



Feedback for Fall 2020 School Reopening

Survey findings from school-based staff, parents/guardians and community members, students, and central office staff

Overview of Surveys

- The Office of Evaluation, Research & Accountability (ERA) administered surveys to gather feedback from **school-based staff**, **parents/guardians and community members**, **students**, and **central office staff**.
- Links to the surveys were posted on SDP's website, and the surveys were open from June 15 to June 22.
- The surveys asked respondents to indicate their comfort level with returning to school/work in-person if certain safety measures are in place, as well as rank reopening scenarios in order of most to least preferable.
- The safety measures included in the survey are aligned to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [recommendations](#) for schools.

How many people completed the surveys?*

- **School-based staff - 12,334**
 - Teachers/Instructional Staff - 7,144
 - Support/Operations Staff - 2,855
 - School Administration - 656
 - Other - 1,679
- **Parents/guardians and community members - 15,076**
 - Parents/guardians - 14,001
 - Other - 1,075
- **Students - 7,120**
- **Central office staff - 1,267**

*Includes anyone who answered at least one question.



How many people left open-ended comments about school reopening?*

- **Parents/guardians and community members - 5,322**
 - Across the comments, the following keywords were mentioned with the following frequency: masks (740), clean/wash (465), schedule (283), sanitize/sanitizer (283), and vaccine (269)
- **Students - 1,325**
 - Across the comments, the following keywords were mentioned with the following frequency: masks (254), clean/wash hands (101), sanitize/sanitizer (82), vaccine (63), and temperature (44)

*There was not an open-ended question about reopening options on the school-based staff survey.



Feedback on School Safety Measures

“Everyone wearing masks” was rated as the most important safety measure by all respondents

	Percentage of #1 Rankings			
	School-Based Staff*	Parents/community#	Students^	Overall
Everyone in the building wears masks	28%	30%	35%	30%
Schools are fully cleaned each day	16%	12%	12%	14%
Hand washing/sanitizer stations	9%	16%	16%	14%
Temperature checks when entering building	14%	15%	14%	14%
Staggered/rotated scheduling	16%	10%	8%	12%
Contact tracing practices are utilized	11%	10%	7%	10%
Rules for moving through the building	2%	1%	2%	2%
Students do not share any materials	1%	2%	3%	2%
Students stay in the same room the entire day	1%	2%	2%	2%
Desks are six feet apart/separated by plastic screen	1%	1%	1%	1%
No visitors are allowed	2%	1%	1%	1%



Themes from open-ended responses: Masks

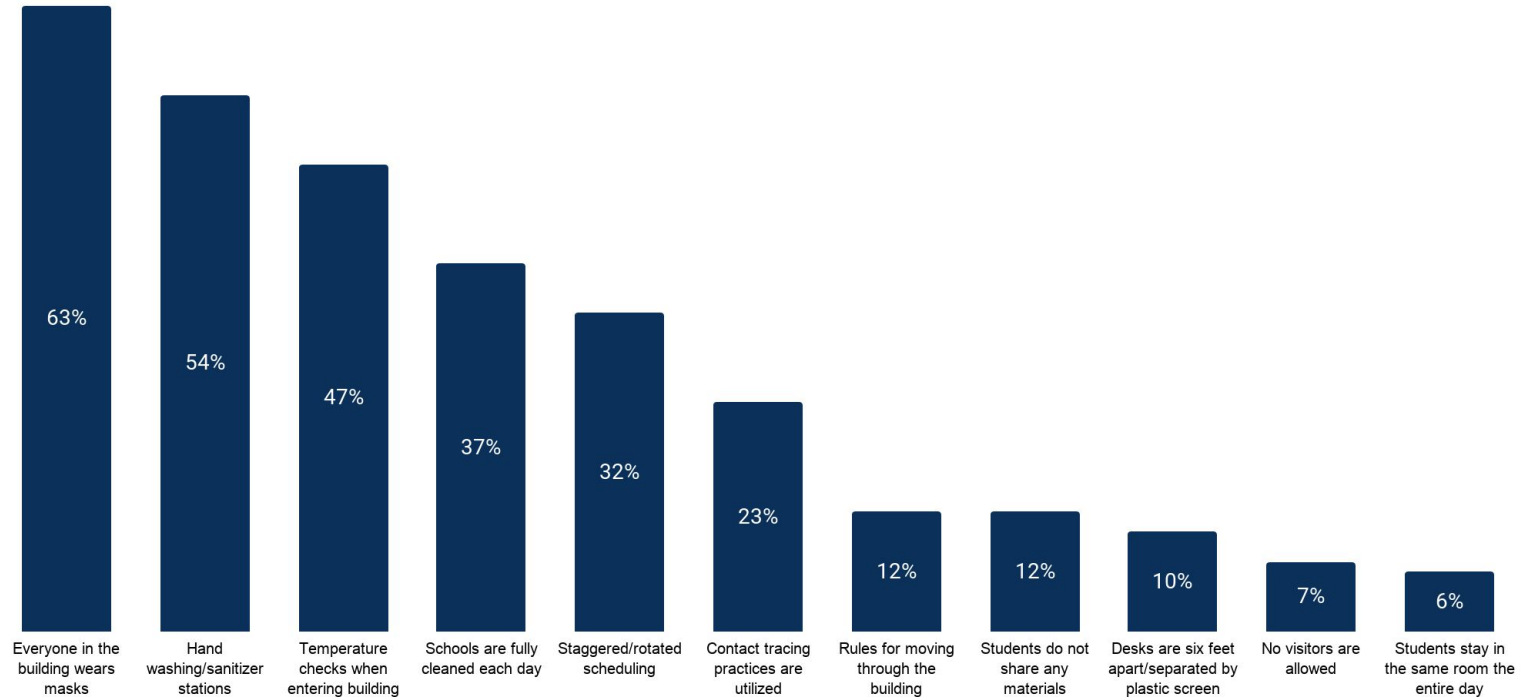
Parents/guardians and students expressed concern and posed questions about the feasibility of students wearing masks all day:

- “I understand the importance of mask wearing, but I am concerned masks will hinder learning and interrupt communication since they cannot read each other's faces.”
- “One thing that may not work very well is wearing masks all day, especially in classrooms that don't have air conditioning. I think it would be very distracting and uncomfortable.”
- “I think it's reasonable for staff to wear masks, but not for the children particularly smaller children. The kids won't keep masks on and will touch their face all day long.”
- “I am all for my child returning to school however having children wear masks for 8 hours a day seems excessive. Having them wear them to get to class, while entering/exiting the building sure. However if desks are 6 feet apart I don't feel they need them all day.”



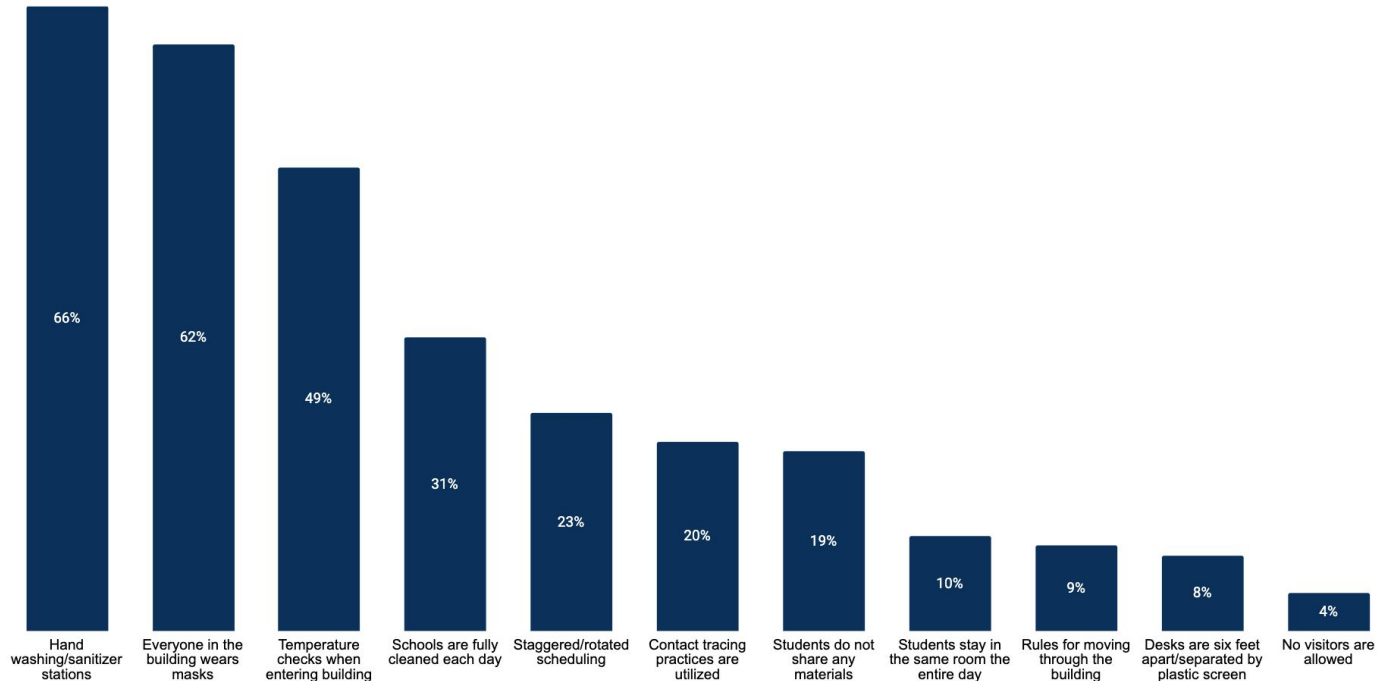
School-based staff ranked mask wearing, hand washing/sanitizer stations, and temperature checks as the top three most important safety measures

Percentage of Top Three Rankings from School-based Staff (N=8,699)



Parents/guardians and community members ranked hand washing/sanitizer stations, mask wearing, and temperature checks as the top three most important safety measures

Percentage of Top Three Rankings from Parents/Guardians & Community (N=12,239)



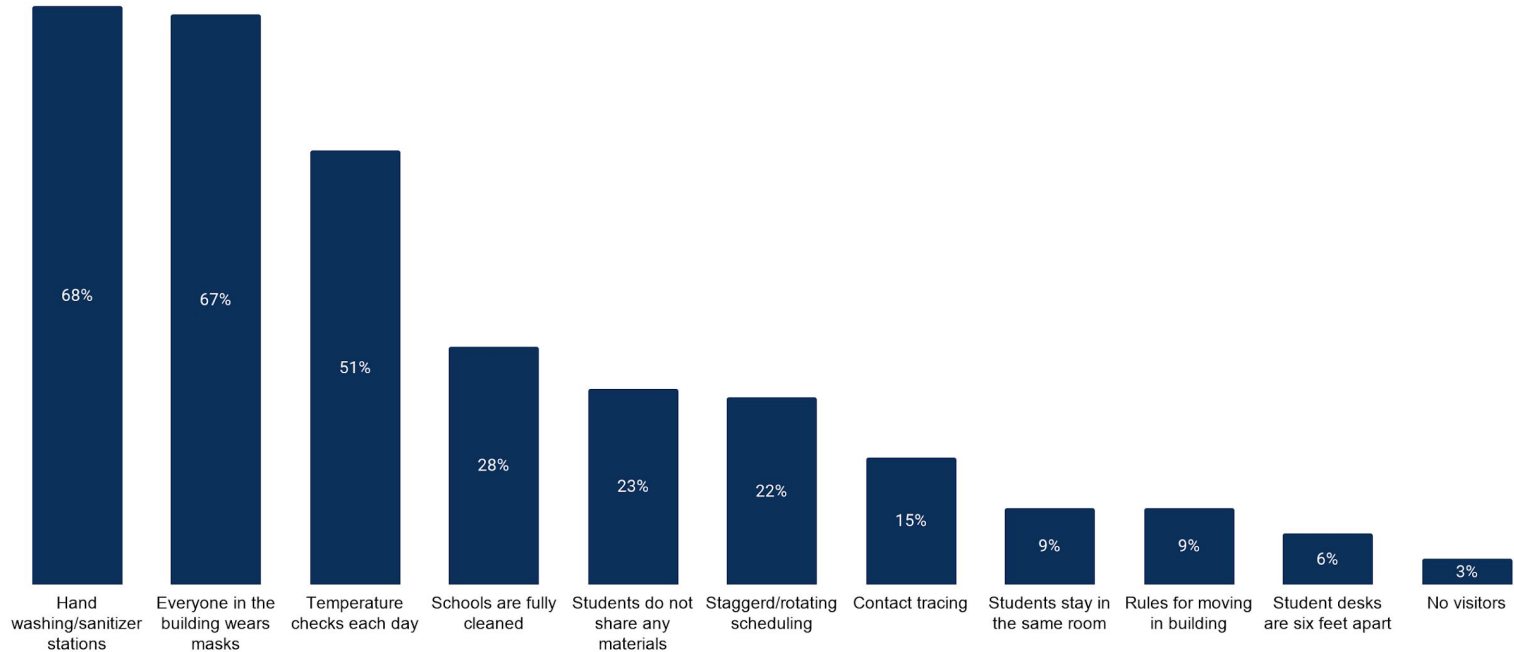
Themes from open-ended responses: Temperature checks

Parents/guardians and students explained why they are not in favor of temperature checks:

- “...Taking temperatures are irrelevant because you can have the Coronavirus and still be temperature free”
- “Asymptomatic people will never have a temperature (I am one of those people) therefore I do not trust the daily temperature checks...”
- “I don't think temperature checks are a worthwhile use of district funds. They are pointless as many are asymptomatic. Also you could have no fever one day and a fever the next day.”
- “If everyday we came into school and everyone had their temperature checked think “How long would that take?” About an hour or two to get the entire school depending on the size? What about at each class you wash your hands and sanitize them? Again “How long would that take?”! In general teachers complain how short class [are] and if we make these changes the classes will be even shorter and we will learn less.”
- “I feel as if daily temperature checks would cause anxiety among the students and possible embarrassment. Everyone would know and make fun of the person who possibly could have it”

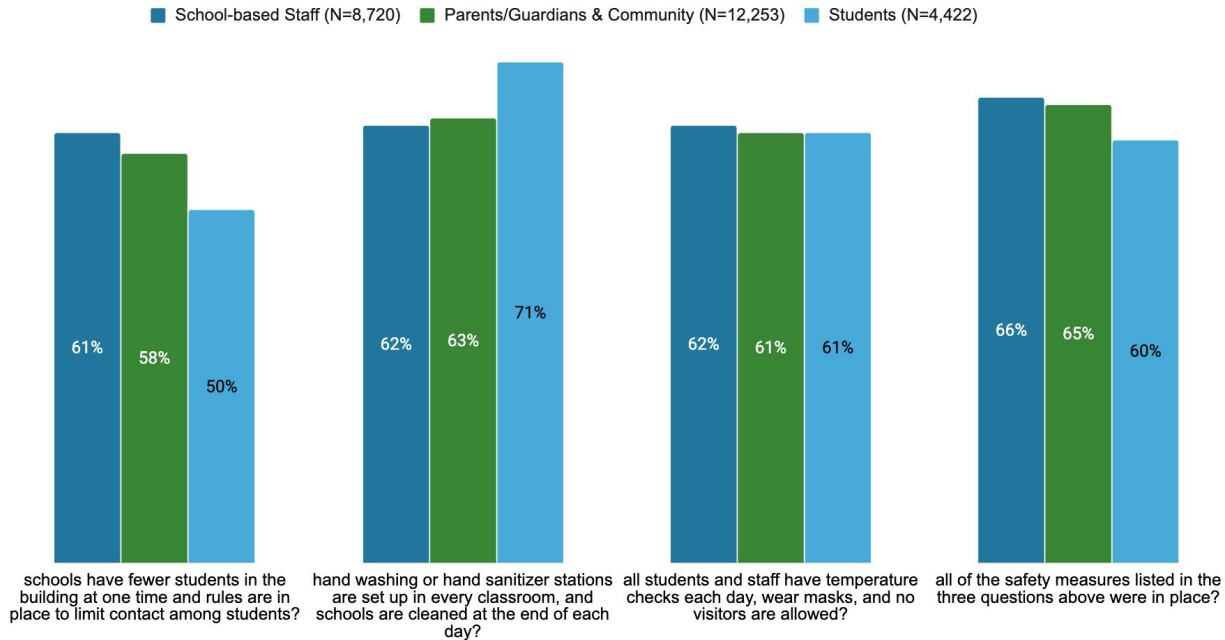
Students ranked hand washing/sanitizer stations, mask wearing, and temperature checks as the top three most important safety measures

Percentage of Top Three Rankings from Students (N=4,432)



At least half of respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to school in person with any of the listed safety measures in place

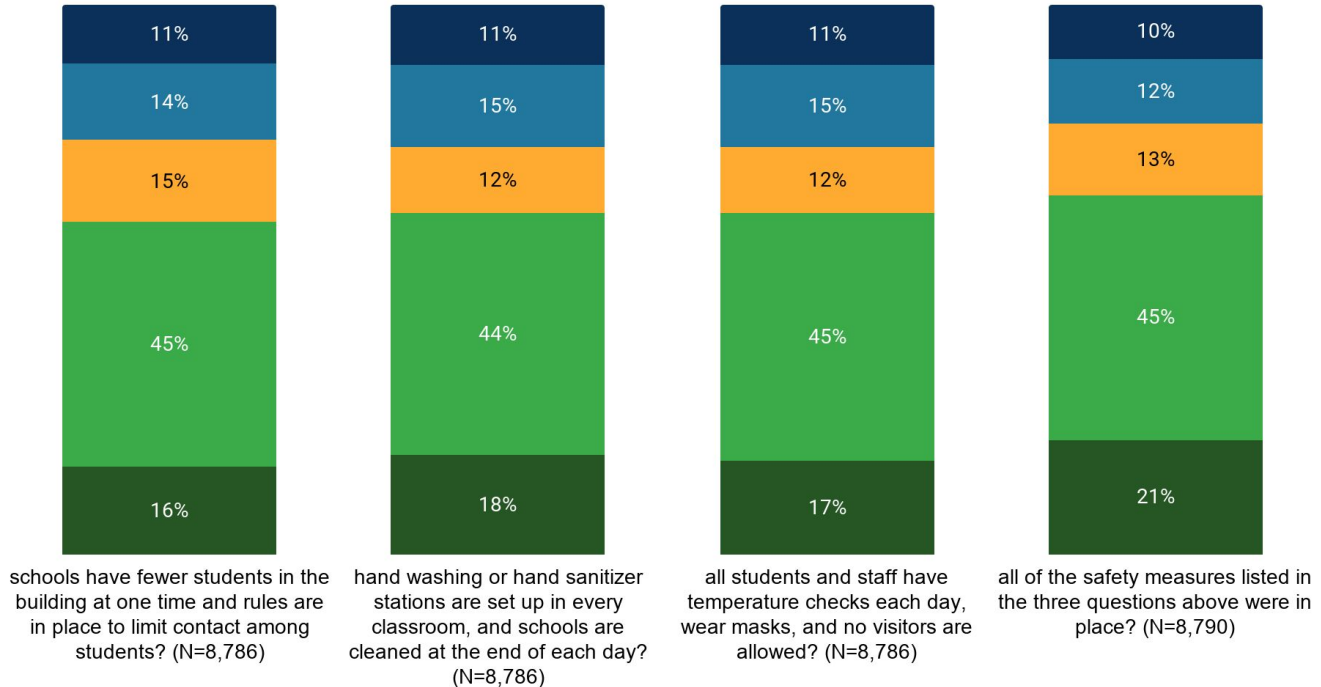
How comfortable would you feel with students and staff returning to the school building in person if...



Most (66%) **school-based staff** would feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to school in person with all safety measures in place

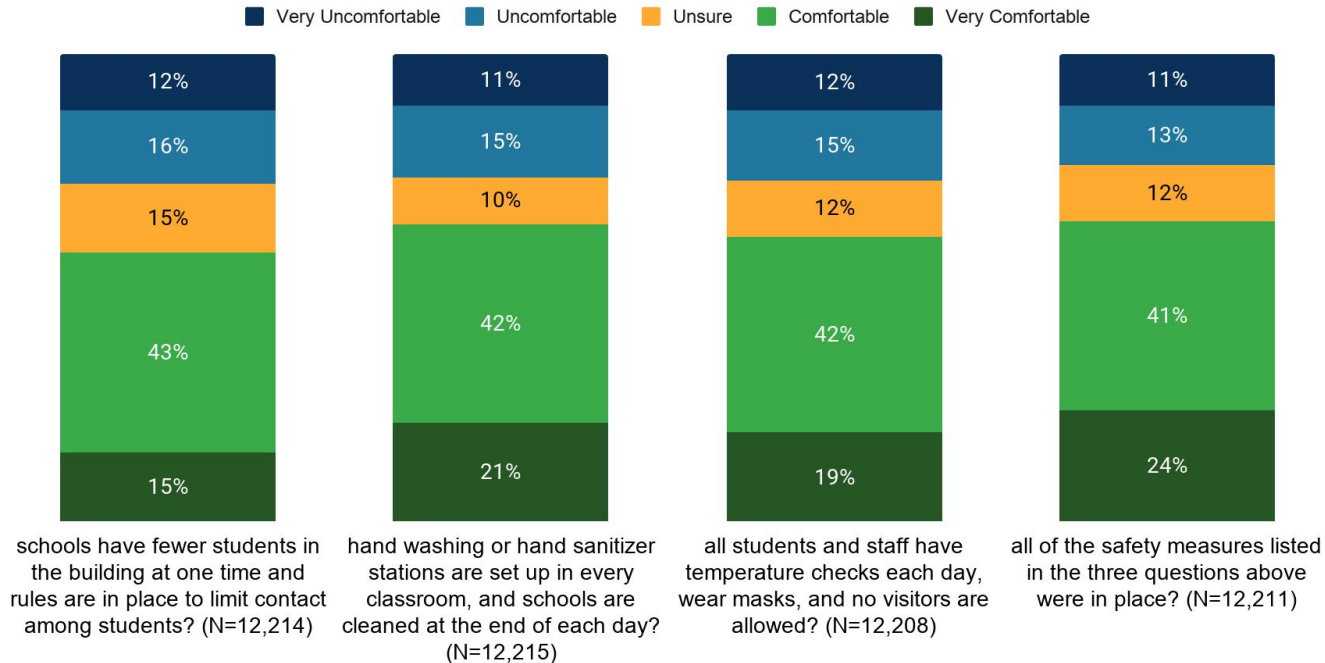
How would you feel about returning to school in person if...

Very Uncomfortable Uncomfortable Unsure Comfortable Very Comfortable



Most (65%) **parents/guardians and community members** would feel comfortable or very comfortable with students returning to school in person if all safety measures were in place

How comfortable would you feel with students returning to school in person if...



Themes from open-ended responses: Daily school cleanings

Parents/guardians questioned whether school buildings would be sufficiently cleaned and brought up concerns about students using bathrooms:

- “My concern is that, how dedicated will the school be with thoroughly cleaning the school each day? In the beginning the cleaning may start of strong, but fall off over some time. Hence, increasing the spread of infection.”
- “My child’s school was barely clean before COVID and I don’t trust that the school will be properly cleaned and sanitized thoroughly. Even sanitizing at the end of the day will not be sufficient because children are germ carriers, and throughout the day touch everything repeatedly...”
- “The schools need to be cleaned thoroughly throughout the day and at the end of end school. Before schools were closed there was an asbestos problem in school so with that being said this virus is only a scarier and messier part of the problem Please make it safe and clean for our children to go to school and learn with no worries and come back to us healthy and safe and everyday”
- “Bathrooms not mentioned anywhere in survey but my kids constantly talk about how dirty they are - no soap - no TP - sinks not working. This is imperative for handwashing and disease spread prevention.”

Themes from open-ended responses: Students with asthma

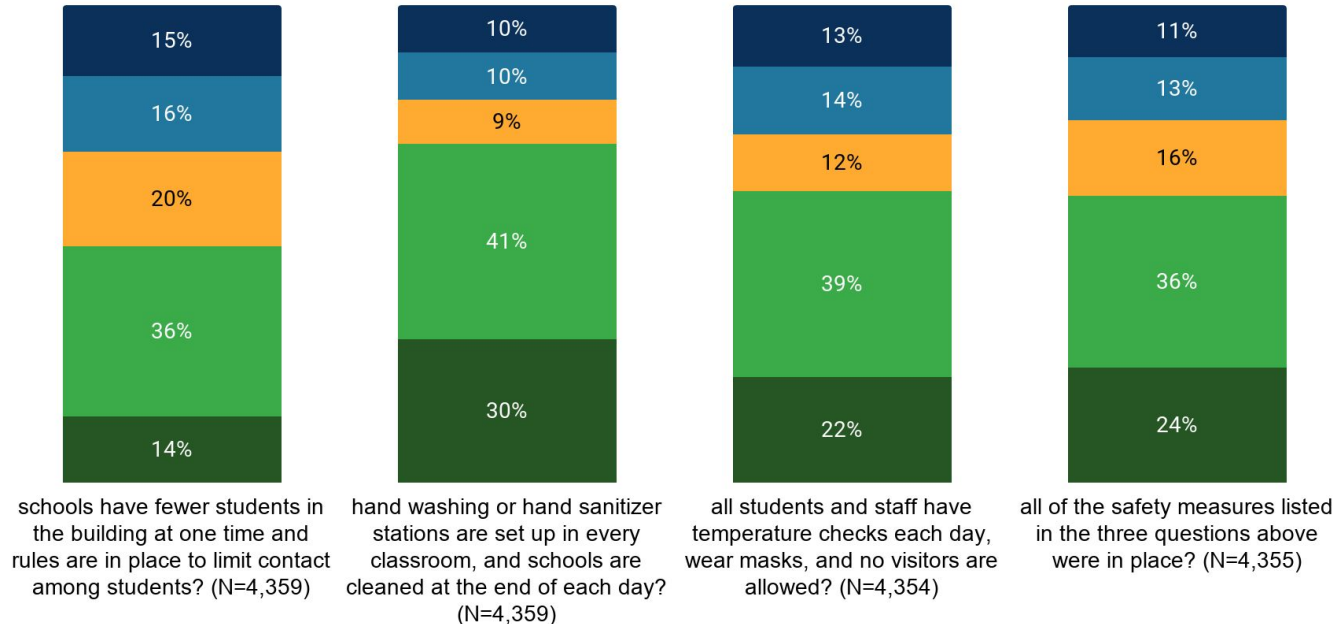
Parents/guardians of students with asthma expressed concerns about mask usage:

- “I am not comfortable with my child sitting in a classroom with a mask all day. He has asthma. He will be in second grade and will potentially play with the mask or try to remove it because he has difficulty breathing.”
- “What measures are being put in place for Kids with health issues... Such as Asthma and other respiratory issues? They can’t wear a mask for 8 hours a day.”
- “My son has asthma and allergies. It would be unhealthy breathing wise to wear a mask 6 plus hours a day.”
- “I am not in favor of children wearing masks for 8 hours a day especially children with asthma. If mask are required my child will not return.”
- “I personally believe that any kid with pre-existing condition (ex. asthma) should continue the education virtually and not exposed to students, staff...etc.”

Most (71%) **student** respondents would feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to school in person if there were **hand washing/sanitizing stations** and **daily school cleanings**

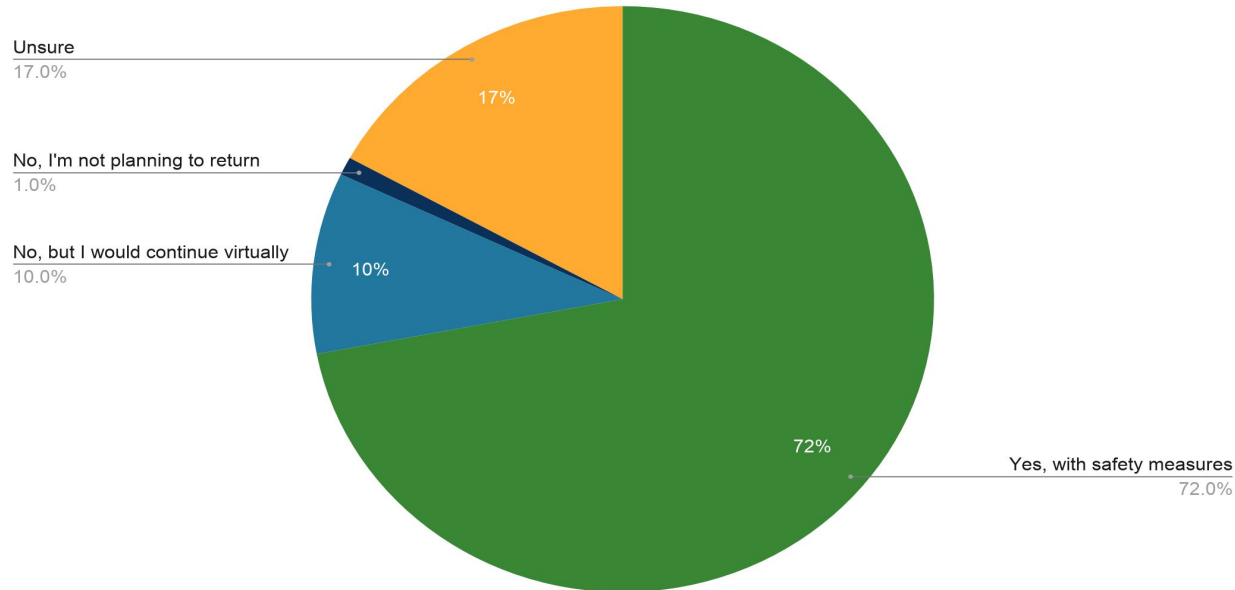
How would you feel about students returning to school in person if...

■ Very Uncomfortable ■ Uncomfortable ■ Unsure ■ Comfortable ■ Very Comfortable



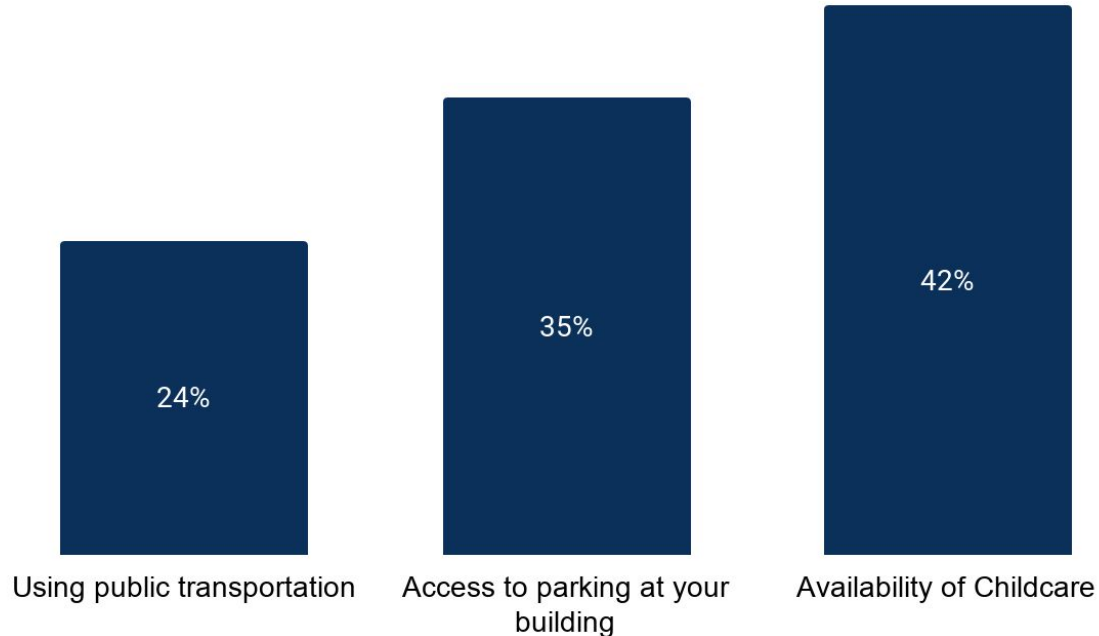
A majority of **school-based staff** respondents plan to return in person in the fall if safety measures are in place

Based on CURRENT circumstances, if your school building reopens in the fall, do you plan to return in person? (N=8,313)

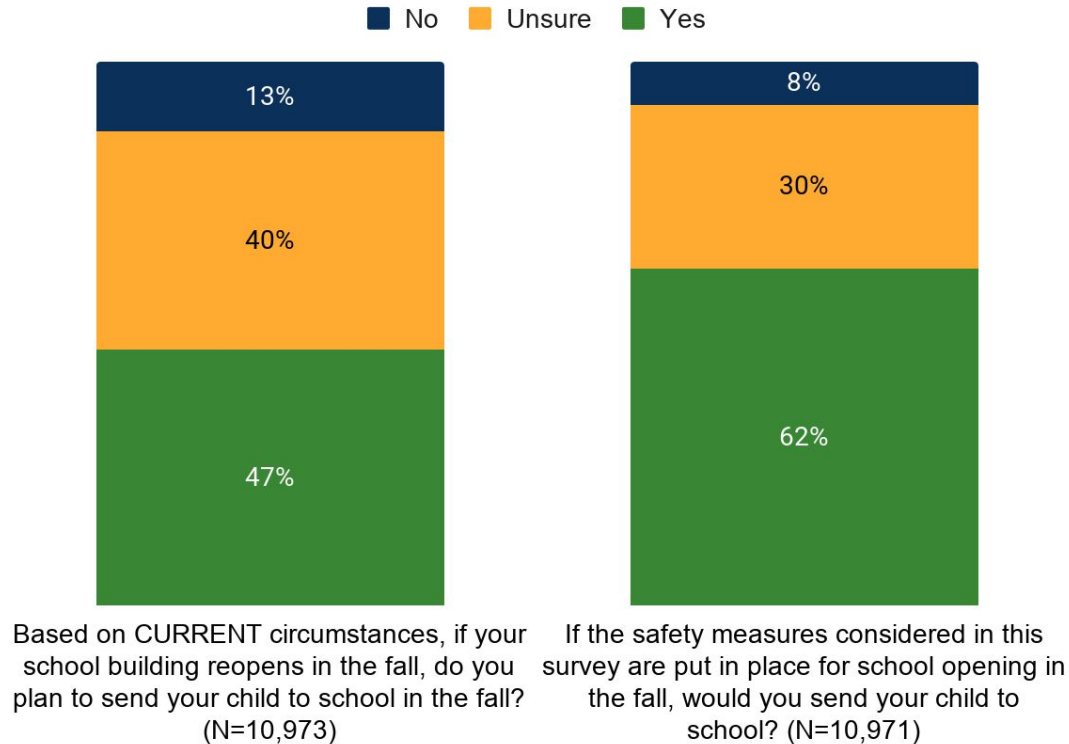


Over 40% of **school-based staff** respondents are concerned about the availability of childcare

Which of these are also likely to contribute to your decision about returning in person in the fall? (Select all that apply; N=4,790)



More **parent/guardian and community member** respondents would send their child to school in person in the fall if all safety measures are in place (62% compared to 47%)



Themes from open-ended responses: Give families the option to keep students home and attend virtual school

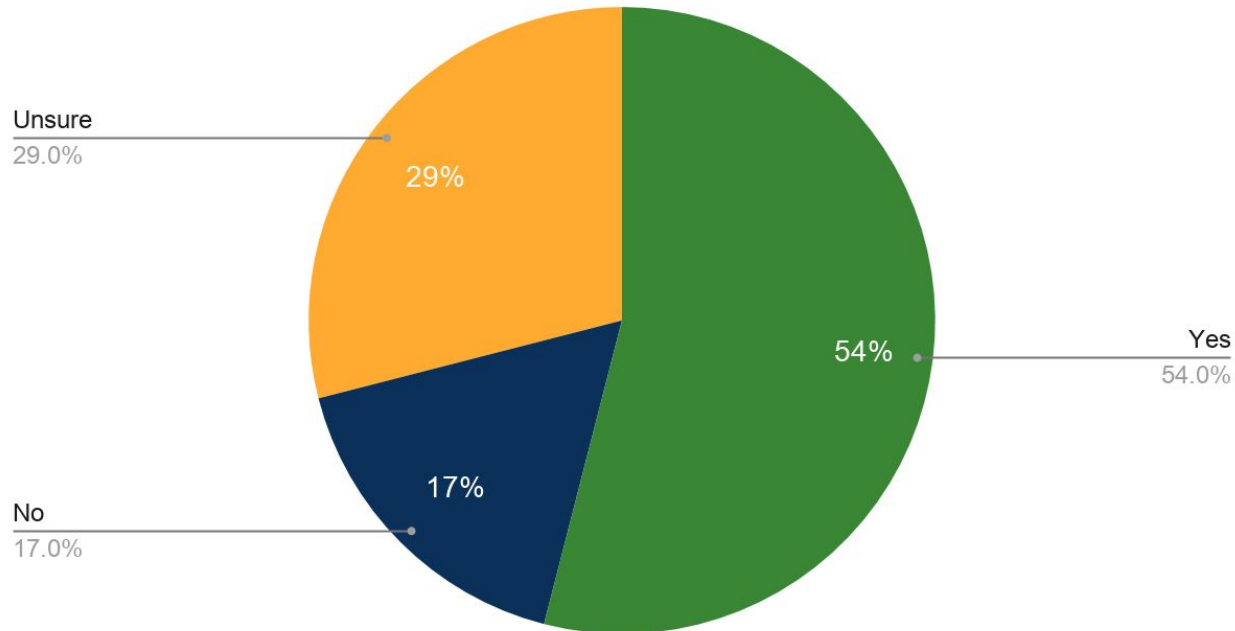
Parents/guardians explained why they want the option of virtual learning:

- “Please consider virtual learning for students who have underlying health conditions and/or students who has family with vulnerable conditions. This virus is life threatening to vulnerable individuals. Parents who want to send their child to school let them, but let those who do not want to send their child to school let them continue online learning indefinitely until it's safer. Our household has more than one individual with underlying conditions. One gets sick and it affects all of us.”
- “With so many deaths due to the COVID-19 and unpredictable situations, it be wise to heed the warnings and keep all our cities children safety as priority. Online virtual classes/online learning being an option for those parents who still have concerns and in class option for those who may still be concerned but feel in class learning works better for their child(ren).”
- “I have two kids that will attend school this fall, one is going to Pk and the other one is going to fourth grade. I can't wait for them to go but for their safety I prefer online learning or at least fewer students at school. I hope that as parents we can get the choice to either send our kids physically to school or have them learning from home.”



Just over half of **student** respondents report they would feel safe going back to school in the fall with all safety measures in place

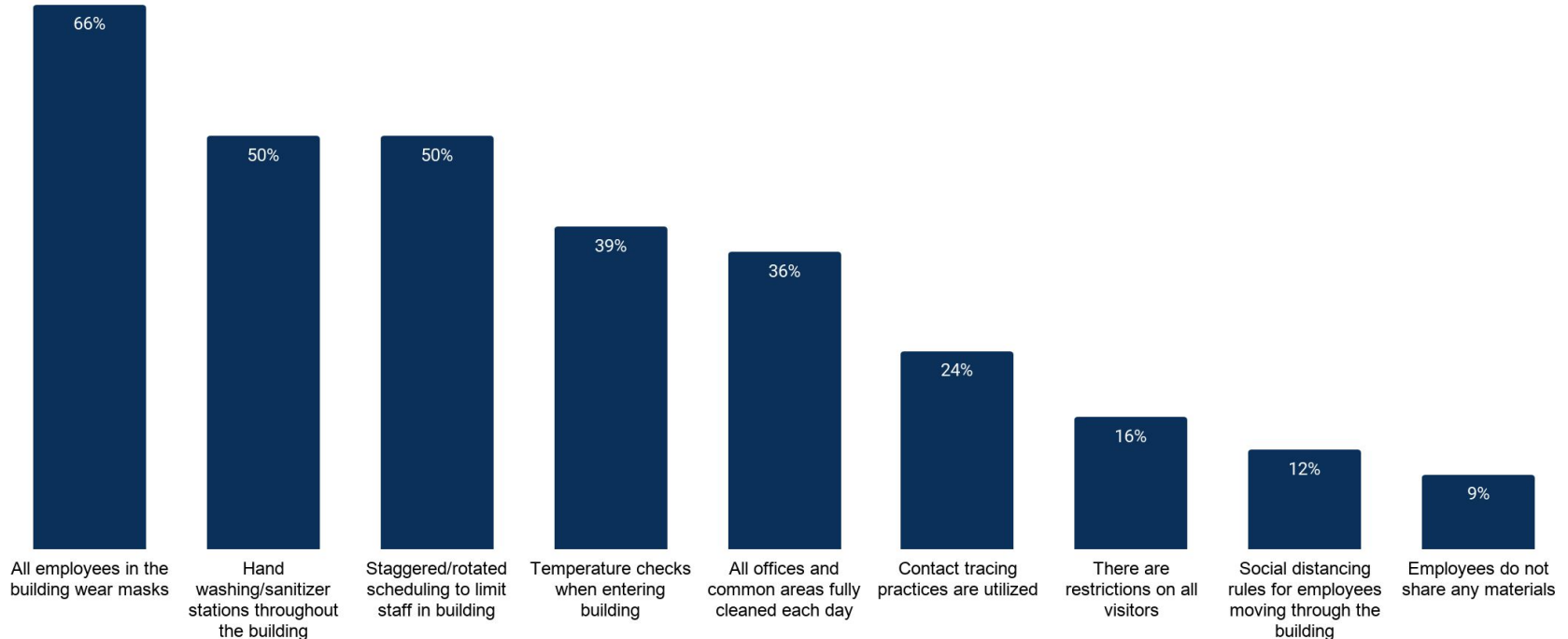
If the safety measures considered in this survey are put in place for school opening in the fall, would you feel safe going back to school for in person classes? (N=4,313)



Feedback on Central Office Safety Measures

“Everyone wearing masks” was rated as the most important safety measure by most (66%) central office respondents

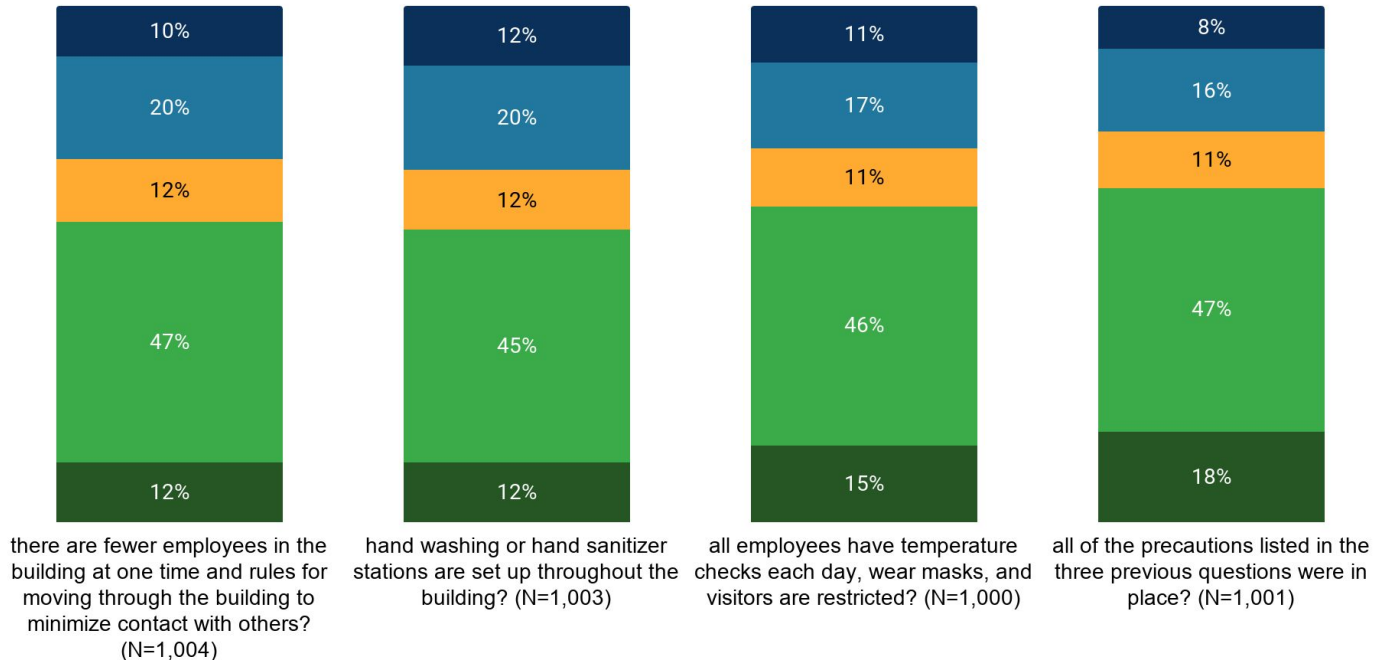
Percentage of Top Three Rankings from Central Office Staff (N=998)



About 60% of central office respondents feel comfortable or very comfortable returning to work in person

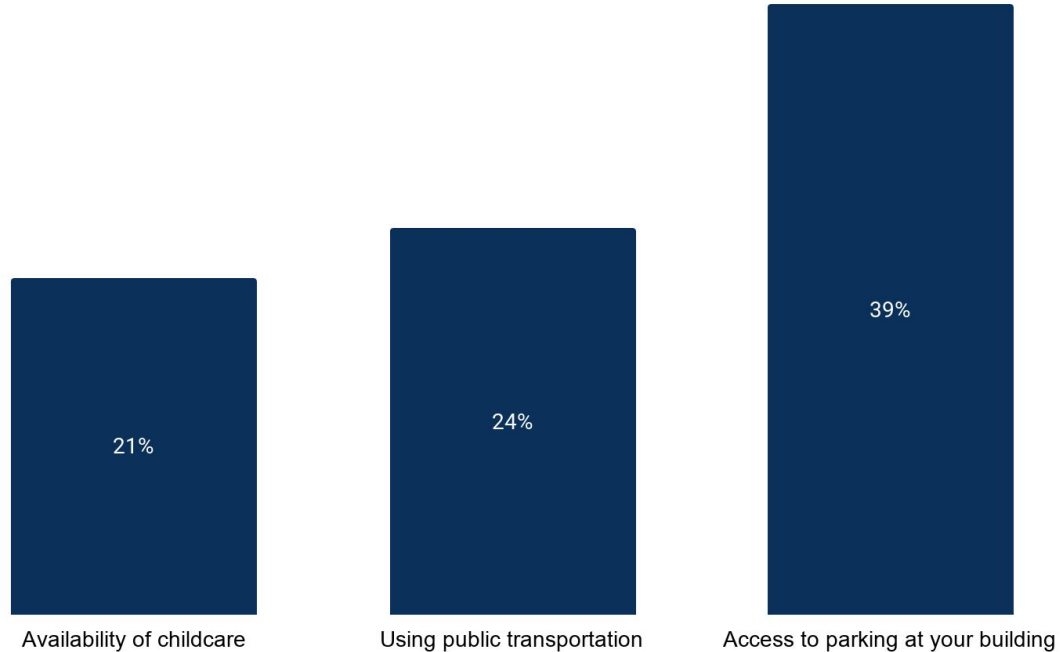
How comfortable would you be returning to central office if...

Very uncomfortable Uncomfortable Unsure Comfortable Very comfortable



About 40% of central office respondents are concerned about the availability of parking

Which of these are also likely to contribute to your decision about returning to work in-person? (Select all that apply; N=1,267)



Feedback on School Reopening Options

Both **school-based staff** and **parents/guardians and community members** rated students coming to school on alternate days in shifts as their **#1** option

	Percentage of #1 Rankings		
	School-Based Staff*	Parents/community#	Overall
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	28%	27%	27%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	24%	21%	22%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	19%	18%	18%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	15%	12%	13%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	14%	22%	19%

*Ns range from 7,988-8,093 ; #Ns range from 11,235-11,360

About 90% of **school-based staff** ranked students coming to school on alternate days in shifts as one of their top 3 options, regardless of which grade band they teach.

	Percentage of School-based Staff that Ranked Option in Top 3		
	K-5 Students*	6-8 Students#	9-12 Students^
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	85%	87%	90%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	74%	73%	74%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	72%	76%	75%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	43%	44%	44%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	26%	21%	19%

*Ns range from 4,934-4,988; #Ns range from 1,153-1,165; ^Ns range from 1,799-1,830

About 85% of **school-based staff** ranked students coming to school on alternate days in shifts as one of their top 3 options, regardless of their role

	Percentage of School-based Staff that Ranked Option in Top 3 Broken Out By Role		
	Teachers/Instructional Staff*	School Administration#	Support and Operations Staff^
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	87%	89%	85%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	74%	66%	77%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	75%	71%	70%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	43%	51%	43%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	22%	23%	27%

*Ns range from 4,680-4,721; #Ns range from 405-409; ^Ns range from 1,873-1,914

Students coming to school on alternate days in shifts was the top rated option by **teachers/instructional staff** and **school administration**

	Percentage of School-based Staff that Ranked Option as #1 Broken Out By Role		
	Teachers/ Instructional Staff*	School Administration [#]	Support and Operations Staff [^]
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	29%	32%	26%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	22%	20%	27%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	22%	16%	17%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	15%	19%	15%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	13%	13%	16%

*Ns range from 4,680-4,721; #Ns range from 405-409; ^Ns range from 1,873-1,914

Over 80% of **parents/guardians and community members** ranked students coming on alternate days in shifts as one of their top 3 options, regardless of their child's grade band

	Percentage of Parents/Guardians and Community Members that Ranked Option in Top 3		
	K-5 Students*	6-8 Students#	9-12 Students^
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	84%	87%	89%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	71%	70%	74%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	69%	75%	78%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	39%	38%	35%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	39%	30%	26%

*Ns range from 6,357-6,427; #Ns range from 1,989-2,011; ^Ns range from 2,775-2,802

Themes from open-ended responses: Alternating schedules

Parents/guardians expressed the challenges they would face if alternating scheduling were put in place, especially those with more than one student:

- “One of my children is entering 1st grade one is entering 6th. I would have answered the same for both kids. My only concern with the logistics of doing A and B days is making sure families with multiple kids are in on the same days and home on the same days, to make it easier for the parents who are working.”
- “When determining the practices discussed please consider, some children are part of multi grade groups. K, 3rd and 6th. Juggling drop offs and pick ups will be challenging for parents if children are on different schedules such as, A/B or half virtual or etc. there has to be some sort of coordination with siblings.”
- “It would be most helpful to know if a family will be able to coordinate schedule among their children. I have four children, presently at three different schools, in ages 4-9.... three different schedules would be untenable”
- “If students are being rotated when attending school what are the parents supposed to do on the days the student doesn’t have school. Not everyone can work from home.”

The responses from **parents/guardians** of students who receive special education services were similar to those of all parent/guardian responses

	Percentage of Parents/Guardians of Students Receiving Special Education Services that Ranked Option in Top 3		
	K-5 Students*	6-8 Students#	9-12 Students^
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	82%	85%	88%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	71%	73%	75%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	68%	75%	74%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	42%	42%	40%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	39%	27%	24%

*Ns range from 878-892; #Ns range from 340-357; ^Ns range from 386-394

The responses from **parents/guardians** of students who receive EL services were similar to those of all parent/guardian responses

	Percentage of Parents/Guardians of Students Receiving EL Services that Ranked Option in Top 3		
	K-5 Students*	6-8 Students#	9-12 Students^
Students come to the school building on alternate days in shifts	85%	84%	88%
Students come to the school building each day , but in shifts	79%	75%	76%
Students come to the school building on alternate weeks in shifts	69%	84%	77%
A phased-in approach where certain students come back to the school building first for in-person classes, while other students continue with virtual learning	39%	37%	34%
All students come to the school building at the same time as usual and there are measures in place to limit students interacting with each other in the school building	29%	22%	24%

*Ns range from 402-414; #Ns range from 104-109; ^Ns range from 98-99

Themes from open-ended responses: Transportation to and from school

Parents/guardians raised the issue of getting students to and from the school building safely, particularly those who use public transportation:

- “I personally would prefer my child to finish school online. If all safety measures are put in place in school, there is still the issue with Septa. My child takes two different buses to get to and from school everyday. Septa now has restrictions on buses with respect to seating and the amount of passengers allowed on the bus at one time. This could be a problem for students, with respect to overcrowding and children denied entry to buses due to limited passengers. This will make it hard for children to arrive to school on time and delay home arrival times as well, considering adults are phasing back to work and take public transportation as well.”
- “I am concerned about my child having to take public transportation to school. My son needs to take multiple septa buses/trains to get to school.”
- “I have a special needs child. An she is picked up by school bus , what I'd like to know is how are we going to distance our children on the buses to come and go from school everyday. Will you have one child on every other seat with a facial mask on.”



Themes from open-ended responses: Parent/guardian work responsibilities

Parents/guardians explained why they think students should return to school full time:

- “I understand the risks but as and ER nurse myself I think we need to move forward with coming to school full time. Families with at risk members can opt to attend school virtually if they wish. I do not think the virus is going to be temporary and I think we need to move towards having a new permanent normal. Part-time school still has exposure and if children have to be at babysitter - like mine will, in the off time, the exposure will be very similar!!! I think having health safety precautions are appropriate, but I think going to school full time is the best choice.”
- “Please open the schools!!! I am an essential Single working parent and I cannot homeschool a Kindergartener and 9th grader while working. I want my children to have a adequate proper education.”
- “Please take into consideration work schedules and childcare for elementary. Teachers with children cannot teach online and help their students at the same time and a lot of jobs that are reopening does not accommodate half time schedules or biweekly schedules.”
- Not reopening schools in the fall puts parents who work full time in a really bad position. Especially if you’re a single parent. Where are your kids supposed to go every day while you’re at work?



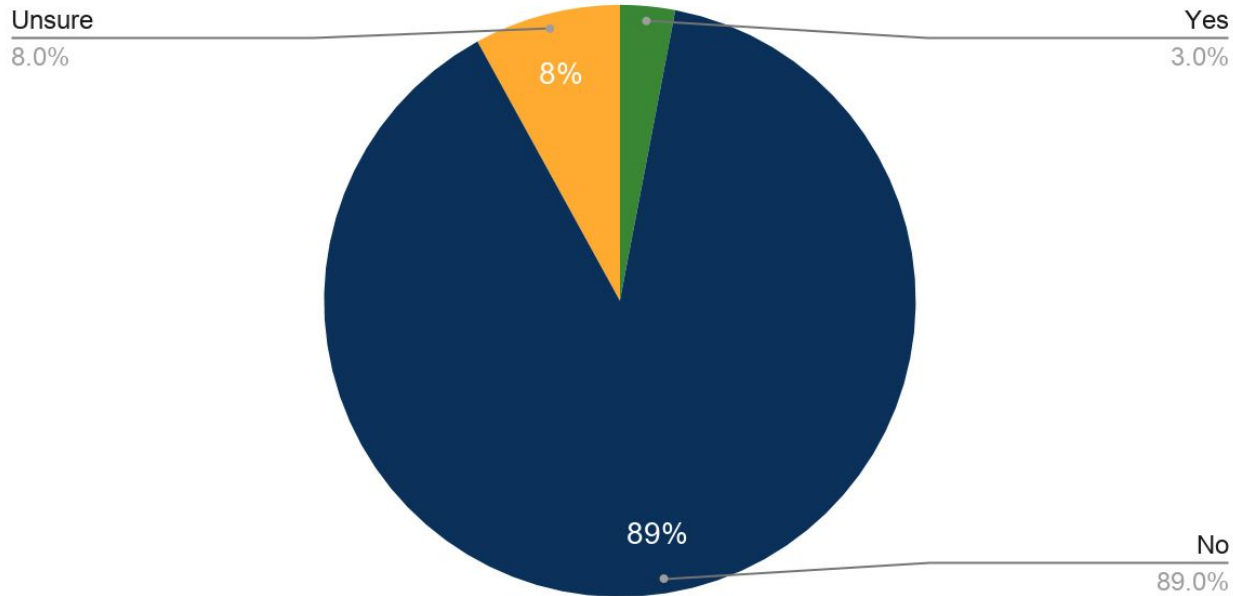
Themes from open-ended responses: Adjusting attendance policies

Parents/guardians highlighted that it will be important for SDP to adjust attendance policies to take into account new safety and health procedures and recommendations:

- “It is critical to change the SDP’s messaging about attendance, emphasizing that students SHOULD miss school if even questionably sick or exposed to someone ill. The SDP needs to eliminate robocalls and emails indicating the importance of sending your child to school each day. Those should be replaced with messages offering parents a number to call for assistance if they need help with attendance, medical concerns, or other resources during this difficult time.”
- “Attendance should be adjusted no child should have to be mark late with the new system if we are going to be checking temperature.”
- “...Change rules about staying home when sick. Kids and staff should stay home if not well and at least 48 hours after a fever. Relax attendance/truancy rules...”

Less than 5% of **parents/guardians** think their child needs to repeat a grade due to virtual learning during the school shutdown

Do you think your child needs to repeat a grade so they can catch up on their school work? (N=10,977)



Summary of Findings

School Safety Measures

- The top three safety measures from all three respondent groups were:
 - All students and staff wear masks
 - School buildings are cleaned and sanitized daily
 - Hand washing/sanitizing stations are set up in each classroom
- Concerns about these safety measures included:
 - The challenge of ensuring masks are worn consistently, especially by young children
 - The risks that prolonged mask wearing has for students with asthma
 - Doubts that school buildings will be cleaned sufficiently and frequently

School Reopening Options

- **Students coming to the school building on alternate days in shifts** (i.e., half the students attend physically on day A and virtually on day B and the other half attend physically on day B and virtually on day A) was the top ranked option by **parents/guardians, community members**, and **school-based staff**
- Concerns about this option include:
 - Coordinating A/B schedules for multiple students within a household (i.e., all students within a household should be on the same schedule)
 - Finding supervision and childcare for students on the days they are learning virtually