



**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Global Strategy Group

**Date:** March 16, 2021

**Re: New York State Parents' Survey Identifies Ongoing Disparities and Priorities As New York State Approaches One Year of Pandemic Learning**

Global Strategy Group partnered with The Education Trust–New York to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 801 parents of children in New York State public schools from February 25<sup>th</sup> – March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This is the fifth survey among parents of K-12 students GSG has conducted with The Education Trust – NY on this topic. Key findings from the statewide research are outlined below.

## Key Findings:

**New York State parents continue to struggle with adjusting to the new learning environment.** Parents increasingly rate the job their school is doing handling the coronavirus as positive (82% excellent/good), which is a 7-point increase from October (75%, in March of 2020 ratings were at 85%). Despite these positive ratings, there is low satisfaction with remote learning and in-person learning overall. One year into the pandemic and less than half (46%) of parents of remote learners rate it as successful. These low satisfaction ratings are largely driven by parents of children with disabilities (37% successful), parents in upstate cities (38%), and Latinx parents (42%). Attitudes towards in-person learning are similar: only about half (55%) of parents of in-person learners have rated their child's in-person learning as successful, with parents of children with disabilities less likely to rate it as a success (49%).

**Although many parents report improvements since the start of the pandemic, a significant proportion of parents report that their and their child's educational experiences have become worse.** The ongoing disruption in instruction caused by the pandemic has negatively impacted the educational experiences of parents and their children:

- **Communication and accessibility have worsened.** Thirteen percent of parents – including 17% of Black parents – cite worsened communication between themselves and their child's school as well as a decrease in the quality of information that is being provided: 15% of parents say that the quality of the feedback their children have received on assignments has become worse since the start of the pandemic, 17% of parents say the frequency of feedback on assignments has become worse, 18% of parents say that their child's access to their teachers has become worse, and 15% of parents say that access to their child's teachers has become worse. For many, their school's efforts to keep students academically engaged has also become worse (19%), with student attendance also decreasing (14%).
- **Remote learners report particularly challenging education experiences.** When comparing traditional in-person learning before the pandemic to now, parents of remote learners are not only more likely to say that their child's engagement and interest in their schoolwork has become worse (30% better / 42% worse) – a 10-point increase in "worse" ratings since October – but that the quality of teaching and instruction has also become worse (27% / 37%). The overall educational experience of remote learners in general is also more likely to be considered worse (30% better / 46% worse) than before the pandemic (8-point increase in "worse" ratings since October), with parents in the suburbs (22% / 54%) and upstate (22% / 53%) the most likely to say so. Additionally, 17% of parents say that their child's remote instruction experience has become worse, while another 16% say that the quality of their child's remote learning has become worse. One in ten parents (9%) of remote learners also say that their child's accessibility to live remote instruction has become worse, with parents from low-income households (12%) more likely to experience this issue than higher-income families (7%).

**A year into the pandemic, parents' concerns about their child's academic, health, and social-emotional development remain top tier issues, with sharp disparities across racial, economic, and regional divides:**

- **Fifty-seven percent of parents are very concerned about their child falling behind academically (86% total concerned).** In addition, 53% are very concerned about ensuring that their child is ready for the next grade level (83% total concerned), with parents of color, particularly Black (69%) and Latinx parents (58%), and parents from low-income households (64%) more likely to be very concerned than their white (46%) and higher-income peers (49%).

- **More than four in ten (45%) parents say they have received little to no information about whether their child has suffered learning loss or has fallen behind as a result of the pandemic.** Black parents (53%) and parents outside of New York City (50%) are most likely to say they have received little to no information on grade level expectations or “learning loss” – more so than white parents (46%) and parents in New York City (37%). Black parents (88%) are also more concerned with ensuring that their child meets state academic standards, more so than white parents (78%) and parents overall (83%).
- **Ensuring their family’s health is particularly concerning for Latinx parents and those in New York City.** For parents, their child contracting the virus (84% concerning) and other family members contracting the virus (83%) remain top of mind. This concern is more intense among Latinx parents and those in New York City: 66% of Latinx parents and 67% of New York City parents say they are *very* concerned about their child contracting the virus, while 48% of white parents and 49% of those outside of New York City say the same. When it comes to family members contracting the virus, Latinx parents (57%) and New York City (56%) families report being *very* concerned at a higher rate than white parents (44%) and parents outside of New York City (45%).
- **Parents of color are also more concerned about their child’s overall well-being.** More than half (54%) of parents say they are *very* concerned with ensuring that their child feels safe and emotionally at ease during this time. This is slightly more concerning for Black parents (67% very concerned) and parents of color overall (61%) than it is for white parents (48%). Parents of color (57%) – including Black (61%) and Latinx parents (58%) – and parents from low-income households (57%) also consider it *very* important to know how often someone is checking on their child's mental health and well-being, more so than white parents (48%) and higher-income families (51%).

**Parents, particularly parents of color and parents from low-income backgrounds, are increasingly concerned about high school students’ transition to college and careers.** Parents are increasingly concerned about their child’s academic future and job prospects after graduation:

- **High school parents are overwhelmingly concerned about their children’s transition to college and the workforce.** Fifty-one percent of parents of high school students are not only *very* concerned about ensuring that their child is on track to go to college (85% total concerned; 5-point increase since October) but 51% are also *very* concerned with ensuring that their child is on track to graduate from high school (83% total concerned). Latinx parents and parents from low-income households are more concerned about some of these issues than their white and wealthier counterparts: 93% of Latinx parents and parents from low-income households are more concerned with ensuring their child is on track to graduate high school, than white parents (79%) and higher-income families (78%). Ninety-one percent of parents from low-income households also are more concerned with ensuring their child is on track to go to college, nine points more than higher-income families (82%). High-school parents are also notably concerned about ensuring their child is taking the courses to prepare them for college admissions and success in college (82% concerned) and that their child is emotionally and socially prepared to go to college (86% concerned).
- **The pandemic has created significant uncertainty for families about their student’s plans after high school graduation.** Likely reflecting the dire economic impact of the pandemic, nearly one in three parents of high school students (30%) say their child is more likely to attend college part-time instead of full-time so they can help support themselves and their family – this is particularly true for Latinx families (36% more likely) and parents from low-income households (35%) compared to white families and higher-income families (29%, respectively). High school parents are also more likely to say that their child’s job prospects post-graduation have changed: 33% of high school parents say that their child is more likely to study a trade instead of pursuing a college degree and 27% of high school parents say their child is less likely to be able to find a job that pays well after they graduate from high school. Parents from low-income households (38% more likely to study a trade / 33% less likely to find a well-paying job) and parents of color (37% more likely to study a trade) are particularly affected by the change in job prospects, and continue to be negatively impacted in many other ways: 12% of parents from low-income households think it is less likely their child will graduate high school compared to 4% of higher-income parents, 17% of Black parents and 23% of parents from low-income households say their child is less likely to attend college, and 12% of Black parents and 13% of parents from low-income households say their child is less likely to graduate from college.

**Parents want regular access to their child’s teachers and more support from their child’s school.** After testing an extensive list of things schools could do to help support parents and students, we found that although parents have consistently remained receptive to all proposed options, there remain gaps in what parents would find helpful and what is currently being offered – particularly when it comes to access to their child’s teacher. Ninety-six percent of parents say

that providing regular feedback on how well their child is doing academically would be helpful, yet only half (52%) of parents say they have access to this. Similarly, 96% of parents say that regular contact with their child’s teachers would be helpful, but only 52% say this is available to them. Parents also consider extra support options for their child if they are struggling academically as particularly helpful (92%), but this is also largely lacking for most parents (39% have access).

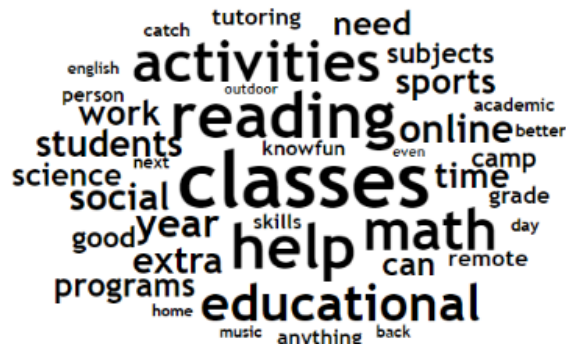
Would be helpful (Oct)	Child's school is doing this (Oct)	Would be helpful (March)	Child's school is doing this (March)	
95%	42%	96%	52%	Providing regular feedback on how well my child is doing academically
95%	48%	96%	52%	Providing parents with regular contact with or access to their child's teacher
94%	48%	94%	53%	Providing students with regular live access to their teacher, such as live online lessons or phone/video calls
94%	41%	94%	52%	Providing information for parents about whether their child is on track to meet the academic expectations for their grade
92%	38%	93%	40%	Providing technical support with technology to help families participate in remote/distance learning
91%	40%	93%	40%	Providing parents or students with regular contact with or access to a school counselor
90%	53%	93%	54%	Lending mobile technology devices like laptops or tablets/iPads to families
92%	38%	92%	39%	Providing extra support options that are available to my child if they are struggling academically
89%	30%	91%	34%	Providing access to recorded live online lessons for you and your child to review later in the day
89%	30%	90%	32%	Sharing resources to help parents teach their children during the day
87%	27%	90%	28%	Providing students with a safe place to do schoolwork and participate in virtual learning
83%	30%	88%	31%	Connecting parents to resources that can help with food, housing, employment, health, and other essential needs
88%	28%	85%	28%	Providing instructional materials and other resources to support students with disabilities
87%	24%	83%	23%	Providing free internet access to families
84%	25%	82%	27%	Providing instructional materials for English learners
72%	25%	72%	23%	Providing information for parents in languages other than English

**Whether it be in-person, remote, or a combination of the two, parents are focused on receiving more information about the quality of instruction their child is receiving.** Parents’ concerns around their child’s academic performance are heightened. As mentioned earlier, one critical way to address these concerns is by schools giving parents the information they need to properly assess their child’s academic progress. Eighty-eight percent of parents stress knowing how much individual time their child gets with their teachers compared to other schools/districts is important, while 89% of parents say information on how much live online instruction their child is getting from their teacher compared to other schools/districts is important. Additionally, not only are 83% of parents concerned with ensuring that their child is meeting state academic standards, but 91% consider it important information for them to know.

**Parents report that state assessments would also be helpful in providing important information on their child’s education.** At a time when some have suggested eliminating state testing for the current school year, 91% of parents say state tests provide important information on whether their school is doing a good job teaching their child, and to provide their child’s teachers with more information about how well their child is doing (92% important). Parents of color (57%), Latinx parents (59%), and parents from low-income households (56%) are particularly inclined to consider these tests very important in helping parents make the case for more resources for their child’s school, compared to parents overall (50%).

**Parents overwhelmingly think access to summer academic opportunities are important for their child’s growth, with parents of color (90%) more likely to consider it important than white parents (77%).** Parents are interested in summer enrichment activities that are fun and focus on providing additional help in reading, math, and other subjects.

**Question:** Briefly, what are some summer learning or enrichment experiences you would like offered this year?



**Food and economic insecurity continue to be a challenge for parents, especially parents of color, parents from low-income households, and parents in New York City.** More than a third of parents (35%) – including 55% of parents from low-income households, 43% of parents of color, and 43% of families living in the suburbs of New York City – say they are uneasy about their family’s financial situation over the next few months. Another 35% of parents in the state say that they have skipped meals or reduced the number of meals they consume personally or reduced/skipped their child’s meals because of the pandemic. Latinx parents (50%), Black parents (45%), parents from low-income households (47%), and New York City families (43%) are the most likely to be facing this problem – more so than white (29%), higher-income parents (31%), and parents outside of New York City (29%). Four in ten parents (39%) also say that they are concerned with access to meals and food for their child, which is again more concerning among Latinx parents (53%), parents from low-income households (49%), and parents in New York City (53%) than white parents (30%), higher-income parents (35%), and parents outside of New York City (27%). Additionally, 40% of parents are also concerned about affording or losing their internet access – including 55% of families from low-income households, 53% of Latinx parents, and 52% of parents in New York City.

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**About this poll:** The survey had a confidence interval of +/-3.5%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of public-school parents are properly represented.

**Parents of Color:** For the purposes of this research, "parents of color" indicates parents who do not self-identify as white or identify as white but also identify as Latinx or whose primary home language is Spanish.

**Low-Income vs. Higher-Income:** Low-income households are those whose total income is less than \$50,000 per year, while higher-income families are those whose household income totals more than \$50,000 per year.