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**New research highlights parents’ top concerns: child’s well-being, stress and anxiety, exposure to violence, and politicians’ reach into classrooms**

***Despite evidence of widescale learning loss, few parents cite reading and math skills as a worry and more than 9 in 10 report their child is at/above grade level***

**WASHINGTON (June 23, 2022)** – Parents say their child’s happiness and well-being, their child’s safety, and politicians’ reach into the classroom top their worries in Learning Heroes’ seventh annual national survey of parents and educators, released today.

The survey provides an important snapshot of parents’ and educators’ desires and concerns two years into the massively disruptive COVID-19 pandemic and amid deep political polarization that has seeped into the debate over classroom teaching.

“Parents and educators have a Herculean task ahead to address setbacks in children’s learning and well-being. They recognize the key to recovery efforts is to team up in support of students,” said Bibb Hubbard, founder and president of Learning Heroes. “But significant barriers remain as the system is designed to keep parents and teachers apart. We must listen to parents and educators and put the structures and supports in place we know will return dividends in student outcomes, educator retention, and family engagement.”

The survey, *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Way Forward for Equity-Centered Family Engagement*, found that parents — who have high aspirations for their child’s education — prioritize direct and truthful information about their child’s performance in school, even if things aren’t going well (85% top priority/very important). Yet, parent perception does not always match reality: 84% of parents report their child gets all B’s or above and more than nine in 10 (92%) say their child is at/above grade level despite that many students did not make academic progress during the pandemic and perform below grade level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Still, parents agree[[1]](#footnote-1) it will be essential for families and teachers to work closely together (89%) and to trust each other (84%) to help address the pandemic’s impact on learning.

Sixty-eight percent of parents worry some or a lot about having politicians who are not educators making decisions about what happens in the classroom, followed by worry about their child’s happiness and well-being (65%), their child experiencing stress/anxiety (60%), and their child being exposed to violence at school (60%). The survey was fielded before the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas.

These worries top concerns such as someone in the family contracting COVID-19 or paying their bills, the survey found. Educators share similar worries: the survey showed politicians making school curriculum decisions as a top worry for educators (68%), along with their students’ happiness and well-being (68%), students’ receiving academic support they need from their parents (66%), and challenges they face at home such as poverty/food insecurity (65%), and students being on track with academic expectations for their grade (64%).

Other key findings from the research:

**Parents have high aspirations and support equitable practices in schools**

* Parent aspirations are high, with 77% of parents saying it’s absolutely essential or very important that their child go to college.
* When asked whether they agree or disagree with statements about family engagement, “equity, meaning every student receives the support to thrive based on their individual needs,” rose to the top, with 54% strongly agreeing.
* Nearly 8 in 10 (78%) agree that more support is needed to help staff members identify and address biases they may have when trying to communicate with parents/families.
* More than a third of parents (36%) say they have talked to a member of the school administration or counselor about an incident where they believe a teacher was biased against their child because of the family’s race, ethnicity or background.

**A little information goes a long way**

* A staggering 92% of parents, regardless of race, ethnicity or background, believe   
  their child is at or above grade level, while only 59% of teachers think most students will show up for grade level work next school year.
* However, when presented with multiple pieces of information, parent understanding shifts significantly. When asked to imagine receiving the following: their child received a B on their report card in math, their child’s year-end state test results indicate they are below grade level in math, and their child’s results on other standardized tests indicate their child is below grade level in math, 57% of parents say they would be extremely or very concerned.

**Going beyond the headlines**

* While parents say they want the opportunity to express their feelings around some of the issues that have dominated the news, relatively few have voiced concerns about school curriculum at a school board meeting (19%), provided feedback on recommended books (17%), or requested their child be excused from an assignment (12%) this school year.

**About the survey**

The survey was conducted in partnership with National PTA, National Urban League, UnidosUS and Univision. Survey research associated with this effort included two online surveys – one among parents and one among educators:

**National online survey of parents** – This survey was a national online survey (n=1,405) of parents/guardians of children in grades K-12 in public school. Survey respondents were recruited using an online, non-probability sample with quotas set to ensure demographically representative audiences. The survey also included oversamples of Black and Hispanic parents to support greater  
statistical validity when examining the responses among those audiences. Oversample data and the dataset overall were weighted such that the final sample is representative of the U.S. population of public school parents per the latest publicly available American Community Survey data. The survey was  
offered in both English and Spanish and fielded April 6-May 4, 2022.

**National online survey of educators** – This national online survey included teachers (n=300) and principals (n=317) who currently work in public schools in grades K-12. Survey respondents were recruited using an online, non-probability sample focusing specifically on teachers and principals in the U.S.  Survey data were weighted to be representative of these respective audiences in the U.S. The survey was offered in English and fielded April 19-May 14, 2022.

Edge Research follows American Association for Public Opinion Research best practices in data collection.

**About Learning Heroes**

Learning Heroes supports parents as their child’s most effective education advocate, catalyzing equitable learning environments for all students. Through partnerships with organizations parents know and trust, we reach more than 20 million parents annually. For more information, visit[www.bealearninghero.org](http://www.bealearninghero.org/).

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1. Includes those who strongly agree and somewhat agree. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)