**The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on                                    Baltimore Public School Children**

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The Coronavirus pandemic is having an enormous impact on public schools across the nation. Data collected from Baltimore City Public School (BCPS) students, sheds light on how students are experiencing the pandemic, particularly with respect to their schooling. We aim to present relevant analysis of this data, so policymakers and practitioners can get a better sense of what current educational practices are working well in light of pandemic school closures, and what areas need further improvement

**COVID’s Impact on Teaching and Learning                                   Figure 1**Chart, sunburst chart

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Beginning March 13, 2020, in response to orders from the Maryland Department of Education, BCPS schools closed to in-person learning and shifted to a completely online instructional model.

Students report that during online learning many are still connecting with their teachers regularly (Figure 1). However, 1 in 3 report connecting with their teachers only a few times or never. Given how important student-teacher relationships are to learning, ideally we’d like to see this number much lower.

Figure 2 gives a more in-depth look at student experiences during distance learning. The majority of students are happy with online learning (56%) and half said they learned a lot during their classroom sessions.  Teachers are doing a good job of providing help when needed, and most students are clear on what they should be doing during classes (72%). While many students find working from home easy (60%), technological barriers appear to be a significant barrier to learning for some, with almost one-fourth of students saying they had trouble getting online or finding a computer for schooling.

**Figure 2: Student Experiences During Online Learning**

**Chart, funnel chart

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With regard to communication, students found a variety of technological tools to be helpful with their education (figure 3). They were most likely to name the online learning system as most helpful tool (53%), followed by video chat (51%) and posting written messages online (32%). Phone calls were less likely to be named as most helpful (19%).

**Figure 3.  Most Helpful Methods of Communicating**

**Timeline

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The human resources that students are most likely to call upon for help with schooling is changing during the pandemic. Since switching to distance learning, students are much more likely to look to adults at home for assistance with schoolwork, and less likely to reach out to teachers (Figure 4). As a result, many parents and other caretakers are experiencing increased educational burdens during the pandemic, and children who do not have access to adults at home during the school day are at a disadvantage.

**Figure 4. Most Likely Ways of Reaching Out for Help**

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Despite the risks involved with in-person learning, the majority of students (67%) are eager to return to their school buildings at least once in a while for instruction or enrichment (Figure 4). Students also feel strongly that families should determine whether or not students return to school in-person (87%).

**Figure 4. Student In-Person Learning Preferences**

**Chart, bar chart

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With regard to going back to in-person learning full-time, many students are apprehensive (Figure 5). Half of students stated they are not comfortable or somewhat uncomfortable with returning to in-person learning full-time. While only one in five were very comfortable with going back into their school building regularly. These data illustrate decisionmakers should account for significant trepidation involved with reopening schools fully.

**Figure 5. Student Comfort with In-Person Learning**

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**Conclusion**

Data from Baltimore City Public School students demonstrate students and families are experiencing increased barriers to education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and students are adapting to the pandemic through the use of technology and increased home-based support. To further build upon current school successes, we recommend policymakers and practitioners focus on the following:

* Ensure all students have access to technology during distance learning
* Provide additional supports and increased outreach to students who do not have adults at home during distance learning
* Keep families at the center of decisions on whether or not students return to in-person learning
* Encourage teachers to connect individually with students as much as possible