Members’ Views on Resuming Safe Instruction This Fall

Key findings from a survey among 1,118 NYSUT K-12 members, conducted July 28 to 31, 2020
Methodology & Sample Characteristics

- Survey conducted online among 1,118 NYSUT K-12 members
  - Does NOT include UFT members
- Sample is representative of the NYSUT K-12 membership universe (outside NYC)

### GENDER
- **Women**: 78%
- **Men**: 22%

### AGE
- **Under 40**: 33%
- **40 to 54**: 45%
- **55/older**: 22%

### JOB ROLE
- **Teachers**: 62%
- **Paras/teaching assistants**: 14%
- **Counselors/speech/RNs**: 9%
- **Other support/transportation**: 15%

### YEARS WORKING AT SCHOOL DISTRICT
- **1 to 3 years**: 22%
- **4 to 10 years**: 22%
- **11 to 20 years**: 36%
- **21 years/longer**: 20%
The overwhelming majority of members approve of the decision to close schools in March, including more than three-fourths who strongly approve.

As part of social distancing restrictions, state and local officials closed schools starting in March for in-school instruction. Do you approve or disapprove of the decision to close schools?

- Strongly approve: 77%
- Approve: 16%
- Disapprove: 7%
While distance learning is no substitute for in-person learning, the majority feel it was at least somewhat effective.

In terms of student learning, how well has distance learning worked compared to traditional in-person teaching?

When schools were closed for in-school instruction, most districts adopted some form of distance learning. How effective do you think distance learning was for your students?
Members largely believe that the health and safety of students and staff should be the deciding factor in re-opening.

> Which should be the biggest factor in deciding whether, how, and when schools should reopen?

- Educational/social needs of students, and impact on student learning: 19%
- Health/safety of students and staff, potential for spreading COVID-19: 81%
Half of members say they are eager/willing to go back to in-person instruction, half are reluctant/unwilling

Feelings toward Going Back to In-person Instruction/Work at my School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eager/willing</th>
<th>Reluctant/unwilling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% Eager</td>
<td>7% Unwilling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Of those who do NOT feel ready to return to school buildings, most express general concern for safety

Why do you feel that you won’t be ready?

- Concern for my personal safety: 81%
- Concern for students' safety: 76%
- Concern for colleagues' safety: 65%
- School doesn't have proper safeguards for in-person instruction: 49%
- Family/household member in high-risk age category: 42%
- Family/household member has underlying health concern: 41%
- I have an underlying health concern: 37%
- I am in high-risk age category: 24%
- Students are not ready to transition back to in-person instruction: 18%
Almost half of older members say that COVID-19 has made them more likely to retire earlier than they had planned.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Likelihood of Retiring or Leaving Education Early

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More likely to retire/leave early</th>
<th>All members</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under age 40</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 40 to 54</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 55/older</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I am more likely to retire or leave education earlier than planned: 30%
- Made no difference in my plans: 69%
- More likely to work in education longer than planned: 1%
Of those three safety precautions, masks are seen as most important.

Of these safety measures, which is the most important to you in terms of making you feel safe returning to in-person work at your school?

- Everyone wearing masks: 51%
- Sanitizing procedures in place: 29%
- Social distancing barriers set up: 20%
More than 80% favor requiring students to wear masks at all times, but they acknowledge that this will be difficult to enforce.

Do you favor or oppose requiring students to wear masks at all times while in the school building?

- Strongly favor: 63%
- Favor: 81%
- Oppose: 19%
- Not difficult: 12%
- Very/somewhat difficult: 53%
- Very difficult: 35%

How difficult do you think it would be for students to effectively wear PPE, like masks, when required?

- Elementary: 60%
- Middle school: 49%
- High school: 48%

Very difficult, by school:
Even greater numbers believe it will be difficult for students (at all grade levels) to stay six feet apart from one another.

How difficult do you think it would be for students to maintain six feet apart from each other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very difficult, by school</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Very difficult: 76%
- Somewhat difficult: 21%
- Not difficult: 3%
A third of members have childcare needs, and of those, 78% are concerned about finding an affordable childcare option should they be asked to go back to work in person.

Do you have children at home who will need childcare if you are asked to go back to work in person?
Members’ highest priorities for safe re-opening: daily sanitation, masks, stay-at-home mandate for anyone who has had contact with an infected person, immediate notification of COVID cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily sanitation in schools, including disinfecting school handles,</td>
<td>55%</td>
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<tr>
<td>surfaces, and bathrooms on a regular basis</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>PPE (personal protective equipment), such as masks, provided and required</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>for employees and students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandating that any student who has come into known contact with an</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>infected person stay home from school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate notification is provided to staff and parents of any COVID-19</td>
<td>41%</td>
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<tr>
<td>cases reported in a school</td>
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Four Most Important (of 16 tested) Steps for Schools to Take if They Reopen in the Fall