Pulse on Mandatory E-Learning/Online Learning – Results Summary

Introduction

In response to a motion passed by the Board on October 30, 2019, the TDSB surveyed its student, parent and secondary teacher communities to gauge support for the government's mandatory e-learning plan.

The following report summarizes the perceptions of students, parents and educators with respect to the government's intended approach to e-learning.

Method

Survey Design

A short online survey was developed, which asked students, parents and secondary teachers if they a) believed mandatory e-learning would benefit students, and b) supported the government's plan to make it mandatory that all secondary students complete two e-learning credits in order to graduate from high school. Respondents were also able to provide commentary on each of the above questions. The survey was voluntary, and survey responses were anonymous.

Samples

Due to the size of the secondary teacher population, all secondary teachers were surveyed (n=6,201).

For students and parents, a randomized, representative sampling approach was employed. In a random sample each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

The sample drawn for both students (n=5,196) and parents (n=5,254) represented the larger student population in terms of key student demographics e.g., geographic location (Learning Centre/Network, Ward), grade, gender, special education needs, country of birth, home language, racial background, and socio-economic status.

Survey Implementation

On January 30, 2020, the survey was emailed to the Grade 7-12 student sample, and the K-12 parent sample, and to all secondary teachers. Three reminder emails were sent out on February 3, 5 and 10 and the survey closed on February 11, 2020.

The survey tool used to distribute the survey (i.e., Qualtrics) allows for tracking of respondents so it can be known which participants have responded, but not which responses belong to which participant. In

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this way, while responses are anonymous, it is possible to assess how well those who returned surveys reflect the original sample.

Results

In total, approximately 5,000 members of the TDSB community responded, including 428 students, 1,938 parents, and 2,730 secondary school teachers.

Teacher responses were received from every Learning Network, and the respondents generally reflect the larger secondary teacher population in terms of gender and employment status (i.e., permanent vs occasional).

Parent responses were received from every Learning Network, and the respondents generally reflect the larger student population in terms of gender, special education needs, and country of birth. In terms of student self-reported racial background, parents of White students and Mixed students were more likely to have responded to the survey, while those of South Asian students were less likely. In addition, parents with higher socio-economic status, those with English as a primary home language, and parents with children in Grades 7-12 were more likely to have completed the survey.
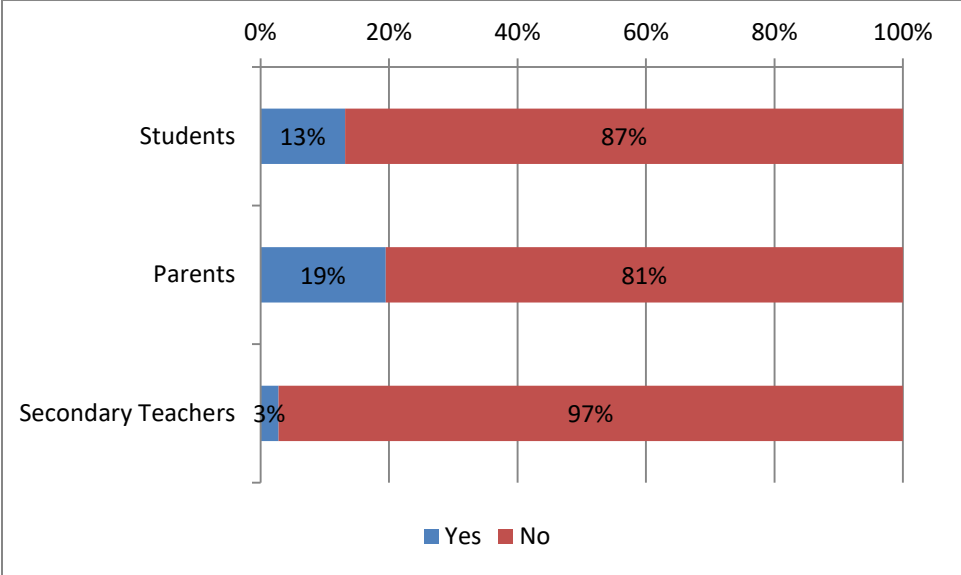
Student responses were received from every Learning Network, however due to the smaller number of student responses, there were some Learning Networks with few student responses. The student respondents generally reflect the larger student population in terms of socio-economic status, language and country of birth. In terms of student self-reported racial background, no Indigenous students submitted a survey, and Black students were less likely to respond. In addition, students in Grades 10 and 11 were more likely to have responded to the survey, while those in Grade 7 were less likely. Male students and students with special education needs (excluding Gifted) were also less likely to have responded to the survey.

Findings

Most students, parents and secondary teachers do not support the government's plan to make e-learning a mandatory requirement for graduation.
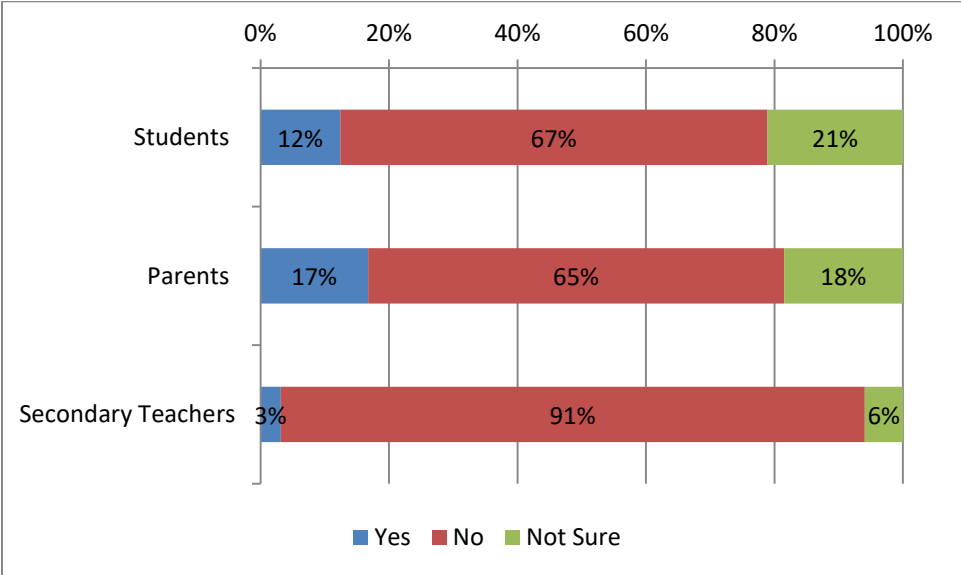
As can be seen in Figure 1, 87% of students, 81% of parents and 97% of secondary teachers answered "no" when asked if they supported the Ministry's decision to make two e-learning credits a graduation requirement.

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Figure 1. Do you support the Ministry's decision to require all students to take two e-learning/online learning credits in secondary school in order to graduate?

Further, most students, parents and secondary teachers do not believe that mandatory e-learning will benefit students. As can be seen in Figure 2, while some students and parents saw some benefits or were unsure of the benefits, two-thirds of students and parents and 91% of secondary teachers answered "no" when asked if they believed mandatory e-learning would benefit students.

Figure 2. In your opinion, would mandatory e-learning/online learning benefit students?

A summary of the themes from student, parent and teacher commentary is forthcoming.

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