



# Impacts of K-12 Remote Learning: Philly & PA Suburbs

**CHESCO, MONTCO, DELCO, BUCKS & PHILADELPHIA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

January 2021

# Survey Background

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Some families report their children are experiencing educational, social and emotional impacts from Remote Learning. Other families report their children are not impacted or are doing even better.

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## Objective

This survey is intended to size the impact(s) of Remote Learning to share with key decision makers including local and state Health Department and Education leaders as well as the public.

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## Methodology

Quantitative survey

Fielded 12/9/20 – 12/22/20

Respondents sourced online (Facebook and Twitter)

# Executive Summary

**While remote learning is working for some and “even better” for a few, it is not working for many. Families of children struggling fear irrevocable harm to their academic and emotional well-being.**

- ▶ If given the opportunity to send their children to school in-person full-time, 63% of parents whose children are currently in public school remote/hybrid learning said they would opt-in. Another 13% would consider it.
- ▶ Nearly 50% of parents report their children's grades as Worse or Significantly Worse than the year prior.
- ▶ 58% believe their children are falling behind; not really learning.
- ▶ Academic challenges noted included lack of motivation, lack of ability to learn virtually, more distraction at home, and less teacher interaction and support.
- ▶ 62% reported that their children's mental health is Worse or Significantly Worse than the year prior with a mix of internal stress signs (anxiety, depression) & external signs (irritability, aggression).
- ▶ 13% reported having a child that is newly seeing a therapist with another 30% considering seeking professional help.
- ▶ 50% of parents do not feel prepared or capable to help their kids with remote learning.
- ▶ More than 50% of parents reported their own mental health concerns from remote learning with increased anxiety, irritability and fatigue. >30% indicated that remote learning has impacted their marriage negatively.



# Philly & PA Suburbs Survey Respondents

Across Chesco, Montco, Delco, Bucks & Philadelphia School Districts

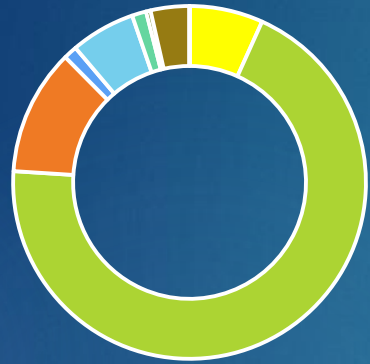
- ✓ **1,573** K-12 Parent Respondents
- ✓ **54** School Districts represented
- ✓ Sourced from **>60** Facebook groups & Twitter



Chesco - West Chester	140	Philadelphia	15
Montco - Lower Merion	119	Delco - Penn-Delco	15
Delco - Radnor	114	Delco - Springfield	15
Chesco - Downingtown	100	Delco - Rose Tree Media	14
Chesco - OJR	90	Montco - Souderton	13
Montco - North Penn	87	Montco - Hatsboro - Horsham	11
Montco - Abington	85	Montco - Methacton	11
Chesco - Avon Grove	83	Montco - Upper Dublin	9
Chesco - UCF	51	Montco - Upper Merion	8
Montco - Upper Moreland	45	Montco - Springfield	7
Montco - Perkiomen Valley	40	Bucks - Bensalem	6
Chesco - Coatesville	39	Delco - Southeast Delco	6
Bucks - Central Bucks	37	Montco - Upper Perkiomen	6
Montco - Spring-Ford	33	Delco - Great Valley	5
Delco - Swarthmore-Wallingford	33	Montco - Pottstown	5
Chesco - Tredyffrin - Easttown	31	Montco - Colonial	5
Chesco - Great Valley	29	Chesco - Phoenixville	5
Bucks - Council Rock	29	Bucks - Pennridge	5
Bucks - Neshaminy	28	Montco - Cheltenham	4
Montco - Wissahickon	25	Bucks - Centennial	3
Delco - Chi Chester	24	Delco - Interboro	2
Bucks - Pennsbury	23	Bucks - Quakertown	2
Delco - Garnet Valley	23	Chesco - Octorora	2
Delco - Marple Newtown	23	Montco - Norristown	2
Delco - Upper Darby	22	Chesco - Oxford	2
Delco - Haverford	20	Montco - Pottsgrove	2
Chesco - Kennett	17	Montco - Lower Moreland	2
		Bucks - Bristol Township	1

# Survey Respondent Details

The majority of respondents' children are in public school remote/hybrid learning

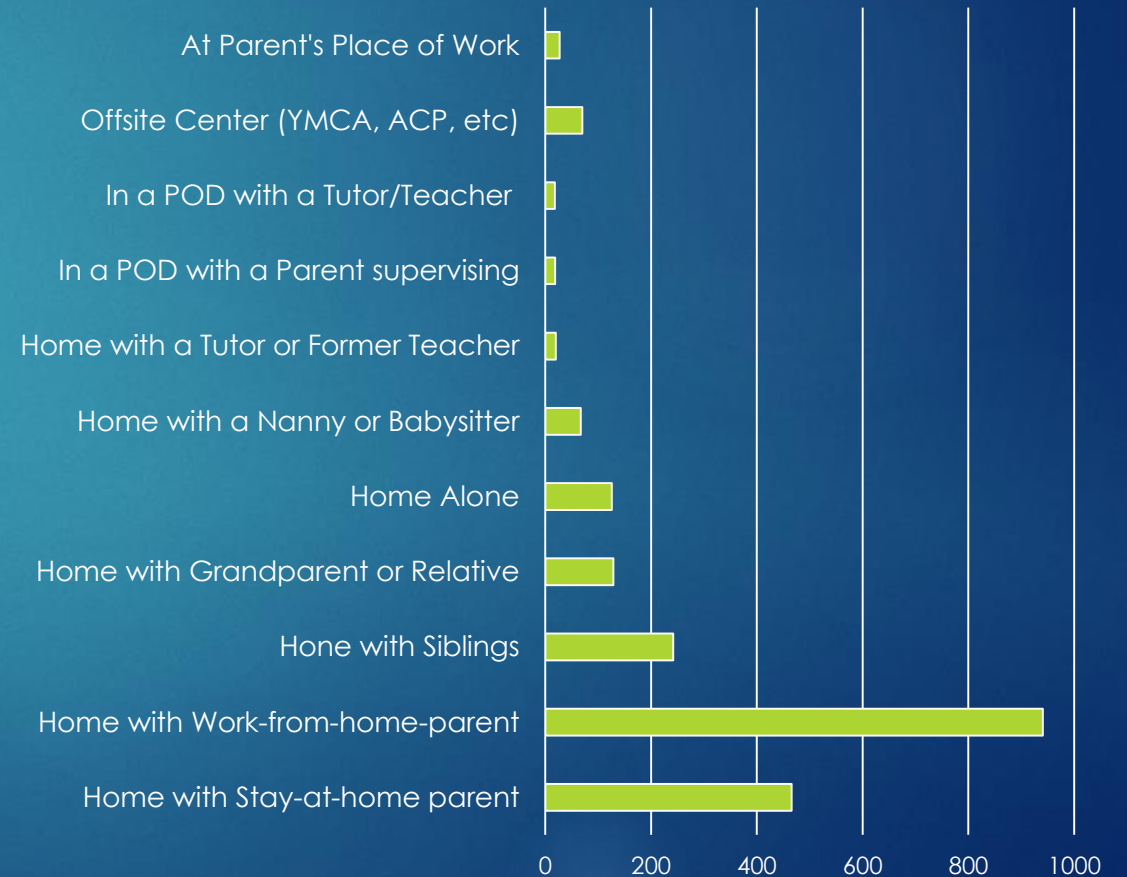


~70%

Public School  
Remote / Hybrid

Public School: 5 days full-time in-person	114
Public school: primarily remote &/or hybrid	1170
Public School: cyber program	195
Cyber School (not offered by the School district)	21
Private School	100
Charter School	22
Home School	7
Some of my kids are in public, some in private	60

The majority of children are learning at-home with work-from-home parents





# The Financial Impact of Remote Learning

## Employment Impact

12%

Quit or Took Leave  
From a FT or PT job

5%

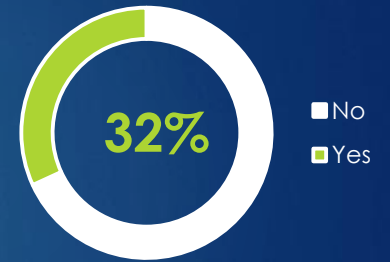
Downgraded  
From a FT to a PT job

10%

May need to  
Quit or Take Leave  
in the Future

## % Incurring Incremental Education & Care Cost

- Additional Childcare on Remote Days
- New Private School Tuition
- Pods
- Tutors



## % Incurring Incremental Data/Wifi Cost



36%

## Total \$/Month Impact (Lost Wages + New Expenses)



# The Academic Impact of Remote Learning

## Zoom School Focus



50%

NOT  
Paying  
Attention

Somewhat Inattentive  
or Very Inattentive

## Grades vs. Last Year



47%

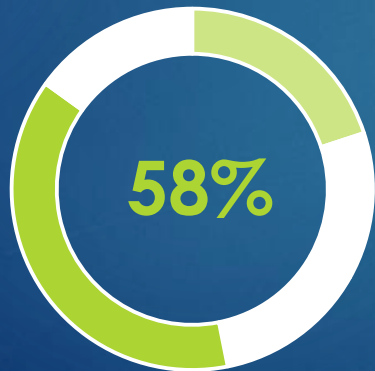
Worse or  
Much Worse

## Repeat the Year?

7% YES

11% MAYBE

## "Falling Behind" Academically



- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Strongly agree
- Strongly disagree

## Remote Instruction Hours Per Remote Learning Day

Per Remote Learning Day

4 OUT OF 10



Parents Report

≤

4 HOURS  
Remote  
Instruction

## Tutor Support or Educational Help

or Educational Help

YES

20%

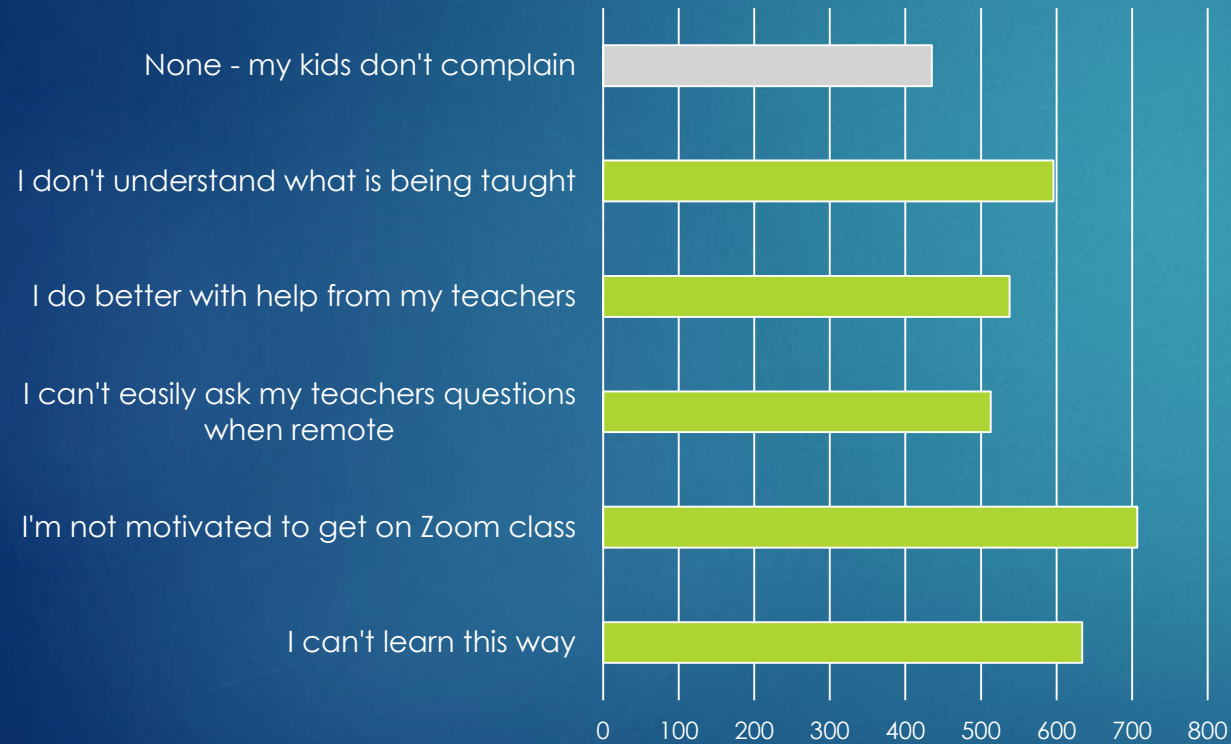
34%

CONSIDERING

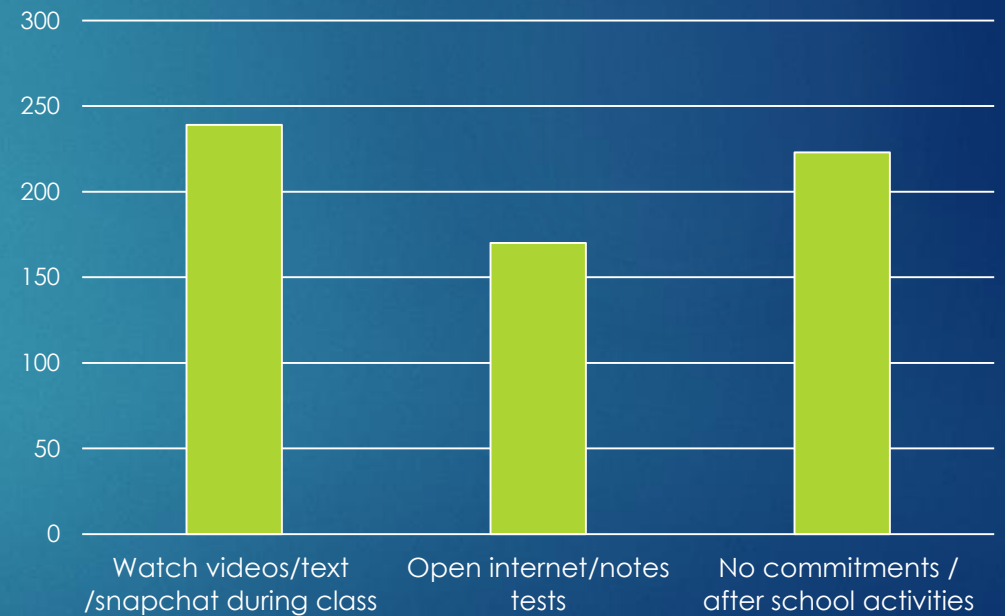
NOT  
NEEDED

# Academic Challenges with Remote Ed

Many Students struggle with ability and motivation to learn in the remote environment



Some students who previously wanted to return to in-school learning are finding unhealthy benefits inherent in remote





# Comments on Academic Impacts

## Concerns (a sample)

- *My children feel like failures because they can't learn virtually*
- *My HS student went from Honor Roll to Ds & Fs*
- *I'm fearful that my kids will never catch up academically*
- *My son admits to cheating; he isn't learning*
- *My 2<sup>nd</sup> grader has learned almost nothing since March*
- *Complex topics like Math and Science are difficult to learn online*
- *No homework, open note tests; nothing to study – No Learning*
- *He is not engaged online; he is engaged in the classroom*
- *The joy of school is the interaction, friends, activities, sense of autonomy*
- *If I don't sit next to her, she doesn't do the work*
- *No counselor has reached out to me, not even when my child was failing*
- *Remote learning leads to headaches and disengaged crying children*
- *Attitude was poor with remote, even 2 days in hybrid helped*
- *We switched to private because our child wasn't thriving*
- *My teen is not prepared for college; huge motivation issues.*
- *My kids don't have the same discipline/pride/concern over virtual schoolwork*
- *Mine are distracted, not able to focus and need the structure of in-school*

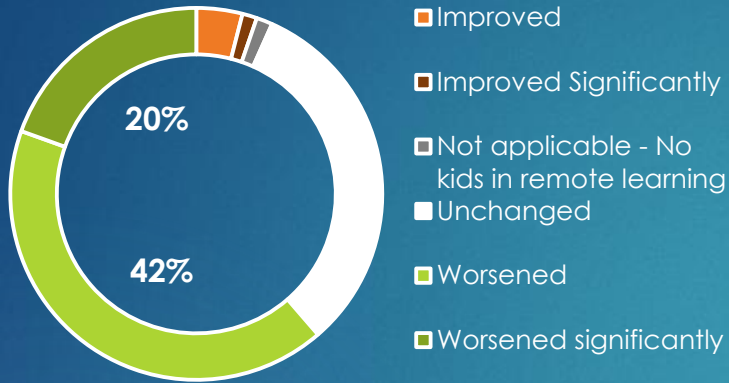
## Support / Neutral (a sample)

- *My children are making progress & they're safe*
- *This has been an improvement to our child's education and attitude*
- *My child does not have any issues. Completes homework and tests without aid or prompting*
- *My kids are maintaining good grades. They love the free time and no cruel kids to deal with.*
- *Mine is doing well with a stay at home parent*
- *Teachers are doing a GREAT job. The impacts I'm seeing are social.*
- *Kids are resilient.*
- *Virtual is great. My daughter is now an honor student with no distractions or bullying at home*
- *Online learning has been successful and appreciated in our household*
- *It's not perfect but we're making it work.*
- *People should stop complaining & be the parent*

# The Emotional Impact of Remote Learning

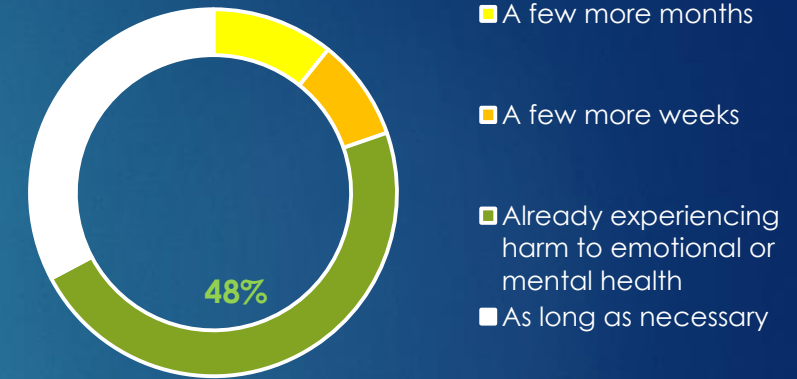
## Mental Health Impact

**62%**  
Worse or  
Significantly  
Worse

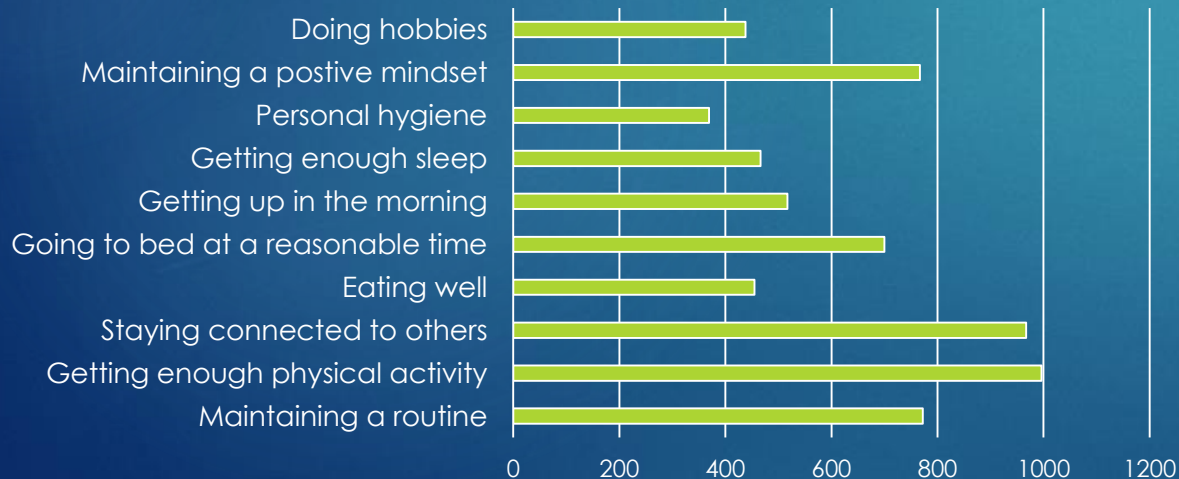


## Time Until Mental Health Harm

**48%**  
ALREADY  
EXPERIENCNG  
HARM



## Self-Care: Challenges to Maintain



## Emotional Changes vs. Last Year

**33%**  
Significant Increase  
**Irritability**  
**Aggressiveness**  
**Argumentativeness**

**36%**  
Significant Increase  
**Anxiety**  
**Depression**  
**Withdrawal**

**20%**  
Significant Increase  
**Stomachaches**  
**Headaches**  
**Sleeplessness**

**+ 24%** some change in above symptoms but not significant

# The Emotional Impact *continued*

## % Seeking Help

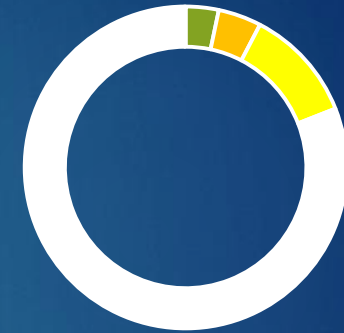
**13%**  
Newly  
Seeing a  
**THERAPIST**

**30%**  
Not Yet, but  
Considering  
(I'm Concerned)

Q. Have you engaged help for any of your kids social/emotional health?

## Suicide Concern

**3%** YES  
**3%** MAYBE  
**11%** NOT YET



## Comments on Seeking Mental Health Help:

**On a wait-list** for a therapist

They will be fine when they get back to school.

My 10<sup>th</sup> grader was extremely depressed. **I was afraid he would harm himself.** I'm now homeschooling and it has helped

**Can't afford therapy**  
due to job loss

We were seeing a psychologist, we now **added a psychiatrist** to get anxiety meds.

School guidance counselor is sweeping things under the rug and making them feel worthless

Newly seeing the guidance counselor weekly

The problems I'm seeing would improve with social interaction and being in-person in a classroom

We've **increased therapy** sessions

My child had been in therapy and now we're looking at **partial hospitalization**



# Comments on Emotional Impacts

## Concerns (a sample)

- *My children are depressed and have very little hope. We are getting help.*
- *I'm worried that it'll do permanent damage to their mental health*
- *They were engaged, successful student athletes, now unmotivated & no longer excited about their future (they can't see beyond this situation).*
- *Sports are part of their identity and dangerous to remove from our kids.*
- *My daughter is withdrawing from many things that she used to love*
- *Emotionally my child is cranky, irritable, short-tempered and aggressive now*
- *My teen went from honors to failing and wouldn't get out of bed. I transferred her to private school full-time and it has improved some*
- *Self esteem is crushed because they struggle with online learning*
- *They used to love school and learning; now they don't want to go to class*
- *ADHD went from a 5 to a 10plus. He's not the same kid.*
- *He stays in his PJs all day and has challenges getting up in the morning*
- *My son now has extreme separation anxiety and doesn't want me to leave him*
- *Emotional pain is real!*
- *One of my kids gets so frustrated he bangs his head on he couch & screams*
- *My child has become increasingly violent & belligerent*

## Support/Neutral (a sample)

- *My daughter was bullied; virtual has been great*
- *They know they are saving lives being responsible*
- *I haven't noticed a difference*
- *My 8<sup>th</sup> grader has adapted well*
- *My son is doing well, not suffering.*
- *My child is thriving. If in school, she would be worried about masks and protecting herself.*
- *Remote has been better for my son's social anxiety. He is a natural loner.*
- *Less pressure with cyber school*
- *They're doing well; we have a "bubble" of neighbors they play with*
- *We keep a routine of healthy meals, exercise and family time. We're fortunate to have the time and means to do this. I'm taking a year off work.*
- *My child has a positive outlook about online school because I do.*

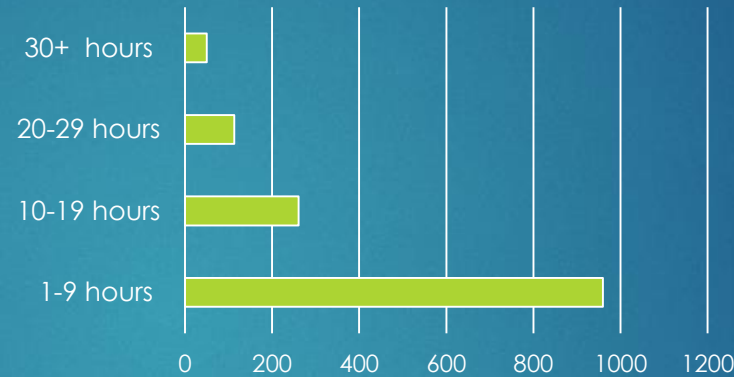
# The Parental Impact of Remote Learning

## Parental Readiness to Support

"I feel prepared / capable to help my kids with remote learning."

**50%**  
Disagree  
or Strongly  
Disagree

## Hours/Week Helping Kids Incremental to Last Year



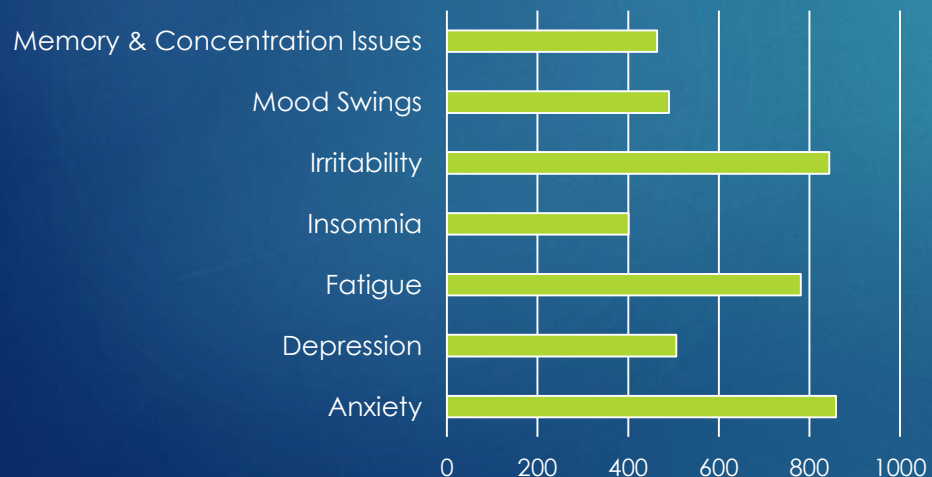
## Marriage Impact

3 OUT OF 10



**NEGATIVE  
IMPACTS to  
MARRIAGE**

## Parental Mental Health Impacts



## Comments:

*I fight my HS'er on keeping the camera on. I wish they would enforce it!*

*I switched to private school because I couldn't work and supervise my 1<sup>st</sup> grader; I would have lost my job*

*Being both parent & teacher is creating tension*

*I'm a single mom. Helping my child all day is impacting my livelihood*

*My daughter is unsupervised. It's not ok but I have no choice!*

*I'm not a teacher. I don't know how to help!*

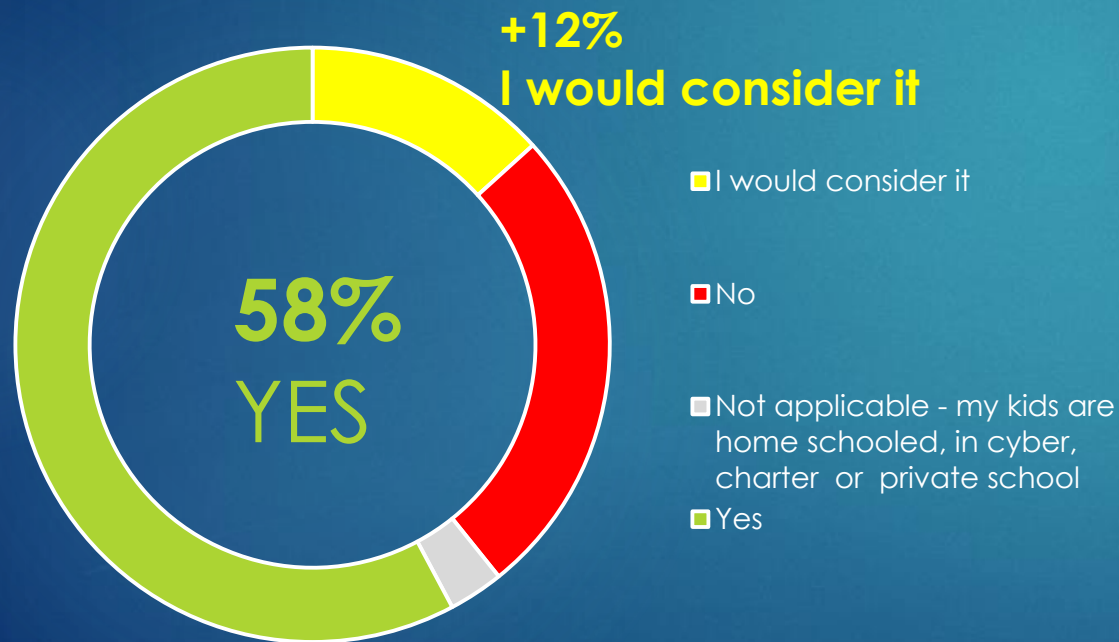
*Working Full Time & being a Part Time teacher doesn't work.*

# Appeal of in-person instruction Full Time

Q. If an option existed for your kids to go to public school in-person 5 days/week full-days, would you send any of your kids? Assume that there is mask wearing and 6' when feasible, 3' minimum distancing.

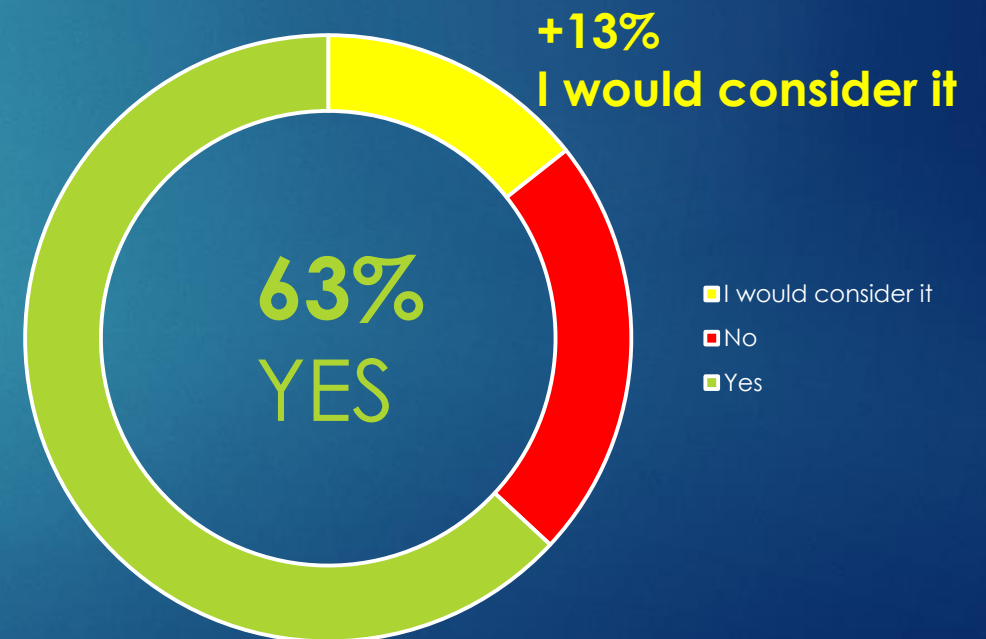
## 1,573 Full Respondent Base

Includes students currently in-school FT



## 1,170 Remote/Hybrid Respondents

Includes only the respondents with public school remote/hybrid students





# Comments to Decision Makers

## Concerns (a sample)

- *This is harming our children. Emotional damage & deterioration in learning is a crime.*
- *Calling the current state an “education” is a joke and a slap in the face.*
- *We will be dealing with the fall out academically and emotionally for years to come*
- *Open Schools 5 Days Per Week! Let parents & teachers who are worried stay home.*
- *Kids need to be in school EVERY DAY.*
- *Covid is spreading at social gatherings, not at school. Kids should be in school.*
- *Our state/local officials have failed to prioritize in-person learning.*
- *Our family is falling apart. Please let our kids go back to school.*
- *Online can't be long term; kids are suffering. Many homes not conducive to learning.*
- *IMPOSSIBLE for dual parent working households – no ability to work, teach, & parent*
- *Not giving people a choice is not okay. Not everyone can afford private school.*
- *My kids learn nothing in remote. I don't push them anymore; I complete their work.*
- *Disparate impact as private schools & some public are in-person; why can't ALL be FT*
- *My son needs to be in school full-time. The few hybrid days – he was so happy.*
- *I'm a teacher and truly in-person is best. They can ask questions & get support.*
- *Children with disabilities are now further behind. IEP services are not working virtually*
- *This has created an extremely stressful family environment; disrupted family dynamic*

## Support/Other (a sample)

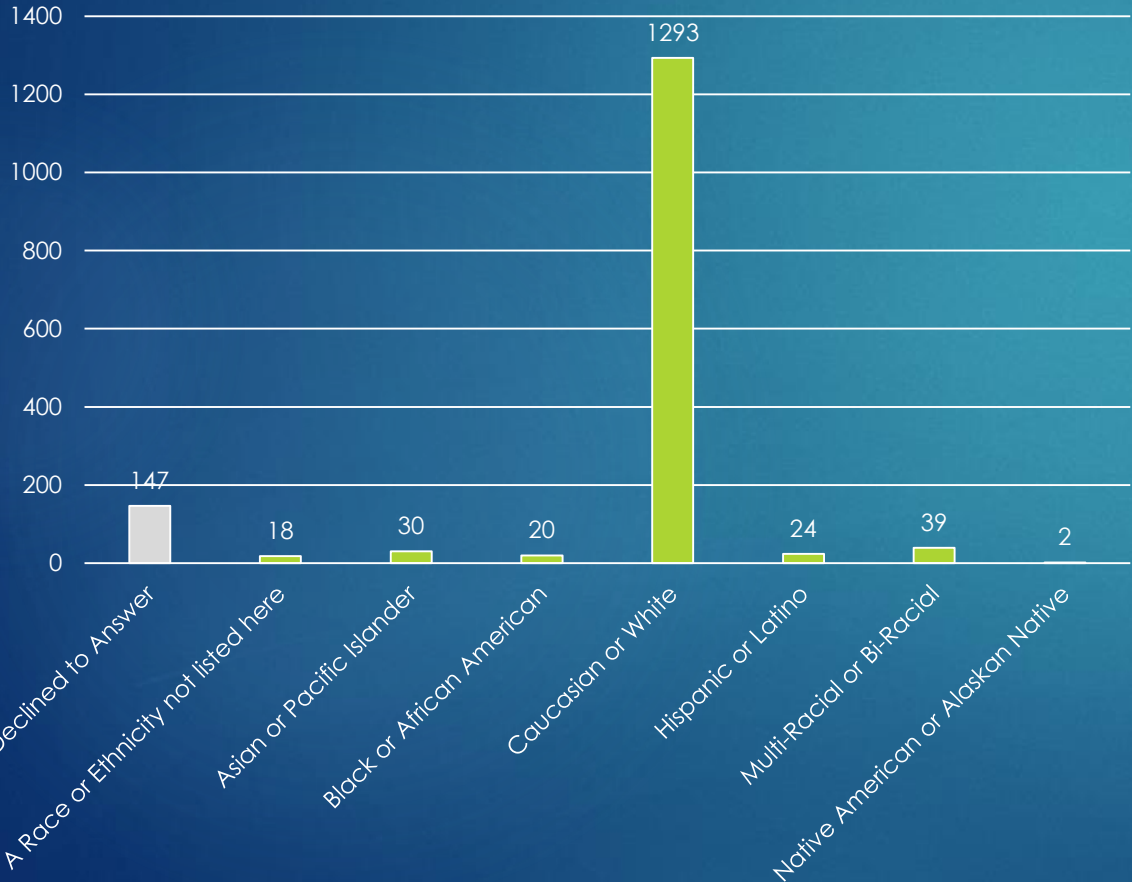
- *We are in a good place & will stay 100% virtual as long as we feel it is unsafe for kids to go to school*
- *I'll send kids back when most have taken the vaccine*
- *It's going as well as it can. I'm impressed by the educators.*
- *My kids are thriving.*
- *Teachers are doing great, but kids need to go back*
- *Remote is fine. Schools are not babysitters. Parents need to take responsibility and parent.*
- *Leave the decisions up to the Families.*
- *Transparency on likelihood to return full-time in 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 is required to allow parents to make the best decisions for their families.*
- *This survey is biased inquiring mainly about negative impacts.*

# Appendix

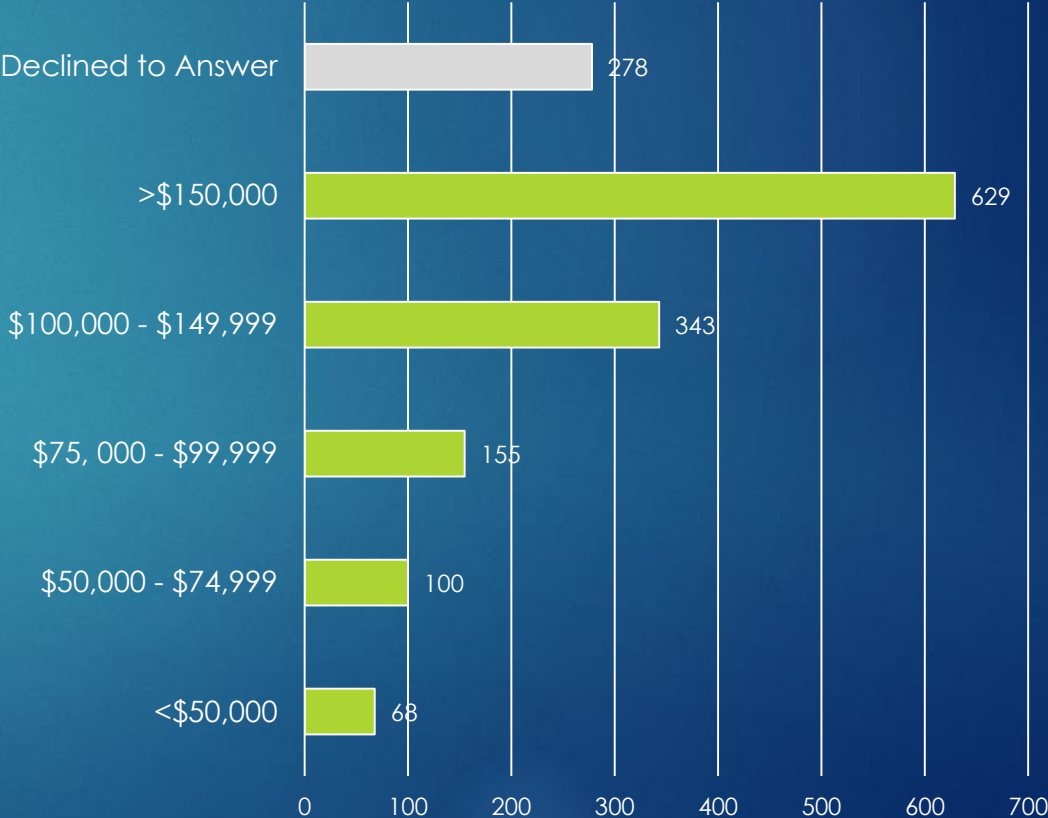
# Respondent Demographics

Respondent base lacks diverse representation despite efforts to solicit feedback across the community. Impacts are likely more significant among lower income households without the means to address academic and emotional challenges; overall reported impacts may be understated.

## Ethnicity



## Household Income





# Survey Respondent Sources

The majority of Respondents were sourced from **Facebook groups**; a small % from **Twitter**.  
*Below is a sampling of the Facebook groups where the survey was posted.*

- ▶ Moms Helping Moms – Lower Bucks County
- ▶ The Best of Montgomery County, PA
- ▶ Fairless Hills
- ▶ OJR Parents and Community
- ▶ Working Moms of Chester county – Momadvice
- ▶ Concerned Citizens Around Glenolden PA
- ▶ Main Line Community
- ▶ Chichester & Aston Moms
- ▶ Everything Collingdale
- ▶ West Chester Community
- ▶ Lower Merion Community Network
- ▶ Chester County, PA Moms Helping Moms
- ▶ Wallingford PA Community Bulletin Board
- ▶ UD Families for In-Person Learning
- ▶ ReOpenPA
- ▶ Doylestown Neighbors Unite
- ▶ Penn Delco Covid-19 Parent Support
- ▶ Pennsylvanians for In-Person Education
- ▶ Philly Moms Supporting Moms
- ▶ We are Philly Mom's
- ▶ CCAP – Coatesville Area Parents
- ▶ Malvern Community Forum
- ▶ Media, PA – Everybody's Hometown
- ▶ Upper Chichester PA
- ▶ GVSD Parents for Brick & Mortar
- ▶ Broomall Community Network
- ▶ Drexel Hill Community Forum
- ▶ #Let Them Play in PA
- ▶ Marple Newtown Parents
- ▶ Delaware County, PA Moms group
- ▶ Main Line Parent Community
- ▶ Marple Newtown Community Network
- ▶ Let Them Play – Winter Ches-Mont
- ▶ Downingtown Parents Navigating Online Learning
- ▶ UCFSD Families for Brick and Mortar
- ▶ Kennett Square PA Community
- ▶ Bensalem Proud – Bensalem Community
- ▶ Pottstown Area Families
- ▶ The Havertown Community Group
- ▶ Greater Philadelphia Community Ntwk
- ▶ North Penn Parents Connection
- ▶ WCASD Families for Brick & Mortar
- ▶ MNSD Parents
- ▶ Upper Darby High School Group
- ▶ Citizens of Delco
- ▶ Upper Moreland News & Notes
- ▶ Wissahickon School District
- ▶ PVSD Parents in Support of In-Person
- ▶ WCASD Parent Chat
- ▶ West Chester PA Moms
- ▶ Parents for In-Person Education
- ▶ DASD for Brick and Mortar
- ▶ Avon Grove Parents

# Contact

Send questions or requests for the survey data export to the email address below:

[RemoteLearningQuestions@gmail.com](mailto:RemoteLearningQuestions@gmail.com)