

GQR

Student Voices In The Time of COVID

December 2020

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**NATIONAL
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ASSOCIATION**

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Online focus groups

- Four groups conducted October 14-15 and 21-22, 2020
 - Suburban
 - Urban
 - Rural
 - Students of color
- Approx. 25-30 students per group

Online survey of students

- November 11-20, 2020
- 800 public school students (age 13-18, grades 7-12) nationwide, 1,328 unweighted
- Oversamples of Black (n=100), Hispanic/Latino (n=100), AAPI (n=100), and rural (n=200) students
- Online surveys use opt-in, non-probability samples. If this were a probability sample, the margin of error would be +/- 2.7% on the full sample.



Key Findings

Education and COVID-19

- These students are extraordinarily resilient. A 56 percent majority describe themselves and their family as “doing OK” when it comes to handling the pandemic, 28 percent report doing well, and only 16 percent are struggling. These numbers remain fairly consistent along different racial groups.
- That said, a significant number of American public-school kids suffer from social and economic deprivation, particularly among students of color.
- A majority of students in this survey report taking classes full-time online. Some students prefer online learning and thrive in this environment, but a significant number report an academic decline, and a majority of students prefer live instruction at least part of the time.
- Students genuinely believe their teachers are doing their best under trying circumstances. A massive 88 percent majority trust their teachers to teach in ways that will help them grow and 76 percent agree they are getting a good education.
- By far the most popular suggestion for improving education in this period is increasing teacher-student interaction.



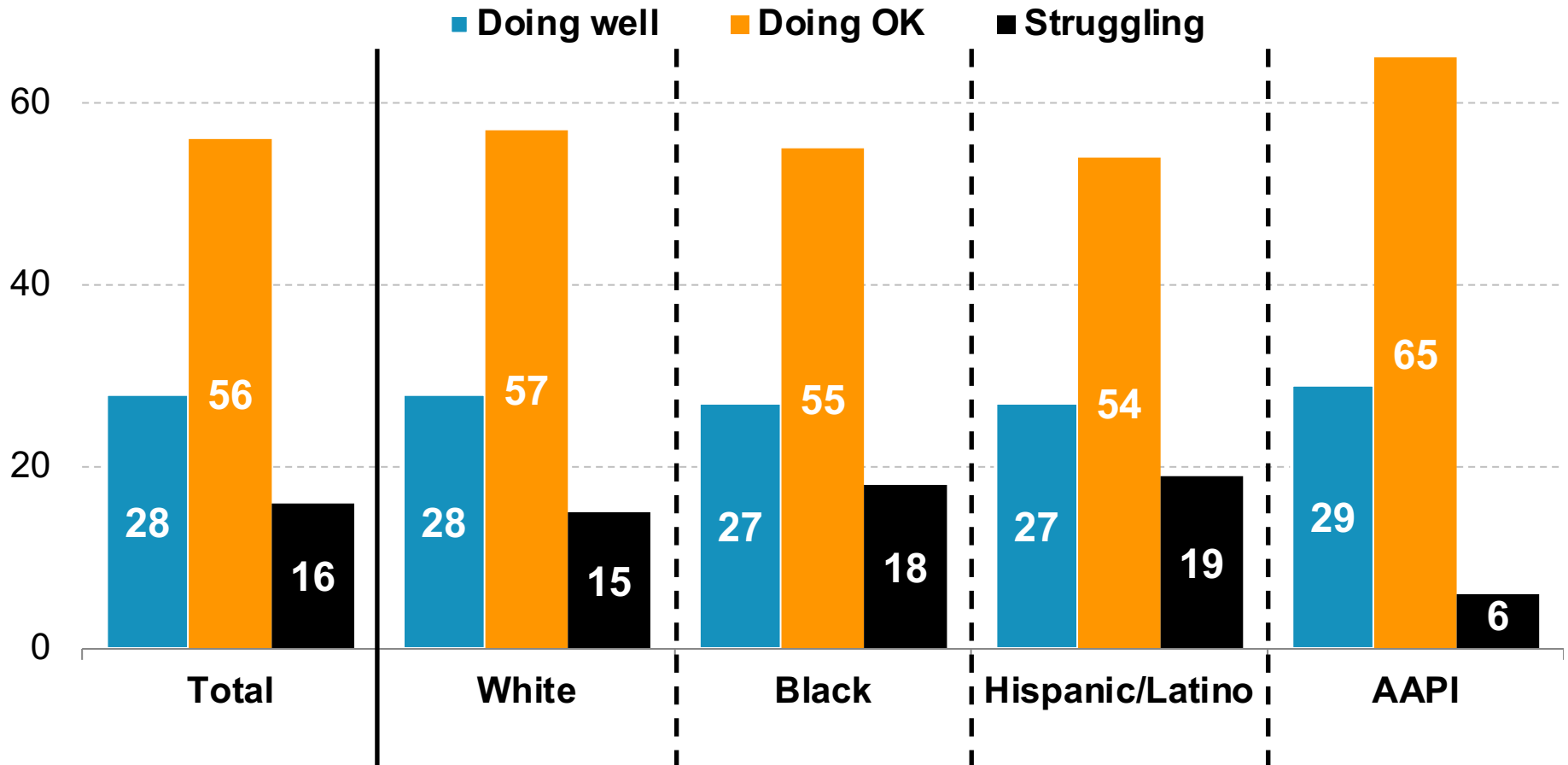
DEALING WITH THE PANDEMIC





Most students “doing OK,” Black & Hispanic/Latino students more likely to struggle

Which of the following best describes how you and your family are handling the coronavirus outbreak?



Many struggle with isolation from friends

"It's hard not being able to see friends and other people as often and it's a very stressful time." *Students of color group, Black student*

"It [online chats] is not the same." *Urban group, White student*

"I miss my friends and am bored to death." *Rural group, White student*

"I got sick. My mom too. It was hard because hospital payments were so high." *Students of color group, Hispanic/Latino student*

"I wish it would end and go back to normal again." *Suburban group, White student*

"My mom lost a few jobs." *Urban group, Black student*

"My dad took a hefty pay-cut and has less in-person work." *Suburban group, AAPI student*

"I don't have friends to talk to." *Suburban group, White student*

"It is hard to stay at home, very boring." *Rural group, White student*



Some find silver lining in time with family, opportunity for new skills

"It has given me more time to exercise."

Suburban group, Black student

"This virus had made me want to help in this area so I am thinking about majoring in biology when I go to college."

Suburban group, White student

"My family and I are closer and we play a lot of board games." *Students of color group, Black student*

"Trying out new recipes."

Urban group, White student

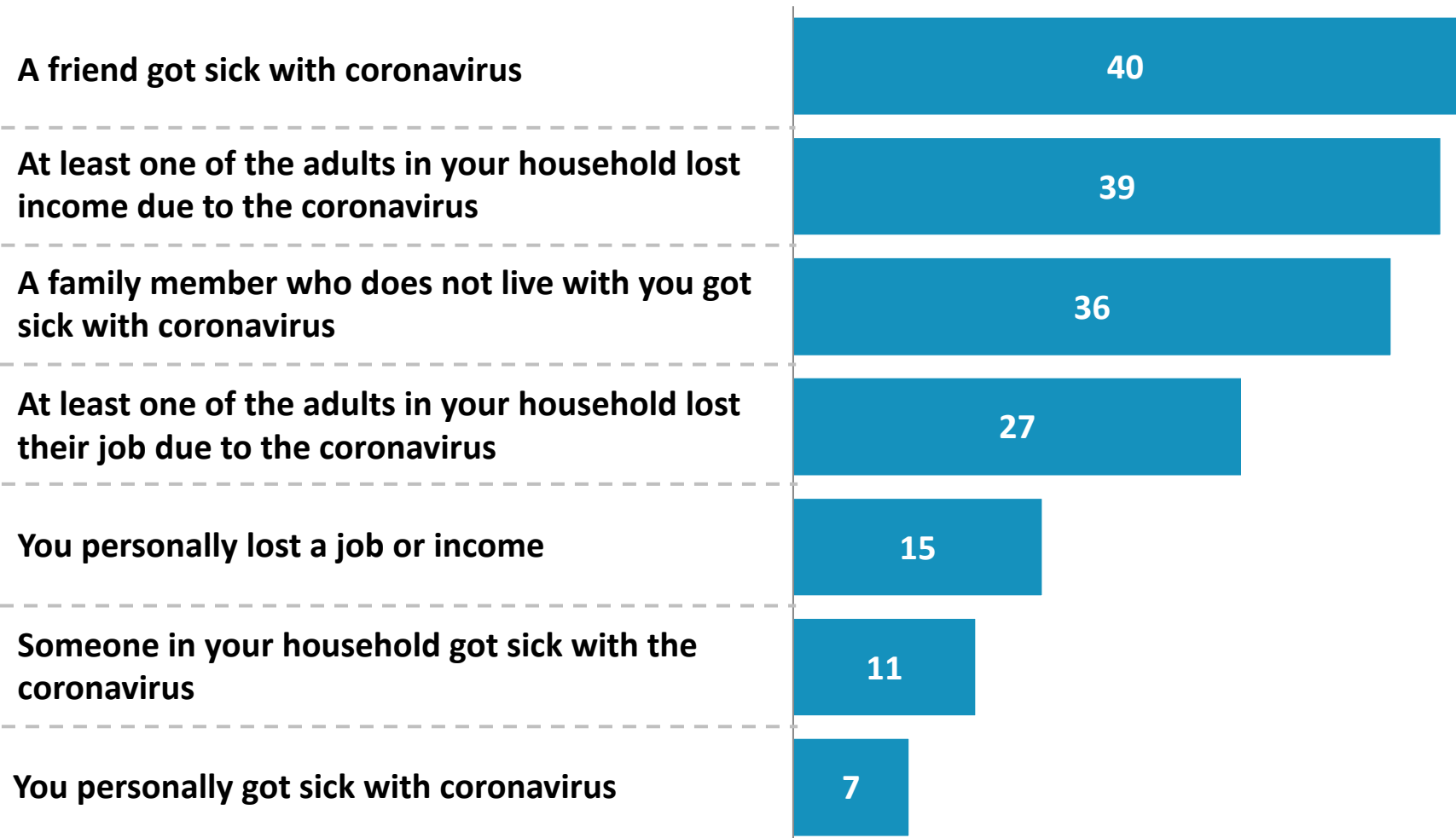
"I have more free time to pick up some hobbies." *Urban group, White student*

"It is nice now that I have a lot more time to chill with my mom and dad." *Suburban group, White student*



Four in ten know someone who got sick; suffer financial hardship

Below is a list of some things that have happened to people during the coronavirus outbreak. For each one, please indicate if it happened to you or your immediate family:



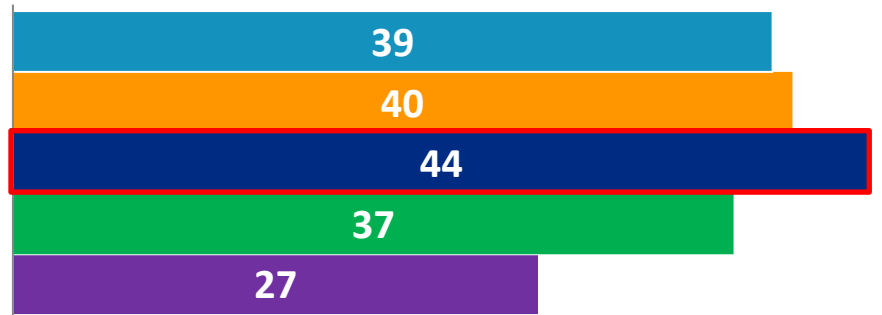


Economic struggles higher among Black students

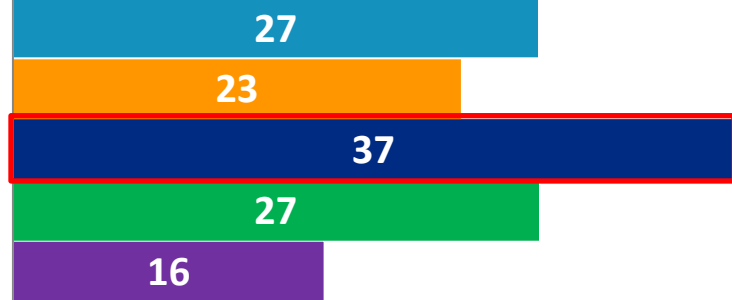
Below is a list of some things that have happened to people during the coronavirus outbreak. For each one, please indicate if it happened to you or your immediate family:

■ Total ■ White ■ Black ■ Hispanic/Latino ■ AAPI

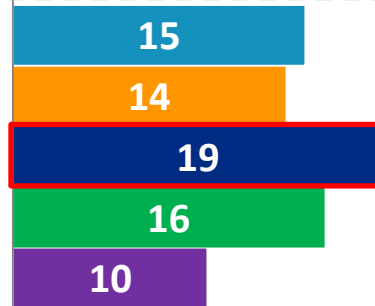
At least one of the adults in your household lost income due to the coronavirus



At least one of the adults in your household lost their job due to the coronavirus



You personally lost a job or income





EDUCATION IN THE TIME OF COVID



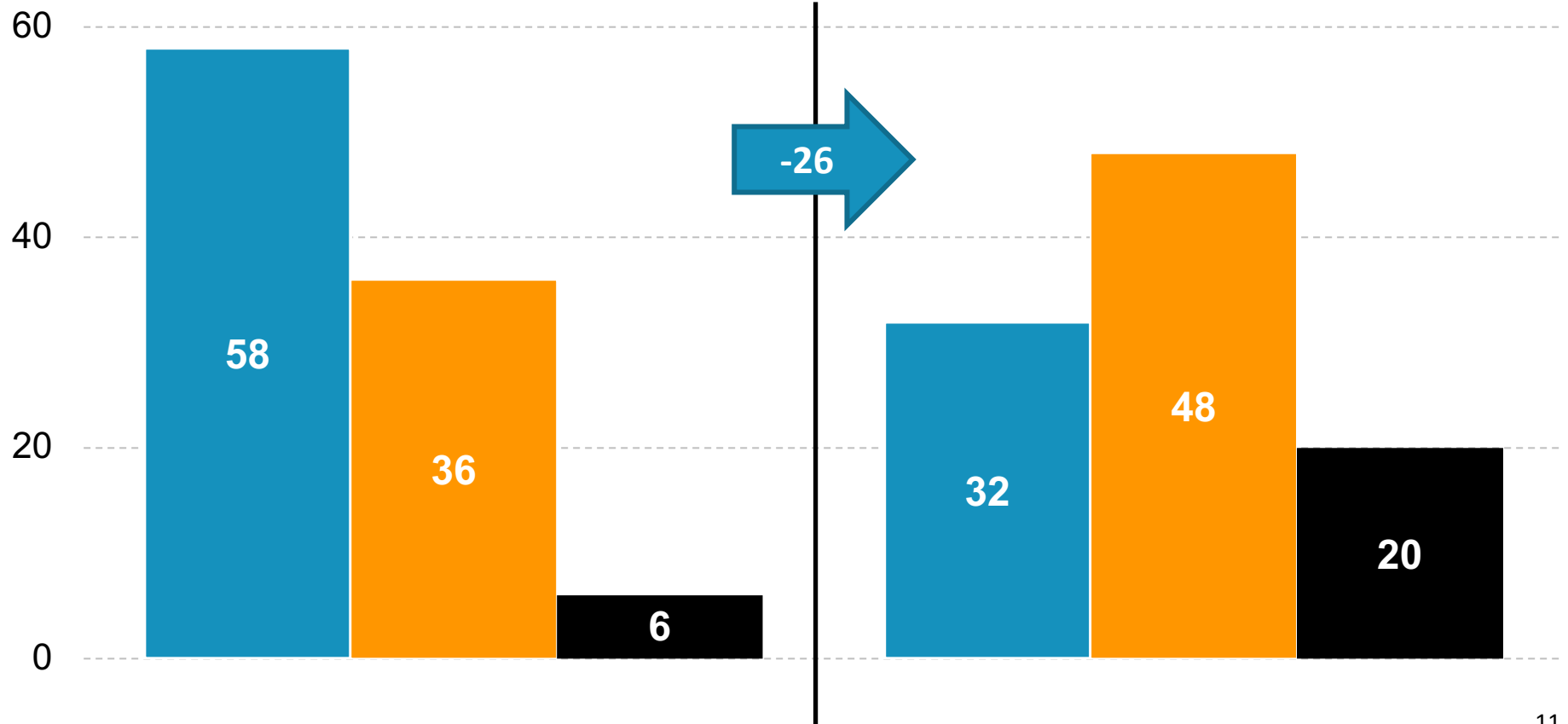


Students report significant academic decline since COVID

Which of the following statements best describes how you were doing with your school work and academics **BEFORE** the coronavirus pandemic began last spring?

Which of the following statements best describes how you are **CURRENTLY** doing with your school work and academics?

■ Doing well ■ Doing OK ■ Struggling





Younger students, students with non-college parents more likely to report decline

Students who were doing well or OK pre-pandemic, but say they are struggling now

| | Total student population | Did well or OK/now struggling |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| White | 47 | 48 |
| Black | 15 | 15 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 25 | 22 |
| AAPI | 6 | 3 |
| Age 13-15 | 57 | 62 |
| Age 16-18 | 43 | 38 |
| Grade 7-8 | 28 | 35 |
| Grade 9-10 | 36 | 37 |
| Grade 11-12 | 36 | 28 |
| At least one parent/guardian has college degree | 72 | 66 |
| No parent/guardian college degree | 28 | 34 |



Some students thrive with online education

"I like having to not get up early and am enjoying online learning." *Suburban group, White student*

"I get more time to work on stuff. And have more resources to ask for help." *Suburban group, White student*

"I also like staying in my pajamas all day." *Urban group, Black student*

"I feel online is better. I like learning at my own pace." *Urban group, Black student*

"I am really happy now. The gossips and bullies feel down and out." *Suburban group, White student*

"I feel more relaxed being at home while doing my online classes." *Urban group, White student*



Others struggle

“It is pretty tough to stay motivated sometimes.” *Suburban group, Hispanic/Latino student*

“They do not understand that some kids learn different and have a hard time understand[ing] what they are putting on a Google classroom for us.” *Rural group, White student*

“I feel like a Zoom Zombie.” *Students of color group, AAPI student*

“I used to get better grades before the virus and now I am stressed out.” *Suburban group, White student*

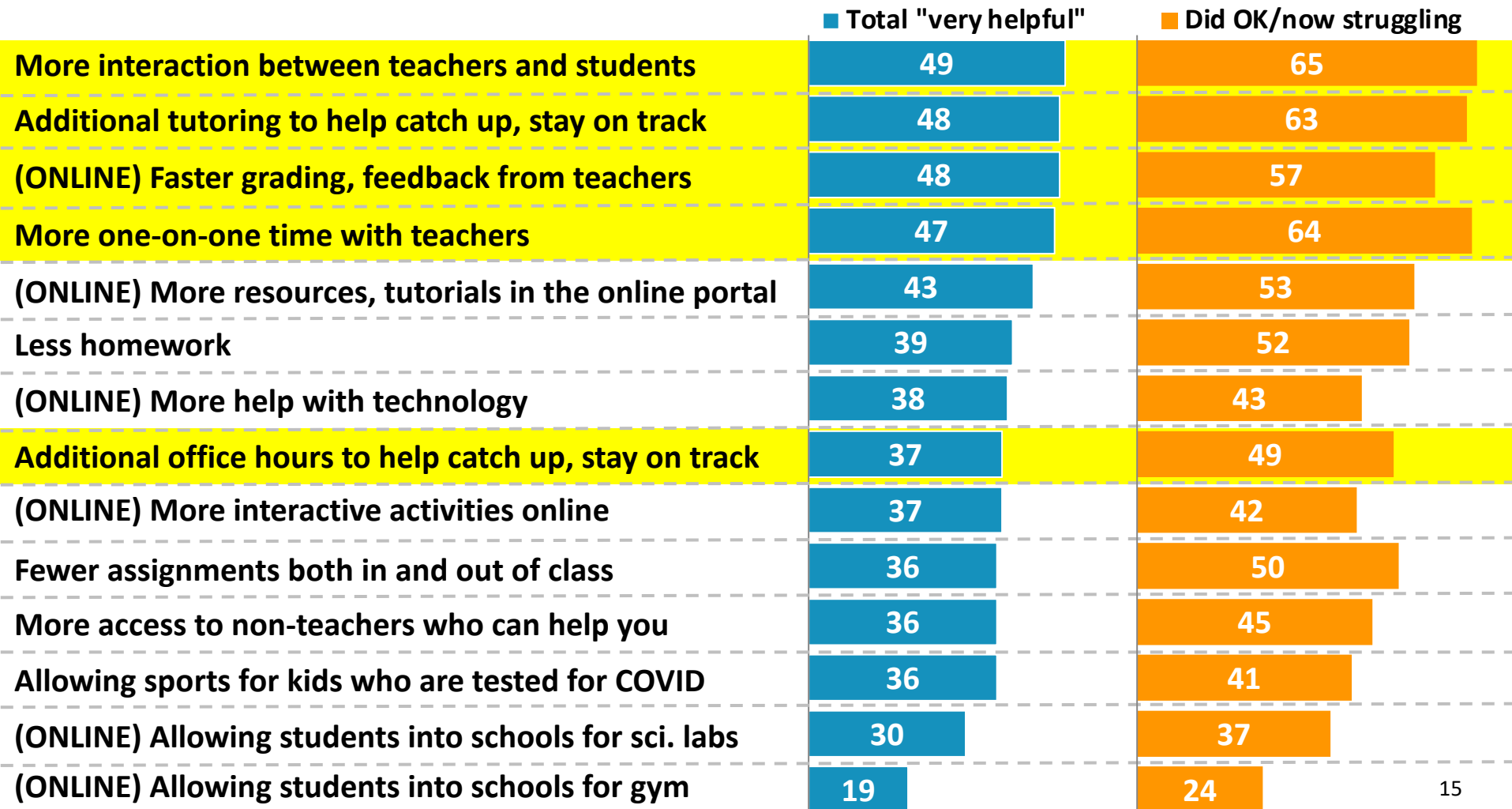
“I am in class but in front of a computer as if I am not even a person.” *Students of color group, Hispanic/Latino student*

“I don’t care not to have work, but I am not learning anything at all.” *Rural group, White student*



Students want more interaction with teachers

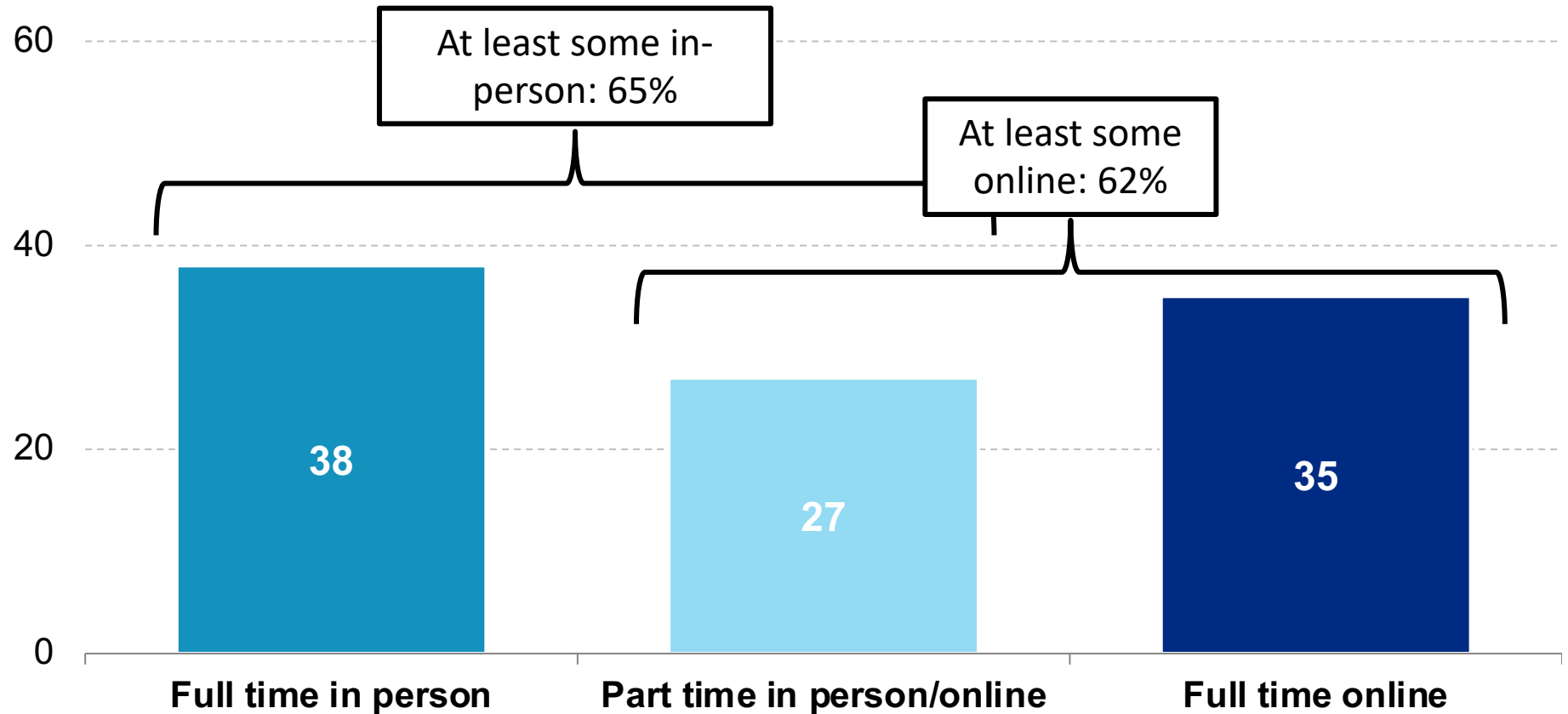
Here are some things some people have suggested to help students learn. Thinking specifically about your own situation, for each one, please indicate if it would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, not very helpful or not at all helpful?





Slightly more students prefer at least some in-person education

If it were completely up to you, which type of classes would you prefer right now, assuming nothing changes with the coronavirus?



Many students remain fearful of virus

"I cannot risk my siblings getting sick. They are way too young and should not be exposed to it." *Urban group, White student*

"I still need to finish high school but I don't want to put my family at risk. So I'd rather complete my school year at home." *Students of color group, AAPI student*

"My grandmother died of it so I take extra care of myself and family so that we don't get sick." *Urban group, Black student*

"I want to keep my family safe and my parents are both higher risk, so it's not worth it to go to school." *Rural group, White student*

"Because I think COVID is not going to stop soon. We need to learn how to live with it and stay safe. We can do it, but we need to follow the social rules." *Students of color group, Hispanic/Latino student*

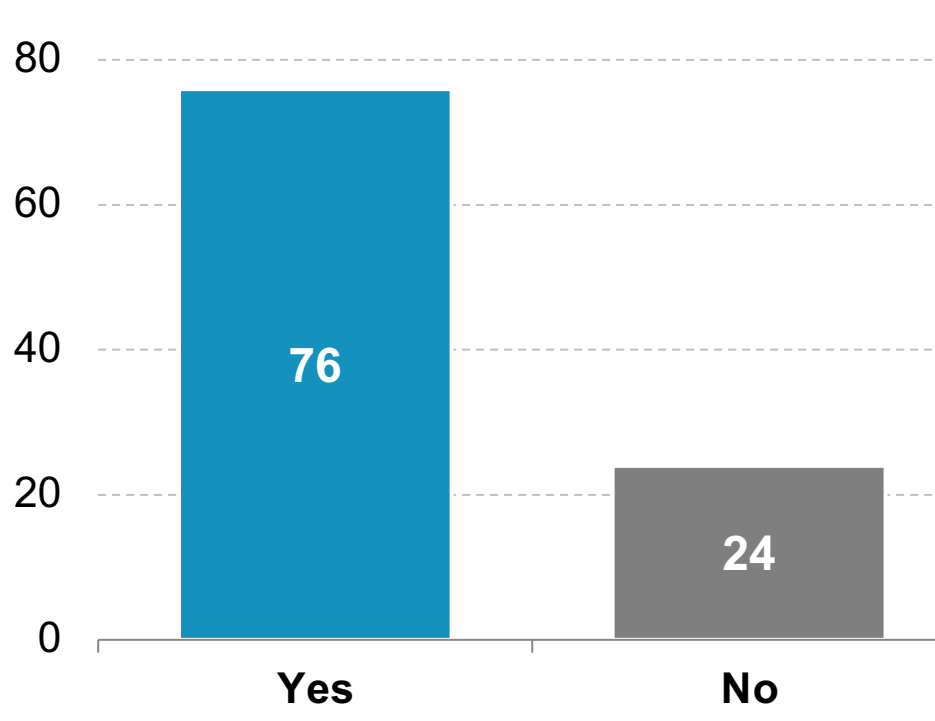
"It is safer. My parents also support that [online learning] if it's still an option... Stuff changes when the virus ends." *Urban group, Black student*

"Until there is a vaccine for this virus, I prefer to remain safe than sorry." *Suburban group, White student*

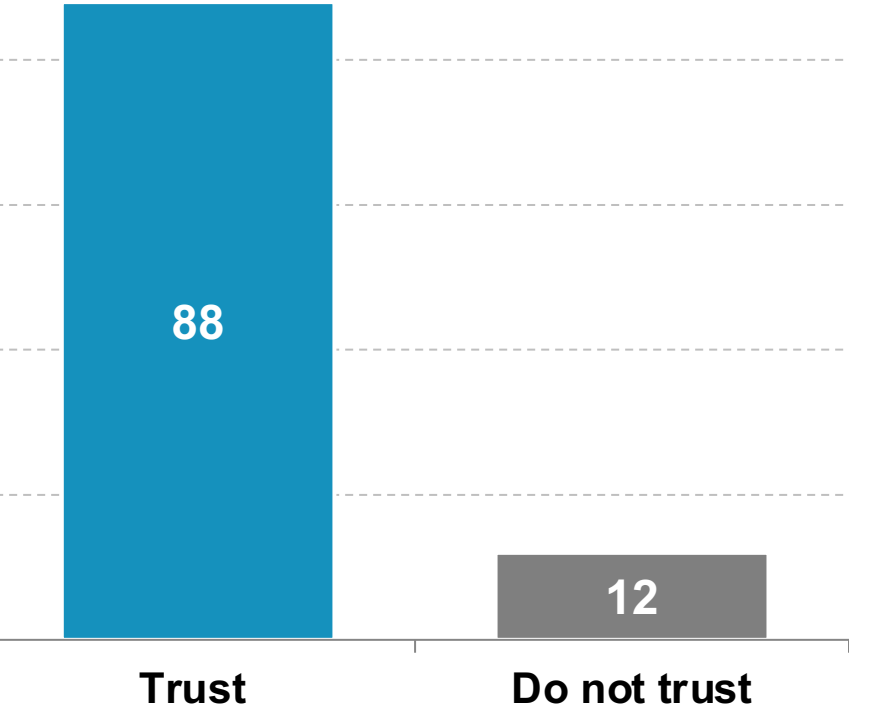


Despite problems, huge majorities trust their teachers and believe they are getting an education

Regardless of how you are currently going to school, do you believe are getting a good education and learning what teachers are teaching you this year?



How much do you trust your teachers to teach you in ways that will help you grow as a student this year?





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