



Evaluation Matters

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Results of the Distance Teaching Survey, April 2020

1. What is the purpose of this report?

This report examines the results of the pilot administration of the Distance Teaching Survey, which is designed to solicit educators' impressions of the delivery of remote instruction and students' distance learning experience while implementing the District's Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP 2.0) during the closure of schools due to COVID-19. The fourfold purpose of the survey is to explore teachers' impressions of (a) ICP 2.0 implementation, such as connectivity, instructional delivery, and compliance; (b) the utility of specific communications platforms; and (c) the rate of students' engagement in the distance learning experience.

2. Which populations were targeted for this survey?

A random sample, stratified by grade organization, of 25% of the population of teachers assigned to traditional (non-charter) and District managed charter schools who teach Foreign Language, English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science Social Studies were targeted to receive the survey in Prekindergarten through Grade 12.

3. How were the data for this report collected and analyzed?

Data to conduct this analysis were obtained from responses to the Distance Teaching Survey, April 2020 which was administered online via Survey Gold 8.0. The survey was accessed through links provided in targeted emails between April 14 - 20, 2020. Teachers were generally asked to choose from among prespecified choices presented in a series of radio buttons. An open-ended response provided teachers the opportunity to share their thoughts related to this unique experience.

4. To what extent did the teachers respond to the survey?

Overall, 1,058 of the 3,116 targeted teachers responded to the survey for a return rate of 34.0%. However, the rate varied by school level ranging from 17.1% in K-8 centers to 47.6% in middle schools, see Table 1. This is a relatively low rate of return for teacher surveys and must be kept in mind when interpreting the results.

Table 1. Return Rates

Level	Number Targeted	Number Responding	Return Rate
Elementary	1,284	499	38.9%
K-8	633	108	17.1%
Middle	401	191	47.6%
Senior	672	219	32.6%
Other (Alternative, Special Education, etc.)	126	41	32.5%
Total	3,116	1,058	34.0%

5. What are the characteristics of teachers' assignments?

The survey asked teachers to select their school level and the grades and subjects that they taught.

School of Assignment. The different types of schools to which teachers were assigned are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Type of School to which Teachers are Presently Assigned

School Type	n	%
Elementary	507	47.9
Middle	194	18.3
Senior	223	21.1
Combination (K-8, 4-8, K-12, etc.)	129	12.2
Alternative/Special Education	5	0.5
Total	1,058	100.0

- The majority of the teachers who responded (47.9%) were assigned to elementary schools, 21.1% to senior high schools, 18.3% to middle schools and 12.2% to combination schools, including K-8 centers. Only 0.5% were assigned to Alternative/Special Education Centers.

Grade of Assignment. Teacher assignments were mostly evenly distributed across grades 2 through 12, while smaller percentages were seen in the lowest grades and at the Adult Centers. It should be noted that teachers in adult education were not targeted, but some selected teachers also taught adults. Counts are duplicated as teachers could teach more than one grade, see Table 3.

Table 3. Grade level that Teachers Presently Teach (n=1,058)

Grade	N	%	Grade	n	%
PK	60	5.7	7	161	15.2
K	101	9.5	8	134	12.7
1	112	10.6	9	142	13.4
2	126	11.9	10	138	13.0
3	129	12.2	11	143	13.5
4	128	12.1	12	151	14.3
5	121	11.4	Adult	8	0.8
6	145	13.7			

Note. Counts are duplicated, as respondents may have taught more than one grade.

Subject Areas. Teacher assignments were mostly evenly distributed across Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science with greater numbers seen in English Language Arts and smaller numbers in Foreign Language, see Table 4.

Table 4. Subject Area that Teachers Presently Teach

Subject Area	n	%
English-Language Arts/Reading	526	49.7
Mathematics	457	43.2
Science	441	41.7
Social Studies	440	41.6
Foreign/Second/World Languages	138	13.0
Special Education	90	8.5
Other (Art, Music, PE, Media, etc.)	62	5.9
Total	1,058	

Note. Counts are duplicated, as respondents may have selected more than one subject.

6. What were teachers' impressions of implementing ICP 2.0?

Teachers' perceptions of selected issues associated with the implementation of ICP 2.0 are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Issues Related to Connectivity, Engagement, and Appropriateness of the Instructional Continuity Plan (ICP 2.0)

Item Stem	N	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
		%	%	%	%
I have been able to connect successfully to the Internet to carry out distance teaching activities.	1,057	59.8	36.3	2.9	0.9
My students have been able to connect successfully via the Internet to learning activities.	1,055	22.0	55.7	17.2	5.1
My students are actively engaged in learning activities.	1,054	21.3	52.4	20.7	5.6
The options available as part of the Instructional Continuity Plan are appropriate for my students.	1,050	33.9	54.3	9.1	2.7
My students with disabilities have been able to connect successfully via the Internet to learning activities.	790	21.6	58.1	15.7	4.6

- While 96.2% of teachers reported being able to successfully connect to the Internet, only 77.7% of their students were judged as successfully doing so.
- While 73.5% of teachers reported that their students were actively engaged in learning activities, perceived engagement varied somewhat with the grade level that teachers taught:
 - 78.0% of elementary (PK-5) teachers,
 - 66.8% of middle (6-8) teachers, and
 - 68.5% of senior high teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their students were actively engaged.
- Over 88% reported that the options available as part of ICP 2.0 were appropriate for their students.
- Nearly 80% of the teachers who taught students with disabilities reported that their students were able to successfully connect to the Internet.

How successful were teachers with available communications platforms?

Teachers' perceptions of their success utilizing selected communications platforms are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Communications Platforms

Item stem	N	Successful	Mixed success	Unsuccessful
		%	%	%
Microsoft Teams	900	43.2	49.3	7.4
Zoom	961	59.5	34.7	5.8
Edmodo	287	70.7	24.4	4.9
Class Dojo	385	80.8	16.9	2.3
Skype	47	40.4	36.2	23.4
Duo Lingo	102	50.0	37.3	12.7
Google Hangouts	71	46.5	46.5	7.0

Note. Overall, 1,058 teachers responded to the survey. Results presented above are based only on the number of teachers who reported using each platform, excluding those who selected "not applicable."

- Most teachers reported using more than one platform.
- Microsoft Teams and Zoom were the most popular platforms as reported by between 85 and 90% of the 1,058 teachers surveyed with varying degrees of success reported with each.
 - Zoom was considered the most successful platform with 59.5% of users reporting success, 34.7% reporting mixed success, and only 5.8% reporting they were unsuccessful using it.
 - Teams was considered to be somewhat less successful with 43.2% of users reporting success, 49.3% reporting mixed success, and only 7.4% reporting they were unsuccessful using it.
- Class Dojo, while used successfully by 80.8% of its users, was only utilized by 36.4% (n=385) of the teachers surveyed.
- Edmodo, while used successfully by 70.7% of its users, was only utilized by 27.1% (n=287) of the teachers surveyed.
- The fewest number of teachers reported using Skype and Google Hangouts.

7. What percentage of students did teachers feel were actively engaged?

Teachers were asked to enter the percentage of their students they felt were actively engaged in the distance learning experience. The results are listed in Table 7 and graphically depicted in Figure 1.

Table 7. Distribution of Perceived Active Engagement Rate

N	Minimum	Quartiles			Maximum
		25 %tile	50 %tile	75 %tile	
1,056	1.0	50.0	75.0	90.0	100.0

Note. Two entries greater than 100 were excluded.

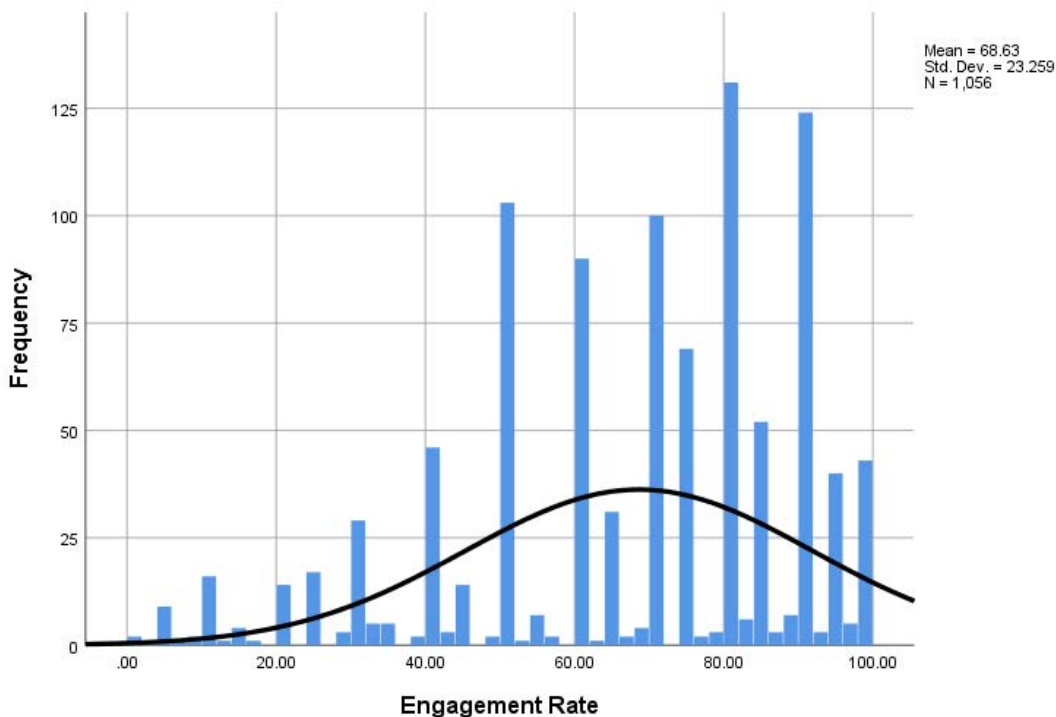


Figure 1. Histogram of perceived active engagement rate.

- The teachers’ reported percent of actively engaged students averaged 68.6% and varied based on the grade level of the teachers’ assignments.
 - Elementary, 71.2%
 - Middle, 64.7%
 - Senior High, 67.1%
- The teachers responses ranged from 0% to 100% of active engagement, and were skewed toward the upper end of the distribution, with the median at 75%. While a quarter of the teachers reported that only 50% (or fewer) of their students were engaged, a quarter also reported 90% (or more) were engaged.

8. What impressions of distance teaching did teachers share with us?

The final item of the Distance Learning Survey invited teachers to provide additional comments on distance learning, if they chose to do so. A total of 491 teachers provided comments in an opened-ended format, which were coded based on themes that emerged through a qualitative analysis. Each teacher’s response was categorized into one to four themes, resulting in a total of 818 comments. For example, three codes would be assigned to a teacher who stated, “I like the flexibility of choosing the platforms that I use but am concerned for my special education students who have some difficulty completing their work. Many of my students’ parents can’t help them because they work all day and get home late.”

In Table 8, the themes are grouped into six focus areas (School, District, Platforms, Parents, Students, and Teachers), within which the themes are listed alphabetically, with general “Positive” and “Negative” categories at the end which encompass responses that did not generate sufficient numbers of responses to warrant a separate theme.

Table 8. Teachers' Comments on Distance Learning

Focus	Comment	Elementary	K-8	Middle	Senior	Adult	Total
School	Positive - support from school administration	2	2	2	0	1	7
	Negative - pressure, lack of support	2	0	2	4	1	9
District	Good District support	5	2	2	2	1	12
	Rushed implementation	5	1	4	5		15
	Positive - "Model", smooth roll-out, good training	12	4	6	6	1	29
	Negative - misaligned, no coordination	12	0	2	2	1	17
Platforms	Continue online next year	4	1	1	5	1	12
	Good platforms, like flexibility, others used	22	12	10	9	4	59
	Too many platforms/choices	5	3	6	3	0	17
	Negative - technical issues, shortcomings	9	6	5	9	0	29
Parents	Need support/resources	26	0	7	1	1	35
	Parent can't or won't support / get kids to comply	36	10	16	8	2	72
	Positive - supportive parents, increased communication	3	0	0	0	1	4
	Negative - invalid contacts, overwhelmed,	4	0	6	4	0	14
Students	Accountability- validity of grades, no deadlines, attendance	7	4	8	20	3	42
	Concern for ESOL, ESE/modified curriculum	16	3	5	1	2	27
	Concern for young children	29	2	0	0	0	31
	Concern for others needing support- mental health, struggling	2	0	4	7		13
	Digital divide, sharing devices, need training	11	7	13	7	1	39
	Student engagement issues	23	10	17	25	2	77
	Positive- students are learning	2	2	3	1	1	9
	Negative- stressed, overwhelmed	3	1	4	2	0	10
Teachers	Doing our best, work in progress	21	2	13	9	3	48
	Excess time spent	17	6	2	12	1	38
	Home/work balance- children, caregiver	8	4	2	3	0	17
	Need training/PD/time to practice	12	5	5	5	1	28
	Stress, overwhelmed	9	1	1	5		16
	Technical issues	16	3	11	8	1	39
	Positive- teamwork, success, individualized instruction	15	6	2	4	1	28
	Negative- operational, social/emotional	15	3	4	10	3	35
Overall		345	95	164	179	35	818

- Overall, teachers' opinions were favorable regarding the Instructional Continuity Plan, its implementation, and support provided by the District. With respect to communications platforms and online instructional programs, most teachers felt that good options were available, and appreciated the flexibility to choose those that worked for them.
- Focusing on parents, the main theme that emerged was that teachers felt that parents were unable or unwilling to support students or to get them to comply with distance learning requirements. Many teachers also indicated that the contact information for parents available to them was not accurate. The teachers also noted that parents often did not have the support or resources needed to help their children, due to a variety of reasons which included their availability or familiarity with technology, and limited English proficiency.
- The highest number of teachers (n=77) expressed concern with student "engagement," that is teachers' felt that anywhere from just a few students in their classes, to the majority of their students were not being fully engaged in distance learning activities. A related concern focused on student accountability, for example, attendance by "logging in," no deadlines on turning in assignments, validity of work produced, students' belief that "grades don't count," and support for pass/fail grades in the fourth quarter. Still another recurring theme was teachers' concern for their students, particularly for ESOL, ESE, young children, and those who were already struggling in school, may have mental health issues, or need extra support.
- The final focus was on the teachers' own, personal journeys through distance learning. The main theme focused on the teachers' efforts, despite difficulties; comments like, "I'm doing my best," "It's a lot of work," "It's a work in progress," and "I've learned a lot." Many teachers indicated that they were spending more time conducting distance learning than they had in the classroom: planning online lessons, conducting classes, office hours, grading assignments, and contact with students and parents (at all times of the day and night). The blurring of boundaries between home/work was also cited by a number of teachers who have children and/or infirm family members at home who need care.
- Despite the challenges that teachers have faced, some felt that even though nothing can replace face-to-face instruction, their students were learning. Others pointed out positive experiences working together with colleagues, the ability to provide more individualized instruction, and increased communication with parents. These themes addressed by teachers in their comments will be used to follow up on subsequent surveys.

8. What are the principal conclusions of this report?

This report presented the results of the pilot administration of the Distance Teaching Survey, which explored teachers' impressions of ICP 2.0 implementation, such as connectivity, instructional delivery, compliance, the utility of specific communications platforms, the rate of students' engagement in the distance learning experience, and provided space to discuss relevant issues. About 33% of the targeted teachers completed the survey, of whom 47.9% were assigned to elementary schools, 21.1% to senior high schools, 18.3% to middle schools and 12.2% to combination schools. Teacher assignments were mostly evenly distributed across grades 2 through 12 and subject areas of Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science with greater numbers seen in English Language Arts and smaller numbers in Foreign Language. Perceptions of implementation were generally positive with nearly all teachers reporting that they were able to successfully connect to the Internet, and that over three quarters of their students were able to do so. Overall, more than 85% felt that the options available as part of ICP 2.0 were appropriate

for their students. Zoom and Teams were the most widely used communications platforms, with Zoom considered to be the most successful platform with 59.5% of users reporting success. Teams was also popular, but only 43.2% of the teachers reported success using it, while 49.3% reported mixed success. Overall, 73.5% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that their students were actively engaged in learning activities. Although the reported percentage of actively engaged students in the teachers' classes varied from 0% to 100%, the median reported percentage was 75%.

Teachers were provided with the opportunity to share their unique perspectives regarding the distance learning experience. Nearly half of the responding teachers chose to do so, with responses coded into themes that emerged through a qualitative analysis into six focus areas: School, District, Platforms, Parents, Students, and Teachers. The major themes that were identified focused on student engagement, accountability for grades, and the need for parents to assist with student learning at home.