

# International Students in High Schools

## The Flip side of Opportunity: the Risks of Isolation and Depression

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# Overview

- International Visa Students in Canada to study in English in a Canadian high school
- Majority of students come to major centres like Toronto
- Some come for one year, fewer for many years and continue on to post-secondary
- In larger centres, students are often in classrooms with other international students and immigrants
- Decision to study in Canada, may not have been their own

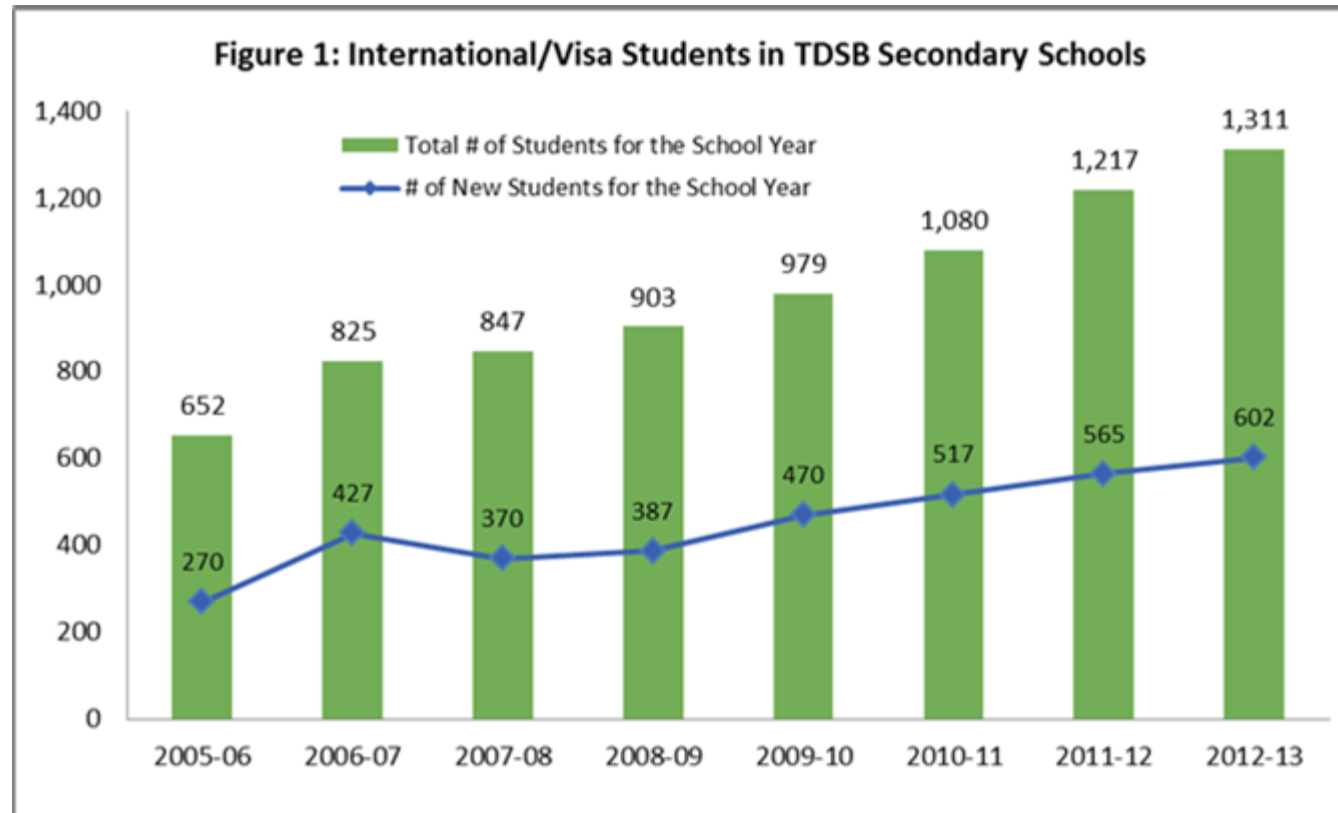
# Student Population

- High school age
- Some as young as 14 years old
- Majority of students are from China
- Some also from Korea, Russia and Ukraine

# Framework

- Education is fees-based for education
- Students live in a home-stay arrangement
- Legal guardians are not necessarily the home-stay parents
- Cultural bridging needed to assist homestay family and student
- Enrolled in schools across the GTA

# TDSB enrollment – International Students



# TCDSB Enrollment – International Students

- 2011 - 97 international visa students.
- 2012 - 292
- 2013 - 425
- 2014 - 674 (were scheduled at time of update)
- 2015 - something in the area of 800 students

# Issues, Challenges

- Loneliness
- Isolation and mental health issues
- Unresolved issues due to isolation and cultural issues
- Culture shock
- Difficult to find appropriate support
- Disconnect between youth and homestay 'parents'/legal guardians

# Activities with Potential for Integration

- School-based activities
- School personnel engaged
- Community agencies engaged
- Access to settlement services
- Assertiveness training – research supported
- Peer mentoring and matching activities
- Group outings with community agencies
- Integrating activities in school



# Recommendations

- Develop a program similar to the post-secondary International Student Connect Program COSTI is currently piloting.
- Develop activities with student input
- Encourage schools to work with community and settlement agencies
- Secure resources ie/ food, admission to events etc.
- Research

# Reference

- TDSB International Student data
- Hijazi, A. & Slavin-Spenny, O. (2011) Targeting Interventions: Moderators of the Effects of Expressive Writing and Assertiveness Training on the Adjustment of International University Students. *Integrated Journal of Advanced Counselling*. 33: 110 -112.