

# CENSUS PORTRAIT



## MIDDLE EASTERN STUDENTS

### Academic Achievement and Well-being

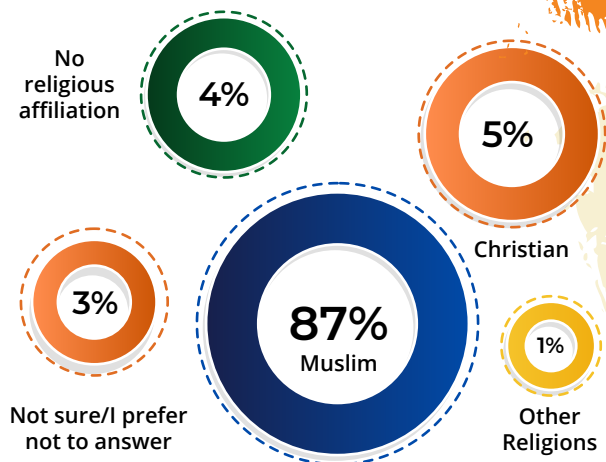
As required by the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Racism Act, the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) conducted its first Student Census in the 2023-2024 school year. The analysis of the data will help the Board understand the experiences of students who have been historically underserved by the education system and put programs in place to close any gaps in academic achievement and well-being.

Of the almost 36,000 students in the GECDSB in 2023-2024, parents/guardians completed the Student Census for **18%** of students in JK-Grade 8, while **58%** of students in Grades 9-12 completed the Student Census.

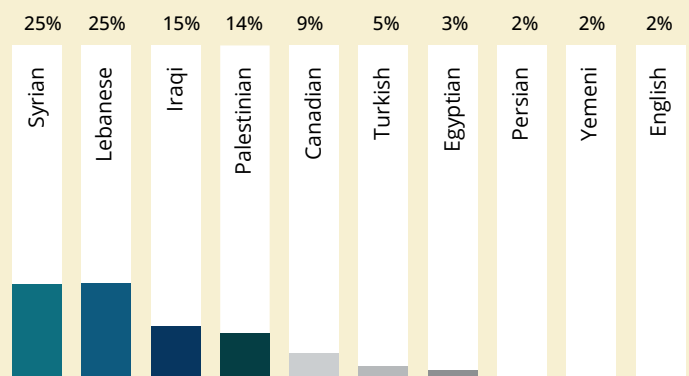
The data shows that **14%** (1,466) of all GECDSB students who completed the Census identify as Middle Eastern. **51%** of these students were born outside of Canada.

There is a good deal of diversity among students who identify as Middle Eastern.

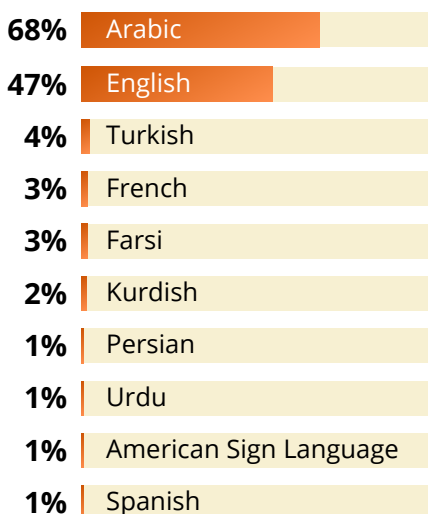
#### RELIGION



#### Top 10 Ethnic Origins



#### TOP 10 LANGUAGES FIRST SPOKEN AS A CHILD

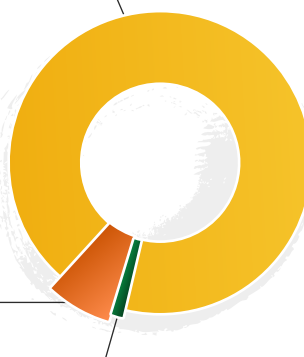


#### 2SLGBTQIA+

Straight/Cisgender **83%**

Not sure/I don't understand this question/ I prefer not to answer **12%**

2SLGBTQIA+ **5%**

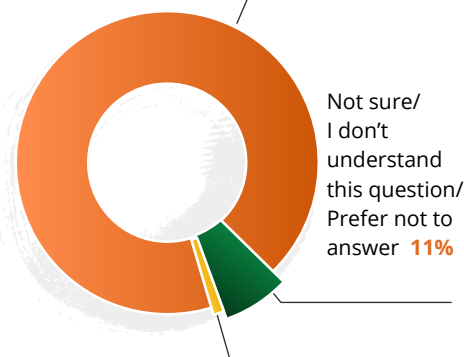


#### DISABILITY

No **84%**

Not sure/I don't understand this question/ Prefer not to answer **11%**

Yes **5%**

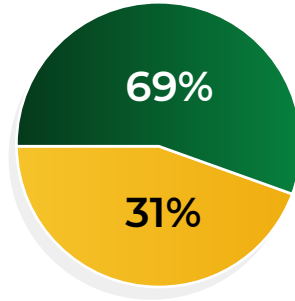


# ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

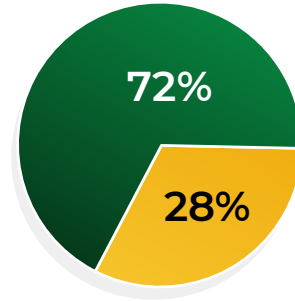
## CREDIT ACCUMULATION

A student is considered to be on track to graduate within four years if they have accumulated at least 16 credits by the end of Grade 10.

Middle Eastern Students



All Students



On Track  
Not On Track

Grade 3 EQAO Reading		64%		69%
Grade 3 EQAO Writing		64%		67%
Grade 6 EQAO Reading		76%		80%
Grade 6 EQAO Writing		75%		78%
OSSLT		67%		74%

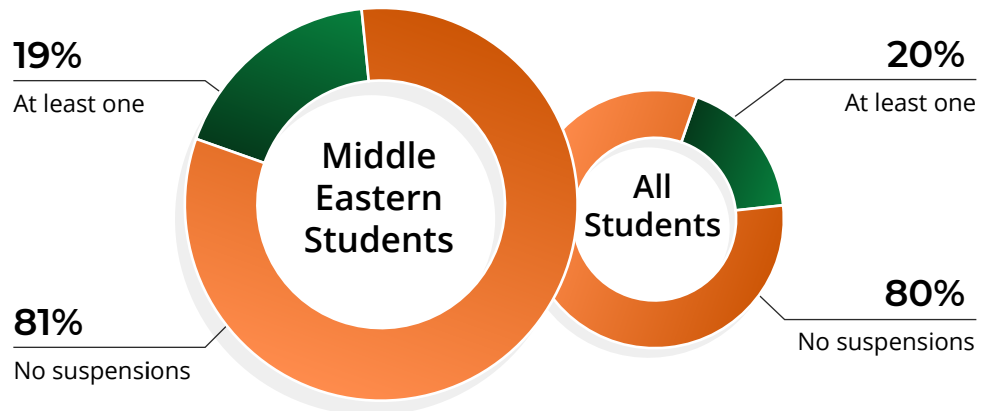
## LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT

EQAO scores assess a student's reading and writing skills against provincial standards.

Middle Eastern Students  
All Students

## SUSPENSIONS (GRADES 4-12)

Percentage of students who have been suspended at least once between Grades 4 and 12.



## ACADEMIC COURSES IN GRADE 10

English		84%		69%
Math		74%		63%
Science		77%		68%

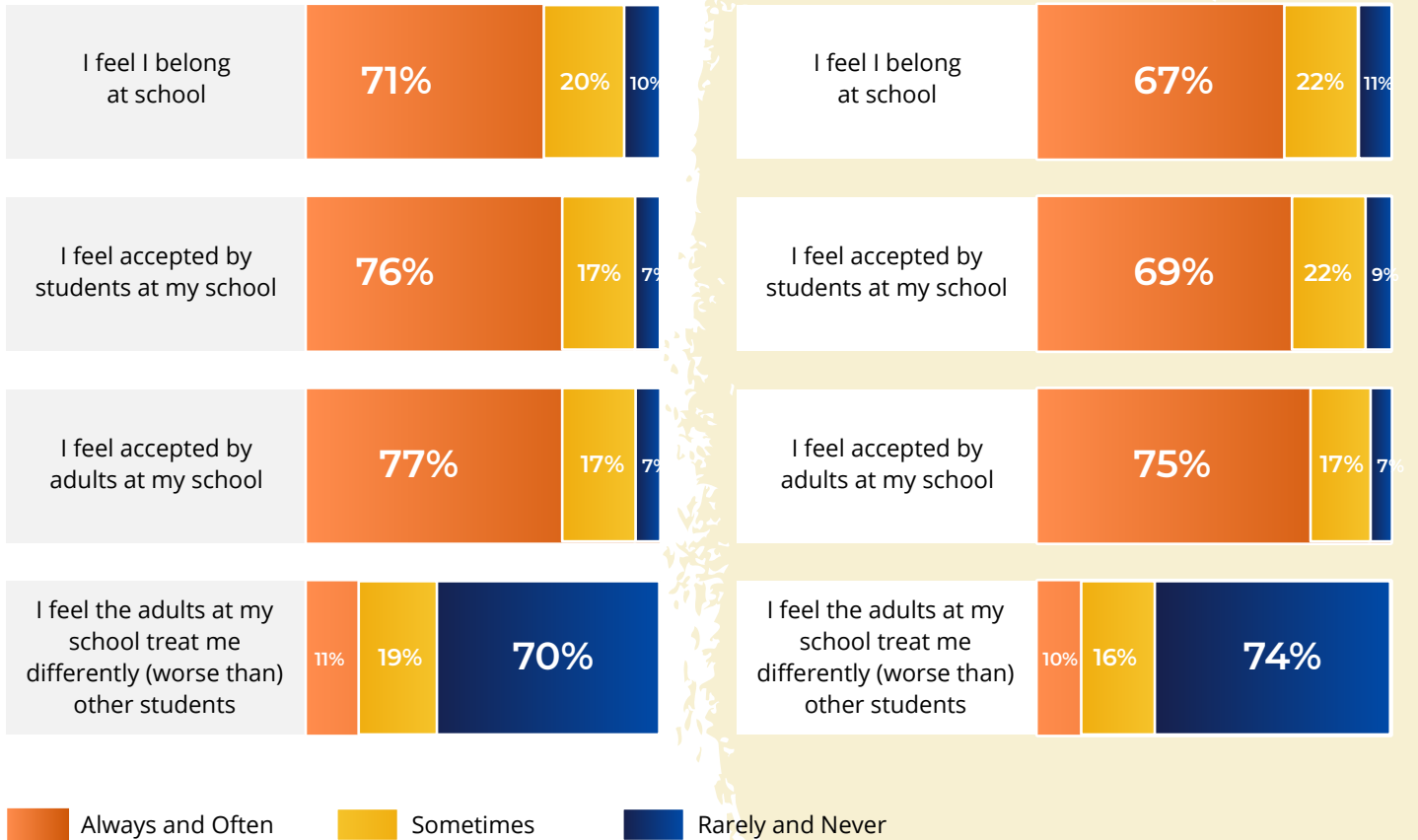
Percentage of students who have taken academic level English, Math, and Science, which allows them to go on to university.

Middle Eastern Students  
All Students

# WELL-BEING

## MIDDLE EASTERN STUDENTS

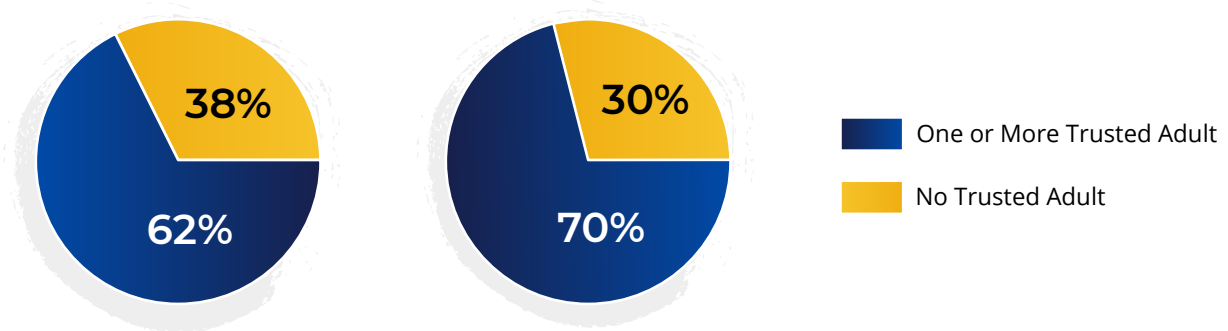
## ALL STUDENTS



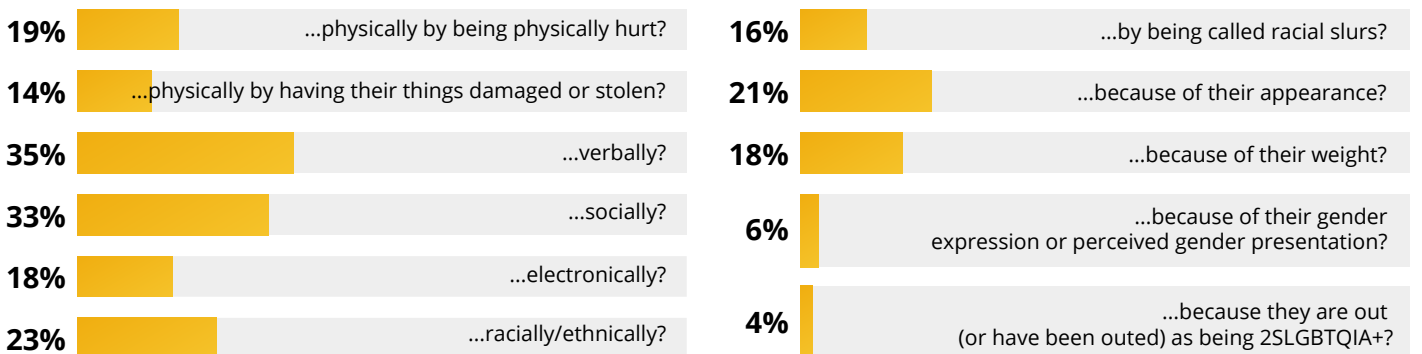
## TRUSTED SCHOOL ADULT (GRADES 4-12)

### Middle Eastern Students

### All Students



## EXPERIENCES OF BULLYING (GRADES 4-12)



# INPUT FROM CONSULTATIONS

To help understand the data, input was sought from students, parents/guardians, staff, and community members. The following summarizes the main themes from these consultations and the recommendations made.

- **Data from the Student Census tells only part of the story:** Those we consulted with were concerned that many newcomer Middle Eastern parents may not have completed the Census. The completion of the Census could have been impacted by language barriers, access to technology, and access to the internet. In addition, some parents may not have fully understood the purpose of the Census and the importance of completing it. Those who did complete it may not know the full experiences of their children and might feel ill-equipped to answer questions on their behalf.
- **Lack of communication and trust between the GECDsB and Middle Eastern and Muslim communities:** Many felt that the Board must better engage with Middle Eastern and Muslim communities. This includes sharing information about the education system and the curriculum to counter the misinformation being shared within the community, which sometimes results in parents moving their children to other school boards or to private schools.
- **Negative perceptions from educators and staff:** Concern was also raised about the negative perceptions GECDsB educators have about Middle Eastern and Muslim students, families, and communities. These negative perceptions impact how students and families are treated and how educators and schools engage with them.

“ The cultural community outside of school helps foster a strong sense of belonging among Middle Eastern students.

- **Lack of cultural responsiveness:** Students want to see themselves and their rich cultures reflected in the classroom and school systems. Additionally, students who don't celebrate Christmas feel pressured to participate in Christmas activities, while their cultures and religions go unacknowledged.
- **Fear of reprisal for raising issues:** There was concern that Middle Eastern and Muslim students and families are afraid to speak up when issues arise. As such, the responses to the Census may not accurately reflect the experiences of students. In addition, participants may not have reported concerns related to students experiencing bullying or other inappropriate behaviours.

“ There is fear of reporting issues, especially if they are immigrants. Students don't feel they will be heard. In reality, we are not heard. Excuses are made.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Set clear goals to increase the number of Middle Eastern educators and staff.
- Provide more information to parents/guardians to help them understand and navigate the GECDsB.
- Provide ongoing professional learning for educators, staff, school administrators, and system leaders to increase their understanding of Middle Eastern students and cultures.
- Reflect Middle Eastern people and their cultures in the curriculum.
- Better equip all staff to foster inclusive learning environments and address racism and Islamophobia when they do occur.
- Support Middle Eastern and Muslim staff who experience racism in the workplace.
- Increase engagement and communication with Middle Eastern communities, in particular to address misinformation.
- Provide opportunities for Middle Eastern students, parents/guardians, and staff to share concerns anonymously.