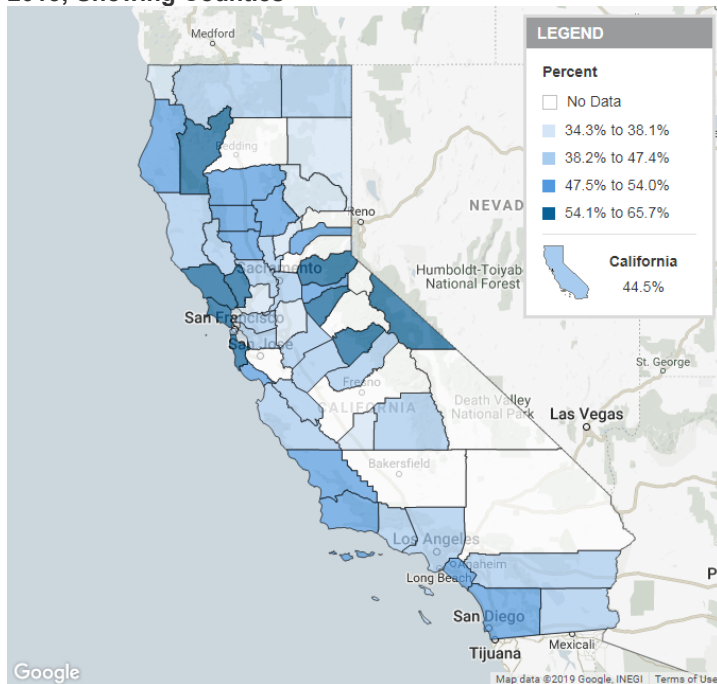


## School Climate in California

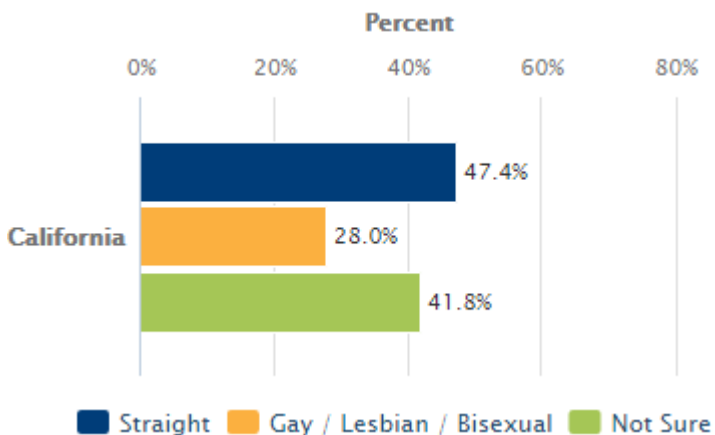
### 9th Grade Students with High Levels of School Connectedness: 2013-2015; Showing Counties



**Definition:** Level of school connectedness among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 51.5% of California 7th graders had high levels of school connectedness).

**Data Source:** WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students with High Levels of School Connectedness, by Sexual Orientation: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Level of school connectedness among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs, by sexual orientation (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 28% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California had high levels of school connectedness).

### What It Is

On kidsdata.org, student-reported data on school climate include:

- Level of academic motivation: This scale is based on student responses to four questions about being interested in schoolwork and being motivated to do well, understand new things, and do better at school
- Level of school connectedness: This scale is based on student responses to five questions about feeling safe, close to people, and a part of school, being happy at school, and about teachers treating students fairly
- Level of total school supports: This scale is based on student responses to three questions about having caring relationships with adults at school, three questions about having high expectations from adults at school, and three questions about having opportunities for meaningful participation at school

These indicators are available by grade level (7, 9, 11, and non-traditional), gender, parent education level, and sexual orientation.

### Why This Topic Is Important

When school climate is positive—for example, when students feel safe and connected to school, and when they have caring relationships with adults and meaningful ways to participate—students are more likely to succeed academically and engage in healthy behaviors. When schools support students' social, emotional, and physical needs, behavioral problems can be avoided and academic performance improves. Improving school climate also is a promising strategy to narrow achievement gaps between lower and higher income students and among students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds. California law now requires school districts to address school climate as part of the Local Control and Accountability Plans.

### How Children Are Faring

In 2013-2015, 52% of California 7th graders, 45% of 9th graders, 43% of 11th graders, and 36% of non-traditional students had high levels of school connectedness, estimated on the basis of reports about feeling safe, close to people, and a part of school, being happy at school, and

Data Source: WestEd, [California Healthy Kids Survey](#). California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

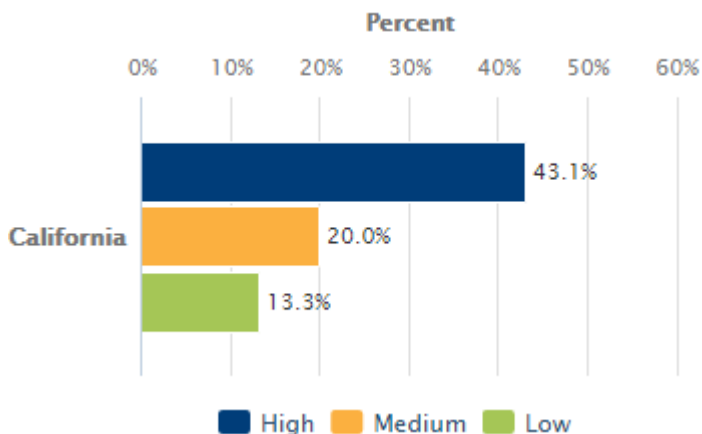
### Level of Total School Supports (Student Reported): 2013-2015

| California      | Percent |        |       |
|-----------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Grade Level     | High    | Medium | Low   |
| 7th Grade       | 32.9%   | 53.2%  | 13.9% |
| 9th Grade       | 26.2%   | 54.2%  | 19.6% |
| 11th Grade      | 31.3%   | 52.3%  | 16.5% |
| Non-Traditional | 23.8%   | 56.2%  | 20.0% |

**Definition:** Level of total school developmental supports for public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 32.9% of California 7th graders had high levels of school supports).

**Data Source:** WestEd, [California Healthy Kids Survey](#). California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students with High Academic Motivation, by Level of School Connectedness: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Level of academic motivation among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs, by level of school connectedness (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 13.3% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with low levels of school connectedness had high levels of academic motivation).

**Data Source:** WestEd, [California Healthy Kids Survey](#). California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

about teachers treating students fairly. Among racial/ethnic groups with data, estimates of high levels of school connectedness ranged from 37% (African American/black) to 54% (white). Statewide, the percentage of gay, lesbian and bisexual students with high levels of school connectedness was 28% in 2013-2015, compared with 47% of straight students, and the share of those with low connectedness (21%) was more than double that for their straight peers (9%).

Students with higher levels of school connectedness tended to have higher levels of academic motivation in 2013-2015. Among California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with high levels of school connectedness, 43% had high levels of academic motivation, compared with 20% of students with medium school connectedness and 13% of students with low connectedness. Younger children, girls, and students with higher parent education levels also tended to have higher levels of academic motivation in comparison with their counterparts.

Levels of school supports (a summary measure based on student reports about the quality of their relationships with adults at school and their opportunities for meaningful participation) also varied by race/ethnicity and level of parent education; e.g., 27% of Hispanic/Latino students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs statewide were estimated to have high levels of school supports in 2013-2015, compared with 37% of white students, while 24% of students whose parents did not finish high school had high levels of school supports, compared with 37% of students with a parent who completed a college degree.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/101/school-climate/summary>



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