# Remote Learning Experiences in Delaware

Delaware Department of Education

**COVID-19 Insights from the Delaware School Reopening Survey** *July 2020*

## Introduction

With all aspects of life and school changing due to COVID-19, students, families, and educators had to quickly adjust to the new ways of accessing and providing instructional and support services, as well as learning to adjust to new social norms. We wanted to understand their experiences during this crisis and therefore designed surveys for students, families, teachers, school leaders, and district leaders. Between June 10 and June 23, 4,805 students[1] (12% response rate), 14,098 families (28% response rate), 3,598 teachers (81% response rate), 183 school leaders (70% response rate), and 33 district administrators (73% response rate) responded to our surveys. We asked them questions around five key areas: access and connectivity, students' academic needs, resources and supports, communication, and wellness and social emotional learning (SEL). We also provided opportunities for students, families, and educators to respond to open-ended questions throughout our surveys.

[1] Thirteen school districts participated in the survey. For details on our sample and data limitations, please see Data and Methods section.

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# DATA & METHODS

Survey Instrument – In order to create a comprehensive survey instrument, we reviewed existing literature on designing questionnaires as well as effective means of surveying different stakeholders (via email and text). We also reviewed existing school reopening surveys, including those from universities (e.g., University of Wisconsin), research and professional organizations (e.g., IES, CCSSO, TNTP, Panorama, Hanover), foundations (e.g., Rodel foundation), and district surveys (e.g., Red Clay Consolidated School District). Finally, we drew upon these surveys and research literature to create the Delaware School Reopening Surveys for students, families, teachers, school leaders, and district leaders.

Survey Content and Length – In keeping with the purposes of administering these surveys, we created five main sections: Access and Connectivity, Students' Academic Needs, Resources and Supports, Communication, and Wellness and Social Emotional Learning. The surveys for students and families were shorter than those for educators. Typically, it took about 10 minutes for students and families to complete the survey and about 15-20 minutes for educators to complete their survey.

Duration of the Survey – Overall, the survey was open for about a week and a half (Wednesday, June 10 - Monday, June 22, 2020).

Survey Delivery – The surveys were primarily delivered by emails. For students and families, we used the emails that were available in the student information system. For students in grades K through 5, the student survey was sent to parents/guardians. They were encouraged to complete the survey with their student. In addition, to increase participation of respondents with limited or no internet access and/or device availability, we partnered with districts to text students and families that did have a smartphone. We also encouraged districts to provide paper copies of the surveys for students and families with no internet/device availability.

In order to reach our non-native English-speaking students and families, we also offered the student and family surveys in Spanish and Haitian Creole. While these options were available, we do recognize that internet/device accessibility was a significant barrier for participating in our survey. To this end, we would like to caution the reader that **our findings do not account for the majority of voices with limited or no internet/device access**. In order to maximize participation in our surveys, we sought the support of districts to send additional reminders. The Department of Education also sent a final reminder on the last day of the survey.

Our Sample – Of the 19 Delaware school districts, 13 districts participated in the survey – Caesar Rodney, Capital, Christina, Delmar, Indian River, Laurel, Milford, New Castle County Vo-Tech, POLYTECH, Sussex Tech, Seaford, Smyrna, and Woodbridge. The remaining districts and charters either conducted their own surveys or were engaged in alternate forms of collecting feedback from their school communities.

Response Rates – Overall, response rate for students was 12%, 28% for families, 81% for teachers, 70% for school leaders, and 73% for district leaders. In addition, response rate of Spanish-speaking students was 4%, 4% of Haitian Creole-speaking students, and 14% for English-speaking students. Moreover, response rate for families of Spanish-speaking students was 9%, compared to 5% for parents of Haitian Creole-speaking students, and 30% for families of English-speaking students.

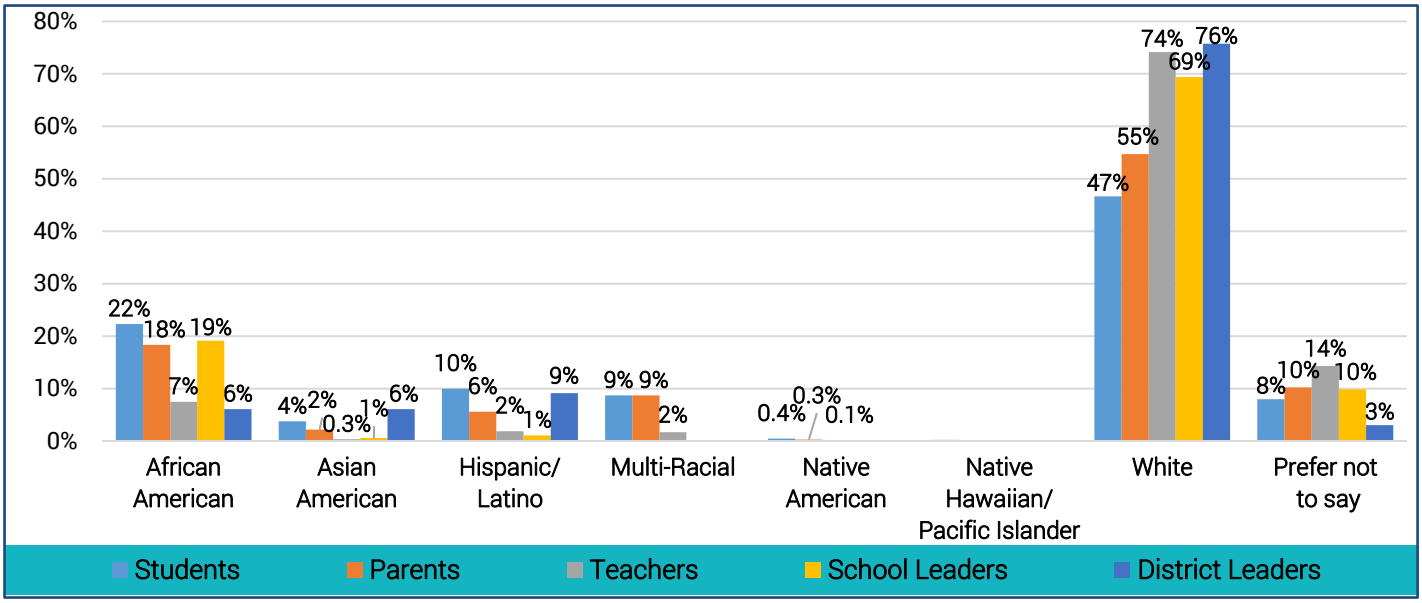
# DEMOGRAPHICS

We wanted to understand the demographics of the students and educators who completed our survey. The demographics include gender, race/ethnicity, grade/grade level taught, special demographics (e.g. students with disabilities, English learners, etc.), and years of educator experience. We found that our sample was largely representative of the statewide student and educator data. However, there are two caveats. First, when compared to the statewide data, African American and Hispanic/Latino student respondents were underrepresented (22% of students and 18% of families reported their student's race/ethnicity as African American, compared to 30% statewide; for Hispanic/Latino students, these numbers were 10% and 6% respectively, compared to 18% statewide). In addition, English learners were underrepresented in our sample (3% of families reported that their students received English language learning services, compared to 10% statewide).

Gender – Overall, 58% of female and 39% of male students completed the survey, and 3% preferred not to say their gender. Families reported that 47% of their students were females, while 49% were male students. Four percent of families preferred not to say their students' gender. Furthermore, 77% of teachers were females, 15% males, and 8% preferred not to report their gender. Sixty-three percent of school leaders reported their gender as female, 31% as male, and 6% reported prefer not to say. Lastly, 58% of district leaders reported their gender as female, while 42% reported as male.

Race – Reported below is race/ethnicity for students and educators (see Figure 1 below). Families were asked what is their children's race/ethnicity.

Figure 1 – Race/ethnicity for students and educators



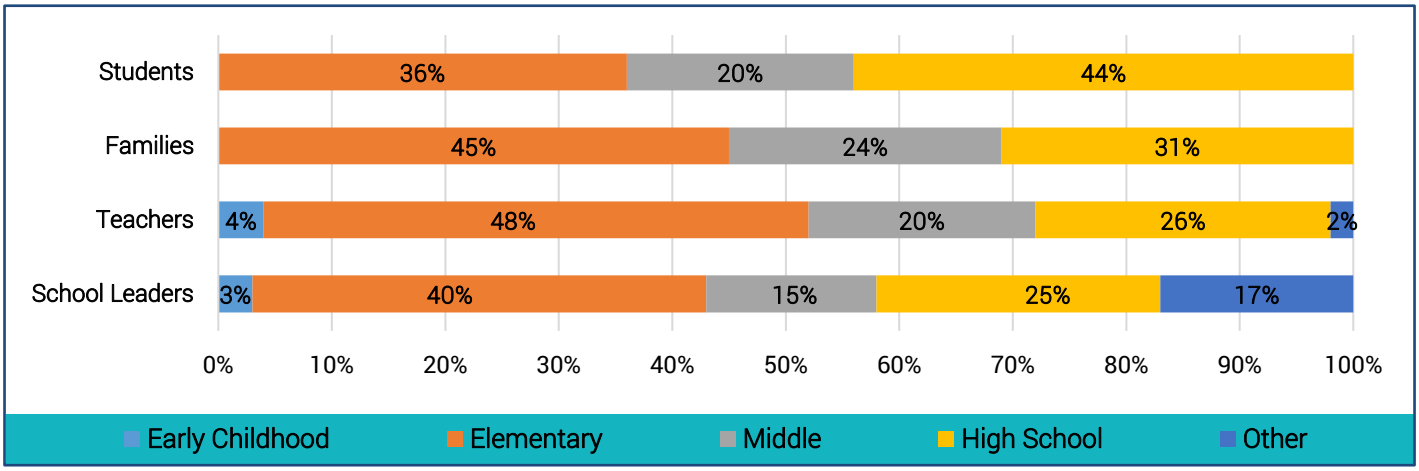

47% of students reported their race/ethnicity as white, 22% as African American, followed by Hispanic/Latino and multi-racial (10% and 9% respectively). When families were asked about their students' race/ethnicity, 55% of families reported their students' race/ethnicity as white, 18% as African American, followed by multi-racial and Hispanic/Latino (9% and 6% respectively).

74% of teachers reported their race/ethnicity as white, 7% as African American, followed by Hispanic/Latino and multi-racial (2% each). 69% of school leaders reported their race/ethnicity as white, 19% as African American, followed by Hispanic/Latino and Asian American (1% each). 76% of district leaders reported their race/ethnicity as white, 9% as Hispanic/Latino, followed by African American and Asian American (6% each).

8% of students, 10% of families, 14% of teachers, 10% of school leaders, and 3% of district leaders chose preferred not to say as their answer option.

Grade – Figure 2 below shows what grade level students were in, as well as which grade level educators worked in. 36% of students reported that they were in an elementary school, 20% in middle school, and 44% in high school. Families reported that 45% of their students were in an elementary school, 24% in middle school, and 31% in high school. Four percent of teachers and three percent of school leaders reported working in early childhood, 48% and 40% in elementary school, 20% and 15% in middle school, 26% and 25% in high school, and 2% of teachers and 17% of school leaders reported working in other school setting (e.g. K-12, adult education , etc.).

Figure 2 – Grade level for students and educators

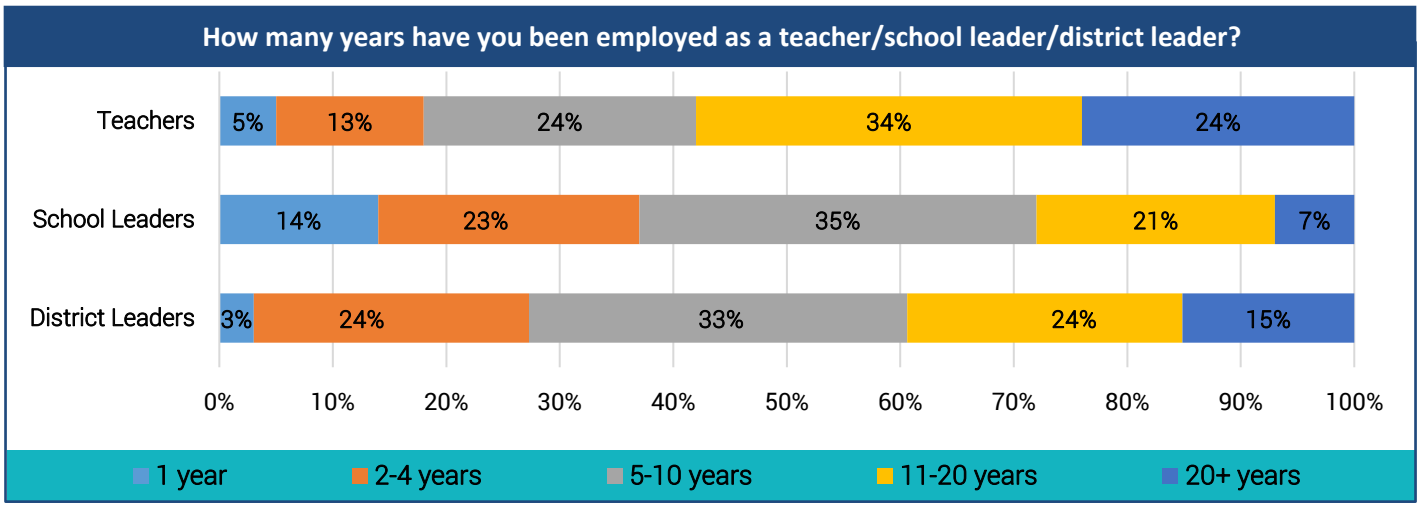



Special Demographics – Additionally, about 20% of families indicated that their students received special education services, 3% indicated that their students received English learning services, and about two-thirds of families reported that their students did not identify in neither of these categories.

Moreover, 28% of teachers reported working as a special education teacher, 3% indicated being English learner teachers, 60% reported being general education teachers, and 8% preferred not to say their role in the district.

Experience – When asked about how many years educators have been employed in their current positions, 18% of teachers, 37% of school leaders, and 27% of district leaders reported having four or fewer years of experience (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3 – Educator experience



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Here are some key findings from our surveys:

Access and Connectivity - As we consider reopening school scenarios for the fall, we wanted to gauge the **level of comfort** that students, families, and educators had **with returning to school in the fall**. Clear preferences emerged – students preferred going back to school, families and teachers had similar preferences for going back to school and remote option, and school leaders preferred remote or hybrid option.

Students and families were twice as likely to not have a properly working **device**, had a device and someone else needed it, or did not have a device.

When asked about supports needed for the next school year, educators identified instructional technology support as critical. Specifically, 82% of district leaders, 51% of school leaders, and 38% of teachers reported needing **expanded instructional technology personnel capacity**.

Students' Academic Needs - Over two-thirds of students and families reported **high levels of satisfaction with the teachers and schools** but relatively low levels of satisfaction with the remote education received (41%). In addition, when asked about whether they were **learning new things**, 43% of students reported doing so.

Furthermore, when asked about their **assignments**, majority of students reported the difficulty and the amount schoolwork assigned to be just right (70% and 59% respectively). However, families and some students did indicate the need for more challenging materials for students moving forward.

Sixty-four percent of teachers reported providing weekly opportunities for students to **collaborate**, and 38% of students reported speaking daily, 2-3 times a week, or weekly with their classmates. Notably, 50% of students reported rarely having the opportunity to speak with their classmates.

Resources and Supports - Over two-thirds of educators indicated **feeling supported and valued** by school leaders. In contrast, as they thought about the next school year, 16% of teachers reported that their students will be prepared, and **more supports and resources** would be needed in the fall.

Teachers and school leaders identified ongoing professional learning communities, professional development on how to use online platforms, and staff-only discussion boards to receive peer support and advice in their **top 5 most useful resources**.

In open-ended comments, some educators also included the need for self-care professional development for educators and staff.

Teachers identified the following **resources and supports for the fall** - continued resources to support remote learning, additional instructional planning time and resources, additional diagnostic tools to understand where their students are in their learning, and flexibility to focus on standards from the students' previous grades.

About two-thirds of **school leaders** reported focusing on supporting teachers to address students' unfinished learning and reducing barriers for at-risk students as key priorities for next year.

Communication - Communication is critical in keeping our students and families updated with important information regarding remote learning, the challenges that arise, and helpful resources available to them. To this end, we wanted to understand the most commonly used channels different stakeholders used to receive information during COVID-19 and any challenges that may have arisen.

Students received the information about COVID-19 from their parents and guardians; families and teachers from the school principal; school and district leaders from their supervisors and administrative meetings.

Students, families, and educators were able to get in touch when access and connectivity was not an issue. Educators found it challenging to communicate with students and families with limited or no internet/device access.

Wellness & Social and Emotional Learning - With all aspects of life and school changing due to COVID-19, students, families, and educators had to quickly adjust to the new ways of accessing and providing instructional and support services, as well as learning to adjust to new social norms.

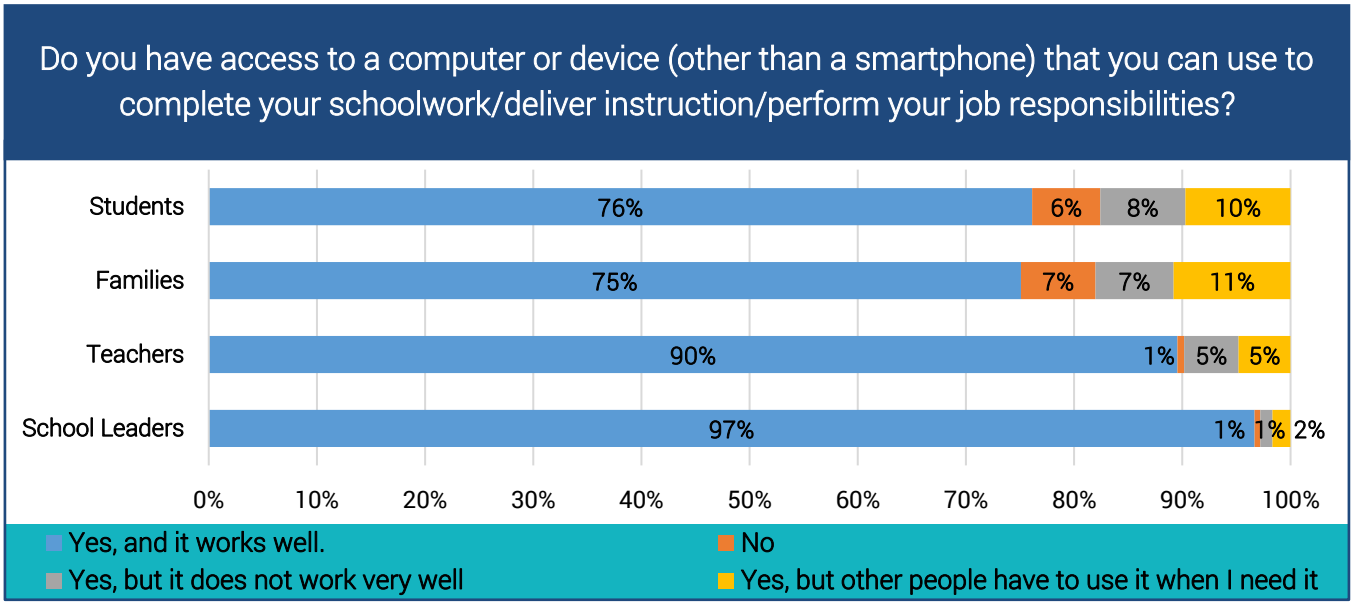
**The survey asked students, families, and educators how they felt in the past week**. Students and educators felt stressed out, frustrated, overwhelmed, and worried. In contrast, though the last several months were very stressful and challenging, students felt safe, loved, kind, and happy. Similarly, educators felt kind, grateful, helpful, and hopeful.

# ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

**STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WERE TWICE AS LIKELY TO NOT HAVE A PROPERLY WORKING DEVICE, HAD A DEVICE AND SOMEONE ELSE NEEDED IT, OR DID NOT HAVE A DEVICE.**

With the instruction moving to remote learning due to COVID-19, we wanted to learn about access and connectivity of our students, families, and educators. Vast majority of survey respondents reported having internet access. In addition, out of those surveyed, about 75% of students and families and over 90% of teachers and school leaders reported having a device to access or deliver remote learning. Notably, students and families were twice as likely to not have a properly working device, had a device and someone else needed it, or did not have a device (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4 – Internet and device access



"I feel like the school gave students the opportunity to keep learning during the pandemic because they gave devices to students that needed it."

– High School Student

"Laptops were shared within our household, therefore resulting in scheduling issues to accommodate telecommuting of adults in the home simultaneously as home learning for our child. Having access to computer equipment could have been useful."

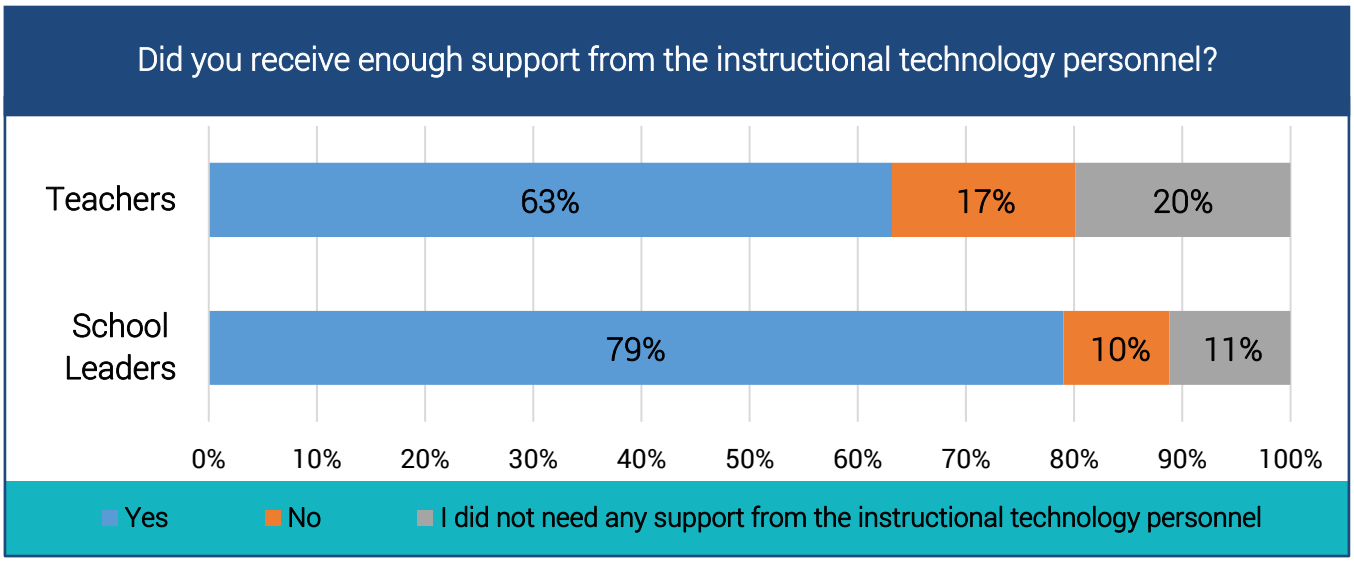
– Middle School Parent

# ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY

**82% OF DISTRICT LEADERS, 51% OF SCHOOL LEADERS, AND 38% OF TEACHERS REPORTED NEEDING EXPANDED INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY PERSONNEL CAPACITY.**

As all of our educators moved their classrooms and support services online, we wanted to understand the instructional technology support that educators received. 79% of our school leaders and 63% of teachers reported that they received enough support from the instructional technology personnel (see Figure 5 below). When asked about supports needed for the next school year, educators identified instructional technology support as critical. Specifically, 82% of district leaders, 51% of school leaders, and 38% of teachers reported needing expanded instructional technology personnel capacity. In addition, 61% of district leaders reported using and promoting technology as their top three priorities for the supports needed for next school year.

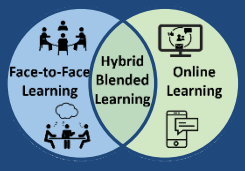
Figure 5 – Instructional technology personnel support




"For the upcoming school year, we need to have a better remote learning platform for students, especially elementary level students and those who have processing difficulties. Even when we come back to the physical buildings, we need to support students in technology with instructional time built into the daily/weekly schedule for typing, accessing online resources/platforms, etc. Additionally, we need tech support to make sure that our devices are working properly and updated/maintained. We need the ability to connect to mobile hot-spots with our district devices."

– Elementary School Teacher

# ACCESS & CONNECTIVITY




**STUDENTS PREFERRED GOING BACK TO SCHOOL, SCHOOL LEADERS PREFERRED REMOTE OR HYBRID OPTION, WHILE FAMILIES AND TEACHERS HAD SIMILAR PREFERENCES FOR GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AND REMOTE OPTION.**

As we consider reopening school scenarios for the fall, we wanted to gauge the level of comfort that students, families, and educators had with returning to school in the fall. Clear preferences emerged for each respondent group – students preferred going back to school, families and teachers had similar preferences for going back to school and remote option, and school leaders preferred remote or hybrid option. Specifically,

**50%** of students reported feeling extremely or very comfortable with going back to school, compared to 36% for remote option and 34% for hybrid option;

**40%** of families and 44% of teachers reported feeling extremely or very comfortable with going back to school, compared to 39% and 44% for remote, and 30% and 36% for hybrid option;

**39%** of school leaders reported feeling extremely or very comfortable with going back to school, compared to 50% for remote option and 49% for hybrid option.

While there is not a clear preference for one option across all respondent groups, going back to school received the most support. 50% of students, 40% of families, 44% of teachers, and 39% of school leaders reported that under the current conditions they felt extremely or very comfortable with going back to school. Once we factored in somewhat comfortable, the percentage increased to over two-thirds of respondents feeling comfortable with the going back to school in the fall.

"I'm hoping things can return to normal this school year. The children need to be in the classroom to fully engage in school."

– Elementary School Parent

"If we are able to return to school, I would expect the level of school cleanliness to improve. Teachers should not have to worry about that. If we don't go back to school, I would hope that it would be mandatory for all families to have internet access and technology. I am not sure how to do that and make it happen for all of our students. Our district would have to have a plan to offer this to families in need. We offered laptops for families to borrow, but not all families in need participated.

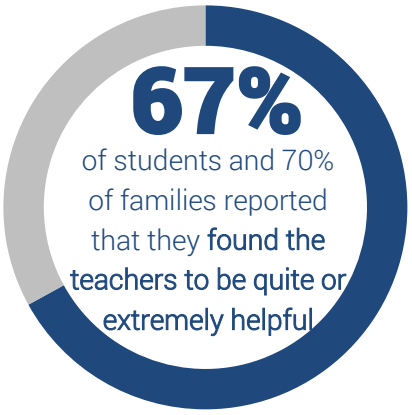
– Elementary School Teacher

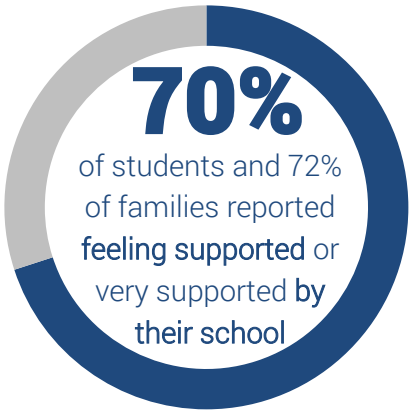
# STUDENTS' ACADEMIC NEEDS

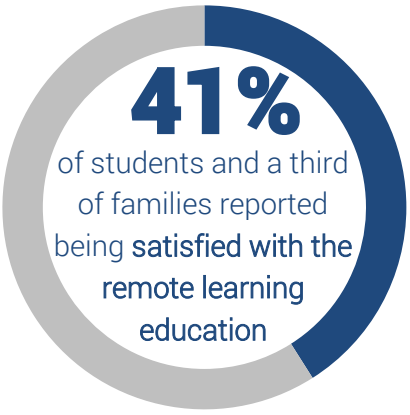
**STUDENTS AND FAMILIES REPORTED HIGH LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS BUT RELATIVELY LOW LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE REMOTE EDUCATION RECEIVED.**

With instruction moving to remote learning, we wanted to understand ways in which we were continuing to meet the needs of students as well as measure the level of support students received from teachers and schools. About 20% of families indicated that their students received special education services, 3% indicated that their students received English language learning services, and about two-thirds of families shared that their students received neither.

Students and families reported high levels of satisfaction with the teachers and schools but relatively low levels of satisfaction with the remote education received.




### Challenges outside the classroom

Given the unprecedented nature of the pandemic, students and families faced various challenges outside the classroom. When asked about obstacles to completing schoolwork, 33% of students reported having other responsibilities or needs to attend to, 23% reported being unsure of what was expected of them, 19% reported not having a quiet place to complete schoolwork, and 17% reported not having enough time to complete schoolwork. In addition, when asked whether someone in their home was available to help them with their remote education, 26% of students reported having some support when they needed it, and 13% reported having no support. Similarly, 33% of families reported their student having some support when they needed it, and 9% reported having no support.

When asked about which area(s) they could use additional support or information about resources at this time, little over a quarter of families reported mental and emotional health, 18% reported food, 16% reported childcare, and 14% reported employment opportunities. It should also be noted that 44% of families and 41% of students reported not needing any support.

Elementary and middle school students wrote comments like
"it's hard for my parents to work and do schoolwork"
"to provide online learning at later times even if recorded because my mom works during the day and my childcare center does not allow electronics so I've had to do paper packets"

# STUDENTS' ACADEMIC NEEDS

**WHEN ASKED ABOUT WHETHER THEY WERE LEARNING NEW THINGS, 43% OF STUDENTS REPORTED DOING SO; FAMILIES INDICATED THE NEED FOR MORE CHALLENGING COURSEWORK**

## Experiences inside the remote classroom

In addition to understanding barriers students faced outside the classroom, we also wanted to gain insights about their instructional experiences around new learning that occurred, the quality and quantity of schoolwork, opportunities to collaborate with classmates, and the quality of communication regarding completing schoolwork and requesting guidance and support.

"More regular feedback. I think it was hard for middle school students to stay motivated to stay on task with distractions at home. My son prefers to work independently and wasn't used to or open to me checking his work. It would have been helpful if his teachers were giving regular feedback/helping to hold him accountable if he did not complete remote learning assignments." – Middle School Parent

When asked about whether they were learning new things, 43% of students reported doing so. In addition to understanding new learning that occurred, we also wanted to understand the quality and amount of schoolwork that was being assigned. When asked about their assignments, majority of students reported the difficulty and the amount schoolwork assigned to be just right (70% and 59% respectively). However, families and some students did indicate the need for more challenging materials moving forward.

"Stay involved. Out of the 4 teachers she had this marking period, only 1 was involved. One of the 4 NEVER had a Zoom call or a face-to-face call. Only emails. The work assigned was vocabulary words each week. There was nothing learned this marking period. Another teacher only had 3 Zoom calls. One of them, they spent the entire call trying to get used to using the Zoom platform. After the Zoom calls, the work assigned was to go to a website for assignments and follow the guide. Again, no teaching." – Middle School Parent

Elementary and high school students wrote comments like

"more fun stuff and new stuff"
"provide more challenges for high-level students"
"harder/more challenging math assignments, the math was way too easy"
"get back to the classroom – art, music, drama is not good virtually"
"try to reply the same day because sometimes I would ask a question but get feedback the next day when it's too late"

# STUDENTS' ACADEMIC NEEDS

**64% OF TEACHERS REPORTED PROVIDING WEEKLY OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO COLLABORATE; 38% OF STUDENTS REPORTED HAVING THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH THEIR CLASSMATES ON A WEEKLY BASIS.**

We wanted to understand the collaboration amongst the students, as it is a critical component for their learning. Sixty-four percent of teachers reported providing weekly opportunities for students to collaborate, and 38% of students reported speaking daily, 2-3 times a week, or weekly with their classmates. Notably, 50% of students reported rarely having the opportunity to speak with their classmates. In addition, when asked about how helpful the directions regarding completing schoolwork were, 72% of students reported receiving enough instruction to complete assignments. Finally, over two-thirds of students reported that if they needed support with learning, they knew who they needed to contact and how they could get in touch with them.

Supports received - In response to how useful were the resources and supports provided by the school, students and families found following supports to be very or extremely useful:

Networking events (e.g. discussion boards, video chats) available online to students (58% of students and 51% of families)

Regular check-ins between teachers and students (54% of students and 56% of families)

Needed technology (e.g. tablet, laptops, and WiFi hotspots) (43% of students and 38% of families).

School supplies (e.g. pencils, paper, art supplies) (36% of students and 21% of families)

Remote appointments with counselors and mental health professionals (20% of students and 16% of families).

Remote appointments between the student and school nurse (9% of students and 7% of families)

# OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

### What has your teacher/school done well during remote learning?

Overall, over 14,000 Delaware families responded to our survey, and more than half (n=7,921) acknowledged something positive that their student's teacher or school has done during this period of crisis.

"I think anything that can help the teachers because I know they are being spread very thin and this is new for them so I am willing to do my part and work together with the teachers and school to ensure everyone is safe." – High School Parent

"My child's 3 IEPs and homeroom had Zoom classes and was able to interact with her Monday through Thursday. Her IEP teachers ran hour meetings and they were able to keep her engaged which helped create structure for my child. All of her teachers were easily accessible via Class Dojo and email in addition to keeping me informed on their daily schedule." – Elementary School Parent

### Room for improvement

Slightly less than half of families (n= 6,739) offered suggestions for teachers and schools to improve the remote learning experiences of students. Suggestions included more internet access, electronics and books, meals during summer and flexibility with the times that meals were offered at, video recorded lessons, more interactive classes, increased online office hours, accommodations for students with IEPs, tutoring, assistance with college prep, extra-curricular activities, and more feedback to parents or guardians on how to better support student learning.

"It is not possible to provide the level of support needed mentally, emotionally, or educationally via remote learning. While we do not need these additional supports, there are MANY children who do and are not being served" – High School Parent

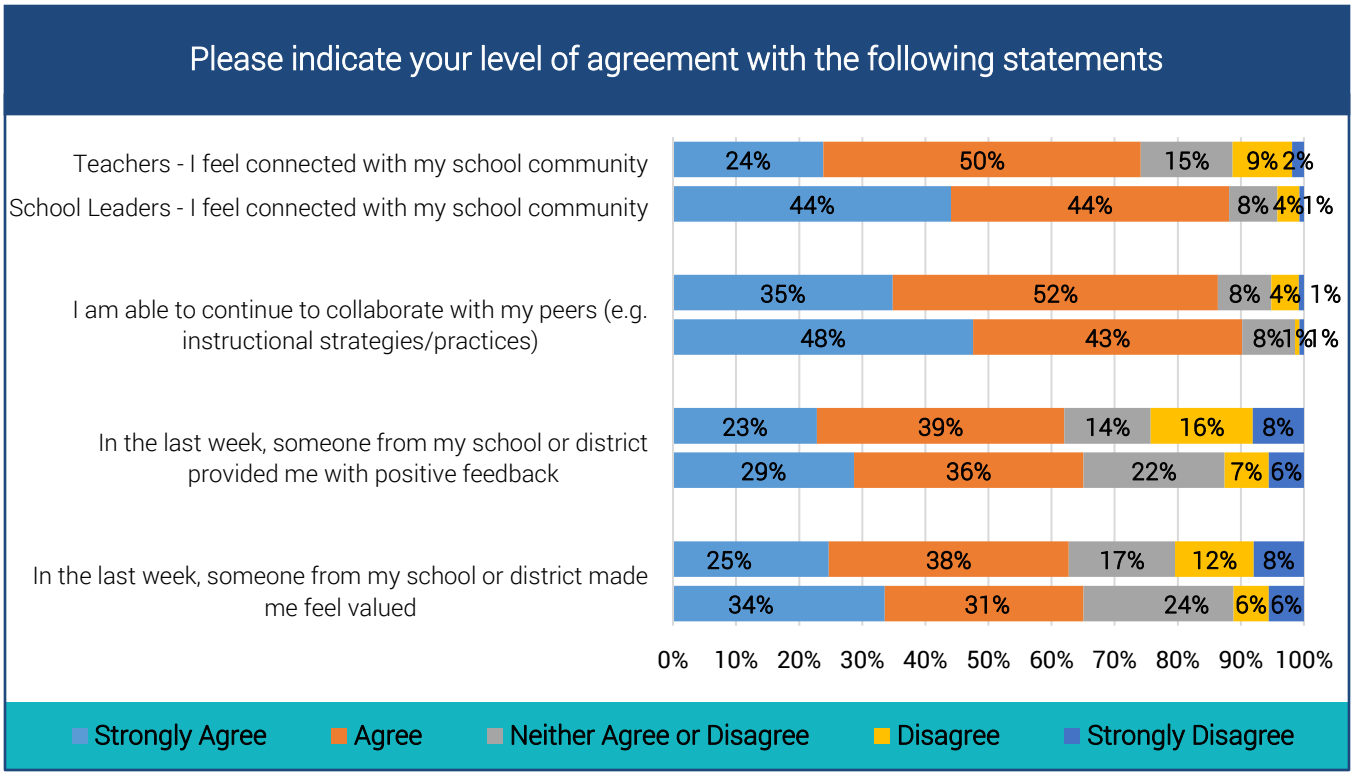
"I think they lose a lot of interaction with the students and classmates. Many did not or were not able to participate in the Zoom meetings. I would like to see more discussions as a group, or have them read an out of the box article on the topic they are studying and discuss it as a class. Something to encourage more critical thinking and engagement." – High School Parent

"I feel that the home learning program is helpful to some families who had the opportunity to stay home and ensure that their children were getting the most out of the materials. I was not one of the moms that was able to stay home with my child, therefore, I am not 100% sure how the program fully works since her older brother who was laid off of work was able to be with her and help her during her session. My child is the type of child who needs routine and at home learning is not good for her personality."– Elementary School Parent

## ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF EDUCATORS FELT VERY SUPPORTED AND VALUED; MORE SUPPORTS STILL NEEDED NEXT SCHOOL YEAR

With instruction moving to remote learning, we wanted to measure the level of support educators received. Overall, teachers felt supported by school and district leaders. About two-thirds of teachers reported that in the last week someone from their school or district made them feel valued, and provided positive feedback. About three-quarters reported feeling connected with their school communities, and over 85% shared that they continue to collaborate with their peers regarding instructional strategies and practices. When asked about autonomy, 70% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they had the autonomy to support their students learning in a remote learning environment (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6 – Supports and collaboration




Similar to teachers, vast majority of school leaders reported feeling supported by district leaders. About 80% reported that their supervisor had contacted them simply to check on how they were doing. When asked about how often they checked in with their peers, over 90% of school leaders reported checking in with their peers a few times a day, once a day, or a few times a week. Finally, about two-thirds of school leaders reported having the resources they needed to effectively support their teachers as they implement remote learning, and over 80% of school leaders reported having the flexibility they needed to support school staff in need as well as students and families in need.

**LACK OF QUIET WORKSPACE, CHILDCARE, AND NEED TO CARE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS IDENTIFIED AS TOP THREE CHALLENGES OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM FOR EDUCATORS**

## Challenges and Supports

While both teachers and school leaders experienced high levels of support and flexibility from their supervisors, only about a quarter of teachers and slightly over half of school leaders reported remaining as effective in their roles since the pandemic started compared to before coronavirus began. Therefore, to better understand resources and supports that educators need in order to deliver instruction to students at home, we asked teachers and school leaders what were their biggest challenges and barriers in ensuring that every student receives a high-quality remote learning experience.

### Challenges outside the classroom

Outside the classroom, teachers and school leaders identified the following as their major barriers to working effectively from home:

lack of quiet workspace (29% of teachers and 15% of school leaders),

childcare (24% of teachers and 16% of school leaders), and

need to care for family members (22% of teachers and 14% of school leaders)

Notably, 36% of teachers and 62% of school leaders reported not having any barriers in effectively working from home.

Teachers shared comments like "…being home does not mean it's a quiet space, that there's no other tasks at hand, that really needs to be taken into consideration. This adjustment has caused much stress to all." and "…we need extended daycare."

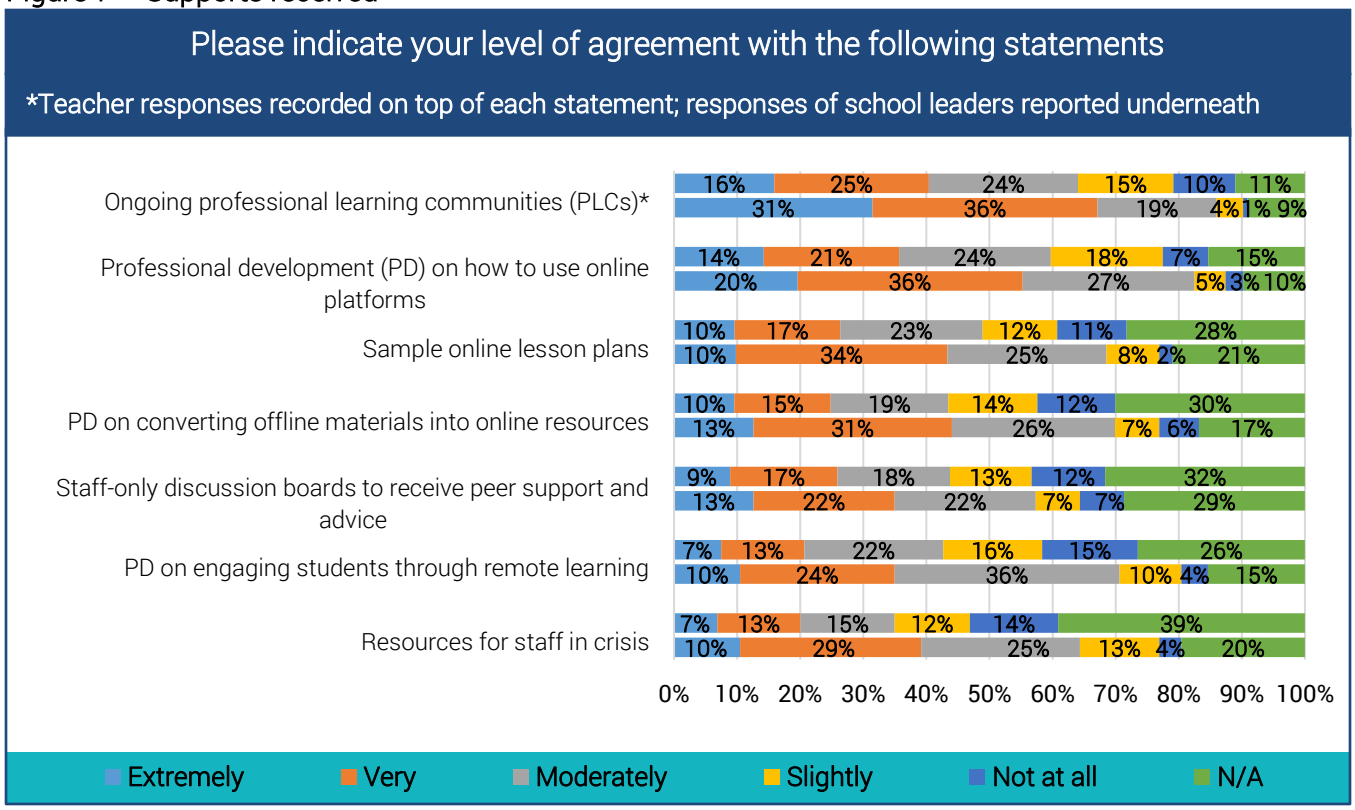
– Elementary and Middle School Teachers

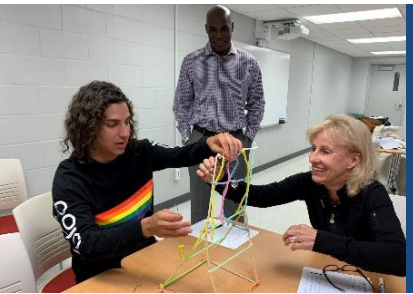
**TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS IDENTIFIED ONGOING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON HOW TO USE ONLINE PLATFORMS, AND STAFF-ONLY DISCUSSION BOARDS TO RECEIVE PEER SUPPORT AND ADVICE IN THEIR TOP 5 MOST USEFUL RESOURCES**

## Supports received

When asked about supports educators received, there was general alignment in what teachers and school leaders identified as most useful resources and supports provided for teachers, though there were also notable differences in extent of how useful teachers and school leaders felt those supports were. Both teachers and school leaders identified ongoing professional learning communities (40% of teachers and 67% of school leaders), professional development on how to use online platforms (36% of teachers and 55% of school leaders), and staff-only discussion boards to receive peer support and advice (26% of teachers and 35% school leaders) in their top 5 most useful resources and supports provided to teachers (see Figure 7 below).

Figure 7 – Supports received



Teachers shared comments like "Our tech team has rolled out a ton of resources for us to use. They have been extremely helpful providing resources but also supporting implementation.", "Provide more Ed camps like the one we participated in where we were able to collaborate with teachers across the district about technology opportunities and resources for remote learning.", and "Professional Development. Self care. Patience. Encouragement." – Elementary & Middle School Teachers

# RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

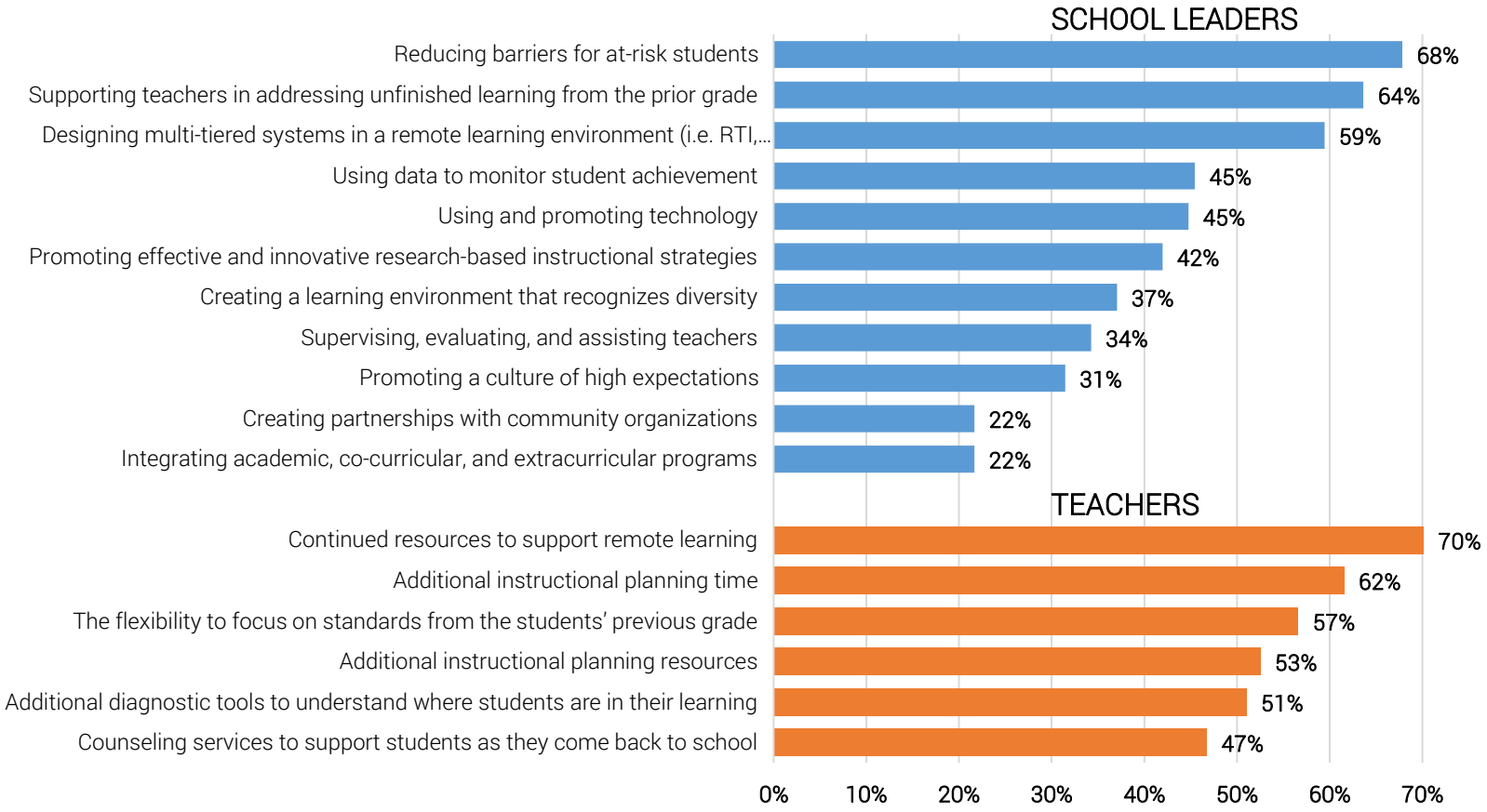
**SIXTEEN PERCENT OF TEACHERS FELT LIKE THEIR STUDENTS WILL BE PREPARED FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR; ABOUT TWO-THIRDS OF SCHOOL LEADERS REPORTED FOCUSING ON SUPPORTING TEACHERS TO ADDRESS STUDENTS' UNFINISHED LEARNING AND REDUCING BARRIERS FOR AT RISK STUDENTS.**

## Supports needed for the fall

16% of teachers felt like their students would be prepared for the next school year, 53% somewhat agreed, and 31% did not agree at all. Looking ahead for the next school year, teachers reported that they would need continued resources to support remote learning (70%), additional instructional planning time and resources (62% and 53% respectively), additional diagnostic tools to understand where students are in their learning (51%), and the flexibility to focus on standards from the students' previous grade (57%) (see figure 8 below).

Figure 8 – Supports needed for the fall

As you think about next year, what support(s) do you imagine you will need?




**About two thirds**

of school leaders reported focusing on supporting teachers to address students' unfinished learning and reducing barriers for at risk students.

**Between 42% and 59%**

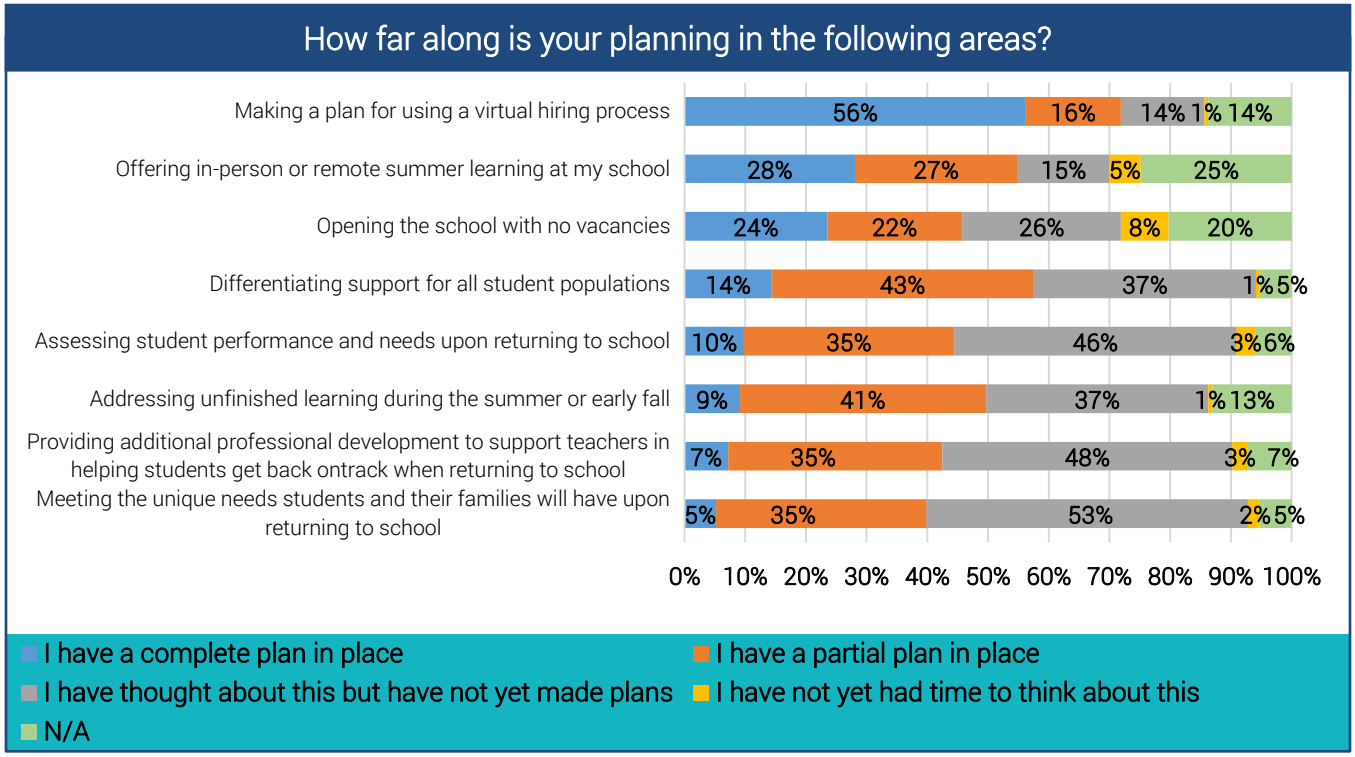
of school leaders reported designing multi-tiered systems for remote learning, and using and promoting technology, using data to monitor student achievement, and promoting effective and research based instructional strategies as important priorities for next school year.

**AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY, SCHOOL LEADERS WERE IN THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PLANNING FOR THE FALL**

## Planning efforts for the fall

When asked about planning for next school year, over half of school leaders reported having a complete plan for a virtual hiring process and about a quarter reported having a plan for offering in-person or remote summer learning at their school. However, less than 15% had a complete plan for assessing student performance and needs upon returning to school in the fall, differentiating supports for all student populations, providing additional professional development to support teachers in helping students get back on track when returning to school, and meeting the unique student and family needs upon returning to school in the fall. This number rose to about half of school leaders when we factored school leaders having a complete or partial plan in place (see figure 9 below).

Figure 9 – Planning efforts for the fall



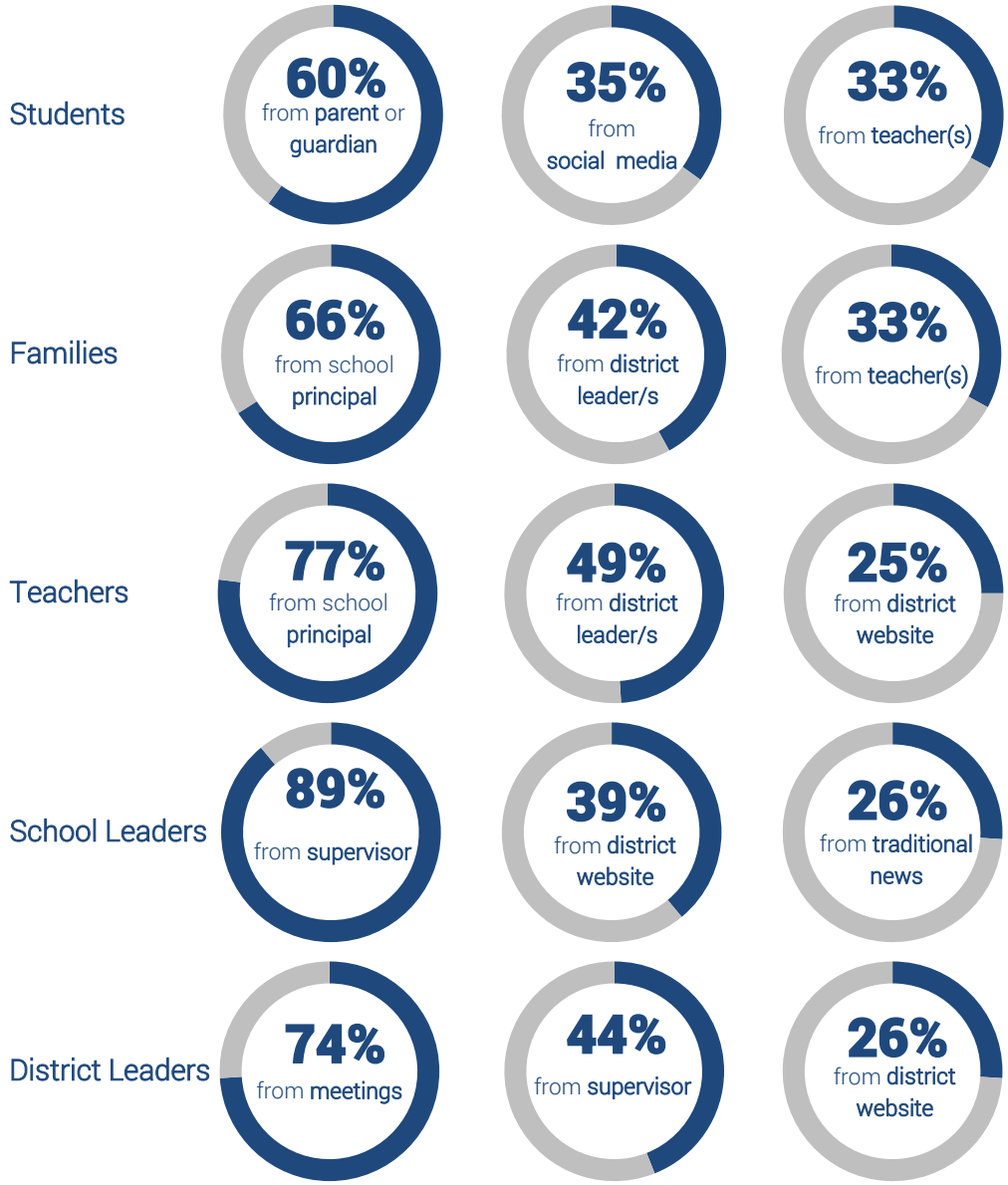

When asked about the plans for the fall, school leaders reported that they"…have already created a plan to support the social & emotional needs of staff and students upon return and have created a Tech Team for staff support." and that "…we are working together to develop a plan if we have virtual or in person learning". Other have suggested to "take time to reflect on what we have done this year and build upon it"

# COMMUNICATION

**STUDENTS REPORTED THEIR FAMILIES AS THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION, AND FAMILIES AND TEACHERS REPORTED THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS THE MAIN SOURCE OF INFORMATION. SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS REPORTED THEIR SUPERVISORS AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEETINGS AS THEIR PRIMARY SOURCE OF INFORMATION.**

Communication is critical in keeping our students and families updated with important information regarding remote learning, the challenges that arise, and helpful resources that are available. To this end, we wanted to understand the most commonly used channels different stakeholders used to receive information during COVID-19. Students reported their families as the major source of information, families and teachers reported the school principal as their main source of information, school leaders reported their supervisor as their major source of information, and district leaders found administrator meetings as the key source of information during COVID-19.

Respondents reported receiving most of the information regarding school's response to COVID-19 from:



# COMMUNICATION

**STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND EDUCATORS WERE ABLE TO GET IN TOUCH WHEN ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY WAS NOT AN ISSUE; EDUCATORS FOUND IT CHALLENGING TO COMMUNICATE WITH STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WITH LIMITED OR NO INTERNET/DEVICE ACCESS**

In addition to understanding the major sources of information, we also wanted to understand whether students and families knew how to get in touch with teachers and school leaders and whether districts were using families' preferred mode of communication. Moreover, we wanted to gain greater clarity about the easiest ways for teachers and school leaders to keep in touch with students and families, as well as the challenges they faced in doing so. Finally, we wanted to understand teachers, school leaders, and district leader's experiences in keeping in touch with their colleagues in the school community.

- Students and Teachers Keeping in Touch - 82% of students reported that they know how to get in touch with their teacher and 89% of teachers and 74% of school leaders reported that their students know how to get in touch with them.
- Families and School Leaders Keeping in Touch - 91% of families reported that their student's school communicated with them on how to get help with remote learning and 92% of school leaders reported that families know how to get in touch with them.
- Families Preferred Mode of Communication - More than half of families reported they strongly agree that their district uses preferred method of communication, while 35% reported they somewhat agree.
- Easiest Way of Keeping in Touch with Students and Families - 45% of students reported email as the easiest way to stay in touch with their teacher, followed by text message (25%), and phone call (16%). 50% of families reported email as the easiest way for the student's teacher to stay in touch with them, followed by text message (26%), and phone call (17%).

**"School has done a great job providing materials to those students lacking: laptops, websites, videos, etc. Teachers have offered many tools to help my child understand the material and provided Google meet sessions and utilized the Remind app to answer questions. One teacher has reached out to my husband and me at least 4 times over this break to see how things were going, answer any questions, and check on our son. Our son told us she sends inspirational messages to all students in his class through the Remind app. Was thankful for this extra effort." – Middle School Parent**

Challenges communicating with students and families; Keeping in touch with the school community

62% of teachers, 34% of school leaders, and 56% of district leaders reported that they agree or strongly agree that it has been challenging to communicate with students and families about their basic needs and resources. In contrast, only 12% of teachers, 10% of school leaders, and 11% of district leaders reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that it has been challenging to communicate with their colleagues and supervisors.

**"The biggest problems are getting students to join my class meetings and being able to communicate with all parents on a regular basis. It is difficult to reach some parents at all, to be able to ask how their kids are doing and if they are getting their packets from school and, if they are, if they need any help with the packets. For those parents, it is clear that they can't have their children join our meetings so I am not able to see if they're doing their work and/or how they're doing on it." – Elementary School Teacher**

## STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS FELT STRESSED OUT, FRUSTRATED, OVERWHELMED, AND WORRIED

With all aspects of life and school changing due to COVID-19, students, families, and educators had to quickly adjust to the new ways of accessing and providing instructional and support services, as well as learning to adjust to new social norms. The survey asked students, families, and educators how they felt in the past week. Additionally, survey asked families and educators how they thought their students felt in the past week. Overwhelmingly, students across all grades reported feeling bored (51%), stressed out (41%), frustrated (36%), overwhelmed (34%), lonely (22%), and worried (22%). When asked how their students felt, families and teachers' responses were consistent with how their students reported feeling. Notably, about thirty percent of teachers were not sure how their students felt.

**"This whole situation is just bad, not real school, and not how we kids should have to do at home ... This situation is so bad and stressful. School is no fun right now. I hope this virus is solved so we can go back to school, be safe, and have fun learning with friends again. It's so depressing and scary right now. I hope it gets better." – Elementary School Student**

**"I feel that they should have been more aware of how my child was functioning mentally and emotionally throughout this entire process. My child can be very anxious and does not easily adapt to changes in her routine. This process of her being at home made her more anxious and less eager to learn and it's very unlikely that trying to get her back into her routine is going to be an easy transition." – Elementary School Parent**

Survey also asked teachers how they felt in the last week. 39% of teachers reported feeling stressed out during the last week, followed by frustrated (35%), overwhelmed (34%), and worried (31%). School leaders reported that their teachers felt stressed out during the last week (40%), followed by worried (38%), overwhelmed (34%), and frustrated (32%).

School leaders reported feeling stressed out during the last week (34%), followed by frustrated (29%), and overwhelmed and worried (31% and 29% respectively). 41% of district leaders reported that their staff felt stressed out during the last week, followed by overwhelmed (38%), worried (30%), and frustrated (26%).

Lastly, 44% of district leaders reported feeling stressed out during the last week, followed by overwhelmed (37%), frustrated (33%), and worried (30%).

**When asked how could their school and district help to improve social and emotional needs of students and families, elementary school teacher responded that schools should be "continuing to send emails/messages, etc. to check on the mental and physical well-being of the students and families. To send out positive messages and words of encouragement to let the students and the families know that we are thinking of them and wish them well."**

# WELLNESS & SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

## STUDENTS ACROSS ALL GRADES FELT SAFE, LOVED, KIND, AND HAPPY; TEACHERS, SCHOOL LEADERS, AND DISTRICT LEADERS FELT KIND, GRATEFUL, HELPFUL, AND HOPEFUL

While this has been a challenging time for our students, families, and educators, our communities have faced the crisis with hope, optimism, and resilience. Students across all grades reported feeling safe (87%), loved (77%), grateful (73%), kind (70%), helpful (59%), and happy (58%). When asked how their students felt, families and teachers' responses were consistent with how their students reported feeling. Notably, over a quarter of teachers were not sure how their students felt.

My teacher "has been extremely supportive with all the many changes for everyone. He hosts 2 Q&A Zoom meetings a week to help students with work and a social zoom every Friday so the students can just chat freely. This has been so beneficial academically, socially and emotionally during this difficult time. His communication with parents is constant and much appreciated. We are forever grateful for him!" – Middle School Student

"My teachers have been kind to me and if I ever need help with anything they are able to help me and take time to help me. I also think it helps to have announcements even if it is on Facebook. It just helps me get up and ready to start remote learning." – Middle School Student

Survey also asked teachers how they felt in the last week. 78% of teachers reported feeling kind during the last week, followed by grateful (75%), hopeful (57%), and happy (51%). School leaders reported that their teachers felt kind during the last week (76%), followed by helpful (70%), grateful (58%), and hopeful (50%).

School leaders reported feeling grateful during the last week (86%), followed by kind (85%), helpful (72%), and optimistic and hopeful (70% each). 74% of district leaders reported that their staff felt helpful during the last week, followed by kind (67%), grateful and curious (63% each), and hopeful (59%).

Lastly, 70% of district leaders reported feeling grateful during the last week, followed by kind (67%), hopeful (63%), helpful (56%), and curious (52%).

"They checked in on my child's emotional and mental health and communicated often on assignments and expectations."

- Middle School Parent

"I would say that my administration during this time were really considerate of our personal lives. They touched base for important conversations, staff meetings, and PDs but really didn't flood us with unnecessary emails. They understood that many of us were also homeschooling our own children and maintaining our households. I am very grateful for that." – Elementary School Teacher