

where we learn

THE CUBE SURVEY OF
URBAN SCHOOL CLIMATE

BRIAN K. PERKINS

WITH A FOREWORD BY JAMES P. COMER

A PROJECT OF THE URBAN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT TASK FORCE
COUNCIL OF URBAN BOARDS OF EDUCATION • NATIONAL SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION



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Principal Investigator

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Students cannot learn well and are not likely to behave well in difficult school environments. That was the first—and lasting—observation of the Yale Child Study Center’s School Development Program, a pioneer in modern school reform. Good student development and academic learning are inextricably linked. Indeed, research-based evidence continues to demonstrate this critical connection.

The School Development Program’s intervention work began as an effort to improve troublesome school climates and create schools that promote student development and learning. We used a school climate survey to help guide the change process. Unfortunately, however, the recent increased pressure to improve student test scores has led many to feel that they do not have time to address anything but academic instruction. That would appear to be a direct approach, but because relationships are so important to learning, strengthening instruction in a difficult school climate generally does not improve academic outcomes. A less time-consuming process of assessment and change is needed.

Brian Perkins has conducted an extensive study of the essential elements of a good school climate based on student, staff, and parental perspectives. Based on his findings, he has skillfully constructed new survey items and consolidated items from previous surveys while maintaining the validity of the instruments. His new instrument can be quickly administered to students. The results will help busy schools measure their climate and chart ways to improve it. Rather than another task, even burden, this school climate survey can be an important stepping stone to school success.

James P. Comer, M.D.
Maurice Falk Professor
of Child Psychiatry
Yale Child Study Center
Associate Dean
Yale University School of Medicine
Founder, School Development Program

Preface

Students thrive when many factors—both tangible and intangible—combine to produce a positive school climate. Climate is especially crucial in urban schools, which enroll almost 25 percent of the nation’s public school children. Many of these students are poor, most are minorities, and many live in neglected neighborhoods. A safe and trusting school environment can give them the security and encouragement they need to achieve academically.

How students feel about the climate in their school is the subject of *Where We Learn*, a nationwide survey of some 32,000 students in 108 city schools. A project of the Urban Student Achievement Task Force of NSBA’s Council of Urban Boards of Education, the survey is the largest research project ever undertaken by CUBE—and one of the most significant studies of climate since James Coleman’s 1966 classic *Equality of Educational Opportunity*.

Urban school board members will be heartened to learn that the great majority of the students surveyed say they enjoy learning at their school and plan to continue their education. In every area studied, however, the survey found some cause for concern.

The findings from this important study—both positive and negative—suggest a framework for improvement. It’s a vital task: Research shows that improved school climate contributes to:

- Higher student achievement
- Higher morale among students and teachers
- More reflective practice among teachers
- Fewer student dropouts
- Reduced violence
- Better community relations
- Increased institutional pride.

Where We Learn can be a valuable tool for achieving such results. Special thanks are due to Brian Perkins, CUBE chair and a board member in New Haven, Connecticut, the study’s principal investigator—and to the 15 school boards who participated in this landmark study.

Anne L. Bryant
Executive Director
National School Boards Association

Katrina Kelley
Director
NSBA Council of Urban Boards of Education

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank the CUBE Urban Student Achievement Task Force for deciding that this project was a worthwhile endeavor. Under the leadership of Dr. Warren Hayman and Carol Coen, this project came to fruition.

Next, I want to thank the NSBA Publications Department, Warren Hayman, Carol Coen, Jessica Bonaiuto, and Katrina Kelley. Their suggestions and critiques have helped bring the report to a point where it could be submitted for publication.

A special thank you is due to Dr. James Comer for his foreword to this report and for his mentorship. My interest in school climate began with my work with him at the Yale Child Study Center.

I would also like to thank NSBA Executive Director Anne L. Bryant for her support of this research project.

Finally, a word of thanks to my staff: first to my graduate assistants, Rose Marie McKenzie and Jennifer Osowiecki, who have been incredible throughout the entire process. The value of their long hours of research on this project is beyond measure. Thanks also to Lesley Russell, the computer programmer who formulated the algorithms for the school and district reports, and Dr. John Jean who assisted with the factor analysis and regression analysis for the national report conclusions.

And a special thank you to the districts that participated in the study. Without the students, teachers, parents, administrators, and school boards in these districts, none of this would have been possible. We hope the information you have helped us provide to the nation is equally useful to you as you work to improve the school climate in your district.

Brian K. Perkins
President, Board of Education
New Haven, Connecticut, 2006
Chair, CUBE Steering Committee, 2005-06

Where We Learn

Executive Summary

The CUBE Survey of Urban School Climate

Students feel good about themselves, their schools, and their teachers and are hopeful for their own future and the future of the nation.

Students care about where they learn. They spend the better part of most days in class or on the playground, so they care very much about what it feels like to be at school. Is the school safe and clean? Can they trust their teachers? And do teachers believe in and respect them? These feelings influence how students feel about themselves—how confident they are, what they think of themselves as learners, and what kind of future they see.

We discovered how much students care about these issues when we conducted this survey of urban school climate. Some respondents—especially younger children—were enthusiastic: “I love my school,” one elementary student wrote. “It’s the best school ever.” Others pointed out particular problems, such as the student who said, “I think our school restroom is a mess,” or the one who asserted that “school is not a problem for most kids” but added that “bullying goes on every day” on the school bus. But some concerns went beyond messy bathrooms. “The staff at this school could be more respectful and considerate to the students,” one high school student said. And another said, “Even though there are a lot of races here, there is a lot of racism as well.”

Such perceptions can have a distinct impact on how well students learn. Those who think their schools are the “best ever” are more likely to feel confident about themselves as learners than are students who feel they are the targets of bullying, racism, or disrespect. Feelings like these, both positive and negative, define a school’s climate—that is, the personality of the learning environment.

School climate is the learning environment created through the interaction of human relationships, physical setting, and psychological atmosphere. Researchers and educators agree that school climate influences students, teachers, and staff members and affects student achievement. Yet many school improvement initiatives primarily address school structure and procedures and virtually ignore school climate. These initiatives may be prompted by concern over inadequate scores on state tests or national assessments or driven by a desire to improve on an already positive performance. Despite this focus on academic achievement, however, factors embedded in a school’s functioning that directly influence performance may be overshadowed in these reform initiatives. The influence of such factors can be gauged through a study of school climate.

This national survey gathers student perceptions that can help us understand the function of school climate and its influence and can inform decision making and improvement initiatives. Note, though, that these findings represent what students perceive about their schools and should not be read as what actually occurs in schools nationally. This study presents a snapshot of some urban students' perceptions of the climate in their schools.

Methodology

The 15 districts surveyed in this study are all members of the National School Boards Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE). Thirteen states are represented. Enrollment in these districts averages 69,172 students, ranging from 8,982 to 426,812. Surveys regarding school climate were distributed in 108 schools: 40 elementary, 26 middle schools, 28 high schools, and 14 K-8 schools.

Students self-identified 110 ethnicities or national origins and more than 100 different home languages. Overall, 32 percent of respondents identified themselves as African American, 26 percent as white, 29.6 percent as Hispanic, 6.8 percent as Asian, 2.5 percent as Native American, and 2.2 percent as another ethnicity. Students also self-reported their ages, ranging from 6 to 20.

Major Findings

The findings of this study are grouped under five categories:

- School Safety;
- Bullying;
- Trust, Respect, and Ethos of Caring;
- Racial Self-Concept; and
- General Climate.

Responses were analyzed as a whole and were also examined by gender, ethnicity, and grade level: elementary school, represented in this survey as grades 4-6; middle school, grades 7-8, and high school, grades 9-12. Interestingly, analysis revealed few statistical differences in responses between male and female students. Age influenced some responses; race, however, predicted how students would respond in almost every category.

In all five categories, the findings were generally positive: Students feel good about themselves, their schools, and their teachers and are hopeful for their own future and the future of the nation. In each category, however, certain findings suggest areas of concern.

School Safety. Students must feel safe if they are to reach their learning potential. Problems with safety can disrupt the learning environment, directly influencing the potential for achievement. While the majority of students surveyed (62.7 percent) said they feel safe in their school, almost one-quarter (24 percent) feel uncertain about their safety.

Factors such as fighting and carrying weapons to school affect a student's perception of safety. Fighting appeared to be most common at the middle school level, where the majority of students (60 percent) reported that many fights occurred at their school. Fewer than half of the elementary or middle school students (48 percent for both groups) agreed with this view. When analyzed by ethnicity, Native American, and African-American students identified the most fighting.

The presence of weapons at school was less clear cut. Students in grades 9-12 were twice as likely as those in grades 4-6 to say that other students bring guns or knives to school (26.7 percent and 13.5 percent, respectively). Further, four in 10 of these older students (42.7 percent) were not sure if others came to school armed—an uncertainty that could cause anxiety.

Bullying. The problem of bullying—physically or psychologically intimidating or belittling others—has received increased attention in schools in the past five years. Many states have either drafted legislation regarding school bullying or updated existing laws. Students who are bullied may have little social success, and their academic performance may suffer.

More than three-quarters of the students surveyed (77.2 percent) said they were not bullied during the school day, but fully half (50.2 percent) said they saw others being bullied at least once a month. Students' belief that teachers could stop bullying declined with age. More than half of elementary school respondents (53.8 percent) believed teachers could stop bullying, but almost half of those in high school (48.1 percent) disagreed. Ethnicity also influenced responses to this question: Almost half of the African-American respondents (46 percent) did not believe teachers could stop bullying, compared to a quarter (24.4 percent) of white respondents.

Trust, Respect, and Ethos of Caring. Trust and respect between teachers and students influence academic achievement and are imperative in maintaining an effective learning environment. Ideally, students will trust their teachers and teachers will respect students, but as this study found, the level of trust and respect between students and teachers decreases with age and varies according to ethnicity.

Approximately one-third of all respondents (36.4 percent) said students at their school trusted teachers; 40.2 percent were not sure, and 23.3 percent said students did not trust teachers. Of the latter group, 32 percent were African American.

Asked to respond to the statement “At my school, teachers respect the students,” a majority of respondents at every grade level (61.6 percent) agreed. Those in grades 9-12, however, were twice as likely as students in grades 4-6 to disagree with the statement (25.9 percent and 10.7 percent, respectively). One out of five students at all grade levels (19.2 percent) did not feel that teachers respect them. Among those who feel disrespected, African-American students accounted for 30 percent.

Overall, almost two-thirds of all respondents (64.3 percent) felt that teachers cared whether they were successful or not. However, almost one-third of Asian students (30.5 percent) were unsure of this.

Another finding showed growing concern for fairness as students get older. Almost 60 percent of students in grades 4-6 agreed with the statement, "At my school teachers are fair to everyone," but the figure dropped to 42 percent for students in grades 7-8 and only 30 percent for older students. As a whole, almost one-third of all students (34.6 percent) did not believe that teachers are fair to everyone.

Ethnicity was a factor in these responses as well. Only 33.8 percent of African-American students felt that teachers were fair, compared with 47.4 percent of Hispanic students and 41.1 percent of white students. In addition, 42.6 percent of African-American students disagreed that teachers were fair, and 23.5 percent were not sure. In all, more than half of the African-American students felt that teachers are or might be unfair to some students.

When asked how they feel about learning, more than two-thirds of all students (68.3 percent) said they enjoy learning at their school, and 79.9 percent said they plan to continue their education after high school. Another question about the future asked students to respond to the statement, "I believe that I will live beyond the age of 25 years." Three-fourths of all respondents (75.1 percent) believed they would. However, twice as many Native American students (8.1 percent) as white and Asian students (3.6 percent and 3.7 percent, respectively) said they do not expect to live that long.

Finally, 61.7 percent of the students surveyed said they are hopeful about the future of the United States, and 83.8 percent said their parents are proud of them.

Racial Self-Concept. Students are generally content with their race. When asked if they wished they were of a different race, only 7 percent said yes, and 11.1 percent were unsure. Asians accounted for 17.2 percent of those who were unsure; African Americans made up only 6.5 percent of that group. While this may be surprising, it supports the hypothesis that African-American children may be better assimilated into the mainstream white culture than other ethnicities. One in 10 Native Americans (9.7 percent) said they wished they were of a different race. Interestingly, 87.2 percent of African-American students disagreed with the same statement.

Asked to respond to the statement, "Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do," 56.1 percent of the respondents disagreed, 32 percent were unsure, and only 12.1 percent agreed. However, African-American students were twice as likely to agree with the statement as white students (15.7 percent and 7 percent, respectively). On a related question, 35.4 percent of respondents agreed that some races are smarter than others; 33.9 percent did not agree. Of the students who agreed, 41.5 percent were Asian and 31.7 percent were white. African-American students were evenly divided on the question.

General Climate. To assess the general climate or atmosphere of their school, students were asked whether their parents (or someone taking care of them) visited the school often. Not surprisingly, the younger the student, the more likely such involvement occurs. Among children in grades 4-6, 44 percent said a family adult visited the school often. The percentage dropped to 35 percent for students in grades 7-8 and 28 percent for those in grades 9-12. Overall, half of all the students surveyed (49.7 percent) said no adult family member came to school often. Only one-quarter of Asian students indicated that an adult visited their school often, compared to 40 percent of African-American students, 32.9 percent of Hispanic students, and 28.8 percent of white students.

When determining whether students attend schools with children from their own neighborhood, almost one-quarter of the students surveyed (24.7 percent) said children at their school do not live close to them. Interestingly, 26.6 percent of respondents were unsure whether the children they went to school with lived in their neighborhood. When analyzed by ethnicity, over half of the African-American respondents (53.1 percent) agreed that students at their school lived in their neighborhood, compared to only 34.9 percent of Asian students.

Conclusions

The results from this national urban school climate survey underscore the importance of a multiplicity of factors that make up school climate and the need to attend to these factors. Most important, the survey found that most students feel safe in their schools and are not themselves the targets of bullying. A large majority have no desire to be of another race, and well over half believe their teachers respect them.

The results, while overwhelmingly positive, point to a few areas in need of attention and further investigation. These areas include, but are not limited to the following:

- The degree to which students witness others being bullied;
- Why students in upper grades do not have much confidence that teachers can stop bullying;
- Why older students have less trust in their teachers; and
- Why students of some races are more likely to believe that those of other races do better in school than they do.

Finally, it is encouraging to discover that more than 70 percent of the students surveyed say they enjoy learning at their school, and 80 percent plan to continue their education in one form or another. These results provide a firm foundation on which to create positive learning experiences for all students—regardless of race, gender, or grade.

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Southern Connecticut State University

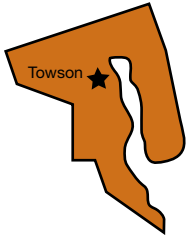
Recommendations

The affective dimension of the school day—that is, how students feel about their experience at school—is just as important as the academic dimension. Without trust and mutually respectful relationships, without physically and psychologically safe environments, teaching and learning cannot reach their maximum potential.

As a result of this survey of urban school climate, the Urban Student Achievement Task Force of NSBA's Council of Urban Boards of Education makes the following recommendations:

1. Districts should include a school climate assessment in their annual evaluation processes, weigh the perceptions the assessment identifies against realities as reflected in data, and incorporate the findings into district and school report cards, along with yearly goals for improvement.
2. Schools should identify one or more key areas on the basis of these assessment findings (for example, perceptions of school safety and perceptions of student-teacher respect) and implement strategies to improve these conditions and students' perceptions of them.
3. Parents should be encouraged to participate in the discussion, development, and implementation of strategies to improve school climate.
4. Students should engage with their peers, teachers, and administrators to address school climate issues and contribute to a healthy school climate.
5. School officials should engage members of the community about the ways they can participate in and support the creation and development of healthy school climate.
6. Boards of education should establish clear policies to create a positive school climate and clarify expectations for teachers and administrators around their responsibilities to carry out these policies.

States with Participating Districts



Maryland
Baltimore County
Public Schools, Towson



Arizona
Cartwright School
District No. 83, Phoenix;
Isaac School District
No. 5, Phoenix



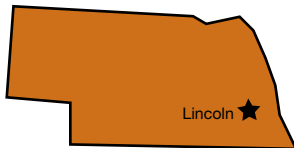
Illinois
Chicago Public
Schools, Chicago



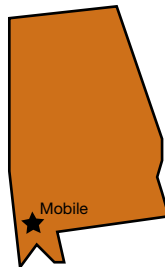
Texas
Fort Bend School
District, Sugar Land;
Ysleta Independent
School District, El Paso



Michigan
Grand Rapids
Public Schools,
Grand Rapids



Nebraska
Lincoln Public
Schools, Lincoln



Alabama
Mobile County
Public Schools, Mobile



Connecticut
New Haven Public
Schools, New Haven



Virginia
Portsmouth Public
Schools, Portsmouth



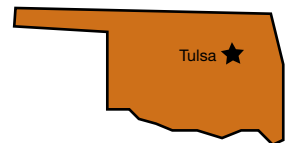
Louisiana
Orleans Parish
Public Schools,
New Orleans



California
San Francisco
Unified School District,
San Francisco



Minnesota
Saint Paul Public
Schools, St. Paul



Oklahoma
Tulsa Public
Schools, Tulsa

About the Respondents

The 15 districts included in this study are all members of the National School Boards Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) and represent 13 states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia. The participating districts have an average population of 69,172 students, with enrollments for the 2004-05 school year ranging from 8,982 to 426,812. Approximately 3,000 surveys were distributed to each district in the spring of 2005 and were disseminated in a total of 108 schools, including 40 elementary schools, 26 middle schools, 28 high schools and 14 K-8 schools. Approximately 61% of the students in the participating districts receive free or reduced-price lunch, with need varying widely from 26% to 95% of the total student enrollment. Students self-identified 110 ethnicities or nationalities and more than 100 different home languages.

Regional Characteristics as of 2004-05 School Year

Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Region

The participating districts in this region are New Haven Public Schools, New Haven, Conn.; Baltimore County Public Schools, Towson, Md.; and Portsmouth Public Schools, Portsmouth, Va. A total of 144,192 students were enrolled in these three districts for the 2004-05 school year. This student population was, on average, 55% African American, 30% Caucasian, 12% Hispanic, 2% Asian, and 1% of other ethnic backgrounds (see Figure I). The average percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced – price lunch was 46.4% and ranged from 30.8% to 55% (See Figure II). A total of 6,655 children in six elementary schools (grades 4-6), three K-8 schools, seven middle schools, and four high schools responded to the survey in these three districts.

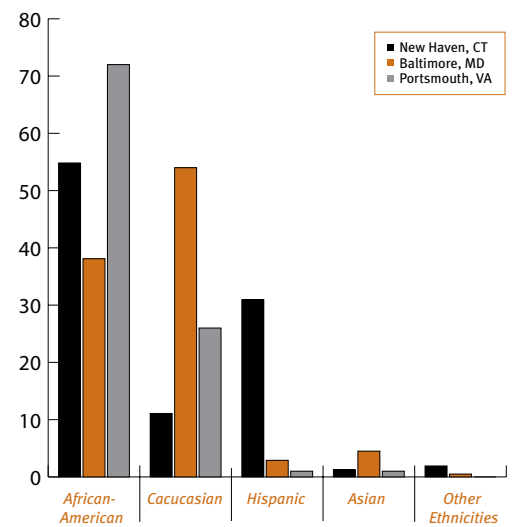


Figure I: Ethnicity Characteristics

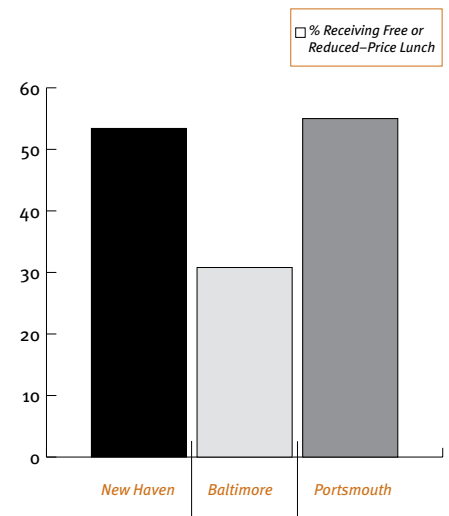


Figure II: Free/Reduced Lunch

Midwestern Region

The participating districts in this region are Grand Rapids Public Schools, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Chicago Public Schools, Chicago, Ill.; Saint Paul Public Schools, Saint Paul, Minn.; Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, Neb.; and Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Okla. A total of 565,203 students were enrolled in these five districts for the 2004-05 school year. This student population was, on average, 33% African American, 37% Caucasian, 19% Hispanic, 8% Asian, and 3% of other ethnic backgrounds (see Figure III). The average percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch was 62% and ranged from 29.5% to 84.9% (see Figure IV). A total of 11,339 children in 19 elementary schools (grades 4-6), five middle schools, and three high schools responded to the survey in these five districts.

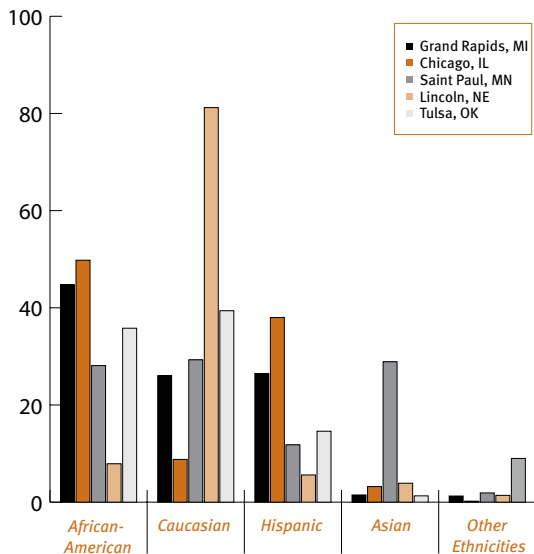


Figure III: Ethnicity Characteristics

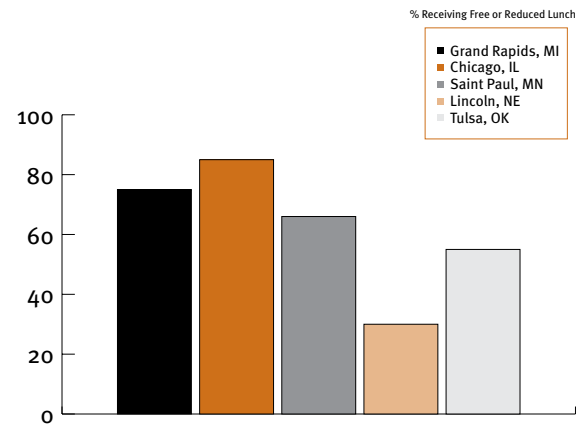


Figure IV: Free/Reduced Lunch

Southern Region

The participating districts in this region are Mobile County Public Schools, Mobile, Ala.; Orleans Parish Public Schools, New Orleans, La.; Fort Bend School District, Sugar Land, Texas; and Ysleta Independent School District in El Paso, Texas. A total of 242,063 students were enrolled in these four districts for the 2004-05 school year. This student population was, on average, 43% African American, 24% Caucasian, 26% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 1% of other ethnic backgrounds (see Figure V). The average percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch was 60% and ranged from 26.2% to 75.5% (see Figure VI). A total of 8,647 children in seven elementary schools (grades 4-6), seven middle schools, and nine high schools responded to the survey in these four districts.

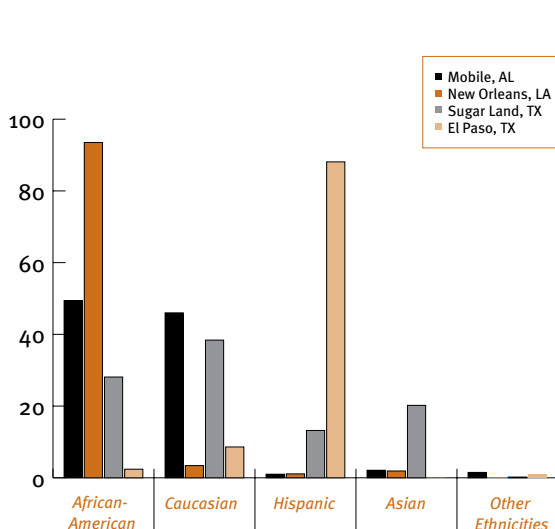


Figure V: Ethnicity Characteristics

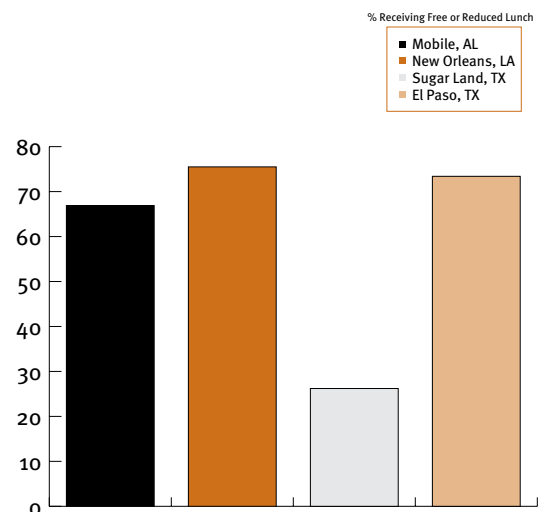


Fig. VI: Free/Reduced Lunch

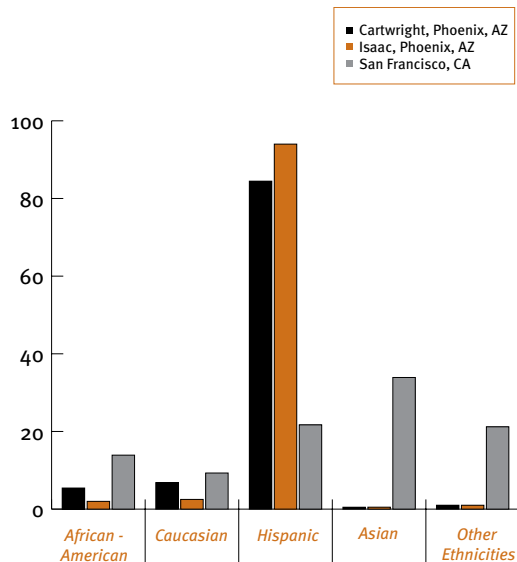


Figure VII: Ethnicity Characteristics

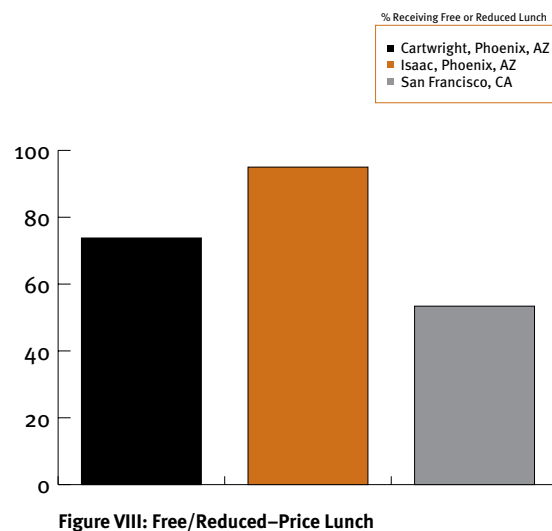


Figure VIII: Free/Reduced-Price Lunch

Western/Southwestern Region

The participating districts in this region are Isaac School District No. 5, Phoenix, Ariz.; Cartwright School District No. 83, Phoenix, Ariz.; and San Francisco Unified School District, San Francisco, Calif. A total of 86,126 students were enrolled in these three districts for the 2004-05 school year. This student population was, on average, 33% African American, 4% Caucasian, 40% Hispanic, 15% Asian and 8% of other ethnic backgrounds (**see Figure VII**). The average percentage of students who qualified for free or reduced-price lunch was 76% and ranged from 53.4% to 95% (**see Figure VIII**). A total of 5,196 children in eight elementary schools (grades 4-6), one K-8 school, three middle schools, and two high schools responded to the survey in these three districts.

Survey Population Demographics

Grade Distribution. Students in grades 4-6 accounted for 23.7% of the student population surveyed; those in grades 7-8 made up 30%; and those in grades 9-12 made up 46.3% (**see Figure IX**).

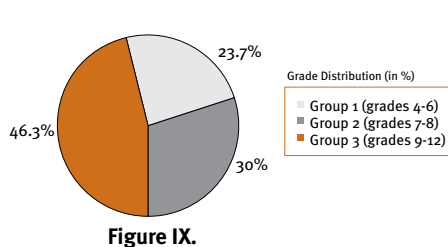


Figure IX.

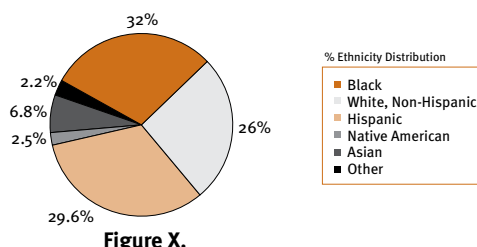


Figure X.

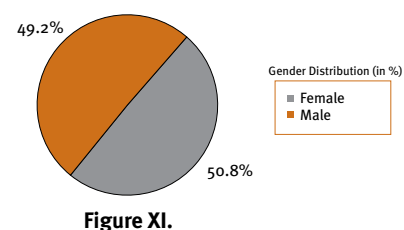


Figure XI.

Ethnicity Distribution

Overall, 32% of respondents self-identified as African American, 26% as white, 29.6% as Hispanic, 2.5% as Native American, 6.8% as Asian, and 2.2% as another ethnicity (**see Figure X**).

Gender Distribution

The respondents were very evenly distributed between male and female (**see Figure XI**).

Findings



Safety

"Sometimes I wake up at night fearing I will get hurt at school and the teachers won't do anything. I've seen it happen several times."
- High school student

Students must feel safe in order to reach their learning potential. When students do not feel safe in their school they are more likely to become truant, carry weapons to school, become distracted from school work, and experience lower levels of achievement (Bluestein, 2001; NCES, 2003). Violence in schools also lowers the quality of classroom instruction, making it difficult to concentrate on academic material (Lintoot, J., 2004).

The following section shows the reactions to statements posed to gather students' perspective on school safety in an urban setting. These findings are reported by grade level, ethnicity, and gender. It is worth noting that there was virtually no difference in the way boys and girls responded to questions about safety issues in their schools.

- A majority of all students (62.7%) surveyed agree or strongly agree that they feel safe in their school (**Figure 1a**).
- Older students, however, are less likely to feel safe at school – 15.4% of respondents in grades 9-12, compared with 10.7% of respondents in grades 4-6 (**Figure 1a**).
- Almost one quarter of all students surveyed (24%) are uncertain of their safety at school (**Figure 1b**).
- Males feel slightly less safe at school (16%) than do females (13%) (**Figure 1c**).

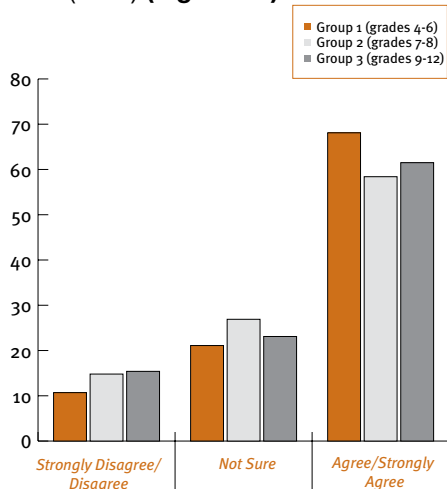


Figure 1a: Responses to "I feel safe at my school." (Age)

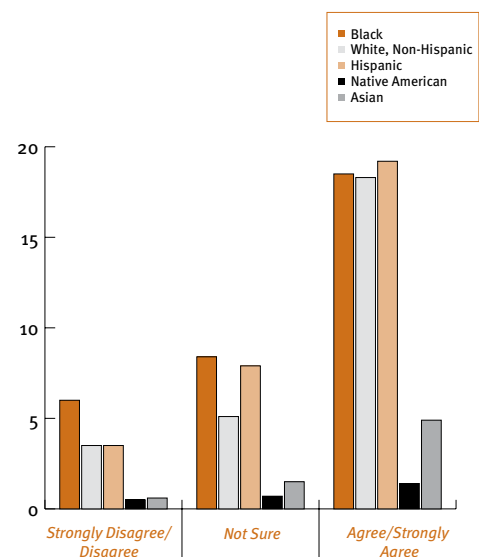


Figure 1b: Responses to "I feel safe at my school." (Ethnicity)

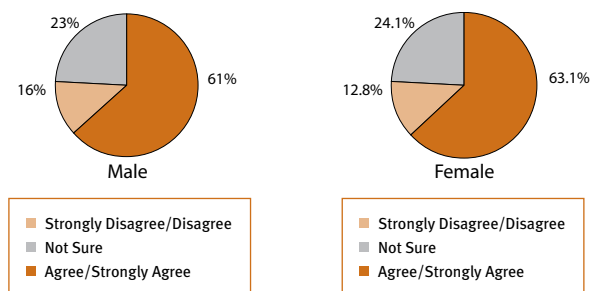


Figure 1c: Responses to "I feel safe at my school." (% within gender)

- Almost 60% of respondents in grades 7-8 agree or strongly agree that students at their school fight a lot, compared with approximately 48% of those in grades 4-6 and grades 9-12 (**Figure 2a**).
- Just over half of all children surveyed (51.4%) believe there is a lot of fighting at their school (**Figure 2a**).
- Approximately one in four all children surveyed are not sure whether there is a lot of fighting going on at their school (**Figure 2a**).

- Native American and African American children identify the most fighting. Almost 60% (56.9% and 58.1% respectively), suggest that fighting is common at the schools these students attend (**Figure 2b**).

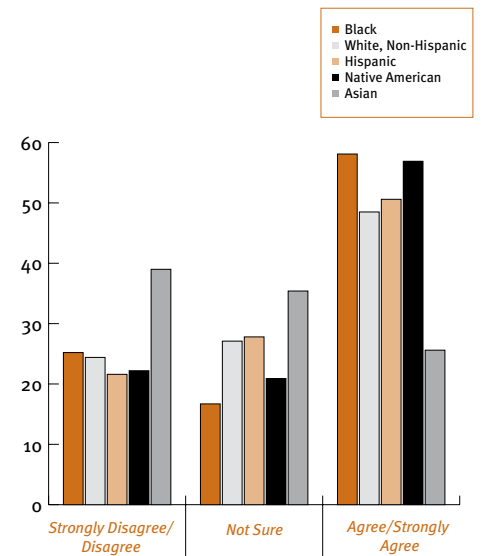


Figure 2b: Responses to “Students at my school fight a lot.” (% within ethnicity)

- Almost twice as many students in grades 4-6 (57%) strongly disagree or disagree that children are bringing guns and knives to school as do students in grades 9-12 (30.6%) (**Figure 3a**).
- Approximately one-fifth of all respondents (19.9%) agree or strongly agree that some children carry knives or guns in school (**Figure 3a**).
- 42.7% of all respondents in grades 9-12 are not sure if children are carrying weapons to school (**Figure 3a**).
- Less than half of the students surveyed (40%) disagree with the statement that some children carry weapons to school (**Figure 3a**).

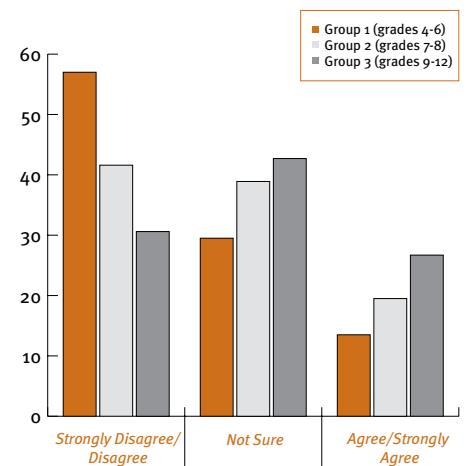


Figure 3a: Responses to “Some children carry guns or knives in my school.” (Age)

- One quarter (25.1%) of Native American students surveyed either agree or strongly agree that some children bring weapons into their school, compared with 14% of Asian students (**Figure 3b**).

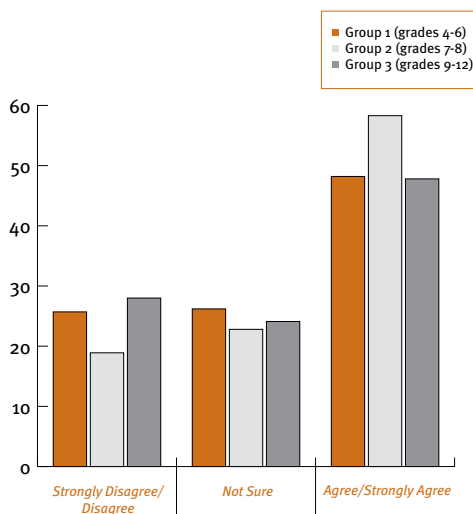


Figure 2a: Responses to “Students at my school fight a lot.” (Age)

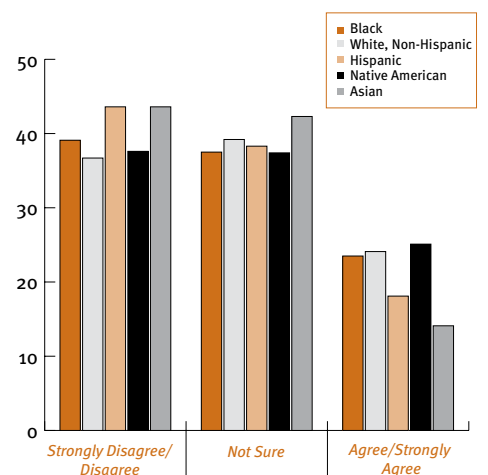


Figure 3b: Responses to “Some children carry guns or knives in my school.” (Ethnicity)

Bullying

*"The schools should pay more attention to the hallways to see the kids who bully."
- Elementary school student*

Scholars generally agree that bullying is an imbalance of power that exists over an extended period of time between two individuals, two groups, or a group and an individual. Bullying takes place when the more powerful intimidate or belittle those who are less powerful. It can take both physical and psychological forms, but physical bullying is not as common as the more subtle forms, such as social exclusion, name-calling, and gossip (Hurst, M.D., 2005).

School bullying has gained increased attention over the past decade, partly out of concern for its effect on student performance. When students lack social success, their academic success may also suffer. However, teachers can influence their students' peer relationships and can support positive peer relationships, minimizing harassment. This can be accomplished when teachers model positive and supportive interactions, providing opportunities for group work, and by developing class rules that value kindness and prevent exclusion (Siris, K. & Osterman, K., 2004).

Both male and female respondents feel much the same about bullying. There is no significant statistical difference in observance of this behavior by girls and boys or in its occurrence.

The following section presents the reaction to statements posed to gather students' perspective on school bullying in an urban setting:

- Just over half (50.5%) of all students surveyed agree or strongly agree that they witness children being bullied at least once per month (**Figure 4a**).
- Approximately 54% of children in grades 7-8 identified with this statement, compared with about 49% of those in grades 4-6 or grades 9-12 (**Figure 4a**).

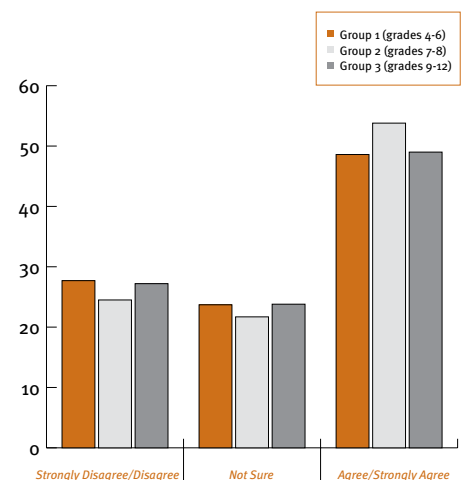


Figure 4a: Responses to "There are some children whom I have seen bullied at least once per month." (Age)

- Fully half (50.2%) of all respondents agree or strongly agree that they have witnessed some children being bullied at least once a month (**Figure 4b**).

- 26.7% of all students responded that they had not witnessed regular bullying in their schools (**Figure 4b**).

- Almost one quarter (23.2%) of all students were unsure if they had witnessed bullying (**Figure 4b**).

- White students were significantly more likely to say they had witnessed children being bullied regularly (56.5%) than were students of other ethnic groups. Least likely to say they had seen children being bullied regularly were Asian respondents (33.3%) (**Figure 4c**).

- More than twice as many respondents in grades 9-12 (48.1%) as those in grades 4-6 (21.6%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that teachers can stop bullying (**Figure 5a**).

- Approximately 37% of all respondents do believe teachers can stop bullying, with children in grades 4-6 representing 53.8% of that number (**Figure 5a**).

- 39% of students surveyed responded that they do not believe that teachers are able to stop bullying (**Figure 5b**).

- Only 33.1% of all respondents agree or strongly agree that teachers can stop bullying (**Figure 5b**).

- 46% of African-American students either disagree or strongly disagree that teachers can prevent bullying, while only 24.9% of Asian students share in that opinion (**Figure 5c**).

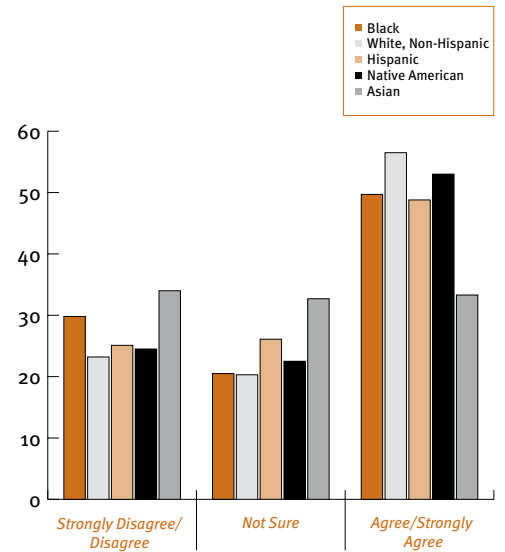


Figure 4c: Responses to “There are some children whom I have seen bullied at least once per month.” (% within ethnicity)

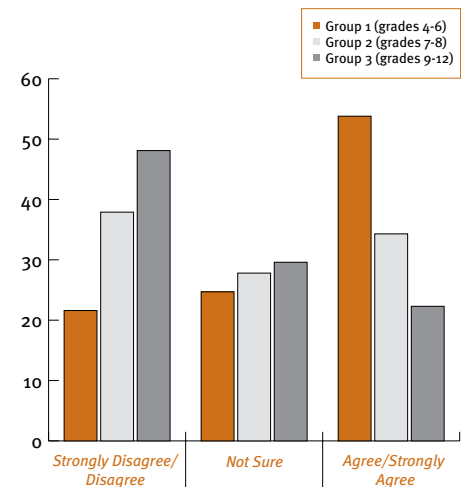


Figure 5a: Responses to “Teachers are able to stop someone from being a bully.” (Age)

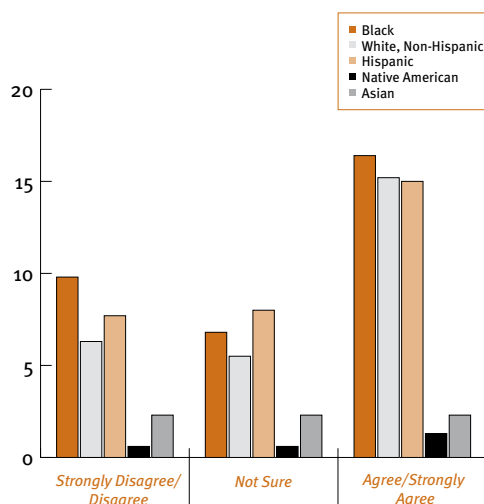


Figure 4b: Responses to “There are some children whom I have seen bullied at least once per month.” (Ethnicity)

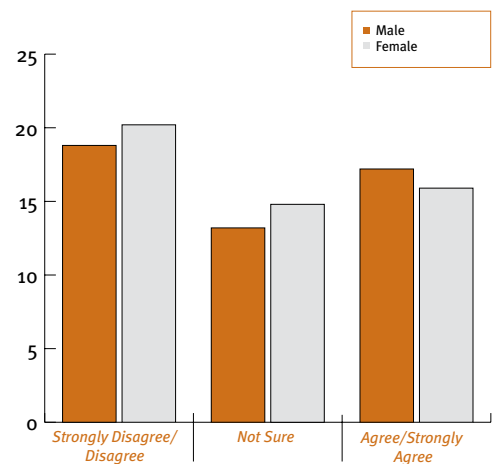


Figure 5b: Responses to “Teachers are able to stop someone from being a bully.” (Gender)

- 28% of all respondents are unsure if the teachers in their school are able to stop bullying (**Figure 5d**).
- 33.1% of all boys and girls surveyed indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that teachers are able to stop someone from being a bully (**Figure 5d**).
- More than twice as many students in grades 4-6 (20.1%) as students in grades 9-12 (8.7%) say that they themselves are bullied during the school day at least once a month (**Figure 6a**).
- On average, 77.5% of all respondents report that they are not bullied during the school day at least once a month (**Figure 6b**).
- Slightly more males (15%) than females (11%) identify being bullied at school (**Figure 6b**).

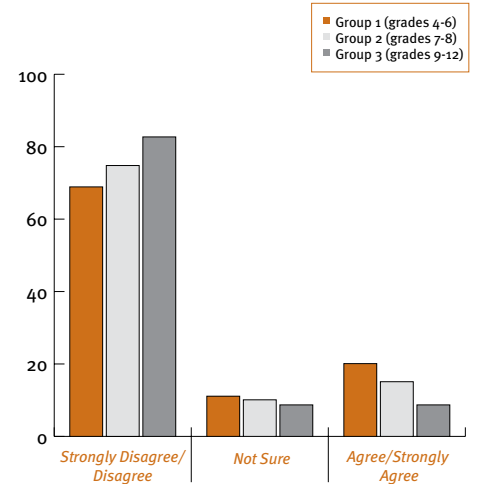


Figure 6a: Responses to "I am bullied during the school day at least once per month." (Age)

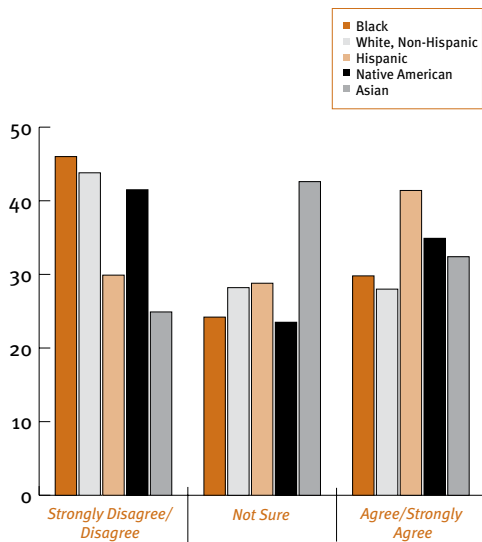


Figure 5c: Responses to "Teachers are able to stop someone from being a bully." (% within ethnicity)

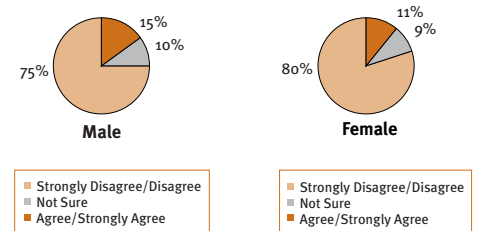


Figure 6b: Responses to "I am bullied during the school day at least once per month." (% within gender)

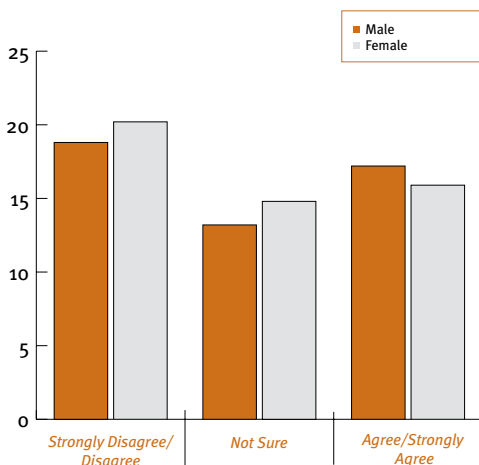


Figure 5d: Responses to "Teachers are able to stop someone from being a bully." (Gender)

Trust, Respect, and Ethos of Caring

“The teachers are disrespectful and then turn around and demand our respect. I respect adults because that’s how I was raised. I was also taught that to get respect you have to give respect.”

- High school student

Relational trust, including trust between teachers and students, has been found to be a major factor in a school’s academic standing (Consortium on Chicago School Research, 2003; Bryk, A.S. & Schneider, B., 2002). Trust influences academic achievement and is key to maintaining an effective learning environment.

Our study found little statistical difference between the responses of males and females with regard to trust and respect between teachers and students in school. Notable, however, is the fact that 34.6% of those surveyed do not believe that teachers are fair to everyone. Generally, children in grades 4–6 felt more positive about issues of trust and respect than did those in higher grades.

The following section presents the reaction to statements posed to gather students’ perspectives on trust, respect, and the ethos of caring in an urban school setting:

- Almost a quarter of all respondents (23.3%) do not think students in their schools trust the teachers. African-American students represent 32% of that population (**Figures 7a and 7b**).
- 36.4% of respondents believe students do trust the teachers, but only about 11% of that total strongly agrees with this belief (**Figure 7a**).
- 40.2% of all respondents are not sure if they can trust their teachers (**Figure 7a**).

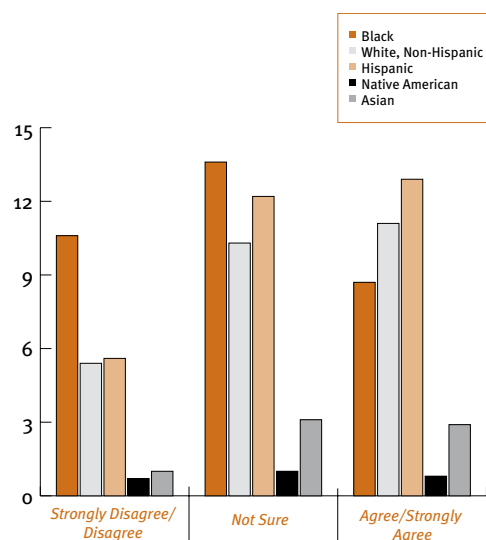


Figure 7a: Responses to “Students at my school trust the teachers.” (Ethnicity)

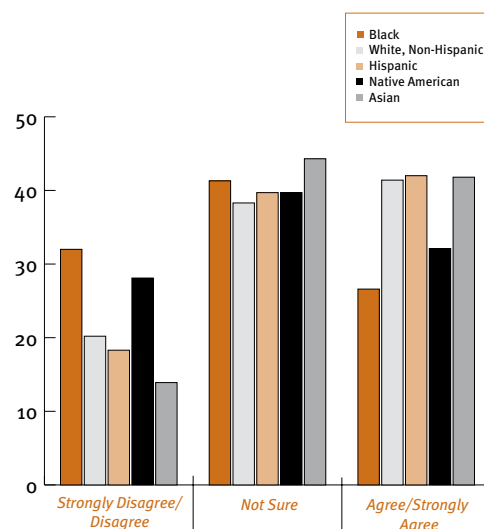


Figure 7b: Responses to “Students at my school trust the teachers.” (% within ethnicity)

- A majority of respondents at every grade level (61.6%) agree or strongly agree that the teachers respect the students at their school **(Figure 8a)**.

- On average, however, almost one in five respondents does not believe that teachers respect the students in their school (19.2%) **(Figure 8a)**.

- More than twice as many respondents in grades 9-12 (25.9%) as in grades 4-6 (10.7%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that teachers respect the students **(Figure 8a)**.

- A majority of students (59%) agree or strongly agree that the teachers in their schools respect the students **(Figure 8b)**.

- One-fifth (20.8%) of the students, however, do not believe teachers respect the students in their school. Among the 20.8% who feel students are disrespected, 31.5% are African American, compared with 17.5% for white students, 14% for Hispanic students, and 12.4% for Asian students **(Figure 8c)**.

- 66.7% of Hispanic students indicated believe that teachers are respectful, compared with only 48.5% of African-American students who share this belief **(Figure 8c)**.

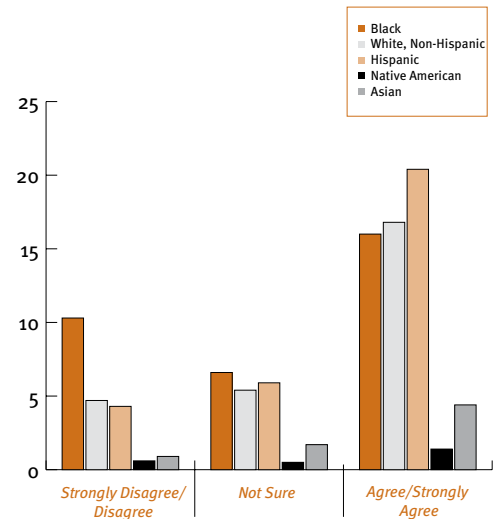


Figure 8b: Responses to “At my school, teachers respect the students.” (Ethnicity)

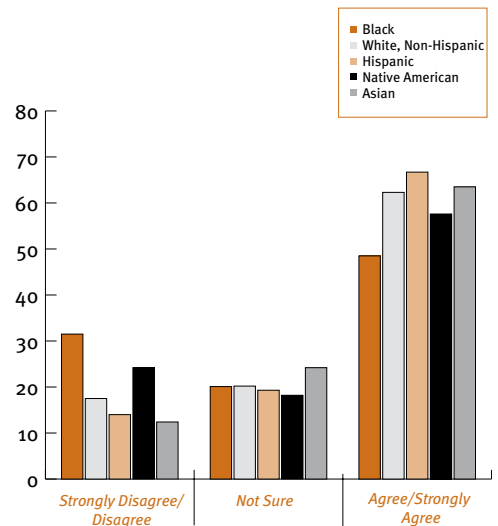


Figure 8c: Responses to “At my school, teachers respect the students.” (% within ethnicity)

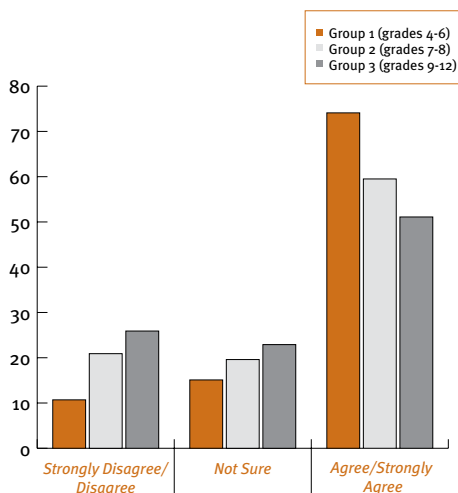


Figure 8 a: Responses to “At my school, teachers respect the students.” (Age)

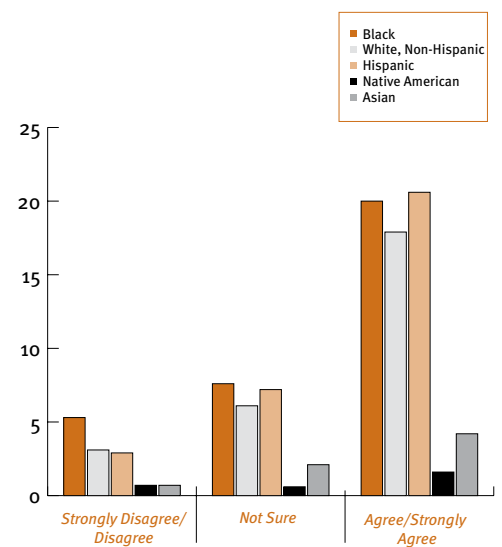


Figure 9a: Responses to “My teachers care whether I am successful or not.” (Ethnicity)

- A majority of the students surveyed (64.3%) either agree or strongly agree that their teachers care about their success (Figure 9a).
- 12.7% of all students surveyed do not believe their teachers care about their success (Figure 9a).
- 30.5% of Asian respondents are not sure whether their teachers care about their success (Figure 9b).
- 15.8% of the Native American student population surveyed does not believe their teachers care about their success (Figure 9b).

- About 43% of all respondents in grades 9-12 do not believe teachers are fair to everyone at their school, compared with approximately 33% of respondents in grades 7-8 and almost 20% of respondents in grades 4-6 (Figure 10a).
- Almost 60% of all students in grades 4-6 agree or strongly agree that their teachers are fair to everyone; only about 42% of those in grades 7-8 and 30% of those in grades 9-12 share in this belief (Figure 10a).

- 34.6% of all students surveyed do not believe that teachers are fair to everyone (Figure 10b).
- 33.8% of African-American respondents believe their teachers are fair to everyone, compared with 47.4% of Hispanic respondents (Figure 10c).
- 42.6% of African-American students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that teachers are fair to everyone in their school (Figure 10c).

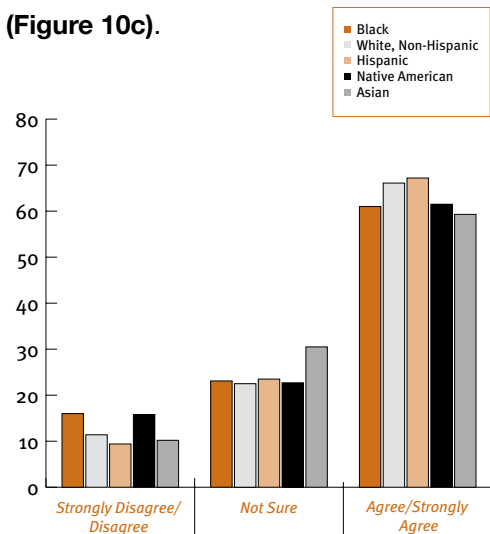


Figure 9b: Responses to "My teachers care whether I am successful or not." (% within ethnicity)

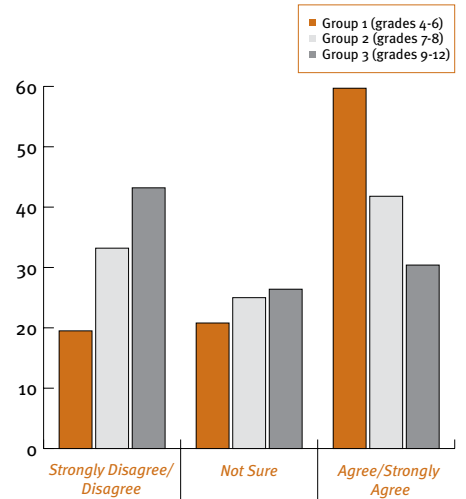


Figure 10a: Responses to "At my school, teachers are fair to everyone." (Age)

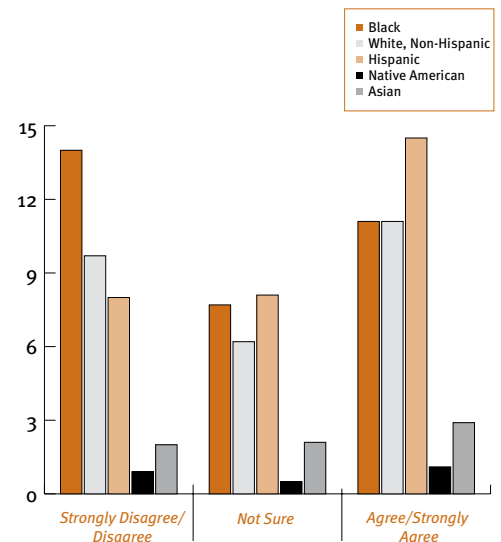


Figure 10b: Responses to "At my school, teachers are fair to everyone." (Ethnicity)

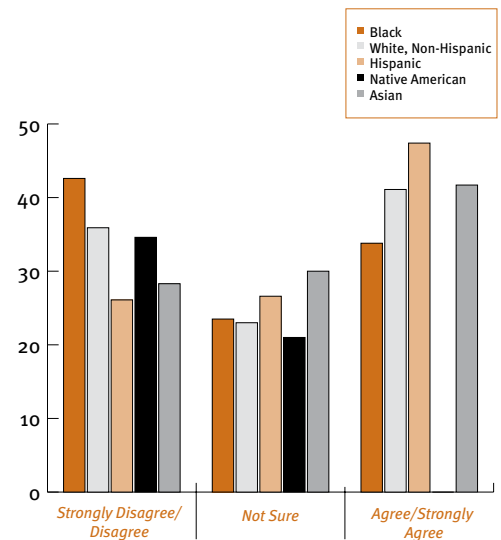


Figure 10c: Responses to "At my school, teachers are fair to everyone." (% within ethnicity)

- More than one-third of all respondents (approximately 35%) do not agree that teachers are fair to everyone (**Figure 10d**).
- One in four students (24.7%) is not sure whether teachers are uniformly fair (**Figure 10d**).

- More than two-thirds of all respondents (68.3%), regardless of ethnicity, say they enjoy learning at their school (**Figure 11a**).
- One-fifth (20.4%) of all Native American students and almost as many white students (18.8%), on the other hand, say they do not enjoy learning at their school, compared with only 12.4% of Hispanic students (**Figure 11b**).

- Eight out of 10 students surveyed (79.9%) surveyed plan to continue their education after high school (**Figure 12a**).
- 16.3% of the students surveyed are uncertain of their expectations after high school, and only 3.6% say they do not plan to attend a junior college or university (**Figure 12a**).

- 85.6% of Asian students look forward to continuing their education, compared with only 71.8% of Native Americans (**Figure 12b**).

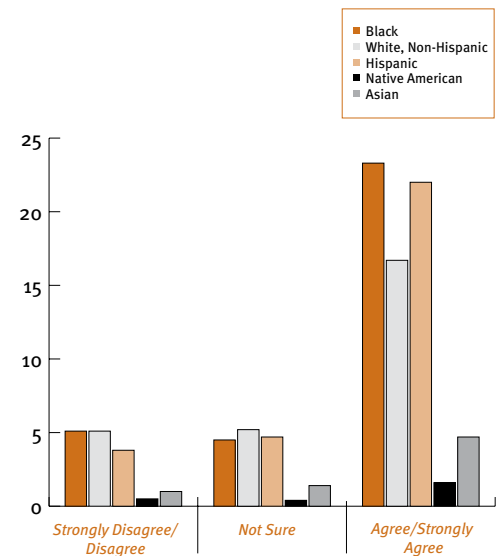


Figure 11a: Responses to “I enjoy learning at my school.” (Ethnicity)

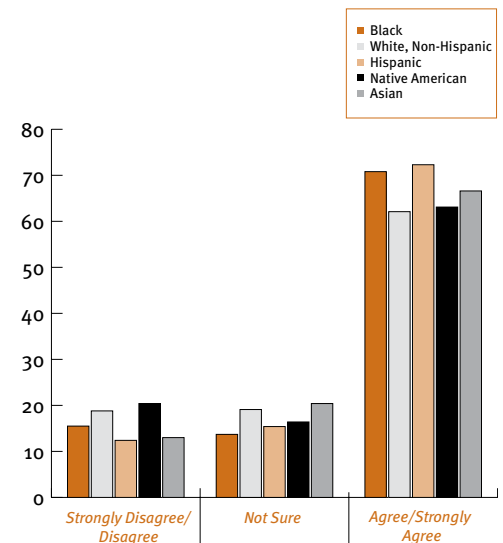


Figure 11b: Responses to “I enjoy learning at my school.” (% within ethnicity)

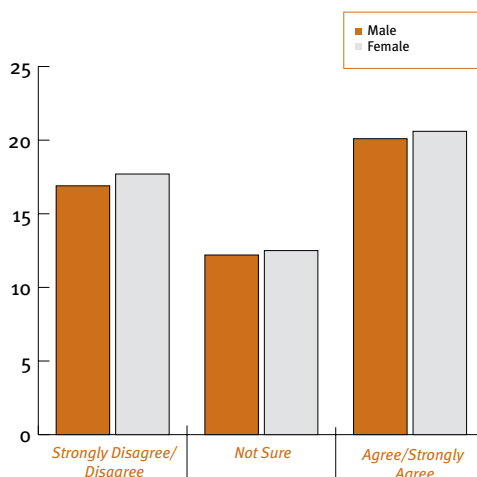


Figure 10d: Responses to “At my school, teachers are fair to everyone.” (Gender)

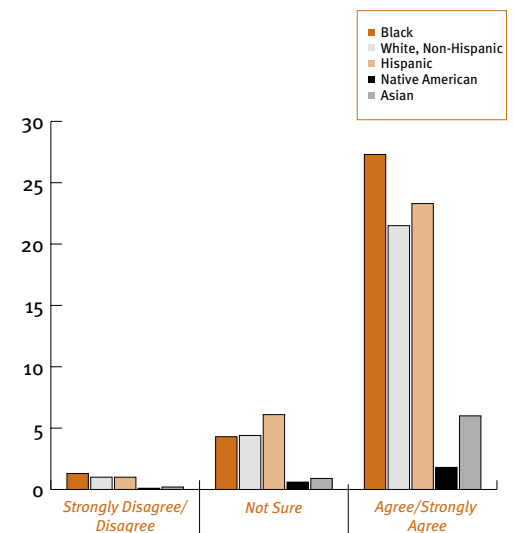


Figure 12a: Responses to “I will continue my education at a junior college or university.” (Ethnicity)

- Three out of four students surveyed (75.1%) believe that they will live beyond the age of 25 (**Figure 13a**).
- Only 68.6% of Hispanic respondents believe they will live that long, compared with 82.5% of white respondents (**Figure 13b**).
- Twice as many Native American students (8.1%) as white and Asian students (3.6% and 3.7% respectively) do not believe they will live beyond the age of 25 (**Figure 13b**).

- 61.7% of the students surveyed are hopeful about the future of the nation (**Figure 14a**).
- 50.4% of Asian students are hopeful for the future of the nation, compared with 63.9% of both Hispanic and white students (**Figure 14b**).
- More than one-quarter (27.6%) of all respondents are uncertain about the future; Asian students account for 35% of students in this group (**Figure 14b**).

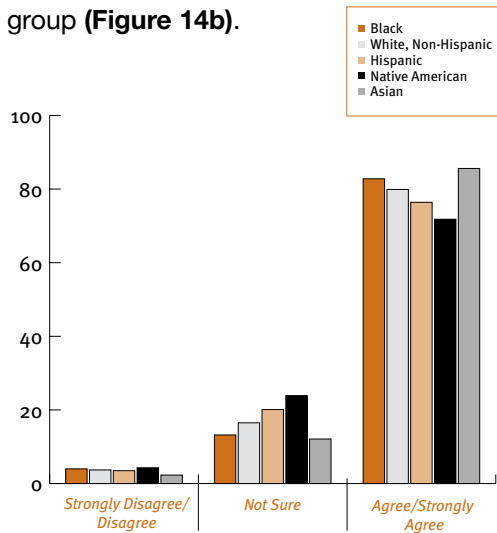


Figure 12b: Responses to “I will continue my education at a junior college or university.” (% within ethnicity)

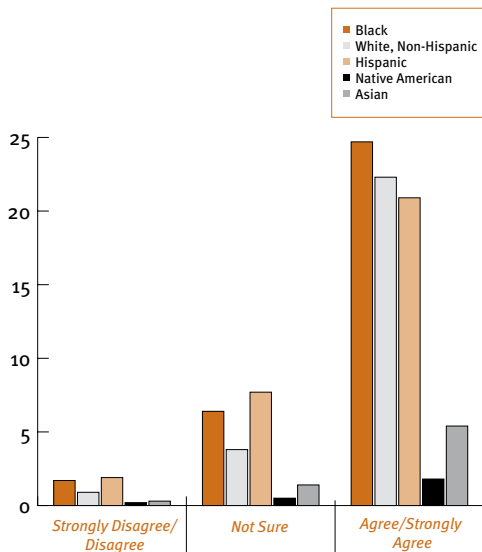


Figure 13a: Responses to “I believe that I will live beyond the age of 25 years.” (Ethnicity)

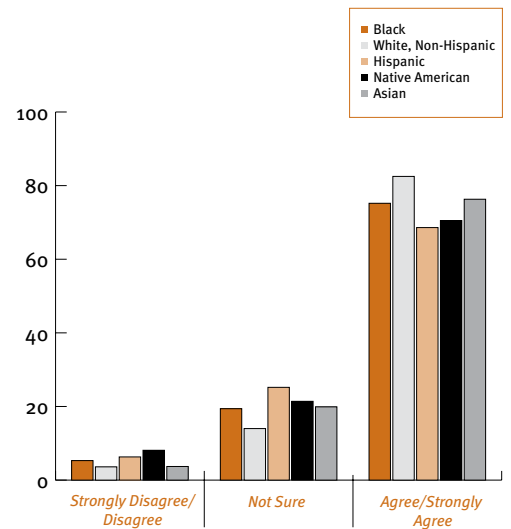


Figure 13b: Responses to “I believe that I will live beyond the age of 25 years.” (% within ethnicity)

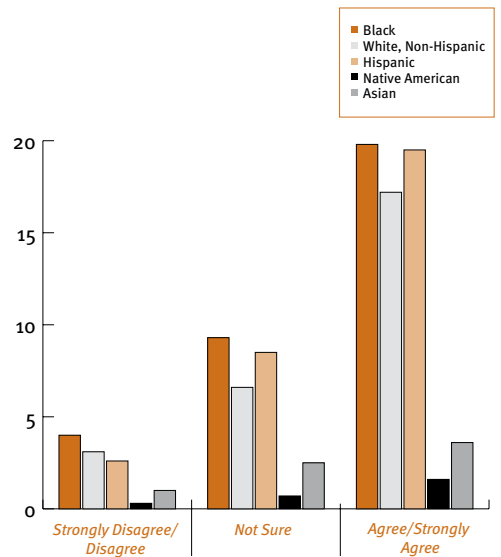


Figure 14a: Responses to “I am hopeful about the future of the United States.” (Ethnicity)

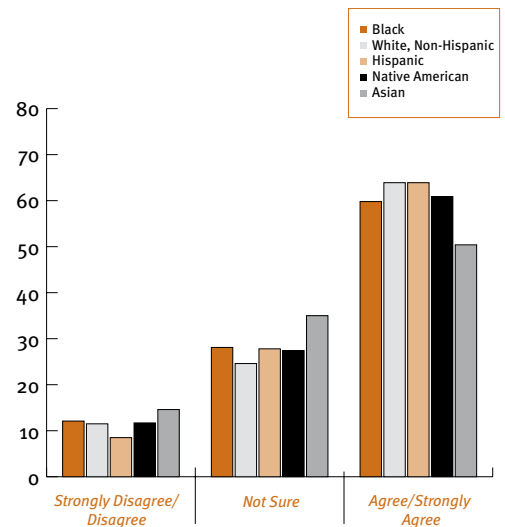
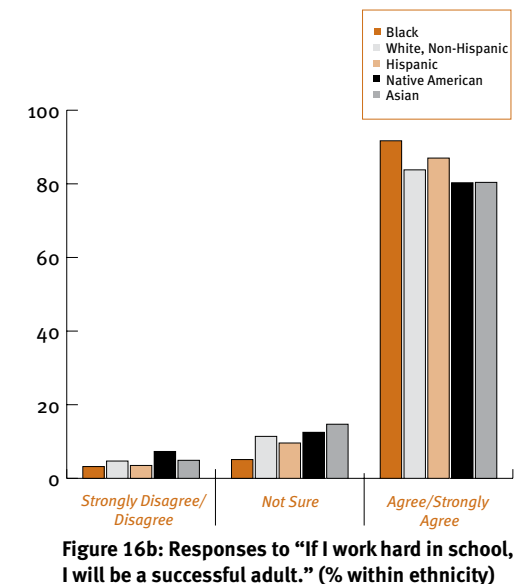
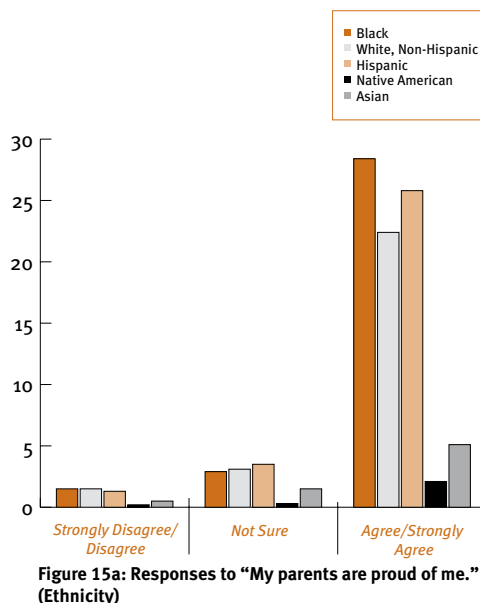
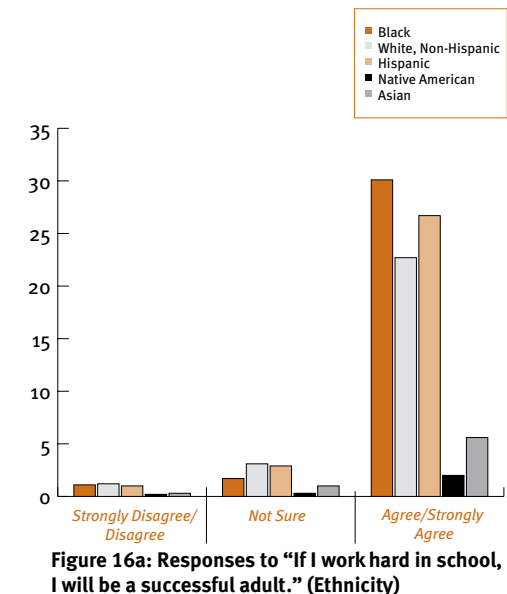
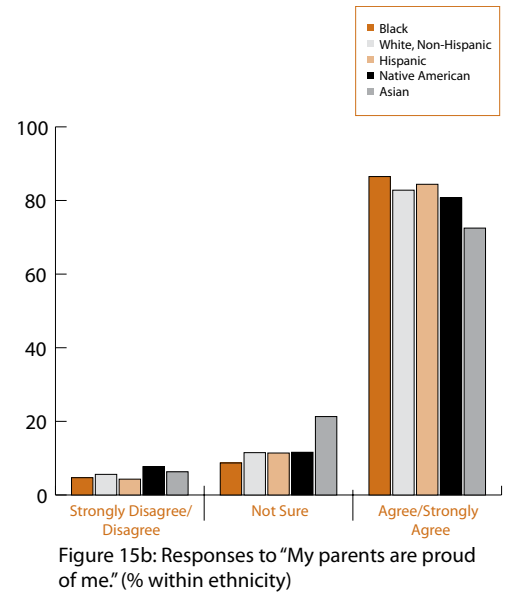


Figure 14b: “I am hopeful about the future of the United States.” (% within ethnicity)

- More than eight out of 10 students surveyed (83.8%) say their parents are proud of them (**Figure 15a**).
- 86.5% of African-American students agree or strongly agree that their parents are proud of them, compared with 72.5% of Asian students (**Figure 15b**).
- About one in 10 students surveyed (11.3%) are unsure if their parents are proud of them (**Figure 15a**).
- One in five Asian students surveyed (21.3%) are unsure if their parents are proud of them, compared with 8.7% of African-American students and about 12% for all other ethnic groups (**Figure 15b**).
- 87.1% of all students surveyed believe that they will be successful adults if they work hard in school (**Figure 16a**).
- 91.7% of African-American students believe that hard work will lead to success in adulthood, compared with about 80.4% of Asian and Native American students (**Figure 16b**).
- Almost three times as many Asian respondents (14.7%) as African-American respondents (5.1%) are not sure whether working hard in school will make them successful (**Figure 16b**).
- Only 3.8% of all respondents do not believe they will be successful adults if they work hard in school (**Figure 16b**).



- Almost two-thirds of all students surveyed (63.6%) say they look forward to attending school (**Figure 17a**).
- 22% of all respondents do not look forward to attending school, while 14.4% are unsure (**Figure 17a**).
- Twice as many white students (31.8%) as Hispanic students (14.8%) say they do not look forward to attending school (**Figure 17b**).

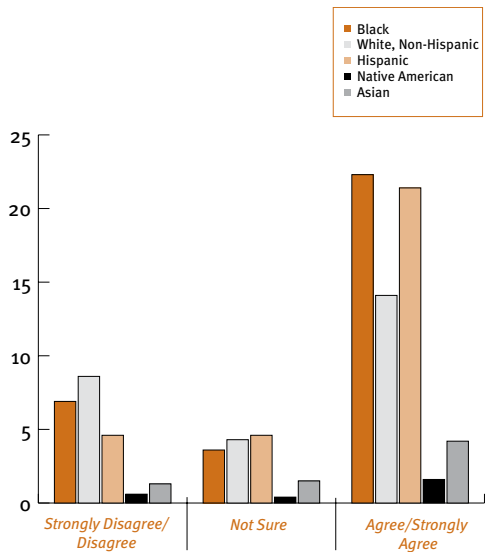


Figure 17a: Responses to “I look forward to coming to school most days.” (Ethnicity)

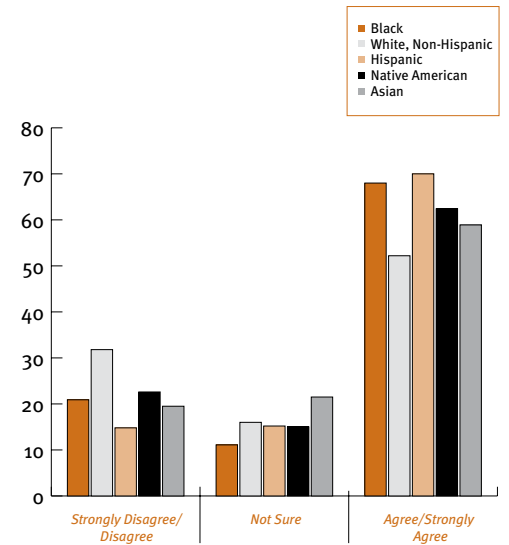


Figure 17b: Responses to “I look forward to coming to school most days.” (% within ethnicity)

Racial Self-Concept

"In my opinion, it doesn't matter what race you are. If you try hard, you can succeed."
- High school student

Researchers who have examined some aspect of racial identity with African-American adults and children argue that African-American students are more likely than white students to encounter barriers to healthy racial identity development (Helms, 1989; Parham, 1989; Parham & Helms, 1985; Smith, 1989; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). Many scholars of racial self-concept have proposed that, for black youth, racial identity has a considerable impact on achievement, motivation, and attitudes toward school (Ford, Harris, Schuerger, 1983; Smith, 1989; Exum, 1979; Colangelo & Exum, 1979, Exum & Colangelo, 1981). In addition, positive academic achievement among African-American students has been linked to higher levels of racial and ethnic pride (Phillips, E., 2003).

The following section presents the reaction to statements posed to gather students' racial self concept in an urban setting:

- Eight out of 10 respondents (80.7%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that they wish they were of another race (**Figure 18a**).
- The youngest students are least sure: 16.1% of those in grades 4-6 are not sure whether they wish they were of another race (**Figure 18a**).
- Only 7.1% of all respondents agree or strongly agree that they wish they were of another race (**Figure 18a**).

- More than one in 10 of all respondents are not sure whether they wish they were of a different race (**Figure 18b**).

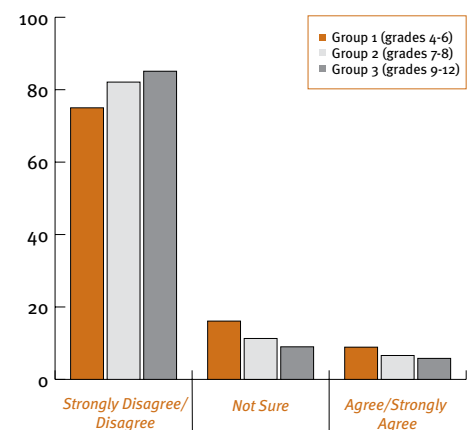


Figure 18a: Responses to "I wish that I were of a different race." (Age)

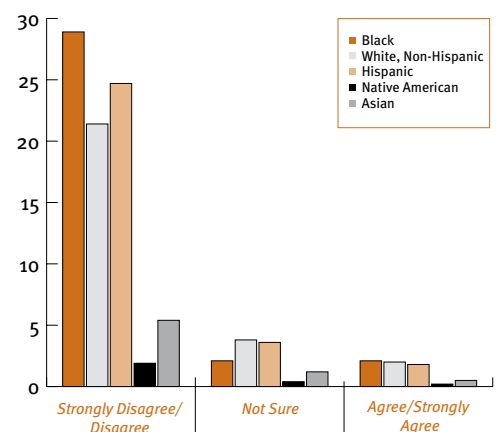


Figure 18b: Responses to "I wish that I were of a different race." (Ethnicity)

- 17.2% of Asian students were unsure, compared with 6.5% of their African-American counterparts (**Figure 18c**).
- Almost one in 10 Native American respondents (9.7%) agree or strongly agree that they wish they were of another race (**Figure 18c**).
- 87.2% of African-American respondents strongly disagree or disagree with that they wish they were of another race, compared with 76.8% of Asian students and 78.8% of white students (**Figure 18c**).

- More than one in 10 respondents (12.1%) believe students of a different race generally do better in school than they do (**Figure 19a**).
- More than half of all respondents (56.1%) do not believe that students who are of a different race generally do better in school (**Figure 19a**).
- About 32% of all respondents are not sure whether students of another race generally do better in school (**Figure 19a**).

- 55.9% of all respondents do not believe that students of another race do better in school (**Figure 19b**).
- 32.3% of all students surveyed are unsure as to whether or not students of another race do better in school (**Figure 19b**).
- More than twice as many African-American students (15.7%) agree or strongly agree that children of other races generally do better in school as do white students (7%) (**Figure 19c**).

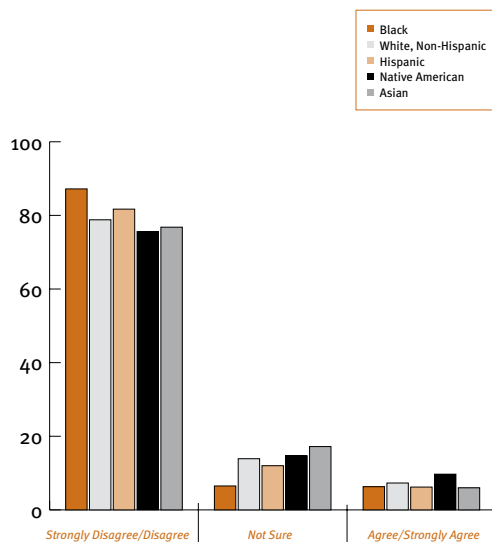


Figure 18c: Responses to "I wish that I were of a different race." (% within ethnicity)

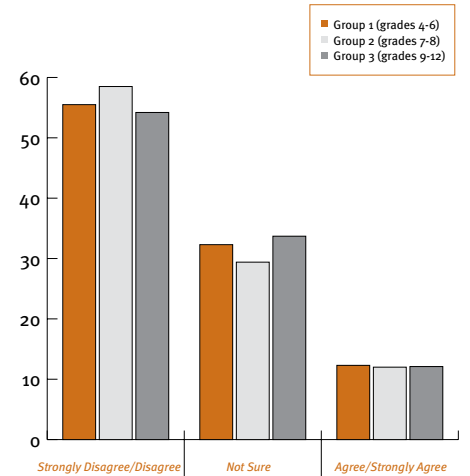


Figure 19a: Responses to "Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do." (Age)

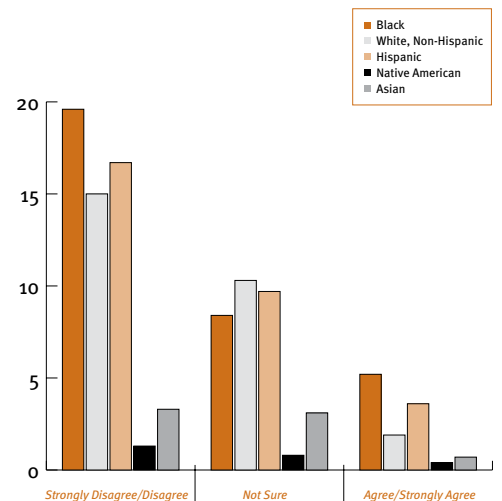


Figure 19b: Responses to "Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do." (Ethnicity)

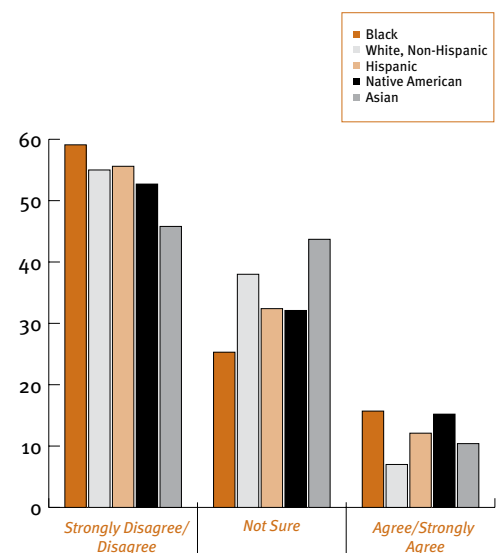


Figure 19c: Responses to "Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do." (% within ethnicity)

- More than one-third of all students surveyed (35.4%) believe there are races of children who are smarter than others (**Figure 20a**).
- Almost as many (33.4%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that there are races of children who are smarter than others (**Figure 20a**).
- 41.5% of all Asian respondents agree or strongly agree that there are races of children who are smarter than others, compared with 31.7% of white respondents (**Figure 20b**).
- An equal percentage (about 37%) of African-American students agree as disagree with this statement (**Figure 20b**).

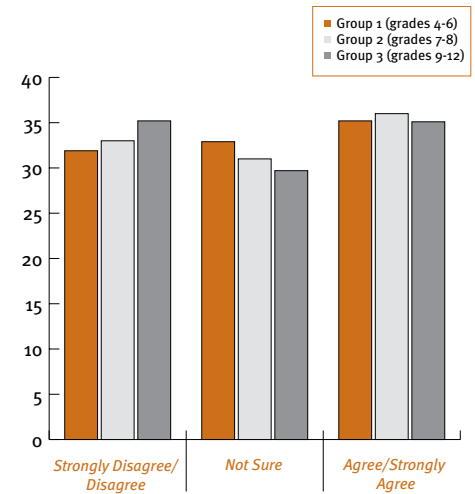


Figure 20a: Responses to “There are races of children who are smarter than others.” (Age)

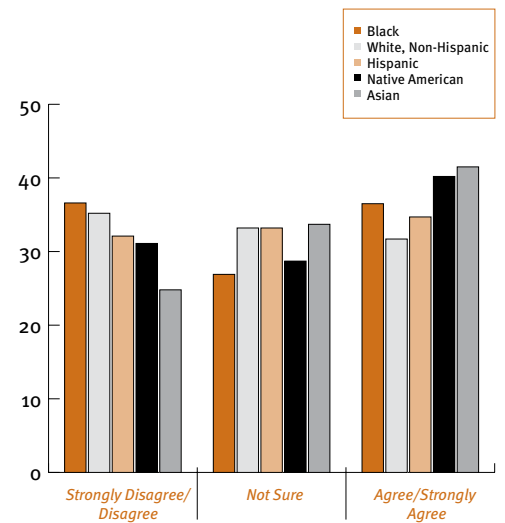


Figure 20b: Responses to “There are races of children who are smarter than others.” (% within ethnicity)

General Climate

*"I like going to school,
and I like my teacher."
- Elementary school student*

Perceptions about school climate—the social climate, atmosphere, or personality of the learning environment (Moos, 1979)—affect teacher morale and student achievement. Positive school climate benefits students, teachers, and staff. In a positive environment, teachers are motivated to teach, and students are motivated to learn (Bulach, 1994). Put simply, school climate influences the learning environment of the school and the achievement of students (Bosser, 1998; Brookover et al., 1978; Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Stedman, 1987). Research shows a strong correlation between parent and family involvement in schools and children's academic achievement, attendance, attitude, and continued education (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Hickman, 1996).

The following section presents the reaction to statements posed to gather students' perceptions of the general school climate in an urban setting:

- About 44% of students in grades 4-6 say an adult visits their school often, compared with 35% of students in grades 7-8 and 28% of those in grades 9-12 (**Figure 21a**).
- Almost half of all respondents (49.9%) do not have an adult visiting their school regularly (**Figure 21b**).
- Just over one-third of respondents (33.7%) say an adult comes to their school often; the highest percentage of students who say this are African American (13.5%) (**Figure 21b**).

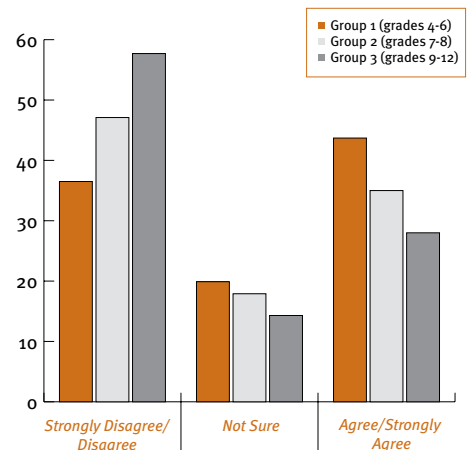


Figure 21a: Responses to "An adult in my family (or someone who is taking care of me) visits my school often." (Age)

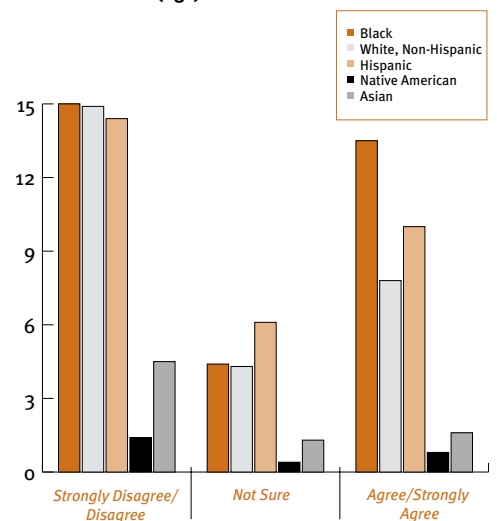


Figure 21b: Responses to "An adult in my family (or someone who is taking care of me) visits my school often." (Ethnicity)

- 58.6% of Asian children do not have an adult visiting their school on a regular basis, compared with 45.6% of African-American children (**Figure 21c**).
- Less than one quarter (22.5%) of Asian students do have an adult that visits their school often, compared with 40.9% of African-American students and 32.9% of Hispanic students (**Figure 21c**).
- 24.7% of respondents say the children in their school do not live in their neighborhood (**Figure 22a**).
- More African-American students than other students agree or strongly agree that the children in their schools live in their neighborhood (53.1%); the number is lowest for Asian students (34.9%) (**Figure 22b**).
- Slightly more than one quarter of all students surveyed (26.6%) are not sure whether the children at their schools live in their neighborhood (**Figure 22a**).

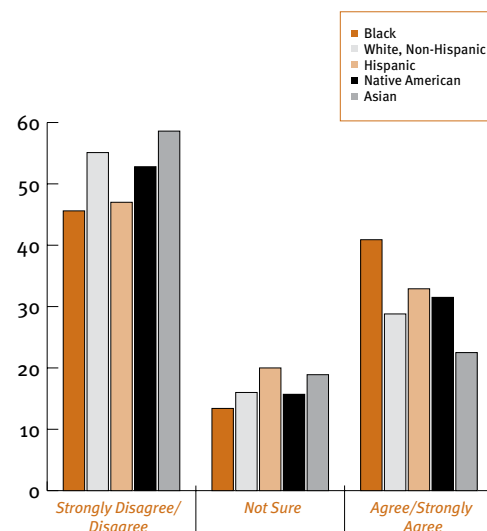


Figure 21c: Responses to “An adult in my family (or someone who is taking care of me) visits my school often.” (% within ethnicity)

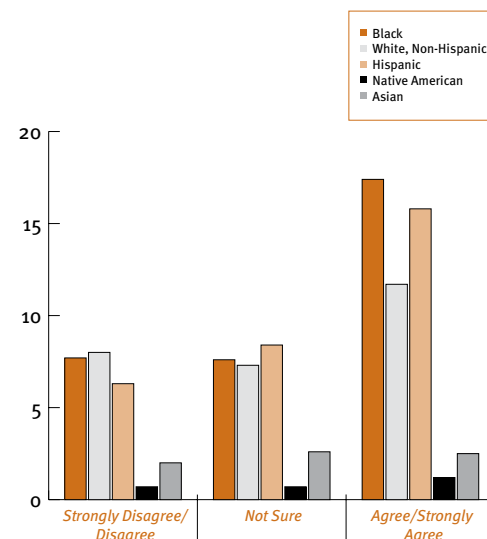


Figure 22a: Responses to “The children at my school live in my neighborhood.” (Ethnicity)

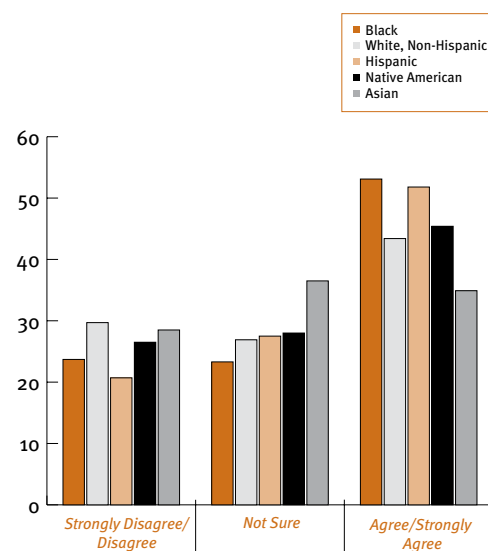


Figure 22b: Responses to “The children at my school live in my neighborhood.” (% within ethnicity)

For further information about the methodology and findings, or to request a copy of the climate survey instrument, please contact:

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Appendix

Annotated Bibliography

Safety

Christle, C., Nelson, C. M., & Jolivette, K. (2004). School characteristics related to the use of suspension. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 27 (4), 509-526.

This study used both qualitative and quantitative procedures to examine suspension rates in 161 Kentucky middle schools. A sample of 20 schools with high suspension rates and one of 20 schools with low suspension rates were compared using a multivariate analysis. Information from four schools selected from each group as case examples provided detailed descriptions of the characteristics of schools with high and low rates of suspension. A theme that emerged from this study was the strong influence of school leadership and governance on student achievement.

Kitsantas, A. & Ware, H. (2004). Students' perceptions of school safety: Effects by community, school environment, and substance use variables. *Journal of Early Adolescence*, 24 (4), 412-430.

This study surveyed 3,092 sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders using the School Safety and Discipline component of the National Household Education Survey. The relationships among student perceptions of community safety, school environment, substance use, and school safety were examined using a path analysis. The analysis showed that the strongest predictors of student perceptions of safety and substance use in school are perceived safety in the school compared to in the neighborhood; community safety; and school climate. The weakest predictor of student perceptions of school safety and substance abuse is actions taken by the school to enhance school safety.

Leventhal, T. & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2004). A randomized study of neighborhood effects on low-income children's educational outcomes. *Developmental Psychology*, 40 (4), 488-507.

This article examines experimental data on moving from high- to low-poverty neighborhoods and how such a move affects low-income minority children's achievements, grade retention, and suspensions/expulsions. Using standardized assessment outcomes as a measure, it was evident that moving to low-poverty neighborhoods had a positive effect on 11- to 18-year-old males, compared to their peers in high-poverty neighborhoods. School safety (as reported by parents) and time spent on homework (as reported by students) accounted for part of the increase in the boys' achievement in low-poverty schools.

Luiselli, J.K., Putnam, R.F., & Handler, M.W. (2005). Whole-school positive behavior support: Effects on student discipline problems and academic performance. *Educational Psychology, 25* (2-3), 183-198.

The basis of the study was a whole-school model for positive behavior support that emphasizes improving instructional methods, formulating behavioral expectations, increasing classroom activity engagement, reinforcing positive performance, and monitoring efficacy using data-based evaluation. With the use of this model, discipline problems decreased over several years in a predominately African-American urban elementary school. During the same years, academic performance—as measured by standardized tests of reading and mathematics—increased.

Ozer, E.J. & Weinstein, R.S. (2004). Urban adolescents' exposure to community violence: The role of support, school safety, and social constraints in a school-based sample of boys and girls. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, 33* (3), 463-476.

This study surveyed 349 young adolescents from nine urban middle schools regarding recent exposure to violence in the community and in other settings, protective factors, and current psychological functioning. A majority of the adolescents reported witnessing or being a victim of one violent event in the previous six months. The results suggested perceived school safety as one protective factor between exposure to violence and specific dimensions of psychological functioning.

Bullying

Dake, J.A., Price, J.H., Telljohann, S.K., & Funk J.B. (2003). Teacher perception and practices regarding school bullying prevention. *Journal of School Health, 73* (9), 347-355.

A random sample of 359 teachers nationwide was examined regarding their perceptions and practices concerning school bullying prevention activities. The only activity concerning bullying conducted by most teachers was a serious talk with the bully. Two other well-proven whole-school approaches to prevent bullying were used by less than one-third of teachers. This was found to be in opposition of their perception that bullying is a serious student behavior, second only to drug use.

Eisenberg, M. E., Nuemark-Sztainer, D., & Perry, C. L. (2003). Peer harassment, school connectedness, and academic achievement. *Journal of School Health, 73* (8), 311-316.

This study describes peer harassment in a multiethnic sample of 4,746 seventh- through 12-graders in urban and suburban schools. The relationship between experiencing peer harassment and both school connectedness and achievement was explored. Multivariate analysis controlled for gender, grade level, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The findings indicate that most students face peer harassment in some form. Students who disliked school reported more mistreatment, therefore missing out on the benefits of connectedness. The link between academic achievement and enjoyment of school was also correlated.

Schreck, C.J., Miller, J. M., & Gibson, C. (2003). Trouble in the school yard: A study of the risk factors of victimization at school. *49* (3), 460-484.

The focus of this study determined factors that single out junior and senior high school students as victims of theft or violence at school. While victimization at school reflects the community, school, and individual char-

acteristics, a strong predictor of victimization was found to be the presence of delinquent students attending the school. Further, students who associated with delinquent friends were more likely to be victims.

Trust, Respect, and Ethos of Caring

Kuklinski, M.R. & Weinstein, R. S. (2001). Classroom and developmental differences in a path model of teacher expectancy effects. *Child Development*, 72 (5), 1554-1578.

This study evaluated a path model of teacher expectancy effects using a sample of 376 first- through fifth-grade urban elementary students. Findings helped to clarify the mediating role of children's expectations with respect to indirect teacher expectancy effects on achievement at the end of the study. Also, when achievement at the beginning of the study was controlled, the relation between teacher expectation and children's self-expectations did not emerge until fifth grade, and only in classrooms where messages regarding performance were clear.

Lane, K.L., Givner, C.C., & Pierson, M.R. (2004). Teacher expectation of student behavior: Social skills necessary for success in elementary school classrooms. *The Journal of Special Education*, 38 (2), 104-110.

Understanding social and behavioral expectations teachers hold for students is the focus of this study.

Four elementary schools from two districts in southern California participated, with a total of 126 teachers completing a brief and anonymous questionnaire. Seven important social skills were generated through this sample, and comparison of novice and experienced teachers did not reveal a significant difference in expectations identified as critical to success.

Lane, K.L., Pierson, M.R., & Givner, C.C. (2003). Teacher expectations of student behavior: Which skills do elementary and secondary teachers deem necessary for success in the classroom? *Education and the Treatment of Children*, 26 (4), 413-430.

This study attempts to identify student behavior that K-12 teachers identify as important for success in their classrooms. The sample consisted of 366 teachers from eight schools in southern California. Using the Social Skills Rating System as well as demographic information, the authors found that teachers rated assertion skills significantly less crucial for success than self-control and cooperation skills. While teachers at all levels had similar expectations of student behavior, middle school teachers identified the fewest number of social skills critical for success and were also the most homogeneous in their expectations.

McKown, C. & Weinstein, R.S. (2002). Modeling the role of child ethnicity and gender in children's differential response to teacher expectations. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32 (1), 159-184.

The premise that teachers can develop differential expectations for students is tested in this study using gender and ethnicity of urban elementary students in the first, third, and fifth grades in the San Francisco Bay Area. The ethnicity of the sample students was limited to African American and Caucasian. The study looked at achievement data, teacher expectations in the fall for year-end achievement, teacher over- and underestimation of ability based on prior achievement, and child ethnicity. The results supported the prediction that, when students are over- and underestimated by their teacher, the teacher's expectations are moderated by the child's ethnicity and gender. This is especially true for African-American children, who are more likely to

confirm teacher underestimations of ability.

Turner, J.C. & Patrick, H. (2004). Motivational influences on student participation in classroom learning activities. *Teachers College Record*, 106 (9), 1759-1785.

Understanding the complex interactions that support student learning and learning-related beliefs and behaviors is the focus of this research. Student characteristics and teacher instruction were analyzed to pinpoint the important student work habit of participation in classroom learning activities. Applying achievement goal theory to student participation leads to the expectation that students with high mastery goals participate actively through self-motivation and that students with high performance goals focus on how they appear to others and will therefore participate to reflect their abilities. However, the findings of this study illustrate that these expectations are moderated by the occasions made available or required of the students by their teacher. Teacher differential expectations and patterns of calling on students appear to influence students' achievement goals in their participation pattern.

Racial Self-Concept

Brinson, S. (2001). Racial attitudes and racial preferences of African American preschool children as related to the ethnic identity of primary caregivers. *Contemporary Education*, 72 (2), 15-20.

This study examined the relationship between primary caregivers' ethnic identity and ethnic identity behaviors along with their preschool children's racial attitudes and racial preferences. Results revealed that African-American caregivers must have a philosophy and model of African-American behaviors to affect young children. Although African-American children exhibited more positive racial attitudes toward African Americans, there was a pattern of Anglo-American preference by African-American preschoolers.

Cokley, K.O. (2002). Ethnicity, gender and academic self-concept: A preliminary examination of academic disidentification and implications for psychologists. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8 (4), 378-388.

The sample for this study included 359 African-American and 229 European-American college students at two predominately white colleges and universities and two historically black colleges and universities. Analysis revealed that African-American male students who are academically strong detach their self-concept from their academic performance to protect themselves from confirming negative stereotypes. This behavior is consistent with Steele's (1992) disidentification theory.

Rabiner, D.L., Murray, D.W., Schmid, L., & Malone, P.S. (2004). An exploration of the relationships between ethnicity, attention problems, and academic achievement. *School Psychology Review*, 33 (4), 498-509.

This study focused on inattention as a significant factor associated with underachievement. This relationship was explored across Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic first-graders in a sample of 33 teachers rating more than 600 students on academic achievement, inattentive classroom behavior, oppositional behavior, hyperactivity, and anxiety. The findings indicate that teacher ratings of inattentive behavior are significantly higher for African-American students than for Caucasians and Hispanics. Further, problems with attention are strongly associated with achievement difficulties.

Smith, E.P., Atkins, J., & Connell, C.M. (2003). Family, school and community factors and relationships to racial-ethnic attitudes and academic achievement. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 32 (1-2), 159-174.

Family, school, and community factors related to children's racial-ethnic attitudes and achievement were examined in this study through a sample of 98 African-American fourth-grade children, their parents, and their teachers. While the parents' educational level was statistically significant to their children's achievement, students whose teachers exhibited higher levels of racial-ethnic trust and perceived fewer barriers due to race and ethnicity showed more trust and optimism. Children with higher racial-ethnic pride exhibited higher achievement as measured by grades and standardized test scores. Children exhibiting racial distrust and perception of barriers due to race had reduced performance.

Wasonga, T., Christman, D.E., & Kilmer, Lloyd. (2003). Ethnicity, gender and age: Predicting resilience and academic achievement among urban high school students. *American Secondary Education*, 32 (1), 62-74. This study gathered data through a questionnaire from 480 high school students regarding protective factors predicting resilience and academic achievement. The impact of specific protective factors—such as home, school, peer, and community—on resilience and academic achievement was demonstrated. Student relationships with adults and peers were better predictors of resilience than achievement and pointed to the need for children to experience a positive involvement with others. This involvement, in the form of a caring, supportive school community, would in turn strengthen identity, autonomy, and regulation of behavior.

Wong, C.A., Eccles, J.S., & Sameroff, A. (2003). The influence of ethnic discrimination and ethnic identification on African American adolescents' school and socioemotional adjustment. *Journal of Personality*, 71 (6), 1197-1232.

The data for this study was collected from an economically diverse sample of African-American adolescents at the beginning of the seventh grade and after the completion of the eighth grade. The study found that students who experienced racial discrimination from teachers or peers showed declines in grades and academic self-concepts and made more friends who were not interested in school and displayed problem behaviors.

General Climate

Brand, S., Feiner, R., Shim, M., Seitsinger, A. & Dumas, T. (2003). Middle school improvement and reform: Development and validation of a school-level assessment of climate, cultural pluralism, and school safety. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95 (3), 571-588.

The relationship between various dimensions of climate and social and academic adaptation of sixth- through eighth-graders was explored in this study in order to develop a reliable and stable measure of students' experiences of whole school climate. Two studies were conducted; the first developed the measure and the second replicated the dimensions at the school level in a larger sample. The second study considered the consistency of climate perceptions across different demographic subpopulations in the same school and examined the stability of school level climate scores over time. Findings indicate that students' behavioral adjustment suggests that their experiences of climate are related to problems with attendance and problems with classroom behavior.

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About NSBA

The National School Boards Association is a not-for-profit Federation of state associations of school boards across the United States. Our mission is to foster excellence and equity in public education through school board leadership. We achieve that mission by representing the school board perspective before federal government agencies and with national organizations that affect education, and by providing vital information and services to state associations of school boards and local school boards throughout the nation.

NSBA advocates local school boards as the ultimate expression of grassroots democracy. NSBA supports the capacity of each school board—acting on behalf of and in close concert with the people of its community—to envision the future of education in its community, to establish a structure and environment that allow all students to reach their maximum potential, to provide accountability for the community on performance in the schools, and to serve as the key community advocate for children and youth and their public schools.

Founded in 1940, NSBA now through the Federation of State Associations represents 95,000 local school board members, virtually all of whom are elected. These local officials govern 14,890 local school districts serving the nation's more than 47 million public school students.

About the Council of Urban Boards of Education

For almost four decades, the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) has been at the forefront in helping urban school districts strive for excellence. Established in 1967 by the National School Boards Association's Board of Directors, CUBE is the only national membership organization governed solely by urban school board members and dedicated to the needs and interests of urban school boards. CUBE's mission is to create opportunities for urban school board leaders to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective policy makers and advocates for excellence and equity in public education.

CUBE represents more than 100 urban school districts in 38 states. Our member districts educate nearly 8 million students in more than 12,000 schools with a collective budget of nearly \$80 billion. CUBE helps urban school board leaders find solutions to challenges at the local level and seeks to improve their policy making effectiveness. CUBE creates a forum for urban school board members to share innovative practices through issues seminars, conferences, legislative advocacy, research projects, professional networking opportunities, specialized publications, and local governance and policy assistance.

About the CUBE Urban Student Achievement Task Force

The CUBE Urban Student Achievement Task Force studies the academic achievement gap between urban and non-urban students, exploring programs that are helping students achieve and bringing attention to successful urban schools.

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