School children connected parents

TORONTO, January 12, 2022—The results of a new survey released today by Maru Public Opinion undertaken for the online and in-person learning support company D2L, finds more Canadian parents of their school aged elementary and secondary students feeling uncertain than they did in the fall of 2021 (36% up six percentage points) as they enter the second half of the school year.

While many are feeling connected (29%) to the online learning platforms that are part of their child's education experience, almost equally as many (26%) feel overwhelmed by it all.

So how are parents feeling about the rest of the school year in 2022?

Canadian parents of children in school spanning kindergarten to grade 12 were asked in mid-August 2021 to best describe their feelings towards the coming school year. Just before Christmas, another group of similar Canadian parents were asked the same question about their feelings for the rest of the school year in 2022. The 2 findings were contrasted and there has been some subtle shifts between beginning of school and midterm.

While an equal number of parents appear to be as hopeful (36%) as was the case back in August, more parents are apparently uncertain now (36% – up six percentage points from 30%,) while less feel anxious (11% – down eight percentage points from 19%), one-in-ten feel excited (10% – no change), and a fraction are angry (6% – down one percentage point from 5%.)

On reflection, how are their student children doing at school?

Half (50%) of parents say their children are meeting expectations and almost one quarter (22%) believe their children are exceeding expectations. However, the remainder (23%) report that their children are struggling –with one-in-five parents (19%) stating that their child is falling behind in some areas well, and another group (4%) admitting that their child is behind in nearly every area.

There is little doubt that the pandemic has caused school absences, distractions, and mental health concerns – all of which have contributed to disrupted learning for students through the past many months. In that respect, parents believe that schools, educators, or families have strategies that can best help to overcome this impact and support students in the months to come. While there is no clear consensus as to what strategy should be employed, there are a range of responses that can be tailor-made to specific circumstances.

Asked how the online learning platforms – as part of their child's education experience – make them feel, many feel connected (29%) while almost as many feel overwhelmed (26%), followed by those who feel empowered (18%), anxious (13%), or confused (13%.)

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Of those parents surveyed just before the December holidays and asked to choose what strategy they would favour, one third (34%) recommended that there should be additional support where it's needed while the six-in ten parents split into three almost-equal groups: one group believes that hybrid learning models should be maintained where students can learn online and in class (21%), followed by those who advocated for strong school-home connections (20%), and those who believe that personalized learning should be undertaken to meet the unique needs of each student (20%). This left a fraction (6%) of parents who suggested that nothing be changed or done because students will eventually catch up over time.

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Methodology

These are some of the findings of a Maru Public Opinion survey among a representative sample of 256 Canadians who are the parents of children in grades K – 12 completed on December 15, 2021, with the results weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and language in Québec) to match the population according to Census data. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The findings were contrasted with the results of a comparable survey conducted August 13 – 15, 2021, among 279 parents of children in grades K – 12. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of either size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/-6.1%, 19 times out of 20.

Panel and data services provider Maru Blue is deeply rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Because of extremely small sample sizes, approval ratings cannot be provided for Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. Respondents could respond in either English or French.

Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction. Maru Public Opinion does not do any work for any political party.

Maru Public Opinion polls with supporting detailed tables are found here: Maru Public Opinion Canada. Corporate information can be found here: Maru Group

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