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Before You Read This Report

It is important to keep the following in mind when reading this report:

- This is the second report to analyze data from the Student Census from 2020. The focus of this report is traditional measures of student achievement and includes some information on student sense of belonging for groups who were not the subject of the first report. The data in this report offers Limestone the opportunity to reflect on system practices. While available to the public, the target audience for this report is Limestone staff so the findings can be considered as part of their daily work.
- Many of these findings are hard to read; there are some difficult truths contained within the results. For some readers, this information will not be new; for others, it will be. If you are struggling as you read this report, please take the time you need to reflect and process the feelings that arise from these findings.
- In reference to the disparity findings, it is important to note that belonging to a group that is generally more likely to have negative experiences or outcomes does not automatically mean that every student from that group shares the same experience or outcomes. The opposite is also true. The findings in this report should never be used to suggest that achievement outcomes are “fixed” based on student identities. Not all students who belong to a group with a high disparity index have the same experience or outcomes. We must see students as whole people and understand their context(s) to better meet their academic needs.
- Any differences in group experiences are not reflective of some imagined shared characteristic. Instead, differentiated group data show that there is something about the education system that does not offer equitable experiences to certain groups of students.
- This report focuses on disparity. Remember that disparity indices describe the likelihood of a group of students giving a particular response relative to a comparison group. It is the difference between saying “Students who identify as [X] do not graduate within five years,” and “Students who identify as [X] are more likely to not graduate within five years.”
- A disparity index of 1 indicates that the student groups in question have an equal opportunity of having the same outcome as the comparison groups. Having equal opportunities does not mean that there are no issues for the student groups in question, or that their school experience or achievement is optimal. Limestone has the dual responsibility of reducing disparities to create equitable outcomes, and to understand and improve school experiences for all students.
- The survey data was collected from November 2020 to January 2021. The achievement data is historical and spans multiple school years, depending on the variable. For example, responses from a student who wrote the Student Census in Grade 12 and has since graduated could be paired with their EQAO results from their Grade 3, 6, 9, and 10 years, their credit accumulation, and their graduation status. Where available and reliable, the most recent data is used.
- Student achievement and disciplinary outcomes are affected by multiple factors. This report explores the relationships between various demographic characteristics and achievement indicators. Though we briefly touch on intersectionality in this report for some groups, most of the analyses use single identity factors in isolation, which is neither holistic nor realistic as various facets of identity cannot be separated from one

another. What is conveyed here is not the whole story (see [A note on intersectionality](#)). However, there are clear disparities among the identity categories examined in this report that demand action.

- The intention of this report is to identify groups of students experiencing systemic barriers to achievement. By focusing on disparities, the joy, successes, collaborative efforts, and positive experiences that are happening for students across Limestone are missing from this report. There are many examples of classrooms, schools, programs, staff, and communities doing excellent, affirming equity work. As plans to respond to the data you see here are developed, Limestone staff will learn from what is already working and expand on those strengths to continue to build bias-free classrooms, equitable outcomes for student achievement, and a culture of well-being.

Indigenous Education Team – Perspective on Achievement, Success, and Future Education for Seven Generations to Come

The Indigenous Education Team would like to acknowledge that this report captures a consequential narrative of the lived realities and experiences of self-identified Indigenous students who are learning and assessed within an institution that grew within a colonial framework and that primarily uses Western standardized testing practices to define success. Research indicates that the establishment of the education system is rooted in the long history of settler colonialism in Canada and the construction of Western thinking as superior to all other ways of knowing and being (McCoy et al., 2016; Ermine, 1995; Henderson, 2000a; Seawright, 2014). Research has shown that public education tends to position Eurocentric culture as the norm (Domina et. al., 2017; James & Turner, 2015; Dumas & Ross, 2016; Keenan & Hot Mess, 2020; Liu, 2017). Traditional assessment methods can prioritize specific ways of learning and evaluating, which do not often align with Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding and there can be a mismatch between the colonial educational structure and the diverse needs and perspectives of Indigenous learners. Indigenous students bring rich cultural backgrounds and ways of learning that may not be fully recognized or valued in traditional Western indicators, and in this regard this report does not capture the full picture. The disparities shown throughout the report illustrate this gap and the need to address the harms perpetuated by an education system that is not crafted with Indigenous students in mind. As a board, we need to be committed to addressing these gaps, outlining what they are, and creating tangible action-items to actively work towards closing them.

Since time immemorial, learning for Indigenous children and youth has been rooted in holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational practices. Indigenous Education is intergenerational, recognizes the role of history and story and involves an exploration of identity and connection to the land. Best practices also include ensuring that learning is interdisciplinary, based in relationships of reciprocity, and is interconnected. Above all else, we believe it is critical that reports about Indigenous children and youth be created in consultation and alongside them to ensure that their voices are heard and empowered. It is our role to ensure that Indigenous education is fostered across the board and that we are actively working towards decolonizing education in K-12 schools and classrooms. For this reason, planning has started for a separate report which will be developed with Indigenous communities and the Indigenous Education Committee (IEC) to create a better understanding of what Indigenous students need to feel support in school and have safe and empowering experiences. This report will involve an Indigenous framework that reflects local Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing; action items attached to Indigenous students' reports; and focused on holistic growth.

Overall Findings

In addition to creating belonging and a strong positive climate, schools have the responsibility to “provide students with the opportunity to realize their potential and develop into highly skilled, knowledgeable, caring citizens who contribute to their society” (*Education Act*, 1990, S. 0.1). Student achievement indicators are used to reflect the extent to which students are developing the desired skills and knowledge schools are meant to provide. This report uses indicators that are monitored at both the ministry and board levels: EQAO test results, credit accumulation, five-year graduation rate, suspensions and absences, and special education status. It also includes information on students’ reports of adult expectations and having caring adults at school. School boards are required under the *Anti-Racism Act* (2017) to collect voluntary demographic data from students and/or families, and to connect that data with existing achievement records to identify, monitor, and eliminate systemic racism. The [Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism \(2022\)](#) (or Anti-Racism Data Standards, or ARDS) require public reporting on Indigenous identities, race and racial background, religion, and ethnicity.¹ This report includes additional demographic areas, including language, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.² These categories are consistent with protected human rights grounds as listed in the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and are included to examine Limestone’s delivery of an equitable and just education system to all students. While not a *Code* ground, socioeconomic status is also included as it intersects with other code grounds and is an identified area of inequity in the Limestone community (LDSB Equity Action Plan, 2023, 2nd ed., p. 7.) This report is intended to stand as a comprehensive resource to be used throughout Limestone that identifies groups of students who are being underserved by the education system, as evidenced by negative disparities in educational outcomes.

Educators, scholars, and policymakers have studied “achievement gaps” and differentiated achievement outcomes in Ontario and beyond for many years and have found consistent trends. Students who are racialized (especially students who identify as Black), students who are Indigenous, students who are newcomers, students who use special education services, and students who have low socioeconomic status have historically been viewed as less successful in mainstream school systems (Lewis, 1992; Government of Canada, 1991, Ch. 3; Safir & Dugan, 2021; Carl & Turner, 2017; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2022, Ch. 5; Ottawa-Carleton DSB, 2023; Peel DSB, 2022). There should be no predictability as to which students will “perform” or “underperform” - all students should have the same opportunities to learn and to demonstrate their learning in meaningful ways. For these reasons, Limestone frames differentiated achievement outcomes as indicative of “opportunity gaps,” rather than “underperformance.” The Board recognizes that equity of opportunity and equity of access to the full range of programs, the delivery of services and resources, and consistent, high-

¹ Note that ethnicity is considered in our analyses as an element of coding rather than being investigated on its own. There are simply too many groups to create meaningful information for this report. As Limestone delves deeper into understanding racial, religious, and linguistic disparities, ethnicity will be considered as a contextual factor when reaching out to communities and understanding specific experiences.

² It should be noted that this report includes groups that were not present in the Sense of Belonging report (e.g., gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, etc.). An earlier report indicated individual reports for all demographic groups on sense of belonging, however timelines and workload demand that these data be mobilized throughout the board in other ways. All disparities for all demographic groups and all indicators are included in the current report, and can be found in the DI tables in Appendix C.

quality instruction are critical to the achievement of successful educational and social outcomes for those served by the school system as well as those who serve the system (LDSB, 2021).

While this report focuses mostly on traditional achievement measures, it is critical to remember that good achievement outcomes do not equate to a positive school experience, nor a strong sense of belonging in the school community. As the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan states, “Not only do persistent achievement gaps continue to exist, but even academically successful students do not always feel included in their school community or proud of who they are” (Ontario’s Equity Action Plan, 2017). The data in this report supports this finding: there are many groups of students whose achievement is either better than or on par with their peers, but who are more likely to have a negative sense of belonging at school (see Figure 3). All students deserve to have an educational experience that embraces their identity and individuality while holding them to a high academic standard. Though the focus of this report is academic achievement, it is critical to ensure building a strong sense of belonging remains a priority in classroom-, school-, and board-level planning.

The students in the central section of Figure 1 have a greater likelihood of having a negative outcome or experience in both achievement and belonging. Students with disabilities, students with IEPs, students with lower socioeconomic status (SES), students who are gender nonconforming, and students who identify as Indigenous have disparity indices over one for every indicator used in this report. Though the severity of disparity varies, this means that these groups of students are all consistently more likely to have more negative outcomes than their peers in their comparison groups (see Table 1). These findings are consistent with those of the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan. Students who identify as Black, and students who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ (Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and more) also consistently have disparity indices over one for almost all indicators. This report is positioned in conversation with the Sense of Belonging Report released in April 2023, and includes new information on belonging indicators for all groups of students described by the Student Census. Combining this information demonstrates that students who are more likely to have negative outcomes in achievement are also generally more likely to have a negative sense of belonging. There are few groups of students who are more likely to have negative outcomes in achievement only.

The following groups of students have disproportionately negative outcomes and experiences for more than half of all indicators.

Groups of students highlighted in bold have disproportionately negative outcomes and experiences for all or almost all indicators.

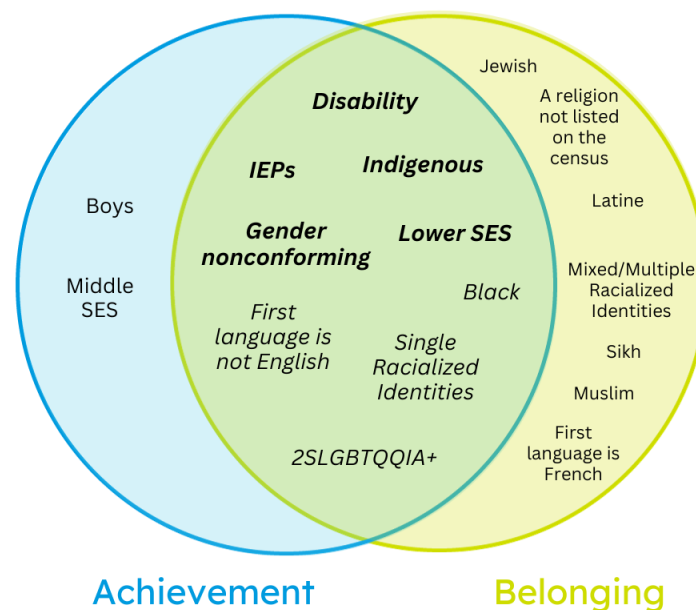


Figure 1. Venn diagram showing overlap in areas of achievement and belonging for all student identity groups described in the Student Census. Please see [A note on intersectionality](#) for important information on findings for students who identify as boys, and students with a middle socioeconomic status.

Using This Report

The first section of this report, *Building on Belonging*, introduces school engagement indicators (students' perceptions of caring adults; students' perceptions of teacher's expectations; suspension; and reasons for being absent or late) as a continuation of the belonging indicators presented in Report 1, and positions both sets of indicators as fundamental to student achievement. The second section, *Student Achievement and Engagement*, demonstrates that some groups of students have comparatively negative achievement outcomes and have therefore been underserved by discriminatory board policies and practices (LDSB, 2020). As previously stated, differentiated outcomes for groups of students are not the result of an imagined shared characteristic among students themselves. Rather, they are the product of an education system that does not fulfil its promise to provide equitable access to education and opportunity to all students.

How to read the data

Groups have been graphed and/or discussed in the text if they have a disparity index greater than 1, meaning that there is an observable difference in the likelihood of that group having a negative outcome relative to their comparison group. For each demographic category, the comparison group is the group which is least likely to experience discrimination in the current context (see Table 1). It is important to note that the significance of disparity indices can vary across indicators. For example, students who identify as having a disability have a disparity index of 2.1 for being assessed below the provincial standard in Grade 6 Writing and they also have a disparity index of 2.1 for graduation outcomes (earning an OSSD within 5 years). The context and scale for calculating the disparity index is different from one indicator to another, Grade 6 EQAO Writing compared to Graduation Outcomes in this example, and therefore the significance of the disparity index must be considered within the context of each indicator.

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Group 7
Achievement Indicator 1	Blue	Grey	Blue	Blue	Grey	Grey	Blue
Achievement Indicator 2	Grey	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

Figure 2. An example of a heat map

In the descriptive paragraphs following each graph, the disparity index for each group is listed, usually like this: (DI=X). Disparities are shown in this report using a **heat map** (Figure 2): a table that uses shaded cells to show results. There is a heat map with select indicators at the beginning of each section, and a comprehensive heat map that summarizes all findings at the end of this section. A blue square indicates a disparity index greater than one; a grey square indicates a disparity index of less than or equal to 1. A disparity index of 1 indicates that the student groups in question have an equal opportunity of having the same outcome as the comparison groups: this does not mean that their school experience or achievement is optimal, just that it is equal.

Looking at the table columns, multiple blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of having negative outcomes for each achievement indicator (a disparity index greater than one). Groups with more blue squares have more frequent negative outcomes than groups with more grey squares (in Figure 2, Group 3, 4, and 7 have more frequent negative outcomes). Looking at the table rows, achievement areas with more blue squares indicate more negative outcomes for multiple groups of students (in Figure 2, more groups of students experience barriers for achievement indicator 2).

Both dimensions of this chart offer opportunities for reflection on system practices. For detailed disparity index data please see the Disparity Tables (Appendix C).

The Anti-Racism Data Standards require boards to calculate disproportionality or disparity indices for all student groups as measures of inequity in various outcomes and experiences (see Appendix A for a full explanation of the method). A disparity index describes a difference in experience and the likelihood that the experience will occur relative to a comparison group. If there is no difference in outcome between the two groups, the disparity index value is 1. When a group has a disparity index above 1, it means there is greater likelihood that group will have a negative outcome (e.g., Group A has a disparity index of 2. That means they are twice as likely to have a certain outcome as Group B). A disparity index below one means that the group is less likely to have a negative outcome and more likely to have a positive one.

A note on intersectionality

Intersectionality refers to the overlapping and intersecting identities that people hold, and the ways in which they interact with the systems that govern people's lives. While there is some information on intersectionality in this report related to students with special education status and students in the Applied stream, this report does not closely examine intersectional identities. Looking at intersectional identities is best done with a specific inquiry question in mind after starting with broad single categories, which has been done here. This report identifies disparities at the highest levels of data, between the broadest groups. These findings can be the basis for both immediate action and for further inquiry.

Two sets of findings require further analysis to yield more meaningful results: findings for students who identify as boys and findings for students who have a middle socioeconomic status, both of whom have disparities greater than one for achievement indicators in this report. In the case of students who identify as boys, the inquiry group and comparison group (students who identify as girls) are roughly the same size (49% versus 47% respectively) and represent almost the entire student population (96% total), which is exceptional within this report. Similarly, students with a middle socioeconomic status represent 39% of the student population, and their comparison group, higher income students, represent 36%. All other inquiry groups are much smaller than their comparison groups. We recommend using these specific findings with caution and acknowledge that additional intersectional analysis could reveal more about why these groups of students are experiencing disparities despite being well-represented within the school system. As with every other group examined in this report, looking at a single element of identity does not allow for a fulsome understanding of students' experiences.

The follow-up work that comes from this report will help us understand more about the experiences of students' intersectional identities within the education system. This work can and should be done with further guidance from stakeholders and with the support of the broader Limestone team. In consultation with student groups for the first Sense of Belonging report, there was great interest in exploring how intersectional analysis could reshape the data, and what that could mean. We believe students are critical partners in understanding which intersections are priorities in schools. The board hopes to continue working with student groups to build student-led inquiries into the issues that affect them daily.

Disparity is preventable and reparable.

Disparity is preventable and reparable. To close this distance and create parity is a main driver of equity work. As a reminder, it is important to understand that any differences in group experiences do not reflect anything about that group's characteristics. Instead, differentiated group data show that there is something about the education system that does not offer equitable experiences to certain groups of students. Limestone will use disparity indices moving forward to measure change from baseline and determine the extent to which disparities among groups have reduced. Disparity is used in this report as a guide to focus findings on action and repair.

This report is designed to identify which groups of students are experiencing systemic barriers to education, and to what extent. Our responsibility as a board is to understand which groups have a greater likelihood of negative outcomes, then learn, adopt, and adapt practices in their interest. Staff within the board can use the information in this series of reports to think critically about our practices and what we can change to begin to reduce and eventually eliminate the reported disparities. The information presented here points us in the direction of our learning and development as educators working in the interest of students who have been underserved.

The table below describes the **groups of students who are included in this report (inquiry groups) and their comparison groups.**

Demographic Category	Comparison Group	Inquiry Groups
Indigenous Identities	Students who did not self-identify as Indigenous	Students who self-identified as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or as Indigenous in another way on the Student Census, and students who have formally self-identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit through Limestone’s Indigenous Self-Identification process.
Race or Racial Background	Students who identify as White (single selection)	Students who identify (in any way and in any combination) as Black, East Asian, Indigenous,³ Latina/Latino/Latine,⁴ Middle Eastern, South Asian, Southeast Asian, or with multiple racialized identities⁵ ; all students who identify as mixed⁶ or made multiple selections and all students who made a single selection of racialized identity .
Religious or Spiritual Affiliation	Students who have no religious or spiritual affiliation	Students who identify as Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, those who practice Indigenous Spirituality , students who are Jewish, Muslim and those who practice another religion or belief (this category includes students who selected Agnostic; Atheist; Baha’i; Jainism; Wicca; Spiritual but not religious; students who selected multiple faiths and/or beliefs, e.g., Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim; and students who used the text box to write down a religion or belief system that was not listed, which includes Paganism, Norse Mythology, Greek Mythology, Hellenic Paganism, Satanism, and several other belief systems that were unique to individual students and cannot be listed to protect their privacy. The categories in bold are in line with ARDS standards but do not adequately reflect the religious and spiritual diversity of Limestone students. Please see the Preliminary Report for a complete table that includes descriptive statistics for all faiths.
Language	Students who speak only English as a first language	Students whose first language is not English ; students who speak only French as a first language⁷

³ Please note the use of “Indigenous” in this report instead of First Nation, Métis, Inuit, or the names of individual nations is reflective of the wording of the questions on the census itself, which offered only “Indigenous” for Race and Racial background, and “Indigenous Spirituality” for the religion or spiritual affiliation question as per the ARDS. As stated in our Preliminary Report, the board recognizes that any government- or researcher-imposed category for describing Indigenous Peoples is contrary to the right to self-determination, as per Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

⁴ This has been shortened to the gender neutral “Latine” for chart labels and throughout this report. Readers may be more familiar with “Latinx” as the gender-neutral term for Latino/Latina. Students stated that “Latine” is more correct based on Spanish grammar.

⁵ This is an aggregate category of students who could not be grouped by ARDS standards (N=108). This group is included in the larger group of students with mixed or multiple racialized identities.

⁶ “Mixed” is included because many students used this word to describe their racial background, which was not an option on the survey as per the ARDS.

⁷ Most of these students are French Canadian. Of the 115 students who speak French as a first language, 104 were born in Canada. Of the 104 students born in Canada, 82 students also responded to the question on ethnicity and cultural background: 59 of them included “Canadian,” “Ontarian,” or “Québécois,” among their responses. Of the remaining 26, fewer than 15 students selected non-European ethnicities with African, Middle Eastern, and Asian origins.

Demographic Category	Comparison Group	Inquiry Groups
Country of Birth	Students born in Canada	Students born outside of Canada . This group includes Canadian citizens; permanent residents and landed immigrants; international students; and newcomers and refugees.
Newcomer or Refugee Status ⁸	Students who did not select “Newcomer or refugee”	Students who selected “Newcomer or refugee.” These students are examined on their own because of the unique challenges facing refugee students. The board has learned since the Census was conducted that combining these two categories is not appropriate. Unfortunately, this cannot be changed at this time, but future surveys will ensure they are separate.
Gender Identity	Category dependent: May be students who identify as boys , students who identify as girls , or students who identify within the gender binary	Students who identify as boys were compared with girls and vice versa . Students who identify as non-binary were compared with those who identify within the binary (i.e., boys and girls) combined. Non-binary is used as an umbrella term in this instance and includes students who indicated a variety of gender identities such as non-binary, gender fluid, and Two Spirit. ⁹
Transgender identity	Students who are cisgender	Students who identified as transgender and students who identified with an identity outside of the gender binary (e.g., who are non-binary) . Transgender identity was defined as having a gender identity different than the students assigned sex at birth, which applies both to students who identify as transgender, and those who identify outside of the gender binary. Both groups are targets of transphobia.
Gender Expression	Students who are gender conforming	Students who are gender nonconforming . Note that this category is not self-selected by students but is coded using self-identified gender identity alongside perceived gender expression (see Preliminary Report). Students whose perceived gender expression did not align with the gender identity they selected (e.g., a feminine boy or a masculine girl), as well as those who identified outside the gender binary (e.g., an androgynous non-binary person) were coded as gender nonconforming. This measurement has been validated by prior research (see Klemmer et al, 2019).
Sexual Orientation	Students who identify as straight /heterosexual	Students who made any selection other than straight/heterosexual. This includes students who identify as asexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, pansexual, questioning or not sure, queer, and Two Spirit as well aromantic, biromantic, demisexual, omnisexual, unlabelled, and polyamorous . This group is abbreviated as 2SLGBQQA+ in this report to keep sexual orientation distinct from gender identity and expression. The acronym 2SLGBTQQIA+ is used to describe the broader group that includes sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression variables.

⁸ The number of students who responded in this way is small (N=72). We are aware that there are many more newcomer and refugee students currently registered in Limestone. We have included this small group of students to honour their participation in the Census (see the note in [Limitations](#) on group size for further explanation).

⁹ The board recognizes that Two Spirit identity is distinct from Western concepts of gender identity and expression and may only be used by people who identify Indigenous. Two Spirit students are included in this category to allow for better analysis: the group size is too small on its own.

Demographic Category	Comparison Group	Inquiry Groups
Disability	Students who did not report having a disability	Students who self-identify as having a disability . Note that this variable is based on student self-report only and is not connected to any formal diagnosis.
IEP Status	Students who do not have an IEP	Students who have an IEP . This data is for students who were active in the 2022-2023 school year, who had an IEP in that year, and who completed the Student Census in 2020. IEP data was provided by Educational Services.
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	Students who have a higher SES	Students who have a lower SES and students who have a middle SES . Note that socioeconomic status in this case is relative to other students, rather than a set external measure (e.g. the poverty line) and that all data is based on student self-report. ¹⁰

Building on Belonging

This report continues the work of the Student Sense of Belonging Report (Report 1) to communicate that it is the system, not the student, that needs to change to realize the promise of educational equity. Report 1 (April 2023) established that several groups of students had a generally negative sense of belonging across several indicators. These findings are summarized below. Please see the full Report Summary, or the Sense of Belonging Report, to learn more about these findings:

Sense of Belonging Report Summary

Students' Experiences of School Climate

There is a connection between belonging to certain racialized and religious groups and experiencing a less positive school climate. Students who identify as Black and students who identify as Latine have consistently negative findings on every belonging indicator included in Report 1. Students who selected Indigenous as their race report higher rates of negative school climate and report that their identity is not positively reflected at school. Students who identify as Jewish also have comparably negative findings on all indicators of belonging. School experience can vary among racialized students based on whether they hold a single racialized identity, or a mixed racialized identity. Students who identify as having mixed or multiple racialized identities are more likely to report negative school climate. Students who identify with a single racialized identity are more likely to say that they have been made to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable because of their race, culture, or skin colour. More work is needed to understand why these differences exist.

Caring Adults at School

To varying degrees, all racialized groups of students, and students who belong to most religious minorities, are more likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school that cares about them. This is also true for students born outside of Canada, students who are newcomers or refugees, and students whose first language is not English. Students who identify as Black, Indigenous, or Latine are about twice as likely to disagree that they have at least one

¹⁰ Socioeconomic status was derived from a series of questions about possessions (e.g. number of cars), housing (e.g. number of bedrooms), and paid extracurricular activities (e.g. music lessons). Responses were combined to create an overall SES "score" which was then divided into three groups based on the distribution of responses. Because this is a composite measure scored relative to other responses, the results may not reflect a students' actual socioeconomic status.

caring adult at school. For linguistic groups, students whose first language is only French and students whose first language is not English are almost twice as likely to disagree with this same statement as their peers who speak only English. Students who identified themselves as newcomers or refugees have the highest disparity index of all groups and were much more likely to disagree that they have a caring adult at school. Among faith groups, students who identify as Hindu, Jewish, or who practice Indigenous Spirituality are one and a half times to twice as likely to report that they do not have a caring adult at school compared to students with no religious or spiritual affiliation.

Reflection of Identity in School

Racialized students are far more likely to report that they do not see their identities reflected positively at school; that they do not have opportunities to learn about and express their cultures at school; and that they do not receive comprehensive social justice education. Students born outside of Canada are more likely to disagree that they have opportunities to learn about and express their cultures at school.

Student Feedback on Census Findings

Self-identified racialized students as well as students from underrepresented religious groups at two secondary and two intermediate-secondary schools were asked to review and respond to the Student Census findings with their observations and recommendations. Students shared the importance of staff and student interactions at school and attributed differences in experience and treatment of racialized students to a lack of intervention when racism occurs; inappropriate responses to racist acts; and a perception that educators need more training in responding to racist incidents. Students readily acknowledged that there were few if any staff members whose identity was like their own and indicated that their experience of caring adults would be better if there were more adults like them in schools. Students offered recommendations for positive changes related to adult interactions that focused on connection, authenticity, and integrity, regardless of identity. Students also shared their observations of how cultural diversity and social justice issues have or have not been included in their education: some noted that their culture and identity were never included in classroom discussions. Students would like to see their identities considered in their classrooms and in the conduct of staff and peers to create a more respectful environment. Students said that when they perceive spaces to be unsafe, it may impact their willingness to participate in events and share their concerns. An important step in fully understanding student experience is being able to build trusting relationships with students and create a climate in which students feel safe to share their experiences with adults who can and will help.

The Sense of Belonging Report focused on race and racial background, religion, language, country of origin, and newcomer status. Because the intention of the current report is to act as a comprehensive resource for Limestone staff to understand achievement disparities, all demographic groups described in the Student Census are included, along with key findings for sense of belonging indicators so that readers may understand the broader context of students' experiences at school, alongside their achievement. Limestone views relationship-building as foundational to student engagement and achievement.

Caring Adults at School

Overall, most inquiry groups are more likely to say they do not have an adult at school who cares about them.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)
Support at School: Disagreement At Least One Caring Adult	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue	Blue

Figure 4. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of disagreeing that there is an adult at school who cares about them. Grey squares indicate groups with an equal or lesser likelihood of disagreeing.

2SLGBTQIA+: Students who identify as transgender or non-binary¹¹ are almost twice as likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school who cares about them (DI=1.9) compared with students who are cisgender. Students who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ are 1.3 times as likely to disagree that they have an adult at their school who cares about them compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identified as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or as Indigenous in another way on the Student Census are 1.6 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at school who cares about them compared with their non-Indigenous peers. Students who have formally identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit with the school board are 1.2 times as likely compared with students who have not formally self-identified.

Disability and Special Education: Students with IEPs are 1.3 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school who cares about them compared with students who do not have IEPs. Students with self-identified disabilities are 1.4 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who cares about them compared with students who do identify as having a disability.

Sense of Belonging

Students who identify as having a disability are nearly three times as likely to report not experiencing positive school climate (DI = 2.9), and nearly twice as likely to report not feeling like their identity is reflected positively at school (DI = 1.8) compared to students who do not identify as having a disability.

¹¹ Non-binary is used as an umbrella term throughout this report to describe a wide range of identities outside of the gender binary (see Table 1).

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify as boys are 1.2 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who cares about them compared with students who identify as girls. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.9 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who cares about them compared with students who identify within the gender binary. Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.4 times as likely to disagree that they have a caring adult at school compared with students who are gender conforming.

Socioeconomic Status: Students who have a relatively lower socioeconomic status (SES) are 1.4 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who cares about them compared with students who have a relatively higher SES.

Student Achievement and Engagement

Regular attendance and engagement in school is an important part of a student’s learning journey. By being engaged in class, students can receive the lesson, collaborate with their teacher and their peers, and ask important questions to support their learning. This section examines three indicators related to school engagement: students’ perceptions of adults’ expectations; suspension data; and reasons for being absent or late.

Adult Expectations at School

Maintaining a culture of high expectations in school benefits all students. Students’ perception of staff belief in their abilities is a significant predictor of achievement outcomes (Hattie, 2023). Students were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “At least one adult at my school expects me to do well.” Most student groups below are more likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/Cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)		
Support at School: Disagreement																															
At Least One Adult Expects Me to do Well																															

Figure 5. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of disagreeing that an adult at school expects them to do well. Grey squares indicate groups with an equal or lesser likelihood of disagreeing.

Special Education and Disability: Students with IEPs are 1.5 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well compared to students who do not have an IEP. Students with self-identified disabilities are 1.4 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well compared to students who do not have a disability.

Sense of Belonging

Students who have relatively lower SES were nearly one and a half times as likely to disagree that they were experiencing a positive school climate (DI = 1.4) compared with students who have a relatively higher SES.

Socioeconomic Status: Students with a relatively lower SES are 1.5 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well compared to their higher SES peers.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, or as Indigenous in another way on the Student Census were 1.3 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at school who expects them to do well compared to students who are not Indigenous. Students who have formally identified with the school board as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit are 1.1 times as likely as their non-Indigenous peers to disagree compared to students who have not identified with the school board. Students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.5 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well compared to students who identify as White.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify as boys are 1.2 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at school who expects them to do well compared to students who identify as girls. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.5 times as likely to disagree compared to students who identify within the binary (i.e., boys and girls). Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.5 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well compared to gender conforming students.

2SLGBTQIA+: Students who identify as transgender are 1.8 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school who expects them to do well compared to students who are cisgender. Students who identify as 2SLGBQQA+ are 1.4 times as likely to disagree compared to students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Race: Compared to students who identify as White, students who identify as Middle Eastern are over twice as likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school who expects them to do well, as are students who identify as Black (DI=2.2 for both). This disparity increases to 2.5 for students who selected only Black as their race and drops to 1.8 for students who selected both Black and White. Students who identify as East Asian are almost twice as likely to disagree that there is an adult at school who expects them to do well (DI=1.8). For students who selected only East Asian as their race, the disparity index increases to 2, and for those who selected both East Asian and White, drops to 1.3.

Students who selected multiple racialized identities are 1.1 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult at their school who expects them to do well, and students who selected a single racialized identity are 1.6 times as likely to say the same, compared to students who identify as White.

Sense of Belonging

Students who identify as 2SLGBQQA+ are more than two and a half times as likely to report not experiencing a positive school climate compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual (DI=2.6).

Language and Country of Birth: Students whose first language does not include English are 1.8 times as likely to disagree that they have an adult at school who expects them to do well compared to students whose first language is English. Students whose first language is only French are 2.1 times as likely to disagree with this statement compared to students whose first language is English. Students who were born outside of Canada are 1.3 times as likely to disagree that there is an adult in their school who expects them to do well compared to students who were born in Canada.

Suspensions

Research in Ontario has shown that suspensions and expulsions have historically disproportionately affected racialized students – especially Black and Indigenous students – as well as students with special education needs and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Lewis, 1992). This in turn means that some groups of students may be missing school more frequently than their peers, due to systemic racism and discrimination embedded in the discipline process. While discipline policies have changed because of this research, survey data from the Limestone Student Census shows that there are still disparities in disciplinary practices to be examined.

Limestone’s *Administrative Procedure 353, Progressive Discipline and Promoting Positive Student Behaviour (LDSB, 2020)*, supports a “safe, inclusive, and accepting learning and teaching environment in which every student can reach their full potential.” Progressive discipline in Ontario schools is a holistic approach to managing student behavior, aiming to foster a positive and safe learning environment while helping students understand the consequences of their actions and providing opportunities for personal growth. As noted in Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan, it is important to critically examine student disciplinary practices, as “racialized students, Indigenous students, students with disabilities, and students with special education needs are overrepresented in the data on suspensions and expulsions” (Ontario’s Equity Action Plan, 2017). In Limestone, the suspension and student census data revealed disparities for several groups of students in relation to frequency of suspensions, including those groups already identified by the province.

The suspension data used in this analysis is for the 2022-2023 school year only.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/Cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)	
Student Engagement																														
Suspended At Least Once (2022-2023)																														

Figure 6. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of being suspended at least once in 2022-2023. Grey squares indicate groups with an equal or lesser likelihood of being suspended.

Indigenous Identities: Students who have formally self-identified as First Nation, Métis, and/or Inuit are 2.1 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who have not self-identified with the school board. Students who identified as Indigenous on the Student Census (First Nation, Métis, and/or Inuit, or Indigenous in another way) are 2.2. times as likely to be suspended compared to students who do not self-identify as Indigenous. Students who identify as Indigenous racially are 2.1 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who identify as White. For students who selected only Indigenous as their race, this figure increases to 2.6. For students who selected both Indigenous and White as their race, it drops to 1.9.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify as boys are 1.5 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who identify as girls. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.2 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who identify within the binary. Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.1 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who are gender conforming.

Socioeconomic Status: Students with a relatively lower socioeconomic status are 1.2 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who have a relatively higher socioeconomic status.

Special Education and Disability: Students with IEPs are 2.5 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who do not have IEPs. Students with a self-identified disability are 1.8 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who do not identify as having a disability.

Race: Compared with students who identify as White, students who identify as Black are 1.6 times as likely to be suspended and students who identify as Middle Eastern are 1.3 times as likely to be suspended. Overall, students who selected one racialized identity are 1.3 times as likely to be suspended compared with students who selected only White.

Language: Compared with students whose first language is only English, students who speak French as a first language are 2.1 times as likely to be suspended and students whose first language is not English are 1.4 times as likely.

Reasons for Absence

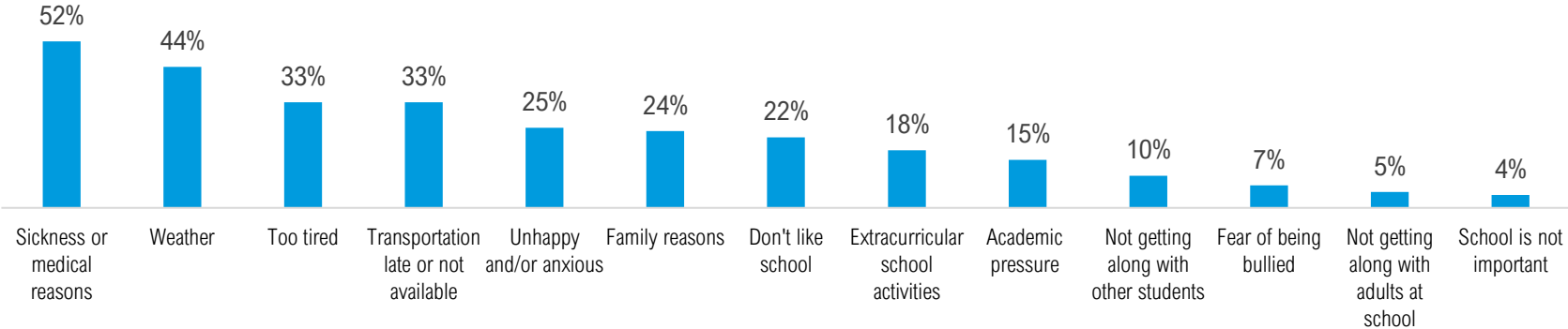
All students miss school occasionally for reasons that are both excused and unexcused by the school board. Students who completed the Student Census were asked to select from a list of reasons they are typically late to or absent from school. Sickness and medical reasons were most common, with over half of all students (52%) selecting this option. It should be noted that the Student Census was conducted in November 2020 during a period of significant pandemic restrictions which prevented students from attending school if they had any COVID-19 symptoms. The next most common reason for missing school was weather (44%), followed by being too tired, or having late or unavailable transportation (both 33%).". One quarter (25%) of students who responded to this question said they missed school because they were unhappy or anxious. Roughly the same amount cited family obligations as a reason they missed school (24%). Just over one in five students (22%) say they missed school because they do not like it. Eighteen

Sense of Belonging

Students who identify as Indigenous are nearly twice as likely to report not experiencing positive school climate and not feeling like their identity is reflected positively at school (DI = 1.7 for both) compared with students who are not Indigenous.

percent (18%) of students missed school because of extracurricular activities, and 15% missed because of academic pressure. One in ten students (10%) missed school because they do not get along with other students, and 7% have missed due to fear of being bullied. Only 5% of students overall have missed school because they do not get along with adults. Finally, very few students (4%) have missed school because they believe it is not important.

Sickness or medical reasons are the most commonly cited reason for being late or absent among all student groups, followed by **poor weather and being too tired**.



Using attendance data from the 2022-2023 school year, seven demographic groups arose as being slightly to moderately more likely to have high absences (more than 50 days) than their comparison groups: students who identify as Indigenous (both culturally and racially; those who practice Indigenous Spirituality; and those who have identified formally with the school board); students who identify as Black; students who identify as Middle Eastern; students who hold a mixed racialized identity; students who identify as Muslim; students who identify outside of the gender binary; and students who have IEPs. To provide some insight into reasons why these groups are more likely to miss school, an analysis of each demographics group’s reasons for absence was conducted.¹² Overall, the groups above follow a similar pattern to that of all students: sickness or medical reasons is the most common response, followed by weather, lack of transportation, or being too tired (although sometimes in a different order). Notably, students who identified as Indigenous (racially, culturally, spiritually, and/or formally with the school board) were more likely than average to miss school because they were unhappy or anxious (ranging from 6% to 17% higher than average); due to of family reasons (7% to 23% higher); or because they do not get along

¹² Reasons for absence data was collected in 2020 and attendance data is from 2022-2023. It is possible that students’ responses would be different now.

with other students (6% to 9% higher). Students who identify with mixed or multiple racialized identities were also more likely to say they have missed school due to being unhappy or anxious, or for family reasons (both 6% higher than average).

Sense of Belonging

Students who identify as transgender or non-binary are four to five times as likely to report not experiencing a positive school climate, and over one and half times as likely to disagree that adults in their school treat them the same or better than other students. Students who are gender non-conforming are nearly twice as likely to report not experiencing positive school climate.

Students who identify outside of the gender binary have the greatest differences in response patterns compared with all other students. While this group follows the pattern of sickness or medical reasons being the most common, their second-most cited reason for absence is being unhappy or anxious at 58% (versus 25% for all students). They are more likely to say they have missed school because they do not get along with other students (32% versus 22%); because of academic pressure (33% versus 15%); due to fear of being bullied (25% versus 7%); for family reasons (34% versus 24%); and because they do not get along with adults at school (14% versus 5%). This pattern echoes similar findings throughout this report that indicate students who identify outside of the gender binary are having a disproportionately negative experience at school, in areas of both achievement and sense of belonging.

Applied Stream

In 2018, the Ministry of Education released the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan. Within the report were findings on the unintended consequences of streaming: according to ONSIS data for the 2010-2011 to 2014-2015 cohorts province-wide¹³, 26% of students who took Applied math and language courses in grade nine did not graduate within five years (Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017). In contrast, only 5% of students who took Academic courses did not graduate within five years. For Limestone, for those same five cohorts, the Academic non-graduation rate was 5%, and the Applied non-graduation rate was 21%, slightly lower than the provincial figure (Ontario Ministry of Education Board Interface Tool, 2023). The report also states that two thirds (67%) of students who took Applied math and language courses in grade nine did not register for post-secondary education immediately after high school (Ontario's Education Equity Action Plan, 2017, p.15). While every student is free to choose their own pathway after high school that may or may not include postsecondary education, this figure becomes more concerning when considering which groups of students are overrepresented among those not attending post-secondary school.

The Ontario Education Equity Action plan states that province-wide, the following groups of students are overrepresented in Applied streams: students with lower socioeconomic status; students who are racialized; students who are Indigenous; students who identify as 2SLGBTQ+; children and youth in care;¹⁴ students with disabilities; and students with special education needs. Based on the data collected during the 2020 Student Census, similar streaming trends exist in Limestone, along with several additional groups not mentioned in the Ontario Education Equity Action Plan. Students with

¹³ This means students who began grade 9 in the 2010-2011 school year, through to the 2014-2015 school year.

¹⁴ No questions were asked about foster care on the Student Census.

disabilities, students with IEPs, students with lower socioeconomic status, students who identify as Indigenous, students who are gender nonconforming, students who identify as Black, students who identify as 2SLGBTQQIA+, students with middle socioeconomic status, and students who identify as boys are all more likely to take Applied math and English courses in Limestone. Note that the analysis below does not reflect students' achievement in Applied courses, but rather their enrollment.

Regardless of identity group, Student Census survey data shows that students who took Applied math and English courses in grade 9 were just over two and a half times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with their Academic level peers (DI=2.7 and 2.6, respectively).¹⁵ Since the Ontario Education Equity Action plan has been released, the Ministry of Education has eliminated streaming in grade 9 math, science, and English, and offers only Academic grade 9 French and geography¹⁶. While students still select a stream in grade 10 and beyond, which influences the pathways and opportunities available to them, the ministry's decision to end early streaming keeps future options open for all students for longer. Future work will take these changes into account and help Limestone understand how de-streaming in grade 9 relates to long-term achievement outcomes and disparities.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Stream																			
	Enrolled in Applied Grade 9 Math																			
Disability (No disability)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Lower SES (Higher SES)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
IEP (No IEP)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Black (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
2SLGBTQQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/O/gender)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Single Racialized Identity (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Boys (Girls)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
First language is not English (First language is English)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Middle SES (Higher SES)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
First language is French (First language is English)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Middle Eastern (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Jewish (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Latine (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Buddhist (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Sikh (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Muslim (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Another religion or belief (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Hindu (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
East Asian (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Girls (Boys)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Southeast Asian (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
South Asian (White)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey
Christian (No religion)	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey	Blue	Grey

Figure 7. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of having taken Applied English or Applied Math courses in grade 9. Grey squares indicate an equal or lesser likelihood of being placed in Applied courses.

Disability and Special Education: Students with a self-identified disability were more than twice as to have taken Applied Math (DI=2.1) and Applied English (DI=2.3) compared with students who do not have a disability. Students with IEPs were more than three times as likely to take Applied Math (DI=3.3), and almost five times as likely to have taken Applied English (DI=4.8) compared to students who do not have an IEP.

Socioeconomic Status

¹⁵ The Research Team also examined Locally Developed streaming and found very similar trends, but with higher disparity indices. Criteria for placement in Locally Developed program has changed in recent years and requires consultation and approval from school staff before a student can be enrolled in the course. Data before and after this change would not be comparable, and so is not included in this report.

¹⁶ De-streamed Grade 9 geography is due to be implemented in September of 2024.

Compared to relatively higher income students, students who have a relatively lower SES are nearly twice as likely to have taken Applied Math (DI=1.9), and over twice as likely to have taken Applied English (DI=2.1). Students with a middle SES were moderately more likely to have taken Applied Math (DI=1.3) and English (DI=1.4).

Race: Students who identify as Black were 1.5 times as likely to have taken Applied English and Math compared with students who identify as White.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identify as Indigenous racially were almost twice as likely to have taken Applied English and Math, compared to students who identify as White (DI=1.8 for both). For students who selected only Indigenous as their race, the disparity index increases to 2.2 for Math and to 2.1 for English; for those who selected both Indigenous and White, it drops to 1.6 for Math and to 1.7 for English. Students who identified as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or as Indigenous in another way on the Student Census were almost twice as likely to have taken Applied English (DI=1.8) and Math (DI=1.9) compared with students who do not identify as Indigenous. Those who have formally identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, were about one and a half times as likely to have taken Applied Math or English in grade 9 compared to students who have not self-identified (DI=1.6).

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who are gender nonconforming were 1.5 times as likely to take Applied math and English courses in grade 9 compared with students who are gender conforming. Students who identify outside of the gender binary were 1.2 times as likely to take Applied math and English compared with students who identify within the binary. Students who identify as boys were 1.3 times as likely to take Applied Math and 1.6 times as likely to take Applied English compared with students who identify as girls.

2SLGBTQIA+: Students who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ were 1.2 times as likely to take Applied English and Math compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual. Students who identify as transgender or nonbinary are 1.1 times as likely to have taken Applied Math, and 1.2 times as likely to have taken Applied English compared to students who are cisgender.

Special Education

The purpose of special education programming in Limestone is “to provide a safe, positive, and caring learning environment, which enables all students to acquire useful knowledge and skills, a positive attitude, and a well-founded self-confidence” (LDSB, 2022, p.2). Effective administration of special education programs can make a significant difference in the day-to-day experiences of identified students and families, as well as for their long-term success and well-being. However, Student Census data shows that students with IEPs are overrepresented in Applied stream; are less likely to graduate within five years; and are less likely to pursue post-secondary education immediately after high school, which suggests that the system in its current form does not allow for Individual Education Plans to be the equalizing force they are intended to be. This section offers information on the demographic composition of students with IEPs so that staff may better understand where there is overrepresentation of demographic groups within special education services. This intersectional data is an important consideration in the fulfillment of students’ human rights (see the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s [Policy on accessible education for students with disabilities](#), S. 4.4., March 2018).

The analysis below uses data from students who were active in the 2022-2023 school year who had an IEP on record in that year and who completed the Student Census in 2020 (33% of the sample, or 2704 students). It is important to keep in mind that this groups includes students from all exceptionality

groups: Behaviour (1%), Communication (40%), Intellectual (10%), Physical (0.5%), Multiple (15%), and No Exceptionality (38%).¹⁷ This analysis reflects the likelihood of having an IEP, not the achievement levels of students who have IEPs (see EQAO Literacy and Math Assessments, Credit Accumulation, and Graduation within Five Years for this information).

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/Cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)	
Special Education Status																														
IEP (2022-23)	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

Figure 8. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of having an IEP in 2022-2023. Grey squares indicate groups with an equal or lesser likelihood of having an IEP.

Disability: Students with a self-identified disability are 3.7 times as likely to have an IEP compared to students who do not have a disability. Because IEPs are often designed to support an identified disability, this disparity is likely higher due to the coincidence of self-identified disability and identified exceptionalities.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identify as Indigenous are the only racialized group more likely to have an IEP compared with students who identify as White. Students who identified as Indigenous on the census (First Nation, Métis, and/or Inuit, or Indigenous in another way) are 1.6 times as likely; those who identified with the school board as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit are 1.4 times as likely; those who practice Indigenous Spirituality are 1.7 times as likely; and students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.5 times as likely to have an IEP. Overall, 50% of students who identify as Indigenous also have an IEP.

Socioeconomic Status: Compared to students with a relatively higher socioeconomic status, students with relatively lower socio-economic status are 1.4 times as likely to have an IEP; those from a middle socio-economic background are 1.1 times as likely.

¹⁷ There can be several identifications within a given exceptionality category. Communication exceptionalities include autism, Deaf and hard of hearing, language impairment, speech impairment, and learning disabilities. Intellectual exceptionalities include giftedness, mild intellectual disability, and developmental disability. Physical exceptionalities include a physical disability, and blind or low vision. Multiple exceptionalities include multiple identifications in one or more of the above categories. No Exceptionality means that a student has been identified as having a learning need that is supported by an IEP, but that they have not been formally identified through the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (or IPRC, see [Glossary](#)).

Gender Identity and Expression: Students who identify as boys are 1.3 times as likely to have an IEP compared to students who identify as girls. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.1 times as likely compared with students who identify within the gender binary. Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.1 times as likely compared with students who are gender conforming.

2SLGBTQQIA+: Students who identify as transgender or non-binary are 1.2 times as likely to have an IEP compared with students who are cisgender. Students who identify as 2SLGBQQA+ are 1.3 times as likely to have an IEP compared to students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

EQAO Literacy and Mathematics Assessment

Monitoring literacy and numeracy achievement in public education serves a significant role in guiding the education system. Proficiency in literacy and numeracy form the foundation upon which students build critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills essential for their personal growth and future success. By closely tracking student progress in these core areas, educators and policymakers can identify strengths and areas for improvement and build targeted interventions and curriculum enhancements. Moreover, monitoring literacy and numeracy achievement plays a role in ensuring equity in education, highlighting disparities, and enabling the development of strategies to address differences in outcomes among underserved student populations. Ultimately, this monitoring process has the potential to empower educators, parents, and stakeholders with data-driven insights that foster continuous improvement and drive the pursuit of educational excellence across Ontario's public schools.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessment data are commonly used as key indicators of student achievement at the provincial and board levels in Ontario. EQAO is an arm's-length agency of the Ministry of Education that supports student learning through the administration of large-scale assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics that align with the Ontario Curriculum. The office was formed in 1996 after the passing of the Educational Quality and Accountability Act in response to growing public perception that the school system was ill-preparing students for the labour market at the time (Eizeradad, 2020). EQAO test results are intended to assure the public of the quality of education Ontario children receive in math and literacy. The non-partisan advocacy group People for Education notes that EQAO results represent a snapshot of the broader education system that works in concert with a variety of other assessments conducted in schools throughout the year (2017). EQAO assessment data is best framed as "satellite data": large-scale, high-level data that can point policymakers and educators in a general direction for future work (Safir & Dugan, 2021). The Student Census data used in this report and others is also satellite data and is not intended to replace the critical classroom- and school-level information and assessment gathered by educators every day.

The data below comprises results from five different cohorts, each taking their tests in different years. The assessment data is historical: Student Census responses were combined with EQAO test results from previous years.¹⁸ For example, a student who completed the Student Census in grade 12 would have EQAO results on record for grades 3, 6, 9, and 10: their test results were combined with their census responses for this analysis.

Literacy Assessments

Across Grade 3, 6, and 10 literacy assessments, there are several groups of students who are consistently more likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard. Students with disabilities, students with IEPs, students with a lower socioeconomic status, students who identify as Indigenous,

¹⁸ EQAO assessments were cancelled during the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years due to the pandemic.

students who are gender nonconforming, students who identify as Black, students with a middle socioeconomic status, students whose first language is not English, and students who identify as Middle Eastern have disparity indices over one in all EQAO literacy assessments. For many of these groups, the disparities begin in grade 3, and widen as students age.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQQA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/Cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)	
Elementary EQAO Outcomes: Below Provincial Standard																														
EQAO Grade 3 Literacy (aggregate)																														
EQAO Grade 6 Literacy (aggregate)																														
Secondary EQAO Outcomes																														
EQAO Grade 10 OSSLT: Unsuccessful																														

Figure 9. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of being assessed as below the provincial standard on EQAO literacy assessments. Grey squares indicate an equal or lesser likelihood of being assessed as below the provincial standard.

Disability and Special Education: Students who identify as having a disability are 1.8 times as likely in Grade 3 Reading and 1.5 times as likely in Grade 3 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who did not identify as having a disability. They are 2.3 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading and 2.1 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard. Students who identify as having a disability are 2.4 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT.

Students who have an IEP are 2.8 times as likely in Grade 3 Reading and 1.8 times as likely in Grade 3 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who do not have an IEP. They are 3.9 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading and 3.5 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard. Students who have an IEP are 3.7 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to students who do not have an IEP.

Socioeconomic Status: Students who have relatively lower SES are 1.5 times as likely in Grade 3 Reading and Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who have relatively higher SES. Students who have relatively lower SES are 1.8 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading and 1.9 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard, and 2.1 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT.

Students with a middle SES are 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 Writing. They are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard in Grade 6 Reading, and 1.3 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing. They are also 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT.

Indigenous Identities: Compared with students who do not identify as Indigenous, students who identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, or as Indigenous in another way on the Student Census are 1.5 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 Reading and 1.3 times as likely in Grade 3 Writing; 1.7 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading; and 1.6 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing. Students who identify as Indigenous are 1.9 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT.

Students who are formally identified with the school board as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard on Grade 3 Reading and Writing. They are 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Grade 6 Reading and 1.3 times as likely on Grade 6 Writing. They are also 1.5 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared with students who have not formally self-identified.

Compared to students who identify as White, students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 Reading, and 1.2 times as likely in Grade 3 Writing. Among students who selected only Indigenous as their race, the disparity index for Grade 3 reading increases to 1.8 and drops to 1.3 for students who selected both Indigenous and White. In Grade 6 EQAO testing, students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.7 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Reading, and 1.6 times as likely on Writing. For students who selected only Indigenous as their race, these figures increase to 2.1 for Grade 6 Reading, and to 2 for Grade 6 Writing. Conversely, for students who selected both Indigenous and White as their race, their disparity indices drop to 1.5 for Grade 6 Reading, and to 1.4 for Grade 6 Writing. Students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.8 times as likely to be unsuccessful on their first attempt of the OSSLT.

Students who practice Indigenous Spirituality are 1.5 times as likely on Grade 3 Reading and 1.2 times as likely on Grade 3 Writing to be assessed at below the provincial average compared with students who have no spiritual or religious affiliation. They are also 1.9 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial average on Grade 6 Reading, and 2.2 times as likely on Grade 6 Writing.

Race: Students who identify as Middle Eastern are 1.6 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 Reading; 1.4 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading, and 1.1 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing; and 1.7 times as likely to be unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to students who identify as White. Students who identify as Black¹⁹ are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed below the provincial standard in Grade 3 Reading. For students who selected only Black as their race, this figure drops to 0.9 (making them less likely to be assessed at below provincial standard) but increases to 1.4 for students who selected both Black and White. Students who identify as Black are also 1.5 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading and Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to students who identify as White, and 1.7 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT. Students who identify as Latine are 1.5 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to students who identify as White.

Students who selected a single racialized identity are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard on Grade 3 Reading; 1.2 times as likely to on Grade 6 Reading and Writing; and 1.4 times as likely on the OSSLT. Students with mixed or multiple racialized identities are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Grade 6 Reading and 1.1 times as likely to be unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared with students who identify as White.

¹⁹ “Student who identify as Black” includes students who selected only Black and students who selected Black and another race or racial background.

Language and Country of Birth: Students born outside of Canada are 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared with students who were born in Canada.

Students whose first language is not English are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard on Grade 3 reading compared to their English-speaking peers. They are also 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 6 Reading, and 1.2 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing, and 1.9 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to peers whose first language is English. Students whose first language is only French are 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard for both Grade 3 Reading and Writing. They are 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 6 Writing.

2SLGBTQIA+: Students who identify as transgender are 1.2 times as likely in Grade 3 Writing and 1.1 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to students who are cisgender.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify as boys are 1.2 times as likely in Grade 3 Reading and Writing, 1.3 times as likely in Grade 6 Reading, and 1.8 times as likely in Grade 6 Writing to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to students who identify as girls. Boys are also 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard on Grade 6 Reading compared with students who identify within the gender binary.

Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Grade 3 Writing and on Grade 6 Reading, and 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to gender conforming students.

Religion: Students who identify as Muslim are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as unsuccessful on the OSSLT compared to peers with no religion or spiritual affiliation.

Mathematics Assessments

Students with disabilities, students with IEPs, students with a lower socioeconomic status, students who identify as Indigenous, students who are gender nonconforming, students who identify as Black, students who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+, and students with middle socioeconomic status are all more likely to be assessed at below provincial standard.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQQIA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/Cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)	
Elementary EQAO Outcomes: Below Provincial Standard																														
EQAO Grade 3 Math																														
EQAO Grade 6 Math																														
Secondary EQAO Outcomes																														
EQAO Grade 9 Math: Below Provincial Standard																														

Figure 10. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of being assessed as below the provincial standard on EQAO math assessments. Grey squares indicate an equal or lesser likelihood of being assessed as below the provincial standard.

Special Education and Disability: Students who identify as having a disability are 1.7 times as likely in Grade 3 EQAO Math, 1.5 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO Math and 1.5 times as likely in Grade 9 EQAO Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who did not identify as having a disability. Students who have an IEP are 1.9 times as likely in Grade 3 EQAO Math, 1.6 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO Math, and 1.9 times as likely in Grade 9 EQAO Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who do not have an IEP.

Socioeconomic Status: Students who have relatively lower SES are 1.5 times as likely in Grade 3 EQAO Math, 1.2 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO Math, and 1.4 times as likely in Grade 9 EQAO Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared to peers who have relatively higher SES. Students who have a middle SES are 1.2 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 EQAO math, 1.1 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO math, and 1.2 time as likely in Grade 9 EQAO math.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identify as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous another way on the Student Census are 1.3 times as likely in Grade 3 EQAO Math, 1.4 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO Math, and 1.6 times as likely in Grade 9 EQAO Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard compared with students who do not identify as Indigenous. Students who are formally identified with the school board as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, are 1.2 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 EQAO Math; 1.3 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO Math; and 1.5 times as likely in Grade 9 EQAO Math compared with students who are not formally self-identified.

Students who practice Indigenous Spirituality are 1.2 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 EQAO Math compared with students with no religious or spiritual affiliation. Students who identify as Indigenous racially are 1.3 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 EQAO Math; 1.3 times as likely in Grade 6; and 1.5 times as likely in Grade 9 compared with students who identify as White.

Race: Compared to students who identify as White, students who identify as Black are 1.3 times as likely in Grade 3, 1.2 times as likely in Grade 6, and 1.4 times as likely in Grade 9 to be assessed as below the provincial standard. Students who identify as Latine are 1.2 times as likely in Grade 6 EQAO

Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard. Students who selected a single racialized identity are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Grade 3 math. Students who selected mixed or multiple racialized identities are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below provincial standard on Grade 9 math.

2SLGBTQQA+: Students who identify as transgender are 1.2 times as likely in Grade 3 EQAO Math to be assessed as below the provincial standard, 1.1 times as likely in Grade 6 math, and 1.2 times as likely in Grade 9 math compared to students who are cisgender. Students who identify as 2SLGBTQQA+ were 1.2 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 EQAO math compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify as girls are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 6 math. Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3, Grade 6, and Grade 9 compared with students who identify within the gender binary. The same of true of students who are gender non-conforming (DI=1.1 for Grades 3, 6, and 9) compared with gender conforming students.

Language: Compared with students whose first language is English, students whose first language is not English are 1.1 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 math. Students whose first language is only French are 1.4 times as likely to be assessed as below the provincial standard in Grade 3 math, and 1.3 times as likely in Grade 6 math.

Credit Accumulation

Credit accumulation refers to a student's progress through secondary school as they pass their courses and earn their 30 credits as part of their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) requirements. Students are considered "on track" to graduate in four years if they earn 8 credits by the end of Grade 9; 16 credits by the end of Grade 10; 23 credits by the end of Grade 11; and all 30 credits by the end of Grade 12. The publicly reported graduation rate includes only those students who graduated with an OSSD within five years. In the data below, students' "expected credit accumulation" means that the students could graduate within the five-year timeline, based on the number of credits they have earned for their grade. This data is current to 2023 and reflects only students who are pursuing an OSSD.²⁰ Students with disabilities, students with IEPs, students with lower socioeconomic status, students who identify as Indigenous, students who are gender nonconforming, students who identify as Black, students who identify as 2SLGBTQQA+, students with a middle socioeconomic status, and students who identify as racialized (both with single racialized identities and mixed or multiple racialized identities) are more likely to be below expected credit accumulation for their grade level.

²⁰ Some students earn an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or a Certificate of Accomplishment, which have different requirements and credit accumulation expectations.

Inquiry Group (Comparison Group)	Disability (No disability)	Lower SES (Higher SES)	Gender Nonconforming (Gender conforming)	IEP (No IEP)	Indigenous (aggregate) (Not Indigenous/White)	Black (White)	Outside the Gender Binary (Boys and Girls)	2SLGBTQQA+ (aggregate) (Straight/heterosexual/cisgender)	Single Racialized Identity (White)	Boys (Girls)	First language is not English (First language is English)	Middle SES (Higher SES)	Mixed/Multiple Racialized Identities (White)	First language is French (First language is English)	Middle Eastern (White)	Jewish (No religion)	Latine (White)	Buddhist (No religion)	Sikh (No religion)	Muslim (No religion)	Born Outside of Canada (Born in Canada)	Newcomer/refugee (Not newcomer/refugee)	Another religion or belief (No religion)	Hindu (No religion)	East Asian (White)	Girls (Boys)	Southeast Asian (White)	South Asian (White)	Christian (No religion)
Achievement Outcomes																													
Credit Accumulation: Below Expected																													

Figure 11. Blue squares indicate groups with a greater likelihood of being below expected credit accumulation for grade level. Grey squares indicate an equal or lesser likelihood of being below expected credit accumulation.

Socioeconomic Status: Compared to students with relatively higher socioeconomic status, students with relatively lower socioeconomic status are 2.4 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation for their grade, and students with a middle socioeconomic status are 1.3 times as likely.

Disability and Special Education: Compared with students who do not have a disability or an IEP, students who identify as having a disability are 2.3 times as likely to be below their expected credit accumulation for their grade, as are students who have IEPs.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 2.3 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation for their grade compared with students who identify within the binary. Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.8 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation compared with students who are gender conforming.

2SLGBTQQA+: Students who identify as transgender or non-binary are 2.1 times as likely to be below their expected credit accumulation for their grade compared with who identify as cisgender. Students who identify as 2SLGBTQA+ are 1.5 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Race: Students who identify as Black are 1.7 times as likely to be below their expected credit accumulation for their grade compared with students who identify as White. Students who have a single racialized identity are 1.2 times as likely and students with mixed or multiple racialized identities are 1.1 times as likely compared to students who identify as White.

Indigenous Identities: Students who identified as First Nations, Métis, Inuit, or as Indigenous another way and students who have formally identified with the school board as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit are both 1.6 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation for their grade compared with students who do not identify as Indigenous. Students who identify as Indigenous racially are also 1.6 times as likely to be below expected credit accumulation compared with students who identify as White.

Nation, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous in another way on the Student Census are 1.8 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared to students who do not identify as Indigenous.

Gender Identity and Gender Expression: Students who identify outside of the gender binary are 2.2 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with students who identify within the gender binary. Students who identify as boys are 1.2 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared to students who identify as girls. Students who are gender nonconforming are 1.4 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with students who are gender conforming.

2SLGBTQQA+: Students who identify as transgender or non-binary are 2.1 times as likely not to graduate within five years relative to their cisgender peers. Students who identify as 2SLGBTQA+ are 1.7 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with students who identify as straight/heterosexual.

Race: Students who have a single racialized identity are 1.3 times as likely and students with mixed or multiple racialized identities are 1.1 times as likely to not graduate within five years, compared to students who identify as White.

Language and Country of Birth: Students whose first languages do not include English are 1.4 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with students whose first language is English. Students who were born outside of Canada are 1.5 times as likely to not graduate within five years compared with students who were born in Canada.

Next Steps

This report builds upon the Sense of Belonging Report (Report 1) and examines how achievement outcomes and student identities intersect to allow for more focused guidance as Limestone moves through a system-wide inquiry that began in the 2022-2023 school year. This inquiry asks: For whom is the education system not working and why? How do we know? And what will we do differently?

For whom is the current education system not working and why?

How do we know?

What are we going to do differently?

The Student Sense of Belonging Report presented evidence that some groups of students within Limestone have disproportionately negative experiences at school. As with Report 1, the current report affirms that there are systemic issues within Limestone that impact student achievement outcomes. Alongside other data sources, the information contained in this report will be used by schools to guide their school improvement planning, and by board leadership to guide policy and program recommendations. Between now and the next Student Census, the board will work to identify and understand systemic barriers facing students discussed in this report; work to reduce these disparities as a collective, demonstrating that equity work is everyone’s work; expand on identified strengths and continue to build supportive programs and services for students; and prioritize the voice and experience of historically marginalized students in system-wide decision-making, including (but not limited to) the LDSB Strategic Plan, Student Achievement Plan, Equity Action Plan, Mental Health and Substance Use Strategy, and Special Education Plan.

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Appendix A: Background Information

In the fall of 2020, Limestone District School Board conducted its first ever Student Census. The Student Census offers an opportunity to create a shared understanding of the diverse backgrounds, experiences, strengths, and needs within school communities. The census questions asked about several aspects of student identity including race and cultural background, religion, sexual orientation and gender, disabilities and conditions, socioeconomic status, as well as experiences at school. The Ministry of Education and the Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate require that demographic data collected on the census be combined with achievement and disciplinary data to examine any trends in student outcomes by identity, which is the subject of this report. This report is the next phase in meeting our obligations to report racial disparity data publicly, as per the Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism, or the Anti-Racism Data Standards (ARDS) (Government of Ontario, 2022). In addition, this report includes data on achievement and sense of belonging for several demographic groups not covered under the ARDS.

Purpose and Approach

This report focuses on identifying groups of students who are experiencing systemic barriers to equitable achievement. As stated in previous reports, over time and through careful analysis in collaboration with students, families, staff and community partners, the information gathered through the Student Census will help Limestone work toward its goals to expand on existing strengths; cultivate classrooms and schools that eliminate discriminatory biases; create more equitable outcomes and inclusive learning environments; and support student achievement and well-being.

Building trust is critical to continuing the important work of building a more equitable school board. Limestone is accountable to our community for the ways in which this data is presented and shared, and in any decisions made as a result. Our approach includes a strong collaboration with stakeholders, as they are critical to the interpretation of data and to turning results into action. Consultations with students, stakeholders, and the Technical Advisory Group, have informed this work to build a more grounded understanding of the nature of disparities presented here, and to mitigate the risk of bias in analyzing this data²². Numbers alone tell us very little about what is happening in the lives of individuals. Rather, large datasets about large groups of people are starting points that only show us what is happening from a distance.

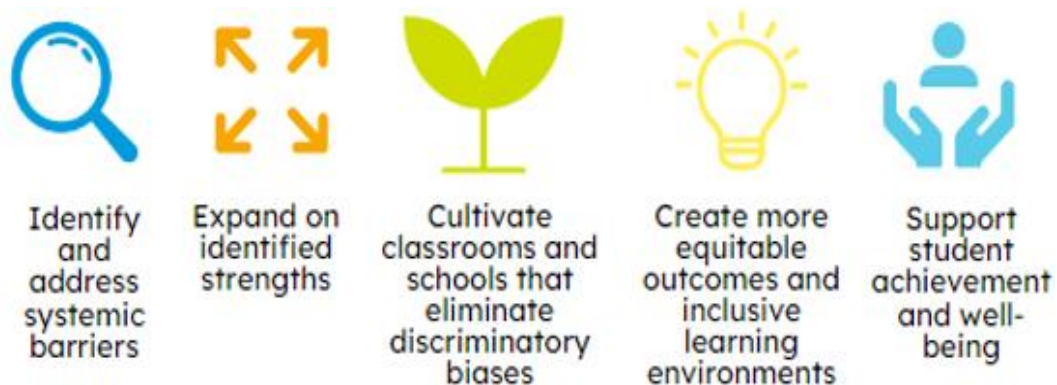


Figure 13. Goals of the Student Census project.

²² Please refer to Report 1 to see the ways this feedback has been considered and included.

Limestone's long-term approach to the collection and analysis of Student Census and achievement data considers not only the "what" but also the "why" behind educational disparities and looks beyond the surface and considers the intricate interplay of historical context, systemic structures, and societal biases. This approach also involves examining not only the end results but also the pathways that lead to them. By shining a light on how different groups of students navigate the educational landscape, we can uncover hidden barriers and systemic inequalities that may contribute to varying outcomes. This nuanced perspective encourages us to question the status quo and work towards a more inclusive and fair education system that addresses the root causes of disparities. It is a commitment to dismantling barriers, fostering understanding, and striving for a future where every student has an equal opportunity to thrive in their educational journey.

Response Rates

Overall, the 2020 Student Census collected data from 10,906 students: from students themselves in Grades 4 to 12, and from families on behalf of students in kindergarten to Grade 3. Every effort was made to achieve high completion rates, which vary across grades.

Grade range	Number of respondents	Response rate
Kindergarten to Grade 3	775	12%
Grades 4 to 6	3389	84%
Grades 7 to 8	2487	86%
Grades 9 to 12	4255	66%

Table 1. Responses by grade range.

The highest response rates were among students in Grades 4 to 6 (84%) and Grades 7 and 8 (86%). These higher rates are important to consider in the work that is ahead as these cohorts will be among the groups of students who will be in secondary school when the next census is conducted and will be more likely take the census again. This means that responses from the same students can be compared directly to see how their experiences have changed over time. The board-wide response rate for the Student Census was 55%. As mentioned earlier, the data collected is not representative of the entire student population. It is, however, a very good representation of students in Grades 4 to 12, who have a 72% response rate overall.

Person-Centered vs. Identity-Centered Language

There are countless ways for individuals and communities to define themselves and express their unique identities. This report uses "person-centered language" to describe demographic groups, meaning that the person is mentioned prior to an aspect of that person's identity. For example, there are references to "students who identify as Black," or "students who identify as Sikh," or "students whose first language is only French." Person-centered language emphasizes personhood first: identity follows as a **part** of their personhood. There are also conflicting preferences: some communities and individuals prefer identity-first language, like "Black students," or "Sikh students," or "Francophones." This type of language puts identity first and can be

used to build belonging and for advocacy within communities (Midwest & Plains Equity Assistance Center, 2021). Not knowing how each individual student who completed the census refers to their identities, this report uses person-centered language because it is the most inclusive under the circumstances.

Indigenous Identities

There are many dimensions that can describe Indigenous identity and ways in which someone can be Indigenous. This report includes information on students who selected “Indigenous” as their race, students who selected that they were Indigenous in terms of cultural identity, students who formally self-identified as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit with the board, as well as students who selected “Indigenous Spirituality” as their religious or spiritual affiliation. The multifaceted expressions and experiences of students who self-identify as Indigenous are not the subject of this report but will be explored in another report in the future in collaboration with the Limestone Indigenous Education Team and local Indigenous partners, as mentioned above.

Limitations

Overall, just over half (55%, N=10906) of all eligible Limestone students completed the Student Census. The voice of about half of the students in the board is therefore missing, although the response rate for students in Grades 4 to 12 is robust at 72%. This is Limestone’s first-ever Student Census and the baseline against which we will compare all future data. As we continue with this project—and as students and families see the changes that are made to the school system using this data—the board is hopeful that more students and families will choose to participate.

The Student Sense of Belonging report included all groups, regardless of size so that students could see their lived experiences reflected in the data; to emphasize social significance rather than statistical significance because every child has the right to have a positive experience at school; and because it is anticipated that there may be students who are experiencing some of the same dynamics that their peers who completed the census have indicated; and finally, because quantitative statistics—numbers—are a starting point and cannot be used in isolation. Sense of Belonging data included in this report follows this same approach. Achievement data, however, has been treated differently. The achievement data included here is based on assessment by educators, both internal and external (e.g. EQAO). Although students’ self-identified demographics form a critical part of this analysis, the measure of student success is not self-defined, the criteria is constantly shifting, and there are systemic constraints (e.g. a certain program is only offered at one site) that may significantly skew the data if smaller groups are used. For these reasons, this report includes only those groups of students who have total group size of 30 and above (within a given question), with 10 or more respondents in each response category (e.g. 10 or more students in each of the agree, neither agree nor disagree, and disagree categories). Note that this eliminates only those groups whose numbers were small in the overall sample.

Method

Please see the first Sense of Belonging report for a detailed description of the method used to calculate disparity indices and to learn more about the coding framework.

Student Consultations

In November 2022, intermediate and secondary students who are attached to equity groups or clubs in four schools were invited to participate in a validation, review, and feedback session concerning the findings of the first report on student sense of belonging. Their feedback resulted in some broad changes to our overall data analysis and reporting. Please see the first Sense of Belonging report to learn more about how students shaped this report and others.

Appendix B: Demographic Tables

Demographic Tables

Number of students reflects the number in each demographic category overall. When examined question-by-question, these numbers change due to non-responses. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Language (K-12)	Number	Percent ²³
Students whose first languages do not include English	835	8%
<i>Students whose first language is only French</i>	<i>115</i>	<i>1%</i>
Students whose first languages include English (English speakers)	9118	91%
<i>Students whose first language is only English</i>	<i>8354</i>	<i>84%</i>

Religious or Spiritual Affiliation (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who identify as Buddhist	46	0.5%
Students who identify as Christian	2230	22%
Students who identify as Hindu	92	1%
Students who identify with Indigenous Spirituality	71	1%
Students who identify as Jewish	110	1%
Students who identify as Muslim	413	4%
Students who identify as Sikh	27	0.3%
Students who practice a religion or belief not listed on the Census	2774	27%
Students with no religious or spiritual affiliation	4366	43%

²³ The denominator in percent calculations is the number of students who answered the question, which is not necessarily the same number of students who participated in the Student Census. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Country of Birth (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who were born outside of Canada	807	8%
Students who were born in Canada	9793	92%

Newcomer or Refugee Status (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who identified that they are a newcomer or a refugee	72	1%
Students who did not identify that they are a newcomer or a refugee	10528	99%

Indigenous Identities (K-12)	Number	Percent
Indigenous	720	7%
<i>First Nations</i>	498	4.7%
<i>Métis</i>	127	1.2%
<i>Inuit</i>	35	0.3%
<i>All other Indigenous identities (e.g. multiple Indigenous identities or selected "Band or Nation not listed above" and then did not specify)</i>	60	0.6%
Not Indigenous	9820	93%

Students who have formally self-identified as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit with LDSB (2020) (K-12)	Number	Percent
Formally self-identified	302	3%
Not self-identified	10571	97%

Race and Racial Background (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who identify with a racialized identity	2276	21%
Students who identify as Black	329	3%
<i>Black</i>	226	2%
<i>Black and White</i>	103	1%

Race and Racial Background (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who identify as East Asian	309	3%
<i>East Asian</i>	231	2%
<i>East Asian and White</i>	78	1%
Students who identify as Indigenous	691	7%
<i>Indigenous</i>	193	2%
<i>Indigenous and White</i>	498	5%
Students who identify as Latino/Latina/Latine	154	2%
<i>Latine</i>	83	1%
<i>Latine and White</i>	71	1%
Students who identify as Middle Eastern	294	3%
<i>Middle Eastern</i>	255	2.4%
<i>Middle Eastern and White</i>	39	0.4%
Students who identify as South Asian	311	3%
<i>South Asian</i>	269	2.5%
<i>South Asian and White</i>	42	0.4%
Students who identify as Southeast Asian	80	0.8%
<i>Southeast Asian</i>	59	0.6%
<i>Southeast Asian and White</i>	21	0.2%
Students who identify with multiple racialized identities	108	1%
<i>This group includes students who identified as Black and Indigenous; Black and Latine; Black and South Asian; Black and Middle Eastern; Black and Southeast Asian; East Asian and Latine; East Asian and Middle Eastern; East Asian and South Asian; East Asian and Southeast Asian; Indigenous and Latine; Indigenous and Middle Eastern; Indigenous and Southeast Asian; Latine and Middle Eastern; Middle Eastern and South Asian; and students who selected more than two options. Each of these groups contains fewer than 15 students and are combined to protect student privacy.</i>		
Students who identify as White (one selection)	8325	79%

Race and Racial Background: Additional Categories (K-12)	Number	Percent
Students who identify with a racialized identity	2276	21%
<i>Mixed or multiple racialized identities (multiple selections)</i>	706	7%
<i>Single racialized identity (one selection)</i>	1570	15%
Students who identify as White (one selection)	8325	79%

Gender Identity²⁴ (K-12)	Number	Percent
Binary	10086	96%
<i>Boy</i>	5174	49%
<i>Girl</i>	4912	47%
Outside the Gender Binary	374	4%

2SLGBTQIA+

Transgender and Non-binary identity²⁵ (K-12)	Number	Percent
Cisgender	7786	89%
Transgender and Non-binary	481	6%
Not sure	243	3%
I do not understand the question	225	3%

Sexual Orientation²⁶ (7-12)	Number	Percent
Straight	4562	71%
2SLGBTQQA+	1631	26%
I do not understand the question	198	3%

²⁴ This table includes only students' responses to the question about gender identity, regardless of their responses to other questions.

²⁵ The category transgender includes students who indicated that they were transgender as well as those who indicated a gender identity that lies outside of the gender binary, including those who identify Two-Spirit (of whom there were too few to report). This grouping aligns with the definition of being transgender used in the census is someone who identifies with a gender that is different from their sex assigned at birth. This question was asked of students in kindergarten to grade 12.

²⁶ This table includes only students' responses to the question about sexual orientation, regardless of their responses to other questions. Note that this question was asked of grade 7 to 12 students only.

Gender nonconforming (K-12)	Number	Percent
No (gender conforming)	6750	63%
Yes (gender nonconforming)	2423	23%
Unknown	1523	14%

Disability (7-12)	Number	Percent
Yes, I do consider myself to have a disability	884	14%
No, I do not consider myself to have a disability	4551	72%
Not sure	721	11%
I do not understand this question	173	3%

IEP Status (2022-2023) (K-12)	Number	Percent
IEP	2704	33%
No IEP	5585	67%

Socioeconomic Status (K-12)	Number	Percent
Lower	2533	25%
Middle	3954	39%
Higher	3726	36%

Appendix C: Disparity Tables

While there have been no formal thresholds set on significance for disparity indices, the table below uses a colour scale to show severity of disparity relative to other groups. Within a row, lower disparities are shaded yellow and change to red as disparities increase (e.g., the student group with the darkest red box for a given indicator has the highest disparity index for that indicator). Within a column, multiple shaded squares mean that students are experiencing disproportionate outcomes across multiple indicators; multiple orange or red squares mean that they often have the highest disparity indices among all students across all indicators.

	Special Education and Disability		Socioeconomic Status		Indigenous Identities		Gender Identity and Gender Expression		2SLGBTQQIA+		Language			
	IEP	Disability	Lower SES	Middle SES	Identified as Indigenous on Census	Formally identified as Indigenous with LDSB	Boys	Girls	Outside the Gender Binary (e.g. Non-binary)	Gender Nonconforming	Transgender and Non-binary	2SLGBTQQIA+	First language is not English	First language is only French
Support at School														
At Least One Caring Adult	1.3	1.4	1.4	1	1.6	1.2	1.2	0.8	1.9	1.4	1.9	1.3	1.7	1.8
At Least One Adult Expects Me to do Well	1.5	1.4	1.5	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.7	1.5	1.5	1.8	1.4	1.8	2.1
Special Education Status														
IEP (2022-23)		3.7	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.4	1.3	0.7	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.7	1
Student Engagement														
Suspended At Least Once in 2022-2023	2.5	1.8	1.2	1	2.2	2.1	1.5	0.6	1.2	1.1	1	0.9	1.4	2.1
Elementary EQAO Outcomes: Below Provincial Standard														
EQAO Grade 3 Reading	2.8	1.8	1.5	1	1.5	1.1	1.2	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	1	1.1	1.3
EQAO Grade 3 Writing	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.1	1.2	0.8	1	1.1	1.2	1	1	1.3
EQAO Grade 3 Math	1.9	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.2	1	1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4
EQAO Grade 6 Reading	3.9	2.3	1.8	1.1	1.7	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.9	1.4	
EQAO Grade 6 Writing	3.5	2.1	1.9	1.3	1.6	1.3	1.8	0.6	0.9	1	1	1	1.2	1.3
EQAO Grade 6 Math	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.3	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1	1	1.3
Stream														
Enrolled in Applied Grade 9 Math	3.3	2.1	1.9	1.3	1.8	1.6	1.3	0.8	1.2	1.5	1.1	1.2	1	
Enrolled in Applied Grade 9 English	4.8	2.3	2.1	1.4	1.9	1.6	1.6	0.6	1.2	1.5	1.2	1.2	1	
Secondary EQAO Outcomes														
EQAO Grade 9 Math: Below Provincial Standard	1.9	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.6	1.5	1	1	1.1	1.1	1.2	1	0.9	0.6
EQAO Grade 10 OSSLT: Unsuccessful	3.7	2.4	2.1	1.3	1.9	1.5	1.4	0.7	0.8	1.3	0.8	0.9	1.9	
Achievement Outcomes														
Credit Accumulation: Below Expected	2.3	2.3	2.4	1.3	1.6	1.6	1	1	2.3	1.8	2.1	1.5	1	0.3
Graduation Outcomes: Did Not Graduate within Five Years	1.7	2.1	2.5	1.7	1.8	2.1	1.2	0.7	2.2	1.4	2.1	1.7	1.4	0.6
Belonging Indicators: Disagreement														
Experiencing Positive School Climate	1.7	2.9	1.4	0.9	1.7	1.6	0.9	1.2	4.3	1.9	4.5	2.6	0.8	1.1
Adults Treat Me the Same or Better as other Students	1.2	1.5	1.1	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.2	0.9	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.1	1.1	1.5
Identity is Reflected Positively at School	1.5	1.8	1.1	1	1.7	1.2	1.2	0.8	1.9	1.1	1.9	1.3	1.1	1.5
Receiving Comprehensive Social Justice Education	1.2	1.6	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.9	1.2	2	1.4	1.3	1.7
Opportunities to Learn and Express My Culture (7-12)	1	1.3	1.1	1	0.8	0.6	0.7	1.4	1.3	1.1	1.3	1	1.6	1

Table 1. Disparity table part 1

Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
2SLGBTQIA+	This acronym stands for Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual. The plus sign means that there may be more ways to identify someone's sexual orientation than what is listed here.
ARDS	Anti-Racism Data Standards
Disability	Disability covers a broad range and degree of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. (https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/code_grounds/disability)
Disparity	Disparity describes group differences in experience or outcomes determined by comparing one group's outcome to those of another.
Disparity index	A disparity index describes the value of a difference in experience or outcome and the likelihood that the experience will occur relative to a comparison group (e.g., If the disparity index is 2, Group A is twice as likely to disagree with a statement as Group B).
Ethnicity	Ethnicity is often confused with race. Unlike race, which specifically looks at physical features, ethnicity refers to cultural and ancestral heritage—like language, citizenship, traditions, and history. Ethnic groups have a common identity, heritage, ancestry, or historical past, often with identifiable cultural, linguistic and/or religious characteristics. Ethnicity and race interact in complex ways that change over time dependent on the present day political and cultural context.
First language	The first language(s) you learned to speak as a child
Formally identified as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit with the school board	Students who identify that they are First Nations, Métis, or Inuit through Limestone's Indigenous Self-Identification process .
Gender Identity	Gender Identity is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither or another gender entirely (https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/gender-identity-and-gender-expression-brochure). A person's gender identity may or may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others. It is important to remember that gender identity is not the same as sex / assigned sex.
Gender Expression	Gender expression is "how a person publicly presents their gender. This can include behaviour and outward appearance such as dress, hair, make-up, body language and voice. A person's chosen name and pronoun are also common ways of expressing gender." (https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/gender-identity-and-gender-expression-brochure)

Term	Definition
Gender Nonconforming	A person can be described as gender nonconforming if their gender expression does not align with societal expectations for that person's perceived gender identity, or if that person's gender identity and expression exists outside the gender binary.
Identity	Your identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you. It can also be considered a combination of personality traits, beliefs, values, physical attributes, looks and/or expressions, abilities that make a person or group.
Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)	The IPRC decides if a student should be identified as exceptional; areas of a student's exceptionality according to specific categories and definitions; decides an appropriate placement for the student; and reviews a student's identification and placement at least once each school year.
Individualized Education Plan (IEP)	An Individualized Education Plan is a legal document that explains students' special education needs, such as their identified exceptionality (Behaviour, Communication, Intellectual, Physical, or Multiple) and any accommodations, modifications, or exemptions they may have so that they may have equal access to the curriculum.
LDSB	Limestone District School Board
Limestone Community Equity Advisory Committee (CEAC)	The Community Equity Advisory Committee supports Limestone District School Board in identifying and eliminating barriers to an equitable and inclusive environment for staff, students, and the broader community, and determine strategies for the implementation of LDSB's Equity and Action Plan.
Race	People are often described as belonging to a certain "race" based upon how others see and behave toward them. These ideas about who belongs to what race are usually based on physical features such as skin colour. Ideas about race are often imposed on people by others in ways which can affect their life experiences and how they are treated. Society forms ideas of race based on geographic, historical, political, economic, social and cultural factors, as well as physical traits. Race is often confused with ethnicity, but there can often be several ethnicities within a racialized group.
Black	Examples may include African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian descent
East Asian	Examples may include Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent
Indigenous (race)	Examples may include First Nations, Métis, Inuit descent
Latino/Latina/Latine	Examples may include Latin American, South American, Central American, Hispanic descent (e.g., Mexican, Puerto Rican, Venezuelan, Honduran, etc.)
Middle Eastern	Examples may include Arab, Persian, West Asian descent (e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.)
South Asian	Examples may include Indian (India), Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, IndoCaribbean, etc.
Southeast Asian	Examples may include Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent
White	People belonging to any of various peoples with light coloured skin, usually of European descent. Examples may include British, Italian, German, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, etc.

Term	Definition
Sexual Orientation	Sexual orientation describes our attraction to other people. We can feel romantic, physical, and/or emotional attraction to someone of the same gender, or a different gender.
Socioeconomic Status	Socioeconomic status refers to a person's relative position in society based on several economic factors such as income, education and employment.
Systemic barrier	A barrier created by policies or practices that exist throughout a system (in this case, a school system). Systemic barriers create inequitable outcomes for different student groups that limit their opportunities.
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
The Closed Group	A sub-committee of TAG made up of members who self-identify as racialized. This group is responsible for guiding the analysis and use of race-based data.
The Data Standards for the Identification and Monitoring of Systemic Racism	A set of standards provided by the Government of Ontario for the collection, use, disclosure, de-identification, management, publication and reporting of race and race-related data. This document is a practical guide for public service organizations to undertake the race-based data collection mandated by the Anti-Racism Act. The goal of the Act and the Standards are to “help enable public sector organizations (PSOs) to fulfil their obligations under the Anti-Racism Act, 2017 (ARA) to identify and monitor racial disparities in order to eliminate systemic racism and advance racial equity.” (ARDS, p.1)
Transgender	A person is transgender if their gender identity - the way they feel like a boy/man, a girl/woman, both or neither - does not match the sex they were assigned at birth