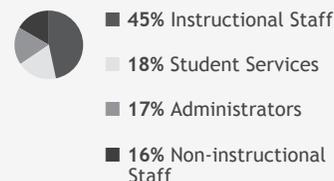
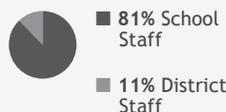
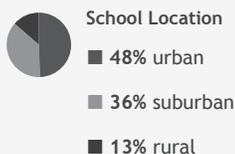


# SUPPORTING SAFETY AND HEALTH WHEN SCHOOLS REOPEN

In May 2020, we surveyed a wide network of school and district staff as the country experienced school closures as a result of COVID-19. Nearly 800 people<sup>1</sup> responded and reflected on the adequacy of current health supports, anticipated challenges upon reopening and resources needed to support the physical health, mental health and well-being of their educational communities. The results are clear: for students to truly bounce back academically from these unprecedented circumstances, school reopening plans must address the holistic health needs of staff, students and families.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE



## What do schools need to reopen?



**Safe school environments** with guidance on implementing public health best practices



**Access to resources** related to implementing best practices in physical health, mental health and well-being



**Increased support staff**, including nurses and Specialized Instructional Support Personnel



**Increased prioritization of mental health and well-being**



**Opportunities to build relationships and process emotions** related to COVID-19 and returning to school

## CURRENT HEALTH SUPPORTS

Percentage of respondents who feel they have adequate resources to support the physical health, mental health and well-being of:



STAFF  
~40%



STUDENTS  
~40%



FAMILIES  
~25%

## Anticipated challenges\*



85%

Limited physical space for physical distancing



56%

Lack of materials for proper health practices



46%

Lack of info on proper health practices



40%

Lack of time to focus on health priorities



37%

Difficulty engaging & connecting with families on health efforts



21%

Lack of knowledge about how to design & implement health initiatives

## What do **staff** need?\*

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

**94%**

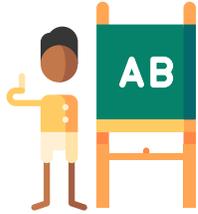
Safe environments for common staff areas

**83%**

Instruction in public health best practices

**61%**

Signage to promote public health guidelines



### MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**59%**

'Soft start' to prioritize relationship building

**47%**

Staff involvement in planning

**43%**

Opportunities to process emotions

## SILVER LININGS

Even in the face of adversity, respondents identified a number of positives that came from the pandemic's effects on schools. Common themes included:



More time to connect with family and community



New virtual learning strategies, cross-school collaboration and parent involvement in learning



Better utilization of technology and innovations in distance learning



More appreciation for teachers, schools and education



Better practices for school safety and hygiene



Prioritization of mental health and well-being of staff and students

## What do **students** need?\*

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

**81%**

Safe environments for meals, instructional time & recess

**50%**

Instruction in public health best practices

**35%**

Increase in school nurses



### MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**52%**

Opportunities to process emotions

**44%**

Increase in student support staff

**43%**

A focus on trauma-informed approaches

## What do **families** need?\*

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

**85%**

Instruction in best practices to create a safe home environment

**74%**

Resources to support physical activity & healthy eating

**56%**

Support in applying for school meals & safety net programs



### MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

**58%**

Expanded access to student support staff

**54%**

Resources to help children readjust

**50%**

Referral pathway for families in need of support

Visit the [Kaiser Permanente Thriving Schools website](#) for more information on these results and our efforts to support schools and districts in planning to reopen.

\* Percentages do not add up to 100% because respondents were asked to choose up to 3 responses.  
 † The survey received 876 initial responses and 777 were included in the analysis.