



To: Interested Parties

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: June 26, 2020

Re: Parents' Survey Identifies Ongoing Education Needs for New York Families

Global Strategy Group partnered with The Education Trust–New York to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 800 parents of children in New York State public schools from June 16th to 22nd, 2020. Key findings from the research are outlined below.

Key Findings:

Months after school closures, satisfaction with distance learning has decreased – driven by a large gap between the experiences of low-income families and higher-income families. From March to June 2020, satisfaction among parents dropped from 57% citing distance learning as successful (8 to 10 on a 0-10 scale), to 43% – a 14-point difference overall and a 16-point drop among Black parents. This decrease is primarily driven by low-income families, who are much less likely to describe distance learning as successful (36%) than higher-income families (48%), a significant widening of the gap between the two groups since March. Parents in Upstate New York (35%) and in the New York City suburbs (39%) are also much less likely to rate remote learning as successful than parents of children who attend New York City public schools (53%), though positive ratings are low and have dipped across regions.

At the root of parents' dissatisfaction with remote learning is a fear that their child will fall behind academically. Consistent with the March survey, when asked a list of potential concerns about their child not being in school as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, academic concerns once again rose to the top, above concerns like ensuring their children feel safe and emotionally at ease during this time and being able to provide financially for their children while schools and businesses are closed. Eighty-six percent of parents are concerned with ensuring their child does not fall behind academically, while 76% are concerned about whether their child is on track to graduate, which is especially concerning to Black parents (67% very concerned) when compared to white parents (49% very concerned).

Access to their child's teachers is viewed as an important area of improvement. Parents want themselves and their children to have access or face-to-face interactions with their child's teacher on a regular basis. Nine out of ten parents say that parent-to-teacher (93%) and child-to-teacher interactions (91%) would be helpful for families like theirs during the coronavirus pandemic. This need is being significantly under-met, with only about half of New York State parents saying their child's school has made these available to them (56% of parents say they have had regular contact and 53% say that their child has had regular live online lessons). Black parents are emphasizing this need even more, with 8-in-10 saying that regular contact (80%) and live access (75%) would be *very helpful*.

Student experiences reveal ways the pandemic makes existing equity gaps even worse:

- **Access to teachers:** Black and Latinx (52%) parents are less likely than White (57%) parents to say their child got regular live access to their teacher, such as live online lessons or phone/video calls, and parents of color are less likely (52%) to say they have been provided with regular contact with or access to their child's teacher compared to White parents (59%).
- **Feedback on assignments:** Parents with incomes over \$100,000 per year are much more likely to report that their child has received regular feedback on assignments (60%) than parents with very low incomes (44%).
- **Summer learning materials:** Parents with very low incomes are also much less likely to say that they have been provided with summer learning materials for their child (23%) compared to parents with incomes over \$100,000 (33%), though both figures remain low.
- **Access to technology:** Students from low-income backgrounds are less likely to have access to their own tablet, computer, or other device to participate in remote learning (77%) than higher-income students (84%).
- **Access to reliable internet:** Low-income (75%) and Latinx students (78%) are much less likely to have access to fast and reliable internet compared to higher-income (88%) or White (85%) students.

- **Food insecurity** 51% of parents from low-income communities, 51% of Latinx parents, and 48% of Black parents are concerned about their child's access to meals and food this summer, compared to just 36% of higher-income parents and 36% of White parents. Overall, 1 in 3 parents (33%) and 40% of low-income parents have skipped or reduced the size or number of meals for themselves or their child as a result of the pandemic.

Low-income families are hit hardest by school closures and distance learning. Although parents support their schools' overall handling of coronavirus (83%, consistent with our earlier research at the end of March which has support at 85%), a major gap has opened between the response of low-income and higher-income families. While 8 in 10 parents of children in New York State's public schools say their child's school is doing an excellent or good job handling the coronavirus (83%), low-income families are 10 points less likely to say to give positive ratings (76%) than their higher-income counterparts (86%). This is a contrast to our March poll, when the difference between the response of low-income and higher-income families was insignificant (84% vs. 86%). **Across several metrics tested, lower income families are consistently less likely to rate their experience with remote learning as positive:**

<\$50k	\$50k +	% positive
74%	84%	Assignments that were posted online or delivered for your child to complete
66%	74%	Access to learning materials that allow for your child to work independently
55%	73%	Homework in between virtual learning sessions
54%	63%	Video lessons recorded by your child's teacher
54%	65%	Live lessons with your child's teacher with the whole class or groups of students by video, chat, or phone
53%	68%	Virtual office hours held by teachers by video, chat, email, or phone
49%	56%	Live 1-to-1 sessions with your child's teacher by video, chat, or phone
48%	56%	Virtual office hours held by school counselors by video, chat, email, or phone
49%	60%	Discussion groups with classmates

Months into school closures, there are still large gaps in supports for families that remain unaddressed. Out of an extensive list of things schools could do to help support parents and students, we found parents are receptive to all options. However, as time has gone by, the rather sizeable gaps between what parents would find the most helpful (in light blue below) and what schools have provided for families (in the dark blue) remains large:

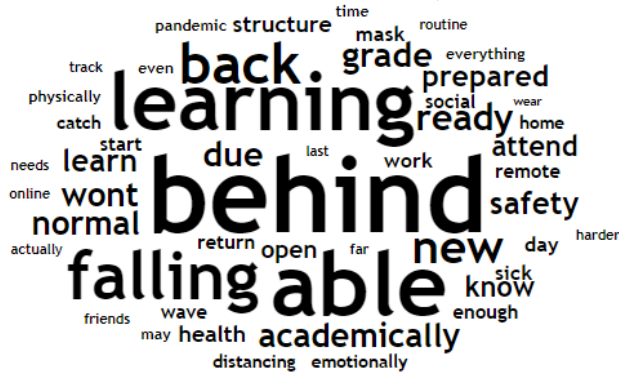
June 2020 % would be helpful	June 2020 % child's school is doing this	March 2020	
93%	56%	52%	Providing parents with regular contact with or access to their child's teacher
91%	53%	N/A	Providing students with regular live access to their teacher, such as live online lessons or phone/video calls
87%	39%	33%	Providing technical assistance to help families get set up for remote/distance learning
87%	42%	N/A	Providing information for parents about whether their child has learned what they are supposed to by the end of their current grade
87%	35%	N/A	Providing information about what areas of learning parents should focus on with their child to be ready for success next school year
86%	37%	34%	Sharing examples of resources to help parents teach their children during the day
86%	50%	43%	Lending mobile technology devices like iPads to families
85%	41%	38%	Providing parents or students with regular contact with or access to a school counselor
83%	44%	24%	Connecting parents to resources that can help with food, housing, employment, health, and other emergency needs
78%	26%	27%	Providing instructional materials and other resources to support students with disabilities
77%	25%	21%	Providing free internet access to families
77%	28%	31%	Providing instructional materials for English learners
64%	25%	28%	Providing information for parents in languages other than English

The 2020-2021 academic year:

Looking ahead to the fall, academic concerns and a fear that their children have or will fall behind academically rise to the top. This comes through clearly in the word clouds represented below, where falling behind and not being able to learn come through clearly, particularly among low-income parents. Academic concerns rise to the top across all regions of the state, though concerns are most intense in New York City (57% of parents are very concerned about their child falling behind academically and 60% of high school parents in New York City are very concerned about their child being on track to graduate, compared to 53% and 48% in the rest of the state, respectively).

What is your biggest concern for your child about next school year?

Household income <\$50,000:



Household income \$50,000+:



Parents prioritize providing additional support for students who have fallen behind and finding safe ways for children to attend school. In whatever format schools reopen, parents' number one priority is extra support for students who are falling behind – 70% say there should be more of this in schools next year, over other important priorities including more team-building and the development of social-emotional skills (61%). When asked to rate their comfort level with a series of protocols and accommodations that could be made next year, parents are most comfortable with in-classroom options over exclusively remote learning: precautions like maintaining rigorous cleaning protocols (80% comfortable), regularly testing staff and students (79%), and ensuring social distancing (75%) are all preferred over school buildings remaining closed (62%).

Losing more learning time is an extremely high concern for parents. Losing even more learning time if schools have to close again during the next school year tops a list of potential concerns about returning in the fall (90% concerning overall, including 61% who say this is very concerning).

Facing a steep economic crisis and with insufficient federal funding to support states and schools, parents want any budget cuts to be targeted so that they protect the students with the greatest needs, rather than implemented across-the-board. Parents overwhelmingly agree that the schools and school districts that serve students with the greatest needs should be protected from bigger budget cuts (81% agree, including 41% who strongly agree) and teacher layoffs (84%/41% strongly) compared to other schools or districts.

About this poll: The survey had a confidence interval of +/-3.5%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel, including 60% of interviews conducted via mobile device. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of public school parents are properly represented. Thirty one percent of participants have a household income of less than \$50,000 per year.