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PARENTS' DEEP ENGAGEMENT IN REMOTE LEARNING DURING COVID-19 WILL REDEFINE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

Lack of Clear Expectations About Their Children's Learning Reinforces Already Inflated View of Achievement

Washington, D.C. – May 20, 2020 — As parents look to the next academic year, they report increased expectations from schools and deeper engagement with teachers and their children, according to a nationally representative survey released today by Learning Heroes, a nonprofit organization that supports parents and guardians as their children's most effective education advocate.

Parents 2020: COVID-19 Closures – A Redefining Moment for Students, Parents and Schools shows that children are spending an average of 4.2 hours per day -- or 46% of their waking time -- on remote learning, with parents dedicating an average of 2.5 hours per day in support of their children's schooling at home.

However, even with more hands-on time, parents continue to have an inflated view of their children's grade level ability, with 92% reporting their children are at or above grade level in reading and math. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows the figure is closer to 37% of students performing at that level.

Now, with more of a front row seat, roughly 7 out of 10 parents said they plan to get a better understanding of what their children are expected to learn in the new grade level, find more time to communicate with their children about their daily assignments, and seek a better understanding of where their child stands academically. Another 64 percent of parents said they plan to talk with the teacher about what they noticed about their children's schoolwork during school closures.

"What we are hearing from families right now is that even as challenging as school closures have been for them, they are looking to next year as an opportunity to engage even more deeply with their children's teachers and schools," said **Bibb Hubbard, Founder & President of Learning Heroes**. "This is a moment to establish clear expectations for parent-teacher relationships grounded in trust and a shared understanding of the child's progress and academic achievement."

The survey also found that parents' concerns about their children's education are weighing more heavily on them than even economic worries.

"Parents have the highest hopes for their kids. It is clear from this research they are eager to actively engage with their children's schools in this next school year as partners in education," said **Marc H. Morial, President and CEO, National Urban League**. "Schools must act to harness and welcome this energy. Together, we must work to identify the high quality supports and resources needed to ensure that our students are able to not only overcome any setbacks faced during the pandemic, but also to thrive and excel!"

Despite parents' concerns, the educational aspirations and expectations parents have for their children have only risen during the COVID-19 crisis, the survey found.

“It’s heartening to see continued hope and optimism from parents amid this pandemic despite the enormous pressures,” said **Janet Murguia, President and CEO, UnidosUS**. “At the same time, it’s alarming that while 83% of Hispanic parents find email an effective way to communicate with teachers, 41% of these parents are missing a device or reliable internet access. The digital divide deepens already existing inequities in our education system, and it is an area our leaders must address as we rebuild and recover.”

Seventy percent of parents said they want to know what material their child is missing at the end of the year and how their school plans to make it up.

“While the deeper connection parents currently feel to their children’s day-to-day learning is positive, this research shows there is still work to be done for truly effective family-school partnerships,” said **Leslie Boggs, president of National PTA**. “It is important that schools are responsive to the concerns parents expressed in this survey, and it is critical that investments are made in family engagement to strengthen family-school partnerships and improve outcomes for all children.”

Learning Heroes has free, bilingual and mobile-friendly tools available to parents to help them get a more accurate picture of their child’s progress and achievement. [Keep Calm, Learning is On](#) is an interactive roadmap with videos and resources to help parents support social, emotional, and academic development at home. The first step is the [Readiness Check](#), a game-like tool that shows parents how their child has progressed with key math and reading skills needed for success in the next grade. At the end, parents get free and fun activities for children to learn and practice these skills over the summer. They can also share the results with their child’s new teacher in the fall.

Parents 2020 was conducted April 14-May 6, 2020, by Edge Research among a nationwide sample of 3,645 parents and guardians with children in public K-12 schools.

The researchers also found:

- While parents feel more connected to their children’s day to day learning (67%), only a third (33%) report having regular access to teachers.
- Parents find texts and phone calls most effective for ongoing communication with teachers, but few teachers are using these modes of contact. Eighty percent (80%) of parents say texting or phone calls are most effective, but only 28% and 26%, respectively, say teachers are using these modes. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of parents say email is most effective and 62% say their child’s teacher is using that mode.
- Parents are most worried about their children missing social interactions (59%), the prospect of someone in their family getting COVID-19 (57%), academic losses (54%) and too much screen time (48%), more than food (30%) and financial security (40%).
- Parent aspirations for their children’s future have increased, with 76% of parents saying it is essential their children get a two- or four-year college degree.
- The increased engagement comes from parents across all racial and ethnic groups. While 65% of parents overall say they are anxious and worried about the current situation, about three quarters indicated that they feel hopeful or grateful. The emotions expressed of feeling hopeful or grateful were especially high among African American and Hispanic parents.

Find out more about Learning Heroes by visiting www.belearninghero.org.