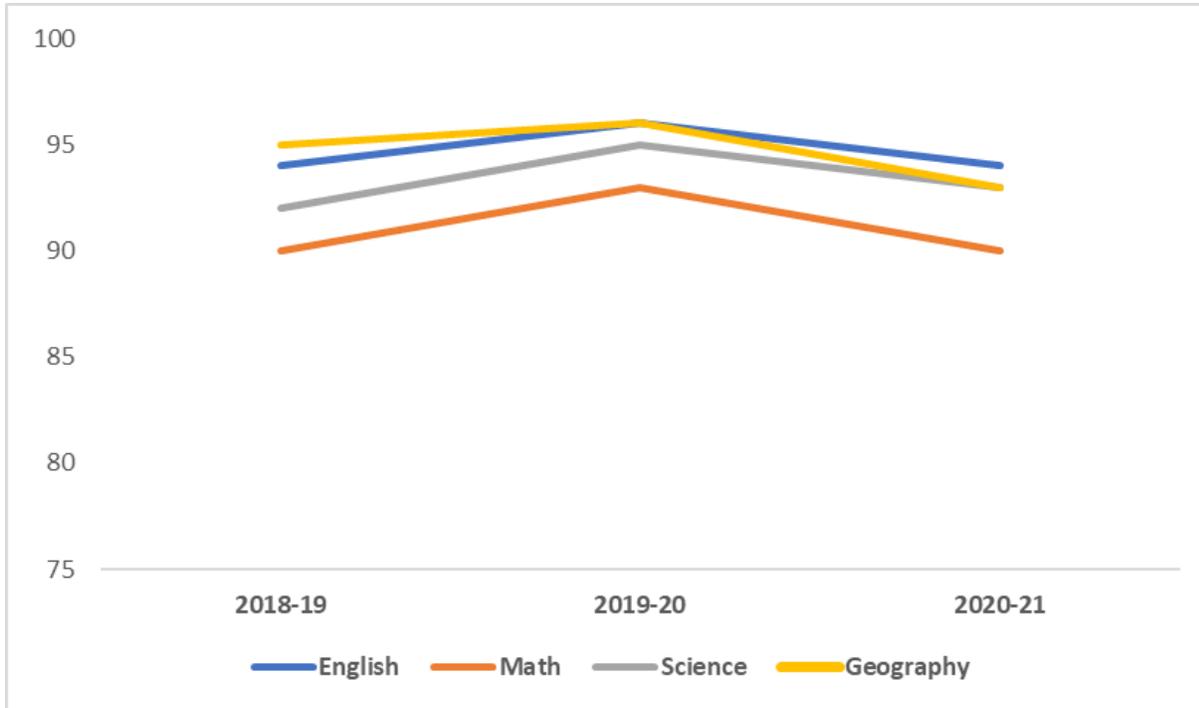
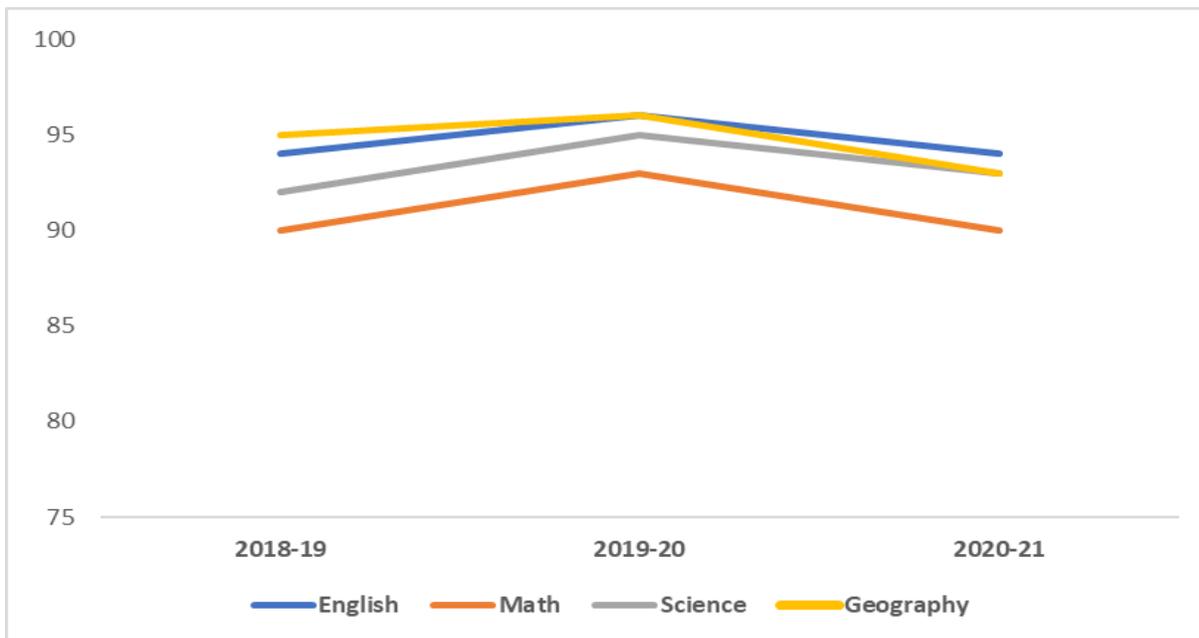


Figure 2. Pass Rates for Grade 10 Courses in Academic Pathway

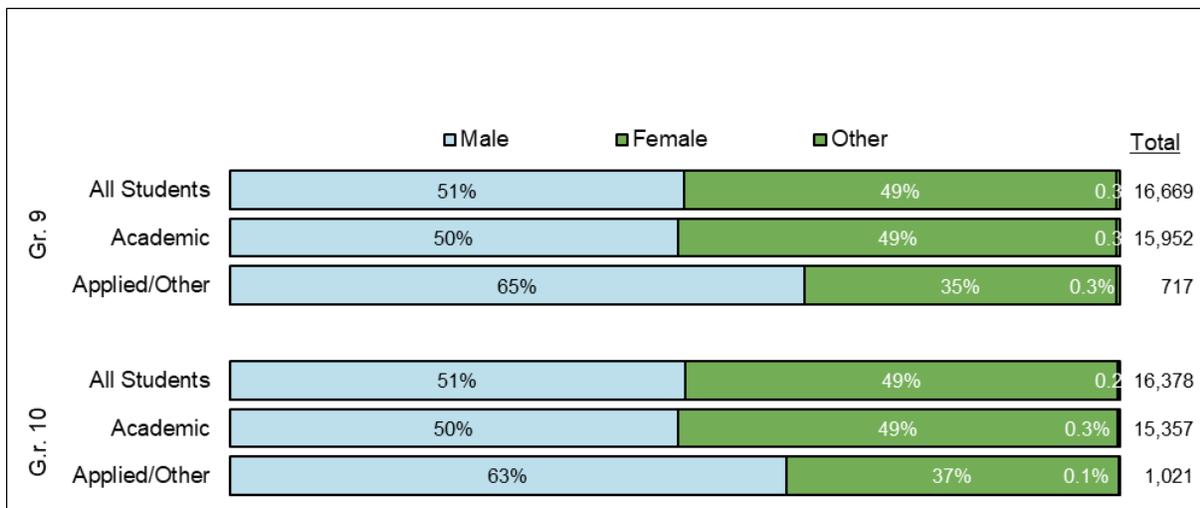


As detailed in both Grade 9 and 10, while the Academic Pathway has expanded in participation increasing by more than 10%, the pass rates have not fallen at all. One of TDSB’s main concerns in eliminating the Applied Pathway option and migrating nearly all students into an Academic Pathway for Grade 9 and 10 has been ensuring that students are supported to achieve to their full potential and are not harmed in this transition. The pass rate data is the first of several analyses planned to monitor student academic progress. This spring Research will be breaking down January outcome information for Grade 9 and 10 Academic courses by demographics to explore who is achieving and at what level is that achievement. That analysis will be available later in Spring 2022. What follows is demographic information for students participating in different pathway options e.g. Academic, Applied, and Locally Developed program pathways. As Table 1 shows, the proportions of students in the Applied Program are so small that they were combined with Locally Developed participation in order to provide a more concise picture of who is and is not currently enrolled in the Academic Pathways in secondary schools.

Demographic Characteristics of the Grade 9 and 10 Program of Study

The following charts outline distribution of Grade 9 and 10 students as it relates to a variety of different student demographic characteristics across Toronto. There are two main sources of data collection for the following charts, school registration information and TDSB Census. The first Five charts (Figures 3-8) below are drawn from data generated out of the school registration process. While the sample is nearly a Census or a complete data set of currently registered students, the data collection process is not voluntary as it is a part of school registration processes and thus may show inaccurate proportions in some categories. This is especially the case with students’ gender identification.

Figure 3. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Gender (Male, Female, and Other Gender Identities)



*The identification and breadth of non Cisgendered students is not represented reliably within this chart due to source collection issues at school registration and self identification.

Figure 4. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Special Education Needs

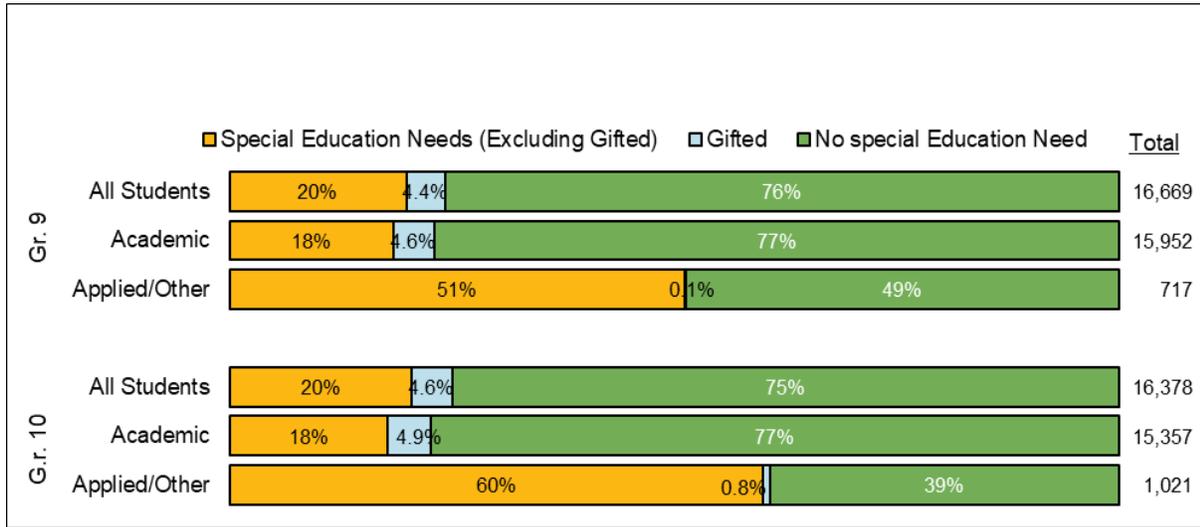


Figure 5. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Language Spoken at Home (English or Language Other than English)

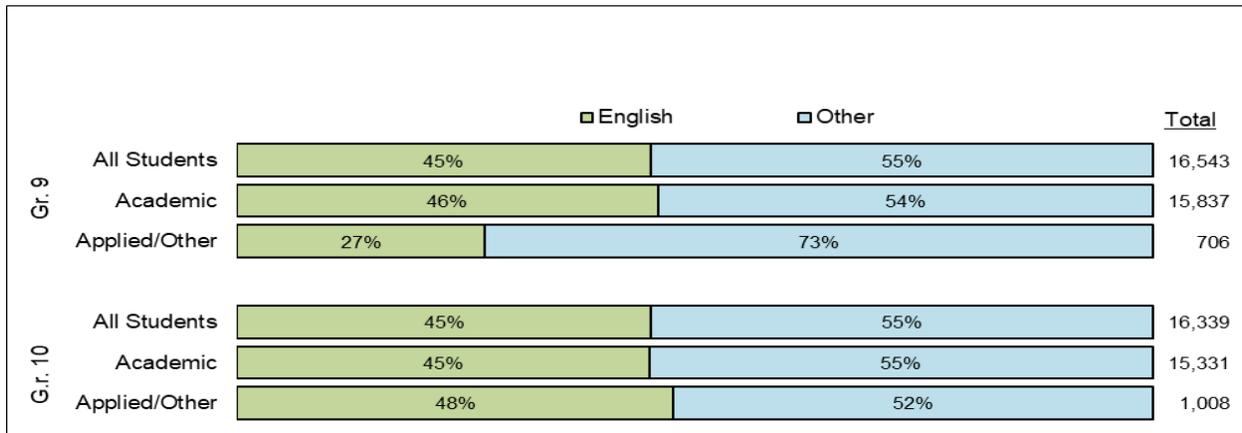
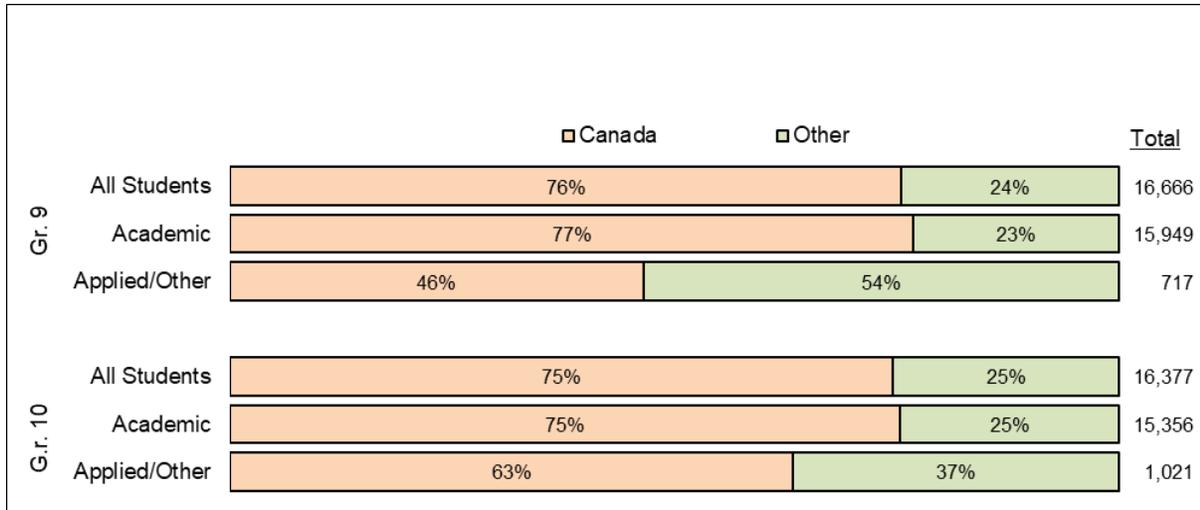


Figure 6. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Place of Birth (Canada or countries other than Canada*)



*Please see list of countries of birth for students in Appendix...

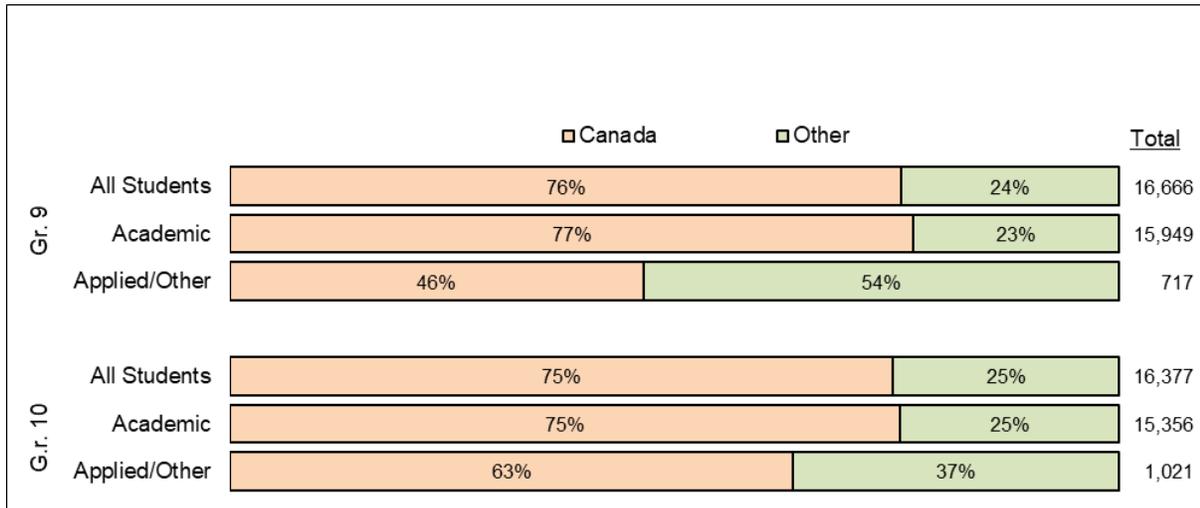
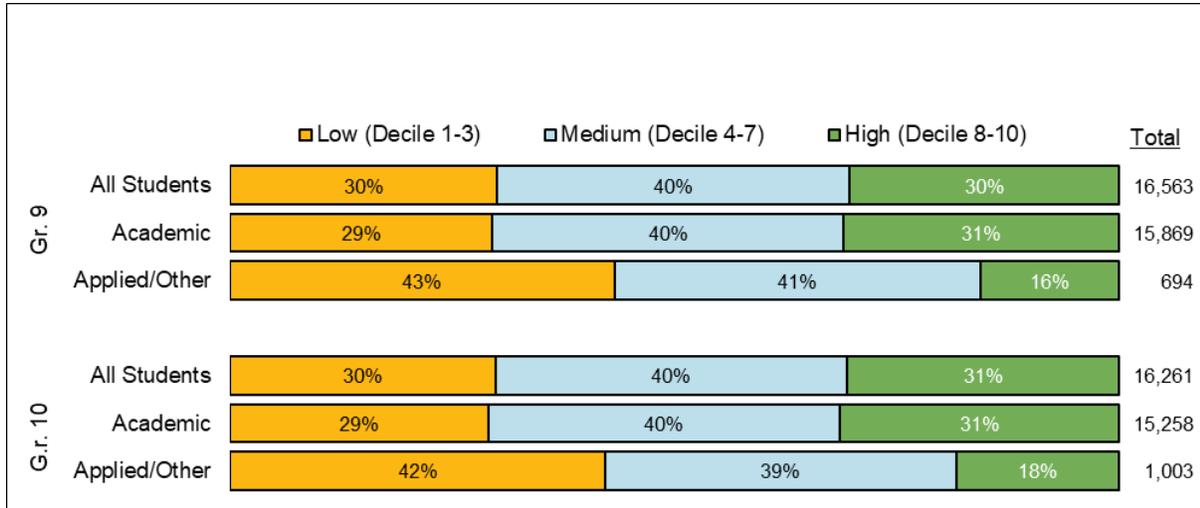


Figure 7. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Parental Presence Living in One Household

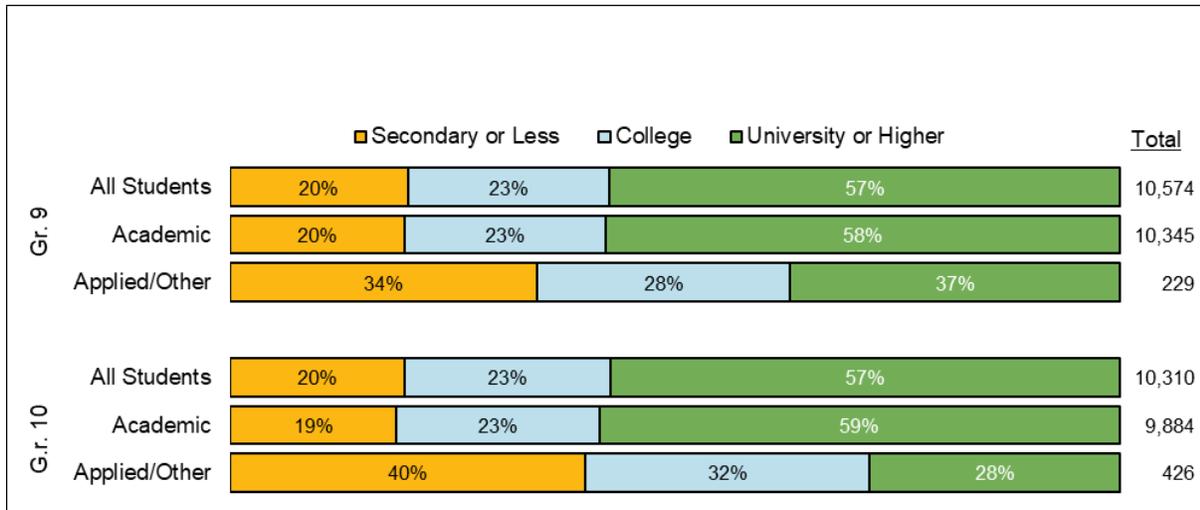
Collectively, these data show that there are distinct differences between student populations in the Academic POS when compared to the other programs of study in the TDSB including Locally Developed and Applied POS. These distinctions highlight areas of marginalization within the TDSB. Students in Applied and Other POS, similar to previous years are much more likely to come from single parent families, be born outside of Canada, and speak a home language other than English. These trends continue when breaking down these programs of study further by other key factors like income, parent education, and race.

Figure 8. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Estimated Family Income



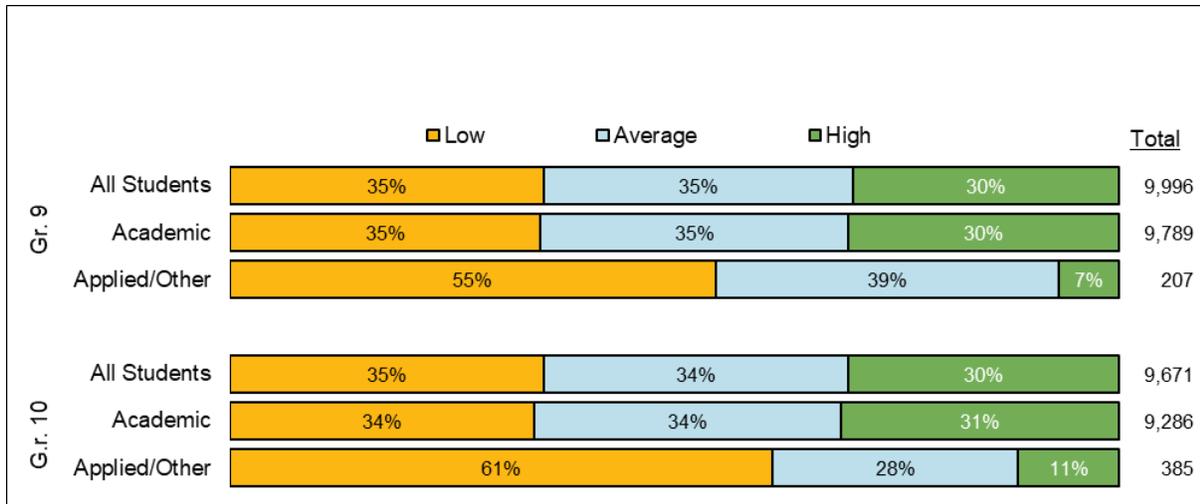
*The estimated family income information was based on the 2021 Environics median family income data at the postal code level. The match rate by linking students' home postal code is over 97%.

Figure 9. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Parent Education Levels (University, College, Secondary School)*



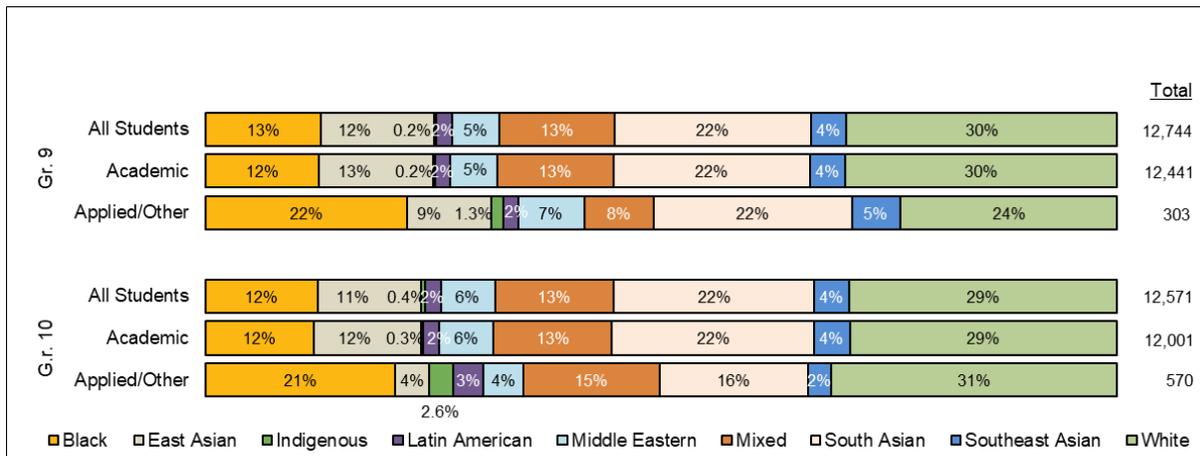
*When matching with the Board's 2016-17 and 2011-12 Student/Parent Census data in parent education, the match rates are low, 32% for Grade 9 students in the Applied/Other program of study and 42% for Grade 10 students in the Applied/Other program. The low match rates are largely due to the smaller number of students in these programs. For the Grade 9/10 students in the Academic program of study, the match rates are 65% and 64% respectively.

Figure 10. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Family Socioeconomic Status*



*When matching with the Board's 2016-17 and 2011-12 Student/Parent Census data in the overall socioeconomic status (SES – calculated from parent education, parent presence at home, and family income/parent occupation), the match rates are low, **29%** for Grade 9 students in the Applied/Other program of study and **38%** for Grade 10 students in the Applied/Other program. For the Grade 9/10 students in the Academic program of study, the match rates are 61% and 60% respectively.

Figure 11. Percentage of Students in Grade 9/10 Program Pathways by Self Identified Race



*When matching with the Board's 2016-17 and 2011-12 Student/Parent Census data students' self-identified racial background, the match rates are 42% for Grade 9 students in the Applied/Other program of study, and 56% for Grade 10 students in the Applied/Other program. For the Grade 9/10 students in the Academic program of study, the match rates are at 78%.

Similar to the initial five charts that broke down demographic characteristics The disproportionalities of program participation in areas like parent education levels, income, and race show that while there has been a dramatic reduction of students streamed into the Applied (POS) and other programs, the disproportionalities of the student populations still in Applied and Locally Developed POS are significant and congruent to outcome trends across the TDSB.

Shifting narratives of achievement within secondary schools in the TDSB

Achievement across Kindergarten to Grade 12 has been closely associated with

demographic characteristics and challenges across jurisdictions for over fifty years. The TDSB has been tracking student outcome data across the pandemic in order to get a sense of the various potential impacts of COVID related learning disruption and change within the TDSB (TDSB, 2021). Consider Figures 10 and 11 below.

Figure 10. Three-year Trends in Achievement for Secondary Students whose credit course average was between 50-59 in 2018-19

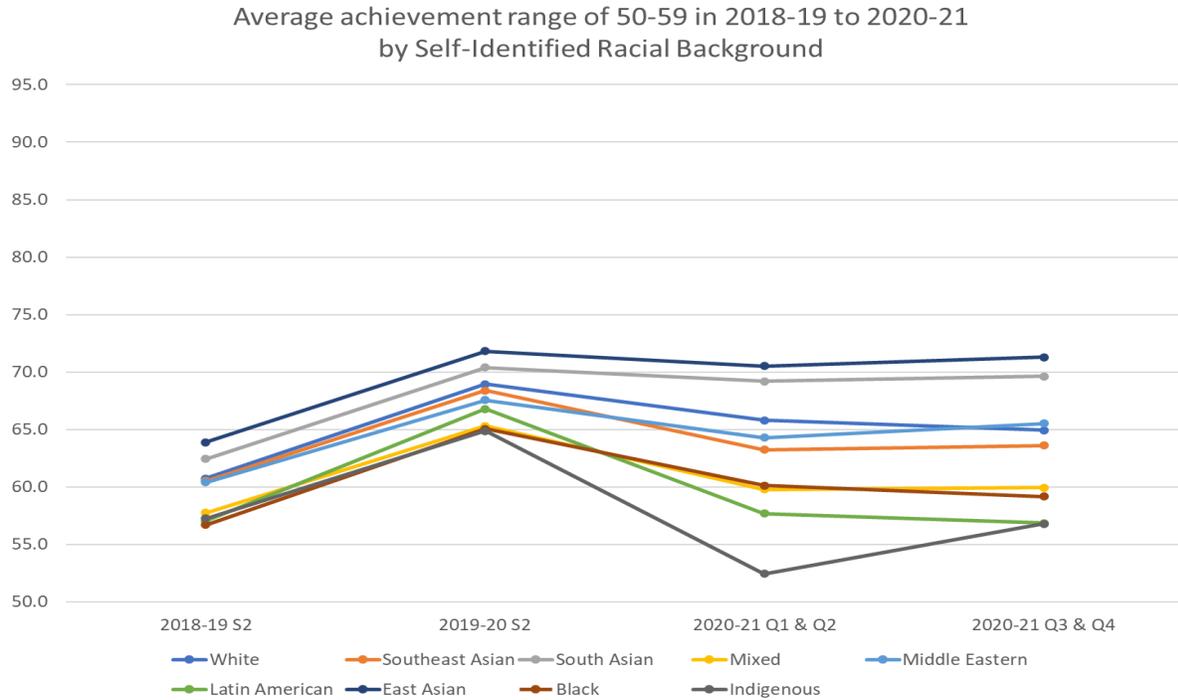


Figure 11. Three-year Trends in Achievement for Secondary Students whose credit course average was between 80-100 in 2018-19

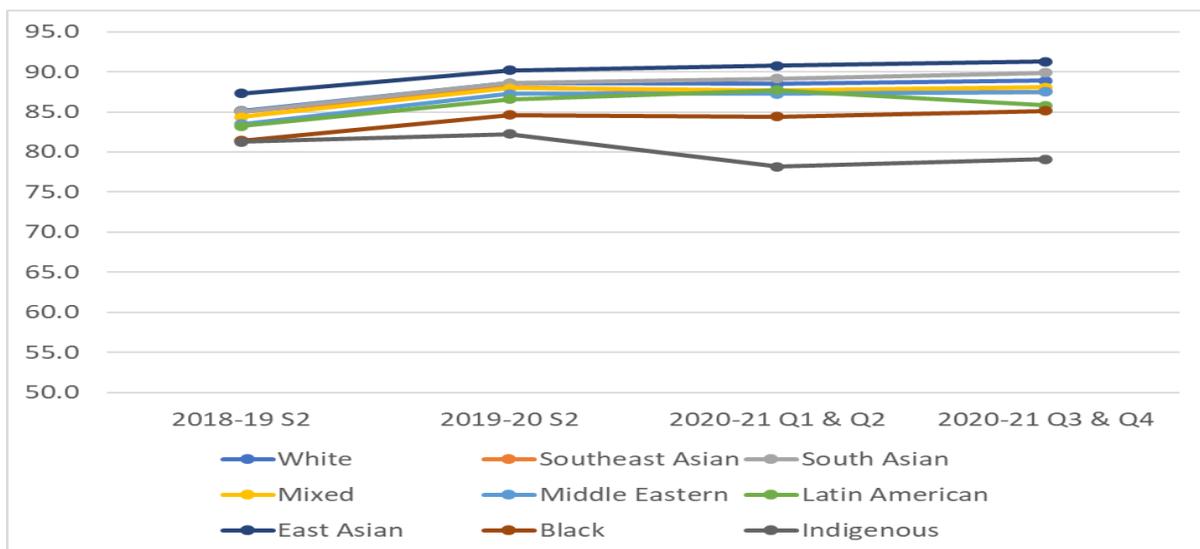


Figure 10 and 11 together provide an analysis that describes secondary school average course achievement over a period of three years. While the data includes all secondary students (Grade 9-12), because the Academic Program Pathway accounts for between 94-96% of all Grade 9 and 10 students, the data is relevant in inferring patterns of success within the Academic POS for Gr 9 and 10 students. Importantly, the data detailed in these two charts reinforces the connection between previous success and future success for students regardless of demographic circumstances including racial and gender identity.

This is a critical notion in relation to TDSB's work on equity as it implies that establishing sets of teaching and learning conditions within schools in which historically marginalized students experience more success will disrupt the obstinate patterns of student outcomes in which disproportionate numbers of students achieving success or failure fall largely in line with students' demographic contexts. A pattern that is persistent in almost all system data from kindergarten through to secondary school graduation and post-secondary school access, across several decades, is subject to the quality of the learning opportunities available for TDSB students.

In this instance, students who have experienced less success in school (Figure 10) are *initially* improving at faster rates than students who have experienced more success (Figure 11). However, students who experienced more success are able to *maintain* their improvement in the third year (2020-21) where students experiencing less success initially (Figure 10) proportionally return to their initial levels of achievement at the outset of the three year period in 2018-19. These graphs provide a system-wide view of secondary school outcome or achievement that suggest experiencing success in schooling may be a potentially more significant predictor of future success than demographic circumstances.

In relation to Academic Pathway success for all TDSB students, the data suggest that it is critical focus on understanding and creating conditions that enable the most opportunity for students to feel successful in their learning experiences across Kindergarten to Grade 12 e.g. using pedagogic approaches that centre students' prior knowledge and experience, building successful relationships including student mentorship, leveraging digital opportunities that the pandemic forged, and expanding capacity to use good formative assessment capacity in weaving existing learning with new learning experience.

The data also reinforces the notion that Pathways as an area of focus for the board, is broad and extremely relevant for students and schools much earlier than ensuring success in Grade 9 and 10. Success in Kindergarten is a strong influencer on success in Grade 1, and success in Grade 1, in turn, is a strong influencer on success in Grade 2 on through to transitions into secondary school and beyond. As such, Pathways, the successful movement of students through their schooling experience is a key policy lever across the MYSP.

Action Plan and Associated Timeline

Grade 9 and 10 Academic

- English/Literacy:
 - Debt in Adolescent Literacy (DIAL) initiative involving 71 schools engaged in professional learning on how to facilitate a successful collaborative inquiry to improve literacy outcomes for adolescents, beginning in 2020-21 and continuing.
 - Ministry-funded adolescent reading interventions will take place in approximately 15 secondary schools, beginning in February 2022.
- Mathematics and Numeracy:
 - Fall math symposium in November 2021 with over 150 secondary math teachers and leaders highlighted Indigenous education, learning mathematics through play in Grade 9 mathematics, as well as transition support for Grades 7-10 students.
 - System-wide professional learning to all schools on the 2020 elementary math curriculum through an inclusive and culturally responsive lens, to begin in February 2022.
 - Senior students will be hired to provide mentoring and tutoring to Grade 9 students from 44 secondary schools, including KWSS, Native Learning Centre, and Native Learning Centre East through an Indigenous lens, beginning February 2022.
- [Academic Pathways K-12 choice board](#) for professional learning was shared with all school administrators for the November 19 PA day.
- Development of a toolkit for school leaders to facilitate local professional learning through an inquiry lens and embed Academic Pathways K-12 into school processes is underway.
- K-Grade 1 IEP strategy is being expanded to Grades 2-12 to interrupt the overrepresentation and unequal outcomes of Indigenous and Black students in special education.
- The Locally Developed Compulsory Courses (LDCC) Strategy continues for the remainder of the 2021-2022 school year. The process requires the collaboration of teachers, administrators and families to determine, on a case-by-case basis, the appropriateness of a student's placement in a Grade 9 LDCC, and the approval of a parent and the Superintendent. We are awaiting Ministry approval to continue LDCC courses for the 2022-2023 school year

<p>MYS P Action: Provide professional learning to Guidance Counsellors and Student Success Teachers in the elementary and secondary levels to support effective transitions for all students in the most appropriate course pathway</p>	
Key Actions in 2020-2021	Key Actions in 2021-2022
<p>Professional learning to Senior Team regarding course selection, academic pathways and LDCC (October 2020, January 2021), followed by the implementation of the LDCC process to review placement of students into LDCC (February 2021) (see Appendix A)</p> <p>Impact: Reduction in LDCC course enrollment across the system (e.g. Grade 9 LDCC math enrolment decreased from 5.6% in 2018-19 to 1.3% in 2021-22)</p> <hr/> <p>Webinars for parents regarding Academic & Career Planning, with information about Academic Pathways (2020)</p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>That during the pandemic we were able to deliver a consistent message and resources to all families. We were also provided additional information to families to support what schools have in place.</p> <p>There were four sessions for grade 8 families and 4063 joined the webinars and there were over 5000 views on YouTube (December 2020)</p> <p>Post-secondary information night for families and 3000 joined the webinar (November 2020)</p>	<p>Professional learning sessions are currently taking place for Middle Years Student Success Counsellors (MYSSCs) on effective intervention tools and strategies.</p> <p>Impact: Follow-up survey for MYSSCs regarding their use of intervention tools and strategies and their effectiveness with students.</p> <hr/> <p>Plan to engage with the Coalition for Alternatives to Streaming in Education to co-develop family engagement and information sessions to support ongoing learning in literacy, numeracy, and global competencies.</p> <p>Impact: Number of parents/caregivers attending session; follow-up survey for participants regarding the usefulness of the session and how it will inform their decisions regarding course pathways.</p> <hr/> <p>Grade 8 to 9 Transition Information Night for families (November 2021)</p> <p>Impact: Approximately 4500 families attended transition information nights.</p>