DISTANCE LEARNING SURVEY SUMMARY

June 22, 2020

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The district surveyed families, students, and educators about the Spring 2020 distance learning experience. The purpose of the surveys was to inform future distance learning initiatives. Surveys were available to stakeholders from May 27th through June 3rd. Key findings from the survey are summarized below.

Instruction

Parents and students want more live instruction. At the elementary level, parent comments targeted a need for more live instruction in Mathematics. Elementary parents reported that small group lessons and direct conversations with teachers best supported student learning. Elementary students wanted access to their teachers throughout the day for help with questions. At the middle school, about one-third of the responding parents characterized the workload as 'Too Little' for the core academic subjects. Most middle school students, however, found the workload to be 'About Right.' Middle school parents felt that core academic courses need to meet daily and also shared that pre-recorded videos support learning if they are paired with student-teacher interaction. High school families were supportive of the A/B schedule, but also expressed a need for more live instruction. Like the middle school students, high school students also saw pre-recorded videos as a good supplement to live instruction, and the high school students do not want to be required to attend live meetings that do not include instructional activities.

In general, there was little or no live instruction for specials at the elementary level and encore classes at the secondary level. Stakeholders voiced a broad range of suggestions to address this issue, from more live instruction for these courses to the elimination of these classes in the online setting. Many secondary students commented on the excessive workload for select encore classes as compared to their core academic classes.

Based on parent and student report, a majority of students were comfortable learning online. While this is a positive finding, there is still a portion of the population that is not comfortable learning online. The open-ended comments offered some insight into this finding. Learning online was challenging for students with IEPs, children in homes where both parents are working, and families with younger students.

Communication

Centralized communication is necessary. Information dissemination on multiple platforms is confusing for both students and parents. Similarly, stakeholders commented on the volume of information students received in the distance learning setting, noting that students were overwhelmed. Parents requested the district use one system for communication across schools, grades, and across teachers. Parents also

requested concise emails with highlights for key details. At the secondary level, parents wanted more communication directly from the teaching team. The open-ended comments indicate that some teachers communicated often and clearly and others did not communicate with parents at all.

Parents and students at every level requested that assignments and meetings be posted in advance, at the start of each week. Additionally, parents and students at all levels would like to see their work for the week rather than daily assignments. Secondary students want one deadline for their work, rather than deadlines at different times for different courses.

Teachers addressed communication as well. At every level, teachers want clear expectations for their time, student accountability, and parent support for distance learning. Secondary parents echoed these sentiments as well.

Evaluation of Learning

Parents and students would like to know more about the learning progress. Secondary students and their parents would like letter grades instead of a pass/fail system, sharing that the pass/fail system left students both unmotivated and unclear about their learning. Students and parents at all levels also requested specific feedback on submitted work, especially writing.

At every level, teachers reported evaluating student learning as their biggest challenge. Most notably, teachers shared it was hard to tell if student work was completed independently or with parent support.

Professional Development

Teachers were asked to specify their needs for professional development. Many need strategies for instructional delivery and assessment, but a large number of teachers simply said they need time to develop material and share best practices with their colleagues. Others noted the need for hardware such as iPads, microphones, headsets, and touch-screen laptops for students and teachers.

ELEMENTARY FAMILY SURVEY

Families were asked to complete one survey for each child in the school. There were 1,108 survey responses from elementary school families. Survey responses were evenly distributed across schools and grades.

- Parents reported that children were generally comfortable learning in the online environment, with 18% reporting their child was 'Very Comfortable' and 52% reporting that the child was 'Comfortable.' Still, 23% reported their child was 'Only a Little Bit Comfortable' and 7% reported their child was 'Not Comfortable.'

- When asked how many hours children were engaged in school work on an average day, parents reported a range of responses:

Table 1. *Hours Engaged in School Work*

Time Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than 1 hour	32	3%
1-2 hours	222	20%
2-3 hours	337	30%
3-4 hours	297	27%
4-5 hours	163	15%
More than 5 hours	55	5%

- In general, a majority of parents characterized the workload as 'About Right' across subjects. The second most selected response across subjects was 'Too Little.' Most frequently, parents noted the workload was too little for Math and Science.

Table 2. % *Parent Characterization of Workload*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply at This Time
Reading	4%	76%	20%	0

Subject				
Writing	11%	66%	22%	1%
Art	7%	61%	21%	11%
Mathematics	6%	60%	34%	1%
PE/Health	9%	60%	19%	12%
Spanish	12%	55%	25%	8%
Music	11%	59%	19%	11%
Science	12%	48%	31%	8%

- Parents were asked to reflect on the helpfulness of the asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences across subjects. Parents showed the most enthusiasm for synchronous learning activities in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Also notable, the synchronous learning experiences had higher ratings of helpfulness than asynchronous learning experiences for the same subject.

  Nearly half of the respondents selected 'I'm not sure' about the helpfulness of synchronous learning experiences in the following subject areas: Science, Spanish, Music, PE/Health, and Art. Responses to the open-ended questions suggest few children experienced synchronous learning for these subjects.

Table 3. *Helpfulness of Asynchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Reading	32%	47%	18%	3%
Mathematics	30%	44%	21%	5%
Writing	27%	45%	23%	4%
Art	21%	36%	20%	22%
Science	21%	40%	24%	15%
Music	20%	34%	24%	22%
PE/Health	19%	35%	25%	22%
Spanish	18%	36%	30%	16%

Table 4. *Helpfulness of Synchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Reading	55%	26%	12%	7%
Writing	53%	24%	14%	8%
Mathematics	48%	23%	16%	14%
Music	25%	19%	18%	39%
Science	20%	15%	19%	46%
Spanish	20%	15%	21%	44%
PE/Health	19%	17%	20%	45%
Art	17%	15%	19%	49%

- Parent responses were positive about the level of communication during the school closure: 61% felt the level of communication was 'Just Right' and 67% felt concerns were 'Always' addressed in a timely fashion.

- 68% of parents showed a preference for a fixed daily schedule for live sessions with fluid structure for the remainder of assignments, as compared to a completely fixed daily schedule.

- Parents were asked to select up to five components of Westport's Distance Learning Plan that worked best for their child. Small group learning had very strong support, followed by communication with the teacher and online skill practice.

Table 5. *Components of Distance Learning Worked Best*

Component	Responses	%
Live small group sessions	974	89%
Communication with teacher	635	58%
Online skill practice	577	53%

Teacher feedback	457	42%
Teacher recorded sessions	451	41%
Live whole group sessions	437	40%
Teacher posted assignments	418	38%
Videos from other resources	305	28%
Teacher Office Hours	135	12%
Grading/assignment criteria	51	5%

- Parents were asked to select up to five components of Westport's Distance Learning Plant that proved challenging for their child. Live whole group sessions and videos from other sources were most challenging. While online skill practice worked well for some students (Table 5), it was challenging for others (Table 6).

Table 6. *Components of Distance Learning That Were Challenging*

Component	Responses	%
Live whole group sessions	336	35%
Videos from other resources	319	33%
Online skill practice	304	32%
Teacher posted assignments	265	28%
Teacher recorded sessions	214	22%
Grading/assignment criteria	193	20%
Teacher feedback	149	16%
Communication with teacher	120	13%
Teacher Office Hours	76	8%

Families had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback about communication and to suggest improvements to the distance learning plan. Responses to both questions centered on key themes, detailed below.

- **Live Teacher Time**
  Above everything, parents want their children to spend more time online with teachers, especially for core academic subjects. A majority of the responses touched on this issue.

  Parents commented on the value of live small groups for learning. One parent said, "More live small lessons. The connection to the teachers and classmates were not only valuable teaching time, but very reassuring socially." Similar to the feedback on more live time with teachers, this point was expressed simply and often.

- **Live Math Instruction**
  Math instruction was a concern. Based on the survey responses, it appeared there was minimal live math instruction and that students were directed to Khan Academy and IXL. Parents were critical of both programs. One parent said, "IXL math is a great tool, although only for practicing material my child has already learned. Otherwise, I am first teaching my child the math lesson, and then the assignment is done. The math lessons on Khan Academy are not helpful, so again I am doing the teaching before my child completes the math assignments on Khan." Another said, "Youtube videos on how to add or subtract do NOT work for kids, especially those who struggle to begin with." Parents noted that the live learning sessions with teachers were focused on topics other than math. In general, many parents simply said, "more live math instruction."

- **Centralize Information Distribution**
  Parents want one place to review schedules and assignments. One parent said, "Information is coming at us as parents from many directions - as an email, as a link posted in GC, as a Google doc, etc." Another said, "Streamlining communications to one consolidated vehicle would be more practical and less confusing. For example, receiving various communication via multiple student emails, daily overview and separate parent emails can put students and parents on a bit of a goose chase." Another theme in the comments was a request for concise, targeted messages. Several parents noted that PTA emails added to the volume of information they received and complicated their efforts to support their child.

  Additionally, families would like to see assignments and a schedule for Google Classroom meetings in advance. Some parents suggested a weekly planning email and a daily update. Many parents suggested a brief, live meeting to start each day. Others noted the value of pre-recorded daily messages from school administrators, sharing that it contributed to a sense of community outside of the school building.

  Finally, many parents requested schools use one system across grades and across teachers.

- **Feedback on Student Progress**
Parents want more feedback on student progress. One parent said, "It would be nice to know how my child is doing…to get feedback on where he is in the curriculum, what he needs to work on, what he's doing well." Another shared, "There's very little closing of the loop. Are they successfully completing tasks? Need more work? Excelling?" A different parent said, "For parents who are both working full time it would be helpful to hear from my children's teachers on how they are doing. Are the submitting quality work in a timely way? Are the teachers even looking at their work? My kids and I are getting virtually no feedback." Another shared, "There is no need to give grades, or in any way penalize children who cannot complete the work due to their particular personal or familial circumstances. But, at least for my child, I think feeling obligated to turn something in and receive feedback on it would serve as a motivation to work harder."

  Parents want to connect with teachers. One parent said, "Schedule old-fashioned phone calls between parents and teacher… If we want distance learning to succeed, active collaboration between teachers and parents is critical." Another suggested, "There should be weekly emails, and possibly a monthly parent/teacher conference to touch base."

  Another theme in the comments was the need for children to both receive feedback on writing assignments and then revise the writing assignments to address teacher feedback. One parent said, "My son does writing assignments yet gets no feedback, so there is little learning."

- **Support for Working Families**
Many commented that it is extremely challenging to support distance learning if parents are working. One parent commented, "With 2 working parents we can't carve out consistent time for the kids to work, so have to do it around meetings or in the mornings/evenings. Kids don't want to learn from us, so we really can only home school a maximum of 2 hours a day. Anything more is a struggle. We never get to the 'electives' like science, art, PE or music." Another offered, "Create a program friendly for working parents and families where there are babies and toddlers. Don't assume the mom or the dad can spend every minute of school hours teaching."

- **Alternate Strategies for Younger Students**
Distance learning was especially challenging for younger students. One parent said, "What works for K-2 does not necessarily work for 3-5 or upper grades. No one size fits all. Go easier on the younger kids; focus on the most critical subjects and do them well." Another said, "We found it challenging that our kindergartener couldn't navigate the computer alone--I had to be sitting with him all the time. There were moments where he would have a meeting or work on math independently, but the majority of the time I was doing one on one work with him." One parent said, "Keeping track of what is due in which subject is way beyond the reach of most elementary students working independently. Young students are not capable of self-motivating and self-teaching to the extent the district is

demanding of them." Parents of younger students also expressed concern about having them on the computer for multiple hours each day.

- **Re-structured Specials**

  The approach to Specials instruction was challenging for parents. One parent said, "If the specials are so important, the teachers should schedule live classes. Even once in a while to guide a project or a learning benchmark would help. To expect parents and kids to simply follow prerecorded or posted assignments with everything else they're going through is completely unrealistic, especially in elementary school." One parent offered, "It could help to have activities for specials class posted on Monday with the goal being to complete them by the end of the week." Another suggested, "I very much value our specials teachers but it would be helpful if the specials become optional if we are to move to distance learning again." This parent added that the basic school work took their family 4-5 hours to work through, and when that work was done they needed to disengage from technology. Another said, "Checking in with 5 different 'specials' teachers on top of the home room teacher responsible for the core reading, writing, math and social studies, completing all of the assignments and tasks is not only unrealistic but also without intention or purpose to truly provide what's in the best interest of the child."

At the conclusion of the survey, parents were offered a chance to share more thoughts. While many of the comments addressed the issues outlined above, a large number of parents used this space to express gratitude for individual teachers, their schools, and the district at large.

There were 538 survey responses from fourth and fifth grade students, evenly split between the grades.

- While a majority of the students (75%) reported being 'Very Comfortable' or 'Comfortable' learning online, 20% (n = 107) reported being 'Only a Little Bit Comfortable' and 5% (n = 27) reported being 'Not Comfortable.'

- Students were asked to characterize the workload across subjects. A greater percentage of students found the workload for Reading and Writing to be 'About Right' as compared to the workload for Mathematics. Responses are presented by the 'About Right' column.

Table 7. *Workload Across Subjects*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply at This Time
Reading	9%	84%	6%	0%
Writing	11%	79%	9%	1%
Art	6%	71%	19%	3%
Spanish	14%	67%	16%	3%
PE/Health	5%	67%	22%	6%
Music	13%	66%	16%	4%
Mathematics	19%	66%	16%	0%
Science	17%	63%	17%	2%

- Students were asked about the helpfulness of various components of the live sessions. Responses are presented by 'Very Helpful.'

Table 8. *Helpfulness of Components of Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Connecting with classmates	65%	21%	10%	5%

Getting feedback about my work	65%	25%	6%	4%
Learning new things	44%	40%	10%	6%
Reviewing things I've already learned	29%	45%	21%	4%

- Students were asked about the helpfulness of various learning activities used outside of live sessions. Responses are presented by 'Very Helpful.'

Table 9. *Helpfulness of Learning Activities Outside Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Feedback from my teacher	75%	20%	3%	2%
Instructional videos from other sources (like Khan Academy or Lexia)	38%	40%	18%	4%
Pre-recorded videos from my teacher	37%	42%	15%	6%
Writing or research projects	37%	42%	12%	9%
Worksheets or web sites to practices skills I've learned in live sessions	24%	50%	18%	8%

Students had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on the distance learning plan. Note that these comments are included as written by the students, with some punctuation added for clarity.

Students were asked to suggest improvements to the distance learning plan. Suggestions centered on key themes:

- **Google Meets**
  Students want more Google Meets. Google Meets were described as a way to "connect with classmates," "ask teachers questions," and "talk about what we learned."

  Students want their teachers accessible all day. While many students said they would like to be live with teachers all day, others noted that it would be helpful if teachers were available to

answer questions during the day. When asked for one improvement to the Distance Learning Program, one student said, "It would be that we would be able to ask our teachers questions about what we are doing any time we want to, even if there isn't a google meet, because sometimes I feel like I have no idea what to do." Another said, "If I want to ask my teacher a question or for help, it will take while. I think it would help a lot if there was some way that we could ask them a question and for the teacher to answer." One student suggested, "I think that there should be one google meet code for the class that the teacher is always on during the school day. That way, if we have a question, we just have to go to a google meet and we get our answer. It would be better than emails because you don't have to wait for a reply." Several students also mentioned they would like to have the opportunity to check in with teachers in the afternoon as well as the morning. One said, "In the morning, I don't have many questions because we haven't started our work yet. If it was at the end of the day, more students would have more questions because we would be finished with our work."

While many students shared targeted suggestions for live teacher time, others commented that they wanted to learn more during Google Meets. One student said, "I think that the teachers should interact with the kids more because every Wednesday I see my teacher and classmates for google meets but that is just to play a game. I feel like we should have an entire class on google meets and everyone is on mute while the teacher teaches. I feel that that should happen every day for normal homeroom subjects." Another said, "During live sessions, we aren't really taught. Giving students work and the teacher not going over the subject makes students learn more independently, which can be beneficial, but tough when new studies begin." Another student said, "In meets we have, it's mostly just listening to the teacher give a main overview of the week. When we do the big meets, for our main class, it's meh." Many students requested more "one-on-one time" with teachers. Students would also like Google Meets with the Specials teachers.

- ### Scheduling the Workload
  Some students noted they would like to see all of the work for the week at once, and others simply asked that for the work to be posted the night before so they can get an early start. One student said, "I think a good improvement would be maybe teachers could also post work for the next day so kids could prepare for that." Others suggested focusing on different topics on different days of the week. One said, "I think we should take two classes every day, like it should switch off like on Monday reading and writing, on Tuesday math and science." Another student said, "In this plan, I am always wondering what my priorities are and it takes me half an hour to get them straight."

  Students also requested time for lunch and recess, as well as scheduled breaks during the day.

- ### Pre-recorded Videos
  From the responses, students benefited from pre-recorded teacher videos. Students commented

that "mini lessons" were helpful and others added that pre-recorded videos were helpful for "explaining things." One student shared, "Maybe having a video that goes with every learning bit, with a little more explanation to what we are doing." Several students felt that videos were helpful for learning, but it was also important to have live time with teachers to ask questions. Regarding videos, one student offered, "Maybe not to make the videos so long and keep them to about 7-8 minutes, because once in reading I had to watch a 24-minute video and I think that is REALLY too much."

- Worksheets
Students asked for more work on paper, including worksheets, coloring, and projects. One student said they would all be healthier if they got off the screens, adding, "We could do this by doing pictures and posting them in our document or doing videos and posting them on Flipgrid."

At the end of the survey, students were given the opportunity to share additional thoughts. Students used this opportunity to express gratitude for their teachers and schools, but also to share that they are stressed with all their schoolwork and everything that is going on in the world right now.

Overall, 90 teachers responded to the Elementary Teacher Survey. Responses were generally evenly distributed across schools and grades.

- A majority of teachers were comfortable in the distance learning environment: 21% reported being 'Very Comfortable' and 34% reported being 'Comfortable.' However, 39% reported themselves only 'Somewhat Comfortable' and 6% were 'Not Comfortable at All.'

- More teachers reported being 'Very Comfortable' or 'Comfortable' providing pre-recorded direct instruction to students as compared to live direct instruction. Additionally, responses show teachers are not comfortable evaluating student progress in the distance learning environment.

Table 10. *Comfort Level with Various Aspects of Distance Learning*

	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all comfortable
Providing Direct Instruction (prerecorded)	33%	43%	19%	4%
Providing Direct Instruction (live)	21%	34%	39%	6%
Providing Feedback to Students	20%	42%	36%	2%
Evaluating Student Progress	7%	23%	47%	23%

- When asked about evaluating student learning, nearly 27% of teachers responded that they have 'Not Really' effectively evaluated student learning in the distance learning environment. While 51% felt they had effectively evaluated student learning in some areas, only 22% felt they had effectively evaluated student learning in all areas.

- In the survey, teachers were asked to select two of the following as the most effective uses of live sessions. Teachers felt the most effective use of live sessions was for targeted, small-group instruction or to connect and catch up with students.

Table 11. *Most Effective Uses of Live Sessions*

Answer	Rank 1	Rank 2	Weighted Rank (Score)
Targeted instruction for individuals or small groups	40	23	1 (103)
To connect and catch up with students	32	25	2 (89)
Direct instruction in content/skill for whole class	9	7	3 (25)
To answer questions	4	13	4 (21)
Student discourse	2	9	5 (13)
For feedback to students	0	11	6 (11)
Evaluation of student progress	3	2	7 (8)

- Teachers were asked to select the most effective tool to provide feedback to students.

Table 12. *Most Effective Tool for Feedback*

Answer	Responses	%
Individual live sessions	58	64%
Small group live sessions	57	63%
Written feedback in response to student work	43	48%
Corrected assignments	6	7%
Tests/Quizzes	5	6%
Whole class live sessions	3	3%

Teachers had the opportunity to share feedback in an open-ended format.

Evaluating Student Learning

Teachers were asked to share the most effective tools for evaluating student progress. Teachers felt they were best able to evaluate progress in small group or one-one-one Google Meets. Another important theme among the responses was that it was hard to 'tease out' whether students completed their work independently or with their parents. The most frequently cited programs for the evaluation of student learning included: Khan Academy, IXL, and Lexia. Flipgrid and Jamboard were also mentioned.

When asked about which subject was most difficult to evaluate, nearly everything was mentioned: reading, math, writing, and students' emotional well-being, band, and physical education. Among those subjects, the most frequent response seemed to be reading. One teacher said, "Usually we have lots of opportunities within the regular school day to evaluate student thinking and progress - read aloud discussions, writing/jotting in notebooks, listening to partner discussions or turn & talk during a mini-lesson. There's so little of that now that it's hard to really know if students are effectively and regularly using the strategies we're teaching." Writing was also mentioned frequently. As with the previous question, teachers again noted it was hard to the level of support provided by parents, and this issue was especially pronounced in student writing. One teacher said, "It is clear that some students are totally on their own, and other parents are totally involved and helping them do their assignments."

Professional Development Needs

Teachers were asked to list their professional development needs related to distance learning. A variety of needs were mentioned, including:

- Strategies for delivering instruction online
- Best practices for assessment, student feedback, and family engagement
- Time for collaboration with grade-level colleagues across the district
- Time to practice with different programs (Google Meet/Classroom, Flipgrid, Peardeck, Screencastify, whiteboard software)
- Ideas for implementing better instruction in mathematical problem solving oninle
- Modeled lessons for math instruction
- Assessment for targeting students' reading level and reading growth
- Strategies for disengaged learners.

Supports for Teachers

Teachers were asked to make recommendations that might make distance learning more manageable or reduce their stress. Suggestions included:

- Clear expectations for live teaching time, small-group work, student attendance, student accountability, and parent support for learning
- Set schedules for student instruction, preparation for instruction, collaboration, and parent communication
- Pre-recorded direct instruction lessons from the district
- Block scheduling to attempt to ensure students complete their work at set times
- Live classes for specials to allow students to give students a way to see each other
- Continued use of Wednesday afternoon for planning time
- Touch-screen laptops for students and teachers
- Exposure to successful distance learning practices within the district
- Access to the school building for work, even without students
- Reduced volume meetings outside of meetings with students.

MIDDLE SCHOOL FAMILY SURVEY

Overall, there were 494 survey responses from families: 39% from sixth grade, 36% from seventh grade, and 24% from eighth grade.

- Parents reported that children were comfortable learning in an online environment, with 27% reporting their child was 'Very Comfortable' and 46% reporting that the child was 'Comfortable.'

- When asked if their child participated in all of the live sessions for their classes, 66% of reported 'All of the Time.'

- When asked how many hours children were engaged in school work on an average day, parents reported a range of responses:

Table 13. *Hours Engaged in School Work*

Time Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than 1 hour	22	4%
1-2 hours	78	16%
2-3 hours	149	30%
3-4 hours	125	25%
4-5 hours	78	16%
More than 5 hours	40	8%

- In general, at least half of the respondents characterized the workload as 'About Right' across subjects. About one-third of the respondents characterized the workload as 'Too Little' for the core academic subjects as well as Physical Education. Responses in the table below are sorted by the 'About Right' column.

Table 14. % *Parents Characterization of Workload*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply
Mathematics	4%	59%	37%	0%

Subject			
Social Studies	9%	59%	31%	1%
Science	9%	58%	33%	1%
Art	13%	57%	22%	8%
English Language Arts	11%	55%	34%	0%
Music	7%	55%	26%	12%
PE/Health	6%	54%	32%	9%
World Language	10%	53%	31%	7%
Engineering	9%	52%	27%	12%
Theater	5%	43%	18%	34%

- Parents were asked to reflect on the helpfulness of the asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences across subjects. Parents showed more enthusiasm for synchronous learning activities than asynchronous learning experiences.

  A large group of parents selected 'I'm not sure' about the helpfulness of synchronous learning experiences in the encore subjects. Responses to the open-ended questions indicate few children had synchronous learning experiences in these subjects.

  Responses below are sorted by the 'Very Helpful' column.

Table 15. *Helpfulness of Asynchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Mathematics	27%	42%	22%	9%
Social Studies	25%	46%	20%	10%
Science	23%	46%	23%	8%
English Language Arts	21%	49%	20%	10%
World Language	18%	44%	21%	16%

Art	18%	34%	22%	25%
Music	16%	31%	23%	30%
Engineering	15%	30%	25%	30%
PE/Health	10%	32%	27%	31%
Theater	8%	28%	18%	46%

Table 16. *Helpfulness of Synchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Mathematics	52%	28%	14%	6%
Social Studies	47%	32%	14%	7%
Science	45%	32%	16%	7%
English Language Arts	44%	33%	16%	7%
World Language	36%	26%	12%	26%
Music	25%	20%	15%	41%
Engineering	16%	18%	17%	49%
Theater	14%	14%	14%	57%
Art	14%	17%	17%	52%
PE/Health	13%	16%	18%	53%

- When asked about the level of communication from the middle school during the school closure, families were split between 'Just Right' (46%) and 'Not Enough' (49%).

- Parents generally were positive about receiving responses to their individual questions or concerns.

Middle school families had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback about communication and to suggest improvements to the distance learning plan. Responses to both questions centered on key themes, as detailed below.

- **More Live Instruction**
  Parents want more than 30 minutes of live instruction weekly for each class. Many parents felt that core academic courses need to meet daily. Those who commented on encore classes noted that there was no live instruction for these courses. A majority of the comments were centered on what was perceived as an inadequate level of live instruction.

- **More Communication from Teachers**
  Parents want to hear from teachers. One parent said, "If by communication, you mean email updates, then that part is fine. But many teachers have NOT been as present as they should be during this time, and they certainly do not seem to be coordinated in their approach." Parents want updates on assignments and expectations directly from the teaching team. One parent suggested teachers or team leaders, "include an update/recap each week of what each grade is covering so parents can stay in sync and discuss with their children." Another added, "Getting only day to day assignments gives a sense of busy work without a structure and ultimate goal. Some teachers provided a snapshot for the week, but better roadmaps and communication of goals are important for parents and kids." The daily posted assignments were frequently referred to as busy work. Parents felt it would be more helpful for teachers to post assignments weekly.

- **Feedback on Learning Progress**
  Parents were critical of the pass/fail grading system, sharing that it left students unmotivated and unclear about their learning. One parent said, "It would also be helpful to receive actual contact from teachers with general comments about how our child is doing in their classes, especially since this quarter is P/F and a 'P' only requires 60%. This is just far too general to be able to assess whether our child is truly 'getting' the curriculum." Another explained, "There is no proactive communication from teachers (unless a student is failing which is a very low bar) so parents are left in the dark about what kids are learning and what is expected." Still another parent said, "I would like to hear more from the teachers. We feel very disconnected from the quality of work being submitted as we don't see grades."

- **Streamline Communication**
  Parents want one place to look for assignments and schedules. Responding parents wanted all teachers to use either Google or Schoology, and they would like to be able to access the selected platform to check on their child's work. One parent said, "There are too many means of communications at the moment. Some teachers send gmails, other send emails over Schoology, yet others send alerts. Also, there are too many various platforms on which students needs to upload their works. It needs to be standardized across all classes to make it less confusing."

- **Attendance**

  Parents suggested a formal attendance policy and a requirement for students to have their cameras on during live instruction.

In addition to these broader themes, comments included very targeted suggestions for future distance learning efforts. These included:

- Conferencing between teachers and students, with standardized approaches across classes
- More pre-recorded instruction to supplement live instruction
- Small-group discussions as a follow-up to live instruction
- A structured day that is analogous to a school day, following the in-school schedule
- Peer collaboration
- Long-term research group projects.

At the conclusion of the survey, parents were asked if there was anything else they would like to say. Many, many parents used this space to express gratitude for the teachers and the work of the district. In addition to the suggestions detailed above, parents noted that distance learning is especially challenging for students with IEPs. Other parents used this space to comment that they felt the distance learning program was geared towards the 'lowest common denominator.'

Overall, there were 604 survey responses from middle school students, evenly split across grades.

- While a majority of the students reported being 'Very Comfortable' or 'Comfortable' learning online, 19% (n = 112) reported being 'Only a Little Bit Comfortable' and 6% (n = 35) reported being 'Not Comfortable.'

- 66% of students reported attending live sessions 'All of the Time' and 34% reported attending 'Most of the Time' or 'Some of the Time.'

- Students reported a wide range of hours spent on school work.

Table 17. *Hours Engaged in School Work*

Time Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than 1 hour	11	2%
1-2 hours	80	13%
2-3 hours	178	30%
3-4 hours	168	28%
4-5 hours	115	19%
More than 5 hours	49	8%

- Students were asked to characterize the workload across subjects. Note that more students characterized the workload for English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies as 'Too Much' as compared to Mathematics. Also, 31% (n = 184) characterized the workload for Art as 'Too Much.' Responses are presented by the 'About Right' column.

Table 18. *Workload Across Subjects*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply
Mathematics	9%	85%	6%	0%
Science	19%	77%	3%	0%
English Language Arts	21%	76%	3%	0%

PE/Health	9%	74%	15%	1%
Social Studies	24%	72%	4%	0%
Music	13%	72%	11%	5%
World Language	20%	66%	6%	8%
Engineering	21%	64%	9%	5%
Art	31%	64%	3%	3%
Theater	8%	55%	9%	28%

- Students were asked about the helpfulness of various components of the live sessions and learning activities outside of live sessions. Students found feedback from the teacher outside of live sessions most helpful. Responses are presented by 'Very Helpful.'

Table 19. *Helpfulness of Components of Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Getting feedback about my work	38%	30%	24%	7%
Learning new concepts and ideas	31%	42%	22%	5%
Reviewing things I've already learned	27%	44%	25%	4%
Connecting with classmates	25%	32%	35%	8%

Table 20. *Helpfulness of Learning Activities Outside Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Feedback from my teacher	64%	26%	7%	3%
Pre-recorded videos from my teacher	40%	39%	18%	3%

Worksheets or web sites to practices skills I've learned in live sessions	32%	43%	21%	4%
Instructional videos from other sources (like Khan Academy or Lexia)	26%	47%	24%	3%
Writing or research projects	17%	45%	33%	5%

Students were offered the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on the distance learning plan. Overall, many students felt they were assigned too much work, and many asked for more work. Other comments centered on key themes:

- **Live Classes**
  Students want more live instruction from teachers. While most students simply stated, "move live classes," others had more specific feedback.

  Students specifically commented on the purpose of the live time. One student said, "For the live meetings with our class and teacher, it is not very engaging since almost every single person is muted and turned their cameras off the whole time. So we can't really have much of a conversation…Because of this the meetings can end up feeling forced." Another added, "Live classes really just tell us what our work is for the day, which is perfectly easy to understand without them." Another student suggested it was not necessary for live classes to be mandatory because, "most of the time they're not needed." Others felt that live classes could be structured to feel more like school. One student said, "One improvement would be to have live sessions corresponding to our schedule that we had when we were in Bedford. All school will be on live sessions. And homework will be done by ourselves."

  Students suggested that teachers record live sessions to help them review if they are confused or miss a session. Several students also suggested a schedule for live extra help sessions, in addition to instructional time.

- **Communication**
  Students would like to see all of their assignments in advance to help them plan their time. One student said, "I think they need to post all the assignments on Monday by 8am due for Friday at noon. Having to check all the time and have assignments pop up at all hours feels frustrating. I believe you all need to realize that I have other things I need to do because of COVID-19. With both my parents working, I am often responsible for my 3 younger siblings. We are all adjusting and making accommodations - I have no problem doing the work but the randomness at when assignments are posted is frustrating." Another added, "Post the work

at the same time, not at different times in the day, because when I think I am done with school work then I double check I am then I see that there is more work."

A number of students commented that the work was not evenly distributed across the week. One said, "Some days we have almost no homework and others we have so much that I go to bed late." Another said, "For almost all my classes you can find one day where there is no work and another where there is upwards of over 5 hours for a specific class. Whether that be unclear instructions, hard to reach deadlines or an over-abundance of work you need to get done for other classes it really makes an anxiety inducing experience."

Students want teachers to use one platform to communicate. They also want to see a list of all of their assignments across classes in one place. One student offered, "I would like it if there was a discussion board all the time for each class so that you could post a question and your classmates and or teacher could help you with it." At the middle school, many students specifically expressed a preference for Google Classroom.

- Feedback
  Students would like to eliminate the pass/fail system so they have a better sense of their progress. One student said, "Right now I have no idea how well I am doing." Another said, "I feel like that new grading technique makes things very confusing and can put lot of pressure on you because you want to get the assignments done. You get worried that you'll get a fail if you don't get the assignments done on time." Another said, "It seems that all of the kids, myself included, are slacking off because we know that we'll get above an F."

- Peer Connection
  Students want more live connection with their peers. This connection was a need that students saw as separate from instructional time. One student said, "An improvement I would make is to connect with classmates more because on the live sessions it's just the teacher teaching a lesson. I think if we are going to have live sessions we might as well connect with our classmates." Students also noted that group projects would help with the need for peer connection.

- Encore Classes
  Many students commented on the excessive workload for art and engineering. It was also noted that these classes required students to use material they did not have at home.

- Timing
  Students felt that 9am was too early for live classes. Students also commented on issues with the scheduling of live classes, but the issue was not clear. From the comments, it seems that students need a break between live classes and that live classes are not evenly spaced across the week.

There were 62 responses to the Middle School Teacher Survey.

- A majority of teachers were comfortable in the distance learning environment: 16% reported being 'Very Comfortable' and 45% reported being 'Comfortable.' However, 32% reported themselves only 'Somewhat Comfortable' and 6% were 'Not Comfortable at All.'

- Middle school teachers were comfortable providing feedback to students. More teachers reported being 'Very Comfortable' providing pre-recorded direct instruction to students as compared to live direct instruction. Still, teachers were at least somewhat comfortable with live instruction. Responses also show that teachers were less comfortable evaluating student progress in the distance learning environment than the other aspects of distance learning.

Table 21. *Comfort Level with Various Aspects of Distance Learning*

	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all comfortable
Providing Feedback to Students	37%	48%	15%	0%
Providing Direct Instruction (prerecorded)	35%	34%	16%	14%
Providing Direct Instruction (live)	16%	45%	32%	6%
Evaluating Student Progress	15%	37%	44%	5%

- When asked about evaluating student learning, 65% of teachers responded they have effectively evaluated student learning 'In Some Areas' in the distance learning environment. 29% have effectively evaluated student learning 'In Most Areas.'

- Teachers were asked to select the most effective use of live sessions.

Table 22. *Most Effective Tool for Feedback*

Answer	Rank 1	Rank 2	Weighted Score
Targeted instruction for individuals or small groups	19	13	1 (51)
To answer questions	11	21	2 (43)
Direct instruction in content/skill for whole class	16	7	3 (39)
To connect and catch up with students	12	9	4 (33)
Student discourse	3	5	5 (11)
For feedback to students	1	5	6 (7)
Evaluation of student progress	0	2	7 (2)

- Teachers were asked to select the most effective tool to provide feedback to students.

Table 23. *Most Effective Tool for Feedback*

Answer	Rank 1	Rank 2	Weighted Score
Written feedback in response to student work	21	21	1 (63)
Individual live sessions	24	13	2 (61)
Small group live sessions	8	11	3 (27)
Corrected assignments	5	9	4 (19)
Tests/Quizzes	1	5	5 (7)
Whole class live sessions	2	2	6 (6)

Teachers had the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on the distance learning plan.

Evaluating Student Learning

Teachers were asked to share their most effective tools to evaluate learning. At the middle school level, teachers named a variety of programs, including: Flipgrid, uploaded photos of work, Schoology Assessments, Gizmos, and Google Forms. The most frequently noted evaluation tool was written responses, with teachers providing feedback on the writing. One teacher noted, "This also happens to be the most time consuming for students to prepare and for teachers to judge." Many teachers also noted they felt most comfortable evaluating learning when they could actually connect with students, but schedules were challenging to coordinate. Teachers felt it was hard to discern who completed the work. One teacher said, "There is no way to tell if the student did the work themselves or if they collaborated with a peer or got help from someone at home (parent, sibling, tutor)." In response to the question of effective tools to evaluate student learning in the online setting, one teacher simply said, "I haven't found any."

Teachers were also asked to comment on what has been most difficult to evaluate. Many teachers used this space to note concerns about students' stress level and their emotional well-being. Others shared that it is challenging to determine if the work submitted was truly from the student working independently. Some teachers noted it was challenging to evaluate anything that was not completed in a live session. Subjects that were specifically noted as challenging included: Science, Physical Education, and Theater.

Challenges in Distance Learning

Most teachers noted it was challenging to keep students engaged. One teacher said, "Sometimes they just don't show up. Some refuse to turn on their cameras. Some give one-word answers." Another added, "Students are reluctant to speak up or have discussions as effectively online as when they were in a classroom." One teacher said, "Without the structure and social networks of normal school, these students cannot or are not motivated to learn." One teacher concluded, "It is almost like we gave too much flexibility in the beginning and then students did not want to change their routine. I have students every week say that they slept through class or extra help and want an individual session for me to re-teach the lesson- outside of my extra help hours."

Teachers also noted the pass/fail grading system contributed to low student engagement. Teachers felt that students need to be held accountable for their academic performance. One teacher said, "This robbed us of our agreed-upon language by which we can talk quickly and effectively about student progress."

Some teachers felt students were overwhelmed with the volume of information shared in the online setting. One said, "Students were unprepared in terms of monitoring their email, responding to teacher feedback, and navigating all the different platforms. Holding students accountable for work has been extremely time consuming. If I am checking every assignment for completion and (often) accuracy, I spend more time grading than actually teaching and giving my students face time." Teachers also felt that changing platforms and changing modalities for

instruction delivery confused students. Another teacher concluded, "Everything about distance learning is far inferior to in-person education for the age-group with which I work."

Other teachers noted it was challenging to balance their own family needs and teaching. One said, "I find myself doing managerial work (correcting, emailing, creating assignments/assessments) late at night after my kids are asleep. This has been the only way to stay ahead and meet my teaching needs."

Professional Development Needs
Teachers were asked to list their professional development needs related to distance learning. A variety of needs were mentioned, including:

- Strategies for student engagement
- Strategies for assessment
- Common planning time. Many respondents expressed a need for planning time over and above a need for professional development.
- A brief list of recommended tools, and training on those tools. Overall, the use of multiple platforms was time-consuming for teachers and confusing for students.
- Discipline-specific training (i.e., Physical Education or Science)
- Learning walks online.

Supports for Teachers
Teachers were asked to make recommendations that might make distance learning more manageable or reduce their stress. Suggestions include:

- Clear expectations for student accountability (i.e., grades and attendance)
- Clear expectations parent support for learning
- One platform for communication of grades, emails, and posting work
- Small class sizes, or permission to replace whole-group instruction with small-group instruction
- Clear expectations for students with IEPs and RTI services
- Administrative or counseling support for disengaged students.

The theme of clear and consistent expectations for all stakeholders was evident in many of the comments. One teacher concluded, "Stress comes from perceived expectations of parents that teachers will conduct online classes as if the student was fully engaged as if in classroom setting. Also, grading/providing feedback is massive and time-consuming." Notably, a number of teachers commented that they would like less live time with students.

There were 399 survey responses from families: 31% were from Grade 9; 34% were from Grade 10; 26% were from Grade 11; and 10% were from Grade 12.

- Parents reported that children were comfortable learning in an online environment, with 33% reporting their child was 'Very Comfortable' and 43% reporting that the child was 'Comfortable.'

- When asked how many hours children are engaged in school work on an average day, parents reported a range of responses:

Table 24. *Hours Engaged in School Work*

Time Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than 1 hour	13	3%
1-2 hours	42	11%
2-3 hours	116	29%
3-4 hours	89	22%
4-5 hours	78	20%
More than 5 hours	60	15%

- In general, a majority of parents characterized the workload as 'About Right' across subjects. The second most selected response across subjects was 'Too Little.' Note that the subject with the highest proportion of 'Too Much' responses is PE/Health. Responses are presented by the 'About Right' column.

Table 25. *Workload Across Subjects*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply
Mathematics	8%	72%	17%	2%
English Language Arts	13%	65%	21%	1%
Science	10%	64%	24%	3%

Social Studies	14%	64%	18%	3%
World Language	13%	60%	23%	5%
PE/Health	26%	41%	18%	15%
Music	1%	20%	9%	70%
Art	2%	18%	7%	73%
Media	1%	14%	5%	80%
Culinary	1%	7%	3%	88%
Theater	2%	6%	4%	88%

- Parents were asked to reflect on the helpfulness of the asynchronous and synchronous learning experiences across subjects. Responses are presented by the 'Very Helpful' column.

Table 26. *Helpfulness of Asynchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Mathematics	33%	37%	20%	11%
Social Studies	24%	44%	16%	15%
Science	21%	39%	26%	15%
English Language Arts	19%	44%	20%	17%
World Language	14%	42%	27%	17%
PE/Health	9%	25%	33%	33%
Art	6%	8%	8%	79%
Music	5%	13%	10%	72%
Media	3%	8%	6%	83%
Culinary	2%	6%	5%	86%
Theater	1%	5%	7%	87%

Table 27. *Helpfulness of Synchronous Learning Experiences*

Subject	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Mathematics	45%	27%	18%	10%
Social Studies	39%	29%	20%	12%
English Language Arts	38%	30%	22%	10%
Science	35%	27%	24%	14%
World Language	27%	20%	24%	28%
Music	11%	11%	10%	67%
PE/Health	8%	16%	35%	41%
Art	7%	9%	10%	74%
Media	6%	8%	6%	80%
Culinary	5%	6%	6%	83%
Theater	4%	6%	7%	83%

- While a majority of the respondents felt the level of communication from the high school during the school closure was 'Just Right' (58%), 36% felt it was 'Not Enough.'

High school families were asked to share their thoughts for improvements to the distance learning program. Responses centered on several key themes:

- **More Live Instruction**
  Most used this space to comment on the need for more live instruction. Many noted their students participated in one or two live classes per week, and that teachers were assigning work with little student interaction and engagement. One parent said, "We were very disappointed in the amount of communication between the teachers and the students. There was work posted, but not enough interaction between the teachers and students online." Another added, "With one notable exception, teachers posted assignments with minimal comment and negligible feedback. New material is hard to learn in this manner; especially in classes (like Spanish) where material builds upon itself this will put students at a disadvantage in the coming year because they have not learned the material." Another parent said, "I want actual lessons. I don't understand why teachers are not doing this…I want either zoom meetings for each lesson with an actual lesson taking place and not a google hangout."

  The split to A and B days was well received. One parent said, "Moving to having classes every other day was a drastic improvement over classes every day. In the beginning, my high schoolers received assignments from every class every day. They were spending 12-16 hours a day on homework and still falling behind. The switch to an A/B schedule was a definite improvement."

- **More Communication from Teachers**
  Parents also noted the importance of consistent expectations for all teachers. Many noted that some teachers communicated frequently and thoroughly while others did not communicate at all. One parent said, "The weekly email and video messages from the principal were delightful. The math teacher was consistent about sending emails with updates about curriculum. We did not receive emails from any other teachers." Another said, "The communication from teachers was uneven and inconsistent. There needs to be structured and standard expectations from teachers to students." Parents noted receiving weekly emails from the principal, but very few emails from teachers. One parent said, "Emails from Principal Thomas were fine. However, I had no idea what was going on in my daughter's classes. An email from the teachers would have been helpful. From March on, I feel that, with the exception of one class there was no substantial work, no contact with teachers and no learning." Still other parents commented on differences between communication coming from the administration and the students. One parent said, "The parents receive different information than the students. Please ensure that both audiences receive the information. For example, the parents didn't receive information about the Graduation motorcade, and the students haven't heard the information that the parents have received. We get our updates from WestportNow, and that isn't appropriate."

- **Clear Expectations for Scheduling and Workload**
  Parents also wanted clarity about what to expect from the school. One parent said, "Information

provided was general, it would be helpful to have more detailed information. Specifics about synchronous learning would be helpful, perhaps for each class. What is considered synchronous learning (face time, chat rooms, etc.? How often should it be happening in each class? Was there a minimum that each teacher should provide?" Another parent offered very specific suggestions, stating, "Teachers should post assignments for the entire week, especially for asynchronous assignments, as this helps students plan their weekly schedule. Students should also have a weekly schedule of which classes will actually meet on which days. Currently there is no consistent as teachers sometimes meet synchronously, and sometimes they don't, and notification of this is given very late (i.e. the night before)."

As with the middle school, parents wanted to hear more from teachers. Characterization of asynchronous assignments as 'busy work' came with comments about minimal communication from teachers.

- **Physical Education**
  A number of comments focused on the workload for physical education in the distance learning program. Some felt that physical education should be excluded from online education. One parent said, "Suspend PE and any other disciplines that need interaction to be remotely effective. It is ridiculous to take hands on classes and convert them to written assignments and deliverables."

Parents also offered targeted suggestions for an improved program. These suggestions included:

- A clear attendance policy with an alert for parents when students miss synchronous learning
- A syllabus for each course that is accessible to parents
- Create text alerts for students
- Require guidance counselors to check on students individually
- Targeted emails from the administration including only new information.

Several parents also noted the positive side of distance learning. One parent said, "There are definite upsides to not having such an intense long school day and I sincerely hope the district will think creatively about instructional time, the length of the day, amount of homework assigned, etc., even if school reopens 'normally.' We should use this as an opportunity to update and elevate our pedagogical model., leveraging new technology and research to best serve our high school students." Another added, "I'd very much like you to know that my daughter is actually doing better in a virtual learning environment which we attribute to the lack of overwhelming social pressure in the school. The stress and anxiety she has experienced from 8th grade onward, especially the pressure to be on social media dramatically and adversely affected her academic success. Not having to go into the school, even in this stressful time in the world, has been better for her."

There were 283 survey responses from high school students: 31% from Grade 9; 28% from Grade 10; 25% from Grade 11; and 16% from Grade 12.

- 75% of students reported being 'Very Comfortable' or 'Comfortable' learning online.

- 35% of students reported attending live sessions 'All of the Time' and 65% reported attending 'Most of the Time' or 'Some of the Time.'

- Students reported a wide range of hours spent on school work.

Table 28. *Hours Engaged in School Work*

Time Range	Number of Responses	% of Responses
Less than 1 hour	4	1%
1-2 hours	21	7%
2-3 hours	58	20%
3-4 hours	92	33%
4-5 hours	77	27%
More than 5 hours	31	11%

- Students were asked to characterize the workload across subjects. Note the high proportion of students who noted the workload for PE/Health was 'Too Much.' Responses are presented by the 'About Right' column.

Table 29. *Workload Across Subjects*

Subject	Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Does Not Apply
Mathematics	16%	82%	2%	0%
English Language Arts	21%	75%	3%	1%
Social Studies	24%	67%	5%	4%
Science	20%	67%	7%	6%

World Language	33%	60%	4%	3%
PE/Health	44%	38%	3%	15%
Art	1%	20%	3%	76%
Music	3%	19%	3%	75%
Media	1%	8%	0%	92%
Theater	4%	5%	0%	91%
Culinary	2%	4%	0%	94%

- Students were asked about the helpfulness of various components of the live sessions. Responses are presented by 'Very Helpful.'

Table 30. *Helpfulness of Components of Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Getting feedback about my work	36%	33%	24%	7%
Learning new concepts and ideas	28%	37%	31%	4%
Reviewing things I've already learned	28%	48%	21%	3%
Connecting with classmates	21%	29%	45%	4%

- Students were asked about the helpfulness of various learning activities used outside of live sessions. Responses are presented by 'Very Helpful.'

Table 31. *Helpfulness of Learning Activities Outside Live Sessions*

Component	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Very Helpful	I'm not sure
Pre-recorded videos from my teacher	61%	28%	8%	3%

Feedback from my teacher	57%	35%	5%	3%
Instructional videos from other sources	29%	47%	21%	3%
Worksheets or web sites to practices skills I've learned in live sessions	28%	48%	20%	4%
Writing or research projects	11%	40%	46%	3%

Students were offered the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on the distance learning plan. Responses centered on key themes:

- **Flexibility and Awareness**
  Students want more compassion from teachers. One student said, "Just because we are all now stuck at home and technically have more time to do things, workload per class should not be increased. Some days I sit at the same table doing schoolwork for 10+ hours. Being at home is not as productive of an environment as school, and increasing the amount of work given only makes learning harder." Another student said, "This is a tough time for everyone and teachers shouldn't expect work to always be turned in on time. It's hard to adjust to this system and it would help to have work make up days for the last days of school to get in any missing assignments." Another added, "The teachers have to understand what it is like being a kid right now."

  Students want flexibility. One student said, "Not every student can attend due to WiFi issues, responsibilities at home and more. When students and their entire families are stuck at home, they have more responsibilities around the house in addition to school work. Making someone's house a classroom, a cafeteria, and a home is not ok. It's hard to compartmentalize." Another student said, "The amount of calls we have back to back. Sometimes it does not leave enough time for me to go eat lunch." Students want flexibility with grades as well. One student said, "If there is an assignment, the teacher should go over it once and give us a chance to resubmit in case there is something wrong because there is a good chance we just don't get it." Another added, "It is a lot harder to learn information without being physically in school so I don't think it is really fair for things to be graded on accuracy at this moment."

  Many students noted the workload had increased during distance learning. One student said, "There should be limits to the amount of work specific subjects can give students. There has been a massive increase in my workload since distance learning has begun due to some teachers thinking we prioritize them or just don't have much work from other classes. This creates an immense amount of academic stress and anxiety for me when I am already unmotivated to do schoolwork." Another added, "I wish some teachers would be more

conscious of the amount of homework they give us to do outside of class. During the assigned class period, many teachers take the time to go over homework or teach new topic. They then assign more work to do outside of class which usually takes me a while." One student concluded, "It can be very be stressful when you have so much work and they don't even help you learn it."

- **More Live Instruction**
  Students want more time with teachers, and during their time together students want instruction rather than emotional check-ins. Live instruction was largely seen as most important for learning new content, but many students felt it was acceptable to introduce new content in pre-recorded videos and then use live time for questions, review, or discussion. Others wanted to use live time to connect with peers about new learning. One student said, "I think more time between students would be cool. To me, a class isn't about everyone sitting in seats and listening to the teacher, or talking to the teacher when the teacher talks to them. It's about the class cooperating together as a nice, familiar group." One student concluded, "I actively look forward to many of my live classes now because it is the closest we can be to actually being in the school environment right now. It is also nice to actually hear the teacher talking and be able to ask questions during class in order to understand the material better."

  Students want live instruction every day, but added that attendance should be required only if there is instruction. One student said, "Do not have teachers make us go on videos only so they can take attendance, if we have to do a live class the teacher should actually take their time to teach us the material. There is no reason to post a video and worksheet but still have us attend a live class. We should either have a live class where we are taught the information or not have one at all."

- **Workload**
  Many students commented on the need for balance between the work that was intended to be completed during a class period and the additional work. One student said, "A lot of teachers assign work that takes up more time than the class period which takes the students longer to complete. Maybe try to assign work that is fit for the length of that time period." One student added, "It's been overwhelming getting work and assignments during the class period and then homework due at 3. You have to rush to finish it. If anything, everything should be due at midnight." A student suggested the school establish a minimum and maximum workload across teachers. Another said, "I'd rather have a low volume of high-effort, engaging, purposeful work than a high-volume of busywork that takes hours and which I am minimally engaged." One student said, "Some teachers are getting by the 'no big assignments' rule by giving us big assignments but only making them worth a mediocre amount of points, so I'm still doing the same work."

- **Communication**
  Students want work assigned weekly, as opposed to daily, and would like to receive a weekly schedule for live meetings. From the feedback, it appears that live meetings were not scheduled with enough notice for students. One student said, "I really liked when some of my

teachers put out schedules for the week on Monday of what work we would be doing, but more importantly, what dates we would be having Google Meets or not. It is very hard and stressful to find out the night before at 9pm or the morning of 20 minutes before your class that there is a Google Meet because you have to shift everything around and it is stressful at home." Another student said, "If there is going to be a google meet, teachers need to make that known before the day of, especially if it is an early class." One concluded, "Instead of having day-by-day assignments for most classes, have them due at a more specific time (for instance instead of due at 11:59 tonight, 3 in the afternoon). It makes it easier to get motivated and get the work done."

The need for consistency was also mentioned repeatedly. One student said, "For some teachers, live sessions are mandatory, for others they aren't and for many, some are and some aren't. This can be very hard to keep track of. Additionally, teachers post due dates for work differently. Some teachers post work on the day it's due for and others post on the day we're expected to do it." Another student said, "More communication between teachers and organization. It can be very hard to stay organized because all the teachers have different rules/expectations for distance learning." Others mentioned the importance of consistency across teachers for posting assignments. One student concluded, "Make all expectations clear for parents, students, and teachers. Keeping information from students makes our lives much more difficult."

- Physical Education
  There was a lot of criticism of physical education in the distance learning environment. One student said, "It's absurd that I spend more time finding partners for and filling out social distance gym worksheets than I do doing work for any of my core classes." Another commented, "The gym assignments are just unnecessary and useless. Almost every student I know is exercising right now because they have so much time and want to stay healthy. The gym assignments waste time and are very annoying especially when we are asked personal questions that should only be asked by a parent or a doctor. Also, my teacher gives students a 'C' when they complete the assignment well but don't answer in 'thorough paragraphs' which no other gym teacher asks of their students!" Still another said, "For my gym class which I would normally get a good grade, have fun in, and really enjoy has now become my most stressful class. instead of doing physical activity we must right full paragraphs about nonsense for 10-20 questions. Then we have to submit 'evidence' of our workout that he chooses for us. If we don't have the right materials we have to fake it otherwise we fail that homework. I end up spending 3 hours on gym alone every other day." One student concluded, "They are so unnecessarily long."

There were 58 responses to the High School Teacher Survey. Responses were generally evenly distributed across schools and grades.

- A majority of teachers were comfortable in the distance learning environment: 26% reported being 'Very Comfortable' and 38% reported being 'Comfortable.' However, 26% reported themselves only 'Somewhat Comfortable' and 10% were 'Not Comfortable at All.'

- More teachers reported being 'Very Comfortable' or 'Comfortable' providing pre-recorded direct instruction to students as compared to live direct instruction. Additionally, responses show teachers are not as comfortable evaluating student progress in the distance learning environment.

Table 32. *Comfort Level with Various Aspects of Distance Learning*

	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not at all comfortable
Providing Direct Instruction (prerecorded)	35%	25%	21%	19%
Providing Direct Instruction (live)	26%	38%	26%	10%
Providing Feedback to Students	55%	26%	12%	7%
Evaluating Student Progress	26%	33%	29%	12%

- When asked about evaluating student learning, nearly all of the teachers responded that they have effectively evaluated student learning in 'Some' or 'Most' skill areas.

- Teachers were asked to select the most effective use of live sessions.

Table 33. *Most Effective Tool for Feedback*

Answer	Rank 1	Rank 2	Weighted Rank
To answer questions	16	19	1 (51)
Targeted instruction for individuals or small groups	12	10	2 (34)
To connect and catch up with students	12	8	3 (32)
Direct instruction in content/skill for whole class	12	4	4 (28)
Student discourse	3	9	5 (15)
For feedback to students	0	6	6 (6)
Evaluation of student progress	2	1	7 (5)

- Teachers were asked to select the most effective tool to provide feedback to students.

Table 34. *Most Effective Tool for Feedback*

Answer	Rank 1	Rank 2	Weighted Rank
Written feedback in response to student work	23	20	1 (66)
Individual live sessions	20	15	2 (55)
Small group live sessions	5	9	3 (19)
Corrected assignments	3	10	4 (16)
Whole class live sessions	4	1	5 (9)
Tests/Quizzes	3	3	5 (9)

Teachers had the opportunity to offer open-ended feedback.

Evaluating Student Learning

When asked about strategies used to evaluate student work, teachers shared a variety of approaches:

- Written assignments
- Writing conferences
- Small group discussions
- Shared Google documents and Google Forms
- Screencastify
- Schoology assessments
- Photos of work

While several teachers noted they were not comfortable evaluating student learning, this theme was not as evident in the high school level responses as it was at the elementary and middle school level.

When asked about the biggest challenge in evaluating student work, teachers reported that they were working with unclear expectations about attendance, participation, and grading practices. One teacher said, "Evaluations were most hindered by the fact that expectations OF students with regards to things like attendance, academic integrity, and grading were not made clear for students leading to many missed teaching sessions, inconsistent work, etc. that interfered with accurate assessment." Teachers also reported spending a great deal of time getting students to submit work, which was separate from time spent on instruction and grading.

Teachers also reported that is unclear if students are completing work independently. One teacher said, "Academic integrity - students have access to their notes, my prerecorded lessons, their peers, and the internet while they are doing all assignments/assessments. It is impossible to know if they are completing these independently or getting assistance." Another concluded, "Besides the day to day actual learning and informal assessment that happens organically within the classroom, the top students are achieving to their capabilities but the majority of students are underachieving compared to in the classroom as they are just copying homework from each other or copying from the worked out solutions or not even completing the assignment altogether."

Challenges in Distance Learning

Most teachers commented on student engagement and attendance as a challenge for distance learning. One teacher said, "Students often use this as an opportunity to disconnect rather than connect." Another said, "Many students do not attend the classes because it was made clear at the beginning of distance learning that attendance is not mandatory. Without attendance, it is difficult for me to get information across to the students and it is difficult for the students to be motivated to try." One teacher added, "Body language is quite important in teaching."

Technology issues were also mentioned frequently, including both computer issues and network issues. One teacher said, "I did not experience too much conflict around tech equity with kids, but I know it's there." Another said, "There are equity and Internet issues – teachers and students alike. Our computers provided by the district are outdated, or not prepared for this type of instruction, without necessary programs at time, and nearly failing in some instances." Teachers also commented on the time required for planning, communication and assessment was much greater in the online setting. One teacher said, "As a trained classroom teacher/totally untrained distance ed. teacher, I found that every lesson/class took two or three times more of my time to PLAN. W/ 2 classes meeting a day, I could still BARELY get everything done in the 8-3 window."

High school teachers also commented on communication from school leaders. One teacher said, "We cannot follow the emails from the administrators and are overwhelmed by them, especially when content is unclear." Another concluded, "Student attendance has been a challenge for students who are not attending scheduled meetings and/or are not checking feedback on their work. This is compounded by technological issues, and an overall feeling that there is little to no accountability coming from leadership about student expectations."

Professional Development Needs

Teachers were asked to list their professional development needs related to distance learning. A variety of needs were mentioned, including:

- Assessment strategies
- Discipline-specific support on delivering instruction
- Techniques for delivery of instruction online (not discipline-specific)
- Strategies for peer collaboration.

Many teachers requested more materials in lieu of professional development, including: iPads, microphones, headsets, more powerful computers. Other teachers requested planning and collaboration time in lieu of formal professional development.

Supports for Teachers

Teachers were asked to make recommendations that might make distance learning more manageable or reduce their stress. Suggestions include:

- Required attendance
- Clear expectations for student accountability and parent support
- Clear expectations for teachers and support staff
- Clear communication from administrators.

One teacher said, "It would also be helpful to get information from administration/central office BEFORE students/families. I feel immense stress when I try to maintain consistency, but then some new job is laid at my feet (ie P/F implementation) or I learn something from the kids. Not knowing information before students/families, makes teachers look disorganized and unprofessional." Another

concluded, "I feel that direct, clear, proactive, and enforced communications from upper-level administrators would set expectations and prevent the trend I am seeing of students and parents pitting one teacher against another for classroom procedures that would not have an issue in the building. The lack of a handbook for distance learning has left a lot of loose ends where teachers are making the best decisions they can in the moment, which are either challenged (with no support), or changed with no warning."