

increase of three percentage points, students of color saw an uptick of seven percentage points. Looking at the 2017-18 data, at schools with a majority of students of color, race is more frequently cited as a reason for being bullied than it is at majority-white schools.

Our 2017-18 data also showed that middle-school students experienced bullying at higher rates than did high-school students — nearly 40 percent, compared to 27 percent.

Student feedback reveals that bullying is evolving, and not in the way we'd like. The new statistic of one in three students reporting being bullied represents an increase of five percentage points over the last two academic years. This is extremely concerning.

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Furthermore, the fact that bullying is more prevalent in majority-white schools, and has increased more sharply for students of color within these schools, is distressing. But knowing how bullying is changing, and for whom, is powerful. Building equitable and inclusive schools where all students feel safe and supported requires that educators understand these differences.

This is something we all need to talk about. We know that bullying can have [severe and lasting consequences — emotional, mental and academic — on students](#), and in the most heartbreaking cases can even lead to suicide. And we know that students who bully others are at [increased risk for substance abuse, academic problems and violence later in life](#). We also know that a positive school environment is crucial to student success and can [help close the achievement gap](#).

Students are not always considered front-line experts as we work to make our schools and classrooms safe spaces for learning. But they should be. Asking students directly and anonymously for feedback is incredibly powerful. There is so much we can learn when we not only ask students about their experiences, but also listen deeply and react promptly to what we hear. Indeed, listening to students is the first step in building the knowledge, dialogue and action needed to stop bullying in our schools.

This story about [social and emotional learning](#), as well as race and equity, was produced by [The Hechinger Report](#), a nonprofit, independent news organization focused on inequality and innovation in education. [Sign up for our newsletter](#).

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