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## **40% of Parents Considering College Delay for High School Seniors Due to COVID-19**

*National survey finds critical concerns include student safety, lack of communication from schools*

**PHILADELPHIA (April 14 , 2020)** – A nationally representative survey released today found that six out of ten parents of college-bound high school seniors have not received any information about schools’ safety plans for the fall term, and four out of ten parents say the COVID-19 crisis may prompt their children to delay going to college.

These are among the results of an independent survey commissioned by [Brian Communications](#) in conjunction with [Dynata](#) – the world’s largest first-party data and insights platform. The report evaluated 405 parents of high school seniors likely to attend a college or university after high school.

Additional key findings of the survey, aimed at gauging how the COVID-19 crisis has impacted parental decisions about their high school seniors’ academic future, included:

- **85 percent feel they need more information on what colleges and universities are doing to ensure student safety next year**
- **40 percent would now prefer their child to attend a college or university closer to home**
- **65 percent say the pandemic has made them more cautious about the financial impact of tuition**

“The incoming freshman class is the lifeblood of a healthy university or college,” said Brian Tierney, CEO of Brian Communications. “What we’re seeing in this survey indicates that parents of graduating seniors have deep concerns connected to this outbreak that could threaten the long-term viability of institutions if they don’t respond in the near term.”

When asked what colleges and universities can do to make them feel better about their children’s academic future, many parents expressed a need for proactive communication on how colleges and universities are handling the crisis, addressing safety and providing more options for financial aid and distance learning.

“There’s always been a need for higher education institutions to communicate their plans regarding student safety and financial aid, and now that need is even more acute,” said David Demarest, Senior Advisor at Brian Communications. Demarest formerly served as Vice President for Public Affairs at Stanford University. “It’s natural that parents are anxious. Even when circumstances are in constant flux, such as in the midst of the current pandemic, institutions of higher learning can help parents of college-bound students by providing clear and continuous communication.”

While parents and high school seniors are feeling anxious about their academic future, data also shows they remain hopeful and optimistic. Among parents surveyed, more than two thirds responded that they might consider paying for their child to attend their first-choice college or university, if distance learning is an option.

With a sample size of 405 parents of college-bound high school seniors and designed to be nationally representative, this independent survey had a margin of error of +/- 4.9% at the 95% level of confidence. The study was conducted between April 1 and April 3, 2020. For a full report on the survey, visit [briancom.com/research](http://briancom.com/research).

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Brian Communications is a national strategic communications agency headquartered in Philadelphia with experience working with clients such as the University of Chicago, University of Pennsylvania, Villanova University and Saint Joseph's University. Other clients include Uber, the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association, PokerStars, Independence Blue Cross and AmeriHealth Caritas. Focused on strategic ideas that advance business goals, the firm's services include strategic planning, brand positioning, reputation and crisis management, advertising, social media strategy and media relations. The agency is led by Brian Tierney, current Chairman of the Poynter Institute Foundation, former publisher of the Pulitzer Prize-winning The Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News and former CEO and founder of a communications agency acquired by the Interpublic Group. For more information, visit [briancom.com](http://briancom.com).