

STUDENTS
COUNT,
EACH AND
EVERY ONE

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FORWARD

The first ever WRDSB Student Census was launched in April of 2021. The data shared in this report summarize overall combined results from both the parent/guardian questionnaire (for students in kindergarten to grade 3) and the student questionnaire (for students in grades 4 or higher). The WRDSB Census includes data on over 30,000 students, which gives the board a powerful opportunity to better understand and support our students. For most questions, students and parents/guardians could select more than one identity. In these cases, the sum of the percentages in a data table may exceed 100%. For more details and background information we encourage you to review the reports and resources on the WRDSB Student Census website.

RESPONSE RATE

8,368

parent/guardian respondents (K-3)
approximately 40% of 20,000 K-3 students

22,871

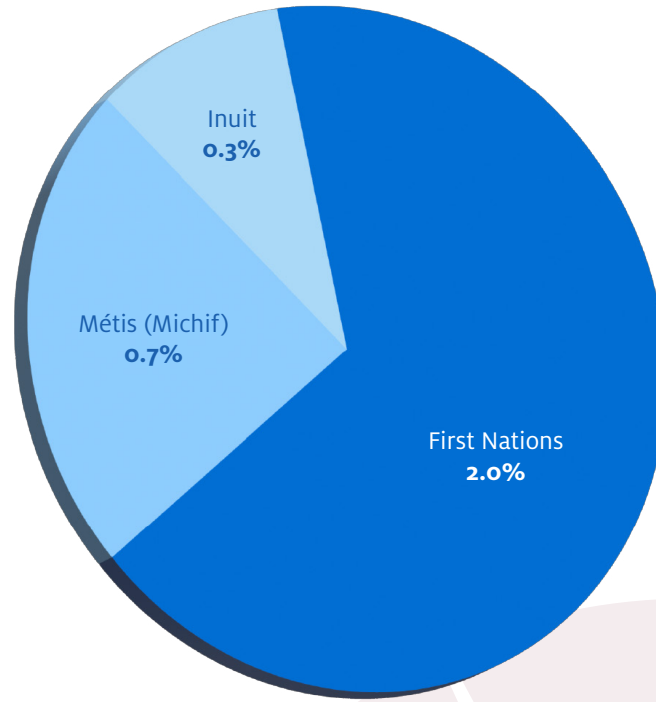
student respondents (4-12+)
approximately 50% of 45,000 4-12+ students



FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS AND INUIT IDENTITY

Nearly 3% of WRDSB Student Census participants identified as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit. The hundreds of students who identified as Indigenous showed us the wide diversity of Indigenous families in WRDSB schools. A total of 253 students and parents/guardians communicated more details about their First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identity. A total of 66 different First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Nations, communities, and identities were shared by students and parents/guardians.

Indigenous identity



Indigenous identity

Indigenous identity	Count
Anishinaabe (eg. Algonquin, Ojibwe, Potawatomi)	95
Haudenosaunee (eg. Cayuga, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, Tuscarora)	47
Métis	31
Cree	25
Mi'kmaq	20
Other Nations/communities/identities (<15 each)	66

The examples provided in parentheses, beside Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, are specific First Nations groups that were mentioned by Student Census participants. The First Nations listed in the parentheses do not represent a full list of Nations and communities that could identify as Anishinaabe or Haudenosaunee.



ETHNIC AND CULTURAL ORIGINS/RACIAL GROUP IDENTITY

Ethnic and cultural origins are very diverse and complex. While nearly all students might have identified as Canadian, just over 60% chose to do so. Approximately 40% of students and parents/guardians identified at least two ethnic and cultural origins. About one-third of Student Census participants identified as racialized and/or Indigenous. This included more than 7% of student who identified as having more than one racial group identity or a multiracial identity.

Ethnic or cultural origin	Percentage
Canadian	62%
English	11.4%
German	9.0%
Irish	7.8%
Scottish	7.8%
East Indian	6.0%
Chinese	4.4%
Pakistani	3.9%
Dutch	3.6%
French	3.6%
Arab	3.5%
African-Caribbean/Black Caribbean	2.6%
Italian	2.3%
American	2.3%
Polish	2.2%
Middle Eastern	2.2%
Mennonite	1.9%
Portuguese	1.7%
East African	1.7%
Serbian	1.5%
Total census participants	28837

Racial group identity	Percentage
Black	6.0%
East Asian	7.0%
First Nations/Métis (Michif)/Inuit	1.2%
Latina/Latino/Latinx	2.5%
Middle Eastern/ North African/West African	7.1%
Southeast Asian	3.2%
South Asian	12.1%
White	66.7%
Racial identity not otherwise listed	1.3%
Total census participants	27371

104 ethnic or cultural origins were identified by at least 15 students. Over 100 other ethnic origins were identified by fewer than 15 students each.



CITIZENSHIP & FIRST LANGUAGES

While nearly 15% of students in the Census were born outside of the lands now known as Canada, most WRDSB students identified as Canadian citizens (94%). About 4% indicated that they are permanent residents or landed immigrants. There were more than 200 first languages reported by participants in the Census, including five Indigenous first languages: Anishinaabemowin/Ojibwe, Cree, Inuktitut, Métis (Michif), and Mohawk.

Place of Birth

14.5%

In a country or region outside of Canada

85.5%

In the country now known as Canada

Citizenship Status

Citizenship Status	Percentage
Canadian citizen	94.2%
International student	0.8%
Permanent Resident/landed immigrant	3.6%
Refugee claimant	0.2%
Protected person/convention refugee	0.1%
Not sure	1.0%
Total	28,209

Student Census participants (especially younger students) may have struggled to understand how to express their citizenship status. Nearly 300 Census participants were 'Not sure' of their status.

First Language

Percentage

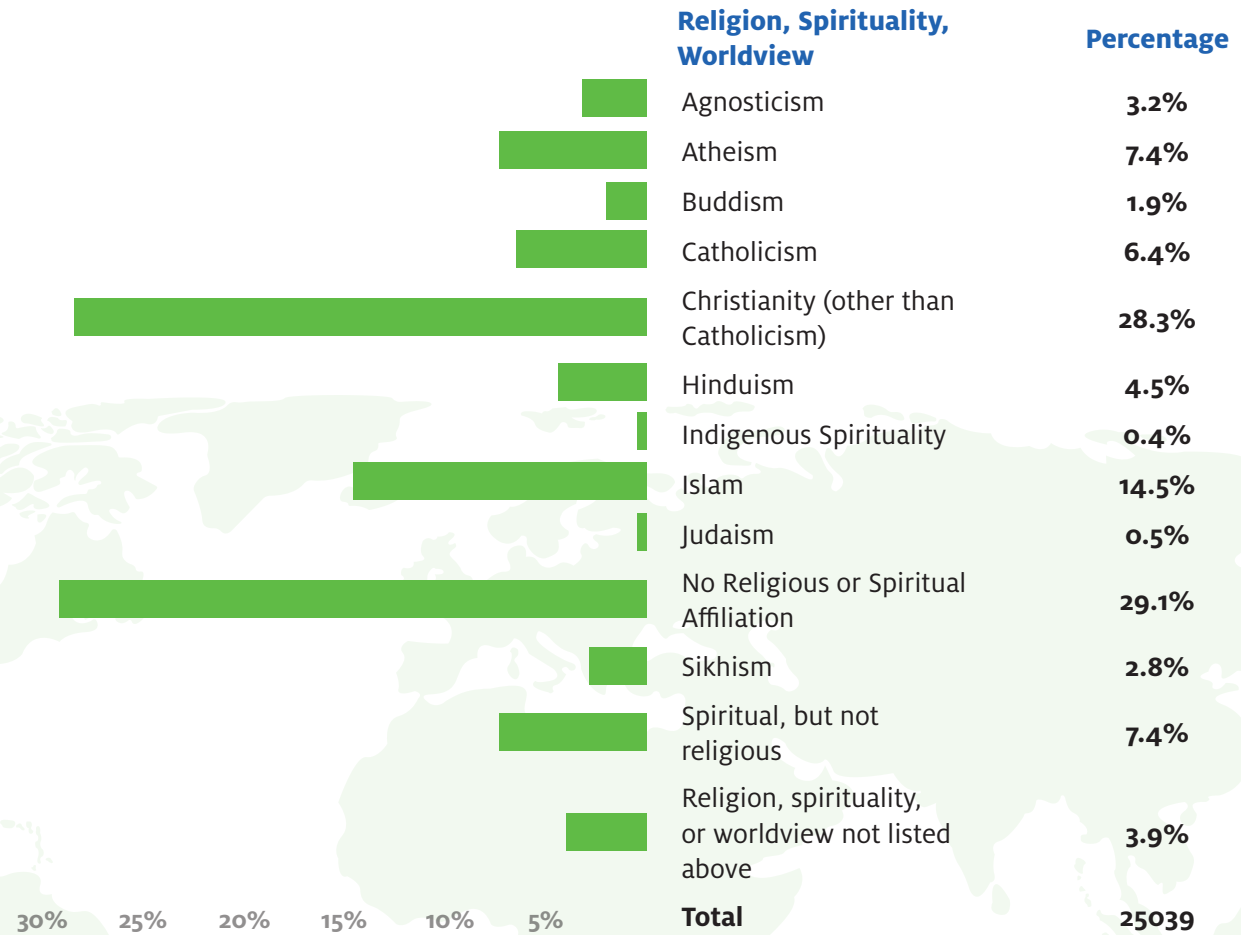
Arabic	4.4%
Chinese	3.1%
Urdu	3.0%
Punjabi	2.6%
Hindi	1.8%
Spanish	1.8%
Gujarati	1.3%
Serbian	1.2%
Vietnamese	0.9%
Korean	0.9%
Romanian	0.8%
Russian	0.7%
Persian	0.7%
Turkish	0.7%
German	0.7%
Portuguese	0.6%
Somali	0.6%
Pashto	0.5%
Tamil	0.5%
Dari	0.4%
Total	29,345

The languages listed in the table include the top languages identified in the Census, excluding Canada's official languages English (83%) and French (6%).



RELIGION/SPIRITUALITY/ WORLDVIEW

While 'Christianity (other than Catholicism)', 'Islam', and 'Catholicism' were identified as the most common religions among students, it is important to remember that these percentages are impacted by the presence of the Catholic school board in our region (hence these percentages are likely lower than the percentages for Waterloo Region as a whole).



Though labelled in several different ways, the most frequent response to related to religion, spirituality, and worldview was that students identified as non-religious. Approximately two out of five students identified as agnostic, atheist, and/or as having no religious or spiritual affiliation.



GENDER IDENTITY

Gender identity as shared by parents/guardians (of students from kindergarten to grade 3) and students (from grades 4 to 12+) are presented in separate tables. The higher number of students reporting diverse gender identities allows for more detailed information to be shared. To provide more accuracy and detail on how trans students identify, the percentage of students who selected a trans identity and another gender identity are expanded and listed.

Gender Identity of K-3 students (identified by parents/guardians)

	Percentage
Female/Girl	49.3%
Male/Boy	51.1%
A gender that differs from their sex assigned at birth	0.6%
Total	7925

Parents/guardians of students in grades K-3 were less likely to identify their child as a gender that differs from their sex assigned at birth than were students in grades 4-12+ who identified their own gender identity.

Gender Identity of 4-12+ students (self-identified by students)

	Percentage
Female/Girl	50.6%
Male/Boy	46.6%
Gender Fluid	1.1%
Gender Non-conforming	0.6%
Genderqueer	0.5%
Intersex	<0.1%
Non-Binary	1.9%
Trans	0.8%
<i>Trans boy</i>	0.3%
<i>Trans girl</i>	0.1%
<i>Trans student</i>	0.2%
<i>Trans student (gender fluid)</i>	0.1%
<i>Trans student (gender non-conforming)</i>	0.1%
<i>Trans student (genderqueer)</i>	0.1%
<i>Trans student (non-binary)</i>	0.3%
<i>Trans student (gender not listed above)</i>	0.1%
Two-Spirit	0.1%
Questioning	0.1%
Demigender	0.2%
Gender identity not listed	0.4%
Total	21265

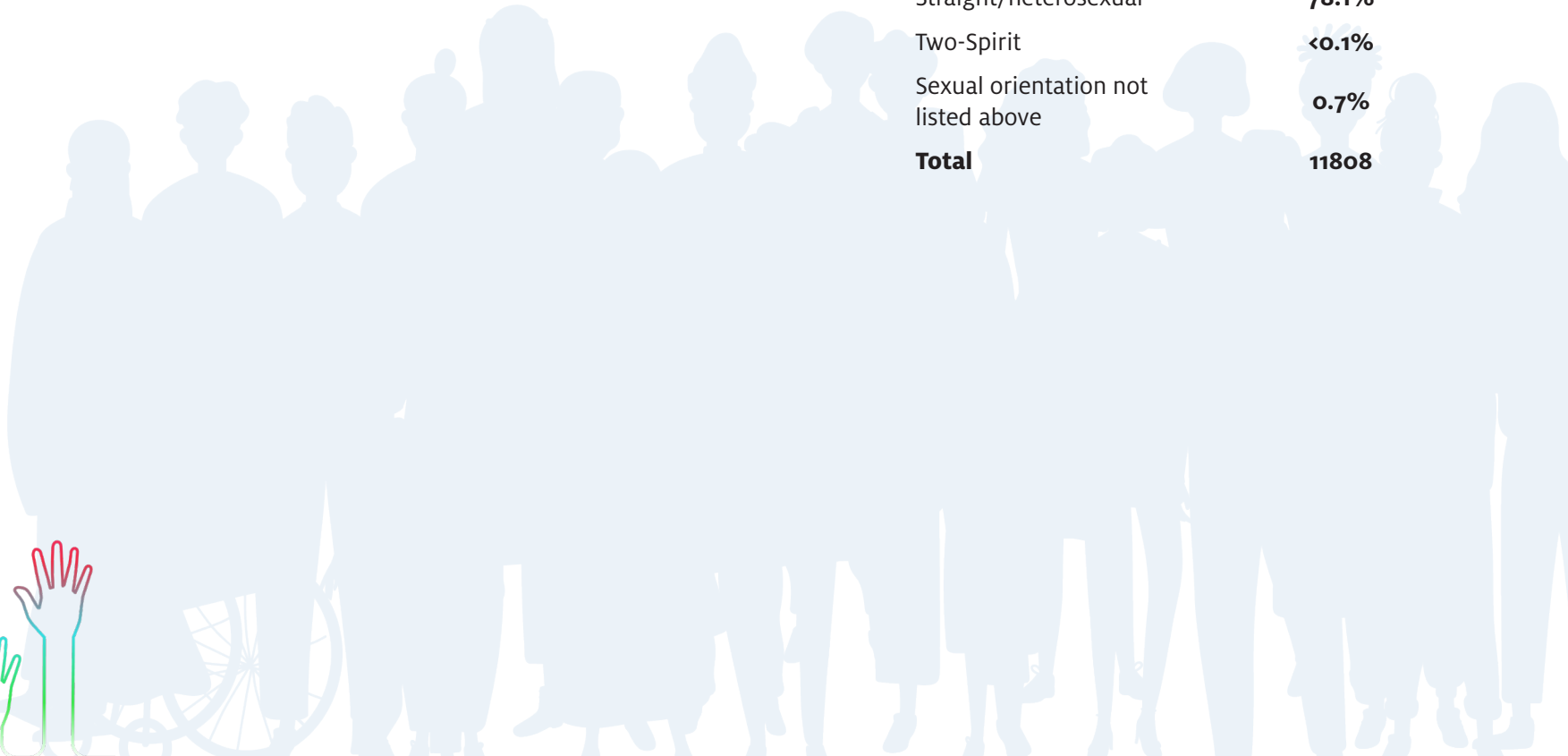
In total, 4.4% of students in grades 4-12+ self-identified with a gender that differs from their sex assigned at birth.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Sexual orientation was asked of students in grades 7 and up. Approximately 5% of student participants identified with two or more of the sexual orientation options provided in the Census.

The most common sexual orientations identified by students in grades 7+ were straight/heterosexual, bisexual, questioning, and pansexual. A total of 23.8% of students in grades 7-12+ identified with at least one 2SLGBTQIA+ sexual orientation. The sexual orientation table includes open ended responses that were shared by more than 15 students (i.e., asexual spectrum, aromantic spectrum, and omnisexual).

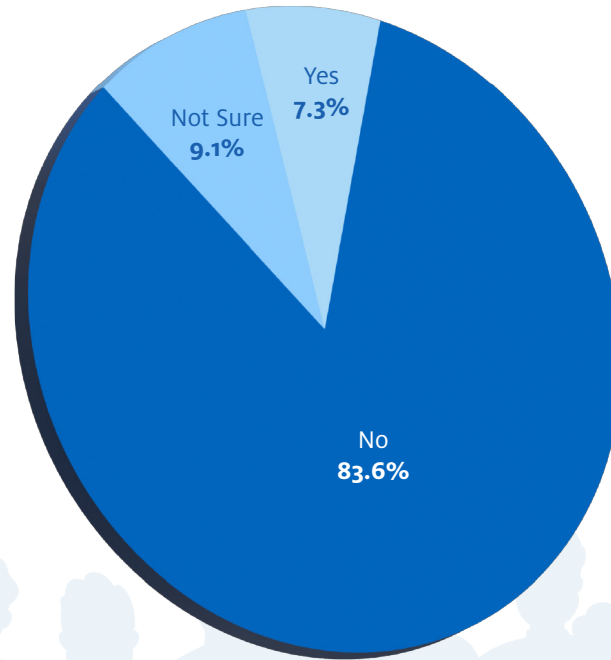
Sexual Orientation - Grades 7 and up	Percentage
Aromantic spectrum	0.3%
Asexual spectrum	4.4%
Bisexual	10.4%
Gay	1.0%
Lesbian	2.2%
Omnisexual	0.3%
Pansexual	3.1%
Queer	1.6%
Questioning	4.6%
Straight/heterosexual	78.1%
Two-Spirit	<0.1%
Sexual orientation not listed above	0.7%
Total	11808



DISABILITIES AND HEALTH CONDITIONS

The most frequent disabilities and health conditions reported by students and parents/guardians were mental health disabilities, ADHD, and intellectual/learning/perceptual disabilities. It is important to note that these percentages represent only those who self-identified on the Census. Medical, physical, sensory, and communicative disabilities were reported by a smaller percentage of the Census participants, but the hundreds of responses from students and parents/guardians shows the wide range of disabilities and health conditions with which WRDSB students identify.

Identifies as having a disability or health condition



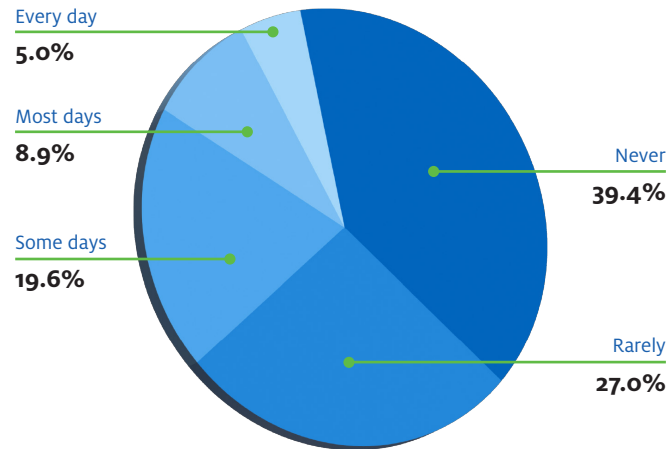
Disability or health condition	Percentage
ADHD	5.1%
Blind/Low Vision	0.7%
Deaf/Hard of hearing	0.5%
Intellectual, learning, perceptual	3.7%
Medical	2.5%
Mental Health	5.2%
Physical	0.8%
Speech impairment	0.9%
Not identified above or specified	0.9%
Total	28023

The percentages related to specific disabilities or health conditions only include those who identified as having a disability or health condition. It is highly likely that the percentage of students struggling with mental health is higher than the percentage presented here who identified as having a mental health disability.

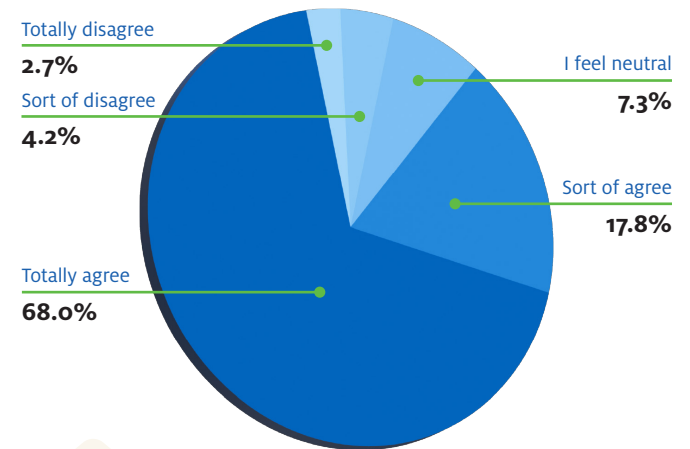
FOOD SECURITY AND LEARNING RESOURCES AT HOME (GRADE 4-12+)

Questions about food security and learning resources at home were only asked of students from grades 4-12+. Questions and statements were inspired by past iterations of the WRDSB Safe, Caring and Inclusive Schools survey and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) household possessions index, but were customized based on consultations with staff and community.

Frequency of skipped meals



I have an adult at home who can help me with my schoolwork



Frequency of nutritious meals

Frequency	Percentage
Never	1.4%
Rarely	5.2%
Some days	15.8%
Most days	38.9%
Every day	38.6%
Total	19981

I have the things I need at home to help me learn

Response	Percentage
Totally disagree	1.1%
Sort of disagree	2.8%
I feel neutral	5.1%
Sort of agree	17.8%
Totally agree	73.3%
Total	20187

Since the WRDSB Student Census was conducted during the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic likely impacted the experiences and responses of many students as they relate to these questions.



ACCESS TO PROGRAMS AT SCHOOL AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Questions about access to programs at school and in the community were only asked of students from grades 4-12+. Only students who responded that there was an activity they wanted to join, but they could not join were asked to specify the reason they couldn't join an activity. Students were more likely to indicate that they wanted to join school programs than community programs.

Reason for not joining activities

	In school	In the community
COVID restrictions	40.3%	29.5%
Activity costs too much	2.0%	3.9%
Lack of transportation	2.6%	2.2%
Didn't feel accepted	2.4%	1.3%
Didn't feel safe	0.6%	0.5%
Activity was not accessible	0.4%	0.4%
Part-time job	1.6%	0.9%
Need to care for family/siblings	1.4%	1.1%
Other reasons (not listed above)	3.9%	1.7%
Total census respondents	19393	19585

Although students more often indicated that costs were a barrier to participation in community activities than school activities, they indicated that transportation, acceptance, part-time work, and caretaking were more often barriers to participation in activities at school than activities in the community.



HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND INCOME (K-3)

Questions about household composition and household income were asked only of parents/guardians of students in grades kindergarten to grade 3. While two parent/guardian households represent the majority of households, approximately 8% reported one parent/guardian in their home. More than two-thirds of parents/guardians reported an annual household income of over \$80,000, while approximately 13% reported annual household incomes of less than \$40,000.

Number of adults in household

	Percentage
One	7.7%
Two	81.3%
Three	6.4%
Four or more	4.7%
Total	7826

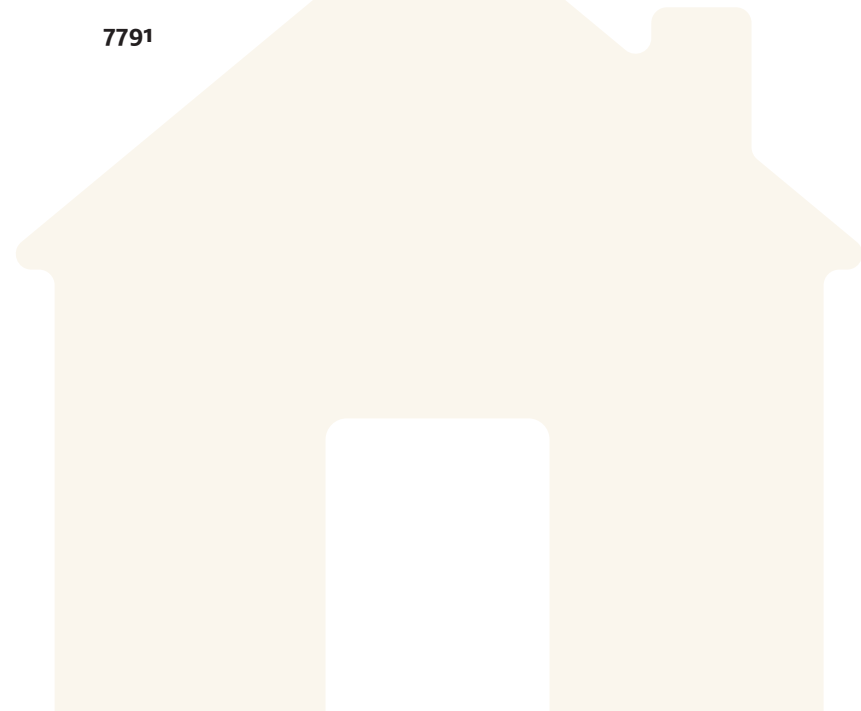
Number of children in household

	Percentage
One	15.4%
Two	54.0%
Three	22.5%
Four	6.4%
Five or more	1.7%
Total	7791

Household income

	Percentage
Less than \$20,000	4.6%
\$20,000 - 39,999	8.4%
\$40,000 - 59,999	9.1%
\$60,000 - 79,999	10.0%
\$80,000 - 99,000	14.3%
\$100,000 - 199,999	40.9%
More than \$200,000	12.8%
Total	6766

Since the WRDSB Student Census was conducted during the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic likely impacted the household incomes for many families.



EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND EDUCATION LEVELS (K-3)

Questions about employment status and education levels were asked only of parents/guardians of students in grades kindergarten to grade 3. Responses were sorted and presented in these table based on the identities of parents/guardians as shared by Census participants. Results show the employment status and education levels for mothers, fathers, and guardians/caregivers ('Guardian. Caregiver', as presented in the table, represent a wide variety relationships between guardians/ caregivers and their children, including aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, cousins, grandparents, caregivers, foster parents, and stepparents).



Employment status	Mother	Father	Guardian/ Caregiver
Employed full-time	54.6%	89%	50.2%
Employed part-time	15.6%	2.4%	8.4%
Stay-at-home parent/guardian	19.9%	1.4%	9.3%
Unemployed (seeking employment)	2.7%	2.5%	2.8%
Unemployed (not seeking employment)	1.1%	0.3%	3.1%
Student (also employed)	1.0%	0.6%	2.8%
Student (not employed)	2.1%	1.2%	3.2%
Retired	<0.3%	<0.3%	17.1%
An employment status not listed	2.9%	2.6%	3.0%
Total	6926	6387	846

Education Level	Mother	Father	Guardian/ Caregiver
No certificate, diploma, or degree	2.7%	3.3%	10.8%
High school diploma or equivalent	11.6%	14.2%	24.1%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	1.9%	10.3%	6.2%
College/CEGEP/non-university certificate/diploma	24.1%	21.9%	22.9%
University certificate/diploma below bachelor level	5.4%	5.4%	6.3%
Bachelor's degree	33.9%	25.2%	18.9%
Master's degree	16.4%	13.7%	8.8%
Doctorate	2.9%	5.0%	2.0%
An education level not listed	1.0%	1.1%	<1.8%
Total	7091	6447	855

Since the WRDSB Student Census was conducted during the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the pandemic likely impacted the employment statuses of many parents/guardians.



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