

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DIGITAL LEARNING SURVEY

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prepared by

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FINDINGS FROM THE HCPS DIGITAL LEARNING AND COVID-19 SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

In 2018, Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) introduced the North Star initiative to ensure every student graduates with college experience or career licensure. The activities of North Star fall into two major categories, which include (1) the collaboration with Harford Community College (HCC) to provide students with access to college courses and career licensure while in high school, and (2) redesign of the Pre-kindergarten through Grade 12 preparation and experiences that occur prior to students' pursuit of college or career experience. **Digital Teaching and Learning is a strategy to advance our North Star initiative.**

Survey Description

On April 28, 2020, the Office of North Star Research and Program Evaluation launched the Digital Learning and COVID-19 Survey on behalf of the superintendent of HCPS. This survey aimed to collect perspectives from parents, guardians, students, instructional staff (e.g., teacher, special educator), non-instructional staff (e.g., nurse, secretary, bus driver), school administrators (e.g., principal, assistant principal), central office staff, central office administrators and community members regarding how well-supported they felt since the closure of the district's schools due to COVID-19, which began in March of 2020.

The survey asked stakeholders and survey respondents about multiple factors, including but not limited to: access to tools and technology, technology infrastructure and devices, social and emotional needs, academic needs, access to basic resources, concerns about digital learning, and communications, which, when analyzed, reveal what the stakeholders think about digital learning. Stakeholders provided valuable data that will help inform decisions on digital teaching and learning and allow the Board of Education, HCPS senior staff, school administrators, teachers, and staff to identify best practices to support future endeavors.

The survey included a total of 18 closed and open-ended questions. At the end of the survey, respondents were provided the opportunities to use three (3) open-ended questions to provide comments about digital learning or their contact information if they wished to be contacted about a specific concern regarding digital learning or COVID-19. The survey was designed to "branch" based on the selection made by individual respondents. Branching is used to have respondents skip certain questions that are not relevant to them, creating different routes through the survey based on their responses or profile. This also means certain questions were reserved for specific group of respondents. For example, all questions related to grade level were reserved for parents, students, and teachers only.

Research Questions

This executive summary report presents key findings from the analyses of survey data. The following research questions guided the analysis of both closed and open-ended responses to the survey.

1. What are the current perceptions of digital learning in Harford County?
2. What is needed to increase digital learning capacity?
3. What supports and professional development areas should be prioritized?

Survey Administration and Survey Sample

- The survey launched on April 28, 2020, and the survey window closed on May 12, 2020.
- Qualified respondents included HCPS students, parents, and staff members.
- Overall, **14,042** responses were received as indicated in the Table 1 below.
- Overall response count and percent of respondents for all stakeholder groups are also presented in the Table 1 below.
- Of the 4,829 school-based and non-school based employees who received invitations, **3,023 employees** submitted responses, making the response rate **63.6%** for employees.

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Respondents

Which of the following best describes your relationship to HCPS? (N=14,042)	Frequency (N)	Percent of Respondents
Parent or guardian of a student	10,155	72.3%
Instructional staff (e.g., teacher, special educator)	2,456	17.5%
Student	826	5.9%
Non-Instructional staff (e.g., school nurse, bus driver)	343	2.4%
School administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal)	103	0.7%
Central office staff	83	0.6%
Central office administrator	38	0.3%
Community member	38	0.3%

Survey Administration (After Data Cleaning)

- Includes a total of **13,957** respondents following data cleaning, which is the process of preparing data for analysis by removing data that is incomplete, irrelevant, or duplicated.
- Overall results and results for questions only shown to certain stakeholder groups (Parent, Student, Instructional Staff, All Staff (excluding Instructional Staff*)) are presented throughout this executive summary and the final research report.

*Includes staff that are not Instructional Staff: Non-Instructional Staff (e.g., school nurse, admin secretary, maintenance, food service, bus driver), School Administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal, administrator), Central Office Staff, and Central Office Administrator. A breakdown of these respondents is shown in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Demographics of Survey Respondents (After Data Cleaning)

Which of the following best describes your relationship to HCPS?? (N=13,957)	Frequency (N)	Percent of Respondents
Parent or guardian of a student	10,146	73%
Instructional staff (e.g., teacher, special educator)	2,391	17%
Student	825	6%
Non-Instructional staff (e.g., school nurse, bus driver)	337	2%
School administrator (e.g., principal, assistant principal)	101	1%
Central office staff	83	1%
Central office administrator	37	0%
Community member	37	0%

Methodology (Summary)

- After data collection, irrelevant or duplicate responses were identified and removed.
- “Don’t Know or Not Applicable” responses, and equivalent, are often excluded from the figures and analysis in order to focus on respondents who did express an opinion.
- The analysis of all open-ended responses was conducted exclusively by human coding.
- An internal team of ten HCPS staff and an external team of researchers from a third-party research firm conducted the qualitative data analysis and topic modeling analysis for open-ended survey responses.
- **Topic modeling analysis** is a statistical model for identifying “topics” or “themes” that occur in a collection of open-ended survey and written responses.¹
- Topic modeling categorizes responses based on the **frequency of co-occurring words**.

¹Feinerer, I., K. Hornik, & D. Meyer. (2008). Text Mining Infrastructure in R. *Journal of Statistical Software*, 25(5), 1 – 54

Perceptions of Digital Learning in HCPS

The following tables provide insight into perceptions of digital learning in Harford County

Table 3: Effectiveness of the HCPS Response to COVID-19

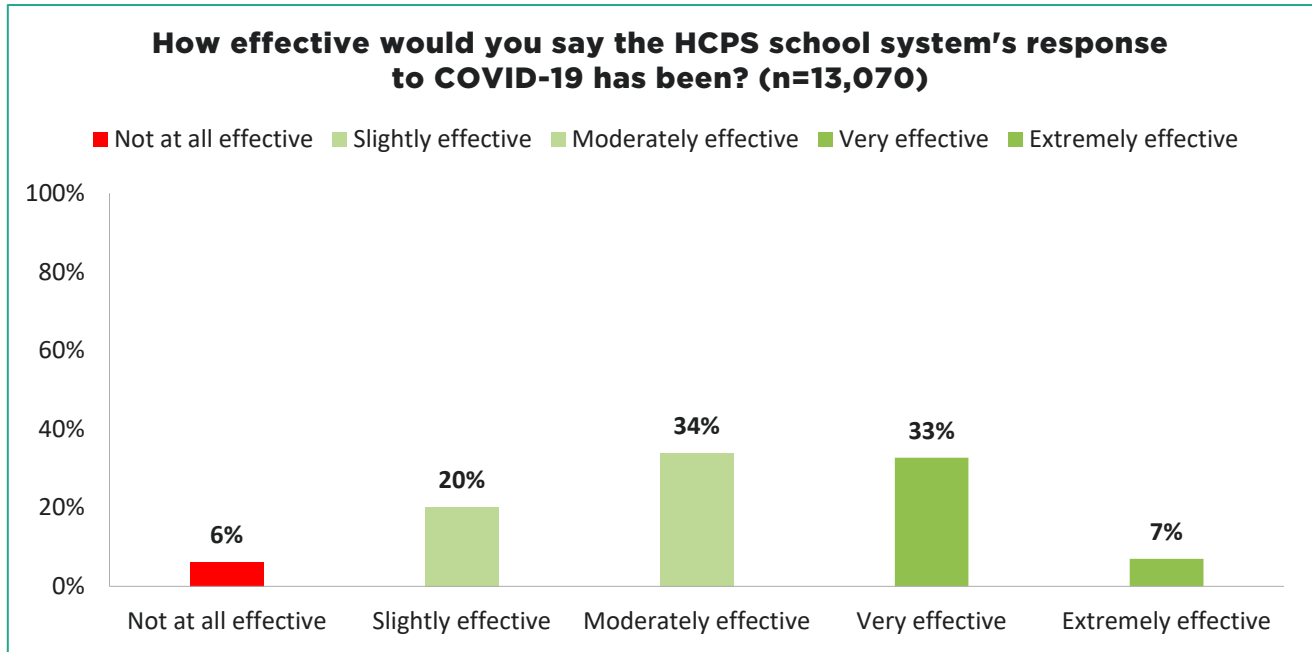
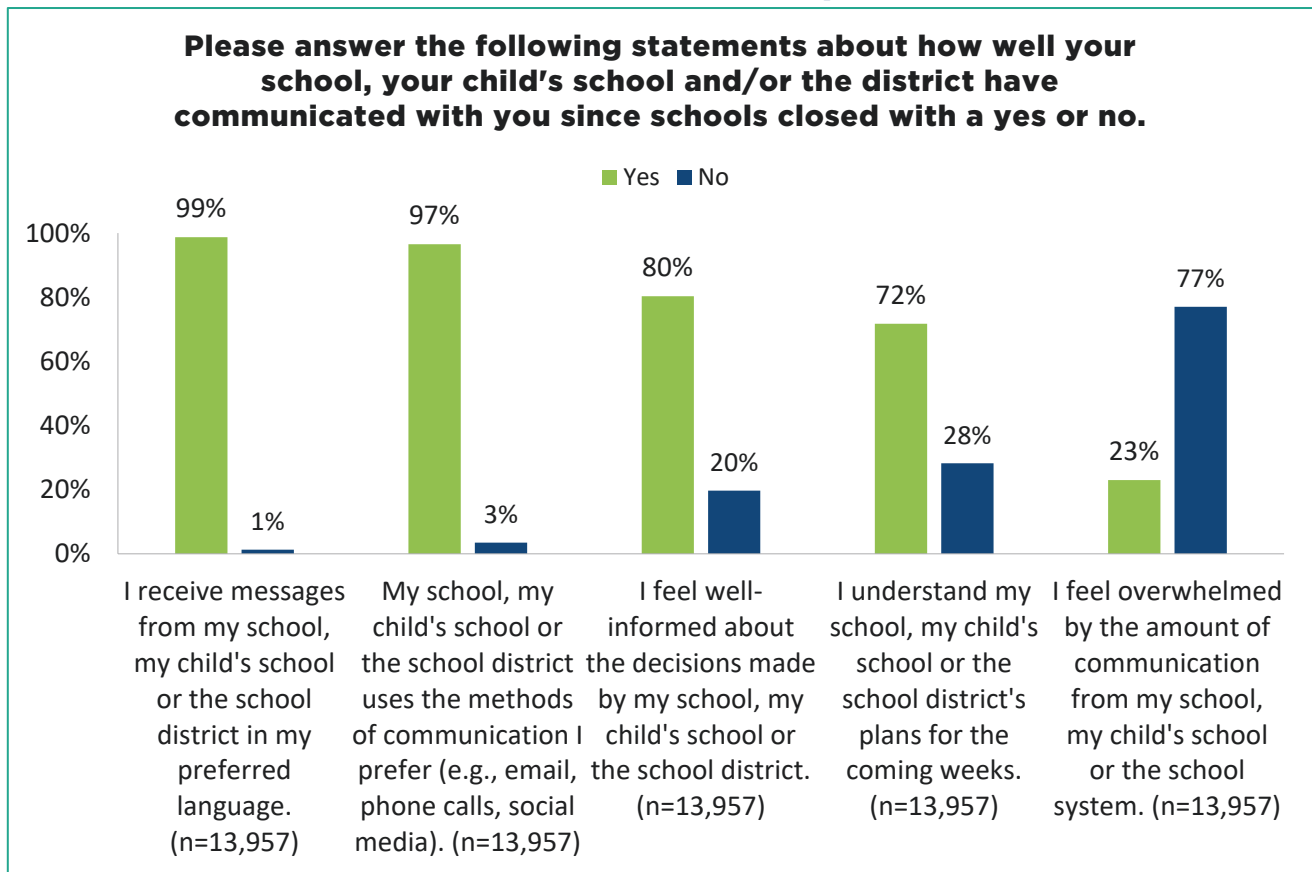


Table 4: Effectiveness of the HCPS Response to COVID-19



Key Findings

KEY FINDINGS

1. **Equitable access to technology and digital learning resources (devices, hotspots, Internet, etc.) is valued by stakeholders.**

Survey respondents advocate for devising methods for all students and teachers to have equal access to the Internet, hotspots, laptops, chrome books, and other necessities.

2. **Technology ease of use and accessibility; and platform user-friendliness are priorities amongst stakeholders.**

These themes emerged in both closed and open-ended survey results. Respondents expressed a desire for technology ease of use and user-friendliness. Teachers, students, and parents desire a learning management system, for delivery of instruction, that is intuitive to use and facilitates efficient access to content and learning resources.

3. **Workload and resulting stress are also consistent themes in the open-ended responses.**

Students who work, parents with essential jobs that require them to be away from home, teachers with school-age children, and others report that the requirements of personal obligations negatively impact their ability to support or engage in student learning at home. The related stress then negatively impacts their mental health.

4. **Personal interaction is highly valued as part of a digital learning plan.**

Stakeholders desire more face-to-face interactions between staff and students, and families want more communication and guidance from their children's educators. Staff miss seeing their students, and students and families believe that the lack of interaction impedes student learning.

5. **Transparency and communication about the future are highly valued amongst all stakeholders.**

Respondents indicate that information about future plans, even if not final, is critical for their ability to manage their stress and plan ahead in their personal lives.

Analysis of Supporting Evidence for Key Findings

KEY FINDING - 1

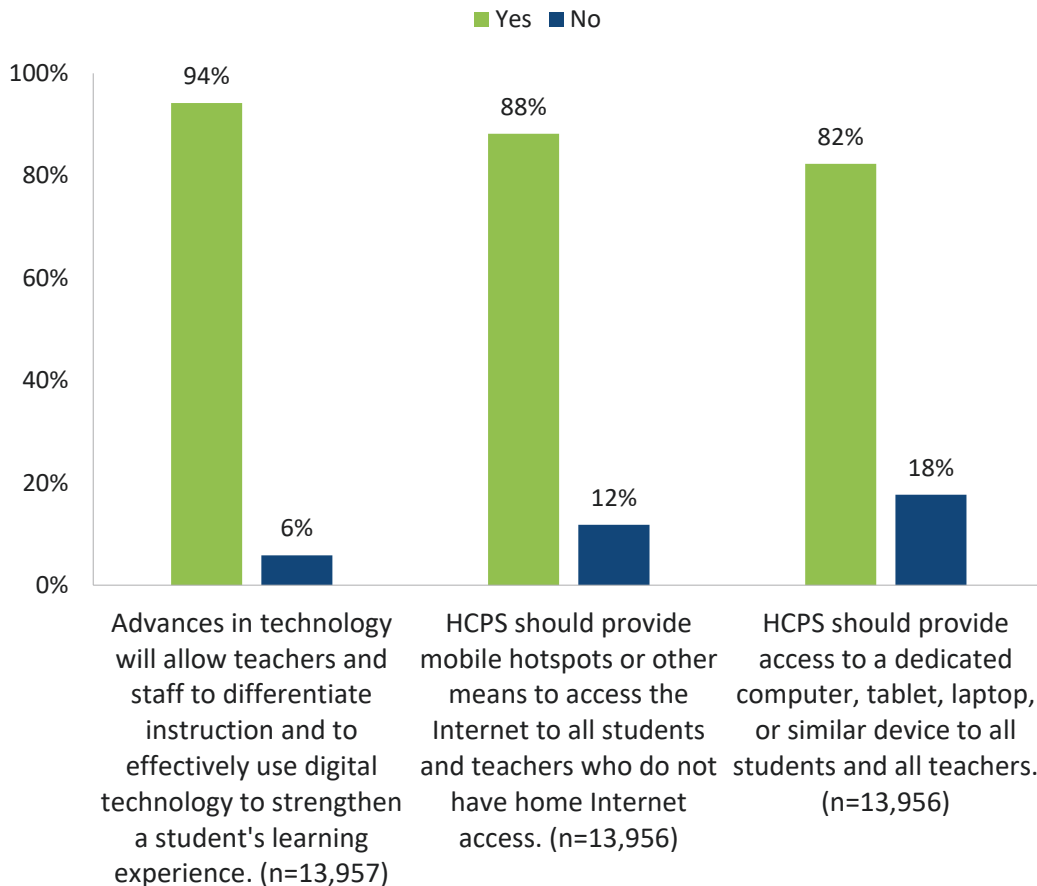
Equitable access to technology and digital learning resources (devices, hotspots, Internet, etc.) is valued by stakeholders.

Survey respondents advocate for devising methods for all students and teachers to have equal access to the Internet, hotspots, laptops, chrome books, and other necessities.

Respondents (82-88%) believe that HCPS should provide devices and internet hotspots to students and teachers with a need for them. They also believe (94%) that advances in technology can allow teachers to differentiate instruction and effectively use digital technology to strengthen students' learning experiences.

Table 5: Technology Access

Closed-ended question: *Please answer the following statements about technology infrastructure and devices to support digital learning with a yes or no.*



Open-ended question: Question 16 - Please use this space to share your concerns and/or suggestions about the implementation of digital learning in HCPS.

A quarter of respondents identify **technology access as a concern for student learning (25%)**. Respondents particularly **worry about students from disadvantaged backgrounds**. They advocate for HCPS to ensure that there is plan for all students and staff to have equitable access to technology and digital learning resources (Internet, hotspots, laptops, chrome books, etc.)



Student Voice

“ This school district has been so far behind. Other counties have given tablets and hotspots. I worked so hard all year and now it is for nothing. Everything is lost and AP exams will be horrible. I don't know how I can apply for colleges and learn for this year and



Parent Voice

“ The limits of families to be able to have access to the computers needed to do the work.. I need my computer to work 8 to 5. We borrowed a chrome book for two kids to share. I can't imagine not having internet...



Staff Voice

“ We are building a plane in flight. I am concerned about the inequity of instruction for those students who do not have technology. A smart phone is not adequate technology to work from. ESOL students are being left behind. Foreign speaking parents cannot adequately help their students because of lack of materials in their language. Special educators are being expected to do more than other instructional staff and beyond what is



Keywords: access, provide, technology, device, system, support, internet, laptop

KEY FINDING – 2

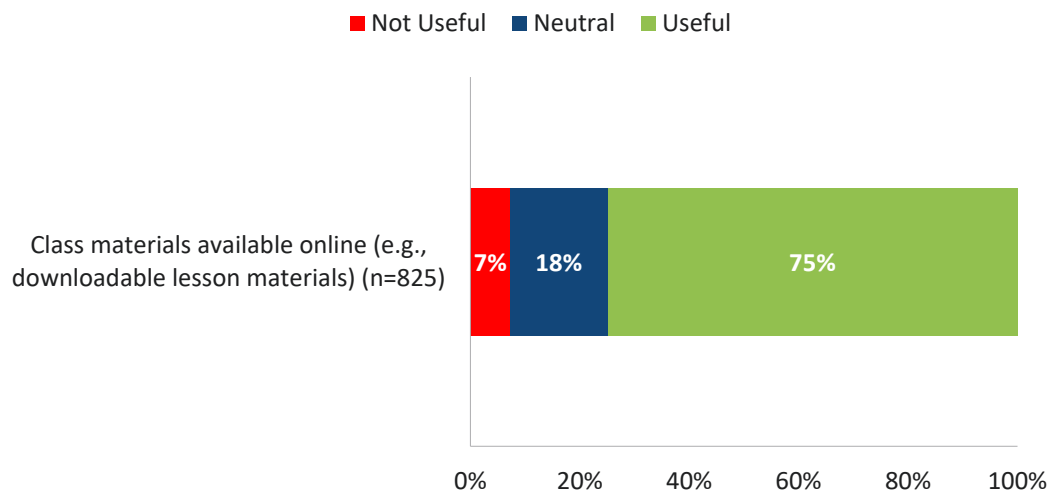
Technology ease of use and accessibility; and platform user-friendliness are priorities amongst stakeholders.

These themes emerged in both closed and open-ended survey results. Respondents expressed a desire for technology ease of use and user-friendliness. Teachers, students, and parents desire a learning management system, for delivery of instruction, that is intuitive to use and facilitates efficient access to content and learning resources.

Students and families may require clarity on how to get technology support. A small but noteworthy minority of parents (24%) and students (28%) report that they **do not** know where to go for help with technology.

Table 6: Online Class Materials (student responses)

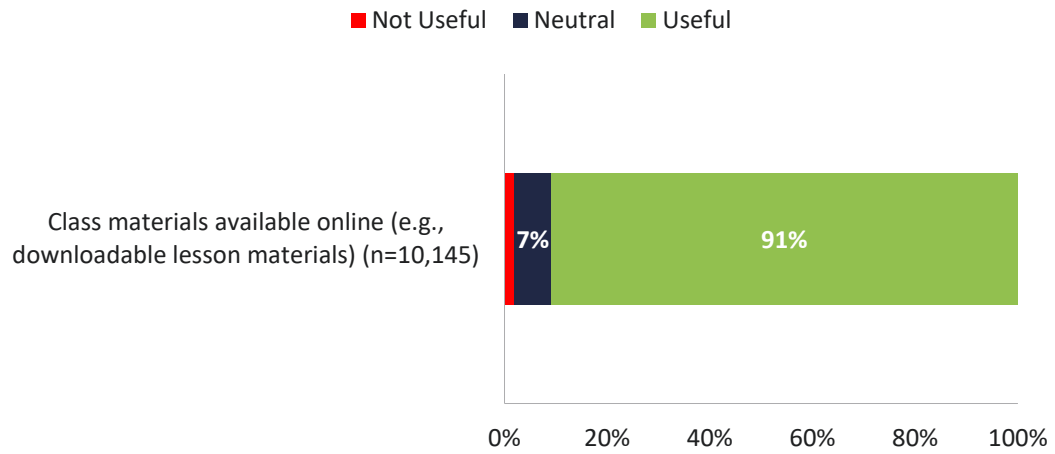
Closed-ended question: *How useful would the following resources or supports be to you as a student?*



Additional online class materials can benefit students. Three-quarters of students (75%) and nearly all parents (91%) indicate that class materials available online would be useful resources/supports.

Table 7: Online Class Materials (parent responses)

Closed-ended question: *How useful would the following resources or supports be to students and/or teachers/staff? [Parents]*



Open-ended question: Question 11 - Do you have another concern or challenge that is not listed on question 10? If so, please select Yes and "Other" and share your concern next to "Other". If not, please select No.

According to a fifth (22%) of the open-ended comments, there is **room to improve online learning platform convenience and usage**. Respondents report dissatisfaction with **the number of logins necessary** to access online learning tools. As shown in the parent voice below, respondents also **recommend consolidating learning platforms into one**, although additional feedback may be needed to identify the best platform. Some staff voice that itslearning is not completely preferred.



Student Voice

“ Too many emails and links and information to go through to get assignments.



Parent Voice

“ All the teachers should be using the same platform. It creates a lot of chaos when you have more than one student and the expectations and tools that are used are different. Everyone should be posting in ItsLearning.



Staff Voice

“ The ItsLearning platform is not very user friendly and consumes a great deal of time to utilize. It is also not an easy platform for primary use. Can we find a platform that is more friendly and effective across grade levels?



Keywords: assign, access, complete, difficult, platform

Open-ended question: *Question 17-Please use this space to share any additional information about how your school/your child's school and HCPS can best support you during this time.*

As seen in the responses to other open-ended questions, respondents again express concern about student access to technology (16%). While the concerns are primarily among parents and staff, all stakeholders desire equal access to **technology and learning platforms that are easy to navigate**.



Student Voice

“ I think by giving students reliable technology to use. Instead of using its learning, use something more organized or giving reliable computers or tablets, so students can have access to that.



Parent Voice

“ The platform needs to be easier to navigate with students able to log on in the morning and having someone walk them through what to do, where to click, etc.

“ itsLearning is not user friendly. Other school systems are using google classroom, which young students can navigate easily without supports.



Staff Voice

“ Provide devices to students who do not have reliable access to devices, including families who have siblings sharing devices. Prioritize providing devices to students with specialized needs/plans (IEP, 504, ELL, etc.) who now require them, even if they do not need them in the school setting...



Keywords: work, time, parent, kid, home, help, stress

KEY FINDING – 3

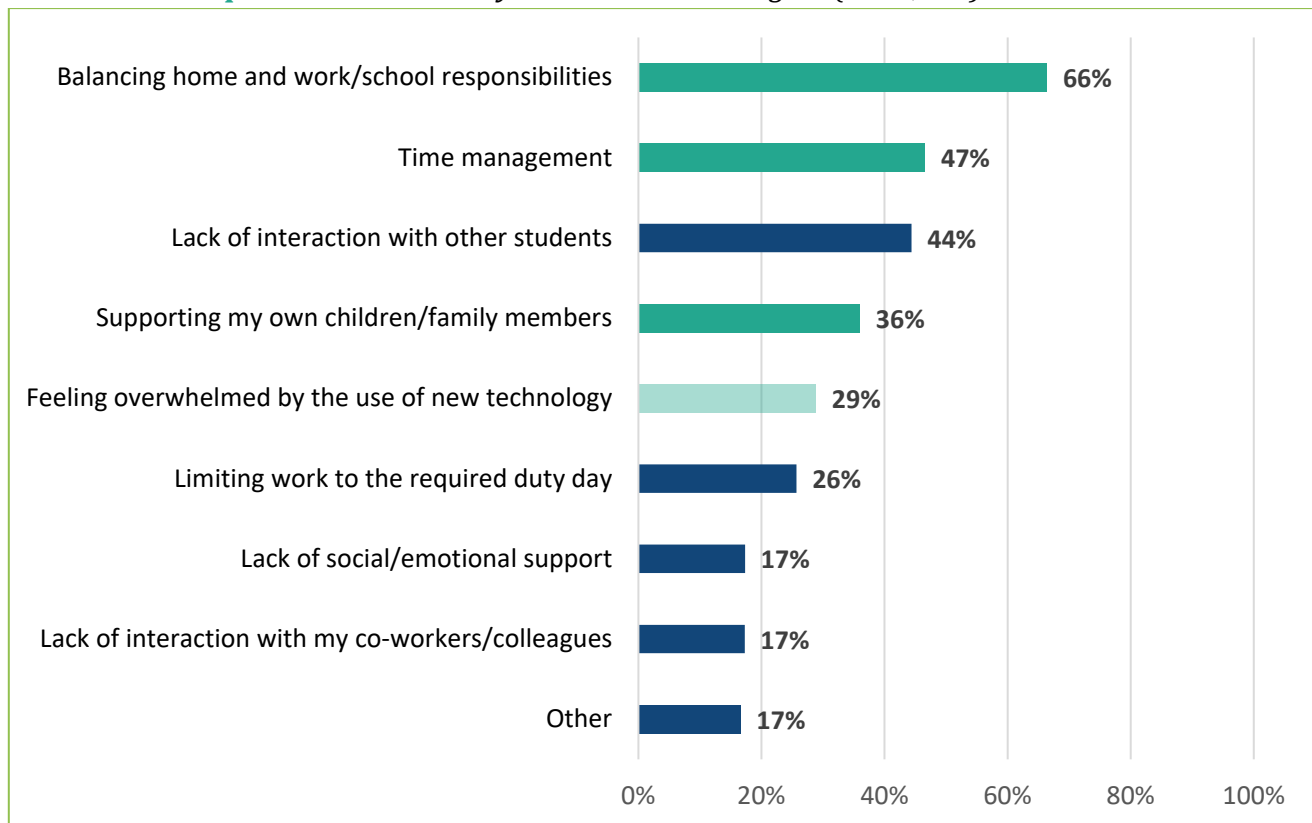
Workload and resulting stress are also consistent themes in the open-ended responses.

Students who work, parents with essential jobs that require them to be away from home, teachers with school-age children, and others report that the requirements of personal obligations negatively impact their ability to support or engage in student learning at home. The related stress then negatively impacts their mental health.

“Balancing home and work/school responsibilities”, “Time management” and “Supporting my own children/family members” are viewed as the top challenges amongst all stakeholders. Almost 30% of respondents selected “Feeling overwhelmed by the use of new technology” as a challenge.

Table 8: Challenges

Closed-ended question: *What are your current challenges? (n=13,956)*



Open-ended question: Question 11- Do you have another concern or challenge that is not listed on question 10? If so, please select Yes and "Other" and share your concern next to "Other". If not, please select No.

Respondents also cite **workload management as an additional concern** moving forward (28%). Student responses report difficulties **finding time** in general, especially when they have essential jobs. Parents express similar concerns regarding the amount of time they are able to commit to their child's education.



Student Voice

“ Look I just want to say some of my teachers have been more supportive and understanding than others. And I would [appreciate] if they gave me less work I have a job I'm working on the front lines of this virus, I dont mind doing work I just need more time.



Parent Voice

“ It is putting too much stress on families. I work a full time job and come home trying to fill the role of full time teacher and full time single mother. I have to fit in time to prepare meals, do chores, etc. I'm stressed, the kids are stressed.



Staff Voice

“ For younger children it is a REAL struggle for parents to work from home and help their child. I have had several parents crying because they are overwhelmed learning how to use HCPS technology to help their child and balancing work.



Keywords: work, time, home, child, help, stress, overwhelm

Open-ended question: Question 16 - Please use this space to share your concerns and/or suggestions about the implementation of digital learning in HCPS.

Respondents (22%) continued to **express concerns about workload** in Q16. As with the responses to Q11, students indicate they feel stressed, parents worry about how to monitor their students given their personal responsibilities and work, and staff indicate issues balancing work (teaching) and parenting their own children.



Student Voice

“ As said previously, some students don't always have the time through the day. Some have to take care of their family members and trying to stress out over all right classes of homework is dreadful.



Parent Voice

“ Right now things are not set up for a child to independently go in and do a lesson and stay on task etc. It takes a heavy amount of parent involvement and for those of us working a full time job in the home it is almost impossible to balance both.



Staff Voice

“ I have a hard time working from home and managing my child at the same time so adhering to the suggested duty day is extra difficult, which puts a bigger mental strain on myself as there is no break. I have to constantly be on. I worry I am getting burnt out as an educator and a mom.



Keywords: work, time, home, child, stress

Open-ended question: Question 17 - Please use this space to share any additional information about how your school/your child's school and HCPS can best support you during this time.

Similar to responses to Question 11 and Question 16, **respondents worry about how to manage their workload while also tending to personal responsibilities (18%)**. A frequent suggestion is to modify expectations for the quantity of work students are expected to complete.



Student Voice

“...We have students doing nothing but schoolwork all day. I wish teachers would stop pretending like everything is normal, because it's not, and that they actually consider the fact that we're at home trying to teach ourselves topics without someone to rely on for guidance.



Parent Voice

“My child's school could be open to changing the expectations for those households with both parents working outside of the house or those households with parents teleworking and trying to manage homeschooling...



Staff Voice

“Despite this support, I am very much struggling to work and care for my own children (2 toddlers) and I worry that my own children's mental health/safety is struggling as I am spending more time in front of my computer to complete work responsibilities....



Keywords: work, time, parent, kid, home, help, stress

KEY FINDING – 4

Personal interaction is highly valued as part of a digital learning plan.

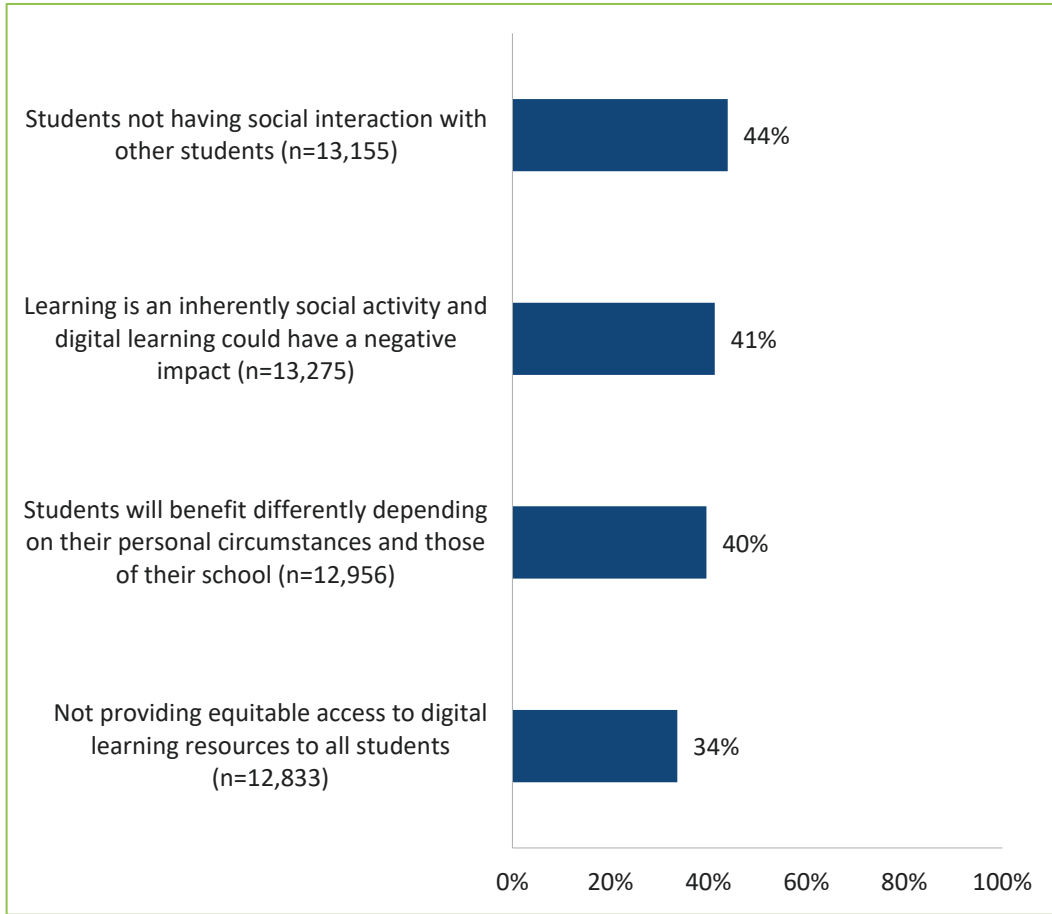
Stakeholders desire more face-to-face interactions between staff and students, and families want more communication and guidance from their children’s educators. Staff miss seeing their students, and students and families believe that the lack of interaction impedes student learning.

There is, however, notable concern that digital learning will negatively impact students’ ability to socialize and make academic progress. Many respondents (41%) believe learning is an inherently social activity and that digital learning could have a negative impact. Slightly more respondents (44%) are concerned that students will not have social interaction with other students.

Stakeholders also worry that personal circumstances of students and their families may hinder digital implementation. Approximately 40% of respondents rank the concern that “students will benefit differently depending on their personal circumstances and those of their school” among their top three concerns.

Table 9: Ranked Challenges with Digital Learning

Closed-ended question: Please enter a valid number (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, or 11) to rank your concerns or challenges regarding digital learning from the highest concern (1) to the lowest concern (11). Graphs show the percent ranked in Top 3.



Open-ended question: Question 11 - Do you have another concern or challenge that is not listed on question 10? If so, please select Yes and "Other" and share your concern next to "Other". If not, please select No.

Approximately one-quarter (26%) of overall responses for Q11 identify **instructional methods as an additional challenge or concern**. In particular, responses express dissatisfaction with the **lack of live video interaction** in the curriculum and also mention preferences for **more direct engagement**. Responses also cite a preference for less focus on assignments and more focus on teacher-student interactions.



Student Voice

“Honestly, its fine to me except i would much rather do video calls. I miss the classes and school. I dont like being cooped up in the house so if we could have video calls with our class mates and teachers i would like that.



Parent Voice

“I would like actual online classes where the teacher is visible and actually teaching the students. I am overwhelmed especially with the 4th grader. She needs actual scheduled lessons with her class. I wish they could meet every day for a couple hours.



Staff Voice

“The teachers need more interaction with the kids. Like class zoom calls where teaching or reading can be done live with the kids. Our teachers are amazing but parents are not the teachers. Our students need to hear from the teachers. They miss them terribly!



Keywords: need, interaction, video, see, help, meet, face, zoom

Open-ended question: Question 16 - Please use this space to share your concerns and/or suggestions about the implementation of digital learning in HCPS.

Responses continue to indicate a **desire for more teacher-student interaction (18%)**. Respondents believe current levels of teacher-student interaction are insufficient and that additional face-to-face engagement will raise student success levels. Suggestions include one-on-one video calls and additional online class material.



Student Voice

“ Not getting to see my teachers on daily basis on Teams Meeting. They don't walk students through new topics on teams meetings.



Parent Voice

“ I would like to see the teachers actually teaching via video or a live service. Art and music are posting videos. Both of my kids teachers are just sending packets with instructions, I must decipher the packets and teach, No teacher to student interaction



Staff Voice

“ The restrictions on doing live online classes, such as no set schedule and not being allowed record live classes (so if a student misses it they missed it). You cannot cover the same material in lab based and engineering type classes.



Keywords: teach, instruction, online, class, lesson, lack, video, interact, face

KEY FINDING - 5

Transparency and communication about the future are highly valued amongst all stakeholders.

Respondents indicate that information about future plans, even if not final, is critical for their ability to manage their stress and plan ahead in their personal lives.

Open ended question: *Question 17 - Please use this space to share any additional information about how your school/your child's school and HCPS can best support you during this time.*

Respondents (17%) value transparency and communication from the school in order to effectively prepare. They recognize that a finalized plan for the fall and beyond may not be possible, but they indicate that any information about re-opening **would contribute positively to their mental health.**



Student Voice

“ Better communicate exactly what is going on and how a plan will be implemented. When a plan has been designed in the past, it has not been communicated clearly as to not confuse all parties involved. Seniors deserve to be told when classes will end (should not be the same as all other students!).



Parent Voice

“ ...Providing people with as clear and as concise of a plan as possible, as soon as possible, would help to alleviate much of this stress and fear of the unknown, and also allow people to plan.



Staff Voice



“ When thinking about our return plan, what thought has been put into the students and faculty that are at high risk for severe illness? Has anyone figured out the percentage of students and faculty that are high risk?



Keywords: work, time, parent, kid, home, help, stress

Recommendations

The findings support the following recommendations to help improve the implementation of digital teaching and learning initiatives in HCPS.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus efforts to improve digital learning on student engagement. All stakeholders believe that students were less engaged in their schoolwork during the school closure than when students were attending school in person. Focus professional development on improving student engagement in remote learning activities. Develop strategies for maintaining student engagement during remote learning.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide additional online class materials to students. A large majority of both parents and students reported they would find these additional materials useful. Supplemental materials related to academics and/or social-emotional needs can be provided by individual teachers, school administration, or the district.

EQUITY



- **Clearly identify how HCPS intends to address remaining and future inequity. Share HCPS' successes in equity during the crisis.**

While the data suggests that a vast majority of students and families can access HCPS' remote learning opportunities and communications, they are nonetheless concerned about equity within the district during the pandemic. HCPS must continue exploring strategies for providing learning resources equitably and reaching students without technology access or sufficient at-home support.



- **Reinforce where families and staff can access technology support.**

While most parents and students are comfortable accessing technology support, a notably large minority of them are not. Improve communication about where and how all stakeholders can access technology support.



- **Ensure that every student (and teacher) has equitable access to a device and Internet.**

More than 80% of respondents expressed that HCPS should provide access to a dedicated computer, tablet, laptop or similar device.

- **Consider providing mobile hotspots and other means to access the Internet to all students and teachers who do not have home Internet access.**

More than 88% of survey respondents agree with this recommendation.

- **Establish public private partnerships with interested parties (county government, etc.) to enable all families to have robust wireline Broadband Internet Services in all areas of the county.**

Many parents and teachers in some locations (county's northern end, etc.) do not have robust wireline broadband services.

PLATFORM USER-FRIEDNLINESS



- **Work with vendor to improve the itslearning Learning Management System (LMS).**

According to open-ended survey responses from many stakeholders, there is room to improve the convenience and usage of the current LMS, itslearning. Respondents report dissatisfaction with the number of clicks necessary to access the itslearning LMS/online learning tools. Some staff also voice concerns that itslearning is not **user-friendly** and is not completely preferred.



- **Consider starting a pilot program of a second online Learning Management System/platform, such as Google Classroom, to use for delivery of instruction in addition to itslearning, during the 2020-2021 school year.**

Teachers, students, and parents recommend having a choice of a more user-friendly learning management system for delivery of instruction only since all teachers are expected to access the curriculum materials via the itslearning platform. Many respondents indicated their preference for Google tools.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING



- **In addition to creating virtual academic opportunities for students, create social opportunities for them, too.**

Stakeholders indicate that a significant percentage of students are not connecting with their peers socially during the pandemic, which can have implications for students' mental and physical health. Research shows that social isolation in young people can lead to immediate negative mental health outcomes with potentially severe consequences later in life.



- **Provide clear, flexible plans for schoolwork to all stakeholders.**

In both open-ended and close-ended responses, respondents indicate that working from home is challenging and that personal circumstances may impact access and engagement with school-related tasks. Clarity in communication and flexibility in timing or path to completion may reduce stakeholder stress.



- **Improve systems for identifying and supporting students with mental health needs.**

Students, parents, and staff indicate that they are concerned about students' mental health during the crisis. Improve processes for regularly checking on student well-being and **provide training to staff to identify when and how to escalate student mental health concerns to school counselors** or others based on district protocols. Ensure that students know what resources are available to them and how to access those resources on their own. Work with staff to identify if this is a general concern or based on observed student actions, behaviors, or statements.

Conclusions

To inform district planning efforts throughout the spring, summer and fall of 2020 HCPS conducted a comprehensive Digital Learning and COVID-19 Survey and used the following research questions to guide the analysis of the responses to the survey.

1. *What are the current perceptions of digital learning in Harford County?*
2. *What is needed to increase digital learning capacity?*
3. *What supports and professional development areas should be prioritized?*

1. What are the current perceptions of digital learning in Harford County?

Most survey respondents indicated that the HCPS response to COVID-19 was effective; however, survey data also revealed opportunities for improvement. Many of those opportunities are described in this executive summary report. The recommendations included in this report highlight some of those opportunities as well. Most stakeholders were satisfied with HCPS' digital learning initiatives in Spring 2020. They appreciated the communication and responsiveness from teachers and district staff, and students and families felt supported by teachers both academically and social-emotionally.

Nonetheless, stakeholders reported that students were less engaged in digital learning as compared to their academic engagement prior to school closures, and they reported concerns about the impact of the minimal social interaction that accompanies remote learning. Additionally, stakeholders expressed difficulty in balancing their personal responsibilities with their workload and/or school obligations. Inconsistent expectations around digital platforms and assignment policies also presented significant challenges for students and families as related to digital learning.

2. What is needed to increase digital learning capacity?

While a vast majority of HCPS stakeholders have access to a device and an Internet connection, ensuring that all stakeholders are able to engage in digital learning must be a priority. Stakeholders believe that equitable access to devices and Internet are essential in order to increase digital learning capacity. This may include providing additional devices for families who are sharing a single or limited number of devices, as well as increased communication about the availability of technology-related supports. Digital learning can also be improved by identifying an effective, user-friendly platform, and/or a single platform for grade levels, schools, and/or the district to use for learning opportunities and communication. Providing online resources beyond those shared by HCPS teachers would also be of benefit to students and families, as would consistent expectations for assignment due dates, grading policies, and the like. Last, digital learning can be improved by providing greater flexibility to stakeholders in how they engage and meet expectations, as they appear eager to be successful in a remote environment but do not always feel as though they're able to manage their workloads.

3. What supports and professional development areas should be prioritized?

HCPS staff should continue to be trained in evidence-based best practices in digital learning, particularly around student engagement and progress monitoring. Additionally, because stakeholders expressed concerns about student mental health and social-emotional well-being, HCPS staff should be trained on how to incorporate wellness and socialization into their lessons and how to identify students in crisis so as to provide escalated supports. HCPS should continue to develop and refine its Continuity of Learning Plan and the digital teaching and learning plan to include comprehensive professional learning for teachers, students and staff; and technical supports and training for students and parents.