

SURVEY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EMPLOYEES

This survey was posted on June 22, 2020.

Responses are still being accepted, so that number will climb. You may view it in real time in the Facebook group AR School Employees & Friends. Shelley Smith is the group admin.

Chart results are current as of 10:00 a.m., June 26th. There are almost 4,000 responses. Also a total of over 500 comments, those attached to this summary are a partial list.

The quoted paragraph below is the introduction to the survey for those participating.

“This survey is anonymous, no one will be able to see names or information of those who respond.

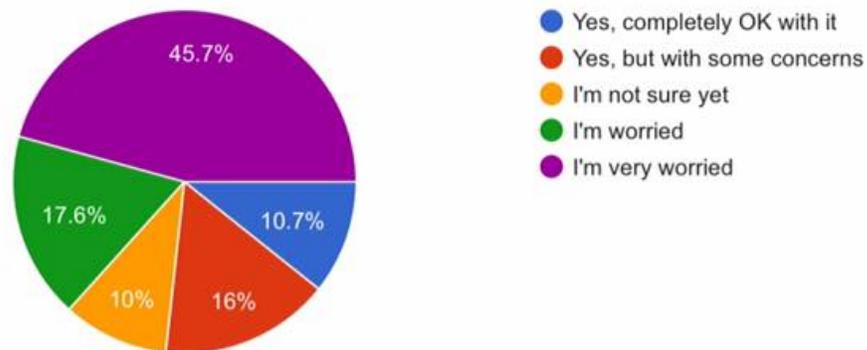
Please choose the response that best reflects your understanding of how decisions are being made in your district to prepare for the upcoming school year. At this point no one knows what the situation will be with the Covid19 pandemic by August or beyond, however plans must be in place to meet whatever challenges arise. Districts across Arkansas are working through this process during the summer. Survey compiled and distributed by Shelley Smith, admin of the Facebook group AR School Employees & Friends.”

2020-21 School Year

3,909 responses

1. Do you feel safe and confident in returning to school for face to face instruction?

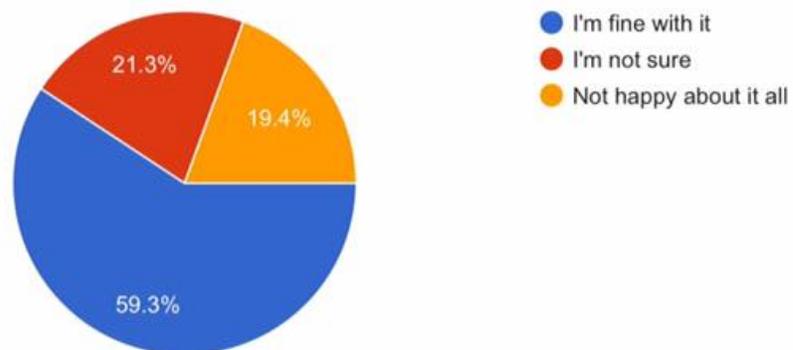
3,902 responses



2. How do you feel about teaching your content online if that is necessary?



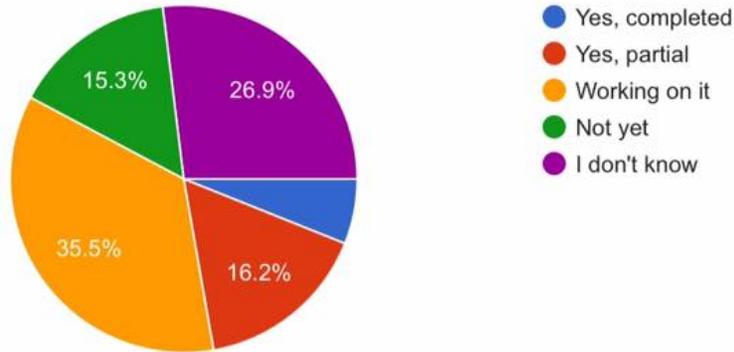
3,909 responses



3. Does your district currently have a plan (or at least an outline) in place for how to handle the 2020-21 school year?

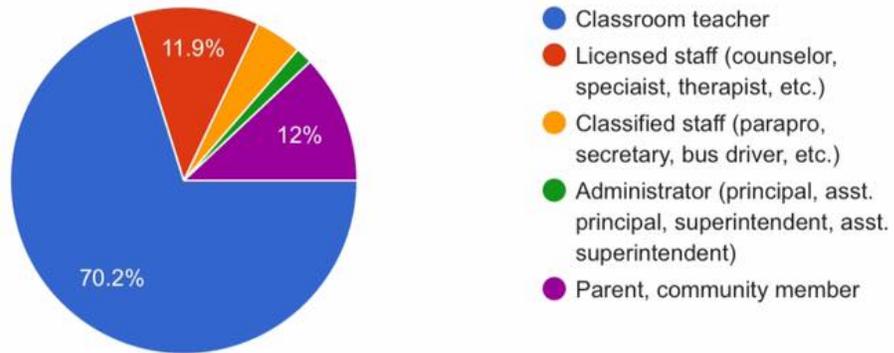


3,237 responses



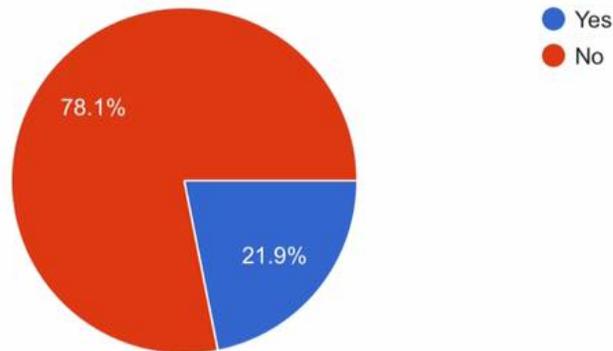
4. What is your position within your district?

3,518 responses



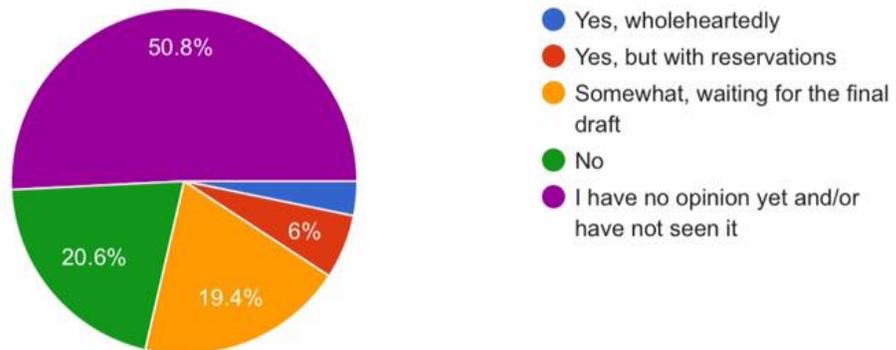
5. Were you surveyed or asked for your input during the decision-making process?

3,300 responses



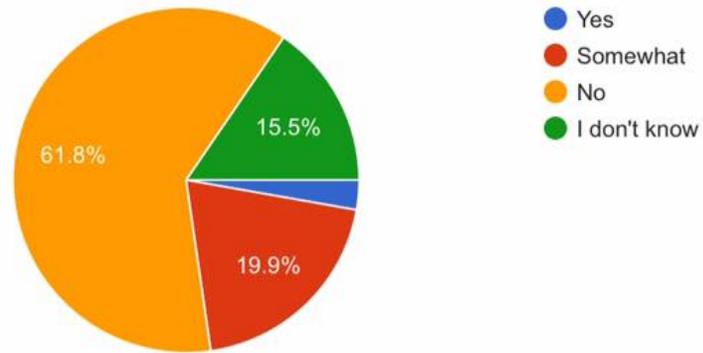
6. Are you comfortable with your district's plan at this time?

3,184 responses



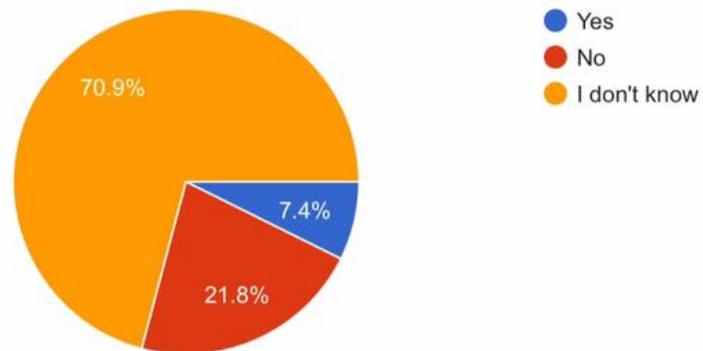
7. Are you satisfied that the plan published by the state department of education is adequate and fair?

3,751 responses



8. Does your district have a policy in place that gives you recourse if you do not feel safe?

3,141 responses



I learned about our district's plan when I read it in the newspaper. Zero communication. I feel like I'm not even part of the group of people being thought about, let alone asked for my opinion. Principal doesn't seem to know anything either. It's frigging ridiculous.

My mask is a courtesy to protect you, so others being required to wear a mask (including kids) is the only way to protect me. If staff and students are required to wear masks, I would feel safer. Moving forward with "business as usual" mindset is very concerning to me.

I don't feel like I have a choice. I can't afford to quit but I am high risk and going back could kill me.

My daughter is highly vulnerable so I'm also worried for her safety!

I'm a SpEd teacher. I'm concerned for the kids who have IEP's.

Our district did a survey but as always the survey didn't allow for true data. The questions are always worded so the data is skewed.

I'm worried about an increased workload, students without internet or parent support, my students getting accommodations and specialized instruction, and some of the state waivers. I fear Asa is going to force us back to school and we will have to choose between our health and our career. I'm also concerned about how the culture war over masks is going to play out in the classroom.

We are once again being treated disrespectfully. We are not professionals, we are going to be babysitters and lambs to the slaughter. I'm afraid for all of us.

Our district is acting like nothing has changed and we have already been informed that they are not reducing class sizes. We have been told nothing else.

I have questions about the waivers districts can apply for, like lunch, and number of students. Let's get those kids back in classrooms!

I am good with going back to school, but I'm not good with wearing masks.

I plan on this being my last year of teaching with 27 years in Arkansas I just do not look forward to trying to go longer with how things are headed.

When this pandemic began, parents and admin jumped up and said "teachers will be so much more appreciative!" These plans (not that my school has released anything or have we even heard from the superintendent twice throughout this whole thing) sound like teachers and staff are going have have double if not triple the work load!

I just want a plan by July 1st. In place and know what's gonna happen.

I have no idea how to prepare or even how we are supposed to deliver in person and virtual instruction at the same time. How is special education supposed to work???

We should not be having a full class of students daily. In elementary they won't have masks on either. It's only a matter of time before teachers and children get sick and possibly lose their lives. It's irresponsible.

I worry that masks will not be worn by staff or students. I worry the safety precautions will not be enforced. I worry that PPE and cleaners will not be readily available for staff or students.

We don't seem to have enough accurate information to determine how safe it will be to return and I don't think attempting to have school with all the safety precautions in place is feasible.

I am very concerned about what might happen if a staff member is exposed and needs to quarantine- will there be options for extended paid sick leave if someone in their household is sick? I am also concerned about students under the age of 10 not wearing masks.

I want to see my kids face to face- online was absolute torture. Almost 70% of my kids had to be chased via email, messenger, zoom, etc before doing their work and what they did turn in was honestly, crap. 30% were angels, read instructions and could probably enter college tomorrow (I teach Jrs). I lost hair and gained weight. If we go to online, either the district needs to hold parents and students more accountable or I will be finding a different job, after 11 years of teaching and a masters degree in my subject area.

School districts, for the first time in a long time, will need rules and consequences in place to make our educational environment safe.

My school did not ask for teacher input on our plan of action. In fact, it was published to social media before teachers were even told about the plan.

We must get back to normal.

Too many unknowns. And I know admin is facing a tough situation but many teachers are scared. I'm disappointed that my district has not said ANYTHING to the teachers about their plan moving forward this year. We are supposed to start school July 20, but have not been surveyed or talked to about what we will do when we return to the classrooms.

One thing that has come out is we will be forced to use our sick days before FMLA sets in. This is if we have to be out due to the virus. Which is something that was opposite of what was discussed at a previous ccpc meeting. We were told our sick days would not have to use our personal days. Also this waiver, that does not recognize the ccpc. Pretty much letting the

super.do what he wishes to do. We were told if we didn't like the expectations, let them know if we aren't coming back. This comes before we know what the expectations are.
Main concern is for the health of teachers/administrators who are older or have underlying health conditions.

I'm a high school sped teacher and so worried about my kids!

I will be required to teach online. I have internet but don't have the bandwidth to support adequate instruction. I currently drive to town and sit in my car outside of a coffee house in order to get WiFi.

I am high risk. Diabetic and high blood pressure. Also the caretaker of my elderly mother. Am very worried. Also worried about being quarantined if a student or teacher has Covid and having to use my only sick days.

I don't want to wear a mask. They serve NO purpose!!!

Too many people are adhering to the idea that children do not die from the covid-19 virus. Not only is this not true, but they are missing the fact that children are often asymptomatic carriers who can endanger teachers and staff easily. I feel like going back to the classroom this fall is an open-ended death sentence.

I have no info yet. What I do have is kids who will not be able to keep masks on all day, who tend to nose drip and put hands in their mouth or on pens/pencils/etc, and a very poor janitorial service. Just about every teacher in my building has an underlying condition.

I am so thankful our district has taken the time to form several committees of nurses, janitors, teachers, and admin to make a good plan. Principals went to building level leadership for our input to take back to final meetings. They aren't rushing like some districts. Trying to make sure every question is answered.

We should NOT be maxing class sizes at this time, nor should we be cutting teachers lunches and prep periods

I am certain we will spend the greater part of the next school year as distance learning teachers. At this point, I don't feel I know of or have adequate training to successfully accomplish this. Trading at the last minute will not allow me time to develop what my kids will need. I feel we are being encouraged to use hyperdocs, but have had no specific training on how to do this. I am EXTREMELY comfortable with my subject (math), but the nuances that go with this subject will be almost impossible to communicate online. Why is the state of Arkansas even considering testing next year? I believe all we will learn from our ACT Aspire scores is the importance of relationships to learning.

As an older art teacher with a disabled husband, I am concerned about safety. I will see all students including younger students without masks. My art room is small. We are elbow to elbow. None of this seems safe to me.

I do not trust our Department of Education based on actions they've done over the past several years. My fear is that they are using the Covid-19 issue to further erode traditional public education. The on-line program they are advocating for is questionable & has generated complaints in other states. The ADE has a terrible habit of not trusting educators in AR to do what they are trained, licensed, & well qualified to do.

I think a significant bump in pay and maybe help more with insurance would be nice considering. I'm a speech therapist whose office is a storage room. Not sure how I will social distance with groups of 4. Not sure how any of this will work. I would rather wear a face shield so the students can see my mouth. Do I have to buy it? I'm afraid to wait too long and then there's a mad rush for supplies and everything is gone. I know this is a fluid situation but I would appreciate to hear anything from our district so I can start preparing.

Although we were asked for input in one afternoon zoom session, that in no way means that we were listened to or that any of our suggestions or input will matter. Our admin does what it wants- what they see as best.

C.O.M.M.U.N.I.C.A.T.I.O.N. continues to be an issue in our district. Decisions are still being made and when one little decision is solidified, it is blasted to social media BEFORE teachers are told. Then parents reach out to teachers for answers and teachers are clueless. That happens often in our district even though we have repeatedly voiced our frustrations.

Worried about doing double and triple duty as a teacher this year. It's also hard knowing I also have my own children to take care of as well, if school is not in regular session.

Just wanted to clarify that I'm not happy about teaching my content online because the students I serve in my 1st grade classroom can't be successful in that setting. Poverty, ELL and no help at home. That coupled with the fact my district would not send home technology to our students, despite the fact that we are 1 to 1 k-12.

Teachers and staff members have family at home that may be vulnerable. We need to remember the whole picture. Also, we have not been told a whole lot. It's June 22, it's past time for school employees to know a plan of action.

Rural areas do not have internet access. Online learning will not work for students in these areas. No internet in Southwest Arkansas. Online learning will be very difficult to do.

I teach prek and am very worried how this will effect prek. Teaching prek online was not effective in my opinion. Very worried about outcome. Would like direction but my district is not offering any!!! We are a 7A school district and I just feel are being left completely in the dark.

I hope they take into account the fact that many teachers have underlying health issues.

I know our children need equity, they need an education, and they desperately need a safe place where they can feel loved and are fed. But teachers are yet again being left out of this conversation. My district has not asked any of us what we feel safe doing, and they won't until they have already decided. We might get a Google Form, at best, from them. I work with some amazing educators and support staff who are incredibly vulnerable to this new virus and in a building as big as ours there is no way to guarantee their safety. Faculty and staff's children and families are also being risked. Even if our kids were able to stay home with a distance learning option we are still coming home to them. We are being asked to serve as frontline workers without any options, plans for PPE, or additional hazard pay. Target is paying their employees who are facing exposure extra, Target. This time we have needs to be spent ensuring equity in online and distance learning, and finding an effective strategy for food distribution for our vulnerable kids. I'm scared for my family and no one seems to care.

I'm self-contained special education. I'm worried that my students will not be able to wear the masks all day. Wondering if I should send them to the other classes. I have one that is already sick so much. I have one that had a heart transplant not coming but brothers will.

Dr. Key stated that districts don't have to follow CDC guidelines and each district makes their own plans. Putting students and teachers in small classrooms with no ventilation, masks, protective equipment, and increased class sizes is going to be a disaster. CDC says you are most likely to catch virus if in close proximity for more than 15 minutes. Teachers and students should not have to return to a school that they do not feel safe in. Please consider how people in confined spaces have been the cases where most Covid transmission has occurred. Until Schools can guarantee that the schools are safe, and following CDC guidelines on- site instruction should not be resumed. Educators are not infectious disease specialists and should not be the ones planning the return to school safety protocols.

In response to question 8, the only plan they have if one does not feel safe is to go home.

It appears that we are definitely trying to cater to students and parents. There is nothing in our plan giving teachers options. It also appears yhat as the teacher you will be expected to do all 3 options at the same time. Full time in class, blended with part in class and part online, and full online. It is unreasonable to expect a teacher to prepare for all 3 methods. Also, will teachers get additional pay or a stipend if we have to work from home. Many have had to add internet and it can cost us \$100+ per month.

Safety for our children & teachers is a biggy

It's scary. I just keep thinking essential personal. Hazardous duty pay.

How much input has any community member had? As teachers we were not given input. Also, will teachers be expected to teach in person and blended learning students? That is a lot to plan for.

I'm concerned about the ability of districts to change policies and procedures without teacher's input.

Our school only surveyed parents. They did not ask for input from teachers.

Cancel sports - look at the NFL and MLB - college teams...don't let an outbreak happen first. These waivers about classroom size and doing away with planning time are very concerning. If we need more teachers this year, hire them on a one year contract which they know may go away. We must have professional development from the state which better equips us to do blended learning. I feel it is a HUGE challenge that I need resources to meet. I want to meet my students' needs, but I need help with technology and best practices. Some colleges have been teaching remotely for years and having success. Please have some of those people create PD for us at the high school level so we can continue to deliver good instruction. We can't just figure this one out as individual teachers.

What will happen when this turns into a teacher crisis? We are already experiencing a teacher shortage. Also, if a teacher is ill and doesn't have the sick days to miss and not get paid, we will have an even bigger problem. Districts already have an issue allowing teachers to work from home and get paid. I am a teacher and parent, I am the only income for my family. I can't afford to be docked because I get COVID-19 from my job.

I'm concerned that the actual teachers were not involved on how instruction would be most successful in the upcoming year.

ALL students should have reliable access to the internet for free. We are not meeting their needs of all of our students.

My district shares nothing with teachers. We typically learn things when they post on Facebook for parents.

There has been virtually no communication between the school/district and classified staff. We don't know what is going on or what is expected of us upon return. I have been there 18 years and find it disheartening that not a single attempt to reach out to employees and their families have been done since the sent us home March 13th.

The AAA rule concerning athletes is unfair. If online instruction counts as instruction and as a day of school, athletes should be able to choose blended learning or off-site instruction but attend

practice. I would rather my child be exposed to the same 12 kids he plays basketball with everyday than the 6-700 kids in the building. Makes no sense. All kids should be doing blended or off-site in my opinion and rotate to avoid larger than necessary grouping. We are using humans as guinea pigs, not cool!

We have been told parents can choose virtual or in person but we have not been told as teachers how that will work. Will we be responsible for virtual students and in person students? I found out about my school's plan, as such, on Facebook. There has been NO communication with teachers about what is going on.

If we are forced to quarantine due to exposure will we have to lose pay and/or use our available sick days?

I feel teachers who are sick or needing to care for family will be punished.

I am not sure those with high risk factors will be protected well enough.

I'm being forced into retirement because my district will not adequately address my health concerns, even I'm 65 and have health issues.

Class sizes really worry me... I'm high-risk and having 22-24 kids at a time is concerning.

Our district will put off to the last moment then copy someone else's plan based on some lawyer's approval.

How will the absence policy change due to Covid?

Very concerned about the lack of at-home resources and internet access for our low income families. We can't teach them if we can't reach them. All the (probably necessary) attendance waivers are going to make it easier for abusive adults to keep their kids out of school and potentially hide abuse. Masks and dividers will not work in elementary and middle school. Testing should be waived again. We all need HQ training for HQ online teaching - and raises. Will we have to use sick days if we are quarantined? What about health-compromised teachers? They can't just suddenly be out of work but these conditions certainly didn't factor into their decision making when choosing a career. It's all so unprecedented, so hard. Praying for the decision makers.

I am concerned about teacher sick days. I am also concerned about the waivers. Teachers worked for years to have those policies in place.

I am concerned that my continual exposure to covid, I will not be able to visit my family. The students I teach will not wear masks because they're under 10 years old. I feel that the district I work will not adhere to CDC guidelines for social distancing. I attending a meeting about tge

predetermined possibilities for next year where only 4 out of 45 people wore masks and I was the only employee who remained socially distanced.

Being in the high risk group, I do have reservations. I'm still fairly sure that we will be seeing a decline in the number of cases by then.

We have heard absolutely nothing from our school on how our year is, or may possibly, going to look. Not even a glimpse.

At my school we the teachers were already sharing classrooms and had packed classes of 25-30. There were classes taking place in the cafeteria. I am skeptical they will be able to enforce any sort of small class size/or socially distanced class size without more construction. Additionally, they keep cutting back electives which makes the elective classes even larger. I am also VERY concerned about how teachers will be treated with blended learning/wholly virtual options. We have been told to prepare our curriculum for blended learning, but we don't know what that will look like at all. If some students are wholly virtual and some are traditional/blended, are teachers going to have to perform double duty? What about the suggestion that students spend some lunches in the classroom? Are we going to lose our duty free lunch? I saw somewhere that ADE would possibly provide waivers to districts concerning teacher duty/extra pay.

I'm trying to just be patient & not go to the "anxious setting" yet. There's still several weeks in which things can develop with the virus, so I think it's premature to get worked up over the "what if's". I trust our district to make the best decisions for students & staff. I do hope the state Dept of Ed considers omitting state testing again next year.

My concern is using my sick days and missing pay if I get sick at school or have to stay at home because someone in my school has Covid19. Also, my husband has severe medical issues and I'm nervous about bringing it home to him.

Masks should be required (not just encouraged or recommended) for ALL students and ALL staff in grades 4-12. ALL visitors in a building should be required to wear masks. Class sizes must be reduced even if that means that students alternate days between face to face and online learning. Students and bus drivers should be required to wear masks.

Really worried about going back in August

Some of the waivers are terrifying to me. If my district were to apply for some of the waivers I wouldn't have a moment to go to the bathroom during the day, much less plan for future lessons. They also make school feel like a terrible place for kids. They will have no play time or social interaction. They need that time to develop socially and emotionally. I wouldn't want to send my own children to an environment like that.

I was just hired so information is scarce.

I have little faith in my CO staff and whatever the plan is it will not be followed in my building. My principal will not hold anyone accountable for it.

We are in uncharted waters. I really feel like districts are doing the very best they can. COVID-19 data varies so much across the state, I think districts need to make decisions based on data for their county. My county has low cases and is not experiencing a huge rise in cases, so I think we would need less modifications than a county that is a hot spot, with the understanding that if cases increase, so do precautions.

Teachers should not be responsible for sanitizing anything outside of their own workspace. We have custodians for those type things. Just because we are salary, doesn't mean we should be "used" for unrelated duties that interfere with our planning time, etc. the custodians at my school have way too much down time....I'm certain they can find the time.

Concerned about waivers for duty free lunch and loss of planning time.

I feel that the state dept. has simply given a theory to the districts, broad as it is, fit it to your district and get back to us. Wow! what is the deal! So sad, but not enough guidance is given. Districts will do as many have done in the past. That is let's not involve the actual teachers, just grab a few who think they know more than anyone, put their ideas to task and make the situation harder and more depressing for the regular classroom teacher to deal with.

I have so many questions that I don't know where to begin.

As a pre school teacher, I feel that our section of school is COMPLETELY being ignored! When we are also governed by DHS and ABC better beginnings, we have rules from everywhere at it appears at this time that the district and the Early Childhood department at DHS are not talking. Pre School classrooms are built on relationships. We teach social skills as well as introduce academics. We love on children in ways that their parents do, and when a child is sick- we hold them. There is no set your head on the desk or walk to the nurse. We are care givers as well as educators.

In the past, my district has NOT taken into consideration the health, concerns, opinions, or feelings of the teachers or staff when making decisions. They do what they want and tell you what you are going to do. The needs of the students are not considered, it is only how little can we get by with. If it isn't within the best practices they just get a waiver. Instead of trying to follow guidelines they go into everything with, "we will just get a waiver". They do not make ALL students follow school rules and many buck the system all the time and get by with it. How can anyone feel safe with so much not being taken seriously. With past experiences of this I don't feel safe with what they will expect from me, required with consistency, or that others safety will be put first.