Missoula County Public Schools
COVID -19 Parent Survey

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June 2020

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In May 2020 the Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) requested that a research team from the University of Montana's Department of Public Administration and Policy's Big Sky Poll conduct an online survey surrounding parent perceptions of student learning experiences due to COVID-19.

The University of Montana's research team (Dr. Sara Rinfret, Shane St. Onge, Chuck Harris) created a ten minute online survey using Qualtrics, a survey software system. To obtain parent feedback, MCPS sent the University of Montana's survey link via text and email to the parents of 9,200 students. Individuals who did not have access to the link were invited to complete a paper survey at one of the local schools and staff recorded responses. Parents were invited to provide their feedback from June 3-15, 2020. MCPS staff sent reminders to participants. Out of the 9,200 students within MCPS, one parent was asked to respond. One thousand seven hundred and forty-eight parents responded for a response rate of nineteen percent.

Although online surveys are scientifically rigorous, there are limitations. For instance, only one parent per student family was asked to participant in providing their feedback. However, a parent completed the survey for each student in their household. For example, one parent could complete the survey once or another parent numerous times. The online survey was also conducted in English, which would limit the participation of non-English speaking participants. We do not believe that these limitations overshadow the quality of information provided in this report.

The following report provides an overview of the demographic data in addition to aggregate level data for questions across the survey. The statistical analysis of the survey data was conducted with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Tableau and NVivo software provided mechanisms to visualize open-ended survey responses. Missing values were omitted from analysis, resulting in a changing sample size (N value) for each question.

We highlight some of the findings from the report, which suggest:

1. Nearly 85 percent of parents were satisfied and very satisfied with their level of Internet access. Parents were less satisfied with the stress caused from shifting to remote learning and the quality of their student's remote learning experience.
2. Parents were more likely to have access to resources like technology, paper, pens, and pencils. They were less likely to have whiteboards, markers, and musical instruments available for use.
3. Nearly 68 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed they will be sending their students back to school in August.
4. Approximately 80 percent of parents rate minimizing health risks during the next school year as very important or important.
5. Approximately 25 percent were frustrated with how remote learning impacted their own work.
6. More than half of the parents expect to hear from the Superintendent and the principle once a week regarding a Return to School Plan.

Overview of Demographic Data
Table 1: Respondents

| Demographic	Number	Percentage
How many student(s) live in your household		
1	771	45.5%
2	692	40.9%
3	173	10.2%
4	44	2.6%
5	9	0.5%
6	4	0.2%
7	2	0.1%
Students by grade		
Pre-Kindergarten	43	1.6%
Early Kindergarten	6	0.2%
Kindergarten	220	8.0%
First grade	207	7.5%
Second grade	203	7.4%
Third grade	201	7.3%
Fourth grade	203	7.4%
Fifth grade	238	8.7%
Sixth grade	195	7.1%
Seventh grade	206	7.5%
Eighth grade	181	6.6%
Ninth grade	249	9.1%
Tenth grade	232	8.4%
Eleventh grade	210	7.6%
Twelfth grade	157	5.7%
School		
Jefferson Early Learning Center	20	0.7%
Chief Charlo Elementary School	164	6.0%
Franklin Elementary School	80	2.9%
Hawthorne Elementary School	109	4.0%
Jeannette Rankin Elementary School	224	8.3%
Lewis and Clark Elementary School	177	6.3%
Lowell Elementary School	64	2.4%
Paxson Elementary School	153	5.6%
Rattlesnake Elementary School	223	8.2%
Russell Elementary School	87	3.1%
C.S. Porter Middle School	145	5.2%
Meadow Hill Middle School	181	6.7%
Washington Middle School	229	8.4%
Big Sky High School	220	8.1%
Hellgate High School	296	10.9%
Seeley Swan High School	15	0.6%
Sentinel High School	310	11.4%
Willard Alternative High School Program	18	0.7%

Examination of Aggregate Data

In addition to the demographic data, parents were asked a series of questions related to experiences with home schooling their students due to COVID-19. These questions focused on experience and satisfaction, well-being, communication, and individual student experiences.

Section I: Overall Experience & Satisfaction

A series of questions asked a parent to examine their student(s)'s overall learning experience, using the following scale: 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied) to rate your level of satisfaction with the following statements. Parents report high levels of satisfaction with access to Internet and communication with MCPS, the school, and their student's teachers. Food distribution at school sites and on bus routes was also rated high in satisfaction. The level of stress from shifting to remote learning and the quality of their student's remote learning experience received the highest levels of dissatisfaction (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Overview of Perceived Learning Experience

- (5) Very Satisfied
- (4) Satisfied
- (3) Neutral
- (2) Dissatisfied
- (1) Very dissatisfied
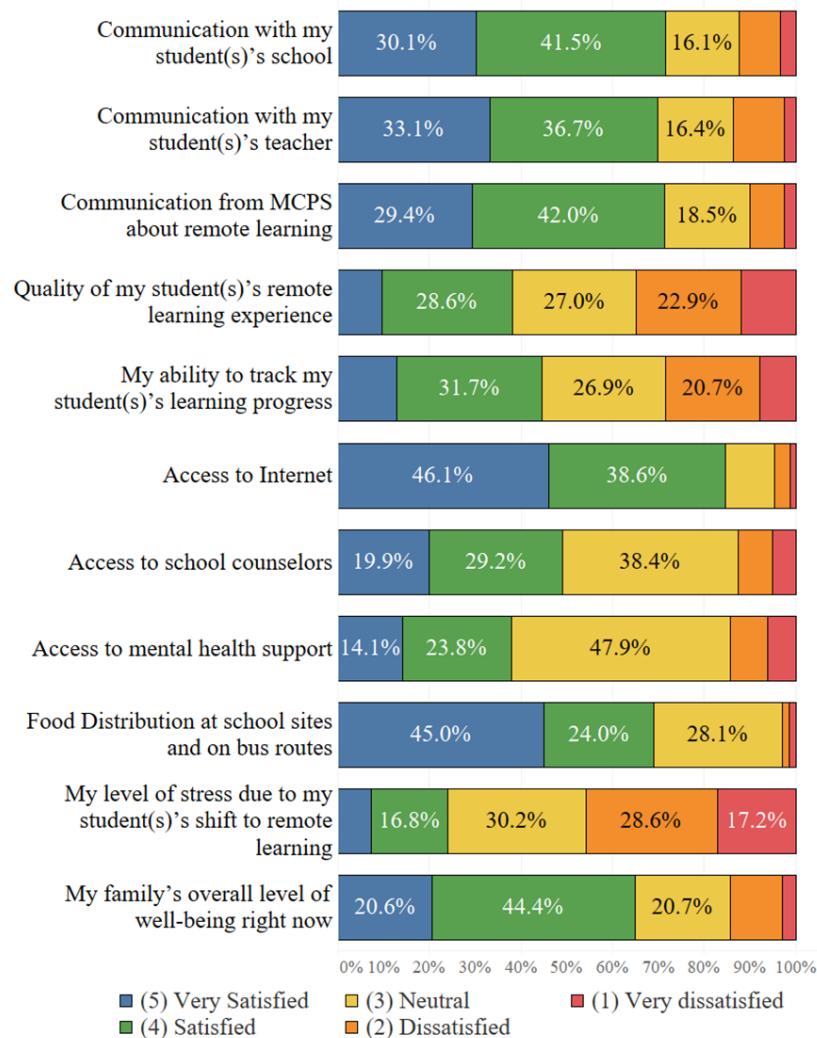
Tables 2-12 offer additional insight per question from Figure 1.

Table 2: Communication with my student(s)'s school
N=1748

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	**3.4%**
Dissatisfied	**9.0%**
Neutral	**16.1%**
Satisfied	**41.5%**
Very satisfied	**30.1 %**

Table 3: Communication with my student(s)'s teacher
N=1728

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	**2.6%**
Dissatisfied	**11.1%**
Neutral	**16.5%**
Satisfied	**36.7%**
Very satisfied	**33.1%**

Table 4: Communication from MCPS about remote learning
N=1738

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	**2.5%**
Dissatisfied	**7.6%**
Neutral	**18.6%**
Satisfied	**41.9%**
Very satisfied	**29.4%**

Table 5: Quality of my student(s)'s remote learning experience
N=1733

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	**11.9%**
Dissatisfied	**22.9%**
Neutral	**27.0%**
Satisfied	**28.6%**
Very satisfied	**9.6%**

Table 6: My ability to track my student(s)'s learning progress
N=1733

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	7.8%
Dissatisfied	20.7%
Neutral	26.9%
Satisfied	31.7%
Very satisfied	12.9%

Table 7: Access to Internet
N=1711

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	1.3%
Dissatisfied	3.4%
Neutral	10.7%
Satisfied	38.6%
Very satisfied	46.1%

Table 8: Access to school counselors
N=1385

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	5.0%
Dissatisfied	7.6%
Neutral	38.4%
Satisfied	29.2%
Very satisfied	19.9%

Table 9: Access to mental health support
N=1217

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	6.1%
Dissatisfied	8.2%
Neutral	47.9%
Satisfied	23.7%
Very satisfied	14.1%

Table 10: Food Distribution at school sites and on bus routes
N=1111

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	1.5%
Dissatisfied	1.5%
Neutral	28.1%
Satisfied	24.0%
Very satisfied	45.0%

Table 11: My level of stress due to my student(s)'s shift to remote learning
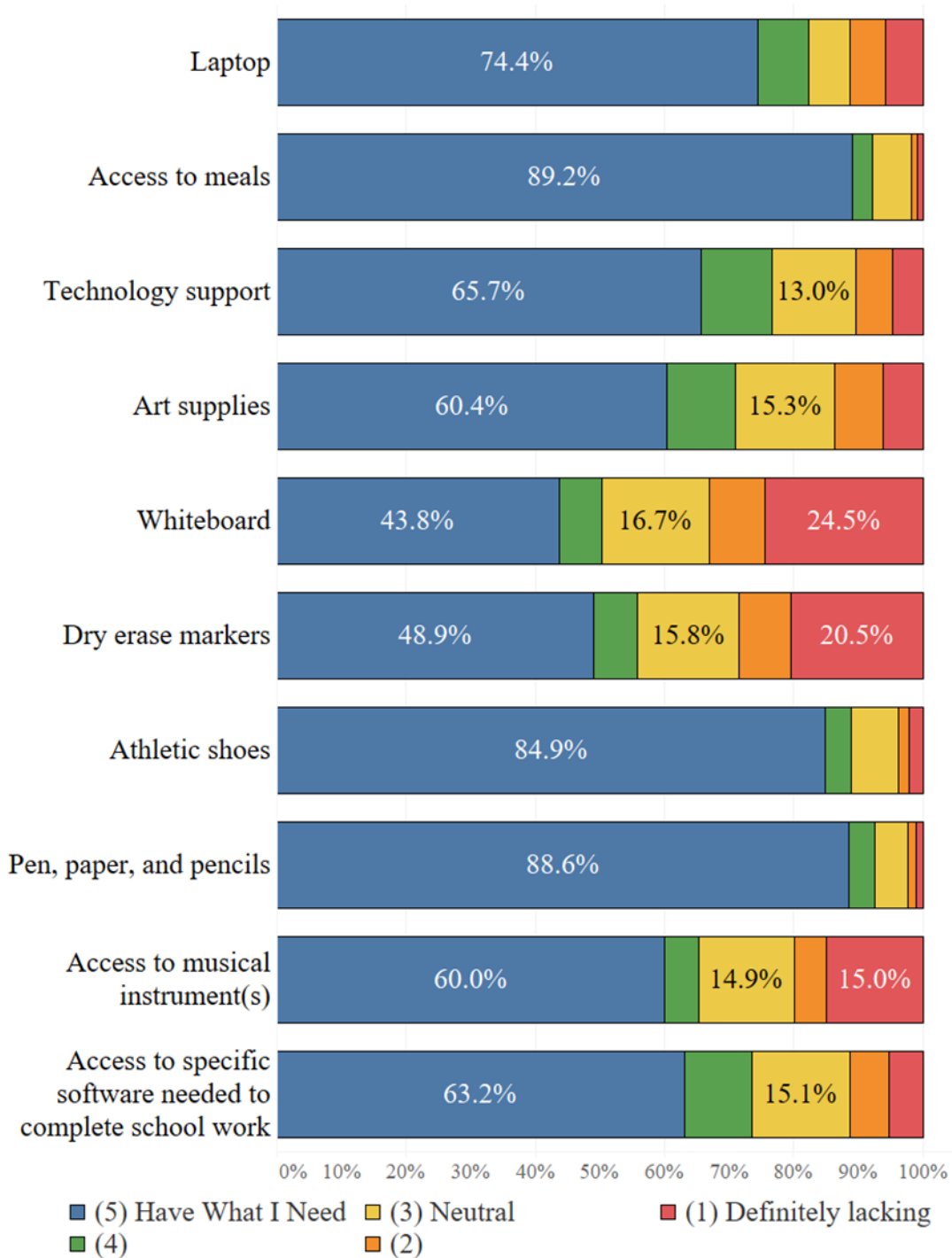N=1697

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	17.2%
Dissatisfied	28.6%
Neutral	30.2%
Satisfied	16.8%
Very satisfied	7.2%

Table 12: My family's overall level of well-being right now
N=1741

Answer	Percentage
Very dissatisfied	3.0%
Dissatisfied	11.3%
Neutral	20.7%
Satisfied	44.4%
Very satisfied	20.6%

To better understand the availability and access to "learn from home" resources, parents were asked on a scale from 1 (definitely lacking) to 5 (have what I need), to rate the availability of a series of items. Parents report having higher levels of access to meals, technology, specific software packages, paper, pens, and pencils. Resources like whiteboards, markers, and musical instruments rated lower (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Availability of "Learn from Home" Resources

Laptop: 74.4%
Access to meals: 89.2%
Technology support: 65.7%, 13.0%
Art supplies: 60.4%, 15.3%
Whiteboard: 43.8%, 16.7%, 24.5%
Dry erase markers: 48.9%, 15.8%, 20.5%
Athletic shoes: 84.9%
Pen, paper, and pencils: 88.6%
Access to musical instrument(s): 60.0%, 14.9%, 15.0%
Access to specific software needed to complete school work: 63.2%, 15.1%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ (5) Have What I Need   ■ (3) Neutral   ■ (1) Definitely lacking
■ (4)   ■ (2)

Tables 13-22 provide responses for each individual question listed in Figure 2.

Table 13: Laptop

N=1707

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**5.8%**
(2)	**5.6%**
(3) Neutral	**6.3%**
(4)	**7.9%**
(5) Have what I need	**74.4%**

Table 14: Access to meals

N=1636

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**0.9%**
(2)	**0.9%**
(3) Neutral	**6.1%**
(4)	**3.1%**
(5) Have what I need	**89.2%**

Table 15: Technology support

N=1706

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**4.6%**
(2)	**5.7%**
(3) Neutral	**13.0%**
(4)	**11.0%**
(5) Have what I need	**65.7%**

Table 16: Art supplies

N=1639

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**6.2%**
(2)	**7.4%**
(3) Neutral	**15.4%**
(4)	**10.6%**
(5) Have what I need	**60.4%**

Table 17: Whiteboard

N=1492

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**24.5%**
(2)	**8.5%**
(3) Neutral	**16.7%**
(4)	**6.5%**
(5) Have what I need	**43.8%**

Table 18: Dry erase markers

N=1509

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**20.5%**
(2)	**8.0%**
(3) Neutral	**15.8%**
(4)	**6.8%**
(5) Have what I need	**49.0%**

Table 19: Athletic shoes

N=1405

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**2.1%**
(2)	**1.8%**
(3) Neutral	**7.2%**
(4)	**4.0%**
(5) Have what I need	**84.9%**

Table 20: Paper, pen, and pencils

N=1701

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**1.0%**
(2)	**1.3%**
(3) Neutral	**5.1%**
(4)	**4.1%**
(5) Have what I need	**88.6%**

Table 21: Access to musical instrument(s)

N=1425

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**14.9%**
(2)	**4.8%**
(3) Neutral	**14.9%**
(4)	**5.3%**
(5) Have what I need	**60.0%**

Table 22: Access to specific software needed to complete school work

N=1685

Answer	Percentage
(1) Definitely lacking	**5.3%**
(2)	**6.0%**
(3) Neutral	**15.1%**
(4)	**10.4%**
(5) Have what I need	**63.2%**

Section II: Safety & Wellbeing

To better understand parent concern over safety and wellbeing, parents were asked for their level of agreement on a variety of school related topics. During the time of the survey, nearly 68 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed they will be sending their students back to school in August (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Overview of Safety and Wellbeing
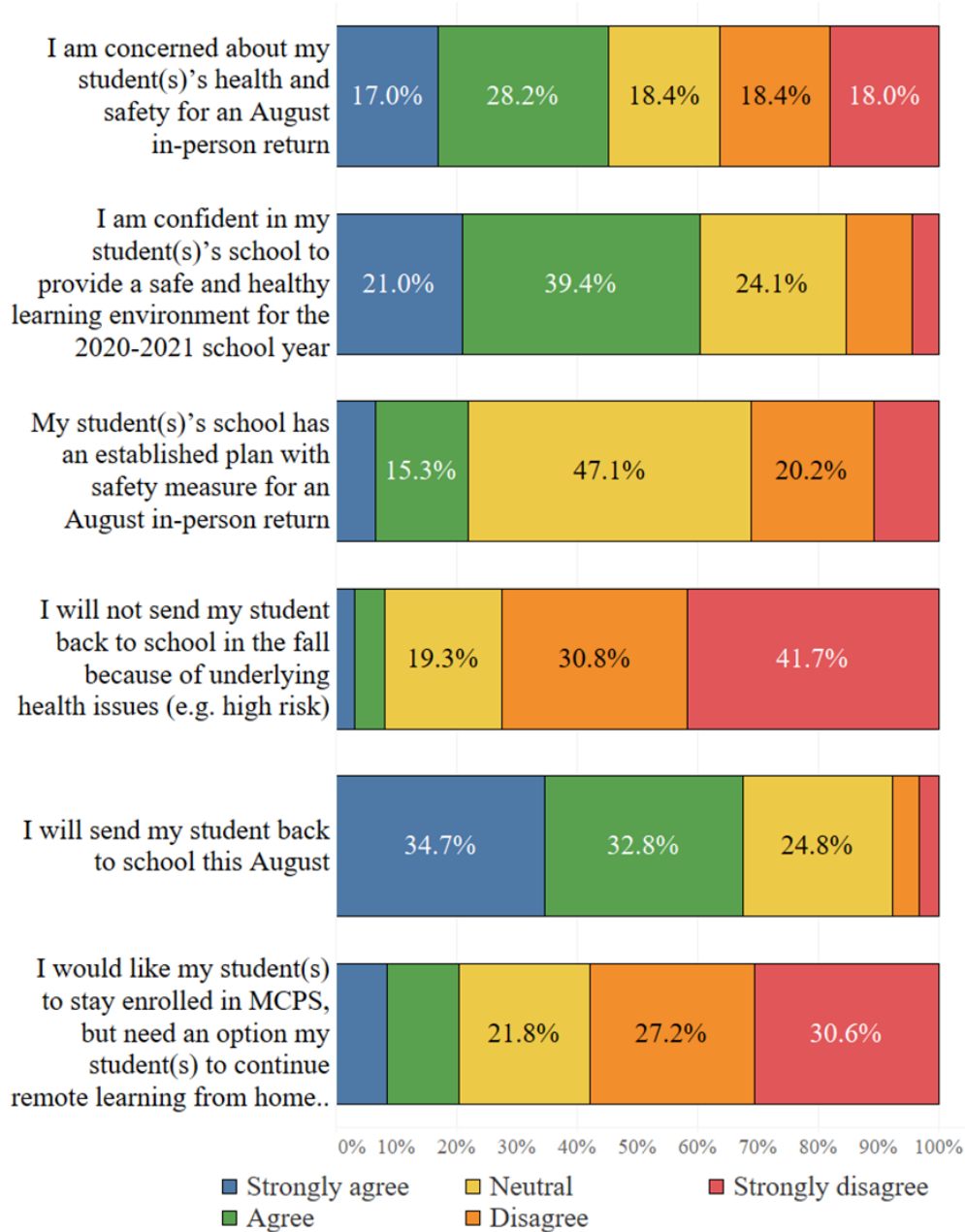
In thinking about the aforementioned statements, Tables 23-28 offer additional insight per question.

Table 23: I am concerned about my student(s)'s health and safety for an August in-person return

N=1704

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**18.0%**
Disagree	**18.4%**
Neutral	**18.4%**
Agree	**28.2%**
Strongly agree	**17.0%**

Table 24: I am confident in my student(s)'s school to provide a safe and healthy learning environment for the 2020-2021 school year

N=1701

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**4.4%**
Disagree	**11.1%**
Neutral	**24.1%**
Agree	**39.4%**
Strongly agree	**21.0%**

Table 25: My student(s)'s school has an established plan with safety measure for an August in-person return

N=1698

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**10.9%**
Disagree	**20.2%**
Neutral	**47.1%**
Agree	**15.3%**
Strongly agree	**6.6%**

Table 26: I will not send my student back to school in the fall because of underlying health issues (e.g. high risk)

N=1704

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**41.7%**
Disagree	**30.8%**
Neutral	**19.4%**
Agree	**5.1%**
Strongly agree	**3.1%**

Table 27: I will send my student back to school this August

N=1701

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**3.3%**
Disagree	**4.4%**
Neutral	**24.8%**
Agree	**32.8%**
Strongly agree	**34.7%**

Table 28: I would like my student(s) to stay enrolled in MCPS, but need an option my student(s) to continue remote learning from home due to underlying health issues (e.g. high risk)

N=1700

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**30.6%**
Disagree	**27.2%**
Neutral	**21.8%**
Agree	**11.8%**
Strongly agree	**8.5%**

To help MCPS plan for the upcoming school year, parents were asked to rate the importance of a series of statements pertaining to school activities. Not surprisingly, having academic support and consistency for how students engage in day-to-day learning are seen as very important. Approximately 80 percent of parents rate minimizing health risks during the next school year as very important or important. The least important item was ensuring after school care programs. Although, nearly 14 percent of parents rate that as very important (see Figure 4 below).

Figure 4: Importance of Item for Next School Year

Minimizing health risks — 50.1% / 30.6%

Impact for high risk populations — 47.4% / 29.3% / 12.7%

Consistency for how my child engages in day-to-day learning — 58.5% / 32.1%

Being able to choose how my student(s) engage in learning (i.e. remote or in-person) — 39.7% / 35.0% / 15.8%

Having academic support for my student(s)'s needs — 61.4% / 31.4%

Being able to have my student(s) participate in athletic or extracurricular activities — 28.9% / 28.9% / 12.5% / 19.6%

Ensuring I have childcare or after school care and programs — 13.7% / 49.6% / 19.8%

Legend:
- Very Important
- Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Important
- Neutral

Tables 29-35 list responses per individual question described in Figure 4.

Table 29: Minimizing health risks

N=1692

Answer	Percentage
Not important	2.7%
Somewhat important	8.8%
Neutral	7.8%
Important	30.6%
Very important	50.1%

Table 30: Impact for high risk populations

N=1684

Answer	Percentage
Not important	3.4%
Somewhat important	7.1%
Neutral	12.8%
Important	29.3%
Very important	47.4%

Table 31: Consistency for how my child engages in day-to-day learning

N=1691

Answer	Percentage
Not important	0.8%
Somewhat important	3.2%
Neutral	5.4%
Important	32.1%
Very important	58.4%

Table 32: Being able to choose how my student(s) engage in learning (i.e. remote or in-person)

N=1693

Answer	Percentage
Not important	2.8%
Somewhat important	6.6%
Neutral	15.8%
Important	35.0%
Very important	39.7%

Table 33: Having academic support for my student(s)'s needs
N=1689

Answer	Percentage
Not important	0.4%
Somewhat important	2.1%
Neutral	4.7%
Important	31.4%
Very important	61.3%

Table 34: Being able to have my student(s) participate in athletic or extracurricular activities
N=1692

Answer	Percentage
Not important	12.5%
Somewhat important	10.2%
Neutral	19.6%
Important	29.0%
Very important	28.8%

Table 35: Ensuring I have childcare or after school care and programs
N=1693

Answer	Percentage
Not important	49.6%
Somewhat important	6.4%
Neutral	19.8%
Important	10.6%
Very important	13.6%

To better understand the impact of implementing remote learning due to COVID-19, parents were asked to rate their satisfaction or frustration with facilitating a home school. Approximately 25 percent were frustrated with how remote learning impacted their own work. A little over half of the parents were frustrated in how it impacted their day-to-day life (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5: Attitudes toward Facilitating Home School

Tables 36-38 offer individual level responses from Figure 5.

Table 36: Implementation of remote learning in your household
N=1693

Answer	Percentage
Frustrated	**22.5%**
Somewhat frustrated	**29.0%**
Neutral	**14.7%**
Satisfied	**24.2%**
Very satisfied	**9.6%**

Table 37: Impact of remote learning on your own work
N=1691

Answer	Percentage
Frustrated	**25.1%**
Somewhat frustrated	**28.4%**
Neutral	**22.1%**
Satisfied	**16.5%**
Very satisfied	**7.8%**

Table 38: Impact of remote learning on day-to-day life
N=1689

Answer	Percentage
Frustrated	**21.3%**
Somewhat frustrated	**32.6%**
Neutral	**20.3%**
Satisfied	**18.6%**
Very satisfied	**7.2%**

Section III: Communication

Three questions on how often school officials should reach out to parents regarding a Return to School Plan were asked. Figure 6 illustrates more than half of the parents expect to hear from the Superintendent and the principle once a week.

Figure 6: Overview of School Communication
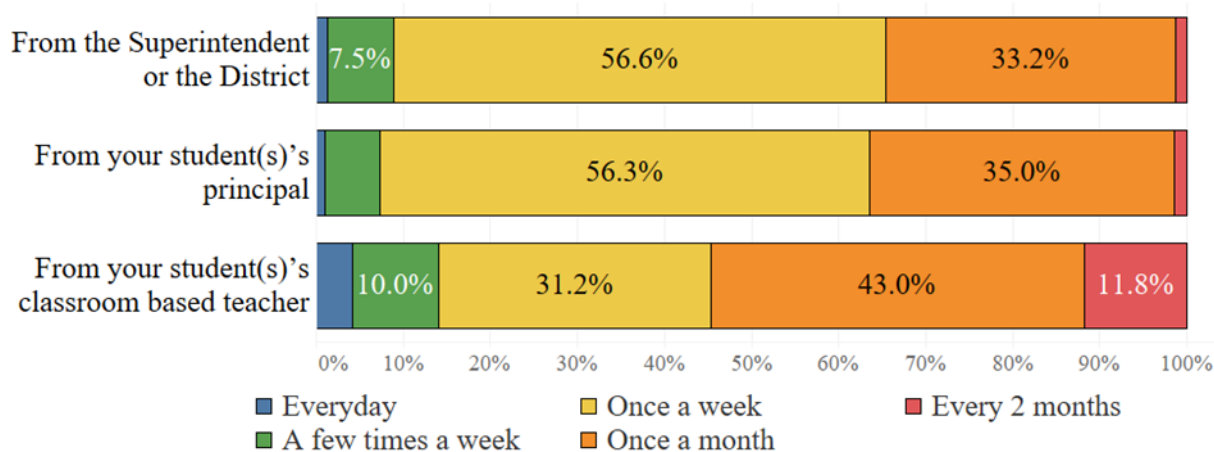
Table 39: From the Superintendent or the District
N=1685

Answer	Percentage
Every day	**1.3%**
A few times a week	**7.5%**
Once a week	**56.6%**
Once a month	**33.2%**
Every 2 months	**1.4%**

Table 40: From your student(s)'s principal

N=1681

Answer	Percentage
Every day	1.0%
A few times a week	6.2%
Once a week	56.3%
Once a month	35.0%
Every 2 months	1.5%

Table 41: From your student(s)'s classroom-based teacher

N=1676

Answer	Percentage
Every day	4.1%
A few times a week	10.0%
Once a week	31.2%
Once a month	43.0%
Every 2 months	11.8%

Section IV: Individual Student Experience

The following section asked respondents specific questions about each individual student's experience in your household.

To better understand the impacts of a remote learning environment for individual students, parents were asked to rate a series of statements regarding **each** of their student's experience. As Figure 7 suggests, parents reported that they strongly agreed or agreed that nearly 75 percent of the students were learning less in a remote learning environment. Over half of the parents disagreed that their student's social and emotional needs were being met in the remote learning environment.

Figure 7: Overview of Student Remote Learning Experience
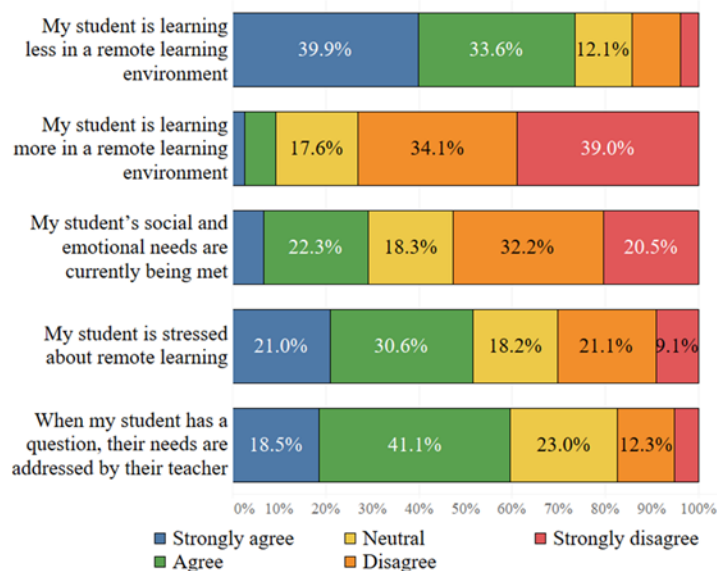
To offer an analysis of the responses for each individual question for Figure 7, Tables 42-46 provide additional information.

Table 42: My student is learning <u>less</u> in a remote learning environment
N=2795

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	4.0%
Disagree	10.4%
Neutral	12.1%
Agree	33.6%
Strongly agree	39.9%

Table 43: My student is learning <u>more</u> in a remote learning environment
N=2761

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	39.0%
Disagree	34.1%
Neutral	17.6%
Agree	6.6%
Strongly agree	2.7%

Table 44: My student's social and emotional needs are currently being met
N=2757

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	20.5%
Disagree	32.2%

Neutral	**18.3%**
Agree	**22.3%**
Strongly agree	**6.7%**

Table 45: My student is stressed about remote learning

N=2760

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**9.1%**
Disagree	**21.1%**
Neutral	**18.2%**
Agree	**30.6%**
Strongly agree	**21.0%**

Table 46: When my student has a question, their needs are addressed by their teacher

N=2762

Answer	Percentage
Strongly disagree	**5.2%**
Disagree	**12.3%**
Neutral	**23.0%**
Agree	**41.1%**
Strongly agree	**18.5%**

Questions regarding students with an IEP

Parents who have a student(s) with an IEP were asked to complete a series of questions. Figure 8 indicates approximately 41 percent of parents were satisfied or very satisfied with the lessons and support their student received from members of their IEP team and 31 percent of parents were neutral in their satisfaction with communication from that team.

Figure 8: Overview of Student Experience with IEP
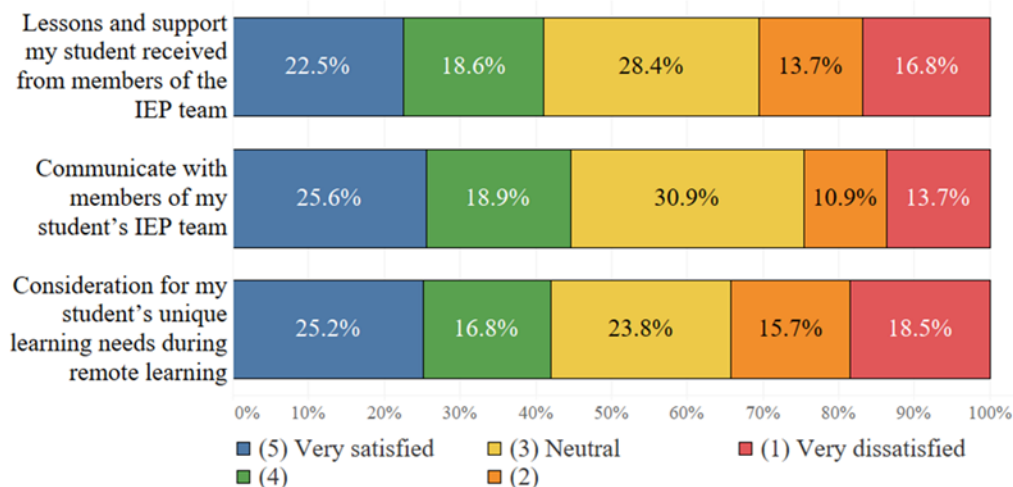
For those interested in an individual breakdown of IEP questions presented in Figure 8, please see Tables 47-51 listed below.

Table 47: Student currently has an IEP

N=2757

Answer	Percentage
Yes	10.6%
No	84.4%
Prefer not to answer	5.1%

Table 48: Did your student's special education case manager and/or team members communicate and collaborate with you regularly to address services and support during COVID school closure?

N=285

Answer	Percentage
Yes	60.7%
No	39.3%

Table 49: Lessons and support my student received from members of the IEP team

N=285

Answer	Percentage
(1) Very dissatisfied	16.8%
(2)	13.7%
(3) Neutral	28.4%
(4)	18.6%
(5) Very satisfied	22.5%

Table 50: Communicate with members of my student's IEP team

N=285

Answer	Percentage
(1) Very dissatisfied	13.7%
(2)	10.9%
(3) Neutral	30.9%
(4)	18.9%
(5) Very satisfied	25.6%

Table 51: Consideration for my student's unique learning needs during remote learning

N=286

Answer	Percentage
(1) Very dissatisfied	18.5%
(2)	15.7%

(3) Neutral	**23.8%**
(4)	**16.8%**
(5) Very satisfied	**25.2%**

Section V: Open Ended Questions

In our final section of this report, we turn to open-ended responses from parents regarding two questions:

1. What positive things have come out of this remote learning period for your student or your family?
2. What is one thing that your student needs that will set your student up for success in the fall?

The qualitative software, NVivo was used to detect common themes across the respondents. The larger words presented in Figures 9 and 10 demonstrate words used the most. We offer the top 10 words and some examples of direct statements from the respondents.

Figure 9: What positive things have come out of this remote learning period for your student or your family?

Top 10 Words

Theme	Count
Time	**802**
Together	**360**
Home	**141**
Spend	**131**
Scheduling	**77**
Nothing	**68**
Assignments	**66**
Flexibility	**65**
Working	**65**

Time
- A re-evaluation of needs vs wants which includes an increased appreciation for family time and emotional support.
- Able to spend more time as a family and teach more real life learning that schools do not.
- Additional time together, break from non-stop scheduled activities.
- By the end, better time management skills.

Together
- Closeness between family. Learned together and I could see where he needed help.
- Coming closer as a family. Spending lots of time together.
- Good family time/togetherness.
- It has brought our family closer together.
- Learning with my child and helping her learn. Spending quality time together.

Home
- As a community we all agreed to keep our children at home as safe and healthy as possible. We learned some new skills and were given new tools how to implement learning at home.
- Better connection with family. Able to tailor schooling to his level. He is very self directed and an introvert so he has enjoyed being home and learning independently.
- Got some things done at home that had been meaning to do for a long time.
- My child liked being home. He was happy.
- My child's emotional needs are met more at home and there is less stress for him

Spend
- Being able to spend more time together.

- Being able to spend even more time together as a family. We enjoyed having them home more!
- More time outside playing sports and spending time outside.
- We're able to slow down and spend more time as a family with one another.
- We have been able to spend more time together and as parents we have a better understanding of what topics are being studied and the methods used to teach.

Scheduling
- Ability for student to work on her own schedule. She's very self-motivated and I did not have to oversee her work.
- Family time and ability to set up a regular exercise schedule.
- Flexible schedules and family time.
- I know more about what exactly my kids are working on. Our schedule is more relaxed. Kids are getting plenty of sleep.
- Less morning schedule stress, since don't have to get kids up early.

Nothing
- Absolutely nothing. My children have huge difficulty learning in a remote environment, and school has become a chore for these once enthusiastic students.
- Absolutely Nothing......
- Honestly nothing I can think of. This has been extreme hardship.
- Honestly nothing, unfortunately my child is overwhelmed and has given up.
- I find nothing positive. Middle school students are too young for distance learning. They need a classroom setting to reach their full leaning potential.

Assignments
- An opportunity to shine by independently completing assignments and being engaged in self-motivated learning.
- Having more time to work on assignments.
- I learned some Spanish. I was way more involved with what my student was working on, knew his daily assignments, more communication with teachers.
- My children learned to manage their time, so assignments were completed on time and to minimize daily stress. If they were having a tough day, it was okay to stop and then regroup and try an assignment again in the afternoon or next day.
- My high school student was able to increase his grades greatly by having all assignments available online. Help greatly with keeping everything organized and accessible!

Flexibility
- Attending school from 8-3 everyday was hard for our high schooler- the flexibility of remote learning was better for him in many ways. I would love

> to see more blended options and flexibility in schedules for high school students- much like college. Evening classes and flexible, blended schedules would be so beneficial to high school students and could possibly improve graduation rates.

- Family and sibling closeness, more rest and sleep, schedule flexibility, more time to do art and hobbies.
- Flexibility of when to engage the material.
- I've enjoyed watching them learn and we all enjoyed having a little bit of flexibility on what to learn when.
- Opportunity for my child to work on flexibility and patience.

Working

- Better understanding of what exactly they are working on on a day to day basis.
- I can spend time working with and seeing how he is learning and what he needs help with.
- Siblings helping each other with homework, sometimes. Parents having a better understanding of schoolwork. Working as a team more and also having kids take on more chores/ life-skills.
- My kids are working relatively independently and have been forced to learn to communicate needs electronically with their teachers- which is a great skill. Teachers have been fantastic in an impossible situation for them. In a weird way my kids are communicating more with their teachers.
- Technology and how to navigate multiple systems is a definite plus. Our two children had to learn how to be self sufficient while they were home and we were working fulltime.

Figure 10 captures responses for the second open-ended question, highlighting the top 10 words used and example responses from parents.

Figure 10: What is one thing that your student needs that will set your student up for success in the fall?

Top 10 Words

Theme	Count
Class	146
Interaction	142
Socially	142
Timing	139
Classroom	112
Assignments	109
Consistency	92
Communication	86
Instructions	85

Class
- A combined in class and self-directed at home learning plan.
- Ability to access AP classes and promote his advanced learning.
- Band class as a group. The loss of music classes was the most trying part of remote learning.
- Better guidance for class selection in preparation for graduation.
- Daily interaction with teachers & classmates, with a consistent daily routine & required attendance for classes.

Interaction
- Access to teacher interaction and access to peer interaction.
- Activities and interaction with her teachers and friends.
- Consistent interaction with a teacher who is not me to guide him through the material.
- He needs more interaction with his teachers. I felt the optional or once a week meets were not enough time for him to learn.

- I do hope that there are some options of in-person learning and/or interacting. Both my children really need to have some interpersonal relations--though with very careful considerations and adhering to the health recommendations per the pandemic.

Social
- A space/ time for social interactions with peers/ classmates.
- Being social.
- Friends, activities, social interaction.
- He'll start middle school & he's ready, looking forward to social connections at school.
- In person social interaction with peers and adults in order to grow socially, emotionally and academically!

Timing
- A formalized schedule of classes and meetings online with teachers. VERY clear instructions on what needs to be completed by what time for prioritizing.
- Activities that are easily accessible but also don't require a lot of time.
- Consistency. I either need him at school full time, or distance learning. I don't want part time at school and part time at home.
- Help with time management and appropriate equipment and learning space.
- More actual classroom time or FaceTime meetings to hold them accountable.

Classroom
- Classroom time with teachers!
- Being in a classroom setting.
- I prefer classroom instruction instead of remote learning or at least a consistent schedule of interaction through media for direct instruction and group interaction.
- More classroom engagement. The scheduled google class meetings were very helpful.
- My 8th grader especially needs in person teaching. He absorbs more from a classroom setting.

Assignments
- A better and clearer system of tracking items that are due and more complete and thorough instructions (written and verbal) on how to complete assignments.
- A better system for organizing herself. It was very confusing and she struggled to keep track and complete her assignments.
- Actual curriculum. The assignments and expectations have been pathetically dumbed down.
- Actual instruction, not just assigned work. Feedback on work submitted.

- Better understanding of due dates for assignments that are absolutely necessary for grading purposes.

Consistency
- A classroom that is consistent and isn't detracted by unnecessary health regulations, a sense of normalcy in uncertain times.
- A clear plan and set of expectations. Consistent among teachers.
- A clear plan for schooling with as much predictability and consistency as possible.
- A consistent curriculum with accountability.
- Consistency.

Communication
- As much consistency as possible with communication processes and online platforms.
- Better communication. Not MORE communication, shorter and to the point is helpful.
- Clear communication of expectations for students and parents.
- Communication from MCPS, principals, and teachers.
- More communication with other students.

Instructions
- A formalized schedule of classes and meetings online with teachers. VERY clear instructions on what needs to be completed by what time for prioritizing.
- Actual instruction rather than just assignments.
- Clear instructions about how to utilize remote learning.
- I prefer classroom instruction instead of remote learning or at least a consistent schedule of interaction through media for direct instruction and group interaction.
- In-person instruction (with the option of keeping up at home if he becomes quarantined).