

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Global Strategy Group

**Date:** September 21, 2021

**Re: As New York Students Return to Classrooms, Parent Survey Outlines Important Disparities and Priorities**

Global Strategy Group partnered with The Education Trust–New York to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 837 parents of school-aged children including 792 parents of children in New York State public schools from September 7<sup>th</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. This is the sixth survey among parents of K-12 students GSG has conducted with The Education Trust–New York on this topic. Key findings from the statewide research are outlined below.

## Key Findings:

**As the new school year kicks off, a majority of students have shifted to in-person learning; however, concerns, divisions, and disparities remain.**

- **Students have suffered from unfinished instruction.** Making up for lost time is clearly a top priority for New York parents this school year: more than two thirds of parents (69%) believe their child has suffered from interrupted instruction or fallen behind grade level expectations as a result of the pandemic. This is more pronounced in New York City (76%) than upstate (64%) or in NYC suburbs\* (63%).
- **Parents have delayed enrolling their child in kindergarten.** 11% of parents of school-aged children in the state say that they delayed enrolling their child in kindergarten as a result of the pandemic (either in the 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 school years). This issue is particularly pronounced in New York City, where 17% report delaying enrollment for their child.
- **For the first time since the start of the pandemic, most students are attending school in person.** In March of this year, 89% of parents in New York State had at least one child participating in either hybrid or fully remote learning; now, 80% have at least one child attending school in person full-time.

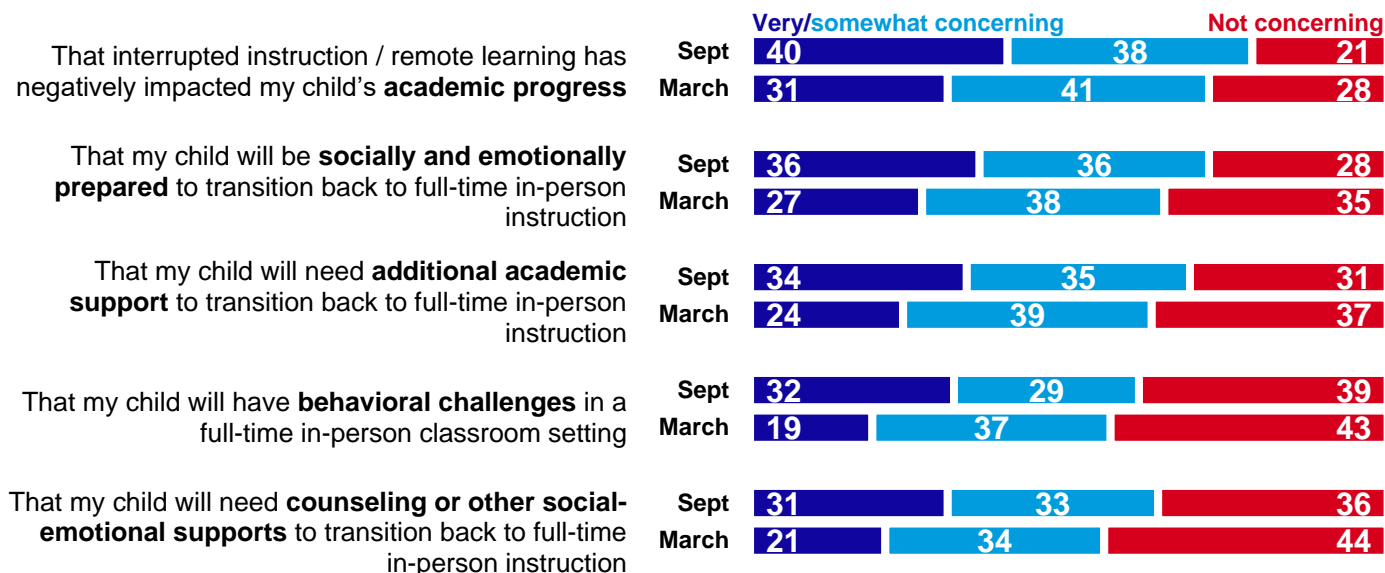
**Parents recognize the benefit of in-person learning, but not all families are offered or comfortable with this option.**

- **Overwhelmingly, parents agree that in-person learning is more beneficial than remote learning.** Regardless of how their child is currently participating in school, this is the case for parents regardless of race: 90% agree among White parents, 92% among Black parents, 89% among Latinx parents, and 91% among participants who identify as Asian or another race.
- **Yet, Black and Latinx families are less likely to have transitioned to in-person learning or be offered a fully in person option.** Days into the new school year, more White parents say that their child is participating in school full-time in person (84%) than their Black (73%) and Latinx (76%) counterparts. Fewer Black parents say their child's school is offering the option of fully in-person instruction (77%) than White parents (86%).
- **For those families who are not being offered a remote learning option this year, more than one in three parents (37%), and nearly half of Black parents (45%), disagreed with that decision.** Among parents who are not currently being offered a remote option this school year, a majority (60%) indicated that they would opt for remote learning if the option were available. More than half of White parents (55%) who are not currently being offered a remote option would opt for remote learning if available, as would more than two thirds of Black (72%) and Latinx (69%) parents. Parents in New York City would opt for remote learning if they could, with more than half (79%) indicating they would opt for remote learning if available.

- **Parents also lack important information about what would happen if their child’s school needed to go back to remote learning or if their child was exposed to the virus.** Nearly one in four parents (23%) report that they have received little to no information about plans in the event their child’s school needs to close because of coronavirus. More than one in three parents (36%) – and nearly half of Black parents (45%) – report that they have received little to no information about plans for remote learning in case a child needs to quarantine.

**Returning to school raises real concerns for many parents in the state, who are concerned about academic progress, health and safety issues, and the social-emotional development of their children.**

- **Parents have several concerns about their child returning to school for full-time in-person instruction, and these concerns have deepened since the spring semester.** While learning loss because of interrupted and remote learning tops the list of concerns, parents are also concerned about how their child will adjust in an in-person environment, including whether they will have the support they need to successfully transition or if they will have behavioral issues.



Although parents indicate widespread concern (64%) that their child will need counseling or other social-emotional supports, few (35%) report that their child’s school provides parents or students with regular contact with or access to a school 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 concerned (65%) compared to Latinx (62%) and White parents (57%).

- **Vaccination and schools’ safety precautions are a top concern among parents.** More than seven in ten (77%) express concern that not all teachers will be vaccinated at the start of the school year, are concerned that not all parents will be vaccinated (76%), and are concerned that not all students ages 12 and up will be vaccinated (74%). Among public school parents, 44% overall say that their child is already vaccinated and 23% say they will get vaccinated as soon as possible once the vaccine is available to their child. Two thirds (66%) of high school parents say that their child has already been vaccinated, as do 43% of middle school parents.

	% concerned	White	Black	Latinx
Whether the school will have proper safety precautions in place		75%	92%	85%
That not all teachers and staff will be vaccinated by the time school reopens		71%	86%	76%
That not all parents of the children attending the school will be vaccinated		69%	86%	78%
That not all students ages 12+ attending the school will be vaccinated		69%	83%	77%
That my child will be exposed to students under the age of 12 who are not vaccinated		68%	71%	77%

**Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income households – whose communities have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic – express heightened concern about safety precautions and are less likely to be satisfied with their child’s school.**

- **Parents of color are less confident in school’s safety precautions...**Confidence in the health and safety precautions schools have put in place is noticeably lower among Black (30% 8-10 on 0-10 “confident” scale) and Latinx (41%) parents relative to White parents (58%). Parents from low-income households (who manage household incomes less than \$50,000 per year) are also less confident (41% 8-10) than parents who are from not-low-income households (54%) in their child’s school’s health and safety precautions.

Overall, the majority of parents support strong safety precautions to keep students and families safe during this time, including strict cleaning, ventilation, and handwashing protocols (97% support), mandatory testing three to five days after exposure to COVID-19 (93%), physical distancing of at least three feet (90%), mandatory vaccination or weekly testing for teachers (86%), and mask wearing for all students (83%).

- **...And are less satisfied with their child’s school overall.** Understanding that school has only just started for most public school students in the state and that schools are still adjusting to having most students back in classrooms in person, overall satisfaction with how schools are doing is lower among parents of color. Black parents give their child’s school lower overall ratings (25% 8-10 on 0-10 “well” scale) than White parents (54%). Satisfaction among Latinx parents (42%) and parents who identify as Asian or another race (46%) is slightly more mixed but still lower than their White counterparts. Similarly, parents from low-income households are also less satisfied with how schools are doing (37% 8-10) relative to parents who are from not-low-income households (51%).
- **Parents of color are more likely to be concerned about someone in their household contracting the virus.** Nearly seven in ten (69%) Black parents are very concerned about their child contracting the coronavirus, as are 60% of Latinx parents (just 51% of White parents are very concerned). Black and Latinx families are also far more likely to express concerns about a family member contracting the coronavirus: 63% of Black parents are very concerned and 56% of Latinx parents are very concerned, compared to 45% of White parents who are very concerned.

**Despite these concerns, parents are generally hopeful about the upcoming year, though optimism varies.**

- **As the new school year kicks off, parents are feeling hopeful and optimistic.** Parents’ top words to describe how they are feeling about this school year overall are “hopeful” and “optimistic,” though feelings of worry and anxiety are particularly pronounced among parents of color:

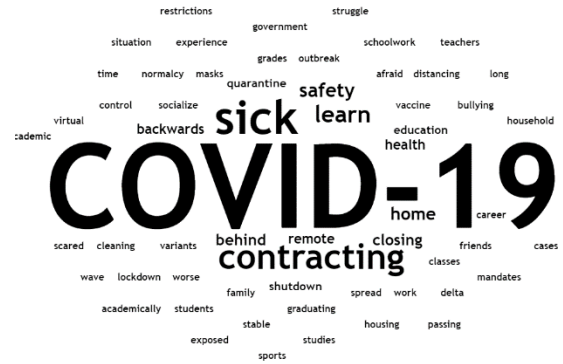
	<b>Top 2 selected statewide:</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Latinx</b>	<b>Asian</b>
Hopeful	<b>52% overall</b>	56	54	41	57
Optimistic	<b>34</b>	40	34	26	22
Worried	<b>29</b>	26	34	30	38
Anxious	<b>24</b>	19	19	38	28
Stressed	<b>19</b>	19	20	20	18
Excited	<b>19</b>	21	20	16	17
Frustrated	<b>9</b>	8	11	12	4
Relieved	<b>7</b>	7	5	8	10
Pessimistic	<b>6</b>	5	4	9	5

- **Despite hope and optimism, COVID-19 clearly dominates parents' concerns about the upcoming year.** Parents also hope that their child will be safe, have a positive experience, and learn this year:

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



**Thinking ahead to the rest of the school year, what are you most worried about for you and your child?**



**There are still more things schools can do to support parents and students during this time.** Parents continue to seek more information about their child's progress, regular check-ins with their child's teacher, and access to additional support:

Sept. 2021 % helpful	Sept. % child's school is doing this	March	
95%	34%	52%	Providing information for parents about whether their child is on track to meet the academic expectations for their grade
95%	44%	52%	Providing parents with regular contact with or access to their child's teacher
94%	35%	52%	Providing regular feedback on how well my child is doing academically
93%	34%	39%	Providing extra support options that are available to my child if they are struggling academically
92%	35%	40%	Providing parents or students with regular contact with or access to a school counselor
87%	26%	31%	Connecting parents to resources that can help with food, housing, employment, health, and other essential needs
77%	23%	23%	Providing information for parents in languages other than English

**About this poll:** 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.

\*New York City suburbs are defined as Nassau, Suffolk, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Ulster, and Sullivan Counties.