

**SCHOOL
RE-ENTRY
PLAN
SURVEY
SPRING
2020
REPORT OF
FINDINGS**



Alberta
School Councils' Association

Overview

This report prepared for the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) is based on the first of four surveys distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first survey aim was to gauge the opinions around the 2020-21 school re-entry discussion points outlined by Alberta Education on May 6th.

Methods

This is report 1 of 4 being released on ASCA's parent voices during COVID-19 surveys. A total of 66,833 parents responded to ASCA's first survey, the School Re-Entry Plan Survey, conducted in May 2020. We are using pseudonyms to represent parent voices.

Key Findings

86% were in favour of returning to school in September 2020.

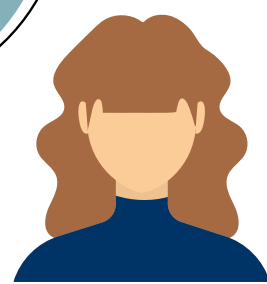
55% were in favour of a modified school calendar.

64% were in favour of regular assessments continuing.

55% experienced difficulty with online spring learning.

"Students need social engagement and an opportunity to participate in sports and other activities."

-Jenny

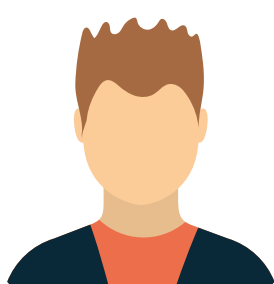


-Henry

"Whatever is safest for our children. However, my first preference is 100% in school learning."

"Online learning would be better and more consistent for kids. This does not provide stability for kids."

-Mabel



-Bob

"Kids need to get caught up next school year, not fall further behind."

"There is not enough information to plan for a safe start in September"

-Samuel



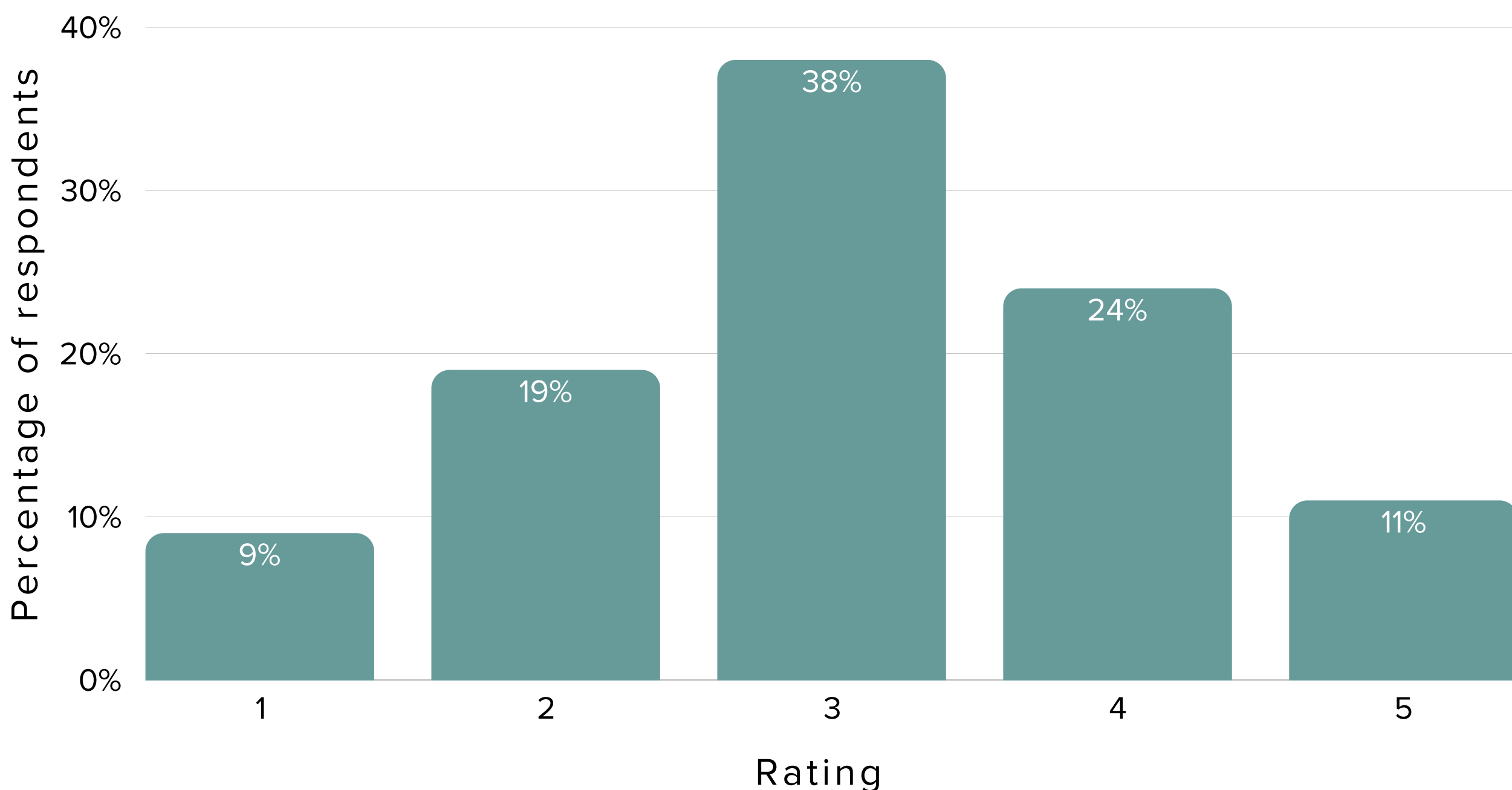
"I will only support a return if safe numbers and a cure or vaccine."

-Abigale



Experiences with Online Learning

Overall, how would you rate your experience with student online learning at home from 1 (terrible) to 5 (great)?



“I think the teachers and school admin have done a fantastic job at transitioning to distance learning. But it has been a struggle and exhausting. I have been told my boys should only be doing a couple of hours of work a day, but by the time I get everyone focused and hop back and forth from boy to boy, it takes much more than this time.”

-Marisa

“It’s not easy at all with 4 different grades and the children are all different. I don’t know anything about computers... We’ve been totally inside and stressed.”

-Charlie

“We need to know where the gaps are in learning now more than ever...”

-Grace

“As the students and teachers adapt to online learning it has improved. There was definitely a learning curve, but once the teachers were comfortable with instructing in a new way, it has gone well.”

-Alex

“I wouldn’t say difficult but a shift in how we do things. Now things seem to be going well for us...”

-Noah

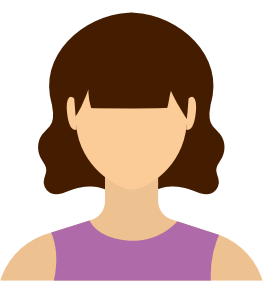
Return to School and Difficulty with Online Learning

Parents were asked: Are you in favour of a back-to-school plan for K-12 students in September? As well as, have you experienced difficulty during spring online learning for students?

Crosstabs of being in favour of a back to school plan and difficulty with online learning.

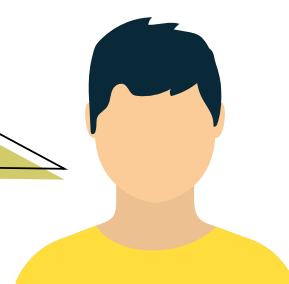
		In favour of back to school plan	
		YES	NO
Difficulty with online learning	YES	57.2%	38.6%
	NO	42.8%	61.4%

Having difficulty with spring online learning did not seem to influence whether or not participants were in favour of a return to school plan for K-12 students in September 2020. 57.2% of those who wanted to return to school had difficulty with online learning, versus 42.8% who wanted to return but did not have difficulty. 38.6% who did want to return to school had difficulty with online learning, versus 61.4% who did not have difficulty.



-Elena

“Children need to get back to school. Being in a physical classroom with their peers is so important. Not only on an education standpoint but on a mental and physical health standpoint.”



-Daniel

“I am very concerned. I am the main caregiver to my children and I am immunocompromised. I do not see how it’s possible for the upkeep of excessive sanitization of the school and the child. Children constantly place their hands in their eyes, nose and mouth, and touch multiple surfaces a day, which makes them susceptible to carrying and passing on the virus.”



-Liam

“Working full time and trying to get my children's required work done is very difficult. Also, in the beginning, many difficulties with communication.”

“My family has had the devices and resources but there is a lack of drive, it's hard to feel engaged with a screen. You are provided with work but there's no real communication happening to teach. I know how hard the teachers are working but the kids are still not supported in the ways needed.”



-Nia

Modified School Plans

16%

of those who were in favour of a modified school calendar were not in favour of a return to school plan for K-12 students in September.

“My children are doing well in the current model that minimizes risk and exposure. I believe a modified schedule would just be disruptive, traumatic, and so unnatural that it would cause more harm than benefit.”

-Sonal

“I think that if all these extra requirements are needed then students should continue to learn from home, this would save many people from added stress.”

-Julia

“I don't want my kids to start hating schools because they don't get the education they deserve. They already lost 2 good months of learning and if school doesn't resume to some kind of normal in September, I say it won't be fair to any kids if they lose any more education that they already lost.”

-Fateema

88%

of those who were not in favour of a modified school calendar were in favour of a return to school plan for K-12 students in September.

“I feel that assessment of learning and understanding should continue; however, I do not feel that provincial exams and tests would be of any fairness or benefit to the children.”

-Kamal

45%

of those who believe that regular assessment should continue in the 2020-21 school year, also expressed concern for health protocols when students become ill.

“I think too many kids are not getting the proper education right now to have a fair assessment.”

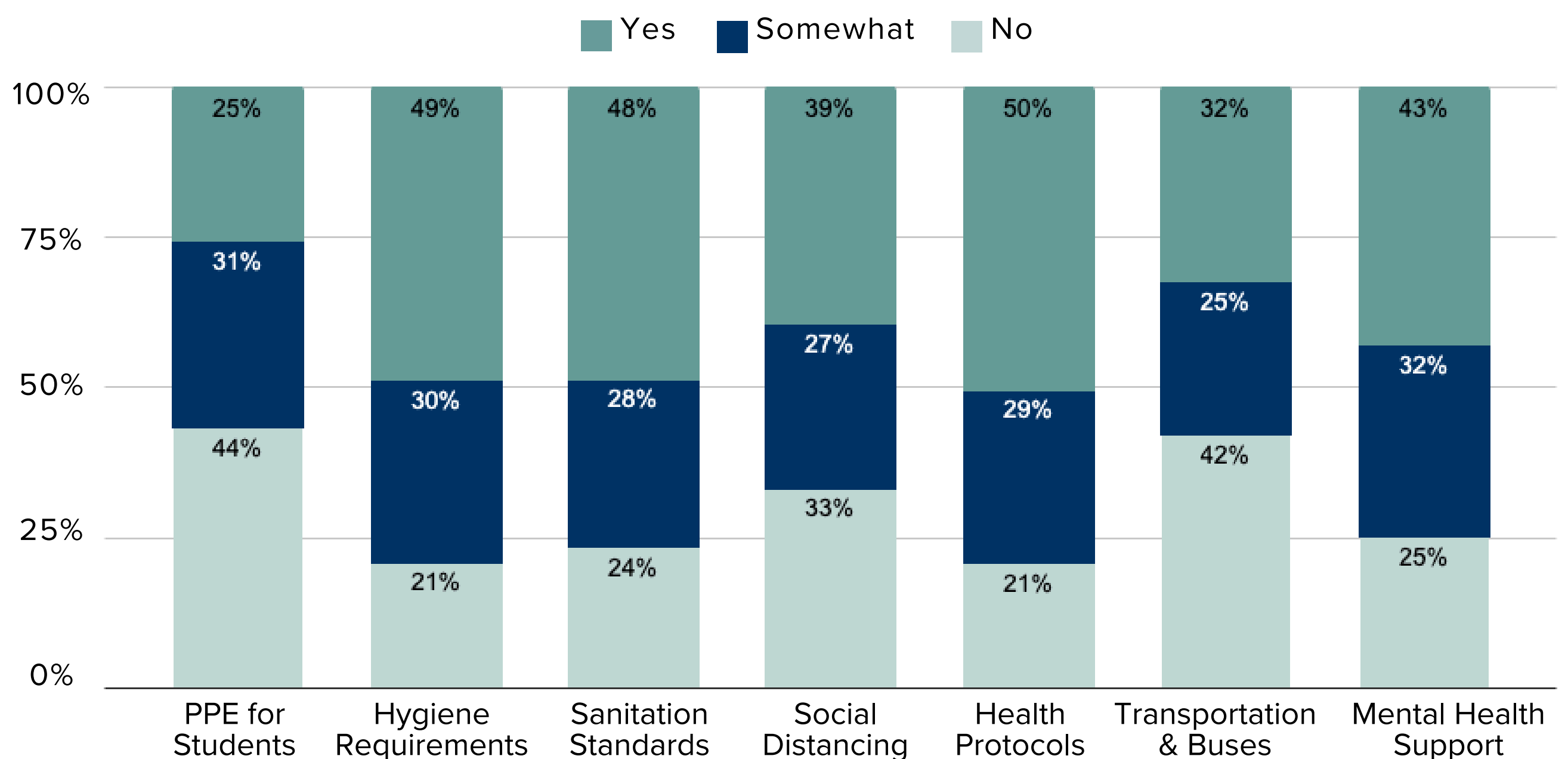
-Leslie

Concerns About Back-to-School Plan

Parents were asked to indicate their level of concern about the following areas in a back-to-school plan:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for students;
- Hygiene requirements for students;
- Sanitation standards in schools;
- Social distancing in schools;
- Health protocols in place when students become ill (identification, testing, guidelines, actions);
- Transportation and school busses (safety, cleaning, distancing, costs, public transportation); and
- Mental health support for students and staff.

Level of concern indicated about the following areas in a back-to-school plan.

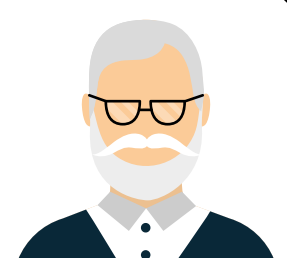


“Again this is not only about the students it is also about the health and safety of educators within the schools. We need to think about the health of all... the physical health, mental health, and emotional health. This is much bigger than just sending kids back to send them back... We must think about the whole child.”



-Sarah

“Most of these issues are ones that until now schools have not had to really worry about. With school budgets already tight, how are these things going to be paid for? And enforcement of some of these things will be very difficult.”



-Zack

General Concerns

“I feel that having half days of school would be too inconvenient and impossible for a lot of families.”

-Nadia

66% of those who were not concerned about health protocols when students became ill, were also not in favour of a modified calendar.

91% of those not concerned with social distancing in schools, were also not concerned with PPE for students.

Parents were **most** concerned about the following areas in a back to school plan:

50% about the health protocols in place for students becoming ill.

49% about the hygiene requirements for students.

48% about sanitation standards for schools.

Parents were **least** concerned about:

25% were concerned about PPE for students.

“Mental health is so often not looked at enough. Always important.”

-Tom

56% of those who were concerned with student and staff mental health more often did not want regular assessment to continue for students in the 2020-21 school year.

67% of those who were concerned about health protocols when students became ill, were in favour of a modified school calendar.

“I do not think modifying the calendar would reduce the risk of spreading infection, and would just add complications for parents.”

-Luke

Parent Quotes

Give people the option to be in class or work from home. It will depend on family decisions and the information available at the time for public safety.

I am fine with whatever keeps my child safe.

Back to normal!!! No to 'NEW NORMAL.'

My biggest concerns are the health and safety of our children and school staff as well as their mental health and stress levels.

COMMUNICATE with the parents.
COMMUNICATE with the students.
You've left us out to dry during this pandemic!

I am deeply concerned for the vulnerable population of students, many of whom are NOT responding well to this type of learning. They are in desperate need of community and support and are not receiving it this way, both due to the laying off of the majority of EAs as well as due to various home situations.

School life needs to be a normal as possible for all students.

Open the schools the kids need this.

I guess at the end of the day I want what is best for the health and safety of everyone entering the school.

This should not be a one-size-fits-all. Our tiny school of 60 students should not need the same restrictions as a big school with hundreds of kids.

As an individual, I am conflicted as to the right course of action to be taking.

Students should not be returning to school in September in any capacity.

Socializing is a very important part of school the students NEED to be able to do that.

Spend the money on the children. They are our future.

PLEASE SEND THEM BACK AS PER NORMAL!!!

School is more than just education... it is community support for entire families.

Some students are doing well in this online learning environment.

Give parents the right to choose!!

I believe it is important for the kids to return to an in-person classroom setting.

INCREASE FUNDING AND STOP CUTTING.

“Sadly, there is no one right solution or way, nor is there a wrong way. Consensus building. Collaboration. Get people active. Engaged. On board. Involved. Make this a tipping point for a new paradigm of learning and action, involvement, and commitment. Make slow choices and changes in light of the overall big picture of health and wellness, learning, and growth.”

Protection of the children should be the greatest concern.

Too many unknowns and it's way too early to tell.

Children need to be in the school environment.

I would prefer if school remained online for the duration of the pandemic.

If we can't carry on with some kind of normalcy once school reopens, I don't think they should open.

I can't adequately assess risks to my child when there is no plan. And I will not be taking risks with my child- school open or not.

I think the kids need to get back to a new normal. It's not good for their mental wellbeing to keep isolated like we are. But that being said, the safety of all staff and children need to come first.

I 100% think children should return to school in September for their mental wellbeing and education needs.

We would like our children to return to school in some sort of manner. it is clear that the professionals (teachers) are better suited and trained to give our children the best education possible.

I would be satisfied with continued at-home education as I feel it is the safest option until a vaccine is available.

Just let everyone know of a plan soon... They, and me, just want to know what to expect so we can prepare.

A decision needs to be made by the end of the school year to give parents a choice and prepare if they need to prepare homeschooling that fits them.

I honestly do not know how this is going to work.

Homeschooling has been very positive for our family. I feel it be more harmful to send the kids back to such a restricted environment.

I think it's important to offer students some normalcy. I think they are resilient and can adapt to changes but we cannot expect them to be okay with extreme restrictions.

I would like to see some form of 'plan' in place that we can review before deciding if or when the return to classes would be, and how it would look for students and teachers.

Not to rush into any decisions, just to make sure it is the right decision as it is our children that we are putting at risk not only their health but also their future education.

Making the kids go through another change to adapt to will be harder on them mentally. If it is not safe to open schools the way they were. I believe the online learning should be the only way.

I want my children and family safe and I want my children to have to best opportunities and to not fall to far behind so that essential concepts are lost.

**Prepared by Samantha Mullin and Erica Fae Thomson
for the Alberta School Councils' Association**

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