



Are schools in  
Karnataka ready for a  
post-COVID 19 world?

**DREAM A DREAM'S SCHOOLS READINESS SURVEY**

# **DREAM A DREAM'S SCHOOLS READINESS SURVEY SUGGESTS SCHOOLS ARE NOT YET READY TO BE RE-OPENED**



## SUMMARY

Dream a Dream's School Readiness for the Post COVID-19 world survey explores the major concerns pertaining to the reopening of schools post lockdown and also lists the support required by the schools. The Survey engaged with Principals, heads of institutions and teachers of 853 various educational institutions across 28 districts of Karnataka to understand the impact of COVID 19 on the educational system of low-cost private schools (affordable private schools), government schools and government aided schools. The major findings of the study suggest that 96 % of the schools require support to address student's wellbeing and mental health concerns following the closure post-COVID. 95% of schools want to postpone exams this year since schools fear that students may not be able to clear board exams since most of the schools were still in the process of completing the syllabus or were working on model preparations for the board exams. Furthermore, 92% of the teachers and principals requested a reduced syllabus for the new academic year owing to the loss of instructional time because of the lockdown. This request comes close to the heels on learning that 97% of the schools surveyed had very little digital infrastructure to support the delivery of online classes. The survey also brought forth the sad state of affairs among teachers who have not been paid for the last two months. More than 89% of the schools need financial assistance from the various stakeholders to stay afloat.



## THE CONTEXT

It has been around 60 days that the schools are closed due to COVID 19 pandemic which impacted over 32 crore students in India. While some schools have communicated that online classes would begin shortly, it is still unclear when exactly the schools will re-open.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has hit the education system hard. Due to the lockdown, they have had to shut their schools without clarity on when they could re-open. The most affected are the low-cost private and government schools as most of them do have e-learning solutions. The students, in addition to missed learning opportunities, no longer have access to healthy meals as well during this time and have been subjected to both economic and social stress.

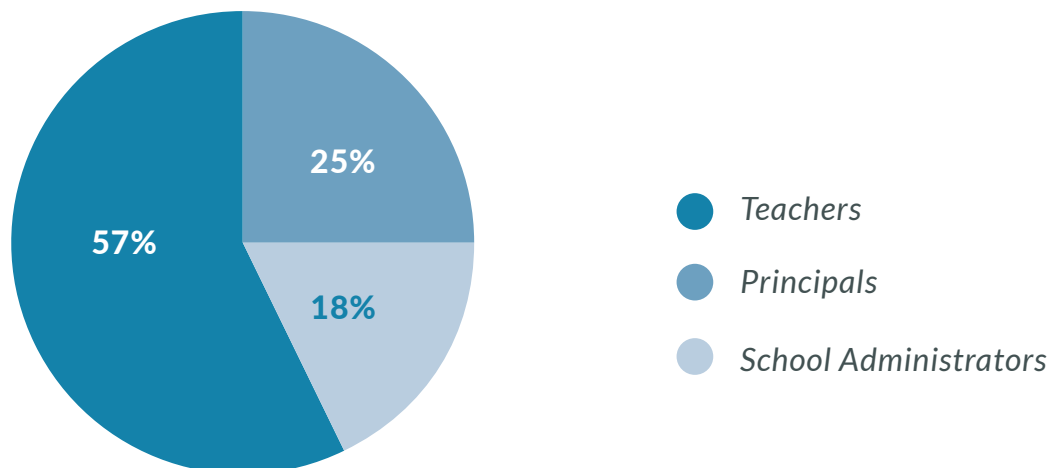
While various educational boards including NCERT and CBSE are exploring new systems to reopen schools, the central and state education department recommends using online learning to continue education. Even as educational departments continue their efforts to ensure continuity of learning, there is a need to prep school ecosystems to reopen schools with clear guidelines and support.

# Survey Design

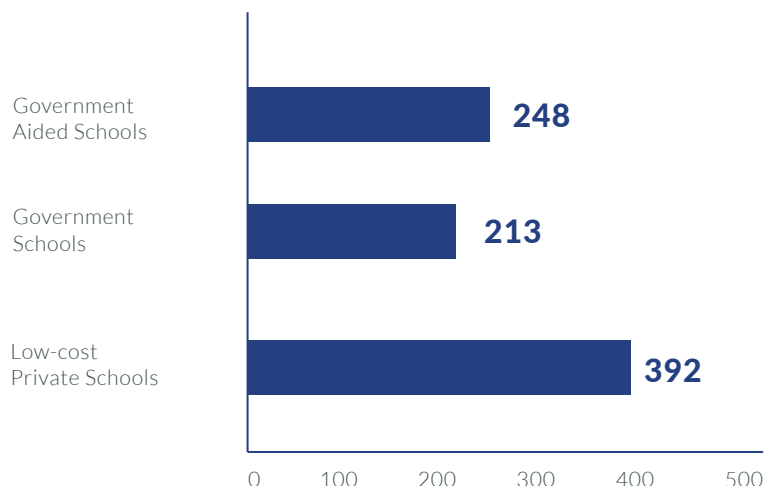
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Dream a Dream is a non-governmental organization closely working with schools in Karnataka. The School readiness survey engaged with 853 school principals, heads of the institutions, and teachers to understand the impact of COVID 19 on the educational system of low-cost private schools, government schools and government aided schools. The survey explores major concerns on the reopening of schools post lockdown and the support required by schools. The study included schools from both rural and urban backgrounds to capture more accurate information across Karnataka.

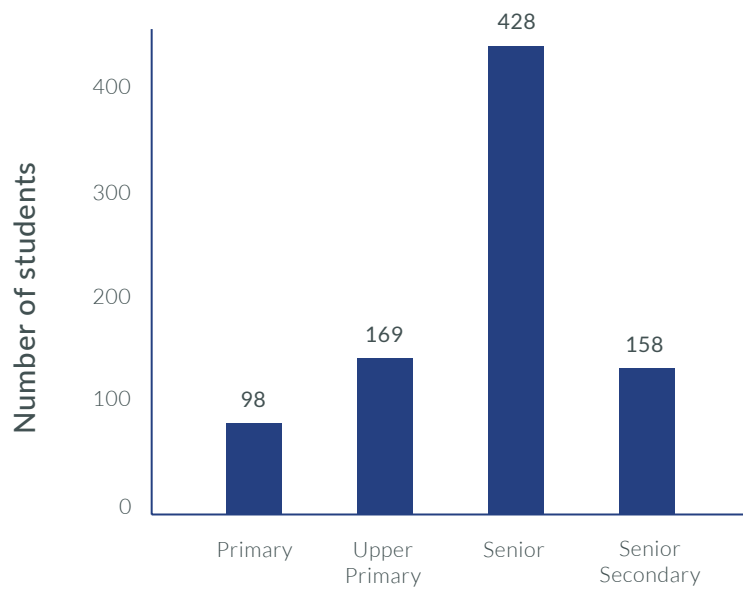
## SURVEY RESPONDENT'S DETAILS



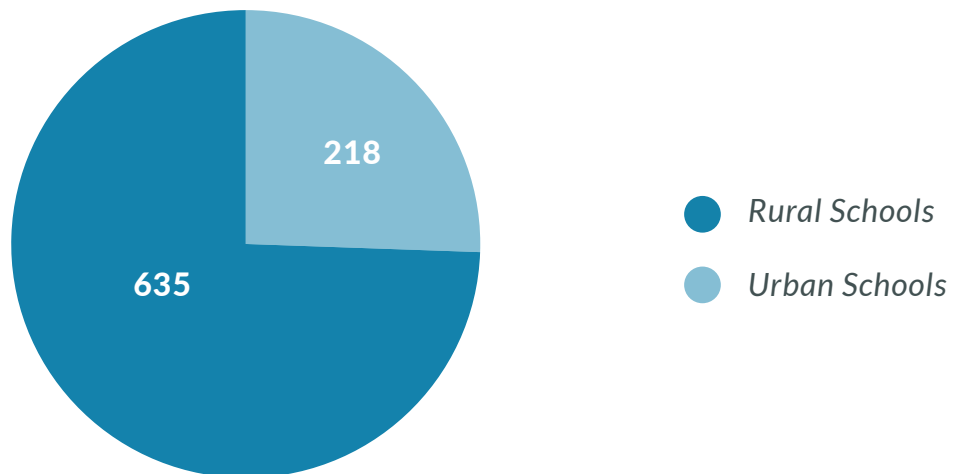
## TYPES OF SCHOOLS



## PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL



## RURAL AND URBAN SCHOOLS DISTRIBUTION



## Major support requested by schools

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### 1. 95% of the schools want to postpone board exams

The government of Karnataka decided to schedule board exams starting from the June 25. However, as per the schools surveyed, none of the schools were ready for the exams. As per a school principals, "We are not worried about students and teachers possibly contracting the disease during the examination period but as the schools got shutdown on emergency, we haven't prepared our students for board exams". There is a major fear among the schools that the students may not be able to clear board exams as they haven't covered the syllabus or model exams to prepare the students for exams. Additionally, due to the lockdown, many students and families have moved back to their villages and the schools are not in a position to contact them.

### 2. 92% of the schools seek reduction of the syllabus for the new academic year

As the central and state education boards are yet to finalize on the next academic session, schools surveyed, suggested that reducing the quantum of the syllabus for the next academic year.. With the loss of instructional time and with the available time for this session reduction in the school curriculum would be a good option.

### 3. 97% of the schools require support in the form of accessible digital learning solutions and training sessions for teachers

Schools are currently seeking support for accessible digital learning solutions since at least for some time, most schools would want to hold online classes. While there are strong recommendations to begin schools to provide online and remote classes, none of the schools under the survey, have had any experience in handling online or remote classes and teachers are not familiar with the use of technology in the teaching and learning process. "We thought about starting online classes for students but we have two major challenges, none of our teachers are trained in handling online classes and we are not able to contact our students who have moved back to villages," says a Principal from Bangalore



## 4. 89% of the schools need financial support

The majority of the private schools have stopped paying teachers and other staff as the salary for teachers and staff is distributed from the school fees collected from students. Due to the lockdown, schools have not been collecting fees for the last few months and expect some financial assistance from the government to support them for the new academic year.

## 5. 96% of the schools require support to address students' wellbeing and mental health concerns

All the schools consider it very important to address the emotional and psychological needs of students after schools reopen post-COVID closure but do not have any definite plans to support students. "Many of our students are coming from the vulnerable background may need support and care as the pandemic has affected them badly," says a principal from Mysore.





# Key Highlights

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- Schools are under huge financial crisis
- Possibility of increase in dropout rates if lockdown continues
- Promoting health and well-being of student's post-COVID is the biggest challenge
- Lack of preparedness for board exams
- Drastic drop in learning levels due to prolonged schools closure
- Online lessons fail to reach to most students
- Teachers are not prepared for online and remote learning



# Biggest Concern

## Post Lockdown

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### ● Health screening at school and maintaining social distancing at schools post COVID

With the relaxing of lockdown measures, schools are worried about ensuring the health and safety of students and staff. The biggest concern for school management teams is to ensure social distancing in class and also ensure continued learning.

### ● Teaching-learning process and competency of teachers to handle online, remote, and virtual classes.

Prior to the pandemic, most teachers had never undergone any training in handling teaching interventions and schools are unclear with how to proceed further and ensure continued learning. Schools require support for digital learning and online pedagogical solutions. Moreover, it is still unclear if schools are expected to move towards complete online or virtual classes or enable a blended learning approach.

### ● Wellbeing and mental health support

Schools play a significant role in protecting the wellbeing of students therefore more interventions will be required to equip teachers with the means to deal with the mental health of students. Furthermore, even the manner of ensuring teachers' wellbeing needs to be addressed.

### ● A drastic drop in learning levels

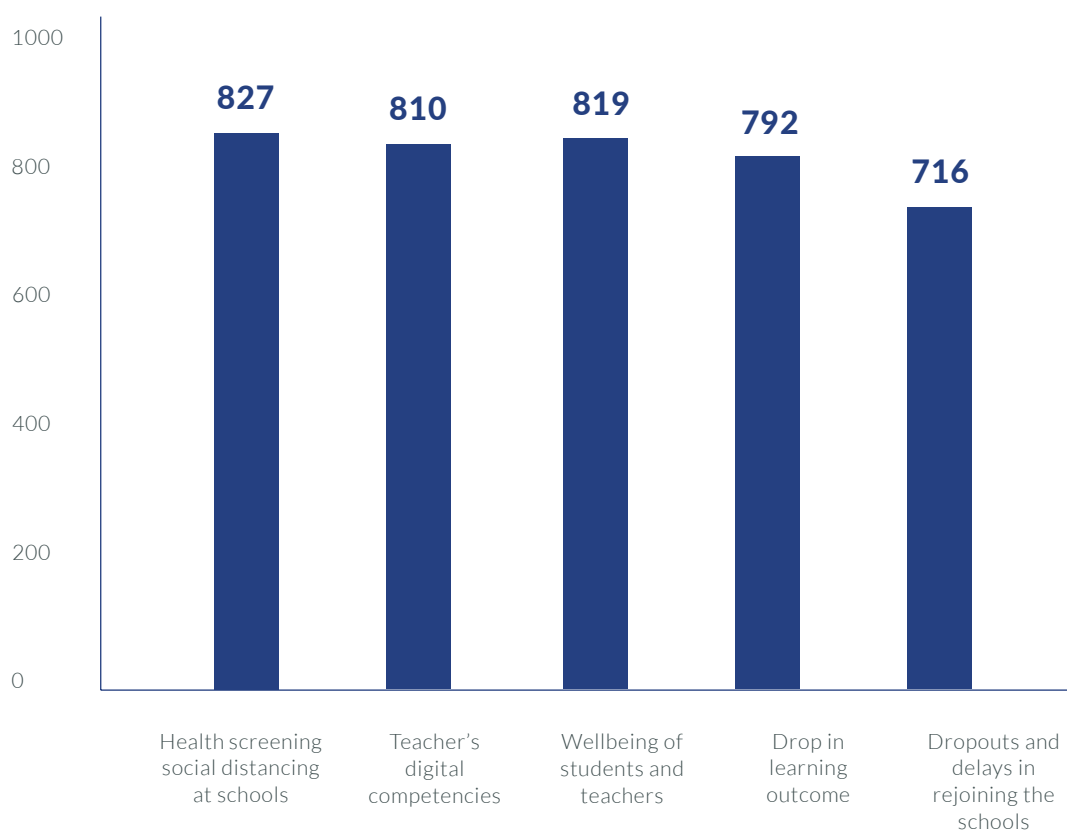
Most of the schools believe that the learning levels of the students may have been impacted drastically since most students may not have engaged in any learning process for the last 60 days. Schools believe that they may have to start again right from the start to improve reading abilities of students as well with their numerical/ mathematical abilities. As one of the teachers says *"It's a continuous effort by teachers to improve the learning levels of children, due to school lockdown, I am afraid they haven't engaged in any learning activities and we may have to start again"*



## Dropouts and delays in re-joining the schools

During the lockdown, many families and students travelled back to their native places and owing to that most schools believe that although there is a possibility that most of them will come back to school however there may be a delay. There is also a worry among schools that if school closure continues further, then there could be an increase in school dropouts. *“Many of our students have moved back with their family to their villages and we are still unclear if they will be coming back to schools”* –says a school teacher from Tumkur.

### MAJOR CONCERNS POST COVID LOCKDOWN





# Dream a Dream's Recommendations

## KEY AREAS TO ADDRESS

### Build financial capability of schools

Low cost and other affordable private schools are under huge financial crisis. It is the role of all stakeholders and service providers who work with the education system to build the financial capability of such schools. Interest-free loans, subsidy in taxes, free online teaching aids, etc. should be provided to support the schools.

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### Clear guidance to ensure health and safety of students

The critical role that schools play in supporting the health and safety of students is still unclear, clear guidance includes practical actions and checklists for administrators, teachers, parents, and children should be provided to ensure safety and social distancing measures that could be adapted in schools and outside school as well. This can only be done in coordination with the government and department of education, other public authorities including the critical support from teachers, parents, the local community and other relevant stakeholders

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### Support and training for digital solutions for teachers

The critical concern of the unpreparedness of teachers to deliver online classes needs to be addressed. Appropriate teaching aids, digital solutions, and training of teaching staff for remote, virtual, or blended learning should be provided. This also includes the availability of quality teaching solutions that are saleable, feasible, and adaptable to any ecosystem.

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### Focus on well-being and building resilience in students

While many reports highlight the increased rates of child abuse, neglect, and exploitation among children, schools are yet to consider the mental health and wellbeing of the students as a priority. Building a psychosocial support system within the school should be considered with high priority.

## REFERENCE

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