

Annual Credit Accumulation 2015-16

The Secondary Success Indicator (SSI) Fact Sheets incorporate secondary success indicator variables from the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) School Information Systems (SIS). The TDSB's SIS provides students' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, region of birth, language, and student academic characteristics such as Program of Study.

This Fact Sheet focuses on **Credit Accumulation** among secondary school students. The patterns and trends are described in terms of overall credit accumulation, program of study, gender, special education needs, and neighbourhood income.

Student Cohorts - Who is in them?

Students are placed into cohorts based on their first year of full time enrolment in secondary school (Grade 9). In the 2015-16 school year, there were 16,314 students in Year 1 (2015-16 cohort), 16,870 in Year 2 (2014-15 cohort), 16,729 students in Year 3 (2013-14 cohort), and 22,175 students in Year 4 or above (comprised of multiple cohorts)¹. Table 1 shows the percentage of students who were attending the TDSB fulltime as of June 2016.

To be considered at or **above** standard credit accumulation rates secondary school students are expected to obtain 8 credits in Year 1 (Grade 9). By Year 2 they should have 16 credits, by Year 3 they should have 23 credits, and 30 or more credits by Year 4.

Table 1: Percentage of Student Population At or Above Standard Credit Accumulation

The Trend:

There has been a very slight increase in the proportion of students being at or above standard credit accumulation rates (see Table 1) from 2012-13 to 2015-16 in Year 1 (83% to 85%). Year 2 has remained the same, and Years 3 and 4+ have seen a decrease.

School Year	Year 1 (Grade 9), Students with 8 or More Credits	Year 2 (Grade 10), Students with 16 or More Credits	Year 3 (Grade 11), Students with 23 or More Credits	Year 4+ (Grade 12+), Students with 30+ Credits
2012-13	83%	76%	75%	68%
2013-14	84%	76%	75%	66%
2014-15	84%	76%	75%	69%
2015-16	85%	76%	74%	67%

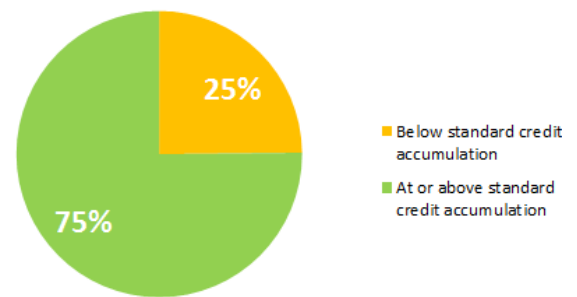
¹ The Year 1 (Grade 9) students in Fact Sheet 2 included 2 groups not in Table 1. Older (16 and over) students in Grade 9, and those who entered the TDSB after October 31, 2015.



Credit Accumulation

Students who fall below standard rates (as seen in Table 1) have been shown to be less likely to graduate, and are less likely to go on to attend post secondary education. As of the 2015-16 school year, 75% of students enrolled in full time secondary school education in the TDSB are at or above standard credit accumulation rates, with 25% falling below (see Figure 1). To graduate a student must obtain 30 credits.

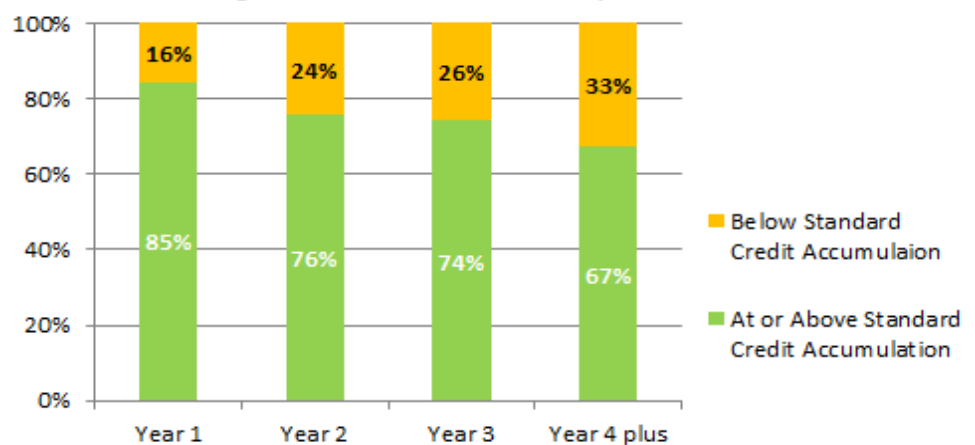
Figure 1: Credit Accumulation Among Secondary School Population



The Pattern:

In the 2015-16 school year, 85% of the students in their first year were at or above standard for credit accumulation, while only 67% were at this level by Year 4+. This shows that as time goes on students are more likely to struggle to obtain all necessary credits (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Credit Accumulation by Cohort Year

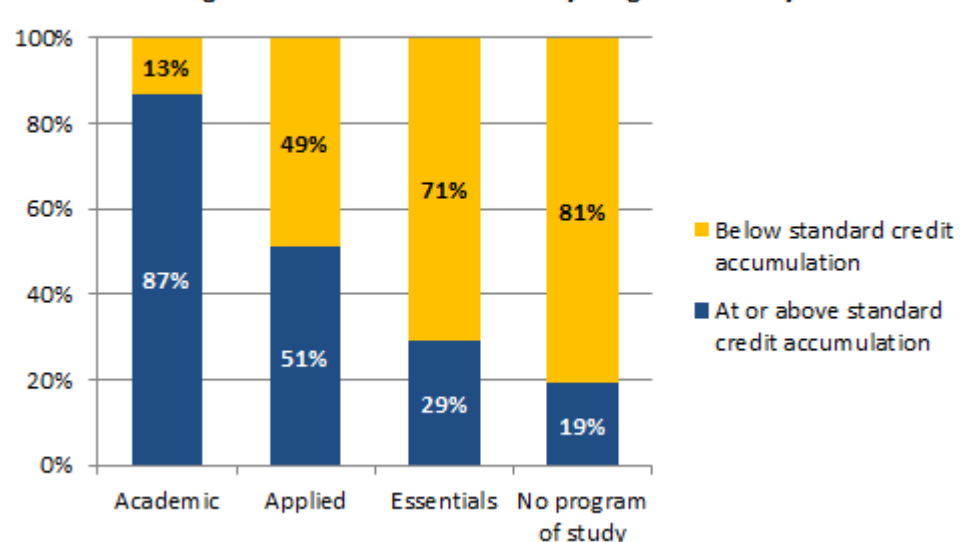


Background Information:

Students are classified in program of study based on the majority of the courses taken.

Academic programs are those most often required for entry into post-secondary education, with some colleges accepting students with applied courses.

Figure 3: Credit Accumulation by Program of Study

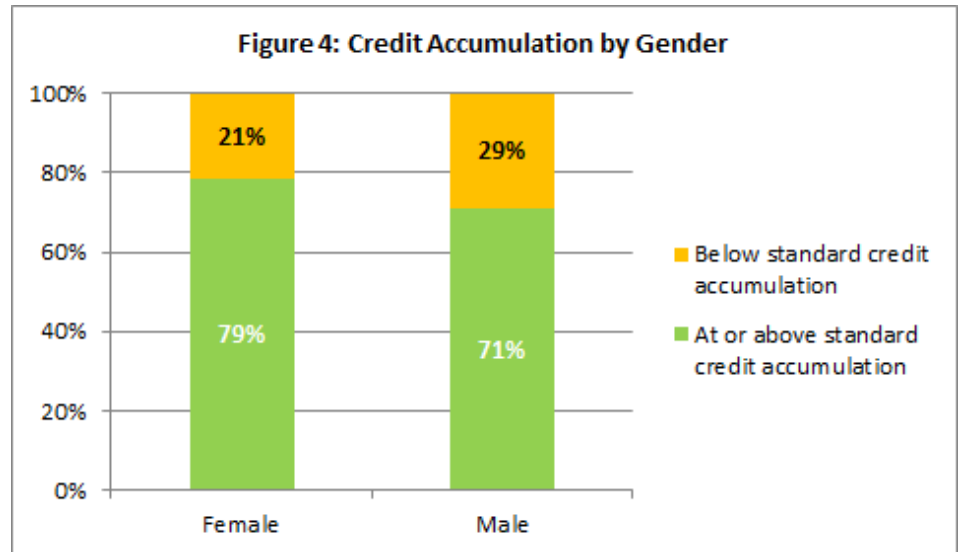


Gender

There is a clear gender gap in terms of annual credit accumulation. Typically female students are more likely than males to be at or above standard credit accumulation rate: 79% for females compared with 71% for males (see Figure 4).

The Trend:

The gender gap that exists between male and female students is consistent with other TDSB research. It can be seen manifesting itself in terms of higher rates of post-secondary applications for females, a trend that is consistent across time (for additional information refer to Fact Sheet 4, Post-Secondary Pathways)

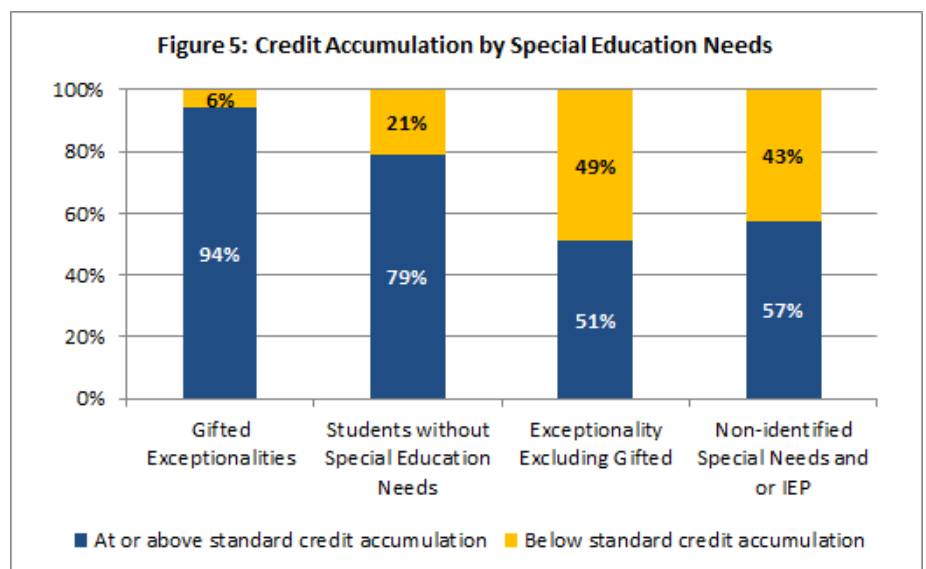


Special Education Needs

Previous TDSB research has shown that secondary school students who are within the special education programs (excluding gifted) are less likely to achieve at the same level as students in regular classes. This trend is reflected in the findings (see Figure 5), which shows that students who have an exceptionality (excluding gifted), or those with non-identified special needs or an IEP are more likely to be below standard credit accumulation rates.

The Trend:

Students with exceptionalities (excluding gifted) are more likely to be below standard credit accumulation (49%) compared to gifted students (6%) or those without special education needs (21%). Those with non-identified special needs are almost as likely to be below the standard credit accumulation rate (43%).

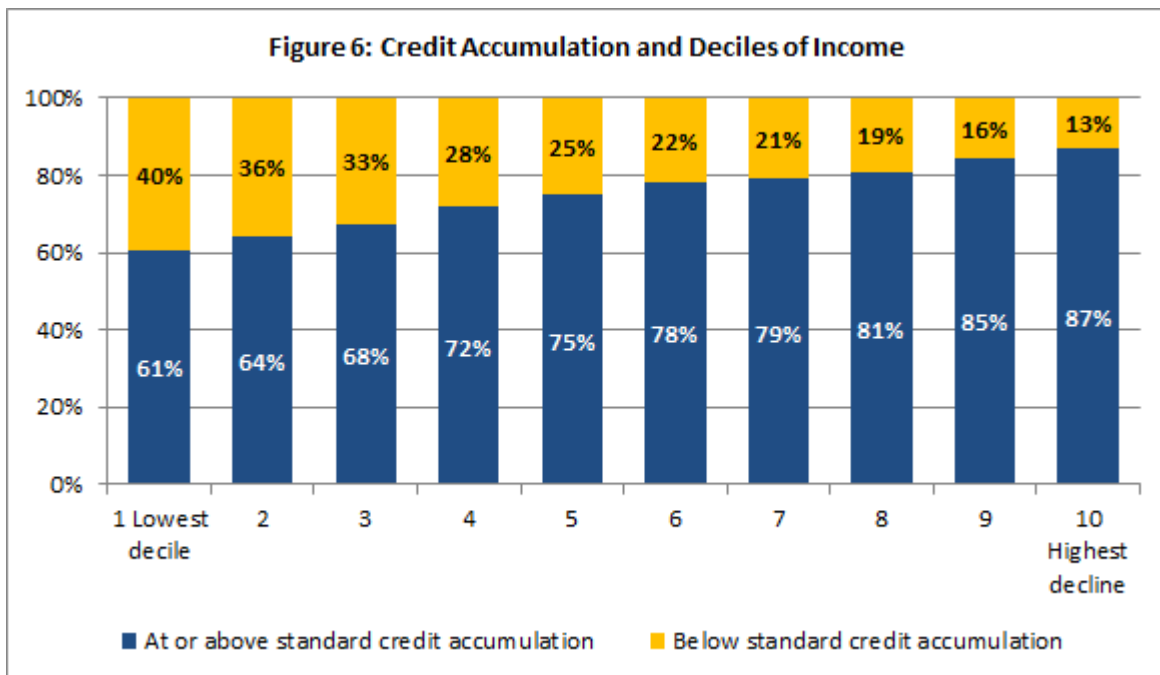


Family Income

Student income was approximated by using the average family income of the neighbourhood of student residence according to the 2016 Average Household Income*. All students in the TDSB were divided into 10 income groupings (deciles), from lowest to highest income (1 being lowest and 10 being highest).

The Trend:

A student's at-risk status is strongly related to family income. While 40% of students from the lowest income neighbourhoods fall below standard credit accumulation rates, only 13% of students from the highest income neighbourhoods are in this category (see Figure 6).



* Student postal codes were matched to the 2011 Dissemination Area (DA) boundaries, then matched to the 2016 Average Household Income for the DA, as provided by Environics Analytics Canada.

Why is this information important?

The more recent history of the TDSB has found a gradual but important increase in most secondary school achievement. The proportion of highly at-risk students has incrementally declined over eight years. Previous analysis, as well as this Fact Sheet, finds that there are clear differences among groups of student demographic variables. The analysis of student demographic characteristics and family background in relation to their achievement is essential for policy decision making and educational improvement planning. This analysis also provides evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of different types of educational programs and interventions within the TDSB.

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