

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE NOVEMBER PARENT SURVEY



2020-2021

A Report Presented to the Board of Education and the Commack Community

By

ADMINISTRATION

Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Donald James

Associate Superintendent for Business & Operations

Mrs. Laura Newman

Executive Director of Instructional Services

Mr. Jordan Cox

Executive Director for Educational Resources & Special Projects

Dr. Michael Inforna

Administrative Associate for Instructional Technology

Mr. Jose Santiago

Curriculum Associate

Mrs. Carrie Lipenholtz

Curriculum Associate

Ms. Sari Goldberg

The Commack School District Mission Statement

Within the context of a caring community of learners, our primary mission is to provide an exemplary learning experience that will allow each child to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to become a successful, contributing member within our school community and greater society.

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District Mission Statement

The Commack School District is committed to developing each student's academic, civic, social, and emotional competencies by providing an overall well-rounded program. As stated by Dr. Donald James, Superintendent of Schools, *"Our aim in Commack is to prepare every student for whatever they want and need to achieve at their next level of learning while simultaneously maintaining and enhancing the educational program and academic achievement, as we define it, that Commack is known for and the community expects."*

Related Board of Education Goals

The following are the adopted 2020-2021 Board of Education goals related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:

- Provide continuity of instruction in both live and virtual settings.
- Support the development and on-going enhancement of a well-balanced, developmentally-appropriate curriculum that allows all students to be prepared to accomplish their individual goals.
- Provide for an education in which all students can learn the social, emotional, academic, and physical competencies in an environment that is as safe and healthy as possible.
- Continue to ensure that all students have access and opportunity to engage in diverse curricular and multitude of extracurricular activities.

Introduction

As is our general practice, the Commack UFSD engages in the formal and informal review of its educational programs along with their various components on a year-in and year-out basis. During the 2020-2021 school year under COVID-19 schools were required to make critical adjustments based on recommendations and guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), the [New York State Department of Health \(NYSDOH\)](#) and the [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#). The health and safety of the District's students, staff and families is our top priority. As such, Commack Schools initiated a Reopening Task Force to identify items related to the reopening of schools for the 2020-21 school year. The Commack Model was designed by Teachers and Administrators using research and information from parent surveys as well as guidance from the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Health.

Listed below are the guiding principles that drove the work of the Reopening Task Force:

- The health, safety and security of our students and staff is paramount in the successful reopening of Commack Schools.

- It is critical to have strategies and support for students, families and staff members in place for each phase of recovery (before reopening, immediately after reopening and long-term support).
- Due to the potential loss of formalized education as a result of COVID-19, it will be necessary to deliver a program that ensures the successful growth of our students toward the end of the 2020 - 2021 school year.
- It is necessary to maintain a collaborative relationship with parents/guardians and the school community.

In an effort to continuously review and monitor our Commack Instructional Models, we surveyed Commack families from November 12, 2020 to November 20, 2020 regarding their child's/children's educational experiences. There were 2,516 responses, topics included but were not limited to:

- Workload
- Engagement
- Flexibility
- Technology
- Time Management
- And More

Once we collected the data, the results were analyzed to identify patterns and themes in an effort to inform how we proceed under continued COVID restrictions.

Commack Schools

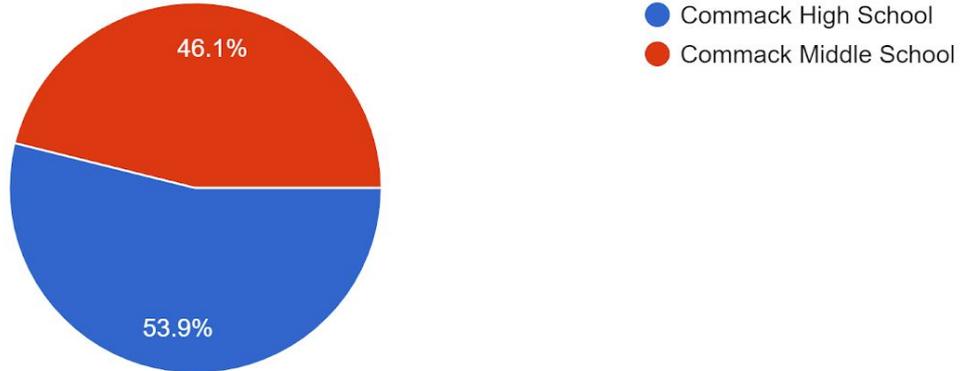
November 2020

Parent Survey Results

Secondary School Data

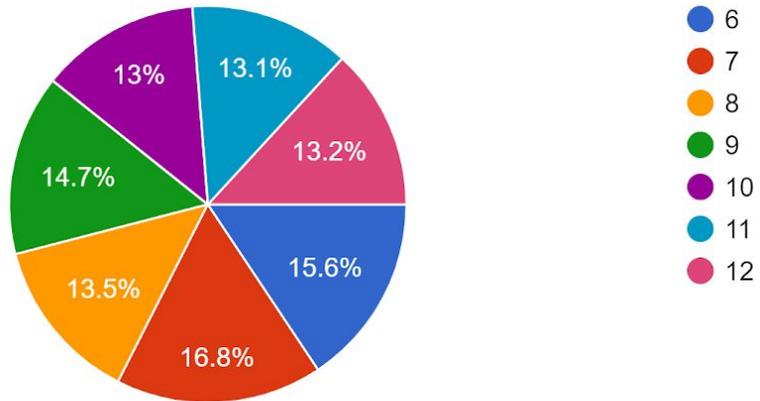
What school does your child attend?

1,451 responses



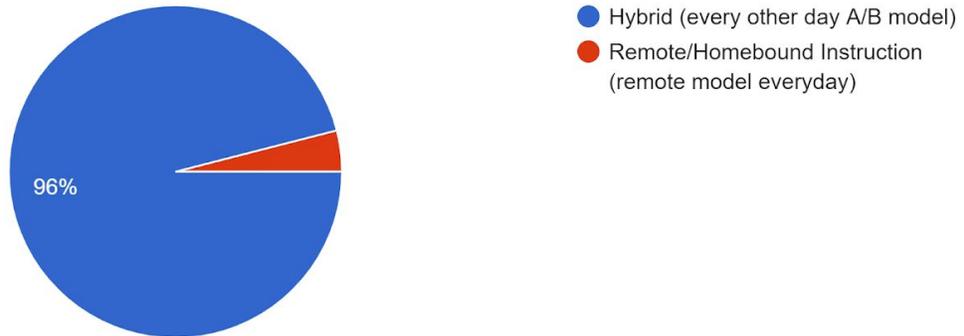
What grade is your child in?

1,451 responses



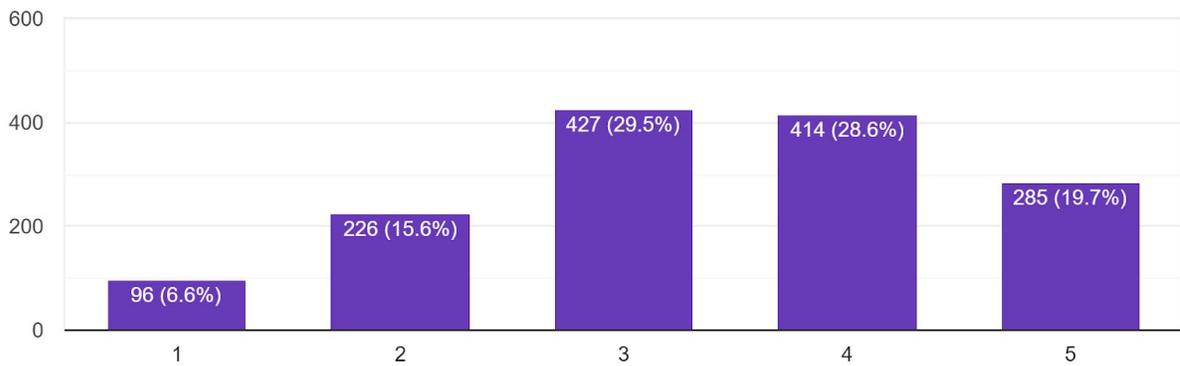
Is your child attending school hybrid or remote learning?

1,451 responses



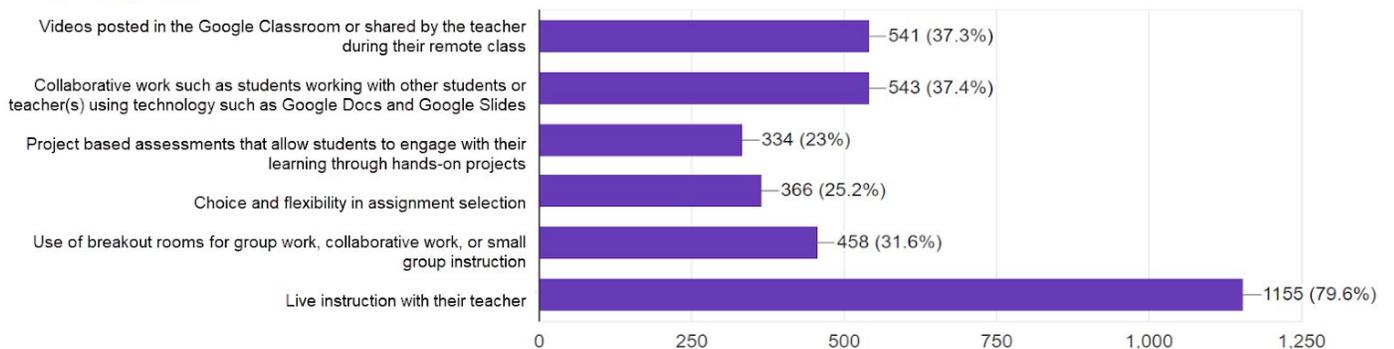
What is your child's level of engagement during their virtual classes?

1,448 responses



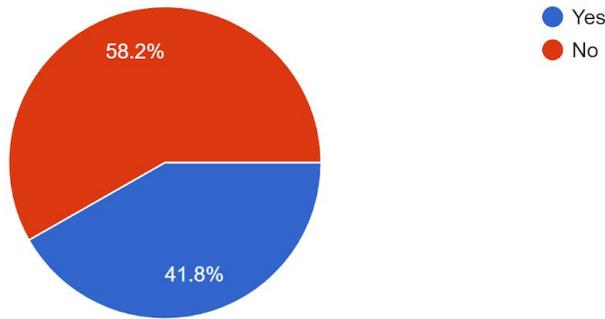
In speaking with your child, which of the following reflects examples of “engaging” work during their virtual courses?

1,451 responses



Does your child enjoy taking virtual courses?

1,437 responses



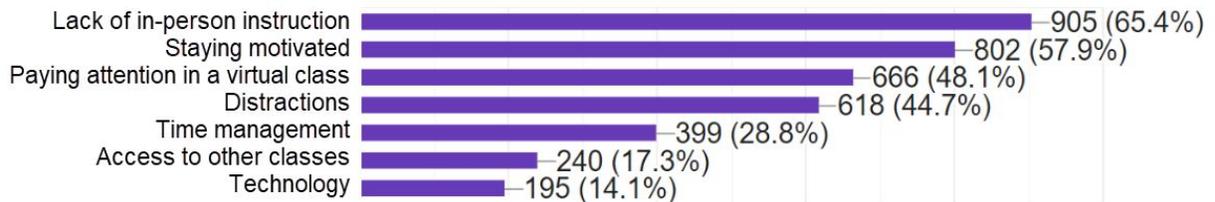
What does your child find most successful in the A/B every other day model? (check all that apply)

1,359 responses



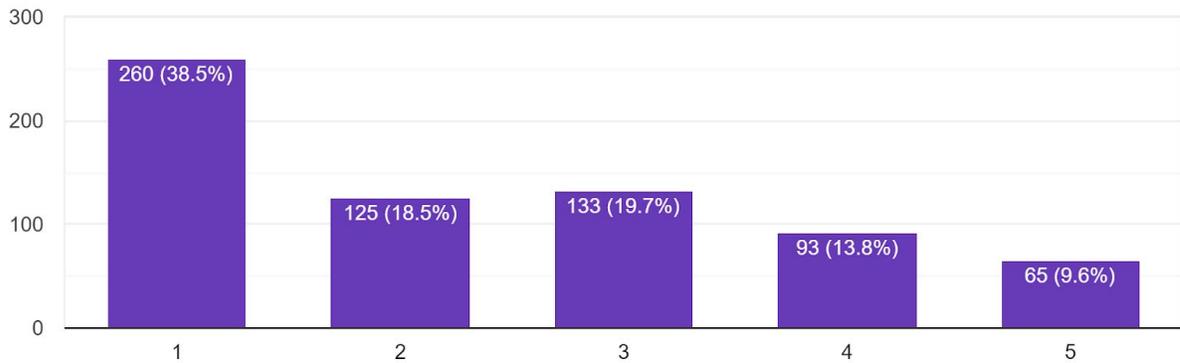
What does your child find most challenging in the A/B every other day model? (check all that apply)

1,384 responses



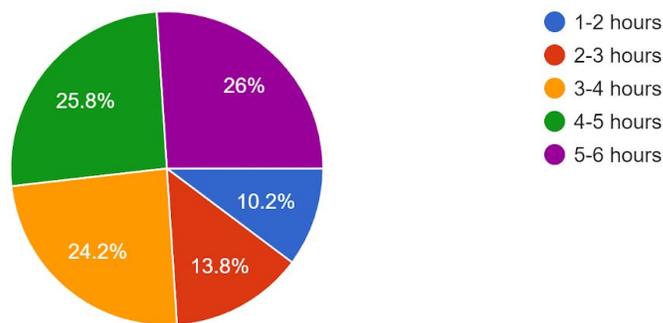
For middle school students, how effective is your child's Humanities and STEM support classes offered on virtual days? *please skip this question if your child is not in middle school

676 responses



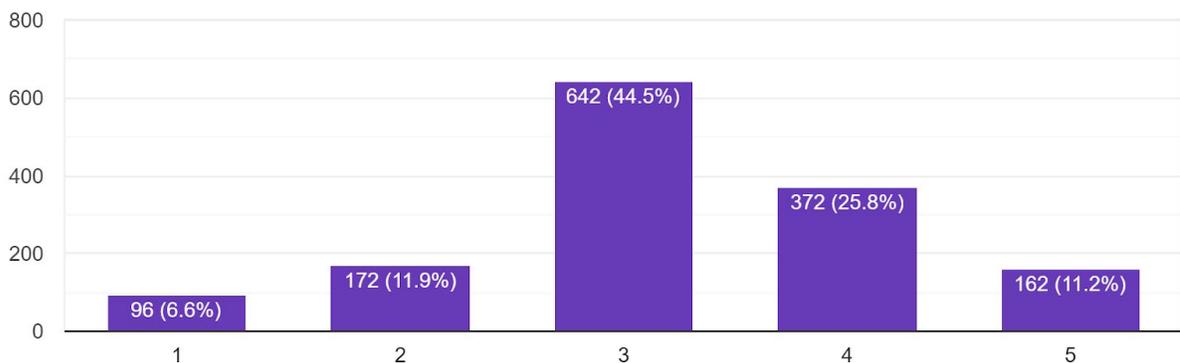
How much time is your child spending online during their virtual day? *please include homework and daily classes

1,440 responses



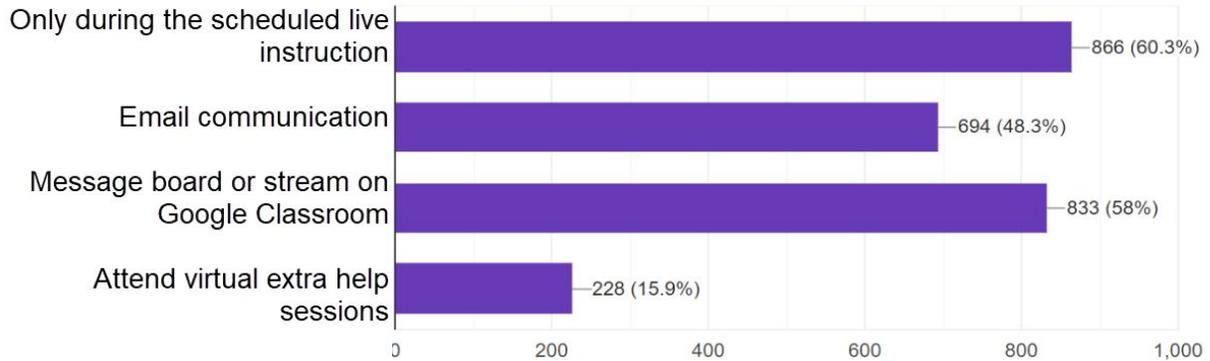
How heavy is the workload for your child?

1,444 responses



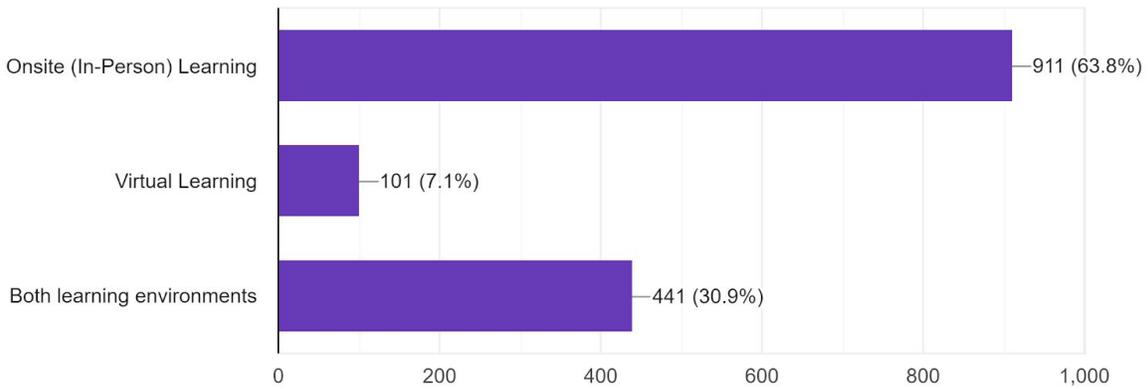
In what ways does your child communicate with his/her teacher for his/her virtual courses?
(Check all that apply)

1,436 responses



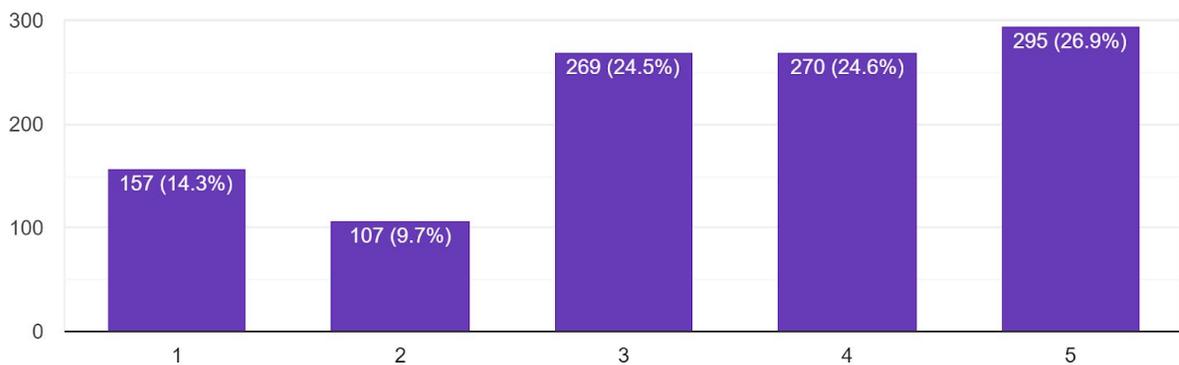
In what learning environment does your child feel most comfortable participating?

1,428 responses



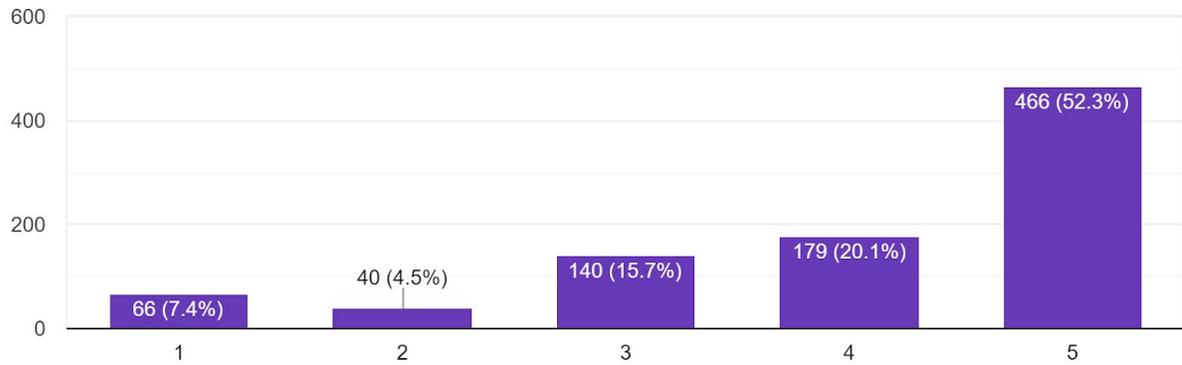
If your school building has closed, how would you rate your child's transition to eLearning?

1,098 responses



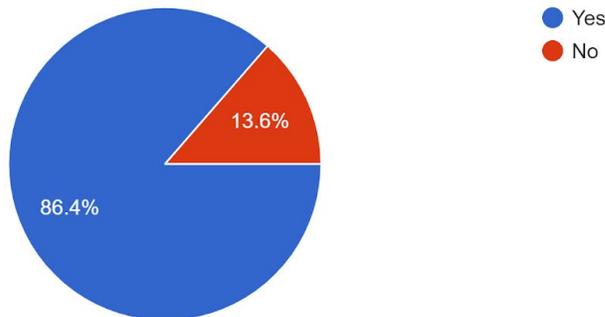
For those who have had to transition to eLearning how would you rate having a set schedule?

891 responses



Do you feel it is useful to receive an email from the District when there is a COVID-19 case in another building?

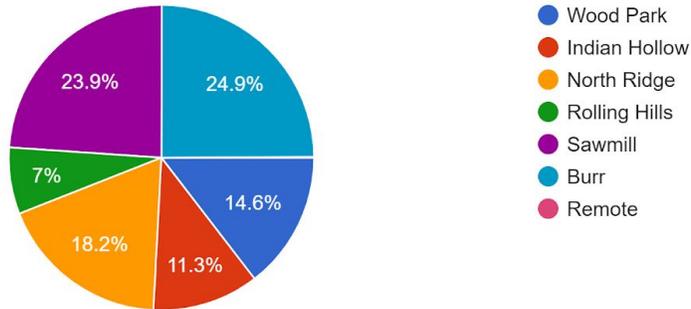
1,442 responses



Elementary School Data

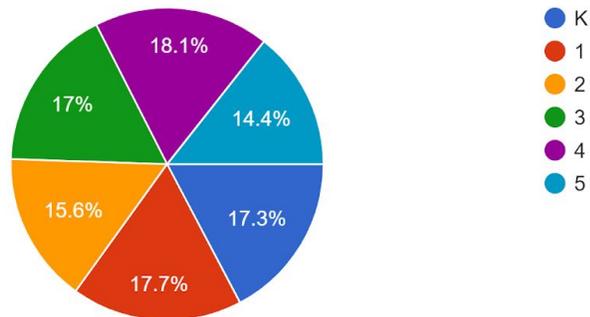
What school does your child attend?

1,065 responses



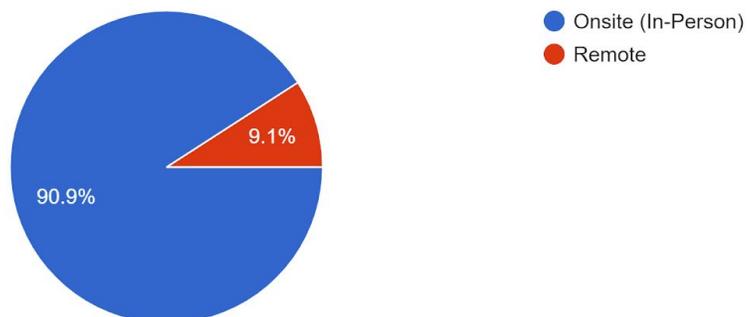
What grade is your child in?

1,065 responses



Is your child attending school onsite or remote learning?

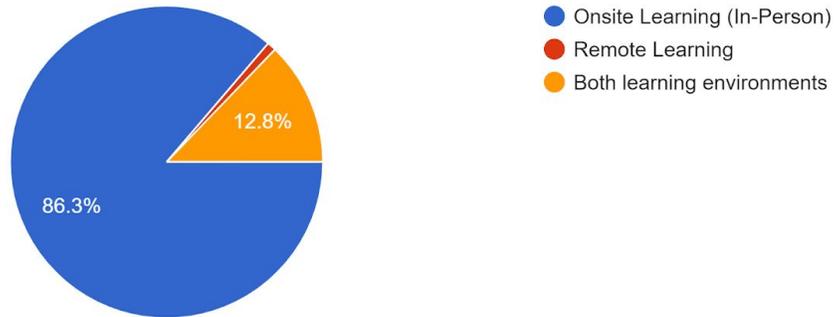
1,065 responses



Elementary Schools Onsite Learning

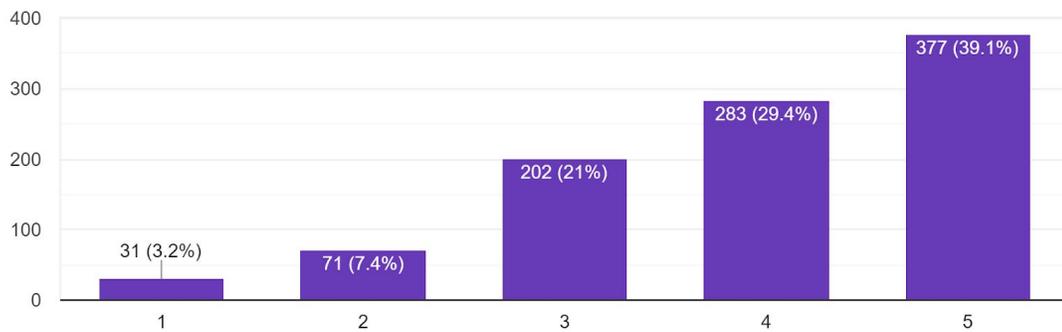
In what learning environment does your child feel most comfortable participating?

968 responses



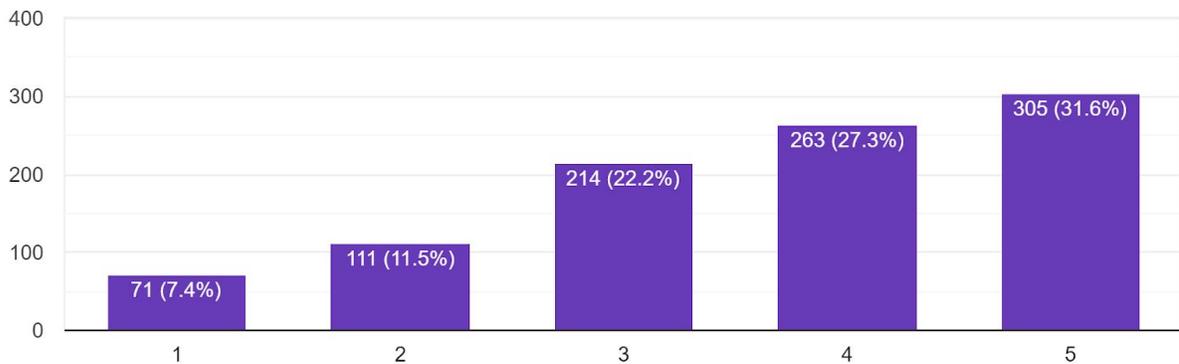
How comfortable is your child using his/her Chromebook?

964 responses



How comfortable is your child navigating Google Classroom?

964 responses



What instructional technology lessons do you think would be helpful for your child to learn?
(check all that apply)

935 responses



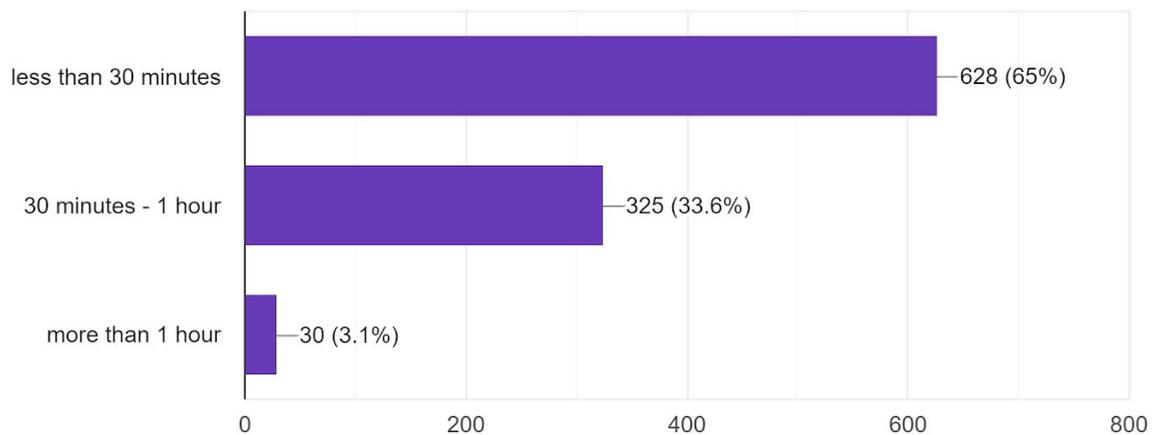
What resources can the District provide to families that would help with technology at home? (check all that apply)

752 responses



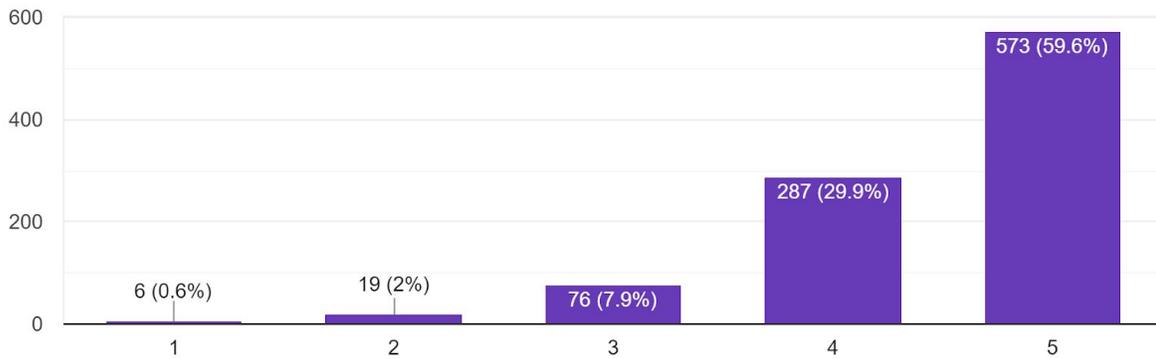
How much time is your child spending doing homework?

966 responses



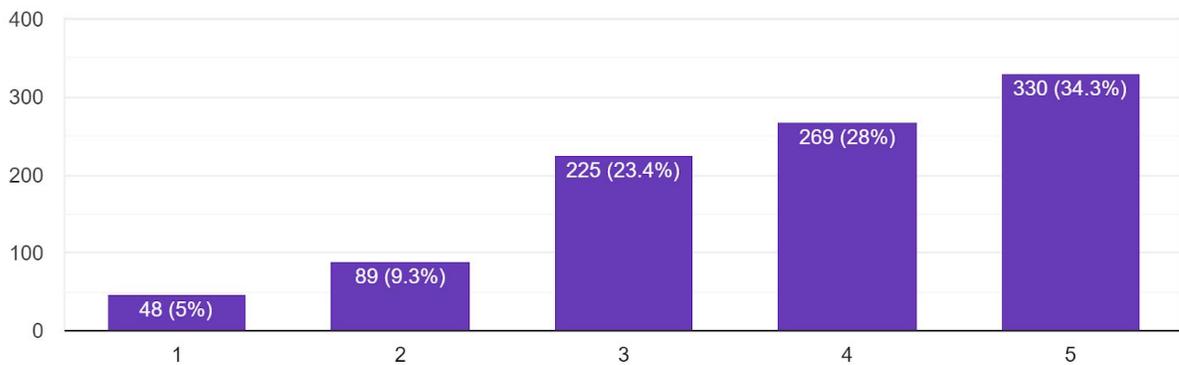
In speaking with your child does he/she feel engaged with the teacher when in Brick and Mortar school?

961 responses



In speaking with your child does he/feel engaged with their peers when in Brick and Mortar school?

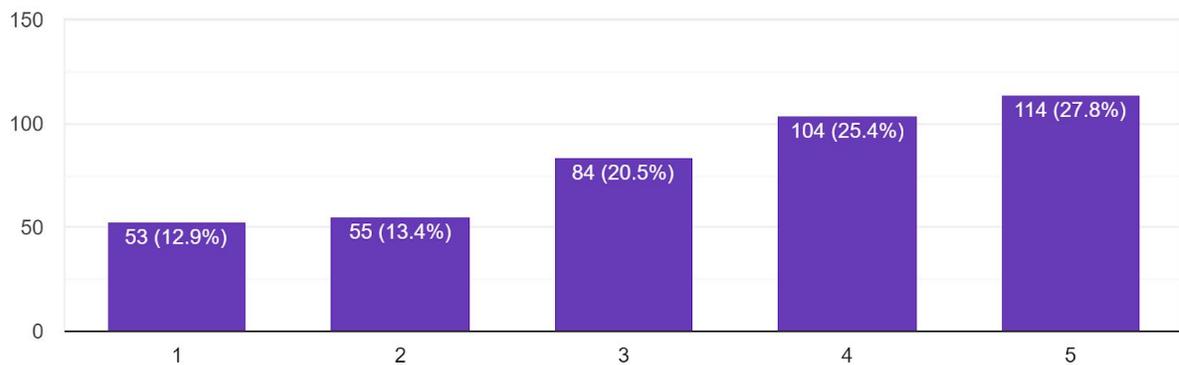
961 responses



If your school building has closed, how would you rate your child's transition to eLearning?

*please skip this question if your child's school has not closed

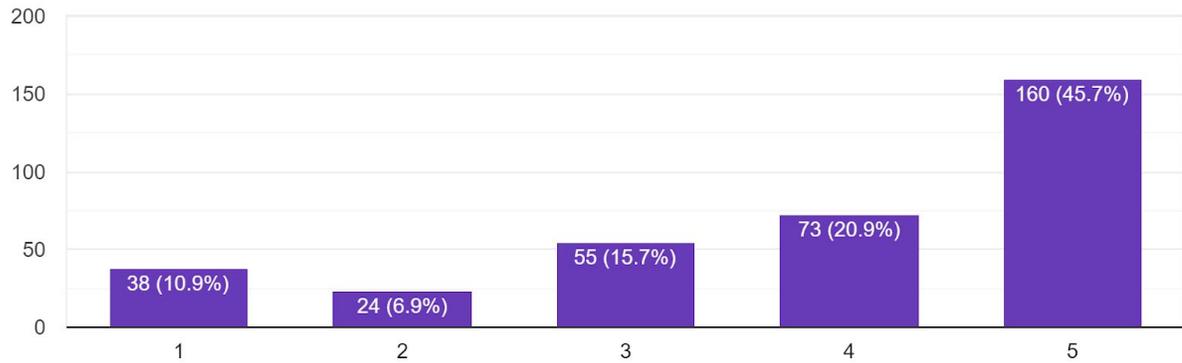
410 responses



For those who have had to transition to eLearning how would you rate having a set schedule?

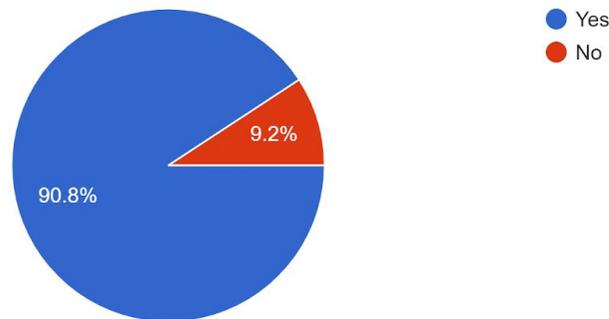
*please skip this question if your child's school has not closed

350 responses



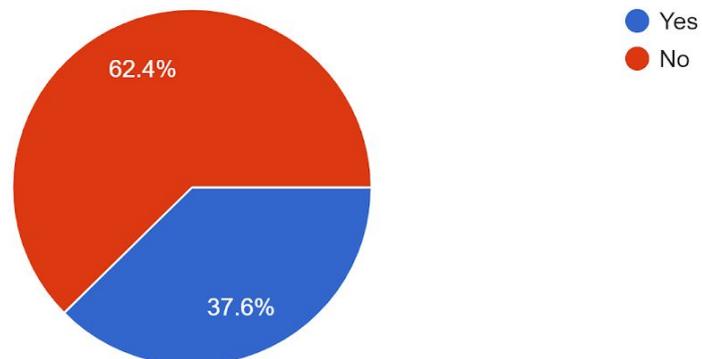
Do you feel it is useful to receive an email from the District when there is a COVID-19 case in another school building?

965 responses



Have you completed a survey for another child?

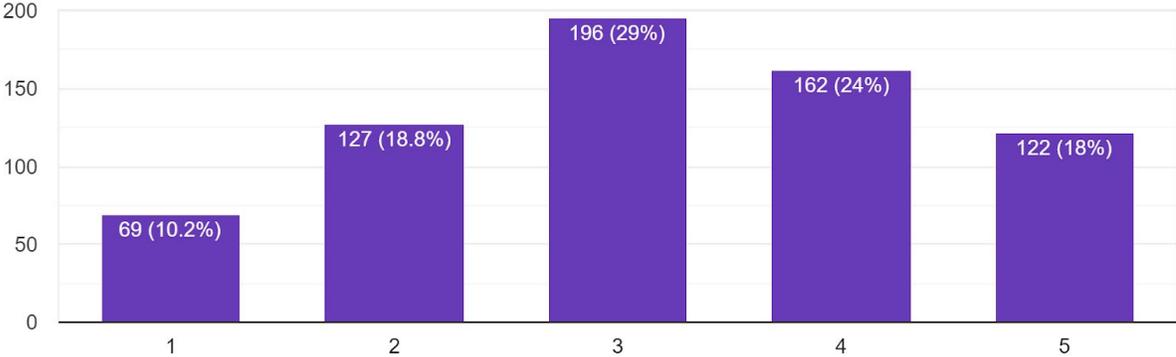
968 responses



Primary Schools Remote Learning

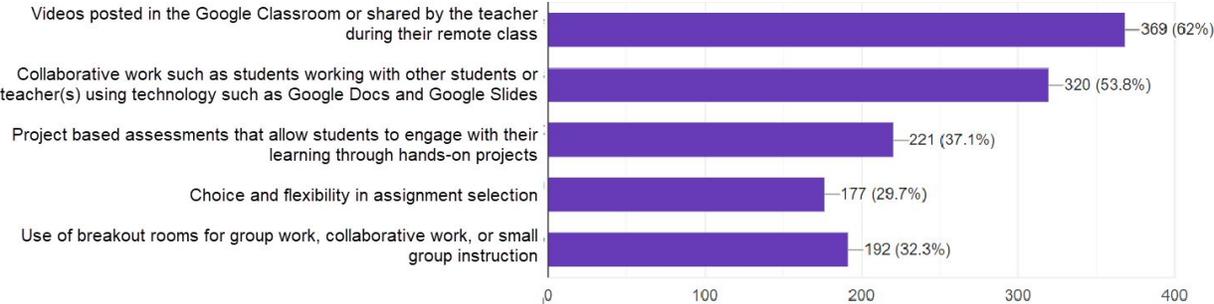
What is your child's level of engagement during his/her remote classes?

676 responses



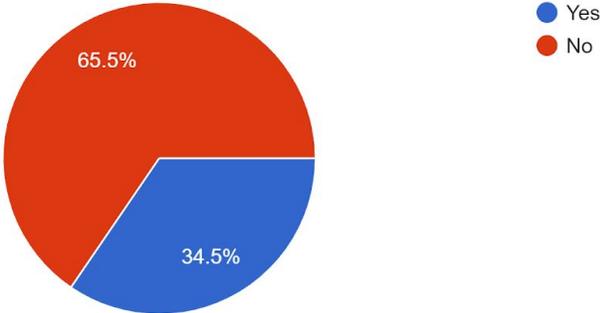
In speaking with your child, which of the following reflects examples of “engaging” work during his/her remote classes?

595 responses



Does your child enjoy remote learning?

698 responses



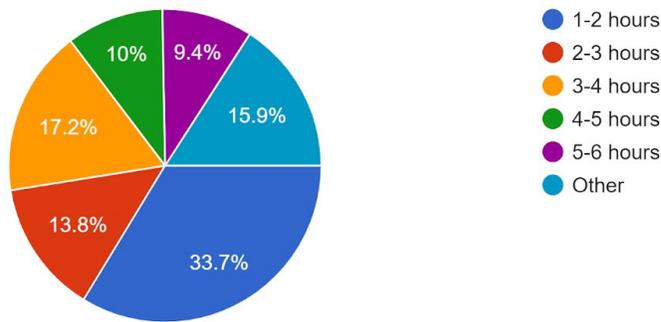
What resources can the District provide to families that would help with technology at home? (check all that apply)

495 responses



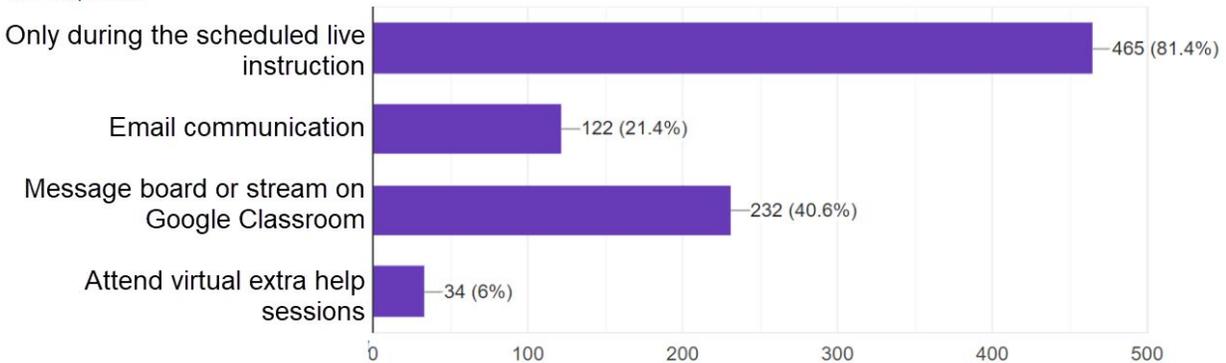
How much time is your child spending online during the day? *please include classes and homework

617 responses



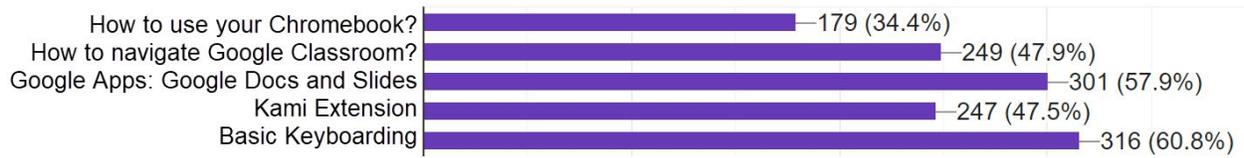
In what ways does your child communicate with his/her teacher for remote learning? (Check all that apply)

571 responses



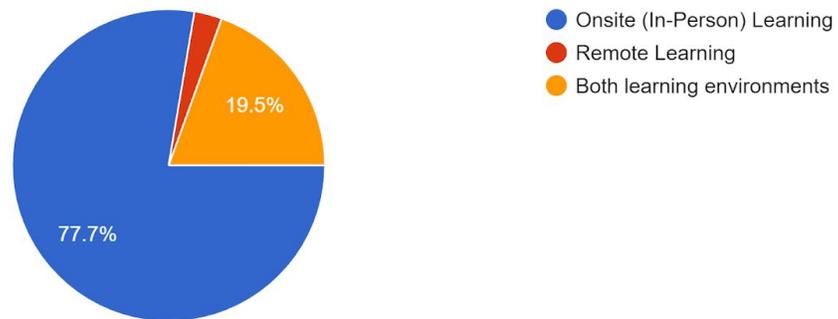
What instructional technology lessons do you think would be helpful for your child to learn?
(check all that apply)

520 responses



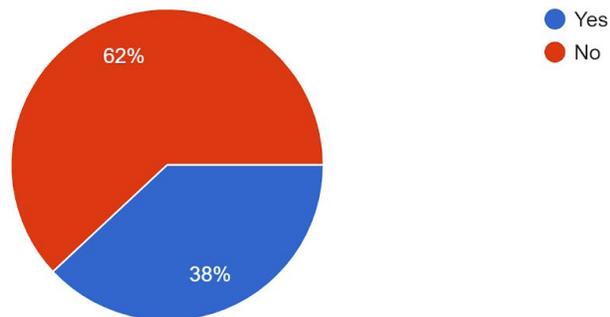
In what learning environment does your child feel most comfortable participating?

698 responses



Have you completed a survey for another child?

1,065 responses



Survey Comments

“Teachers showing the flexibility that was promised at the beginning of the school year.”

“All teachers should have an assignment on the virtual day with a due date of the virtual day during school hours. Some classes are not posting any learning so I’m not sure how they will get through the curriculum. And some assignments are due at midnight which lets my procrastinating child stay up late.”

“If my child is quarantined he needs to be provided live instruction.”

“STEM Support class really helps because the teacher helps with any questions about math and science. The teacher explains the material very thoroughly and makes it easy to understand.”

“I think this year is more helpful to the children compared to last year.”

“Often times students don’t have enough instruction with their core subject teachers and they’re forced to self teach. This is a problem because the courses move at a rapid pace and many children fall behind. There isn’t enough in person instruction to support how quickly work is being covered.”

“Thank you for the hard work that everyone is putting in to making this impossible situation as productive and beneficial as possible. It is appreciated.”

“If my child is absent they should be able to remote into the class so they do not miss any of the learning. “

“The fall semester has been better than the spring learning. At least they were able to go to school every other day! Mentally that is important for my child.”

“Commack is amazing and I am so proud my child attends CHS.”

“Our children need to be in school. They only thrive when they are in the building.”

“Thank you teachers, staff and administrators for all that you are doing! Commack SD is going above and beyond so many other districts to keep our kids, healthy & safe!”

“We need a text or email when contact tracing is complete for the night. Being left wondering if our children have been exposed for another 24 hours makes it difficult for them to attend work and other activities.”

“I wish there was an answer that could make school better. I feel awful for these seniors who are ending their years in Commack this way. I hope that our world heals and they at least get to experience college. “

“The Humanities and STEM support teachers should collaborate with the classroom teachers. It appears there is not any carryover.”

“We don’t feel that there is enough continuity on the virtual day with the core subjects.”

"The teachers seem to be giving more work on virtual than in school."

"[In the STEM and Humanities class] the kids need virtual instruction to support their core classes."

"Lack of outdoor activity during lunch, clubs and sports is a disadvantage to commack students- please revise ASAP!"

"This has been a difficult transition but thank you for all you have done in the Commack school district ...my son is acclimating and has had detailed instruction."

"[In the STEM and Humanities class] it gives time to do work being supervised and allows for students to ask questions."

"My child enjoys both online and in person, but the hybrid is actually working very well for them - they're asking to keep it till graduation!!"

"I am concerned that if my son has to quarantine then he would fall behind. We need to be able to live stream!!"

"Better communication from school and teachers when child is quarantine and how they will complete their work/assignments. Very difficult as an IB student who is quarantine with no guidance in how they will get their work/assignments/tests."

"There should be a cut off time for which assignments and items to be printed for the next day can be posted so students can know when to stop checking Google classroom for the day."

"Please start up virtual clubs and engage students to join them."

"[STEM & Humanities] Support classes are not teacher driven. There needs to be more structure from the teachers, e.g. more guided instruction."

"Very difficult being in one room all day, especially socially".

"There is a high level of anxiety, stress and feeling overwhelmed. There needs to be more of a focus on reaching out to students on the importance of mental health."

"Students who are absent due to quarantine should have access to online learning and extra help for their classes."

"We feel that considering the challenges facing education right now, Commack is doing an excellent job of making it work as well as it can."

"It is challenging when teachers are posting assignments at any point of day 7 days. Sometimes right after checking something new is posted. More regularity on posting would help for scheduling and routines. Some teachers do not respond to the comments and virtual communications or give much work. Need more asynchronous work."

"I think the school has done a great job with communication. While the e-learning isn't perfect, overall I think the district has done a great job with a crappy situation."

"I think that it should be taken into consideration that this new way learning is new for everyone and that the workload should be a little lighter... I don't think that the in school teachers should be assigning new work on the days the kids are virtually learning."

"The lack of live in-person music instruction and access to practice rooms has hindered our son's preparation for his upcoming college auditions. Additionally we were disappointed with the cancellation of music related electives our son was originally scheduled to take this year. These would have helped him in preparation for his college career where he is planning on majoring in music education. We were also hoping that at this point there might have been a resumption of some ICA music ensembles."

"Given the extra amount of time students are in front of a computer screen, perhaps the use of Chromebooks should be limited to at home instruction, and not in the classroom during live instruction. "

"I am thankful for all the effort the teachers are doing in this challenging environment and applaud the efforts with online instruction. I understand this is not an easy task. The teachers are doing the best they can."

"It can be very confusing to monitor both Google Classroom and Infinite Campus. Sometimes, for example, depending on the teacher, an assignment may be marked "missing" from one but not the other, so you have to toggle back and forth to get a clear picture on what's going on."

"More communication for remote learning students from the district. I feel like they are being left out of everything. Also, I would like to see a homework tab added to the google classroom for each class. Some type of study group or clubs for the remote students since their day ends so early & they are already missing out with student interaction by not being in school."

"My child is not socializing much. He needs to have more conversations with classmates."

"More flexible opportunities for extra help beyond 2:45 when she is still on the bus and unable to attend extra help. Teachers posting extra help times more frequently, as they change weekly. My daughter struggles with managing her assignments and things can get lost on google classroom, so management skills for all students to stay on top of assignments. (The Chromebook does not have notifications pop up for google classroom)."

"The hybrid model was the best choice for my child as he likes in school learning but wouldn't be lost in case the school shuts down. I commend Commack for an excellent job."

"I appreciate that the school counselors are checking in with the students as at this age they do not always talk freely with parents."

"The children should have more outdoor time. The teachers should more actively tell the children they can take a mask break."

Parent Survey Findings

All elementary and secondary parents were invited to participate in a district-developed survey regarding their child's/children's educational experience under the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey included a myriad of questions related to the instructional models, which sought to develop a system-wide understanding of our students' educational experience both virtually and Brick and Mortar (in-person instruction).

The following is a summary of the survey results and subsequent anecdotal data collection.

- 78% of secondary students felt engaged in their virtual classes.
- 79% of secondary students prefer live instruction with their teacher during virtual classes.
- 54% of secondary students find the flexibility of the A/B schedule to be beneficial.
- 65% of secondary students felt the most significant challenge in the A/B model was the lack of in-person instruction.
- 57% of Middle School students felt the STEM and Humanities courses were less than effective on virtual days.
- 76% of secondary students spend between 3 and 6 hours online during their virtual day.
- 64% of secondary students feel most comfortable participating in onsite (in-person) learning.
- 76% of secondary parents felt the transition to e-learning was successful due to a school closure.
- 88% of secondary students felt having a set schedule was beneficial when transitioning to eLearning.
- 86% of elementary students prefer Onsite Learning and an additional 13% feel comfortable in both online and in-person learning environments.
- 90% of elementary students feel comfortable using their Chromebook.
- 81% of elementary students are comfortable navigating Google Classroom.
- 67% of elementary parents feel it would be helpful for their child to learn basic keyboarding and 63% feel it would be helpful for their child to learn Google Apps.
- 67% of elementary parents feel it would be helpful to provide families with resources focused on Google Apps.
- 97% of elementary school students feel engaged with their teacher when in Brick and Mortar school.
- 86% of elementary school students feel engaged with their peers when in Brick and Mortar school.

- 74% of elementary parents felt the transition to eLearning was successful due to a school closure.
- 71% of elementary remote students felt engaged in their remote classes.

Recommendations

Our team of teachers and administrators developed the following recommendations to reflect the findings of this survey.

- Increase level of support and live instruction while students are on quarantine.
- Increase socialization, i.e. live music lessons, athletics, clubs.
- Evaluate the STEM and Humanities courses at Commack Middle School to increase the effectiveness of the program.
- Provide additional Google Apps support resources for families through the Commack eLearning Parent Toolkit.

Alterations and Adjustments

- **Quarantine Support:** Additional academic support is available for students upon request and/or identified in need of support. A subject specialist is assigned to teach the material the teacher of record assigned to assure the lessons are aligned. An additional two weeks of Curriculum Quarantine Support will be provided for students upon return.
- **Clubs:** Commack Middle School and Commack High School will be phasing in clubs throughout the first and second semester.
- **Music:** Commack High School will begin offering live music instruction beginning Monday, January 25, 2021. Student musicians will be safely distanced in the auditorium, band, chorus, and orchestra rooms, as per the Department of Health recommendations: Ensuring a distance of 12 feet between individuals while participating in activities that require projecting the voice (e.g. singing) or playing a wind instrument (e.g. flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone horn, tuba) Ensuring a distance of 6 feet between individuals while participating in activities that require playing a string instrument (e.g. violin, viola, cello, bass) or percussion.
- **STEM and Humanities:** The Curriculum Team has continued to work with the Commack Middle School Administration and Directors of Social Studies, Math, Science, and English to make changes to the STEM & Humanities Support classes. The changes will occur in two phases. Phase 1 will begin on January 4 and will include schedule changes for grade 8 STEM classes, a schedule for content support, and the introduction of executive functioning skills lessons on alternating Fridays. Phase 2 will begin on February 1. During the STEM and Humanities Support classes, teachers will facilitate a 20-minute lesson that relates to the

topics being taught in class and the remaining 20 minutes of class will be independent work and studying with the teachers available for support.

- **Senior Support:** Program is available to Grade 12 Students on their virtual day in the CHS Library, commencing the beginning of the second semester. Students will be able to use their Chromebooks and work independently to participate in their virtual classes while housed in the library.

Monitoring

- Principals and Assistant Principals are the primary administrators that will monitor the efficacy of the adjustments to the Commack Model. Throughout the school year, these administrators will engage teachers in conversation to solicit feedback regarding the new effectiveness of these programmatic changes on a day-in and day-out basis. Principals will choose from multiple methods to engage in this monitoring such as classroom observations, grade level meetings, faculty meetings, etc.
- District Office administration will engage in the monitoring of program adjustments via principal meetings, informal classroom observations, other grade level meetings, etc. as appropriate.

Evaluation

- Teachers, students and parents will be engaged in an evaluation of the new adjustments and alterations to the Commack Model.
- The resulting evaluation will inform design teams as we plan and design a blueprint for the 2021-2022 school year.