

ABOUT THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
SCHOOLS IN THE AFTERMATH: TARGETING, TRAUMA AND TENSION	6
SOME EXCEPTIONS	11
THE UGLINESS IS NEW	12
RECOMMENDATIONS	13
ABOUT THE SURVEY	14
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	18

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IN THE FIRST DAYS AFTER the 2016 presidential election, the Southern Poverty Law Center's Teaching Tolerance project administered an online survey to K–12 educators from across the country. Over 10,000 teachers, counselors, administrators and others who work in schools have responded. The survey data indicate that the results of the election are having a profoundly negative impact on schools and students. Ninety percent of educators report that school climate has been negatively affected, and most of them believe it will have a long-lasting impact. A full 80 percent describe heightened anxiety and concern on the part of students worried about the impact of the election on themselves and their families.

Also on the upswing: verbal harassment, the use of slurs and derogatory language, and disturbing incidents involving swastikas, Nazi salutes and Confederate flags.

Teaching Tolerance conducted a previous survey in March, when we asked teachers how the primary campaign season was affecting our nation's students. The 2,000 educators who responded reported that the primary season was producing anxiety among vulnerable students and emboldening others to new expressions of politicized bullying. Teachers overwhelmingly named the source of both the anxiety and the behavior as Donald Trump, then a leading contender for the

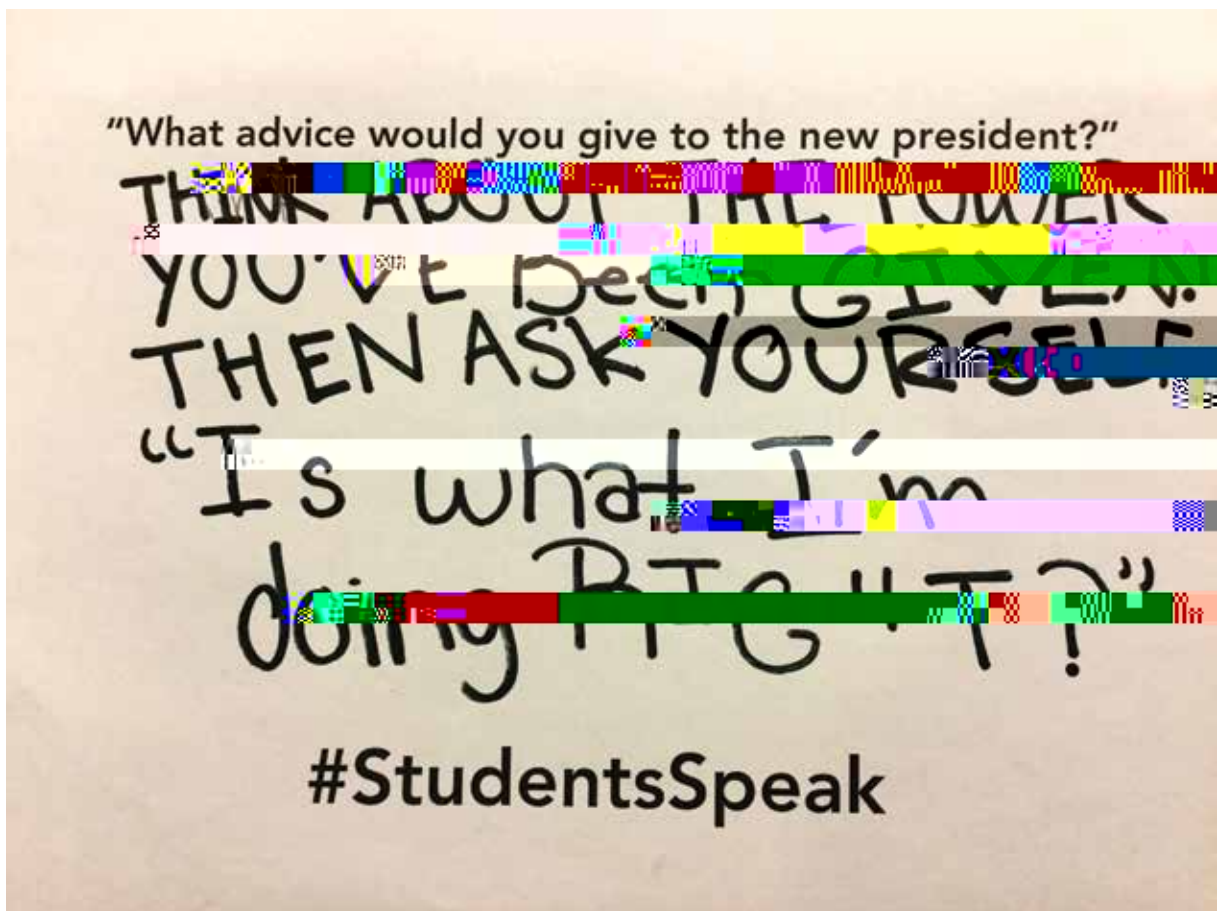
It is worth noting that many teachers took pains to point out that the incidents they were reporting represent a distinct uptick; these dynamics are new and can be traced directly to the results of the election.

In addition, many teachers who said they were not hearing anti-immigrant or anti-Muslim sentiment or derogatory language pointed out that their students belong exclusively to targeted groups. The dynamics in their schools reflect fear and anxiety about the future (and of the larger community) rather than aggressions between students or groups of students.

The dynamics and incidents these educators reported are nothing short of a crisis and should be treated as such. We end the report with a series of recommendations that school leaders and administrators should take immediately. These include making public

statements that set expectations, establishing protocols to identify students who are being targeted or whose emotional needs have changed, doubling down on anti-bullying strategies and being alert to signs of a hostile environment. Most importantly, every school should have a crisis plan to respond to hate and bias incidents.

These are only the initial steps. What new steps wills0.027 Tw 9



SCHOOLS IN THE AFTERMATH: TARGETING, TRAUMA AND TENSION

The election of Donald Trump is having a major

was learning about major religions.)” MIDDLE SCHOOL
TEACHER, WASHINGTON

“I’ve had a lot of students repeat the phrase
‘Trump that bitch’ in my class, and make jokes
about Hispanic students ‘going back to Mexico.’”
— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, GEORGIA

“A proud proclamation of racism was made by a stu-
dent after the election: ‘Bet those black people are
really scared now.’” — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, MICHIGAN

“White males have been overheard saying, ‘screw
women’s rights, fag lover liberal, build the wall, lock her
up.’ The rebel flag is draped on the truck of a popular
student, and the p-word has been used very casually,
citing Trump as the excuse.” — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER,
MICHIGAN

“Kids saying, ‘Trump won, you’re going back to Mexico!’
Boys grabbing girls, cornering girls against lockers. Kids
yelling, ‘Trump won, so [there will] be less people here
soon.’” — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, KANSAS

“Today I photographed vandalism in the boy’s bath
room that mentioned a specific black student (1 of 7 in a
school of 200). It repeatedly mentioned the KKK, used
the n-word and joining Jews. A student drew a swas
tika on my board a few days ago. A black female ran out
of a room crying after being racially harassed by multi-
ple students during two different classes. One student
... reported asking two different Latina students if they
were ready to move back to Mexico now that Trump
is president. I have witnessed an increase in racist and
sexist jokes by students who support Trump. I person-
ally spent most of the day putting out fires related to
these issues, including documenting and reporting
them. Multiple white males also expressed anger over
the school wanting to post signs stating we are a sanc-
tuary school.” — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, OREGON

“Kill the n*****s’ etched in school bathroom. Paper
with n-word left in my classroom. Neither incident was
investigated. Students have told me they no longer need
Spanish (the subject I teach) since Trump is sending all
the Mexicans back. A black student was blocked from
entering his classroom by two white students chanting,
‘Trump, Trump.’” — HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, TENNESSEE

“Kids did a ‘mock’ election where they got to vote for

president and two of 32 kids voted for Trump (this was
all before the actual election). One of the students who
voted for Trump expressed that he felt kids were judg-
ing him for his choice and the teacher defended his
position and right to have his own vote. He then said
to the class, ‘I just want him to win so he can get rid
of all the Mexicans.’ He himself is an immigrant from
Bosnia.” — ELEMENTARY TEACHER, ARIZONA

THE NEW MAJORITY: TRAUMA AND FEAR

Speaking broadly, the survey results indicate that schools

hated America or now understood why their friends who is Jewish reported, 'We'll burn you.'" HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, NEW JERSEY

"Many of my students feel fear, particularly my students of color, my Latino students, LGBTQ students and so on. They worry about their future and their rights. While we've had few episodes of hate, we haven't had many students (mostly white) tell others to get over it, shake it off and so on. It's a difficult climate."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, WASHINGTON STATE

"Multi-racial children were telling Hispanic children they were going back to Mexico and their parents were crying in the bathroom and leading teachers to spend more time away from instruction so they can provide emotional support. For some, student distrust of a majority-white teaching force may loom as a new issue. More than one educator commented that her "students believe that white teachers voted for Trump." It's impossible to know how long added support will be needed or when trust will be restored.

— ELEMENTARY COUNSELOR, ILLINOIS

"Most of students come from Hispanic backgrounds. Many of their parents came to the states illegally. We also have some Muslim students. Many of them were crying and so scared the day after Trump won. They are tough and emotionally exhausting."

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, PENNSYLVANIA

"Immigrant students reported that the bus on November 9th was full of 'Terrorist' or 'Pack your bags!' or 'Go back to where you came from.' Another student

INCREASED TENSION, LESS COMMUNITY

Finally, in any school that is diverse, especially those with no group in the majority, teachers report that students are tense, have lost trust in each other and are struggling to get along. The divisions opened by the election run deep in these schools.

Here are some stories that show the division, tension and loss of trust.

"We have a mixture of high-income white families and low-income Latino students. The divide has always existed, but with the election over the last year, it's been WAY worse." — ELEMENTARY TEACHER, ILLINOIS

"The day after the election, I broke up a fight in the

SOME EXCEPTIONS

A very small minority of teachers reported little impact of the election on their schools. These schools tended to fall into two broad groups.

The first group includes schools that are overwhelmingly white, especially in areas with few immigrants or African Americans. These students are isolated, with little exposure to students who are frightened by the election results, and few opportunities to see the world from their perspective. Teachers at these schools report that their students have accepted (or welcomed) the results and have moved on.

Here are some examples of the schools that fall into this category.

“Truly, it hasn’t had a huge impact. Because I talk about these things in class, I have been able to see what little impact there is. Colleagues haven’t seen anything.”

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, UTAH

“Students stated, regardless of who won, we are still in this country together and we will make the most of it. They really did not see that whoever won would make a difference in their lives.”—

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, ALABAMA

“If we stop trying to find problems and focus on the future, our country would be a better, more tolerant place to live. I explained to my students how lucky we are to live in the greatest country in the world, a place where we can have a peaceful transition of power; and if you do not agree with the results, we get to do it again in four years.”—

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, FLORIDA

“I teach current events and the students did a very good job on breaking down how to actually do a true protest.”

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THE UGLINESS IS NEW

Many teachers made a point of saying that what is happening now is something new. It's not, they explained, a different response to an election result, but an unleashing of a spirit of hatred they had not seen before.

Here are some of their comments.

"I have seen open racism, spoken, for the first time in 23 years of teaching."— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, MICHIGAN

"I have never directly encountered race-related harassment in our school until after the election this year."
— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, WISCONSIN

"There have been more fights in the first 10 weeks of this year than in the first 10 years of my career (this is my 11th year teaching)." SECONDARY TEACHER, NEW YORK

"Words that I have not heard in the past — racist, bigot, pussy, slut — are now used by my fourth-graders."
— ELEMENTARY TEACHER, MINNESOTA

"This is my 21st year of teaching. This is the .4 ((r)0.5 9s)0.5 (t)0.5 (y)16t (i)0.5 (s)0.5 (e)10.52]TJ -0.011 Tc -0.022 Tw 9.66

RECOMMENDATIONS

A few days before the election, we posted advice to help teachers navigate the day after Election Day. We knew that, no matter the result, some kids would be crushed and others would be jubilant. We also knew that, after a campaign as ugly as this one, teachers would be like medics on the front lines.

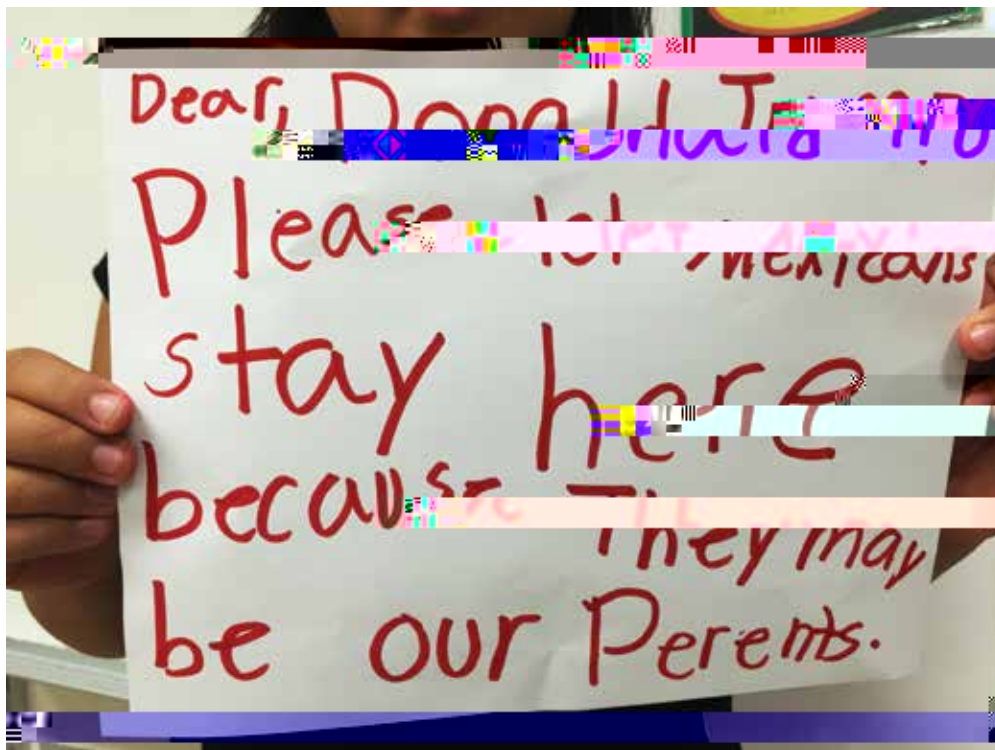
A week later, we saw that school leaders around the country were confronting increasingly volatile school environments. From managing anxiety and fear to

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The discussion in this report summarizes responses to responded to the survey. Collectively, they submitted questions posed by Teaching Tolerance via an informal over 25,000 comments. Nearly all respondents iden online survey launched on November 14, 2016; the data ed themselves by name, email address, grade level reported here is based on the responses as of Novembeand state. More than 1,500 signi ed a willingness to go 23. A link to the survey was sent to educators who sub on record by giving permission for Teaching Tolerance scribe to the Teaching Tolerance newsletter and was alsoto share their contact information with the media. shared on Teaching Tolerance's social media sites. It was The results of this survey are not scienti c. The open to any educator who wanted to participate. Several respondents were not selected in a manner to ensure other groups, including Facing History and Ourselves, a representative sample; those who responded may Teaching for Change, Not in Our Schools, the American have been more likely to perceive problems than those Federation of Teachers and Rethinking Schools, also who did not. But it is the largest collection of educa shared the survey link with their audiences. tor responses that has been collected; the tremendous

The individual items can be found on page 15 ofnumber of responses as well as the overwhelming con this report. mation of what has been anecdotally reported in the

In the course of just over a week, over 10,000 peoplemedia cannot be ignored or dismissed.



10. What resources, programs or interventions are you currently using?

Please let us know about yourself. We need your name and will not share it without your permission. This is necessary so we can verify the data. Reports of harassment at school are being dismissed as "hoaxes," and we know that some social media anecdotes have been found to be pranks. We need solid data from educators. We're depending on you.

11. At what school level do you work?

- Early childhood to pre-K
- Elementary education K-5
- Middle school 6-8
- High school 9-12
- Higher ed
- Other (please specify)

12. What is your main job role?

- Teacher
- Counselor
- Building administrator
- District administrator
- Librarian
- Professor
- Other (please specify)

ENDNOTES

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6. Market Data Research school data, accessed via subscription November 27, 2016.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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