



# STATE OF STUDENT WELLNESS 2021

## THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Student mental health is highly connected to student success and well-being. California students were already the most underserved in the country in terms of school-based mental health. Our wellness surveys completed by over 1,200 students throughout the pandemic reveal the emergency has evolved into a crisis. This fact sheet shares some of the findings from our upcoming report. Students from over 50 school districts and 25 counties across California completed the two surveys administered in April 2020 and April 2021.

### STUDENT-TO-STAFF RATIOS

	RECOMMENDED	NATIONAL	CALIFORNIA
COUNSELOR	250-to-1	444-to-1	626-to-1
NURSE	750-to-1	936-to-1	2,410-to-1
PSYCHOLOGIST	700-to-1	1,526-to-1	1,041-to-1
SOCIAL WORKER	250-to-1	2,106-to-1	7,308-to-1

SOURCE: California Department of Education CALPADS 2020, USDOE CRDC 2018

## CALIFORNIA STUDENT VOICES ON THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

"I saw my mom almost dying and haven't had the time to heal because of school, grades, homework, testing, studying. I'm doing all this just to be able to get into a good college but haven't taken the time to heal. My mom is doing better now but it was something traumatic."

- Los Angeles Unified Student, 11th Grade

"I have lost all motivation in school this year. School ends in two months and I have not learned a single thing."

- Imperial Unified Student, 11th Grade

"I'm mentally exhausted from how COVID has impacted Asian Americans. My family and I are scared to go out in public."

- Carlsbad Unified Student, 8th Grade

"I feel as if teachers don't take into consideration that our mental health matters and they act as if this pandemic isn't hurting us. One teacher of mine said that even though we are in a pandemic, she is expecting us to uphold a standard that some students could not reach. She doesn't take into consideration how we feel."

- San Diego Unified Student, 10th Grade

"I just don't care anymore about school. It's not fun anymore."

- Lakeport Unified Student, 9th Grade

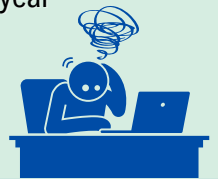
**66%** of students reported that their **mental health was negatively impacted** by the pandemic

**54%** of students reported experiencing a **decrease in mental health support** at their schools in the past year

**57%** of students reported **not having access to a counselor or therapist** in the past year

**51%** of students were **overwhelmed by virtual learning**

**31%** of students experienced the **loss of a loved one**



## HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS?

1 (on a scale from 1-10) → 10

### PRE-PANDEMIC

69% of students selected 7 or above  
24% of students selected 5 or below  
8% of students selected 3 or below

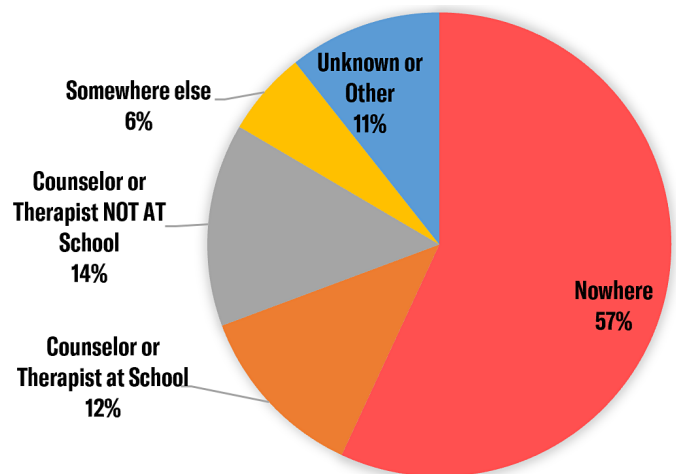
### APRIL 2020

27% of students selected 7 or above  
46% of students selected 5 or below  
23% of students selected 3 or below

### APRIL 2021

42% of students selected 7 or above  
44% of students selected 5 or below  
16% of students selected 3 or below

## IN THE PAST YEAR, WHERE DID YOU GET HELP FROM A COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST? (2020-21)

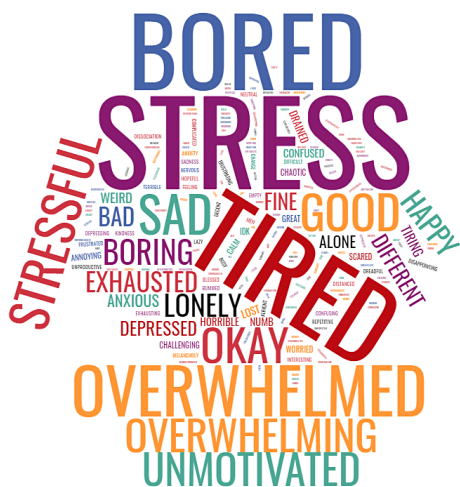


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## SHARE ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE YOUR OVERALL FEELING A YEAR SINCE THE PANDEMIC BEGAN

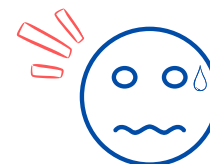


Word Size = Word Popularity (2021)

## HOW NERVOUS ARE YOU ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL? (1-5)

# 40%

of students were nervous or extremely nervous about returning to school while only 19% of students were not nervous.



"I don't care about myself anymore."  
- Imperial Unified Student

### THE 5 MOST COMMON WORDS IN 2020

1. BORING
2. LONELY
3. OVERWHELMING
4. ANXIOUS
5. SAD

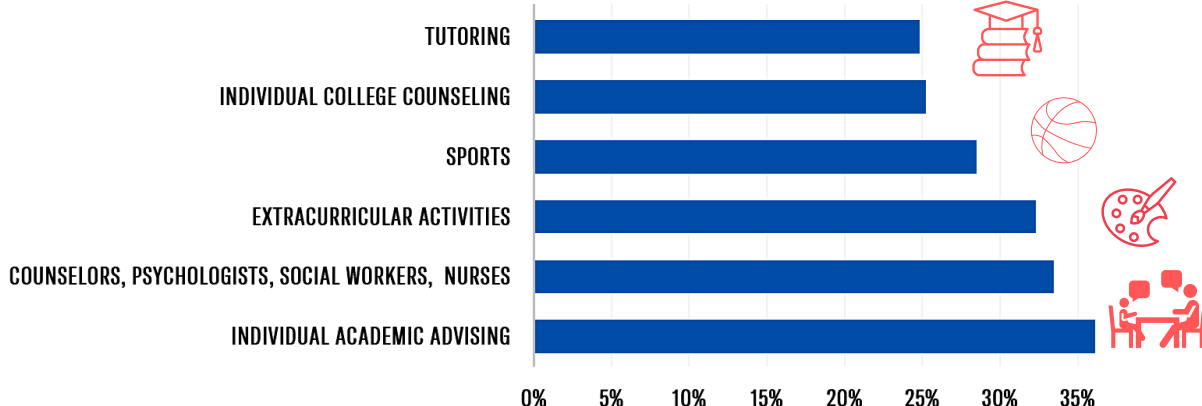
### THE 5 MOST COMMON WORDS IN 2021

1. TIRED
2. BORED
3. STRESSED
4. OVERWHELMED
5. SAD

## WHAT SHOULD YOUR SCHOOL DO TO PROVIDE MORE SUPPORT?



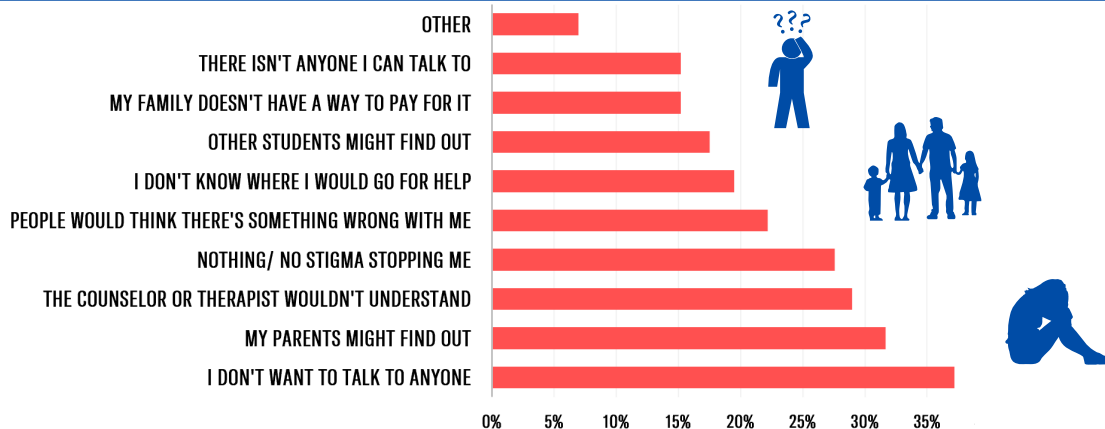
(PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO SELECTED OPTION)



## IF YOU WERE VERY SAD OR STRESSED, WOULD ANY OF THESE THINGS STOP YOU FROM TALKING TO A COUNSELOR OR THERAPIST?



(PERCENT OF STUDENTS WHO SELECTED OPTION)



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

- Address student stigma and support programs to educate students on the basics of mental health, wellness, help-seeking, and privacy rights.
- Prioritize spending of increased school funding on school counselors, psychologists, social workers, and nurses to address high caseloads.
- Ensure trauma-informed approaches to mental and behavioral health issues. Do not respond to student needs with law enforcement or criminalization that further traumatizes youth.
- Support and fund school-county partnerships for the delivery of mental health services. Ensure community-based mental health professionals are coordinated and supervised in their school-based activities by credential pupil personnel services staff as required by Section 80049.1(c) of Title 5.

FULL REPORT COMING SOON

FEATURING 40+ POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STUDENTS