Title

Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth: Who is Most at Risk and What Can Schools Do?

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Publication Date

2024-05-01

REPORT

MAY 2024

Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth

Who Is Most at Risk and What Can Schools Do?

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Executive Summary

Bullying is a persistent yet overlooked problem facing Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth in California. In this report, we pinpoint, for the first time, AAPI groups at highest risk of bullying. Further, we identify which regions have the highest rates of anti-AAPI bullying. Finally, we examine ways to combat anti-AAPI bullying, focusing on what schools can do to improve their school climates and ways districts can strengthen their anti-bullying resources geared toward AAPI students and families. Our findings are based on statewide data from the California Healthy Kids Survey that includes over 300,000 AAPI youth in 9th and 11th grades who were surveyed between the 2015 and 2021 school years.

Findings About Anti-AAPI Bullying Risks

Our analyses yielded three key findings about the risks of bullying:

- Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NH and PI) youth endure the highest rates of bullying compared to all AAPI students and all students statewide.
- Anti-AAPI bullying rates initially declined between 2019 and 2020, but rebounded after schools reopened for in-person learning. Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian youth rebounded the most, exceeding pre-pandemic levels.
- California's Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley, and Inland Empire have the highest rates of anti-AAPI bullying.

Recommendations

Schools serving Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and NH and PI youth should receive priority for more intensive and targeted anti-bullying supports and interventions. To combat anti-AAPI bullying, resources should also be targeted to areas where AAPI youth face the highest risks—the Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley, and the Inland Empire.

Findings About Combating Anti-AAPI Bullying Through Schools

We found that:

- AAPI students who feel more strongly connected to their schools and more strongly supported by adults at school have a lower risk of being bullied.
- Three districts stood out for their publicly available resources on their websites that addressed bullying, particularly for AAPI youth: Elk Grove, San Francisco, and Los Angeles Unified School Districts.
- Most districts offer anonymous online reporting systems for victims or witnesses of bullying.

Recommendations

We urge greater investment in initiatives and policies to strengthen school climate. Districts should consider ways to further enhance resources related to anti-AAPI hate as well as encourage use of their anonymous reporting systems to ensure that AAPI students and their families feel safe when reporting bullying.

Introduction

Bullying is a longstanding problem affecting many students in schools. While rising anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) hate across the United States has attracted public attention and scrutiny, bullying of AAPI youth has remained a persistent and pervasive problem throughout California's schools. Unfortunately, rates of bullying are highest for AAPI youth relative to peers from other racial and ethnic groups, with over a third (35%) of AAPI youth in 9th grade bullied between 2017 and 2019.[1] Although AAPI youth can be resilient in the face of bullying, the consequences of bullying can be harmful to their well-being, leading to anxiety[2,3], depression[4,2] and internalizing behavior problems,[3] effects that can extend well into adulthood.[3] The focus of this report is on understanding and addressing the unique challenges faced by AAPI youth, an underrepresented and marginalized group within the broader issue of school bullying.

Reducing anti-AAPI bullying throughout California will require a clear strategic plan. Yet, progress in tackling the problem has been limited because of two gaps in the evidence about anti-AAPI bullying:

1. At the state, district, and school levels, little information is available on who is at risk of bullying and where risks are highest. As a result, targeted resources and supports for AAPI groups and areas may be insufficient.
2. State-level evidence and guidance about what schools can do to prevent anti-AAPI bullying is scarce. Absent this guidance, schools continue to address bullying through broad-based policies that may be ineffective in reducing anti-AAPI bullying. At worse, certain strategies may be counterproductive to resolving the problem.

Report Purpose

Our report fills these two critical gaps in the evidence base on anti-AAPI bullying. We have generated new, data-driven evidence on anti-AAPI bullying with an eye toward solutions. The new evidence offered throughout this report can be used to establish a clear path forward in delineating statewide priorities and a blueprint to address anti-AAPI bullying.

This policy report is divided into three sections.

Section #1: The Risk of Anti-AAPI Bullying: Who and Where?

We answer four questions.

1. How do anti-AAPI bullying rates, overall and for each AAPI student subgroup, compare to statewide rates?
2. Which AAPI subgroups experienced the highest rates?
3. How did bullying rates change prior to and after school closures due to the pandemic?
4. Which California regions experience higher rates of anti-AAPI bullying?

Section #2: How Can School Climate Better Protect AAPI Youth from Bullying?

We answer one question:

1. Do AAPI students attending schools with more supportive school climates have a lower chance of being bullied?

Section #3: How Do Districtwide Anti-Bullying Resources Meet the Needs of AAPI Students and Families?

We answer one question:

1. Which districts have the most accessible bullying-related resources and online reporting systems for AAPI students and families?

Throughout this report, we focus on two forms of bullying: (1) bias-based bullying, and (2) cyberbullying. Bias-based bullying refers to unwanted aggressive acts—verbal, physical, or relational—targeting one's race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation[5] that are repeated over time and inflicted upon an individual with less social power.[6] Cyberbullying is the use of digital technologies, such as social media and mobile phones, to inflict intentional and repeated harm on others. Both forms of bullying have been shown to be detrimental to AAPI youth, leading to higher levels of anxiety[2] and depression.[4]

OUR DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Findings in this report are based on the seven most recent years (2015–6 to 2021–22 school years [SYs]) of data from the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a large-scale statewide survey of youth that has been conducted annually since 1997 and sponsored by California's Department of Education.

The target population for the CHKS were students in 9th and 11th grades and thus, throughout this report, our findings pertain to the sample of 9th and 11th graders that responded to the CHKS. Our sample of AAPI youth includes 9th and 11th graders who self-identify as AAPI. When pooled together, the seven waves of the CHKS yield an overall sample of over 300,000 students who self-identified as Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Further, we looked at AAPI ethnic subgroups, including youth who identify as Asian Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong), Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Additional methodological details of our analyses are included in the Methodological Appendix at the end of this report.

The Bullying of AAPI Youth: Background

Why Are AAPI Students Bullied?

AAPI students are bullied for many reasons. Some reasons are based on perceptions and judgments that others have about their race or ethnicity, their gender, sexual orientation, or perceived disability.[5] This is known as *bias-based bullying*. Other reasons can include perceptions and judgments about their cultural differences, language difficulties, social stereotypes, immigration status, religious beliefs, academic performance, physical appearance, and nonconformity to gender stereotypes.[7]

Notably, youth with multiple marginalized social identities are more vulnerable to the experiences and consequences of bias-based bullying.[8] For example, the incidence of bias-based victimization tends to be even greater for AAPI youth in California who are exploring their sexual orientation. Specifically, they report experiencing depressive symptoms at an overall rate 2.5 times higher than other AAPI youth who did not report being a victim of bias-based bullying.[9] Beyond their perceived identities, other individual-level factors also may influence their risk of bullying, such as their involvement in certain school extracurricular activities.[10,11]

Bullying also can be influenced by systems with which students interact on a daily basis: their schools and neighborhoods, as well as the broader social and political structures in their communities.[12] Increasingly, these broader determinants of bullying against AAPIs have been a focus of interest, especially in response to the surge in anti-AAPI hate in the wake of the pandemic.

Although the extent of anti-AAPI bullying during the pandemic is unclear, we do know that between March and July 2020, nearly three of every four 12–18 year olds who reported incidents of anti-AAPI behavior to stop AAPI hate had been targets of verbal harassment or name calling related to their race.[13] Further, during the pandemic, Asian American adolescents reported the highest rates of perceived racism in their lifetimes.[14] Many also have had to confront COVID-19 racial discrimination, both online and in person, which has been linked to higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder.[15]

What is the Role of Schools in Bullying?

Schools play a critical role in combatting bullying. School-wide policies and practices can shape the school's social environment in powerful ways, both in establishing norms for what is acceptable and setting clear consequences for inappropriate behaviors.

One way is via school climate—the overarching environment and quality of schools.[16] Positive school climates that have caring and supportive adults such as teachers, as well as clear and firm school rules, tend to have lower levels of bullying.[17] AAPI youth with supportive peers at school are less likely to be physically bullied (i.e., being hit or shoved). On the other hand, dangerous situations at school also can lead to higher risks of bullying—AAPI students who are exposed to gangs and engaged in physical fights at school face a higher risk of social bullying (i.e., being subjected to other students spreading rumors about them).[18]

Another way that schools can confront bullying is through enactment of policies based on statewide mandates. According to California's Education Code, schools are responsible for implementing bullying prevention strategies. They also must offer teacher training in bullying prevention and provide mental health supports for victims. In 2019, the state enacted bullying prevention legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 2291, which requires school districts to adopt "procedures for preventing acts of bullying, including cyberbullying," and to publicly post online training materials to support educators and student support staff in preventing bullying.[19] While a step in the right direction, these materials lack specific acknowledgement or documentation of bullying against AAPI youth, nor do they offer any guidance specific to safeguarding AAPI youth.

Establishing a Strategic Plan to Address Anti-AAPI Bullying

Any strategic plan to confront anti-AAPI bullying must have a foundation rooted in understanding the scope of the problem. It is crucial to identify who is at risk and where those risks are. This information is essential in identifying where to channel resources to areas most in need. Any strategic plan also must show evidence about effective actions that schools can initiate to combat bullying and where existing anti-bullying efforts need to be improved. In the following three sections, we offer new evidence on the scope of the problem, what schools can do, and where improvement is needed. Our hope is that this new information can be used to spur action and inform a longer range plan at intentionally combatting anti-AAPI bullying throughout the state.

Section #1: The Risk of Anti-AAPI Bullying: Who and Where?

Finding #1: Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and NH and PI Youth Have the Highest Rates of Bullying Compared to All AAPI Youth and All Youth Statewide.

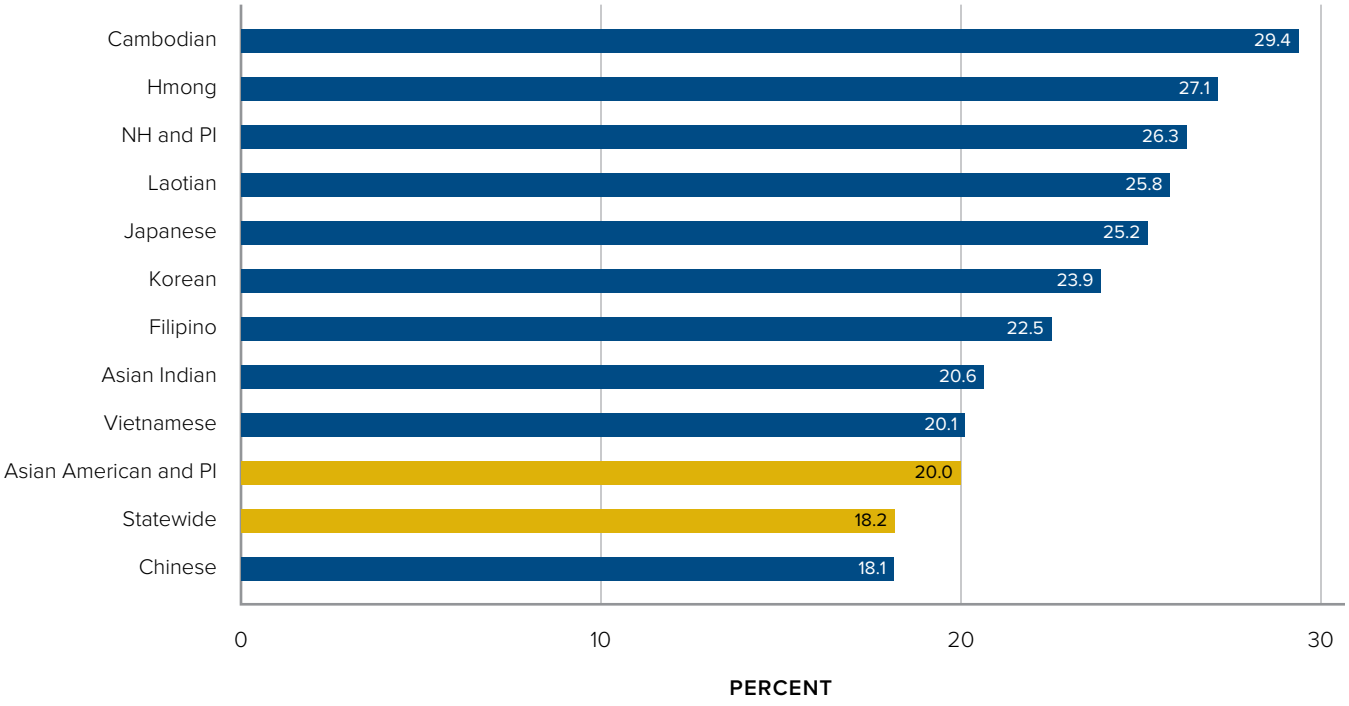
Rates of bullying of AAPI youth (9th and 11th graders), as a whole, are comparable to all youth (9th and 11th graders) statewide. About 2 out of 10 AAPI youth have been targets of bias-based bullying and 1 out of 10 have been cyberbullied (Figures 1 and 2).

However, treating AAPIs as a single monolithic group overlooks higher rates experienced by most AAPI subgroups. Notably, Cambodian youth have the highest rates of bullying relative to all AAPI youth and all students statewide. Nearly one in three Cambodian youth (29%) has experienced bias-based bullying, 1.5 times the statewide rate for all youth. About one in five (20%) has been cyberbullied, 1.7 times that of all youth statewide.

Hmong, NH and PI, and Laotian youth also experience higher rates of bias-based bullying—about 9 percentage points greater than the statewide rate for all youth. For Laotian youth, cyberbullying rates are 7.5 percentage points higher than the statewide rate for all youth.

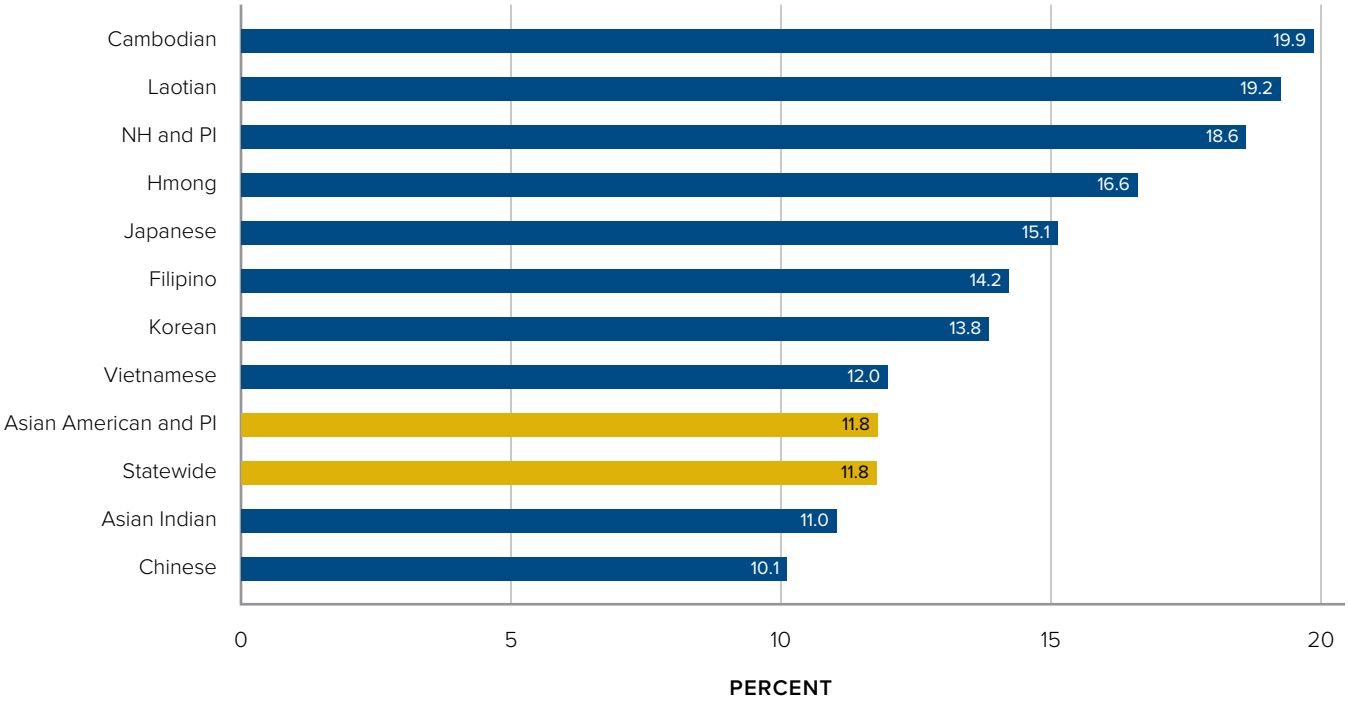
Given that Cambodian, Hmong, and NH and PI students face higher risks of bullying, the state and districts need to prioritize them for more intensive and targeted anti-bullying supports and interventions.

FIGURE 1. Bias-Based Bullying of California's AAPI 9th and 11th Graders, 2015–2021 School Years



Source. California Healthy Kids Survey

FIGURE 2. Cyberbullying of California's AAPI 9th and 11th Graders, 2015–2021 School Years



Source. California Healthy Kids Survey

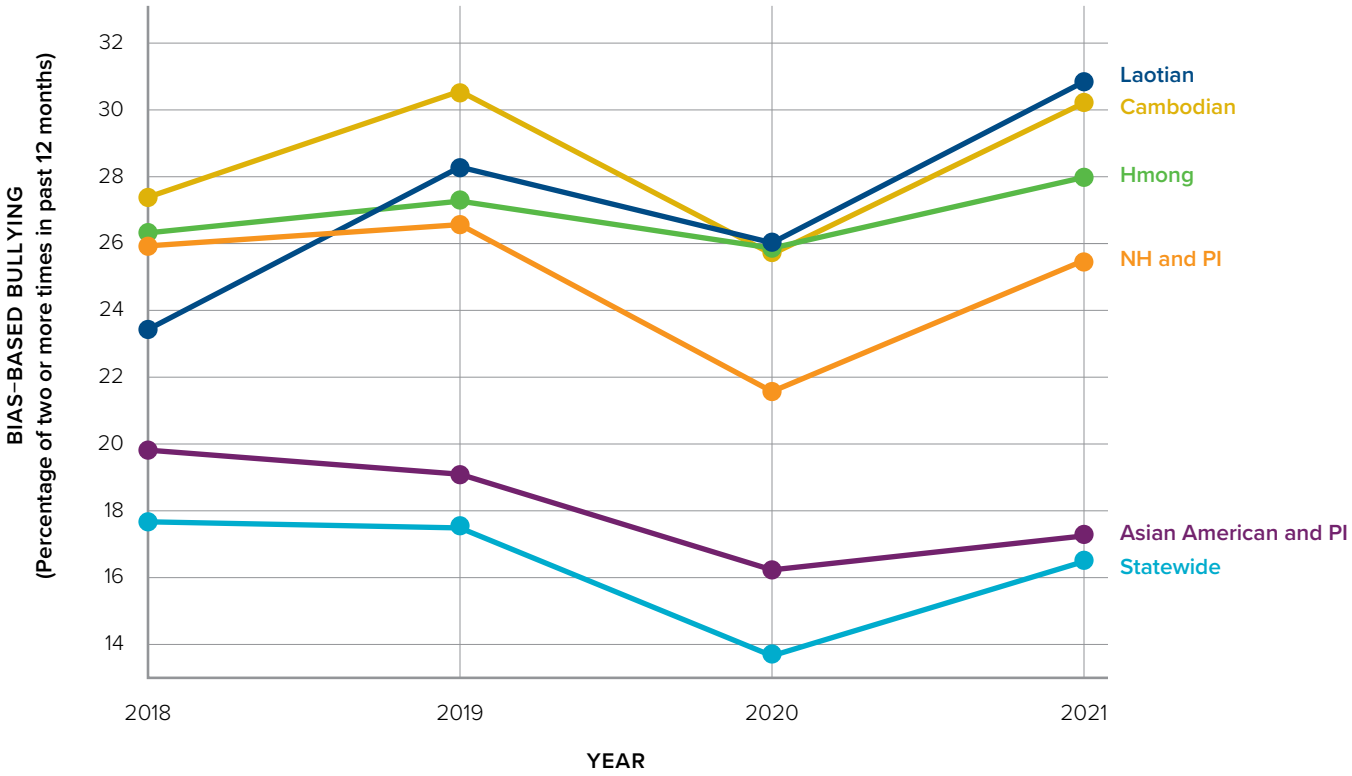
Finding #2: Anti-AAPI Bullying Rates Initially Declined Between 2019 and 2020, But Rebounded After Schools Reopened for In-Person Learning. Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian Youth Rebounded the Most, Exceeding Pre-Pandemic Levels.

Bullying against AAPI students as a whole declined between 2019 and 2020, followed by a rebound in 2021. This rebound effect closely mirrors the overall bullying trends for all students statewide (Figures 3 and 4).

For subgroups experiencing the highest overall bullying rates—Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian youth—their bias-based bullying and cyberbullying rates also declined between 2019 and 2020. However, they also experienced some of the largest rebound effects. In fact, rates rebounded to levels equaling or exceeding pre-pandemic rates. For instance, for Cambodian youth, cyberbullying rates declined from 22% to 14% between 2019 and 2020, only to rebound to 22% in 2021. Similarly, for Laotian youth, their rates of cyberbullying declined from 22% to 15% only to rebound to 23% (Figure 4).

These rebound effects can complicate efforts to help AAPI youth recover from the educational impacts of the pandemic, which include learning losses, increased chronic absenteeism,[20] and mental health concerns.[21] The rebound in bullying could exacerbate these challenges, acting as a barrier to recovery. Further, these results underscore the need for additional investments in anti-bullying prevention initiatives targeted to Cambodian, Hmong, and Laotian students.

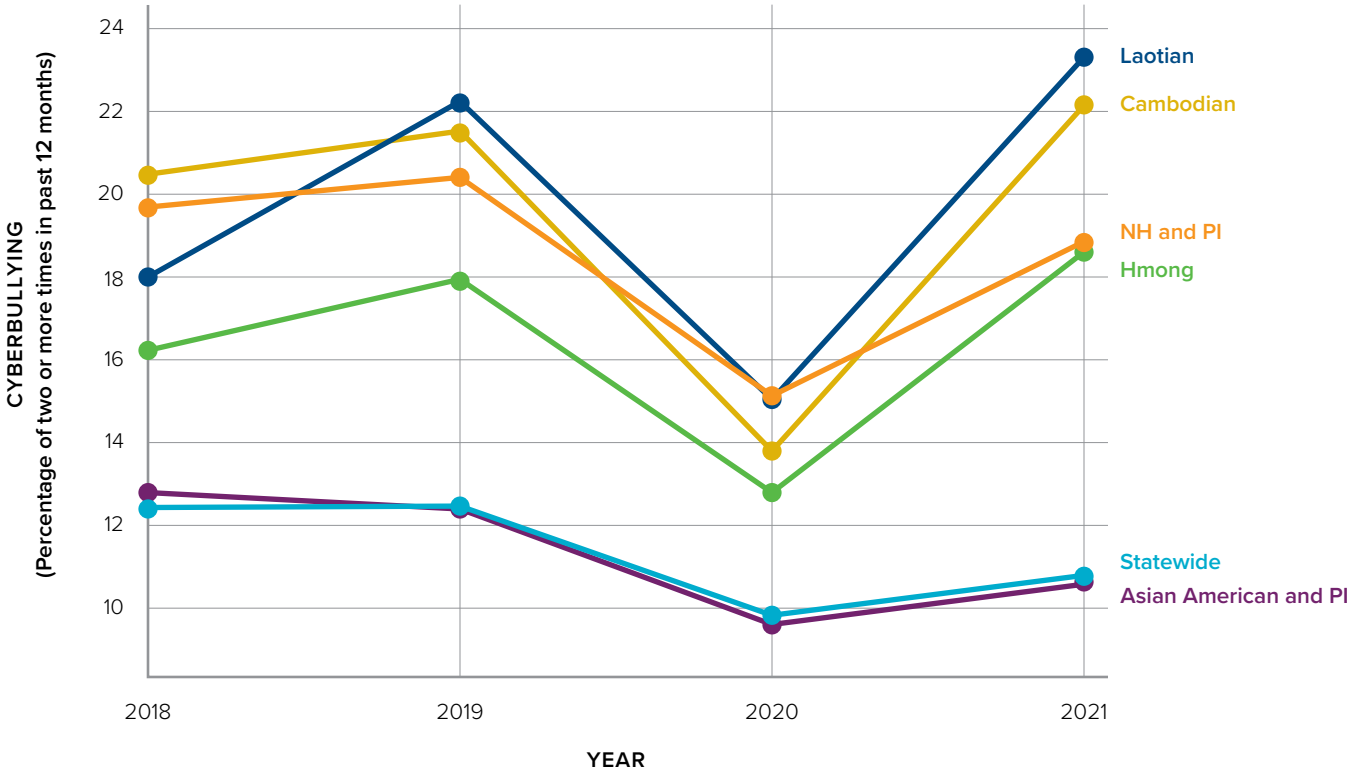
FIGURE 3. Annual Trends in Bias-Based Bullying, 2018–2021



Note. Represents students in 9th and 11th grades who reported that they were harassed or bullied two or more times on school property in the past 12 months for any of the following reasons: race, ethnicity, or national origin; religion; gender; disability.

Source. California Healthy Kids Survey

FIGURE 4. Annual Trends in Cyberbullying, 2018–2021



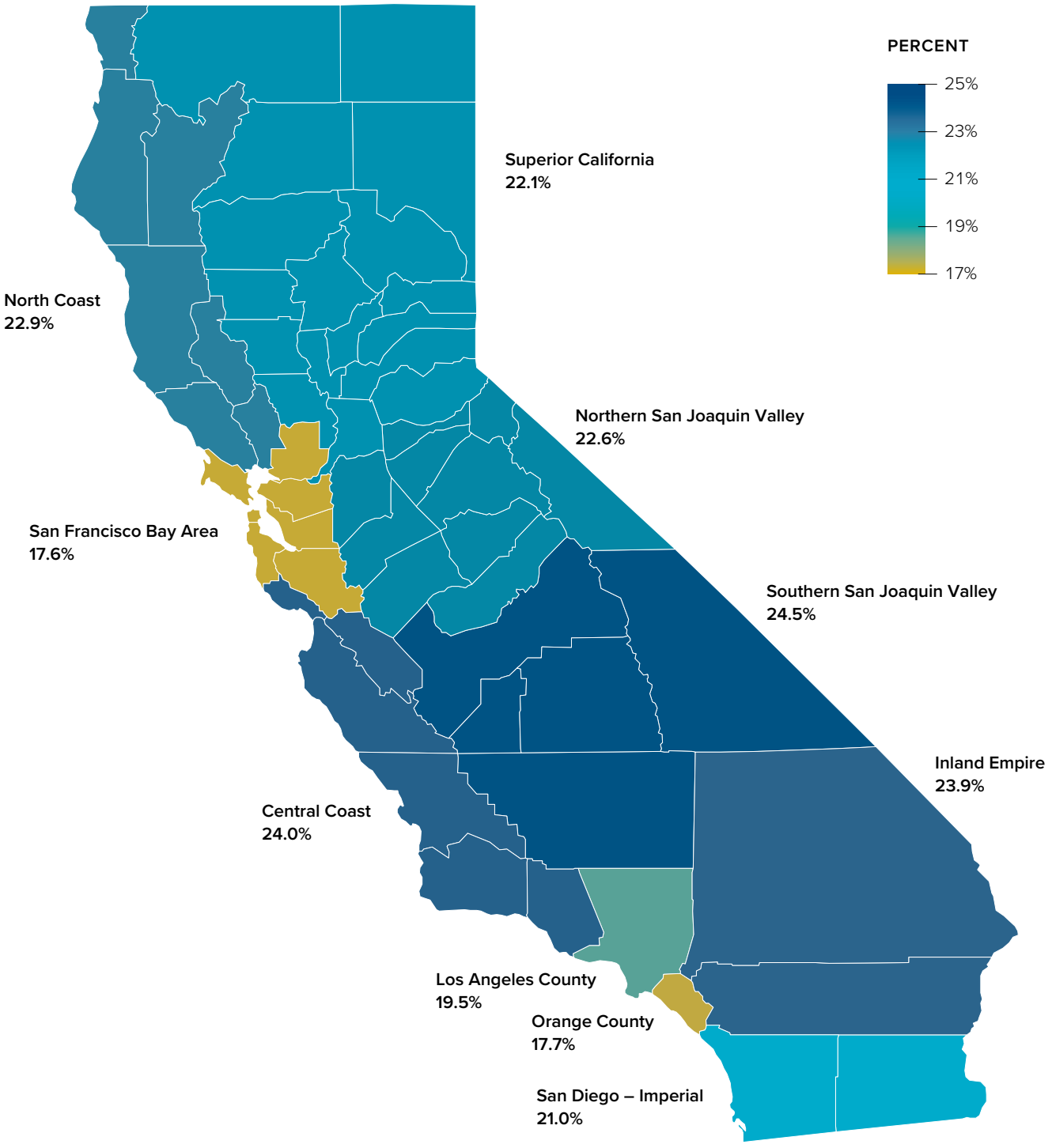
Note. Represents students in 9th and 11th grades who reported that other students spread rumors, lies, or hurtful pictures about them online, via social media, or through a cell phone two or more times in the past 12 months.

Source. California Healthy Kids Survey

Finding #3: California's Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley, and Inland Empire Have Higher Rates of Anti-AAPI Bullying

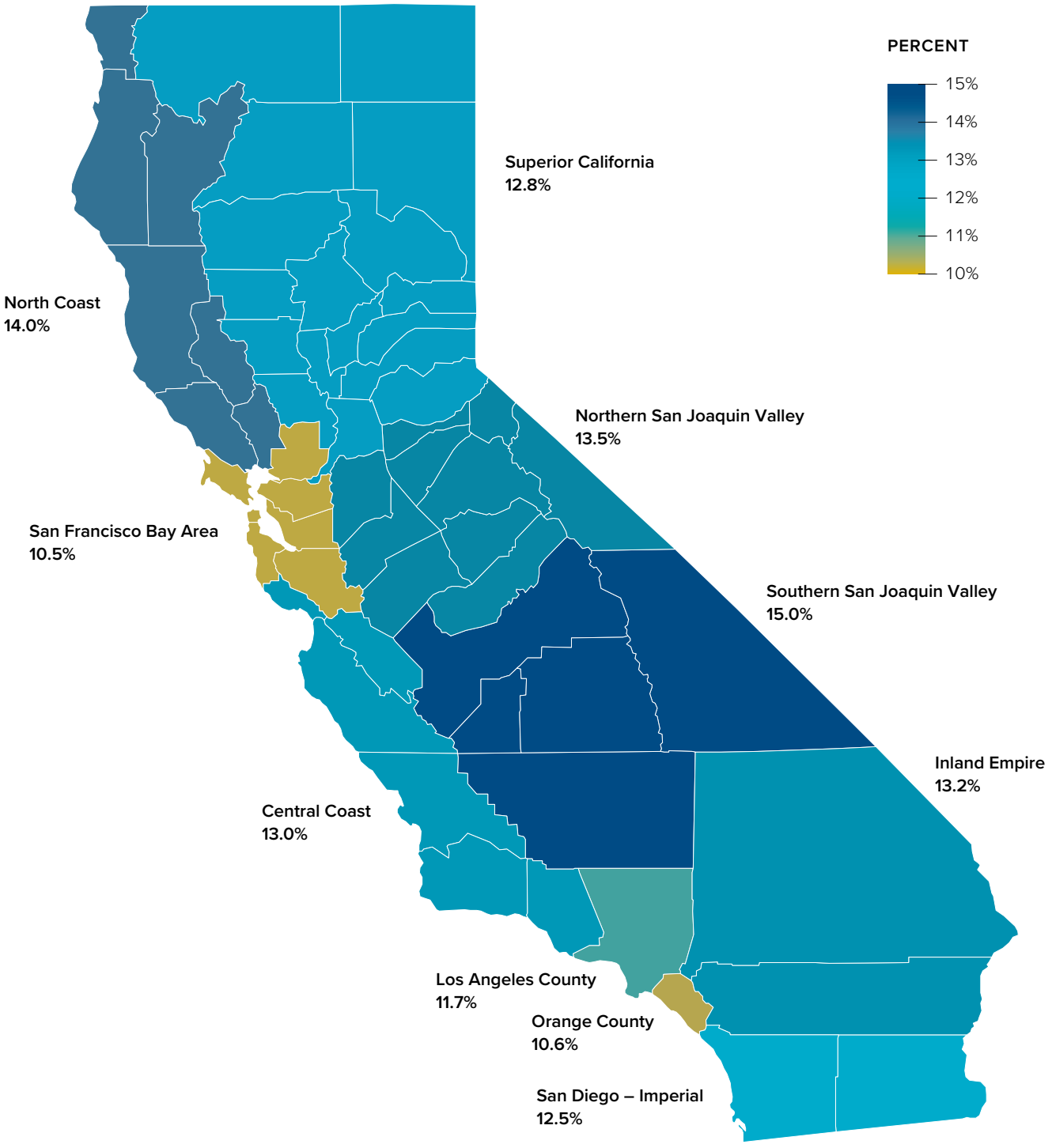
Three regions stand out for their relatively higher rates of bias-based bullying against AAPI students: California's Central Coast (24%), Southern San Joaquin Valley (25%), and Inland Empire (24%) regions (Figure 5). In comparison, the San Francisco Bay Area and Orange County experienced lower rates, about 18% each. The rates of bias-based bullying of AAPI students in the Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley, and Inland Empire are about 1.5 times the statewide rate (24% versus 16%).

FIGURE 5. Anti-AAPI Bias-Based Bullying Rates by California Census Regions



There also are regional differences in cyberbullying (Figure 6). However, unlike rates of bias-based bullying, rates of cyberbullying are relatively similar across regions. The San Francisco Bay Area experiences the lowest rate at 10.5% while the Southern San Joaquin Valley experienced the highest rate at 15%.

FIGURE 6. Anti-AAPI Cyberbullying Rates by California Census Regions



Overall, these regional patterns show where investments in anti-AAPI bullying initiatives and supports are most needed.

Section #2: How Can School Climate Better Protect AAPI Youth from Bullying?

Finding #1: School Climates that Foster Connection and Have Supportive Adults Are Linked to Lower Levels of Anti-AAPI Bullying.

We found that students were bullied less if they felt more connected to their schools and if they had supportive adults at school. In particular, AAPI students with higher levels of adult support in school are less likely to be bullied, lowering the probability of bias-based bullying by roughly 3.5 percentage points and cyberbullying by 6 percentage points. Similarly, students who feel more strongly connected to their schools face a lower risk of both bias-based and cyberbullying, roughly 7 and 12 percentage points lower, respectively.

Groups with the highest rates of bullying—Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and NH and PI youth—also experienced reductions if they had stronger connections with school and more adult support. Some of the largest reductions are for cyberbullying—for example, NH and PI youth experience a 20 percentage point drop in the probability of being cyberbullied if they report stronger school connectedness. Beyond AAPI students, those from all other racial and ethnic backgrounds also experienced reductions in bullying if they had stronger support from adults and felt more connected to their schools.

These results show that investing in school climate initiatives to reduce anti-AAPI bullying is a commonsense strategy that can benefit not only AAPI students, but also students overall. Importantly, making schools more supportive is a low-cost strategy in which many schools already invest. To make that investment go even further, schools can improve school climates to make them even more inclusive—and not only for all students, but for AAPI students in particular. Schools can strengthen connectedness through initiatives like building family to school connections, providing professional development to teachers to support students' socioemotional well-being, and promoting positive learning environments.[22]

Section #3: How Do Districtwide Anti-Bullying Resources Meet the Needs of AAPI Students and Families?

Using publicly available information on school district websites in winter of 2024, we reviewed anti-bullying policies and resources (e.g., statements, flyers, forms, and web pages) as well as online bullying reporting systems for the 10 unified school districts with the highest student populations in California: Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, Long Beach, Elk Grove, San Francisco, Corona-Norco, San Bernardino, Capistrano, and San Juan.

It is important to note that our findings are based solely on a review of each district's websites versus individual school websites and focus on online content rather than printed content that might have been available at district or school sites. Nonetheless, our review helps provide an initial scan of how districts have been publicly responding to and addressing anti-AAPI hate.

In Table 1, we documented whether anti-bullying resources that were readily available on each district's website:

- Specifically addressed the needs of AAPI students
- Were directly translated into specific AAPI languages (beyond using online translation tools)
- Included an online reporting system where students and families could report safety concerns, including bullying

Table 1 lists the districts in the order of the highest percentage of AAPI students among the total student population to the lowest. Districts serving the highest percentage (16–36%) of AAPI youth are Elk Grove, San Francisco, and Corona-Norco Unified. The other districts have 13.5% or fewer AAPI students.

TABLE 1. Anti-Bullying Resources in Selected California Unified School Districts

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL ENROLLMENT IN 2022–23* (AAPI %)	SPECIFIC AAPI RESOURCES	RESOURCES DIRECTLY TRANSLATED IN AAPI LANGUAGES	ONLINE REPORTING SYSTEM
Elk Grove Unified	62,957 (36.4%)	✓	✓	✓
San Francisco Unified	55,537 (33.5%)	✓	✓	✓
Corona-Norco Unified	50,790 (16.1%)			✓
San Diego Unified	112,790 (13.5%)	✓		✓
Fresno Unified	72,379 (11.4%)			
Long Beach Unified	65,826 (11.2%)			✓
San Juan Unified	49,036 (10.9%)			✓
Capistrano Unified	49,421 (8.4%)			✓
Los Angeles Unified	538,295 (2.6%)	✓	✓	✓
San Bernadino City Unified	50,434 (1.9%)			✓

* Enrollment data for 2022-23 come from the California Department of Education's (CDE) DataQuest website. AAPI percentage represents students who are Asian, Filipino, or Pacific Islander.

Finding #1: Elk Grove, San Francisco, and Los Angeles Unified School Districts Have the Most Accessible Bullying-Related Resources for AAPI Students and Families

Overall, three districts stood out for their publicly available resources that addressed bullying, particularly for AAPI youth: Elk Grove, San Francisco, and Los Angeles Unified School Districts. Each district provided the most accessible bullying-related resources to AAPI students and families. We highlight examples of resources that these districts provide:

- **Elk Grove Unified School District** excels in presenting multilingual bullying-related policy information, especially information on their Uniform Complaint Procedures that are provided in languages commonly spoken within its respective AAPI communities, including Hmong, Chinese, and Punjabi. Further, in a letter to the Elk Grove Unified community, the Superintendent explicitly condemned anti-AAPI hate and offered instructional resources on anti-AAPI racism. Finally, the district allows for anonymous reporting of bullying through its Incident Reporting System which enhances the ease and accessibility of reporting bullying incidents.
- **San Francisco Unified School District** stands out for its extensive, publicly available Asian American & Pacific Islander Resource Guide that specifically addresses anti-AAPI hate. The district also provides complaint forms in Chinese, Samoan, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The district also offers an online anonymous reporting system, known as the Say Something Anonymous Report System (SS-ARS).
- **Los Angeles Unified School District** includes specific resources for addressing the recent increase in anti-Asian hate and how to create a culture that discourages anti-AAPI bullying. The district also included resources for education on anti-AAPI racism (highlighted in May for AAPI Heritage Month) on its website. Finally, LAUSD also offers a No Bullying or Hazing contract through which students vow to refrain from bullying.

Almost all districts had anonymous online reporting systems for victims or witnesses of bullying. For districts like Elk Grove Unified and San Diego Unified, online bullying reports are reviewed as soon as possible after submission, with varying timelines for taking action. Some districts provide clear and transparent information that describes each step of their investigative processes in cases of bullying or harassment, including San Francisco and Capistrano Unified School Districts

Based on our review, districts should consider ways to further enhance resources related to anti-AAPI hate as well as encourage use of their anonymous reporting systems to ensure that AAPI students and their families feel safe when reporting bullying. While there is limited evidence of the effectiveness of anonymous reporting systems in increasing school safety[23], such systems—when used in tandem with other whole-school anti-bullying strategies, like strengthening school climate—could help reduce bias-based bullying of AAPI students.

Conclusion and a Path Forward: A Strategic Blueprint to Combat Anti-AAPI Bullying

Throughout this report we have provided new evidence that can spur innovation in developing a longer-range and comprehensive statewide strategy to confront and resolve anti-AAPI bullying. Based on our findings, we recommend creation and adoption of a statewide anti-AAPI bullying blueprint that begins with prioritizing groups most subjected to bullying: Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and NH and PI youth. We further advise targeting resources regionally, where the need is most urgent: the Central Coast, Inland Empire, and Southern San Joaquin Valley.

Beyond to whom and where the state should be targeting anti-bullying resources, schools also matter. As a prevention strategy, school climate is a commonsense starting point. Although our findings do not necessarily show that school climates *cause* changes in bullying, they are highly related to reductions in bullying.

Finally, our scan of districtwide anti-bullying resources on the websites of the 10 largest districts in California revealed the importance of enhancing resources related to anti-AAPI hate as well as encouraging use of anonymous online reporting systems to ensure that AAPI students and their families feel safe when reporting bullying.

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Methodological Appendix

Dataset

We use data from the seven most recent years (2015–16 to 2021–22 school years) of the California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a large-scale statewide survey of youth that has been conducted annually since 1997 and sponsored by California's Department of Education. Our sample includes 9th and 11th graders who self-identify as Asian American or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (AANHPI). The CHKS survey asks students who identify as AANHPI, their specific ethnic subgroup identities, including whether they identify as: Asian Indian, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese, or Native Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, Tahitian, or other Pacific Islander.

Students could identify with multiple races or ethnicities, so our main AANHPI sample includes any students who indicated they were Asian or Asian American or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander either alone or in combination with other races or ethnicities (e.g., Asian American and Hispanic). Similarly, our AANHPI subgroup samples include any AANHPI students who identified with one or more AANHPI subgroups (e.g., students who identified as Chinese and Vietnamese would be counted in both the Chinese and Vietnamese subsamples).

Sample

When pooled across seven waves, the CHKS data contained valid responses about bias-based bullying for approximately n = 322,000 AANHPI 9th and 11th graders. The data also contained valid responses about cyberbullying for about n = 350,000 AAPI 9th and 11th graders. Response rates among AANHPI students were about 85% for bias-based bullying and 93% for cyberbullying. Due to missing data and non-response, the samples of students who responded to questions about bullying and cyberbullying vary for each subgroup. The table below indicates sample sizes of each group for each bullying outcome.

APPENDIX TABLE 1. Sample Sizes, 2015–2016 to 2021–2022, CHKS Waves Pooled Together

GROUP	BIAS-BASED BULLYING	CYBERBULLYING
Asian American and Pacific Islander	322,374	350,349
Asian Indian	41,713	46,281
Cambodian	10,424	11,394
Chinese	80,866	88,061
Filipino	98,585	106,182
Hmong	11,088	12,099
Japanese	31,049	33,618
Korean	28,311	30,760
Laotian	10,891	11,612
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	31,820	34,069
Statewide	1,686,929	1,831,289
Vietnamese	48,979	53,181

For our analyses examining the relationship between school climate (school connectedness and adult support) and bullying, our sample size of AANHPI students is approximately n = 212,000 for our bias-based bullying outcome and n = 238,000 for our cyberbullying outcome. The reduced sample sizes reflect missing data on the variables we included for those analyses.

Measures

Bias-Based Bullying

Students were asked if they had experienced bullying in the past 12 months based on their race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. The CHKS question clarifies that bullying is characterized by the repeated nature of unwanted aggressive attacks and asymmetric power differential between victim and victimizer. For our analyses, any students who reported that they experienced bias-based bullying two or more times on school property were classified as having been a victim of bias-based bullying.

Cyberbullying

Students were asked whether or not they had been victimized by cyberbullying in the past 12 months, and if they were, how many times other students "spread mean rumors or lies, or hurtful pictures, about you online, on social media, or on a cell phone?" Any students who reported cyberbullying two or more times on school property were classified as having been a victim of cyberbullying.

For our analysis examining school contexts and bullying, we include a set of main predictors and controls.

Authoritative Disciplinary Climate

We operationalize two distinct facets of authoritative climate consistent with prior research (Gee & Cooc, 2022; Cornell & Huang, 2016; Fisher et al., 2018).

The first facet is guardianship based on a Caring Staff-Student Relationship index score ($M = 0$; $SD = 1$) that we constructed from six items using factor analysis. The items captured the extent on a 4-point scale, from responses to this question: How true, from 1 (*not at all true*) to 4 (*very much true*), is it that there was a teacher or adult at school who (a) really cared about them, (b) told them when they did a good job, (c) noticed when there were not there, (d) wanted them to do their best, (e) listened to them when they had something to say, or (f) believed they will be a success. Reliability for the items was 0.89. Factor analysis based on a polychoric correlation matrix yielded one factor (eigenvalue = 4.33) with each item loading high on this one factor (loadings were > 0.80).

The second facet, capturing school disciplinary structure (rule fairness) alongside school belongingness and safety, is a School Connectedness index score ($M = 0$; $SD = 1$) constructed from five items using factor analysis. These five items revealed the extent to which adolescents agreed, on a 4-point scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*), that (a) they felt close to people at school, (b) were happy to be at school, (c) felt part of their school, (d) their teachers treated people fairly, or (e) they felt safe at school. Reliability for the items was 0.81. Factor analysis based on a polychoric correlation matrix yielded one factor (eigenvalue = 3.10) with each item loading high on this one factor (loadings were > 0.70).

Controls

We include controls for students' demographic background characteristics, including: (1) gender; (2) parental education level (whether the parent's highest level is college/a college education or high school or below); (3) academic grades (a categorical variable documenting whether a student had mostly A's and B's, mostly B's or C's, or C's or below); and (4) grade level. We include school fixed effects to account for time-stable differences, both observed and unobserved, between schools.

Analytic Strategies

To describe patterns in bias-based bullying and cyberbullying we calculated the proportion of youth overall and within our selected AANHPI ethnic subgroups who reported that they experienced any form of bias-based bullying or cyberbullying two or more times in the past 12 months at school.

To estimate the relationship between our indices of Caring Staff-Student Relationships and School Connectedness and the probability of experiencing bias-based bullying, we fit linear probability models to our data and included fixed effects for school and year. To account for the correlation of children within schools, we clustered our standard errors by school.

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Kevin A. Gee is a professor in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. He examines the impact of a broad array of adverse experiences on children's school outcomes, including children who are vulnerable to absenteeism, bullying, food insecurity, abuse, and neglect.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This report was made possible with the grant support from AAPI Data at the University of California, Riverside. We thank Ben Trigg at WestEd for facilitating our access to the California Healthy Kids Survey Data. We also appreciate the insightful observations of Dr. Richard Pan, Fontaine Lo, and Diep Doan. The contents of this report, including the findings, conclusions and recommendations, are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of AAPI Data.

ABOUT SPARC

Through our research on school policies and programs, the **School Policy, Action, and Research Center (SPARC)** in the School of Education at UC Davis generates actionable insights aimed at supporting the educational wellbeing of vulnerable youth populations. Our work supports children experiencing adverse life and social circumstances, including children of abuse and neglect, children who have been bullied and children experiencing chronic absenteeism.