

## Students' Reports of Hate-Related Words and Hate-Related Graffiti

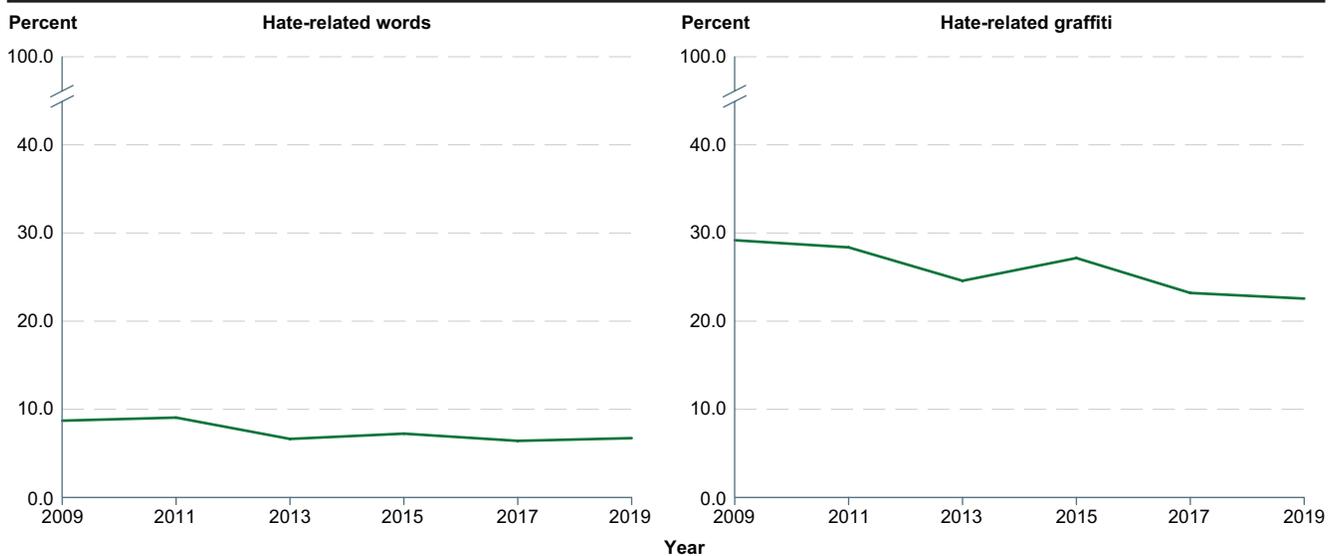
*In 2019, about 7 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being called hate-related words at school during the school year, which was lower than the percentage reported in 2009 (9 percent). About 23 percent of students reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year in 2019, which was a decrease from 29 percent in 2009.*

Based on principal reports from the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), 2 percent of public schools reported hate crimes in 2017-18, for a total of about 5,700 hate crimes.<sup>1</sup> Specifically, some 2 percent reported hate crimes motivated by race or color, 1 percent each reported hate crimes motivated by national origin or ethnicity and sexual orientation, and less than 1 percent each reported hate crimes motivated by religion, gender identity, sex, and disability.<sup>2</sup>

This indicator specifically examines hate *speech*, in the form of words spoken to students and graffiti drawn at school, which may or may not be reported to principals

or other authorities. The School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey collects data on students' reports of being called hate-related<sup>3</sup> words and seeing hate-related graffiti at school.<sup>4</sup> In this survey, students ages 12-18 (including both public and private school students) were asked whether someone at school had called them a derogatory word having to do with their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. Students were also asked if they had seen hate-related graffiti at their school—such as hate-related words or symbols written in classrooms, bathrooms, or hallways or on the outside of the school building.

**Figure 1. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being called hate-related words and seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year: Selected years, 2009 through 2019**



NOTE: "At school" includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. "Hate-related" refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students' personal characteristics.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2009 through 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 230.30.

About 7 percent of students ages 12-18 reported being called hate-related words at school during the school year in 2019, which was lower than the percentage reported in 2009 (9 percent); however, there was no consistent downward trend over the decade. In 2019, about 23 percent of students reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year, which was a decrease from 29 percent in 2009.

Between 2009 and 2019, the percentage of male students who reported being called a hate-related word decreased from 9 to 6 percent. For female students, there was no measurable difference in the percentage who reported being called a hate-related word in 2009 and 2019. For both male and female students, the percentage who reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school decreased over this period (29 to 22 percent and 29 to 23 percent, respectively).

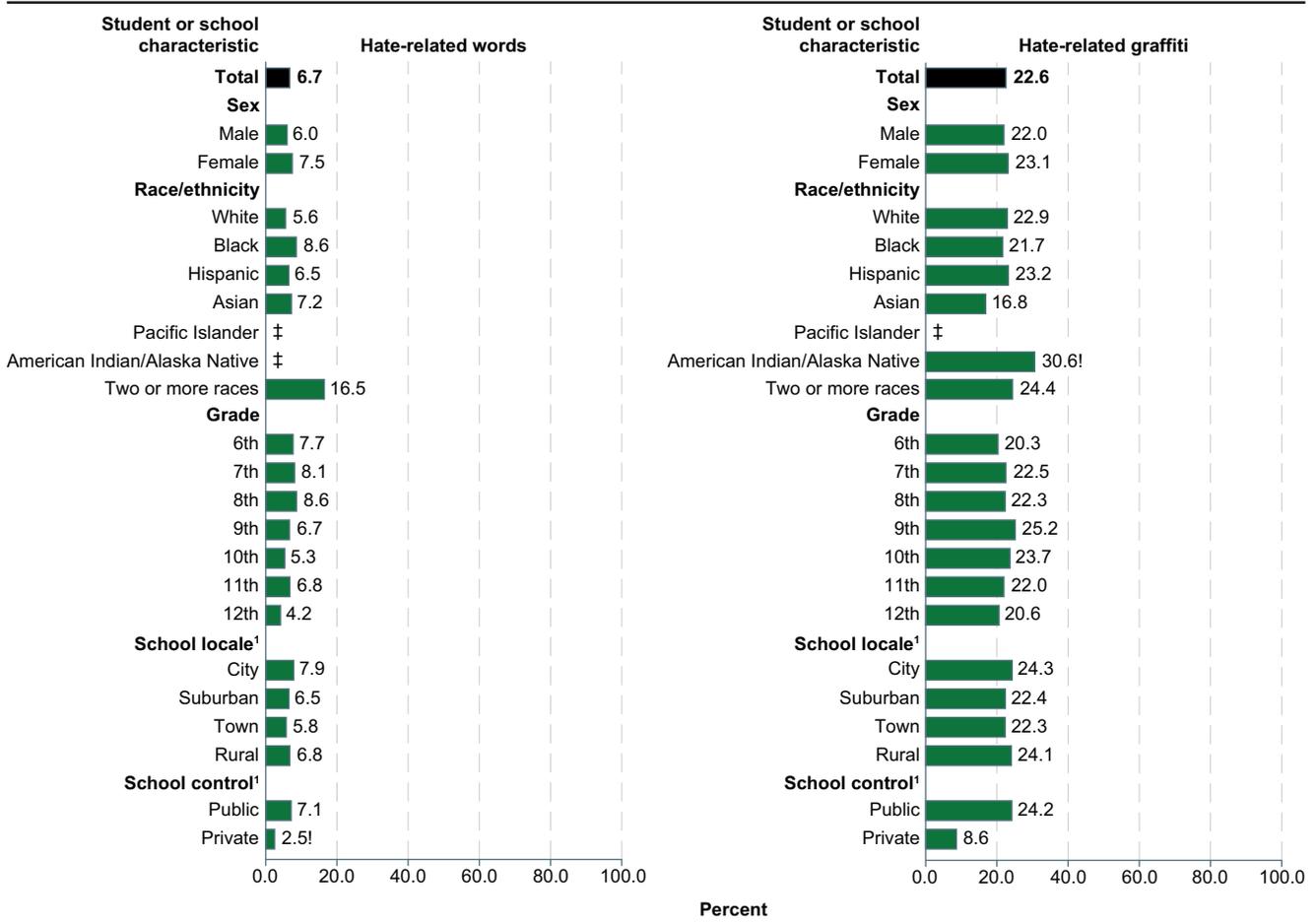
Considering these experiences by race, the percentages of students who reported being called a hate-related word at school were lower in 2019 than in 2009 for White students (6 vs. 7 percent) and Hispanic students (6 vs. 11 percent). In addition, the percentages of students who reported seeing

hate-related graffiti at school were lower in 2019 than in 2009 for White students (23 vs. 28 percent), Black students (22 vs. 29 percent), Hispanic students (23 vs. 32 percent), and Asian students (17 vs. 31 percent).

There were fewer differences in the percentage of students who reported being called a hate-related word by grade level, with only 10th-graders reporting lower percentages in 2019 than 2009 (5 vs. 10 percent). In contrast, the percentages who reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school were lower in 2019 than in 2009 for students at all grade levels except 9th grade.

For the locale and control of students' schools, comparable data have only been available since 2015.<sup>5</sup> For each individual student subgroup by school locale or control, the percentage of students reporting being called a hate-related word in 2019 was not measurably different from the percentage in 2015. The percentages of students who reported seeing hate-related graffiti were lower in 2019 than in 2015 for students enrolled in schools in towns (22 vs. 36 percent) and in suburban areas (22 vs. 28 percent). The percentage was also lower in 2019 than in 2015 for students in public schools (24 vs. 29 percent).

**Figure 2. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being called hate-related words and seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year, by selected student and school characteristics: 2019**



! Interpret data with caution. The coefficient of variation (CV) for this estimate is between 30 and 50 percent.

‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.

<sup>1</sup> Excludes students with missing information about the school characteristic.

NOTE: “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. “Hate-related” refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students’ personal characteristics. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 230.30.

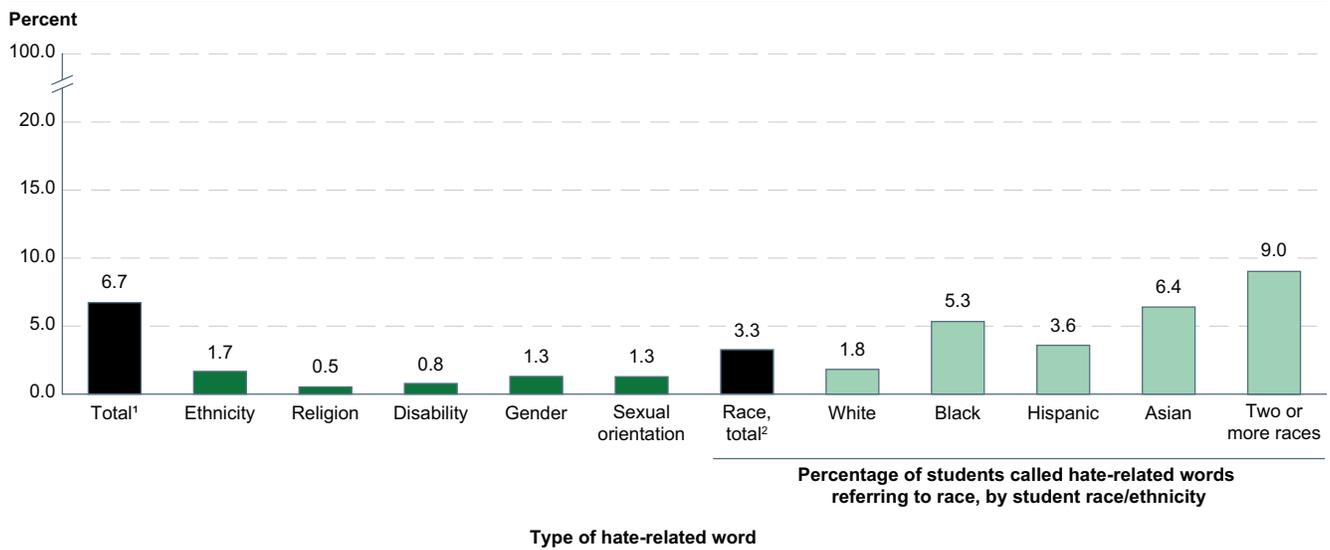
In 2019, lower percentages of White (6 percent), Hispanic (6 percent), Asian (7 percent), and Black (9 percent) students than of students of Two or more races (16 percent) reported being called a hate-related word at school during the school year. The percentage who reported being called a hate-related word was also lower for White students than the percentage for Black students. Additionally, a lower percentage of Asian students (17 percent) than of White students or Hispanic students (23 percent each) reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school during the school year.

Some measurable differences were observed across grade levels in students’ reports of being called a hate-related word during the school year in 2019. Lower percentages of 12th-graders (4 percent) than of 6th-, 7th-, 8th-, 9th-, and 11th-graders (ranging from 7 to 9 percent) reported being called a hate-related word at school. The percentage

of students who reported being called a hate-related word was also lower for 10th-graders (5 percent) than for 7th- and 8th-graders (8 and 9 percent, respectively). In 2019, there were no measurable differences by grade level in the percentage of students who reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school.

In 2019, a lower percentage of private school students than of public school students reported being called a hate-related word at school during the school year (3 vs. 7 percent). Similarly, a lower percentage of private school students than of public school students reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school (9 vs. 24 percent). There were no measurable differences by the locale of students’ schools in either the percentages of students who reported being called a hate-related word at school or the percentages who reported seeing hate-related graffiti at school.

**Figure 3. Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being called hate-related words referring to various personal characteristics at school during the school year; and percentage called hate-related words referring to race, by race/ethnicity: 2019**



<sup>1</sup> Students who reported being called hate-related words were asked to which specific characteristics these words were related. If a student reported being called more than one type of hate-related word (e.g., a derogatory term related to race as well as a derogatory term related to sexual orientation), the student would be counted separately in the percentage for each applicable category; however, the student would be counted only once in the total percentage of students who were called any hate-related words.

<sup>2</sup> Total includes data for Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students, which are not separately shown because data for these two groups did not meet reporting standards in 2019. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity.

NOTE: “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. “Hate-related” refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students’ personal characteristics. Although rounded numbers are displayed, the figures are based on unrounded data.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2019. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, table 230.35.

Students who reported being called hate-related words at school during the school year were asked to indicate whether the derogatory word they were called referred to their race, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender, or sexual orientation. In 2019, race was the most frequently reported characteristic referred to by hate-related words (3 percent). A lower percentage of White students than of students of any other race/ethnicity for which data were available reported being called a hate-related

word referring to their race. Specifically, 2 percent of White students reported being called a hate-related word referring to their race, compared with 4 percent of Hispanic students, 5 percent of Black students, 6 percent of Asian students, and 9 percent of students of Two or more races. In addition, the percentage of students who reported being called a hate-related word referring to their race was lower for Hispanic students than for students of Two or more races.

#### Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> A hate crime was defined as a “committed criminal offense that is motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender’s bias(es) against a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.” Hate crimes are also known as bias crimes.

<sup>2</sup> Schools that reported hate crimes motivated by multiple types of bias are counted separately under each type of bias reported.

<sup>3</sup> “Hate-related” refers to derogatory terms used by others in reference to students’ personal characteristics.

<sup>4</sup> “At school” includes in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school.

<sup>5</sup> For 2013 and prior years, the four-category school locale information (city, suburban, town, and rural) was not available and data by the control of school (public or private) were based on school information provided by the respondent. Beginning in 2015, data by the control of school were based on school information collected in the Common Core of Data and the Private School Universe Survey, which was appended to the School Crime Supplement data file and disaggregated at the student level; therefore, these data may not be entirely comparable with figures for earlier years. Analyses by school locale and control of school exclude students with missing information about the school characteristic

**Reference tables:** *Digest of Education Statistics 2020*, tables 230.30 and 230.35; *Digest of Education Statistics 2019*, table 229.70

**Related indicators and resources:** [Bullying at School and Electronic Bullying](#); [Students’ Reports of Gangs at School](#)

**Glossary:** At school; Gender identity; Hate crime; Hate-related graffiti; Hate-related words; Sexual orientation