

Understanding Student Safety

What is student safety?

Student safety is when a student feels safe in school. A safe school should protect its students from things like violence, theft, bullying and harassment, and the influence of substance use.¹ When students feel safe, they are able to focus on their academic performance and thrive.¹

Why is measuring student safety important?

If students do not feel safe, this can negatively impact their attendance, academic performance, and graduation rate.¹ Students who are being bullied at school may struggle with social isolation and therefore have a negative impact on their mental health.² It's important to know how students feel in school to ensure that they are in an optimal learning environment to succeed.

Who gets measured?

Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, Ascend tracks student safety response trends on an annual basis for students in grades 6 through 12 at three of the five Promise Neighborhood schools: Milner and M.L. King, Jr. middle schools and Weaver High School.

How is student safety measured?

Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, student safety is measured based on whether they strongly agree or agree with the following statements:

1. I feel safe from harm in my school.
2. I feel safe on my way to and from school.

The percentage of students who agree or strongly agree with the statements (reported separately and for both) are used as an indicator of whether students feel safe or not.

The percentage is calculated by:

1. Counting how many students agree or strongly agree to both statements, “I feel safe from harm in my school” and “I feel safe on my way to and from school.”
2. Dividing by the total number of students who responded to both statements.
3. Multiplying by 100 to get a percentage.

Higher percentages are better, showing that more students feel safe.

Where does the data come from?

The information comes from the Hartford Public School (HPS) School Climate and Culture Survey (SCCS). The SCCS is administered in the spring to all students in 3rd – 12th grades enrolled in an HPS school. Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, we only report survey results for students in 6th-12th grade.

How to Read the Graph

The graphs below show the percentage of 6th through 12th graders who agree or strongly agree to each safety item and who agreed to *both* items.

The **orange** line in the graph shows the percentage of students in 6th through 12th grade at the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools who agree or strongly agree to the respective survey items, and the **blue** line shows other Hartford Public Schools. The dashed **green** line represents the target value set for this indicator for the years covered by the Promise Neighborhood grant.

For perceptions of safety, higher numbers are better!

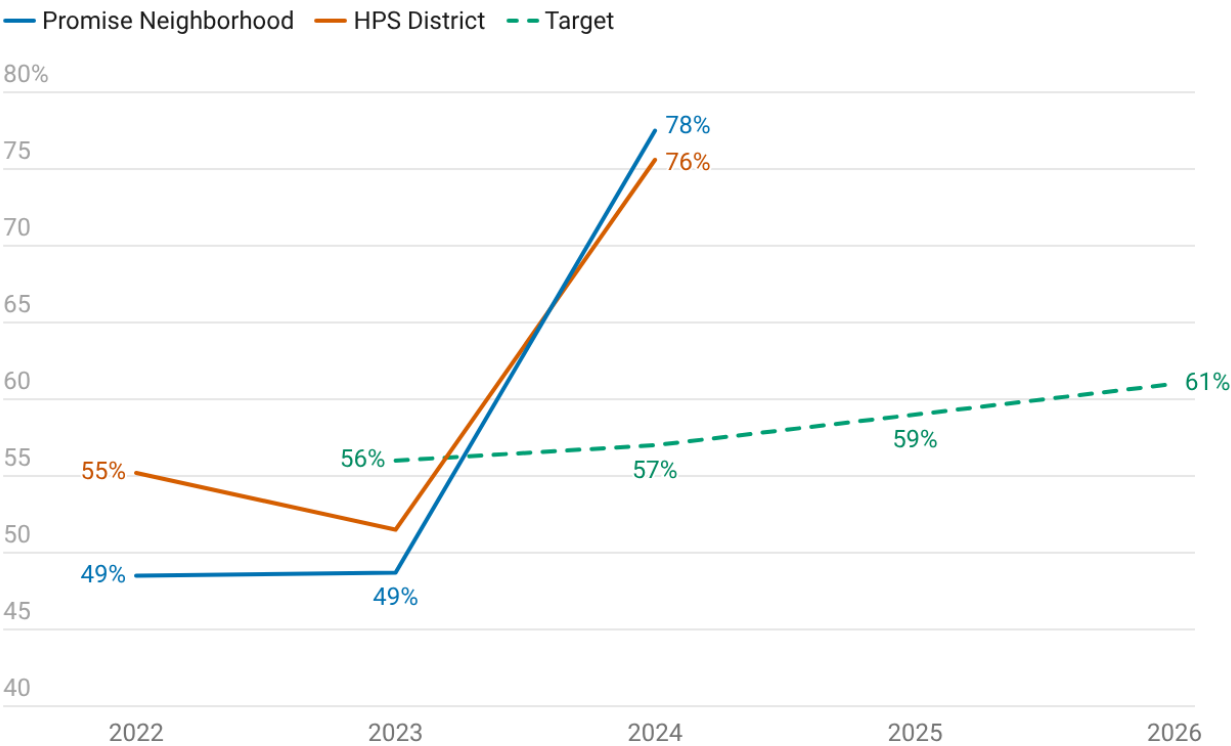
What do the results show?

Student Safety

Percentage of Students Who **Feel Safe At School***

Select a category below to view safety by topic area:

Feel Safe at School Feel Safe Traveling To and From School Feel Safe With Both



Years refer to the year it was collected. For example, 2025 refers to results from the spring 2025 survey.
*Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, only survey results from students in 6th-12th grade are reported.
Chart: Connecticut Data Collaborative • Source: Hartford Public School District Climate and Culture Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Note: Because the item “I feel safe from harm at my school” was not included in the spring 2025 survey, data is not available to calculate the percentage agreeing with this item for 2025.

- In spring 2024, 77.5% of 6th-12th grade students attending the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools reported that they feel safe from harm in their school, which is above the target for that year.

- Compared to the spring of 2023, perceptions of safety in school increased by almost 29 points for the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools in the spring of 2024.
- Overall, the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools have achieved a 29-point increase in perceptions of safety in school since baseline.
- Students attending Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools have reported similar perceptions of safety as their peers attending other schools in the district, being only slightly higher than the district in 2024.

Student Safety

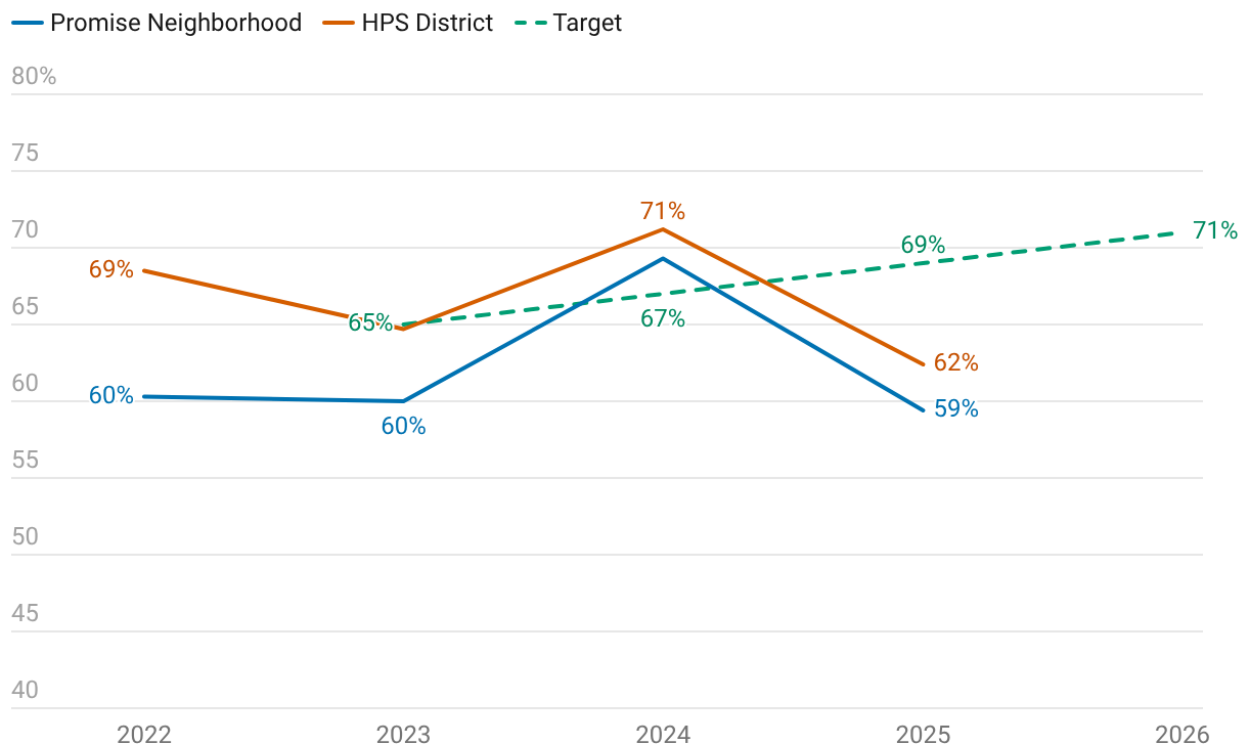
Percentage of Students Who **Feel Safe On Their Way To and From School***

Select a category below to view safety by topic area:

Feel Safe at School

Feel Safe Traveling To and From School

Feel Safe With Both



Years refer to the year it was collected. For example, 2025 refers to results from the spring 2025 survey.

*Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, only survey results from students in 6th-12th grade are reported.

Chart: Connecticut Data Collaborative • Source: Hartford Public School District Climate and Culture Survey • Created with Datawrapper

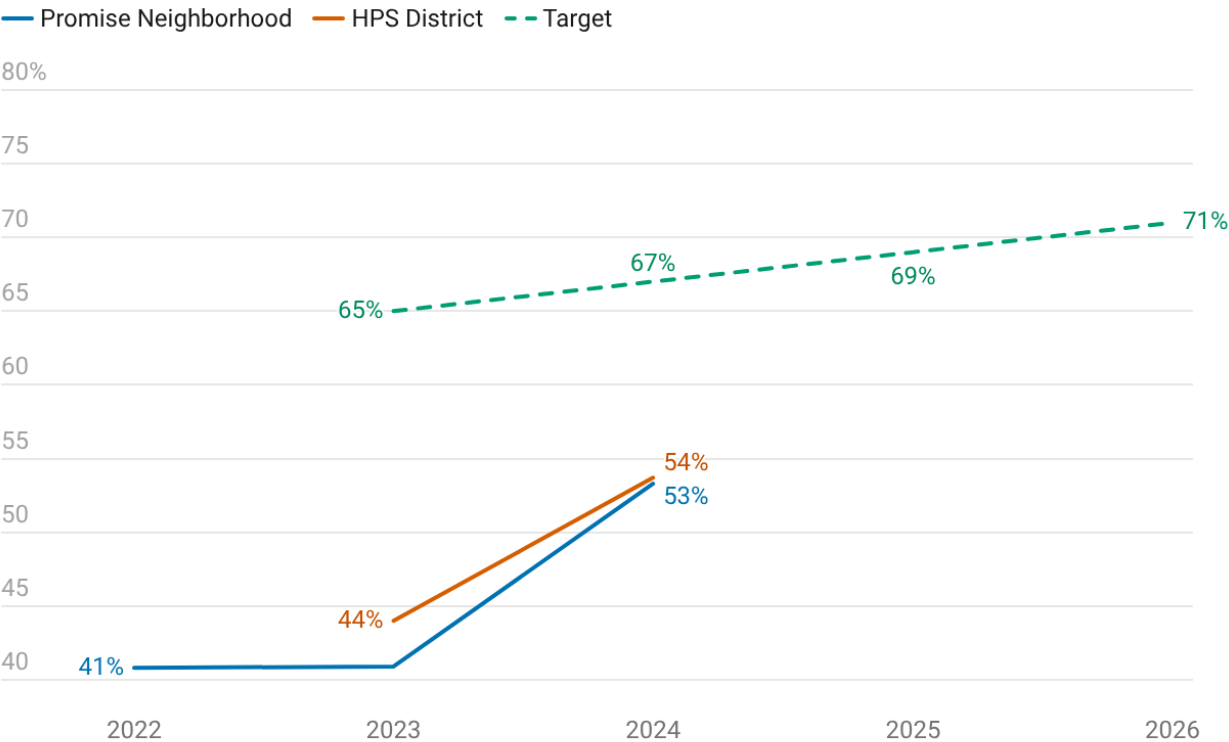
- In spring of 2025, 59.4% of 6th-12th grade students attending the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools reported that they feel safe on their way to and from school, which is 6.6 points below the target value for this year.
- Compared to the spring of 2024, perceptions of safety traveling to and from school decreased approximately 10 points in the spring of 2025.
- Overall, perceptions of safety traveling to and from school in 2025 were similar to perceptions at baseline due to losing the improvements achieved in 2024.
- Students attending Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools have reported slightly lower perceptions of safety traveling to and from school than their peers attending other schools in the district, being 3 points lower in the spring of 2025.

Student Safety

Percentage of Students Who **Feel Safe At School and On Their Way To and From School***

Select a category below to view safety by topic area:

- Feel Safe at School
- Feel Safe Traveling To and From School
- Feel Safe With Both



Years refer to the year it was collected. For example, 2025 refers to results from the spring 2025 survey.
*Per U.S. Department of Education guidelines, only survey results from students in 6th-12th grade are reported.
Chart: Connecticut Data Collaborative • Source: Hartford Public School District Climate and Culture Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Note: Because the item “I feel safe from harm at my school” was not included in the spring 2025 survey, data is not available to calculate the percentage agreeing with both statements for 2025. Because data allowing the calculation of agreement to both statements was not available until 2024, no target values have been set for this result.

- In spring 2024, 53.3% of 6th-12th grade students attending the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools reported that they feel safe from harm in their school *and* on their way to and from school.

- Compared to the spring of 2023, the combined perceptions of safety increased by 12.4 points for the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools in the spring of 2024.
- Overall, the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools have achieved a 12.5-point increase in combined perceptions of safety since baseline.
- Students attending Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools have reported similar combined perceptions of safety as their peers attending other schools in the district, differing by only 0.4 points in 2024.

Why is this happening?

For 2024-25, only one question related to student safety was available and reported on. The rate of agreement decreased by 9.9 points from the previous year and has fallen by 0.9 points compared to the baseline in 2021-22. It is difficult to say why this decrease happened, with less questions being asked about safety in the SCCS survey.

While the reason for this decrease is unclear, the number of students responding to the survey in 2024-25 decreased from the previous year with overall average daily attendance being lower than other years. The lower number of respondents may be contributing to the change in the rate of agreement.

However, resources are still available to students. Integrated student supports within the Full-Service Community School (FSCS) model, for example, aim to provide supports to students such as attendance/truancy prevention programs, on-site mental health services, on-site health care services, and juvenile crime prevention and intervention programs.

More support for students' overall well-being and mental health is needed, and the work must continue to ensure students feel safe in school.

How can Ascend help improve child safety?

Several programs within Ascend support children in our neighborhood to be safe:

[Ascend Family Navigators](#), from The Village for Families and Children, provide additional supports for the Ascend Promise Neighborhood schools. They:

- Hold regular hours within each school to work with students and families

- Collaborate with **Family & Community Service Support Providers (FCSSPs)** and other school-based staff to identify barriers to attendance
- Connect students and their families to services and resources within the community

Hartford Public Schools offers multiple programs, services, and supports to students and their families as part of the Full-Service Community School model implemented at each of the Promise Neighborhood schools. These services may be provided by either school staff (e.g., FCSSPs, School Social Workers) or community-based organization partner(s), or both working in conjunction with each other. They provide the following types of support to students and to other members of their families:

- Integrated Student Supports (at all schools) promote students' academic success by developing and coordinating supports that target academic and non-academic barriers to achievement, including providing resources and supports to meet basic needs.
- Family Engagement services (at all schools) involve outreach and engagement with family members, including providing direct assistance to family members of the student. A few examples include Parent Engagement Groups, home visits, back-to-school events, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Referrals to outside organizations (at all schools) address needs that require a higher level of care or access to resources available outside of the school, such as housing, employment, food, and energy assistance.
- Family Resource Centers (at S.A.N.D. and Wish elementary schools) provide access to a continuum of services that foster the optimal development and education of children beginning at birth. They provide early childhood education, child care, and family support services to meet the specific needs that are presented when engaging with families.
- Career and Workforce Development (at MLK and Milner middle schools and Weaver High School) includes programs and services that support post-secondary education and career development, in-school or out-of-school, such as those that link students to higher education, vocational training, or work-based learning opportunities, or connect classroom learning to career pathways. This area also includes efforts to engage parents and provide financial resources for continued learning and/or student transition assistance.

[Injury Free Hartford](#) at Connecticut Children's provides information about safety and injury prevention and activities focused on pedestrian safety, bike helmet use, booster and car seats, home safety, fall prevention, and healthy relationships.

The [Truancy and Family with Service Needs Court Diversion Program](#), in partnership with the City of Hartford Department of Families, Children, & Youth (DFCY) and The Village for Families and Children, helps:

- Address students' truancy concerns
- Address any underlying issues contributing to absentee patterns
- Return students to the path of academic success

The [Youth Play Institute](#) at Hartbeat Ensemble is a professional workforce internship that allows students to engage in community research, acting technique, original playwriting, and sound and light design to connect the community beyond traditional barriers of race, gender, class, and geography.

The data reveals an opportunity to continue engaging these programs to support student safety.

References

1. National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Safety. Advancing Evidence Improving Lives. n.d. Accessed July 21, 2025. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety>.
2. Madsen KR, Damsgaard MT, Petersen K, Qualter P, Holstein BE. Bullying at School, Cyberbullying, and Loneliness: National Representative Study of Adolescents in Denmark. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2024;21(4):414. doi:10.3390/ijerph21040414.