



Title IX Student Voice Report

Title IX Student Voice Subcommittee

Seattle Public Schools is committed to making its online information accessible and usable to all people, regardless of ability or technology. Meeting web accessibility guidelines and standards is an ongoing process that we are consistently working to improve.

While Seattle Public Schools endeavors to only post documents optimized for accessibility, due to the nature and complexity of some documents, an accessible version of the document may not be available. In these limited circumstances, the District will provide equally effective alternate access.

For questions and more information about this document, please contact the following:

Natasha Walicki
Title IX Coordinator
title.ix@seattleschools.org

This report details feedback received during the 2019 Title IX Task Force's attempts to elicit student voice. It includes information regarding a student survey provided, as well as individual focus groups held at three of the District's high schools. It includes recommendations in changes to the District's policies, procedures, and practices related to concerns of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

TITLE IX OFFICE STUDENT VOICE REPORT

Title IX Task Force

Title IX Student Voice Subcommittee

2020-2021

Report Gathered by

Student Voice Subcommittee

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Core Question	3
Recommendations	4
Introduction	4
Background	6
Survey	7
Listening Sessions	17
Conclusion	23
Appendices	25

Executive Summary

This multi-tiered information collection aimed to gather student voice from across the Seattle Public Schools district. The objective of this collection process was to incorporate student voice into the policy evaluation and recommendation process led by the Title IX Taskforce.

To meet this objective, the Title IX Taskforce formed the Student Voice Subcommittee which then took two approaches to collecting student voice; the subcommittee lead a district-wide survey of high school students *and* held four listening sessions over the course of the year.

It is important to note that much of this work was completed during the COVID-19 pandemic while students participated remotely. Half of the listening sessions were conducted in this fashion; half of the listening sessions were conducted in-person.

Core Question

At the core of this work, the Student Voice Subcommittee aimed to answer **how do students feel about sexual harassment/assault/violence and sexual harassment/assault/violence risk in schools**. To answer this question, the following was conducted:

- Survey – the subcommittee designed and distributed an optional and anonymous survey to high school principals across the district. This included alternative high schools and alternative schools teaching high school aged students within SPS. Principals were asked to distribute these surveys after families were given notice.
- Listening Sessions – the subcommittee designed a set of questions to ask students, anonymously, through listening sessions. The subcommittee targeted specific schools, prioritizing schools serving students furthest from educational justice. Four listening sessions were held over the course of one calendar year.

Given two main sets of approaches to answer this core question, this committee aimed to examine two sets of core questions.

Survey Core Questions

1. Do students know where to get resources and support?
2. Do students talk with their families about sexual violence?
3. What do students think of how their school responds to sexual violence?
4. How do students feel about current sexual assault prevention strategies?

Listening Session Core Questions

1. Are students aware of their rights?
2. Are students aware of how to report sexual harassment/assault/violence?
3. How do students think staff should respond to sexual violence?
4. What should schools do to prevent sexual violence?

Recommendations

Given the information collected from students by way of anonymous survey and anonymous listening sessions, the Student Voice Subcommittee offers the following recommendations for the Task Force to review:

1. Stronger education
 - a. Outlining student rights
 - b. Prioritizing prevention and affirmative consent
 - c. Healthy Relationships
 - d. Teach intersectionally
 - e. Early education
2. Clear pathways with clear outcomes for reporting.
3. Invest in professional development
 - a. Compassion
 - b. anti-violence frameworks.
 - c. Intervention practices
4. Safe and Supportive Environments
5. Improved Family Engagement

Introduction

The Title IX Office at Seattle Public Schools, convened the Title IX Taskforce in 2018. This group was comprised of experts in related fields, parents of students, and community members. Many attempts were made to recruit diverse perspectives to the group. However, these efforts were largely unsuccessful across three major cross-sections of identity;

- Race – a majority of the taskforce was comprised of white-identified individuals.
- Gender – a majority of the taskforce was comprised of women-identified individuals.
- Age – the entirety of the taskforce was comprised of adults.

Given the complete lack of youth present on the taskforce, the taskforce chose to prioritize efforts to creatively incorporate student voice before delivering recommendations to the school board for review. Thus, a subcommittee was formed.

The Student Voice Subcommittee devised a multi-tiered information collection process to elicit student feedback into recommendations:

1. Schools need Professional Development focused on sexual violence prevention and compassionate response training.
2. Schools need to better educate students about their rights within schools, including their right to report. Schools need to do a better job of illuminating pathways for reporting and for accessing support and services.
3. Schools need to provide students with a clearer understanding of processes associated with reporting, supporting students in learning what to expect.
4. The aim to build and sustain safe and supportive environments should include a sexual violence prevention lens.
5. Schools need to do a better job of teaching sexual violence prevention strategies and relationship skills.
6. Family Engagement strategies that build comfort and skills in discussing sexual violence and sexual violence prevention with students to reinforce lessons in school.
7. The district should build in sexual violence prevention education into curriculum as early as kindergarten.

Prioritizing schools that predominantly served students furthest from educational justice allowed for the SVS team to simultaneously amplify underrepresented voices across all three important, previously identified cross-sections of identity (race, gender, and age). Our listening session demographics were as follows:

- Race: majority students of color.
- Gender: many genders represented.
- Age: exclusively students 18 and younger.

The recommendations contained within this report address the core question of how students feel about sexual violence in schools.

Background

Organizational Lead

The Title IX Taskforce is made up of many individuals, each committed to the evaluation of the district's Title IX policy and procedure. Membership is comprised of experts in violence prevention, trauma response, and law. Members also included school leaders, parents, and community members – all of whom were interested in objectively evaluating Title IX policy and procedure.

The taskforce split into different subcommittees – each focused on different approaches to the evaluation of policy and procedure. The Student Voice Subcommittee (SVS) chose to focus on building up opportunities to collect student voice in response to the absence of student voice on the task force.

Student Voice Subcommittee

Listed alphabetically by last name, the Student Voice Subcommittee members Include:

- **Brennon Ham, Ed.M.** intern, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- **Rebecca Milliman, MSW** member, Harborview Abuse and Trauma Center
- **Monica Schell, MSW** intern, University of Washington School of Social Work
- **Natasha Walicki, JD** coordinator, Title IX, Seattle Public Schools

Listening Session Leads

Listed alphabetically by last name, the Listening Sessions Leads were:

- **Brennon Ham, Ed.M.** intern, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- **Monica Schell, MSW** intern, University of Washington School of Social Work

Survey Response Summary

The survey first asked for answers to demographic questions so that the SVS could better identify *which* voices were being collected from the survey alone. This information was necessary for the SVS to be purposeful and systematic in its listening session planning process. In addition to demographic questions, the SVS wanted a clearer picture of what students knew about sexual violence and what their impressions were of outreach, education, and response efforts upheld by the district. Answers to questions about knowledge and impressions were collected in through four direct questions and one response grid presented to students.

More specifically, the SVS wanted to know if students knew where to turn in the event of sexual harassment/assault/violence both on and off campus. If students did not know, or were unsure, of where to turn for support and resources, it would help identify a need for both an increase in information shared during learning and clearer pathways for reporting and garnering support in the case of sexual harm. The SVS also wanted to learn if students talked with their families about sexual violence. If students do not talk with their families about sexual violence, or talk infrequently, it could help inform the district on family engagement efforts – do families know how to talk to their kids about sexual violence, sexual violence prevention, and reporting? The SVS also wanted to gather impressions from students about how their schools respond to sexual violence. If students feel like schools are not performing well in this regard, survey responses could point the district to increasing specific kinds of training to build more responsive practices when sexual violence occurs.

After permission was granted from the district (requested by *Appendix A*), families were informed through a letter distributed through school leaders (*Appendix B*) and students were informed through the same pathway (*Appendix C*).

Overall, the following trends were uncovered:

- About half of students knew where to turn in the event of sexual harassment/assault/violence in school.
- More than half of students knew where to turn in the event of sexual harassment/assault/violence outside of school.
- Less than half of students had conversations with their families about sexual violence.
- Less than 10% of students felt their school “is great at responding to sexual harassment/assault/violence.”

Who was surveyed?

The following histograms capture responses of students by different cross-sections of self-reported identity. These self-reported identity groups illuminate patterns of which students took the survey. Demographics collected in the survey include the following major groupings: grade, school, race, gender, sexual orientation. Please note: questions were not

required to be answered. To that end, the total number of responses to each question ranges between 691 and 695 responses.

- **Figure 1. Histogram Depicting Grade Distribution of Students Who Completed Survey**

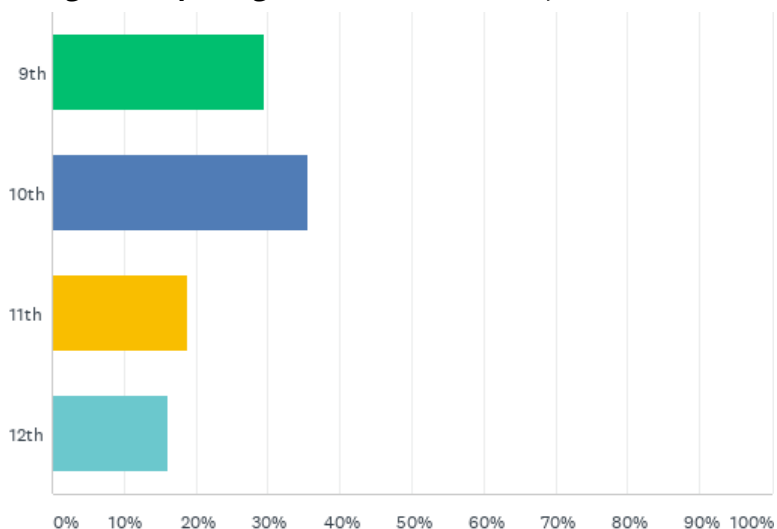


Figure 1. Positively skewed, unimodal distribution; greater participation from underclassmen than upperclassmen with the greatest participation from 10th grade students in 2021.

- **Figure 2. Histogram Depicting School of Origin for Students Who Completed Survey**

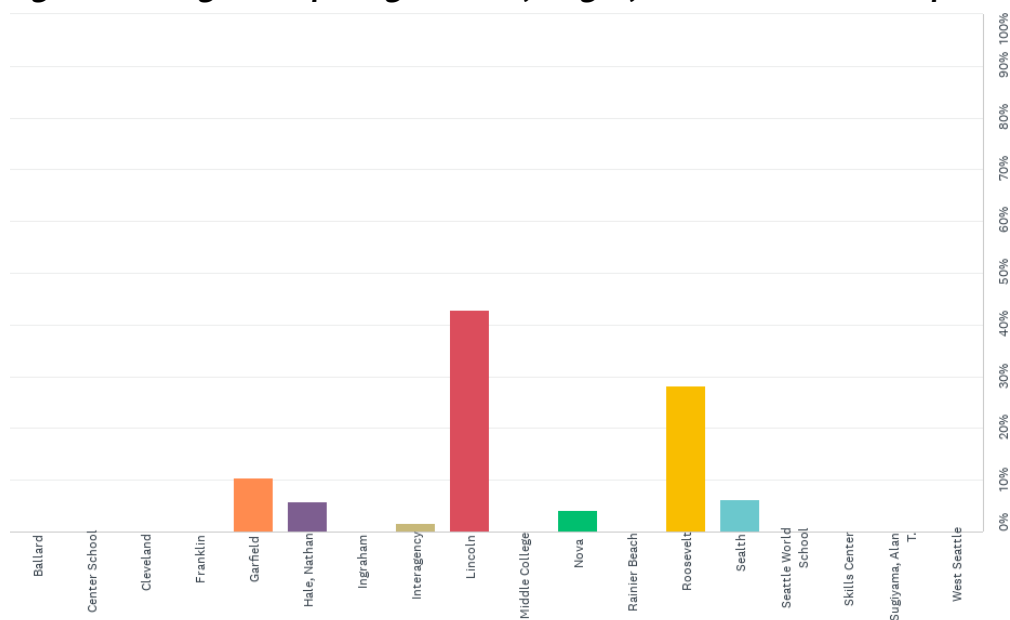


Figure 2. Histogram depicting the distribution of participants by school. Greatest participation from Lincoln High School (over 40% of surveys collected were taken

here) and Roosevelt High School, with limited participation from Garfield, Nathan Hale, Interagency, Nova, and Chief Sealth International.

- **Figure 3. Histogram Depicting Race of Students Who Completed Survey**

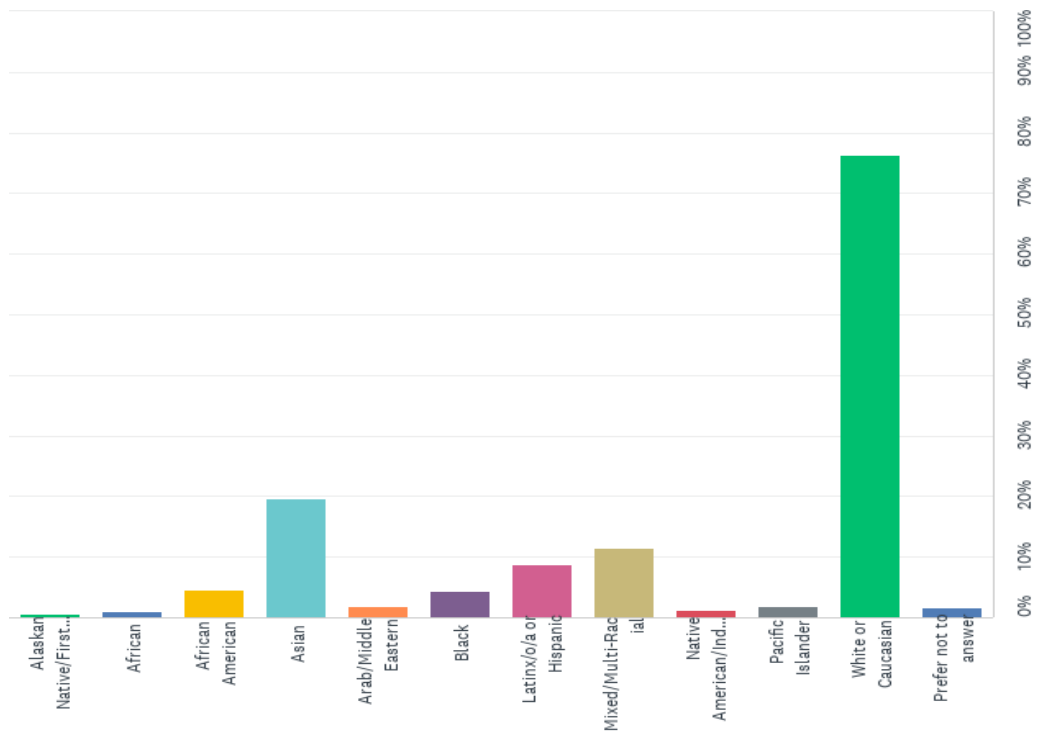


Figure 3. Over 70% of students who completed the survey identified as white. Under 30% identified as students of color.

- **Figure 4. Histogram Depicting Gender of Students Who Completed Survey**

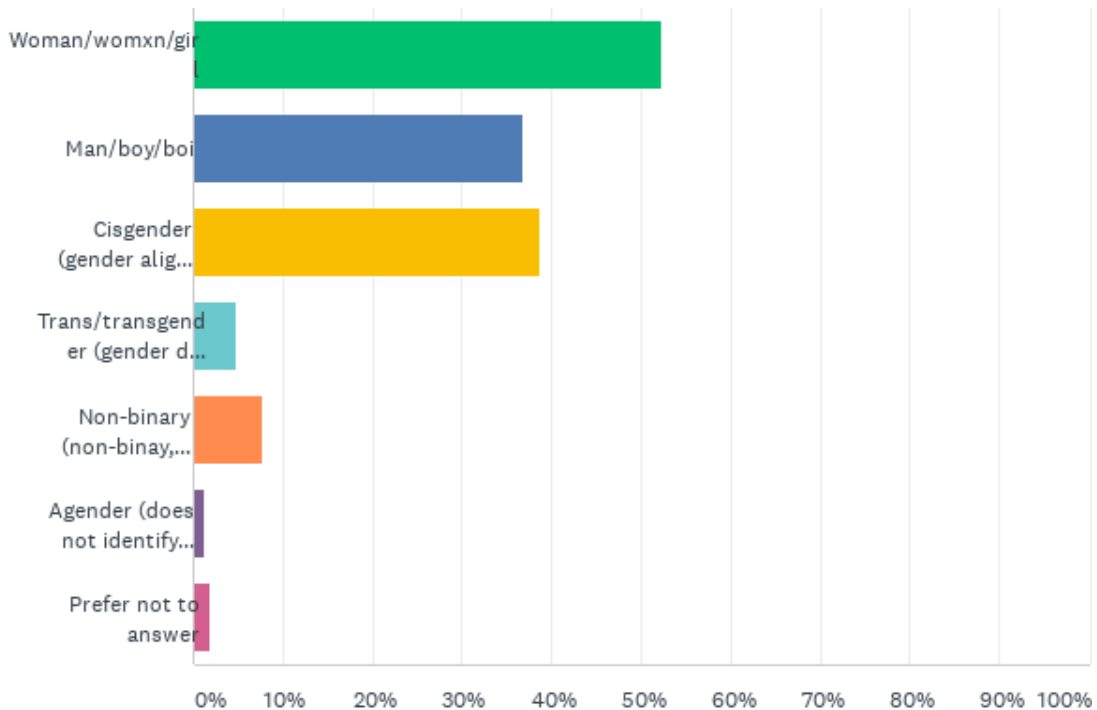


Figure 4. A majority (over 50%) of surveys were completed by students who identified as women/girls (gender that aligns with sex assigned at birth), less than 40% of surveys were completed by students who identified as men/boys, and just over 10% of students who completed the survey did not identify as either. Under 40% identified as cisgender (when one's gender identity aligns with one's sex assigned at birth).

- **Figure 5. Histogram Depicting Sexual Orientation of Students Who Completed Survey**

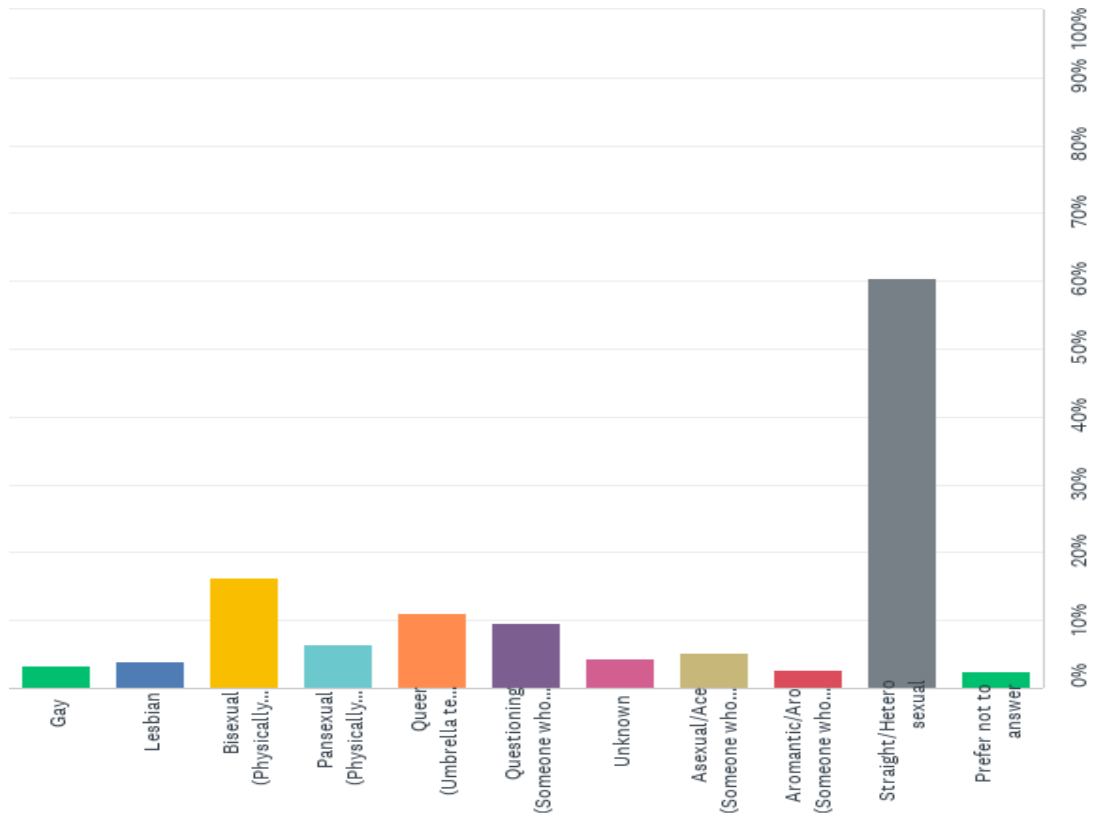


Figure 5. 60.49% of students who completed this survey identified as straight/heterosexual. 32.56% of students who completed this survey identified as part of the LGBTQ+ community.

What did students think?

The following graphics include responses from students for each of our questions. Patterns within each will be explained and relevant extrapolations will be posited. *Please note: All histograms will be titled with the question asked to elicit the very responses captured within the figure.*

Figure 6. Do you know where to get resources and support for sexual harassment/assault/violence in school?

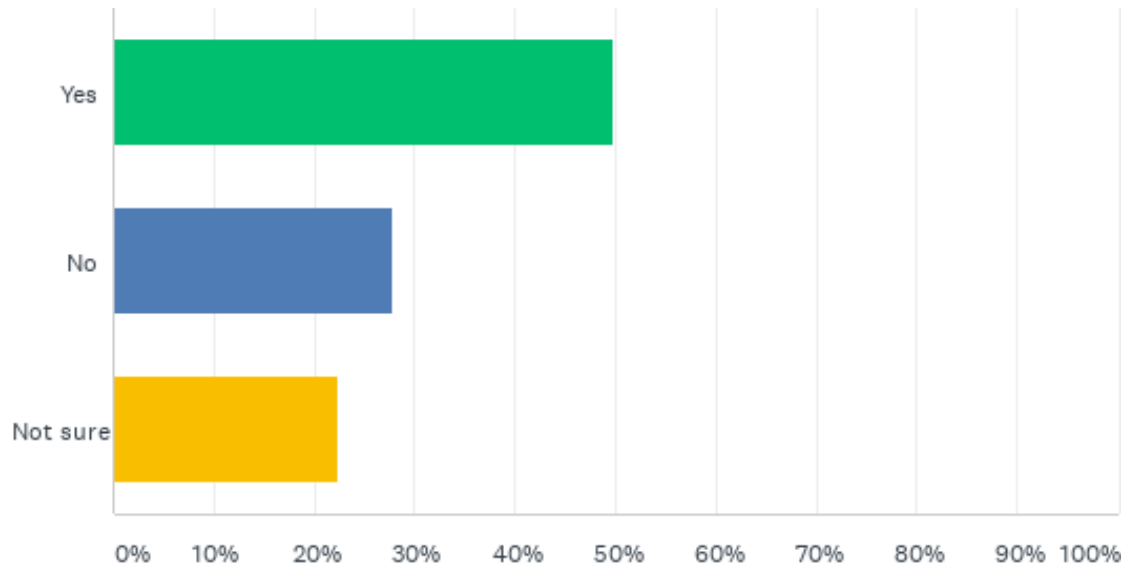


Figure 6. Just under 50% of students know where to go for resources and support for sexual harassment/assault/violence in schools. The remaining students either do not know where to go or are unsure.

This points to a potential need for schools to be more explicit with students in ongoing learning and orientation to the school on where to turn for support.

Figure 7. Do you know where to get resources and support for sexual harassment/assault/violence outside of school?

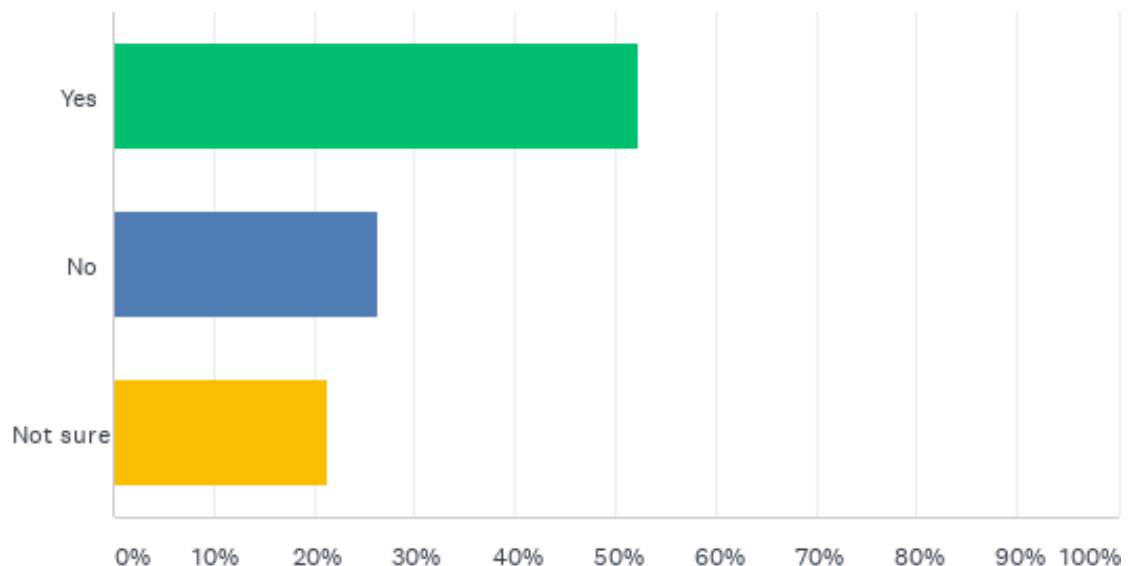


Figure 7. Over 50% of students know where to turn to for support and resources outside of school. Less than 50% of students either don't know where to turn or are unsure. Though the difference in yes

responses between inside and outside of schools is slight, it is enough to tell us that outside agencies and pathways to reporting sexual violence and/or gaining access to necessary resources is *clearer* (more known or easily understood) to students than within schools.

This points to a need for the district to consider the comparatively effective outreach strategies of outside agencies and reporting/resource pathways or an increased partnership between schools and anti-violence agencies in the region.

Figure 8. How often do you and your family talk about sexual harassment/assault/violence?

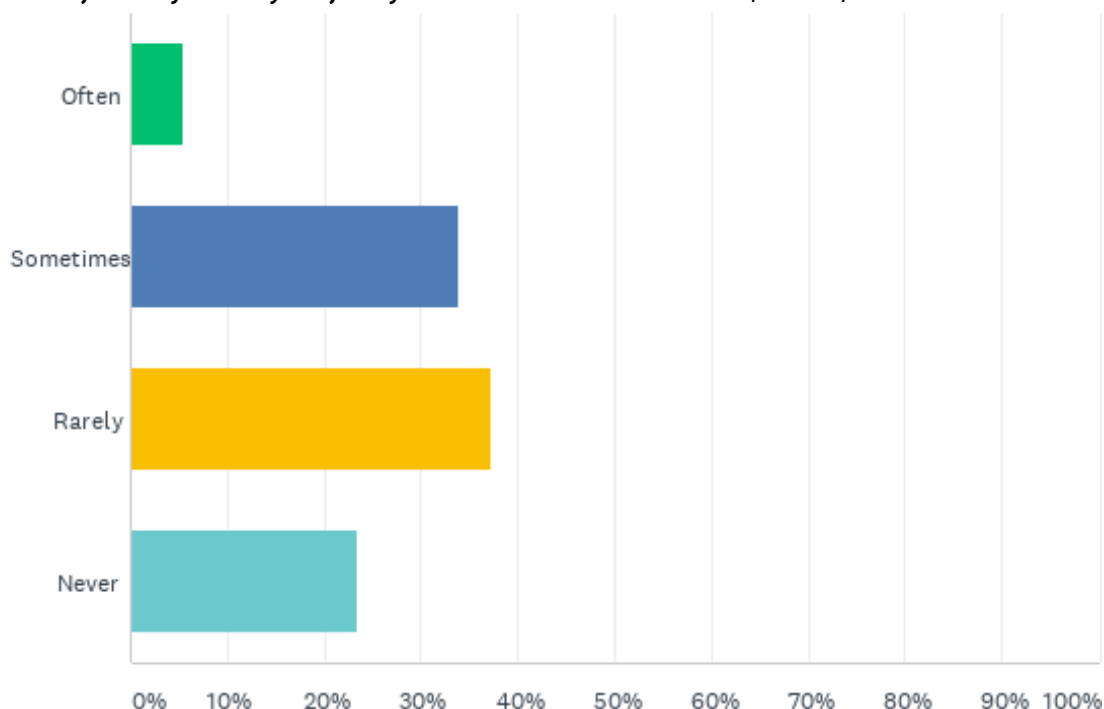


Figure 8. Over 20% of students never talk with their families about sexual harassment/assault/violence while just under 40% rarely talk with their families about these topics. Over 30% sometimes talk with their families about sexual violence and less than 5% talk with their families often about these topics.

This points to a potential gap in skill or comfort in discussing these topics among families. The district should, accordingly, consider increasing family engagement strategies that include skill-building that centers both knowledge and comfort in discussing sexual violence and sexual violence prevention. Such efforts would aid accountability in schools, underpinning school-wide efforts to shift harmful behaviors among perpetrators and inactive/passive behaviors of student and adult bystanders.

Figure 9. What do you think about how your school responds to sexual harassment/assault/violence when it happens?

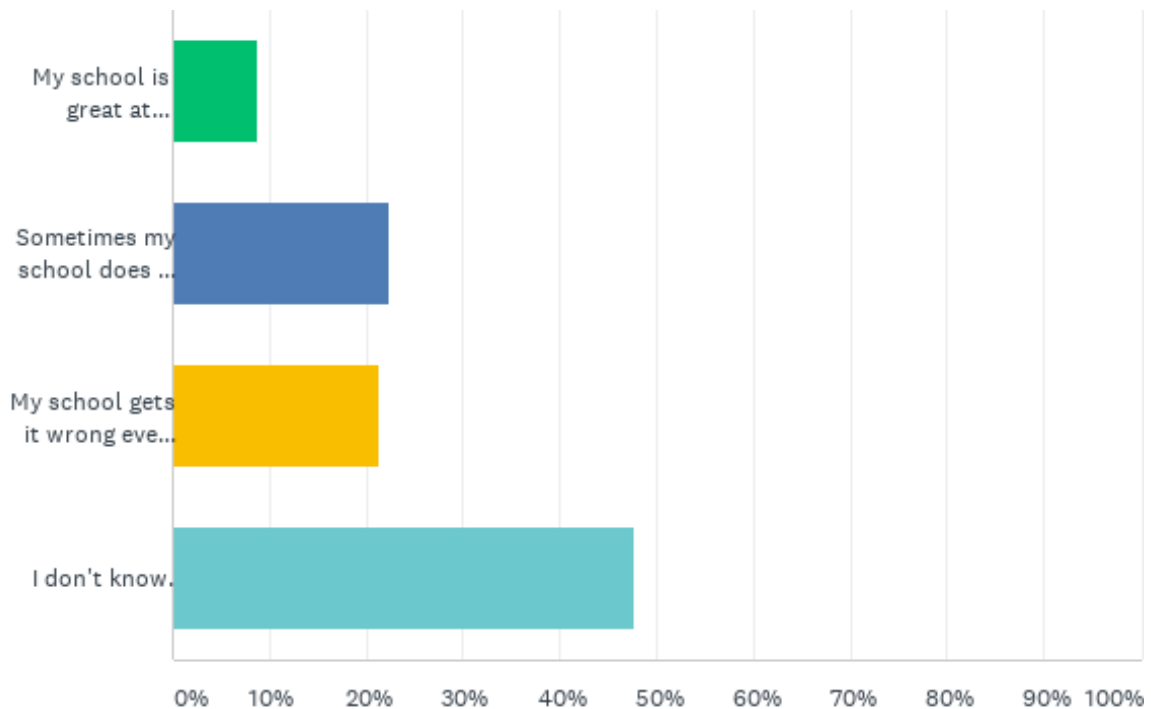


Figure 9. Less than 10% of students feel that their school does a great job responding to sexual harassment/assault/violence. 22.30% of students feel their school *gets it right* only sometimes while 21.29% of students who completed the survey feel their school *gets it wrong* every time. Over 40% of students are not sure.

Students are 4 times as likely to feel that their school does not do well at responding to sexual violence as they are to think their school does respond well. This tells us that we need both consistency across the district in responses to reporting, and better control of its ripple effect.

Rating box for the final question within the survey.

Seattle Public Schools does have current sexual violence prevention strategies in place. To assess the efficacy of these strategies, students were also asked of their impressions for each. The following is a

graph reporting those impressions from students:

	MY SCHOOL DOES THIS WELL.	MY SCHOOL DOES THIS, BUT IT COULD USE IMPROVEMENT.	MY SCHOOL DOES THIS, BUT DOES A BAD JOB.	MY SCHOOL DOES NOT DO THIS.	I DON'T KNOW.	TOTAL
Educate students about consent	46.82% 324	31.36% 217	7.66% 53	8.53% 59	5.64% 39	692
Educate students about healthy relationships	38.12% 263	30.43% 210	8.12% 56	17.39% 120	5.94% 41	690
Educate students about gender stereotypes	25.69% 177	33.24% 229	12.05% 83	20.90% 144	8.13% 56	689
Educate students how to intervene or help when there is sexual harassment or assault	13.79% 95	25.83% 178	15.09% 104	33.09% 228	12.19% 84	689
Student club(s) doing work to prevent sexual assault	24.82% 171	20.17% 139	4.93% 34	16.40% 113	33.67% 232	689
Display posters, media, materials about sexual assault prevention	15.87% 109	22.85% 157	9.46% 65	26.06% 179	25.76% 177	687
Educate athletes about sexual assault prevention	8.38% 57	10.00% 68	9.56% 65	32.06% 218	40.00% 272	680
Educate students with IEPs about sexual assault prevention	9.66% 66	7.91% 54	4.83% 33	16.69% 114	60.91% 416	683
Teachers and staff model consent and respect	41.85% 285	27.31% 186	7.49% 51	9.10% 62	14.24% 97	681
Teachers and staff intervene or help when there is sexual harassment or assault	16.15% 110	11.01% 75	12.92% 88	12.33% 84	47.58% 324	681
Students are taught about affirmative consent and/or sexual violence in health education (affirmative consent is a knowing, voluntary and mutual decision among all participants to engage in sexual activity)	45.03% 308	28.65% 196	8.92% 61	7.46% 51	9.94% 68	684
Students learn about bystander intervention (bystander intervention is when someone steps in to help in a situation where someone is causing harm or being harmed)	21.93% 150	29.82% 204	13.16% 90	19.30% 132	15.79% 108	684

students:

Figure 10. Less than 50% of students felt their school did a great job of educating students about consent; less than 40% of students felt schools did a great job educating students about healthy relationships; less than 30% of students felt their school did a great job educating students about gender stereotypes; less than 15% of students felt their schools did a great job of educating students about how to intervene when they in cases of sexual harassment or assault; almost 25% of students felt their school's student clubs were doing a great job of working to prevent sexual assault; just over 15% of students felt their schools did a great job of displaying helpful posters and learning materials about sexual assault prevention; less than 10% felt their schools did a great job of educating athletes about sexual assault prevention; less than 10% felt their schools did a great job of educating students with IEPs about sexual assault prevention; only 41.85% of students felt their teachers did a great job of modeling consent; only 16.15% of students felt their teachers did a great job of intervening when sexual assault or harassment happens; about 45% of students felt their schools did a great job teaching *affirmative* consent; only 21.93% of students felt their schools did a great job teaching about bystander intervention.

From these responses, we learned that a majority of students across all of the available assessment fields believe their schools could improve sexual violence prevention strategies. The SVS believe these findings can point the district to an increase in funding, type, and scale of sexual violence prevention strategies around the district.

What does this tell us?

We have learned about general trends from each of these questions. Still, how they should inform the district is not quite conclusive without direct student voice. This is, in part, solved with the inclusion of listening session summaries. Our four listening sessions provide us with more direct feedback and asks from students in our district, specifically from students furthest from educational justice.

Limitations

Students and families can opt out of completing surveys depending on specific topics as outlined by Policy No. 3232. As the Student Voice survey was related to sexual harassment, assault, and violence, it legally overlapped with the topic of “sex behaviors and attitudes” outlined in that policy. Accordingly, principals were given messages to deliver to families with 10 days’ notice, granting them the opportunity to opt their children out of taking the survey. The survey was then distributed by principals and students were given two weeks to complete the survey.

However, some school leaders chose not to send the survey to students. This had an impact on which schools were over- and under-represented in the survey result collection. After speaking with some school leaders, the Student Voice Subcommittee learned that the rationale for forgoing delivery of the survey included following:

- **Survey Fatigue** - Students expressed exhaustion with the large number of surveys they were required to complete, especially during remote learning through the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Presumed Disinterest** – Leaders commented on the perceived apathy and exhaustion of students, linked with survey fatigue and broader trends of languishing.
- **Presumed Community Response** – Some leaders commented on the presumed response from the broader community; these leaders held worry that the distribution of such a survey without further explanation of its use (see Appendix A) could increase tension between the school and community and therefore decrease trust.

As a result, our survey did not fully represent the broad experiences of students across the district. The schools/institutions that did not distribute the survey included the following:

1. Cleveland High School
2. Ingraham High School
3. Middle College
4. Rainier Beach High School
5. Seattle World School
6. Alan T Sugiyama
7. Skills Center
8. West Seattle

Listening Session Summary

The SVS anticipated disparate survey completion rates between schools. To offset the anticipated underrepresentation, the SVS structured listening sessions that prioritized the student voices from schools serving students furthest from educational justice.

Alphabetically, the schools prioritized for listening sessions included:

1. Chief Sealth International High School (1 session)
2. Garfield High School (1 session)
3. Rainier Beach High School (2 sessions)

4-8 students per listening session anonymously participated in hour-long conversations to surface their perspectives and ideas on existing policy, gaps in education, and recommendations for how the district should move forward. Students were given an

overview of what would be covered in the listening session ahead of time as shown in *Appendix D*. At the beginning of each listening session, students were briefed with the same prepared materials as outlined in *Appendix E*.

Overall, students responses to questions were consistent across listening sessions. Students had specific and heartfelt asks including:

- stronger prevention education in schools;
- compassionate response training for school staff;
- clearer reporting pathways;
 - clearer consequences/system activations with reporting;
- importance of teaching consent starting early (kindergarten);
- staff training on harassment intervention strategies;
- student learning focused on bystander intervention.

Listening Session Questions

The following questions were asked during each listening session:

1. Can you tell me some of your rights as a student at SPS regarding sexual assault and harassment?
2. Where would you go to report sexual assault and harassment?
3. If a student discloses a sexual assault to a staff member, how do you think the school should respond?
4. Think of a time in which you witnessed a school response to someone's experience of sexual assault and harassment on school grounds. Please share what you liked or didn't like about the school's response.
5. What could schools do better to prevent sexual assault and harassment from happening?
6. What do you and your families talk about regarding sexual assault and harassment in schools?
7. What should teachers and school staff do to create a safer environment at school?
8. How do you plan to uplift your peers with knowledge and information about this topic?

These questions were selected to *dig deeper* to the core of the questions asked in the SVS anonymous student survey. The final question was asked to aid the group discussion in ending on a positive note. Given the emotionally evocative/activating nature of the other 7

questions, the SVS felt it was important for students to exit listening sessions feeling hopeful and empowered.

Student Responses

Below are both summarized answers to each listening session question as well as some direct quotes taken from students. In some instances, direct quotes have been modified to preserve the anonymity of student informants.

Can you tell me some of your rights as a student at SPS regarding sexual assault and harassment?

- Across the board, students could not answer this question directly – after confirming they did not know the answer. When explaining what rights look like, one senior student said, “literally, to this point, I didn’t know that was a thing. I didn’t know we had rights.”
- The listening session facilitators then asked what students *thought* their rights should be. The answers from some students were aligned with their rights and the answers for others were not. One student said, “we should have the right to file or go after... to seek legal or therapeutic help...we should have the right to take time out of school.” Another student said, “we should be able to get counseling at school and we should have adults available who we can trust.”

This tells us that student’s wants for rights align with many of the rights they have after experiencing sexual harassment/assault/violence in schools. Because students do not know their rights, the SVS believes this should inform the district on education initiatives; how are students being informed, directed, and supported when sexual harm happens?

Where would you go to report sexual assault and harassment?

- Students, across the board, felt they would turn to a teacher or an adult within the school *only if* they had previously built up a trusting relationship with this person. They were less likely to go to a specific point person and *far* less likely to want to report to school administrators or district leads.
- One student said, “there should always be a therapist or counselor on deck... for students to talk to” indicating that they were either unfamiliar with the role of school counselors, that counselors were limited in their role, and/or they did not feel the available counselors had the necessary training to properly support sexual assault survivors.

- Another student said, “lots of people went to adults and they didn’t do anything about it. They were just like, “that’s sad, that’s really sad,” and they didn’t do anything about it. They didn’t actually do anything to help them.”
- “There should be some kind of mandatory training... it’s a heavy thing to carry... they don’t know what to do so maybe that’s why they’re avoidant... they don’t know how to respond. So, there should be a training to deal with that so they don’t push it under the rug – they’ll know how to address it.”

This tells us that there is inherent distrust (or, lack of unearned trust) between students and the leaders responsible for their care - students do not trust the district level response. These answers also tell us that students are unaware of the in-house resources that exist to support them *and* that *all* staff should be better prepared to respond to and immediately support students who disclose their experiences with violence.

If a student discloses a sexual assault to a staff member, how do you think the school should respond?

- Students felt that survivors of violence should be *believed* and did not feel they often were – or that their reports were legitimate.
- One student said, “you should never feel miserable or alone... school is a lot of people’s getaways. My friend is a survivor and she doesn’t get that feeling because the school isn’t doing what it’s supposed to, to support [the survivor].”
- Another student shared, “sometimes it’s so hard to speak up because of the same reason... when you see it happen to others, you hear the rumors, you don’t see schools doing anything, and then they don’t do anything to make sure it doesn’t happen again. They’re not doing anything to the people who did it to you. [Perpetrators] will just keep doing it to other [potential victims].”

These responses tell us that students feel schools should have better, clearer, and more supportive responses to reports of sexual violence in schools. SVS understands this as the need to center anti-violence in our district-wide efforts to ensure safe and supportive environments; how are we ensuring safe and supportive environments for survivors of sexual violence?

Think of a time in which you witnessed a school response to someone’s experience of sexual assault and harassment on school grounds. Please share what you liked or didn’t like about the school’s response.

- A student shared that several students claimed that they were being assaulted by another student and the school responded poorly. The school didn't make any of the survivors feel taken care of, and the assaulter was suspended for one day and was able to come back to school without any repercussions. The student said the assaulter continued the behavior once they returned to school.
- One student expressed that a lot of sexual harassment is happening online as well, in terms of sending people sexually explicit photos and messages, so that there is a lot happening that isn't visible to staff.
- A student said in their experience when students experience sexual assault and harassment, it usually stays between the students and teachers don't really notice.

This tells us that students are both unsatisfied with how schools respond to sexual violence *and* feel unclear about the processes associated with reporting. Students do not feel safe with the current procedure, especially with the perception of Title IX procedure feeling inconsistently administered.

What could schools do better to prevent sexual assault and harassment from happening?

- One student said, "I would prefer for the schools to teach students that there are better ways to express attraction and you still need to be respectful of other people and their bodies and stuff like that."
- It was recommended that The FLASH curriculum could use some revisioning and that Health Educators should do a better job teaching prevention.
- One student said they never learned about sexual assault prevention in health classes which was echoed by another student. They then said health teachers didn't seem interested in the content and they just wanted to get through it.
- Another student recommended making it mandatory for teachers to have sexual assault resources in every class, not just health classes (that this task shouldn't fall just to health educators).
- A student said teachers should make the elimination of sexual harassment a top priority. The student suggested teachers hold meetings and bring in speakers to address sexual harassment.
- A student said students should be taught the difference between flirting, joking, and harassment.

This tells us that students *want* to learn how to engage with each other in ways that are respectful, but that curriculum on healthy relationship, boundaries, and consent is not at the

level that is needed. These responses also spoke to a need to incorporate these changes into the broader school culture; asking *all* teachers to do the work of educating about prevention and maintaining behaviors that align with such lessons.

What do you and your families talk about regarding sexual assault and harassment in schools?

- Students said they sometimes talk about sexual assault and harassment in school with their parents, but specifically with their mothers.
- One student said their mom encourages them to stay away from certain people.

These responses tell us that some of the conversations students have with families comes primarily from a place of fear and distrust rather than a place of education. The SVS believes this points to a need for increased family engagement strategies to reinforce learning happening in schools to prevent sexual violence.

What should teachers and school staff do to create a safer environment at school?

- One student said that teachers should always be talking about and modeling consent - not just sexual situations, but everyday life.
- Another student said teachers should make it clear that if a student reports to them, that their conversation would remain confidential. Or that if “teachers say they’re going to do something with it, that they do something with it.”
- One student said, “teachers don’t notice that... sometimes a lot of little [instances of sexual violence] happen before big [instances]. They need to pay attention – they should see those hints. If you see something that’s not right, if you see a student who’s not acting normal, then you should get those hints – you should talk to that student.”
- Students consistently brought up that prevention and consent should be taught as early as elementary school and, specifically, in kindergarten onward.

This tells us that teachers should be working on building up trusting relationships with students by modeling expected behaviors, responding to instances with compassion, and being proactive when they witness students acting out of character. Students also believe that prevention education should be taught far earlier.

How do you plan to uplift your peers with knowledge and information about this topic?

- One student said they were going to try and start an assembly about this topic to increase awareness.
- Another student said they plan to call it out when they witness sexual harassment.
- And, another student said they plan to normalize these conversations with their peers to build trust and increase transparency to help increase safety.

This tell us that students *want* to take action. Students want to be a part of the solution, working in partnership with schools and each other.

Limitations of methodology

The sheer amount of information shared in listening sessions is impossible to completely capture in a report. To that end, the report is limited to the points that *stand out* to the report gatherers only. Additionally, as this was an opt-in and anonymous method of information-gathering, it is difficult to say that these perspectives are universally held across all students or if they are commonly held across all students interested in opt-in and anonymous listening sessions about this topic.

Conclusion

Seattle Public Schools cares deeply about students. And, students do not always feel this is the case. After conducting this two-tiered information gathering process to better involve student voice in the Title IX policy and procedure analysis, it is clear from student surveys and student listening sessions that students do not give SPS their full vote of confidence. From these information gathered, the SVS strongly recommends the following steps be made to make SPS students feel safer:

1. **Schools need Professional Development focused on sexual violence prevention and compassionate response training.** Professional development would ensure consistency in delivery and response across the district.
2. **Schools need to better educate students about their rights within schools, including their right to report. Schools need to do a better job of illuminating pathways for reporting and for accessing support and services.** Listening sessions unveiled that students felt underinformed about their rights and where to turn for support. Unless SPS better prepares students, it is co-responsible for the rate of underreporting and the continued distrust between students and schools.
3. **Schools need to provide students with a clearer understanding of processes associated with reporting, supporting students in learning what to expect.** It was inferred from listening sessions that part of why students underreport/are less likely to report experiences of sexual violence is because of the unfavorable/unsupportive

outcomes they have witnessed their peers experience. Much of this stems from a lack of understanding of the full, legally required process involved in making a report.

4. **The aim to build and sustain safe and supportive environments should include a sexual violence prevention lens.** Rape culture is pervasive; unless our schools are consistently interrupting and intervening to ensure safe and supportive environments, and unless their perspective contains a sexual violence lens, schools will continue to feel unsafe.
5. **Schools need to do a better job of teaching sexual violence prevention strategies and relationship skills.** It is recommended that the Health Education curriculum be revamped and given more support to reimagine and teach to stronger, more effective prevention strategies.
6. **Family Engagement strategies that build comfort and skills in discussing sexual violence and sexual violence prevention.** Families are best equipped to reinforce lessons in school when they are supported in doing so. This can be achieved through ongoing family engagement that includes training and support.
7. **The district should build in sexual violence prevention education into curriculum as early as kindergarten.** The best way to prevent violence is to provide violence prevention education early; this helps shift attitudes and behaviors among young people.

The SVS pushes these recommendations forward on behalf of students who participated in the student voice survey and listening sessions. We believe the Title IX Taskforce should incorporate these recommendations into its review of the current Title IX policy, procedure, and related grade school curriculum for school board review.

Appendices

Appendix A

MEMORANDUM

To: Dr. Clover Codd, Chief Human Resources Officer

From: Title IX Task Force Subcommittee (comprised of: Rebecca Milliman, Natasha Walicki, Monica Schell, Brennon Ham, Jack Baker)

Date: December 15th, 2020

Re: Title IX Student Voice Survey

This memo will give background on and explain the rationale for the Title IX Task Force's "School Responses to, and Prevention of, Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment" Survey being sent to high school students. Included are responses to anticipated pushback and next steps for the task force.

Background: Overview of Survey

The electronic survey will be geared at Seattle Public Schools (SPS) high school students. The survey intends to gauge students' knowledge about resources and opinions about district procedures related to sexual assault and sexual harassment in schools. The survey will also ask students about their opinions about the efficacy of the district's efforts to respond to incidents and prevent these types of incidents in the future.

The responses collected will be shared with two currently active Task Forces for SPS. First, the Title IX Task Force is developing Title IX policy change recommendations to the SPS school board. Second, the School Health Education Task Force is developing recommendations regarding improving and expanding sexual health education in the district through curriculum development. This survey implementation is an intentional effort to hear from students and include their voices in the formal recommendations that will be made to the district.

The survey is optional and anonymous and no personal questions will be asked. The survey consists of 8 multiple-choice questions and one Likert scale formatted question.

Link to the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SPSstudentvoice>

Rationale:

Recommendations

This survey will help SPS collect information about students' opinions and knowledge regarding sexual violence (unwanted sexual experiences) in schools and the district's response. Students will not be asked about personal experiences with sexual violence, but rather their knowledge of the topic and ways in which the district could better respond to students who have experienced sexual violence. With this survey, we also hope to build sexual assault prevention programs. This means student responses will help us make programs to prevent and stop sexual violence for other students at SPS.

Anticipated Pushback

Families may be concerned about the subject matter of the survey. Due to the survey centering around how schools respond to and prevent sexual assault, parents/guardians may be reluctant allowing students to participate in the survey. However, as stated above, no students will be asked personal questions regarding this topic and the survey is optional and anonymous.

Next Steps: Timelines

In the next month, this survey should be distributed to all high school students. By March, we will close this survey. Then, by May, the Task Force will use the anonymous and optional aggregate survey responses to support recommendations for Title IX policy change to SPS school board *and* sexual violence prevention curriculum design led by the School Health Education Task Force.

At the bottom of the optional, anonymous survey, students will find a link to an optional listening session sign up. We will be hosting listening sessions for some schools around the district. Students will have the chance to weigh in on the Title IX Task Force policy recommendations and share related concerns. Listening sessions will begin in February and run through April to also support recommendations for Title IX policy change to SPS school board.

Appendix B

Email to school leaders to be distributed to families

School Responses to and Prevention of Sexual Violence: Student Survey

May 5th, 2021

Dear Seattle Public Schools Families:

Seattle Public Schools is committed to a positive and productive educational environment free from discrimination, including sexual harassment. The district prohibits sexual harassment of students, employees, and others involved in school district activities. In order to strengthen student supports, we will rely on a diverse range of feedback from students in high school.

We plan to gain student feedback with a short, optional, and anonymous survey. This survey asks about students' knowledge and opinions. For example, are students learning about consent? Do they know where to get resources for support? What could schools and the districts be doing better? Anonymous student survey responses will be shared with the school board, Title IX Task Force, and Health Education Team. The responses will help improve district policy, procedure, and education.

Students will have the option to complete this 5-10-minute survey at any time before **May 28th, 2021** at 5pm when the survey closes. Participation in this survey is voluntary. The survey will include a link to resources for students, which we have also included in this email.

Students and families can opt out of completing this survey as it contains the sensitive topic of sex behaviors and attitudes per Policy No. 3232. If you would like to review the survey, please contact brham@seattleschools.org and we will make it available to you. If you do not want your student to participate in the survey, please contact brham@seattleschools.org by Sunday, May 16th, 2021.

Thank you,

[Principal Name]

High School Principal
[Name of High School]
Seattle Public Schools

Tina Meade, M.Ed., J.D.

Director of Investigations
& Compliance | Designated Title IX Coordinator
Title IX Office
Seattle Public Schools

Brennon Ham, cEd.M.

Health Education Specialist/Trainer
Health Education Office
Seattle Public Schools

Appendix C

Letter distributed to school leaders to be sent to students, omitting opted-out students.

Students,

Here is our survey on School Responses to and Prevention Survey for High School Students in Seattle Public Schools

This survey will help Seattle Public Schools (SPS) collect information about students' opinions and knowledge regarding sexual violence (unwanted sexual experiences) in schools. We know that this content can be activating for many people. We encourage you, the survey participants, to care for yourself as needed. At the bottom of the survey description are resources available for you to call if you need to talk to someone about your experiences. **Know that this survey is anonymous and it is optional.** Complete as much or as little of this survey as you want.

Here is the link to the survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5JS7FL6>

For the purposes of this survey, we will be defining sexual violence in explicit terms; sexual violence includes anything from sexual harassment (talking about someone's body or teasing them in a sexual way - this can be virtual or in real life), unwanted sexual touch (touching someone's body without their consent), coercion (forcing someone to do something without their permission), and rape (forcing someone to have non-consensual sex). When we ask about sexual violence, we are asking about all experiences within this range.

With this survey, we also hope to build sexual assault prevention programs. This means, your responses will help us make programs to prevent and stop sexual violence for other students at SPS. Anonymous student survey responses will be shared with the school board, Title IX Task Force, and Health Education Team. The responses will help improve district policy, procedure, and education. We thank you for your time and thoughtfulness.

For students wishing to participate in our **listening sessions** – to **have your voices heard** - please click this link to learn more:

Appendix D

SPS Title IX Listening Session Sign-up

Seattle Public Schools (SPS) is conducting listening sessions about our Title IX Policy and Procedures. We want to hear from you! We want to hear how you think we should improve the way that schools respond to sexual violence (defined as unwanted sexual engagement) and prevent it. Know that this conversation is confidential. Feel free to participate in as much or as little as you would like. Your opinions and recommendations will help shape district response!

During our listening sessions, we will be asking questions about general awareness and knowledge regarding sexual harassment and violence in schools - NOT about your personal experience. And, for the purposes of this discussion, we will be defining sexual violence in explicit terms; sexual violence includes anything from sexual harassment (talking about someone's body, sending or showing unwanted explicit pictures, or teasing them in a sexual way - virtual or in real life), unwanted sexual touch (touching someone's body without their consent), coercion (forcing someone to do something without their permission), and rape (forcing someone to have non-consensual sex).

Your comments and input will be shared with both the SPS Title IX Task Force and the SPS School Health Education Task Force. They will be incorporating your feedback into their recommendations to the SPS Health Education Dept, SPS School Board, and SPS Superintendent. Your input will help us improve the school district! We thank you for your time and thoughtfulness. Please submit your seattleschools.org email address to be given further instructions.

****This listening session is only for students from Garfield High School. If you are not from Garfield High School, please do not sign up for a listening session. Thank you.**

Appendix E

Introduction

We're here today to learn about how schools are currently preventing and responding to student experiences of sexual assault and sexual harassment. Our goal is to learn from students what gaps exist between their experiences working with schools and their expectations of schools. We are mandated reporters. This means that we are responsible for reporting experiences of assault and harassment. We ask that students keep this in mind as you share your experiences with us. We recommend, while speaking about your own experiences, to use third person language and to speak broadly about experiences while speaking specifically about your school's response to that experience. We will try to remind you of this before each question.

Definitions

For the purposes of this discussion, we will be defining sexual assault and harassment in explicit terms: Sexual assault is an unwanted (including nonconsensual) sexual touch – it includes touching someone's

body without their consent, coercion (forcing or threatening someone into doing something sexual), and rape (forcing someone to have non-consensual sex). Sexual harassment is when someone makes unwelcome and inappropriate sexual remarks towards another person (this can be virtual or in real life and includes sharing unwanted sexual imagery with another person). When we ask about sexual assault and sexual harassment, we are asking about all experiences within this range.

Group Ground Rules

What is said here stays here, what is learned here leaves here

Mandated reporters / Speak in third person

Share from your own experiences

Keep it short and simple

One person speaking at a time

Space for listening & building information as a group

Not a space for feedback to peers

Speak to your own perspective

Take space when you need to

Appendix E

Message from Roosevelt High School's Student Group, Feminism Club and Consent Culture Team

We, the students of the Roosevelt High School Feminism Club and Consent Culture Team, affirm that sexual assault and harassment are significant issues in the Seattle Public Schools District. We would like to acknowledge that the majority of our school and our clubs are white and the many privileges we have because of this.

In polling our members, we have concluded that the problems with sexual assault in the district are of both a cultural and structural nature. Firstly, there is a rape culture that school and district administration have consistently failed to address, within specific incidents, broad culture, and student and staff education. Secondly, there is a lack of transparency, clarity, and accessibility when it comes to the policies surrounding sexual assault, specifically within the formality of the language, the lack of organization of the policies, the unclear and ambiguous nature of many policies, contradictions between policies, invisible and unfindable placement of the policies. This often further confuses and traumatizes a victim looking to report, often causing a victim not to report at all. Thirdly, the process of reporting a case of sexual assault often further reinforces the victim's traumas and invalidates their feelings associated with the event. When reporting, victims may feel as though their needs are treated as less important than the completion of a procedure due to the lack of staff education. Fourthly, there is a lack of transparency as to the anonymity of information a victim gives, what corrective and safety measures can be taken following a report, and what the victim can hear of the consequences of a report. Fifth, the outcome of many reports does not serve to protect the victim. Often, nothing official can be done, leaving the victim feeling unsafe and unheard; worse, nothing is done to protect the victim beyond official corrective actions, further amplifying not only their feelings but their traumas. Lastly, the number of harmful actions is compounded with the addition of another marginalized identity, especially race.

We have created some broad goals for the district that we believe, if promptly implemented in policies, could address many of these issues. Although non-exhaustive, these goals have been written with a broader and more intersectional purpose, generally addressing harmful and discriminatory behavior.

1. All middle and high school teachers must receive sensitivity training around student reporting. This means they must be able to meet any student who comes to them

with compassion and respect, listening to the student's wants and needs, and understanding that listening is often more important than doing.

2. All middle and high school students must receive at least biweekly training around anti-racism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, queerphobia, fatphobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and every other type of discrimination. At least monthly, the curriculum must be taught by experts from outside of the district of the focus topic. This curriculum must also be approved by said experts.
3. The integration of marginalized communities and their stories must be regulated into regular curriculum. In language arts, this should look like the integration of work and the stories of marginalized communities. In history, this should look like the stories of those being colonized, or generally the events studied also told from marginalized communities' perspectives. In science, this should look like the acknowledgement and brief histories of the accomplishments of marginalized communities, especially when a more amplified voice took over or stole the accomplishment. In math, this should look like the acknowledgement of marginalized communities in the studied topics. For example, much of Algebra came from the Middle East.

In conclusion, Seattle Public Schools District has a significant historical rape culture that is reinforced by its policies, which in addition to often prioritizing a completion of a procedure over a victim's needs, are not clear or accessible. The district must remedy its issues through the implementation of transformative and restorative justice.