



The Special Needs Advisory Committee of LBPSB - SNAC reached out to its members, email list, followers on its facebook page and in facebook groups for parents of children with special needs asking their opinion on the reopening of school's based on the press conference of April 27, 2020.

****Here are the responses we have received up until April 30, 2020 at 8pm****

Here is a copy of the letter we sent our email list - please see the following pages for all the responses

Good Morning,

We are reaching out to parents of children with special needs today to receive feedback from you regarding the Minister of Education's decision to begin to reopen schools in Quebec in the coming weeks. If you viewed or read about yesterday's press conference you learned that he listed students with special needs and vulnerable students as the top reason for reopening schools indicating that our kids are unable to go without formal education and socialization for 6 months.

I am writing to ask your opinion.

Do you plan on sending your elementary school child with special needs / daycare or preschool child with special needs back to school based on the press conference of April 27? Do you have any concerns about sending them back to school?

Please note: It was announced that is not mandatory to send your child back to school when it reopens. Parents will make the decision based on their family situation.

To view what support measures that the ministry has listed to support students and staff as of April 27 you can go to the website here :

<https://www.quebec.ca/.../mesures-de-securite-pour-les-trav.../...>

SNAC has recently created a Facebook Page where we posted this question late last night, and responses are flooding in.

Please feel free to view our page and the responses directly.
<https://www.facebook.com/SpecialNeedsAdvisoryCommittee/>

When you have a moment we would love to hear from you.

We will be compiling the answers (without names). We would love to hear your opinion and concerns (if any).

Thank you very much for your time.

Email Responses - 26 received

***Please note we have removed all names to maintain privacy.**

Email response 1

I am not sure. I am not back at work full time (I work 3 days a week outside the home). That will be a big deciding factor for me.

I do feel that 3 days a week he is not doing anything productive at home. But he is definitely not suffering.

He is not going to enjoy going back to school. I think putting him back in 5 days a week would be rough.

I don't know what the plan is, but I hope they start with small groups. Maybe alternate days. And have a lot of teaching on hygiene.

I am not sure about him understanding (remembering) social distancing and the last thing he needs is to be made to feel anxious. He has issues following his classmates already.

As for risk, my son lives with 3 adults who are essential workers, so we hope to have kept it out of the house so far.

It would be a shame if he brought it in the house. But I expect he would be the least careful out of the 4 of us. At least we are not seeing the grandparents yet.

Will I be able to see the results of the poll on the facebook page?

Thank you,

Email Response 2

My son with special needs is in High school, so it is not an issue but my younger son who also has some small learning issues is scheduled to go back on May 19. I am very undecided about sending him back to school.

Email Response 3

I do not intend to send my son back to school. Social reasons are a big deal to me but not when there are 5 weeks left of school and someone could possibly die because of it.

Email Response 4

Good morning,

Hoping you are well. My kids are no longer in elementary school, but I will give you my two cents worth anyway.

Because I did not delve into the topic so as to fully understand why children with special needs specifically would need to return, I do not fully understand the reasoning behind it. However, whatever that reasoning may be I personally would not be sending my child back at this time. We've got twice as many cases as Ontario with nearly half the population; at this time I feel it is still too risky. Having said that, I will admit that it is easier for me to say since I am not working at the moment! I feel for the parents who are stuck with not much of a choice!

Best regards and good luck,

Email Responses 5

Hi,

Hope you and your family are staying safe and well. Thank you for taking initiative for this opinion poll. I am not a Facebook user, so I am sending you my response by email instead.

My autistic son is in grade 3 and his younger "neurotypical" brother is in grade 1. Although I would LOVE to have a little respite at this time, for my family in particular, going back to school on May 19th is problematic. I am not very concerned about the children getting sick since it seems like younglings' symptoms are mild to non-existent, but more that they will harbor the virus and will infect my husband and I who are both in the vulnerable population (I have asthma and my husband is immunosuppressed because of inflammatory arthritis). No matter how well the children have learned and are applying the social distancing regulations, it will not be obvious for the teachers and educators to make sure they follow them, particularly at recess and free play time. That also means no playing tag, no ball playing, etc. so I am not certain what advantage that will really be socially.

In addition, in our situation in particular, I don't think that going back to school for one month will be all that beneficial in terms of academics for my son. By the time the children get settled in to the new routine, possibly with different teachers, I am not sure how much learning will actually get done. Plus, it appears that the work has been/will be optional. Some continued teaching can be done at home, even though the summer, to make sure that they don't lose their learning abilities.

That's my 2 cents worth. 😊 Honestly, I think there actually won't be a return to school in May since I think there will be a lot of resistance from the different unions. But then again, one never knows.

Email Response 6

Hi,

Thank you for your message.

As of right now, I don't plan on sending my children to school in May. I understand the need for structure, and that some students are vulnerable at home, but as someone with a chronic illness I'm worried that the virus will come into our home and complicate life even more. I have masks for my kids but will they wear them all day at school? Not likely. The teachers will not be equipped with protective gear either.

The health of our family is more important than schooling at the moment. My plan is to continue whatever form of homeschooling that I can over the summer.

Thanks again,

Email Response 7

Thanks for asking and I would prefer not sending my son back to school for the following reasons:

1. It would be difficult for them to keep social distance, in the class, while playing and on the school bus;
2. In case of being exposed to the virus, considering my health status, it will be dangerous,
3. We don't want to take chance and bring our colleagues to the potential risk of exposing to the virus as they have seniors at home, and one of my colleagues is pregnant.

With regards

Email Response 8

Hello,

Thank you for reaching out. My replies to your questions are as follows:

Do you plan on sending your elementary school child with special needs / daycare or preschool child with special needs back to school based on the press conference of April 27?

Most likely No, but not fully decided. I am able to work from home so I'm not under pressure to send my child back.

Do you have any concerns about sending them back to school? Yes, definitely, there is still much to learn about the virus. I worry about his health and safety as well as that of the staff and the increased risk to the household.

I'm also concerned about my child's education, and would appreciate more supports and materials. I'm ensuring there is some school work being done at home 5 days per week, but it could be improved upon.

Email Responses 9

I will NOT be sending my kids (they use the daycare facilities at Christmas Park as they are at Summit School) mostly because change is hard enough on kids with ASD and making such a huge adjustment for 4 weeks with all kinds of new rules just won't fly (and will create much more anxiety than keeping them home). I could go on and on but it's that simple. I am surprised at Mr. Legault for stating that this is for the benefit of students with special needs for the above mentioned reason and so many other reasons.

By the time everyone figures out how to make this work properly (if it does) it will be early June and the last day of class is June 19 - what's the point?

I feel like this is all being done to re-open the economy rather than for the benefit of our children (it will remove the barrier and allow parents to go back to work). It would have made more sense to start with high school students who are still low-ish risk (still TBD) but can distance themselves better.

Also, I feel for the teachers who will have to navigate through this and have been given very little guidance thus far.

Email Responses 10

I am not sure if I would send my daughter back to school. She has ADHD and some learning disabilities, but the concern is for myself and stepfather as we both have health conditions. I am waiting for our doctor to call me and give her opinion. Once I have that, I will sit with her father and step father and discuss. How would Riverview and Verdun do this? Would the Riverview kids go to Beurling as high school students are not returning to class until September? Verdun elementary would be too crowded otherwise I would think.

Email Responses 11

I talked to our family doctor and she said not to send her to school, that she would not recommend anyone to send their child back to school this early.

I think my daughter should be able to get work online from teachers, speech and language therapy, and resource team. She purchased her own Chromebook and has it with her, even when she goes to her father every other weekend.

Riverview has pre kindergarten to grade 4 in Verdun Elementary right now. It has been like that since we flooded January 2019. Grades 5 and 6 have been in Beurling since then as there was not enough space for all of Riverview in Verdun Elementary. So I am curious to see how this situation would be resolved as Riverview building is still not open.

So I will not be sending my daughter to school having talked to our doctor and her father and stepfather. She will be back in September as long as the risks have decreased.

Email Responses 12

For my opinion I don't agree with kids going back, as my daughter immune compromised I personally would refuse all in school activities. However both my kids are in high school now, so it doesn't apply to me. Do we know however how the high school students with needs will be accommodated?

Email Responses 13

I would think young children and depending on their need would not truly understand that they need to keep their distance when they see their teachers and friends. That would be my main concern. Would they keep their masks on? Keep their distance from others? Want a hug? That kind of stuff would concern me and I would not be sending my children if it was optional as I still think it is too early to be going back.

Email Responses 14

I am definitely not sending my son back to school in May. My son is not a guinea pig and I think that's how our government is treating special needs kids right now when they're saying that they specifically should go back to school, but they're hoping that others will stay home. Sending my kid back is not going to help him catch up to the other kids or with anything. He's been catching up more while staying home and working one on one with me.

Email Responses 15

Personally I was shocked by the government's decision to reopen in a few weeks. I was not expecting it at all and had just gotten my head wrapped around a return in September.

The current plan to return makes me feel anxious and worried for all those who may feel like they don't have a choice for employment reasons. This could open the door for employers to terminate staff because they are "choosing" to stay home. None of this is a choice.

The risk and anxiety it will cause staff and students, I believe, far outweighs any true benefits that may come from the return.

What I believe special needs families need is more support on a small scale. Why not allow families to connect with one or two other families at low risk who have also been isolating? This would provide some much needed social interaction for both parents and kids, and may also allow for watching each other's kids on occasion to allow for a few uninterrupted hours of work or just to re-energize. With this option, safer social distancing seems a lot more attainable.

All that to say, unless some very clear and realistic precautions are put into place, we will not be sending our kids back on May 19th.

Email Responses 16

My daughter is in high school but if schools were to re open u would absolutely not allow her to be used as an experiment for the government!! She would not go! I work in the medical field. We used to prepare lifesaving IV antibiotics to patients. Now my companies business is almost 80% comfort measures. For those that don't know what it is, is I am sending medications that last 24 hours so people will die without pain. Everyday the patients are getting younger and more of them. Today we served 52 patients with these comfort measures!! The number of covid patients in Quebec has not stabilized but going up! The Jewish hospital is preparing a whole new wing for new Covid patients. In lasalle the jacque Lemaire ice rink has been turned into a covid ICU equipped hospital. If the cases are going down, why do we need these new facilities? The answer is as Legault said it clearly, they are turning on the tap slowly, and will see what effect these new measures will have. This to me is a dangerous experiment using our children and staff as guinea pigs. This weekend 3 family friends died of Covid. I am a nurse by training (RN) and I used all the precautions when traveling, Lysol wipes, N95 mask ect. And I caught it!! I got admitted at

emerg In incredible pain, when the emerg physician told me I had covid 19 I told him how was it possible ? I had done everything to protect myself! I will never forget his answer and I think it's the best explanation. He said there are many many unknowns about covid. Yes you did everything right, you took all the precautions but one of the unknowns GOT YOU! So I can't imagine these students that don't even know what social distancing really is, that really probably don't use the proper hand washing techniques, that can't wear masks or won't know how to wear them or take them off properly! And the staff!! My goodness, nurses get training on how to put on and remove PPE. They have people supervising them when they are putting on and off....
I think i have said my peace.
Please be safe.

Email Responses 17

We at this time are leaning towards not sending our daughter back to kindergarten.

Email Responses 18

If my kids were still in elementary, I would not send them.
If high schools were to open, I may have sent my child in for a special day with special rules to follow, but that's it

Email Responses 19

My son is 16 so I don't have to make this decision now but I would not have been sending him, had it applied to him. He understands personal space but he has difficulty respecting it because he is very impulsive and reacts often without thinking. He also has some sensory issues so I doubt he'd wear any type of protective gear properly. I think seeing teachers in masks, etc. would feed his anxiety so all in all, I don't think returning to school under these conditions would be healthy for him. I've been diabetic since I was a kid, which means I have a pre-existing condition, so that's another thing I have to consider. I'm honestly not sure I will be sending my son in the fall, unless things are significantly improved by then.

I read an excellent letter to the Premier from a friend who works with special needs kids that pointed out how hard transitions are for them and how they are probably just now starting to adapt to being at home. So now we are asking they transition back to school and probably just as that starts to feel OK, we'll be sending them back home. Her point was that saying we are doing this for the benefit of special needs kids is not a fair argument.

I'd like to better understand what resources are available to parents who choose to keep their kids home until we have a vaccine or some type of reliable treatment. With all the talk about mutations and risks for kids or young adults who get it with few symptoms but then die of a stroke, I honestly don't know what we know about this virus. Some of this may just be speculation (I sure hope so) but if it's not then there are even more risks out there. With this many unknowns, I don't feel safe sending my son anywhere at this point.

That's my 2 cents. Stay safe everyone.

Email Responses 20

Thank you for reaching out to ask our opinions. As parents we always want to make the right decisions when it comes to our kids. My eldest son suffers from severe anxiety and has many challenges at school - homeschooling him with little contact from his school has been a challenge and I'm confident not very effective. My youngest son has severe asthma and my pediatrician has recommended that we consider keeping him home. That being said I'm leaning towards not sending the boys back. I'm sad and disappointed that their education will forever be impacted by this pandemic but as a parent their well being, their mental and physical health is what will pay the price by going back. We are fortunate to have regular driveway visits from our family and friends who all live within walking distance. I hope to see more online support for the parents who opt to keep their kids home out of fear of what this virus could still have on us. It's a delicate topic and lots of personal opinions - I respect everyone's point of view - thank you for allowing me to share mine !

Email Responses 21

Thanks for checking in.

I am leaning towards not sending my kids back now, and not sure about September either. One of my boys is already vulnerable to respiratory infections and is at risk. He has been on a preventative treatment for 6 weeks now. That means exposing any of us puts him at risk.

I understand that opening schools is necessary for parents to be able to work. We are already highly taxed and we will be paying for this crisis for decades...

On the other hand - there is no way to put adequate safety measures in place in a school. This virus is highly infectious, and already mutating (meaning we may be able to catch it twice). It travels up to 3 meters and stays active on most surfaces for hours and days. Kids touch everything. I can't imagine how they will manage PE or recess (shared equipment, running/bumping), music class (shared instruments!!!), and a general class environment in which kids touch the same door, sharpener, desks etc. Just the locker area is a nightmare.

Kids will not be (cannot be) wearing masks at school safely.

Some teachers will wear masks which will only scare some kids... and even that won't protect them as they don't have training on how to use them or sufficient equipment to respect norms.

The return to school will be stressful for staff (and parents) and kids will feel this. There is no returning to normal as normal isn't possible... My autistic son is truly alarmed at the complete dissonance between what he knows about the virus (studying it has been one of his pastimes the last few weeks) and all that we are being asked to set aside, quite suddenly, to participate in this back to school experiment. He has been sleepless and anxious and confused.

On another note - now that dates for return to school have been announced, many employers will be expecting parents to return to work (or shift from working digitally to office). Refusing to return to normal work conditions will put jobs at risk. For parents of special needs kids - this is more the case because of the energy and time we already need to reserve for our kids. My job will definitely be in jeopardy as I insist on continuing to work from home.

Moreover, we have several friends and family in Europe who have been Covid + in the past few weeks. We just lost a dear cousin to this virus three days ago (she was only 48 and only left the house once to go buy her mother's medication... she had no known previous conditions). They all told me the same thing:

this virus is hell. Even for those who survived, it took up to 3 weeks after discharge to feel relatively normal. They all seem shaken by the whole experience.

Finally - choices at this point come down to what we value. I hear politicians the world over talking about a managing the flow of patients coming into hospitals and target mortality rates. Charts and numbers... For us - every death is tragic. Every case is someone's mum, sister, brother, child, dad, grandparent - taken too soon. I don't mind working harder and longer (and paying even higher taxes) to avoid losing another life.

My final question is: what is the government planning for parents who chose to keep kids home?

Latest article out of Europe regarding Covid and kids: <https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/very-worried-britain-issues-alert-as-possible-new-coronavirus-syndrome-emerges-in-children-20200428-p54nqb.html?fbclid=IwAR2AWSXjQKlygwuJVamY0RUPi7GVe2x46mcfq8we0xd3r2NMKI1Ek8yr9MQ>

Email Response 22

It was a tough day here yesterday.

If my son was still in elementary, I would not be sending him to school. He was too much of a hands on kid and he would have been screaming at any kids who came close to him, Plus, my situation was different then also, I only worked an hour a day. I would not have put much thought into this. I know the reasoning behind this is to get people back to work. I think politicians in the government should lead by example and not have virtual meetings when they are asking children to go back to school.

As staff, I am really torn. I work at an elementary school with MANY special needs kids. Many of these kids are non-verbal and most of them are very hands on. I am pretty sure the child I am assigned to will not come in as he gets sick very easily and has missed many days already. At regular times, his mother would keep him home if she heard a virus was going around, so I doubt he'll be back. BUT, if he does come back, it is an impossibility to keep 2m away from him at school. He's non-verbal and needs to be calmed down using breathing techniques at a regular basis to avoid total meltdowns. He sneezes on me every day. From what I heard yesterday, we will not be given protection. I've made masks at home because my husband has worked through this and he wears my masks. The aides at our school regularly are getting sneezed on, wiping noses and dealing with body fluids every day.

My son is not handling yesterday news very well. He is 15 and autistic. He stays home alone when there are ped days and I go to work. No problem. He was already a little stressed and I've been keeping him busy with a long routine. He listened to the press conference with me. I made him stay quiet and listen until the end. At first he was upset about what was said about high schools. The main things he took away from the news conference - The work done at home is now mandatory and will be evaluated and this is not a vacation "I know this is not a vacation! You told me our vacation would probably be cancelled this year! They said nothing counts for marks! What is my science teacher going to do to me! It would be nice to see my history teacher again. What about French! How am I suppose to do Transmission (his work book) at home! My book is in my French class! At least my math teacher has been teaching us. But he said the assignments were all optional! And he said they didn't count for marks! And now they are going to count! They are going to fill up my day with classes and how am I going to do your list! Now I'm gong to have to do all the English assignments that were sent! What about drama! What about gym! I'm not going to have any time!" Then put these sentences in a loop.

Then he realized that I was going back to work. "I have to do all this alone! When you come home are you going to have to everything like dad (He has to strip, put everything in the wash and take a shower right away.) What's going to happen when you get sick! Do you really have to go?" And put this on a loop too.

So, I'm leaning toward not going or asking if there is some alternate way I can be useful. Right now I am a replacement of a person on maternity leave. The plan was this would give me the chance to be high on the priority pool next year for a full time job. It looks like I might have to give this up to make sure my child gets through this with the least amount of scars.

Take care everyone

Email Response 24

My kids are in highschool but I would not have sent them back had highschools reopened. There are too many unknowns and I wouldn't have the confidence that they wouldn't be exposed to the virus or wouldn't be inadvertently transmitting the virus to others. Our personal circumstances are such that our physical contact with the outside world is limited and there would be no benefit to our increasing our risk by sending the kids to school.

Since the school shut downs, my priority has been trying to provide them with a sense of security and the right balance of work and responsibility...that has meant different work loads for each of them. One is definitely more engaged and I have had to be ok with that to keep the peace and keep a happy home.



My son, who is definitely more engaged but much more at risk, was used to going to school all day, doing countless hours of work after school and going to tutoring 3 times per week. Under normal circumstances, this break would be fantastic as it would give a great deal of time to fill some of the « gaps » in his learning. But these are not normal circumstances so that isn't our priority right now. While I worry that he will pay the price next year as his class goes even faster because of the loss time, I have to make our mental health a priority; rather than providing the best possible homeschooling experience, which I am sure many parents feel pressured to do. We are very lucky that we can provide the support at home, I know that not all families can. Not unlike other families, I will do what is best for my kids. For us, that means keeping them home.

Stay safe and healthy everyone.

Email Response 25

It is my intention, if things do not degrade and a proper scenario can be laid out to send my 8 year old ASD kiddo back to school for a limited amount of time per day.

I would like to say that my family has not come to this decision lightly a family member has p-assed away from covid and my brother and his wife are respiratory therapist and para medic and have been in conversations with professionals way before the announcement. Here are the reasons why:

1. our child has deteriorated significantly in the confinement. lost skills, increased others including aggression which was never there before
2. increased panic attacks and anxiety
3. according to Montreal the covid units are at 25% capacity and therefore are prepared for extreme cases as best they could. the second wave is predicted to be worse and so I would prefer to have it before the over flow
4. I lost my job due to covid and when cerb runs out I will have to find another job which will put me at risk anyway and so I would rather expose my family slowly then all at once.
5. The long term goal of quarantine was never to end COVID but to give time to be prepared and not overwhelm the hospitals
6. the long term mental health cost for my child doesn't outweigh re integration on some level
7. most parents will not send their kids and so the amount of children exposed is going to be quite low

None of us Parents who are considering sending our children are doing it lightly and without regard for those working in the schools or our children's well being, I also think it is extremely unfair for anyone to think that the people who took this decision did it with the idea of guinea pigging our children. I think they have the best intentions to solve a complex problem in an unknown territory. I would like to see a solid plan of how they will manage kids, during class and recess etc. I would like to see a solid plan on how staff will be protected (PPE etc) but I do think that SOME children not all will benefit from this. I also applaud the government for making this OPTIONAL. NO one is forced back to school and I think this is wise.

No matter what I think that calm, prudence and kindness above all else is warranted here, from all angles and in every forum.

Stay safe everyone

Email Response 26

I absolutely would not send my kids back to school while we do not have a vaccine and treatment for COVID-19.

Despite the best intentions of the staff and administration I do not believe that there is any possible way they will be able to have the children maintain social distancing and proper handwashing protocol and safety measures at school.

The older elementary children are now going to be in our high schools for the overflow since there are only 15 children in a room. Who will teach the overflow children? The high school teachers who are supposed to start the online learning for the high schoolers?

Who will supply the masks and face shields for the staff and students? Will all the staff and children be tested before walking into the school? Are handwashing stations going to be installed everywhere? Classrooms don't have their own sinks and bathrooms.

Lunch staff, integration aides, daycare staff and bus drivers - the majority of these positions are held by people 50 and older. Even a large majority of administration, school receptionists are 60 and older. There was already a substitute teacher shortage, what on earth will you do now?

Will there be extra "danger pay" provided to all the staff since they are now deemed essential workers. For students with special needs - do you really think they will be able to take care of themselves for dressing, handwashing, feeding, toileting, handwashing -oh wait I said that again. In the best of days these "vulnerable students" as Mr. Legault puts it, require physical contact and support.

I don't see children with sensory issues being able to wear the masks at all. Lunch time and recess and hallway transitions will all be disasters. Our children have difficulty enough with transitions. To put them through this large amount where they will likely not even be with their teacher or their friends, or even in their class for 5 weeks... for what?

There will now be a term 3 report card ...so you are pressuring parents? We have the ability for distance online education. We just need to ensure that all students have access to the technology and the internet. We have heard daily for weeks, and rightly so, that we are safest at home. Families have been staying home, ordering their groceries online to be delivered, going on short walks, social distancing, staying away from extended family or friends, no birthday parties, no gatherings and now it is okay to put hundreds of children back in a school.

Our children - and our staff - should not be the guinea pigs to the government for COVID-19. When one child dies, who will take the blame? NO I will not be sending my children back to school until this pandemic has a vaccine and a treatment. Stay home. Stay safe.



SNAC Facebook Page Responses - 28 received

Facebook Page Parent Response 1

I'm an integration aide and the mom of a 10yr old who is autistic. I don't want to send him back, but I've got to go back to work! If I can keep him home I will.

Facebook Page Parent Response 2

I find it unthinkable that the government of Quebec is throwing all the responsibility onto the local school administrators to deal with a situation that they are causing BY OPENING THE SCHOOLS PREMATURELY - when such a measure is not at all in anyone's best interests, especially when there are other options available - to support our children in a much more humane and secure manner in these unprecedented circumstances, - options which have apparently not been explored and do not seem to be being available as viable/workable solutions.

Without hashing out all the facts and such, I would like to simply post a link to comments made by the Prime Minister of Canada recently, which relate to the danger of acting too hastily in this situation, - namely his comments regarding "We are in the middle of the most serious public health emergency Canada has ever seen, and if we lift measures too quickly, we could lose the progress we've made". In fact, if that occurs, a new wave of the epidemic will thrive and we all know what would be next accordingly.

If the Lester B Pearson School Board has ever STOOD UP for its members and beneficiaries ... now is the time to do so - before more harm is caused by inexperienced, immature and seemingly blindsided individuals taking decisions which might cause a very serious harm to the school board population at large. Just because someone says the water is safe ... does that mean that we should all jump from a 50 foot cliff into uncharted waters ... ?

We are dealing with children and families here we are dealing with the entire LBPSB family! What say you?

<https://www.msn.com/.../pm-says-canada-not.../ar-BB13kcXL...>

Facebook Page Parent Response 3

My son had ADHD and Anxiety, he doesn't handle changes in routine very well so this would be meltdowns and anxiety attacks for him. His home room teacher will be gone...its too much worry and adjusting for 1 month

Facebook Page Parent Response 4

What am I even reading here, this is absolute madness. "Anyone who develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19 during the day will be isolated in a room until they leave the school."

But current research indicates that after infection, most people display symptoms after 4-6 days, but they are contagious after 1-3? So after you've been infecting people for 3 days, then we take action? And what about the decent chunk who never display symptoms?

Unless I'm misunderstanding the data, the basic math says that the infection doubles every 2-3 days. These are kids we're talking about, they're not all going to be able to perfectly follow social distancing and hand washing protocols. They're not all going to be able to not touch their faces. Especially with special needs kids, they going to be able to just not touch things (and each other) all day.

Exponential growth is hard to wrap your head around, but doesn't this mean that after all of this is put together, that if one person gets sick, after a month 2,000 kids and staff could be infected? Unless protocols are perfectly followed? By children?

Right, and the evidence points to covid-19 being fatal in 1 out of every 1000 cases found in kids, with estimates indicating perhaps 50% additional cases where kids don't show symptoms? Like, if nobody gets sick, your kid gets a month of school. If not, roll 4 dice for every kid infected and if they're all 6es they die? That is a really shitty bet.

There's no real treatment yet, new cases aren't even trending down. The measures we've taken so far are only good enough to stop it from growing out of control. And the plan is to what, send the special needs kids in there and wash every pencil and see how it goes? This seems incredibly reckless. Like, amazingly dangerous.

Am I missing something here? This seems untenable right on its face.

Facebook Page Parent Response 5

No because my husband is immunosuppressed.

Facebook Page Parent Response 6

Absolutely not. My child is autistic and in grade 1. I cannot trust him to social distance without constant supervision, even getting him to reliably wash his hands is a fight every time. It would be irresponsible of me to send him back as it would be difficult to get him to comply and he would put himself and others at risk. Learning at home has been a struggle for us because home is his rest space and he is resisting any change to that. But sending him back to a school environment where everything is different from what he remembers will cause a crisis situation for him, his teachers and us.

Its unfortunate that other kids returning when he cannot will also undo all the hard work the staff at his school have done this year to show him he is part of his class group and expected to follow group rules. He will feel othered again. I'm afraid he will fall behind.

As a parent, all the materials we've been given as "optional" work to help our kids keep their progress has been much more overwhelming than helpful. What would be helpful instead would be clear, short and simple activities to keep up their skills in various subjects. Parents do not know how to plan lessons, faced with 40 web sites, we are as overwhelmed as our kids.

Facebook Page Parent Response 7

My son has ADHD and anxiety. The school does not have the staff to properly aid him. Now with this pandemic the government thinks they are doing us a favor opening up the schools for 1 month? It takes time and preparation to properly prepare special needs kids. This is a joke and a slap in our faces. I am once again outraged and our Quebec government completely letting down families with special needs. My 2 asd boys will NOT be going. Make no mistake about this. This is not about helping kids with special needs this is about getting people back to work. The Quebec government is using your school as a daycare

Facebook Page Parent Response 8

My 11 year old with ASD and anxiety will be going back to school as soon as he's allowed. For him, the structure and routine of school is very important and we're not able to give him that at home, no matter how we try. Am I worried about the disease? Yes, of course I am. But I have to put my faith in what the govt is doing, and hope that is the right thing.

I much prefer a slow, gradual start up of school as opposed to a big 'boom' in September. It will hopefully give the schools time to explore and implement new routines and rules for what is definitely going to be a different world when this pandemic is contained.

Facebook Page Parent Response 9

I would have really felt much more secure had our gov implemented quick ONLINE COURSES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS SCHOOL YEAR - and if they had of commenced them within a week of the school closures It's not as if we had no prior notice after all the other places struck by Covid 19! Better to be safe than sorry. Now all they proved is that WE LOST A MONTH OR 2 OF THE SCHOOL YEAR!

Facebook Page Parent Response 10

Scary time for all. I have two children attending primary school, my youngest in grade 3 who has Autism. He craves his regular routine and to see the familiar faces that would regularly make him feel safe and secure. Is this the right approach? I have no idea.

Facebook Page Parent Response 11

LBPSB TEACHERS ARE GREAT! 1,000% - but to put the local schools on the line to try to run a school (full of young children) like this sounds absolutely ridiculous to me? What are they thinking? Things need to be done safely. What if a parent unknowingly gets exposed to Covid 19, unwittingly gives it to their child, the child attends school and unknowingly transmits it to another child, who brings it back to their family? What then? I think this is being planned way too quickly. There's only 1 month left of school!

Facebook Page Parent Response 12

No way !!! My kid (19 with ASD) is super friendly and very affectionate.....impossible to keep him physically away from people !!! He a big hugger....nope nope nope !!!!
Plus these kids are usually not great at practicing personal hygiene on a good day....always have to remind them and hand guide a lot of them to get it donethey forget to cover their mouths when they cough and sneeze.....no way !!! Way too many germs being spread in a special needs school :(

Facebook Page Parent Response 13

with 20+ years involved in Human Rights at large, I can VERY SADLY SAY - that although my political opinions have always been expressed freely in the past (about those in Ottawa and Quebec city accordingly) - but this directive to start re-opening the schools at this time and in the manner as being proposed - is one of the most IRRESPONSIBLE - DANGEROUS and absolutely LUNATIC LIKE decisions I have ever seen any government take in my entire life! *And I have seen a lot believe me. Do we need psychiatric evaluations given to those in power now? Is that where this is going?

Facebook Page Parent Response 14

He is right special needs children need routine and structure as much as possibletoo much time away from school could result in very high levels of anxiety once they return to school and 6 months is a very long, but I do understand parents feeling a little hesitant to send in our kids with the present situation.

Facebook Page Parent Response 15

PROPER - limited, responsive and adequate ONLINE SUPPORT could be given in the circumstances. Perhaps McGill should be approached to get tutors in action asap.

Facebook Page Parent Response 16

I am happy about the several zoom meetings that have occurred with both of my child's elementary teachers and their classes since this madness began

Facebook Page Parent Response 17

I will be sending my 12 year old daughter. She is ASD with intellectual disability. She will need reminding to wash hands and keep distance but I'm hopeful that they will provide the kids with reminders. She's in a special school where there are already small class sizes and a good support structure. She is also a "healthy" child with now underlying conditions that help to make my decision easier. I have an older HS aged son with learning needs and I wish they would do a better job at online teaching for him. I agree with a mom who responded earlier saying that the government "suggested" learning they have sent home has

not been sufficient for him. He needs too much support from me to follow the program and ideas and it is very time consuming for parents to find the right learning materials for them online. This needs to improve

Facebook Page Parent Response 18

My 11 year old son has Autism and desperately needs to return. Unfortunately, his 8 year old brother is immunosuppressed and very high risk - our entire family must continue with our lock down.

Parent Response 19

I'm not sure how the added stress of children having to social distance in their classrooms, in the school yard, with their friends and teachers will be beneficial to them? Seems like this situation would increase anxiety in all and hinder any learning for typical and/ or atypical children.

Facebook Page Parent Response 20

The children have already been subjected to a lot of "different and abnormal things" due to this unique situation. The fact that the schools closed the way they did - may have protected the children from further stress and probably a lot of unexplained anxiety and emotional hardships. I agree this type of a return situation only proves (without a doubt) that those responsible (gov) have absolutely no idea of what is needed for children to have the environment necessary - to be able to learn in a relaxed and secure environment. If I wasn't worried before (after all the nonsense that the gov has caused in the past year or so) - I am definitely justifiably very concerned now!

Facebook Page Parent Response 21

yes I agree somewhat, - but to go back to a weird kinda, NEW SCHOOL ANTI SOCIAL ALMOST KINDA NEW ROUTINE for 4 weeks only - when the children have already began to and many HAVE adjusted to their new routine of staying at home SAFE SOCIAL DISTANCING - might throw the children off much more than some might think - as in another 4 weeks it will be another NEW REALITY STRANGE ROUTINE to replace summer camps :-)

Facebook Page Parent Response 22

My son would go back, having adhd and delayed learning disability he really needs his routine back and learn how to adjust to this new world sooner than later. Waiting until September to me makes no sense as it would not be any different than now. Expect for the fact more students would be going and hence making it more difficult on the system to manage it all. History has proven the second wave of viruses are worse than the first. So teachers, caregivers, day care workers, and general school staff would be exhausted come end of September trying to remind students of the new rules, and keeping everyone safe. In turn those who need help might not get it and fall through the cracks. We need to remind people that reality is we will never go back to what it was even with vaccine the government said, and learn to adjust to new change. Giving children who need that little bit extra the time now to be able to handle the new rules come fall would be extremely important.

his school reached out to his class as whole not specifically for him. His teacher has been amazing giving school books through google classroom for grade 2. Having an older child I haven't seen this for other grades at the same school. His teacher has been very interactive with the kids from the first day of school and never skipped a beat once school was closed. He has serve issues with transitions so I don't know how that would be with the new system. If he has a clear outline of what to expect things go smoothly.

Also if they stay in their class more often that would be easier on the teachers. As walking through hallway and staying still would pose problems for sure for any child with ADHD. I have spoken to other parents with children like my son at our school and they would be asking to limit the amount of times they have to go out of their classrooms.

Facebook Page Parent Response 23

yes but could prepare them for the new rule of social distancing. This would be in place for another year or so even with a vaccine they said.

Facebook Page Parent Response 24

Absolutely not sending my daughter to school, until we have a vaccine. Kids with ADHD and sensory issues cannot keep a mask on their face. My daughter gets skin rashes from fabrics other than cotton, she has to be reminded constantly to wash her hands, she constantly chews on objects and has anxiety and PTSD related to medical issues. She is so afraid to go back to school and possibly get infected and fall ill. There is no way I will trust anyone to care for her while I'm hiding at home trying to stay healthy so I can take care of her. We have been able to adapt well. Teachers are sending school work every week and we've found free tutoring. In this age of technology we can easily adapt to online teaching.

Facebook Page Parent Response 25

Thrusting the children into this Disney (possibly fatal) Wonderland and expecting them to understand the seriousness and reality of this - is in itself CHILDISH and EXTREMELY DANGEROUS .

Facebook Page Parent Response 26

Absolutely not. My son (10 with ASD) and my daughter (7 with ADHD) will not manage to effectively social distance in school (specifically my daughter). My son will spend his day anxious that he will catch it. With no protective gear in place for staff or students, we can not take any risks especially because my husband is immunocompromised. This is a terrible idea with the numbers still being where they are. 6 weeks of school isn't going to do anything for my son especially, who takes 3 months to get readjusted.

Facebook Page Parent Response 27

My daughter attends the endeavor program at Allancroft, is that one of the programs that will start soon also because it worries me to know how she is a hugger and she loves her friends. What do I do

Facebook Page Parent Response 28

I don't see how they can open special needs schools. No way to teach these kids social distancing ...brutal

Responses from some parents of children with special needs Facebook groups - 11 received

***Please note we have removed all names to maintain privacy.**

Facebook Group Response 1

No, I will absolutely not be sending my daughter to school.

Facebook Group Response 2

No. I know alot of other kids from my sons school that are not going either I was like STOP saying special needs students need to go back to get the support they need LIKE Yeah thats a joke. they dont help even though they are in school Im very fortunate at my sons school they do weekly meeting almost daily for kids to talk and discuss , she gave online work to do weekly. Support was 100 percent

Facebook Group Response 3

My daughter is in a chair, needs to be fed, and has a diaper. There would be NO distancing for her possible. So very easy pass for our family.

Facebook Group Response 4

The school was already struggling to properly teach my son before this with lack of ressources and funding! Every time he would repeat at the conference "these children need to go back " no what these and all children need is proper funding and ressources that are not available or non existing in most schools. My son will not be going back until the situation with covid gets more stabilized. Not putting him in any risk when he barely already gets the help and resources he needs at school.

Facebook Group Response 5

This is so confusing! Like everything in this Province... they should change the „Je me souviens“ to JE NE SAIS PAS “

Facebook Group Response 6

I know not sure of the help your child can get with the distancing part

Facebook Group Response 7

I am on the fence.
I need some more information on protocol and such.

Facebook Group Response 8

I have 2 girls who are dying to go back to school, both ADHD, one who is on a modified IEP.... I still won't be sending them before September... and even then, we'll see what happens with the waves 🙄

Facebook Group Response 9

Not sure. It will depend on the safety/hygiene protocols put in place on the bus and at school. My child is on an adapted bus but her driver is over 70. She is in wheelchair so he has to get practically in her face to buckle her in properly and any mask he wears will be ripped off.

Facebook Group Response 10

Nope! My 12 yr old son has severe autism and a low immune system..I'll wait it out and see what happens! I get there worried about the second wave hitting in flu season but 50% of my children are not strong enough to be experimenting in this way.. but we're not completely safe my husband works in an elementary school.. 😊

Facebook Group Response 11

I work in daycare my husband Bell (both essential service) so I would consider sending them part time but no definite decision yet.