Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
The Parent Training and Information Center for the District of Columbia

EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT

This project was funded in part by Meyer Foundation.
WHAT IS THE EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT?

The Education Justice Project (EJP) is a year-long project in which we will provide outreach, training, and advocacy as it relates to disparities caused in education by COVID-19.

WHAT WE WANTED TO KNOW

What were DC families' experiences as it relates to disparities in education and health during the COVID-19 pandemic?

WHAT WE DID

AJE conducted an impact assessment (in English and Spanish) of District families to identify those who have been impacted by COVID-19 related policies and practices.
WHAT IS THE EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT?

GOAL 1: TRAINING

As a part of this project we will provide training to families: on their rights and on obligations of schools to provide recovery services.

Our training will: build the knowledge and capacity of parents and empower parents to meaningfully participate and advocate in the education process (individually and collectively) for the changes they want to see.
WHAT IS THE EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT?

GOAL 2: ADVOCACY

AJE will, in partnership with parents and other stakeholders, engage in policy and systemic advocacy strategies to eliminate the policies and practices that have denied children equitable access to the education to which they are entitled too.
WHAT IS THE EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT?

GOAL 3: ENGAGEMENT

We will provide ongoing engagement efforts to:
- hear from families about their experiences;
  - identify areas of concern;
- build the capacity of families to engage in system-level advocacy;
  and
- collaborate with legal and community partners to determine legal strategies for achieving systemic change.
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EMPLEYMENT & STABILITY

64% of the participants are employed

25% have an in-person job that requires childcare arrangements

35% of participants agree that one or more people who stay in their home lost their job during COVID-19

67% have a stable home

14.8% don't
14.8% neutral
Over half of the participants said that they spent more money during Covid-19 to pay for:

1. School Supplies
2. Tutoring Services
3. Other Educational Services

60% of participants said their internet bill increased.
ENROLLMENT

Around half of participants say it has been easy for them to navigate school enrollment.

1/3 of parents say that they need more help registering their child for the next academic year.

57% of parents do not need assistance navigating MySchoolDC to enter the lottery.
ACCESS TO SCHOOL MEALS

Almost half of participants say their child has not had access to breakfast that is usually provided by the school.

Half of participants say their child has not had access to lunch that is usually provided by the school.

Children's access to meals provided by the school has decreased since distance learning.
DISTANCE LEARNING

71% of participants were homeschooled throughout or during some part of Distance Learning

42% of participants said their child's school schedules services around their availability

"MY SON'S TEACHER HAS BEEN THE MOST HELP TO MY SON THAN ANYONE ON THE TEAM. THE OTHERS ACT LIKE THEY NO LONGER WANT TO DO THEIR JOB"
DISTANCE LEARNING

67% understood the explanation given to them about Distance Learning POLICIES and PROCEDURES

"Often there are confusing messages about what is happening when"

About 1/2 understood the explanation given to them about the PURPOSE of Distance Learning
DISTANCE LEARNING

42% of the participants agreed they had input in their child's Distance Learning Plan.

1/5 of the participants stated that the Distance Learning Plan was not explained to them.
I haven't seen any of these accommodations

32% of participants did not receive **adequate resources** to support their academics

"All accommodations denied. I've been told the teachers should meet with my son... instead. Accommodations are usually not provided during these meetings"

35% said their child did not receive **appropriate accommodations** to support their academics
DISTANCE LEARNING

HALF said their children have access to **FREE online TUTORING** resources during Distance Learning

"SOME OF THE BEST APPS REQUIRE THAT WE PAY FOR IT OURSELVES..."

60% said their children do not have virtual after school **HOMEWORK support provided by the SCHOOL**

"IT'S REALLY HARD FOR MY KIDS TO FOCUS ON A COMPUTER ALL DAY"
71% of participants were not provided with the necessary equipment to engage in Distance Learning.

"I PAID TO GET MY SON HIS NECESSARY APPLIANCES"

42% said there are no free and accessible online programs to help their child during Distance Learning.

"I Agree [there are programs], but the school doesn't use the best ones and assigns too much homework, so our children don't have as much time to... use...such programs"
About **40%** of participants were able to have their child **EVALUATED** during Distance Learning.

Only **39%** of parents felt that their child's **IEP WAS FOLLOWED** during Distance Learning.
43% of participants had their IEP services change because of distance learning.

Only 1/2 of participants think their child's IEP team made helpful changes during distance learning.

"School says they do not need to provide accommodations because of virtual learning"
1/2 of parents said their child’s academics have worsened during distance learning.

"Middle school child failing multiple classes since distance learning began"

"Less hours and direct support for her as a struggling reader and writer"
"My 3rd grader is doing better. Less behavior problems"

35% of parents said their child's academics have improved during distance learning.

"My 3rd grader has finally caught up. Distance learning helped me realize how far he had fallen behind during in-person schooling"
60% of participants agree that their child's mental health has been negatively impacted because of Distance Learning.

- "Two instances of suicidal ideation. School did not follow through with a safety plan and threatened to call CPS when I disclosed the first instance" 
- "She misses in class learning, direct contact with her teacher and friends... she is not seen with all her abilities, competences and needs through the screen..." 
- "Children have to reach out but what if they children don't want to. I feel they should meet the kids where they are. Some kids need a push"
LANGUAGE ACCESS

Some participants did not receive an interpreter during virtual IEP meeting (14%).

A little over a third of participants received documents in their native language 5 days before meeting (35%).
LANGUAGE ACCESS

1/2

of participants were

PROVIDED MATERIALS IN THEIR
NATIVE LANGUAGE

PROVIDED INFORMATION IN NATIVE
LANGUAGE FROM CHILD'S IEP TEAM
Almost half of the participants were provided technology assistance by the district in their native language.

&

53% of the participants were communicated with in their native language when the distance learning policies and procedures were explained.
85% of participants did **NOT** have a child **EXPelled** during Distance Learning.

Most participants did **NOT** have a child **REMOVED** from the class as a form of discipline.
A **THIRD** of participants say their child has been marked **ABSENT** for having their camera's off during Distance Learning.

"My child is autistic, so she feels more comfortable with her camera off..."

"Kids should not be forced to turn on their camera this is all new to everyone social distance learning it's invasive"
41% of participants indicated that they did **NOT UNDERSTAND THEIR RIGHTS** after their child was suspended/expelled.

Only 15% of participants said they felt **PREPARED AND SUPPORTED** when they attended **VIRTUAL HEARINGS**.

"I was told I had no rights and they had the discretion to remove child from classes without consent"
DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Most participants did **NOT** have social services, MPD, or CSFA come to their home because their child was **ABSENT**

71%
35% of participants have difficulty navigating their school’s technology.

Around 1/4 of participants’ child(ren) cannot navigate online platforms used by school without issues.

"It’s a lot of programs and passwords my son cannot keep up with these different programs."

"Older children can but kindergarten child (with disabilities) needs 100% assistance."
92% of participants' children have access to stable internet connection at home.

25% of participants were not offered a stable internet connection from their child’s school.

‘They keep saying that the city will provide Wi-Fi... no one has contacted me about the Wi-Fi... I’m paying for my own Wi-Fi every month.’
Technology

32% of the devices provided by the school do not function well for distance learning.

75% of parents agree that their child had access to telehealth services.

About 40% of parents say that it's difficult to access health services on school devices because of restrictions.

‘They send work with YouTube videos and you cannot watch the videos on the computer. Why then send YouTube videos with the work?’
Almost half of participants’ children did not have access to assistive technology to help complete their schoolwork.

'It may be present on the device, but nobody has explained how to use those features.'

'It is difficult for us to understand technology (and my child as well).'

'I am seeking more assistance to get him more help with his learning. He has been regressing.'
PARENT NEEDS

- 42% of participants say they do not need more resources to help navigate distance learning.
- 35% of participants say they need more resources to navigate distance learning.
- 28% of participants say they need more one-on-one technical support.
Thank you to all of the families who participated in this study as well as to the Meyer Foundation! If you have any questions about the content of this needs assessment, please contact us at:

Advocates for Justice and Education, Inc.
1200 G St., NW Suite #725
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 678-8060
www.aje-dc.org