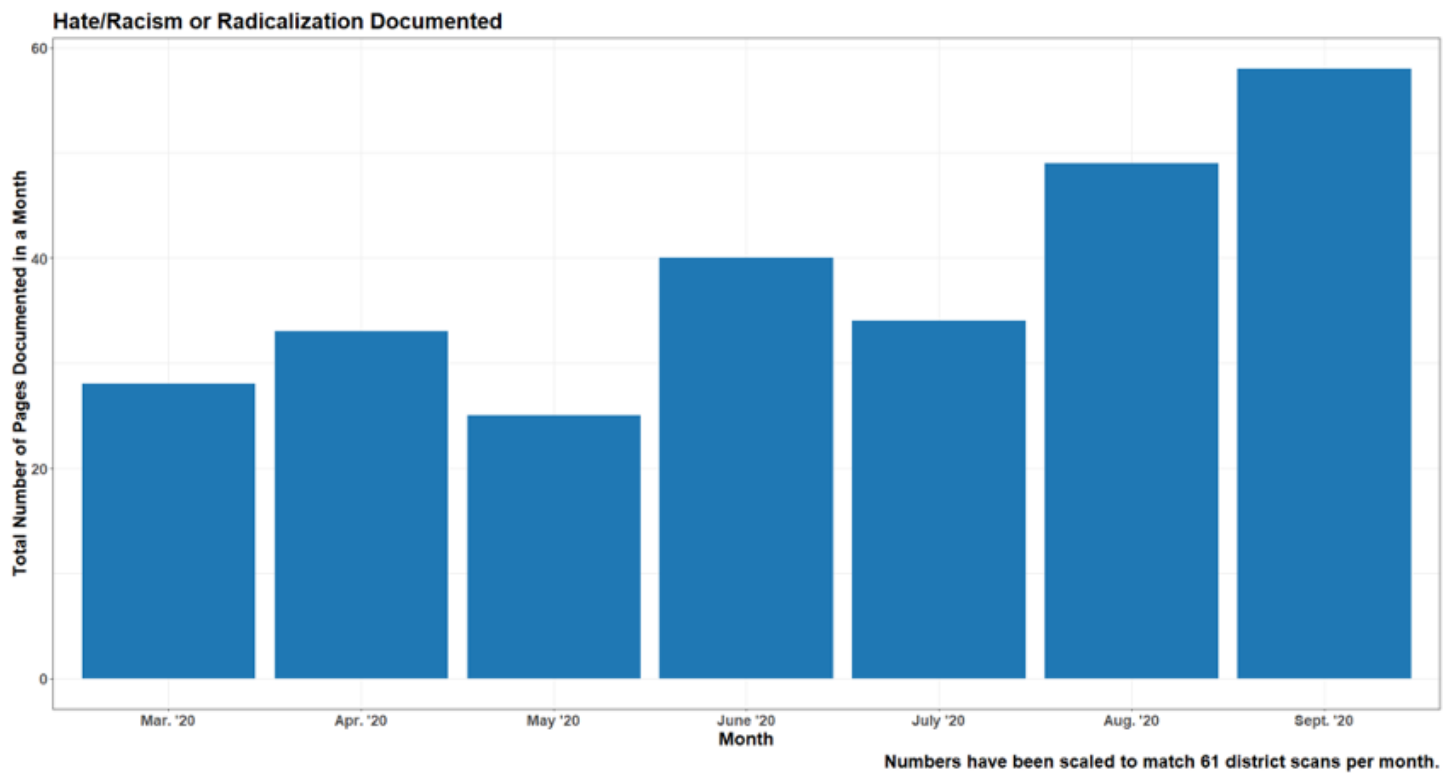# CURRENT ONLINE TRENDS:

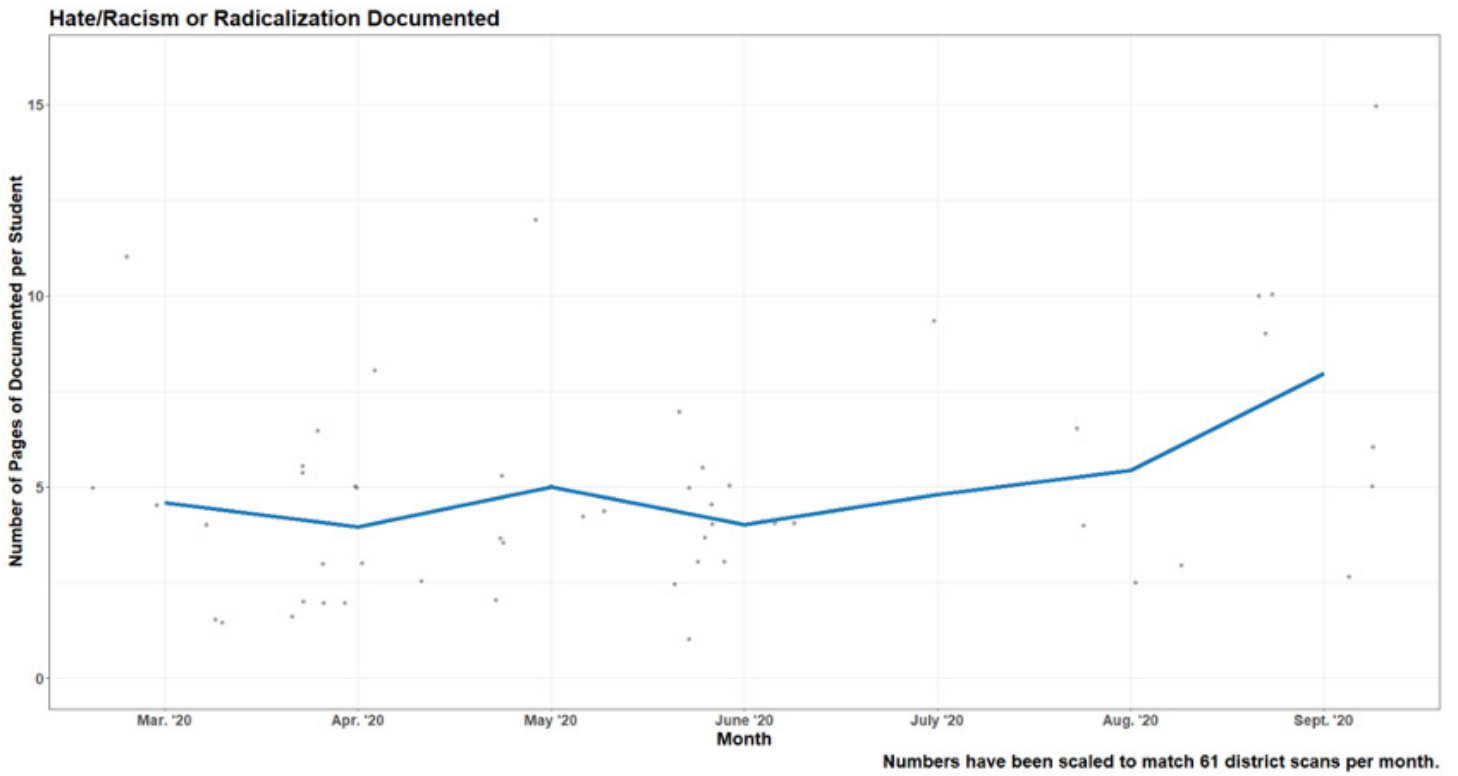## MARCH - SEPTEMBER 2020

SAFER SCHOOLS TOGETHER

UPDATED TRENDS

HATE / RACISM:

With the escalation of international protests regarding race, our analysts have noticed a rise in posts that contained hateful or racist subject matter. We are now seeing commentary and material once contained in private peer circles being shared publicly to expose racist individuals.

For the students who have been identified as posting racist and other hate related content, these cases have become more extensive and complex. Racism has become a very polarizing issue and our analysts have noted more extreme instances of racist digital content being shared publicly.

Hate/Racism or Radicalization Documented

Numbers have been scaled to match 61 district scans per month.

Hate/Racism or Radicalization Documented

Numbers have been scaled to match 61 district scans per month.
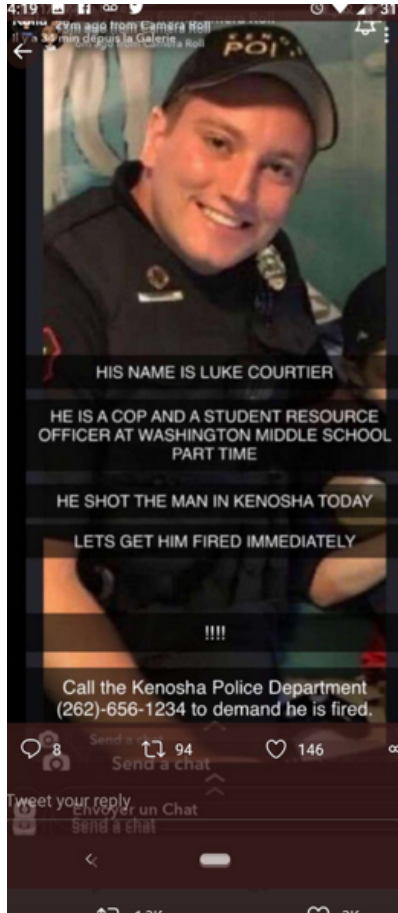
In recent months, students who post hateful content are making more hateful posts than that of students who we have identified as posting hateful content in the past.
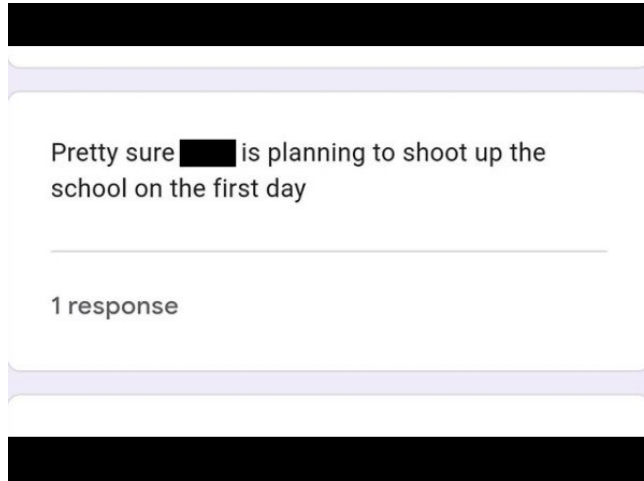
CANCEL CULTURE:

Cancel culture is the practice of withdrawing support (or calling for the boycott) of companies and people after it is revealed that they have done something offensive. It has become a way for the public or a group of people to demand accountability. Cancellations have become a fast-track route for individuals who may be seeking a version of Social Justice. However, by airing unconfirmed "facts", we have noticed the trend causes more harm than good. We've seen students, staff, and even parents engage in doxing and cancellations.
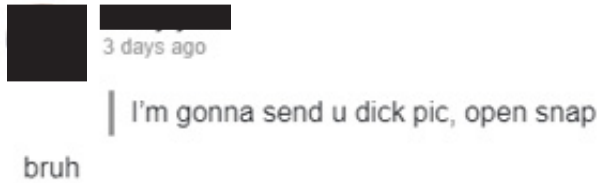

LEFT: In the aftermath of the Jacob Blake shooting, many individuals wanted to even the score and did so by doxing the police officer in the above screenshot. Officer Courtier was misidentified as the individual who shot Mr. Blake and his image was widely spread across social media. Although not connected to the shooting, his reputation was harmed and the school that Officer Courtier was connected to as a School Resource Officer was bombarded with phone calls, emails, and threats with regards to his employment.
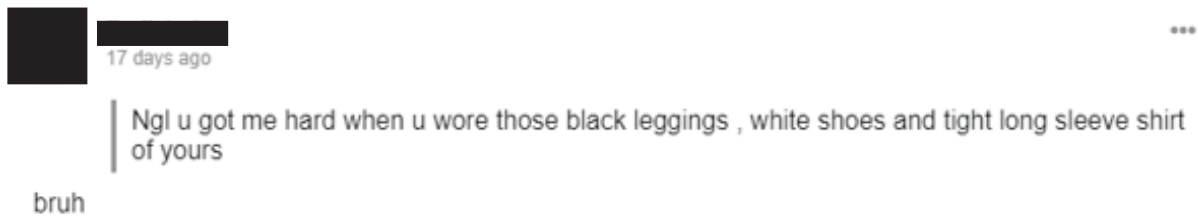
CONFESSION PAGES / TEA PAGES

Confession pages or tea pages have become a medium for students to spill thoughts and feelings without having their identities revealed. These pages usually take the form of Instagram pages and collect "tea" using a variety of applications such as Tellonym, Google Forms, email, or direct messages (DMs). We are seeing numerous schools and districts affected by these pages.

Our analysts have had intakes that either posed a direct threat or a warning of a threat targeting schools from posts submitted to student confession pages.

The above screenshot from a student's Tellonym is an example of how Tea/Confession pages provide anonymity to the sender. It allows them to make demands or send comments without fear of repercussion. In this case, the sender is threatening to send sexually explicit imagery.
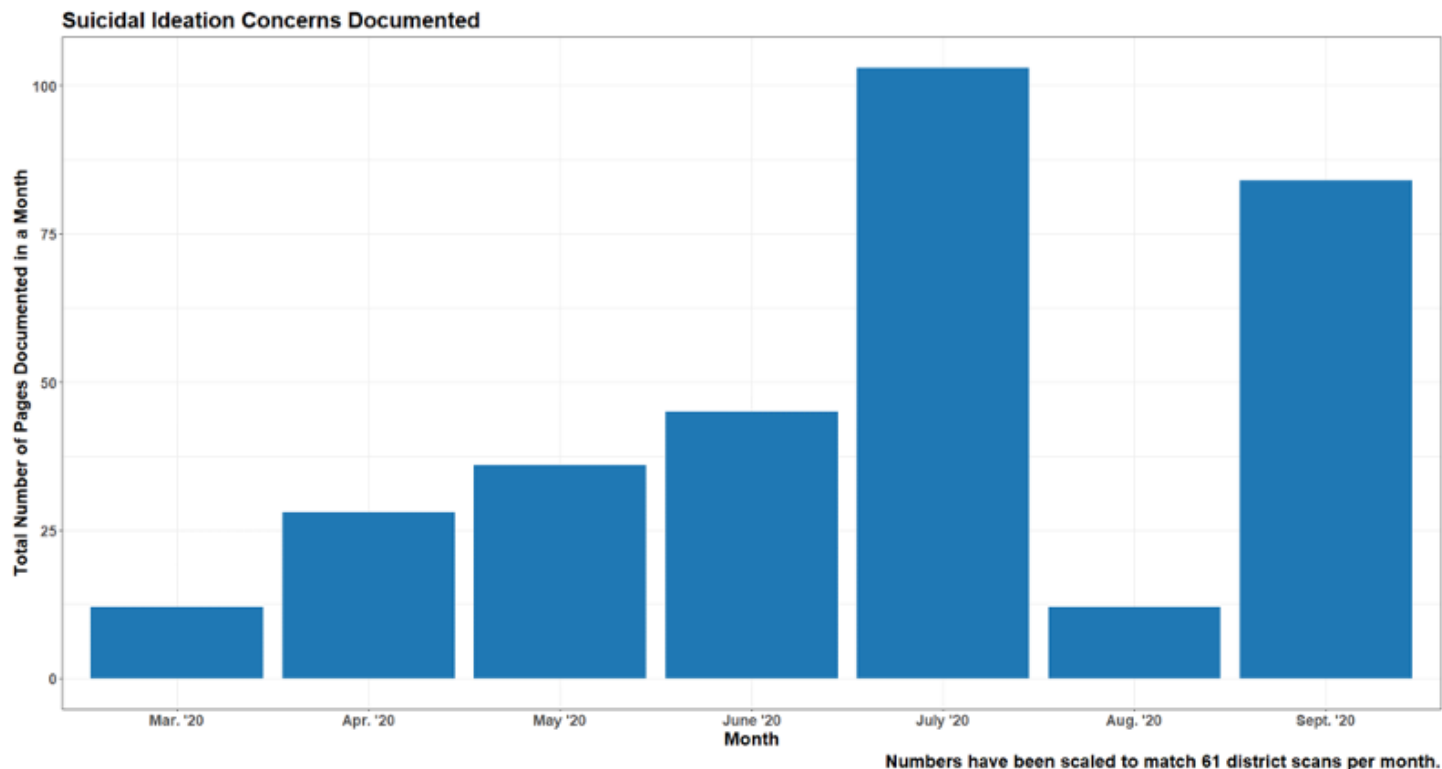

In the above screenshot, the sender comments on the outfit of the person they saw that day, meaning they were close together. The receiver does not know who sent it or who may have been following them.

SEXTORTION

The act of sending and receiving intimate images is prevalent amongst our youth. Image boards are one medium where intimate images are shared publicly. In some instances these images contain nudity of underage individuals. Despite take down measures by law enforcement to remove message boards in the past, there appears to be a resurgence of these online image boards which we have observed in at least one region. One avenue towards removing these images is to determine the organization that is hosting the image board and submitting a DMCA request. It's important to make students aware of reporting tools and encourage them to report if they come across content that is worrisome or if they or their peers are experiencing sextortion themselves.
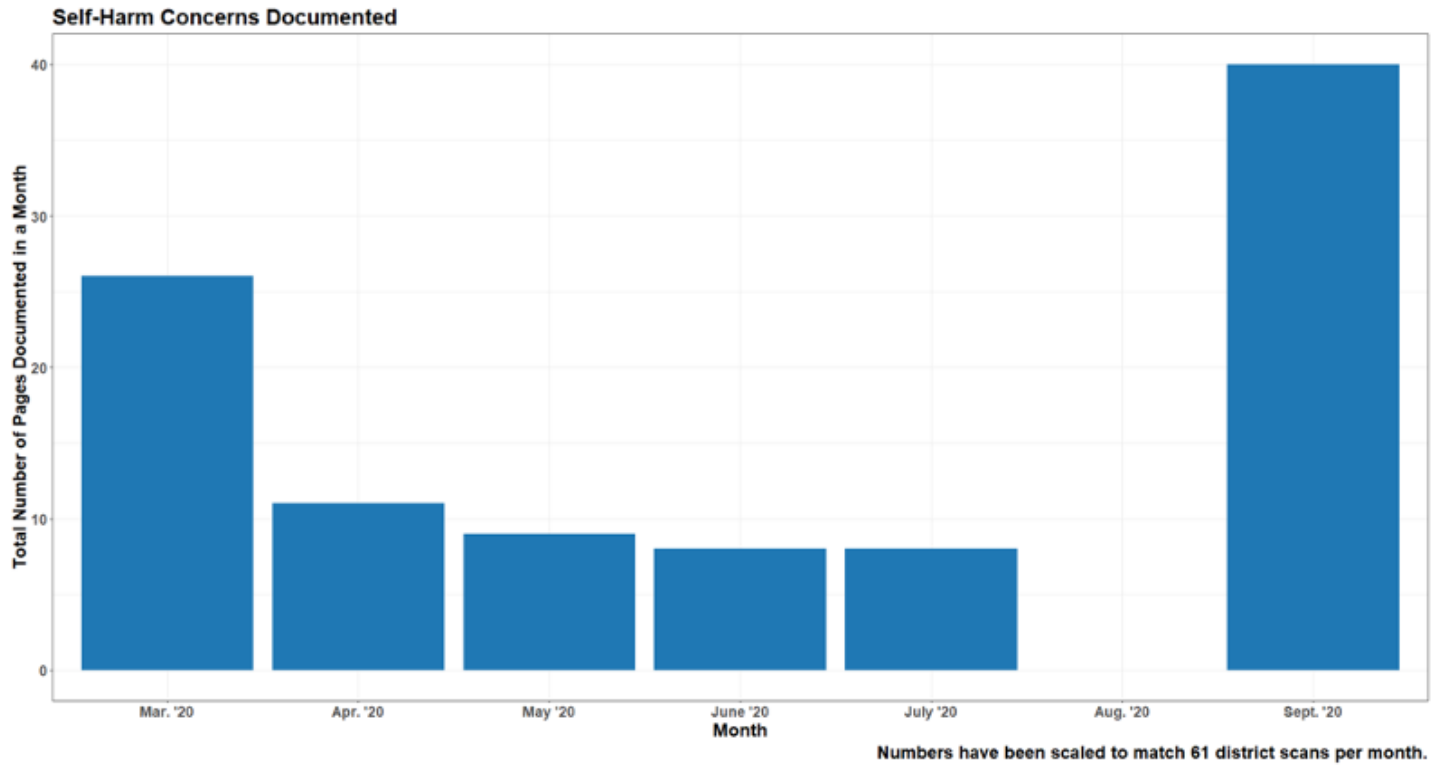
SUICIDAL IDEATION:

Analysts observed commentary around increased stress in relation to online learning. There appeared to be continued growth in stress and anxiety falling in line with our students' return to school. Note that unusual fluctuations in observations for July and August can be attributed to the fewer district scans that were conducted over the summer. The observations were scaled as if a typical number of district scans were conducted over the summer. This lead to significant highs or lows in instances where the districts that we did conduct scans for had a higher or lower than average baseline of suicidal ideation in comparison to other districts.
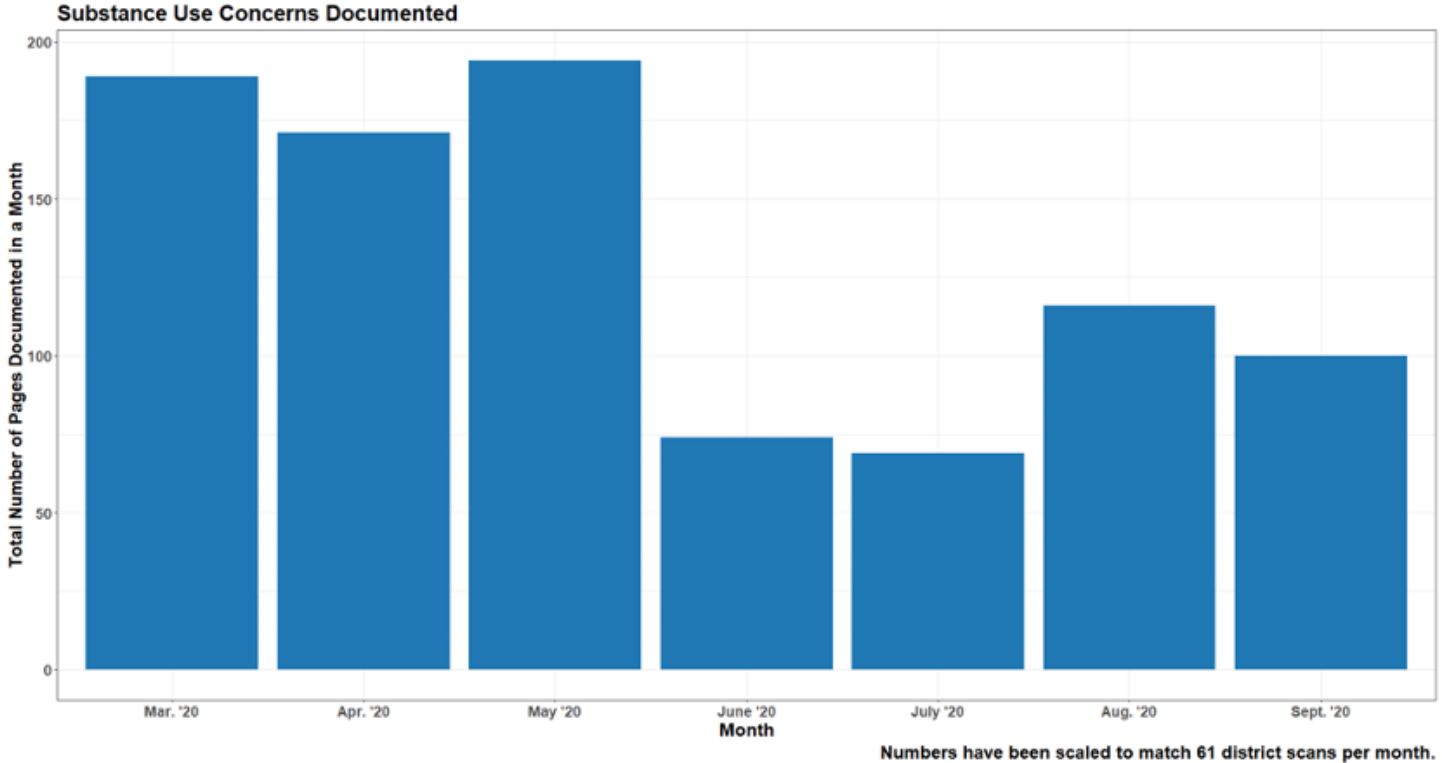
Suicidal Ideation Concerns Documented

Numbers have been scaled to match 61 district scans per month.

SELF-HARM:

Following a transition from in-person to online learning and students' loss of supports/connections, analysts observed a significant number of self-harm cases, followed by an apparent decline in self-harm. This coincided with the alleviation of physical distancing measures in late Spring and the Summer. As our students made a return to school and in-person learning, there appeared to be a spike in instances of self-harm more numerous than the cases observed in March.

Self-Harm Concerns Documented

Numbers have been scaled to match 61 district scans per month.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

When stricter physical distancing measures were in effect between March and May, our analysts noticed higher instances of substance use. Analysts observed a significant drop in substance use beginning in June which was concurrent with the transition to the economic Restart Plan.

Substance Use Concerns Documented

Numbers have been scaled to match 61 district scans per month.

Our analysts are available to advise on complex cases. If your district is going through similar cases or seeing any worrying trends with your students, please email info@saferschoolstogether.com.