

AGENDA: 5:30-8:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Parent/Guardian Special Education Survey: Communication – Individual Education Plan (IEP) & Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC)
4. Grade Nine De-Streaming Update
5. Positive Culture & Well-Being Report
6. Adjournment



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: November 23, 2021

PREPARED BY: Sue Dunlop, Associate Director, Learning Services
Peggy Blair, Superintendent of Student Achievement – Specialized Services
Sally Landon, Manager of Research & Analytics

RE: Parent/Guardian Special Education Survey: Communication – Individual Education Plan (IEP) & Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC)

Background

At the Program Committee Meeting on December 10th, 2018, a plan was presented that was designed to engage parents of young people who require special education supports and/or services. The purpose was to ultimately enhance two-way communications with parents/guardians in order to improve service to and programming for their children. That plan involved focus groups and was scheduled to begin in 2019. However, to have input from more parents/guardians of children requiring special education supports, a decision was made to release a survey. The survey was available to all parents/guardians of students requiring special education supports.

In November/December of 2019, a thirty-five-question electronic survey for parents/guardians of students with exceptional learning strengths and needs was launched as a means of fulfilling the original mandate. The focus of the survey was based on the two main pillars of Special Education: Individual Education Plans (IEP) and Identification Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). Parents/guardians were offered opportunities to work with system staff to complete the survey if they wanted support. Parents were also able to complete the survey on paper. There were 440 responses through the online survey, no paper copies were requested, and no parents/guardians/caregivers followed up to request support. The parent letters were translated into five languages and parents were encouraged to reach out for assistance with the survey if required. None did.

Findings From the Survey

The following are key findings from the survey:

General Communication

- Generally, parents/guardians use a variety of communication methods to interact with staff on a regular basis. The most frequently used methods are emails, phone calls, written notes and informal interactions. Parents/Guardians most frequently engage in communication with the Classroom Teacher, followed by the Learning Resource Teacher and then the Principal/Vice-Principal.
- Parents/Guardians receive information from multiple school staff, and many indicated that they knew which staff to communicate with when they have a question or information to share about their child.
- Parents/Guardians rate the quality of communication with their school as fair to very good.

IEP and IPRC

- Most parents/guardians understand the purpose of the IEP and IPRC.
- Most parents/guardians are aware if their child has been formally identified as an exceptional pupil.
- Most parents/guardians understand how the IEP is used at school or in the classroom.
- Most parents attended the IPRC Meetings

Areas Requiring Development

Continuing to support the growth of practices that support communication positively reported on by parents regarding the IEP Process and IPRC Meetings noted above, the findings on the two key prompts noted below suggest areas requiring further development:

- Being invited to attend meetings to discuss the development and/or revisions to the IEP.
- Being encouraged to offer input into the IEP development.

In addition to the two key findings noted above, parent/guardian suggestions on how to enhance communication with school staff during the IEP process and reflections on their experiences about their child's Identification Placement Review Committee (IPRC) process were analyzed to identify themes:

IEP

- More frequent communication and follow-up around the IEP process
- More parent engagement and participation in the development of the IEP
- More face-to-face interaction
- More explanation to explain the jargon on the IEP
- More awareness about staff implementation of the IEP

IPRC

- More simplicity in explaining the process and outcomes of the meeting
- More opportunity to review information in advance of the meeting
- More flexibility in meeting times
- More simplicity in language used and explanation of terminology
- More parental input
- More student participation at the IPRC Meeting

The key findings of the survey have resulted in some intentional next steps to continue to improve communication with parents/guardians related to the two main pillars of Special Education: IEP and IPRC.

Next Steps

Key findings from this survey have provided the opportunity to invest in resources and professional learning for school-based staff. Implementation of information from the learning sessions and use of the resources will support best practices related to the IEP development process and IPRC meetings. Best practices include communication with parents/guardians. The survey has also reinforced the requirement to have consistency of practices across the system.

To better support communication, participation and understanding with and for parents/guardians related to the two main pillars of Special Education, IEP and IPRC, the following steps have been taken to support Principals and Teachers:

Individual Education Plans

A resource package on Individual Education Plans has been developed for Principals and Teachers to support consistency of best practices across schools. The resources in the package are aligned to the Ministry of

Education Standards for the IEP as well as relevant legislation. In-service on the materials in the resource package has been provided to all Principals as well as Learning Resource and Self-contained Class Teachers. These resource materials are also available to all staff on the HWDSB Intranet. To support school administrators to build common understanding about IEPs with teachers, a presentation and a video on 'How to Create IEPs' have been created and shared with staff in all schools at the October 2021 Staff Meeting.

Identification, Placement and Review Committee Processes

In-service was developed and provided to Principals on the requirements of the IPRC. Discussion on best practices for parent/guardian communication was also included in the in-service. An administrator checklist to outline the practices for both an initial IPRC as well as an Annual Review is currently being developed. It will be released in December 2021.

Supporting Parent IEP and IPRC Communication

To improve communication and build common understanding with parents/guardians regarding IEP and IPRC, HWDSB has developed five short videos that will be released in December 2021 on the board website.

- IEP Explained
- IEP: Transition Plan Explained
- IEP: Integrated Transition Plan Explained
- IPRC Explained
- IPRC Process Explained

Each video will have a translation feature. To accompany each video, a one-page summary of key information will be posted. Principals and teachers can also use these videos with parents/guardians to further support common understanding as well as explain processes.

Additional videos and resources are currently being considered that will support the parent/guardian community regarding key aspects of special education.

Lastly, leveraging MS Teams for remote meetings has provided a greater level of flexibility for school staff and parents/guardians. The use of MS Teams to make meetings more efficient and responsive to parent/guardian needs is a practice that can be perpetuated long-term.



EXECUTIVE REPORT TO PROGRAM COMMITTEE

TO: PROGRAM COMMITTEE

FROM: Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education

DATE: November 23rd, 2021

PREPARED BY: Sue Dunlop, Associate Director, Learning Services
Bill Torrens, Superintendent of Student Achievement, Program

RE: Grade Nine De-Streaming Update

Action

Monitoring X

Context

De-streaming Grade Nine is a Ministry of Education initiative designed to remove systemic barriers to achievement for students identifying as Black, Indigenous, and racialized, students from low-income households, and students requiring special education support and services. The removal of these barriers will ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. ¹

To “de-stream” refers to ending the practice of having Grade Nine courses divided into academic and applied courses. Having separate types of Grade Nine courses “streams” students into either a pathway to university or a pathway to another post-secondary destination, be it college, an apprenticeship, the workplace, or the community. Evidence exists that students identifying as Black, Indigenous, and racialized, students from low-income households, and students requiring special education support and services have been underserved by streaming. ² Once a student is in a pathway, it can be difficult to move to another pathway, especially if a student wants to move to a university pathway from a college or workplace pathway.

The HWDSB has adopted the Ministry’s three research informed goals for de-streaming, which include:

1. Cultural shifts in schools and boards to identify and dismantle systemic discrimination and structural inequities;
2. Increased educator capacity for effective culturally responsive instruction, assessment and evaluation in de-streamed classes;
3. Increased student engagement, achievement and well-being.

The following report provides:

- 1) An overview of the Grade Nine De-Streamed Course;
- 2) An update on Ministry of Education directions for 2022-23; and,
- 3) An overview of next steps in implementing de-streaming at the HWDSB.

Please see **Appendix A: Background** for more information on the three goals of de-streaming.

1) Grade Nine De-Streamed Math (MTH1W) Overview

¹ In the HWDSB *Student Learning and Achievement Annual Plan for 2021-22*, closing achievement gaps and improving the graduation rate for currently and historically underserved students is part of the graduation goal. Although the HWDSB identifies students who “self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people with students requiring special education supports/services” as underserved, the HWDSB approach acknowledges the intersectionality of socio-economics and poverty as it contributes to underserving students.

² Please see the High Education Quality Council of Ontario’s report at [Destreaming in Ontario: History, Evidence and Educator Reflections – Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario \(heqco.ca\)](https://www.heqco.ca/destreaming-in-ontario-history-evidence-and-educator-reflections)

Strands in MTHIW

Courses in the Ontario Curriculum are organized into strands. Each strand represents concepts or “big ideas” that students must demonstrate an understanding of by the end of the year or semester/quadmester. The strands in MTHIW align with the strands in the Grade Eight Mathematics curriculum with the exception of Strand A: Mathematical Thinking and Making Connections. This strand is not included within the Grade Eight Mathematics curriculum.

The strands are:

- Strand AA: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills in Mathematics
- Strand A: Mathematical Thinking and Making Connections
- Strand B: Number
- Strand C: Algebra
- Strand D: Data
- Strand E: Geometry and Measurement
- Strand F: Financial Literacy

Each strand has overall expectations for student learning, accompanied by a series of specific expectations. Expectations outline the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students acquire, apply, and demonstrate through the course. Educators plan and deliver courses by creating a sequence of learning activities, based on the specific expectations, that enable students to develop a mastery of the overall expectations. Final grades for a course are based on students’ achievement the overall expectations. The course outline and supporting information for MTHIW is accessible at: <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-mathematics/courses/mthIw>

Please see **Appendix B: MTHIW Strands** for a detailed outline of the MTHIW strands.³

How is MTHIW Different from Grade Nine Principles of Mathematics (MPM1D) and Foundations of Mathematics (MFM1P)?

MTHIW is significantly different than MPM1D and MFM1P. Critical differences include:

- A Social-Emotional Learning Skills in Mathematics strand and a Financial Literacy strand are new to the Grade Nine math curriculum;
- Mathematical Processes are now specific expectations that need to be explicitly taught and assessed;
- The “front matter” of the curriculum outlines specific language regarding Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP)⁴ and Universal Learning by Design (UDL)⁵ approaches in the classroom, as well as recommended teaching strategies;
- Coding is in the curriculum as an overall expectation with a series of specific expectations.

A detailed overview of changes in MTHIW is available here: <https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/fbd574c4-da36-0066-a0c5-849ffb2de96e/6c4330a7-bb2a-47b6-a169-a5e2c8dc6792/Key%20Changes%20for%20Educators.pdf>

Progression to Grade 10

The MTHIW curriculum states: “The overall aim of the Grade 9 mathematics course is to ensure that all students can access any secondary mathematics course they need in order to pursue future studies and careers that are of interest to them.”⁶ Therefore, the Ministry of Education designed MTHIW as a pre-requisite for either Grade Ten Principles of Mathematics (MPM2D) and Grade Ten Foundations of Mathematics (MFM2P). Students earning the MTHIW credit can choose either course in Grade Ten, but staff recommends that students transition to MPM2D to enable students to choose a senior Mathematics course best suited to their post-secondary aspirations. Taking MFM2P closes the option of taking Grade Eleven Functions (MCR3U) unless a student also completes MPM2D.

³ Please follow this link provides the full set of overall and specific expectations for MTHIW: https://assets-us-01.kc-usercontent.com/fbd574c4-da36-0066-a0c5-849ffb2de96e/2c41223a-5f39-4dd2-b94c-c75d2fae1fbd/Math_9_strand%20chart_AODA_06-May-21.pdf

⁴ For more information on CRRP please go to: <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/program-planning/considerations-for-program-planning/human-rights-equity-and-inclusive-education>

⁵ For more information on UDL please go to: [Learning for All – A Guide to Effective Assessment and Instruction for All Students, Kindergarten to Grade 12, 2013 \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/program-planning/considerations-for-program-planning/human-rights-equity-and-inclusive-education) page 11

⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/secondary-mathematics/courses/mthIw/elements-of-the-Grade-9-mathematics-course#overview>

In terms of curricular alignment, the following aspects of MTH1W will support students in being prepared for MFM2P and MPM2D. The new curriculum:

- Strives to create confident, competent math learners who have been explicitly taught how to use mathematical processes to solve problems and make connections;
- Creates opportunities for students to work with different types of numbers, such as powers with positive and negative exponents; solve problems involving positive and negative fractions, decimal numbers, and integers; and, build their knowledge and skills related to percentages, ratios, rates and proportions to make connections to real-life situations (*for example, comparing costs and determining best choice in a given scenario*);
- Includes concepts that support the development of student understanding of algebraic expressions and equations by applying coding skills to understand complex math concepts and make predictions; learning about various linear and non-linear relationships; and, increasing their understanding of rates of change and apply it to make sense of real-life situations (*for example, analysing the movement of a car or determining rates of pollution*);
- Continues the development of data literacy skills to examine the collection, representation, and use of data including how data is used to inform decisions, and continue to apply mathematical modelling to analyze real-life situations (*for example, the impact of social media on the economy, analyzing broad spending habits to determine a marketable product for sale*);
- Asks students to make connections between geometric shapes and their applications in architecture, engineering, and design, analysis, and creation of designs to increase understanding of geometric relationships, and real-life problems that involve applying their knowledge of perimeter, area, surface area, and volume (*for example, planning and creating models of a community garden, designing a patio to benefit a local restaurant*);
- Includes Financial Literacy strand to prepare students to manage finances; work with budgets and understand appreciation and depreciation of assets; analyze various financial situations; and, learn how math can be applied to make informed decisions (*for example, understanding shifts in the stock market, how interest rates and down payments as well as other factors impact purchasing decisions*).

Ministry has announced the release of an addendum to the MFM2P and MPM2D curriculum documents to ensure that any key content not addressed in MTH1W will be addressed as part of MFM2P and MPM2D.

Please see **Appendix C: Grade Ten Mathematics: Overall and Specific Expectations** outlines the overall and specific expectations for MPM2D and MFM2D from the Ontario Curriculum 9-10: Mathematics (2005).

2) **Ministry of Education Update**

On Wednesday, November 10th, 2021, the Ministry of Education announced the full de-streaming of Grade Nine. Specifically, the Ministry provided the following direction for implementation beginning in September 2022:

1. A new de-streamed Science, Grade Nine course (SNC1W) will be issued in Spring 2022;
2. English will be offered using the Academic curriculum and course code (ENG1D) for the 2022-23 school year;
3. Issues in Canadian Geography will be offered using the Academic curriculum and course code (CGC1D) for the 2022-23 school year;
4. French as a Second Language courses will be offered using the current Academic curriculum and course codes (FSF1D, FEF1D and FIF1D) for the 2022-23 school year;
5. The Locally Developed Compulsory Credit course policy remains unchanged and school boards must ensure that enrollment is not to increase in Locally Developed Compulsory Credit courses because of de-streaming;
6. The remaining Grade Nine subjects will continue to be offered as “Open” as they were already de-streamed.

MTH1W Update

To support the continuum of learning in mathematics, the ministry will release an addendum for each of the Grade 10 Academic and Applied Mathematics courses to be implemented for the 2022-23 school year. The addenda will outline additional learning expectations to be instructed in Grade 10 that support students in their transition from the de-streamed Grade 9 Mathematics course to the current Grade 10 Mathematics courses.

3) Next Steps in Implementing De-Streaming

On-going Work 2021-22

HWDSB continues to work towards the three goals for de-streaming. The work of cultural change within the organization continues through the anti-racism/anti-oppression learning for staff planned for the November 26th Professional Activity Day. A new resource, named the *On The Horizon's Toolkit*, will provide a framework and strategies for shifting culture. A new Pathways process that places students' aspirations and interests in the centre of the course selection process is under development. Capacity continues to be built with all staff. Learning teams in secondary schools reflect on and apply the learning from quadmester one to future MTHIW classes. Also, the *Learning Math Together* scope and sequence resource will be updated based on feedback and the experience of quadmester one. Teaching strategies and resources related to CRRP, UDL, and Indigenous Cultural Safety will be added to the resources. Educators will also have opportunities to become aware of additional strategies to support learners in the MTHIW classroom. Finally, student engagement, well-being, and achievement will continue to be a focus for classroom educators and for school and system leaders. Monitoring will continue to understand the impact of de-streaming and to guide the preparations for future courses.

Preparing for 2022-23

Initial planning for de-streaming in 2022-23, based on the Ministry direction, will build on the practices used last year to prepare for MTHIW. The system-wide anti-racism/anti-oppression learning will provide a foundation for creating safe, accepting, and inclusive classrooms. Successful practices from MTHIW will be shared with secondary staff. Secondary department heads will play a leadership role in the professional development and creation of resources (e.g., scopes and sequences). Staff will update course selection documents to reflect the new curricula and student/parent information sessions will need to reflect the new courses. Continuing Education will continue to offer Grade Nine preparation programming.

Appendix A: Background

Planning for 2021-22

In 2020-21, the Ministry of Education announced it would begin de-streaming Grade Nine. De-streaming would begin with Mathematics by removing the academic Grade Nine Principles of Mathematics (MPM1D) course and the applied Foundations of Mathematics (MF1D) course from the curriculum. Beginning in September 2021, de-streamed Grade Nine Mathematics (MTH1W) replaced these two courses. Staff began to prepare to offer a de-streamed Grade Nine Math course during semester two of 2020-21. The HWDSB adopted the Ministry's three research informed goals for de-streaming, which include:

1. Cultural shifts in schools and boards to identify and dismantle systemic discrimination and structural inequities;
2. Increased educator capacity for effective culturally responsive instruction, assessment and evaluation in de-streamed classes;
3. Increased student engagement, achievement and well-being.

Goal One: Cultural shifts in schools and boards to identify and dismantle systemic discrimination and structural inequities

The Ministry's goal of cultural shift aligned with the HWDSB's goals for cultural change. In 2020-21, HWDSB shifted its Annual Plan goals for the Positive Culture and Well-being and Student Learning and Achievement Priorities to focus on closing gaps for students who have been historically underserved. The Equity Action Plan and the Learn. Disrupt. Rebuild (LDR) initiative provided a foundation to begin implementation of de-streaming. For example, staff began to collaborate with community partners to identify barriers in the course selection and pathways process that prevented students and their families from choosing a pathway to reflect their aspirations and interests. The LDR initiative raised awareness of the need to work from an anti-racist/anti-oppressive stance to remove barriers to student achievement.

Goal Two: Increased educator capacity for effective culturally responsive instruction, assessment and evaluation in de-streamed classes

Professional development in support of MTH1W implementation began prior to the delivery of the curriculum to school boards in June 2021. Beyond the LDR learning mentioned above, learning teams of educators from secondary schools and their associated elementary schools met in the spring of 2021 to discuss Grade 8 – 9 Transitions; to engage in learning regarding CRRP; and to explore new instructional approaches. Over the summer of 2021, a writing team developed a MTH1W scope and sequence of activities, rooted in CRRP and UDL, for use by teachers in 2021-22. Lowering school year. Student voice from a Grade Eight to Nine summer learning program helped shape the resource. Now, each school has a MTH1W learning team following the cyclical Continuous Learning and Improvement process (CLI) to learn from their experiences implementing the curriculum and apply that learning to future lessons and classes.

Goal Three: Increased student engagement, achievement and well-being

The final goal focuses understanding the impact of implementing de-streaming. Student engagement and well-being will be measured through a end of course "exit card" or survey created in partnership with HEQCO. Each MTH1W has their own individual exit card for their class and the feedback is for their use only. The HWDSB Research and Analytics Division will have access to the results, but because this is a classroom tool, the results will be analyzed using a system-wide lens where no school will be identified. Through each quadmester, schools will monitor student achievement at each reporting point looking for trends and insights that can be shared for analysis and action. For example, the October quadmester one mid-term report data indicates that 82% of students in MTH1W were achieving above 50%.⁷ In the classroom, educators will use this data to support students immediately and, if needed, create a credit rescue plan for Student Success Days.

⁷ Last year, 84% of students in semester one were passing at mid-term. It is important to note that the 2021-22 cohort is 686 students while the 2020-21 cohort was 1572 students.

Appendix B: MTHIW Strands

Elementary Mathematics	Grade 9 Mathematics
	AA. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills in Mathematics
A. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills in Mathematics and the Mathematical Processes	A. Mathematical Thinking and Making Connections
B. Number	B. Number
C. Algebra	C. Algebra
D. Data	D. Data
E. Spatial Sense	E. Geometry and Measurement
F. Financial Literacy	F. Financial Literacy

Strands in Grade 9 Mathematics
Strand AA: Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Skills in Mathematics
Strand A: Mathematical Thinking and Making Connections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mathematical processes Making connections
Strand B: Number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and use of numbers Number sets Powers Rational numbers Applications
Strand C: Algebra <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and use of algebra Algebraic expressions and equations Coding Application of linear and non-linear relations Characteristics of linear and non-linear relations
Strand D: Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Application of data Representation and analysis of data Application of mathematical modelling Process of mathematical modelling
Strand E: Geometry and Measurement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geometric and measurement relationships
Strand F: Financial Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial decisions

Appendix C: Grade Ten Mathematics: Overall and Specific Expectations

Principles of Mathematics (MPM2D)	Foundations of Mathematics (MFM2D)
Quadratic Relations of the Form $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating the Basic Properties of Quadratic Relations Relating the Graph of $y = x^2$ and Its Transformations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving Quadratic Equations Solving Problems Involving Quadratic Relations Analytic Geometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using Linear Systems to Solve Problems Solving Problems Involving Properties of Line Segments Using Analytic Geometry to Verify Geometric Properties Trigonometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating Similarity and Solving Problems Involving Similar Triangles Solving Problems Involving the Trigonometry of Right Triangles Solving Problems Involving the Trigonometry of Acute Triangles 	Measurement and Trigonometry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving Problems Involving Similar Triangles Solving Problems Involving the Trigonometry of Right Triangles Solving Problems Involving Surface Area and Volume, Using Imperial and Metric Systems of Measurement Modelling Linear Relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulating and Solving Algebraic Equations Graphing and Writing Equations of Lines Solving and Interpreting Systems of Linear Equations Quadratic Relations of the Form $y = ax^2 + bx + c$ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manipulating Quadratic Expressions Identifying Characteristics of Quadratic Relations Solving Problems by Interpreting Graphs of Quadratic Relations

Executive Summary

Topic: Positive Culture and Well-Being Report

Context

HWDSB's Board of Trustees approved Strategic Directions that were launched in August 2016 and staff has developed an Annual Plan for 2021 - 22. The five priorities are *positive culture and well-being*, student learning and achievement, effective communication, school renewal and partnerships.

Mission: We empower students to learn and grown to their full potential in a diverse world.

Commitment: We are committed to learning, equity, engagement and innovation

Priority: [Positive Culture and Well-Being](#) – *We will build our student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies.*

Summary

This report provides an update on the Positive Culture and Well-Being Priority since the last report in February 2021. This report serves as the primary report on this priority area with a number of related Monitoring Reports being shared throughout the year.

Positive Culture and Well-Being Reporting Schedule

- September 2021 – Safe Schools Action Plan
- November 2021 – Board Annual Plan
- February 2022 – Suspensions, Expulsions and Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) Data and Safe Schools Action Plan
- June 2022 – Equity Action Plan, Community Mapping and Safe Schools Action Plan

The following report includes:

- The review of the 2021-22 implementation of the HWDSB Annual Plan, Positive Culture and Well-Being
- Positive Culture and Well-Being COVID-19 Related Updates
 - Attendance
 - Social Work Referrals and Consults
- Appendix A: Positive Culture and Well-Being Student Attendance

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board is committed to improving the well-being of all students and staff and close the gap for those currently and historically underserved. More specifically, staff have identified a target of at least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities. To meet this target, staff are undertaking strategies across three areas:

Investing in People

Provide differentiated professional learning on *culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy*, *Indigenous Cultural Safety* and *Learn.Disrupt.Rebuild @HWDSB* with a focus on relationships and conditions impacting learners who are current and historically underserved.

Foundational to improving well-being is supporting the learning of system leaders (school and board) related to human rights, systems of oppression, privilege, and anti-racism. There have been a number of opportunities in this area for staff. Highlights include:

- Human Rights and Equity: New Employee Onboarding
- Human Rights 101 Training for Employees
- Anti-Racism Anti-oppression (ARAO) Education and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP) – On the Horizons and Understanding and Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary, and Diverse Gender Students

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Staff are on track in investing in people and a further update will be provided in the *Equity Action Plan Report* in June, 2022.

Leveraging Effective Practices

Equity is not sameness and in order to address current and historical gaps, *differentiated strategies* involving targeted and enhanced supports continue to be explored and introduced. Highlights include:

- Graduation Coaches for Black Students – Program expansion
- Student Voice Groups for Racialized and Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Students
- Social Connection Group for Muslim Students
- Understanding and Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary and Diverse Gender Identities Resource
- Human Rights Early Resolution
- AIM Program
- Project SEARCH

Emotion Coaching is a communication strategy that calms the brain in as little as 60 seconds and helps improve relationships. *Emotion Coaching* has two steps: Validation –Letting someone know we are trying to understand how they feel, think or act in a certain way. This step is followed by Support –where the individual provides emotional and practical support using strategies including reassurance, limit-setting, re-directing, collaborative problem solving, teaching skills etc.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board completed an *Employment Equity Audit* (Employment Systems Review) to examine Human Resource policies and practices related to hiring, advancement, and inclusion of employees from diverse backgrounds. In the fall of 2020, HWDSB acted upon the recommendations from this audit and created, *Reflecting our Community: Employment Equity Audit Action Plan*. As reported to the Board in June 2021, Human Resource Services staff completed most of the Phase 1 recommendations.

Staff are on track in leveraging effective practices.

Refining Measures of Progress

The *HWDSB We All Count*, student census was completed throughout spring 2021. Due to numerous factors the response rate was lower than anticipated. The census will be re-opened from November 29th to December 16th to provide an additional opportunity for students and/or parents/guardians/caregivers to participate within the census.

As part of the commitment to transparency and accountability, staff continue to provide regular updates on the implementation of the *Safe Schools Action Plan*. The previous update was provided on September 21, 2021.

Updates in this Report include:

- Communications
- Structures
- Administrator Learning
- Reimagining Wellness – Return to School
- Reimagining Wellness – Bullying Awareness and Prevention
- Keeping Students in School
- Middle Years Development Instrument

Staff are on track in refining measures of progress.

Staff are not on track to achieve the target of at least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities by June, 2022 due to the pause on the MDI survey in 2019-20 school year. The new target date will be June, 2023 at which point we will have

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a 2021 mid-point MDI survey to measure our system progress and a final MDI survey in the spring of 2023. (Note: This is contingent upon a continued return to normal schooling experiences)

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HWDSB Annual Plan Report

Name of Report: Positive Culture and Well-Being Report (Annual Plan Year 2021-22)

Date: November 2021

This report provides an update on the Positive Culture and Well-Being Strategic Direction Priority since the last report in February 2021. This report serves as the primary report on this priority area with a number of related Monitoring Reports being shared throughout the year.

Positive Culture and Well-Being Reporting Schedule

- September 2021 – Safe Schools Action Plan
- November 2021 – Board Annual Plan
- February 2022 – Suspensions, Expulsions and Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) Data and Safe Schools Action Plan
- June 2022 – Equity Action Plan, Community Mapping and Safe Schools Action Plan

Priority: Positive Culture and Well-Being: We will build student and staff well-being through positive climate strategies and supportive relationships.

Goal: Improve the well-being of all students and staff and close the gap for those currently and historically underserved.

Target: At least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities.

Investing in People

Strategy #1: Provide differentiated professional learning on *culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy, Indigenous Cultural Safety and Learn.Disrupt.Rebuild @HWDSB* with a focus on relationships and conditions impacting learners who are current and historically underserved.

To support students who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ and people requiring special education supports/services feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities, staff engage in a variety of professional learning focused on classroom conditions and relationships.

*Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogy (CRRP)**

In an inclusive education system, students must see themselves reflected in the curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, so that they are engaged in and empowered by their learning experiences. *Culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy (CRRP)* provides a framework for building positive environments, improving student responsibility and success, encouraging parent-school relationships, and building strong community connections.

CRRP also emphasizes that it is important for educators and school leaders to examine their own biases and to analyse how their own identities and experiences affect how they view, understand, and

curiosity • creativity • possibility

interact with all students. This can help to prevent discrimination, harassment, and the creation of poisoned environments.

By knowing "who our students are", educators and administrators can tailor practices to meet the needs of their diverse student population to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

The current CRRP project the equity department is involved in includes three schools with diverse needs. The overall goal of the project is to eliminate disparities in achievement and develop a sense of belonging for historically and currently marginalized students in Ontario schools. Our specific inquiry question is: *What happens to student achievement and sense of belonging among historically and currently marginalized students when CRRP is centered in board and/or school improvement processes?* Student and staff surveys will track progress throughout the project term which ends in December 2021. Staff are using the lessons from *Learn.Disrupt.Rebuild.* as the foundational piece for introducing and centering CRRP, and we are on track for completing this project in December.

Board staff continue to engage in differentiated professional learning on culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy (CRRP). The Equity and Program Departments are collaborating to train all Program Consultants and Reading Specialists on the tenants of CRRP. This will enable these staff members to provide learning to the schools and educators they work with when planning and developing areas of study. CRRP learning will be embedded into all staff learning through staff meetings and the Continuous Learning and Improvement process. CRRP will also be centred in staff work related to destreaming with a focus on Gr. 7-9 transitions.

Indigenous Cultural Safety

The principles and practices of *Indigenous Cultural Safety* was embodied throughout the implementation of the *Learning Nest*. The *Nest* is a dedicated classroom program with Indigenous staff for Indigenous students with a focus on cultural safety. In addition, the Indigenous Education team provides educator resources for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Treaties Recognition Week and National Indigenous Peoples Day. The team also works with senior leadership, social workers, and schools to deepen learning about the Land Acknowledgement, respond to cultural safety questions and support staff to support students.

The *Indigenous Education Circle Strategic Action Plan (IECSAP)* is in development and will provide concrete actions and next steps in the spirit of the Two Row Wampum as HWDSB works alongside Indigenous staff and communities to revitalize education.

*Learn.Disrupt.Rebuild@HWDSB: Building a Community of Care**

Prior to the return to school in September 2020, staff began work on a curriculum designed to support the safe physical, social and emotional re-entry of students to face-to-face learning. At the same time, the world was responding to the long-standing pandemic of racism, specifically Anti-Black Racism. HWDSB students were returning to school in a different world with a heightened call to action – Black Lives Matter. With this in mind, staff developed a curriculum resource that aligns with the Strategic Directions and Equity Action Plan. This resource was intended to support staff as they address issues related to equity, mental health, human rights, anti-racism and well-being within the context of the dual pandemics of Covid-19 and Anti-Black Racism.

Modules 1-3 were implemented during the 2020-2021 school year and the lessons focused on physical safety (e.g. Enhanced Public Health Measures) and mental well-being, identity, race, intersectionality, community, diverse families, and ongoing self-care. Towards the end of the school year, Module 3, focusing on Human Rights, Equity and Anti-Racism was released. All modules are being revisited this year, with the inclusion of French translations and ESL accommodations (as a result of staff survey feedback), including the release of Module 4 with a focus on Empowering Action and Allyship. Research and Analytics will be developing a feedback survey to launch in the new year, in order to gauge further impact and needs around the resource tool.

***Additional updates will be provided in the *Equity Action Plan Monitoring Report* in June 2022.**

Strategy #2: Provide differentiated professional learning to system leaders on human rights, systems of oppression, privilege, and anti-racism and implications within the learning and working environments.*

Foundational to improving well-being is supporting the learning of system leaders (school and board) related to human rights, systems of oppression, privilege, and anti-racism. There have been a number of opportunities in this area for staff.

*Human Rights and Equity: New Employee Onboarding**

The *New Employee Onboarding* program has been updated to include materials that provide a consistent and clear understanding of human rights and equity to new employees joining HWDSB. The onboarding session provides orientation on HWDSB's commitment to human rights and equity, and provides an introduction to the *Equity Action Plan*, outlining employees' roles and responsibilities in creating learning and working spaces that are free from discrimination and harassment. The training also introduces new employees to key departments that are leading the work and provides direction where they could get support if they face issues.

*Human Rights 101 Training for Employees**

The HWDSB Human Rights Office has developed a professional development session focusing on the fundamentals of human rights, understanding the human rights code and outlining roles and responsibilities of educational professionals in creating a culture of human rights in their schools, workspaces and communities. This training is being integrated in the Hub as an online module to be available to all employees and also to be a learning tool as part of the hiring process when new employees join the board.

*Anti-Racism Anti-oppression (ARAO) Education and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP)**

During the 2020/21 school year, staff, led by Social Work Services, co-created a toolkit to support educators in the creation of safer and more inclusive classrooms (On the Horizons). The "On the Horizons" toolkit addresses topics related to Indigenous Cultural Safety and Equity and supports educators in understanding of class discussions, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity & competency, and cultural humility. Staff received professional development on August 30th on this document which supports anti-racism/anti-oppression practices and supports inclusive conversations. During the upcoming November PA Day, staff will dig deeper into this document to expand their learning in this area.

Administrator learning has been provided on anti-racism and anti-oppression practices. This includes learning about the updated Resource Guide/Factsheet: *Understanding and Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary, and Diverse Gender Identities*. This learning supports creating inclusive spaces in HWDSB learning and workspaces and outlines inclusive practices and human rights obligations to ensure that everyone understands their rights and responsibilities to make schools and workplace free from discrimination and harassment based on gender identity and expression.

***Additional updates will be provided in the *Equity Action Plan Monitoring Report* in June, 2022.**

Leveraging Effective Practices

Strategy #1: Implement differentiated strategies to provide targeted and enhanced support to Black, Indigenous, Racialized and Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ students and students requiring special education supports and/or services.

Equity is not sameness and in order to address current and historical gaps, differentiated strategies involving targeted and enhanced supports continue to be explored and introduced.

Graduation Coach for Black Students*

The *Graduation Coach for Black Students Program* has been operating in two secondary schools: Bernie Custis and Westdale Secondary Schools, in the past school year. For the 2021/22 school year, a third Graduation Coach has been introduced and the program is expanded to include two more secondary schools: Sherwood and Sir Allan MacNab Secondary Schools. The Graduation Coaches serve as mentors and advisors to Black students who may need support in ways that are culturally responsive and affirm the student's intersecting identities. The program operates during school time and throughout the summer. The coaches run a leadership summer program to keep students engaged and stay connected with their peers and mentors from local communities. In the summer of 2021, the coaches coordinated both in-person and virtual sessions engaging 20-25 students where the students worked with mentors from areas of their interests they identified (e.g. boxing, basketball, music production, financial literacy, African/Caribbean cooking skills etc.). In the 2020/21 school year even though the program shifted to remote due to the pandemic, the coaches, students and families reported successful outcomes that have helped students stay engaged and motivated. Outcomes from the 2020/21 school year include:

- The program had a case load of 42 students in both semesters. In semester one 27/42 students were successful which was a 64% success rate and in semester two 29/42 students were successful which is a 69% success rate (success is defined as those that have passed 50% and more of their class load.)
- While it is a factor and important to focus on academic supports, the greater impact and power of the coaches' work can be highlighted in the personal growth, the relationships and the strengthening of students' well-being as they continue to develop and advance in their high school career and beyond. The focus on students' well-being and supporting their overall needs beyond their academic priorities also seem to impact students' engagement and connections positively throughout the pandemic. Out of the 42 students, the coaches developed continued relationships with 38 students.
- The whole family approach has been used to identify barriers for students and make some financial supports available, including bus tickets, grocery gift cards, school supplies for the new school year, and throughout the year.

Student Voice Groups for Racialized and Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ Students*

Student voice groups for racialized and Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ students will begin throughout November 2021. The purpose of these groups is to gather student voice on the experiences of marginalized and racialized students. Safe spaces are created for students to share, reflect and provide staff voice and insight on how to better serve our students.

Social Connection Group for Muslim Students*

In spring 2020, staff introduced the *Social Connection Group for Muslim Students* in response to increased incidents of racism and Islamophobia. Staff collaborated with leaders from the five Hamilton Mosques as well as parents from the Muslim community and their children and youth around approach and content. Initial sessions have occurred and staff are working with those involved to identify areas to be further developed. During the 2021/22 school year, staff are exploring the structures needed around this concept to ensure sustainable and scalable programming of this nature

is available year after year and with potential to additional student groups who are currently or historically underserved by education.

*Understanding and Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary and Diverse Gender Identities**

The updated Resource Guide/Factsheet: *Understanding and Supporting Transgender, Non-Binary, and Diverse Gender Identities* has been distributed to schools and learning has occurred for staff on inclusive practices for transgender, non-binary and gender fluid students. This learning is essential to creating safe and inclusive conditions for students with non-binary and diverse gender identities.

*Human Rights: Early Resolution**

HWDSB has established a Human Rights Office to develop safe, culturally responsive and inclusive reporting structures, as well as identify and address discriminatory practices at all levels. The Human Rights Office works towards building and maintaining a culture of human rights in HWDSB learning and working environments using three strategies:

- 1) Reviewing policies, procedures and practices using a human rights-based approach;
- 2) Building capacity and creating awareness among HWDSB stakeholders on human rights, and their roles and responsibilities;
- 3) Resolving human rights issues through an internal procedure focused on fair, transparent and independent process focused on early resolution and restorative justice.

Students, families, staff and others have the option to directly access support from the Human Rights Office. A Human Rights Early Resolution Supervisor has been hired and is now working alongside the Human Rights and Equity Officer, to provide support to students, families, and staff; and proactively address human rights concerns as they arise through early resolution, mediation, and other approaches. The process to develop a Human Rights Policy and Procedure has begun and engagement sessions are planned to take place in November and December 2021 to hear from students, families, staff and community members.

AIM Program

Differentiated support continues to be provided for a small number of students through AIM Programs running in various elementary schools. This year, one more Child and Youth Care Practitioner (CYCP) was added bringing the number of AIM programs to twenty-eight. The CYCP acts as the primary caring adult for students. This practitioner provides in-school support to a small group of students in the development of pro-social skills. The AIM Program uses a variety of evidenced-based strategies to support the student in monitoring progress toward a small number of goals. A Board-Certified Behaviour Analyst collaborates with the CYCP weekly on student progress to analyze data related to effectiveness.

Project SEARCH

"The unemployment rate for persons with disabilities is at least five times the national average" (OESC, 2011). To improve employment outcomes for young people with disabilities upon exit from secondary school, HWDSB introduced Project Search in the 2020-21 school year. *Project SEARCH* is a unique, business-led, one-year, transition-to-work program for young people with developmental or intellectual disabilities. The main objective is to prepare students for competitive employment when they exit secondary school. This program takes place entirely at the workplace. In keeping with the documented success rate of 70 percent employment for interns, four opportunities for full-time employment have become available to the June 2021 graduates. This year, *Project Search* has welcomed five new interns that are preparing for employment through job skills training through a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on career training.

***Additional updates will be provided in the *Equity Action Plan Monitoring Report* in June, 2022.**

Strategy #2: *Implement Emotion Coaching (i.e. Validation), to enhance student-staff relationships (i.e. caring adult).*

Emotion Coaching is a communication strategy that calms the brain in as little as 60 seconds and helps improve relationships. *Emotion Coaching* has two steps: Validation –Letting someone know we are trying to understand how they feel, think or act in a certain way. This step is followed by Support – where the individual provides emotional and practical support using strategies including reassurance, limit-setting, re-directing, collaborative problem solving, teaching skills etc. Feedback surveys have shown that staff feel *Emotion Coaching* is a helpful approach to utilize when working with students and other individuals experiencing emotional distress and that it fits well within the scope of their role. School staff participated in *Emotion Coaching* at each staff meeting in the 2020/21 school year. Based on post-outcomes measures from the learning in 2020/21, “next step” learning modules have been developed. This training focusses on exploring our own emotional responses, behaviour coaching, relationship and caregiver dimensions and emotion traps.

The focus for 2021/22 year has been on sustainability and integrating the learning into daily practices with staff and introducing the learning to parent/caregivers. Staff are investigating the most appropriate approach to integrate the *Emotion Coaching* training as part of the onboarding process for all new staff.

Additionally, staff have begun offering *Emotion Coaching* 90-minute workshops that introduce the key concepts of *Emotion Coaching* and how parents/caregivers can use this approach in their home. Staff are also offering a more intensive learning group experience for parent/caregivers in *Emotion Coaching* that is comprised of 6 x 90-minute sessions that focus on parents/caregivers learning the approach and applying it directly to their interactions with their children. Both the workshops and the groups are being provided in collaboration with the HWCDSB and the Hamilton Family Health Team. To date, sixty-three caregivers have attended *Emotion Coaching* workshops. To date we have had 95 parent/caregivers attend the 90-minute workshop and 28 parent/caregivers participate in the groups. Additional sessions of both the workshop and the group are scheduled for November and December 2021.

We also are in the process of working with Muslim community of Hamilton to develop a culturally relevant and responsive iteration of *Emotion Coaching*.

Strategy #3: *Implement Employment Equity Action Plan***

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board completed an *Employment Equity Audit* (Employment Systems Review) to examine Human Resource policies and practices related to hiring, advancement, and inclusion of employees from diverse backgrounds. In the fall of 2020, HWDSB acted upon the recommendations from this audit and created, *Reflecting our Community: Employment Equity Audit Action Plan*. The Action Plan laid out the 70 recommendations into three phases to see through these recommendations and whereby revise policies and practices, set priorities, and develop resources to continue building a more diverse, inclusive, welcoming and supportive learning and working environment for everyone. The Employment Equity Audit and corresponding Action Plan are a key part of the [HWDSB Equity Action Plan](#).

The implementation of the recommendations of the *Employment Equity Audit* have been a major priority of the Human Resource Services division specifically in the area of implementation of new hiring and recruitment practices, professional development and community relations. As reported to the Board in June 2021, Human Resource Services staff completed most of the Phase 1 recommendations within the timeframe allocated within the *Employment Equity Action Plan*. Within the first phase, there are 60 recommendations. Staff are now working on the implementation of Phase 2 recommendations.

****Additional updates will be provided to the Human Resource Services Committee throughout the 2021/22 year.**

Refining Measures of Progress

Strategy #1: Develop and implement the tools required to collect student identity-based data as part of the Student Census, and updated annually.

The *HWDSB We All Count*, student census was completed throughout spring 2021. Due to numerous factors the response rate was lower than anticipated. The census will be re-opened from November 29th to December 16th to provide an additional opportunity for students and/or parents/guardians/caregivers to participate within the census. HWDSB also continues to collect race-based data during registration to follow a consistent, cumulative, and multi-pronged approach to data collection, which will contribute to in building a dataset that is representative and can be used for identifying and addressing inequities.

Strategy #2: Develop and implement a *Safe Schools Action Plan* to respond to the recommendations from the Safe Schools: Bullying Prevention and Intervention Review Panel.

Communications

In addition to developing structures which invite student, parent/guardian/caregiver, community and staff participation, the HWDSB website has been updated to provide a “one stop shop” on the Action Plan and related work. Each Working Group will be sharing updates for feedback through this structure.

Structures

Students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community were invited during the month of October to share their interest in joining an Advisory Group as another approach to hearing directly from those impacted by the work. Staff are appreciative of the overwhelming response to the invitation:

Students – 25
Parents/Guardians/Caregivers – 127
Community – 16

The first meeting of each Advisory Group will take place in November 2021.

Administrator Learning

Targeted administrator learning related to Safe Schools has taken place since September 2021. This has included:

- ✓ Reviewing a consistent framework for responding to incidents requiring suspension and/or expulsion and to support data input and collection
- ✓ Understanding when an incident is recorded as "Violent" by Ministry of Education definition
- ✓ Using log notes and what to do when there is a breach of privacy
- ✓ Understand the importance of documenting incidents in the Student Information System while maintaining privacy where needed
- ✓ Evacuation planning and SPEAR data sheet completion
- ✓ Interim Dress Code Guidelines
- ✓ How to respond to incidents where the school is evacuated
- ✓ Responding to incidents of hate and/or bias-motivated occurrences:
 - 20-day suspension pending expulsion provides administrator with 5 days to investigate an incident. During this time, **intent** and **impact** can be determined to affect a decision related to the harm caused:

Intent – was the action (language/behaviour/gesture) intended to harm?

Impact – whether intended to harm or not, has someone been impacted by the action?

- Consideration of mitigating circumstances
- Depending on what the investigation reveals, consequences could range from 0 to 20 days suspension, as well as referral to expulsion hearing. In all cases, there should be an educational component/process to assist in repairing the harm created by the situation or actions

Reimagining Wellness

Reimagining Wellness – Return to School in classrooms created an intentional focus on three areas of wellness: community and team building, physical activation, and social-emotional skill development as foundational to developing and maintaining healthy relationships which is key to bullying prevention. Feedback on activities and observed impact is being gathered from staff through a ThoughtExchange. This will inform next steps.

Reimagining Wellness – Bullying Awareness and Prevention in classrooms will coincide with Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week in Ontario (November 22 - 26). All elementary and secondary staff are being asked to take time during this week to discuss bullying awareness and prevention. Activities have been developed by classroom educators, for kindergarten to Grade 12 classes. Material will also be shared with families on how they can support bullying awareness and prevention in the home. In addition, we have partnered with TELUS and the Hamilton Tiger-Cats to provide a workshop on Cyber Bullying and Digital Citizenship to approximately 700 students across the system in grades 4-6 in November 2021.

In January/February 2021, *Reimagining Wellness* will continue with a focus on healthy relationships.

Keeping Students in School

HWDSB was invited by the Ministry of Education to participate in a new program which focuses on taking an anti-racist/anti-oppressive approach to responding to student behaviour. The objective of this initiative is to create practices in schools where principals and superintendents, as equity leaders, will be engaged in integrating human rights principles into safe/caring/accepting policies, procedures and their decision making. Participating schools are required to undertake an intentional process to develop an action plan that identifies the students who are overrepresented in discipline/suspensions/expulsion data and to identify the most urgent staff learning needs that will be addressed in order to enhance school conditions. This initiative aligns with our existing *Equity Action Plan* and *Safe School Action Plan*. Staff have engaged in one learning session and the initiative is a two-year commitment.

Middle Years Development Instrument Lite

The MDI Lite was administered in June 2021 by the Research and Analytics Department as an optional climate survey for students in Grades 4 to 12. This administration was intended as a temperature check amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, rather than a comprehensive system-level assessment of well-being and school climate. Communication was sent to parents via School Messenger, with instructions to pass the link to students if they wished to participate. At the outset of the survey, respondents indicated whether the survey was completed by the parent on behalf of a student, by the parent and student together, or by the student. As the survey was anonymous, it cannot be linked to other existing datasets.

Over the span of two weeks, 2076 we submitted for review. This represents 6.6% of the Grade 4 to 12 student population. High level themes which are informing staff priorities (e.g. Reimagining Wellness) include:

- Well-being decreases from grades 4 to 12
- On the Well-being Index (optimism, happiness, absence of sadness, self-esteem, general health) 47% of students have no measures as 'low' and 53% have one or more measures as 'low'
- Students reported better connectedness with adults in elementary compared to secondary

The November/December administration of the MDI will provide further insight into student well-being and connectedness after the return to school.

Middle Years Development Instrument

The *Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI)* will be administered from November 29th to December 16th 2021. This tool gathers student voice and measures student well-being in the following areas:

Student Voice

- Safety
- Bullying prevention, intervention and responding
- Identity and belonging
- Expressing feelings and understanding the feelings of others
- Mattering/healthy relationships (previously caring adult)

Student Well-being

- Social and emotional development, such as self-esteem, optimism, happiness and empathy;
- Feelings of connectedness to school, family, friends and communities;
- School experiences; (climate)
- Physical health and well-being; and
- Time use after school hours, as well as children's wishes for their after-school time

The 2021/22 MDI also includes questions on students use of technology for school work in order to inform decisions on board devices for students.

Language within the MDI has evolved to include individual student's sense of healthy relationships in place of previous "caring adult" language. This change is based upon feedback that caring adult behaviours might not be experienced by students are caring.

The MDI had been previously administered in Grades 4 to 8 (comparator data) but has been modified to include Grades 9 through 12 (baseline data). This is a key tool that measures progress related to this priority area.

Staff are not on track to achieve the target of at least 80 per cent of students and staff who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+, and people requiring special education supports/services self-report feeling safe, supported, accepted and affirmed in their diverse and distinct identities by June, 2022 due to the pause on the MDI survey in 2019-20 school year. The new target date will be June, 2023 at which point we will have a 2021 mid-point MDI survey to measure our system progress and a final MDI survey in the spring of 2023. (Note: This is contingent upon a continued return to normal schooling experiences)

Positive Culture and Well-Being COVID-19 Related Updates

Attendance Related Data

As a proxy for engagement, attendance provides one way to understand student interaction with the learning environment. Although attendance cannot tell us to what extent students engage in classroom lessons, we do see a direct connection between attendance and achievement. In Appendix A, bar charts are used to visualize attendance patterns over 3 years: 2017-2018, 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. The year 2019-2020 was omitted because we entered emergency remote teaching and learning after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. As a result, we do not have a full year of attendance data for 2019-2020.

In elementary, there is a clear pattern of increased days absent during the 2020-2021 school year when compared to the two pre-pandemic school years. This trend is exacerbated when we look at students with IEPs and students from high priority schools. In contrast, absences in the Remote School appear fewer than the board average, even among students who attended the Remote School for only a portion of the year. Students who attended the Remote School all year appear to have the lowest absence rate among all of the student groups charted.

However, attendance-taking during remote learning is not without challenges. Traditional attendance is often used as a proxy for engagement because students are physically present in the learning environment and, in all likelihood, are engaged by their teachers to participate. During remote learning, being present can mean logging into a learning platform. We see, in the secondary bar charts, lower or similar absence rates across all grades compared to previous years. The confidence with which we use attendance as a proxy for engagement wanes when we look at the secondary results because we don't know if students who were present online were actually engaged.

On page 3 of Appendix A, bar charts showing the total days absent across the elementary panel by grade and total classes absent across the secondary panel by grade show the distribution of absences by grade along with the percentage of those absences that were due to Covid-19 related illness.

Social Work Referrals and Consultations

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTALS:
2021-22 SWS referrals	580	473									
2020-21 SWS referrals	572	722	444	339	194	361	415	343	172		3562
2019-20 SWS referrals	408	461	390	232	263	301	76	89	477	122	2819
2018-2019 SWS referrals						489	501	333	261	15	1599
2021-22 BREAK DOWN:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTALS:
SECONDARY REFERRALS	193	116									309
ELEMENTARY REFERRALS	211	188									399
VIRTUAL SERVICE/SUPPORT	64	55									119
SYSTEMS/SAL/SAE/CLINIC	69	16									85
FINAL TOTAL OF REFERRALS:	537	375									912
Anonymous Consults:	43	98									138
TOTAL INCL AC:	580	473									1053
2020-21 BREAK DOWN:	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	TOTALS:
SECONDARY REFERRALS	214	164	112	86	79	83	122	83	34		983
ELEMENTARY REFERRALS	224	177	171	130	55	190	139	46	28		1160
VIRTUAL SERVICE/SUPPORT	37	81	44	34	22	42	37	103	107		507
SYSTEMS/SAL/SAE/CLINIC	59	48	22	9	8	13	16	3	3		181
FINAL TOTAL OF REFERRALS:	539	465	345	256	149	328	314	263	172		2831
Anonymous Consults:	33	257	99	83	45	33	101	80	N/a		731
TOTAL INCL AC:	572	722	444	339	194	361	415	343	172		3562

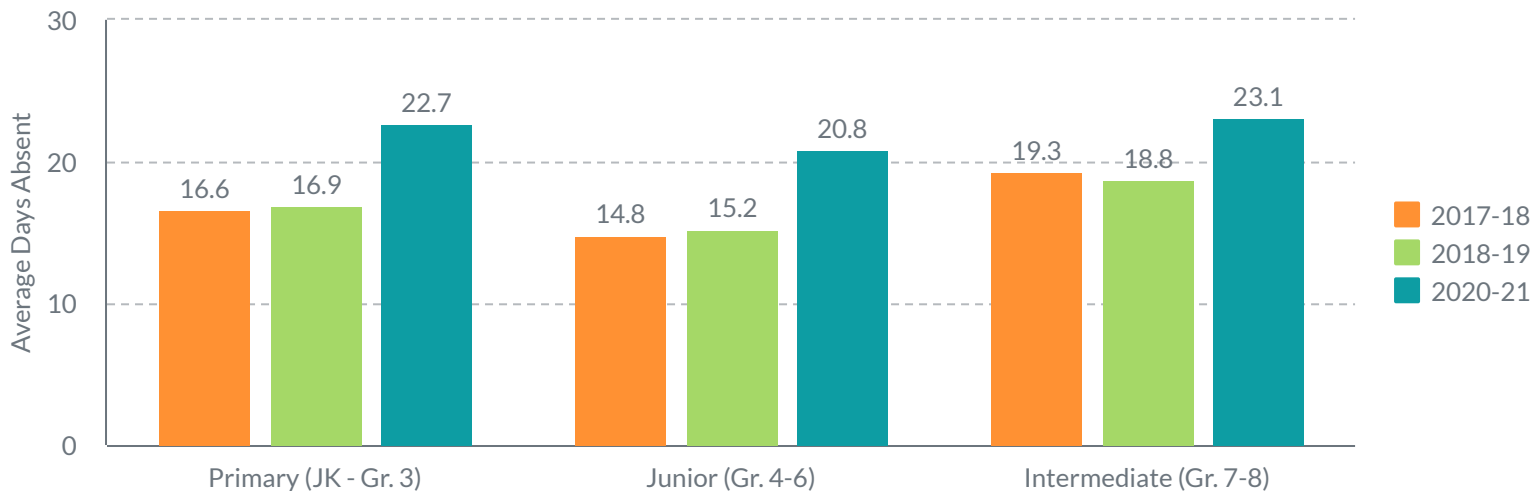
	ATTENDANCE	MENTAL HEALTH	PERSONAL ADJUST	FAMILY ADJUST	CRISIS
2021-22 KEY DOMAINS**	423 [40.1%]*	407 [38.6%]	227 [21.5%]	149 [14.1%]	51 [4.8%]
2020-21 KEY DOMAINS	1259 [44.4%]	1182 [41.7%]	487 [17.2%]	451 [15.9%]	39 [1.3%]
2019-20 KEY DOMAINS	1628 [57.7%]	762 [27%]	682 [24.1%]	348 [12.3%]	104 [3.6%]
2018-19 - S2 KEY DOMAINS	857 [53.5%]	748 [46.7%]	617 [38.5%]	409 [25.5%]	151 [9.4%]
2021-22 KEY DOMAINS Breakdown	ATTENDANCE	MENTAL HEALTH	PERSONAL ADJUST	FAMILY ADJUST	CRISIS
SECONDARY REFERRALS	197	153	58	34	24
ELEMENTARY REFERRALS	171	153	124	87	17
VIRTUAL SERVICE/SUPPORT	31	42	24	24	4
SYSTEMS/SAL/SAE/CLINIC	24	59	21	4	6
TOTALS:	423	407	227	149	51
*captures percentage within number of total referrals thus far					
**Key domains do not capture anonymous consults, referrals only					

Anecdotally, social workers are reporting that there is an increase in depth, or intensity, of their clinical work alongside students this year. This is somewhat reflected in crisis numbers; thus far, 51 of our cases are identified as 'crisis'; whereas last year in total, we had 39 cases of this nature.

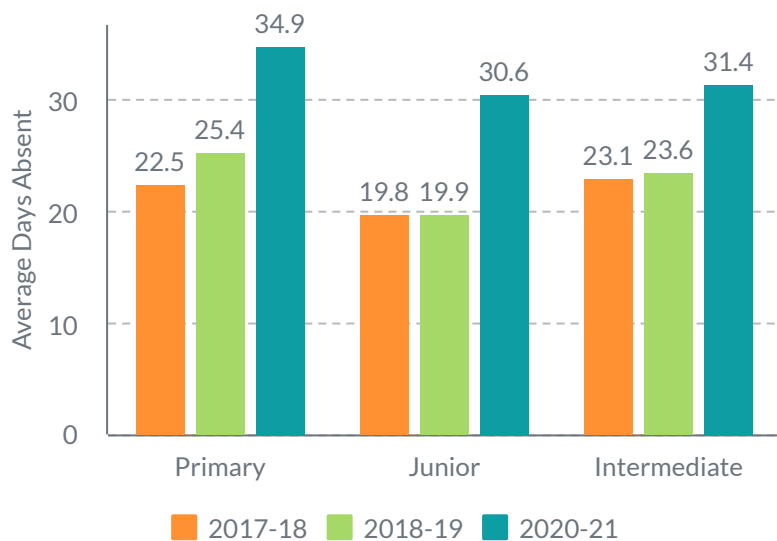
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Comparing average days absent (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2020-21) by division

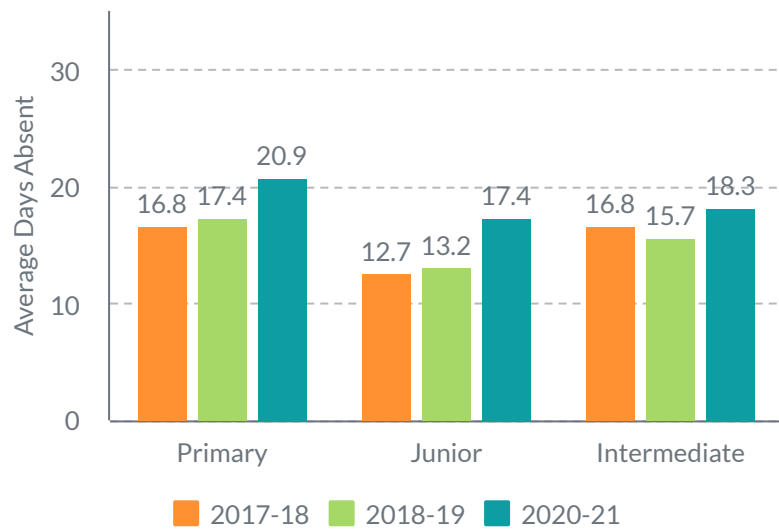
Average Days Absent - Board-level Data



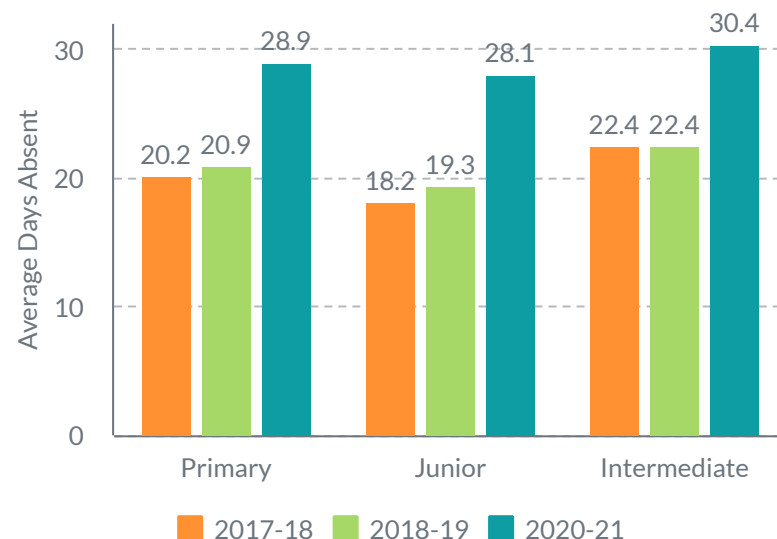
Days Absent - Students with IEPs



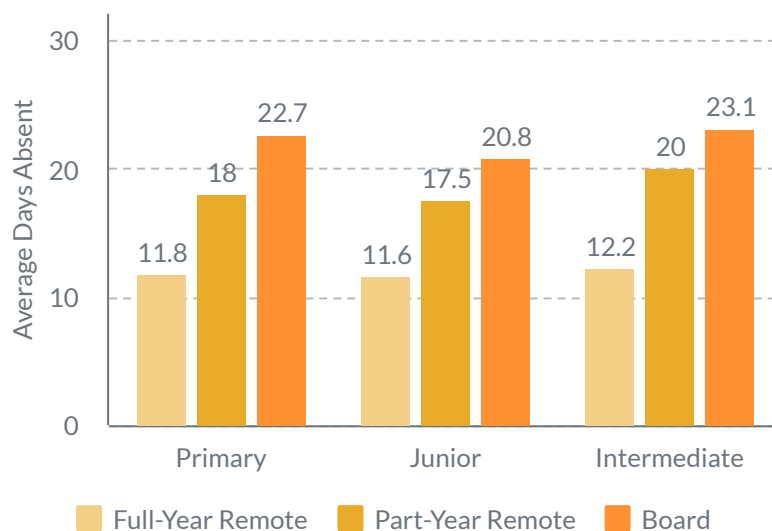
Days Absent - ELL Students



Days Absent - High Priority Schools



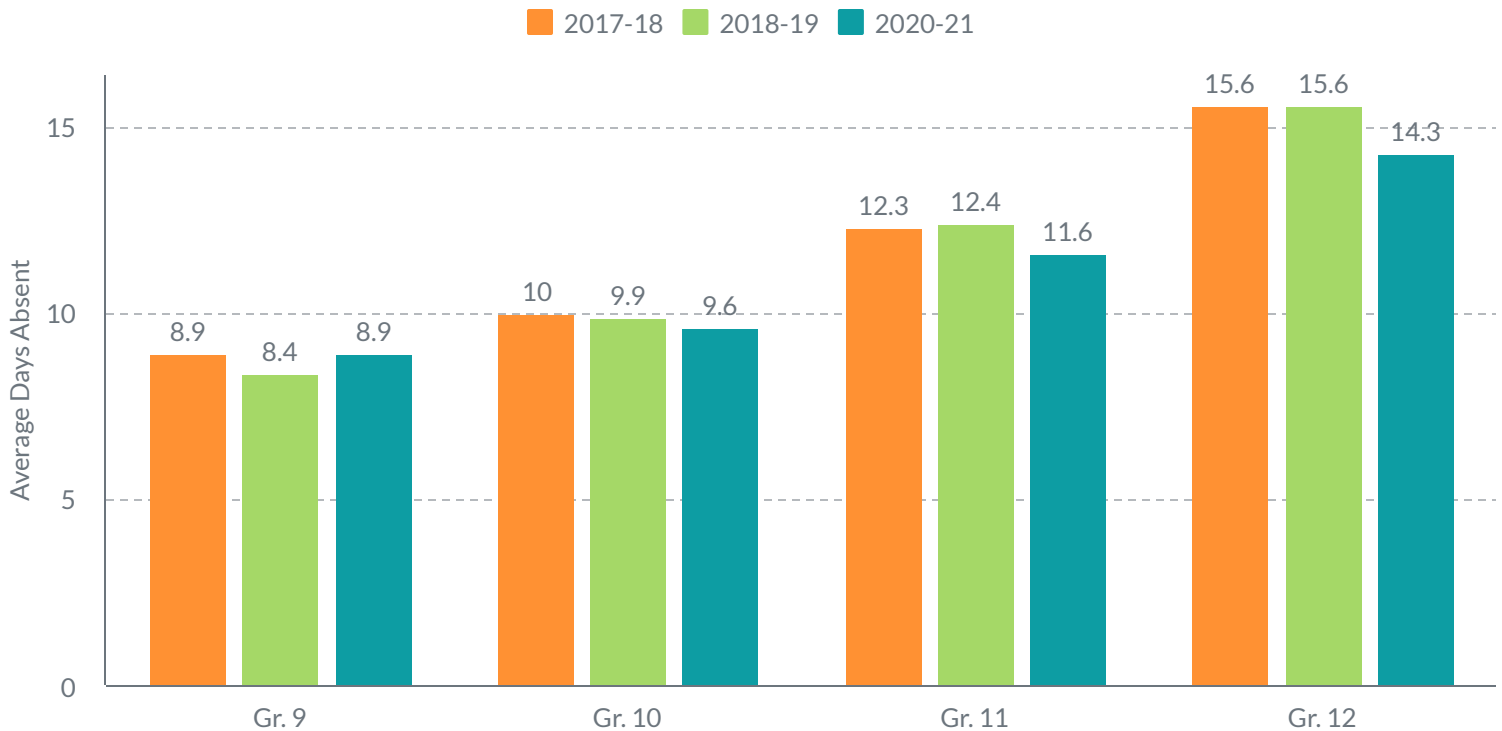
2020-21 Absences - Remote School



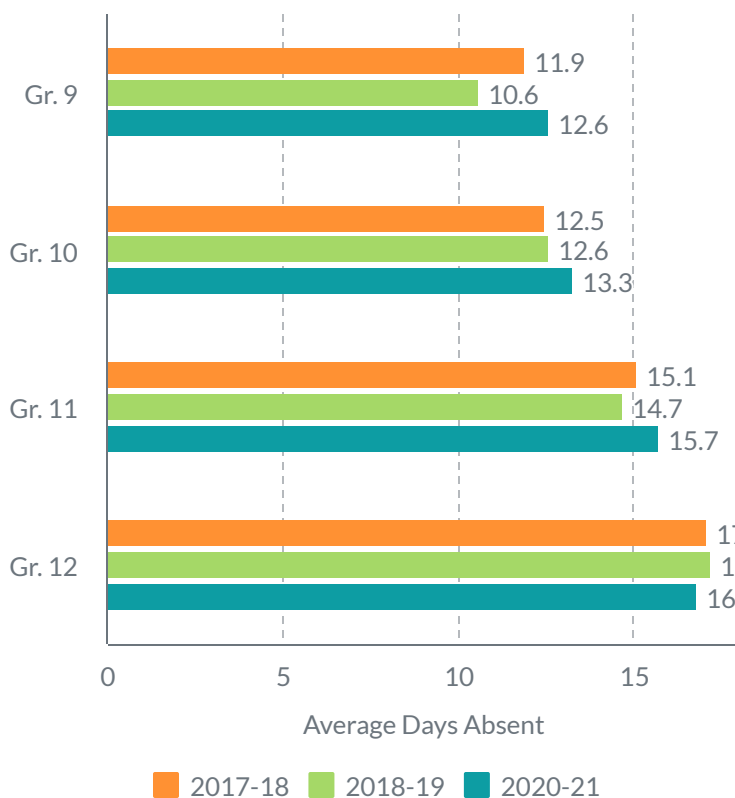
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Comparing average number of classes missed per course (2017-18, 2018-19 and 2020-21) by grade level

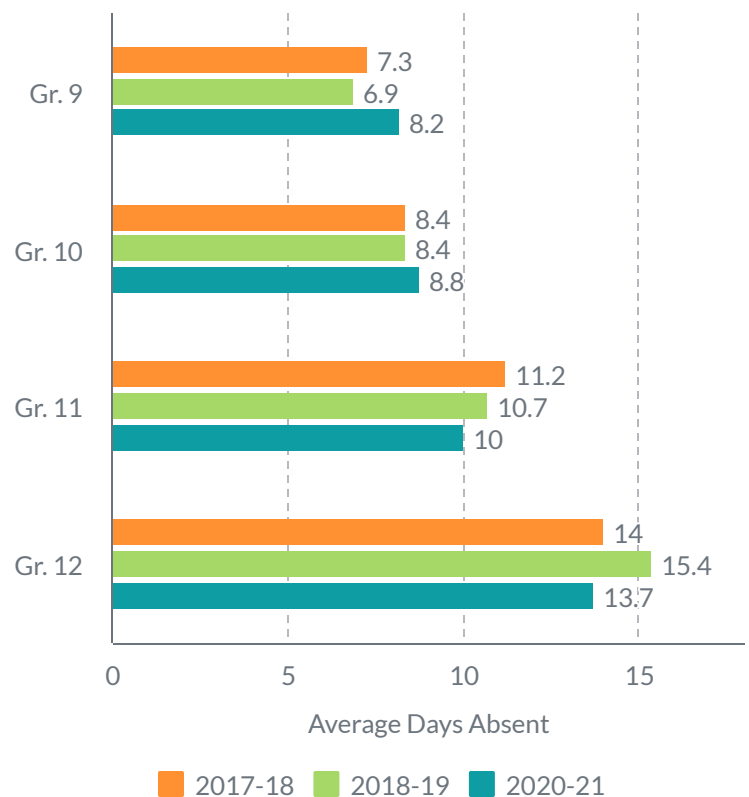
Average Classes Missed - Board-level Data



Average Classes Missed - IEP



Average Classes Missed - ELL

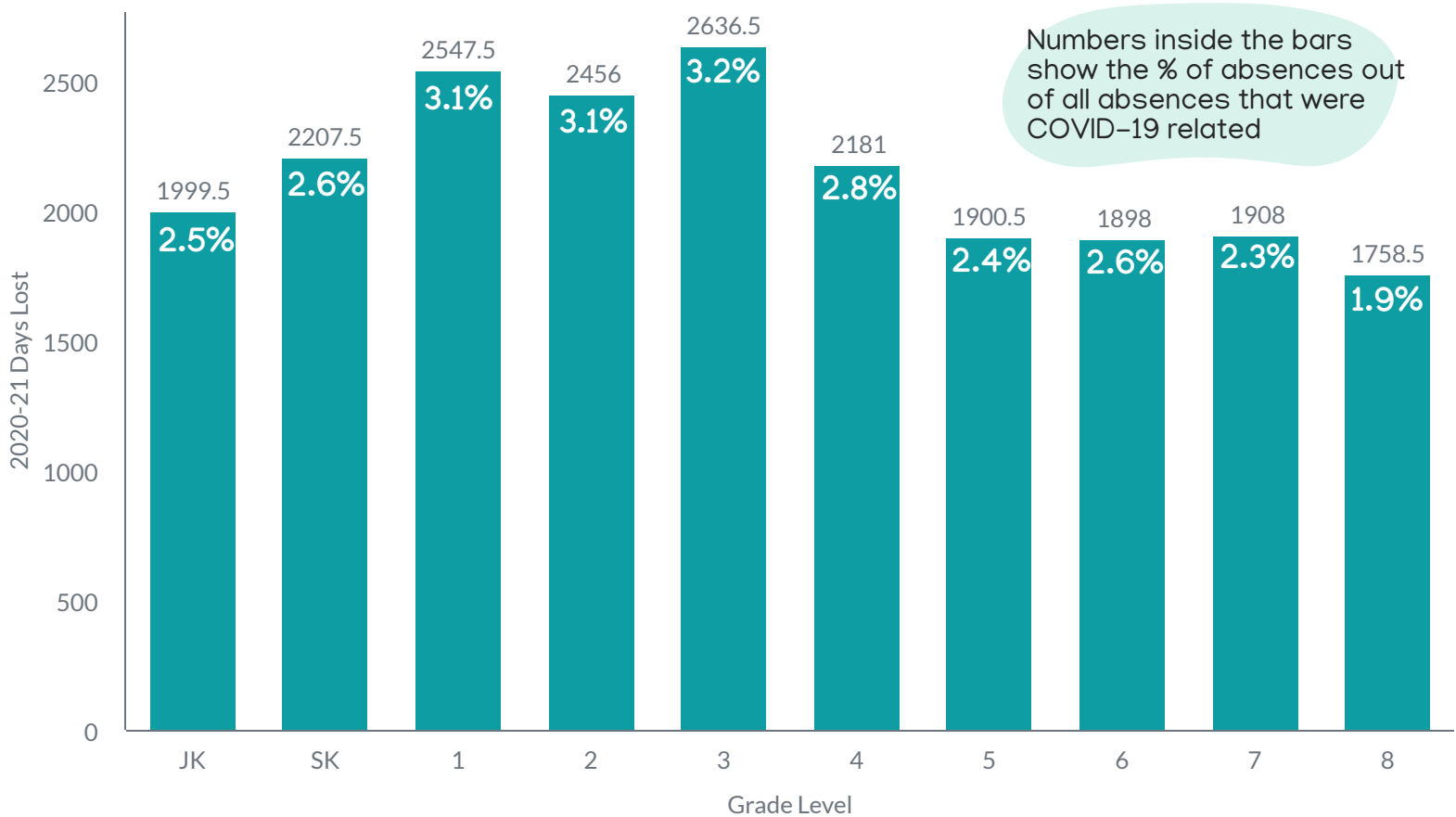


Note: Data were based on courses from semesters 1 and 2, for students in secondary day schools.

ABSENCES DUE TO COVID-19 IN 2020-21

Absences associated with the COVID-19 attendance code

Elementary Schools: Total Days Absent Related to COVID-19



Secondary Schools: Total Classes Missed Related to COVID-19

