COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

SCHOOL POLICY, ACTION AND RESEARCH CENTER

By Kevin Gee, Professor and Director of SPARC

TOPICS Violence and Discrimination, Education

ABOUT

The School Policy, Action and Research Center (SPARC) at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis), generates research leading to actionable insights that can support the educational well-being of vulnerable youth. SPARC's work focuses on children experiencing adverse life and social circumstances, including Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth who have been bullied, children experiencing chronic absenteeism, and youth involved in the child welfare system who have experienced maltreatment. Established by Professor Kevin Gee at the UC Davis School of Education, SPARC's research explores the implications of bullying and hate speech.

DATA NEEDS

While hate and bullying against AAPI youth are longstanding and systemic, this is a critically important juncture to study bullying against AAPI youth amidst the intensification and proliferation of anti-AAPI hate, both nationwide and in California. Yet disaggregated data specific to ethnicity, vital to gaining understanding of the scope of the problem, is deficient.

The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a large-scale statewide survey of youth conducted annually under the sponsorship of the California Department of Education. It is the only dataset that captures bullying experiences with disaggregated information on AAPI subgroups. The Bureau of Justice Statistics also offers data on hate speech and bullying through the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), but the data is disaggregated only by racial group, not by ethnicity. **A significant data gap remains at the national level, with no data to assess the effects of hate speech and bullying on youth in each AAPI ethnic group.**

SPARC's recent report *Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth*[1] leveraged data from the California Healthy Kids Survey to analyze rates of anti-AAPI bullying among 9th and 11th graders who identify as Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The study examined experiences with bullying in specific AAPI ethnic subgroups, including Asian Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Laotian and Hmong), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Research questions included:

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 during pandemic-induced school closures differ from the frequency of reported bullying incidents prior to 2020?

Anti-AAPI bullying declined as schools shifted to remote learning during the pandemic.

4. Which California regions experienced higher rates of anti-AAPI bullying?
5. Do supportive school climates result in reduced incidence of bullying for AAPI students?
6. Which districts have the most accessible bullying-related resources and online reporting systems for AAPI students and families?

The *Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth* study found that Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth are subjected to the highest rates of bullying among all students statewide. The researchers delineated the impact of COVID on bullying, as well as the regions where bullying of AAPI students was most prevalent. Importantly, the study identified important mitigating factors — notably, AAPI students who felt connected to their schools and supported by adults at the school had a lower risk of experiencing bullying. The findings also pointed to the efficacy of anti-bullying resources and reporting systems in specific school systems throughout California.

Solving anti-AAPI bullying requires building strong school climates where students feel connected to school and each other.

With the alarming rise in suicide rates among AAPI youth documented in a *JAMA Network Open* report,[2] these findings point to the urgent need for disaggregated data that tracks AAPI youth experiences with bullying and hate speech. **Disaggregated data is urgently needed across all age groups in the K-12 system — elementary school, middle school, and high school — at the national, state and school district levels.** There is currently no data on middle school students. Existing datasets need to support disaggregation by ethnic group, such as the NCVS School Crime Supplement and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study — Kindergarten (ECLS-K), and the Common Core of Data (CCD).

1 Gee, K. A., Hang, S., Jost, G., & Cooc, N. (2024, May). Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander youth: Who is most at risk and what can schools do? UC Davis School Policy, Action and Research Center. https://education.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/misc/sparc_report_bullying_aapi_youth_05-2024_final.pdf

2 Bui, A. L., & Lau, A. S. (2024). Suicide rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander youths — A cause for alarm. JAMA Network Open, 7(7). https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.22694

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