



CSDE ThoughtExchange

Final Summary Results May 5th, 2020

Question: What concerns, questions or ideas do you have when considering a return to in-person schooling after this extended closure?

Participation/Demographics: Responses are representative of a truly statewide response. The ThoughtExchange was open from Friday, May 1st through midnight, Tuesday May 5th and during that time 34,547 Connecticut residents logged onto the site to express their opinions. Participants shared 49,471 thoughts and submitted almost 1,112,817 ratings, making this exchange the highest volume activity in the history of the company. Responses came from across the state and represented a reliable sample size from each RESC region, from urban, suburban, and rural communities, and for each of the critical roles that were identified as well. 133 participants responded in the Spanish language version. The largest representative group were parents, with nearly 20,000 taking the opportunity to voice their thoughts and rate those of others. Representative graphics for the exchange demographics are displayed below.

 34547
Participants

 49471
Thoughts

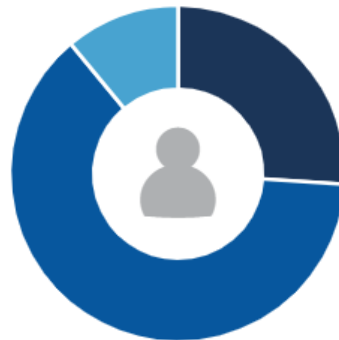
 1124817
Ratings

- Which RESC Region is your school or district in?



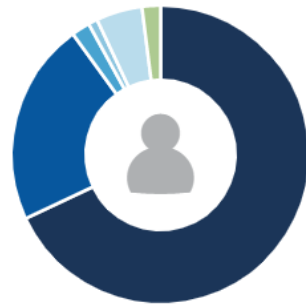
%	Person Icon	Region
4%	(1066)	ACES
11%	(3243)	CES
18%	(5420)	CREC
9%	(2728)	EASTCONN
11%	(3149)	EdAdvance
8%	(2294)	LEARN
39%	(11712)	I am not sure
0%	(4)	Answer not available

- Is your school or district considered:



%	Person Icon	Location Type
26%	(7590)	Rural
63%	(18307)	Suburban
11%	(3346)	Urban
0%	(8)	Answer not available

- What is the MOST IMPORTANT role you play related to public education?



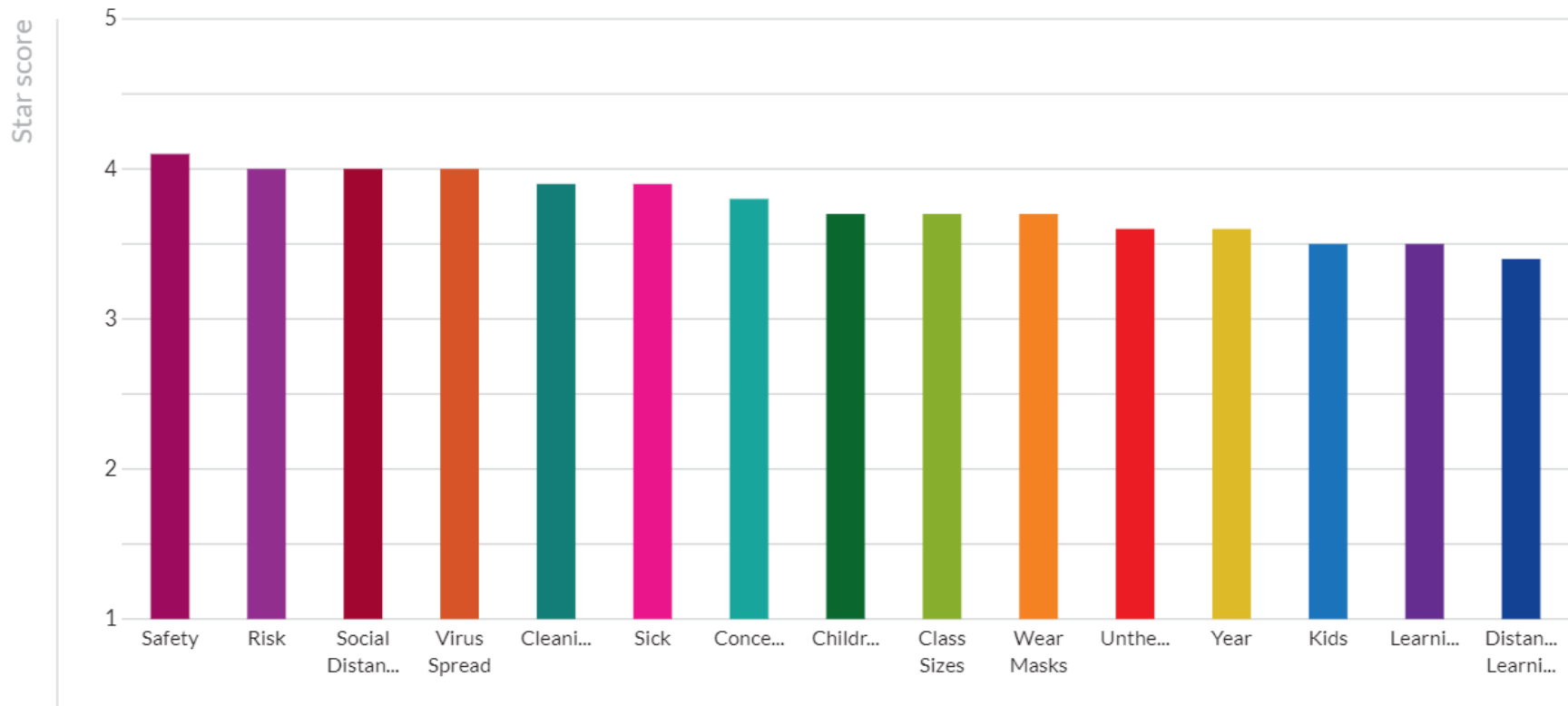
%	Person Icon	Role
68%	(19956)	Parent
22%	(6480)	Faculty/Staff
2%	(475)	Administrator
1%	(121)	Board Member
5%	(1516)	Special Education
0%	(87)	English Language Learners
2%	(591)	Other
0%	(2)	Answer not available

- Participation languages



%	Person Icon	Language
100%	(34414)	English
0%	(133)	Spanish

High Level Findings: The ThoughtExchange analysis algorithm identified 15 themes in the responses. *Every one of the top ten* highest average rated themes, which in total represent the vast majority of all thoughts contributed, deal with concerns over health and safety with scant support for returning to school for the 2019-2020 school year. Those themes are - Safety concerns, Health risks, Need for social distancing, Risk of spread concerns, Challenges in cleaning, Concerns over sick children/adults coming to school, Concerns over children’s ability to follow safety guidelines, Class concerns related to social distancing, Requiring (need/challenge) everyone to wear masks. There are themes that relate to concerns over the cost (academic, social, emotional, and economic) of the schools remaining closed but they trail in number and rating level to all of the aforementioned health and safety concerns. With a data set of this size, considering the wide distribution among regions and communities, there is a high degree of confidence in the summary findings: the results are unambiguous and consistent throughout the exchange demographics; *keep schools closed until safety risks can be reliably mitigated.*



Word Cloud Analysis: The following graphic demonstrates the health and safety focus of this exchange. The size and placement of each word (the larger the word and the closer to the center the greater the weight) are related to their placement in the highest rated thoughts.



Theme Frequency

Analysis: The following graphic also demonstrates the health and safety focus of this exchange. The size of each tile represents the total number of thoughts attributable to each theme (the previous bar graph of themes was based on the average rating).



Additional Summary Conclusions:

- Regardless of the metric – whether it is how highly rated a thought was or how many times that thought was expressed – the results were the same and focused on planning for how to return safely and acknowledging that it could not/should not be done this school year.
- The vast majority of the concerns were about public safety and health, the vast majority of the questions were inquiries about how it was possible to ensure public health and safety, and the ideas were mostly about what would be needed to return to school safely until there is a vaccine.
- There are thousands of examples of participants who express sadness and frustration regarding what is being lost – sports seasons, award ceremonies, graduations and special events – as well as many parents expressing opinions on the varied experiences with the quality of online learning taking place during this emergency learning period and bemoaning the lack of interpersonal socialization. Even in these critical posts however, most go on to note that these issues are less important than the lives of family, friends and peers.
- Of the 100 highest rated thoughts in the exchange (almost 49,471 thoughts and 1,112,817 ratings) which average a 4.5 point out of 5 rating or higher, **EVERY thought, 100%**, was focused on a health or safety concern recommending a fall (at the earliest and with conditions) restart.
- Of the 49,471 thoughts submitted (as of 10:52 AM on 5/5/20) the algorithm or participants flagged just under 2% of all thoughts as inappropriate. RESC staff reviewed each of the 900 quarantined thoughts – most were returned to the exchange. Those that were removed were so identified because they used inappropriate language, specifically named a local official, or stated something hurtful or dangerous.

Top Thoughts: The following are the 24 highest rated thoughts of the entire exchange.

Would like to wait until September - hopefully some what diluting the chances of the virus spreading. Too soon and will we have to start over? Waste more time? Let's do it right the first time.



4.7 ★★★★★ (30)



How will the school ensure distancing is maintained?



4.6 ★★★★★ (29)



Besides the virus being asymptatic for some- some DO show symptoms. Will there be a screening for each child each day before entering school? I am not convinced that families will keep their children if they are showing symptoms or if they have been in a highly exposed situation.



4.6 ★★★★★ (28)



I am concerned about the health and safety of the children and teachers. We do not want to find ourselves in another similar situation as we are in now.



4.6 ★★★★★ (27)



I'm an educator but I'm also a mother and my son had a heart transplant 7/4/19 and is now on immune suppressant medication to accept his new heart. I If we were to return to school, I would put my son's life in danger. Until we have a vaccine or more testing available, I will not return.



4.6 (27)
 Ranked #5 of 34630



Please just announce that we will not be returning to school this school year Almost everyone already assumes we will not be returning, having a definite answer will reduce the stress of the unknown



4.6 (27)
 Ranked #6 of 34630



Safety is of course my first concern. Safety of staff as well as students. We know that many people can be asymptomatic and that concerns me returning to an environment with many people.



4.6 (27)
 Ranked #7 of 34630



Starting up again in the Fall 2020 At this point, it being May, I don't see why we should risk the lives of the students going back now. Let's start again in August 2020.



4.6 (27)
 Ranked #8 of 34630



I am worried about reopening too soon I want to know that it is safe for my children to return to school before schools reopen.



4.6 (23)
Ranked #9 of 34630



Safety is the most important thing to consider. Student, faculty and staff safety is the most important thing.



4.5 (35)
Ranked #10 of 34630



How are you going to ensure social distancing in classrooms, lunchrooms, on busses, etc. ? We need to have a solid plan in place BEFORE we reopen schools.



4.5 (34)
Ranked #11 of 34630



Will my child be safe? Their health is the most important thing to me.



4.5 (34)
Ranked #12 of 34630



The 2nd wave of covid 19 is supposed to be worse than the 1st If we bring our children back together as one big unit to soon we could potentially end up with more sick people than if we continue distancing.



4.5 (32)
Ranked #13 of 34630



I'm most concerned with the health and safety of me and my students. I don't want to rush getting back and risk that in ANY WAY.



4.5 (30)
Ranked #14 of 34630



Reopening In my opinion, we shouldn't open schools at the May 20th date.



4.5 (30)
Ranked #15 of 34630



Being a first responder and seeing first hand the changes society has had to make during these past weeks, I dont feel this is the right call now. We need to ensure 100% safety of students, teachers, and faculty to avoid any further outbreaks of Covid-19.



4.5 (29)
Ranked #16 of 34630



Concern: Shared spaces Students may be distanced; however, shared spaces such as bathrooms, hallways, cafeteria, spaces for specials (pe, art, etc) will still be an issue



4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #17 of 34630



Date of reopening I don't believe schools should reopen for this academic year--still too many unknowns regarding the Coronavirus.



4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #18 of 34630



Do not open until fall. Not enough has been done to ensure safety for all.



4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #19 of 34630



Health of Students and Faculty/Staff Obviously, this is at the top of the list for many of us. What will it look like when we return to the classroom and how can we best prevent sickness



4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #20 of 34630



How often will the building be sanitized? Covid 19 is highly contagious.

4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #21 of 34630



How to do "social distancing" with large class sizes? Large classes make it impossible to stay 6 feet apart.

4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #22 of 34630



I think we should wait. What can be accomplished in 30days? The risk isn't worth it. We teach our children to see things through all the time. Finish the job, etc... here we have a chance to prove that.

4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #23 of 34630



I worry that it will happen too soon and then we will have to do this again. It's important to keep restrictions in place until we are SURE that we have done as much as possible to keep everyone healthy.

4.5 ★★★★★ (29)
 Ranked #24 of 34630

