

The Office for Education Policy (OEP) partnered with DESE’s Office for Family Engagement to administer a survey to parents across the state to learn from the families of Arkansas students about what is working currently as well as future considerations.

About the survey:

Dates open: November 9th-22nd, 2020

Survey responses are anonymous.

Surveys were developed in both English and Spanish.

Special thanks to Echelon Insights and the National Parents Union for many of the survey questions.

Parents were informed about the survey through social media channels, and superintendents and principals were asked to share the link with the parents and guardians of students in their schools.

About the sample:

This was a sample of convenience and the results may not be generalizable to the entire state.

17,836 parents/guardians responded to the survey, representing 30,381 individual students.

We estimate this to be about **6% of the parents/guardians of K-12 students in the state**. For more detailed information about the sample characteristics, please see the Appendix.

Parent/Guardian-Level Responses

In the first part of the survey, parents/guardians responded about their worries regarding COVID-19 and what schools should be focused on.

Parent/ Guardian Worries:

Respondents were asked to indicate how much they worried about aspects of the current coronavirus situation. Figure 1 presents the results in each area. Parents expressed the greatest concern about making sure their child(ren) stayed on track in school, with 73% of respondents indicating that they “worry a lot” (51%) or “worry some” (22%) about this. Parents were also worried about their children missing social interactions (62%) and about someone in their family getting the Corona virus (59%). With regards to mental health and emotional wellbeing, parents were worried both about their children’s (56%) and their own (47%). Forty-three percent of parents were concerned about making ends meet, and 36% worried about what to do with their children during the day.

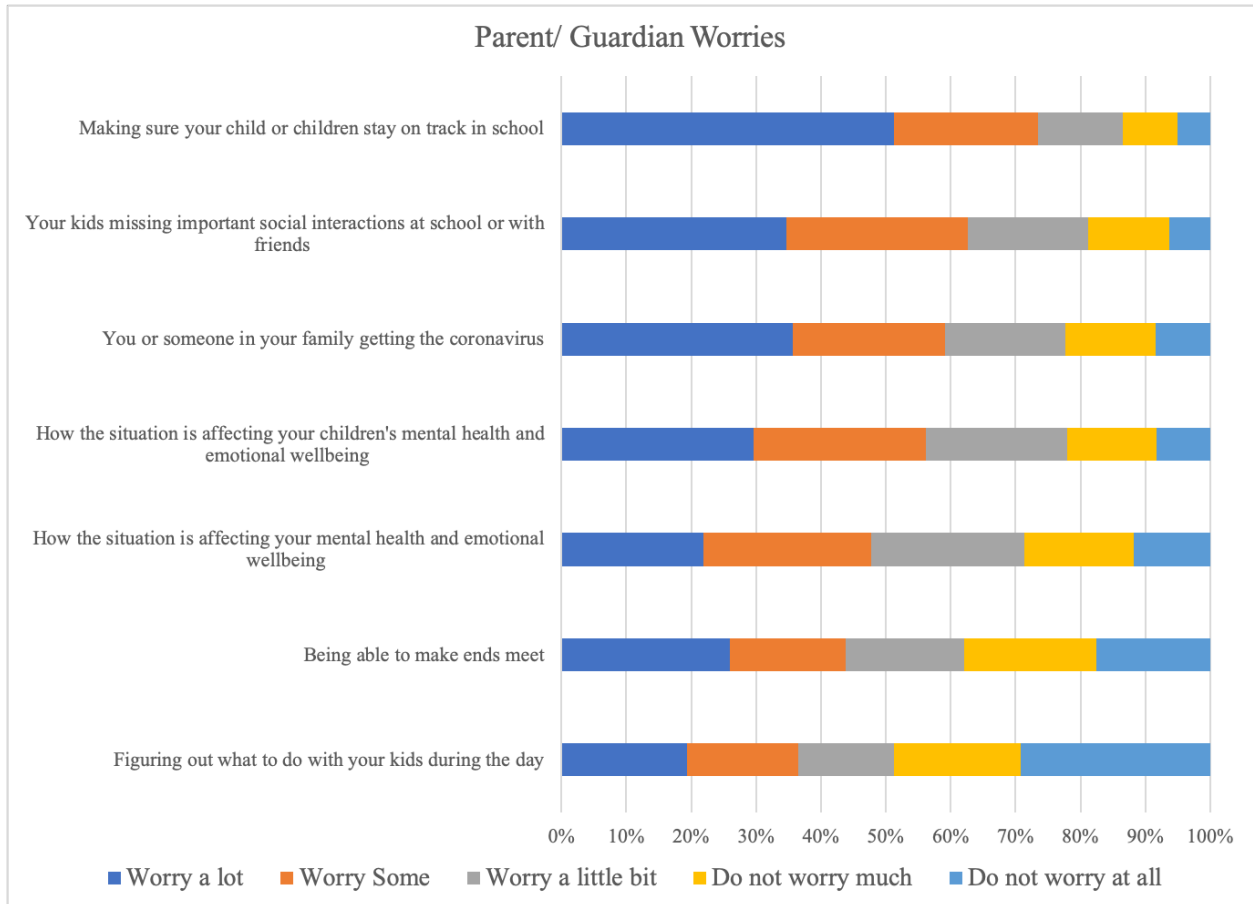


Figure 1. Responses to the question “With regard to the current coronavirus situation, how much do you worry about each of the following as a parent or guardian?”.

Respondents who indicated that their student was eligible for the Federal Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRL) reported higher levels of worry than the full sample in all areas except missing social interactions. Figure 2 displays the comparison between the full sample and FRL-eligible parents/guardians who responded that they “worry a lot” or “worry some” to each area. Parents of FRL-eligible students were most concerned about making sure their child(ren) stayed on track in school, with 77% of respondents indicating that they “worry a lot” (56%) or “worry some” (21%) about this. Parents of FRL-eligible students were more worried about someone in their family getting the Corona virus (66%) and making ends meet (62%) With regards to mental health and emotional wellbeing, parents were worried both about their children’s (58%) and their own (53%). Forty-one percent of parents of FRL-eligible students reported being worried about what to do with their child(ren) during the day.

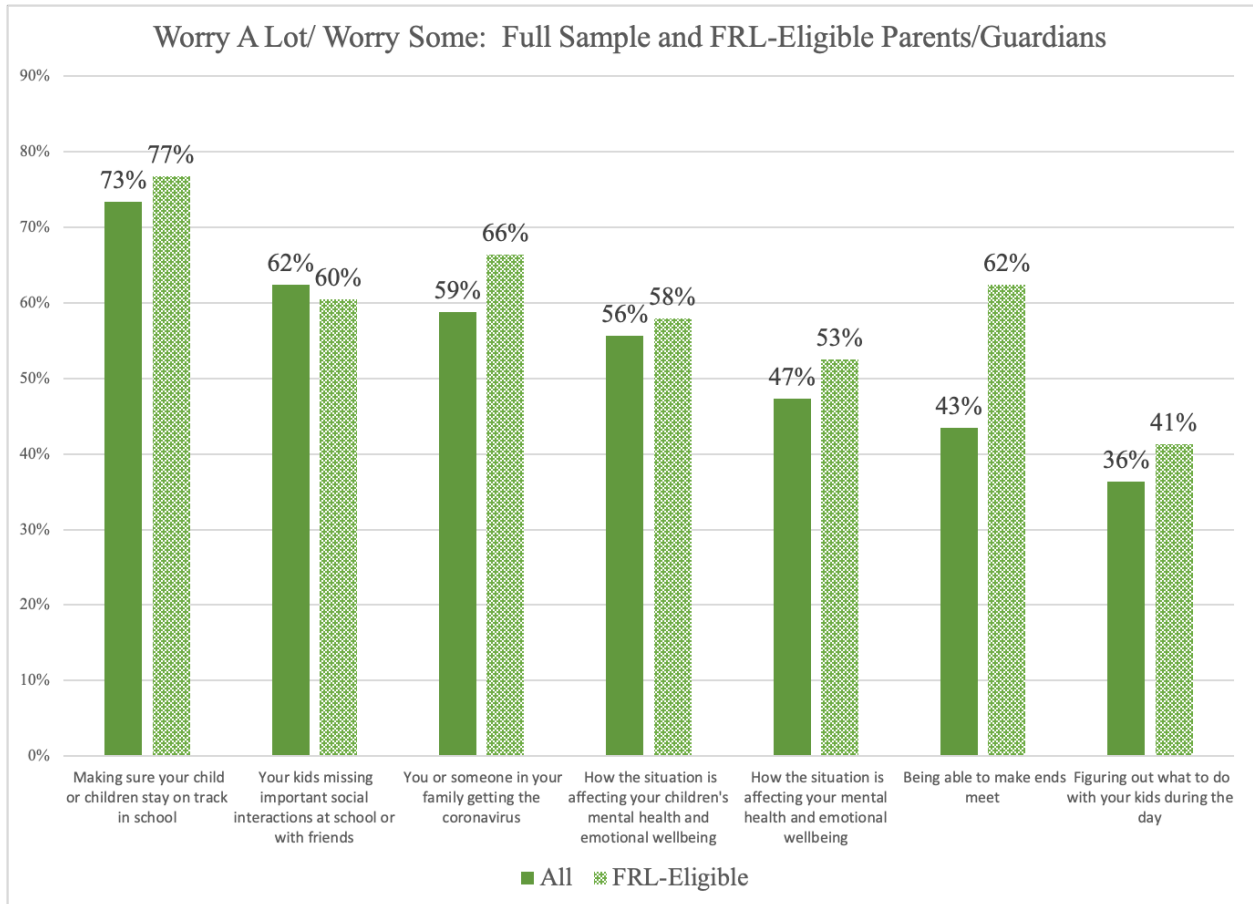


Figure 2. Percentage of full sample and FRL-eligible parent/guardian responses of “worry a lot” and “worry some” to the question “*With regard to the current coronavirus situation, how much do you worry about each of the following as a parent or guardian?*”.

School Direction:

Survey respondents were asked to select which statement they agreed with more:

- Schools should be focused on rethinking how we educate students, coming up with new ways to teach children moving forward as a result of the COVID-19 crisis
- Schools should be focused on trying to get back to the way things were before the COVID-19 crisis as soon as it is safe to do so

As presented in Figure 3, 51% of parents statewide selected “rethinking how we educate students... as a result of the COVID-19 crisis” and 47% of parents selected “get back to the way things were before COVID-19.” Two percent of survey respondents did not answer the question. Parents/guardians in the Southeast and Central regions were the most likely to agree that school should be rethinking how students are educated, at 58% and 55%, respectively. Parents/guardians in the Southwest region were the most likely to feel that school should be focused on getting back to the way things were before COVID-19.

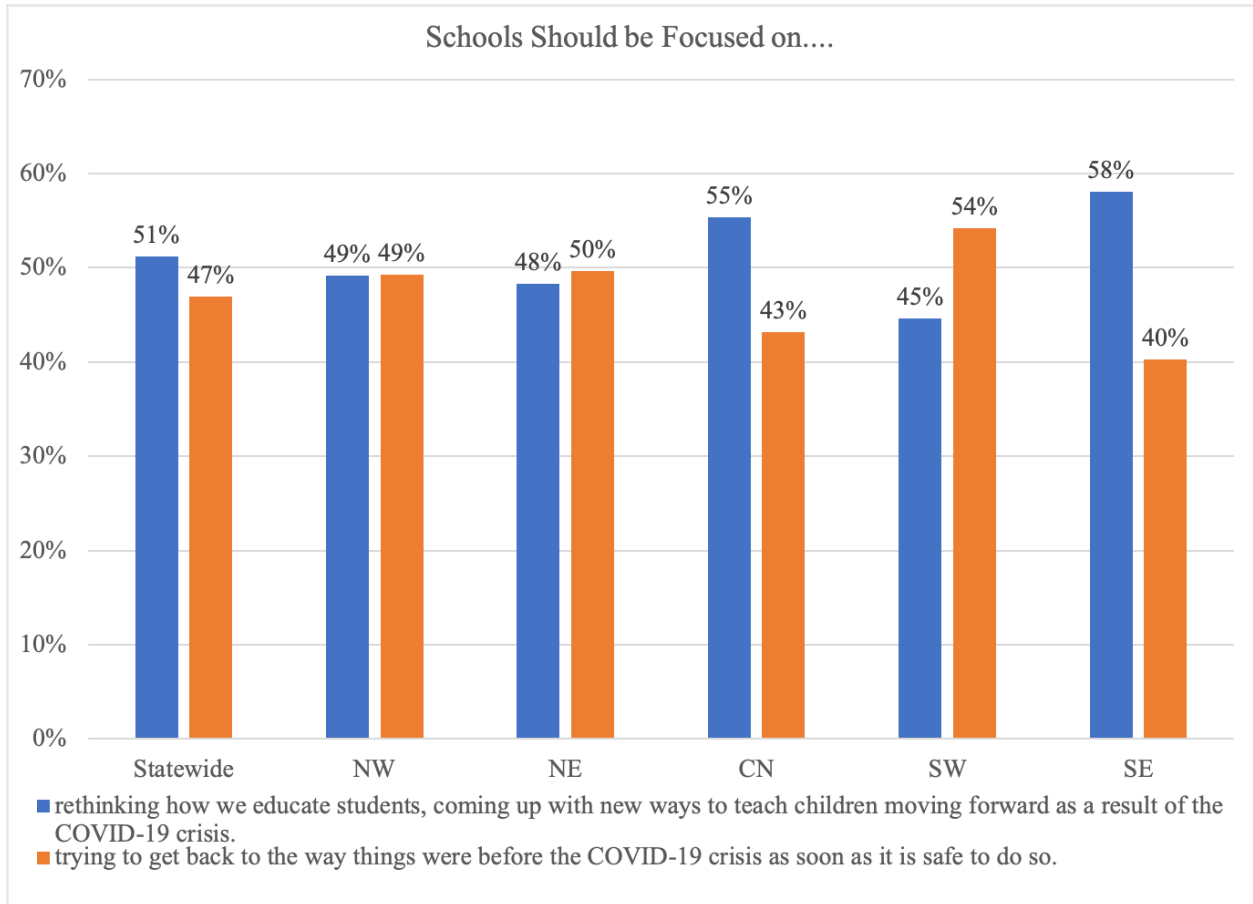


Figure 3. Percentage of full sample parent/guardian responses to the question regarding what schools should be focused on.

Similar to parent worries, we see differences by FRL-eligibility, with 57% of FRL-eligible parents statewide supporting re-thinking how we educate students and only 41% wanting to get back to the way things were before COVID-19 (Figure 4). By region, parents that reported FRL-eligibility were 3-8 percentage points more likely to want schools to come up with new ways to teach children than the full sample.

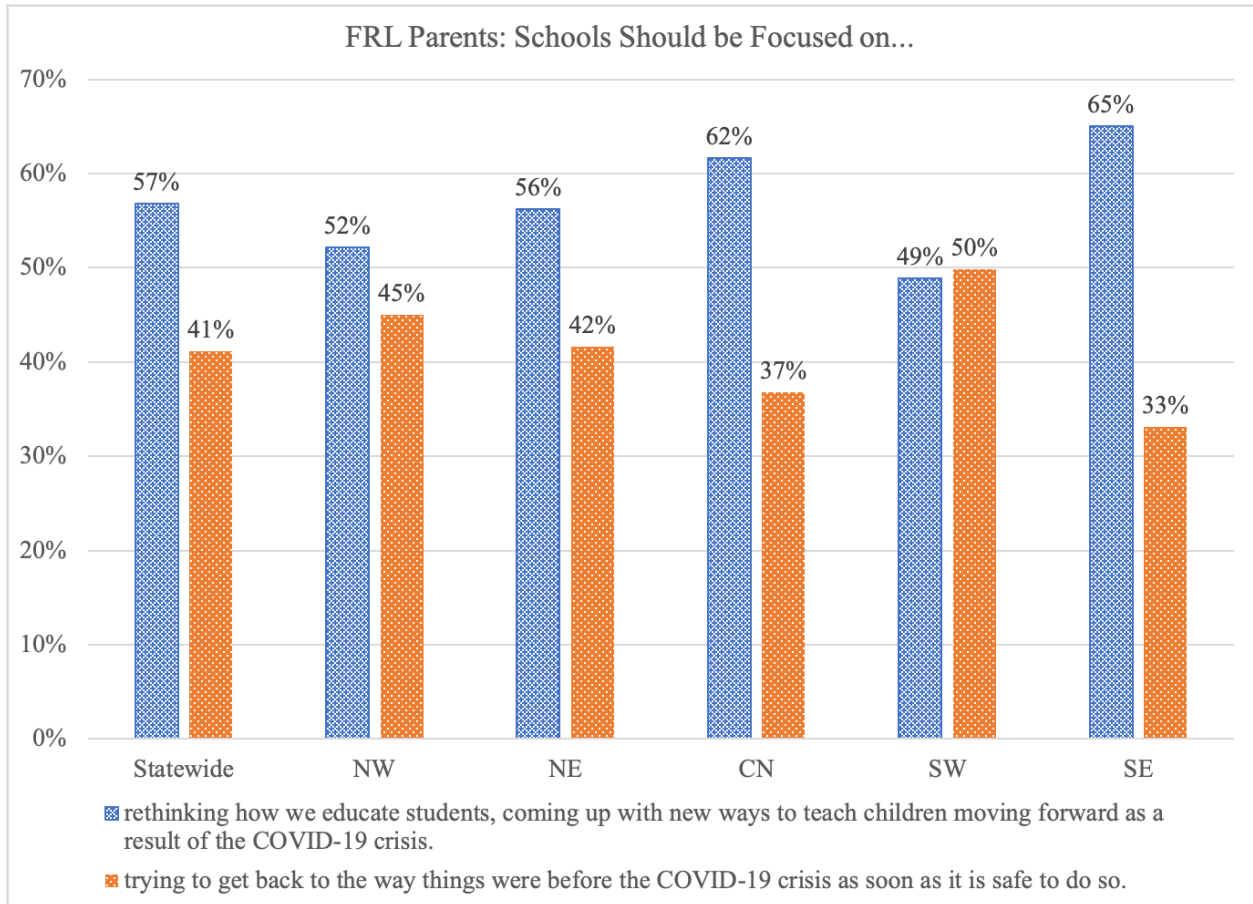


Figure 4. Percentage of FRL-eligible sample parent/guardian responses to the question of what schools should be focused on.

Student-Level Responses

In the second part of the survey, parents/guardians responded individually about each child in public school regarding current instructional setting, how much the student was learning compared to the prior year, and perceptions of the student’s school.

Current instructional setting:

The vast majority of parents indicated their student was attending school in person only on their school campus (69%). Twenty percent of students were reported to be attending online or remotely only, and 10% were reported to be attending part-time in person and part-time remotely. One percent of students were doing “something different” or didn’t respond. These percentages were similar to what DESE reported at the time of the survey: 64% in person, 22% virtual, and 14% part-time in person and part-time remotely.

Reasons for instructional setting selection:

Parents/guardians were asked to identify their main reasons for selecting the instructional setting for their child. Figure 6 displays the reasons reported by parent/guardians by instructional setting. Among parents that selected in-person learning on the school campus, the most popular reasons were worries that their child would not learn as much any other way (74%) and that their

child would miss social interactions (52%). Among parents that selected remote instruction, the main reasons were to reduce the risk of the child getting Covid-19 (84%), as well as other reasons (26%). Among parents and guardians of students attending only remote or online, 52% of the “other reasons” responses were related to health and medical concerns for students, their families, or the community. Twelve percent of the “other reasons” indicated that it was easier for the family, while 8% indicated the selection was made by the student. Six percent of responses reflected that the student was already attending virtual school prior to the pandemic, 5% of parents indicated disapproval of students wearing masks at in-person school, and 4% indicated that they were concerned their student’s school wasn’t providing needed services.

Among parents that selected a hybrid model, there was a mixture of reducing the risk of their child getting Covid-19 (39%), concerns that their child would not learn as much any other way (38%), and that their child would miss social interactions (37%).

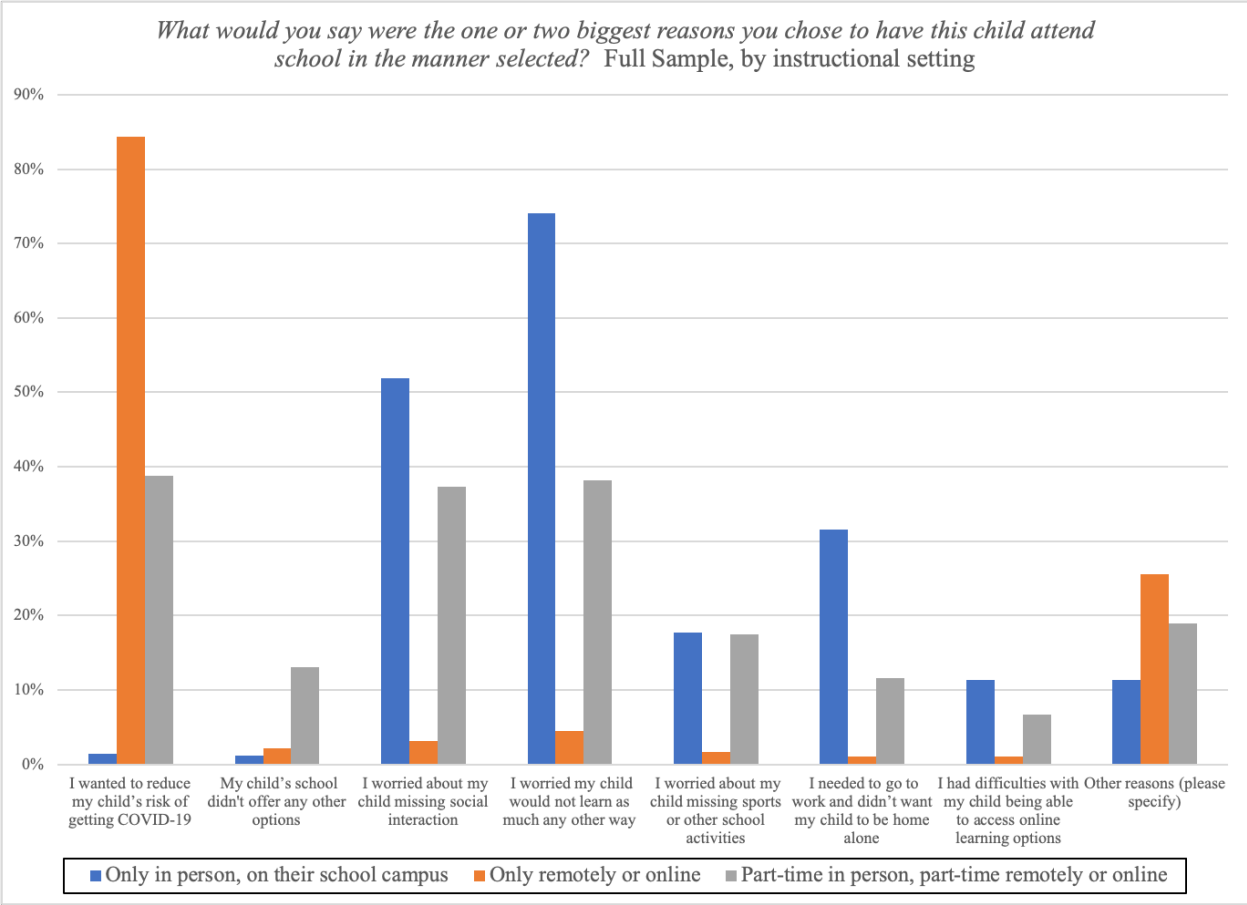


Figure 5. Parent/guardian responses about reasons for selecting the instructional setting for their child, Full sample, by instructional setting.

Learning amount:

Parents were asked to compare how much their student was learning this year compared to normal. Figure 6 displays the perceptions reported by parent/guardians. The majority of parents (62%) felt that their student was learning more (8%) or about the same (54%) as normal.

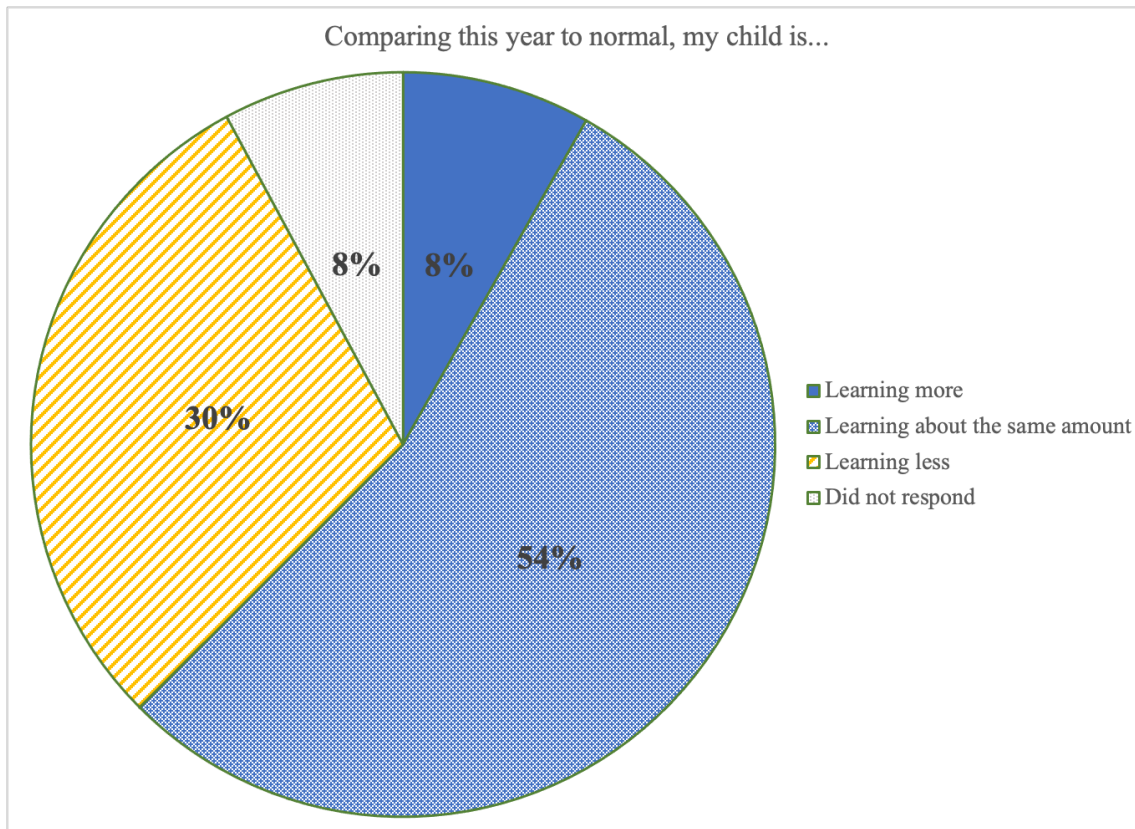


Figure 6. Percentage of parent/guardian responses to the question: “*At this point in the school year, do you think your child is learning more than they normally would, less than they normally would, or about the same amount as they normally would when attending school?*”.

There was, however, variation by instructional setting, with parents of remote only or part-time remote students more likely to report that their student was learning less than normal. Among in-person parents, 25% reported that their student was learning less than normal, compared to 38% of remote only parents and 47% of parents whose students were attending school part-time in person and part-time online.

When examined by instructional model and grade range as presented in Figure 7, we find that across all grade ranges parents/guardians of students receiving in-person instruction were the most likely to report that their student was learning the same or more than normal.

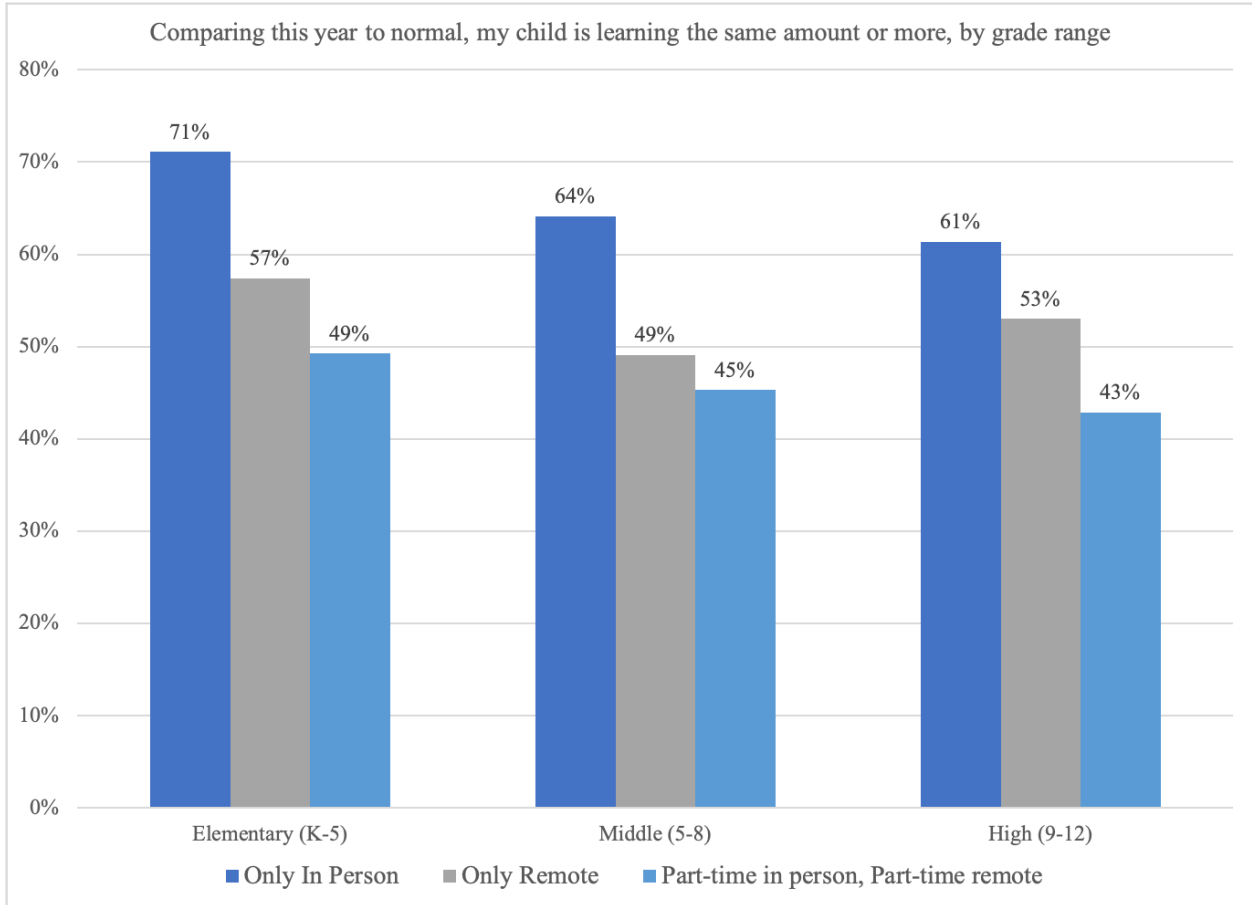


Figure 7. Percentage of parents/guardians responding “Same amount” or “More” to the question: “At this point in the school year, do you think your child is learning more than they normally would, less than they normally would, or about the same amount as they normally would when attending school?” by student grade range and instructional setting.

School supports for learning:

Parents responses to the question “Is your child’s school offering any of the following for remote or online learning?” are presented in Figure 8 overall and by instructional setting. A majority of parents’ guardians reported that their child’s school provided laptops or tablets for students to take home.

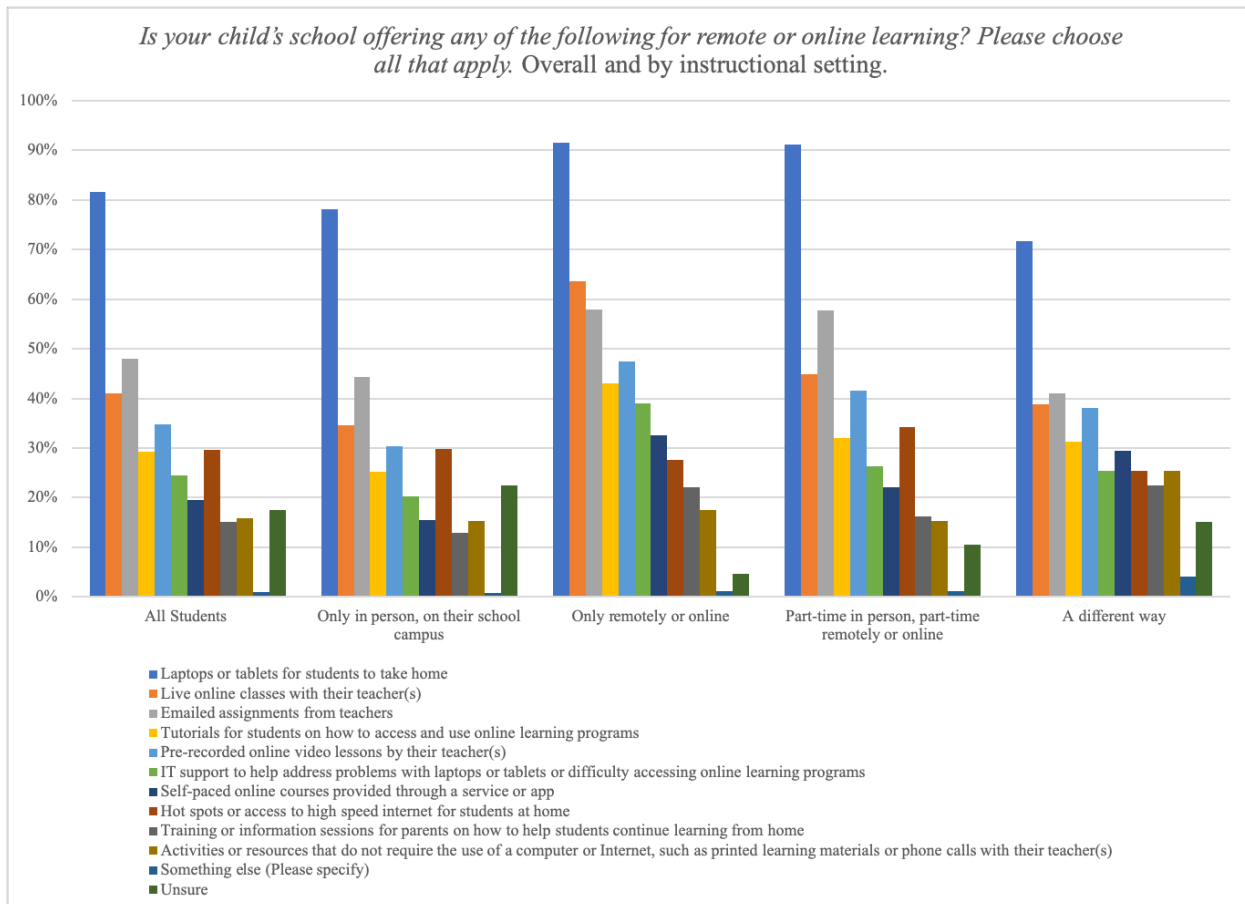


Figure 8. Percentage of parents/guardians indicating that their school offered the options for online or remote learning, Full Sample by instructional setting.

Plans for instructional setting next semester:

The vast majority of parents indicated they were planning on their student would be school in person only on their school campus next semester (66%). Seventeen percent of students were planning to be attending online or remotely only, and 13% were planning to be attending part-time in person and part-time remotely. Three percent of parents reported they expected their students to be doing “something different” next semester or didn’t respond.

Opinions on daily schedule:

Overall, parents reported that their student was getting about the right amount of time receiving instruction from their teacher(s) (72%), time to communicate directly with their teacher(s), and to ask questions, or get help with assignments (71%). A smaller percentage of parents reported that their student was getting about the right amount of time to interact and communicate with other students (64%).

Variation by in opinion of daily schedule by instructional setting is presented in Figure 9, with parents part-time remote students less likely than parents of in-person students to report that their student was getting “about the right” amount of time receiving instruction from their teacher(s), time to communicate directly with their teacher(s), and to ask questions, or get help with assignments, and to interact and communicate with other students. Parents of students who were

only remote were the least likely to report students were getting “about the right” amount of time in all three areas, particularly relative to interacting with other students.

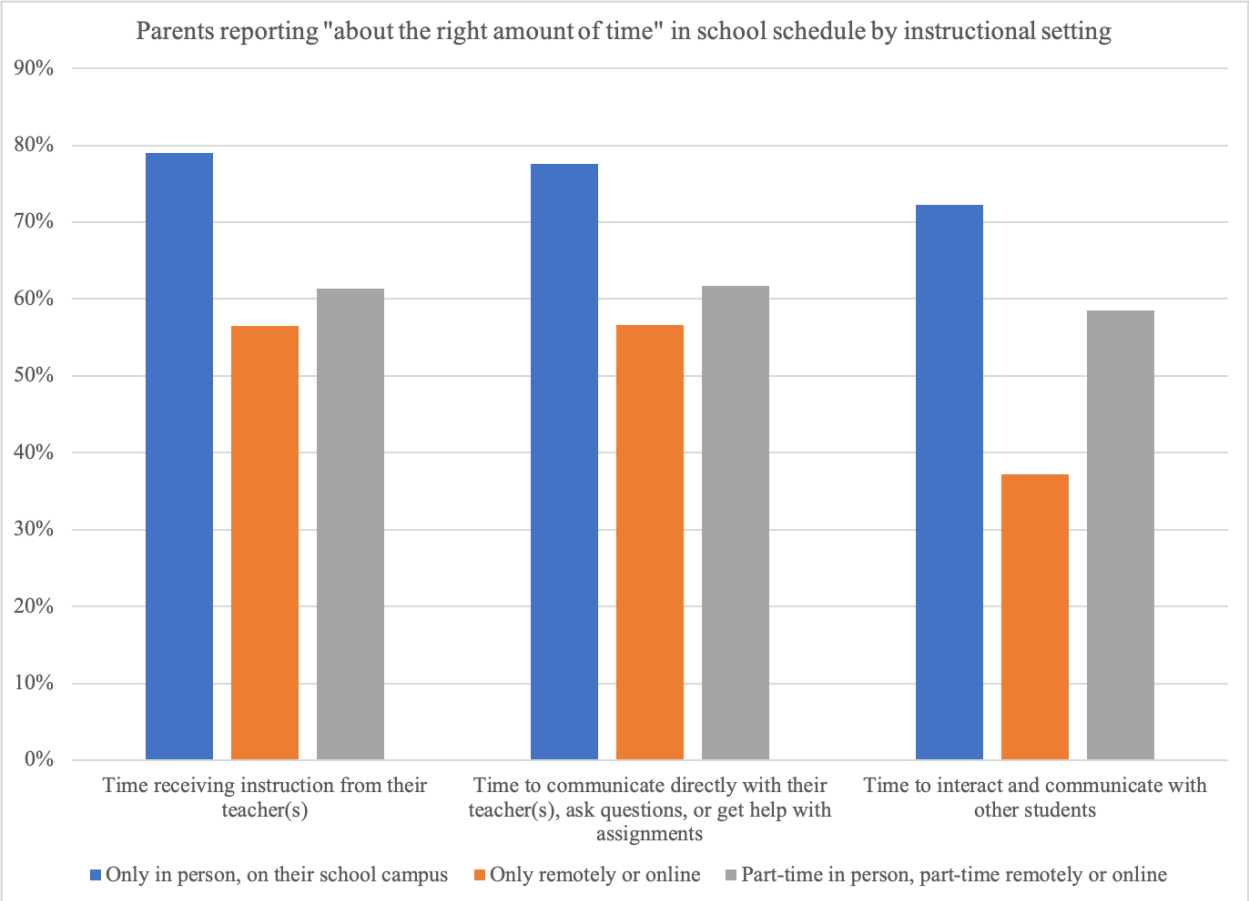


Figure 9. Percentage of parents/guardians responding that their student in getting “about the right amount of time” in their school day for specified areas, by instructional setting.

Parents felt that their child’s school included parents in the decision-making process about the school’s plans for reopening and options they would offer for this school year (68%).

Opinions of school performance:

Survey respondents were asked to rate how well their child(ren)’s school was doing on a variety of measures. Results are presented in Figure 10. Over 70% of parents rated their child’s school as doing an “excellent” or “good” job on handling health and safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (71%), on the quality of teaching and instruction (72%). Over 60% of parents rated their child’s school as doing an “excellent” or “good” job on assessing their child’s progress and level of learning (68%), communicating with parents (66%) and providing additional resources and support to help their child continue learning (62%). Schools received lower ratings in two areas: providing additional resources to support learning and to support students’ mental health and emotional wellbeing. Some areas received lower levels of agreement, Only 53% of parents felt that their child’s school was doing an “excellent” or “good” job managing online learning programs, and only 43% reported that their child’s school was doing an “excellent” or “good” job support student’s mental health and emotional wellbeing. In large

part these lower ratings, however, were due to an increased percentage of respondents who indicated that they did not know how the school was performing in these areas.

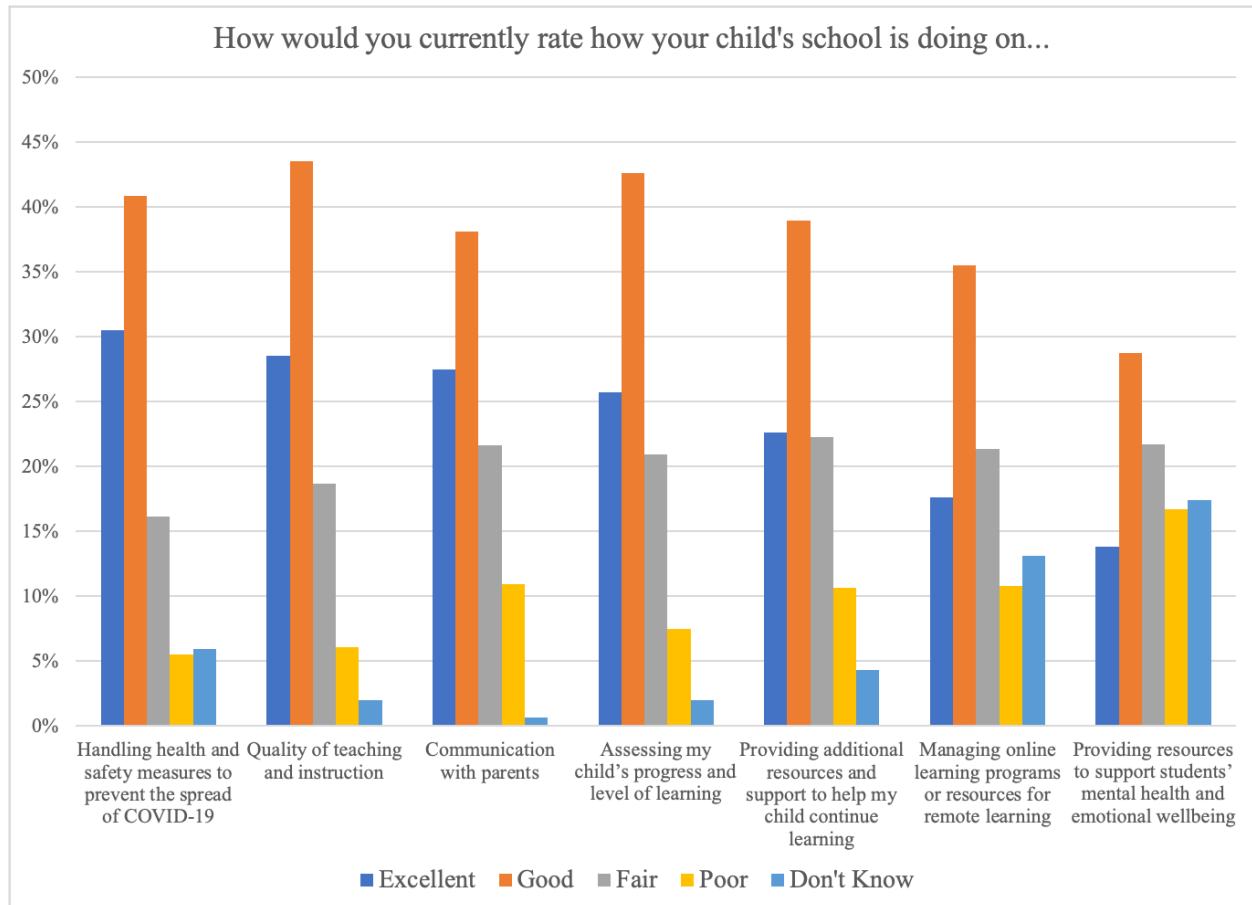


Figure 10. Percentage of parent/guardian responses to the question: “How would you currently rate how your child’s school is doing on each of the following?” Full Sample

For more information about the survey or this report, contact Sarah McKenzie oep@uark.edu.

Appendix

Table A1: Sample Characteristics by Race/Ethnicity

Student Race/ Ethnicity <i>(For the sample that responded to the question)</i>	Sample N	% of Survey Sample	% of Statewide K-12 Population	Difference (survey sample) - state
Asian	281	1	2	-1
Black or African American	3,557	12	20	-8
Hispanic/ Latino	1,465	5	14	-9
Native American or Alaskan Native	303	1	1	0
Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian	27	0	1	-1
Two or More races	1,851	6	4	+2
White	22,273	75	60	+15
Total (K-12)	29,757	100	6	NA

Table A2: Sample Characteristics by Grade Level

Grade Level	Sample N	% of Survey Sample	% of Statewide K-12 Population	Difference (survey sample) - state
K	2,537	8	7	+1
1	2,386	8	8	0
2	2,363	8	8	0
3	2,255	8	8	0
4	2,341	8	8	0
5	2,360	8	8	0
6	2,294	8	8	0
7	2,311	8	8	0
8	2,135	7	8	-1
9	2,086	7	8	-1
10	1,999	7	8	-1
11	1,784	6	8	-2
12	1,527	5	7	-2

Table A3: Sample Characteristics by Geographic Region

	N of Survey Respondents	% of respondents from region	% of state enrollment by region	Difference (survey sample) - state
Northwest	4,823	16	37	-21
Northeast	6,175	21	19	+2
Central	11,604	39	30	+9
Southwest	4,823	16	9	+7
Southeast	1,886	6	5	+1

Table A4: Sample Characteristics by FRL Eligibility

FRL-Eligible (applied to students)	Sample N	% of Survey Sample	% of Statewide K-12 Population	Difference (survey sample) - state
Yes	12,691	42	66	-24
No	15,021	50	44	+6
Unsure	2,160	7	NA	NA

Table A5: Sample Characteristics by Student Program Participation

	Sample N	% of Survey Sample	% of Statewide K-12 Population	Difference (survey sample) - state
Student with Disability	1,992	10.18	13.00	-2.82
English Language Learner	10,591	35.86	8.00	+27.86*
Gifted and Talented	3,011	14.32	9.00	+5.32
Homeless	15	0.13	0.20	-0.07
In Foster Care	65	0.42	0.06	+0.36
Migrant	43	0.30	0.04	+0.26
Military Connected	538	2.89	0.01	+2.88

*Note: The percentage of students reported ELL in the sample is much larger than expected and should not be considered representative of the ELL population.

Table A6: Sample Characteristics by Student Program Participation and Instructional Setting

	Student with Disability	English Language Learner*	Gifted and Talented	Homeless or lacks private adequate housing	Children in Foster Care	Migrant	Children with a Parent that is Military Connected
All Students in Survey	10.18%	34.86%	14.32%	0.13%	0.42%	0.30%	2.89%
Only in person, on their school campus	9.65%	34.90%	13.74%	0.10%	0.55%	0.29%	2.89%
Only remotely or online	11.87%	35.15%	14.30%	0.15%	0.13%	0.34%	2.97%
Part-time in person, part-time remotely or online	10.82%	35.12%	19.16%	0.26%	0.20%	0.33%	2.91%
A different way	15.61%	35.84%	12.14%	1.16%	0.00%	0.00%	2.31%

*Note: The percentage of students reported ELL in the sample is much larger than expected and should not be considered representative of the ELL population.

Table A7: Parent Opinion of Daily Schedule being “about the right amount of time” by Student Group and Instructional Setting

	Time receiving instruction from their teacher(s)			Time to communicate directly with their teacher(s), ask questions, or get help with assignments			Time to interact and communicate with other students		
	Only in Person	Only Remote	Hybrid	Only in Person	Only Remote	Hybrid	Only in Person	Only Remote	Hybrid
All Students	79%	56%	61%	77%	57%	62%	72%	37%	59%
Students with Disability	73%	56%	56%	71%	56%	57%	68%	37%	55%
English Language Learners*	78%	55%	58%	76%	56%	59%	71%	40%	56%
Gifted and Talented	79%	56%	66%	80%	59%	65%	72%	34%	59%

*Note: The percentage of students reported ELL in the sample is much larger than expected and should not be considered representative of the ELL population.

Table A8: Parent/ Guardian Report of student “Learning About the Same Amount as or More than Normal” by Student Group and Instructional Setting

	Only in Person	Only Remote	Hybrid
All Students	68%	54%	46%
Students with Disability	62%	56%	45%
English Language Learners*	66%	52%	43%
Gifted and Talented	66%	55%	53%

*Note: The percentage of students reported ELL in the sample is much larger than expected and should not be considered representative of the ELL population.