



To: Interested Parties
From: Global Strategy Group
Date: August 20, 2020

Re: Parents’ Survey Identifies Stark Racial and Income Disparities Headed into Next School Year

Global Strategy Group partnered with The Education Trust–New York to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 804 parents of children in New York State public schools from August 8th to 19th, 2020. Key findings from the research are outlined below.

Key Findings:

Black, Latinx, and low-income parents are disproportionately likely to be wary of reopening school buildings this fall. Sixty-six percent of white parents and 68% of parents with an income of at least \$50,000 support reopening school buildings fully or partially, compared to 43% of Black parents, 57% of Latinx parents, and 48% of lower-income parents. Black and Latinx parents and parents from low-income backgrounds to a much greater extent believe we should NOT reopen school buildings (52% among Black parents, 41% among Latinx parents, and 48% among lower-income parents). Just 5% of Black parents believe students should attend schools in-person every day.

	Parents Overall	NYC	Suburbs	Upstate	White	Black	Latinx	<\$50,000 HHI	\$50,000+ HHI
We should fully reopen public schools in New York State where students attend schools in-person every day	19%	20%	21%	17%	25%	5%	17%	13%	24%
We should partially reopen public schools in New York State where students attend a few days a week and remote learn a few days a week	40	37	42	41	41	38	40	35	44
We should not reopen schools and instead have students learn remotely every day	38	38	36	39	32	52	41	48	30
FULL/PARTIAL REOPEN (TOTAL)	60%	57%	64%	59%	66%	43%	57%	48%	68%

These racial and income disparities have stark implications for New York’s public schools. Among parents who say their school is offering the option of in-person learning on either a full- or part-time basis, as well as parents who are unsure what their school will be offering next year, 66% say that at least one of their children will attend school in-person if possible. Among white parents, this number rises to 74%, but is drastically lower among Black (47%) and Latinx (61%) parents. As we outline below, this disparity is driven by higher fears among parents of color that their child or another family member will contract coronavirus, and less overall confidence in schools. Eighty-six percent of Black parents and 76% of Latinx parents are concerned about their child contracting the coronavirus, compared to 62% of white parents. Similarly, 81% of Black parents and 72% of Latinx parents are concerned about another family member contracting the virus, compared to just 62% of white parents.

- **This racial divide is even more pronounced among parents in New York City:** 84% of white public-school parents in New York City say their child will attend school in-person if possible, compared to 63% of Latinx parents and just 34% of Black parents.

	Parents Overall	NYC	Suburbs	Upstate	White	Black	Latinx	<\$50,000 HHI	\$50,000+ HHI
My child will attend school in person if possible (IF AVAILABLE TO THEM/DON'T KNOW)	66%	62%	70%	67%	74%	47%	61%	53%	74%
New York City only:					84%	34%	63%	46%	74%

Precautions like rigorous cleaning protocols, requiring masks and social distancing, and regular testing make parents more comfortable with their child returning to school, but do not fully assuage the concerns of parents who want to keep their children at home:

Overall	NYC	In-person	NOT	% <i>much more comfortable with child/children attending school in-person</i>
50%	52%	60%	31%	Schools reopening if they maintain rigorous cleaning protocols
43%	49%	56%	25%	Schools reopening if they require students, teachers, and staff to wear masks and ensure social distancing
41%	48%	50%	22%	Schools reopening if they regularly test staff and students for coronavirus

Parents continue to be under significant stress as a result of the pandemic and ongoing uncertainty with planned schedules for in-person learning that do not meet family needs. Parent stress is at its highest and most intense level since the beginning of the pandemic: 44% of parents say their level of stress as a parent is *much* higher than usual (compared to 40% in March in 31% in June). Parents of elementary and middle school students report higher levels of stress (elementary: 50%; middle: 45%), as do low-income parents (46%, compared to 42% among higher-income parents). Black and Latinx parents are less likely to be able to rely on working remotely or otherwise planning to stay home for child care during remote learning (Black: 41%; Latinx: 45%) than white parents (51%) and thus are more likely to be affected by difficult schedules for in-person learning. Black parents are also more likely to rely on informal child care arrangements through an extended family member, friend, or neighbor (Black: 22%) than parents overall (17%), further complicating the process of managing their child or children’s schedules when in-person learning is only offered part-time and may be different for siblings in the same household.

Satisfaction with remote learning remains low and parents have clear priorities for how to improve remote learning. From March to June 2020, satisfaction among parents citing distance learning as successful (8 to 10 on a 0-10 scale), dropped from 57% to 43%. Now, just 40% of parents say remote learning was successful. In June, dissatisfaction was driven primarily by low-income families; satisfaction among higher-income families has since dropped (to 40% successful). Positive ratings remain low across regions, though parents in Upstate New York (37%) and in the New York City suburbs (33%) remain much less likely to rate remote learning as successful than parents of children who attend New York City public schools (49%).

Parents have clear priorities for remote learning, with more live instruction topping the list of priorities across grade levels. Elementary and middle school parents are also particularly inclined to say they want much more information about what their child is supposed to learn at each grade level, and regular contact with or access to their child’s teacher. Elementary parents also say they would like much more assistance with both technology devices and remote learning software compared to last year.

Elementary	Middle School	High School	% <i>want <u>much more</u> of this compared to when schools closed in the spring</i>
53%	47%	50%	Live instruction during days when my child is learning remotely
54%	47%	44%	Information about what my child is supposed to learn at each grade level
50%	42%	38%	Assistance ensuring my child has the technology he or she needs, such as tablets, laptops, or devices
45%	44%	39%	Regular contact with or access to my child’s teacher
49%	37%	38%	Technical assistance to help with remote learning

Parents of high school students are focused on ensuring their child is on track to graduate from high school and go to college or get a job that pays well after they graduate. This is increasingly concerning to parents – 63% of high school parents say they are *very* concerned about ensuring their child is on track to graduate (compared to 48% in June) and 61% are very concerned about being on track for college or a career (up from 43% in June).

Wealthy families are much more likely to be seriously considering supplementing remote learning with private tutoring by joining “pods” with other families. Parents with household incomes exceeding \$150,000 a year are far more likely to report seriously considering this option (26%) than parents with incomes below \$50,000 (10%). Overall, pods have gained more traction in New York City (19% seriously considered) than they have upstate (15%) or in the New York City suburbs (11%).

Insufficient high-speed internet access further threatens students' abilities to successfully learn remotely next school year. Nearly half of parents (47%) are concerned about being able to afford internet access or losing their internet access (including 55% of low-income parents and 63% of parents in New York City), which threatens students' abilities to successfully learn remotely next school year. Black and Latinx parents are disproportionately likely to say they would like much more assistance ensuring their child has access to reliable, high-speed internet to use for remote learning (Black: 49% much more; Latinx: 48%) compared to their white counterparts (37%). Parents of color are also more likely to say they would like much more assistance ensuring their child has access to laptops, tablets or other technology devices (Black: 53% much more; Latinx: 52% much more; white: 37% much more).

Food insecurity remains a significant issue for parents. A staggering 39% of parents say they have skipped meals or reduced the number of meals they consume personally or reduced/skipped their child's meals as a result of the pandemic, up from 33% in June. Latinx parents (48%) and parents in New York City (50%) are particularly likely to have skipped or reduced their family's meals as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly half (48%) of low-income parents in the state say they are very concerned about access to meals and food for their child this fall (43% overall), as are 51% of elementary school parents and 62% of parents in New York City. These findings are consistent with our earlier research among parents of infants and toddlers and among college students in New York State, indicating that young children and their families as well as young adults remain significantly food insecure.

***About this poll:** The survey had a confidence interval of +/-3.5%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel, including 52% of interviews conducted via mobile device. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of public-school parents are properly represented. Twenty-six percent of participants have a household income of less than \$50,000 per year. The survey also included additional interviewing among Black parents in New York City.