



DRAFT - Summary of Family and Student Feedback Regarding School Closures and Return to School

Bellingham Public Schools sought feedback from staff, families, students and the community regarding the emergency school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their experiences and checking in on possible scenarios for a return to school in the fall. The feedback forms were shared through a message from Superintendent Greg Baker on June 17 and a reminder sent on June 25. This message was emailed to staff, families and community, posted on the district and school websites and shared on social media. The Family Resource Center with the support of interpreters called families whose home language is not English and filled out the form with them. Feedback forms closed on Monday, June 29. A total of 3,645 families, students and community members responded to their feedback form.

Respondents:

Family/Student Feedback Form

- Parent or guardian: 3,044
- Student: 366
- Staff filling out on behalf of family: 141
- Community member: 92

All schools were represented with the most responses from Bellingham High School (405) and the fewest from the Bellingham Family Partnership Program (31).

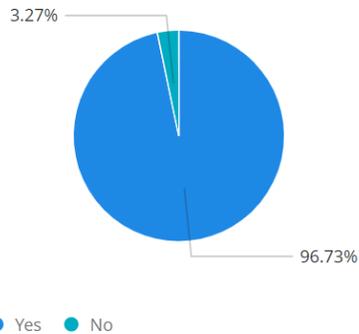
In addition, we had 16 respondents take the survey in a language other than English and 92 families were assisted by the Family Resource Center in sharing their feedback because their home language is not English.

Families/Students: Remote Learning and Experience During the School Closures

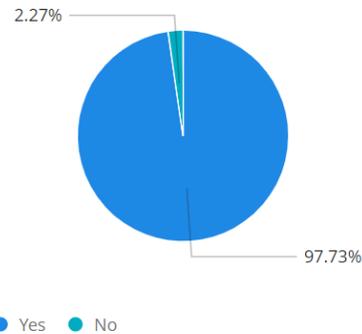
Experience during the closures:

47.6 percent of families reported their experience was either “worse than expected” or “much worse than expected.” 34.5 percent reported the experience was “as expected” and 17.9 percent reported the experience was either “better than expected” or “much better than expected.” Results from students were similar with 45.0 percent reporting their experience was either “worse than expected” or “much worse than expected.” 34.2 percent reported the experience was “as expected” while 20.8 percent reported the experience was “better than expected” or “much better than expected.”

Does your child have access to a laptop or computer? (elementary only) 



Does your child have access to reliable internet? 



Other than technology, what was your primary concern about your child learning remotely?

2,478 people answered this question. Many families/students mentioned “interaction” 362 times and “social” 446 times in their responses.

“The absence of a teacher. I have never wanted to home school my child because I think teachers do a great job and the social interaction is so important. But we do the best with what we have. Live lessons would be really helpful in the fall.”

“Teacher” was referenced 556 times and the word “lack” was used 486 times.

“Lack of regular engagement with teachers and peers.”



What have been the best parts of remote learning for your child?

This question received 2,500 comments. Families and students commented on the use of “video” or “Zoom” with mostly positive sentiment. “Learning” and “teacher” were the most used words and both had mostly positive sentiment. Families and students also commented that more family

time and better sleep as positives. Comments also included positive sentiment for flexibility. 261 comments used the words “nothing” or “none.”

Representative comments:

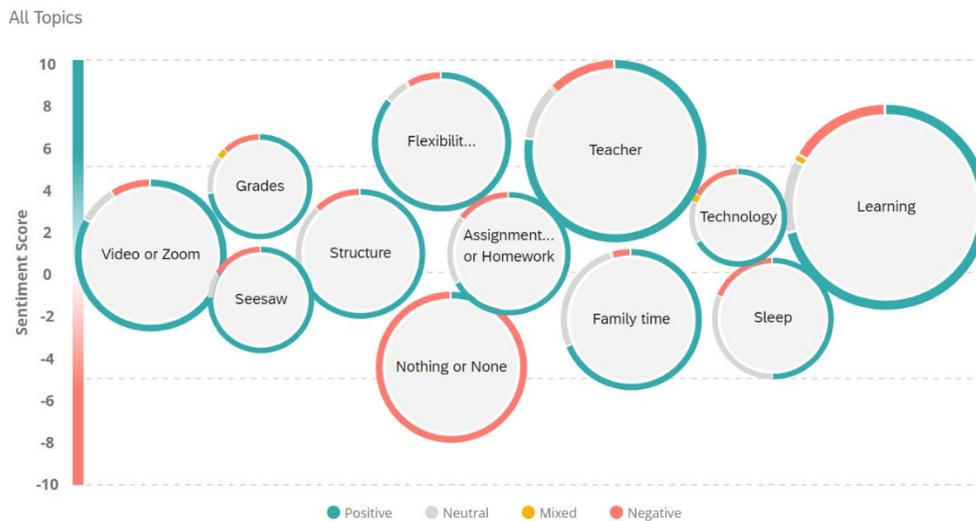
“My son seeing his teachers and classmates during zoom classes was the best part. Learning to wait and be respectful of other people's turn to talk was just another surprise learning opportunity.”

“It helped me to see and understand their learning styles and our bond as a family has grown.”

“More quality time at home with family. As a working parent, I was able to get to know the teacher better thru seesaw than I ever would have during normal school schedules.”

“None really. I have enjoyed them being home, but it is also very challenging and stressful in many ways.”

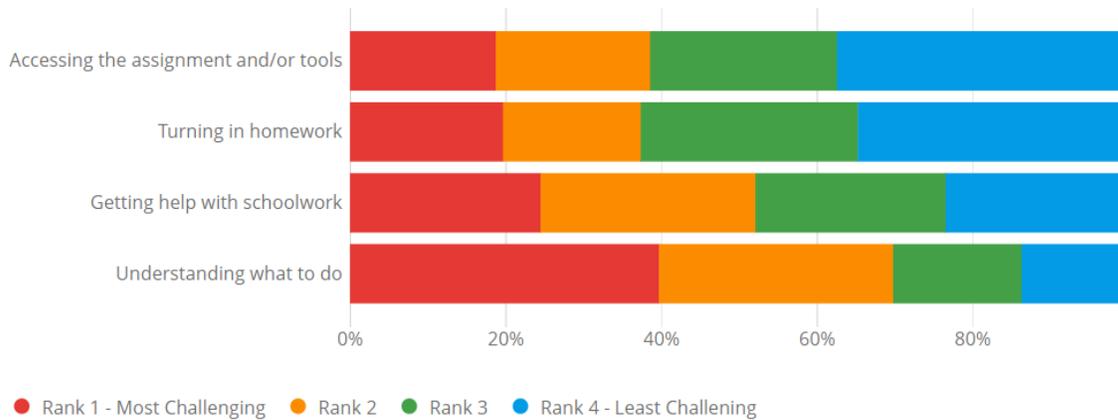
The chart below shows the most frequently used themes in comments and sentiment levels (green being positive and red being negative). For instance, “family time,” includes the phrases, “family time,” “being home with my kids,” “more time with my kids” etc.



What have been the most challenging parts of remote learning for your child? (Rank these from 1 (most challenging) to 4 (least challenging)).

Families and students reported that “Understanding what to do” was the most challenging part about remote learning at 40 percent. “Accessing the assignment and/or tools” and “Turning in homework,” were the least challenging parts.

What have been the most challenging parts of remote learning for your child? ▼ 1 ⬇



Were there any other challenges?

This question received 2,020 comments. Families and students shared a variety of challenges including:

- Wanting more academic rigor for the courses provided.
- Struggling to access assignments and maintain motivation.
- Expressed difficulty with managing remote learning and child care, or helping elementary aged children with their learning menus.

Representative comments:

“I feel like remote learning could improve by a lot. I as a student had a very difficult time finding my assignments in knowing what to do I wish they had an option kind of like being in the classroom where you can see your teacher and she can explain better.”

“Our student needed more academic challenge and teacher engagement than what was presented in learning menus.”

“My husband and I both work full time, and continued to work full time from home during remote learning. Therefore, someone had to miss work to be the teacher for the day. Elementary is too young for them to work on their own, so this was very challenging for our family.”

frequently. Most of these terms receive positive sentiment, while “seesaw” had more negative sentiment.

Parents/students shared several suggestions including:

- More clean guidelines and direction for families and students around remote learning
- Provide remote learning as an option for families who are concerned about sending kids to school
- Organize and streamline the online programs for students
- Elementary kids need in-person instruction

“Clear detailed expectations, and a routine curriculum with interactive zoom learning that involves teachers and students.”

“I don’t even know where to begin. How can you inspire and motivate high schoolers? It was such a letdown to what started out being a great year for my student. There has to be more teacher student contact on a daily basis. If they are going to do remote learning, the teachers need to be teaching them. It is not enough to send out an email once a week and put assignments on one note. It is not enough.”

“An option for families of younger grades to work on actual paper assignments, no more seesaw!!! (Other than to do show and tell and say hi to teachers and classmates).”

“One unified platform without so many different learning sites. One simple point of access for academic help and another single point for tech support. Better proactive ergonomic support. More personalized interaction and learning feedback with each student. Perhaps a simple “dashboard” to help make it clear not only if assignments completed but how well or accurate it was and any correction or learning reinforcement when concepts are not fully grasped.”

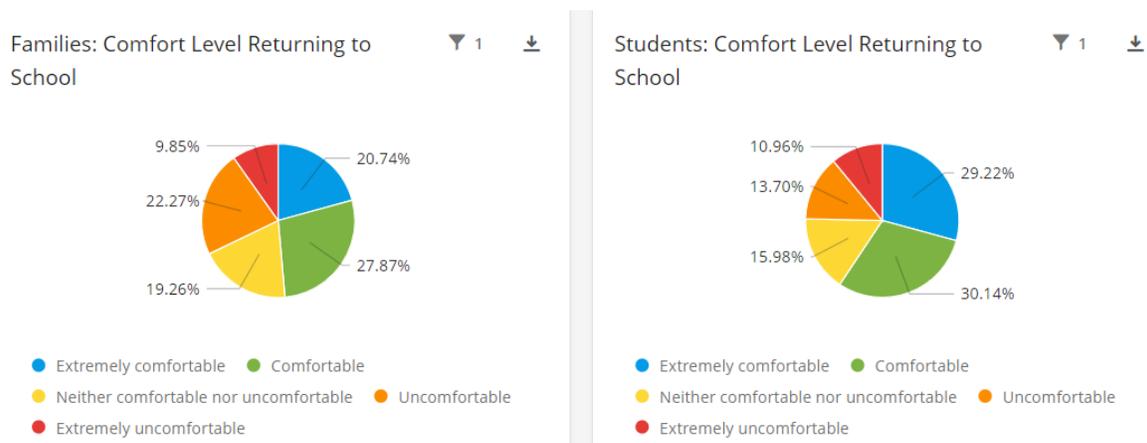


Return to School

How comfortable are you returning to school in the fall?

59.4 percent of students report they are “comfortable” or “extremely comfortable” with returning to school in the fall. 24.7 report they would feel “uncomfortable” or “extremely uncomfortable.”

Parents/guardians are in similar in response. 48.6 percent of parents/guardians feel either “comfortable” or “extremely comfortable” about their child returning to school in the fall and 32.1 percent of parents/guardians reported they feel “uncomfortable” or “extremely uncomfortable.”



The state recently recommended schools consider these actions. Please rate your comfort level with each action for a return to school this fall:

Overall families/students are comfortable with the recommendations presented by the state. The two charts below show this information in two ways. The first chart shows comfort level by recommended action. Blue is “comfortable” and red is “uncomfortable.” For each action below “comfortable” is most selected. These actions ranged from 75.4 percent comfortable with “disinfecting and cleaning high touch surfaces,” to the lowest “phased-in opening by geographic location or grade level with continuous remote learning” at 28.3 percent.

The highest “uncomfortable” action is “students wearing masks or cloth face coverings,” at 21.0 percent followed by “Phased-in opening by geographic location or grade level with continuous remote learning,” at 18.7 percent. *Note: the governor’s face covering mandate for Washington state went into effect June 26, after most of the respondents completed our survey.*

Chart 1

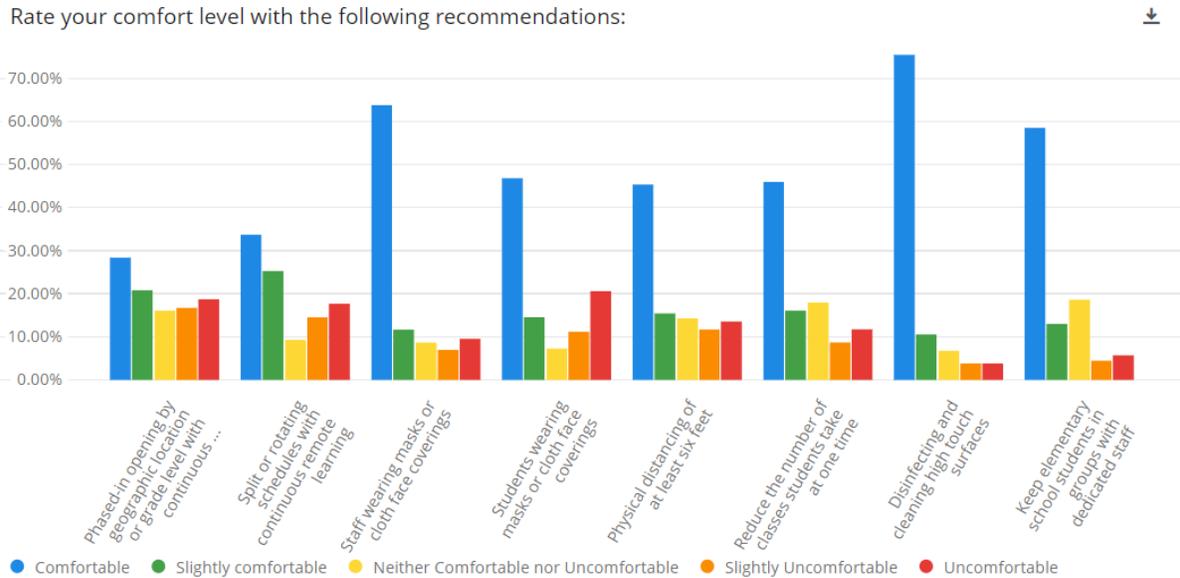
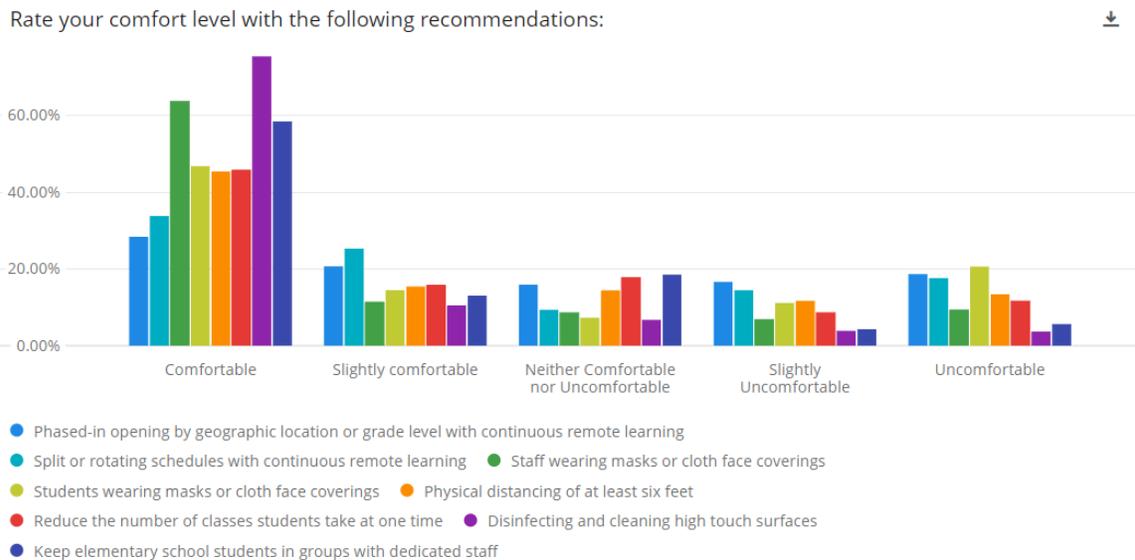


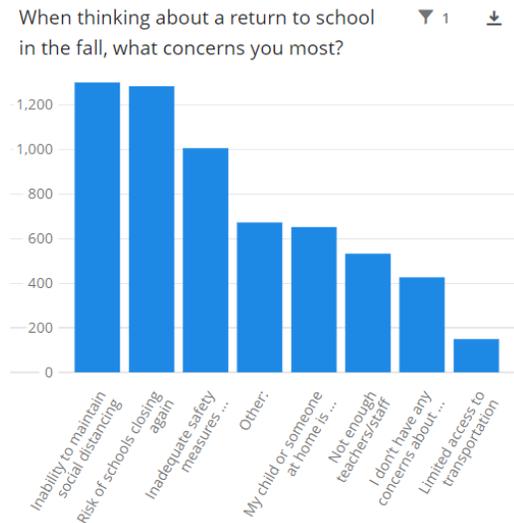
Chart 2



When thinking about your child returning to school, what are you most concerned about? Please select all that apply.

Families and students reported their main concerns about returning to school in the fall are the “inability to maintain social distancing,” with 1,300 responses, followed by “risk of schools closing again” with 1,282 responses, and “inadequate safety measures,” with 1,005 responses.

Students selected “risk of schools closing again,” as their highest concern, while parents/guardians selected “inability to maintain social distancing,” (1,136) and “risk of schools closing again,” (1,137) of almost equal concern.



Given what we know currently about the COVID-19 pandemic, what should Bellingham Public Schools prioritize?

Families/students selected “prepare a return to school buildings for students and staff” as their top priority at 53.3 percent, followed by “making remote learning the best it can be” at 31.1 percent.

What is your child most looking forward to about returning to school? Please select all that apply.

Families/students selected “social interaction,” at 23.3 percent, followed by “in-person instruction” at 17.9 percent and then “routine or structure,” at 17 percent.



“Please let the kids return. Or provide a choice to return or use remote learning for those who prefer that. I understand the risk, but as a single mom and small business owner, I cannot provide both financial security AND academic success for my kids. I feel like I really let my son down, and I hate it.”

“Consider offering some type of daycare for teachers who have young children so they do not have the home distractions. They are pulled in multiple directions with work and family, so it is difficult for those with younger children to focus and prioritize. We appreciate having the school computer. We appreciate all the school is doing to accommodate families and seek feedback on return plans.”