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COVID DIARIES

A joint project of IDEA and SAYS

MARCH 2022 - JULY 2022
WHITE PAPER

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Executive Summary

      In late fall-early winter 2021, the [Institute for Diversity, Equity and Advancement (IDEA)](#) in the UC Davis (UCD) Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion partnered with the UCD-based non-profit [Sacramento Area Youth Speaks (SAYS)](#) to design the COVID Diaries research project (COVID Diaries) which was implemented in March – June, 2022 at eight middle and high schools (6 - 12th grades) served by SAYS in Sacramento and Yolo counties. During this time, students and educators alike were contending with an array of public health factors including a surge in COVID-19 cases, the spread of a new Omicron variant of COVID-19, and the emergence of vaccines for adults as an effective mitigation tool while research on the safety and effectiveness of vaccinations for those under 18 years was ongoing. Simultaneously, case rates and deaths in Black, Latinx, and low-income communities remained persistently high,[1] while mis- and disinformation about COVID-19 exacerbated racial disparities, health inequities, and impacted the uptake of COVID-19 mitigation measures in these communities.[2] SAYS and IDEA wanted to know how students experienced the pandemic and the key factors that influenced their experience and health choices. They were inspired by the UC Davis One Health Institute and from lessons learned from AIDS/HIV public health campaigns of the late twentieth century that demonstrated that partnerships between public health officials, medical practitioners, and vulnerable communities increased the uptake of sound health decisions in impacted communities.[3] Hence, COVID Diaries set out to address the following research questions:

1. How can youth of color become empowered to assess and think critically about the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. How can youth of color become influencers of sound health decisions in their communities rather than targets of misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19?

3. From what sources did participants receive information about COVID-19?

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[1] Latoya Hill and Samantha Artiga, "COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Race/Ethnicity: Current Data and Changes Over Time," *Kaiser Family Foundation*, published August 22, 2022, https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/issue-brief/covid-19-cases-and-deaths-by-race-ethnicity-current-data-and-changes-over-time/

[2] Leo Lopez, Louis H. Hart, and MItchell H. Katz, "Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Related to COVID-19," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 325, no. 8 (2021): 719-720, https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.26443.

[3] Lloyd Michener et al., "Engaging with Communities - Lessons (Re)Learned From COVID-19," *Preventing Chronic Disease*, no. 17 (2020): 3-4, https://doi.org/10.5888/pcd17.200250.

COVID Diaries consisted of three overarching components. **CD CURRICULUM.** The development and implementation of the COVID Diaries Curriculum (CD Curriculum) aimed to help middle and high students (grades 6-12) grapple with understanding the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and what roles they could play to keep themselves and their communities safe. Over a period of ten weeks the SAYS Director, Associate Director, and their team of Poet Mentor Educators (PMEs) administered the CD Curriculum to 188 students in participating schools as part of the existing SAYS credit elective course during the first full year of in-person instruction since the pandemic began. **JOURNAL REFLECTIONS.** As part of the CD Curriculum, students were assigned prompts to respond to and capture in handwritten journal reflections their experiences of life, education, and attending school during the pandemic. SAYS collected 42 student journal entries, which were analyzed and included as part of the study findings. Additionally, the SAYS Director and Associate Director voluntarily reflected on their experience administering COVID Diaries, and the findings will be included in future publications. **SURVEYS**. Pre- and post-surveys were administered to students immediately before and after their participation in the CD Curriculum. Survey results were used to understand, at two points in time and with a representative (if different) sample of students, how students felt about COVID-19 and public health mitigation strategies that were being put into place. Researchers evaluated the attitudinal changes that occurred among participants at different stages of the pandemic and as a result of the implementation of the CD Curriculum. When compared to national and regional measures, the results could indicate whether COVID Diaries was targeting communities that were more or less impacted by disparities in public health messaging, vaccination rates, and health outcomes.

In the shifting events around this global health pandemic—and in the reality that COVID Diaries was a small piece of a complex network of initiatives aimed at reducing the spread of COVID-19—the project's value became the elucidation of the second crisis of the pandemic: the trauma and loss that students experienced, which has had a profound effect on their mental health and ability to rebound both socially and academically from the crisis. The CD Curriculum provided students the space and framework to process and express these experiences in their own words.

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Introduction and Purpose

COVID Diaries was a collaboration between the Institute for Diversity, Equity and Advancement (IDEA) and Sacramento Area Youth Speaks (SAYS). IDEA supports collaborations and projects that involve UC Davis' existing and new recruitment, retention, and advancement programs and interventions that connect to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students, faculty, and staff. IDEA conducts research to assess the impact of DEI interventions and programs, establishing metrics, collecting and analyzing evidence, disseminating findings, and facilitating the scale-up of effective practices.[4] SAYS is a social justice movement that empowers youth and transforms education by creating platforms for critical literacy, access to higher education, youth voice and civic engagement. SAYS elevates the voices of students as the authors of their own lives and agents of change.[5] COVID Diaries was also supported by Empower Yolo, Puentes Network, Empower Yolo, Knights Landing Family Resource Center, the UC Davis Department of Chicana/o Studies, and Fresno County Golden Plains Unified School District. These partnerships were facilitated by Natalia Deeb Sossa, Professor of Chicana/o Studies at UC Davis.

The goal of this project was to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in marginalized communities in rural and urban areas, in particular in Black and Latinx communities, by encouraging youth of color in Sacramento County to become positive influencers in public health behavior. It also aimed to empower students to take a proactive role in their health and lifestyle choices amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The project provided a platform for students to freely express their stories and experiences through the use of a customized curriculum, writing workshops, spoken word, poetry, critical discussions and journal reflections about the impact of COVID-19. The project recruited community teaching artists—also known as Poet Mentor Educators (PMEs)—visual artists, and other creators to teach students in grades 6 to 12.

The project also aimed to communicate and share stories to shape the public narrative and inform public health policies. We intend to translate the research that emerges out of this project into a multimodal (textual, visual, and audio) narrative format, which will be shared with the public and policymakers with the following objectives in mind:

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[4] "About IDEA," UC Davis Institute for Diversity, Equity, and Advancement, accessed September 16, 2022, https://idea.ucdavis.edu/about-idea
[5] "About – SAYS," Sacramento Youth Speaks, accessed September 16, 2022, https://www.says.ucdavis.edu/about

A. Piloting a model of narrative-driven, community-based participatory research that centers the voices, experiences, and needs of low-income and working communities in California,

B. Producing and communicating these narratives with the public to inform and influence ongoing disaster governance, and

C. Refocusing the public narrative about young Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and essential workers during the pandemic, most of whom are at the greatest risk of illness and economic disaster.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study is situated within the theoretical and conceptual framework of Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). [6] The research team was interested in conducting CBPR to understand how youth could use photovoice, spoken word poetry, and performative arts to communicate their understanding of the pandemic and how such a process might influence the targeted youth to change their behaviors to try to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Like other researchers, this research team worked on the assumption that those in the community have the ability and motivation to react positively to opportunities that arise from the research project. [7] SAYS embarked upon this program already having extensive experience working in classrooms and interacting

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[6] Nina Wallerstein et al., eds., *Community-Based Participatory Research For Health: Advancing Social and Health Equity* (San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 4. Nina Wallerstein, a public health researcher, defines CBPR as "a collaborative approach to research, equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings. CBPR begins with a research topic of importance to the community with the aim of combining knowledge and action for social change to improve community health and eliminate health disparities."; Emily J. Ozer, "Chapter Seven – Youth-Led Participatory Action Research: Developmental and Equity Perspectives," Advances in Child Development and Behavior 50 (2016): 190, https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.acdb.2015.11.006. This study is also framed around YPAR which Emily Ozer describes as a youth-centered form of CPBR in which social change and scientific inquiry are evidence-based and "grounded in principles of equity that engages young people in identifying problems relevant to their own lives, conducting research to understand the problems, and advocating for changes."; Jonathan London, Kristen Zimmerman, and Nancy Erbstein, ". Youth-Led Research and Evaluation: Tools for Youth, Organizational, and Community Development," New Directions for Evaluation (2003): 33-45, https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.83. London, Zimmerman, and Erbstein also point to a Youth-led Research, Evaluation, and Planning (Youth REP) model that links youth and community development and empowers young people to lead research and evaluation in order to "shift and heal the relationships between youth and adults, foster the growth of young people and community members as community stewards, and support the ongoing development of sustainable and just communities."

[7] Jim Silver et al., "Community-Based Participatory Research in a Low-Income Public-Housing Project," in *Practicing Community-Based Participatory Research: Stories of Engagement, Empowerment, and Mobilization*, ed. Shauna MacKinnon (Vancouver, BC: Purich Books, 2018), 83–84.

with the community's youth population. SAYS was interested in using COVID Diaries to show how working with youth could have an impact on health inequity.

The SAYS philosophy suggests that providing youth with platforms where they could freely express apprehensions and opinions might enable them to feel empowered in making critical health decisions for themselves.[8] SAYS achieves its impact with youth by engaging them using unconventional, humanizing, and culturally appropriate techniques[9] that often stand in contrast to traditional disciplinary, social, and pedagogical approaches.[10] By helping youth better understand their experiences, SAYS hypothesized that students who had the opportunity to explore their experiences through the pedagogy of love would have fewer adverse effects due to the pandemic. IDEA and SAYS co-developed a culturally relevant curriculum with this framework in mind.

Setting and Context

California began reopening its schools to in-person instructions in 2021 after a turbulent year of readjustment to remote instruction, causing a mix of joy and concerns to students, families, and the educator community. [11] While our researchers observed that many study participants were excited to be back in school, the 2021-2022 academic school year proved to be one of the most challenging as they lost nearly two years of in-person instruction. For young people and educators alike, the return to in-person schooling provided the perfect storm of educational loss, struggles with mental health, educational politics, and increased anxiety around COVID-19 transmission and treatment. Such existing challenges were amplified for historically marginalized students living in under-resourced

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[8] SAYS recently completed a program similar to COVID Diaries in partnership with Sacramento State University and San Juan Unified School District. See the program's report here: https://www.csus.edu/college/education/doctorate-educational-leadership/spotlights/equity-in-motion-report.html.

[9] Vajra Watson et al., "EQUITY-IN-MOTION: An Evaluation of the SAYS Partnership with San Juan Unified School District, Phase I, an Evaluation Report Prepared for the Equity and Student Achievement Department, San Juan Unified School District, Carmichael, CA" Sacramento State, August 2022, https://www.csus.edu/college/education/doctorate-educational-leadership/spotlights/equity-in-motion-report.html. The SAYS framework of a "pedagogy of love," the hallmark of the SAYS classroom, characterized by the following qualities: 1) value and respect students, 2) environment that gives support and safety for all students to express their voice, 3) community of acceptance that honors and centers all students' experience and wealth–rather than deficits, and 4) affirmative educators who are "warm demanders that showcase students' brilliance."

[10] Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th Anniversary Ed.,* (New York: Continuum, 2000)

[11] "California Schools Reopen to In-person Instruction, Students and Families Decide if it's Right for Them," EdSource, April 22, 2021, http://edsource.org/?page_id=652944

communities,[12] where many of these challenges were encountered by the SAYS team while implementing the CD Curriculum:

- High levels of absenteeism among students and educators [13]
- Drastic lack of substitute teachers [14]
- Unequal access to technology [15]
- Lack of transportation to and from schools[16]

Amidst such challenges, COVID-19 cases in the U.S. escalated at an alarming rate with the Omicron variant in the beginning of 2022. In mid-January 2022, the nationwide 7-day average of COVID-19 cases peaked at over 800,000 (see figure 1), marking the highest level of COVID-19 cases yet.[17] While the numbers subsided in the following months to 30,000 cases in March 2022, it rose again to nearly 100,000 average daily cases in June 2022 (see figure 1).

On a local level, a week after COVID Diaries received an approval for research by the UC Davis Office of Research Institutional Review Board (IRB) in March 2022, schools in the Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) closed due to a teachers' strike. This standoff caused students to be displaced from school between March 23, 2022, and April 4, 2022. When students eventually returned to school after the strike ended, they only received one week of instruction before spring break. Consequently, students missed several weeks of steady instruction.

Conducted from March 2022 through July 2022, COVID Diaries captured the experience of students and educators during the time of constant changes, uncertainty, exasperation, fear, and stress of the prolonged pandemic.

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[12] Sabrin Hassan and Beverly-Jean Daniel, "During a Pandemic, the Digital Divide, Racism and Social Class Collide: The Implication of COVID-19 for Black Students in High Schools." *Child & Youth Services* 41, no. 3 (2020): 253-255, https://doi.org/doi: 10.1080/0145935X.2020.1834956.

[13] Sarah D. Sparks, "Teacher and Student Absenteeism is Getting Worse," *Education Week*, July 7, 2022, https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teacher-and-student-absenteeism-is-getting-worse/2022/07

[14] Madeline Will, "The Already Dire Substitute Shortage Could Get 'Worse Before It Gets Better,' *EdWeek*, October 13, 2021, https://www.edweek.org/leadership/the-already-dire-substitute-shortage-could-get-worse-before-it-gets-better/2021/10

[15] "Students' Access to the Internet and Digital Devices at Home," *National Center for Education Statistics,* June 9, 2021, https://nces.ed.gov/blogs/nces/post/students-access-to-the-internet-and-digital-devices-at-home

[16] Evie Blad, "In a Pandemic, Who Gets to Ride the Bus And What About Those Who Don't?" Education Week, July 9, 2020, https://www.edweek.org/leadership/in-a-pandemic-who-gets-to-ride-the-bus-and-what-about-those-who-dont/2020/07

[17] "Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count," New York Times, last modified September 19, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html.
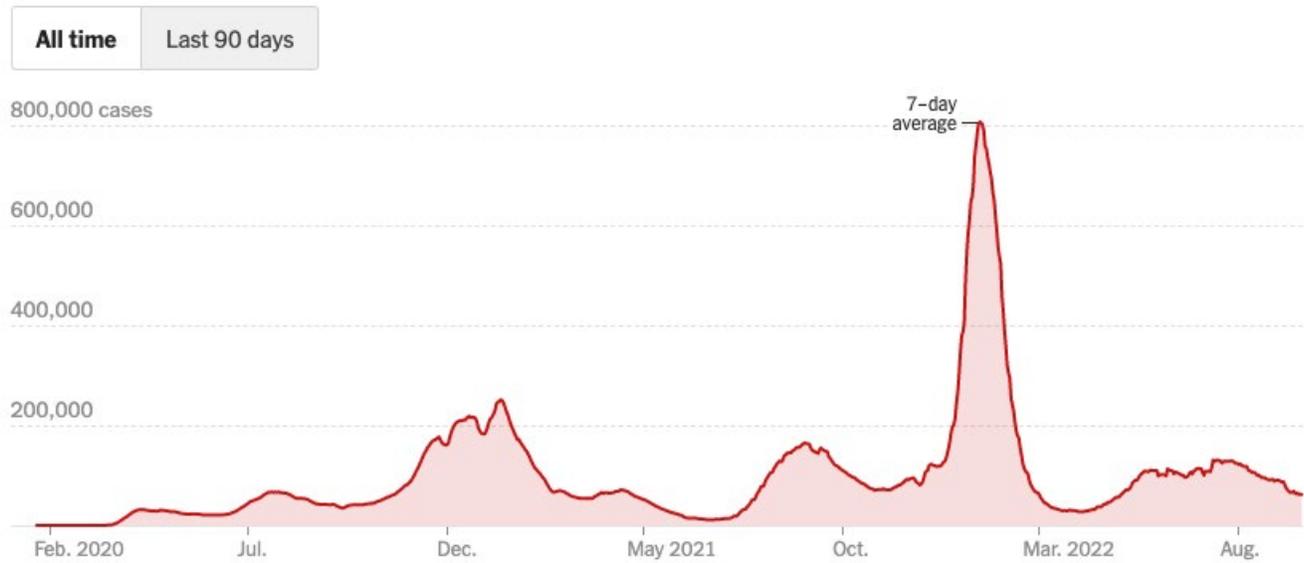
Figure 1: New reported cases of COVID-19 from February 2020 to September 2022. *New York Times*. Accessed September 19, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html.
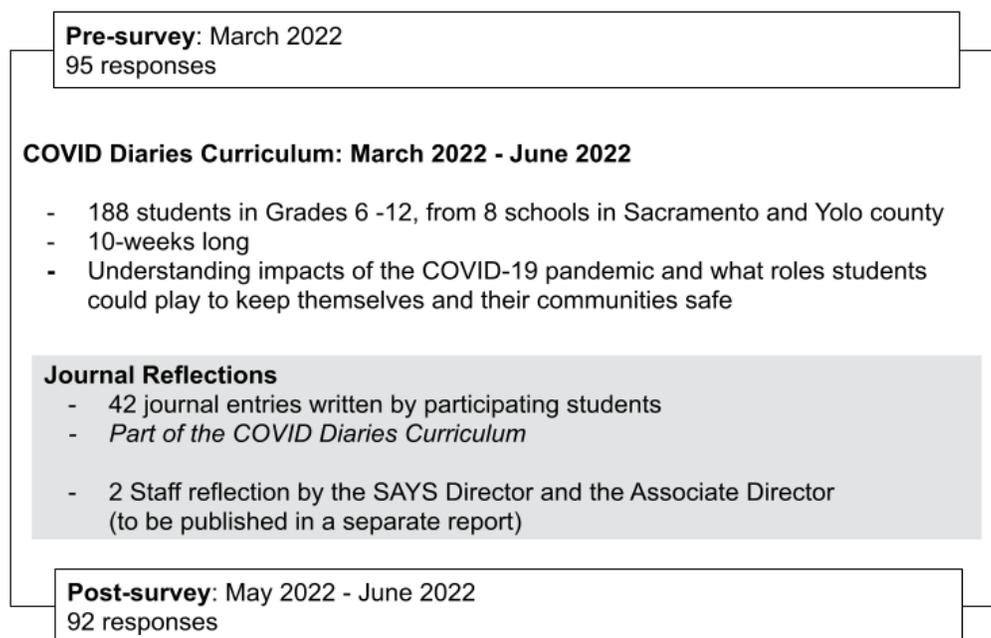
Study Design

Research Questions

As noted in the Executive Summary, this mixed methods study set out to address the following research questions which were informed by the theoretical and conceptual frameworks:

1. How can youth of color become empowered to assess and think critically about the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How can youth of color become influencers of sound health decisions in their communities rather than targets of misinformation and disinformation about COVID-19?
3. From what sources did participants receive information about COVID-19?

COVID Diaries Components

COVID Diaries consisted of three overarching components: curriculum, surveys, and journal reflections. To observe the impact of the COVID Diaries Curriculum, pre- and post-surveys were administered before and after the curriculum implementation, with journal reflections from students and educators throughout the process. Accordingly, the researchers used mixed method approaches to analyze the wealth of data on student and educator experiences (see figure 2).

Pre-survey: March 2022
95 responses

COVID Diaries Curriculum: March 2022 - June 2022

- 188 students in Grades 6 -12, from 8 schools in Sacramento and Yolo county
- 10-weeks long
- Understanding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and what roles students could play to keep themselves and their communities safe

Journal Reflections
- 42 journal entries written by participating students
- *Part of the COVID Diaries Curriculum*

- 2 Staff reflection by the SAYS Director and the Associate Director (to be published in a separate report)

Post-survey: May 2022 - June 2022
92 responses

Figure 2: A conceptual model of the major components in COVID Diaries.

IDEA and SAYS sought to reach youth from under-resourced, low income, immigrant, black and Latinx communities because of the disproportionate distribution of the negative public health impacts of COVID-19. The current study includes eight middle and high schools in Sacramento and Yolo County who participated in COVID Diaries. Table 1 provides the name and district of each school, as well as the number of students who participated in the COVID Diaries Curriculum. Two of the four participating middle schools (Hazel Mahone College Prep, and Ephraim Williams College Prep) are part of Fortune School of Education (Fortune School) which formed as a partnership between public charter schools and the Black Press.[18] All schools that participated in COVID Diaries have high enrollment of students from historically underrepresented communities, and are eligible for the Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch program with the exception of Rio Americano High School (see Appendix B).

TABLE 1. Participating Schools and in COVID Diaries

Name of School	Grade Levels*	City	District	# of Students Served
Luther Burbank High School	9-12	Sacramento	SCUSD	28
Sam Brannan Middle School	6-8	Sacramento	SCUSD	10
Rio Americano High School	9-12	Sacramento	SJUSD	25
Encina High School	9-12	Sacramento	SJUSD	25
Thomas Edison Language Institute**	6-8	Sacramento	SJUSD	35
Hazel Mahone College Prep	6-8	Sacramento	Fortune	25
Ephraim Williams College Prep	6-8	Sacramento	Fortune	35
Cesar Chavez Community School	9-12	Woodland	YCOE	5
8 Total School Sites				**188**

*Grade levels served by SAYS in the corresponding schools. **Thomas Edison Language Institute serves K-8 grades. However, SAYS only serves grades 6-8 at this school site.
Source: National Center for Education Statistics. "Common Core of Data: America's Public Schools," accessed September 30, 2022. https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/.

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[18] "Our Story," *Fortune School: Inspiring Leaders*, accessed September 27, 2022, https://www.fortuneschool.us/apps/pages/ourstory.

The student demographics of Rio Americano High School has been historically majority white, but the student population underwent a significant change in the last few years.[19] There was increased ethnic and racial diversity,[20] including Black, Latinx and refugee students primarily from Middle Eastern regions such as Afghanistan[21] as well as a steady increase in ESL student population.[22] Considering the changing student population, SAYS worked with the San Juan Unified School District (SJUSD) administration to pilot a culturally relevant intervention designed into a school day as an elective. However, Rio Americano High School's demographic composition differs from the majority of the other schools participating in COVID Diaries. Hazel Mahone College Prep and Ephraim Williams College Prep's student demographic data was aggregated with the rest of the Fortune Schools.

Curriculum

The development and implementation of the COVID Diaries Curriculum (CD Curriculum) aimed to help middle and high students (grades 6-12) grapple with understanding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and what roles they could play to keep themselves and their communities safe. Students participated in a multi-week curriculum that was integrated into their SAYS weekly elective course offered at their school site. Over a period of ten weeks the SAYS Director, Associate Director, and their team of Poet Mentor Educators (PMEs) administered the CD Curriculum to nearly 188 students at 8 high school sites in Sacramento and Yolo counties as part of the existing SAYS credit elective course during the first full-year of in-person instruction since the pandemic began.

Surveys

Pre- and post-surveys were administered to student participants immediately before and after their participation in the CD Curriculum. The survey results were used to understand, at two points in time and with a representative (if different) sample of students, how students felt about COVID-19 and

[19] "Rio Americano High," *Ed-Data*, accessed September 30, 2022, https://www.ed-data.org/school/Sacramento/San-Juan-Unified/Rio-Americano-High.

[20] "Rio Americano High."

[21] "San Juan Unified Hires Team to Support Refugees," *CBS Sacramento*, September 22, 2021, https://www.cbsnews.com/sacramento/news/afghan-refugees-san-juan-program/.

[22] "San Juan Unified," *Ed-Data*, accessed September 30, 2022, http://www.ed-data.org/district/Sacramento/San-Juan-Unified.

public health mitigation strategies that were being put into place. To assess changes in their beliefs and behaviors after participating in COVID Diaries, the pre-survey and post-survey contained the same questions (see Appendix A).

Graduate Student Researchers designed the pre and post-surveys online using Google Forms and provided SAYS staff with the final survey links to share with COVID Diaries participants. Time was allotted in class for students to complete the surveys. Participation in the pre and post-surveys was encouraged but voluntary. To maintain anonymity and encourage greater respondents to the survey, names and email addresses were not solicited. For school sites where students used laptops in class, SAYS staff either emailed survey links to students or wrote the links on the whiteboard in class for students to pull up on their laptops and complete. Participants at all high school sites completed the online surveys using Google Forms. Three of the middle school sites did not have laptops available in class (Thomas Edison, Ephraim Williams and Hazel Mahone). In this instance, printed hardcopies of the pre and post-surveys were distributed during class for students to complete and return. SAYS staff then manually entered those anonymous student responses into the Google Form. Additionally, by the time the post-survey was distributed Thomas Edison's school year had already ended. As such, student participants at this school site did not complete a post-survey. They did, however, complete the pre-survey.

Journal Reflections

As part of the CD Curriculum participating students were assigned journal reflection prompts to respond. The hand-written reflection journals served to offer a greater insight into student experiences of life and education living and attending school during the pandemic. SAYS collected 42 student journal entries, which were anonymized, analyzed and included as part of the study findings. Additionally, the SAYS Director and Associate Director voluntarily reflected on their experience administering COVID Diaries, the findings of which will be included in future publications.

This study was approved by the UC Davis Office of Research Institutional Review Board (IRB). Researchers also received written consent from parents and the participating youth before carrying out this research. In addition, researchers obtained permission to use all photographs produced and the accompanying narratives for academic purposes, including the sharing of relevant findings with public health and public policy experts and the general public. Student and staff journal reflections will

ultimately be compiled and published into a collective "diary" of the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers removed student identifiers prior to the analysis to protect participant privacy and ensure anonymity throughout the process.

As part of the regular SAYS curriculum, journaling is part of the daily class assignments. Due to the sensitive nature and identifiable information in the journal, however, the SAYS team did not collect entire student journals for an analysis. Instead, the SAYS team sent out requests to all student participants to voluntarily share an entry of their journal as they were comfortable. Out of 188 students who received the CD Curriculum 42 students across all schools provided an entry from their journal for the research team to analyze. All journal entries came from middle schools, not high schools. Thus, the entries are written by middle school students, who volunteered to share their journals. In addition, the majority of the submitted journal entries were written by students from Fortune Schools, with Ephraim Williams College Prep being overrepresented with the highest number of submissions. Thus, our analysis of COVID Diaries student journal reflections capture a snapshot, not the whole picture, of the student experiences during the pandemic.

COVID Diaries Curriculum

The CD Curriculum (see figure 3 and table 2) was developed to shine a light on and provide a platform for the stories and voices of students that had a multitude of different experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning. The pandemic disproportionately affected historically marginalized students, which educators witnessed firsthand. The CD Curriculum was also designed to educate students on the realities of the pandemic and encourage them to become positive influencers in public health behavior. It provided students a space to process what happened in their local communities during mandated closures caused by COVID-19. The SAYS Curriculum and pedagogy served as the foundation to develop the CD Curriculum. The SAYS Curriculum is based on four key pedagogical components:

1. Learning how to authentically reach students is a precursor to successful teaching.

2. Effectively engaging students requires that educators know who their students are and where they come from.

3. Young people want to learn, but most of them need lessons that are relevant, thought provoking, and interactive.

4. Reading, writing, and speaking are the foundations of civic engagement, democratic participation, and equity within and beyond the walls of school.

Additionally, the SAYS pedagogy and curriculum is rooted in critical cultural literacy, spoken-word performance poetry, trauma informed and writing for healing and expression. Spoken word poetry is an everyday life endeavor that has found greater usage in education.[23]

At SAYS, they believe in using writing as a form of healing and empowerment, so in developing the CD Curriculum they focused on using culturally relevant writing prompts to engage students to critically think on the ways that the COVID-19 pandemic shaped, influenced and changed their lives and most importantly spoke about their experiences. Students were given the option to record themselves reciting their poetry if desired.
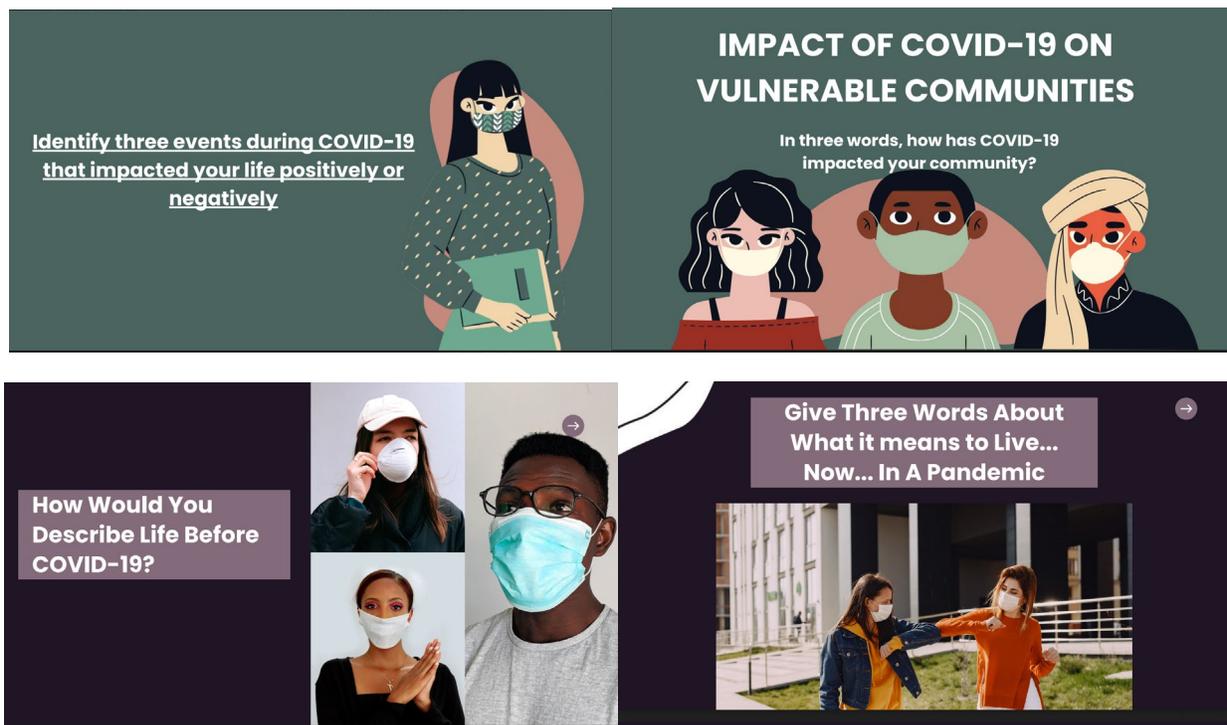
Figure 3: Presentation slides from the COVID Diaries curriculum

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[23] Raphael d'Abdon, "Teaching Spoken Word Poetry as a Tool for Decolonizing and Africanizing the South African Curricula and Implementing 'Literocracy'", Scrutiny 21, no. 2 (2016): 44, https://doi.org/10.1080/18125441.2016.1192676. As Raphael d'Adon notes, spoken word poetry is "inscribed with textual and extra-textual elements" that can be used to change how students or society think about themselves and the process of knowledge acquisition and production.

TABLE 2. *COVID Diaries Curriculum*

Time	Components	Writing Prompts
Week One: Acceptance Workshop	• Identity. Memories. Defining self for self. • Impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable communities. • Three events that changed you during the COVID-19 shutdown.	• COVID changed everything. • Will I ever be the same?
Week Two: The Can I Live Workshop	• The meaning of life before COVID-19 as young people define it. • The meaning of life after COVID-19 as young people define it. • What does it mean to live in a pandemic?	•Can I live … Can I breathe … • Since COVID-19, this is life as I see it.
Week Three: Real numbers + Realities of COVID-19 in our communities.	• The real numbers of COVID in our communities? • Vaccination rates for teens and communities of color in the Greater Sacramento Region.	• Understanding the true reality of COVID in my community informs me. • COVID-19 is running rampant. • Why should I get vaccinated? • I want the vaccine, but I think otherwise.
Week Four: Historical of unethical + racist medical practices in vulnerable communities	• History of Racism in the healthcare industry and how that informs communities of color. • Exploitative behavior in the healthcare industry • Tuskegee • Henrietta Lacks	• The history of unethical medical practices in America and now being a thing during COVID-19. • History impacts me … •Comparing today to yesterday during covid-19…
Week Five: How do you really feel about COVID?	• How does implementing vaccine mandates in my school district affect me? • Vaccinations • Vaccination Mandates • Social Distancing • Masks Mandates • Mandated Closures • Essential Workers • Distance Learning	• School is where I want to be so if I must take a vaccine to come, I will … • I see no alternative for me, if I don't get vaccinated against COVID-19, I will …
Week 6: COVID-19 and Education	• COVID-19 and its effect on your education. • How did you experience your education during COVID-19? • School differences pre/post COVID-19. • School and what was lost during COVID-19? • Partial quarantining • School communication regarding COVID-19	• School was a safe space for me that was lost during mandated closures caused by COVID-19… • During mandated closures caused by COVID-19, distance learning worked for me… • School is important to me but during COVID-19 school was not the best for me…

Week	Topics	Prompts
Week 7: COVID-19 Symptoms and Testing	• COVID-19 symptoms • COVID-19 testing • Access to testing sites • Types of tests • Personal experience with COVID-19 testing	• I took a COVID-19 test and surprisingly… • I want to take a COVID-19 test but I don't know if it's for me… • Since I got my vaccine, I have had minimal testing for COVID-19.
Week 8: COVID-19 and Youth Mental Health	• Intergenerational Trauma • Systemic Racism • Psychological Distress • Therapy in underrepresented communities • Access to clinical services • Analyzing quotes and data about the impact on youth mental health during the pandemic.	• COVID-19 has had a major mental effect on me… • My mental health is my priority, during covid-19 I focused on…
Week 9: Young people as disseminators of information	•What do I want health care providers to know about stopping the spread of COVID-19? • What do I want my community to know about stopping the spread of COVID-19? • What do I want my family to know about stopping the spread of COVID-19? • What do I want my community to know about stopping the spread of COVID-19? • What do I want to know about stopping the spread of COVID-19?	• I am taking it upon me to personally help stop the spread of COVID-19… • In my community there are these important things we must know to stop the spread of COVID-19…
Week 10: Social Justice and Artistic Expression	• COVID art and the impact on communities of color • Art resistance as a tool for the fight against the spread of COVID-19 • Artists' response to COVID-19	• Final project: Create song, poem, artwork. Etc. as a call to action to help stop and prevent the spread of covid-19.

Findings

Survey Results

There are multiple influencers inside and outside of the school setting related to public health notions and beliefs. The scope of the project was focused on the school setting; therefore, the surveys were used to understand, at two points in time and with a representative (if different) sample of students, how students felt about COVID-19 and public health mitigation strategies that were being put into place (see Appendix A). These results—when compared to national and regional measures—could tell us whether we were targeting communities that were more or less impacted by disparities in public health messaging, vaccination rates, and health outcomes that the COVID-19 Diaries project was seeking to impact.

The CD Curriculum was administered to 188 individual students in 8 school sites in Sacramento and Yolo counties. Of the participants, 95 students completed the pre-survey (pre-survey) in the first week of March 2022 and 92 students participated in the post-survey (post-survey) in June 2022. Students had the option to respond to some or all the survey questions. Hence, 95 responses were not collected for each and every question posed. The circumstances and the data from the surveys both suggest that the sample of students for the two surveys were overlapping but different. This was not a longitudinal study; rather, the pre- and post-curriculum surveys were utilized to measure the COVID-19 attitudes and behaviors of the sample as context for the analysis of quantitative data.

In the ten weeks or so between the pre- and post-surveys, factors such as school closures, lifting of mask mandates, changes in the availability of vaccines and testing, as well as rising and falling infection rates, also had an influence on students' perceptions and behaviors. Changes in perception or behaviors from the time of the first survey to the second survey were not necessarily indicative of the impact of the curriculum; rather, they serve as a baseline of data to understand who the participants were as a backdrop to the analysis of their reflections. Survey findings can be categorized into the following themes: Demographics: Race and ethnicity, Geographic Location, Perceptions, Testing, Mask Wearing & Social Distancing, Vaccinations, Sources of Information, and Sense of Empowerment.

DEMOGRAPHICS: RACE AND ETHNICITY. The pre- and post-surveys collected participant demographics, specifically ethnicity, to measure the reach of COVID Diaries on these target communities (see figures 4 & 5). Respondents were able to select more than one ethnic identity.
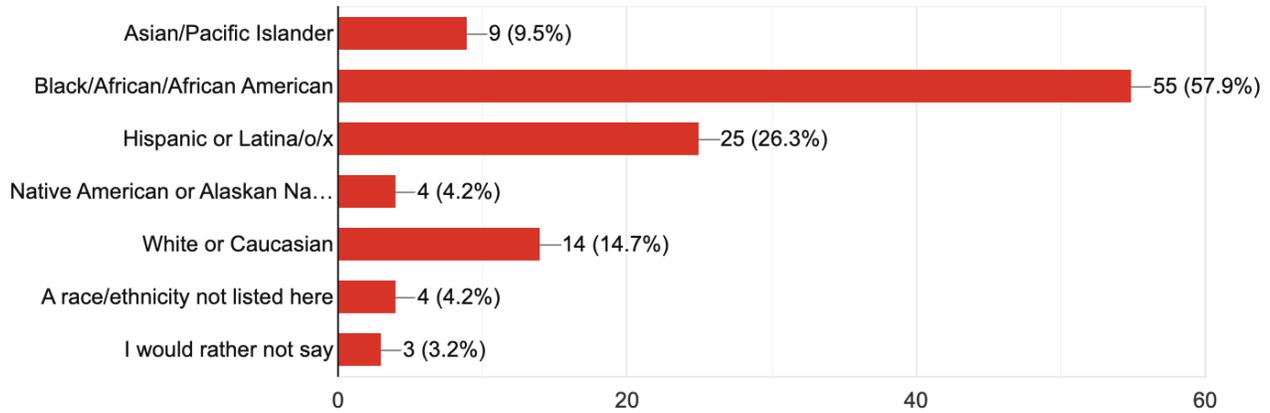
The vast majority of respondents to both surveys identified as Black/African American (58% in the pre-survey and 43% in the posted survey) followed by Hispanic or Latina/o/x with just over 26% of all respondents in both surveys. Asian Pacific Islander respondents ranged from 9.5% in the pre-survey to nearly 14.5% in the post-survey. White or Caucasian participants represented close to 14% and 13% of all responses to the pre-survey and post-surveys respectively. Native American or Alaskan Native represented the smallest percentage (ranging from 2-4%) of all responses.

GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION. Most of the respondents to the surveys lived in Parkway-South Sacramento and Arden-Arcade Communities of Sacramento County with some respondents from South Land Park, Carmichael, Fruitridge, and Woodland (see figures 6 & 7). Parkway-South Sacramento "neighborhoods in the 95823 zip code...have been a COVID-19 hot spot since the start of the pandemic...the highest of any zip code in Sacramento County by more than a thousand cases, according to the municipality's COVID-19 dashboard."[24]

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[24] Sarah Mizes-Tan, "Why Is This South Sacramento Area A COVID-19 Hot Spot?" *CapRadio*, January 11, 2021, https://www.capradio.org/articles/2021/01/11/why-is-this-south-sacramento-area-a-covid-19-hot-spot/

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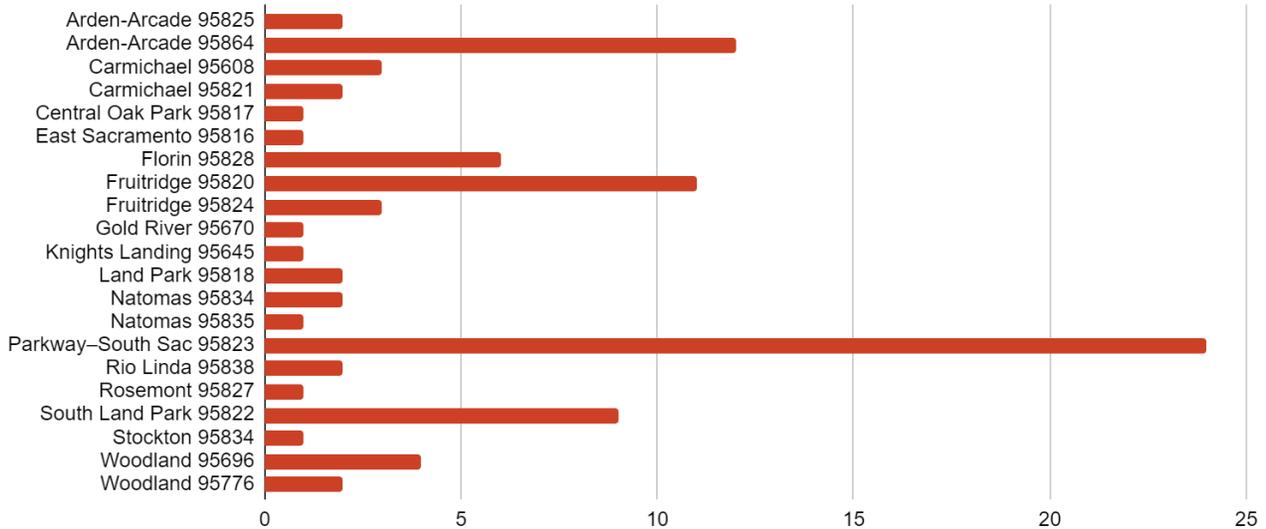
Demographics: Race and Ethnicity

Figure 4: Pre-Curriculum Survey Q2:"Which of the following best describes you?
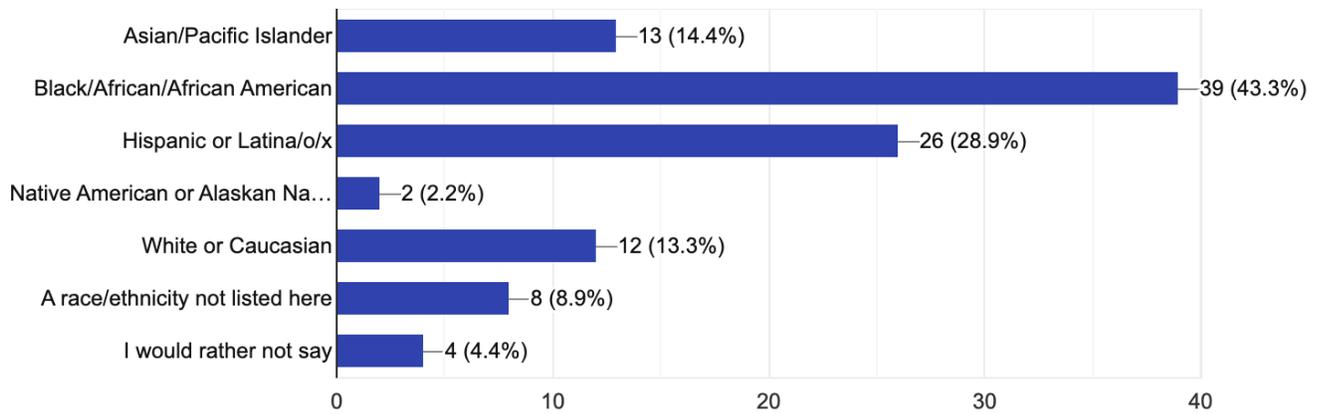
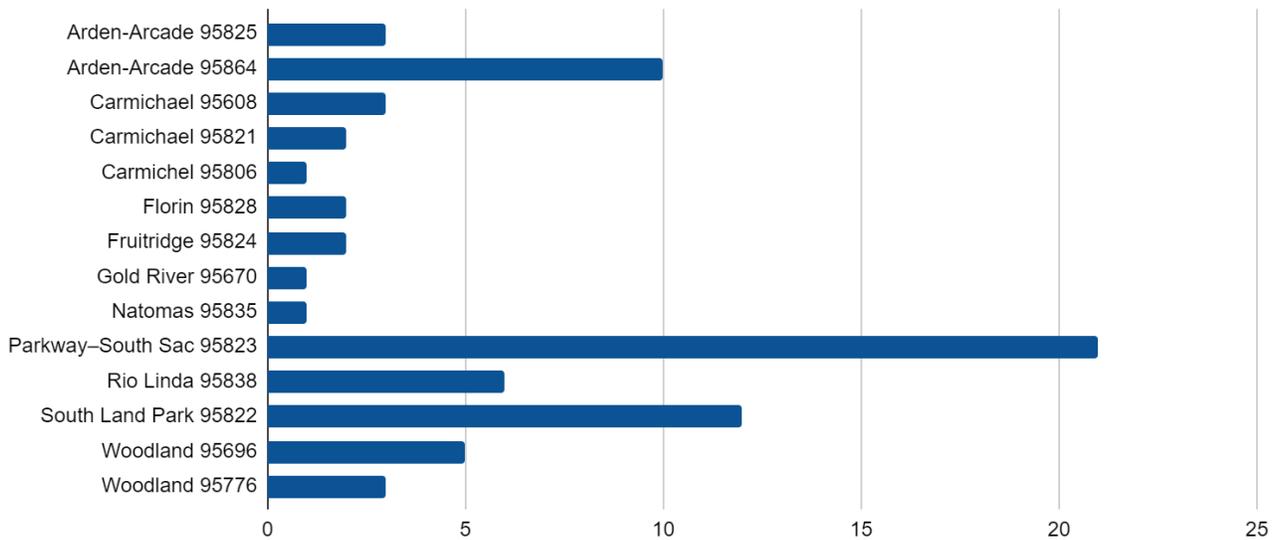**Figure 5:** Post-Curriculum Survey Q2: "Which of the following best describes you?

Geographic Location

Pre-Curriculum Survey: Student Participant Zip Codes

Figure 6: Pre-Curriculum Survey: Student Participant Zip Codes (Sacramento/Yolo County)

Post-Curriculum Survey: Student Participant Zip Codes

Figure 7: Post-Curriculum Survey: Student Participant Zip Codes (Sacramento/Yolo County)

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PERCEPTIONS. When the pre-survey was launched in March 2022, the US Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) established the severity of the Delta and Omicron variants with announcements across media platforms. By March 8, all the pre-survey responses (95 responses) had come in. In the pre-survey, 54% of participants believed that the virus posed a threat to their health (see figure 8). but this increased to 61% in the post survey. The pre- and post-survey results show that the percentage of respondents who believed "COVID-19 was a 'very serious' or 'serious' public health issue" (60%) remained consistent.

Regarding student fears surrounding contracting COVID-19, while most respondents in the pre- and post-surveys remained neutral, we did see a slight increase among participants concerned with contracting COVID-19. In the pre-survey, 31% (29 of 94 responses) responded that they were scared of getting COVID-19. In the post-survey, 37% (33 of 89 responses) responded that they were scared of getting COVD-19 (see figure 9). While there are multiple contextual factors that may affect student perception of COVID-19, the responses hint at an increased health-related awareness of COVID-19 as a result of the CD Curriculum.

TESTING. Fewer participants reported taking a COVID test after completing the CD Curriculum. In the pre-survey, 93% (88 of 95 responses) had previously taken a COVID-19 test, while 85% (76 of 89 responses) of post-survey respondents reported taking a COVID-19 test (see figure 8). In terms of access to COVID-19 testing, we did see an increase from 74% (70 of 94 responses) reported knowing how to access COVID-19 tests in the pre-survey to 88% (80 of 91 responses) post-survey responses (see figure 10). The majority of participants who did report taking a COVID-19 test were tested in schools (see figure 11 & 12). Other common testing locations were home rapid test kits, hospital visitation, and community centers.
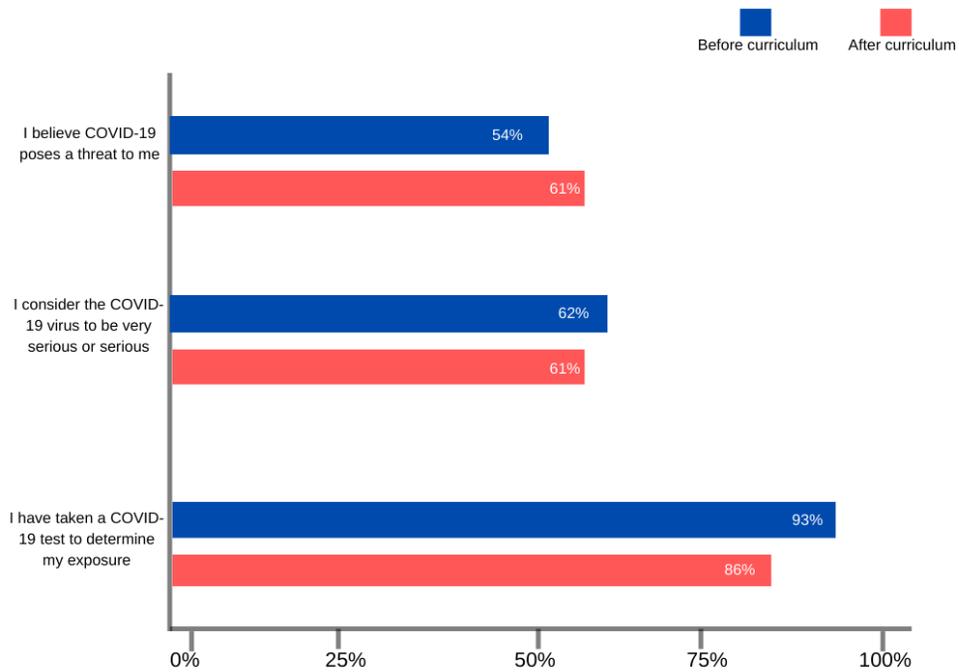
Figure 8: Response to COVID-19 seriousness (pre-curriculum response in blue, post-curriculum response in red) Q3: Do you believe COVID-19 poses a threat to your health? Q4: How serious of a public health issue do you consider the COVID-19 pandemic? Q5: Have you ever taken a test to see if you have COVID-19?
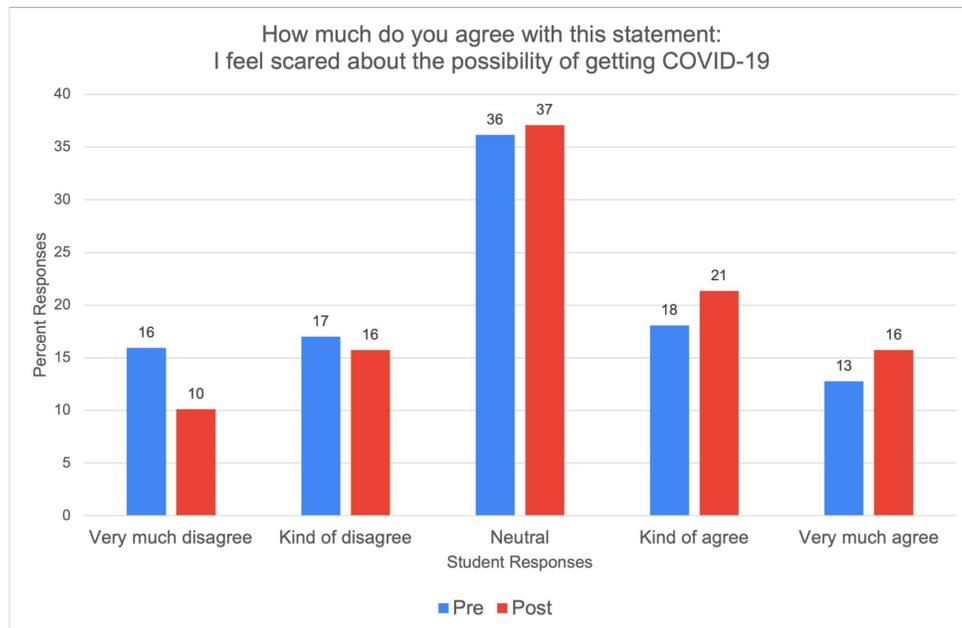
Figure 9: Percentage responses to student perceptions of COVID-19 and fear (pre-curriculum response in blue, post-curriculum response in red). Q28: How much do you agree with this statement: I feel scared about the possibility of getting COVID-19.

In the pre-survey, 37% (35 of 94 responses) reported being tested every week, while 4% (4 of 94 responses) reported testing every two weeks and 20% (21 of 94 responses) testing when symptomatic. In the post-survey, 15% (12 of 82 responses) reported getting tested every week, 17% (14 of 82 responses) reported testing every two weeks, and 35% (29 of 82 responses) were testing when symptomatic. In the pre-survey, 46% (44 of 95 responses) reported having had a COVID-19 infection. Comparatively, in the post-survey, this percentage increased to 58% (52 of 90 responses) (see figure 10). Based on these findings, it is possible that more students contracted COVID as the school year progressed throughout the 10-week CD Curriculum.
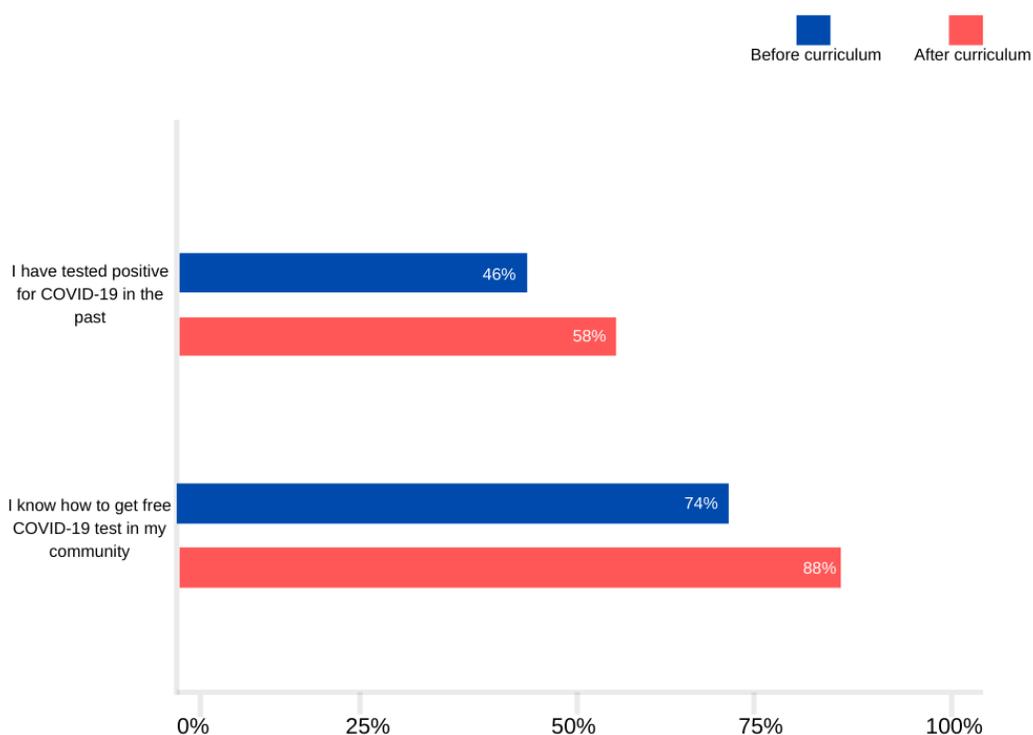

Figure 10: COVID-19 testing questions (Pre-Curriculum response in blue, post-curriculum response in red)
Q7: Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19?
Q8: If you get sick, do you know how to get a free COVID-19 test in your community?
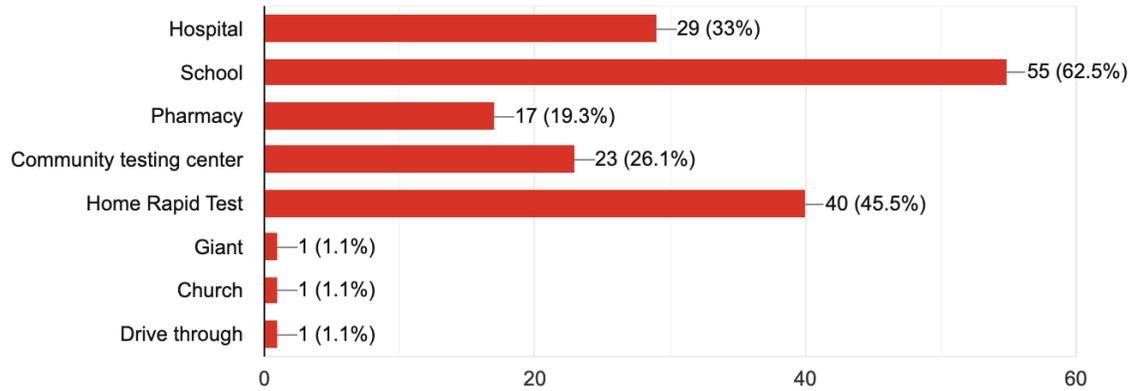
Figure 11: Pre-Curriculum Survey response from students who answered yes to taking a COVID-19 test (Figure 8) Q6: "If yes, where have you gotten tested? Check all that apply"
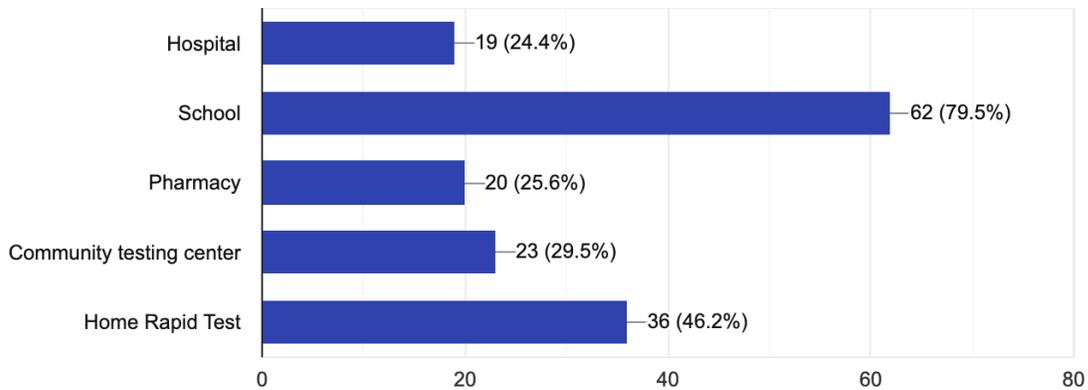
Figure 12: Post-Curriculum Survey response from students who answered yes to taking a COVID 19 test (Figure 8)
Q6: "If yes, where have you gotten tested? Check all that apply"

MASK WEARING & SOCIAL DISTANCING. When the pre-curriculum survey was administered in March 2022, wearing masks was mandated at the schools. In the pre-survey, 24% (23 of 94 responses) indicated that they always wear masks in school and never take them off while 50% (47 of 94 responses) reported usually wear them and sometimes take them off. Only 13% (12 of 94 responses) reported never using masks. Responding to the post-survey in May - June, while fewer students noted always wearing a mask in school, 19% (17 of 91 responses) slightly more students, 54% (50 of 91 responses) indicated that they usually wear masks and sometimes remove them. The percentage of students who reported never wearing masks remained steady at just around 14% (13 of 91 responses). The reduction in the percentage of students reporting that they always wore a mask may be attributed to changes in local and state policies, specifically lifting of the state-wide mask mandate in April 2022.

Additionally, we saw an increase in the percentage of respondents who reported practicing social distancing, with 67% of pre-survey respondents indicating that they maintain a six feet distance in school compared to 87% in the post-survey.

VACCINATIONS. A few months before the distribution of the pre-survey, in November 2021, the CDC announced that anyone under 18 years of age could get the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and that children aged 5 to 11 could get the Pfizer-BioNtech Pediatric vaccine.[25] In the pre-survey 44% (42 of 95 responses) viewed vaccines as an effective means to mitigate the spread of COVID and/or the severity of its impact on those who contract the virus, compared to 80% (71 of 89 responses) in the post-survey. In addition, there was a slight increase in the percentage of respondents who reported being vaccinated. In the pre-survey, 45% (43 of 95 responses) had received a COVID-19 vaccine. In the post-survey, 52% (47 of 91 responses) reported being vaccinated. In the pre-survey, 30% (13 of 43 responses) reported feeling safer after being vaccinated while 37% (16 of 43 responses) felt "somewhat" safer and 33% (14 of 43 responses) felt otherwise. In the post-survey, 66% (31 of 47 responses) reported that they felt safe because of vaccines, 30% responded "somewhat" safer (14 of 47 responses), while only 4% (2 of 47 responses) did not. The significant increase in the percentage of post-survey respondents who reported feeling safer after being vaccinated is parallel to the decrease in respondents who reported that the vaccine did not make them feel safer.
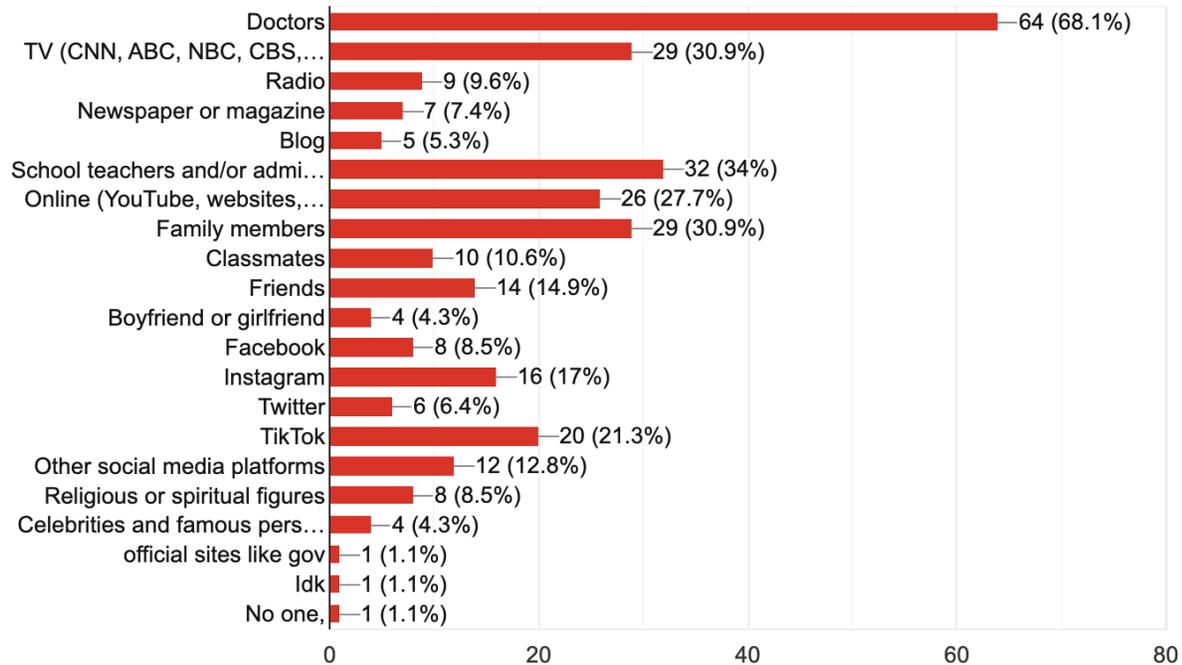
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[25] "CDC Museum COVID-19 Timeline," Center for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed September 16, 2022, https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html.

Among students who were not vaccinated, when asked why the majority of those who responded to the pre-survey—58% (24 of 41 responses)—noted "lack of trust", followed by "parents would not let me" (10%; 4 out of 41 responses). Approximately 5% cited "religion" and "medical reasons" respectively (5%; 2 out of 41 responses). In the post-survey, fewer students—41% (11 of 27 responses)—listed "lack of trust" while "parents would not let me" increased to 37% (10 of 27 responses) "religion" increased to 15% (15%; 4 of 27 responses).

In terms of keeping themselves and others safe, students were asked to indicate how much they agreed with the following question: I feel it is important to know if someone is vaccinated before I hang out with them. In response to the pre-survey 23% (22 of 95 responses) indicated they agree "very much" or "somewhat" while 40% (38 of 95 responses) said they disagree "somewhat" or "very much." The remaining 37% (35 of 95 responses) were neutral, meaning they neither agreed or disagreed. In the post-survey, 29% (26 of 90 responses) agreed "very much" or "somewhat" and 38% (34 of 90 responses) disagree "somewhat" or "very much", and 33% (30 of 90 responses) remained neutral. This increase in the percentage of students who expressed concern about being in close proximity to others who were not vaccinated.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION. COVID Diaries aimed to ascertain where Sacramento youth received information about COVID-19 to better understand their attitudes toward the pandemic. The pre- and post-surveys show that participants consider doctors and schoolteachers to have more reliable information about COVID-19. However, responses also demonstrate the strong influence of social media and online forums, particularly YouTube and Tiktok, as channels of COVID-19 information (see figures 13 & 14).

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Figure 13: Pre-curriculum survey response to sources of information on COVID-19
Q25: "What do you consider a reliable source when it comes to getting accurate information about COVID-19?
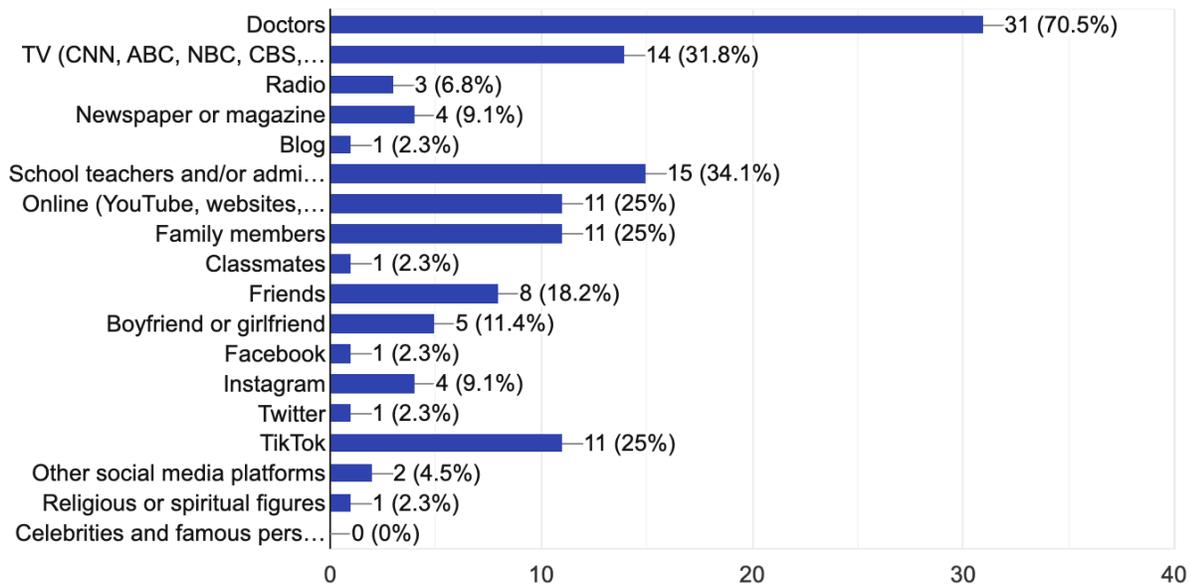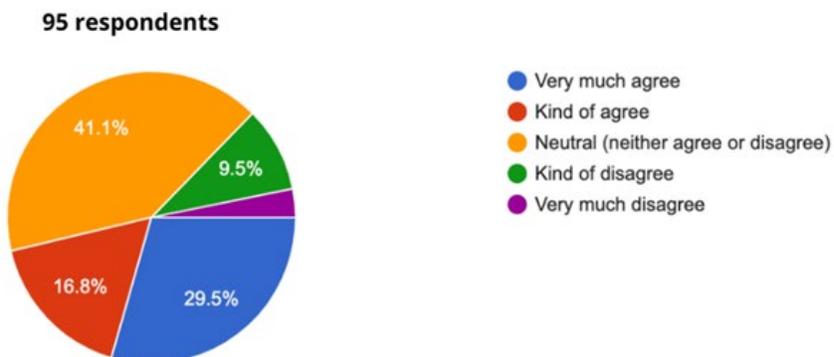

Figure 14: Post-curriculum survey response to sources of information on COVID-19
Q25: "What do you consider a reliable source when it comes to getting accurate information about COVID-19?"
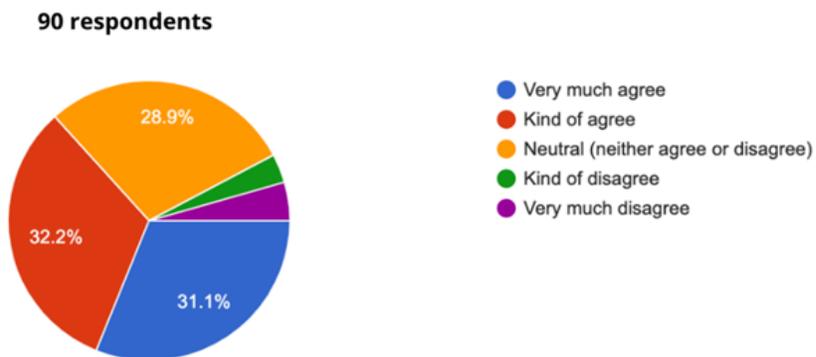
SENSE OF EMPOWERMENT. Students' self-empowerment at the highest level remained consistent before and after the CD Curriculum, with nearly 30% of respondents in the pre and post-survey indicating that they "very much agree" that they felt empowered to make decisions regarding their own health. In contrast, only 13% disagreed ("kind of" or "very much") in the pre-survey which reduced to 8% in the post-survey. Of note was a shift in those who felt indifferent. Whereas 41% of pre-survey respondents responded being "neutral" and 17% felt "somewhat" empowered, post-survey responses showed a reduction to 29% "neutral" responses and an increase to 32% of students noting that they "kind of" feel empowered over their health (see figure 16). This is an indication that more students appeared to have self-agency pertaining to their health following the CD Curriculum.

In terms of feeling empowered and motivated to help their family and community members stop the spread of COVID-19, when comparing the pre and post-survey responses while the percentage of students who felt empowered and the highest levels (very much agreed) dropped slightly from 29% in the pre-survey to 23% in the post-survey, fewer students felt neutral after completing the CD Curriculum shifting from 41% (39 of 95 responses) of pre-survey respondents to 33% (29 of 88 of responses) in the post-survey. Additionally, the percentage of students who felt "somewhat empowered" to influence their family and community increased from 17% (16 of 95 responses) in the pre-survey to 33% (31 of 88 responses) in the post-survey (see figures 17 and 18). Compared to 46% (44 of 95 responses) of pre-survey respondents who indicated that they agree to the statement: "I feel empowered and motivated to help my family and members of my community stop the spread of COVID-19" In the post-survey, 58% of students (51 of 88) reported that they "kind of agree" or "very much agree'' that they felt empowered and motivated to help their family and members of their community stop the spread of COVID-19. In contrast, only a small percentage of pre- and post-surveys reported feeling disempowered: 13% (12 of 95 responses) from the pre-survey and 9% (8 of 88 responses) from the post-survey (see figures 17 and 18).
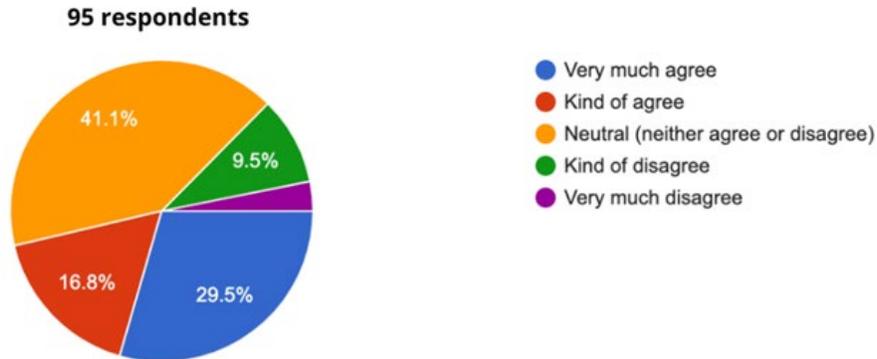
95 respondents

Legend:
- Very much agree
- Kind of agree
- Neutral (neither agree or disagree)
- Kind of disagree
- Very much disagree

41.1% 9.5% 16.8% 29.5%

Figure 15: Pre-curriculum responses regarding student empowerment
Q30: How much do you agree with this statement: I feel empowered to make decisions regarding my own health

90 respondents

Legend:
- Very much agree
- Kind of agree
- Neutral (neither agree or disagree)
- Kind of disagree
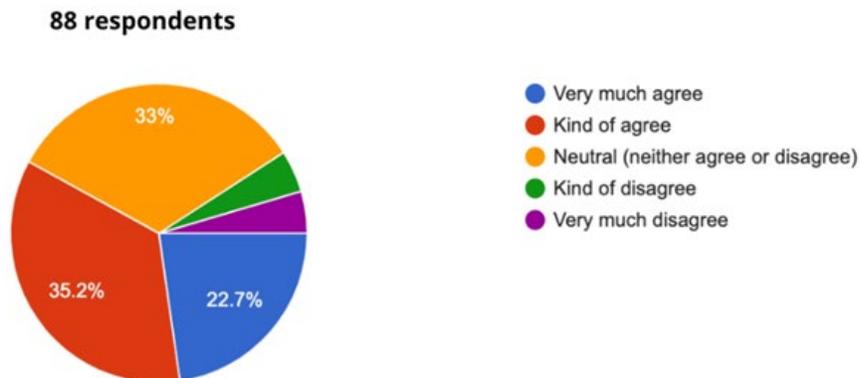- Very much disagree

28.9% 32.2% 31.1%

Figure 16: Post-curriculum responses regarding student empowerment
Q30: How much do you agree with this statement: I feel empowered to make decisions regarding my own health

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95 respondents

- ● Very much agree
- ● Kind of agree
- ● Neutral (neither agree or disagree)
- ● Kind of disagree
- ● Very much disagree

Figure 17: Pre-curriculum response to student empowerment to support family and community.
Q31: How much do you agree with this statement: I feel empowered and motivated to help my family and members of my community stop the spread of COVID-19?

88 respondents

- ● Very much agree
- ● Kind of agree
- ● Neutral (neither agree or disagree)
- ● Kind of disagree
- ● Very much disagree

Figure 18: Post-curriculum response to student empowerment to support family and community.
Q31: How much do you agree with this statement: I feel empowered and motivated to help my family and members of my community stop the spread of COVID-19?

To summarize, the COVID Diaries pre- and post-surveys provide insight into how participants felt about critical aspects of COVID-19 mitigation like testing, vaccination, and mask-wearing. We saw positive attitudinal changes regarding these indicators after participants completed the curriculum. Survey responses revealed that students were taking more agency over their health and becoming more confident in taking necessary actions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 along with what to do when they are infected. It appears that this confidence grew regarding vaccination, testing, and safe public health practices after completing the CD Curriculum. Additionally, we saw an increase in student motivation to be influencers in their communities to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 after completing the curriculum. We also see that student participants took the threat of COVID-19 to personal and public health seriously.

Student and Staff Journal Reflections

Student Reflections

The COVID Diaries curriculum employed the observation of students' experience of life and education living and attending school during the pandemic. Students expressed their feelings in handwritten format. SAYS collected 42 student journal entries. This section is an overview of what students wrote. The student journal entries personalized many of the challenges that students across the country faced during the lockdown. Most students expressed trauma related to the loss of teachers and people close to them. These mental health traumas were amid forceful separation from friends and teachers, and the unusual nature of taking remote classes. These elements negatively affected the mental health of students. The five dominant emotional trends expressed in the 42 journal entries were loss, distractions/isolation, restrictions, anxiety, and acceptance.

LOSS. The sudden transition from in-person schooling to virtual learning, the unfamiliarity of mask-wearing, and the everyday broadcast of COVID-19-related deaths were primary aspects that participants described regarding their pandemic-related trauma. These elements appeared in numerous forms. Some students were shocked and confused by the sudden deaths of teachers and family members due to the virus. Managing these hardships with the knowledge of a worldwide loss of precious lives was

difficult to process.[26] For many, such deaths caused significant mental strain and added difficulty to learning. As two students put it, "COVID-19 messed up our education."[27] The challenges of coping with such mental hardships also affected participation in extracurricular activities like sports, even before schools were forced to close.
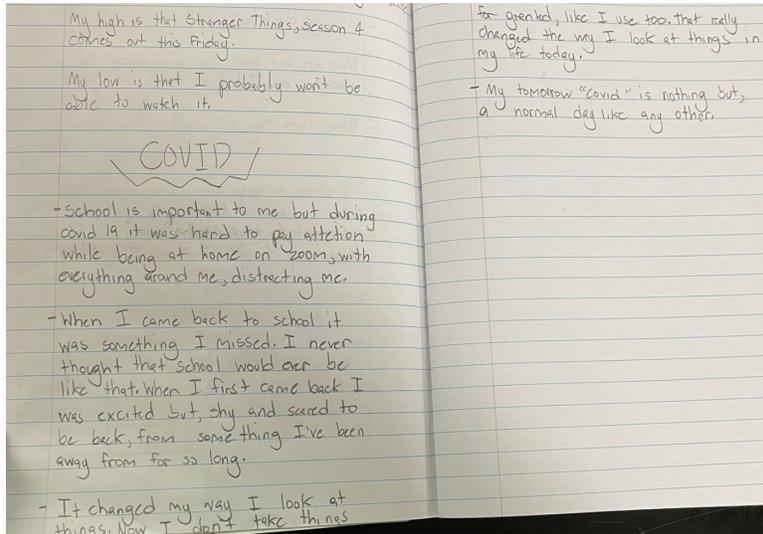
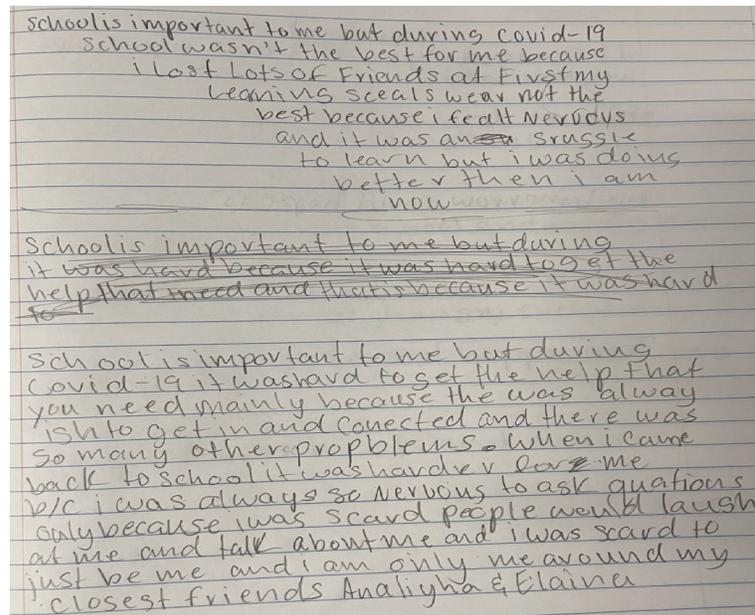**Figure 19**: Photo of Student Journal Entry #4

Figure 20: Photo of Student Journal Entry #16

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[26] Entry 9, 11, 23, 32.

[27] Entry 33, 37.

DISTRACTIONS FROM REMOTE LEARNING. Many students experienced difficulties and distractions while learning remotely. Some students enjoyed being home during the pandemic because COVID-19 rules were less enforced at home than in schools. However, students were not guaranteed a conducive remote learning environment. For example, students had disruptive home environments, with noises out of their control.[28] Due to minimal supervision, students were engaged in social media during school hours. Several students emphasized a lack of ability to discipline themselves and set aside distractions to focus on school.[29] Before the pandemic, many students had set routines that were conducive to both productivity and regular sleep hours. After the shelter-in-place mandate, students struggled to keep their routines and often slept during normal school hours. Some reported sleeping during live lectures,[30] especially when no parent or guardian was present and attentive to wake them.[31]

RESTRICTIONS. The students' learning was restricted because they were not adequately prepared to switch to remote learning so quickly. It was challenging for many to participate and retain information from their classes.[32] One common barrier was poor internet connection.[33] Students were frustrated with this disruption because it was largely out of their control. Students also struggled to adapt to the fast-paced nature of remote learning. Unlike in brick-and-mortar classrooms where students could take time before class to consult other students or utilize school facilities to prepare for an upcoming class, remote learning did not offer these same opportunities.[34] The isolated and in-and-out style of remote learning restricted the opportunity for students to interact with and get help from classmates and teachers. After schools resumed in-person classes, students found it difficult to adapt to the mandatory indoor mask-wearing requirement across Sacramento schools. Wearing one mask—due to mask shortages—for the entire school day caused a "sicky" feeling.[35] Many students wrote that the mandate restricted their interaction with friends, which was one of the main reasons they enjoyed going

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[28] Entry 4, 30.
[29] Entry 6.
[30] Entry 11, 21.
[31] Entry 17.
[32] Entry 20.
[33] Entry 40, 42.
[34] Entry 15, 18, 35, 36, 38.
[35] Entry 7.

to school.[36] Not seeing smiles or giving hugs to their friends was an "awkward and weird" experience.[37] These reasons prevented students from maintaining focus in school.[38]

ANXIETY. As friendships were rekindled after in person class resumed,[39] many students still had difficulty re-acclimating to the school environment because they were "shy" and "scared" to be back after "so long."[40] The earliest days of being back to school was a period of anxiety. Students feared getting sick and so they did their best to adhere to school COVID-19 mandates and social distancing guidelines.[41] They were also scared of bringing the virus home and making their parents or loved ones sick. This new terrain of anxiety made it a challenge to maintain good grades because it was "hard to learn" in these circumstances.[42] Not all students felt that they had enough support to ease into the new environment at school.[43] Pandemic school life was "bad" and "boring" so much that "during COVID-19, school was not the best" place to be.[44] Nonetheless, to these students returning to "school is important."[45] Yet they had problems adjusting to basic tasks like writing, reading, and other commitments; these became so "confusing and tiring."[46]

ACCEPTANCE. Some students had a positive experience after in-person class resumed, particularly those whose grades suffered due to distractions and restrictions during remote learning.[47] Students had a better quality of life and appreciated in-person classes more after seeing their teachers and friends again.[48] Other students felt bored in the immediate days of returning to school; the fatigue of lockdown was not easy to shrug off quickly, and it caused some students to withdraw.[49] One student reported that they refused to actively participate in class activities because they were scared others

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[36] Entry 1, 16, 28.

[37] Entry 3.

[38] Entry 16, 27, 30, 31.

[39] Entry 1.

[40] Entry 4.

[41] Entry 24.

[42] Entry 13, 19.

[43] Entry 15.

[44] Entry 2, 39, 40.

[45] Entry 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 34, 41.

[46] Entry 13, 14, 30.

[47] Entry 5.

[48] Entry 4, 28, 39.

[49] Entry 8, 10, 12, 17, 26.

would laugh at them should they wrongly answer a question.[50] This speaks to the trauma many students experienced and shared surrounding potential exposure to COVID. Nonetheless, as vaccination increased across the country in May 2022 and COVID Diaries wound down, students accepted that COVID-19 had to be managed as a part of life This acceptance made going to school during the pandemic as a student puts it, yet "another normal day" of life.[51]

Staff Reflections

The SAYS Director and Associate Director, who implemented the CD Curriculum, documented their reflections on the project as well. These reflections provide additional insight into the experience of working with students during their first full year back in the classroom while implementing COVID Diaries. Below are two excerpts from their reflections. An analysis of the staff experiences and observations will be published in a separate report.

"The Covid Diaries curriculum experiences prove that students need more than academics and traditional education in order to bounce back from this international pand[emic]. This curriculum gave students an opportunity to critically think, speak, and social[ly] and emotional[ly] heal from some [of] the negative effects of C[OVID] and distance learning."

"One of my babies at school thanked me today after class just for giving her the space and time to talk about [the] impacts of C[OVID]. She said, "I was the only person to ever ask her opinion and it felt good letting it out because she didn't realize how much C[OVID] affected her."

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[50] Entry 16.
[51] Entry 3.

Conclusion

The 2021-2022 academic year in Sacramento County presented immense public health challenges and hardships, particularly in zip codes of immigrant, low-income, and racial and ethnic minority communities, in the context of the continued COVID-19 pandemic. As schools returned to in-person instruction, varied factors—such as an unequal distribution of resources, uneven access to testing, misinformation, disinformation, and lack of information, and a dearth of relationships with trusted medical providers—exposed and amplified the health, educational, and socio-economic inequities that exacerbated COVID-19 rates and the impact of COVID-19 on daily life. In response, the CD curriculum endeavored for youth to be agents in their own health outcomes by providing a safe space for them to share and process their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CD Curriculum gave students and educators the opportunity to express and process what they experienced from spring 2020 through summer 2022. The CD curriculum, on the ground educators, and safe classroom spaces infused with a culturally relevant curriculum amplified student voices. It created the opportunity for vulnerable youth, as critical consumers and distributors of information, to engage in critical and in-depth discussions around the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-Diaries curriculum was developed to document what educators were seeing and experiencing working on the front lines with students as they transitioned back to school from distance learning as the pandemic continued. The stories and lived experiences of students chronicled in this project fill in gaps in the knowledge of vulnerable youth who experienced the pandemic and processed public health information. The findings have the potential to substantially influence and shape the way we approach public health and education and the role of youth in such endeavors. This project provides insights for medical providers, government officials, policymakers, educators, and the community at large on the devastating impact that COVID-19 had on youth, schools, and communities. Additionally, the findings point to possible solutions to improve public health outcomes. These stories must be shared and heard. The research team will pursue additional analysis of the data, publication, and dissemination venues.

Appendix A

COVID Diaries Pre- and Post- Survey

The purpose of the survey is to measure the effectiveness of the SAYS COVID Diaries Curriculum and its impact on students. You will take the same survey two times, once before the curriculum starts and once after the curriculum is completed. Your answers to the survey will be anonymous and will NOT impact your grade in the SAYS class. For the purpose of this survey, the "pandemic" refers to the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020-present.

GENERAL:

1. Which zip code do you currently live in?   (Select one zip code)

   Sacramento (95823,95828, 95817, 95818, 95821, 95822, 95824, 95824, 95825, 95838, or 95864)

   Knights Landing (95645 or 95776)

   Woodland (95696 or 95776)

   Firebaugh (93622)

2. Which of the following best describes you? (check all that apply)

   Asian/Pacific Islander

   Black/African/African American

   Hispanic or Latina/o/x

   Native American or Alaskan Native

   White or Caucasian

   Multiracial or Biracial

   A race/ethnicity not listed here

   I would rather not say

3. Do you believe COVID-19 poses a threat to your health?

   Yes

   No

   I would rather not say

4. How serious of a public health issue do you consider the COVID-19 pandemic?

   Very serious

   Serious

   Somewhat serious

   Not serious

5. Have you ever taken a test to see if you have COVID-19?

   Yes

   No

   I would rather not say

6. If yes, where have you gotten tested? Check all that apply

   Hospital

   School

   Pharmacy

   Community testing center

   Home Rapid Test

   Other: list

7. Have you ever tested positive for COVID-19?

   Yes

   No

   I would rather not say

8. If you get sick, do you know how to get a free COVID-19 test in your community?

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Yes

No

9. In the last month, how often do you get tested for COVID-19?

Only when I have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19

Once every week

Once every two weeks

Once every month

Other (list)

I have never gotten tested

10. Do you believe that vaccination helps prevent COVID-19 infection or reduces the severity of COVID-19 illness?

Yes

No

11. Have you received a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes

No

12. If yes: Do you feel safer than you did prior to vaccination?

Yes

Somewhat

No

13. If yes: Which vaccine did you receive?

Pfizer

Moderna

Johnson & Johnson

I'm not sure

14. If Pfizer or Moderna vaccine: have you received two shots?

Yes

No

I'm not sure

15. If Pfizer or Moderna vaccine: have you gotten a booster shot (3rd shot)?

Yes

No

I'm not sure

If no:

16. Why have you not received the vaccine?

Medical reasons

Religious reasons

Don't trust the vaccine

Don't know where or how to get one

Parents won't let me get the vaccine

Other (list reasons)

PROTECTION FROM COVID-19

17. Do you wear a mask when you are in school?

Always, I never take it off

Usually, but sometimes I take it off

Sometimes, I wear it less than half the time

Never

18. Do you wear a mask when you are out in public?

Always, I never take it off

Usually, but sometimes I take it off

Sometimes, I wear it less than half the time

Never

19. What kind of mask do you usually wear?
> N95 mask
> KN95 mask
> Surgical (blue) masks
> Cloth or homemade masks
> Other
> I don't wear a mask

20. Which mask do you think offers the best protection?
> N95 Mask
> KN95
> Surgical (blue) masks
> Cloth or homemade masks
> Other
> I don't believe masks offer any protection

21. Whenever possible, do you maintain 6 feet of distance between yourself and other people when you are in school?
> Always
> Usually
> Sometimes
> Never

22. Whenever possible, (maintain 6 feet of distance) between yourself and other people yourself when you are not in school?
> Always
> Usually
> Sometimes
> Never

23. Do you have a primary care doctor?
> Yes
> No
> I'm not sure

24. Have you visited your primary care doctor within the last twelve months?
> Yes
> No
> I would rather not say

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

25. What do you consider a reliable source when it comes to getting accurate information about COVID-19? Select all that apply.

> Doctors
> News
>> TV (CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, etc.)
>> Radio
>> Newspaper or magazine
>> Blog
> School teachers and/or administrators
> Online (YouTube, websites, etc.)
> Family members
> Classmates
> Friends
> Boyfriend or girlfriend
> Social media
>> Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

TikTok

Other social media platforms

Religious or spiritual figures

Celebrities and famous personalities

Other source (list sources)

26. How likely are you to encourage your family members, friends, or members of your community to get the COVID-19 vaccine or to get regularly tested for COVID-19?

Very likely

Likely

Somewhat likely

Very unlikely

How much do you agree with the following statements:

27. I feel like life is beyond my control in the face of the pandemic

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

28. I feel scared about the possibility of getting COVID-19.

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (Neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

29. I know where to get accurate information about the pandemic.

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

30. I feel empowered to make decisions regarding my own health.

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

31. I feel empowered and motivated to help my family and members of my community stop the spread of COVID-19.

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

32. I feel it is important to know if someone is vaccinated before I hang out with them.

Very much agree

Kind of agree

Neutral (neither agree or disagree)

Kind of disagree

Very much disagree

COVID-19 AND SCHOOL

33. During the pandemic, has someone (student or teacher) at your school test positive for COVID-19?
    Yes
    No
34. Do you qualify for the free lunch program at your school?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
35. During the pandemic, has the school given you N95 masks and hand sanitizer to use on a daily basis?
    Yes
    No
36. If yes: how often did you use the N95 masks and sanitizer provided by the school?
    Very often
    Often
    Sometimes
    Never

OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS

37. Does your family use electronic benefits transfer (P-EBT &/or EBT to purchase groceries?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
38. During the pandemic, did any of your family members or loved ones get a positive COVID-19 test result?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
39. Did any of your family members or loved ones become hospitalized because of COVID-19?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
40. Did you lose any family members or loved ones to COVID-19?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
41. Did the pandemic negatively impact your family's financial security?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
42. Did the pandemic negatively impact your family's housing security (ability to live in your home)?
    Yes
    No
    I'm not sure
43. During the pandemic, did your family obligations (like caring for younger siblings or doing chores) change?
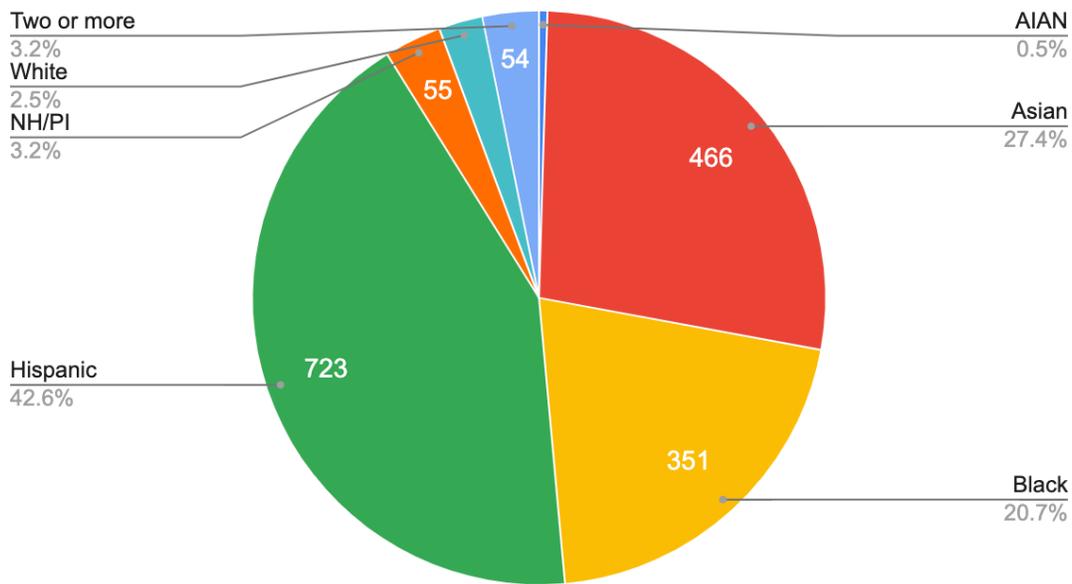   Yes
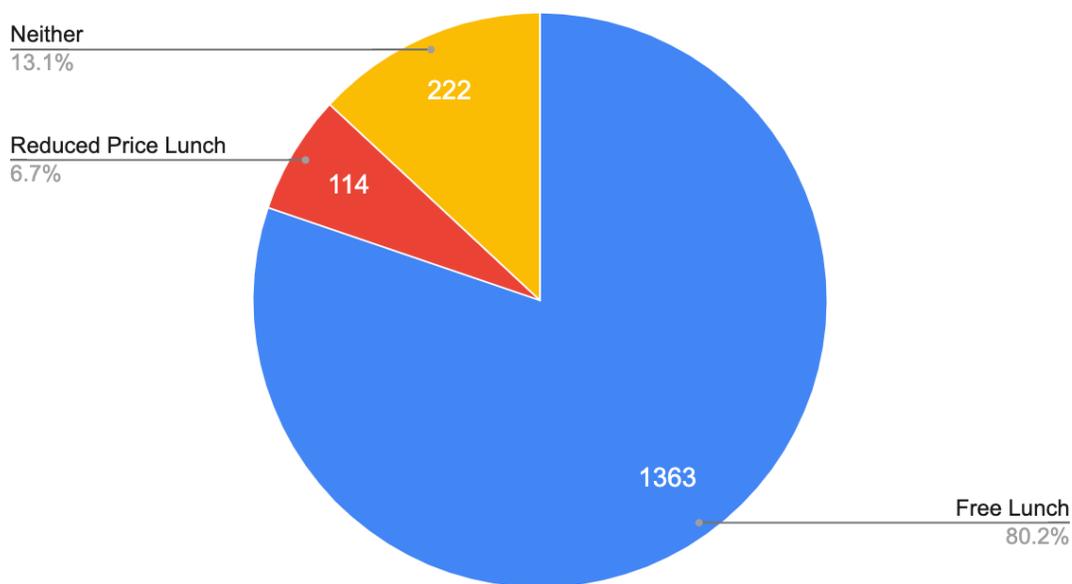   No

Appendix B

COVID Diaries School Demographics

The data is based on the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data.

1. Luther Burbank High School
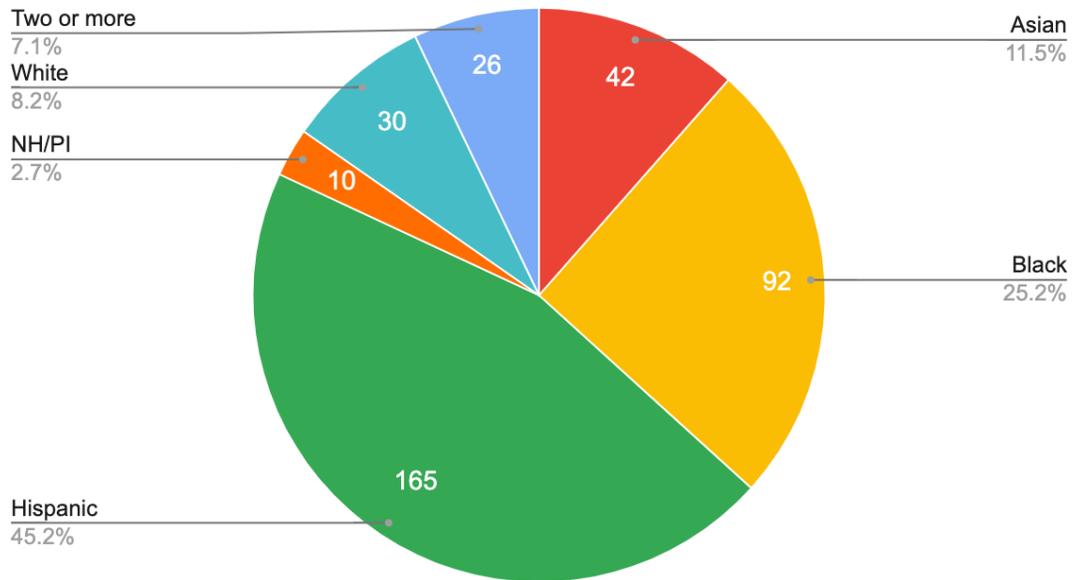
Luther Burbank High School - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more
3.2%
White
2.5%
NH/PI
3.2%

54

55

AIAN
0.5%

Asian
27.4%

466

Hispanic
42.6%

723

351

Black
20.7%

Luther Burbank High School: Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither
13.1%

222

Reduced Price Lunch
6.7%

114

1363

Free Lunch
80.2%

2. Sam Brannan Middle School

San Brannan Middle School - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more
7.1%

White
8.2%

NH/PI
2.7%

Hispanic
45.2%

26

30

10

165

42

92

Asian
11.5%

Black
25.2%

Sam Brannan Middle School - Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither
18.9%

Reduced Price Lunch
12.9%

69

47

249

Free Lunch
68.2%
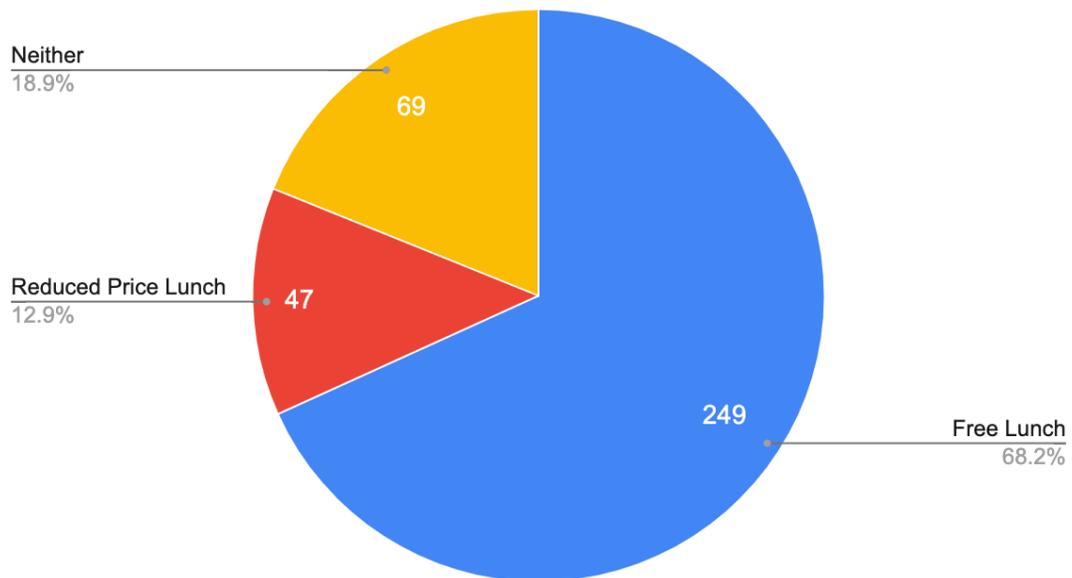
3. Rio American High School

Rio Americano High School - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more
6.6%

128

146

71

AIAN
0.7%

Asian
7.5%

Black
3.7%

366

Hispanic
18.8%

NH/PI
0.3%

1214

White
62.4%

Rio American High School - Free/Reduced Priced Lunch Eligibility

370

Free Lunch
19.0%

Reduced Price Lunch
1.2%

1550

Neither
79.7%
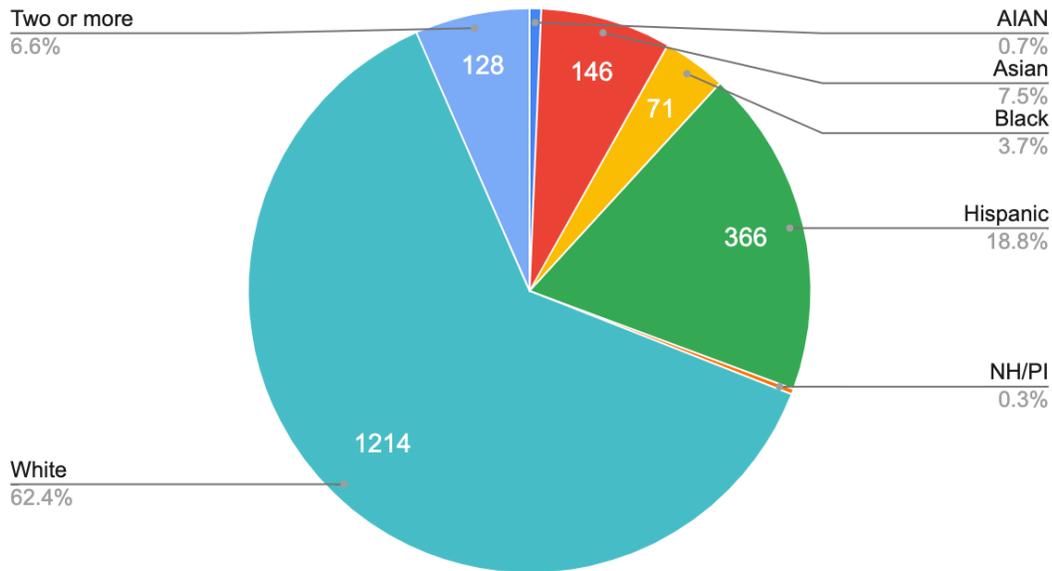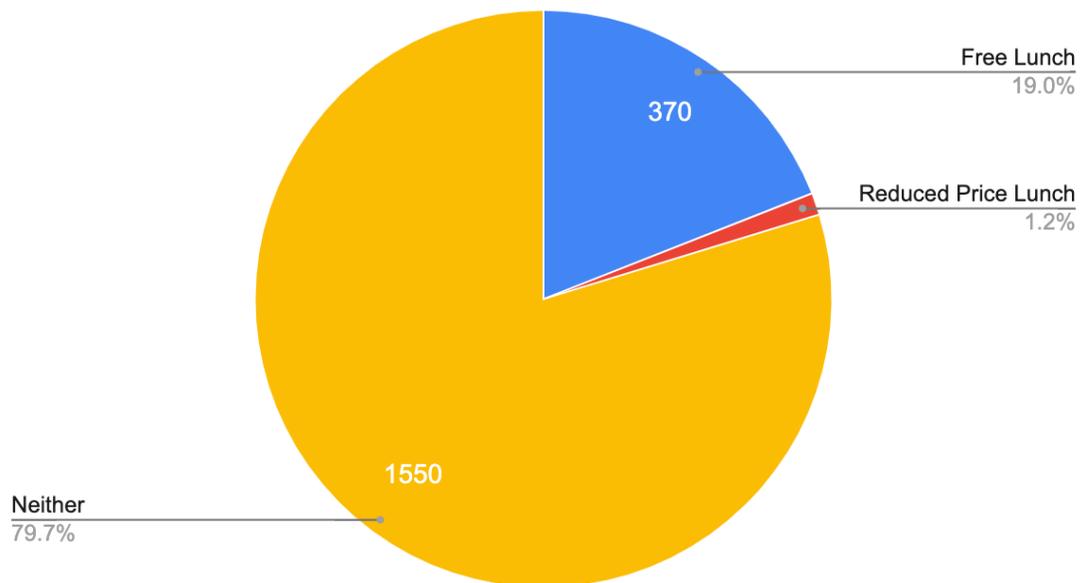
4. Encina High School

Encina High School - Race/Ethnicity
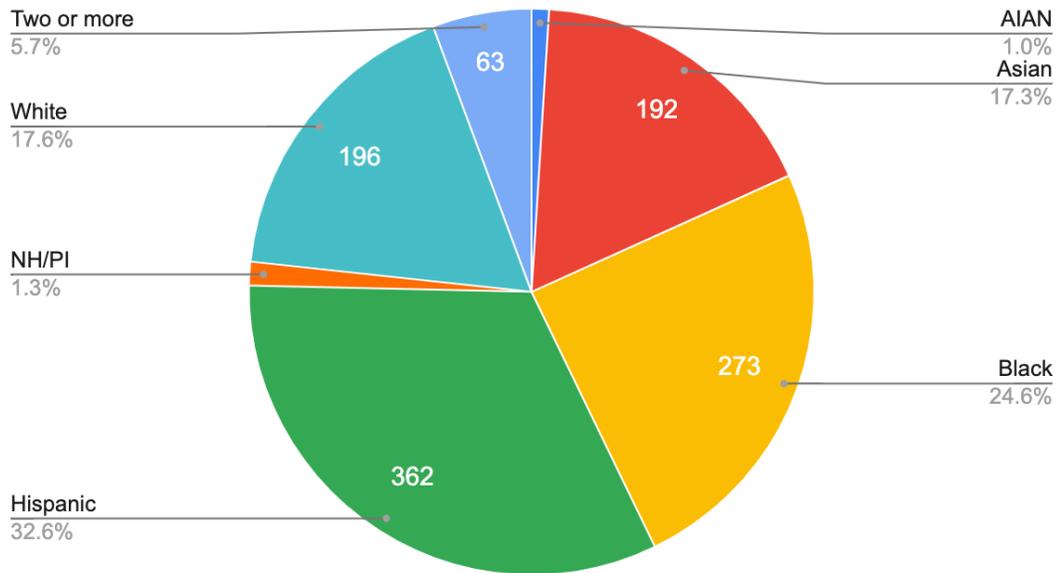
Two or more
5.7%

White
17.6%

NH/PI
1.3%

Hispanic
32.6%

AIAN
1.0%

Asian
17.3%

Black
24.6%

63

196

362

192

273

Encina High School - Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither
12.0%

Reduced Price Lunch
12.3%

133

137

842

Free Lunch
75.7%
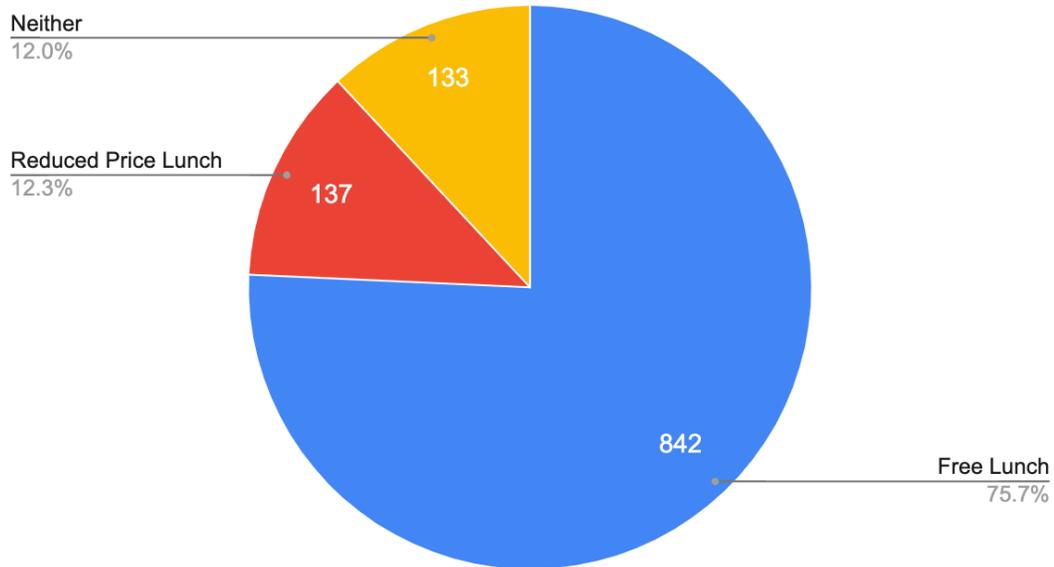
5. Thomas Edison Language Institute

Thomas Edison Language Institute - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more 4.6%
White 17.8%
NH/PI 0.6%
Hispanic 50.0%
AIAN 0.8%
Asian 13.3%
Black 12.9%

36
105
140
102
394
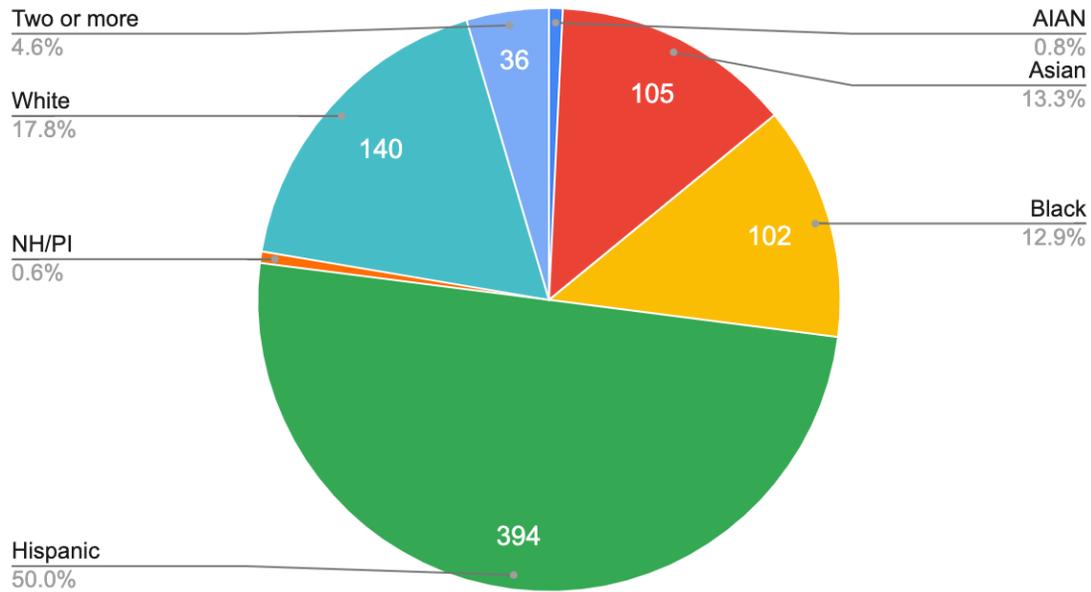
Thomas Edison Language Institute - Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither 37.3%
Reduced Price Lunch 2.9%
Free Lunch 59.8%

294
23
471

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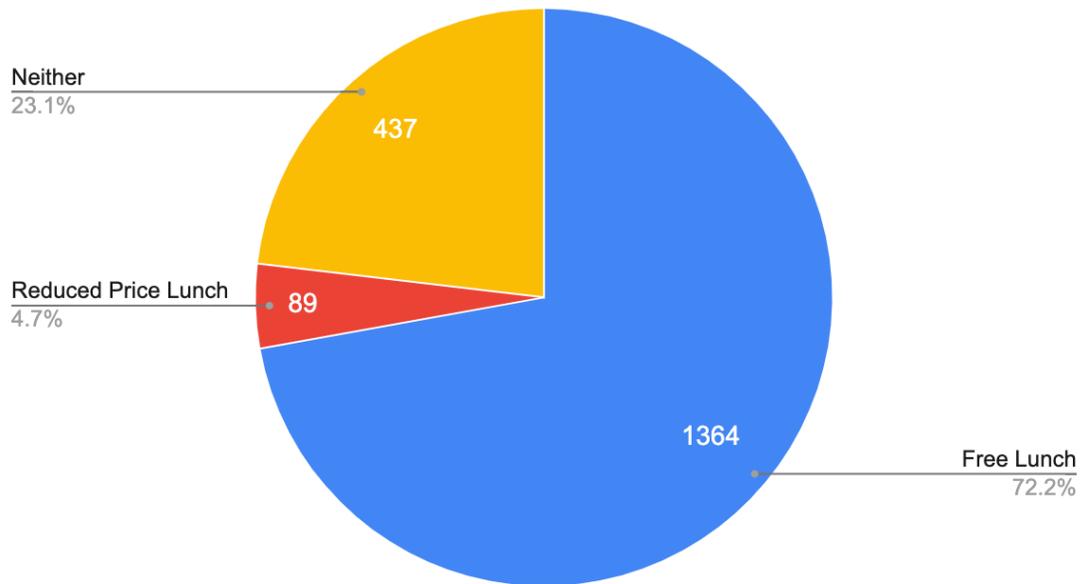and Inclusion

HEALTHY
YOLO
TOGETHER
A Public Health Project of UC Davis
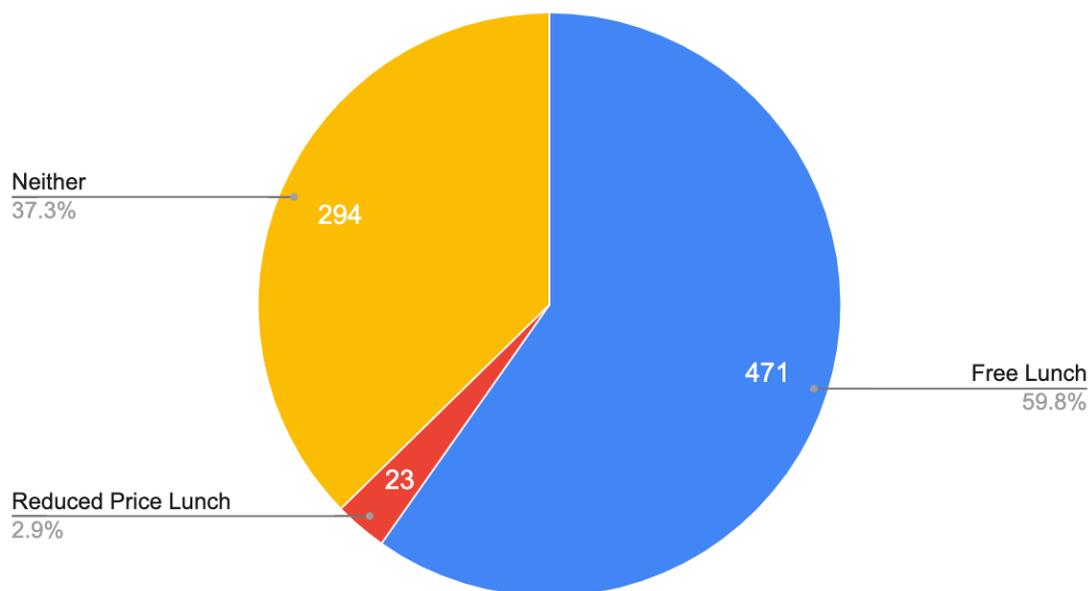
6. Fortune Schools (includes Hazel Mahone College Prep and Ephraim Williams College Prep)

Fortune Schools - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more
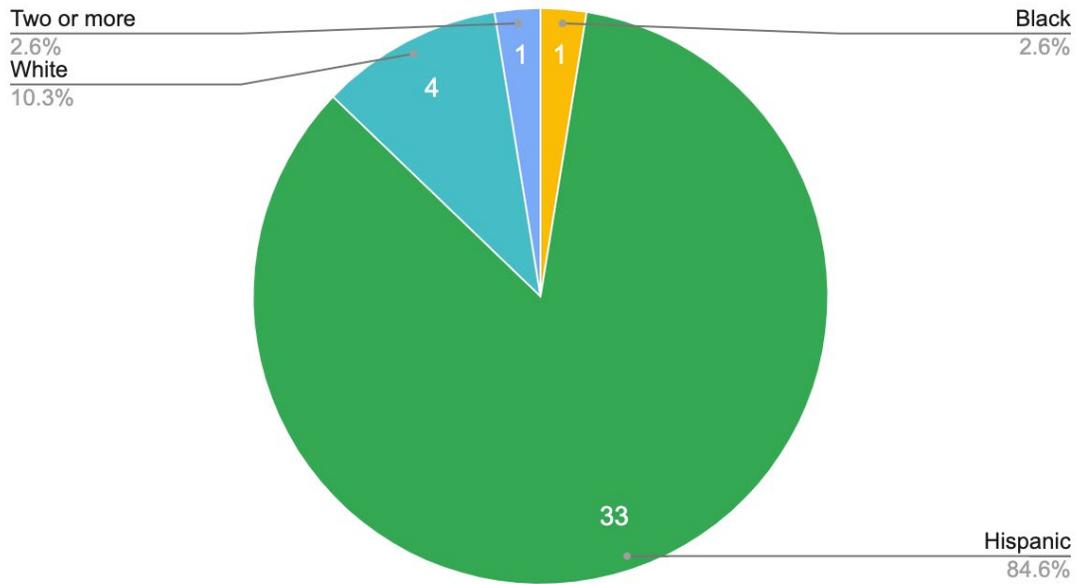7.6%

White
1.3%

NH/PI
0.7%

Hispanic
23.9%

143

451

1201

Asian
2.2%

Black
63.5%
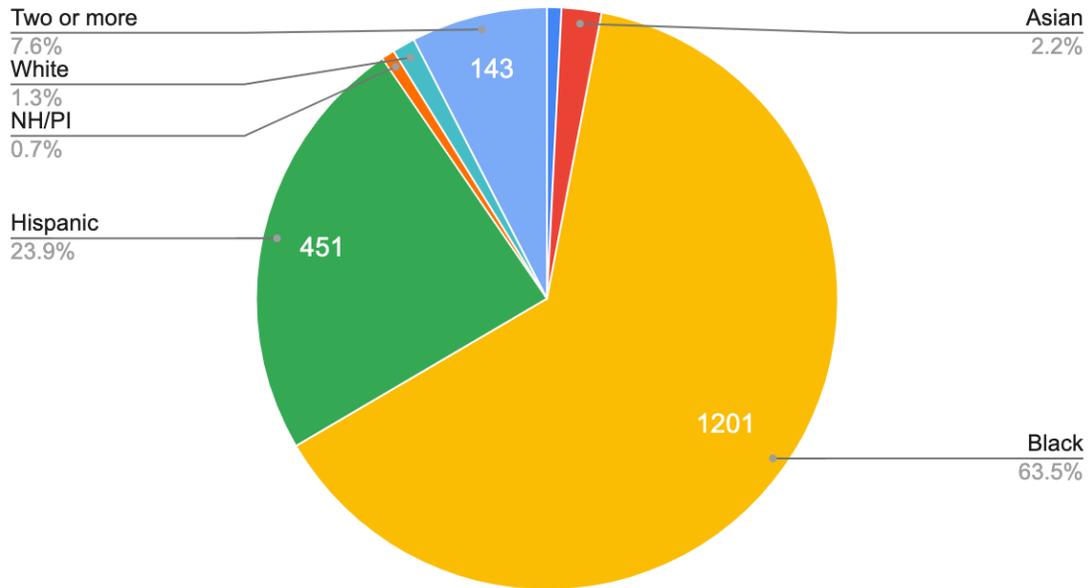
Fortune Schools - Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither
23.1%

Reduced Price Lunch
4.7%

437

89

1364

Free Lunch
72.2%

7. Cesar Chavez Community School

Cesar Chavez Community School - Race/Ethnicity

Two or more
2.6%

White
10.3%

Black
2.6%

Hispanic
84.6%

1 1
4
33

Cesar Chavez Community School - Free/Reduced-Priced Lunch Eligibility

Neither
23.1%

9

30

Free Lunch
76.9%
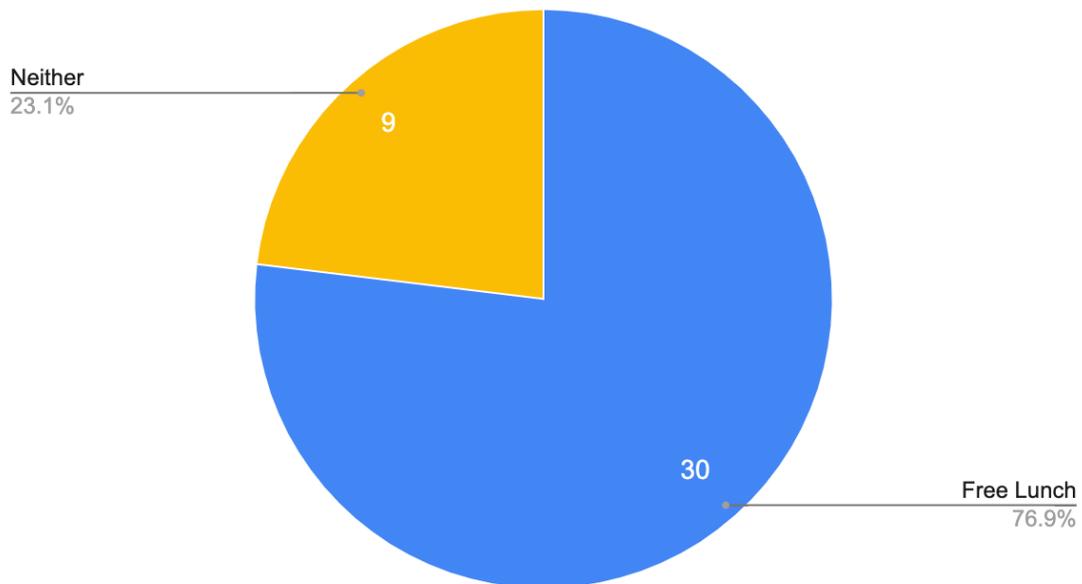
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