



THE
PAST FOUNDATION

RemotEDx Listening Tour Final Report, Volume II Appendices

July 2021



**PAST Foundation
Research**

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RemotEDx: Ohio Listening Tour
Final Report, Volume II
Appendices

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RemotEDx Listening Tour Final Report, Volume II

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Appendix A:

Ohio Listening Tour Question Sets

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- Student Listening Session Questions
- Parent and Guardian Listening Session Questions
- Project Connect Listening Session Questions
- Bilingual Liaisons Listening Session Questions
- Key Informant Listening Session Questions
- RemotEDx Educator Online Survey Questions
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Educator Listening Session Questions

Thank you for signing up for a PAST Foundation Listening Session on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help in developing additional resources and strategies for supporting student learning. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session.

1. What is your role in the school? Do you work as a classroom teacher, aide, special education, etc?
 - a. How are you working with students remotely?
2. What have been the biggest challenges with working with students this school year?
 - a. How have you overcome these challenges?
3. What strategies are you using to work remotely with vulnerable student populations including students with disabilities, high mobility students, English language learners etc.?
4. What have been the best parts in working remotely with students this school year?
 - a. In what ways have you seen students engaged in learning?
 - b. What are your thoughts on the various online platforms and tools you're using to work with students remotely?
5. What kind of feedback have you had from students and their families about remote learning both academically and as it impacts their relationships at home and with their peers?
6. How has working remotely with students impacted your work-life balance?
7. Are there community organizations you've partnered with to get support and resources for remote learning for your students that you'd recommend to others? Which ones?
8. What kind of guidance and resources have you received for working with students remotely?
9. What do you need to be more effective in working with students remotely?
10. What aspects of remote education would you like to see continued after the COVID-19 pandemic?
11. What are your thoughts on strategies for continuing to hear from educators, students and families about their educational experiences?

Student Listening Session Questions

Thank you for signing up for a PAST Foundation Listening Session on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help in developing additional resources and strategies for supporting student learning. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session

1. What grade are you in?
2. What does a school day look like for you during the pandemic?
3. What kind of things have you done to make yourself comfortable learning at home?
4. What have been the hardest parts with remote learning?
 - a. Have you found ways to make it better? If so, how?
5. What has been the best parts with remote learning?
6. How have you been able to balance school and other activities such as work, sports and responsibilities at home?
7. What kind of help have you gotten from your school and community?
 - a. What opportunities have you had to feel connected to school and friends?
8. What kind of help would you like for learning remotely?
9. What parts of learning at home do you hope will be the same in the next school year?
10. What is the best way for the Ohio Department of Education to hear about your school experiences?

Parent/Guardian Listening Session Questions

Thank you for signing up for a PAST Foundation Listening Session on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help in developing additional resources and strategies for supporting student learning. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session

1. What grades are your children in?
2. What does a school day look like in your household?
3. What have been the biggest challenges for your children with remote teaching and learning this school year?
 - a. How have you overcome these challenges?
4. What have been the best parts for your children with remote learning this school year?
5. How has your child's school worked with you to facilitate remote learning?
 - a. Do any of your children receive services through the school?
6. How has your family been able to balance learning at home and other activities like work, sports, and responsibilities at home?
7. Are there community organizations you've worked with to get support and resources for remote learning that you'd recommend to others? Which ones?
8. What do you need to help your children learn remotely?
9. What aspects of remote education would you like to see continued after the COVID-19 pandemic?
10. What are your thoughts on strategies for the Ohio Department of Education to continue to hear from educators, students and families about their educational experience?

Project Connect Listening Session Questions

Thank you for signing up for a PAST Foundation to Listening Session on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help in developing additional resources and strategies for supporting student learning. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session.

1. What is your role and responsibilities with being Project Connect staff for the school district?
 - a. How many students do you work with in any given year?
 - b. How are connecting with the students and families you work with?
2. What have been the biggest challenges with working with students this school year?
 - a. Have you been able to overcome these challenges? If so, what strategies worked?
3. What have been the accomplishments with students working remotely this school year?
4. What strategies are you using to work remotely with student with disabilities, IEPs, English language learners, etc.?
5. What kind of feedback have you had from students and their families about remote learning?
6. How has working remotely with students impacted your work-life balance?
7. Are there community organizations you've partnered with to get support and resources for remote learning for your students that you'd recommend to others? Which ones?
8. What kind of guidance and resources have you received for working with students remotely?
9. What do you need to be more effective in working with students remotely?
10. What aspects of remote education would you like to see continued after the COVID-19 pandemic?
11. What are your thoughts on strategies for continuing to hear from educators, students and families about their educational experiences?

Bilingual Liaisons Listening Session Questions

Thank you for signing up for a PAST Foundation Listening Session on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help in developing additional resources and strategies for supporting student learning. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session.

1. What is your role and responsibilities with being a Bilingual Liaison for the school district?
 - a. How many students do you work with in any given year?
 - b. How are connecting with the students and families you work with?
2. What have been the biggest challenges with working with students this school year?
 - a. Have you been able to overcome these challenges? If so, what strategies worked?
3. What have been the accomplishments with students working remotely this school year?
4. What strategies are you using to work remotely with student with disabilities, IEPs, etc.?
5. What kind of feedback have you had from students and their families about remote learning?
6. How has working remotely with students impacted your work-life balance?
7. Are there community organizations you've partnered with to get support and resources for remote learning for your students that you'd recommend to others? Which ones?
8. What kind of guidance and resources have you received for working with students remotely?
9. What do you need to be more effective in working with students remotely?
10. What aspects of remote education would you like to see continued after the COVID-19 pandemic?
11. What are your thoughts on strategies for continuing to hear from educators, students and families about their educational experiences?

Key Informant Listening Session Questions

Thank you for agreeing to be a key informant for the PAST Foundation Listening Tour on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and RemotEDx. The information you share will help inform our work with key stakeholders. We observe confidentiality protocols, so your comments will not be linked with your name. We'd like to get your permission to record so that we have an accurate record of this session.

1. What is your role in education in Ohio and on the national stage?
2. What do you see as the primary challenges with remote education in Ohio?
3. In your experience this past school year with your clients and stakeholders, what have you identified as the greatest needs to effectively work with students remotely?
4. What do you consider to be the benefits of remote education?
5. What do you consider to be the detriments of remote education?
6. How would you describe the impact of remote learning on educational partnerships with community organizations, business and industry?
7. What aspects of remote education would you like to see continued after the COVID-19 pandemic?
8. What are your thoughts on strategies for continuing to hear from educators, students and families about their educational experiences?



RemotEDx Educator Survey

Page 1 - Educator Profile Questions

1. **What school district do you work in?**

[--Please Select--]

2. **What county do you work in?**

[--Please Select--]

3. **How would you describe your region?**

☐ Rural

☐ Urban

☐ Suburban

4. **What grade levels do you work with? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Elementary School
- ☐ Intermediate School
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly

5. **What is your role in your school? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Administrative staff
 - ☐ Advisor
 - ☐ Agricultural educator
 - ☐ Attendance Officer
 - ☐ Classroom aide
 - ☐ College Counselor
 - ☐ Community liaison
 - ☐ Computer & Technology teacher
 - ☐ English language arts teacher
 - ☐ English Language Learners teacher
 - ☐ Extra-curricular coach
 - ☐ Foreign language teacher
 - ☐ Grade-level teacher
 - ☐ Guidance Counselor
 - ☐ Health/Wellness teacher
 - ☐ School librarian
 - ☐ Math teacher
 - ☐ Music & Arts teacher
 - ☐ Occupational therapist
 - ☐ Physical therapist
 - ☐ Science teacher
 - ☐ Social studies teacher
 - ☐ Special education teacher
 - ☐ Speech therapist
 - ☐ Student teacher
 - ☐ Subject-area teacher
 - ☐ Support staff
 - ☐ If other, please describe briefly
-

6. What have been the greatest accomplishments in working with students remotely this school year?

7. What have been the biggest challenges with working with students remotely this school year?

8. Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?

9. **Are you aware of students in your building facing the following issues? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Food insecurity
- ☐ Housing instability
- ☐ Homelessness
- ☐ Safety concerns at home
- ☐ Safety concerns online
- ☐ Mental health issues
- ☐ Physical health issues
- ☐ Trauma
- ☐ Childcare needs
- ☐ Living in Foster care
- ☐ In the Juvenile Justice system
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly

10. **Are there resources available in the school or district to help these students?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

11. **How often do you conduct mental health check-ins with students?**

- ☐ Always
 - ☐ Usually
 - ☐ About Half the Time
 - ☐ Seldom
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Not applicable
-

12. **What kind of support have you received from your administrator?**

13. **Which community organizations have you partnered with to get support and resources for remote learning for your students? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Community centers
- ☐ Learning centers
- ☐ Recreation centers
- ☐ Food banks
- ☐ Social services
- ☐ Public health providers
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly

14. **Is there additional support you'd like to have for working with students remotely?**

15. **What are your thoughts on continuing remote education after the COVID-19 pandemic?**



RemotEDx Parent & Guardian Survey

Page 1 - Parent & Guardian Profile

1. **In which school district does your child attend school? If you do not find your child's school on the list, please continue on to the rest of the survey.**
[--Please Select--]

-
2. **What county do you live in?**
[--Please Select--]

-
3. **How would you describe your region?**

- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban

4. **What is your race/ethnicity? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Non-Hispanic White or Euro American
 - ☐ Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
 - ☐ Latino or Hispanic
 - ☐ East Asian or Asian American
 - ☐ South Asian or Indian American
 - ☐ Middle Eastern or Arab American
 - ☐ Native American
 - ☐ Alaskan Native
 - ☐ Pacific Islander
 - ☐ Decline to Answer
 - ☐ If other, please describe briefly
-

5. **What grade levels are your children in? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Elementary School
 - ☐ Intermediate School
 - ☐ Middle School
 - ☐ High School
 - ☐ If other, please describe briefly
-

6. **Do any of the children in your household receive services at the school? If yes, please choose all that apply. If not, please proceed to the next question.**

- ☐ Special education
- ☐ Gifted education
- ☐ Occupational therapy
- ☐ Speech therapy
- ☐ Physical therapy
- ☐ English language learners
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly

7. **Are you or anyone in your household experiencing the following challenges? Please choose all that apply.**

- ☐ Housing instability
- ☐ Food insecurity
- ☐ Safety concerns
- ☐ Mental health issues
- ☐ Physical health issues
- ☐ Childcare needs
- ☐ Prefer not to answer
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly

8. What have been the best parts of remote education this school year?

.....

9. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
I received help with how to use my children's learning platforms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am aware of all the learning platforms my children use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know how to access information about schedules, assignments, learning progress, grades and attendance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have received communication about resources available to me and my children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My children have access to community resources such as libraries, learning centers, recreation centers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My children have been using community resources such as libraries, learning centers, recreation centers, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to create a comfortable and distraction-free learning environment for myself and my children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My children have been able to balance learning at home with other activities like work, sports, and responsibilities at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have been able to balance working from home and supporting my children's learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My children's teachers conduct wellness check-ins on a regular basis	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. What have been some of the biggest challenges with remote education this school year?

11. Have you been able to overcome any of these challenges?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, what strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?

12. Is there additional support you'd like for remote education?

13. **What are your thoughts on continuing remote education after the COVID-19 pandemic?**

14. **Do you have access to technology for your children to participate in remote education?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, please describe briefly

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Date:

Survey Location:

1. Please share what grade levels your child or children are in?

2. I which school district does your child or children attend school?

3. What county do you live in?

4. How would you describe your region?
 - ☐ Rural
 - ☐ Urban
 - ☐ Suburban

5. What is your race/ethnicity? Please choose all that apply.
 - ☐ Non-Hispanic White or Euro American
 - ☐ Black, Afro-Caribbean, or African American
 - ☐ Latino or Hispanic
 - ☐ East Asian or Asian American
 - ☐ South Asian or Indian American
 - ☐ Middle Eastern or Arab American
 - ☐ Native American
 - ☐ Alaskan Native
 - ☐ Pacific Islander
 - ☐ Decline to Answer
 - ☐ If other, please describe briefly in the space below:

6. Do any of the children in your household receive the following services at the school? Please choose all that apply.

- ☐ Special education
- ☐ Gifted education
- ☐ Occupational therapy
- ☐ Physical therapy
- ☐ English language learners
- ☐ If other, please describe briefly in the space below:

7. What things are the best parts of remote education this school year?

8. What have been some of the biggest challenges with remote education this school year?

9. Have you overcome any of these challenges?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If so, what strategies have you developed to overcome these challenges?

10. What kind of help are you getting from the school to address issues you're facing?

11. Is there additional support you'd like to have for your children learning remotely?

12. What parts of remote education would you like to see continued after the pandemic?

13. Do you have access to the technology needed for you children to participate in school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, please briefly describe in the space below:

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Date:

Survey Location:

1. ¿Por favor, comparta en qué niveles de grado se encuentran su hijo o hijos?

2. ¿A qué distrito escolar asiste su hijo o hijas?

3. ¿En qué condado vives?

4. ¿Cómo describiría su región?
 - ☐ Rural
 - ☐ Urbano
 - ☐ Suburbano

5. ¿Cuál es su raza/etnia? Por favor, elija todo la que corresponda.
 - ☐ Blanco o Euroamericano
 - ☐ Afrocaribeño o Afroamericano
 - ☐ Latino o Hispano
 - ☐ Asia Oriental o Asiática Americano
 - ☐ Asia meridional o India Americano
 - ☐ Oriente Medio o Árabe Americano
 - ☐ Nativo Americano
 - ☐ Nativo de Alaska
 - ☐ Isleño de Pacífico
 - ☐ No Respuesta
 - ☐ Si hay otros, describa brevemente en el siguiente espacio:

6. ¿Alguno de los niños de su hogar recibe los siguientes servicios en la escuela? Por favor, elija todo lo que corresponda.

- ☐ Educación especial
- ☐ Gifted education
- ☐ Terapia ocupacional
- ☐ Fisioterapia
- ☐ English language learners
- ☐ Si es otro, describa brevemente en el siguiente espacio:

7. ¿Cuáles son las mejores partes de la educación remota este año escolar?

8. ¿Cuáles han sido algunos de los mayores desafíos con la educación remota este año escolar?

9. ¿Has superado algunos de estos desafíos?

- ☐ Sí
- ☐ No

Si es así, ¿qué estrategias ha desarrollado para superar estos desafíos?

10. ¿Qué tipo de ayuda recibe de la escuela para abordar los problemas que está enfrentando?

11. ¿Hay apoyo adicional que le gustaría tener para que sus hijos aprendan en forma remota?

12. ¿Qué partes de educación remota le gustaría que continuaran después de la pandemia?

13. ¿Tiene acceso a la tecnología necesaria para que sus hijos participen en la escuela?

- ☐ **Sí**
- ☐ **No**

En caso contrario, describa brevemente en el siguiente espacio:

Parent/Guardian Permission for a Minor's Participation Listening Tour of Ohio

RemotEDx and the Ohio Department of Education wants to hear from your child about their experience with school during this challenging time. We want to support student learning and growth, and are constantly developing and seeking resources to do so. To this end, we're working with The PAST Foundation to conduct a Listening Tour of Ohio to collect the voices of students, educators and families. We will be conducting virtual focus groups and surveys with students throughout the state, and would like your permission to include your child if they would like to join the conversation. **Participation is voluntary.**

Please consider the information carefully. Feel free to discuss the project with your friends and family and to ask questions before making your decision whether or not to permit your minor to participate. If you permit your minor to participate, you will be asked to sign this form.

Procedures/Tasks:

The project will involve several methods to gain information about your child's experience as a grade 6-12 student enrolled in Ohio schools. The PAST Foundation Research Team members conducting group discussions will record these activities by **audio recording** to ensure we capture their voices fully. Students will not be identified by name in any reporting, and surveys will be anonymous.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no risks to participation for any individual minor. The benefit may derive from increased understanding of student experiences of remote education programs from the perspective of the student.

Participant Rights:

You or your minor may refuse to participate in this study without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you or your minor is a student or employee at Ohio schools, your decision will not affect their grades or employment status.

If you and your minor choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. By signing this form, you do not give up any personal legal rights your minor may have as a participant in this study.

Contacts and Questions:

If you'd like to speak with someone about this project, please contact Maria Green Cohen, Director of Research for the PAST Foundation at 614-340-1208. For questions about your minor's rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Shelly

Vaughn, Superintendent Mercer County Educational Service Center at 419-586-6628 and the appropriate person will respond to your questions and/or concerns.

If your minor is injured as a result of participating in this study or for questions about a study-related injury, you may contact the principal of your minor's school.

Signing the parental permission form

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form and I am aware that I am being asked to provide permission for my minor to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. I voluntarily agree to permit my minor to participate in this study.

I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form.

Printed name of the minor student

Printed name of person authorized to
provide permission for the minor
student

Signature of person authorized to
provide permission for the minor
student

Relationship to the minor student

Date and time

AM/PM

School District: _____

County: _____

Once signed please scan or take a photo of this form and send to:

Kayla Galloway, Research Associate

The PAST Foundation

kgalloway@pastfoundation.org

If you are able to and prefer to sign the consent form virtually, please follow this link:

<https://www.pastfoundation.org/remotedx-listening-tour-of-ohio-parent-guardian-permission-form>



Appendix B:

PAST Foundation Research: RemotEDx Ohio Listening Tour Work Summary



PAST Foundation Research: RemotEDx Ohio Listening Tour Work Summary			
Activity	Dates of Work Done	Process	Product/Outcome
Meeting with Shelly Vaughn to review contract terms	January 18, 2021	Review project origin, timeline, budget requirements, payment schedule	Develop invoicing schedule
Intern recruitment and training	January 18-29, 2021	Outreach to OSU Anthropology Dept.; review resumes, conduct interviews	Pool of interns to train for fieldwork
Set up Project Management in Airtable	January 18-29, 2021	Research team back-mapped project timeline and deliverables in project management database	Project timeline, tools, and deliverables back mapped
Develop Outreach Materials	January 18-February 23, 2021	Develop flyers and outreach language detailing project goals and points of engagement	Outreach flyers and standard outreach email template
Meeting with RemotEDx Subcommittee	January 20, 2021	Discuss project goals, communication plan, and workplan review	Alignment of project goals
Develop focus group question sets	January 20-February 12, 2021	Develop focus group question sets based off of project RFP, project goals, and feedback from the RemotEDx subcommittee	Focus group question sets for the three project stakeholder groups: Educators, Students, and Parent and Guardians
Develop project portal in Airtable for interns and RemotEDx Advisory and Subcommittee members	January 20-February 5, 2021	Develop Google Site for subcommittee to review Network Tracking, and Intern Tools, Scheduling, Focus Group Forms, Onsite Survey Form, and Templates	Project portal via Google Sites



Community Organization Outreach	January 24, 2021 - May 21, 2021	Process initiated in Central Ohio and expanded to the entire state of Ohio; Connect with Community Houses, Jobs and Family Services, Girl Scouts, YMCAs, regional ESCs, etc.	Connect with community organizations to distribute project information, and schedule and conduct onsite surveys and virtual focus groups
RemotEDx Coordinating Council Meeting	January 26, 2021	Presentation of Project to ODE and RemotEDx Coordinating Council	Opportunity to provide clarification on research process and plan; opportunity to gain deeper insight into project goals
Intern training	January 29-February 12, 2021	Develop templates and training tools, train undergraduate and graduate interns	Trained pool of interns for conducting fieldwork
Share Google Site for Subcommittee review of materials	January 29, 2021	Share Google Site for subcommittee to review Network Tracking, and Intern Tools, Scheduling, Focus Group Forms, Onsite Survey Form, and Templates	Launch project Google Site for review
Ohio Listening Tour Recruitment Strategy meeting	February 2, 2021	Meeting with PAST staff, prepare project landing site and recruitment materials	Strategy for initial recruitment
Prepare packets for PAST Foundation staff outreach	February 2-6, 2021	Ongoing process; revise to reach stakeholder groups within the PAST Foundation Network	Outreach packets for distribution
Set up Survey Methods platform	February 3, 2021	Design survey questions for educator and parent and guardian stakeholder groups in survey methods	Launch educator and parent and guardian surveys
Design Charrette with Subcommittee	February 4, 2021	Review question sets for students, educators and parents	Further refinement of question sets



Outreach to Community Networks	February 8, 2021- in progress	Coordinated outreach effort by PAST staff and interns	Spread awareness of Listening Tour; lay groundwork for participation
Prepare Social Media Materials	February 8-10, 2021	Prepare outreach materials specifically for social media pushes via the PAST Foundation network in collaboration with the PAST Foundation marketing team	Social media outreach plan and materials
Meeting with FG Facilitators	February 8, 2021	Training with focus group facilitators; Review questions, reporting templates and process	Trained pool of focus group facilitators
Spanish Language Outreach Planning	February 9, 2021	Planning for outreach and onsite surveying with Spanish community of central Ohio	Plan for outreach and fieldwork with Spanish community
Prepare onsite survey materials	February 9, 2021	Prepare materials for onsite fieldwork: project flyers, online survey QR codes, and onsite surveying materials	Materials for onsite fieldwork (English and Spanish versions)
Conduct first social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	February 11, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached nearly 18,000 Ohioans
Provide info on fieldwork facilitators to ODE	February 11, 2021	Questions from ODE on facilitators for focus groups	Provided background information on staffing
Outreach to Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate	February 11, 2021	Engage Ohio legislature in Listening Tour recruitment	Expand recruiting activities



Conduct focus groups with project stakeholder groups	February 13, 2021 - May 21, 2021	Schedule and conduct (25) Educator Focus Groups, (13) Student Focus Groups, and (13) Parent Guardian Focus Groups	Thematic bullet point reports developed for each focus group conducted
Meeting with School District Family Liaison	February 16, 2021	Connect with the Family Liaison who manages Project Connect (homeless populations liaisons) staff and Bilingual Liaisons	Scheduled (2) focus groups with Project Connect staff and Bilingual Liaisons
Meetings with PAST Foundation outreach team	February 16, 2021 - May 25, 2021	Reoccurring meetings with PAST Foundation outreach team	Provide outreach update and modify outreach plan
Conduct fieldwork at St. Stephens Community House	February 17, February 25, March 2, 2021	Conduct onsite fieldwork and project outreach at St. Stephens Community House	Distribute project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
Meeting with District administrator	February 18, 2021	Meeting with district administrator to schedule educator, student, and parent and guardian focus groups	Scheduling focus groups
Intern training with Spanish language intern	February 18, 2021	Train Spanish language intern on onsite surveying protocols and procedures	Trained Spanish language intern equipped to conduct onsite fieldwork
Meeting with Ohio PTA	February 18, 2021	Share information about Listening Tour	Outreach engagement
Develop focus group questions for Project Connect Educators	February 18, 2021	Revise educator focus group questions to fit Project Connect Educator	Project Connect Educator focus group question set



Conduct second social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	February 18, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached nearly 15,000 Ohioans
Meeting with District administrator	February 19, 2021	Meeting with district administrator to schedule educator, student, and parent and guardian focus groups	Outreach engagement
Meeting with District administrator	February 19, 2021	Meeting with District administrator to schedule educator, student, and parent and guardian focus groups	Scheduling focus groups with students and educators
Meeting with Susannah Weyland, ODE Homeless Students	February 19, 2021	Meeting with Homeless Students ODE Liaison to collect background information on vulnerable populations in the state of Ohio	Collect background information about vulnerable student populations and contact information of agencies, organizations, and school districts to contact
Conduct Spanish Language onsite surveys	February 21, 2021	Conduct onsite surveys and project outreach with Spanish speaking stakeholders at Holy Name Roman Catholic Church	Completed onsite surveys (Spanish language version)
Present Ohio Listening Tour to ESC Family Liaisons	February 23, 2021	Share Listening Tour outreach materials and encourage participation in network development	Entries through Airtable portal for outreach sites across Ohio
Develop focus group questions for Bilingual Liaisons	February 23, 2021	Revise educator focus group questions for Bilingual Liaisons	Bilingual Liaisons focus group question set



Meeting with subcommittee leaders to review Ohio Listening Tour timeframe	February 24, 2021	Discuss progress toward meeting participation goals and timeline	Extended timeline for data collection to end of May; final reporting due mid-June; interim reporting due March 31
Meeting with Regional Robotics Coach	February 24, 2021	Review project goals and recruit student participation	Schedule student focus groups
Reoccurring meeting with PAST Foundation Marketing Team	February 24, 2021 - May 25, 2021	Reoccurring meeting with PAST Foundation Marketing Team for outreach update and to brainstorm and modify outreach strategy	Updated outreach strategy
Request from subcommittee leaders for information on network development	February 24, 2021	Tracking on network development of community resource centers across the state	Sent (3) tables containing outreach activities to date
Key Informant (KI) Interview	February 24-25, 2021	Develop KI interview questions and conduct KI interview Ohio Educational Leader	KI interview question set and interview notes; information to inform recruitment
Meeting with Regional Robotics Coach	February 26, 2021	Review project goals and recruit student participation	Schedule student focus groups
PAST Foundation Mass Mailing	February 26, 2021	Recruit participation in Listening Tours	Information sent to over 5,000 Ohioans
Outreach materials delivered to Columbus Metropolitan Libraries	February 26, 2021	Project outreach materials delivered to Columbus Metropolitan Libraries	Distributed project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
Focus Group Bullet Point Reports to ODE (5)	February 27, 2021	Educator, students, and parent and guardian focus group reports sent to ODE to review	Focus group thematic concepts in bullet point report format
Student Focus Group scheduling call with district educator	March 2, 2021	Meeting with district educator to schedule student focus groups	Scheduled (2) student focus groups and discussed parental permission



Meeting with fiscal agent to discuss funding for new outreach strategies	March 3, 2021	Review strategies for incentivization to recruit from vulnerable populations	Request for additional funds discussed
Reoccurring intern check-ins	March 3 - May 25, 2021	Reoccurring process of intern check-ins to review updated templates, procedures, protocols, and conduct individual work plan reviews	Trained pool of interns to conduct fieldwork and tracked work in progress
Conduct third social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	March 4, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached more than 25,000 Ohioans
Meeting with subcommittee	March 5, 2021	Check-in with subcommittee and provide update of Ohio Listening Tour work status	Provide ODE with actionable data report
Submit outline and budget for additional 2.5 months of work requested by ODE	March 5, 2021	Budget developed for recruitment incentivization	Budget submitted to Subcommittee leaders
Focus Group Bullet Point Reports to ODE (7)	March 8, 2021	Educator, students, and parent and guardian focus group reports sent to ODE to review	Focus group thematic concepts in bullet point report format
Ohio Listening Tour materials to Central Ohio Food Bank	March 18, 2021	Deliver project outreach and survey materials to Central Ohio Food Bank	Distributed project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys to central Ohio vulnerable populations



Conduct fourth social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	March 19, 2021 - March 26, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached nearly 7,000 Ohioans (new strategy piloted)
Reoccurring weekly meeting with subcommittee	March 26, 2021 - June 3, 2021	Check-in with subcommittee and provide update of Ohio Listening Tour work status, stakeholder numbers, and committee portal	Update project portal per request of the subcommittee
Submit Interim Report	March 31, 2021	Research team submits Interim Report to ODE	Interim Report
Conduct fieldwork at Noble Local School District Event	April 8, 2021	Conduct fieldwork at Noble Local School District Event	Distribute project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
Meeting with Tom Reed	April 9, 2021	Meeting with Central Ohio ESC Director of Data, Research and Grants Advancement to discuss recruitment for educator Listening Sessions	Update on educator recruitment
Conduct fifth social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	April 13, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached nearly 9,000 Ohioans



Meeting with ESC of Central Ohio Family Liaison	April 13, 2021 and April 16, 2021	Meeting with Andrea Summers, Family Liaison for the ESC of Central Ohio to discuss data collection and Listening Session recruitment	Update on Listening Session recruitment
Meeting with subcommittee	April 22, 2021	Meeting with subcommittee to preview the Listening Tour presentation to the RemotEDx Coordinating Council	Collect feedback from subcommittee on Listening Tour presentation
Conduct sixth social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	April 23, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached nearly 12,000 Ohioans
RemotEDx Coordinating Council Meeting	April 23, 2021	Presentation of project update to ODE and RemotEDx Coordinating Council	Update on Listening Tour data collection and high level, thematic takeaways
Conduct fieldwork at the Morrow County Jobs and Family Services	April 28, 2021	Conduct onsite fieldwork and project outreach at the Morrow County Jobs and Family Services	Distribute project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
Conduct fieldwork at the Clermont County Jobs and Family Services	April 29, 2021	Conduct onsite fieldwork and project outreach at the Clermont County Jobs and Family Services	Distribute project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
Attended the Ohio ESC's Family Engagement and Vulnerable Youth Planning Discussion	May 7, 2021	Observed and participated in the Ohio ESC's Family Engagement and Vulnerable Youth Planning Discussion	Recruitment for educator Listening Sessions



Conduct seventh social media push via PAST Foundation accounts	May 13, 2021	Push project information, online survey for educators and parent and guardians, and focus group sign-up form for educators, students, and parent and guardians via PAST Foundation social media accounts	Listening Tour information reached a little over 7,000 Ohioans
Conduct fieldwork at the YMCA of Central Ohio	May 13, 2021	Conduct fieldwork at the YMCA of Central Ohio - Hilltop Branch	Distribute project information, focus group sign-up, online survey access, and completed onsite surveys
End of data collection	May 21, 2021	Research team ends Ohio Listening Tour data collection	End data collection and begin data analysis
Data analysis and final report compilation	May 21, 2021 - June 15, 2021	Research team conducts data analysis and begins report compilation	Data analysis and report compilation
Submit Final Report	June 15, 2021	Research team submits Final Report, Volumes I and II, to ODE	Final Report, Volumes I and II



Appendix C:

Ohio Listening Tour Interim Report Narrative



Listening Tour Interim Report Narrative

Overview of Project Goals

PAST Foundation (Partnering Anthropology with Science and Technology) was selected in mid-January 2021 to conduct a Listening Tour on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education and the RemotEDx initiative designed to learn about the educational experiences of those who are directly impacted by the pandemic: students, parents/guardians, and educators. With our ethnographic tool kit and years of experience, PAST Research is uniquely qualified to undertake this effort, having produced nearly seventy reports of qualitative and quantitative data collected and analyzed since our work began in 2007. The PAST Foundation's impact on the Ohio educational landscape over the past 20 years has given our Research team access to stakeholders across the state.

Research Methodology

The PAST Foundation Research Team applies an ethnographic lens to their research and evaluation process to provide actionable data at key implementation points. The PAST Foundation Research Model is based on established mixed methods used in the humanities and sciences to capture qualitative and quantitative data. PAST Research is culturally focused, seated in ethnographic perspectives that are the cornerstone of our work. The Research Team has provided evidence-based guidance to PAST projects and partners for over 14 years and has undergone a process of trial, experimentation and on-going field-testing. Our ethnographic tool kit includes interviews, observation, focus groups and surveys.

Work on the Listening Tour began in earnest on notification of PAST's selection (*See Appendix A: PAST Foundation Research Listening Tour Work Summary*). The Research Team recruited and trained interns (12), developed a project management platform with interfaces for the RemotEDx subcommittee, drafted questions, and prepared marketing and outreach materials. In keeping with our mission of "Linking Learning to Life," PAST Research recruited undergraduate and graduate students with training in ethnographic methodology to join our Research Team, in addition to a consulting PhD who had worked with us on previous projects. Students were trained in notetaking, team analysis of data, report drafting and conducting fieldwork. The graduate students were also trained to facilitate focus groups.

Using the platform Airtable, the Research Team developed portals for tracking data, and built an interface for the Listening Tour Subcommittee to track on data collection and provide input through a feedback loop. Portals were also developed for interns to upload data, and for soliciting outreach suggestions to community resource organizations around the state.

Drafts of questions submitted in the project proposal were refined and expanded, then shared out through Google Drive with the Listening Tour Subcommittee for edits and feedback. A draft Parental Permission was reviewed by the Subcommittee Chair and the Fiscal Agent, as were preliminary outreach and marketing

materials. A Design Charrette was held with the Listening Tour Subcommittee on February 4th to review and revise the questions in development.

Further editing was done after piloting the questions, and sets were finalized for focus groups with three stakeholder groups: students, parents/guardians, and educators. The questions were designed to explore what education “looked like” during the 2020-21 school year: the benefits of remote education, the challenges with remote education, strategies and resources employed to overcome challenges, and what aspects of remote education stakeholders would like to see post-pandemic. Similar question sets were also developed for online surveys and onsite surveys (*See Appendix B: Ohio Listening Tour Question Sets*).

Listening Tour Outreach Activities

PAST Research developed several versions of outreach materials in January for distribution through the PAST Foundation network of partners and clients in Ohio, which began in early February. By mid-February three flyers were finalized for participant recruitment via email to clients and nearly 5000 people on the PAST mailing list, for distribution at community resource centers, and for inclusion in food bank and food pantry boxes. Flyers featured information about the project as well as links for accessing focus group sign-ups, and QR codes to access the online parent survey (*See Appendix C: Ohio Listening Tour Outreach Materials*).

The PAST Marketing Team built a landing page on the PAST website, featuring information about the project, information about the RemotEDx initiatives, sign up links for Educators, Parents/Guardians, and Students (grades 6-12), as well as an embedded link for parents to grant permission to have their children participate in focus groups via Hubdoc. Initially, 10-12 time slots were offered per week for focus groups, which resulted in very small groupings. Trial and error in finding times that work best for stakeholders has been ongoing, and evening and weekend time slots have been most successful for generating focus group registrations.

For those who may not have time for a 60-minute focus group, links to online surveys were posted for both parents and educators (*See Appendix D: PAST Foundation Listening Tour Website Landing Page*). The Marketing Team also developed ads for social media, and ran strategically timed (4) weekend boosted ads on Facebook and Instagram, which over 70,000 Ohioans. Social media marketing, and distribution of flyers through email to potential stakeholders resulted in (153) sign-ups for sessions in the past (8) weeks.

Recruiting activities included direct mailing to stakeholders on the PAST Foundation email list (*See Appendix E: PAST Foundation Subscriber Listening Tour Mailing*), and email and phone outreach to partner schools and organizations, with offers to schedule focus group sessions with students, parents and educators at a time of their choosing. This approach proved particularly effective, and several focus groups were scheduled with students and educators through direct scheduling of times during club meetings, classes, and teacher planning time.

Strategies for recruiting participation of vulnerable populations involved outreach to community resource centers. Outreach by phone was followed up with flyers. Centers were asked if they were willing to have



surveyors onsite to talk with people accessing their services. Due to COVID-19 compliance protocols, very few organizations agreed to allow onsite surveyors. Most of those that did not authorize onsite fieldwork

were willing to distribute flyers to their clientele. Outreach materials have been delivered to food pantries, public libraries, and aftercare facilities. Resource centers have also been asked if they have volunteers willing to work with their populations to have surveys filled out, at this point in the project only one organization has been able to do so.

Listening Tour Data Collection

Data for the Listening Tour has been collected through virtual focus groups, online surveys, and onsite surveys. To capture the experiences of those who are unable or unwilling to spend an hour in a focus group, PAST Research offered links to two anonymous online surveys targeting Educators (15 questions) and Parent/Guardians (14 questions). The parent survey included a skip-logic feature to collect the names of those facing connectivity issues, so their information could be shared with the Connectivity Champions while their survey responses remained anonymous. At the time of this writing there are (130) parent/guardian participants in the online survey, and (110) educators who have participated in the online survey.

An onsite survey was developed, and includes (13) questions covering the same types of questions in the focus group and online surveys. The onsite survey was designed to bridge the digital divide, and to be used at community resource centers where vulnerable populations access resources. Onsite survey data was collected during this period of research at a Central Ohio Community House, where participants were accessing food pantries and aftercare (n=11). Onsite data was also collected from a Hispanic population at a Central Ohio Catholic church (n=12). Outreach materials were distributed at each site as well, with a QR code to access the online survey, as well as a link to the focus group sign-up.

For capturing voices heard in the virtual focus groups, a bullet point reporting template was developed based on the question set with the following areas: “Aha” Moments, Benefits, Challenges, Strategies for Overcoming Challenges, Resources offered and used, and when they were presented, Participant Perspectives on Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports. In this period of data collection, three sets of Bullet Point reports were submitted to the Listening Tour Subcommittee. On February 27th, PAST Research submitted (5) reports; March 8th (7) reports were sent; and on March 24th, an additional (7) reports were submitted for review. Reports submitted to date include reporting on (9) Educators Focus Groups, (7) Parent Focus Groups, and (3) Student Focus Groups (*See Appendix F: RemotEDx Listening Tour Focus Group Bullet Point Reports*).

Thematic Overview of Focus Group Data

The initial research plan was to recruit from urban, suburban, and rural locations to see if these demographic areas faced different challenges with remote education. Rural Ohio presents the greatest challenges with connectivity, with many households having limited to no digital access whatsoever. At the time of this



reporting, we are not seeing any distinctions in demographic regions as yet. This section of the report includes a summary of focus group findings:

"Aha" Moments

- Educator Perspective
 - Many students who tend to engage in middle and high school "drama" (in their social interactions) have become more engaged with school work when they are learning remotely
 - Educators shared that they learned better remote teaching strategies, technologies, and enrichment activities via TikTok and other social media platforms than from any PD they've received
 - Educators would like differentiated remote education PD opportunities (by educator skills with technology)
 - Remote education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of social and emotional learning
 - Educators working with vulnerable populations, such as students with housing and food insecurities, have to focus on meeting the families' immediate needs before addressing issues related to education
 - Bilingual liaisons note the importance of cultural relevance in their work with students and families
 - Students and families are more willing to engage if they feel the liaison can relate to their experiences
 - Liaison role evolves into a mentoring relationship with students and their families
 - The pandemic has made people realize that they have more options than the "wake up, go to school, sit there, etc." and students and parents will expect more options going forward
 - Remote education doesn't just mean online education
 - Some schools have employed strategies such as students working and learning at community urban garden a few hours a week
 - Students may show certain body language in person that alerts educators if something is wrong, and educators realized that this body language can still be observed while learning remotely, which is why it is important to have cameras on
 - Students choosing to only show half their face on an online meeting platform is the equivalent of "laying their head on their desk" during in-person instruction
 - Allowing for remote students to come in-person at least one day throughout the week has been beneficial
 - One educator is in a scheduling model where students predominantly in-person with some students electing to stay fully remote; fully remote students have the opportunity to come to the building mid-week when in-person students are out for anything they may need including meetings with school staff
 - Still allows for an in-person component and students are able to check-in with teachers while not being exposed to in-person classmates
 - Showing students they are cared for even in remote models



- Some educators find creative ways to form online connections and relationships with students, for example, mailing students personalized greeting cards for various occasions
- Collaborative classrooms between teachers and students
 - Educators have noticed that students are playing a role in helping teachers, especially with technology, and teachers are learning new things
 - One educator said that this has even led to “collaborative classrooms” where students are at the center because they feel empowered and able to solve problems
- Student Perspective
 - Strategies to continue with in-person instruction
 - Students would like to see breaks between in-person classes to allow for time to do homework, regroup, and restore energy
 - Students would like to see the continued use of online platforms like Microsoft Teams to allow for collaboration with their peers after school hours
 - Adaptive strategies
 - Students have established their own cutoff times for finishing school work in the late afternoon
 - Some students have implemented mental health breaks after school hours to recharge by engaging in personal hobbies like reading, videogames, art, etc.
 - Use breakout rooms to allow students to talk with each other about their problems
 - Student success and engagement in remote learning directly relates to students’ learning styles
 - Some students enjoy online education where they can learn and complete tasks at an expedited pace
 - Some students had trouble focusing, retaining motivation and completing coursework during online classes
- Parent/Guardian Perspective
 - Many parents have a renewed appreciation for teachers
 - One parent shared that her son now “owns his IEP” due to the flexibility and self-reliance built into remote education
 - Some parents set expectations early that their children were accountable for balancing their school schedule and assignment
 - COVID-19 uncovered many underlying issues connected with the school system
 - Students with IEPs and other disabilities not be adequately supported
 - School short staffed
 - One Central Ohio school’s PTO schedules monthly outings for students in various city parks

Benefits

- Educator Perspective
 - Feeling more connected to students and their families
 - Allows educators to see the home environment of students to better understand the circumstances in which they are learning



- One-on-one opportunities
 - Educator shared that every student receives attention when remote, compared to in-person where educators do not get a chance to give individualized attention to the entire classroom
- Remote capabilities allow for easier check-ins and meetings with students and parents
- Access to school is easier for those without reliable transportation; avoid chronic absenteeism
- Some students find remote education a more approachable option
 - Shy and anxious students have found it a more welcoming environment and have increased their contact with educators
- Student growth
 - Time management, problem solving skills, and communication
 - Some students are able to be more focused and more successful with remote education
 - Students work at their own pace and have the autonomy to be independent and responsible students
- Educator collaboration
 - Allows collaboration among colleagues to determine which strategies are working best, time to share tips and resources, and help with modifying assignments based on the expertise of other colleagues in similar situations
- Educators plan to continue to integrate remote learning technological tools and teaching strategies for in-person learning
 - Continue the integration of technology into classroom
- Student Perspective
 - Student growth
 - Self-reliance and independent work skillsets
 - Time-management
 - Communication skills
 - Technical and computer skills
 - Students would like to see the continued use of technology after the return to in-person classes
 - Flexible school schedule allows for more time to engage in extracurricular activities and employment opportunities
 - Independent learners flourish from self-paced education
- Parent/Guardian Perspective
 - Students with IEPs
 - Remote education has allowed students with IEPs identify how they learn best without the restrictions of an in-person classroom
 - Student Growth
 - Communication skills



- Students are learning how to initiate conversations with teachers and other adults
- Students taking ownership of their learning
- Self-reliance and independent work skillsets gained due to the freedom and flexibility of remote education
- Problem-solving skills
- Development of online etiquette skills
- Learning real-world skills to prepare students for college and beyond
- Remote education is a “safe space” for some students both physically and from the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) perspective
- Being able to work from home should continue for students on snow days, days when they are too sick for school but not too sick to learn, and times when they are having other barriers to in-person learning (such as struggles with bullying) to allow them to continue learning in a safe and more comfortable environment
- The ability to work at their own pace allows gifted students to not feel as bored
- Online availability of school assignments and materials is helpful
- More time spent with the family
- Parents are more connected to their children’s education and have a better understanding of how their children learn

Challenges

- Educator Perspective
 - Distributing supplies and materials to students
 - Teachers and staff feel overworked, underpaid and under considerable stress trying to teach with different modalities
 - Educators find they are working more than previously and fill more roles than they did before COVID-19
 - Educators face a technology learning curve
 - Difficult to manage synchronous learning model and to acquire skills with the online learning platforms
 - Many educators would prefer to keep online and in-person students completely separate
 - Lack of student engagement and rapport with students
 - Difficult making connections with students remotely
 - Educators mentioned that older students who live in households with younger children often take on a tutoring/parental role for younger siblings and may neglect their own assignments as a result, and may benefit from additional support
 - Getting students to collaborate remotely, specifically in breakout rooms is difficult
 - Internship opportunities and career training courses are not as engaging for students this school year



- Educators are concerned about students' learning gaps and students missing fundamentals this school year
- Student Perspective
 - Students noted experiencing virtual learning fatigue
 - Lack of social interactions and missing their friends
 - Students report experiencing more stress due to higher workloads and teachers having higher expectations for the quality of the work the second semester of this school year
 - Students struggle with time management, motivation, focus and accountability to retain information when classes are online
 - High school students experienced difficulty with time management due to work overload and difficulty balancing school, employment, and home obligations
 - Relaxed and distracting home environment made it difficult to get motivated to do work and to concentrate on classes and homework
 - Flexibility enabled procrastination
 - Harder to learn without in-person demonstrations and the ability to easily ask teachers questions during class time or in between classes
 - Students believe it is difficult for teachers to accommodate both in person and online students because not all students are in one mode of instruction
 - Students coming to class online often feel overlooked or ignored
 - Online students report feeling embarrassed to ask questions during class because their faces come up on whiteboards for the whole classroom
 - Direct virtual instruction for 45 minutes or more is exhausting and causes students to lose focus and motivation
 - Students felt that teachers disregarded their needs
 - Lectured to the end of the class time instead of giving time for working and asking questions
 - Challenges expressed by upper classman in high school
 - Lack of support and empathy from overall community while students mourn the loss of their senior year activities
 - Lack of support from colleges during application process
 - Students are worried about picking out colleges without getting the opportunity to visit them in person
 - Tuition is back to normal, any tuition breaks offered last year are no longer available
 - Students are supported by shift to tests being optional and scholarship availability
- Parent/Guardian Perspective
 - Students with IEPs
 - Parents feel their students are falling behind; remote education not equitable for all students



- Need for Educational Therapists in all Ohio schools to teach educators how to empower students to help themselves and develop confidence
- Parents noted their children are not receiving the same resources and supports during remote education compared to in-person learning
- Parents are paying for tutors and other student supports to fill the gaps of their students learning, which is causing a financial strain on many families
- Student engagement
 - Not having in-person teacher or peer interaction; children are lonely
 - Parents noted their children struggled with their mental health
 - Difficult to keep students focused on task with schoolwork due to distractions at home and virtual fatigue
 - Lack of opportunities for collaboration with peers
- Parent challenges
 - Facilitating student learning at home and balancing work and home responsibilities
 - Difficult for both students and parents when the parent and teacher role overlap
 - Expectation that parents will be able to teach their children and fill in the students' gaps in knowledge, but not all parents are equipped to do so
 - Not all parents work from home and students have little supervision
- Teachers are overtasking students in the second semester of this school year
 - Students and families are stressed and overwhelmed
 - Teachers "checking the box"
- Little to no check-ins with school guidance counselors, specifically to address mental health
- High school students are not receiving guidance on college and career prep
- Students have missed milestones for their academic career, such as school trips, time to build relationships with teachers, prom, and graduation
- Lack of consistency or structure with school schedule and communication of daily agendas of teachers
- Connectivity issues
 - Demand for internet in individual households surpasses the available capacity with (multiple) students engaging in remote learning and parents working from home

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

- Educator Perspective
 - Consistent communication and transparency with students and their families to keep them informed
 - Hold regular office hours
 - Placing more value on positive news and action
 - Skilling up parents and guardians on technology, specifically how to navigate and use the online learning platforms to check grades, assignment due dates and submittal process, and communicate with teachers



- Record lessons and post them online
 - Strongly encourage every student to turn their cameras on while in online classes
 - Being open to change, being flexible, being vulnerable and adapting
- Student Perspective
 - Student adaptations
 - Students use social media and group texts to post questions about school work and to ask peers for help
 - Students feel they are adapting to online platforms and their teachers' virtual work processes and feel more confident this semester in their work
 - Students created designated work spaces at home to increase focus and motivation
- Parent/Guardian Perspective
 - Students with IEPs
 - Many parents who have the means have opted to pay for a tutor or personal Education Therapists to fill in the gaps and provide additional support for their children
 - The isolation from remote learning is somewhat remedied with children's involvement with extracurricular activities and hanging out with friends in small social bubbles
 - Facilitating children's learning by collaborating and sharing the workload with other parents in their social bubbles
 - Some parents have paired their children with friends and set up schedules to alternate homes, providing both social interaction for their children and designating days where they will have time for their own work

Support from the District/School (Communication, Guidance, Resources)

- Student Perspective
 - Some students express lack of support and guidance from school and community
 - Lack of regular scheduled check-ins or interventions with school counselors and specialists
 - High school students feel unheard and left behind by school administrators and guidance counselors
 - Forced to navigate the college admissions process on their own
- Parent/Guardian Perspective
 - Parents appreciated constant and consistent communication between teachers and parents

Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Educator Perspective
 - Educators recommend building an established network or system of community organizations and resources at the local and statewide level for school districts
- Student Perspective
 - Building in time for students to ask questions at the end of classes would minimize some of the additional burdens during remote learning
- Parent/Guardian Perspective



- Parents noted the need for a resource to help students stay on track with self-paced work
- Parents shared there needs to be as much attention placed on the fully online students as there is on the hybrid student
- Educators need SEL PD

Online Survey Overview

Educators and Parent/Guardians were given the opportunity to take an online survey covering the same topics discussed in the focus groups. The Educator Survey consists of (15) questions, with one-third soliciting open-ended responses (5), one-third providing space for “if other” entries (5), and the remaining questions multiple choice (5). The Parent/Guardian has (14) questions, nearly one-third are fully open-ended (4), nearly one-third are “if other” (4), two provided space for responses to “if yes/if no” questions, and the remaining questions (2) are multiple choice. The intent behind the survey design was to collect qualitative data that closely matches the depth of responses of focus groups. The bullets below represent thematic take-aways from the current pool of responses, and correlations between urban, suburban, and rural locations have not been made at the time of this reporting.

Educator Takeaways

Benefits

- Making connections and establishing relationships with students and families virtually
 - More connected with students and parents
 - Opportunity to establish one-on-one relationships
- Students adapting and student growth
 - Students gaining technical skills
 - Student learning soft skills
 - Independent learners
 - Online learning allowed students that traditionally struggled academically to flourish because it provided a more comfortable learning environment
 - Learning real world skills and real-world application
- Educators gaining technical and computational skills to enhance instructional practices and integrate technology into the classroom
- Allows for easier, greater access to vulnerable student populations
- Opportunity to develop creative, new lessons and teaching strategies

Challenges

- Lack of devices and strong internet connections for both students and educators
 - Lack of resources for both students and educators
 - “Statewide inequity with wealthy areas having the ability to provide extra supports and less advantaged areas left without”
 - Many educators have supplied students with materials and resources with their personal funds



- Lack of support from school and school district
 - Inconsistent expectations
 - No support to implement new learning strategies
 - Educators feel overwhelmed and overtasked
 - Many struggle with their mental health
- Not seeing the students in-person to have those “human connections”
- Lack of student engagement
 - Absences
 - Keeping students motivated and engaged
 - Low motivation
 - Older siblings facilitating learning at home for younger students in the home
 - Getting students to submit assignments
 - Keeping remote learning students engaged
- Social-emotional and mental health issues with students
- Lack of parent engagement and support
 - Many parents work and cannot facilitate their children’s learning from home
- Communication solely through email
- Language barriers with families
- Getting students to collaborate via online meeting platforms
 - Created a lonely experience for students and educators

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Were you able to overcome any of these challenges? (n=50)
 - Yes: 58%
 - No: 42%
- Delivering and mailing materials and resources to students using personal resources
- Connecting with students via cards and “get to know you” virtual discussions
- Monitoring software for student issued devices
- Collaborating with other educators
- Constant and transparent communication with students and parents
 - Weekly videos, slideshows, email, school learning platforms, and phone calls
 - Positive communication and reinforcements
 - Home visits for ESL students and families
- Allowing students with IEPs to meet in-person at school to receive assistance
- Personal mental health treatments

Parent and Guardian Takeaways

While many parents shared that they could not identify any benefits from remote education, some offered the following insights:

Benefits



- Safety
- Flexibility in schedule and self-paced instruction
- Supportive and understanding educators
- Better work/life balance
 - More time with the family
 - Having lunch and afternoons to spend with children
 - Lower anxiety and stress for both parents and children
 - No commute or worry about transportation
- Student has more opportunity to focus on College Credit Plus courses
- Improved teaching
 - Less time teaching to the test and more time spent learning about current events
- More connected to and informed about children's education and learning process
- Student growth
 - Virtual learning environment is more comfortable and a safe space for many students
 - No bullying
 - Less distractions
 - Students taking responsibility and ownership for work
 - Time management and organizational skills
 - Self-reliance and independent work skillsets
 - Students learning life skills at home
 - Problem-solving skills
 - Communication skills
 - Learning technical and computational tools and skills
 - Student adaptability
- District supplied equipment and resources
- Access to classroom resources and recorded instruction online
- Smaller classes

Challenges

- Lack of student engagement
 - Motivation
 - Students not engaging in breakout rooms
 - Teachers keeping students engaged virtually
- No social interactions
 - Isolation
 - Loneliness
 - Lack of community
 - Not getting enough physical exercise
- Supporting social and emotional learning
 - Student mental health issues
- Connectivity issues and issues with online learning platforms and applications



- WiFi does not support multiple students and parents working from home
 - Causing students to miss assignments and to be recorded absent
- Confusing, complicated schedules and too many online learning platforms
- Difficult to ask teachers for help
 - Delay in communication via email
- Students not feeling comfortable to ask teachers questions
 - Lack of opportunities to interact with teachers
 - Teachers are not able to differentiate virtually like they can in the classroom
- Students are overwhelmed and overtasked
 - Work is piling up
 - Too much busy work
 - School work is supposed to be self-paced, but teachers are now placing unnecessary restrictions on the assignments
- Excessive amount of weekly Zoom meetings
 - Zoom fatigue
- Students with IEPs
 - Lack of support
 - Difficult to learn via Zoom
- Balancing work, life, and facilitating learning from home
 - Parents forced to become teachers
 - Do not have the skills or resources to facilitate learning at home
 - Many parents have to physically go to work and cannot be home to help their children navigate online learning
- Senior students do not feel supported
 - Missing milestones
- No boundaries between life, school and work
 - Exhausting
- Disparity in quality of education provided to students who chose to go fully remote vs. students who chose hybrid or in-person models
- Students falling behind
- Inflexible, unsupportive teachers
- Too much screen time

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Were you able to overcome any of these challenges? (n=113)
 - Yes: 50%
 - No: 50%
- Designate a quiet, comfortable space at home for schoolwork
 - Separate children in the house during school hours
- Parents making themselves available to assist children with schoolwork during the day
 - Adjust work schedule



- Some parents took pay cuts to be more available to facilitate student learning
- Connectivity issues
 - Communicating connectivity, bandwidth issues with teachers so students do not get marked absent or inattentive
 - Schedule household WiFi usage
 - Keep videos off during Zoom to reduce bandwidth usage
- Asking for support from school and teachers
- Addressing mental health and loneliness
 - Allow children more time to focus on hobbies and interests
 - Allow students more screen time to interact with friends
 - Counseling
 - Adjust expectations
 - Participation in sports and other extra-curricular activities
 - Social distance playdates and visits with family members outside the household
- Schedules and tracking assignments
 - Help students set a schedule
 - Setting calendar reminders for every Zoom meeting and intervention
 - Streamline folders and assignments
- Constant communication with teachers and school

Next Steps

The PAST Foundation is known for flexibility and adaptability. Recruitment for Listening Sessions has been an ongoing challenge, and the Research and Marketing Teams continually evaluates and revises outreach and recruitment strategies. With the pandemic, people are spending more time than ever before in online meetings, most likely leaving them reluctant to take an additional hour to talk about their experiences with remote education. Several focus groups were scheduled where none of those who signed up came into the zoom session. Almost all focus groups had fewer people come into the sessions than signed up for the sessions. Time slots offered are reviewed on a weekly basis to determine the “sweet spot”—convenient times for educators, parents and students, keeping in mind school closings and openings. Moreover, with Ohio schools resuming in-person attendance, increases in vaccination efforts, and an enormous desire to have life revert to “normal,” it appears many people are not interested in revisiting a very difficult period in their lives.

PAST Research will continue to do social media boosts, as they have shown a positive impact on listening session sign-ups and survey taking. Mapping survey and focus group participation by county has provided areas where voices haven’t been heard as yet for targeted outreach (*See Appendix G: RemotEDx Listening Tour Participation by County*). PAST will work with the ESCs to recruit stakeholders from unheard regions with direct scheduling. For reaching the most vulnerable populations, PAST is working with ESC Family Liaisons on setting up focus groups with homeless parents, foster parents, and if possible, homeless



students, foster students, and students in the juvenile justice system to learn about their experiences with education during the pandemic. PAST is planning to incentivize participation with Kroger gift cards for parents, and other appropriate gift cards for students.

With nicer weather and vaccinations progressing in the state, PAST Research will step up onsite surveying activity over the next two months. Community resource centers will be re-contacted to see if surveying can take place onsite with vulnerable stakeholder populations. PAST will incentivize survey participation with smaller gift cards for free coffee on survey completion.

Data collection will continue to the end of May, 2021. In the interim, the PAST Research Team will begin the coding process for the open-ended parent and educator online survey questions. The team uses the platform atlas.TI for analysis, and will be able to quantify qualitative data collected in the open-ended questions. Final reporting will include comprehensive analysis of online surveys, updated information on research activities, and an integrated overview of focus group and survey findings.



Appendix D:

RemotEDx Listening Tour Focus Group Bullet Point Reports

- (25) Educator Focus Group Bullet Point Reports
- (13) Student Focus Group Bullet Point Reports
- (13) Parent Focus Group Bullet Point Reports
- Ohio Listening Tour Focus Group Participant Perspectives

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

February 18, 2021 (3pm-4pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Na Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session have experience with the following roles: classroom teacher, specials teacher, and school administrator, and work in suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- One educator attributes success to having more guidance and training on virtual teaching and learning
 - Educator's students expressed that the class is still the same "amazing class" it was been when in-person
 - Notes her success with online education was due to her organizational skills and having taken class on teaching virtually
- Remote education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the important of social and emotional learning
 - One educator stressed that she gained a new tool with virtual education, which is to make sure students are "okay" before getting to the content. The educator plans to incorporate this strategy when classes resume in person

Benefits

- One educator shared she has more refined lesson plans
 - Found more time to make presentations to "really nail" the lessons
- One educator found new ways to track and monitor student progress
 - Students submit their work daily, as well as reflect and discuss their work using Google Slides
- One-on-one opportunities
 - Educator shared that every student receives attention when remote, compared to in-person where educators do not get a chance to give attention to the whole classroom
- Educator noted that students use the chat function in online learning platforms to help educators keep track of students' progress and engagement within the virtual classroom
- Educator shared that there is more accountability with engagement through the poll feature on online learning platforms

Challenges

- One specials teacher shared the difficulty with distributing art supplies and materials to students for home use
 - Not enough supplies for students to take for home use; difference in amount of available classroom sets to available take-home supply
 - Many students do not have the ability or resources to buy the supplies, especially for traditional media art
- Lack of student engagement
 - One educator noted difficulty making connections with students remotely and finds it challenging to control the classroom
 - Lack of student engagement in breakout rooms
 - One educator shared that she can't put the students in breakout rooms because the students will not interact or communicate
 - One educator noted a lack of engagement in particular with freshmen students
 - Educator shared that many students struggle to balance other responsibilities, such as babysitting younger siblings

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Communication with families
 - One educator composes emails to parents using simple language that can be easily translated with Google Translate to overcome frequent language barriers
 - One educator is trying to limit communication issues by regularly copying parents and students on the same email and sharing visual examples of student work
 - One educator keeps regular office hours to be available to students and families
 - Educator shared that students have been appreciative of office hours and even come to office hours for casual visits
 - One educator holds parent meetings
 - One educator makes phone calls to parents to share "positive news" which has led to more open communication with parents
 - Educators reach out to parents directly if there are multiple student absences
- Access to Resources
 - Art teacher used the school parking lot to create a drive-thru for materials and supplies so students could complete their assignments
 - One educator provided access to resources and videos to students and families
 - Educators are recording lessons and making them available to all students
 - Educator shared that parents are grateful for recorded lectures because it has allowed parents to be more available to help their children during the evening
 - One educator has delivered supplies and materials to students' homes
- Collaboration with other Educators

- One educator meets with 9th grade teacher team twice a week to identify students who need interventions and check-ins
- One educator invites special education teachers to join virtual classes

Community Resources (organizations)

- Resources on remote learning from the University of Cincinnati
- One educator shared that she is a member of an organization called CECO where it holds several remote learning workshops for educators
- One educator noted a local church provides community resources where students can go during the day to engage in remote education
 - The church also provides basic needs including free lunches and a nurse practitioner onsite Monday through Friday, in addition to offering mental health resources Monday through Fridays for students

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Focus Group Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group (Project Connect)

February 22, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Enzo Zaccardelli, Observer

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session are liaisons for homeless students in an urban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Participants help families and students meet their immediate needs before addressing issues surrounding school
 - Perform wellness checks, provide resources for basic necessities, housing, and clothing
- Collaborative community building effort
 - Various organizations, shelters, and institutions work together to help students and families
- Liaisons take innovative approaches and strategic outreach to combat challenges

Benefits

- For those who are currently living outside of the immediate vicinity of their "home" school because they can attend class remotely and avoid chronic absenteeism
- Access to school is easier for those without reliable transportation
- When education is remote, the staff does not need to worry as much about certain issues like transportation

Challenges

- Lack of reliable transportation to obtain necessities and to go somewhere with adequate internet connection
- Poor network connectivity, especially in hotels
- Understaffed, overwhelming workload for liaisons
 - Two full-time people per region; the remaining staff is part-time
 - One liaison works in more than 20 schools, and coordinates with shelters, transportation and other logistic concerns
- Families have too many basic needs that they need help with
 - Issues at home have to be addressed first before remote learning can take place
- Lack of face-to-face interaction

- When things are remote it can be hard to actually get the students the resources/access they need
- Availability issues with hot spots and other resources

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Educators collaborate with various organizations and community services or initiatives
- Community network building
- Innovative outreach
 - Reaching out to secretaries, bus drivers, etc. and communicating through Google voice number (calls or texts) and Project Connect numbers
- Bilingual liaisons greatly reduced the gap between homeless students and EL students

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- District provided resources in difficult times/situations
 - Private transportation for families after moving
- District keeps the parents connected
 - The children whose parents are connected and kept in the loop tend to succeed and engage with school work
- Intra-district collaboration and bilingual liaisons

Community Resources (organizations)

- Local non-profits
- District partnership with local urban farm to provide students the opportunity to engage in remote learning offline
- Furniture bank
- Homeless and domestic violence shelters

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Educators recommend building an established network or system of community organizations and resources at the local and statewide level for school districts

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

February 25, 2021 (3pm-4pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Enzo Zaccardelli, Facilitator

Jonah Lewis, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session have experience with the following roles: classroom teachers, administration, STEM teacher, and work in urban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Community organizations play a large role with helping the students in their home lives
- English teacher perceived students did not benefit or want better technology such as Chromebooks, in contrast to STEM teacher's perception that students desire and require better technology
- Educators find they are working more than previously and fill more roles than they did before COVID-19

Benefits

- Remote education offers provides opportunities and avenues for outreach
- Shy and anxious students find it more welcoming environment and have increased contact with educators
- Some students find it a more approachable option
- Potentially less expensive for families than buying school supplies for in-person schooling

Challenges

- Students shared with educators that hotspots and internet services do not provide adequate access for remote learning
- Educators face a technology learning curve, having to learn how to use iPads and a variety of learning platforms
- Reaching students who do not have access to these technologies (i.e. homeless students, etc.)
- Students are not engaging despite access to resources and technology
- Educators are unable to achieve the nonverbal communication that is important in reaching students
- Non-student family members using resources intended for the students to use for remote learning

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Maintaining and/or increasing contact with families to keep them informed
- Virtual faculty meetings
- Placing more value on positive news and actions and taking more time to reflect with students
- Upgrading technology to accommodate for remote learning (i.e. number of available hotspots becoming unlimited instead of capped)

Community Resources (organizations)

- Goodwill
- Columbus Foundation
- CommQuest Services
- Stark County Urban League
- Holmes County Education Foundation

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

February 26, 2021 (1pm-2pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Enzo Zaccardelli, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants included bilingual liaisons for a non-profit working in partnership with an urban Ohio school district to bridge immigrant families and their students' schools.

"Aha" Moments

- Fostering parent buy-in and filling in the gaps in knowledge of the American school system is the fundamental challenge for bilingual liaisons
 - The challenge increases when the parent speaks little to no English and has never attended school
 - Helping parents navigate the school system and getting them involved is critical to students' learning
 - Bilingual liaisons are teaching the whole family, not just the student they are assigned to
 - Skilling them up on technology, specifically how to navigate and use the online learning platforms to check grades, assignment due dates and submittal process, and communicate with teachers
 - Helping them navigate the school system and processes
 - Conveying the importance of education and attending school on a regular, consistent basis
- Bilingual liaisons note the importance of cultural relevance in their work with students and families
 - Students and families are more willing to engage if they feel the liaison can relate to their experiences
 - Participants' role evolves into a mentoring relationship with students and their families
- Bilingual liaisons shared that once contact is made with parents and they are provided the resources to successfully support student remote learning (i.e. hotspots, Chromebooks, and training to navigate online learning portals), student attendance has drastically improved
 - Approximately 90% of elementary school students assigned a bilingual liaison now attend school on a regular, consistent basis

- Nearly 70% of middle school students assigned a bilingual liaison now attend school on a regular, consistent basis
- High school student attendance has improved, but not at the rate of the elementary and middle school grade levels

Benefits

- Increased capacity in technical and computational skills for both students and parents
- Students attended class with greater frequency, sometimes as much as 90% in some educational age groups
- Easier access
- Parents are more connected to their students' learning
 - They see evidence of learning every day and are able to grasp the importance of education

Challenges

- Lack of parental supervision during remote learning because parents have to work, which leads to engagement and attendance issues amongst students
- Language barriers
- Student engagement and maintaining students' motivation
- Work-life balance
- Transportation to learning extension centers
- Communication with participating districts is cumbersome and time consuming

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Train both students and parents on online learning platforms and how to navigate the school system
- Speak with both students and parents to hear both perspectives to get a better idea of what the fundamental challenges are for each family
- Encourage parents to participate in ESL classes to help with language barrier

Community Resources (organizations)

- Learning extension centers
- Local libraries
- Open source resources online, such as ESL videos on YouTube

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 3, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Enzo Zaccardelli, Facilitator

Haruko Tanaka, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session no longer work directly with students in the classroom, and now serve on school boards in rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Only 20% of schools in one of the rural districts represented in this session are still remote
- Participants expressed concern for children's mental health and lack of academic success if online education continues
- Prefer in person classes to avoid missing integral teaching moments in early childhood
- Prioritized the future success of students and their learning being potentially hindered by remote education
- The pandemic has made people realize that they have more options than the "wake up, go to school, sit there, etc." and students and parents will expect more options going forward

Benefits

- Safety protocols with remote education enabled community's ability to return to school in-person with minimal hospitalization and no deaths in one rural community
- People are becoming more creative in using online resources and holding virtual meetings

Challenges

- School leadership has limited awareness of available resources
- Prepare for this to occur again in the future
- Teachers and staff feel overworked, underpaid and under considerable stress trying to teach with different modalities
- Connectivity/accessibility in rural Ohio
- Prevalence of mental health issues increased with remote learning
- Communication and getting students to engage and participate has been problematic
- Teachers initially had to scramble to connect with students

- If early childhood students miss the “golden opportunity window” when reading “clicks with them” this may hinder their reading abilities in the future
- Online education does not give the same social “spark” that in person education provides, depriving children of needed socialization and limits the social-emotional aspect
 - Students don’t have in-person access to guidance counselors, school psychologists for increased support
- If remote learning persists, parents take on a larger role in educating their kids
 - If their teaching is insufficient, that could hinder their children’s education

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parking lot internet access in remote areas
- Strong leadership
- Limit remote education
- Access local resources
- Parents drove their children to school to avoid increased exposure to COVID on “packed” school buses

Community Resources (organizations)

- Connectivity Champions
- MRDD and Family and Children First counsel work together to provide resources for families, especially with mental health
- 2-1-1 hotline for housing help
- ESCs (Education Service Centers)
- Prevention Partners

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educators Focus Group

March 10, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Haruko Tanaka, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. An informal educator with a national organization participated in this session, and works with K-12 students, educators and administrators.

"Aha" Moments

- Children are learning how to apply knowledge by adapting through online programs, enhancing problem solving skills
- Online programming was considered an option before the pandemic, but the pandemic expedited efforts to implement online peer mentoring programs
- Even after the pandemic, some strategies will be retained

Benefits

- Alumni peer mentorship program was developed
- Fewer barriers for student involvement through virtual programming
- Students have increased access to regional and national events where they have been previously deemed ineligible if unable to attend in-person due to virtual programming
- More students can be involved in national competitions through virtual programming
- Judges have more time to score equitably

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Loss of student participation in programming across the nation and in Ohio
- Educator challenges
 - Overwhelmed with constant changes regarding mode of instruction and regulations
 - Prefer consistency over promises of being in-person
 - Forced to put additional resources, assets or programs on hold as they do not have the bandwidth to add anything else on their plate
- Made connections with the right people to implement programming, but connectivity issues resulted in less participants from areas that already struggle with online education

- Program-staff workload increased as they took over work previously done by school teachers
- Challenges with increasing outreach into new areas

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Centralization of programming parameters and standards
- Developed peer mentorship program
- Online regional events
- Online platforms were helpful

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Educator focus groups on how to better implement program in their schools
- Online regionals/Virtual programming
- Peer mentoring from alumni

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 11, 2021 (3pm-4pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Daniella Saul, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators taught classes in art, special education, and English/language arts in elementary, middle school, and post-secondary (special education) grade levels. Educators work in urban and suburban/rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Educators used a variety of tactics to adjust to remote learning; creating YouTube videos for students, using Google translate to accommodate non-native English-speaking students, and using a combination of functions on virtual platforms to keep students engaged remotely (ex. Using Zoom microphones only on some days, turning on video only certain days, using the Breakout Room feature some days, etc.)
- The variety of platforms available for educators to use can be limiting; there is not enough time to familiarize oneself with the technology before it is implemented, and many new programs might be helpful but cost money
- Educators noted that there are benefits and drawbacks to remote learning depending on the student population – for special education students, if the student has a disability, parents may welcome being more involved in their education from home. For other students, parent “buy-in” is extremely difficult. Still, remote learning allows teachers to understand the home environments of students and how their education is managed at home
- Educators mentioned providing “grace” to parents in situations where students were not turning in work or continuing to miss class; noted that parents themselves need to understand how to support their children, as remote learning is so new
- Many acknowledged the positives of remote learning and admitted they would like to see some degree of remote learning continue in the future

Benefits

- Remote learning seems to work well for some students
 - Special education post-secondary students who have jobs are able to log in on their own schedule and complete assignments before the deadlines
 - For special education students, it may be easier for parents to remain involved in their child’s education and aware of progress when they are in school at home

- Control of schedule and responsibility with managing time were noted as benefits
- For teachers, remote education has some benefits.
 - Allows collaboration amongst colleagues to determine which strategies are working best, time to share tips and resources, and help with modifying assignments based on the expertise of other colleagues in similar situations.
 - Allows educators to see the home environment of students to better understand the circumstances in which they are completing their education (feeling more “connected” to families and students).
 - It is easier and faster to link students to supplemental materials as they are needed.

Challenges

- Access to resources and funding has been a challenge for educators, students, parents
 - One participant noted that art supplies were not provided for or budgeted for by the school, and parents and students needed to make do with what they are able to afford
- Special education students who are in career training programs have limited options for gaining experience with community partners
- Learning new technology has been a challenge for educators
 - Not being familiar with or having enough dedicated time to “play around” with technology before instituting it in a classroom
- Attendance and student engagement, and parental lack of understanding has been an issue
 - Parents may not be dedicated or supportive to their children’s learning and advancement to the next grade, resulting in low motivation for the student to attend class
 - Parents may lack understanding of the specifics of online school and its curriculum, for example students need to log in at certain times, complete work on deadlines, etc., and this concept is unfamiliar to many parents
 - Parents leaving elementary school children alone to do work online, resulting in students who get distracted and do not complete work.

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Putting together physical supplies for special education students to pick up on their own time (binders full of worksheets that are digitized and presented in class via Google meets)
 - For special education educators, working with an intervention specialist to adjust assignments for special education population
 - Implementing different schedules for different students was effective in keeping consistency with students’ routines
- Varying the how technology was used was helpful in dealing with the “technology-related remote exhaustion”

- For example, switching up using Google classroom on some days, other days just using breakout rooms on Zoom, some days no cameras on, etc.
- Using games and quizzes as assessments instead of exams
- Creating YouTube videos where students can pause/play at specific times and teacher can curate and edit the content
- Overcoming the lack of funding available for art supplies, an educator developed a “toolbox” by having students find whatever types of unconventional materials they have at home to do art
- Positive communication is key with parents, students, because it is a difficult time to learn in this environment, and can provide a moment of “grace”
- In schools where there is a language barrier and few native English-speaking students and parents, a reliance on Google translate has been implemented in place of interpreters
- One educator has asked students what their biggest struggles have been in order to better understand how to help them succeed

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Educator noted there were more opportunities to collaborate with fellow educators to determine which strategies work best.
 - However, even with new platforms being introduced and support from colleagues, there is limited time in the school day to train and familiarize oneself with new technological platforms before implementing them

Community Resources (organizations)

- Educator noted that these types of conversations (focus groups for ODE) is helpful and values having time to talk through what is working, where more support is needed, etc.
- No mention of specific organizations that provides additional resources

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- When the shift back to in-person instruction resumes, there was mention of hiring online teachers exclusively for online students. It is difficult for one teacher to manage both in-person and online materials for students (especially if there is a split between students who attend in-person and those who remain online)
- One educator mentioned that high school students who live in households with younger children often take on a tutoring/parental role for younger siblings and may neglect their own assignments as a result, and may benefit from additional support

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Focus Group Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 11, 2021 (5pm-6pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Annika Doneghy, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session fill the roles of principal, full-time remote learning educator, and career and technical high school administrator in rural, suburban, and urban Ohio districts.

"Aha" Moments

- One educator works as a principal and stated that they missed teaching and wanted to return to the classroom, and they realize they do not want to be a teacher again
 - Remote education helped them become empathetic and more appreciative of teachers and students
- One educator realized that their joy in teaching comes from being in-person, meeting students, and forming connections with them, and they stated that they will never want to teach remotely again
- Students may show certain body language in person that alerts educators if something is wrong, and educators realized that this body language can still be observed while learning remotely, which is why it is important to have cameras on
 - Students choosing to only show half their face on an online meeting platform is the equivalent of "laying their head on their desk" during in-person instruction

Benefits

- Educators and students have learned to quickly adapt to any circumstance
 - Educators have noticed that students are playing a role in helping teachers, especially with technology, and teachers are learning new things
 - One educator said that this has even led to "collaborative classrooms" where students are at the center because they feel empowered and able to solve problems
 - Educators want these new techniques continue in learning post-COVID, especially new technology tools that have been learned and developed
- Remote capabilities allow for easier check-ins and meetings with students and parents
 - Even though some educators stated that getting students to participate in these check-ins can be a challenge, one educator did note that online methods like Zoom allow for quick 5-minute meetings at any time or place, whereas these same meetings in-person would need advance planning so logistics could be

arranged, including the need to find transportation in order to reach these meetings for some families

Challenges

- Different models of learning can be chaotic and stressful for teachers and students to adapt
 - Some models require “A” and “B” groups of students to come in on different days throughout the week, which means teachers need to create many lesson plans for just one week
 - Even if a school district is doing in-person learning, students can still opt for online learning
 - APEX (online learning academy assigning curriculum to fully remote students)
 - This platform cannot be modified by teachers
 - Completely separate entity from lesson plans made by teachers, no opportunities for peer collaboration for students
- Higher education opportunities are difficult to manage through remote models
 - Educators expressed that students taking college courses aren’t able to form relationships or connections with professors
 - Communication is a big issue but college professors seem to be understanding and helpful
 - Adapting to college in an online platform has not been easy for students
 - One educator explained that no in-person connections is a huge barrier for high schoolers trying to navigate college for the first time, but navigation did improve in the second half of the school year/college semester
 - Virtual internship programs and experiences are not as engaging
 - One educator noticed that enrollment in the internship program for the next school year significantly dropped due to students spreading out the word that this year’s program was bad
 - Students participating in career centers are missing the full experience
 - Educators understand that some courses cannot be taught online and need to be in-person, but trying to remain safe and social distance in-person to conduct these courses is difficult
 - Career center activities are usually hands-on and in making the switch to remote activities educators notice both grades and attendance drop significantly
 - Student participation has significantly dropped and in some cases is almost non-existent
 - One educator spoke about a program in their district for troubled and vulnerable kids who often missed school regularly before the pandemic hit, so trying to get these kids to stay active in a program that is now online has been extremely difficult

- Students simply do not want to participate
 - Educators notice that students who have IEP's are not wanting to participate in any remote programs that could be beneficial
 - Educators agree that students are disengaged
 - It is difficult to enforce online meetings and check-ins
 - Virtual events and opportunities receive low participation and educators believe this is due to "Zoom burnout"
- Forming relationships with students through online platforms is difficult
 - One educator explained that their joy in teaching is forming relationships with students but it has been nearly impossible in remote learning
 - Educators notice students struggling but they lack the rapport and connection to truly be able to help them
 - When students constantly have their cameras off it is hard to make sure students are okay both academically and emotionally
 - One educator stated that a lack of relationships with their students has led to a drop in the quality of instruction
- Some students are still struggling to have stable internet connections
 - Issues with connectivity is not a matter of money or not having access, it is a matter of living in an area that has limited access and options
- Educators question if students will be able to advance to the next subjects for the upcoming school year
 - Plans of remediation are uncertain
- Educators have their own personal struggles outside of teaching and working with students
 - Adapting to remote learning is difficult
 - Educators have families and children of their own who are students trying to navigate remote learning, and this can be stressful
 - Finding balances between work, school, and life is difficult

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Being open to change, being flexible, being vulnerable and adapting
 - Educators understand that these challenges are not personal and are faced by everyone, so adaptability is very important
 - One educator explained that sometimes it is better to go with the flow rather than trying to be prepared and plan (especially days in advance)
- Allowing for remote students to come in-person at least one day throughout the week
 - One educator is in a model where students are in-person but some students have elected to stay fully remote with the opportunity to come in Wednesdays when in-person students are out, so fully remote students can come into the building for anything they may need
 - Still allows for an in-person component and students are able to check-in with teachers while not being exposed to in-person classmates
- Showing students they are cared about them even in remote models

- Some educators find creative ways to form online connections and relationships with students, for example, mailing students personalized greeting cards for various occasions
- One educator works with students and their parents in cohort groups which makes it easier to check-in and tackle any challenges that may arise
- Strongly encourage every student to turn their cameras on while in online classes
 - One educator explained that educators failed by making assumptions prior to the start of remote learning that making students turn cameras on while in their homes may not be appropriate or equal for everyone
 - This educator said that barriers and obstacles were already assumed and expected so no camera requirements were made, but instead these issues should be addressed when and if they arise
 - Educators think cameras being on allows for better relationships to be formed and students can be checked on by seeing if student body language hints at any issues (academically, emotionally, physically, etc.)
 - One educator brought up an incident that they did not want to fully share where they said that something bad was happening in a student's home and because the student had their camera on the school was able to help the student
- Make prior agreements and contracts so students know what they are required to do while in remote models
 - One educator made contracts for both students and parents to sign stating that the program required monthly check-ins with online meetings and this had to be agreed upon in order to participate in this program

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Technological supports
 - One district provided students with chrome books and hotspots if needed
 - Another district made routers available at no cost for students to take if needed
 - The educator in this district shared that no students accepted the routers because they did not want to accept a "hand-out"
 - This reflects the rural culture of this district's students
- Specialist supports
 - One district provides counseling services and social workers on site to help students
 - Another district provides intervention specialists to work with students with IEP's
 - The educator in this district said this resource is highly engaging for students

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Educators need better ways of connecting with families, students, and especially parents

- Two educators mentioned that working with high schoolers in higher education programs can be difficult if the students' parents do not have higher education experiences themselves
 - There can be different levels of understanding and educators need better ways to connect with these parents to support students
- One educator mentioned ODE organized meet-ups and said these have been very helpful and should definitely continue

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Focus Group Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 12, 2021 (8am-9am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session teach students from 7th-12th grade in a suburban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Many students who tend to engage in middle and high school "drama" (in their social interactions) have become more engaged with school work when they are learning remotely
- Those students who are attending in-person who may have previously been distracted by the "drama" of others have become more engaged in learning

Benefits

- Some students are able to be more focused and more successful with remote education
 - One educator said that their students are able to move at their own pace with remote learning and they don't view assignments as having homework but doing class work on their own time
 - Students also do not feel rushed to do work and have more autonomy to be independent and responsible students
- Using online resources and platforms to teach and learn
 - One educator mentioned "Desmos" as a platform they used pre-COVID for math and now they rely on this platform even more
 - Platform is easy to use, engaging, and a "cool learning" opportunity for students
- Less in-person distractions from being in school everyday
 - One educator noticed that students who tend to engage in "drama" (in social interactions) at school are now performing better online and getting better grades because they are more focused on their work, they aren't getting attention from others, and are able to be more engaged and ask more questions
 - Another educator agrees and states that this is even a benefit for in-person students because seats are now more distanced and not as many people are in the school building, making it easier for students to be focused on learning

Challenges

- Engagement and participation
 - Creative and fun “enrichment” activities are not possible to conduct online
 - One educator provided examples of engaging learning activities they conduct in-person that students enjoy, but trying these same activities online is hard because students view it as “busy work” and don’t want to participate
 - Online learning has become just doing what is necessary and what needs to be done, no extra learning or activities are completed
 - Learning becomes mundane
 - Getting students to work together in groups is difficult
 - Students divide their time and multitask rather than being fully engaged with class
 - Students log-in to class while doing other things like being at work, eating in restaurants, at their employment, and even on vacation
 - Students lack motivation and effort
- Blended, synchronous learning models
 - One educator noticed that having online students and in-person students in class at the same time could be confusing and difficult to manage
 - There is a lot going on at one time—multiple groups of students doing different things, educator has to constantly repeat instructions and lessons, multiple students ask questions at once both in-person and online
 - One educator would prefer to keep online and in-person students completely separate
 - For students with learning disabilities like ADD/ADHD it can be difficult to focus
 - One educator said it is even confusing for them personally because they have ADD as well
 - One educator has noticed that online students who then return to in-person learning academically improve
 - Students with F’s online now get A’s in-person
 - Another educator disagreed and stated some students won’t do better in-person because they are “poor” students regardless of where they are learning
 - Another educator believes that students who do well in school will do well regardless of the learning model they are in, and sees no difference between in-person or online learning (sees the issue as the students themselves and their drive/effort not the model of learning)
- Learning gaps
 - One educator explained that online students may be behind in learning and once they come back to in-person learning it will be too hard to “bridge the gaps”

- Another educator has noticed that online students can't keep up or try to cut corners in their learning and then once in-person again they are behind the students who have been fully in-person
- Students staying up late and completing work late
 - One educator said students are going to bed around 3-4am and will even submit their assignments around 3-4am
 - Another educator said this behavior is typical of their student population and COVID and remote learning has only exacerbated this issue
- Parent involvement, participation, and technological literacy
 - Educators say that some parents are receptive to remote learning and others want in-person learning
 - Communicating with parents is a struggle for educators
 - Hard to get parents' input on students' work
 - One educator stated that students lie to parents about submitting work or being in class
 - Parents don't know how to use Google classroom so they can't check for themselves what their students are doing
 - Parents may also give excuses for their students or themselves
 - Parents don't know how to use computers and responsibility falls on educators to inform parents
 - Parents have access to computers and technology but literacy is the issue
 - One educator said that parents aren't taking the time to figure out technology and they don't care to learn or used resources to help themselves
 - Parents are not very involved or hands-on with their students' education
 - One educator said that parents think teachers aren't doing any real teaching with remote learning and this may impact how parental involvement
- Work/life balance and boundaries
 - Two educators noticed that online students don't understand or think that the school day still ends at 3pm—students will reach out with emails around midnight
 - One educator stated that students who complete work during the day and reach out with questions in the evening are "okay," but students who wait to do their work until the nighttime and decide to reach out with questions is "not okay"
 - One educator said they have to set limits on when they will reply to students' emails
- Possibility of cheating on tests and assignments while online
 - Some educators said in-person students worry that online students have an unfair test-taking environment because they could use multiple devices or even other students to help them find answers while testing

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Constant communication with students and parents

- Sending emails, phone calls home
- Being competent and comfortable with technology and digital platforms
 - One educator explained that they have used digital platforms for 3-4 years by now, so making the switch for COVID was not a big deal
 - Students now have to submit videos of themselves exercising for physical education class and this has been an effective strategy
- Monitoring the online access students have
 - Educators spoke about changing their curriculum to be more essay and project heavy rather than test heavy so students cannot easily cheat on tests
 - This also results in more learning because students have to actually know material rather than relying on help with online access
 - Blended classrooms are useful because online students have the same time requirements and time limits as the in-person students, making it harder to cheat

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School resources to help families and parents
 - A teacher at the school created a resource to help educate students and their parents on how to use online platforms and become adjusted to remote learning, resource was posted on school website
 - The only issue is educators say this resource is either not used enough or not used at all by parents
 - School administration set up Google classrooms so emails can automatically be sent to parents as well and keep them in the loop
- Collaborative faculty & staff
 - The school has always encouraged the staff to work together and collaborate
 - Sharing of resources, helping with lessons, giving tips and advice for remote learning and using technology
- Professional Development (PD) days teaching educators about technology
 - Mixed feelings from educators on this resource
 - Educators think that this is helpful and useful but every educator is not on the same level with their technological literacy, so these PD days can waste time for more advanced educators who already know technology basics

Educator Perspective: Recommended Resources and Supports

- Permanent switch to digital learning methods (even for in-person learning)
 - One educator has had students download apps for further engagement, for example library apps that allow students to download and read books
 - Students have really liked this
 - Another educator mentioned a platform called "virtualvacation.us" where students have to guess a city through a virtual tour

- Students are highly engaged in this and work together doing research to guess the city
 - This educator learned about this resource through the social media app TikTok where many teachers have shared videos about how they are engaging their students
- One educator said digital learning keeps students more organized because it is consistent and provides structure
 - Students can no longer say they lost or forgot a worksheet because everything is online
- One educator agrees that digital methods are useful and should be used in-person, but paper/pencil methods should still be an option for students who may be easily distracted online with multiple tabs or games for example
- Incentivize parents and families in order for them to participate, communicate, and give feedback
 - One educator suggested Google Forms as a way to survey and get feedback
- Differentiated Professional Development days
 - Because educators are on different levels technologically, these PD days should provide different trainings for different levels rather than having all educators in the same sessions

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 31, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Annika Doneghy, Facilitator

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. The educator participating in this session works as a social worker in an urban school district, working with students in high school and elementary school.

Benefits

- Educator says the experience of working from home has been good overall at a personal level
 - It is convenient to work from home
 - Role as a social worker is following “the need,” so it has been easy to adapt to a new work setting and help families with their transition to a new learning model
- New methods for learning that should be kept post-COVID
 - Google Classroom
 - Meetings can take place virtually, such as on Zoom
 - Educator said that not all meetings should stay virtual, but it is helpful when dealing with finding a location and making sure all participants have transportation
 - Documentation
 - As a social worker, educator mentioned that documentation is very important, for example keeping track of outreach to families and students
 - Educator has noticed that even more staff has been documenting this during the pandemic, and it is something that is helpful and should be kept as a practice

Challenges

- Navigating digital platforms
 - Educator shared that most parents, and even some students do not know the basics such as using an email account
 - Some students easily give up and shut down if they don’t understand something
 - Being remote makes it easier for students to shut down and not reach out for or accept any help
 - Educator’s role as a social worker has now shifted to primarily helping students and families with technology

- Educator did mention that this is not necessarily a bad thing because their role is to go wherever the need is, but remote learning has made things much more difficult for families and students who may not have digital literacy
- Everyday work before COVID was heavily in-person, and now that cannot be carried out
- Reaching ESL (English as a second language) families
 - Educator made clear throughout the listening session that communication with ESL families is a major challenge and something that needs attention both during and after the pandemic
 - Making phone calls to ESL families is difficult with an interpreter, which is not always available on the spot
- Students with IEPs may have a harder time
 - Educator has noticed that parents with students who have an IEP often struggle more than normal in remote learning
 - Some parents have multiple students with IEPs learning from home
 - There seems to be no help or coordination from the school to assist the families in managing their students' IEP needs
- Not being able to truly check-in with students and see how they are doing
 - Educator explained that part of their job role is to link students to counseling
 - Telehealth has been great during the pandemic but referrals for students who may need counseling has greatly decreased
 - Without seeing students in-person and without students always using their cameras in online visits, it is harder to see how they are doing (i.e. no body language that may indicate something going on or needing help)
- Students struggle in online platforms
 - Educator said that some students perform well in remote learning, but many struggle
 - Educator explained that students feel alone and isolated and may even experience family conflict in wanting to be social and see their peers while their family wants them to stay in and be safe
- Printing from home has been a challenge
 - Educator noted they don't know of any realistic fixes for this

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Texting with students and families
 - Educator mentioned that this is a strategy they have used for years, even before the pandemic
 - Sometimes it is much easier to connect with families and students by text, rather than emails, zoom calls, or even in-person meetings
 - Educator also explained that this is a helpful method for ESL families and other vulnerable populations

- Screen share feature on Zoom
 - Educator has used screen share to connect with ESL families when interpreters are unavailable to meet immediate needs or in any timely manner
 - Sharing the screen allows families to see what is being discussed rather than only relying on hearing it and trying to understand what is being explained
- Problem solving and trouble shooting
 - Educator now plays a big role in technology assistance and finds that talking through issues with families helps them learn things for themselves while also fixing the issues
- Home visits with families and students
 - Educator has made some home visits to families and students that needed this option, but it is difficult to do because of COVID and safety protocols

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Resources provided for families and students
 - School district provided Chromebooks, food distribution, basic technology help, and a help desk for more in-depth or around the clock issues
 - Educator mentioned that at one high school they work in, students took the responsibility of recording the principal's weekly newsletter and sending this to families so they can listen to the recording rather than relying on reading the information on paper or online (something they may not know how to do because of (digital) literacy and ESL)

Community Resources (organizations)

- Learning Extension Centers
 - School district partnered with the local Urban League to create Learning Extension Centers for students to be in-person doing their work without distractions and to provide supervision/help if needed
 - Centers were located in empty high school buildings while high school students were in a remote learning model
 - When high school students entered a hybrid learning model, these centers could no longer be located in the high schools since they were not empty, so this resource had to end
 - YMCA offered this type of resource as well but educator noted that spots filled up very fast
 - The Learning Zone
 - Vineyard Church Community Center
 - Educator noted that this had a cost of \$25 and for some families this was not affordable
- Libraries when open as centers for students to get homework help
- Emergency funds and P-EBT cards
- IMPACT Community Action

- Educator said there are some good community partners and resources available, but they themselves are affected by the pandemic as well, which makes it difficult for families and students to access during their different learning models

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- School coordination for IEP
 - Educator mentioned that IEP families often struggle more, especially if there are multiple students with IEPs in a home and if they are ESL families as well
 - School should do more to help families so they are not tasked with keeping up with all their students and their needs while also trying to navigate spaces that are not in their primary language
- On-demand interpreter services
 - Educator said that a lot of schools have bilingual staff, which is very helpful but is also a very slow system in terms of responsiveness
 - Relaying messages through staff members who may not always be available to translate is hard, and having so many middlemen can cloud translation
 - Interpreters for any language should be available at any time they are needed in order to best assist ESL families and students
- District-provided cellphones
 - Educator uses texting as their own strategy to overcome challenges and uses a Google Voice number to do so
 - Educator shared that this strategy does not work for all because some staff are uncomfortable connecting a Google number to their own personal information
 - Having district-provided phones will allow staff to connect with families in any ways they may like, without feeling unsafe or uncomfortable due to personal privacy
 - This also helps with student records, educator said they often take a screenshot and send things to families through text then has to remember to delete the screenshots afterwards
 - District-provided phones can hold confidential information that can be properly deleted whenever phones are returned or no longer needed
- Educator stressed the importance of reaching ESL families who may need help, but who also do not use or know how to use technology
 - Educator did not have specific strategies, but wants ODE to make sure these families are not left behind
 - ESL families may speak their native language but not know how to read or write it, so even communication in their language through email or paper may be useless
 - There needs to be some type of verbal communications and interactions happening

- Educator suggested that ODE fund digital literacy classes for adults so parents can learn technology skills in order to help themselves and their children
 - This resource is especially needed for ESL families

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

March 31, 2021 (1:20-2:05pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session are teachers in a suburban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Online teaching has become somewhat easier over the course of the school year
 - Nearly constant changes in scheduling and structure made it especially difficult to get acclimated to teaching online
 - Synchronous scheduling has made it simpler for both teachers and students to follow along with schedule and classes as a whole
 - More accountability and structure

Benefits

- In-person students seem more engaged than usual because there are less students in the classroom
 - Sweet spot for engagement is around 15 students in the classroom

Challenges

- Changes in online structure made it more difficult to adjust to teaching remote students
- Teachers experienced difficulties in recording themselves
 - Lack of training in how to use the technology
 - Stories of teachers in other districts getting sued for uploading recordings in which students and/or teachers did something inappropriate made them worried about recording themselves while teaching
 - "At the beginning of the year, we were told to be careful about filming ourselves live because we didn't know what students would do. We heard crazy stories about students or teachers saying things and then getting sued. So, filming and recording yourself in front of students was a bit scary."
- Lack of engagement amongst fully remote students
 - Online students don't ask questions or engage with the material
 - Online students ask for help privately on the class chat but do not speak out during class time on Google Meets
 - Remote students lack motivation to attempt and/or complete work

- “I have kids who came back for the fourth nine-weeks. A lot of them were failing the first semester or not doing too well, but since they’ve come back, they’ve improved. It was too easy not to do anything at home. It was hard to get motivated at home but being back in school has helped them.”
- Difficult to build relationships with fully remote students
 - Teachers feel they do not know their remote students
 - “We don’t really know the online kids. It’s the first time we’ve had some of them. They could walk in front of me, and I wouldn’t know that they were one of my students.”
- Teachers feel that remote students lack integrity
 - “You can’t really control what sources of information people are using. We all have that setting that they can’t look up stuff on their computers during tests, but we don’t know if they’re using their phones or other computers.”
 - Leads to questions of fairness
 - Educators feel the remote students are cheating themselves out of properly learning the subject matter
 - In-person students feel that they have to do more work and study more than their remote peers
- Some resources are blocked on students’ Chromebooks

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Frontloading class recordings when online classes were not synchronous
- Synchronous classes create more accountability for remote students and give more structure to all students and teachers
- Reevaluating work and test questions to make it more difficult to Google the answers
 - Example: asking for personal experiences
 - “Trying to instill in [the students] the need to be honest and take pride in their own work.”
- Making tests open note
 - Not ideal because students are not preparing for tests properly

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- No training on how to teach online

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Recording videos daily
- Using EdPuzzle
- Setting up on Google Classroom for both in-person and remote students
- Virtual teaching PD

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 8, 2021 (2pm-3pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen and Kayla Galloway, Facilitators

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted an onsite focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participating in the focus group were elementary school educators from a rural Ohio region.

"Aha" Moments

- Educators found that consistency in instruction played a large role in learning
- Despite the relative success of the district, the teachers and administrator feel that the current model is unsustainable.

Benefits

- Students have learned technical skills
- Educators enjoyed the accessibility and organization of Google classroom

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Parental support played a large role in students' ability to succeed
 - Children have trouble sustaining their attention on computers for long periods of time and often get distracted by classmates
- Educator challenges
 - During remote instruction, educators were unable to give individualized attention where needed
 - Educators unable to evaluate fine motor skills such as writing, how children hold their pencil, etc.
 - Educators are unable to walk around the classroom and provide attention to kids who tend to struggle more
 - Educator challenges are exacerbated regarding remote instruction when parents are disruptive/not adequately supportive
 - Constant communication with parents has led some educators to feel stressed
 - They are lacking privacy (parents texting late at night, on weekends)
 - They do not have adequate time to plan when a child becomes quarantined and has to go virtual (educators will receive a message in

the morning that the child's mother wants to come by that evening to pick up the next 2 weeks of work)

- Educators miss spending time with one another within their school community
- Educators miss the spontaneity and flexibility they used to have with in-person teaching. Virtual teaching is on a tighter schedule
- Educators had to learn how to use new technology
- The online learning platforms
 - Not accommodating for students with IEPs/special education
 - Tech issues would result in lost time as well as lost focus of the group
- Some parents did not set good examples for their students in that they did not wear masks or disrupted teachers

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parents who work would send their children to their grandparents' house
 - This led to its own challenges, including lack of technology capabilities and knowledge to support student learning
- Educators would utilize numerous planning periods to organize take-home work for quarantined students
- The principal is turning stationary buses into Wi-Fi hot-spots and looking into opening the school for internet usage
- Sharing phone number, Facebook handle, etc. with parents

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Chromebooks
- Bus Wi-Fi hotspots

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 8, 2021 (1pm-2pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Jonah Lewis, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted an onsite focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participating in the focus group were elementary school educators from a rural Ohio region.

"Aha" Moments

- Organization for concurrent classes presents additional challenges to educators
- Teachers have been flexible, but even with flexibility and understanding ("grace") they are under a great deal of stress

Benefits

- Communication with parents has increased, and in some cases improved
- Students have taken on more responsibility and ownership of their learning
- Teachers have an opportunity to get a glimpse into childrens' home lives

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Teachers are not able to support both in person and remote at the same time effectively (concurrent teaching)
 - Many parents are not able to or willing to be attentive to facilitate student learning at home
- Parent challenges
 - Parents will often do children's work for them at home
- Online learning platforms
 - Area is rural, so many do not have access to cable internet
 - Only option is for parents and educators to pay for more expensive satellite services
 - Internet services cannot support teaching many students in the same household

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Strong sense of community among the school that allows them to be flexible and support each other

Community Resources (organizations)

- Contact tracing via the Health Department and school nurses work effectively when needed

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 15, 2021 (3:30pm-4:15pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Naa Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session are on the leadership team at an urban charter school system.

"Aha" Moments

- Providing social opportunities for students to meet with their peers was effective for engagement
- The school system determined mid-summer 2020 to be fully remote and planned accordingly
 - Teachers were trained in using new platforms and learning management systems during the summer
 - Curriculum was revamped for online delivery
 - New assessment tools were implemented
 - Consistency with scheduling
- Families were surveyed at key points to determine readiness for in-person learning
- Tents were set up outdoors for parents to pick up devices and hotspots for their children, including written instructions for the curriculum and meals
 - Providing meals and school supplies for students has been ongoing throughout the school year

Benefits

- Building-level instructional coaches were reassigned to work with grade and subject bands across the 12-building system
 - This created a cohort of teachers who prepared lessons together across the network
 - Teachers were able to establish relationships across all of the schools and share best practices
 - Coaches became grade band and subject area experts for entire system
- Realization that in-person isn't the only way to teach and learn
 - System plans to continue using new assessment tool
 - Online individualized instruction will be useful
- Students have become more digitally literate

- The charter system arranged for safe spaces where students could learn in small pods during the school day
 - Families were able to opt in for this arrangement
 - Students received meals
 - Adult supervision of student groups was 1-to-9
- High mobility families were able to keep their students enrolled despite moving out of catchment area
- Attrition has been reduced in mobile population

Challenges

- Recruiting students for the coming year was difficult to do online
- Parents were late in making enrollment decisions for the current school year
- Educator challenges
 - Learning new ways to teach and engage students
 - Teaching parents how to support their students, learn new technology and platforms
- Principals were used to having dedicated instructional coaches and were uncomfortable with having unfamiliar coaches assigned to work with their teachers
- Some online learning platforms are not accommodating students with IEPs
- Students are not meeting learning goals at the expected rate
- Meeting staff and building relationships were delayed leader new to the charter system
 - Staff adjustment and working from home was difficult

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Had social emotional learning strategies available to all students
- Made a special effort to get students with IEPs to come back to school 5 days a week
- Making school tours virtual
- Setting up a virtual call center for families to ask questions and be guided through using devices, platforms and tools

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers
- Providing instructional coaches working with teachers throughout the entire system
 - Increased teacher collaboration and communication of best practices
- Educators set up meal pickups throughout the school year
- Learning centers provided in person speech therapy and special needs services

Community Resources (organizations)

- Educators worked with an after-school provider to offer remote learning centers of K-8 for families who did not have health care
- Support from city school district

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 19, 2021 (6:30pm-7:30pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Annika Doneghy, Facilitator

Haruko Tanaka, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session work with elementary and middle school students in rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parent engagement influences student growth and success
 - Students with involved parents are succeeding
 - Those students whose parents are not active in their children's education are not reaching the same level of success
- Educators are overwhelmed accommodating and teaching both online and in-person students concurrently

Benefits

- Increased communication between educators and parents
- Forced parents to be more involved and up-to-date with children's learning
- Having more family time
- Children are learning adapt to new learning environments and interactive sites
- Students have access to their school information online
 - Prevents falling behind when missing school for quarantine/doctor's appointments

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Elementary school students' participation has dwindled since they began using the online platform
 - Younger children's education is dictated by the parents' schedule and flexibility
 - Some parents did their children's homework
- Parent challenges
 - It is especially challenging for parents of younger students (K-1) to support student learning
 - These children must be accompanied by parents when working remotely
- Educators

- Juggled accommodating both online and in person students concurrently
- Difficult finding the work and life balance with having to teach their own children in addition to working with students in their classrooms
- Internet issues when all members in a household try to use simultaneously made it difficult to teach remotely
- Had to “dig in” and select certain programs and lessons that were standards based

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Educators were permitted to bring their own children to school during online instruction
- Adding “planning days” so educators had enough time to digitize and gather teaching material
- Educators found more interactive educational games to keep students more engaged in learning
- Educators with previous experience using online resources had better success at adapting when switching to fully online

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- District gave brief instructions on how to use online platforms
- Implementing one day during the week for collaboration/planning with other educators
- Providing family connectivity through T-Mobile hotspots and bus hotspots

Community Resources (organizations)

- Churches and libraries offered hotspots

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Continue with hotspots, especially personal hotspots to take home instead of local bus hotspots which require students traveling to access Wi-Fi
- Continuing planning days

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 20, 2021 (9am-10am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with teachers on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants in this session are educators, most being administrators, from around the state of Ohio who are members of the Ohio STEM Learning Network (OSLN).

"Aha" Moments

- Shutting down, while sometimes necessary, creates additional engagement challenges
- Staff's emotions need to be considered and addressed
 - Many teachers did not get a real summer break between the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, which exacerbated stress this school year
- What works in some situations does not necessarily work in others
- A lot of strategies to overcome challenges are "good things to do outside of a pandemic...just with more intentionality."
- Administrators are concerned about the potential loss of teachers after the high emotional stress of this year
 - "You have your fear of what the students have lost as far as educationally during this time, but the teachers and the leaders that have trudged through this nightmare, there's gonna be a toll and I don't think we're looking at that target at all."
- Overwhelming question of whether the seniors will be prepared for college, especially those who have been remote for the entire pandemic
- The transition back to in-person has been difficult emotionally and a logistical shift was needed

Benefits

- Virtual meetings make it easier for teachers to meet with parents due to increased flexibility
- Teachers have found new methods to see what students understand and what they need more help with
- Communication among staff and with families and students has become more efficient and intentional
- "Formative assessments and feedback is quicker and more efficient."
- One district's summer academy for professional development was held virtually last summer (2020) and had more participation than ever before due to increased accessibility

- Students already had a lot of technology skills, but they were able to get even better
- Increased access to “informal education connections.”
 - Teachers were able to setup virtual field trips/community immersions for their students all over the world, including Joshua Tree National Park and Oaxaca, Mexico
 - “Real, live interactions via Zoom have been very powerful and they’ve also been free this year.”
 - “It happens pretty much weekly with different grade levels and their connections that they make.”
 - This allows for a “broader range of experts and experiences for the kids.”
- Students really wanted to be at school
 - “I was prepared for, like, a 188-day mask war and it really hasn’t been an issue. Our kids have complied and met our expectations and that’s probably the biggest engagement boost we’ve seen. It’s easy to assume high-schoolers are disengaged and too-cool for everything. Having them express, over time, how much they wanted to be here was really empowering for a lot of our staff.”
- Some students thrived in the virtual environment and had less distractions at home than they would at school

Challenges

- STEM schools have different strategies for in-person learning than online learning, making it difficult to teach both in-person and remote students at the same time (concurrently)
 - “The staff has expressed that they do not feel that they did justice to either group.”
- Staff members feel anxious and fearful
 - “There was a lot of fear and apprehension we had to overcome as a staff.”
 - “There has been an inordinate amount of anxiety... that anxiety has manifested in very real ways in terms of how they interact with peers, in terms of their comfort coming into the building.”
- Distance learning started off with difficulty in the 2019-2020 schoolyear, which led to teachers not taking real breaks over the summer, leading to burnout this current schoolyear
 - “Teaching...is high stress, high emotion through the school year and you need your summers off to just rejuvenate from that whole ordeal. And, this summer, many of our teacher didn’t take that time for themselves because they saw how hard it was to do a lot of distance learning and the hybrid stuff at the end of last school year. And so, they just totally engaged during the summer on developing what they could to hit the ground this year running. And, it has just been exhausting for teachers and leaders altogether.”
- Connectivity challenges existed, even when there were efforts by local companies to help with access
- There were issues with parents learning technology
 - It was hard to find “a balance of keeping the parents informed but then also asking them to just let their kids be and sort of get out of their way sometimes...”

- “A lot of the times the parents were making it worse by trying to intervene too much and the kids knew what to do. So, we had to smooth out some of those processes and tell the parents, ‘Let your kids try to figure it out.’”
- Parents have been overwhelmed with electronic communication regarding their children’s education
 - “Their kids aren’t bringing home papers to show them when there’s something important that we could print out on paper ‘cuz we knew that the parents would get it.”
 - “Sometimes they have gotten overwhelmed and then just stopped reading it or stopped really paying attention to it, so there’s things that get missed.”
- For students that were already disconnected, they got more disconnected
 - “It kind of increased the outliers, in some ways.”
- Remote engagement with some families was difficult, especially when parents were not tech-savvy or there was a language-barrier
- Some students had increased distractions at home
- Work-life balance for teachers and administrators have been completely skewed
 - “Mine has been imbalanced, heavy on the work side.”
 - “[I] worked every day this summer and [I’m] working late right now.”

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Having *just* online or *just* in-person classes can ease problems with concurrent teaching/learning
 - “Having more learners just online has been much more successful than having smaller groups spread throughout the day during in-person learning.”
 - “Our teachers – almost all of them – have at least two or maybe more classes that are virtual and maybe two or so that are hybrid.”
- “Learning to recognize [anxiety] for what it is and not take it personally and help staff members see it and own it and then figure out how to move forward has been something.”
- Intentional communication with staff
 - Talking through questions and concerns before returning to in-person learning
 - Bring staff into planning
 - Acknowledging their work and making staff feel valued and appreciated
 - Actively working to correct, manage, and modify problems
- One participant said a student was told to go to McDonalds to access internet, but this strategy is not safe for many students
- Students do virtual activities for things that they would typically do hands-on
 - Virtual building on CoSpaces.edu
 - As the pandemic has progressed and gotten better, building things together with a good amount of distance between students has helped them
- Putting kits together for parents to pick up in a “drive-through” fashion allowed students to have supplies/materials for projects to complete at home
 - Pick-up looked different depending on the school

- One school had once-a-week pickup on Thursdays, but the school does allow for some flexibility for busy parents
- Purchasing technology devices for students that did not have them
- Edpuzzle has been well-received by many teachers
- One school used a “digital Pineapple Chart” to allow teachers to build off each other in professional development
- Actively engaging and checking-in with remote students
 - “we were running a schedule in real-time and so students were actively logging-in to class in real-time and working with teachers and so we...were actually calling if students weren’t in class and I think, for us, that changed engagement to a point.”
 - “Waterfall chat” allowed all students to participate in remote lessons.
 - This was a strategy in which students “have to hold your response, and everybody chats at once because otherwise your quick typers are killing everybody giving answers because they don’t wanna turn on the mics.”

Community Resources (organizations)

- Partnership with local companies to improve access to Wi-Fi through hotspots was helpful, but some students still had trouble with connectivity
- In one district, there is a market where the district has set up tutoring a few days a week
- One district is setting up “summer learning-loss enrichment camps” and plans to connect those with a local media company and local athletic facilities
- One district worked virtually with their previous partners, including city developers, and the city’s mayor

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Administrators need to be aware of the human cost of the pandemic for teachers as well as students
- Teacher-run professional development allows teacher experts to share best practices
 - Having these virtually allowed more teachers to show up and gain useful information, especially teachers who did not have Zoom or Meet skills before the pandemic
- Continuing the use of virtual meetings after the pandemic would increase accessibility and would eliminate the issue of travel time
- Parents still need training on how to use school technologies, but this was always a problem (i.e., before and during the pandemic)
- Continued use of (virtual) Pineapple Charts to allow staff experts to teach each other.
- Having vaccination clinics at schools would guarantee that students and staff are protected from the coronavirus
- One district is having summer learning-loss camps
 - The camps will be organized around themes (STEM, entrepreneurship, athletics, performing arts)
 - Camps will be offered alongside traditional summer school and are focused on reengagement and keeping kids connected, so they will not be credit-bearing

- Professional development focused around Social Emotional Learning, social justice, equity, etc. is important for schools, especially those with diverse student bodies
- Schools will have to work hard to identify learning losses and close the gaps in student learning
- Teachers are not mental health professionals, but they can (and should) be taught “how to manage their emotions...teach kids about their emotions and how to regulate.”
 - “I would love to see strategic resources and strategies in teaching around learning how to cope with grief, learning how to manage loss, learning how to acknowledge this last year.”
 - “Mental Health First Aid Training, which helps you just sort of identify people who are in need of first aid and then how to dispatch them.”
 - “SMART Lab allows kids who are really kind of struggling, whether it be with anxiety, or grief, or anger, or whatever the things that are going on with them...”
 - Includes “a program called Heart Math where students can actually go on, and they attach...a little probe to their ear and it measures their heart rate, they get a baseline, and then we give them things to do.”
 - Includes exercise equipment, things to color, a sunlamp, a couch, and a grass rug
 - SMART Lab helps students more quickly than one-on-one counselor meetings in the offices

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 22, 2021 (3pm-4pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator and Notetaker

Jonah Lewis, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in the Listening Session were STEM instructors from Pre-K up to the 8th grade level.

"Aha" Moments

- Much higher workload due to the improvised format for accommodating both remote and in-person students
- One educator shared that their school was advanced in technological integrations (Google Classroom and other online learning platforms) pre-pandemic, but would still prefer in-person instruction even with school supports

Benefits

- Students are able to work at their own pace
- More structure and ease of delivering lessons
- Room for pre-assessments and projects at home

Challenges

- Handling workload for the educators is difficult
- Hard to set "boundaries" between helping remote students and personal time
 - Finding work-life balance was challenging
- Lack of peer-to-peer interaction among students

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School districts provided new technologies (devices and software) to support remote teaching and learning

Community Resources (organizations)

- Local church has been helpful to educators and students by providing home visits for students and educator care

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 23, 2021 (2:15pm-2:45pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Daniella Saul, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session work with high school students in rural Ohio.

"Aha" Moments

- Remote learning already in place for many teachers, but increased use of resources solidified these systems for this school year (Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.)
- Significant transition worries between grade levels, particularly for those that finished certain subjects in Spring 2020 when classes were abruptly cancelled
 - Remediation is a concern for students who opted for fully virtual instruction
 - Many students had to be pulled back to in-person instruction due to lack of productivity
- Impact of quarantine/absences has varied by grade level
 - Certain grades have been hit harder

Benefits

- Remote learning was, in many ways, an extension of technology already in place for some students
 - Now it is more ingrained than it was before
- Useful for check-ins for students that were out for any reason (illness, etc.)
 - Daily check-ins are good for building relationships with between students and teachers
- Virtual classrooms are "great for multiple things," such as keeping materials in an easily accessible place
- Digital textbooks are a more convenient option
- This year has been a learning experience for how to use technology better
 - Teachers receiving professional development for using new tools
- More options for parents to attend meetings with their children
 - Alternatives to meeting in person
 - Better attendance with conferences, better contact with parents
- Virtual professional development days

Challenges

- Adjustment for students who chose to do remote learning to going back to in-person schooling was difficult
 - Many of these students were not getting work done and were forced to come back to in-person schooling and
 - Helping to get them caught up was “tough”
- Students “floating in and out” of remote and in-person learning for different reasons very frustrating for the teachers
- Concerns from parents that the children doing remote learning were not learning the same things as those in-person
 - Florida Virtual system (the program for students doing remote learning in this particular district) was not aligning with school curriculum for in-person students, though there were efforts to align them
- Remediation in math courses for scaffolded learning
 - Students at the end of 2020 missed months of Algebra I, for example, and while this year they take unrelated math courses, next year they will be taking Algebra 2 without fundamental knowledge
 - This is an issue for kindergarteners with learning basics like spelling, letters, etc.
- Contact tracing pulled many kids out of class for weeks out a time
- Lack of response from students during their quarantine periods

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- At the elementary level, there will be summer remediation with small groups for about two months in order to fill in learning gaps
- If teacher was out sick/quarantining, platforms like Google Meet allowed for communication with students while substitute was teaching in-person
- Schools still had meals delivered or available for students over last summer
- Use of Google/Zoom is more personal than email correspondence, especially for students that were out for a while
 - Email and phone calls with parents
- Use of video calls (Google Meets) while teaching for students who were at home
 - Access to recorded lectures
 - Teaching in-person and having students attend virtually if they are quarantined
- Videos of lessons uploaded to platform
- Google Classroom set up for quarantined students
 - Teachers check in frequently to see if there are student questions

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School was able to offer hotspots to students who lacked access
- Chromebooks in class for elementary school students, older students were 1:1

- Use of Florida Virtual school program instead of the creation of remote curriculum for students who opted out of in-person instruction this year

Educator Perspectives: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Implementing daily check-ins with students
- Continuing to offer alternative forms of parent-teacher conferences (phone, video call, etc.)
- Virtual professional development days for teachers as opposed to in-person
- Virtual classroom space is useful and convenient for keeping all things in one place

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 23, 2021 (2:15pm-2:45pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Cailynn Fox, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Session participants are elementary school educators in a rural Ohio region.

"Aha" Moments

- One educator has been impressed with how well the students are adjusting to changes with in-class activities and social distancing
- Educators made Facebook videos and put signs in front of the school to show support for the students at home during the beginning of remote learning
- Small number of families opted in for virtual learning this school year
 - Many opted into the remote learning option initially, but many have chosen to opt out of the remote learning option as the school year progressed
 - Two weeks after school started students could opt out of virtual learning,
 - Some students were removed from the remote learning option due to lack of completion of schoolwork
- Educators shared that parents were initially surprised about how much time was required for remote learning

Benefits

- More virtual tours and field trips are available online
- Heightened communication with parents (to ensure online learning resources are understood)
- Paper was eliminated as a way to bring homework home
- One educator expressed that for her own child a smaller workload at home helped foster student engagement
- Improved attendance this school year
- Improved hand-washing and sanitizing among students led to fewer sick students this year

Challenges

- "It was all a challenge at the beginning, now I'm just used to it"

- Everything had to be coordinated differently, group work or partner work could not be done anymore
 - Students had to spend much more time in their seats
 - Less collaborative work between students
 - Very difficult at the beginning to get young children to stay still (students are now used to it)
 - Everything takes place in the classroom including lunch, with the exception of recess
 - Initially more behavioral issues, but students are mostly used to it now
- Educators switch classrooms when changing subjects instead of the students moving, which was difficult to get used to
 - Students don't have exposure to different classrooms anymore
- Lots of lost instruction during the first 9 weeks
 - Took students longer to catch on with the new modes of learning
 - Teachers had to work with many small groups and additional review was necessary
- For science class, not all the tools were available to all the students at all times, or the tools had to be used virtually (simulations)
 - Since objects cannot be passed between students, there has to be enough for every student for it to be used
 - Similar for blocks and art materials
- In regards to the small population of students who opted in for remote learning one teacher shared, "There's not really a problem, except for the fact that I don't really think they're learning"
 - There is concern that these students will return to in-person school having missed a year and a half of effective instruction
- Lack of facial expression from the educator due to masks makes it difficult for students to interpret
 - Behavioral management has been more difficult, but most have adjusted to this change

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Partner work is permitted when students wear masks
 - Educators allow up to three students to spread out around a table with Plexiglas dividers
 - Students in one class are permitted to stand if they stay in place, and two students can talk to each other if social distancing takes place
- There are more virtual field trips (Smithsonian Museum, Revolutionary War, etc.) available and students enjoy them
- Sanitizing writing utensils so they can be used by multiple students
- Use individual station baskets instead of traditional stations
 - One basket for each student with dry erase boards and markers, coloring sheets, etc.

- Communication with other educators on strategies for resources and lesson plans are beneficial

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Professional development is a resource offered widely by this district
- Lunches were packed in the cafeteria, and bus drivers and educators delivered meals for students at home

Community Resources (organizations)

- Water bottles have been donated by various organizations because water fountains cannot be used

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 26, 2021 (8am-9am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Educators participating in this session teach children in pre-k and elementary school in rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Educators realize how much student success depends on parent involvement
 - It's harder for younger students to be successful without their parents' support because they are not independent students yet
 - Students who do have support at home do "so much better"
- Educators have learned about social and emotional well-being of students and realize that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) is just as important as traditional subject learning (i.e. math and reading)

Benefits

- In-person learning model
 - Close to 100% "normal" despite pandemic
- Online learning model
 - Live meetings are not mandatory, instead videos are sent and recorded and work is assigned weekly for students to complete
 - One educator noticed that students who traditionally struggle in school have been performing really well in the online model
 - Being able to do work at their own pace and have more focus online
 - One educator said 3 of their students chose to come back to in-person learning after being online and they were performing well academically and were not behind from the students learning in-person
 - Educators who chose to teach remotely are able to have more time at home with their own students and can assist them with their online learning as well
- More family interaction
 - Educators are now speaking with and forming relationships with parents and families on deeper level
 - One educator said being online has helped them get to know families better than ever before in their 6 years of teaching

- Another educator said family and parent relationships are now like partnerships and collaborations
 - Families are able to better understand what their students are learning and working on everyday
 - Technology allows for more check-ins at any point in the day or week
- Students are learning and adapting
 - Educators said that students have become flexible in navigating changes that take place throughout the year

Challenges

- Student behavior
 - Educators have struggled with students having “bad” behavior
 - Dean of Students has been much more involved
 - Students are wetting their pants, crying, and having outburst (for no clear reasons)
 - Educators believe students are experiencing anxiety due to the pandemic
 - Some educators have said that students have issues at home that are more pronounced because of the pandemic and this affects their behavior at school
 - Self-contained classrooms
 - Students do not interact with other classes in-person, only their own
 - This has caused students to act out because they are “bored” with being around the same students every single day rather than having peer interaction with multiple students from different classes and grade levels
- Student and parent/family participation
 - One educator said that even though their live online meetings are optional, some students never show up at all which is ultimately detrimental to the student
 - Educators have had students miss meetings and fall behind on work and then they cannot get in touch with parents to see what is going on
 - Educator stated that the online learning really needs parents to be involved in order for students to succeed
 - Students are behind their grade level for learning and parents are not logging into class for students
 - One educator said parents said, “it got hard” and they just stopped logging online for their student
 - Parents don’t show effort in helping or pushing students to get work done
- Online learning
 - Although online learning is good for some, some students are still struggling without the in-person interaction
 - Some students have switched from online to in-person just to have connections with their peers again
 - Internet access and quality is lacking

- One educator said that internet is a huge challenge and even though the online learning agreement required access, students still cut in and out of class and have bad internet connectivity
- Rural area means that access may not be the issue, it's available, but the quality is poor

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Offering extra help and support for families
 - One educator provided live online sessions for students to get lessons and reading every day in various subjects
 - This was optional but still provided an opportunity for extra involvement for students and peer interaction
 - Sending weekly emails to remind parents and students about work or deadlines
 - Educators said they met with families at the beginning of the year and made tutorial videos for them to navigate the online learning platforms
 - One educator offered more in-depth one-on-one sessions with families who reached out for more help
 - Using Google meet and screen sharing
 - One educator had monthly goal-setting meetings
- Adjusting to the "new normal"
 - One educator said teaching 1st grade means that things need to stay as normal as possible, but in order to adjust to the pandemic the educator uses safety protocols such as using hand sanitizer before and after sharing lessons
- Checking families' and students' well-being
 - One educator sends surveys to parents around Social Emotional Learning in order to check-in on students and see how they're doing and feeling overall, not just with school assignments
 - Despite a disconnect due to the pandemic, surveys allow families to feel cared about and not forgotten, and keeps a connection with the students' teacher

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School allowed for parking lots to be internet-access centers

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Trauma-informed care and SEL are huge
 - Educators need professional training in order to understand students' emotional needs as well as how students may be anxious or triggered due to things happening in the world right now

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

April 29, 2021 (12:30pm-1:30pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Session participants are middle school mentors and educators in an urban area.

"Aha" Moments

- Participation in hybrid classes is a challenge across stakeholder groups
- Even when students were able to go back to classes in person, they were not the same as they were pre-pandemic
 - Students "still had to be six feet apart, even when you came back, there was no more eating in the cafeteria. At first, there was no playing on the playground together."

Benefits

- Despite participation challenges, attendance (in mentoring sessions) was higher than it was for academic classes
- Some students were more engaged with the program than they were pre-pandemic when participating in the completely remote version
 - "As... we got more into the program, by the third session, children really started to open up and were very, very willing to participate."
- Projects that were completed this year were better than in previous years
 - "By the time we got to the final session last week, they did some of the most beautiful vision boards and they were really open to talking..."
- Students enjoyed having more control over conversations
- Students and educators have developed new technological skills
 - "We have a whole different skill set now with being able to manipulate Zoom and things of that nature."
- There were fewer behavioral issues than pre-pandemic
 - "Behavior issues, suspensions, all those types of things, went down quick because you're at home. So, parents have a certain expectation about how kids should act when they're in school. And they were held to it because they were at home."
 - In learning pods, "they were a little antsy but they were never misbehaving..."

Challenges

- Students did not even log-in for remote sessions much of the time
 - “The first couple of sessions, the students were more or less a bit shy and a lot of them did not login.”
- Students who did log-in had technical issues to overcome
 - “Some of the students were trying to engage more but they were having a problem with – you know how we do with mute: taking mute on, mute off...”
- Some students did not participate in classes to their previous extent
 - “Everyone was silent, nobody really talked that much, it was like pulling teeth at times.”
 - “Just trying to get ‘em engaged and it just seemed like they were kinda exhausted.”
 - “a large group of [students] really ever, never shared and they would have a camera on, but they were pointed at the ceiling.”
 - Students and educators felt “targeted” when they had their cameras on
- Some students did not have the materials that they needed to fully participate
 - Students did not have materials at home during remote sessions
 - Students did not bring materials into school during hybrid and in-person sessions
- It was hard for educators to see what the students did (not) understand during remote sessions
 - “I think, being in that classroom... I was able to interact with the students more, maybe to kinda see their faces or facial expressions more, their body language and see whether they were picking up on the information or what they needed, that was hard doing it virtually. In that virtual environment, you could kinda skim the room or see the bottom of the screen, but you can’t see everything, so that was a little bit more difficult for me...”
- The typical amount of time that the program was allotted pre-pandemic was cut in half for this year
 - “We were already cut down to 50 minutes as opposed to 2 hours in which we had given in the past.”
 - This made it harder to build relationships with students because “we missed a lot of that personal engagement that lets them trust us and get even more connected to us and the program...”
 - There was not enough time to accomplish everything that was desired
 - “We didn’t allot enough time between getting into the break-out rooms and then bringing things back together. Maybe the timing, I think, on some of the activities might need to be changed if it’s something that we would have to do going forward as an online, remote session.”
- The digital divide was a huge issue for students

- “Everybody doesn’t have great internet, everybody doesn’t have – even though it’s 2021 – an awesome device. Everybody – God forbid, we didn’t run into this, but just consider – if somebody’s lights were out, then oh my God, they can’t be virtual. You know, you can’t be remote and your lights are cut off.”
- Remote classes were even harder for English as a second language (ELL) students
 - “We have another [challenge] to try to overcome and just communicating at the basic levels...”
 - Inability to see visual cues was challenging for working with ELL students
 - Cultural differences needed to be overcome
 - “I work with very diverse populations and a lot of times they don’t want that other person in their environment, so a lot of times that’s why those kids will have those cameras off or that’s why they won’t want you to see them or what’s behind them and they’ll close the camera or have it towards the ceiling.”
- It was difficult for students to manage and keep track of the various platforms used for online learning
- There were breaks, but they were few and far between
 - “Sometimes they would go for about 2 hours and then they would get a break. I know with the younger groups, they would only go for about 45 minutes to an hour and then they would get a break before going to another class.”
 - Even when there were breaks, they weren’t effective
 - “you’re still in the same seat all day. Like, you don’t get a recess or have interaction with other kids...”
 - This made it difficult for students to sit still and pay attention in classes

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

- Educators encouraged students to participate
 - Classroom teachers proved essential to student participation in the mentoring program
 - Teachers encouraged students to turn on their cameras by explaining they were not trying to look at students’ environments and backgrounds but rather were trying to connect with students at a deeper level
 - To encourage students to turn on their cameras, they made up games and icebreakers that required students to turn on their cameras for shorter periods of time
 - When educators were animated and engaged, it encouraged the students to participate more fully
 - “We kinda just tried to always let ‘em know how much we appreciated their engagement and tried to get everybody to give us something and we were just very encouraging to the people who did wanna share.”
- To cope with the shorter amount of time per session, students completed pre-work

- There were also alternative activities provided for students who did not complete the pre-work
- When educators shared their own personal experiences with students, students became more engaged
- Secondary support people (tutors, mentors, etc.) talk to teachers to “translate” what students need to do
- Setting up rules for student’s participation early on
 - “it wasn’t too much begging and pleading with them, let’s get this together. They knew from day one, it was a battle we didn’t have to fight...”

Support from the District/School (Communication, guidance, resources)

- The program’s curriculum included a PowerPoint
 - Students who did not have their workbooks were still able to participate in classes
 - Educators could stay on track with what they needed to be doing when
- The program’s t-shirts allow students from various schools to connect with each other and other mentors

Community Resources (Organizations)

- Community centers organized academic pods
 - These had their own challenges, especially navigating online class platforms and keeping track of students’ inconsistent schedules

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- School restructuring of the classroom curriculum on program days would help students get the most of the program without feeling time pressure
- Restructuring timing within classes so that there is enough time for small-group discussions
- Educators be open and more supportive of student’s struggles
 - “These kids, they go through so much more than we can even imagine. So, just to be open, level with ‘em in spite of whatever the circumstances may be.”
- School restructuring of the classroom curriculum on program days would help students get the most of the program without feeling time pressure

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator (Family & Community Liaison) Focus Group

May 11, 2021 (11am-12am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Annika Doneghy, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with Family & Community Liaisons (FLC) on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants in this session work with schools and community service organizations to connect vulnerable students and families to resources through various ESCs in Ohio.

"Aha" Moments

- Mental health is a huge factor impacting learning in vulnerable student populations

Benefits

- Adaptability
 - School districts have been able to quickly adjust and fix issues related to connectivity
- Technology
 - More students now have access to technology, especially those who may not have had tablets or laptops before the pandemic
 - Remote learning allows for things to still happen and fit into people's schedules
 - Students may have a sick day but can still complete work online
 - Families can have meetings or conferences through Zoom if they are working or don't have transportation to attend in-person meetings
 - More platforms and opportunities for learning and education
 - Teachers have developed empathy for their students because they are able to see the environment and home life through a new lens
- Despite different learning models and "new normal," students are still learning, and student progress is being reported to some liaisons

Challenges

- Rural county environment
 - Liaisons and schools don't have many resources and must utilize what they do have to the best of their ability
- Job description and impact
 - Lack of clarification on what encompasses the "family liaison" role

- Some districts are reluctant to work with FLCs as they feel they are already aware of resources
- Some districts are reluctant to work with FLCs as they see it as a temporary position
- One liaison explained that they have no direct contact or communication with students or families
 - The job is to provide resources but only to and through the school based on needs the school is communicating
 - Not all schools have the same standards for fulfilling needs
- Mental health
 - COVID-19 has introduced and exacerbated several issues
 - Unknown/unreported abuse, social isolation, no home visits, substance use/abuse, lack of respite services (for example providing temporary relief for caregivers or families caring for students with disabilities)
 - Schools are better able to address issues such as connectivity or hotspots, but are unable to properly address mental health needs
 - Access to available services
 - One liaison said “telehealth treatment is worthless” because most families don’t even have access to these services
 - Many services require you to qualify, and if you don’t then you are “out of luck,” as one liaison explained
 - Waiting lists for services are too long and students suffer in the interim
 - Case managers lack the skills to provide resources and address students’ needs and mental health services lack enough workers that are skilled and qualified to actually help
 - one worker can be assigned to 45-90 cases without support
 - Mental health ER visits have risen in kids ages 5-17 (CDC fact shared by one liaison)
 - One liaison shared a personal story about their 11-year-old nephew committing suicide because he was failing school and his teacher talked openly about him failing in front of the whole class
 - Students are facing isolation both through remote and in-person learning models due to limited social interaction
 - Students are anxious because of the constant “COVID talk” they are hearing in the media, schools, and even at home
- Learning loss
 - Many students are failing
- Vulnerable student populations
 - ESL students are not having their basic needs met
 - One liaison explained that students are not able to get translators to support their learning
 - ESL students also struggle with mental health issues
 - Foster care students lack transportation

- Unaccompanied minors, for example “couch surfers,” do not want to be found, located, or contacted and families cannot be reached either
 - This issue is not exclusive to unaccompanied minors as many students are hard to locate and contact regardless of their status
 - Some students could have even moved districts, but nobody knows
- These student populations were already hard to communicate with before COVID-19 so the pandemic and remote learning has only made issues worse
- Human trafficking
 - Many of the rural counties mentioned in this session are pipelines for human trafficking throughout Ohio
 - Vulnerable student populations such as unaccompanied minors and immigrants are easy targets for trafficking
- Teacher’s preparedness (especially in dealing with vulnerable student populations)
 - Liaisons explained that teachers’ own mental health is an issue on top of having to deal with students’ mental health
 - Teachers are often in stressful situations and have little to no training on mental health, substance abuse, poverty, etc.
 - Teachers are unable to do it all on their own, and student home environments need to be (more) supportive
 - One liaison said they have teacher friends who say, “We don’t get paid enough to wear all these hats”
 - Teachers want to be teachers, they are “burnt out” and don’t want to play the role of counselor, caregiver, social worker, etc.
 - Teachers are not participating in modules to learn about resources—not interested in professional developments
 - Program grants are not being continued due to low participation of teachers this schoolyear
 - One school has had 8 teacher openings because current teachers either quit, retired early, or moved districts
 - Morale is very low, almost non-existent in many of the schools the FLCs work with
- Truancy
 - There have been over 500 meetings with parents this schoolyear about truant students through one ESC
 - COVID-19 makes it easier for students to “hide” and stay under the radar
 - One liaison explained that some students may be absent because they are truly skipping school, while others may be absent because they don’t want to log into class and show their home environments on camera
- Lack of communication
 - Overall there is poor communication between various stakeholders such as students, families, educators, family liaisons, and even community organizations and services

- Various stakeholders also lack a connection but should be trying to work together for the students' success

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parenting classes
 - One liaison mentioned truancy officers meeting with parents and holding classes which was well received
 - Could be a possible solution if done on a large scale
- Providing access to food
 - One liaison is establishing a food pantry at the ESC
 - One liaison delivers food to students' homes

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Building Better Bonds group
 - Provides resources and tips through online modules for educators and caregivers/families
 - There is low participation and completion of the modules

Community Resources (organizations)

- Job & Family Services, Children Services, Juvenile Justice
 - Help educators with vulnerable student populations
 - Provide resources to help families as well
- Learning extension centers
- Mental health community supports

Educator Perspectives: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Need to bridge family and student needs
- Professional development and training for educators
 - Mental health
 - Working with vulnerable student populations
 - Support and motivation (for each other and for students)
 - PTSD
- Focus on building (better) relationships with families and students to ensure student success
- Parents also need training, mentoring, and coaching
 - Family engagement classes/events
 - Health services and how to best help children
- Need a way to reach people who need services but may not qualify

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

May 11, 2021 (3pm-4pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Annika Doneghy, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with Family & Community Liaisons (FLC) on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants in this session work with schools and community service organizations to connect vulnerable students and families to resources through various ESCs in Ohio.

Benefits

- Technology
 - Being able to meet on Zoom (for those who have access)
 - If people have no transportation or cannot make in-person meetings for any reason
 - Bringing people together who haven't been able to meet before
 - Having remote days for inclement weather when in-person school resumes
 - New educational opportunities and enhancements have been introduced and made possible with technology

Challenges

- Specific role of liaison
 - Schools had enough resources and didn't need or want another referral, number, link, etc.
 - Schools know who to call to get resources
 - Someone needed to take this role from school staff like counselors so that they are freed up to do their specific roles
 - One liaison explained they are working more directly with families since the schools are providing resources on their own as well
- Slow process
 - Information given slowly from ODE, but liaisons were expected to be able to provide services immediately
- Rural environment
 - Some families are not eligible for basic help but still need assistance, especially with COVID-19 impact on employment
 - Poverty levels are high for most students and families
 - Not all schools have available resources and limited funds

- Getting schools to trust liaisons in their role
 - Some schools think they're just another "roadblock" for families but really, they are put in place to help
- Vulnerable student populations
 - Liaisons focus on the highest needs in each population
 - Learning/academic gap even larger than normal due to COVID-19
 - Students with disabilities are struggling regardless of learning model
 - Zoom IEP meetings are not helpful
- "Problems"
 - No tangible solution but people know what needs to be done
 - In regard to bettering the overall experience for vulnerable students and families
 - Need to just plan and tackle issue to create solutions
 - Lack of time
- Family engagement and community support needs to be fostered
 - Making vulnerable student populations part of the conversation so communities can be made aware that these students need resources
- Student attendance, participation, engagement, and motivation
 - Trying to keep track of remote learners is difficult
 - Need to create a plan to close gaps students are facing
 - Truancy and juvenile justice system are playing a larger role than before
- School vs. family accountability
 - Where do you draw the line between who is responsible for student behavior?
- Mental health
 - Issue for students, teachers, and families
 - Concern regardless of learning model, but especially with the transition back to in-person learning at full-time
 - Classroom management and expectations need to be addressed
 - Increase in anxiety
 - Trauma and upsetting/confusing events
- Workload for teachers
 - Having to be teachers 24-hours a day now rather than being able to leave school and go home and just be a parent or a spouse
- Social issues
 - Family problems such as domestic violence, substance use/abuse, unsafe living conditions are prevalent
 - Hunger needs such as accessing food banks, lack of food banks, students coming to school needing breakfast etc.

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Applying for grants for money to provide services
- Family engagement
- Bridging learning gap

- Identifying gaps and making plans, connections, and solutions
- Staying resilient and positive
- Listening to needs and experiences of others
- Navigating the “new normal” together

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Counselors, JFS, liaisons
- Providing funding for families in need
- Chromebooks
- District emails for students
 - School able to stay in touch with them
 - Helpful for students who are present and want to learn
 - Resources are provided and put in place

Community Resources (organizations)

- Collaboration between stakeholders is needed
 - Non-profits, schools, families, community members all need to work together
 - Online platform to keep track of who needs help to accelerate the process
 - Under discussion at one ESC
- United Way provides resources

Educator Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Applying for grants
- More communication and connection between schools and liaisons
 - Collaboration between stakeholders
- Services for teachers and students to improve mental health

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator Focus Group

May 12, 2021 (4pm-5pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Jonah Lewis, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with educators on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Listening Session includes the perspective of educators from a rural district.

"Aha" Moments

- District operated completely in-person for the school year with 1500 students in one building
 - No severe COVID outbreaks due to strict COVID-19 protocol compliance
- Important for school district to remain fully in-person to provide the community children direct resources such as hot meals

Benefits

- Administrator felt the school district operated closely to any typical school year
- New resources and strategies such as mental health resources and parent-faculty communication strategies were discovered this school year and will continue to be used post-pandemic
- Remaining fully in-person allowed students the opportunity to still have in-person events such as graduation and prom, in addition to sports and clubs with limited disruptions

Challenges

- Some push-back from families on protocols necessary for in-person schooling, specifically mask requirement policies
- General uncertainty on whether the school could remain open with staff and faculty needing to quarantine, get tested, etc.

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Zoom meetings with families and community to better communicate updates
- Adherence to protocols that allow them to stay in person, in addition to outfitting their building with measures to reduce potential exposure (sanitization stations in hallways, bipolar ionization units)

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- District did not support remote learning and would refer families to other online education services
- Zoom communications

Community Resources (organizations)

- Community hospital and health foundation assisted in contact tracing and helping the school district be COVID-19 compliant

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Educator, Student, Parent Focus Group

May 17, 2021 (5:30pm-6:30pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitators

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with teachers on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants in this mixed stakeholder session are educators, students, and parents in a rural Ohio school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Hybrid is more difficult than having either all students in-person or all students remote
- Hotspots did not fix connectivity issues
- Educators remarked that it felt like they did not make real progress in student learning goals for the school year
- Participants expressed feeling that the school year was a constant uphill battle of trying to find the right balances and solutions to problems
 - "It was a constant, 'Okay, here's the scenario, what do we do, how do we fix?'"
- Although students were still learning, classes were not up to the standards that the teachers typically strive for
 - "it is manageable... [but] I don't think it's authentic learning."

Benefits

- Remote allowed some students to self-motivate
- There was growth in English testing scores between fall and December tests
- Teachers have learned more tools for teaching
- Remote capabilities allow everyone to meet with each other and people they would not ordinarily get to meet with more easily
 - "there's actually better communication between parents and staff..."
 - "parents find the Zooms a lot easier because then they don't have to take off work and don't have to do this and drive and pick up kids."
- Technology use in the classroom has given students new methods of interacting with the material

Challenges

- The hybrid model made it difficult for teachers to keep track of what they taught each group of students and for students to stay organized for their learning
- Internet connectivity issues.

- “even with hotspots we had students with issues connecting, staying connected, or you’d get the kind of frozen screen and every now and then they’d come on like robots...”
- It was difficult to hold students accountable to show up to classes and to complete their assignments
- Students felt that they did not learn much during class time and that they did not have time to complete assignments with teacher feedback
 - “we would have 30-minute classes, but it would take like, 10 minutes for attendance and then you’d only have 20 minutes left and by the time that they finished giving you the lecture, you’d have less than 10 minutes left. And then, for us, we only had 5 minutes in between class, so we didn’t have that much time to do the work that we were given.”
 - “I felt like I had time to get stuff done, just not as best as I could.”
- There were questions of legality regarding video recording classes
- When the school district was fully hybrid, there was not a specific time for teachers to check in with their remote students
 - “I felt really bad for the education remote students were getting the first semester because unless they were self-motivated and great kids, but not everybody is like that...”
- Students faced learning challenges as well as mental health challenges
- Students and teachers alike feel that remote learning is not engaging or interactive

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Balancing student accountability for school with any responsibilities they may have had at home
 - “try to hold them accountable but also understand that the families were going through a lot as well.”
 - Providing students with videos to watch rather than forcing them to attend live classes allowed them more flexibility
 - “It might not have been [done] right during my window of time, but they would... catch up and do that.”
- Students overcame lack of time by finding other time slots to get things done and/or multitasked
 - “I would try to work on [assignments] in classes that we wouldn’t have Zooms and if were given videos, I would try to have that playing in the background as I did other work.”
- Adding more Social Emotional Learning (SEL) components to classes
- Expanded professional development allowed teachers to get a better understanding of how to teach remotely
 - Allowed for a deep dive into Google Classroom
- During hybrid learning, providing teachers with microphones enabled them to walk around and engage with their classes more

Community Resources (organizations)

- One teacher discussed engaging with the WhyTry ministries for SEL training

Educator, Student, Parent Perspectives: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Continuing to add SEL components to classes
- Teachers relying on each other for help and support in technology, etc.
- Expanding professional development to what teachers really need help with
- Continued use of technology in the classroom could help to make sure that teachers and students do not get stuck in ruts
- Continuing the use of virtual meetings will continue open communication between parents and teachers

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

February 22, 2021 (2pm-3pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Cailynn Fox, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session attend middle school in urban and suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Student adaptations
 - One student regularly uses social media to post questions about school work and specific math problems to ask peers for help
 - Noted high engagement from peers
 - Students feel they are adapting to online platforms and their teachers' virtual work processes and feel more confident this semester in their work
- Education moving forward
 - Students want to see the continued use of technology after the return to in-person classes
 - Students expressed great growth in their technical skills while adapting to remote learning
 - Students would like to see breaks between in-person classes to allow for time to do homework, regroup, and restore energy
 - Students would like to see the continued use of online platforms like Microsoft Teams to allow for collaboration after school hours
 - All students expressed that they would like to regularly engage with ODE via surveys where they can quickly share their experiences and feedback
 - One student would like to participate in annual student focus groups to hear other students' experiences and strategies

Benefits

- Student growth in self-reliance and independent work skillsets
 - Students noted having more freedom and flexibility with school schedule as a great benefit
 - Students enjoy having more independent time to complete schoolwork

Challenges in remote learning

- Students noted experiencing virtual learning fatigue
 - Students feel as though they are never away from school
 - Minimal, short breaks in-between virtual classes
- All students noted one of their biggest challenges is lack of social interaction and missing their friends
 - All students express the desire to resume in-person instruction
- Students report experiencing more stress due to higher workloads and teachers having higher expectations for the quality of the work the second semester of the school year
- Connectivity and technical issues
 - Issues with submitting assignments on online platforms
 - Teacher connectivity issues
 - Students expressed frustration with teacher connectivity issues because it takes too much time for the class to get back on track with the lesson due to teachers' lack of understanding the technology
 - Student experience connectivity issues

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Students have established their own cutoff times for finishing schoolwork in the late afternoon
 - Implemented mental health breaks after school hours to help recharge by engaging in personal hobbies like reading, videogames, art, etc.
 - All students continue to participate in extracurricular activities

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Students reported there are not regular scheduled check-ins or interventions with school counselors and specialists
 - Students indicated that the responsibility is on them to check-in if they feel it is necessary and noted that they know how to request a meeting with their school counselor(s)

Recommended Resources and Supports

- Students expressed that they feel sufficiently supported

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

March 15, 2021 (8:30am-9:15am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session are seniors in a suburban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Students felt unheard by school administrators and guidance counselors and like they have been left behind
- Student challenges during asynchronous remote learning periods and synchronous remote learning
 - Difficult to get additional help from teachers
 - Students experienced extreme lack of motivation
 - Students experienced difficulty with time management due to work overload and difficulty balancing school, employment, and home obligations

Benefits

- Remote education allows students to build self-reliant and independent skillsets they will need in college
- Remote education at the end of last school year (2019-2020) was less structured and allowed students flexibility when completing assignments and class work

Challenges

- Relaxed home environment made it difficult to get motivated to do work and to concentrate on classes and homework
- Harder to learn without in-person demonstration and the ability to easily ask teachers questions during work time or in between classes
- Students felt that teachers disregarded their needs
 - Lectured to the end of the class time instead of giving time for working and asking questions
- Flexibility enabled procrastination
- Lack of teacher support and time to ask questions lead some students to feel tempted to cheat
- Students felt that work was "piled on" them

- Teachers do not expect that they have any additional work for their other classes or to do outside of school (at home or at a job)
- Teachers do not support their lives outside of school (e.g. ignoring the additional responsibilities many students had at home, for extracurriculars, and at work)
- Expectations increased this year
 - Students felt that teachers believe they are used to remote learning and do not give them enough flexibility in work quality and load

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Working outside of the bedroom at the dining table or another similar space
- Emailing teachers for explanations does not give the same benefit as having a chance to talk to them in person/during class because it is harder to explain a concept over an email
 - Calling teachers after class works a bit better but is inconvenient
- One student cited that they moved their work shift to become a “closer” so that their job would not interfere with class meetings
 - This led to additional problems (e.g. staying up later to finish homework after closing at work, not getting enough sleep, etc.)

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Students felt that the guidance counselor was not offering enough support
- Students were upset to lose the activities they are supposed to have during senior year (prom, senior dinner, going to sporting events)
 - Sporting events were only offered for students who could finesse a ticket from friends
 - Homecoming was planned in a rush
 - No prom last year or this year
 - Senior dinner was changed to a picnic
 - Students have not been able to give their feedback on how they want these events and activities to look
- Students felt the administration was favoring the younger grades over the seniors in how classes were structured and the support given

Community Resources and Supports

- Lack of support and empathy from overall community while students mourn the loss of their senior year activities (prom, homecoming, senior dinner, etc.)
 - Feel that students from class of 2020 had it better because they did not miss as much and got a lot of support from the community and world for their loss
 - Feel that students in the class of 2021 have not been given the same generosity as the class of 2020 and have been told to “suck it up”

- Students feel that people expect them to be fine since they have classes in person (for the most part) and because the online experience has already been “figured out” by schools
- Lack of support from colleges during application process
 - Students are worried about picking out colleges without getting the opportunity to visit them in person
 - Tuition is back to normal, any tuition breaks offered last year are no longer available
 - Students are supported by shift to tests being optional and scholarship availability

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Utilizing breakout rooms more would allow students to talk through their problems with each other
- Building in time for students to ask questions at the end of classes would minimize some of the additional burden during remote learning
- Adjusting work load so that not all classes have due dates at the same time

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

March 15th, 2021 (9:20am-10:30am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Haruko Tanaka, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session are high school juniors in suburban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Student success and engagement in remote learning is affected by students' learning styles
 - Some students enjoy online learning where they can learn and complete tasks at an expedited pace
 - Some students had trouble focusing, retaining motivation and completing coursework during online classes
- No social opportunities were given online, so some students wanted in-person classes to be with friends and avoid boredom at home

Benefits

- Students have more freedom with their time, such as attaining more sleep or engaging in extracurricular activities
- Independent learners flourish from self-paced education because they do not need extensive teacher interaction
- High school students improved their communication skills with teachers since their only way of communicating with them was through email
- Some students are more motivated to get their homework done with online schools, to "get it over with"

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Students struggle with time management, motivation, focus and accountability to retain information when classes are online
 - Some students find it harder to learn without a teacher in front of them to answer immediate questions, which resulted in students resorting to teaching themselves

- There is a lack of motivation to complete homework when in person but a shift in the lack of motivation to completing coursework when classes are online
- Students said it seemed like teachers gave a lot of additional work online
- waiting for teachers to email back
- Teacher's attention is more focused on the in-person students rather than an online student, resulting in a disadvantage to those students who chose online learning
- Some schools require that forms, attaining a book, and returning documents are in person during the school day
- Student perspective on educator challenges
 - Difficult to accommodate both in person and online students because not all students are in one mode of instruction
 - Difficult to get to know students on a personal level to understand their way of learning

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Classmates utilize text messaging and social media to communicate with each other about homework and classwork
- Students enhance their email communication skills with teachers
- Cut out "unnecessary" classes such as study halls to make shorten school days more efficient
- Offering only required electives
- NHS induction was online to retain extracurriculars for students
- Teachers assign groups together for projects based on their mode of instruction or existing friend groups to minimize additional contact

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Guidance counselors are reaching out to juniors via email for graduation/post-diploma plans

Community Resources (organizations)

- A new community and school funded recreation center now operates as a community gym, library, track, COVID testing site, sports camps, prom venue, and a STEM school

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- School provided all students with computers, but did not address connectivity issues

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

March 18, 2021 (4pm-5pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session are in high school in a suburban Ohio school district.

Benefits

- Hybrid learning model
 - One student likes the hybrid model because you are in school every other day which allows for both talking to teachers in person and free days to get homework finished
 - Provides more time than usual to get homework and assignments completed
- Virtual Learning Program (VLP) model
 - One student noted that although they did not like the VLP, it could be good to have little teacher involvement, allowing for student independence
 - Another student takes orchestra and likes the online method; it worked well
 - Teachers from the district could opt for VLP as well, and students found that this model allowed for quick and easy communication with teachers
 - One student said they could always email teachers and get quick responses
- College credit courses
 - One student was taking college classes (virtually) and participating in the VLP
 - Student liked that they were self-guided and self-scheduled for their schoolwork
 - Synchronous classes were the most helpful
- More time for other things
 - One student, who is a senior, found that virtual learning created a less “blocked out” day
 - Able to apply for college and balance schoolwork
- No paper
 - While this did have challenges as well, many students liked being 100% digital
 - Not having to keep track of assignments and work on paper helped students be more organized and responsible
 - One student would like to see all schools completely digital as a permanent method, regardless of the learning models being used

Challenges

- Hybrid learning model
 - Although this model had its benefits, students also said it could be confusing
 - School blocked out certain days for certain students to come in-person for certain classes
 - One student said it was hard to figure out what assignments were due on what dates
 - Lack of direct instruction and time for asking questions
 - Not much teaching involved
 - Students explained that teachers are not available when they say they will be
 - Even though students get in-person days for teacher interaction, these teachers are still teaching class on days when the students are at home, which limits the time to ask questions and get help
 - One student said this method is “quite lacking”
 - Learning gaps
 - At home days/homework days are useful but nearly impossible to get timely teacher help with assignments
- Virtual Learning Program (VLP) model
 - Students also found challenges in this model despite its benefits
 - One student said this was a “horrible mistake” and a “terrible learning platform”
 - VLP curriculum is entirely self-taught and then they are tested immediately after learning a section
 - Platform is very repetitive and monotonous
 - A lot of testing
 - Tests are only 5 or 10 questions and student explained that missing 1 or 2 questions on each test can drastically lower your grade and consequently your GPA
 - Student expressed a lot of stress
 - The lack of teacher involvement is a challenge as well
 - Student explained that even though VLP gives students independence, it can be hard to truly learn and be engaged without constant teacher interaction
 - Meeting with teachers only happens once a week and this is the only time for true engagement
 - One student said this is difficult because students want to ask questions after learning a section before having to be tested
 - True interaction with teachers can only take place in-person in the school building
 - Balance

- Students expressed busy schedules occupied by either school, extracurriculars, or other activities
- Even though students were used to heavy loads before the pandemic, the school load has drastically increased
 - Students said that teachers are giving more work in order to compensate for lost time
- One student said they have no free time
- Collaborative classes
 - One student explained their struggle with math classes
 - Jumping from in-person to remote and hybrid models changed classes from collaborative and interactive to individual
 - Student was able to succeed by using peer help and collaboration when in-person, but in remote learning they are “on their own” and have to figure things out the best way they can
- Organization/Focus
 - One student said it is hard to keep up with their assignments and the different methods and platforms teachers use to teach and assign work
 - Another student explained that their home/room environments can be distracting and it’s much easier to focus in school
- No paper
 - This benefit came with challenges as well
 - Students explained that their school provides iPads for incoming freshman, but every student participating in this session was in a higher grade and did not receive iPads
 - Students explained that school should’ve “grandfathered” current students into the iPad program so every student can have one
 - Students did say school provided Chromebooks for older students, but lesson plans and school platforms are iPad adapted, which makes Chromebook learning difficult
- Structure
 - Students find things to be a lot less structured than normal
 - One student explained how office hours are set up differently now and there’s less time to ask for extra help and get meaningful guidance from teachers
 - Another student explained how VLP is self-taught and students are left to take notes and figure out work in their own methods

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Use a calendar or planner
 - One student started using a calendar to keep track of their assignments which was very helpful

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Extracurricular activities
 - School allowed for sports teams to continue to be active
 - Other activities and events have been adapted to virtual methods
 - One student participated in debate team and was able to meet and compete with students from all over Ohio since the virtual method allowed for a greater range of participation
 - One student said this was not the ideal school year, especially being a senior, but having extracurricular activities has helped
- Universalized online platform
 - School uses “Schoology” platform
 - Students said it’s easier to manage classes since they are all accessible on one platform
 - More efficient
 - One student noted that school has always used this platform but it’s used more consistently now due to the pandemic
- AP Classroom resource
 - One student said this helps with organization and time management

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Provide structure
 - One student suggested that teachers provided structured notes to accompany virtual lecture/learning videos so students can be guided through the material they should be learning
- iPads for every student
- Parents
 - One student explained how their parents have been a great resource when it comes to getting help with assignments
- Peer collaboration
 - One student said being able to interact with other students is helpful because they are more comfortable asking peers for help than teachers
- Online learning supports
 - Students really like Kahn Academy as a helpful resource to learn and master topics

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

March 24, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session are high school juniors and seniors in suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Students liked learning in the hybrid model

Benefits

- Hybrid learning model
 - Allows for remote and in-person learning days
 - Students really like this model for several reasons
 - Still allows for COVID-19 safety
 - Fun seeing teachers and classmates and being able to get out of the house
 - Organization of classes is split into different student groups which makes learning easier
 - Easier to be accountable and on top of schoolwork
 - One student said they can work to their full potential
 - It is easier to concentrate and improve grades
 - Students can check-in with teachers in-person and get help if needed
 - Easier to build relationships with teachers; one-on-one opportunities
 - One student said the hybrid model makes high school a new experience; rather than seeing everyone 5 days a week and having "drama" or getting annoyed with peers it's nicer to have remote days and school is more enjoyable
 - One student said having a bit of normalcy again is nice and reduces stress
- Internships and mentor programs
 - Students were involved in programs where they were able to shadow teachers (because they are interested in becoming teachers themselves)
 - Regardless of remote or in-person learning, students found these experiences to be very helpful and eye-opening

- One student said it was nice to see how other schools were handling the COVID-19 pandemic, especially for younger-age students
- Another student explained how it was interesting to see the both the teacher and student perspective in the classroom setting

Challenges

- Remote learning days
 - Hard to focus, especially if students have siblings and parents also at home for school and work
 - One student said the environment is loud and distracting because they have a full-house with younger siblings and a parent working from home
 - Connectivity and Wi-Fi are also issues while having a full-house working remotely
 - Too many devices slow internet service
 - Transitioning from remote to in-person learning days
 - One student explained that these abrupt and inconsistent changes can be hard for some students
 - For example, remote grading scales were pass or fail but in-person grading scales are regular A-F scales, which can be hard to adjust to
 - Another example is that more work is assigned and expected to be finished by certain deadlines in-person than remote
 - Lack of a regular schedule
- Communication
 - One student explained how participating in theater was hard because it was online and scheduling was difficult
 - Teachers had their own busy schedules and were not always reachable or quick to respond to emails, making it hard for students who needed answers or help for a deadline
- Time management
 - Students participated in extracurriculars, had household responsibilities, jobs, and were applying to college
 - One student explained that the college process was especially hard
 - Normally in-person meetings were held, and students had a timeline for applying, but this changed with COVID-19 and students had to rely more on themselves and their peers rather than their teachers and counselors
 - One student said balancing school and other activities was definitely a struggle
- Different teaching methods
 - One student explained that teachers vary in how they teach

- Some may lecture the whole time, some may take attendance then end class, and others lecture for half the class and allow students to work the other half (this method is preferred by students)
- Different methods can make it hard for students to stay engaged, pay attention, and complete work on time

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Extracurricular activities
 - Students explained that being involved in sports or other activities helped them take a break from academic stress and provide opportunities to connect with peers
 - Even if extracurriculars were adapted to be virtual it was still fun
 - For example, one theater student said they held an online show and a “parking lot” show

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Virtual events
 - Trying to keep students as involved as possible
 - Also trying to keep the school year as normal as possible
 - Talent show, poetry slam, prom, district wide-fundraiser

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Online office hours
 - Even for in-person learning, virtual office hours allow for students to get extra help outside of the classroom
- Engagement
 - Students explained that when teachers allow for breaks to get up and move around it is easier to stay focused
 - One student said teachers will check-in with students to make sure they are understanding everything which is helpful
 - Allowing for virtual breakout rooms for student collaboration

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 8, 2021 (1pm-1:30pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Cailynn Fox, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted an onsite focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Session participants are middle school students in a rural Ohio region in Appalachia.

"Aha" Moments

- Students have the option on any day to attend school online or in-person
 - Most of the participants would like to see this option discontinued in the future
 - "Everyone has the option that you can be virtual or in-person, that's not always the best thing because some kids just don't show up. Just, if there's a test they'll be like 'Oh, we're not going to show up, we're going to go virtual' because they don't structure you when you're virtual"
 - Some students choose online learning on test days because it is easy to cheat on the tests this way
 - These students' grades are improving because it is easy to receive a 100% on a test through cheating
 - Usually half the regular number of students attend in-person on test days
 - Some teachers seem to not be concerned about students cheating on tests virtually
 - Some students choose to not show up to certain classes that they don't like or to avoid submitting assignments and participate in group presentations

Benefits

- Students are still able to participate in extracurricular activities
- Receiving social aspect in-person
- The option for in-person or virtual learning on any given day is helpful for reasons such as appointments
- Students have can take elective classes such as art or Spanish
- Remote learning periods provided opportunities to explore their interests
 - Multiple students reported having more time to work on family farms and with their animals, which they found enjoyable and had a positive impact on their families
 - More time to explore options for future careers (interests and dislikes)
 - One student 3-D printed masks for local hospitals

Challenges

- Connectivity Issues
 - Students had to go to family members or friend's houses for a functioning internet connection
- During times of full-remote learning, little information was provided and it was hard to learn without a teacher
 - One student's schoolwork was sent by mail and arrived a week late
- Usually have to solve problems by themselves
 - Students noted this allowed them to gain problem-solving skills by being forced to find solutions on their own
- It is common to be less efficient while doing virtual learning
 - Distractions or lack of social interaction seem to be main contributors to this lack of efficiency
- Social aspect of life is missing during remote learning
 - Difficult to communicate with peers, with exception of group projects
 - Sometimes students in the group didn't show up
 - Only communication via email
- Limited non-athletic based extracurricular activities through the school due to Covid-19 protocols
 - The only extracurricular activities provided by school are choir and band
- Noted challenges for older siblings' (seniors in high school)
 - Struggling with limited capacity, socially distanced high school graduation
 - Restrictive college tour process
- Options for the eighth graders preparing for high school courses are limited, such as health class

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Eating during class to help stay focused
- Breaks were permitted by teachers to be on phones for in-school days
 - Only break for virtual school days is lunch, but the day is usually shortened by about two hours
- Social media and email to contact other students for help
- This group of students regularly opt in for in-person learning to help with focus and socialization with other students

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Chromebooks provided by the school
 - Google Meet used as online classroom tool
 - Teachers do not require video cameras to be turned on if student's internet connection is poor
 - Teachers live stream in the classroom for students who choose virtual learning each day

Community Resources (organizations)

- This school has a large participation in FFA, and all students are required to take agriculture classes, which have not been restricted due to Covid-19 compliance
 - Students view this as a great outlet

Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- These students would like to do more focus groups in the future
 - “It feels more open, and we can express ourselves”

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 12, 2021 (6pm-7pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Annika Doneghy, Facilitator

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. The student participating in this session is a high school senior in a suburban school district.

Benefits

- Being able to complete work at your own pace
 - Student explained they are a fast learner so being in-person at school required them to wait on other students to finish work before moving on
 - Remote learning allows student to complete work at their own pace and complete more assignments in a shorter time period
- Better teacher communication
 - Remote learning has caused teachers to communicate more with each other and with students in order to understand and learn from each other
- Adaptability
 - Student noticed that teachers are more open to change and willing to work with students on things such as due dates because this mode of learning is new for everyone and they are all starting from the same point
 - Teachers able to learn from students what is or isn't working and can quickly adapt rather than getting stuck in one teaching method and never changing

Challenges

- Scheduling and time management
 - Student finds having weekly due dates more challenging than the daily due dates they were accustomed to with in-person school
 - It can be too easy to procrastinate and wait until the end of the week to do the whole weeks' worth of work
- Not seeing friends and classmates
 - Student misses friends and misses having the opportunity for in-person collaboration and conversation with peers
- Work/school/life balance
 - Student explained that being a high school senior has made it especially hard to balance everything because they are focused on applying to college while maintaining their schoolwork and extracurriculars
- Teacher consistency

- Student said they believe some of their teachers do not have great communication among each other in regard to workloads for students
 - It is hard to keep up with assignments from every teacher, and teachers are not coordinating with each other when and how many assignments they are giving to students with the same deadlines

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Designated “school space” at home
 - Student realized that having a space at home specifically for schoolwork helped them be more successful and focused
 - Doing work in your room or on your bed can be distracting
- Time management
 - Creating to-do lists, check lists, and work schedules to get work finished on time and to keep track of assignments
 - Using all time effectively
 - Student said without in-person classes there is no structure or discipline, so creating your own structure is very important
- Staying organized and being responsible

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Non-educational Zoom hours
 - Student explained that some teachers would hold open Zoom calls for students to join (only if they want) to check-in and talk with teachers and peers
 - Way to stay connected to everyone and get a break from all the educational Zoom calls
- Virtual events
 - Ex: Relay for Life held virtually since it could not be held in-person

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- ODE (or any other organization) having open comment/concern “boxes”
 - Student suggested using something like Google Forms to allow for open-ended comments, questions, concerns, and suggestions to be made
 - Student said they think other students may not want to complete surveys because they fear it would take too long, but something that allows for a quick open-ended response would be helpful

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 23, 2021 (1:15pm-2:15pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Enzo Zaccardelli, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. The participants of this focus group were high school students from a rural school in Ohio. They discussed how the pandemic has affected their education, extracurricular activities, and future college plans.

"Aha" Moments

- Students noted that their learning this year has not been affected, but extracurricular activities have been altered by the pandemic
 - School is in-person with some students opting to be remote (Florida Virtual Academy)
 - Same class sizes and general curriculum
- The pandemic has affected their future college plans
 - Difficulty visiting and selecting colleges due to COVID-19 restrictions
 - Students have lost scholarships due to budget cuts, prompting them to reconsider their future education and career opportunities
 - Some students are considering if they should still go, defer, or take up a trade instead
- School is in a low- income rural area where in-person classes are important due to free meals and lack of connectivity

Benefits

- Learning has been improved since last spring (March 2020) students were online
 - School work during quarantine was mostly reviewing previous material
 - Students acknowledged challenges that teachers faced in adjusting the curriculum within a week's notice

Challenges

- Limited extracurricular activities outside school lowers student morale
 - Many events and trips cancelled; others forced to be online
 - Much smaller crowds for sporting events
 - Lack of club activities and limited sports recruitment
- The online learning platform (Florida Virtual Academy)

- Classmates say it's harder than in-person schooling
- One student says 25% of students do not have Wi-fi and others have unreliable connection
- Little to no teacher interaction
- Attendance
 - Students state it is harder to go to school due to COVID-19 related factors
 - Some students forced to quarantine multiple times in a row, making it hard to catch up
- Impact on graduation and college
 - Students will have a limited number of guests at graduation
 - Issues visiting colleges due to the pandemic
 - Some colleges will not offer tours in-person
 - Others offer limited tours for a set number of prospective students
 - Scheduling meetings and interviews are difficult because of unpredictable schedules due to the pandemic and its effects on their lives
 - Some students have lost scholarships to go to college due to budget cuts from COVID-19
 - Two consider either deferring or not going to college
 - Others will have to pay more out of pocket
 - Contemplating going to college if classes will still be remote while at full priced tuition

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School provides free lunches in person
- School also dropped food off for students who still needed free lunches but were remote

Community Resources (organizations)

- Christian Center church served as pick-up center for meals
- Community Action helps provide free meals and activities in the summer

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Focus Group Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 23, 2021 (1:15pm-2:15pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Madeline McDaniel, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students participating in this session were middle school students from a rural, southern Ohio school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Students do more work on their Chromebooks and seem to enjoy using them for new aspects such as taking tests
- Teachers gave students options on assignments and projects
 - Called it the tic-tac-toe because they had to complete three assignments
 - Not all teachers graded their assignments, so some students chose not to do them
- In order to achieve a more normal middle-school year the school created reward days in response to cancelling middle school dances
 - Students must reach certain requirements to earn rewards
- The students expressed more need for group projects and collaborative work opportunities

Benefits

- Tests were easier on Chromebook
- Able to choose assignments from the tic-tac-toe which included a large variety of options
 - Most projects were fun and interesting

Challenges

- Connectivity issues
 - Many students have had trouble with connectivity issues
 - Students in town have stronger internet connectivity than their peers living in the country
- Math became particularly difficult for one student this past year
- Students struggled to adjust to online learning and the disruption of their traditional schedule
 - Students expressed that they had to stay up later at night to complete work
 - Disrupted sleep schedule
 - Struggled with time management

- During online learning it was sometimes difficult to understand homework assignments
- In-class communication is difficult with the Covid-19 protocols in place (i.e. masks and social distancing)
 - Students with softer voices find it especially challenging
- Lack of group projects
- Lack of one-on-one opportunities with teachers
- No dances or high school orientation

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Teachers made themselves available to answer emails for their students
- The school has provided routers and hotspots for students with connectivity issues
- The school provided Chromebooks
- Teachers seemed to do a good job of keeping in touch with students who were in quarantine
- Teachers create time for collaboration with a 15-minute time limit
- The school created reward days
 - Rewards included watching a movie in the afternoon

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School provided Chromebooks and hotspots to students in need

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 26, 2021 (9am-9:30 am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Naa Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Listening Session participants are high school students from a rural Ohio region.

"Aha" Moments

- Students are grateful to have the opportunity to be able to participate in athletics while being COVID-19 compliant
 - Athletic programs are being more favored by the district than music and art programs
- Some students liked having the option of being fully remote due to the self-paced nature of the learning model

Benefits

- Having school online made AP classes easier
- Now that school activities are outside many students can be socially distanced but also be in groups they enjoy participating in
- Students are learning how to become more independent and voice their concerns to their teachers
- Scheduled days off for students allows them time to rest and relax
 - Remote education gave students a chance to explore hobbies they never had the chance to explore

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Not having in-person connection with teachers to prepare for the ACT/SAT
 - Difficult to go from learning everything at home and transitioning to taking assessments in-person
 - Missing college prep opportunities, help with filling out college applications, navigating college admissions process, difficulty with visiting college campuses, etc.
 - Time management was difficult when teachers did not have structure
 - Some students are facing a lot more mental health issues with the disjointedness of the school year

- Inconsistent access to educator input caused anxiety and stress
- The online learning platforms
 - Hard to learn and focus when in music and art classes
 - Teachers are teaching subjects that they do not normally teach
- COVID-19 restrictions were higher for students in Music department than students who were in the Athletic program which caused tension between the groups
 - Athletic programs were favored over music programs

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Students feel their teachers have done a good job communicating with students; consistent email correspondence
- School instituted Baron Time partway through the school year for students to connect with teachers and peers
 - Students viewed videos followed by discussions led by the teachers
 - Perception that it “checks a box” and doesn’t always help those students who need it

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Students who are not doing well in school need more teachers to reach out and ask them about their mental health issues caused by anxiety and stress
- Counselors could reach out to more students by email or Zoom

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

April 26, 2021 (9am-10am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Session participants are middle-school students in a rural area.

"Aha" Moments

- Students felt like they were "powering through" more than actually excelling
- Students appreciated having the opportunity to give their feedback to ODE
- Students felt more mature due to the added responsibilities of going to school during a pandemic
 - Students felt this could be capitalized on by providing more real-life experience classes

Benefits

- There was more leeway for assignments to be turned in
 - Teachers were more lenient with due dates and some grading
- Sports were still able to take place, but they weren't able to do them in the same capacity as before
- Students liked the smaller class sizes they had during the hybrid model
 - You could ask more questions and had more one-on-one opportunities with the teacher
- Student council has more real-world responsibilities – "I feel like an actual person that matters"
- Students enjoyed going outside for hands-on experiments and experiences
- Students learned how to write scholarly emails in order to communicate with their teachers

Challenges

- It was hard to keep track of everything that needed to get done and stay focused during remote instruction
 - The leniency with due dates made it even more difficult to get things done in a timely manner

- One student remarked that it was even more difficult to do this when quarantined
 - “I had a lot of missing assignments ‘cuz I wish I was at school so I could be there, see the teacher talking and explain things but I had to just base it off my Schoology.”
- Grades fell for all session participants when attending school in the hybrid model
- It was hard to juggle home and school responsibilities when studying remotely
- After returning to in-person classes, it was difficult to adjust to walking through the school the correct way and wearing facemasks everywhere (being covid compliant)
- Students did not like having to schedule everything around Zoom meetings
- Students remarked that it was annoying to have to plan out lunches – e.g. who would sit with whom, etc.

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

- It was easier to keep track of everything due when teachers would make detailed posts on Schoology
- Contacting teachers via email was helpful for students when studying remotely, especially when quarantining
- Contacting peers could help students get information from a student point of view when they were quarantining
- Using a calendar for tracking assignments and due dates
- FaceTime with friends and making the most of weekends allowed students to feel like they had somewhat of a social life
- Taking breaks allowed students to feel like they were doing more than homework

Support from the District/School (Communication, guidance, resources)

- The school’s focus on hygiene has made students feel like their overall health is better

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

May 1, 2021 (10am-11am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Naa Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Students who participated are in urban high schools.

"Aha" Moments

- School district continued to hold extracurricular clubs, such as a cooking club, virtually via Zoom
- Connectivity
 - The school provides computers and hot spots for every student
- Classes were shortened during periods of remote learning from 90 minutes to 40 minutes

Benefits

- Having more family time
 - One student was able to travel to another country to stay with family for several months
 - Another student was able to go on a road trip with family members
- Students felt they were more engaged remotely via Zoom than in person
 - Some activities were more engaging virtually
- Students had more flexibility
- Students reported their teachers were more flexible and understanding
- Some students felt they became more independent learners

Challenges

- Difficult to learn and retain information for tests
 - Several students reported that their grades were slipping
 - One shared that she is "doesn't feel prepared to the standardized tests"
- Students felt they were given too much classwork
- Difficult to learn at home due to distractions and little guidance
 - Several students shared that there were too many distractions at home and it was difficult to find a quiet place to do schoolwork
- Students felt like they had to teach themselves the material

- Many thought their teachers could make the material more engaging and interactive
- Disruption of schedule
 - Sleeping schedule got “messed up” due to students attending class while still in bed
- Online learning platforms made assignments unclear
- Students were unable to get to know their classmates
 - Many of the participants in this session started high school in fall 2020

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Some students were able to attend classes in neighborhood learning pods
- Schools provided several weeks’ worth of food for students and families to pick up
- Some school had “Advisory Day” where student had opportunities to participate in virtual activities with classmates

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Students found the recorded lessons to be very helpful
- Teachers were more flexible

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Students need more opportunities to interact with each other socially and intellectually
- Teachers being more continuing to be more understanding
- Allow students to have more breaks for themselves during the school day

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Student Focus Group

May 8, 2021 (10am-11am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Naa Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with students on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Participants are high school students in an urban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- One student was still able to make new friends during periods of remote learning because students were forced to lean on their peers for help more than they would with traditional, in-person instruction
- High school juniors are struggling with the process of choosing a college without traditional, in-person college visits
 - Virtual campus tours are not as informative and effective as in-person tours
 - Pictures online for colleges are not the same as seeing it in person
- One student who remains fully remote feels that teachers are giving more attention to in-person students
- Not having extracurricular activities and traditional athletic offerings and schedules has hurt students trying to earn scholarships

Benefits

- Flexibility of remote education
- Students learned to reach out to other students for help and guidance on assignments
- Counselors help students set up for taking the ACT/SAT, keep students up to date, and help motivate students

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Hard to get motivated while taking classes at home
 - Difficult to hold themselves accountable for their work
 - Not having sports available for students as an outlet for their stress and anxiety
 - Students worried they will not be prepared for college academically and athletically
- The online learning platforms
 - Prevents social connections for one student
 - Caused grades to drop

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Having parents hold the students accountable is helpful
- Having classes in a room designated for studying

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Counselors really helped one student stay on track
 - Student initiated the help from the school counselor
- Teachers mainly focused on student's well-being than learning the material

Community Resources (organizations)

- Top Scholars is an ACT prep program
- Mentorship programs are helpful

Student Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Students need the availability of people to talk to
- Students enjoyed the revised school schedule where they received an extended lunch break (almost 1 ½ hours) and would like to see that continue post COVID-19
 - Nice to have a break to reset, exercise, focus on a hobby or explore an area of interest

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

February 17, 2021 (6pm-7pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Mariana Hughes, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary and middle school in suburban and rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parents shared their appreciation for teachers and give them "a lot of credit" for navigating online learning
- One parent shared that her son now "owns his IEP" due to the flexibility and self-reliance built into remote education

Benefits

- Having more family time
- Parents acknowledged they are fortunate their employers are being flexible
- Children are learning how to initiate conversation with adults and growing their communication skills

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Not having in-person teacher or peer interaction
 - Difficult to keep children focused and on task with schoolwork
 - Students and families are tired of social distancing and quarantine protocols
 - Parents noted their children are struggling with mental health issues
- Parent challenges
 - Facilitating student learning at home and helping with assignments
- The online learning platforms the schools are using have many technical issues
 - Not accommodating students with IEPs

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parents are working with their children on assignments to fill knowledge gaps
- Parents are accessing school resources and supports
- Parents are opting into the hybrid model vs. online only schooling

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Advisory and office hours with teachers for extra help
- Parents shared having intervention specialists working with children with IEPs is helpful
- Parents appreciated constant and consistent communication between teachers and parents

Community Resources (organizations)

- Extracurricular activities
 - Summer sports
- Local church activities with online options
- Activities and resources through the Boy and Girl Scouts
- Parents were not aware of any direct support or resources for their schools from outside organizations

Recommended Resources and Supports

- Students need more opportunities for peer-to-peer interaction
- Parents noted the need for better resources for teachers
- Parents noted the need for a resource to help students stay on track with self-paced work
- Parents shared there needs to be as much attention placed on the fully online students as there is on the hybrid students

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

February 17, 2021 (7pm-8pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Naa Dromo Korley, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in middle and high school in suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- One parent shared that remote education helped her child with ADHD identify how he learns best
 - Student found that multitasking helps him stay focused and on task
 - Listening to music or having another tab open on the computer
 - Parent hopes that the school will be adaptive when they return to in-person instruction and allow some version of this strategy to continue
- Both parents set expectations early that their children were accountable for balancing their school schedule and assignments

Benefits

- Student engagement
 - One parent shared that her high school students thrived with the freedom and flexibility of remote education
 - Observed student growth in self-reliance and independent work skillsets

Challenges

- Student engagement
 - Parent noticed her middle-school student struggled with remote learning due to the lack of personal and social interactions
 - Parent noted it was difficult for her daughter to transition from elementary school to middle school with remote learning
- Resources
 - One parent shared that in the beginning of remote learning (March 2020) connectivity issues were a major challenge, however they had resources to overcome the issues
- Parents feel that their children's teachers are overtasking and expect more from their students the second semester of the school year (spring 2021)

- Believe teachers are sacrificing critical instruction and personal time to get through the curriculum
- Students are feeling more stressed
- One parent is counting on private tutors to fill in the gaps
- Parents shared that their voices are not being heard and realize that COVID-19 uncovered many underlying issues connected with the school system
 - Parents noticed that the solutions the schools were coming up with were all superficial
- Parents shared that students did not have any mental health check-ins and the school counselors made no connection with them

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- One parent shared the need to get a private tutor for her children, specifically for her child with an IEP
- One parent is involved in a PTO group that schedules monthly outings in various city parks
- One parent shared that she assigned specific workstations for each child to successfully engage in remote learning

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Parents agreed that schools “could do much better” in supporting students by giving them resources to succeed in remote education
 - One parent did not “bother” to ask the school for resources to aid her child diagnosed with ADHD because she felt the school did not care about her child’s remote education
 - One parent shared how beneficial educational therapists are for her son and attempted to share outside resource with other families
 - PTA leaders did not share information about outside resources due to fear of “upsetting” the school district

Needed Resources and Supports

- Parents believe teachers need more profession development
 - Parents shared the need that teachers lacked technical skills, as well as diversity and sensitivity training
 - Parents shared that students tend to be ahead of teachers when it comes to remote connections
 - Parents shared that the schools are not advancing in making connections with the students during remote education
- Parents noted the need for more substitute teachers to be involved in the schools
 - Some parents feel that substitutes and aides are treated negatively, leading them to not want to work with the schools
- Educational Therapist

- One parent believes there is a need for educational therapists to teach teachers how to empower students to be able to help themselves and develop confidence
 - Parent feels that many people tend to think that children with learning disabilities must go to a counselor or take medication, but educational therapist are “the happy medium” that all children need

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

February 20, 2021 (10am-11am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary and middle school in urban and suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moment

- Children need more structure with remote education
- It is difficult for both students and parents when the parent and teacher role overlap
- Students get lonely with completely remote schooling, so more opportunities to interact with classmates and teachers are needed
- More communication from ODE and additional opportunities for parents to provide feedback would identify and ease parent "pain points"

Benefits

- Flexibility has been helpful for students
- The ability to work at their own pace allows gifted students to not feel as bored
- Being able to work from home should continue for students on snow days, days when they are too sick for school but not too sick to learn, and times when they are having other barriers to in-person learning (such as struggles with bullying) to allow them to continue learning in a safe and more comfortable environment
- Integration of technology with learning is helpful for students because they are familiar with it
- It is easier to assure all deadlines are met because parents can help their children with work in the evenings and on weekends

Challenges

- There is not enough structure for students, and fully remote classes are made even more difficult because all responsibility is on parents
 - Parents struggle with having their own job to do, and finding a work-life balance
- There is not enough support for mentors and parents
- There is an expectation parents will be able to teach their children and fill in the students' gaps in knowledge

- For Virtual Academy students, attendance is confusing because students are penalized for working fast and not being on the remote learning system for long enough periods of time
- Students are feeling lonely
- At the beginning of remote education, teachers were overly stressed, which made it hard to get the support needed
- Too many online learning platforms
- Connectivity has only been an issue on days when parents and children are working from home concurrently
- With some online learning platforms, parents cannot monitor whether student work has been submitted correctly

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Reaching out to teachers has been helpful in some cases
- Small-group worktimes and lunch together on Zoom allow students to have social interactions with peers and teachers
- Teachers using fun platforms, like Kahoot and interactive videos help students be more engaged
- Setting alarms to make sure children return to the virtual classroom (Zoom, Adobe Connect, Teams, etc.) at the correct time after breaks
- Parents end up scheduling their own meetings around their children's meetings
 - This ensures that there is enough Wi-Fi signal for student and parent work
 - Scheduling so parents are free when students are doing independent work
 - Ensuring their children will be busy during parents' work meetings
- Putting children in afterschool activities one time a week helps them feel less lonely, but they are worried about exposure to coronavirus
- Assignments are not always differentiated for gifted students, leading some students to become bored

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Zoom fosters connection and allows the students to interact with one another and their teacher(s)
- Communication of barriers led to improvements for gifted student
 - Parent shared communicating with the teacher helped to develop an alternate plan for gifted students
- School provided iPads

Community Resources (organizations)

- School partnership with Syntero, a community mental health organization, has been helpful in supporting students with ADHD
- Occupational therapists are helpful in overcoming sensory issues that impede on remote learning

Recommended Resources and Supports

- Having an open portal from ODE would be a good way for parents to communicate issues or concerns with their children's education without making a big time commitment
- Quarterly newsletter communication from ODE would allow parents to learn more about what is happening in Ohio education without having to seek out the information themselves and without flooding their inboxes
- Clearer communication from schools will allow parents to better support their children
- Children need more support with the completely digital platforms because there is too much to do and most of the provided resources, which tend to be video lists, are not helpful
- Parents need step-by-step directions to help their children complete all the things that they need to
- More small-group work would allow students to have more interaction with their peers

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent Focus Group

February 21, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway and Lisa Beiswenger, Secondary Facilitators

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Session participants are parents of elementary, middle, and high-school students in a suburban Ohio region.

"Aha" Moments

- When the school tracks what students are doing on their devices, it reduces stress from parents and helps to keep the child on track with their schoolwork.
- Helping their children study remotely has helped parents value teachers more.
- Parents do not always foster independence with high school students and might need some guidance on when to let go

Benefits

- Students have learned to become more resourceful and work with what they are given
- Parents appreciate not having to drive their children to school every day
- Studying remotely kept students safe and healthy
 - "That limits a lot of our anxiety, especially parents of teens who – we are always wondering what our kids are up to"
- Parents have become more involved with their children's education
 - "I think now, parents have to get involved so now they are more into what their kids are doing and teachers have been more forthcoming to hear everything with the parents now"
 - "To actually see how they approach [math], it's been really interesting"
 - Teachers are more approachable for parents
- One parent reported that his child's IEP team was more responsive than in typical year

- There are more free resources (from companies, etc.) that are available due to the pandemic
 - Class recordings are also a useful resource for students
- Students have more capabilities when it comes to technology tools
 - “My son and his friend are Zoom masters”
 - “They’re gonna be very savvy communicators using these methods”

Challenges

- It is hard to motivate students to get out of bed and start doing their classes and schoolwork when school is completely virtual
- It is difficult for students to pay attention to classes after lunch, especially when they are completely virtual
- Doing “specials” on Zoom feels inauthentic
 - “I get that they want them to have the time, but they don’t translate the best...but they’re trying”
- The higher level of parent involvement can be difficult to balance
 - Parents have a hard time keeping up with everything that they need to learn in order to help their children, which is challenging when they also have their own jobs to do
- Teachers did not always communicate expectations clearly enough for students and parents to understand.
 - “I was, personally, expecting there will be maybe grace for the kids since everything was so overwhelming. Grace in the sense like, if they’re not submitting, suppose 5 out of 10 assignments, the teachers will be like, ‘Okay, as long as you do the other assignments very well.’ But no, they expected every one to be graded properly...”
- Virtual tools could be difficult to figure out
 - “The fact is this was the first time my son was exposed to Schoology, so I think I had a bit of extra challenge”
 - “Every teacher was using a different platform... I think you had to download apps of different ones. And, they’re all nice, but my phone was blown away with all these apps, ‘cuz now I had to download and I see what my child has done on it or not...”
- Parents would like for not everything to be virtual
 - This stress is added to by the fact that parental controls do not work with school iPads
- Wi-Fi interruptions and connections were frustrating and difficult to manage

- “Once they are kicked out or once it’s not working, once they are not logged-in, their whole day’s – it just goes in frustration and it’s like they’re not synced back in the mood to study that day”
- Students with fine-motor skills disabilities had trouble writing on iPads
- Students often get distracted by other things on their iPads (the internet, other apps, etc.)
- Parents know that teachers are stressed and feel a bit uneasy about emailing with complaints
 - “I know what they’re going through, I know they’re stressed. But at the same time, I have to do it. I’m giving them grace and I’m not mad at ‘em but... I hate the feeling”
- Student performance anxiety can be worse with so many virtual assignments because they feel that everything they do is being watched closely
- Teachers do not always check over the work that students are given during remote days – it is more like busywork
 - “She might be giving it a cursory glance, but they’re not grading it and they’re not really using it as a conduit to ensure engagement and that they’re learning from it, they’re not turning it in”
 - It also means that the work that would be optional in other years (due to student’s already firm grasp of material) is no longer option
 - “I think there’s a lot more repetition... in a classroom setting, they’d be better able to gauge which student’s getting it and which student isn’t and they’d be moving them on ‘cuz they always would work in groups in the classroom based on their individual skill-level...”

Strategies for Overcoming Challenges

- Forming a pod with another family/families allows parents to do their own jobs
- Having aides to monitor Zoom calls was helpful, but unrealistic due to staffing issues
- The school IT department can help with certain technology issues
- Teachers printed out pages and emailed them to parents so that students with fine-motor disabilities could still complete their work
- One school monitors the iPads to keep students on task
 - “Kids are logged in to Adobe Connect and if they go to a different website, it notifies the teacher that they have exited the class. So then, if the child is not back within 5 minutes, the teachers email them. And if they are not there for 15 minutes, I get an email or a notification”

- “The iPads are great [in] that they can monitor activity online of the kids... That takes half of my battle away...”
- Having work in packets rather than virtually keeps students from being as distracted
 - “[They] aren’t tempted to sneak off and go look at YouTube videos when he’s supposed to be on this lesson”
- Adopting pets has helped students’ stress levels
- Parents have encouraged their students to get more involved with non-virtual activities (book clubs, etc.)

Support from the District/School (Communication, guidance, resources)

- Both of the schools from this focus group provided iPads for students to use when they are learning remotely
 - “In normal years, they have an iPad at school and usually, kindergarten through 3rd grade, they really only stayed at school”
- Intervention specialists work with students who have IEPs over Zoom daily, which allows them the one-on-one focus that they need to succeed
- One school has an IT department available to students and their parents that can be contacted by email or phone
- Another school’s IT department was able to provide hotspots to families who needed them
- One student’s intervention specialist puts his work for remote days in a folder and separates out what he needs to do when so he isn’t stressed
 - This only works when she remembers to do it completely, otherwise the student gets very stressed

Community Resources (Organizations)

- Facebook parent support groups allow parents to communicate about what is working for them
- Kahn Academy and IXL online resources can help students if they are having trouble with a concept
- Library study hall hours could be helpful, but the participants had not tried them yet
- One school has office hours and university students who are tutors
- Therapies that students were already receiving helped them with the transition last spring
- Parents in pods support each other

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

February 24, 2021 (6pm-7pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Lola Valion, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in high school in urban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Students have missed milestones for their academic career, such as school trips, time to build relationships with teachers, prom, and graduation
 - Parents, especially parents of seniors, are missing these milestones as well
- There are stark differences between students at public and private schools
 - Private school returned to in-person instruction with strict COVID protocols in place
 - Public school has used virtual instruction since March 2020, and has no clear plans to return to the classroom at this time
 - Parent reports that other schools in the same district have returned to in-person instruction or hybrid instruction
 - Communication from the private school has been exemplary, while communication from the public school has been lacking
 - Parent received weekly surveys from the public-school district, but is unclear on whether feedback is being used to inform policy

Benefits

- Block scheduling allows students to spend more time with teachers
- Online availability of materials is helpful when students miss a school day they can easily access materials to catch up

Challenges

- Underutilized time
 - Because deadlines are set at 11:59pm, child often delays taking exams until later in the day instead of taking it during normal class time.

- There is no direct instruction on Wednesdays, instead students are instructed to “log on if you need help”
 - These days feel underutilized because some children use them as “free days”
- Although teachers’ efforts are made visible (sending email updates, being available on zoom), administrative efforts are not visible which further feeds into the notion that they aren’t doing anything to actively problem-solve
- Not enough effective communication and community engagement; it is important for these to be done thoughtfully and not “just for show”

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- The isolation from remote learning is somewhat remedied with children’s involvement with sports and hanging out with friends in small social bubbles
- The feedback and perspectives of the “bright parents” at the school are being underutilized
 - Positive change could come if the schools reached out to consult the parents
- Parent would like to see concrete results from the weekly surveys sent from the school district
 - At the very least, parent would like to see the results from the surveys, so students and parents could connect on what they agree on and initiate change

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- The students received iPads from their school

Community Resources (organizations)

- Parent received support from work (local hospital)

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

February 27, 2021 (11am-12pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Kayla Galloway, Facilitator

Annika Doneghy, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children ranging from kindergarten to high school in suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Awareness of the usefulness of remote learning when in-person resumes
 - Parents agree that students need to be back in-person 100% but remote learning can also be an option for students who may have absences (ex: sick day)
 - Remote learning should not be required, just an option
 - If student is sick or absent for another reason, they should be able to complete missed work online rather than waiting to catch up on work whenever they return to school

Benefits

- No longer need to wake up early or rush in the mornings
 - No need for busing or transportation to get student to school on time
- Students may develop skills that prepare them for college at early ages
 - Students have to be responsible for themselves and their learning
 - Students are asked to be "self-sufficient" and "self-starters"
 - Some parents expressed this can have a negative impact on students who are not ready to be independent, especially younger grades
 - Other parents expressed that their students have been successful at staying on top of their work and completing assignments

Challenges

- No consistency or structure
 - Parents commented that some teachers constantly change the daily agendas, making it hard for students and parents to complete the proper work and stay on top of assignments
 - Education has transformed into "checking the box"
 - Students just complete whatever task is assigned to them by teachers, and parents notice students can finish their school day within 2-3 hours

rather than being engaged in learning for the length of a typical school day

- “Terrible” communication between schools/teachers/parents
 - Parents expressed mixed experiences with how their students are able to communicate with teachers
 - Some parents say their students are “self-sufficient” and know what to do everyday
 - Other parents say both themselves and their children are confused on daily assignments
 - One parent shared that teachers communicate through email solely with the student, even though the student is in a younger grade and may not know or remember to check and use email daily
- No work/life/home balance
 - Parents expressed great frustration in trying to maintain their own schedules along with their students’ schedules
 - Some parents work from home, others work outside the home, regardless the parents have to work their own jobs then turn around and help their students, significantly adding to their work load
 - Parents described a cycle of schools not caring about the parents’ jobs while employers do not care about their employees’ kids/students
 - At the end of the day, the student is the only one who suffers
- Students need help with their learning
 - Students often need help, guidance, and supervision when completing their remote learning
 - Not all parents work from home and are able to give this attention
 - Even parents who do work from home are focused on their own work
 - Parents have hired private tutors but this can be financially straining and it still does not make a great difference in their students’ learning
 - There are no opportunities for meaningful peer collaboration
 - In-person learning allows students to talk to their peers, ask for help and even take cues from their peers to help them stay focused and working on assignments
 - There is a need for visual, social, and physical interaction
 - Older students are not getting hands-on experience or guidance with college or career prep, which is important for students who are close to graduating
 - Parents have witnessed their A and B grade students drop down to D and F grades
 - Students are not focused, motivated, or disciplined to be successful in remote learning
 - Students may fall behind in their grade level
 - Parents described remote learning as “a wash” and “a waste of a schoolyear”

- Students who may have an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) can suffer even more through remote learning
 - All parent participants had at least one student with an IEP and expressed that special needs made remote learning even more difficult than it already is
 - Parents work harder to help their students with their learning but are not always successful, and outside resources and supports are negligible
 - Students who received IEP resources in person are not receiving the same resources in remote learning
 - Some parents are even unsure if their students are still getting the IEP support they need while being in a remote model
- Excess screen time for students

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Hire outside assistance
 - Although this may be helpful, it is not guaranteed and it also creates a financial strain on the family
 - Some parents expressed that their students help each other and they may pay their older students to act as “babysitters” for their younger students
- Employers should be more flexible and understand that many employees may have children participating in remote learning
 - Parents want their jobs to understand what they are going through
- Send students back to in-person learning
 - The best and most useful strategy parents believe in is stopping remote learning completely and having students back in-person fulltime for “normal” learning

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Little to no support or resources
 - Parents strongly expressed that there are no resources to help them or their students
 - One parent mentioned having an educational advocate provided by the school for their student with an IEP but this does not make a big difference with remote learning
 - This same parent has hired a private tutor at their own expense and this has not been helpful
 - Parent has also been told their student can receive IEP support in-person but only if the parent provides transportation to and from the school to receive this resource

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

March 3, 2021 (7pm-8pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Madeline McDaniel, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have high school children in suburban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parent had to cut back on work hours to stay home with her son with IEP
- Demand for internet in household surpasses the available capacity
- Teachers expect student to lead communicate rather than parents
- Lack of social interaction has led to mental health struggles

Benefits in remote learning

- None

Challenges in remote learning

- Expectations for special education student too high
 - Student's IEP is not being followed adequately
- Teachers "pile on" assignments
 - Assignments have accumulated and student has multiple missing
- Household internet demand overtakes capacity
 - Only one server, lack of connection
- Lack of resources offered by school
 - Parent is paying out of pocket for student support
- Lack of support, structure, communication, hands-on activities
- School did not help kids learn how to use online tools
- Lack of communication from teachers
 - Teachers take too long to respond to student and parent questions
 - Responds with video rather than individualized responses
- Student struggling, questioning future possibilities because of poor grades
 - Student had been considering college, but grades have dropped too low to be accepted
- Financial strain and emotional strain on parent with student struggling in school, spousal health issues

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Found a tutor through Sylvan Learning Center
- Sports helped engage child in healthy activity

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- None acknowledged
- Poor communication with teachers

Community Resources (organizations)

- Sylvan Learning for tutoring (expensive for parents)

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

March 6, 2021 (1pm-2pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Annie Cohen, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary and middle school in suburban and urban school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parents have a better understanding of how their children learn
- Parent-teacher conferences are more informative through a remote platform
 - Everybody is there
 - Fewer issues with childcare
- Parents, students and educators have been exposed to other modes of teaching and learning
- Occupational therapist was able to develop effective strategies for remote education
 - Speech therapy strategies were not as successful in remote education

Benefits

- Children have developed online etiquette skills
- Flexibility and choice
 - Remote education provided the flexibility for students to turn in work on their own time rather than by the end of the class period
 - Student was empowered to select remote vs. in-person schedule
- Parent-teacher conferences were more inclusive
- Better understandings of different modes of teaching and learning

Challenges

- Too much screen time for students
- Children feel isolated and disengaged
- Families are strained by parents having to take up teacher roles
 - Indistinct boundaries between parent role and parent-as-teacher role
- Students with IEPs get less time in class with their peers in the hybrid model because interventions and therapies take place in person over fewer days
 - Fewer days available for student to be pulled out of class

- Interventions are also impacted in remote education because a lot of the work is left up to the parents
- Remote days can seem like students are just doing “busy work”
- Students have trouble staying on task and need additional supervision

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Social time for children within “COVID bubbles”
 - Other neighborhood children
 - Relatives
 - Religious communities
- Utilizing additional familial supports (grandparents, aunts and uncles, etc.) for certain educational tasks
- Class meetings for social activities rather than just academics

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Choice of fully remote or in-person learning depending on family preference
- Free lunches for students in need
- Virtual speech and occupational therapies
- Hotspots for students who need internet
- Parent-teacher conferences over Zoom

Community Resources (organizations)

- Church

Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Mass mailings (email AND physical mail) of information from the Department of Education would be appreciated
 - Facilitated through individual districts and/or schools
- Allowing students with IEPs to come in to school on fully-remote days so that they do not miss additional in-person class time for intervention activities
- Call-in conferences instead of just Zoom (for additional focus groups or other surveys) for those who are not tech-savvy

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

March 24, 2021 (6pm-7pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary, middle school, and high school in an urban district.

"Aha" Moments

- Some teachers did a great job getting to know their students on a personal level
- Provide parents with authentic, experiential options to help their children learn
- Hesitant to fully eliminate snow days with remote learning to let "kids be kids"
- The social piece is difficult for students
- "I know in my district, we are moving at lightning pace, so it's hard to slow down. It's hard to pause and say, 'what would we have done differently?' and even taking the time to ask the question. I think the fatigue of COVID from both the parent side and an educator side is so real, and just allowing people a chance to breathe."

Benefits

- Having more family time
 - Family makes a point to spend time outside and doing family activities
- Getting to see firsthand how their children are as students
- Children learned a lot about technology
- Access to learning when there's a "medical hiccup"
 - Child with medical issues had fewer missed days this year

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Parent felt there was a lack of academic rigor
 - Student attention lags when they are not being challenged, especially with younger children
 - Lack of peer-to-peer interaction
 - Students need to remember/relearn how to work with others
 - "Remembering what it's like to go out and be in a group. That's going to be different. [...] Yes, we've had a few small get togethers outside with grandparents or cousins or whatever in the last little bit, but we haven't been to a restaurant. We haven't been to a movie theater. There are so many things that we

haven't done over the last year, and I think we're all out of practice in doing those things. And for kids who have less experience, they need to practice those skills."

- Parent challenges
 - The biggest challenge at home was internet bandwidth with four children and two parents working at home
- COVID fatigue

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parents created hands-on learning activities for their children
 - Encouraged children to write letters to their cousins
- Parents created boundaries to separate work-time from home-time

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School provided an extra laptop to the family so all of the children could have their own devices
- One of the grade-level teams created a refrigerator magnet with a list of the platforms being used for the classes and how to access them

Parent and Guardian Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Provide parents with options to help their children learn and reinforce the concepts from classes
 - Examples: getting the children to create a food plan for a week (students learn about nutrition, planning, measurements, etc.)
 - Encourage letter writing
 - Less rote learning, more experiential/critical learning
- Parents noted the need for more opportunities like the Listening Tour where there are opportunities to connect to all kinds of families
 - Lack of advertisement of the Listening Tour in children's school district
 - Provide additional opportunities for both parents and educators to reflect and debrief about what worked and what didn't work

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

April 15, 2021 (7pm-8pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in high school in an urban school district.

"Aha" Moments

- Having a two-parent household is an advantage because parents can share the work with supporting their children's learning
- School has been doing a great job reaching out
 - Teacher and principal have been really encouraging
 - Acknowledging the difficult situation
 - Reminding students to submit missing work
 - Asking what she (the teacher) can do to help
- There is a lot of genuine assistive learning technology available, and a lot of schools have not been taking advantage of these resources
 - "I think, through no fault of anyone's really, [...] but there's so much rich technology out there, assistive technology, educational technology, that is genuinely pretty dynamic and pretty adaptable. I mean, Google classroom I get, but there's probably a cost, but that's not the even the low-mid-point to what is available for real, rich, education instruction. I just think that that type of thing could be, would be, extremely beneficial"
 - Kids are learning online on their own in their leisure time, but they are not being taught the same way online in school
 - "We have so much more available to us"
 - The cost of not investing in these technologies is more than just the money
 - Students aren't learning the information as well as they could, and students will need interventions later

Benefits

- "It's been helpful to get to meet and know people 'safely' without being thrust into this brand new... you're a freshman, you're at a new school, you don't know anyone."
- Principal has been very encouraging
 - Acknowledgement by principal of students' hard work and flexibility as a whole and individually

Challenges

- Student frustrated with online learning
 - Difficult to find the assigned tasks
 - Technical difficulties
 - A lot of homework, 4-7 assignments each night in addition to the school day
 - Student switched classes and submitted work in the wrong class section
 - Student became frustrated because they were completing the work but kept receiving notices that they weren't submitted
- Parent has had to let a lot of activities go because school has been so labor intensive
- Connectivity issues
 - Internet broadband kept failing at home

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Parent has been helpful in communicating with principal, teachers, and counselor
 - Was able to arrange a tutor for math provided through the school
- School supplied an internet hotspot
- School has been flexible and understanding
 - Teacher changed grading criteria to support student learning more effectively

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- School provided tutor
- School provided hot spot because internet kept failing at home

Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Reach out to parents where they already are, community centers, family centers, food pantries

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

April 19, 2021 (5pm-6pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Lisa Beiswenger, Facilitator

Daniella Saul, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary, middle, and high school in rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parents noted that broadband and internet access were major issues
- One parent noted that an initial drawback of remote learning was the lack of provided lunches
 - When the school district began to offer lunch for all students, it was a huge financial benefit
- Infrastructure in rural areas having to do with internet access and capability is not being addressed, affirmed by all parents in the focus group, despite these issues being talked about for years
- Parent suggested using the physical school building as a safe space for students who had difficult home situations
- Frustration with lack of transparency and apparent lack of concrete action when data is collected by ODE via surveys

Benefits

- Flexibility of remote learning
 - Because Internet access is a major at-home issue for these families, one parent was able to take her children to work with her, where they could complete their schoolwork with sufficient access
- With remote learning, there is an option in place for days when students cannot physically get to school, whether because of illness or snow/flood days making the physical environment unsuitable
- Direct communication between teachers and students, as well as multiple lines of communication (parents, teachers, students)
- Online platforms such as Google Classroom were noted as beneficial ways to keep tabs on students and keep track of assignments
 - Google Classroom was noted as a tool to let parents be more hands-on with their children's education
 - Teachers set up instructional videos on how to access these resources.

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - Lack of interaction and face-to-face learning has caused students to feel isolated due to time away from friends
 - Different learning styles are difficult to accommodate remotely
 - Not all students learn the same way, and while teachers have been flexible with different assignments, remote learning doesn't lend itself to a variety of learning styles
 - One parent noted their child did not feel she learned as well online as she did in school
 - Frustration with delayed responses when she would ask questions
- Parent challenges
 - Difficult to accommodate your own work schedule when your children are home all day
 - Broadband with multiple workers in the house caused families to leave home to find place to do work online with adequate internet access
 - Challenges with instructing children on certain subjects that parents struggled with themselves
 - Insecurity in knowing the material well enough to teach it
 - Questions about whether the assignments were strenuous enough or too challenging for online platform compared with regular in-person classes
- Online learning platforms
 - Do not lend themselves to a variety of learning styles that can be accommodated with different assignments in person (differentiation)
 - Some platforms may be underutilized (one parent noted that Zoom would have been nice for face-to-face interaction, but her child's school did not use it)
- Lack of attention and funding toward rural school districts
 - Parents would like to see increased policy action on rural schools

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Flexibility from teachers on assignments, and alternatives to assignments if families are lacking sufficient Internet access
- Using other spaces for Internet access outside the home, using hotspots inside the home instead of broadband
 - Traveling to locations where there is adequate connectivity
- Instructional videos from the school teaching parents and students how to use certain remote resources
- Creating personal schedules for remote learning when there were not set meeting times for classes

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Qualifications for lunch program relaxed during COVID, any student was allowed to receive lunch
 - Even those who did not qualify for free lunches were allowed to receive lunch, which was a financial relief
 - “It was a tremendous blessing”
- Schools providing instructional videos on how to use platforms online
- School provided laptops for families without devices

Parent Perspective: Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Having physical school building be a “safe space” with an adult present designated area for students would have been helpful for students with difficult family situations having a place to go in
- Use the school district to reach out to parents and students for data and feedback
 - Transparency about where collected data from these polls/surveys are disbursed, and how this information is used
 - “Sometimes you fill out a survey and it feels like nothing happens”
- On a higher level, promote policy to increase internet access in rural areas
- Maintain some forms of remote learning in case of days where students cannot physically get to school
- Continue to use Google Classroom as a hub of assignments/information
- State lunch program being more widely available for families that do not necessarily qualify is a significant financial relief

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

April 26, 2021 (10am-11am)

PAST Foundation Research:

Maria Green Cohen, Facilitator

Kayla Galloway, Notetaker

Haruko Tanaka, Notetaker

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children in elementary and middle school in suburban and rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Younger students may fall behind when they lose in-person education during a vital developmental stage
- Students have obtaining the ability to advocate for themselves and have been communicating one-on-one through email with teachers, asking what they need to succeed.
- Mental health issues hinder education, especially when 100% virtual
- Each student has a way of learning, so it depends on the student on how receptive they are adapting to online learning
- Parents shared their appreciation of teachers going above and beyond for their children
- Increased communication with teachers has allowed enhanced parent involvement in children's education and curriculum
- Virtual students performed better than in-person students in state test
- Children are learning on their own, applying knowledge into navigating new modes of learning and utilizing chrome-books and technology

Benefits

- Having more family time and acknowledging that "time slows down"
- Students are learning to advocate for themselves and email teachers in what they need or ask them specific questions when they don't understand something
- Teachers are going above and beyond in every aspect
- Parents acknowledged they are more aware of what their children are learning
- Children are learning how to utilize technology and apply it

Challenges

- Student challenges
 - More mental health challenges to students who are in person

- Preschool students with an IEP are the only ones with zoom calls
- Lack of structure in curriculum created an environment for students to fall behind in assignments
- Reliance on computers has hindered spelling and handwriting abilities in students
- Parent challenges
 - Huge learning gap attempting to teach own children with technology since parents are not as used to them as the children are
- The online learning platforms
 - May lead to entire grade levels falling behind from "20 minutes of learning"
 - Challenging to keep student engaged

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Forming/meeting in "bubbles"
- Behavioral health therapies
- Parents change their work schedule to accommodate online school for their kids
- Having the option to be in person may ameliorate mental health problems
- Online zoom groups each week for a way to socialize with other remote students in the same class
- "Learning Aid Ohio" funds tutors for students who are 100% virtual and have an IEP

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Very efficient and fast responses for questions are appreciated
- IT was responsive and very helpful getting connected, especially in the beginning

Community Resources (organizations)

- Synagogues have been supportive to find solution to medical issues and offering social support

RemotEDx Listening Tour

Bullet Point Report

Parent/Guardian Focus Group

April 27, 2021 (7pm-8pm)

PAST Foundation Research:

Annika Doneghy, Facilitator

Overview:

The PAST Foundation Research Team conducted a virtual focus group with parents on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education for the RemotEDx Listening Tour. Parents participating in this session have children ranging from pre-school to high school in rural school districts.

"Aha" Moments

- Parents shared that they are lucky to have had a full in-person schoolyear that was close to normal, but they realize even the "normal" schoolyear was different and took some adjustment

Benefits

- In Person=Normal schoolyear
 - Parents explained that their schools have stayed in-person and they never really had to experience a remote learning model
 - Have been using technology more than usual which parents appreciate
- Increase of helpful resources
 - Parents said that the school district and teachers have integrated more resources to help with learning, especially technological resources like apps
- Better communication
 - Although the schoolyear is fairly normal, other events such as parent-teacher conferences look different and teachers have used more communication methods to engage parents
 - Parents have noticed that their students are collaborating more with other students

Challenges

- Technology usage increase
 - Although technology usage has benefits, some parents expressed that it is challenging and harder to use for younger age students
- Quarantine cases
 - Parents shared that students sent home to quarantine had interrupted learning since they were used to the in-person model
- Balance
 - Some parents said it can be difficult balancing work, school, and other activities but it hasn't been more so than before the pandemic

- Transitioning from remote to in-person
 - One parent shared that the school gave students the option to be remote if they were not comfortable doing the in-person school year
 - Parent explained that their student started remote but wanted to switch to in-person, which was a difficult transition
 - School was supportive with the transition but trying to catch up to the in-person students after being remote was the hard part

Strategies for overcoming challenges

- Extracurricular activities look different
 - The learning has been in-person but some activities have been changed to adjust to pandemic protocols
 - For example, parents said sports games are still taking place with limits on the number of guests that can come for each student
 - One parent explained that meetings and conferences are conducted virtually in order to limit face-to-face interactions

Support from the District/School (communication, guidance, resources)

- Flexible and adaptive
 - School gave students the option to be remote if they did not want to be in-person
 - Parents said the school has been helpful and communicative
 - One parent said the whole process has been “as smooth as it can be” and it has been a learning experience for everyone
 - Parents expressed how helpful the teachers have been
- Helpful resources
 - Parents mentioned various resources provided by the school and teachers
 - Final Forms, Google classroom, Remind App
 - School also provided water bottles for students because they were no longer able to use the water fountain in school

Community Resources (organizations)

- Parents said churches contributed bottled water, paper towels, and cleaning wipes to the school to help with meeting pandemic protocols

Potential Strategies, Resources and Supports

- Parents said continuing to reach out to school districts can be helpful methods to hear from parents, educators, and students

PAST Foundation
Ohio Listening Tour
February Focus Groups (n=10)
Participant Perspectives

Issues facing those who work with homeless students

Issue: One of the largest urban school districts in the state only has funding for 2 full-time staff members and 4 part-time staff, which is inadequate to attend to the needs of homeless students nearly 100 school buildings.

Issue: Staff working with homeless students report with their high mobility, some have landed in safe locations outside their assigned school districts. With mandates for in-person attendance, students who have found temporary housing outside of their districts face repercussions for unavoidable truancy.

Issues facing those who work with ESL students

Issue: Due to the large number of ESL students in the buildings served in one of the largest urban Ohio school districts, communication between bilingual liaisons and the partnered school district is challenging and time consuming.

Issues facing families with Special Education students

Issue: Students with IEPs are not meeting with intervention teachers as frequently as they did before the pandemic. This is placing additional stress on students with learning disabilities and their families, especially with students who require consistency in their school day. Some families have resorted to hiring private consultants, tutors, educational therapists and educational advocates, putting a tremendous strain on family finances.

Issues facing Students and Parents

Issue: Students and their parents are frustrated by the lack of technical skills and technical knowledge demonstrated by their teachers.

Issue: Parents have been exposed to a lack of sensitivity to race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and ESL needs in the educators who are working with their children.

Issues facing Educators

Issue: Identifying community resources to support students and families in need, and then connecting the families and students with those resources.



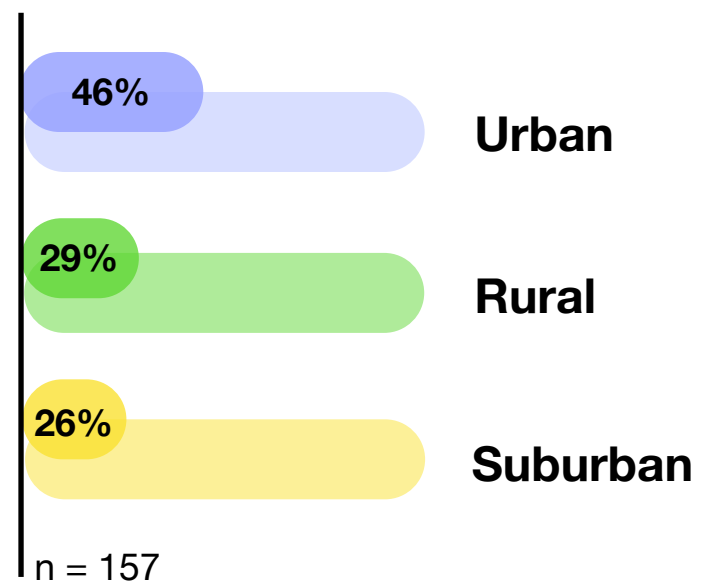
Appendix E:

Ohio Listening Tour Survey Graphics

Ohio Listening Tour: Educator Survey Graphics
Ohio Listening Tour: Parent and Guardian Survey Graphics

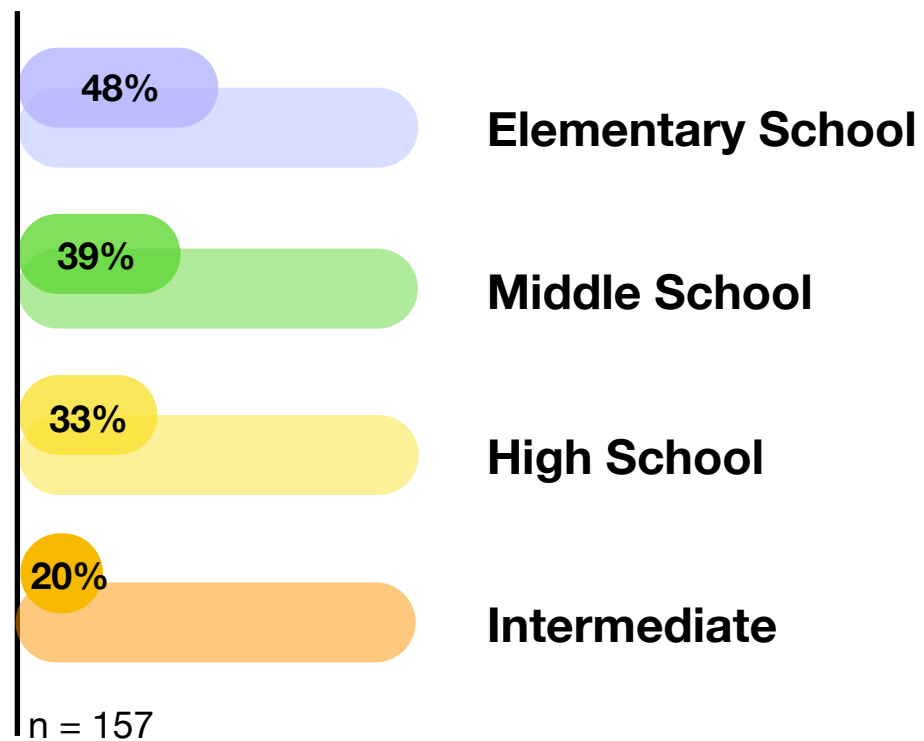
Ohio Listening Tour Survey Graphics

Educator Survey Graphics (n=157)



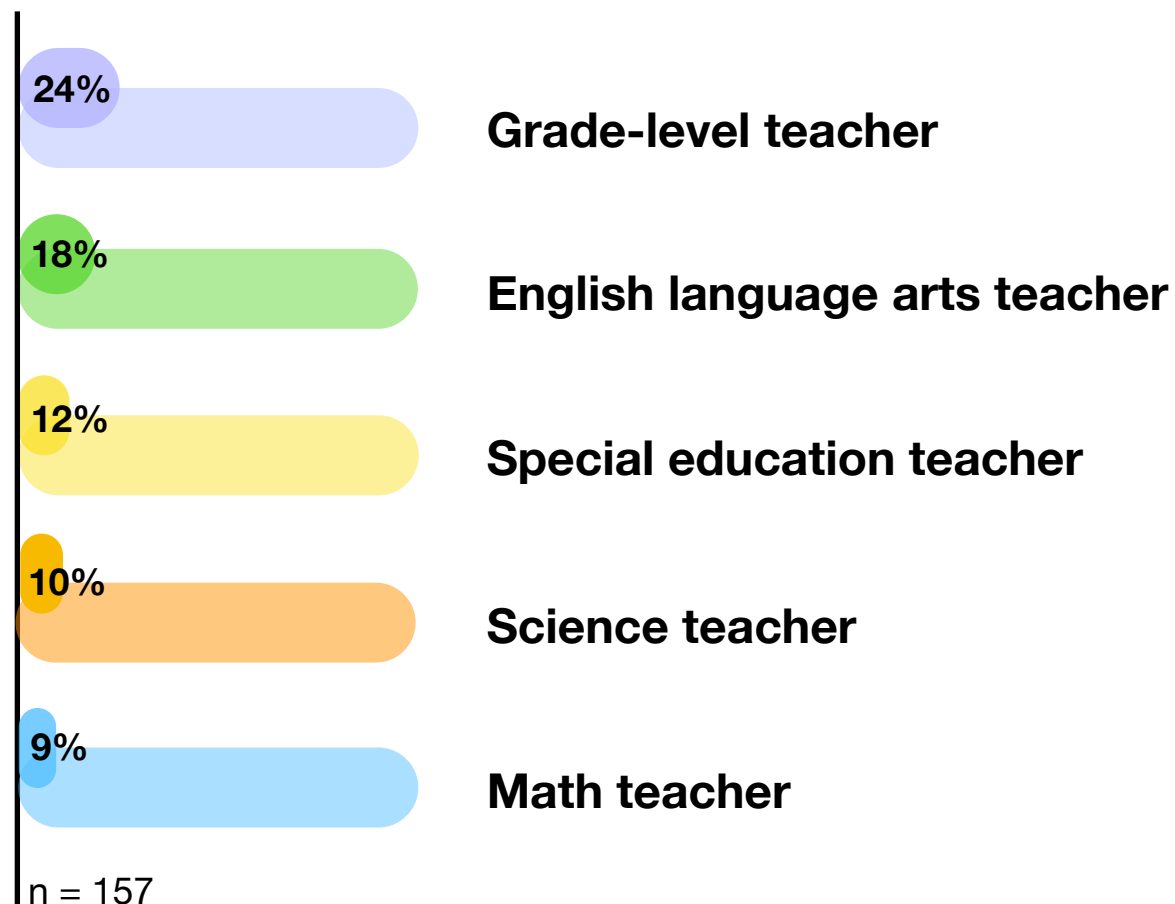
Q3. *Educators self-described regions.*





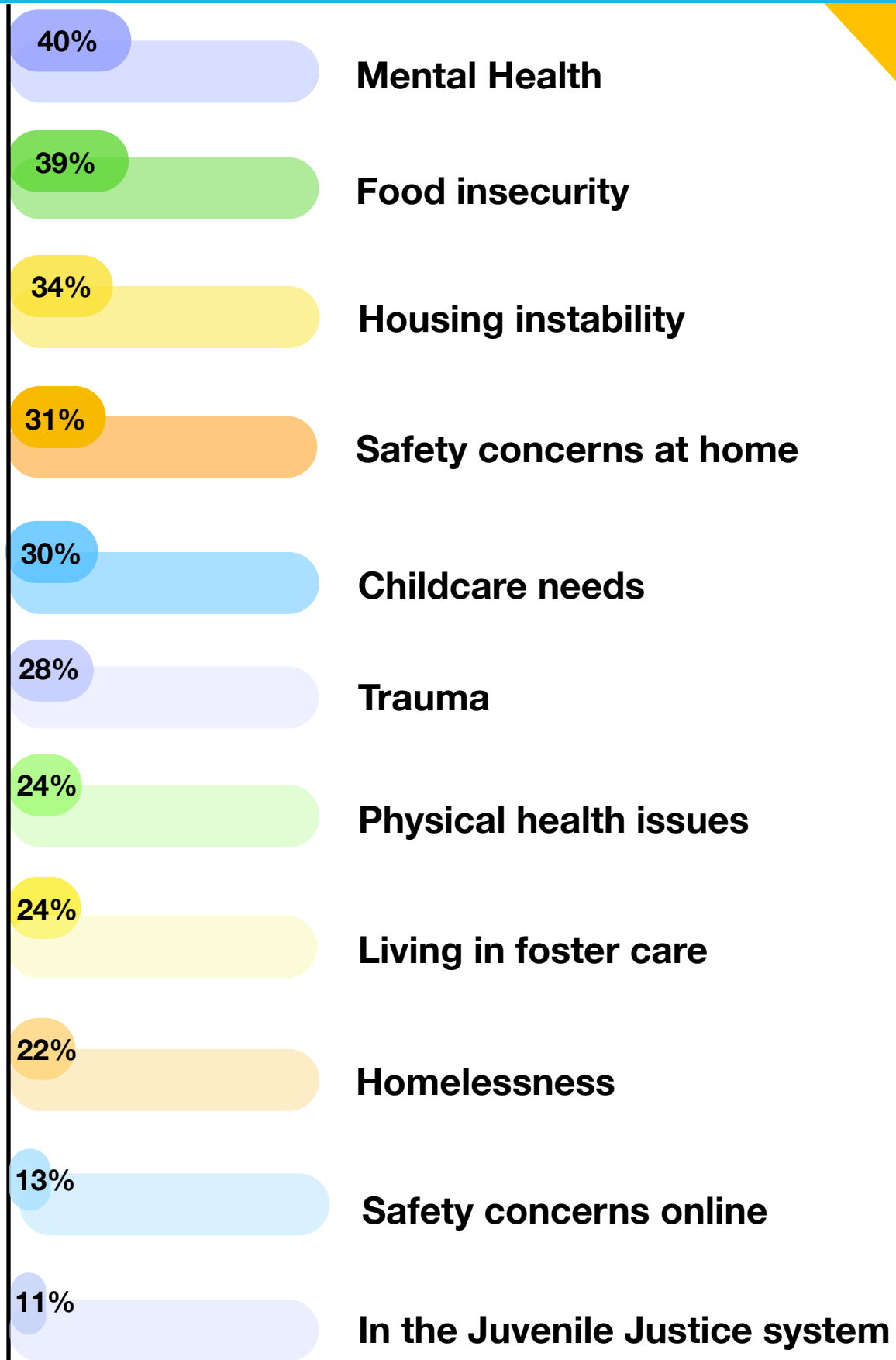
*Q4. What grade levels do you work with?
(Please choose all that apply.)*





Q5. *Top Five Selections: What is your role in your school?
(Please choose all that apply.)*

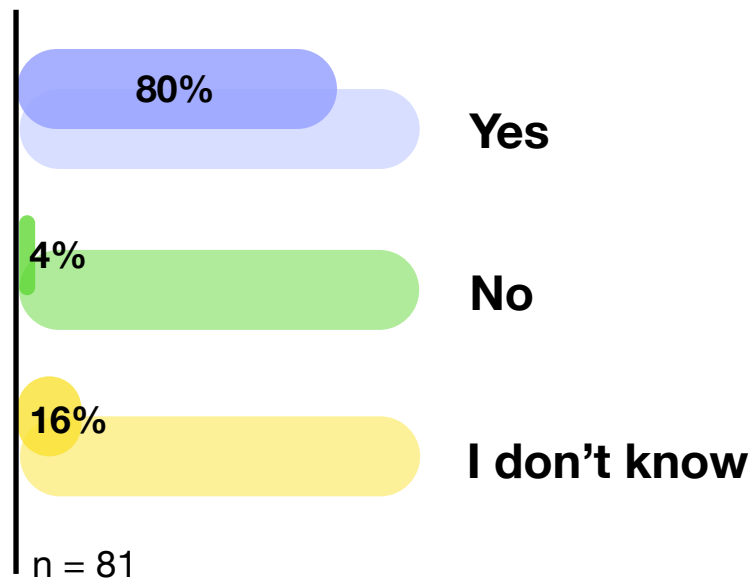




Q9. Are you aware of students in your building facing the following issues?
(Please choose all that apply.) Note: 50% of survey participants chose not to answer the question.

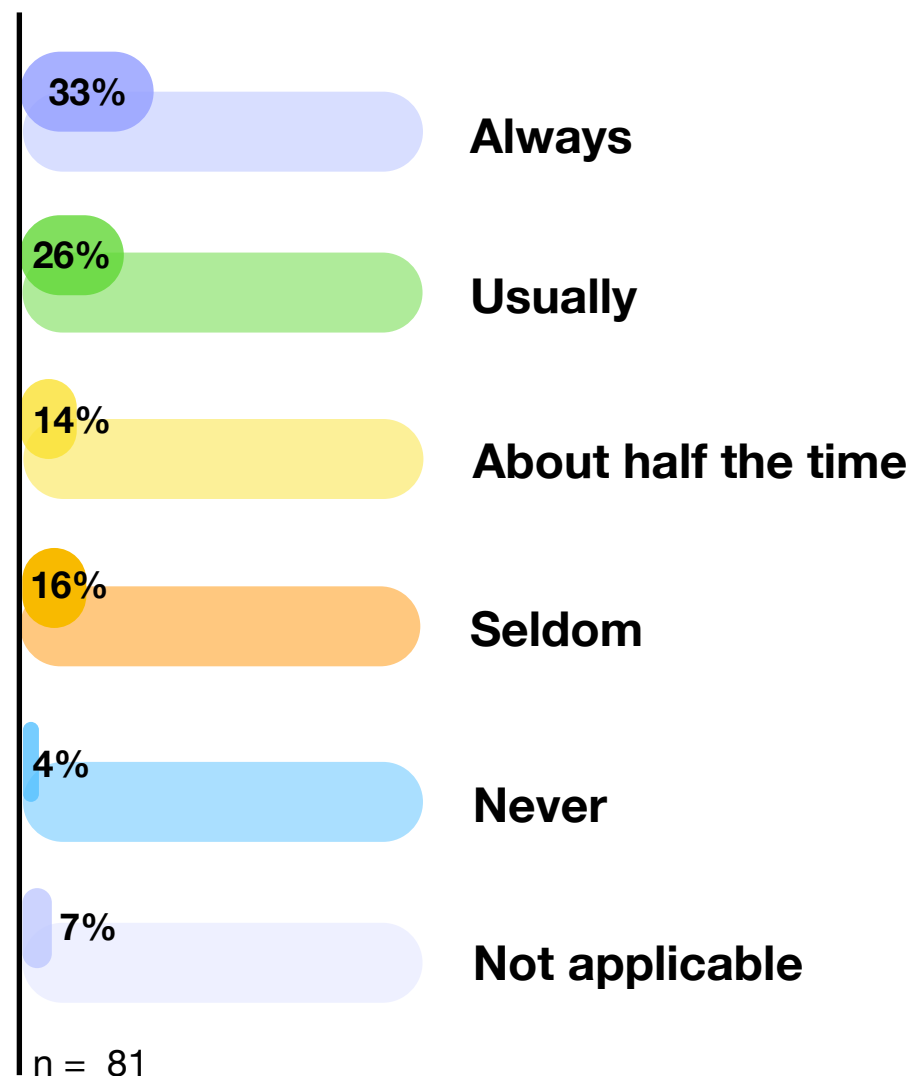
n = 157





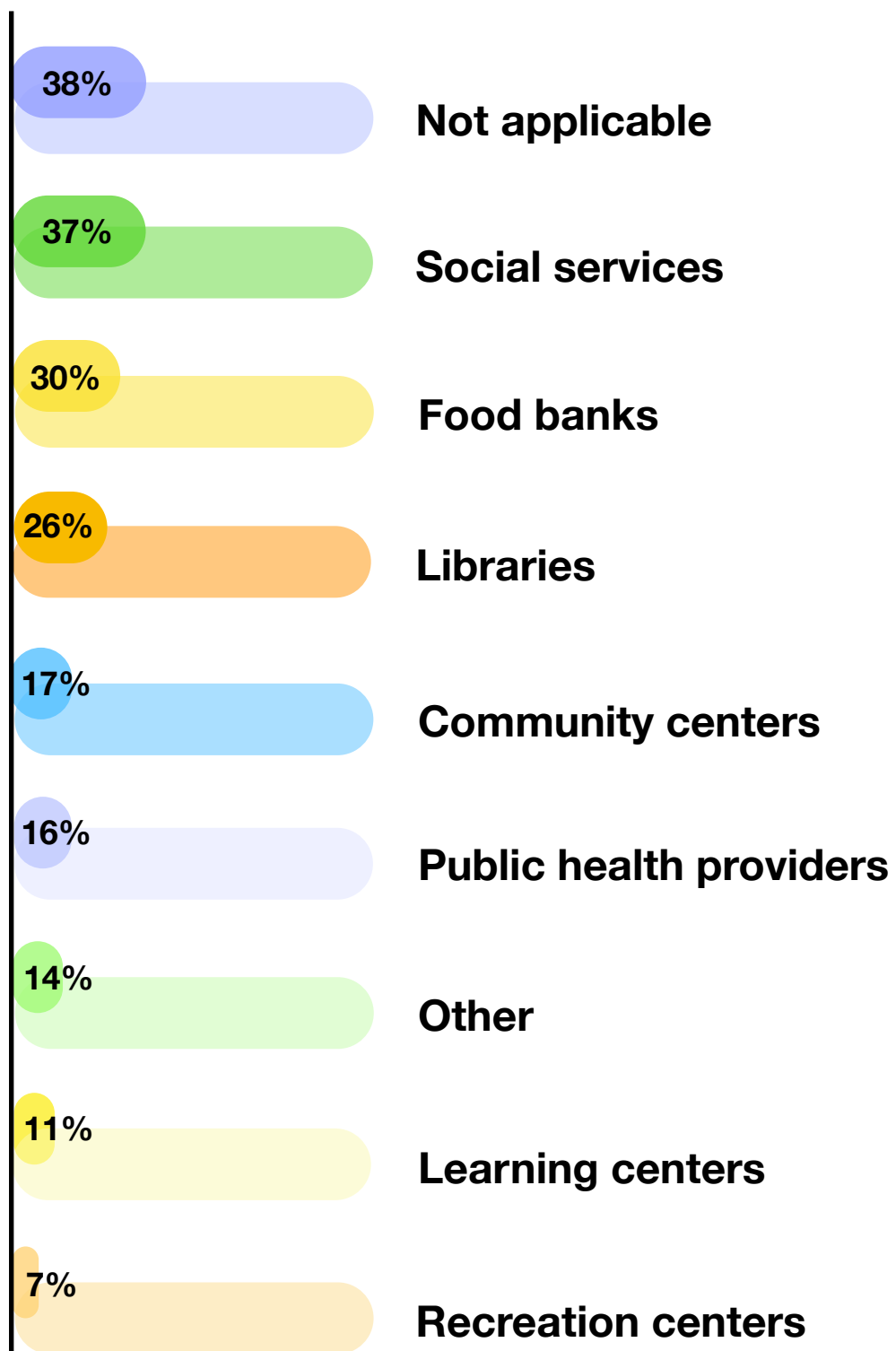
Q10. Are there resources available in the school or district to help students in your building facing the issues listed in Q9?





Q11. How often do you conduct mental health check-ins with your students?





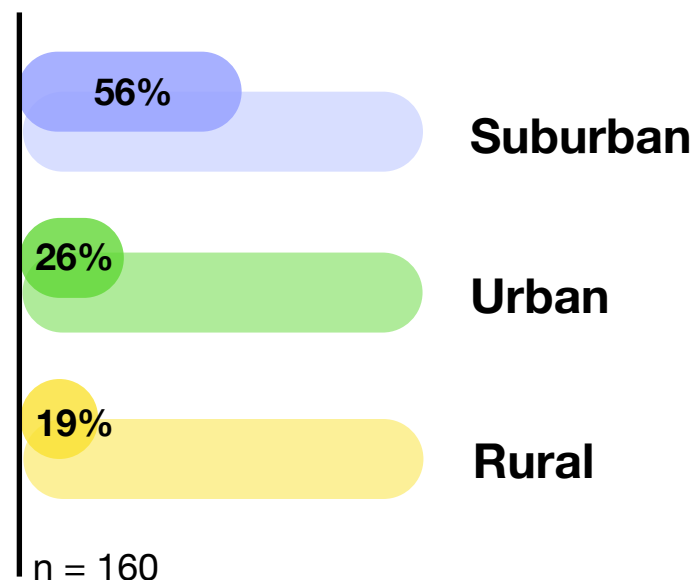
Q13. Which community organizations have you partnered with to get support and resources for remote learning for your students? (Please choose all that apply.)

n = 76



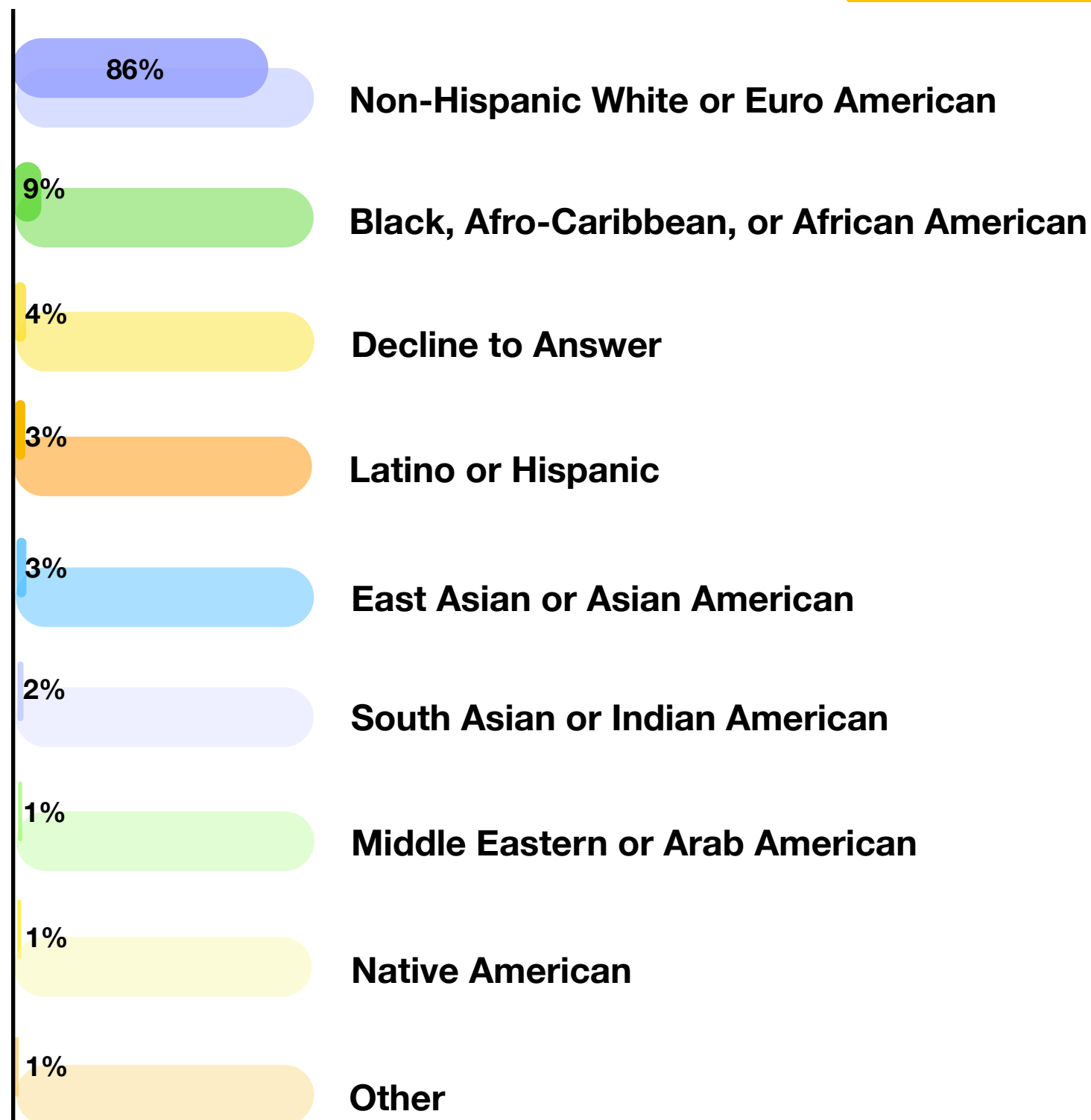
Ohio Listening Tour Survey Graphics

Parent and Guardian Survey Graphics (n=160)



Q3. Parent/Guardians self-described regions.

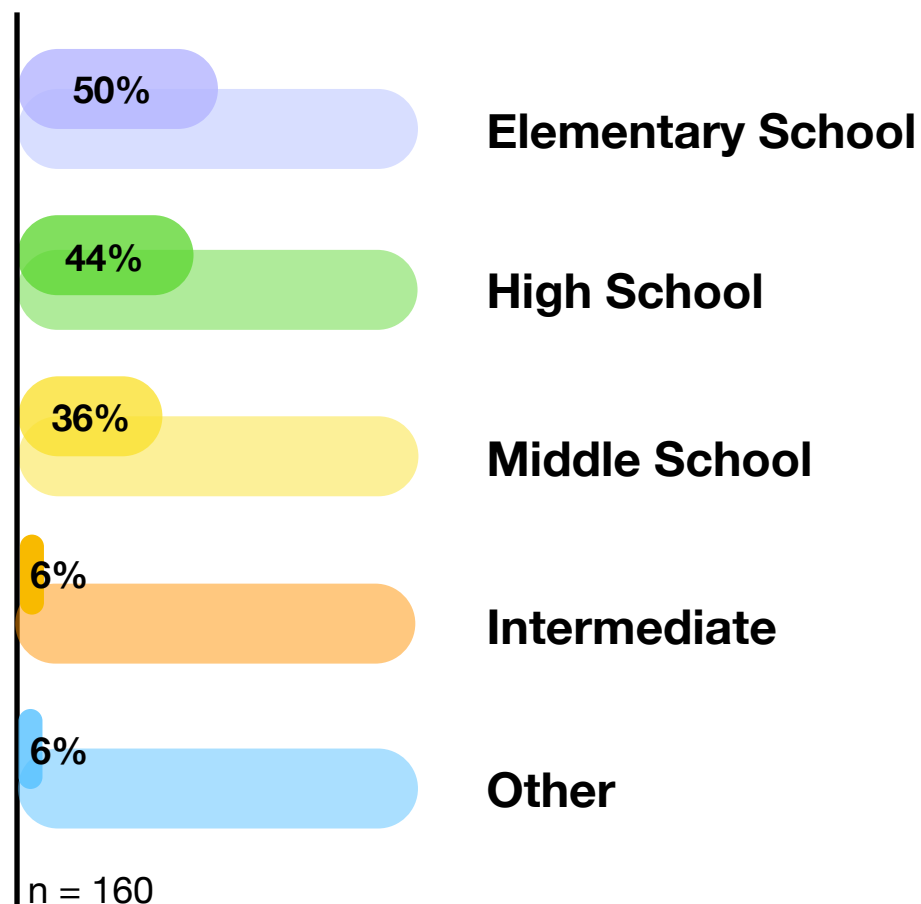




Q4. Parent/Guardians self-described race/ethnicity. Open-ended response represented by "Other" included the following: Xhosa. (Please choose all that apply)

n = 159



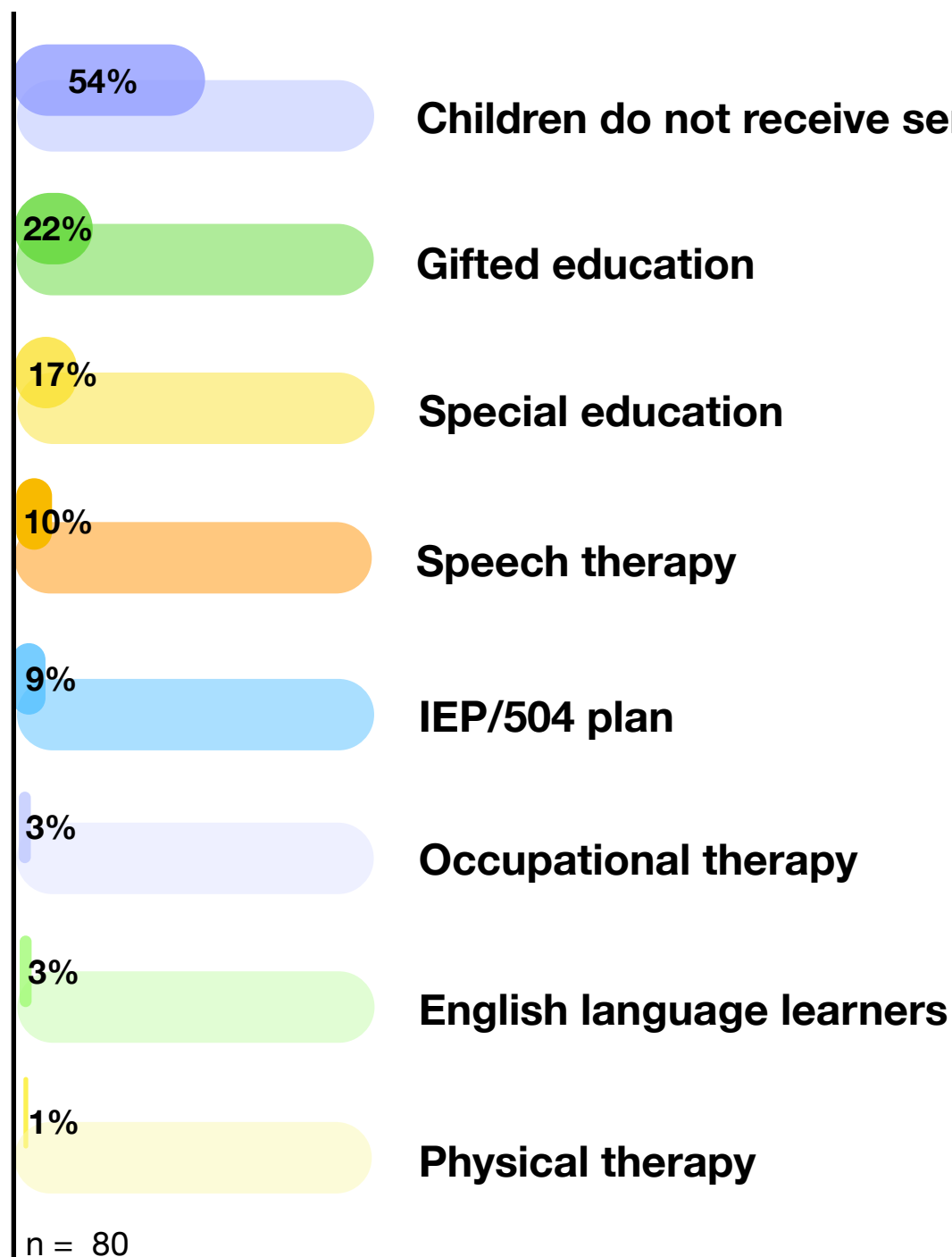


Q5. *What grade levels are your children in?*

*Open-ended response represented by "Other" included the following:
Junior High, Middle school but all high school courses, Preschool, and
Pre-K Special Education.*

(Please choose all that apply.)





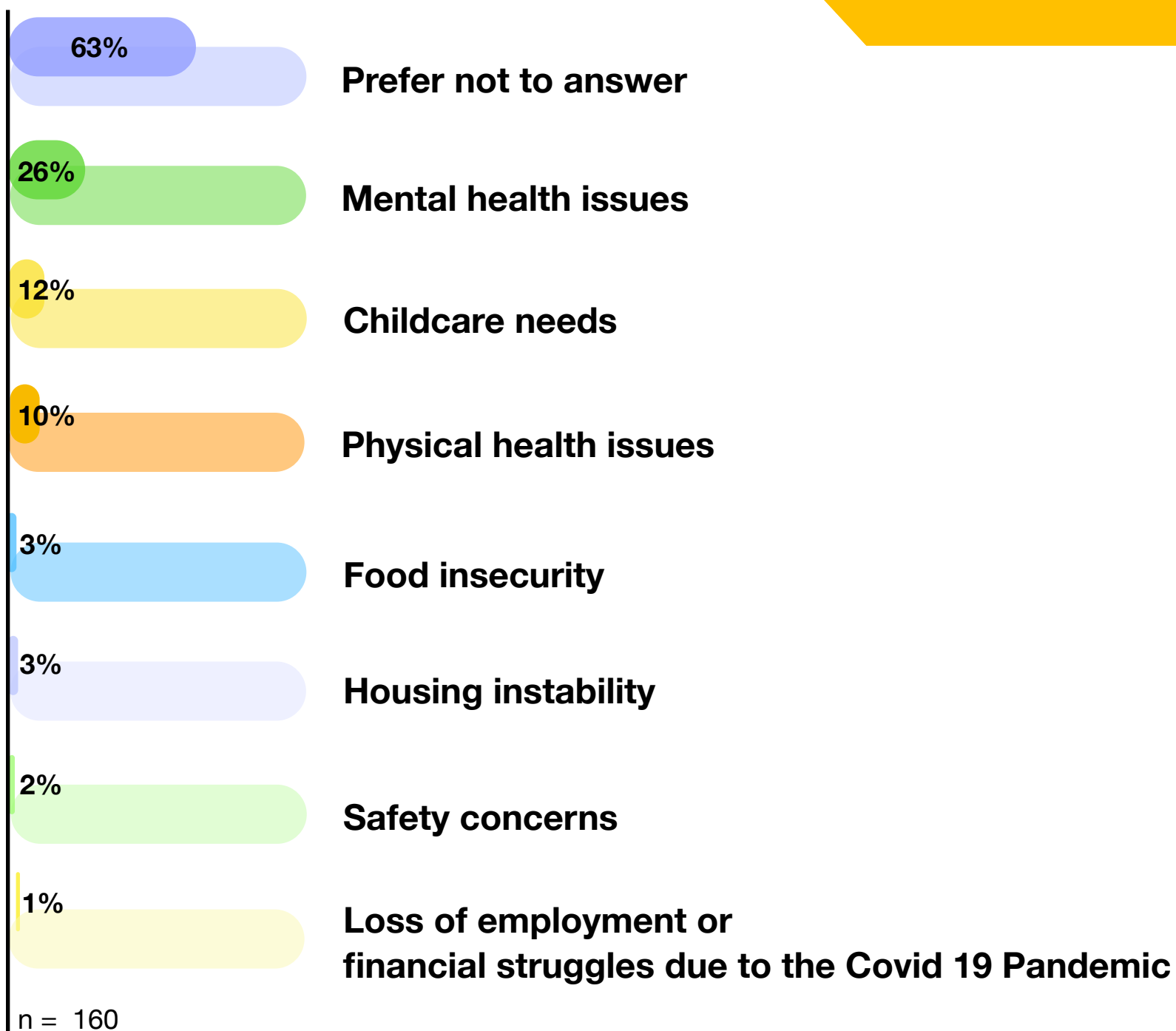
Q6. Do any of the children in your household receive services at the school?

Open-ended response represented by "Other" included the following:

Medical services and Reading intervention services.

(If yes, please choose all that apply)





Q7. Are you or anyone in your household experiencing the following challenges?
(Please choose all that apply.)





THE
PAST FOUNDATION

PAST Foundation
Research

Maria Green Cohen, Impact Officer and Director of Research
Kayla Galloway, Research Associate

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Appendix F:

In Their Own Words: Quotations from Listening Sessions



In Their Own Words: Quotations from Listening Sessions

The following quotations were excerpted from virtual focus groups conducted with parents, educators, and students who participated in the RemotEDx Ohio Listening Tour Spring 2021. Quotes have been organized by stakeholder group, and represent comments made in response to questions about their experience with education during the pandemic. Stakeholders were asked to identify *Benefits* arising from the experience, *Challenges* they faced, and *Strategies* they used to overcome challenges. Some stakeholders shared their *Perspectives on Potential Strategies Moving Forward*, and these quotes are found at the end of this document.

Benefits

Parent Comments

Parent Engagement:

- "Now parents have to get involved. Now they are more into what their kids are doing."
- "Teachers have been more forthcoming to share everything with the parents now because they cannot do everything virtually."
- "Teachers are approaching parents more..."

Student Growth:

- "During this school year it was very helpful for [my son] to be online actually, where he can be distracted but not with someone pressuring him to be focused at the same time. He found his own space and that worked really well for him."
- "We've seen [our daughter] blossom in areas we've never seen her blossom before."
- "If a student is struggling in any subject, then they have more opportunities or resources available to correct that and master that subject."
- "[the students] are Zoom masters...I think they're gonna carry that forward and they're gonna be very savvy communicators using these methods. So, if the world truly is changing to incorporate this stuff, they're [going to] be very well positioned..."
- "Now that the teachers [are] facing the kids, the kids can be held more accountable...than virtual."
- "My [son said], 'I am liking this because I can listen to music, I can do something [else], I can multitask, and no one can pull me out of it because this is how I focus and it all helps me focus.'"
- "My kids have gotten good at advocating for themselves and communicating with teachers."
- "The time away from the screen, [he's] doing that work more engaged because... [he isn't] tempted to sneak off and go look at YouTube videos when he's supposed to be on this lesson."

Safety:

- "It's been helpful to get to meet and know people 'safely' without being thrust into this brand new [school]."
- "[One benefit] is staying safe and healthy. That limits a lot of our anxiety, especially parents of teens who...are always wondering what our kids are up to."
- "The iPads are great [in] that they can monitor the activity online of the kids."



Support:

- "I [appreciated] the responsiveness of the IEP team at the start of the year when things were really rough and the strategies that we'd used in the past weren't really syncing up with the virtual learning...model they were using."
- "The school has a technical department. The students and parents can immediately email them or call them...and they will walk them through the steps to help with the iPad, to reconnect it, or if they are having any issues."
- "To actually see how they approach [teaching], it's been really interesting."
- "the best part, which I feel differentiates [my school] from a lot of other district schools is there [are] always live virtual classes going on."
- "They are in a very, very unique situation and I think all teachers around have been doing a tremendous job...I really appreciate all the efforts teachers are doing."
- "We were very happy to see that [the teachers] were flexible and that they recognized the need of tactile work and how...getting [the students] away from the screen has a big impact."
- "The counselors are always there, available, if the kids have anything to report or talk about."
- "Once issues are brought up, they're dealt with."

Student Comments

Experience with Different Learning Models:

- "I definitely like in-person learning better because it keeps me on a schedule or in a routine...And I just feel like being in-person and having a set period helps me get [things] done. And it helps my motivation, too."
- "When we started doing online, I realized I liked it a lot more and I wish I had done it a lot sooner because I kind of like going at a go-go-go pace and [getting] it all done so then I can do whatever I want for the rest of the day."
- "Being able to do the little things [extracurricular activities] made a big difference."
- "I appreciated that I could go at my own pace...I was able to get my work done a lot faster because I am naturally a much quicker learner (with virtual learning)."
- "Being at home, I didn't have to wait on the rest of the class to finish. I could move on to my next assignment which was really nice and it gave me more free time to work on my own independent projects."
- "The education itself has not been affected much by COVID-19 this year (being in-person)."
- "I kinda feel like an adult when...[because] you [have to] have all this schedule stuff. And schedules are nice, I like schedules."
- "I...felt a little more confident in my work (with small class sizes)."
- "You can still do all your exploratory classes, which is good because you obviously don't [want to] miss out on hands-on learning (with hybrid education)."
- "When we were hybrid, I really liked the smaller classes. It was more accompanied to just that class."
- "You felt like you could ask more questions without people interrupting (during hybrid learning)."
- "I feel like my...health has been better...(with following COVID protocols)"
- "I...like how for school experiments or anything we go outside more."
- "There was a lot of leeway on limits and when things could be turned in."



Communication:

- "It was a really nice thing to know that [teachers] were there for you when you...needed to ask questions, so that was a good part of being in contact with teachers."
- "I...like how it's more normalized to email your teachers about things, [because] last year I would've been awkward."
- "The majority of my teachers communicate with us through office hours with email [and they're] good about asking students to contact them for help."

Educator Comments

Embracing New Teaching Paradigms:

- "I think...it was kind of fun because I have been teaching a long."
- "I feel super connected to some of my kids and their families now because I have had the opportunity to see them in their home environments."
- "Working from home is good for me...Of course, I miss seeing colleagues, students, and families, but it's convenient to be home."
- "Teaching during a pandemic has really cemented to me my staff's indomitable nature."
- "Our teachers have been really innovative and have figured out ways to keep that going in a digital format."
- "Our teachers have just been amazing, especially when I'm hearing about my friends and other places..."
- "As the year progressed on, I think we did a much better job keeping students engaged. And [we were] more mindful of their SELs."
- "Even though it was a different type of program, I still think that this year was very productive."
- "We have a whole different skill set now with being able to manipulate Zoom and things of that nature."
- "The number of tech tools that I have personally learned how to use and helped my students learn how to use that we can carry on into face-to-face learning, that has been amazing."
- "Virtual meetings are something that people are much more willing to engage in."
- "We...have had a lot of experts from all over the US working with our kids on a regular basis, presenting from different locations...and those real live interactions via Zoom have been very powerful and they've also been free this year."
- "We've branched out and we found some alternative routes to explore."
- "We've expanded our technology usage and adaptability ten-fold from the fall."
- "[In Google Classroom] it's nice that you can list your assignments. You have all your assignments listed and then if they're absent that day, they can get [them]."
- "Everything's accessible for...parents and...kiddos [sic] when they go home."
- "All of our kids have a Chromebook that they can take home."
- "We have five busses that we are turning into Wi-Fi hotspots that are [going to] be parked moving forward. We haven't deployed them yet."
- "When we had snow days, it had to be online."
- "We got new laptops [and] that was a transition this year."
- "When I did the remote teaching from home, I thought it went extremely well."



- "We're very fortunate that we've been here and that these kids have grown."
- "It...models...for the students that flexibility and that you can figure out a way to get it done. It doesn't necessarily have to be the cookie-cutter deal."

Student Growth:

- "[When] the child is there in front of the screen, they almost feel like it is a one-on-one experience and they are more willing to share and...take risks for me in that environment rather than...at school."
- "I do believe that the majority of our students gave everything they had, too."
- "For some students this has been wildly successful in ways we didn't anticipate."
- "The students that may not have been successful got super successful..."
- "The students...who are being successful in this [remote learning] program have had to become even better problem solvers than...they were before."
- "When we were [meeting] remotely, [students] did respond more and they were more engaged [in] the program."
- "I have seen more growth this year than I have in previous years."
- "It has made [students] better communicators."
- "The students seem to have more control over their conversations, even when they selected not to speak or not to be in the camera."
- "Our [department's] testing data...showed a massive growth from the first time we took it in fall to when we took it in December."
- "There are students that are incredibly shy or introverted that may not talk in class but will blow up a chat box."
- "Our kindergarteners and first graders are going on to next year and they're gonna know their login and they're gonna know how to get to the classroom and access these things..."
- "Our kids really wanted to be here. I was prepared for...a 188-day mask war and it really hasn't been an issue. Our kids have complied and met our expectations and that's probably the biggest engagement boost we've seen."
- "As we got...more into the [mentor] program...children really started to open up and were very, very willing to participate."
- "By the time we got to the final session [of the program], [the students] did some of the most beautiful vision boards and they were really open to talking..."
- "If I am not available...[students] have to figure [problems] out on their own if they do not want to wait until I can respond...that has been a good thing."

Changing Dynamics:

- "More of a cooperative and collaborative relationship [between students and teachers] is really coming through here."
- "I've gotten to know the families better than ever before."
- "It...has brought our capacity to share these best practices across our district in a way we wouldn't have before."
- "Behavior issues, suspensions, all those types of things, went down quick because you're at home...parents have a certain expectation about how kids should act when they're in school and they were held to it because they were at home."
- "When we finally went back to full-in, the excitement was great for kids..."



- “We were able to supply our kids with instruction five days a week. It didn’t stop for [our] grade...we’ve been here the entire year and we’ve seen growth with our kids.”
- “We brought students back in again in March and...the amount of joy at being back in the building and getting to interact with teachers and with peers has been exponential.”
- “The experience, whether we liked it or not, it was something that was in place. It was a good alternative. It taught us not to give up as well as showed them to never give up.”
- “It was an adjustment for us as on how to collaborate together to try to figure out best practices, best ways to do things when [the students] didn’t have resources.”

Parent Engagement:

- “My parents were pretty good that they would come in and pick stuff up.”
- “Parental support has...made all the difference in the world.”
- “There’s actually better communication between parent and staff...especially in the special [education] department...they have been participating more. They’ve become more aware.”
- “The parents find the Zooms a lot easier because then they don’t have to take off work and...drive and pick up kids. They just show up on their phone or on a Zoom session.”
- “[Virtual] allows us to get [a] broader range of experts and experiences for the kids.”
- “Moms taught [remote students] along with me.”
- “One...mom...she should be a role model parent for remote teaching...She logs [her child] in [and] she leaves the room.”
- “My one [student]...he does testing at home and he’s had Ds and Fs. [His] mom takes a picture of it [and] sends it to me. She doesn’t correct it, she lets me do that.”

Challenges

Parent Comments

Feeling Overwhelmed

- “I am a part-time homeschool teacher. That’s my second job now.”
- “Some families don’t have the best support system...”
- “After one year...we [are] feeling...burned out and it feels [like there are] more challenges than benefits at this point...”
- “I think the fatigue of COVID-19 from both the parent side and an educator side is so real...”
- “I was personally expecting there [would] be...grace for the kids since everything was so overwhelming...in the sense like, if they’re not submitting, suppose five out of ten assignments, the teachers will be [understanding]. But no, they expected [each] one to be graded properly.”
- “[The teachers] are depending on us to find those issues and...they’re trying to stem the flow.”

Pandemic Repercussions:

- “It was isolation emotions. We are going to see in the years to come what isolation is doing to kids. No doubt, kids need to be in school.”
- “There are so many things that we haven’t done over the last year and I think we’re all out of practice in doing those things. And for kids who have less experience, they need to practice those skills.”

Issues with Technology:



- "I know now that each teacher works differently, their methodology is different, but in that, every teacher was using a different platform."
- "It was overwhelming to have all these [different] platforms."
- "Everything's online now and I really wish some of it was on paper."
- "[One] struggle is to keep them away from the virtual world because they have an excuse to be online."
- "I try to put parental control and that doesn't work with the school iPads so then they are not able to access...school...altogether and then I have to remove the blocks..."
- "With [my child's] fine-motor disability, trying to write on the iPad...I wasn't gonna go get him an Apple Pencil that cost a hundred bucks and a regular stylus just wasn't fine enough to control. The app that they use...would not allow us to print the pages."
- "This has been a discussion for years...Connect Appalachia, here's the plan...and nothing ever happens. You never hear anything about it again and nothing ever happens."

Engagement Issues:

- "[My son] couldn't focus because there was no structure [with online classes] and [he] fell behind in assignments."
- "[My child] will not reach out if he needs help in any subject, [so] I have to be on top of things."
- "Now that...everything's virtual, [the kids] feel like [they're] more on the radar..."
- "Anytime I email if there's an issue, I feel like a Karen."
- "When we send that [virtual] work in, she might be giving it a cursory glance, but they're not grading it and they're not really using it as a conduit to ensure engagement..."
- "I think there's a lot more repetition."
- "The teachers...[are] teaching five days a week. So, when they're in the classroom...with the other cohort, they can't field the emails from us. We get a rushed email in the evening, maybe, and sometimes we have to send another email as a reminder."
- "On the virtual days...we're pretty much on our own...I think that comes with the hybrid model. It's the same number of teachers...And they've got kids in school every day except for Wednesday."
- "I'd like to say that the resources that [teachers are] providing could be helpful as just extension opportunities for additional practice...but given their current age range and how they're interacting with it...they don't like doing this stuff."

Student Comments

Limited Social Interaction:

- "The lack of extracurricular activities is demoralizing."
- "You [have to] figure out seating arrangements [for lunch] and it's really annoying."
- "Think about your senior year in high school. Could you imagine not even being able to gather with a group of kids in class?"

Technology Limitations:

- "Technology doesn't work all the time."
- "It was hard to get [college] visits this year. It was hard to see campuses. You were looking through a Zoom call. You don't want to choose your campus through a Zoom call or where you want to spend your next four years."



Lack of Structure & Guidance:

- "I feel like the teachers can't do as much [in concurrent teaching] because some of the kids are online [and] it's hard handling both."
- "It's harder and harder to get the work done fast because it's confusing what they put in Schoology..."
- "Your days [are] not split up, but when we were in hybrid, it was weird because I'm so used to being at school doing my school."
- "Having to do school at home and then having your home chores...it's definitely a lot. It's like a big weight on your shoulders."
- "You still definitely have to go to school [while quarantining]."
- "There was very little consistency between my teachers."
- "Every teacher had a different way of doing [things] which made it hard to keep track and the inconsistency was just frustrating sometimes."
- "Hybrid or all remote is not really for me because I...need a little more structure."
- "[When I was quarantining] I [would] wish I was at school so I could be there, see the teacher talking and explain things, but I had to just base it off my Schoology."
- "My grades were worse in hybrid...sometimes you'd forget which [assignments] you had to take [to school]."
- "You have a home life and you have your school life and it's all just mixed together and it really sucks because you [have to] figure out which one's more important."
- "They don't structure you when you're virtual."

Time Management:

- "When we were online, it ruined my motivation, and...I'd wait to do [things until] the day before, so it was very overwhelming."
- "There's no independent work time. Teachers let us work on our own, but [there's] no time for independent work."
- "We weren't going to sleep until midnight."
- "We had...maybe just a couple hours left to actually do your own work."
- "There were definitely different strategies for in-person than online, so...the staff has expressed that they do not feel that they did justice to either group."
- "When I was in remote, it was like, 'Oh, I'll just take a 5-minute break' and suddenly I've been on TikTok for an hour. It's a lot harder to have a time limit or to get my work done."
- "There [were] a ton of Zoom...or Google meetings where I felt like I had to schedule everything [in] my day around that meeting."

Educator Comments

Student Engagement:

- "[The] biggest challenge as an online learning teacher is not knowing the kids. It's very difficult to develop...relationships with kids...I can't develop that rapport with them."
- "Most of [the remote students] don't really talk or engage."
- "We don't really know the online kids. It's the first time we've had some of them. One of them could walk in front of me and I wouldn't know that they were one of my students."
- "It was too easy not to do anything at home. It was hard to get motivated at home..."



- "There's not really a problem except for the fact that I don't really think they're learning."
- "One of the challenges...that I had the most was participation, getting the students to login when they were only at home."
- "I think...the kids at home...feel disconnected."
- "The first couple of [mentoring] sessions, the students were more or less a bit shy and a lot of them did not login."
- "When they actually were able...to be in person with the program, it was hard [to get] participation in class...everyone was silent, nobody really talked that much. It was like pulling teeth at times."
- "Increased distractions...[have] been really tricky. If I have nine children in my home and I don't have rooms for all of [them], the amount of learning that's [going to] happen from a sixth grader is a bit of a crap-shoot."
- "It just seemed like [the students] were [kind of] exhausted. It was very difficult for them to engage."
- "It was just harder to keep [students] engaged compared to [before]."
- "It's hard to keep [my remote student] motivated, no matter what it is, [because] he's getting the same experience, just through a screen, but he wants to be in the classroom, he wants to be around his friends, he needs that social interaction."
- "We missed a lot of that personal engagement that lets them trust us and get even more connected to us and the program."
- "The biggest challenge is attendance."
- "Unless [students] were self-motivated, [they fell behind]."

Pandemic Repercussions:

- "I'm not concerned with right now, I'm concerned about next year. The kids that are remote will come back [and be behind]."
- "There's [going to] be, probably, a lot of holes in what [remote students have] learned over the year compared to face-to-face."
- "I could tell these [first graders] missed out at the end of kindergarten because I felt [like] it took us until January to be able to understand the rules and what you expect."
- "They are going to learn, but if we don't focus on their emotional well-being and making sure that we are truly educating the whole child, that's going to have more of an impact on their long-term mental, social, all that, health than just the education."

Parent Engagement:

- "A lot of times, the parents were making [tech issues] worse by trying to intervene too much and the kids knew what to do."
- "[One] mom [has] just been...a complete nightmare...interrupts teaching...it's like having another child in the room."
- "The parents who aren't in active involvement aren't doing as well."
- "We take an online test...and...you could tell that [one student] didn't take the test [herself]."
- "[One student] can't [sic] hardly read, but yet she was way above the benchmark. She was probably on a third-grade reading level with mom, but she's not at all [there]."
- "With the increase [in email communication] sometimes [parents] have gotten overwhelmed and stopped reading it or stopped really paying attention to it, so there's things that g[o]t missed."
- "Parents are also frustrated, they don't know how to do the specifics of...our curriculum."



Working with Vulnerable Populations:

- "The majority of my kids are ESL students...so we have another [challenge] to overcome [in] just communicating at the basic levels, so it was...compromised by being in the virtual environment."
- "Reaching ESL families is a major challenge. You make phone calls and need an interpreter."
- "Touchpoints have been only virtual...if they're virtual, it makes it trickier because if families were already maybe not tech-savvy or maybe there was a language-barrier or something like that – I think that was tricky for us, too."
- "I had kids that had one-on-one aides in the building, and without that support, really struggled at home."
- "Some [students] could not attend at all because of autism or ADHD...So, we did lose some valuable time with kids like that, where just technology was not their way of learning."
- "If somebody's lights were out, then...they can't be virtual...you can't be remote [if] your lights are cutoff."

Mental Health Concerns:

- "There was a lot of fear and apprehension we had to overcome as a staff."
- "One of the things [that] has been most challenging as a leader this year has been managing emotions of the staff. There has been an inordinate amount of anxiety...that anxiety has manifested in very real ways in terms of how they interact with peers...[and] their comfort coming into the building."
- "This summer, many of the teachers didn't take that time for themselves because they saw how hard it was to do the distance learning and the hybrid stuff at the end of last school year."
- "Teaching...is high stress, high emotion through the school year and you need your summers off to just rejuvenate from that whole ordeal."
- "This entire year, it has been a battle...[of] mental fatigue and exhaustion and a lack of seeing that success."
- "I personally am very worried about what happens next year after this is over. How many teachers are we going to lose because of that high emotional stress that they've been in?" "There are...students that felt like they were disconnected and [remote education] only increased the disconnection."
- "It is fundamentally unfair to expect the teachers to be the ones to do [mental health stuff] without effective resources and support."
- "The students who weren't doing well were doing even less well."

Teaching Limitations:

- "A lot of the enrichment activities kind of went by the wayside because it was more 'do what needs to be done' kind of deal."
- "Some of those enrichment activities were difficult to do online."
- "We heard crazy stories about students or teachers saying things and then getting sued. So, filming and recording yourself in front of students was a bit scary."
- "I do a lot of hands-on, multisensory things and you can't really do that through a screen, so you miss out on that aspect [of learning]."
- "[One] thing that I miss...is we did awesome centers."
- "A lot of [the students] didn't get their books because they didn't [want to] come up to the school...So, that was a challenge for us in trying to find ways to navigate that and still be effective in the program and still get across the message that we were to teach."



- "It was kind of hard to keep [students] accountable."
- "I felt really bad for the education remote students were getting the first semester."
- "Just like we h[ad] before COVID-19, there'll be some [students] that try to abuse the system, try to escape and slip through the cracks. That's just the nature of what we do."

Technology Limitations:

- "You praise the kid through the screen and does it help? Sure, but it's not the same as [seeing] that person eye-to-eye and giving them that support."
- "When [technology] works, it's fantastic. When it doesn't, it's horrible. It has been such a determiner in the way teaching happens, especially this year. And it's unavoidable."
- "We all have that setting that [students] can't look up stuff on their computers during tests, but we don't know if they're using their phones or other computers."
- "You lose a lot of those teachable moments because we [have to] login."
- "Even with hotspots, we had students with issues connecting, staying connected, or you'd get the...frozen screen and every now and then they'd come on like robots."
- "Some of the students were trying to engage more but they were having a problem with technology."
- "Without being in a classroom, it was very hard to see all that [progress]."
- "Being in that classroom...I was able to interact with the students more...and see whether they were picking up on the information or what they needed, that was hard [to do] virtually."
- "The biggest challenge that we had...with teaching remotely is that...digital divide...everybody doesn't have great internet, everybody doesn't have...an awesome device."
- "One of the most difficult things that the kids have is the navigation of the classes online."
- "[One] huge difficulty, as far as remote teaching, for me was trying to give my remote kids everything they need[ed]...it's a whole different ball game when they're here in the classroom...and it's a whole [different] thing when you have [them] on a computer. There's only so long that six- and seven-year-olds can sit at a computer."
- "I can't even see how they're holding their pencil...you need to see...their fine-motor skills."
- "There [were] some problems [because] the kids [want to] share with their friends...and they're not muting their mics."
- "Sometimes we'd come in and my screen would be up on my laptop and then it wouldn't be on my SMART Board...or the mic isn't working."
- "There were just different [technology] things we had to navigate and that takes time."
- "I can see the kids' frustration because the teachers are piling a lot of information into the Google Classroom, so the kids are not seeing all the detail that they need to complete their assignments."
- "In that virtual environment, you could...skim the room or see the bottom of the screen but you can't see everything, so that was a little bit more difficult for me."
- "We didn't allot enough time between getting into the breakout rooms and then bringing things back together."
- "I found it easier to have...[them] all in one place. Either all of [them] here or all of [them] there."

Lack of Social Interaction:

- "We couldn't eat lunch together anymore."
- "Sometimes [the students] would go for about two hours and then they would get a break...with the younger groups, they would only go for about 45 minutes to an hour and then they would get a break



before going to another class...even still, you're in the same seat all day. You don't get a recess or have interaction with other kids."

- "We still had to be six feet apart, even when you came back, there was no more eating in the cafeteria. At first, there was no playing on the playground together."

Finding Balance:

- "It is nonstop texting, messaging, from parents and...it could wait [but] I can't stand not to answer somebody."
- "There's no downtime now."
- "[The students] have a lot more [work] to do."
- "We take calls, answer questions, all hours of the night."
- "The normal teacher support just isn't there. I am not available 24/7."
- "I can't have parents messaging at 10 o'clock at night, 12 o'clock – you just can't. On a Friday night?"
- "It just felt like we would always try to prepare, plan, execute [but] you never got through the whole cycle without something happening. Something would trip you up and you would [have to] restart."
- "It was just a constant juggle of one issue to the next to the next and as we feel like we start to get a handle on one issue, a new one would arise."
- "What would work for one batch of students would not work for another and so it was a constant shuffle."

Quarantine Preparation:

- "You didn't prepare just for a couple days' absence, you would prepare for a week or two."
- "When [students would] be quarantined, you'd know the night...or the morning of."
- "The [students] that went from being quarantined to coming back to my classroom, I felt like that was where we were losing some of the education piece...because...it's...just harder to keep them on track and they were the ones...[who] needed to be in school."
- "We probably all had a lot of quarantine kids at one time or another, and it just seemed like they did struggle more than the kids that just started out with remote and [were] consistent with it."

Strategies

Parent Comments

- "We've had a few small get-togethers outside with grandparents or cousins or whatever in the last little bit."
- "Having family around to help [students] helps."

Student Comments

- "[Colleges] try to help us out with scholarships and stuff."
- "Being in school does help a lot because we have set times for everything."
- "I...try to use my weekends or try to FaceTime my friends."
- "Canceling stuff in your home-life schedule...was an alternative to finally get your stuff done and get it out of the way."
- "You...have to make sure you're an organized person because if you're not, then it's...hard to get all your work done and remember everything."



Educator Comments

- "I just give a lot of grace."
- "Providing that grace wherever we can has meant a lot to students and families."
- "We've been using experts within our staff to help each other."
- "We've just...adapted the PD and used each other as needed."
- "There's so much need for communication digitally because their kids aren't bringing home papers to show them when there's something important that we would print out on paper."
- "The parents were the teachers...Teachers stepp[ed] in as helpers to provide tools and gave lessons, but the parents, sitting right by their child, they were the one...giving instructions at home."
- "We...just tried to always...let [them] know how much we appreciated their engagement and tried to get everybody to give us something and we were...very encouraging to the people who did [want to] share."
- "We...shared a lot about ourselves...we never hesitated in putting them where we were, our mindset of what was going on with us when we were in the eighth grade."
- "As teachers, we've been very flexible with [communication], too, because when we find out that [a] child is quarantined, we're really good about talking to the parents at all hours of the day...it's not unlike us to...be talking to the parents in the evenings."
- "I would give [the students] a time [for speech therapy appointments], create a group, and, with their parent's help, they would click on it at the scheduled time."
- "I feel like we have been very open this year in taking into consideration this virus and everything..."

Stakeholder Perspectives on Potential Strategies Moving Forward

Parent Comments

- "COVID-19 should make school districts look into their policies, their ways of doing things, their way of [thinking] if [things] are equitable or...fair for everyone."
- "People will know where [school districts] messed up and they are taking notice."
- "It's hard to pause and [ask], 'What would we have done differently?' and even tak[e] the time to ask the question."
- "There's so much rich technology out there, assistive technology, educational technology, that is genuinely...dynamic and...adaptable...I just think that that type of thing could be...extremely beneficial."
- "A lot of companies, a lot of resources, became free during the pandemic as the kids went virtual and many kids have utilized those. And I hope some of those continue to be available."
- "For any kids who lose focus or have difficulty focusing in class, come back home, we'll get that recording again, maybe go over what the teacher said. So, class recordings available would be really...helpful."

Student Comments



- "You could probably organize a way to meet with counselors. I doubt they would leave you hanging for help."
- "Just having more communication between teachers about what the expectations for learning [are] and how to format Canvas pages and assignments [would be helpful]."

Educator Comments

- "[There] should be a collaborative operating classroom and that's where we really want students at the center anyways."
- "We need an on-demand interpreter service for ESL families."