PRELIMINARY REPORT OF ACSSO NATIONAL FOLLOW UP SURVEY
Extraction of some raw data with no current analysis.

ACSSO conducted a follow up survey to the highly successful National Survey held last year at roughly the same time. Both launched in the last week of April this survey ran for a total of four weeks. Whilst both still in the midst of a global pandemic the 2021 Survey was in large to see how respondents reflected on the learning from home period and how their child / children had settled now that some normalcy had returned.

We re-opened the collectors (June 3) for Victoria in an attempt to gather any further well-being issues with the new lockdown – mostly due to the lack of financial assistance to families. What was most interesting is that 61% of Victoria's responses came after the new lockdown. This is reflective we believe, of the stress experienced in lockdowns.

We circulated the link to the same groups:

- ACSSO Newsletter
- ACSSO Social media
- National Peaks (ASPA, APPA, AGPPA, ASEPA, ATSIPA, APC, CSPA)
- State Territory Members (Parents Victoria, P&Cs Qld, Tasmanian Association of State School Organisations, ACT P&C Council)
- State and Territory Peaks Non-Members (NSW P&C; NTCOGSO; WACSSO; SAASPC; SAASO and the non-gov school parent peaks)
- DG, Secretary's EXEC Officers of state and territory Department of Education
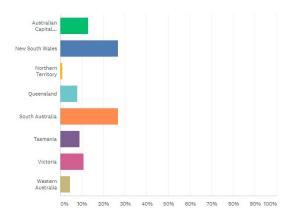- Those who registered interest from last year's survey

Of the FB pages we also advertised on – created by people who were doing learning from home for the first time we could only find one of those still active.

Here is some preliminary raw data as the "official" closing date was May 31 and we have re-opened the Victorian Collectors

We were not expecting the huge response we got last year - this year so far 335 (10%of last year's responses) further examination will assist to identify why – early reading seems to indicate people are not as alarmed, however there are still some concerning commentary
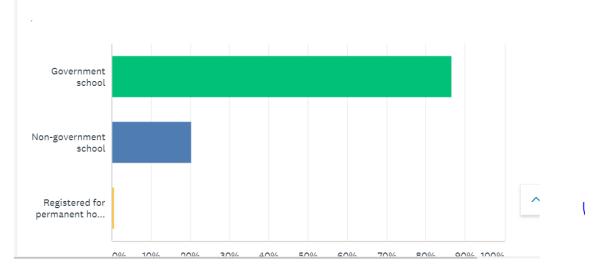
We set up 22 unique collector identifications just as a trial for the purpose of seeing the most effective modes of communication for these surveys

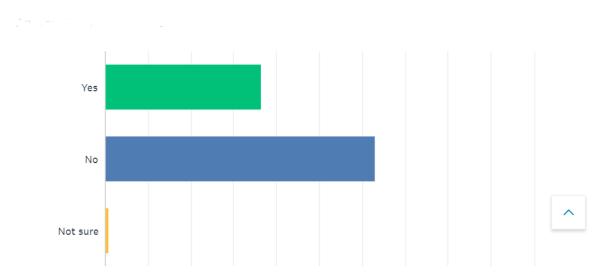Which Australian state or territory do you live in?

This one is telling with the greatest number of responses coming from South Australia and NSW – jurisdictions to which ACSSO does not have membership by its peak organisation. In this survey we obtained responses from all jurisdictions.

What types of schools do your children attend? Choose all that apply in 2021.

The majority of responses were from government schools however reasonably reflecting roughly the national enrolment – we will share findings with APC and CSPA
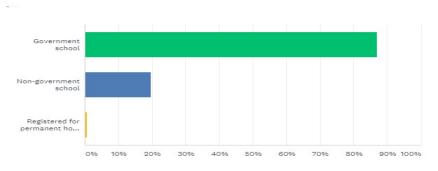
Are you currently a member of a school's parent/community group? Eg, the P&C, P&F, or School Council?

This is also clear and pleasing to see – we put this collector in this time to specifically ascertain if we were reaching the "not yet reached" or "hard to reach" cohort – those who don't attend the regular parent meeting (for whatever reason) and whose voices are often not heard. We also know that those without and online access are not reached all –we will move next term into some FTF

We offered this survey cross sectoral with the support particularly of CSPA and the breakdown can be seen below – very similar to last years response and reasonably representative of the spread of students

What types of schools do your children attend? Choose all that apply in 2021.

Q1

Where did you find out about this survey?

Of great interest in this chart is the fact that family's greatest response was when the information came via the child's school or a personal email – a trusted source

Q11 – how appropriate is online learning for your child

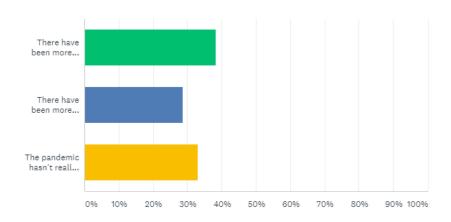| ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Very appropriate	20.88%
▼ Works well if tailored to their needs	45.05%
▼ Not at all appropriate	34.07%
TOTAL	

Shows there needs to be a lot more work done in this area – however we will find out more when we delve into the narrative – over 30% of respondents have also made comment

Q13 Looking back, would you say your child's experience of home learning during the pandemic has been:

ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES
▼ a positive change for them	29.97%
▼ a negative change for them	30.64%
▼ no noticeable difference from classroom learning	23.23%
▼ did not engage in any home learning	16.16%
TOTAL	

Over 50% of respondents have made comment on this – the stats are rather divisive so the narrative will give more explicit information

Looking back at the past year, which statement best describes your family's overall wellbeing during the pandemic?

This is a total change from last year and obviously a reflection of the timing of this survey – it will be interesting to read the narrative and also see how Victoria responds in the next few weeks

Over 50% of

ANSWER CHOICES ▼	RESPONSES
▼ Desktop computer	10.81%
▼ Laptop computer	42.70%
▼ Mobile tablet	31.35%
▼ Printer	26.49%
▼ Modem	8.11%
▼ Wifi extender	15.14%
▼ Web cam	14.05%
▼ Study desk	43.24%
▼ Study chair	41.62%
▼ Items normally provided by school (eg writing books, paints, craft supplies)	36.22%
▼ Other (please specify) Responses	10.27%

respondents needed to purchase new equipment in order to cope with learning from home. Some 40% of these respondents spending between $1,000 and $5,000

Feelings towards online learning at a glance were mixed although the majority of adults found it stressful – and many reported different experiences for each of their kids

Below are a few of the responses to "If I could change one thing about online learning…………
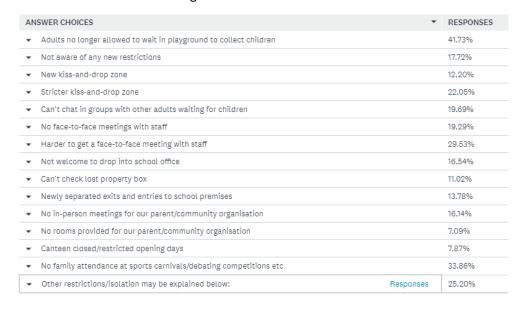
- *For my daughter's school, ideally daily, but at least weekly live video catch ups with her teacher and classmates. Work that matches her ability. For my son, no homework.*
- *Teachers teaching and not filling time. Ie, kids log on for instruction for 10 or so minutes and then they can continue work on their own. One platform and a consistent approach throughout. Teachers being on hand during school hours for if any issues*
- *For principals and teachers to actually understand the world are children are entering and support their teaching and learning appropriately in partnership with parents.*

- *To simplify it so the younger kids could do this independently if needed. It was impossible for my 8 yr. old to navigate alone and with me working full time it was stressful to work all day then jam in a whole day's learning in a few hours with my child of an evening.*

- *Maybe a 'plain English' version of what is happening*

- *internet and hardware provided to all school children*

- *Never do it again*

- *provide more money to schools to support development and implementation of online learning (equipment and software) and training for teachers, support staff, children and parents.*

- *More information from the school about requirements each day, it was hard understanding my own full-time work requirements and then had to add in full time school. It was too much.*

- *It being grade towards the reports. As this wasn't done, I felt like all that effort was huge waste of time and we should have just spent the time working on our children well-being and mental health.*

- *that it not be all face to face or all online learning. With the return of face to face learning, online learning should still be incorporated into the curriculum and there should be dedicated funding to resource and support this model. Many schools are still using hybrid learning and there are many different ways of doing it - interviewing an Antarctic Scientist who is in Antarctica can happen in the classroom or via multiple screens. There are true advantages to hybrid learning.*

- *A certificate for parents for surviving.*

- *Juggling 3 kids lessons at once.*

- *Have the student and teacher communications better prepared - the parent had difficulty interpreting what they were asking for - plus tried to work*

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ rewarding and fun	20.30%
▼ exhausting and confusing	42.80%
▼ revealed learning difficulties	20.30%
▼ expensive to set up	11.07%
▼ stressful for children	41.33%
▼ involves too many different programs	28.41%
▼ made no difference to our children	10.33%
▼ stressful for adults	51.29%
▼ well supported by our schools	35.06%
▼ poorly supported by our schools	22.51%
▼ a waste of time	8.86%
▼ too dependent on individual teacher skills	21.77%
▼ full of great opportunities	13.28%
▼ let down by our internet speed	8.12%
▼ used too many platforms	20.30%
▼ really well organised	13.65%
▼ doesn't cater for our child's learning needs	21.77%
▼ helped us bond as a family	14.02%
▼ very different between our children	31.37%
▼ is better than before the pandemic	14.76%
▼ is worse than before the pandemic	2.58%
▼ requires too much internet speed/mobile data	5.54%

Changes to Family Engagement

We had a considerable number of calls to our office and anecdotal information around families and their ability to engage as the restrictions were lifting. We had two specific questions targeting this and it was clear that – Families and Schools still are not quite sure what it means by engaging families but more importantly as the restrictions were lifting across the country schools, and sad to report F-6 schools are more reluctant to return to the pre-covid times. Many families have reported that they have been informed that the current processes will remain and its much "quieter and more settling for classes" this way

This is an area that we believe needs urgently addressing not only for the known benefit to student learning outcomes but for the well-being for families and students.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
▼ Adults no longer allowed to wait in playground to collect children	41.73%
▼ Not aware of any new restrictions	17.72%
▼ New kiss-and-drop zone	12.20%
▼ Stricter kiss-and-drop zone	22.05%
▼ Can't chat in groups with other adults waiting for children	19.69%
▼ No face-to-face meetings with staff	19.29%
▼ Harder to get a face-to-face meeting with staff	29.53%
▼ Not welcome to drop into school office	16.54%
▼ Can't check lost property box	11.02%
▼ Newly separated exits and entries to school premises	13.78%
▼ No in-person meetings for our parent/community organisation	16.14%
▼ No rooms provided for our parent/community organisation	7.09%
▼ Canteen closed/restricted opening days	7.87%
▼ No family attendance at sports carnivals/debating competitions etc	33.86%
▼ Other restrictions/isolation may be explained below:	Responses 25.20%

And finally, here is a few of the select responses from this question
Is there anything you'd like your children's schools or the state or federal government to change as a result of what your family experienced in the past 12 months?

- *Need for more school psychologists and dedicated welfare officer in primary schools*
- *Federal government to provide capital funding for government schools. Federal government to remove 20% cap on government school funding. Federal government to increase funding for government schools. Federal government to invest in improved telecommunications in regional, rural and remote communities.*
- *Improve schools. Allow a better way for parents to communicate with schools. Offer parents and children the ability to home-school for some subjects all the time.*
- *The teachers and principal are great, but I feel the department of education is more risk averse than non-government school. If teachers have less paperwork, they would have more time to communicate with parents and we can share the teaching and learning load*
- *Continued efforts to make parent engagement in learning a priority.*
- *Continued opportunities to engage via Zoom, to allow equal access for parent engagement - as a teacher I have had more fathers engaged than ever before*
- *All families provided with internet connection*
- *Make dyslexia and ADHD screening (particularly in girls), referral, diagnosis and teacher training mandatory for all new and existing teachers.*
- *give the kids more time to learn less!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! stop cramming unnecessary things into an already full curriculum - make learning fun again!!!!*
- *Teach teachers skills on how to present online learning. We found that only one teacher at our school was excellent at online teaching. Definitely upskill teachers to be effective in online teaching.*
- *Fix the NBN. Resource ALL kids having access to the internet and online learning at the same level. Money for mental health and similar, especially for the kids who have unsafe or less supportive home environments.*
- *There need to be more learning options for children with disabilities. The home learning has exposed more of the cracks that these children are slipping through, and in some cases has increased the child's difficulties (e.g., increased anxiety). Government depts and levels of government all taking a silo approach does not solve this problem - these children need access to more options. Twice-exceptional children are a subgroup whose needs are not being met. Too many suffer trauma in the school system and families are forced into home-schooling, at great personal financial and career cost, and causing great stress for families. NDIS says they can't help because its education, and the education system doesn't understand the disability and mental health consequences. It is not ok.*
- *Ensure children are encouraged to learn and grow up to be people rather than 'achieve' tick a box curriculum requirement no matter what the external factors are.*
- *Be great to have Email access to staff, some offer this and it helps with proactive family engagement*
- *Actually, embrace family and community engagement so that it becomes embedded and therefore part of the culture of education. It is time for lip service to end and action to occur.*
- *More value in quality educators. Recognising the value in engaged families. The ability to sack principals would be nice too, a lofty ideal.*

- *Tas has identified wellbeing and supporting students that may have experiences trauma as crucial points of additional input - it may also have brought literacy challenges for some students to the fore as well as we are seeing renewed emphasis on this vital topic.*

OTHER FAMILY COMMENTS (VIC LOCKDOWN)

Parents Victoria (PV) have had oversight and contact with families during lockdown periods. We would think it's helpful to ACSSO to note the following: -
- *all Parent Club, School Council and other groups in schools impacted by having to pivot their operations or postpone them until it was possible to action –*
- *definitely more reports of heightened anxiety in students and parents with ongoing lockdown disruptions to learning –*
- *school staff, families and students feeling fatigued and questions what is reasonable expectations during these times? –*
- *the org is continuing to receive media requests on how parents or students coping which is difficult when you don't want to be responsible for fuelling anxiety and unrest –*
- *schools certainly are more confident in pivoting to and from remote learning (but unsure about long term impact on the learners or teachers) –*
- *question that family engagement in 2020 was seen as a positive but how that is sustained and strengthened beyond 2021 is questionable?*

- *My 7yr old has struggled massively with home learning. She strongly dislikes it, and this has caused an awful dynamic between us and parents and her trying to get her to embrace her studies.*
  - *trying to home school and working from home is not really achievable. some teacher friends said but we have to do it. try calling each child in your class at least three times in a day and dedicate your time to facilitating home school for a 5/6-year-old it's not possible. if you are being paid to work from home you are being paid to work not facilitate schooling*

  - *trying to work from home and facilitate schooling has resulted in many extra work hours and much frustration at home fortunately we could at least still work*

  - *the program was ok however we found one teacher put out a program on MS PowerPoint which is a paid to use program we had to alert school. Also found same subject wanted us to "sing a song to you tube" video and upload the song. this involved using multiple devices to get the work submitted. also found if we couldn't manage time for things like art or pe just videoed/ photographed similar activities and submitted due to lack of time and patience while trying to work in busy and essential jobs (parent in media and power supply)*

  - *Out of the 2 lockdowns Melbourne had last year the first didn't engage in home learning. In the second the school changed guideline to make sure all student, logged in each day, this helps to keep him on track with schoolwork a little.*

  - *Two working parents, two children to home-school PLUS additional stress of the unknown pandemic, income stress, and there is NO support for working families. No one has 'tips or tricks' on how to manage full-time workload with teaching and looking after children full time. No one provided extra carer's leave for working parents home schooling. Instead, we work ourselves to the ground - up before 6 to do work and not in bed before 1am trying to finish work off once kids are in bed. totally unsustainable. Not enough online learning for kids. Home-schooling is unsustainable and disadvantages our kids and our jobs.*

  - *more online learning, more carers leave to help look after them whilst working, more recognition of the impossible task we were expected to take on*

- *We have young children and worked through the pandemic as well as assisted our children with home learning. Balancing was very hard between school and work meetings. At times was frustrating and hard. Kids overall enjoyed it as they learnt to do their work quickly to have more free time during the day.*