School and Society in the Age of Trump

John Rogers

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with the School and Society in the Age of Trump research team:
Michael Ishimoto, Alexander Kwako, Anthony Berryman, Claudia Diera

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School and Society in the Age of Trump

Executive Summary

In this age defined by the presidency of Donald J. Trump, our nation is increasingly divided and our political atmosphere highly charged. The contentious environment contributes to other societal problems, even as it makes it increasingly difficult to deal with them. America's schools are not immune from this division and incivility and are similarly challenged to address a range of issues that confront our society.

In this new study, School and Society in the Age of Trump, we asked a nationally representative group of more than 500 high school principals how a broad set of social issues at the forefront of the Trump presidency are felt and affect students and educators within America's high schools. We look closely at: 1) political division and hostility; 2) disputes over truth, facts, and the reliability of sources; 3) opioid addiction; 4) the threat of immigration enforcement; and 5) the threats of gun violence on school campuses. The study explores the impact on students' experiences in America's high schools as well as their learning and well-being. We also examine how high school principals throughout the U.S. responded to these challenges, and measure how the impact and responses differ across schools depending on student demographics, geographic location, or partisan orientation of the surrounding community.

Our findings make clear that in the age of Trump, America's high schools are greatly impacted by rising political incivility and division. Eighty-nine percent of principals report that incivility and contentiousness in the broader political environment has considerably affected their school community. In eighty-three percent of schools these tensions are intensified and accelerated by the flow of untrustworthy or disputed information and the increasing use of social media that is fueling and furthering division among students and between schools and the communities. And in this environment marked by fear, distrust, and social isolation, schools are impacted by and challenged to address critical issues confronting our nation including opioid abuse, immigration and gun violence. Sixty-two percent of schools have been harmed by opioid abuse. Sixty-eight percent of the principals surveyed say federal immigration enforcement policies and the political rhetoric around the issue have negatively impacted students and their families. Ninety-two percent of principals say their school has faced problems related to the threat of gun violence

In the face of these societal challenges, it is students themselves who bear the brunt of the impact. Many students feel greater anxiety, stress, and vulnerability, and parental opioid misuse and aggressive immigration enforcement have both resulted in greater material deprivation for young people—unstable housing, insecure food supplies, and a lack of other necessary supports.

School principals are also impacted. The average principal in the study reports spending six and a half hours a week addressing the five societal challenges. One in four principals spend the equivalent of one workday a week responding to the challenges. That time represents lost opportunity costs, taking time away from efforts to meet students' academic needs and enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

Principals report spending extra time on supervision, school discipline and community outreach related to school incivility and challenges with untrustworthy information and social media. Across the challenges, many principals say they spend extra time talking and meeting with students and parents, connecting students and families with community and social services, and planning and providing professional development to help teachers address the challenges. Some principals have intervened with immigration authorities on behalf of students and families. Others have sent backpacks full of food home for the weekend, or dug into their own pockets for money to help pay utility bills or help with rent for students whose families have been affected by opioid abuse. Many principals seem to feel somewhat unprepared for dealing with the opioid crisis.

Virtually every school, regardless of region, community type, or racial make up was impacted by these challenges. More than nine in ten principals in our survey report experiencing at least three challenges and more than three in ten experiences all five challenges.

Yet, certain types of schools are more likely to be impacted by particular challenges. Schools that enroll predominantly students of color are most impacted by the threats of immigration enforcement and gun violence. Predominantly white schools are most impacted by the opioid crisis. Differences across regions are relatively modest, with the exception of the opioid crisis, which is experienced most severely in the Northeast, and the threat of immigration enforcement where the greatest impact is felt in the West. Schools located in congressional districts that voted strongly for Donald Trump in 2016 are slightly more likely than other schools to experience political incivility and the opioid crisis.

It is important to note that when multiple challenges occur within a school site, they interact with one another in complex and mutually reinforcing ways. It is likely that political division makes schools more vulnerable to the spread of untrustworthy information, just as the spread of untrustworthy information often contributes to division and hostility. And the fear and distress associated with opioid misuse, threats to immigrant communities, and gun violence, increases the possibilities for division and distrust amongst students and between educators and the broader community.

Our hope is that these results will help to present a more complete portrait of how our nation is changing in the age of Trump, and that by sharing data and stories from America's high schools, we can help educators and policymakers consider and address the effects and causes of these societal challenges during a period of political and social turmoil.

Key Findings and Recommendations

The study findings are based on an online survey conducted in the summer of 2018 by UCLA's Institute for Democracy Education and Access (IDEA) of 505 high school principals whose schools provide a representative sample of all U.S. public high schools. The survey examined how students and schools were affected by five different societal challenges during the 2017-18 school year, as well as how principals and their colleagues responded to these challenges. UCLA IDEA also conducted 40 follow-up interviews with principals who participated in the survey selected to be representative of the larger pool of schools. A summary of key findings includes:

Division, Incivility, and Hostility in American High Schools

- Almost nine in ten principals report that incivility and contentiousness in the broader political environment has considerably affected their school community.

- An overwhelming majority of principals report problems such as contentious classroom environments, hostile exchanges outside of class, and demeaning or hateful remarks over political views.

- Expressions of hostility towards racial groups or immigrants are heard across a wide swath of American public schools. More than eight in ten principals report that their students have made derogatory remarks about other racial or ethnic groups.

- More than six in ten principals say their students have made derogatory remarks about immigrants.

- The most commonly reported instances of racial hostility echo President Trump's "Build the Wall" rhetoric on immigration.

- Almost eight in ten principals report that they have disciplined students for uncivil behavior toward other students in the past school year.

- School principals report "time consuming and arduous" work to address "volatile exchanges" on campus and say they spend an average of nearly an hour and a half a week responding to these challenges.

- Principals are almost twice as likely to speak specifically about the importance of respecting students from different racial or ethnic minority groups (85%) as about respecting immigrant youth (49%).

- Principals in predominantly white schools are less likely than principals in racially mixed schools, and far less likely than principals in schools enrolling predominantly students of color, to talk about tolerance toward immigrant youth.

- Principals in predominantly white schools located in congressional districts that voted heavily for Donald Trump in 2016 are the least likely to report having spoken with their student body about promoting tolerance and respect toward immigrant youth.

Untrustworthy Information in America's High Schools

In the midst of the political division of the Trump era, transformations in the national media landscape are propelling the flow of unfiltered and often untrustworthy information across American society. In this environment students struggle to discern fact from opinion, identify quality sources, or participate in inclusive and diverse deliberations on social issues. School climate also suffers as students use social media to call one another names or spread rumors.

The vast majority of high school principals surveyed and interviewed report experiencing problems at their school related to the flow of untrustworthy or disputed information.

- More than eight in ten principals say their school has faced one or more problems such as students frequently making unfounded claims based on unreliable media sources; students rejecting the information or media sources the teacher is using; or parent or community members challenging the information or media sources used by teachers.

- Many principals across a broad cross-section of schools also highlight ways that students' abilities to access and share unfiltered and untrustworthy information through social media platforms has upset both classroom learning and school climate.

- More than nine in ten principals report that "students have shared hateful posts on social media."

- Many principals highlight the detrimental effects of cyberbullying on their school culture.

- Principals in the survey say they spend more than one hour each week responding to these concerns.

The Opioid Crisis in America's High Schools

The opioid crisis has continued to play out in communities and states across the nation during the first two years of the Trump administration. Eleven million Americans misused opioids in 2016, resulting in 42,249 deaths from overdose, or more than 130 deaths every day. Every region in the nation has been affected, but the impact has been most strongly felt in West Virginia, Ohio, New Hampshire, and Maryland, as well as in rural areas.

- More than six in ten high school principals in our survey report that their schools have been impacted by the opioid crisis.

- Principals say opioid addiction in students' families has resulted in student concerns about their well-being or the well-being of family members, students losing focus in class or missing classes, parent and guardian difficulties in supporting students, and a lack of parent and guardian participation in school activities.

- Principals in predominantly white schools are far more likely than their peers to report these problems and to note they have occurred multiple times.

- Schools in small towns and rural areas are most affected.

- Almost one-third of principals interviewed report fatal overdoses occurring within their school community.

- Many principals described how students' lives are upended when parents become addicted, impacting their mental health and also often resulting in extreme financial hardship.

- Principals whose schools are affected by the opioid crisis dedicate an average of more than one hour each week addressing these challenges.

- The vast majority of principals report talking with individual students about their concerns, connecting students to counseling or social welfare services, and/or partnering with community based organizations adept at providing supports for students and families.

- About one-third of principals offer professional development opportunities for their faculty to support students with addicted family members.

- Principals feel somewhat unprepared for dealing with the opioid crisis. Most principals do not have protocols or systematic plans to deal with student addiction or dangerous drug use at this scale.

The Threat of Immigration Enforcement in America's High Schools

Since the election of Donald Trump in 2016, students across the country have experienced mounting uncertainty and fear due to their families' immigration status. The rhetoric and actions of the president and his administration have dramatically heightened the vulnerability of these children and taken a toll on their physical and mental health and education. A "climate of fear" pervades many immigrant communities, creating stress and anxiety for parents and children alike.

More than two-thirds of the principals surveyed report that federal immigration enforcement policies and the political rhetoric around the issue have harmed student well-being and learning or undermined the ability of parents to support student learning. Principals say:

- Students from immigrant families experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.

- Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty participating in school activities or supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home.

- More than half of principals report that immigrant parents and guardians have been reluctant to share information with the school.

- Students and parents are reluctant to discuss their citizenship status with school personnel.

- Principals whose schools are located in congressional districts that voted strongly for President Trump in 2016 are less likely to report student concerns due to immigration policies than principals in congressional districts that voted strongly against President Trump.

- Principals who report that their schools have been impacted by the threat of immigration enforcement spend an average of more than an hour and a half per week responding to related student and family concerns.

- More than nine in ten principals have spoken with impacted students and directed them to counseling and other social welfare supports.

- Eight in ten principals surveyed report partnering with community-based organizations that provide services for immigrant students and families, while five in ten report connecting families to legal services.

The Threat of Gun Violence in America's High Schools

There were 1611 gun-related homicides of fifteen to nineteen year olds in the United States in 2016. An average of twenty students are killed each year on K-12 campuses, representing one to two percent of all youth homicides. Between the school shootings in Columbine, Colorado in 1999 and Parkland, Florida in 2018, there have been shootings at 193 schools, affecting more than 187,000 enrolled students. Almost all of the high school principals we surveyed and interviewed report that their schools have been impacted by the threat of gun violence.

- More than nine in ten principals say their school has faced problems such as students concerns about the threat of gun violence in school or the surrounding community, lost focus in class or missed school time due to concerns with gun violence, and, parent and community member concerns about the threat of gun violence in the school or surrounding community.

- Principals from California to Connecticut say that, in comparison with all other challenges, this topic (gun violence) "has captured the most attention," represents the "largest stress," and poses the "gravest concerns."

- The threat of gun violence impacts schools across all demographic and regional categories. Schools with large proportions of students of color have been affected most.

- Principals dedicate more time addressing problems associated with the threats of gun violence than any other challenge they currently face. On average, principals who report any impact from gun violence spend more than two hours per week addressing the issue.

- One in five principals interviewed recount incidents involving firearms on campus.

- One in three principals interviewed report that their school received threats of mass shootings, bombings, or both at some point during the previous school year. Many of these threats occurred in the days following the Parkland shooting.

- Principals say they also spend considerable time and energy addressing stress and anxiety and talking with various constituencies about the problem. Almost all principals in our survey report that they seek to reduce student concerns by talking to them and connecting them with counseling services.

- Principals are also spending time creating conditions to prevent and respond to school shootings. Most principals interviewed have focused their efforts to prevent gun violence on "hardening" their school campus and many schools have also moved to limit entry and exit to one "secure" site on campus.

- It was rare for principals in our study to respond to the threat of gun violence in a manner consistent with the comprehensive public health model of school safety—which represents the consensus approach within school safety scholarship. That model emphasizes establishing a school climate in which students feel a sense of connection with and responsibility toward one another. It also entails investing in counselors, psychologists, and social workers who can identify students in need of counseling and provide mental health services.

Cumulative Effects: Societal Challenges and America's High Schools

The principals who participated in our study come from schools that reflect the rich diversity of public high schools across the United States. Virtually every one of these principals experienced at least one of the five challenges addressed in the study. Often they experience several challenges at once. Certain types of schools are more likely to be impacted (and impacted severely) by particular challenges.

- Almost all schools experience at least two challenges, more than nine in ten experience at least three challenges, more than seven in ten experience at least four challenges, and more than three in ten experience all five challenges.

- Schools enrolling predominantly students of color are most impacted by the threats of immigration enforcement and gun violence.

- Predominantly white schools are most impacted by the opioid crisis.

- Differences across regions are relatively modest, with the exception of the opioid crisis, which is experienced most severely in the Northeast, and the threat of immigration enforcement where the greatest impact is felt in the West.

- Schools located in congressional districts that voted strongly for Donald Trump in 2016 are slightly more likely than other schools to experience political incivility and the opioid crisis.

It is important to note that when multiple challenges occur within a school site, they interact with one another in complex and mutually reinforcing ways.

Recommendations

School principals in the age of Trump encounter substantial obstacles. The challenges outlined in this report affect schools in all communities. Resolving them will likely require solutions that encompass more than access to material supports. Education and social policies that address fear, social isolation, and distrust are needed, and are likely to continue to be needed for the foreseeable future. If public high schools in the U.S. are to prepare young people to grow into compassionate and committed community members, our society and our schools must exhibit care, support connectedness, and promote civility. And society and schools especially must do this across social, political, and racial divides.

It is beyond the scope of this report to map out what this means for or may be required at the societal level. The focus of our recommendations lies with changing conditions and practices in America's high schools. We call for relationship-centered schools that attend to the holistic needs of young people and their families, while building social trust and understanding. In such schools, caring and well-trained professionals support student development, link young people and families to community-based services, encourage thoughtful inquiry, and foster respectful dialogue. Creating and supporting such schools requires an educational policy framework that responds to the demands of the Age of Trump. We recommend:

1. *Establish and communicate school climate standards emphasizing care, connectedness, and civility and then create practices that enable educational systems to document and report on conditions associated with these standards.*

2. *Build professional capacity within educational systems to address the holistic needs of students and communities and extend this capacity by supporting connections between school-based educators and other governmental agencies and community-based organizations serving young people and their families*

3. *Develop integrated systems of health, mental health, and social welfare support for students and their families.*

4. *Create and support networks of educators committed to fostering care, connectedness, and strong civility in their public education systems.*

America's High Schools in the Age of Trump

Linda James[1] is a veteran principal trying to hold things together in a large, racially diverse high school in North Carolina. Her highly regarded school features ample college preparatory offerings, an array of career and technology courses, and a popular JROTC program. Ms. James believes her "job is to make sure all students and all parents are supported equally and feel that support and know how to access [it]." She takes pride in the fact that leaders in the African American community look to her school as "a good place for their children," who represent roughly one-third of the student body. Last year, Ms. James created a new staff position to foster stronger relationships with the school's small but growing Latino community.

> "When we get into the heart of this conversation about national politics, that's when things fall apart."
>
> *Linda James, High School Principal in North Carolina*

During the long hours she works to enhance learning and student wellbeing, Linda James increasingly worries about real threats and challenges created beyond the boundaries of her school's walls. The shooting in Parkland, Florida, left many of her students and parents anxious and concerned about safety in their own school, while the growing misuse of opioids in the surrounding community has led to a significant increase in youth addiction. More than ten recent graduates—including several "kids that you don't predict"—have overdosed, James says, including one young graduate who died during his first year in college.

Linda James believes that the greatest challenge she now faces as a principal stems from the contentious national politics that stir up "turmoil" in her school. Students have shouted down one another over important yet polarizing policy debates such as gun control. Parents have complained about what they perceive to be the liberal bias of websites recommended by their children's English teacher for research projects—at least until Ms. James showed them that these sites are on a list of reliable information sources "vetted" by North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction.

Linda James recounts sitting in her office during a class period last winter and hearing a loud, repetitive *thump thump thump* coming from the stairwell, causing her to run out to check on the commotion. Once there, she discovered a group of white male students clapping and shouting "Trump, Trump, Trump" as they descended the stairs. Before she could get to the boys, an African American student with an anti-Trump message handwritten on his t-shirt stepped into the hallway to challenge them. This counter-protest "ignited the boys again to pick up their cadence and their volume" until James and her fellow administrators, alongside the school resource officer, were able to establish order and begin applying consequences for the pandemonium and disruption of class time.

When students at Ms. James' school reprise certain strains of our national political rhetoric, they too often communicate racially hostile messages to their classmates. Some "students feel emboldened to say … 'Go back to Venezuela.' 'Go back to Colombia. You don't belong here,'" she recounts. Such statements carry a particularly menacing force for members of a community that has experienced several recent deportations. Noting that immigrant "parents don't like to come to school, they don't like to sign things," Linda James describes the local Latino community as "very much on edge."

Against this backdrop of stress, division, and marginalization, Linda James sees little choice but to "deflect" attention away from politics. Her school has received recognition in the past for ensuring that 100% of eligible students are registered to vote. But now, she agonizes that greater political engagement is "when things fall apart." Ms. James explains: "My role has always been to bring people together for what is common." In this political moment, she does *not* believe it is her job to get students "to understand the other's viewpoints." She concludes: "I don't think anybody's been very good at doing that."

Societal issues shaping life in America's high schools ——

In fall 2017, UCLA IDEA published *Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump,* a report that examined how the political rhetoric and policy actions during the first four months of the Trump administration affected students and learning in the United States. Our national survey of high school teachers found increased stress and hostility in America's classrooms and across its campuses during the spring of 2017.

In this new study, we draw on stories of principals like Linda James to look beyond the initial effects of that tumultuous period of transition. We begin by examining the ways and the extent to which a broad set of social issues that have come to the forefront of public concern during the Trump presidency are acutely felt and otherwise affect students and educators within America's high schools. We examine five social issues in particular:

1. **Political division and hostility**	2. **Disputes over truth, facts, and the reliability of sources**	3. **The crises posed by opioid addiction**	4. **Vulnerabilities associated with threats of immigration enforcement**	5. **The perils and frequency of gun violence.**

These challenges—undergirded and propelled as they are by fear, distrust, and social isolation—are closely associated with the Trump administration, despite their roots extending well before November 2016.

Foregrounding these specific challenges, we explore three questions:

1) Have these societal challenges that have intensified during the Trump presidency impacted students' experiences in America's high schools, and if so, how has this affected their classroom learning and well-being?

2) How have high school principals throughout the U.S. (acting alone or in collaboration with other staff members) responded to these challenges?

3) How do these challenges, as well as their degree of impact and principals' responses, differ depending on student demographics, geographic location, or partisan orientation of the surrounding community?

The Study ——

To address these questions, UCLA IDEA initiated a national study of high school principals in the summer of 2018. Principals, who are responsible for ensuring student well-being as well as advancing their schools' educational and civic mission, are uniquely positioned to report on the impact of societal challenges. In carrying out the day-to-day tasks of their job, these school leaders are called upon to look across the entire school community and oversee teachers, counselors, and other support staff. They have unique first-hand knowledge of how various social pressures manifest in schools; what effects these pressures have on learning and student development; and the efforts of school officials to respond to emerging needs.

Between late June and early August 2018, we conducted an online survey of 505 high school principals whose schools provide a representative sample of all U.S. public high schools in terms of region, prevailing partisan affiliation of the surrounding community, students' racial demographics, and family income. In all, the participating principals' schools represent nearly two-thirds of all congressional districts across forty-six states and the District of Columbia. (See "High Schools Represented in Our Study," below, for more information on the sample.)

The 20 minute survey examined how students and schools were affected by the five different societal challenges described above during the 2017-18 school year, as well as how principals and their colleagues responded to these challenges.[2] The survey concluded with an optional open-ended question inviting principals to comment freely on the topics at hand. Two hundred principals responded to this question. Additionally, the survey inquired about principals' race, gender, years of experience in education, and the degree to which they consider themselves to be civically and politically engaged.

In July and August, we conducted forty follow-up interviews with principals who participated in the survey. These principals were selected to be representative of the larger pool of schools according to region, student race and family income, and community-wide partisan political leaning. Interviews were conducted over the phone or via video chat, and generally lasted 30 to 45 minutes. During these conversations, interviewers asked principals to elaborate on their schools' experiences and responses to the five societal challenges. We promised confidentiality to participants in our study, and so we use pseudonyms when referring to specific principals throughout this report.

Purpose and Plan of the Report

It is critically important to understand how growing contentiousness and heightened societal stress are affecting America's youth and our public schools. Much has been written regarding political division, unreliable information, opioid abuse, immigration enforcement, and gun violence. But less is known about the impact of these issues on young people's well-being, learning, and future plans. Today's political conflicts and unresolved societal problems pose immediate threats to young people and also establish patterns that may play out for years to come. Further, such effects are likely to differ in relationship to students' backgrounds as well as the characteristics of their communities. By examining these five challenges in the context of a diverse cross section of U.S. public high schools, we aim to present a more complete portrait of how our nation is changing in the age of Trump.

We also hope that sharing data and stories from America's high schools will help educators and policymakers deeply consider and address both the effects and causes of these societal challenges. Educators are too often overwhelmed by new or rapidly changing conditions and uncertain about their roles when facing challenges that originate outside of schools. Recognizing that educators may often perceive their experiences to be idiosyncratic and reflective only of their particular schools or communities, our analysis offers a sense of how they actually fit within larger patterns shaped by societal forces. We focus on different ways that principals respond to the challenges, and consider the possibilities and limitations of remedial actions undertaken inside schools. Throughout, we aim to identify insights on how to support schools and society during a period of political and social turmoil.

In the remainder of this report, we highlight our findings that show how America's high schools have experienced and responded to five central challenges in the age of Trump. In each of the following five sections, we: 1) Focus on one of the aforementioned challenges; 2) Briefly review contemporary scholarly literature, public polling, and government data that provides further details regarding how the societal challenge is currently experienced overall; 3) Provide a unique first-person vignette that illustrates how a particular principal experienced this challenge; and 4) Present our survey and interview data to illuminate the overall experiences of the challenge, the ways this experience differs (if at all) across demographically distinct communities, and the efforts of educators to mitigate the effects or transform the underlying issues associated with the challenge. In our concluding section, we look across these five challenges to assess the collective impact of societal pressures on America's high schools in the age of Trump. We close by outlining a set of recommendations for fostering caring, connectedness, and civility.

High Schools Represented in Our Study and Key Terms and Definitions

The 505 principals who responded to our survey lead schools that closely resemble the student demographics and community characteristics of all public high schools in the United States. The 40 principals who participated in our follow-up interviews come from a similarly diverse set of high schools.[4]

Student Demographics

Racial Demographics of High Schools

In the report, we differentiate between three groups of high schools: 1) Predominantly White Schools (80-100% white enrollment); 2) Racially Mixed Schools (35-79.9% white enrollment); and 3) Predominantly Students of Color Schools (0-34.9% white enrollment).[5]

- ■ Predominantly White Schools
- ■ Racially Mixed Schools
- ■ Predominantly Students of Color Schools

All U.S. Public High Schools

24.5% 34.5% 41%

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey

21.4% 33% 45.6%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews

25.1% 37.9% 37%

Low-Income Status of Families in High Schools

We use student eligibility for the federal Free and Reduced Price Lunch program to distinguish between Low Poverty Schools (0-29.9% of students are eligible); Mixed Income Schools (30-59.9% of students are eligible); and High Poverty Schools (60-100% of students are eligible).[6]

Legend:
- Low Poverty Schools
- Mixed Income Schools
- High Poverty Schools

All U.S. Public High Schools
- 30.3%
- 31%
- 38.7%

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey
- 26.3%
- 35.6%
- 38.1%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews
- 34.6%
- 22.1%
- 43.3%

School Size

We use student enrollment to distinguish between Small Schools (1-999 students); Mid-Size Schools (1000-1999 students); and Large Schools (2000 or more students). Our survey and interview samples include a higher proportion of Mid-Size Schools and Large Schools than the universe of all public schools in the United States.[7]

Legend:
- Small Schools
- Mid-Size Schools
- Large Schools

All U.S. Public High Schools
- 25.6%
- 36.1%
- 38.3%

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey
- 12.2%
- 41.6%
- 46.2%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews
- 12%
- 46.1%
- 41.9%

Community Characteristics

We highlight three types of community characteristics in the report: 1) Political Leaning of Congressional District; 2) Community Type; and 3) Region.

Political Leaning of Congressional District[8]

Donald Trump received 46.09% of the national vote in the 2016 presidential election. The chart below shows the percentage of schools located in congressional districts that exceeded the average vote for Donald Trump in 2016.[9]

All U.S. Public High Schools	505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey	40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews
50%	52.3%	47.5%

In the report, we differentiate between three groups of high schools: 1) Low Trump Vote (located in congressional districts in which the vote for Donald Trump was 0-36.08%); 2) Contested Vote (located in congressional districts in which the vote for Donald Trump was 36.09-56.09%); and 3) High Trump Vote (located in congressional districts in which the vote for Donald Trump was 56.1-100%).

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey

Low Trump Vote	Contested Vote	High Trump Vote
25.3%	43.6%	31.1%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews

Low Trump Vote	Contested Vote	High Trump Vote
35%	42.6%	22.5%

Community Type

We use a classification from the National Center For Educational Statistics to distinguish four basic types of locations: City, Suburban, Town, and Rural.[10]

All U.S. Public High Schools

City	Suburban	Town	Rural
30%	38.8%	11%	20.2%

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey

City	Suburban	Town	Rural
30.2%	47.4%	9.2%	13.2%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews

City	Suburban	Town	Rural
36.6%	47.5%	6.9%	9%

Region

We use a classification from the U.S. Census to classify schools into one of four geographical regions: Northeast, Midwest, South, and West. Our survey and interview samples include a higher proportion of schools from the West and a lower proportion of schools from the South than the universe of public schools across the United States.[11]

All U.S. Public High Schools

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
16.6%	21.4%	37.8%	24.2%

505 Principals in Schools and Society Survey

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
12.7%	19.2%	27.5%	40.6%

40 Principals in Schools and Society Interviews

Northeast	Midwest	South	West
13.5%	26.3%	18.5%	41.7%

Political Division and Hostility in America's High Schools

There's a greater divide than there has been in years past between liberals and conservatives—which I think everybody sees. Things that are going on outside the school setting obviously affect school, and students' thoughts, and students' beliefs. There's a different tone. I don't want you to think that the sky is falling. As society goes, school goes. So [a] breakdown in communication [and] civility in general society, plays itself out in a school setting, or it has opportunity to.

High school discussions are what they are. You get good discourse depending upon the class, depending upon how skilled the teacher is, depending upon the level of students. But across the board [we've seen what] could be considered kind of a breakdown of civility—a lack of understanding or empathy for people who are on the other side of an issue that you don't necessarily agree with. You see some of that come out in class discussions—a lack of civility that used to be there. Kids struggle with being civil with one another in their discussions based off perceived facts or understandings or knowledge they have about a given situation.

For a while you couldn't go on the news without seeing videotape of a racially biased comment made in class. We didn't have anything like that here, nothing "newsworthy." But there's probably not a teacher you could talk to where those ideas or beliefs didn't come out in a class discussion in a manner that wasn't very healthy. There was an uptick in class discussions that denigrated [groups] based off racial lines, particularly when the teachers would talk about immigration policies.

As an administrative team we work pretty hard with our teacher leaders to try to intervene with groups that are having issues and help work through that within our school community. We developed a program [in which] teachers meet twice a month with the same group of students [for] two half hour sessions. We have lessons on current social topics where we'll provide an outline for teachers to engage with kids. It's a pretty fluid curriculum, so if there are issues that come up within a school setting that we feel we have to deal with, this time provides us some agility in order to do that. Trying to make a larger environment smaller has helped our community engage in some of these issues.

—Gerald Wise, principal of a Michigan high school located in a congressional district that leaned toward Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential election[12]

Like many principals across the nation, Gerald Wise faces challenges at his school associated with divisive and contentious politics in broader society. Almost two thirds of Americans report that discussing political issues with people who hold different views results in discovering they share *less* in common politically than they previously thought. A majority of Americans now say that it is "stressful and frustrating" to have political conversations across lines of disagreement, and only a quarter feel that "the tone of political debate is respectful."[13] Before the 2018 fall midterm elections, three-fourths of likely voters reported that the "overall tone and level of civility in Washington" has "gotten worse" since the election of Donald Trump, while fewer than one in twelve said that it has improved.[14]

The growing political discord of the last two years is perhaps best understood in the context of two decades of steadily intensifying partisan division. Between 1994 and 2017, gaps between Democrats and Republicans grew substantially on a wide array of issues. For example, in 1994, 58% of Democrats and 38% of Republicans agreed that the "government should do more to help the needy"; by 2017, 71% of Democrats and only 24% of Republicans agreed with this statement. Over this same period, the proportion of both Democrats and Republicans who held a "very unfavorable opinion" of their rival party more than doubled.[15] Distaste for members of the opposing party increasingly carries over into social relationships.[16] Americans now express less satisfaction for their neighborhoods when they are told that members of the opposite party live there.[17] Multiple analyses highlight a vicious cycle of "self-sorting" whereby Americans move into more like-minded residential clusters, thereby producing greater social distance from and distrust of others, which, in turn, prompts further sorting still.[18]

Alongside growing partisan polarization, our political culture can be increasingly characterized as a "rude democracy."[19] To be sure, incivility is not new in American politics, but there is mounting evidence of an upward trend in politicians' demon-izing of opponents, as well as uses of invectives and violent political metaphors.[20] When political elites engage in such aggressive rhetoric, members of the general public become more aggressive in turn.[21] In short, political incivility in campaigns and national debates begets incivility in daily civic life.[22]
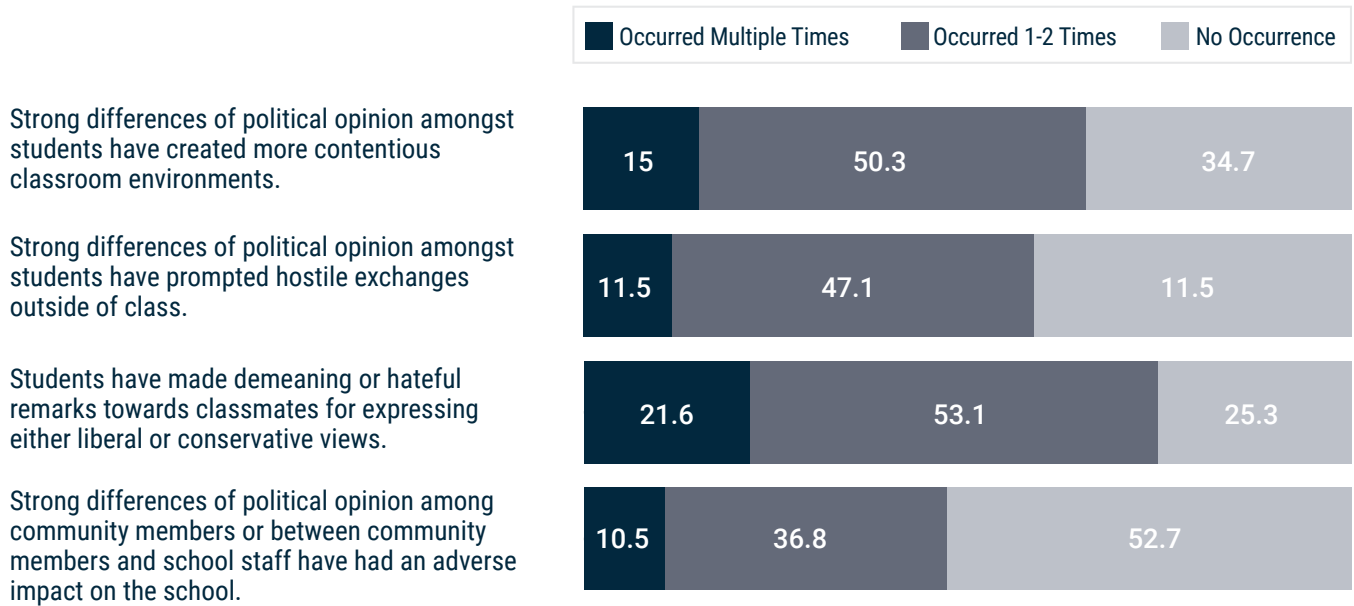
Recent social science research establishes that aggressive and dehumanizing rhetoric has also fomented negative feelings and antipathy toward immigrants and other racial minorities.[23] Sociologist Rene Flores finds evidence in survey data that Donald Trump's rhetoric about immigrants in the 2016 election negatively affected public opinion towards immigrants.[24] Psychologists Christian Crandall, Jason Miller, and Mark White similarly establish that the presidential campaign led to a "normative climate that favored expression of several prejudices." Participants in their study demonstrated increased biases against groups repeatedly named and targeted by the Trump campaign, but no such change toward unnamed groups.[25] In experiments conducted after the 2016 election, political scientist Brian Schaffner finds that exposure to Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric about Mexicans "emboldened" study participants to "say more offensive things about *all* groups."[26]

As sociologist Ariela Schachter notes, political rhetoric that activates racial biases can meaningfully shape "how Americans treat one another in schools, jobs, and neighborhoods."[27] Sadly, recent trends in law enforcement bear this out. According to FBI statistics, hate crimes rose 17% during the first year of the Trump administration, with increases in each of three categories—race, religion, and sexual orientation.[28] Further, national opinion surveys conducted in 2017 and 2018 reflect the public's belief that racism is a growing problem.[29]

Division, Incivility, and Hostility in American High Schools

Eighty-nine percent of principals report that incivility and contentiousness in the broader political environment has considerably affected their school community. The overwhelming majority of principals surveyed have experienced at least one of the following problems: 1) Political differences among students create contentious classroom environments; 2) Students' different political opinions prompt hostile exchanges outside of class; 3) Students make demeaning or hateful remarks to classmates for expressing liberal or conservative political views; 4) Strong differences of political opinions among community members or between community members and staff adversely impact the school. Large majorities of principals report that their schools experience each of the first three problems, and almost half report the fourth. The principals most likely to report that these problems occurred multiple times are those whose schools are Racially Mixed and those working in politically contested congressional districts.

Problems Related to Political Division and Hostility

Legend: ■ Occurred Multiple Times ■ Occurred 1-2 Times ▪ No Occurrence

Strong differences of political opinion amongst students have created more contentious classroom environments.
| 15 | 50.3 | 34.7 |

Strong differences of political opinion amongst students have prompted hostile exchanges outside of class.
| 11.5 | 47.1 | 11.5 |

Students have made demeaning or hateful remarks towards classmates for expressing either liberal or conservative views.
| 21.6 | 53.1 | 25.3 |

Strong differences of political opinion among community members or between community members and school staff have had an adverse impact on the school.
| 10.5 | 36.8 | 52.7 |

Problems Related to Political Division and Hostility, by School Racial Demographics.

Legend: ■ Occurred Multiple Times ■ Occurred 1-2 Times ▪ No Occurrence

Strong differences of political opinion amongst students have created more contentious classroom environments.

Predominantly Students of Color	11	42	47
Racially Mixed	17	55	28
Predominantly White	16	52	32

Strong differences of political opinion amongst students have prompted hostile exchanges outside of class.

Predominantly Students of Color	7	48	50
Racially Mixed	15	54	31
Predominantly White	11	42	47

Students have made demeaning or hateful remarks towards classmates for expressing either liberal or conservative views.

Predominantly Students of Color	15	45	40
Racially Mixed	25	57	18
Predominantly White	24	56	20

Strong differences of political opinion among community members or between community members and school staff have had an adverse impact on the school.

Predominantly Students of Color	8	27	65
Racially Mixed	13	45	42
Predominantly White	10	35	55

Severity of Political Division Challenge by Region and Type of Community

Increasingly, the boundaries of public school grounds have been breached by the ideologically driven animus that divides communities large and small throughout the country. In Montana, a local elected official directed a vitriolic and "inflammatory" attack against teachers and students who were planning a peaceful protest at David Ostrander's school. Ostrander has seen a "noticeable increase in conflicts between extreme political views … [among] adult community members on both sides of the issues." In California, the social media pages of Amy Robinson's school reflect a local "atmosphere [characterized by] bullying, hate speech, and indoctrination," filled as they are by "parents arguing with each other" about contentious political issues. At another California school, "scores of community members and parents … from both sides of the political spectrum" regularly pressure Aaron Graves to address hot-button political issues like gun control and free speech. Although Graves recognizes the importance of community participation, he has been "surprised and dismayed by the deterioration of compromise and the erosion of basic civic rules of engagement, such as listen[ing] to both sides and allow[ing] everyone to express their opinions."

Just as some parents and community members perpetuate these and other types of intolerance in many places, young people have brought political conflicts directly onto their campuses as well. Together, the discord experienced and in some cases inflamed by young and old alike has substantially damaged the well-being of many school climates. Michael Rayne's Pennsylvania school serves a diverse community—"affluent and very poor, very liberal [and] very conservative." Students "from both sides of the aisle" consistently follow the news, and classroom and school-wide discussions frequently echo competing partisan narratives and a desire "to make the school an extension of that debate." At times, students' political differences may move beyond mere debate, as was the case at Nick Gill's school in a politically divided county in Wisconsin. Recalling a day when a small group of students wore hats to school to show their allegiance to the president, Gill says, "One of the more liberal students took offense to the Make America Great [Again] hat and the next thing you know we had fists flying in the hallway and whatnot. A lot of it starts out as comments under the breath, because we're small enough … that the students know who's on which side of the political spectrum."

Many principals report that the contentious tone and corrosive discourse of national politics has negatively re-shaped the norms of student interaction. In California, Juan Gomez worries that "our current political climate is modeling a negative form of communication … based on extreme words fostering extreme action," while Gabe Anderson similarly recounts that such polarizing rhetoric "has trickled down" to his school. Roger Townsend attributes a rise in inappropriate behavior at his Kansas school to students who "see, watch, [and] hear our … political leaders behave in less than adult-like or professional manners … [further] lowering the bar" of what is acceptable. In Washington, Nellie Jenkins similarly decries elected officials' "modeling of poor interpersonal relationships and disrespectful discourse." She notes the difficulty of holding "students to high standards for behavior and citizenship when those in the limelight of our country's leadership do not exhibit those qualities." Citing the influence on his school of the "toxic political climate at the federal level," Jorge Avila in Texas concludes: "It is as if we have given the fringe permission to come to the

center and dictate social norms and behaviors."

A particular concern for principals is what Cathy Burton in California describes as an "ugliness about the politics" that leads to incidents of antagonism and prejudice "popping up through the kids." Mike Ross has worked as an educator for three decades across three states and has never seen schools so divided. "Voices of indifference and intolerance" at his school "were ignited by the political rhetoric fueled by the present political divisions in America." In Alabama, Sam Harris' school has experienced a "very divisive climate since 2016," leading students to exhibit a "heightened sense of fear and suspicion of others." Victor Russo is even more blunt about conditions at his Washington school. Over the last two years, he has witnessed "a noticeable increase in incivility overall and outright hostility toward minority groups."

Expressions of hostility towards racial groups or immigrants are now heard across a wide swath of American public schools. More than 8 in 10 principals in our survey report that their students have made derogatory remarks about other racial or ethnic groups, and more than 6 in 10 principals say their students have made derogatory remarks about immigrants. These problems occur most frequently in Racially Mixed Schools and Predominantly White Schools. Throughout our interviews, the most commonly reported instances of racial hostility echo President Trump's rhetoric on immigration. Several principals recounted groups of white students chanting "Build the wall!" in a manner intended to demean and threaten students of color. Michelle Kenup recalls an incident in which a Latino student was told "he needed to go back to Mexico," despite the fact "that student wasn't actually *from* Mexico."

Student Hostility Toward Other Racial Groups and Immigrants, by School Racial Demographics

Students have made derogatory remarks about other racial/ethnic groups.

→ **82.2%**
All U.S.
Schools

- Predominantly Students of Color: 77%
- Racially Mixed: 84%
- Predominantly White: 85%

Students have made derogatory remarks about immigrants.

- Predominantly Students of Color: 51%
- Racially Mixed: 62%
- Predominantly White: 68%

60.4% ←
All U.S.
Schools

Of course, racially hostile behavior is not new in American high schools, and some principals acknowledge that their schools have struggled with this issue for years. Yet, a number of principals see the increasing intolerance at their school as concomitant with the same changes in mainstream political culture. Some attribute hateful speech at their schools to withering social norms and a growing tendency to equate free speech with saying whatever is on your mind. Cathy Burton explains that as "civil discourse has deteriorated over the last couple years … students are more and more willing to say outrageously racist, homophobic, 'whatever-phobic' things, believing it is their 'right' to do so." She adds: "In the past, when this occurred, there would be [a] certain acknowledgement and perhaps *shame* I could elicit through discussion—an ability to see that hate speech is wrong." Burton notes "that is less and less true now," however. Like a few other principals, she highlights the challenge of enforcing standards of behavior when they do not receive a baseline of support from students' parents. She remembers making disciplinary calls home only to discover that the parent either endorsed the student's "bigoted" statements, or argued that the "child was merely stating his or [her] opinion, and that it's perfectly fine for them to have done so."

Responding to Incivility and Hostility

Principals like Carol Hall in New Mexico describe the "time-consuming and arduous" work of addressing "volatile exchanges" that arise on school campuses "due to the divisiveness of political and social views" in the broader community. In our survey, principals report spending an average of nearly an hour and a half each week responding to these challenges. Their responses include efforts to mete out discipline, communicate social norms, enforce neutrality, and foster civility.

Disciplinary Action

Almost eight in ten principals in our survey report that they have disciplined students for uncivil behavior toward other students in the past school year. Principals in Predominantly Students of Color Schools report such disciplinary action with slightly less frequency—which may reflect the fact that these schools are less likely to experience such uncivil or hostile behavior. Often, principals treat political incivility or racially charged language and action as a form of bullying that is prohibited under their overall disciplinary code.

Disciplining Uncivil Behavior [30]

Disciplined students for uncivil or demeaning behavior toward another group of students.

Predominantly Students of Color	Racially Mixed	Predominantly White
74%	82%	81%

→ 79.1% All U.S. Schools

Despite principals' commitments to behavioral standards or willingness to discipline violations, they often do not have sufficient time or staff support to address every problematic incident. Nick Gill, whose Predominantly White School in Wisconsin was the site of the fight over MAGA hats described above, has used threats of disciplinary action to combat racially charged bullying. Along with his fellow administrators, Gill uses school assemblies to "flat out tell kids … there will be no tolerance for any of these things," and further, "If you screw up, we … will hammer you." Yet, Gill acknowledges that he and his fellow administrators can neither see nor "prevent everything." A group of white male students regularly say "some real awful things" in class as well as the lunchroom, which creates a "leeriness every day" amongst Latino and African American students. Although he encourages students to report these occurrences, with some resignation Gill concludes that his students of color are "savvy enough to know that they're outnumbered."

Addressing a Hostile Environment

A number of principals have grappled with trying to make their schools safe and inclusive environments when some of their students embrace symbols such as the Confederate flag that communicate overt hostility to other students. Maggie Cook in Pennsylvania and Chris Berry in Alabama have addressed this issue in different ways at their Predominantly White Schools.

We had a group of students wearing the Confederate flag to the school on a regular basis, and our school is predominantly white with a small group of African American and Hispanic students. This wearing [of] the Confederate flag had a deep impact on those [students] of color. [Our] response was twofold: [First], ensure to the students that were offended by this that it was not a representation of our school culture—it was a representation of a few people's opinion—and that they were safe within our school. [Second], help the others that were expressing their first amendment rights to [recognize] the fact that, sometimes, your beliefs can have a negative impact on others. You need to be sensitive to other people's opinions and perspectives. This group of kids that has been displaying and wearing the Confederate flag has pretty entrenched values. It's going to be an ongoing challenge for our school. It has not risen to the level of violence yet but I feel it percolating and I'm hoping that our conversations back and forth between the groups of kids on both sides can keep it from getting violent.

–Maggie Cook, Principal at a Predominantly White School in Pennsylvania

We had some difficult conversations [about] Confederate flags on students' vehicles. What you're trying to get them to understand is [that] somebody else views that as a sign of oppression, and it infringes on their freedom. And that's a very difficult line to walk sometimes. Not that I think that there's racist people here—I don't want you to think that. They don't view it as being racist. They view it as being just their Southern heritage. My African-American [students] don't view it the same.

–Chris Berry, Principal at a Predominantly White School in Alabama

Several principals combine punishment with discussions that aim to persuade students to adopt more civil and inclusive behavior. "Since the last election," Veronica Garcia in Pennsylvania has witnessed students give the "Nazi salute in public forums" and notes an overall "rise in the number of white students who are openly hostile to minority (mostly Black) students." Beyond bringing each incident "before the school board for a disciplinary hearing," Garcia strives to "teach our students the value of each person regardless of color or creed." which she does by facilitating "frank discussions" about what it means to treat one another equally. Similarly, Jessica Bishop in Arizona has responded to hate speech by "opening small group conversation about the impact of that kind of language." While Garcia, Bishop, and other principals emphasize "discussions" or "conversations," they do *not* envision unrestricted exchanges in which any language is permitted. Rather, their admonishments and exhortations are intended to provoke students to reflect on the meaning and consequences of their words and actions. When Bryan Johnson brought together students for chanting "Build the Wall" at his Massachusetts school, he first asked them for their rationale before bluntly telling them:
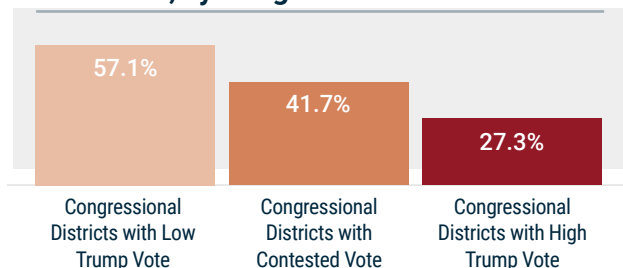
"It doesn't help anybody, [and] it doesn't make these people feel safe." While Johnson describes such efforts as "dampening the fire," it is not clear in this case—or in any other, for that matter—whether the principal's guidance affected students' beliefs and/or their underlying behavior.

Communicate Social Norms

Although the vast majority of principals talk with their students about the value of civility, the messages they convey about tolerance and inclusion are shaped by school demographics and the political leaning of the surrounding community. More than eight in ten principals surveyed communicate with their entire student body about the importance of promoting tolerance and respect. Principals who send a general message on tolerance are much more likely (85% to 49%) to speak specifically about the importance of respecting students from different racial or ethnic minority groups than about immigrant youth.
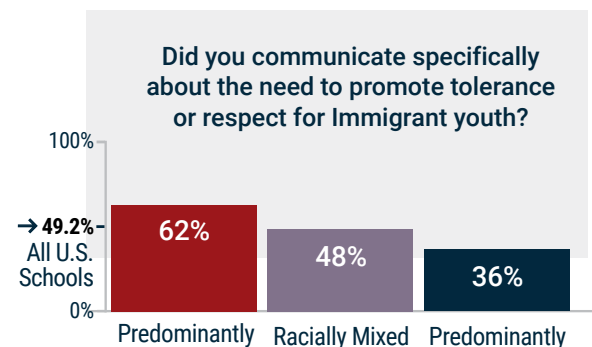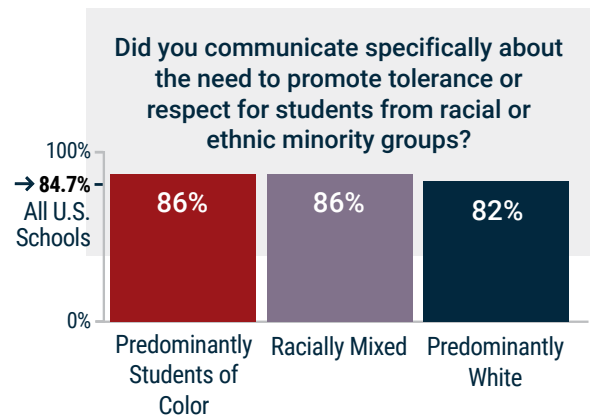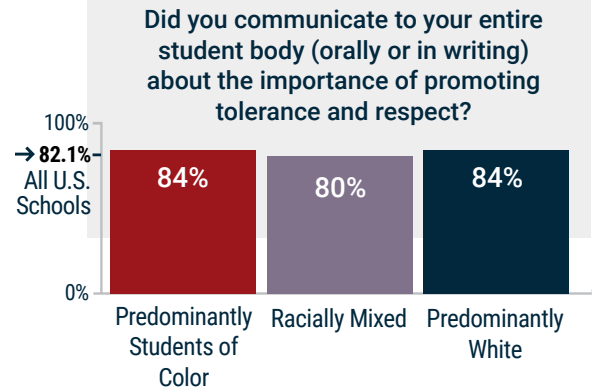
There is a strong relationship between school racial demographics and the likelihood of principals conveying messages that promote tolerance toward immigrant youth. Principals in Predominantly White Schools are *less* likely than principals in Racially Mixed Schools, and *far less* likely than principals in Predominantly Students of Color Schools, to talk about tolerance toward immigrant youth. This pattern is all the more striking given the fact that principals in Predominantly White Schools are the *most* likely to report incidents of students making derogatory remarks about immigrants. It is possible that some principals in Predominantly White Schools believe (consciously or not) that whole-school messages promoting tolerance toward immigrant youth will not be well received in their community. There is evidence to support this theory, such as the fact that principals in Predominantly White Schools located in congressional districts that voted heavily for Donald Trump in 2016 are *least* likely to have spoken with their student body about promoting tolerance and respect toward immigrant youth. Thus the schools that are *most* likely to produce hostile environments for immigrant students are situated within communities whose political dynamics may contribute to these students receiving the *least* support from principals.

Communicating Tolerance and Respect Toward Immigrants in Predominantly White Schools, by Congressional District Vote

Congressional Districts with Low Trump Vote	Congressional Districts with Contested Vote	Congressional Districts with High Trump Vote
57.1%	41.7%	27.3%

School racial demographics are also related to the likelihood of principals communicating with their student body about the importance of political tolerance. Almost half of principals who communicate with their students about the values of tolerance and respect in general also emphasize the importance of directing these values to those with unpopular political views. One-third of principals emphasize the importance of practicing tolerance toward those with liberal views,

Communicating the Values of Tolerance and Respect, by School Racial Demographics

Did you communicate to your entire student body (orally or in writing) about the importance of promoting tolerance and respect?

→ **82.1%** All U.S. Schools

Predominantly Students of Color	Racially Mixed	Predominantly White
84%	80%	84%

Did you communicate specifically about the need to promote tolerance or respect for students from racial or ethnic minority groups?

→ **84.7%** All U.S. Schools

Predominantly Students of Color	Racially Mixed	Predominantly White
86%	86%	82%

Did you communicate specifically about the need to promote tolerance or respect for Immigrant youth?

→ **49.2%** All U.S. Schools

Predominantly	Racially Mixed	Predominantly
62%	48%	36%

and one-third say it is important to be tolerant toward those with conservative views. Principals in Racially Mixed Schools are most likely to address the need for tolerance and respect toward political minorities. When Racially Mixed Schools are located in politically contested congressional districts, principals are even more likely to speak about the importance of political tolerance. This suggests that principals are particularly attentive to addressing political incivility in schools that embody the highest degrees of racial and political diversity.

Communicating Tolerance and Respect Toward Political Minorities, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: ■ Predominantly Students of Color ■ Racially Mixed ■ Predominantly White

Students or adults who hold unpopular political viewpoints
- All U.S. Schools **48.9%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 40%
- Racially Mixed: 56%
- Predominantly White: 49%

Those with particularly liberal views
- All U.S. Schools **34.2%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 26%
- Racially Mixed: 41%
- Predominantly White: 35%

Those with particularly conservative views
- All U.S. Schools **33.2%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 26%
- Racially Mixed: 38%
- Predominantly White: 35%

(axis: 0% to 100%)

Enforce Neutrality

Many principals concerned about the impact of divisive and contentious politics on their schools emphasize the need for teachers to uphold standards of neutrality in class discussions. In the open-ended writing prompt in our survey, the importance of teacher neutrality is one of the most common themes to emerge. Notably, two-thirds of principals who comment on the value of neutrality lead schools located in politically contested congressional districts. In such schools, the mere appearance of political favoritism (toward either party) can elicit concerns from students or parents. Soon after the 2016 presidential election, Jim Stevens in Oklahoma received an influx of anxious calls from parents concerned about teachers expressing their political frustration. After students recorded a video of one teacher's lecture they considered to be a "rant," Stevens brought his faculty together to discuss "proper political discussions inside the classroom."

Several principals have spoken with teachers about maintaining partisan balance. "It is not our role in public education, no matter how much we want to, to create little Republicans or Democrats," explains Charlie Humphrey in Utah. As Lee Ryan in Wisconsin tells his faculty, "we as educators need to open doors for all students, but mak[e] sure we are not picking sides." Similar strategies lead Hugh Sparks in Connecticut to "discourage any communication by teachers of their personal views" and Casey Larson in Kansas to highlight the importance of remaining "apolitical, whenever possible." Teachers may hear such messages as calls for political quiescence. While most principals who address the value of teacher neutrality also articulate a commitment to civic education, it is possible that their message effectively discourages discussions involving controversial issues.

Foster Civility

In our survey, a strong majority of principals report having taken some action to promote tolerance, understanding, and civil interactions at their schools. The likelihood of principals acting in this capacity—whether by engaging teachers, students, or community members—is related to school racial demographics. Principals from Predominantly Students of Color Schools are generally *most* likely to report working to foster more civil

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Protecting Unpopular Viewpoints

A high achieving, very-involved young lady who is a white student was in her civics class and she was supporting a pro-Trump message. Some of her classmates began directing some denigrating language towards her based on the philosophy that she espoused. The young lady felt like her teacher did not protect her [ability to represent] a minority political perspective in that case. That turned into a bit of an issue with the teacher and the mother and the child. No one was in trouble; it was not a disciplinary issue whatsoever. [I saw my role as] reaffirming that diversity of perspective needs to be protected, even in the case when I happen to not agree with her perspective.

—Phil White, Principal in a suburban Connecticut school

and respectful learning environments. As the lone exception to this pattern, principals from these schools are slightly less likely than their peers to call on student groups for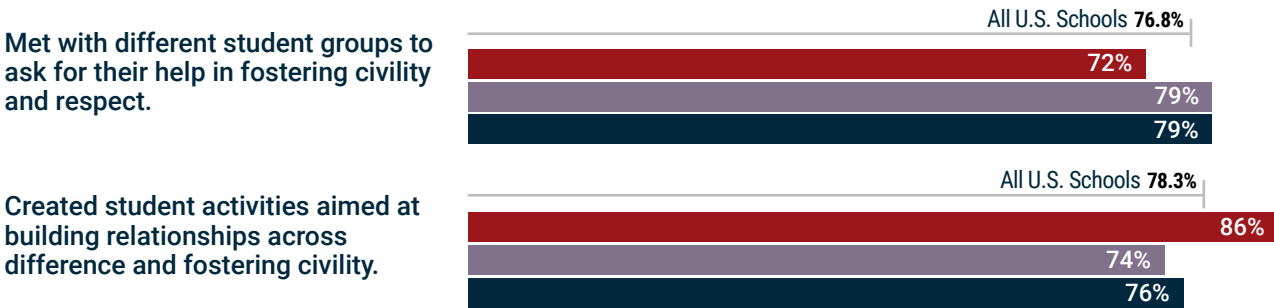 help in building civility on campus. Recall that principals in Racially Mixed Schools and Predominantly White Schools report incivility most frequently. Thus we see that efforts to foster civility are *most* common within schools that are *least* likely to have experienced uncivil and hostile environments.
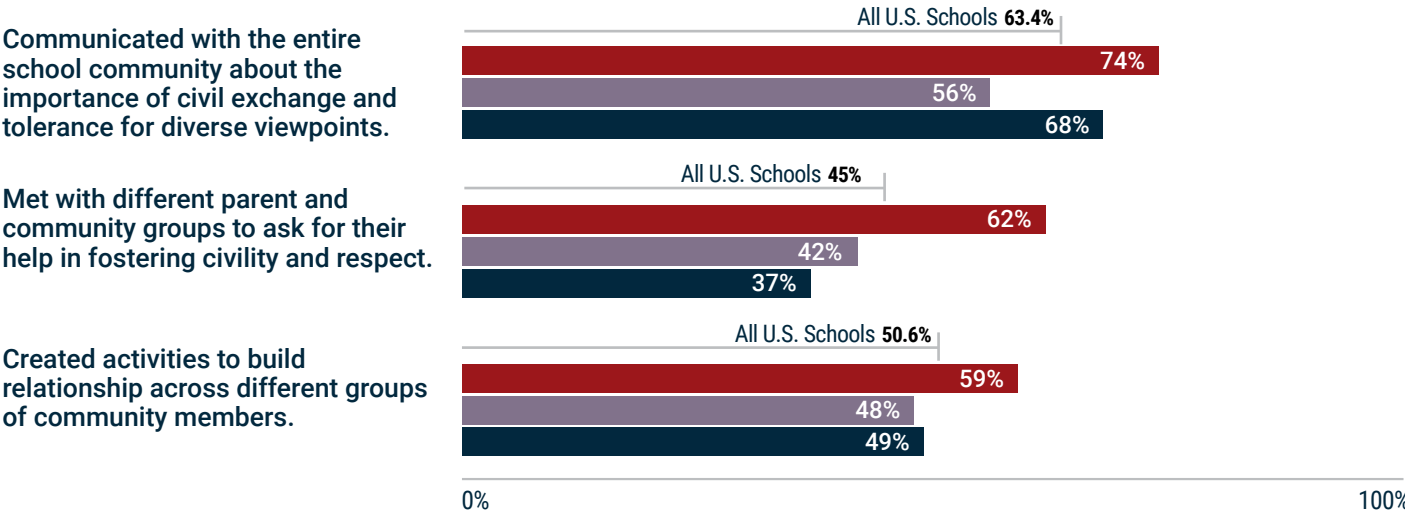
Professional Development for Civility, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: ■ Predominantly Students of Color ■ Racially Mixed ■ Predominantly White

Initiated professional development aimed at supporting teachers to create more civil and respectful learning environments.
All U.S. Schools **43.9%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 56%
- Racially Mixed: 40%
- Predominantly White: 37%

Created professional development for your staff about restorative justice approaches.
All U.S. Schools **41.3%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 59%
- Racially Mixed: 37%
- Predominantly White: 29%

Student Engagement for Civility, by School Racial Demographics

Met with different student groups to ask for their help in fostering civility and respect.
All U.S. Schools **76.8%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 72%
- Racially Mixed: 79%
- Predominantly White: 79%

Created student activities aimed at building relationships across difference and fostering civility.
All U.S. Schools **78.3%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 86%
- Racially Mixed: 74%
- Predominantly White: 76%

Community Engagement for Civility, by School Racial Demographics[31]

Communicated with the entire school community about the importance of civil exchange and tolerance for diverse viewpoints.
All U.S. Schools **63.4%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 74%
- Racially Mixed: 56%
- Predominantly White: 68%

Met with different parent and community groups to ask for their help in fostering civility and respect.
All U.S. Schools **45%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 62%
- Racially Mixed: 42%
- Predominantly White: 37%

Created activities to build relationship across different groups of community members.
All U.S. Schools **50.6%**
- Predominantly Students of Color: 59%
- Racially Mixed: 48%
- Predominantly White: 49%

0%　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　100%

Some principals try to cultivate civility in uncivil times by enacting trust and care at their schools. In New Mexico, Brad Hamilton invests time and resources "building relationships with … students and modeling kindness and community." At Jared Leonard's Arkansas school, educators "try to teach and model" the ideal of treating "all people with dignity and respect … at all times." Consistently living up to such a motto is especially challenging when it is routinely countered by national political rhetoric that models the opposite, and it is complicated further still by the different (and often contradictory) conceptions adults and students possess about the meaning of dignity and respect. At times, these difficulties are compounded in linguistically and culturally diverse settings where educators have limited familiarity with students' backgrounds. Willie Fields, whose Florida school educates students from more than thirty nations, responds to this challenge by "coaching sensitivity …[and] cultural responsiveness" to his staff. He encourages them to demonstrate respect by understanding, validating, and connecting with their students' backgrounds to create and nurture what he describes as "a culture of love."

Other principals envision their schools creating civil discourse as a counter to the polarizing and contentious rhetoric that has become the norm in national politics as well as their own communities. In California, Cathy Burton and her faculty have "been struggling" with political divisiveness and racial hostility, but they envision a way forward by creating a new school culture—one that supports inclusive and respectful dialogue. Rather than "avoiding the conversation in classes," they have established opportunities to learn how to guide students so that they are able to present their differences with respect for one another. Similarly, Andre Ibrahim's staff in Connecticut tries "to get in front of" contentious political issues when they "feel that this is something that is growing in the community." They believe that "these issues should be conversed about," and they work to establish conditions for students to do so in a "very respectful, collegial kind of way." Educators at Emma Sumpter's school in Montana also are committed to providing students with the tools necessary to navigate issues across a community that is a "blend of conservative and liberal students." They guide students in how "to have civil conversations with their peers, families, and community when those thoughts differ from the majority."

Many principals acknowledge that encouraging students to engage in productive dialogue across lines of disagreement comes with inherent challenges. Carol Hall in New Mexico talks with her students about a proper balance between articulating their own ideas and listening to those of others. "I've been trying to instill in my kids that you are absolutely of value in voicing your concerns and in raising these issues and in needing to be heard. But just because you believe so strongly doesn't mean that this student over here also doesn't have that right." She is careful to remind her students that forging civil conversations is a developmental process. Looking "beyond

Fostering an Open and Inclusive School Culture

[We have] a culture of open discussion and tolerance of other viewpoints. We do a lot of school-wide discussions about equity. We reinforce our expectations as a community for having those kinds of dialogue, for addressing things when they come out. We don't avoid issues. I think when you avoid issues, you have a vacuum. That is when these other negative forces fill that void, and students feel like it's okay to act out.

We use [divisive incidents] as teachable moments-- bringing students together and having them hear one another out. [We also] sit down with the students and just say, "Hey, look. If you have something to say, here's the right way to do it." Students [here] understand if they want to express themselves, there's an expectation for how they do that. We are not going to tolerate bullying and harassment for someone's political views or personal or ethnic or racial background.

[We are] proactive. We have student mentoring programs to try to build a friendlier, more connected community. We have the students collaborating an awful lot in the classroom, just so that they have opportunities to work with different students and get to know different students. We have a district equity team, and we have an equity team in every building, and we promote the notion of an equitable environment, where every student feels comfortable, connected, and supported. And [we encourage] students to participate—having student committees, empowering the student council, using student surveys. Even if we are making some decisions that maybe they don't agree with, at least they feel they are being heard.

—Anthony Montesa, principal in a politically contested Pennsylvania community

themselves," "listening to what other people have to say," and recognizing that "it's perfectly healthy to agree to disagree" are civic skills that come with time and practice. Hall's students have taken this message to heart and are working with her to establish an after-school club in which students with strong and competing viewpoints can come together for facilitated dialogue that helps them "hear what other people are saying."

Untrustworthy Information in America's High Schools

It happens a lot where kids are not using good sense on the Internet when they're searching for sources for information. They just come upon whatever website— the first thing they find— and it seems to fit with what they're looking for, but they don't really fact check it. They'll get information that's completely false or just not very accurate.

I'm thinking back to the political campaigns, we had a lot of kids taking sides on issues. Kids were finding stuff online from social media posts—pulling information about political issues. Facts [were] being thrown out there [and] you couldn't tell where they were really getting those facts. Several kids were backing up their political stance with information that just wasn't accurate at all.

I think it's easy to get into that and just go, "Geez, well, this isn't a normal time and it could be a dangerous time, and we've got to really educate kids about what the truths are because there's so much being put out there that's untrue." If you don't do it very, very well and balanced you're going to alienate a lot of kids that don't agree with you. I see that clearly with a lot of our students. I know their parents' beliefs. If you're saying that something is untrue or a certain network is putting out information that is propaganda, you're going to immediately cause people to be upset and they're going to automatically take a view of you that you can't get rid of.

I always question students. When they talk about something that sounds questionable, [I] ask them: "How did you source it? Where did you get the source? How do you know that's an accurate source and a reliable source?" [I] really push them to see if they can give a response. Because if they can't, then you've got to wonder how they're accepting it as truth.

Now that we are so connected and so digital and kids are constantly online, it's more about understanding how to find good information. The real skill that we've got to teach kids is how to unearth and fact check and to make sure sources are good sources.

— Eric Jasper, principal of a suburban Michigan high school

The difficulties Eric Jasper has encountered at his school highlight transformations in the national media landscape that propel the flow of unfiltered and often untrustworthy information across American society. A first dimension of this evolution is the decades-long drop in newspaper circulation and viewership of network news.[32] Perhaps both cause and effect of this erosion is the diminished public faith in traditional news sources. Less than one-third of Americans now say that they trust newspapers, television, and radio to report the news "fully, fairly, and accurately."[33] A second and related change is an increasing reliance on digital media for news. More than nine in ten Americans receive news online—from news websites, social media, search engines, or via email, text, or alert.[34] The universe of online news sites is vast, spanning professional news organizations, bloggers, content aggregators, and a wide array of political and commercial ventures. Within and across these categories, distinctions of "quality" news reporting are often purposefully obscured. A third shift, facilitated by the number and diversity of news sites, is the growing proportion of Americans who opt for news sources that specifically target them and others with whom they already agree. This, in turn, further widens ideological and partisan divisions. Taken together, these three changes prompt what some commentators have called "truth decay," characterized by dramatic disagreements over basic facts, prevailing uncertainty about the distinctions between fact and opinion, and the wide distribution of misinformation under the guise of "news."[35]

While the process of "truth decay" has occurred gradually over time, it has also been hastened by the 2016 presidential campaign and the election of Donald Trump.[36] Demonstrably false and purposefully combative news stories were circulated widely during the presidential campaign, creating further confusion and greater contentiousness within the public. During the first three months of the 2016 presidential campaign, the twenty most popular election stories that have since been revealed to be based on falsehoods garnered more Facebook shares, reactions, and comments than the twenty most popular truthful stories.[37] A survey conducted in the wake of the election found that "fake news headlines fool American adults about 75 percent of the time," and "'fake news' was remembered by a significant portion of the electorate and those stories were seen as credible."[38] The public increasingly recognizes these changes. Roughly two-thirds of Americans agree that fictionalized news stories create confusion about facts, almost one-third acknowledge that they regularly see false stories online, and one-sixth admit that they have shared such stories.[39]

President Trump's rhetoric often obfuscates the public's understanding of important issues and erodes commitment to the ideal that policy deliberations should be grounded in verifiable facts. The nonprofit organization Politifact has scored 70% of Donald Trump's statements "mostly false," "false," or "pants on fire" fabrications.[40] In addition, President Trump's frequent invocation of the phrase "fake news"—a term he has

tweeted more than 300 times in his first two years in office—does further damage to the public's faith in traditional information sources.[41] Another result "has been to relentlessly turn questions of fact into questions of motive," as the journalist Uri Friedman points out.[42] One upshot of "truth decay" is that partisan identity increasingly shapes how members of the public differentiate between fact and opinion. Both Democrats and Republicans are more likely to label claims that align with their partisan view as factual, even when those statements are based on opinions, not facts.[43]

America's high schools have emerged as both critical sites to address "truth decay" and places that are particularly vulnerable to its effects. Many political and educational leaders reason that the ability to distinguish truth from falsehood or fact from opinion is tied to cognitive skills that can and should be developed in schools.[44] As a consequence, the topic of "fake news" has featured prominently in national conferences for both English/Language Arts and social studies teachers.[45] Practitioner magazines have published articles, blogs, and resources suggesting how educators should respond to misinformation and changing media landscapes.[46] Similarly, National Public Radio, the Public Broadcasting Service, and the Education Writers Association have all examined educators' strategies for working with students on these issues.[47]
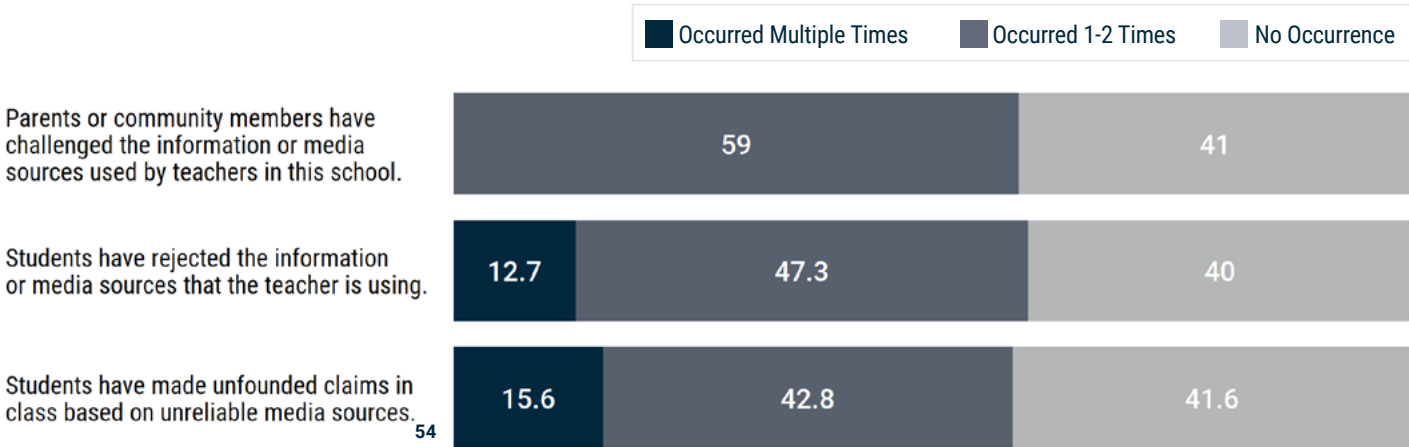
High school youth, who access online information and participate in social networks at higher rates than other Americans, are the most likely age demographic to encounter misinformation.[48] More than nine in ten American teens access the Internet on a daily basis, and one in four say they do so "almost constantly."[49] Teens are just as likely to access news about political issues from social media postings of friends and family as they are from more traditional sources.[50] Many young people are skeptical of traditional news sources and consider user-generated content (such as live video streams) to be the most trustworthy.[51] The implications of the near-constant sharing of information through social networks stretch beyond students' abilities to discern fact from opinion, identify quality sources, or participate in inclusive and diverse deliberations on social issues. It also affects school climate as students call one another names or spread rumors; almost six in ten teens report having experienced some form of cyberbullying.[52]

The Impact on U.S. High Schools

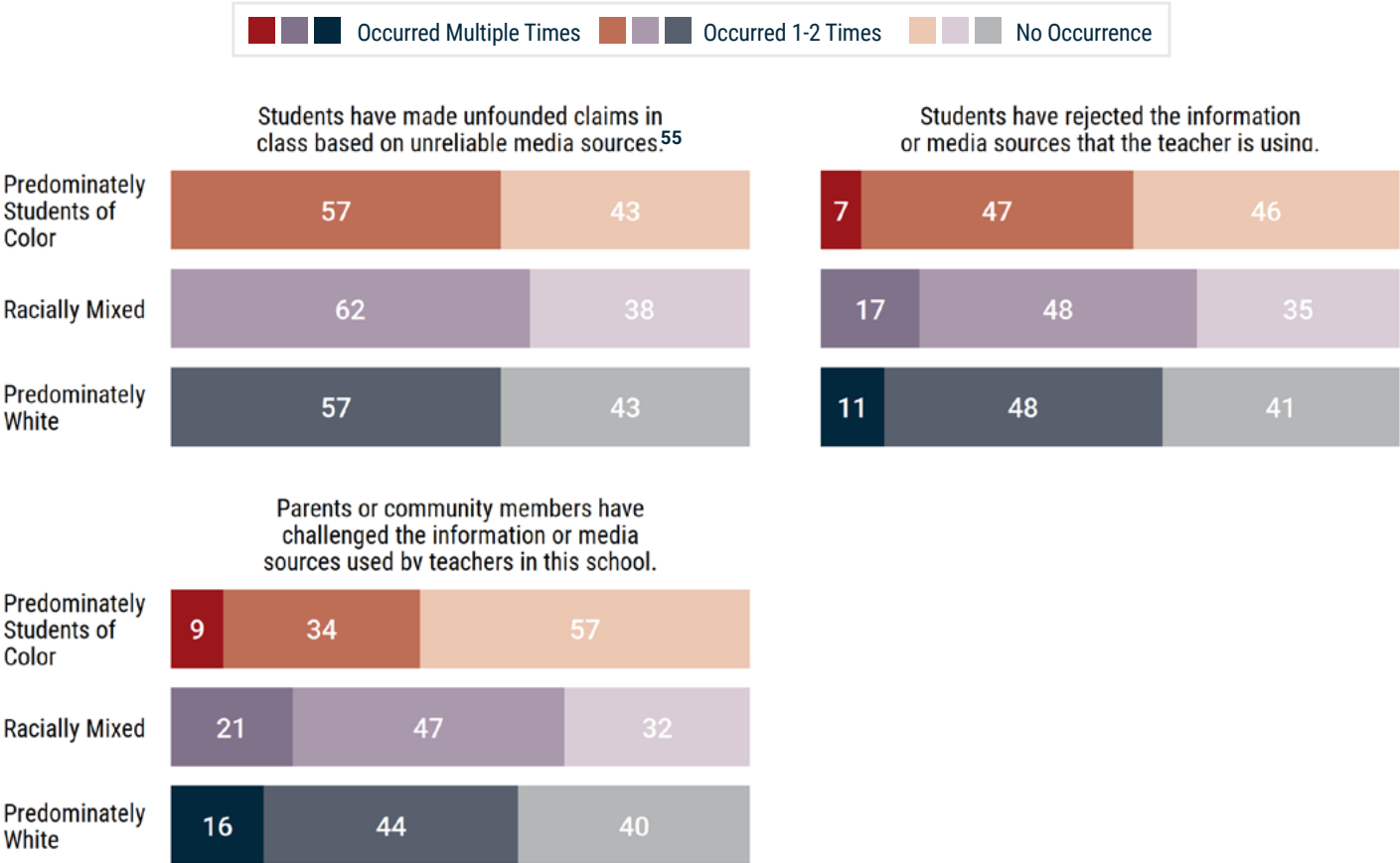The vast majority of high school principals surveyed and interviewed report experiencing problems at their school related to the flow of untrustworthy or disputed information. Eighty-three percent of principals indicate that their school has faced at least one of the following problems: 1) Students frequently have made unfounded claims based on unreliable media sources; 2) Students have rejected the information or media

sources that the teacher is using; or 3) Parent or community members have challenged the information or media sources used by teachers.[53] Twenty percent of principals note that students rejected information or parents and community members challenged information on multiple occasions, with Racially Mixed Schools being most likely to experience these issues frequently. Many principals working across a broad cross-section of schools also highlight ways that students' abilities to access and share unfiltered and untrustworthy information through social media platforms has upset both classroom learning *and* school climate.
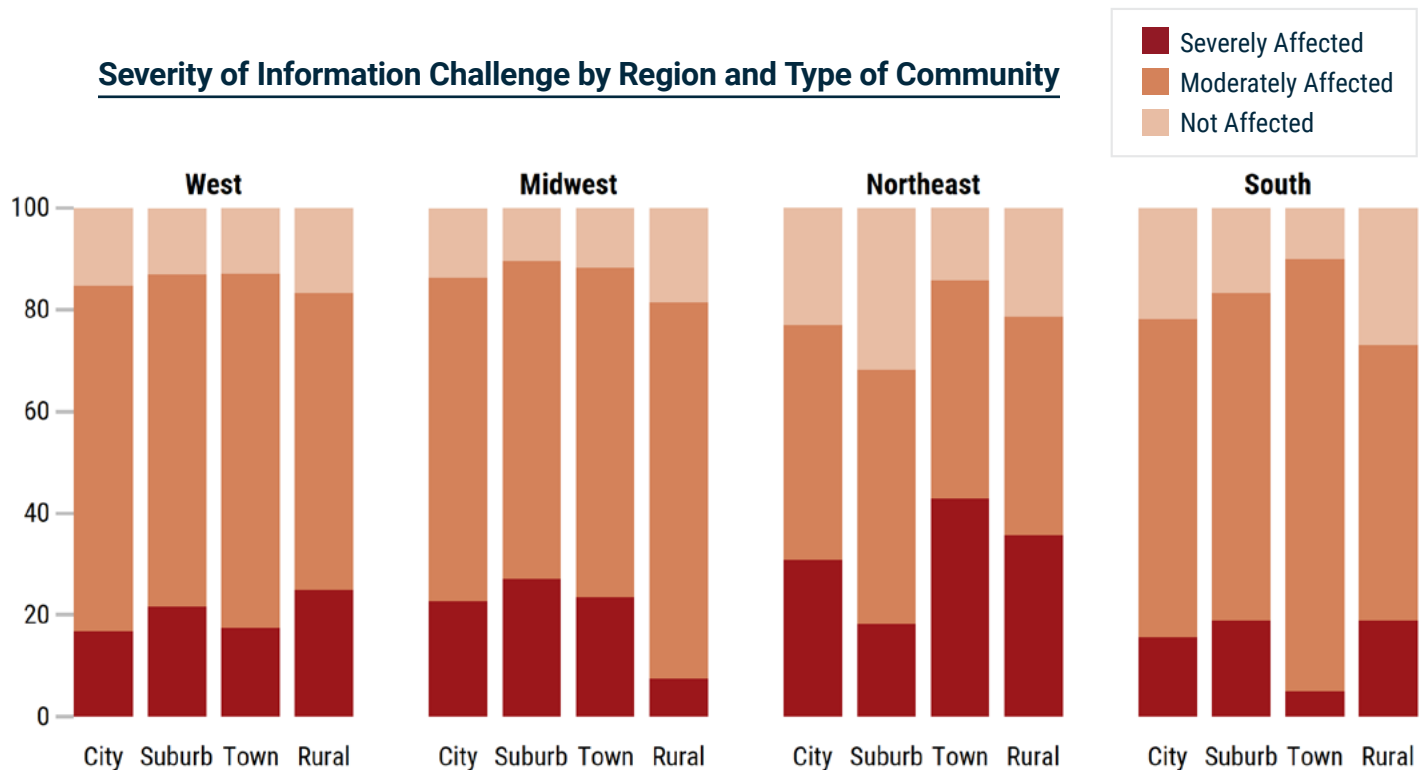
Problems Related to Spread of Untrustworthy Information

Legend: ■ Occurred Multiple Times ■ Occurred 1-2 Times □ No Occurrence

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Parents or community members have challenged the information or media sources used by teachers in this school.		59	41
Students have rejected the information or media sources that the teacher is using.	12.7	47.3	40
Students have made unfounded claims in class based on unreliable media sources.[54]	15.6	42.8	41.6

Problems Related to Spread of Untrustworthy Information, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: ■■■ Occurred Multiple Times ■■■ Occurred 1-2 Times □□□ No Occurrence

Students have made unfounded claims in class based on unreliable media sources.[55]

	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	57	43
Racially Mixed	62	38
Predominately White	57	43

Students have rejected the information or media sources that the teacher is using.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	7	47	46
Racially Mixed	17	48	35
Predominately White	11	48	41

Parents or community members have challenged the information or media sources used by teachers in this school.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	9	34	57
Racially Mixed	21	47	32
Predominately White	16	44	40

Severity of Information Challenge by Region and Type of Community

Many principals are worried that changing media landscapes are having a negative effect on how their students process and use information. Some relate that their students commonly access narrow and distorted versions of news stories, which leads them to reject any alternative interpretations out of hand. Elroy Thomas in Kentucky expresses concern that "media bias is affecting our students' ability to develop critical thinking." In California, Derek Shields contrasts the one-sided presentation of news stories with the free flow of diverse ideas that he deems necessary for a robust learning environment. "Often times, the mainstream media sources provide a narrow narrative based on specific political views. In the past, the news organizations would provide the infor- mation and let the public form their opinions, thus creating healthy debate. Recently, one side is presented, sometimes falsely. This creates a one-sided thought process." Shields adds that this dynamic undermines learning and "creates hostility because the other side of the topic or view is not presented."

Principals frequently note a tendency of their students to accept without question the veracity of stories encountered via the Inter- net or multiple social media platforms. "If a student sees something on Twitter," notes Gerald Wise in Michigan, he or she will "pick up on that and read into it as truth, particularly if it maybe goes into helping support the worldview that they've brought into the class." Wise worries that some students then arrive at class committed to "outrageous" viewpoints, which creates "another hurdle that teachers … face when they are holding current topical discussions." In California, Cathy Burton characterizes this problem as: "Well, I saw it on the Internet." Students' struggles to assess the "validity and/or credibility" of sources has grown as Burton's school has moved toward providing every student with laptops within "Google classrooms." When teachers ask their classes to identify evidence to be used for discussion, they find that each student's "ability to determine a reliable source is just weak." Too often, Burton says that "the result is polarizing" when students gather information: "[S]ome of it [is] reliable, some of it [is] *not* reli- able, [and] they use [both] as weapons against each other."
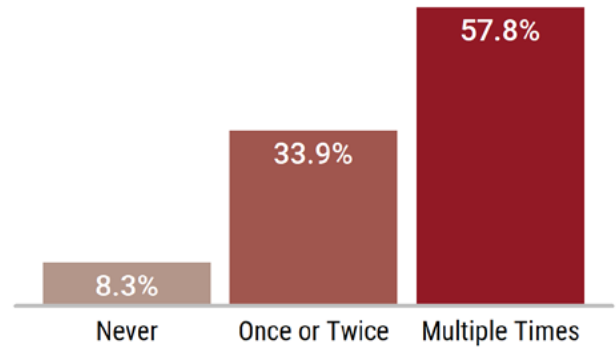
Rancorous battles over competing "truths" play out both inside and outside of classrooms. Several principals report incidents of students using social media to agitate classmates about issues at their school or in the news. In Missouri, a few of George Mull's students spread rumors online about another faction of students stealing the student government election (until Mull was able to reassure the student body that his school's technology made such vote-rigging impossible.) At Pete Pedersen's suburban Utah school, students have shared false or misleading information about issues that divide the community, such as gun control, hasten- ing the replacement of civility with a pervasive "unsettling feeling." As a strong advocate for incorporating new technology into the school's program, Pederson laments that social media is "one of the best *and* worst things that we have to deal with as a school."

Perhaps the most substantial impact of social media has been the surge of cyberbullying at schools. More than nine in ten principals in our survey report that "students have shared hateful posts on social media." A strong majority note that this problem has occurred multiple times during the school year, and many principals highlight the detrimental effects of cyberbullying on their school culture. Dean Swan in Ohio, who has seen many students "post inappropriate content meant to threaten or harm," is quite

blunt in his assessment: "Social media," he says, "is destroying school safety and climate." To relate the severity of the problem at her California school, Lisa Gonzales tells the story of an incoming 9th grader who asked her about how the "administration would protect students" from bullying. "Of interest," she continues, "was what he was wearing—a football t-shirt."

In Minnesota, Tim Vanderdoes associates the growth of cyberbullying with "our current political landscape," which conveys to students "that they should be able to post whatever they feel, not thinking about who is offended and to what degree." Principals like California's Christopher Wick reason that the anonymous nature of social media emboldens students to communicate "awful things" to one another. "I can say anything with my thumbs that I wouldn't dare say to you in person. I'm not even forced to even look you in the eye when I say it." Similarly, Andre Ibrahim in Connecticut worries about "the bullying sentiment via twitter fingers." Because "all of these children are completely connected via social media," their virtual communication that occurs outside of school inevitably shapes the

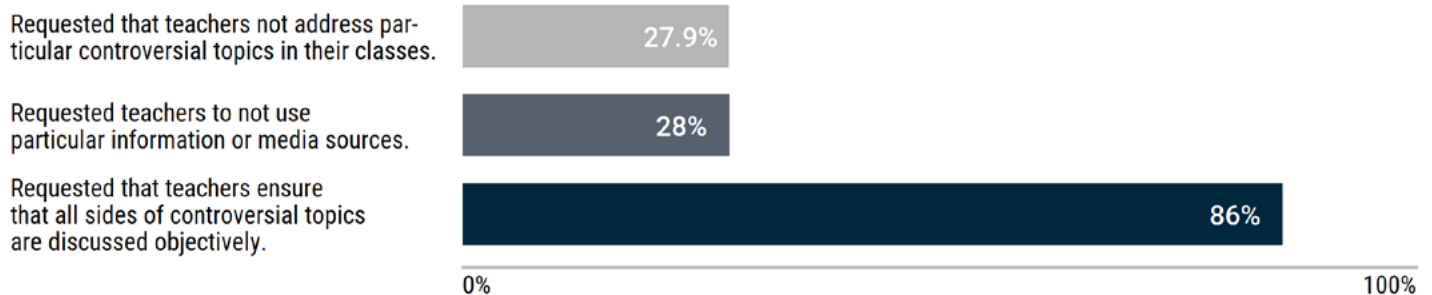**Cyberbullying in America's High Schools**

climate within the school. As Ibrahim says, "If somebody has Twitter Fingers, guess what? Less than 12 hours later, they're all going to be within 100 feet of each other, because that's the only place for the kids in a small town like this … to be for 183 days of the year."

Responding to Untrustworthy and Contentious Information

On average, principals who report challenges associated with the flow of untrustworthy information spend more than one hour a week responding to these concerns, and they take on a variety of roles in response. They seek to shape *what* information students encounter, as well as providing guidance as to *how* to responsibly grapple with this information. Principals also encourage more responsible uses of social media, through rules and restrictions, counseling, or mentoring.

A little more than a quarter of principals report they have restricted topics or information sources in order to diminish the flow of unreliable or contentious information. Principals are much more likely to encourage "balance" than advocate for restrictions. Six in seven principals have "requested that teachers ensure that all sides of controversial topics are discussed objectively." Olivia Minor in Wisconsin has been struck by the way that teachers of "a very strong liberal or conservative bent" often seem unaware that they are presenting only one ideological side of a topic. When speaking with these teachers about the media they incorporate in their lessons, she makes a point to ask, "What other sources do you have for that?"
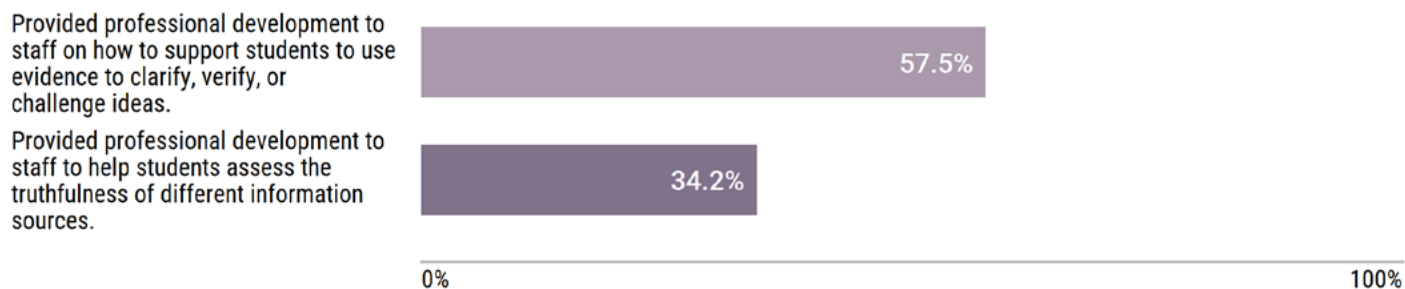
Limiting or "Balancing" Information

Many principals invest resources in professional development aimed at helping students better understand and act within the new landscapes of information exchange. A majority of principals provide professional development on "how to support students to use evidence to clarify, verify, or challenge ideas."

A little more than a third of principals offer professional development to "help students assess the truthfulness of different information sources." Most principals we interviewed, like Pete Pedersen in Utah, envision the school's role as providing students with technical guidance on how to "decipher real versus not real." He uses school-wide faculty meetings to discuss articles from practitioner journals about how to "teach kids as far as [what is] good information versus bad information." Some principals, like Carlos Loza in Texas, bring in non-profit organizations to present a set of questions that students should use to evaluate websites. Several principals delegate similar roles to librarians, or to media specialists on staff. In Pennsylvania, Anthony Montesa's school librarian shows students "how to research and find accurate information online, how to verify sites, how to verify sources."

Professional Development on Information Sources and Evidence

Provided professional development to staff on how to support students to use evidence to clarify, verify, or challenge ideas.	57.5%
Provided professional development to staff to help students assess the truthfulness of different information sources.	34.2%

0%   100%

A smaller group of principals articulate a mission that extends beyond merely helping students distinguish between "real" and "fake" information. These principals highlight the importance for students to develop critical understandings of how information is produced and consumed and a commitment to ongoing inquiries into complex questions about society and social relations. In discussions with his students and faculty, Andre Ibrahim in Connecticut emphasizes "intellectual and reflective capacity" to question the reliability of information sources—as well as one's assumptions and biases about this information—as vital "21st Century skills." He wants his students to "really dig deep" so that "whatever the sources … we choose to take … as fact or true, we need to also be reflective as to the opposite side of things, and to what extent does that have merit as well." Greg Daniels in Pennsylvania believes that fostering such intellectual sensitivity requires students to recognize the ways that our particular perspectives and systems of power shape how we understand societal relations and power differentials. As his students research news coverage of social issues, he wants them to learn "that most media is biased and has an agenda."

At Terrence Buehler's science-themed high school, educators encourage students to reflect on the processes and assumptions that influence all investigations. He and his faculty have created a new course, "Introduction to Science Research," that "support[s] students in becoming science-literate—how [to] read, write, and research like a scientist," including "how to be critical of the research they encounter." These are not easy or straightforward skills to teach or acquire. As Phil White in Connecticut notes, "kids really need a lot of assistance" as they grapple with the complex meaning of reliability, validity, and truth.

Responding to Irresponsible Use of Social Media

Whereas principals focus on curriculum and instruction when they encounter the flow of untrustworthy information, most approach the problematic social media practices of students as matters related to student behavior and school discipline. Many have begun to adopt and enforce new rules and restrictions in response to the dramatic increase of social media use at their campuses. Almost three in four principals report their schools have "created or publicized rules for students to use social media responsibly." At Ryan Bisset's school in Nevada where "cyberbullying is rampant," the administration spends "countless hours" reacting to student violations of the school's social media policies. Bisset notes that there have been "numerous times" when he even has called upon local law enforcement to address particularly serious cases. Similarly, cyberbullying has become such a big issue in Gil Reedsberg's Wisconsin community that the local town council passed an ordinance calling for police to fine students for "unlawful use of electronic media."

Addressing Social Media Practices

Created or publicized rules for students to use social media responsibly.

72.4%	

0% 100%

At other schools, educators counsel students to avoid inappropriate social media behavior. Every year, Pete Pedersen brings in speakers from Utah Netsmartz to speak to his students about "electronic safety" and the importance of projecting positive images of themselves on social media platforms.[56] In Colorado, Frank Hartford and his counselors are more direct in their small breakout groups with young women and young men. "Remember that picture that your friend sent you? By it being on your phone, you're liable. And if you ever hit send, you're in big trouble." Hartford also encourages his teachers to hold these conversations with their students, but acknowledges that "some teachers struggled with" this role due to their lack of familiarity with the technology and its nomenclature. He recalls his teachers asking him, "What's Snapchat?"

Several principals envision their role as stopping social media rumors before they spread throughout the entire student body. Whenever necessary, George Mull in Missouri counters false and misleading stories about students or the school by publicizing "the real story." Because he often finds himself limited by privacy laws, he reminds students that "not everything you read is credible," encouraging them to do their "due diligence to find out what is the truth." Michael Rayne takes a more personal approach to quell rumors at his Pennsylvania high school by going directly to the source of the stories and challenging students to examine their facts.

In Georgia, Michelle Kenup shares a story that highlights her unique approach to addressing problematic social media practices. Rather than addressing such behavior as a disciplinary problem, Kenup emphasizes community building and learning.

> We had a situation in which two students of different ethnic backgrounds got into a verbal altercation. Unfortunately, the student who initiated it decided to go on social media and complain about the consequences that came into play for her and the other student. It kind of took off from there. Like the telephone game, she posted one thing, and then it got changed. And it got tweeted and changed again, and tweeted to the point where I was literally getting emails from all over the country, from people who had no idea about our school, based on one tweet.
>
> I pulled informal as well as formal student leaders in our building —those kids that people follow. And we talked about it as a group. I read the different tweets and the different stories to them. [I said:] "You guys have been here with me from the day [you] entered high school. Does this really sound like what we do here?" And every single one of them said, "No." I said, " If you don't believe that this is legit, then you've got to step up. You've got to help stop the spread of it. The only way that it stops from getting out is you guys have to tell your friends: 'Hey, we know this isn't the case.'"
>
> Amazingly, they did. They stepped up. I have awesome students. They started having conversations. [These conversations] open[ed] some doors for [broader] conversations within our building. It also stopped the spread of the inaccurate information.
>
> We tried to utilize that [story] in our classes as we talked about fake news, unreliable sources. [It] gave students a real world example of how something can be taken completely out of context that's not legitimate and kind of turned around.
>
> —Michelle Kenup, Principal of a Racially Mixed, Suburban School in Georgia

Kenup's story reminds us that as much as facts matter, the way we come together collectively is just as essential if we are to make sense of them—whether we are assessing social media postings, news articles, or other sources of information. Rather than encouraging deference to external rules or guidelines, Kenup emphasizes the importance of context and the relationship between reliability and social trust. Martin Baron in Massachusetts underscores this point when he describes how his school counters the "polarized information coming from the media and our political leaders" with teaching and learning that shows students "what it means to be respectful, accepting, … and loved." Ultimately, students learn important lessons about the flow of trustworthy information as they participate in school communities that establish meaningful, trusting relationships.

The Opioid Crisis in America's High Schools

I think every one of our kids would probably say they know someone who either is addicted or was addicted to opioids. I don't know why it seems so prevalent here, but this county has had an unusually large number of situations involving opioids, specifically prescription pill issues. We had a local doctor that was arrested this past year for over-prescribing. We had deaths that came about because of it.

We often hear from former students in their twenties who are addicted to heroin, and it started with prescription pills while they were still in high school--essentially, from their parents' medicine cabinet.

When they're in high school, they feel invincible; they still don't think there's any real risk or harm from prescription pills. When that runs out and they have to turn to alternative sources, they start to fall apart. It is an issue that we have to deal with, and it's something we have to work on and educate our kids about, so they can try to make the best choices possible.

We have a family in the school community that's very active, everyone knows who they are, just good people. One of the kids became addicted pretty bad, and he had to go to rehab multiple times and he did clean himself up. But his mother decided to try to tackle the problem. She formed her own group to try to raise awareness in parents: What are the warning signs? How do you look through your kids' social media accounts or through their bedrooms to see if there's things they shouldn't have?

With her group, we sponsored a guest speaker that came to the high school last fall. He is a [well known, retired athlete] and he does this around the country. He was phenomenal. He was addicted, but he cleaned himself up. He speaks extremely well to kids. We were really happy to host him, and he was excellent. We saw a lot of impact, I think, from that assembly.
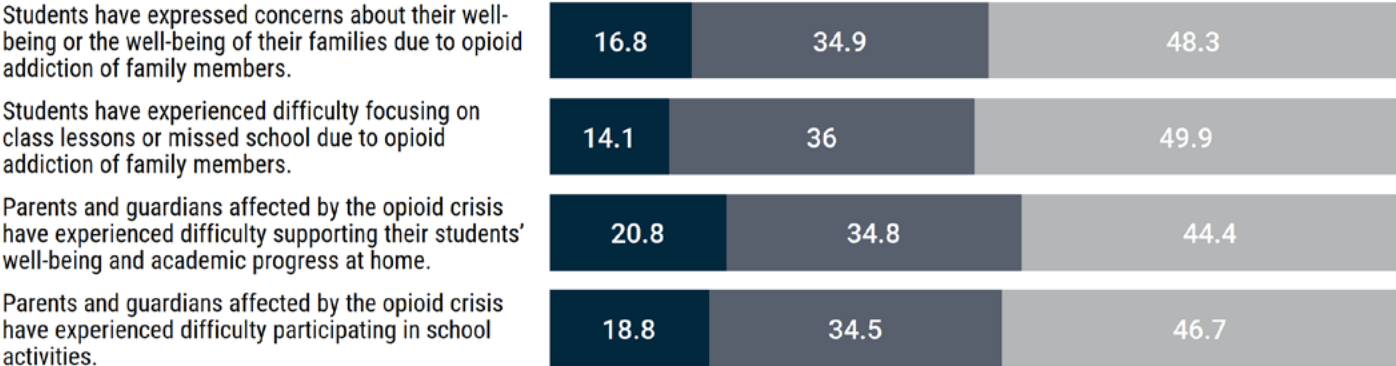
—Michael Rayne, high school principal in a small town in Pennsylvania

Michael Rayne's story emerges against the backdrop of the growing opioid crisis affecting communities across the United States. In October 2017, Acting Health and Human Services Secretary Eric Hargan declared a nationwide public health emergency regarding opioid addiction.[57] Eleven million Americans misused opioids in 2016, resulting in 42,249 deaths from overdose, or more than 130 deaths every day.[58] Drug overdoses now represent the leading cause of death from injury in the United States.[59] Rates of addiction have increased over the past two years, and are highest among adults ages twenty-five to fifty-five.[60] Although opioid misuse and abuse occurs in every region in the nation, its impact has been most strongly felt in West Virginia, Ohio, New Hampshire, and Maryland,[61] and rural communities have been particularly hard hit.[62] The social and economic damage has been substantial—researchers at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimate the annual economic cost of opioid prescription misuse, dependence, and overdose to be more than $70 billion.[63]
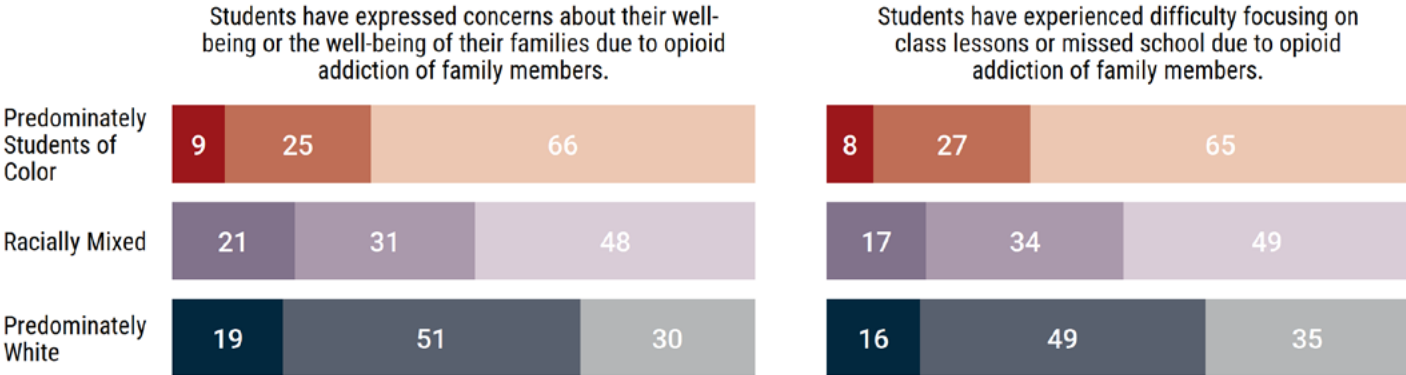
Impact on U.S. High Schools

Sixty-two percent of high school principals in our survey report that their schools have been impacted by the opioid crisis. According to these principals, opioid addiction in students' families has resulted in at least one of the following problems: a) Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of family members; b) Students have lost focus in class or have missed class entirely; c) Parents and guardians have found it difficult to support their students at home; or d) Parents and guardians have not participated in school activities. Twenty-five percent of principals indicate that at least one of these problems occurred on multiple occasions. Principals in Predominantly White Schools are far more likely than their peers to report these problems and to note they have occurred multiple times. In fact, Predominantly White Schools are roughly twice as likely as Predominantly Students of Color Schools to be harmed in these ways by the opioid crisis.
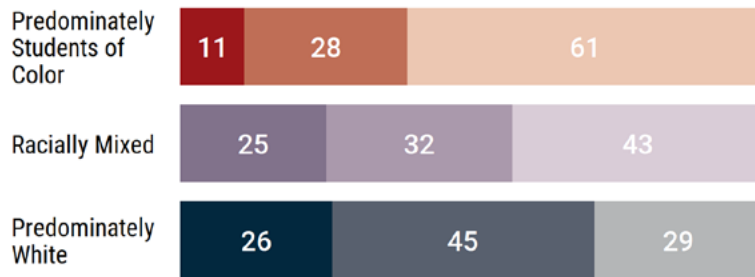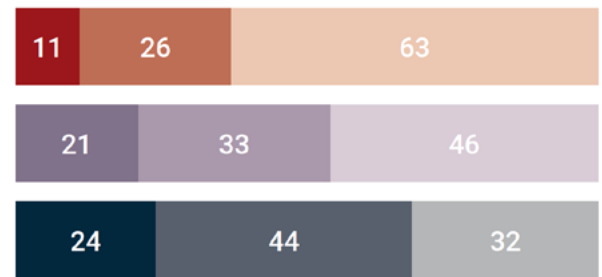
Problems Related to Opioid Misuse

Legend: Occurred Multiple Times | Occurred 1-2 Times | No Occurrence

Problem	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to opioid addiction of family members.	16.8	34.9	48.3
Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to opioid addiction of family members.	14.1	36	49.9
Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home.	20.8	34.8	44.4
Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty participating in school activities.	18.8	34.5	46.7

Problems Related to Opioid Misuse, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: Occurred Multiple Times | Occurred 1-2 Times | No Occurrence

Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to opioid addiction of family members.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	9	25	66
Racially Mixed	21	31	48
Predominately White	19	51	30

Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to opioid addiction of family members.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	8	27	65
Racially Mixed	17	34	49
Predominately White	16	49	35

Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home.
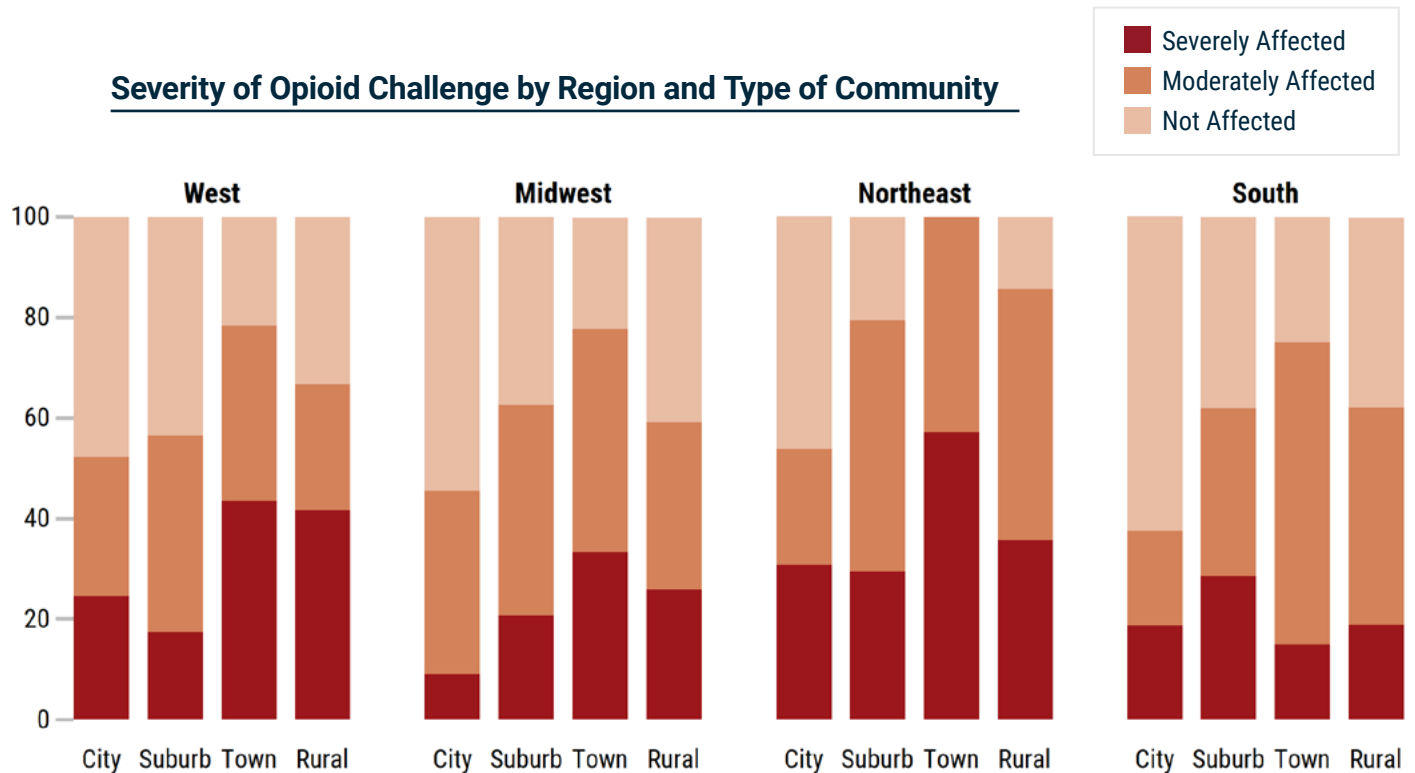
Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty participating in school activities.

Predominately Students of Color	11	28	61
Racially Mixed	25	32	43
Predominately White	26	45	29

Predominately Students of Color	11	26	63
Racially Mixed	21	33	46
Predominately White	24	44	32

Amongst the principals we interviewed, slightly more than half describe the impacts of opioid addiction at their school. "The use of opioids in our community," explains Maggie Cook, "has exploded as it has across the state of Pennsylvania and across our nation." Nick Gil describes his Wisconsin town as a "typical rural place" in which the opioid crisis is "really hitting." Jeff Brown, a principal in rural Indiana, similarly shares that "opioids are a big deal down here." Acknowledging that not all of his students have been directly affected, he adds, "I'm sure they're all touched by it in some way." Much like principals we spoke with in Georgia, New York, Arizona, and Texas, Gil and Brown believe that their schools have been particularly affected because of their proximity to drug trafficking routes. But a broader pattern is likely at work as well: schools in small towns and rural areas have borne the brunt of the opioid crisis across the country. For example, all seven of the principals surveyed from small towns in the Northeast indicate that their schools have been affected by the opioid crisis.

Severity of Opioid Challenge by Region and Type of Community

The toll of the opioid crisis has been profound—almost one-third of principals interviewed report fatal overdoses occurring within their school community.[64] These principals most commonly recount the deaths of recent alumni, or within students' families, though two report student deaths as well. At the suburban school in Michigan that Eric Jasper leads, two former students in their twenties and two students' parents died as a result of opioid overdoses in the preceding year alone. "We are a small school," Jasper tells us, "so that's a pretty big impact." The fact that other principals characterize opioid addiction as "not a huge problem" even while recounting recent graduates' deaths by overdose indicates the ways that the crisis is reshaping expectations in many communities.

Alongside dramatic stories of overdoses, many principals describe how students' lives are upended when their parents become addicted to opioids. In Phil White's Connecticut high school, family addiction "shows up in terms of kids and their mental health … feelings of [a] lack of support, [and] really kind of questioning the safety and security of home." Sabrina Fowler recalls a student in her Nevada school who slept in a nearby local park and showered each day at school. He "wouldn't go home because his mom was a drug addict, addicted to opioids, and he was afraid he was going to find her dead," Fowler says. Students whose family members are struggling with addiction also often face extreme financial hardship. Michelle Kenup, who leads a school in suburban Georgia, worries about students being forced to take on adult responsibilities when their addicted parents are no longer able. These students "are trying to go to school and work full time because they're bringing in the money to pay the rent and put food on the table for younger siblings." Not only does this pull students away from their studies, Kenup tells us; it also "limit[s] their view of what their opportunities are," as they "don't see options and opportunities when we talk about college or technical school, or internships, or apprenticeships."

While the opioid crisis has primarily impacted schools through family members' addictions, some principals are also facing the challenge of students' misuse of these drugs. Several principals connect the prevalence of student addiction to widespread opioid use in the broader community and access to prescription drugs at home. Savana Alker, the principal in a small Kansas town, relates that students in her school find pills in their family medicine cabinet or approach classmates "who had knee surgery, or … wisdom teeth pulled out" in hopes of "buy[ing] their extra pills." Like several other principals, Alker emphasizes that addicted students are "really good kids" with parents who "are right on top of things."

Principal Responses to the Opioid Crisis

Principals whose schools are affected by the opioid crisis dedicate an average of more than one hour each week addressing these challenges. The vast majority of principals report talking with individual students about their concerns, connecting students to counseling or social welfare services, and/or partnering with community based organizations adept at providing supports for students and families. Only about one-third of principals offer professional development opportunities for their faculty to support students with addicted family members.

The Opioid Crisis in a Montana High School

Last year, we had a number of kids who really got going on the prescription opioids. When you have ten or fifteen kids involved in something, you kind of start feeling it.

In January, we had a group of those kids popping so many of these pills, and two of the boys overdosed. One of them made it and one of them didn't. That was a Saturday night. On Sunday morning at eight, one of the other kids Snapchatted pictures to everybody. There's a live feed going out of the dead kid, and of the paramedics working on the other kid, and it just went viral, so every kid in the school had seen this before we even had an opportunity to try to get a crisis team together.

Word went out so quickly on that—we didn't really have to reach out. We had counselors from all the schools within 30 miles that came in on Monday, and we just set up a crisis plan where we could funnel kids into counseling as needed.
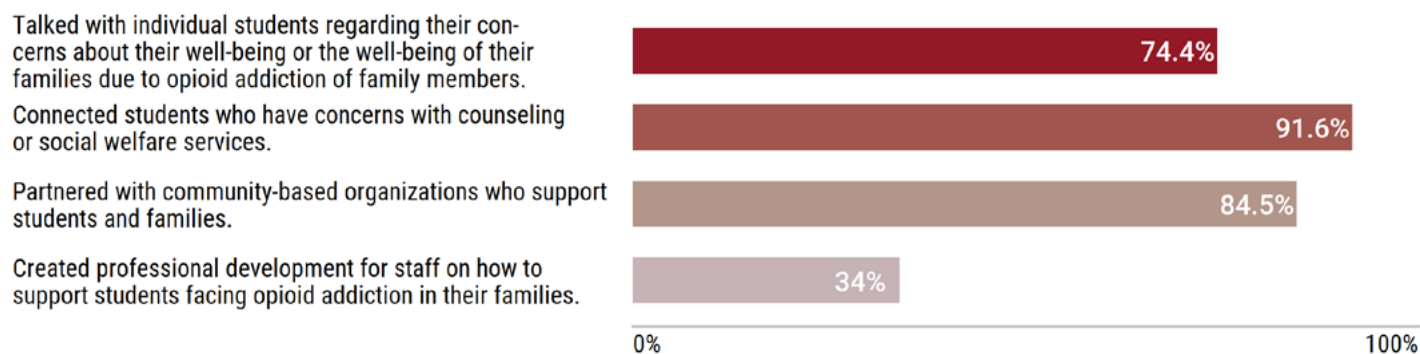
I prepared a statement that I had teachers read to their first period classes. It outlined our process with the counselors. That was the initial attack. We had kids that, probably for two weeks, were regularly visiting with counselors.

Then we showed that Chasing The Dragon video—the FBI developed it as kind of their educational effort for combating the opioid abuse. It's real gritty. These guys are in there talking to inmates and people who have been using the heroin or the opioid pills. We did that in conjunction with a panel of law enforcement addiction counselors. We had a parent whose daughter had died this last year of an overdose, so you have this really good panel.

That overdose really drove it underground—the prescription drug stuff. So, for the back half of the school year, we didn't feel its impact or suspect that kids were under the influence certainly to the degree that we did in the beginning. I think the kids were pretty perceptive about it. The student who died had been a good student, well-connected, well-liked. The kids saw it just like we did—this period of deterioration. They can see this path that this kid took and analyze it in light of their own situation and just stay the heck away from it.

—David Ostrand, principal in a small town in Montana

Responding to Student and Family Needs Related to Opioid Misuse

Talked with individual students regarding their concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to opioid addiction of family members.	74.4%
Connected students who have concerns with counseling or social welfare services.	91.6%
Partnered with community-based organizations who support students and families.	84.5%
Created professional development for staff on how to support students facing opioid addiction in their families.	34%

0%   100%

While some principals consider helping students from addicted families a responsibility for their counseling office, others play a more substantial and personal role. When students in Maggie Cook's rural Pennsylvania school experience difficulties due to family opioid addiction, she and her colleagues "wrap [our] school arms around the kid." She and several other principals regularly check in on affected students and make sure they receive the support they need. Some principals go to greater lengths to meet the social welfare needs of their students. In Georgia, Michelle Kenup frequently sends students home for the weekend with a backpack full of food, and she has gone so far as to pay water and electricity bills for students' families out of her own pocket—"so the child can keep the lights on in the house." Nonetheless Kenup, like many other principals, still faces the challenge of students being reluctant to talk about their family's addiction problems. Such problems are part of "the hidden secrets," as Sabrina Fowler in Nevada calls them, of high schools throughout the country. Unlike many other student problems, principals "don't know it's occurring until the kid shows up in the office crying, because a lot of kids won't even admit, won't even tell somebody because they're embarrassed that their parent is hooked on opioids."

Alongside efforts to provide supports for students whose parents or guardians are struggling with addiction, many principals have created programs intended to prevent or respond to student misuse of opioids. For Leonard Palmer, who leads a rural school in Arizona, these two tasks are related: "We have a lot of students who come to us from homes where opioid use is prevalent. Equipping those students to resist participation themselves, and then to try to seek help for family members, is something that we're really targeting." Aided by a health and wellness grant, Palmer has created a particularly innovative strategy at his school, whereby students work with artists to share their "stories of resisting temptation, of succumbing, of recovering." In suburban Massachusetts, Bryan Johnson's school creates opportunities for students to talk about the dangers of drugs in small, facilitated discussions. Amongst the principals we interviewed, however, by far the most common strategy intended to prevent opioid misuse is whole-school assemblies that typically feature different types of speakers—law enforcement officials, medical professionals, or celebrities who have experienced addiction. Almost all adopt some combination of a motivational approach with a "scared straight" narrative that moves from innocence to opioid abuse to incarceration or death.

Several principals describe strategies for responding to students' misuse of opioids, including some who articulate a holistic approach that draws in part on a public health framework. Following several deaths in the broader community, Mary Haight's superintendent in New York pulled resources together from throughout the county to hire a student support specialist to treat addicted students. Louis Spiro works with intervention specialists at his California school to "triage situations" and "get students into diversion programs" or "medical help, if they need it right away." These cases are exceptions to the broader pattern, however. It is much more common for principals to share a sentiment like Daniel Hettich, who "didn't even know who to call" after learning that some students at his Idaho high school were misusing opioids. Most principals do not have protocols or systematic plans to deal with student addiction or dangerous drug use at this scale, and no one we interviewed has designated a point person at their school to lead these efforts—as the emergent literature on school responses to opioid addiction strongly recommends.[65] A number of principals—even those whose schools are equipped with opioid reversal drugs like Naloxone— worry that they may not be able to prevent the worst from happening. "I hate to even say it," notes Eric Jasper in Michigan, but while "we've not had any current students pass away or have any major issues directly with opioids … I'm just scared that that's going to change at some point in the future."

The Threat of Immigration Enforcement in America's High Schools

We have a very high population [of undocumented students]. We [always] understood they were here and they were our students. But last year brought to light that the country wasn't seeing them that way, and it was really affecting the way kids and families felt in our own community. We were facing so many kids afraid of being deported, being discovered. Kids afraid to engage in school and ask for help and fill out forms that we need to help them.

The kids have anxiety about whether their parents were going to be here the next day. We had a higher rate of suicidal protocols amongst our Latino population and a lot of it had to do with that fear of what they would do if their mom or dad was deported. Kids don't know what to do with their life once their families are pulled from underneath them. Oh my gosh. We had two parents who were actually deported. The kids were living with friends, on couches. Couch hopping so that they could survive.

That insecurity was killing kids' motivation for school. Watching the energy and drive for these students inside classrooms go down--it's heartbreaking. You see it on kids' faces. There's emotional strains and insecurities that we have to address so that kids can learn.

Our free and reduced lunch applications went down even though our poverty level in our area is increasing. Parents [are] afraid. Families would reach out to us and come for our FAFSA orientation night, until we told them that they had to complete a form. Parents would no longer complete any form that indicated that the government would get involved in their life in any fashion. We have [had] a very good graduation rate. That's started to waver. Our applications to colleges [are] kind of dissolving.

—Sabrina Fowler, principal of a Predominantly Students of Color School in Nevada

Since Donald Trump's election in November 2016, many students attending Sabrina Fowler's Nevada school have experienced mounting uncertainty and fear due to their family's immigration status. So too have millions of students attending public schools across the United States. In each of six southwestern states, more than 10% of public school students have at least one parent who is an unauthorized immigrant. The same is true of 7.3% of all U.S. public K-12 students.[66] Slightly more than five million children live with an unauthorized parent in the United States. Roughly 4,300,000 of these children are U.S. citizens and 800,000 are undocumented.[67]

Through a series of executive orders, the Trump administration has dramatically heightened the vulnerability of students living with undocumented family members. Since January 2017, these executive orders have sought to: expand the pool of undocumented residents facing deportation; deputize local law enforcement officers to serve as agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program (which has shielded 800,000 young people, including roughly 160,000 high school students); declare an end date to Temporary Protected Status for 390,000 immigrants from Central America, Haiti, Nepal, and Sudan (who are parents to 273,000 U.S. born children); and blunt the efforts of sanctuary cities to protect undocumented residents.[68]
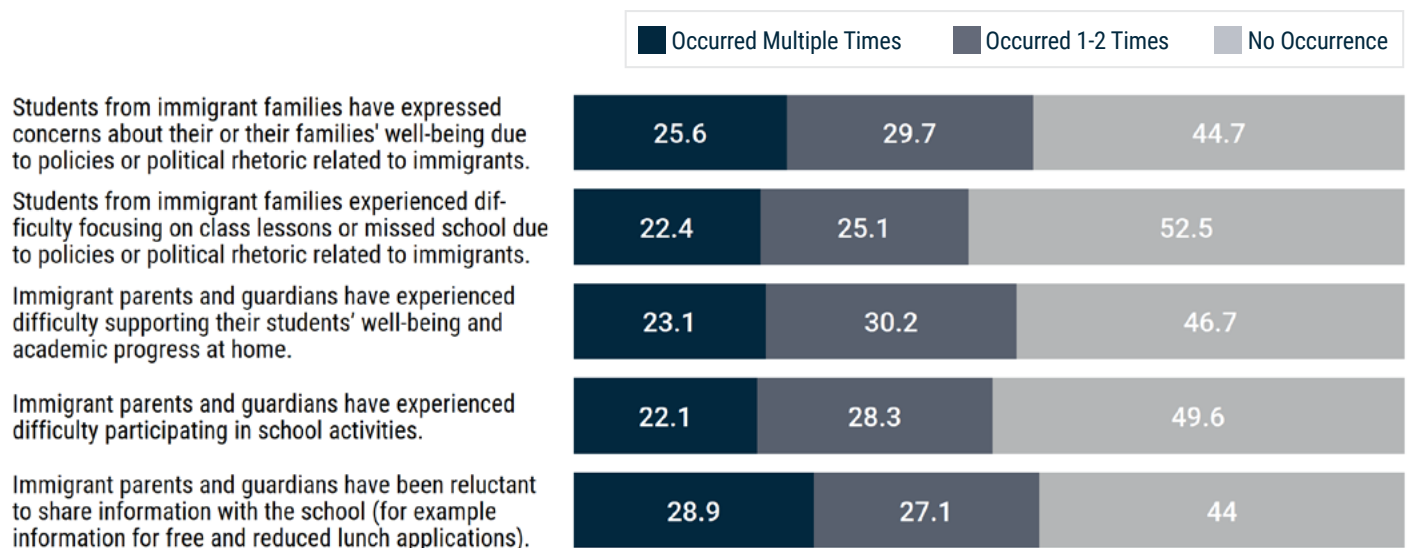
To date, the Trump administration's Department of Homeland Security has affirmed an Obama-era memo holding that immigration enforcement may not occur at "sensitive locations" such as schools. However, there have been a few highly publicized incidents of ICE officials arresting parents in the process of dropping off their children at school.[70] In addition, U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos created confusion in May 2018 when she testified to Congress that educators at local schools should decide whether or not to notify ICE when they believe particular students are undocumented.[71] (She later recanted this position.)[73]

The Trump administration's overall immigration policy and rhetoric have taken a toll on school-age children. Following highly publicized workplace ICE raids in New Mexico and Tennessee, nearby schools experienced precipitous declines in Latino students' attendance. More generally, a "climate of fear" pervades many immigrant communities, creating stress and anxiety for parents and children alike. Healthcare providers and parents report that this "toxic stress" has led to physical ailments as well as mental health problems.

The Impact on U.S. High Schools

Sixty-eight percent of the principals we surveyed report that federal immigration enforcement policies and the political rhetoric around the issue have harmed student well-being and learning, and undermined the work of their schools in general. We characterize a school as *impacted* if principals report that: 1) Students from immigrant families have expressed concerns about their well-being or that of their families due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants; 2) Students from immigrant families experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants; 3) Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty participating in school activities or supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home; or 4) Immigrant parents and guardians have been reluctant to share information with the school. Thirty-seven percent of all principals report that at least one of these problems has occurred multiple times. While many schools across all regions of the country experience these challenges, they are felt most deeply in urban areas, in Western states, and in schools serving Predominantly Students of Color.
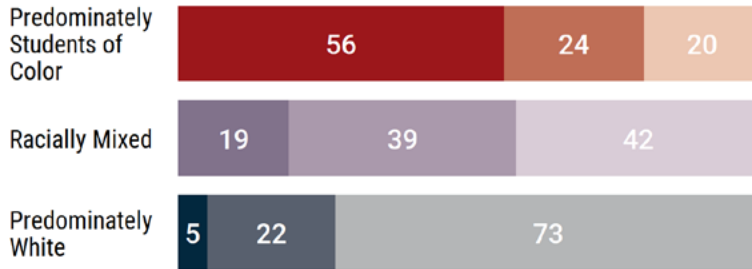
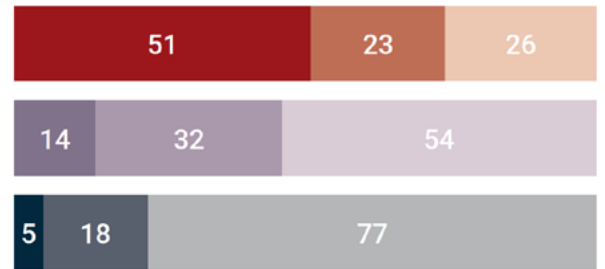### Problems Related to Threat of Immigration Enforcement

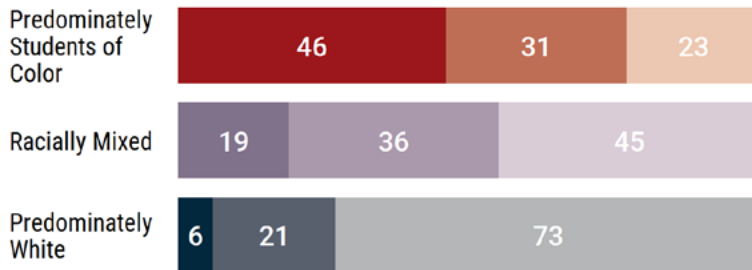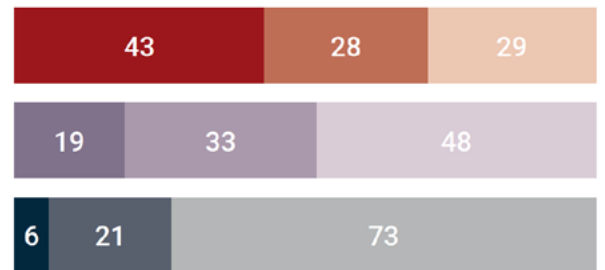|	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Students from immigrant families have expressed concerns about their or their families' well-being due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.	25.6	29.7	44.7
Students from immigrant families experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.	22.4	25.1	52.5
Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home.	23.1	30.2	46.7
Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty participating in school activities.	22.1	28.3	49.6
Immigrant parents and guardians have been reluctant to share information with the school (for example information for free and reduced lunch applications).	28.9	27.1	44

Problems Related to Threat of Immigration Enforcement, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: Occurred Multiple Times | Occurred 1-2 Times | No Occurrence

Students from immigrant families have expressed concerns about their or their families' well-being due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	56	24	20
Racially Mixed	19	39	42
Predominately White	5	22	73

Students from immigrant families experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.
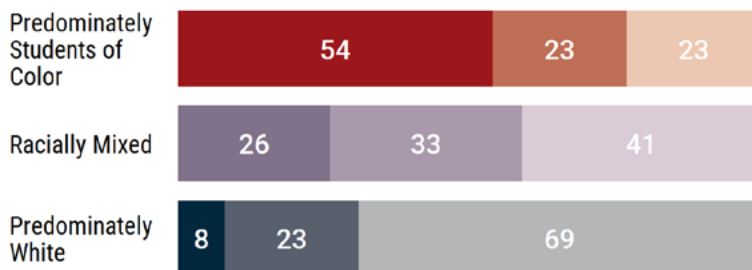
	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	51	23	26
Racially Mixed	14	32	54
Predominately White	5	18	77

Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home.
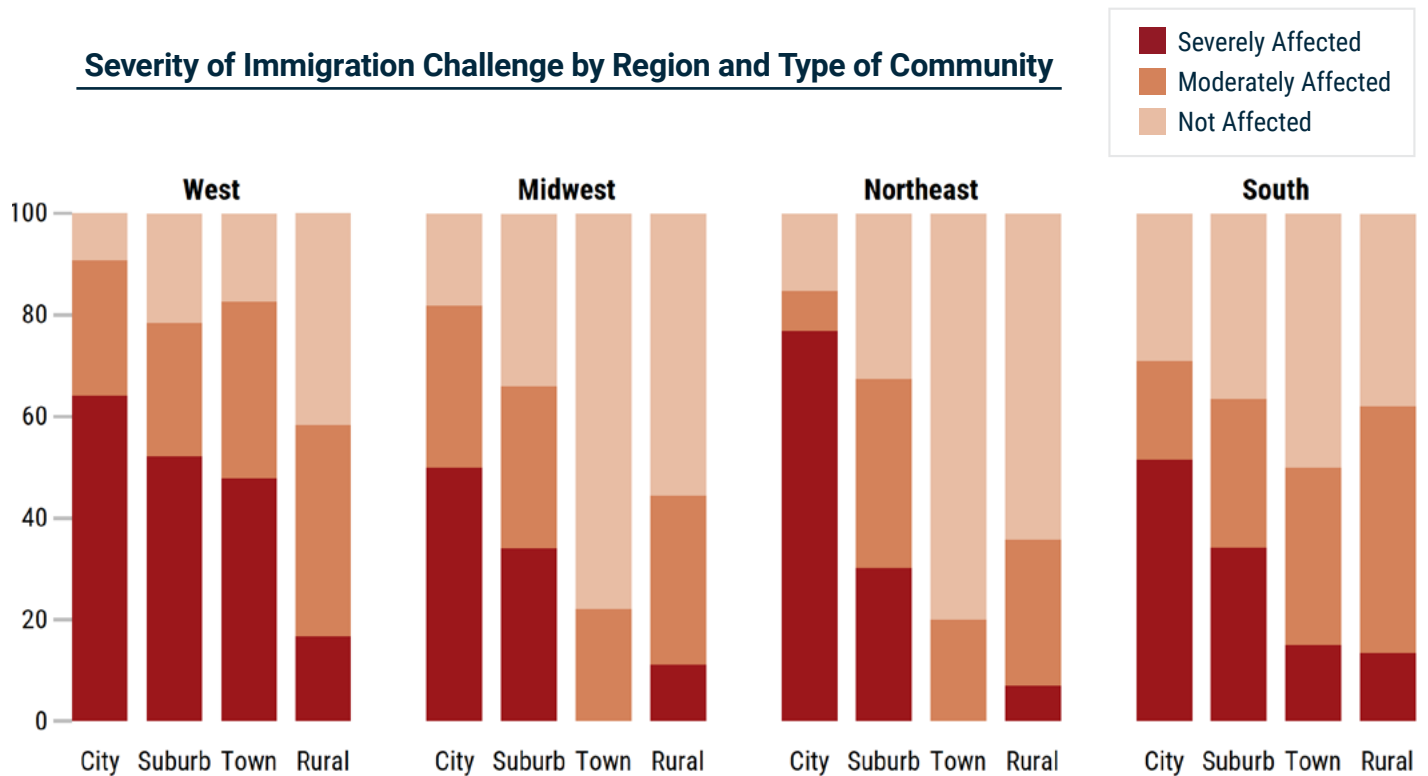
	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	46	31	23
Racially Mixed	19	36	45
Predominately White	6	21	73

Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty participating in school activities.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	43	28	29
Racially Mixed	19	33	48
Predominately White	6	21	73

Immigrant parents and guardians have been reluctant to share information with the school (for example information for free and reduced lunch applications).

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	54	23	23
Racially Mixed	26	33	41
Predominately White	8	23	69

Severity of Immigration Challenge by Region and Type of Community

Impact of Immigration Policies is Likely Underreported in Some Schools

In our survey and interviews we asked principals to reflect on their observations of the ways students and parents have been affected by immigration enforcement measures. A number of principals note that some students and parents have been reluctant to speak about their citizenship status with school personnel. Eric Jasper in Michigan recounts a particular student who only shared his story after a sustained effort to establish mutual trust. "It took me a while to catch on to what was going on," Jasper relates, but once the student described his concerns about "ICE or some other government organization coming and taking him or his parents away ... I thought, wow, this is serious fear." Not all principals have the time or sensibility to establish such rapport. Further, students and parents living in politically conservative communities may sense greater risk associated with disclosing that they are undocumented immigrants. Thus it is likely that some principals—particularly those leading schools in areas perceived by immigrant families as most threatening—are not aware of the extent to which their school community has been affected by immigration policy. One indication of this pattern is that when we hold school racial demographics constant, principals whose schools are located in Congressional districts that voted strongly for President Trump in 2016 are less likely to report student concerns due to immigration policies than principals in Congressional districts that voted strongly against President Trump.

Many principals we interviewed note both the distress of students from immigrant families as well as its source in national politics. Mike Ross in Washington perceives "an undertow of concern ... in regards to immigration policy." In California, Rick Andrews relates: "We have had a lot of students scared of being deported." Speaking of this fear and its effects, California's Cathy Burton reports: "It's huge at my school, absolutely huge." Some principals, like Arnold Price in Illinois or Donald Cerda in Arizona, ascribe this problem to the "national political climate." Others, like Todd Philips in North Carolina, are more pointed in their comments: "A lot of those [immigrant] students were very stressed out and the main 'stress out' was some of

our President's words and pronouncements." In Arizona, local political rhetoric regarding immigration converges with the national discourse, which heightens students' fears, according to Leonard Palmer. Alongside talk "from Washington," Palmer says that the Senate campaign of former Sheriff Joe Arpaio left many young people "deathly worried that the green bus is going to show up at their house and take mom or dad away."[76]

Several principals share similar stories of students worried about arriving home to discover that their parents had been deported. Rita Cena, a principal in an immigrant-serving community in California, describes this fear as "more palpable now than I recall it in the past." But Cena also notes that a great
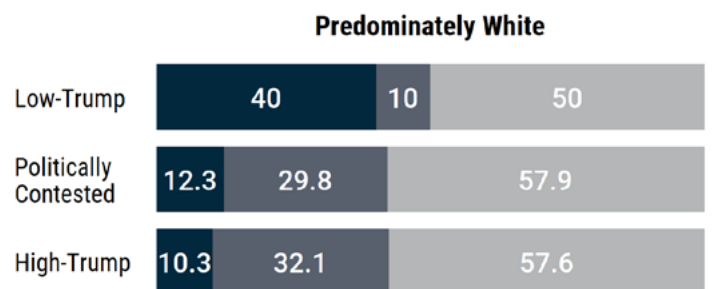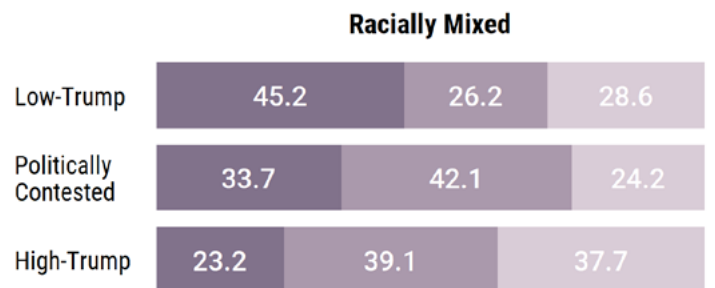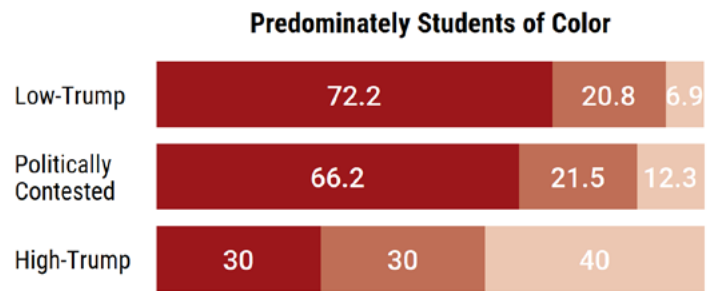
deal of her students' stress is associated with taking on new responsibilities due to heightened immigration enforcement efforts. "There's been a lot of talk, parents to students, kind of trying to prepare them if something were to happen. 'If I don't come home, this is what you need to do.'" As a consequence, Cena's students with younger siblings feel "a heavy weight." She believes that many of her students bear this burden alone, much like a senior who requested Cena write a letter on behalf of his father who was detained. The detention occurred a few weeks before, she came to learn, causing substantial effects on the family and its financial well-being. Cena comments: "Our kids are suffering in a lot of silence." Willie Fields recounts a similar story in Florida. After parents have been deported, his students are left "on their own … sitting here with no means to … feed [themselves], get clothing, pay the bills, or anything."

Principals report that deportations and the threat of targeting certain groups of immigrants have taken a toll on both students' psychological well-being and their learning. Michigan principal Gerald Wise describes how the deportation of two of his students' fathers resulted in the students withdrawing "into a shell." The "uncertainty… affects all aspects of their life, it affects school," Wise tells us. A few principals recount declines in attendance associated with immigration enforcement. Others, like Alicia Ramirez in California, speak to the effects on student performance and behavior. "Several of our students had parents or family members deported, and it has had a real impact on our students' ability to focus and engage in class, with peers and with staff."

A prime concern for many principals is that their undocumented students feel greater uncertainty about future plans in the current political climate. After President Trump rescinded DACA protections, many of Donald Cerda's students in Arizona felt "vulnerable and terrified," wondering: "Am I going to be able to continue my education?" Todd Philips in North Carolina notes that some of the immigrant students at his school are "just not as driven" to achieve academically as others had been in the past. They have become "less focused on their grades because … they're wondering, "Well, what's the use?"

More than half of the principals surveyed report that national immigration policy and rhetoric has made it difficult for some parents to support their children at home or participate in school activities. Leonard Palmer in Arizona attributes parents' reluctance to attend school events to the dangers they face in taking unnecessary trips outside their homes. "Something like a taillight out could result in somebody being picked up." When parents attended events like a college access program sponsored by the local university, they sat "in the very back of the room just because they were afraid that somebody might notice them." Across the country in Connecticut, Phil White similarly observes that some parents take pains to remain unnoticed. As a fluent Spanish speaker, White has always conversed with his Spanish-speaking parents in their native language; now, he finds that in public, "parents are afraid to show

Experience of Immigration Threat by School Racial Demographics and Political Leaning of Congressional District

Predominately Students of Color

Low-Trump	72.2	20.8	6.9
Politically Contested	66.2	21.5	12.3
High-Trump	30	30	40

Racially Mixed

Low-Trump	45.2	26.2	28.6
Politically Contested	33.7	42.1	24.2
High-Trump	23.2	39.1	37.7

Predominately White

Low-Trump	40	10	50
Politically Contested	12.3	29.8	57.9
High-Trump	10.3	32.1	57.6

that they are Spanish speakers."

The everyday practices of schools gathering data about students has been a particularly sensitive issue for undocumented families wary of exposing their status to government officials. More than half of the principals surveyed report that the political climate around immigration has made parents reluctant to share information with the school. At a California high school serving a large immigrant community, principal Fred Palma explains that in the wake of what was "perceived to be a more aggressive stance from immigration agencies, you could really feel a kind of a drawing back of our Latino community as far as engagement [goes], and [their] willingness to share information that would possibly benefit students; things as simple as financial aid for college," also declined. In Connecticut, Camilo Rizo has noticed that parents are "scared … [and] reluctant to give any kind of information out." For Rizo, "it's getting harder and harder" to conduct the Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility counts. In Washington, Tyrone Jackson's high school has ex-

perienced a related pattern, with parents being "hesitant to take advantage of social services or school services for fear of putting their name down on a form."

The climate of fear has cut off essential services for special education students at Cathy Burton's California school, including some they would otherwise qualify for after graduation. Many parents of special education students did not participate in the school's online registration, Burton tells us, because they did not want the government "to have [their] email and [home] address." Burton tries to reassure parents that federal laws like the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protect them "from that kind of invasion." Nonetheless, the trust these parents have in Burton is outweighed by their fears of the federal government. Fred Palma describes how undocumented parents often feel caught between their desire to support their children's schools and the need to protect themselves. Whenever school officials ask parents to share information, many parents find themselves asking: "What do I put down? … Who does this information go to? If I fill out something that indicates that I am not a resident or a citizen, am I opening myself up to the government threatening me or threatening my status in any way?"

Principal Responses

Principals who report that their schools have been impacted by the threat of immigration enforcement spend an average of more than an hour and a half per week responding to related student and family concerns. In general, principals seek to address their students' psychological and social welfare needs, and to ensure parents their children will be safe at their school site. Principals' practices vary greatly depending on their school's internal capacity, their access to resources in the community, and the political contexts in which their schools reside. In a few schools, principals encourage teachers to engage students in critical reflection about how national policies are affecting their communities and what actions they might take.

Responses to Threat of Immigration Enforcement

Talked with individual students about their concerns. — 94.1%

Connected students who have concerns with counseling or social welfare services. — 91.4%

Supporting Students

In response to the threat of immigration enforcement, more than nine in ten principals have spoken with impacted students and directed them to counseling and other social welfare supports. We interviewed a few principals of schools serving substantial immigrant communities who employ counselors with extensive experience working with immigrant youth. For example, a principal in Nevada shared that two of her counselors draw upon their personal experience of having undocumented family members in their work with students. In contrast, many principals in other parts of the country report that their immigrant students have limited access to educators who have experience working with immigrant communities. We spoke with two Wisconsin principals of schools with growing Latino enrollment whose professional staff is entirely white.

In some instances, principals learn of issues arising in counseling contexts and are able to use those opportunities to connect students with other supports. Still, this process is often complicated by a student's or family member's concern that accessing resources will expose them to enforcement action. One example of this comes from Phil White, a principal at a Predominantly Students of Color School in Connecticut, who shared with us a story about Gabriela, an 11th grade student who told her counselor that her mother had been diagnosed with cancer. "When I found this out, knowing that her family is undocumented, I started asking her questions … 'Gabriella, does your family have health insurance? Has your mom got access to care? … How are you doing? How are you feeling about all of this?'" When it turned out that the family did not have health insurance, White contacted medical

professionals to help the mother access services and to connect Gabriela with counseling that could help her "handle the strong emotions that go along with this." Realizing that "it takes a while sometimes to establish trust," White was careful to let Gabriela and her mother make their own decisions about how and when to seek care. At the end of the school year, he sought out Gabriela and said to her, "Call us [or] contact us at any point if … there's anything that we can do … if you'd benefit from talking to someone."

The Disruptive Effects of Enforcement

A sophomore student came down to my office in April and said, "Mr. Johnson, how can I finish this school year?" [I said] "What are [you] talking about? We don't get out until the middle or end of June." Her father had gotten served papers that he was being deported May 1. They had two weeks to tie up all their loose ends here. The father was getting shipped back to Brazil, and is not allowed back in the country [for] seven years. The mother made a decision that the two kids were going with them.

We worked with our bilingual coordinator and translator because the mother and father didn't speak English. We were able to say, "Is there a way that she can stay in the United States? We feel that this is best for your daughter. If we have to set up busing or transportation, we can do that." We made arrangements through other families to have her stay here through the end of June, finish the school year, finish her sophomore year and then be able to transfer and leave to go to Brazil. She did live with those people for a while and then near the end of the year, she was staying with other students' families who basically took her in. For the last two months of school, her mother and father were in Brazil, and she was here. She is just fifteen and a half. I mean she was a young kid.

—Bryan Johnson, Principal of a Predominantly White School in Massachusetts

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Like Phil White, many principals recognize that helping students receive sufficient support requires them to be embedded within "well networked organization[s]" and connected to an array of "other community resources." Eight in ten principals surveyed report partnering with community-based organizations that provide services for immigrant students and families, while five in ten report connecting families to legal services. The quality of these services vary, and are largely determined by the resources available in different communities—that is, principals in cities with extensive networks of immigration services are able to connect families with less effort and much more effectively than principals in other parts of the country. For example, Rita Cena has a long-standing partnership with a prominent immigrant rights organization whose headquarters are located close to her school, and lawyers from the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) regularly come to her campus to speak with students and parents. In other parts of the country, few such community-based resources exist, leaving principals to rely solely upon district personnel for support.

Connecting Students and Families with Services

Partnered with community-based organizations who support students.	79.9%
Connected students with legal services.	51.2%

0%   100%
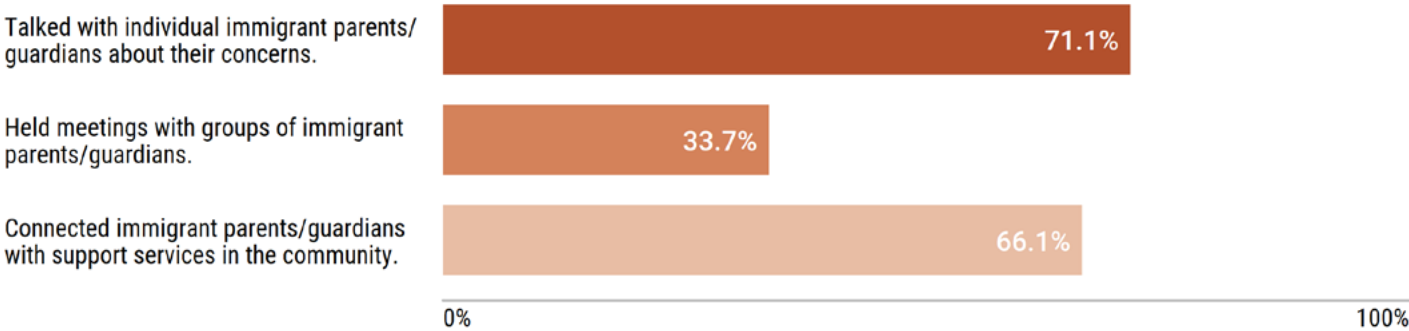
In addition to connecting students and families to services, a few principals have intervened directly to support families facing deportation. Principals in California, Texas, and Michigan report writing letters to the court on behalf of a parent in deportation hearings, despite none having received legal guidance on how to frame their letter. Most principals rely on district trainings to understand immigration law as it relates to students, their families, and their school. One notable exception is Phil White in Connecticut, who joined with fellow principals and legal advocacy agencies to understand "what to do if ICE agents were to show up at our school and say, 'We're looking for this child.'" For White, this was an opportunity for principals throughout his community to develop an "emergency protocol," which in turn gives them a sense of being prepared. To date, they have not had to make use of it.

Supporting and Reassuring Immigrant Parents

Principals invest substantial time and resources to continuously communicate with and support immigrant parents. More than seven in ten principals in our survey whose schools have been impacted by the threat of immigration enforcement report talking with immigrant parents about their concerns, and more than six in ten report connecting these parents with services in the community. Several principals have redirected funds toward hiring bilingual community liaisons in order to better serve non-English-speaking communities. Principals often rely upon these liaisons to establish trust in communities whose members are increasingly concerned about their safety. However, not all schools have the resources to employ a bilingual liaison. Lacking this capacity, a few principals with small immigrant populations, such as Michelle Kenup in Georgia, end up relying on Google Translate—an imperfect tool at best—to facilitate their communication with students and parents.

Supporting Parents

Talked with individual immigrant parents/guardians about their concerns.	71.1%
Held meetings with groups of immigrant parents/guardians.	33.7%
Connected immigrant parents/guardians with support services in the community.	66.1%

0%   100%

A central goal for many principals is to assure parents that their undocumented children will be safe at school. At times, this has required principals to move swiftly in order to stop the spread of rumors about impending ICE raids. When word was out that ICE was coming to Louie Spiro's California school with a "list … to pick people up," Spiro checked with authorities to make sure the information was false before taking to social media to quell the rumors. "We got in front of it," Spiro says, which made it easier to persuade parents that their children would be safe at school.

Concerns about the possibility of ICE raids in Florida have led principal Willie Fields to take his message about student safety directly into the community. "We go knock on doors … to reassure the parents, to the depth of our ability, that ICE … is not permitted … to come to [this] school campus." In Chris-topher Wick's California district, the board of trustees and the superintendent have sent letters home to communicate that their schools are sanctuaries from immigration enforcement. Their message to parents is: "We consider our schools to be safe havens for our kids … We won't be handing anybody over." Wick reinforces this idea throughout the year: "We'll mention it when we are having parent nights … or when we are meeting with people. … It's just sort of a pervasive theme … that we will always take care of your kids." Whereas some districts have established similar sanctuary policies, most have not. Olivia Minor in Wisconsin points out why these policies matter, having recently moved to Wisconsin from a sanctuary city in another state. At her previous school, immigrant parents viewed the campus as a safe space; now, "because it's not a sanctuary city … the undocumented community is far more vulnerable."

Principal Responses to Contradictions of Immigration Policy

Current immigration enforcement policies are fraught with tensions across multiple levels, branches, and sectors of government, each of which hold profound implications for America's schoolchildren. The Trump administration and federal agencies such as ICE act in ways that directly contradict the message of asylum conveyed in many local sanctuary resolutions. In addition, highly publicized threats of enforcement create obstacles for undocumented students and for children of undocumented parents to attend public school, thus undercutting the United States Supreme Court's constitutional guarantee in its 1982 *Plyler* decision of universal access to public education.[77] Further, conflicting messages on education and immigration policy place undocumented minors and adults in a double bind. Compulsory school attendance laws across states compel children of a certain age to attend public school, and the federal government's Every Student Succeeds Act establishes the importance of parental engagement in their children's schools.[78] Yet, aggressive immigration enforcement efforts can make such participation perilous.[79]

Principals across the United States navigate these tensions in different ways. Some adopt a strategy that might best be characterized as *protective avoidance*—they neither ask about nor address issues related to immigration enforcement or undocumented students and parents. This silence may reflect their concerns about heightening the discomfort and fear experienced by immigrant families. But it also may result from worries about prompting backlash from members of their school community who support President Trump's enforcement strategies. Other principals, like Pete Pedersen in Utah, acknowledge that immigration policy is highly contentious—"people feel how they feel"—but argue that legal mandates and moral ideals compel them to actively assist undocumented students. "We're a public school, so we take anyone and every[one]." Pedersen's view exemplifies a model of *inclusive support*. From this perspective, principals reason that "if immigrants make their way to us, our job is to help them and figure out the best way we can do that."

Two principals we interviewed articulate a third approach that emphasizes the potential for members of a school community to address the underlying challenges associated with immigration policy. They seek to *enhance civic agency* by deepening students' and community members' understandings of rights; through community-building endeavors; and by inviting young people to play a role in social change. For example, after witnessing how distressed her student body became as a result of national rhetoric and policy actions regarding immigration, Sabrina Fowler established forums for students to join together to talk about their hopes and fears. Fowler, who participates in these forums by listening and asking students clarifying questions, sees this as an opportunity for her school to create a space for students to develop understandings about how they "can make changes in society through their own personal actions." She has been heartened to see what was originally envisioned as a space for undocumented youth expand to include a cross-section of her school community. "We had African American kids show [up], we had white kids show. They were all there in support of what's wrong with this ... because it affects more than just ... [our immigrant] population."

The Threat of Gun Violence in America's High Schools

It was hard for kids to watch Parkland. I'm not sure exactly why it spoke to people so much, but there was a lot of anxiety for a while on campus. Our job was just to reassure them and say, "Hey, my number one job as your principal, the thing I worry about the most every single day, is whether you're safe on campus."

We got some great questions from kids. "What if somebody comes on campus with a gun? How can you prevent that?"

[I told them] "I don't think schools are ever going to be able to completely ensure that somebody couldn't come on campus with a gun. We're not going to go to metal detectors. That's not necessary, and we don't want you to feel like you're in an armed camp. But, we do want you to feel safe."

We went down to one entrance a few years ago. We have kids wearing their IDs every day—we want to make sure that everybody who's on campus is somebody that should be on campus.

We have kids that display different signs of either having mental issues or just having a difficult time on campus now and then. We bring those kids in and we talk with them and counsel them as much as we can. It's really about being vigilant.

We engage with kids and we talk to them. If somebody looks like they're not having a good day, we ask them about it. There's lots and lots of people on campus doing that all the time. It's probably one of our strengths -- how well we develop relationships with our kids.

—Christopher Wick, principal of a Predominantly Students of Color School in suburban California

The fears and concerns of Christopher Wick's students reflect the anxieties wrought by the disturbingly high incidence of gun violence affecting America's youth. There were 1611 gun-related homicides of fifteen to nineteen year olds in the United States in 2016,[80] and while the number of youth homicides has declined substantially since the early 1990s, it remains alarmingly high—particularly for young men of color.[81] The United States accounts for more than nine in ten of all youth firearm deaths across the twenty-two high-income nations in the world.[82] Homicide is the second leading cause of death among all American children between the ages of five and eighteen.[83]
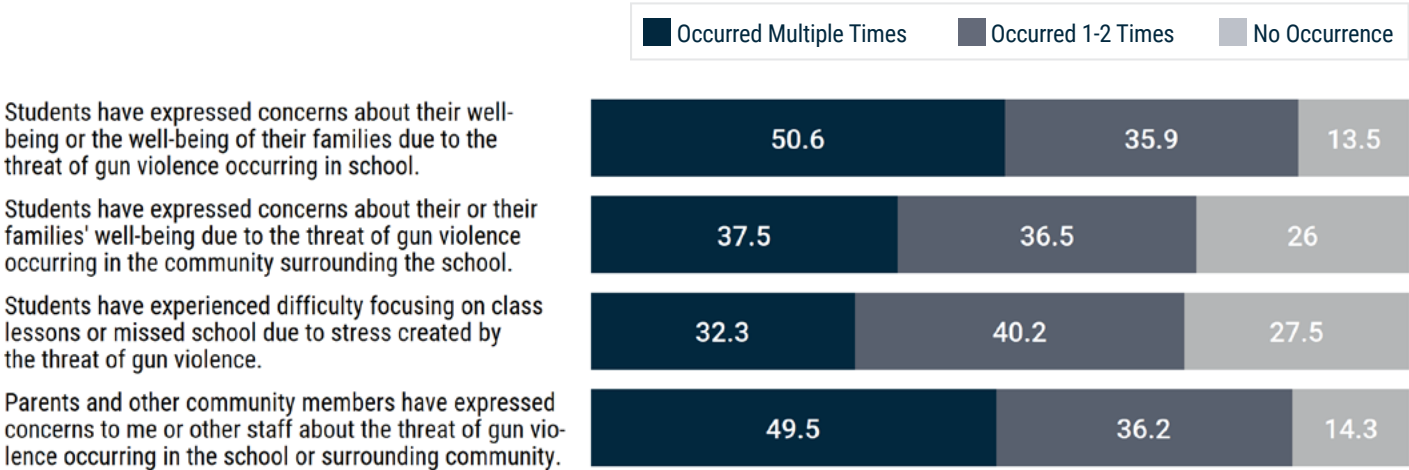
Like many young people across the nation, Christopher Wick's students are particularly worried about the threat of gun violence at their school. In the last quarter century, there have been more mass school shootings in the United States than in the rest of the world combined.[84] An average of twenty students are killed each year on K-12 campuses, representing 1-2% of all youth homicides.[85] The deadliest of these incidents occurred on February 14, 2018, when seventeen students were murdered at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. A recent analysis shows that between the school shootings in Columbine, Colorado in 1999 and Parkland in 2018 there have been shootings at 193 schools, affecting more than 187,000 enrolled students.[86] Exposure to such school violence is associated with fear, anxiety, depression, and other psychological problems.[87]
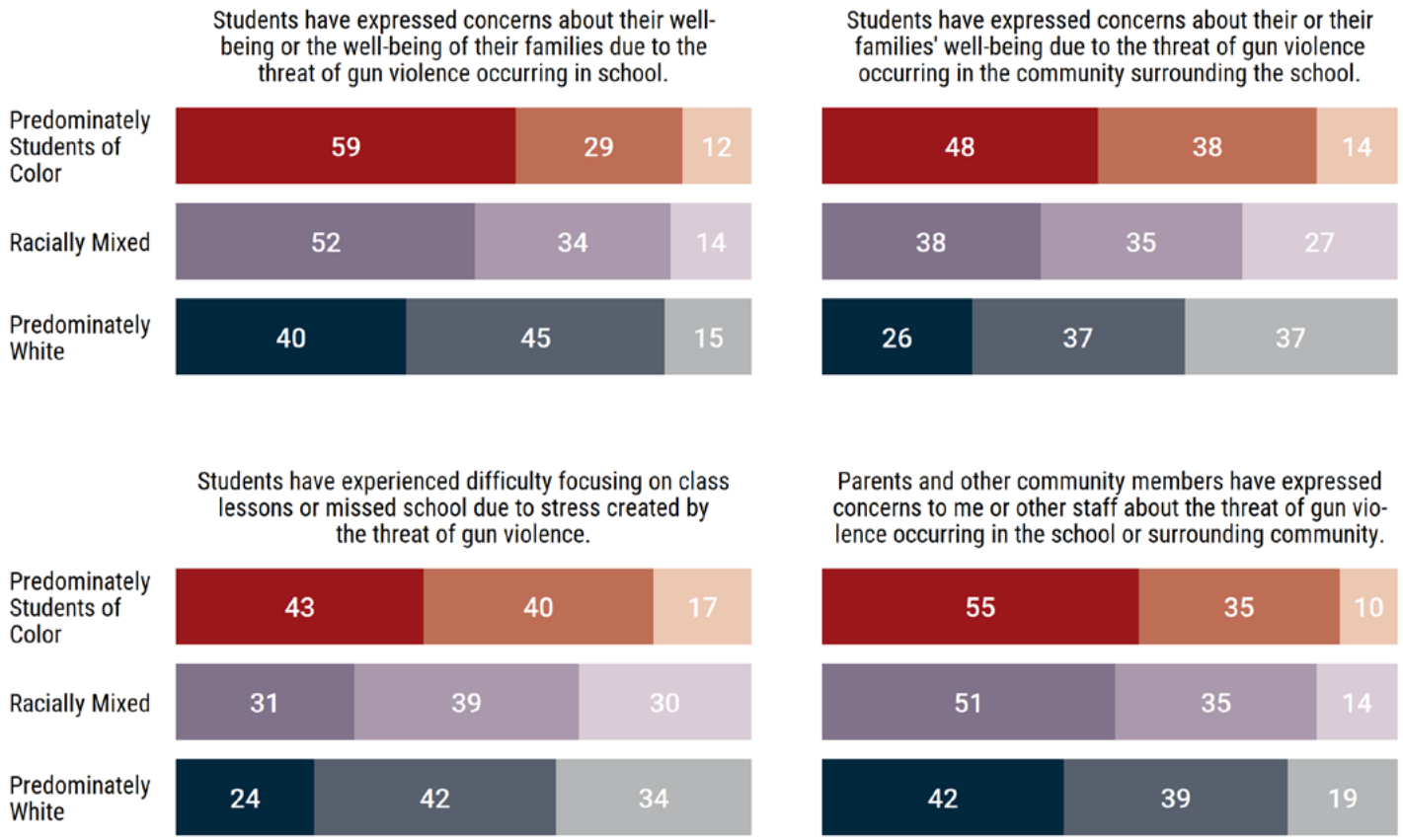
The Impact on U.S. High Schools

Almost all of the high school principals we surveyed and interviewed report that their schools have been impacted by the threat of gun violence. Ninety-two percent of principals indicate that their school has faced at least one of the following problems: a) Students have expressed concerns about the threat of gun violence occurring in school; b) Students have expressed concerns related to the threat of gun violence in the community surrounding the school; c) Students have lost focus in class or missed school entirely due to the threat of gun violence; or d) Parents and other community members have expressed concerns about the threat of gun violence

in the school or surrounding community. Fifty-nine percent of principals note that at least one of these problems has occurred multiple times. More principals report being affected by the threat of gun violence than for any other challenge. These concerns have been felt across rural, suburban, and urban communities, and while the threat of gun violence impacts schools across all demographic and regional categories, schools with large proportions of students of color have been affected most.
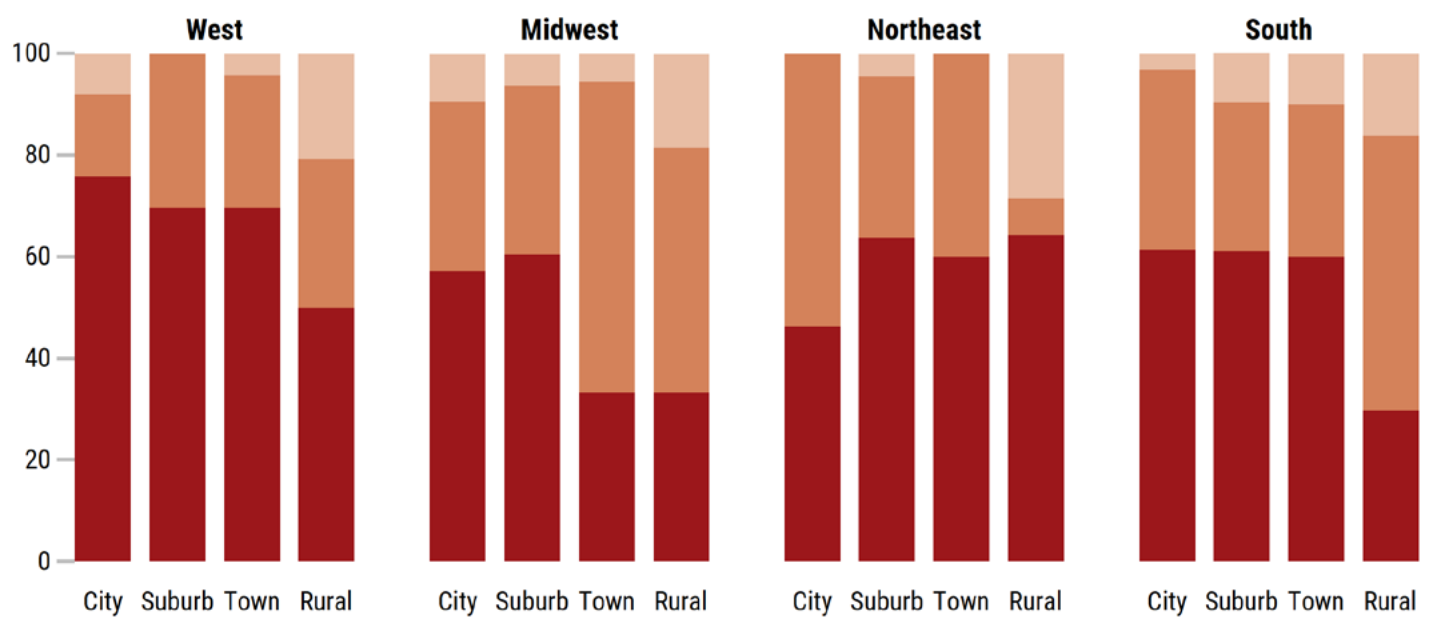
Problems Related to Threat of Gun Violence

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to the threat of gun violence occurring in school.	50.6	35.9	13.5
Students have expressed concerns about their or their families' well-being due to the threat of gun violence occurring in the community surrounding the school.	37.5	36.5	26
Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to stress created by the threat of gun violence.	32.3	40.2	27.5
Parents and other community members have expressed concerns to me or other staff about the threat of gun violence occurring in the school or surrounding community.	49.5	36.2	14.3

Problems Related to Threat of Gun Violence, by School Racial Demographics

Legend: ■ ■ ■ Occurred Multiple Times ■ ■ ■ Occurred 1-2 Times □ □ □ No Occurrence

Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to the threat of gun violence occurring in school.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	59	29	12
Racially Mixed	52	34	14
Predominately White	40	45	15

Students have expressed concerns about their or their families' well-being due to the threat of gun violence occurring in the community surrounding the school.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	48	38	14
Racially Mixed	38	35	27
Predominately White	26	37	37

Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to stress created by the threat of gun violence.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	43	40	17
Racially Mixed	31	39	30
Predominately White	24	42	34

Parents and other community members have expressed concerns to me or other staff about the threat of gun violence occurring in the school or surrounding community.

	Occurred Multiple Times	Occurred 1-2 Times	No Occurrence
Predominately Students of Color	55	35	10
Racially Mixed	51	35	14
Predominately White	42	39	19

Severity of Gun Violence Challenge by Region and Type of Community

Legend: ■ Severely Affected ■ Moderately Affected □ Not Affected

Many principals we surveyed and interviewed agree with Utah principal Pete Pedersen that the threat of gun violence has "been a huge issue with students, parents, teachers, and community members." Principals from California to Connecticut tell us that, in comparison with all other challenges, this topic "has captured the most attention," represents the "largest stress,"[89] and poses the "gravest concerns."[90] Anxiety about school shootings plays out across many diverse communities. Rita Cena's big city California school has long been viewed as among the safest places in its low-income neighborhood, but recently, the first question parents ask at their weekly "Coffee With the Principal" concerns the possibility of a school shooting. David Ostrander's school is located in a small Montana town in which firearms are part of the prevailing culture—he estimates that three-quarters of his students regularly go hunting. Yet in a focus group following the Parkland shooting, every one of his students agreed with the statement, "Of course, I'm afraid that this could happen here." Andrew Bergen in suburban Kentucky captures the same prevailing sentiment: "My school did not experience any incidents of gun violence … [but] we were all very much affected by gun violence."

Feelings of distress about gun violence are heightened by both the prevalence and the extensive media coverage of mass shootings. As Michigan principal Gerald Wise notes, "there's something in the news" on the issue of "gun violence in schools… [just] about every week." As a consequence, these stories are "in the forefront of students' minds …[and] the forefront of our community's mind." Such national stories take on particular force when tied to local concerns. Many principals point to their school's proximity to highly publicized shootings in their city or state, which acts as a destabilizing force throughout the school community. Washington principal Mike Ross describes how, after a shooting at a neighboring high school, parents began to express worries that "[I]f it can happen in ___ High School, it can happen anywhere." In some instances, principals expressed how gun violence has touched their communities, and in some cases their families, in very direct ways: one principal we interviewed had previously taught at a high school that was the site of a mass shooting, while another principal lost his niece in a mass shooting at an elementary school.

Responding to the Threat of Gun Violence

We found that principals dedicate more time addressing problems associated with the threats of gun violence than any other challenge they currently face. On average, principals who report *any* impact from gun violence spend more than two hours per week addressing the issue. In doing so, principals generally take on one of three roles: a) Responding to immediate threats; b) Managing the problem by alleviating stress and communicating with the public; c) Creating conditions to prevent and respond to school shootings.

First Responders

One in five principals we interviewed recount incidents involving firearms on campus.[91] Jamie Holt in Missouri acknowledges that her school experiences "scares all the time." Like several principals we interviewed, Holt has established clear protocols for her staff members to follow if they learn that a student may have brought a gun on to school grounds. If faced with an immediate threat, however, principals may be prompted to take decisive action. Michelle Kenup in Georgia spoke of one incident where she found herself removing a gun from a students' car in the school parking lot—despite never being "trained how to handle a gun." In California, principal Louie Spiro asked his secretary to call 911 before confronting an expelled student with a gun in the school parking lot. Although no physical harm resulted from the incident, Spiro notes, a palpable fear and constant awareness that "those threats are real" remain.

Other threats—often less grounded in reality— proved very disruptive to many schools. One-third of the principals interviewed report that their school received threats of mass shootings, bombings, or both at some point during the previous school year.[92] Many of these threats occurred in the days following the Parkland shooting. Almost all were spread through social media platforms.[93] Because many of these postings "immediately went wild," as Maggie Cook in Pennsylvania put it, principals were tasked with trying to determine "whether or not [they were] credible threat[s]." In rare instances, the threats proved substantial. In the Midwest, for instance, threats in a small town high school led to the discovery of bomb-making materials a student had hidden at a friend's house; in the Southwest, chatter on social media platforms helped a principal prevent two students' well-developed plans to carry out a shooting at their graduation ceremony—a discovery made all the more chilling upon realizing that the students had access to more than 60 firearms in their homes. But the vast majority of cases are similar to what Massachusetts principal Bryan Johnson characterizes as kids "sitting at home in their pajamas [who] get on the internet and … fire these things off."

Regardless of the intent of social media threats against schools, they substantially impact school communities. As Utah principal Pete Pedersen understatedly remarks, when a student threatens to "bring a gun to school and … take care of business … that causes us a little bit of panic." At many schools, social media threats prompted parents to keep students at home the next day. Fred Palma in California regrets that 40% of his students failed to show up following social media postings about a possible school shooting-- even after he clarified that there was no credible threat. Parents who normally followed Palma's guidance told him, "I couldn't live with myself if I let my kid stay and something happened." The threats also create havoc in principals' personal lives. A number of principals recount receiving calls late at night, prompting them to jump out of bed and into action. Beyond the immediate response, each incident requires investigation, follow-up, and often conferences with police and students. Moreover, as Mike Ross in Washington laments, even when he has taken "a significant amount of time to deal with [threats] … thoughtfully and safely," his school often is left with "an undercurrent of … fear."

Managing the Problem: Alleviating Stress and Communicating about the Threat

In addition to checking immediate threats associated with gun violence, principals spend considerable time and energy addressing stress and anxiety and talking with various constituencies about the problem. Almost all principals in our survey report that they seek to reduce student concerns by talking to them and connecting them with counseling services. A strong majority of principals also indicate that they include both youth and adult stakeholder groups in discussions about the threats of gun violence. Fewer principals report talking with the media or community leaders and public officials about the threat of gun violence. When principals do engage the public, however, they are more likely to do so around the issue of gun violence than any other challenge they currently face.

The Disruptive Effect of Threats

We experienced a huge increase in our number of threats after the Parkland shooting. We had one within 24 hours— a copycat type thing. Within minutes of that going out on social media, it was picked by other local groups and was put out there as fact. So we had to respond to that. I was very proactive. I was up at 10:30, 11 o'clock at night getting information through social media and through our direct phone contact to let families know what was actually going on. I worked with police and [then] with our assistant superintendent to draft language that was used over the next two weeks by all the other schools that had the same things happen. We got the message out quickly— put out accurate information. I felt that that was critical.

—Louie Spiro, Principal of a California high school

Managing the Threat of Gun Violence

Talked with individual students about their concerns.	98.9%
Connected students who have concerns with counseling.	92.1%
Met with student groups to talk about how to address gun violence.	79.1%
Met with parent or community groups about how to address gun violence.	64.8%
Communicated with the media about the threat of gun violence at your school.	42%
Spoke to community leaders/public officials about the threat of gun violence.	59.5%

0%   100%

Creating Conditions to Prevent and Respond to School Shootings

Most principals we interviewed have focused their efforts to prevent gun violence on "hardening" their school campus. A number of principals detail new investments in "safety upgrades" to their physical plant, which typically includes security cameras, electronic doors, safety locks on teachers' classrooms, safety-coating on glass, and stronger windows. Many schools have also moved to limit entry and exit to one "secure" site on campus. These strategies have been adopted (often at substantial cost) in big cities, small towns, and suburbs across the country.[94] As Frank Hartford in Colorado acknowledges, community members and public officials have exerted "a lot of pressure" on schools to take preventative measures aimed at protecting students' lives. A few principals argue that these changes make their students feel safer. In Michigan, Gerald Wise explains that the new safety measures are meant to communicate "the school is trying to do something to combat this."

A wide array of schools also have begun to train educators and students how to effectively respond if confronted by school shooters. Lockdown drills are now regularly conducted alongside annual fire or weather emergency drills, and schools are increasingly encouraging students to envision themselves playing an active role to ensure their safety. Rather than "duck and cover," these trainings tend to emphasize what Olivia Minor in Wisconsin describes as "active code red interventions." Some schools now employ the "A.L.I.C.E." training method, which encourages students to utilize several strategies depending upon the situation at hand: "Alert," "Lockdown," "Inform," "Counter," and "Evacuate." Gerald Wise in Michigan reasons that this type of training "puts more tools in your toolbox in order for you to be able to handle or confront situations." Notably, one tool that has not been implemented is President Trump's preferred policy of arming teachers. No principal we spoke with has adopted this approach, though one Idaho school is seriously considering it. Already, three-fourths of its staff have gone through the concealed weapons training, but they have not yet been granted permission to carry firearms on campus.

A Comprehensive Public Health Approach to School Safety

Despite their tireless and often heroic efforts, most principals we interviewed emphasized a narrow set of strategies for preventing gun violence at their schools. Their attention to hardening school campuses likely reflects the overriding sense of vulnerability that has been created through mass school shootings. Responding to this existential threat, parents, students, and staff aim to establish impermeable barriers—and while new doors and windows may be part of a holistic strategy in some cases, such measures will not in and of themselves prevent a mass shooting. Eric Jasper, a principal in suburban Michigan, was one of the few principals interviewed to make this point. He speaks to the importance of mental health services, training for students in "how to treat each other," and a school-wide effort to encourage "kids to take care of other kids." These strategies, Jasper reasons, "are more important than the hard, physical stuff like bulletproof glass and clear backpacks and all those kind of things."

Eric Jasper's relationship-centered efforts to make his campus safe are consistent with the consensus view of school safety research: to prevent gun violence, schools must draw from a broader set of strategies than merely intensifying security and surveillance. Rather, a public health model that emphasizes systems and supports to promote safety and root out problems at their source is much more likely to ameliorate the threat of

> ### Securing the Campus
>
> *I started teaching right before Columbine happened. It's kind of been our world. For these kids, it is their world. They don't know any different.*
>
> *This year I had a PD [professional development] rotation where teachers learned how to barricade doors. It's a real thing and we encourage teachers to have conversations with the kids, the really hard conversations: "What are you going to do if you can't get into a classroom because everybody's locked down? Where are you going to go? What are you going to do?"*
>
> *We just had open house and parents are always asking me about security measures. Parents want me to tell when we're doing the drills so that they don't worry. Yet if I tell them, then people know that my kids are going to be lined up outside.*
>
> *We are very concerned. My campus is just one large building, so when you want to lock down it's much easier. However, it also means that all of my kids are in one location. There are points in the day where there's no other option but to see us as sitting ducks.*
>
> *I have two armed police officers on campus and three unarmed security guards. I don't have the funding to supplement that. We use staff as best as possible. We ask for volunteers to go around throughout the day to make sure exterior doors are secured and not propped open. We lock the back gate and don't let [students] out. I mean, it's just ... it's kind of an impossible ... there's no solution. We're just hanging on, doing the best we can.*
>
> *—Carol Hall, Principal in New Mexico*

violence.[95] This framework calls for principals to focus attention on establishing a school climate in which students feel a sense of connection with and responsibility toward one another. It also entails investing in counselors, psychologists, and social workers who can identify students in need of counseling and provide mental health services. A public health approach additionally looks to address conditions outside schools that endanger students during school hours. Thus it includes reasonable strategies aimed at restricting access to the most dangerous and destructive weapons.[96]

The comprehensive public health approach is a long-term strategy for enhancing safety that offers no immediate security guarantee to individual schools and communities. Regardless of which policies or strategies they pursue, principals around the country are confronting the prospect of gun violence at their schools in the here and now. Many share the sentiment of Colorado's Frank Hartford: "Do I think it's inevitable that it'll happen at every school? No. No. But do I think that the likelihood of something happening has increased for me, personally? Yeah. It has." Michelle Kenup in suburban Georgia is kept up at night thinking about the "1500 kids here who are sort of my kids," while acknowledging that, if a mass shooting were to happen on her campus, "we might stop them and we might not." Similarly, George Mull, a principal in rural Missouri, is constantly asking himself: "When is it going to be us?" and "What else can we do?" He concludes: "It's probably the first thing I think of every morning and every night. You know, God forbid, [but]
what if?"

Cumulative Effects: Societal Challenges and America's High Schools

Throughout this report we have examined how five different societal challenges, deeply felt in the age of Trump, have impacted America's students and their schools. For the purpose of analysis, we have focused on each issue separately as a way to illuminate its particular dynamics and effects. Yet, it is often the case that schools experience many challenges at once, as Constance Williams notes. In this concluding section, we look across the challenges and consider their aggregate effect on public education in the United States. We begin by reviewing how broadly the challenges are experienced and how frequently schools experience them together. Next, we consider how the challenges affect educators' time and capacity to promote student learning. We then assess their likely aggregate effects on school climate—including heightened fear, social isolation and distrust—and consider the implications of their indirect effects on social practices in broader society. Finally, we outline recommendations that respond to these challenges with caring, connectedness, and civility.

> *"Our nation faces many challenges. Our students face those along with so many others. When speaking of a divided nation, we're acknowledging a major barrier for all learners. … From a leadership angle, I feel we are doing a good job of addressing issues, but the national problems undermine them all."*
>
> **Constance Williams, principal in a Kentucky high school**

Challenges are Broadly Felt, But Experienced Differently Across Communities

The principals who participated in our study come from schools that reflect the rich diversity of public high schools across the United States. Virtually every one of these principals—regardless of whether their schools are located in predominantly white or predominantly non-white communities, in rural areas or large cities, in the Midwest or the South, in congressional districts that voted heavily in favor of or against Donald Trump—has experienced at least one of the five challenges addressed here. And yet, while the challenges are felt almost everywhere, certain types of schools are more likely to be impacted (and impacted severely) by particular challenges.

The charts below depict the average severity of challenges experienced at different types of schools. Our scale spans from "Not Affected," to "Moderately Affected" (principals who report that a challenge was experienced one or two times), to "Severely Affected" (principals who report that the challenge was experienced multiple times). As the charts indicate, Racially Mixed Schools are most impacted by untrustworthy information and political division; Predominantly Students of Color Schools are most impacted by the threats of immigration enforcement and gun violence; and Predominantly White Schools are most impacted by the opioid crisis. Differences across regions are relatively modest, with the exception of the opioid crisis (experienced most severely in the Northeast) and the threat of immigration enforcement (where the greatest impact is felt in the West). Although community type bears little relationship to the experiences of political division or untrustworthy information, it is closely associated with the impact of the opioid crisis (centered most in towns and rural communities) and the threat to immigrant communities (experienced most commonly in cities). Finally, schools located in congressional districts that voted strongly for Donald Trump in 2016 are slightly more likely than other schools to experience political incivility and the opioid crisis, but less likely to feel the effects of a threatening environment for immigrant communities.
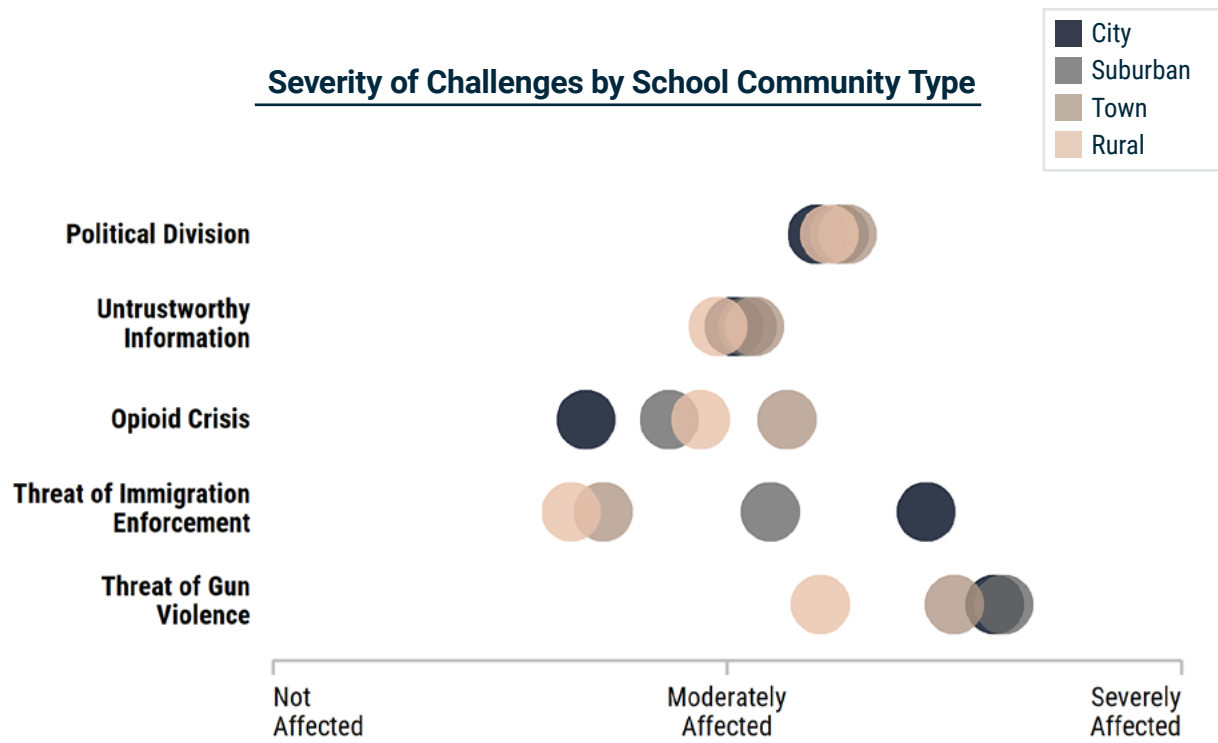

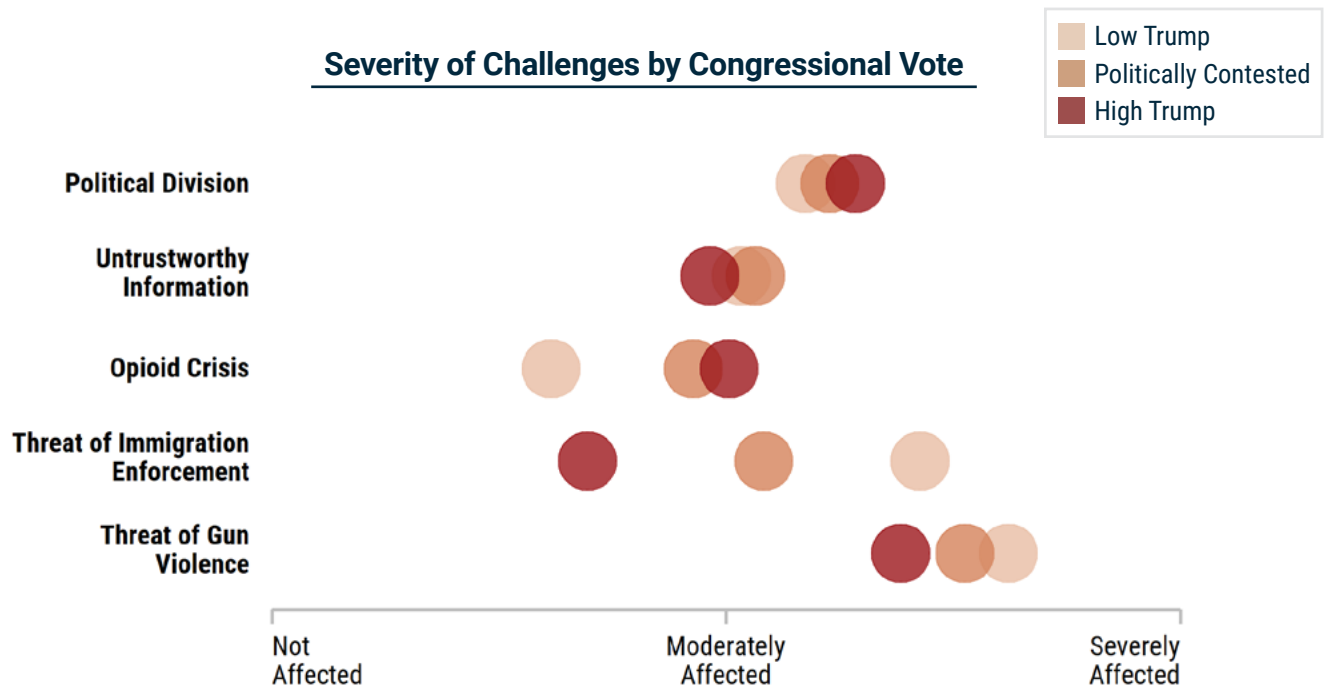**Severity of Challenges by School Racial Demographics**

Legend:
- Predominantly White Schools
- Racially Mixed Schools
- Predominantly Students of Color Schools

Severity of Challenges by Region

Legend:
- Northeast
- Midwest
- South
- West

Categories (top to bottom):
- Political Division
- Untrustworthy Information
- Opioid Crisis
- Threat of Immigration Enforcement
- Threat of Gun Violence

X-axis:
- Not Affected
- Moderately Affected
- Severely Affected

Severity of Challenges by School Community Type

Legend:
- City
- Suburban
- Town
- Rural

Categories (top to bottom):
- Political Division
- Untrustworthy Information
- Opioid Crisis
- Threat of Immigration Enforcement
- Threat of Gun Violence

X-axis:
- Not Affected
- Moderately Affected
- Severely Affected

Severity of Challenges by Congressional Vote

Legend:
- Low Trump
- Politically Contested
- High Trump

Categories (top to bottom):
- Political Division
- Untrustworthy Information
- Opioid Crisis
- Threat of Immigration Enforcement
- Threat of Gun Violence

X-axis: Not Affected — Moderately Affected — Severely Affected

Almost All Schools Experience Multiple Challenges

Regardless of their location, most schools face multiple societal challenges. Almost all schools experience at least two challenges, more than nine in ten experience at least three challenges, more than seven in ten experience at least four challenges, and more than three in ten experience all five challenges. Racially Mixed Schools are the most likely to experience all five challenges together. When multiple challenges occur within a school site, they interact with one another in complex and mutually reinforcing ways. It is likely that the experience of political division makes schools more vulnerable to the spread of untrustworthy information, just as the spread of untrustworthy information often contributes to division and hostility. Similarly, the fear and distress associated with threats to immigration communities, gun violence and opioid misuse, increases the possibilities for division and distrust amongst students and between educators and the broader community.

Percentage of Schools Experiencing 0-5 Challenges

Pie chart values: 0.6%, 2.2%, 6.9%, 18.3%, 38.9%, 33.1%

Legend: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Number of Challenges by School Racial Demographics

The Impact on Students and Schools

Our findings underscore the reality that when high schools experience societal challenges, it is frequently the students themselves who bear the brunt. Many students feel greater anxiety, stress, and vulnerability as a result of forces emanating from outside the school. As Todd Philips in North Carolina notes, the broader national climate has "got everybody all torn up." Such conflicts often lead students to turn inwards, withdraw from social interaction, and/or lose their focus during classroom lessons. Political division and the flow of untrustworthy information have prompted some educators to narrow the focus of the curriculum in ways that reduce opportunities for critical thinking, as Miles Eriksson in Florida attests to: "There is a huge shift going on within the political climate and it is having a great impact on student learning."

In addition, parental opioid misuse and aggressive immigration enforcement have both resulted in greater material deprivation for young people—unstable housing, insecure food supplies, and a lack of other necessary supports.   While many students have taken on added responsibilities to meet these needs for themselves and their family members, their actions take a toll on schoolwork and their capacity to plan for the future.

One measure that helps reveal the impact of these societal challenges on schools is the amount of time invested by principals to respond to these issues. The average principal in our study reports spending six and a half hours a week addressing the five societal challenges.[97] More than one-quarter spend at least eight hours per week (the equivalent of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. school day). Because these challenges emerge in unexpected and disruptive ways, the amount of time principals spend varies widely over the course of the year. As Calvin Ford in Pennsylvania reports, "issues such as gun violence took a lot of time in a limited amount of days," whereas "opioid issues … popped up over time." In California, Rick Ricci reports: "I have found that I need to do some intensive work when issues arise, so my average for the year might be low, but there are some weeks when that seems to be all that I am doing." Ricci adds that because so many of his "students, families, and staff members are nervous and anxious about many of the" challenges, he feels a need to "really get out in front of these issues to help people relax."   But, as Ford points out, this is not easily achieved since "principals rarely get to plan ahead for the new hot topics."

Average Time Spent by Principals on the 5 Challenges

Pie chart segments:
- Political Division: 1 hour 25 minutes
- Untrustworthy Information: 1 hour 11 minutes
- Opioid Crisis: 49 minutes
- Threat of Immigration Enforcement: 1 hour 2 minutes
- Threat of Gun Violence: 2 hours 3 minutes

The substantial amount of time principals spend addressing the five challenges represents lost opportunity costs. When the principal and school staff take on societal challenges, they do not have as much time to meet students' academic needs or to work toward enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. As Kay Todd in Massachusetts notes, "The political and social climate has forced us to take attention away from traditional academics to focus on the issues that are impacting our students." Todd believes that "there are lessons to be learned here," but they unfortunately come "at great cost." Principals like Savana Alker in Kansas point out that societal challenges create a need for professional development across "many [new] topics," but she worries that there is "not enough time" to address these areas *and* other pressing issues related to school improvement. In California, Cecilia Reed is concerned that her school's concentrated focus on a series of challenges stalled momentum for enhancing the school's instructional program: "With fake gun threats having occurred multiple times in the last six months alone, the threat to our community members who may not be here legally and not feeling safe, and the divisiveness of the community … we have been in a 'treading water' status for the last year."

Reforming Schools and Society in the Age of Trump

While most U.S. high school principals struggle to address the most pressing needs of the moment, some still manage to look forward, seeking to lay the moral and civic groundwork for a better future. Chris Berry, who leads a Predominantly White School in Alabama, characterizes himself and his peers across the nation as "public servant[s]." He envisions the role of principals as working to ensure that "our teachers are doing their jobs preparing our students … to be productive members of society and to give back, to take ownership of the school, to take ownership of their community." Willie Fields articulates a similar vision for the young people attending his Predominantly Students of Color School in Florida: "I may not see these kids twenty years from now, but my hope and prayer is that they're living … productive lifestyles, and they are … paying it forward by also investing in a young person or another school to make sure that community and school is safe."

Berry and Fields embrace a long-term view of the relationship between school and society: by cultivating particular social relationships and commitments, public schools can develop, over time, more caring and community-minded adults. In this way, their understanding and strategic approach to social change resonates with a deep current in American education. More than a century ago, John Dewey wrote in *Democracy and Education:* "we may produce in schools a projection … of the society we should like to realize."[98]

Yet, principals who pursue this strategy in the age of Trump encounter substantial obstacles. The "divisive, hateful climate of the country," frequently seeps into schools with "a horrific effect," as New Jersey's Aaron Nash reports. In Minnesota, Tim Vanderdoes similarly laments: "We try to teach positive values and ethics, and our current political landscape works against this." Our survey analysis supports these sentiments and suggests that political dynamics in the broader community often *discourage* prin-

cipals from working to ensure tolerant and inclusive learning environments. As we described in Section 2, the principals who are *least* likely to communicate with their student bodies about the importance of tolerance toward immigrants are those in Predominantly White Schools and schools located in congressionally districts that voted heavily for Donald Trump—despite the fact that their schools are the most likely to experience incidents of students making denigrating comments toward immigrants. Hence, too often, in place of Dewey's vision, we see society's ills projected into our nation's high schools.

In light of these challenges, what is to be done? Several principals in our study speak to the importance of simultaneous efforts to improve social relations in schools and society. Evan Pearson from Kansas reasons: "In these increasingly divisive times … [we need] solutions for our country as a whole, and for our schools in particular." Pearson's point echoes calls in recent years from reformers associated with the "Broader and Bolder Approach to Education" who argue that improving learning outcomes in communities of concentrated poverty necessitates addressing both education *and* social policy. Proponents of this approach seek better conditions for teaching and learning alongside expanded access to high quality early childhood education, healthcare, and other social services aimed at ensuring all students enter school prepared to learn.[99] However important this agenda is, the societal challenges in the age of Trump demand an even more comprehensive strategy. The challenges we have outlined in this report affect schools in *all*

communities and ameliorating them will likely require solutions that encompass more than access to material supports. What is needed are education and social policies that address the fear, social isolation, and distrust that currently exists and are likely to continue for the foreseeable future.

If public high schools in the U.S. are to prepare young people to grow into compassionate and committed community members, our society and our schools need to exhibit care, support connectedness, and promote civility. And society and schools especially need to do this across social, political, and racial divides. Amidst competing claims about free speech and student safety, it is important to be clear about what we mean when we speak of the need to promote civility. It is easy to accept a "weak" form of civility—the mere absence of overt hostility or coarse language—without encouraging young people to question how it can mask oppressive social relationships and neglect the complex needs for diverse people to work together on shared concerns. We concur with the civil rights leader Reverend William Barber's argument that civility should not be understood in narrow terms—it is not about acting "polite," and certainly does not require "standing down" from essential discussions related to issues of justice. Civility, he suggests, is about enacting the values that express how we should live together.[100] Sociologist Richard Sennett makes a related point when he states that civility is how people engage with one another in open and cooperative dialogue that "enlists empathy."[101]

Recommendations

Promoting care, connectedness, and strong civility demands new policies, structures, and practices in society and in schools. It is beyond the scope of this report to map out what this means or may be required at the societal level, though it is clear that there is much work to be done in regards to both the style and substance of American politics and public policy. The focus of our recommendations thus lies with changing conditions and practices in America's high schools. We need relationship-centered schools that attend to the holistic needs of young people and their families, while building social trust and understanding. In such schools, caring and well-trained professionals support student development, link young people and families to community-based services, encourage thoughtful inquiry, and foster respectful dialogue.

The schools we envision build on and extend two evidence-based models. The first is "Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child," developed in 2015 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development as a strategy for integrating research in health and education to improve health and learning outcomes in public schools.[102] A second related approach is the "Educating the Whole Child" policy framework, produced by the Learning Policy Institute in 2018, which uses the science of learning and development to identify essential conditions for student well-being and growth.[103] Both of these models highlight the value of structures that address developmental needs and support caring and connectedness. Yet, they do not explicitly address the societal challenges discussed in this report or the role of schools in fostering strong civility.[104] Our four recommendations below draw upon and augment the central insights of these models to offer an educational policy framework that responds to the demands of the Age of Trump.

Recommendation 1: *Establish and communicate school climate standards and then create practices that enable educational systems to document and report on conditions associated with these standards.* A positive school climate encourages students to have productive relationships with other students and adults and motivates engagement in learning activities. The school climate should support students' social and emotional well-being so that they feel a sense of belonging as well as emotional and physical safety.

While student and educator surveys have long been used to measure school climate and social and emotional well-being, these surveys now should be expanded to respond to current societal challenges. New questions should address: a) bullying and related forms of hostility directed to students because of their race, immigration status, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or other vulnerable social identities; b) activities that foster trust and understanding across lines of difference; b) cyberbullying; c) students' psychological and social welfare needs associated with family addiction or immigration enforcement; d) students' concerns about violence as well as more general concerns with mental health. Data collection strategies will need to account for the sensitivity of many of these issues. For example, given the vulnerabilities of immigrant communities, educational systems may wish to partner with immigrant-serving organizations as they develop and implement ideas for learning about the needs of students from immigrant families.

Recommendation 2: *Build professional capacity within educational systems to address the holistic needs of students and communities and extend this capacity by supporting connections between school-based educators and other governmental agencies and community-based organizations serving young people and their families.* Pre-service teacher and administrator training programs and in-service professional development should provide educators with a strong foundation in adolescent development (including issues related to adolescent health and mental health), social and emotional learning, culturally responsive education, and the social welfare needs of diverse families. Training should also provide educators with the skills and understanding necessary to collaborate with health and mental health providers, social welfare services, and community-based organizations.

Today's heightened levels of divisiveness and hostility call for pre-service and in-service training to examine the meaning of strong civility and to encourage educators to enact practices associated with strong civility as they interact with their fellow staff members as well as with their students and their students' families. Similarly, growing concerns over the flow of untrustworthy information speak to the importance of creating opportunities for educators to grapple with the complex meaning of reliability, validity, and truth claims in relationship to the high school course of study. Alongside this important focus on educator development, current societal conditions also increase the need to diversify the educational workforce through greater investment in teacher and administrator recruitment, including scholarships and forgivable loans. The data from our study highlight the importance of ensuring that more educators of color and more educators who have experience living in and working with immigrant communities are placed in schools where few or no such educators presently work.

Recommendation 3: *Develop integrated systems of health, mental health, and social welfare support for students and their families.* All adolescents come to high school with a diverse array of developmental needs. Educators are best positioned to address these needs when they collaborate with health, mental health, and social welfare professionals. Such collaborations are most productive when all parties have time to communicate with one another and forge shared understandings that foreground students' assets and attend to community values. It is also important to establish tiers of support so that educational systems can ensure all students access to a core of services while also targeting particular attention to students who experience the greatest vulnerabilities.

The fear, distrust, and isolation associated with current societal challenges often make it more difficult for professionals to identify and respond to student needs. Efforts to provide services must now be tied to a broader project of strengthening relationships between adults and students as well as relations between different groups of students. As noted in Recommendation 1, the concerns of vulnerable communities may necessitate that professionals establish or deepen collaborations with trusted community-based organizations.

Recommendation 4: *Create and support networks of educators committed to fostering care, connectedness, and strong civility in their public education systems.* Many educators across the country are working to establish relationship-centered schools that enact caring and foster respect and understanding in racially, socio-economically, and politically diverse settings.

Recall, for example, Pennsylvania principal Anthony Montesa who develops trust and empathy among his students through mentoring programs, collaborative work, and opportunities for students to participate jointly in making the school more responsive and equitable. Such powerful strategies can only inform practice more generally if there are opportunities for educators to share about and learn from one another's work. We need spaces—at local, district, and state levels—where practitioners committed to addressing societal challenges through care, connectedness, and strong civility can discuss their common dilemmas as well as their emerging best practices.

Conclusion

Schools and society share the same great task of promoting caring, connectedness, and strong civility in the age of Trump. The experiences of the principals who participated in our study reveal how the consequences of the five societal challenges blur the boundaries of where schools end and society begins. This suggests that schools and school leaders will not be able to mitigate the effects of these issues on their own; nor can society do this without the full engagement of its public schools. Many of the principals in our study offer a glimpse of what is possible. We give the last word to Phil White, the principal of a racially and socio-economically diverse high school in Connecticut:

We have within our school a great many different students and a great many different families. Background experiences may dictate your perspective on the world. The diversity of our students in race, in religion, and in their geographic origins, is kind of correlated with very different political and social perspectives. Students at our school occasionally will get caught up in conflicts about racism, the economy, presidential politics, or about what law ought to be passed or not passed. About how things ought to be.

When conflicts come up we try to use them as an opportunity for growth and learning. The fact that there are social challenges in the world is not something that we're going to hide [from] our teenagers. We're not going to hide the fact that racism is a problem. We're not going to hide discussions of power and privilege. People very often underestimate what teenagers can handle. Teenagers know what's going on.

I try to be really real with kids. I try not to shy away from important topics. I tell teachers that their job is to facilitate dialogue and learning; I don't want any sort of dialogue to be smashed. I don't want them to feel like when discussions about the election come up that they need to shut them down so as to avoid any sort of hurt feelings or disagreement. I want teachers to have the attitude of "there's nothing wrong with disagreement." We need to be able to foster and model how to properly do this for our kids.

We desire for students to have a strong approach to collecting, reasoning [about], and using information in a fair way. Hopefully there is a strong academic sense of how we vet facts, what is or is not the truth. And then from there, based on that information, [we want them to] make a decision about what's best to do. But also [we want them to] develop [a] perspective on the world, grounded in empathy, and to [understand]: "Just because something is not my lived experience doesn't mean that I can't step into my classmate's shoes and say, 'What does the world look like from your perspective?'"

Endnotes

1   We use pseudonyms for all the principals named in this report.

2   The survey also explored a set of issues related to democracy and education—principals' civic goals and civic education practices, principals' strategies for listening to the interests and concerns of students, and principals' responses to student protests this past school year. We will report on findings related to this theme of democracy and education in a subsequent report.

3   Principals were also asked to articulate their civic goals, their practices for engaging student voice, and their responses to student protests.

4   Our sample of schools was created by using data from the 2015-16 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) list of public secondary schools. This data allowed us to target outreach to schools based on school demographics and school location. For school demographics, we considered student race and student eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Lunch.

5   Throughout the report, we compare the experience of and response to societal challenges across these three categories of schools. Previous research has shown that the racial demographics of schools is related to whether current societal challenges and political rhetoric negatively impact high school students.   See: Rogers, John, Megan Franke, Jung-Eun Ellie Yun, Michael Ishimoto, Claudia Diera, Rebecca Cooper Geller, Anthony Berryman, and Tizoc Brenes. "Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump: Increasing Stress and Hostility in America's High Schools." *UCLA IDEA* (2017).

6   Free or Reduced Priced Lunch eligibility is a commonly used indicator for low-income status. Students from households with income up to 185 percent of the federal poverty threshold are eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch.   See: Snyder. Tom Lauren Musu-Gil-lette. "Free or reduced price lunch: A proxy for poverty?" *National Center for Educational Statistics Blog*, April 16 (2015): 2015.

7   We excluded high schools with enrollment below 100 students from our survey and interview samples.

8   This figure is an estimate based on the average national vote.

9   Federal Election Commission. "Federal Elections 2016: Election Results for the US President, the US Senate and the US House of Representatives." December, 2017. *https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2016/federalelections2016.pdf*

10   US Department of Education. *Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates program (EDGE): Locale boundaries user's manual,* by Douglas Geverdt. National Center for Educational Statistics 2016-102, Washington, DC: 2018. *https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/docs/NCES_LOCALE_USERSMANUAL_2016012.pdf*

11   US Census Bureau. Geographic terms and concepts - Census divisions and census regions. Washington, DC: 2018. *https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_census_divreg.html*

12   This statement by Gerald Wise is the first of several first-person principal vignettes we present throughout the report. These vignettes, which are italicized, are drawn from direct quotes that appear in the principals' transcribed interviews. At times, the vignettes include responses from different sections of the interview. In order to make the vignettes accessible and clearly convey the principals' meanings, we do not use ellipses to indicate where we have connected different parts of the transcript or where we have deleted words. Nonetheless, the vignettes use only the principals' own words, unless we indicate otherwise with bracketed text. Aside from these italicized vignettes, we follow standard rules for quoting principals in the report—using ellipses to indicate missing words.

13   Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley, and Bridget Johnson, "More Now Say It's Stressful to Discuss Politics with People they Disagree with," *Pew Research Center, http://www.people-press.org/2018/11/05/more-now-say-its-stressful-to-discuss-politics-with-people-they-disagree-with/,* (November 5, 2018); Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley, and Bridget Johnson "The Public, the Political System, and American Democracy," *Pew Research Center, http://www.people-press.org/2018/04/26/the-public-the-political-system-and-american-democracy/,*   (April 26, 2018).

14   NPR, PBS NewsHour, Marist, "NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll National Likely Voters," *http://maristpoll.marist.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NPR_PBS-NewsHour_Marist-Poll_USA-NOS-and-Tables_Adults-and-Registered-Voters-and-Likely-Voters_1810301732.pdf#page=4,* (November 1, 2018).

15   Carroll Doherty, Jocelyn Kiley, and Bridget Johnson, "The Partisan Divide on Political Values Grows Even Wider," *Pew Research Center, http://www.people-press.org/2017/10/05/the-partisan-divide-on-political-values-grows-even-wider/,* (October 5, 2017).

16   Liana Mason, *Uncivil Agreement: How Politics Became Our Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

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[23] Steven Utych. "How dehumanization influences attitudes toward immigrants," *Political Research Quarterly* 71, No. 2 (2017):440-52.

[24] Rene Flores, "Can Elites Shape Public Attitudes Towards Immigrants? Evidence from the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election," *Social Forces* 96, No. 4, (2018): 1649–90.

[25] Christian Crandall, Jason Miller, and Mark White II, "Changing Norms Following the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election: The Trump Effect on Prejudice," *Social Psychological and Personality Science.* 9, No. 2, (2018): 186-192.

[26] Brian Schaffner, "Follow the Racist? The Consequences of Trump's Expressions of Prejudice for Mass Rhetoric." Tufts University Working Paper, *http://www.ashford.zone/images/2018/09/followtheracist_v2.pdf*, (2018); Joshua Holland, "Yes, Donald Trump Is Making White People More Hateful" *The Nation*, *https://www.thenation.com/article/yes-donald-trump-is-making-white-people-more-hateful/*, (May 2, 2018).

[27] Ariela Schachter, "How Apparently Unpopular Racial Rhetoric can be Politically Effective," *Scholars Strategy Network*, *https://scholars.org/brief/how-apparently-unpopular-racial-rhetoric-can-be-politically-effective*, (January 10, 2017).

[28] Federal Bureau of Investigations, *2017 Hate Crime Statistics*, *https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017/topic-pages/incidents-and-of-fenses*, (2018); In addition, a 2018 study by the Center for Investigative Reporting identified 150 incidents of either verbal taunting or physical violence in which assailants invoked Donald Trump's name in the course of assault. See: Will Carless, "They Spewed Hate. Then they Punctuated it with the President's Name." *Reveal*, *https://www.revealnews.org/article/they-spewed-hate-then-they-punctuated-it-with-the-presidents-name/*, (April 19, 2018).

[29] Samantha Neal, "Views of Racism as a Major Problem Increase Sharply, Especially Among Democrats," *Pew Research Center*, *http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/29/views-of-racism-as-a-major-problem-increase-sharply-especially-among-dem-ocrats/*, (August 29, 2017) ; Anthony Salvanto, "Poll: One Year After Charlottesville, Majority of Americans See Racial Tensions on the Rise," *CBS News*. *https://www.cbsnews.com/news/poll-one-year-after-charlottesville-americans-see-racial-tensions-on-increase/*, (August 12, 2018).

[30] When analyzing principals' responses to particular challenges throughout the report, we consider only those principals who experienced the challenge in question. Here, 79.1% of principals who experienced political division report that they disciplined students for uncivil or demeaning behavior. Similarly, later in this report when we share data on principals' responses to the opioid crisis, we present the finding as a percentage of principals who have experienced the opioid crisis at their schools.

[31] Respondents include only principals who reported: "Strong differences of political opinion among community members or between community members and school staff have had an adverse impact on the school."

[32] *Pew Research Center* "State of the News Media 2018;" *http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/state-of-the-news-media/*, (July 25, 2018).

[33] 32% report that they have either "a great deal" or "fair amount of" trust. See: Art Swift, "Americans' Trust in Mass Media Sinks to New Low." *Gallup News*. *http://news.gallup.com/poll/195542/americans-trust-mass-media-sinks-new-low.aspx*, (September 14, 2016).

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"Students have made unfounded claims in class based on unreliable media sources." Principals could respond that this issue "a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions." Recognizing that students learn how to assess the quality of sources over time, we came to view it as neither surprising nor necessarily problematic if occasional cases of students making claims based on untrustworthy information occur. In short, such occasional incidents may simply reflect a student's developmental process. In our analysis of this particular item, then, we treat principals who report "occurred one or two times" as not experiencing a problem—the same as we do for principals who report that this issue "did not occur." We thus only coded this item as a problem for principals who report this issue "occurred on multiple occasions." For this one item, the response "occurred on multiple occasions" is not coded as a severe challenge. One indication of the reasonableness of this data interpretation is that the percentage of principals reporting that students made unfounded claims "on multiple occasions" (59%) is nearly identical to the percentage of principals reporting "Students have rejected the information or media sources that the teacher is using" (60%); or "Parents or community members have challenged the information or media sources used by teachers in this school" (58%).

54 As we indicate in the previous note, for this item only, we recoded responses of "occurred one or two times" as a "no occurrence," and we recoded responses of "multiple occurrence" as "occurred one or two times."

55   Again, for this item only, we recoded responses of "occurred one or two times" as a "no occurrence," and we recoded responses of "multiple occurrence" as "occurred one or two times."

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88 Matt Phillips, principal of Predominantly Students of Color School in a small city in California.

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90 Scott Hurwitz, principal of a Predominantly Students of Color School in small city in Connecticut.

91 We did not explicitly ask whether any of their students had brought guns to school. Rather, principals shared this information in the course of talking about gun violence generally. Thus it is possible that more than 1/5 of the principals interviewed had students bring a firearm to school.

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About the Authors

John Rogers is a Professor of Education at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and Director of UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and ACCESS (IDEA). He also serves as Faculty Director of UCLA's Center X. Rogers studies educational inequality, what and how students learn about inequality, and the role of civic engagement in addressing inequality. Professor Rogers is the 2016 recipient of the American Educational Research Association's Presidential Citation. He received his Ph.D. in Education from Stanford University and his B.A. in Public Policy and African American Studies from Princeton University.

Dr. Michael Ishimoto is a Fellow at UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access.

Alex Kwako is a Ph.D. student in the Social Research Methodology division of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

Anthony Berryman is a Ph.D. student in the Urban Schooling division of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

Claudia Diera is a Ph.D. student in the Urban Schooling division of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.