

Embargoed until 6:00am, Friday May 14th

NEW SURVEY POLLS REMOTE FAMILIES TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY NEED TO COME BACK TO THE CLASSROOM

New study interviewed more than 100 families with all-remote students in public schools across the City to find out what it will take to get them back in-person.

Majority (64%) of those surveyed say they are very or somewhat likely to come back in person in the fall with 21% still uncertain — and more than half saying nobody had reached out to discuss the fall yet.

Vaccinations for families and students, keeping up safety measures, and lower COVID levels in the summer, at top of mind.

Results highlight the need for the City to engage families in a dialogue to shape a plan for the fall. The candidates plan to continue surveying over email and other outreach methods to gain additional insight.

BROOKLYN, NY -- City Council Candidate Justin Krebs and current council member & candidate for Comptroller Brad Lander announced today the results of a new survey that polled over 100 families with students in all-remote school across the five boroughs to find out why they chose remote learning for their children and what it would take for them to feel confident coming back to the classroom this fall.

The recent survey, conducted by the Krebs and Lander campaigns via phone over a four-day period this week, showed that families chose remote school last fall and many continued to remain remote through the year primarily because of concerns for the health of their child and family members. Measures that gave these parents the most confidence to return were if children and family members are vaccinated, if social distancing and mask wearing precautions are still in place in September, and if class sizes are smaller.

“We decided to launch this survey because the City and DOE need to recognize and address why so many of our students have still not come back to the classroom,” said **City Council Candidate Justin Krebs**. “We have talked to more than 100 families across the five boroughs and we call on the Mayor and DOE to prioritize this conversation for all remote families. We need to do more to get all our kids back in person safely and to address the trauma that many families have from the pandemic. We want to make sure the city is getting concerned families the answers they need to ensure an in-person, full-time return this fall is a reality for all students.”

“There’s no time to waste. We need to start listening to families whose students have been learning remotely, about what will make them feel confident in their kids returning to the

classroom in the fall,” said **Council Member and Comptroller Candidate Brad Lander**. “This survey shows us that many parents are ready for their kids to go back in-person, but they have important questions. Unfortunately, a majority report that no one from DOE or their school has reached out to ask what they need to feel safe returning to school in the fall. We need to engage them now, as part of an inclusive process that includes families from all cohorts, so principals and school leaders can make plans that will make next year work for all our kids.”

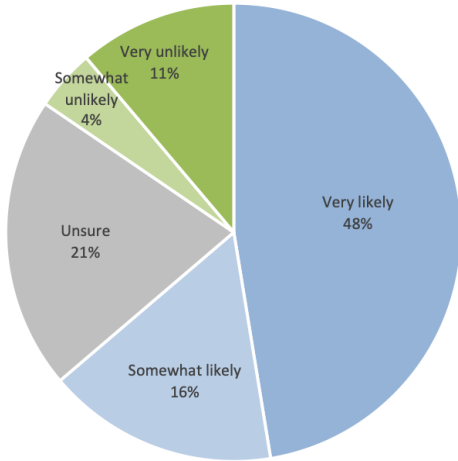
Topline Findings

Topline findings of the study included:

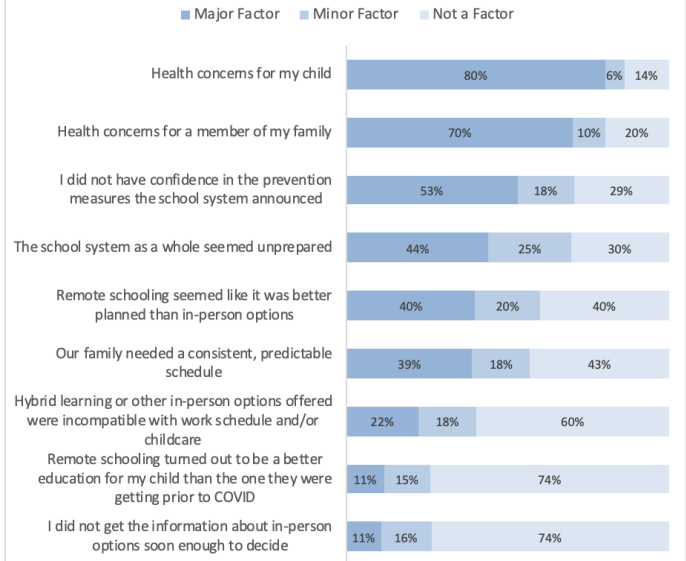
- A large majority (64%) of current remote-only families contacted say they are very or somewhat likely to return in-person in the fall, with many unsure (21%) and only (15%) very or somewhat unlikely.
- Concerns about the current school year and next school year are largely around children’s and family’s health.
 - Measures that gave the most confidence were if children and family members are vaccinated, if distancing and mask wearing precautions are still in place, and if there are smaller class sizes.
 - If new coronavirus cases still remain high in the summer, 70% of families would lean more towards staying all-remote.
- Over half (52%) of respondents had not been contacted by anyone about returning in-person in the fall.
- The most influential person parents could hear from to make a decision is their child’s principal (45%) followed by their teacher (29%), rather than the Chancellor (13%) or Mayor (13%).
- Open-ended responses broadly indicate that families interviewed want their kids to go back in-person. They don’t love remote learning, they just want to know it’ll be safe. If they stay remote, the quality of the experience needs to improve.

Highlighted Survey Questions

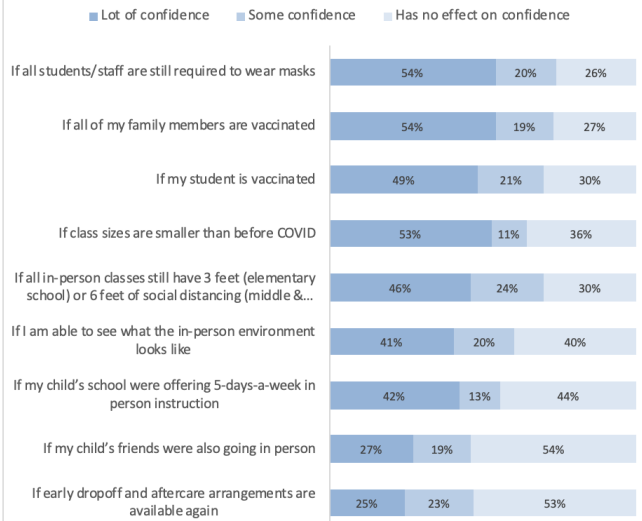
Given what you know today, how likely are you to enroll your children for in-person learning in the fall?



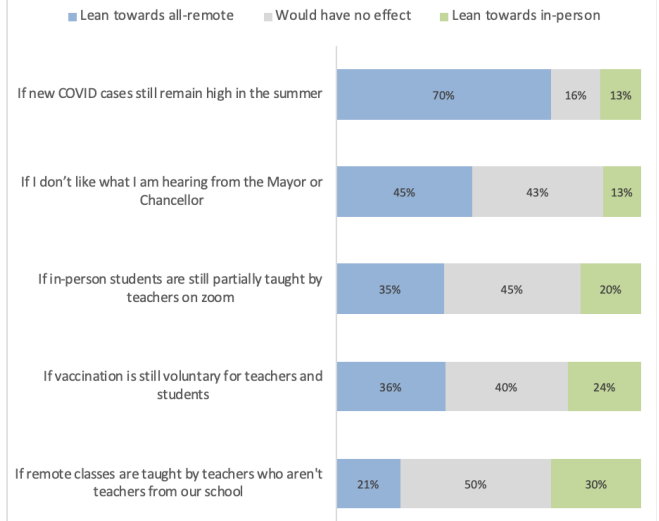
Concerns at the beginning of the school year



Measures that would give confidence in returning to in-person school in the fall



Things that may cause parents to lean towards all-remote versus in-person schooling in the fall



Selected Parent Comments

Highlighted parent comments gathered in the interviews called out concerns about the ability of schools to address lost academic progress and social-emotional needs, frustration with continued remote learning, and among some, a deep sense of trauma from the pandemic.

Some selected comments include:

“The public school system did the best with what they had, but the Department of Education just wanted to save face by opening schools without really having a plan for students. Graduating seniors have been left behind and missed out on important stepping stones towards building their futures. These questions should have been asked a year or a year and a half ago.”

“Having kids be physically in a classroom but still taught by teachers who are online/on zoom is basically the same thing as doing fully remote. The schools should be doing completely remote or completely in person, not in between.”

“I am concerned that people will not follow guidelines. Children will have to take the train which causes more exposure. What will happen with cleaning bathrooms? Will they still be testing?”

“Classes are large, teachers are overwhelmed, and I am worried that teachers will not be able to recognize a student who has extra needs than other classmates. Smaller classes would be a good thing.”

“I am concerned about COVID as I was actually hospitalized for it earlier in the pandemic.”

“I want to make sure everyone is vaccinated, including children, by the fall. Make the class sizes smaller, everyone should keep wearing masks and social distancing.”

“If high rates of positive tests occur, schools would switch back and forth from remote and in-person, making things chaotic again”

“[With remote learning] you don’t have in-person interaction and it’s tough for kids who suffer with paying attention and self-discipline. Remotely, they lose those students. Students need to be self-motivated, it’s more difficult to ask questions and get support.”

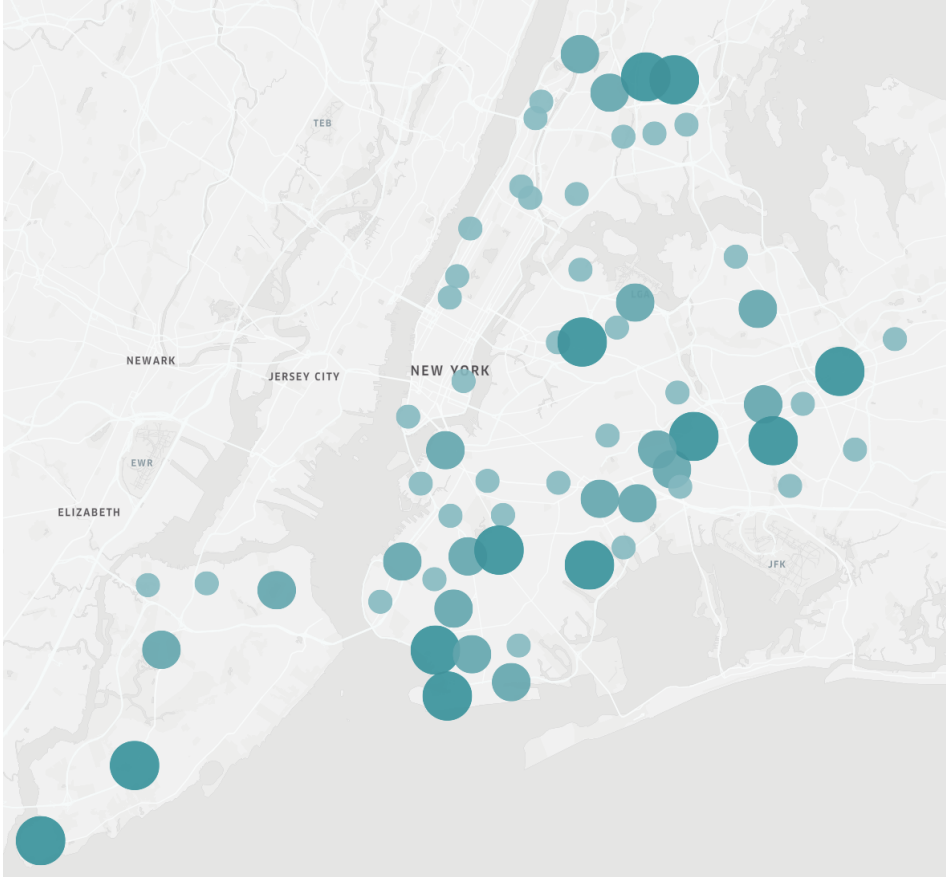
“My special needs son could focus more on what he was learning without peers. My daughter was hurt by not having the social aspect of school.”

Survey Sample

Respondents represent a cross-section of the city and broadly correspond to the demographics of the school system, hailing from neighborhoods in Queens, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Manhattan, and Staten Island. 33% spoke a language other than English at home, including Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Bangla, Russian, Hatian Creole, Arabic, Urdu, German, Greek, Tibetan, and Albanian. 29% are single parents or guardians and 28% live with grandparents or other older relatives.

Detailed survey methodology can be found in the attached Appendix.

Home zipcode of the residence of respondents shown in the map below



Background

During the most recent opt-in period, approximately 51,000 more students returned to schools for in-person learning. But about 582,000 students, or 61% of total reported enrollment, remain enrolled in all-remote learning, according to estimates from the city's Department of Education.

Justin Krebs is a parent of three public school students at PS39 in Brooklyn where his children have attended hybrid through the year, and now attend full-time as of this month. He serves on the Executive Board of the School District 15 Presidents Council as well as on the Parents Association Executive Board of PS 39.*

Krebs is running for City Council in District 39 in Brooklyn which includes the neighborhoods of Park Slope, Windsor Terrace, Kensington, part of Borough Park, the southern part of Gowanus, the western parts of Carroll Gardens and Cobble Hill, and the Columbia Waterfront District. He's now endorsed by The New York League of Conservation Voters, League of Independent Theaters, The American Institute of Architects, 30 Local Parent Leaders, and 100 Artists. For more information about his campaign visit www.justin2021.org

**These perspectives do not represent the Presidents Council or Parents Association.*

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Appendix: Full Topline Results and Methodology

Survey Methodology

Conducted via live phone interviews Sunday, May 9 through Wednesday, May 12. Phone calls were made to a list of likely parents in New York City with a landline or cellphone number available. Only parents with at least one public school student learning fully remote were included in the full survey. Callers reached 519 people, 194 of whom were parents of current NYC public school students. Of those, 126 (64%) reported having one or more children currently in all-remote learning. Of those, 111 completed the survey. Results are presented unweighted.

Screening Questions

Are you an elected official, an employee of an elected official, or a member of the media?

Number of responses: 519

Yes [SCREENED OUT]	3	1%
No	516	99%

Are you a parent of a current New York City public school student?

Number of responses: 516

Yes	194	38%
No [SCREENED OUT]	322	62%

Which of these answers best describes your children's current schooling arrangement?

Number of responses: 193

All of my children are learning fully remote	105	54%
All of my children are learning in person some or all days of the week [SCREENED OUT]	62	32%
Some of my children are learning fully remote and some are learning in person at least some days of the week	21	11%
Refused to answer [SCREENED OUT]	5	3%

Moved on to survey 126

Survey Questions

Which of these answers best describes your children's current schooling arrangement?

All of my children are learning fully remote	105	83%
Some of my children are learning fully remote and some are learning in person at least some days of the week	21	17%

For just your children in public school who are currently learning fully remote, what grade or grades are they currently in?

[asked by grade and re-coded]

Elementary/Pre-K Only	30	24%
Middle or High School Only	77	62%
Both Elementary/Pre-K and Middle/High School	18	14%

Did any of your children's schools offer any in-person or hybrid instruction this year?

Number of responses: 124

Yes	104	84%
No	13	10%
I'm not sure	5	4%
Other	2	2%

I am going to read a list of concerns that some parents may have had at the beginning of the school year. Please tell me whether these were a major factor, a minor factor, or not a factor in your decision to choose all-remote instruction this year.

Number of responses: 104

[Asked only if schools offered in-person or hybrid schooling]

[Order of items randomized]

	Major Factor	Minor Factor	Not a Factor	Not applicable
Health concerns for my child	81	6	14	3
Health concerns for a member of my family	71	10	20	3
I did not have confidence in the prevention measures the school system announced	54	18	30	2
The school system as a whole seemed unprepared	45	26	31	2
Remote schooling seemed like it was better planned than in-person options	40	20	40	4
Our family needed a consistent, predictable schedule	39	18	43	4
Hybrid learning or other in-person options offered were incompatible with work schedule and/or childcare	22	18	59	5
Remote schooling turned out to be a better education for my child than the one they were getting prior to COVID	11	14	71	8
I did not get the information about in-person options soon enough to decide	10	15	70	9

	Weighted Score*	Major Factor	Minor Factor	Not a Factor
Health concerns for my child	0.83	80%	6%	14%
Health concerns for a member of my family	0.75	70%	10%	20%
I did not have confidence in the prevention measures the school system announced	0.62	53%	18%	29%
The school system as a whole seemed unprepared	0.57	44%	25%	30%
Remote schooling seemed like it was better planned than in-person options	0.50	40%	20%	40%
Our family needed a consistent, predictable schedule	0.48	39%	18%	43%
Hybrid learning or other in-person options offered were incompatible with work schedule and/or childcare	0.31	22%	18%	60%
Remote schooling turned out to be a better education for my child than the one they were getting prior to COVID	0.19	11%	15%	74%
I did not get the information about in-person options soon enough to decide	0.18	11%	16%	74%

**Weighted score of Major Factor = 1.0; Minor Factor = 0.5; Not a Factor = 0.0*

Given what you know today, how likely are you to enroll your children for in-person learning in the fall? Are you:

Number of responses: 116

Very likely	55	47%
Somewhat likely	19	16%
Unsure	24	21%
Somewhat unlikely	5	4%
Very unlikely	13	11%
Very/Somewhat Likely	74	64%
Unsure	43	21%
Very/Somewhat Unlikely	29	15%

How satisfied are you with remote learning this year? Are you:

Number of responses: 116

Very satisfied	29	25%
Somewhat satisfied	43	37%
Somewhat unsatisfied	23	20%
Very unsatisfied	21	18%

In your own words, what works or doesn't work for your children in remote learning?

Number of responses: 106

See selected responses at end

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about your thoughts about the coming school year in the fall. I am going to read a list of things that might or might not happen. After I read each item please, tell me whether each gives you a lot of confidence, some confidence, or has no effect on your confidence in choosing in-person learning in the fall for your children. Okay?

Number of responses: 113

[Order of items randomized]

	A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Has no effect on confidence	NA
If all students/staff are still required to wear masks	58	21	28	5
If all of my family members are vaccinated	58	20	29	6
If my student is vaccinated	50	22	31	10
If class sizes are smaller than before COVID	56	12	38	6
If all in-person classes still have 3 feet (elementary school) or 6 feet of social distancing (middle & high school)	49	25	32	5
If I am able to see what the in-person environment looks like	43	21	42	7
If my child's school were offering 5-days-a-week in person instruction	44	14	46	8
If my child's friends were also going in person	29	20	57	7
If early dropoff and aftercare arrangements are available again	25	23	54	10

	Weighted Score*	A lot of confidence	Some confidence	Has no effect on confidence
If all students/staff are still required to wear masks	0.64	54%	20%	26%
If all of my family members are vaccinated	0.64	54%	19%	27%
If my student is vaccinated	0.59	49%	21%	30%
If class sizes are smaller than before COVID	0.58	53%	11%	36%
If all in-person classes still have 3 feet (elementary school) or 6 feet of social distancing (middle & high school)	0.58	46%	24%	30%
If I am able to see what the in-person environment looks like	0.50	41%	20%	40%
If my child's school were offering 5-days-a-week in person instruction	0.49	42%	13%	44%
If my child's friends were also going in person	0.37	27%	19%	54%
If early dropoff and aftercare arrangements are available again	0.36	25%	23%	53%

**Weighted score of A lot of confidence = 1.0; Some confidence= 0.5; No effect= 0.0*

I am going to read another list of things that may or may not happen. This time, please tell me whether each one would cause you to lean towards all-remote, lean towards in-person, or have no effect.

Number of responses: 111

[Order of items randomized]

	Lean towards all-remote	Lean towards in-person	Would have no effect	N/A
If new COVID cases still remain high in the summer	74	14	17	6
If I don't like what I am hearing from the Mayor or Chancellor	46	13	44	8
If in-person students are still partially taught by teachers on zoom	37	21	47	6
If vaccination is still voluntary for teachers and students	37	25	42	7
If remote classes are taught by teachers who aren't teachers from our school	22	31	52	6
	Weighted Score*	Lean towards all-remote	Lean towards in-person	Would have no effect
If new COVID cases still remain high in the summer	-0.57	70%	13%	16%
If I don't like what I am hearing from the Mayor or Chancellor	-0.32	45%	13%	43%
If in-person students are still partially taught by teachers on zoom	-0.15	35%	20%	45%
If vaccination is still voluntary for teachers and students	-0.12	36%	24%	40%
If remote classes are taught by teachers who aren't teachers from our school	0.09	21%	30%	50%

*Weighted score of Lean towards all-remote = -1.0; Would have no effect = 0.0; Lean towards in-person = 1.0

Which of the following four people would be the most important for you to hear from in making your decision about whether to send your child in-person or remote in the fall?

Number of responses: 103

Your child's principal	47	46%
Your child's teachers	30	29%
The Schools Chancellor	13	13%
The Mayor	13	13%

Have any of the following contacted you about returning in-person in the fall?

Number of responses: 102

No one has contacted me to discuss returning in-person in the fall	59	58%
My child's principal	20	20%
Someone else from my child's school	18	18%
The Department of Education	6	6%
My child's teacher	6	6%

In your own words, please tell me what your concerns are about your children returning to school in-person next year

Number of responses: 99

See selected responses at end

After thinking through the issues we have discussed in this survey, how likely are you to enroll your children for in-person learning in the fall?

Number of responses: 110

Very likely	49	45%
Somewhat likely	20	18%
Unsure	34	31%
Somewhat unlikely	1	1%
Very unlikely	6	5%
Very/Somewhat Likely	69	63%
Unsure	34	31%
Very/Somewhat Unlikely	7	6%

Demographics

Do grandparents or other older relatives live in your home?

Number of responses: 108

Yes	30	28%
No	78	72%

Are you a single parent or single guardian of your children?

Number of responses: 108

Yes	31	29%
No	77	71%

What language(s) do you speak in the home?

Number of responses: 107

English	104	97%
<i>Any language other than English [Re-coded]</i>	35	33%
Spanish	17	16%
Mandarin Chinese	3	3%
Cantonese Chinese	2	2%
Bengali or Bangla	3	3%
Yiddish	0	0%
Russian	4	4%
Haitian Creole	1	1%
Arabic	1	1%
Urdu	2	2%
Korean	0	0%
French	0	0%
Other	4	4%

Which racial/ethnic group(s) best match how you personally identify?

Number of responses: 106

Black or Afro-Caribbean	31	29%
Latino / Latina / Hispanic	28	26%
Asian	22	21%
White	23	22%
Other, including Multi-racial	9	8%
Native American	0	0%
Pacific Islander	0	0%

What year were you born?

Number of responses: 100

[Recoded as age turned in 2021]

31-40	15	15%
41-50	67	67%
51-60	17	17%

What is your gender?

Number of responses: 106

Female	78	74%
Male	27	25%
Neither male nor female	0	0%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Other	0	0%

What borough do you live in?

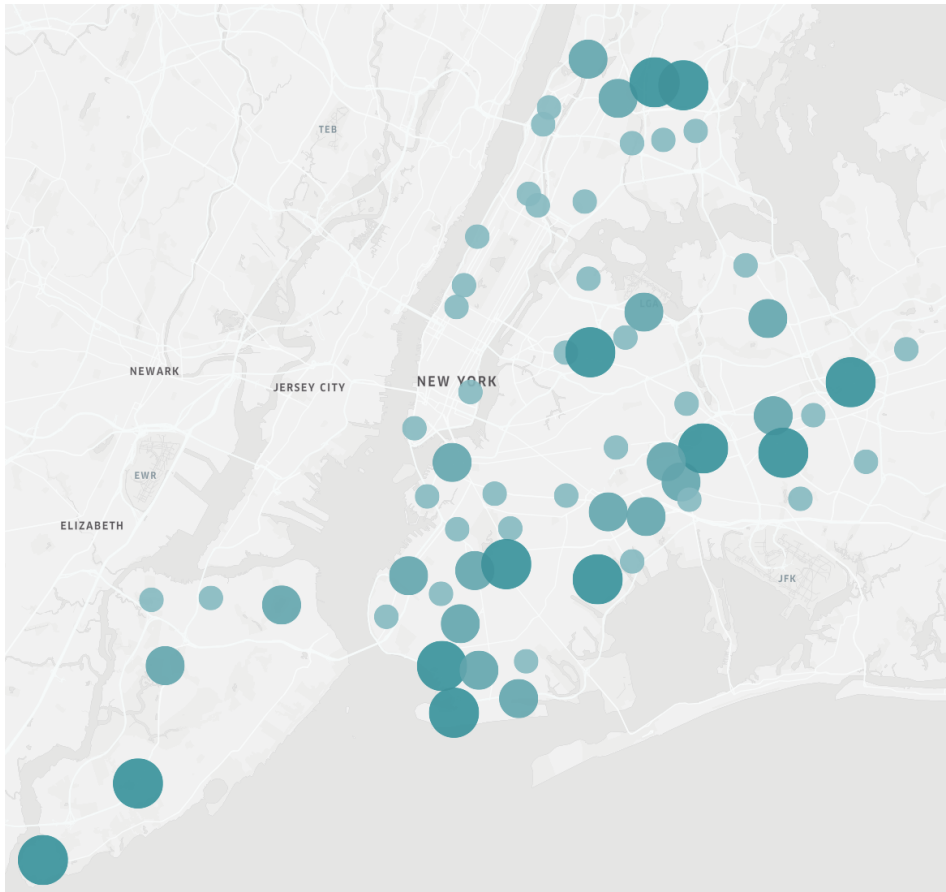
Number of responses: 105

Bronx	13	12%
Brooklyn	34	32%
Manhattan	10	10%
Queens	37	35%
Staten Island	10	10%
Outside NYC	1	1%

What is your home zip code?

Number of responses: 94

Mapped by zipcode centroid



Is there anything else we didn't ask you that you think the people in charge of the public school system know about what your family needs for the next school year?

Number of responses: 85

See selected responses at end

Selected Open-Ended Responses

In your own words, what works or doesn't work for your children in remote learning?

- My special needs son could focus more on what he was learning without peers. My daughter was hurt by not having the social aspect of school.
- They need to connect with their peers in person, which isn't available remote. Younger students couldn't connect with teacher and did not want to go to google meets. There's a disconnect with remote learning.
- They have a consistent schedule now; synchronous learning contributes to structures; sometimes school day end at different times throughout the week and that interrupts my day; tutoring did not work because too many children at different levels of knowledge (tutors could not cater to specific needs)
- Not having access to the resources like textbooks so no alternative method for doing school work is a problem. For example, everything is online but she realized her student sometimes needs a tangible textbook or paper packet to be able to effectively comprehend the information. She also feels the student does not have the same access to teachers remotely as she did in person.
- It's not just remote learning, the school system itself is very inefficient. The two forms of learning only differ in that sending my child to school puts his health at risk. I would be more enthusiastic about sending my child to school if they had different expectations for different students.
- They don't absorb as much because they aren't in person; it's been really difficult but they are adjusting
- You don't have in-person interaction and it's tough for kids who suffer with paying attention and self-discipline. Remotely, they lose those students. Students need to be self-motivated, it's more difficult to ask questions and get support.
- The teachers were trying their hardest and the google classroom worked very well. Two teachers per classroom in elementary school worked and small classrooms were good. Grading and attendance was very reasonable and flexible and made things less stressful.
- Did not have good wifi access and had to pay for an upgrade that took months to start working. Still experience Internet blackouts frequently. There also needed to be more creativity in the remote lessons because the same lessons/teaching style as before did not translate well to remote learning. There was not enough mental health support to keep kids happy, positive, and motivated. Graduating seniors had little to no support during remote learning when it came to things like the SAT and college planning.
- Having everything written down helps a lot. In terms of online schooling. The difficulty is that children aren't used to internet, a lot of things to distract. Needs to be constantly observed to make sure kids are not getting distracted.
- She thinks that remote learning has made her kids fall behind and she is worried about the workload in the upcoming fall since she thinks that it has been lighter during Covid.
- Hands on is important for children, time period too short, hard to keep attention, no one on one help
- Ability to observe teachers' teaching was nice.

- "Virtual school is not okay" because when we are in school we get to take notes, the kids don't even use books virtually. Younger girl will not turn camera on and older brother must watch her to ensure she is actually working. Teacher is not in front of student leading to lack of discipline.
- There was no structure in the remote learning, which was difficult for the children and not conducive to the learning environment. The teachers were not as helpful as they would have liked in the remote learning which is damaging children's education.
- Teachers have gone above and beyond, but there is nothing that works about remote learning. You cannot replicate in person learning.
- The family schedule is easier to manage.
- Harder to stay focused outside of the school environment and some of the learning was not interactive enough, more so just giving assignments

In your own words, please tell me what your concerns are about your children returning to school in-person next year

- She suffers from chronic asthma and allergies and safety conditions in schools aren't reliable enough.
- She wants to make sure teachers are accessible to students, she wants schools to keep social distancing measures, enforce mask wearing, and make sure that class sizes are smaller to make this possible.
- Classes are large, teachers are overwhelmed, and I am worried that teachers will not be able to recognize a student who has extra needs than other classmates. Smaller classes would be a good thing.
- I am concerned about COVID as I was actually hospitalized for it earlier in the pandemic.
- As I said, I would expect some changes in how students are expected to learn. Schools don't take into account the learning capabilities of children or the talents of children. Everyone is measured by the same tests, in the same subjects. I think that is inefficient learning, and if it's changed, I will look forward to sending my child back to in-person learning.
- If high rates of positive tests occur, schools would switch back and forth from remote and in-person, making things chaotic again.
- I want to make sure everyone is vaccinated, including children, by the fall. Make the class sizes smaller, everyone should keep wearing masks and social distancing.
- Health of the household since there are 5 people in the house including elderly family members, there were covid cases in her child's school so she does not feel confident that the school can stop transmission in the classroom and is therefore unsure about sending her child in person next year even though she feels that her child is not getting as good of an education virtually as she did when she was fully in person before the pandemic.
- She is most concerned for her daughter's health since she has asthma and she said even with a vaccine she would be concerned because there is a chance of a breakthrough case or other classmates/teachers being unvaccinated and spreading a new variant around. Unless covid is controlled or her child is mandated to report in person, she is keeping her at home.
- Vaccination rates. And kids do not always listen to social distancing rules, especially when messages about social distancing are made by and for adults, not little kids.

- If they can't get the vaccine I'd be worried but I think they will soon enough.
- The child is a graduating senior, so the main concern was that the child did not have enough support or resources to bounce back from COVID before graduation.
- Safety on the subways when commuting to school, if there are high covid cases with no vaccine for younger children she is concerned for their safety.
- Main concern is what stage the pandemic is, covid numbers among children, how long vaccines last, variants, etc. Not rushing to get back to normalcy.
- She worries that the workload will be a lot more than it was during remote learning and her kid will fall behind.
- I want my kids to get a vaccine before they go to school.
- I am concerned that people will not follow guidelines. Children will have to take the train which causes more exposure. What will happen with cleaning bathrooms? Will they still be testing?
- Have elderly family in the home, cannot risk any exposure to COVID. If there is a remote option available, might as well do it.
- That the classes have fewer students and more one-on-one learning and the fact that students will be behind and will find it difficult to catch up.
- Immunocompromised child in the house. Transmission rates are also important.
- No, we need to be back in all person learning.
- My main concern is receiving the same quality of education as before school closures. Returning to in-person instruction would require many risks, so I want to make sure my child at least gets a good education.
- If the cases were still high, that would be the only concern.

Is there anything else we didn't ask you that you think the people in charge of the public school system know about what your family needs for the next school year?

- Building cleanliness is important (bathrooms were not clean even before COVID); ensure kids from virtual learning are caught up with where hybrid and in-person kids are.
- The kids should have group sessions about what they went through the past year and a half. Need a certified guidance counselor for children. Need to be able to talk about how difficult it was to be home for so long with no outlets.
- Having kids be physically in a classroom but still taught by teachers who are online/on zoom is basically the same thing as doing fully remote. The schools should be doing completely remote or completely in person, not in between.
- Many kids speak English as a second language, and a lot of remote teaching is only in English so some kids don't have access to bilingual teachers/lessons. Some parents don't speak English at all, so their kids end up falling behind because the parents can't communicate with teachers.

- The public school system did the best with what they had, but the Department of Education just wanted to save face by opening schools without really having a plan for students. Graduating seniors have been left behind and missed out on important stepping stones towards building their futures. These questions should have been asked a year or a year and a half ago.
- Teachers need to be supported, helped, etc. Whether it's financially or another method. They need support.
- There needs to be transparency and everyone involved needs to be on the same page. The needs of parents and students need to come before the politicians' wants.
- Should be better control over the curriculum and should be consistent between schools; teachers should not have individual control over what is taught to the students and they should be more consistent with how long school sessions are (she believes that other public schools that her friends have children at have done a better job with remote learning, and she wants education to be more consistent / equal across different schools).
- This has been a really trying time emotionally and I hope that's a factor in not admitting people into college. It's a hard situation, I hope my son doesn't suffer because of how bad this year has been grades wise.
- Important for arts and recreational activities to continue if school is in-person.