

--Methodological Appendix--

School and Society in the Age of Trump

This section summarizes the methods for our study, describes the survey and interview samples, and presents the survey questions used in the report.

Overview of the Study

In the summer of 2018, UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA) initiated a study investigating how a set of societal issues acutely felt during the Trump administration were experienced in public high schools across the United States during the 2017-2018 school year and how principals responded to these challenges. Specifically, the study explores three questions: 1) Have key societal challenges experienced at a heightened level in the age of Trump impacted the experiences of students in America's high schools, and if so, how has this affected student learning and young people's well-being? 2) How have U.S. high schools responded when faced with new or heightened challenges in the age of Trump? 3) How do the impacts from, as well as the responses to, these challenges differ depending on student demographics, geographic location, or political leaning of the communities surrounding schools? To pursue these questions, UCLA IDEA conducted: a) an online survey of 505 high school principals; and b) follow-up interviews with a diverse cohort of 40 principals who participated in the survey. The schools that these principals lead reflect the demographics and community characteristics of U.S. public high schools generally, particularly with respect to racial demographics and family socio-economic status.

U.S. Public High School Principal Survey and Follow-Up Interviews

Our sample of principals for the survey was created by using data from the 2015-2016 National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) list of public secondary schools. We identified a sample of high schools based on student demographics and school location. We then used publicly available information to identify the names of the principals at these schools as well as the principals' email address.

We sent out emails to high school principals in our sample of schools inviting them to participate in the survey through Qualtrics, an online survey software platform. The subject line of the email invited principals to participate in a study from UCLA. We sent the first email invitation on June 21, 2018. Reminder invitation emails were sent on June 26th, July 10th, July 30th, August 6th, and August 9th. (We stopped collecting surveys on August 15th 2018.)

The principals who opened the email learned that we were inviting them to participate in an online survey examining how "the work of U.S. public school principals relates to social and

political life in the United States.” We promised confidentiality and offered principals a \$10 Amazon gift card as an incentive for participating and we also agreed to award the 100th, 300th, and 500th principal who completed the survey with a \$250 Amazon gift card. Principals who were interested in taking the survey then clicked on a link to enter the survey itself. Principals who did not respond to the initial email (or who began the survey but did not complete it) received follow-up reminders.

We encountered two challenges in survey distribution, one anticipated and one unforeseen. The first challenge was that many principals take a vacation in late June and July and do not check their official school email. A second challenge was that many district servers treated email from our UCLA server as SPAM and hence failed to deliver. Even after we addressed this second concern by sending invitations via Constant Contact, we were not able to reach a large (but indeterminate) number of schools.

While we are not able to determine how many principals received or opened our email invitation, we do know that 682 principals started the survey. Of these 682 principals, 505 (or 74% of all survey starters) completed the survey. We considered principals to have completed the survey if they answered at least 90% of the questions.

The survey included questions about: I. How schools have experienced and responded to five societal challenges: A) Political division and hostility; B) Disputes over truth, facts, and the reliability of sources; C) Crises posed by opioid addiction; D) Vulnerabilities associated with threats of immigration enforcement; and E) Perils posed by threats of gun violence on school campuses; II. How principals conceive of and support civic education, student voice, and student agency; III. The background characteristics and experience of principals. (We include below a copy of all questions in Section I of the survey. *School and Society in the Age of Trump* draws only on the questions in Section I; we will report findings from the other sections of the survey in later publications.)

Near the end of the survey, we provided principals with the opportunity to comment on the issues raised by the survey. This open-ended item stated: “We have asked a number of questions about whether and how your school has been affected by the broader political and social climate and how you, in turn, have responded. Please use this space to share any further thoughts you have on this topic.” 200 of the 505 survey respondents answered our open-ended question. These open-ended answers ranged from a single sentence to one or more paragraphs.

The survey closed with an invitation for principals to participate in a follow-up interview (and receive an additional Amazon Card). 60% of our survey respondents expressed a willingness to be interviewed. In July and August, we conducted forty follow-up interviews with principals who participated in the survey. These principals were selected to be representative of the larger pool of schools according to region, student race and family income, and community-wide partisan political leaning. Interviews were conducted over the phone or via video chat, and generally lasted 30 to 45 minutes. During these conversations, interviewers asked

principals to elaborate on their schools' experiences and responses to the five societal challenges as well as their civic goals and practices for supporting and responding to student voice and agency. We promised confidentiality to principals who participated in the interviews.

Representativeness of Study Sample

The 505 principals who responded to our survey and the 40 principals who participated in our interview lead schools that generally reflect the student demographics and community characteristics of all public high schools in the United States. Our sample very closely resembles the universe of public high schools in terms of student racial demographics and family income as well as the political orientation of the surrounding communities. In addition, the survey sample reaches across much of the nation. In all, the participating principals' schools represent nearly two-thirds of all congressional districts across forty-six states and the District of Columbia.

While our study sample looks a great deal like the universe of U.S. public high schools, there are a couple ways that our sample diverges from the broader pool of schools. Our sample includes fewer schools with enrollment lower than 1000 students than proportionately are found in the nation as a whole. Our sample also includes slightly more schools from the West and from suburban communities and slightly less schools from the South and from rural communities than are found across the United States.

In addition, it is possible that the principals who responded to our survey differ in some intangible ways from those who did not respond. For example, some principals may have been more inclined than others to open an email from a UCLA researcher. In addition, some principals may have been more willing than others to begin and complete a survey addressing how their work relates to social and political life in the United States. To the extent that non-response bias exists in this study, it would be most likely to affect survey responses about what steps principals take to address societal challenges at their schools. Conversely, non-response bias is not likely to have had a substantial effect on principals' reporting about the degree to which different societal challenges are affecting students at their school.

Below, we draw on Section One from *School and Society in the Age of Trump* to describe the student demographics and community characteristics of participating principals in the study.

High Schools Represented in Our Study

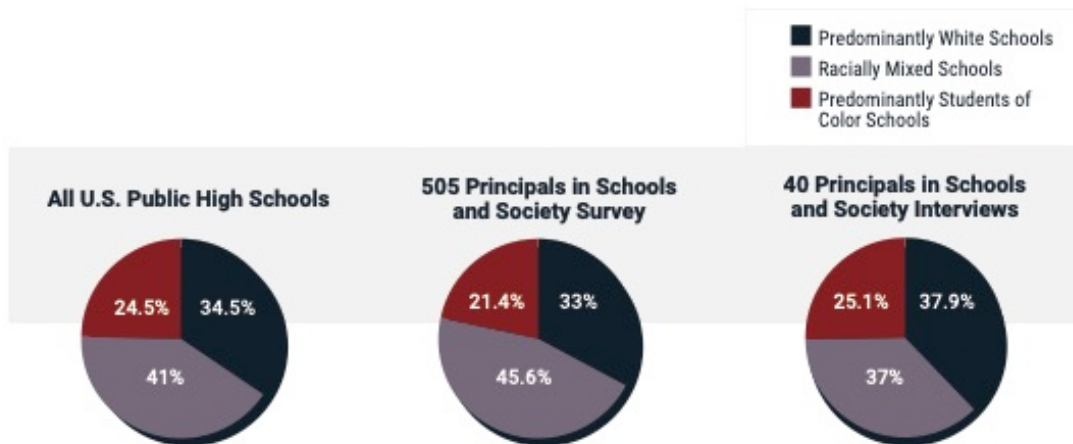
The 505 principals who responded to our survey lead schools that closely resemble the student demographics and community characteristics of all public high schools in the United States. The 40 principals who participated in our follow-up interviews come from a similarly diverse set of high schools.

Student Demographics

Racial Demographics of High Schools

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

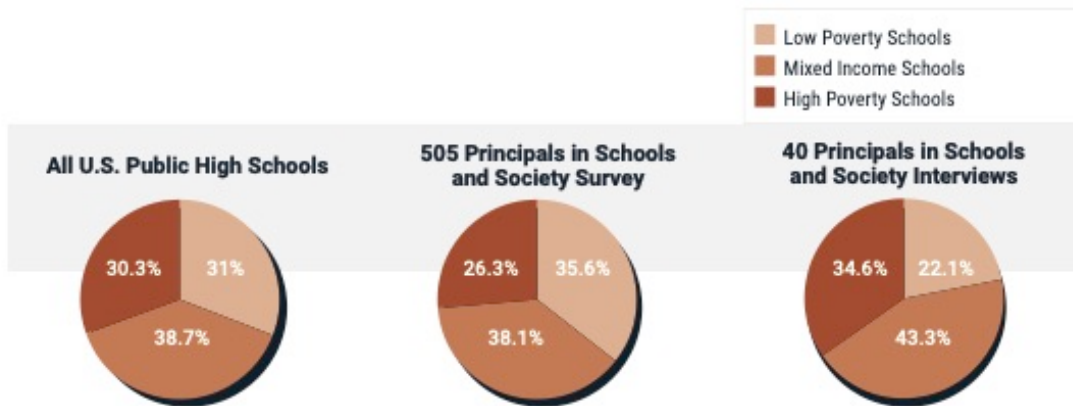
Chart 1-1: % of Schools by Racial Demographics



Low-Income Status of Families in High Schools

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

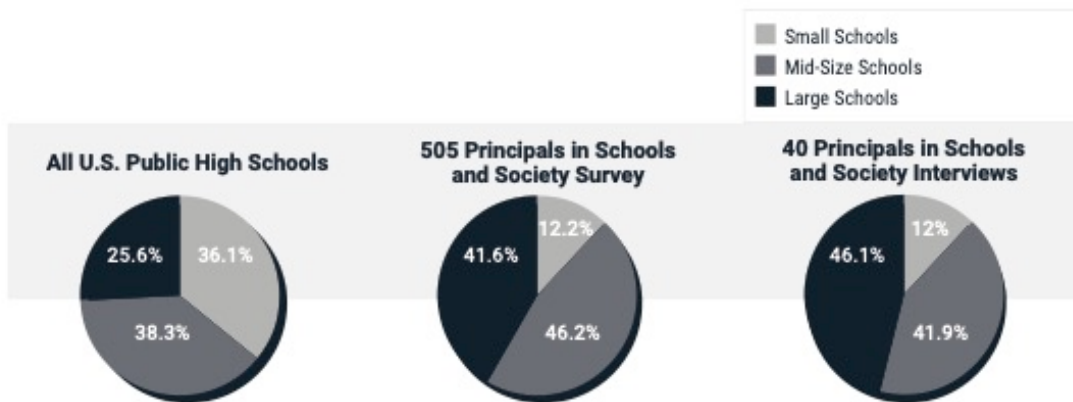
#Chart 1-2: % of Schools by Family Low-Income Status



School Size

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

#Chart 1-3: % of Schools by Size



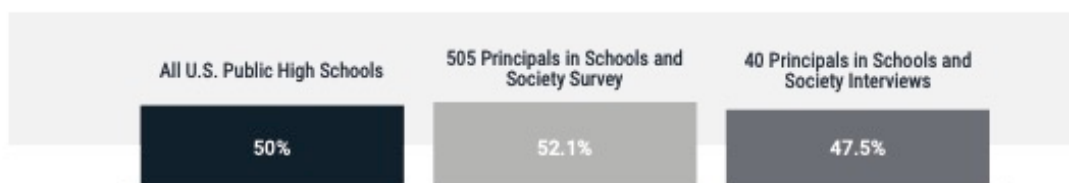
Community Characteristics

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

Political Leaning of Congressional District

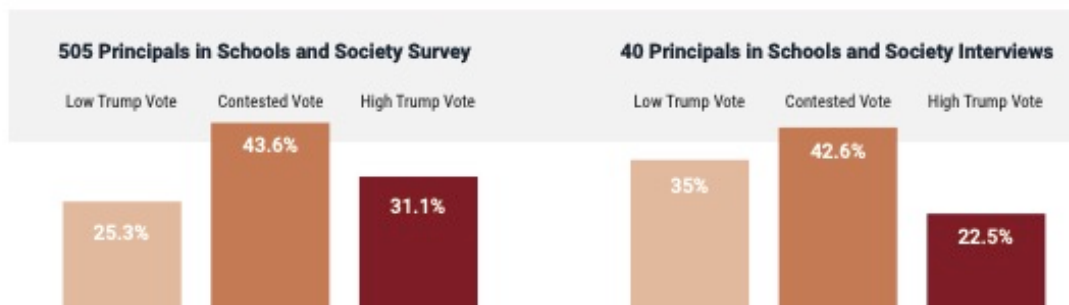
Donald Trump received 46.09% of the national vote in the 2016 presidential election.ⁱ

#Chart 1-4: % of Schools Located in Congressional Districts that Exceeded National Vote for Donald Trump



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

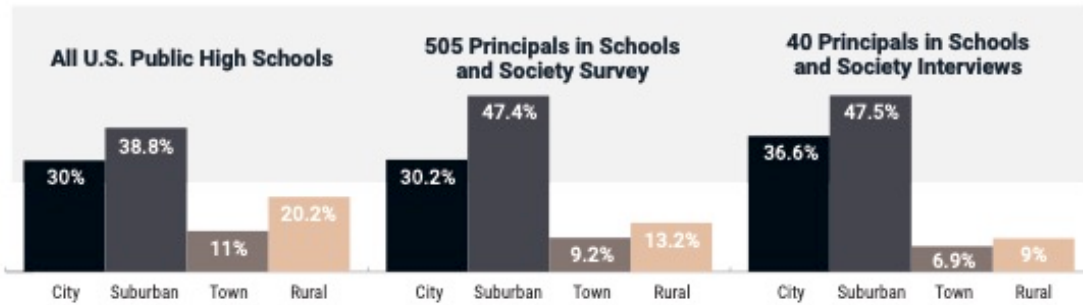
#Chart 1-5: % Low Trump Vote, Contested Vote, and High Trump Vote Schools



Community Type

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

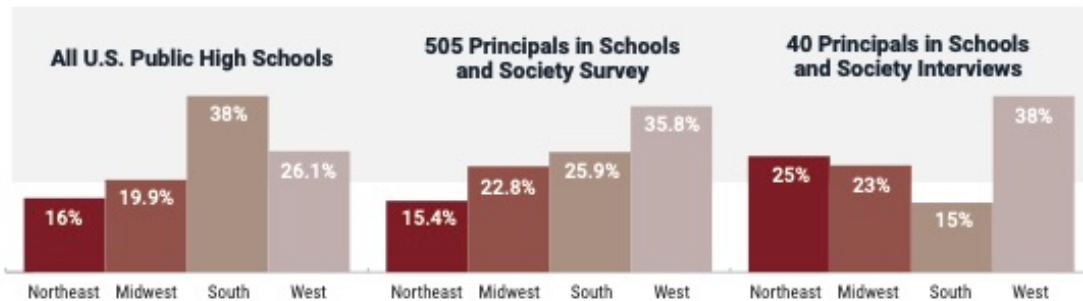
#Chart 1-6: % of Schools by Community Type



Region

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

#Chart 1-7: % of Schools by Region



**Survey Questions used in
SCHOOL AND SOCIETY IN THE AGE OF TRUMP**

This section asks you about whether and to what extent your school was impacted this past year by 5 different challenges facing many communities across the United States, and what actions you have taken as a school leader:

- 1) Political divisiveness and incivility
- 2) The spread of untrustworthy information via the internet and other media
- 3) The Opioid crisis
- 4) The vulnerability of immigrant youth and families
- 5) The threat of gun violence.

Challenge One

There are reports that some communities in the United States are experiencing growing political divisiveness and incivility. We would like to ask you about whether similar issues have affected your school.

Q. For each of the following, please indicate whether this issue a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions.

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

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

3--Strong differences of political opinion amongst faculty and staff have created stress and challenges for collaborative work.

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

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

6--Students have made derogatory remarks about immigrants.

7--Students have made derogatory remarks about LGBTQ youth.

8--Students have acted in demeaning ways toward girls and women.

9--Students have acted in demeaning and/or cruel ways toward special education students.

10--Students have shared hateful posts on social media.

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

[If *any* of above student items occurred]

Q. We know that principals' time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response to these issues: [Yes/No]

- 1--Communicated directly with the entire student body about the importance of civil exchange and tolerance for diverse viewpoints.
- 2--Met with different student groups to ask for their help in fostering civility and respect.
- 3--Created student activities aimed at building relationships across difference and fostering civility.
- 4--Created or publicized rules for students to use social media responsibly.
- 5--Initiated professional development aimed at supporting teachers to create more civil and respectful learning environments.
- 6--Created professional development for your staff about restorative justice approaches.
- 7--Directed staff to limit discussions about political and social issues in class.
- 8--Disciplined students for uncivil or demeaning behavior toward another group of students.
- 9--Communicated with the media about the importance of promoting understanding and tolerance at your school.
- 10--Spoke to community leaders or public officials about the importance of promoting understanding and tolerance at your school.

Q. Did you communicate to your *entire* student body (orally or in writing) about the importance of promoting tolerance and respect? [Yes/No]

Q. In doing so, did you communicate specifically about the need to promote tolerance or respect for any of the following groups: [Check all that apply.]

- 1-- Students from racial or ethnic minority groups.
- 2-- Immigrant youth.
- 3-- LGBTQ youth.
- 4-- Students with disabilities.
- 5-- Students or adults who hold unpopular political viewpoints.
- 6-- Girls and women.
- 7-- Muslim students.
- 8-- Christian students.
- 9-- Jewish students.
- 10--Those with particularly liberal views
- 11--Those with particularly conservative views

[If a concern –FACULTY AND STAFF]

Q. Again, we know your time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response

to strong differences of political opinion amongst faculty and staff and/or community members.
[Y/N]

- 1--Talked with staff about importance of treating one another with respect.
- 2--Created activities to build stronger relationships among staff
- 3--Established rules to promote civil/respectful behavior amongst staff
- 4--Directed staff to limit their political discussions with one another

Q [If a concern-- COMMUNITY]

- 1--Communicated with the entire school community about the importance of civil exchange and tolerance for diverse viewpoints.
- 2--Met with different parent and community groups to ask for their help in fostering civility and respect.
- 3--Created activities to build relationship across different groups of community members.

Q. Approximately how much time did you spend in an average week this past year responding to any issues related to political divisiveness and incivility among your students, faculty, or community? [None, 1 hour, 2-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10 or more hours.]

CHALLENGE 2

Changes in the broader media landscape along with the growth of social media have created new challenges to determining what information sources are trustworthy.

Q. For each of the following, please indicate whether this issue a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions.

- 1--Students have made unfounded claims in class based on unreliable media sources.
- 2--Students have rejected the information or media sources that the teacher is using.
- 3--Parents or community members have challenged the information or media sources used by teachers in this school.

[If a concern]

Q. We know that principals' time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response to these issues: [Y/N]

- 1--Requested teachers to not use particular information or media sources.
- 2--Requested that teachers not address particular controversial topics in their classes.
- 3--Requested that teachers ensure that all sides of controversial topics are discussed objectively.

- 4--Provided professional development to staff to help students assess the truthfulness of different information sources.
- 5--Provided professional development to staff on how to support students to use evidence to clarify, verify, or challenge ideas.
- 6--Communicated with local or national media about how the spread of misinformation is an issue at your school.
- 7--Spoke to community leaders or public officials about the importance of this issue.

Q. Approximately how much time did you spend in an average week this past year responding to any issues related to students using untrustworthy news sources? [None, 1 hour, 2-3 hours [=2.5], 4-6 hours [=5], 7-9 hours [=8], 10 or more hours.]

CHALLENGE 3

Opioid addiction has affected individuals and communities across the United States—in many instances creating growing challenges related to health, mental health, and public safety. We would like to ask you about whether similar issues have affected your school.

Q25. For each of the following, please indicate whether this issue a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions.

- 1--Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to opioid addiction of family members.
- 2--Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to opioid addiction of family members.
- 3--Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home?
- 4-- Parents and guardians affected by the opioid crisis have experienced difficulty participating in school activities?

[If a concern]

Q. We know that principals' time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response to these issues: [Y/N]

- 1--Talked with individual students regarding their concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to opioid addiction of family members.
- 2--Connected students who have concerns with counseling or social welfare services.

- 3--Partnered with community-based organizations who support students and families.
- 4--Created professional development for staff on how to support students facing opioid addiction in their families.
- 5--Provided encouragement, guidance, and support for faculty to teach about and/or discuss opioid addiction-related issues in their classes.
- 6--Talked with individual parents/guardians about their concerns.
- 7--Held meetings with groups of parents/guardians who have been affected by these issues.
- 8--Communicated with the media about the opioid crisis in relation to your school.
- 9--Spoke to community leaders or public officials about the importance of this issue.

Q. Approximately how much time did you spend in an average week this past year responding to any issues related to opioid addiction in student families? [None, 1 hour, 2-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10 or more hours.]

CHALLENGE 4

There are also reports that national, state, or local policy has created concerns among immigrant youth and families. We would like to ask you about whether similar issues have affected your school.

Q. For each of the following, please indicate whether this issue a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions.

- 1--Students from immigrant families have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.
- 2--Students from immigrant families experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to policies or political rhetoric related to immigrants.
- 3--Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty supporting their students' well-being and academic progress at home?
- 4--Immigrant parents and guardians have experienced difficulty participating in school activities?
- 5--Immigrant parents and guardians have been reluctant to share information with the school (for example information for free and reduced lunch applications)?

Q30. We know that principals' time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response to these issues: [Y/N]

- 1--Talked with individual students about their concerns.
- 2--Connected students who have concerns with counseling or social welfare services.
- 3--Connected students with legal services.

- 4--Partnered with community-based organizations who support students.
- 5--Created professional development for staff on how to support students from immigrant families.
- 6--Provided encouragement, guidance, and support for faculty to teach about and/or discuss immigration-related issues in their classes.
- 7--Talked with individual immigrant parents/guardians about their concerns.
- 8--Held meetings with groups of immigrant parents/guardians who have been affected by these issues.
- 9--Connected immigrant parents/guardians with support services in the community.
- 10--Communicated with the media about issues facing immigrant families at your school.
- 11--Spoke to community leaders or public officials about the importance of this issue.

Q31--Approximately how much time did you spend in an average week this past year responding to any issues related to students from immigrant families? [None, 1 hour, 2-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10 or more hours.]

CHALLENGE 5

Gun violence has affected individuals and communities across the United States. We would like to ask you about whether similar issues have affected your school and surrounding community.

Q. For each of the following, please indicate whether this issue a) did not occur, b) occurred one or two times, or c) occurred on multiple occasions.

- 1--Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to the threat of gun violence occurring in school.
- 2--Students have expressed concerns about their well-being or the well-being of their families due to the threat of gun violence occurring in the community surrounding the school.
- 3--Students have experienced difficulty focusing on class lessons or missed school due to stress created by the threat of gun violence.
- 4--Parents and other community members have expressed concerns to me or other staff about the threat of gun violence occurring in the school or the community surrounding the school.

Q. We know that principals' time is limited and that you face countless competing priorities. We are wondering if, during the past year, you have taken any of the following actions in response to these issues: [Y/N]

- 1--Talked with individual students about their concerns.
- 2--Connected students who have concerns with counseling.
- 3--Created professional development for staff on how to support students who experience stress due to the threat of gun violence.

- 4--Provided encouragement, guidance, and support for faculty to teach about and/or discuss gun violence-related issues in their classes.
- 5--Met with student groups to talk about how to address the threat of gun violence.
- 6--Met with parents and community groups to talk about how to address the threat of gun violence.
- 7--Communicated with the media about the threat of gun violence at your school.
- 8--Spoke to community leaders or public officials about the threat of gun violence.

Q. Approximately how much time did you spend in an average week this past year responding to any issues related to the threat of gun violence? [None, 1 hour, 2-3 hours, 4-6 hours, 7-9 hours, 10 or more hours.]

Open-ended question

Q. We have asked a number of questions about whether and how your school has been affected by the broader political and social climate and how you, in turn, have responded. Please use this space to share any further thoughts you have on this topic.

ⁱ Federal Election Commission. "Federal Elections 2016: Election Results for the US President, the US Senate and the US House of Representatives." December, 2017.

<https://transition.fec.gov/pubrec/fe2016/federalections2016.pdf>

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

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