



## MEASURING PROGRESS ON EQUITY Report No. 17-006

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (PUBLIC)

7 February 2017

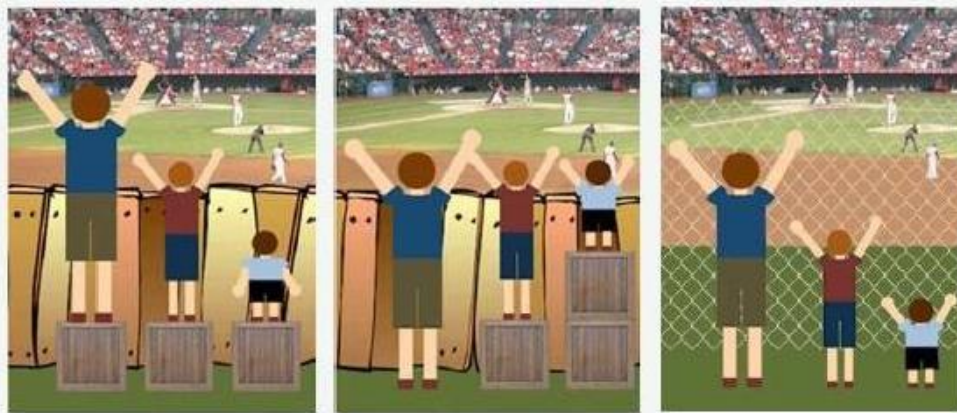
**Key Contact: Michele Giroux, Executive Officer, Corporate Services, 613-596-8211 ext. 8607**

### **Equity Objective - By 2019, the District will reduce barriers to learning to improve equity of access and opportunity for all students.**

The Ottawa-Carleton District School Board identified equity as one of five key priority areas in the 2015-2019 strategic plan. In the plan, equity for the District is described as “a culture that continually balances equity of opportunity and access for all”. The objective states: “By 2019, the District will reduce barriers to learning to improve equity of access and opportunity for all students”. The strategies to support this objective are:

- “Develop and implement enhanced methodologies to differentiate the allocation of resources to improve equity of opportunity for all students”;
- “Identify students and groups of students who face barriers to learning and differentiate supports to close achievement gaps”; and
- “Review and ensure effective use of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit funding to increase First Nations, Métis, and Inuit graduation rates”.

Our work on the equity objective requires careful consideration of what it means to achieve equity for all. *Report 16-042: Measuring Progress on Equity* discussed equality versus equity and included images similar to the first two panels below. Equal resources/supports do not necessarily create equity of opportunity and access, and so, as a District, we must work to identify barriers and address them by providing differentiated supports. In addition, ongoing work is necessary to remove systemic barriers. The removal of barriers aims to address the root of the inequity, as depicted in the inclusion of a third panel below.



**Figure 1. Equality versus Equity**

## Improvements in Process

The following, primarily qualitative evidence indicates progress on the equity objective:

- Implementation of strategies outlined in the strategic plan;
- Contributions from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE);
- Promoting awareness/understanding for identified groups; and
- Improvement in accessibility.

## **Implementation of strategies outlined in the strategic plan**

Progress on the equity objective is evidenced by the key work carried out to implement strategies outlined in the strategic plan. Key work under these strategies includes:

- Strategy: “Develop and implement enhanced methodologies to differentiate the allocation of resources to improve equity of opportunity for all students”

Key work: In 2013-2014, a measure of socio-economic status (SES) was introduced which allows for the disaggregation of achievement data for students residing in lower income neighbourhoods (see *Report 15-041* for details on how the SES variable is calculated, and *Report 16-125* for disaggregated achievement scores). The investigation of achievement gaps based on SES (as discussed below based on EQAO and EDI results) is evidence of key work in this area. Based on these findings, additional supports are needed to ensure equity of opportunity for these students. In addition to the calculation of SES, the OCDSB undertakes a cyclical review and updates its Resource Allocation based on Socio-economics (RAISE) index, which supports differentiated allocation of resources to help mitigate the impact of socio-economic factors on student achievement and well-being. Work is currently underway to review and update RAISE for implementation in the fall of 2017.

- Strategy: “Identify students and groups of students who face barriers to learning and differentiate supports to close achievement gaps”

Key work: Results from EQAO scores continue to demonstrate the need for supports for students with special education needs (note that this data does not include gifted students). Achievement gaps for these students are wider than those seen for the other identified groups. Most prevalent, among those with special education needs, are students with a learning disability (LD). Following a review of the LD program in 2015-2016, key work this year involves the implementation of a Geographic Model in support of LD, with the Board Improvement Plan for Student Achievement and Well-Being as an important resource. This ensures that adequate supports for LD are located in areas of greatest need.

Since the initiation of the strategic plan, the number of refugee students at the OCDSB has increased dramatically. In 2015-2016, the OCDSB welcomed 502 Syrian newcomers. Supports for these students include working closely with community partners to ensure a smooth transition for all newcomers into both schools and the community, as well as programs for sharing information (e.g., police/fire safety workshops, orientation sessions, information on winter in Canada) and recreational activities (soccer, choir, storytelling, etc.). Monthly, a roundtable discussion is held with cross-panel and departmental representatives to share information on progress, plan,

and proactively problem-solve for Syrian refugee students. Examples of this work include increasing and strategically deploying volunteers, as well as providing training from Learning Support Services about best practices when responding to children who have experienced trauma.

Important work is being done to promote inclusive spaces in all OCDSB schools. Progress is being made in this area through the establishment of universal washrooms. These washrooms, which are for individual use with lockable doors, are available to anyone and everyone in the school. As of November 2016, approximately 40% of schools (elementary and secondary) have been equipped with universal washrooms and the roll-out is continuing across the District in 2017.

- Strategy: “Review and ensure effective use of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit funding to increase First Nations, Métis, and Inuit graduation rates”.

Key work: An FNMI strategy is being implemented, and a regular reporting structure has been put in place (annually each fall; see *Reports 15-120* and *16-135*). As outlined in these reports, the OCDSB has forged key partnerships and undertaken various initiatives for supporting FNMI students. Report 16-135 also details a review of FNMI funding and the Board FNMI action plan for 2016-2017. Next steps will involve establishing a compulsory English course with native studies curriculum focus, for which work securing funding is ongoing, and establishing an FNMI Advisory Committee.

### **Contributions from the Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE)**

The Advisory Committee on Equity (ACE) assists the Board in its commitment to provide an equitable and inclusive educational and work environment which supports student achievement and well-being. Some highlights of this work include:

- Applying an equity lens to the Revised Exit Outcomes, draft policy on establishing community hubs in schools, OCDSB’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, French Language Instruction, OCDSB’s Budget Process, and Secondary School Review Framework;
- Supporting and tracking the District’s Equity Awards that honour students, staff, and community members for their ongoing commitment to live the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the District’s learning and working cultures;
- Continuing research to better understand potential barriers to learning faced by racialized and other students;
- Engaging representatives from the Muslim Community to build awareness around Islamophobia and its potential impact on Syrian arrivals who are Muslim; and
- Conducting a community forum in partnership with Rideau High School to gather qualitative information about the vision and dreams for student success and well-being, the experiences, skills and attributes, and support that could be provided.

### **Promoting Awareness/Understanding for Identified Groups**

One way in which the OCDSB promotes equity is by strengthening relationships to make schools a welcoming learning environment for all. An important part of this work is increasing awareness/understanding of students and staff. This not only benefits the identified group, but the OCDSB population as a whole. Recent work has been done to

develop strategies and target resources for two groups of interest: (i) First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students; and (ii) students of all gender identities and/or sexual orientations.

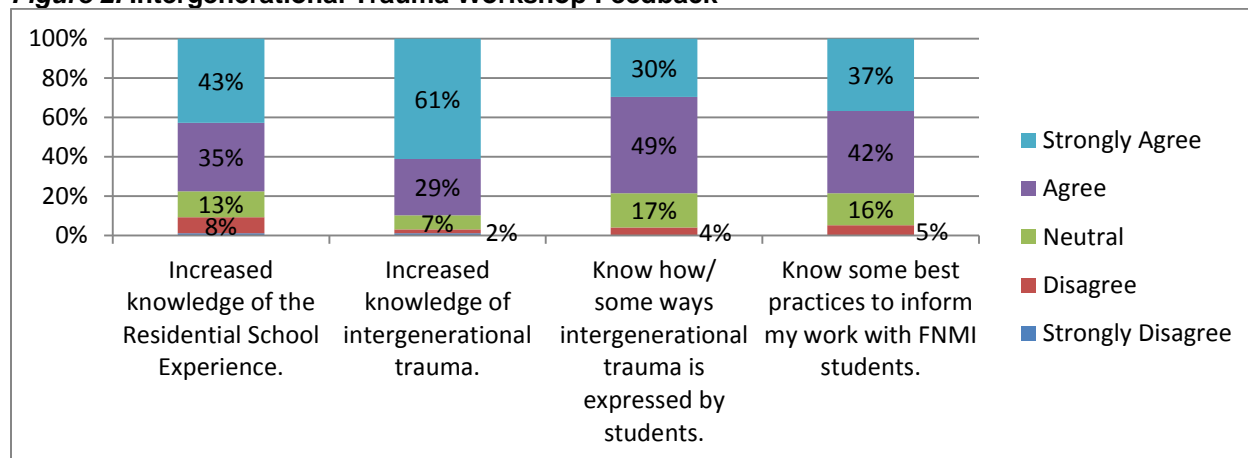
### **First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students**

Developing strategies to support FNMI students is important work in the area of equity. These strategies (and some of the work being done to implement them) include:

- Supporting FNMI Students (e.g., Student Leadership Camp; Dare to Dream Program; Aboriginal Post-Secondary Information Program; FNMI Education Instructional Coaches; InSTEM pilot project; School Within a College Program);
- Supporting Staff & Schools (e.g., Funding for busing to Summer Solstice Education Days; Indigenous Arts & Restorative Teachings workshops; Aboriginal Art and Culture residencies; financial support for Native Studies courses); and
- Community Engagement and Collaboration (e.g., local community members engaged as workshop providers and role models; Indigenous Voices in Schools Program; Aboriginal Working Committee for the City of Ottawa; support of community events).

For the purpose of this report, we will explore evidence of progress in supporting staff learning, which has been gathered through workshop feedback. The OCDSB’s Indigenous Education team presented a workshop designed to build staff capacity and awareness of intergenerational trauma, how it is expressed by students, and what some best practices are for supporting FNMI students. This workshop was offered on four occasions in the fall of 2016 to 160 staff. Feedback suggests the workshop led to increased knowledge for staff, as depicted in Figure 2 below.

**Figure 2. Intergenerational Trauma Workshop Feedback**



Note. Labels for the percentages were not provided for strongly disagree, due to the small size of the bars; responses were  $\leq 1\%$ .

### **Students of all gender identities and/or sexual orientations**

The OCDSB also works to promote equity for students, regardless of gender identity and/or sexual orientation. Several strategies are being implemented to achieve equity in this area. These strategies include:

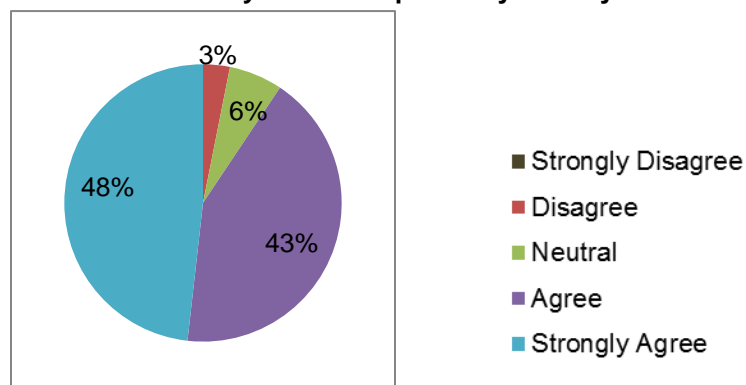
- Supporting Students (e.g., Rainbow Youth Forum; Rainbow Spring Fling; DILA Program; Roots of Empathy Program);
- Supporting Educators (e.g., Instructional Coach to facilitate professional development and provide system supports; promotion of system-wide gender identity guidelines; on-going consultations with school administrators and system staff); and
- Community Engagement and Collaboration (e.g., partnership with Family Services Ottawa; participation in community panel for Ottawa Public Health Nurses; involvement with Rainbow Service Providers Network).

As evidence of support for students, the OCDSB has a number of annual events and activities designed to promote inclusivity and awareness. These events are held year after year to continue to build awareness for each cohort. One such event, the Spring Fling, received recognition from Crime Prevention Ottawa as a finalist for the Community Safety Awards earlier this year. Another event is the Rainbow Youth Forum, which is an annual high school conference for students and staff to expand their knowledge and awareness of gender identity, sexual orientation and gender expression. The 2017 Forum attracted over 300 students and approximately 70 staff. At the end of the day, students were asked to complete a short, anonymous survey. Results from the survey demonstrate that:

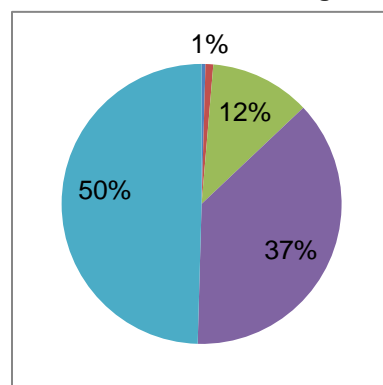
- 55% were first-timers; 45% previously participated and chose to attend again;
- 95% of the students said they would attend again in the future, if given the opportunity, while 4% said 'n/a' and only 1% would not;
- 81% said they learned about resources they didn't know about before;
- When asked how they felt prior to attending the event and how they felt after:
  - 35% of students increased their agreement with the statement "I feel free to be myself and express my identity"; and
  - 46% increased their agreement with the statement "I feel connected to a larger community".
  - Interesting, those who did not demonstrate an increase tended to stay the same (56% for "I feel free to be myself and express my identity" and 50% for "I feel connected to a larger community") – most of whom already indicated agreement with the statements (93% and 86% respectively).

Overall, at the conclusion of the event, students clearly demonstrated strong agreement with feeling able to express themselves and feeling connected to a larger community, as depicted in Figures 3 and 4 on the following page.

**Figure 4.**  
"I feel free to be myself and express my identity"



**Figure 3.**  
"I feel connected to a larger community"



### Improvements in Accessibility

The OCDSB continues to work to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities who work in, use, or attend school board facilities and/or access services. As outlined in the Annual Accessibility Report for the OCDSB, *Memo 16-110*, significant progress has been made implementing the District's multi-year accessibility plan (2012-2016). Highlights of the activities undertaken in 2015-2016 include:

- Staff training (e.g., AODA information sessions; Human Resources workshops; training on the Integrated Accessibility Standards; participation in the Date With Diversity Conference; etc.) provided to over 2000 employees;
- Work is being done to ensure that any new web site or major revision to a site's web content is compliant with the Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 and that all new content presently being added to existing or new sites is compliant;
- Policy changes being made with an "accessibility lens" (e.g., individual student transportation process for students with disabilities); and
- \$1.5 million invested in accessibility-related projects.

### Improvements in Outcomes

The following quantitative measures were used to assess progress on the equity objective:

- Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) data;
- Graduation and certification rates;
- OurSCHOOL Parent Survey responses; and
- Early Development Instrument (EDI) scores.

### EQAO data

Each year Ontario students complete provincial assessments through the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO). Scores on these assessments can be used to examine OCDSB student learning over time and in comparison to the province, as presented in *Report 16-125: Measuring Progress on Learning*. Furthermore, data from these assessments can be disaggregated for specific groups of students to examine how they are performing relative to the general student population. Four groups of

students have been identified as populations that tend to be at risk of not meeting provincial standards; EQAO data for these groups is useful for monitoring achievement gaps over time. These groups of students are:

- English Language Learners (ELLs; 20-21% of students);
- Students with special education needs (20-21% of students, not including gifted);
- Students who have self-identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit (FNMI; 2% of students); and
- Students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods (22-24% of students)<sup>1</sup>.

EQAO results for these groups are reported each fall in the Annual Student Achievement Report and graphs have been included in Appendix A. Recent trends in the data show that results for all students tend to be fairly consistent over time. Although fluctuations were slight, there is evidence from 2015-2016 that elementary students, as a whole, tended to demonstrate increases in reading but decreases in mathematics, with mixed results in writing. At the secondary level, results showed increases in math and OSSLT previously eligible, but a slight decrease for OSSLT first-time eligible. For the most part, identified groups tended to be less successful meeting the provincial standard as compared to all students.

#### English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with special education needs

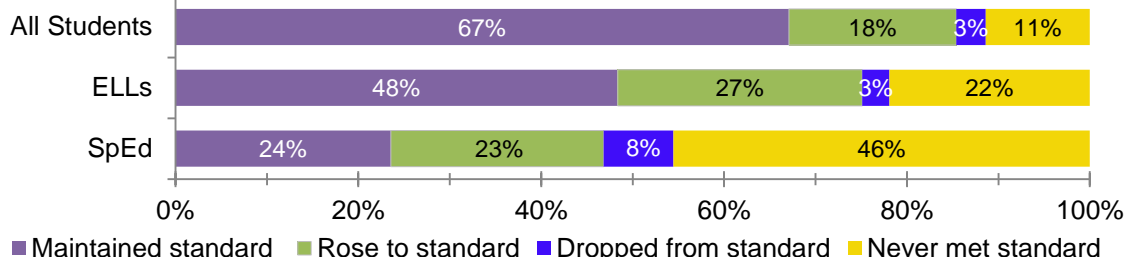
As can be seen in Appendix A, ELLs and students with special education needs tend to demonstrate increases in literacy and secondary math but decreases in elementary math. Despite decreases in elementary math, the achievement gap (i.e., the difference between an identified group and all students) for each of these two groups is smaller, as compared to the previous three-year average, in most areas (reading, writing, and math). Evidence of progress in closing the achievement gaps for ELLs and students with special education needs is encouraging, particularly in light of the historical trends which show that the gap tends to be largest for students with special education needs. In addition to these trends, EQAO data can be examined for these two groups by tracking cohorts over time, as presented in the graphs below. From this data, there is evidence that although progress is being made in closing the gap, there is a clear need to support students who continue to not meet the provincial standard over time – particularly elementary students with special education needs. Also demonstrating an area of need is the high proportion of ELLs in grade 9 applied math who did not meet the provincial standard over time – a trend which is also present, but to a lesser degree, for students with special education needs and for all students.

---

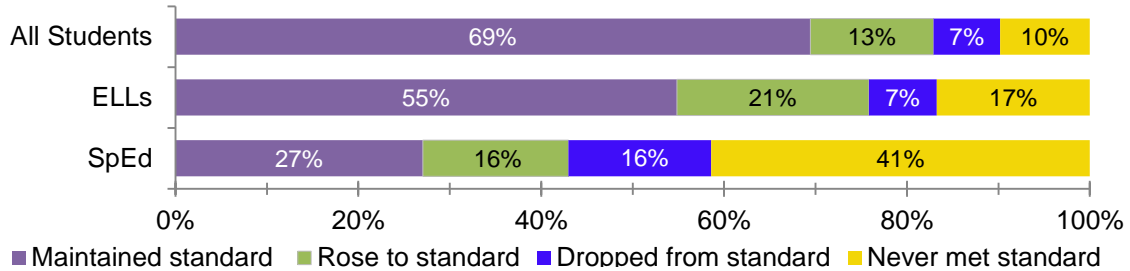
<sup>1</sup> Proportions of student population are based on 2015-2016 EQAO data (weighted proportions for grade 3 and 6 for elementary, and weighted proportions for both math courses and first-time eligible OSSLT for secondary).

## Cohort Tracking for English Language Learners (ELLs) and Students with Special Education Needs (SpEd; not including gifted)

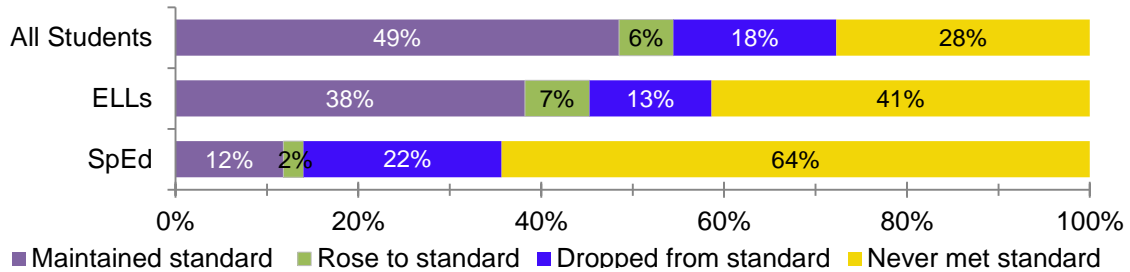
**Figure 5. Reading – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**



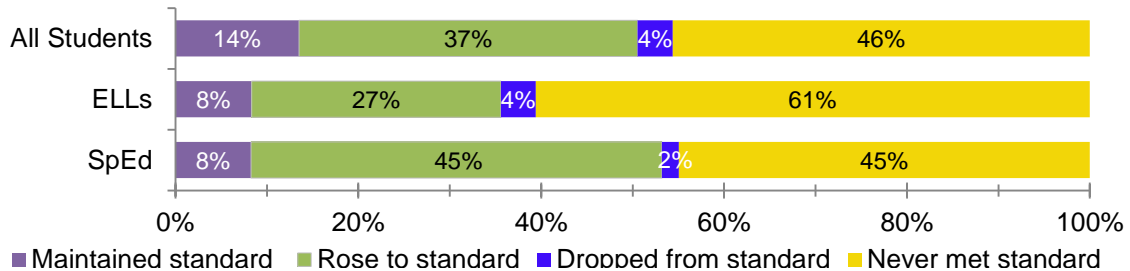
**Figure 6. Writing – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**



**Figure 7. Mathematics – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**

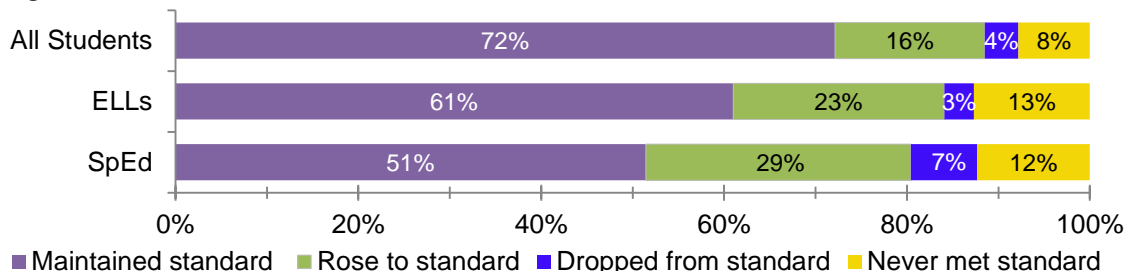


**Figure 8. Grade 6 Mathematics in 2012-13 and Grade 9 Applied Mathematics in 2015-16**

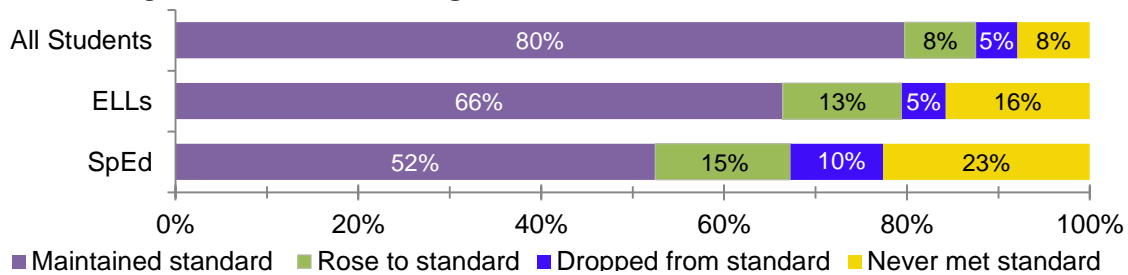




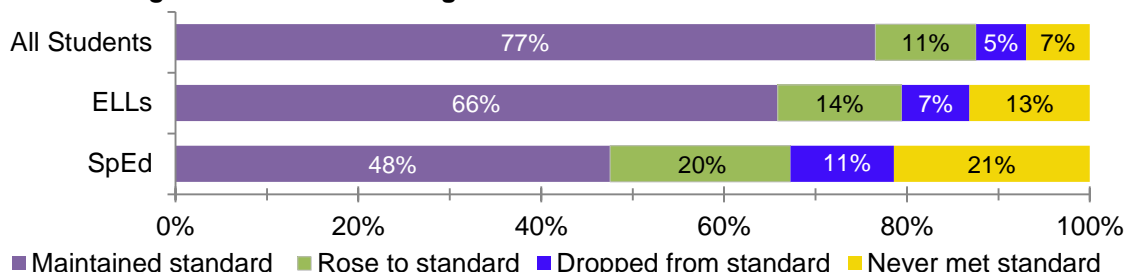
**Figure 9. Grade 6 Mathematics in 2012-13 and Grade 9 Academic Mathematics in 2015-16**



**Figure 10. Grade 6 Reading in 2011-12 and Grade 10 OSSLT in 2015-16**



**Figure 11. Grade 6 Writing in 2011-12 and Grade 10 OSSLT in 2015-16**



### FNMI students and students residing in lower income neighbourhoods

Based on EQAO results, students who identify as FNMI and students who reside in lower income neighbourhoods (SES) tend to be less successful in meeting the provincial standard compared to the previous three years. Furthermore, for approximately half of the EQAO assessments, scores for these two groups decreased over time and increased in the achievement gaps. Graphs of these results can be found in Appendix A. Worth noting is that students who have self-identified as FNMI and students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods have been the newest areas of focus for establishing data collection practices to monitor progress on the equity objective. Both groups will require continual monitoring in the future as trends are established over time. Given the size of the FNMI population and the complexity of the FNMI and SES variables, which are not included in the datafile provided from EQAO, cohort tracking is not available for these two groups.

### Limitations

It is important to note that when interpreting trends in EQAO results, we assume that individuals included in the dataset are an accurate representation of that particular

student population. However, it is likely that there are students within a specific population who are unidentified, and are therefore not included in the analysis. It is also the case that some students are represented in more than one identified group, and/or that a group which merits particular attention is not included in the analysis. For example, a student who is an ELL, has a special education need, and resides in a lower-income neighbourhood belongs to multiple groups above. This impacts both the interpretability of the results and the multiplicity of supports and strategies put in place, which may not necessarily target the greatest needs of an individual student. The limitations on the existing data highlight the importance of providing appropriate supports to all students, to ensure that even those students who may face multiple or unidentified barriers are receiving equal learning opportunities.

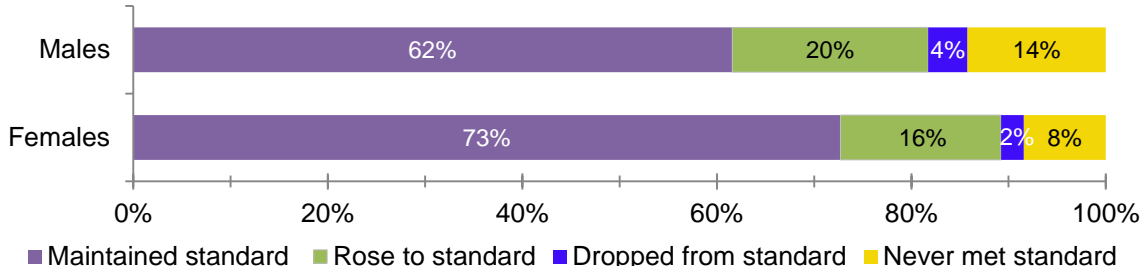
## Gender

In addition to the groups outlined above, the OCDSB has aimed to reduce the achievement gap between males and females. It is important to note that the District recognizes that gender is not a binary construct (see *OCDSB Gender Identity and Gender Expression Guide to Support Our Students*), however, current data collection and reporting practices of EQAO preclude the disaggregation of gender data beyond the gender binary male-female distinction. As discussed above, supports are in place to provide equity of access and opportunity to students who do not identify with a binary construct. The categorization of students as male or female by EQAO provides insight on progress made in reducing the achievement gap between these two groups in recent years.

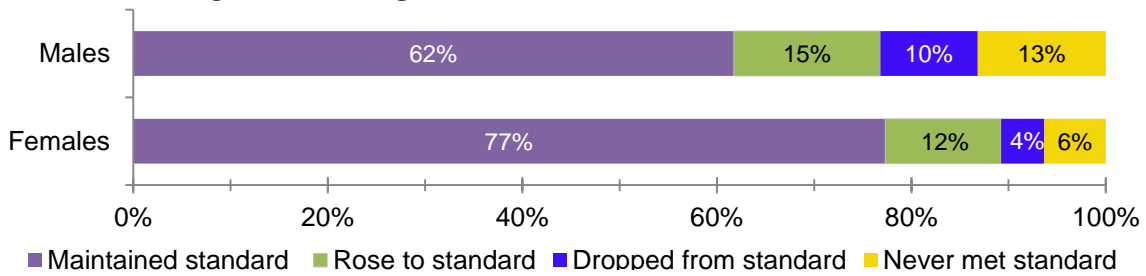
The *Annual Student Achievement Report (Report 16-125)*, indicates that females tend to outperform their male counterparts. In recent years, there has been progress in closing this gap for grade 6 students; however, the gap has widened for grade 3 students. Results at the secondary level showed that the gap tended to stay the same (with a slight widening for OSSLT first-time eligible); interestingly with males outperforming females in mathematics. In addition to these trends, EQAO data can also be examined for these two groups by tracking cohorts over time, as presented in the graphs below. From this data, there is evidence that although females are more likely to meet the standard in elementary literacy, a greater proportion of males (as compared to females) are rising to meet the standard from grade 3 to 6. Other meaningful results garnered from this data are the differences in applied math. Overall EQAO results demonstrate a gap of 8% for applied math, with males outperforming females (see Appendix A). A closer examination of the cohort data reveals that similar proportions of males and females maintained the standard from grade 6 but that males were more likely to rise to the standard after grade 6.

## Cohort Tracking for Males and Females

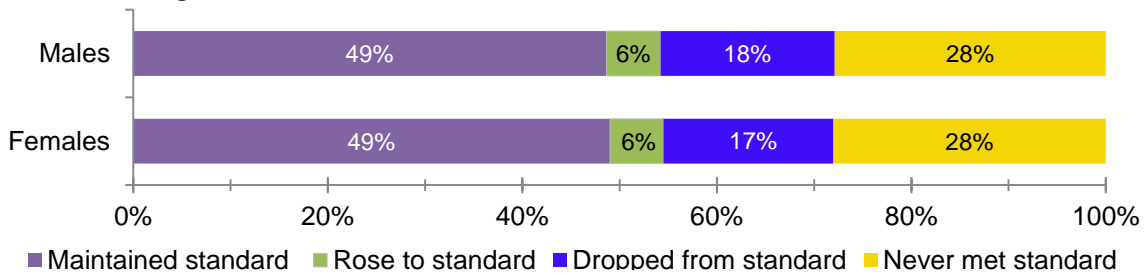
**Figure 12. Reading – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**



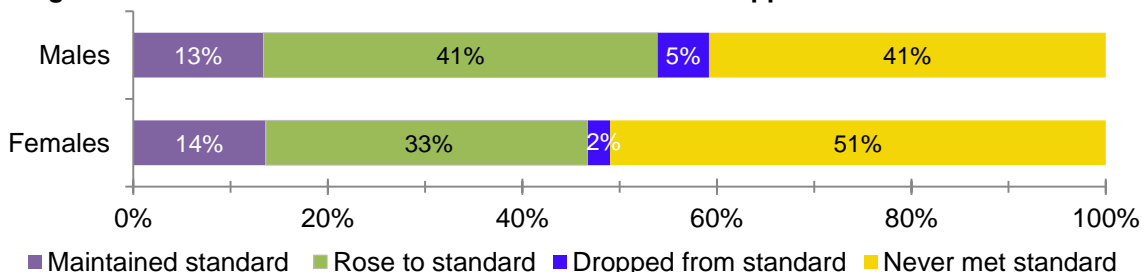
**Figure 13. Writing – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**



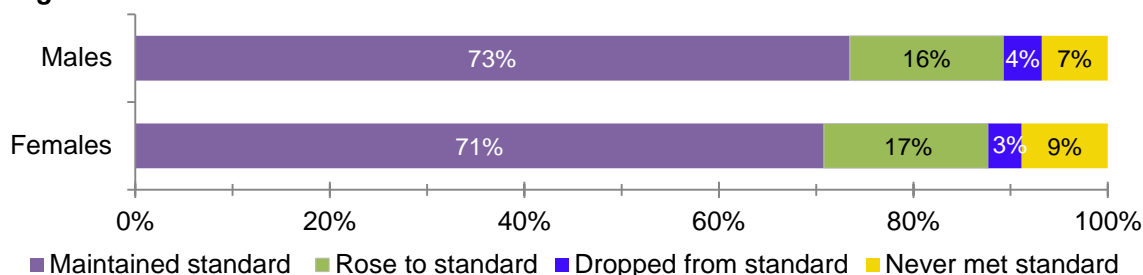
**Figure 14. Mathematics – Grade 3 in 2012-13 and Grade 6 in 2015-16**



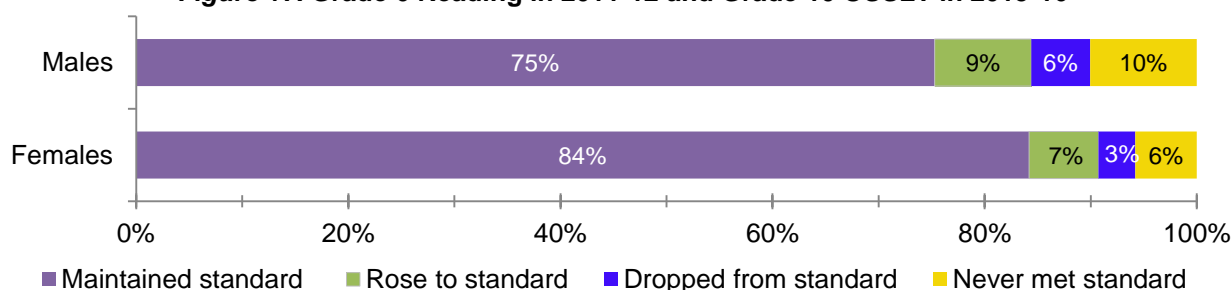
**Figure 15. Grade 6 Mathematics in 2012-13 and Grade 9 Applied Mathematics in 2015-16**



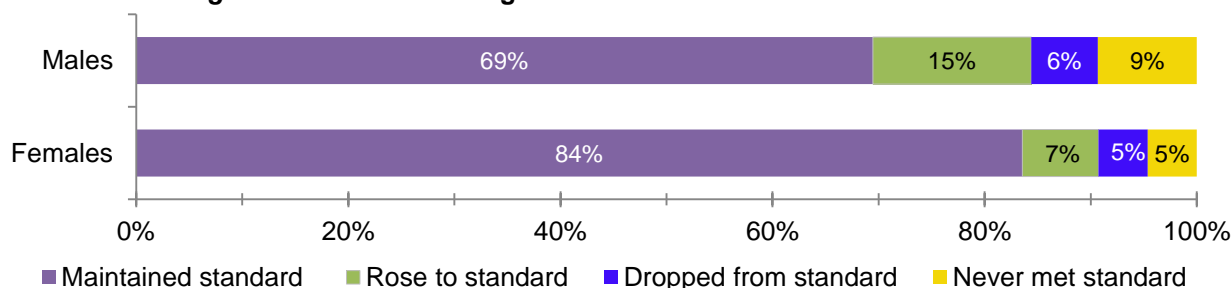
**Figure 16. Grade 6 Mathematics in 2012-13 and Grade 9 Academic Mathematics in 2015-16**



**Figure 17. Grade 6 Reading in 2011-12 and Grade 10 OSSLT in 2015-16**



**Figure 18. Grade 6 Writing in 2011-12 and Grade 10 OSSLT in 2015-16**



## Graduation and Certification Rates

Students from the 2010-2015 grade 9 cohort ( $N = 5,141$ ), who could be tracked within the OCDSB, had a graduation rate of 82% (i.e., graduated from an OCDSB secondary school within five years, earning an Ontario Secondary School Diploma; OSSD). This group consists of the following breakdown of students:

**Table 1. Enrolment Distribution, Cohort Graduation Rate (2010-2015 Cohort)**

	ELLs	SpEd	FNMI	SES	Males
Number of students	388	755	215	1,337	2,658
% of cohort ( $n = 5,141$ )	8%	15%	4%	26%	52%

An examination of the identified groups revealed the following trends for achieving an OSSD within five years:

- 82% of ELLs; a gap of 5%, which is 2% smaller than the average of the previous two years;

- 64% of students identified with a special education need (not including gifted); a gap of 23%, which is 4% larger than the average of the previous two years;
- 80% of students who self-identified as FNMI; a gap of 7%, which is 4% larger than the average of the previous two years;
- 64% of students residing in lower income neighbourhoods; a gap of 13%, which is 4% smaller than the average of the previous two years; and
- 81% of males, a gap of 3%, which is 3% smaller than the average of the previous two years.

Some students require longer than the designated five years to obtain a Ministry-recognized diploma/certificate. The success of these students can be measured by using the OCDSB's Annual Certification Rate (ACR; as described in detail in *Report 15-023*). The ACR reflects the proportion of students who have earned an OSSD, an Ontario Secondary School Certification (OSSC), or a Certificate of Accomplishment (COA) from an OCDSB secondary school (or Crystal Bay, Clifford Bowey) in what is theoretically their final year of school. The ACR for 2014-2015 was 89%. Data was disaggregated for identified student groups, and the following observations were made:

- Compared to the overall student population, ELLs (83%), students who self-identified as FNMI (81%), and students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods (81%) were less likely to earn a diploma or certificate. For students who self-identified as FNMI and students residing in lower-income neighbourhoods, the achievement gap compared to all students has reduced by 3% and 1% respectively; there was no change in the gap for ELLs.
- Students with special education needs (not including gifted students) were equally likely to earn a diploma or certificate (89%) compared to the overall student population. This is a striking difference as compared to the graduation rate for this group (64%).

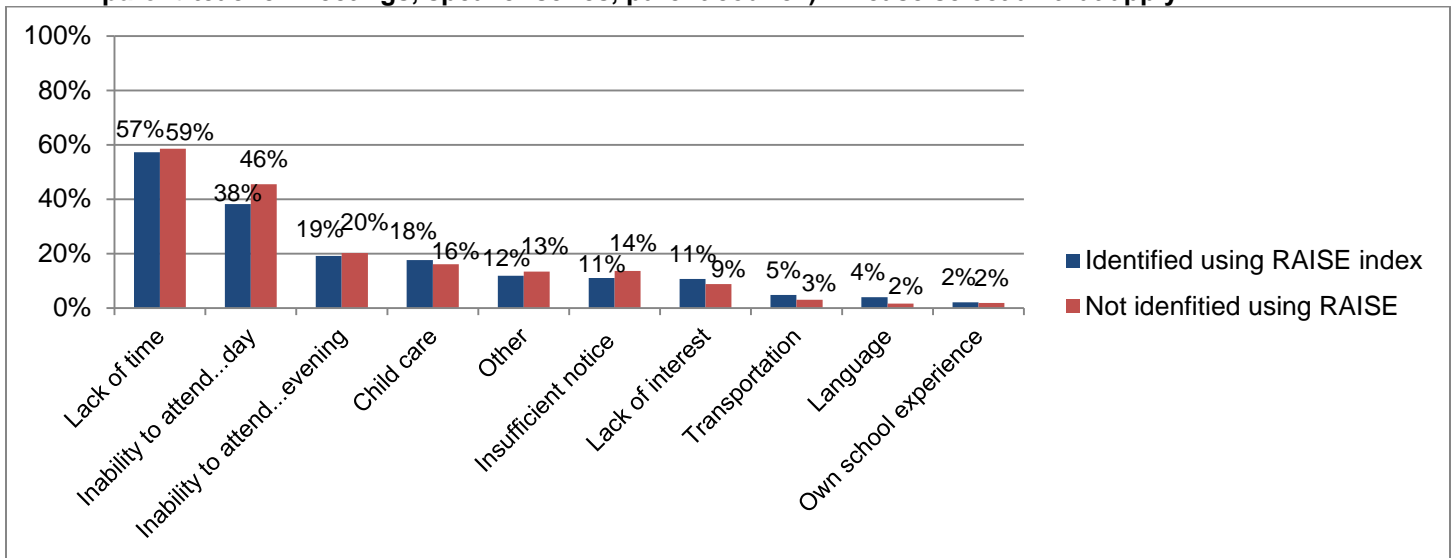
### **OurSCHOOL Parent Survey responses**

The OurSCHOOL survey is a voluntary online questionnaire, developed by The Learning Bar, which is used by school boards to collect anonymous and reliable data about school climate. In 2015-2016, the survey was administered to parents/guardians of all OCDSB students, of which 8,843 individuals responded. In addition to the questions developed by the Learning Bar, the OCDSB included two District-wide questions to gather information related to parent engagement. From this data, it is clear that the largest barrier for parents is time, and the preferred method of communication is email.

Although the OurSCHOOL data is anonymous and therefore cannot be linked to student demographic data, it can be disaggregated by school and therefore can be considered in the context of school-level variables. At the OCDSB, a school-level RAISE index is calculated based on a number of variables, including poverty, family/community, mobility, cultural/linguistic diversity, and readiness to learn. The RAISE index was most recently calculated in 2011 and has been used to identify schools with greater socio-demographic challenges. The OurSCHOOL responses from parents/guardians at schools identified using the RAISE index, compared to those at schools not identified,

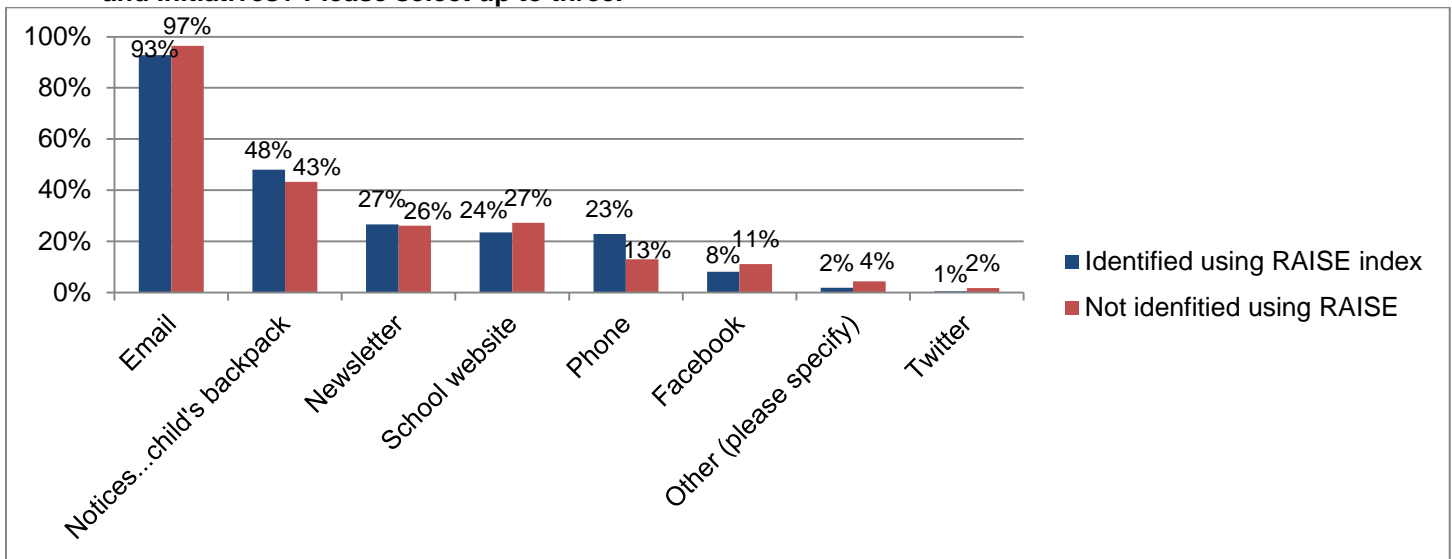
are informative for considering different barriers they may be faced with when engaging in their child’s education. These responses are presented below in Figures 19 and 20 and suggest that there is a great deal of similarity between the two groups. Despite the similar trends, parents/guardians of students at schools identified using RAISE tend to be less likely than those at schools not identified to cite lack of time or inability to attend events at a certain time as barriers to engagement, and tend to be more likely to cite reasons such as child care, transportation, lack of interest, and language barriers. Interesting differences also exist in parent/guardian responses as to how they would like to receive communication from their child’s school. Although both groups largely prefer information via email, it is worth noting that those at identified schools tend to be less likely than those at schools not identified to select technology-based methods (email, school website, social media) but more likely to select notices in their child’s backpack and being contacted by phone.

**Figure 19.** “Which of the following limits your ability to attend school or district events (e.g., parent-teacher meetings, speaker series, parent council)? Please select all that apply.”



Note. Total  $n = 8,720$ , response rate = 13%; Respondents from schools identified using RAISE index,  $n = 626$ , response rate = 6%; Respondents from schools not identified,  $n = 7,644$ , response rate = 13%.

**Figure 20. “How would you like to receive information from the school about events, activities, and initiatives? Please select up to three.”**



Note. Total  $n = 8,773$ , response rate = 13%; Respondents from schools identified using RAISE index,  $n = 665$ , response rate = 7%; Respondents from schools not identified,  $n = 8,108$ , response rate = 13%.

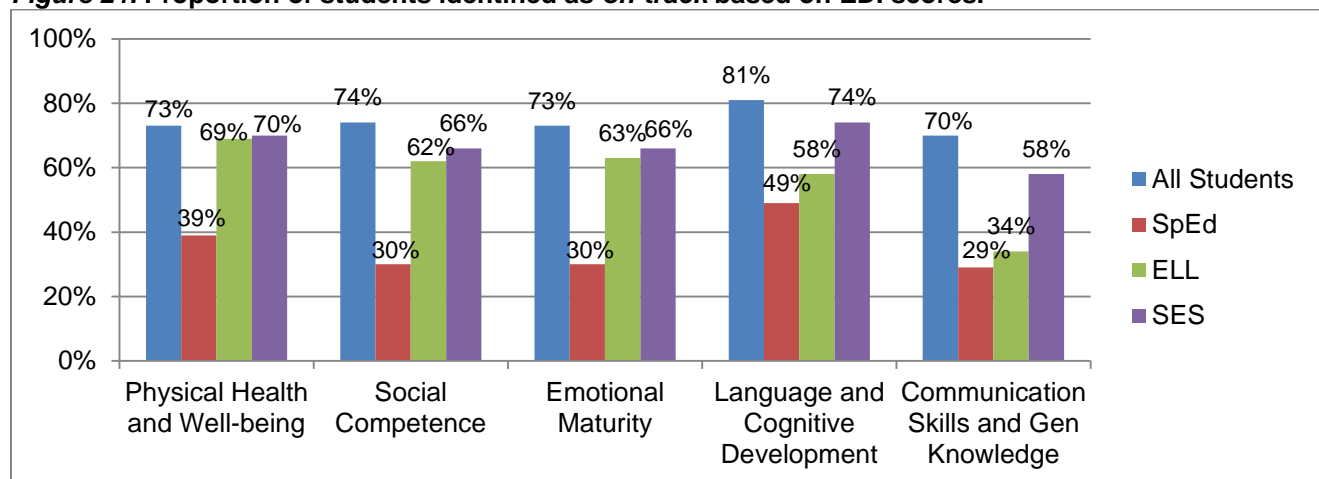
Important to consider in the interpretation of these results are the differences in both sample size and response rate for the two groups. The response rate of the parents/guardians of students at schools not identified using the RAISE index are approximately double those at schools which were identified. This is important data for informing next steps, as additional work is needed to increase response rates in targeted areas and therefore increase the accuracy of the data collected using this tool. Also important to keep in mind is that the survey was administered online, and may also have introduced some response bias in the results.

### Early Development Instrument (EDI) Scores

The Early Development Instrument (EDI) measures children’s developmental health in the province of Ontario in their second year of Kindergarten. The tool identifies children who are *on track* (i.e., score above the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, compared to the Ontario baseline population), *vulnerable* (i.e., score below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile), or *at-risk* (i.e., score between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> percentiles) on five domains: (1) Physical Health and Well-being; (2) Social Competence; (3) Emotional Maturity; (4) Language and Cognitive Development; and (5) Communication Skills and General Knowledge.

Data from the spring of 2015 allows for comparisons between all OCDSB students, ELLs, students with special education needs (not including gifted; SpEd), and students residing in lower-income neighborhoods (SES). As shown in Figure 21 below, fewer students were identified as being on track in the identified groups, as compared to all students, for each of five of the domains examined. Furthermore, considerable differences were found between all students and students with special education needs. Interestingly, the gap for ELLs is wide in the domains of language and communication but is much smaller in the domains of physical health, social competence, and emotional maturity.

**Figure 21. Proportion of students identified as *on-track* based on EDI scores.**



### Next Steps

The evidence reviewed in this report speaks to the OCDSB’s progress on equity as a strategic priority. This evidence speaks to improvements in process and the District’s implementation of strategies to remove barriers and promote equity of access and opportunity for all. The evidence also speaks to improvements in outcomes, closing the gaps and increasing achievement for identified groups, as well as highlighting areas where additional supports are needed. This information will be particularly useful for the Advisory Committee on Equity and its work promoting an equitable and inclusive environment, as well as the Special Education Advisory Committee and its work to ensure we are meeting the needs of our students with exceptionalities.

As a District priority, equity is defined as “a culture that continually balances equity of opportunity and access for all”. Moving forward, our collective understanding of equity and how it is achieved can be an area of focus. This involves developing a better understanding of our population and the interconnectedness of our identified groups. For example, based on 2015-2016 grade 3 EQAO data, there is considerable overlap among our identified groups: of the students identified as residing in lower income neighbourhoods, 36% are ELLs and 19% have special education needs.

Also important to the work in this area will be continual improvements in the data that is used to assess progress. In this regard, there are two key pieces of work lined up as next steps. One action item will be updating the RAISE index, based on more recent data since the 2011 calculation. This will provide a more accurate index, based on timely information, for the allocation of resources based on school needs. The other critical piece of work in this area will involve following up on the use of ethnic/racialized data to better understand our student groups. The OCDSB has expressed support to the Ministry of Education for the disaggregation of provincial data by race/ethnicity which would provide a framework for the use of this data at the District level. By increasing our understanding of OCDSB students and identifying groups of students facing unique barriers, more appropriate supports can be put in place.



## Guiding Questions

The following questions are provided to support the discussion of this item by the Committee:

- How does the key work discussed support the implementation of the strategies for this objective?
- How can we further develop our shared understanding of what it means to improve equity of opportunity and access for all?
- How does our achievement data inform our progress on the equity objective?
- How can we continue to improve our understanding of our identified groups and the barriers which impact their learning?
- How does this work relate to the work under the other strategic objectives?

---

Michele Giroux  
Executive Officer  
(ext. 8607)

---

Jennifer Adams  
Director of Education and  
Secretary of the Board