

**WHAT SCHOOL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO
UNDERACHIEVEMENT? THE CASE OF CARIBBEAN
STUDENTS IN TORONTO SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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Abstract

This study adds to the growing literature on the Black education experience in Canada. The achievement gap among Black student populations and the resulting high dropout rate is well documented in past studies. Given the varied results of these studies, there is a clear need for further investigation of how school factors contribute to academic underachievement. Specifically, this study explores the academic underachievement of Black Caribbean immigrants in Toronto's public secondary schools. Through key informant interviews, focus groups and a case study analysis, I examine whether school factors negatively influence the academic performance of these students. Low teacher expectations; culturally insensitive curriculum; school disciplinary practices; a lack of linkages between schools and the Caribbean community and peer culture all show significance in this study. Drawing on these findings, the study proposes and evaluates three policy options for addressing such factors.

Keywords: Toronto; Caribbean; Academic Underachievement; School Factors

Subject terms: Teacher Expectations; School Counselling Practices; School Curriculum; Peer Groups; School Discipline; Generational Status; Toronto District School Board

Executive Summary

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is the largest school board in Canada and among the largest in North America, serving almost 1.4 million electors of the City of Toronto. According to the TDSB, Black students are more likely to be at risk of not graduating and potentially dropping out of secondary school. In view of the achievement gap, one of the current initiatives of the TDSB is to improve the academic success of Black students. Recognizing that Toronto's African Canadian community is not one and the same, this study explores underachievement in a specific Black immigrant population, namely Caribbean immigrants.

Seeking better educational opportunities for Caribbean youth is often one of the most important reasons for migrating. Yet, these students have the highest dropout rate and at-risk rates in credit accumulation among all Black students in the TDSB. The failure of these students to complete secondary school and pursue post-secondary education calls into question some of the benefits of emigration. Previous research suggests that teachers' low expectations from these students combined with a misunderstanding of their culture increase settlement difficulties for Caribbean youth and contribute to their academic underachievement.

To uncover school factors that may negatively influence the achievement patterns of Caribbean students, I use information from interviews with education policy experts and community stakeholders (i.e. key informants) in the City of Toronto. This data is supplemented with interviews with focus groups made of first and second-generation Caribbean secondary students to highlight some of the significant school factors that negatively influence these

students' academic performance in secondary school. A case study is also used to help corroborate the findings.

My findings suggests low teacher expectations, culturally insensitive curriculum, school disciplinary practices, a lack of linkages between schools and the Caribbean community, and peer culture among Caribbean students exert a negative influence on school completion. These findings, along with a survey of existing literature, inform my policy options. While a number of options are considered, those proposed in this study include the following:

- *Provide Ongoing Diversity Training to All Employee Groups:* The TDSB would provide staff development opportunities related to racism and classism in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and the Settlement and Integration Services Organization. The training supports school staff by deepening their awareness and understanding of the implications of diversity, equity and racism in schools today.
- *Pilot Caribbean Academic Program:* The TDSB would pilot the Caribbean Academic Program (CAP), a specialized curriculum and transitional program. ESC Students spend part of the day in their CAP classes and the other half in regular content courses. The program offers a maximum of two years of language instruction and emphasis is on learning English grammar and sentence structure by studying the differences between Creole and English. Students receive full credits for their participation.
- *Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students:* The TDSB would work closely with Caribbean families and partner with the Pathways program to address the needs of high-risk ESC students. The program would address many community risk factors, such as poverty, minority status and the inability of Caribbean parents to navigate the school system. The program is also free to participating students.

I assess the practicality of these options by using a set of criteria that includes effectiveness, administrative feasibility, stakeholder acceptability and cost. This multi-criteria analysis reveals

that partnering with Pathways to Education to target Caribbean students in Toronto's inner city communities is the best policy to pursue. Subject to an ongoing evaluation of the partnership and early outcomes, the TDSB may want to introduce some features of diversity training for all TDSB employees at a later stage. Lastly, I suggest, while this study has identified some of the important factors influencing dropout rates, future TDSB research should consider a quantitative study on how school experiences impact student achievement and the decision to leave school early among Caribbean youth.

Dedication

To my parents, Rick and Anna, for their love, encouragement and support.

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Table of Contents

Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Executive Summary	iv
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements	viii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
Glossary	xiv
1: Introduction	1
2: Demographics and School Performance	3
2.1 Demographics	3
2.2 School Performance	6
2.2.1 International Data on School Performance.....	8
2.2.2 TDSB Data on School Performance by Region of Birth.....	9
3: Theory about Minorities and School Performance	14
3.1.1 Teacher Expectations.....	15
3.1.2 School Counselling Practices	16
3.1.3 School Curriculum.....	16
3.1.4 Peer Groups	17
3.1.5 School Discipline.....	19
3.2 Generational Status	19
4: Policy Problem and Key Stakeholders	22
5: Methodology	25
5.1 Key Informants	25
5.2 Focus Groups	27
5.3 Analytical Method	30
6: Analysis	31
6.1 Key Informants	31
6.1.1 Teacher Expectations.....	31
6.1.2 School Counselling Practices	34
6.1.3 School Curriculum.....	36
6.1.4 Peer Groups	37
6.1.5 School Discipline.....	38
6.1.6 Generational Status.....	39
6.2 Focus Groups	40

6.2.1	Teacher Expectations.....	40
6.2.2	School Counselling Practices	42
6.2.3	School Curriculum.....	42
6.2.4	School Discipline.....	43
6.2.5	Peer Groups	43
6.2.6	Other School Factors	44
6.3	Case Study	45
6.4	Summary of Findings	47
7:	Policy Objectives, Options, Criteria Analysis	52
7.1	Policy Objectives	52
7.1.1	Policy Options	52
7.2	Criteria for Analysis	56
8:	Analysis of Policy Options	61
8.1	Option 1: Provide Ongoing Diversity Training for All TDSB Employee Groups	61
8.2	Option 2: Pilot Caribbean Academic Program	63
8.3	Option 3: Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students	65
8.4	Policy Recommendations	68
9:	Conclusions	71
Appendices.....		73
	Appendix A: Key Informant Questions	74
	Appendix B: Key Informant Results.....	76
	Appendix C: Focus Group Survey	79
	Appendix D: Focus Group Survey Results	81
	Appendix E: Focus Group Questions.....	82
	Appendix F: Focus Group Sample Results	84
	Appendix G: Dropout Data from Springer et al. Case Study.....	87
	Bibliography	88
	Websites Visited	93

List of Figures

Figure 1: Dropout of Cohort by the Fall 2005 by Region of Birth.....10

List of Tables

Table 1: People of Caribbean Origin in the CMA and the City of Toronto	5
Table 2: 2006 Black Student Population in the TDSB	6
Table 3: Trends of Education Attainment of the Total Population Aged 15 and Over by Country & Group	9
Table 4: Gr. 9 Cohort Student Achievement in Credit Accumulation by Region of Birth	10
Table 5: Student Achievement in Mathematics, Science & Geography by Region of Birth	11
Table 6: Student Achievement in English by Region of Birth	12
Table 7: Student Achievement in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test by Region of Birth.....	13
Table 8: Key Informants Interviewed & Position Title	25
Table 9: Interview Themes & Questions Explored with Key Informants	27
Table 10: Summary of Focus Group Survey Findings – Demographic Data	29
Table 11: School Factors Explored with Caribbean Secondary Students.....	29
Table 12: Summary of Key Informant Responses	32
Table 13: Results from Focus Group Discussions with First Generation Students	40
Table 14: Comparative Analysis of Focus Group and Case Study Results	46
Table 15: Summary of Overall Findings	50
Table 16: Criteria and Measures for Analysis of the Policy Options	57
Table 17: Evaluation of Policy Options.....	68
Table 18: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding Teacher Expectations.....	76
Table 19: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Counselling Practices	76
Table 20: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Curriculum.....	77
Table 21: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding Peer Groups	77
Table 22: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Discipline.....	78
Table 23: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results A.....	81
Table 24: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results B	81

Table 25: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results C.....	81
Table 26: How do you get along with your teachers?	84
Table 27: Do you feel like your teachers and other school authorities expect you to succeed in school?.....	84
Table 28: Do your friends make fun of you for doing well?	84
Table 29: Do you feel comfortable seeking advice and discussing your personal problems with your guidance counsellors?	85
Table 30: Do you believe that going to college or university would make a difference in your life?	85
Table 31: Can you think of any reasons why students of Caribbean descent drop out of school?	85
Table 32: In what ways could school be made more interesting for students of Caribbean descent, so that they will be more likely to finish rather than dropping out?	86
Table 33: Reasons for Dropout, Suspensions & Expulsions Among Caribbean Youth 15-25	87
Table 34: Teacher Relationships Among Caribbean Youth Aged 15-25	87
Table 35: Future Aspirations Regarding Education Among Caribbean Youth 15- 25.....	87

Glossary

At Risk	Many students face the risk of not achieving their highest potential for success, academically, and/or socially. Such students are referred to as being “at risk”, and many of these students require special supports and interventions.
BESD	Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties
BYTA	Black Youth Taking Action
CABE	Canadian Alliance of Black Educators
CMA	Toronto Census Metropolitan Area
Dropout	A student is generally considered to be a dropout, who leaves school without graduating and does not transfer to another educational institution.
ESC	English-speaking Caribbean specifically refers to Black youth that racially or culturally self-identify with Anglophone islands in the Caribbean.
EQAO	The Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) is the organization that has been established by the Ontario Ministry of Education to create, administer, analyze and communicate the results of various mandatory provincial tests.
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
JCA	Jamaican Canadian Association
OPBC	Organisation of Parents of Black Children
OSSLT	The Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), established by the Ministry of Education, is one of the requirements for an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The test assesses the reading and writing skills of students in their Grade 10 year.
Success Indicators	There are many ways that a student's progress can be measured. The various measures, called success indicators, include report card marks, EQAO scores or other consistent ratings that are applied to an individual or group based on criteria.
TDSB	Toronto District School Board
UARR	Urban Alliance on Race Relations

1: Introduction

The Toronto Census Metropolitan Area is home to the largest number of Blacks among all census metropolitan areas in Canada. Blacks represent the third largest visible minority group in Toronto in 2006. According to the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), self-identified Black students are more likely to be at risk of not graduating and potentially dropping out of school. For example, self-identified Black students born in Canada and the Caribbean have an at-risk rate higher than the TDSB average. Self-identified Black students have the lowest Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test pass rate. Black students also have disproportionately higher levels of suspensions and expulsions. In view of these indicators, one of the current initiatives of the TDSB is to close the achievement gap among Black students. The gap is generally defined as a significant disparity in educational achievement among groups of students as determined by standardized measures. Within the TDSB, those measures are based on credit accumulation, program of study, reading and writing tests, reports cards and graduation/dropout rates.

The achievement gap among Black student populations and the resulting high dropout rate is well documented. Given the varied results from studies, there is clearly a need for further investigation of how school factors contribute to academic underachievement. Recognizing that Toronto's African Canadian community is not monolithic and variations exist, this study explores underachievement in a solely Black immigrant population, namely Caribbean immigrants. For the purposes of this study, English-speaking Caribbean (ESC) specifically refers to Black youth that racially or culturally self-identify with Anglophone islands in the Caribbean. To uncover school factors that negatively influence the achievement patterns of secondary students born in the ESC, I employ key informant interviews with education policy experts and community stakeholders in the City of Toronto. I also supplement the data from my key informant interviews with focus

groups with first and second-generation Caribbean secondary students. In effect, I highlight some of the significant school factors that negatively influence these students' academic performance in secondary school. A case study is also used to help corroborate my focus group findings.

Low teacher expectations; culturally insensitive curriculum; school disciplinary practices; a lack of linkages between schools and the Caribbean community and the need to cultivate peer culture among ESC students all show some importance in this study. While recent policy interventions have helped curb suspensions and expulsions in the TDSB, this study recommends the TDSB partner with the Pathways to Education program in order to target ESC students in Toronto's inner city communities. This option would help bridge the gap between Caribbean parents and TDSB secondary schools, and provide ESC students with the necessary guidance and support they require. Following implementation, I recommend the TDSB conduct an ongoing evaluation of the partnership overtime. Depending on early outcomes, the TDSB may want to introduce some features of option 1, diversity training for all TDSB employee groups, to further address some of the achievement gaps.

The study is organized as follows. In section 2, I present demographics on the Caribbean community in Toronto as well as school performance data on ESC students at the international level and in the TDSB. In section 3, I review the literature, both theoretical and empirical, about minority youth in education. In section 4, a description of the policy problem and stakeholders is provided. In section 5, the data and methodology used for this study are outlined. Section 6 analyzes the results from the data. In section 7, I review the proposed policy options that have been derived from the analysis. Finally, section 8 provides an evaluation of the options, and recommendations are made to ensure better outcomes for ESC students in TDSB secondary schools.

2: Demographics and School Performance

This section begins with background information on the Caribbean region and the immigration patterns of Caribbean immigrants to Canada since the 1960s. Subsequently, I provide an overview of the latest Census data on people of Caribbean origin living in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and in the City of Toronto. I then compare the CMA and City data with demographic data on Caribbean secondary students and their school performance at the international level and in the TDSB.

2.1 Demographics

The Caribbean region is comprised of 50 inhabited island countries that stretch in a 2,000-mile-long arc between Trinidad and western Cuba. The Caribbean culture contains influences from African, Spanish, British, French, Dutch, Asian and Native American cultures. In addition to ethnic diversity, the region is home to a variety of races. While a large portion of the population is of African descent, there is an array of languages spoken in the Caribbean region including English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Creole. Caribbean people also share a common set of cultural values, including the presence of extended families and a strong sense of family cohesion; the importance of spirituality (many are practicing Christians); a focus on self-improvement; and a strong sense of ethnic pride based on allegiance to one's country of origin (Mitchell and Bryan, 2007).

Historically, the first wave of Caribbean immigrants to Canada arrived in 1956 when two thousand West Indians came as university students and domestics (Coelho, 1988). In 1967, Canada's immigration department eliminated country quotas and the number of Caribbean newcomers to Canada started to increase. By 2001, 25% of Caribbean immigrants living in

Canada had arrived between 1981 and 1990, while another 28% had arrived in the subsequent decade. In contrast, only 14% had arrived in the 1960s, while just 2% came before 1961. Today, Canadians of Caribbean origin form one of the largest non-European ethnic origin groups in Canada. Over half a million people (578,695) of Caribbean origin live in Canada, representing close to 2% of the total population. The majority of people of Caribbean origin live in either Ontario or Quebec, but they account for a small share of the overall population in both provinces (Lindsay, 2007). In 2006, 40% (229,580) of all those who reported Caribbean origin (age 15 and over) lived in the Toronto CMA, accounting for 5% of the CMA population (5,113,149) (Statistics Canada, 2006).

Based on Statistics Canada's 2006 Profile of Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities, Table 1 outlines the distribution of the Caribbean population in the CMA and the City of Toronto. Among those in the CMA, 51% said they were Jamaican, while 15% were Guyanese, 13% were West Indian, 11% were Trinidadian and Tobagonian and 5% were Barbadian. Hence, Jamaicans represent the largest subgroup of people of Caribbean of origin living in the CMA. The largest share of those aged 15 and over is first generation 71% (162,830), followed by second generation 26% (59,950) and third generation or more 3% (6,795)¹ (Statistics Canada, 2006).

¹ According to Statistics Canada, 1st generation refers to persons born outside Canada; 2nd generation refers to persons born in Canada with at least one parent born outside Canada; 3rd generation refers to person born in Canada with parents born in Canada.

Table 1: People of Caribbean Origin in the CMA and the City of Toronto

Total Population	Toronto CMA		City of Toronto	
	Caribbean	5,113,149	100%	2,503,281
	229,580	5%	121,635	5%
Caribbean Population	229,580	100%	121,635	100%
Jamaican	116,105	51%	58,635	48%
Guyanese	33,565	15%	18,840	16%
West Indian	29,225	13%	15,120	12%
Trinidadian and Tobagonian	26,090	11%	13,540	11%
Barbadian	11,395	5%	5,770	5%
Other	13,200	6%	9,730	8%
1 st Generation	162,830	71%	87,165	72%
2 nd Generation	59,950	26%	30,905	25%
3 rd Generation	6,795	3%	3,560	3%

Source: Statistics Canada (2008a)

Those of Caribbean origin (age 15 and over) account for 5% (121,635) of the population in the City of Toronto (2,503,281). Among those in the City of Toronto, 48% said they were Jamaican. Similar to the CMA, the large majority of people of Caribbean origin between the ages of 15 and over in the City of Toronto is first generation 72% (87,165), followed by second generation 25% (30,905) and third generation or more 3% (3,560). The Caribbean community in the CMA is also relatively young. In 2006, 21% (48,415) of people of Caribbean origin living in the CMA were between the ages of 15 and 24. Of which, 49% were male and 51% were female. The generational status among this age group (15 and over) varies: 32% (15,540) is first generation, 63% (30,485) is second generation and 5% (2,395) is third generation or more. While similar Census data on people of Caribbean origin in the City of Toronto is inaccessible, a segment of the 15-24 CMA demographic would currently attend secondary schools in the City of Toronto.

In Table 2, I provide a detailed background of the self-identified Black student population in the TDSB, the fourth largest racial group behind Whites, South Asians and East Asians. These students represent 15% of the senior elementary school population (34,219), Grades 7 and 8, of which 6% are Black Caribbean. Many of these students would attend TDSB secondary schools today. Student census data also indicates that self-identified Black students

represent 12% of the secondary school population (71,222), Grades 9 to 12, of which 6% are Black Caribbean (Yau & O'Reilly, 2007). Thus, at both the senior elementary and secondary school levels, Black Caribbean students represent the largest subgroup within the Black student population. While many of these students are 2nd or 3rd generation, students born in the ESC (1st generation), are underperforming academically at the secondary level. The subsequent section provides data on the school performance of ESC students internationally and in the TDSB.

Table 2: 2006 Black Student Population in the TDSB

Detailed Racial Background	Grade 7-8	Grade 9-12
Total number of TDSB Students	34,219	71,222
Black Canadian %	5% of pop.	2% of pop.
Black Caribbean %	6% of pop.	6% of pop.
Black African %	4% of pop.	4% of pop.

Source: Yau & O'Reilly, 2007

2.2 School Performance

The TDSB was created on January 1, 1998, following the amalgamation of seven boards of education (Grodesky et al., 2004). It is the largest school board in Canada and among the largest in North America, serving almost 1.4 million electors of the City of Toronto (TDSB, 2008a). The student body is also diverse: whereas Toronto elementary schools receive up to 8,000 newcomers each year from many countries, secondary schools receive on average 4,000 newcomers each year (Dei, 2008). As a result, approximately 80,000 (30%) of students were born outside of Canada in more than 175 different countries; 27,000 (10%) of students have been in Canada for three years or less; and over 80 languages are represented in schools. For example, 2005 statistics show that approximately 41% of secondary students have a first language other than English (Dei 2008). Given the student diversity, there is a current gap in knowledge about how well secondary students from various demographic backgrounds do in their studies. To address this gap, the TDSB is exploring links between demographic data and student achievement

among its senior elementary and secondary student populations and early findings indicate high underachievement among Black youth, some of whom were born in ESC (Brown, 2006).

The pattern of migration of people from the Caribbean to Canada is unique among immigrants, especially for youth. During the 1980s many children immigrated to Canada in order to join their parents who had come before them. This had enormous consequences. Youth may be dealing with a restructured family that may have been separated for more than a decade. The situation is complicated if they have other siblings who were born in Canada, or they are dealing with step-siblings who now form part of the new mixed family. They may have left the emotional attachment to extended family, especially a grandmother, to join a family where their situation is less stable (Scott, 1990). For example, a recent study suggests ESC students are more likely to enter school one year late (88 percent) and live in alternate family structures; only 26 percent of students from the Caribbean lived in two parent families. Ultimately, the high rate of Caribbean single parenthood limits parental preparation of youth for school. ESC students are also the least likely to be enrolled in the ‘Academic’ stream in the TDSB, with only 39 percent of secondary students on this path (Anisef et al., 2008). In addition to migration stress and parental status factors, Caribbean immigrants face a host of concerns associated with their minority group status. Like many Blacks immigrants, they expect to experience the “mobility dream” where any person can “make it” regardless of ethnicity or race, and education is viewed as a means of attaining this dream (Plaza, 1998). In fact, seeking better educational opportunities for youth is often one of the most important reasons for migrating (Smith et al, 2005). However, the realities of day-to-day life do not always correspond with these expectations (Plaza, 1998). Racism and other barriers to immigrant mobility, such as an increased number of Caribbean immigrants living below the poverty line, may limit these expectations.² This suggests the effects of community and socio-

² The poverty line is defined as the low income cutoff (LICO), as defined by Statistics Canada. Specifically, LICOs – based on data from the Survey of Household Spending – are defined as the income below which a family is likely to spend 20 percentage points more of its income on food, shelter and clothing than the average family. LICOs are calculated using both total income (i.e. income after government transfers, but before taxes) and after-tax income.

demographic characteristics on student achievement. In fact, concern has been expressed since the 1970s about the 'ghettoisation' of Black tenants in Metropolitan Toronto Housing Authority (MTHA) public housing, particularly among Caribbean immigrants (Murdie, 1994). Some of the “ghetto-like” neighbourhoods in which these students live may adversely affect the quality of the schools they attend. The acculturation process for ESC students therefore has negative impact on their academic performance and over the course of their lifetime (Mitchell & Bryan, 2007).

2.2.1 International Data on School Performance

Table 3 presents time-series data on the educational attainment for the population over age 15 at five-year intervals between 1990 and 2000 for a number of ESC countries. Specifically, the data set refers to the percentage of the population for whom the secondary school level was the highest level of education attained. Data is provided for four countries of the five largest subgroups of people of Caribbean of origin living in the CMA. For comparison purposes, similar data is provided for Canada and all developing countries.

Secondary school attainment has modestly improved in the four ESC countries in the 1990s up until 2000.³ It is lowest in Jamaica (8.4%), followed by Guyana (8.7%), Barbados (9.5%) and Trinidad & Tobago (10.3%), and these countries have a slightly higher secondary school attainment than all developing countries (8.3%). Still, all four ESC countries lag behind Canada (12.5%) in this regard, highlighting a small gap in secondary school attainment for the population over age 15. This gap is further substantiated in the next section, which provides data on ESC students and their school performance relative to other secondary students in the TDSB.

There are separate cut-offs for seven sizes of family (from unattached individuals to families of seven or more persons) and for five community sizes (from rural areas to urban areas with a population of more than 500,000) (Statistics Canada, 2008b).

³ Similar results are observed for the population over age 25.

Table 3: Trends of Education Attainment of the Total Population Aged 15 and Over by Country & Group

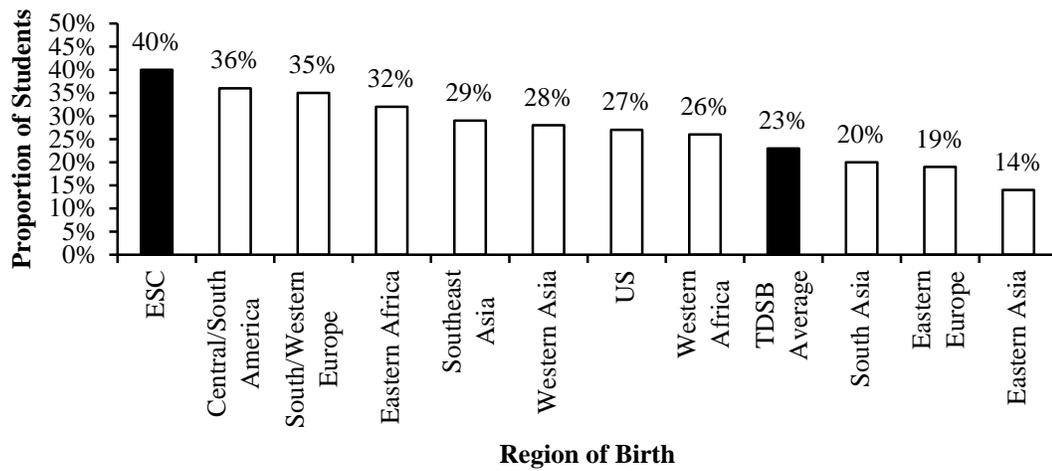
Country/Group (no. of countries)	Year	Pop. Over 15 (million)	Secondary
			(% of the pop. aged 15 and over)
Canada	1990	22027	14.8
	1995	23325	13.6
	2000	24644	12.5
All Developing (73)	1990	1488	7.5
	1995	1684	8.0
	2000	1905	8.3
Jamaica	1990	1581	7.2
	1995	1693	7.8
	2000	1822	8.4
Guyana	1990	530	7.3
	1995	566	8.0
	2000	617	8.7
Trinidad & Tobago	1990	816	8.8
	1995	884	9.5
	2000	984	10.3
Barbados	1990	195	8.9
	1995	201	9.2
	2000	208	9.5

Source: Barro and Lee (2000), Appendix Table A2, Table 4,.

2.2.2 TDSB Data on School Performance by Region of Birth

Figure 1 shows the dropout rate among Grade 9 students (16,291) that started secondary school in the TDSB in the fall of 2000. These students were between 13 and 15 years of age and were new to the secondary school studies in the fall of 2000. Subsequently, they were identified and tracked in until the fall of 2005. The average dropout rate among this cohort was 23% (3,814) by the end of Year 5. This means they left school without a record of transferring to another school, or without graduating (Brown, 2006). As the reader will note, students born in the ESC had the highest dropout rate among their 2000-2005 cohort at 40%.

Figure 1: Dropout of Cohort by the Fall 2005 by Region of Birth



Source: Brown (2006)

The pattern of underachievement persists among students born in the ESC. The Grade 9 Cohort of 13-15 year old students that attended the TDSB over the full 2006-7 school year shows Grade 9 students born in the ESC are more at risk of not graduating on time or potentially dropping out than the average Grade 9 student (Brown & Sinay, 2008). Table 3 presents data on Grade 9 cohort student achievement in credit accumulation by region of birth and among self-identified Black students in 2006-07. It shows that 31% of students born in the ESC had six or fewer credits by August 2007 compared to students born in Canada at 15%. While those self-identified Black students born in Canada at 26% and born in Africa at 21% have an at-risk rate that is higher than the full TDSB population, their rate is still lower than that of ESC students.

Table 4: Gr. 9 Cohort Student Achievement in Credit Accumulation by Region of Birth

Region of Birth	Credit Accumulation		
	Six or fewer credits by August 2007 %	Seven or more credits or by August 2007 %	Total N
Canada	15%	85%	11776
Canada (Black)	26%	74%	1483
Africa	21%	79%	208
ESC	31%	69%	191

Source: Brown & Sinay (2008)

The pattern of underachievement continues for students born in the ESC in core curriculum subjects. Core curriculum subjects include Mathematics, Science, Geography and English. Achievement in the first three subjects is measured by four levels.⁴ As the reader will note from Table 4, the large majority of students born in the ESC are well below the provincial standard in all three subjects. Only 23% of students born in the ESC met the provincial standard in Mathematics; and 29% and 34% met the provincial standard in Science and Geography (Level 3 and 4) respectively. Furthermore, almost half of the students born in ESC had not completed a credit or had an average of 50-59% in Mathematics, Science and Geography by August 2007.

Table 5: Student Achievement in Mathematics, Science & Geography by Region of Birth

Region of Birth	Mathematics			Science			Geography			Total N
	50-59% and below %	60-69% %	70% or higher %	50-59% and below %	60-69% %	70% or higher %	50-59% and below %	60-69% %	70% or higher %	
Canada	36%	21%	43%	30%	22%	49%	26%	19%	55%	11776
Canada (Black)	55%	21%	24%	46%	25%	29%	42%	24%	34%	1483
Africa	51%	22%	26%	42%	23%	35%	38%	27%	36%	208
ESC	59%	18%	23%	49%	22%	29%	48%	18%	34%	191

Source: Brown & Sinay (2008)

Students born in the ESC also lag behind Canadian-born students in Grade 9 Cohort English achievement.⁵ Performance in English is measured by four levels albeit different than the measure used for core curriculum subjects.⁶ Table 5 indicates that 37% of students born in the ESC had not completed a credit in either English-/ESL/ELD by August 2007. Conversely, a little more than one third (38%) of students born in the ESC had either an average of 60-69% or

⁴ Grade 9 Cohort Mathematics, Science and Geography achievement examines: 1) Grade cohort students who had not completed a credit in the subject by August 2007, or had an average of 50-59%; 2) those who had an average of 60-69%; and 3) those who were at the provincial standard, that is, an average of 70% or higher (Levels 3 and 4) (Brown & Sinay, 2008).

⁵ English achievement includes English as a Second Language (ESL)/English Literacy Development (ELD)

⁶ Grade 9 Cohort English-ESL/ELD achievement, examines: 1) cohort students who had completed an ESL/ELD credit but not an English credit by August 2007; 2) Grade cohort students who had not completed a credit in either English or ESL/ELD by August 2007, or had an average of 50-59%; 3) those who had an average of 60-69%; and 4) those who were at the provincial standard, that is, an average of 70% or higher (Levels 3 and 4) (Brown & Sinay, 2008).

exceeded the provincial standard (70% or more) and are outperforming Black Canadian and African students. Still, ESC students remain the highest at-risk in other core curriculum subjects.

Table 6: Student Achievement in English by Region of Birth

Region of Birth	English-ESL/ELD				
	ESL/ELD	No English or ESL/ELD credit	50-59% or below	60-70% +	Total
	%	%	%	%	N
Canada	0%	24%	20%	56%	11776
Canada (Black)	0%	39%	25%	36%	1483
Africa	14%	31%	20%	35%	208
ESC	6%	37%	19%	38%	191

Source: Brown & Sinay (2008)

Results of first-time eligible (Grade 10 students) writing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) examines those students that successfully completed the test the first time, versus those that did not. Closely related to future achievement, the purpose of the OSSLT is to determine whether students have acquired the literacy (reading and writing) skills expected to have learned by the end of Grade 9, as outlined in the Ontario Curriculum. Upon completion, the OSSLT identifies students that have demonstrated the required literacy skills as well as those who have not demonstrated these skills and need additional instruction and practice (EQAO, 2008). Table 10 indicates more than 61% of self-identified Black students born in the ESC failed or were absent, deferred, exempted from writing the OSSLT. While 39% of students born in the ESC were successful in completing the OSSLT, these OSSLT success rates are still lower than the success rates of Canadian-born students (62%) and self-identified Black students from Canada (38%) and Africa (51%).⁷

⁷ In contrast, results from the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress long-term trend assessments, which were administered during the 2007-08 school year in the United States, show that Black students have made greater gains from the early 1970s than White students in reading and mathematics. For example, across three age groups (ages 9, 13 & 17) increases from 1971 to 2008 were larger for Black students than for White students (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2008).

Table 7: Student Achievement in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test by Region of Birth

Region of Birth	First-time eligible students		
	Other Students (failed, absent, deferred, exempt)	Successful	Total
	%	%	N
Canada	23%	77%	11864
Canada (Black)	38%	62%	1299
Africa	49%	51%	269
ESC	61%	39%	231

Source: Brown & Sinay (2008)

International data suggests ESC countries have witnessed a slow increase in secondary school attainment since the 1990s, outpacing all developed countries. However, the data suggests a small gap between Canada and the four countries of the five largest subgroups of people of Caribbean of origin living in the CMA. While such educational progress is noted, it does not suggest the presence of a strong academic culture.⁸ Furthermore, those born in the ESC have the highest dropout rate and at-risk rates in credit accumulation, core curriculum subjects (except in English achievement) and the OSSLT among students by region of birth and self-identified Black students in the TDSB (Brown & Sinay, 2008). In addition to their school performance, ESC students are the least likely to enter high school on time or be enrolled in the ‘Academic’ stream in the TDSB. They are also the most likely to be living in other family structures. As such, they are in the most disadvantaged position in terms of socio-demographic and school related characteristics in the TDSB, which makes them unique among all new immigrants (Anisef et al., 2008).⁹ Given their at-risk profile, the persistent underachievement of ESC students requires further investigation. The subsequent section provides a literature review on minority students in education. The literature attempts to explain academic underachievement among minority students in relation to school factors. The literature section leads to my methodology in section 5.

⁸ Advocates and literature (Bello, 2008; Magocsi, 1999) suggest Caribbean immigrants come from a society where education is highly valued.

⁹Anisef et al. (2008) also find that youth who live in neighborhoods where higher proportions of residents live in poverty also experience higher dropout rates. This effect remained statistically significant when region of origin and individual-level factors were present in their statistical model.

3: Theory about Minorities and School Performance

The theoretical literature on minority youth addresses the relationship between ethnic origin and educational achievement. It also attempts to explain the negative schooling experiences of some minority youth and the process of academic disengagement. In his study on minorities in Canadian education, Cummins (1997) highlights the role of the school and teachers in maintaining inequalities. Cummins suggests unequal power and status relations within the larger society shape the “micro-politics” of the classroom to the disadvantage of minority groups. Cummins identifies two types of educational structures reflected in the power relations of the classroom. The first structure, which he labels “coercive relations of power”, serves to maintain the inferior status of minority students and contributes to their uneasiness with their learning environment. The second structure, which he labels the “collaborative relations of power”, relations are positively co-developed and shared among students and teachers. As such, minority students feel more comfortable with their identity and are better able to change their situation.

In Cummins' view, there is a historical and current pattern of “coercive relations of power”, the first structure, which have led to persistent problems in Canadian schools for minority students. The lack of respect for minorities' cultural identities and languages contributes to student resistance to learning and strained relationships with teachers. Mitchell and Bryan (2007) support Cummins' view. They suggest Caribbean immigrant students who represent one of the largest subgroups in the Black population in the United States are experiencing negative academic outcomes because of poor interactions with school personnel. Walrond (2008) also shares this view, suggesting there is a lack of cultural recognition of the cultural model of Caribbean youth in Canadian schools. Given these theoretical perspectives, I focus on specific studies that highlight some of the school factors that contribute to underachievement. While most

of the studies focus on either minorities or Black student populations as homogenous groups, some of the case studies are particularly germane to Caribbean youth.

3.1.1 Teacher Expectations

As noted earlier, several authors have attributed underachievement among minority students, particularly Caribbean immigrant students, to the negative experiences they have within school. There is a growing body of research that suggests some teachers have lower expectations of minority students, particularly Black students. For example, Taylor (1991) finds that to the extent teachers harbour negative racial stereotypes, a Black student's race alone is enough to place them at risk of negative school outcomes. This is despite the fact that studies show Black students' aspirations are as high as White students (Smith et al., 2001). Solomon (1997) suggests teachers have negative perceptions and expectations of Black students and often give preferential treatment to students of their own kind. Murphy (1973) also suggests "social class" is readily and undoubtedly accepted as a critical component of those expectations; all of which lead to alienation and academic failure among Black students. In Canada, Codjoe (2001) examines the academic and achievement-related beliefs of Black high school students in two Canadian cities, Toronto and Halifax. Black students express the belief that White teachers view them as academically weak, discourage their academic interests, stream them into vocational and athletic programs, and respond to them less positively than White students.

In the case of ESC students, the expectations follow a stereotype: having poor language and communication skills; low levels of school participation; and, in the case of the males, higher levels of aggression (Anderson and Grant, 1987; Foster, 1996). Moreover, Walrond (2008) argues that Caribbean youth are regularly and unnecessarily tested and labelled "as having psychological problems, as being slow learners or being learning disabled, as suffering from the attention deficit syndrome or being hyperactive, and assigned to special education classes". Lindsay et al. (2006), using longitudinal data from the 2005 Pupil Level Annual School Census, discovers that

Caribbean students are one and half times more likely identified as having Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) than White British students. They suggest differential treatment of Caribbean students as a reason for their over-representation in the BESD category. As a result, treatment of some minority students by teachers emerges as a problem that contributes to academic failure.

3.1.2 School Counselling Practices

Elliston (1985) suggests school counsellors do not provide adequate, culturally competent counselling and academic planning. This affects the academic outcomes for minority students and limits their life chances. Mitchell and Bryan (2005) notes that this situation is compounded by the fact that Caribbean parents are often unaware of the need to monitor closely their children's academic development, as school personnel in the Caribbean are perceived by parents as professionals who are trusted to make the best decision for the child's academic progress. The fact that Caribbean students are more likely enrolled in basic and general level academic programs than is the average student is a case in point. The Ontario Royal Commission on Learning (1995) indicates that Canadian-born black students of Caribbean descent are overrepresented in basic and general level math courses and foreign-born black students of Caribbean descent are overrepresented in basic and general level English and math programs. While parents may believe that teachers are making the best educational decisions for their child, they are sometimes unaware that the prescribed educational programs are nonacademic tracks. Consequently, there is a need for appropriate school counselor and teacher interactions with Caribbean students and families (Mitchell & Bryan, 2005).

3.1.3 School Curriculum

There is also concern that the classroom is not a welcoming environment where Black children can discuss their life experiences (Walrond, 2008). Teaching materials and school texts

are critical in this respect. Research provides evidence that the underrepresentation of Black culture in the school curriculum provides mediocre classroom experiences for Black children, thus establishing barriers to their academic achievement (Dei, 1995; Hale-Benson 1986). An important predictor of whether students remain in school or leave school early is their ability to identify with curriculum (Griffin, 2002). For instance, based on a three-year study in the greater Toronto area, Dei et al. (1997) examine how school structures and processes lead to Black students dropping out. Students cite problems regarding the content of school curriculum and its relevance to their lives. Accordingly, curriculum that fails to reflect Black students' experiences and provides, at times, only negative images of students' culture and backgrounds is critical in affecting the learning processes of these students (Dei, 1995). This lack of interest in school curriculum is further exacerbated given that Black students tend to "identify" less with academics relative to Asian and White students (Dei, 2003).

3.1.4 Peer Groups

The role of peers is also a factor in the underachievement of minority youth. In a study examining ethnic differences in adolescent achievement, Steinberg et al. (1992) find that while African-American parents are supportive of academic success, African-American youth find it difficult to join a peer group that encourages academic success. Interviews with high-achieving African-American students indicate that peer support for academic success is limited to the extent that many academically successful African-American students avoid contact with other African-American students and affiliate primarily with students from other ethnic groups. Ogbu (2003) documents similar findings in a study of the academic performance of African-American students in an affluent neighbourhood in Cleveland, Ohio. Ogbu finds that Black peer groups have different norms and degrees of school involvement; do not study together; and encourage each other to do poorly in school. Black peer groups consider answering questions in class as "acting White" and peers run the risk of being chastised and marginalised. Ogbu finds this is particularly

true for students in lower level academic programs who tend to be vulnerable to negative peer influence. Similar issues have arisen in the analysis of the U.S. White/Black student performance gaps. In a recent empirical study of Texas schools, Hanushek and Rivkin (2006) conclude that the Black/White achievement gap is entirely attributable to an over-representation of Black students in low-performing schools. This is consistent with other recent work on racial composition in schools. Guryan (2004) examines whether the desegregation plans of the 1970's benefited Black and White students in desegregated school districts in the U.S.¹⁰ He finds they reduced high school dropout rates of Blacks by two to three percentage points during this decade. No significant change is observed among Whites. Similarly, Cooley (2007) studies White and non-White students in North Carolina public elementary schools and determines that desegregation results in small reductions in between-race achievement gaps. Others such as Angrist and Lang (2004) use Boston's Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (Metco), one of the largest and longest-running desegregation programs in the U.S., to study the impact of desegregation on White students who remain in schools to which Black students are bused. They find no impact of Metco on the scores of White non-Metco students, but show some evidence of a negative impact on the reading and language scores of Black third graders, especially girls. However, given the localized nature of the results, they conclude that peer effects from Metco are modest. In total, these findings suggest that minority peer effects in school are likely detrimental, particularly with respect to achievement on standardized tests for basic subjects (Richards et al., 2009).

¹⁰ Up until Brown v. Board of Education in 1954, Southern and Border States in the U.S. legally segregated their school systems by race. As a result, Black schools received fewer resources and Black children were taught almost exclusively by Black teachers. With the Brown decision, the U.S. Supreme Court deemed segregated schools "inherently unequal" and therefore unconstitutional. During the next 30 years, federal courts ordered the implementation of desegregation plans for many of the largest school districts in the U.S. The intent was to provide equal educational resources to Blacks by eradicating segregation on the basis of race (Guryan, 2004).

3.1.5 School Discipline

Felice (1981) suggests that students that dropout from school are more likely to come from schools with disproportionately high rates of minority student suspensions and expulsions. This is less the case where students perceive the discipline to be fair (Goldschmidt and Wang, 1999). Some minority students face discipline for being “nonconformist and resistant to the authoritarian structures of schooling” (Dei, 2008, p. 350). To illustrate this point, Gillborn (1997) shows how Caribbean and Asian students in Britain are subject to different stereotypes, with Caribbean students more frequently perceived by teachers as troublemakers and punished for displays of their ethnicity than Asian students. Gillborn notes that for Caribbean males, “the very masculinity that seems to offer them respect among peers (including Whites) feed directly into actions that will fail them in school” (p. 383-384). In Britain, inequalities are already greatest for Caribbean males who are subject to high underachievement and expelled more than any other group. Others such as Ruck and Wortley (2002) examine perceptions of differential treatment relating to school disciplinary practices among racially and ethnically diverse high school students in Toronto. They find that racial and ethnic minority students believe they are more likely to face suspension or police contact at school than White students. Moreover, age at immigration seems to be associated with students’ perceptions of differential treatment, such that the longer respondents live in Canada the more likely they are to perceive bias toward members of their racial and ethnic group.

3.2 Generational Status

A recent study reveals that first and second-generation immigrant youth face distinct challenges in secondary school (Ferguson et al., 2005). In interviews with first and second-generation youth in Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo that had either left school early or were at risk of doing so, researchers identify the need to learn a new language, unfamiliarity with the Canadian school system and inappropriate grade placement as important risk factors. Issues of

resettlement, loneliness, isolation and a lack of friends are also reported. The study suggests youth who immigrated to Canada during the last years of high school were most at risk of dropping out. This has been shown in previous studies: minority students that arrive in their new homeland by age six or seven tend to do better academically than those who arrive in the upper elementary and junior high years (Gibson, 1987).

There is also evidence that immigrant youths are frequently more successful in school than non-immigrant students of similar backgrounds if they receive all their schooling in their new homeland (Gibson, 1997). Mitchell (2005) analyses the responses of 200 Caribbean immigrant adolescents of first, second and third-generation who attended public, private and catholic schools in New York City and an urban area in North Carolina. Results indicate that academic achievement decreases with the length of stay. This substantiates Ogbu's (1997) findings that there are differences in performance between recent minority immigrant populations and U.S.-born minority students, with the former having greater academic success. Yet, Canadian research contradicts these findings. Anisef et al. (2008) find region of origin to be a significant predictor of underachievement. They find first generation Caribbean youth perform worse in Toronto schools compared to native born and "third" plus generation Caribbean youth. Glick and White (2004) suggest that this variance of research findings shows that the adaptation experiences of immigrant and second-generation youth do not follow the same trajectory across all racial and ethnic groups. Thus, generational status influences academic achievement among Caribbean youth, but it is not clear in what ways and to what extent.

To summarise, teacher expectations and academic planning practices adversely affect minority students and their academic achievement. There is also the lack of relevant curriculum, peer influences and the disciplining of minority students with suspensions and expulsions, which ultimately lead to negative school outcomes. In addition to their sense of alienation, some minority students lack any sense of identification and connectedness to school. As a result,

negative attitudes towards school manifest themselves in a variety of ways depending on their length of time in their new country. In the subsequent section, I outline the policy problem and the possible stakeholders that would be interested in this study.

4: Policy Problem and Key Stakeholders

The policy problem I examine is the academic underachievement among secondary students born in the ESC. In Canada, graduation from high school is the minimum level of education required to gain access to a range of prospects, including post-secondary education. While graduating from secondary school does not guarantee individuals have sufficient academic skills for post-secondary education, failing to graduate ensures an individual does not. Those who leave school early, on average, have lower academic skills than secondary school graduates and even those graduates of similar characteristics or backgrounds (Alexander et al., 1985). In 2006, the Canadian unemployment rate among 25- to 54-year-olds without a secondary school diploma was 9.4%, compared to 4.2% for those with a secondary school diploma (Statistics Canada, 2008c). Individuals with less than a secondary school diploma also suffer a lower level in real income. Dropouts have been disproportionately limited in recent decades to working at the low end of the service sector economy. These positions tend to offer low wages, poor benefit packages, non-unionized status and restrictions to internal job promotions (Dunham & Wilson, 2007). Leaving school early is a barrier to future occupational mobility and success. Dropouts also suffer from a host of negative consequences, ranging from poor health to increased criminal activity (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). The number of school years completed is therefore an important contributor to an individual's welfare.

The dropout rate among secondary students born in ESC was 40% in 2005 and this segment of the Black student population continues to be more at risk of not graduating compared to the average secondary student. This study proposes policy options based on an analysis of key informant interviews, focus groups and a case study. Findings from this study will be useful to school boards in fostering positive environments that help minority youth complete high school.

It will also assist boards with developing policies and programs to close the achievement gap between students born in the ESC and other groups of students.

Stakeholders interested in this policy problem include the Ontario Ministry of Education. The Ministry is responsible for allocating funds to school boards based on student enrolment and the unique needs of the students in each board. Ministries also include the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, which provides programs and services to help newcomers settle in Ontario. Another stakeholder is the TDSB with the 22 school board trustees elected to the board. Trustees approve or disapprove all internal policies. Others include CultureLink, which offers services to immigrant students and families in the TDSB. Community stakeholders engaged in this policy problem include the Toronto's Caribbean community, notably the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA) and Tropicana Community Services (TSC). The JCA is an incorporated, non-profit charitable organization, providing social and cultural programs for people of Jamaican, African Canadian and Caribbean descent. The JCA also offers a range of culturally sensitive services, which support the diverse needs of its constituency, especially youth. TSC is a not-for-profit organization providing culturally social services in East Toronto, focusing on the needs of youth, newcomers and the Caribbean and Black communities.

Other community stakeholders include the Canadian Alliance of Black Educators, the Black Youth Taking Action and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations. These organizations have been involved in advocacy and action around the need for anti-racism and equity in education. As well, they have attempted to address the barriers faced by immigrant and refugee students in the Toronto area. Additional stakeholders include numerous parents and community advocates in the Toronto Black community, specifically the Organisation of Parents of Black Children (OPBC). The OPBC has long advocated for improvements in curriculum content and delivery for Black students, and for fuller participation of Black parents in the processes of education in Toronto and surrounding areas. Finally, Pathways to Education is a charitable organization created to reduce

poverty and its effects by lowering the high school dropout rate and increasing access to post-secondary education among disadvantaged youth in the Regent Park neighbourhood in Toronto. The next section now describes the main methodologies employed in my study.

5: Methodology

Two main methodologies form the basis for my analysis: key informant and focus group interviews. This section helps to provide context for Section 6, which presents the results of my data analysis. Details in this section include data collection as well as the themes explored with key informants and focus group participants.

5.1 Key Informants

Key informant interviews were conducted with experts and stakeholders in the City of Toronto between January 26th, 2009 and February 3rd, 2009. In total, six key informants were interviewed for my analysis. Those informants are:

Table 8: Key Informants Interviewed & Position Title

Key Informants	Position Title	Identification	Date Interviewed
Dr. Carl James	Professor in the Faculty of Education, cross-appointed in the graduate programs in Sociology and Social Work, York University	Professor of Education	January 27 th , 2009
Dr. George Dei	Chair, Department of Sociology and Equity Studies, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto	Professor of Sociology	February 3 rd , 2009
Dr. Joe Springer	Director of the Caribbean Research Centre, Ryerson University	Director of Caribbean Research	January 29 th , 2009
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	Academic Director of the Centre for Urban Schooling, Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto	Professor of Urban Schooling	January 26 th , 2009
Dr. Lance McCready	Assistant Professor, Department of Teaching, Learning and Curriculum, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto	Professor of Teaching	February 3 rd , 2009
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	Supervising Principal, Equity and Inner City, Toronto District School Board	Supervising Principal	January 26 th , 2009

My objective was to interview a cross section of identified experts, particularly those who had been previously consulted by the TDSB or had in-depth knowledge of some of the issues related to my policy study. Experts were selected through a review of TDSB documents and stakeholder lists. Interviews were conducted with front-line workers in the TDSB, however permission to quote was not granted. Attempts were also made to interview the Executive Officer of Student and Community Equity and various superintendents of education at the TDSB, but they were unavailable for comment. While this study accurately summarizes the opinions of key informants, it does not account for school factors as perceived by frontline principals and teachers, a major limitation of this study. In future studies, it would be useful to ask principals and teachers not only their perceptions, but the types of reforms that should be implemented in order to improve outcomes for ESC students.

In view of the literature on how school factors contribute to academic underachievement among minority students, I explored various themes in my key informant interviews. Questions were prepared, so to raise similar issues with all key informants. The questions do seek, however, to obtain the view of informants based on their own research and understanding of the issues related to my policy study. Themes and questions are:

Table 9: Interview Themes & Questions Explored with Key Informants

Themes	General Question
Teacher expectations	Do you think teacher expectations play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?
School discipline	Do you think school discipline plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?
School counseling practices	Do you think school counselling practices play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?
School curriculum	Do you think school curriculum plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?
Peer groups	Do you think peer groups play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?
Generational status	Do you think generational status plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean youth?

Prompts were also employed in order to further explore themes and better understand how each school factor may or may not contribute to the underachievement patterns among students born in the ESC (see Appendix A). In order to ensure comprehensiveness, I finished each interview with a question about other school factors not discussed that may be contributing to my policy problem. Not all informants chose to answer this question.

5.2 Focus Groups

I also employ focus groups to address the question of how school factors contribute to academic underachievement of secondary students born in the ESC.¹¹ Focus group participants were recruited through the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA), a charitable organization in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Focus group interviews were conducted on January 31st 2009 with

¹¹ The importance of examining student's perceptions cannot be underestimated. As Ruck and Wortley (2002) note, "how an individual perceives his or her environment may be more important than "objective reality, in that one's perceptions will influence how one responds to the environment." If students perceive unfair treatment then that perception is reality. This has important policy implications if school boards expect to develop policy measures to ensure all students perceive their schooling experience as an equal educational opportunity. Moreover, analyzing students' perceptions of their school environment provides a unique opportunity to understand how students interpret social aspects of their social world. It allows students a chance to articulate their sense of "connectedness" and "belonging" in their schools (Dei, 1995).

the assistance of JCA personnel. The JCA recruited Caribbean secondary students (Grades 9-12) in the TDSB deemed at-risk due to a host of factors including truancy, credit accumulation and school violence. To uncover some of the school factors that contribute to my policy problem, I formed the following sampling sub-categories for the focus groups in order to compare their responses:

- 2 at-risk Caribbean secondary students (first generation, born in Jamaica)
- 5 at-risk Caribbean secondary students (second generation, born in Canada)

In total, 7 students took part in the focus groups. Before beginning each focus group, students were administered a survey (see Appendix C), which elicited general information from Caribbean youth relating to age, grade, place of birth, current high school, class sizes and length of enrolment in their current secondary school. Table 13 provides the results from that survey. One male and one female participated in the focus group of first generation students and four males and one female participated in the group of second generation students. Students ranged from ages 14-19 and attended one of two high schools in the TDSB: C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute (C.W.J.C.I.) and Downsview Secondary School (D.S.S.). Six students attended C.W.J.C.I., a high school of over 830 students located in the northwest of Toronto (TDSB, 2008b). Only one student attended D.S.S., a smaller school with approximately 570 students (TDSB, 2008c). The majority of students had been attending their high schools for two years and were enrolled in applied streams. The rest were either enrolled in academic or workplace. An even number of students reported their average class size as either being 15-19 students or 20-24 students. Only one student reported their average class size was between 25-29 students.

Table 10: Summary of Focus Group Survey Findings – Demographic Data

Generational Status	Place of birth	Age	Grade	Toronto High School	Length of time at high school	Academic Stream	Class Sizes (# of students)
1st generation	Jamaica	19	10	C.W.J.C.I.	5 years	Applied	15-19
	Jamaica	16	12	D.S.S.	2 years	Academic	25-29
2nd generation	Canada	17	11	C.W.J.C.I.	3 years	Applied	20-24
	Canada	18	12	C.W.J.C.I.	2 years	Workplace	20-24
	Canada	15	10	C.W.J.C.I.	2 years	Academic	20-24
	Canada	15	10	C.W.J.C.I.	2 years	Applied	15-19
	Canada	14	9	C.W.J.C.I.	1 years	Applied	15-19

On the survey, questions also elicited information with respect to class participation, teacher relationships, school discipline and institutional respect for Caribbean students’ cultural and racial backgrounds. The survey closed with questions relating to personal motivation and high school completion (see Appendix D for survey results). Subsequently, I began the focus group and explored school factors similar to those raised with key informants. Again, questions were prepared, so as to raise similar issues with both focus groups. Table 14 provides an overview of the general themes. I also elicited information from students about how school boards could address underachievement among ESC students, so that they would be more likely to finish secondary school rather than dropping out.

Table 11: School Factors Explored with Caribbean Secondary Students

Variable #	General Theme	Specific Theme
1	Teacher expectations	Fair/respectful treatment of you
		Relationship with teachers
		Expectations of school teachers/authorities
2	School counseling practices	Knowledge about guidance counselors
		Reliance on guidance counselors
3	School curriculum	Interest in course material
		Representative of race and culture
		Ability to follow curricular demands
		Willingness to seek help when needed
4	Peer groups	Relationship with school peers
		Expectations of peer groups
		School culture in general (bullying, violence, discrimination, abuse)
5	School discipline	Fair treatment by school authorities

Given the small size of my focus groups, data from Springer et al.'s "*Pathways to Homelessness Among Caribbean Youth Aged 15-25 in Toronto*" are used to help validate findings from my focus group interviews. The study, conducted in February 2006, attempts to determine pathways related to homelessness among Caribbean youth, some of whom are dropouts. The study garnered 43 interviews (26 males and 17 females). The majority of homeless youth were Black. In total, 15 (35%, 11 males and 4 females) had dropped out of school at some point. Although the focus of this study is different, reasonable comparisons can be made between the two samples. In relation to other immigrant students in the TDSB, students born in the ESC are in the least favourable position in terms of socio-demographic characteristics (Anisef et al., 2008). My analysis focuses on the responses of those students in the Springer et al. study that dropped out secondary school. Questions range from reasons for dropping out to issues surrounding discrimination in school.

5.3 Analytical Method

To compare the information from the full written transcripts, I develop categories of responses that both generalize the verbatim and the larger themes emerging from these discussions. For the focus groups, I also crosstab participants' responses with the characteristics gathered from my survey related to place of birth, grade level, academic stream and school involvement. From these analyses, I then highlight the issues that negatively influence the academic achievement of students born in the ESC or discourage some of them from completing secondary school. The next section presents the detailed analysis.

6: Analysis

This section presents the results of my analysis. I focus on school factors that both positively and negatively influence student achievement among students born in the ESC, as expressed by key informants and focus group participants. Focus group results are compared with a case study to lend to my findings. All help to inform my policy options discussed in section 7.

6.1 Key Informants

Table 15 summarises my overall findings with respect to the five main school factors investigated in my study.

6.1.1 Teacher Expectations

All informants except one believe that teacher expectations play an important role in the underachievement of students born in the ESC. Race and class considerations also have an impact. The Director of Caribbean Research suggests that ESC students learn early on from teachers that little is expected of them academically and they are often ignored, which he considers problematic. The Professor of Sociology suggests that not all teachers have low expectations or that all teachers engage in those stereotypes, but it is still a problem since students have raised it consistently in past TDSB studies. For example, students often raise the issue that teachers do not believe in their ability to excel. As a result, students act out. Yet, the larger issue is what is available to students to counteract low expectations. Similarly, the Supervising Principal maintains that relationships between students of the ESC and teachers are sometimes strained since many Black students feel stereotyped.

Table 12: Summary of Key Informant Responses

1) TEACHER EXPECTATIONS		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Education	Teachers feel information students bring to school not in keeping with expectations. Must think about race and class operating within expectations.	Yes
Professor of Sociology	It is a problem. There are not sufficient safeguards and antiracist support measures in the schools to assist the students to deal with such problems.	Yes
Director of Caribbean Research	Students learn early on that not much is expected of them academically and they are ignored, which is problematic.	Yes
Professor of Urban Schooling	While teacher expectations are part of larger culture in a school, negative and missing teacher relationships are important.	Yes
Professor of Teaching	Teacher expectations are related to curriculum standards and there is a current gap between expectations and student knowledge.	No
Supervising Principal	Students are stereotyped, which leads to strained relationships. Lack of parental involvement.	Yes
2) SCHOOL COUNSELLING PRACTICES		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Education	Socioeconomic conditions may inform outcomes. Students may not know about consequences of certain academic paths. Parents may not know the Canadian school system; trust schools to make best decision.	No
Professor of Sociology	Nobody believes in these students. It is a question of expectation. Students know counsellors will put them in lower streams anyway.	Yes
Director of Caribbean Research	Use of native jargon and improper use of English has direct implications for how Caribbean students are viewed and assessed. Poor assessments result in the type of streaming outcomes observed	Yes
Professor of Urban Schooling	Race and class considerations are important. Access looms large for socioeconomically underprivileged students. No capacity to think beyond current circumstances.	No
Professor of Teaching	Counsellors are overloaded and do not have time to see everybody. Sorting mechanisms related to previous achievement records.	No
Supervising Principal	Counselling deters students of colour from university. Based on expectations and biases towards students. Teachers need to get to know their students better. Lack of parental involvement.	No
3) SCHOOL CURRICULUM		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Education	Material in curriculum approaches need to better relate to students. Teachers may not connect lessons to communities in which students live, to the experiences they bring to school.	Yes
Professor of Sociology	Huge issue. Curriculum is everything that happens in school system. If students do not see themselves in the curriculum, it leads to disengagement.	Yes
Director of Caribbean Research	Important students learn to see themselves in the material. Not as criminals, but as inventors and creators. Must recognize students' role in building society.	Yes

Professor of Urban Schooling	It has a big role. Need to look at curriculum and teaching practices across an array of contexts to ensure equity in school and in outcomes.	Yes
Professor of Teaching	No evidence that TDSB is doing enough to address this issue. Some schools are trying new programs, but not implemented board wide.	Yes
Supervising Principal	Students do not see themselves in the curriculum. It is essential for students to be represented. Brings higher sense of expectation and involvement.	Yes
4) PEER GROUPS		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Education	Peers are significant for immigrants, more so than parents. Academic underachievement is more about resisting perceived unfairness. Students put off engagement until larger curriculum responds to them.	No
Professor of Sociology	Students not developed a strong sense of self and fall prey to their peers. Educators must cultivate peer culture to help students understand the importance of education to their lives/communities.	Yes
Director of Caribbean Research	Critical element. Students see themselves as ‘othered’ and establish alternative identity. They seek status on athletic teams.	Yes
Professor of Urban Schooling	Considerable factor. Both a source and place of community, notably marginalized students who struggle with negative profiles of their communities.	Yes
Supervising Principal	Peer groups do matter, but are not central. The dominant culture is the issue. Peers reinforce negative stereotypes about their communities.	No
5) SCHOOL DISCIPLINE		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Education	Disciplinary measures cannot be read in isolation of schools. Race and class operate within those measures. Gender is also critical i.e. Caribbean males	Yes
Professor of Sociology	Too much enforcement. If students have a history of marginalization, they react negatively to authority. Also a lack of respect in the system among students, peers and teachers translates into indiscipline.	Yes
Director of Caribbean Research	Zero tolerance policy inconsistently administered. Students believe it is arbitrary and attribute it to racism. Students entering midstream also cause disciplinary problems.	Yes
Professor of Urban Schooling	There are vestiges of the zero tolerance in TDSB. Students suggest it is arbitrary and targeted. No flexibility and removes any element of a relationships between school authorities and students.	Yes
Professor of Teaching	Teachers views students without looking at social economic context of students’ lives. TDSB also has progressive discipline chart, defining certain consequences for certain behaviour. Limits teachers’ abilities to foster relationships with students.	Yes
Supervising Principal	Not arbitrary, but based on implicit biases. Bill 212 introduced to address wrongful suspensions and promote more progressive approach.	Yes
6) GENERATIONAL STATUS		
Key informant	Description	Factor
Professor of Teaching	Students may believe less and less that doing well academically will make a difference in their lives.	Yes
Supervising Principal	The longer an immigrant student stays in the TDSB, the less likely the student is going to be successful.	Yes

A related issue raised by key informants is the concept of class and race operating within expectations and its impact on student achievement. The Professor of Education suggests that teachers may feel that the educational values of students born in the ESC may not be in keeping with academic expectations. Socioeconomic conditions may also be operating within those expectations, as economic conditions correlate strongly with race. For him, it is therefore necessary to consider the communities and schools in which Caribbean immigrants live and attend. He notes:

...Black students living in, say, for example, in Bayview and Leslie or Leslie and Yorkmills, in a fairly solidly middle-class area, might have different relationships with the school, say at York Mills Collegiate, [than] compared to somebody that goes to Westview in the Jane and Finch area. They're both migrant, they're both Black, they both might have similar backgrounds, but they live in different kinds of communities. Therefore, teachers might use that kind of information about what he or she knows about the community - but what he or she knows about a community is a construct - not only by the teacher, but by that environment and of course by the media. All that is going to operate with teacher expectations of students and sometimes what students come to think the teachers expect of them and they might play to that expectation that teachers have of them.

The Professor of Urban Schooling makes a similar point, underscoring the challenges associated with teaching socioeconomically underprivileged students. She also identifies negative and missing teacher relationships as factors. Conversely, the Professor of Teaching gives little credence to the impact of teacher expectations on student outcomes. While he believes high expectations for students are important, he notes that teacher expectations are related to curriculum standards and, in this respect, student skills are fundamentally lacking. Teachers expect a certain academic skill set, which students have not always acquired. Therefore, the notion of high expectations being a successful platform to develop positive relationships with students does not address the underlying issues of poor academic standards.

6.1.2 School Counselling Practices

With regards to school counselling practices, no clear consensus emerges among informants on this issue. Whereas half of the informants suggest low expectations play a role in this outcome, a third feels class and race considerations are underlying factors. Points are also

raised about the weak linkages between schools and the Caribbean community. The Director of Caribbean Research argues that ESC students' use of native jargon and improper use of English has a direct implication for how they are counselled and assessed. Other informants share different views on school counselling practices. The Professor of Urban Schooling suggests race and class considerations may inform a student's decision to follow specific streams through high school, particularly among socioeconomically disadvantaged students. The Professor of Teaching acknowledges school counsellors can play a significant role, however, some counsellors are overloaded and do not have time to counsel every student. Moreover, schools have sorting mechanisms in place related to previous academic achievement, with the result that students are often automatically placed into a particular academic stream.

As noted, informants also focus on weak community linkages as a determinant in why students born in the ESC are placed in non-academic streams. According to the Supervising Principal, the relationship between schools and the Caribbean community are informed in part by cultural based parental attitudes, which may have a direct impact on student achievement:

...social advocacy is very different in the Caribbean than social advocacy here in Toronto...most Caribbean families leave education to the professionals and back home they don't question a lot because education is not their domain. It's for the professionals and you send your child to school and you expect that they will be given a fair opportunity to be successful and be challenged and given some rigour to move forward. Now, I'm not saying that all Caribbean countries, all school environments, but, generally, that's the sentiment of the community, is that they leave education up to the teachers. They come here to Canada in many, many cases expecting that same approach, but here in Canada we always talk about parent involvement and getting the community involved and we, again, project upon, our Caribbean parents, who don't show up at the school council meeting, to the bake sale, and our response is – that's an uncaring parent. They don't care about their child's success. They're not getting involved in their child's education, but if that's not my way and I'm not used to that and I expect when I send my child to school [that] you're going to be educating [them], that is your job, and I'm not saying that with any disdain, but that's what I respect your position and that's what you do, you educate, as you did back home.

The Professor of Education shares the Supervising Principal's view. He suggests there is a knowledge gap among Caribbean parents regarding academic streams, and more appropriate school counsellor and teacher interactions with Caribbean students and families is required to address this gap.

6.1.3 School Curriculum

On the impact of school curriculum on student achievement, all informants acknowledge that course content and material play a significant role in underachievement, as does the ability of a teacher to connect the material to a student's day-to-day life. The Professor of Sociology places a high value on curriculum and its impact on student achievement. Curriculum, he notes, "is everything that happens in the school system." If students do not see themselves in the curriculum, it leads to disengagement. The curriculum and the approach of teachers to the curriculum need to relate to students in the context of their everyday lives. The Director of Caribbean Research agrees with him. It is much more important that students learn to see themselves in a positive light and contributing to the larger society. Accordingly, the curriculum must be presented in a fashion that allows students to engage with it.

The Professor of Education also underscores the teacher's approach to the curriculum as significant to student achievement. If a student believes the curriculum does not relate to a student's experience, it may be due to the fact that the teacher is not connecting a lesson to that student. Curriculum does not necessarily need to reflect a particular population, but it does need to reflect student experiences. This response speaks to the difficulties faced by educators to engage different learning and social styles, particularly in diverse social settings. Others, such as the Supervising Principal, believe it is essential for students to be represented in the overall school environment, which leads to greater student engagement and success. He maintains that the lack of representation of Black culture in the curriculum fosters both mediocre classroom experiences and institutional inequalities. Speaking to the 40% dropout rate among students born in the ESC, he notes:

How do [ESC students come to have a] 40% dropout rate? Is it because [school is] hard? It's not because it's hard. [It's because they] have no relationship with an adult in this building or at least no substantive or sustainable relationship with an adult, which is in this building - this course, this school, this building; and when you talk about curriculum you [also have] to talk "Big C" curriculum. I'm not just talking about content; I'm talking about pictures on the wall. I'm talking about announcements on the PA. Does it represent it me in anyway? Do I see myself in

any part of this building? In the staffing? In the leadership? In the secretaries sitting at the front door? In the caretakers in the building?

Hence, the school environment becomes another barrier to academic achievement. Students may lack any connection to the school due to a lack of cultural perspectives and diversity in staff representation.

6.1.4 Peer Groups

On the issue of peer groups, there is no clear agreement among key informants regarding a negative peer effect. While half suggest they do matter, others suggest peers do not actively encourage negative attitudes toward school and academic achievement. Rather, negative peer groups are a function of low-teacher expectations and students tend to assume the negative stereotypes about their communities. The Professor of Education points out that peers are a significant source of community among immigrant students. Peers may have a better appreciation for some of the issues students face in school compared to immigrant parents. However, he differentiates between African American and African Caribbean students and their approach to academic achievement. He argues disengagement among ESC students is more related to perceived bias or unfairness than succeeding in school. In some instances, students may be putting off their engagement until something better comes along such as a teacher they can relate to or a curriculum that responds to them. Conversely, the Professor of Sociology explains that many ESC students have not developed a strong sense of self-confidence. Therefore, students that are ignored or underappreciated fall prey to their peers. Alternatively, they may seek status elsewhere. The Director of Caribbean Research notes that accomplishments in sports, particularly for Caribbean males, become a means of avoiding and resisting the negative stereotypes about their identities in the classroom. For the most part, all informants recognize educators have a responsibility to cultivate peer culture and show different students the relevance of education to themselves and their communities.

6.1.5 School Discipline

All informants acknowledge that discipline has a negative influence on the academic achievement of ESC students. Yet, issues of class, race and gender are also important. The Supervising Principal contends that students born in the ESC are subject to a disproportionate number of suspensions relative to other students. This creates barriers to academic achievement, which arise from strong biases educators have about the Caribbean community. Three of the informants hold the TDSB's zero tolerance policy (i.e. Safe Schools Act)¹² responsible for the disproportionate number of suspensions and expulsions among students born in the ESC. Although it has now been repealed, the Professor of Urban Schooling maintains the policy had two significant implications. First, the one-size-fits-all approach of the policy restricted administrators who may have been more progressive on issues of discipline. Second, the policy offered a platform to school authorities who were more punitive with certain populations. As a result, some students felt the administration of discipline was arbitrary and targeted. The policy also helped to remove the element of any positive relationship with school authorities, serving to alienate not only Caribbean students, but other minority students, too.

Another issue raised regarding school discipline is the practice of delaying Caribbean students a year to "catch-up" with the Canadian school system. Interestingly, this is not raised by informants when discussing school counselling practices. The Director of Caribbean Research suggests such assessments do not consider the physical development of these students, which, in turn, can lead to isolation and generate disciplinary issues. Of the informants, only one raises this issue. The Professor of Education believes that school discipline practices are having a negative impact on the academic achievement of ESC students. Like other informants, he believes that

¹² On June 14, 2002, the *Safe Schools Act (SSA)* was passed by the provincial government. The *SSA* amended Ontario's *Education Act*, implementing a new Code of Conduct for Ontario schools and providing principals and teachers with the authority to suspend and expel students. One of the most significant changes made by the *SSA* was the provision for mandatory suspension, expulsion and police involvement for various forms of misconduct. The *SSA* fundamentally changed the manner in which discipline was enforced in Toronto, creating what some refer to as a zero tolerance regime (Falconer et al., 2008).

focusing on community is important. For him, the weak ties between the schools and the Caribbean community remain an issue, as does race and class and how those factors operate within disciplinary structures and policies. He suggests that disciplinary measures are more likely to occur in neighbourhoods where there is less parental involvement in the local schools. The Professor of Education also points out that gender is critical involving issues of discipline. Caribbean males are more likely to be subject to disciplinary issues than females.¹³

6.1.6 Generational Status

Lastly, not all key informants spoke to the importance of generational status, but some key findings do emerge from my discussions, namely the age of entry into the school system. Most significant is the admission by the Supervising Principal that the longer a minority student is enrolled in the TDSB system, the less likely their academic success. The Professor of Teaching provides an alternative explanation for this outcome. While there is no evidence that academic standards among ESC students are higher in countries of origin, he suggests immigrant students may increasingly believe that excelling academically will make little difference in their lives. While this belief may be tied to their parents' outlook, it may be related to their socio-economic standing, too. As a result, after being in the school system for a length of time, there can be a shift in attitude in terms of how immigrant students apply themselves in school.

In summary, the majority of informants feel teacher expectations; school curriculum; and disciplinary practices play a role in the underachievement of students born in the ESC. Half of the informants feel peer groups play a role, too. On the other hand, there is no clear agreement on the roles of school counselling practices. Aside from those school factors, points are raised about the weak linkages between schools and the Caribbean community, which can lead to poor academic outcomes.

¹³ This concurs with available research on the subject. Ruck & Wortley (2002) indicate that males are far more likely than females to be disciplined at school.

6.2 Focus Groups

The purpose of this section is to examine the differences in academic self-concept among first and second-generation Caribbean secondary students. Table 16 summarises the overall results with regards to questions posed to focus group participants (see Appendix D for the questions). Results presented are for first generation students only, but the analysis that follows includes discussion from second generation students.

Table 13: Results from Focus Group Discussions with First Generation Students

Variable #	General Theme	Specific Theme	Factor
1	Teacher expectations	Fair/respectful treatment of you	No
		Relationship with teachers	No
		Expectations of school teachers/authorities	Yes
2	School counseling practices	Knowledge about guidance counselors	No
		Reliance on guidance counselors	No
3	School curriculum	Interest in course material	No
		Representative of race and culture	Yes
		Ability to follow curricular demands	No
		Willingness to seek help when needed	No
4	Peer groups	Relationship with school peers	No
		Expectations of peer groups	No
		School culture in general (bullying, violence, discrimination, abuse)	No
5	School discipline	Fair treatment by school authorities	No

6.2.1 Teacher Expectations

Generally, first generation students are more positive about their relationships than their second generation counterparts. Both groups of students suggest they are treated fairly at school, but some second generation students complain about teachers being impolite. On the question of respect for their racial and cultural background, there is a divergence of views between groups. One first generation student explains they socialize and engage with their teachers. In comparison, one second generation student suggests that it depends on the ethnic origin of the teacher whether teacher relationships are positive. There is also a difference about how students perceive their teachers' views of them. While first generation students report being viewed as outspoken or mischievous, second generation students describe their relationships as strained,

explaining teachers are rude. It is noted by a number of second generation students that teachers send students down to the office far too often. In so far as general expectations from teachers and school authorities, both first and second generation students describe a lack of encouragement and understanding. According to one first generation student, teachers fail to appreciate students' day-to-day experiences at home. In general, very few of the students from both groups feel teachers hold high expectations of them. One first generation student does feel however his vice-principal expects him to succeed.

Both groups of students are adamant that they do not share a bond or feel comfortable discussing personal problems with any of their teachers. Friends and coaches are cited as the only outlet for discussing problems at school. First and second generation students are divided on teachers as role models. However, the former were more likely to identify some teachers as role models. The key ingredient was the ability of the teacher to relate to students¹⁴ i.e. usually a teacher of visible minority status. Such teachers help to increase self-confidence and promote higher aspirations. Concerns also surface regarding student perceptions of equal treatment. Particularly, the notion that students are not treated differently because of race or linguistic differences. One first generation student notes:

I have a computer teacher...he doesn't see colour. Like, you know, some teachers will think just cause, just you're Black or whatever, like they need to break it down for you, he does like, he teaches everyone the same. Like, he teaches everyone equal, everyone is equal to him. The way he teaches you one thing, he's going to teach the next person the same thing. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter if you speak English properly or not. He's going to teach you the same thing.

Systemic racism and the differential treatment of ESC students by teachers and other administrators is a significant problem that directly contributes to underachievement. When treated equally and fairly, students are less likely to form an "oppositional identity" that removes them from academic success.¹⁵

¹⁴ King (1993) concluded that Black teachers as role models were critically important because of the many other roles, perspectives, and practices they brought to their teaching approach.

¹⁵ See Codjoe (2001) and Asanova (2008) for further discussion.

6.2.2 School Counselling Practices

Students know little about the role and responsibilities of guidance counsellors. Whereas first generation students know nothing about their responsibilities, second generation students associate them with course planning and scheduling duties. Others do not feel a connection with their counsellors. Not surprising, both groups indicate they neither visit nor feel comfortable seeking advice or discussing problems with their counsellors. Given little contact between students and counsellors, it is difficult to assess whether academic counselling practices impact educational outcomes among either group. However, it is worth noting that students from both groups were overrepresented in “Applied” streams, which can result in negative academic outcomes, such as disengagement and dropping out from secondary school.

6.2.3 School Curriculum

A diversified curriculum that addresses questions of inclusivity and captures the interests of students seems most important for both generations of students. Responses from both groups of students indicate schools do not offer the courses they need. They also complain that the teaching materials and school texts studied at school are outdated, but feel people of different backgrounds are represented in the course materials. In fact, both groups suggest the course material is multicultural. They also agree that learning would be more enjoyable or interesting if they learned more about their cultural background at school. Both groups think taking an African history course would help them learn more about their historical roots, which is important to their sense of self and connectedness to the school. Still, first generation students spoke of the need for a balanced curriculum: “I’m finding the way school is now, if it was more focused towards me then how would the other kids learn.” To this student, a more inclusive curriculum includes a diversity of perspectives, ensuring all students are represented in the curriculum. With regards to students’ willingness to seek help when they need it, first generation students were less likely to

forego help from a teacher.¹⁶ Moreover, neither group of students found the school workload demanding or too challenging.

6.2.4 School Discipline

Nothing indicates students are being disciplined for being nonconformist or resistant to school discipline. Students are asked whether they thought they were treated fairly by school authorities. Girls from both groups raise issues related to dress codes and boys complain about the need to maintain grades to remain on sports teams. One second generation student suggests some Jamaican and African students are more likely to be suspended than their mainstream counterparts. She notes:

“Like, in my school, like, there are some people that...do stuff and get kicked out, but I don’t feel like they treat everybody fair, in my school, cause, there are people that, well, I’ve seen people like try to stab somebody and they’ll get kicked out, they’ll get kicked out and come back. And some people who did something like not as bad, get kicked out and can’t come back to school. It’s because of who they are...Caribbean, like Black, just Jamaicans, Africans.”

This implies that some students may perceive that their peers are more often penalized for engaging in the same types of behaviours than other students. Furthermore, that discipline is arbitrarily administered. While it is difficult to substantiate without a larger sample size, the fact that a female student was more likely to believe that there is bias in terms of treatment relating to school punishment does not correspond with available research on school discipline.¹⁷

6.2.5 Peer Groups

First generation students have slightly higher expectations of themselves academically than their second generation counterparts. All students report academic achievement is encouraged among their friends. However, first generation students do speak to occasional issues

¹⁶ Past studies have shown that students in need of help often do not ask for it (Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2000). However, this was not the case for first generation students in this study.

¹⁷ Ruck & Wortley (2002)

of teasing and bullying when asked how well they get along with other students in the school. As one female student explains about clothes and accessories:

...it depends, there are some people in our school that if you're not wearing the newest Nikes, or if you're not wearing the newest Jordans, or if you don't have a Jsquare bag, they don't want to see you... so, they used to get at you like, where did you get those shoes from, Salvation Army, you know.

While this student recounted teasing as a negative component of the school environment, there is no sense that this directly impacted the student's achievement. As noted, students from both groups had different self-expectations for academic achievement. Still, there is no indication that academic achievement is discouraged to the extent that high-achieving first generation students are forced to associate with students from other ethnic groups. On questions regarding future aspirations, both groups of students understand the importance of education and their own social mobility in the future. All students are in agreement that going to college or university would make a positive difference in their lives. There is also a broad range of career goals among students from becoming a teacher, a lawyer to pursuing a career in either the music or sport and entertainment industries.

6.2.6 Other School Factors

Lastly, students are asked if they could think of any reasons why students born in the ESC dropout of school. A majority of first and second generation students highlight the significance of peer influence and the lure of selling drugs to make money, which, again, raises the issue of a negative peer effect. First generation students also indicate that the negative stereotypes about the communities in which students live plays a role. As one first generation student explains regarding the high dropout rate:

It probably depends on the school and like the atmosphere, the atmosphere of the school. I know, cause, when most, when most of these Black kids, when they come to Canada, once they started the drugs, they start making money and then they drop out of school to go and make money, and then they end up getting in trouble, and then if they go to jail, it screws up everything...that's probably what it is, and plus, like, I live in the Jane and Finch area, and like all the folks are

stereotyped. Like you're from Jane and Finch, you're going to get shot; oh you're going to get shot bad.

While schools have little control over negative societal labelling and other factors that constitute social risk, underachievement is open to school intervention. With this in mind, my primary methodology reveals that teacher expectations and school curriculum play a role in the underachievement of students born in the ESC. While the students do not suggest as much, all informants agree that disciplinary practices have adverse impacts on academic achievement. Half of the informants feel peer groups play a role; others suggest low teacher expectations are the larger factor. All students report academic achievement is encouraged among their friends, but underscore the significance of peer influence and drug peddling. Additionally, there is no clear agreement on the role of school counselling practices on student achievement. Generally, low expectations and negative stereotypes are attributed to this factor. Points are also raised about the poor linkages between schools and the Caribbean community in Toronto schools, which lead to negative academic outcomes.

6.3 Case Study

Table 17 provides a summary of the comparative analysis between the responses of first generation students in the focus group and the case study. While proxies do not exist for all the school factors investigated in my study, Springer et al. (2006) address the role of teacher relationships and expectations, school discipline and the ability of first generation students to follow curricular demands. They also inquire about the future aspirations of students (see Appendix G). Some commonality is found between first generation students in the focus group and case study on the issue of teacher relationships. Students from the case study report that they have no strong relationships with any of their teachers. They also suggest that not all teachers expect them to succeed in school. Equally, 47% of dropouts in the case study feel discrimination makes it hard for people of Caribbean background to get good marks in school. However, first

generation students from the focus group are more positive about teacher relationships than those in the case study. Over 60% of the students in the case study disagree that teachers always treat students fairly. Close to seven in ten (67%) feel most of the time school teachers have treated them like a child, and 60% feel they could “not at all” rely on a teacher for help.

Table 14: Comparative Analysis of Focus Group and Case Study Results

Variable #	Theme	Specific Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
1	Teacher relationships & expectations	Fair/respectful treatment of you	No	Yes
		Relationship with teachers	No	Yes
		Expectations of teachers/authorities	Yes	Yes
2	School counselling practices	Knowledge about guidance counselors	No	-
		Reliance on guidance counselors	No	-
3	School curriculum	Interest in course material	No	-
		Representative of race and culture	Yes	-
		Ability to follow curricular demands	No	No
		Willingness to seek help when needed	No	-
4	Peer groups	Relationship with school peers	No	-
		Expectations of peer groups	No	-
		School culture in general (bullying, violence, discrimination, abuse)	No	-
5	School discipline	Fair treatment by school authorities	No	Yes

With regards to students’ abilities to follow curricular demands, students in the case study do not find the school workload too demanding. Over a third (33%) feels their grades are among the best and another 10% feel their grades are above average. In addition, 43% of students plan on getting a university degree and 29% plan to get a degree from a community college or technical school. An additional 29% plan to finish high school at some point, but would probably relocate to another school in order to complete their schooling. Finally, over 93% agree that continuing with their education will help them acquire a good job. Likewise, first generation students from the focus group also hold positive attitudes towards schooling and have high aspirations for the future.

On issues of school discipline, seven participants in the case study answer yes to having been previously suspended or expelled. The main reason cited is violence (29%). According to

the Director of Caribbean Research, many of the students in the case study suggested school discipline is administered arbitrarily by school authorities. In contrast, first generation students from the focus groups do not share these views.

Students in the case study also share their reasons for dropping out of secondary school. While over 40% cite “financial” reasons as the main reason for leaving school, another 29% cite “relocation”. First generation students in the focus groups also cite financial reasons as a possible reason for why students drop out of school. One female student explains:

I think the government should give more money to the schools, like a special program for people that can't really afford to come to school and those stuff...at least if there's like, you know, if you ever got busted before you come to school, there's nothing really on their minds saying like oh how am I going to come to school, how I'm going to eat, so if there's a program, I think the percentage of dropouts would be lesser.

Again, issues regarding socioeconomic disadvantage emerge, which schools have little control over. However, common school factors that prevail from the focus group and case study are missing teacher relationships and low teacher expectations. First generation students in both the focus group and case study do, however, share positive attitudes towards education as vehicle for success and upward mobility.

6.4 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this section is to highlight school factors that positively and negatively influence academic achievement of ESC students. Table 18 presents a summary of the overall findings. Accordingly, a number of issues emerge:

1) Teacher expectations: All informants except one believe that teacher expectations play an important role in the underachievement of students born in the ESC. First generation students recount a lack of teacher relationships and stress the value of minority teachers as role models in schools. Case study participants also disagree that teachers always treat students fairly.

2) School counselling practices: There is no clear consensus among key informants on this factor. Some key informants attribute low expectations to why first generation students are placed in non-academic streams. Missing school partnerships with Caribbean families and the lack of awareness among students and parents about certain academic paths is also mentioned. Students also report little knowledge about the role and responsibilities of guidance counsellors.

3) School curriculum: All informants agree that if students do not see themselves in the curriculum, it leads to disengagement. The curriculum material needs to better relate to students. First generation students also think learning about their own cultural background would help them to do better in school.

4) School discipline: All informants agree the Safe Schools Act (SSA) and the zero tolerance approach that ensued had negative impacts on the Caribbean population, notably among males. The weak ties between the schools and the Caribbean community remain an issue as well. Disciplinary measures are more likely to occur in neighbourhoods where there is less parental involvement.

5) Peer groups: There is no clear agreement among key informants regarding this factor. There is a general acknowledgement among informants about the need to cultivate peer culture and show ESC students the relevance of education to themselves and their communities. ESC students also highlight the significance of peer influence and the lure of selling drugs to make money. On the contrary, first generation students report that they hold high expectations of themselves with respect to academic achievement, as do case study participants. Still, recent studies on racial composition in U.S. schools suggest the negative effect of higher proportion of Black students is highly significant for Blacks, much more so than for Whites (Hanushek and Rivkin, 2006). This is especially true in terms of achievement on standardized tests for basic subjects. Given that ESC students continue to have the highest at-risk rates in credit accumulation and core curriculum subjects, the minority peer effect is likely deleterious.

Overall, the school factors that influence the policy analysis that follows are:

- Low teacher expectations and ill-prepared educators to engage different learning and social style.
- The need to cultivate peer culture among ESC students
- Culturally insensitive curriculum that fails to reflect the experiences and histories of students.
- Lack of linkages and meaningful partnerships between schools and the wider Caribbean community.

School discipline is also found to negatively influence the academic achievement of ESC students. Much of that is attributed to the SSA. However, this change in the TDSB's disciplinary climate did not go unnoticed by community stakeholders. In July 2005, the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) initiated a complaint against the TDSB. The complaint alleged that the enforcement of the SSA and the TDSB's policies on discipline were having a disproportionate impact on racial minority students and students with disabilities. As a result of this complaint, the TDSB and the OHRC entered into a settlement agreement in November 2005. The TDSB is now expected to report yearly to the Provincial School Safety and Equity Officer on progress made in implementing the OHRC settlement. The TDSB implemented a progressive discipline approach with the goal of curbing suspensions and expulsions.¹⁸ Changes have also been made by the current provincial government to Ontario's *Education Act* (Falkoner et al., 2008). Given these policy interventions, I do not address school discipline in my policy options.

¹⁸ Recent TDSB data indicates the number of students suspended by system enrolment has since declined from 2005-2008. In 2005-06 the number of students suspended and overall suspensions showed a marked decline, and the numbers have continued to drop for 2007-08 (TDSB, 2007; TDSB, 2008e).

Table 15: Summary of Overall Findings

1) TEACHER EXPECTATIONS				
Key informant Summary	Factor	Focus Group Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
<p>Teachers feel information students bring to school not in keeping with expectations. Race and class operating within those expectations.</p> <p>Students are stereotyped, which leads to strained relationships. Not sufficient safeguards and antiracist support measures in the schools to assist the students to deal with such problems.</p> <p>Teacher expectations are related to curriculum standards and there is a current gap between expectations and student knowledge.</p>	Yes	Fair/respectful treatment of you	No	Yes
		Relationship with teachers	No	Yes
		Expectations of teachers/authorities	Yes	Yes
2) SCHOOL COUNSELLING PRACTICES				
Key informant Summary	Factor	Focus Group Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
<p>Socioeconomic conditions may inform outcomes. Students not aware of consequences of certain academic paths. Parents not aware as well: trust schools to make best decision for their children.</p> <p>Unconventional use of English has implications for how Caribbean students are viewed and assessed. Based on strong biases and leads to low expectations of these students.</p> <p>Counsellors are overloaded and do not have time to see everybody. Sorting mechanisms related to previous academic achievement records.</p>	No	Knowledge about guidance counselors	No	N/A
		Reliance on guidance counselors	No	N/A
3) SCHOOL CURRICULUM				
Key informant Summary	Factor	Focus Group Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
<p>Curriculum is everything that happens in school system. If students do not see themselves in the curriculum, it leads to disengagement.</p> <p>Material in curriculum approaches need to better relate to students. Teachers may not connect lessons to communities in which students live, to the experiences they bring to school.</p> <p>Important students learn to see themselves in the material. Not as criminals, but as inventors and creators. Must recognize students' role in building society.</p>	Yes	Interest in course material	No	N/A
		Representative of race and culture	Yes	N/A
		Ability to follow curricular demands	No	No
		Willingness to seek help when needed	No	N/A

4) PEER GROUPS				
Key informant Summary	Factor	Focus Group Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
<p>Both a source and place of community, notably marginalized students who struggle with negative profiles of their communities. Peers reinforce negative stereotypes about their communities.</p> <p>Caribbean youth hold high expectations for themselves. Underachievement more about resisting perceived unfairness. Students put off engagement until curriculum responds to them.</p> <p>Immigrant students have not developed a strong sense of self and fall prey to their peers. Educators must cultivate peer culture to help students understand the importance of education to their lives/communities.</p> <p>Other factors: in and outside of school, students highlight the significance of peer influence and the lure of selling drugs to make money.</p>	Yes	Relationship with school peers	No	N/A
		Expectations of peer groups	No	N/A
		School culture in general	No	N/A
5) SCHOOL DISCIPLINE				
Key informant Summary	Factor	Focus Group Theme	Focus Group	Springer et al.
			Factor	Factor
<p>Disciplinary measures cannot be read in isolation of schools. Race and class operate within those measures. Gender is also critical i.e. Caribbean males</p> <p>Students have a history of marginalization, so they tend to react negatively to authority. Also a lack of respect in the system among students, peers and teachers translates into indiscipline.</p> <p>Zero tolerance policy inconsistently administered. Students believe it is arbitrary and attribute it to racism. Students entering midstream also causes disciplinary problems.</p> <p>TDSB has progressive discipline chart, defining certain consequences for certain behaviour. Limits teachers' abilities to foster relationships with students.</p>	Yes	Fair treatment by school authorities	No	Yes

7: Policy Objectives, Options, Criteria Analysis

To assess the various policy options, I identify both long-term and short-term objectives as well as criteria to evaluate the policy options. I assign a measure to each criterion for the purpose of comparison.

7.1 Policy Objectives

To close the achievement gap for underachieving students, the TDSB has set a “Key System Goal” to increase the secondary school graduation rate for all demographic groups to a minimum of 85% in five years. The TDSB has established a 5% per year improvement for the next five years for underachieving groups for secondary school graduation (TDSB, 2008d). For the purposes of this study, the long-term objective is to reduce the dropout rate among students born in the ESC from 40% to 15% by 2013 as set by the TDSB and my short-term goal is to reduce it to 35% by 2010.

7.1.1 Policy Options

Based on my findings in sub-section 6.4., a number of policy options are designed to address the factors that negatively influence the academic achievement of Black student populations. Two often cited reforms are an Afrocentric alternative secondary school and increasing the number of minority teachers in the school system. However, the literature does not clearly support the efficacy of these policy options in addressing the dropout rate (Ginwright, 2000; Pitts, 2005). Hence, those options are not proposed. Teacher merit pay was also considered as a policy option in this study; the idea of rewarding teachers that do a good job (based on the performance of their students) and weeding out those teachers that do not. It would also entail

putting the very best teachers in the poorest schools in Toronto and paying them salaries to compensate for the challenges they face (Ibbitson, 2009). However, as noted earlier, a major limitation of this study is that it does not account for the views of frontline principals and teachers. Without these interviews, it is difficult to accurately assess whether merit pay would be acceptable to frontline teachers and the unions. Moreover, a recent report by the British Columbia-based Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education suggests the substantive effects of merit pay on student achievement are mixed. Based on a review of six teacher compensation programs operating at the district, state, and national levels in the United States, the report argues merit pay would help attract and retain better teachers. Yet, “merit” is hard to define (i.e. risks arbitrariness and favouritism by principals) and the study finds such pay for individual teachers is unpopular. Many view merit pay as proliferating unhealthy competition and lowering staff morale (Raham et al., 2008). Hence, the three alternative options are:

Option 1: Provide ongoing diversity training for all TDSB employee groups

Students stay in school when social relations with their teachers are positive. In this study, both first and second generation students spoke about teachers harbouring negative attitudes towards students. Informants also indicated that there are insufficient safeguards and antiracist support measures in schools. While not all teachers and school staff are insensitive, there is the sense that some are ill-prepared to engage different learning and social styles. To address these findings, option 1 proposes the TDSB provide ongoing diversity training for all employee groups modeled after the approach of the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB). Specifically, the HWDSB currently provides staff development opportunities related to racism and classism in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) and the Settlement and Integration Services Organization (SISO). According to the CRRF, the training supports school staff by deepening their awareness and understanding of the implications of diversity, equity and racism in schools today. The workshops provide practical strategies and

resources for the school and the classroom, with an emphasis on turning theory into practice. Participants explore racism and other forms of discrimination in education as well as learn how to deliver an inclusive curriculum based on anti-racism and multicultural approaches. Sessions also focus on identity and inclusion as well as understanding systemic barriers to equality in education for all students (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2009).¹⁹ This option should be offered annually to all existing and new staff.

Option 2: Pilot Caribbean Academic Program

Key informants suggest ESC students perform poorly in school because the curriculum has little relevance to their lives and culture. Data in this study show first generation students believe learning about their cultural background would make school more interesting and enjoyable for them and would help them to do better in school. ESC students also cite unequal treatment by teachers, namely because of linguistic differences. The use of native jargon and improper use of English has a direct implication for how they are counselled and assessed. The fact also remains that very few ESC students have acquired the literacy (reading and writing) skills expected by the end of Grade 9. To address these shortcomings, option 2 proposes the TDSB pilot the Caribbean Academic Program (CAP), similar to the one introduced in Evanston Township High School (ETHS) near Chicago in 1986 (Siegler, 1999). The CAP, a specialized curriculum and transitional program, provides a variety of services to help students succeed (Evanston Township High School, 2009b).²⁰ ESC Students spend part of the day in their CAP classes and the other half in regular content courses. The program offers a maximum of two years of language instruction and emphasis is on learning English grammar and sentence structure by studying the differences between Creole and English. Students receive full credits for their participation and attention is paid to developing respect for the Creole language. Specifically,

¹⁹ Similar training opportunities have been provided to staff in the school districts of Fort Wayne, Indiana and Durham Public Schools in North Carolina, which have proven effective for lowering dropout rates for diverse populations (Sadowsky, 2001; Durham Public School District, 2009).

²⁰ At ETHS; at least 8% of ETHS' students were born in Jamaica, Belize, Barbados, and the Bahamas (Evanston Township High School, 2009b).

freshmen participate in a special section of reading, where cultural and language differences experienced in other classes are addressed. For upper class students, CAP offers support in mainstream English classes as well as a literature and language classes. Caribbean literature is used extensively to build reading skills, including stories, plays, tales and poetry. Students enrolled in CAP classes are also eligible for an intensive study period, in which they can receive individual and small group homework assistance (Evanston Township High School, 2009b). Another key to the CAP program is parent involvement. The program is carefully explained to parents by teachers and students, and a CAP parent group meets regularly (Fischer, 1992).

Option 3: Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students

Findings from this study suggest that there is a lack of linkages and meaningful partnerships that exist between schools and the wider Caribbean community. First generation students cite financial reasons as a possible reason for why students drop out of school as well as negative peer pressure. In the GTA, Regent Park's Pathways to Education program addresses the lack of connectivity between the schools and the community, and fills the existing gap in how the TDSB engages with ESC students and their families. It also helps to address issues of high poverty among ESC students, negative peer effects and the importance of positive role models in their lives. The Regent Park Community Health Centre initiated the Pathways to Education program in Regent Park in 2001. This is the oldest public housing project and one of the most economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Canada (Pathways to Education, 2009). The specific objectives of the program are to increase retention in high school and academic success of students from the Regent Park area. Option 3 proposes the TDSB work closely with Caribbean families and partner with the Pathways program to address the needs of high-risk ESC students. The program would address many community risk factors, such as poverty, minority status and the inability of Caribbean parents to navigate the school system. For instance, the Pathways program helps bridge the gap between parents and secondary schools by providing information

and supporting active parental involvement. The program is also free to participating students. The only requirement is that parents sign a contract agreeing to participate and giving Pathways staff the right to both advocate on the students' behalf and gain access to their personal information, including attendance records and grades from local secondary schools. In return, students have access to tutoring in their communities four nights a week and participate in group, individual and career mentoring. Students further receive financial support such as bus fare to attend school and a thousand dollar scholarship towards post-secondary education. Lastly, students and parents receive personal support and advocacy from a Student-Parent Support Worker (Pathways to Education, 2008).

7.2 Criteria for Analysis

A set of four criteria provide the framework for evaluating each policy option. Those criteria are effectiveness, administrative feasibility, stakeholder acceptability and cost. Table 15 provides a summary of the criteria and measures applied in the policy analysis. All criteria are weighted equally and assigned a rating of high (score = 3), medium (score = 2) and low (score = 1). This system of analysis enables me to allocate a score to each criterion, thus highlighting the tradeoffs between them. The total scores allow me to determine how well each policy achieves the objectives.

Table 16: Criteria and Measures for Analysis of the Policy Options

CRITERIA	DEFINITION	MEASUREMENT	VALUE	
Effectiveness				
Decline in the annual dropout rate	The extent to which the proposed policy option reduces the dropout rate of students born in the English-speaking Caribbean	The percentage decrease in the annual dropout rate	≤5%	High
			0-5%	Medium
			0	Low
Administrative ease				
Ease of implementation	The extent to which the proposed policy involves fundamental reform in the school system	The number of Comprehensive School Reform components required to implement the policy option	1-2 components	High
			3-4 components	Medium
			5 plus components	Low
Cost				
Program expenditure	The estimated costs associated with the policy option	Amount of money per student per year in thousands of dollars (\$)	≤\$7,500	High
			\$7,500-\$15,000	Medium
			≥\$15,000	Low
Acceptability				
Acceptability among TDSB decision makers	The extent to which TDSB trustees would be supportive of the policy	Estimate of TDSB decision makers' support from school trustee voting records	Majority	High
			6-11 votes	Medium
			0-5 votes	Low
Acceptability among community stakeholders	The extent to which community stakeholders would be supportive of the policy direction	Estimate of stakeholder support through Interviewee A and stakeholder comments in TDSB documents	All agree	High
			2 agree	Medium
			0-1 agree	Low

1) Effectiveness: is measured by the extent to which a policy option closes the current dropout gap. The dropout rate is used since school factors that influence student learning such as a rigorous curriculum, high teacher expectations and a strong academic environment influence whether students remain in school (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005). Policy options obtain a ranking

of (1) if they leave dropout rates unchanged. I give a score of (2) if they decrease dropout rates by less than 5%. Options receive a ranking of (3) if they decrease dropout rates by 5% or more.

2) Administrative ease: measures the extent to which a policy option requires fundamental reform in the school system. The Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) model measures the degree to which a policy option addresses all aspects of a school system's operations. There are five general components to the CSR: resource restructuring (either with existing or the realignment of financial resources), internal facilitator (to coordinate the implementation of the reform and otherwise monitor implementation), initial training (the amount of specific training and staff development required) teacher buy-in (changes in curriculum, classroom instruction and assessment) and outside assistance (the amount of assistance required external to the school board to implement the reform). Thus, the more comprehensive the reform the more difficult to it will be to implement (Vernez et al., 2006). Options receive a ranking of (1) if they require all 5 components. I allocate a score of (2) if they require 3-4 components. Options obtain a ranking of (3) if they require 1-2 components.

3) Cost: is an estimate of the cost associated with high school dropouts in Canada. The failure to complete high school has fiscal consequences in terms of public expenditures on social services and programs, education, employment, criminality, lower economic productivity and health. According to a recent study, the annual estimated cost in 2008 per dropout in Canada is \$15,613 (Hankivsky, 2008). The cost estimates are as follows:

- Health (private)²¹ \$8,098
- Social Assistance (public) \$4,230
- Crime (public) \$224
- Tax revenue loss (public) \$226
- Revenue loss in employment insurance premium (public) \$68
- Employment insurance cost (public) \$2,767
- **Total: \$15,613**

²¹ Data on public healthcare costs are not available. Instead, private healthcare costs are used as a proxy (Hankivsky, 2008).

Policy options receive a ranking (1) if they require more than \$15,000 per student. I give options a score of (2) if they require \$7,500 - \$15,000 per student. I assign a score of (3) if they require less than \$7,500 per student.

4) Stakeholder acceptability: is divided into three parts: acceptability by TDSB decision-makers and acceptability by community stakeholders. For each part the total score is divided by two to maintain equal weights across criteria. Hence, assigned to each criterion is a ranking of high (score=1.5), medium (score=1) and low (score=.5).

Part 1: There are 22 school trustees and their support is a necessary condition for the adoption of any policy. I estimate the acceptability of a policy option to TDSB decision-makers based on past voting records, which are available on the TDSB website. Given that resolutions pass by majority opinion, policies receive a rank of (.5) if they are estimated to garner 0-5 trustee votes. I give a score of (1) if they are estimated to receive 6-11 trustee votes. Options receive a rank of (1.5) if they are estimated to garner majority support.

Part 2: I determine how acceptable a measure is to a number of community stakeholder groups as well. These groups, outlined in section 4, provide advocacy and culturally sensitive services to newcomers and the Caribbean and Black communities. I also estimate how other community groups with high dropout rates (e.g. Central and South America, Eastern Africa) would react to targeted policies or exclusion from ESC student programs. The scoring for this criterion is measured through an interview with a Caribbean settlement worker in the GTA and TDSB consultation documents from Black Community Education Forums and the consultation process from the TDSB's Urban Diversity Strategy.²² To determine stakeholder acceptability,

²² The Caribbean settlement worker was interviewed on March 5, 2009. For the purposes of confidentiality, the name of the Caribbean settlement worker is withheld. Hereafter, the settlement worker is referred to as Interviewee A. The TDSB consultation process documents are developed based on stakeholder input from Black Community Education Forums held on December 1, 2007 at Northview Heights Secondary School and December 8, 2007 at Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute in the GTA (TDSB, 2008f). They are also developed based on a review of submissions by groups representing organizations at TDSB community forums, including: the Canadian Arab Federation, Hispanic, Muslim, Portuguese, and Somali communities (TDSB, 2008g).

assigned to this criterion is a ranking of low (score =.5) if none or only one of the stakeholders agree, medium (score = 1) if two of the stakeholders agree and high (score = 1.5) if all stakeholders agree with the policy direction.

It is important to note that equity as a criterion is not used to evaluate the policy options. The underlying principle of this policy study is how to achieve institutionalised equity for students born in the ESC. Equity means providing for each and every student, so they can reach or exceed a common standard and be successful in school (McIntosh, 2009). As schools institutionalise equity, dropout rates decrease. Equity is covered by the effectiveness criterion.

8: Analysis of Policy Options

This section evaluates each of the policy options using the criteria outlined in the previous section. My analysis informs the final policy recommendation.

8.1 Option 1: Provide Ongoing Diversity Training for All TDSB Employee Groups

Effectiveness: Diversity training was introduced in Fort Wayne, Indiana, a district of approximately 32,000 students, 26 percent of whom are black, in 1994. The dropout rate for Black students was 10.4 percent in 1994 and by 2001 this rate had dropped to 2.6 percent, less than one percentage point away from the dropout rate for White students (Sadowski, 2001).²³ While Fort Wayne credits several ongoing initiatives for the reduction, diversity training for school staff was central to tackling dropout rates. This dropout reduction represents a 1.1 percent gain per year on average, but is less than 5 percent.²⁴ Effectiveness ranks medium.

Administrative ease: First, this option would require a realignment of existing resources, namely within the budget of the TDSB's Student and Community Equity office. Second, it also demands an internal facilitator to coordinate and monitor implementation of the training. The TDSB's Student and Community Equity office would possibly have the lead with the assistance of Employee Services and respective Superintendents of Education in the TDSB. Third, this option requires specific training on issues of equity and diversity for all employee groups. Training would take place on weekends or outside regular school hours. Fourth, it also potentially requires changes in classroom instruction, as teachers may need to alter their current approach to

²³ In the given case, a dropout is defined as a student that has not graduated and not enrolled in a current semester, but who was otherwise eligible for enrolment (Indiana Department of Education, 2009).

²⁴ Correspondence was shared with the author of the Fort Wayne study, Dr. Michael Sadowski, on April 1, 2009. He confirmed the dropout rate decline for Black students in the study (i.e. 8 percentage points) and that the reduction happened somewhat gradually, spread evenly between 1994-2001.

their teaching practices. Fifth, outside assistance would be needed from the CRRF or another consulting body, which offers diversity training to Ontario school boards. So, there are five CSR components and administrative ease ranks low.

Cost: Training could be administered by the CRRF and SISO. Costs are \$300 per school staff member.²⁵ Included in the costs are binders, instruction materials and six workshops (Canada Race Relations Foundation, 2009). Staffing levels in 2007-08 indicate there were 5,847 secondary school teachers, 105 principals and 179 vice-principals in the TDSB. This includes 360 new secondary teachers. I am assuming the total number of participants will not change in the short-run. So, the total annual cost is \$1,839,300 (i.e. $5,847 + 105 + 179 \times \300). Using October 2005 dropout numbers in TDSB secondary schools (3,814), costs are estimated at \$482 per student (Brown & Doc, 2006). This cost does not include guidance counsellors and support staff. Staff level breakdowns for these positions are unavailable at the secondary school level. So, this cost is less than seventy-five hundred dollars per student and cost ranks high, meaning the dollar amount is low.

Stakeholder acceptability: Past Board meetings indicate majority support for the provision of board wide equity training as well as ongoing professional development on multicultural and anti-racist education (21-0 in favour of motion and no vote cast by chair) (TDSB, 2008f). Stakeholder acceptability among TDSB decision-makers ranks high. As for community stakeholder acceptability, Interviewee A suggests teachers need to be more sensitive to the cultural background of their students. Black community education forums call for the provision of intensive training for not only teachers, but principals, guidance counsellors and support staff in “equity issues, including anti-racism and gender equity awareness and strategies; stereotyping; racial profiling; cross cultural differences; and understanding the immigrant and

²⁵ This cost estimate is based on a telephone conversation with the Director of Education and Training, Canadian Race Relations Foundation, on April 17, 2009, who indicated the cost per workshop, is \$1500 for 30 participants, which is approximately \$50 per participant or \$300 for all six workshops.

refugee experience” (TDSB, 2008h). Other community groups also call for incorporating antiracist and equity training in new teacher education. Since all three stakeholders agree with the policy direction, community stakeholder acceptability ranks high.

8.2 Option 2: Pilot Caribbean Academic Program

Effectiveness: Prior to the introduction of the CAP in ETHS, a disproportionate number of the ESC students were dropping out of school or being placed in special education classes. A decade later, the number of ESC student dropouts and those in special education had reduced dramatically with many moving on to honours classes and going on to college (Menacker, 1998). While specific data are not available from ETHS on reducing the dropout rate, similar transitional bilingual programs have proven effective. In 1996, Thomas J. Rusk (TJR) Middle School in Nacogdoches, Texas was designated as a low-performing school by the Texas Education Agency because of a dropout rate of 8.3 percent for Hispanic students. By 2000, the dropout rate has been reduced to less than one percent.²⁶ This improvement is credited to increased faculty awareness of the needs of the Hispanic population, a restructured ESL program to cater to the needs of Hispanic students and enhanced parent involvement activities (Cassity & Harris, 2000).²⁷ This dropout reduction represents a 1.8 percent gain per year on average, but is less than 5 percent. Effectiveness ranks medium.

Administrative ease: First, this option would require a realignment of financial resources within the TDSB’s current ESL program budget. Second, an internal facilitator would have to be appointed to coordinate testing and placement for all CAP students (incoming Grade 9 ESC students and others new to the Board). A coordinator would also need to establish and

²⁶ According to the Texas Education Agency, a student is identified as a dropout if the individual is absent without an approved excuse or documented transfer and does not return to school by the fall of the following school year, or if he or she completes the school year, but fails to reenroll the following school year (Texas Education Agency, 1996).

²⁷ In order to close the achievement gap, researchers at the Teaching Research Institute at Western Oregon University argue language support programs like the CAP must be well implemented, not segregated, and sustained for 5-6 years to achieve results. They suggest even the most effective language support programs can only close half of the achievement gap in 2-3 years, which suggests dropout rates would not fall immediately, but would be staggered over time (Teaching Research Institute, 2007).

maintain communication with parents of students in the program. This would include serving as a liaison between students in the program and/or their parents and TDSB staff and community services as well as facilitating workshops for parents. Third, CAP teachers and education assistants would need to be trained about issues and needs relating to CAP students. Teachers and education assistants would also need to be assigned duties and supervised by the CAP coordinator. Fourth, teacher buy-in would be necessary, as the program requires a change in both ESL curriculum and classroom instruction; CAP teachers would need to coordinate the administration of required language proficiency and academic achievement tests for placement and ongoing monitoring of student progress; compile and maintain a record of achievement for each student; determine when a student is to be exited from the program; and conduct academic support programs for CAP students as they transition to the mainstream (Evanston Township High School, 2009). Fifth, no outside assistance is required. So, there are 4 out of 5 CSR components and administrative ease ranks low.

Cost: In Massachusetts, school districts provide transitional bilingual education programs for students who do not perform well enough in the regular classroom. For Massachusetts, the 1999-2000 statewide average per student expenditure for transitional bilingual programs is US\$7,566 or CDN\$9,351²⁸ (Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2001). These costs reflect the time spent in bilingual education only. So, this cost is more than seventy-five hundred dollars per student per year and cost ranks medium.

Stakeholder acceptability: Past Board meetings indicate majority support for significantly increasing resources available for English Language Learning (TDSB, 2007b); the 2008-09 Budget Plan sets aside funding for 55 additional ESL teachers to be hired in secondary schools to support the TDSB's large immigrant population (TDSB, 2008i). Trustees have also considered Chicago Public Schools' transitional bilingual education model for English language

²⁸ The exchange rate is US\$1 = CDN\$1.2360 (Bank of Canada, April 22, 2009).

learners (ELLs) at both the elementary and secondary school level; programs where the student's first language is used as the medium of instruction as a bridge to academic success in the English core curriculum (TDSB, 2007b). Despite increased funding for ESL programs and past consideration of the proposed model, it is uncertain whether the Board would support a transitional program specifically targeted at ESC students. Thus, stakeholder acceptability among TDSB decision-makers ranks medium. As for community stakeholder acceptability, Interviewee A suggests Black students should be exposed to learning about African culture, but in context of the entire school board curriculum, which the CAP does not address. Conversely, Black community education forums have requested targeted support for students whose learning styles may be considered different, while making learning challenging by developing students' creativity and thinking skills. Forums also call for school programs around improving students' self esteem by focussing on what Black students do well; and the creation of strong home-school connections with Black parents, providing opportunities for families to support student learning. The CAP would address many of these community proposals (TDSB, 2008h). Other community groups have requested that the TDSB integrate the references and sources of knowledge from all peoples into all areas of instruction, which the CAP does not resolve. Since only one stakeholder agrees with the policy direction, community stakeholder acceptability ranks low.

8.3 Option 3: Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students

Effectiveness: Pathways to Education reduced the dropout rate for Regent Park youth in Toronto from 56 percent to 10 percent between 2001 and 2006. The average gain per year is 9.2 percent. Since this gain is more than 5 percent per year on average, effectiveness ranks high (Pathways to Education, 2008).²⁹ The dropout reduction in Regent Park has been verified by an independent third party. In 2007, a pro bono evaluation study was released by the Boston

²⁹ In the TDSB, a student is generally considered to be a dropout, who leaves school without graduating and does not transfer to another educational institution.

Consulting Group (BCG), which confirms that the program had had not only a dramatic result in reducing the high school drop-out rate in Regent Park, but also helped increase the proportion of young people attending post-secondary education from 20% to 80%. The BCG study also finds that Pathways contributed significantly to social cohesion and the integration of immigrants, who make up 60 per cent of the population of Regent Park, in which 79 per cent of residents are visible minorities (Pathways to Education, 2007).³⁰

Administrative ease: First, no financial resources need to be realigned within the TDSB budget. Second, an internal facilitator is required from all participating secondary schools to provide research data and access to student records to Pathways to Education on an ongoing basis. Third, initial training would have to be provided to administrative staff on how to gather student information and regularly submit it to the Pathways program. Fourth, there is no staff development or teacher buy-in necessary. The program would also have no direct impact on classroom instruction, but it is expected that student performance would improve. This may alleviate pressure on teachers and their education assistants. Fifth, outside assistance is required from Pathways to Education to recruit volunteer tutors and group mentors to provide tutoring and mentoring to ESC students. Returning or new volunteer tutors and group mentors would need to register and attend training sessions in September for the following school year. Training may want to emphasize the specific needs of ESC students and some of the difficulties they face in secondary school. So, there are 3 out of 5 CSR components and administrative ease ranks medium.

Cost: The cost per student is approximately \$4,000 per year, including immediate financial assistance, such as bus tickets and a scholarship for post-secondary education (Pathways

³⁰ The yearly dropout gains in Regent Park were confirmed by the Director of Research and Evaluation at Pathways to Education in a telephone interview on Monday, May 25th, 2009, who indicated the average dropout gain per year for the first three program cohorts, is just shy of 10 percentage points. However, he noted that recent gains with the newest program cohort currently hover around 2 percentage points per year, but are inconclusive, since most of this cohort has yet to complete their secondary school studies.

to Education, 2008). ESC students may enroll in the program over 4 years. Still, this cost is less than seventy-five hundred dollars per year per student and cost ranks high.

Stakeholder acceptability: Past trustee meetings indicate majority support for off-site alternative programs for at-risk students (18-0 in favour, 3 absent and no vote cast by chair) (TDSB, 2004). So, this garners majority support and stakeholder acceptability among TDSB decision-makers ranks high. As for community stakeholder acceptability, Interviewee A suggests students born in the ESC need to be given proper guidance and support, so that they better understand their options in school and are given a better opportunity to succeed. Parents also need to be more involved in their children's education, and be aware of what is required for their children's present and future success, which the Pathways program would help to address. Black education community forums also call for more after school programs to be offered in all inner city communities of the TDSB (TDSB, 2008h). Other community groups have called for the Pathways to Education model to be offered to students in all inner city communities of the TDSB, which this option does not address. Since two stakeholders agree with the policy direction, community stakeholder acceptability ranks medium.

Table 21 summarizes the results of the policy analysis, using the three policy options and established criteria and measures.

Table 17: Evaluation of Policy Options

	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
Criteria	Provide Ongoing Diversity Training for All TDSB Employee Groups	Pilot Caribbean Academic Program from ETHS	Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students
Effectiveness	2	2	3
Dropout Rate Reduction	Medium (2)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Administrative ease	1	2	2
CSR Components	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Medium (2)
Cost	3	2	3
Cost to Society Per Dropout	High (3)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Stakeholder Acceptability	3	1.5	2.5
TDSB Decision-Makers	High (1.5)	Medium (1)	High (1.5)
Community Stakeholders	High (1.5)	Low (0.5)	Medium (1)
Total Score	9	7.5	10.5

8.4 Policy Recommendations

In view of the short-term objectives and the policy evaluation criteria, option 3, partner with Pathways to Education to target ESC youth, ranks the highest. It is acceptable to TDSB decision-makers and community stakeholders. It also ranks high for effectiveness and cost, but ranks medium for administrative ease. This option also addresses the concerns of the Caribbean community about the need for greater parental engagement and involvement. The major problem with this policy option is that it may require the Pathways program to seek additional funding to

target and support ESC students. In this respect, greater financial support from individual donors, communities, corporations and possibly the provincial government would need to be secured. It may also take time to recruit and train tutors and mentors to work directly with ESC students.

Option 1, to provide ongoing diversity training for all employee groups, ranks second in this analysis. The cost of the policy is low and deemed highly acceptable to stakeholders. In terms of effectiveness, this policy has shown to help lower the dropout rate in other school districts in North America. However, this policy is difficult to implement, meaning it ranks low for administrative ease. There could also be resistance from teacher unions with regards to the need for such training initiatives.

Option 2, the TDSB pilot the CAP to help ESC students succeed in secondary school, ranks third in this analysis. This option has slightly higher costs than the other options and therefore ranks medium. It also ranks low for acceptability among TDSB decision-makers, community stakeholders and other community groups. While the TDSB has increased funding for ELLs, the TDSB operates under a tight budget and this option requires a realignment of financial resources within the TDSB's current ESL program budget. Changes to the current ESL program model and staff development would also need to be coordinated and implemented.

Given my analysis, I recommend implementing option 3 immediately. The TDSB should partner with the Pathways to Education program in order to target ESC students in Toronto's inner city communities. This option would help bridge the gap between Caribbean parents and TDSB secondary schools, and provide ESC students with the necessary guidance and support they require. Following implementation, the TDSB should conduct an ongoing evaluation of the partnership overtime. If necessary, the TDSB may want to introduce some features of option 1, diversity training for all TDSB employee groups, to further address some of the achievement gaps. To this end, it is important to note that the Ministry of Education recently announced their Equity Inclusive Education Strategy, providing \$4 million to Ontario school boards to support

and promote equity and inclusive education (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009). This new funding would potentially assist the TDSB with the diversity training costs.

9: Conclusions

Seeking better educational opportunities for Caribbean youth is often one of the most important reasons for migrating. The failure of these students to complete secondary school and pursue post-secondary education calls into question the benefits of emigration. It also raises important questions about the socioeconomic integration of new immigrants. Dropouts suffer a decline in real income and are subject to a host of negative consequences over the course of their lifetime, ranging from poor health to increased criminal activity. As a result, leaving school early is a barrier to future occupational success and upward mobility.

In this study, I investigated some of the school factors that negatively influence the academic achievement of students born in the ESC. To do this, I drew on key informant interviews with education policy experts and community stakeholders in the City of Toronto. I also employed focus groups with first and second-generation Caribbean youth that currently attend secondary schools in the TDSB. While a number of findings emerge, low teacher expectations; culturally insensitive curriculum; school disciplinary practices; a lack of linkages between schools and the Caribbean community and the need to cultivate peer culture among ESC students all show some importance in this study.

Drawing on these findings, the study proposes and assesses three policy options for addressing these factors. These options were assessed using a set of established criteria. While they vary in scope and approach, those options are Option 1: Provide Ongoing Diversity Training to All Employee Groups, Option 2: Pilot Caribbean Academic Program, Option 3: Partner with Pathways to Education to Target ESC Secondary Students. I analysed these policies and determined that option 3 should be implemented immediately. Subject to an ongoing evaluation of the partnership and early outcomes, the TDSB may want to introduce some features of option

1, diversity training for all TDSB employee groups, to further address some of the achievement gaps.

While my research represents a very small contribution to the growing literature on the Black education experience in Canada, future TDSB research should consider a quantitative study on how school experiences impact student achievement among students born in the ESC. Building on this study, the TDSB should employ data from the TDSB's 2006 Students Census in an attempt to establish correlations or causal relationships among different variables such as school experiences, involvement in extra-curricular activities and post-secondary school plans.

Appendices

Appendix A: Key Informant Questions

1. Teacher Expectations:

Do you think teacher expectations play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant you?

Prompts:

Low student expectation by teachers; negative student-teacher relationships: teachers who fail to recognize the critical role they play in students' academic motivation and outcomes; conflicts with particular teachers; labelled by teachers; teachers look the other way from bullying; arrogant teachers; teachers picking on students.

2. School Discipline:

Do you think school discipline plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant you?

Note: Black students have disproportionately higher levels of suspensions and expulsions in the TDSB (Improving Success for Black Students, 2008).

Prompts:

Ineffective discipline system: discipline system that is perceived to be unfair and/or arbitrary; the system is invisible to students; ineffective discipline; unfair rules; not allowing students to learn from mistakes; negative student-administrator relationships: Particular conflicts with principal, vice-principal, counsellor, board of education etc.

3. School Counselling Practices:

Do you think school counseling practices play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?

Prompts:

Lack of adequate counselling/referral: lack of support and/or referral from schools to appropriate agencies for youth (and/or families of youth) experiencing personal and/or academic difficulties; lack of representation by visible minorities in positions such as guidance counsellor; counselling is out of reach or invisible or inaccessible.

Lack of support: Lack of assistance with schoolwork/homework; lack of support by teachers, principals, guidance counsellors etc. for doing well/remaining in school; no one at school (teachers etc.) to talk to.

4. School Curriculum:

Do you think school curriculum plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant you?

Prompts:

Curriculum: monotonous school environment with no apparent connection to adolescents' experiences in the wider community or the adult world; not relevant to life aspirations or plans; curriculum that fails to acknowledge and include the contributions/experiences/history etc. of minority groups; poor quality and superficial curriculum; difficulty with curriculum; difficulty with "new" curriculum.

Disregard of student learning styles: a disparity between teaching style and students' learning style; teachers who do not recognize the diverse learning needs, strengths, weaknesses and interests of their students; teachers who do not use varied teaching methods to teach diverse student groups; student not able to learn at own pace.

5. Peer Groups:

Do you think peer groups play any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth?

Prompts:

Relationship with school peers; expectations of peer group; social integration (i.e. formal/informal extra-curricular activities); school culture in general (bullying, violence, discrimination, abuse) racism, homophobia, sexism; bullying due to race or skin colour, ethnicity or culture, country of origin, language or accent, sexual orientation (actual or perceived), religion, family income level, physical traits (weight, acne etc.), physical abilities, learning abilities, family composition.

6. Generational Status:

Do you think generational status plays any role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean youth?

Prompts:

Student age at time of migration; negative impact of interruptions and changes in schooling due to migration; differential expectations in educational level between schools in the Caribbean and in Canada, as well as other mismatches between school systems; non-recognition of prior educational achievement; unfair practices including automatic placement in an English-as-a-Second-Language stream without prior checking of transcripts or evaluation of actual linguistic skills. The latter takes on additional poignancy in the case of migrants whose mother tongue is in fact English; acculturation difficulties and other resettlement stresses such as loneliness, social isolation, a lack of friends, and a difficult 'fit' with new classmates.

Supplementary Question:

Do you think there are any other factors that may play a role in the academic underachievement of Caribbean immigrant youth? Specifically, other school factors that I may be overlooking or missing?

Appendix B: Key Informant Results

Table 18: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding Teacher Expectations

Key informant	Teacher Expectations	Factor
Dr. Carl James	"...(teachers) might feel the value system, the kind of education...the kind of information that they (Caribbean students) bring to school might not be in keeping with expectations. I also feel that...you need to think about how class, socioeconomic conditions might be operating here."	Yes
Dr. George Dei	"So, first it's a problem, two, what the students have to go through to counteract the problem and three the absence of sufficient safeguards in the system to help them deal with that..."	Yes
Dr. Joe Springer	"...they not only don't expect whole a lot of the student, but they don't expect a whole lot of the parents either. So, that process is pervasive enough to be problematic."	Yes
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	"...teacher expectations in my experience are so much a part of larger culture in an institution like a school... cultures in schools can really affect how teachers communicate general expectations to their students."	Yes
Dr. Lance McCready	"The notion of high expectations being a platform to even foster good relationships with students, it's too cultural laden to me."	No
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	"For minoritised youth, and for students that are racialised, visible minorities, that context is very, very important."	Yes

Table 19: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Counselling Practices

Key informant	School Counselling Practices	Factor
Dr. Carl James	"...the socioeconomic condition may inform than rather than (school counselling practices)..."	No
Dr. George Dei	"Black students, particularly students from the Caribbean, are normally in the low stream...nobody believe(s) in them...therefore they have this route for them, so that's where they have to go."	Yes
Dr. Joe Springer	"Part of that is...how students are assessed, and the sense that they are not as competent...if you take a combination of poor expectations, inappropriate assessment, and toss in some racism, then you stream kids...and you do not stream them in a fashion that is useful."	Yes
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	"...I think race and class considerations are very important when it comes to those kind of streaming outcomes and questions..."	No
Dr. Lance McCready	"In many schools, counsellors do play a really significant role, and ...in large part determine the pathways of students. But, it also depends on the schools...because some counsellors are overloaded and they don't really have time to see everybody..."	No
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	"It's a not a matter of they're led, there is a preconceived notion, there is an assumption that this is what they can do successfully...again, it all leads to expectations..."	No

Table 20: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Curriculum

Key Informant	School Curriculum	Factor
Dr. Carl James	"...there's no question about the fact that the material and information in curriculum approaches that's given to students needs ...to relate to them, it must capture them. There's no question about that. Now, now, but who is teaching, it is also significant."	Yes
Dr. George Dei	"...when students do not find themselves, whether you look at it in terms of the visual culture of the school, or look at it in terms of the text, or look at it in terms of...representation, who are in the school, who are the teachers...it all leads to a question of disengagement."	Yes
Dr. Joe Springer	"This is what is much more important...that students learn to see themselves in the material that they study...and that the curriculum is presented in a fashion that allows them to engage..."	Yes
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	"The curriculum has a big role and...it's too narrow, and it doesn't take on the bigger question of the relationship between the learner and the teacher..."	Yes
Dr. Lance McCready	"sure...in terms of...Black students...I actually think a lot of culture, cultural based approaches could be more diasporic."	Yes
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	"It is absolutely essential for students to be represented – you don't have to talk about me (the student) every day, all day, but I have to see myself somehow (in the curriculum)."	Yes

Table 21: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding Peer Groups

Key Informant	Peer Groups	Factor
Dr. Carl James	"I don't think, it's a very simplistic kind of, a terribly simplistic kind of conclusion that's drawn to that. However, a more complicated would be, yes, in some ways the students might think that, that excelling might mean they're not resisting the kind of onslaught of their being."	No
Dr. George Dei	"For a student that has always been put down, a student that has always been negated, or has always been devalued...they fall prey to their peers, so it is a huge problem... but I think this is...one of the problems, we tend to look at it in terms peer pressure, but that's always a problem with youth, but I think that's defeatist..."	Yes
Dr. Joe Springer	"Friends or friendships are a very critical element...they see themselves as 'othered' and therefore they establish an alternative identity, you know, they (become) rebels..."	Yes
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	"...particular identities associated with particular communities – let's say Jamaican...can serve to disempower and marginalize students who...struggle with identifying with the negative profiles of their communities."	Yes
Dr. Lance McCready	NO COMMENT	-
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	"I don't see the peer group as the issue. I see it as the dominant culture as the issue..."	Yes

Table 22: Summary of Key Informant Responses Regarding School Discipline

Key Informant	School Discipline	Factor
Dr. Carl James	“On the student’s outcomes. Obviously, it has, too and...will play a role in how they apply themselves to school performance etc.”	Yes
Dr. George Dei	“...if issues are not being addressed, students feel there is too much of the spiritual, the mental wounding that takes place, they don’t have any outlets, they have to find some way to let it out. So, that then creates the disciplinary issues.”	Yes
Dr. Joe Springer	“...from listening to some kids that I spoke to, if it was the arbitrariness, they attributed much of it to racism...they say it as the single most important thing that determined how they were going to be treated, and up until a year ago or so, we had the zero tolerance policy, inconsistently delivered, with devastating impacts...”	Yes
Dr. Kathleen Gallagher	“...students have shared with me that it feels both arbitrary and targeted and I think that’s the result of a zero tolerance policy is a universalist approach to something...as a result, people, young people, particularly young people of colour, feel the arbitrariness...”	Yes
Dr. Lance McCready	“...the discipline and classroom management...the way kind it’s taught deals a lot more with consequences and that’s why it’s always going to have a limited effect on teachers’ ability to foster relationships with their students...”	Yes
Mr. Kurt McIntosh	“...we do create barriers for them and upon those barriers, involve the disciplining and the pushing out of kids, and those barriers come through very strong biases and assumptions we make about the community, about them as a people. And it proliferates and comes out in our actions: suspensions, kick you out of class, low expectations.”	Yes

18. Do school authorities <u>fairly</u> apply school rules to you? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No
19. When it comes to school, are you: 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Motivated 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Indifferent 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Unmotivated
20. Based on your current academic achievement, do you believe you will graduate from high school? 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No

THANK YOU!

Appendix D: Focus Group Survey Results

Table 23: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results A

Generational Status	Answer questions in class	Participate in class activities and discussions	Participate in extracurricular activities in school	High school staff respect your ethnic background	Supported and encouraged by your teachers	Satisfied with the way your teachers teach you
1st generation	Yes	Yes	Weekly	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Weekly	Yes	Yes	Yes
2nd generation	No	No	A few times this year	Yes	Yes	No
	Yes	Yes	Monthly	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Weekly	Yes	No	No
	Yes	Yes	Weekly	Yes	No	No
	Yes	Yes	Monthly	Yes	No	No

Table 24: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results B

Generational Status	Would learning about your racial and cultural background make learning:		
	Make learning more interesting for you	Help you do better in school	Make school more enjoyable for you
1st generation	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Yes
2nd generation	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	No	Yes
	Yes	No	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 25: Summary of Focus Group Survey Results C

Generational Status	Do you discuss your personal problems with your:			Do school authorities fairly apply school rules to you	When it comes to school are you	Do you believe you will graduate from high school
	Teachers	Guidance Counsellor(s)	Principal or vice-principal(s)			
1st generation	No	No	No	Yes	Motivated	Yes
	No	No	No	Yes	Motivated	Yes
2nd generation	No	Yes	No	No	Unmotivated	Yes
	No	No	No	Yes	Indifferent	Yes
	No	Yes	Yes	No	Indifferent	Yes
	No	No	No	Yes	Motivated	Yes
	No	No	No	No	Indifferent	Yes

Appendix E: Focus Group Questions

1. Fair/respectful treatment of you

How are you treated at school? How do people see you?
Do you feel school staff respect your racial and cultural background?

2. Expectations of teachers, principal, guidance counsellors and other school staff

Do you feel like your teachers and other school authorities expect you to succeed in school?

3. Relationship with teachers

How do you get along with your teachers?
Do you feel comfortable discussing personal problems with your teachers?
Are any of your teachers role models? Why? Why not?

4. School counsellor academic planning practices/reliance on guidance counsellors

Whom do you discuss any problems you have at school with?
What do you know about the roles and responsibilities of your school's guidance counsellors?
How often do you see a guidance counsellor?
Do you feel comfortable seeking advice and discussing your personal problems with your guidance counsellors?

5. Interest in course material (amount/kind of curriculum)

Does the school offer courses that you need?
How do you feel about the teaching materials and school texts studied at school?
Does the material interest you?
Do you feel people of different backgrounds are represented in your school material?

6. School curriculum – representative of race and culture

Would learning be more enjoyable or interesting if you learned more about your racial and cultural background at school?

7. Ability to follow curricular demands (keep up with lesson & homework)

How willing are you to seek extra help available at school when you need it?

8. Willingness to seek help when needed

Do you find your school workload demanding or challenging? Or, is it not demanding enough?

9. Discipline

Would you say that you are treated fairly at school by the authorities?

10. Relationship with school peers

Who are your peers? Who are your friends/best friends?
Do you get along well with other students in your school?
Do you feel accepted by other students in your school?

11. Expectations of peer group

Among your group of friends, is it acceptable to do well in school? Or, do your friends make fun of you for doing well? Or, is academic achievement encouraged among your friends?

12. Future Aspirations

What are your future aspirations in life? What do you hope to do when you leave school?
Do you think that you can still accomplish these goals if you were to drop out of school?
Are your plans, your hopes for the future raised or lowered when you are at school?
Do you think going to college or university would make a positive difference in your life?

13. Dropout/underachievement among Caribbean youth

Can you think of any reasons why students of Caribbean descent drop out of school?
In what ways could school be made more interesting for students of Caribbean descent, so that they will be more likely to finish rather than dropping out?
What advice would you give to new students who have just arrived here from the Caribbean in order to adjust to school life in Toronto?

14. Recommendations by Caribbean students

Tell me about what your school has been doing to encourage you and other students to stay in school? Do you think it works?
What do you want to see the government do about the dropout problem in the schools?
What are your views about school boards hiring more Black teachers?
What are your views about Black-focused schools?
Do you see any role for the business community in helping students stay in school?

Appendix F: Focus Group Sample Results

Table 26: How do you get along with your teachers?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>"It depends, which teacher it is...I take academic in school – all those teachers are good because they like understand like my learning...it's like the other teachers around me that, like, cause I'm the type of outspoken person, right, and say I say, I'm not afraid to tell anyone what I think about them in their face, right. So they might not like what I have to say about them, and some teachers don't like that I'm very outspoken."</i></p> <p><i>"I get along with everybody. I'm known as troublesome. So, I just go around making trouble, but I get along with everybody... (teachers) know me as like pesky."</i></p>	<p><i>"I'm ok with teachers because I don't really talk that much, I mean, like, out there in the classroom. No, no problems."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't talk to them, like, because some teachers are rude, like, um, yeah, they're rude, I don't really talk to them, but I'm like quiet, so I don't really have a conversation with them."</i></p> <p><i>"I don't like none of my teachers in my school...In my school, they just send you down to the office for the littlest things. You know..."</i></p>

Table 27: Do you feel like your teachers and other school authorities expect you to succeed in school?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>"One African-American vice-principal, he expects always, like he wants all African-American students to succeed. So, he expects us to try harder than the rest, because he thinks it's harder for us, because we're discriminated against, or whatever, but it's not really like that."</i></p> <p><i>"Some teachers that I don't understand like what we're going through at home, and how it affects our studies in school, they say that, if we don't get something, that when our testing comes, and we talk on like, on the day of the quizzes and stuff, they talk, it's not really their fault that we don't understand it, they try to teach it to the best of our ability and they already graduate... so some of the say they don't really care."</i></p>	<p><i>"I think they just go and teach and get their pay cheque and that's what they're, some of them are about."</i></p> <p><i>"Some of them actually do care, but some of them just do their job just cause they're getting paid."</i></p> <p><i>"Most of them they'll tell us they don't care if we do the work, because they're still getting paid."</i></p>

Table 28: Do your friends make fun of you for doing well?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>"...if you like got a high mark, it's nothing, but if you got a low mark, then they'll make fun of you. How the hell did you get that mark? Like what you doing in that class, go to the next class or something. If you get a low mark, then they'll make fun of you, but if you get a high mark, (they're) quiet."</i></p>	<p><i>"Be more like surprised. Like, how did you get this mark, cheating?"</i></p> <p><i>"Yeah, and they make a joke up... they'll be sarcastic, congratulations, you passed your class, you know, sarcastic."</i></p>

Table 29: Do you feel comfortable seeking advice and discussing your personal problems with your guidance counsellors?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>“It’s not that we have a problem with it or we don’t do it, we don’t know who our guidance counsellor is, and we don’t know who like they are, maybe if we build a more positive relationship with them, then we could feel more comfortable. “</i></p>	<p><i>“I think they give good advice, but I don’t really go to the guidance counsellor for advice. I don’t really speak about my personal problems with them. ”</i></p>

Table 30: Do you believe that going to college or university would make a difference in your life?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>“Well, it would definitely make a financial difference. Like, they always tell you, go to college, university, pursue what you want and it makes it easier...if you get a degree and that stuff. It’s true.”</i></p> <p><i>“I look at it different. Because these days, they use to say like, us Black people are never going to do this or that, and most see them on doing drugs and those stuff, but for me, if I fulfill my dream, I’m just going to be like oh I did it, and you can’t stop me, you can’t take it away from me, so, it’s already done.”</i></p>	<p><i>“Yeah, it would make everything easier...because if you don’t have the skills for it, they train you mostly, to get prepared for it, and if you don’t have the skills for it you can’t, they’re going to pick the other person that has the skills before you.”</i></p> <p><i>“There’s certain requirements for different occupations, you need to get certain skills to improve your education, so you want that post-secondary education.”</i></p>

Table 31: Can you think of any reasons why students of Caribbean descent drop out of school?

First generation	Second generation
<p><i>They made a mistake. They probably had the wrong, chill’n with wrong group of people or something. Or, they probably weren’t trying hard enough. They never had enough motivation, their parents never pushed them hard enough. Something.”</i></p> <p><i>“It probably depends on the school and like the atmosphere, the atmosphere of the school. I know, cause, when most, when most of these Black kids, when they come to Canada, once they started the drugs, they start making money and then they drop out of school to go and make money, and then they end up getting in trouble, and then if they go to jail, it screws up everything...that’s probably what it is, and plus, like, I live in the Jane and Finch area, and like all the folks are stereotyped. Like you’re from Jane and Finch, you’re going to get shot, oh you’re going to get shot bad.”</i></p> <p><i>“Same thing. Stereotype... no, not for even leaving for school, saying that if you’re born in Jane and Finch because you know Jane and Finch equals (inaudible) and whatever. If they say like, say stereotype about you’re not going to finish school,</i></p>	<p><i>“Some people find it, like they get distracted by hustling probably, and they find they make money that way, and they focus on right now, what they’re doing getting money out ...like I think they’re focused on selling drugs, stuff like that, or there’s so much drama happening, people shooting each other, and people are more focused on right now, not the future and how they’re going to survive. Things like, um, probably material things they’re probably focused on...the latest Jordans, you know, Sean John, not stuff like that.”</i></p> <p><i>“Making money, like selling drugs and stuff, probably at school not, not getting the money, if you sell drugs you can probably make money from that, basically, it’s just about money nowadays, and people are like focused on what’s happening now...”</i></p> <p><i>“They may not be use to the environment. So, they may want to drop out and find something better to do.”</i></p> <p><i>“Some people just don’t like school. Like, I hate</i></p>

<p><i>you're not going to be nothing, it's just you know."</i></p> <p><i>"But I think the high dropout rate is mainly because they come, they sell drugs, they make money, they want more money, so they then go to school to go do that. Or, while they're in school, they skip classes to go do it, they feel like they mad and stuff, and while they're selling their drugs, they get caught, go to jail for a couple of years, come back and screw their whole life up."</i></p>	<p><i>school, but I just know that I'd rather do college than high school, because I hate high school, but I know if I go to college, I pick what I want to do, so if something I like, so I'll focus to do it because I know I'm going to do it. They just don't like what they're doing in school, so they drop out."</i></p> <p><i>"Yeah, it's just to make money, that's why. They just leave school for money over school...probably working, or selling drugs..."</i></p>
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Table 32: In what ways could school be made more interesting for students of Caribbean descent, so that they will be more likely to finish rather than dropping out?

<i>First generation</i>	<i>Second generation</i>
<p><i>"I think the government should give more money to the schools, like a special program for people that can't really afford to come to school and those stuff (inaudible) at least if there's like you know if you ever got busted before you come to school, there's nothing really on their minds saying like oh how am I going to come to school, how I'm going to eat, so if there's a program, I think the percentage of drop outs would be lesser."</i></p>	<p><i>"Probably find, like, more interesting things, like, that they would be interested in, like, guys, like mechanics, they want to do stuff like that, or maybe girls do hairstyling, yeah, stuff like that. That they're interested and would go to school for."</i></p> <p><i>"Probably, more interactive things, like fun things to do to make you more interested in the subjects."</i></p>

Appendix G: Dropout Data from Springer et al. Case Study

Table 33: Reasons for Dropout, Suspensions & Expulsions Among Caribbean Youth 15-25

Why did you drop out? (n=14)					
Relocation	Financial	Expelled	Violence	Lack of interest	Mental
29% (4)	43% (6)	7% (1)	7% (1)	7% (1)	7% (1)
Have you ever been suspended or expelled? If yes, why were you suspended or expelled? (n=7)					
Skipping classes	Weapons charge	Falsely accused	Gangs	Violence	Suspended, but then it was appealed
14% (1)	14% (1)	14% (1)	14% (1)	29% (2)	14% (1)

Source: Springer et al., 2006

Table 34: Teacher Relationships Among Caribbean Youth Aged 15-25

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=15)	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Teachers always treat students fairly	20% (3)	13% (2)	7% (1)	33% (5)	27% (4)
Most of the time in school teachers have treated me like a child	20% (3)	13% (2)	0	47% (7)	20% (3)
Discrimination makes it hard for people from my racial group to get good marks in school	33% (5)	13% (2)	7% (1)	47% (7)	0
When you have problems with life, can you rely on the following people for help? i.e. Teacher (n=14)					
Yes, a great deal	Yes, a little bit	No, not at all	I don't have such a person in my life		
7% (1)	0	67% (10)	21% (3)		

Source: Springer et al., 2006

Table 35: Future Aspirations Regarding Education Among Caribbean Youth 15-25

Question (n=7)	I plan to finish high school	I plan to get a degree from a community college or technical school	I plan to get a university degree
How much education do you plan on getting?	29% (2)	29% (2)	43% (3)

Source: Springer et al., 2006

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