

***STUDENTS SPEAK
OUT ABOUT
DISCRIMINATION
IN
CAMBRIDGE***

A Survey by the Cambridge Human Rights Commission

**YOUTH HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CITY OF CAMBRIDGE:
SUMMARY REPORT OF SURVEY OF CAMBRIDGE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
(Conducted June 2006)**

As part of our mandate to conduct public education and outreach, the Cambridge Human Rights Commission set out in the fall of 2005 to learn more about discrimination experiences of high school age youth in the city. Our interest was prompted by a study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project in the city of Boston, which had shown considerable discrimination.

During early 2006, we obtained permission from the Harvard project to use and revise relevant questions from their survey. Next, we approached Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School to ask them to work with us in obtaining responses from their students. They agreed, and during June 2006, History/Social Science teachers at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School handed out surveys in all social science classes. Five hundred and fifteen students completed the surveys. (There are approximately 1800 students at CRLS.)¹ To assure frank responses, the survey was entirely anonymous.

The Commission wishes to thank the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School for their assistance, and especially to thank the Cambridge Public Health Department for providing data analysis.² The Human Rights Commission takes full responsibility for interpretation of the data and the content of this report.³

TOTAL SURVEY SAMPLE WAS AS FOLLOWS:

		# OF STUDENTS	%
<u>GENDER</u>			
	Female	253	46%
	Male	262	51%
<u>AGE</u>			
	14,15	144	29%
	16,17	289	59%
	18+	59	12%
<u>RACE/ ETHNICITY</u>			
	African American /Black/Haitian/ African	172	36%
	White Anglo	140	29%
	Latino/a/Hispanic	69	14%
	Mixed Race	69	14%
	Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	30	6%

¹ See website of Cambridge and Latin High School.

² We especially want to thank Andrew Ellingson at the Cambridge Public Health Department, and Elizabeth Grady at the CRLS. We could not have done this study without their invaluable help and guidance.

³ All Human Rights Commissioners approved this summary report. Commissioner Susan Ostrander is the primary author.

Survey findings selected for this report, highlight issues the Commission considers worthy of concern and community discussion. A copy of the survey questionnaire with frequency results for all questions for all students is available on request. Responses to all survey questions were tabulated by race/ethnicity, gender, and age. When not reported in this summary, differences in responses by race/ethnicity, gender, and/or age were small or nonexistent, or numbers of cases were too small for valid interpretation.

- **Nearly half of all students surveyed (249, 48%) said that racial discrimination in Cambridge is a very serious or somewhat serious problem. While numbers are small, students who said that racial discrimination in the city is a “very serious” problem are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
Mixed Race	3	19%
Latino/a/Hispanic	11	17%
Asian	5	17%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	24	14%
White Anglo	13	10%

- **One in three (154, 30%) students surveyed report feeling discriminated against in some way during the past year in a store in Cambridge. Numbers are too small to determine presence or absence of racial-ethnic variation.**
- **One in five (109, 21%) students report feeling discriminated against in school in some way, and nearly the same number by police (89, 17%). Numbers are too small to determine presence or absence of racial-ethnic variation.**

- **Students who report at least one personal experience of racial/ethnic discrimination somewhere in Cambridge in the past 3 months are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
Latino/a/Hispanic	43	62%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	95	56%
Mixed race	31	47%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	13	43%
White Anglo	54	39%

- **Students who report being treated with less respect than others at least once a year in Cambridge because of their race/ethnicity are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
Latino/a/Hispanic	49	71%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	108	63%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	20	67%
Mixed Race	39	57%
White Anglo	68	49%

- **Students who report receiving poorer service than others in stores or restaurants at least once a year in Cambridge because of their race/ethnicity are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
Latino/a/Hispanic	65	45%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	92	54%
Mixed Race	36	52%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	15	50%
White Anglo	40	29%

- **Students who report experiencing at least once a year that people in Cambridge were afraid of them (more true for males) are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	110	64%
Latino/a/Hispanic	44	64%
Mixed Race	39	57%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	8	27%
White Anglo	38	27%

- **Students who report experiencing people at least once a year in Cambridge thinking they were dishonest (more true for males) are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	113	66%
Latino/a/Hispanic	45	65%
Mixed Race	43	62%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	12	40%
White Anglo	54	39%

- **Most students at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School experience the school as racially integrated. White Anglo students are the most likely to experience school as racially integrated.**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
White Anglo	113	83%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	104	62%
Latino/a/Hispanic	40	58%
Mixed Race	44	67%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	21	70%

- **Of those students (148, 31%) who experience the high school as *not* racially integrated, 91, 61%) said they do not want it to be more integrated. While numbers are too small to draw a valid conclusion, mixed race and African American/Black/ Haitian/African students appear to be more likely than other racial groups to have this preference. [Note again that most students of every racial-ethnic group see the school as already integrated, so this preference refers only to those who do not experience the school as racially integrated.]**

- **Students who report that they or one of their family members have experienced housing discrimination of some kind in Cambridge are:**

RACE / ETHNICITY	# OF STUDENTS	%
African American/Black/Haitian/African	29	18%
Latino/a/Hispanic	15	22%
Mixed Race	15	22%
Asian/Asian-American/Pacific Islanders	4	14%
White Anglo	4	3%

- **Female students are more likely than males to report being discriminated against in some other way than by race/ethnicity. (Females – 91, 40%; Males – 70, 29%)**
- **The most common ways that students reported feeling discriminated against other than race/ethnicity are age (19%), and gender (17%).**

For further information, please contact the Cambridge Human Rights Commission. 51 Inman Street, 2nd floor, Cambridge, MA 02139, (617) 349-4396, <http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/HRC/>