

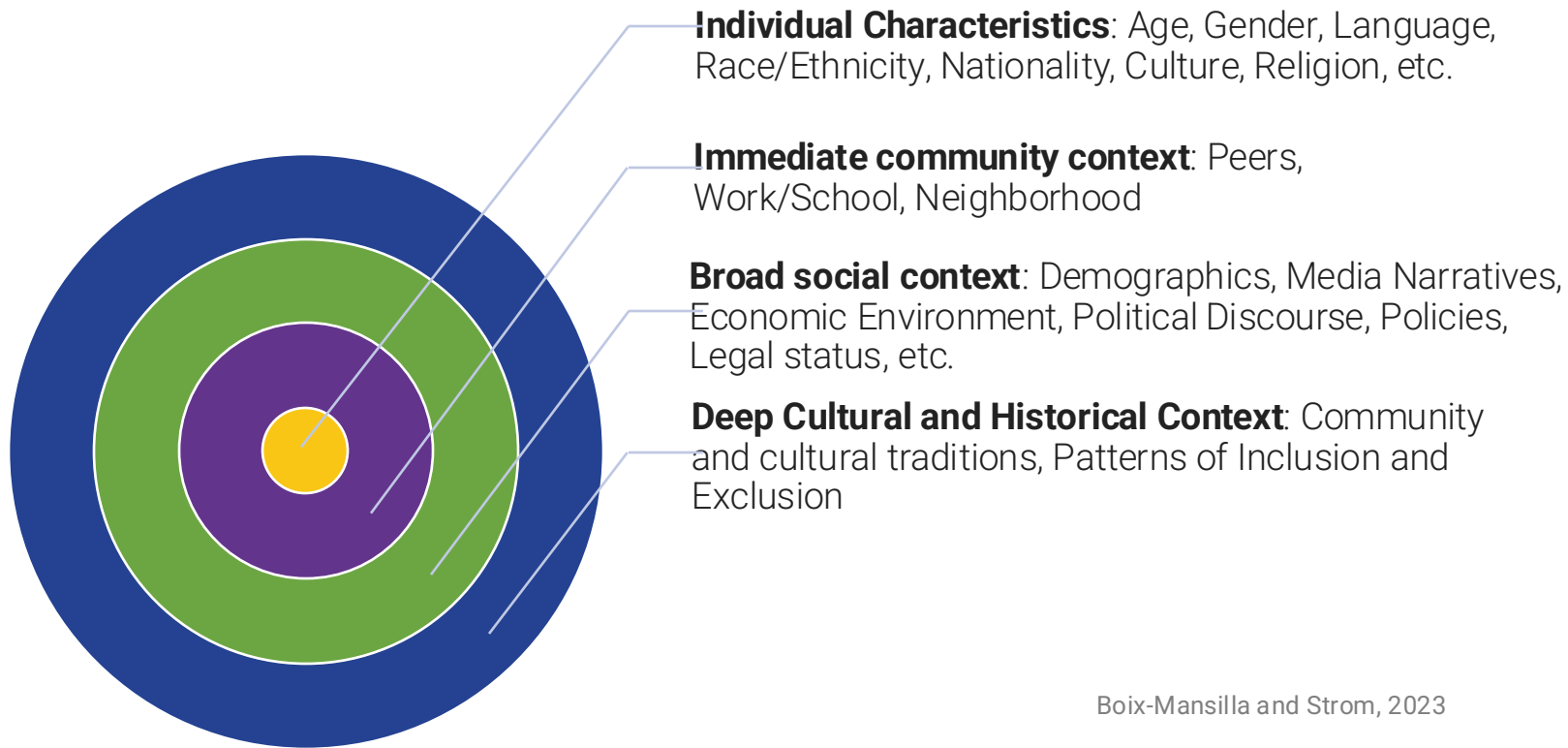
Imagine you are a fourth grader getting ready for your first day of school in a new community, maybe country.

You are excited to meet new friends, learn, and belong.

Your parents constantly stress how important school, however, they also warn you that some people may not be welcoming. They also say you need to be on your best behavior and follow all of the rules.

What do you wish you would see, hear, and feel when you walk in the door?

The Ecology of Identity



37% of respondents to a Sept. 18-20 CBS News/YouGov poll believe the claim that Haitians in Springfield, Ohio are eating people's pets is either certainly true or likely true.

- **Bomb Threats:** Schools in Springfield were subjected to bomb threats following the dissemination of the false rumor. These threats led to heightened security measures and disruptions to the educational environment. There has been an increased police presence and emergency protocols being activated to ensure the safety of students and staff.
- **Community Tensions:** The rumor has fueled tensions not only within schools but also in the broader community, leading to threats against various public buildings. This has necessitated a coordinated response from law enforcement and school officials.
- **Impact on School Operations:** The threats have caused disruptions in school operations, with some schools having to close temporarily or implement lockdown procedures. These actions have strained the educational environment and impacted students' learning experiences.

You told us that since the beginning of the school year



You know that Immigrant-origin youth have reported that they have been bullied or teased at my school

I heard students make anti-immigrant comments this school year

I have heard staff at my school/institution make anti-immigrant comments this school year

I have heard/seen staff at my school make anti-immigrant comments directed at family/caregivers of students

I have not seen or heard any anti-immigrant language or bullying this school year

We believe that schools have the potential to help individuals and communities navigate demographic change. Schools can be greenhouses for inclusion and belonging that counteract harmful anti-immigrant sentiment.

Recognizing that communities have different needs, we have designed a research-based approach that offers educators practical tools and strategies they adopt to promote the dispositions that:

- **Allow newcomers to thrive**
- **Their peers to learn**
- **Communities to successfully navigate the predictable tension that surfaces with demographic change.**

The Broad Social Context



Demographic Change

Geographic Proximity

No Social Interaction

Xenophobia

The Deep Historical Context

Migration is the throughline of the human story and it is central to the history of the United States.

Myths & misinformation get in the way of our responses to newcomers.



Scholar Bevel Daniel-Tatum likens stereotypes to smog that we all take in as we breathe. She explains,

"We're all breathing in misinformation. We're all being exposed to stereotypes, and we all have to think about how we have been impacted by that... if we have all been breathing in smog, we can't help but have our thinking shaped by it. "



**Xenophobia and polarization harms all kids,
particularly immigrant youth.**

“More than two-thirds of the principals surveyed report that federal immigration enforcement policies and the **political rhetoric around the issue have harmed student well-being** and learning or undermined the ability of parents to support student learning.” ([Rogers et al., 2019](#))

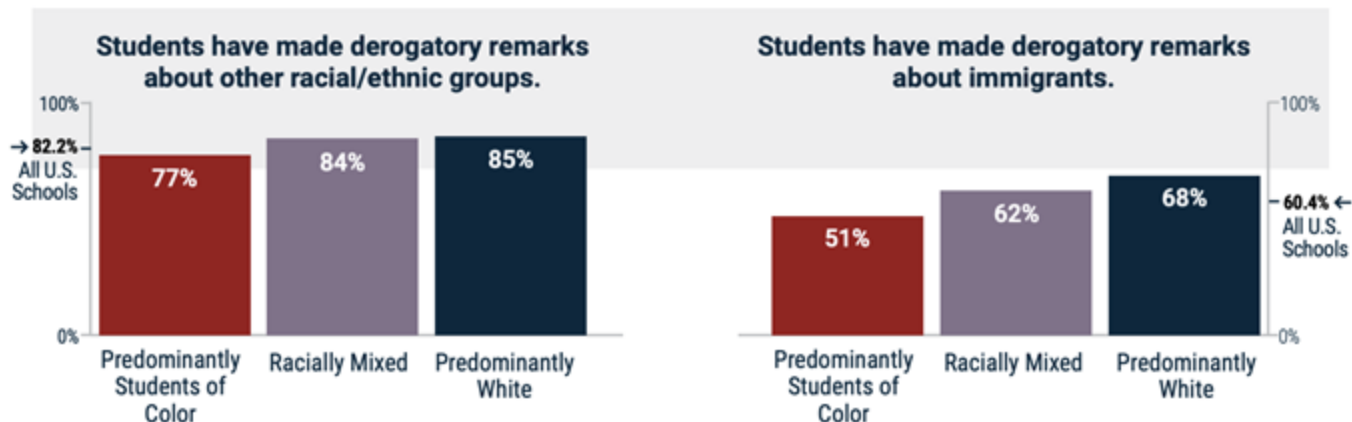
How Xenophobia Impacts Immigrant-Origin Youth

In the run up and aftermath of the 2016 election, researches at UCLA found:

- 85% of educators observed **fear** among immigrant-origin students.
- 58% of teachers noted students expressed **concerns about their the well-being** due to political discussions surrounding immigration enforcement.
- 44.3% of teachers indicated that students' concerns regarding immigration and related issues **affected their learning**.

- **Bystanders to Bullying:** Non-immigrant students report they are less likely to intervene when immigrant students are being bullied.
- **Justifying Bigotry:** Some students feel emboldened to express xenophobia, using political rhetoric as a justification.
- **Setting Norms:** Non-immigrant students may adopt prejudiced attitudes and behavior (exclusion, bullying) due to the prevalent anti-immigrant sentiments in school environments. This is particularly true when popular students express anti-immigrant attitudes.
- **Empathy:** Some students are negatively impacted by seeing their friends and peers mistreated.
- **Academic Performance:** Toxic school climates can negatively impact the academic performance of all students.

Student Hostility Toward Other Racial Groups and Immigrants, by School Racial Demographics



Non-Immigrant students report being less likely to intervene when immigrant students are targets of bullying.

- ❖ Rogers, J., Ishimoto, M., Kwako, A., Berryman, A., Diera, C. (2019). *School and Society in the Age of Trump*. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access
- ❖ Gönültaş, S., & Mulvey, K. L. (2021). The Role of Immigration Background, Intergroup Processes, and Social-Cognitive Skills in Bystanders' Responses to Bias-Based Bullying Toward Immigrants During Adolescence. *Child development*, 92(3), e296–e316. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13476>.

Immigrant Students Sense of Belonging

Civics

Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Students Are More Optimistic About the Future than Their U.S.-Born Peers

Familiarity may breed awareness of disadvantages and discrimination, finds a new study led by TC's S. Garnett Russell

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Photo credit: S. Garnett Russell. Image illustrated by: Kelly Baird.

What We Are Learning

A 2021 pilot survey by Youth Truth, in collaboration with the Immigration Initiative at Harvard and Re-Imagining Migration, focused on middle school students' sense of belonging. The survey identified six key patterns:

1 Lower sense of school belonging compared to nonimmigrant peers.

4 Difficulty discussing race and ethnicity with school staff.

2 Discouragement from using their family's home language.

5 Lower sense of safety, both in and out of school.

3 Increased reports of bullying or harassment.

6 Lack of representation in the school curriculum.

Bullying: Policies and Norms

The number of schools that communicate specifically about the need to promote tolerance and respect for immigrant youth is **30%-40% lower than for other racial and ethnic groups.**

