

Teacher, Student, and Parent/Guardian Perspectives on School Safety and Climate, 2015-16 to 2017-18

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Each year, the Office of Research and Evaluation includes questions about school safety and climate on the District-wide surveys administered to parent/guardians, teachers, students, and principals in District and Charter schools. Results from the surveys are used to inform school, sector, and city-wide improvement efforts.¹

This brief summarizes District-wide survey responses related to safety and climate from students, parents, and teachers in both District and Charter schools. Climate refers to the things that affect how school community members feel about their school, like school mission and vision, respectful relationships, student safety and support, and challenges to student learning.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined for survey respondents from both District and Charter schools:

1. What do teacher and student survey respondents report about school safety in District and Charter schools?
2. What do teacher, student, and parent/guardian survey respondents report about school climate in District and Charter schools?

Data and Methods

Three years of responses to the District-wide teacher, student, and parent/guardian surveys were used to answer the research questions (2015-16 to 2017-18). Response rates for the survey in 2017-18 were 54% for students, 54% for teachers, and 17% for parents. These response rates for students and parents are an increase from previous years (Table 1).

¹ Since 2015, District-wide surveys have been administered annually to students, parents/guardians, teachers, and principals. Each year, the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE) carefully plans the timing and duration of the administration windows for each of the surveys to optimize participant access and response rates across the district and charter sectors. For more information, visit <https://philasd.org/dws>

Table 1: District-wide survey response rates, 2015-16 to 2017-18²

Year		Student	Parent/Guardian	Teacher
2015-2016	Response Rate	50%	13%	52%
	Number	73,187	25,911	5,688
2016-2017	Response Rate	50%	16%	56%
	Number	72,580	30,968	6,515
2017-2018	Response Rate	54%	17%	54%
	Number	80,101	33,334	6,652

For this brief, we analyzed responses to individual questions³ about perceptions of safety and groups of questions about school climate.⁴ With one exception, results to individual questions are reported as the percent of “most positive” responses. For example, in response to the student question, “I feel safe in my classes,” the most positive response is “most or all of the time.” The one exception is for a question asking teachers about how great of a challenge school crime/safety is in their perspective.

Results are presented separately for grade levels (3-8, 9-12, K-8) when possible. Tables detailing the number and percentages of most positive responses for each survey question can be found in Appendix A.

Findings

School Safety

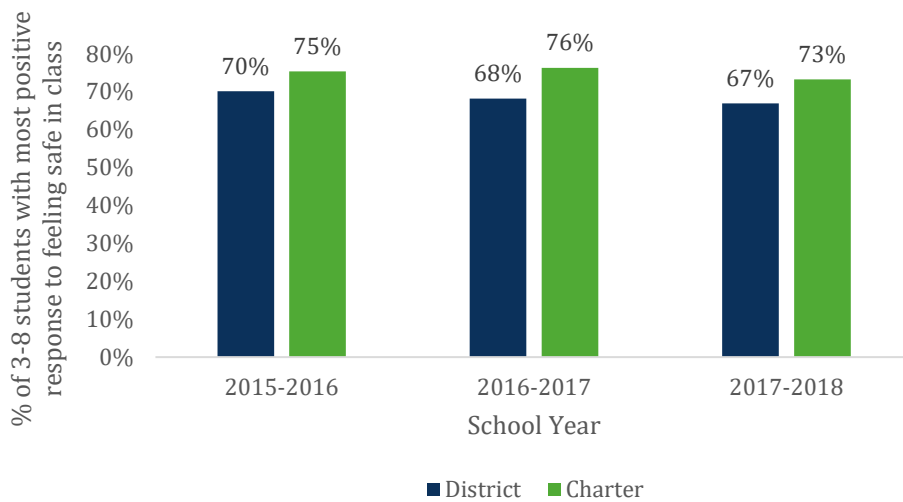
Although a higher percentage of Charter student respondents in grades 3-8 reported feeling safe in class most or all of the time, both District and Charter schools experienced a slight decrease in this percentage between 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 (Figure 1).

²Parent/Guardian and Student response percentages are based on student enrollment records as of May 31. Teacher response percentages are based on District teachers with an “active status” on record as of May 31. For charter school teachers, the response percentage is based on the emails provided by Charter schools during the survey administration period. For more information about response rates, see <https://www.philasd.org/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2018/12/DWS-Response-Rate-Summary-Dec-2018.pdf>

³A complete list of survey questions is available at: <https://www.philasd.org/research/programsservices/district-wide-surveys/survey-archive>. More information about constructs and other technical information can be found at: <https://www.philasd.org/research/wp-content/uploads/sites/90/2018/12/DWS-Technical-Report-updated-Nov-2018.pdf>

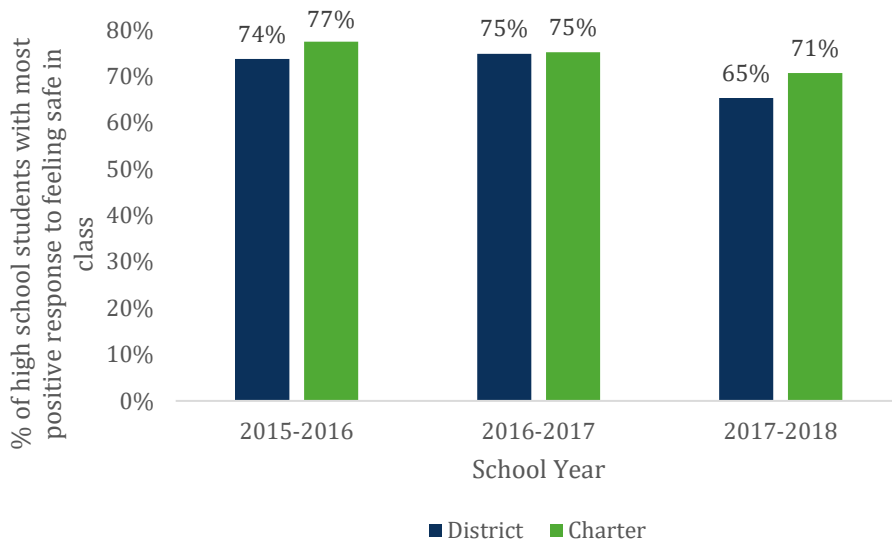
⁴ Groups of survey questions are often analyzed together when they represent the same “construct” or underlying theme or topic. Construct scores are generally used when analyzing survey data because asking multiple questions about the same topic is a better way to find out what people really think rather than just relying on one question. In this brief, the climate construct score is the combination of responses to multiple questions that ask about school climate.

Figure 1. For survey respondents in grades 3-8, a higher percentage of Charter students reported feeling safe in class most or all of the time when compared to District student responses



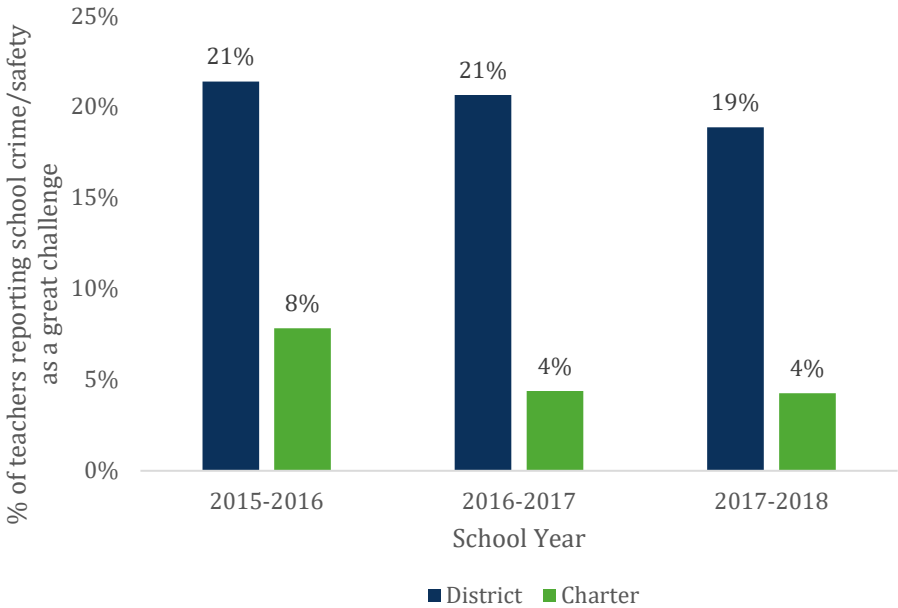
Results were similar for high schools, with a higher percentage of Charter student respondents having reported feeling safe in class most or all of the time, and a decrease for both District and Charter students in these percentages between 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. For survey respondents in high school, a higher percentage of Charter students reported feeling safe in their class most or all of the time when compared to District student responses



The teacher survey includes a question that asks to what extent school crime/safety is a challenge to student learning in their school. A much higher percentage (19%) of District teacher respondents with K-8 students in their schools indicated school crime/safety was a great challenge compared to Charter teacher respondents (4%). Although both groups have experienced declines in these percentages since 2015-2016, the disparity in responses between District and Charter students has existed for all three years (Figure 3).

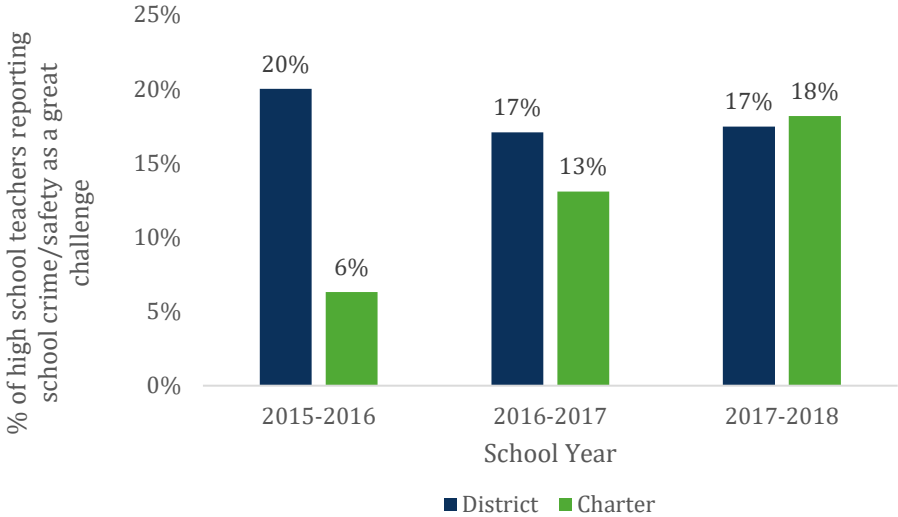
Figure 3. For teacher respondents with K-8 students in their schools,⁵ a greater percentage of District teachers reported school crime/safety as a great challenge as compared to Charter teachers who responded to the survey



⁵ Respondents included teachers at schools with any of the grades from K-8. This includes schools that serve grades 6-12 or another combination of middle and high school grade levels.

Although a similar pattern existed between District and Charter high school teacher respondents in 2015-2016, survey results in 2017-18 showed a slightly higher percentage (18%) of Charter teachers reporting school crime/safety as a great challenge compared to District high school teachers (17%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. For teacher respondents in high schools, a greater percentage of District teachers reported school crime/safety as a great challenge, however this disparity has greatly decreased between 2015-2016 and 2017-2018



School Climate

The following results refer to responses to the overall climate construct questions pertaining to bullying, belonging, and safety. Reported are the percentage of the most positive response options for students (Figure 5), teachers (Figure 6), and parent/guardians (Figure 7). For all three years, a higher percentage of Charter students, teachers, and parent/guardians selected the most positive response option compared to District students, teachers, and parent/guardians. In 2017-18, the greatest disparity is seen for teacher respondents, with 35% of Charter teachers selecting the most positive response option compared to 28% of District teachers. Slightly smaller disparities exist for students and parent/guardian respondents.

Figure 5. For student respondents, a higher percentage of Charter students selected the most positive response choice for the climate construct when compared to District student responses

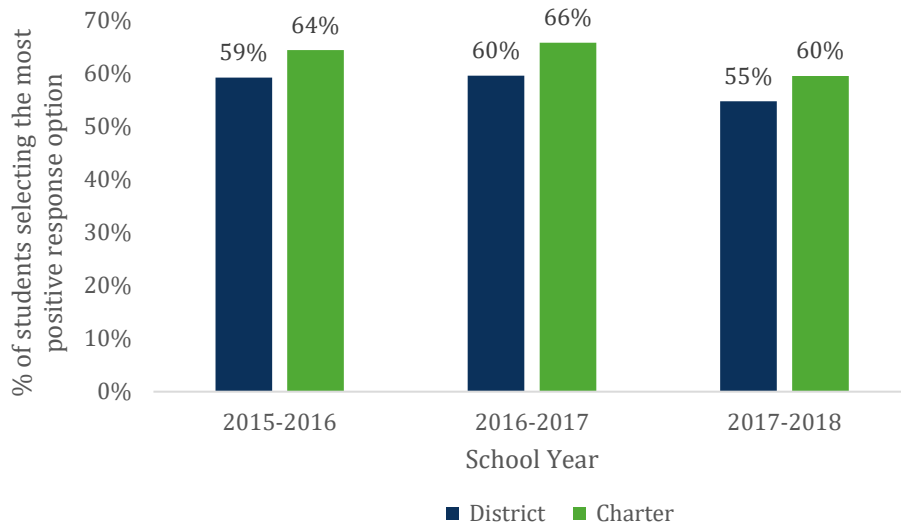


Figure 6. For teacher respondents, a higher percentage of Charter teachers selected the most positive response choice for the climate construct when compared to District teacher responses

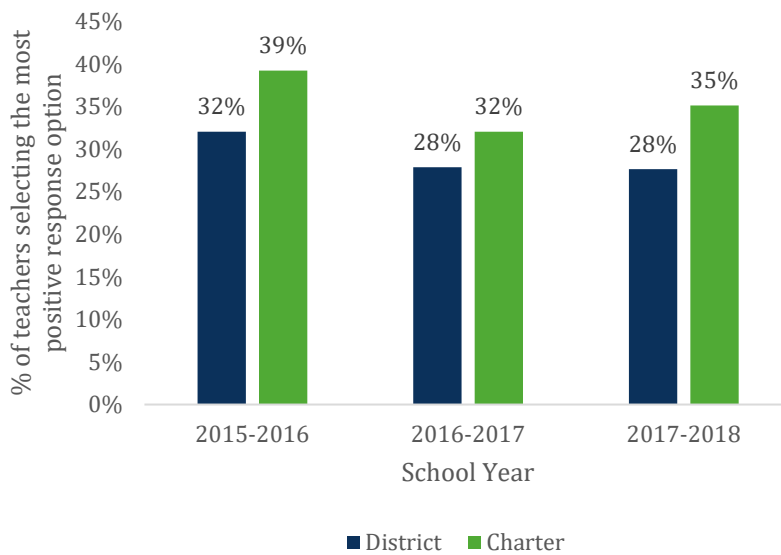
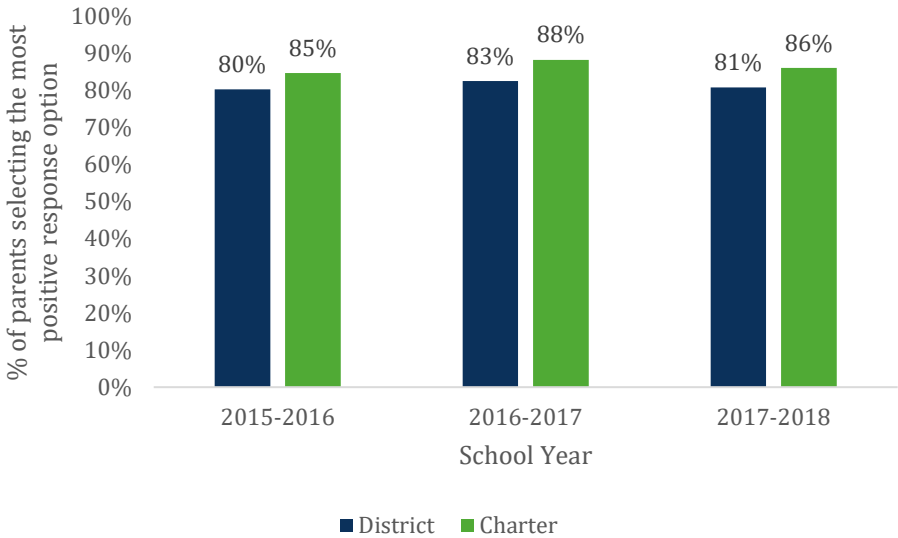


Figure 7. For parent/guardian respondents, a higher percentage of Charter parent/guardians selected the most positive response choice for the climate construct when compared to District parent/guardian responses



For additional information about the District-wide survey, please see <https://philasd.org/dws>. To use an interactive tool to explore these and other District-wide survey results, visit <https://philasd.org/dwsresults>.

Appendix A.

Table A1. Number and percent of most positive responses to safety and climate construct questions

Student Survey Question: I feel safe in class-Grades 3-8 (Figure 1)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	35,284	70%	33,311	68%	41,797	67%
Charter	14,279	75%	14,118	76%	13,058	73%

Student Survey Question: I feel safe in class-High School (Figure 2)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this Question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	13,155	74%	13,048	75%	15,683	65%
Charter	5,680	77%	5,495	75%	5,185	71%

Teacher Survey Question: School crime/safety is a great challenge in my school-K-8 (Figure 3)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	3,080	21%	3,172	21%	3,623	19%
Charter	1,048	8%	1,484	4%	1,386	4%

Teacher Survey Question: School crime/safety is a great challenge in my school-High School (Figure 4)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	905	20%	1,194	17%	1,156	17%
Charter	111	6%	191	13%	110	18%

Student Survey: School Climate Construct (Figure 5)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	51,951	59%	50,265	60%	59,468	55%
Charter	21,023	64%	20,863	66%	18,755	60%

Teacher Survey: School Climate Construct (Figure 6)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	4,330	32%	4,605	28%	5,010	28%
Charter	1,271	39%	1,800	32%	1,599	35%

Parent Survey: School Climate Construct (Figure 7)						
	2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018	
Sector	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively	# of Responses to this question	% Responding most positively
District	15,923	80%	19,710	83%	21,005	81%
Charter	9,979	85%	10,835	88%	12,044	86%