

Survey Reports on Academic Achievement Gap and Socioemotional Learning – December 2021

The Office of Educational Research and Statistics within the Department of Diné Education (DODE) released three surveys targeting students, parent/guardians, and staff/administrators. These surveys were created to obtain personal perspectives on challenges and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among technical assistance, learning loss, and socioemotional learning. Surveys were distributed using online resources, such as emails, department websites, social media, and reminders were shared during DODE’s weekly school leadership meetings. Responses were also collected using QR codes during a local Halloween trunk or treat event including disseminating the same codes to schools to post on their websites and around their facilities. Surveys were created and deployed using Survey Planet. Initially, the surveys were opened for two weeks; however, due to low sampling, the surveys were extended for an additional week.

The total sample for the Pre-K to 12th grade survey was 1,035, the parent/guardian survey was 484, and the school staff and administrators survey was 493. All three samples were relatively low, and the inferences shared in this report may not provide a compelling review. However, this report should warrant further exploration, especially when discussing the academic achievement gap and socioemotional learning in schools across the Navajo Nation. All three surveys collected information on the perception of stakeholders concerning their role and student learning in the areas of technical assistance, learning loss, and socioemotional wellbeing. The results of these surveys could assist schools with remediation efforts, identify training, webinars, work sessions that assist parents and potentially improve their educational instruction. First, the results from the student survey are presented, then the parent/guardian survey, and concluding with the survey for staff and administrators.

PRE K – 12th GRADE STUDENT SURVEY

1. I am a student who attends a:

School Type:	Percentage:
Public school	83%
Grant school	4%
BIE school	6%
Private/Parochial school	1%
Charter school	1%
*Homeschool	1%
Other	4%

Notes:
 *not an enrolled student with the above options and all instruction is done with non-certified parent/guardian

2. My school is located ON the Navajo Nation:

Yes	53%
No	12%
I am unsure	20%

3. I am within the grade level:

Pre-K to 3 rd grade	17%
4 th grade to 6 th grade	27%
7 th grade or 8 th grade	32%
High school (9 th to 12 th grade)	24%

4. Currently, I am a:

Online/virtual only	24%
Remote student (packet pick-up)	1%
Hybrid (part virtual & part in-person)	8%
Fully in-person	66%
Homeschooled	1%


5. I am an enrolled citizen with the Navajo Nation:

Yes	82%
No	3%
I am not sure	15%


6. I am COVID-19 vaccinated:

Yes	57%
No	22%
I am not old enough	21%

7. I feel like I lost a lot of knowledge and skills for school because of this pandemic:

Strongly Agree	Agree 	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
27%	47%	21%	5%

8. This new school year, I feel my teachers became better at teaching me online:

Strongly Agree	Agree 	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	I am an online student
13%	27%	13%	4%	43%

9. Due of the COVID-19 pandemic, I developed fear and anxiety because of: (select all that apply)

Returning back to school	27%
Losing a family member to COVID-19	20%
Testing positive for COVID-19	7%
Community lockdowns	15%
I did not develop any fear or anxiety	21%
Other:	10%

10. Since developing fear and anxiety because of COVID-19, my school had available resources (counselors, programs, mentors, family assistance, etc.) to support me.

True	41%
False	24%
I did not develop any fear/anxiety	35%

Student survey results showed that 83% were from public schools and were nearly all located in the Navajo Nation. The grade levels of students who completed the survey were quite similar with most being in-person and 24% being online/virtual. Three-fourth of the students who completed the survey feel that they lost academic knowledge and skills due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps these convictions are associated with 31% of virtual/online only students who felt their teachers did not improve their online instruction.

The pandemic did not only generate a learning disparity but also affected a child's socioemotional wellbeing. Results showed that 27% of students felt returning to school and losing a family member to COVID-19 ensued fear and anxiety. On the other hand, 33% of students reported no development of fear and anxiety. However, for those students who did, 41% said their school had available resources for them while 24% reported that their schools did not.

The academic achievement gap of students is relatively known firsthand, including the difficulties of navigating this concern with fear and anxiety. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened new variations to the discussion of student health and wellbeing, further exploration of these critical areas can be expanded. The expansion can include the support and recommendations offered from parents/guardians and school staff and administrators. The next survey includes the purview from parent/guardians regarding technical assistance, learning loss, and the socioemotional wellbeing of students.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

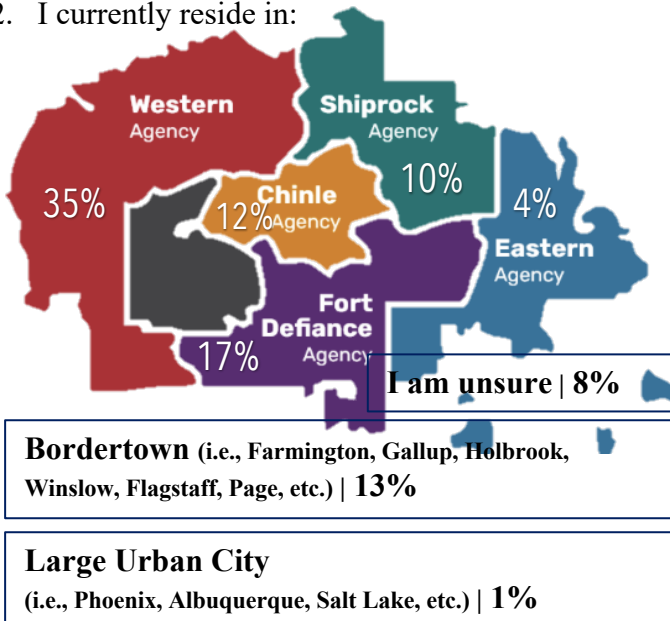
The parent/guardian survey had a total sample of 484, and the results are presented below:

1. My student(s) primarily attend a:

School Type:	Percentage:
Public school	53%
Grant school	12%
BIE school	20%
Private/Parochial school	8%
Charter school	2%
*Homeschool	1%
Other	4%

Notes: *Not an enrolled student with the above options and all instruction is done with non-certified parent/guardian.

2. I currently reside in:



3. My child(ren)'s school is located on the Navajo Nation:

Yes	77%
No	21%
I am unsure	2%

4. The number of Pre-K to 12th grade students I have in my household is:

1	34%
2	31%
3	23%
4	8%
5 or more	4%

5. Currently, my child(ren) is a: (select all that apply)

Online/virtual only	19%
Remote student (packet pick-up)	3%
Hybrid (part virtual & part in-person)	16%
Fully in-person	61%
Homeschooled	1%

6. I am COVID-19 vaccinated:

Yes	93%
No	7%

7. I am an enrolled citizen with the Navajo Nation:

Yes	93%
No	6%
I am not sure	1%

8. What is your current employment status?

Employed	73%
Unemployed	18%
Laid off (due to pandemic)	1%
Resigned (caretaker due to pandemic)	1%
Resigned to assist child(ren) with virtual learning	2%
Other	5%

9. Did you receive any federal COVID-19 relief assistance since the pandemic? (select all that apply)

Navajo Nation stimulus check	65%
Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)	2%
Navajo Nation School Clothing	8%
Unemployment	6%
NTUA Solar Energy Project	1%
Assistance from my child(ren)'s school	6%
Other	12%

10. On a 1-10 scale that measures the degree to which the pandemic created a learning loss for your child(ren) on the Navajo Nation, with 10 being an enormous loss, measure below:



11. Based on the degree you indicated, what are ways you feel schools can start to address the gap in academics? (select all that apply)

After school program (all grades)	49%
Summer school (all grades)	39%
Tutoring Programs	64%
Academic-related school activities	38%
Professional Development (teacher)	30%
Training for families	37%
Additional funding	33%
Investing in technology	48%
A change of leadership	29%
Strengthen mental health support for students	48%
Same as above, but for families	37%
No belief of an extreme learning loss	7%
Other	11%

12. On a 1-10 scale that measures your knowledge in computer literacy, 10 being most knowledgeable, how would you rate your ability when assisting your child(ren) with online learning?



13. Has your child(ren)'s school/district provided computer literacy training for you due to your child(ren) learning virtually/online?

Yes, at least once	16%
Yes, more than once	11%
No	58%
I am not sure	15%

14. As a parent/guardian, what activities have you done to support your child's socioemotional wellbeing during this current pandemic? Socioemotional wellbeing is defined as one's ability to develop relationships, regulate and express emotion, and learn new skills. (select all that apply):

Exercise (walking, hikes, etc.)	83%
Contemporary meditation (yoga, breathing exercises, etc.)	16%
Traditional Navajo meditation (smudging, prayer, etc.)	45%
Family (game nights, etc.)	79%
Professional counseling	10%
Other	14%

For the current SY 2021-2022, the majority of parents/guardians indicated that their child(ren) attended in-person instruction at primarily public schools. Since most students attend in-person today, addressing academic needs and socioemotional conditions are presumably target areas considering schools were closed and virtual learning was common. Parents/guardians felt a high degree of belief that the COVID-19 pandemic created a learning loss for students. To address this learning gap, 64% of parents/guardians suggested tutoring while another 49% felt afterschool programs may help. Additionally, 48% of parents/guardians equally felt investing in technology and strengthening the mental health support for students is important. Other central areas suggested were summer school, academic-related activities, and training for families.

Training for families is imperative, especially for students still in hybrid or virtual-only instruction. Parents/guardians indicated they have a general understanding of computer literacy, including 58% indicating that their child(ren)'s school did not provide computer literacy training. The unpredictable state of the COVID-19 pandemic persists with introducing new, diverse training for students and families.

Finally, in addition to the learning gap, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant confusion, anxiety, and perhaps a lack of motivation. Families continue to do their best to support their students. Many of them reported that they primarily exercise with their child(ren) and participate in family activities.

In conclusion, the academic achievement gap and socioemotional wellbeing of stakeholders remain central. Future initiatives could potentially be strengthening a working relationship between families and educators to help combat specific concerns as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing support for families could also encourage parental involvement, strengthen parent-child relationships, and enhance students' self-esteem. The last survey targeting school staff/administrators is presented next.

SCHOOL STAFF/ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY

A total of 493 surveys were completed for the final survey, which targeted school staff and administrators. The results for this survey are presented below:

1. I am a(n):

Staff (PreK-12 classroom teacher, paraprofessional, bus driver, custodian, etc.) **84%**
 Administrator (superintendent, principal, director, etc.) **16%**

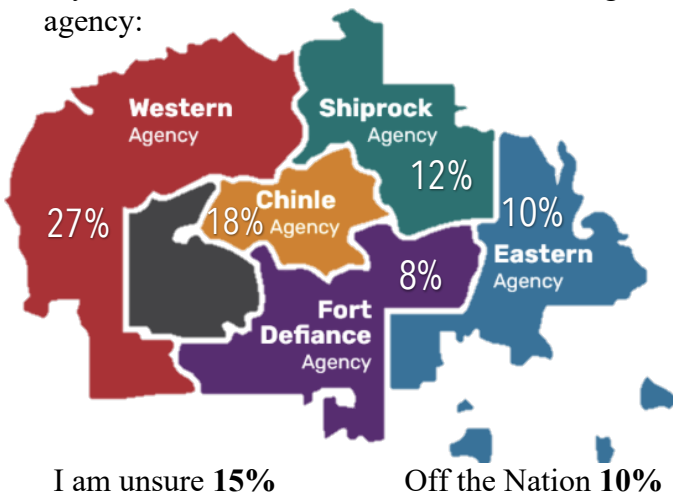
2. I am currently employed at a:

School Type:	Percentage:
Public school	56%
Grant school	21%
BIE school	16%
Private/Parochial school	1%
Charter school	2%
Other	4%

3. My school is located on the Navajo Nation:

Yes	87%
No	12%
I am unsure	1%

4. My school/district is located in the following agency:



5. I am COVID-19 vaccinated:

Yes	97%
No	3%

6. I am an enrolled citizen of the Navajo Nation:

Yes	72%
No	27%
I am unsure	1%

7. Studies have discussed the implications learning loss had on schools because of the pandemic (closures, learning shock, etc.). How has your school/district been addressing this concern? (select all that apply)

After school programs	18%
Summer school	17%
Tutoring programs	24%
Parental nights	11%
Schoolwide activities	15%
Other	15%

8. Over the course of the pandemic, have you experienced an increase in training provided for all instructional staff to improve their online instruction?

Yes	42%
No	20%
Somewhat	31%
I don't know	7%

9. As an administrator, how many trainings have been conducted to improve online instruction for all instructional staff since the pandemic began?

1	6%
2	3%
3	5%
4 or more	17%
I am not a school administrator	69%

10. Has your school/district provided computer literacy training for families of students who are in virtual format?

Yes, at least once	18%
Yes, more than once	19%
No	32%
I am not sure	31%

11. How is your school/district addressing students who are at-risk? (select all that apply)

Requiring them to be in-person	15%
Making home visits	14%
Making referrals	14%
Frequent phone calls	22%
Emails	19%
I am unsure	10%
Other	6%

12. Did your school/district provide any assistance from CARES and/or ARPA funds to families? Select all that apply: (Note: These funds are related to CARES and/or ARPA only. They do not include Title funds).

Electronic devices (laptops, Chromebooks, etc.)	41%
School Supplies	28%
Training for families	8%
Subscriptions (school-related programs, etc.)	12%
Electric bills for families	1%
Other	10%

13. Does your school/district provide available resources for students dealing with COVID-related socioemotional health?

Yes	40%
No	31%
In progress	29%



14. The following are provided to students dealing with COVID-related socioemotional health? (Select all that apply)

After school program (all grades)	30%
Summer school (all grades)	25%
Tutoring programs	43%
Academic-related school activities	30%
PD for teachers	44%
Training for families	17%
Additional funding	10%
Investing in technology	35%
A change in leadership	7%
Strengthen mental health support for students	35%
Strengthen mental health support for families	21%
I am unsure	32%
Other	12%

Of the school administrators and staff who completed the survey, 84% were staff and 16% were administrators. Staff included teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, etc. School administrators were principals, superintendents, directors, etc. The majority of respondents were from public schools (56%) and nearly all responses were from schools residing in the Navajo Nation (87%). As the Navajo Nation continues to experience the detriments from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, schools persist with attempting to address learning loss and socioemotional wellbeing.

Based on the results the top three priorities to address learning loss are tutoring programs, after-school programs, and summer school. These priorities require an emphasis on the instruction for staff, including online opportunities. Nearly half of school staff and administrators reported that they increased training for instructional staff to improve online instruction and reported that training have been conducted at least four or more times.

Schools also continue to provide services for families and students, including 41% of those resources being electronic devices. Additionally, schools provided computer literacy training

while nearly the same school staff reported there has been no training for families. Further attempts are also made for at-risk students, which schools responded that they utilize primarily phone calls and emails, with some requirements to be in-person in order to address their needs. The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted various implementation methods that schools continue to explore to ensure students and families are part of efforts to address the academic achievement gap and socioemotional wellbeing.

Socioemotional wellbeing for students and families has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. School staff and administrators reported that there are available resources for students dealing with socioemotional health, including a significant percentage reporting that resources are in progress. The top five (5) available resources being provided to students are professional development for teachers, tutoring, mental health support, investing in technology, and after-school programs.

In conclusion, the information presented in this study conveys a degree of diversity with experiencing and addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. Students, parent/guardians, and school staff provided insight toward technical assistance, academic achievement gap, and socioemotional wellbeing. Although, all three samples were relatively low, the inferences shared in this report may not provide a compelling review for schools to address. Nonetheless, this report should warrant further exploration, especially when discussing the academic achievement gap and socioemotional learning in schools across the Navajo Nation.

As the results showed, students and families would agree that there is a learning loss occurring in education across the Navajo Nation. Schools reported that they have been developing ways to address these concerns. The leading recommendations from parents/guardians and

schools were tutoring and after-school programs. While these developments are ongoing, continuous technical assistance with electronic devices and computer literacy training are crucial for families and students. Although parents indicated an increase in knowledge of computer literacy, students and schools continue with providing more than one opportunity to obtain training.

Finally, when it comes to socioemotional learning, reinforcing the dynamics between students, families, and schools are important. Schools continue to provide resources for students and families. As the results showed, students reported a high percentage of being supported by their school through various services, such as counselors, programs, mentors, and family assistance. Families have also increased their interaction with their children through exercising activities, such as walking or taking hikes, including family nights. As the COVID-19 pandemic remains unpredictable, ongoing goals should be built to delineate the socioemotional wellbeing of all stakeholders, which affect a child's learning.

Overall, the results of these surveys could assist schools with remediation efforts, persist with increasing trainings, webinars, and work sessions that assist all stakeholders with increasing their virtual learning and instruction. Furthermore, the results provide a glimpse into understanding the demographics that surround family assistance and school site practices that assist vulnerable students. Altogether, this report anchors the attention and responsibility needed for educational stakeholders to continue with improving the instruction and ability of students across the Navajo Nation.

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