

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Hart Research Associates and Lake Research Partners

DATE: January 7, 2022

RE: National Survey of Public School Parent Voters

Hart Research Associates and Lake Research Partners conducted a national survey of 1,308 public school parents who are registered to vote, including sub-samples of 206 Black parents and 240 Hispanic parents. The survey was conducted online December 15 to 22, 2021. This memo reviews the survey's key findings.

1. Notwithstanding the considerable difficulties of the pandemic, public school parents express high levels of satisfaction with the schools serving their children and say that public schools are helping their children achieve their full potential.

- More than seven in 10 public school parents give a high performance rating to their children's schools. Fully 72% of parents say that the public school(s) their children attend provide them with an excellent or good quality education. In contrast, just 7% feel that the education received by their children is not so good or poor (another 21% say "adequate"). Parents across the demographic spectrum give high marks to their public schools, including Black parents (70% excellent or good), Hispanic parents (67%), and parents in cities (75%).
- Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the job public schools are doing to help their children achieve their potential. Four in five (79%) parents are satisfied with their children's public schools when it comes to helping their child or children achieve their full potential, while only 21% report feeling dissatisfied. This widespread satisfaction includes 83% of parents in cities, 81% of Black parents, 73% of Hispanic parents, and 81% of younger parents (under age 40).

2. Parents give very high performance ratings to their children's teachers, recognize the challenges facing teachers during the pandemic, and appreciate the extra efforts that teachers are making to help their children.

- A remarkable 78% of parents feel that the quality and performance of their children's teachers is excellent or good. This positive rating is seven points higher than the last time we asked this question of a national sample of parents (71% in 2013). Teachers receive high marks from parents in cities (84%), Black parents (72%), Hispanic parents (75%), and younger parents (79%).
- Parents feel overwhelmingly that teaching during the pandemic has been a hard job (79%), not an easy one (21%).
- Eighty percent (80%) say that their children's teachers have made an extra effort to help students during the pandemic.

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- When we ask parents to evaluate their children’s teachers on more specific dimensions, they consistently report that teachers have the qualities needed in a good teacher, including knowledge of subject matter (90% applies), caring about children (87%), and understanding the individual needs of each child (78%).
- The vast majority of parents say their children’s teachers communicate with parents and keep them informed (80%), an important reason for these positive views of teachers. Similarly, 79% are satisfied with the job their school does communicating with parents about academics.

	Describes Their Teachers Well %
Knows the subject material very well	90
Cares about children	87
Loves teaching	86
Are on the same team as parents	81
Communicates with parents and keeps them informed	80
Has made extra effort to help students during the pandemic	80
Understands the individual needs of each child they teach	78

3. Parents are very satisfied with the way their schools have handled the COVID-19 pandemic, and they reject the claim that schools waited too long to resume in-person instruction.

- Fully 78% express satisfaction with their school’s overall handling of the pandemic, including 82% of urban parents, 77% of Black parents, and 74% of Hispanic parents. More specifically, 83% are satisfied with the school’s efforts to keep students and staff safe.

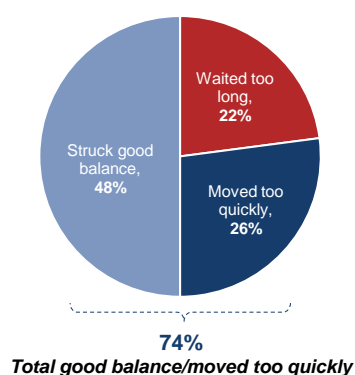
	Total Satisfied %	Total Dissatisfied %
Keeping students and staff safe from COVID-19	83	15
The way the school has handled the COVID-19 pandemic	78	21
Supporting students' social and emotional well-being during the pandemic	76	21
Helping students who experienced learning loss during the pandemic to catch up	70	21

- The pandemic has impacted most families, with 45% of parents reporting that one or more of their children have experienced learning loss and 51% reporting a negative emotional impact.

- Just 22% of parents believe that schools waited too long before resuming in-person instruction, while three-fourths feel that the school struck a good balance between safety and learning (48%) or actually moved too quickly to reopen buildings (26%). Just 20% of urban parents and 11% of Black parents feel that schools waited too long before reopening.

Contrary to the prevailing narrative, parents' do not believe that schools reopened too slowly.

In dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, do you think your child's public school waited too long or moved too quickly in resuming in-person instruction?



	Waited too long	Too quickly	Good balance
White	25%	22%	49%
Black	11%	34%	48%
Hispanic	21%	35%	39%
Democrats	13%	35%	49%
Independents	24%	26%	42%
Republicans	30%	16%	49%
Urban	20%	34%	43%
Suburban	23%	23%	49%
Small town/Rural	23%	18%	54%

4. Teachers unions are seen as a more positive force in education today than before the pandemic. Parents do not blame teachers or their unions when schools need to use remote instruction or make other schedule changes.

- By a remarkable 31-point margin, parents feel that teachers unions are having a positive (48%) rather than negative (17%) effect on the quality of education provided by public schools. This represents a substantial improvement over the eight-point margin (34% positive, 26% negative) recorded in 2013. Urban parents (62% to 9%) and Black parents (57% to 4%) especially feel that teachers unions are playing a positive role in education today.
- In response to the Omicron outbreak, some schools needed to periodically close buildings or return to online learning in December. Significantly, very few parents (14%, including 14% of urban parents and 9% of Black parents) blame teachers or teachers unions for these disruptions to their schedules. Instead, most feel that these disruptions were beyond anyone's control (47%) or the fault of districts and administrators (26%).

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5. Parents clearly identify the top education problems that need attention from leaders today. Their top concerns include inadequate school funding, students falling behind academically and socially during the pandemic, low pay for teachers, and shortages of counselors, nurses, and teachers.

The survey asks parents how concerned they are about several trends in education. Parents' greatest concerns include shortages of counselors and nurses (75%), students falling behind academically (72%) or lacking social interaction (70%) because of the pandemic, inadequate funding for schools (68%), and low teacher pay (65%).

Top Education Problems Identified by Parents

	<u>Very/Fairly Concerned</u> %
Shortages of guidance counselors, social workers, nurses	75
Students falling behind academically during the pandemic	72
Students lacking social interaction and getting isolated during the pandemic	70
Students not getting enough individual attention	69
Inadequate funding for schools	68
School buildings and facilities that are in poor condition and need repair	65
Teachers not being paid enough	65
Shortages of full-time and substitute teachers	65