

As a parent and a teacher, I have many concerns about returning to school whether hybrid or in-person. We have not done enough to prepare for it, and we would be wasting a lot of money on a temporary problem. Here are just some of my concerns.

How will teachers collect papers to grade? Do we quarantine papers and then grade them, then quarantine them before returning them?

What happens to the sick children, especially if parents do not come to get them immediately?

What happens if 10 teachers are sick and we do not have enough substitute teachers?

How will students feel if a teacher dies? How will students feel if a classmate, friend, or family member dies due to the student being infected? I already had students who had Covid 19 in the spring, and students who lost their grandparents to Covid 19, and it was traumatic and terrible. The students are devastated for a long time when they suffer losses, and the trauma impacts their ability to learn. I know, because as a counselor, I see them when they are crying without being able to stop. Is it fair to force this on them? What about parents who are at risk? Should we force them to send their children to school and possibly risk their lives? Then the students will feel even worse.

How do students learn when wearing an uncomfortable mask all day? How can the students hear the teachers clearly if the teachers wear masks?

Wouldn't it be cheaper to buy technology for every student (which can be used for years) and teach remotely rather than spend all this money on sanitizer, plexiglass, scan thermometers, gloves, masks, PPE's, cleaning supplies, extra staffing, plus technology?

I cannot teach as well when social distancing, but I can counsel or teach online while everyone is safe and more comfortable. This is only for a limited time, so why risk more lives? If students fall behind, the rest of the state will also be in the same boat, but more people will be alive and well.

And what are the side effects of asymptomatic infection? We do not have enough studies on that either, but are we risking our children's health?

Many parents want the experienced rather than new teachers, but many experienced teachers are in the high risk categories, so they qualify for accommodations - which may mean they will be asking for remote teaching anyway.

I do not want my own children being exposed daily, not only for their safety, but also for mine. Life is not just about how much we learned in school. There are other experiences I want my children and students to live to experience. And I want them to be happy. Is that not more important than a couple of months of school? Don't get me wrong: I believe strongly in lifelong learning, not just till you graduate college, and my children have summer homework from me every summer, but there are other reasons to live.

These are only a few of the concerns we can raise about returning to school. Our nurses, deans, teachers, paras, and secretaries have other perspectives, plus all the medical professionals opinions. Have we really addressed a fraction of these? What about lawsuits after the first person dies due to being exposed in school? Or the first time a school gets an epidemic with a large number of students affected? I would rather err on the side of safety for a few months of remote learning than risk the health of our entire community.

Thank you,  
Shirin Skovronski