

Madison Local Schools Remote Learning ThoughtExchange Parent Results

A ThoughtExchange on distance learning was open for Madison Local teachers from June 3-15, 2020. The following are the results from that Exchange.

This report breaks out the sections by Top-Rated Themes/Thoughts; Miscellaneous Thoughts; and Shared Thoughts between Different Groups. The number in parentheses after the statement indicates the overall rating each thought received.

Question

If the next school year required continued use of remote learning, what positive outcomes can we build upon? What challenges do we need to address? What additional practices should we consider?

Overview

The responses from this ThoughtExchange overwhelmingly focused on interaction and engagement between teachers and students. Of the top 20 rated thoughts, 15 were about this theme. To summarize, most of those thoughts expressed the following:

- Teachers should have face-to-face meetings with students via Zoom or Google at least once a week, if not more.
- Teachers should post assignments and lessons at the beginning of the week so parents can plan around their home/work schedule.
- Teachers should record lessons so students can watch at a more convenient time.
- Lessons from the teacher are preferable to links to online learning resources like Khan Academy.

Along the same lines, there was a very highly-rated thought about teachers' use of technology. The thought expressed that it would be helpful if all the teachers used consistent technological platforms. The thought added that it becomes difficult for students and parents when different teachers use different resources.

There were also two very distinct groups in this ThoughtExchange:

- Group A: Remote learning is not acceptable and school should resume on a full-time basis.
- Group B: Remote learning is acceptable if the virus still presents a threat.

Group A was 54% Pre-K and elementary school parents and 46% middle school and high school parents. Nearly a third of Group A came from South Elementary School.

Group B was 39% Pre-K and elementary parents and 61% middle school and high school parents.

While these groups generally have different beliefs about remote learning, they did agree on the main points about teacher-student interaction. Both groups agreed that teachers should hold online classes weekly at a minimum; that teachers should post assignments at the beginning of the week; that teachers should record lessons; and that teachers should hold classes rather than send links to outside resources.

Details

Respondents:

- 597 participants
 - 84% parent only; 16% parent + staff
 - Building breakdown:
 - 32% Madison High School
 - 20% Madison Middle School
 - 18% North Elementary
 - 26% South Elementary
 - 4% Madison Pre-K
- 1,026 thoughts shared
 - 366 participants shared thoughts
 - 367 participants rated thoughts
 - 403 participants explored thoughts
- 24,532 ratings

Top Thoughts by Themes

Theme: Teacher/student interaction and virtual class frequency

- There needs to be online interaction between teacher and students Whether that be prerecorded lessons or regular check ins. These kids need to see faces, not just links to someone else teaching like Kahn Academy (4.5)
- Recording each video lesson for students who miss daily virtual classroom Or need to refer back to it for homework. This type of consistent lesson from a teacher that is able to be recorded can help slower learners excel by referring back (4.3)
- More time with teacher on zoom to teach Helps with kids who are more hands on and for parents who are working still (4.2)
- Options for tutorials when student struggling need to be available So students do not get discouraged and parents can help - we are not teachers and are learning with them sometimes (4.2)
- Regular videos and google meets. Our teacher did teaching videos and google meets every day. That may be too much to expect, but teachers need to interact more rather than less (4.2)
- The face to face meetings were a lot of fun for my student. I'd like to see that more often. To stay established in a classroom setting (4.2)
- I'd like to see increased virtual teaching live, either through Zoom or another service It's important to have that teacher-student interaction where kids can ask questions and others benefit even if they weren't the one asking (4.2)
- If the remote learning is going to continue then each teacher needs to do a google meet to teach their assignments to the kids. Just posting assignments is basically like saying here teach yourself. It's hard on the parents especially those of us who work (4.2)
- More teaching verses virtual assigning only one of my son's teachers had f2f virtual sessions and meeting times actually connecting with students. Only assigning work is not teaching (4.2)
- My first thought would be that teachers would need to do more than meet once a week and just ask how it's going. All of my son's stuff was on his own It's important because the kids can't just be given material and expected to figure it out. Having it explained is necessary as well (4.2)
- Weekly Zoom or other classroom meetings They helped students to connect with teachers and peers and to feel more comfortable asking questions (4.2)
- Only assign work that they will actually learn from. Busy work will only turn the students away from school. Assign them relevant work and point out applications. (4.2)
- Next year, one thing that should be implemented is having Google Meets at least once a week mandatory. Teachers need to be meeting face to face online with students! Kids need that interaction plus teachers NEED to reach out and keep their rapport! (4.2)

Theme: Posting work at the beginning of the week

- Our teacher posted all the assignments at the beginning of the week and we could get it done as we went along This made it easy to know what was expected and to divide up assignments throughout the week. (4.4)
- Having the weeks work up at the start of the week So a parent can prepare (4.3)

Miscellaneous comments

- Technology: All teachers need to use same platform, example most used google classroom, but others used their website on top of Google Classroom. Children would know where to go each and every single time versus different teachers using different ways and then it becomes confusing (4.4)
- Teacher support and flexibility: Some teachers were very understanding about the huge shift remote learning was for the students, which was very helpful. Some teachers, not so much. Especially in the first couple of weeks, the shift to remote learning created new challenges for the students, so understanding was appreciated. (4.2)
- Support for district: Overall, the staff at Madison did an excellent job pulling together for our students to finish out the school year. Thank you for your dedication! The staff set a great example not only to our students but to the parents as well. They reflected positivity and teamwork (4.1)

Different Groups and Commonalities

There were two distinct groups:

Group A: No Remote Learning

Group A believes that remote learning was universally negative. They want full-time school next year. They are best represented by the following comments:

There was nothing positive about this. I did what I had to do and this was a temporary situation. Full time school next school year. (Rated 4.4 by Group A and 1.4 by Group B)

Second thought is NO. My child is already behind in reading and I am scared that he will be even more behind when we finally DO go to school. (Rated 5.0 by Group A and 1.8 by Group B)

- Group A had 96 members.
- 82% parent only; 18% parent + staff
- School breakdown:
 - 31% South Elementary
 - 26% Madison Middle School
 - 20% Madison High School
 - 19% North Elementary
 - 4% Madison Pre-K

Group B: Remote learning is acceptable if COVID is still a threat.

Group B believes that remote learning is acceptable if COVID remains a threat. They're ok with continuing remote learning in the fall. They are best represented by the following comments:

I'm fine with remote learning if this virus continues to be a threat. (Rated 1.2 by Group A and 4.8 by Group B)

Myself and my child loved the online learning. It was so easy for her and she loved being able to work ahead. (Rated 1.6 by Group A and 4.5 by Group B)

- Group B had 86 members.
- 83% parent only; 17% parent + staff
- School breakdown:
 - 36% Madison High School
 - 23% Madison Middle School
 - 22% South Elementary School
 - 11% North Elementary School

- 6% Madison Pre-K

What do these groups have in common?

While these groups disagree on their general feelings about remote learning, they do agree on how the learning should be delivered. Specifically, they agree that:

- Assignments should be posted at the beginning of the week so parents can prepare. This idea was rated 4.4 by Group A and 4.6 by Group B.
- Teachers should have face-to-face meetings via Zoom or Google Meet at a minimum of once a week, if not more. There were multiple comments to this effect (many listed at the beginning of this document), all of which were rated 4.0+ by both groups.
- Teachers need to use the same technological platforms so kids and families aren't keeping track of multiple websites, apps, software, etc. This was rated 4.7 by Group A and 4.0 by Group B.
- Teachers should be provided with training and resources to be more effective teaching from home. This thought was rated 4.1 by Group A and 4.6 by Group B.
- Teachers should record sessions and post them online for those students who can't make it. This idea was rated 4.3 by Group A and 4.6 by Group B.