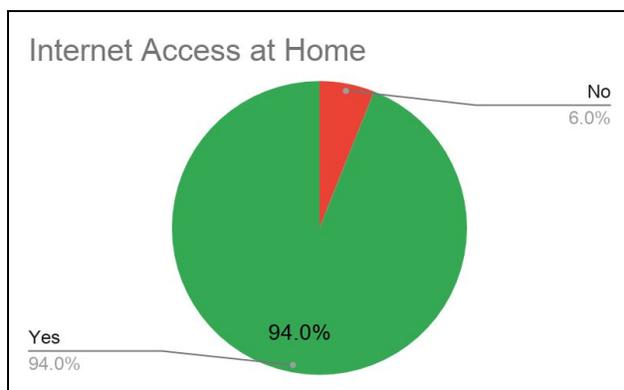
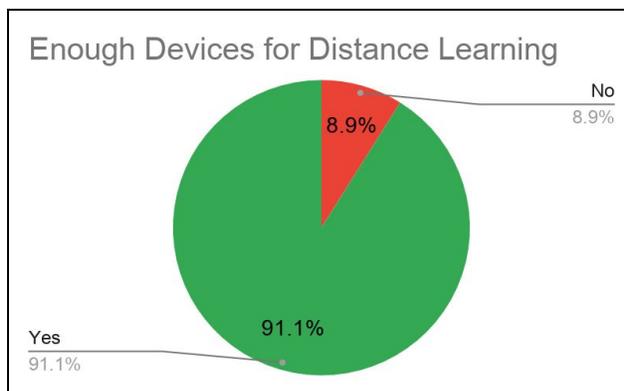


For Immediate Release:

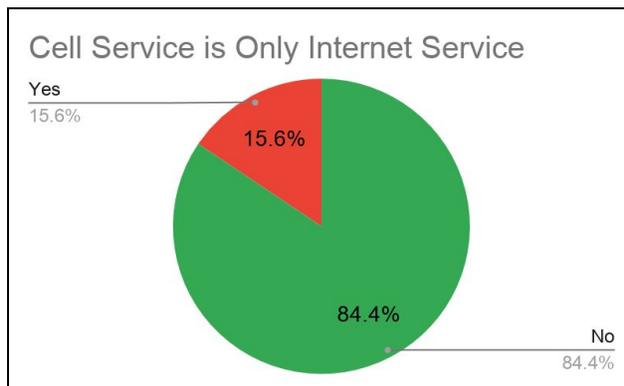
2,130 Families in 12 ECMECC member districts (representing 18,794 students) completed a survey asking questions about their access to the Internet and computing devices relative to distance learning between April 15th, 2020 and May 8th, 2020. This represents 3,959 K-12 students. The response rate provides a margin of error of about $\pm 1\%$ with a 95% confidence level. Results indicate that there is still a significant population of students with no or poor Internet access and/or limited access to computing devices making it very difficult, if not impossible, to successfully participate in digital distance learning. Following is a summary of the survey results.



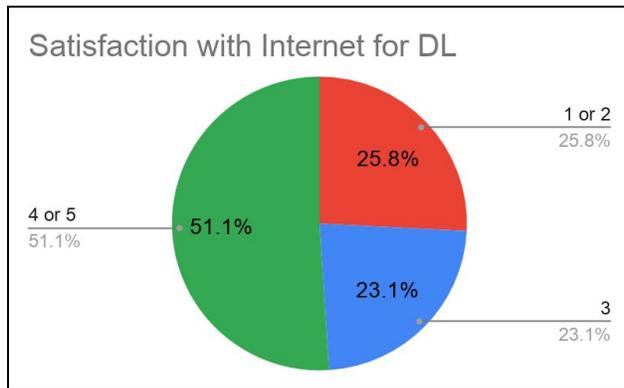
Approximately 6% of respondents reported that they do NOT have Internet access at home for distance learning. Most have cell phones but do not (or can not) use them for distance learning. This percentage would represent **1,128 students** across the region without usable Internet access for distance learning.



Approximately 9% of respondents reported that they do NOT have enough devices for their students to participate in distance learning successfully. This represents **1,673 students** across the region who may not have a device to fully engage in distance learning.

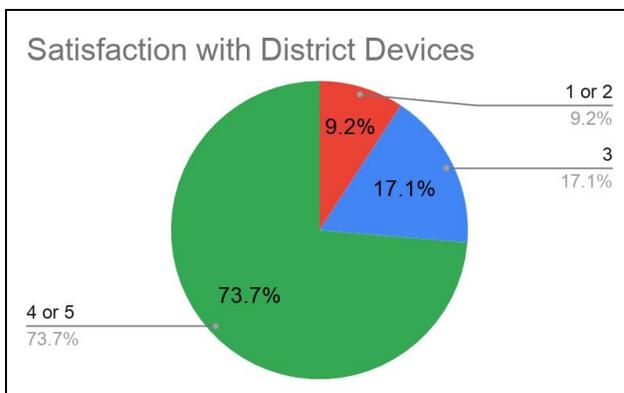


Nearly 16% of respondents indicated that some kind of cellular service is their only Internet Access at home. This could be through phone sharing or a hotspot tied to a cellular service provider. This includes most of those who reported they have NO Internet Access and represents **2,932 students** across the region.



Satisfaction with Internet service for distance learning gives insight into which families may be experiencing difficulties or frustration. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction related to distance learning on a 1 (low) to 5 (high) scale

Nearly 26% of respondents indicated that they were generally dissatisfied with their current situation representing over **4,840 students** throughout the region.



Over 73% of respondents are satisfied with the school issued devices their students have received (where applicable) for distance learning while 9% are generally dissatisfied. Comments provided by those who were dissatisfied indicated issues such as broken devices, content that was not accessible on the devices and slow performance, among others.

Additional Considerations/Findings:

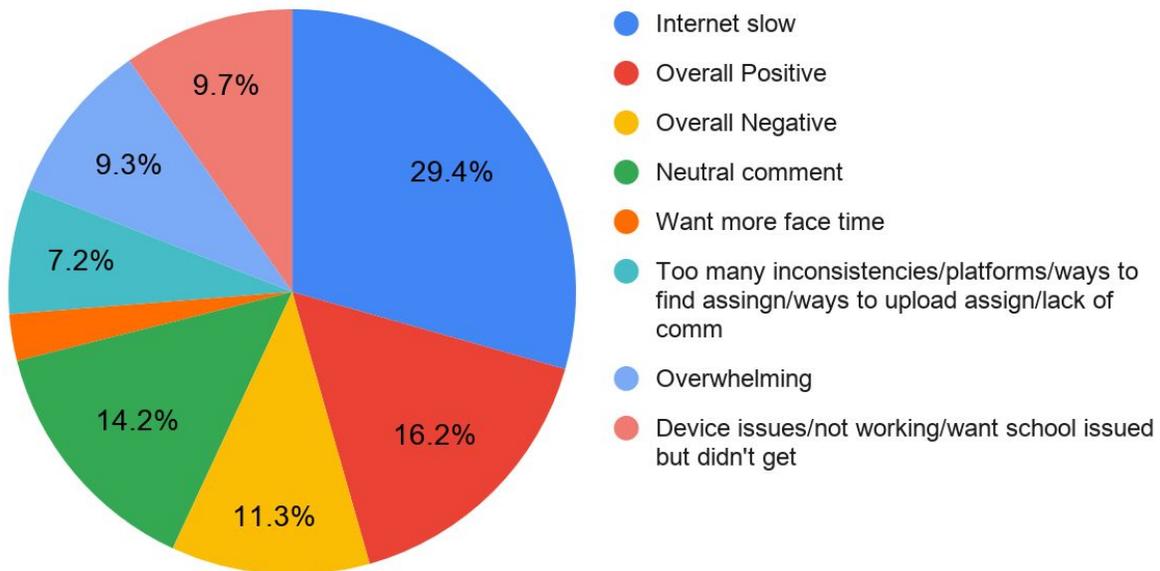
- The data is based on the results from 12 of 14 ECMECC districts representing 18,794 students.
- Over half (51.5%) of the families who reported only having cell service as their Internet service were moderately or highly dissatisfied with their service relative to distance learning and many of those provided comments expressing their frustrations with participation in distance learning with only cell phones or hot spots as Internet access devices.
- The 25.8% who report moderate or high dissatisfaction with their Internet service are the group who generally have Internet service but do not find it adequate for distance learning. This group is often not identified in other data collections. While not yet correlated, anecdotally, it appears that the comments from this group demonstrate high levels of frustration with the distance learning process.

Comments:

There were 636 free response comments provided by respondents. They have been subjectively grouped into 8 categories. Sample comments provided below are **unedited and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.**

Free Response Comments

Grouped by similarity



Over 29% of the provided comments involved reports of “slow” Internet speeds that often hampered distance learning. Sample comments included:

- our home internet is works well for one connection, is barely usable for 2 connections and unusable for 3 connections. We cannot reliably connect for Zoom meetings ever. For 1 student and 2 adults working from home, we have to stagger our times online. We know that we are lucky to have any internet service at our house when our neighbors have nothing or only cell phone connection, but this can create a huge educational disparity.
- Only 1 person can use my hotspot at the time. We have to take turn. My youngest son can't do IXL when his older brother is doing his school work. It's technically impossible for my 3 sons to be online at the same time. Verizon is the only internet provider where we live. I had to change my plan to the most expensive one, and I am still limited to 15 GB of 4G LTE for my hotspot. This is not acceptable in 2020. Distance learning in these conditions is hardly feasible.
- It's very hard to do this distance learning with no internet

- The internet is SO SLOW so teachers don't think my kids are doing their work. We live in the middle of nowhere. Uploading is almost impossible
- some days we have to try 3-5 times to get an email to send or to upload and send videos because of the spotty wifi internet service
- He goes to a friend's house or sits in school parking lot

Over 16% of the comments were “overall positive.” Sample comments included:

- Thank you all for what you are doing during this time. We are truly appreciative of our teachers and you all are being missed!!
- It is wonderful to see how caring your teachers on staff are of our students.
- Teachers did an excellent job implementing a plan in such a short amount of time. We miss routine, we miss the teachers and they are so appreciated, now more than ever.
- Our district has been really great from helping to understand the expectations put on students right now, providing meals for kids, communicating important information and helping students and families to still feel like a part of a community. Distance learning is working really well for our family and I am happy with the way it has been handled.
- Just want to send a giant virtual hug and say thank you to all the teachers and staff. This is hard for all of us and you're helping make it easier.

Approximately 9% of the comments found distance learning “overwhelming” and about 7% expressed concerns with too many platforms, ways to upload assignments, communication, etc.

Sample comments included:

- Utilizing too many apps (Google classroom, dojo, email, etc) makes confusing and frustrating
- Every teacher seems to use a different platform so my student is constantly having to switch devices and platforms to complete 1 assignment
- It can be hard to organize everything. One child's teacher uses email to send schoolwork and the other uses seesaw. Every teacher is doing something different it seems. More consistency would help
- Having 3 kids, trying to keep track of all the work, and assignments has been a challenge.
- Please remember some households have both parents working still.
- Please, for the love of God, have teacher's (middle school) send the parents a copy of the weekly work. You make us use way too many apps and websites to be able to find it easily and then wonder why our kids are missing some of the stuff.

Almost 10% of the comments suggested the families were having issues with devices not working or needing additional devices to fully participate in distance learning. Sample comments included:

- We can not do all distance learning due to not having a fully working device. We can do IXL but can't do google meet because our devices will not let us.
- We use our own laptop instead of the chromebook as it is faster.
- Unable to print from the school chromebook using our home printer.
- We have a school issued device that is not working properly. It is very challenging to know what to do and if it is working. I am not working from home during day hours so my kids are on their own to solve these problems as my job in healthcare is very busy. This is very challenging and students may be paying a price for technical problems.
- There are way too many restrictions on the computer my senior has. She struggles to do many needed tasks and has to use a different device to do the required tasks because the computer is so restricted.

Additional Data and Use of the Data

Additional insights will be shared as we examine the data in a deeper way. We expect to see other trends and tendencies.

We ask that entities outside of ECMECC member districts do not use or publish this data without consulting ECMECC. We like to share but also like to know how the data is being used.

If you have comments or questions or would like to discuss use of the data, please contact ECMECC.

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About ECMECC:

<https://www.ecmecc.org>

ECMECC is 39,000 students, 2800 faculty/administrators and 2200 educational support staff from 14 member school districts and Pine Technical and Community College. ECMECC utilizes technology, information and communication tools to expand educational opportunities for students, staff and community members in East Central Minnesota and beyond. ECMECC was founded in 1983 to make great things happen for students. We still do.