Summary of Themes from the "Feedback Form" Responses about SDP's 2020 School Reopening Plan

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In June 2020, the Office of Evaluation, Research and Accountability created a feedback form to gather input about reopening schools for the 2020-21 school year. A link to the form, which was hosted by SurveyMonkey, was posted on the Advancing Education Safely page of the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) website.[1] The feedback form was translated into nine languages[2] and was open June – August, 2020.

The feedback form included opportunities to provide open-ended comments about each of the different topics covered by SDP's school reopening plan: Health and Safety, Learning Models, Operations, Timeline, and Workforce Considerations. Respondents could also leave feedback not related to these topics, which were categorized as "Other."

This report summarizes our findings from an analysis of the comments submitted from the time the feedback form opened on June 23 until August 14 to identify common words, phrases and themes, and determine if there were changes after SDP announced its reopening plan on July 15 and/or after SDP announced its updated reopening plan on July 28 via email to all District staff. We provide an overview of the most common words and phrases included in the comments by topic and date range and compare trends over the time. Additionally, we summarize the themes that emerged from our analysis of a random sample of coded comments.

Summary

- Across all topics (Health and Safety, Learning Models, Operations, Timeline, Workforce Considerations, and Other) there were 3,570 feedback form responses containing at least one character and 3,558 that contained at least two words.
- Most feedback responses were left under the Health & Safety topic, followed by Learning Models and Other.
- This memo provides a summary of responses related to the following themes (begins on page 12):
    - concerns for digital learning and pro in-person learning
    - suggestions for the school reopening in the fall
    - questions about implementation
    - pro hybrid model
    - options/choice

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[1] https://www.philasd.org/coronavirus/schoolstart2020/
[2] The survey was translated into Albanian, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), French, Khmer, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Methods

To create a file for analysis, we removed any responses with less than two words. Then we re-coded and transformed some of the original SurveyMonkey data so that each comment was associated with the following variables: topic, date range, language, and respondent ID.[3] Date range refers to if the comment was left before July 15 (before the initial reopening plan was announced), after July 15 but before July 28 (after the initial reopening plan was announced), or after July 28 (when the updated reopening plan was announced).

To focus our analysis, we used WordStat software to determine the most common words and phrases by topic and time frame. We then identified comments with words and phrases pertaining to in-person learning, such as "return to school" or "attend school," and words and phrases pertaining to digital learning, such as "online learning" or "stay home." We identified a set of 723 comments about returning to school in-person and a set of 892 comments about digital learning. We took a random sample of 25 percent of each set, resulting in 180 comments about returning to school in-person and 223 comments about digital learning for a total of 403 comments. The 403 comments were coded using Dedoose software.[4] The codebook consisted of 14 codes, including more specific iterations of the two original categories (in-person learning and digital learning). For example, there was a "pro in-person learning" code as well as a "pro digital learning/anti in-person learning" code. We also added a code representing respondents' desire for a choice or option to do in-person or virtual learning, which emerged as salient during the initial stages of coding.

Findings

Across all topics, there were 3,570 survey responses containing at least one character and 3,558 that contained at least two words. Of those, 165 were in a language other than English and were translated into English by SDP's translators in the Office of Family and Community Engagement. Most responses were short, with about half (50%) containing 50 words or fewer and over three quarters (77%) containing 100 words or fewer. Three responses consisted solely of a link to a website. The longest response was over 3,000 words (Table 1).

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[3] The respondent ID is a random number that is generated each time someone completed the survey.

[4] Dedoose Version 8.0.35, web application for managing, analyzing, and presenting qualitative and mixed method research data (2018). Los Angeles, CA: SocioCultural Research Consultants, LLC www.dedoose.com.

Table 1. Number of responses by word count

Number of words	Count of responses
1 (web address)	3
2 to 5	59
6 to 10	153
11 to 20	439
21 to 30	435
31 to 50	723
51 to 70	491
71 to 100	445
101 to 150	357
151-200	177
201-500	222
501-1000	44
More than 1000	10

Most responses were left under the Health & Safety topic, followed by Learning Models and Other as the most common topics selected (Table 2).

Table 2. Number of responses by reopening topic

Reopening topic	Count of responses
Health and safety	1,648
Learning models	850
Other	379
Workforce considerations	285
Operations	229
Timeline	153
No topic selected	14
Total	**3,558**

Most comments were submitted after the end of the 2019-20 school year and before the initial plan for the 2020-21 school year was announced. During this three-week period, there were 2,368 responses. After the announcement of the initial reopening plan on July 15 and before the formal announcement of the updated reopening plan on July 28, 958 comments were submitted. The remaining 232 comments were submitted after the District announced learning would be 100% digital for the first semester until the time when the responses were downloaded for analysis on August 14 (Table 3).

Table 3. Number of responses by date range

When comment was left	Number of days	Count of responses
Between June 23 and July 14, before initial reopening plan was announced	22	2,368
Between July 15 and July 28, after initial plan was announced and before revised plan was announced	14	958
Between July 29 and Aug 14, after revised plan was announced	17	232
Total	**n/a**	**3,558**

Most common words and phrases

Using Wordstat, we were able to identify the most common words and phrases across all responses. The most frequently used words across all responses were "school," "students," "teachers," "children," and "learning."

Table 4. Top 25 words across all responses

Word	Number of times the word was used	Number of responses that included the word	Percentage of responses that included the word
SCHOOL	3971	1921	54.0%
STUDENTS	2840	1393	39.2%
TEACHERS	1649	992	27.9%
CHILDREN	1634	894	25.1%

Word	Number of times the word was used	Number of responses that included the word	Percentage of responses that included the word
LEARNING	1578	940	26.4%
KIDS	1281	675	19.0%
SCHOOLS	1209	789	22.2%
STAFF	1000	646	18.2%
TIME	978	675	19.0%
DISTRICT	931	627	17.6%
PARENTS	931	584	16.4%
WORK	900	595	16.7%
ONLINE	894	614	17.3%
HOME	852	577	16.2%
VIRTUAL	819	548	15.4%
DAY	818	502	14.1%
COVID	711	494	13.9%
SAFE	663	517	14.5%
PERSON	651	445	12.5%
HEALTH	631	485	13.6%
TEACHER	625	393	11.1%
CHILD	579	390	11.0%
CLASSROOM	563	404	11.4%
MASKS	548	367	10.3%
FAMILIES	544	365	10.3%

The top five phrases were "school district," "virtual learning," "social distancing," "school year," and "online learning" (Table 5).

Table 5. Top 25 phrases across all responses

Phrase	Number of times the phrase was used	Number of responses that included the phrase	Percentage of responses that included the phrase
SCHOOL DISTRICT	333	276	7.8%
VIRTUAL LEARNING	310	240	6.8%
SOCIAL DISTANCING	258	210	5.9%
SCHOOL YEAR	234	193	5.4%
ONLINE LEARNING	223	173	4.9%
REMOTE LEARNING	196	141	4.0%
HIGH SCHOOL	148	107	3.0%
HEALTH AND SAFETY	137	131	3.7%
STUDENTS AND STAFF	129	116	3.3%
HYBRID MODEL	121	102	2.9%
ONLINE CLASSES	121	114	3.2%
PERSON LEARNING	109	90	2.5%
SCHOOL BUILDINGS	107	91	2.6%
WEAR MASKS	102	91	2.6%
RETURN TO SCHOOL	98	97	2.7%
FULL TIME	97	86	2.4%
DISTANCE LEARNING	91	69	1.9%
DIGITAL LEARNING	90	70	2.0%
WEAR A MASK	88	78	2.2%

Phrase	Number of times the phrase was used	Number of responses that included the phrase	Percentage of responses that included the phrase
SOCIAL DISTANCE	84	82	2.3%
STAY HOME	83	72	2.0%
TOWN HALL	83	72	2.0%
FACE TO FACE	81	65	1.8%
HAND SANITIZER	80	72	2.0%
DIGITAL ACADEMY	77	55	1.6%

We also looked at the most common words and phrases based on when the comment was made relative to SDPs announcements about school reopening, and by topic. The word and phrase counts were highest in the date range that began on June 23 (before the District announced a reopening plan) and lowest in the date range after July 28 (after the District announced its revised reopening plan), though this may also be the case because the first date range was the longest period of time.

The most common words were fairly consistent across the date ranges. While most of the phrases reflect similar concepts, comments left after June 23 and before July 15 frequently included "social distancing," a concept that is not as frequently used in comments left after July 15 (Table 6).

Table 6. Top five words and phrases by date range

When comments were left	Top five most common words	Top five most common phrases
Between June 23 and July 14, before initial reopening plan was announced	school (2,763), students (2,076), children (1,162), learning (1,106), teachers (1,065)	school district (235), social distancing (210), virtual learning (208), online learning (170), school year (157)
Between July 15 and July 28, after initial plan was announced and before revised plan was announced	school (981), students (645), teachers (476), children (344), learning (332)	online classes (94), school district (82), virtual learning (77), digital academy (72), school year (59)
Between July 29 and August 14, after revised plan was announced	school (227), learning (140), children (128), kids (120), students (119)	virtual learning (25), remote learning (19, digital learning (18, school year (18), school district (18)

The most common words were also fairly consistent across the topics, with a couple exceptions. For example, the word "staff" only appears under the topic "Workforce Considerations" and the word "time" only appears under "Timeline." While most of the most common phrases reflect similar concepts, three stand out as unique to their topic: "teachers from our schools," "internet to teach" and "resumption of classes," all three from comments left under the "Workforce Considerations" topic (Table 7).

Table 7. Top five words and phrases by topic

Topic	Top five most common words	Top five most common phrases
Health and safety	school (1,890), students (1,353), children (835), schools (682), kids (633)	social distancing (168), school district (151), school year (116), virtual learning (110), health and safety (109)
Learning models	school (850), learning (713), students (696), teachers (470), online (395)	virtual learning (115), online learning (98), school district (69), remote learning (69), hybrid model (61)
Other	school (531), students (337), children (166), learning (159), kids (151)	school district (55), virtual learning (49), school year (25), social distancing (21), digital learning (19)
Workforce considerations	teachers (254), school (250), students (166), staff (123), classes (96)	online classes (35), teachers from our schools (23), school district (19), resumption of classes (18), internet to teach (17)
Operations	school (287), students (198), children (133) learning (114), kids (96)	school district (27), high school (22), remote learning (18), school year (18), social distancing (18)
Timeline	school (146), students (87), learning (60), time (60), schools (53)	remote learning (23), school year (16), school district (12), school buildings (11), virtual learning (9)

Themes

We randomly selected 403 cases for additional coding. After an initial review of the comments, we created a code book with 14 possible codes. In many cases, more than one code was applied for a comment. The most frequently applied code across all comments was "anti in-person/pro digital learning" (N=175), followed by "in-person concerns" (N=118), and "suggestions for learning in the fall" (N=108). For comments left before the revised school reopening plan was announced, the most common code applied was "anti in-person/pro virtual." However, after the revised plan was announced, the most common code applied was "pro in-person." The shaded cells in Tables 8 and 9 show the most common codes for each date range.

Table 8. Number of codes applied to comments by date range

Code	Between June 23 and July 14, before initial reopening plan was announced	Between July 15 and July 28, after initial plan was announced and before revised plan was announced	Between July 29 and Aug 14, after revised plan was announced	Overall total number of comments with code applied
Anti in-person/ pro digital*	117	53	5	175
In-person concerns	91	26	1	118
Suggestions for learning in the fall	81	23	4	108
Questions for implementation	39	25	7	71
Digital concerns	32	24	10	66
Pro hybrid	34	12	6	52
Options/Choices for families	29	16	7	52
Pro in-person	24	10	12	46
Negative experience with digital learning	19	6	5	30
Hybrid concerns	18	10	1	29
Anti digital	7	1	2	10
Anti hybrid	4	4	0	8
Pro digital	3	2	0	5
Positive experience with digital learning	2	0	0	2
Total	500	212	60	772

*This code was applied to comments that advocated for digital learning because of their opposition to in-person learning. In comparison, the pro digital code was used when the comment championed digital learning outside of the context of learning during a pandemic.

NOTE: The shaded cells show the most common codes for each date range.

Table 9. Percentage of codes applied to comments

Code	Between June 23 and July 14, before initial reopening plan was announced	Between July 15 and July 28, after initial plan was announced and before revised plan was announced	Between July 29 and Aug 14, after revised plan was announced	Overall percentage of comments with code applied
Anti in-person/ pro digital	23.4%	25.0%	8.3%	22.7%
In-person concerns	18.2%	12.3%	1.7%	15.3%
Suggestions for learning in the fall	16.2%	10.8%	6.7%	14.0%
Questions for implementation	7.8%	11.8%	11.7%	9.2%
Digital concerns	6.4%	11.3%	16.7%	8.5%
Pro hybrid	6.8%	5.7%	10.0%	6.7%
Options/Choices for families	5.8%	7.5%	11.7%	6.7%
Pro in-person	4.8%	4.7%	20.0%	6.0%
Negative experience with digital learning	3.8%	2.8%	8.3%	3.9%
Hybrid concerns	3.6%	4.7%	1.7%	3.8%
Anti digital	1.4%	0.5%	3.3%	1.3%
Anti hybrid	0.8%	1.9%	0.0%	1.0%
Pro digital	0.6%	0.9%	0.0%	0.6%
Positive experience with digital learning	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%

*This code was applied to comments that advocated for digital learning because of their opposition to in-person learning. In comparison, the pro digital code was used when the comment championed digital learning outside of the context of learning during a pandemic.

NOTE: The shaded cells show the most common codes for each date range.

We then identified themes that emerged across the comments that fell under each of the eight most common codes: "Anti in-person/pro digital learning;" "Digital concerns;" "In-person concerns;" "Pro hybrid;" "Questions about implementation;" "Suggestions for learning in the fall;" "Options/choices for families;" and "pro in-person." In a few instances, there was overlap in the themes that emerged from two codes, such as the themes identified for comments with the "concerns for in-person" and "anti in-person/pro digital." Given the extent of the similarities in themes, we combined these codes in our discussions below.

Themes for responses coded under "concerns for in-person" and "anti in-person/pro digital"

Many comments coded as "concerns for in-person learning" were the same as or expressed similar sentiments as comments coded as "anti in-person/pro virtual." Comments expressed the belief that **returning to in-person instruction is too dangerous and risky and the safest option is digital learning** and that **it is not feasible to think schools would be able to implement all the necessary safety measures required for a safe in-person experience**. Specific concerns about the risk and safety measures involved with a return to in-person learning also emerged as reasons why digital learning is the best choice. These specific concerns include asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic carriers; attendance policies; providing and receiving specialized services; concern that there could be a need to return right back to digital learning; and stress and mental health issues caused by returning to in-person learning during a pandemic.

In some cases, respondents referred to data about how COVID is spread and expressed concerns that asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic carriers will make it impossible to prevent people with COVID from attending school.

> I hope that we will continue to take online classes next semester. For the healthy growth of our children, as parents, we do not want our children to take risks. As parents, we are so worried.

> School should not reopen in the fall, too dangerous. 100% digital learning

> I do not want my 6 year old son to return to school cause he could bring this virus to my parents. It is a risk that I am not willing to take.

> ...risk outweighs the gargantuan effort of putting safety measures into place where there is no infrastructure for contact tracing and no way to know who are asymptomatic carriers/ spreaders of the virus.

> I know you must understand that many employees WILL come to work with COVID. Through no fault of their own. Children and the majority of young staff may have very mild symptoms, so will older staff initially. The symptoms, especially initially, are very similar to the common cold. Colds are very common among school children and staff. We don't have the sick days to stay home with a mild cold. So we, and students will come to school. With the way this virus is

so easily transmitted and the way it grows exponentially, a surge could come very fast in a large school district and urban city like Philadelphia.

I am a teacher in the district and a parent of a student in the district. If a person with COVID-19 is contagious while they are presymptomatic (about two days), then having students attending school every other day means that every person is attending school while they are contagious. It takes on average 5 days (could be up to two weeks) for a person to have symptoms after being exposed. So, unless students were to attend school for a week and then move to online learning for two weeks, we will be unable to know who is sick when they are attending school.

I know that there will be a "screening" procedure for symptoms, but there are many carriers who do not have symptoms, there for the screening procedures will not be as effective as we would hope.

Sometimes, respondents that advocated for digital learning acknowledged the reasons why in-person learning is important, but made it clear that **the benefits of returning in person did not outweigh the risks**.

As much as most of us would like to see schools re open, teachers, staff and students, we all know how dangerous it is to do so. Everyone is suffering from lack of socializing with our peers and the students are also. But we also know how dangerous Covid is and it's showing us. Please, continue online learning until it's safe for all of us to return.

I don't like distance learning but it is the ONLY safe option at this point

While school and supportive programs are necessary for learning, I have sincere concerns about reopening this fall. The CDC website shows that prolonged interaction between people in an enclosed space leads to a higher risk of spreading the disease. A lower risk is to conduct virtual learning per the CDC.

Other comments framed their stance based on their opinion that **it is not feasible to think schools would be able to implement all the necessary safety measures required for a safe in-person experience**.

until there's a successful vaccine or control of this virus they shouldn't be back at school. adults can barely follow directions of social distancing and keeping their mask on for long periods of time, how do you expect children to do this?

Social distancing, I just don't understand how that's going to happen? We all know that schools in Philly have smaller classroom size and large number of students. I highly doubt it will be possible to be 6 ft apart. These plans all sound great. But I do not see the possibility of it happening the way it's expected to carry out.

Do you really think that one teacher can watch and monitor 30 students and make sure their masks are on, not touching their face, while teaching class? I doubt it. Kids will always be kids with their hands on their face, in mouth, rubbing eyes or nose. They will take their mask off when they have to scratch their nose etc, kids are kids.

I know myself and my classmates well enough to know that we will not wear masks and we will not social distance, because we're kids!

*I'm really concerned about procurement and on-going supply of PPE -- masks for students, plastic shielding for teachers, hand sanitizing fluid everywhere. It's a national problem and school districts will be competing with one another and everyone else. * Most schools in the city are decrepit in terms of bathrooms and plumbing as it is. How will we have enough hand-washing stations around the school for easy, well-distanced availability?*

Respondents expressed a need for more specific information about the return to in-person learning and expressed situational safety concerns relevant to certain SDP students and staff, such as students who require special education and/or specialized services and the staff who support them. Some examples of these questions and concerns included:

What will the state do in regards to caseload size? Working with 65 plus kids for related service is way more than a teacher who has a classroom of 30. The chances of Speech, OT, PT getting the virus is higher since we work with 65 or more students, materials are shared , rooms are not properly ventilated, some rooms don't have windows, how will you protect related providers from the virus and ensure their safety? Will plastic dividers be in place?

When looking at the amount of students in a class, please be mindful of classes for special needs students, that may also include one or more classroom assistants, as well as other support staff, such as full time nurses and TSS and BSC's. Schedules of support staff may need to be addressed to limit the number of bodies in the classroom for social distancing.

Respondents expressed **concern that there could be an immediate need to switch back to digital learning**.

Please remember, once covid 19 rears its ugly head in our schools, there goes "in person" learning. Be prepared to continue "online" learning for everyone as long as needed.

Temperature checks will be pointless. Handwashing and masks are always a good thing, but when you are in the school buildings, most without good ventilation and temperature controls, it will be very hard to not build a viral load in the air over the many hours of the school days. It seems that sending students to schools on alternating days will result in many people getting sick and then we will return to 100% online learning again.

What we cannot do is return, wait to get sick, realize what a huge mistake was made and fall back into scrambling to switch to remote learning. Let's START OFF AS 100% REMOTE LEARNING, AND PLAN NOW TO MAKE IT EFFECTIVE. The District must understand the hazard in any type of classroom return. Also, remember that the conditions of the school buildings district wide were not adequate due to asbestos, mold, etc. and I am thinking that this was not addressed over the summer due to the virus. It is a SAFETY HAZARD all around to return to any classrooms at this time.

Respondents expressed **concern that stress and mental health issues could result from students and staff returning to in-person learning during a pandemic**.

What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?   How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid? How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?

I understand the students' mental health deteriorates a little when not doing face to face learning or socializing with friends, however when they are in school and social distancing there is no difference then doing virtual learning. The only difference is they're exposed and can get virus. What about when they bring home the virus to parents and grandparents? How will their mental health be at that point, when they wonder who will take care of them if their parents are sick with Covid because schools opened up too soon?

Although online learning has many challenges, I cannot fathom having a "social distancing classroom" be a child's first school experience. I do not think this environment is beneficial to their development and emotional health!

Themes for responses coded under "concerns for digital learning" and "pro in-person learning"

Many arguments for why children should return to school in-person were grounded in negative experiences with digital learning last spring. Respondents expressed **dissatisfaction with the quality of digital learning offered in the spring and expressed concern that without returning to school for in-person instruction, their students would continue to fall behind academically**.

The remote learning modules provided while school was closed last year was abysmal. Regular, in-person learning must be the mandate of the school district. Both my children suffered greatly during the closure. My straight A 3rd grader experienced depression and my

kindergarten didn't learn much. This was due primarily to the fact that their teachers refused to actually TEACH students during their limited online hours with in-person Google Meet...

I think the children need to be in school. No more of this virtual learning. It is destroying my child's mind and is ridiculous. They NEED TO BE IN SCHOOL.

The schools NEED to open, especially elementary school. My rising 3rd grader learned nothing last spring. Online learning is insufficient for elementary school students. I did not get a chance to speak at the town halls, and it seems that only teachers were allowed to speak. Please open the schools! We are sacrificing our children's education for far too long. We cannot wait for a vaccine that will never come, we need to figure out how to teach our children.

I am in full support of returning to school in the fall, as long as there is a plan for how to manage children and staff who test positive for COVID19. My kid learned nothing via virtual learning last spring and she is a motivated, straight A student. This shut-down has been rough on her mental health, and I have seen it be even more damaging for many of my patients, particularly those with difficult family situations. I hope that there will continue to be the option to attend school in the fall.

Respondents also expressed **concern that students would not attend or engage with digital learning in the fall.**

Too many kids would fall through the cracks if remote learning occurs more than 50% of school time.

I continue to strongly support in-person learning for children younger than 10. Digital learning is not effective for this age AND risk of COVID transmission is exceedingly low.

Open the schools. You're going to be setting up a lot of kids for failure if you don't. And we all know the union will refuse to go back in November. It's time to put your foot down. If you think a structured remote learning schedule will make kids want to log on, think again. Kids will not sit in front of a screen like a bunch of robots every day. Most likely, our at-risk kids will go out and run the streets and get into trouble.

Respondents were **concerned that digital learning would not offer the same academic options as those available in-person**, such as the same teachers, courses, and opportunities for support.

I hope that the teachers from our school teach online classes when classes resume in the fall.

My daughter is a rising 8th grader at Gen. George McCall, and has earned a spot to learn algebra and biology this year. We feel a remote learning option is safest for staff and students, but were disappointed to learn that the District's Digital Academy will not allow her to receive instruction from her home school (McCall) teachers, or to take these advanced courses.

I would be more comfortable with the 100% virtual program if when a child is enrolled then only had teachers from their home school and other students from their home school. Like the program in the Spring was solely from the home school teachers. There is more comfort for parents and students this way. This situation has created a lot of mental emotions for children and adults. Giving them the teachers and students they already know would make this year more comfortable and provide better learning. Plus ultimately it would be easier planning for the teachers and would provide a more solid virtual learning program.

It has been brought to my attention that the IB curriculum will not be offered virtually. My first question is who is responsible for making the decisions concerning the IB curriculum? I'm not understanding why we won't be able to take the courses virtually when looking back over the past few months that's exactly what we have been doing. What I got today was an ultimatum, and I would like to know how you all plan to give me my time back. IB is a 2 year course that I agreed to that I now would have to risk my life for or I've ultimately wasted a year on just to reap no benefits.

Respondents expressed **concern that digital learning had negative effects on students' social, emotional, and physical well-being**.

American Academy of Pediatrics statement recently argued that the negative effects of distance learning on balance may start to outweigh the positive effects of COVID-19 remediation. Negative effects during quarantine included weight gain, inactivity, social isolation, increased exposure to abuse, depression, anxiety and reduced learning overall.

The psychological and educational damage that the kids have already suffered cannot continue into the next school year with more virtual learning. That crisis might end up being worse and longer lasting than the disease itself.

There are clear health consequences from virtual school: educational losses that are doing to impact our most vulnerable students most but all students; safety losses because not all children have safe homes; family stress and increased poverty as working parents face difficult choices; and health costs associated with lost nutrition. There are not risk-free choices. Parents should be given a choice about how to assess these competing risks.

I've witnessed the emotional well-being of students decline over the course of remote learning. I've dealt with absent kids who were difficult to track down. Not to mention, how many families are struggling because parents can't work due to having no place to send their kids? Many of these people can't afford day care and could be hungry, or even on the verge of losing their homes. I'm sure there's also child abuse and neglect going on that's left undetected because teachers aren't seeing kids face-to-face and it seems attendance wasn't taken seriously by many teachers....

Whatever it takes in terms of summer planning, the most important thing is to find a way to keep the kids and teachers safe and to come back for in-person learning only. The psychological and educational damage that the kids have already suffered cannot continue into the next school year with more virtual learning. That crisis might end up being worse and longer lasting than the disease itself. It really needs to be in-person, so really, please, do whatever it takes to make that happen.

I feel the change of full virtual is going to negatively impact students and teachers. I understand the risks to teachers and students. Although, I feel the mental health and safety of the students is getting worse. Students need interaction, in person education, sports etc. some kids live for sports as some live for art, English or social studies.

The schools need to re-open in the Fall according to the science it is safe for children and important for them to attend school, physically and mentally. Isolate at risk employees, it can be done. I'm a Dental Hygienist with 40 yrs experience, and we're much more at risk than your teachers with patient/close contact. Figure it out. If you remain closed I am planning a "Defund The School District Movement" Philadelphia taxpayers will not stand for paying teachers and school district employees who are NOT working. Virtual learning is not adequate.

In some instances, **respondents saw in-person school as necessary because students would otherwise not have supervision during the day** when the adults in the family are working. Respondents expressed that **parents/guardians would not be able to support students' digital learning due to conflicting work responsibilities**.

I understand many parents would prefer a stay-at-home model for their children, but that is not a feasible plan for those of us who are essential employees. How will I provide my daughter an all-digital education if I work at a hospital and her father works as a Paramedic for the city of Philadelphia? I think it's important to consider those of us who will opt for face-to-face education for our children due to our work circumstances, even if it's just a few days.

I support all children returning to a traditional school day with health and safety precautions (sanitizing, not sharing) in place. I would have to quit my job if virtual learning continues. Which means we couldn't afford our house.

My daughter is starting kindergarten. I don't see how the public education system proposes to offer "virtual" learning to the youngest of our children. It will require full parental support which is not available in working families.

Not all parents will be able to do distance learning on whatever schedule psd decides on, especially since the schedules that are being considered are irregular.

The digital learning program will be an issue for working parents such as myself it will be hard for me to assist my children online with my work schedule.

Themes for responses coded under "suggestions for the school reopening in the fall"

In addition to using the survey to voice concerns, many respondents left suggestions for what they think the District should do in the fall to maximize student learning. In many instances, this meant **suggestions for what a hybrid model should look like from the student and teacher perspective**.

> *Perhaps a model with groups A and B, dividing each grade/class in two. Group A would attend in person learning on Monday and Tuesday, Wednesday would be a virtual learning day for both A and B together, leaving space for cleaning and transition team in school buildings. Thursday and Friday group B would have in building/ in person learning, while group A would do homework and assignments, without direct (virtual or in person) instruction. Website subscriptions like IXL for Math, or RazKids-Epic Books for reading could be purchased and utilized with reports going to teachers for monitoring and using to assign.*

> *Consider installing web-cameras in each classroom and give teachers microphones. Rotate kids every other week to keep classes at 50% occupancy.*

> *When it is actually safe and prudent to reopen, which it is not yet, please use an alternate-week plan instead, which would allow students to be home for 10 days between time spent at school, which would maximize the chance that they, or, more likely, members of their household would become symptomatic during a stretch when they are home, which would allow them to be quarantined before returning to school.*

> *For high school, I suggest holding alternative in school and home virtual learning. Maybe 9th and 10th go to school 3 days with 2 days of home virtual learning. 11th and 12th grade go to school the alternate 2 days and hold 3 days of home virtual learning. Vacant classrooms can be utilized for spreading out smaller size classrooms. Teachers may need to rotate classrooms.*

> *If a full virtual option is offered for students who cannot attend in-person school, please do not require classroom teachers to teach both in-person and virtually. I suggest that the central office curriculum staff record instructional videos and create materials for students who will be learning remotely. These can be provided to the students' regular classroom teachers and they can then post these materials for the virtual students and also grade the work. If this is not possible, or places too much of a burden on the curriculum staff at the central office, please consider hiring paying teachers a stipend to create district-wide curricular materials that can be shared for students who are participating in virtual learning.*

Other comments included **suggestions for ways to improve digital learning,** including ways to improve the student and family experience.

> *I understand that digital learning will be a component of next year's learning. But I would love to see the children spend less time on the computers than they did this year. Perhaps looking*

into Project Based learning where the children can discuss a topic and then breakout to do their own work. Every subject was so separate, there were no connections being made between ideas that they were learning. I would also like to see more emphasis on physical writing (especially for younger children) and less time using apps to help solidify their learning.

Please consider having set schedules each day for activities around those who requested to have their children do 100% virtual learning. We as parents and family want to support our child the best that we can but we also need support from the district to have clear and precise expectations from day to day so we can plan accordingly as well.

Online instruction should be developed with mobile device use in mind. Many students rely on tablets and/or phones to complete online learning. Google slides and PDF documents should not be standard format for tasks, as they are not user-friendly to edit on mobile devices.

Educate and prep teachers now on how to successfully plan for online learning. There can be so much more improvements. Expecting younger kids to complete slides on google docs alone are not helpful. Instead incorporate recorded teaching videos, small personalized virtual meetings, etc. to incorporate with the google slide docs. Also have textbooks available so kids aren't staring at the computer all day and can practice some of the work.

If we must have periods of exclusive online learning next year, teachers have to be ready to provide actual instruction, feedback and socialization via video conference. I heard a lot about equity concerns in attempting to do this. While I appreciate that, refusing to teach anyone serves no one and actually makes it less likely that teachers can accurately gauge who is consistently able to obtain online access and may need additional, more equitable resources. Many would not show up because the sessions were useless and unengaging. If this is our new normal, then truancy or identifying families who need extra support must actually occur via ONLINE methods of teaching/evaluation or our children will not learn anything for the next 2-5 years during a critical stage in their development.

Themes for responses coded under "questions about implementation"

Many comments included questions posed to the District. In many instances, the questions asked for more details about **the ways in which plans for school reopening would be flexible to accommodate students, teachers, or families with particular needs.**

The CDC now considers pregnancy a high-risk health concern. What options will staff who are pregnant have? Will they need to meet specific criteria?

If a child has a 1 to 1 on IEP and we choose all virtual learning due to a medical condition can the 1 to 1 come to the house to work with the child? or do you offer a teacher to come out to the house to work with the child that has special needs and medical concerns?

What options will be in place for teachers, staff and students in high-risk categories for whom returning to school in any capacity poses too much risk?

I still have gotten no answer to my question, despite raising it multiple times in multiple forums. Please find a way to answer and post it! Why doesn't the Head Start plan provide precautions & accommodations for safety like other grades? Giving us face shields & allowing a half day of virtual learning & sending us back, business as usual is unacceptable--same of children, same small classrooms in which it is impossible to socially distance w/ 3-5 yr. olds who require constant assistance, necessitating close contact by teachers. We share materials among ALL children all day; use communal tables designed to seat 6-8 children, face-to-face/side-by-side, eating breakfast/lunch/snack w/o masks; we crowd in close proximity on rugs for circle; sleep on cots literally one foot apart. These children are the least likely to keep masks on, and so Pre-K teachers are the most vulnerable and least protected--face shields do NOT provide proper protection--droplets can breach the sides/bottom! Head Start teachers have NO virtual teaching option. Why has Pre-K been forgotten again?

Perhaps in response to the initial plan laid out by SDP, **respondents had many questions about how SDP plans to enforce the rules and policies designed to prevent the spread of COVID during the in-person part of a hybrid learning model.** While many questions were about what happens inside the school building, there were also questions raised about behaviors outside the control of the school.

There are many symptoms associated with covid. How will you screen for the other symptoms? And who will be conducting those screenings and making those determinations?

COVID-19 symptoms are the same as every other viral illness that children come to school with every day. Will there be a specific protocol to follow for students with any symptoms and/or fever? Will students be required to get tested and be negative in order to return to school if they have been seen by the school nurse for any such symptoms? What will happen if the student does not get tested?

While today's presenter walked us through getting a student to school, his school day and getting home, she did not address the realities of the school day for the student and teachers. Keeping 12 students 6 feet apart is 96 feet. How is this monitored for the necessary safe movement to any place in the building especially with the younger students? How do students enter the building to begin their school day?

There is no possible way schools will be able to enforce what is needed to keep us all safe. How will students get to school in a safe fashion? Kids are jam packed onto septa. Who will be responsible for exposing themselves to watch the kids who came to school sick?

Respondents had **questions and concerns about staff and student attendance policies related to COVID symptoms or a COVID case within a school**.

> *I worry about individuals who are pre-symptomatic, mildly sick, or have been in close contact with someone with Covid-19 and are asymptomatic. I would like there to be changes to our attendance policies. How do we ensure people don't go to work/ school who could be spreading the virus unintentionally? What about excuse note policies- people may stay home sick more often (even if they are just being responsible and waiting to see if symptoms develop). These people may not get to see a doctor, can we eliminate the limit on excused sick days and requirement to send a doctor's note after 3 days.*

> *Parents routinely send sick children to school by dosing them with medication to mask symptoms. Parents also do not report illnesses and do not keep their children home for an adequate amount of time (24 hours fever free (WITHOUT medication). Strict guidelines have to be adhered to for the safety and well-being of staff and students. How will districts ensure that parents do not violate these rules (which have been in place for years and are routinely ignored)? Many districts send the sick children (fever, vomiting, etc,) back to the classroom to wait for parents pick up and this can take hours. How can we ensure this will no longer happen?*

Several responses also included **questions about what would happen during in-person or hybrid learning if a member of the school community tested positive for COVID.** Questions specifically asked about scenarios including teachers, students, students' families, and any school-based staff.

> *If a teacher test positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid? If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to stay home and quarantined for 14 days? Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? How are parents going to be notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that? What if someone who lives in the same home as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?   How fast can the district find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay? What if a student is positive for COVID-19? Do all of the kids in school now have to quarantine and get tested? How will that be handled? Does the teacher also have to quarantine? What will the school district's liability be if a child or teacher with asthma or an immune obtains COVID-19 from someone at school? Will the school district pay for medical bills? How about in the event of death?*

> *If someone tests positive in their classroom, will the whole class quarantine at home for 2 weeks? Would parents have the option to switch to 100% virtual once the quarter starts if kids in their class start getting sick?*

So if and when there is any kind of symptoms or positive COVID 19 cases within a school, what is the protocol? I assume the staff members and students surrounding the case must be quarantined. If a student and or staff member is positive I assume they will not be returning to school for at least 14 days and has this been factored in regarding substitutes?

There will be times that parents fall ill with Covid. Are children from those families going to be kept out of school? Also, what if the parents are too ill to get their kids to school? Will the children be penalized for absences?

What will happen if a large portion of the staff contracts the virus and have to be out?

Some respondents used the survey to ask particular **questions about what a hybrid model would look like** for them. Some parents/guardians asked to get their students' schedule, noting they need to plan how their families will alter their day-to-day depending on when and how often their students need to be in the school building.

What about Monday holidays for students only coming in on M/W for in person learning? How will at home learning be structured for their off days?

If the district opts for a hybrid model, will families be able to provide input on which children attend in person on the same days as their own? For example, my neighbor and I would like to form a child care "pod" in which we take care of each others' children on the days they are doing virtual school, reducing each other's childcare burden.

When will we know what days of the week our children will attend school? I work with the homeless so I am expected to go to work as is my wife who works at CHOP. We are anxious to set up childcare for the other days. Will the three at-home days per week in the hybrid model be synchronous or asynchronous. Who will be teaching those days?

First, what impact will choosing either the hybrid model or the all-virtual model have on the high school student's transcripts? Will the transcript explicitly note which learning mode the student opted into? Second, what impact will either the hybrid model or the all-virtual model have on course selection? If the home school doesn't offer an AP course that the all-virtual school option offers, can my student be enrolled in that AP course?

Themes for responses coded under "pro hybrid model"

Many of the quotes under this code were actually in favor of providing a choice for families, rather than advocating for the proposed hybrid plan. Some cited **the need for at least some in-person instruction for students with special needs and pointed to risks associated with not going to school** -- not actually participating or learning during virtual instruction, food insecurity, child abuse and neglect, mental health effects -- and that the proposed hybrid plan helped mitigate those risks as well as the risks from the virus.

I'm not fighting for the requirement for every student to be in school; I'm fighting for the choice to be in school. The hybrid plan you currently have sounds good, but I'm afraid it may switch to all digital, and that absolutely cannot happen... These are the emotional and physical risks we're exposing the kids and even families to right now, and they will only become worse if schools don't open. Caring about the students' well-being means caring about the ones who die from shootings, abuse, suicide, etc. I guarantee, we will lose more children to these threats if schools don't open than we will to the virus if schools do open....Helping the community is about more than just the virus. It's about doing our part to give students a safe place to go, connecting them with adequate (in-person) mental health resources, and being a resource for families.

I would like the hybrid model option to be available. It mitigates the risks of infection and the risks of online-only learning (my kid is in 2nd grade and at this stage online learning can only go so far).

A few others proposed other hybrid models based on the evidence of how COVID is spread, such as different approaches for different age groups:

For the hybrid model, are you considering different schedules for different ages? Especially for K-2nd grade, those kids (a) really, really need in-person learning, and (b) appear to be less likely to spread this disease. That may be completely flipped for high schoolers, who appear to be potential super-spreaders, and may have the ability to handle virtual learning more easily. I would like the school district to consider different solutions for different age groups.

Themes for responses coded under "options/choice"

The comments in this category **advocated for families and teachers to be able to choose for themselves between an in-person, virtual learning, or hybrid model**. Generally, when a respondent advocated for a particular model, they were for it to be an option because it was what would work best for their students and families.

I think that having the choice to be in an online school would be the best plan of action because students who would like to remain away from schools have the choice, and I think that forcing every student to go online would be a bad decision. I'm not fighting for the requirement for every student to be in school; I'm fighting for the choice to be in school.

Also, can there be a consideration where students AND teachers choose whether they feel comfortable physically going into a building or would rather Virtually teach? This way no one is forced into a dangerous situation and learning can continue for the upcoming school year. Please take all of this into consideration when making the final decision. The possible loss of lives is greater than students staying home until we have a vaccine.

I think a good idea is to have full time 5 day in school instruction for families who want that & full time 5 day digital home learning for families that don't.

Some of the examples for why a choice is needed included the children of front-line workers, who need childcare and cannot supervise virtual learning, so they wanted the option of in-person instruction. Another included a pregnant teacher who wanted the option of teaching online.

The school district should consider allowing children of essential worker to attend school daily or 4 days a week. If the children of nurses and doctors do not have reliable childcare, some essential workers will quit working to care for them. Then when the second wave of the virus spikes this fall, we will have a shortage of nurses, doctors, and other essential workers who help keep our basic needs supplied. This past spring, I faced multiple issues with finding reliable childcare and people able to assist my young school aged children with attending online classes. I will choose my children over my career if this happens again this fall. Society will miss me-- I am an anesthesiologist-- a doctor who placed breathing tubes in patients. Perhaps not the person you want to quit right before many people need intubation!

I would like to request that at-risk teachers have the option to continue working online if they do not feel comfortable returning to their building. I am pregnant and will consider not returning if there is no online alternative and I do not feel that the reopening plan is safe for myself and my baby. I am an ESOL teacher—could my small groups visit me via video call while they are in the building? Or perhaps I could deliver online instruction to the students not currently in the building in a hybrid model.

Overall, **there were many comments that simply advocated that families be provided with meaningful choices that work for them**, and that the District allow as much flexibility for families and local school communities as it can.

We need dual-delivery of the school experience -- in person and online. We need to maximize flexibility for students and teachers to stay home if they're even worried about being compromised.

Please allow for maximum flexibility in terms of learning-modality choice. If you adopt a hybrid model, allow students who need or prefer to learn remotely to do so. This will allow for de facto easier social distancing in existing building spaces and will ensure that families are making the choice that is right for them.

I think that FLEXIBILITY should be a defining characteristic of any/all plans: learning models that will allow some kids to do exclusively remote learning but also let other children be in the classroom full time; different schools being afforded latitude of being responsive to their unique student populations and unique physical plants, etc.

Finally, whatever you choose, please provide flexibility for teachers and staff to be able to be sure they stay safe, and limit their in-person interaction with adults as much as possible - there should be a way for them to be physically present only amidst their own students.

Conclusion

Depending on their unique circumstances, respondents expressed different concerns, needs, and ideas about what school should look like while COVID is still a health threat. Given the gravity of the situation, it is not surprising that many respondents communicated very strong opinions about what the District should do and why it is best for all students and staff. However, many responses show an awareness that there is not a "one size fits all" option by specifically referring to their own unique situations. Additionally, feedback points to an awareness that all options have downsides, risks, and drawbacks. While there was no consensus about what learning should look like for all students, the comments provided in the survey seem to point to a common desire to be able to choose a learning model that works best for a particular student and their family.