

To: Interested Parties

From: Global Strategy Group

Date: November 17, 2020

Re: Parents' Survey Identifies Stark Racial and Income Disparities This Fall Semester

Global Strategy Group partnered with JerseyCAN and the New Jersey Children's Foundation to conduct an online (desktop and mobile) survey among 600 parents of children in New Jersey public schools from October 7th - 16th, 2020. The survey shows New Jersey parents are positive about their schools' and government's handling of the coronavirus: parents rate the job that their schools are doing handling the coronavirus as positive (77% excellent/good) and approve of the job Governor Murphy is doing reopening schools (70% approve). However, there is mixed satisfaction with remote learning overall, with only 42% of parents rating remote learning as successful (ratings 8-10 on a 0-10 scale, an additional 3% of parents say their child is not participating in distance learning now). And while 66% of parents say that remote learning has been better than last spring, the study shows a significant disparity with remote learning success – especially among low-income Black and Latinx parents. The following document defines the key findings of the survey.

Key Findings:

Stark differences among racial and economic groups could widen educational opportunity gaps among New Jersey public school students this year. Divisions along racial and economic lines not only show that there are gaps in educational opportunities afforded to students, but also highlight that low-income parents and parents of color are much more likely to be wary of schools reopening and the potential effects it will have on their families:

- **Parents of color and low-income parents are more likely to say that their child is fully remote learning.** Statewide, 52% of parents say they have at least one child that is participating in remote learning only, while 45% are participating in hybrid in-person and remote learning, and 11% are fully in person. However, 70% percent of Black parents, 61% of Latinx parents, and 72% of low-income families say that their child is remote learning only. Low-income parents (56%) and parents of color are also less likely to report having the option of hybrid learning (49% Black offered hybrid option, 55% Latinx), when compared to their white (76%) or more affluent peers (73%).
- **Low-income parents and parents of color, who have been disproportionately affected by the coronavirus pandemic in the state, are also disproportionately concerned about the virus.** For parents, their child contracting the virus (88%) or another family member contracting the virus (87%) are concerning issues. This concern is slightly more intense among low-income families and parents of color: 72% of low-income families said they were *very* concerned about their child contracting the virus, along with 70% of Black parents, 60% of Latinx parents, and 66% of remote learners – more so than high income families (52% very concerned), white parents (52%) and parents of in-person/hybrid learners (47%). And when it comes to family members contracting the virus, parents of color, particularly Black parents (57%) and Latinx parents (60%), are *very* concerned.
- **Ensuring their child's overall well-being is particularly concerning for low-income families, Black parents, and remote learners.** Almost six in ten (58%) parents say they are very concerned with ensuring that their child feels safe and emotionally at ease during this time. This is more of a concern for Black parents (64% very concerning), low-income parents (67%) and remote learners (64%), more so than higher-income parents (54%), white parents (58%) and parents of in-person/hybrid learners (55%).
- **Financial and work insecurity are top concerns for low-income parents and parents of color.** More than four in ten parents (43%) – including 52% of parents of remote learners and 66% of low-income parents – say they are uneasy about their family's financial situation over the next few months. This includes 56% of parents who say they or their partner had reduced or missed work as the result of the coronavirus. Low-income people of color are hit the hardest, not only are they more likely to change their work schedule so they can be home when their child is not in school (25% low-income Black and Latinx) than parents overall (18%) but are also more likely to say that they or their spouse will take time off or leave their job to stay at home (22% low-income Black and Latinx, 14% overall).

Low-income parents and low-income parents of color are disproportionately likely to want additional support.

Forty-seven percent of New Jersey families say that their child will need additional support to have a successful school year (8-10 on a 1 to 10 scale). The need is most concentrated among low-income parents of color: 54% percent of low-income Black parents and 56% of low-income Latinx parents are more likely than high-income parents (45%) and low-income parents overall (51%) to want additional support for their child. Low-income parents and parents of remote learners are also less likely to be supplementing their child’s education with educational sources outside public school options. Lack of being able to do these options due to economic reasons is most true among low-income families (24%, compared to 7% high income) and parents of remote learners (14% compared to 9% in-person/hybrid).

Overall adoption	Remote	In-person/hybrid	< \$50K	\$50K +	
21%	19%	25%	14%	24%	Relied on online learning tools that you can find on the internet to teach your child
16	15	16	17	15	Homeschooling instead of remote learning
13	9	18	7	16	Finding tutoring through a local community organization
12	12	14	8	14	Joining a "pod" with other parents to provide tutoring or other educational support outside of school
7	4	11	3	9	Transferring to a private or parochial school
6	3	9	4	7	Switching to another school district
6	4	8	5	6	Relocating to a different part of New Jersey or moved to a different state
12	14	9	24	7	I would like to enroll my child in these services, but my economic situation does not afford me choices
42	46	36	40	42	I did not seriously consider any of these options

Parents want regular access to their child’s teachers and want more information on how their child is academically progressing. We tested an extensive list of things schools could do to help support parents and students and found that although parents are receptive to all proposed options, 97% of parents say allowing their child to have regular live access to their teacher, such as live online lessons or phone/video calls would be the most helpful. However, only 57% of parents say that this is something offered at their child’s school and it is significantly less for Latinx parents (52%). Parents also feel that they are lacking information on how their child is progressing throughout the school year. Ninety-six percent of parents say that regular contact with their child’s teacher would be helpful, and of those 63% say it would be very helpful for them and their family. Additionally, 95% of parents say information on whether their child has learned what they are supposed to by the end of their grade would be helpful, with 66% saying it would be very helpful.

Would be helpful	Child’s school is doing this	
97%	57%	Providing students with regular live access to their teacher, such as live online lessons or phone/video calls
96	50%	Providing parents with regular contact with or access to their child's teacher
95	26%	Providing information for parents about whether their child has learned what they are supposed to by the end of their current grade
95	35%	Providing information about how my child will be evaluated during this time
94	34%	Providing resources and/or assistance to help with completing assignments and assessment tests online
93	24%	Providing information about what areas of learning parents should focus on with their child to be ready for success next school year
92	37%	Providing technical assistance to help families get set up for remote/distance learning
91	37%	Providing parents or students with regular contact with or access to a school counselor
89	50%	Providing mobile technology devices like iPads to families
89	25%	Sharing examples of resources to help parents teach their children during the day
87	21%	Providing free internet access to families
84	21%	Providing instructional materials and other resources to support students with disabilities
82	29%	Connecting parents to resources that can help with food, housing, employment, health, and other emergency needs
80	20%	Providing instructional materials for English learners
66	20%	Providing information for parents in languages other than English

As the New Jersey school year continues, there are clear issues that need to be addressed. Parents of color, low-income families, and parents of remote learners clearly indicate the best ways to improve the current educational experience for both them and their child:

- **Reliable internet access.** Lack of reliable internet access is a top concern among families this fall, with almost half (44%) of parents concerned about whether their family will be able to afford internet access. This issue is particularly concerning for low-income parents (64%) and low-income Black parents (75%). Six in ten parents (60%) say providing free internet access to families during this fall semester would be *very helpful* for families like theirs, yet only 21% of parents report that their child's school has made this available for students. Additionally, only 8% of parents overall say they receive free internet support from their school, and this is even worse among Black parents (1%) and remote learners (3%).
- **Closing technological barriers.** Sixty percent of parents say that their school lending technology devices like iPads or laptops to each child in the family would be *very helpful*, yet only half of parents say their children have access (50%). Nearly a third (30%) of parents say that their child does not receive any technology support – free internet or mobile device – with parents of remote learners (32%) more likely to say they are not receiving technology support than parents of in-person/hybrid learners (28%). And of those who are receiving support, more than a quarter (27%) of low-income families – especially low-income Latinx families (26%) – and more than one in five parents of remote learners (22%) say that the support given to the family is in fair/poor condition.
- **Food insecurity.** A staggering 35% of parents in New Jersey say that they have skipped meals or reduced the number of meals they consume personally or reduced/skipped their child's meals because of the pandemic. Low-income parents (51%) – specifically low-income Latinx parents (56%) and low-income Black parents (52%) parents – are particularly likely to have skipped or reduced their family's meals because of the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, 67% of low-income parents say that resources to help with food, housing, employment, health and other emergency needs would be *very helpful*, but only 29% of state schools are working to bridge this gap – suggesting this is a priority need among this population that should be addressed.

About this poll: The survey had a confidence interval of +/-4.0%. All interviews were conducted via web-based panel. Care has been taken to ensure the geographic and demographic divisions of public-school parents are properly represented.

Parents of Color: For the purposes of this research, "parents of color" indicates Black and Latinx parents who do not self-identify as white or identify as white but also identify as Hispanic or Spanish-speaking American.

Low-Income vs. High-Income: Low-income households are those whose total income is less than \$50,000 per year, while higher-income families are those whose household income totals more than \$50,000 per year.