

MEA Member Survey: COVID-19 and Public Education

May 14–22 – 15,339 active member responses

Key Findings

- There is broad agreement about importance of health and safety considerations for reopening of schools, including: concern for health of students, parents, employees and families; the impact of class sizes on social distancing; and the need for standards around PPE usage and future closures.
- Turnover in the educator ranks looks to be increased because of COVID-19, exacerbating the ongoing shortage of teachers and other school employees.
- Student learning needs are front of mind for educators, particularly deemphasizing standardized testing and its impacts.
- All these issues underscore the need to prevent pandemic-drive budget cuts and for urgent action by Congress to provide funding to help maintain a safe, quality public education.



15,339 responses from MEA members statewide to online survey from May 14–22



Grade Level:



On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being extremely positive, 1 being extremely negative), how do you feel about your school's efforts to continue learning opportunities for students during the pandemic?





Thinking about reopening schools, move the slider to indicate the degree to which you agree more with one of the following two statements:

A) COVID-19 has been extremely disruptive and Michigan students are falling behind every day. It's important to get back to school and get the economy reopened again as soon as possible so our kids don't fall further behind their peers in other states. -OR-

B) Schools should reopen only after public health experts determine it's safe to return, and with adequate planning and equipment to protect school employees, students and visitors from COVID-19.





Thinking about your personal experience in the COVID-19 crisis, please share if you agree or disagree with the following statements:



It's important that schools were closed to help prevent the spread of the disease.

I am paying close attention to social distancing and am staying home unless absolutely necessary to leave.

I'm concerned with my family's health and someone in my household contracting COVID-19.

I'm concerned about my health and contracting COVID-19.



How concerned are you regarding the health risks of returning to in-person school for:





Thinking about the grade level(s) you work with, how difficult do you think it will be to implement social distancing and other public health practices inside public schools?



Thinking about when schools reopen for in-person learning, please share whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Health & Safety -



Standards need to be set and enforced regarding future outbreaks of illness and required closure of buildings.

My employer must provide and require usage of masks and other personal protective equipment for <u>employees</u>.

Taking temperatures of students and staff entering school buildings and careful tracking of illnesses will be essential.

My employer must provide and require usage of masks and other personal protective equipment for <u>students</u>.



Thinking about when schools reopen for in-person learning, please share whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: - School Operations -



Smaller class sizes will be necessary to enforce social distancing.

Staggered school arrival and/or attendance will be required to enforce social distancing.

We will need to implement a hybrid learning model, where students attend in-person some of the time and remotely at other times.

We can spread out student lunch periods and enforce social distancing during recess or other activities.

Current support staffing and resources will be sufficient for school cleaning, food service, bus runs, etc.



Thinking about when schools reopen for in-person learning, please share whether you agree or disagree with the following statements: - Student & Professional Issues -



We need to suspend standardized testing until we can return to normal school operations, including requirements based on standardized tests (i.e. 3rd grade reading retention).

I'm concerned current evaluation practices can't be fairly implemented when we return to measure our effectiveness as educators.

Measuring and addressing student learning loss during the pandemic will be critical.

Co-curricular/extracurricular/athletic opportunities won't be able to restart until social distancing is no longer needed.

I feel equipped to handle the social and emotional needs of students when we return to school.



Has COVID-19 made you think about leaving the public education profession or retiring earlier than planned?



<u>Subgroup</u>	<u>Yes,</u> <u>Retiring</u>	<u>Thinking</u> about Retiring
Over 25 years	14.3%	27.9 %
15-25 years	5.3%	11.0%
	<u>Yes,</u> Leaving	<u>Thinking</u> about Leaving
Over 25 years	1 .9 %	5.5%
15-25 years	2.2%	10.7%
5–15 years	2.3%	18.7%
Under 5 yrs	2. 1%	16.1%

Some lawmakers have called for schools to reopen this summer. Do you support or oppose restarting in-person learning at your school during the summer?





Thinking about summer in-person learning, please share whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:



In your opinion, when do you believe we will be able to return to in-person learning that is close to the same as prior to the closures in March?





Next Steps

- We asked educator experts Michigan's teachers and school support staff what needs to happen. We appreciate that Gov. Whitmer and other lawmakers want to hear from frontline educators.
- The results from this survey will be shared with the Governor's Return to School Advisory Council to help ensure the voices of front-line educators are part of the decisions about how to safely reopen schools for in-person learning.
- MEA will advocate for common sense solutions to keep everyone safe, including appropriate statewide standards for health and safety while maintaining ability for districts to work with employees to meet learning needs of their communities.

