



Los Angeles
Urban League

STATE OF STUDENTS LA

A Student Perspective on the State of Black
Los Angeles

2026

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OUR MISSION

The mission of the Los Angeles Urban League is to help African Americans and all others in underserved communities achieve their highest true social parity, economic self-reliance, power, and civil rights. The League promotes economic empowerment through education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, health, and quality of life.



Los Angeles
Urban League

STATE OF STUDENTS LA

A Student Perspective of the State of Black Los Angeles

PREPARED BY

Los Angeles Urban League

Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

PUBLICATION DATE

March 2026

SURVEY POPULATION

450+ Students

Los Angeles County

EQUITY • DATA • ACTION

THE STATE OF STUDENTS LA REPORT

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Los Angeles Urban League, we are proud to present **The State of Students in Los Angeles: A Student Perspective on the State of Black LA**. This report represents more than a collection of data, it is a reflection of the voices, insights, and lived experiences of students across Los Angeles County. We extend our deepest gratitude to the dedicated Los Angeles Urban League staff and the exceptional student interns whose commitment, curiosity, and leadership made this project possible.

This initiative was intentionally designed as a student-centered research process. Through a series of training sessions, student interns were introduced to the fundamentals of community-based research, including survey design, ethical data collection, and the importance of amplifying youth voice in public policy conversations. Students worked collaboratively with Los Angeles Urban League staff to develop the survey instrument, ensuring that the questions reflected issues that matter most to young people today.

Following the training phase, students helped distribute the survey throughout their networks and communities, collecting responses from students across diverse neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. This outreach ensured that the findings represent a broad cross-section of youth experiences. After gathering the responses, the students participated in guided data analysis sessions where they examined trends, identified key findings, and discussed how the results connect to broader systemic issues affecting young people.

The final stage of the project involved translating those insights into meaningful policy recommendations and shaping them into the comprehensive report you now hold. Throughout this process, the student interns demonstrated remarkable thoughtfulness and leadership, contributing ideas that strengthened both the analysis and the solutions presented in this report.

We are deeply grateful to our LAUL staff who supported this work through mentorship, facilitation, and coordination, and to the student interns whose passion and dedication ensured that this report is authentically grounded in youth perspectives. Their work reminds us that when young people are given the tools, the platform, and the trust to lead, they can produce powerful insights that inform community dialogue and inspire change.

It is our hope that this report will serve as a catalyst for continued collaboration among educators, policymakers, community organizations, and youth leaders to build safer, healthier, and more equitable opportunities for all students in Los Angeles.

In Community!



Los Angeles
Urban League



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President & CEO



ROBERT ZARDENETA
Vice President,
Programs
Project Lead



DARRELL HILLS
Director of Programs
Project Co-Lead

ABOUT THE STATE OF STUDENTS LA INITIATIVE

The State of Students LA Initiative is a youth centered research and engagement effort designed to elevate the perspectives, experiences, and ideas of students across Los Angeles. Grounded in the belief that young people are essential partners in shaping stronger communities, the initiative creates opportunities for students, particularly those from historically underserved Black and Brown communities, to share their lived experiences and contribute meaningfully to conversations about policy, education, and community investment.

Too often, decisions about schools, neighborhoods, and youth development are made without directly consulting the young people most impacted by those decisions. The State of Students LA Initiative seeks to change that dynamic by placing student perspectives at the center of analysis, advocacy, and policy dialogue. Through surveys, discussions, and collaborative engagement, the initiative gathers insights that reflect how students experience issues such as safety, housing stability, school climate, mental health access, identity, and economic opportunity.

The findings generated through this initiative are intended to inform leaders across multiple sectors including educators, policymakers, community organizations, and civic institutions. By translating student experiences into actionable insights, the initiative helps ensure that strategies designed to support youth are responsive to the realities students face in their daily lives.

Importantly, the State of Students LA Initiative also recognizes young people as leaders and advocates in their own right. Beyond data collection, the initiative encourages civic awareness, youth engagement, and peer dialogue that empower students to participate in shaping the systems that influence their futures. Students are not simply respondents in this work. They are contributors to a broader movement toward equity, accountability, and opportunity in Los Angeles.

As part of the broader State of Students LA effort, this Initiative provides a platform for youth voices to inform meaningful change. By listening carefully to students and amplifying their insights, this initiative seeks to build stronger partnerships between young learners and the institutions that serve them, ensuring that the next generation has both a voice and a seat at the table in shaping the future of Los Angeles.

Meet the Student Research Interns



Dave Aguire
JUNIOR, 16



Hailey Barajas
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Edgar Fabian
SENIOR, 18



Alan Gramajo-Salinas
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Adonis Love
SENIOR, 17



Caleel Smith
SENIOR, 17

Acknowledging the Students

This report would not exist without the voices, experiences, and leadership of the students who chose to participate. We extend our deepest gratitude to the more than 450 young people across Los Angeles who shared their perspectives, stories, and insights through this survey and research process.

By contributing their voices, students helped bring attention to the realities they navigate every day, including challenges related to safety, housing, school climate, mental health, and opportunity. Their willingness to speak honestly about both the strengths and the struggles within their communities has made this report more than a collection of data. It has made it a reflection of lived experience.

The students who contributed to this report demonstrated thoughtfulness, courage, and a strong commitment to improving their communities. Many of them engaged not only as respondents, but also as emerging researchers, thinkers, and advocates who recognize the importance of using information to drive meaningful change.

We are deeply grateful for their participation and leadership. Their voices provide the foundation for the insights and recommendations presented throughout this report, and their perspectives serve as an important reminder that young people must be included in the conversations and decisions that shape their future.

To the students who contributed to this effort, thank you for sharing your voice and for helping to illuminate the path toward a more equitable and supportive Los Angeles for the next generation.

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Los Angeles County

Anti-racism, Diversity and Inclusion Initiative



This report is more than a set of findings. It is a record of what young people in Los Angeles are living, noticing, and asking us to take seriously.

At the Los Angeles County Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative, we begin with the belief that people closest to a challenge are often the ones best positioned to help solve it. The State of Students LA report gives that belief form and substance. Through the voices of more than 450 students across Los Angeles County, we see not only the realities young people are facing, but also the clarity, insight, and leadership they bring to the work of change.

What students tell us is both encouraging and sobering. Many describe feeling supported at school and prepared for college and careers. At the same time, too many are living with housing instability, exposure to violence, barriers to mental health support, and identity-based harm. These are not separate concerns. They move together, shaping whether a young person can feel safe, learn fully, and imagine a future with confidence. Research consistently shows that unstable housing is linked to poorer mental health and broader health risks for youth, underscoring why these experiences cannot be treated as peripheral to education policy.

What makes this report especially important is not only what it measures, but how it was created. Students were not simply asked to respond to questions designed by adults. They were engaged as researchers, analysts, and advocates. That approach matters. Research on youth participatory action research shows that when young people help define the questions, analyze the data, and shape the recommendations, they gain agency while producing insights that are both rigorous and relevant. The report also reflects what school climate research has long shown: student voice is not an optional add-on. Instead, it is a key part of building stronger, more responsive systems.

We are living through a moment of overlapping pressures that some have called a polycrisis—a time when housing, safety, mental health, identity, and opportunity are all intersecting at once. In that context, listening to students is not a courtesy. It is a responsibility. Their experiences reveal where systems are working, where they are failing, and where redesign is needed.

The recommendations in this report deserve to be taken seriously because they are grounded in lived experience and backed by evidence. They call on educators, policymakers, community leaders, and institutions to move beyond isolated fixes and toward solutions that are holistic, sustained, and accountable. If we want equity to mean more than a slogan, then we must build systems that respond to the whole student, not just the test score or attendance record.

Most of all, this report reminds us that young people are not waiting for permission to lead. They are already doing it.

Our responsibility is to listen carefully, partner honestly, and act with urgency.

D'Artagnan Scorza, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Racial Equity

Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office

Anti-racism, Diversity and Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative

At GPSN, we believe that meaningful and lasting change in public education begins by listening—especially to the voices of those most directly impacted: students.

The State of Students LA Report represents a powerful and necessary shift in how we understand the challenges and opportunities facing young people across Los Angeles. By centering student voices not only as a source of insight but as a driver of the research itself, this effort reflects what true partnership and equity in education can look like. The students who contributed to this report did more than share their experiences—they designed the questions, engaged their peers, and helped analyze the findings. In doing so, they modeled the kind of leadership, agency, and civic engagement that our education system should seek to cultivate in every classroom.

What emerges from this work is both urgent and instructive. Students are telling us clearly where systems are falling short and where opportunities exist to better support their academic success, well-being, and pathways to economic mobility. Their perspectives challenge us to move beyond assumptions and to ground decisions in lived experience.

At GPSN, we are committed to advancing policies and practices that improve outcomes for all students in Los Angeles, particularly those who have been historically underserved. Efforts like this report are essential to that mission. They not only elevate critical insights but also build the capacity of young people to shape the future of their schools and communities.

We commend the Los Angeles Urban League for its leadership in bringing this vision to life and for investing in the next generation of leaders. As stakeholders across Los Angeles review this report, we encourage policymakers, educators, and community leaders to take these findings seriously—and to act on them with urgency, transparency, and a commitment to partnership.

When students are heard, empowered, and engaged, we move closer to an education system—and a city—that truly works for all.

Dr. Ana Ponce

Chief Executive Officer

Greater Public Schools Now (GPSN)

The State of Students in Los Angeles

Young people across Los Angeles are navigating a complex and rapidly changing social landscape. While they pursue education, build their identities, and prepare for their futures, many are also confronting systemic challenges that shape their daily lives: housing instability, community violence, unequal access to resources, and persistent inequities across institutions. At the same time, today's students are more informed, connected, and civically engaged than ever before. Their voices offer powerful insight into how policies, schools, neighborhoods, and systems are experienced by the next generation.

The **State of Students LA Report** centers those voices.

This report captures the perspectives of more than 450 students from across Los Angeles County, with the majority representing Black and Brown communities that have historically faced barriers to opportunity and investment. Through a comprehensive student survey, participants shared their experiences and perceptions across several critical areas shaping youth well-being and opportunity, including school climate, housing stability, mental health, safety, identity, and preparation for college and careers.

What emerges from these responses is both sobering and inspiring. Students report meaningful support from educators and strong preparation for future academic and career pathways. At the same time, many young people continue to experience exposure to violence, housing uncertainty, and identity-based discrimination that affects their sense of safety and belonging. These realities highlight the importance of addressing the full ecosystem surrounding youth not just schools, but neighborhoods, policies, and community supports that influence their daily lives.

Importantly, the students who contributed to this report are not passive observers of these challenges. They are deeply aware of the social and political forces shaping their communities, and many express a strong desire to engage in civic life and advocate for change. Their insights reveal both resilience and a clear call for systems that better reflect their needs, dignity, and aspirations.

The **State of Students LA** report is intended to serve as both a reflection and a roadmap. By grounding policy conversations in the lived experiences of students themselves, this report provides critical guidance for educators, policymakers, community organizations, and civic leaders working to advance equity and opportunity across Los Angeles.

Listening to students is not simply an exercise in consultation, it is essential to building systems that truly serve them. When youth voices are centered in decision-making, communities gain a clearer understanding of the barriers that persist and the opportunities that lie ahead. The findings and recommendations presented in this report are a call to action to ensure that every young person in Los Angeles, particularly those from historically underserved communities, has the safety, support, and resources needed to thrive.

The future of Los Angeles is being shaped in classrooms, neighborhoods, and communities today. By elevating the voices of students, this report seeks to ensure that the policies and investments made now will build a more equitable and empowering future for the generation that will lead our city forward.

About This Report

This report analyzes the experiences of **over 450 students** across Los Angeles County, primarily Black and Brown youth, examining critical areas that impact their daily lives and future opportunities, surveyed July 2025. The survey represents a targeted sample of the greater Los Angeles County population.

Through comprehensive survey data, we explore **safety, housing, mental health, education, equity, civic awareness, and economic opportunity** providing an authentic window into the challenges and aspirations of LA's young people.

This report is aligned with the broader **State of Black LA** equity agenda, centering student voices as essential data points for policy reform and community investment.

**450+**

STUDENTS SURVEYED

**20+**ZIP CODES
REPRESENTED**7**

KEY FOCUS AREAS

**100%**

YOUTH CENTERED

KEY FOCUS AREAS

● Safety & School Climate

● Housing Stability

● Mental Health & Wellness

● Educational Equity

● Civic Engagement

● Career Readiness

● Identity & Belonging

Executive Summary

Critical findings from 450+ student voices across Los Angeles

The **State of Students LA** report captures the lived experiences of Los Angeles youth, revealing both the resilience of our young people and the systemic barriers they continue to face in housing, safety, education, and well-being.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY SAFETY



388

Students Report Stable Housing



1 in 4

Experience Housing Instability



202

Exposed to Gang Activity



243

Impacted by Gun Violence

Key Finding: While the majority of students report stable housing, a significant portion face uncertainty with direct implications for academic performance, mental health, and long-term success.

Executive Summary

Education, civic engagement, and equity indicators

● AREAS OF STRENGTH



85%

Feel Safe at School



446

Feel Supported by Staff



393

Feel Prepared for College



372

Feel Prepared for Careers



385

Informed About Politics



AREAS OF CONCERN

228

Experienced Identity-Based Safety Concerns

187

Experienced Unfair Police Treatment

The data reveals a complex picture: Los Angeles students demonstrate remarkable civic awareness and education optimism, yet significant portions continue to face identity-based discrimination and inequitable treatment from institutions meant to protect them.



*“Young people in Los Angeles
are **resilient, informed, and
ready to lead** – but systemic
barriers persist.”*

STATE OF STUDENTS LA • 2025

450+

STUDENTS

7

FOCUS AREAS

20+

ZIP CODES

1

UNIFIED VOICE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Student Demographics

Understanding who participated in this study

450+

TOTAL STUDENTS

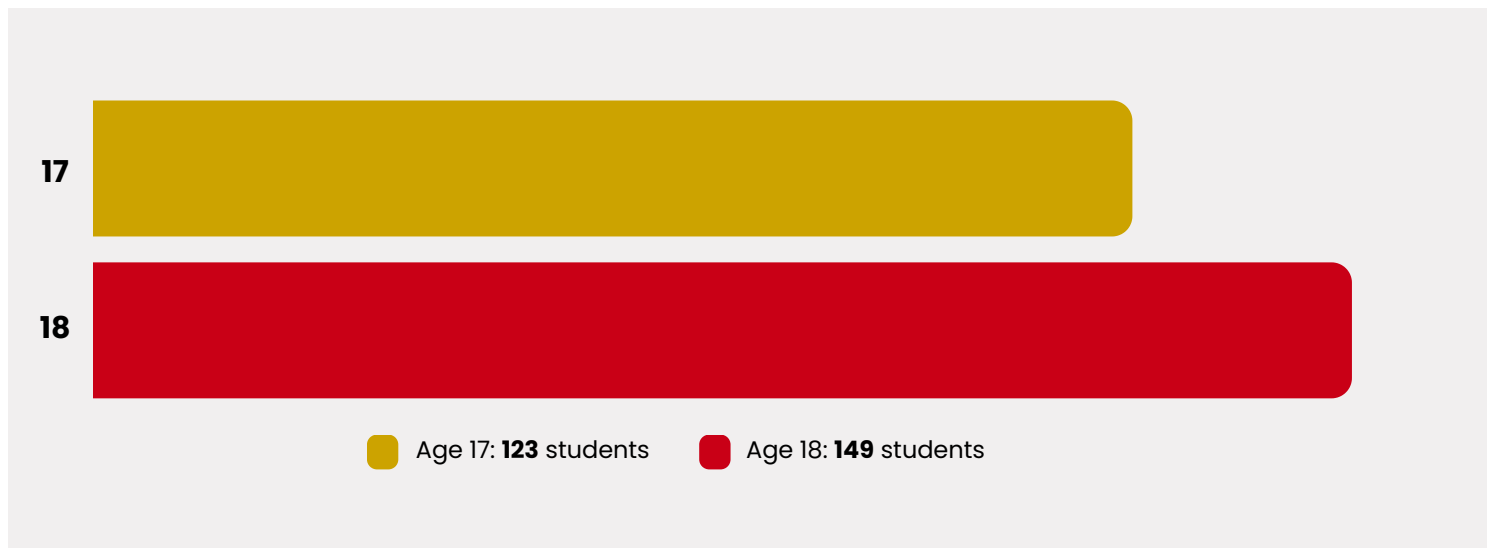
17-18

PRIMARY AGE RANGE

LA County

GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

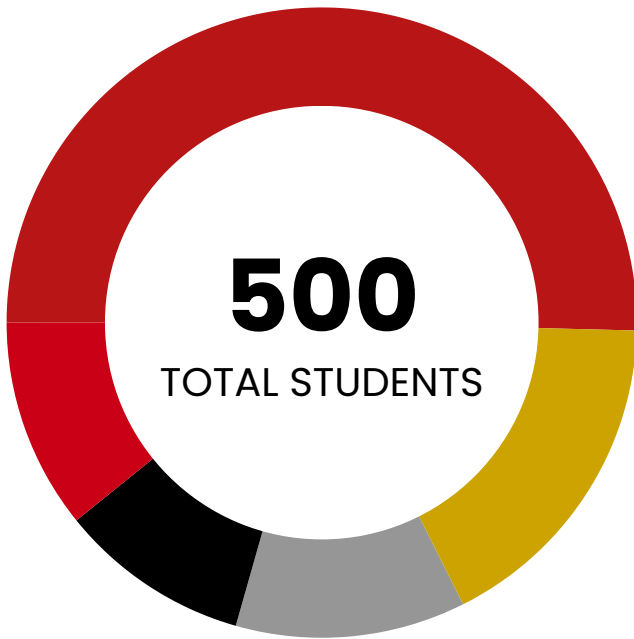
AGE DISTRIBUTION



Key Finding: The majority of respondents are 17-18 year old, representing students at critical points in their educational journey.

Grade Level Distribution

Survey respondents by academic standing



Seniors	252	50%
Juniors	86	17%
Sophomores	59	12%
Freshmen	49	10%
College Freshmen	54	11%

50%+

Over half of respondents are high school seniors, at the critical threshold of their next chapter

446

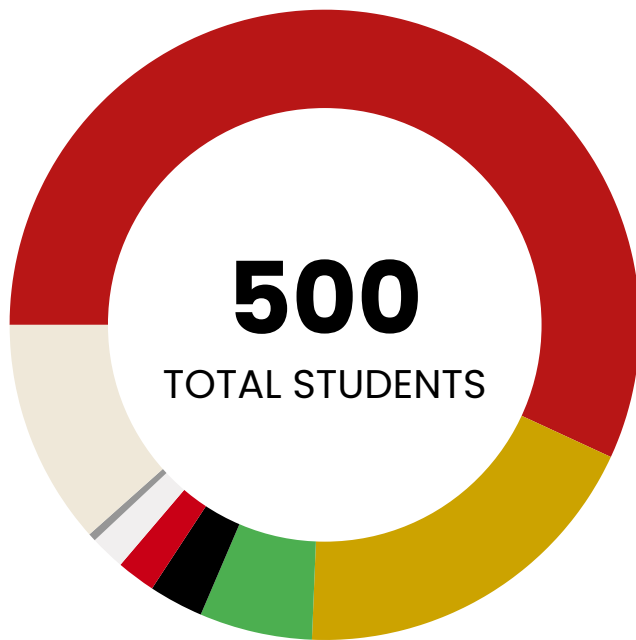
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

54

COLLEGE FRESHMEN

Race Distribution

Several key observations emerge from the demographic data



■	Black or African American	284	57%
■	Hispanic or Latino	94	17%
■	Caucasian or White	58	12%
■	American Indian or Alaska Native	29	6%
■	Asian	14	3%
■	Middle Eastern	10	2%
■	Multiethnic or Multiracial	9	2%
■	Mixed (other responses)	2	1%

DEMOGRAPHIC INSIGHT

Significant representation of Black students

More than half of survey participants identify as Black or African American, providing a substantial foundation for understanding the experiences of Black youth in Los Angeles.

Broad racial diversity

The dataset includes representation from multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds, including Hispanic, Asian, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern students. This diversity reflects the multicultural makeup of Los Angeles County.

Multiracial identity among students

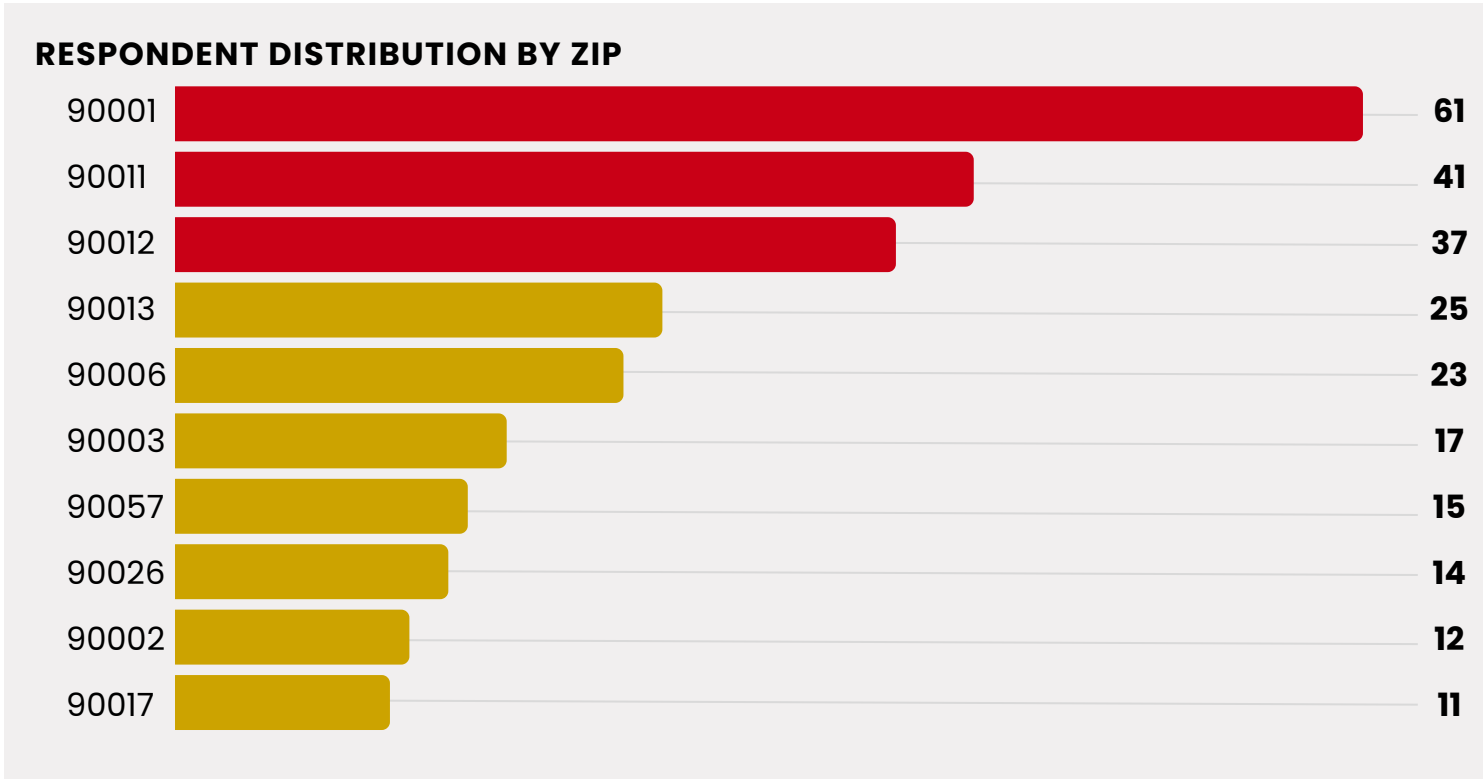
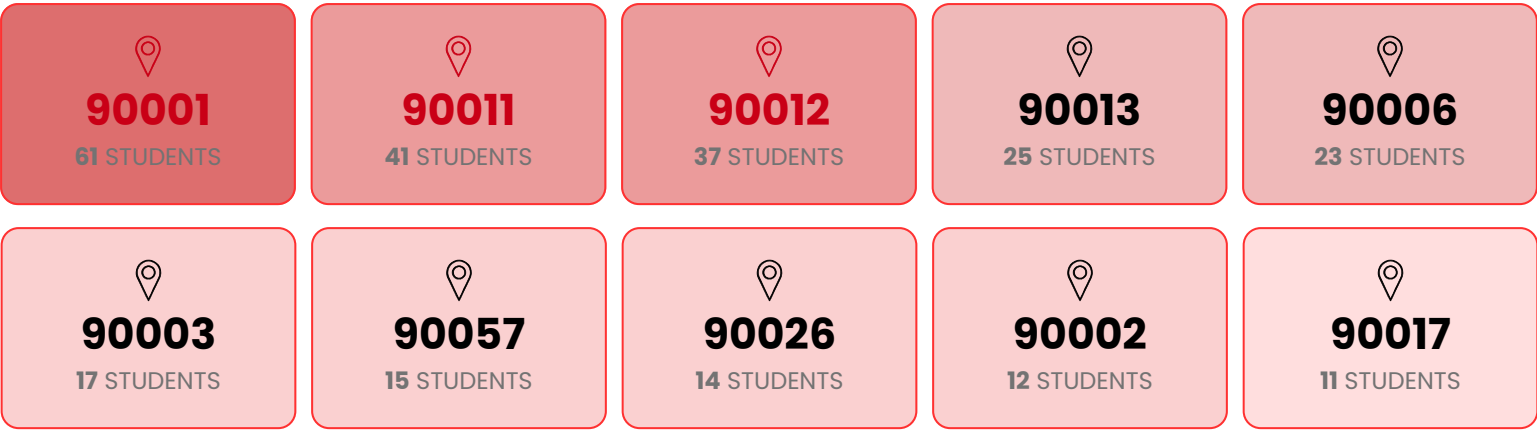
A portion of students identified as multiracial or mixed heritage, reflecting the increasingly diverse identities of younger generations in urban communities.

Context for the report's findings

While the report centers the experiences of Black and Brown youth, the racial diversity of respondents allows the findings to capture broader student perspectives across communities.

Geographic Distribution

Top 10 ZIP codes represented in the survey



South LA Concentration: ZIP codes 90001, 90002, 90003, and 90011 represent historically underserved communities.

Central LA Presence: Downtown-adjacent areas (90012, 90013, 90017) show significant representation.

Housing & Community Safety

Top 10 ZIP codes represented in the survey

Housing stability is foundational to student success. Students facing housing insecurity experience higher rates of stress, absenteeism, and academic challenges.



388

Stable Housing



93

Temporary Housing



19

Unstable Housing

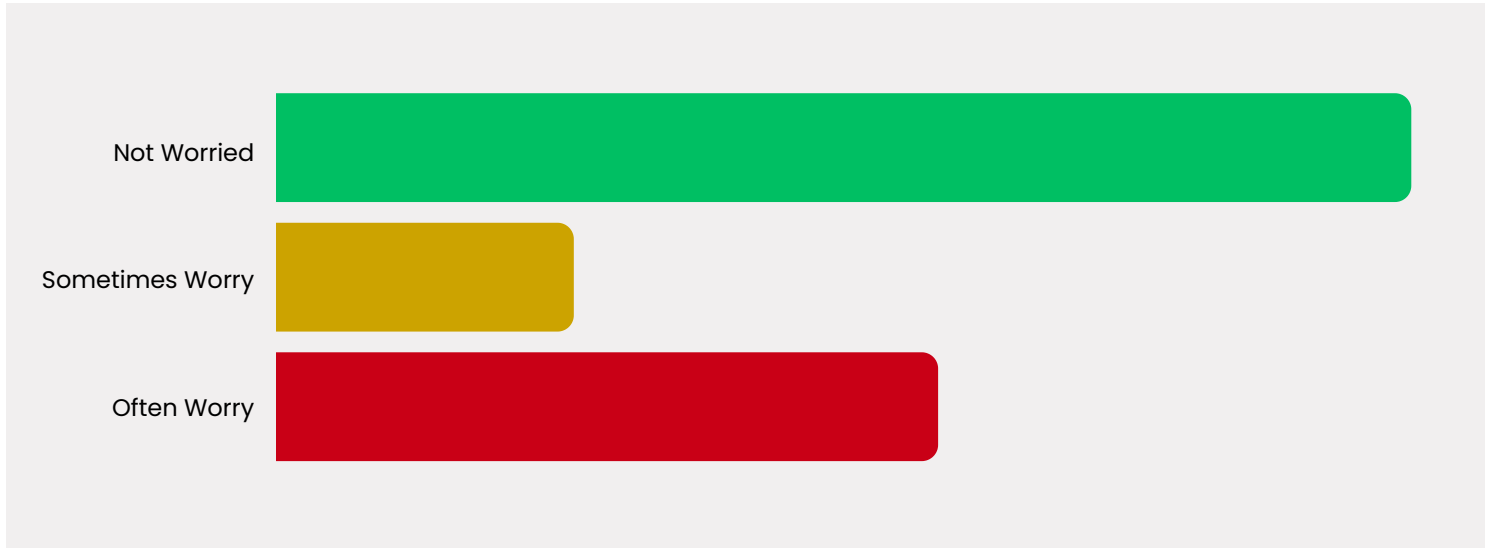
1 in 4

students experience some form of housing instability

Critical Finding: While a majority report stable housing, the 112 students in temporary or unstable situations require immediate support.

Housing Concern Levels

How often students worry about housing stability

**271**

Not Worried

54%**71**

Sometimes Worry

14%**158**

Often Worry

32%**54% Feel Secure**

271 students report not worrying about housing stability

**46% Experience Concern**

229 students sometimes or often worry about housing

"Housing instability creates a domino effect--when students worry about where they'll sleep, focusing on homework becomes nearly impossible."

RESEARCH INSIGHT

Community Violence Exposure

The reality of violence in students' neighborhoods



202 **Gang Activity Exposure**
Students exposed to gang activity in their neighborhood



243 **Gun Violence Impact**
Students impacted by gun violence in their community



42% **Feel Safe Walking**
Students who feel safe walking in their neighborhood

VIOLENCE EXPOSURE SUMMARY



Gang Activity



202 of ~500 students (40%)



Gun Violence



243 of ~500 students (48%)

Urgent Finding: Nearly half of surveyed students have been impacted by gun violence. This trauma affects mental health, school attendance, and overall well-being, requiring trauma-informed approaches in schools and communities.

Housing & Community Safety

Access, utilization, and barriers to care

Mental health services are critical for student success, yet many young people face barriers to accessing care. This section explores how students use school mental health resources and the gaps that remain.



500

Students Surveyed



382

Use Services



118

Never Access Care

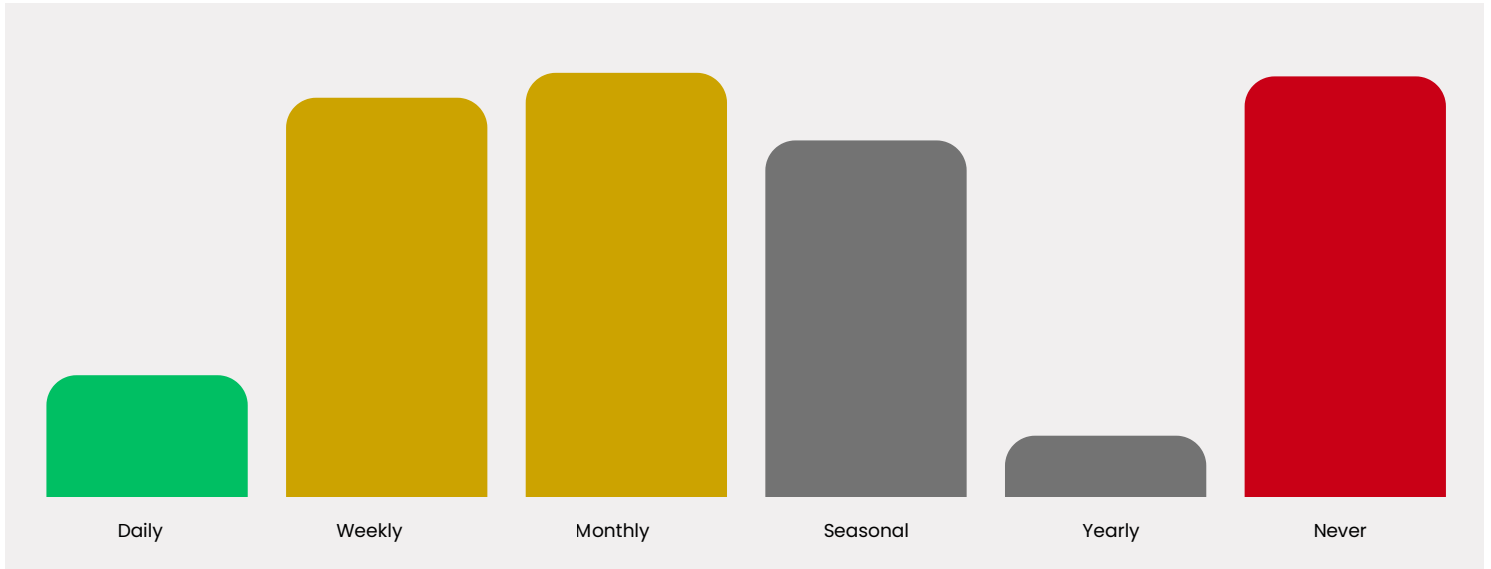
1 in 4

students never use school mental health services

Why This Matters: Students who don't access mental health services may face stigma, lack of awareness, cultural barriers, or insufficient resources. Understanding usage patterns helps schools better service their communities.

Service Utilization Frequency

How often students access school mental health services



34
Daily
7%

112
Weekly
22%

119
Monthly
24%

100
Seasonal
20%

17
Yearly
3%

118
Never
24%

Regular Users

265

Students accessing services daily, weekly, or monthly (53%)

Non-Users

118

Students who never access mental health services (24%)

Access Barriers & Gaps

Why some students don't access mental health services



Stigma

35%

Feel of being judged by peers or family



Awareness

28%

Not knowing services exist or how to access them



Cultural Barriers

22%

Services not culturally responsive or relevant



Trust

15%

Lack of trust in counselors or the system

Breaking Down Barriers

- Normalize conversations about mental health in classrooms
- Hire culturally competent counselors who reflect student demographics
- Increase visibility and accessibility of services

Path Forward: Addressing stigma through peer education programs and ensuring services are culturally responsive can dramatically increase student engagement with mental health resources.

School Climate & Trust

How students experience their schools

A positive school climate is foundational to student success. When students feel safe, supported, and heard, they are more engaged learners and active community members. This section explores how LA students perceive their school environments.



Safety

85%

Feel safe at school



Support

446

Feel supported by staff



Voice

359

Believe school listens

OVERALL CLIMATE RATING

POSITIVE

Majority of students report favorable school experiences

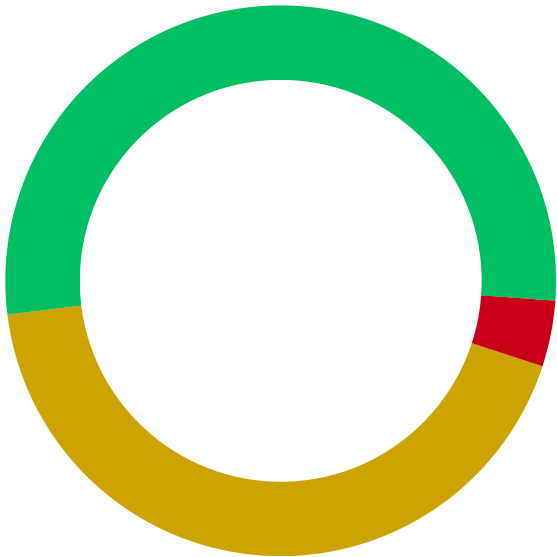
Balanced View: While these numbers reflect progress, the students who don't feel safe or supported represent critical opportunities for improvement.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

Safety & Staff Support

Detailed breakdown of student experiences

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

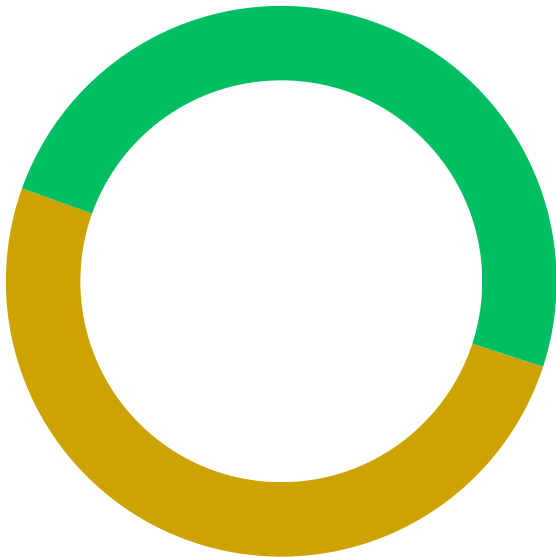


- Very Safe 200 (43%)
- Somewhat Safe 247 (53%)
- Unsafe 18 (4%)

96%

Feel at least somewhat safe at school

SUPPORT FROM STAFF



- Always Supported 225 (50%)
- Sometimes Supported 221 (50%)

18

Student report feeling unsafe at school

Student Voice & Agency

Do students feel their schools listen to them?



359

students believe their school listens to them

72%

Feel Heard

28%

Don't Feel Heard



When Students Feel Heard

- Higher academic engagement
- Greater sense of belonging
- Increased civic participation
- Better mental health outcomes



When Students Don't Feel Heard

- Disengagement from learning
- Increased absenteeism
- Distrust of institutions
- Lower self-advocacy skills

Building Voice: Schools that actively create opportunities for student input through councils, surveys, and classroom discussion see improvement across all climate indicators.

College & Career Preparedness

Are students ready for what comes next?

Preparing students for success beyond high school is a core responsibility of our educational system. This section examines how prepared LA students feel for college and career pathways.



College Readiness

393

students feel prepared for college

79% of respondents



Career Readiness

372

students feel prepared for careers

74% of respondents

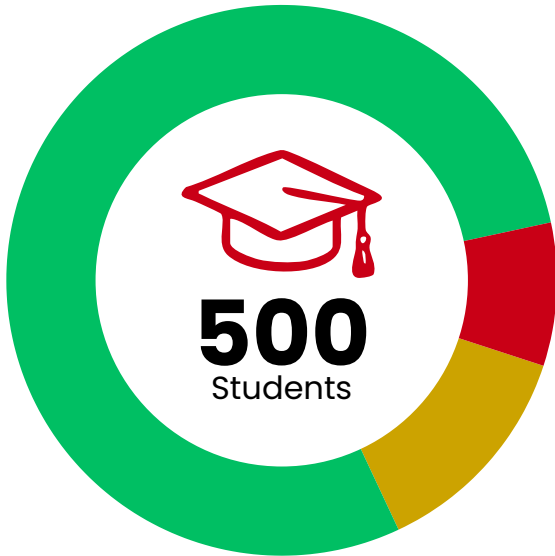


A Hopeful Outlook

The majority of LA students feel optimistic about their future pathways, demonstrating confidence in their preparation and potential.

College Preparedness

How ready do students feel for higher education?



Prepared	393	79%
Unsure	65	13%
Unprepared	42	8%

79%

Feel College Ready

A strong majority of students believe they have the skills and knowledge needed for college success

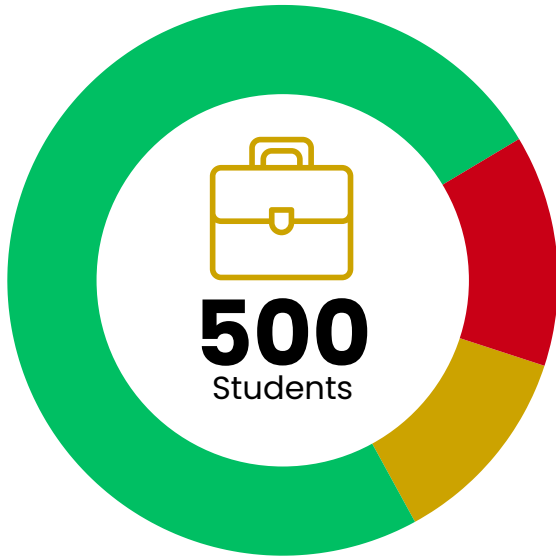
107

Unsure or Unprepared

Over 100 students need additional support and resources to feel confident about college

Career Preparedness

How ready do students feel for the workforce?



Prepared	372	74%
Unsure	60	12%
Unprepared	68	14%

74%

Feel Career Ready

Most students believe they have skills transferable to the workforce

128

Need More Support

Students who feel unsure or unprepared for career pathways

Opportunity: Expanding internship programs, job shadowing, and vocational training can help bridge the gap for students who don't feel career-ready.

Equity & Identity

How students perceive systems and experience their identities

Equity in education means ensuring every student has access to the resources and support they need to succeed regardless of their background.



235

Believe systems mostly help



199

See systems as mixed



19

Believe systems mostly harm

228

students have felt unsafe due to their identity

Complex Reality: While most students see systems as helpful, many have experienced identity-based safety concerns.

Systems Perception

How students view institutions and systems



	Mostly Help	235	52%
	Mix of Help and Harm	199	44%
	Mostly Harm	19	4%

52%

See System as Helpful

A slight majority view institutions like schools and government as beneficial to their lives

44%

See Mixed Impact

Nearly half recognize both positive and negative aspects of institutional systems

"Systems work for some students better than others. True equity means redesigning systems so they work for everyone."

RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

Identity-Based Experiences

Safety concerns and treatment based on who students are



228 Identity-Based Safety Concerns

Felt unsafe due to race, gender, sexuality, or religion



64 Unfair Treatment by Staff

Experienced discrimination from school personnel



187 Unfair Police Treatment

Reported inequitable treatment by law enforcement

// When students don't feel safe because of who they are, learning becomes secondary to survival.

EQUITY RESEARCH FINDING

Critical Action Needed: Nearly half of surveyed students have experienced identity-based safety concerns. Schools and communities must implement robust anti-discrimination policies and culturally responsive practices.

SECTION 08

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Data-driven policy actions to improve outcomes for LA students

→ Safety & School Climate → Housing Stability → Mental Health → Equity & Identity



RECOMMENDATIONS

Safety & School Climate

🎯 KEY FINDINGS

- 85% of students feel safe at school, but 18 students reported feeling unsafe
- 202 students exposed to gang activity; 243 impacted by gun violence
- 42% feel safe walking in their neighborhood

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Expand restorative justice programs to reduce punitive discipline
- Increase funding for school counselors and social workers
- Implement trauma-informed teaching practices across all schools
- Create safe space and peer support programs



POLICY ACTIONS

- Advocate for increased school safety funding that prioritizes support over surveillance
- Partner with community organizations for violence prevention programs
- Develop early warning systems to identify students in crisis



RECOMMENDATIONS

Housing Stability

🎯 KEY FINDINGS

- 388 students report stable housing (77%)
- 112 students in temporary or unstable housing situations
- 229 students sometimes or often worry about housing
- 1 in 4 students experience housing instability

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish housing liaisons at every school to connect families with resources
- Create emergency housing funds for student facing immediate displacement
- Partner with local housing authorities for priority placement programs
- Develop after-school programs with safe spaces for housing-insecure students



POLICY ACTIONS

- Advocate for tenant protection policies and rent stabilization measures
- Support funding for affordable housing development in school-adjacent areas
- Integrate housing support into school wellness programs



RECOMMENDATIONS

Mental Health & Wellness

🎯 KEY FINDINGS

- 118 students (24%) never use school mental health services
- 35% cite stigma as primary barrier to seeking help
- 28% unaware of available services or how to access them
- 22% report cultural barriers to care

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Hire culturally competent counselors who reflect student demographics
- Implement peer mental health ambassador programs
- Integrate mental health education into standard curriculum
- Create anonymous access pathways to reduce stigma



POLICY ACTIONS

- Increase counselor-to-student ratios to meet recommended standards (1:250)
- Fund community-based mental health partnerships
- Require cultural competency training for all school mental health staff



RECOMMENDATIONS

Equity & Identity

🎯 KEY FINDINGS

- 228 students experienced identity-based safety concerns
- 64 students treated unfairly by school staff
- 187 students experienced unfair police treatment
- 44% of students see system as having mixed impact

✅ RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implement comprehensive anti-discrimination policies with clear reporting
- Require implicit bias training for all school personnel
- Create affinity groups and safe spaces for marginalized students
- Establish student-led equity committee with real decision-making power



POLICY ACTIONS

- Advocate for police-free schools and restorative alternatives
- Support legislation protecting students' civil rights
- Fund ethnic studies and culturally relevant curriculum development

Calls to Action

How stakeholders can drive change



Student Advocacy

Empower youth to share their stories and advocate for policy change at every level of government



School Board Engagement

Attend board meetings, submit public comments, and run for student representative positions



City Council Action

Push for youth-centered policies, community investment, and violence prevention funding



Investment in Youth Programs

Advocate for increased funding for after-school programs, job training, and mental health services



Equity-Driven Reform

Demand policies that address systemic inequities and center the most marginalized students

THE TIME FOR ACTION IS NOW

All stakeholders – students, parents, educators, policymakers, and community members
– have a role to play in building a more equitable Los Angeles.

“To build a safer, more just Los Angeles for youth, we must adopt a **holistic approach** that expands safety programs, ensures **stigma-free mental health access**, and addresses **housing instability** through systemic change.”

— ◆ —

When students feel **safe, supported, and secure**, they thrive.

Conclusion

The 2025 State of Students LA report represents the voice of over 450 young people across Los Angeles County. Their experiences, concerns, and aspirations form a powerful call to action for all stakeholders committed to equity and justice.



Youth Voice as Roadmap

Student perspectives are not just data points, they are the compass in guiding systemic change.



Resilience in the Face of Challenge

Despite significant barriers, LA youth demonstrate remarkable strength and optimism.



Urgent Equity Investment

Closing opportunity gaps require immediate and sustained investment in historically underserved communities.



Students as Partners

Young people must be at the table as co-designers, advocates, and decision-makers; not just subjects of study.

This report is not the end of a conversation, it is the beginning. The data presented here demands action: from school boards, city councils, state legislators, and community organizations.

The students of Los Angeles have spoken. Now it's time to listen and act.

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www.gpsnla.org

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