The COVID-19 quickly disrupted education. Parents had to take on greater responsibilities as their children attended school from home. Yet, the pandemic did not impact all families equally. This project sought to add to a better understanding of school parents’ experience of the pandemic as well as how they drew on their social networks to support their children and themselves.

Amara, an immigrant from North East Africa, detailed the challenges she and her family faced during the pandemic, and some of the welcome joys. Her daughter at first enjoyed being at home with family. Key struggles included:
• Adapting to new technology and software.
• Dealing with inconsistent internet connection.
• Keeping her children motivated, providing emotional support.
• Developing a routine.
• Managing her own classes and home responsibilities.

Learning deficits arose at the beginning of the pandemic, but leveled off once instruction resumed through remote learning. Isolating effects of remote learning may have been damped by use of virtual platforms and parental availability. Family engagement may look different across race and class, based on the resources available to each family.

“We have just two rooms, so it was hard to manage the space. I had to figure out a place that is quiet, tidy, and organized for her... We have a lot of people [in the house] sometimes, so it was hard to keep her focused the whole day.”

Further research is needed to understand school communities and their impact on pandemic education. Teachers and administrators should consider greater adoption of and training for software that enables faster, low-pressure communication between teachers and parents.