

Parent/Family Distance Learning Survey

Results

June 2020



Background

Governor Walz's executive order to close schools for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year changed the plans and lives of administrators, teachers, students, and families. Plunged into new ways of learning, communicating, and working together, it is important to know more about families' experiences supporting their students' learning during this pandemic and to know more about their needs going into the future.

This parent/family distance learning survey was conducted by the School Transformation Collaborative (STC) and the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota (JRPFF) with research support from ACT Research. The catalyst for conducting this survey was a deep concern about how student and parent feedback will inform academic planning for academic year 2020-2021 as schools create a longer-term response to learning in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a part of this work, it is essential to adopt a ground-up approach to gaining an understanding of families' current experience with distance learning; their continuing needs; and their perspectives about how schools and districts can improve teaching, learning, and connection during distance learning. With this information, parents/families and their advocates can start to reimagine and share what future academic planning should be focused on in order to better meet families' needs and better support students' success. This project's sponsors and partners share a deep belief in the importance of family leadership in education and have conducted this survey with families, with special efforts toward recruiting families of color and families with lower incomes, to ensure they have a voice in planning for the 2020-2021 school year.

Two key uses that were identified for survey results included:

- To inform responsive plans for community support and programming.
- Issue a report summarizing the findings from the survey that can be used to advocate for improvements to current distance learning practices and for future academic planning that better meets families' and students' needs.

Overarching research questions that guided survey development were:

- What has been the mental and emotional impact of COVID-19?
- What are families' experiences with distance learning?
 - What's working well?
 - What's challenging?
 - What needs improvement? What would be more effective?
- What do students need most from schools in order to be successful?
- How have schools and districts reached out for feedback from parents/families to inform distance learning?
 - What more can they be doing?
- What are parents/families' concerns going into summer?
- What are parents/families' concerns for fall and the 2020-2021 academic school year?
- Assuming the next school year includes at least some distance learning, what do schools need to do to make this work for students:
 - Academically?

- Emotionally?
- How would families like to be involved in helping their school or district respond to COVID-19?

About the Sponsors/Partners:

School Transformation Collaborative: The School Transformation Collaborative (STC) is an organization whose mission is to serve families and community stakeholders of academically low performing schools to improve the performance of those schools while respecting the school's educational autonomy.

The Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota: Since 2016, the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation of Minnesota has chiefly focused on investing in the creative and strategic genius of the North Minneapolis community in the spaces of economic development and education.

ACT Research: ACT Research is a research and evaluation consultancy that works primarily with non-profits, foundations, and educational institutions and is one of the few firms that specializes in developmental evaluation – working at the intersection of research, evaluation, planning and development.

Survey Details

Survey administration

- The survey was administered online in English and in Spanish.
- Survey data was collected from 05/19/2020 to 06/03/2020.
- \$20 gift-card incentives were used to recruit some participants. Versions of the survey without incentives were also distributed.

Respondents

- 98 participants with children in Minnesota schools responded to the survey.
- 47 responded to an English version that offered a \$20 gift card for responding, 10 to a Spanish version that offered a gift card, and 41 to an English version that did not offer a gift card.
- Demographic details are presented below.

Analysis and reporting

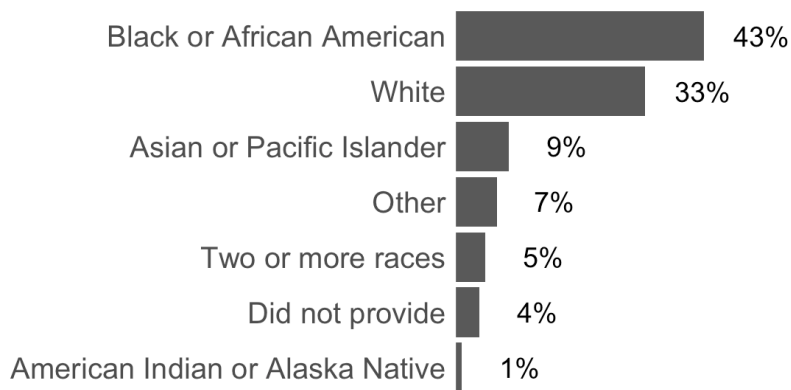
- Responses to open-ended questions were coded and then synthesized into a narrative that reflects both major themes mentioned by multiple respondents and the broad range of experiences of families and students. Representative quotes are included below and are italicized and are placed in quotation marks.
- We investigated potential group differences in responses to closed-ended items with statistical testing to identify differences that were not likely due to chance and that would likely still appear if we had a different set of respondents. We only report on differences that met predefined criteria for statistical significance in the main part of the report (starting on page 25). See the separate Appendix for other comparisons and details on statistical tests.

SURVEY RESULTS

98 respondents took the survey.

- Of the 98 respondents, 43% identified as African American, 33% as White, 9% as Asian or Pacific Islander, 7% as a non-listed race, 5% as two or more races, and 1% as American Indian or Alaska Native. Four percent did not provide this information. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one identification.
- 12% identified as Hispanic (of any race), 85% did not, and 3% did not answer the question about Hispanic heritage.
- 59% of respondents reported that their students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

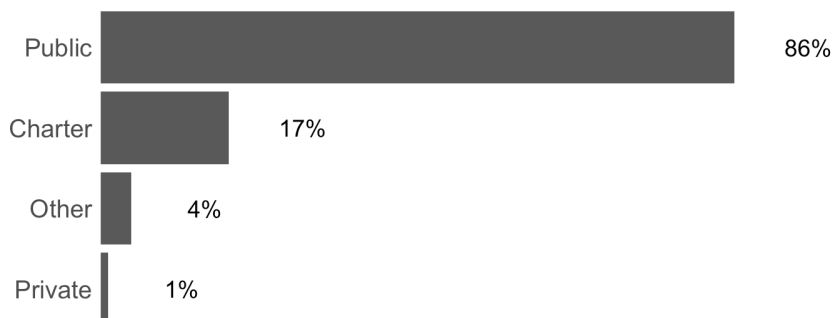
Which of the following best describes your race: (optional)



Students came from primarily public schools and from all grade levels.

- 86% of respondents had students in public schools and 17% had students in charter schools.
- 50% of respondents had students in Minneapolis Public Schools.

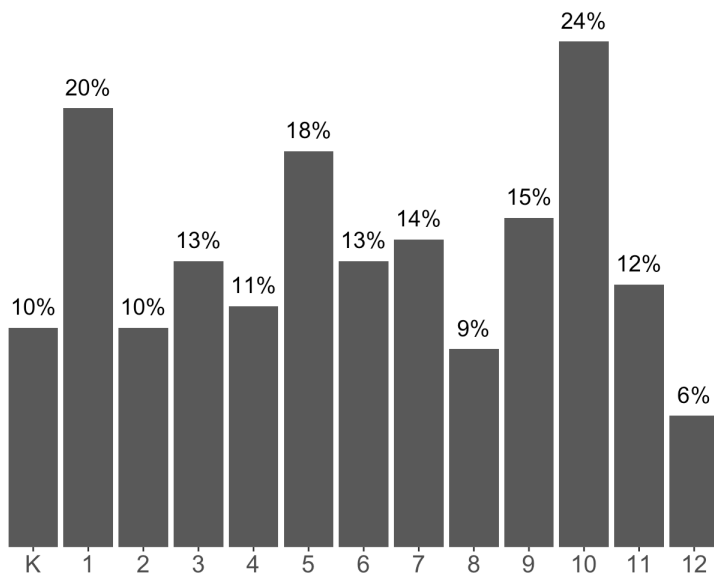
Type of school: (check all that apply if you have children at different schools)



School district:

District	N	Percent
Anoka-Hennepin	3	3.1
Brooklyn Center	1	1
Buffalo Hanover Montrose	1	1
Eagan and Rosemount	1	1
Edina	2	2
Hermantown	2	2
Hopkins	4	4.1
Lakeville	1	1
Minneapolis Public Schools	49	50
New Prague	1	1
North St Paul	2	2
Northfield	1	1
Osseo	3	3.1
Perham	1	1
Robbinsdale Area Schools	6	6.1
Saint Anthony	1	1
Saint Cloud	1	1
South Washington County	2	2
St Paul Public School	2	2
St. Louis Park	4	4.1
Wayzata	1	1
West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan Area Schools	1	1

What grade(s) are your students in? (check all that apply)



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on Minnesota's students ranging from social isolation to mental health impacts to struggles with distance learning to missed milestones.

- **The social impacts have been large, especially not being able to see teachers, friends, or classmates.**
 - *"The biggest impact has been the inability to see their teachers and friends."*
 - *"My children miss school and peers. They are teenagers and developmentally they are supposed to be forming their identity through those relationships, while distancing themselves from parents. Instead, they are pushed into the situation of only being with family and missing that important development."*
 - *"Lack of social participation and hands on learning has been rough. Emotional rollercoaster from missing everyone and school being snatched away."*
 - *"Missing out on socializing and social development. Missing the structure of school and the relationships with many students and adults at her school."*
 - *"Not seeing their friends and teachers and not able to just go out and be kids."*
- **Not being able to go to school and having to do learning at a distance has also had a major impact leading to a range of outcomes including:**
 - Learning loss.
 - Loss of structure and routine.
 - Less motivation to learn.
 - Missed milestones like prom, senior spring, and graduation.
 - *"Not having the classroom experience, I think they may be behind entering the next year."*
 - *"Not being able to walk across the stage for graduation. It has devastated her. Not having prom was a huge blow ... But not being able to walk across the stage and get recognized for all of your accomplishments and accolades is a whole different ball game. I have to imagine that it causes some type of trauma that will be long lasting. Anytime someone gets disappointed after looking forward to something it causes some sort of trauma."*
 - *"Motivated to learn online, when learning is already a challenge."*
 - *"Missing the structure of school and the relationships with many students and adults at her school."*
- **Having to stay at home and being stuck inside have led not only to social isolation but also to more screen time and inactivity. Many students are missing the opportunity to engage in sports.**
 - *"Isolation, more screen time."*
 - *"Being in the house can't really be a kid."*
 - *"Not leaving the house, gaining weight, no summer job."*
 - *"They are getting lazy despite trying to get them moving."*
 - *"The loss of athletics & being in school."*
 - *"Trying to motivate now ... son was motivated before pandemic."*
- **For some students, the impact on their mental health and emotions has been significant including increased anxiety and depression, nightmares, fear of COVID-19, and the loss of loved ones to the virus.**
 - *"Loss of people due to covid and mental health."*

- *“Sadness and anger about covid and its impact on their lives and greater community.”*
- *“Socially, emotionally and mentally. They understand it’s a bad virus and that’s why everyone is home. But it’s hard for them to be home yet is expected to focus on school. Sometimes it’s hard to cope with.”*
- *“Very, very sad, my kids cry all day about going back to school.”*
- *“My daughter’s mental health has been unstable. She already struggled with anxiety and depression and social distancing and all the unknowns has exasperated her symptoms.”*

Although many students are struggling with distance learning, the experience has been at least “okay” for many students, and even better for others.

- **When asked *How is distance learning going for your child/children?*, 40% reported a challenging experience (discussed further in the next section).**
 - *“It’s challenging.”*
 - *“I don’t have a clue how much learning is being done. I suspect very little. I affectionately am referring to this as ‘the lost semester’.”*
 - *“My 10th grader is putting in very little effort due to credit/no credit.”*
- **However, 21% reported an “okay” or neutral experience, and 34% reported a “good” or better experience. Reasons some students are having a positive experience include having a self-paced environment and being away from many of the distractions of in-person classrooms. [Note: 5% of responses could not be coded with these categories.]**
 - *“So so.”*
 - *“Ok.”*
 - *“It is going pretty good, little hiccups but teachers are amazing.”*
 - *“It’s going great.”*
 - *“My middle schooler loves not having to put up with all the distractions of class learning. She loves not worrying about other kids or their behaviors.”*
 - *“It has been a lot better, he is not distracted and gets his work done.”*
 - *“They can mostly go at their own pace, not spending as much time waiting on classmates.”*
- **However, experiences can vary widely, even within families.**
 - *“My high school does not like it at all. He misses the opportunity to interact with both teachers and students. My middle schooler loves not having to put up with all the distractions of class learning.”*
 - *“5 grader ok, she’s happy but misses her friends and she has an IEP; 6th grader not well, not tech savvy and will not do homework or she’ll do it but won’t turn it in.”*
 - *“2 kids, 2 very different experiences—younger one is doing fine, older one (who does great at school) struggles with distance learning.”*

Major challenges with distance learning include a lack of live interaction with teachers and classmates; a confusing and frustrating instructional experience characterized by variable instructions and a lack of clarity and organization; and competing responsibilities that prevent families from supporting students as much as they would like to. Many students struggle to stay motivated, focused, and engaged during distance learning.

- **A lack of live interaction with teachers, classmates, and friends has been one of the biggest challenges during distance learning.**
 - Very little interaction with classmates and friends, leaving students disconnected and slowing their social development.
 - Students cannot ask teachers questions easily or get real-time feedback most of the time.
 - *“Not having personal interaction with teachers.”*
 - *“Lacking meaningful interaction with classmates ...”*
 - *“They are home all day ... Not having a break from family to be with friends.”*
 - *“My daughter is struggling with it. She is missing the human interaction and easily gets stressed out when she thinks she is missing something or not understanding. She lacks motivation to participate because the social and personable aspect is not present as a reward.”*
 - *“It's been hard and different at home. The attention span is not there. Not much live interaction. Here's the homework, do it.”*
 - *“It's harder to get questions answered from some teachers. It's hard if not impossible to do group projects, he misses the interactions with other students.”*
 - *“They do well with the tasks, although it is not the same when a teacher is teaching them in person because if they have any questions they can ask the teacher and they cannot do it at a distance.”*
- **Distance learning this spring was an often confusing experience characterized by a lack of clarity and organization, technical challenges, variable instruction, and attendance and grading policies that could leave students and families feeling overwhelmed.**
 - Students had to figure out tasks on their own and in many cases instructions or expectations for what need to be completed were not clear.
 - *“It's not ideal. We struggle since my children aren't independent workers. It helps that I work in the school district and am familiar with the online learning platforms my kids are using. But even so, it is hard for us to track all the assignments and stay on top of what is expected. There are lots of different teachers and classrooms to try to manage. My kids have been avoiding work. Some teachers are more proactive than others in reaching out and engaging my kids.”*
 - *“The amount of school work is overwhelming because they have to figure it out on their own ... have to interpret the directions on their own. They are teaching themselves math.”*
 - *“Unclear directions made some of the work challenging.”*
 - *“I also had to explain and teach her some things I did not know about math or another task and they also put tasks that they have not been taught yet ...”*
 - Work could be spread out across multiple places and across multiple platforms, making it hard for students and families to track down all the different links that students needed to follow and making it difficult to keep track of what work had been done and what work still needed to be done.
 - Additionally, what distance learning looked like varied significantly from teacher to teacher with no consistent organization or use of technology. In some cases, technical challenges increased frustration, with links to external resources not working.
 - *“Having a simple platform for documents and organizing work load. The streams are cluttered. Sometimes the resources are confused with assignments. The instructor often*

talks too long and loses students attention or overloads them with extra information. The instructors often change submission method due to technical challenges on pdf & google doc because not all of the student can edit (add their answers) to assignments."

- "Inconsistent workloads. Unorganized assignments- spread throughout chats and docs."*
- "Middle school teachers all assign things differently, so we got behind in a couple classes."*
- "It's complicated going to all the different emails and links that they send. Which makes it hard to complete all the assignments and make sure that you're not missing anything."*
- The work and workload has also been highly variable, ranging from an overwhelming number of task to not enough work. The rigor has also varied significantly.
- In other cases, policies like grading and attendance did not have the intended consequences with students being marked absent for the day if they did not complete the official attendance task even though they had completed other work and some students taking a switch to pass/fail grading as an opportunity to stop turning in work.
- "Well the tasks are many."*
- "Not enough work being put into the system to actually keep these children with work to do throughout the day."*
- "... content appears much less rigorous/thorough as compared with in-person learning."*
- "The rigor of the lessons is low. There are few opportunities to learn new content—the assignments are practice with previously learned skills."*
- "Attendance. Just because if they miss an assignment from one class they are marked absent for that whole day."*
- "The most frustrating part has been attendance for my oldest child. And that is mostly his fault. He doesn't always answer the attendance question in his Advisory class. 4-5 times he has been marked absent after having been 'working' on his Chromebook all day."*

- **Parents and family members cannot support their students as much as they would like because they have competing demands like having to work and are *"becoming teachers"* for the first time.**

- Many parents and family members have to work outside of the home, leaving their children with no supervision or support during distance learning.
- Others are working from home and having to juggle their jobs and supporting their children's learning.
- "Feeling like I'm not able to really help as much as I should or would like to."*
- "... sometimes it's become really hard on us, me and their Dad, because, both of us are working people. Most of the time nobody home to supervise them. So, in this case they just do whatever they want. But, the moment I get home and take shower, we just get right into it. So, I think I will say it's hard for real."*
- "Keeping up with the assignments that require parent help has been extremely hard while working from home!"*
- "For my 3rd grader, it has been challenging when it comes to his math and science projects that need adult assistance, both my husband and I work from home and our schedule can be tight."*
- "Balancing work and teaching 3 different grade levels in one day!"*
- Many parents are *"becoming teachers"* for the first time and are not certain how to help their students with academic content, the technology of distance learning, or the

specialized learning needs of their children (e.g., children with IEPs). In many households, parents are helping children learn at multiple grade levels and at multiple schools, making this job even harder.

- Additionally, it can be difficult for parents to keep track of the work that their children have completed because of the sheer volume of tasks, lack of organization of instructional content, and missing tracking tools (e.g., disabled parent portals).
 - *“That we papas have to be their teachers.”*
 - *“I can't help them (when they don't understand).”*
 - *“As a parent, know if the tasks will be good and if they will all be enough for my sons to learn well according to their grade and ability.”*
 - *“How do I know my child did not just copy something off of google and turn it in?”*
 - *“She has an IEP and though she's in the 6th grade her grade level is 3rd grade. I was going to take her out and homeschool her. She does well one on one.”*
 - *“Trying to track down all the different links and pages they have to go to.”*
 - *“Plus, I have no clue what work needs to be done and on which platform for each class (zoom, google classroom, mosamack website, etc).”*
 - *“How to access to apps, links, accounts are not clear.”*
 - *“It is very difficult because two of my children are in an immersion school and I am unable to help them.”*

- **Many students struggle to stay motivated, focused, and engaged during distance learning.**

- Focus is a challenge due to distractions in the home like other children, not understanding the work to begin with, and a lack of engaging instruction.
- For students with specific learning needs, the transition to distance learning has been particularly hard.
- Some students may be losing interest in school because they are craving more challenge and choice.
 - *“Boredom.”*
 - *“Not always understanding the work.”*
 - *“Lack of physical presence causes lack of focus.”*
 - *“Focus. Attention.”*
 - *“My son has an IEP for ADHD and he struggles with focusing all day by himself on a computer. In school his teachers and case manager give him accommodations on his assignments, group him with peers to support his learning, and individually help him with work. Right now it is all up to me to help him while I work full time.”*
 - *“Children distract each other. Children are not motivated or are stubborn.”*
 - *“Motivation to get the work done.”*
 - *“Finding the time and helping my child to stay motivated.”*
 - *“Motivating my daughter to interact virtually and managing the ups and downs.”*
 - *“Getting him motivated to do online learning, when learning is already hard. Keeping his focus, confidence he can do it!”*
 - *“Watching him go from loving school to saying that he hates it and doesn't want to do his work.”*

Despite these challenges with distance learning, some things are going well. Some teachers and schools are communicating well, organizing work effectively, and building real-time interactions that help students learn and feel connected. Some students and families like

changes from in-person schooling like shorter days and less work, flexibility, having time and learning as a family, and that children are home safe from the pandemic. Several family members expressed gratitude for the work of teachers and administrators during a quick and difficult transition to distance learning.

- **Some teachers have built effective and supportive learning environments for students and their families. These teachers are:**
 - Understanding
 - Communicating effectively and making themselves accessible
 - Reaching out to students and checking in
 - *“Her school has been very supportive and understanding of the stress this has put on families.”*
 - *“Homework and tests are very flexible with children and that helps them manage stress.”*
 - *“Support from his teachers, councilor, and social worker, we created a lead teacher to check-in with him and a tutor to check-in to help when needed.”*
 - *“Teacher communication with students and also with parents.”*
 - *“Teachers have been very accessible.”*
 - *“Also that my kids teachers keep me informed weekly with my kids daily assignments.”*
 - Building engaging, well organized lessons
 - Hosting real-time gatherings for students (e.g., Google Meets)
 - *“The classes that have a good flow.”*
 - *“The detailed instruction about assignments.”*
 - *“When they can log into one thing and get work done without all the extra links to follow.”*
 - *“Google Meetings with the teachers.”*
 - *“Being able to connect with teacher and other students.”*
 - *“Being able to see his classmates.”*
 - *“It's also so great to see him connect with his classmates and teacher since they started doing their morning meeting online a couple weeks ago. I finally see joy in him again.”*
- **Students and families like some of the changes from in-person schooling like shorter days and less work, flexibility, having time and learning as a family, and that children are home safe from the pandemic.**
 - *“He’s been able to keep up on the assignments very easily. It’s less work than at school.”*
 - *“The days have been shorter than regular school days.”*
 - *“For my kids, they seem to spend a good amount of time at school, on their phones, because they finish their work early or they have a sub, etc. Distance learning allows them to focus on the work they need to do, in the time it naturally takes them, and then they can move on to the rest of their day.”*
 - *“Time flexibility – can start earlier in morning, take a break, go back to it.”*
 - *“Also being able to do classes when and where they want.”*
 - *“Establishing a schedule for school work and having more family time through daily walks.”*
 - *“We can talk about how they feel. what stresses them out and healthy ways to relieve the stress and how to exercise to stay in shape. We now don't have to rush prayer time and story time.”*

- *“They love the way we work together.”*
 - *“It's really fun when we learn something new together.”*
 - *“First-hand experiences with how my child is learning.”*
 - *“I know what my kids are learning in school.”*
 - *“They are home safe.”*
 - *“Being at home safe from pandemic.”*
 - *“That the kids are safe and not out getting exposed to Covid”*
- **Other positive aspects of distance learning mentioned by respondents include having a computer or tablet provided and some of the learning platforms and multimedia lessons.**
 - *“Chrome book provided.”*
 - *“Both have their own devices and able to keep up with school work.”*
 - *“Use of Chromebooks. I had never used one before, but since the children had already used them at school, they were familiar with it.”*
 - *“The kids like the apps that have the learning on them.”*
 - *“Dreambox, readworks, flocab, lexia, google classroom.”*
 - **Several family members expressed gratitude for the work of teachers and administrators during a quick and difficult transition to distance learning.**
 - *“Our North Principal, has been such a great leader giving so much time, energy, love, and support to keep everyone as connected as can be.”*
 - *“Just thank my son’s teacher who has virtual classes daily with him.”*
 - *“Keep up the great work MPS.”*
 - *“We appreciate the time and effort staff at Henry have put into the end of the school year during this crazy situation. We feel missed and loved.”*

Looking toward the summer, respondents are concerned that students will lose a lot of their learning that was already compromised by the switch to distance learning, keeping children busy and occupied, continued social isolation, and uncertainty about what the fall and the longer-term future will bring.

- **Summer learning loss that compounds losses in learning caused by the transition to distance learning.**
 - *“That they haven’t learned what they could have if they were in school”*
 - *“Losing the learning they have had given how little they’ve learned the last few months and isolation from communities.”*
 - *“That they will be so far behind in their learning and with continuously sitting inside the house these children will become very lazy and care less more and more every day.”*
 - *“Higher summer slide, won’t be ready to move to the next grade.”*
- **Keeping students busy and occupied, especially given the lack of summer camps, jobs, and sports.**
 - *“Finding something for him to do besides playing video games.”*
 - *“You can't do your favorite activities like playing soccer.”*

- *“Everything is canceled. All sports are canceled. Their jobs are canceled. So, they do not have any structure to their lives to allow for their own interests, passions and growth to independence.”*
- *“Need to get him moving, no summer job, not able to hang out with friends.”*
- *“I am worried about them having enough to do as the libraries and parks are closed. Not liking that STEM program is on line.”*

- **Continued social isolation.**

- *“That they will get bored. Isolation is bad.”*
- *“Social isolationism.”*
- *“More isolation.”*
- *“Without the structure, he may feel more lonely and bored, especially since I’m going back to work.”*

- **Concerns about what the fall and the longer-term future will bring.**

- *“Do not open school and fall behind in learning.”*
- *“What does 2020-2021 gonna look like for the children.”*
- *“What this fall’s school year will be like as my daughter enters her Senior year as a graduate of 2021.”*
- *“Well, I don’t think I have any time in mind for summer but, my major problem here is that, how will the next school year will be. Because, I can’t keep sitting all the time, I have to work, to help me husband with some bills. But, if the covid 19 can’t go away then I will have to keep sitting and babysitting them. Also, home schooling’s them.”*

Looking toward the fall, respondents have a lot of uncertainty and concerns about what will happen. Will students be able to return to school or will distance learning continue? How can we keep children safe? Have students fallen behind?

- **Continued distance learning.**

- *“That the danger continues and that they cannot return to school.”*
- *“That this will be their new norm for schooling.”*
- *“That we will be in distance learning again and he needs to be in his classroom.”*
- *“If she has to do distance learning next fall, I am concerned about her mental health and well-being.”*
- *“That we will continue distance learning. They are behind in learning math at this point. And, they need to have teachers and peers for learning support/identity development. Also, that they may not have their fall sports, which is an important aspect of the high school experience.”*

- **Students have fallen behind and will fall even farther behind.**

- *“Not being academically prepared for the next school year!”*
- *“That they will not properly be on track and have learned the necessary things to prepare them for the next grade.”*
- *“They may be behind and struggle throughout the year.”*
- *“They may not meet school expectations and may not be at the academic level and may be academically low.”*

- *“Not interested anymore or not up to standards.”*
- *“What if they didn’t accomplish what was needed to go into a new grade? What if they aren’t ready?”*

- **Keeping children safe and healthy.**

- *“COVID 19 still around.”*
- *“Virus!!!”*
- *“That the Schools are not prepared to receive students and that they implement safe sanitary measures.”*
- *“Their safety. What will school be like or look like? How will the district teach and be proactive and stay safe? What improvement and safety measures are put in place?”*
- *“One of my biggest concerns is their safety. I am concerned for the safety of my boys, my students, myself, and my fellow staff members. I’m not sure what things are going to look like with sanitizing classrooms regularly, if we are allowed to be back in the building. I am very concerned that whatever chemicals are used could be damaging to the health of everyone exposed to them. I have seen videos of some districts spring down the inside of buses with Clorox. Disinfectants like this have been shown to cause lung damage as well as reproductive health issues.”*
- *“Keeping them safe and healthy, while attending school and being involved in activities.”*

- **Uncertainty about what will happen.**

- *“Wondering if he will be going back to school or continuing online at home? Also, will he be able to play his Fall sport?”*
- *“The unknown of what school will be like.”*
- *“The unknowns about how the school schedule will be structured and how it will work with our family’s schedule. The unknowns about how social interaction between student and teachers will be facilitated (it worries me that she’ll feel isolated, despite being in the company of other kids/adults), the increased risk of getting sick/getting others sick.”*
- *“Lots of uncertainty, presumably needing to transition and adapt to new ways of being at school, grieving the loss of familiar school environments given changes dictated by the CDD in Minneapolis.”*

If distance learning continues in the fall, many family members feel like academic learning will be maximized if there is a lot more real-time interaction with teachers and other students, more use of paper and physical textbooks, and a better organized online learning environment. They would also like to see schools and districts make sure that families have the devices, internet access, and materials that they need and are actively helping families to help their children learn.

- **More real-time interaction with teachers and other students. This may include:**

- Live classes, potentially *“virtual classrooms”* that include real-time instruction, especially on new topics.
- More and longer real-time meetings.
- Opportunities for small group work.
- *“Hold virtual classrooms. Not just send assignments and links.”*

- *“Have them do more classes where they do their homework with the teacher instead of them doing it alone.”*
- *“I think verbal (face to face) online instructions like a meeting or virtual classroom setting would be helpful for my kids. Also face to face feedback from teachers and friends on a more regular basis rather than the current check once a week.”*
- *“More Google meetings, including with Art, Music, Spanish & Phys Ed teachers.”*
“As I said before, being on a zoom conference call with their entire class and teacher for at least two hours a day.”
- *“More educational meetings and contact, regarding the actual curriculum. Now it’s mostly social connection (which is HUGE) but also needs to include some learning on video.”*
- *“More online groups and activities with students once a week with like incentives each week or like school get togethers on zoom for students to see each other.”*
- Accessible teachers including opportunities for real-time one-on-one help and connection.
- Regular check-ins between students and teachers and active outreach.
 - *“Keep the teacher on line like they are in school.”*
 - *“Teacher during school hour being available. Work was printed out on Monday, they had till Friday to get it done. No one to help if her older sister was not there.”*
 - *“Accountability. He has a phone. Text or a call from teachers. Emails may help some but only if they are actually read. Kids don’t check the email. Unless you tell them to.”*
 - *“It would be nice if my kids had a daily check in with his teacher and friends or more virtual classroom time so that they could ask questions and connect with their teachers.”*
 - *“Do one on one video calling to help with school work.”*
 - *“One on one time for each student”*
 - *“Community and connections are very important too. I have really appreciated the teachers that still continue to do whole class virtual meetings. I also really appreciate the teachers who have been proactive in reaching out to my children when they notice they’re falling behind in their classwork, and then setting up a time to virtually walk them through it.”*
- **More work on paper and use of physical textbooks. The online learning platforms have been a challenge, and many families would like to see more use of paper packets and physical textbooks.**
 - *“I honestly think physical books would have helped on some subjects. I think the teachers should have had more zoom meetings with the students, or recordings for daily workload and expectations.”*
 - *“More paperwork less online.”*
 - *“Having teachers available for questions. Have their homework examples and books for home so they don't have to always be online. They are finding it hard to fall asleep.”*
 - *“Actual textbooks, not having everything be online, have papers and work be sent in or dropped off. One on one time for each student.”*
 - *“Add books and supplies not everything needs to be online.”*
 - *“Send us packets to complete.”*
 - *“Provide paper work if needed and the pick-up drop off of different materials.”*

- **Better organized online learning environments with clearer learning objectives and instructions, a manageable work load, and easy ways for students and families to keep track of the work that has been done and still needs to be done. Family suggestions for these improvements include:**
 - Everything in one place on effective learning platforms and standardized format/delivery across classes.
 - Clear checklists and syllabi for keeping track of work that are shared earlier than the day of, as well as clear learning objectives and expectations.
 - A manageable workload. This may mean fewer assignment for many, but some families would like to see more work to keep their children busy and engaged and several would like to see more challenging work and some choice. For some students, this also means flexibility about when things are due.
- *“I also, would have liked to have a schedule available sooner than the day of.”*
- *“... a list of weekly activities and what needs to be completed each week rather than day as each day ...”*
- *“Use a single platform that works best.”*
- *“I homeschooled once through k-12 online learning and their entire set up was amazing. They have all the classes set up and send all the materials to you.”*
- *“Centralized material. Bouncing between apps makes it harder for my little one to focus.”*
- *“It would be really nice if there was one single closed platform for the students to use for their digital learning. It would also be really helpful if there was one easy place to look and see all of the students assignments and deadlines. Some of the things that have worked best have been with students created weekly or monthly calendars with a daily checklist of the things to be done for that class.”*
- *“Simplified, organized, straightforward delivery from the platform and instructor. My learner is very literal and needs instructions like your goal is. The instructor tried having student make a To-do list for independent studies at the end of the morning class meeting which worked well. He was able to complete all tasks without issues or assistance and was prepared for the afternoon meeting with confidence and positivity.”*
- *“Less assignments.”*
- *“I think my kids also feel overwhelmed by all of the different Google and Schoology classes and courses they have to sift through sometimes to find their work. The amount of work our district is giving at times feels overwhelming for my kids.”*
- *“A full curriculum.”*
- *“Uniform ways of assigning things. Meaningful master calendars.”*
- *“I also think that having a balance of flexibility and structure is important.”*
- *“Clear connection between school work and learning objectives. Flexibility and curriculum options.”*
- *“Establishing clear academic goals, strategies and expectations amongst educators, parents and child.”*
- *“Be clear on what the objectives for the child are ...”*
- *“There needs to be enough work put on there so that these kids can remain proactive during the days! There definitely should be more interaction between the students and teachers.”*
- *“More work and connect individually with my kids.”*
- **Making sure students have the devices, internet access, and materials they need.**

- *“Supplies like markers, crayons, etc.”*
- *“Make sure everyone has internet access.”*
- *“Provide laptops.”*
- *“We should have gotten their own computers from the school.”*
- *“Luckily the school provided chromebook and neighbor helped us with internet/wi-fi.”*
- *“Access to internet, computer device, Wi-Fi extender for better service long range.”*
- **Helping families support their children’s learning including understanding the material that they are helping their children learn and the technology platforms they are using.**
 - A clear “syllabus” that families can follow.
 - *“Class syllabus and teacher check-ins.”*
 - *“Parents need to know what classes they have, when they meet, when checkins should happen, what assignments should look like and when they are due. A syllabus would be handy. They might not know how to teach the subject, but they should know what questions to ask. Maybe work it similar to online college classes– where feedback is necessary for a grade.”*
 - More communication and information for families.
 - Regular updates on students’ work and progress including what they have to do, when they have to do it, and what they have completed. If possible, real-time access for parents to see what students are supposed to be doing and if it has been down; this may involve better tracking on district portals
 - *“Regular feedback on how scholars are doing ... before students have a chance to fall behind.”*
 - *“I get some emails about what he needs to do. I think I should enable to see all of what he needs to do and know if he’s not doing it. I don’t know what he has and hasn’t done. If there is a way to know what he is doing, if he’s checking in and so on I don’t know about it.”*
 - *“More parental information. What class, when it meets, how it meets, when deadlines are, maybe a copy of the assignment so I know what he’s NOT working on.”*
 - *“I think it would be helpful if the parent portal worked so I could see what was missing.”*
 - Instructional materials for parents on technology and course content so they can help students learn.
 - Better ways to support families who are working and students who have no one to help them.
 - *“More support for parents to help their children.”*
 - *“Perhaps it would be a good workshop for parents on how to establish school routines so that we can help our children at home during distance learning and team up parents to teachers to help them further reinforce their learning.”*
 - *“Well I feel if the parents can have some sort of class to take so that these new programs that the teachers want the kids to do; the parents can be there to help the student more.”*
 - *“Have it in multiple languages and include parents.”*
 - *“Better yet rep for parents on what we need to do. More check ins.”*

- *“An outline of the curriculum so that it can be more stimulating for the kids as well as the parents. There is a disadvantage. For the families that do not have teaching in their backgrounds.”*
- **Families are also asking for differentiated and engaging education that will help students catch up and be ready for the future, including:**
 - Instruction that challenges and engages students including things like project based learning and student presentations.
 - *“Challenge him and engage with him.”*
 - *“Systems to ensure 1) students are learning new content, ideally differentiated for their level, 2) students are getting constructive feedback on their work so they can intentionally focus their efforts towards continuous improvement, 3) transparency about the specific standards, skills and vocabulary that students are expected to master so parents can be strategic with their support.”*
 - *“Need to challenge, motivate and engage students to prepare for college and a high challenging work environment ... the most challenging that will require them to rise to complexities of a global generational pandemic.”*
 - *“Project based learning.”*
 - *“Also, if the curriculum could be more project based it would be more interesting for them and group work can continue online.”*
 - Accommodations and tailored instruction for students with specific needs.
 - Maintaining high standards, helping students catch up on lost learning, and preparing them for the future.
 - *“One on one” meeting time with teachers for any help or catch up.”*
 - *“Continue learning information over the summer.”*
 - *“Be patient with catch up, use differentiation in the classroom based on where different students are.”*
 - *“Every student is different and everyone has different learning and work styles.”*
 - *“They should be given work and assignments that’s up to their speed and not stuck with ‘easy’ work because other students are a little behind. If they are a little advanced give them the proper work and not things they learned in middle school.”*
 - *“Some students need help because they struggle with a specific subject.”*
 - *“Support from teachers, understanding of his needs, which is what we have at North. Great support , and understanding of what his needs are and how to support him through his learning.”*
 - *“If the teacher made time for one on one with the students. They know will not ask for help.”*
 - *“Accommodations for SPED.”*

If distance learning continues in the fall, many family members feel like students’ social emotional learning and wellness will be maximized if there is a lot more real-time interaction with peers, intentional social emotional learning, and counselor support.

- **Families see real-time peer interaction as key to students’ sense of connectedness, emotional health and personal development. This can include:**
 - Academic small group work and peer-tutoring.

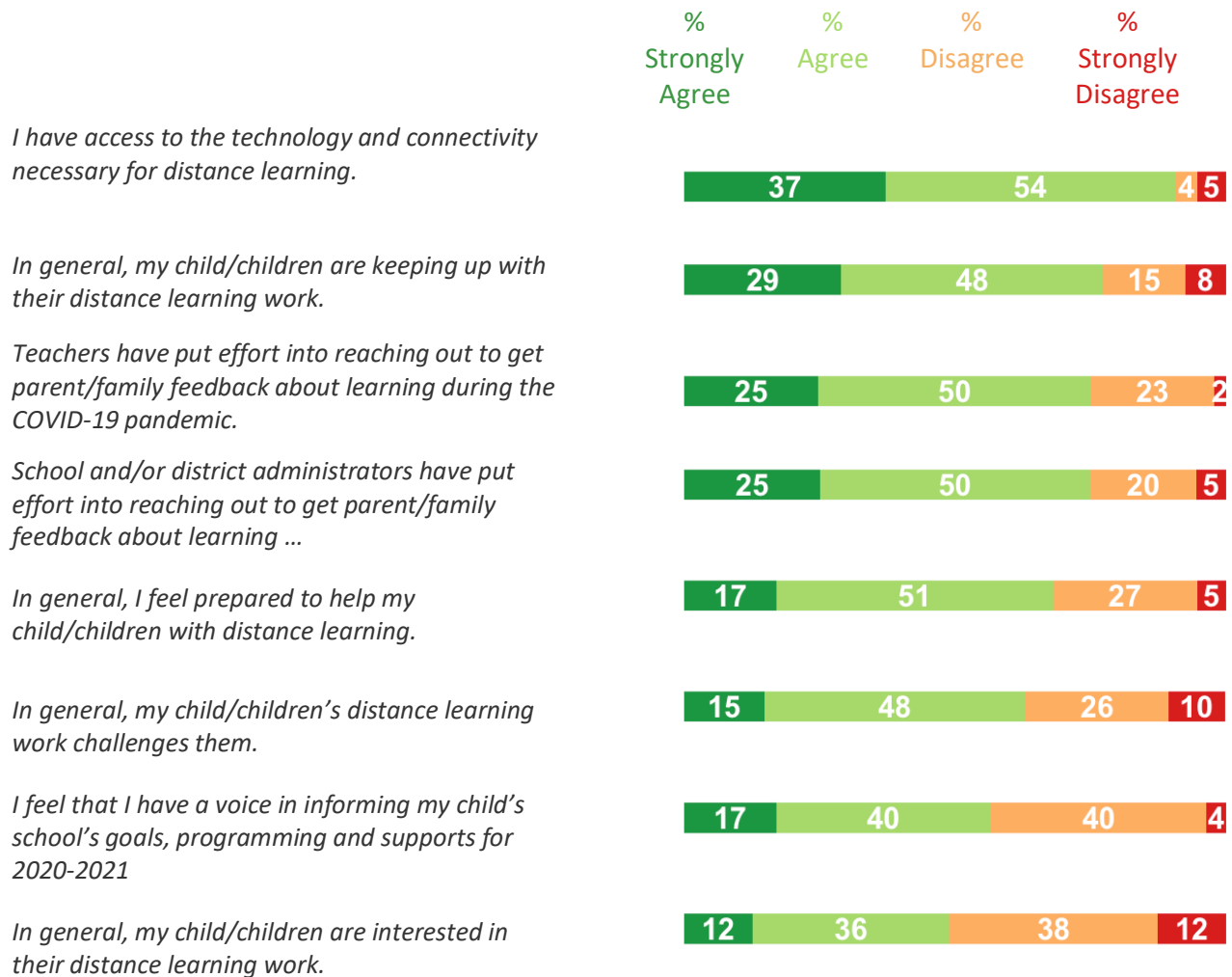
- Fun things like games, birthdays, and other celebrations.
- *“Ways to connect more meaningfully with peers.”*
- *“That there could be a way for them to be in contact with their peers.”*
- *“More zoom meetups for students that are a part of the grade or extra credit. Pictionary games trivia online games for extra credit once a month or every 2 weeks.”*
- *“Offering Google meets, open times to meet with teachers, students, doing small group work to promote social/emotional interactions.”*
- *“Intentional efforts to build community/relationships amongst students and to have students regularly learning and sharing their work with each other. Discussions/role plays about sharing, resolving conflicts, managing emotions—group learning/lessons on social emotional development, in addition to independent learning from videos.”*
- **Intentional social emotional learning and counselor support including:**
 - Regular meetings and check-ins with the school counselor.
 - Personalized support.
 - Classes on stress relief and coping.
 - Opportunities to reflect and process what is happening in the world.
 - *“Understanding children’s mental health and the social emotional component of learning.”*
 - *“Making sure that the counselors do more reaching out to the students individually to see how they are doing. Some kids don’t like to be in a group to talk.”*
 - *“Have a school advisor available to speak to them.”*
 - *“Try focusing more on the child individually.”*
 - *“Be aware of each student and their concern. And support them.”*
 - *“Talk to kids about reality.”*
 - *“Outside of including SEL topics in the curriculum, including instruction specific to coping with change, I’m not sure what they can do.”*
 - *“Allow children to take mental health days; have class conversations/instruction about how they are feeling; encourage children to express themselves thru writing, music, and art.”*
 - *“Continual self-reflection and self-help through-out its entirety when transitioning between Distance Learning and in-classroom learning.”*

When asked “Imagine that time is not a factor, how would you like to be involved in helping your school or district respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?”, respondents said:

- **Any way possible.**
 - *“Any way possible! It’s been hard reaching out due to the adjustment of them being home full time. I’m not even sure how to reach [out].”*
 - *“I would be available to help all children and also do whatever it takes to help children become successful.”*
 - *“Anyway I could help.”*
 - *“I’m ready where I can.”*
 - *“In any way possible doing anything I can to assist and help out.”*

- **Helping with access to resources ranging from teaching/tutoring to food and shelter, technology, and emotional/mental health support.**
 - *“Tutoring kids that are struggling, helping to make sure students have access to technology and understand how to use it, providing emotional support to those who need it.”*
 - *“I would like to be a reading helper.”*
 - *“Supporting students and families with resources.”*
 - *“Participate in service work. Sponsor a student with care kits.”*
 - *“Helping with meals or where needed.”*
 - *“Making sure that all students/families have what they need to be successful during distance learning, which includes food, shelter, emotional/mental support, technology, internet access, and any other needs families may encounter. Also that families know it’s ok to reach out for help.”*
 - *“Reaching out to children that do not have the home environment and technological advantages to fully complete school work and activities.”*
- **Helping design learning and support approaches, providing suggestions and feedback.**
 - *“Would like it if they surveyed us on possible options.”*
 - *“Spend time with teachers and aid them in my child’s success & be a part of her implementation, planning of school work and also be actively involved in the school building and at home for my child.”*
 - *“Giving ideas and suggestion.”*
 - *“I would love to be surveyed by the school, with feedback about this spring tailored to each grade level team. I would love to offer suggestions for next year and be given opportunities to give feedback on initial plans for next year. I would like opportunities to provide feedback on a regular basis (perhaps every couple of weeks) so that teachers can continually adjust approaches to better meet students’/families’ needs.”*
- **Putting together and delivering instructional materials.**
 - *“Making work packets for the kids.”*
 - *“If we do yard signs for or district I could help pass out. I could also help get materials to families without transportation.”*
 - *“I would be willing to drop off work, help out reach to kids who are not attending to assess barriers, support other parents.”*
- **Helping families be heard and stay informed.**
 - *“Helping to get voices of families heard to best meet needs if distance learning continues.”*
 - *“Making sure parents are informed on school work.”*
 - *“Sharing information.”*
- **Helping clean schools.**
 - *“Helping with disinfecting the school or helping children to have resources in their homes.”*
 - *“Making sure the school is cleaned and disinfected more each day.”*

Responses to agreement items.

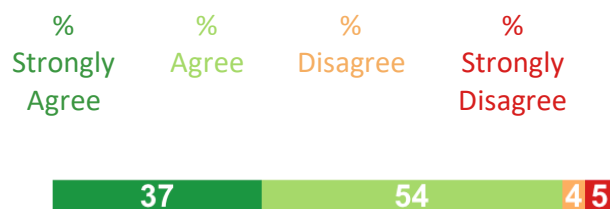


[Note: For the above forced choice items, responses of “I don’t know” are excluded for the calculation of percentages. Also, due to rounding, sums of categories mentioned below may be slightly different than the sums of the category percentages shown on plots. This data is further discussed below.]

The vast majority of respondents (91%) feel like they have access to the technology and connectivity necessary for distance learning, but 9% do not – a percentage that could mean thousands of Minnesota students do not have the necessary devices or connectivity for distance learning.

- 91% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “*I have access to the technology and connectivity necessary for distance learning.*”
- Considering that these were responses to an online survey that requires both a device and internet access, these rates may be higher than the population at large.

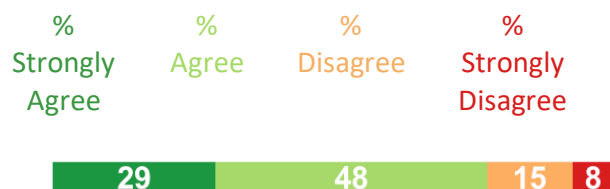
I have access to the technology and connectivity necessary for distance learning.



77% of respondents felt like their children were keeping up with their distance learning work, leaving 23% of students who may not be keeping up with their work.

- 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “In general, my child/children are keeping up with their distance learning work.”

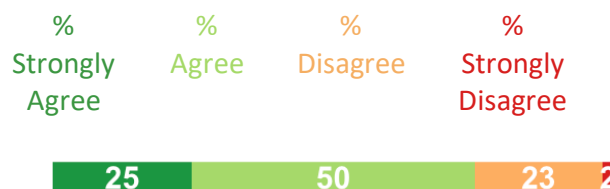
In general, my child/children are keeping up with their distance learning work.



Although many respondents feel like teachers and administrators have put effort into reaching out to get feedback about learning during the pandemic this spring, about a quarter do not, and many (43%) do not feel like they have a voice in informing what school will look like during the 2020-2021 school year.

- 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “Teachers have put effort into reaching out to get parent/family feedback about learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.”, leaving 25% who did not.
- 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “School and/or district administrators have put effort into reaching out to get parent/family feedback about learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.”, leaving 25% who did not.
- Only 57% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I feel that I have a voice in informing my child’s school’s goals, programming and supports for 2020-2021”, leaving 43% who did not. [Note: due to rounding, this is 1 point lower than the sum of disagree and strongly disagree percentages plotted below.]

Teachers have put effort into reaching out to get parent/family feedback about learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.



School and/or district administrators have put effort into reaching out to get parent/family feedback about learning ...



I feel that I have a voice in informing my child’s school’s goals, programming and supports for 2020-2021



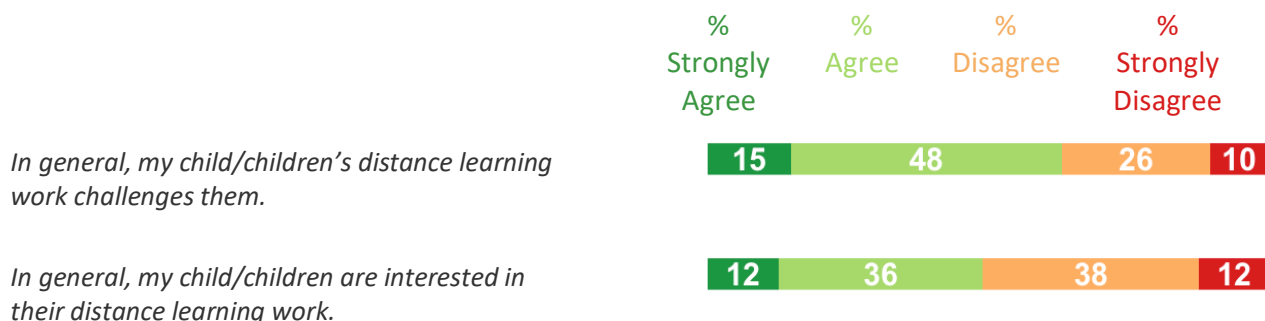
Nearly a third of respondents do not feel prepared to help their children with distance learning.

- 32% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement *"In general, I feel prepared to help my child/children with distance learning."*



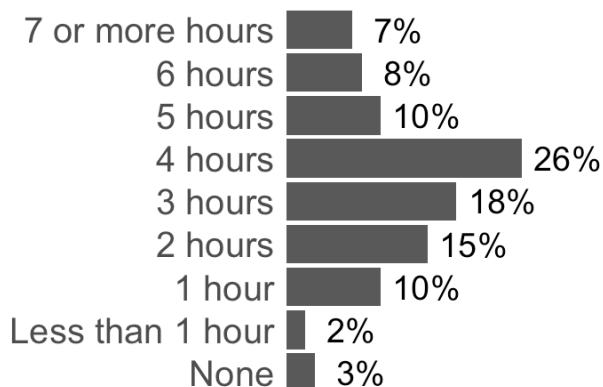
Distance learning may not be challenging or interesting enough for many students.

- Only 63% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *"In general, my child/children's distance learning work challenges them."*
- Only 48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *"In general, my child/children are interested in their distance learning work."*
- Requests for more challenging and engaging education also came up in the free-response questions reported on above.



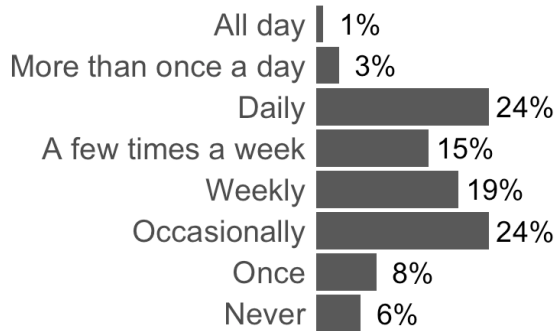
Nearly all students (95%) are spending at least an hour a day on distance learning and more than half (51%) are spending 4 or more hours a day.

On average, how many hours per school day is your child/children spending on distance learning?



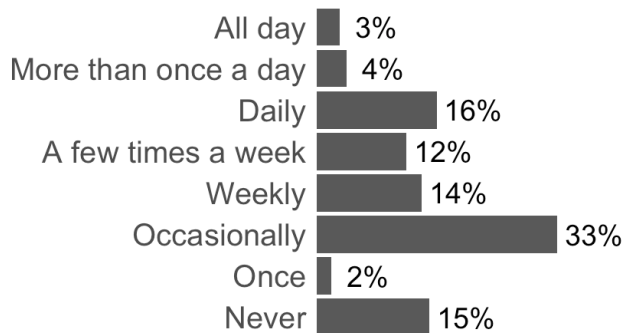
Most students (86%) have at least occasional real-time interaction with teachers or other staff members, but fewer (62%) have weekly or more frequent real-time interaction, and fewer still (28%) have once a day or more frequent real-time interaction.

How often does your child/children have real-time interaction with a teacher or other school staff member since distance learning began (e.g., via video call, phone call, chat, text message, etc.)?



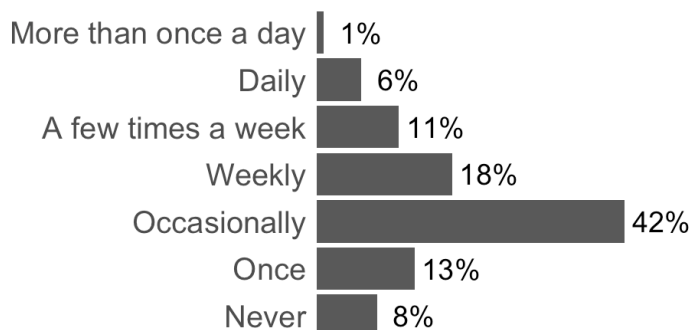
Although most students (83%) have at least occasional real-time interaction with peers from school, many (15%) never have this type of interaction.

How often does your child/children have real-time interaction with peers from school since distance learning began (e.g., via video call, phone call, chat, text message, etc.)?



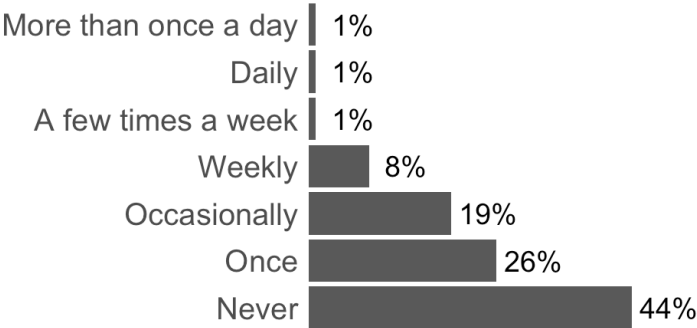
Most respondents (92%) have communicated with teachers or other school staff members since distance learning began, but for more than half of respondents (55%), this communication has been only once or occasional.

How often have you communicated with your child/children's teachers or other school staff members since distance learning began?



Communication with school or district administrators has been less frequent, with 44% of respondents having no communication with administrators at the school or district level.

How often have you communicated with your child/children’s school or district administrators since distance learning began?



The most common way for school or district staff to get feedback has been email followed by phone calls. They have also been using surveys, video calls, text messages, robocalls, and regular school updates. One respondent even reported a socially-distanced house visit.

GROUP COMPARISONS

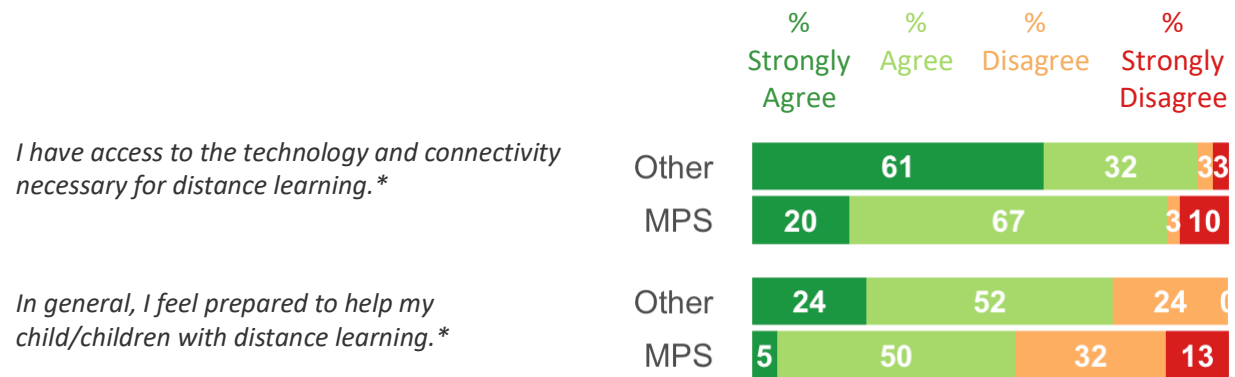
We investigated differences in responses based on school district (Minneapolis versus Other), race/ethnicity (persons of color versus non-Hispanic whites) and free and reduced-price lunch eligibility (an indicator of family income). Below, we discuss statistically significant differences that are likely to reflect differences beyond this group of survey respondents. Statistical analyses suggest that other apparent difference may be due to chance (e.g., who ended up responding to survey from a particular group of interest) and not group differences that would appear if we administered this survey again. Only statistically significant differences are discussed here; all group comparisons are presented in a separate document. There was no statistically significant difference associated with race/ethnicity.

Minneapolis Public Schools

Notes: comparisons limited to public schools, MPS (n=40) included respondents who only identified MPS schools and Other included respondents who only identified non MPS public schools (n=31). This excludes families who have children in schools in more than one district. Responses of “I don’t know” were excluded.

Families with children in Minneapolis Public Schools feel less prepared to help their children with distance learning than families with children in other districts. They also report less access to the technology and connectivity necessary for distance learning.

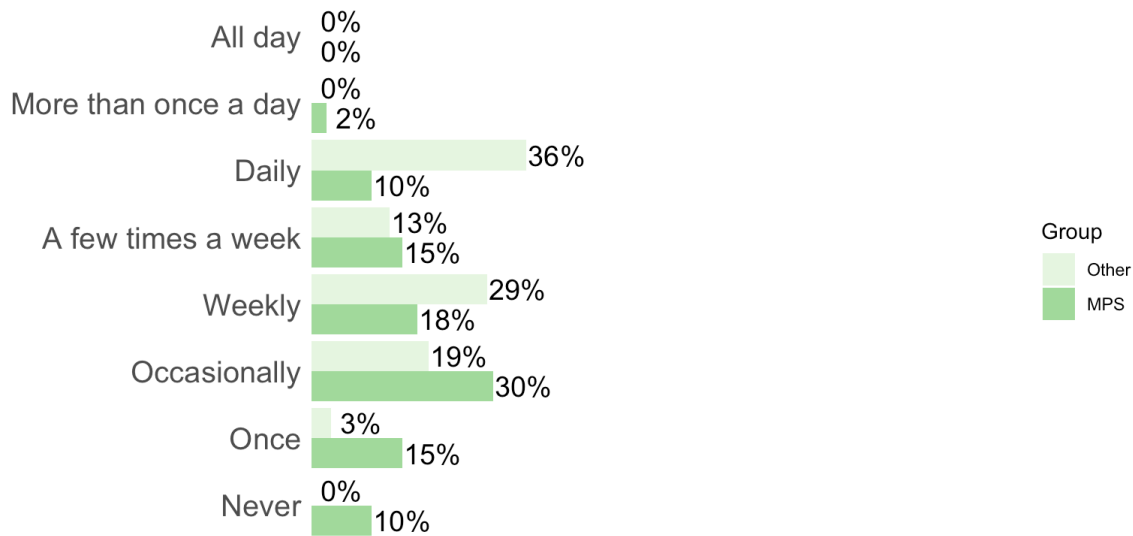
- Only 55% of families with children in Minneapolis Public Schools agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *In general, I feel prepared to help my child/children with distance learning* compared to 76% of families with children in other districts.
- Only 5% of families with children in Minneapolis Public Schools strongly agreed with the statement *In general, I have access to the technology and connectivity necessary for distance learning* compared to 24% of families with children in other districts.



Students in Minneapolis Public Schools had less real-time interaction with teachers and other school staff than did students in other school districts.

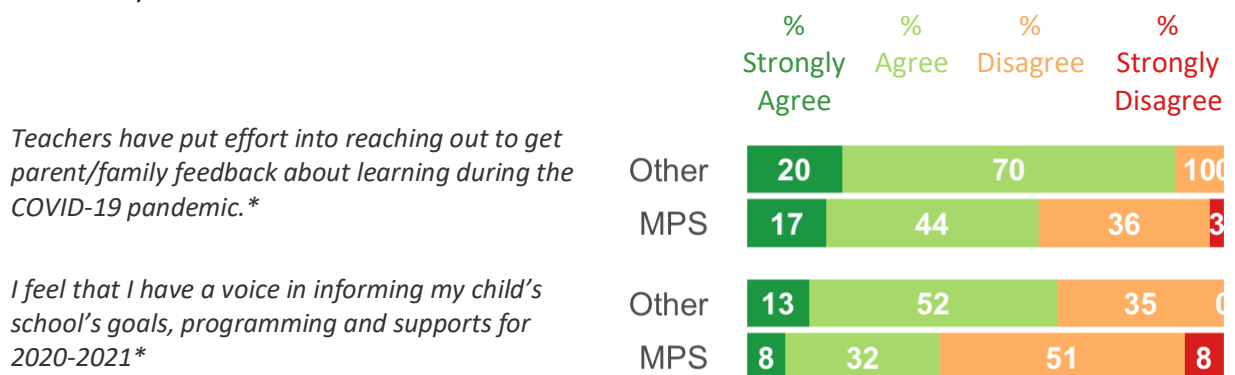
- For example, only 12% of Minneapolis Public School students’ families reported daily or more frequent interaction between students and teachers or other school staff, but 36% of families from other districts did.

How often does your child/children have real-time interaction with a teacher or other school staff member since distance learning began (e.g., via video call, phone call, chat, text message, etc.)?

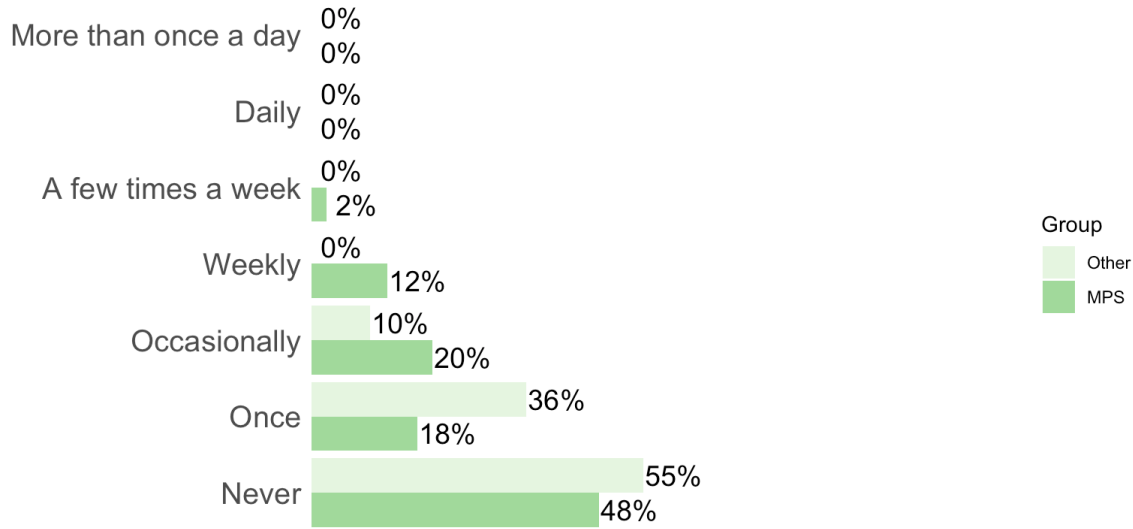


Families with children in Minneapolis Public Schools are less likely to agree they have a voice in informing what the next school year looks like or that teachers have put effort into getting feedback to inform distance learning; however, respondents with children in Minneapolis Public Schools are more likely to have reported communicating with school or district administrators at least weekly than other respondents.

- While 90% of families in other school districts agreed or strongly agreed that teachers had put effort into reaching out for feedback about learning during the pandemic, only 61% of families in Minneapolis Public Schools did.
- While 65% of families in other school districts agreed or strongly agreed that they have a voice in informing what the next school year looks like, only 40% of families in Minneapolis Public Schools did.
- Respondents with children in Minneapolis Public Schools are more likely to have reported communicating with school or district administrators at least weekly than other respondents (14% versus 0%).



How often have you communicated with your child/children's school or district administrators since distance learning began?



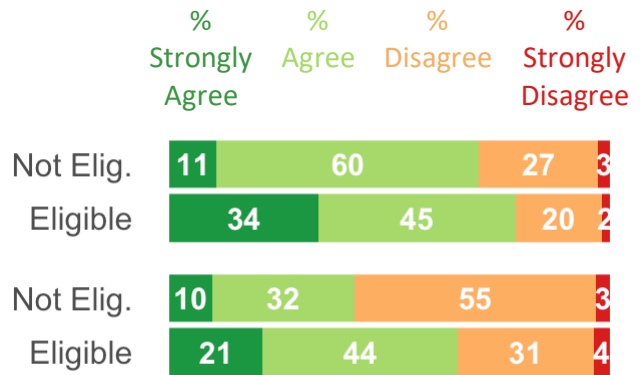
Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Eligibility

Note: 58 respondents with free and reduced price lunch eligible children, 40 with children who were not eligible.

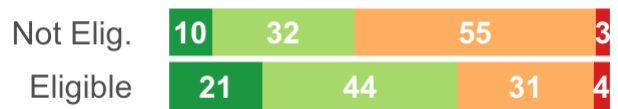
Respondents with children who are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch agreed more strongly that teachers had put effort into reaching out and that they feel like they have a voice in informing what school will look like next year. Respondents with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were also more likely to report daily or more than once a day communication with teachers or other school staff and more likely to report communicating with school or district administrators at least once than other respondents.

- More than three times as many families with eligible student strongly agreed that teachers had put effort into reaching out to get feedback than did other families (34% versus 11%).
- More than twice as many families with eligible students strongly agreed that they have a voice in informing what school will look like next year (21% versus 10%).
- Respondents with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch were more likely to report daily or more than once a day communication with teachers or other school staff than other families (12% versus 0%).
- Respondents with children who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch were more likely to report communicating with school or district administrators at least once than other respondents (66% versus 42%).

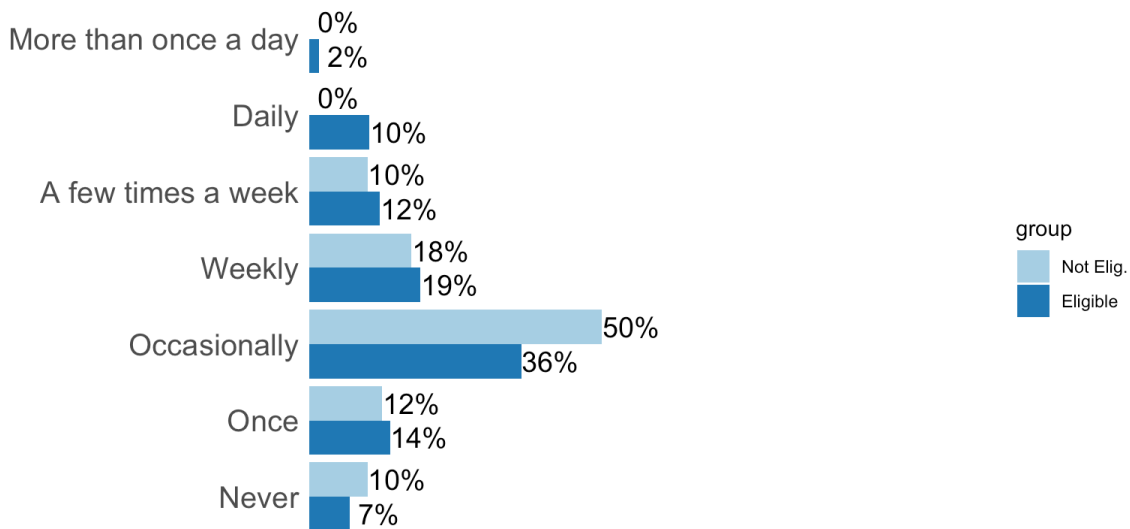
*Teachers have put effort into reaching out to get parent/family feedback about learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.**



*I feel that I have a voice in informing my child's school's goals, programming and supports for 2020-2021.**



How often have you communicated with your child/children's teachers or other school staff members since distance learning began?



How often have you communicated with your child/children's school or district administrators since distance learning began?

