

Mental health can directly affect a youth's ability to learn and succeed in school and beyond. School-based services that support students' mental health are best delivered using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports.* Examining data on a population level can help to identify students' needs within each tier. Data from the 2017-19 Biennial Statewide California Healthy Kids Survey of secondary students show that respondents have significant unmet needs that could benefit from intervention and supports.

TIER 1: SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR ALL STUDENTS

About three-fourths of California secondary students reported high levels of school climate indicators, indicating that supports are needed to ensure ALL students have positive experiences at school.

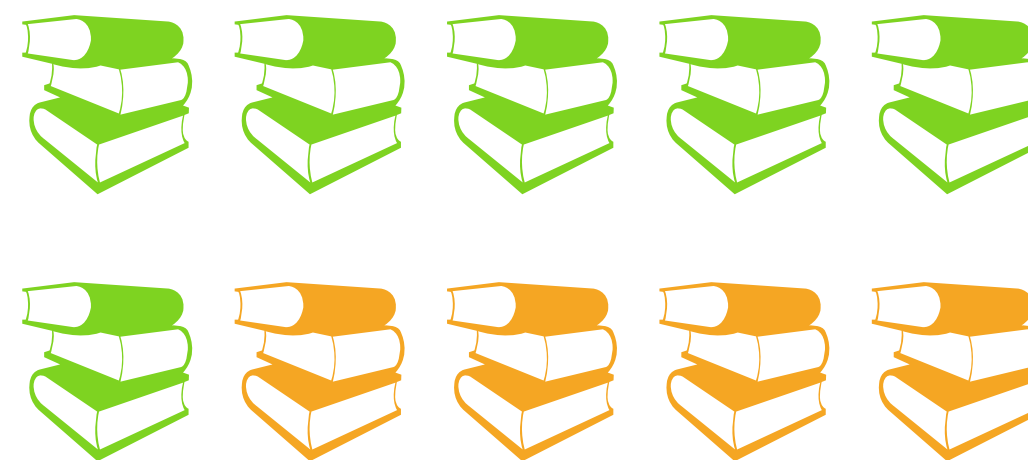
6 out of 10

Reported High Levels of Caring Adult Relationships at School



6 out of 10

Reported High Levels of School Connectedness



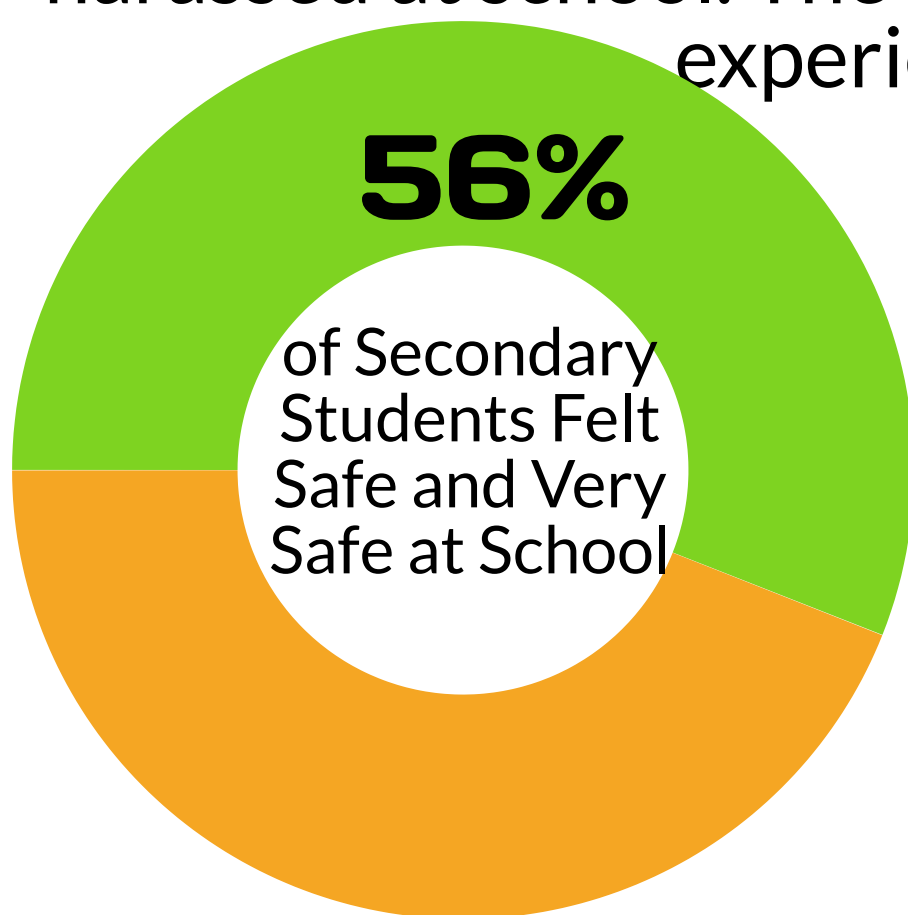
7 out of 10

Reported High Levels of High Expectations from Adults at School

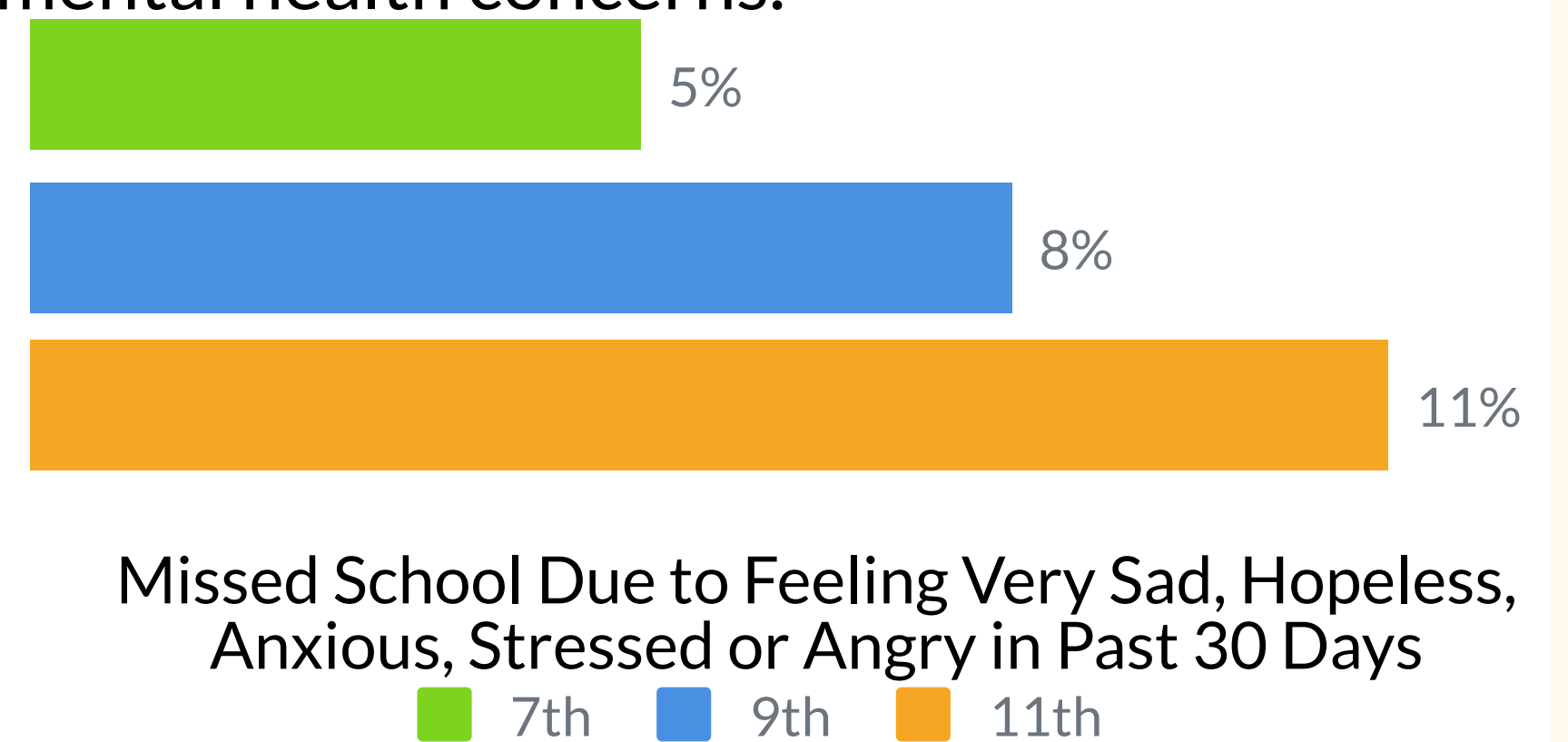


TIER 2: STUDENTS AT RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Only 56% of secondary students reported feeling safe or very safe and about one-third were bullied and/or harassed at school. The percentage who missed school due to emotional distress increased with age. These experiences can contribute to increased risk for mental health concerns.



3 out of 10
Secondary Students Were Bullied or Harassed at School

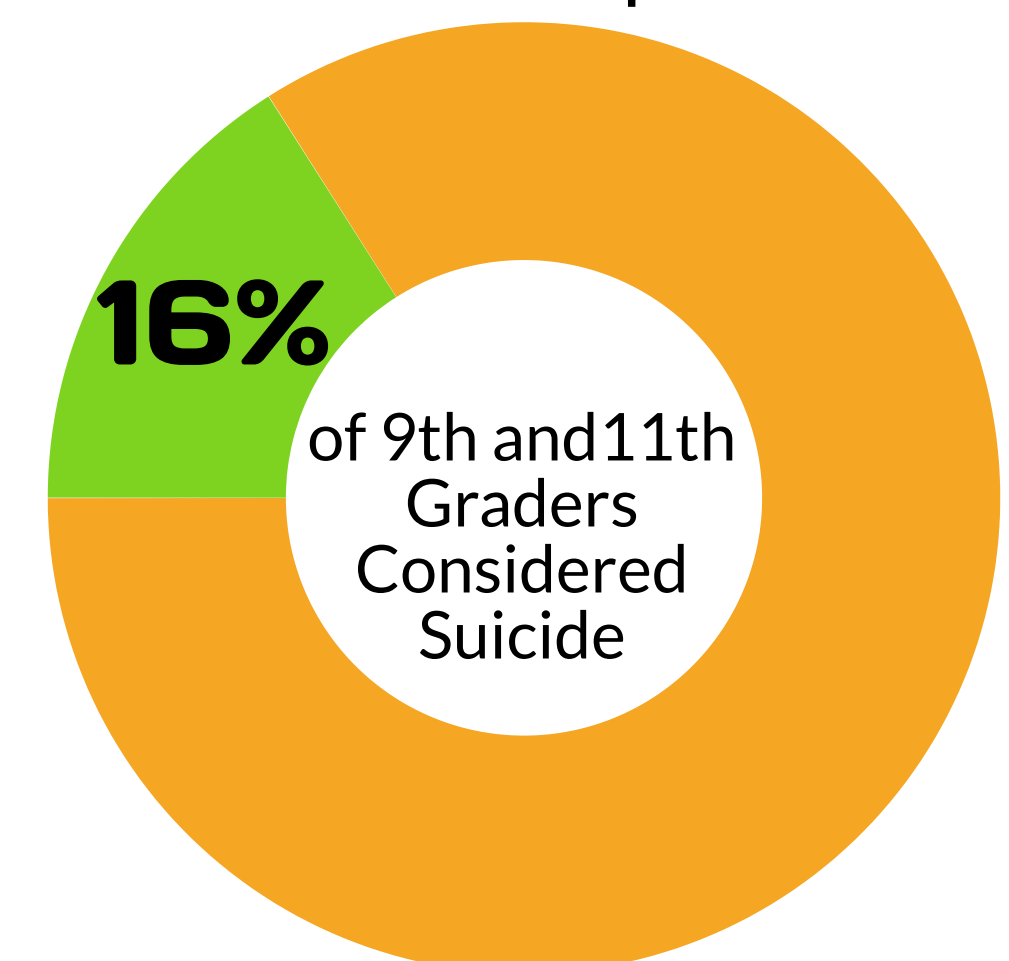
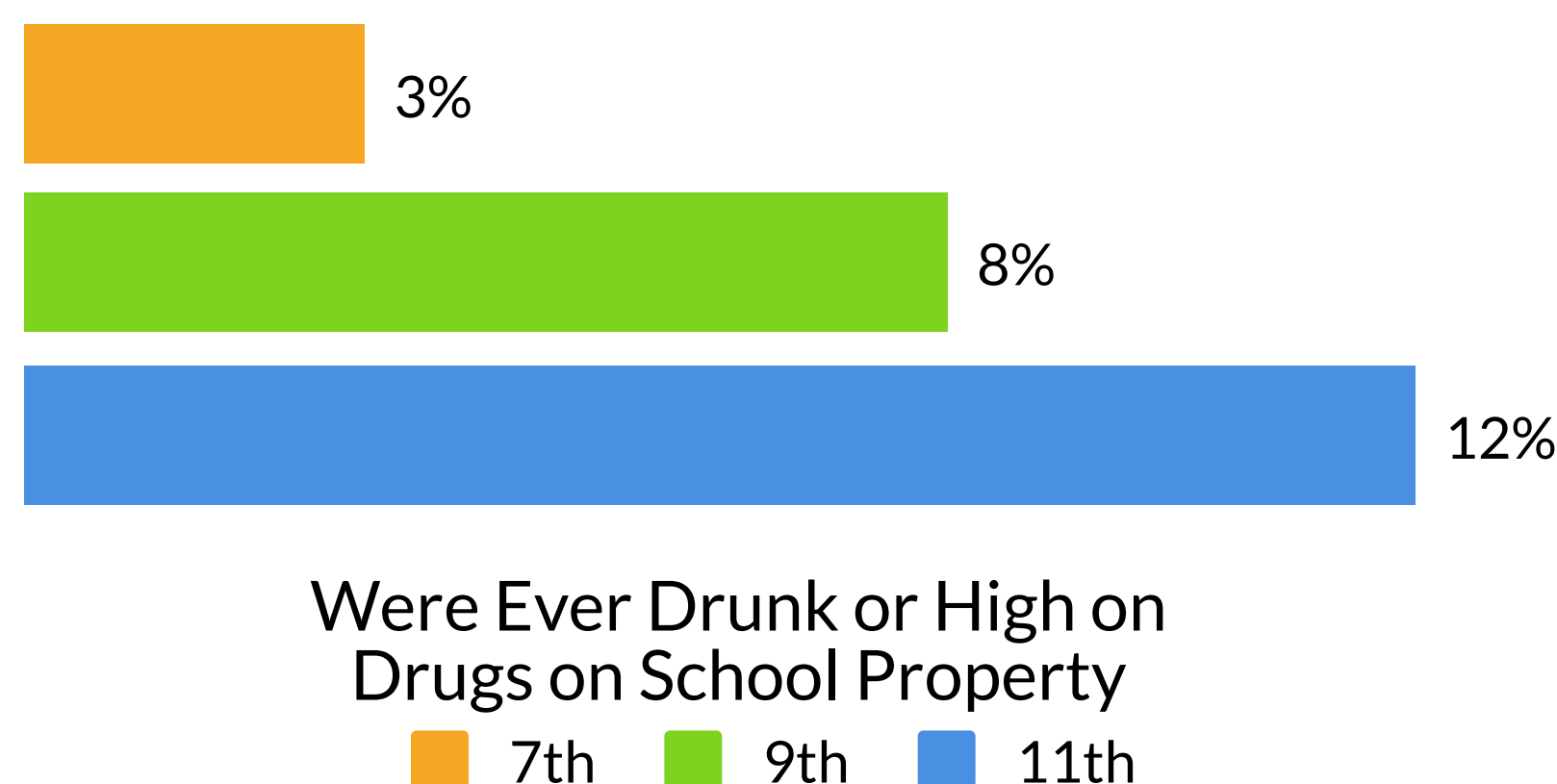


TIER 3: STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT NEEDS

One-third of secondary students experienced chronic sadness and 16% considered suicide. The percentage who used substances at school increased with age. Students experiencing these concerns require individualized interventions.



3 out of 10
Secondary Students Experienced Chronic Sadness or Hopelessness



Schools are increasingly being called upon to address students' mental health needs. School-based services are best delivered using a Multi-Tiered System of Supports that includes: 1) universal supports for ALL students to increase mental health awareness and improve school climate; 2) targeted supports to support students at risk of developing mental health conditions; and 3) intensive supports or referrals to individualized services for students with significant needs.

TIER 1: SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR ALL STUDENTS

About two-thirds of California secondary students report high levels of school climate indicators, indicating that supports are needed to ensure ALL students have positive experiences at school.

School climate is related to students' experiences of school life. Positive school climates, characterized by caring adult/student relationships, high expectations, and meaningful opportunities for youth participation, promote healthy social-emotional development and well-being for ALL students. One way they do this is by fostering school connectedness, which itself has been shown to lead to positive academic, health, and social-emotional outcomes.

Tier 1 supports are designed to reach all students through school-wide implementation with a prevention focus. They are generally delivered within the scope of general education curricula or extracurricular activities.

TIER 2: STUDENTS AT RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

Many factors contribute to students developing mental health conditions, such as anxiety or depression, including feeling unsafe or being bullied and/or harassed at school. Another indicator of students who may be at risk is the percentage missing school due to feeling stressed, anxious, sad or angry.

About one-third of California secondary students were bullied or harassed at school. The percentage that missed school due to mental health related reasons increased from middle to high school.

Tier 2 interventions are intended for students with mild or emerging mental health needs. These supports are typically delivered in small group settings, are time-limited in duration, and focus on teaching pro-social skills and strategies tailored to students' needs.

TIER 3: STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT NEEDS

One-third of secondary students experienced chronic sadness and 16% considered suicide. The percentage who use substances at school increased with age, with 12% of 11th graders reporting use at school.

Students who are experiencing chronic sadness or suicidal ideation or heavily using substances, particularly on school property, require more individualized interventions to support their higher mental health needs. Youth who report one of these conditions may be experiencing all three and require intensive support.

Tier 3 interventions are individualized and delivered by trained mental health clinicians, often in one-to-one settings. Partnerships with community-based organizations can help schools connect students in need to services.

For more information on how to support students' needs within each tier, visit:
<https://healthpolicy.ucsf.edu/sites/g/files/tkssra756/f/wysiwyg/PDF/IHPS/Three-Component%20Model%20100918.pdf>



This report was produced by the University of California, San Francisco School Health Services Research & Evaluation Team for the California Department of Education's Project Cal-Well Mental Health Program. For more information visit: <https://healthpolicy.ucsf.edu/school-health-services-evaluation>. Data in this report are from the 2017-19 Biennial Statewide California Healthy Kids Survey. A full copy of the report is available at: https://data.calschls.org/resources/Biennial_State_1719.pdf

*Adapted from Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: <https://www.pbis.org/school/tier-3-supports/what-is-tier-3-pbis>

