

SEPTEMBER 2021



The Education Trust—New York

# BACK TO SCHOOL, NOT TO NORMAL

**As students return largely in person for a new school year, academic, health, and social-emotional concerns remain top of mind for parents**



Students across New York State returned for a new school year this month, by and large in person for the first time in 18 months. Yet, while most parents believe in-person instruction is ideal for their child's learning, they remain deeply concerned about how the ongoing coronavirus pandemic is impacting their child's health and well-being.

For the first time in our polling, that remained true across racial and income groups, underscoring the impact this pandemic has had on all of us.

The results of our latest poll — the sixth since the start of the pandemic — highlight the critical need for state and local education leaders to listen to the voices of parents and act with the greatest urgency to provide their children with the resources and support they need to safely thrive this school year — including clear and consistent safety precautions, a remote learning option, and clear plans for if schools need to close or students need to quarantine.

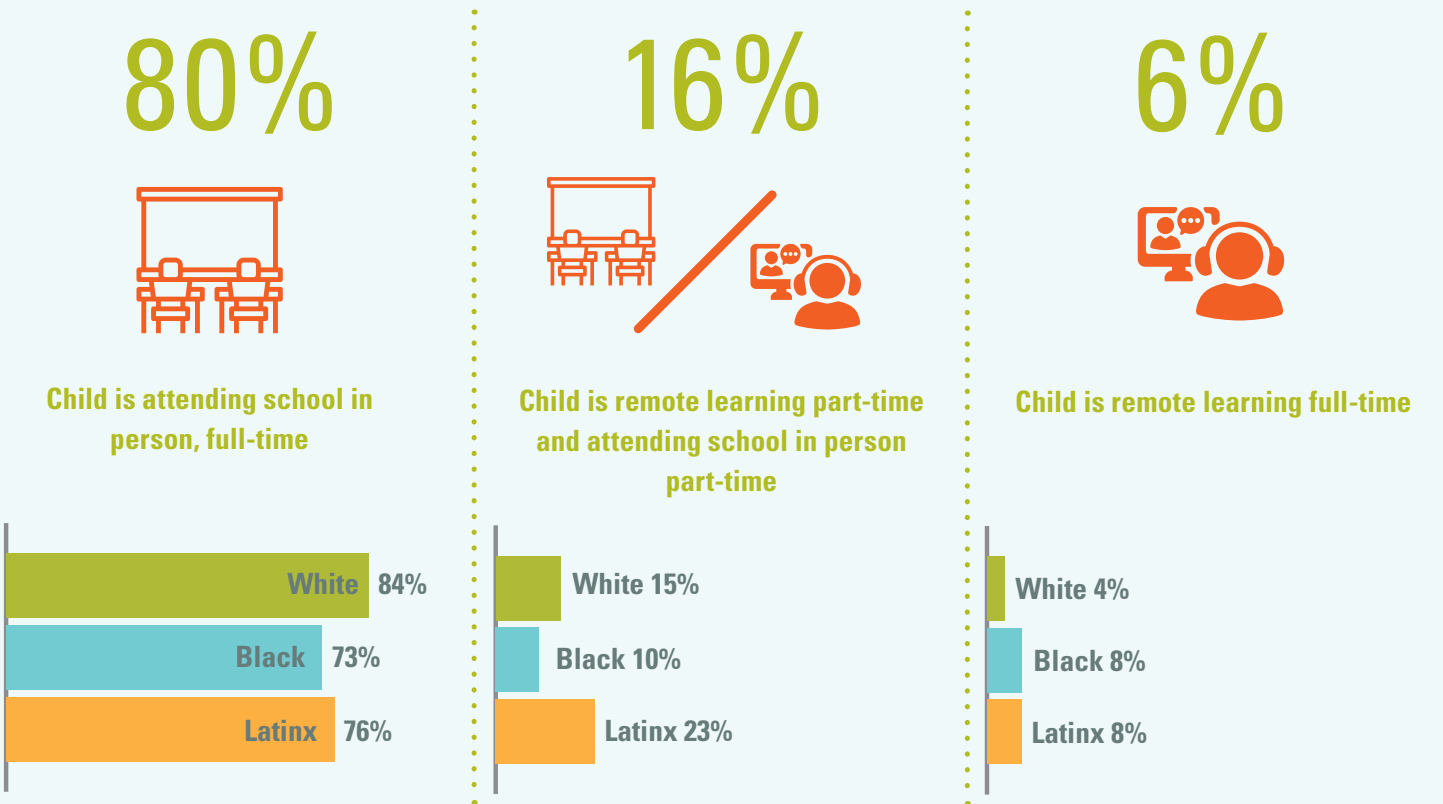
In this unprecedented moment, we can and must do better for New York families and that starts with listening to the people who know the most about their children — parents.

## KEY POLL FINDINGS

- 1 Although the vast majority of New York State parents report that their children are attending school in person this year — likely because few parents report having a remote learning option — the majority of parents across all racial groups indicated they would opt for remote learning if the option was available. Additionally, 11 percent of parents of a Kindergartner said they delayed enrolling their child because of concerns over the coronavirus.
- 2 Parents continue to be concerned about health and safety issues and the social-emotional development of their children — with heightened concern among Black and Latinx parents, whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- 3 While parents are mostly satisfied with their child's school's handling of the coronavirus so far this school year, they continue to be concerned about the academic development of their child — with heightened concern among Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income households. These parents also reported that they would find many resources helpful that schools are still not providing.
- 4 Parents, particularly Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income households, are increasingly concerned about their child's academic development and high school students' transition to college and careers, and how the pandemic will affect their futures.
- 5 As New York school districts are set to receive additional resources and federal funding, including funding through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Coronavirus, Response, and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA), parents feel that it is important to prioritize academic and social-emotional supports for students.

**FINDING 1:** Although the vast majority of New York State parents report that their children are attending school in person this year — likely because few parents report having a remote learning option — the majority of parents across all racial groups indicated they would opt for remote learning if the option was available. Additionally, 11 percent of parents of a Kindergartner said they delayed enrolling their child because of concerns over the coronavirus.

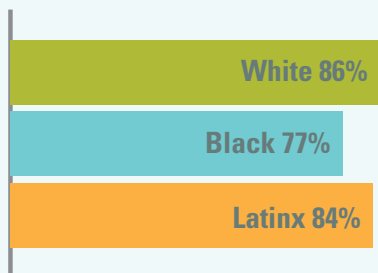
The vast majority of New York State parents report that their child is attending school in person this year.



Relatively few parents indicated that their school is offering a remote learning option.

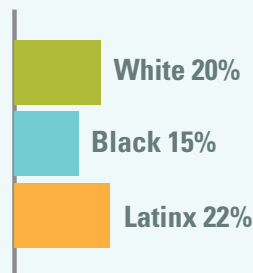
84%

School is offering the option of attending school in person, full-time



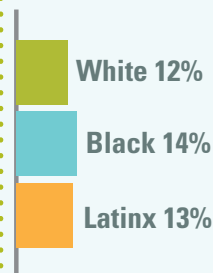
20%

School is offering the option of remote learning part-time and attending school in person part-time



12%

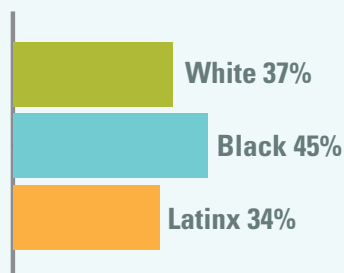
School is offering the option of remote learning full-time



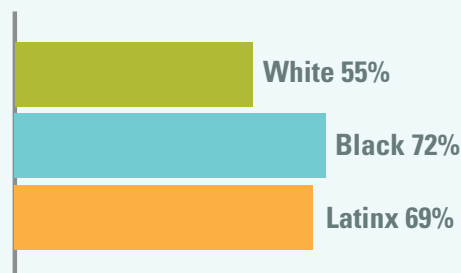
Note: Percentages do not add to 100 because some districts may offer multiple options.

More than one in three parents, and nearly half of Black parents, disagreed with their child's school's decision not to offer a remote learning option. Across all racial groups, the majority of parents said they would opt for remote learning if the option was available.

Disagree with decision to not offer remote learning



Would opt for remote learning if available



The vast majority of parents in New York City indicated they would opt for remote learning if the option was available.

79%

of New York City parents said they would opt for remote learning



Parents largely prefer for their child to attend school in person, rather than online, and trust the precautions that their child’s school has put in place for in-person instruction. Still, the vast majority do not believe it is safe to send their child to school in person unless there are certain procedures in place, with greater concerns among Black and Latinx parents.

89%



In a perfect world, I would prefer for my child to attend school in person rather than online, even if their social experience is a little different than normal

90%



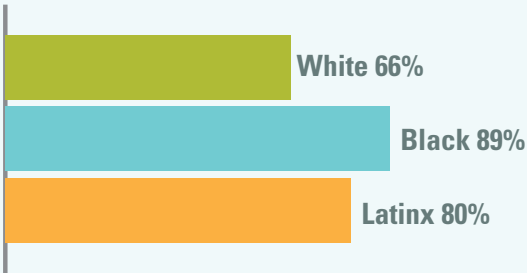
Regardless of how my child is currently participating in school, I believe in-person learning is more beneficial and effective

85%



I trust the precautions that my school has put in place for in-person learning this year

I do not believe it is safe to send my child to school in person unless there are procedures to maintain social distancing and mask wearing



The survey had a confidence interval of +/-3.4%. 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. 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. Learn more at [EdTrustNY.org/EyeonEquity](https://EdTrustNY.org/EyeonEquity).

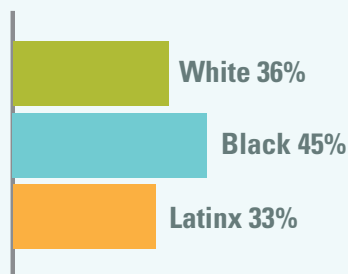


Nearly one in four parents report that they have received little to no information about plans in the event their child's school needs to close because of coronavirus or their child needs to quarantine because of coronavirus exposure.

23%



More than one in three parents — and nearly half of Black parents — report that they have received little to no information about plans for remote learning in case a child needs to quarantine.



About one in 10 parents said that they delayed enrolling their child in Kindergarten as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

11%

**FINDING 2: Parents continue to be concerned about health and safety issues and the social-emotional development of their children — with heightened concern among Black and Latinx parents, whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.**

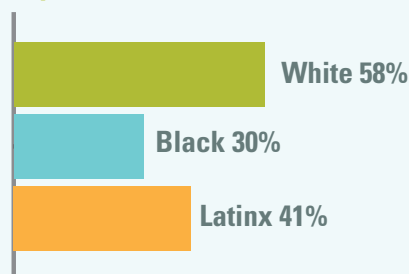
Although parents across racial groups were likely to rate the job their child's school is doing handling the coronavirus this academic year as positive, Black and Latinx parents were far less likely to feel confident in the health and safety precautions their child's school has in place.

How would you rate the job your child's school is doing handling coronavirus this academic year?

79%  
POSITIVE

17%  
NEGATIVE

Confidence in health and safety precautions school has in place



Parents widely support a number of precautions schools can have put in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

83%



Requiring all students to wear masks in classrooms regardless of vaccination status

86%



Requiring all teachers and staff to be vaccinated or tested on a weekly basis if not vaccinated

90%



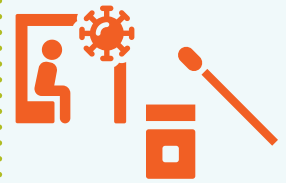
Requiring schools to maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms

97%



Enforcing strict cleaning, ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette protocols

93%

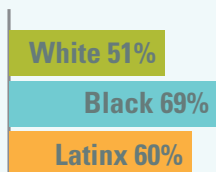


Requiring anyone who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 to quarantine and be tested 3-5 days after exposure

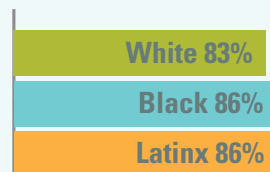
Black and Latinx parents were far more likely to express concerns about their child or a family member contracting the coronavirus.

#### Child Contracting

Concerned

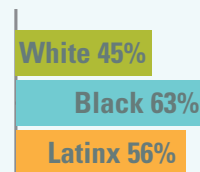


Very Concerned

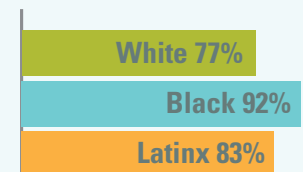


#### Family Member Contracting

Concerned

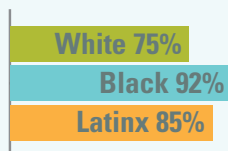


Very Concerned

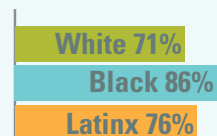


Parents have a number of concerns about their child returning to school for full-time in-person instruction.

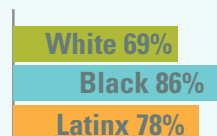
Whether the school will have proper safety precautions in place for my child to attend safely



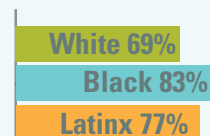
That not all teachers and staff will be vaccinated by the time school reopens



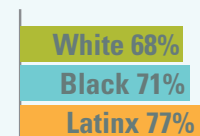
That not all parents of the children attending the school will be vaccinated



That not all students ages 12+ attending the school will be vaccinated



That my child will be exposed to students under the age of 12 who are not vaccinated



Although parents indicated widespread concern about their child's school supporting their mental health and well-being, few report having received information about their child having regular access to a counselor.

94%

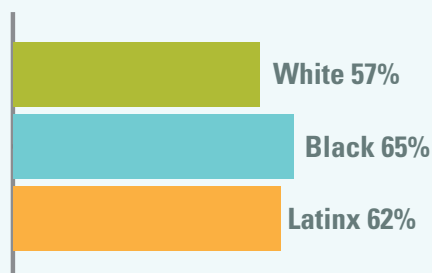
Parents concerned about their child's school supporting their mental health and well-being

35%

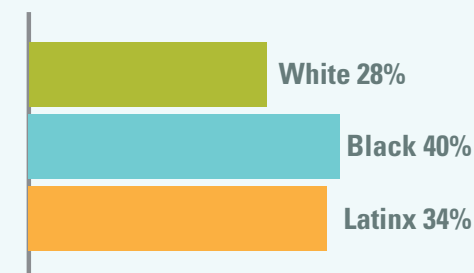
Parents report having received information about their child having regular access to a counselor

Parents across all racial groups expressed concerns that their child will have behavioral challenges in a full-time in-person classroom setting, with Black parents far more likely to indicate that they are very concerned.

Concerned

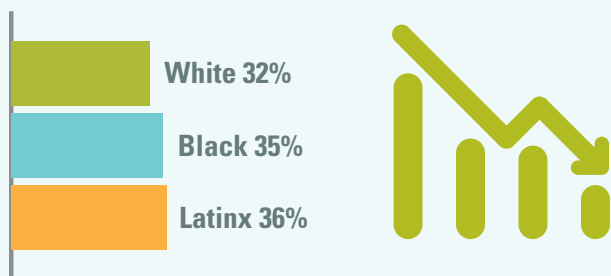


Very Concerned



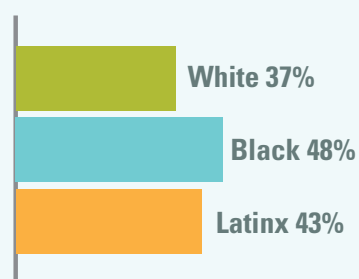


Across racial groups, roughly one in three parents indicated they feel uneasy about their financial situation in the coming months.



Black and Latinx parents were more likely to have reduced the size of or skipped their family's meals as a result of the coronavirus crisis than White parents. More parents reported reducing or skipping their own or their family's meals than in March 2021, and parents are more concerned about access to meals and food for their child this school year.

#### Reduced/skipped own/child meals



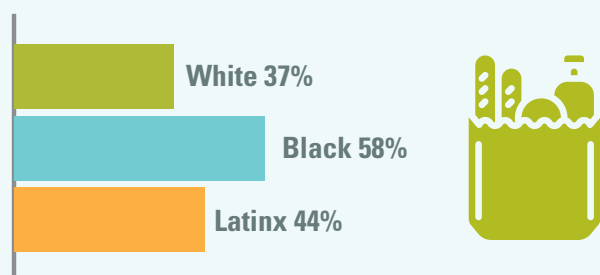
#### All Parents

Sept 2021

March 2021

40% 35%

How concerned are you about access to meals and food for your child this year?



#### All Parents

Sept 2021

March 2021

Concerned 44% 39%

Very concerned 20% 14%

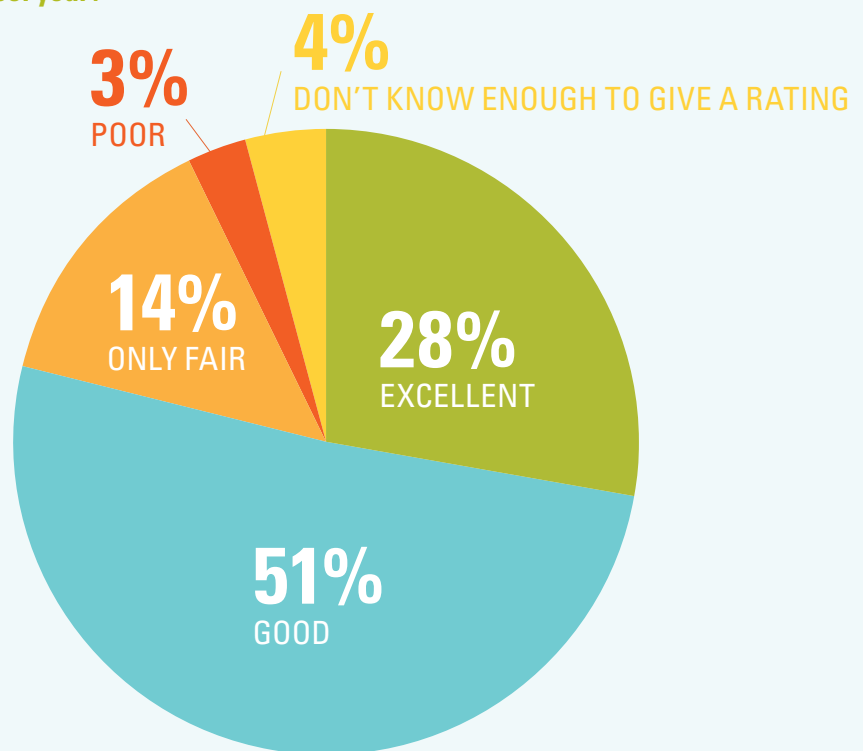


Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImage

**FINDING 3: While parents are mostly satisfied with their child's school's handling of coronavirus so far this school year, they continue to be concerned about the academic development of their children — with heightened concern among Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income households. They also said that they would find many resources helpful that schools are still not providing.**

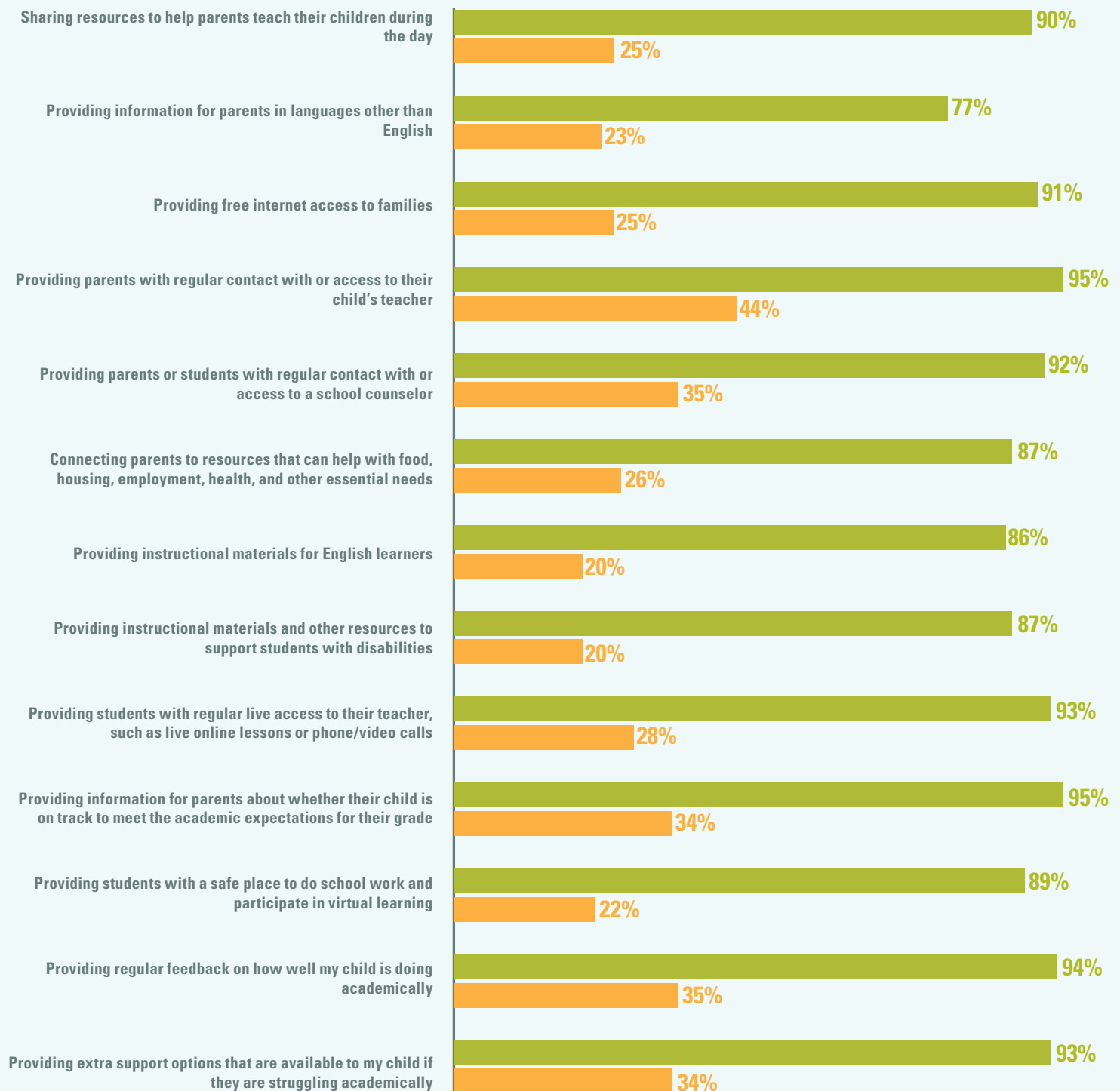
**While parents are mostly satisfied with their child's school's handling of coronavirus this school year, they also said that they would find many resources helpful that schools are still not providing.**

How well do you think your child/children's school(s) are doing so far this school year?



## Resources parents say would be helpful

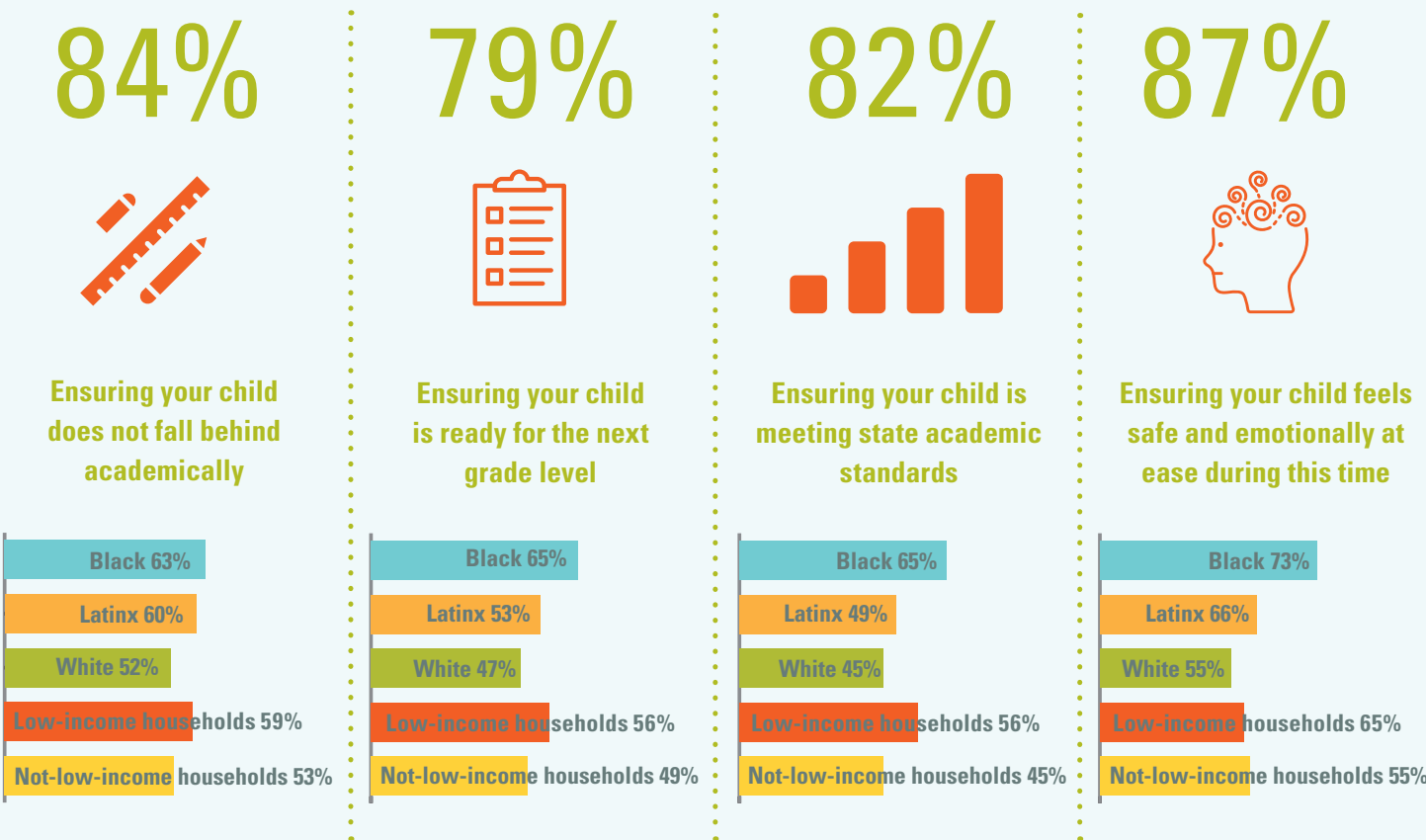
● Would be helpful ● School is doing



**FINDING 4: Parents, particularly Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income households, are increasingly concerned about their child’s academic development and high school students’ transition to college and careers, and how the pandemic will affect their futures.**

**Academic issues, social-emotional support, and health and safety at school remain top of mind for parents during the pandemic. Here are some of the concerns parents have about their child:**

Parents who expressed they are somewhat or very concerned:



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One in 10 parents from low-income households indicated that they worried their child would be less likely to graduate from high school because of the pandemic — more than twice that of parents from no-low-income households.

10%

Parents from low-income households



4%

Parents from not low-income households

A comparable share of parents from low-income households indicated the coronavirus pandemic has made it less likely their child will go to college.

14%

Parents from low-income households



10%

Parents from not low-income households

An even greater share indicated that they think the coronavirus pandemic has made it less likely their child will graduate from college.

11%

Parents from low-income households



8%

Parents from not low-income households



Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimage

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**Parents have a number of concerns about their child returning to school for full-time in-person instruction, and these concerns have deepened since the spring semester**

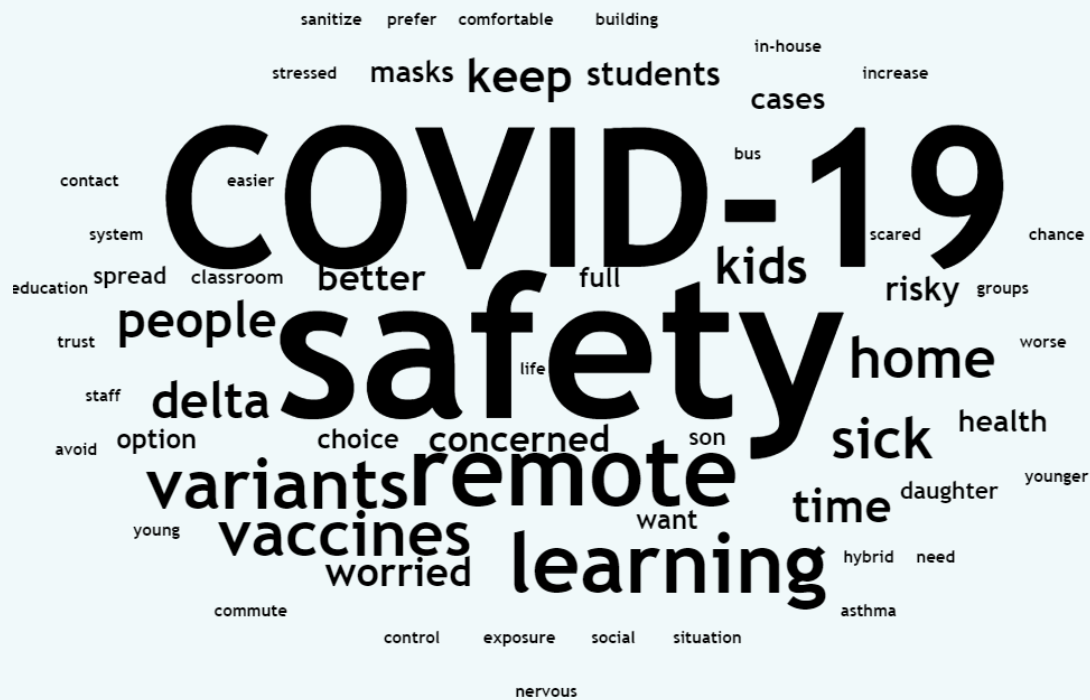
	September 2021 Very Concerned	September 2021 Concerned	March 2021 Very Concerned	March 2021 Concerned
That my child will need additional academic support to transition back to full-time in-person instruction	34%	69%	24%	63%
That my child will be socially and emotionally prepared to transition back to full-time in-person instruction	36%	72%	27%	65%
That interrupted instruction/remote learning has negatively impacted my child's academic progress	40%	79%	31%	72%
That my child will need counseling or other social-emotional supports to transition back to full-time in-person instruction	31%	64%	21%	56%
That my child will have a hard time getting back into the full-time in-person school routine	35%	73%	31%	68%
That my child will have a hard time focusing in full-time in-person classes	34%	67%	28%	63%
That my child will not have as much one-on-one support as they are currently used to	37%	76%	23%	62%
That my child will have a difficult time interacting with students and teachers	33%	67%	23%	53%
That my child will have behavioral challenges in a full-time in-person classroom setting	32%	61%	19%	57%

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**Parents have a mixed range of words to describe how they are feeling about this school year, as well as hopes and worries for their children.**

## How are you feeling about this school year?



**Thinking ahead to the rest of this school year, what do you hope will happen for you and your child?**



And, thinking ahead to the rest of this school year, what are you most worried about for you and your child?

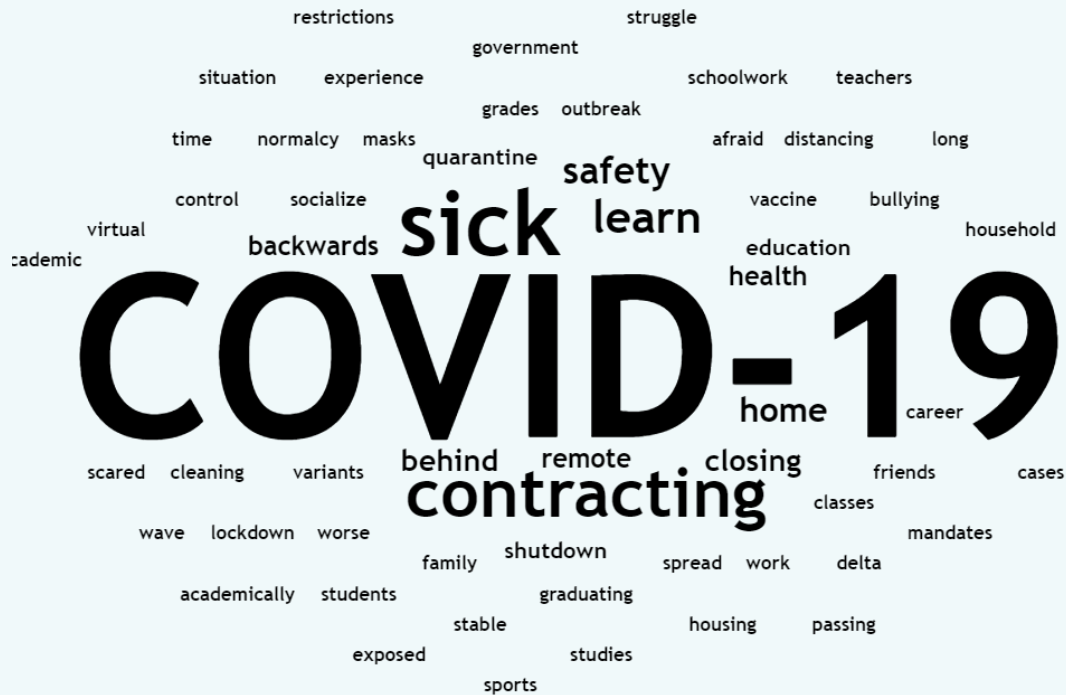
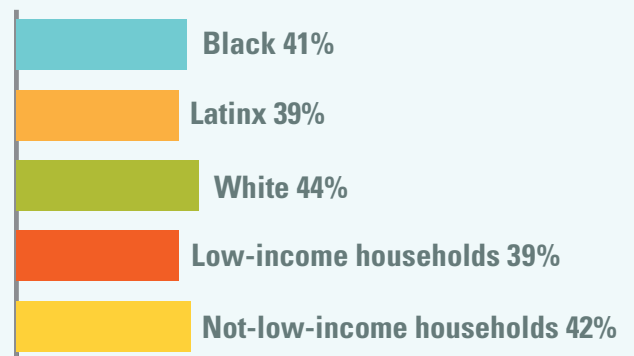


Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImage

More than 4 out of 10 parents report receiving little or no information about whether their child has suffered from instructional loss or has fallen behind grade level expectations as a result of coronavirus related school closures.



# FINDING 5: As New York school districts are set to receive additional resources and federal funding, including funding though the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Coronavirus, Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA), parents feel that it is important to prioritize academic and social emotional supports for students.

