

Summary Report for
Return to School Survey
School-Based Staff
June 29, 2020



Draft Report for LCPS Return to School Survey - School-Based Staff

The LCPS Return to School Survey for School-Based staff was intended to collect data about the perceptions of school-based staff regarding the proposed models for returning to school in the fall of 2020, as well as their comfort with strategies recommended by the Virginia Return to School Plan and the Loudoun County Health Department. The survey included a section of questions specifically for licensed staff about their experience with distance learning during the spring of 2020 and their preparations for delivering instruction in the fall.

A link for the confidential survey was sent to all school-based staff by the Public Information Office on June 18 and was closed on June 23. The Public Information Office announced the survey through email and social media to encourage participation.

Analysis

There were 5,967 responses to the staff survey, 39 of which were from respondents who indicated that they did not work in a school. This report analyzes the 5,928 school-based staff responses from 5,576 distinct IP addresses. Multiple submissions from a single IP address could be the result of households in which there are two LCPS school-based employees or itinerant teachers who elected to provide separate feedback for each school in which they work.

About half of the respondents were elementary school staff, with high school/educational center and middle school constituting 29% and 22%, respectively. These results are representative of the overall staffing by level in the division.

Table 1. Responses by School Level

| School Type | # Respondents | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Elementary School | 2888 | 49% |
| Middle School | 1329 | 22% |
| High School or Educational Center | 1711 | 29% |
| LCPS | 5928 | 100% |

Regarding position type, 79% of the respondents were licensed staff, which is reflective of the overall composition of LCPS school-based staff.

Table 2. Representation of Staff by Position and School Level

| Position | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|----------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Administrative | 4% | 5% | 5% | 4% |
| Classified | 19% | 17% | 13% | 17% |
| Licensed | 77% | 78% | 82% | 79% |
| LCPS | 2888 | 1329 | 1711 | 5928 |

Based on the responses by grade/content area/position there was representation from each of the categories of school-based staff.

Table 3. Grade or Content Area Expected to Teach for the 2020-21 School Year

| Subjects | Number of Responses | Percentage of Responses |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Pre-K | 38 | 0.8% |
| Kindergarten | 224 | 4.8% |
| Grade 1 | 213 | 4.6% |
| Grade 2 | 212 | 4.5% |
| Grade 3 | 224 | 4.8% |
| Grade 4 | 202 | 4.3% |
| Grade 5 | 211 | 4.5% |
| Career & Technical Education | 164 | 3.5% |
| English | 330 | 7.1% |
| English Language Learner | 236 | 5.1% |
| Fine Arts | 227 | 4.9% |
| Health & Physical Education | 188 | 4.0% |
| Librarian | 84 | 1.8% |
| Mathematics | 318 | 6.8% |
| Science | 278 | 6.0% |
| Social Science | 271 | 5.8% |
| Special Education | 546 | 11.7% |
| World Language | 146 | 3.1% |
| Other (please specify) | 554 | 11.9% |
| LCPS | 4666 | 100.0% |

Note: Top items for “Other” were Counseling (n=143), Reading (n=82), Instructional Technology (n=61), and Gifted Education (n=54).

LICENSED STAFF

Experiences with Distance Learning for Spring 2020

Respondents who identified themselves as licensed staff were asked to select their level of agreement with the following statements about their experiences with distance learning during Spring 2020. In general, staff felt supported during the distance learning experience. About two-thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had the *resources and support needed to plan and deliver effective learning for their students*. Sixty-two percent of the respondents felt that *LCPS was responsive in providing guidance for distance learning*.

Table 4. Experiences with Distance Learning in Spring 2020

| Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| I felt supported in planning and delivering effective learning for my students. | 73% | 78% | 63% | 71% |
| I had the resources I needed to plan and deliver effective learning for my students (devices, software, examples of differentiated lessons, etc.). | 60% | 72% | 67% | 65% |
| Overall, LCPS was responsive in providing guidance for distance learning. | 65% | 69% | 53% | 62% |

Licensed staff were asked to assess their readiness for planning and delivering distance learning for the 2020-21 school year. Most respondents felt prepared regarding the planning and delivery of instruction for the upcoming school year. Teachers were most confident about (1) their strategies to communicate with families regarding goal setting and expectations and (2) planning and delivering asynchronous learning. A majority of respondents also felt *prepared to plan and deliver synchronous learning and differentiate learning for individual students*.

Table 5. Readiness to Plan and Deliver Distance Learning During the 2020-21 School Year

| Percentage Agree or Strongly Agree | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| I have strategies to communicate with my students and their families each week to establish goals and expectations for learning. | 79% | 83% | 83% | 81% |
| I am prepared to plan and deliver asynchronous (viewed on-demand at different times) instruction in a distance learning environment. | 77% | 83% | 80% | 79% |
| I am prepared to plan and deliver synchronous (live, interactive online) instruction in a distance learning environment. | 58% | 66% | 59% | 61% |
| I am prepared to plan and deliver differentiated instruction for individual students in a distance learning environment. | 54% | 60% | 54% | 55% |

Respondents were asked to assess their level of comfort with the layout of a classroom that was developed by LCPS to display physical distancing of students attending on an alternating day schedule. The results indicated that school-based staff have different levels of comfort regarding the proposed classroom layout for in-person learning. Elementary staff felt least comfortable with the layout compared to middle and high school staff.

Table 6. Level of Comfort with Classroom Layout

| | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Very uncomfortable | 22% | 17% | 19% | 20% |
| Uncomfortable | 29% | 23% | 22% | 25% |
| Comfortable | 26% | 29% | 31% | 28% |
| Very comfortable | 6% | 10% | 12% | 9% |
| The classroom layouts do not apply to my work environment. | 17% | 21% | 16% | 18% |
| LCPS | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Overall, most respondents (67%-81%) felt concerned about their workload, their ability to make connections with their families, and their ability to meet the academic and social emotional needs of their students. A greater proportion of elementary school teachers were concerned compared to middle and high school licensed staff.

Table 7. Level of Concern with Responsibilities for 2020-21 School Year

| Percentage Very Concerned and Concerned | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| Meeting the social-emotional needs of all students | 85% | 78% | 78% | 81% |
| Meeting the academic needs of all students | 84% | 77% | 75% | 79% |
| Workload | 82% | 76% | 71% | 77% |
| Maintaining connections with students and families | 67% | 68% | 68% | 67% |

Illustrative Quotes for “Very concerned”

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| <p>Maintaining connections with students and families</p> | <p>“My greatest concern is connecting with my students and being able to spend enough time with them to really understand their needs: to help them through the transition to first grade, to support their social and emotional development, and to help them progress academically. That’s really hard to do online.”</p> | <p>“Distance learning worked when we had already established the connections with our students and had formed expectations for our classes. I think it will be difficult to manage this if we are 100% distance learning.”</p> |
| | <p>“My greatest concern is making sure students and families have access to the things [that] they need to survive. I’m worried about my kids who depend on school for food, clothing, medical care, and a safe space.”</p> | <p>“If we do distance learning, the connections we make with students are lost and many of my students do not do well online. Additionally, students have already had the expectation that online learning is not important and doesn’t count.”</p> |
| <p>Meeting the academic needs of all students</p> | <p>“Many [special needs] students do not have the same needs and cannot be grouped together for modified/differentiated learning. I have concerns regarding delivering specialized program instruction (such as reading) and the accessibility to all students. Based on the 4th quarter of this year, I have concerns regarding student participation, grading, etc. 25% of my students did not participate at all in distance learning.”</p> | <p>“Students can make due with distance learning but they are not learning anything new. They are maintaining what has been taught before the pandemic. From observation of the end of last year it was extremely difficult to have students focused, engaged and motivated. Starting the year this way will widen the gap that was started at the end of this past year. In elementary school if we continue to widen the gap, our students will never close it again.”</p> |
| | <p>“This past spring we did not grade the work that the students completed. Feedback was given but no grades; many students did the absolute minimum or no work at all. Very few were motivated, and I really could not blame them. We need to be allowed to provide more rigorous lessons that engage the students.”</p> | <p>“I worry about having enough time to plan an online lesson, how to keep kids accountable, and be sure my own kids are learning.”</p> |
| <p>Meeting the social-emotional needs of all students</p> | <p>“Students and staff need to be in a safe environment for effective learning... If people are constantly concerned about whether or not</p> | <p>“As a school counselor, distance learning was very challenging to help provide direct emotional support for children. I worry what potential lasting negative effects</p> |

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| | they are being exposed to COVID-19, I worry that the students will not be in an environment for productive learning.” | COVID-19 will have on their mental health and well-being.” |
| | “We will not be able to attend to students’ emotional well-being if we do not have an emphasis on in person and synchronous online learning.” | “I’m concerned about the social-emotional growth of these littlest ones if they can’t socialize or collaborate. No one does well in isolation. Humans need humans and little ones need hugs.” |

LICENSED, ADMINISTRATORS, AND CLASSIFIED STAFF

When asked about their level of concern with personal matters of safety and childcare, about two-thirds of school-based staff had concerns about (1) maintaining physical distancing, (2) managing anxiety and stress, and (3) exposure to COVID-19. About half of respondents had concerns about access to personal protective equipment and one-third had concerns about childcare. These results indicate high levels of concern for school-based staff regarding their safety.

Table 8. Level of Concern with Personal Topics for 2020-21 School Year

| Percentage Very Concerned and Concerned | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|--------------------------|----------------------|--|-------------|
| Maintaining physical distancing | 70% | 69% | 66% | 69% |
| Managing anxiety and stress | 69% | 65% | 63% | 66% |
| Exposure to COVID-19 | 63% | 65% | 65% | 64% |
| Access to personal protective equipment | 49% | 54% | 52% | 51% |
| Childcare | 38% | 33% | 31% | 35% |

Illustrative Quotes for “Very concerned”

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| Exposure to COVID-19 | “I am pregnant and terrified of exposure. I’ve seen parents send children to school with lice, pink eye, flu and other obvious sicknesses. How can we trust [that] they will track COVID symptoms and take it seriously? What if students or staff don’t show signs of COVID? How am I to ensure they are washing their hands and doing their part?” | “I am very concerned about returning to school on a staggered schedule. This means that the other days per week my students will need to be in some other form of care. This increases their exposure to other students and therefore increases the chances of contact exposure to COVID.” |
| | “From past experiences, our kids come | “Teachers who work in multiple |

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| | <p>to school sick all of the time because they have limited access to healthcare. For example, they often don't get flu shots because of the cost. Many live in multi-family environments which increases the exposure and risk to illness. I am worried that our school is going to become a mini-hotspot."</p> | <p>classrooms (i.e., SpEd, specials, EL, reading specialists, counselors, etc.) have exponential exposure. Even though kids don't often have symptoms as bad as older people, they are carriers and take it between home and school. If they are going to daycare, that adds one more exposure point."</p> |
| <p>Access to personal protective equipment</p> | <p>"I would like to see LCPS provide all of its faculty and students with CDC recommended PPE masks, gloves, and disinfecting products. I am not comfortable returning to work if I have not been given these items."</p> | <p>"Stores currently require masks inside, yet many do not wear them. Students will be the same. They will not wear masks, or wear them incorrectly and inconsistently. This poses a constant risk to teachers."</p> |
| | <p>"Deadly responsibility should not be put on [my students] to wear masks responsibly for hours on end. It's not fair to them or our other loved ones and will inevitably affect relationships when people feel their very lives are at stake for students following protocol."</p> | <p>"Even with measures in place such as social distancing, extra cleaning, PPE, I am well aware of student behavior. It seems extremely unrealistic to think students will keep masks on and maintain social distance. It's not natural. As an adult, wearing a mask is difficult for half an hour let alone a whole day."</p> |
| <p>Maintaining physical distancing</p> | <p>"I am concerned with providing direct special education services to children in the self-contained classrooms, where social distancing, proper hygiene and behaviors can be difficult at best on a good day, let alone when we are attempting to provide enhanced social distancing and cleaning precautions. During the regular flu season, I am extremely cautious with my care to clean materials, and maintain good hand-washing hygiene, however, I cannot count the amount of times that I work with students who may come to school having taken fever-reducing medicine first thing in the morning, but then have a fever midway through the day."</p> | <p>"In a middle school, there is absolutely no possible way to enforce social distancing between teenagers in any setting. I'm worried that this will affect teachers' job expectations, and also risk the health of every single staff member and student (and families of students) just to open school. Distance learning has been fine, and it is the safest option until there is a vaccine."</p> |
| | <p>"Social distancing is not possible at school, even with proposed plans. Sharpening pencils, handing in quizzes,</p> | <p>"Elementary school students are not used to staying in one seat all day long and will have a lot of trouble having to do so. We</p> |

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| | <p>leaning over shoulders to assist students with notes, getting a tissue are day to day things not talked about at the school board meetings which cause teachers major concerns.”</p> | <p>also share a lot of materials, like manipulatives, books, and other supplies, which we may not be able to do in this scenario. In addition, this means we will not be able to work with students in small groups, as this means being within 6 feet of them.”</p> |
| <p>Managing anxiety and stress</p> | <p>“This past experience with distance learning was so stressful that it actually affected my physical and mental health. The amount of work expected of special education teachers was unreasonable, especially those of us that teach small-group, direct-instruction classes and co-teach inclusion classes. Not only are we expected to prepare lessons for our direct-instruction classes, we are also expected to work with our co-teachers planning lessons. We are expected to maintain our caseloads, collect data, write and hold IEP meetings, keep track of all communications, work 1:1 or in small groups with struggling students, grade assignments, give feedback, offer remediation, participate in CLTs, and attend staff meetings.”</p> | <p>“The overwhelming responsibilities being put on myself as a teacher to keep everyone safe while juggling both in person and distance learning responsibilities, communicating with families and students, grading and assessing individual student work, receiving training for all the aspects of distance learning with possibly no break or downtime for my own mental stability and anxiety. This is unrealistic.”</p> |
| | <p>“Providing distant learning in the spring was extremely difficult with my children being home with me. It was stressful and caused a lot of anxiety and tension in my house. I have worries about providing distant learning while homeschooling my own children.”</p> | <p>“My son already struggles with significant anxiety and phobias of illness. I worry the wearing of masks and social distancing will be too much and I will end up needing to stay home with him. I know if my son is like this and I have many students who already struggle with anxiety, how do I support them while yelling to them from six feet away?”</p> |
| <p>Childcare</p> | <p>“Currently our child care and surrounding child care are full and are limiting it to essential staff. Unfortunately there is now a wait list and a seniority list. Child care is the biggest concern especially when both my wife and my families live several states away from us.”</p> | <p>“A hybrid schedule would not allow me to work at a full time schedule due to having to care for my children. I would not be able to afford childcare cost. A hybrid schedule would be financially devastating for my family.”</p> |

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| | <p>“With a hybrid opening I am concerned I will not be able to find child care for my 2 children. I think returning 100% in person provides the greatest level of safety to me and my family. Otherwise my family will be exposed so much further due to my children being in daycare and my students being in a variety of daycares while they are not at school. This approach exposes us to so many more people and circles.”</p> | <p>“A hybrid model is a logistical nightmare for families, like myself, with 2 working parents and elementary aged children... My elementary aged children won't just need daycare on the days when they don't have school, they need a daycare that is going to help them with their distance learning. This is going to be difficult to find and if we do, the cost is going to be ridiculous for my family.”</p> |
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In considering the return to school in Fall 2020, school-based staff were asked to assess their comfort level with the three educational models being planned. The respondents were most comfortable with the 100% distance learning model, followed by the hybrid and 100% in-person models. Only the distance learning model had more than 50% of staff being comfortable or very comfortable with the approach.

Table 9. Level of Comfort with Educational Models for 2020-21 School Year

| Percentage of Very Comfortable and Comfortable | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| 100% distance learning | 53% | 59% | 57% | 56% |
| Hybrid - Students in the school building two days per week on an alternating schedule and | 40% | 45% | 47% | 43% |
| 100% in-person learning, students learn at school full-time | 45% | 39% | 40% | 42% |

Respondents were asked to assess their level of comfort with taking personal precautions in school to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Fifty-six percent of staff were comfortable or very comfortable with wearing a face covering when six feet of physical distance is not possible, if required for returning to school campuses (Table 10). Eighty-eight percent of the respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with taking their temperature at home or at school, if required (Table 11).

Table 10. Comfort with Wearing a Face Covering

| | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Very uncomfortable | 20% | 17% | 18% | 19% |
| Uncomfortable | 26% | 26% | 23% | 25% |
| Comfortable | 40% | 38% | 39% | 39% |
| Very comfortable | 15% | 20% | 19% | 17% |
| LCPS | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 11. Comfort with Taking Temperature

| | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Very uncomfortable | 7% | 7% | 7% | 7% |
| Uncomfortable | 5% | 5% | 6% | 5% |
| Comfortable | 44% | 43% | 43% | 44% |
| Very comfortable | 44% | 45% | 43% | 44% |
| LCPS | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

School staff were asked to assess the importance of different school-wide practices to mitigate against the spread of the COVID-19 virus if they returned to school for the 2020-21 school year. Respondents tended to value practices that focused on facilities and screening of staff and students over schedules. Almost all (95%) staff valued enhanced cleaning of schools and facilities as the most important factor. Regular temperature checks and verbal symptom screenings of students and staff and limited classroom setting were identified as important or very important by 74-80% of respondents. Staggered recess and lunch times and student schedules were identified as important or very important by about two-thirds of respondents and staggered school start and end times were identified as important or very important by about half of respondents.

Table 12. Importance of Mitigation Practices for COVID-19

| Percentage Very Important and Important | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|--|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|------|
| Enhanced cleaning of schools & facilities | 97% | 94% | 92% | 95% |
| Regular temperature checks and verbal symptom screenings of students | 82% | 79% | 78% | 80% |
| Regular temperature checks and verbal symptom screenings of staff | 80% | 78% | 76% | 79% |
| Limited classroom seating to maintain social distancing | 72% | 79% | 75% | 74% |
| Staggered recess and lunch times | 67% | 68% | 62% | 66% |
| Staggered student schedules | 57% | 65% | 60% | 60% |
| Staggered school start and end times | 49% | 54% | 52% | 51% |

Respondents were asked in the event LCPS were to return to school with students attending on a two day per week alternating schedule, whether they would be unable to come to work because of any one of the reasons listed below:

- A. If schools or day-care centers are closed, you would need to care for a child.
- B. If other services were unavailable, you would need to care for other dependents.
- C. If you or a member of your household fall into one of the categories identified by the CDC as being at high risk for serious complications from the pandemic coronavirus disease, you would

be advised by public health authorities not to come to work (e.g., pregnant women; persons with compromised immune systems due to cancer, HIV, history of organ transplant or other medical conditions; persons less than 65 years of age with underlying chronic conditions).

Almost half (43%) of the respondents indicated that one or more of the conditions would render them unable to go to work in a school or facility. Another 11% preferred not to answer the question.

Table 13. Limitations to Working in the School Facility

| | Elementary School | Middle School | High School or Educational Center | LCPS |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| No, the conditions listed do not apply to me | 47% | 44% | 45% | 46% |
| Yes, one or more of the conditions listed apply to me | 42% | 45% | 44% | 43% |
| I prefer not to answer | 11% | 11% | 11% | 11% |
| LCPS | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Conclusions

- In general, staff felt supported during the distance learning experience. About two-thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they had the resources and support needed to plan and deliver effective learning for their students. About half of the respondents felt that LCPS was responsive in providing guidance for distance learning.
- Most respondents felt prepared regarding the planning and delivery of instruction for the upcoming school year. The respondents were most confident regarding (1) their strategies to communicate with families regarding goal setting and expectations and (2) planning and delivering asynchronous learning. A majority of respondents also felt prepared to plan and deliver synchronous learning and differentiate learning for individual students.
- The results indicated that school-based staff have different levels of comfort regarding the proposed classroom layout for in-person learning. Among the staff who teach in classrooms, less than half (44%) felt comfortable or very comfortable with the layout. Elementary staff felt least comfortable with the layout compared to middle and high school staff.
- Overall, most respondents (67%-81%) felt concerned about multiple topics regarding their workload, their ability to make connections with their families, and meet the academic and social emotional needs of their students. The elementary respondents were the most concerned compared to middle and high school staff.
- When asked about their level of concern with personal matters of safety and childcare, about two-thirds of respondents had concerns about (1) maintaining physical distancing, (2) managing anxiety and stress, and (3) exposure to COVID-19. These results indicate high levels of concern for school-based staff regarding their safety.
- The respondents were most comfortable with the 100% distance learning model, followed by the hybrid and 100% in-person models. Only the distance learning model had more than 50% of staff being comfortable or very comfortable with the approach.

- Fifty-six percent of the respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with wearing a face covering. Eighty-eight percent of the respondents were comfortable or very comfortable with taking their temperature.
- Respondents tended to value practices that focused on facilities and screening of staff and students over schedules. School-based staff valued enhanced cleaning of schools and facilities as the most important factor at 95%. Regular temperature checks and verbal symptom screenings of students and staff and limited classroom setting were identified as important or very important by 74-80% of respondents.
- Almost half (43%) of the respondents indicated that one or more of the conditions would render them unable to go to work in a school or facility. Another 11% preferred not to answer the question.

Considerations for Planning for Fall 2020

- Most school-based staff feel prepared for planning and providing instruction in an asynchronous environment but are not as confident regarding synchronous instruction and differentiation. What supports can be provided to meet these needs?
- There are significant levels of concern for staff regarding their personal safety. What steps can be taken to address these concerns?
- There are significant concerns among staff regarding meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of students. What supports can be provided for staff?