



# Return to School Planning – Parent Feedback Form Summary Report

## Contents

Background.....	2
Feedback.....	3
Who Responded?.....	3
Elementary Student Feedback Form Responses.....	3
Secondary Student Feedback Form Responses.....	4
Special Education Feedback Form Responses.....	4
Elementary Student Feedback Form Results.....	4
Question – SCENARIO 1.....	4
Question – SCENARIO 2.....	5
Other Feedback – Common Themes.....	6
Secondary Student Feedback Form Results.....	8
Question – SCENARIO 1.....	8
Question – SCENARIO 2.....	9
Other Feedback – Common Themes.....	10
Special Education Feedback Form Results.....	12
Question.....	12
Other Feedback – Common Themes.....	13

## Background

The Ministry of Education has indicated that the return to school plan will be finalized and communicated to school boards by early August, 2020.

In the meantime, HCDSB staff have been planning for three (3) potential scenarios, as outlined in the Ministry's [Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year](#).

- SCENARIO 1 - Normal (conventional) school day routine with enhanced public health protocols
- SCENARIO 2 - Modified (adapted) school day routine that may include some time learning at school in small groups (cohorts), and some time learning from home.
- SCENARIO 3 - At-home learning with ongoing enhanced remote (distance) delivery

Our Return to School Planning Committees are currently reviewing a number of considerations and options for each scenario. To assist with our planning, parents and guardians with children currently enrolled in an HCDSB school were invited to share their feedback in one of three online feedback forms.

## Feedback

Feedback was gathered through three (3) separate online feedback forms. The links to the forms were not posted but were sent directly to parents and guardians through email.

The feedback forms remained open from Wednesday, July 8, 2020 to Wednesday, July 15, 2020. This report provides a summary of the feedback gathered from parents.

## Who Responded?

A total of **20, 038 responses** were submitted using the three online forms.

### Elementary Student Feedback Form Responses

A total of **13, 267** responses were submitted through the Elementary Student Parent Feedback Form.

Parents/guardians who responded identified having one or more children enrolled in an HCDSB elementary school in the following grades:

GRADES OF CHIL(DREN)	COUNT
Kindergarten	3786
Grade 1	2210
Grade 2	2092
Grade 3	2122
Grade 4	2175
Grade 5	2142
Grade 6	2022
Grade 7	1896
Grade 8	1602

## Secondary Student Feedback Form Responses

A total of **6552** responses were submitted through the Secondary Student Parent Feedback Form.

Parents/guardians who responded identified having one or more children enrolled in an HCDSB secondary school in the following grades:

GRADES OF CHIL(DREN)	COUNT
Grade 9	2259
Grade 10	1869
Grade 11	1915
Grade 12	1686

## Special Education Feedback Form Responses

A total of **219** responses were submitted through the Special Education Parent Feedback Form.

Parents/guardians who responded identified having one or more children enrolled in an HCDSB school in one of the following self-contained Special Education classrooms:

SELF-CONTAINED CLASS	COUNT
Community Living Class	11
Essential Skills Class	21
Life Skills Class	69
Structured Teaching Class	74

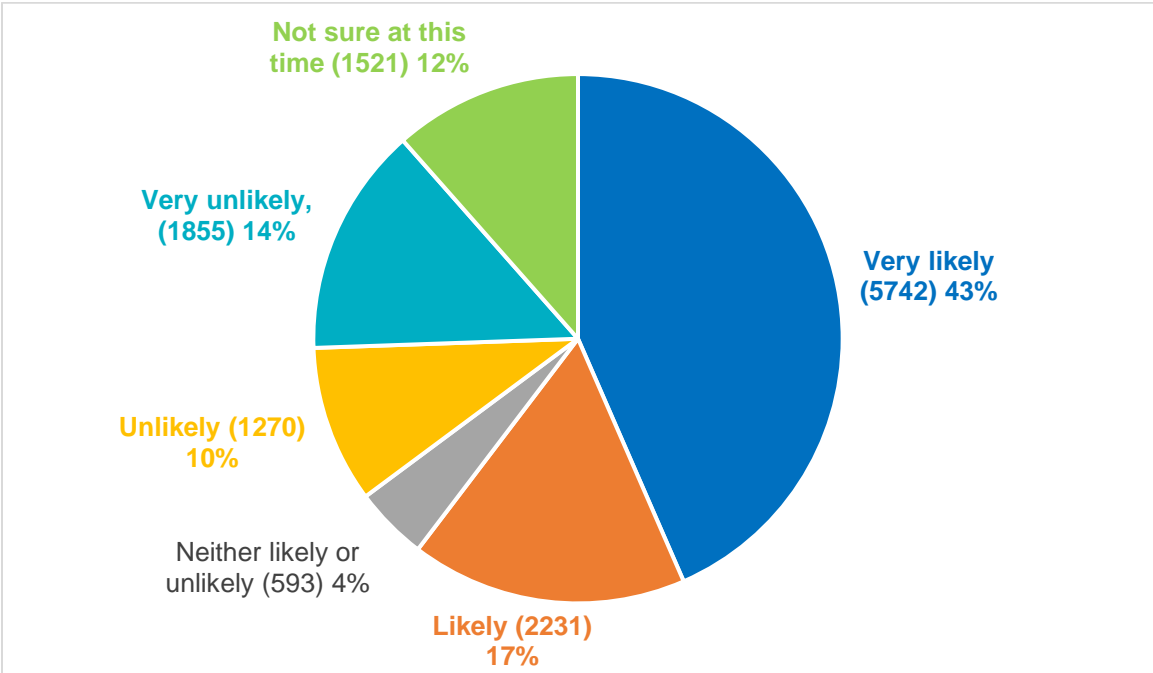
## Elementary Student Feedback Form Results

Parents and guardians who responded to the Elementary Student Feedback Form were asked to provide specific feedback on SCENARIO 1 and SCENARIO 2.

### Question – SCENARIO 1

In SCENARIO 1, the conventional school routine would resume. Schools would be open, and full-time instruction would take place in classrooms for all students, every day. NOTE: Enhanced public health protocols would be in place to help ensure student and staff safety and well-being.

If the Ministry of Education directs school boards to implement SCENARIO 1, how likely would you be to send your child(ren) to school?

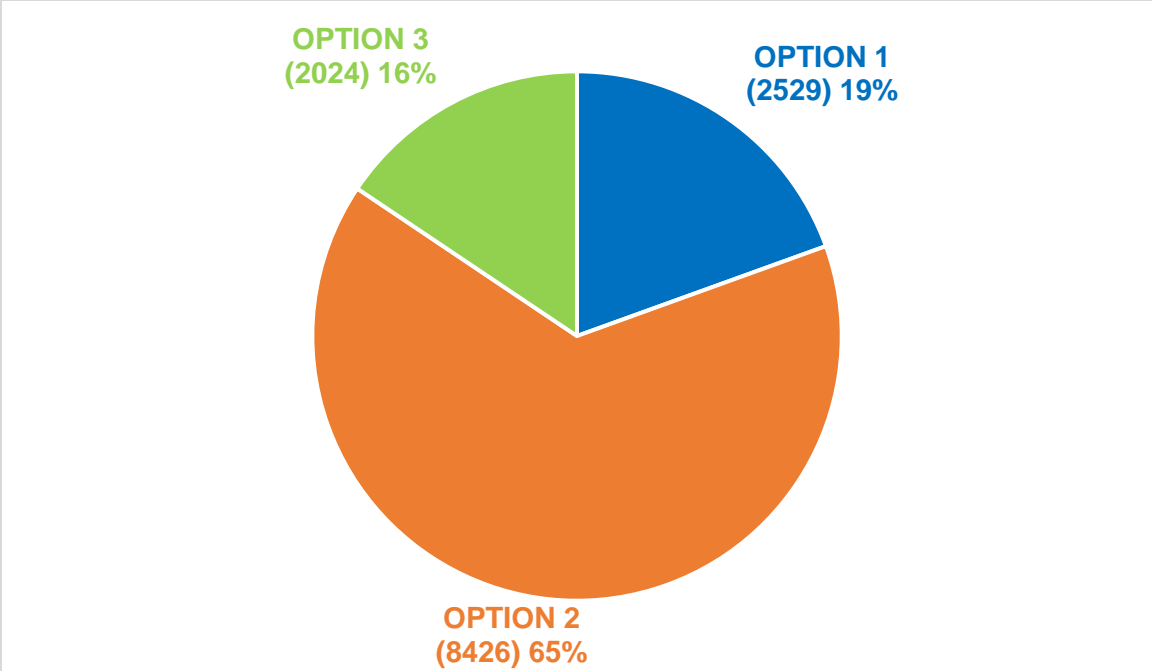


**Question – SCENARIO 2**

In SCENARIO 2, students would return to a modified school day routine. Classes would be divided into two groups (cohorts) of up to 15 students, and students would spend some time learning in school, and some time learning from home. NOTE: in this scenario, the school day could include a shortened day and/or modified bell times.

If the Ministry of Education directs school boards to implement SCENARIO 2, which of the following options would you prefer?

- **OPTION 1** - my child would attend school with his/her assigned cohort one week and learn from home the following week.
- **OPTION 2** - my child would attend school either 2 or 3 days per week, every week. On the days they are not at school, they will learn from home.
- **OPTION 3** - I would opt to keep my child(ren) home and have them participate in remote (distance) education.



**Other Feedback – Common Themes**

Parents were invited to share other feedback in an open-ended question. **5967 comments were submitted.**

[Click here to view all responses received through the Elementary Student Parent Feedback Form.](#)

The following are the most common themes identified within the responses.

**Students need to be back in school (37%; n=2197)**

Many parents expressed the need for students to return to learning at school. The rationale provided included:

- Financial burden on families and parents who need to work (n=547)
- children need to be at school for their social/mental health well-being (n=390);
- children/youth need routine and structure (n=81);

**Examples:**

*“Kids need to return full time this coming September.”*

*“I think the risks of not resuming a normal pre-covid schooling system are greater than the benefits. Covid is not prevalent in children, and recent research shows that children are not likely to transmit the virus. Time to bring back some normalcy to our kids!”*

*“I would prefer a few full days a week. Having half days or earlier bell times would make it difficult for me to go to work. I'm a single mum and not working is not an option for me. However I am able to build my schedule with 3 days off a week and I can manage this around my child's school days.”*

### **Comments around distance/remote/online learning (20%; n=1167)**

A number of responses were focused on remote learning, and the need for improvements to the distance learning their child(ren) experienced during the school closure period (April -June, 2020).

#### **Examples:**

*“Obviously, I would prefer at school learning as having to help with schoolwork during the day is extremely difficult while still doing our jobs. If at-home learning is a must, I would suggest the teachers record a lesson and have the students work off of that. We had 2 different experiences with the 2 grades. 1 teacher adapted to the online learning very well and the other did not.”*

*“I would love to see our kids return to school full time. If this does not happen, I believe actual online "live" classes need to be implemented instead of just sending work for kids to finish. Working from home and being a teacher is very hard on everyone.”*

*“Online learning needs to be better. It needs to be more engaging and the teacher needs to be more involved with interactive lessons/conferencing with the students. Students who are at risk or have learning difficulties need more attention and more appropriate planning. Class sizes should be reduced And as a result, more classes/teachers should be added this year to accommodate the global pandemic. As working parents, it is just not possible to work from home plus have my own kids do distance learning successfully. This was very challenging and we did not find it to be effective. Not all kids are cooperative and willing to learn from home from us. It's just not the same effect.”*

### **Concerns around health and safety (17%; n=1005)**

A number of the responses received expressed concerns around safety. Within this theme, the sub-themes were identified:

- questions and comments around ensuring health protocols are in place and enforced (n=529).
- 284 parents/guardians indicated they would wait to send their child back to school until it was safe to do so (vaccine available, lower COVID numbers, etc.)

### Examples:

*“If the school reopens and children are required to wear a mask, then I would choose to keep my son at home. I’m ok for returning to conventional or modified learning as long as kids don’t need to wear a mask at school.”*

*“Having some days in school and some days off will pose a challenge for daycare with my family. I prefer distance learning until there is a vaccine and we can ensure that covid is not brought home.”*

### Childcare concerns and questions (8%; n=492)

A number of the responses received expressed concerns around safety. Within this theme, the sub-themes were identified:

- A number of respondents (n=258) commented that partial return to school would entail childcare for many families, which would mean children would be mingling, thereby defeating the purpose of smaller cohorts.
- Some parents and guardians expressed concerns around difficulty in finding childcare for the adapted scenario. (n=67).

### Examples:

*“I’m concerned about the increased cleaning (washrooms, lunch rooms, common areas) and if janitors will be able to keep up. From my own experiences, I recalled school having 1 full time janitor which won’t be enough for the Fall semester. Also, if students are expected to stay home on alternate days, their exposure to other people might not decrease because of babysitter/grandparents/family watching them on their “off” day”*

*“I don’t think this is a viable solution for both parents that work. Where would kids be on days not at school in daycare mingling with other kids? It does not make sense?”*

*“The Scenario 2 would not work for our household as it will create an issue with the daycare providers for the time my child is not at school.”*

## Secondary Student Feedback Form Results

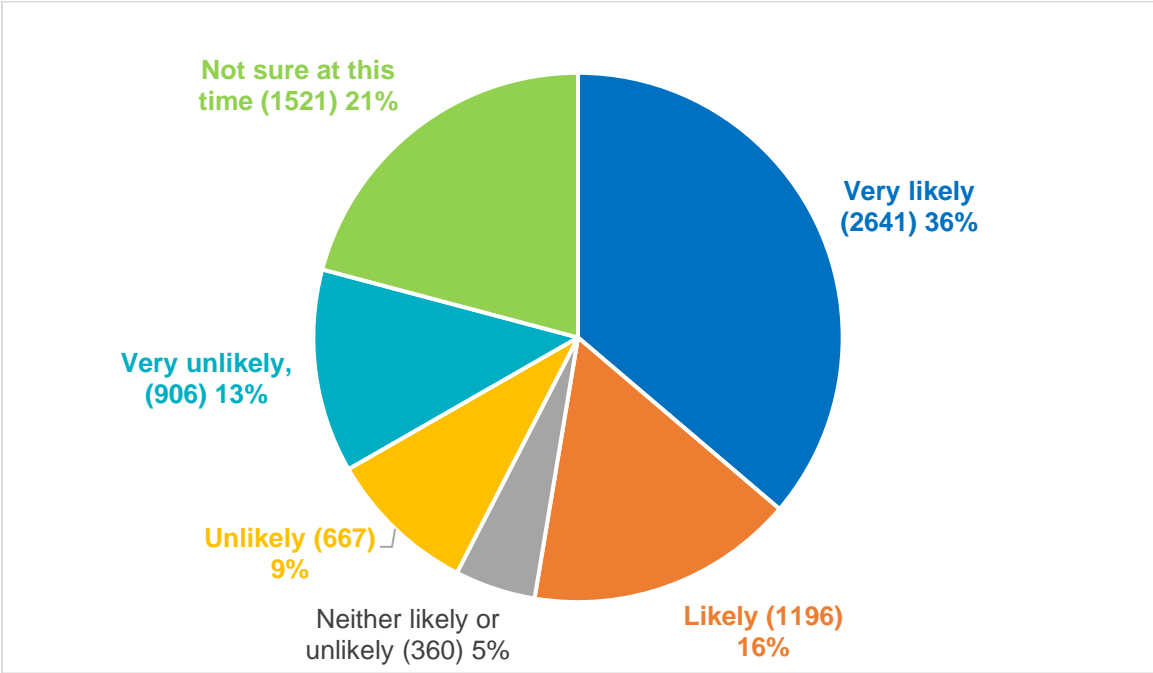
Parents and guardians who responded to the Secondary Student Feedback Form were asked to provide specific feedback on SCENARIO 1 and SCENARIO 2.

### Question – SCENARIO 1

In SCENARIO 1, the conventional school routine would resume. Schools would be open, and full-time instruction would take place in classrooms for all students, every day. Enhanced public health protocols would be in place to help ensure student and staff safety and well-being. NOTE: in this scenario, the school day could include a shortened day and/or modified bell times.



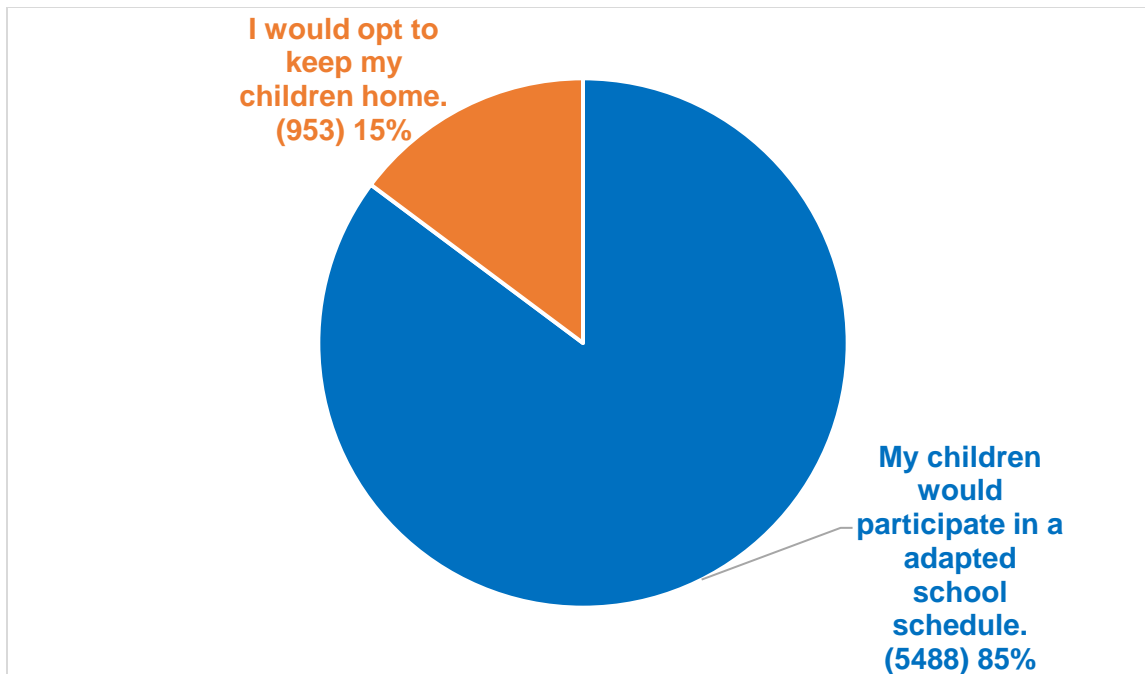
If the Ministry of Education directs school boards to implement SCENARIO 1, how likely would you be to send your child(ren) to school?



**Question – SCENARIO 2**

In SCENARIO 2, students would spend some time learning in school within a group (cohort) of up to 15 students, and some time learning from home. At the secondary school level, schedules and delivery models would need to be modified to limit contact between students outside of their assigned cohort. We are currently exploring a number of timetabling and delivery approaches that will allow us to achieve the goals of social distancing and cohorting at the secondary school level. NOTE: Parents who do not wish to send their children to school should schools re-open, may opt to keep their children home and have them participate in remote (distance) instruction.

Please indicate your plans for September, if the Ministry of Education directs school boards to implement SCENARIO 2.



### Other Feedback – Common Themes

Parents were invited to share other feedback in an open-ended question. **2788 comments were submitted.**

[Click here to view all responses received through the Secondary Student Parent Feedback Form.](#)

The following are the most common themes identified within the responses.

#### Students need to be back in school (72%; n=2000)

The majority of the responses submitted expressed the need for students to return to learning at school. 276 responses indicated a clear preference for a full return to conventional school setting, while 66 respondents expressed a preferred for a hybrid (adapted) approach to return to school.

Within this theme, there were a number of sub-themes identified, including:

- my child needs to be in school because he/she does not do well with remote learning (n=1114);
- children need to be at school for their social/mental health well-being (n=284);
- children/youth need routine and structure (n=51).

### Examples:

*“Children need to get back to school in person. Please make every effort to get them back into the classroom!!!”*

*“The last few months of this past school year demonstrated that it is essential for my son to work in a classroom/in school setting. An in classroom/school setting provides learning with peer interaction, collaboration and support.”*

*“Learning at school is the best way to learn properly, virtual learning does not provide the quality education that students must acquire.”*

### Concerns around safety (25%; n=685)

A quarter of the responses received expressed concerns around safety. Within this theme, there were a number of sub-themes identified, including:

- questions and comments around ensuring health protocols are in place and enforced (n=370).
- 159 responses indicated they would wait to send their child back to school until it was safe to do so (vaccine available, lower COVID numbers, etc.)
- Some respondents expressed concern that the student population in their child’s school is already overpopulated, making social distancing more difficult. (n=30)
- Additional comments (n=20) spoke to perceived challenges with enforcing health protocols with adolescents.

### Examples:

*“I have a son with asthma and this is all assuming we continue with current or lower infection rates in Halton”*

*“The health of every child should come first and students should not be at school if there is not a vaccine yet. We need to think of how this virus could potentially spread if the students are carriers and coming into contact with others in their household, their extended families, neighborhood and vulnerable people at the school setting.”*

### Comments around distance/remote/online learning (22%; n=608)

A number of responses were focused on remote learning, with 211 respondents expressing that there would need to be improvements to the distance learning their child(ren) experienced during the school closure period (April -June, 2020). More than half of the comments (n=339) in this theme indicated that live (synchronous) instruction should be mandatory and consistent across all classes, schools. There were also some comments and suggestions around platforms and remote learning tools (n=58).

## Examples:

*“Remote learning needs to be restructured to be more effective. Just reading posts is not effective. An online connection with teachers and students would help.”*

*“Please make sure distance learning is improved from what students had from March to June. They need facetime lessons, information taught in depth just as they would in the classroom, appropriate assessment and timely feedback. There was a big discrepancy among high school teachers and it was very disappointing to see.”*

*“In case of having any distance learning scenario, we are looking forward to have a well structured program with full content, due dates, with activities and lessons we’ll thought in order not have gaps between school learning and distance learning.”*

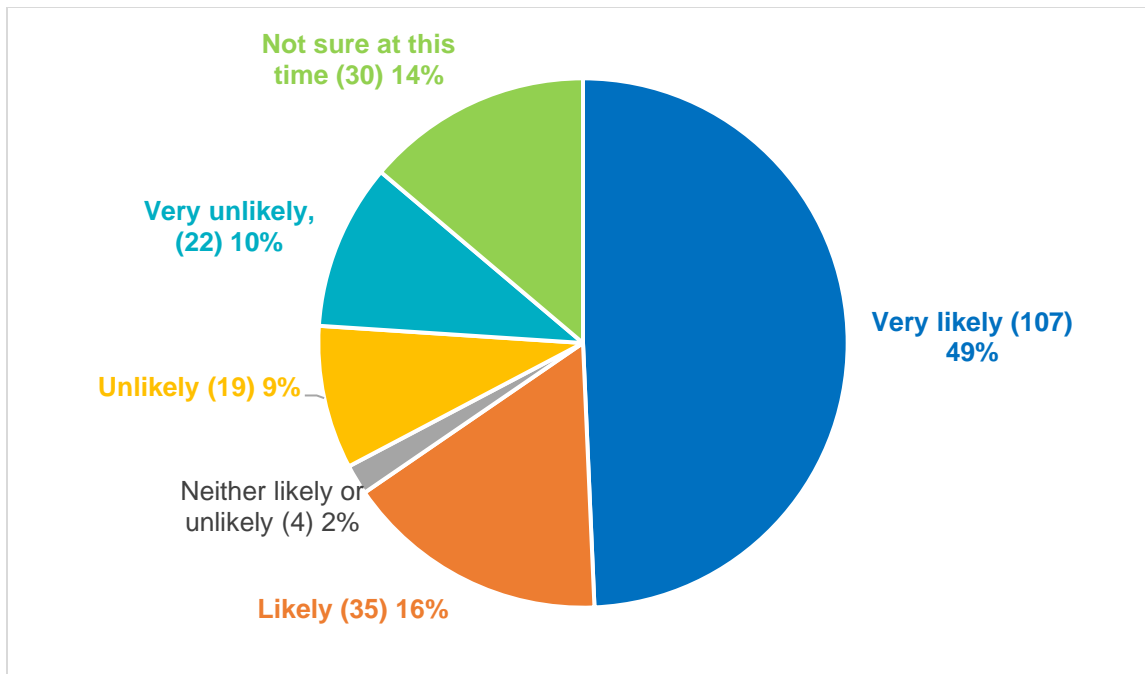
## Special Education Feedback Form Results

Parents and guardians who responded to the Special Education Feedback Form were asked the following question:

### Question

Where schools have smaller classes, such as congregated classrooms for students with special education needs, the Ministry of Education is encouraging school boards to offer regular, everyday timetabling. NOTE: Where these classes involve close physical contact between teachers, educational assistants and students, guidance will be provided for appropriate use of personal protection equipment (PPE).

If the Ministry of Education directs school boards to implement either SCENARIO 1 or SCENARIO 2, how likely would you be to send your child(ren) to school to participate daily in their self-contained class with their regular timetable?



### Other Feedback – Common Themes

Parents were invited to share other feedback in an open-ended question. **94 comments were submitted.**

[Click here to view all responses received through the Special Education Parent Feedback Form.](#)

The following are the common themes identified within the responses.

### My child needs to be back in school (47%; n=44)

The vast majority of the responses submitted expressed the need for students in self-contained special education classes to return to learning at school, citing as rationale:

- Family circumstances – work commitments, financial, etc. (n=13).
- My child needs routine/structure (n=10);
- Children need to be at school for their social/mental health well-being (n=6)

### Examples:

*“I am hoping that my child gets to resume a regular everyday school schedule. The lack of routine is very difficult and the ability to find someone to care for our child that requires 1 to 1 is very difficult as both parents work outside the home.”*

*“My son with autism and CP needs the routine of daily class and structured learning. Also, finding and funding care outside of school creates financial hardship for our family*

*and is not sustainable. It also impacts his quality of life as social interactions and participation in the community has become increasingly isolating due to the pandemic and associated restrictions.”*

### **Concerns for my child’s health and safety (11%; n=10)**

Some of the responses submitted expressed concerns around their child’s health and safety.

#### **Examples:**

*“Some of the students in the class have underlining Health issues as my son has a heart condition. How will PEP be used if the students amongst themselves do not understand to wear a mask? What will the safety protocol be for these special needs students?”*

*“Very concerned in regards to our daughter consistently social distancing. Using the bus, bathrooms, etc.”*

### **Prefer to keep my child in remote learning (10%; n=9)**

Some parents indicated a preference for keeping their child at home as the best way to ensure their health and safety.

#### **Examples:**

*“Under the present circumstances and with the view that safety is the main priority for vulnerable students, seems that distance learning is the only way for them of attending the 2020-2021 school year. Teachers could give parents instructions on how they can help their children at home.”*

*“Until there is a vaccine or no more cases come up, I think kids needs to be kept at home.”*

*“Would be scared to send at this time  
Too vulnerable.”*