

Nearly half of Americans support reopening schools before there is a coronavirus vaccine

USA Today/Ipsos poll finds that most parents think their child will be able to make up lost ground, but that teachers have struggled to help

Topline Findings

Washington, **DC**, **May 26**, **2020** – As a vast majority of schools across the country have developed alternative teaching arrangements due to the coronavirus pandemic, a new USA Today/Ipsos poll finds support for a range of proposals for how to return to school in the fall, yet less than half of Americans are in favor of students and teachers returning before there is a vaccine. Another poll of K-12 teachers conducted simultaneously shows similar levels of support, both for different ways of returning and for doing so before there is a vaccine.

Most parents of school-aged children feel their kids have adapted well to online learning, yet a majority acknowledge they are worried about their child(ren) and that teachers have struggled to support their child(ren)'s distance learning. At the same time, many teachers also feel parents have struggled to help support online or distance learning, according to the parallel survey of teachers.

Detailed Findings

- 1. More than half of Americans support a range of suggested proposals for returning to in-person learning next fall. Nearly two-thirds think it is likely that schools will re-open in the fall, yet less than half support returning to school before there is a coronavirus vaccine.
 - Overall, there is little difference in support for these measures between the general population and parents of school-aged children.
 - Sixty-four percent of Americans think it is likely that schools reopen in the fall, and most would support in-person teaching 5 days a week or 2-3 days a week with distance learning on other days (58% each).
 - Six in ten (61%) would support low-risk teachers returning to in-person teaching with high risk individuals continue to teach online. Less (47%) would support adjusting school calendars to start earlier in the summer and continue into the following summer.
 - Forty-six percent of Americans (and 47% of parents with at least one child in grades K-12) would support in-person schooling before there is a coronavirus.
- If schools reopened in the fall, more than half of parents with a school-aged child report being
 very or somewhat likely to switch to at-home learning. Two-thirds or more of parents would be
 likely to ask their child to wear a mask at school and say their child would likely have difficulty
 complying with social distancing at school.
 - More than two-thirds (68%) say their child would likely find it difficult to follow social distancing guidelines at school (68%) and would be probably ask their child to wear a mask at school (70%).
 - Fifty-nine percent would likely pursue at-home learning such online school or homeschooling, with 30% saying they would be *very* likely to do so. Parents in the Midwest are least likely to say this (49%), while those in the South (64%) are most likely.





- 3. Parents with a child that is online or distance learning agree that they have sufficient and easy-to-use resources to aid in the transition, yet most agree that teachers have struggled to support their child(ren)'s distance learning.
 - Nearly 4 in 5 (78%) report their school district has developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement, like distance learning or virtual classes, in order to adapt to the coronavirus pandemic.
 - More than three-quarters of parents with a child utilizing online or distance learning agree that their home has reliable internet (94%), they have sufficient software (86%), and it is easy for their child to use the technology (82%). Most of these parents also agree that that their school district's effort is headed in the right direction (73%), and that their school district prepare their child(ren) well for online or distance learning (65%).
 - However, three in five parents with a child in grades K-12 are worried about their child(ren) right now, and 52% agree think teachers have struggled to support their child(ren)'s online or distance learning.

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 18-20, 2020 on behalf of USA Today. For this survey, a sample of 2,008 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:





Full Annotated Questionnaire

1. Do you currently have at least one child or grandchild in school (kindergarten through 12th grade)?

	Total (N=2,008)
Yes, a child	22%
Yes, a grandchild	15%
No	63%

2. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Total Agree Summary

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	Total	August 2018	Child in K-12
	(N=2,008)	(N=2,010)	(N=403)
Public school teachers are paid fairly	31%	34%	40%
Most teachers are able to take a vacation all summer	43%	43%	52%
Teachers are working harder now than they ever have	70%	-	71%

a. Public school teachers are paid fairly

	Total	August 2018	Child in K-12
Strongly agree	10%	12%	12%
Somewhat agree	22%	22%	27%
Somewhat disagree	31%	30%	28%
Strongly disagree	31%	29%	28%
Don't know	7%	7%	4%
Agree (Net)	31%	34%	40%
Disagree (Net)	62%	59%	56%

b. Most teachers are able to take a vacation all summer

	Total	August 2018	Child in K-12
Strongly agree	15%	16%	22%
Somewhat agree	28%	28%	30%
Somewhat disagree	29%	29%	27%
Strongly disagree	19%	19%	14%
Don't know	9%	9%	7%
Agree (Net)	43%	43%	52%
Disagree (Net)	48%	47%	41%





c. Teachers are working harder now than they ever have

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly agree	41%	40%
Somewhat agree	29%	31%
Somewhat disagree	15%	14%
Strongly disagree	7%	9%
Don't know	7%	6%
Agree (Net)	70%	71%
Disagree (Net)	23%	23%

3. **[If selected "Yes, a child" in Q1]** Which of the following best describes how your school district has adapted to the coronavirus pandemic?

	Total (N=403)
Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement, like distance learning or virtual classes	78%
Canceled in-person classes and did not provide students with anything to do for the rest of the year	8%
Canceled in-person classes, but they have since resumed	6%
Continued in-person instruction in school buildings throughout March, April, and May	6%
Other	1%

4. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] How did your school district provide alternative teaching arrangements? Select all that apply.

	Total (N=326)
Instructors teaching students live, in real-time, through a video platform	60%
Students using software or watching pre-recorded videos	60%
Students using paper packets or worksheets	37%
Something else	4%





5. [If selected "Yes, a child" in Q1] Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Total Agree Summary

	Total (N=403)
My child(ren) has/have access to reliable internet at home that allows them to study	N=326 94%
My child/Each of my children had sufficient software and equipment already, or the school provided it, for online or distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic	N=326 86%
It is easy for my child(ren) to use the technology needed for online learning	N=326 82%
My child(ren)'s teacher(s) is/are in contact with my child(ren), and we feel connected to them right now	77%
I think my school district's online or distance learning effort is headed in the right direction	N=326 73%
My child(ren) will eventually be able to make up any lost ground	73%
My school district prepared my child(ren) well for online or distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic	N=326 65%
I am worried about my child(ren) right now	60%
Teachers have struggled to help support my child(ren)'s online or distance learning	N=326 52%
Online or distance learning is causing my child(ren) to fall behind	N=326 46%

a. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3]
 My school district prepared my child(ren) well for online or distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Total
	(N=326)
Strongly agree	23%
Somewhat agree	43%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	12%
Don't know	7%
Agree (Net)	65%
Disagree (Net)	28%

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b. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] My child/Each of my child(ren) had sufficient software and equipment already, or the school provided it, for online or distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	50%
Somewhat agree	36%
Somewhat disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know	4%
Agree (Net)	86%
Disagree (Net)	10%

c. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] It is easy for my child(ren) to use the technology needed for online learning

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	44%
Somewhat agree	38%
Somewhat disagree	9%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know	4%
Agree (Net)	82%
Disagree (Net)	13%

d. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] Online or distance learning is causing my child(ren) to fall behind

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	18%
Somewhat agree	28%
Somewhat disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	22%
Don't know	9%
Agree (Net)	46%
Disagree (Net)	45%





e. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] Teachers have struggled to help support my child(ren)'s online or distance learning

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	16%
Somewhat agree	35%
Somewhat disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	19%
Don't know	10%
Agree (Net)	52%
Disagree (Net)	38%

f. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] I think my school district's online or distance learning effort is headed in the right direction

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	28%
Somewhat agree	45%
Somewhat disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	6%
Don't know	8%
Agree (Net)	73%
Disagree (Net)	20%

g. [If selected "Developed some type of alternative teaching arrangement..." in Q3] My child(ren) has/have access to reliable internet at home that allows them to study

	Total (N=326)
Strongly agree	70%
Somewhat agree	24%
Somewhat disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know	3%
Agree (Net)	94%
Disagree (Net)	3%





h. My child(ren)'s teacher(s) is/are in contact with my child(ren), and we feel connected to them right now

	Total
Strongly agree	35%
Somewhat agree	42%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	6%
Don't know	5%
Agree (Net)	77%
Disagree (Net)	17%

i. My child(ren) will eventually be able to make up any lost ground

	Total
Strongly agree	37%
Somewhat agree	37%
Somewhat disagree	13%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know	10%
Agree (Net)	73%
Disagree (Net)	17%

j. I am worried about my child(ren) right now

	Total
Strongly agree	30%
Somewhat agree	30%
Somewhat disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	15%
Don't know	3%
Agree (Net)	60%
Disagree (Net)	37%

6. How likely do you think it is that schools in your area will reopen in the fall?

	Total	Child in K-12
Very likely	19%	23%
Somewhat likely	45%	39%
Not very likely	20%	22%
Not at all likely	6%	7%
Don't know	10%	8%
Likely (Net)	64%	63%
Not likely (Net)	26%	29%





7. Would you support or oppose the following measures if schools in your area implemented them this fall?

Total Support Summary

	Total	Child in K-12
Teachers considered high risk for severe illness continuing to teach online, while low-risk teachers teach in person	61%	63%
Students and teachers returning to school 5 days a week	58%	59%
Students and teachers returning to school 2-3 days a week, with distance learning on the other days	58%	63%
Schools adjusting their calendars to begin earlier in the summer and continue into the following summer	47%	50%
Students and teachers returning to school before there is a coronavirus vaccine	46%	47%

a. Students and teachers returning to school 5 days a week

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly support	24%	29%
Somewhat support	33%	30%
Somewhat oppose	18%	15%
Strongly oppose	12%	18%
Don't know	12%	8%
Support (Net)	58%	59%
Oppose (Net)	30%	33%

b. Students and teachers returning to school 2-3 days a week, with distance learning on the other days

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly support	18%	27%
Somewhat support	40%	36%
Somewhat oppose	18%	14%
Strongly oppose	12%	15%
Don't know	11%	8%
Support (Net)	58%	63%
Oppose (Net)	30%	29%

c. Teachers considered high risk for severe illness continuing to teach online, while low-risk teachers teach in person

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly support	22%	26%
Somewhat support	39%	37%
Somewhat oppose	16%	16%
Strongly oppose	7%	9%
Don't know	15%	13%
Support (Net)	61%	63%
Oppose (Net)	23%	24%

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d. Schools adjusting their calendars to begin earlier in the summer and continue into the following summer

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly support	16%	21%
Somewhat support	31%	29%
Somewhat oppose	21%	18%
Strongly oppose	14%	21%
Don't know	17%	10%
Support (Net)	47%	50%
Oppose (Net)	36%	40%

e. Students and teachers returning to school before there is a coronavirus vaccine

	Total	Child in K-12
Strongly support	16%	19%
Somewhat support	30%	28%
Somewhat oppose	22%	24%
Strongly oppose	17%	17%
Don't know	15%	12%
Support (Net)	46%	47%
Oppose (Net)	39%	41%

8. **[If selected "Yes, a child" in Q1]** If your child(ren)'s school was to reopen and implement social distancing guidelines, how likely are the following?

Total Likely Summary

	Total (N=403)
I would ask my child(ren) to wear a mask at school	70%
My child(ren) would have difficulty complying with social distancing at school	68%
I would pursue at-home learning for my child (such as online school or homeschool)	59%

a. My child(ren) would have difficulty complying with social distancing at school

	Total
Very likely	34%
Somewhat likely	34%
Not very likely	16%
Not at all likely	8%
Don't know	8%
Likely (Net)	68%
Not likely (Net)	24%





b. I would ask my child(ren) to wear a mask at school

	Total
Very likely	43%
Somewhat likely	28%
Not very likely	16%
Not at all likely	8%
Don't know	6%
Likely (Net)	70%
Not likely (Net)	24%

c. I would pursue at-home learning for my child (such as online school or homeschool)

	Total
Very likely	30%
Somewhat likely	29%
Not very likely	21%
Not at all likely	15%
Don't know	5%
Likely (Net)	59%
Not likely (Net)	36%

9. [If selected "Yes, a child" in Q1] Which type of school does/do your child(ren) attend?

	Total (N=403)
Public school	75%
Charter school	11%
Private school – religious or parochial	10%
Private school – non-religious	9%
Other	3%

10. Do you have any teachers in your immediate family, meaning parents, siblings, or children?

	Total	August 2018	Child in K-12
	(N=2,008)	(N=2,010)	(N=403)
Yes	26%	29%	35%
No	74%	71%	65%





About the Study

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 18-20, 2020, on behalf of USA Today. For this survey, a sample of 2,008 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The sample includes 403 parents with at least one child in kindergarten through 12th grade. Partial findings from an USA Today/Ipsos poll conducted August 9-13, 2018 among roughly 2,010 adults 18+ are included as well.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=2,008, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/-4.0 percentage points).

The poll also has a credibility interval of plus or minus 5.6 percentage points for parents with at least one child in kindergarten through twelfth grade. Additionally, the USA Today/Ipsos poll conducted August 9-13, 2018 has a credibility interval of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for all respondents.

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