York Region District School Board's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy Annual Report: Year 2 (2022-2023)

Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments

November 2023

Report Accessibility

Feedback regarding this report is both encouraged and essential for advancing accessibility at YRDSB in a way that recognizes the needs of all learners and community members.

To provide feedback or questions about report accessibility, or if you require the report in a different format for accessibility purposes, please contact:

The Human Rights Commissioner's Office, York Region District School Board, Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning, Room 202, 36 Regatta Avenue Richmond Hill, Ontario L4E 4R1. Phone: (905) 884-2046 extension 311. Email: aoda@yrdsb.ca

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Land Acknowledgement

We affirm that we are all treaty people and acknowledge that the York Region District School Board is located on the lands of two treaties. These treaties have been signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the First Nations of the Williams Treaties who are: the Mississaugas of Alderville, Curve Lake, Hiawatha, Scugog Island; and the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Rama, and Georgina Island who is our closest neighbour and partner in education.

To honour this agreement we will take up our responsibility to be respectful of their traditions, knowledge and inherent rights as sovereign nations. We will respect their relationship with these lands and recognize that our connection to this land is through the continued relationship with these First Nations, and we acknowledge our shared responsibility to respect and care for the land and waters for future generations.
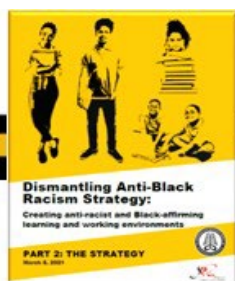
Ancestor Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the African ancestors, those Indigenous to the African continent. It is important to acknowledge the generations of people of African descent who were forcibly brought to this land and displaced around the world, as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade.

We want to also acknowledge the historical and contemporary resilience of Black people of the African diaspora as they have and continue to unequivocally resist oppression; demand for social justice to dismantle oppressive practices, systemic and institutional racism; and make incredible contributions to our societies serving as examples of excellence and inspiration.

We pay tribute to their sacrifice.

Executive Summary

Through the collective dedication of YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee, Turner Consulting Group Inc., and a Working Group consisting of members of the Black community and YRDSB staff, the YRDSB developed a Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy (DABRS) designed for implementation over five school years from 2020-2021 to 2025-2026.

On March 8, 2021, the "Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy: Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments" was officially launched. The overall goal of this strategy is to establish racial equity within YRDSB for both Black students and Black staff, while simultaneously dismantling the attitudes and structures that contribute to and maintain anti-Black racism within the Board.

Purpose of this Report

During the second year of implementation, two reports (February 8, 2023; and May 16, 2023) were provided to Trustees and YRDSB's Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee, which outlined progress on implementation of the priority actions. This second annual report builds on previous year 2021-2022 as well as quarterly reports from 2022-2023 year by providing an updated summary of the actions taken during 2022-2023 to implement the strategy.

Moreover, this second annual report builds on the first annual report by monitoring the impact of the strategy on Black students by tracking data of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from Every Student Counts Survey (ESCS) 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, Resolve Tool, Centre for Black Student Excellence Programs, and on Black staff hiring by tracking data from Apply to Education, years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Strategy Framework

The DABRS is outlined in two documents: Part 1 - Background Report and Part 2 - The Strategy. The three foci areas have been created by the DABR implementation team to help to focus the work. These foci areas include 7 priority areas, 35 relevant key actions, the accountability framework, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Engaging with this Report through an Anti-Racism Framework

The [Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy, Part 1: Background Report](#) provides an overview of the systemic nature of anti-Black racism and its manifestations within the education system.

Data plays an important role in advancing the goals of equity and social justice and can support the priority actions. At the same time, it is important to ensure that data collection, interpretation, reporting, and utilization do not harm Black students and staff represented by this data. When interpreting race-based data, it is important to consider the data through a critical lens that provides a framework for understanding the context in which findings occur. It is crucial to understand that systemic racism, specifically anti-Black racism, is one of the sources of these inequities, and subsequent inequitable outcomes experienced by Black students, their families, and Black staff. As a result, negative educational outcomes can "*reinforce and hold in place the White racial frame and the related stereotypes teachers and administrators have about Black students*" (James and Turner, 2017, p.65) instead of the onus falling on the education system that created the conditions for such outcomes. Developing racial literacy when looking at data and applying anti-racist principles will help ensure that data are not used in ways that stereotype, marginalize or stigmatize racialized communities, or promote a deficit-based perspective of racialized students and families.

When reviewing race-based data, readers should use an anti-racism framework, to:

➢ Put race and racial inequity at the forefront of data analysis and interpretation.

➢ Acknowledge that racism continues to operate today (i.e., ask where and how racism is operating, not if racism is happening).

➢ Allow for the historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts of racism, and specifically anti-Black racism, to inform our understanding of the data.

Summary of Strategy Implementation

The Year 2 Implementation Plan for the DABRS was structured to emphasize the three foci areas:

To evaluate the extent of strategy implementation during the second year, we have outlined the series of implementation actions for 2022-2023 within each focus areas:

Foci Area 1: Bold Leadership and System Practices

- Aligns a commitment to bold leadership and enforces the connections of the MYSP, DAP, DABRS, and SIP through the creation of procedures and guidelines that dismantle anti-Black racism in the Board.

- Leaders inspire and hold high expectations of the efficacy for Black Students and Staff by leading the work to dismantle anti-Black racism.

- Creating new possibilities for those in leadership positions to effectuate within the organization by boldly leading conversations on identifying and addressing anti-Black racism.

Foci Area 2: Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Outcomes

- Establishes the inclusion of cultural relevance within teaching, learning and curriculum to embrace the diversity within, and complexities of, the Black experience(s) and the African diaspora.

Foci Area 3: Black-Affirming Environments and Community Engagement

- The importance of listening to, building trust, partnering, and working with Black communities is driving force of this foci area.

- This type of intentional engagement will support the creation of Black-affirming learning and working environments conducive to strengthening pride, empowerment and positive narratives that enrich and inspire Black students, families and staff.

Summary of Student and Staff Outcomes

The following summary table highlights both the achievements and challenges encountered by Black students, underscores the positive impacts of Centre for Black Student Excellence programs, and recognizes improvements in staff representation. It underscores the imperative of sustained efforts to create anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments.

Please note, that for several KPI's, rather than only reporting rates, proportions and counts, a discussion of disproportionality is used to identify inequities and barriers experienced by Black students.

- **Disproportionality** is a measure of an identity group's over-representation or under-representation in a program, outcome or service relative to the group's representation in the population.

- **A disproportionality index** value that is more than 1 means over-representation, under 1 means under-representation and equal to 1 means equitable representation.

Section 1: Graduation Rates, Leaver Rates, and Post-Secondary Pathways

- A review of the cohorts 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, show a decline in graduation rates among all students. Black students' graduation rate has also decreased across the three cohorts reviewed. Similar trends observed in early leaver rates and post-secondary access rates. (See Table 2 and Figure 4; Table 3 and Figure 5; and Figure 6 respectively)

Section 2: Representation in Program of Study and Specialized Programs and Schools

- Since 2018-2019 there has been increase participation of Black students in Academic course types. However, there continues to be overrepresentation of Black students in Applied/Locally Developed type courses. (See Figures 7 and 8)

- In the 2022-2023 period, the representation of Black students (single race and multiple race) increased in the Academic program as well as in De-streamed courses. However, they are still overrepresented in the Applied/Locally Developed courses. (See Figure 7 and Figure 8)

- Some specialized programs have shown an increase in the participation of Black students (e.g., Art and French Immersion for Elementary; Art, College Delivered Dual Credit (DC) for Secondary. However, Black students remain underrepresented in some specialized programs (e.g., Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) for Secondary). (See Tables 4 and 5)

Section 3: Representation in Special Education Programs

- While improvements observed over time, Black students continue to be overrepresented in special education needs programs (excluding Giftedness) when compared to students from all other racial backgrounds. (See Figure 9)

- Also, Black students remain underrepresented in the gifted program when compared to students from all other racial backgrounds (See Figure 10)

Section 4: Representation among Suspensions and Expulsions

- While over representation of Grade 4-12 Black students (single race and multiple races) in out of schools suspensions shows consistent decline over the past five years, they still show the higher disproportionality in suspension rates compared to students of all other races, particularly those who self-identified as Black (single race). (See Figure 11)

Section 5 and 6: Equitable Learning & well-Being

- Positive outcomes in certain well-being areas reflect a noticeable decrease in feelings of nervousness and anxiety among Black students (single race) compared to Black students (multiple races) and students of (all other races). (See Figure 21)

- However, both Black (single race and multiple races) students' sense of belonging to their school has been slightly lower when compared to students of (all other races). This difference is more pronounced in 2022-2023 data and remains consistent across grades 7-8 and 9-12. (See Figure 19)

Section 7: Incidents of Hate Racism and Discrimination

- Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, as documented by the Resolve tool, the majority of reported incidents were associated with anti-Black racism, constituting approximately 50%. Additionally, a notable number of incidents included antisemitism (15%), homophobia (12%), and anti-Asian racism (11%). (See Table 9)

Section 8: Developing Racial Literacy for all Staff

- As part of implementing the DABRS strategy, an assessment of a scaled Racial Literacy program involving Grade 5 educators and students in 80 schools during Year One (May/June 2023) revealed encouraging results.

- The data showed that classroom-based co-learning opportunities improved the racial literacy of both educators and students, with Figure 25 providing a visual comparison of the changes in teacher responses regarding their confidence in addressing racism and anti-Black racism. (See Figure 25)

Representation of Black staff among applicants and new hires

- In the year 2021-2022, there was a significant increase in the proportion of Black applicants who chose to self-identify their race. This positive trend was also observed in the new hires data for 2021-2022. (See Table 10)

- There is an increase in the representation of Black employees, especially among Intervention Support Workers (See Table 11 and Figure 26)

Recommended Transformational Shifts & Changes

In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of the DABRS strategy in addressing anti-Black racism within YRDSB. While there have been notable successes and positive impacts, challenges remain, emphasizing the need for ongoing and sustained efforts to create inclusive and affirming educational environments for Black students and staff. The collaborative approach and commitment to systemic change

embodied by the DABRS strategy serves as a foundation for future progress towards racial equity and justice within the educational system.

As we embark on the third year, the following transformational shifts and changes are recommended:

Foci 1- Bold Leadership and System Practices

- Continue to provide senior staff and trustees ongoing professional development focused on addressing anti-Black racism from a system level.

- Continue to enhance racial literary through professional development for school administrators, educators, and staff.

- Increase efficacy of administrators in addressing incidents of Anti-Black Racism through the use of Hate and Discrimination Protocol and review the Resolve Tool process.

- Ensure that School Improvement Plans align with the priorities of the DABRS and are subject to supervision from the Superintendent through the System Improvement Learning Cycle (SILC).

Foci 2- Culturally Relevant Teaching, Learning and Equitable Outcomes

- Encourage teachers to integrate curriculum addressing racism, anti-Black racism and oppression into their daily lessons to foster awareness within the classroom.

- Provide training to increase teachers' confidence and competence in planning, delivering, and assessing culturally relevant practices, including Black affirming curriculum.

- Ensure that Teachers' Annual Learning Plans align with School Improvement Plans.

- Increase the number of staff members implementing Black identity affirming resources, as evidenced in New Teacher Induction Program Teacher Performance Appraisals, Principal Appraisals and Annual Learning Plan, lesson plans, long range plans, admin walkthroughs.

Foci 3- Black Affirming Environments and Community Engagement

- Support meaningful engagement and advocacy, providing various` opportunities to deepen relationships with Black families and communities for opportunities to engage and communicate with schools.

- Continue to provide racial literacy professional development for all staff aimed at creating Black Affirming learning environments. ⌑

- Provide learning experiences that empower Black students to aim for high academic achievement and create identity-affirming spaces that allow them to maintain a strong and positive sense of self rooted in their racial identity using CRRP.

- Increase the involvement of Black families in school initiatives (e.g., school council).

York Region District School Board's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy Annual Report: Year 2 (2022-2023)

Introduction

YRDSB staff, students, families, community members, and community agencies have consistently communicated their concerns to the Board including:

1. How anti-Black racism continues to rob Black children, families, and communities of their futures

2. Damaging ways anti-Black racism has impacted the mental health of staff and students, the career paths of staff, and

3. The entrenched nature of anti-Black racism in the education system (e.g., practices, policies, and curriculum).

Through the collective dedication of YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee, Turner Consulting Group Inc., and a Working Group consisting of members of the Black community and YRDSB staff, the YRDSB developed a Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy (DABRS) designed for implementation over five school years from 2020-2021 to 2025-2026.

On March 8, 2021, the "Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy: Creating anti-racist and Black-affirming learning and working environments" was officially launched. The overall goal of this strategy is to establish racial equity within YRDSB for both Black students and Black staff, while simultaneously dismantle the attitudes and structures that contribute to and maintain anti-Black racism within the Board.

This comprehensive strategy is outlined in two documents: Part 1 - Background Report and Part 2 - The Strategy. The strategy (see ABR strategy summary), is framed by 7 priority areas which inform 3 foci areas for the Board along with 35 relevant key actions, an accountability framework, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Figure 1: Visual Summary of the [Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy](#)
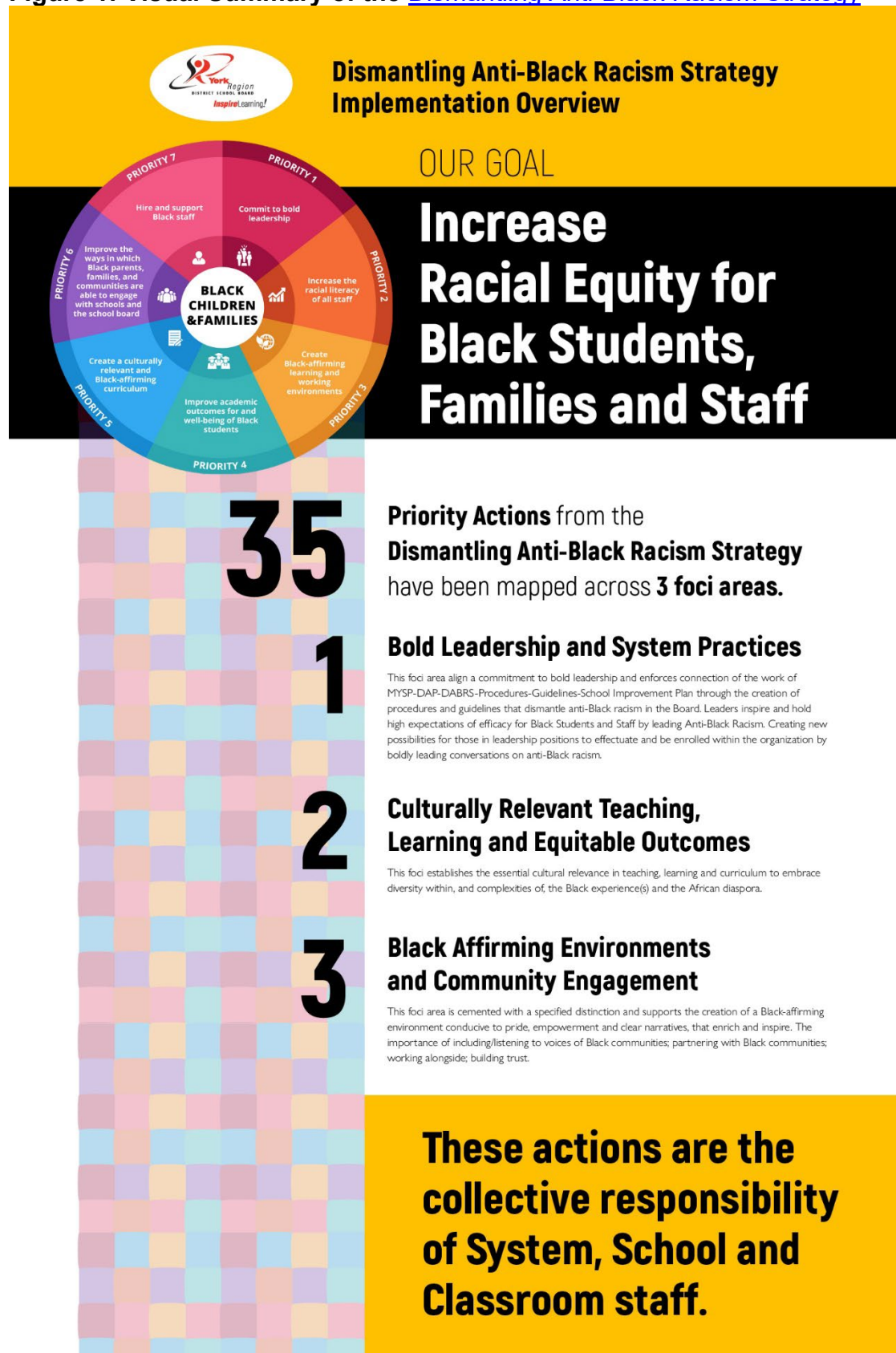
Achieving results

Addressing anti-Black racism and creating Black-affirming learning and working environments demands concrete and demonstrable changes in practices, learning and working experiences, and outcomes. The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy creates an accountability mechanism for the Board to allocate resources, monitor and evaluate the strategy's implementation. Throughout the 2021-2022 school year, the Board identified several actions to achieve the priorities set out in the strategy to ensure racial equity for Black students and staff.

On an annual basis, the YRDSB will prepare a public report for Trustees and communities documenting the implementation of DABRS to date, and the outcomes for Black students and Black staff connected to the strategy. These annual reports support Trustees in their governance role and ongoing monitoring of the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The Director of Education will invite members of Black communities to meet on an annual basis to review the findings of the annual report and ask for their feedback and any concerns. In this way, the public and members of Black communities will play a critical role in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this strategy.

Purpose of this report

During the second year of implementation, two reports (February 8, 2023; and May 16, 2023) were provided to Trustees and YRDSB's Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee, which outlined progress on implementation of the priority actions. This second annual report builds on the two reports by providing an updated comprehensive summary of the actions taken during 2022-2023 to implement the strategy. Moreover, this second annual report builds on the first annual report by monitoring the impact of the strategy on Black students by tracking data of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from Every Student Counts Survey (ESCS) for years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, and on Black staff hiring by tracking data from Apply to Education, years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

The provided data will be used as one way to monitor the strategy and will be complemented by data provided from Resolve tool on Incidents of Hate Racism and Discrimination, as well as information gathered through the Centre of Black Student Excellence Programs (e.g., Black Excellence Program, Ascending Sisters, Rise Brothers, Come Up, Camp Black Brilliance, and Black Internship program). This information will include anecdotal data on students, family and staff feedback on these initiatives. Information continues to be made available through Every Student Counts Survey (ESCS) themed reports and research briefs.

The accountability framework outlined in the DABRS mandates regular public reporting to allow for broader community input beyond what is provided to the Board through the Anti-Black Racism Steering Committee and Board of Trustees. This framework identified the following KPIs to support monitoring the strategy:

- ➢ Graduation Rates, Leaver Rates, and Post-Secondary Pathways,
- ➢ Representation in each program of study and specialized programs,
- ➢ Representation in special education programs,
- ➢ Representation among suspensions and expulsions,
- ➢ Students' equitable learning,
- ➢ Student well-being
- ➢ Representation of Black employees in workforce and among new hires, and

Reporting on this data provides system and school leaders with an understanding of the nature and degree of inequities present in YRDSB schools and workplaces. It will allow the YRDSB to:

- Set clear expectations for Black student achievement and well-being,
- Identify opportunity gaps and how to address them (e.g., allocation of resources, developing initiatives, providing relevant learning, or training opportunities),
- Invite the community to participate in holding the Board accountable to achieving the actions set out in the strategy,
- Identify whether and where adjustments to this strategy are needed,
- Identify any required adjustments to monitor the strategy implementation, and
- Assess the impact of strategy initiatives.

Connections to Board Strategic Plans

DABRS is an integral component of the Director's Action Plan (DAP).

Figure 2: Director's Action Plan (DAP)

Well-Being & Mental Health	Equity & Inclusivity	Effective Instruction & Assessment	Building Relationships	Ethical Leadership
Build safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments where all feel they matter and belong.	Build understanding of anti-racism, anti-oppression, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and the ongoing impact of colonialism.	Provide effective instruction and assessment that reflect students' identities, lived experiences, strengths, needs and interests.	Build trust and collaborative relationships with students, families and staff by developing shared solutions through respectful communication and responsive actions.	Build shared understanding of Ethical Leadership that elevates student, staff, family and community voice.

While the strategy is relevant to all five goals of the Director's Action Plan as outlined above, it is situated within the Equity and Inclusivity Goal: Build understanding of anti-racism, anti-oppression, culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy and the ongoing impact of colonialism. The DAP is intentionally aligned with the [Trustees' Multi-Year Strategic Plan](...) (MYSP) and ensures that the organization remains focused on established Board priorities. The MYSP outlines the priorities that guide the work of all staff and represents the Trustee's commitment to the public and reflects input from community consultations. Accordingly, this annual report reflects the Board's continued commitment to mobilize and monitor interdepartmental actions that help achieve the priorities set out in the Trustees' MYSP, specifically in ensuring that the Board achieves racial equity for Black students and Black staff. This report also reflects the Board's commitment to transparency and to raising the achievement and well-being of Black students and Black staff, as well as a willingness to be held accountable by the public to this commitment.

Engaging with this Report through an Anti-Racism Framework

The [Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy, Part 1: Background Report](...) provides an overview of the systemic nature of anti-Black racism and its manifestations within the education system.

As noted, this second annual report outlines data that is used to monitor DABRS. Data plays an important role in advancing the goals of equity and social justice and can support priority actions. At the same time, it is important to ensure that data collection, interpretation, reporting, and utilization do not harm Black students and staff represented by this data. When interpreting race-based data, it is important to consider the data through a critical lens that provides a framework for understanding the context in which findings occur. It is crucial to understand that systemic racism, specifically anti-Black racism, is one of the sources of these inequities, and subsequent inequitable outcomes experienced by Black students, their families, and Black staff. As a result, negative educational outcomes can "*reinforce and hold in place the White racial frame and the related stereotypes teachers and administrators have about Black students*" (James and Turner, 2017, p.65) instead of the onus falling on the education system that created the conditions for such outcomes. Developing racial literacy when looking at data and applying anti-racist principles will help ensure that data are not used in ways that stereotype, marginalize or stigmatize racialized communities, or promote a deficit-based perspective of racialized students and families.

When reviewing race-based data, readers should use an anti-racism framework, to:

➢ Put race and racial inequity at the forefront of data analysis and interpretation.

➢ Acknowledge that racism continues to operate today (i.e., ask where and how racism is operating, not if racism is happening).

➢ Allow for the historical, socio-cultural, and political contexts of racism, and specifically anti-Black racism, to inform our understanding of the data.

The following questions are intended to support readers in using an anti-racism lens:

- How does your identity influence how you interpret the data?

- What assumptions might you be making about Black students, their families and Black staff that perpetuate anti-Black racism?

- Are you able to understand that the negative outcomes experienced by students and staff reflect the deficits of the system (i.e., structures that create and maintain conditions of inequity)?

- Are you viewing Black students, families and staff through an affirming and positive lens when looking at the data and outcomes for students and staff?

- Whose voices are missing from the report, and/or in the data?

- Within the spaces you live/work/hold privilege, what is your commitment to amplifying Black voices and affirming Black identities and excellence?

Where are we now?

The strategy implementation began with actions across all priority areas, and their progress will be closely monitored and reported on over a span of 5 years (i.e., short term impact in 1-2 years, medium term impact in 3-4 years, and long-term impact in 5 or more years). In year 1 report, the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on strategy implementation could not be overlooked. For a detailed overview, please refer to (Summary of Strategy Implementation) and the baseline data for the KPIs that serve as reference points for Years 2-5 (Key Performance Indicators: Outcomes). This report reflects on Year 2 of DABRS implementation and KPI data are used to demonstrate whether improvements in outcomes have taken place, wherever applicable.

Summary of Strategy Implementation

The Year 2 Implementation Plan for the DABRS was structured to emphasize the three foci areas:

To evaluate the extent of strategy implementation during the second year, we have outlined the series of implementation actions for 2022-2023 within each foci area:

Foci Area 1: Bold Leadership and System Practices

- Aligns a commitment to bold leadership and enforces the connections of the MYSP, DAP, DABRS, and SIP through the creation of procedures and guidelines that dismantle anti-Black racism in the Board.

- Leaders inspire and hold high expectations of the efficacy for Black Students and Staff by leading the work to dismantle anti-Black racism.

- Creating new possibilities for those in leadership positions to effectuate within the organization by boldly leading conversations on identifying and addressing anti-Black racism.

Foci Area 2: Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Outcomes

- Establishes the inclusion of cultural relevance within teaching, learning and curriculum to embrace the diversity within, and complexities of, the Black experience(s) and the African diaspora.

Foci Area 3: Black-Affirming Environments and Community Engagement

- The importance of listening to, building trust, partnering, and working with Black communities is driving force of this foci area.

- This type of intentional engagement will support the creation of Black-affirming learning and working environments conducive to strengthening pride, empowerment and positive narratives that enrich and inspire Black students, families and staff.

This following summary provides the relevant actions accomplished between August 2022 and August 2023. Each action is accompanied by a progress status, which falls into the following categories:

- **Complete** - This indicates that the action has been successfully completed.
- **Ongoing** - Denoting that the work is progressing as planned and has adhered to established timelines. Progress remains on track for completion.
- **In Progress** – signifying that the work is actively advancing. Additional support and/or time might be required.
- **Action Required** - This indicates that the action has been delayed or postponed, necessitating further attention or rescheduling.

Foci Area 1: Bold Leadership & System Practices

Classroom Level:
- Educators are reading and implementing their learning from Dr. Erica Buchanan-Rivera's book, "Identity-affirming classrooms: Spaces that center Humanity" **(2.2 & 5.3; ongoing)**

School Level:
- Information sessions provided for educators and administrators on creating Black Student Associations (BSAs) in November and December, 2022 **(4.7; ongoing)**
- Graduation Coaches created affirming inclusive spaces that empower and affirm Black Identity within their 6 schools **(4.5; ongoing)**
- Expanded Elementary BEP from 6 to 22 schools and launched Year 2 in December, 2022 **(4.7; ongoing)**
- Launched "Ascending Sisters: Pilot Program" in December, 2022 **(4.7; ongoing)**
- Superintendents are engaging in conversations with Administrators focusing on School Improvement Plans with a specific focus on goals, actions, and strategies specific to dismantling Anti-Black Racism **(1.2 & 1.3; ongoing)**
- Following professional learning, ensuring accountability through critical questions/prompts and a direct action that demonstrates learning has been applied. For example, one or two components of racial literacy directly related to our Black students **(1.3; ongoing)**

System Level:
- Normalizing conversations around Black students and staff experiencing anti-Black racism within classrooms and schools **(1.3 & 1.4; ongoing)**
- All schools must develop one School Improvement Plan (SIP) goal related to DABRS after receiving training on creating goals that align with DABRS **(1.3 & 1.4; ongoing)**
- Staff receive professional development on DABRS at Monthly Staff Meetings **(3.3; ongoing)**
- Held drop-in session for administrators with Centre for Black Excellence Team in December, 2022 **(2.2; ongoing)**
- Unpacked Annual Report data with DABR Steering Committee in November, 2022 **(4.2; ongoing)**
- Senior Leaders have developed more specific questions directly related to the DABRS to be used during future school visits and walk throughs. These look fors go beyond "performative" actions and are connected to critical questions/prompts **(1.1, ongoing)**
- Seniors Leaders will work with all departments (including Plant services) to ensure DABRS priorities are embedded in all levels of the organization **(1.1, ongoing)**

Foci Area 2: Culturally Relevant Teaching and Learning Outcomes

Classroom Level:

- DABRS Racial Equity Project: Student Conscious Pilot Program (Classroom Level):   Pilot project involving 90 Schools that center co-learning with educators and students in the Junior Grades (Gr. 5 focus) to develop a reciprocal student leadership model that complements classroom-based learning for racial literacy. **(May 16-17) (2.2, 2.5, 5.1, 5.2 & 5.3; in progress)**
- Engage and apply in classroom: engage in learning that counters White dominant narratives and centers the voices and experiences of Black and African peoples. Youth leadership, student/staff collectivism with a focus on justice and liberation (community and student-driven inquiry). **(4.7 &5.5; in progress)**

School Level:

- DABRS Racial Equity Project: Student Conscious Pilot Program: Administrators and staff in 90 Schools are engaging in power-sharing with Black students, families, community, and Elders and champion the continued partnership and sustainability of relationships (In Progress - involving multiple stages supporting educators, community and students) **(5.3, ongoing)**
- DABRS Racial Equity Project: Student Conscious Pilot Program (Pilot Launch) Opportunity for Black Staff to engage in professional development with Black Scholar Dr. Howard Stevenson **(7.3; ongoing).**
- Staff in 90 Schools will engage in learning with guest speaker Dr. Howard C. Stevenson, who will share viable ways to support the well-being of those most impacted by (anti-Black) racism, while increasing the critical consciousness, agency, and racial literacy of all involved in the teaching and learning partnership **(7.3; in progress)**

System Level:

- Increase Racial Literacy via DABRS Racial Literacy Equity Project: All partners - students, families, educators, staff, leadership - can name the historical legacies and ongoing structures and systems that disproportionately negatively impact Black students and perpetuate anti-Black racism **(2.2; in progress through May via multiple engagement opportunities)**
- DABRS Racial Equity Project: Student Conscious Pilot Program (System Level) Supporting system leaders Increase knowledge of historical legacies and systems of power (e.g., white supremacy, settler colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism) and how they continue to operate in ways that advantage some/disadvantage others. (Partnering with attending school leaders 2 full-days and 2 half days **(5.2; in progress)**

Foci Area 3: Black-Affirming Environments and Community Engagement

Classroom Level: NA

School Level:

- Hosted 300 Black students for Remembrance Day and Movie Premiere event: Wakanda Forever in November, 2022 **(4.7; completed)**
- School administration communication to staff identifying programs, resources and supports for Black staff, students and families to access mental health **supports (4.3, 6.4 & 7.3, ongoing)**
- Staff participating in professional development and on-going learning and utilizing resources to support educators **(2.4, ongoing)**
- Increased understanding and efficacy of administrators in addressing incidents of ABR through the use of the Hate and Discrimination protocol and RESOLVE **(1.2; ongoing)**
- Schools to continue to promote programs listed below to elevate voices of our students who identify as Black **(4.7; ongoing)**
- Black Excellence Pilot Program
- RISE Brothers and Ascending Sisters,
- The Come Up summer program
- Black Brilliance Summer Camp for incoming Year 1 & 2 Kindergarten

System Level:

- Held session for Black families about student mental health and identity affirming spaces in November, 2022 **(6.2; Completed)**
- Continuation of Secondary Black Excellence Program (BEP) in November, 2022 **(4.7; ongoing)**
- Created mailing list for Black families to receive communication **(6.4; ongoing)**
- Engaged in partnership discussions with Children's Aid Society **(4.4; ongoing)**
- Hosted various Black History Month events for system **(5.4; ongoing)**
- SLT engaged in professional development specific to their roles and responsibilities in order to develop their racial literacy along with the knowledge and competence to support the implementation of this strategy and build capacity **(2.1; ongoing).**
- DABRS Rise Module in progress
- Hate and Discrimination Protocol
- Discriminatory Slurs and Statements Protocol
- Workshops supporting staff to DABRS (drop in for Black Excellence, Anti-Racist Educator Network) and continue to create mandatory Staff meeting professional learning for schools and workplaces in delivering a Black-affirming and anti-racist curriculum and racial literacy **(2.2; ongoing).**

- The YRDSB will develop mechanisms to communicate directly with Black parents **(6.4; complete).**

Student Outcomes

To understand the experiences of Black students within YRDSB schools, the following KPIs will serve as baseline data for monitoring the long-term impact of the strategy:

1. Graduation Rates, Leaver Rates, and Post-Secondary Pathways,
2. Representation in Program of Study and Specialized Programs and Schools,
3. Representation in Special Education Programs,
4. Representation among Suspensions and Expulsions,
5. Equitable Learning
6. Student Well-Being
7. Incidents of Hate Racism and Discrimination
8. Centre for Black Student Excellence Programs

The monitoring of these KPIs is intended to:

- Provide clear expectations for Black student achievement and well-being,
- Assess the impact of the initiatives outlined in this strategy,
- Identify whether and where adjustments to this strategy are needed,
- Focus school board attention on opportunity gaps, and
- Provide accountability data for use by the community. (York Region District School Board, 2021a, p.22)

Please note, that for several KPIs, rather than only reporting rates, proportions and counts, a discussion of disproportionality is used to identify inequities and barriers experienced by Black students.

- **Disproportionality** is a measure of an identity group's over-representation or under-representation in a program, outcome or service relative to the group's representation in the population.

- **A disproportionality index** value that is more than 1 means over-representation, under 1 means under-representation and equal to 1 means equitable representation.

Also, throughout this report, the following two categories are used to identify Black participants: Black (single race) and Black (multiple races). Participants in the Black (single race) category indicated Black as their only racial identity. Participants in the Black (multiple races) category selected Black as one of multiple racial identity categories. The purpose of this distinction is to highlight the nuanced differences in the experiences of those who identify exclusively as Black and those who identify with multiple racial identities that include Black (also referred to as "mixed", "biracial" or "multiracial") that would be lost if participants were grouped into one category.

Section 1: Graduation Rates, Leaver Rates, and Post-Secondary Pathways

Graduation should be an expectation for all students. While the graduation rate can be an important indicator of student success overall, a more critical key indicator of equity is whether every student has a voice and choice into their post-secondary pathway programming.

1.1 Graduation Rates and Leaver Rates

The graduation rate is the percentage of students belonging to the same Grade 9 Cohort who obtained an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) within five years of beginning high school, less attrition.

- ➢ A cohort is comprised of all students who begin Grade 9 for the first time, in the same academic year.

- ➢ Attrition refers to a reduction in numbers as a result of transfers or death prior to obtaining an OSSD. Transfers are those who exited the YRDSB to continue their studies elsewhere.

- ➢ Only students working toward an OSSD are included in the calculation of graduation rates.

The following table (Table 1) shows graduation rates for Grade 9 cohorts over the years 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023 in YRDSB, with a focus on Black students, both self-identified as single race and multiple races, and compared to students of all other races. The overall YRDSB graduation rate slightly decreased over the three years. Black students (single race and multiple race) had higher graduation rates in 2020-2021, however, this rate started to decline over time. This decline was more pronounced for Black students (single race), falling to 88.8%. However, this decrease rate was also observed in students from (all other races). See Figure 3 for a visualization of the data.

Table 1: 5-year Graduation Rates of Grade 9 Cohorts (2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019) by Racial Identity

Racial Identity	2016-2017 Cohort Size	2016-2017 Cohort Graduation Rate	2017-2018 Cohort Size	2017-2018 Cohort Graduation Rate	2018-2019 Cohort Size	2018-2019 Cohort Graduation Rate
Black (single race)	246	95.9%	256	92.6%	251	88.8%
Black (multiple races)	163	96.3%	158	94.9%	165	91.5%
All other races	6,370	98.6%	6,839	96.8%	7,380	94.6%
No race selection	547	95.2%	647	92.4%	833	92.1%
*Not participated in ESCS	977	88.6%	707	83.6%	751	79.4%
YRDSB Total	8,568	94.7%	8,728	94.3%	9,162	93.5%

Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023). * Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools but did not complete the ESCS.

Figure 3: 5-Year Graduation Rates of Grade 9 Cohorts (2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019) by Racial Identity
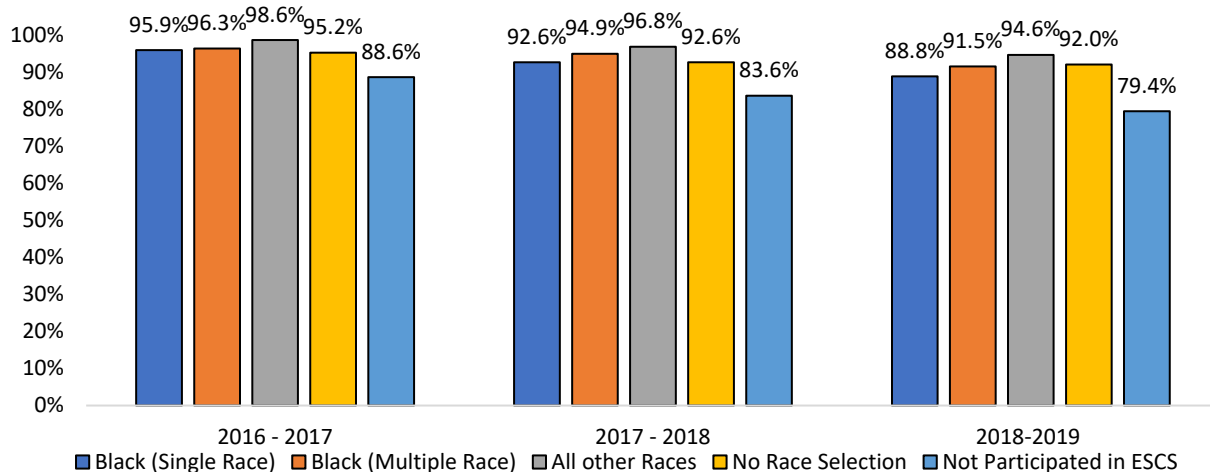
Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023).

The disproportionality indices of 5-year graduation rates by Grade 9 cohort and racial identity are shown in Figure 4. Black students (single race and multiple race) consistently showed lower graduation rates compared to students from (all other races), as indicated by disproportionality index (DI) values below 1.00.

Figure 4: Disproportionality Indices of 5-Year Graduation Rates by Grade 9 Cohort and Racial Identity
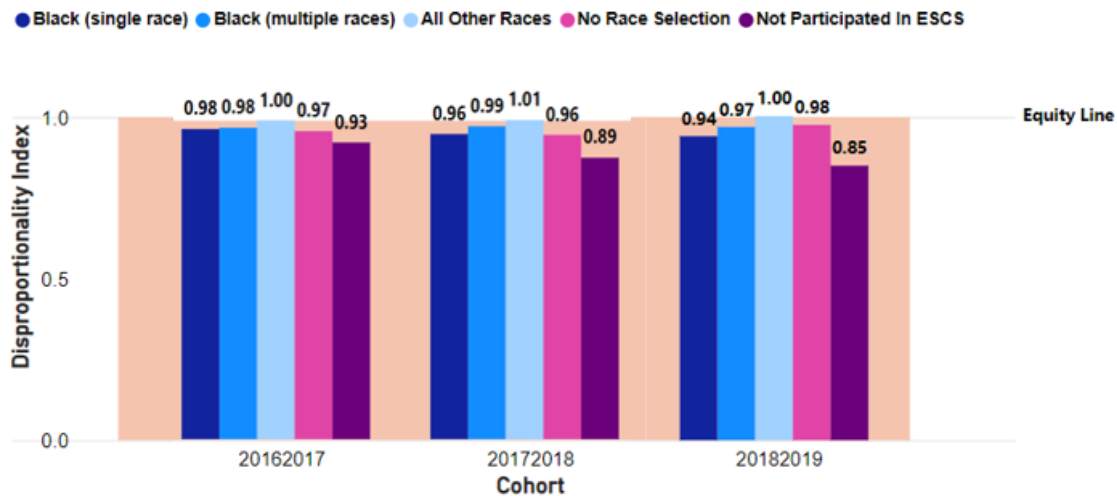
Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) Note: The equity line is a DI of 1.0 and means equitable representation of that student group within graduation rates. A DI above 1.0 represents over-representation and below 1.0 represents under-representation.1.2 Early Leavers

Another way to look at the experiences of students is to examine Early Leavers, who are students that leave school (not including students who transfer to another Board or education system in another country) before they graduate from high school with an OSSD. The following table (Table 2) shows early leaver rates for Grade 9 over three consecutive years, with a focus on Black students, both self-identified as single race and multiple races, and compared to students of (all other races). Black students (single race and multiple race) data indicates a notable increase in early leavers over the three years. Even though students from (all other races) also experienced an increase in early leaver rates, they are still lower when compared to Black students (single race and multiple race).

Table 2: Percentages of Early Leavers for Three Consecutive Years

Racial Identity	2016-17 Cohort Size	2016-17 Leavers (%)	2017-18 Cohort Size	2017-18 Leavers (%)	2018-19 Cohort Size	2018-19 Leavers (%)
Black (Single Race)	246	2.8%	256	7.4%	251	11.2%
Black (multiple races)	163	3.7%	158	5.1%	165	8.5%
All Other Races	6,370	1.1%	6,839	3.2%	7,380	5.4%
No Race Selection	547	3.5%	647	7.6%	833	7.9%
***Not Participated in ESCS**	977	7.6%	707	16.4%	751	20.6%

Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023). * Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools but did not complete the ESCS.

Figure 5 presents the DI of early leaver rates by Grade 9 cohort and racial identities. The data shows that early leaver rates disparities vary slightly from cohort to cohort but consistently higher rates for Black students (single race and multiple race) compared to students from (all other races) especially in cohort 2018-2019.

Figure 5: Disproportionality Indices of Early Leaver Rates by Grade 9 Cohort and Racial Identity
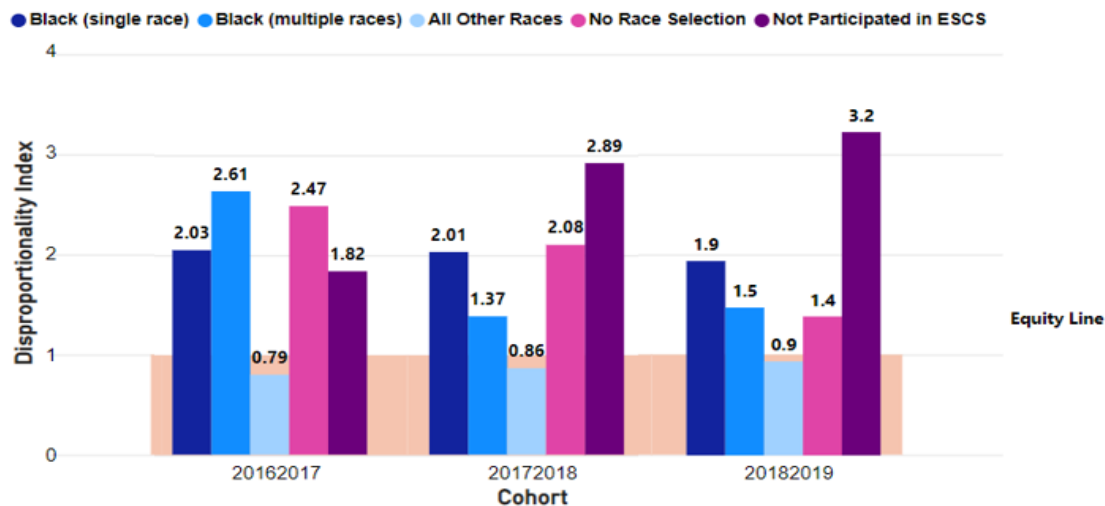
Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023).

1.3 Post-Secondary Pathways

It is a key goal of YRDSB to increase the percentage of Black students who apply to postsecondary education, and to ensure equitable access to both post-secondary options (College and University). Figure 6 presents data on post-secondary pathways for the 2016-2017 and 2018-2019 Grade 9 cohort, categorized by racial identity. Students are organized into four categories:

➢ Did not apply to post-secondary.
➢ Applied to post-secondary but did not confirm an offer of admission from an Ontario post-secondary institution.
➢ Confirmed an offer of admission of an Ontario college.
➢ Confirmed an offer of admission to an Ontario university.

In the 2016-2017 cohort, Black students (single race and multiple race) had higher percentages of students who did not apply for post-secondary education compared to students from (all other races). In terms of confirmed post-secondary pathways, a significant proportion of Black students (multiple race), confirmed their plans to attend university. However, it is still lower than students from (all other races). For 2018-2019 cohort, the percentage of Black students (single race and multiple race) who did not apply for post-secondary education increased compared to 2016-2017 cohort. With respect to confirmed University pathway, no change has been observed on Black students (single race) percentage, and an observable drop for Black students (multiple race).

Figure 6: Post-Secondary Pathways for the (2016-2017) and (2018-2019) Grade 9 Cohort by Racial Identity
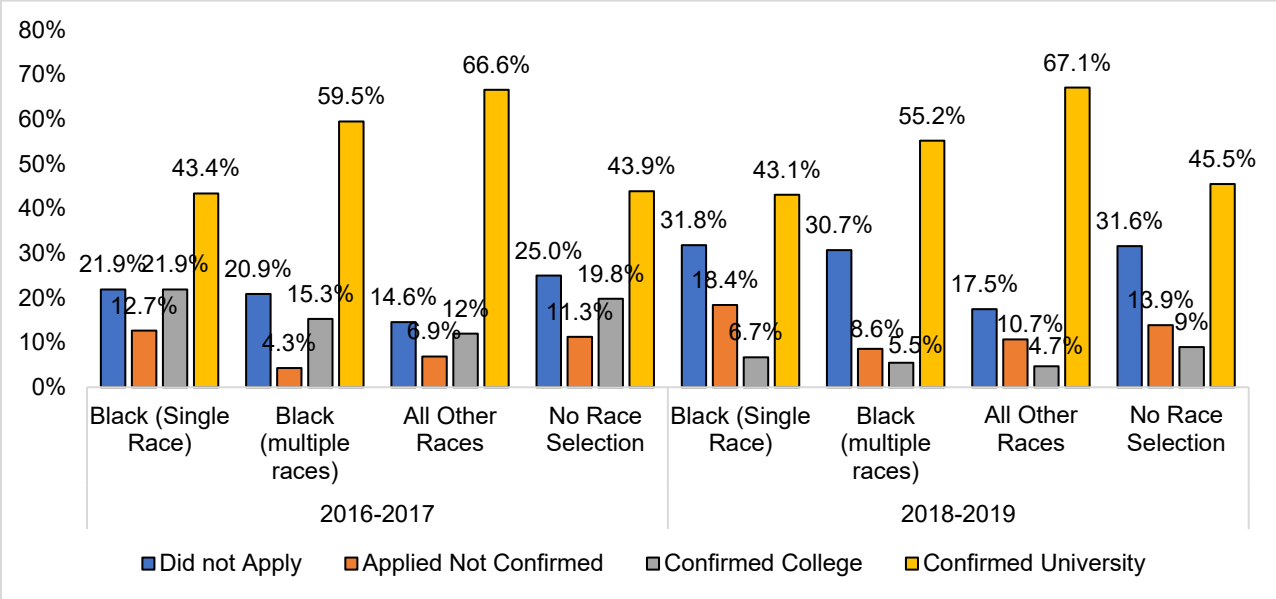
Source: YRDSB SIS, ESCS (2018-2019 and 2022-2023), OUAC and OCAS

Section 2: Representation in Program of Study and Specialized Programs and Schools

2.1 Program of Study

YRDSB offers secondary students the opportunity to enroll in classes within various Program of Study such as: Academic, Applied, and Locally Developed courses taken in Grades 9 and 10 and the University, Mixed, College, and Workplace Preparedness level courses taken in Grades 11 and 12. To support student success and promote inclusion and equitable outcomes, YRDSB phased out Grade 9 Academic and Applied (streamed) Mathematics courses in 2021-2022. At the same time, YRDSB phased in Grade 9 de-streamed courses and supported students to be successful in these courses.

Figures 7 and 8 present the DI for Grade 9 Program of Study by Racial Identity in 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. The data shows that in 2018-2019, Black students (single race and multiple race) were underrepresented in Academic program of study and overrepresented in Applied/Locally Developed program of study compared to students from (all other races). In 2022-2023, the DI for Black students (single race and multiple race) increased in the Academic program, as well as in De-streamed course. However, they continue to be overrepresented in the Applied/ Locally Developed program.

Figure 7: Disproportionality Indices for Grade 9 Program of Study by Racial Identity (2018-2019)
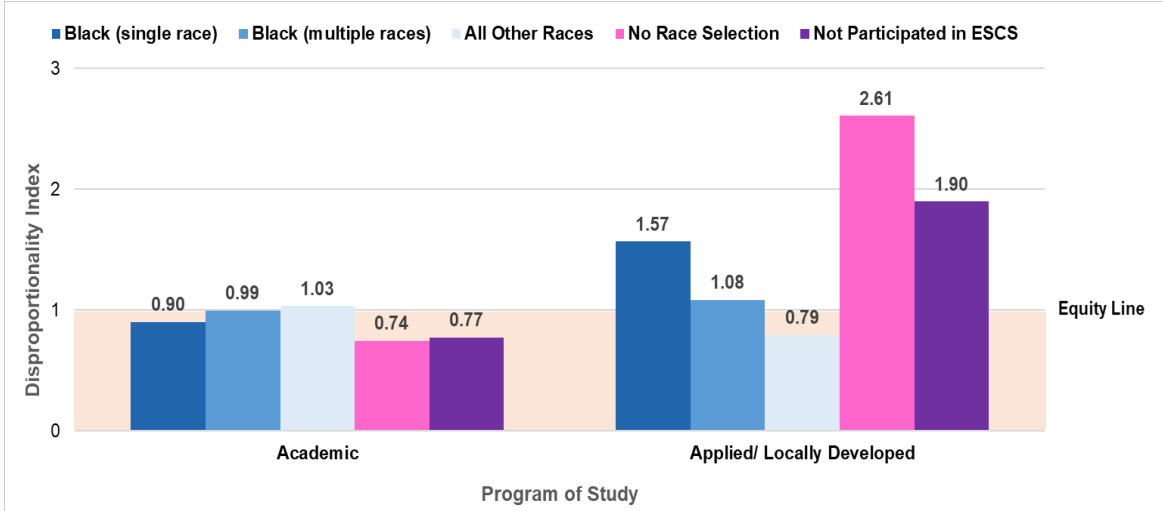
Source: YRDSB SIS and ESCS (2018-2019).

Note: The equity line represents a DI of 1.0 and means equitable representation of that student group within the Grade 9 Program of Study. A DI above 1.0 is over-representation and below 1.0 represents under-representation.

Figure 8: Disproportionality Indices for Grade 9 Program of Study by Racial Identity (2022-2023)
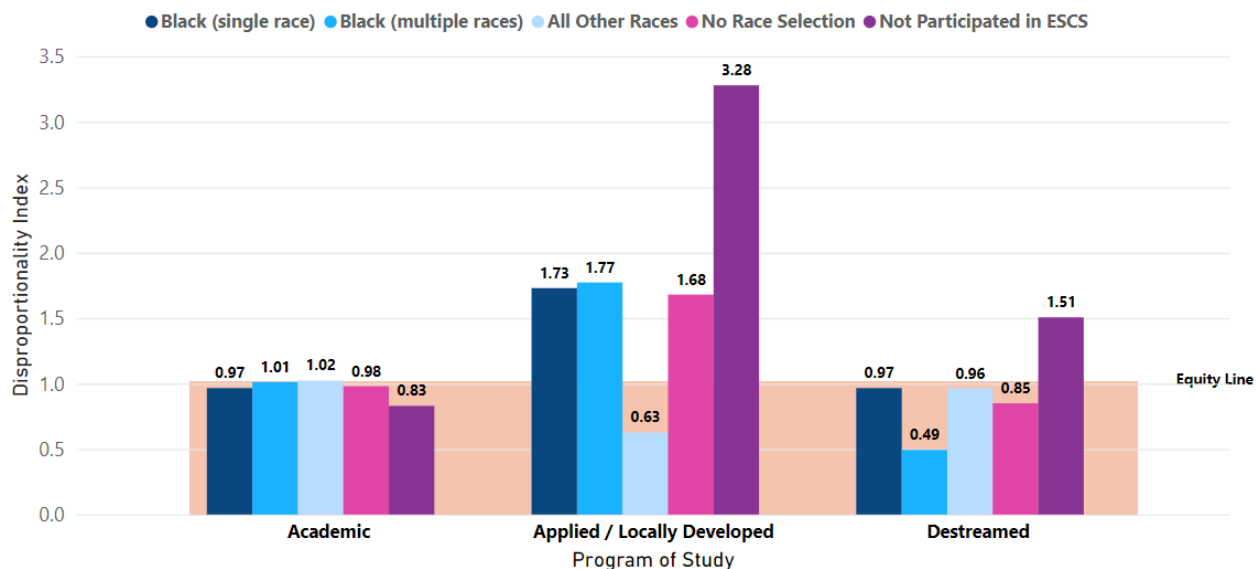
Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2022-2023).

Note: The equity line represents a DI of 1.0 and means equitable representation of that student group within the Grade 9 Program of Study. A DI above 1.0 is over-representation and below 1.0 represents under-representation.

2.2: Elementary Specialized Programs and Schools

For elementary school students the following specialized programs are offered: Arts (Grades 5-8), French Immersion (Grades 1-8), and Gifted programming. Gifted programming is included in the Special Education Needs Program section. Elementary Art programs begin in Grade 5, and French Immersion begins in Grade 1.

Table 3 presents the percentages of students with self-identified racial identities and their DI scores for Arts and French Immersion programs, for the years 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. For Black students (single race), their participation in Arts program increased, with a small DI drop. In French Immersion, there was an increase in their participation from 1.2% to 2.1%, with a slight decrease in DI. When compared to students from (all other races), Black single race students' participation remained relatively low.

For Black students (multiple races), in both Arts and French Immersion, their participation increased, however, their DI scores dropped slightly. Compared to students from (all other races), Black students are generally having lower participation rates and DI scores.

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Table 3: Elementary Specialized Programs and Schools by Racial Identity

Self-Identified Racial Identity	2018-19 Arts (%)	2018-19 Arts (DI)	2018-19 French Immersion (%)	2018-19 French Immersion (DI)	2018-19 YRDSB %	2022-23 Arts (%)	2022-23 Arts (DI)	2022-23 French Immersion (%)	2022-23 French Immersion (DI)	2022-23 YRDSB %
Black (single race)	0.8%	0.79	1.2%	1.16	1.0%	1.0%	0.52	2.1%	1.09	1.9%
Black (multiple races)	1.6%	2.80	0.7%	1.22	0.6%	2.0%	1.62	1.5%	1.20	1.2%
All other races	63.5%	1.69	38.6%	1.02	37.7%	86.5%	1.42	66.7%	1.07	62.2%
No race selection	6.7%	1.60	3.9%	0.93	4.2%	4.0%	0.79	5.9%	1.16	5.1%
*Not participated in ESCS	27.4%	0.48	55.7%	0.98	56.6%	5.8%	0.21	24.5%	0.86	28.5%
YRDSB Total	252	-	12,663	-	86,128	496	-	11,773	-	90,259

Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

* Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools and did not participate in the ESCS at all.

Note: YRDSB Total refers to the number of all survey participants including students who selected an Indigenous Identity on survey and does not include students identified from the Student Information System.

2.3: Secondary Specialized Programs and Schools

Table 4 provides data on the participation rates of different specialized programs at YRDSB schools from ESCS in 2018-2019 and 2023-2024, with a focus on different racial categories, including Black students (single race and multiple race), and all other races.

In the Advanced Placement (AP) program, Black students' representation decreased in 2022-2023. However, a lower rate of participation was also observed among students from all other races.

In the Arts program, only Black students (single race) showed a slight increase in their participation in 2022-2023, however, students from all other races also experienced a slight decrease in their participation rate. The Bill Crothers Secondary School (BCSS) (i.e., specialized focus on sports and athletics) program showed an increase in Black students (single race and multiple race) participation rates. This increase in participation rate was also notable among students from all other races. With respect to College Delivered Dual Credit (DC) program, Black students (single race and multiple race) representation increased in 2022-2023, contrary to students from all other races who experienced a decrease in their participation rate. Please note that Arts Specialized schools include Alexander Mackenzie S.S., Huron Heights S.S., Unionville H.S., and Westmount C.I.

The French Immersion (FI) program showed a relatively consistent pattern of representation for Black students (single race and multiple race), as well as for students from all other races. In the Gifted Program, Black students had disproportional representation lower participation rates in both years, contrary to students from all other races who experienced an increase in their participation rate.

The High Performance Athlete (HPA) program showed a decrease in Black students' participation in 2022-2023 compared to 2018-2018, however, this was contrary to students from all other races who showed an increase in their representation. The International Baccalaureate (IB) program showed a slight increase in representation for Black students. However, for students from all other races, there is a notable decrease in their representation from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023.

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program showed a relatively consistent pattern for representation of Black students, however, representation of students from all other races showed a slight decrease in 2022-2023 compared to 2018-2019. Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) program showed an increase in participation rates for Black students, compared to students from all other races who showed an observable decrease in their representation.

Table 4: Secondary Specialized Programs and Schools by Racial Identity

Specialized Program or School	2018-19 Black (Single race)	2018-19 Black (multiple races)	2018-19 All other races	2018-19 No race selection	2018-19 *Not participated in ESCS	2018-19 YRDSB	2022-23 Black (single race)	2022-23 Black (multiple races)	2022-23 All other races	2022-23 No race selection	2022-23 *Not participated in ESCS	2022-23 YRDSB
AP	1.6%	1.5%	76.3%	2.7%	1.6%	731	0.9%	1.2%	73.1%	4.4%	20.4%	953
Arts	1.1%	1.6%	79.9%	5%	1.1%	1,231	1.6%	1.5%	77.5%	4.4%	14.4%	1,279
BCSS	6.1%	3.5%	75.8%	6.8%	6.1%	1,499	8.1%	6.1%	72.8%	5.5%	7.5%	1,623
DC	2%	1.6%	59.9%	10.9%	2.0%	449	3%	2.8%	52.1%	6.7%	35.4%	534
FI	4.1%	2.8%	80.3%	4%	4.1%	2,893	3.8%	2.6%	76.6%	4.2%	11.9%	3,034
Gifted	0.8%	0.9%	82.9%	2.9%	0.8%	1,191	NR**	0.4%	85.5%	4%	10.1%	455
HPA	13.3%	8%	62.7%	1.3%	13.3%	75	1.9%	3.8%	71.7%	3.8%	18.9%	53
IB	0.5%	0.6%	91.5%	3.1%	0.5%	1,231	1.1%	0.7%	80.2%	4.2%	13.5%	1,668
SHSM	2.3%	1.6%	78.6%	5%	2.3%	4,676	2.1%	1.5%	74%	4.3%	18.1%	2,521
OYAP	2%	1.2%	70.2%	7%	2.0%	1,620	2.7%	2.7%	51.1%	6.8%	36.7%	599
YRDSB	2.8%	1.7%	75.5%	6.8%	13.2%	40,911	2.6%	1.9%	73.4%	4.8%	15.7%	43,797

Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

* Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools, but they did not complete the ESCS.

**NR: Results for groups with less than 5 students are not reported to maintain confidentiality.

Disproportionality Indices for Secondary Specialized Programs and Schools by Racial Identity

Table 5 presents the DI for secondary specialized programs and schools by racial identity. The table presents data on where Black students (single race and multiple race) are overrepresented or underrepresented compared to students from all other races in different specialized programs in 2022-2023 compared to 2018-2019.

Black students are underrepresented in several programs, including AP, Arts, Gifted, IB, and SHSM. This underrepresentation was observed in both 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. Black students were initially overrepresented in BC and FI programs. However, their overrepresentation in FI program decreased slightly in 2022-2023. In 2022-2023, there was an increase in the representation of Black students in DC and OYAP. In the HPA program, Black students were initially overrepresented in 2018-2019. However, their representation decreased in 2022-2023.

Table 5: Disproportionality Indices for Secondary Specialized Programs and Schools by Racial Identity

Specialized Program or School	2018–2019 Black (single race)	2018–2019 Black (multiple races)	2018–2019 All other races	2018–2019 No race selection	2018–2019 *Not Participated in ESCS	2018–2019 YRDSB Total	2022–2023 Black (single race)	2022–2023 Black (multiple races)	2022–2023 All other races	2022–2023 No race selection	2022–2023 *Not Participated in ESCS	2022–2023 YRDSB Total
AP	0.59	0.86	1.01	0.40	1.34	731	0.35	0.58	0.99	0.88	1.25	953
Arts	0.38	0.93	1.06	0.73	0.94	1,231	0.60	0.78	1.08	0.91	0.92	1,279
BC	2.22	1.99	1.00	1.00	0.59	1,499	3.00	3.07	0.98	1.10	0.46	1,623
DC	0.73	0.89	0.79	1.61	1.93	449	1.11	1.42	0.70	1.35	2.18	534
FI	1.50	1.62	1.06	0.60	0.66	2,893	1.46	1.34	1.07	0.86	0.76	3,034
Gifted	0.30	0.53	1.10	0.43	0.94	1,191	NR**	0.22	1.15	0.79	0.62	455
HPA	4.82	4.58	0.83	0.20	1.11	75	0.72	1.97	1.00	0.78	1.20	53
IB	0.18	0.33	1.21	0.46	0.33	1,231	0.41	0.37	1.12	0.88	0.86	1,668
SHSM	0.84	0.92	1.04	0.73	0.95	4,676	0.82	0.77	1.03	0.90	1.15	2,521
OYAP	0.74	0.71	0.93	1.03	1.48	1,620	0.99	1.35	0.69	1.37	2.26	599
YRDSB	1,131	714	30,873	2,775	5,418	40,911	1,146	839	32,149	2,114	6,869	43,797

Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022 2023)

*Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools, however they did not participate in the ESCS. Note: YRDSB Total refers to all survey participants including students who selected an Indigenous Identity on survey and does not include students identified from the Student Information System.

**NR: Results for groups with less than 5 students are not reported to maintain confidentiality.

Section 3: Representation in Special Education Programs

3.1 Special Education Needs Program (Excluding Giftedness)

Figure 9 shows the DI for Grades 7-12 students enrolled in special education programs, excluding giftedness, by racial identity. The data highlights that Black students (single race and multiple race) are increasing slightly in their representation rates in Special Education programs (excluding Giftedness) over the past three years. However, Black students remain overrepresented in special education needs programs when compared to students from all other races.

Figure 9: Disproportionality Indices for Grades 7-12 Students in Special Education Needs Program (Excluding Giftedness) and Racial Identity
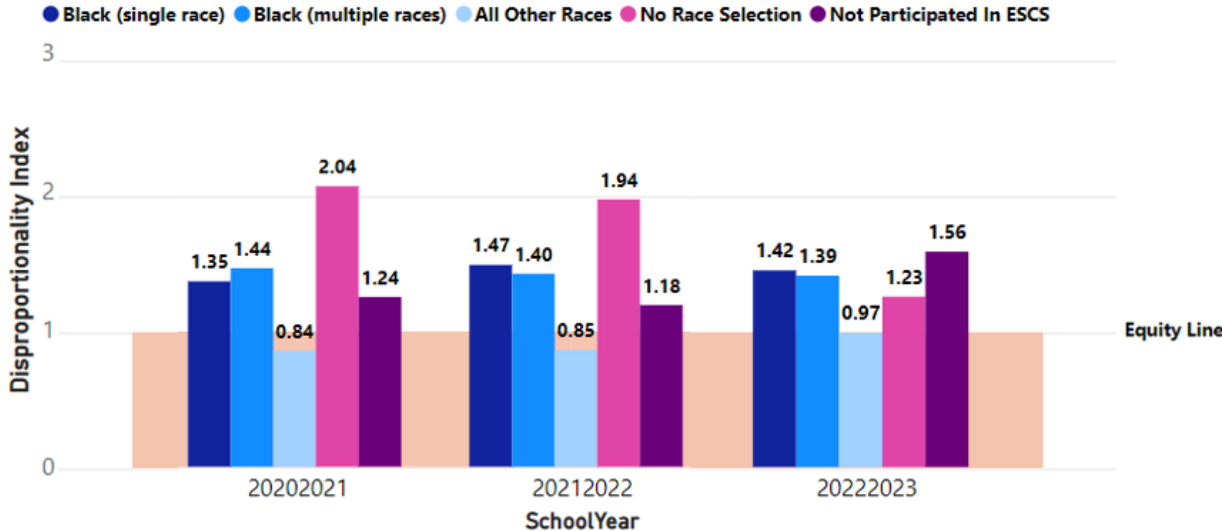
Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019 and 2022-2023)

*Note: Above the Equity line (1.0) shows over-representation

3.2 Gifted Program

Figure 10 shows the DI for Grades 7-12 students enrolled in gifted program, by racial identity. The data shows a decline in the representation rates of Black students (single race and multiple race) over the past three years. Moreover, Black students continue to be underrepresented in the gifted program when compared to students from all other races.

Figure 10: Disproportionality Indices for Grades 7-12 Students in Gifted Program by Racial Identity
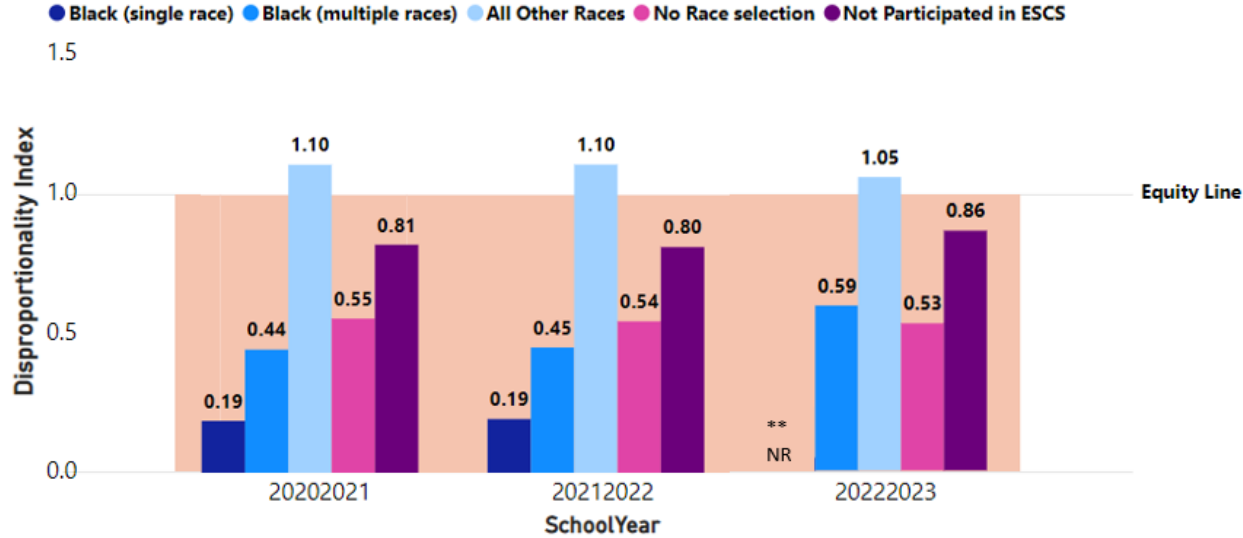
Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019 and 2022-2023)

*Note: Under the Equity line (1.0) shows under-representation

**NR: Results for groups with less than 5 students are not reported to maintain confidentiality.

3.3 Secondary Learning Strategies Courses

The following table (Table 6) provides percentages and DI for Secondary Learning Strategies courses, comparing data from 2018-2019 and 2022-2023. Data shows a notable increase in Black students (single race) participation rate in these courses. However, this increase was also observed among students from other races.

Table 6: Percentages and Disproportionality Indices (DI) for Secondary Learning Strategies Courses by Racial Identity

Self-Identified Racial Identity	2018-19 Learning Strategies %	2018-19 Learning Strategies DI	2018-19 YRDSB %	2022-23 Learning Strategies %	2022-23 Learning Strategies DI	2022-23 YRDSB %
Black (Single Race)	3.9%	1.43	2.8%	4.2%	1.56	2.6%
Black (Multiple Races)	2%	1.15	1.7%	2%	1.32	1.9%
Other Races	59.8%	0.79	75.5%	68.6%	0.90	73.4%
No Race Selection	14.8%	2.18	6.8%	8.3%	1.66	4.8%
*Not Participated in ESCS	19.5%	1.47	13.2%	18.9%	1.16	15.7%
YRDSB Total	5,195	-	40,911	3,388	-	43,797

Source: YRDSB Student Information System and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

*Refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools, however they did not participate in the ESCS.

Note: YRDSB Total refers to all survey participants and includes students with Indigenous Identity from Survey but does not include students identified from Student Information System

Section 4: Representation among Suspensions and Expulsions

The term "suspensions" in this report only refers to out-of-school suspensions. While this is important for understanding systemic inequities facing Black students, the use of out-of-school suspensions as a KPI for monitoring is limited in that it does not account for the "in-school" suspensions involving Black students.

A key objective of the strategy is to ensure equitable representation for Black students in suspensions and expulsions. To this end, YRDSB is committed to reducing the overall suspension rates among Black students and ensuring that Black students are not overrepresented in suspensions and expulsions. This requires schools to commit to anti-racist and Black-affirming learning environments for students and ensure that behaviors are addressed through a bias aware perspective. Suspensions and expulsions can negatively impact students' self-concept, self-worth, motivation, and feelings of competence and significance to others. Suspensions and expulsions also increase students' negative disposition toward school and staff and, in turn, promote similar forms of undesired behaviors. In addition, suspensions and expulsions may contribute to inequities among students.

Table 7 presents suspension rates for Grades 4-12 students over five consecutive school years, categorized by self-identified racial identity. Black students (single race and multiple race) consistently experienced higher suspension rates compared to students from all other races throughout the five years. Black students (single race and multiple race) showed fluctuating suspension rates, with some years having higher rates, such as 2018-2019, and other years showing lower rates, like 2020-2021. However, they remained consistently above the average overall YRDSB suspension rate. See Figure 11 for a visualization of the data.

Table 7: Suspension Rates for Grades 4-12 Students by Racial Identity for Five Consecutive School Years

Self-identified Racial Identity	Suspension Rate in 2018-2019	Suspension Rate in 2019-2020	Suspension Rate in 2020-2021	Suspension Rate in 2021-2022	Suspension Rate in 2022-2023
Black (single race)	5.5%	4.2%	0.4%	4.0%	4.7%
Black (multiple races)	4.6%	3.8%	0.7%	3.8%	4.4%
All other races	1.7%	1.2%	0.2%	1.3%	2.0%
No race selection	3.4%	1.9%	0.3%	2.9%	3.1%
*Not participated in ESCS	2.6%	1.7%	0.5%	2.9%	3.1%
YRDSB Total	2.2%	1.5%	0.3%	2.1%	2.5%

Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)
*Not participated in ESCS refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools but did not complete the ESCS

Figure 11: Suspension Rates for Grades 4-12 Students for Five Consecutive School Years by Racial Identity

Legend:
- Black (single race)
- Black (multiple races)
- All other races
- No race selection
- *Not participated in ESCS
- YRDSB Total

Data shown in chart:

Category	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Black (single race)	5.5%	4.2%	<1%	4%	4.7%
Black (multiple races)	4.6%	3.8%	<1%	3.8%	4.4%
All other races	1.7%	1.2%	<1%	1.3%	2%
No race selection	3.4%	1.9%	<1%	2.9%	3.1%
*Not participated in ESCS	2.6%	1.7%	<1%	2.9%	3.1%
YRDSB Total	2.2%	1.5%	<1%	2.1%	2.5%
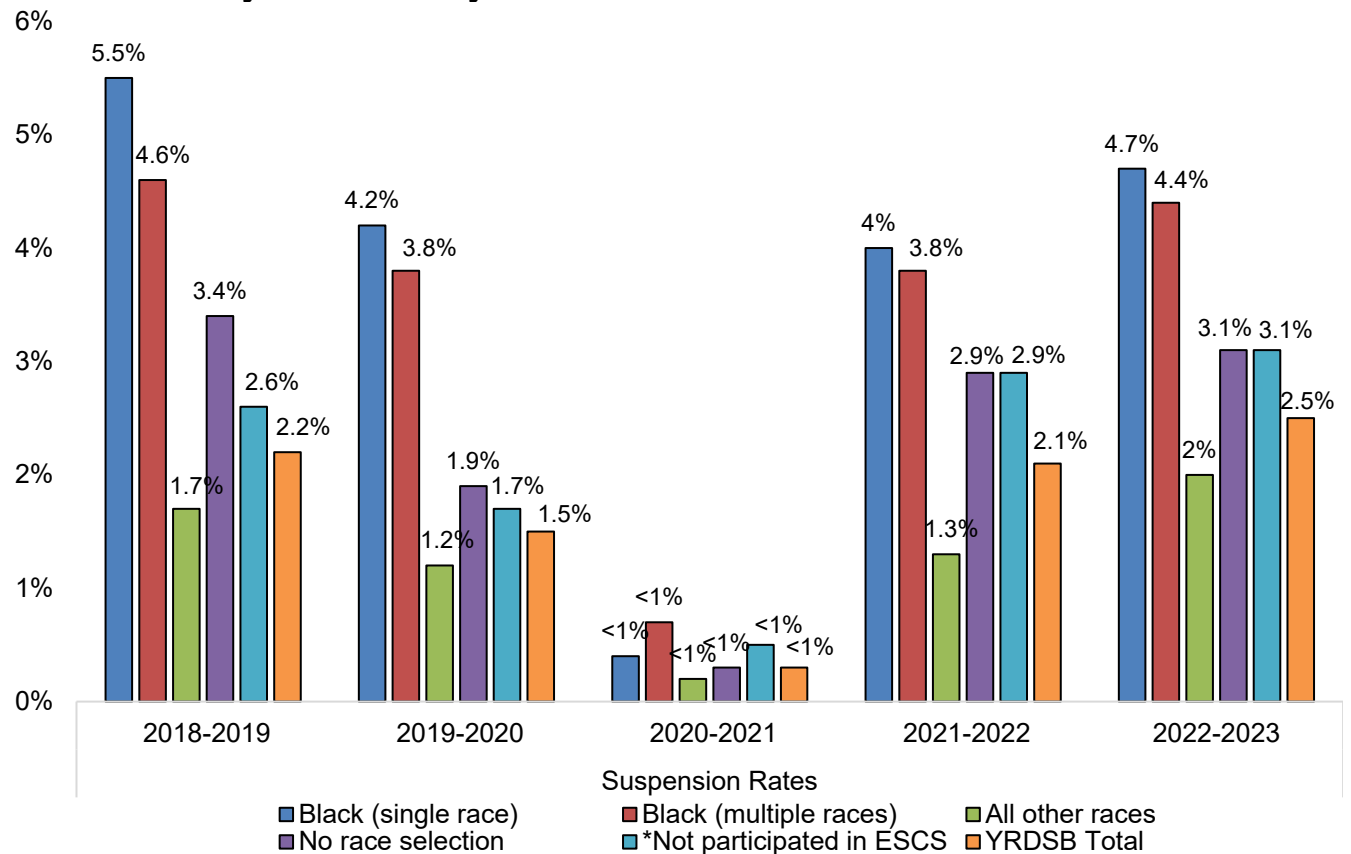
YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023).
*Not participated in ESCS refers to students who were attending YRDSB schools but did not complete the ESCS.

Figure 12 shows the DI of suspension rates for Grades 4-12 students for five consecutive school years by racial identity. The data shows a decline in the suspension rates of Black students (single race and multiple race) over the past five years. However, Black students continue to have the highest disproportionality of suspension rates compared to students from (all other races), especially who self-identified as Black (single race).

Figure 12: Disproportionality Indices of Suspension Rates for Grades 4-12 Students for Five Consecutive School Years by Racial Identity
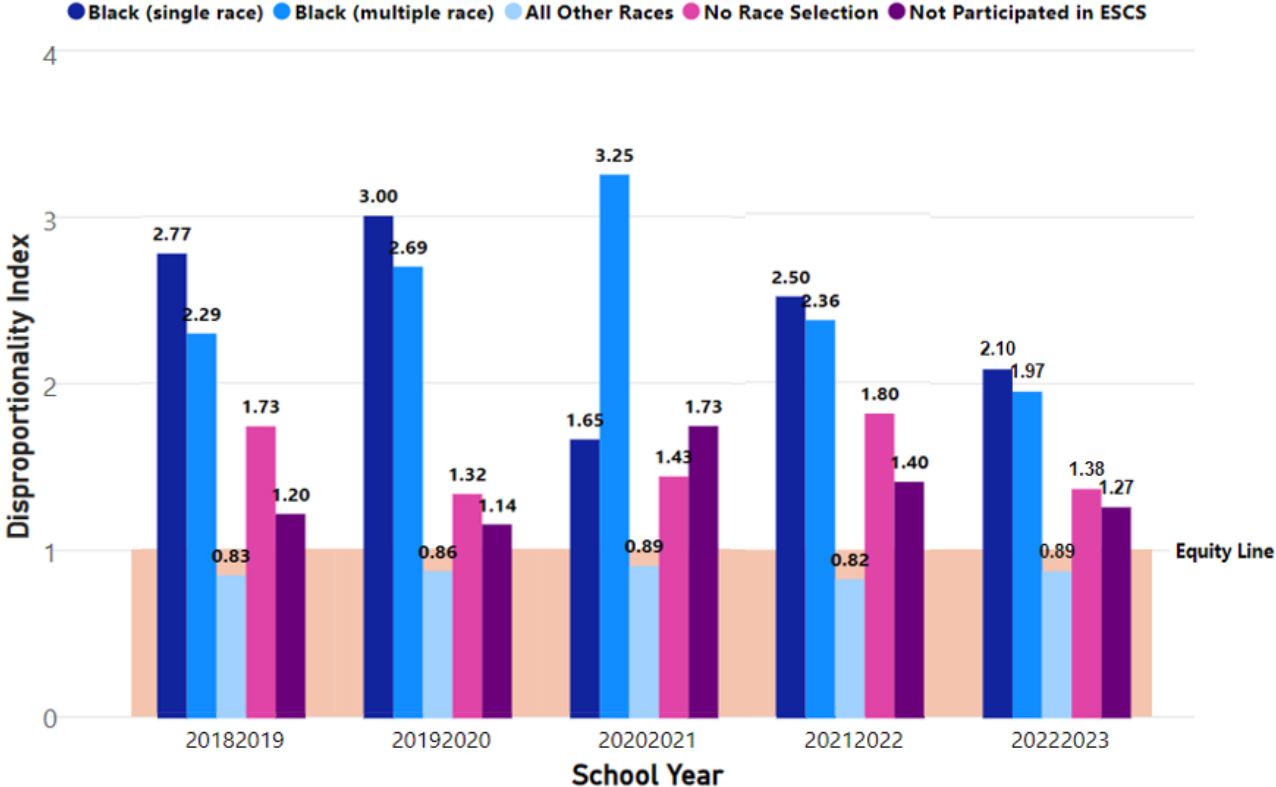
Source: YRDSB Student Information System (SIS) and Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

The following sections (5 and 6) reflect on the KPIs related to equitable learning and student mental health.

Section 5: Equitable Learning

What are Black students experiencing?

To specifically explore whether students perceived their schools and classrooms as identity-affirming spaces that nurtured a sense of belonging, were welcoming and safe, and supported by staff who reflect their identities, responses to the following survey questions were used:

Agreement with the statements:

▪ I feel welcomed at my school.
▪ I feel safe at this school.

- School rules are applied to me in the same way as other students.
- At school, there are adults with the same identities as me, like my culture, disability, language(s) spoken, race, religion, etc.
- When thinking about all parts of school (such as: class lessons, books, clubs, hallways, classroom walls), I see my identities (for example: disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, Indigenous background, etc.) represented in a positive way.

What are Black students experiencing at YRDSB?

Figure 13 represents the percentage of students who either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" with the statement "I feel welcomed at my school." The data suggests that there has been a decline in the proportion of Black students, of grades 7-8 and 9-12, who feel welcomed at their school from 2018-2019 to 2022-2023, irrespective of whether they identified as a single race or multiple races. Additionally, when compared to students from other racial backgrounds, it is evident that the decline in Black students' sense of feeling welcomed has occurred at a more accelerated rate.

Figure 13: Grades 7-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" or "All the time" or "Often" by Racial Identity

I feel welcomed at my school
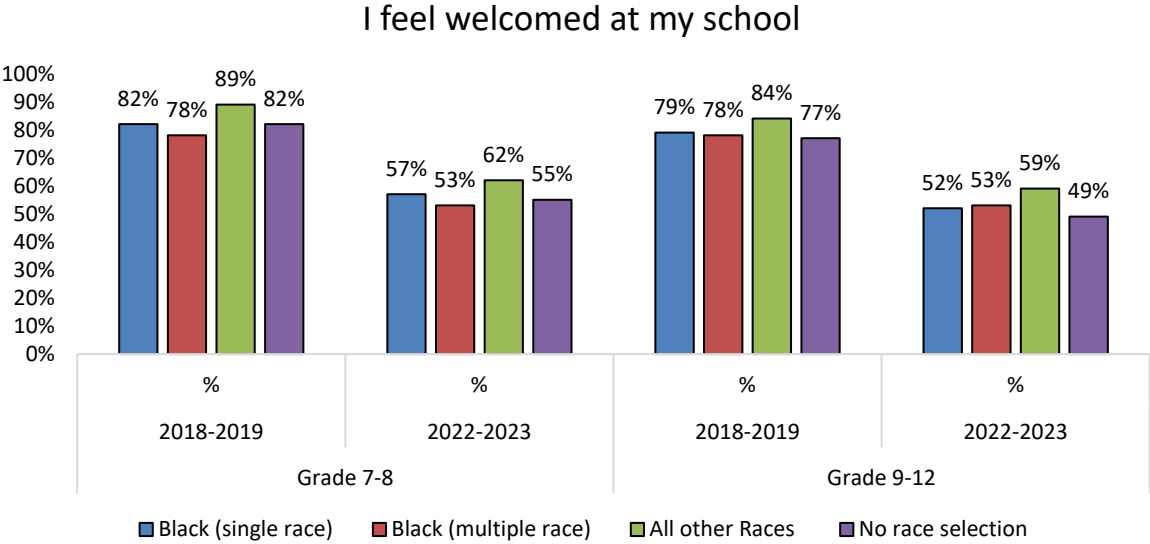
Note: In 2018-2019, the question was an agreement scale for: This school is a welcoming place. In 2022-2023, the question was a frequency scale for: I feel welcomed at my school.
Source: YRDSB Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 14 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement, "I feel safe at this school." Overall, there has been a slight decrease in the sense of safety at school for Black students, of grades 7-8 and 9-12, compared to students from other racial background. The decrease in the rate of feeling safe for (all other races) is more pronounced among Grade 7-8 students, however, it appears to be increasingly higher for Black students, particularly those identifying as a (multiple race).

Figure 14: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

I feel safe at this school
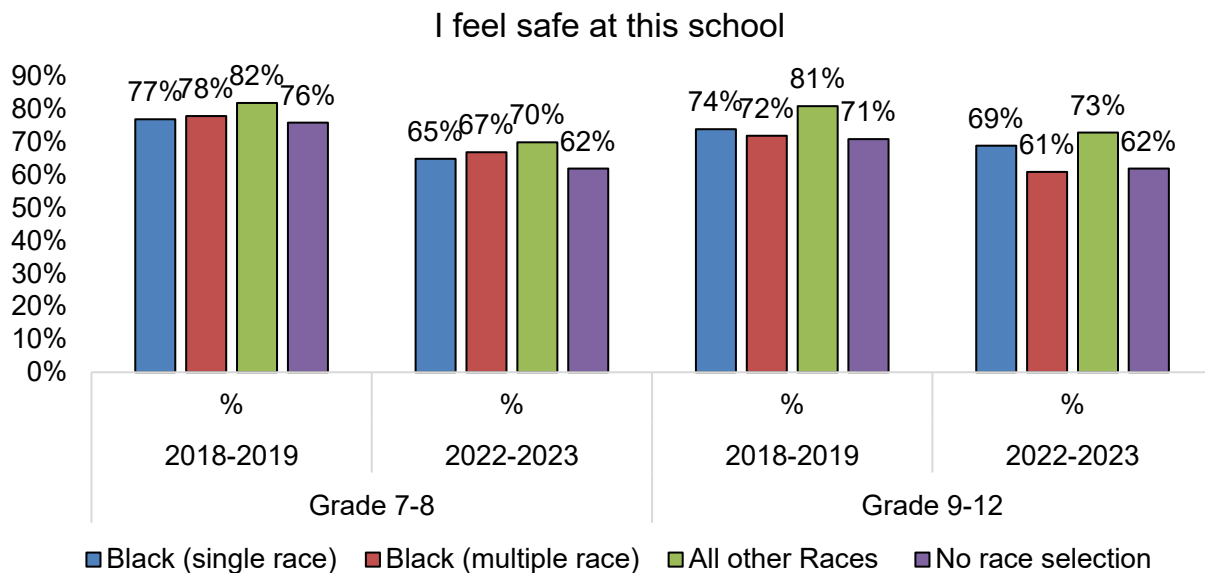
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 15 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement, " School rules are applied to me in the same way as other students." Black students (both single and multiple race), of grades 7-8 and 9-12, reported that the application of rules varied and were not equitable; compared to students of all other races. Overall, the data shows decrease in perceptions of equitable rule application for most racial groups, but the decline was more noticeable for Black students in Grade 7-8.

Figure 15: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

School rules are applied to me in the same way as other students

	Grade 7-8		Grade 9-12	
	2018-2019	2022-2023	2018-2019	2022-2023
Black (single race)	73%	69%	74%	72%
Black (multiple race)	72%	63%	74%	68%
All other Races	81%	76%	83%	82%
No race selection	75%	68%	75%	69%
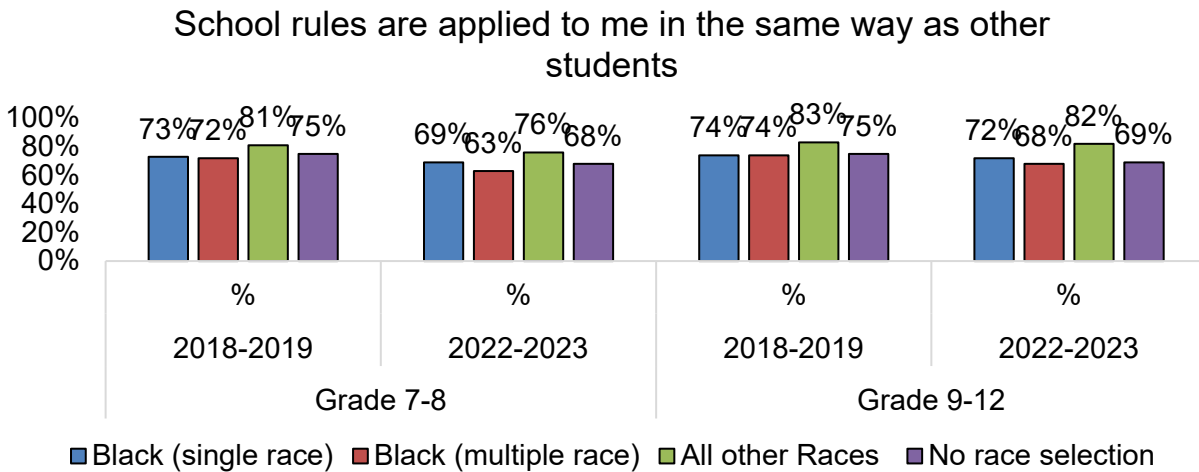
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 16 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement, " At school, there are adults with the same identities as me, like my culture, disability, language(s) spoken, race, religion, etc.". From Black students' perspective, the data indicates a lower sense of representation of adults who share similar identities at school, whether cultural, linguistic, or based on race or religion. These lower percentages are especially pronounced when compared to students of all other races.

Figure 16: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

At school, there are adults with the same identities as me, like my culture, disability, language(s) spoken, race, religion, etc.

	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-12
	2022-2023	2022-2023
Black (single race)	53%	61%
Black (multiple race)	53%	57%
All other Races	63%	72%
No race selection	48%	52%
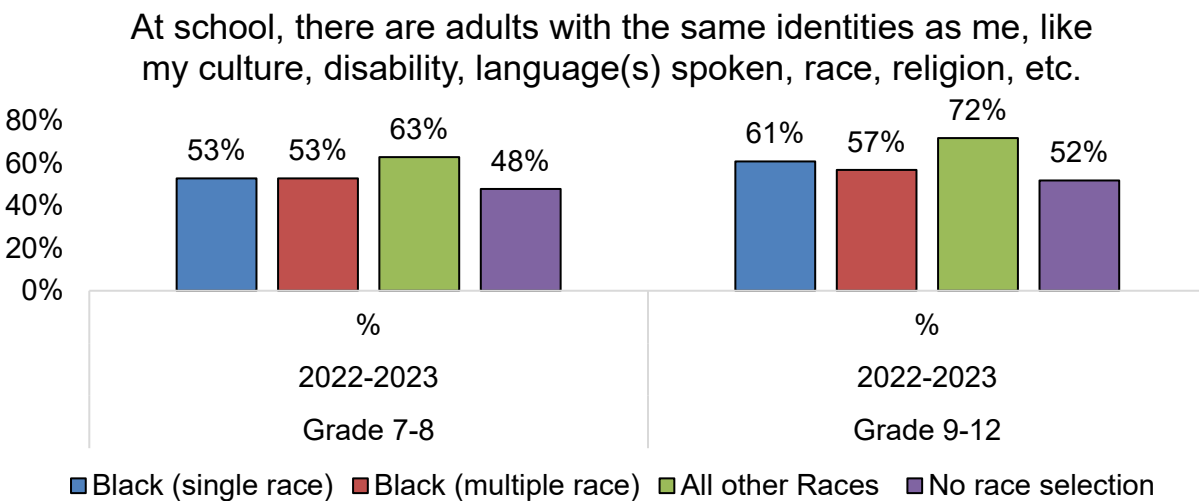
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 17 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement," When thinking about all parts of school such as: class lessons, books, clubs, hallways, classroom walls, I see my identities (for example: disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, Indigenous background, etc.) represented in a positive way." Black students see themselves not represented in all parts of school as compared to students from other racial identities. This is more evident in grades 7-8 Black students' experiences.

Figure 17: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

When thinking about all parts of school (such as: class lessons, books, clubs, hallways, classroom walls), I see my identities (for example: disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, Indigenous background, etc.) represented in a positive way.
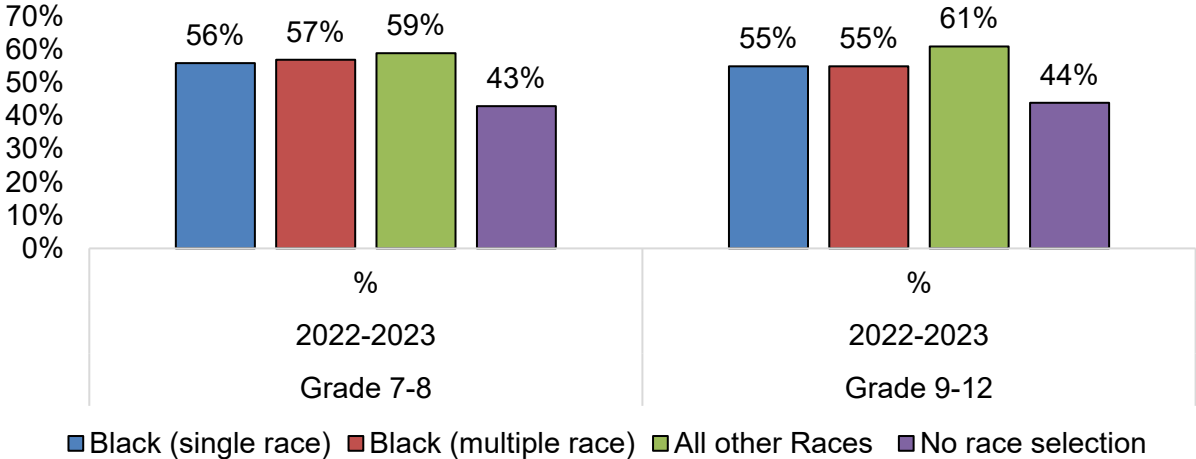
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Section 6: Student well-being

Student Well-Being

Every student deserves to feel like they belong, matter, are welcomed and are safe in all aspects of their schooling experiences. This means they feel affirmed, validated, and nurtured at school.

What is it?

This section comprises baseline data regarding student well-being, including relevant indicators from Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) that are relevant to the

physical, socio-emotional, and cognitive well-being of students. The data also includes the same indicators from Every Student Counts Survey (2022-2023) completed by students in Grades 7-12 (ESCS, 2023), as well as new indicators that were not present in the 2018-2019 survey or the first annual report.

When interpreting the data, it is important to note that it does not represent a longitudinal study following the same group of students over time; instead, the data for each grade represents a distinct group of students.

Why is it important?

Monitoring this KPI raises awareness of the experiences of Black Students, especially considering their experiences over the past two years with continued anti-Black racism strategy within educational practices, policies, and curriculum. Moreover, continuing to look at this KPI will allow the Board to assess its progress in creating positive, Black-affirming learning environments where Black students can experience a greater sense of safety, welcome, and respect.

What are Black students experiencing?

To explore students' perceptions of belonging to their school, feeling accepted by adults, and the frequency of emotions such as happiness, loneliness, nervousness/anxiety, sadness, and stress and pressure, responses to the following survey questions were used:

Agreement with the statements:

- I feel like I belong to this school.
- I feel accepted by adults at this school.

How often they feel:

- Happy, lonely, nervous/anxious, sad, and under stress and pressure.

What are Black students experiencing at YRDSB?

Figure 18 shows the percentage of students who have responded with "All the time" or "Often" to the statement," At school, I feel happy." For Black students, both those identifying as (single race) and (multiple race), there has been a noticeable decrease in self-reported happiness levels between 2018-2019 and 2022-2023, compared to students of (all other races). This decrease is consistent across both Grade 7-8 and Grade 9-12.

Figure 18: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

At school, I feel happy

Black (single race) ■ Black (multiple race) ■ All other Races ■ No race selection
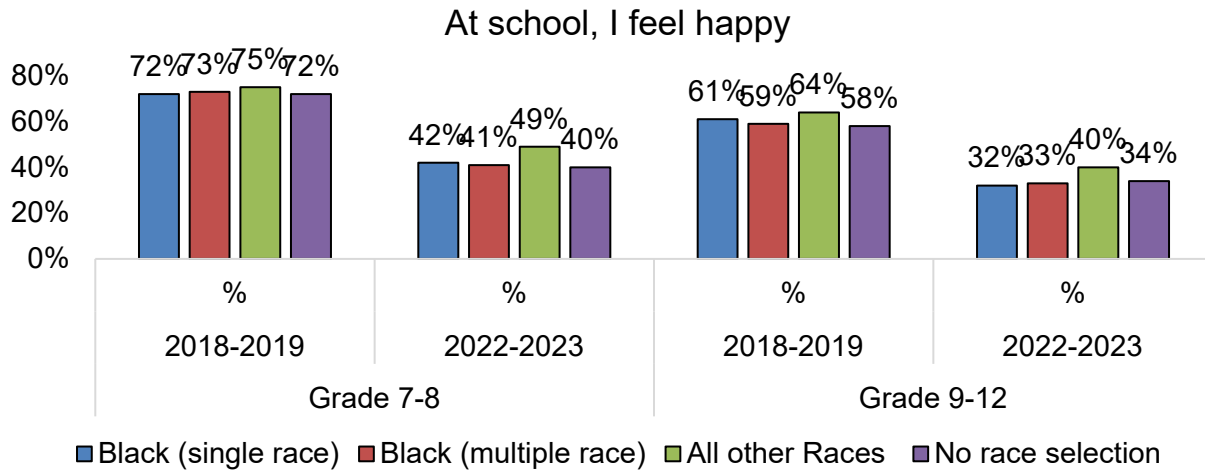
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 19 shows the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement," I feel like I belong to this school." Black (single race and multiple race) students' sense of belonging has been slightly lower when compared to students of (all other races). This difference is more pronounced in the 2022-2023 data; however, it is consistent across Grades 7-8 and grades 9-12.

Figure 19: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "All the time" or "Often" by Racial Identity

I feel like I belong to this school

■ Black (single race) ■ Black (multiple race) ■ All other Races ■ No race selection
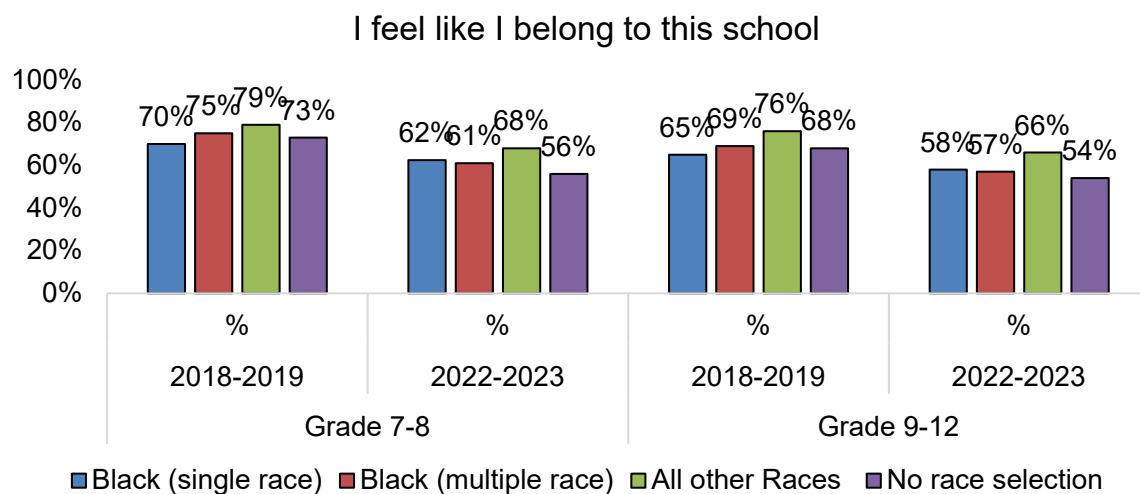
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 20 Shows the percentage of students who have responded with "All the time" or "often" to the statement, "At school, I feel lonely." Black students (single race and multiple race) seem to experience lower levels of loneliness in 2022-2023 compared to 2018-2019, however, they are still at a slightly higher levels when compared to students of (all other races), especially those in grades 9-12 who identify as Black (multiple race).

Figure 20: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

At school, I feel lonely
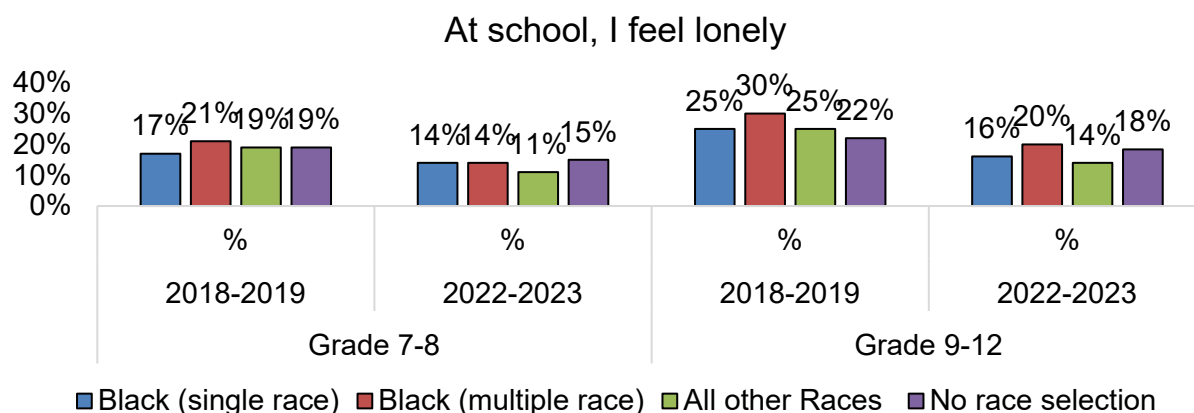
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 21 represents students who have responded with "All the time" or "Often" to the statement," At school, I feel nervous/anxious." The data highlights a decrease in feelings of nervousness and anxiety among Black students (single race) compared to Black students (multiple race) and students of all other races, indicating an improvement in their well-being.

Figure 21: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "All the time" or "Often" by Racial Identity

At school, I feel nervous/anxious
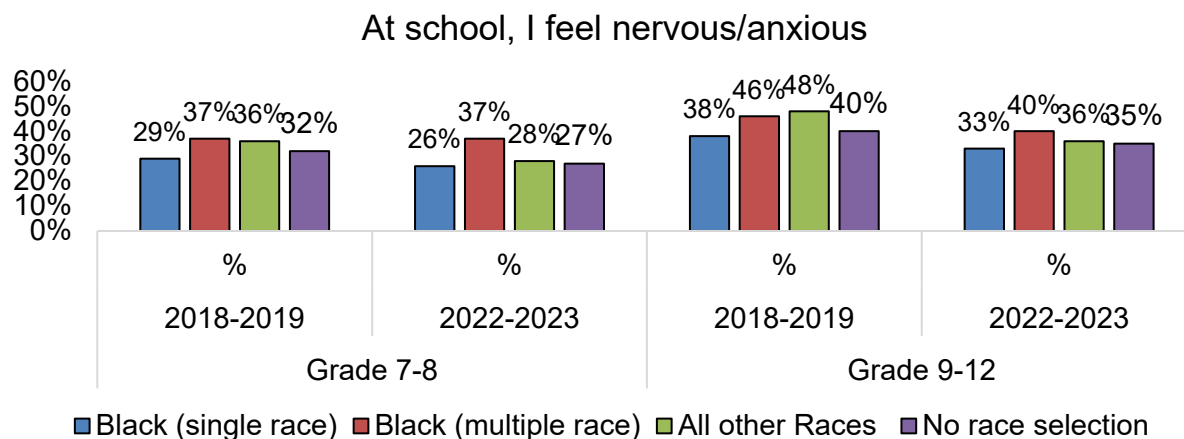
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 22 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "All the time" or "often" to the statement," At school, I feel sad." Black students (single race and multiple race) seem to experience lower levels of sadness over time. However, compared to those from (all other races), they show a slightly higher levels of self-reported feelings of sadness.

Figure 22: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "All the time" or "Often" by Racial Identity

At school, I feel sad

Black (single race)   Black (multiple race)   All other Races   No race selection
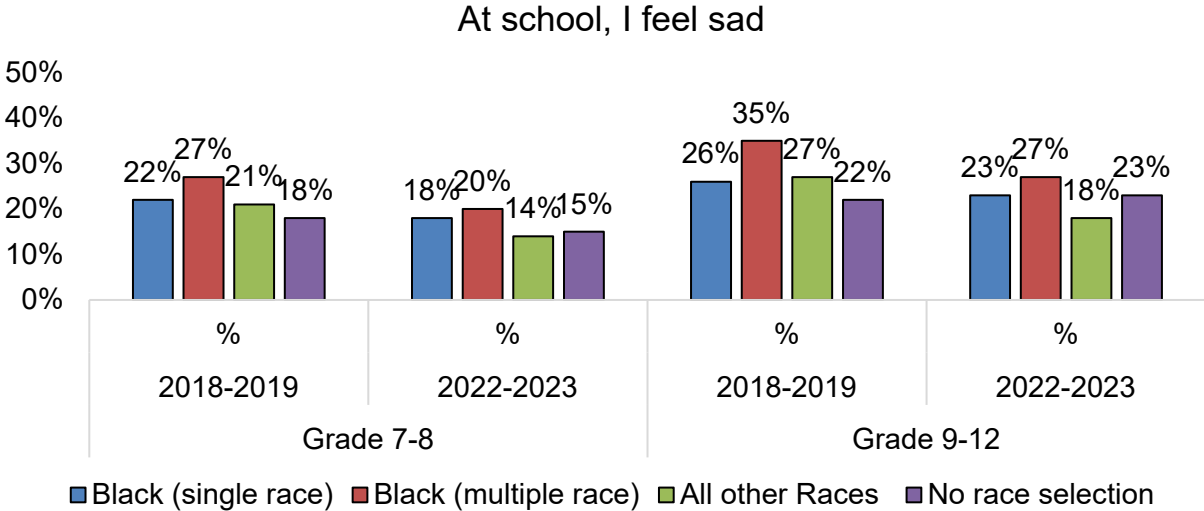
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 23 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement," At school, I feel under a lot of stress and pressure." Black students, both those identifying as a single race and multiple races, reported higher proportions of feeling under a lot of stress and pressure compared to students of (all other races). Among Black students, the proportion of those feeling stressed and pressured is notably higher in Grade 9-12, indicating that the transition to higher grades may bring additional stressors.

Figure 23: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "All the time" or "Often" by Racial Identity

At school, I feel under a lot of stress and pressure. (Strongly Agree/Agree)
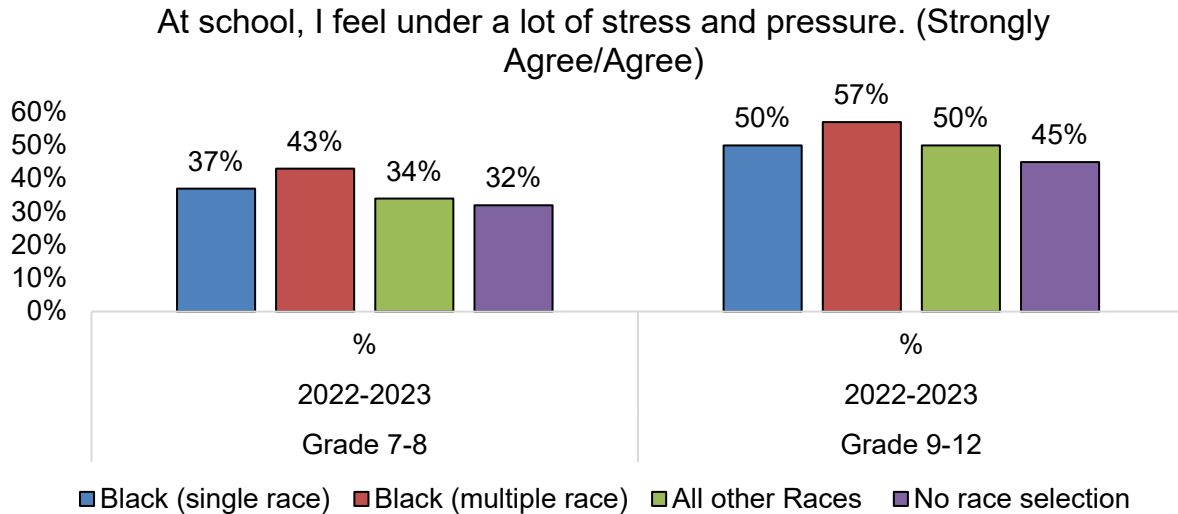
Source: Every Student Counts Survey (2018-2019) and (2022-2023)

Figure 24 represents the percentage of students who have responded with "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" to the statement, "I feel accepted by adults at this school." The data is specific to the academic year 2022-2023. Black students (single race and multiple race) reported reasonably high proportions of feeling accepted by adults at school. These proportions seem consistent within Grade 7-8 and Grade 9-12, indicating a positive sentiment of their interactions with adults in the educational environment.

Figure 24: Grades 7-8 and 9-12 Students Who Responded, "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" by Racial Identity

I feel accepted by adults at this school. (Strongly Agree/Agree)
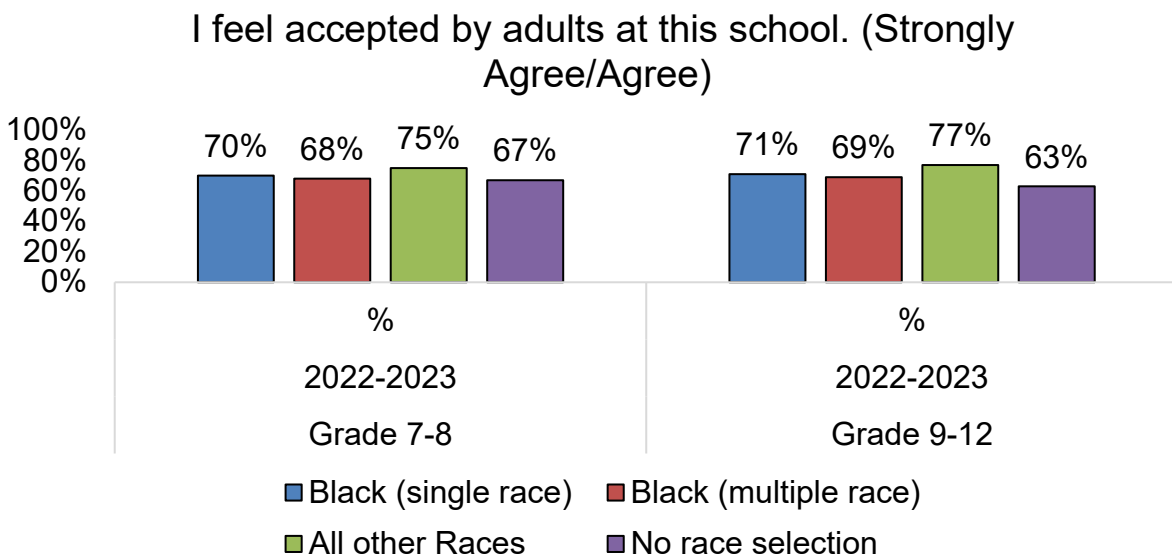
Source: Every Student Counts Survey 2022-2023

Section 7: Incidents of Hate Racism and Discrimination

Resolve, a dedicated tool designed as part of DABRS priority actions, stands as a centralized secure system-wide communication, collaboration, and documentation platform. It allows school administrators to collaborate with superintendents and system staff departments to report, address and respond to incidents of hate, racism and/or discrimination.

Table 8: Reported Incidents of Discrimination, Hate and Racism through Resolve Tool in 2022-2023

Report Type	Reported Behaviors 2022-2023
Anti-Black racism	529
Antisemitism (anti-Jewish racism)	157
Homophobia	131
Anti-Asian racism	115
Islamophobia (anti-Muslim racism)	49
Transphobia	26
Sexism	18
Ableism (discrimination against disability or special education needs)	23
Anti-Indigenous racism	6
Classism (poverty)	2
Total	**1,056**

Source: Resolve Tool in 2022-2023

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, as observed in Table 8, a total of 915 reported incidents of discrimination, hate or racism were documented using the Resolve tool (2021-2022 the number of reported incidents was 771). It is important to note that within each incident, multiple instances of racist or hateful behaviours may be reported, resulting in a cumulative total of 1,056 reported behaviours.

Each incident of hate, racism and discrimination is distressing emphasizing the importance of addressing all such occurrences. The data presented here is concerning, with the majority of reported behaviours were related to anti-Black racism (about 50%). In addition, there were a significant number of incidents involving antisemitism (15%), homophobia (12%), and anti-Asian racism (11%).

This was the second full year of using Resolve and we recognize that the true number of incidents is likely higher; However, we are determined to ensure the comprehensive recording of all such incidents within Resolve, reinforcing the commitment of combating hate, racism, and discrimination within the educational system.

Section 8: Centre for Black Student Excellence Programs

In alignment with the objectives outlined in the DABRS, the Centre for Black Excellence offers programs that specifically target Priorities 3 and 4. Designed to affirm Black students, their identity and support student achievement and well-being. There are **summer programs** (Camp Black Brilliance, The Come Up, and Black Internship Program), **school year programs** (Ascending Sisters, Black Excellence Program, and Rise Brothers), and **pilot initiatives** aiming to provide Black Affirming environments for staff. The following provides an overview on each program from students', staff's and parents' perspective.

8.1: Camp Black Brilliance

Camp Black Brilliance offers families the opportunity to get to know the kindergarten program and have their children experience their introduction to schooling in a way that is culturally responsive and affirming of their identity, through experiential learning. It is designed for students entering Junior Kindergarten. This year, the program took place at the following locations: Ashton Meadows Public School, Discovery Public School and Walter Scott Public School during the month of July 2023.
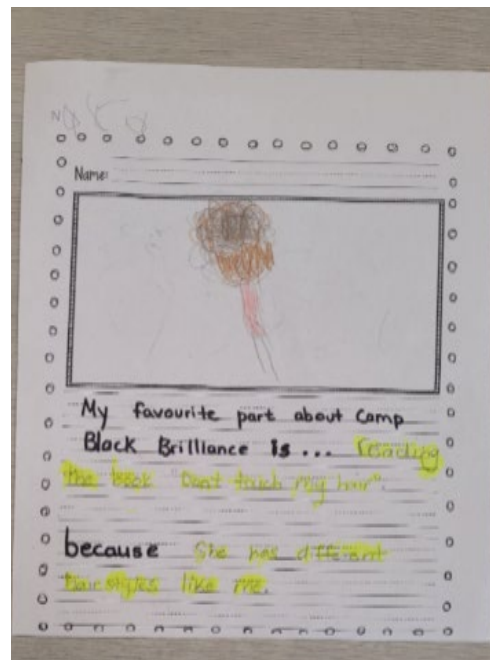
8.2: The Come Up

The Come Up summer program is an in-person course designed for self-identifying Black students in the YRDSB. This program aims to empower students to pursue excellence in high school and beyond through meaningful discussions, activities, and educational experiences. It was offered at two summer school locations: **Tommy Douglas Secondary School** and **Milliken Mills High School** during the month of July 2023.

The Grade 8 transition to Grade 9 Program (CHV 208/GLC 208) focuses on civics, citizenship, and digital literacy, encouraging students to explore the role of social media

in civic engagement and politics, and providing insights into the functions of government and the historical roots of Canadian rights and freedoms. Meanwhile, the Grade 9 transition to Grade 10 Program (CHE3O1) delves into the history of Black and/or African peoples in Canada, studying historical developments in their countries of origin and highlighting factors influencing their migration to Canada, all while emphasizing their contributions to Canadian identity and heritage, with the option to fulfill the grade 10 compulsory history credit.

NUMBER OF GRADE 9 AND 10 BLACK STUDENTS WHO EARNED A CREDIT: 103

The program featured guest speakers from various sectors, including Black Aviation Professionals Network, Artlee Creative, McMaster University, George Brown College, Advance Music, Nia Centre for The Arts, and featured Artist, Wayne Moore. Field trips were organized to institutions like George Brown College, McMaster University, Brimz Hat Boutique, Ufly Simulator, Centennial College, and Simeon Park.

> **"The career studies portion taught me more about future possible career interests but also gave me the opportunity to be with students of the same ethnicity."** - A student

Students' Feedback

Students shared their feedback by emphasizing the enriched awareness they gained from their cultural heritage and found that the program deepened their understanding of African history. The program also allowed them to share their new knowledge with their families, contributing to a broader understanding of their cultural roots. The program also allowed them to explore career interests and connecting with peers who share their ethnicity, strengthening their self-confidence and fostering a stronger connection to their racial identity.

Parents' Feedback

Parents expressed their gratitude for The Come Up Summer Program, acknowledging its significant positive impact on their children's lives. They observed noticeable improvements in their children's understanding of Black culture, history, and potential

career paths. Also, parents appreciated the chance for their children to form new friendships and grow their knowledge of their racial history, which contributed to a greater sense of belonging and self-assuredness. Their encouraging words were a testament to the program's value, as they enthusiastically recommended other parents to enroll their children in this enriching experience.

8.3: Black Internship Program

> **"My son's experience was very nice. He was able to learn more about the history of his race and how it has impacted our society positively."** - A parent

The Black Youth Internship Program (BYIP) is a collaboration between The Come Up and York University Jean Augustine Chair, designed to empower Black students with leadership skills and enhance their educational engagement. The program, primarily targeting Grade 10 students entering Grade 11 within the York Region District School Board (YRDSB), offers a range of benefits, including tailored secondary school education, collaboration opportunities, a safe and supportive learning environment, exploration of academic and career goals, co-op credit acquisition, experiential and community-based learning with compensation, and participation in activities related to Grade 12 planning, post-high school pursuits, financial education, Black history, and personalized learning initiatives. Notably, 42 Black students have achieved the program's objectives by earning a credit, receiving financial compensation, and obtaining a certificate of completion, resulting in a noteworthy celebration of their accomplishments by students, parents, and educators.

Students' Feedback

Students reflected on how the program helped them gain a deeper understanding of their cultural identity and heritage. They mentioned learning about inspiring figures within the African community and discovering aspects of their heritage they had been unaware of previously. Additionally, they noted that the program provided a supportive environment that enabled personal growth, including stress management, motivation, and a positive outlook for the future.

> **"I liked it was fun learning about the African culture; it was great because I have never learned this much about where I come from."** - A student
>
> **"I loved the workshops and the guest speakers. They were all so inspiring and informative!"** - A student

Parents' Feedback

> **"My child enjoys the class overall as well as the environment of collaborating and engaging with teachers and other peers that identify as Black youths. Having Black role models who comes in to speak really motivates my child. My child enjoys the field trips as well. The food was great which is a taste of the Caribbean culture was enjoyable for my child."** - A parent

Parents of students who participated in The Come Up Summer Program 2023 also offered their perspectives on the program, highlighting the positive learning experience, the enjoyment of learning about Black history, and recommending the program to other parents, reflecting a high level of satisfaction.

Parents also provided feedback on the parent/guardian workshop series (understanding the secondary system and supporting your child), highlighting their positive impressions. The workshops were described as informative and engaging, offering valuable resources that parents could now use. Facilitators were also commended for their engaging approach, which made the discussions more meaningful.

> **"The workshops were quite informative. The facilitators were engaging which makes the conversations or discussions more meaningful."** - A parent

8.4: Ascending Sisters

The Ascending Sisters Mentorship Program is a pilot project aligned with the DABRS. This initiative aims to connect Black girls and non-binary students in the YRDSB with self-identified Black staff members, including teachers, educational assistants, Child and Youth workers, support professionals, and administrators. The program is open to cisgender girls, transgender girls, and non-binary students in grades 7-10 across selected pilot schools.

The primary goal of Ascending Sisters is to empower, affirm, and enhance the achievement, well-being, and sense of belonging of participating students in both elementary and secondary schools. The program seeks to achieve this by providing responsive programming that reinforces students' sense of identity, boosts their confidence, self-esteem, and improves their academic performance. Additionally, the program aims to address and mitigate the negative impacts of anti-Black racism on the mental well-being of Black students as they navigate the education system.

For the implementation of the program during 2022-2023, a total of 21 schools actively participated in the program, enrolling 71 registered students. Notably, the Elementary

panel accounted for the majority of participants, with 46 students and representation from 16 schools. Regionally, the West exhibited the highest engagement, with 38 students from 11 schools. In contrast, the Central region had the lowest participation rates, with only three students enrolling in the program.

Students had the chance to provide their feedback about the influence of being in an affinity space (a space exclusively for Black girls and Black non-binary students) reflect overwhelmingly positive experiences. Many students expressed that the affinity space made them feel more comfortable, safe, and welcomed. They felt like they could relate to others and appreciated the opportunity to connect with peers who shared similar experiences. Some mentioned that it boosted their confidence and made them feel proud and included.

> **"It helped my confidence and when I'm in a space where I'm the only black person, I feel proud and confident."** - A student
>
> **"To make an arrangement for field trips to museums or historical places around York region."** - A student
>
> **"I think we could have more sessions and discuss more about how we feel and how to feel in a safe space."** - A student

Students also shared their suggestions for the program in the upcoming year 2023-2024, the majority suggested to broaden the age range for students and increase in-person activities. Many students recommend more sessions that provide a safe space for discussing feelings and experiences. Students also expressed their desire for more activities, group interactions, and events where they can meet and bond with peers from other schools. Some students suggest field trips to museums or historical places within the York region. While, others mention improving the consistency and quality of virtual meetings. Overall, students appreciate the program but hope for more engaging and interactive elements in the upcoming year.

8.5: Black Excellence Program

This program offers elementary and secondary school students a supportive, identity-affirming space where they can explore their interests, connect with peers and advance their achievement and well-being. In Summer 2023, Parents of participating students in 2022-2023 Black Excellence Program, shared that their children reflected on the positive impact and empowerment of the program through cultural connection, as well as the positive experience and enjoyment.

Moreover, parents also expressed their gratitude and appreciation for this initiative.

> **"They were filled with joy to see many students who also look like them and learn more about their culture. They cannot wait until another BEP event!"** - A parent

They commended the organizers for their hard work and dedication in launching the program. Some parents expressed their interest in volunteering for future events and hoped for more frequent gatherings.

> **"I would love for these events to be more frequent. Can parents be provided with the opportunity to come in briefly to see the program? Thank you to all the organizers for envisioning this program and pushing past all the systemic barriers to ensure that this program happened for our children. I hold space for every one of you because I know that difficult days were also a part of creating this wonderful experience. With immense gratitude"** - A parent

What follows are quotations from a student, parents, and staff who participated in specific programming that was offered.

> **"It was very good preparation before the high school journey. My child benefited from boost in confidence, more knowledge in so many areas, high school course requirements, long term planning post-secondary and beyond, more awareness of his Black identity and racism. I would definitely recommend to future parents. This program provided a feeling of community connectedness that I as a Black person feel has been missing in York Region."** - A Parent
>
> **"This was the best day ever. I feel so smart here. Do I have to go back to class?"** - A Student
>
> **"To share their own experiences but also to share what excellence looks like. Students were able to hope, [and] have desires to excel above and beyond those who shared with them."** – A Teacher

8.6: Rise Brothers

Rise Brothers Mentorship Program was founded in 2016. It was designed to confront and address the persistent inequities faced by Black male students within the YRDSB due to systemic anti-Black racism. The program aligns with the goals and strategies of the Centre for Black Student Excellence, particularly the DABRS.

Rise Brothers functions as a mentorship program that facilitates connections between self-identified Black male students and self-identified Black male YRDSB staff, which may include teachers, educational assistants, child and youth workers, support professionals, and administrators or managers. The program's core mission is to empower young Black males by providing them with safe spaces for identity affirmation, community-building among Black peers, amplification of student voices, and the development of leadership skills.

Furthermore, the program recognizes the vital need for Black male youth to envision and work toward their own pathway goals, ultimately realizing their personal aspirations. To fulfill this objective, Rise Brothers offers students the following opportunities: the ability to set and commit to achievable academic goals, explore future pathways, investigate career interests, develop financial competencies, and establish and nurture community partnerships. Most importantly, the Rise Brothers program enables participants to connect with peers who share similar cultural experiences, creating a space for genuine and authentic engagement.

Feedback

Rise Brothers conducted several sessions starting in November 2022, emphasizing its commitment to supporting Black male students in grades 7 to 12. Subsequent sessions, in February and March 2023, included over 30 students and Black male mentors from YRDSB. These sessions featured visits to educational and financial institutions, such as the University of Toronto and TD Securities, providing students with valuable experiences and insights.

8.7: Providing Black Affirming environments for staff

The opportunity for Black identifying staff to engage in an affirming space yielded enthusiastic participation primarily from teachers. Their responses to various questions offer insights into the reasons for their engagement, their key takeaways, and suggestions for future programs. The majority of participants cited that the main motivations for registering for this opportunity is the need for a unique space where

Black-identifying staff could connect and get to know each other better. This desire stemmed from their sense of belonging within their educational community and the importance of recognizing individuals who share a common racial and cultural journey. They underlined the significance of supporting initiatives like the **Centre for Black Student Excellence** and advocated for broader community support.

> **"I believe that it is important for Black identified staff have an opportunity to get to know each other so that we are aware of others who understand our journey. It is important that Black identified staff have a space where we can feel that we actually belong. I fully support the work that is being done by the Centre for Black Student Excellence. It is important that we as a community support the events."**
> - An Administrator

In terms of resonating themes from their learning, participants emphasized the impact of trauma on mental health and the importance of coping strategies. They stressed the need for open conversations about race and the importance of accessing emotions to address hurtful racial encounters. They found the strategies provided valuable in regaining control over painful situations and acknowledged the beginning of a collective learning journey in their school system.

> **"The link between racial literacy and mental health. Having a more mindful approach when dealing with racial situations."** - A Teacher

Section 9: Developing Racial Literacy for all Staff

As part of implementing the DABRS strategy and aligning with the priority actions, an assessment of a scaled Racial Literacy program was conducted. This initiative involved Grade 5 educators and students in 80 schools during Year One (May/June 2023). The results of this assessment are encouraging and show that classroom-based co-learning opportunities help to raise the racial literacy of both educators and student participants. For a visual representation of the improvement from pre-assessment to post-assessment for educators, please refer to Figure 25. This figure provides a comparison of the changes in response to a question directed to teachers: "*I have the racial literacy skills required to normalize conversations about racism, in order to confidently and competently notice, name and disrupt anti-Black racism.*"

Feedback collected from participant pre- and post-surveys, which were administered by Curriculum and instructional Services (C & CIS), highlight the importance of educators remaining attentive and responsive to student-generated questions about racism and anti-Black racism. Year Two implementation will occur in December 2023/2024 with an expansion to over 100 Elementary schools that did not participate in the racial literacy

project during the last academic year. This will contribute to the ongoing commitment to fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

Figure 25: Teacher Perception Data, Question: I have the racial literacy skills required to normalize conversations about racism, in order to confidently and competently notice, name and disrupt anti-Black racism
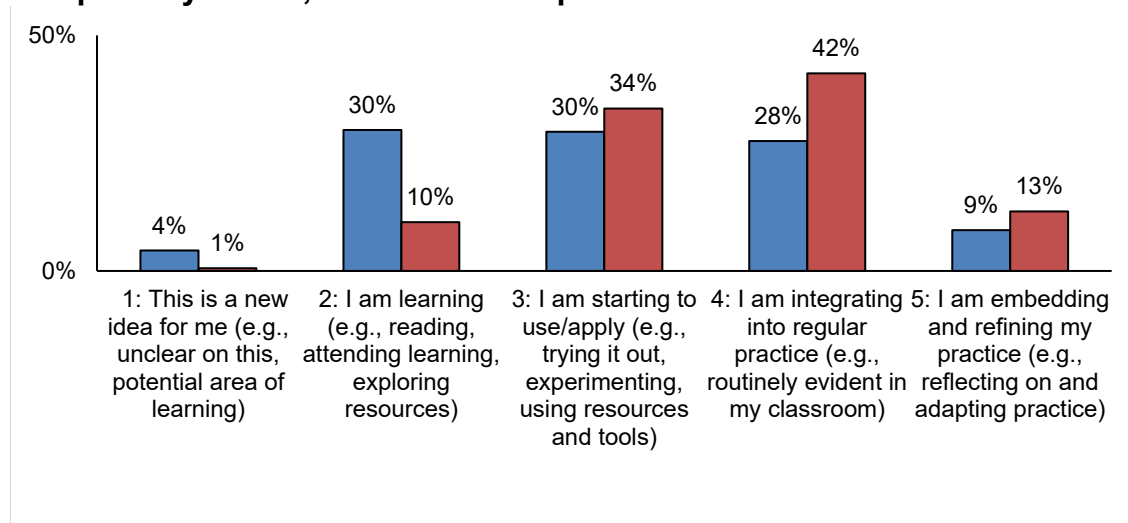
Source: DABRS Racial Literacy Pilot Project – Educator Pre- and Post-Survey, Research and Assessment Services, June 2023

Staff Outcomes

Representation of Black Employees in YRDSB: Applicants and New Hires

What does it look like at YRDSB?

The Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy outlines the Board's commitment to hiring more Black staff and creating working environments that are identity-affirming, inclusive, and anti-racist. To explore the impact of the Strategy on Black staff over the five-year implementation period (2020-2025), the following KPIs will be used as baseline data: Representation of Black employees in workforce and among new hires.

Understanding the data

The following data examines the representation of Black applicants and new hires during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 years and is sourced from Apply to Education. It is important to note that this data includes all employee groups except superintendents and corporate managers and professional staff. The information was collected through the Apply to Education website where applicants were asked an optional question

regarding their race during the job application process. As a result, the data represents only those applicants who chose to self-identify their race, as well as those who did not provide a race selection. Therefore, it is possible that there are more Black applicants and new hires among the latter group. The data is categorized into those who identify as Black (single race), Black (multiple race), all other races, and no race selection. This comparison allows us to assess the representation of Black applicants and new hires in relation to other racial groups over two consecutive years.

How are Black staff represented in the workforce and among new hires?

About the Applicants Data

Table 9 provides a breakdown of the proportions of applicants by racial identities and role for two consecutive years: 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. In the year 2021-2022, 88% of all applicants chose to self-identify their race, with 8% of them identifying as Black (single and multiple race). Comparatively, during the year 2020-2021, only 54.8% of all applicants self-identified their race, and among them, 4.2% identified as Black (single and multiple race). An encouraging trend can be observed in the year 2021-2022, as there is a notable increase in the proportion of Black applicants across all employee roles when compared to the data from 2020-2021.

**Table 9: Proportion of Self-Identified Race Among Applicants by Role for the Years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022**

Employee Role	2020-21 Black (single race)	2020-21 Black (multiple races)	2020-21 All other races	2020-21 No race selection	2021-22 Black (single race)	2021-22 Black (multiple races)	2021-22 All other races	2021-22 No race selection
All Employee Groups	3.7%	0.5%	50.6%	45.1%	7%	1%	80%	12%
Intervention Support Workers	8.6%	0.4%	30.9%	60.1%	18%	3%	64%	15%
French Teachers	6.5%	0.9%	64.6%	27.9%	13%	2%	74%	11%
Developmental Support Workers	4.7%	0.1%	32.7%	62.5%	20%	1%	65%	14%
Designated Early Childhood Educators	2.5%	0.3%	40.7%	56.5%	4%	0%	82%	15%
Secondary Occasional Teachers	4.0%	1.0%	77.5%	17.4%	3%	1%	88%	8%
Elementary Occasional Teachers	3.8%	0.8%	79.1%	16.4%	4%	1%	87%	8%
Caretakers	1.6%	0.3%	16.5%	81.6%	6%	1%	77%	16%
Administrative/ Clerical	1.2%	0.4%	28.5%	69.9%	3%	1%	80%	16%
Library Technicians	0.4%	0.0%	33.5%	66.1%	5%	3%	64%	28%

Source: Apply to Education 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

About New Hires Data

Figure 26 represents a comparison between new hires in the years 2020-2021 (left) and 2021-2022 (right). In 2021-2022, approximately 6% of all new hires chose to self-identify as Black (single and multiple race), while only 4% self-identified as Black (single and multiple race) in 2020-2021.An encouraging trend is evident in the year 2021-2022, as there is a notable increase in the proportion of Black new hires across the majority of employee roles when compared to the data from 2020-2021 (from 3.7% to 7%).

Figure 26: Proportions of New Hires by Self-Identified Race for All Employee Groups in 2020-2021 (left) and 2021-2022 (right)
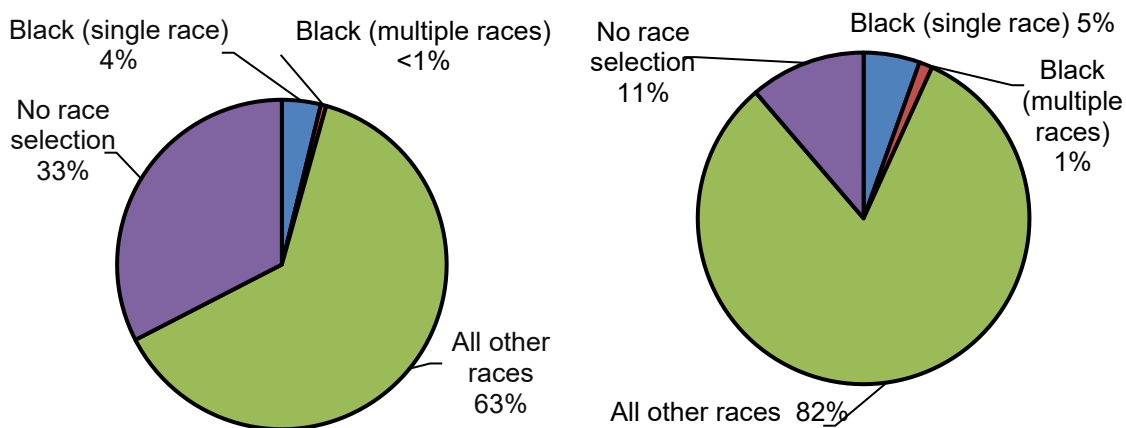
Source: Apply to Education (2020-2021) and (2021-2022).

The following table (Table 10) provides the representation of different racial categories, specifically "Black (single race)," "Black (multiple races)," and "All other races," in various employee roles within YRDSB over two consecutive academic years (2020-2021 and 2021-2022).

For Black (single race) employees, in the first year (2020-2021), their representation across all employee groups was relatively low, with an average of 3.8%. However, there were significant variations among job roles. For instance, Intervention Support Workers had a considerably higher representation of Black (single race) employees at 15.1%. In the second year (2021-2022), the overall representation of Black (single race) employees increased to 5%, indicating a slight improvement in diversity and representation within YRDSB. Notably, Intervention Support Workers continued to have the highest representation of Black (single race) employees, which increased to 22%. With respect to Black (multiple races), Their representation was quite low in both years, with an average of 0.5% in the first year and 1% in the second year across all employee groups. The distribution of Black (multiple races) employees was not as varied across different job roles as Black (single race) employees.

Table 10: Proportions of New Hires by Self-Identified Race and Role

Employee Role	2020-21 Black (single race)	2020-21 Black (multiple races)	2020-21 All other races	2020-21 No race selection	2021-22 Black (single race)	2021-22 Black (multiple races)	2021-22 All other races	2021-22 No race selection
All Employee Groups	3.8%	0.5%	63.1%	32.6%	5%	1%	82%	11%
Intervention Support Workers	15.1%	0.0%	34.2%	50.7%	22%	4%	60%	14%
Developmental Support Workers	8.0%	0.0%	41.1%	50.9%	18%	0%	64%	18%
Secondary Occasional Teachers	3.6%	0.0%	80.9%	15.5%	3%	0%	87%	9%
Elementary Occasional Teachers	3.6%	1.0%	80.8%	14.6%	3%	1%	89%	7%
French Teachers	2.5%	0.0%	70.5%	27.0%	8%	3%	78%	11%
Administrative/ Clerical	2.2%	0.7%	51.1%	46.0%	4%	0%	76%	20%
Designated Early Childhood Educators	1.9%	0.0%	43.8%	54.3%	4%	0%	79%	17%
Caretakers	1.5%	0.0%	20.4%	78.1%	8%	1%	74%	17%
Library Technicians	0.0%	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	0%	50%	50%	0%

Source: Apply to Education (2020-2021) and (2021-2022).

Recommended Actions

Building upon the achievements and reflections of the second annual report, it is evident that substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the DABRS. The assessment of strategy priorities associated actions, and baseline data for outcomes concerning Black students and Black staff is a commendable step toward accountability.

Looking Ahead to Year Three

As the journey into year three unfolds, it is important to recognize the accomplishments of the past years, and the relative improvements at the different levels. However, this requires a discerning eye to identify areas of improvement, and determine strategic pivots in the years to come. Dismantling AntiBlack Racism Strategy team will continue to work with the system to increase collective responsibility in improving outcomes for Black students.

The intentional initiatives that were well-received, such as: Black-affirming programming for students K-12, family-engagement events, and racial literacy workshops for staff, have proven effective. However, to ensure a comprehensive impact, the Board-wide implementation of these initiatives is still necessary. Creating Black-affirming and anti-racist environments across all spaces within the Board remains a vital objective for fostering inclusivity.

What Needs to Be Improved?

A critical analysis of the data suggests that more efforts are needed to enhance the representation and diversity among the adult staff within the educational environment. This is an important part of the broader strategy to address anti-Black racism and promote inclusivity within the educational system.

Student Outcomes

To support positive student outcomes, intentional efforts are needed in the following areas:

➢ **Graduation Rates, Leaver Rates, and Post-Secondary Pathways:** Ensure that educators engage in self-reflection to identify systemic racism and biases that impact Black Students, while simultaneously increasing opportunities for knowledge and exposure to multiple pathways to increase graduation rates and decrease Early Leaver Rates.

- **Representation in special education programs:** Continue to review processes of Special Education Placement for Black Students with a focus on equitable and inclusive practices.

- **Students' equitable learning & well-being:** Ensure to incorporate a culturally relevant curriculum and pedagogy to create inclusive learning environments that affirms Black students' identities and foster Black-affirming environments that supports the well-being of Black students.

- **Representation among suspensions and expulsions**: Implement a process to review the suspension and expulsion procedures, in collaborating with administrators, aimed at developing strategies that support staff in preventing conditions that result in an overrepresentation of Black students facing out-of-school suspensions.

- **Representation in each program of study and specialized programs:** Continue assessment of Pathways and Specialized Program and Schools (Arts, Gifted, International Baccalaureate) to guarantee equitable inclusion of Black students in these programs. Conduct a review of program promotion, access, and location, as well as ongoing review of application process and curriculum revision to ensure it is culturally relevant and responsive.

Staff Outcomes

To foster positive staff outcomes, the following actions are recommended:

- **Enhance Black Representation:** YRDSB should continue its initiatives to enhance the presence of Black employees across all staff categories, while also aiding those engaged in the recruitment process to appreciate the contributions Black employees bring to the workplace and to identify and address their own unconscious biases.

- **Support for Healing**: Provide ongoing support for Black staff to address the impact of racial trauma within the school environment.

- **Address Workplace Discrimination:** Assist staff in utilizing available resources within YRDSB to address incidents of hate and discrimination in the workplace.

- **Increase the Representation of Black Staff in Mentorship Programs**: Increase the number of Black teachers in the Indigenous and Racialized Leaders

Mentorship Program, which is designed to mentoring racialized educators and support them pursue various career pathways.

Transformational Shifts & Changes

As we embark on the third year, the following transformational shifts and changes are recommended:

Foci 1- Bold Leadership and System Practices

- Continue to provide senior staff and trustees ongoing professional development focused on addressing anti-Black racism from a system level.

- Continue to enhance racial literary through professional development for school administrators, educators, and staff.

- Increase efficacy of administrators in addressing incidents of Anti-Black Racism through the use of Hate and Discrimination Protocol and review the Resolve Tool process.

- Ensure that School Improvement Plans align with the priorities of the DABRS and are subject to supervision from the Superintendent through the System Improvement Learning Cycle (SILC).

Foci 2- Culturally Relevant Teaching, Learning and Equitable Outcomes

- Encourage teachers to integrate curriculum addressing racism, anti-Black racism and oppression into their daily lessons to foster awareness within the classroom.

- Provide training to increase teachers' confidence and competence in planning, delivering, and assessing culturally relevant practices, including Black affirming curriculum.

- Ensure that Teachers' Annual Learning Plans align with School Improvement Plans.

- Increase the number of staff members implementing Black identity affirming resources, as evidenced in New Teacher Induction Program Teacher Performance Appraisals, Principal Appraisals and Annual Learning Plan, lesson plans, long range plans, admin walkthroughs.

Foci 3- Black Affirming Environments and Community Engagement

- Support meaningful engagement and advocacy, providing various` opportunities to deepen relationships with Black families and communities for opportunities to engage and communicate with schools.

- Continue to provide racial literacy professional development for all staff aimed at creating Black Affirming learning environments.

- Provide learning experiences that empower Black students to aim for high academic achievement and create identity-affirming spaces that allow them to maintain a strong and positive sense of self rooted in their racial identity using CRRP.

- Increase the involvement of Black families in school initiatives (e.g., school council).

Next Steps in Monitoring and Evaluation

The importance of KPIs in monitoring DABRS success cannot be understated. However, it is noteworthy noting that these KPIs are not monitored annually due to their connection to system-wide surveys. Therefore, our focus in the upcoming year will be on supporting priority actions that directly and indirectly influence these KPIs. For example, an increase in suspension rates will prompt the implementation of a monitoring process for suspended students, particularly Black students. The success of this process will be reflected in the suspension rate data released in ESCS 2026.

Regarding the "Next Steps in Monitoring and Evaluation," the following processes will be maintained for effective oversight:

- Continuous monitoring and revision of KPIs based on reporting cycles.

- Ongoing reviews of KPIs within priority areas and associated actions, ensuring they are implemented as intended.

- Acknowledgment of the limitations of quantitative data in assessing student and staff outcomes, and the inclusion of program/process/practice data linked to school improvement planning. This approach will encompass both qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as intersectionality and anti-racism frameworks, to gain deeper insights into the perspectives and experiences of Black students and staff.

- In addition to KPIs, we will monitor the initiatives within priority actions to ensure their proper implementation and evaluate their success in advancing the objectives of the DABRS.

In conclusion, the roadmap laid out in this report serves as a comprehensive guide for the continued implementation of the DABRS. The outlined actions, when executed with commitment and diligence, will contribute to the creation of an inclusive and equitable educational environment for Black Students, fostering a positive and supportive environment that aligns with the Board's policies and objectives.

As part of our efforts to collaborate with community members, feedback on this report, the research approach or next steps regarding the ongoing monitoring and reporting structures for the DABRS is welcomed. Please contact: research.services@yrdsb.ca with any feedback.

Appendix A: Explanation of Terms

Anti-Oppression: An approach that places equity and human rights at the forefront of actions by intentionally identifying, addressing and changing the values, structures, policies, attitudes and practices that result in discrimination against individuals or groups. The framework promotes an understanding of how power, privilege and oppression operate within institutions.

Anti-Black Racism: Anti-Black racism is prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping, and discrimination directed at people of African descent and rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices, such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifested in the legacy of the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians in society as evidenced by the lack of opportunities, lower socioeconomic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Culturally Responsive Pedagogy or Culturally Responsive Teaching acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates students' cultures, languages, and life experiences in all aspects of students' learning (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

DABRS: DABRS is an acronym that refers to YRDSB's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy.

Data: "Data is defined as facts, figures, and statistics objectively measured according to a standard or scale, such as frequency, volumes or occurrences. Data does not include information like reports or manuals" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Discrimination: Discrimination is the distinction between individuals not based on legitimate terms; refers to arbitrary bias for or against an individual or a group, or the unjust and inequitable treatment of an individual or group. Discrimination can be based on age, birth, socioeconomic class, colour, creed, ability, ethnicity, familial status, gender, gender identity, language, marital status, political or other opinion, race, religion or faith belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Equity: Equity refers to "the systemic fair treatment of all people. It results in equitable opportunities and outcomes for everyone. It contrasts with formal equality where people are treated the same without regard for ... differences" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Gifted: The Ministry of Education defines gifted as an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability that requires differentiated learning experiences of a depth and breadth beyond those normally provided in the regular school program to satisfy the level of educational potential indicated (as cited in York Region District School Board, 2021).

Inclusive: "Inclusive processes, policies, services, program and practices are accessible to and useable by as many people as possible, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, language, etc. An inclusive environment is open, safe, equitable and respectful. Everyone can enjoy a sense of trust, belonging and involvement, and everyone is encouraged to contribute and participate fully" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Indigenous: "Indigenous people identify as being descended from the Original Peoples of what is currently known as Canada. In this context, Indigenous peoples include people who may identify as First Nations (status and non-status), Métis and/or Inuit and any related identities" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Intersectionality: "Intersectionality is the way in which people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, opportunities, and/or power imbalances. In the context of race and Indigenous identity, this means recognizing the ways in which people's experiences of racism or privilege, including within any one group, may vary depending on the individual's or group's relationship to additional overlapping or intersecting social identities, like religion, ethnic origin, gender, age, disabilities or citizenship and immigration status. An intersectional analysis enables better understanding of the impacts of any one particular systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Oppression: Oppression refers to the "a situation in which people are governed in an unfair and cruel way and prevented from having opportunities and freedom" (Cambridge University Press & Assessment 2024, 2021)

Privilege: Privilege is defined as "unearned power, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities that exist for members of the dominant group(s) in society. Can also refer to the relative privilege of one group compared to another" (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013, p. 61).

Program of Study: The course level in which the student took the majority of their courses in their Grade 9 year.

Race: "Race is a term used to classify people into groups based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., "socially constructed"), with significant consequences for people's lives. Racial categories may vary over time and place and can overlap with ethnic, cultural or religious groupings" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Racialized (person or group): "Racialized persons and/or groups can have racial meanings attributed to them in ways that negatively impact their social, political, and economic life. This includes but is not necessarily limited to people classified as "visible minorities" under the Canadian census and may include people impacted by antisemitism and Islamophobia" (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Racial Trauma: Racial Trauma or race-based traumatic stress is a cumulative emotional pain or stressful impacts of experiencing or witnessing discrimination, racism, and institutional racism (Carter, 2007).

Racism: "Racism includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain or perpetuate the racial superiority or dominance of one group over another" (Government of Ontario, 2021). These ideas and practices are maintained when racial prejudice is so often backed by systems of power (Oluo, 2018)

Stereotypes: Stereotypes is defined as "Qualities ascribed to individuals or groups that are based on misconceptions, false generalizations, and/or oversimplifications that potentially result in stigmatization. A race-based stereotype is a quality ascribed to individuals/groups related to race. Stereotypes can perpetuate racism and racial discrimination and give rise to racial inequalities." (Government of Ontario, 2021).

Special Education Needs: "Students who have been formally identified by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC), as well as students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Students whose sole identified exceptionality is giftedness are not included" (EQAO, 2019, p.38). Special education needs is a classification of students for school to provide specialized or intensive programing and support. It is closely associated with Program of Study (Brown & Sinay, 2008; Brown & Parekh, 2010) or "streaming" and is widely considered to be strongly connected to postsecondary access.

Title: York Region District School Board's Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy Annual Report: Year 2 (2022-2023)

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