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Parent *Thoughtexchange* Survey Results

June 2020

Introduction

March 13, 2020 was the last day of in-person instruction for the Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen as a result of the extended school closure due to COVID-19. Teachers, students, and families had to rapidly adjust to the remote learning environment. The closure was extended in two week increments by Governor Cuomo until May 1 when he announced that schools would remain closed for the remainder of the school year.

Instruction changed over the course of the closure, with an immediate transition to printed learning packets and then weekly online learning templates that later included live interactions. Collectively, we learned much over the course of the extended school closure, and we will be implementing changes and making adjustments and improvements to instruction for September 2020. The Valley Stream UFSD Thirteen Reopening Task Force work began with a data collection phase that included teacher and parent surveys. The data from this parent *Thoughtexchange* will be used to inform reopening planning.

Parents have always been critically important partners in student learning. The extended school closure amplified the significance of *parents as partners*, and underscored the importance of parents having a voice in their child's education. In order to capture parent input regarding the extended school closure the district launched a *Thoughtexchange* survey and the summary results are presented below.

Summary

Thoughtexchange is a conversation tool that can be used to crowdsource thoughts and ideas regarding how community members feel. The question asked, "**What are your thoughts regarding your experiences with remote learning, district-provided childcare, and meal distribution during the extended school closure.**" After participants share their thoughts they are encouraged to rate other thoughts. In this way, the thoughts that speak to the most participants will rise to the top of the *Thoughtexchange*.

The survey was open from June 8 through June 12, and included 291 participants, 393 thoughts, and 7,118 ratings.

Participant School Building Classification

- With which school(s) are you associated?



%		
32%	(80)	James A. Dever
14%	(34)	Howell Road
29%	(74)	Wheeler Avenue
25%	(64)	Willow Road

Themes

- Remote Learning (39 thoughts, 3.6 star rating)
- Child (35 thoughts, 3.7 star rating)
- Parents Work Home (31 thoughts, 3.8 star rating)
- Lessons (25 thoughts, 3.9 star rating)
- Learning Kids (24 thoughts, 3.6 star rating)
- Work Day (22 thoughts, 3.9 star rating)
- Teaching (21 thoughts, 4.0 star rating)
- Live Instruction (19 thoughts, 3.8 star rating)
- Learning Grade (16 thoughts, 3.8 star rating)
- Hours Day (15 thoughts, 3.8 star rating)
- Assignments (14 thoughts, 3.8 star rating)
- Childcare (11 thoughts, 3.5 star rating)
- District Communication Emails (11 thoughts, 3.5 star rating)
- Unthemed (94 thoughts)

The highest rated thoughts included the following ideas:

- Remote learning should be more similar to the in-school experience, with daily instruction on a set schedule. There was little structure and a lack of feedback and accountability.
- Remote learning was very challenging and stressful for families, including parents having to work, having to assist multiple children at the same time, and navigating technology issues.
- With safety in mind, parents want to return to in-person learning, recognizing the need for the teacher and social interactions with other students. Students need a separation between home-life and school-life.
- The district must have a better plan in place for next year.

Note: The top 20 thoughts from the exchange are included at the end of this document.

Differences

The *Thoughtexchange* system is able to look at differences and commonalities among participants in the exchange. An example of this is provided below. This helps to indicate areas where there are divisions and agreement throughout the exchange. In the example below the system looked at two groups of participants, Group A and Group B. On the right side is the highest rated thoughts for Group B and on the left side are the highest rated thoughts for Group A. In the middle are thoughts that participants rated similarly, indicating agreement between both groups.

Differences between thoughts among parents:

Side A

Lack of communication from teachers and administrators

★ 4.5 ★ 1.0

Why was there not continuous video learning throughout the day? Why was the onus of being the teacher placed on parents?

I saw NYC teachers (my wife is one) working continuously all day long teaching students via video. Why did we not have that same level of teaching?

★ 4.7 ★ 1.7

Less teacher interaction than ideal Students did most of the work alone without teacher involvement or instruction.

★ 4.9 ★ 1.8

District was slow to react and poor at communicating. Have heard teachers were willing to dive in quickly yet they were held back by district officials who lacked planning and forethought.

★ 4.6 ★ 1.4

not that happy teachers should have conducted classes not just work sheets

★ 4.7 ★ 1.4

The remote learning for my 3rd grader was completely unacceptable They did maybe 20 minutes of learning a week with the teacher leading a discussion

★ 4.2 ★ 1.1

I don't believe my child got the education he deserved nor for what we pay in taxes .Assignments were uploaded for students to do and parents were left to teach the topic.

★ 4.6 ★ 2.0

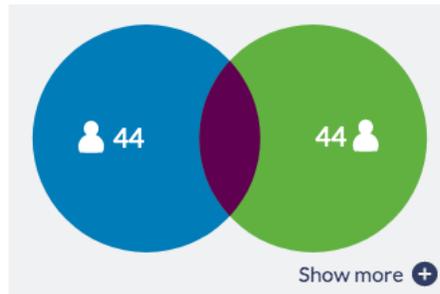
Remote learning was very much a review from my perspective. There was a lot to do on each child's own. The class calls twice a week were social Instruction is needed to move forward.

★ 4.8 ★ 2.3

Slow to start We pay very high taxes, the staff is paid well, and technology is available....I was disappointed with the late start of face time face teaching.

★ 4.8 ★ 1.7

Live teaching and zoom meetings nonexistent for weeks. Students weren't given any live instruction or video instruction for weeks leaving them to fall behind in their work.



Side A/B Common (high)

Class agendas with time slots and more regular virtual learning lessons/sessions with the teacher would be more beneficial.

Virtual classroom set up would be helpful.

★ 4.7 ★ 4.1

I think distance learning could have been more streamlined and organized. It was very hard to use multiple platforms to complete the assignments. Difficult understanding how to get the HW and what to read or prepare for the HW

★ 4.7 ★ 3.8

Again, we all are aware that it was a trying time. If it has to happen again, the system needs to be strengthened. Thanks!

★ 4.6 ★ 4.0

Remote learning was very difficult for my child. Remote learning needs virtual instruction from the teachers. As a working parent, I was not able to provide the tools needed to support learning.

★ 4.3 ★ 4.0

The District must devote adequate resources to developing a long-term continuity plan. Given the possibility of delayed fall openings and/or mid-year closures, there must be a plan in place that supports a full year of student learning.

★ 4.8 ★ 4.7

Interactive class lessons with teachers and students. Students need feedback as they are learning.

★ 4.1 ★ 4.0

I think the virtual learning should have been set up more as classes as if they were actually in school. I really believe that they missed out on a lot of learning that parents working from home couldn't provide for their children and even some therapy from psychologists from school would help

★ 4.5 ★ 4.2

Remote learning is challenging both for

Side B

I think that the district did a good job providing instruction through remote learning. It was organized and help and guidance was provided as needed. Children continued learning and were able to see their classmates and teachers twice a week. The teacher, Mrs. Tringone ws available and very helpful.

★ 1.6 ★ 4.8

The teachers did a great job. I just do not prefer remote learning.

★ 1.7 ★ 4.8

When deemed necessary the amount of work and teacher interaction changed . Teachers became more available and started having more virtual classes. Teachers were ALWAYS in contact via Remind, phone calls to my children, Google Meet , Zoom, Google Classroom, or Seesaw. I appreciated the effort.

★ 1.8 ★ 4.8

I think the teachers did a great job supporting the parents during this hectic time. This was very important, especially for those parents that work from home because the teachers were very accessible every step of the way.

On the way.

★ 1.9 ★ 4.6

It has been great ... Teachers were very helpful

★ 1.8 ★ 4.8

I think we all need to be cognizant that this was an extreme, sudden circumstance that the schools/teachers could not fully prepare for. Teachers and administrators have families as well. They are also managing remote learning and device sharing with their own children. We must ALL do our part

★ 1.8 ★ 5.0

Remote learning was good. The teacher was fantastic!

★ 1.5 ★ 4.6

Regular communication from the superintendent, principal and teachers was outstanding. I was constantly made aware of any updates or changes. We received weekly emails from the principal and daily communication from classroom teachers.

★ 1.8 ★ 4.9

I think it was well planned. Kids didn't miss out too .They learned new things during the

Here are 20 thoughts that received the highest star ratings

I think the virtual learning should have been set up more as classes as if they were actually in school. I really believe that they missed out on a lot of learning that parents working from home couldn't provide for their children and even some therapy from psychologists from school would help

4.3 ★★★★★ (28)

Ranked #1 of 20



The District must devote adequate resources to developing a long-term continuity plan. Given the possibility of delayed fall openings and/or mid-year closures, there must be a plan in place that supports a full year of student learning.

4.3 ★★★★★ (20)

Ranked #2 of 20



I really hope with the time that has passed and what we now know about staying safe a plan goes in place to allow at least some in classroom learning.

As they proceed to a new grade they need the instruction of a teacher .

4.3 ★★★★★ (20)

Ranked #3 of 20



If remote learning has to resume in fall the TEACHERS HAVE TO ACTUALLY TEACH SEVERAL HOURS EACH DAY

4.3 ★★★★★ (20)

Ranked #4 of 20



But I think they need school a teacher in front of them to really learn and the social time with other kids.

4.3 ★★★★★ (18)

Ranked #5 of 20



Remote learning is challenging both for parents and students. It was difficult to teach my child while having to work from home. At the elementary level, students need to be taught information. Without adequate teaching, learning is disrupted and it will have a negative impact.

4.3 ★★★★★ (17)

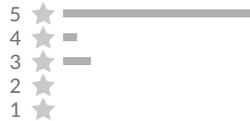
Ranked #6 of 20



When your child needs extra help its better in person with the teacher.

The child feels more comfortable and has a better understanding.

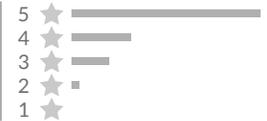
4.3 ★★★★★ (16 👤)
Ranked #7 of 20



Class agendas with time slots and more regular virtual learning lessons/sessions with the teacher would be more beneficial.

Virtual classroom set up would be helpful.

4.2 ★★★★★ (30 👤)
Ranked #8 of 20

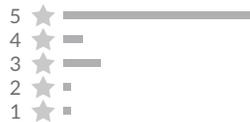


This remote learning experience understandably was new to everyone and it took some time to adjust. Honestly, while the work was tailored to the grade

There should have been more involvement from the teachers on a daily basis. There could have been some live instruction on some days.

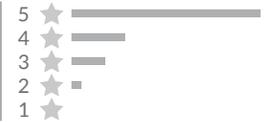
Teacher feedback

4.2 ★★★★★ (27 👤)
Ranked #9 of 20



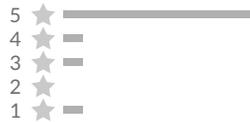
Again, we all are aware that it was a trying time. If it has to happen again, the system needs to be strengthened. Thanks!

4.2 ★★★★★ (26 👤)
Ranked #10 of 20



Rather than it being remote learning, it felt like it was home schooling and as a full time working parent, it was stressful

4.2 ★★★★★ (25 👤)
Ranked #11 of 20



They need to have that separation between home life and school life with teachers that specialize in each education area.

They aren't getting a well rounded education, although the teachers are efforts are great and they do their best to assist parents, it's not the same.

4.2 ★★★★★ (23 👤)
Ranked #12 of 20



It is difficult for parents with several children to focus on the multiple curriculums. Mine are both young and need individual attention. It is difficult to keep bouncing from child to child while also going from curriculum to curriculum.

4.2 ★★★★★ (21 👤)
Ranked #13 of 20



Online learning is VERY different from remote learning-there needs to be a clear distinction for proper plans to be put in place

4.2 ★★★★★ (20 👤)
Ranked #14 of 20



This is especially hard for the little ones (K-3)-they need their teachers to actually teach remotely not just assign worksheets w/no feedback

4.2 ★★★★★ (19 👤)
Ranked #15 of 20



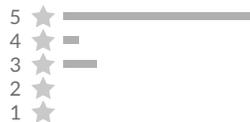
As an Educator, I was able to utilize Supplemental Learning materials for my children, in addition to Free Online Virtual Programs but for the average parent who was not savvy to supplemental learning programs- they felt frustrated by the lack of additional resources of rigor that was not provided

4.2 ★★★★★ (18 👤)
Ranked #16 of 20



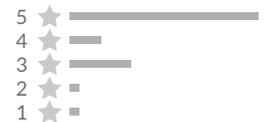
More structured secondary subjects Lessons or video conference with teachers (ie Art, Music, etc.) relevant to grade would have been preferred
More Structure is sometimes good especially when everything around us hasn't been at all

4.2 ★★★★★ (14 👤)
Ranked #17 of 20



I thought there would be more interaction and learning from the teachers.
As someone who is considered essential and had to work full time during the pandemic. It was very stressful to teach my two children at the same time

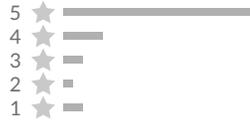
4.1 ★★★★★ (29 👤)
Ranked #18 of 20



Lack of instructions and follow up, and accountability

No structure was set for students at home. Besides a little work provided through links, there was no way as a parent to find out my child's progress

4.1 ★★★★★ (27 👤)
Ranked #19 of 20



The first few weeks required parents to be the primary instructor for lessons and it was overwhelming.

4.1 ★★★★★ (26 👤)
Ranked #20 of 20

