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Center for  
School Climate



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# Perspectives on student well-being: Life satisfaction data from the California Healthy Kids Survey

5/23/23

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# Welcome



**Hilva Chan**  
Education Program Consultant  
California Department of Education

# California Center for School Climate (CCSC)

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## What we offer

- School Climate Data Use Webinar Series
- Peer Learning Exchanges (monthly, online)
- School Climate Collaboratives for district teams
- Data Use Peer Networks for district and county office teams
- Professional learning on safe and supportive learning environments
- Resources: briefs, audio gallery
- Technical assistance supports



# Speakers



**Erin Dowdy, PhD**  
Professor  
Department of Counseling, Clinical, and  
School Psychology  
UC Santa Barbara



**Michael Furlong, PhD**  
Research Professor and Distinguished  
Professor Emeritus  
School Psychology  
UC Santa Barbara



**Tom Hanson, PhD**  
Senior Managing Director  
WestEd

# Perspectives on Student Well-being

*Life satisfaction data from the California Healthy Kids Survey*

Complete Mental Health

Mike Furlong, Tom Hanson, Erin  
Dowdy  
May 23, 2023

UC Santa Barbara

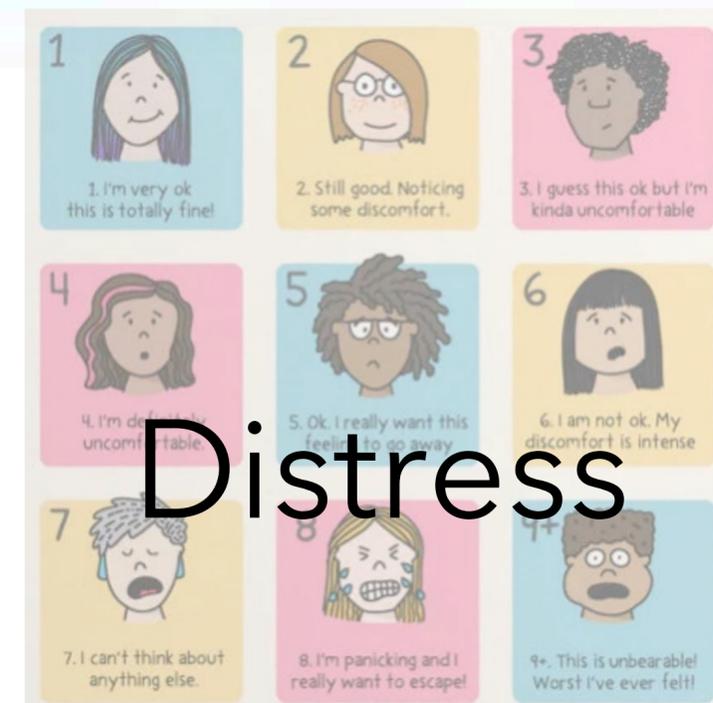
California  
Center for  
School Climate

# BMSLSS and SEDS

Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)



Social Emotional Distress Scale (SEDS)



# Life Satisfaction: What is it?

Using the 7-point response options on the right, answer these five questions and sum the total.

In considering your responses:

**What areas of your life came to mind?**

**Did you weigh each area the same or some more than others?**

\_\_\_\_\_ In most ways, my life is close to my ideal.

\_\_\_\_\_ The conditions of my life are excellent.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am satisfied with my life.

\_\_\_\_\_ So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life.

\_\_\_\_\_ If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Total (5-35)**



# Today's Topics

- 2021/22 California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) Core Responses
- Life Satisfaction Items
- Emotional Distress Items
- Item Scoring
- Responses of 505,099 Students
- Interpretation Considerations
- Application Considerations



# *In the beginning, there was light*



*and two CDC items*

English ▾

**During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more that you stopped doing some usual activities?**

No

Yes

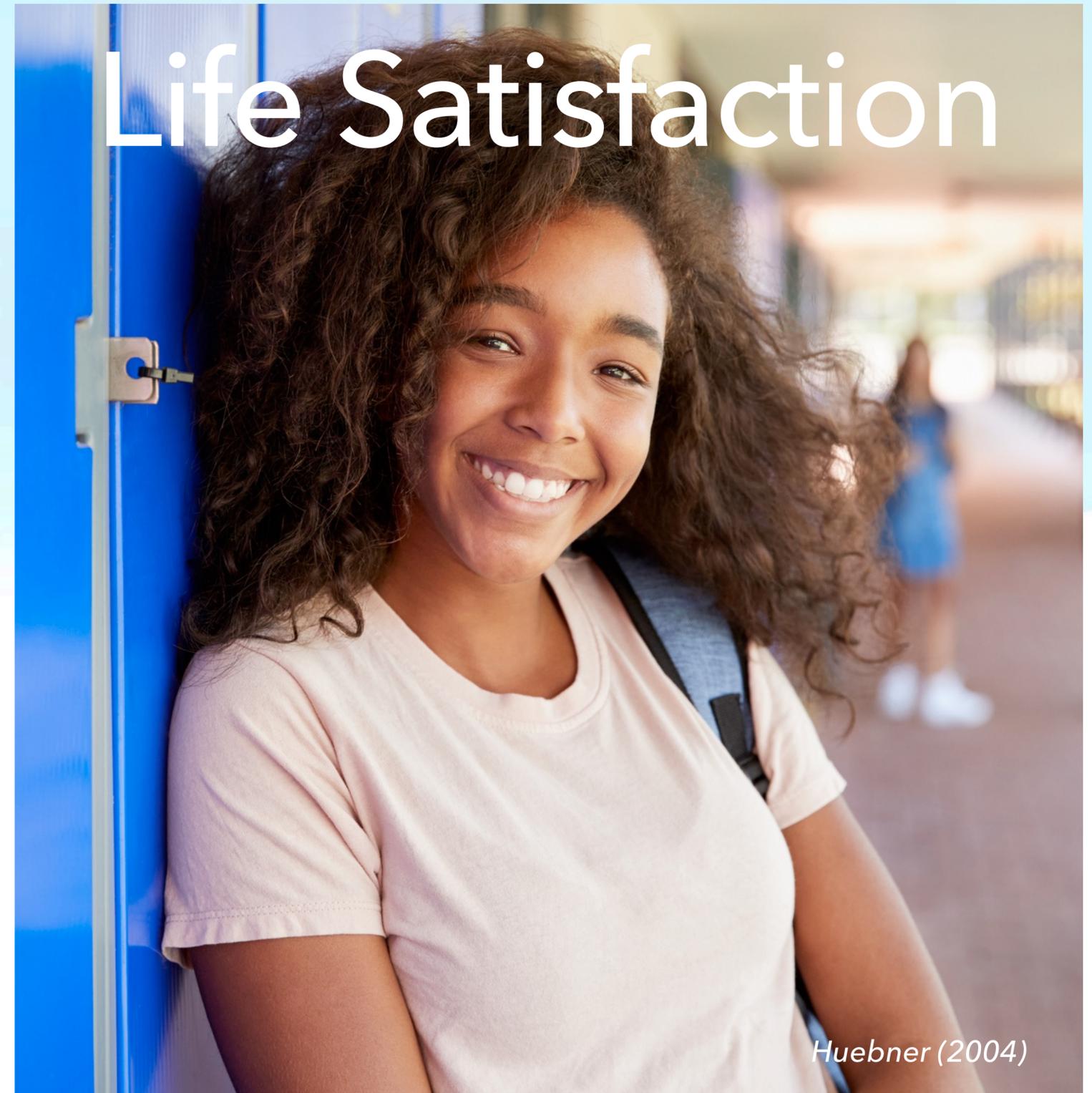
**During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?**

No

Yes

- Cognitive evaluation of one's life as a whole...
- Distinguished from transitory affective states...
- Enduring appraisals...
- Major facets of one's life...

# Life Satisfaction



Huebner (2004)

*Global and Specific*  
*Active Not Passive*

- Young persons' experiences
- General patterns form
- Global and by domains (family, peers...)



Multidimensional

# Brief Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale (BMSLSS)

*What value do life satisfaction items add?*

Better  
Health



# Online CHKS Portal

CalSCHLS

WestEd  
Developed by WestEd for the  
California Department of Education



California Healthy Kids Middle and High School Surveys

Survey Testing - School BF

Please select Survey ▼

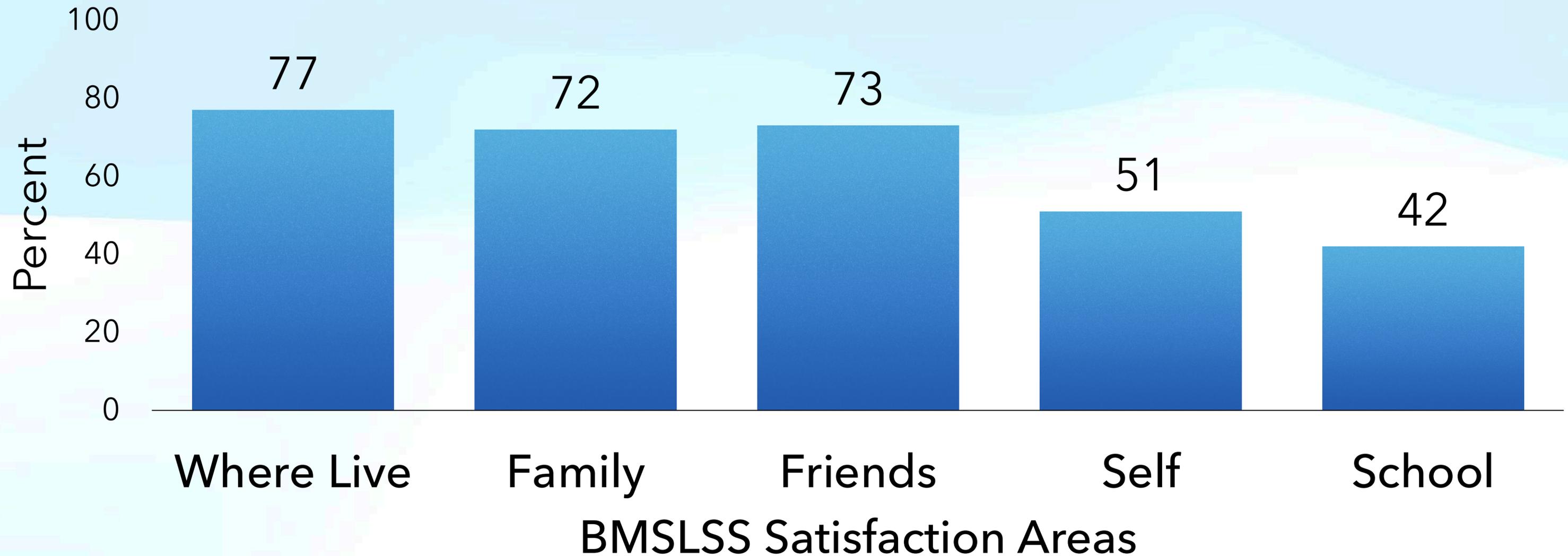
Please confirm this is your school before proceeding with the survey.  
Por favor confirma que esta es tu escuela antes de continuar con la encuesta.

**TAKE SURVEY**



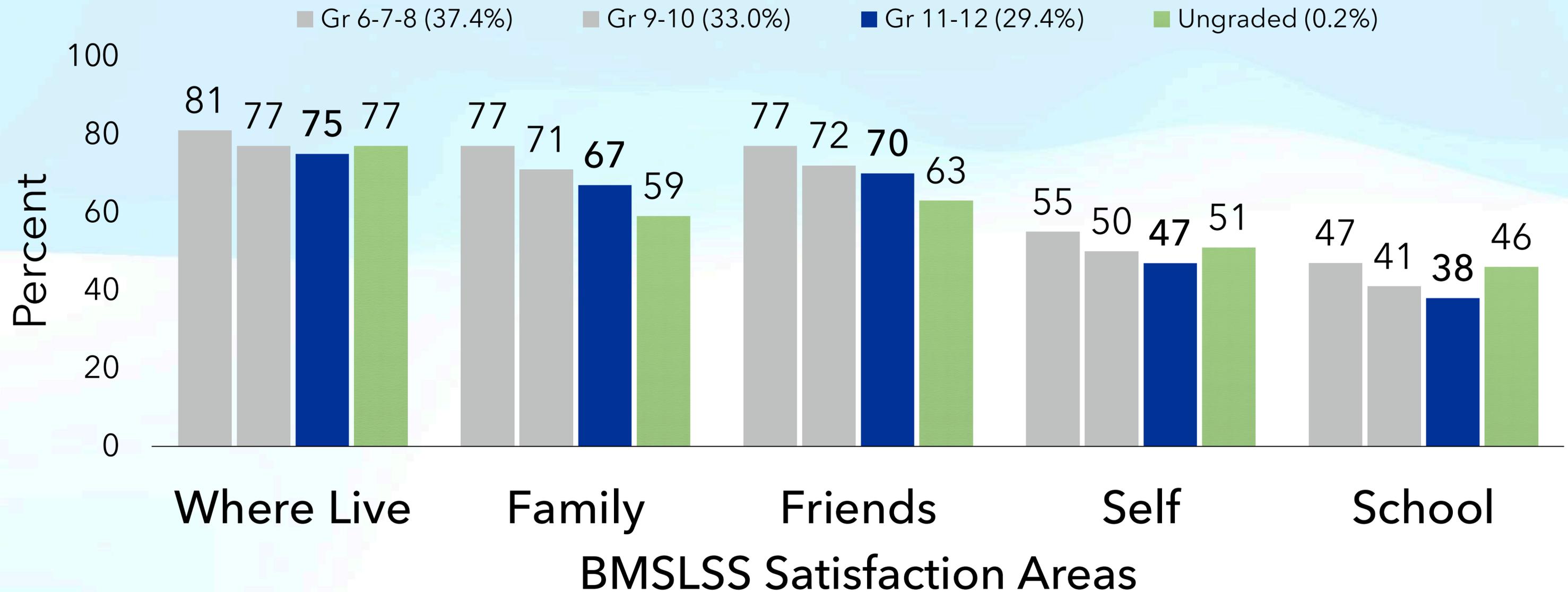
# BMSLSS Items: Percentage Reporting Being Satisfied or Very Satisfied by Life Satisfaction Domains

N = 505,099



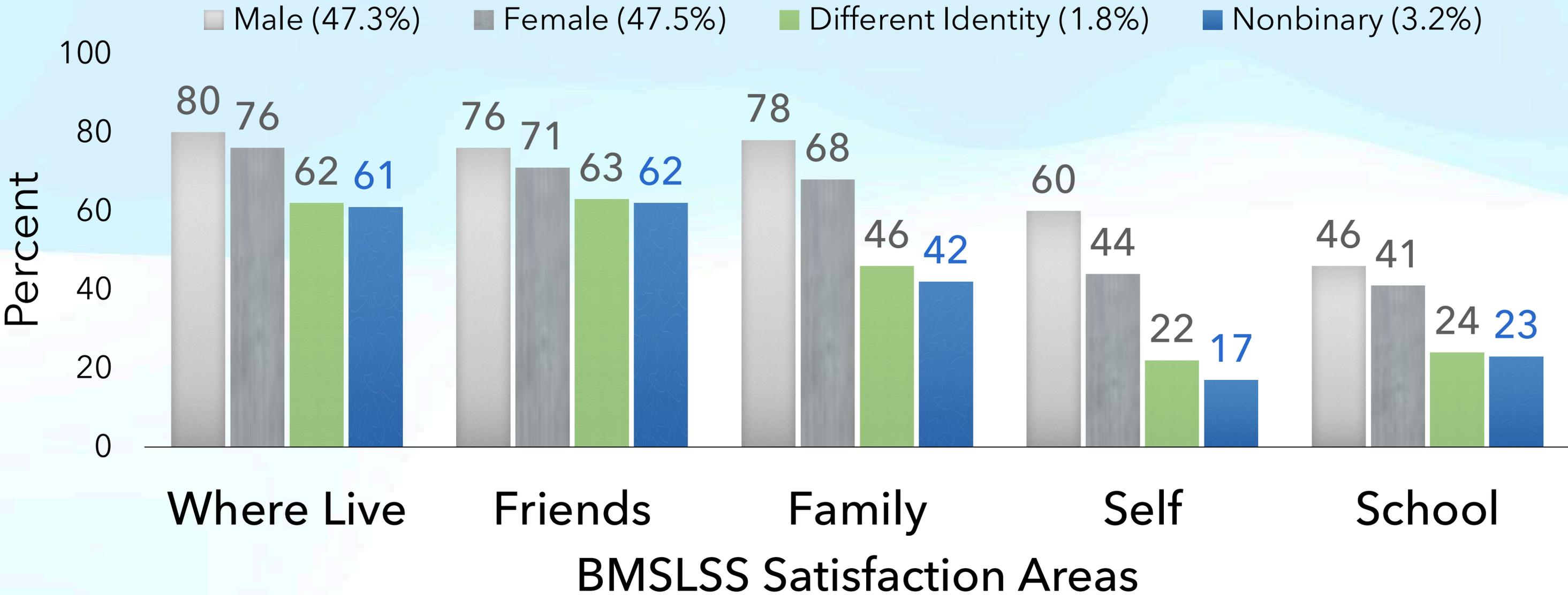
# BMSLSS Items: Percentage Reporting Being *Satisfied* or *Very Satisfied* by Grade Level

N = 505,099



# *BMSLSS Items: Percentage Reporting Being Satisfied or Very Satisfied by Gender Identity*

N = 505,099



Dowdy, Erin, Michael J. Furlong, Karen Nylund-Gibson, Dina Arch, Tameisha Hinton, and Delwin Carter. Validating a Brief Student Distress Measure For Schoolwide Wellness Surveillance. *Assessment for Effective Intervention* (2022): 15345084221138947.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/15345084221138947>

# Emotional Distress

## Social Emotional Distress Survey-Secondary

Article

### Validating a Brief Student Distress Measure For Schoolwide Wellness Surveillance

**Erin Dowdy, PhD<sup>1</sup>**, **Michael J. Furlong, PhD<sup>1</sup>**, **Karen Nylund-Gibson, PhD<sup>1</sup>**, **Dina Arch, MA<sup>1</sup>**, **Tameisha Hinton, MEd<sup>1</sup>**, and **Delwin Carter, MA<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract**  
The original Social Emotional Distress Survey-Secondary (SEDS-S) assesses adolescents' past month's experiences of psychological distress. Given the continued need for and use of brief measures of student social-emotional distress, this study examined a five-item version (SEDS-S-Brief) to evaluate its use for surveillance of adolescents' wellness in schools. Three samples completed the SEDS-S-Brief. Sample 1 was a cross-sectional sample of 105,771 students from 113 California secondary schools; responses were used to examine validity evidence based on internal structure. Sample 2 consisted of 10,770 secondary students who also completed the Social Emotional Health Survey-Secondary-2020, Mental Health Continuum-Short Form, Multidimensional Student Life Satisfaction Scale, and selected Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance items (chronic sadness and suicidal ideation). Sample 2 responses examined validity evidence based on relations to other variables. Sample 3 consisted of 773 secondary students who completed the SEDS-S-Brief annually for 3 years, providing response stability coefficients. The SEDS-S-Brief was invariant across students based on sex, grade level, and Latinx status, supporting its use across diverse groups in schools. Additional analyses indicated moderate to strong convergent and discriminant validity characteristics and 1- and 2-year temporal stability. The findings advance the field toward comprehensive mental health surveillance practices to inform services for youth in schools.

**HAMMILL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITIES**

Assessment for Effective Intervention  
2023, Vol. 48(3) 159-169  
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DOI: 10.1177/15345084221138947  
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**SAGE**



District: Survey Testing 7  
School: Survey Testing - School BF

N = 105,771  
113 schools  
r BMSLSS = -.47

1-year = .55  
2-year = .49

English ▾

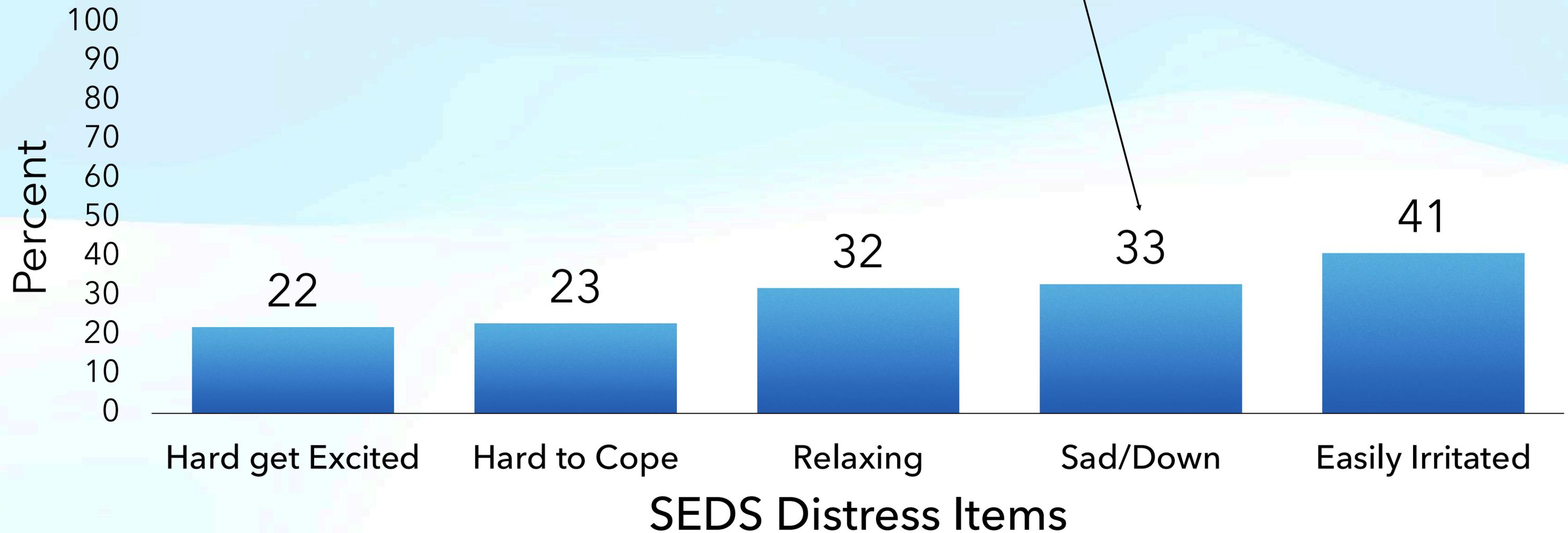
**Over the past 30 days, how true do you feel these statements are about you?**

	Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
I had a hard time relaxing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt sad and down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was easily irritated.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
it was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
it was hard for me to get excited about anything.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# SEDS Items: Percentage Reporting Being Pretty Much True or Very Much True in the Past Month

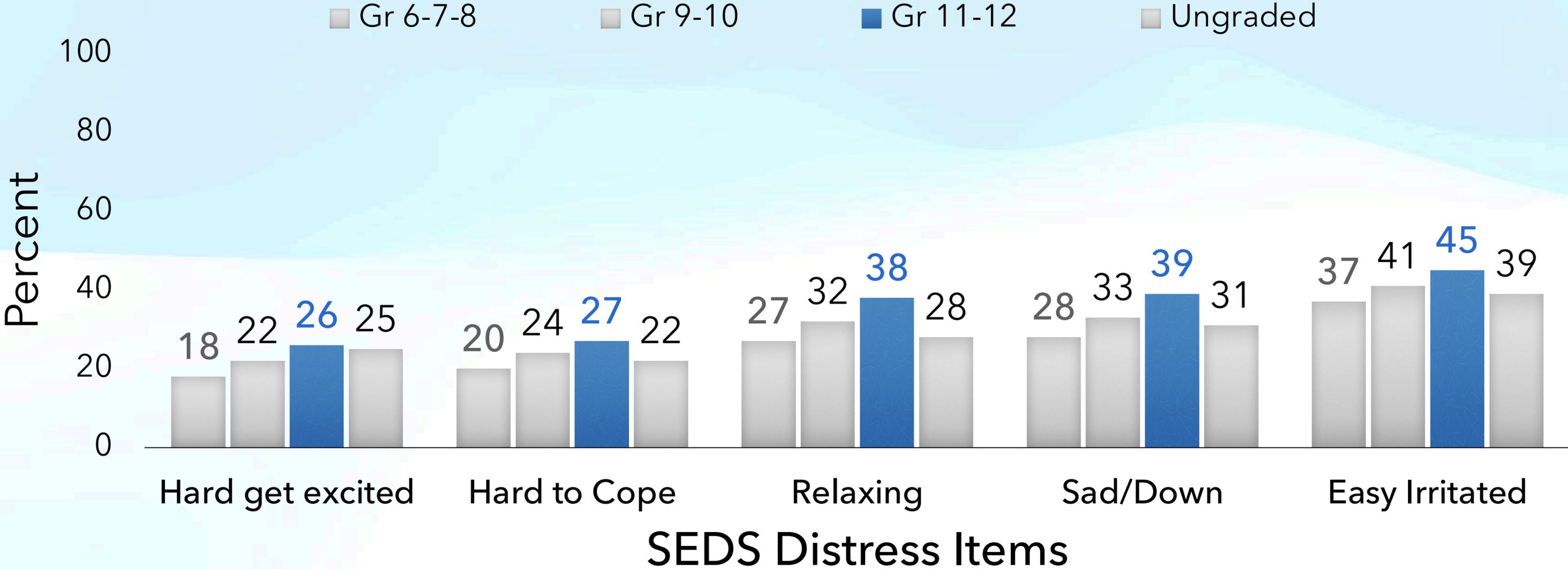
N = 500,220 - 503,561

Compare a157\_a150: CDC past-year chronic sadness item = 35% (N = 502,769)



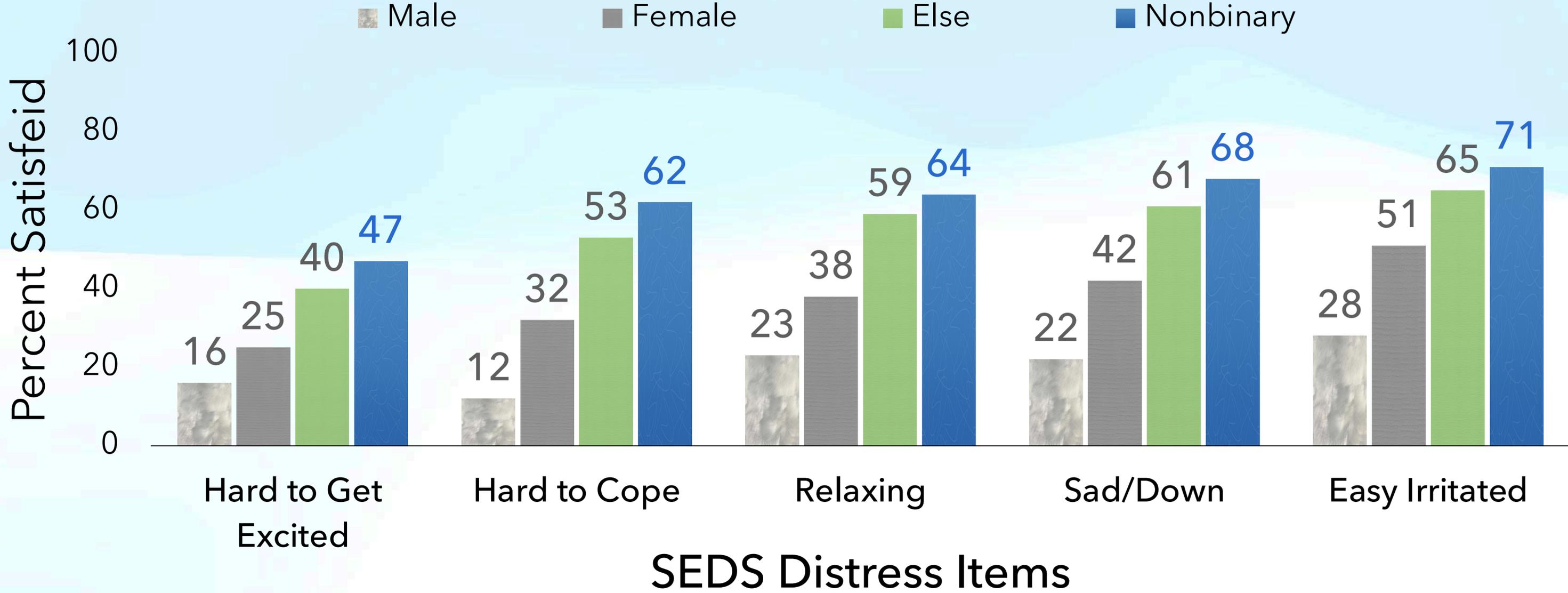
# SEDS Items: Percentage Reporting Being *Pretty Much True* or *Very Much True* in the Past Month by Grade

N = 499,634 - 502,965



# SEDS Items: Percentage Reporting Being *Pretty Much True* or *Very Much True* in the Past Month by Gender Identity

N = 498,412 - 501,715



# Your CHKS Report

*Where to look for your students responses?  
How are the responses presented?  
How to take a deeper look?  
Bonus: Taking a look ahead to 2023/2024*

# CALIFORNIA HEALTHY KIDS SURVEY



# Your CHKS Report

Statewide CHKS  
Secondary  
2022-2023  
Main Report

# Your Students' Life Satisfaction Responses

**Table A7.4**  
*Life Satisfaction Scale Questions*

		Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	NT %
<b>Life satisfaction</b>					
<i>Average reporting "Satisfied" or "Very satisfied"</i>		65	64	62	65
<i>I would describe my satisfaction with...</i>					
<b>my family life as...</b>					
	<b>Family</b>				
Very dissatisfied		4	3	5	7
Dissatisfied		2	3	5	0
A little dissatisfied		7	7	7	7
A little satisfied		10	13	13	7
Satisfied		29	38	39	49
Very satisfied		48	35	32	31
<b>my friendships as...</b>					
	<b>Friends</b>				
Very dissatisfied		3	3	5	7
Dissatisfied		2	2	4	0
A little dissatisfied		6	6	6	3
A little satisfied		15	15	15	11
Satisfied		33	41	42	57
Very satisfied		41	32	28	21
<b>my school experience as...</b>					
	<b>School</b>				
Very dissatisfied		8	6	8	8
Dissatisfied		8	7	7	2
A little dissatisfied		18	14	16	10
A little satisfied		28	29	26	33
Satisfied		24	29	30	35
Very satisfied		15	15	13	12

<i>I would describe my satisfaction with...</i>					
<b>myself as...</b>					
	<b>Self</b>				
Very dissatisfied		10	7	9	10
Dissatisfied		7	6	7	7
A little dissatisfied		11	11	12	13
A little satisfied		17	19	18	18
Satisfied		25	34	33	38
Very satisfied		30	23	20	13
<b>where I live as...</b>					
	<b>Where Live</b>				
Very dissatisfied		3	3	5	8
Dissatisfied		2	3	3	3
A little dissatisfied		5	8	6	7
A little satisfied		10	12	13	11
Satisfied		31	38	41	39
Very satisfied		49	36	31	31

# Your Students' SEDS Distress

## Item Summary

**Table A7.5**  
*Social Emotional Distress Scale Questions*

	Grade 7 %	Grade 9 %	Grade 11 %	NT %
<b>Social emotional distress</b>				
<i>Average reporting "Pretty much true" or "Very much true"</i>	23	20	25	21
<b>I had a hard time relaxing.</b>	<b>Hard to Relax</b>			
Not at all true	43	43	44	44
A little true	34	34	31	33
Pretty much true	14	16	15	15
Very much true	9	6	10	8
<b>I felt sad and down.</b>	<b>Sad and Down</b>			
Not at all true	47	51	48	57
A little true	29	29	24	23
Pretty much true	13	13	15	11
Very much true	11	7	13	8
<b>I was easily irritated.</b>	<b>Easily Irritated</b>			
Not at all true	43	43	43	47
A little true	25	27	25	25
Pretty much true	15	19	17	12
Very much true	17	11	14	17
<b>It was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.</b>	<b>Hard to Cope</b>			
Not at all true	64	66	62	70
A little true	18	19	19	15
Pretty much true	10	8	11	10
Very much true	8	6	9	5
<b>It was hard for me to get excited about anything.</b>	<b>Couldn't Get Excited</b>			
Not at all true	60	61	57	62
A little true	24	24	24	18
Pretty much true	9	10	11	11
Very much true	8	6	8	8

## District Mental Health Report—2022-2023

District: Jurupa Unified

Date Prepared: 1 Mar 2023

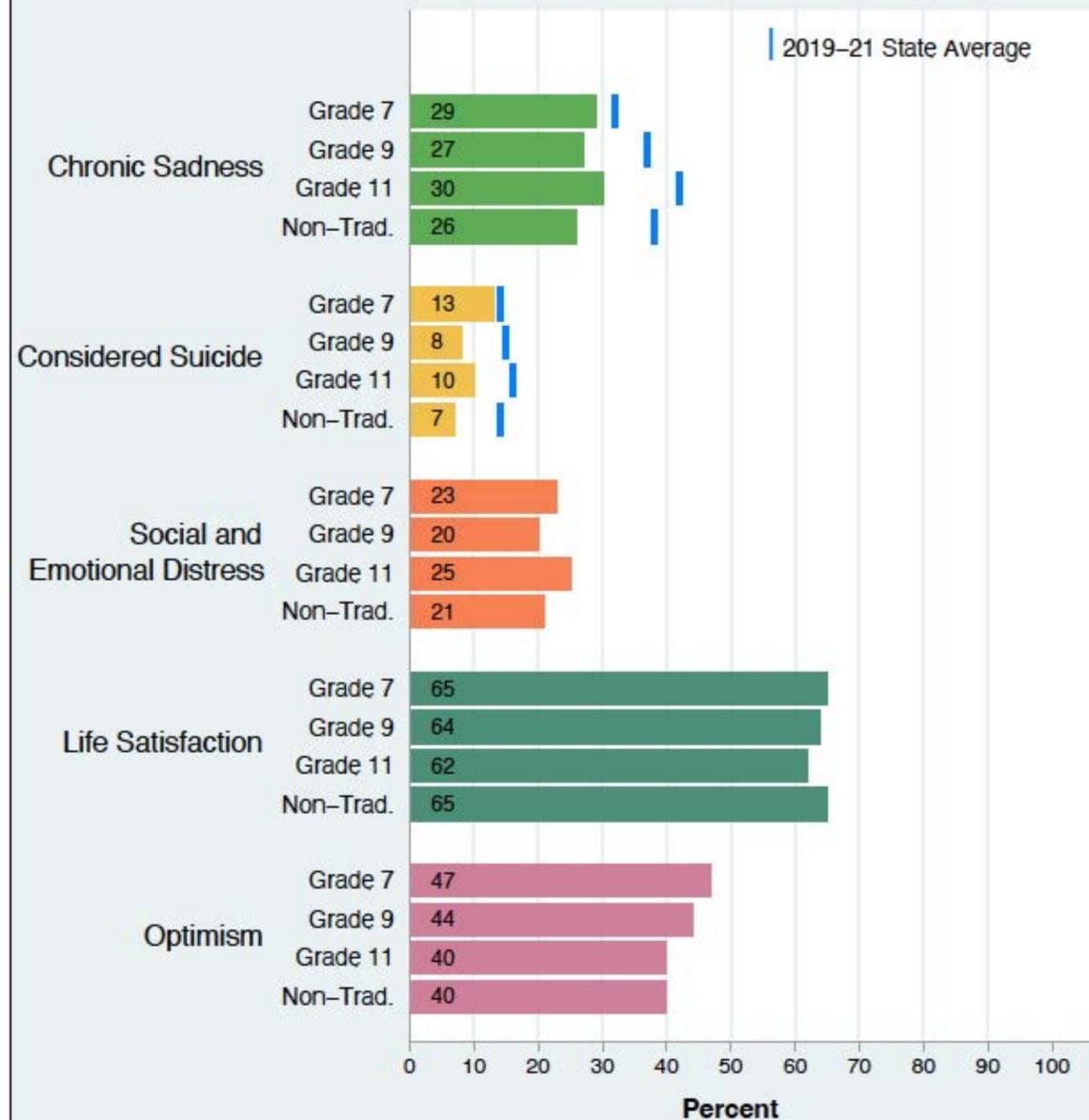
No. of Schools/Eligible: 4/4 (Grade 7), 3/3 (Grade 9), 3/3 (Grade 11), 1/1 (Non-Trad.)

Number of Responses: 1,091 (Grade 7), 1,000 (Grade 9), 943 (Grade 11), 61 (Non-Trad.)

Response Rate: 76% (Grade 7), 71% (Grade 9), 67% (Grade 11), 95% (Non-Trad.)

### Mental Health Indicators (2023)

Based on responses from students to the California Healthy Kids Survey



## District Mental Health Report (Grade 11)—2022-2023

District: Jurupa Unified

Date Prepared: 1 Mar 2023

No. of Schools/Eligible: 3/4 (2019), 3/3 (2021), 3/3 (2023)

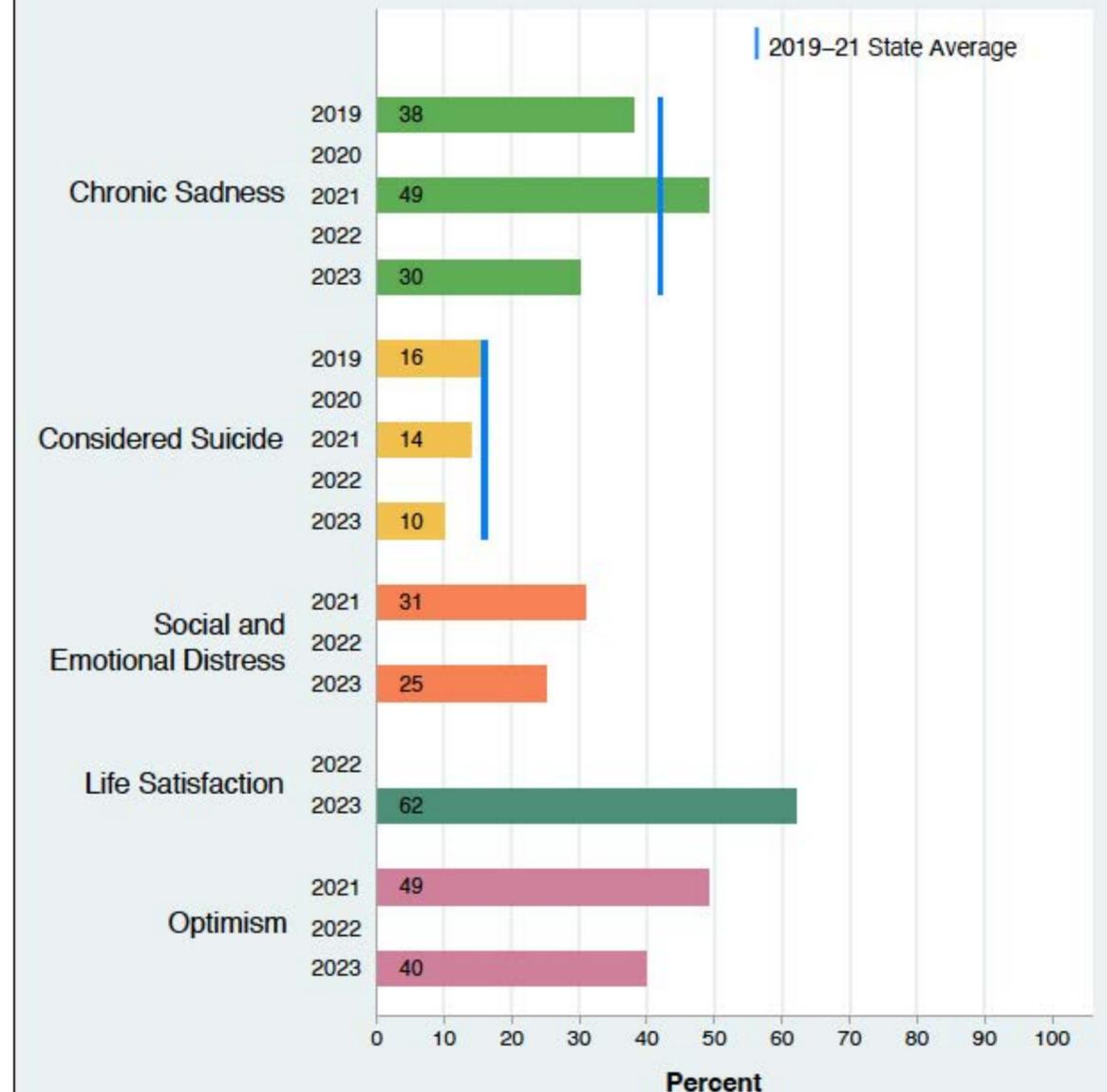
Number of Responses: 801 (2019), 954 (2021), 943 (2023)

Response Rate: 56% (2019), 68% (2021), 67% (2023)

### Grade 11

### Mental Health Indicators

Based on responses from students to the California Healthy Kids Survey



# CaSCHLS Mental Health Report

**Explore Your CHKS**

**Dashboard**

**Dashboard Enhancements**  
**(coming soon to a school near you)**

Complete Social-Emotional Health

**A look ahead**

# Life Satisfaction

BMSLSS



English ▾

Please describe your level of satisfaction below

Life Satisfaction = 3

*I would describe my satisfaction with...*

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	A Little Dissatisfied	A Little Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
my <b>family life</b> as...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
my <b>friendships</b> as...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
my <b>school experience</b> as...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>myself</b> as...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>where I live</b> as...	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

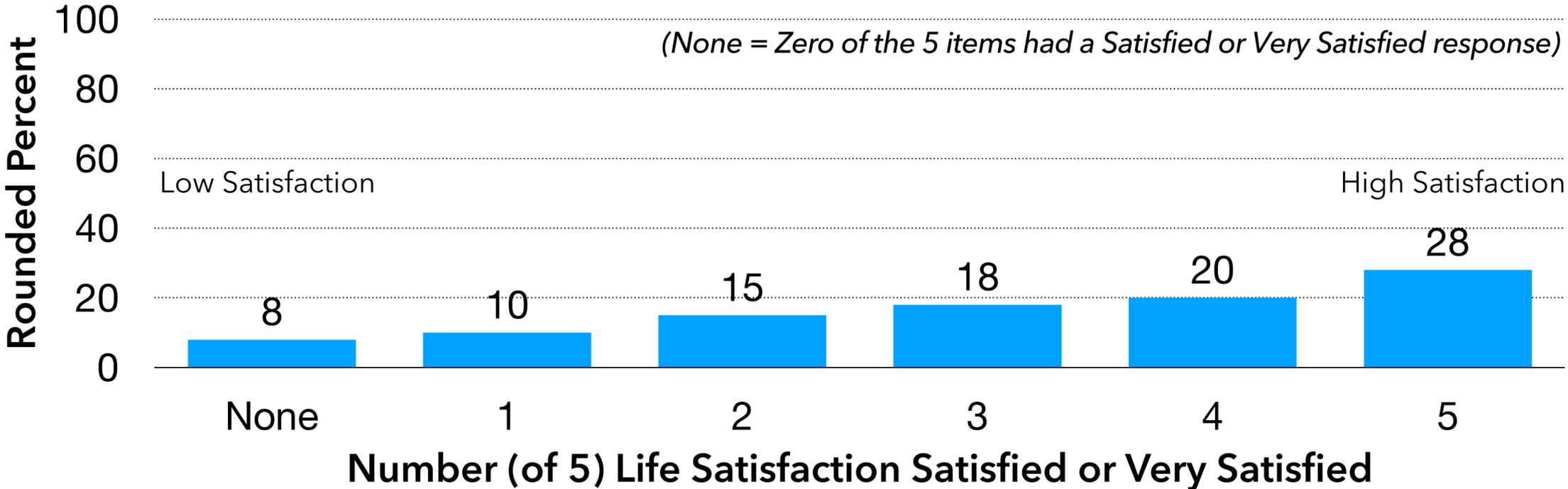


No



Yes

**Life Satisfaction Items**  
**Number (out of 5) Items Responded "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied"** (Alpha = .94)



Dowdy, Erin, Michael J. Furlong, Karen Nylund-Gibson, Dina Arch, Tameisha Hinton, and Delwin Carter. Validating a Brief Student Distress Measure For Schoolwide Wellness Surveillance. *Assessment for Effective Intervention* (2022): 15345084221138947.

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Assessment for Effective Intervention  
 2023, Vol. 48(3) 159–169  
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 DOI: 10.1177/15345084221138947  
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SAGE



Distress = 1

District: Survey Testing 7

School: Survey Testing – School BF

English ▾

**Over the past 30 days, how true do you feel these statements are about you?**

	Not At All True	A Little True	Pretty Much True	Very Much True
I had a hard time relaxing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt sad and down.	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was easily irritated.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
it was hard for me to cope and I thought I would panic.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
it was hard for me to get excited about anything.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

←————→

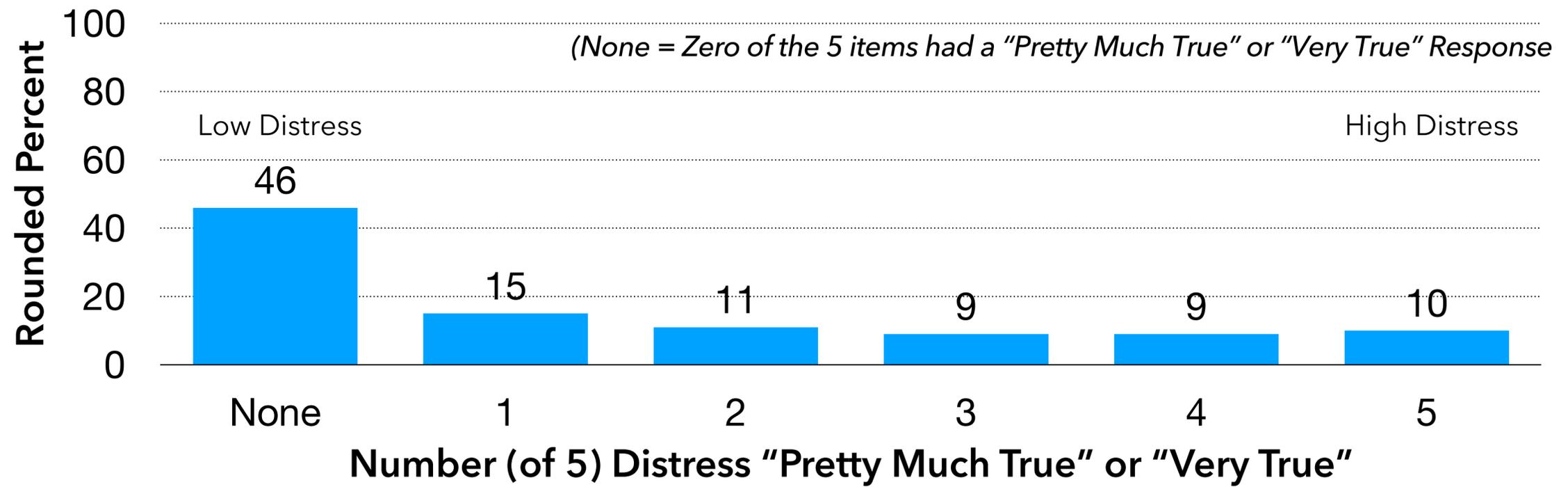
No

←————→

Yes

***Distress Items***

***Number (out of 5) Items Responded "Pretty Much True" or "Very True"*** (Alpha = .94)



# Item Response Count

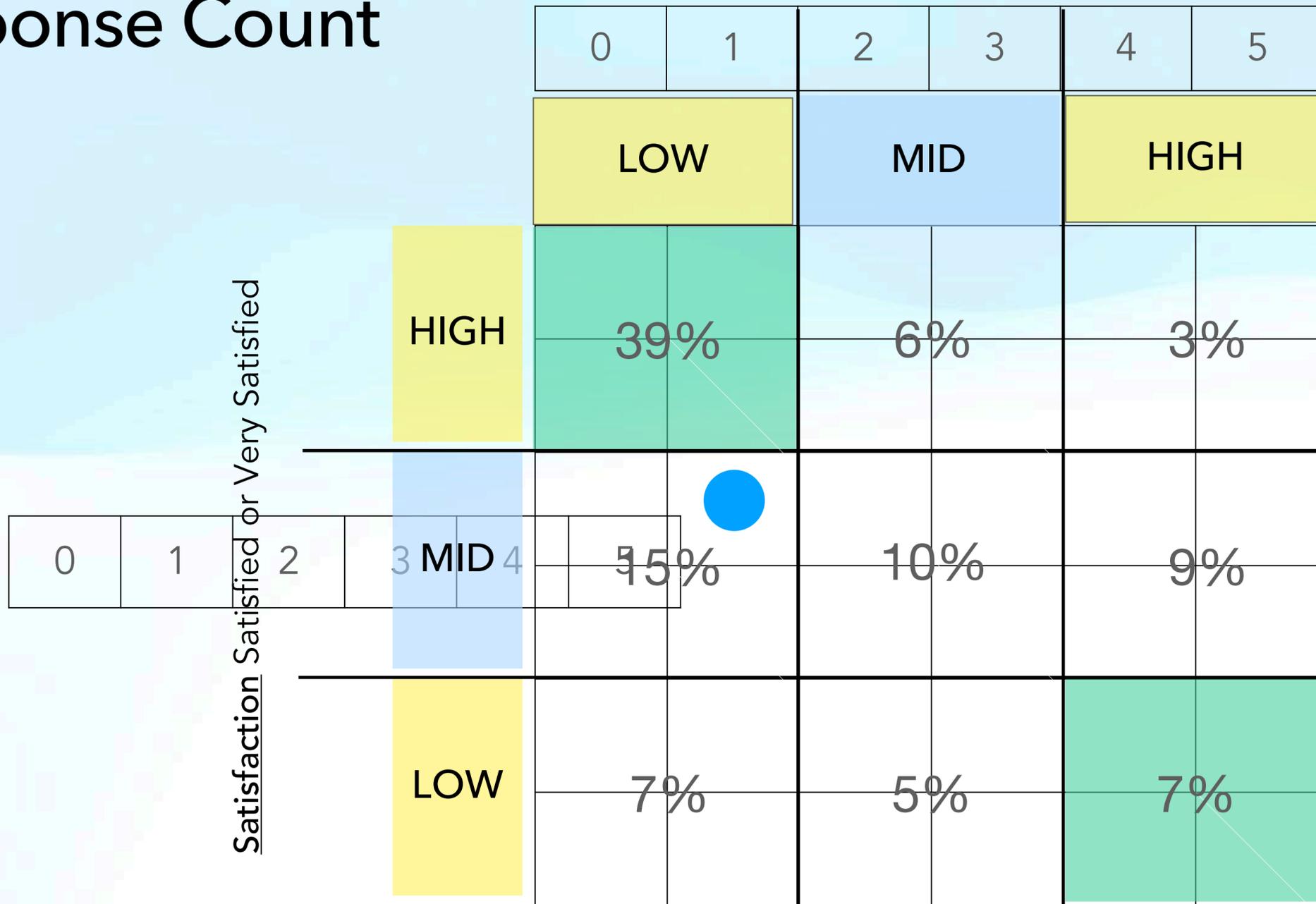
Distress Pretty Much True or Very Much True

		<u>Distress</u> Pretty Much True or Very Much True					
		0	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Satisfaction</u> Satisfied or Very Satisfied	HIGH	LOW		MID		HIGH	
	HIGH	OPTIMAL					
	MID						
	LOW					SUBOPTIMAL	

0	1	2	3	4	5
			MID		

# Item Response Count

Distress Pretty Much True or Very Much True



# Dual-Factor Student Wellness Profile

How is it related to other students assets and risk?

## Chronic Sadness:

(124) During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless every day for two weeks or more that you stopped doing some usual activities? (Yes/No)

## School Belonging:

(21) I feel I am part of this school (Agree + Strongly Agree)

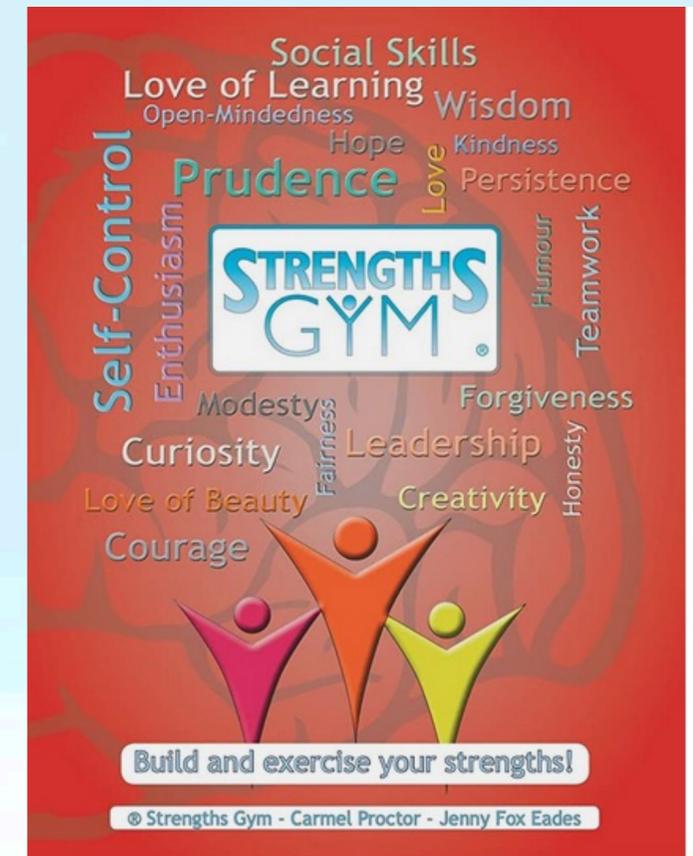
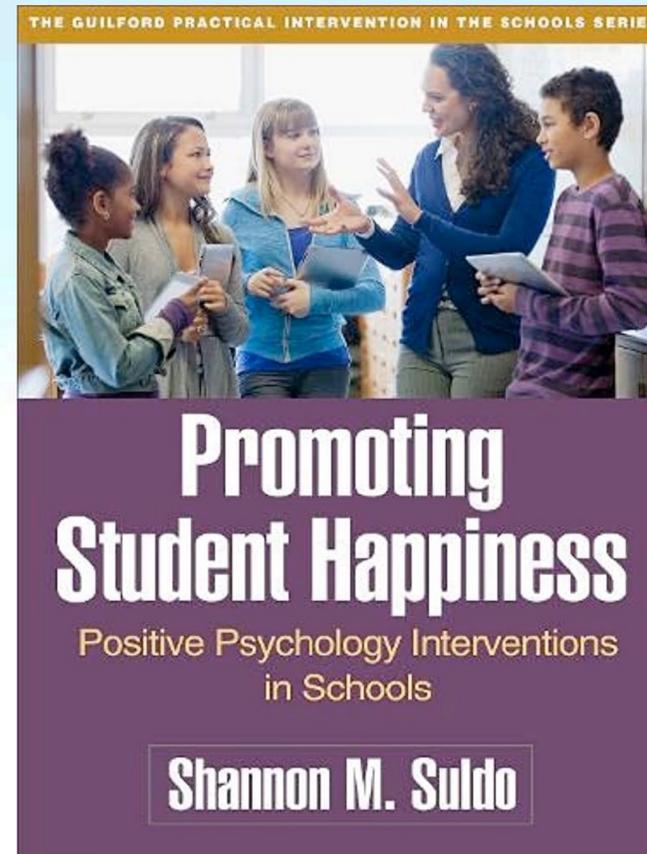
		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Number of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much/Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness Indicator	Number of BMSLSS Satisfied/Strongly	4-5 High	<b>Optimal</b> <b>8%</b> Highest Satisfaction Lowest Distress	38%	66%
		2-3	24%	57%	83%
		0-1 Low	28%	68%	<b>Suboptimal</b> <b>89%</b> Lowest Satisfaction Highest Distress

		Emotional Distress Indicator			
		Count of SEDS Distress Items Pretty Much or Very Much True			
		0-1 Low	2-3	4-5 High	
Life Satisfaction Wellness	Number of BMSLSS Satisfied or Strongly	4-5 High	Optimal Mental Health <b>69%</b> Highest Satisfaction Lowest Distress	61%	57%
		2-3	39%	37%	32%
		0-1 Low	29%	23%	Suboptimal Mental Health <b>18%</b> Lowest Satisfaction Highest Distress

# Boosting life satisfaction

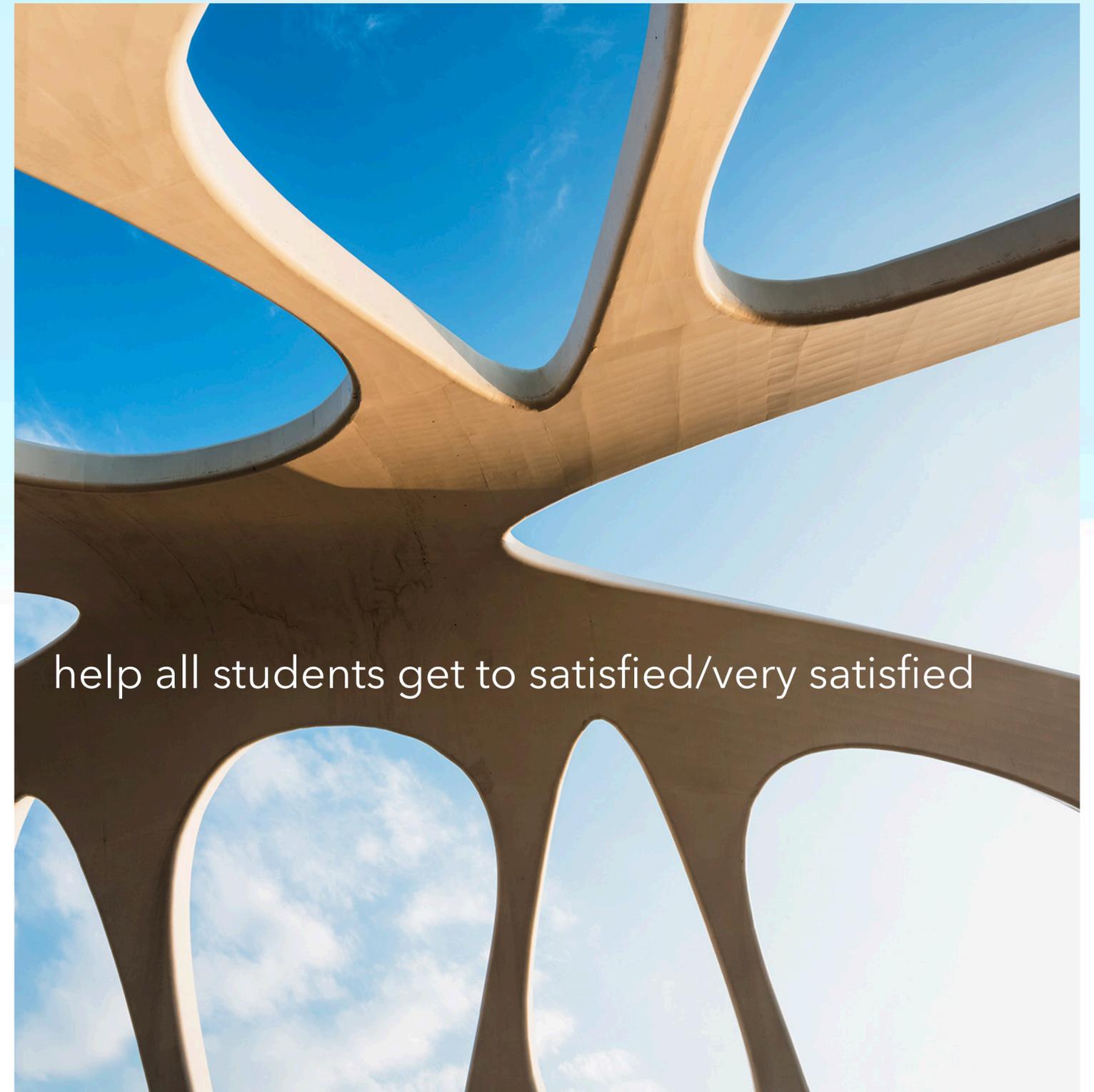
## A few examples

- UCSB Resources
- Promoting Student Happiness
- Strengths Gym
- Add other WestEd Resources??



# Key takeaways

- New data to understand your students' wellbeing
- Consider combination of Life Satisfaction and Distress
- Efforts to boost life satisfaction are particularly critical



help all students get to satisfied/very satisfied



# Stay Connected with the CCSC

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To learn more about free school climate and data use supports we offer, visit our **website**:

<https://ccsc.wested.org>

**Newsletter:** *California Safe and Supportive Schools Newsletter*



California  
Center for  
School Climate



**Thank you for joining  
us today!**