

## Summation of Free Response Questions

### Question #8 (407 of 940 responding)

*This was the free response for the multiple questions of communications by school and district; adequate access to supplies, training, internet, parent availability.*

*“This has been incredibly hard.”*

*“The district, however, I do not feel has provided very good or timely information.”*

*“It’s not helpful for school administrators/teachers to receive district information from media rather than from the district.”*

*53.74% not satisfied with the quantity of District communication about online learning.*

*56.04% not satisfied with the quality of District communication about online learning.*

*but*

*51.50% satisfied with the quantity of School communication about online learning.*

*47.77% satisfied with the quality of School communication about online learning.*

### Communications (70)

Most comments on this subject cite the District as having overly elaborate communications in eduspeak. Parents want clear communication in everyday language. The district was faulted for the on-line learning brochure which contained an excessive number of links.

The District has not communicated a clear plan for school opening. Often parents, teachers and administrators find out the District plans via news media first. Parents feel that there is no outreach/engagement with the community on what this will look like.

Schools either have great communication or terrible communication depending on the principal and their level of skill. Teachers as well are either good at communicating or not.

### On-line (Zoom, internet) (26)

Parents noted that chrome books did not seem up to the task of the online Zoom classroom. Some parents had extra laptops which the students used instead. The number of people in a household using the internet at the same time was a problem. Problems with drop-out during the class time.

### On-line Format (12)

Of the parents who responded, they find the online format unworkable for their child, either too much computer time, not enough personal interaction, or the child is not engaged. Parents feel they have to support the kids online the entire time as problems pop up on the platform.

The amount of screen time has been seen as excessive (54%)

The online format is better suited to grades 6-12 who can operate more independently than younger children.

### IEP/Special Ed (9)

These students seem to struggle most with the online format. Some parents are waiting for special services with seem to be suspended at the moment?

## Re-open the schools (30)

Split among those who want school back, hybrid, some personal interactions and those that want to remain online.

## Parent Availability to assist students (52)

*“My husband and I both work full time. We cannot give the kids the support they need.”*

*45.07% indicate they are available during school hours to assist their student.*

*41.82% indicate they are not available during school hours to assist their student.*

Parents are finding online learning cumbersome for their situation. Many parents (even teachers) work full time or part time. If they figure out a way to support their child, it means they are working odd shifts or they cannot support their child at all. Some parents have hired sitters to assist with time needed to support their student during their work day. This more adversely impacts parents who are essential workers and have to support system for their kids.

As with the general population in the news, women are disproportionately affected with some leaving the workforce. [<https://www.vox.com/21536100/economy-pandemic-lose-generation-working-mothers>]

## Training and Support (19)

*41.34% indicated they did not receive adequate training on how to help their student.*

### **Support (13)**

Some parents & students need more support. Parent training, Zoom troubleshooting, inadequate supplies.

### **Training (6)**

Additional opportunities for training needed.

## Teaching (54)

By the comments it is unclear if the teachers were sufficiently trained in on-line teaching. It seems that some teachers excel and have adapted well; and some teachers have not adapted. For those who did not adapt well to online teaching the students are not receiving any to poor services and are falling behind.

There is the added factor that some children did not adapt to online learning, therefore they are falling behind as well.

## Question #9 (216 of 1042 responding)

*Where does your student do classwork?*

**21.23% Communal Space with no Person Desk**

**29.17% Communal Space with Personal Desk**

**50.60% Personal Space/Office/Bedroom**

**General Comments:** Of the comments regarding where the learning takes place, three distinct categories were evident.

### Home (154)

Many of those at home remarked about the importance of a WiFi connections, troubles with multiple WiFi users and location of routers as being key challenges. Learning spaces included bedrooms, dining rooms, kitchen tables, on the couch in the living room. A number of comments focused on the rotation of spaces if possible, in order to offer variety and support the mental health of the children. Some families have purchased office equipment for their students while others are making do the best they can with what they have. Small spaces and multiple students/parents at home pose a particular challenge.

### Pod (10)

Pod learning ranged from, trading off at friends' houses, to relatives to tutors.

### DayCare (16)

Day care for some included church, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club or similar programs, day camp or going to a babysitter's house during the school day.

## Question 11 (420 of 1042 responding)

**This was the free response on Quantity of work, difficulty of work, amount screen time, and grading.**

**General comments:** Experiences vary depending on grade levels

### Quantity of work (65)

**26% found the quantity of schoolwork excessive.**

The comments were split as to whether or not there was too much work or too little. Some parents felt overwhelmed with the pace of work while others felt that time was being wasted in class and that students should be busy all day just like a regular in person school day. More than a few mentioned "zoom fatigue" as an issue. A few comments suggested a workbook style curriculum especially for the younger ones.

Comments were essentially split on the issue of 6 versus 2 or 3 classes in the upper grades.

## **Difficulty of work (81)**

***20% found the difficulty of schoolwork to hard.***

Again, comments were divided on difficulty. This was the case from Kindergarten to high school. There was a sense of frustration in many comments as many parents are not feeling well equipped to help with academics and in many cases not have the time to help with academics due to multiple children, multiple grade levels and work. Some also had concerns with the 6-week periods in regards to AP preparation. Immersion language learning online has been especially challenging. The positive comments all relate to flexibility, accessibility and teachers making adjustments along the way.

## **Screen time (77)**

***53.16% found the quantity of screen time excessive***

Many comments were in regard to long stretches of screen time being difficult for the young students. Additionally, keeping young ones engaged on a screen for a long period of time is a challenge. Some comments focused on the importance of students turning on their videos during classes. A call for more frequent screen time breaks. There were more than a few comments regarding PE in this section. The overall from comments was that the online PE is not working and that it should be focused on getting students outside. The overwhelming comment in this section really centered on the belief that there is too much screen time/ get the kids back in school

## **Grading (74)**

***20% found the grading of assignments too harsh.***

Many comments regarding grading confusion or lack of grades. A number of commenters did not know what was happening with grading while others were upset about the “harshness” of some of the grading. There were many comments regarding feedback. Lots of focus on teachers. Some positive some not. Some teachers have connected well with their parents and the two-way communication is going well. Feedback and communication with parents seems to be key. Personalized feedback should not just be grades. It was noted in some comments that there is a need for greater flexibility to meet the needs of all students. Parent fears of their children falling behind was a strong theme as well.

## **Question #13 (148 of 810 responding)**

*Comments regarding which areas you need extra support*

**General Comments-** Social/Emotional health comments were most common

### **Technology (8)**

Though there were not many comments in this section regarding tech support, there were many comments in other sections about issues with the large number of academic platforms being used, and a lack of support managing those apps in addition to the regular zoom meetings. Additionally, in other sections of this survey, there were numerous comments regarding wasted class time due to technical issues with the meeting platform. Multiple platforms and multiple processes are confusing. Parents having a tough time keeping up with and checking on assignments with all of the apps. Some comments also focused on the quality of district chromebooks. A number of respondents did not see any issues with the tech support and see that aspect of things not to be a problem.

### **Homework/Academics (21)**

Some comments were focused on the lack of options for talented students to go beyond the A number of parents remarked at really not being prepared to act as teachers especially with some of the high school material. Tips and support for parents as co-teachers was a theme. A number of comments focused on the belief that teachers are working less and not addressing the needs of students. Something needs to be done to address lab classes.

### **Social/Emotional Wellbeing (35)**

More support for wellbeing, emotional support. The lack of social interaction has many of the respondents concerned. The students want to see their friends and many are feeling isolated. Most of the comments regarding this issue were focused on students returning to in person learning. One comment noted that the emotional and social toll is huge and that they were grateful for the counselor at school.

### **Navigating School District Resources (5)**

Comments in this section ranged from “What district resources?” to “the district resources not being helpful in any way.

### **Special Education and Services Associated with Special Education (14)**

Comments were focused on the need for evaluations and feedback and a loosening of the strict grading. A few comments highlighted the need for one on one time.

## Question #14 (638 of 1172 responding)

*Open-ended response to: Is there anything else you would like to share with us?*

***“Inconsistency across school sites.”***

### Positive remarks (39)

For some parents, online learning is going along smoothly and the students are engaged and doing well. They feel that the implementation has gone well for their students.

### Communications (24)

Communications does not seem to have a unified format. Either there is too much duplicative information or none at all. Clear expectations should exist about what level of communications will be coming from District, principal and teacher.

Respondents feel that the district is not communicating in a meaningful way. In the past it has been noticed and reported that all parents do not receive all communications, with some parents designated as primary, some as secondary and some not listed at all. The lack of communications leads to parents feeling as though the District is not planning or intentionally leaving parents in the dark.

Additionally, not all parents have emails on file, or correct emails on file. South of I-8 this is a bigger problem. How is the District communicating with these families?

This also feeds into the idea that the District lacks transparency about planning, how Covid Relief Funds were spent (budgeting), and how the reopening (or not) of schools was decided.

### IEP (11)

Students with IEPs, especially some with support services need in person interactions and are falling far behind in distance learning. These are the most fragile of students and probably those that need in person, on campus learning most.

It does appear that many students with IEPs are not receiving services. Families are unsure how they will be receiving support. IEP comments also popped up under teaching.

### Inequity (5)

A small number of respondents feel that the online platform is exacerbating the inequity in the education system as not all parents can devote the day to assisting their students with online learning problems. If respondents, who are primarily from the more affluent sections of the city, struggle with technology, what does this say for parents in less affluent areas who may struggle with English, computer skill and time to assist their children.

## **Mental Health (51)**

Respondents felt that their students were having decreases wellbeing due to isolation, problems with the online learning. Zoom classrooms can be impersonal and the students are not connected to their teachers or the coursework. Some feel there is too much homework and computer time. There is an emphasis on finding a way for the student to visit/socialize during the school day. Is it possible to facility clubs via Zoom, take Wednesdays as a down day.

## **Parent Availability During the School Day (16)**

Parent again reiterated that working parents struggle to support students who did not readily acclimate to online learning or are so young that they need more support. Essential workers are suffering the most.

## **District Planning Procedures (48)**

Parents are disappointed that the district is not coming up with a solid timeline and that parents are not included in the planning. Many worry that if school reopens with am/pm shift, their kids will end up on opposite shifts. Parents want to be included in the planning.

## **Return to School (215)**

A small group of these respondents (37) indicated they were not in a hurry to get back to in person learning, a number would not return until after a vaccine. The majority want science to dictate a return.

The remainder of the respondents (231) indicate that they want in person services sooner rather than later. It was not a universal call for full in person opening of the schools. Many respondents wanted some in person teaching from one day a week to half days. Children seem to be dropping though the cracks from impersonal on-line learning, are stressed by the process, or feeling isolated affecting their well-being.

Parents want options and they want to be included in the planning.

Return to school also showed up in the other categories as an aside to their main comment.

## **Technical and Personal Support (11)**

These respondents specifically cite the need for more support (interpersonal) for their students. This theme is also reflected in the other categories. These fall into categories. Respondents either want more small-group setting with teachers and students, tutoring opportunities for students or a list of resources for tutoring and support. If the teachers are teaching for 3 hours, what is happening the other 3 hours? Counseling for high school students was listed as needed improvement. Online is not working as smoothly as in person – need playbook for this online system.

One comment questioned the placement of Technical Support Hubs. There need to be more hubs in the areas where parents have less access to easy transportation in order to make this more equitable. Four hubs is inadequate for assisting parents.

## Teaching (112)

*"There needs to be more time with the teacher."*

*"Quarters are too short. Zoom hours too long."*

*"The teachers are doing their best but the mandates in place requiring a certain amount of synchronous learning are not good for the younger kids."*

**26% found the quantity of schoolwork excessive.**

**20% found the difficulty of schoolwork too hard.**

**20% found the grading of assignments too harsh.**

***These metrics indicate the number of students struggling with online learning.***

Parent responses to teaching are subjective as it is not known how much training teachers received and how much support is ongoing for this online environment. For teachers who struggle with this format, are they receiving extra peer assistance?

For these respondents, even if the teachers are phenomenal, for most the online environment is not working for them. Students are falling behind or checking out. Some do not have parental support during the day, so parents struggle to understand what the child was taught and how they should help.

Distance teaching is not working for students with IEPs or undiagnosed learning difficulties, for elementary school especially the youngest and for second language acquisition.

Most language learning comments came from parents of students enrolled in a second language program, extrapolating to ELLs would make this a bigger problem.

Too much screen time or too much homework was a re-occurring theme. **54%** of the respondents indicated they thought there was too much screen time for their student.

The quarter system is a problem in high school with the AP courses.

Some respondents felt that the lead time for homework due dates was too short.

Comments cited the need for:

- Small group settings with teacher on zoom
- Recording Zoom lessons so parents can review who are not available during the instructional day
- Ice breakers for breakout rooms where kids unfamiliar with each other may not interact at all during the session.
- Posting assignments earlier with more lead time.
- Having a social time for students (mental health)
- Being more responsive to student needs and parent questions.

A number of comments in all categories touched on Equity Grading. It would appear that this concept has not been clearly communicated to the parents. A clear outline of what this is in plain English needs to be written and distributed.