Massachusetts PTA Survey
Returning to School
2020-2021

Thank You for Your Input!

June 28, 2020
Scope of Survey

As the 2019-2020 school year came to an end, Massachusetts PTA, looking forward to schools reopening in the fall wanted to know the thoughts and experiences with distance learning and how our schools should reopen from parents, educators and our community in general. We believed that this survey would be a chance for voices to be heard in as unbiased way as we could manage.

The questions were developed by a 100% volunteer team of parents and educators. This is in no way a purely scientific survey and we do not purport to be a professional survey or data collection organization.

We were truly blown away by the responses. A total of 46,278 responses were logged over the 1 week that the survey was live. We were able to translate the survey into Spanish and Portuguese as well.

The survey was posted on our Website, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts as well as sent to our email list for parents and partners.

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the raw data, please feel free to reach out to us with any thoughts or concerns at info@masspta.org.
Question 1: Which County Are You Located In?

Understanding that this survey was promoted on Social Media, primarily Facebook, the Massachusetts PTA website and subsequently forwarded to parents and staff of school districts when a member of that district felt it would be of value.
Question 2: Which of the Following Best Describes You?

Respondent’s Connection to School Districts

Respondents were asked to select the descriptor of who they are. Since they could have multiple identities they were allowed to select all that apply including being able to self identify. We have attempted to include those into categories that relate. The raw data is available to review as well.
Although the majority of respondents are not currently identifying as PTA members we are pleased that they found value in responding to the Massachusetts PTA and our efforts to advocate on their behalf. Although submitting an email address was not necessary, we did receive over 4,000 new email addresses of respondents who have said they are willing to be contacted further.
Question 4: Grade Level of Your Child for 2020-2021?

The responses to this question includes parents who have multiple children in various grades as well as respondents who may not have children currently in school. The total number of responses for this question is 82082.
Question 5: Prior to the Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts, how often did work require you to be out of the house during regular school days?

The majority of respondents worked at a location other than their home prior to the Covid-19 stay at home order.
Question 6: During Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts, how often does your work require you to be out of the house?

Once the Covid-19 stay at home order was in place the majority of respondents were able to remain at home. Although this question and the prior question attempts to determine how many respondents had to change their working habits it did not ask if you were unemployed or furloughed during the order.
Question 7: Prior to the Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts, how often did work require you to need before and/or after school care?

Prior to the Covid-19 stay at home order the majority of respondents, 52%, required some child care assistance to be able to work.
Question 8: During Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts did you need child care?

During the Covid-19 stay at home order 37% of respondents still required some assistance with child care telling us they were still either working as essential workers or are unable to work from home without someone caring for their children.
Question 9: Do you currently need child care?

As we enter the summer months, when children would normally be home, respondents still required some assistance with child care.
Question 10: Many factors are important when planning to reopen schools. How Important are each of the following when considering children attending school in person?

Respondents overwhelmingly agree that ensuring the safety of our students and staff is the most important issue if returning to school.
Question 11: If schools are allowed to reopen in the fall 2020, how strongly would you support each of the following options?

Returning to a full time regular school schedule in the fall is what respondents prefer. Secondary to that is a request for a delayed start until after Labor Day. Respondents also agree that the decision should be based on the individual student’s needs.
Question 12: Considering your experience with emergency distance learning that schools implemented for the end of 2019-2020 school year, how important are the following aspects of distance learning for Fall 2020?

After managing the conversion to distance learning this past Spring, respondents note that communication and flexibility were the key components for them to be able to manage the situation.
Question 13: Considering your experience with emergency distance learning that schools implemented for the end of 2019-2020 school year, how did distance learning affect your child(ren)?

After managing the conversion to distance learning this past Spring, respondents noted that although the relationship with family improved, students struggled with distance learning and feeling connect to school, teachers and friends.
Question 14: Considering your experience with emergency distance learning that schools implemented for the end of 2019-2020 school year. How prepared did you feel your child(ren) were to participate in distance learning? (technology, time, etc.)

Respondents had very mixed answers for this question. Two significant variables included the age of the student (younger children less prepared than older children) and the response of the school district with support materials. All comments are available for review in the raw data file.
Question 15: Transportation- if there are 2-3 students per seat (Please check the two options that best apply.)

- My child will ride the bus to school: 33%
- My child will ride the bus home from school: 28%
- I will transport my child to school: 19%
- I will transport my child home from school: 28%
- Other: 6%

Included in the Other segment is Walkers, Students who have a Van Pool, Student Drivers, and those who are Unsure. There were many comments that included the dismay at the “2-3 students per seat” on the bus which made respondents uncomfortable.
Question 16: What are your primary concerns regarding students returning to school in Fall 2020?

Items under Other include: All Issues, Special Education, Emotional Support Availability, Equity, Class Size, Vaccine, Recess, Testing for Covid-19, and Other
Question 17: Prior to the Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts, please indicate any of the following that were a concern for you and your family regarding anxiety and mental health. (select all that apply)
Question 18: During Covid-19 stay at home order in Massachusetts, please indicate any of the following that are a concern for you and your family regarding anxiety and mental health (select all that apply)

- I have stress and anxiety: 9%
- I suffer from depression: 0.3%
- My child/children have stress and anxiety: 14%
- My child/children suffer from depression: 1%
- I have worries and stress: 11%
- I have worries and stress but it is manageable: 56%
- Other: 9%

Comparing the mental health responses from prior to the stay at home order and during the order there have been a noted increase in respondents worries and stress as well as children who are suffering from depression.
Of note is that the majority of respondents to this survey do not depend on the school or local food banks but that during the Covid-19 stay at home order the dependence on local food banks did increase.
Question 21: During the 2020 summer Coronavirus months, how significant will the following be for you and your family?

Again, the majority of respondents to this survey do not depend on the school or local food banks. To determine the significance of this response and the next question response we would need to better determine the locations of the respondents and if access to services is an issue.
Question 22: When schools reopen in the fall how significant will the following be for you and your family?

As our final question, the issues around food insecurity although significant the respondents to this survey are not identifying as accessing or utilizing services for food. Once again we feel to determine the significance of this response we would need to better determine the locations of the respondents and if access to services is an issue.
Survey Summary

Massachusetts PTA is pleased that so many people have engaged with our advocacy efforts by responding to this survey. As an all volunteer association we are overwhelmed by the number of responses and unable to process all of the data we have collected.

It is our hope in putting together this simple summary that it gives others some insight into respondents thoughts and feelings towards students and teachers returning to school this fall.

As an Advocacy Association we will be making all of the data available for download on our website for anyone to review and access. We will be sharing this data and summary with members of the Massachusetts Board of Education and Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This is in no way a purely scientific survey and we do not purport to be a professional survey or data collection organization. The questions were developed by a 100% volunteer team of parents and educators.

We believed that this survey has been a venue for voices to be heard in as unbiased way as we could manage. If you have any questions or would like a copy of the raw data, please feel free to reach out to us with any thoughts or concerns at info@masspta.org.

Thank you,
Massachusetts PTA Board of Directors