Back to School Survey
Elevating the voices and experiences of families

We surveyed a total of 939 families about their experiences returning to school virtually, the ongoing impact of Coronavirus, and what they were planning for school in the future. Surveys were conducted in English and Spanish.
Elevating the voices and experiences of families

- The parents and caregivers we heard from were representative of our city’s public school system across race, ward, and sector.
- About a quarter of responses were from families with children with an IEP.
- Half received at least one form of services or assistance during COVID.
- While we did conduct some surveys over the phone, it should be noted that most surveys were completed online given the health and safety concerns of the pandemic.
- The survey was open from 9/16 – 9/30.
Our Survey Approach

• We shared the survey online, including:
  • To our PAVE network through emails, texts, and our newsletter
  • On Social media
  • Through school and community partner networks
  • On community list servs
• PAVE Community Organizers also made phone calls to parents to support completing the survey over the phone.
• The survey was available in both Spanish and English.
Top Challenges for Parents
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>% Listed as MOST or VERY Challenging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistent access to healthcare</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to technology devices</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Access to enough food at home</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<td>Housing and rent/mortgage insecurity</td>
<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job or income instability</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing my child(ren)'s education at home</td>
<td>44%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While managing learning at home is the **top challenge for many parents (44%)**, in the April survey, the **59% of families** noted it as a top challenge, a **decrease of 15%**.
TOP TWO Concerns about the new school year and distance learning for Parents with Children with an IEP or and English Language Learner

- Ensuring my child(ren)'s academic growth: 56%
- Achieving a well-rounded education for my child(ren): 43%
- Getting my child(ren) the services they need (special education, ELL, etc.): 43%
- Opportunities for my child(ren) to socialize with other children: 36%
- Concerns about my job/ability to work: 29%
- Access to mental health and social emotional supports: 23%
- Receiving clear communication from my child(ren)'s school: 19%
- Concerns about childcare: 12%
- Other: 1%
Top Challenges for Parents East of the River
(% Listed as MOST or VERY Challenging)

Managing my child(ren)'s education at home: 48% 38% 45%
Job or income instability: 26% 32% 29%
Housing and rent/mortgage insecurity: 15% 26% 39%
Not getting good information from the city: 16% 22% 29%
Access to high-speed internet: 14% 18% 24%
Access to enough food at home: 12% 19% 24%
Access to technology devices: 11% 8% 13%
Consistent access to healthcare: 8% 11% 11%

[Bar chart showing the percentage of challenges faced by parents in different wards, with categories such as managing child(ren)'s education, job or income instability, housing and rent/mortgage insecurity, not getting good information from the city, access to high-speed internet, access to enough food at home, access to technology devices, and consistent access to healthcare.]
Managing my child(ren)'s education at home

Job or income instability

Housing and rent/mortgage insecurity

Not getting good information from the city

Access to high-speed internet

Access to enough food at home

Access to technology devices

Consistent access to healthcare

Top Challenges for Parents who have Received Services
(% Listed as MOST or VERY Challenging)
Top Challenges for Parents by Ward

(% Listed as MOST or VERY Challenging)

- Managing my child(ren)'s education at home: Ward 1 (51%), Ward 2 (53%), Ward 3 (50%), Ward 4 (45%), Ward 5 (45%), Ward 6 (42%), Ward 7 (42%), Ward 8 (32%)
- Job or income instability: Ward 1 (35%), Ward 2 (33%), Ward 3 (32%), Ward 4 (32%), Ward 5 (39%), Ward 6 (33%), Ward 7 (23%), Ward 8 (23%)
- Housing and rent/mortgage insecurity: Ward 1 (33%), Ward 2 (32%), Ward 3 (32%), Ward 4 (32%), Ward 5 (29%), Ward 6 (26%), Ward 7 (26%), Ward 8 (29%)
- Not getting good information from the city: Ward 1 (21%), Ward 2 (14%), Ward 3 (14%), Ward 4 (14%), Ward 5 (15%), Ward 6 (15%), Ward 7 (15%), Ward 8 (15%)
- Access to high-speed internet: Ward 1 (20%), Ward 2 (15%), Ward 3 (15%), Ward 4 (15%), Ward 5 (15%), Ward 6 (15%), Ward 7 (15%), Ward 8 (15%)
- Access to enough food at home: Ward 1 (17%), Ward 2 (17%), Ward 3 (17%), Ward 4 (17%), Ward 5 (17%), Ward 6 (17%), Ward 7 (17%), Ward 8 (17%)
- Access to technology devices: Ward 1 (12%), Ward 2 (10%), Ward 3 (10%), Ward 4 (8%), Ward 5 (8%), Ward 6 (8%), Ward 7 (8%), Ward 8 (8%)
- Consistent access to health care: Ward 1 (11%), Ward 2 (11%), Ward 3 (11%), Ward 4 (11%), Ward 5 (11%), Ward 6 (11%), Ward 7 (11%), Ward 8 (11%)
Parents Who Listed "Managing my Child(ren)’s Education at Home" as a Top Challenge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School (9-12th, including alternative)</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with IEP</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>44%</td>
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When asked if there was anything else we should know about families’ internet access, many parents responded:
• Some schools offered devices and/or hotspots, which was helpful.
• Cost was a serious barrier to internet access, especially to get adequate, reliable, or high-speed access.
• Reliability and quality of internet varied. For those with basic or lower-cost internet, there were glitches and made kids’ classes hard to follow.
• This was especially true with parents also working at home or with multiple kids.
• Special education students in particular need(ed) help navigating technology and internet.
Do(es) each of your child(ren) have access to their own tablet, laptop, or computer available for schoolwork when they need it?

- **Yes**: 79%
- **No**: 9%
- **Sometimes we share**: 12%
Experience with Distance Learning
Which learning activities are helpful for your child(ren)'s learning?

- Small group virtual sessions: 85%
- 1:1 teacher support: 68%
- Independent online learning platforms/activities: 47%
- Paper assignments: 44%
- Project-based learning activities: 36%
- Large group virtual sessions: 19%
- Other: 3%
- None: 3%
What distance learning resources are available for parents at your child(ren)'s school?

- **1:1 check-ins with your child's teacher**: 60%
- **Office hours with the teacher**: 41%
- **Pre-recorded videos**: 40%
- **Group meetings or town halls with teachers**: 38%
- **Webinars for parents about what kids are learning and how to teach**: 27%
- **None**: 11%
- **Other**: 4%
Does your child have access to specials and/or other enrichment programs like music, art, PE, etc. during distance learning?

- Yes: 74%
- No: 11%
- I'm not sure: 15%

74% of parents surveyed said their child DOES have access to specials or enrichment programs.
Has/have your child(ren) who need(s) special education or English Learner services received them this school year?

HALF of parents surveyed with children who need special education or ELL services said their child(ren) have **NOT** received services.
Parent Satisfaction with Distance Learning

- The majority of parents are satisfied with the communication from their school, distance learning tools, and their child’s school schedule.
- 24% of parents are NOT satisfied with the mental health supports and social emotional learning available for their child, and 30% are NOT satisfied with the resources for PARENTS to support that at home.
How satisfied are you with the frequency of communication from your child(ren)’s teachers?

- I am happy with the frequency of communication: 67%
- I wish they communicated more: 31%
- I wish they communicated less: 2%

More than two thirds of parents surveyed are satisfied with the frequency of communication from their children’s teachers.
What parents said was going WELL:
• One-on-one learning/check-ins with teachers for parents and students
• Consistent schedule that students can easily follow and expect
• Teachers’ clear dedication to students
• Daily communication and updates from school
• Individual support
• Smaller groups
• However - many said “Nothing”

What parents said was CHALLENGING:
• One-on-one time with teachers
• Students inability to interact with peers and teachers
• Students’ inability to focus in virtual classrooms
• Lack of access to mental health supports and social emotional learning
• Specialized instruction for students with IEPs
• Classroom management
• Communication

Based on these responses, it’s clear that quality of instruction and access to resources and supports are not the same for all families. We will keep digging to find more specific trends.
Plans for School in the Future
If DC schools offer a hybrid option in November, how likely are you to send your child(ren) to school in-person?

- 27% of parents are undecided
- 40% said definitely NOT or probably NOT
- 33% said probably or definitely
If DC schools offer a hybrid option in November, how likely are parents to send their child(ren) to school in-person by race

- I am still undecided.
- Definitely not.
- Probably not.
- Probably.
- Definitely.
If DC schools offer a hybrid option in November, how likely are you to send your child(ren) to school in-person?*

*Note: There were not significant sample sizes from Ward 2 & 3, so we are not able to report that information.
If schools offered outdoor classes, how would that affect your decision to send your child to school in-person?

- 43% No effect
- 35% Would be MORE likely to send children
- 22% Would be LESS likely to send children
Key Takeaways and Next Steps
Key Takeaways

• Coronavirus continues to have a disproportionate impact, particularly for families East of the River and who have received services during COVID.
• Managing learning from home remains a top challenge for many families, but there is still a wide range in satisfaction.
• We need more resources for SEL and mental health and to ensure ELLs and students with IEPs are receiving services.
• The vast majority of parents were not comfortable sending their children back to school in person, and there is no consensus on preference for outdoor learning options.
What’s Next?

• We must continue to connect with families to understand their experience and concerns so we can help meet their basic needs and create a community-driven plan to reopen our schools safely and equitably.
• PAVE parent leaders will use these findings to inform their vision for a safe return to school in-person and #DCSchoolsRecovery.
• Find out more at dcpave.org!
Appendix: Overview of Survey Respondents
We heard from families who live all across the city.
We heard from families of all different races and ethnicities.
We heard from families who speak different languages.

Languages Spoken at Home

- English: 74%
- Spanish: 20%
- French: 4%
- Amharic: 2%
- Other: 0%

Other includes ASL, Chinese, Igbo, Tagalog, Vietnamese

N = 1088
We heard from families with children who attend different types of schools.
We heard from families that have children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**Do You Have a Child With an IEP?**

- Yes: 27%
- No: 73%

N = 939
And we heard from many different sized families.
We heard from families with children in all grade levels.

Grades Children are Enrolled in SY 2020-2021

- In College: 9%
- High School (9-12, including alternative): 27%
- Middle School (6-8): 33%
- Elementary School (K-5): 61%
- Pre-School/Pre-Kindergarten: 27%
- Under Age 3: 13%

N = 939
We heard from families who are receiving services.

54% of parents surveyed have received one or more type of service.
What are the TOP TWO concerns you have about the new school year and distance learning?

- Ensuring my child(ren)'s academic growth: 60%
- Achieving a well-rounded education for my children: 51%
- Opportunities for my child(ren) to socialize with other children: 40%
- Concerns about my job/ability to work: 32%
- Receiving clear communication from my child(ren)'s school: 19%
- Getting my child(ren) the services they need (special ed, ELL, etc.): 15%
- Concerns about childcare: 15%
- Access to mental health and social emotional supports: 14%
- Other: 1%
What is the best way(s) for your child(ren)'s school to communicate with you?

- **Email**: 82%
- **Text**: 80%
- **Phone call**: 64%
- **Virtual meeting (Zoom, Microsoft teams, etc.)**: 52%
- **Updates on the school or class website**: 31%
- **App (WhatsApp, Remind 101)**: 27%
- **Other**: 1%
Top Challenges for Spanish-Speaking Parents
(% Listed as MOST or VERY Challenging)

- Consistent access to healthcare: 10% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 24% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Access to technology devices: 11% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 18% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Access to enough food at home: 17% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 23% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Access to high-speed internet: 18% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 31% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Not getting good information from the city: 18% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 21% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Housing and rent/mortgage insecurity: 21% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 31% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Job or income instability: 31% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 40% (Not Spanish-speakers)
- Managing my child(ren)'s education at home: 44% (Spanish-Speakers) vs. 45% (Not Spanish-speakers)