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The Impact of COVID-19 on the I Promise School

Katherine E. Haver

Williams Honors College Research Project

Spring 2023

The University of Akron

Introduction

The I Promise School in Akron, Ohio is a very unique school compared to other schools in northeast Ohio. The I Promise School is a public school in the Akron Public School district. However, this school does receive some additional funding from the Lebron James Family Foundation and some other private partner organizations that helps financially support resources available to students of the I Promise School such as mental health support, financial literacy assistance, and an onsite media lab. One of the main differences that separates the I Promise School from other schools in the area is that it puts so much emphasis on social emotional learning and forming connections with each student. Although other schools in northeast Ohio also integrate these elements into their school, the I Promise School bases their entire school day and academic year off these aspects. With the COVID-19 pandemic causing all schools to shut down for several months in 2020, and the effects of the shutdown lingering into 2021, I began to wonder how the students who attend the I Promise School did during the shutdown and upon returning to school after the shutdown. I was curious if and how distance learning affected their social emotional learning and behaviors once returning to the classroom.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is a recent event that is still currently taking place, there is already a considerable amount of research that has been conducted on the impact it had on schools and social emotional learning. The general consensus is that COVID-19 had a negative impact on schools. Since I did focus specifically on the I Promise School in Akron, that did make my research project more specific. However, there is still plenty of research that has previously been conducted on this topic that I was able to build my research off of.

However, “As past research from previous disasters such as Hurricane Katrina reported, children who were exposed to a significant event were more likely to experience emotional dysregulation and PTSD symptoms that would lead to reactive aggression (Marsee, 2008), and the reactive aggression behaviors were negatively associated with academic achievement (Scott et al., 2014)” (Kamei et al., 2021, p. 367). The same is true during the COVID-19 pandemic. Remote learning caused students to have to learn in a much different setting and way than if they were attending in person school (Kamei et al., 2021). This could have been from added stress, someone they know getting sick, or limited social interactions and more isolation. Because of this, students needed social and emotional support more than ever in order for them to be able to learn and succeed during this time (Kamei et al., 2021).

Furthermore, additional research shows just how important social emotional learning is for adolescence. Social emotional development competence is a key foundational skill that aids young children in being successful and contributes to their overall well-being in the future (Ashdown et al., 2011). Social emotional learning serves as a tool for students to learn skills such as how to regulate their emotions and express feelings, control their behaviors, pay attention, and overcome challenges (Ohio Department of Education, 2021). All of these skills then help students progress in healthy development both socially and emotionally (Ohio Department of Education, 2021). Not only this, but other studies have linked direct social emotional learning instruction to growth in children’s levels of academic achievement as well (Ashdown et al., 2011).

Additionally, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defines social emotional learning as “the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage

emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions” (CASEL, n.d., para. 1). This definition of social emotional learning highlights the importance of social emotional learning being incorporated into the learning of children in school. All of these skills are crucial parts of an individual’s development. Children develop in these social emotional learning areas through authentic school, family, and community partnerships, as well as through the use of curriculum, instruction, and evaluation (CASEL, n.d., para. 2).

With the COVID-19 pandemic, instruction of social emotional learning strategies looked a bit different than they had previously when taking place in the classroom. Therefore, the students were possibly affected in adverse ways that hindered their growth academically and socially due to not receiving the same foundational social emotional competencies that they should have been receiving. This is what my research focused on finding out.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of my research project was to take a closer look at how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the I Promise School in Akron and the social emotional learning of the students who attend there. All schools nationwide were majorly affected by the pandemic, but I chose to specifically focus on the I Promise School, located in northeast Ohio, since it is such a unique school that structures so much of their learning based on forming connections with the students. I gathered information through sending a survey to faculty and staff members of the I Promise School. I asked questions about how online learning affected the teachers' connections with their students, how social emotional learning strategies were incorporated online, and what challenges were then being faced as students returned to online learning? My goal with this project was to learn about the effects of COVID-19 in the I Promise School in regard to social

emotional learning, so that I could recognize the important elements of in person learning that were missed during school shutdowns. That way, as a future teacher, I would be equipped to emphasize in my classroom the crucial elements that were missed over the past few years to help my students get back on track both socially and academically and have a sense of normalcy that will help them be as successful as they possibly can be.

There were three research questions that were focused on as this research project was completed. In the survey that was sent out, there were a section of questions that addressed each of these three research questions so that the information gathered was useful and pertained to the topic of research. Each of these questions helped shape the research and aided in the flow of the final presentation and findings. The three research questions were as follows:

1. What specific social emotional learning strategies did teachers use when teaching remotely?
2. How did the social emotional learning strategies impact students during remote instruction?
3. What are the social emotional learning challenges that have been encountered upon returning to in person learning this year?

Methods

Teachers at the I Promise School in Akron were asked to participate in the data collection process for this study by completing a survey that included questions revolving around the ideas brought up in the three research questions that guided the research to this study. All questions included in the survey were multiple choice questions. Additionally, all participants identifications were kept anonymous and were given the choice of whether they wanted to

participate. The responses to the survey were then analyzed to reveal any patterns and trends present within the data collected. I received IRB approval prior to research being conducted.

Sampling and Participants

For this study, all participants were classroom teachers and specials teachers (art, Spanish, PE, music, etc.) who worked at the I Promise School in Akron during the 2020-2021 school year. All faculty and staff of the I Promise School were sent a subject recruitment email, and individuals were given the choice of whether they wanted to participate or not. All participants were notified that the survey would not collect any identifiable information, and no one would be able to connect their responses to them. Their anonymity was further protected by them not being asked to sign and return a consent form. Participants were required to give consent to participating by selecting the option “I consent to participate” located immediately after information and warnings about the survey.

Data Collection

A Qualtrics survey was utilized to ask questions to faculty and staff members at the I Promise School in Akron. This is how information was gathered for this research study. The questions that were asked on the survey were well written multiple-choice questions. This allowed for conclusions about the data to be easily drawn from the research and the research questions to be answered. This information then helped enable me to clearly see how faculty and staff members at the school felt that COVID-19 affected the school and the students' learning. The survey used in this study to collect data was approved by the IRB prior to it being sent out to participants.

The survey was initially sent out to the faculty and staff of the I Promise School on March 23rd, 2022, asking participants to complete the survey by April 8th, 2022. All the names

and emails of the faculty and staff members that the survey was sent to were acquired through the school's website and public records. Over the course of two weeks, the survey was sent out a total of three times via email. These additional emails sent on March 30th, 2022, and April 5th, 2022 served as reminders to participate in completing the survey by April 8th, 2022. I received a total of twenty-three responses to the survey. Of the individuals who responded, 8 identified themselves as classroom teachers, 10 identified themselves as intervention specialists, 2 identified themselves as specials teachers, 1 identified themselves as other, and 1 identified themselves as an individual who did not work at the I Promise School during the 2020-2021 school year. Since the survey was only intended for classroom teachers and specials teachers, only the 10 individuals who identified themselves as a classroom teacher or specials teacher were permitted to participate in the rest of the survey.

A copy of the survey sent to participants can be found in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

The survey questions used were formatted closed-ended questions, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics – frequencies and percentages. Responses were analyzed to reveal patterns and trends and to answer the research questions.

Results

Research Question 1:

There were three questions on the survey that aligned with the first research question created for this study. The first research question was “What specific social emotional learning strategies did teachers use when teaching remotely?”

Question one on the survey asked teachers how frequently in a typical week they provided opportunities for students to interact with each other and how frequently they checked in with students and their families during remote learning. This data is reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency of Interaction with Students and Families

	Rarely or Never		Once a Week		Several times each week		Daily or almost daily	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Provide time for students to interact with each other	1	10	0	0	2	20	7	70
Check in with the student and family to see how they were doing	0	0	0	0	5	50	5	50

Although one teacher responded rarely or never when it comes to providing time for students to interact with each other, overall, the pattern of interaction was mainly daily or almost daily. A total of 70% of teachers responded saying that they provided time for their students to interact with each other daily or almost daily during remote learning. Additionally, half (50%) of teachers responded that they checked in with the students and their families to see how they were doing several times a week, and the other half (50%) of teachers responded that they checked in with the students and their families daily or almost daily.

Question two on the survey asked teachers how frequently they used certain methods of communication to communicate with parents or guardian during remote learning. The following methods of communication were asked about: meet virtually, email, text message, phone call, home visit, and mailed reports home. This data is reported in Table 2.

Mailed reports home were the least frequently used method of communication. Nine teacher (90%) selected that they rarely or never mailed reports home. Email was also a less frequently used method of communication based on the survey results. Six teachers (60%) selected that they rarely or never sent emails to communicate with families during remote

Table 2*Frequency of Certain Methods of Communication Used*

	Rarely or Never		Once a Week		Several times each week		Daily or almost daily	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Meet Virtually	3	30	2	20	2	20	3	30
Email	6	60	2	20	2	20	0	0
Text Message	0	0	3	30	5	50	2	20
Phone Call	0	0	0	0	7	70	3	30
Home Visit	5	50	3	30	2	20	0	0
Mailed reports home	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0

learning. Two teachers (20%) sent emails once a week and two teachers (20%) did send emails several times a week. However, the majority rarely or never sent emails as a way of communication. The results for use of home visits during remote learning was comparable to the results of use of sending emails. Half of teachers (50%) rarely or never did home visits. However, the other half of teachers either selected that they used home visits once a week (30%) or several times each week (20%). All of the other responses were used more frequently since they each had some teachers respond that they used that method daily or almost daily. Phone call had all teachers respond that they used that method more than once a week. The largest number of teachers, seven teachers (70%) respond that they used this method several times each week, and three teachers (30%) used phone calls daily or almost daily. Text message had all teachers respond that they used that method once a week or more. Half of teachers (50%) respond that they used this method several times each week, three teachers (30%) communicated via text message once a week, and two teachers (20%) communicated via text message daily or almost daily with parents or guardians. The use of virtual meetings had very spread-out results. Three teachers (30%) rarely or never used virtual meetings to communicate with parents or guardians during remote learning, two teachers (20%) used them once a week, two teachers (20%) used

them several times a week, and three teachers (30%) used virtual meetings daily or almost daily to communicate with parents or guardians.

Question three on the survey asked teachers how frequently they used certain strategies and methods with students during remote learning. The strategies and methods asked about were the following: set a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency, use a social-emotional learning curriculum, teach students strategies to keep their assignments organized, spend time talking with your students about how to handle their emotions and feelings, assign individual students responsibilities like class jobs, and use calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing. This data is reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of Certain Strategies and Methods Used with Students

	Little or no use		Moderate use		Frequent use	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Set a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency	0	0	0	0	10	100
Use a social-emotional learning curriculum	1	10	2	20	7	70
Teach students strategies to keep their assignments organized	1	10	2	20	7	70
Spend time talking with your students about how to handle their emotions and feelings	2	20	0	0	8	80
Assign individual students responsibilities like class jobs	8	80	1	10	1	10
Use calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing	1	10	2	20	7	70

All teachers (100%) responded that they frequently used a set daily or weekly schedule to help provide consistency for their students. Majority of teachers, seven (70%), reported that they used social emotional learning curriculum frequently as well. This was also the case for using calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing and teaching students strategies to keep their assignments organized. Seven teachers (70%) also responded that they used those strategies/methods frequently during remote learning. The strategy of assigning individual

students with responsibility like class jobs was much less frequently used. Though one teacher (10%) did respond that they used this strategy frequently, the majority, eight teachers (80%), responded that they had little or no use of this strategy during remote learning. When it comes to teachers using the strategy of talking with their students about how to handle their emotions and feelings, only two teachers (20%) responded that they had little or no use with this strategy. The strong majority, eight teachers (80%) reported that they used this strategy frequently with their students during remote learning.

Research Question 2:

There was one questions on the survey that aligned with the second research question created for this study. However, this survey question consisted of two parts. The second research question was “How did the social emotional learning strategies impact students during remote instruction?”

Question four on the survey asked teachers to what extent they felt like the implementation of the strategies mentioned in survey questions one through three benefited students academically and socially during remote instruction. The first part of this survey question asked about the academic benefits of the strategies used. This data is reported in Table 4.

A total of 75% of teachers reported that they felt that setting a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency resulted in significant benefits academically. Similarly, 6 teachers (75%) also reported that spending time talking with the students about how to handle their emotions and feelings also resulted in significant academic benefits. For both of these strategies, the remaining 2 teachers (25%) reported that the set schedule did result in some benefits but not significant benefits. Both the strategy of meeting for class in a live virtual setting and checking in with the

Table 4*Academic Benefits of Strategies Used*

	Little or no benefits		Some benefits		Significant benefits	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Meeting for class in a live virtual setting	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50
Peer interaction and collaboration	1	12.5	2	25	5	62.5
Checking in with the student and family to see how they were doing	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50
Setting a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency	0	0	2	25	6	75
Use of a social-emotional learning curriculum	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5
Teaching students strategies to keep their assignments organized	1	12.5	2	25	5	62.5
Spending time talking with students about how to handle their emotions and feelings	0	0	2	25	6	75
Assigning individual students responsibilities like class jobs	4	50	3	37.5	1	12.5
Use of calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5

students and families to see how they are doing received the same results as each other. For both of these strategies, half of teachers (50%) reported that they felt that these resulted in significant academic benefits. Three teachers (37.5%) reported that they only saw some academic benefits from using these strategies during remote learning, and only one teacher (12.5%) responded saying that there were little or no academic benefits from these strategies. Additionally, the strategy of allowing for peer interaction and collaboration and the strategy of teaching students strategies to keep their assignments organized both resulted with the same feedback. More than half of teachers (62.5%) reported that using these strategies resulted in significant benefits when it came to academics. One teacher (12.5%) for each of these two strategies did report that they saw little to no benefits academically from the use of these strategies, however the other two teachers (25%) for each strategy reported that there were some benefits. The use of social emotional learning curriculum and the use of calm down methods such as fidgets or deep

breathing both had positive responses. All the teachers responded and said that they saw at least some academic benefits, with three teachers (37.5%) reporting seeing some benefits and five teachers (62.5%) reporting seeing significant benefits academically. The only strategy asked about that did not have at least 87.5% of teachers report seeing some benefits or significant benefits academically was the strategy of assigning individual students with responsibilities like class jobs. Half of teachers (50%) actually reported seeing little to no benefits from this strategy. Of the other half of teachers, three (37.5%) reported seeing some benefits, and only one teacher (12.5%) reported seeing significant benefits academically from the use of this strategy.

The second part of the survey question four asked about the social benefits of the strategies used during remote learning. This data is reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Social Benefits of Strategies Used

	Little or no benefits		Some benefits		Significant benefits	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Meeting for class in a live virtual setting	2	25	2	25	4	50
Peer interaction and collaboration	2	25	2	25	4	50
Checking in with the student and family to see how they were doing	1	12.5	2	25	5	62.5
Setting a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5
Use of a social-emotional learning curriculum	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5
Teaching students strategies to keep their assignments organized	1	12.5	3	37.5	4	50
Spending time talking with students about how to handle their emotions and feelings	0	0	2	25	6	75
Assigning individual students responsibilities like class jobs	3	37.5	2	25	3	37.5
Use of calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing	0	0	3	37.5	5	62.5

A total of 75% of teachers reported that spending time talking with students about how to handle their emotions and feelings resulted in significant social benefits during remote learning.

The remaining 2 teachers (25%) reported that talking to students about how to handle their emotions and feelings did result in some benefits but not significant benefits. Additionally, the strategies of setting a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency for students, using social emotional learning curriculum, and using calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing all received the same results as each other. For all of these strategies, five teachers (62.5%) reported that they felt that these resulted in significant social benefits, and three teachers (37.5%) reported that they only saw some social benefits from using these strategies during remote learning. Similarly, checking in with the students and families to see how they were doing during remote learning also had five teachers (62.5%) report seeing significant benefits. Two teacher (25%) reported that there were only some social benefits form this strategy, and one teacher (12.5%) did report seeing little or no social benefits resulting from checking in with students and their families. When asked about whether meeting for class in a live virtual setting and incorporating time for peer interaction and collaboration during distance learning, four teachers (50%) reported that each of these strategies resulted in significant social benefits. Of the remaining half of teachers, two (25%) reported seeing some benefits from each of these strategies, and two (25%) reported seeing little to no benefits from them. Likewise, half of teachers (50%) reported seeing significant benefits socially from teaching their students strategies to help keep their assignments organized. However, instead of the other teachers being equally split in their answers reported, only one teacher (12.5%) reported seeing little to no benefits. Instead, three teachers (37.5%) reported seeing some benefits. The strategy of assigning individual students responsibilities like class jobs had a symmetrical distribution of reported answers. The same number of teachers reported seeing little or no benefits and significant benefits socially from this strategy. Three teachers' answers are recorded for each of these

options. The remaining two teachers (25%) reported in the middle by saying they only saw some benefits from the strategy of assigning students with individual responsibilities such as class jobs during remote learning.

Research Question 3:

There were two questions on the survey that aligned with the third research question created for this study. The third research question was “What are the social emotional learning challenges that have been encountered upon returning to in person learning this year?”

Question five on the survey asked teachers to what extent do they feel that the following student challenges have become evident in their classroom since returning to in person learning during the 2021-2022 school year. The possible challenges listed included: academic performance that is lower than expected, difficulty staying seated at desk when expected to, harder time interacting with their peers and adults, difficulty following directions and rules, and difficulty controlling their emotions. This data is reported in Table 6.

Table 6
Student Challenges Evident in the Classroom

	Slightly or not evident		Moderately evident		Significantly evident	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Academic performance that is lower than expected	0	0	2	25	6	75
Difficulty staying seated at desk when expected to	0	0	0	0	8	100
Harder time interacting with their peers and adults	0	0	0	0	8	100
Difficulty following directions and rules	0	0	0	0	8	100
Difficulty controlling their emotions	0	0	2	25	6	75

The results to this question lean strongly towards the significantly evident side. Six teachers (75%) responded that the student’s academic performance being lower than expected was significantly evident. The other two teachers (25%) reported that they viewed this challenge

as being moderately evident. Likewise, six teachers (75%) responded that the students having difficulty controlling their emotions in the classroom was significantly evident. The other two teachers (25%) reported that they viewed this challenge as being moderately evident. All teachers (100%) responded that upon returning to in person learning, they viewed the following student challenges as being significantly evident in the classroom: difficulty staying seated at their desk when expected to, harder time interacting with their peers and adults, and difficulty following directions and rules.

Question six on the survey asked teachers to what extent do they feel that the following student challenges have become evident outside of their classroom since returning to in person learning during the 2021-2022 school year. The challenges listed included: harder time interacting with their peers and adults, difficulty following directions and rules, difficulty controlling their emotions, and negative overall behavior. This data is reported in Table 7.

Table 7

Student Challenges Evident Outside of the Classroom

	Slightly or not evident		Moderately evident		Significantly evident	
	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>
Harder time interacting with their peers and adults	0	0	1	12.5	7	87.5
Difficulty following directions and rules	0	0	1	12.5	7	87.5
Difficulty controlling their emotions	0	0	2	25	6	75
Negative overall behavior	0	0	2	25	6	75

The results to this question also lean strongly towards the significantly evident side. For both the student challenge of having a harder time interacting with their peers and adults outside of the classroom and the challenge of having difficulty following directions and rules outside of the classroom, seven teachers (87.5%) reported that they found these challenges to be

significantly evident. For both of these challenges, only one teacher (12.5%) reported them to be only moderately evident. Similarly, for the student challenge of having difficulty controlling their emotions outside of the classroom and the challenge of having overall negative behavior outside of the classroom, the majority, six teachers (75%) reported that they thought these challenges were significantly evident. Only two teachers (25%) responded that these challenges were only moderately evident.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on the research conducted, it is evident that the use of social emotional learning strategies during distance learning had positive effects on the students at the I Promise School both academically and socially. For all the strategies asked about, with the exception of assigning individual students with responsibilities like class jobs, at least 50% of teachers reported seeing significant benefits socially and academically from the use of the strategies. Furthermore, again except for assigning individual students with responsibilities like class jobs, only 12.5% or fewer teachers reported seeing little or no academic benefits from the use of the strategies. Of the nine social emotional learning strategies asked about, four of them had all teachers report seeing at least some academic benefits, meaning that 0% reported seeing little or no benefits. Similarly, all of the social emotional strategies only had 25% or fewer teachers report seeing little or no benefits socially, again with the exception of assigning individual students with responsibilities like class jobs. Like the academic benefits, four of the strategies had all teachers report seeing at least some social benefits from the strategies asked about, which means that 0% reported seeing little or no benefits socially.

Additionally, the data collected from this research also shows that upon returning to in person learning during the 2020-2021 school year at the I Promise School, there were several

student challenges that were significantly evident in the classroom. Of the five student challenges that data was collected on, three of them resulted in 100% of teachers who participated in the survey agreeing that those challenges were significantly evident in the classroom. Those student challenges were the following: difficulty staying seated at their desk when expected to, harder time interacting with their peers and adults, and difficulty following directions and rules. The other two student challenges, academic performance that is lower than expected and difficulty controlling their emotions, both had 75% of teachers report seeing these challenges being significantly evident in the classroom upon returning to in person learning. The other 25% of teachers reported that these two challenges were still moderately evident. No teachers reported any of the five challenges being slightly or not evident in the classroom.

Similarly, the data collected also shows that students challenges were significantly evident outside of the classroom upon returning to in person learning for students at the I Promise School. The following four student challenges were asked about: harder time interacting with their peers and adults, difficulty following directions and rules, difficulty controlling their emotions, and negative overall behavior. 75-87.5% of teachers reported these student challenges as being significantly evident outside of the classroom after returning to in person learning. The remaining 12.5-25% of teachers all reported these challenges being moderately evident. Again, no teachers reported these student challenges as being slightly or not evident.

During remote learning, students at the I Promise School as well as other schools were experiencing school in a much different format than they were used to. Therefore, the incorporation of social emotional learning strategies was highly beneficial to help them stay organized, manage their emotions, and still have some form of social interaction even though they were isolated at home. The use of these social emotional learning strategies, though the

frequency of their use varied from teacher to teacher at the I Promise School, resulted in the large majority of teachers seeing some to significant benefits both academically and socially for their students during distance learning. Furthermore, I anticipated finding that student challenges would be evident both in and out of the classroom upon returning to in person learning. However, I did not expect for the results to so strongly lean towards significantly evident. Zero teachers reported seeing these challenges not present in or out of the classroom after returning to in person learning.

To conclude, the purpose of this research was to take a closer look at how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the I Promise School in Akron and the social emotional learning of the students who attend there. The data collected and analyzed throughout this research effectively accomplished this. Because the COVID-19 pandemic was such an unexpected worldwide event that affected everyone, it is very important for teachers and other individuals to take a step back to look at and evaluate the impact that it made on the education of the children of our society. As the future leaders of our society, they deserve the best possible education that we can provide them with. The shutdown greatly hindered the quality of the education they were receiving. Now they are struggling because of this. By conducting research on the effectiveness of the use of social emotional learning strategies during remote learning and the presence of student challenges after now returning to in person learning, we can determine what next steps need to be taken to help these students succeed both academically and socially in the learning environment.

Limitations

When completing my research, I ran into one limitation. This limitation was the low number of responses that I received to the survey I sent out. I sent the survey out to the possible participants a total of three times to help ensure that I would receive the best possible response

rate. However, I still only ended up receiving a lower number of responses than I had hoped for. As a researcher, you cannot force individuals to participate and respond to the survey. The responses needed to be entirely voluntary and optional. This made it difficult to get a larger response rate.

Suggestions for Future Research

As possible further research, I would be curious to see how evident teachers felt that these student challenges were prior to the COVID-19 shut down that caused schools to move to remote instruction. Then, the results could be compared to learn further about how large of an impact the COVID-19 shut down truly had on these students at the I Promise School. It would also be interesting to learn about what the teachers at the I Promise School have been doing with their students since returning to in person learning to help try to minimize the presence of these student challenges both in and out of the classroom. What additional strategies have they used and are they working or not? These are challenges that all teachers are currently dealing with as we have come away from this unprecedented time. Now that we see that so many student challenges are present upon returning to in person learning, it needs to be determined how teachers can help their students and make up for instruction and time in school that they missed during the shutdown. All teachers could greatly benefit from this knowledge.

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Appendix A

Thank you for clicking on the link to this survey. This survey is geared towards classroom teachers and specials teachers who taught at IPS during the 2020-2021 school year.

What was your role during the 2020-2021 school year?

- Classroom Teacher (e.g., third grade teacher, 4th grade teacher, etc.)
- Specials Teacher (e.g., art, music, PE, Spanish, etc.)
- Intervention Specialist
- Administrator
- Support Staff (e.g. tutor, speech therapist, counselor, school psychologist, school nurse, etc.)
- Office Staff
- Other
- I did not work at IPS during the 2020-2021 school year.

You are invited to participate in an Honors College research project being conducted by Katherine Haver, a student in the LeBron James Family Foundation School of Education at The University of Akron. The purpose of this research is to find out how remote learning impacted student's social emotional learning.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to complete an anonymous web-based survey. **The survey should take no more than 10 minutes.** I hope to recruit 30 participants. Please give your consent below to access the survey.

Some other things to know:

- The survey will not collect any identifiable information, and no one will be able to connect your responses to you.
- Your anonymity is further protected by not asking you to sign and return a consent form.
- Some of the questions might bring up challenging memories from remote learning during the 2020-2021 school year. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer, and you can stop the survey at any time.
- If you have any questions about this study, you may email me at keh122@uakron.edu or my advisor, Dr. Susan N. Kushner Benson, at snk@uakron.edu.
- This project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Akron Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, you may call the IRB at (330) 972-7666.

- I consent to participate**

Remote Learning During the 2020-2021 School Year

1. **In a typical week** during the 2020-2021 school year, how frequently did you do the following **during remote learning?**

	Rarely or never	Once a week	Several times each week	Daily or almost daily
Provide time for students to interact with each other				
Check in with the student and family to see how they were doing				

2. **In a typical week** during the 2020-2021 school year, how frequently did you use the following ways to communicate with parents or guardians **during remote learning?**

	Rarely or never	Once a week	Several times each week	Daily or almost daily
Meet virtually				
Email				
Text Message				
Phone call				
Home visit				
Mailed reports home				

3. **During remote learning** in the 2020-2021 school year, how often did you use the following strategies and methods?

	Little or no use	Moderate use	Frequent use
Teach students strategies to keep their assignments organized			
Set a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency			
Assign individual students responsibilities like class jobs			
Use a social-emotional learning curriculum			
Spend time talking with your students about how to handle their emotions and feelings			
Use calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing			

4. During the 2020-2021 school year, to what extent did the following strategies **benefit students academically and socially** during remote instruction?

	Academic Benefits			Social Benefits		
	Little or no benefits	Some benefits	Significant benefits	Little or no benefits	Some benefits	Significant benefits
Meeting for class in a live virtual setting						
Peer interaction and collaboration						
Checking in with the student and family to see how they were doing						
Teaching students strategies to keep their assignments organized						
Setting a daily or weekly schedule to provide consistency						
Assigning individual students responsibilities like class jobs						
Use of a social-emotional learning curriculum						
Spending time talking with students about how to handle their emotions and feelings						
Use of calm down methods such as fidgets or deep breathing						

5. Since returning to **in-person learning** during the 2021-2022 school year, to what extent do you feel that the following **student challenges** have become evident **in your classroom?**

	Slightly or not evident	Moderately evident	Significantly evident
Academic performance that is lower than expected			
Difficulty staying seated at desk when expected to			
Harder time interacting with their peers and adults			

Difficulty following directions and rules			
Difficulty controlling their emotions			

6. Since returning to **in-person learning** during the 2021-2022 school year, to what extent do you feel that the following **student challenges** have become evident **outside your classroom?**

	Slightly or not evident	Moderately evident	Significantly evident
Harder time interacting with their peers and adults			
Difficulty following directions and rules			
Difficulty controlling their emotions			
Negative overall behavior			

Your responses have been recorded. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey. I really appreciate it!