

## Introduction

With thousands of schools closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, districts confront the challenge of maintaining continuity of education for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year through distance learning while preparing curriculum and instruction for 2020-2021 amid uncertain learning loss. To inform district planning efforts, Hanover Research (Hanover) conducted a national survey of K-12 parents and teachers in May 2020.<sup>1</sup> In addition to sharing perceptions of current distance learning practices, the nationally-representative sample of 989 parents and teachers who completed the survey indicated how they expect students to be affected academically, emotionally, and physically and, thus, how they think districts should support teaching and learning during the 2020-2021 school year. In this brief, Hanover summarizes key findings from the survey and offers recommendations for districts based on parents' and teachers' experiences.

[Review the Extended School Closure Impact Findings Here](#)



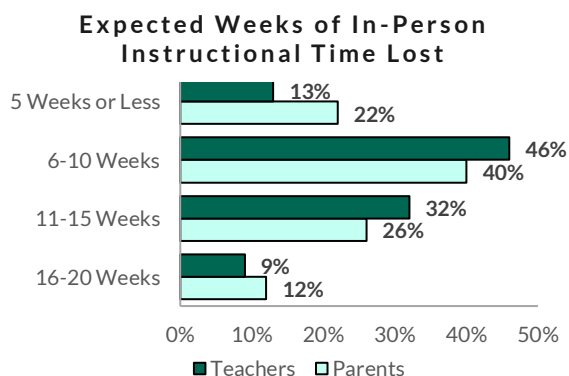
## Recommendations

Looking ahead to 2020-2021, Hanover's key findings suggest that districts should:

- ✓ **Administer the same (or a similar) survey locally**, gathering input from their own parents and teachers. Although Hanover's survey results contain valuable insights for districts, in general, each district must understand the unique challenges and opportunities its stakeholders face to determine the best path forward.
- ✓ **Develop a comprehensive approach for addressing learning loss**, consisting of schoolwide measures and individualized supports. In addition to exploring extended learning opportunities for all students, districts should conduct universal testing in the fall to identify students in need of more intensive interventions.
- ✓ **Give teachers additional professional learning opportunities** focused on delivering online instruction and closing technology skills gaps.
- ✓ **Provide parents with more supports**, equipping them with the resources and strategies they need to support their child and enabling them to contact instructional staff with questions as needed.
- ✓ **Focus stakeholder communications**, using a few preferred methods to deliver timely—and consistent—messaging.

## Key Findings

### ACADEMIC READINESS AND STUDENT WELL-BEING



Compared with parents, teachers generally expect students to lose more weeks of in-person instruction during the 2019-2020 school year due to COVID-19 school closures. Nearly one-quarter (22%) of parents anticipate losing 5 weeks or less, whereas only 13% of teachers feel similarly. In contrast, nearly half (46%) of teachers expect to lose 6-10 weeks, while another 32% predict losing 11-15 weeks (compared with 40% and 26% of parents, respectively).

<sup>1</sup> Responding parents and teachers are not necessarily affiliated with the same districts or schools (i.e., the teachers who provided responses are not necessarily instructing the children of the parents who also completed the survey).



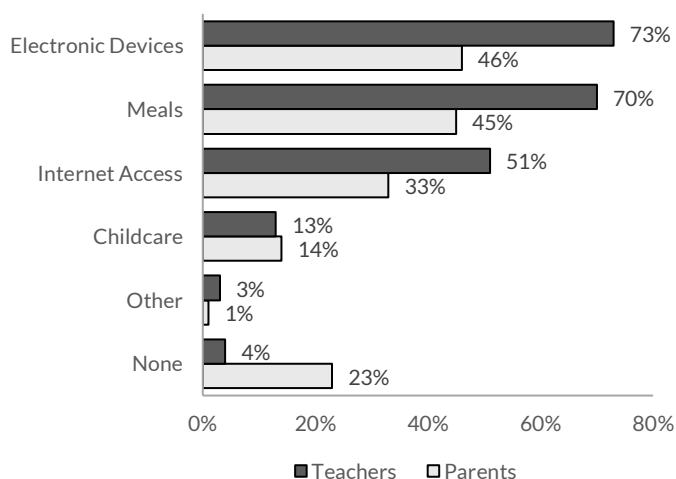
Perhaps not surprisingly, therefore, teachers also are significantly more likely than parents to expect COVID-19 school closures to negatively impact students' academic readiness for the 2020-2021 school year *and* their emotional, social, and physical well-being. More than half of teachers expect academic readiness to suffer in every core subject area, ranging from 62% in the case of math to 52% in the context of social studies. In contrast, only 21%-28% of parents predict that their child will be less prepared for next school year academically, with most expecting COVID-19 school closures to have no—or perhaps even a *positive*—impact. Similar gaps appear in teachers' and parents' perceptions of potential effects on student well-being. For example, 60% of teachers anticipate negative consequences for students' mental health or emotional well-being, compared with only 26% of parents.



Such differences notwithstanding, parents and teachers seem to prefer the same schoolwide options for mitigating learning loss during the 2020-2021 school year. Specifically, parents and teachers find expanding online/remote learning capabilities most appealing (38% and 47% respectively). Both groups also consider starting the 2020-2021 school year earlier and offering afterschool programs to struggling students preferable to either extending the school year or attending school year-round. With respect to their child, in particular, nearly half (48%) of parents do not anticipate needing to take any steps to combat the effects of school closures. Among those who do, enrolling in summer school (22%) and altering class schedules (e.g., taking regular instead of AP courses) (20%) appear more likely than taking remedial classes or repeating a grade level (16% and 15%, respectively).

## DISTRICT AND SCHOOL RESOURCES

Resources Provided by the District and/or School Since Schools Closed<sup>2</sup>



Parents and teachers share similar views regarding their district's and/or school's lack of preparedness for distance learning prior to COVID-19. However, compared with parents, teachers offer a more positive account of their district's and/or school's resource provision since school closures occurred. Fewer than 40% of parents and teachers (37% and 39%, respectively) say that their district and/or school had most or all of the systems needed for distance learning available prior to COVID-19. Yet, while at least 70% of teachers indicate that their district and/or school has provided electronic devices (73%) or meals (70%) since schools closed, fewer than half of parents (46% and 45%, respectively) report similar resource availability. A greater share of teachers than parents also state that their district and/or school has supplied internet access (51% versus 33%). Among the parents able to access such resources, however,

satisfaction rates appear high, with more than 75% describing themselves as somewhat or completely satisfied.



Responses from parents suggest that districts and schools have not equitably met the needs of special student populations during COVID-19 school closures. Specifically, districts and schools have more effectively supported English learners (ELs) and children needing meals than special education students. Only 12% of parents of children who need school- or district-provided meals report not regularly receiving them. Although approximately one-third (32%) of parents of ELs note a decline in the level of their child's

<sup>2</sup> Percentages sum to more than 100% as teachers and parents could select more than one resource.

current English language support, nearly half (49%) actually report an increase. In contrast, more than half (53%) of parents of special education students consider their child less supported, despite the fact that almost two-thirds (64%) have talked with their child's IEP team at least once since schools closed. Regarding specific services lost, parents most often mention having no or reduced access to speech therapy (15%), counseling services (15%), school psychologists (14%), and assistive technologies (12%) due to COVID-19.

## DISTANCE LEARNING

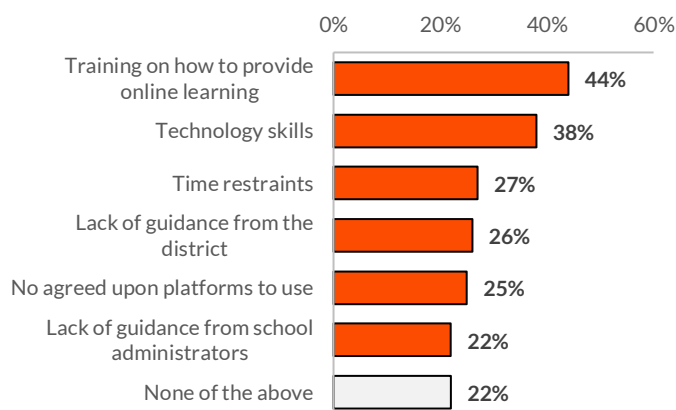


**Most parents and teachers agree that, during school closures, teachers give students assignments (either online or in the form of physical copies). Yet, with respect to other instructional supports, teachers are noticeably more likely to report having provided them than parents are to indicate their child having received them.** More than 60% of parents and teachers say that teachers gave assignments (64% and 71% respectively).

However, while 54%-60% of teachers claim to have shared additional educational videos or resources online, held virtual office hours or one-on-one meetings with students, provided grades or feedback on assignments, and live-streamed or recorded lessons, only 37%-49% of parents confirm that at least one of their child's teachers offered these supports. The greatest differences occur in the context of virtual office hours or one-on-one meetings with students (60% of teachers versus 37% of parents) and additional educational videos or resources online (60% of teachers versus 43% of parents).

**Distance learning presents challenges to teachers and parents. Many teachers do not receive the training needed to deliver online instruction, a troubling finding given how many consider their technology skills a barrier to continuity of learning during school closures.** Nearly 40% (38%) of teachers claim that technology skills pose difficulties. With an even greater proportion (44%) lacking sufficient training on how to provide online learning, skills gaps may persist. Teachers also need more time and direction. More than one-quarter (27%) of teachers face time constraints. Similar shares want their district to provide more guidance regarding instruction (26%), in general, and which platforms teachers should use (25%), in particular.

**Teacher Barriers to Providing Continuing Education to Students<sup>3</sup>**



*Many parents need to supervise or help with their child's learning activities and homework, as teachers and other school staff are not always to provide support.*

**Parents, meanwhile, struggle with the amount of supervision and assistance needed to sustain their child's continuity of learning.** Almost one-third (31%) of parents report that their child's homework and activities require additional help or supervision. While 42% indicate that their child only needs help or supervision sometimes, 32% report that this is often or always the case. With only slightly more than half of parents (52%) often or always able to rely on their child's teacher or another school staff member for support, the responsibility then falls on family members (primarily the parents and, to a lesser extent, siblings and other relatives) to help.

<sup>3</sup> Percentages sum to more than 100% as teachers could select more than one barrier.

## STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATION



Parents find communications sent by district and school administrators during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly more satisfying than teachers. However, parents and teachers both think that districts and schools can strengthen communication by limiting the channels used and coordinating the information shared. Whereas roughly two-thirds of parents express satisfaction with district and school communications since the crisis began (63% and 68%, respectively), only slightly more than half of teachers feel similarly (51% and 56%, respectively). Yet, when asked about obstacles to communication experienced during the crisis, parents and teachers most frequently cited inconsistent messaging (e.g., details not coordinated well) (25% and 40%, respectively) and communication sent in too many ways (e.g., emails, virtual bulletin boards) (31% of each group).



## Related Hanover Resources

- [Learning Loss Through Traumatic Events](#)
- [Learning Loss Discussion Guide](#)
- [Supporting Students' Social-Emotional Needs During Pandemics](#)
- [Professional Development Needs Assessment Survey Instrument](#)
- [Best Practices in Online Professional Learning](#)
- [Planning and Delivering Online Instruction During COVID-19 School Closures](#)
- [Info-Brief: Personalized Learning Online](#)
- [Strategies for Maintaining Student Engagement During Remote Learning](#)
- [Meaningful Distance Learning for English Learners](#)
- [Parent's Guide to Helping Your Child Succeed in Reading and Writing at Home](#)