

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING

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"HIB" DEFINED

HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION AND BULLYING DEFINED

“The Legislature finds and declares that: a safe and civil environment in school is necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards; harassment, intimidation or bullying, like other disruptive or violent behaviors, is conduct that disrupts both a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate its students in a safe environment; and since students learn by example, school administrators, faculty, staff, and volunteers should be commended for demonstrating appropriate behavior, treating others with civility and respect, and refusing to tolerate harassment, intimidation or bullying.”

N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13

THE CONDUCT MUST MEET ALL OF THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA TO CONSTITUTE “HIB”

It is one or more acts;

That occur on school property, on a school bus, at a school-sponsored function, or off school grounds but has a nexus with the school;

In the form of written, verbal or electronic communication or a physical act;

That is “reasonably perceived” as motivated by an “actual or perceived” characteristic or other “distinguishing” characteristic;

Which “substantially disrupts or interferes” with the operation of the school or rights of other students; and

Has at least one of the following characteristics...

A reasonable person should know it would physically or emotionally harm a student, damage a student's property, or place a student in reasonable fear of such;

It insults or demeans a student; or

It creates a hostile educational environment by interfering with a student's education or severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm.

AN "ACT" IS A GESTURE, A WRITTEN, VERBAL OR PHYSICAL ACT, OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Verbal

- Name calling
- Taunting
- Teasing
- Making threats

Physical

- Hitting
- Punching
- Shoving
- Spitting
- Taking or damaging personal belongings

Psychological

- Spreading rumors
- Purposefully excluding people from activities
- Breaking up friendships or other relationships

Electronic Communication

- Communication transmitted by means of an electronic device, including email, text message, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or other social networking sites.

"MOTIVATED BY"

AN ACTUAL OR PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTIC, OR

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Ancestry
- National origin
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity or expression
- A mental, physical or sensory disability

ANY OTHER DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC

- Definitely: hair color, piercings, braces, glasses, intelligence, weight, physical features
- Possibly: grade level, political beliefs, social standing, popularity, socioeconomic status
- Probably not: comparative strength, age or popularity between students

"REASONABLY PERCEIVED"

- The act does not have to be **actually** motivated by any actual or perceived, or other distinguishing characteristic.
- The critical question is whether the evidence shows that the **victim or witnesses** (or a reasonable person) ***felt*** that a student was targeted based on the characteristic.
- If the answer is yes, the question becomes whether that belief is **reasonable**.

“SUBSTANTIAL DISRUPTION OR INTERFERENCE”

The act must “substantially disrupt or interfere with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students.”

- Are the student’s grades declining?
- Has the student’s attendance been affected?
- Does the student need to be moved to a different class?
- Is the student acting differently?
- Did the incident disrupt the learning environment?
- Did the incident affect the rights of other students?
- Does the student have physical manifestations as a result?

THE ACT MUST BE INAPPROPRIATE IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS

1. **A reasonable person would know**, under the circumstances, that the act will either:
 - a. Have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student;
 - b. Damage the student's property; or
 - c. Place the student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm.
2. The act **has the effect of** insulting or demeaning any student or group of students.
3. The act creates a **hostile educational environment** for the student by:
 - a. Interfering with a student's education; or
 - b. Severely or pervasively harming the student, physically or emotionally.

WHERE AND WHEN CAN AN ACT OF HIB OCCUR?

1. On school grounds;
2. At any school-sponsored function;
3. On a school bus; or
4. Off school property, when a school employee is made aware of such act, including:
 - a. Any other physical location, or
 - b. Over the internet (on social media or a messaging platform, over a video chat, etc.).

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide consisting of two parallel, wavy lines. The inner line is a light blue color, and the outer line is white. They follow a similar undulating path from the top to the bottom of the frame.

REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

All acts of HIB shall be reported:

- **To the school principal:**
- **Verbally on the same day, and**
- **In writing within two school days,**
- **As when the school employee or contracted service provider** witnessed or received reliable information that a student has been subjected to an incident of HIB.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

FIRST LEVEL: INITIAL INVESTIGATION

The investigation shall be initiated by the principal (or the principal's designee) **within one school day** of the report.

- The investigation shall be conducted in consultation with the **Anti-Bullying Specialist (“ABS”)**.
- The principal may appoint other personnel to assist in the investigation.

The investigation shall be completed **no later than ten school days** from the date of the written report.

- In the event that there is information relative to the investigation that is anticipated but not yet received by the end of the ten-day period, the ABS may amend the original report of the results of the investigation to reflect the information.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

SECOND LEVEL: SUPERINTENDENT REVIEW

The results of the investigation shall be reported to the Superintendent of Schools **within two school days** of the completion of the investigation.

The Superintendent **may decide**, as a result of the findings, to do the following:

- Provide intervention services;
- Establish training programs to reduce HIB and/or enhance the school climate;
- Impose discipline;
- Order counseling; and/or
- Take or recommend some other appropriate action.

This is colloquially referred to as the “Superintendent’s decision,” even though no written decision is issued.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

THIRD LEVEL: BOARD OF EDUCATION

The results of the investigation shall be reported to the Board **no later than the next scheduled Board meeting** after the investigation has been completed, along with information:

- On any services provided,
- Training established,
- Discipline imposed, or
- Other action taken or recommended by the Superintendent.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

FOURTH LEVEL: POST-INVESTIGATION

Within five school days after the results of the investigation are reported to the Board, the parents of the students who are parties to the investigation shall be provided with written information about the investigation, including:

- The **nature** of the investigation,
- Whether the district found **evidence** of HIB, and
- Whether **discipline** was imposed or **services provided** to address the HIB.

Parents are entitled to ask for copies of the investigation materials, provided **all other students' names are redacted**.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

FIFTH LEVEL: BOARD HEARING

A parent may request a hearing before the Board **within 60 calendar days** of receiving the written information about the investigation.

If a hearing is requested, the hearing shall be held **within 10 days** of the request.

- The Board shall meet in executive session for the hearing to protect the confidentiality of the students.
- At the hearing, the Board may hear from the ABS about the recommendations for discipline or services, and any programs instituted to reduce such conduct.


At the next Board meeting following its receipt of the report or following a hearing, the Board shall issue a **written decision** to affirm, reject or modify the Superintendent's decision.

INVESTIGATION TIMELINES

SIXTH LEVEL: APPEALS

The Board's decision may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education **no later than 90 days** after the issuance of the Board's decision.

Parents can also file complaints with the Division on Civil Rights **within 180 days** of any incident of HIB if the child falls under a protected class pursuant to the NJ Law Against Discrimination.



SHARING INFORMATION WITH PARENTS

INFORMATION TO PARENTS

THE START OF THE INVESTIGATION

The principal must inform the parents of **all the students involved** in the alleged incident and may discuss, as appropriate, the availability of counseling and other intervention services.

The law does not say exactly what the principal must share with the parents.

- Parents should at least be informed as to **whether their child is considered to be the alleged offender or target**.
- Parents may be entitled to **some factual detail**, but only to the extent that it will not compromise the investigation.

INFORMATION TO PARENTS

AFTER THE INVESTIGATION BEGINS

Parents of students who are parties to the investigation are entitled to information about the investigation, in accordance with federal and State law and regulations, including:

- The **nature** of the investigation;
- Whether **evidence** of HIB was found; and
- Whether **discipline** was imposed or **services** provided to address the incident.

This information must be provided within **five school days** after the results of the investigation are reported to the Board.

After the second Board meeting, when the Board votes to affirm, reject or modify the Superintendent's decision, the Board must issue a **written decision**.



HIB CASES

SEPTEMBER 2019-SEPTEMBER 2021

MOTIVATING FACTOR: GENDER IDENTITY

- On the morning school bus, A.K., a seven-year-old female student, encountered a transgender student, N.V., who went by a male name the prior year but now used a female name and wore clothing commonly associated with females. A.K. asked N.V. why she did so, and N.V. did not have an answer.
- Subsequently, A.K. allegedly told N.V., “you can’t like these things [Shopkins and Monster High] because you’re a boy,” and that N.V. could not wear a dress on picture day.
- During her interview, A.K. indicated that she understood that what she did was hurtful, but that she did not want to call N.V. by a female name.
- The Board affirmed the HIB finding based on the persistent questioning of the victim. The parents appealed.

MOTIVATING FACTOR: GENDER IDENTITY

- The ALJ overturned the Board's decision, finding that the evidence only corroborated the school bus incident and not the alleged "persistent" questioning, and concluding that the school bus incident did not rise to the level of HIB because there was no evidence of a **substantial disruption or interference** with school operations or the victim's rights, or that A.K. **knew or should have known** that she would emotionally harm N.V.
- The Commissioner rejected the ALJ's decision, finding that A.K. "repeatedly questioned [N.V.] and made comments about [her] name, [her] hair, and the clothing that [she] wore," and that the A.K. "persisted despite warnings from school staff that such remarks were unacceptable, and instructions from her mother to discontinue such queries."

MOTIVATING FACTOR: GENDER IDENTITY

- The Commissioner concluded that A.K.'s conduct was motivated by N.V.'s **gender identity and expression**, resulted in emotional harm and created a hostile educational environment (N.V.'s parents drove her to school because she did not want to be on the same bus as A.K.).
- Mindful of the fact that A.K. was seven, the Commissioner noted that because she was repeatedly counseled that her behavior was inappropriate, **she should have known that her conduct was harmful**.
- The Appellate Division remanded the Commissioner's decision for a more specific explanation as to why he rejected the ALJ's credibility determinations and found HIB conduct beyond the school bus incident.

MOTIVATING FACTOR: DISABILITY

- During the 2015-2016 school year, G.A. was a sixth grade student who was eligible for special education because of her ADHD.
- From September to December, her special education teacher, R.L., allegedly hovered over G.A.'s desk repeatedly, asking to see her work in front of other students, and called attention to her in ways that made her feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. Students were aware of the negative interactions and questioned her, which added to her anxiety in the classroom.
- In December, the case manager and principal met with the parent and agreed to put G.A. on a new schedule.
- The parent reported the teacher's conduct, alleging HIB on the basis of disability. The district did not find HIB, and the Board affirmed that finding.
- The ALJ found that the conduct could not have been reasonably perceived as being motivated by disability, and that there was no substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of the school or G.A.'s rights. The Commissioner adopted the initial decision, and the parent appealed.

MOTIVATING FACTOR: DISABILITY

- The Appellate Division found that the Board's decision was not arbitrary, capricious or unreasonable.
- “In reaching this conclusion, it is not our intention to minimize or downplay the feelings of a child in a classroom. We recognize the imbalance of power a child may legitimately experience in a classroom when she or he is singled out.”
- However, the record did not have sufficient facts to support a conclusion that R.L.'s conduct was motivated by G.A.'s ADHD or other personal characteristics.
- “Here, R.L. had an obligation as G.A.'s special education teacher to oversee G.A.'s work consistent with the parameters of her IEP, and **even if we presume R.L. was insensitive or even unkind**, there is no evidence R.L. was prompted by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as . . . disability, or any other distinguishing characteristic.”
- Moreover, there was no evidence of a substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of the school or G.A.'s rights.

"MUTUAL BEHAVIOR"

- Five fifth-grade female students were texting in a group chat outside of school, some of whom were persons of color. J.D. and B.A. pretended to fight about homework, calling each other various obscene terms. After the prank was over, the students, including G.D., encouraged one another to continue the name-calling and continued using inappropriate language at and about each other. Then, J.D. said to G.D., "Fuck ur dad you little n*****." G.D. replied, "that's racist[,]” and the conversation ended.
- Subsequently, G.D. was upset and told B.A. that she was surprised that J.D. used the n-word, she regarded J.D. as a good person, and it made her angry that someone she was friends with was “actually really mean.” G.D.’s parent requested that J.D. be removed from G.D.’s class and considered keeping her home from school.
- **The ABS investigated and did not find HIB.** The incident took place away from home and did not substantially impact the orderly operations of the school or the rights of others. G.D. appeared to be her “**happy, normal self**” the Monday after the incident, and her **attendance and grades were not affected.**

“MUTUAL BEHAVIOR”

- G.D.’s parent appealed. The Board denied her request to overturn the decision.
- The ALJ and Commissioner sustained the Board’s decision, finding that while the use of the n-word is “abhorrent and cannot be tolerated,” the students were involved in the chat **voluntarily** and engaged in “**mutually egregious behavior** aimed at the others.” Further, G.D. “appeared to suffer **no detrimental effect**,” as her grades “were virtually unaffected” and she appeared “nonplussed by the incident.”
- The Appellate Division affirmed, stating that while the use of the n-word is serious, and especially against a ten-year-old child, the incident was “**a conflict among a group of fifth-grade students using vulgar language and pretending to fight, rather than an act of HIB.**” Further, G.D. did not suffer any significant impact.

TEACHER-STUDENT HIB: STATUS AS STUDENT IS NOT ENOUGH

- The parent reported to the district that her son, J.B., a senior, was “bullied, ostracized and singled out” by his soccer coach, Mr. Truppi. The parent alleged various instances of bullying, including:
 - On several occasions, J.B. told Mr. Truppi that he had college-related meetings and would miss practice. Mr. Truppi mocked J.B. and told him school should not be a priority, athletics should come first;
 - Mr. Truppi would falsely blame J.B. for being the last to join the team huddle when he was not, for showing up late to practice when he did not, and for being disrespectful when he was only asking questions;
 - During a drill, J.B. ran onto the field at the wrong time. Mr. Truppi looked at J.B. in anger and walked off the field. J.B. texted Mr. Truppi an apology, and Mr. Truppi responded, “Let’s talk tomorrow at 3:15. Bring your uniform.” J.B. believed he was going to be kicked off the team (but he was not); and
 - J.B. texted Mr. Truppi that he had to miss practice due to a religious holiday and school closure. Mr. Truppi texted the entire team and said, “Any freshman players who want to practice with varsity today, we would be happy to have you.” Mr. Truppi allegedly told players on multiple occasions that he would replace them with freshmen. J.B. was only permitted to play in the next day’s game for 30 seconds, unlike in other games.
- J.B. quit the soccer team in the last month of the season.

TEACHER-STUDENT HIB: STATUS AS STUDENT IS NOT ENOUGH

- The ABS found that the allegations did not meet the definition of HIB. Despite there being evidence of a substantial disruption due to Mr. Truppi's conduct, there was no evidence that the conduct was motivated by a **“distinguishing characteristic.”**
- Based on witness interviews, there seemed to be a consensus that Mr. Truppi was “passionate” about “motivating his players to reach full potential as individuals and a team.” However, at times he was “overly emotional, focusing ‘more on the negatives than positives which can, at times, undermine the trust and confidence the players have in [him] as well as the team environment and culture.”
- The Board affirmed.
- The parent appealed, arguing that Mr. Truppi's conduct was based on J.B.: (1) being “intellectual” and “committed to academics,” and (2) being a student, creating a power imbalance.

TEACHER-STUDENT HIB: STATUS AS STUDENT IS NOT ENOUGH

- The ALJ found there was insufficient evidence to conclude that Mr. Truppi targeted J.B. based on his being “intellectual” and “committed to academics.” Mr. Truppi’s conduct, albeit questionable, appeared to be universal.
- The ALJ further found that J.B.’s status as a student, alone, is not a distinguishing characteristic. **The power imbalance that exists by virtue of the position of an adult teacher or coach and a minor child, without more, is insufficient to substantiate a HIB allegation.**
- For those reasons, the ALJ upheld the board’s determination, and the Commissioner affirmed.



QUESTIONS?



School Culture & Climate Initiative

Midland Park School District

Findings from the Spring 2021 *School Climate Student Survey*

Supporting, Connecting and Empowering Schools

Patricia Heindel, PhD

- Professor of Psychology
- Co-Director and Co-Founder- School Culture and Climate Initiative
- Co-Director - On-line Academy for Social-emotional Learning in Schools
- Director - Center for Human and Social Development, Saint Elizabeth University
- Dean, School of Professional Studies – Saint Elizabeth University

Elizabeth Warner

- Co-Director and Co-Founder- School Culture and Climate Initiative
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<http://www.schoolcultureandclimate.org>

Midland Park SCBP Student Survey Findings

Response Rates

GRADE	2018	2019	2020	2021
2 nd	85%	84%	76%	81%
3 rd	80%	77%	93%	87%
4 th	76%	92%	86%	91%
5 th	77%	96%	99%	90%
6 th	93%	88%	100%	100%
7 th	75%	95%	79%	94%
8 th	90%	88%	95%	92%
9 th	84%	90%	89%	100%
10 th	74%	89%	96%	82%
11 th	79%	80%	79%	90%
12 th	75%	63%	84%	92%

Examples of Detailed Findings

SURVEY ITEMS*

- How many friends do you have that would support you?
- Do you have a trusted adult in school?
- Given a list of issues, how serious is each as a problem in your school?
- How often do you hear various types of derogatory language?
- In general, are students in your school nice to each other?
- Are the rules against bullying clear in your school?
- Are teachers able to stop bullying?
- Has each of the following things happened to you? If so, how often?
- If you were having a problem in school, whom would you go to for help?

**Note: This is not exactly how the questions are worded on the survey*

Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends

	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	HS				
2014												
2015												
2016												
2017												
2018												
2019												
2020												
2021												



Having fewer than four friends is a **risk** factor; the *lower* the percentages in this table, the better.

Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends

	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	HS				
2014	33%	25%	23%	21%	14%	21%	20%	20%				
2015	5%	6%	14%	7%	3%	13%	7%	13%				
2016	14%	11%	4%	20%	6%	3%	16%	15%				
2017	27%	16%	7%	12%	13%	10%	10%	14%				
2018	6%	15%	12%	4%	11%	15%	11%	15%				
2019	4%	8%	3%	14%	7%	12%	20%	13%				
2020	19%	8%	8%	7%	8%	6%	7%	17%				
2021	28%	24%	14%	12%	25%	33%	21%	19%				





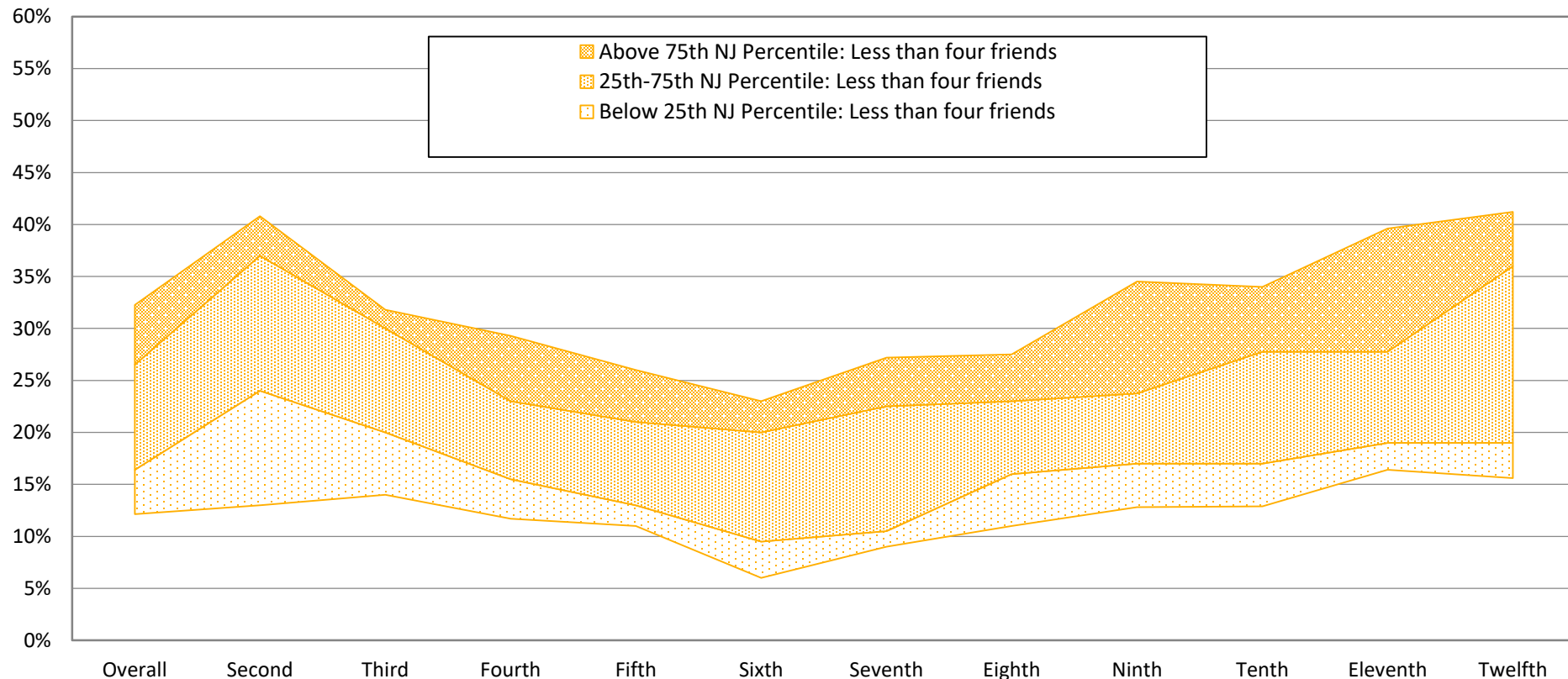
Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends

	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	HS				
2014	33%	25%	23%	21%	14%	21%	20%	20%				
2015	5%	6%	14%	7%	3%	13%	7%	13%				
2016	14%	11%	4%	20%	6%	3%	16%	15%				
2017	27%	16%	7%	12%	13%	10%	10%	14%				
2018	6%	15%	12%	4%	11%	15%	11%	15%				
2019	4%	8%	3%	14%	7%	12%	20%	13%				
2020	19%	8%	8%	7%	8%	6%	7%	17%				
2021	28%	24%	14%	12%	25%	33%	21%	19%				

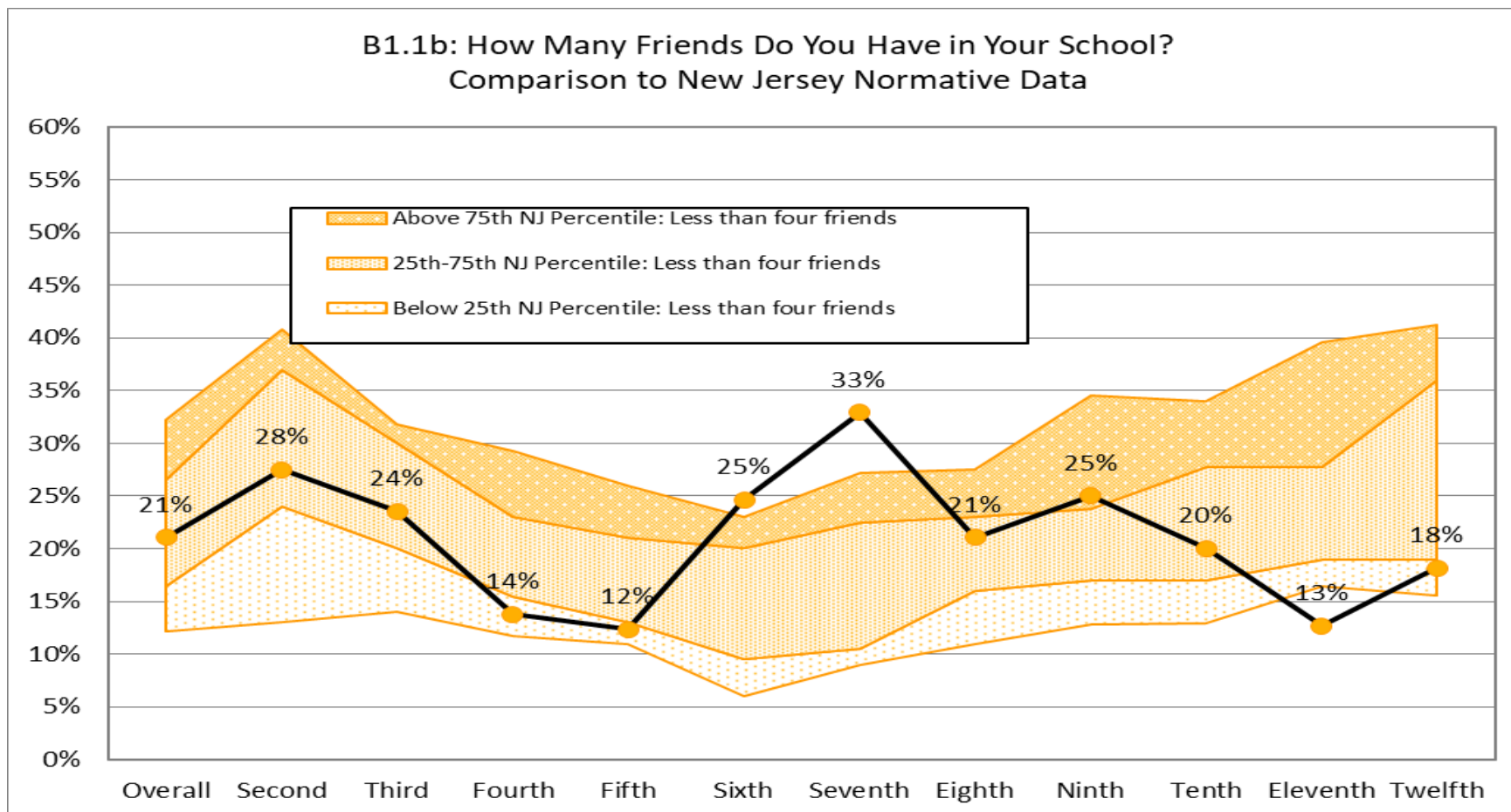


Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends

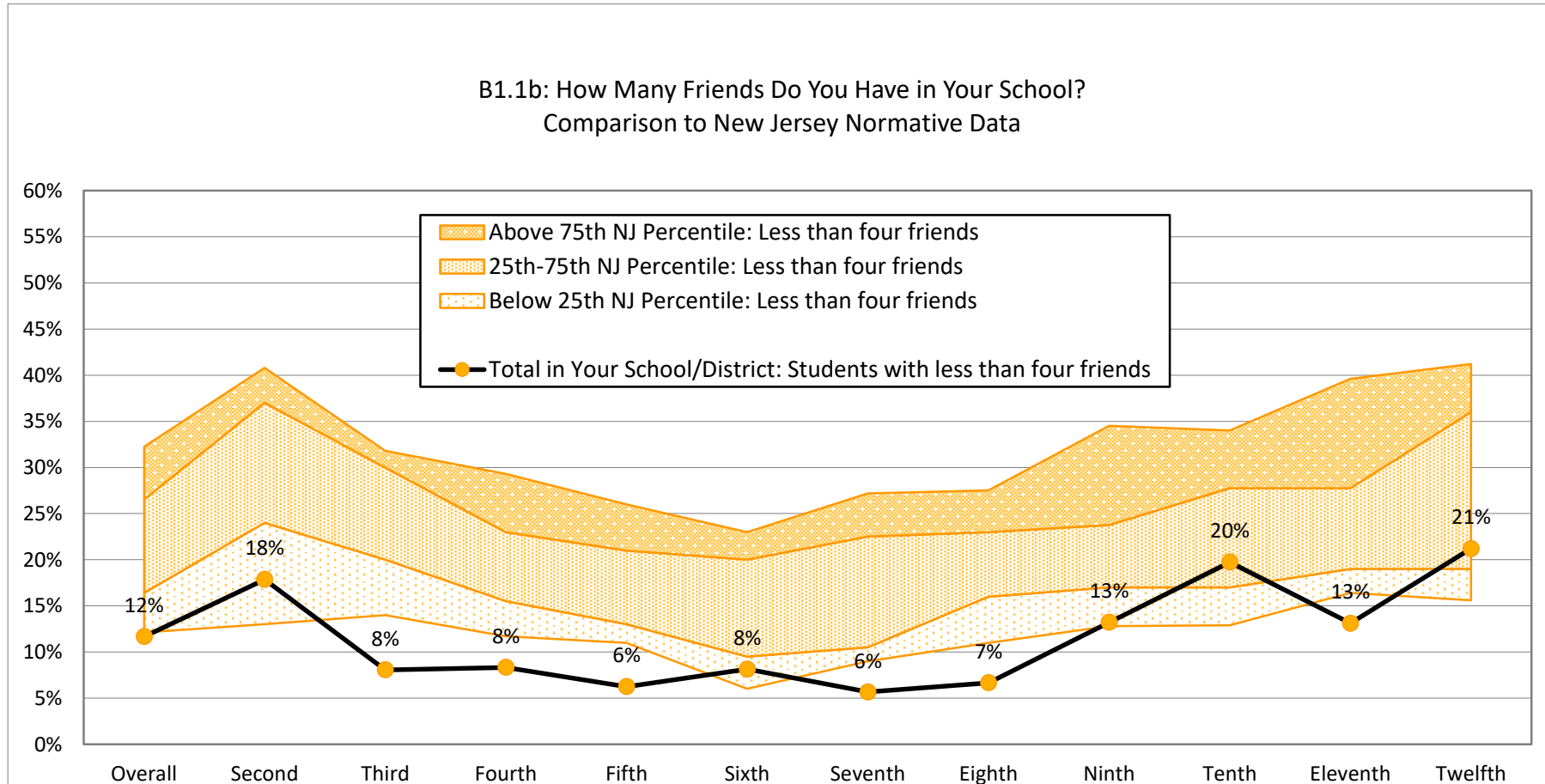
B1.1b: How Many Friends Do You Have in Your School?
Comparison to New Jersey Normative Data



Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends S2021



Percentage of Students Reporting Fewer than Four Friends S2020



Percentage of Students Who Say They Have a Trusted Adult at School

	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	HS				
2014												
2015												
2016												
2017												
2018												
2019												
2020												
2021												

Having a trusted adult is a **protective** factor; the *higher* the percentages in this table, the better.

Percentage of Students Who Say They Have a Trusted Adult at School

	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	HS				
2014	87%	79%	91%	95%	81%	59%	74%	85%				
2015	89%	82%	85%	84%	86%	75%	71%	69%				
2016	88%	89%	80%	67%	95%	81%	75%	76%				
2017	91%	88%	91%	80%	75%	81%	78%	77%				
2018	92%	84%	86%	91%	81%	71%	79%	73%				
2019	85%	92%	89%	92%	95%	76%	72%	82%				
2020	86%	97%	93%	82%	91%	74%	72%	72%				
2021	62%	78%	91%	90%	80%	58%	84%	71%				

Having a trusted adult is a **protective** factor; the *higher* the percentages in this table, the better.

Grade 2-5 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School

	2 nd	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd	4 th	4 th	5 th	5 th
Fighting, hitting, pushing								
Mean Name-calling								
Leaving each other out								
Gangs								
Prejudice (race, religion)								
Appearance pressure								
Mean text messages								
Rumors								
Teachers say mean things								

In general, findings less than 10% indicate there might be some students with individual concerns, but do not indicate school-related climate issue, and findings of 20% or less indicate low levels of concern among students.

Grade 2-5 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School, 2019 to 2020

	2 nd	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd	4 th	4 th	5 th	5 th
Fighting, hitting, pushing	33%	13%	20%	14%	6%	11%	6%	3%
Mean Name-calling	41%	19%	36%	16%	35%	13%	38%	17%
Leaving each other out	40%	20%	38%	23%	45%	17%	41%	14%
Gangs					12%	3%	6%	4%
Prejudice (race, religion)					6%	2%	3%	1%
Appearance pressure					5%	3%	16%	5%
Mean text messages					15%	6%	9%	7%
Rumors	27%	13%	33%	11%	49%	15%	60%	15%
Teachers say mean things	11%	6%	6%	4%	9%	5%	12%	3%

In general, findings less than 10% indicate there might be some students with individual concerns, but do not indicate school-related climate issue, and findings of 20% or less indicate low levels of concern among students.

Grade 2-5 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School, 2020 to 2021

	2 nd	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd	4 th	4 th	5 th	5 th
Fighting, hitting, pushing	13%	11%	14%	7%	11%	5%	3%	4%
Mean Name-calling	19%	17%	16%	10%	13%	12%	17%	10%
Leaving each other out	20%	19%	23%	16%	17%	15%	14%	16%
Gangs					3%	3%	4%	4%
Prejudice (race, religion)					2%	5%	1%	1%
Appearance pressure					3%	8%	5%	5%
Mean text messages					6%	2%	7%	4%
Rumors	13%	9%	11%	8%	15%	14%	15%	18%
Teachers say mean things	6%	5%	4%	1%	5%	1%	3%	6%

In general, findings less than 10% indicate there might be some students with individual concerns, but do not indicate school-related climate issue, and findings of 20% or less indicate low levels of concern among students.

Grade 6-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School

	6 th	6 th	7 th	7 th	8 th	8 th	HS	HS
Appearance Pressure								
Social Exclusion								
Name-calling								
Racial prejudice								
Anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice								
Physical aggression								
Gangs								
Unwanted photography								
Hurtful posting								
Adults insulting students								
Adults disrespecting each other								
Rumors								

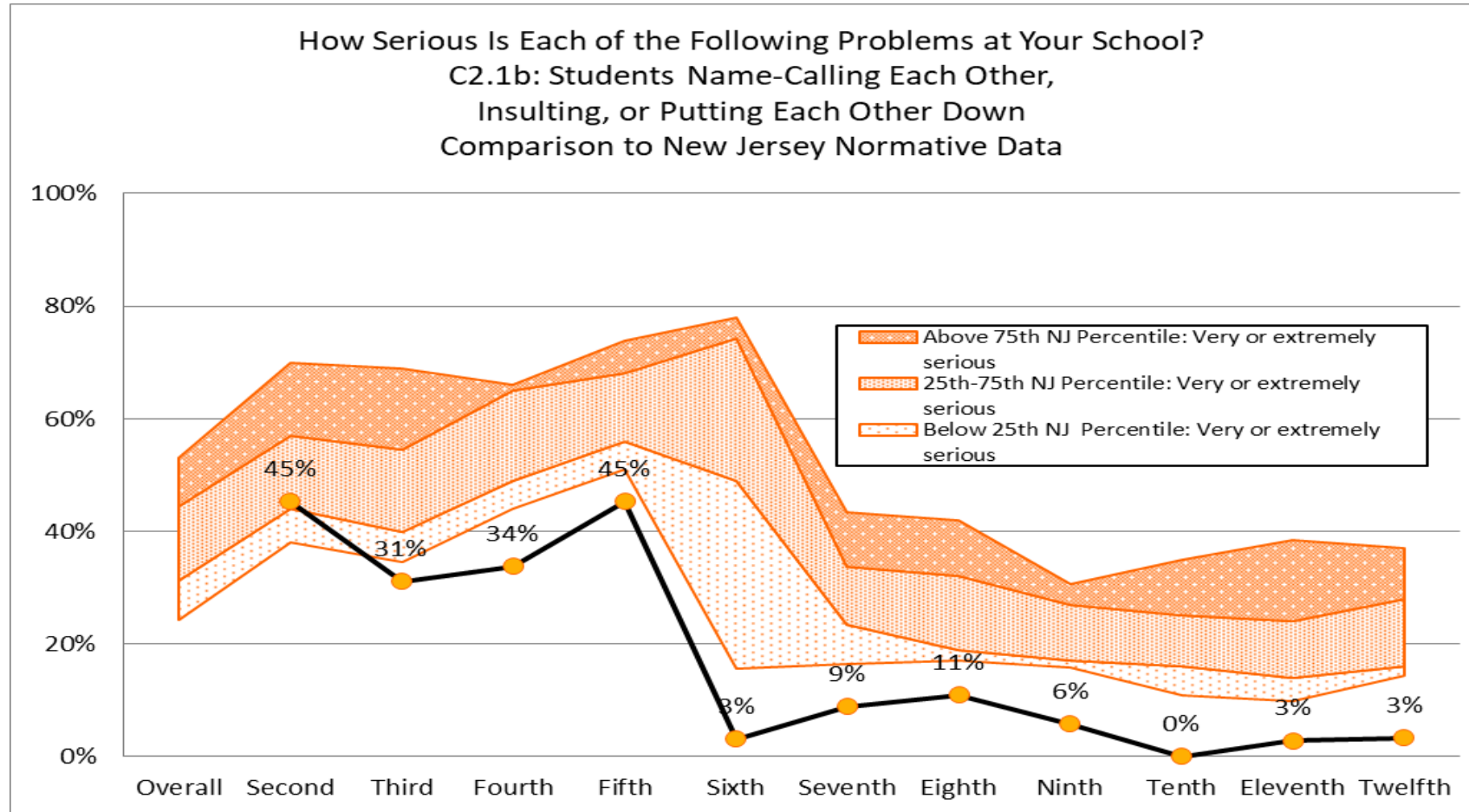
Grade 6-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School, 2019 to 2020

	6 th	6 th	7 th	7 th	8 th	8 th	HS	HS
Appearance Pressure	16%	13%	2%	20%	13%	9%	8%	12%
Social Exclusion	9%	14%	25%	23%	11%	16%	17%	14%
Name-calling	21%	4%	7%	23%	17%	10%	9%	8%
Racial prejudice	5%	7%	5%	4%	10%	6%	4%	10%
Anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice			3%	14%	16%	4%	6%	7%
Physical aggression	9%	7%	10%	6%	11%	6%	4%	5%
Gangs	4%	9%	5%	0%	11%	2%	5%	8%
Unwanted photography			9%	19%	18%	5%	7%	11%
Hurtful posting			5%	12%	11%	6%	8%	9%
Adults insulting students	5%	6%	5%	2%	11%	6%	6%	7%
Adults disrespecting each other			7%	2%	10%	5%	2%	3%
Rumors	35%	31%	13%	26%	20%	25%	32%	19%

Grade 6-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School, 2020 to 2021

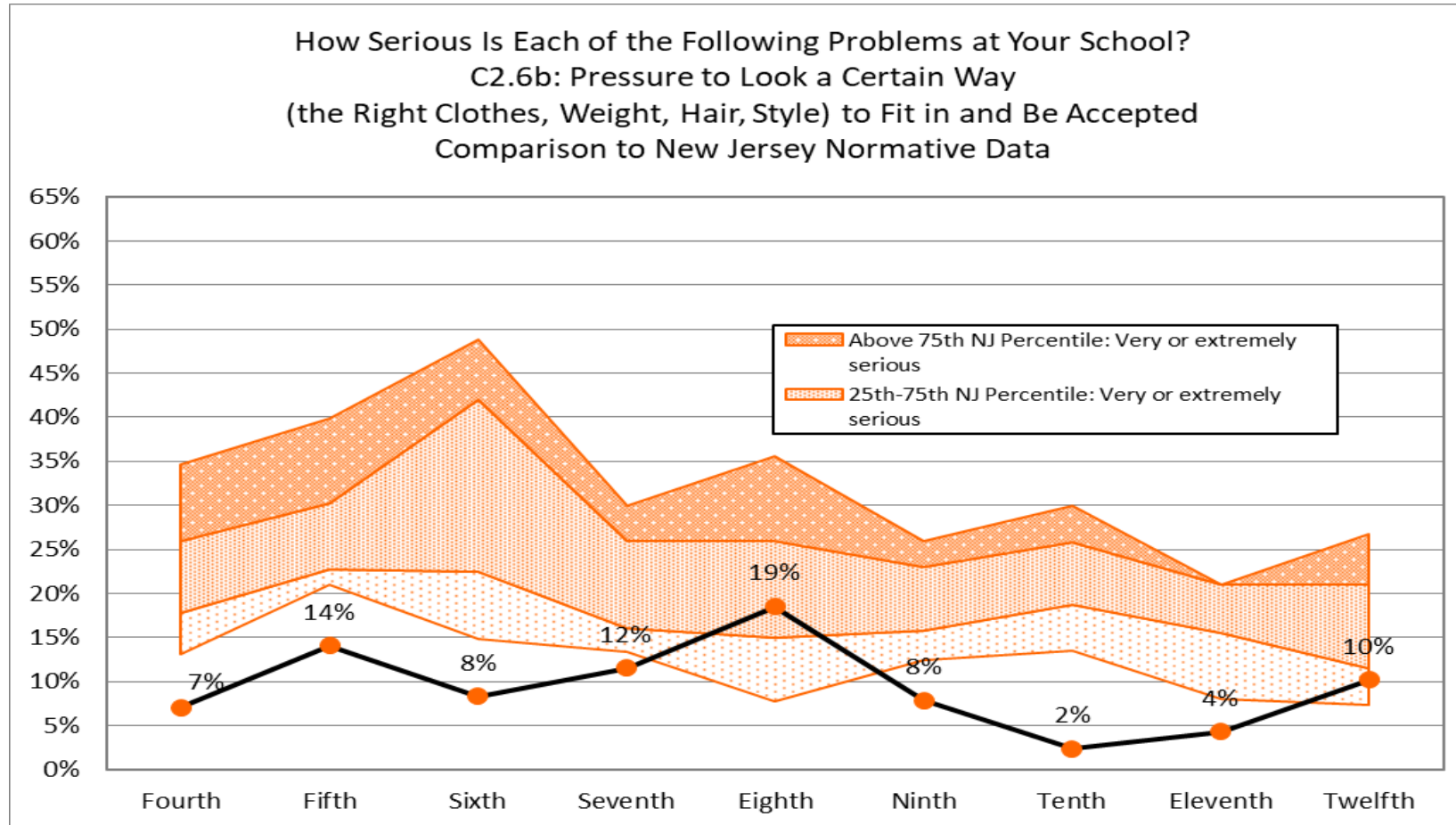
	6 th	6 th	7 th	7 th	8 th	8 th	HS	HS
Appearance Pressure	13%	8%	20%	12%	9%	19%	12%	6%
Social Exclusion	14%	8%	23%	13%	16%	4%	14%	11%
Name-calling	4%	3%	23%	9%	10%	11%	8%	2%
Racial prejudice	7%	3%	4%	5%	6%	11%	10%	4%
Anti-LGBTQ+ prejudice			14%	4%	4%	18%	7%	8%
Physical aggression	7%	6%	6%	9%	6%	5%	5%	2%
Gangs	9%	2%	0%	5%	2%	2%	8%	3%
Unwanted photography			19%	9%	5%	13%	11%	4%
Hurtful posting			12%	8%	6%	15%	9%	4%
Adults insulting students	6%	7%	2%	5%	6%	4%	7%	4%
Adults disrespecting each other			2%	3%	5%	4%	3%	2%
Rumors	31%	14%	26%	9%	25%	9%	19%	11%

Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School



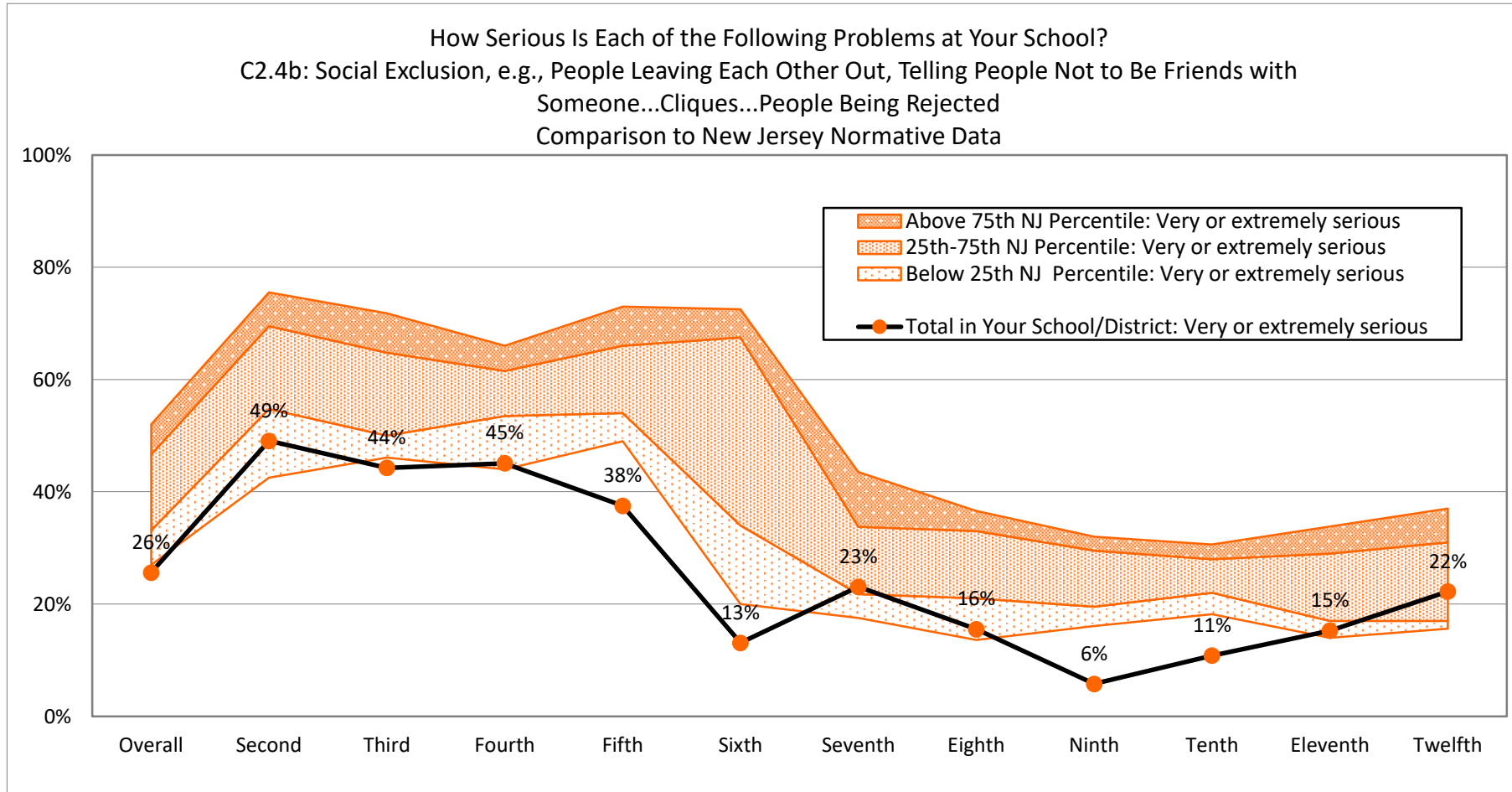
Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who say that **name-calling** is a problem are low in most grades. The percentage for Grade 2 is higher than the others, but still only at the 25th percentile.

Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who consider **“appearance pressure”** to be a problem are low in most grades, except for Grades 8 and 12, but those are still only at the 25th percentile.

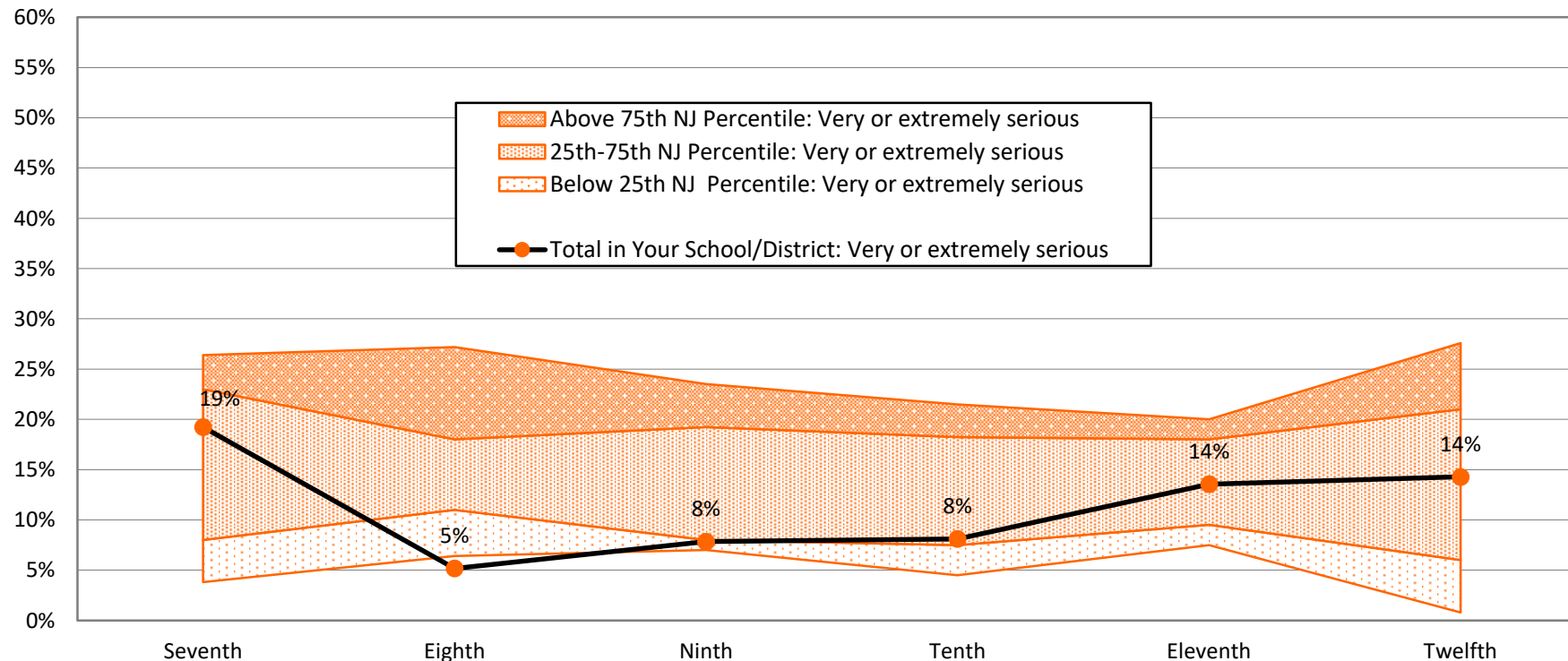
Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who consider **social exclusion** to be a problem are low.

Grade 7-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School

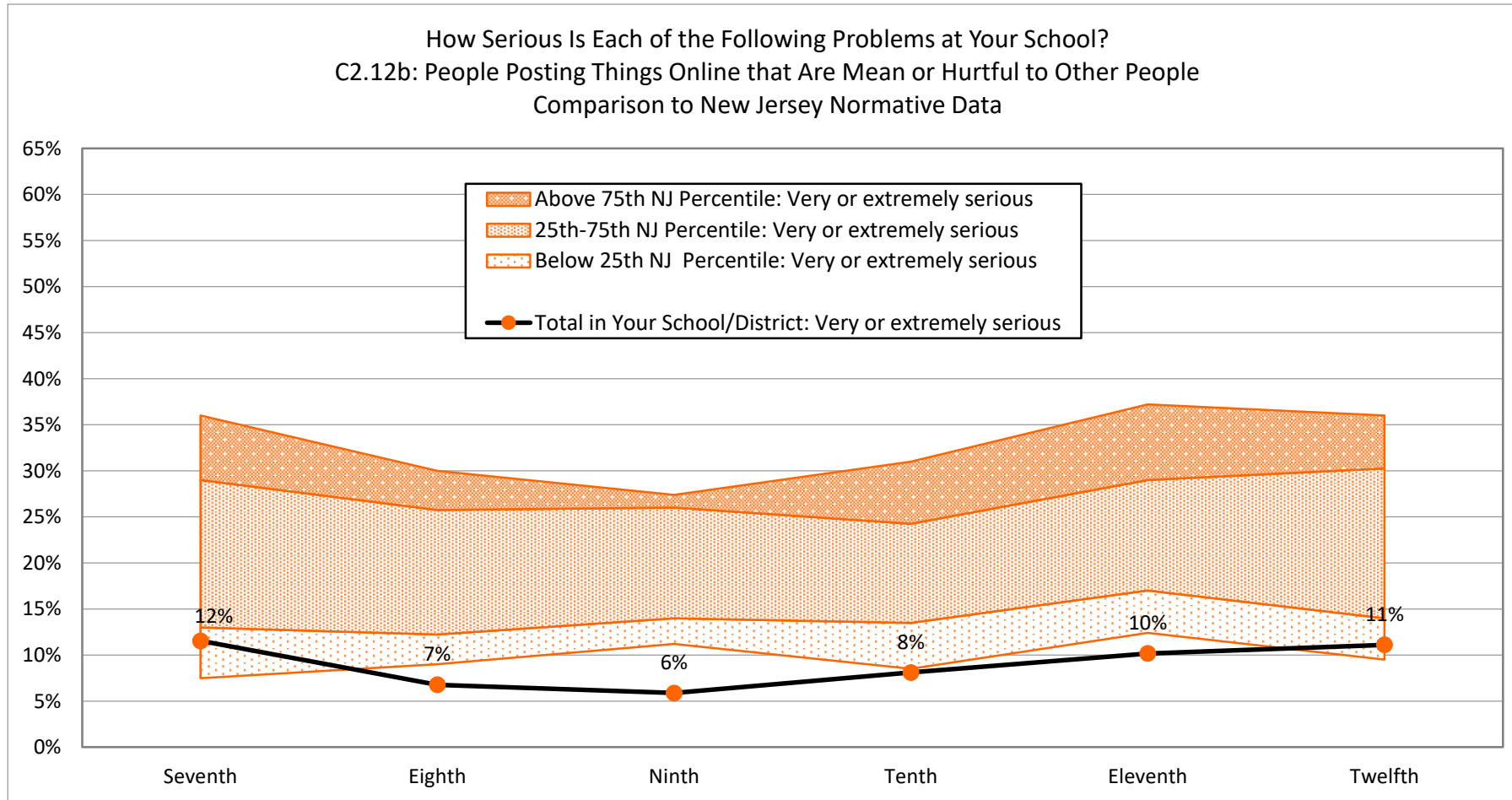
How Serious Is Each of the Following Problems at Your School?
C2.11b: Taking Photos or Videos of Other Students that are Embarrassing,...
or When the Other Student Doesn't Want to Be Photographed...
Comparison to New Jersey Normative Data



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who consider **“taking non-consensual photos or videos”** to be a problem are moderate.

Findings indicate that this issue should be a focus for the cohorts *now* in Grades 8 and 12.

Grade 7-12 Students' Perceptions of Problems at School



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who consider **“posting hurtful things online”** to be a problem are low in all grades.

Frequency of Derogatory Language among Students – Grades 2-8

- There has been a gradual decline in the frequency with which students report hearing peers make derogatory comments.
- **0%-5%** of students in Grades 2-7 say they frequently hear peers make insulting comments about someone's APPEARANCE; **down from 4%-28% in 2020**. *The cohort in Grade 8 in 2021 has since they were in Grade 2, reported more derogatory comments than other cohorts. 19% reported hearing these insults in 2021 compared to 10% of 8th Graders in 2020. However, this cohort's percentage was 28% when in Grade 7 in 2020.*

Frequency of Derogatory Language among Students – Grades 2-8

- **0%-3%** of students in Grades 2-6 say they frequently hear peers call each other “DUMB,” “RETARD,” “STUPID,” etc.; **down from 5%-14% in 2020**. However, **13% in Grade 7 and 27% in Grade 8** reported hearing this type of insult. In 2020, the percentages were **48% in Grade 7 and 24% in Grade 8**.
- **0%-5%** of students in Grades 4-8 reported frequently hearing GENDER-BASED insults about BOYS and **3%-15%** about GIRLS. These percentages have generally been **below 16% since 2016**.
- In grades 4-8, **0%-29%** of students say they frequently hear peers use the word “GAY” AS AN INSULT (i.e., “so gay”); **down from 27%-77% in 2011**.

Frequency of Derogatory Language among Students – High School Students

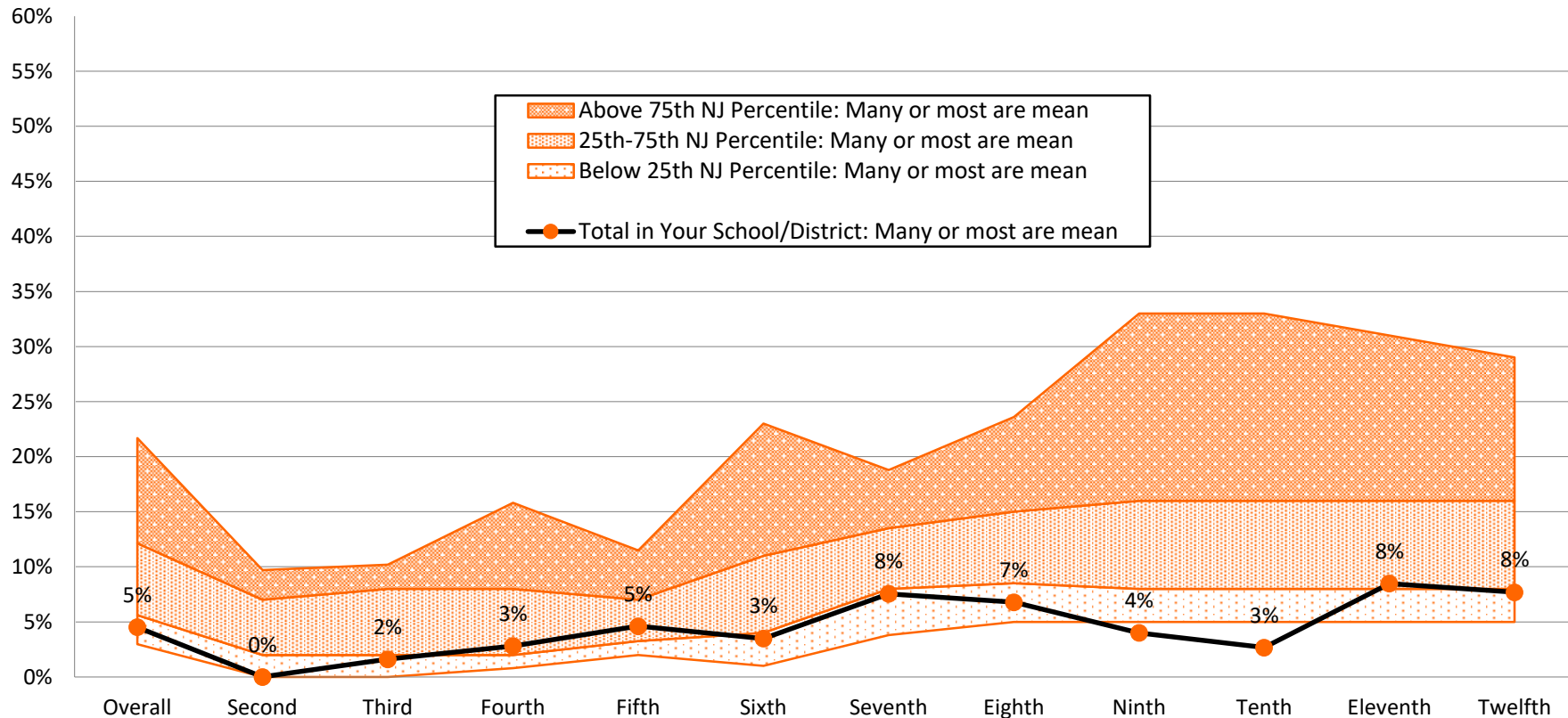
- The percentage in HS who said they frequently hear derogatory comments decreased significantly between 2018 and 2019, and declined again from 2020 to 2021.
- **11%** say they frequently hear peers use the word “GAY” AS AN INSULT (i.e., “so gay”); **down from 76% in 2011 and 24% in 2020.**
- **10%** say they frequently hear INTELLIGENCE-BASED insults; **down from 80% in 2011 and compared to a low of 36% in 2020.**
- **5%** say they frequently hear APPEARANCE-BASED insults; **down from 42% in 2011 and a typical ~25% in prior years.**

Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Whether Students are Usually Nice to Each Other

NOTE: This variable is coded as a “risk factor;” what you will see on the next slide are the percentages of students who say that many or most of their peers are *mean*. Therefore, the ideal would be for these percentages to be *low*.

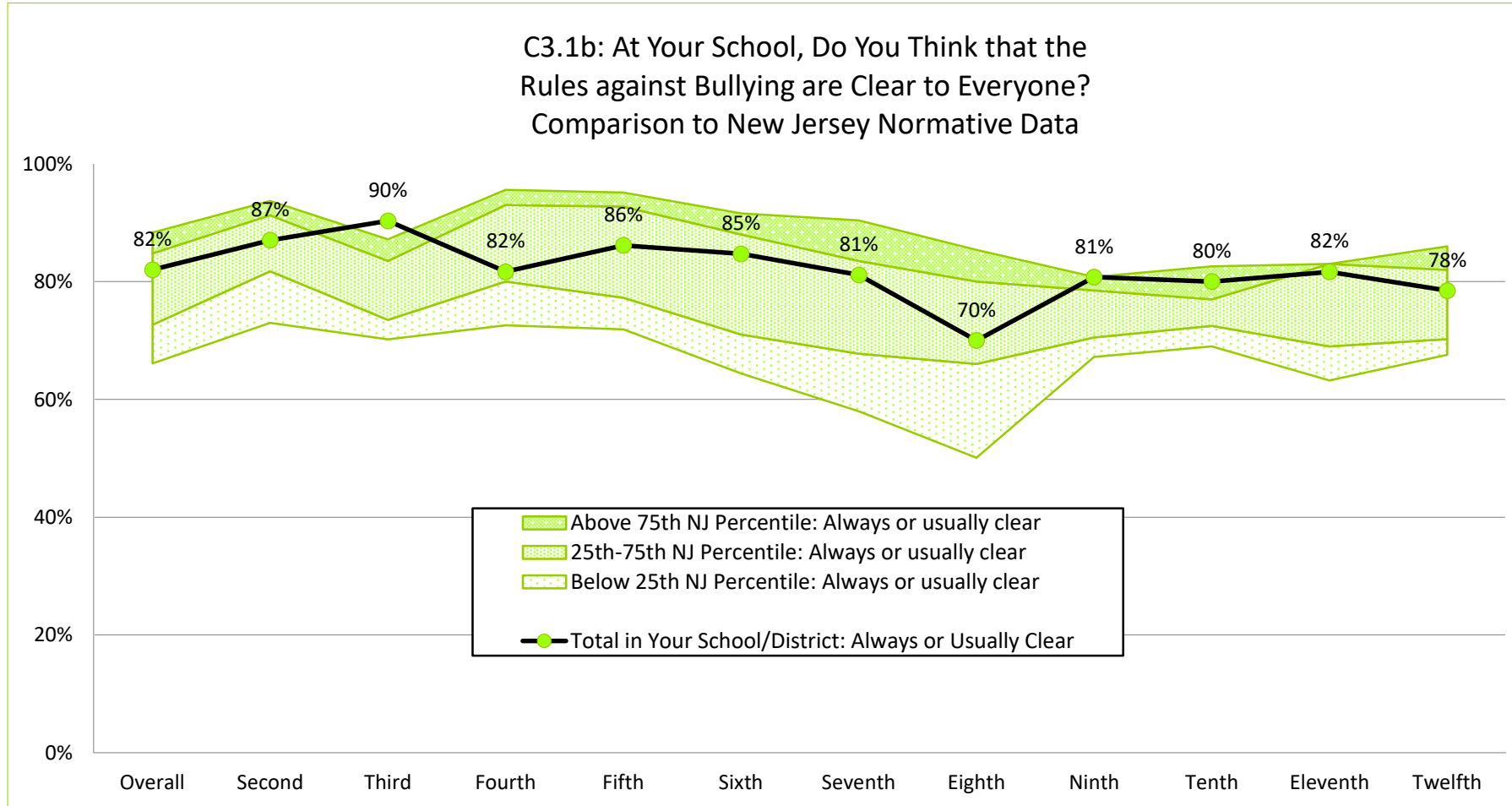
Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Whether Students are Usually Nice to Each Other

D1.1b: Are Students at Your School Usually Nice to Each Other?
Comparison to New Jersey Normative Data



Compared to normative data, the **percentages of students who say that many or most of their peers are mean are very low in every grade.**

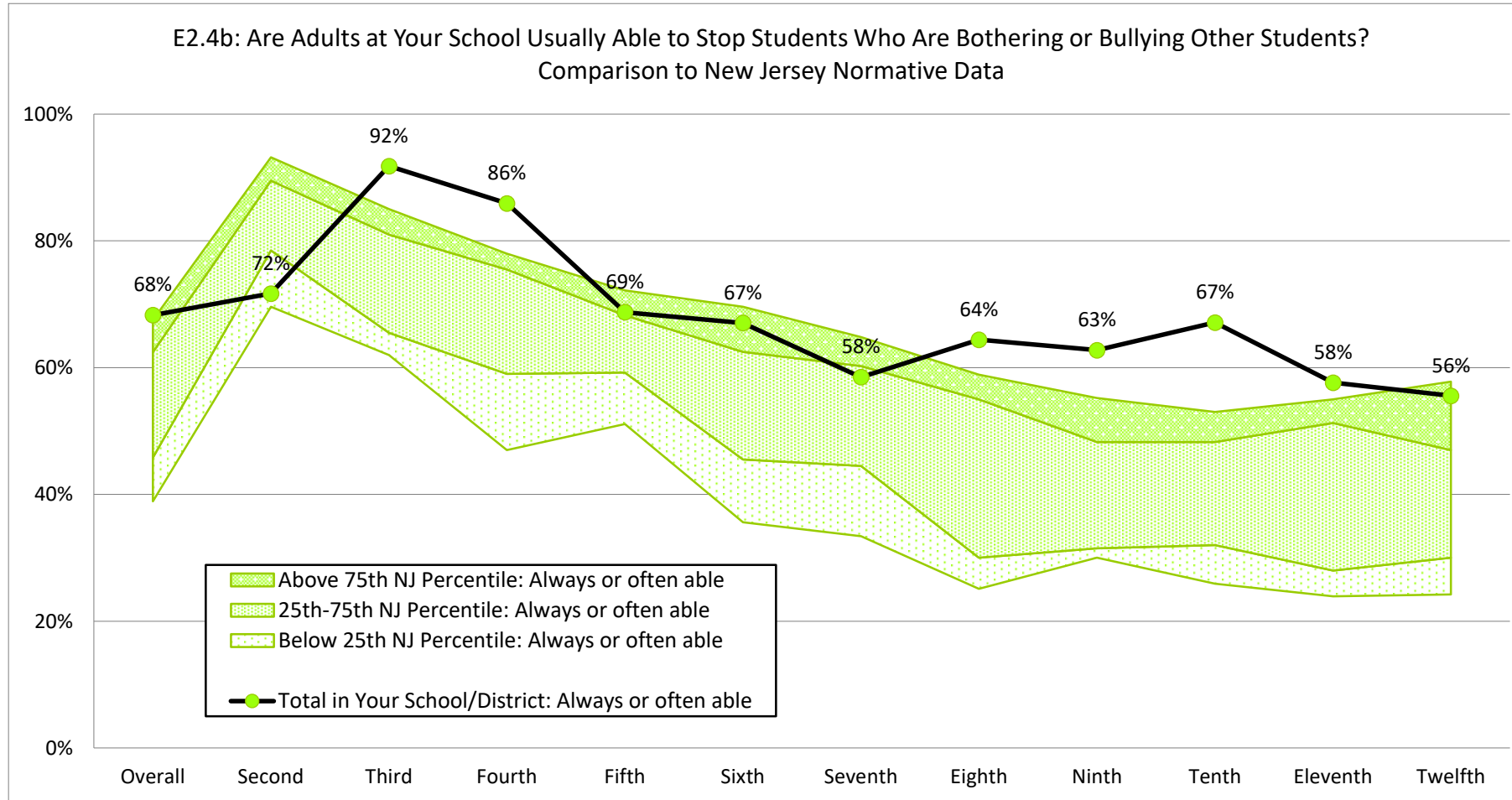
Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Whether the Rules Against Bullying are Clear



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who say that the rules against bullying are clear are very high in most grades.

Findings indicate that this is an area for specific focus in grades 4 & 8.

Grade 2-12 Students' Perceptions of Adults' Ability to Stop Bullying



Compared to normative data, the percentages of students who say that adults are usually or always able to stop bullying are very high in most grades.

Findings indicate that this is an area for specific focus in grade 2.

Has this happened to you... (percent saying often, weekly, daily, or more than once a day)?

	<i>Verbal Name-calling</i>		<i>Hurtful Exclusion</i>		<i>Appearance Denigration</i>	
	2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
2 nd grade	10%	1%	8%	0%	0%	0%
3 rd grade	10%	0%	2%	0%	6%	0%
4 th grade	1%	0%	4%	0%	2%	0%
5 th grade	8%	3%	8%	3%	7%	1%
6 th grade	6%	0%	6%	0%	3%	0%
7 th grade	12%	6%	8%	9%	6%	4%
8 th grade	10%	8%	2%	0%	5%	6%
HS	11%	2%	8%	3%	5%	1%

Students were asked about 17 different experiences. The three shown here are those that are generally most common, throughout New Jersey, and in Midland Park in the past. The percentages were extremely low in 2021..



If You Were Having a Problem... Bullying... and You Needed Help, How Would You Get Help?

- Tell a teacher
- Tell a counselor at school
- Tell the principal
- Tell the nurse at school
- Put a note in a bully report or comment box
- Tell my parent/parents/mom or dad
- Tell my older brother or sister
- Tell another adult (aunt, uncle, religious leader, coach)
- Tell a friend my own age

*Older students are less likely to tell an adult. Percentage decreased from 82% in Grade 2 to 37% in HS. The turning point where student are less likely to tell an adult appears to be 6th – 7th grade.

Conclusion: Implications

STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN PROGRESS

- Parents and School Should Work Together to Ensure that:
 - Each student has friends in school who can be supportive. In most grades, 8% or fewer reported have less than four friends.
 - Each student can identify an adult at school whom they trust, to whom they could go if they had a problem with another student. The vast majority of students across all grades indicated that they had a trusted adult to go to.
 - Students are encouraged to help each other; students confide in peers, more than in adults. If a peer is in trouble, tell an adult.
 - Each school has a positive and safe school climate. 80% - 90% of students across all grades indicated that they felt very or mostly safe in school.



STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN PROGRESS

- Parents and School Should Work Together to Ensure that:
 - Students are discouraged from using language that is derogatory to others.
 - Students know that harmful social exclusion and rumor-telling are forms of bullying.
 - Cyber safety education occurs both at home and at school.



STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN PROGRESS

- Parents and School Should Work Together to Ensure that:
 - Continue to encourage students to include each other and develop positive social relationships with peers in school.
 - The word “bullying” is not used for incidents that involve other types of hurtful behavior that are not bullying.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SCHOOL'S PROCEDURES?

- School personnel must protect the confidentiality of all students. The school cannot provide you with information about discipline given another student.
- The school's jurisdiction is limited. If an incident occurred off campus, your recourse might be with law enforcement, and not through the school.
- “Tough on Bullying” means appropriate, not extreme, responses; remedial responses are often more effective.
- School staff are required to report certain types of incidents within the district, and at the state level.



WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Be familiar with your district's anti-bullying policy.
- Know that bullying today is different than it used to be; take it seriously. Listen/talk about it.
- Tell your son/daughter what to do if s/he is bullied (tell an adult). Do not give advice that will put your child in a difficult situation in school (e.g. do not advise to "hit back").
- Teach your son/daughter what to do if someone else is bullied (tell an adult, stand up for them, help them walk away, etc.).
- Teach about cultural diversity; teach the difference between Respect and Agreement.
- If you learn of a situation or incident in the school, tell a member of the school staff immediately.

THANK YOU
Stay Safe, Stay Well, and
Have a *Respectful*
School Year