

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot of teachers' experiences regarding their return to school. This survey was an in response to a request from Saskatchewan's Chief Medical Health Officer, Dr. Saqib Shahab.

The survey was conducted under very tight timelines. Members were informed of the survey by email from the Federation and were able to access the survey site online. The survey was open for four days and only Saskatchewan teachers were able to access the survey questions. A total of **2,108** people, or 16 percent of STF members, completed responses. The information cannot be broken down or further analyzed because demographic data was not collected – rather, it is a snapshot in time.

Information was collected in five key areas:

Access to Personal Protective Equipment

22 percent of the respondents indicated they do not have access to sufficient personal protective equipment at their school. These respondents report they either are running out or have not yet received expected PPE. Items noted include:

- Lack of gowns and face shields for individual teachers
- Supplied mask shortages for teachers
- Limited number of hand sanitizers
- Lack of Plexiglass shields for desks

"I received one re-usable mask, one face shield, and one non-reusable medical mask for the year..."
– Survey Respondent

Physical Distancing

Overwhelmingly, nine out of 10 (89 percent) teachers reported that they cannot maintain social distancing of two metres in their classroom. In addition:

- Forty-five percent of teachers are not comfortable in providing the teaching services expected of them.
- Forty-six percent of teachers are not confident in the effectiveness of front-facing instruction.
- Forty-two percent of respondents reported they teach more than 30 students in a day.
- The majority of respondents (77 percent) work in one or two classrooms.

"I have been putting in between 5 to 16 hours on weekends and still falling behind expectation. Stress levels are high ... burnout is already occurring for myself and others." – Survey Respondent

Needs and Supports

Over half (52 percent) of teachers specified that they are unable to meet the educational needs of the students while also abiding by health and safety guidelines.

- Almost half (48 percent) of teachers felt that students are not receiving the supports they need.
- Similarly, half (50 percent) of teachers believe that they are not receiving the supports they need.

“... Most of the things kids enjoy about school have been stripped away, leaving many of them sad and disinterested in learning. The only education models that make sense given our current classrooms sizes and lack of supports are completely outdated and no longer socially acceptable.” – Survey Respondent

Online and in Classroom

Almost half (43 percent) of teachers identified that they were asked to teach both online and in the classroom. Respondents mentioned that they are required to teach and assess students who are physically in the classroom as well as plan and upload materials up to two weeks in advance. This material is for students who are absent due to quarantine expectations, for substitute teachers in case they are out of their classrooms due to quarantine restrictions or in the event they move to remote teaching.

“We are required to have online access for students who are away. Although it is not necessarily to teach direct online classes it is still doing everything twice.” – Survey Respondent

“...Considering there are no breaks in a day to even pull a child aside to sit and have a heart to heart chat, the mental health of both students and teachers is being blatantly disregarded.” – Survey Respondent

Extra Duties

Over 80 percent of teachers identified extra responsibilities on top of their already heavy workload. Respondents mentioned “cleaning and sanitizing,” “supervising student handwashing,” “extra lunch supervision or extra recess supervision,” “preparing additional work/assignments for online” as additional duties they have to perform on top of their regular classroom teaching.

“I feel like we as teachers have been given so many extra duties [such as cleaning and sanitizing, supervising student handwashing, providing extra lunch or recess supervision] as yet, we have not been given any extra support or time to do any of those duties...” – Survey Respondent

Conclusion

Feeling overwhelmed, additional duties, concerns about student needs and safety while feeling largely unsupported are the common themes that appeared in this survey.

“Because of all the extra duties, I feel like I am very far behind in my teaching compared to previous years, [and] yet, the same expectations of testing are being placed on me. Teachers are not being supported, [and] yet, I feel the weight of keeping students safe and education are on us.” – Survey Respondent