



FCFT Report on Member Feelings About the Current Reopening Plan and Experience with Workload, Planning Time, and Well-Being During Week Two of SY 2020-2021

As FCPS leadership plans to reopen our school buildings, an important voice has been left out of the conversation: that of the staff members tasked with making it a reality. **FCPS staff members are overwhelmingly uncomfortable with returning for in-person instruction given the incomplete information about implementation that has been currently shared.** In a survey of 1,335 FCFT members, 85.7% shared that they are not confident in the current reopening plan. This lack of confidence has led 26.8% of these members to share that they are considering taking an unpaid leave of absence or resigning if asked to return to working in-person. An additional 26.1% are undecided about taking a LOA or resigning, meaning that the majority of members surveyed are either not returning or not sure if they will return if asked. This statistic represents 705 staff members at risk of leaving FCPS, and they only represent a fraction of those with similar feelings in the broader FCPS staff community. Staffing is the linchpin of the reopening plan; without our staff, we have nothing. FCPS risks losing a critical mass of staff if leadership does not heed the concerns shared in this report.

Transparency: Our members are concerned with the lack of transparency from FCPS about COVID-19 cases that have already occurred in our school buildings. The lack of a clear answer about positive cases during summer childcare activities (Camp Fairfax), and vague allusions in the Sept. 22nd work session to 3-5 cases that have occurred in SRS in the first 2 weeks, do not inspire confidence that staff will receive critical information about the safety of their workplace. Before we can consider resuming in-person instruction, we must have clear communication from FCPS on the exposures and positive cases in our buildings. VDOE established guidelines for reporting cases and exposures in schools. While other districts, including Loudoun, follow these guidelines, we do not. Prince William County also provides a model for clear communication with the community on positive cases. We expect FCPS to adopt these same practices and adhere to VDOE's guidelines.

The current reopening plan is setting up school-based staff for failure, because many of the details of the plan have not been decided and communicated to staff, and feedback from classroom staff is not included. The details are the difference between a safe and unsafe school environment. They must not be left up to each individual school to figure out. Every staff member needs clear, consistent guidance from the top on how to handle critical concerns, such as addressing a student who refuses to follow safety guidelines, or finding coverage for a classroom when there are no subs. Leadership must also engage non-administrative staff in identifying the gaps in the plan. Administrators and classroom-based staff each have a critical lens, and both must be considered for the plan to be successful. Members slated to return in the first four cohorts this month have told FCFT that they have received no information yet on what the reopening will look like for their classroom. If school-based staff do not know the details of the plan, it will not be implemented safely. Staff need ongoing, individualized, school-based training on how to manage day-to-day situations safely. Compliance videos pushed out to the whole county do not provide the practical application staff need to successfully implement safety procedures or safely instruct students in-person while maintaining social distancing.

Workload: Requesting safety for ourselves and our colleagues is not an avoidance of work - in fact, our members reported that they are working more than ever. **98.7% of teachers and 65.5% of support staff worked beyond contract hours in week 2, and 22.7% of teachers reported working over 20 hours outside of contract hours.** Our concerns about the increased workload associated with Distance Learning, coupled with the lack of planning



time, is not a criticism of FCPS' choice to start the year virtually. The vast majority of our membership is appreciative of this decision and would prefer to continue working with students virtually. However, the workload concerns and lack of time must be addressed. Our staff are quickly burning out. The data in this report paint a dire picture, with the majority of staff members reporting the workload has affected their ability to sleep and eat, and that it is taking a toll on their physical and mental health. Referring staff to use EAP counseling sessions is just a bandaid on the systemic problem of overloading staff while simultaneously whittling away at the little planning time we have. Regardless of whether staff are working virtually or in person, FCPS leadership must address the lack of planning time and provide more time during the workday for staff to complete the duties of their jobs. All Monday afternoons must be reserved for unencumbered, teacher-directed planning time. We also urge FCPS to consider shortening the synchronous instructional day as has been done in Richmond. Families and staff have been concerned about the amount of screen time involved in a full day of synchronous classes. Shortening the instructional day would help alleviate both planning time, workload, and screen time concerns from all parties.

FCFT takes a strong stance in opposition to the concurrent teaching model. Over the summer, the Leadership Team assured the School Board that FCPS would not be putting cameras into classrooms and streaming instruction for students at home. However, mentions of concurrent teaching in information shared with principals suggest that FCPS is going back on this promise. School districts across the country have attempted to use concurrent teaching to provide instruction to both in-person and online students by the same teacher at the same time. The schools that have attempted to use concurrent teaching are seeing it fail across the board. It is impossible to effectively plan for and teach in two vastly different models of delivery and simultaneously engage students in both settings. This method is not what is best for students. Whether the student is in-person or virtual for the day, they will only receive half of their teacher's attention. And the nominal benefit of having a teacher's partial attention while in-person half of the time comes at a huge cost: the impossible workload of concurrent teaching is causing teachers across the country to burn out and leave the profession. We cannot stand to lose any of our valuable staff members by forcing them into this impossible teaching situation.

In everything we do, we have to come back to what is best for kids. The current plan is not what is best for kids. Although some students will be in-person 4 days/week, the majority will only receive instruction for 2 days/week. Elementary students currently check in with their teacher 5 days/week and have 4 full days of direct instruction. Under the hybrid model, 3 days/week will be 100% independent, likely requiring full-time adult support. As schools plan to bring the first cohorts back, classes are being split up with students being assigned a new teacher and sometimes even changing schools to balance classes. Preschool teachers are being directed to tape-off an area for each student where their movement will be restricted and they will have no interaction with classmates. Maintaining the relationship students have built with their teachers and classmates far outweighs the benefit of 2 in-person, socially distanced days.

We believe that staff, leadership, and the community can all agree on two things: we want to return to school in a way that is safe for students and we do not want to lose any of our valued staff members to a LOA or resignation. This report includes the results of three surveys FCFT conducted among our membership. *The data speak loud and clear with valid concerns about the unsustainability of the current workload and staff's lack of confidence in the reopening plan.* The success of the plan comes down to school-based staff's ability to implement it. As a data-driven school division, FCPS cannot afford to ignore the red flags raised in this report.



Report on FCFT Member Feelings on the FCPS Reopening Plan

Method

This survey represents responses from 1,335 FCFT members. Responses were collected between September 25-29. The Google Forms survey was distributed by email to FCFT members. Participants were asked to review details on the reopening plan shared in the September 22 School Board work session and the slideshows presented to principals on September 11 and 18.

Key Takeaways

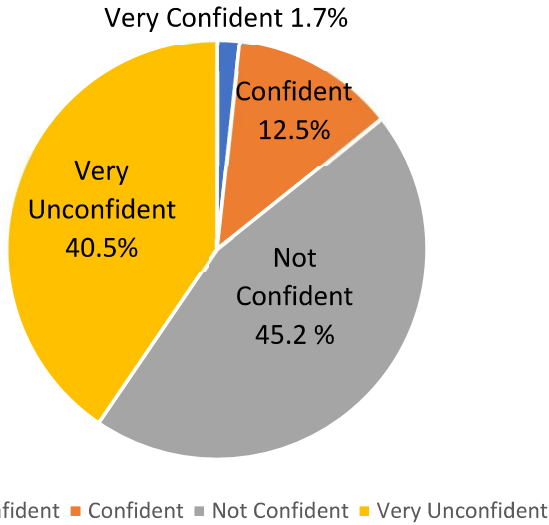
- This survey represents the largest response that FCFT has ever seen in one of our surveys and the responses were received in record time: less than 5 days.
- Members overwhelmingly lack confidence in the FCPS reopening plan with 45.2% reporting that they are not confident and an additional 40.5% reporting that they are very unconfident, **resulting in 85.7% of respondents lacking confidence in the plan.**
- **Only 9.8% of respondents report that they feel safe returning** with 69.5% reporting that they do not feel safe and 20.7% reporting that they are unsure how they feel.
- 26.8% report that they would consider taking an unpaid leave of absence or resign if asked to return in-person, and an additional 26.1% report feeling undecided if they would take a LOA or resign. **This means that 52.9% of respondents may not return if asked to work in-person.** Of the 42% that report that they would return if asked, many reported in the comments that they still do not feel safe and would only return because their family is not in a financial position to allow them to take an unpaid year of leave.
- Language used in the 511 comments highlights the fear that staff are feeling in being pressured to return to unsafe workplaces, including 167 mentions of safety, 145 mentions of feelings of concern, worry, or fear, 53 mentions of health and dying, and 20 mentions of feeling forced to return.

FCFT's Recommendations Based on the Data

- Postpone opening school buildings for in-person instruction until we have well-documented numerical metrics supporting the decision and FCPS can confirm that all of the safety guidelines laid out in FCFT's 11 Pillars of a Safe Reopening are met.
- Present staff and the community with clear responses to all of the logistical questions that have been posed to leadership since June and have not received a response.
- Provide extensive training for in-person staff members and answer all their questions until all parties feel confident in the safety of the plan and their ability to implement it.
- Commit to following VDOE guidelines on notifying the community of exposures and positive COVID-19 cases that occur within FCPS buildings.
- Commit to only bringing back as many students as are appropriate for the staff members willing to work-in person, and continue instructing the remainder of students virtually until FCPS develops a reopening plan that the majority of staff feel confident in. This requires plans in place to address the many safety questions that are still unanswered.
- Honor all ADA accommodation requests to work 100% virtually. **Many members report having their ADA accommodation request denied by their principal,** leaving them with only the option to accept an in-person position or resign. We must allow all staff members with a valid ADA request, including support staff, to continue to work remotely through the entire 2020-2021 school year.

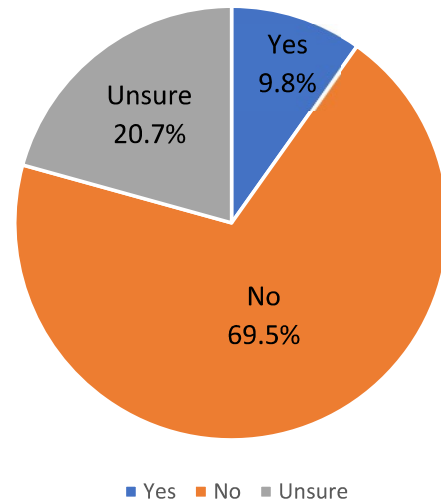
Data on FCFT Member Feelings on the FCPS Reopening Plan

Fig. 1 Confidence in FCPS Return to School Plan



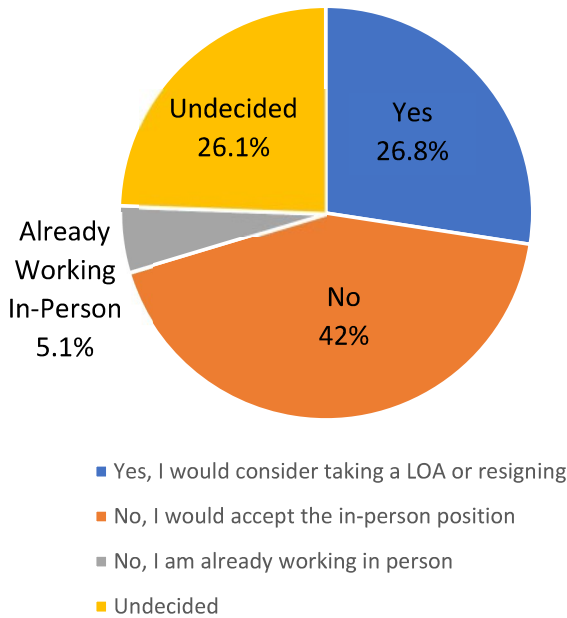
Based on the information that you have currently, how confident are you in the FCPS return to school plan?
1,331 responses

Fig. 2 Do You Feel Safe Returning?



Given the information that you know now about COVID-19 and FCPS' return to school plan, do you feel safe returning?
1,334 responses

Fig. 3 Would You Consider Taking an Unpaid Leave of Absence or Resigning?



If FCPS offers you an in-person position, would you consider taking an unpaid leave of absence or resigning?
1,332 responses

Fig 4 511 Respondents wrote a comment in response to the survey item, "Please let us know any additional comments you have about reopening." Below is the frequency of mentions of some common words.

Word	Mentions	% of Total Responses
Safe/Safety/Safer Safely/Unsafe	167	32.7%
Concern(s)/ed)/ Scared/ Worry(ies/ied) Afraid/ Terrified/ Nervous/Anxiety/Anxious	145	28.4%
Time	83	16.2%
Health/Die	53	10.4%
Risk(ing)/Danger(ous)	51	10%
Leave of Absence LOA	47	9.2%
Resign(ing)/Quit/ Retire(ment)	44	8.6%
ADA	40	7.8%
Forced	20	3.9%
PPE	18	3.5%



Report on FCFT's Member Surveys on Staff Workload, Planning Time, and Well-Being

Method

Results represent responses from 895 teachers and 200 support staff in two separate FCFT member surveys separated by job classification. Responses were collected between September 18-25. The Google Forms surveys were distributed by email to FCFT members. Members were asked to track the number of hours worked beyond contract time from the end of the workday Friday, September 11, through the end of the workday Friday, September 18. The breakdown of responses by school type are 51.5% elementary and 49.5% secondary for the teacher survey and 63.3% elementary, 34.1% secondary and 2.5% centers for the support staff survey.

Key Takeaways on Planning Time and Well-Being

- **98.7% of teachers and 65.5% of support staff worked beyond contract hours.**
- **22.7% of teachers and 9% of support staff report they worked more than 20 hours beyond their contract hours in the 2nd week of school.**
- Amounts of teacher-directed planning time during week 2 varied greatly from teacher to teacher, ranging from 0 hours (6.6% of teachers) to 10 hours (3.5%). **Almost half of teachers (47.7%) had fewer than 4 hours of teacher-directed planning time, which is the minimum amount laid out for elementary teachers in regulation 4422.11.**
- 20.1% teachers surveyed were asked to meet with their CLT/CT outside of contract hours and 15.8% were asked to hold office hours outside of contract hours.
- Respondents report that work outside of contract hours has had a negative impact on their well-being, including missing meals (73% of teachers; 51.5% of support staff), losing sleep (80.8% of teachers; 55% of support staff), impacting ability to exercise and take care of their physical health (83.2% of teachers), and impacting mental health (84.6% of teachers).

FCFT's Recommendations Based on the Data on Planning Time and Well-Being

- Prohibit administrators from scheduling mandatory staff meetings and professional development on Monday afternoons and leave Monday afternoons as unencumbered, teacher-directed planning time.
- Prohibit administrators from requiring staff to schedule CLT/CT meetings and mandatory office hours outside of contract hours.
- Implement a consistent schedule across elementary schools to reduce inconsistencies in instructional blocks and planning time.
- Shorten the instructional day to address family and staff concerns around excessive screen time and to provide all staff with at least the minimum amount of planning time required by regulation 4422.11.
 - This can be achieved in elementary schools by leaving the last hour of the day as asynchronous "family choice time" as is done in some schools.
 - This can be achieved in secondary schools by shortening each instructional block by at least 10 minutes to shorten the length of the school day and provide staff with planning time at the end of the day.
- Provide additional planning time to special education teachers who, as a whole, receive less planning time than their general education peers and have a significantly larger workload, including assessing students, writing IEPs, and conducting IEP meetings, in addition to their full teaching load.

Teacher and Support Staff Responses to August Professional Development

As a part of the Planning Time, Contract Hours, and Well-Being survey, teachers and support staff were asked about the usefulness of the beginning-of-year virtual trainings.

- A slight majority of respondents (53.8% of teachers and 69.5% of support staff) either agreed or strongly agreed that the beginning-of-year virtual trainings were useful.
- 35.1% of teachers and 30.5% of support staff report disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the beginning-of-year trainings on tools to use while working remotely were useful.
- The 142 comments surrounding PD included:
 - Little-to-no time for application for the many tools introduced
 - “Play around with it” was the training rather than how to use the tool
 - Teachers lose time “training” teammates due to lack of tech/training support
- When asked what staff felt they need to feel better prepared:
 - Over 530 (roughly 60%) of staff responded that they need more time. Suggestions on how FCPS could support them with regard to this were:
 - Mondays being strictly for teacher planning, not meetings
 - Shorter instructional days (benefit for students and staff)
 - Fewer meetings (aside from CLT/CT or IEP/504s)
 - Banks of resources for each content area that are easily navigable (instead of each content-area curriculum team creating separate and compartmentalized sites)
 - Staff need student-friendly resources (videos, how-to guides, etc.) for tools like:
 - Navigating Google Classroom, Schoology, BBCU, etc.
 - Editing/Using Google Docs/Slides
 - Content-specific sites (e.g. Clever, NoRedInk, ST Math, etc.)
 - Often-used and approved sites (e.g. FlipGrid, Padlet, etc.)

FCFT’s Recommendations based on Member Comments on Professional Development

- Allow a greater portion of teacher work days to be teacher-directed. In the 15 work days before the start of the school year, 4 were left as teacher-directed, and teachers were instructed to use these days to complete compliance training. Many were also asked to assist with laptop distribution and packing/distributing school supplies during their teacher-directed days. Very little time was allowed for actual planning.
- Provide ongoing built-in time during the workday to explore new tools and curricula.
- Reduce one-size-fits-all training and instead offer more time for individualized professional development where staff can work with peers, coaches, resource teachers, and SBTs to receive training that is personalized to their experience and needs.
- Establish consistency in how curriculum supports are created in central office; some subjects are very accessible and easy to implement, while others are dense and hard for teachers to utilize with such short time allowed for planning.



Fig. 5 Word cloud created from teachers' responses to the following question: What do you feel you need to feel better prepared? Mentions of additional planning time appeared in 530/895 responses (nearly 60%).

Data on Teacher Workload, Planning Time, and Work Outside of Contract Time

Fig. 6.a. How many hours outside of contract time (7.5 hours per work day) did you spend working this week, including over the weekend? (This may include: planning, grading, training, emails, creating materials, etc.)

Response	Percent of Total Responses	Number of Responses out of 895
None. I only worked within my contract hours.	1.3%	12
I worked about 1-5 hours beyond contract time this week.	13%	116
I worked about 6-10 hours beyond contract time this week.	21.2%	190
I worked about 11-15 hours beyond contract time this week.	24.6%	220
I worked about 16-20 hours beyond contract time this week.	17.2%	154
I worked over 20 hours beyond contract time this week.	22.7%	203

Fig. 6.b. Hours Worked Outside of Contract Time During Week 2

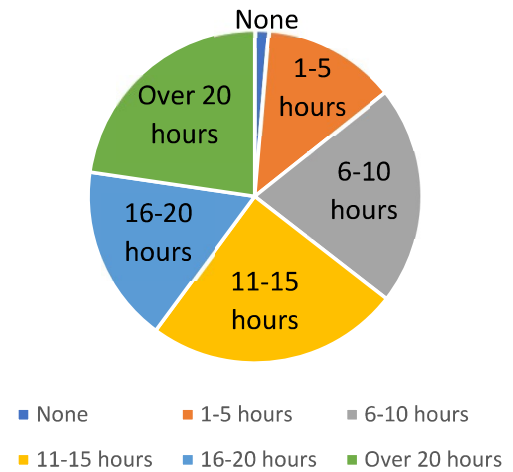


Fig. 7.a. How many hours this week did you have teacher-directed planning time during your contract hours (not at CLT, staff meeting, duty, or with a class)?

Response	Percent of Total Responses	Number of Responses out of 895
0	6.6%	59
1	7.9%	71
2	16.2%	145
3	17%	152
4	16.5%	148
5	14.3%	128
6	9.5%	85
7	3.4%	30
8	4%	36
9	1.1%	10
10	3.5%	31

Fig. 7.b. Hours of Teacher-Directed Planning Time During Week 2

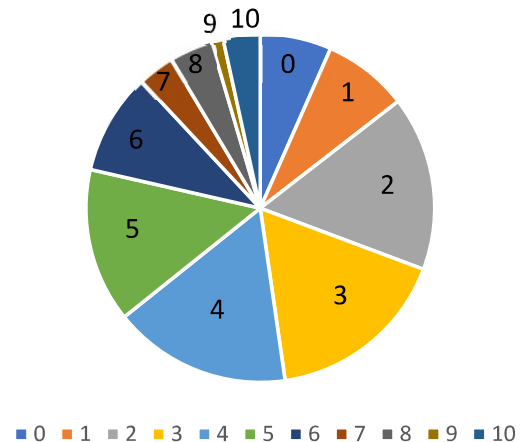


Fig. 8 Have you been asked to meet for CLT/CT meetings outside of your contract hours?

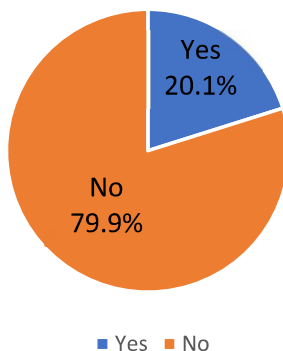
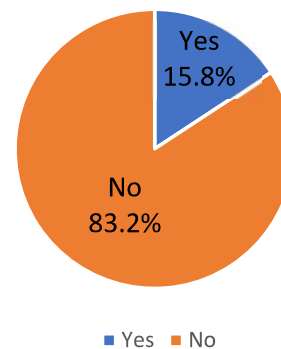


Fig. 9 Have you been asked to host office hours outside of your contract hours?



Data on Teacher Well-Being and Usefulness of Teacher Training



Fig. 10.a. Have you missed any meals this week due to work-related time commitments (including nights and weekends)?

Response	Percent of Total Responses	Number of Responses out of 895
Never	27%	242
Once or twice during the week	45%	403
3-4 times during the week	19.6%	175
5 or more times during the week	8.4%	75

Fig. 10.b Have you missed any meals this week due to work-related time commitments (including nights and weekends)?

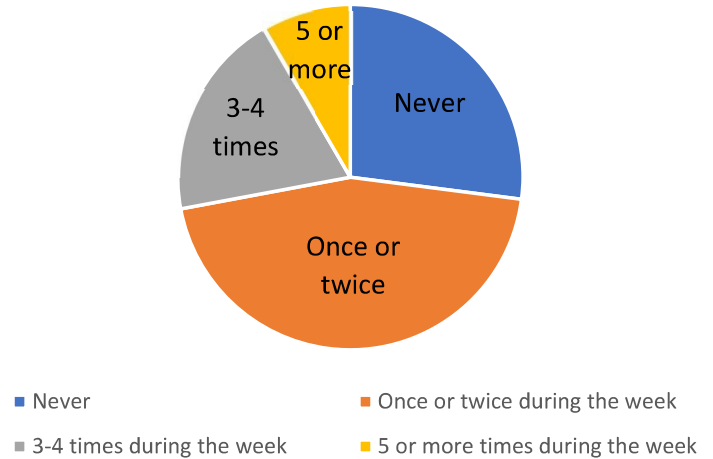


Fig. 11 Has work outside of contract hours this week negatively impacted your ability to get a full night of sleep?

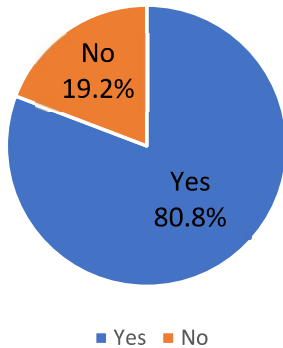


Fig. 12 Has work outside of contract hours this week negatively impacted your ability to exercise and take care of your physical health?

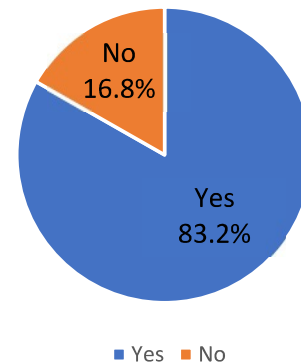


Fig. 13 Has work outside of contract hours this week negatively impacted your mental health?

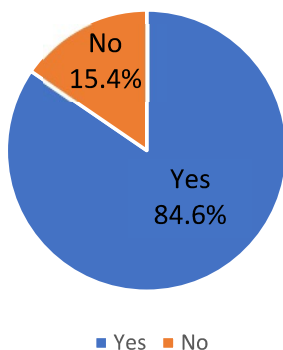
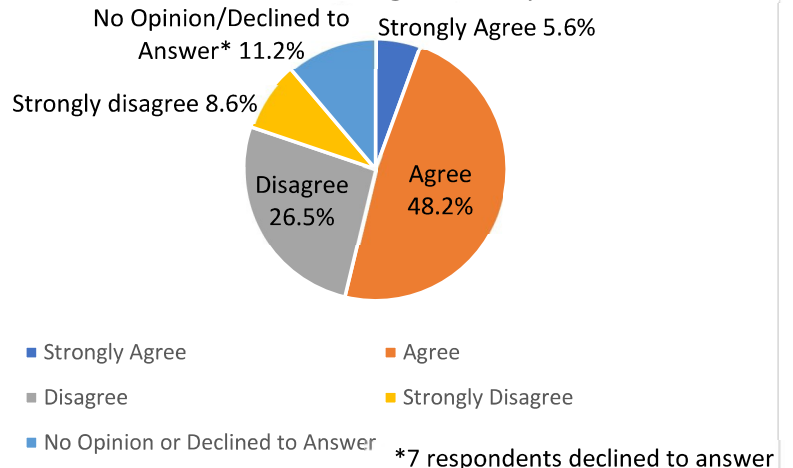


Fig. 14 The district's beginning-of-year trainings on tools to use while working remotely were useful.



Data on Support Staff Workload, Communication, and Inclusion

Fig. 15.a. How many hours outside of contract time did you spend working this week, including over the weekend?

Response	Percent of Total Responses	Number of Responses out of 200
None. I only worked within my contract hours.	34.5%	69
I worked about 1-5 hours beyond contract time this week.	27%	54
I worked about 6-10 hours beyond contract time this week.	11.5%	23
I worked about 11-15 hours beyond contract time this week.	10.5%	21
I worked about 16-20 hours beyond contract time this week.	7.5%	15
I worked over 20 hours beyond contract time this week.	9%	18

Fig. 15.b. Hours Worked Outside of Contract Time During Week 2

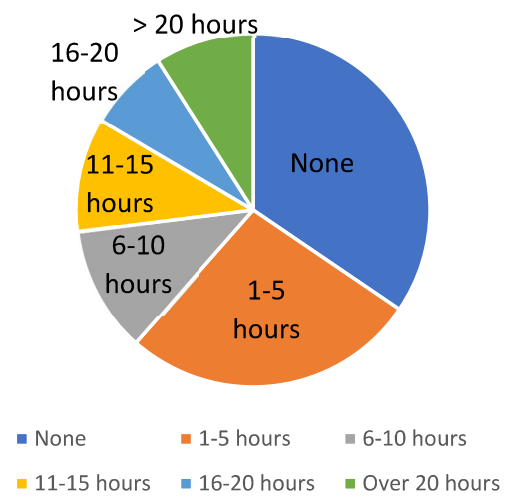


Fig. 16 Have you been given time to work with your instructional support members?

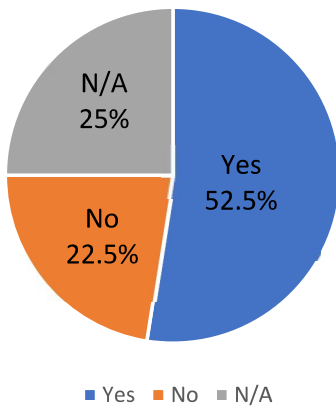


Fig. 17 Have you been given a meaningful role in the virtual reopening to make it successful?

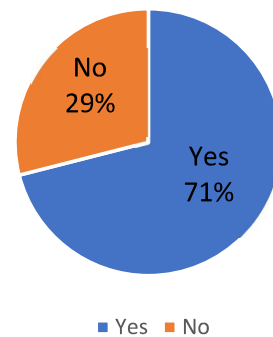


Fig. 18 Have you received adequate communication from FCPS administration about your role in a virtual opening?

