



# Positive Relationships Between Student Engagement and Hope and Student Behavior

Key findings from Gallup's Student Poll analysis in California

**Increased emphasis on the importance of student behavior outcomes** (e.g., suspension, absenteeism and dropout rates) has created a need for further research on what factors can positively affect these outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Gallup researchers help our clients in education tackle this challenge. Based on our study of research literature and our consulting experience, we hypothesized that student engagement<sup>2</sup> and student hope<sup>3</sup> positively influence student behavior outcomes in schools. To test this hypothesis, Gallup conducted a school-level study of students from the 2015 and 2016 Gallup Student Poll (GSP). This study included GSP data from the fall of 2015 and fall of 2016, California student data from the California Department of Education reporting California public school outcomes reflecting the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school year, and 2015-2016 school demographic data from the National Center for Education Statistics' Common Core of Data. Gallup was able to study 117 schools across 18 districts in California that served more than 117,500 students in 2015-2016 (94,598 in grades five through 12) and 153 schools across 27 districts that served more than 144,075 students in 2016-2017<sup>4</sup> (118,769 students in grades five through 12).

144,075

STUDENTS STUDIED  
IN 2016-2017

117,500

STUDENTS STUDIED  
IN 2015-2016

<sup>1</sup> ESSA, 2016 - <http://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Gallup defines Student Engagement as "the involvement in and enthusiasm for school"

<sup>3</sup> Gallup defines Student Hope as "the ideas and energy students have for the future"

<sup>4</sup> California Enrollment 2016-2017 data set

## Key Study Findings

- 1 Student engagement is significantly negatively related to types of student behavior outcomes at the school level.

ENGAGEMENT	2015		2016	
Student Discipline and Behavior Outcomes Within Schools	Corr. Alpha	School n size	Corr. Alpha	School n size
Suspension Rate	-.495**	117	-.391**	153
Expulsion Rate	-.434**	117	-.409**	153
Chronic Absenteeism Rate			-.344**	153
Truancy Rate	-.317**	117		
Dropout Rate	-.269*	78		

- 2 Student hope is significantly negatively related to types of student behavior outcomes at the school level.

HOPE	2015		2016	
Student Discipline and Behavior Outcomes Within Schools	Corr. Alpha	School n size	Corr. Alpha	School n size
Suspension Rate	-.443**	117	-.333**	153
Expulsion Rate	-.344**	117	-.273**	153
Chronic Absenteeism Rate			-.256**	153
Truancy Rate	-.293**	117		
Dropout Rate	-.243*	78		

\*significance at the .05 level

\*\*significance at the .01 level



## Utility Analysis Findings

- 1 Schools with higher student engagement show significantly lower incidents of negative student behavior compared to schools with lower student engagement across five different measures in California. Compared with bottom-quartile schools, top-quartile schools have:

2015

**75.8%** fewer student suspensions in 2015

(6.7 percentage-point difference)

**91.4%** fewer student expulsions in 2015

(0.32 percentage-point difference)

**29.4%** fewer student truanancies in 2015

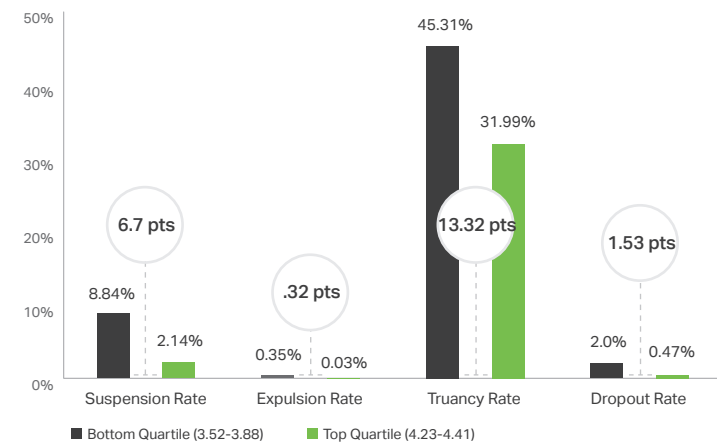
(13.32 percentage-point difference)

**76.5%** fewer dropouts in 2015

(1.53 percentage-point difference)

ENGAGEMENT QUARTILES AND CALIFORNIA STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

2015



2016

**65%** fewer student suspensions in 2016

(4.35 percentage-point difference)

**93.75%** fewer student expulsions in 2016

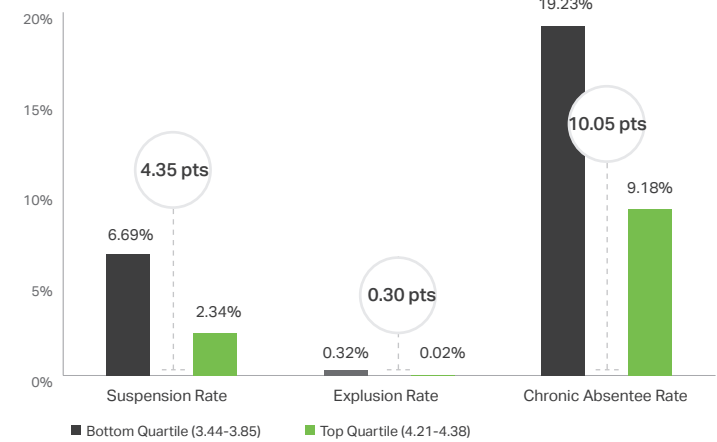
(0.3 percentage-point difference)

**52.3%** fewer chronically absent students in 2016

(10.05 percentage-point difference)

ENGAGEMENT QUARTILES AND CALIFORNIA STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

2016





2 Schools with higher student hope show significantly lower incidents of negative student behavior compared to schools with lower student hope across five different measures in California. Compared with bottom-quartile schools, top-quartile schools have:

2015

**68.5%** fewer student suspensions in 2015

(5.32 percentage-point difference)

**90.6%** fewer student expulsions in 2015

(0.29 percentage-point difference)

**37.3%** fewer student truanancies in 2015

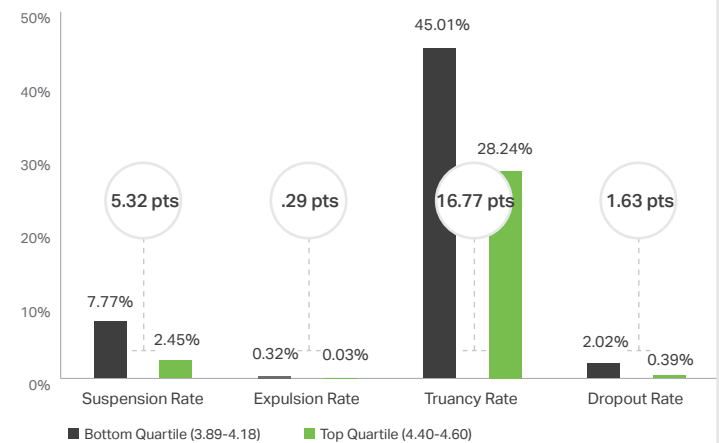
(16.77 percentage-point difference)

**80.7%** fewer dropouts in 2015

(1.63 percentage-point difference)

HOPE QUARTILES AND CALIFORNIA STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

2015



2016

**55.8%** fewer student suspensions in 2016

(3.52 percentage-point difference)

**82.1%** fewer student expulsions in 2016

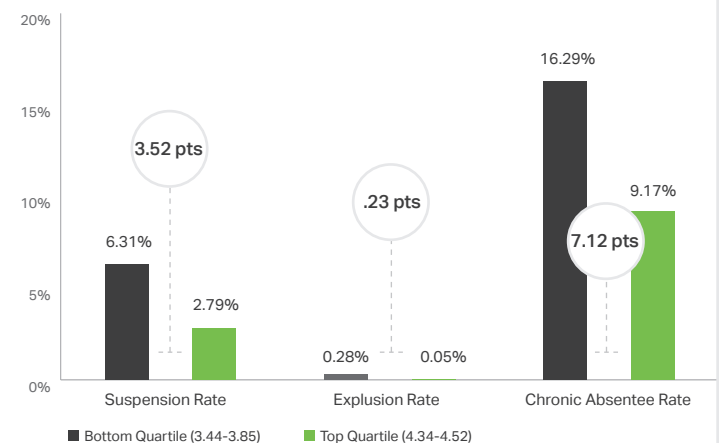
(.23 percentage-point difference)

**43.7%** fewer chronically absent students in 2016

(7.12 percentage-point difference)

HOPE QUARTILES AND CALIFORNIA STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL

2016





## Implications of This Study

This study has proven engagement and hope measurements to be significantly negatively related to student discipline and behavior outcomes at a school level. Consequently, this study has provided a path for districts and schools to proactively build a positive culture and environment at the school and classroom level that supports students emotionally and socially — while positively impacting student behavior outcomes.

This study of the GSP database involving student engagement and hope in relation to student discipline and behavior outcomes is the largest conducted to date. Due to the limitations of the aggregated database and isolation to the state of California, further studies will need to be conducted to replicate results across states and extend to the individual student, grade and subject areas.

Findings of this study reach beyond proving that engaged and hopeful students experience less discipline and negative behavior outcomes. This study has created an opportunity for schools to proactively decrease negative student behavior — and the resulting discipline — through specific actions that increase student engagement and hope. The impact of this approach is a basic step in shifting and growing a positive school culture.

By creating a school culture driven by student engagement and hope, schools can provide a positive atmosphere that encourages involvement in and enthusiasm for school, while promoting students' ideas and energy for the future. As a result of increasing student engagement and hope, schools can decrease negative student behavior outcomes such as chronic absenteeism and suspensions.

The Gallup Student Poll is an exemplary tool in producing positive school outcomes beyond measuring student engagement and hope. To help principals and teachers on this journey, Gallup offers a Gallup Student Poll tool kit with advice, action items and resources to build and grow student engagement and hope, while creating their own unique school culture. The tool kit is a first step in providing students the opportunity to feel engaged, hopeful and excited about going to school — while influencing academic growth, achievement and postsecondary readiness.<sup>5</sup> Gallup also offers individualized consulting specific to a district's Student Poll outcomes — and a District Identity offering to align schools, classrooms and communities with the district's mission, brand and culture.

**To learn more about our Gallup Education offerings, visit [www.gallup.com/education](http://www.gallup.com/education), or to speak with a Gallup Education expert, contact us at: [education@gallup.com](mailto:education@gallup.com) | 1-800-204-1192**

<sup>5</sup> Gallup. (2017). Engagement and hope positively influence student outcomes: Key findings from Gallup's student poll analysis in Texas.