THE SOCIAL INSTITUTE

THE SOCIAL STUDENT REPORT

The latest social media & tech trends impacting well-being, according to students

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

The findings in this report represent a nationwide survey of 10,498 students at K-12 schools across the country, collected August 1 - December 31, 2021.

At The Social Institute, **we believe most students are ahead of the curve when it comes to social media and technology.** That's why we huddle with students across the country to help them navigate their social world – including social media and technology – positively.

Each school year, we ask students to examine which social media apps they're on and why, share how they would react in difficult, everyday social situations, give adults insight into their relationship with technology, and more.

Insights from The Social Institute have been featured by The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Popular Science, the International Society for Technology in Education, NBC TODAY, the National Association of Independent Schools, the Family Online Safety Institute, and other publications. If you would like to learn more about this report or highlight its findings, please email **contact@thesocialinst.com.**

"As schools navigate this pandemic, more and more of their students are turning to technology to connect socially, thrive emotionally, and excel academically. We have a unique opportunity to meet students where they are and equip them with the skills, plays, and values that embody their daily digital needs."

Laura Tierney

Founder & CEO of The Social Institute

FOR STUDENTS, SOCIAL MEDIA IS BEING SOCIAL

It takes 4 minutes to ride the Steel Dragon 2000, the longest rollercoaster in the world.

Now, imagine riding it 113 times in a single day. Welcome to the world of a current student in today's rollercoaster media landscape.

For Generation Z, who spend nearly as much time consuming social media content as they do attending classes at school, **social media is simply being social.** It also informs their passions, decision-making, and social experiences far more than watching videos, sharing posts, or smashing that like button might suggest. TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Discord, and every other social app under the sun aren't fleeting distractions from the real world. To students (and many adults!), they are both constant and fully-immersive as any book, movie, or song that captures our attention and informs our thoughts and actions.
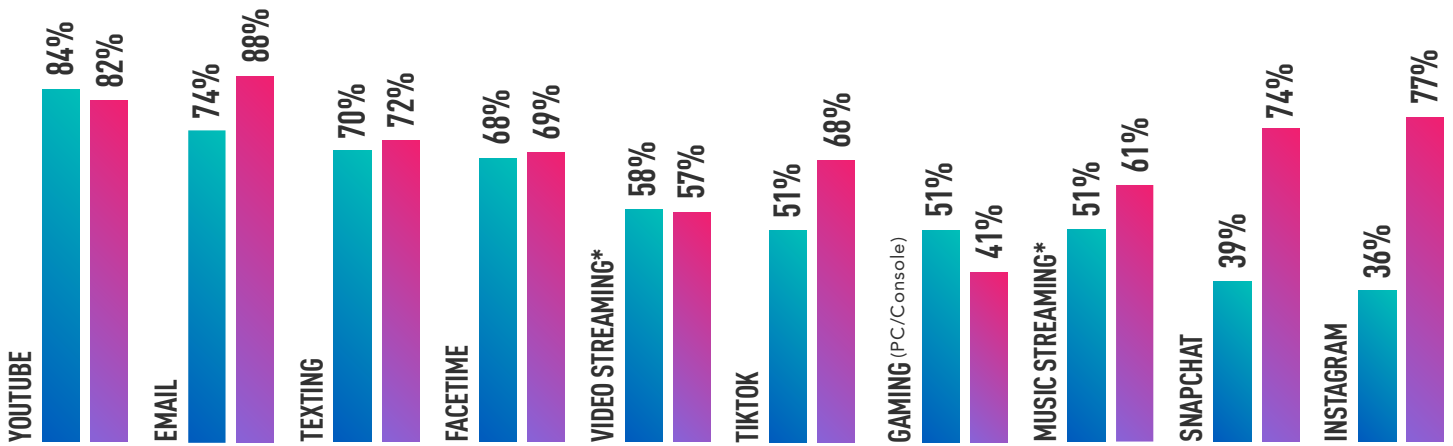
Texting, gaming, and all things "social" are where students hang out with friends, develop relationships, find inspiration, explore new interests, stay informed, follow role models, make purchases, and connect across borders and cultures. With pretty much everything connected to wifi these days, and brilliant technologists tracking our every step, **student experiences are more integrated - and more complicated - than ever before.**

And sometimes it's the same old middle school drama or high school competitiveness that breaks hearts and hurts friendships – or, with no advanced warning, a network of peers (maybe even parents and teachers) can see everything a student is experiencing up close and personal. With these normal student experiences readily seen and shared on social media, it's hard to go unnoticed these days.

And with all due respect to Steel Dragon 2000, it's the craziest rollercoaster on the planet.

According to a report released by Common Sense Media, **today's teenagers (ages 13-18) use screens for entertainment about 7 hours per day, while tweens (ages 8-12) average more than 4 hours per day.** This doesn't include time spent using media for school or homework. Over 50% of 6th graders report using social media, and that number exponentially increases by 9th grade. Add in the fact that smartphone sales have more than quadrupled in the last decade and it becomes clear that technology and social media are here to stay.
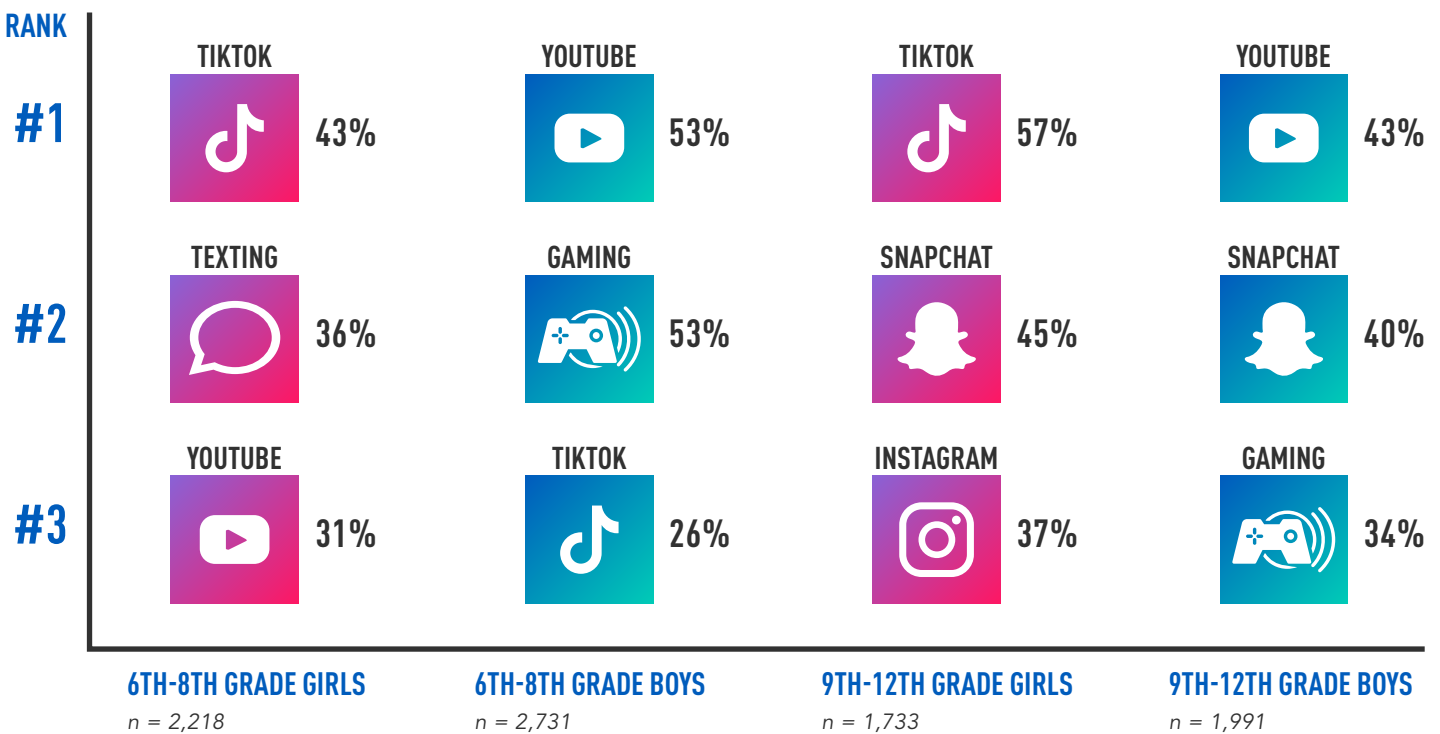
MOST POPULAR APPS USED WEEKLY AMONG STUDENTS

App	6th-8th Grade	9th-12th Grade
YOUTUBE	84%	82%
EMAIL	74%	88%
TEXTING	70%	72%
FACETIME	68%	69%
VIDEO STREAMING*	58%	57%
TIKTOK	51%	68%
GAMING (PC/Console)	51%	41%
MUSIC STREAMING*	51%	61%
SNAPCHAT	39%	74%
INSTAGRAM	36%	77%

*Video Streaming = Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video
*Music Streaming = Spotify, Amazon Music, Pandora, Apple Music

■ 6TH-8TH GRADE STUDENTS = 5,098
■ 9TH-12TH GRADE STUDENTS = 3,944

TOP FAVORITE APPS BY GENDER

RANK	6TH-8TH GRADE GIRLS n = 2,218	6TH-8TH GRADE BOYS n = 2,731	9TH-12TH GRADE GIRLS n = 1,733	9TH-12TH GRADE BOYS n = 1,991
#1	TIKTOK 43%	YOUTUBE 53%	TIKTOK 57%	YOUTUBE 43%
#2	TEXTING 36%	GAMING 53%	SNAPCHAT 45%	SNAPCHAT 40%
#3	YOUTUBE 31%	TIKTOK 26%	INSTAGRAM 37%	GAMING 34%

76% BOYS (n = 2,731)

36% GIRLS (n = 2,218)

% OF 6TH-8TH GRADE STUDENTS WHO PLAY VIDEO GAMES ON A PC OR CONSOLE EACH WEEK

Source: The Social Institute annual student survey, Aug. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021

ADULTS OFTEN FEAR SOCIAL MEDIA'S IMPACT
Social media comes with limitless benefits, and limitless pitfalls.

Spending 7 hours on anything each day will impact our well-being. Plugging into social networks at the height of a multi-year pandemic and 24/7 infodemic carries the potential to significantly impact student social health and emotional resiliency, **both for better and worse.**

The drawbacks of social media are very real, as highlighted in scores of publications, news stories, and our own classroom focus groups. Students are...

- Suffering from heightened anxiety due to social stress
- Dealing with FOMO (fear of missing out)
- Making social comparisons that can lead to lower self-esteem
- Feeling pressure to respond immediately to texts and messages
- Facing the increasing wave of perfectionism
- Losing sleep due to device usage at night
- Sometimes feeling depressed or hopeless

Many of the common challenges of being a tween or teen have simply recreated themselves on social media. For example, in-person bullying morphs into cyberbullying. Of course, social media is not all bad. In fact, it can be **one of the greatest enablers of a student's health, happiness, and future success.** Where else can you interact directly with leaders in every field, explore gazillions of images and videos about your favorite topics, learn new skills, nurture relationships from far away, find internships and jobs, and feel empowered to be yourself?

Social media fosters relationships and **provides a myriad of opportunities to connect with, inspire, and learn from others.** A Pew Research study found that nearly two-thirds of teens have made a friend online, and a whopping 83% say that social media makes them feel better connected to their friends.

Online interaction has also been shown to have positive effects on combating loneliness. It's difficult to overstate the importance of connection against the backdrop of a global pandemic that has drastically reduced in-person gatherings and forced students to find **new ways to socialize with their friends.**

Laura Tierney, Founder & CEO at The Social Institute, received a phone at age 13, and since then, was lectured by adults on how devices will destroy our generation, tarnish our reputations, and damage our mental health. Laura recalls how, while in high school, and later on as a student-athlete at Duke University and Team USA, adults would harp on the Don'ts: Don't text this, don't share that, don't join that app, and don't post anything you wouldn't want your grandmother to see.

Laura flipped the script when she went on to use technology to land three out of her four jobs, follow positive role models, stay in touch with friends across the world, and more. She found ways to navigate social media and technology to fuel her health, happiness, and future success, and she admired when students would do the same.

Students are moving at the speed of light, and sometimes it's hard to separate the good from the bad in their everyday experiences. How will you keep up?

We believe in a positive, proactive approach. **Rather than scare and restrict, empower and equip.**

"**SOCIAL MEDIA** IS NOT GOING AWAY. IT'S EMBEDDED IN OUR LIVES."

"SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE PRIMARY WAY MOST STUDENTS, ESPECIALLY TEENS, COMMUNICATE."

"THE MORE WE ARE EDUCATED ABOUT HOW THE INTERNET WORKS, THE SAFER WE'LL BE."

"SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS GIVE A LOT OF US THE ABILITY TO EXPRESS OURSELVES, AND TEACHING US HOW TO DO SO IN A HEALTHY MANNER IS MORE BENEFICIAL THAN RESTRICTING ACCESS."

"IT'S NOT ALL BAD **AND CAN BE USED FOR GOOD**"

"WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"

"TALK TO US ABOUT THIS TOPIC IN A WAY THAT DOESN'T COME ACROSS AS REPETITIVE, SUPERIOR, OR DISCRIMINATING."

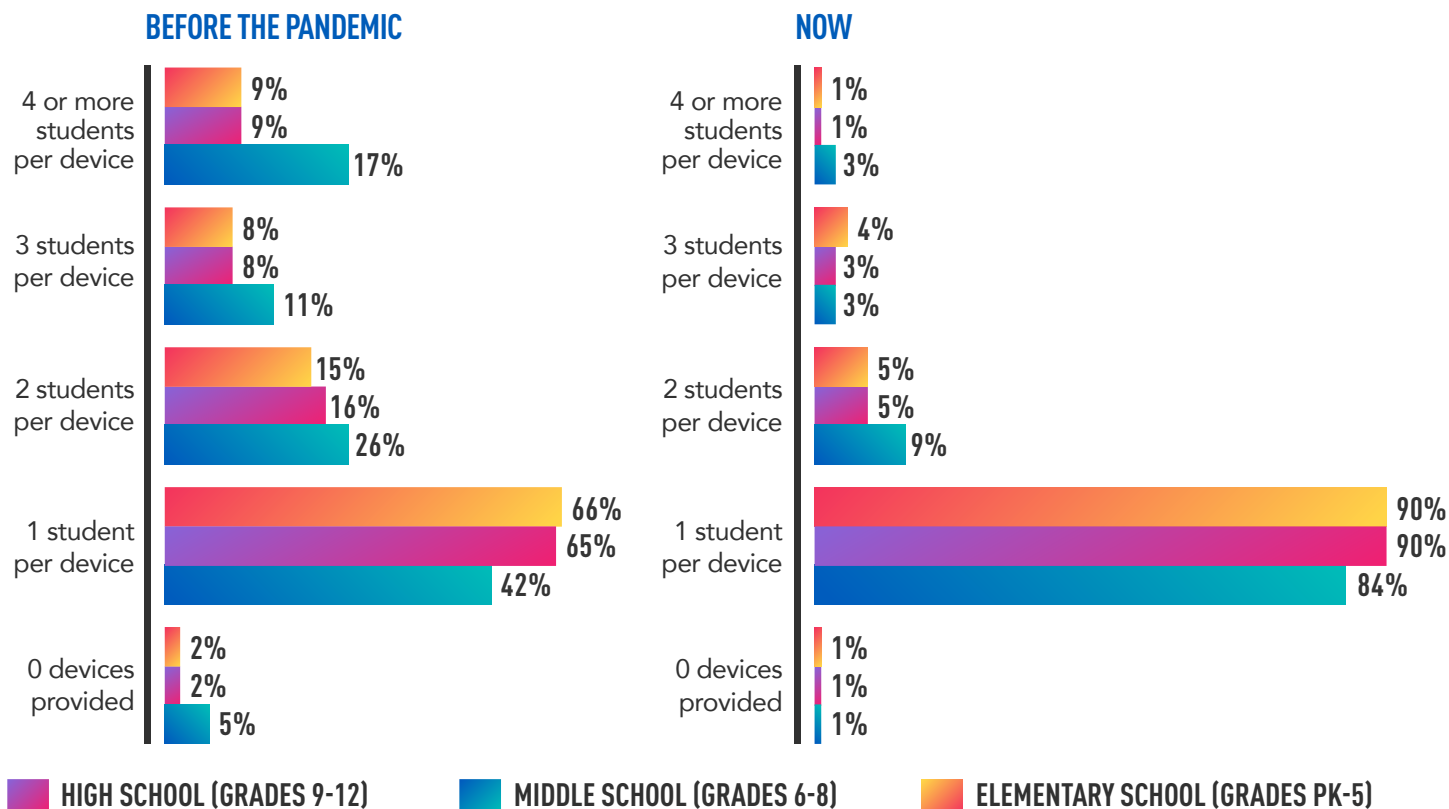"NO MATTER HOW MUCH ADULTS FIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA, **IT IS OUR FUTURE**."

"WE CAN'T PAUSE ONLINE GAMES"

Source: The Social Institute annual student survey, Aug. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021

DURING COVID-19, K-12 SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE MADE A MAD DASH TO 1-TO-1 COMPUTING. THIS DRAMATIC CHANGE IS SURE TO IMPACT TEACHING, LEARNING, DISTRICT OPERATIONS, AND SCHOOL BUDGETS LONG BEYOND THE PANDEMIC.

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC

Category	Elementary	High School	Middle School
4 or more students per device	9%	9%	17%
3 students per device	8%	8%	11%
2 students per device	15%	16%	26%
1 student per device	66%	65%	42%
0 devices provided	2%	2%	5%

NOW

Category	Elementary	High School	Middle School
4 or more students per device	1%	1%	3%
3 students per device	4%	3%	3%
2 students per device	5%	5%	9%
1 student per device	90%	90%	84%
0 devices provided	1%	1%	1%

HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 9-12)   **MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 6-8)**   **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (GRADES PK-5)**

Results show responses from district leaders
Source: EdWeek Research Center survey, 2021

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS ARE UNABLE TO KEEP UP WITH STUDENT NEEDS

RECOMMENDED
500:1
STUDENTS PER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

VS

NATIONAL AVERAGE
1,211:1
STUDENTS PER SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Source: National Association of School Psychologists

72% of **13- to 19-year-olds** have struggled with their mental health.
Source: New York Times

62% of educators report that **their own support for social-emotional learning has increased** in the past year.
Source: EdWeek Research Center Survey

COVID ACCELERATED A GROWING PROBLEM

The pandemic has dramatically increased students' reliance on technology for socializing, learning, and personal development. But without proper education, students risk their health, happiness, and future success.

Schools nationwide are reporting higher-than-ever levels of faculty fatigue, teacher shortages, and student burnout. A recent study showed 72% of 13- to 19-year olds have struggled with their mental health, and school psychologists are **unable to keep up with students' needs.**

Meanwhile, access to technology only increases, which provides great benefits and challenges. A survey by the EdWeek Research Center found that about 65% of educators reported having one school-issued device for every middle and high school student before the pandemic. Another 42% said the same about elementary school kids. In the same survey, 90% of educators said that by March 2021, there was **at least** one device for every middle and high school student. An additional 84% said the same about elementary school students. Coupled with using technology for school, students are also hanging out via FaceTime, arranging Netflix Parties, exchanging Spotify Playlists, and creating TikTok duets **as a way to be "social" while "social distancing".**

This leaves K-12 schools and families facing a looming challenge: How can we proactively empower students to navigate their social world, including social media and technology, in ways that **fuel their health, happiness, and future success?**

Whether schools prioritize academic recovery, whole student development, managing budgets tightly, or all of the above – they are in luck! One of the most extensive studies by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) found that students who were part of SEL programs in school showed **11 percentile-point gains in academic achievement** over those who were not a part of such programs. Compared to students who did not participate in SEL programs, students participating in SEL programs also showed:

- Improved classroom behavior
- An increased ability to manage stress and depression
- Better attitudes about themselves, others, and school

Studies also show that the average return on investment for evidence-based programs is 11 to 1, meaning **for every $1 a school invests in SEL, there is a savings of $11.** This investment has the ability to give students the tools they need to overcome obstacles and plug into their education for long-term achievement.

This pandemic is magnifying an irrefutable truth: student well-being, social media and tech use, and academic performance are wholly intertwined. **How will we respond?**

WHY WE MUST EMPOWER STUDENTS TO NAVIGATE SOCIAL POSITIVELY

The K-12 education system has arrived at an inflection point.

While social-emotional skill-building has been a necessary component of K-12 education for years, many schools and parents have **overlooked the role that social media and technology play in socialization,** more likely focusing on how to be safe or limit screen time. Most efforts have not evolved with the times, and are met by students with eye-rolls and snickering.

We would never give students the "keys to the car" without driver's ed. Why give them access to school computers, smartphones, family tablets, or gaming consoles without simultaneously equipping them with the ability to make high-character, healthy decisions that can impact them now and throughout their lives?

The education system is at an inflection point, and this demands a **new, modern approach** that meets students where they are. Schools can and should reimagine how they support students, address parent concerns about technology, and foster innovative teaching experiences for faculty. It's all connected.

Flip the script from negative to positive. Move from reactive to proactive, because there are too many fires to put out. Flex lesson materials to inspire students and teachers throughout the day and fit your community's needs. Keep parents in-the-know. **Most importantly, make sure you know your students.** Because there's a lot they are feeling but aren't saying.

When leaders embed this education systemically into the fabric of their school, **the benefits are both immediate and long-lasting.**

"As students got into the #WinAtSocial Lessons, classrooms lit up with discussion and inquiry into the different questions and responses. The engagement is second-to-none."

– Rob Wegley, *Dean of Culture*
Deer Path Middle School

CONNECTING WITH STUDENTS IS JUST THE START
Empower students on their level, in ways they respect and embrace.

Given the rate of change in student trends, social behaviors, and technology, it's easy, as a teacher or parent, to be out of touch and ignored by students. Teachers regularly fail at what The Social Institute calls **'the student snicker test'**, which plainly is: Do young people roll their eyes when you talk with them about making positive choices online and off?

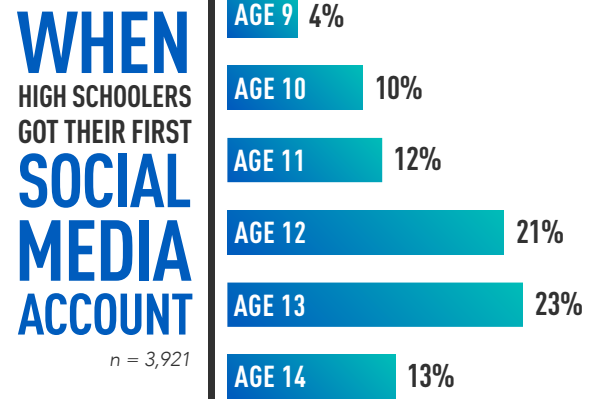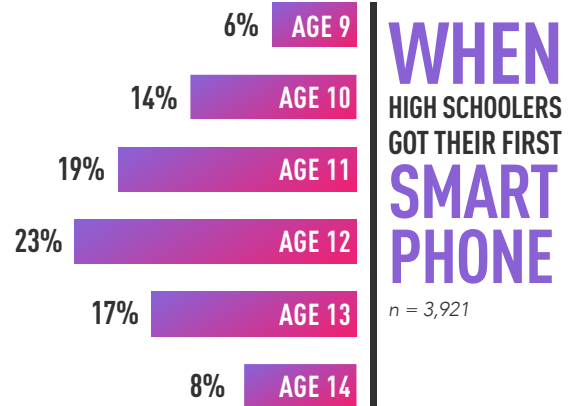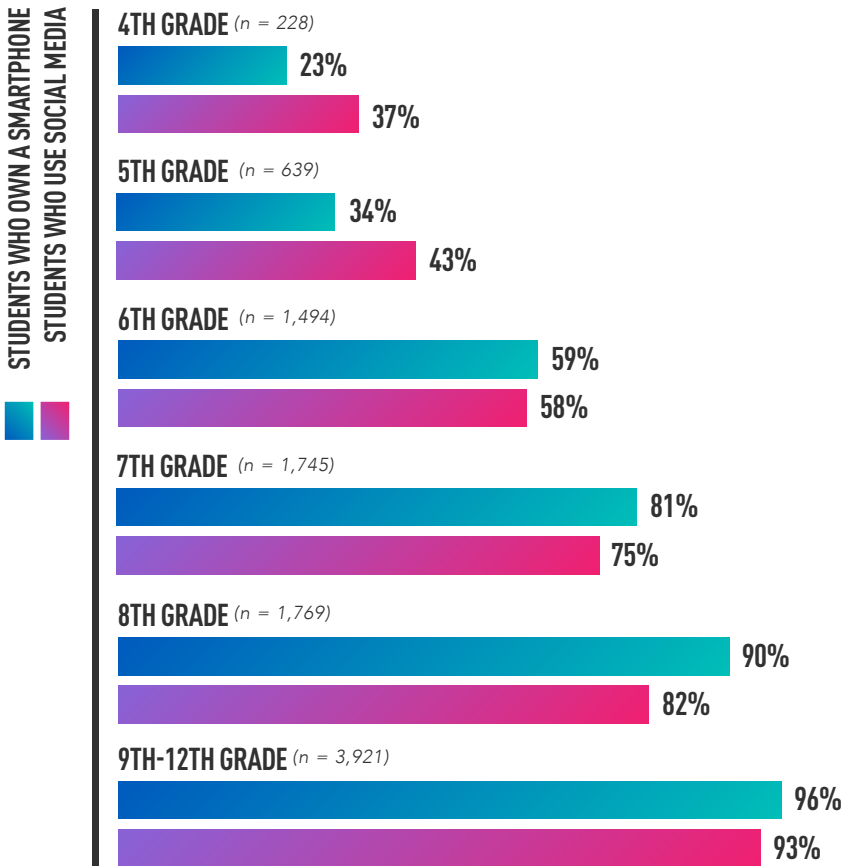**Failing the snicker test is the sound of your credibility flying out the window in front of Gen Z.**

And in some ways teachers are set up to fail. Keeping up with students and technology can be tough, while research has shown that **social and emotional health is key to strong academic performance.** So how do teachers maintain credibility in the classroom while addressing one of the most important influences on student success?

It's easy to fall into the trap of overgeneralizing social experiences to connect with students. How a boy in 6th grade interacts with the world online is completely different from the experience of an 11th grade girl. Watching YouTube videos and sending Snaps can fall on different ends of the social media spectrum. Trends vary across grades and genders, and **no year of a student's life is the same.**

When your lessons pass the snicker test, students open up and engage in honest, thoughtful discussions about how they feel, how they relate to each other, their behaviors on social media, and much more. Educators have the opportunity to listen. Capturing student voices and insights about your school community can inform how you address everyday challenges that impact learning, health, and long term success. By passing the snicker test and getting to know the whole student, **teachers can find new meaning in their work, strengthen school culture, and prepare students to thrive in a complex world.**

STUDENTS WHO OWN A SMARTPHONE
STUDENTS WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA

4TH GRADE *(n = 228)*
23%
37%

5TH GRADE *(n = 639)*
34%
43%

6TH GRADE *(n = 1,494)*
59%
58%

7TH GRADE *(n = 1,745)*
81%
75%

8TH GRADE *(n = 1,769)*
90%
82%

9TH-12TH GRADE *(n = 3,921)*
96%
93%

WHEN HIGH SCHOOLERS GOT THEIR FIRST **SMART PHONE**
n = 3,921

6% AGE 9
14% AGE 10
19% AGE 11
23% AGE 12
17% AGE 13
8% AGE 14

WHEN HIGH SCHOOLERS GOT THEIR FIRST **SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNT**
n = 3,921

AGE 9 4%
AGE 10 10%
AGE 11 12%
AGE 12 21%
AGE 13 23%
AGE 14 13%

42% OF 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

SAID THEY RARELY OR NEVER PAY ATTENTION TO HOW COMPANIES ARE TRACKING INFORMATION ABOUT THEM ONLINE.
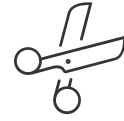
n = 1,878

39% OF 6TH GRADE STUDENTS

SAY THAT PARENTS WILL SOMETIMES OR OFTEN BE DISTRACTED ON THEIR DEVICES WHEN THE STUDENTS ARE TRYING TO TALK TO THEM.

n = 1,607

OUT-OF-TOUCH EMOJIS The top emojis that show you're "officially old", according to students

👍 😂 ✔ 👏 💩 ❤️ 👌

Source: The Social Institute annual student survey, Aug. 1 - Dec. 31, 2021

Cut out this poster and hang it in your classroom, office, or home to remind yourself and others to #WinAtSocial

THE SEVEN SOCIAL STANDARDS
Created with students across the country.

The Social Institute's **Seven Social Standards** provide a common language for school communities to build important life skills and have productive conversations about our ever-changing social world. In addition to students learning the Seven Social Standards, we encourage families and educators to adopt these standards as positive role models. After all, **students can't be what they can't see.**

THE SOCIAL INSTITUTE

SEVEN
SOCIAL STANDARDS

Your Challenge: #WinAtSocial by navigating social situations and social media in positive ways that fuel your health, happiness, and future success. Because when we live up to high standards together, as a school and as a family, we all win.

PLAY TO YOUR CORE
Reflecting our values, character, and interests in our actions online and off.

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY LIKE YOU'RE FAMOUS
Staying in control of our personal information.

STRIKE A BALANCE
Balancing our time and attention on technology with the people around us.

CYBERBACK
Having each others' back and supporting each other.

FIND YOUR INFLUENCERS
Surrounding yourself with positive role models and credible influences.

USE YOUR MIC FOR GOOD
Amplifying your voice to create meaningful change.

HANDLE THE PRESSURE
Finding your own path no matter the pressure from others.

#WINATSOCIAL
THE SOCIAL INSTITUTE

#WINATSOCIAL
SNAPSHOT

The following questions and responses are from The Social Institute's #WinAtSocial Curriculum Program, used by K-12 schools across the country to proactively empower students to navigate their social world – including social media and technology.

4th GRADE STUDENTS

DID YOU KNOW THAT GIVING AND RECEIVING COMPLIMENTS IS SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN TO MAKE US FEEL BETTER? IT'S TRUE! **WHICH SCENARIO MAKES YOU FEEL THE BEST?**

n = 1,031

16% | **19%** | **65%**
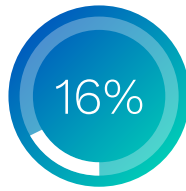
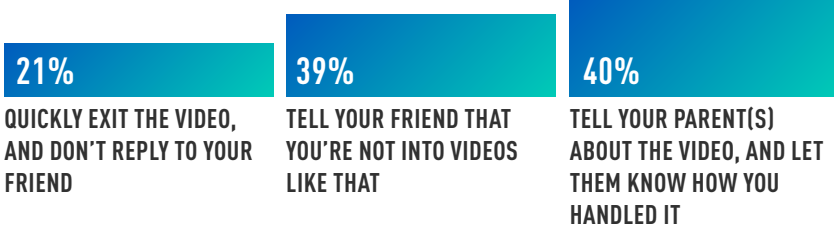| A TEACHER SAYING 'GOOD JOB' FOR PARTICIPATING IN CLASS | A CLASSMATE SAYING 'THANK YOU' FOR HELPING THEM | A FAMILY MEMBER SAYING 'I'M PROUD OF YOU' FOR DOING THE RIGHT THING |

5th GRADE STUDENTS

IMAGINE YOUR FRIEND SENDS YOU A LINK TO A YOUTUBE VIDEO. YOU BEGIN WATCHING THE VIDEO, AND SOMEONE STARTS USING OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE THAT MAKES YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**
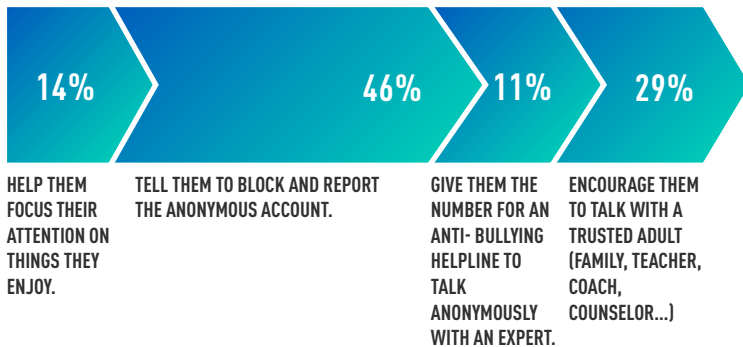
n = 1,208

21%	39%	40%
QUICKLY EXIT THE VIDEO, AND DON'T REPLY TO YOUR FRIEND	TELL YOUR FRIEND THAT YOU'RE NOT INTO VIDEOS LIKE THAT	TELL YOUR PARENT(S) ABOUT THE VIDEO, AND LET THEM KNOW HOW YOU HANDLED IT

6th GRADE STUDENTS

IMAGINE YOUR BEST FRIEND'S PARENT IS DRIVING YOU BOTH TO ANOTHER FRIEND'S HOUSE, BUT THEY TAKE OUT THEIR PHONE WHILE DRIVING, CHECKING GOOGLE MAPS AND REPLYING TO TEXTS. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**

n = 1,176

ASK IF YOU OR YOUR FRIEND CAN HELP AND HOLD THEIR PHONE
29%

ASK THEM TO PUT THE PHONE AWAY OR PULL OVER
25%

NUDGE YOUR FRIEND AND ASK THEM TO SPEAK UP
28%

SPEAK WITH YOUR FRIEND AFTERWARD ABOUT IT
18%

7th GRADE STUDENTS

IMAGINE THAT YOUR FRIEND REALIZES SOMEONE MADE AN ANONYMOUS INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT ABOUT THEM AND IS POSTING EMBARRASSING PHOTOS WITH THREATENING CAPTIONS. YOU TELL YOUR FRIEND TO IGNORE IT, BUT IT'S REALLY IMPACTING THEM. **WHAT DO YOU DO?**
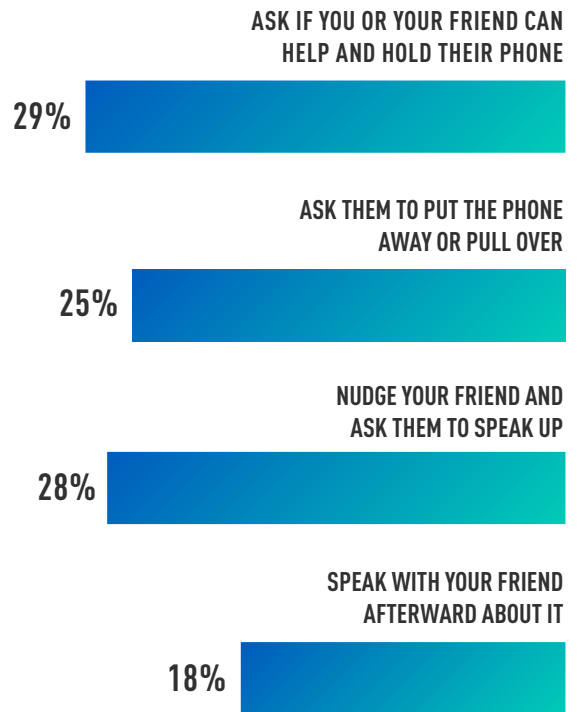
n = 1,494

14%	46%	11%	29%
HELP THEM FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON THINGS THEY ENJOY.	TELL THEM TO BLOCK AND REPORT THE ANONYMOUS ACCOUNT.	GIVE THEM THE NUMBER FOR AN ANTI-BULLYING HELPLINE TO TALK ANONYMOUSLY WITH AN EXPERT.	ENCOURAGE THEM TO TALK WITH A TRUSTED ADULT (FAMILY, TEACHER, COACH, COUNSELOR...)

8th GRADE STUDENTS

HOW OFTEN DO YOU SEE YOUNGER STUDENTS BECOMING MORE AND MORE **HOOKED ON DIGITAL DEVICES?**

12% | **25%** | **37%** | **26%**

n = 1,877
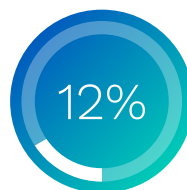
| RARELY | SOMETIMES | OFTEN | ALWAYS |

9th
GRADE STUDENTS

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING SOCIAL MEDIA PRESSURES DO YOU BELIEVE CREATES THE MOST STRESS FOR STUDENTS? **RANK THE FOLLOWING, WITH #1 BEING THE MOST STRESSFUL.**

n = 947

PRESSURE TO GET COMMENTS, LIKES, OR RESPONSES TO WHAT WE SHARE

#1

PRESSURE TO POST POSITIVE AND ATTRACTIVE CONTENT ABOUT YOURSELF

#2

PRESSURE TO POST FUNNY CONTENT THAT MAKES OTHERS LAUGH, BUT MIGHT CROSS THE LINE
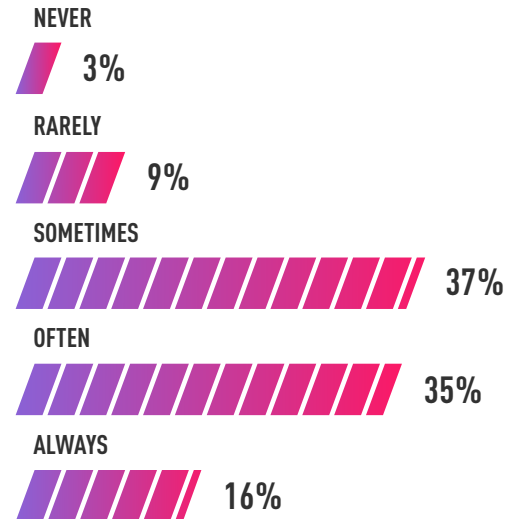
#3

PRESSURE TO STAY UP TO DATE ON FRIENDS' POSTS AND LIKE WHAT THEY SHARE

#4

10th
GRADE STUDENTS

HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL BURNT OUT BY HOW MANY PRIORITIES YOU HAVE ON YOUR PLATE?

NEVER 3%
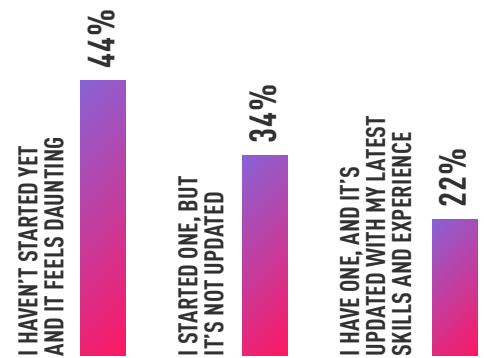
RARELY 9%

SOMETIMES 37%

OFTEN 35%

ALWAYS 16%

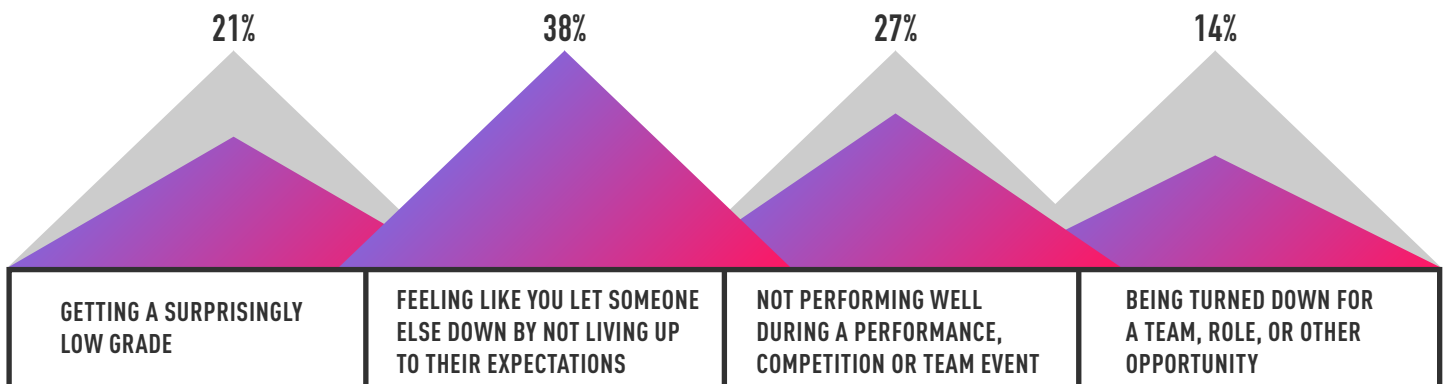*n = 822*

11th
GRADE STUDENTS

LOOKING BACK ON HIGH SCHOOL, MANY COLLEGE STUDENTS SHARE HOW HAVING A RÉSUMÉ HELPED THEM OPEN DOORS TO DIFFERENT OPPORTUNITIES. **WHERE ARE YOU IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING A RÉSUMÉ?**

n = 579

44% — I HAVEN'T STARTED YET AND IT FEELS DAUNTING

34% — I STARTED ONE, BUT IT'S NOT UPDATED

22% — I HAVE ONE, AND IT'S UPDATED WITH MY LATEST SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

12th
GRADE STUDENTS

TALKING OPENLY ABOUT FAILURE ISN'T EASY, AND IT REQUIRES A HEAVY DOSE OF SELF-AWARENESS. IMAGINE YOU'RE IN AN INTERVIEW, AND THE INTERVIEWER SAYS, "TELL ME ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOU FAILED." **WHICH ANSWER WOULD YOU RELATE TO MOST?**

21% — GETTING A SURPRISINGLY LOW GRADE

38% — FEELING LIKE YOU LET SOMEONE ELSE DOWN BY NOT LIVING UP TO THEIR EXPECTATIONS

27% — NOT PERFORMING WELL DURING A PERFORMANCE, COMPETITION OR TEAM EVENT

14% — BEING TURNED DOWN FOR A TEAM, ROLE, OR OTHER OPPORTUNITY

n = 477

THE
SOCIAL
INSTITUTE

OUR STORY

The Social Institute (TSI) partners with schools nationwide to empower students, families, and educators to navigate social-emotional health, social media, and technology positively. Schools access our student-respected curriculum through **WinAtSocial.com**, an interactive, gamified learning platform. With solutions for students, parents, and educators, we offer a systemic and comprehensive program that empowers students to fuel their health, happiness, and future success.

We are proud to serve public and independent school partners such as Ravenscroft School, All Saints Episcopal School, Woodward Academy, Oldfields School, Lake Forest School District, Boston Public Schools, and more. For more actionable tips on how to empower students to make healthy, high-character decisions online and off, visit **TheSocialInstitute.com**.

LAURA TIERNEY
Founder and CEO

Laura Tierney is the Founder and CEO of The Social Institute and a nationally recognized speaker and education innovator. She dedicates relentless energy to empowering students to navigate their social world – including social media and technology – in positive, high-character ways. With input from over 100,000 students nationwide, she developed the first-ever K-12 curriculum addressing social media, technology, and student well-being. Laura's contribution to education has been highlighted by Melinda Gates, The New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, along with numerous associations including NAIS, ISTE, ATLIS, SAIS, NCAIS, and more.

Tierney's drive to reinvent the conversation around teens and social media is fueled by her standout sports leadership experience combined with her career managing social media for world-class brands.

Prior to envisioning, researching, and launching The Social Institute, Laura served as Social Media Director at the award-winning advertising agency McKinney, overseeing social media strategy for the agency's leading global brands. Before McKinney, Laura honed her marketing and social media skills as a Social Media Manager at ESPN, helping espnW use social media to inspire millions of women and girls who love sports. During the 10 years she worked in social media, she helped build strategies and campaigns for leading brands including Duke Men's Basketball, ESPN, Samsung, Coca-Cola, Travelocity, Oakley, and Disney. Her work with Duke catapulted the @DukeMBB account to become the most engaging, most followed account in college sports.

Laura is an unshakable optimist and a competitive athlete at heart. She was a student-athlete at Duke University, majoring in sociology and journalism, and became a 4-time Duke All-American, 2-time team captain, and Duke Athlete of the Decade for field hockey. During her time at Duke, she played with the U.S. Women's Junior National Field Hockey Team, representing the United States at home and abroad. She also serves on Duke University's Learning Innovation Advisory Council and received the Triangle Business Journal's 40-under-40 award.

Today, Laura plays on behalf of students to equip them with skills and values that embody their daily digital needs. Through her work and passion, students now have the chance to win at the world's largest game: social media.

WHAT SCHOOLS ARE SAYING ABOUT #WINATSOCIAL

"TSI's #WinAtSocial Program provides a highly engaging platform to engage staff and students in discussions and activities that will help meet social-emotional learning needs, **leading to greater academic success** as we work to move beyond COVID-19."

Ted Wilson
Dir. Teaching & Learning Support
Juneau School District

"I love that #WinAtSocial Lessons are very engaging and cover topics that are relevant to students or current events. It makes the lessons interesting and I feel like I finish every lesson with a **new understanding of what we discussed.**"

Mia
11th Grade Student

"**The Social Institute's seminar vcoaching is a must for all parents!** Laura's approach to social media and adolescence is unique and simultaneously educational and refreshing. In a matter of minutes, she levels the playing field between parents and children by explaining the different platforms, their organization, intent, purpose and how to navigate them."

Amy
Parent of five

"The Social Institute has a well-thought-out curriculum. **The lessons are easy to implement, and the students enjoy the interactive design.** I have taught other digital citizenship curriculums and The Social Institute's is far superior. The parent education component (resources and webinars) really builds the partnership between TSI and our school community."

Nicky Meyer
Program Integration Director & Head Librarian
Carlthorp School

"**I love seeing the data on the screen during the discussions.** It shows you the bigger picture, across your class, your school, and in the country. I also love hearing other people's answers because then I get to learn why they feel that way. Sometimes, I even change my answer because classmates open my eyes to other perspectives and ways of thinking."
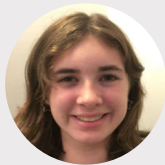
Annie
7th Grade Student

"I love how interactive the #WinAtSocial Lessons are. It is nice how we can discuss and click answers so it **feels like a game.**"
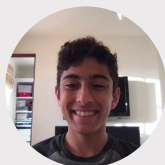
Sascha
9th Grade Student

"**Our partnership with TSI has been a game-changer.** We struggled to keep up with educating our community about the ever-changing digital world. The #WinAtSocial Curriculum takes that burden from us and expertly shares in a way that connects with children, families, and faculty."

Stacia McFadden
Chief Information Officer
The Lovett School

"The Social Institute's approach to 'social' is refreshing. Having a child that has grown up with technology and where online interaction is ubiquitous, we find it difficult to say NO. Seeing the positive in this interaction and offering caution and advice to our young is a **much more constructive approach.**"

Rollis
Parent of two

"I love how engaging #WinAtSocial lessons are. My past schools have tried various other programs, and after a few questions they got really boring. With #WinAtSocial, the content mixes up current events, facts, questions, and videos to **get everyone involved in the lesson.**"

Arianna
8th Grade Student

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