

Public schools, COVID-19 and the Road Ahead

Presentation to the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

Tuesday June 30, 2020

Maine Education Association

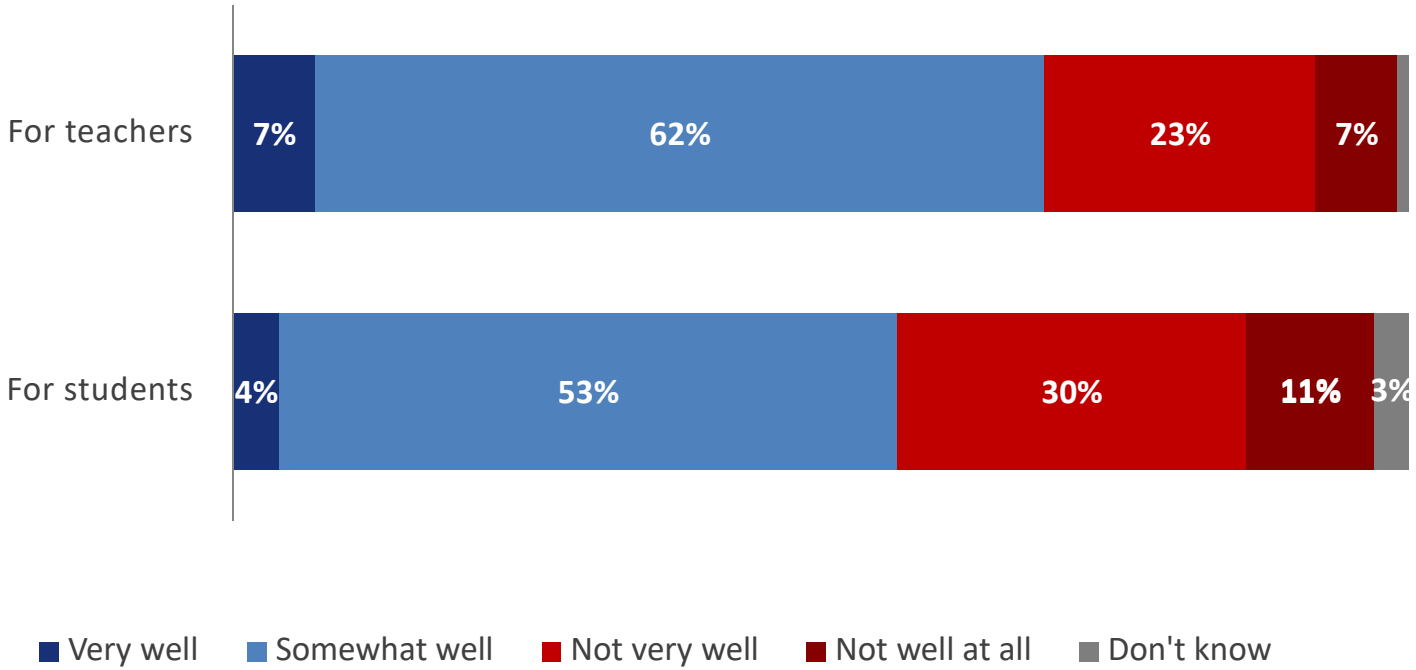


Maine's Public Schools – and the people who work in them - are amazing!

- On a dime, schools in Maine were forced to end in-person classroom instruction and convert to “emergency learning.”
- Every district in the state quickly developed remote learning plans for students.
- Schools across the state developed food preparation and delivery programs.

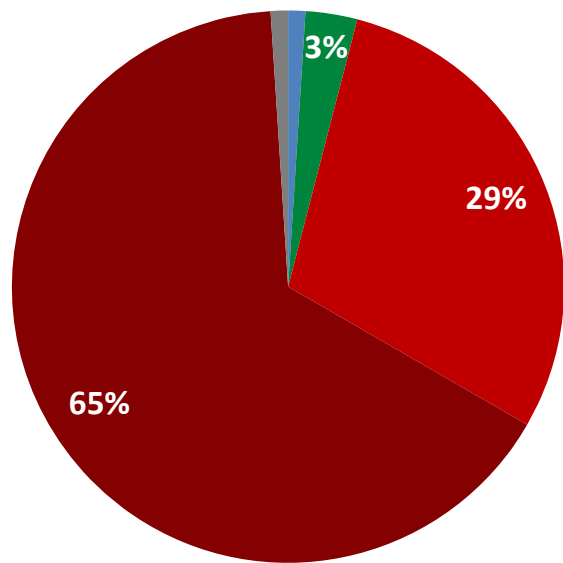
REMOTE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- Nearly seven in ten teachers think that remote learning is going well overall, however, very few would say it is going very well, while three in ten say it is not going well.
- While a majority say that it is going well for their students, over two in five think it isn't going well.



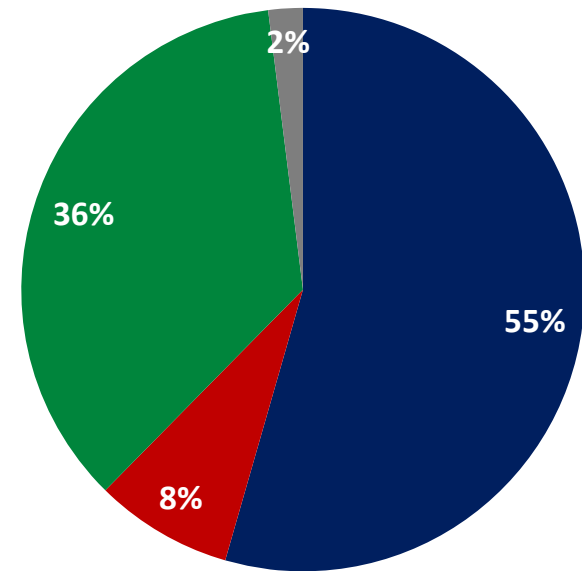
REMOTE V CLASSROOM LEARNING

Remote v Classroom



- Much better
- Somewhat better
- About the same
- Somewhat worse
- Much worse
- Not sure

Change since started



- Better
- Worse
- About the same
- Not sure

Members Who Received Training On Distance Learning Comparison

Figure 5

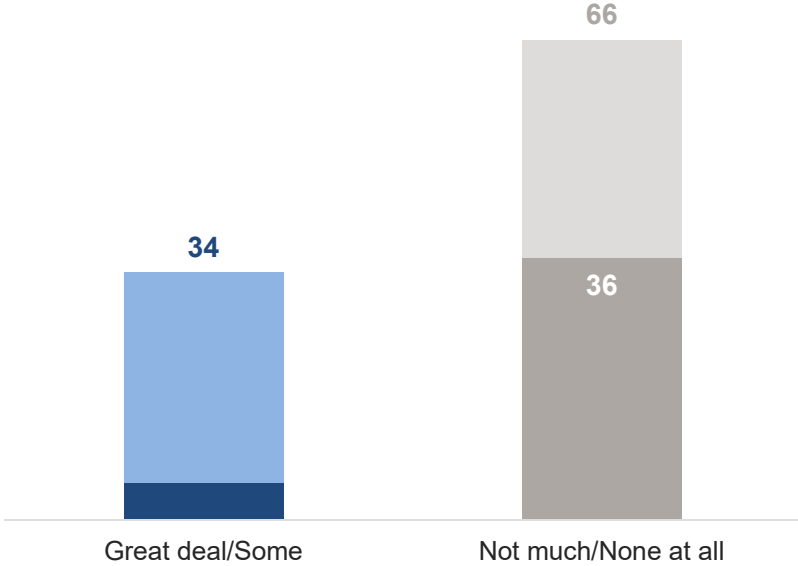
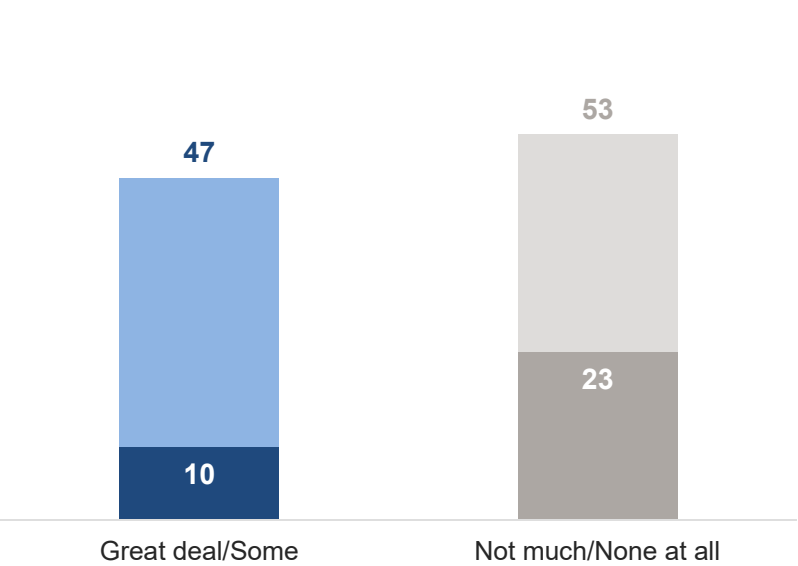
National

Maine

(Teachers/Paraeducators) Have you received any training on distance learning?

Darker shade = Stronger intensity

Darker shade = Stronger intensity



Members Prepared For Distance Learning Comparison

Figure 6

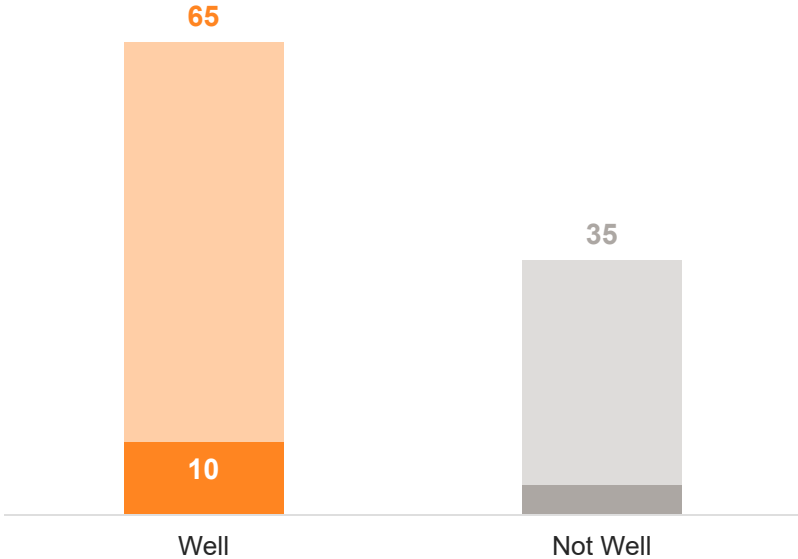
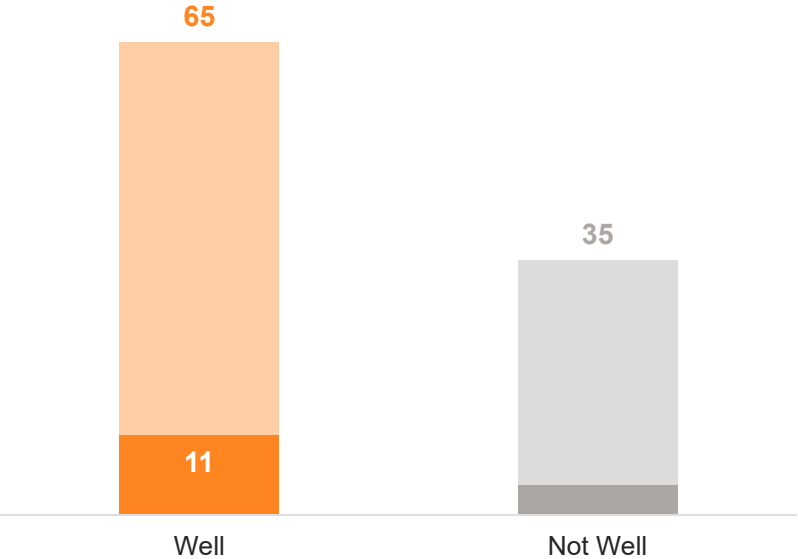
National

Maine

(If received training) How well did the training prepare you for distance learning?

Darker shade = Stronger intensity

Darker shade = Stronger intensity



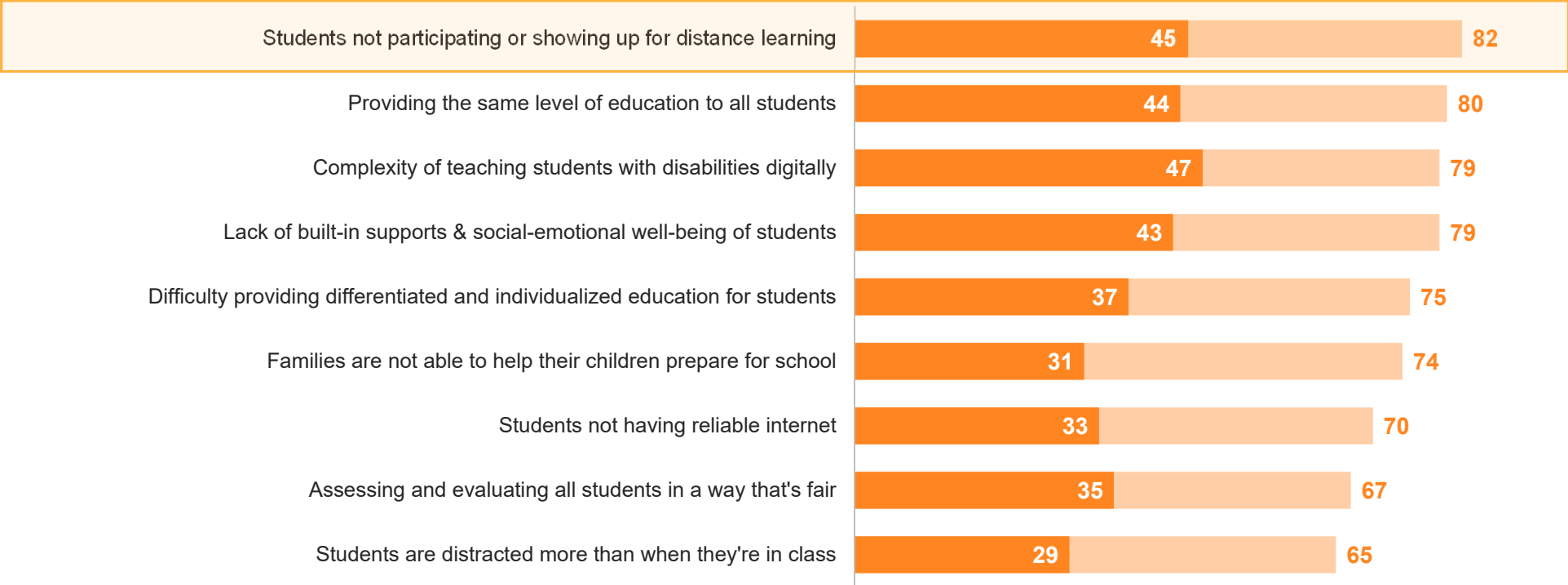
Members Concerned With Student Participation And Quality Of Instruction

Figure 7

Coronavirus Concerns

Below is a list of issues or problems some school employees have experienced during the coronavirus pandemic with distance learning. For each one, please indicate how serious of a problem you think this is for students in your school.

● Very Serious ● Total Serious

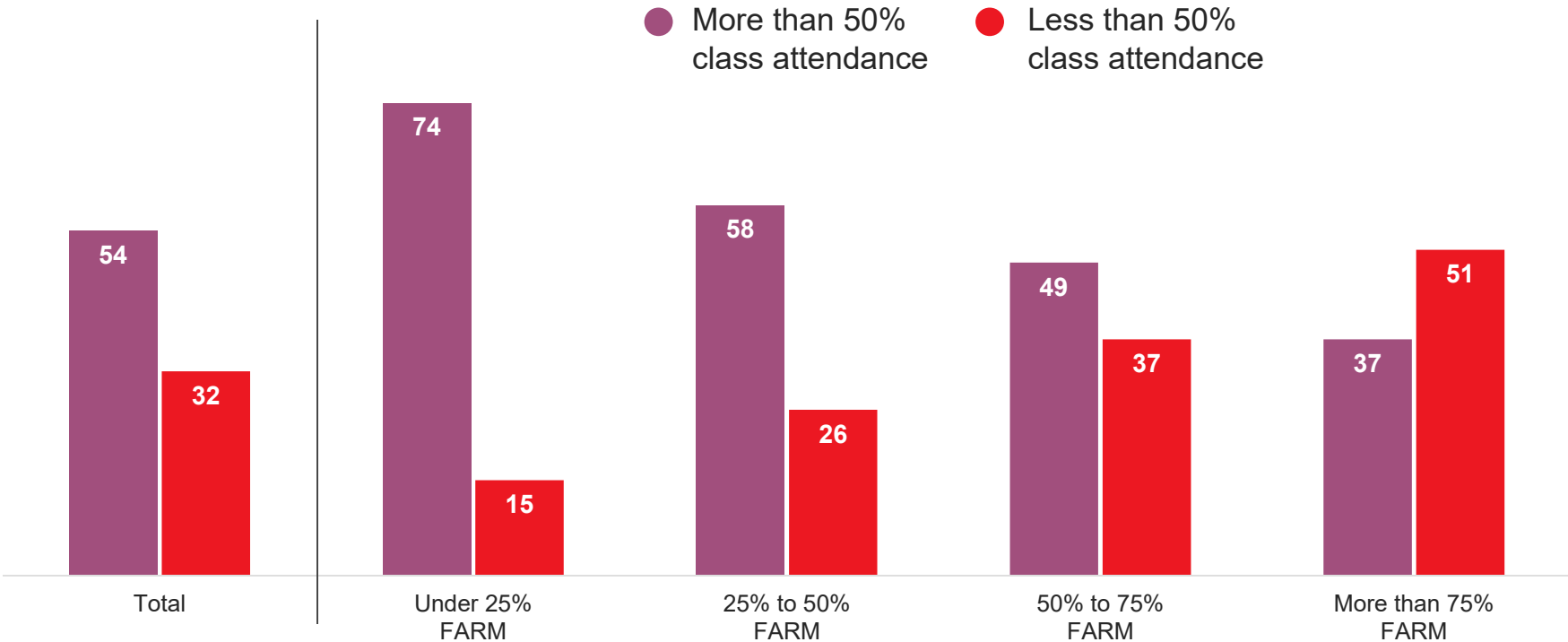


In Maine, Equity Problems In Distance Learning Participation Are More Pronounced

Figure 8

Class Attendance

In terms of class attendance and participation, about what percentage of your students are regularly attending or participating in distance or digital learning opportunities?



Work to Prepare for Fall Re-opening of Schools

- MEA has been working collaboratively with the Maine Dept of Education, Commissioner Pender Makin and other stakeholders.
- Maine Dept of Education has released a DRAFT framework for re-opening schools. (found here: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/covid-19/reintegrate>)
- **Educators are working over the summer in their school districts to develop plans for re-opening – innovation, collaboration and creativity will be key.**

Challenges for Fall Re- Opening of Schools

- Educators are very concerned about their own health and safety and the health and safety of students.
- The science on the spread of the virus among students and in schools remains unclear.
- Social Distancing
 - Maintaining social distancing among students and students and educators is contrary to the usual work of public schools.
- Face Masks
 - Requiring students to wear face masks will be a challenge regardless of age and grade.

Challenges for Fall Re- Opening of Schools (cont.)

- Transportation
 - Transporting students to schools is key to equity, but how to do so safely will be a major challenge for schools.
- Restructuring of the typical school day
 - Schools will need to rethink activities, including “specials” such as physical education, cafeterias, etc.
- Schools, educators, students and families will need to be agile
 - Due to the likelihood of additional waves of COVID, schools may need to move to remote learning for periods of time

Challenges for Fall Re- Opening of Schools (cont.)

- Educators sometimes have children, too!
 - Some teachers and educators work in one school district but may have children in another and these schools may not be on the same timeline/schedule.
- Some educators will feel unsafe returning
 - The average age of a teacher in Maine is over 55 – dangerously close to the “high risk” age category for COVID 19.
 - We are likely to see an increase in retirements from teaching and other education jobs (bus drivers, ed techs).
 - Some educators may require accommodations in order to return to school.
 - Some may unsafe due to their own high risk conditions or those of household members
 - Concerns about the challenges of students being able to maintain social distancing or wearing masks

Challenges for Fall Re- Opening of Schools (cont.)

- Infrastructure challenges
 - More space for classrooms
 - Proper ventilation systems

Bottom Line

State Funding of Schools is Critical to Our Success

- Changes will cost money to implement
- Smaller class sizes = more educators
- PPE
- Hybrid and blended learning models will cost more money to operate well.
- Teachers and educators will need more training and professional development to help implement remote learning plans.
- Any cuts in state aid will likely not be made up by property tax increases given the economic volatility and the high unemployment rate.

Thank you for all you do!

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