

AFTER ELECTION DAY

THE TRUMP EFFECT

THE IMPACT OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS



Southern Poverty Law Center

Fighting Hate
Teaching Tolerance
Seeking Justice

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ABOUT THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Montgomery, Alabama, is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) civil rights organization founded in 1971 and dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society.

ABOUT TEACHING TOLERANCE

Founded in 1991, Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, is dedicated to reducing prejudice, improving intergroup relations and supporting equitable school experiences for our nation's children.

The program provides free educational materials, including *Perspectives for a Diverse America*, a K-12 anti-bias curriculum. *Teaching Tolerance* magazine is sent to more than 400,000 educators, reaching nearly every school in the country. Tens of thousands of educators use the program's film kits, and more than 7,000 schools participate in the annual Mix It Up at Lunch Day program.

Teaching Tolerance materials have won two Oscars[®], an Emmy and dozens of REVERE Awards from the Association of American Publishers, including two Golden Lamps, the industry's highest honor. The program's website and social media pages offer thought-provoking news, conversation and support for educators who care about diversity, equal opportunity and respect for differences in schools.

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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 Republican nomination.

Since Trump was elected, media have been awash in reports of hate incidents around the nation, including at schools. Some detractors have characterized the reports as isolated, exaggerated or even as hoaxes. This survey, which was distributed by several organizations (see About the Survey for a complete list), via email and social media, offers the richest source of information about the immediate impact of the election on our country. The findings show that teachers, principals and district leaders will have an oversized job this year as they work to heal the rifts within school communities.

The survey asked respondents a mix of easily quantifiable questions and also offered them a chance to

describe what was happening in open-ended questions. There are over 25,000 responses, in the form of comments and stories, to the open-ended questions. It will take time to fully analyze and report on those comments. This report provides a high-level summary of the findings.

Here are the highlights:

- Nine out of 10 educators who responded have seen a negative impact on students' mood and behavior following the election; most of them worry about the continuing impact for the remainder of the school year.
- Eight in 10 report heightened anxiety on the part of marginalized students, including immigrants, Muslims, African Americans and LGBT students.
- Four in 10 have heard derogatory language directed at students of color, Muslims, immigrants and people based on gender or sexual orientation.
- Half said that students were targeting each other based on which candidate they'd supported.
- Although two-thirds report that administrators have been "responsive," four out of 10 don't think their schools have action plans to respond to incidents of hate and bias.
- Over 2,500 educators described specific incidents of bigotry and harassment that can be directly traced to election rhetoric. These incidents include graffiti (including swastikas), assaults on students and teachers, property damage, fights and threats of violence.
- Because of the heightened emotion, half are hesitant to discuss the election in class. Some principals have told teachers to refrain from discussing or addressing the election in any way.

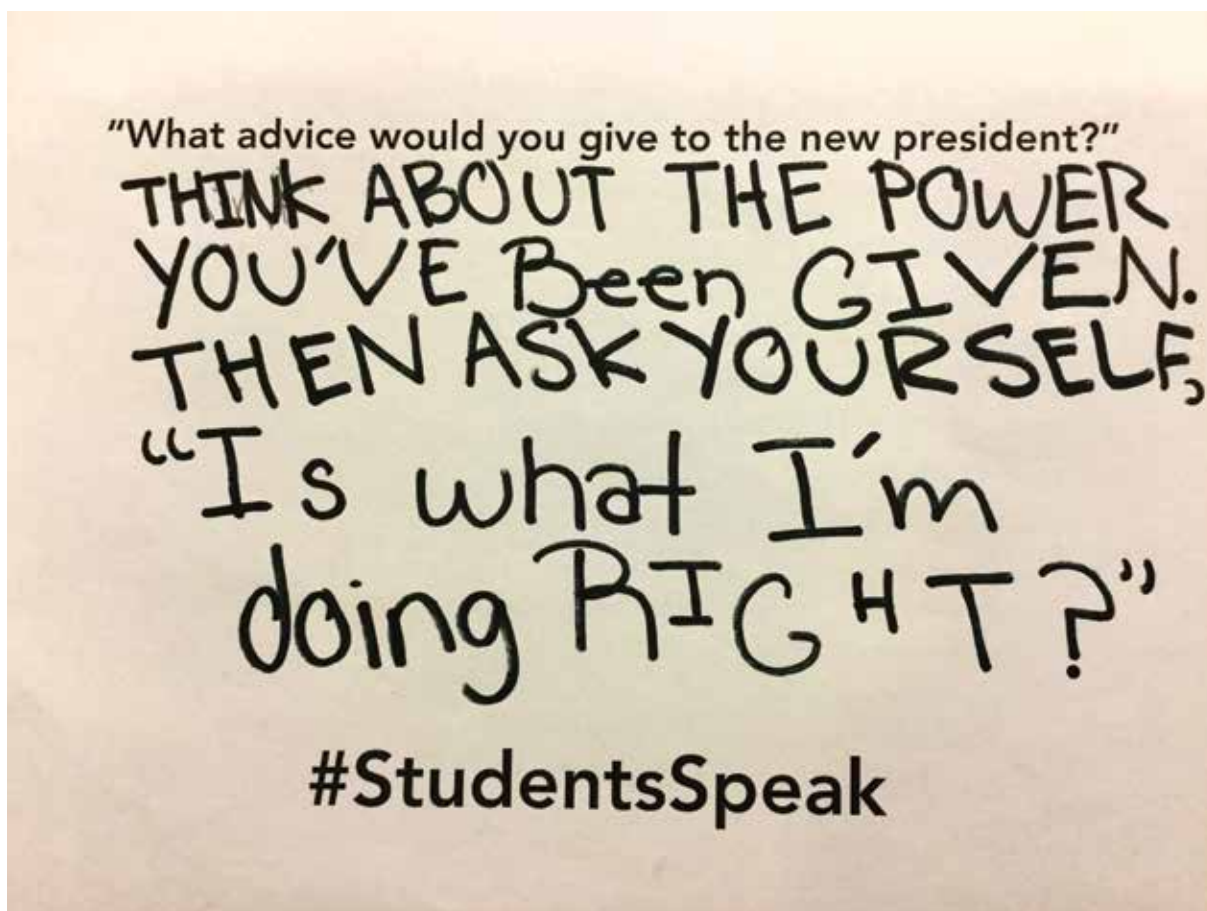
It is worth noting that many teachers took pains to point out that the incidents they were reporting represent a distinct uptick; these dynamics are new and can be traced directly to the results of the election.

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 will be needed depends entirely on how the rapidly changing political environment (and new federal policies) affect fragile school cultures. At minimum, all schools will need to work to rebuild community; many will need to deal with even more serious threats. The kinds of disruption we describe in this report have long-lasting impacts; school leaders must be ready to respond.



SCHOOLS IN THE AFTERMATH: TARGETING, TRAUMA AND TENSION

The election of Donald Trump is having a major impact on American schools, but how students are affected — and how educators are addressing the impact — depends largely on demographics. American schools are increasingly segregated along racial, ethnic and economic lines. Although individual experiences will vary, looking at the proportion of students who are African American, Hispanic and white is a generally dependable indicator of what each school is experiencing, regardless of whether it is located in a red or a blue state. We found that how a school reacted ultimately depended on whether it is a white-majority school, a “minority-majority” school, or a diverse school with no single group in the majority. This is a generalization, of course, and there are exceptions, which we discuss later.

Overall, our public schools serve mainly low-income students of color. But students are not evenly distributed among schools. Here are a few important facts:

- Total number of public schools: 98,454¹
- Percentage of students who are from low-income families: 51²
- Percentage of students who are Hispanic: 25³
- Percentage of students who are African American: 16⁴
- Percentage of students who are students of color: 50⁵
- Percentage of schools that are 70% or more minority: 26⁶
- Percentage of schools that are 70% or more white: 42⁷
- Percentage of schools with less than 70% of one racial group: 32⁸

TARGETING AND RACIAL BIAS

The increase in targeting and harassment that began in the spring has, according to the teachers we surveyed, skyrocketed. It was most frequently reported by educators in schools with a majority of white students.

The behavior is directed against immigrants, Muslims, girls, LGBT students, kids with disabilities and anyone who was on the “wrong” side of the election. It ranges from frightening displays of white power to remarks that are passed off as “jokes.”

Here’s a small sampling of the thousands of stories teachers told us that illustrate post-election targeting.

“A group of white students held up a Confederate flag during the pledge of allegiance at a school-wide assembly.” — **HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR, ARIZONA**

“Since the election, every single secondary school in our district has had issues with racist, xenophobic or misogynistic comments cropping up. In the week since the election, I have personally had to deal with the following issues: 1) Boys inappropriately grabbing and touching girls, even after they said no (this never happened until after the election); 2) White students telling their friends who are Hispanic or of color that their parents are going to be deported and that they would be thrown out of school; 3) White students going up to students of color who are total strangers and hurling racial remarks at them, such as, ‘Trump is going [to] throw you back over the wall, you know?’ or ‘We can’t wait until you and the other brownies are gone’; 4) The use of the n-word by white students in my class and in the hallway. Never directed towards a student of color (that I’ve been told yet), but still being casually used in conversation.” — **MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, INDIANA**

“The slurs have been written on assignments. ‘Send the Muslims back because they are responsible for 9/11.’” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, MINNESOTA**

“‘I hate Muslims.’ (Student blurted this while the class

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 student 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 bathroom 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 swastika on my board a few days ago. A black female ran out of a room crying after being racially harassed by multiple 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 personally 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 sanctuary 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 judging 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, COLORADO**

“The day after the election I had a group of Hispanic girls in my homeroom targeted by a boy who told them Trump was going to deport their families.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, NEW JERSEY**

“Seventh-grade white boys yelling, ‘Heil Trump!’ Many stories about bigotry have happened outside of school.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, COLORADO**

“Someone anonymously put a swastika with the Trump tag line ‘Make America Great Again’ on the desk of a Spanish teacher.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, CALIFORNIA**

“The day after the election, white students in my school walked down the halls harassing their students of color. One student went around asking, ‘Are you legal?’ to each student he passed. Another student told his black classmate to ‘Go back to Haiti because this is our country now.’” — **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT TEACHER, MASSACHUSETTS**

“These incidents involve students that I teach in 6th grade: 1) A white student waited outside the boys restroom to target an African-American student, attempting to provoke a fight and calling him ‘n----r.’ The white student had been a vocal Trump supporter; 2) A white male student asked an Asian female student why her eyes looked so funny. The same male student repeatedly asked another male student of Middle Eastern background if he was Muslim and [said] that he ‘hated Muslims.’ Both of these occurred last week following the election.” — **MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, VIRGINIA**

“In over 15 years of teaching high school this is the first year that swastikas are appearing all over school furniture. The day after the election I overheard a student in the hall chanting, ‘White power.’ I’m appalled! I live in one of the bluest states!” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, WASHINGTON STATE**

THE NEW MAJORITY: TRAUMA AND FEAR

Speaking broadly, the survey results indicate that schools with significant numbers of African-American and Hispanic students and immigrant students of color are experiencing what many teachers named as trauma, with all its attendant consequences. A Minnesota high school teacher wrote, “Our school is all immigrant, mostly students in upper teen years (14–21, most are over 16). The levels of anxiety have been through the roof since summer break. It’s very hard for them to think. Their brains can literally handle a fraction of what students could learn in these same classes in the previous 16 years I have taught them. They escaped trauma recently and now are facing it ahead of them (and around them right now).”

These schools with large populations of students of color, many of them also high-poverty schools, report relatively few instances of bigotry in the form of anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim or racist sentiment or language. That’s not, however, a sign that all is well. As several teachers noted, theirs are the students whose identities were disparaged during the election. A California high school teacher reported, “[Our] students have not perpetuated incidents of election-related bigotry or harassment. They perceive themselves to be victims of this throughout their lives, not just because of the election.”

A school social worker in Washington State observed that her school had no incidents of harassment. “On the contrary,” she wrote, “since the vast majority of our students are members of targeted groups, I have seen nothing but a shared sense of fear about what will happen to them and their families.”

The fear comes in many forms: worries about deportation, family separation and general anxiety and hopelessness about the future. Teachers observed that children who are fearful and anxious are unable to concentrate and have a harder time keeping up at school.

The biggest fear of all comes from immigrants; nearly 1,000 teachers specifically named “deportation” or family separation as a concern among students. Given Trump’s promises to deport millions of people here illegally and the uncertainty about what actual policies may ensue, teachers are ill-equipped to address these fears.

Here is a sampling of what fear looks like in schools.

“I teach in a university lab school. The kids come from very diverse cultures, but definitely from middle class,

educated families, and STILL they feel threatened. One Muslim girl clung to her kindergarten teacher on November 9 and asked, ‘Are they going to do anything to me? Am I safe?’” — **EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER, TENNESSEE**

“In a 24-hour period, I completed two suicide assessments and two threat of violence assessments for middle school students. This was last week, one week after the election... students were threatening violence against African Americans. Students were suicidal and without hope. Fights, disrespect have increased as well.” — **MIDDLE SCHOOL COUNSELOR, FLORIDA**

“A kindergartener asked me ‘Why did the bully win?’ Other kids who have been awarded student of the month and considered great examples for our school hid in a classroom after school and drew pokémon fireballs attacking the man. This is a serious issue that we have not clearly addressed. We need help and we must claim our districts and other districts ‘sanctuary districts.’” — **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, ARIZONA**

“We have over 20 percent Muslim students and 96 percent students of color. Before the election night, in my role in the building as the principal, I was already dealing with children calling Muslims terrorists, boys objectifying girls by calling out obscenities about their private parts, and racial tensions between Latino and Black students. We have had one incident the election night, but our students are really worried about being deported, some Muslim girls are coming to school without their hijabs, and kids have told me they are afraid that a war is going to happen. One child asked me, ‘How are we going to get our freedom back?’” — **ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL, MICHIGAN**

“I teach at a charter school in [an inner city]. The student makeup is 99 percent black and Latino children, with the majority qualifying for free or reduced price lunch. The climate in the school itself has been fine, because almost all of the students are people of color. However students have been emotionally distraught, especially the day after the election. Many came to school sobbing, fearing for their future and their families, worried about their relatives being deported. Many expressed sadness that they didn’t realize how messed up the country was until that day, and that they either

hated America or now understood why their friends said they hated America.” — **MIDDLE 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 have 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**

“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 thinking of future plans just in case. My Muslim students wondered why America didn’t like them. It’s been 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

who is Jewish reported, ‘We’ll burn you.’” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, ILLINOIS**

“Multi-racial children were telling Hispanic children they were going back to Mexico and their parents were first. Fifth-grade boys were fighting in the bathroom because they found out who voted for Trump in the mock election at school. A lesbian student’s mother was telling her that life as we knew it was over, and she was quite distraught about her mother. Children are very worried about being deported or killed.” — **ELEMENTARY COUNSELOR, ILLINOIS**

The trauma students are experiencing is putting a strain on school counseling and social work resources 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.

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 locker room because of differing opinions around each student’s choice for president.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, ILLINOIS**

“‘You voted for Trump. I hate you,’ said one third-grader to another.” — **ELEMENTARY TEACHER, WASHINGTON**

“Half of the students are white with frontier mindset (working in primary industries and a dislike for authority). One-third of the students are Native [American]. One-third of the students are newly arrived first-generation and second-generation immigrants from Central America. The students have grown up together in a small town. The white students wear red ball caps and say terrible things about immigrants, while sitting next to their immigrant friends. The white students are loud about their views. The others are quiet and afraid.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, OREGON**

“I teach in a primarily white, upper middle-class school that largely supports Trump. Unfortunately, there have been divisions between students since Trump’s win. My African-American students are refusing to work with the white students who supported Trump. Students are no longer looking at each other as people, but are looking at them as who their parents supported. It is no longer about issues, but about hate and fear and disagreement and all the things we work our tails off

to teach our students to be careful and wary of. My heart is breaking. And it was especially broken when the 12-year-old white male student saw an x on another white male student's paper and said to him, 'Here, let me help you,' and proceeded to draw a swastika on his paper. And our admin is telling us NOT to talk about it."

— MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, GEORGIA

"There is a lack of trust in the school right now. Many students are unclear as to how to talk to each other."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, WASHINGTON

"The day after the election a line of students (mainly Hispanic) was formed at lunch. A student (African American) told one of them to 'Go back to Mexico.' A fight almost resulted from his comment."

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, NORTH CAROLINA

"We had a race-related fight at a school function in

September. My Mexican-American students have been catching comments from kids at school and in the community about being deported, etc. We also had one student post a pro-Trump/anti-black meme that went to 600 other kids' Instagram feeds. (The words he used are not printable here.)"

— HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, NEW YORK

"We have had many students fighting, especially between the Latino and African-American population, as well as many more boys feeling superior to girls. I have had one male student grab a female student's crotch and tell her that it's legal for him to do that to her now. We have not had as many hate crimes in our school as others, but that is likely because we have a VERY small white population. One of my students from last year who is Muslim has not worn her hijab since the election. She is one of three Muslim students in our school."

— ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHER, MINNESOTA



THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO MENTIONED ...

SWASTIKAS	54
CONFEDERATE FLAGS	31
THE KKK	40
"BUILD THE WALL"	476
DEPORTATION	672
NAZI	13
THE N-WORD	117
PUSSY	18
LYNCHING	7
NOOSE	4
AFRICA (sent back to)	89
SLAVERY (return to)	20

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 that will actually bring change vs. a mass temper tantrum. They also looked into how our democracy works.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, WASHINGTON STATE**

“They reacted, but they moved on faster than the adults are.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, IDAHO**

“I don’t think the election has had a big impact on our

school climate. It is a 6-8 middle school in a wealthy suburb. We have mostly white students with a decent size Asian population. It seems that there was support for both sides in our community, but the students seem to be taking the results fairly.” — **MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, OHIO**

“Absolutely nothing; if anything, this survey is creating more hatred than the election results.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, RHODE ISLAND**

“Our school has a unique demographic and, as a result, the emotions of the election were very mixed. Many of our students are white, middle-to-upper-class and conservative. Many of them were happy with the outcome of the election, much to most teachers’ chagrin. There were, of course, a fair amount of students who were visibly upset as well. A week later, though, and I (sadly) don’t really see much remnants of the election.” — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, NEW MEXICO**

The second group includes schools that have worked hard at establishing inclusive welcoming communities, have response programs in place, and nurtured qualities of empathy and compassion among students. Many of them report that students are affected, but that they have the language and practices — talking circles, student-led groups, leadership clubs, character programs and proactive staff — that have helped them avoid conflict. “We are keeping a careful, careful watch as teachers and administrators,” noted a North Carolina educator. “We are in solidarity as we seek to see that every child in our school knows his/her value and importance in our community.” A high school teacher in California reported, “The students were devastated by the election results, as were most of our faculty and staff members. However, the darkness of the election brought us all closer together and in a positive and proactive way!”

Other schools are feeling the pressure, though. A Maryland high school teacher said, “We have worked really hard over the last 10 years to change our climate. The last year has nearly undone all of that work. It is disheartening.”

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 first time I've had a student call another student the 'n' word. This incident occurred the day after a conference with the offender's mother. During the conference, the mother made her support of Trump known and expressed her hope that 'the blacks' would soon 'know their place again.'" — **ELEMENTARY TEACHER, GEORGIA**

Clearly, this election is having an effect on students, but teachers are affected as well.

"Teachers are struggling. We are facing division like we've never seen before. People are rethinking

relationships and opinions of colleagues. Personally, I am wondering if teaching Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* might bring me grief. I've never even considered such a thought in 20+ years of teaching!" — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, IOWA**

"An administrator told female and minority teachers that fear was 'silly' and 'ridiculous.'" — **MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER, CALIFORNIA**

"The day after the election, I sat in my car for 30 minutes before school dreading going in to the middle school and seeing the faces of the disappointed students and trying to think of what I was going to say to them. I tried to be encouraging and say they would be safe in the school that no one would be coming to get them in school." — **MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER IN A SCHOOL WITH 65 PERCENT STUDENTS OF COLOR, INCLUDING IMMIGRANTS, WISCONSIN**

"The day after the election, white male students were seen running through the halls, wearing American flag shorts and socks, Confederate flag shirts and carrying large American flags. The students were told to put their flags away, but they argued that it was freedom of speech. They continued to run through the halls periodically throughout that day. The symbol of our flag was changed for me that day. When I attended a Veteran's Day service on Thursday, some of those same students were in the ROTC group here. I saw a distinct parallel to Hitler Youth. I am no longer able to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. I am compelled to turn away when it comes on over the loud speaker and am repulsed by 'liberty and justice for all.'" — **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER, VIRGINIA**

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 responding to derogatory language and acts of bias, principals, superintendents and other district and building leaders have a tremendous challenge ahead.

With this understanding in mind, we offer these suggestions to school administrators.

› **SET THE TONE.** We're aware that many superintendents and principals around the country have sent [letters to staff and families](#). If your administration hasn't, consider doing it now. [This one](#), from Boston's school superintendent Tommy Chang, is a great model. Your message should affirm your school's values, set expectations about inclusion and respect, and explain your vision for the school community.

› **TAKE CARE OF THE WOUNDED.** Many students — especially immigrant, LGBT, Muslim and African-American students — are profoundly upset and worried by the election results. Their anxiety is warranted; many have been targeted in and out of school by individuals who think Trump's election has licensed hatred and bigotry. Let your school community know that you have a plan — and the necessary resources — to provide for the needs of specific students. Some of them are experiencing [trauma](#). Are your teachers ready?

› **DOUBLE DOWN ON ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES.** Encourage everyone in the school community to be aware of bullying, harassment and bias in all their forms. Remind them of the school's written policies, and set the expectation that your staff be ready to act. Not everyone has to be a superhero, but everyone can be an [ally](#) and an [upstander](#).

› **ENCOURAGE COURAGE.** It's especially important to let staff and students know that you expect them to [speak up](#) when they see or hear something that denigrates any member of the school community. When students interrupt biased language, calmly ask questions, correct misinformation and echo others who do the same, they send their peers a clear message: This kind of language doesn't fly here.

› **BE READY FOR A CRISIS.** The news and social media are awash in posts about ugly bias incidents — and even hate crimes — in our communities and our schools. When an incident happens, you will not have time to learn how to manage it: You need to be prepared. If something happens, we have guidance for managing the crisis and keeping students safe. Download ["Responding to Hate and Bias"](#) now and share it with others.

Teaching Tolerance will further analyze the survey results and continue to use the data to shape our resources and offerings to K-12 teachers and others who work in schools. Visit tolerance.org/voting-elections to view a package of materials currently available to help educators navigate this crisis.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

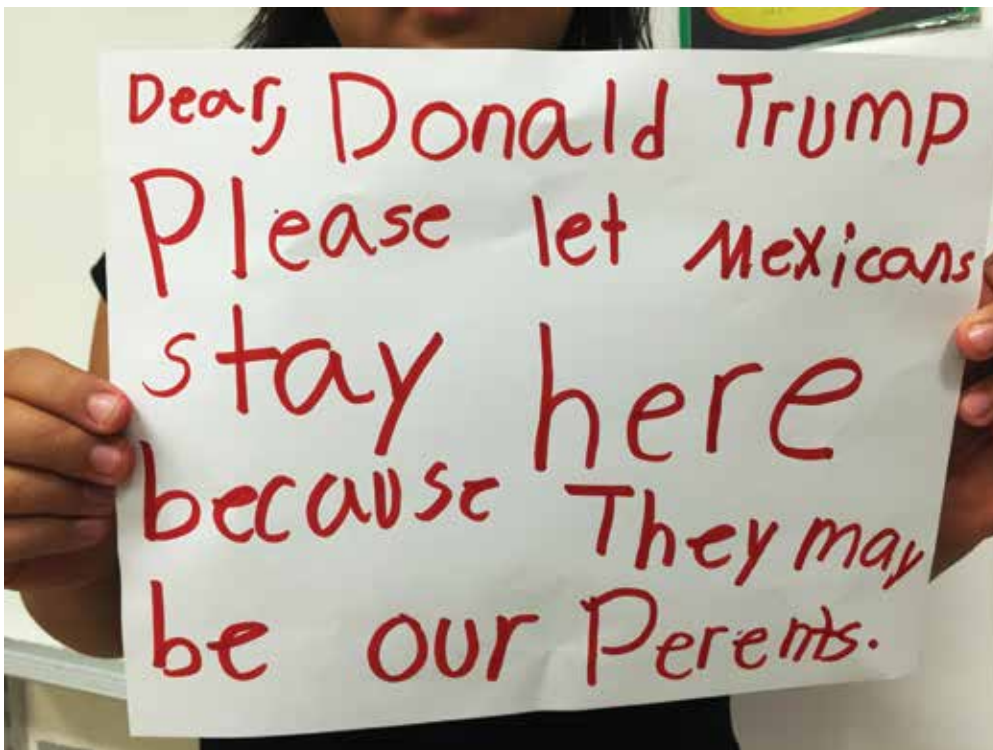
The discussion in this report summarizes responses to questions posed by Teaching Tolerance via an informal online survey launched on November 14, 2016; the data reported here is based on the responses as of November 23. A link to the survey was sent to educators who subscribe to the Teaching Tolerance newsletter and was also shared on Teaching Tolerance's social media sites. It was open to any educator who wanted to participate. Several other groups, including Facing History and Ourselves, Teaching for Change, Not in Our Schools, the American Federation of Teachers and Rethinking Schools, also shared the survey link with their audiences.

The individual items can be found on page 15 of this report.

In the course of just over a week, over 10,000 people

responded to the survey. Collectively, they submitted over 25,000 comments. Nearly all respondents identified themselves by name, email address, grade level and state. More than 1,500 signified a willingness to go on record by giving permission for Teaching Tolerance to share their contact information with the media.

The results of this survey are not scientific. The respondents were not selected in a manner to ensure a representative sample; those who responded may have been more likely to perceive problems than those who did not. But it is the largest collection of educator responses that has been collected; the tremendous number of responses as well as the overwhelming confirmation of what has been anecdotally reported in the media cannot be ignored or dismissed.



SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the impact of the election results on your school's climate?

VERY NEGATIVE SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE SOMEWHAT POSITIVE VERY POSITIVE

2. How concerned are you about your school climate for the remainder * of the year?

NOT AT ALL CONCERNED SOMEWHAT CONCERNED VERY CONCERNED EXTREMELY CONCERNED

3. Is there anything you'd like to tell us about your school and the students you serve?

4. How has the election affected the mood and behavior of students at your school?

Since the election:

My students have expressed concern about what might happen to them or their families.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

There has been anti-immigrant sentiment at my school.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

There has been anti-Muslim sentiment at my school.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

I have heard derogatory language or slurs about students of color.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

I have heard derogatory language or slurs about white students.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

I have heard derogatory language or slurs based on gender or sexual orientation.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

Students are targeting other students based on who they supported in the election.

Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

5. If specific incidents of election-related bigotry or harassment have occurred in your school, please describe them. You may include a link.

6. Please describe any examples of hope or inclusion that have occurred in your school following the election.

7. How are you, other educators and administration responding?

- My administration is being responsive to the post-election climate.
 - My school has an action plan for when incidents of hate or bias occur.
 - I am hesitant to teach about the election results and post-election season.
 - Teachers or administrators are being harassed for standing up for children.
- Please provide details about any of the above statements.

8. Use this space for comments or additional information you'd like to share.

9. What resources or support do you and your school need?

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)

13. What is your name? (We will not share it without your permission.)

14. Please provide your email address. (We will never share your email address without your permission.)

15. In what state or U.S. territory do you work?

16. What city?

17. The report we wrote after our last survey drew the media's attention to classrooms. We expect this to happen again. If you would like the opportunity to tell your story or the story of your students, answer YES. It gives us permission to give your email address to a journalist.

- YES, you may share my email address.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our survey.

ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Fast Facts: Education Institutions*, accessed November 27, 2016, <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=84>
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3. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Common Core Data: State Nonfiscal Survey of Public Elementary and Secondary Education*, accessed November 27, 2016, <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/stnfnis.asp>
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4. Ibid.
5. Leslie A. Maxwell, "U.S. school enrollment hits majority-minority milestone," *Education Week*, August 19, 2014, accessed November 27, 2016, <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/08/20/01demographics.h34.html>
6. Market Data Research school data, accessed via subscription November 27, 2016.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.

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SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER

CO-FOUNDERS Morris Dees, Joseph J. Levin Jr.

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TEACHING AND LEARNING SPECIALISTS Jarah Botello, Lauryn Mascareñaz

SENIOR EDITOR Monita K. Bell

WRITER/ASSOCIATE EDITOR Maya Lindberg

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE Margaret Sasser

TECHNICAL LEAD D. Scott McDaniel

NEW MEDIA SPECIALIST Tiffany Gibert

PROGRAM COORDINATOR Steffany Moyer

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Cecile Jones

INTERN Alexis Ofe

DESIGN

DESIGN DIRECTOR Russell Estes

SENIOR DESIGNER Valerie Downes

DESIGNERS Michelle Leland, Sunny Paulk, Scott Phillips, Kristina Turner

DESIGN ASSOCIATE Shannon Anderson

SPLC  **Southern Poverty Law Center**
400 Washington Avenue
Montgomery, AL 36104
(334) 956-8200
splcenter.org