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ALSDE HOME TECHNOLOGY SURVEY UNVEILS PERCEPTIONS AND PREPAREDNESS FOR ALABAMA PARENTS AND STUDENTS

More than 26,000 Parents Weigh in on Devices, Connectivity, and Learning

MONTGOMERY, AL – The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has joined forces with the Innovative Programming Research Collaborative, a strategic partnership between the University of Alabama’s College of Education and The Akribos Group*, to gauge the extent to which Alabama parents perceive their own, and their children’s, adaptation to remote learning and blended learning options.

Previously, the ALSDE compiled data on what schools and school systems had internet connectivity, but not individual households. Now, the impact that COVID-19 has made on schools prompts education officials to explore creating a statewide school technology list that details internet connectivity and device availability in households across the state.

The survey was designed by and administered through the Innovative Programming Research Collaborative. Composed of several sections, the survey examines various areas including demographic information, parents’ approach to the school year, access to internet and technology, usage of Alabama Public Television and other online educational resources, students’ learning during the COVID-19 crisis, and parent’s opinion about the importance of having educational resources.

Part of the data was analyzed to see what the significant differences were between parents who planned to send their children to school in the traditional classroom setting and those who planned on using the remote learning option.

“Given what we have experienced in education this year, we now know it is imperative to better understand the capabilities for remote learning in all communities across the state,” said Eric Mackey, state superintendent of education. “Regardless of the COVID-19 impact going forward, it is likely that some form of remote learning will continue to have an impact on the delivery of education. This crisis has laid bare some of the inequities we knew existed between varying communities. This survey was conducted in such a way that it provides valuable data to mine in our attempt to understand what is needed, as well as explore adequate solutions for emerging educational situations.”

The main theme of the survey is related to parents’ willingness to send their children to school this fall. One example shows 65 percent of parents said they were planning to send their children to school, while 35 percent of parents said they did not plan to send their children to school.

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Ultimately, the almost 40-page report is full of parent perceptions on everything from concerns about school transportation and internet access, to before and after school academic resources and health concerns.

Dr. Peter Hlebowitsh, Dean of the University of Alabama College of Education, said the response to COVID-19 brought about an immediate change in the delivery of education services.

“When the pandemic struck last spring, it became clear that the nature of public schooling in Alabama would have to change, with the main effect being that the instructional work of the teacher would have to move to the internet. This inevitably raised a number of questions about the role that internet connectivity, device availability and parental involvement would play in ensuring that all school-aged children in Alabama would be able to move forward with their school education,” Hlebowitsh said. “The College of Education at the University of Alabama is pleased to have collaborated with the Alabama State Department of Education to develop and administer a statewide parental survey that provides some insight to these questions and that yields data speaking to a number of other critically important matters. We are thankful for the opportunity to conduct this important work and grateful for the assistance provided by our research partner, The Akribos Group.”

The full report, which includes complete graphs and data about the survey, is attached and will be available at https://education.ua.edu/alsde-student-parent-technology-survey/ or www.akribosgroup.com after noon on Thursday.

*The Akribos Group: A professional consulting practice specializing in accurate and precise research-based solutions through strategic planning applications, innovative organizational design, expert leadership training and highly effective professional development services.

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