



Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump: Increasing Stress and Hostility in America's High Schools

John Rogers

UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access

OCTOBER 2017

Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump: Increasing Stress and Hostility in America's High Schools

John Rogers

with the Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump research team:
Megan Franke, Jung-Eun Ellie Yun, Michael Ishimoto, Claudia Diera,
Rebecca Cooper Geller, Anthony Berryman, and Tizoc Brenes

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank Martin Lipton for his textual suggestions to the report and Mike Seltzer and Mike Rose for their wise counsel on survey design and interview analysis. Thanks also are due to Sheriah Altobar and Beth Happel for graphic and web design.

The appropriate citation for this report is: Rogers, J., Franke, M. Yun, J.E., Ishimoto, M., Diera, C., Geller, R., Berryman, A., Brenes, T. (2017). *Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump: Increasing Stress and Hostility in America's High Schools*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access.

The report can be accessed online at <https://idea.gseis.ucla.edu/publications/teaching-and-learning-in-age-of-trump>

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution—Noncommercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>.



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	III
Executive Summary	V
Section 1: U.S. High School Students on Edge	1
Section 2: Effects of National Political Rhetoric on Student Well-being	5
Section 3: Effects of National Politics on Student Polarization, Incivility, and Use of Unreliable Sources	12
Section 4: Schools as Hostile Environments for Vulnerable Groups	17
Section 5: The Response of School Leaders to a Changing Political Environment	21
Section 6: Student Civic Engagement	24
Section 7: What We Have Learned, Why This Matters, What To Do?	28
Methodological Appendix: Teaching and Learning in the Age	33
Survey Protocol: Learning as it Relates to Social and Political Life in the U.S.	37
Endnotes	41
About the authors	43

Executive Summary

This report examines whether the substance and tone of national political discourse during the first four months of the Trump administration affected U.S. public high school students. Throughout his campaign and in his presidency to date, Donald Trump has addressed a number of “hot-button” topics that call into question the status or rights of many different groups in American society. The charged political rhetoric surrounding these and other issues often has been polarizing and contentious. Many would agree that, since Donald Trump has moved into the White House, national political discourse has become a more potent force in shaping the consciousness and everyday experiences of Americans. It is important to ask if this new political environment has impacted high school students.

We consider the following questions:

- 1) Have national political debates on topics such as immigration enforcement increased students’ stress and heightened students’ concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families?
- 2) Have combative political dynamics at the national level contributed to incivility between students in schools and classrooms?
- 3) In what ways is student learning affected by heightened stress or incivility?
- 4) Do the impacts of the national political environment on student experiences differ depending on the demographics of the high schools they attend?

To answer these questions, UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access conducted a survey in May 2017 on changes in school climate, and therefore on teaching and learning, during the first months of the Trump administration. The 1535 teachers who responded to the survey teach in schools that are representative of public high schools in the United States in terms of student demographics and geographic location. The 10-15 minute survey asked multiple choice questions about student experiences during the period from January to May 2017.

The survey included an optional open-ended question for teachers to write about their thoughts regarding how their “classroom and school climate has changed this past year as a result of changes in national politics.” 848 teachers wrote responses, ranging in length from one sentence to a couple paragraphs. In July and August 2017, we conducted 35 follow-up interviews with social studies and English teachers from geographically and demographically diverse schools. The 30-40 minute interviews were conducted remotely, via video-chat or phone, and focused on school and classroom climate and student well-being.

Key findings from the study include:

I. Stress and concerns with welfare have increased, particularly in schools enrolling few White students.

- 51.4% of teachers in our sample reported more students experiencing “high levels of stress and anxiety” than in previous years. Only 6.6% of teachers reported fewer students experiencing high stress than previous years. A Pennsylvania teacher reported: “Many students were very stressed and worried after the election. They vocalized their worries over family members’ immigration status and healthcare, as well as LGBT rights.”
- 79% of teachers reported that their students have expressed concerns for their well-being or the well-being of their families associated with recent public policy discourse on one or more hot-button issues, including immigration, travel limitations on predominantly Muslim countries, restrictions on LGBTQ rights, changes to health care, or threats to the environment.
- 58% of teachers reported that some of their students had expressed concerns in relationship to proposals for deporting undocumented immigrants. A Nebraska coach recounted that some of his student-athletes have begun to live their lives in “survival mode” because “at any time they could be possibly picked up by the police and deported to a country that they didn’t even grow up in.” A Utah teacher overheard her students grappling with what would happen should their undocumented parents face deportation. “Would I stay, because I was born here,” one student asked. “But how would I survive if my dad got taken back to Mexico?”
- 44.3% of teachers reported that students’ concerns about well-being in relation to one or more hot-button policy issues impacted students’ learning—their ability to focus on lessons and their attendance. A number of teachers also pointed to policy threats undermining students’ educational and career goals. A New Jersey teacher related that one of her students “had to postpone her plan to join the navy because her parents had made her legal guardian of her siblings, in the event that her parents were deported.”

II. Polarization, incivility, and reliance on unsubstantiated sources have risen, particularly in predominantly White schools.

- More than 20% of teachers reported heightened polarization on campus and incivility in their classrooms. A social studies teacher in North Carolina noted: “In my seventeen years I have never seen anger this blatant and raw over a political candidate or issue.” A West Virginia social studies teacher explained that her students have interpreted politicians saying “it’s not important to be ‘politically correct’” to mean “I can say anything about anyone.”
- 41.0% of teachers reported that students were *more* likely than in previous years to introduce unfounded claims from unreliable sources. Many teachers noted a connection between students’ use of unsubstantiated sources and growing incivility. A Missouri social studies teacher wrote: “It has been a terrible year for helping kids understand the structure of government. They come in ready to fight, full of bad information from Twitter and Facebook.”

III. A growing number of schools, particularly predominantly White schools, became hostile environments for racial and religious minorities and other vulnerable groups.

- 27.7% of teachers reported an increase in students making derogatory remarks about other groups during class discussions.
- Many teachers described how the political environment “unleashed” virulently racist, anti-Islamic, anti-Semitic, or homophobic rhetoric in their schools and classrooms. An Indiana English teacher explained: “Individuals who do harbor perspectives and racism and bigotry now feel empowered to offer their views more naturally in class discussions, which has led to tension, and even conflict in the classroom.”
- Acts of intimidation and hostility took their toll on young people and undermined student learning. Students who were victims of verbal assaults withdrew from class discussions and sometimes missed class altogether.

IV. While some school leaders avoided issues related to the political environment, others moved proactively to create a tolerant and respectful school culture. When leaders did not act, student behavior grew dramatically worse.

- 40.9% of teachers reported that their school leadership made public statements this year about the value of civil exchange and understanding across lines of difference. But beyond the “public statements” only 26.8% of school leaders actually provided guidance and support on these issues, as reported by teachers in the survey. Teachers in predominantly White schools were much *less* likely than their peers to report that their school leaders had taken these actions. Hence, the schools *most* likely to experience polarization and incivility were the *least* likely to have leaders responding to these issues proactively.

V. As the national political environment has become more threatening, bellicose, and uncivil, more young people are subject to adverse socio-emotional and academic consequences. These changes also undercut the democratic purposes of public education.

- Previous research has established that policy threats, perceived discrimination, and targeted bullying have lasting effects on young people’s mental health and educational progress. A policy environment that exacerbates these dynamics increases the number of students at-risk for negative outcomes.
- Heightened political polarization and incivility makes it more difficult for public schools to provide students with opportunities to deliberate productively across lines of difference and practice working together to solve collective problems.

VI. Educators can mitigate some of these challenges, but they need more support. Ultimately, political leaders need to address the underlying causes of campus incivility and stress.

- 72.3% of teachers surveyed agreed that: “My school leadership should provide more guidance, support, and professional development opportunities on how to promote civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference.”
- 91.6% of teachers surveyed agreed that: “national, state, and local leaders should encourage and model civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference.” Almost as many (83.9%) agreed that national and state leaders should “work to alleviate the underlying factors that create stress and anxiety for young people and their families.”

Section 1: US High School Students on Edge

“I’ve never been in a school year where I’ve had so many kids, kind of on edge.”

- Nicole Morris¹, social studies teacher in Utah

Nicole Morris has been a high school teacher for a quarter century, most recently in a politically diverse community in Utah. But this experience did not fully prepare her for the challenges of teaching and learning in the first months of the Trump administration. Some of her students were thrilled that Donald Trump was elected president, while others were enraged or afraid. Many were very vocal about their beliefs. Morris has always encouraged students to share their opinions in class discussions. She sees such exchange as critical to learning. “Teenagers are formulating their opinions,” she argues, and so need opportunities to try out and develop their ideas in a structured and supportive setting. Yet, this year, the broader political environment set her students on edge, and so learning was undercut by anxiety, incivility, and hostility.

Some students felt on edge with anxiety because the Trump administration’s policies and rhetoric on immigration enforcement threatened their families. Morris describes one student sitting in her geography class “worried about his parents getting deported,” while trying to focus on a lesson about the religions of India. Another of her students uncharacteristically missed homework assignments after “his dad got deported” because “he’s now working to help support his family,” and so has less time for school assignments. For these students, she concludes, “it was more stressful, for sure.”

For a few students, being on the edge meant being open, when they previously would have remained silent, about the vulnerabilities they felt in the face of the changing political climate. Such was the case for students who, after the election, told classmates, “this could be a big thing for my family.” Or, for another student who shared that election results were particularly disturbing to her because she was a survivor of sexual assault. “I guess what this means,” she told the class, “is it’s okay to openly assault women.”

While politically-induced stress affected students differently, all of Morris’s students experienced being on edge as an “elevated level of incivility.” She notes that the “contentiousness of the 2016 election definitely made its way into my classroom.” Students frequently made outlandish or mean-spirited claims, particularly in relationship to social class, race, or gender. Morris understands that teenagers sometimes “will make comments just to shock, they’ll make comments just to make someone angry.” But this year was different. “I had never seen behavior this brash. . . . I saw this dynamic happening on the national level, and was amazed to see such a mirror of the same thing with 14 to 16 year olds.”

Because she is an experienced teacher, Morris knew how to use disciplinary tools to establish limits on student behavior in her class. But, in other classes, being on the edge meant that incivility was articulated as overt racial animus. After the election, in the class across the hallway from Morris, a White student turned to his Latino classmate (who had previously divulged his undocumented status), and said, “Hey bro, you better pack your bags.” Morris concluded that, “until this year,” she had never seen students, “just flat hostile to each other.”

“I had never seen behavior this brash... I saw this dynamic happening on the national level, and was amazed to see such a mirror of the same thing with 14 to 16 year olds.”

- Nicole Morris, social studies teacher in Utah

The national context: What we know from research to date

Nicole Morris is one teacher, reporting on what happened in one school following the election of Donald Trump. This report places her story in a national context. The report draws on a national survey of teachers to examine whether the political environment in the first months of the Trump administration impacted the experiences of public high school students across the United States.

Our study of how a particular political environment affects students is not a common focus of educational research. For example, to the extent that educational researchers attended to the political environments characterizing the Bush or Obama administrations, it was to understand what led to federal policies like the No Child Left Behind Act or Race to the Top. The primary concern of such research was whether and how these education policies affected student experiences and learning outcomes. Yet Donald Trump's influence over students' and teachers' experiences is not confined to typical education policies put forth by the federal government—matters such as funding, curriculum, assessment and so forth. Rather, the national political environment has become a potent force in shaping daily life over and above particular policy interventions. It thus is reasonable to ask whether, and in what ways, this political environment impacts high school students—both directly and indirectly.

Commentators across the political spectrum frequently characterize President Trump's political ideology and style as both populist and nationalist.² This approach to politics is fueled by resentment of elites and fear of groups considered to be outsiders who are perceived to threaten security as well as cultural and economic stability. Its sensibility is anti-establishment, and hence disposed toward challenging social norms and conventions of correct or appropriate behavior. Political discourse tends to be heated, combative, and coarse.³

There is emerging evidence that the charged political environment ushered in by the Trump presidency has affected Americans' sense of well-being and how they interact in public life. Surveys conducted by the American Psychological Association show that, since President Trump's election, more Americans report heightened stress related to national politics, and this stress is highest among African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans.⁴ Other surveys conducted by *Time* and Pew Research highlight increased worries among LGBTQ people and Muslim Americans following the election.⁵ Alongside these national surveys, there have been numerous media accounts of growing anxiety in immigrant communities across the nation.⁶

There also is some evidence that politics in the Trump era has begun to shape how Americans interact with one another in public life. A Pew Research survey conducted in June and July 2017 found that most Americans find it “stressful and frustrating” to talk with people who hold different positions about the president.⁷ Many commentators have suggested that President Trump's contentious rhetoric promotes greater polarization and antagonism in social interactions generally.⁸ Harvard Political Scientist Theda Skocpol conjectures that President Trump's tendency toward combative and divisive discourse models greater incivility among the population. “What gets publicly expressed,” by the president, is directly related to what “people feel that they have permission to publicly express,” and that, she concludes, “makes a huge difference in the way a society is organized.”⁹

Does the political environment under President Trump matter to the experiences of students in American public high schools? Two informal teacher surveys, conducted in 2016 and early 2017, provide some insights.

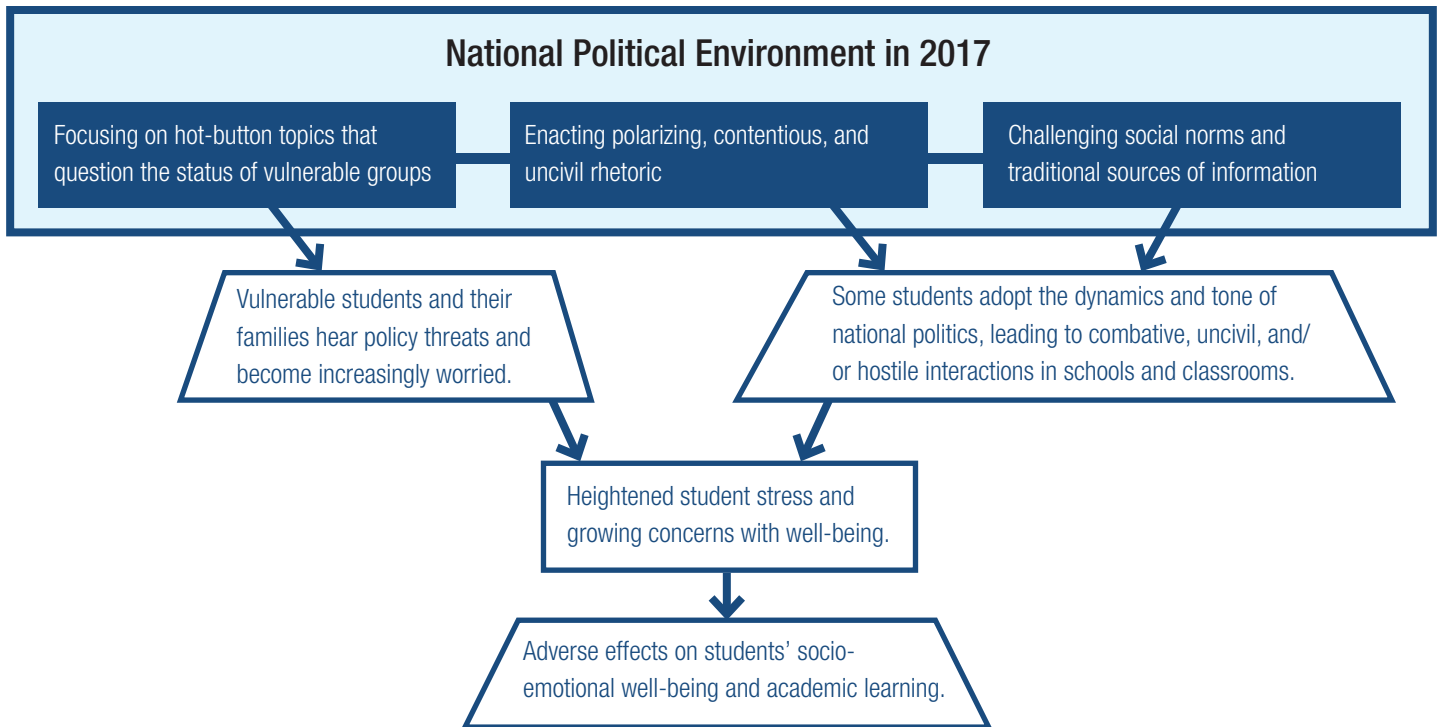
The first of these surveys was distributed by *Teaching Tolerance*, a magazine associated with the Southern Policy Law Center, whose mission is to “reduce prejudice, improve intergroup relations and support equitable school experiences.” In March and April of 2016, *Teaching Tolerance* invited their email subscribers or other K-12 teachers who visited their website to participate in a short survey about how the political rhetoric during the presidential primaries had affected their schools. Most of the roughly 2000 respondents reported that the primary elections had led their students, particularly children from immigrant families and Muslims, to express concerns about what might happen to their families.¹⁰

The second teacher survey was conducted in February 2017 by *Education Week*, a national newspaper covering education policy. *Education Week* invited teachers who are registered readers on its website to participate in a short survey about teaching controversial issues during the period of February 2016 to February 2017. 830 K-12 teachers responded to this invitation. The majority of these respondents reported an increase in uncivil discourse in their classrooms and about half noted a rise in bullying incidents related to national politics.¹¹

Both *Teaching Tolerance* and *Education Week* acknowledge that their survey samples were not representative. They draw upon particular pools of K-12 teachers—those strongly committed to addressing racial prejudice or those deeply interested in education policy. Nonetheless, these surveys about the period leading up to the Trump presidency point toward possible impacts of the Trump administration on U.S. schools generally.

Taken together with findings from national opinion polls during 2017, these education surveys highlight two ways that the national political environment

under President Trump may shape student experiences in U.S. public high schools. First, national political discourse might increase stress, particularly amongst vulnerable groups of students. Students who follow the news may worry that proposed policies on topics such as immigration, travel restrictions for predominantly Muslim countries, or limitations on LGBTQ rights will threaten their well-being or the well-being of their families. If such concerns grow substantially, student learning might be affected. Second, political dynamics at the national level may shape how students interact with one another. That is, students may enact the contentious, combative, or uncivil behavior that they see or hear in national politics. Such behavior may then undermine some students' sense of well-being and it may impact student learning. The chart below shows a visual representation of these possible effects.



Our Study

We are interested in understanding whether the substance and tone of national political discourse during the first months of the Trump administration affected U.S. public high school students. We consider the following questions: 1) Have national political debates on topics such as immigration enforcement increased students' stress and heightened students' concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families? 2) Have combative political dynamics at the national level contributed to incivility between students in local schools and classrooms? 3) In what ways is student learning affected by heightened stress or incivility? 4) Do the impacts of the national political environment on student experiences differ depending on the demographics of the high schools they attend?

This report draws on a unique data set to answer these and other questions. Nicole Morris is one of 1535 teachers who participated in a survey conducted by UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access in May 2017 exploring the impact of the first months of the Trump administration on teaching and learning in U.S. public high schools. These social studies, English, and mathematics teachers work in 333 public high schools that are representative of public high schools in the United States generally in terms of geographic location and student demographics. One key distinction we highlight in the report is between teachers working in a) Predominantly White Schools (80-100% of students are White); b) Racially Mixed Schools (35-79.9% of students are White); and c) Predominantly Students of Color Schools (0-34.9% of students are White).¹² An extended discussion of the survey sample can be found in the Methodological Appendix.

The survey inquired about classroom discussions, student interactions and school climate, and student stress and well-being. In addition, the survey asked teachers to assess several strategies for improving school climate and students' learning experiences. The survey also included an optional open-ended question that invited teachers to discuss whether their "classroom and school climate has changed this past year as a result of changes in national politics." 848 teachers wrote responses to this optional open-ended question. These answers ranged in length from one sentence to a couple paragraphs.

At the close of the survey, teachers were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. In July and August 2017, we conducted 35 follow-up interviews with social studies and English teachers from geographically and demographically diverse schools. We identified potential teachers to interview based on their responses to both the close-ended and open-ended survey questions. We sought out teachers working at schools who reported changes in school climate and student learning as well as teachers who reported that their school leadership had moved proactively to foster a safe and inclusive environment. Nicole Morris was one of the teachers we interviewed.

All of the interviews were conducted remotely, via video-chat or phone, and generally lasted 30 to 40 minutes. The interviews focused on teachers' experiences from January to May 2017. Teachers were asked questions about school climate, student well-being, class discussions on social and political issues, and student engagement in social and political life. We also asked teachers to comment on how their school leaders had responded to the changing social and political context and whether they themselves had forged a new understanding of their role as teachers.

Plan of the report

The remainder of this report highlights the findings from our study. Section 2 examines whether threats by national leaders to enact a set of hot-button policies have affected student stress and personal well-being as well as student learning and development. Section 3 considers how a national political environment characterized by contentious rhetoric and coarse and disrespectful language impacts school climate and student interaction in class. We discuss growing polarization and incivility and the related challenge created by student use of unsubstantiated news sources. Section 4 investigates incidents of hate speech and bullying targeting vulnerable minority groups. We explore how the political climate is related to hostile learning environments as well as the effects of such environments on student learning. Section 5 lifts up the importance of school leadership. We share examples of how failed leadership has led to more divisive and violent school settings. We also present models of exemplary leaders who responded to the demands of the changing political climate. Section 6 shifts the focus toward student agency, examining whether and how students' civic engagement has grown in response to the new administration. Finally, Section 7 summarizes key findings from the study, highlights their significance for student well-being and learning, and closes with a few ideas on what can be done.

Section 2: Effects of National Politicals Rhetoric on Student Well-being

“Since November it’s been kind of a constant anxiety. And it’s quite frequently in the news, which, I think, leads to that.”

- David Levin, social studies teacher in Nevada

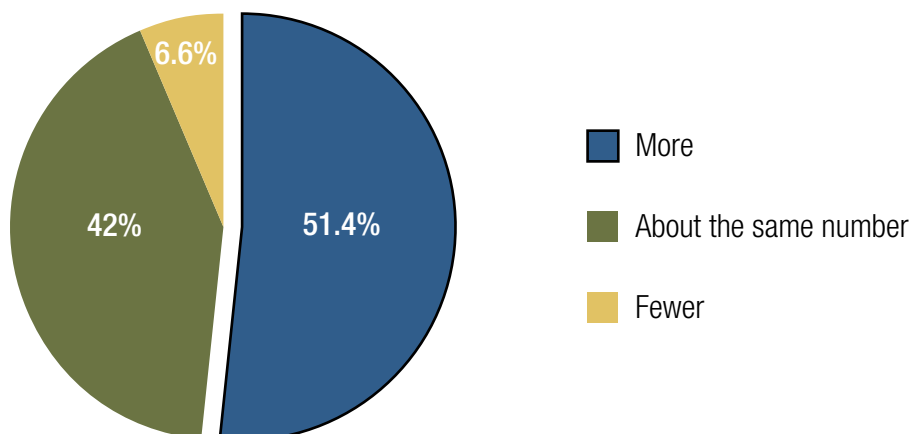
The first months of the Trump administration have been characterized by highly charged political rhetoric from the president and his critics on issues ranging from border walls, to travel restrictions, to health care, and more.¹³ Americans hold sharply divergent views on these issues; a minority express fervent support for the Trump administration’s policy initiatives on a border wall, healthcare, DACA and deportation generally, and others are deeply concerned with these measures.¹⁴ Contentious debates have prompted heightened public interest in national politics, as evidenced by dramatic increases in cable news viewership and newspaper readership.¹⁵ And this attention has permeated popular culture, including media targeting youth. Have U.S. public high school students been affected by this new political climate? Has national political rhetoric influenced student well-being and learning in high school classrooms across the United States? Have students in particular schools been more affected than others?

To answer these questions, our survey and follow-up interviews explored the relationship between national politics in the first months of the Trump administration and student welfare. We asked teachers about their students’ anxiety and stress. Teachers also reported on instances of students expressing concern about their well-being or the well-being of their families in relation to particular policy issues. In addition, we asked teachers whether concerns emerging from the political climate affected students’ learning. Teachers also addressed these issues in short written responses to the survey’s open-ended question and, at even greater length, in one-on-one interviews.

Student Stress

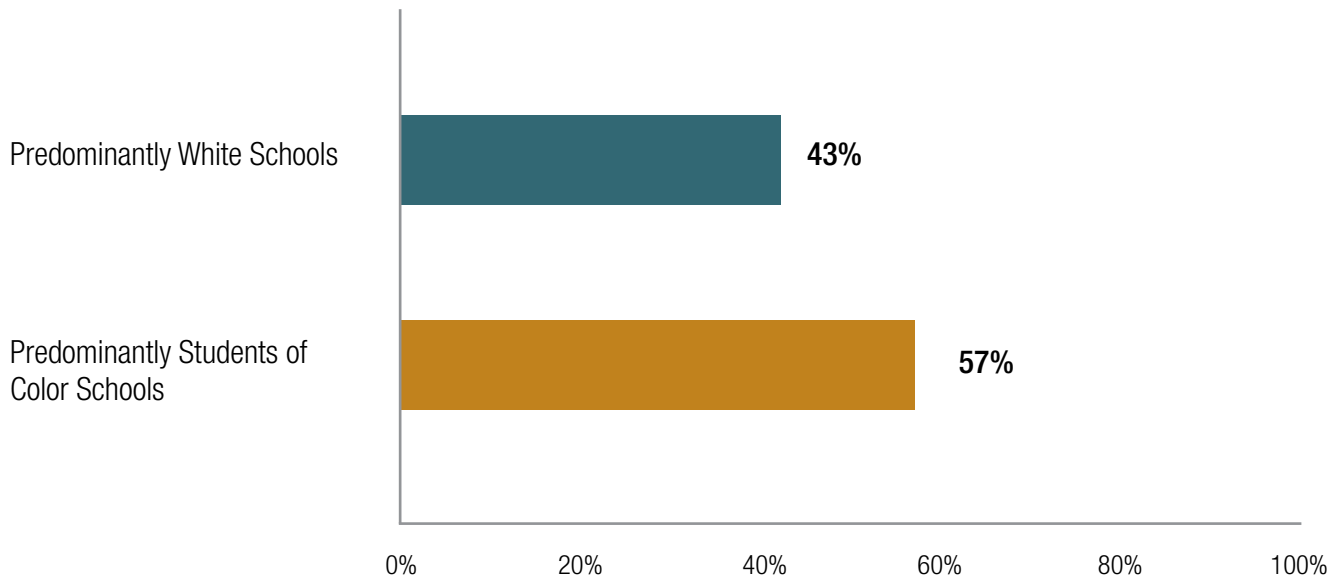
We asked teachers whether more, about the same number, or fewer students in a typical class¹⁵ experienced “high levels of stress and anxiety this year compared to last year?” 51.4% of teachers in our sample reported *more* students experiencing high stress in 2016-17 than in 2015-16. By contrast, only 6.6% of teachers reported *fewer* students experiencing high stress than the previous year. The remaining 42.0% of teachers said there had been no change from year to year.

Percentage of teachers reporting (more, same, or fewer) students are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety this year compared to previous year



Teachers in Predominantly Student of Color Schools (< 35% White) were more likely than teachers in Predominantly White Schools (> 80% White) to report an increase in students experiencing high levels of stress. 57.1% of teachers in Predominantly Students of Color (PSC) Schools noted this increase, compared with 43.0% of teachers in Predominantly White (PW) Schools.¹⁷ This difference is particularly noteworthy given the fact that, on average, PSC Schools were subject to high levels of student stress prior to the 2016-17 school year. PSC Schools enroll large numbers of students who are exposed to various forms of stress due to poverty¹⁸ and/or who may be subject to racial prejudice that has been shown to produce stress.¹⁹

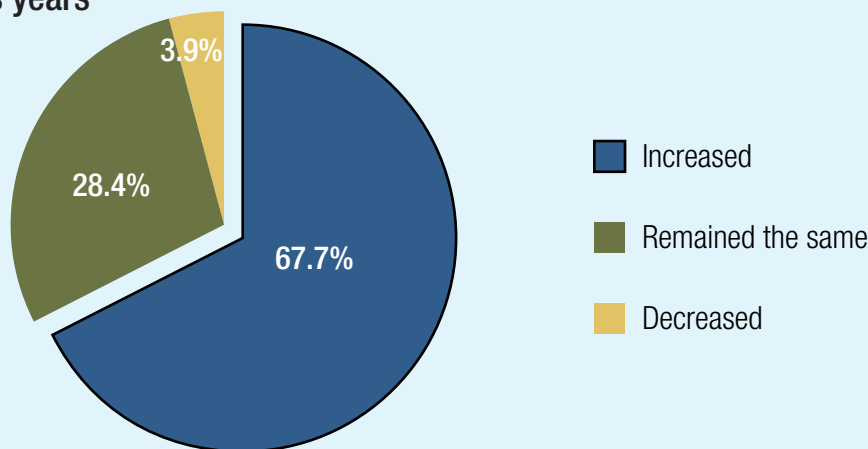
Percentage of teachers reporting “more” students experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety, by school type



Increased Teacher Stress

While this report focuses on the experiences of high school students, it is important to note that teachers also have felt heightened stress in the first months of the Trump administration. 67.7% of U.S. public high school teachers reported that the level of stress associated with their work increased during the 2016-17 school year. Only 3.9% said that work-related stress had decreased and 28.4% noted it had remained the same. Almost half (48.7%) of teachers who reported increased stress attributed this increase “primarily” to the changes in the national political environment.

Percentage of teachers reporting work-related stress in 2016-2017 ... compared to previous years



Student concerns with policies that threaten well-being

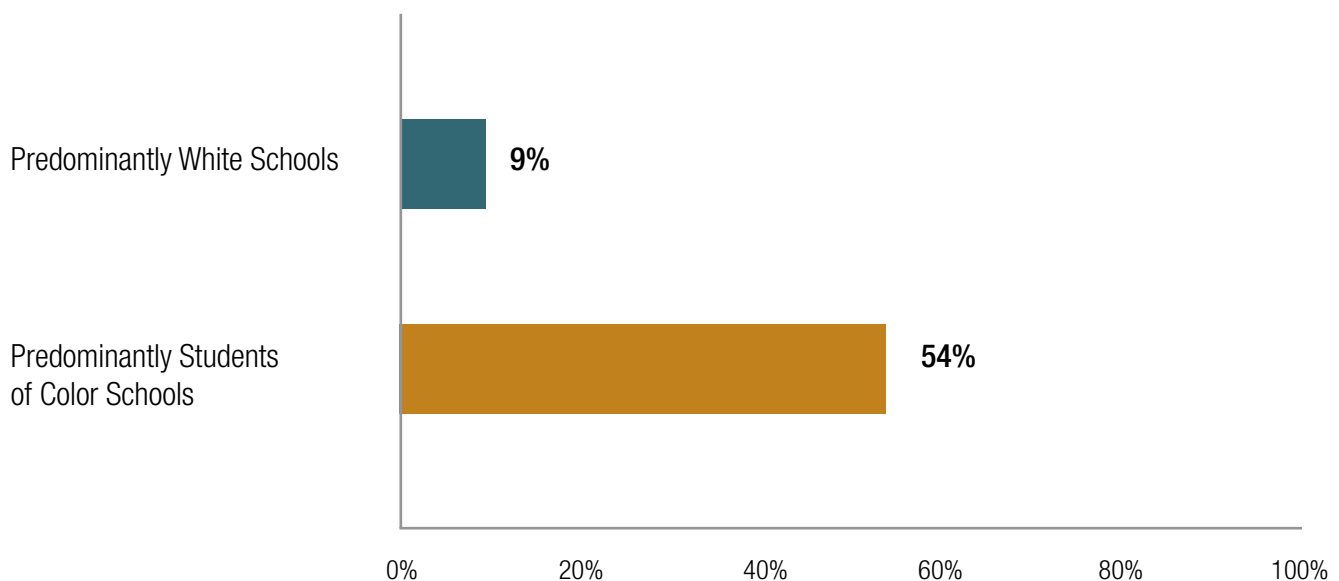
To examine whether national politics contributed to rising student stress, we asked teachers how many students in a typical class had expressed concern “about their well-being or the well-being of their family due to political rhetoric or changing political conditions” on five key issues. These issues touched on the rights of immigrants, Muslim Americans, and LGBTQ youth, as well as access to healthcare and a clean environment. 79% of all teachers said that their students expressed concerns for themselves or their families in response to at least one of the policy areas.

Percentage of Teachers Reporting Some Students Have Expressed Concern About ...	
Deportation of undocumented immigrants	58%
President's executive order restricting travel from 6 primarily Muslim countries	36%
Limiting rights of LGBTQ youth	38%
Reform and/or Repeal of the Affordable Care Act (or “Obamacare”)	44%
Deregulation of environmental protections	45%

The impact of national policy rhetoric and action on immigration

The policy issue that prompted most student concern was the Trump administration's discussion of immigration enforcement measures. More than half of all teachers reported that some of their students had expressed concerns about proposals for deporting undocumented immigrants. These sentiments were most prevalent in PSC Schools. Teachers in these schools often had multiple students in each classroom worrying about deportation proposals. Teachers in PSC Schools were almost six times more likely (53.8% to 9.1%) than teachers in PW Schools to report that at least 10% of their students had expressed these concerns.

Percentage of teachers reporting at least 1 out of 10 students expressed concern about the deportation of undocumented immigrants



In written responses to our survey and in one-on-one interviews, teachers described how the Trump administration's policy and rhetoric on immigration produced apprehension, uncertainty, and distress. Jeff Seuss, a social studies teacher and coach in Nebraska, reported that some of his student-athletes have begun to live their lives in "survival mode" because "at any time they could be possibly picked up by the police and deported to a country that they didn't even grow up in." In New Jersey, many of Lisa Camden's students from immigrant families similarly experienced "far greater levels of stress." She noted that "in class, students have cried about how they are worried about the outcome of their family members." Several teachers reported that the greatest fear for students was the prospect that their parents would be deported, leaving them all alone. Nicole Morris, who we introduced in Section 1, overheard her students grappling with what would happen should their undocumented parents face deportation. "Would I stay, because I was born here? But how would I survive if my dad got taken back to Mexico?"

Teachers recounted different ways that distress manifested itself in their classrooms. In Nevada, Maribel Hernandez's students "have voiced deep fears concerning the deportation of loved ones" and generally communicated "a pervasive feeling of hopelessness and frustration." Clarissa Correy from Georgia saw visible signs of stress in a student who had confided his concern about what would happen to his undocumented mother. "You could see on his face that something made him very uncomfortable." Connecticut English teacher Amy Clark recalled the intense reaction of fear that came every time one of her students received his mother's text, as he worried that this would be news that his father had been detained. In Ohio, Aaron Burger recounted the story of an undocumented student—a "bright and engaged kid"—whose mother had heard rumors about Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials raiding a workplace much like her own. Burger's student "broke down and cried and wondered if she was next. If her family was next."

"Students have voiced deep fears concerning the deportation of loved ones. I have seen a pervasive feeling of hopelessness and frustration."

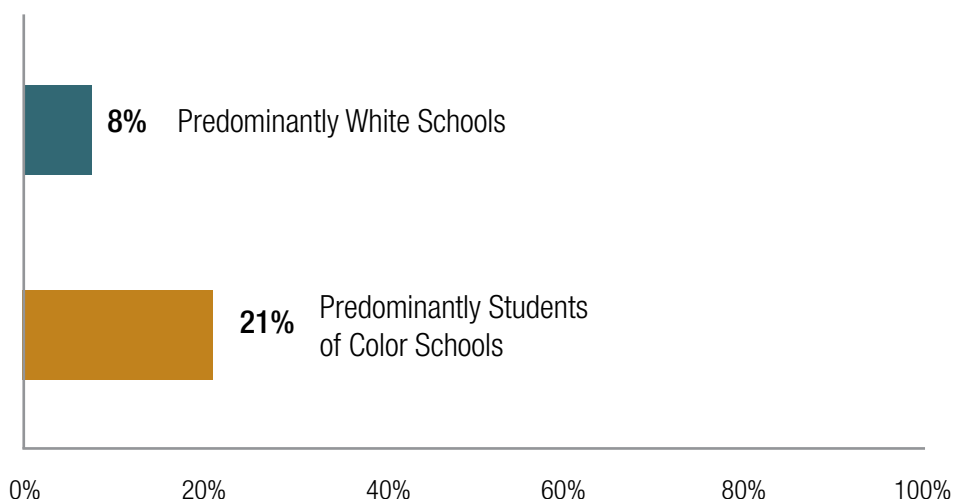
- Maribel Hernandez, English teacher in Nevada

Aaron Burger's story echoes a theme shared by many teachers: limited access to trustworthy information and unpredictable enforcement action often combined to heighten a sense of student insecurity. Teachers reported it was difficult to assess the nature of the threat their students faced. For example, Jennifer Ford, an English teacher in Georgia, first perceived "paranoia in our community about the raids." But then she realized that "some of that paranoia was not paranoia; it was just rational fears that turned out to be true when there were raids." She characterized the concern of her students that their parents would "get arrested while going to the grocery store" as "just a real fear." Similarly, Jordan Smith in North Carolina talked about the way that local news reports "of ICE agents intercepting undocumented parents en route to school . . . caused a particularly notable spike in anxiety."

The impact of the "Travel Ban"

More than a third of all teachers (36%) reported that some of their students expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to the "President's executive order restricting travel from 6 primarily Muslim countries." These concerns were most commonly expressed in PSC Schools and teachers in these schools were more likely to report that multiple students had expressed these concerns. Teachers in PSC Schools were almost three times more likely (20.5% to 7.7%) than teachers in PW Schools to report that at least 10% of their students shared worries about the travel ban.

Percentage of teachers reporting at least 1 out of 10 students expressed concern about the President's "Travel Ban"



Teachers who discussed the impact of the travel ban presented stories of student distress. “I had a student crying in my classroom,” reported Texas teacher Justin Grayson, because after the travel ban he “didn’t know if [his] mother would be able to come back to the U.S.” Michael Bridge from New York described student worries about the travel ban as “permeating their lives” at school and at home. In Delaware, one of Jake Norris’ highest performing students—Amina—underwent a dramatic change following the announcement of the travel ban. Whereas Amina previously had a “good sense of humor” and was “very dedicated to her studies,” she became deeply concerned that “she was never going to see some people again.” Amina also generally felt more vulnerable: “like if her father did his taxes wrong, then they were all going to get forcibly removed from their home.” Norris described how Amina “visibly changed—her color had changed, her demeanor, her body language.”

“I had a student crying in my classroom after the travel ban because he didn’t know if his mother would be able to come back to the U.S.”

- Justin Grayson, English teacher in Texas

Concerns about LGBTQ rights

More than a third of teachers (38%) reported that students expressed concerns about threats to the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and queer (LGBTQ) people. Teachers in PSC Schools and PW Schools were equally likely to have students communicate that they were worried about their well-being or the well-being of family members due to these concerns. Whereas immigrant youth and Muslim youth often expressed concern about specific policies or potential enforcement actions, LGBTQ youth and their allies responded to a more general sense of threat that they sensed from national political rhetoric. Astrid Natividad, an English teacher in New York reported: “I have gay students who were scared that they were going to lose the rights that they just celebrated achieving.” Across the country in Oregon, Jane Gorman noted that the group of students who were “most visibly upset, and afraid, and scared” following the election were her LGBTQ students or kids who identified closely with the community because of friends and family.” Stacy Marx, an English teacher working in what she describes as a very conservative Wyoming community recounted a similar story. One of her students cried in class the day after the election and “the biggest reason she felt so sad was that she was talking about all of her friends that are like transgender, or bisexual, or whatever, and she just felt like the hateful talk towards them would increase, so it hit her that way.”

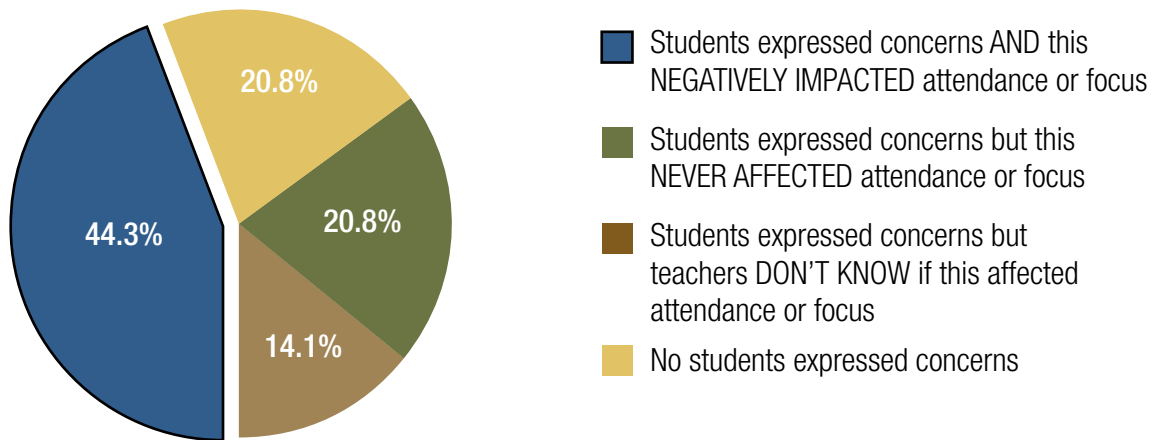
Concerns about other issues

More than 40% of teachers reported that students had expressed concerns related to the potential repeal of the Affordable Care Act or deregulation of environmental protections. Teachers in PSC Schools and PW Schools responded to these questions in similar ways. While a substantial proportion of teachers reported that some students were worried about these issues, there is reason to believe that concerns with healthcare and the environment did not elicit the same level of student stress as issues related to immigrant, Muslim, and LGBTQ rights. Very few teachers commented on healthcare or the environment in our open-ended survey question (which invited teachers to write about whether and how their classroom or school had changed as a result of changes in national politics.) Whereas 1 in 10 of the 848 teachers who responded to this voluntary question wrote about effects on immigrant students, and 1 in 40 wrote about Muslim students or LGBTQ youth, less than 1 in 200 wrote about healthcare and less than 1 in 400 wrote about the environment. Teachers who mentioned healthcare or the environment did so in the context of a list of issues that elicited student concern. For example, Tiffany Snow from Pennsylvania wrote: “Many students were very stressed and worried after the election. They vocalized their worries over family members’ immigration status and healthcare, as well as LGBT rights.” Similarly, Lauren Mack from Maryland noted: “Students are generally stressed about rights being taken away, and are also concerned about the damage that could be done to the country and the environment if new policies under the current administration are put into place.”

The impact of national policy rhetoric on student learning and development

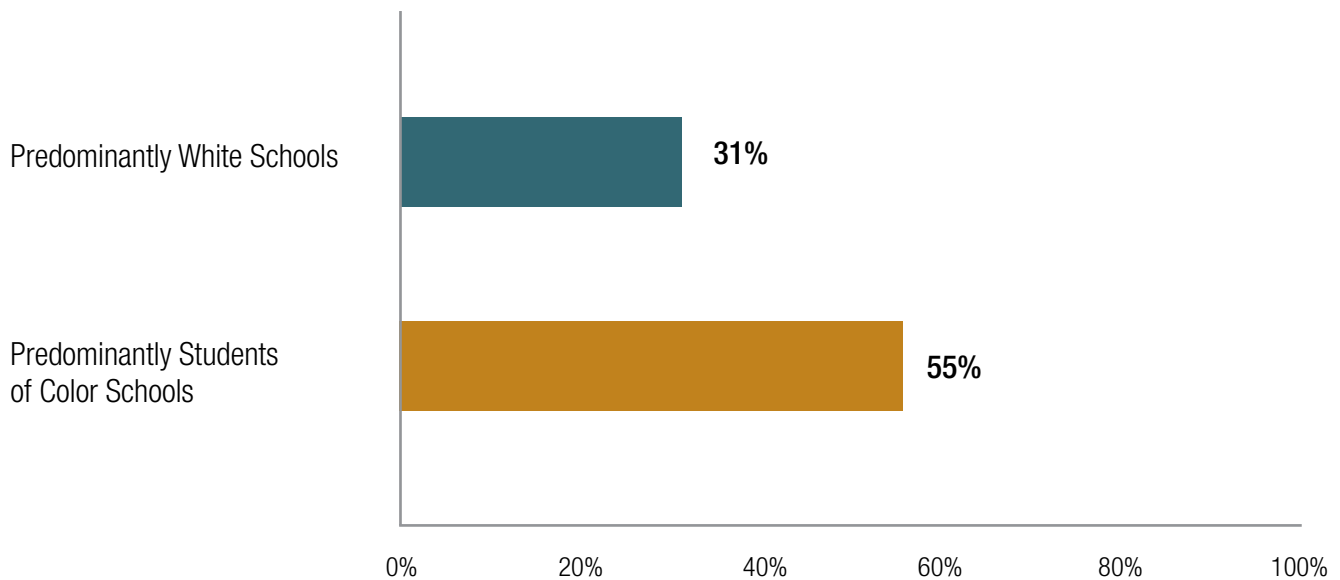
Young people should not have to experience heightened stress and anxiety. These effects on student welfare are important in and of themselves. Not surprisingly, many teachers noted that such socio-emotional effects influence student learning. We asked teachers whether “the effects from any of these topics made it difficult for students to focus in class or caused students to miss class altogether?” 44.3% of all teachers reported that students expressed concerns related to at least one policy issue *and* that this negatively impacted students’ ability to focus or their attendance. Another 14.1% of teachers reported that, even though their students had expressed concerns about one or more policy issues, they did not know whether this affected student learning.

Relation of hot-button policy issues to student attendance and focus on lessons



These negative effects on learning time are concentrated in PSC Schools. 55.1% of teachers in PSC Schools report that policy rhetoric negatively affected learning time, compared with 30.6% of teachers in PW Schools.

Percentage of teachers reporting students' attendance or focus on lessons was negatively impacted by hot-button policy issues



Many teachers addressed the ways that policy rhetoric related to immigrant, Muslim, and LGBTQ rights impacted student learning. Jordan Smith in North Carolina recognized a pattern amongst the few students he knew to be undocumented or to have undocumented relatives. "I definitely noticed that from the fall semester to the spring semester, there was an increase in absences, students were less focused." Smith related a story of one student whose stepfather was detained by ICE agents. "She missed multiple days of school to attend these proceedings. When she was in class, she had her homework completed less frequently than previously. Several teachers noted that, following the election, their undocumented students worried that the school was no longer a safe place. Erin Parker, an English teacher in Arizona reported that some of her "students fear coming to school because they may be deported. Also, they fear immigration will be waiting for them at school." At Danielle Reno's school in Missouri, attendance fell off for undocumented students in the

weeks after the election, until school officials assured students they were safe on campus. Yet as late as May 2017, Leah Lee in Washington still found that many of her undocumented students “no longer attend school for fear of deportation or some form of repercussion.”

Teachers also described the ways that the national policy environment shaped student behavior in class. Jasmin Fisher in Oregon recognized that distinct groups of students responded very differently to perceived policy threats. Whereas young women from middle class families became increasingly vocal on issues of gender equality, her undocumented immigrant students withdrew from class discussions. “My kids who were, maybe, a bit more privileged, were a bit safer getting a bit more strident But then, there was the other section, where they’re like, ‘Wow, this could be really dangerous,’ [and they] stepped back a bit.” In Delaware, English teacher Jack Boxer reported that, following President Trump’s Executive Order on travel, his “Muslim students seem quieter and cautious.” David Boudin’s school in New Hampshire enrolls a number of Muslim students from various African nations. These students who had been “active class participants at the end of the Obama administration, were less so in the spring semester.” He went on to describe changes in his Muslim students’ body language and the way they sat at their desks. “I’m a veteran teacher,” he concluded, and “you learn to notice things like that.”

A number of teachers reported that the policy environment had profoundly affected their students’ educational and career goals. Daniel Coine teaches several students in Maryland who came to the U.S. as undocumented unaccompanied minors. These students have been “working extremely hard both at school and at jobs” to secure a path to the middle class. Coine says, “It is heartbreaking to see how the fear of deportation has pushed too many of these young people to decide to drop out of school or not pursue higher education after graduating.” Even students that are U.S. citizens have had their future plans affected. Lisa Camden from New Jersey recounted that one of her students “had to postpone her plan to join the navy because her parents had made her legal guardian of her siblings, in the event that her parents were deported.” In Nevada, David Levin shared a story of another student worried that her military future has been affected by changing national politics. “She’s gay, and she comes from a long line of military service in her family. And she wants to enlist, but she’s afraid of what possible policy decisions could come down between now and, well, next year. . . . She’s definitely worried about the climate in the military towards the gay community changing. Or policies that would hurt the gay community, hurting her ability to serve.”

Section 3: Effects of National Politics on Student Polarization, Incivility, and Use of Unreliable Sources

“Students have been more likely to make offensive comments that I think in the past they may have thought, but would not say out loud.”

- Bridgette Jonas, math teacher in Arkansas

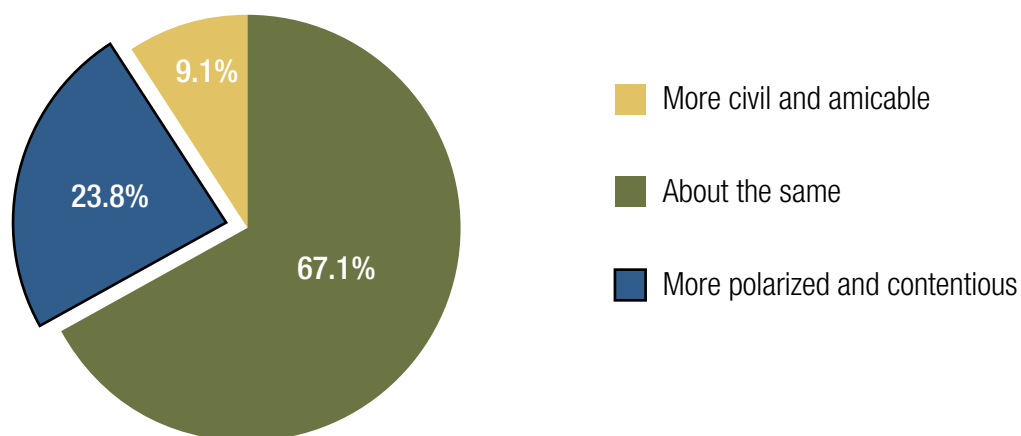
This section examines whether and to what extent the contentious political climate that has characterized the early months of the Trump administration also has impacted the social climate of schools and classrooms. Has heightened polarization and growing incivility in the broader political environment prompted students to act more combatively or disrespectfully toward their classmates? Have particular groups of students found themselves the targets of such actions? Are these impacts concentrated in particular sorts of schools?

The survey asked teachers about the quality of relationships across different student groups, the civility of classroom discussions, and the reliability of sources students used in the course of these discussions. Teachers in many schools reported growing division and contentiousness, as well as a broader coarsening of classroom dialogue. These changes were most notable in Predominantly White (PW) schools. This issue is clearly salient for many teachers across the country, as evidenced by the fact that 185 teachers chose to write about polarization in our open-ended question, many sharing a great deal of distress.

Campus climate

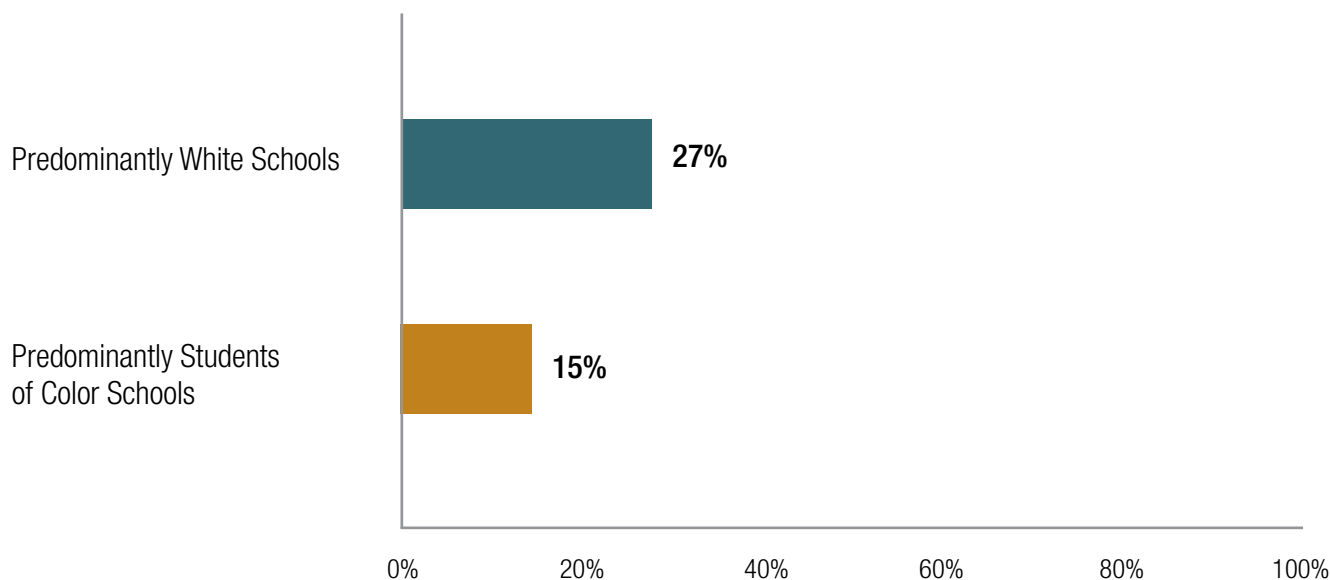
We asked teachers to characterize the relationships among student groups on campus in comparison to previous years. 23.8% of teachers reported that relationships had become more polarized and contentious, compared with 9.1% who said such relationships had become more civil and amicable. The remaining 67.1% of teachers responded that relationships remained about the same as previous years.

Relationships among student groups are ... compared to previous years



Teachers in PW Schools were far more likely than teachers in other schools to report heightened polarization. 26.9% of teachers in PW Schools noted increased polarization, compared with only 14.6% of teachers in PSC Schools.

Teachers reporting relationships among student groups more polarized and contentious



In open responses and interviews, a few teachers described proactive efforts of school leadership to foster an inclusive and respectful school environment (a theme we explore further in Section 5). For example, John Alberts, an English teacher in Illinois, wrote:

Overall, I would say that the school I work at does a very good job trying to be inclusive. There are many extracurricular organizations that support diversity, our administration is very open about matters that were brought up in this survey, and the overall climate seems to be pretty healthy (although I always think that there is room for improvement).

But a larger body of teachers acknowledged that high levels of polarization had characterized their schools for a long time. Bruce Williams in North Carolina spoke of a “simmering hostility” whereby students constantly worried that “the other side, whichever side that is, is looking to mess up my side.” Mr. Williams concluded that this sort of incivility has “been coming for 10, 15 years” and may result from students’ growing use of social media.

Roughly 1 in 4 teachers reported increased polarization at their schools. These teachers often pointed to the national political environment as the source of the change. For example, Shaun Cheney in North Carolina explained the polarization in his school by saying: “In my seventeen years I have never seen anger this blatant and raw over a political candidate or issue.” Such emotions played out in different ways depending upon the prevailing politics in the surrounding community. Delaware social studies teacher Susan Boyer teaches in a tightly divided political community--the mock presidential election at her school resulted in a perfect tie between Trump and Clinton. Boyer recounted that the day after the election students chanted angrily at each other in the hallways. “Sometimes it got to the point where it was not a fight but it had the makings of being that, and then teachers would break it up.”

“In my seventeen years I have never seen anger this blatant and raw over a political candidate or issue.”

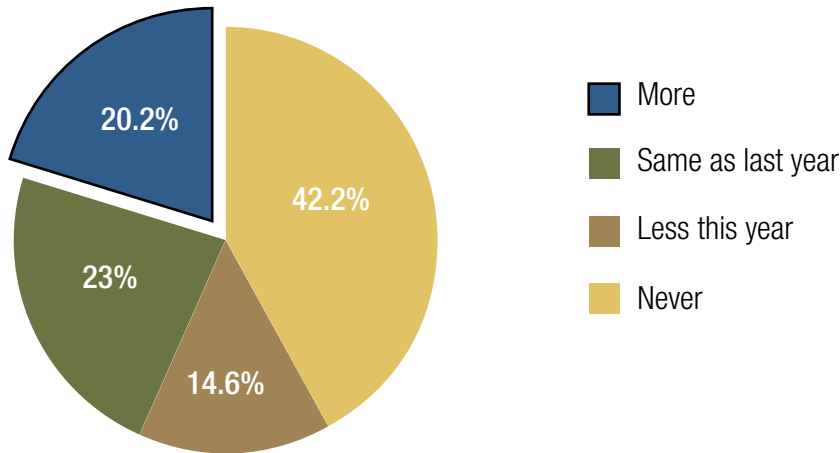
- Shaun Cheney, social studies teacher in North Carolina

In describing similar incidents, other teachers noted that confrontations between students reflected something deeper than differences over policy positions or candidate qualifications. “There’s a sense that the stakes are higher,” argued Aaron Burger in Ohio. “When a kid says, ‘I support Trump,’” other students take that to mean “you don’t have respect for me as a human being.” At Astrid Natividad’s school in New York, students who came to school wearing Trump hats or shirts were challenged by others who asked: “How could you support him? He wants to deport my parents. How can you support him? He wants to take away my right to get married.”

Campus climate

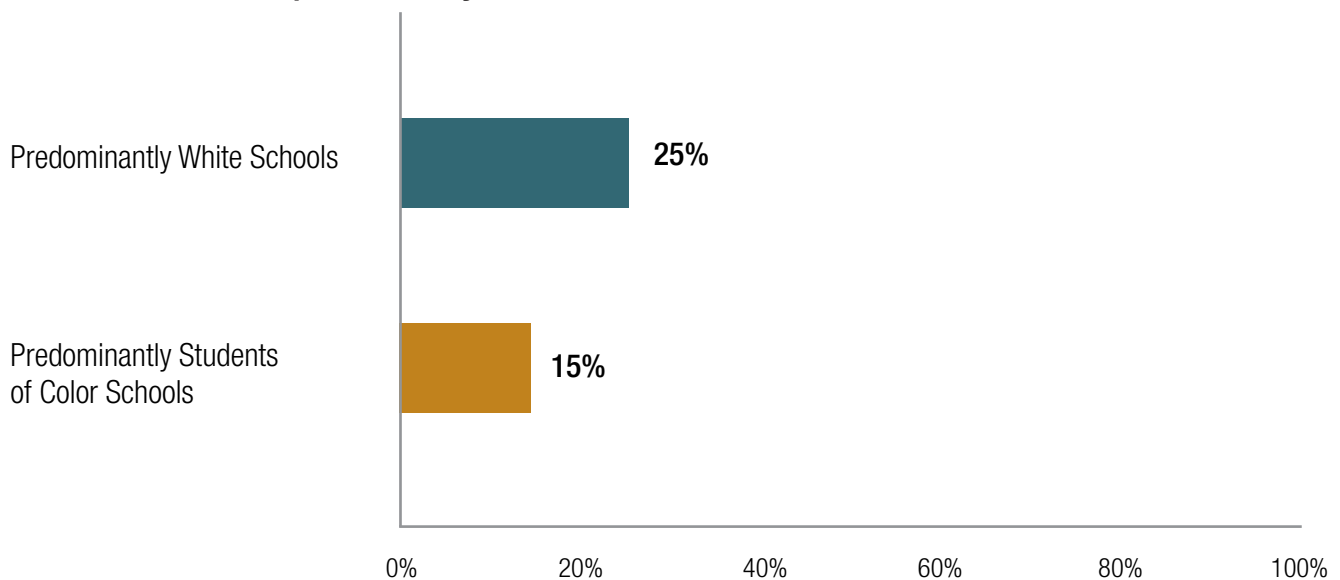
We asked English and social studies teachers about whether students became contentious and disrespectful during class discussions. 20.1% of teachers responded that not only had such incidents happened, but that they had become more common this year.

Compared to last year, how often did students become contentious and disrespectful during class discussions?



Teachers in PW Schools were far more likely (25.1% to 15.1%) than teachers in PSC Schools to report that class discussions had become more contentious this year.

Percentage of English and Social Studies teachers reporting class discussions became more contentious and disrespectful this year



A number of teachers spoke about the ways that national political rhetoric shaped student interaction during class discussions. Colorado English teacher Kimberly Bran wrote that “the tone of the election spilled into the classroom and many students felt free to make unkind statements to those who did not agree with them.” Jimmy Lloyd in Utah spoke eloquently about the tendency for students to approach classroom discussions as an opportunity to “mock or offend.” He went on to explain:

“The tone of the election spilled into the classroom and many students felt free to make unkind statements to those who did not agree with them.”

- Kimberly Bran, English teacher in Colorado

I believe the unhealthy discourse that surrounded the previous election and that continues into the current presidential office has empowered students to speak recklessly and even disrespectfully because it is now seen as normal. Our current politicians, on both sides of the aisle, would rather turn to national television and openly criticize than they would work behind the scenes to improve upon the situation. Students feed off of this.

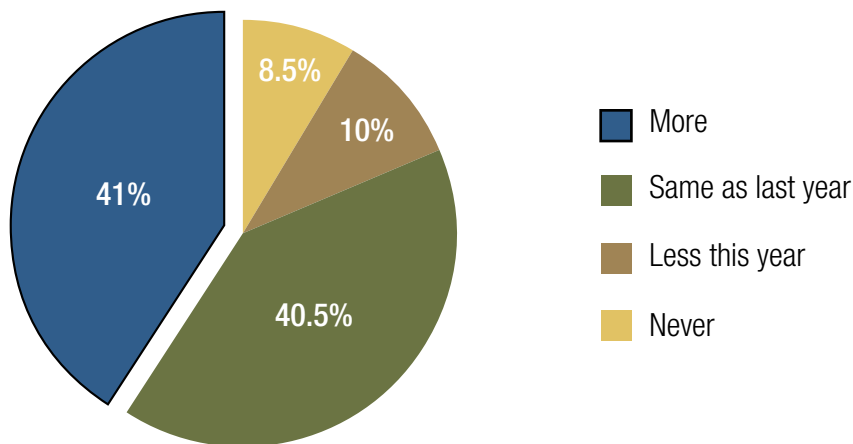
There are echoes of Lloyd’s class in Marie Shrub’s West Virginia students who have interpreted politicians saying “it’s not important to be ‘politically correct,’” as an invitation to “say anything about anyone” or in Cory Floyd’s students in Kentucky who “are now not afraid of offending.” Floyd believes that hearing certain ideas in the last election, prompted his conservative students to undergo a “unique transition” from “not saying anything because they were afraid their opinion would hurt someone’s feelings to now expressing what they truly believe.”

Teachers shared concerns with the behavior of both conservative and liberal students. While some teachers were uneasy about the lack of empathy exhibited by conservative students, others worried that liberal students coerced their classmates through their “hyper-sensitivity,”—what Texas teacher Bryan Taylor characterized as a “hair-trigger response to anything that seems even remotely controversial.” Most often, teachers worried that liberal or conservative students disrespected classmates with different political views, creating an alienating environment.

Civility undercut by students using unsubstantiated sources

An issue that had far-ranging effects on classroom discussion was the tendency for students to draw upon unsubstantiated news sources to make specious and often combative claims. “It has been a terrible year for helping kids understand the structure of government,” wrote Jillian Fera in Missouri. “They come in ready to fight, full of bad information from Twitter and Facebook.” 41.0% of teachers reported that students were more likely than in previous years to introduce unfounded claims from unreliable sources (and another 40.5% said that the problem had remained unchanged since last year.) There was no statistically significant difference in the incidence of this problem across PW and PSC schools.

Compared to last year, how often did students introduce unfounded claims from unreliable media sources?



Political battles challenging the veracity of news sources prompted Arkansas English teacher Roger Hartwig to write: “This is the first year that I have taught Orwell’s *1984* and been able to use the daily news as an example.” Many teachers, like Mary Collins in Massachusetts, reported that the prevalence of “fake news” led their students to “express trust in conspiracy theories of apocryphal origins.” As students became more likely, in the words of Texas teacher Ray Rivers, to “accept false and misleading ‘news’ stories as fact and refute or ignore verifiable news stories that are not in line with their existing political ideology,” they entered discussions with “more extreme and less tolerant viewpoints.” Will Carmel, a veteran teacher in Virginia, told us that while over the years he has led “lots of heated political debates . . . this time I think it was pushed a little too far” in part because “even basic facts were contested.”

“This is the first year that I have taught Orwell’s *1984* and been able to use the daily news as an example.”

- Roger Hartwig, English teacher in Arkansas

Effects of incivility on teaching and learning

A number of teachers felt ill-prepared or inadequately equipped to respond to the unique classroom dynamics that grew out of the contentious political environment. Even teachers who had graduated from teacher education programs that emphasized strategies for teaching in diverse settings, struggled with how to foster learning amidst polarization and incivility. As Ryan Warren, a social studies teacher in California, noted, meeting the instructional demands of this political moment is a very challenging task.

It’s really hard to balance trying to keep a classroom that’s safe for all perspectives and that’s welcoming of all perspectives with trying to push back against some of the more extreme perspectives that we’re hearing now, that are anti-community and that are interfering with our community. It’s difficult to balance those things.

Many teachers responded to heightened tension in their classrooms by avoiding uncomfortable topics. Emily Hall in Delaware reported that she has been “less likely to bring up politics . . . [because] both sides are so emotionally charged . . . that they forget to respect each other’s thoughts.” She went on to add that it has been very hard to maintain civil exchange, and concluded: “So I avoid.” For some teachers, avoidance entailed eliminating all engagement with current events. Joshua Cooper in Wisconsin tried to steer clear of any issues that might provoke “potential conflict.”

Other teachers downplayed social and political issues, sometimes sticking to non-controversial elements of their topic. For example, in his economics class, Richard Dorn emphasized “the mathematics and graphing behind the economic theory” and ignored real-world topics like the relationship between immigration policy and the prevailing wage for unskilled labor. This strategy allowed him to “head off . . . contentious issues,” but it meant that students didn’t develop a deep understanding of the underlying economic concepts according to Dorn. Another approach was to minimize student interaction. Susan Boyer explained that, in past years, a major culminating assessment for an AP course was a class debate in which students would draw upon research to assess whether race had remained a constant category or had changed over time in U.S. history. This year she had them write an essay about the same topic. “They were still covering the same content,” she explained, though not with the same level of interest or depth of engagement as in the past. “But,” she concluded, now “I can control it more.”

Not only did teachers narrow their curriculum and pedagogy to avoid conflict, but students often silenced themselves as well. Ben Matthews, a social studies teacher in Alaska, explained that “rigidity” and “intolerance” on the part of some students led others to “withdraw from discussion.” Such actions undercut the potential power of his lessons and diminished student learning. “Many of my students,” he wrote, “wanted to discuss issues to better understand the background and to gain better understanding of their own viewpoints.” But, Matthews concluded, they “were robbed of the opportunity.”

Section 4: Schools as Hostile Environments for Vulnerable Groups

“I had students stand up in the middle of class and directly address their peers with racial slurs. This is not something I have seen before.”

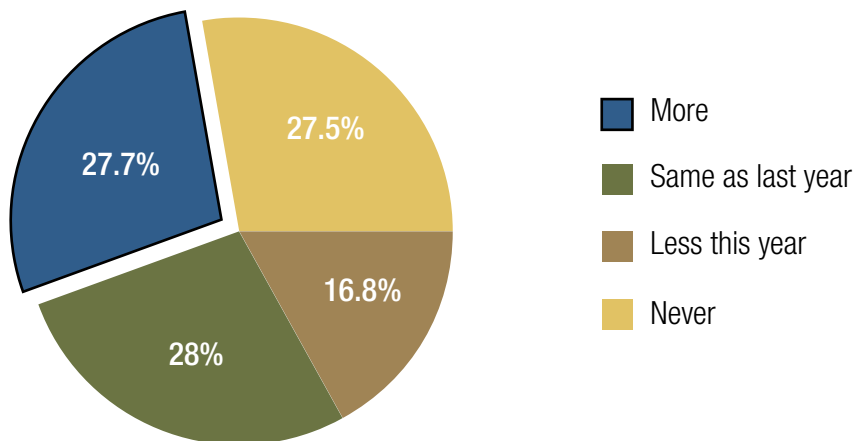
- Aaron Burger, social studies teacher in Ohio

Thus far we have highlighted evidence that the climate in many U.S. public high schools has become more contentious and less civil and tolerant. If this were all that we had heard from teachers, there would be substantial cause for concern. But, many teachers reported that, in addition to political polarization, they witnessed heightened levels of hostility directed toward immigrants, racial and religious minorities, LGBTQ youth, and young women. Of the 186 teachers who wrote about incivility and polarization in the survey's open-ended question, more than 1/3 addressed attacks on these different categories of students. Hate speech and acts of intimidation are not new in U.S. public schools. Yet, it is noteworthy that numerous teachers said that the level of animus they witnessed was “unprecedented” in their careers.

Use of derogatory terms

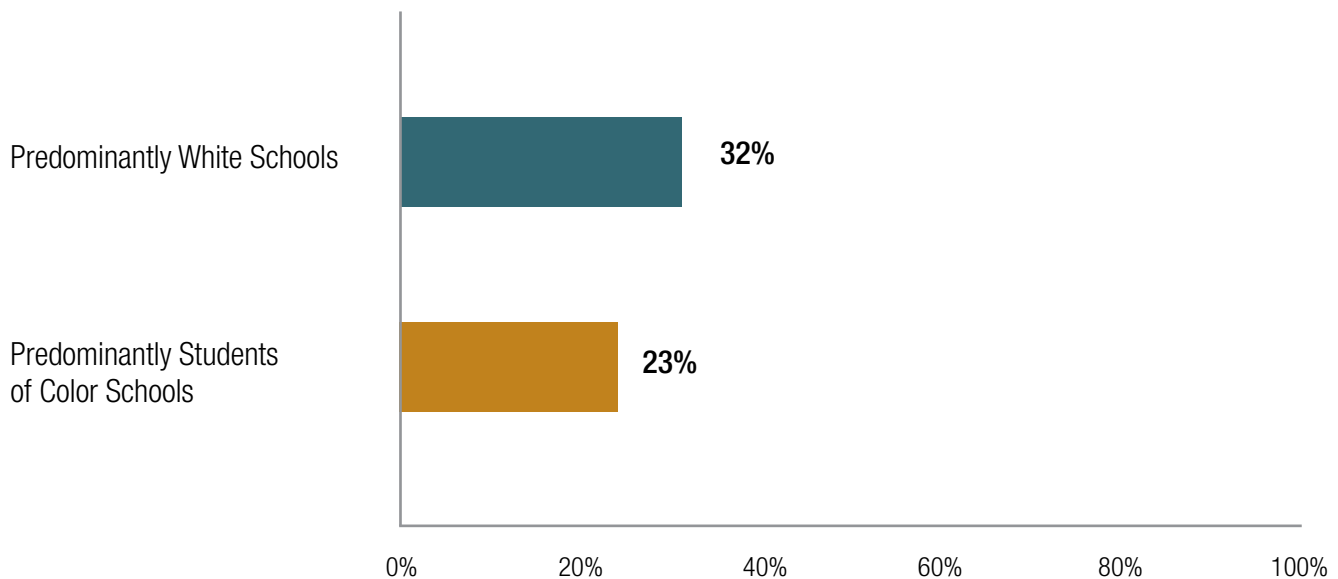
We asked English and social studies teachers how often students made derogatory remarks about other groups during class discussions. 27.7% reported that such incidents had increased this year.

English and Social Studies teachers reporting how often students made derogatory remarks about other groups compared to previous years



Teachers in PW Schools were far more likely than teachers in PSC Schools to report this increase.

English and Social Studies teachers reporting more students making derogatory remarks about other groups compared to previous



Numerous teachers spoke of ways that dynamics in the broader political environment unleashed prejudicial, racist, and xenophobic sensibilities. Patrick Sawyer in Texas wrote that on his campus there was a feeling of “justification, of outwardly being more open with bigotry, etc. because of the election results.” In Virginia, some of Will Carmel’s White students explained to administrators that they had a right to taunt “Hispanic students with ‘build the wall’” because “this isn’t any different” than what the president has done. Pat Weber, an English teacher in Indiana explained: “Individuals who do harbor perspectives and racism and bigotry now feel empowered to offer their views more naturally in class discussions, which has led to tension, and even conflict in the classroom.”

“Individuals who do harbor perspectives and racism and bigotry now feel empowered to offer their views more naturally in class discussions.”

- Pat Weber, English teacher in Indiana

Stephanie Kuntz described a trajectory of change that unfolded in her Maryland classroom following the election.

I had students coming to me, upset, crying, talking about being targeted because their brown skin, Muslim faith, and sexual orientation. There was a distinctive emboldening of nasty (to borrow the phrase) people who are pushing back against the ‘politically correct’ climate through use of incendiary language and slurs.

Kuntz’ use of “embolden” was not idiosyncratic. Teachers from eight separate states invoked the same verb. Albert Rose, a social studies teacher in Arizona, wrote that some of his students have been “emboldened to speak out more in a derogatory way about race.” Richard Dorn in Tennessee acknowledged that racial bullying has long been an issue at his school but that more recently “a momentum has gathered among the perpetrators . . . who feel pretty emboldened to lash out.”

Jude Canon, who teaches in what he described as a “very white community” in North Carolina, recounted a searing incident of racial intimidation that occurred in his U.S. History class. In the course of a lesson on Columbus enslaving and mistreating the native people in Hispaniola, one of his students said: “Well, that’s what needed to happen. They were just dumb people anyways like they are today. That was the purpose, that’s why we need a wall.” Multiple student agreed, leading to what Canon characterized as a “huge rile in the classroom.” After class, two Latina students whose families are

migrant workers came up to Canon and said: “That’s not something we want to talk about. . . . He doesn’t need to be saying stuff like that in class. We are worried for our wellbeing. We’re worried about things not going good for us.”

Teachers in other states shared stories with similar themes from the incident in Canon’s class: students overtly embraced the logic of White supremacy, deployed rhetoric or symbols made popular through national politics, and confronted classmates in threatening ways. Ingrid Dane, an English teacher in Washington reported that some of her students have:

Told African Americans in my class that they wish they could go back to the “good old days,” referring to slavery times. And still others have told Hispanic students how excited they are about the wall. “Make America Great Again” has become a popular slogan to say when demeaning someone, telling someone to leave the country, and telling female classmates they should learn to cook and not go to college.

In Arkansas, Tracy Neely has overheard students in the hallway saying: “National Geographic will have to print a retraction because it is scientifically proven that Whites are the superior race.” Some students have incorporated these ideas into writing and class discussions. Susan Boyer, in Delaware, reported that one of her who had made numerous discomfoting comments in class, “defend[ed] the institution of slavery as a just cause.” What was particularly striking to Boyer was that this student presented a ‘White supremacy argument’ rather than a more typical case for states’ rights. While bigotry certainly is not new in American public schools, the substance and tenor of these incidents struck many teachers as a dramatic departure from the norm. Boyer told us: “I have never heard anything like this before.”

Many teachers talked about ways that some White students used symbols to communicate their views and lay claim to school space. Teachers in seven different states in the North, Midwest, and West reported that a growing number of their students this past year began to display Confederate Flags or symbols associated with it. No teachers from the South made this claim. Jessica Donovan, a math teacher from Indiana, wrote:

We have witnessed a significant uptick in Confederate Flag related clothing and items in the building among elements of a White Blue-Collar presence in the building that supports those views. [It] is now very visible in the hallways, parking lots and culture of the building. This has created obvious tension with them and the African American and Latino members of the school community.

While in some schools students expressed racist beliefs openly across classrooms and hallways, in other settings students turned to the relative anonymity of digital media. In one California school, White students shared online photos of African American classmates and teachers drawn with nooses around their necks. In Washington, the digital quiz game “Kahoot!” (which is often used to help students review before tests) provided a vehicle for issuing a violent racial threat. Students frequently make up names as they log into the game. One day, the name that “flashed on the board” was “Kill the [N-word].” Social studies teacher Hannah Porter concluded: “Nothing like that has ever happened at our school. I mean, it was kind of mind blowing.”

Several teachers also expressed concern and surprise at the heightened levels of religious intolerance in their schools. Jeff Seuss in Nebraska was “really kind of shocked” when one of his Muslim students who wears a hijab told the class that a classmate had walked up to her and asked, “Why are you dressed like a terrorist?” At Debb Kroppe’s school in California, students have scrawled swastikas on desks. One day when she was absent, someone re-arranged the keyboards on a school laptop to read, “F—k Jews.” Other students were seen saluting heil Hitler in the hallways. None of this anti-Semitism had been seen on campus before the 2016-17 school year.

Teachers often noted that homophobic and misogynistic bullying accompanied other forms of hostility on campus. In addition to noting bullying of LGBTQ students generally, a few teachers highlighted verbal attacks on transgender or transitioning students. In several schools, young men challenged the ideal of gender equity. At Jillian Fera’s school in Missouri, a “group of boys attacked the feminist and lesbian students online, picking fights and wearing ‘Meninist’ shirts to school.” Nicole Morris told us: “I’m a female teacher, and you have these 14 year old boys sitting in my class saying, ‘Women aren’t fit to lead, women should just be staying home.’ I mean, it was questioning women’s intelligence.” Similarly, Susan Boyer reported that some of her male students questioned whether women should have the right to vote.

Effects of the hostile environment

Acts of intimidation and hostility took their toll on young people and undermined student learning. Jimmy Lloyd described the experience of Muslim students in his Utah school who faced bullying in the wake of the President's travel ban. "They were mocked. It was a small percentage of students doing it, but to those students who heard those kind of jeers, it felt like the entire school was against them." Richard Dorn, a social studies teacher in Tennessee, similarly highlighted a feeling of vulnerability and marginalization that characterized two groups of students at his school. The LGBTQ and immigrant students tried to make themselves invisible to potential assailants. Dorn explained that they "just kind of went underground . . . they didn't engage. They kind of hid from this." Missouri teacher Delia Gonzalez worried about the "long-lasting effects" of students "being harassed, targeted, effaced by their peers." She related that these problematic dynamics have silenced students—they have "backed away from conversations."

In addition to discouraging class participation, acts of bullying also directly undermined student academic progress. Susan Boyer reported on a student from Egypt who began to perform poorly on tests in the wake of "a lot of the anti-Muslim talk." This student had difficulty focusing in class because "she was afraid of what some of the other students were going to say." One of Jane Gorman's students in Oregon—a particularly "engaging smart, funny, popular young man"—just stopped coming to school for several days. Gorman was puzzled until a colleague told her that other students had been "saying crap to him in the halls. Stuff about deportation, and just ethnic slurs that I don't think had been part of his experience." Reflecting on this incident and others, Gorman worried about the impact on young people who "were harassed after the election openly, in a place where they had always been safe." She went on to say: "Everything we know about bullying says that it doesn't stop with the specific event, but that we carry it. So, I'm going to project long term effects for some kids."

**“There are long-lasting effects
... of students being harassed,
targeted, effaced by their peers.”**

- Delia Gonzalez, English teacher in Missouri

Section 5: The Response of School Leaders to a Changing Political Environment

“Administration simply does not have an effective way of handling bullying, so often kids don’t even bother reporting it, because they know nothing will be done.”

- Stephanie Kuntz, English teacher in Maryland

“Being in a conservative district, our school site has been relatively quiet about politics this year, but I will never forget that the morning after the election when our principal unexpectedly expressed in the announcements our school’s commitment to welcoming all students, to being a safe place of civil discourse, and the need to be sensitive to others following such a contentious political season.”

- Sarah Hobbs, social studies teacher in California

School leaders across the United States responded in very different ways to challenges posed by the unsettling new political environment. Some leaders sought to avoid controversy at all costs, remaining silent about political issues affecting the well-being of their students and their families and ignoring rising incivility and aggression on their campuses. Other leaders moved quickly to ease community concerns with statements of democratic principles. Many initiated programs to support tolerance and respectful interactions. Teachers in our study reported that these various leadership practices made a significant difference—for the worse and the better—in school culture and student learning. Their overarching message was clear: leadership matters.

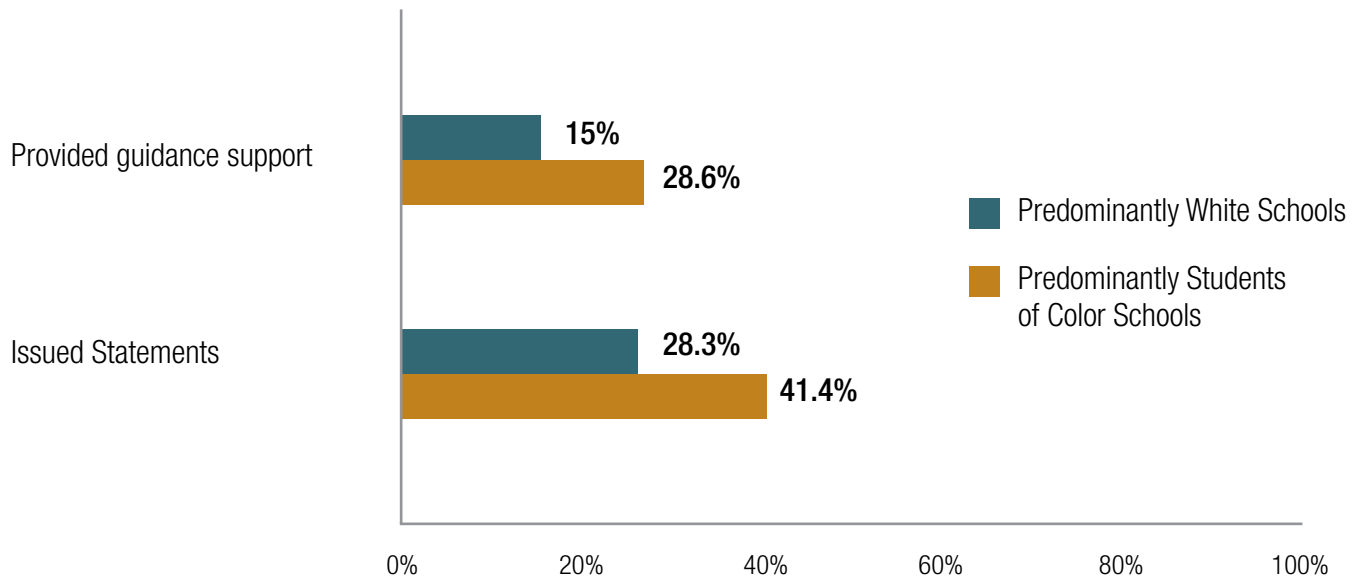
This section opens with analysis of two survey questions exploring whether and how leaders addressed polarization and incivility. We then turn to teachers’ descriptions of leadership in responses to the open-ended question and interviews. To illuminate why leadership matters, we describe an instance of failed leadership and the climate of hostility that ensued. We follow this by highlighting several positive examples of how leaders contributed to a more caring and civil school culture through public statements, programs, and professional development.

Leadership practice in 2016-17

We asked teachers whether, during the 2016-17 school year, district or school leadership acted to promote civil exchange and understanding across lines of difference by either a) issuing public statements; or b) providing guidance and support to educators. 40.9% of all teachers reported that leaders had made public statements, but only 26.8% reported that leaders had provided guidance and support. Teachers in PSC Schools were substantially more likely than teachers in PW Schools to report yes to both questions. Recall that in Section 3 we reported that PW Schools experienced higher levels of polarization and incivility than PSC Schools. Hence, the schools facing the greatest need for leadership to respond to the changing political climate were the least likely to experience it.

Schools facing the greatest need for leadership to respond to the changing political climate were the least likely to experience it.

Percentage of Teachers reporting school or district leaders took action to promote civil exchange and understanding



Little or no response in many schools

A number of teachers regretted that leaders in their schools or districts did not more forcefully address hostile speech and actions associated with the new political environment. Lily Moore in Arizona explained:

Our leaders have not addressed it in any way. . . . My principal didn't. None of our administrators. . . . Just, "business as usual guys. We're going to ignore all the other problems and just keep trucking on." I wish they would have addressed it though. It would have felt nice to know that we were supported, that our students are supported.

Some teachers wanted their leaders to make symbolic statements to the school community. Others sought support so that they could address growing incivility in their classes. For example, Susan Boyer wanted her school to provide training that would help teachers develop strategies for "what do you do if you see some of this politically specific bullying and things going on." She added that the bullying training her school has offered to date does not address the political challenges she and her colleagues have faced.

A few teachers shared stories of how bullying and racial hostility at their schools spiraled out of control after their administrators failed to take action. A particularly poignant case played out in Richard Dorn's school in Tennessee, the site of "some very high profile bullying" incidents. Following the election, a group of White students initiated ongoing verbal assaults against classmates who were immigrants, African Americans, LGBTQ, or Muslim. This was something new at the school—bullying of this sort previously had "never been the norm." When the school administration failed to take action, a young woman of color in student government wrote a letter to the school board detailing the problems. The principal called her into his office and said, "I really wish you would have brought this to me first. Now this is all I'm going to have to deal with for the rest of the school year." This response was typical of an administrative approach that emphasized public relations over student well-being. "I think that their goal," said Dorn, was, "let's just make this go away as best we can. Let's keep it as quiet as we can. Keep it out of the public eye."

The students who were leading the assaults took the administration's failure to act as "an implicit, if not endorsement, at least permission to continue what they were doing and even escalate it." Verbal assaults and acts of intimidation became more common and began to shape all aspects of the school environment. Dorn describes how the racial hostility even found its way into the school's restrooms.

There was one incident that I was particularly frustrated with. There was some vandalism in one of the boys' bathrooms, racial slur, the n-word, was carved into a wall. Told administration about it. They said, "Oh, well let's put a work order in for it." And I tried to pressure them and say, "You know, this is more important than most types of vandalism. . . . We really need to get this off the wall." They did not fix it. It was up there for months. At one point an English teacher and I actually came in with a power sander and did it ourselves to get it off the wall. . . . Now, interestingly, after we power sanded it off the wall, someone, I presume a student, drew some swastikas and some other racial epithets where we had removed the n-word. And the battle in the bathroom goes on.

Dorn concludes that, by allowing bullying and hatred to seep into the school's culture and mark its physical plant, the administration had cultivated "hostility," "threat," and "danger." He concluded, "I would say that our school environment is much more uncomfortable for a majority of our students as a result of the election and the failure of the administration to deal with the bullying incidents."

A robust response from proactive school leaders

For every story shared of failed or inadequate leadership, another story was told about school or district leaders acting to safeguard student well-being and build inclusive communities. Many teachers expressed appreciation for public statements articulating core principles. "My administration," noted Betsy Mora in Texas, "has been very compassionate and sent emails advising teachers to be concerned and offer support to their students." Jennifer Ford's principal in Georgia spoke to the school community over the intercom the day following the election. He "talked for about five minutes specifically about how much he is proud of the diversity of our school and the fact that even though we may all have different opinions, that we can get along together." Similarly, after the travel ban was issued, Hannah Porter's superintendent in Washington sent out orange fliers to each classroom in the district that read, "Refugees and immigrants are welcome here." The superintendent didn't direct teachers to take any further action but "pretty much everybody . . . put it in our windows . . . [People walking around the schools saw] a flood of these orange signs." And then every week throughout the remainder of the school year, the superintendent wrote a letter encouraging all instructional staff to make their classrooms safe for students and to support tolerance through their work.

Other teachers talked about the ways that their school leaders established inclusive and respectful school cultures that protect against incivility and divisiveness in the broader political environment. Leaders in these schools celebrated diversity as a strength and lifted up democratic values. For example, a poster hangs in the lobby of Troy Castell's school in New Hampshire that states in multiple languages, "Hate is not welcome here." Charlie Hill's school in Connecticut has spent the past few years "providing opportunities for teachers and students to be engaged in learning about how to appropriately interact and respect multiple viewpoints." Teachers have participated in "cultural perspective training and multicultural professional development."

Section 6: Student Civic Engagement

“I am proud to have provided ALL of my students a safe space to express their opinions, both those that are conservative and those that are liberal. My students fear for their future—not because of terror, but because they fear that the leaders of this country are not listening to them nor care about them. They feel a disconnect, but luckily, rather than not participating and developing apathy, they are participating. They are protesting, they are organizing, they are becoming educated. As much as it has created stress, it has caused my students to develop more civic mindedness than ever before.

- Cindy Lee, social studies teacher in Virginia

In previous sections, we have reported on how, in many U.S. high schools, the political environment established during the first months of the Trump administration has undermined student well-being, heightened stress, and fostered incivility and hostility. As Cindy Lee’s quote suggests, American youth have not simply been victims of political dynamics beyond their control. Many students have responded with greater interest and engagement in civic life. In this section, we report on three survey items examining how student civic participation in 2016-17 compared to previous years. We also draw upon teacher accounts to explore how students followed politics and participated in civic and political life.

A growing interest in politics

Teachers across the country reported that the election of Donald Trump has generated far greater student interest in national politics and related issues. “Usually, very few students care about the political environment,” wrote Kristie Harper in Texas. “This year,” she continued, “my students are more involved and more vocal about politics.” David Levin described this new focus as a “silver lining” to changes that otherwise have brought stress and strain to his Nevada school. In Washington, George Sweeny noted that the new political environment has prompted an array of emotions—“I have never seen my students more interested, concerned, worried, or inquisitive.” Similarly, Erick Jones in New York shared that his students have widely different views of Donald Trump—“some students love him . . . and some (especially girls) really hate him”—but more students are following presidential actions than ever before.

“I have never seen my students more interested, concerned, worried, or inquisitive.”

- George Sweeny, social studies teacher in Washington

Teachers offered different assessments of whether this increased student interest in politics led to deeper learning—that is, a broader knowledge base and enhanced capacity to apply this knowledge in real-world contexts. William Payne in Maryland argued that the “urgency” of student concerns for “their family’s safety or security” meant that they were “far more likely to ask about the powers and consequences of specific proposed policies rather than just the general principles.” But Bruce Williams’ students in North Carolina have tended to follow the news as if it is a reality television show with compelling characters and plot lines. They ask about what he described as “conspiracy concepts” rather than “how are we going to handle health care.” In a similar way, Jimmy Lloyd worried that the 24-hour news cycle leaves his students with talking points rather than a big picture of the issues at hand.

They're getting snapshots and using those to create opinions. And so they bring these comments that they obviously heard or read, and they use that. But when they're pressed on the issue and asked for clarification, most students don't have anything further to add. They're a lot more politically active, but I don't know if they're more politically aware.

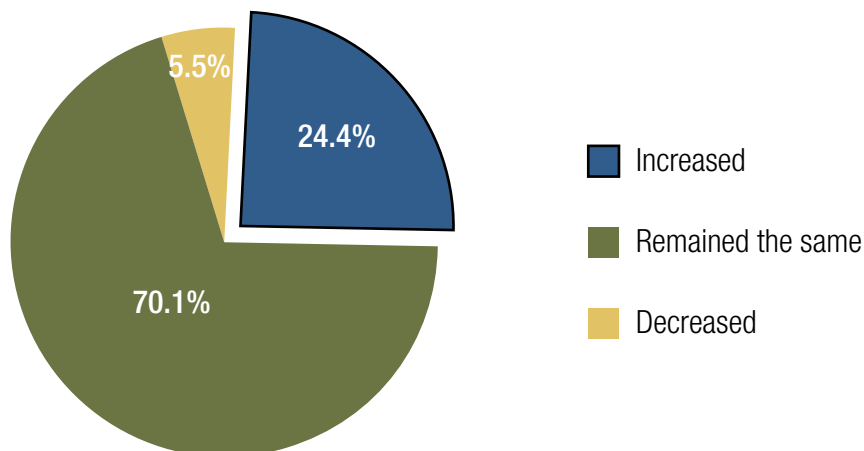
Lloyd's point was not to denigrate his students. Rather, he wished to emphasize that, even when national politics captivates public attention, depth of understanding requires sustained attention and careful study.

Responding to polarization and incivility with caring and community

We asked teachers how many of their students, compared to previous years, had participated in “extracurricular groups or clubs that encourage acts of kindness, community building, and bridge building.” 24.4% of teachers said that student participation in such activities had increased. Only 5.5% reported a decrease and 70.1% said that the number had remained about the same. There was no significant difference in teacher responses across demographically different schools.

In several cases, schools that experienced dramatic acts of polarization and hostility were also sites of student-led efforts to foster caring and inclusion. For example, at Jude Canon's school in North Carolina that had seen White students taunt classmates with white supremacist declarations in class, a small multi-racial group of students began meeting at lunchtime. They came together to eat, “discuss equality, and ways to get around those issues [of racial hostility] so that people could get along.” Or in California, after students' social media accounts containing violent and threatening racist images were made public, another group of students, “demonstrating a really high level of empathy and leadership,” formed to address the intolerance. This group travelled to different classrooms to lead presentations about social justice and patterns of oppression facing students of color at the school.

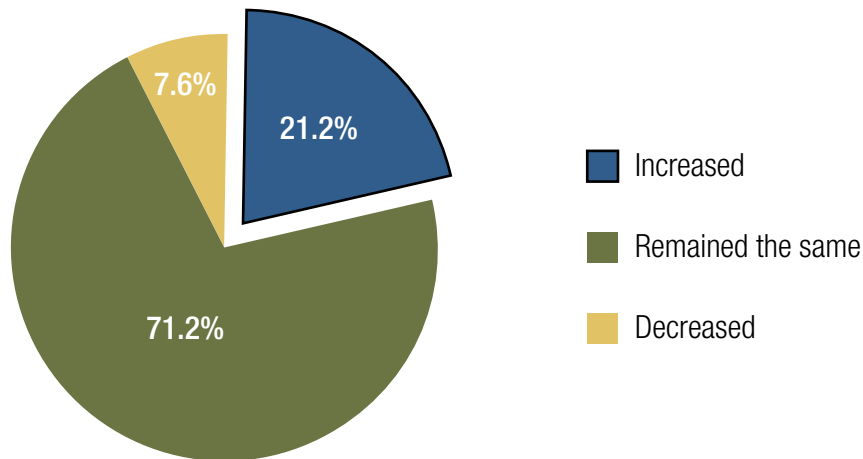
Percentage of teachers reporting on number of students participating in acts of kindness, community/bridge building, compared to last year



Becoming politically engaged

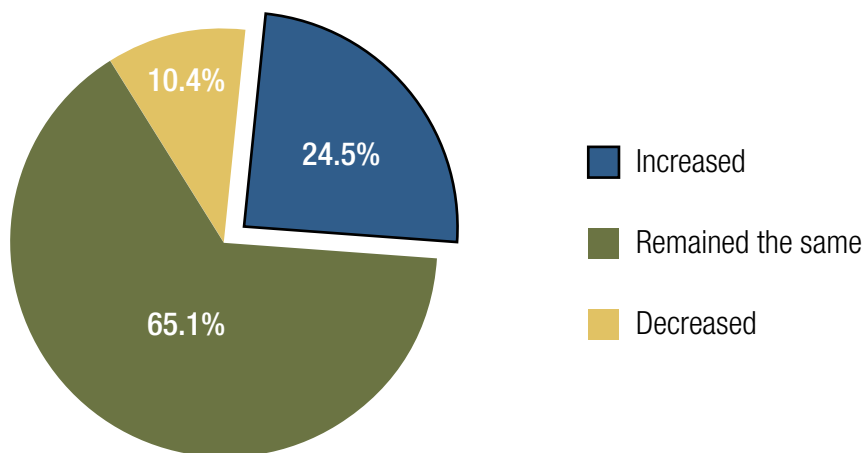
We asked teachers how many of their students, compared to previous years, had participated in extracurricular groups or clubs that encourage youth to speak out on civic and political issues. 21.2% reported an increase, 7.6 reported a decrease, and 71.2% said that the numbers were about the same.

Percentage of teachers reporting on number of students participating in clubs that encourage youth to speak out, compared to previous years



We similarly asked about student participation in civic and political protest compared to previous years. 24.5 reported an increase, 10.4 a decrease, and 65.1% said there had been no change. There was no statistically significant difference across demographically distinct schools on either of these questions.

Percentage of teachers reporting on number of students participating in civic and political protest, compared to previous years



Teachers described a number of ways that their students participated in civic and political life following the presidential election. Teachers in Georgia, Wisconsin, Utah, and Oregon reported an increase in students working in voter registration efforts. Numerous teachers talked about student participation in political rallies, marches, or protests. A few teachers highlighted the rise in political participation across the ideological spectrum. For example, Bruce Williams in North Carolina told us that before the 2016-17 school year, he had never had students attend a political rally. This year, he had “25 different students go to one of those rallies . . . it was for Bernie Sanders, Hillary Clinton, Donald Trump, Ted Cruz.” But, we heard about

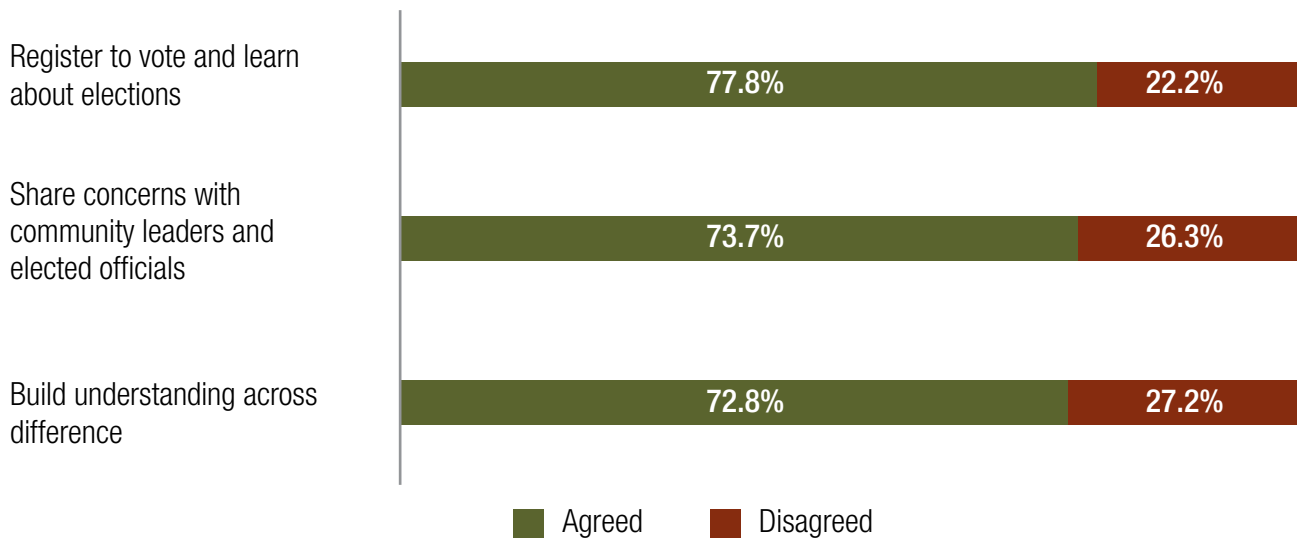
more such engagement from students opposing President Trump's initiatives than those supporting them. Many teachers, for example, mentioned that students attended the Women's March in sites around the country. Nicole Morris recounted the momentum that built up over the course of the year. Some of the same students who had despaired following the election came up to her over the spring and said, "How do I get involved? Are there organizations I can join outside of school? . . . Are there rallies coming up? Where do I sign up and what do I do?"

While some teachers likely viewed enhanced student civic engagement as a means to change the broader political environment, several teachers spoke passionately about its impact on the psychological well-being of participating students. Clarrisa Correy in Georgia feels a "frantic need" to make sure her students don't become "jaded and disengaged" in the face of political threats. She sees opportunities for youth civic engagement as a way to let her students "know that they are not powerless." At another Georgia high school, Jennifer Ford encourages her students "to have a [civic] voice" so that they do not feel overwhelmed by factors outside their control. "If they're feeling their fear, then I need to do everything I can do to equip them with the skills that they need to both confront that fear and then maybe overcome it." Jeff Seuss in Nebraska similarly sees his role as encouraging his most vulnerable students to feel a sense of agency amidst very challenging conditions. He hopes that by providing students with opportunities to speak out, they will develop strategies for productively addressing the "fear" and "uncertainties" that otherwise "can dominate your life." Importantly, Correy, Ford, and Seuss, did not present student civic engagement as a solution to their students' problems, but rather as a means for young people to cope as best they could with precarious circumstances created by far-away politicians.

Supporting student civic engagement (and sense of agency)

A strong majority of teachers supported the idea that strengthening school based opportunities for student civic engagement could improve school culture and students' sense of well-being. Roughly ¾ of teachers agreed with each of three different items about the value of their schools providing more opportunities for students to: a) Build understanding across lines of difference (72.8%); b) Share their political and social concerns with community leaders and elected officials (73.7%); and c) Register to vote and learn about government elections (77.8%). There was very little or no difference in teachers responses to these items across geographically or demographically different schools.

Percentage of teachers supporting expanded civic engagement opportunities for students to ...



Section 7: What We Have Learned, Why This Matters, What To Do?

“There’s more of a tension ... the same tension you feel out in the public.”

- Bruce Williams, social studies teacher in North Carolina

“This year, it’s just everything feels so much more important. ... I fear for public education.”

- Jasmin Fisher, English teacher in Oregon

Drawing on a representative sample of teachers, this study provides empirical evidence of the impacts from the political environment during the first months of the Trump administration on public high school students across the United States. Like Bruce Williams and Jasmin Fisher, many teachers told us that the period from January to May 2017 felt different to them and their students. Often, teachers expressed serious concerns about these changes. “The political climate has been very discouraging this year,” wrote Miranda Andrews of Ohio. “I pray this is not the new norm.”

In this concluding section, we briefly summarize our findings about how students have been affected by the substance and tone of national political discourse. We then build on related scholarship (for example, about bullying) to highlight why these impacts matter. Finally, we turn to a closing discussion about what can be done, highlighting the need for action both within schools and within the national political environment.

“The political climate has been very discouraging this year. I pray this is not the new norm.”

- Miranda Andrews, social studies teacher in Ohio

The effects

Our study documents three ways that the national political environment has had a negative effect on high school students.

First, national policy discourse on several hot-button issues has heightened student stress and concerns about their well-being and the well-being of their families. Policy discussions on the status of undocumented immigrants elicited the broadest effects—more than half of all teachers reported students expressed distress related to this issue. Substantial proportions of teachers also noted student concerns about policy discussions on travel restrictions, LGBTQ rights, healthcare access, and environmental protections. Almost half of all teachers reported that student worries about at least one of these issues negatively affected student attendance or ability to focus in class. All of these impacts on stress and well-being were concentrated in Predominantly Students of Color Schools.

Second, the polarized and bellicose dynamics of the national political environment “spilled into” classrooms and other school spaces. Roughly a quarter of teachers reported that their students acted more combatively and disrespectfully toward their classmates. The increase in tension amongst students and the coarsening of classroom dialogue was most commonly found in Predominantly White Schools. Substantial proportions of teachers also reported an increase in students relying upon unsubstantiated sources, which further contributed to a contentious classroom environment.

Third, national political rhetoric that personalized political conflict, challenged norms of civility, and inflamed social divisions prompted some students to target vulnerable classmates. Many teachers described how the political environment “unleashed” virulently racist, anti-Islamic, anti-Semitic, or homophobic rhetoric in their schools and classrooms. More than a quarter of teachers reported an increase in derogatory remarks targeting different groups of students. Acts of intimidation and hostility took their toll on young people and undermined student learning. Students who were victims of verbal assaults withdrew from class discussions and sometimes missed class altogether.

Why this matters – Lessons from existing research

The effects we describe above are not entirely new to U.S. public high schools. Prior to the election of Donald Trump, a number of students experienced vulnerability, discrimination, and bullying. A good deal of research has documented the consequences of such experiences.

- More than four million students in the United States experience vulnerability associated with growing up in a home with at least one undocumented immigrant parent. Research has shown that these young people frequently experience anxiety and stress associated with the prospect of losing a parent to deportation. This anxiety places the students at risk for poor mental health outcomes. It also is associated with lower educational achievement and diminished progress toward degree attainment.²⁰
- Members of ethnic and racial minority groups that perceive discrimination at school experience increased levels of distress, anger, and anxiety. They are more likely to withdraw from full participation in class activities. Perceptions of discrimination are associated with a drop in attendance and grades and hence depress academic performance.²¹ While there is less research about members of religious minority groups that perceive discrimination in schools, many similar patterns seem to hold.²²
- Bullying affects the social and emotional well-being of students, causing heightened levels of anxiety and depression. Youth who are targeted because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or disability are more likely to miss school, become disengaged from their studies, and receive lower grades.²³

What are the likely results of a political environment that exacerbates these challenges? First, in the wake of increased policy threats, discrimination, and bullying, more young people are subject to adverse socio-emotional and academic consequences. Second, the volatility of these threats may contribute to a generalized sense of uncertainty about the future. Such an understanding underscores feelings of instability and lack of agency that are themselves factors associated with negative mental health and educational outcomes. It is important to note that, for a substantial number of youth, these potential long-term effects are layered on top of other vulnerabilities associated with economic factors such as food, health, and shelter insecurity.

In addition, growing polarization and contentiousness in classrooms and schools undercuts the democratic purposes of public education. Public schooling emerged in the United States as a strategy for developing the civic commitments and skills of each new generation. Ideally, public schools provide opportunities for students to deliberate productively across lines of difference and practice working together to solve collective problems. Heightened incivility makes it more difficult for schools to achieve this valued goal.

Ideally, public schools provide opportunities for students to deliberate productively across lines of difference and practice working together to solve collective problems.

What to do?

In considering what can be done to protect students and schools, it is important to note that educators have not been idle bystanders in the face of a rapidly changing political environment. As we reported in Section 5, many school leaders offered public statements and/or supported programs about the importance of tolerance and inclusivity. Most of the teachers we interviewed shared compelling stories about how they acted to meet new and growing challenges. For many teachers, this meant demonstrating an ethic of care. For example, in New York, Astrid Natividad communicated to students who approached her with concerns about their well-being that “they have a support system of people who care about them at school—that I loved them, their teachers love them.” Other teachers embraced the challenge of fostering civil classroom dialogue in querulous political times. (See: “Teachers’ Strategies for Enhancing Civility in Uncivil Times,” on p. 30.) Jake Norris in Delaware posed this mission powerfully:

I’m a civics teacher. . . . For science, you have a lab where you go in and you do whatever you do in your Petri dish. The things that happen outside my school, or even inside my school from a sociology perspective, that’s our lab. We can talk about that.

Teachers' Strategies for Enhancing Civility in Uncivil Times

1) Build relationships. Jimmy Lloyd from Utah believes that high quality discussion of difficult topics must be grounded in meaningful social relationships. Classroom dialogue, he argues, develops over time as students come to know and trust one another.

We don't get into those types of topics that are really polarizing, early in the year. We wait until later when students know each other, and they've learned about each other. I think it's really dangerous to do that before the students know who their peers are. And so we do a lot of group work early in the year. Part of it is to get to know each other and learn from each other. The second half of the year is where we get into some of those more controversial subjects. And they know going into it that there's certain things that won't be tolerated.

2) Establish norms. Jordan Smith, a social studies teacher in North Carolina, feels an obligation to establish clear expectations for how students should interact with one another, even (or particularly) in moments of disagreement.

Any time that I lighten my control of the classroom and we discuss more freely, you always have to norm the discussion. I think I had early in the year developed norms with my students on what we want to do in discussions and how we want to behave. . . . Look the person that you're talking to in the eye. Body movement that is appropriate. Listen to them, try to repeat back what they said, to demonstrate you understand.

3) Model and practice. Stacy Marx teaches journalism and English in Wyoming. Every day in her journalism class, she distributes the local paper and the class reads for 10 minutes and then discusses interesting topics. Marx is very clear with her students about how they should participate with their classmates. She guides, reminds, and occasionally corrects. But, for the most part, she gives them space to practice.

I tell them, "You may disagree with each other, but there's really no need to call each other names. There's no need to get angry about it. You just disagree." Everyone in here has a completely different opinion, and they are 100% entitled to those, and you can't yell at them, and call them names because you disagree. That's a childish way to behave. You have to go out into the world and work with people all the time that are going to have different views than you. You need to learn, right now, how to interact with them, and not get fired up about everything.

4) Structure opportunities for participation. Tom Steeler, a social studies teacher in Ohio, seeks to ensure that all of his students have an opportunity to express their ideas. He creates a number of different contexts for student communication—whole class discussions, circle conversations (in which a few students discuss issues and the rest of the class listens in), small group work, pairing off with individual partners, and journals. Steeler also invites students to "stop in" after school to "keep me updated."

5) Monitor and respond. For Bruce Williams, a social studies teacher in North Carolina, the challenge of fostering civility lies in knowing when and where to address student needs. As he teaches each lesson, he tries to be conscious of how each of his students is experiencing the dialogue, and then he responds accordingly.

You have to be very aware of not just who you're talking to, but you better be aware of the reaction of the kids around the person that's talking. I try my best to keep a wide angle on the room so I can see the kid in the third row on my right that's not even in the discussion. I can catch her eyes and see that she's uncomfortable. That's my job to realize that's an uncomfortable situation. Let me see if I can alleviate her fears without bringing attention to her, or redirect the conversation if I feel as though it's getting out of hand. But you don't ignore it, either.

What additional action is then needed?

A first answer is more support. While some teachers share Jake Norris' sense of agency, most would like more support so that they and their colleagues can promote civil dialogue in their classrooms. 72.3% of teachers we surveyed agreed that: "My school leadership should provide more guidance, support, and professional development opportunities on how to promote civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference." Teachers from all parts of the nation and teachers working in demographically distinct schools supported this statement at similar levels.

School leaders should support teachers to promote civil exchange



A second answer to what is needed is more data and reflection about how the new political environment is shaping student experiences. Bruce Williams, a social studies teacher in North Carolina, develops such understanding through ongoing observation and writing. "I think the thing that has changed for me is the amount of self-reflection. It's deeper. . . . Jotting down the notes, and doing diaries, and journals on my own, to make sure I'm actually sticking to what I believe because of the climate, because of the stuff that's out there." Williams's commitment is to be admired. Yet, we need structures and conditions that ensure that such reflection becomes a normal part of how educators do their work. Reflective practice requires access to information and time and space to make sense of this information and forge plans of action.

There have been increasing calls over the last few years to supplement data about student performance on standardized assessments with additional information on student learning and development, opportunities for learning, and school climate. This study points to the need for information about how the political environment is impacting student stress and campus civility. While the data presented in this report provides a national portrait, more is required. Educators and local publics need localized data to understand how these effects are playing out in their own schools and how they compare to schools in similar communities.

Yet, strategies centered on increasing teacher support and enhancing educator awareness cannot address the full range of challenges created by a threatening political environment. Teresa Master, an English teacher at a diverse school in Illinois captures this dilemma. She feels "lucky" to teach at a school where educators have worked hard to establish a climate "where students respect one another and staff members support all students." At the same time, Master worries about forces beyond the school's control. "This year has proven stressful because most of our students have been negatively affected by the new administration . . . The current culture is one of judgment and anger. It makes it hard to have a positive atmosphere, even here where we have the best of everything."

National, state, and local leaders should encourage and model civil exchange



A third answer to what is needed is change in the national political environment. Teachers we surveyed strongly supported the need for political leaders to address the underlying causes of much campus incivility and stress—contentious political rhetoric and policies that threaten student well-being. More than 90% of teachers agreed that “national, state, and local leaders should encourage and model civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference.” Almost as many (83.9%) agreed that national and state leaders should “work to alleviate the underlying factors that create stress and anxiety for young people and their families.” Support for both of these items was extremely strong for teachers across the nation, with little or no difference by geography or school demographics.

National and state leaders should alleviate underlying factors leading to stress



Of course, such change will not come easily. It requires politicians, and the broader public who elect them, to set aside divisive rhetoric and explore possible common ground. Reflecting on the need for such civil discourse, Delia Gonzalez, an English teacher in Missouri, explains that she frequently shares a painful truth with her students: “Adults are really, really bad at feeling uncomfortable, . . . having the hard discussions, and looking at the underlying assumptions and really unpacking them.” Gonzalez tells her students: “My job is to give you more practice so you’re better at it than we are.” As Ms. Gonzalez and her students practice, it is time for the rest of us adults to get to work.

Methodological Appendix

Teaching and Learning in the Age of Trump

At the end of the 2016-17 school year, UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access conducted an online survey of 1535 U.S. public high school teachers in the United States exploring how experiences of teaching and learning had been affected during the first few months of the Trump administration. The survey sample includes social studies teachers, English teachers, and mathematics teachers nested in 333 public high schools that are representative of public high schools in the United States generally in terms of student demographics and geographic location. Teachers were asked to report on classroom discussions, school climate, and student stress and well-being. In addition, the survey asked teachers to assess several strategies for improving school climate and students' learning experiences. The survey also included an optional question that invited teachers to share their thoughts about how their "classroom and school climate has changed this past year as a result of changes in national politics." 848 teachers wrote responses to this open-ended question. At the close of the survey, teachers were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. In July and August 2017, we conducted 35 follow-up interviews with social studies and English teachers from geographically and demographically diverse schools.

US Public School Survey Sample

Our spring 2017 survey was distributed to a representative sample of U.S. public high school teachers that was constructed two years before (for the purpose of administering a different survey about whether and how high school teachers address issues of inequality in their classes.) To create our teacher sample in spring 2015, we used enrollment data from the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) Common Core of Data for the 2010-11 school year. We sorted the roughly 17,000 public high schools in the NCES database into deciles according to race (the percentage of White students) and SES (the percentage of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch.) We also divided the universe of public high schools into deciles by school size and designated schools according to states and regions (according to NCES definitions).

We used these categories to create an initial list of 1,000 public high schools that were representative of the student demographics and geography of the entire universe of U.S. public high schools. Our research group then sought to determine which of these 1,000 schools posted their teachers email lists on the internet, and did so by subject area. 745 of the 1,000 schools met this criteria.

We selected 250 schools from this list of 745 schools that were representative of the broader universe of U.S. public high schools as our primary sample. The remaining schools served as potential replacements. Because it would be difficult to draw a sample of teachers in very small schools (which employ very few teachers in each subject area), we excluded high schools enrolling less than 500 students from our initial sample. To compensate for this decision, we doubled the number of schools in our sample from the second decile of school size. We also took two other steps to make sure that schools enrolling small numbers of students would be represented in the survey. First, we added 35 additional schools that enrolled less than 500 students with the understanding that these schools might only yield 1 or 2 teachers in a given subject area. Second, we added 25 schools in the 2nd decile of school size, 10 schools in the 3rd decile by school size, and 5 schools in the 4th decile of school size to compensate for what we expected would be lower numbers of survey participants from the smaller schools. We selected small schools with low, middle, and high proportions of students receiving Free or Reduced Priced Lunch.

We made two adjustments to our sample of schools, after launching the spring 2015 survey. First, we identified and replaced 35 high schools, which we were unable to reach through email. It is likely that school district servers blocked our email invitations to teachers in these schools, as we received no responses from any teachers at these sites. We identified 35 supplemental schools that matched the non-responsive schools from the original list of the 1000 schools. Four schools did not have a suitable replacement from the original list of 1000 schools. Because there were no replacements, four schools were randomly selected from the NCES database to match the characteristics of the four schools. Second, after noting that the initial response rate was lower in large, high poverty high schools, we identified and included 19 additional schools with these characteristics from the original sample of 1000 schools.

Our spring 2017 survey was distributed to teachers from the final sample of 344 public high schools drawn in May 2015. Because we used teachers' emails collected in spring 2015, some teachers on our list were no longer teaching at these same schools by spring 2017. Further, teachers who began teaching at these schools in 2015-16 or 2016-17 were not included in our spring 2017 survey. Teachers from 333 schools responded to our spring 2017 survey.

Survey Administration in May 2017

On May 11, 2017, we sent out more than 10,000 emails to social studies, English, and math teachers in our sample inviting them to participate in the survey through Qualtrics, an online survey software platform. The subject line of the email invited teachers to participate in a study from UCLA. Those teachers who opened the email learned that we were inviting them to participate in an online survey about how “the experience of teaching and learning in high schools relates to social and political life in the United States.” We promised confidentiality and offered teachers a \$10 Amazon gift card as an incentive for participating and we also agreed to award the 250th, 500th, and 1000th teachers with a \$250 Amazon gift card to spend on their classroom. Teachers who were interested in taking the survey then clicked on a link to enter the survey itself. Teachers who did not respond to the initial email (or who began the survey but did not complete it) received follow-up reminders every week for three weeks.

The survey included initial screening questions to determine eligibility. Teachers were asked whether they still taught at the same school and what subject matter they taught. We set the Qualtrics quota system to allow up to 5 social studies teachers and 3 math and 5 English teachers from each school to complete the survey. After these quotas were met, teachers who tried to respond to the survey were thanked for their interest and told that we would not be able to include them in the survey.

Survey Response Rate

On May 11, 2017, we sent 10,813 email invitations to social studies, English, and math teachers in our sample. Reminder invitation emails were sent on May 17th, 22nd, 25th, and 31st. We stopped collecting surveys on June 2nd 2017. 161 emails failed or bounced back. 3283 teachers opened the initial email. 2090 teachers started the survey (or 63.7% of those who opened the initial email.) 1795 of these teachers were eligible to complete the survey. 1535 teachers completed the survey (or 85.4% of the eligible teachers who started the survey.) Hence, 46.8% of teachers who opened the initial email completed the survey and another 9.0% of those who opened the email, tried to take the survey but were excluded because they were not eligible.

U.S. Teacher Responses	Social Studies	English	Math	All Subjects
Emails Sent	3681	3631	3501	10813
Emails Failed	13	21	17	51
Emails Bounced	36	39	34	109
Emails Duplicate	13	15	12	40
Emails Opened	1168	1102	1013	3283
Surveys Started	743	731	616	2090
% Started / Opened	63.6%	66.3%	60.8%	63.7%
Ineligible - not at school	24	37	20	81
Ineligible - subject matter	21	19	15	55
Ineligible - school quota	17	48	94	159
Total eligible for survey	681	627	490	1798
Chose not to take survey	2	5	8	15
Did not finish	90	86	70	244
Completed Survey	583	540	412	1535
% Completed / Eligible starters	85.6%	86.1%	84.1%	85.4%
% Completed / Opened	49.9%	49.0%	40.7%	46.8%
% Ineligible / Opened	5.3%	9.4%	12.7%	9.0%

Representativeness of the Sample

We used the most recent data from NCES (2014-15 school year) to determine the representativeness of the teachers who responded to our survey. To do this, we sorted the roughly 17,000 public high schools in the NCES database into deciles according to the percentage of students: a) receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch; b) categorized as White. We also divided the universe of public high schools into deciles by school size and placed schools into one of four regions designated by NCES (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West.) We then placed our survey respondents into the NCES deciles or regions. The tables below show that our sample is quite representative of the universe of U.S. public high schools generally by student demographics, school size, and region.

Survey Respondents by % Free and Reduced Price Lunch

(Deciles of schools from NCES enrollment data 2014-15; Decile 1 is lowest % FRPL)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Total	11.5%	10.9%	13.3%	8.6%	9.1%	12.8%	4.5%	9.2%	13.1%	7.0%

Survey Respondents by % White Students

(Deciles of schools from NCES enrollment data 2014-15; Decile 1 is lowest % White students)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Total	5.0%	10.2%	8.9%	9.4%	12.6%	13.1%	12.8%	13.9%	9.5%	4.5%

Survey Respondents by School Size

(Deciles of schools from NCES enrollment data 2014-15; Decile 1 is lowest % enrolled)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
Total	2.3%	12.2%	8.3%	10.7%	11.4%	9.3%	9.3%	15.1%	10.0%	11.3%

NCES Region 1 Northeast

NCES Region 1 Midwest

NCES Region 3 South

NCES Region 4 West

Survey respondents	15.3%	21.4%	35.1%	28.1%
NCES	16.0%	19.9%	38.0%	26.1%

Comparing Responses Across Schools

In reporting the results of the survey, we compare responses of teachers from schools that enroll relatively few white students (% White Deciles 1-3) with schools that enroll large proportions of white students (% White Deciles 8-10). In the first group of schools, less than 35% of the students are white and 65.1%-100% of the students are students of color. We describe these schools as "Predominantly Students of Color." In the second group of schools, 80-100% of the students are white. We describe these schools as "Predominantly White." In a third group of schools, 35.0-79.9% of the students are white. We refer to these schools as "Racially Mixed."

There is a strong correlation between the racial composition of schools and socio-economic status of the student body as represented in the proportion of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch. In our sample, 80% of respondents from schools that enroll "Predominantly Students of Color," teach in schools that have the highest (deciles 8-10) enrollment of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch. Less than 5% of these respondents teach in schools with the lowest (deciles 1-3) enrollment of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch. Conversely, less than 8% of respondents from Predominantly White schools teach in schools with the highest (deciles 1-3) enrollment of students receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch.

	FRPL 1-3 (0-26.7%)	FRPL 4-7 (26.8-53.2%)	FRPL 8-10 (53.3-100%)
Predominantly Student of Color (<35% White)	4.86%	15.14%	80.00%
Racially Mixed (35.0% - 79.9% White)	40.43%	43.28%	16.28%
Predominantly White (80 -100% White)	53.97%	38.08%	7.94%

Interview Methods

At the close of the survey, teachers were asked if they would be willing to participate in a follow-up phone interview (and receive an additional Amazon Card). 798 teachers (or 52% of all survey respondents) agreed to participate in an interview. We decided to interview social studies and English teachers (and not math teachers) because part of our interview protocol focused on teacher experiences facilitating classroom discussions of social and political issues, and few math teachers had done this.

We employed three strategies to generate a list of potential interview subjects. First, we used survey data to identify teachers working in schools in which more than one teacher reported changes in the school climate or student learning in the first months of the Trump administration. Second, we used the open-ended survey question to identify teachers who reported some interesting dimension of how students were impacted by the social and political climate. Third, we used the open-ended survey question to identify teachers who highlighted the ways that school leadership fostered a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment amidst political change. Many teachers in this last group did not report changes in school climate or student learning in response to other survey questions.

From this initial list, we used maximum variability sampling on the following variables to ensure demographic diversity of the schools in the interview pool: % white students enrolled; % students receiving FRPL; and region and state in which school is located. Using these criteria, we selected 73 teachers. We sent invitations to this group of teachers in early July 2017. 40 teachers responded and scheduled interviews. Of these teachers, 35 completed interviews in July and August. Our efforts to reach teachers and schedule interviews were certainly hampered by the fact that our invitations were sent during their summer vacation. Many teachers did not regularly check their professional email during this period.

Teachers who agreed to be interviewed were asked to schedule a 30-40-minute video chat or phone interview at a time of their convenience. During the interviews, we asked teachers about school climate, student well-being, and class discussions involving social and political issues. We inquired about whether students had become more engaged in social and political life and/or whether students had participated in community-building efforts this past year. We also asked teachers to comment on how their school leaders had responded to the changing social and political context and whether they themselves had forged a new understanding of their role as teachers.

Survey Protocol: Learning as it Relates to Social and Political Life in the U.S.

This protocol includes all survey questions that are addressed in the report.

For next set of questions, please focus on a class that you usually teach after lunch. (If you do not teach such a class after lunch, focus on the class you teach right before lunch.)

It is common for teachers to experience challenges when leading class discussions, particularly when some of the issues may be viewed as controversial. For each challenge listed below, please let us know if it occurred this year when you had discussions in your target class, and, if so, whether it occurred less or more than last year.

	No, it never occurred this year	Yes, but less than last year	Yes, about the same as last year	Yes, a little more than last year	Yes, far more than last year
Some students regularly introduces unfounded claims from unreliable media sources					
Some students made derogatory remarks about particular groups of people.					
Some students became increasingly contentious and disrespectful of one another over the course of the discussion.					

Concerns with student well-being and well-being of families

There have been media reports that some young people this year have been affected by political rhetoric and policy proposals.

About what proportion of students in your target class have expressed to you that they are concerned about their well-being or the well-being of their family due to political rhetoric or changing political conditions on the following topics:

	None	1/25	1/10	1/3	Most
Deportation of undocumented immigrants					
President's executive order restricting travel from 6 primarily Muslim countries					
Limiting rights of LGBTQ					
Reform and/or Repeal of the Affordable Care Act (or "Obamacare")					
Deregulation of environmental protections					

You indicated that some of your students have expressed concern about their well-being or the well-being of their family in relation to [List based on responses to above] How frequently have the effects from any of these topics made it difficult for students to focus in class or caused students to miss class altogether?

- Never
- Once or twice
- Once per month
- Once per week
- A few times a week
- Daily
- I don't know

From your ongoing observation of your target class, what proportion of students are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety this year compared to last year?

- Fewer students this year than last year
- About the same number as last year
- More students this year than last year

We are interested in whether and how national politics has influences the climate at your school.

Comparing this year to previous years, ...

Are relationships among student groups...

- More civil and amicable
- About the same
- More polarized and contentious

Comparing this year to previous years, are there (fewer, about the same, or more) students participating in...

	Fewer	About the same	More
Extracurricular groups or clubs that encourage acts of kindness, community building, and bridge building across lines of difference			
Extracurricular groups or clubs that encourage youth to speak out on civic and political issues			
Civic and political protests in the school or broader community			

This year, has district or school leadership . . .

	Yes	No
Issued public statements about the importance of civil exchange and understanding across lines of difference?		
Provided educators with guidance and support on how to encourage civil exchange and understanding across lines of difference?		

Teaching in public high schools can be a stressful job.

Compared to last year, has the level of stress associated with your work . . .

- Decreased
- Remained the same
- Increased somewhat
- Increased substantially

[If increased somewhat or increased substantially]

Is the cause of the increase primarily due to changes in the social and political environment and their effects on learners and schools?

- Yes
- No

Improving School Climate And The Experience Of Learners

Many educators and elected officials around the country are talking about strategies for improving school climate and the well-being of students.

Please indicate whether you Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree with each of the statements below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My school leadership should provide more guidance, support, and professional development opportunities on how to promote civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference.				
National, state, and local leaders should encourage and model civil exchange and greater understanding across lines of difference.				
My school should provide more social welfare and mental health supports for students.				

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
National and state leaders should work to alleviate the underlying factors that create stress and anxiety for young people and their families.				
My school should provide more extracurricular activities that support young people to build understanding across lines of difference.				
My school should provide more extracurricular activities that encourage young people to share their political and social concerns with community leaders and elected officials.				
My school should provide more opportunities for students to register to vote and learn about government elections.				

Optional Free Write

We have asked a number of questions about whether and how your classroom and school climate has changed this year as a result of changes in national politics. Please use this space to share any further thoughts you have on this topic.

Endnotes

1. We use pseudonyms for all teachers named in this report.
2. Victor Davis Hanson, "What Exactly is Trumpism?" *National Review*, January 10, 2017, <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/443667/trumpism-what-it-tradition-populism-american-greatness-starters>; David Edward Tabachnick, Ph.D., "The Four Characteristics of Trumpism," *The Hill*, January 5, 2016, <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/presidential-campaign/264746-the-four-characteristics-of-trumpism>; Jonathan S. Tobin, "What is Trumpism Anyway?" *Commentary*, August 31, 2016, <https://www.commentarymagazine.com/politics-ideas/campaigns-elections/what-is-trumpism-anyway/>
3. E.J. Dionne, Jr., Norman J. Ornstein, and Thomas E. Mann, *One Nation After Trump: A Guide For the Perplexed, Disillusioned, the Desperate, and the Not-Yet-Deported* (New York: St. Martin's Press); Paul Krugman, "Whither Trumpism?" *New York Times*, August 31, 2017, <https://krugman.blogs.nytimes.com/2017/08/18/whither-trumpism/?mcubz=0>
4. American Psychological Association, *Stress in America: Coping With Change* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2017); American Psychological Association, *2017 Work and Well-Being Survey: Special Focus on Politics* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2017).
5. Katy Steinmetz, "LGBT Americans Say They Feel Less Safe Under President Trump: Poll," *Time*, July 10, 2017, <http://time.com/4842910/donald-trump-lesbian-gay-bisexual-lgbt-poll-safe/>; Pew Research Center, "U.S. Muslims Concerned About Their Place in Society, but Continue to Believe in the American Dream: Findings From Pew Research Center's 2017 Survey of U.S. Muslims" July 26, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2017/07/26/findings-from-pew-research-centers-2017-survey-of-us-muslims/>
6. See, for example, Olga Khazan, "The Toxic Health Effects of Deportation Threat," *The Atlantic*, January 27, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2017/01/the-toxic-health-effects-of-deportation-threat/514718/>; Ruben Vives, Andrea Castillo, Cindy Carcamo, and Corina Knoll, "As Trump Immigration Crackdown Comes Into Focus, Anxiety Grows Along With Anger," *Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 2017, <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-trump-deportation-20170222-story.html>; Carolyn Jones, "Immigration Crackdown Taking Heavy Toll on California Students," *Ed Source*, September 28, 2017, <https://edsource.org/2017/immigration-crackdown-taking-heavy-toll-on-california-students/588027>.
7. Pew Research Center, "Since Trump's Election, Increased Attention to Politics – Especially Among Women," July 20, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/07/20/since-trumps-election-increased-attention-to-politics-especially-among-women/>
8. See, for example, David Brooks, "The Abbie Hoffman of the Right: Donald Trump," *New York Times*, September 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/opinion/abbie-hoffman-donald-trump.html?mcubz=0>
9. Theda Skocpol and Rene Flores, interview with Avi Green, *No Jargon*, Scholars Strategy Network, podcast audio, September 19, 2017, <http://www.scholarsstrategynetwork.org/podcast/live-show-act-i>
10. Southern Poverty Law Center, "The Trump Effect: The Impact of the Presidential Campaign on Our Nation's Schools," (Montgomery, AL: The Southern Poverty Law Center, 2016).
11. Madeline Will, "Survey: Teachers Talk Politics to Students, Despite Divisive Atmosphere," *Education Week*, April 4, 2017, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/04/05/survey-national-politics-causing-classroom-divisions.html>
12. 30% of U.S. public high school students attend Predominantly White Schools, 40% attend Racially Mixed Schools, and 30% attend Predominantly Students of Color Schools.
13. Wikipedia contributors, "Timeline of the Trump Presidency, 2017 Q1," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_the_Trump_presidency,_2017_Q1

14. Pew Research Center, "Republicans Divided in Views of Trump's Conduct; Democrats are Broadly Critical," August 29, 2017, <http://www.people-press.org/2017/08/29/republicans-divided-in-views-of-trumps-conduct-democrats-are-broadly-critical/>
15. Joe Otterson, "Cable News Ratings: MSNBC, CNN, Fox News Post Double-Digit Growth in Q2," *Variety*, June 27, 2017, <http://variety.com/2017/tv/news/cable-news-ratings-cnn-fox-news-msnbc-q2-1202479416/>; Ken Doctor, "Trump Bump Grows Into Subscription Surge – and Not Just for the New York Times," *The Street*, March 3, 2017, <https://www.thestreet.com/story/14024114/1/trump-bump-grows-into-subscription-surge.html>
16. In this question, and in much of the survey, we asked teachers to report on students in the class they taught right after lunch. Teachers who did not teach a class after lunch were instructed to report on the class right before lunch.
17. As noted above, 30% of U.S. high school students are enrolled in PSC Schools and 30% are enrolled in PW Schools. All comparisons we note in this report between teachers in PSC Schools and teachers in PW Schools are statistically significant.
18. Catherine DeCarlo Santiago, Martha E. Wadsworth, and Jessica Stump, "Socioeconomic Status, Neighborhood Disadvantage, and Poverty-Related Stress: Prospective Effects on Psychological Syndromes Among Diverse Low-Income Families," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 32, no. 2 (March 2011): 218-230; David Berliner, "Effects of Inequality and Poverty vs. Teachers and Schooling on America's Youth." *Teachers College Record* 115, no. 12 (December 2013): 1-26; Gary W. Evans, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, and Pamela Kato Klebanov, "Stressing Out the Poor." *Pathways*, (2011): 22-27.
19. Dorainne J. Levy, Jennifer A. Heissel, Jennifer A. Richeson, and Emma K. Adam, "Psychological and Biological Responses to Race-Based Social Stress as Pathways to Disparities in Educational Outcomes." *American Psychologist*, 71, no. 6 (2016): 455-473; American Psychological Association, *Stress in America: The Impact of Discrimination*. (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2015).
20. Hirokazu Yoshikawa, Carola Suárez-Orozco, and Roberto G. Gonzales. "Unauthorized Status and Youth Development in the United States: Consensus Statement of the Society for Research on Adolescence." *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 27, no. 1 (March 2017): 4–19; Christia Spears Brown, *The Educational, Psychological, and Social Impact of Discrimination on the Immigrant Child*. (Washington, DC:, Migration Policy Institute, 2015).
21. Adriana J. Umaña-Taylor, "A Post-Racial Society in Which Ethnic-Racial Discrimination Still Exists and Has Significant Consequences for Youths' Adjustment." *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 25, no. 2 (2016): 111-118; April D. Benner, and Sandra Graham. "The Antecedents and Consequences of Racial/Ethnic Discrimination During Adolescence: Does the Source of Discrimination Matter?" *Developmental Psychology*, 49, no. 8 (2013): 1602-1613; Dorainne J. Levy, Jennifer A. Heissel, Jennifer A. Richeson, and Emma K. Adam, "Psychological and Biological Responses to Race-Based Social Stress as Pathways to Disparities in Educational Outcomes." *American Psychologist*, 71, no. 6 (2016): 455-473.
22. Pia Rebello Britto, "Global Battleground or School Playground: The Bullying of America's Muslim Children," *Policy Brief No. 49*, Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, Washington, DC (September 2011); Karen J. Aroian, "Discrimination Against Muslim American Adolescents." *The Journal of School Nursing*, 28, no. 3, (2012): 206-213.
23. American Educational Research Association. *Prevention of Bullying in Schools, Colleges, and Universities: Research Report and Recommendations*. (Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 2013).
24. This was the most recent data available in spring 2015. Below, we describe how we used data from the 2014-15 school year to update our analysis.
25. Initial questions in the survey filtered out teachers who no longer were teaching in the same school. Given that respondents to our spring 2017 survey have been teaching at the same school since at least 2015, they are well positioned to compare classroom dynamics or school climate to previous years.
26. Gary Orfield, Jongyeon Ee, Erica Frankenberg, and Genevieve Siegel-Hawley. "'Brown' at 62: School Segregation by Race, Poverty and State." *Civil Rights Project-Proyecto Derechos Civiles*, Los Angeles, CA (2016).

About the Authors

John Rogers is a Professor 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 the Faculty Director of Center X, which houses UCLA's Teacher Education Program, Principal Leadership Program, and professional development initiatives. Rogers studies educational inequality, what and how students learn about inequality, and the role of civic engagement in addressing inequality. His most recent article, published in the October 2017 issue of *PS: Political Science & Politics*, is "Teaching about economic inequality in a diverse democracy: Politics, ideology, and difference." 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.

Megan Franke is a Professor at UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies and a member of the National Academy of Education. She studies how teachers make use of research-based information about the development of children's mathematical thinking (Cognitively Guided Instruction) and how CGI supports student learning in mathematics. She is interested in how paying attention to students and their mathematical thinking can create better understanding and opportunities for low-income students of color.

Jung-Eun Ellie Yun is a Ph.D. student in the Social Research Methodology Division of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

Michael Ishimoto is a Ph.D. student in the Social Science and Comparative Education 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.

Rebecca Cooper Geller is a Ph.D. student in the Urban Schooling 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.

Tizoc Brenes is a Ph.D. student in the Urban Schooling Division of UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

