

#230 Amauri Gomez

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COVID-19 Reveals Educational Inequalities of Distance Learning Experiences and First-Year College Enrollment for Black High School Seniors

Background: In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutions in the United States switched from in-person to remote learning. Educational disparities of technology access and the quality of and satisfaction with distance learning quickly emerged, with students of color adversely affected. The Arthur Ashe Institute for Urban Health, Health Science Academy (HSA), an afterschool health science enrichment pipeline program, switched to remote learning to serve 175 minority high school students in their 3-year Academy. HSA is located in Brooklyn, New York, an area severely impacted by COVID-19.

Methods: A cross-sectional study was conducted with 35 of 50 HSA seniors during the period late March to mid-May 2020. Online surveys were administered to assess the pandemic's impact on HSA seniors' distance learning experiences and college enrollment plans. Descriptive statistics were used to assess any associations and differences.

Results: Most HSA high school seniors had access to mobile phones and the internet, with 96.7% of participants reporting they had access to each of those resources. Other forms of devices used to complete online coursework were less common: 70% had access to a laptop, 26.7% had access to a desktop, and 40% had access to a tablet. Most of the high school seniors surveyed preferred in-person instruction (57.1%), whereas only 25.7% of students preferred a hybrid model, and 14.3% preferred online instruction. In questions concerning college readiness, 62.5% of students reported they were concerned about college finances, and 28.2% delayed their final enrollment decision for the Fall 2020 semester. Although their final semester of high school was remote, 70.8% of the students surveyed still felt prepared for college.

Conclusion: HSA senior students indicated their educational instruction preferences and college enrollment plans that may impact their overall college experience.

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