



## The Education Trust–New York

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### **Poll: One year into the coronavirus pandemic, academic concerns remain top of mind, particularly for parents of color and parents from low-income households**

*Concerns about whether their children are meeting state academic standards and will graduate from high school underscore the need for policymakers to support students and families during the pandemic and beyond*

NEW YORK – One year after the coronavirus pandemic forced school closures across New York State, the vast majority of parents remain concerned about whether the loss of instructional time in the classroom will have a long-term impact on their children, and those concerns are heightened among parents of color and parents from low-income households, according to a poll released today by The Education Trust–New York.

The poll found that 83% of all parents are concerned whether their child is meeting state academic standards, but that concern is intensified for parents of historically underserved students – with 59% of parents of color, 77% of Black parents, and 58% of parents from low-income households saying they are very concerned, compared to 39% of White parents and 45% of higher-income parents.

Additionally, parents of students in grades 9 through 12 expressed that they are concerned about the long-term implications for their children, with 83% of all parents indicating they are concerned whether their child will graduate from high school. The percent of parents from low-income households who indicated they are very concerned about whether their child will graduate from high school was an alarming 72%, compared to 44% among parents from not-low-income households. The heightened concern also persisted among parents of color, with 57% of parents of color and 64% of Black parents indicating they are very concerned, compared to 46% of White parents.

Poll findings also indicate that even a year into remote schooling, many families continue to struggle and schools have not yet provided resources, such as access to teachers and technology support, that parents say would be helpful.

The poll, the fifth parent survey conducted by Global Strategy Group for Ed Trust–NY during the pandemic, elevates educational priorities that have been top of mind for New York families since school buildings closed one year ago. These include the availability of teachers, access to personal learning devices and high-speed internet, student attendance and engagement, along with access to resources and supports to make up for lost instructional time and help ensure that students are making academic progress.

As New York State and the nation look to return more students to traditional in-person instruction, it is crucial that state leaders and educators listen to the concerns of parents and act with great urgency to direct resources and support to the students and families who need them most.

“These survey findings reinforce the need for urgent action from state officials and education leaders to ensure that New York’s students and families do not continue to pay the toll for pandemic related school closures,” said Dia Bryant, interim executive director of Ed Trust–NY. “It is crucial that we leverage the voices of parents and take action for better, more equitable policies that are critical if we are to build back stronger and better serve students who were already underserved prior to the pandemic.”

Among additional key poll findings:

- Parents continue to be concerned about the academic, health, and social-emotional development of their children – with significant concern amongst parents of color and parents from low-income households. Among all parents, 86% indicated that they are concerned their child will fall behind academically and 83% indicated they are concerned their child will be ready for the next grade level. Those concerns intensified among parents of color, with 63%, including 72% of Black parents, indicating they are very concerned their child will fall behind academically (50% White parents) and 61%, including 69% of Black parents, indicating they are very concerned their child is ready for the next grade level (46% White parents). Among parents from low-income households, 67% indicated they are very concerned their child does not fall behind academically (53% among parents from higher income households) and 64% indicated they are very concerned their child is ready for the next grade level (49% among parents from higher income households).
- Parents, particularly parents of color and parents from low-income households, are increasingly concerned about high school students’ transition to college and careers, with 85% of parents indicating they are concerned whether their child is on track for college. Among parents of color, 55%, including 67% of Black parents, indicated they are very concerned, compared to 47% of White parents. Among parents from low-income households, 58% indicated they are very concerned, compared to 48% of more affluent parents.
- While the majority of parents (82%) rate their school’s handling of the coronavirus as positive, fewer than half rated the learning experience as a success (42% remote, 43% in-person). Those sentiments are driven in part by families’ ongoing struggles with remote learning, despite one year with distance learning. Parents also identified a number of resources that would be helpful that schools are still not providing, including access to their child’s teacher, feedback on assignments, and technology support for remote learning.
- Inequities in how families are experiencing the pandemic reach beyond the educational experiences, particularly for parents of color and parents from low-income households. Forty three percent of parents of color indicated that they feel uneasy about their financial situation (27% White parents) and an alarming 47% of parents from low-income households indicated

that they have reduced or skipped meals for themselves or their child (31% among higher income parents).

- An overwhelming majority (84%) of parents support summer learning or enrichment experiences, with reading and math being two of the areas parents most often indicated they would like to see offered.
- Parents report state assessments would provide important information on whether their child is meeting state academic standards and on track for college and careers, with 91% of parents indicating the assessments would provide valuable information in both of those areas. A vast majority of parents also indicated that data on other measures of the pandemic experience, including the availability of live instruction in schools (89%) and student attendance and participation in remote learning (84%) would be helpful.

The poll was conducted among 801 parents of children in New York State public schools from 02/25-03/04, and had a confidence interval of +/- 3.5%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel, including 59% of interviews conducted via mobile device. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of public-school parents are properly represented.

“Parents across New York State continue to express significant concerns about our children's learning during the pandemic, and it is imperative that state and district leaders take steps to ensure that the students most affected by the pandemic have access to the resources and support they need to make up for lost instructional time,” **said Samuel L. Radford III, past president of the District-Parent Coordinating Council of Buffalo and co-chairperson of CAO's We the Parents.** “It is also critical that these plans, including for summer programs and other learning opportunities, are co-created with parent, teacher, and student voice through effective school-based planning and shared decision making.”

“One year later, schools are still not communicating with families in a timely manner,” **said Lori Podvesker, director of education and disability policy for INCLUDEnyc.** “They're also not providing basic academic resources or technological support needed for children to learn adequately at home. Summer enrichment and additional supports are beyond urgent.”

“New York leaders must act urgently to support our students both now and in the aftermath of the pandemic, particularly students of color and students from low-income households who were already underserved prior to the pandemic,” **said Arva Rice, president and CEO of the New York Urban League.** “This crisis has exacerbated longstanding inequities in our communities and our education system, which is why it is crucial that students and families have access to the resources and support they need so that all young people are prepared for a bright future.”

Learn more and explore our resources from the past year at [EdTrustNY.org/EyeonEquity](https://EdTrustNY.org/EyeonEquity).

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#### **About The Education Trust–New York:**

The Education Trust–New York works to eliminate the gaps in equity, opportunity and achievement that hold back too many students from reaching their full potential, especially those who are low-income or students of color, in order to enable all students in New York State to achieve at high levels — from early childhood through college. Learn more at [EdTrustNY.org](https://EdTrustNY.org).