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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 21, 2020

Stand for Children Illinois Poll: CPS Parents Concerned About Keeping Children's Education on Track and Health & Safety as School Year Approaches

Chicago--Stand for Children Leadership Center today released the results of the poll it commissioned to gauge the feelings of Chicago Public Schools (CPS) parents relating to schools reopening for the upcoming school year. The poll, conducted July 8-14 by Tulchin Research, included 660 parents of CPS students. The margin of error for the survey is +/-3.81%.

Parents continue to be torn between a school year that includes a mix of online and in-person school or a completely online schooling experience for students. Thirty-five percent of parents support a hybrid approach with a partial reopening of schools and continued learning from home, while 40% of parents believe that schools should remain closed with only remote learning. Just 19% of parents said they supported a full-time return to school when the new academic year begins.

"As our city and country continue the fight against COVID-19, Chicago parents want to ensure schools are taking the safety of their children seriously when it comes to schools reopening," said Mimi Rodman, Executive Director of Stand for Children Illinois. "We wanted to learn more about the issues that matter most to CPS parents to ensure their opinion is heard at this vital time. The findings of this survey, especially when it comes to concerns parents have and their thoughts on issues like their children's academic progress, safety, cleaning, and frequency of in-person classes, align largely with the recent CPS draft plan for reopening schools. Many parents want a continuation of at least some remote learning, they want schools to be clean and safe when students return, and they want their students to return for those crucial interactions with both teachers and other students."

CPS parents have several concerns about the pandemic and its impact on their children's education and daily lives. Chief among them is keeping their child's education on track, outranking

even “getting sick, or close friends or family members getting sick.” When it comes to learning from home, a clear majority of parents (61%) noted that they found it either very difficult (20%) or “somewhat difficult” (41%) to help their children learn at home during the pandemic.

Furthermore, to feel comfortable with a return to schools, parents put a premium on the safety of their children and schools. Parents rated “an increase in schoolwide cleaning and disinfection” as the most important guideline for schools to follow, trailed by a requirement that “schools conduct symptom screenings and temperature checks or require that individuals self-certify that they are free of symptoms before entering school buildings,” and a requirement to use “appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including face coverings.”

Among the challenges facing parents and their students if CPS continued remote learning in the new school year, missing out on extracurricular activities outside of school and social interaction with other students rank as the most pressing. The next biggest challenges were ensuring students get enough exercise or physical activity and ensuring students can keep up with school and complete their assignments.

A plurality of parents (44%) said they preferred alternating days of the week for in-person attendance rather than alternating weeks or mornings/afternoons if CPS opens schools with limited attendance. Furthermore, if schools fully reopen, a majority of parents (55%) prefer to hear from their child’s school once a week to communicate regarding its reopening process.

For more in-depth analysis, see the [polling memo](#).

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Stand for Children Leadership Center, Inc. is a non-partisan education advocacy organization focused on ensuring all students receive a high quality, relevant education, especially children whose boundless potential is overlooked and under-tapped because of their skin color, zip code, first language, or disability.