

Bullying of California’s AAPI Youth: *Who is most at risk and what can schools do?*



Photo by Diane Krauthamer

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While anti-Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) hate has swelled across the United States in recent years, the bullying of AAPI youth has been a persistent and pervasive problem across California’s schools. Unfortunately, AAPI youth experience one of the highest rates of bullying relative to peers from other racial and ethnic groups with over a third (35%) of AAPI youth in 9th grade bullied between 2017 and 2019 (Austin et al., 2020).

Reducing anti-AAPI bullying throughout California will require a clear strategic plan that supports all AAPI students while prioritizing AAPI subgroups and geographic regions needing targeted resources and supports. It will also require strengthening state-level evidence and guidance about what schools can do to prevent anti-AAPI bullying.

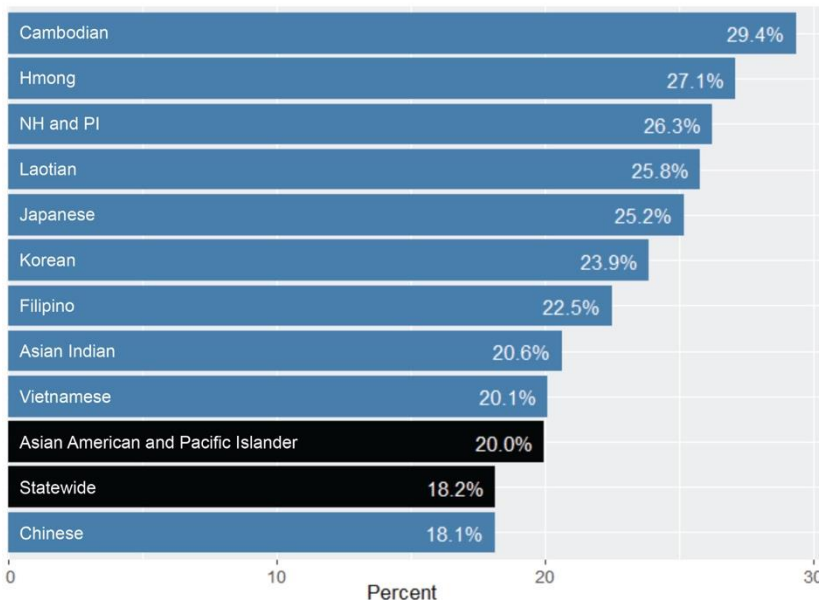
Who Faces the Highest Risks of Bullying?

- Almost all AAPI subgroups in 9th and 11th grades have bullying rates exceeding the statewide rate for 9th and 11th graders (> 18.2%).
- Among AAPI subgroups, **Cambodian 9th and 11th graders** report the highest rates of bias-based bullying (29.4%), followed by **Hmong, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander, and Laotian youth**.
- One in three **Cambodian 9th and 11th graders** were targets of bias-based bullying, **1.5 times the statewide rate for 9th and 11th graders**.

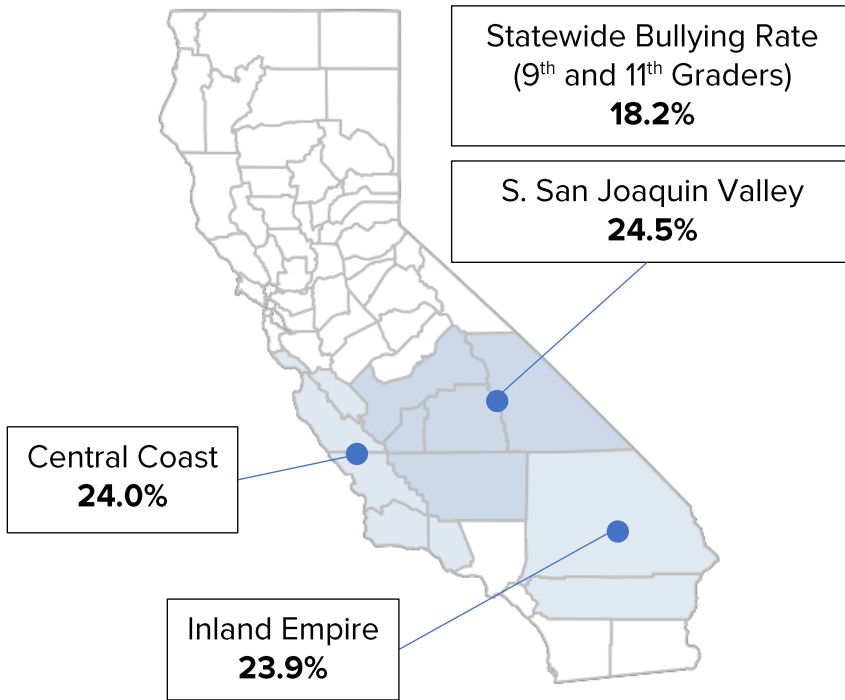
Data source: California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), 2015-2021

Bias-Based Bullying of California's AAPI 9th and 11th Graders

California Healthy Kids Survey, 2015-21 School Years



Bias-based bullying refers to unwanted aggressive acts—verbal, physical, or relational—targeting one’s race, ethnicity, religion, gender or sexual orientation. Such acts, repeated over time, are inflicted upon an individual with less social power (Walton, 2018).




Where is Anti-AAPI Bullying Most Prevalent?

AAPI 9th and 11th graders in the **Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley and the Inland Empire** experience bullying at nearly **1.3 times the rate for 9th and 11th graders statewide**

(Data source: California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), 2015-2021)

How Can School Climate Protect AAPI Youth from Bullying?

AAPI students were bullied less if they felt **more connected** to their schools and if they had **supportive adults** at school.



Percentage point declines in bullying when AAPI students felt more connected to adults at school

Data source: California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), 2015-2021

Bias-based bullying



Cyberbullying



Recommendations

- Schools serving **Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and NH and PI youth** should receive priority for more intensive and targeted anti-bullying supports and interventions.
- To combat anti-AAPI bullying, resources should be targeted to regions where AAPI youth face the highest risks—the **Central Coast, Southern San Joaquin Valley and the Inland Empire**.
- Given our evidence linking school climate with a lower risk of anti-AAPI bullying, we urge greater investment in initiatives and policies to **strengthen school climate**.

For the full report, visit <https://education.ucdavis.edu/sparc>

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