

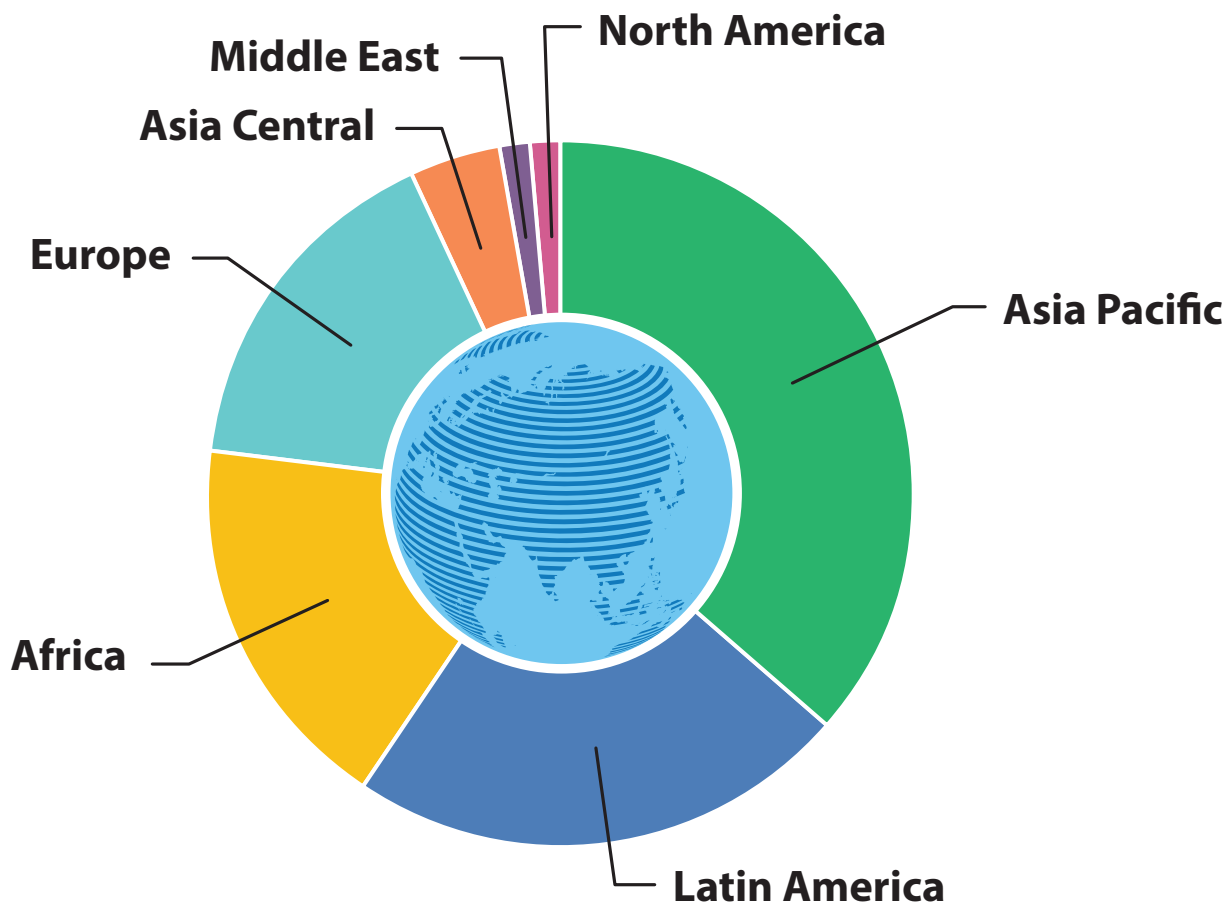
## International School Reopening Plans and Fall 2020 Outlook

### General Observations

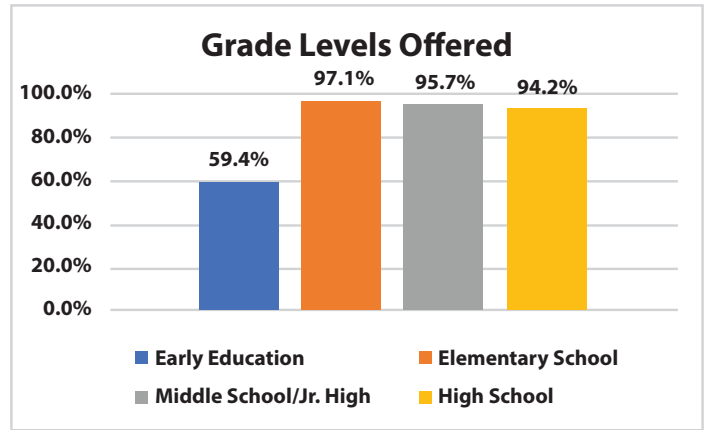
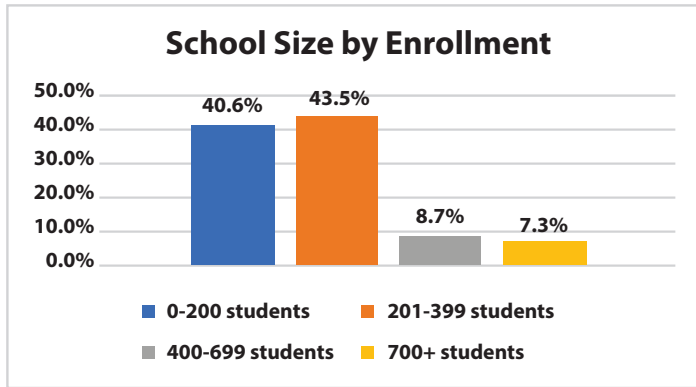
This report pulls together the results of a survey taken in early August 2020 of ACSI member international schools regarding reopening plans for fall 2020. The survey was nearly identical to one conducted approximately one month prior with ACSI USA member schools; this report should be considered a supplement to that much larger US report. See the [US report here](#). Where it is useful, differences between the International schools' and US schools' results will be highlighted in blue.

### Survey Demographics for International Schools

The Fall 2020 Re-Opening survey was sent to the leaders of approximately 170 Christian international schools around the world. 73 unique schools responded, giving a response rate of 43%. Schools in 41 different countries responded.



The international participation in the survey closely follows the numbers of members in each region. Each country where ACSI member international schools are located will have different school reopening strategies and challenges depending on regulations within their respective countries. For example, we know in some parts of the world that schools, both public and private, are banned from reopening physically until a much later date while others will have less restrictive regulations regarding reopening. In spite of these obvious differences, a clear pattern emerges in the survey results.



## Reopening Plans

Regarding reopening plans, most international schools (59.7%) plan for some sort of a physical reopening of their campuses in the fall. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of schools will offer on-campus instruction only, 18% are offering on-campus instruction with an option for distance learning (e.g., if preferred by families for health/safety, or in case of illness), and 12.5% plan to offer both on-campus instruction and distance learning, in which all students will experience a blend of both in some way. It is interesting to note that another 29% of the international schools anticipate offering distance learning only. *Only 3% of US schools polled were offering distance learning only. The higher international number is likely due to national or local restrictions against opening in-person.*

Two schools, (1.4%) of international school respondents indicated that their school was closing permanently. One of those schools reported this closure was only temporary due to the closure of international travel routes that kept the school from reopening in the fall.)

Reopening Option for Grades K-12	Percentage of Schools
Offer <b>on-campus instruction only</b> .	28.8
Offer <b>on-campus instruction, with an option for distance learning</b> (e.g., in case of illness, health condition, or family preference).	17.8%
Offer <b>both on-campus instruction and distance learning</b> , in which all students will experience a blend of both in some way.	12.3%
Offer <b>distance learning only</b> .	30.1%
School is <b>closing permanently/not reopening</b> in the fall.	2.7%
Have <b>not identified a plan</b> at this time.	1.4%

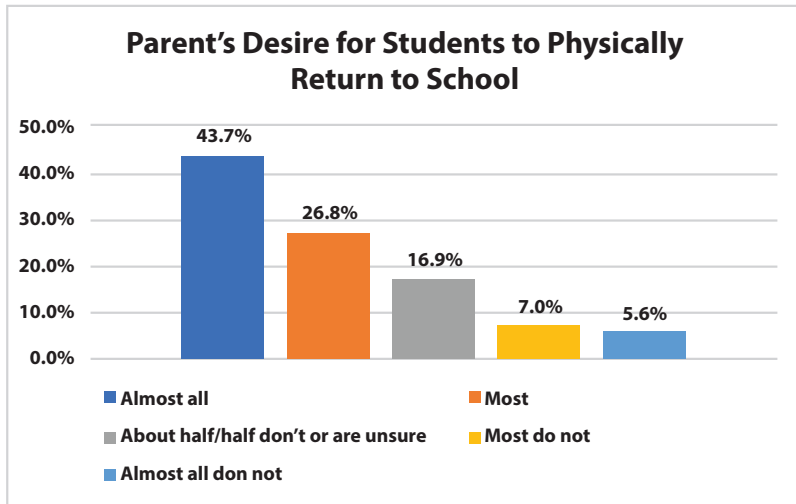
At the time of the survey, 86% indicated that their reopening plans had been finalized, while only 14% had not finalized plans.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of schools reported that their plans had been communicated to school families. When asked about a timeline for reopening, 28.5% indicated that they planned to delay the start of the school year, while the majority (71.5%) were starting on time.

## Influences on Planning

The survey asked respondents to describe the preferences of school parents in terms of a physical return to campus. Nearly forty-three percent (42.8%) of respondents indicated that **almost all parents desired their students to return to the international school campus**. Another 27% indicated that **most parents** preferred a return to campus, while an additional 24% were split on the issue of a return to campus. Five percent (5%) of respondents said that **almost all parents** at their school do not want the children physically back on campus.

Parents in ACSI US member schools show a much greater desire to get their children back on campus as compared to parents of children in international schools. Nearly fifty-five percent (54.7%) of US schools indicated that **almost all** of their parents desired their students to return to campus, 35.2% reported that **most of their parents** preferred a return to campus and less than 2% indicated that **most of their parents did not** desire a physical return to campus.

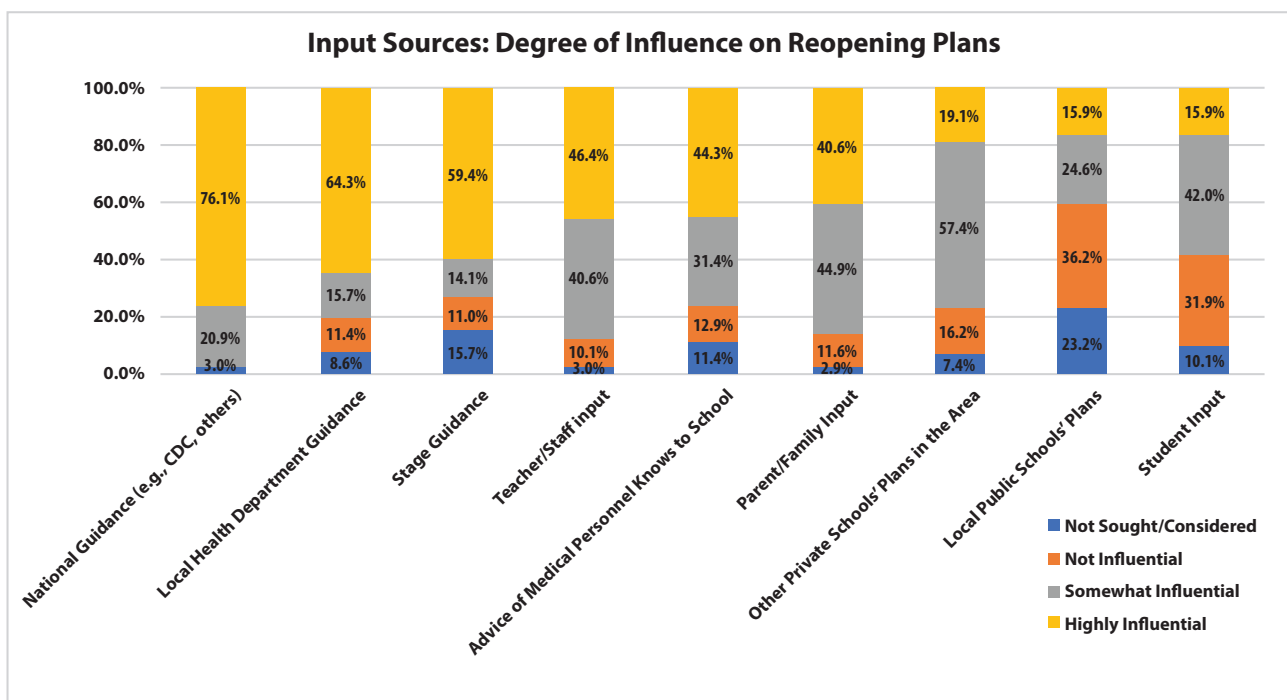


*"I am very impressed and blessed to have such a hard-working, adaptable staff. Rather than grumbling about all of the changes, my teachers cheered each other on. As we look ahead to starting the new school year, our staff is unified and supportive of the board's decision to have school on-campus. Every single teacher cannot wait to teacher their students in person! Of course, we will do our best to keep our students and staff safe, AND at the same time we trust that GOD is in control. We are not fearful but extremely hopeful for a fantastic 2020-2021 school year!" —Japan*

The survey also asked about the influence of various input sources in schools' formulation of reopening plans. As the graph below shows, national guidance played the leading role in a majority of international schools' reopening plans with local health department guidance next, followed by state guidance.

*It is interesting to note that 75% of international schools cited national guidance as highly influential in their decision making, whereas only 45.2% of US schools cited national guidance as highly influential. This makes sense when thinking about how the US makes its educational decisions (at the state level rather than at the federal level) versus other countries who make their educational decisions more centrally.*

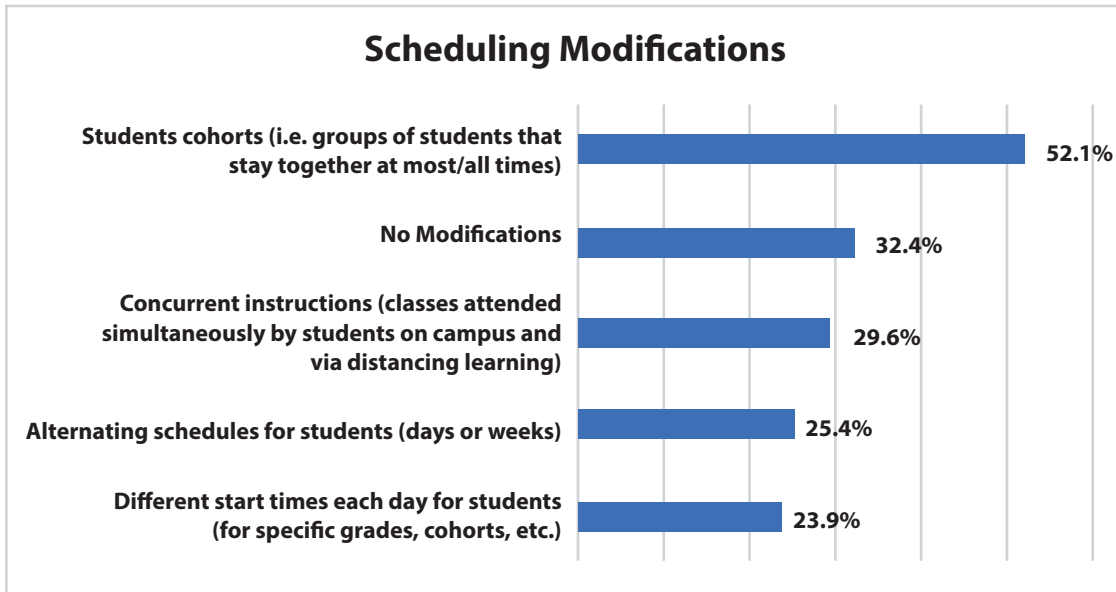
*It is also interesting that the influence of student input on reopening plans seems to have played a higher role in international schools than it did in US schools. For example, 16% of international schools indicated that student input was highly influential in their decision making while only 4.5% of US schools cited student input as highly influential. On the other hand, 10.2% of international schools indicated that student input was not sought or considered, whereas 29.9% of US schools indicated they did not seek student input in their reopening plans.*



## COVID-19 Modifications

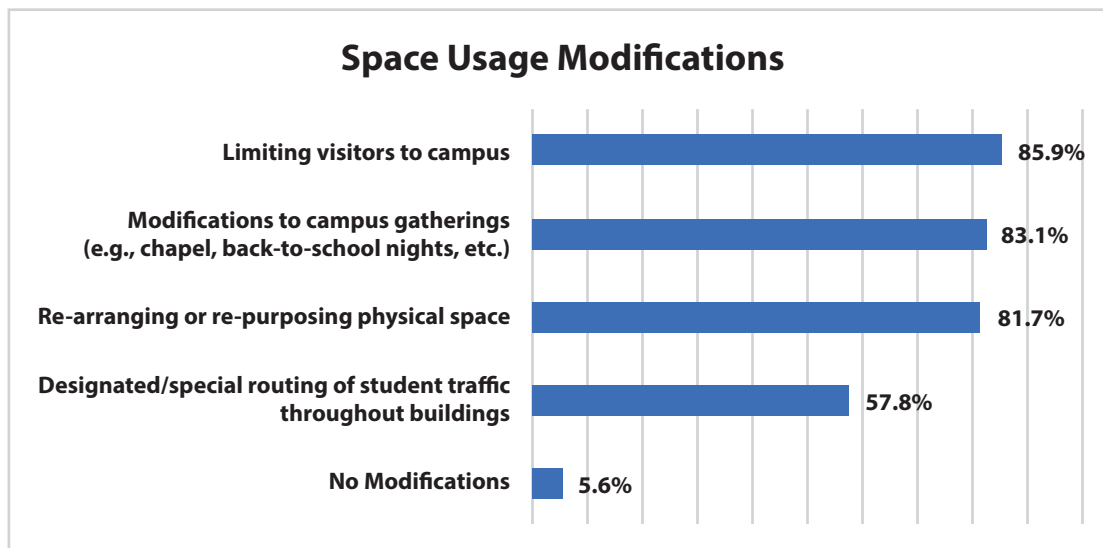
The survey asked international schools to indicate what modifications were done to scheduling, health and safety, space usage, programs and events, special education, and student support and testing. In this section, several international schools (*much more than US schools*) responded with NO MODIFICATIONS in all the options. This is likely due to a higher percentage of international schools restricted to distance learning due to government regulations for the restart of school. *Most of the modifications that international schools made tend to closely follow their US counterparts.*

### Scheduling



### Space Usage

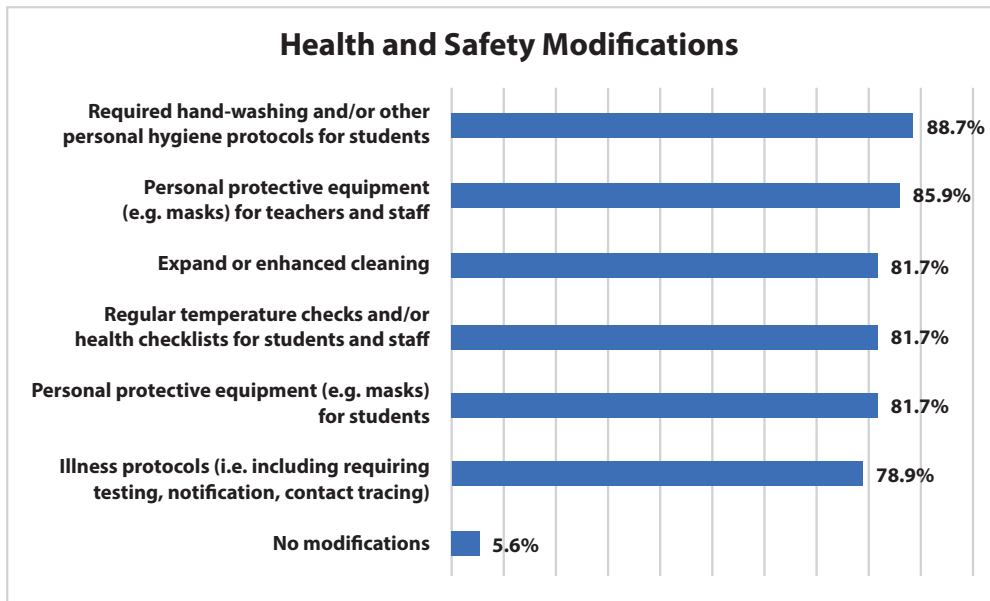
Almost all responding schools were making multiple kinds of space modifications for the start of school with re-arranging or re-purposing physical space as the top modification.



*"A non-Christian Spanish family has decided to send their two children to our school next year because of the uncertainties of the local public schools. Mostly due to COVID-19, these two children who are growing up in an atheist home will receive a biblically integrated education." —Paraguay*

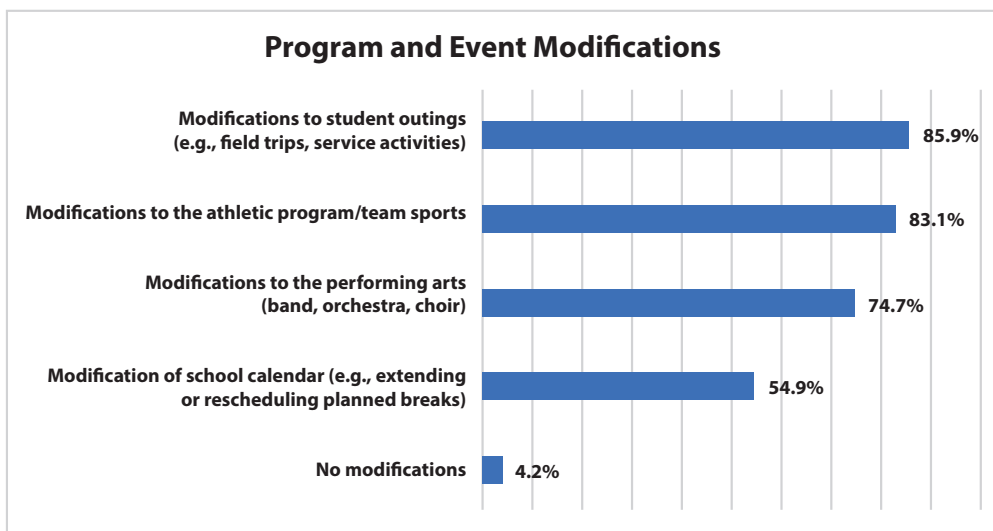
## Health and Safety

Most schools were making modifications changes for health and safety. The top modification was required handwashing and/or other personal hygiene protocols for students.

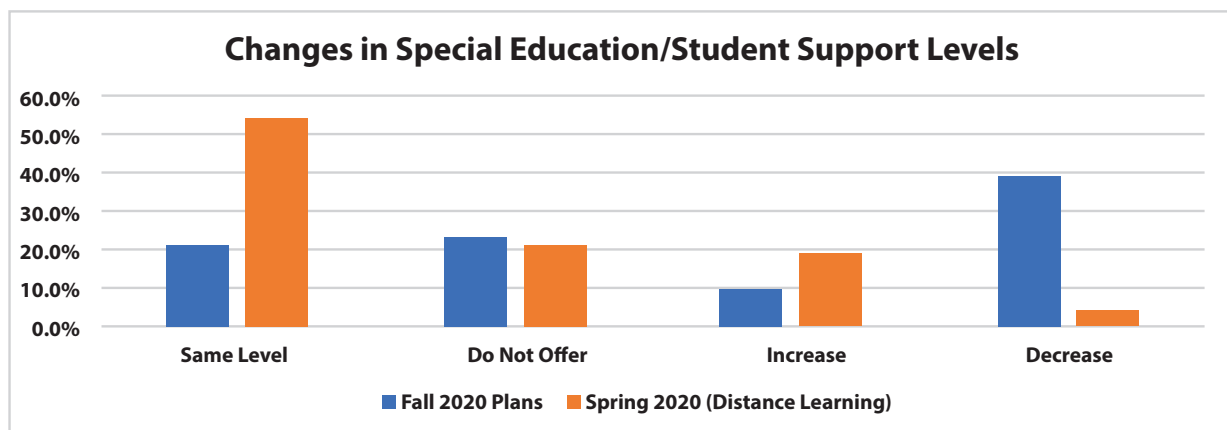


*"In May, we were expecting only 187 students to return to our school which is a large decrease from the 224 we had in 2019-20 school year – many families had returned to home countries and may not choose to continue with us. But, God has provided. On August 4, our first day of school, we had 208 enrolled, including multiple new families. Many families chose to STAY WITH US and study online, even while in their home country. With the new and (unexpected) continued enrollment, the nearly \$70,000 deficient in our 2020-21 budget has been FILLED. Praise JESUS. We have seen multiple MIRACLES to help our teachers return to Indonesia after a summer break in the United States. One teacher, in particular, was waiting since March for her passport renewal. With just a week to spare, her passport was renewed and returned to her so that she could travel back to Indonesia to renew her visa here. Our teacher had contacted a senator who acted on her behalf to get the passport renewed and returned in time. God displayed his care for our teacher and for Mountainview by acting through a senator." —Indonesia*

## Programs and Events



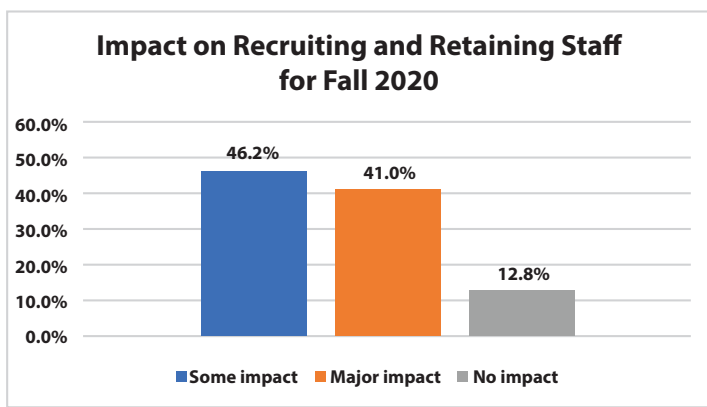
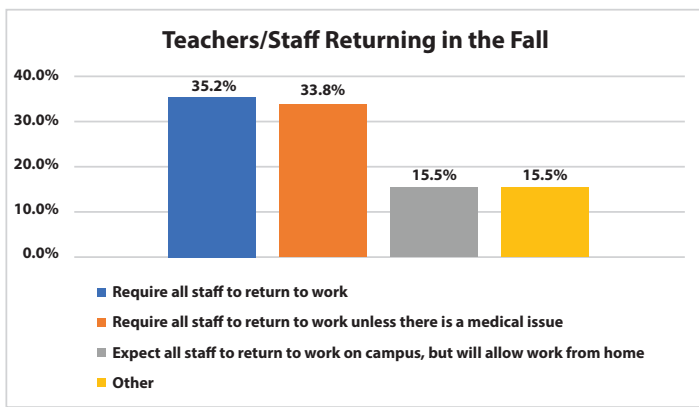
## Special Education and Student Support



## Staffing Impact

International schools most frequently reported that they are keeping the same overall full-time employment (FTE) for the coming year (47% of schools), while 9% reported an increase in overall FTE, and 44% reported a decrease in FTE.

Regarding teachers and staff returning to campus, there was quite a difference against their US counterparts. Only 35.7% of international schools reported that they were requiring all teachers/staff to return to work on campus when it is open (*62.1% in the US*). Another 32.8% indicated they would allow those with documented medical/health concerns to work from home (e.g. via distance learning) (*22.5% in the US*), with an additional 15.7% reporting that they would work with those teacher and staff who are uncomfortable returning to campus to allow them to work from home (*15.4% in the US*). Another 15.7% of international schools chose “other” with a variety of responses ranging from, “currently working virtually”, “waiting for government decisions”, or “some teachers are currently in quarantine.” Clearly, international schools have unique challenges with varying government regulations and working with an expatriate staff.



The international schools were also asked about the impact of recruiting and securing new expat staff. Forty-two percent (42%) reported no impact from COVID-19 on staffing, while 44.7% indicated there was some impact that caused some recruits to back out or be delayed, and 13% reported a major impact with serious gaps in staffing.

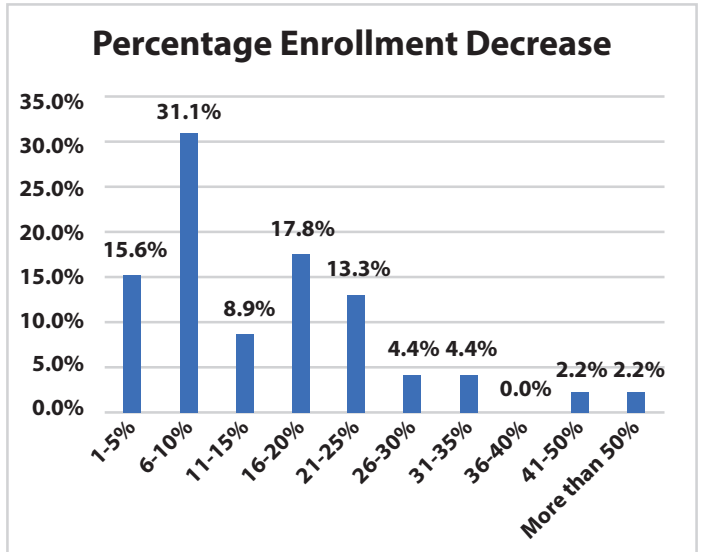
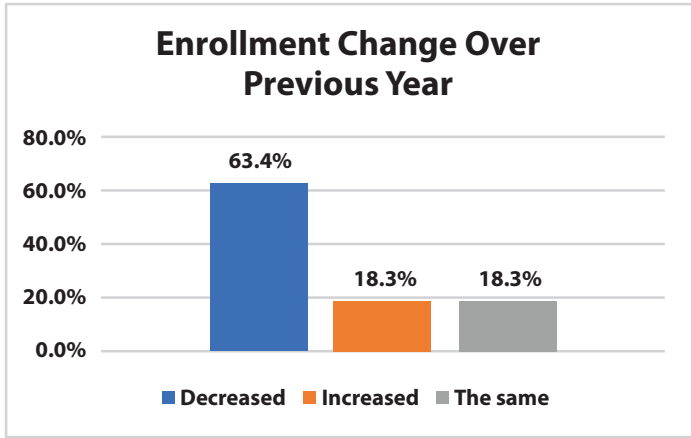
Nearly thirty-seven percent (36.8%) of schools reported that they still had academic positions at the school that were unfilled, while 63.1% indicated all their positions were filled. Those with gaps reported unfilled positions ranging from a high of six unfilled positions to a low of one position unfilled.

## Financial Impact

### Enrollment changes

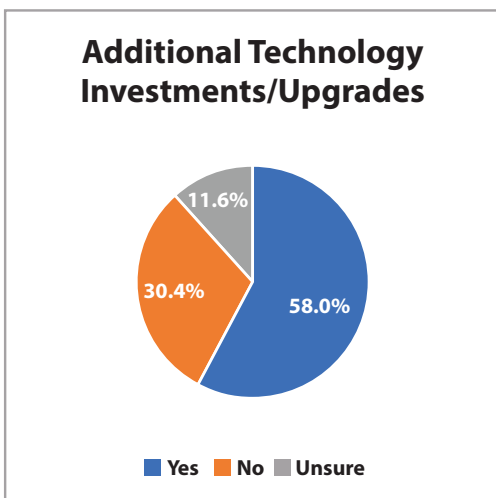
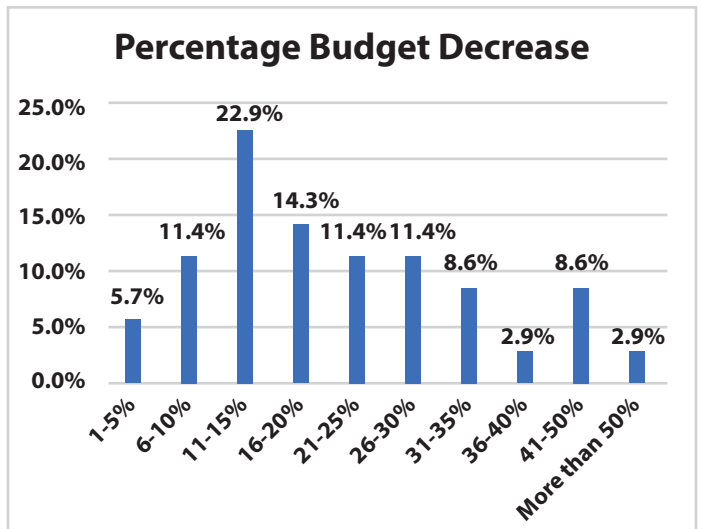
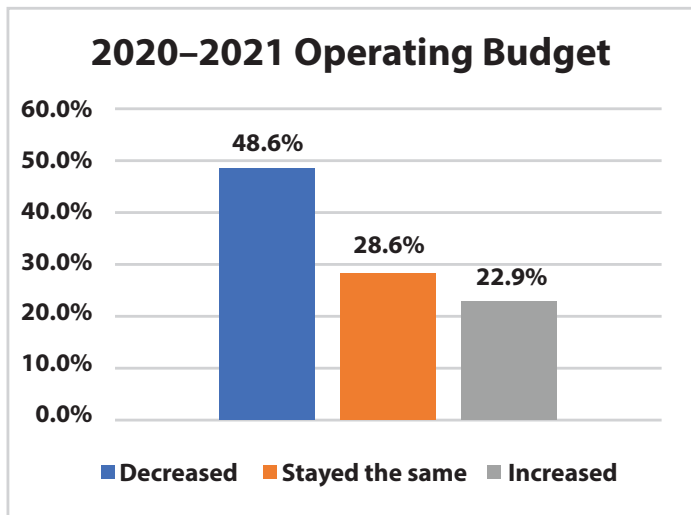
Just over 60% of international schools (64.3%) reported a decreased enrollment for Fall 2020, with the most frequently cited range of enrollment decrease being 6-10%. A little over eighteen percent (18.5%) of schools are reporting an increase in enrollment. The international nature of the community certainly has impacted enrollment. We know that some families were evacuated to their home countries from various regions due to the pandemic, but it is hard to know if those families (business, diplomatic, NGO, or ministry) will eventually return. *The US survey indicated that only 52.8% of its schools were anticipating a decrease in enrollment, 25.8% were looking at an increase in enrollment, while 21.3% indicated their enrollment would stay about the same.*

*“Our school has been able to provide weekly food rations for impoverished families of our sister free school weekly since April 25 due to the donations of our alumni and foreign supporters.” —Bangladesh*



### Changes in Operating budget

International schools most frequently reported (49%) that their operating budgets decreased for 2020-2021. The most frequently cited range of budget decrease was 11-15%, 27.5% of schools indicated their budgets would stay the same, and another 23.2% indicated an anticipated increase. *The international results are almost the exact opposite of US results and likely due to the greater drop in international enrollment. A little over forty percent (40.5%) of US schools are anticipating an increase in their operating budgets (see US report for a possible explanation), 30.4% report their budget will stay the same, and 29.1% report a decreased budget.*



At the same time, 57.3% of international schools reported that they were investing additional funds this fall for technology upgrades related to COVID-19 planning.

*"We began classes 100% virtually on August 6, 2020. We are so grateful to the Lord for His faithfulness during this extraordinary time. He gets the glory!" —Panama*

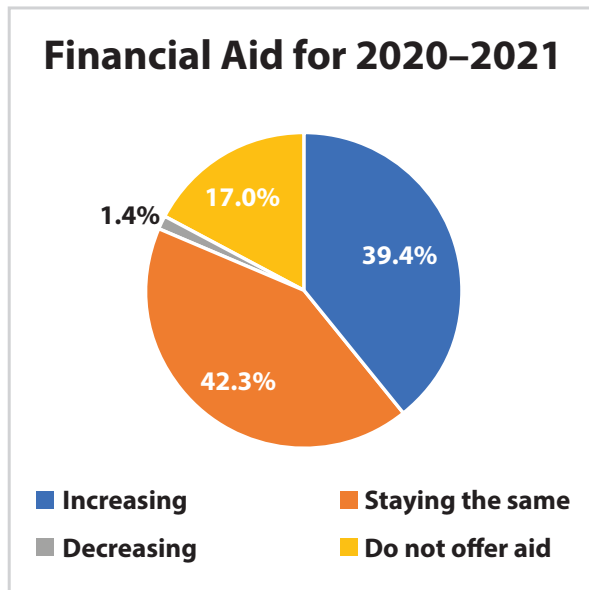


## Tuition Discounts

Regarding tuition discounts, most of the international schools (74.2%) are not offering tuition discounts for on-campus instruction, which is similar to US schools at 86.1%. On the other hand, international schools are more likely to offer discounts on their distance learning programs (38.6%) which stands in contrast to the US schools at only 11% offering a discount on distance learning.

## Financial Aid

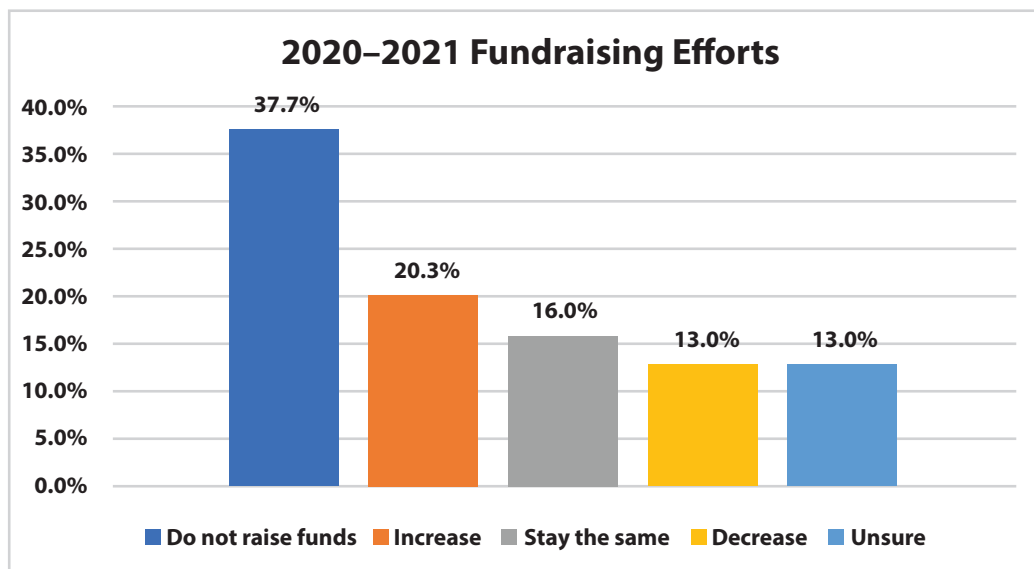
Most international schools indicated their financial aid levels were staying the same as compared to the previous year, while 40% indicated plans to increase financial aid for the 2020-2021 school year. Only one respondent indicated they were dropping their financial aid for this Fall. Almost sixteen percent (15.7%) of schools indicated that they do not offer financial aid at all.



*"As COVID19 crisis numbers climbed in March 2020 in Russia, God used this to provide us a new school building at less than half of the rental price of 2 months earlier and we were able to go into a fairly fixed price for 5 years. The building owner is not a believer and fearful of the virus impact on the economy and his building so he chose to pay up front himself for all the needed renovations to make it licensable by the local government and at ACSI accreditation standards: a price tag of about \$450,000 so that we will be ready to open school on September 14, 2020." —Russia*

## Fundraising Efforts

Twenty percent (20%) of international schools with fundraising initiatives reported that their efforts will increase in the coming year. About sixteen percent (16.1%) anticipate their efforts will remain the same, while 13.2% indicate their efforts will decrease this coming year. It is important to point out that 36.7% of the international school respondents reported that they do not currently have a fundraising effort.





## Other

There were two more short questions in the international school survey regarding the current head of school that are worth noting. (These were not reported upon in the US reopening report.)

When asked, "Is your head of school new for 2020-2021?", 17.6% of responding international schools indicated that their current head of school was new in their position. Nearly eighty-two percent (82.3%) indicated that their head was not new.

When asked, "What gender is your head of school?", 54.4% of responding international schools reported that their head of school was male and another 45.6% indicated their head of school was female.

## Calling Amid Challenge

ACSI's international school members and their leaders have stepped up with tremendous courage and grace during this period of pandemic uncertainty. International schools are often alone with few local peers to consult or knowledgeable experts (local or international) to call upon, or local and federal governments that fully understand or support their unique situation.

International school staff are often comprised of majority expatriate, non-citizen personnel that have visa and travel issues. Many of our schools have had to deal with late arriving staff this summer and then quarantining those same staff upon entering their country prior to serving.

Likewise, the international school parent and student constituencies are often made up of additional expatriates, international business, and diplomatic families presenting additional challenges and quarantine issues of their own. Losses in enrollment due to the international nature of those community members have presented financial challenges to schools, as well.

And finally, each international school in ACSI membership is subject to differing federal and local health regulations during this pandemic that will vary widely from country to country and region to region. All these factors combine to increase the decision-making pressure and challenge upon leaders and staff of international school communities.

And yet, as this report is written, international Christian schools are reopening all around the world. Tremendous effort has gone into starting well, meeting new and changing regulations, caring for one another, and delivering on the stated purpose of the school to provide a quality Christian education to the glory of God. One thing is clear: international schools are staying true to their calling.

Tim Shuman  
Regional Director for International Schools  
September 2020

*"The government ordered a discount to be applied to school fees. Some families have donated their discount to help those that need it the most." —Bolivia*

*"Parents and the community are very supportive. They have other options, but they value Christian Education." —Bolivia*

*"Lots of neat stories... we have 80 families receiving special financial support due to COVID and it has been neat to see families helping other families during this difficult time. Our staff has been amazing... basically working all summer to be ready to start school this week." —Colombia*

*"Teachers have been incredibly flexible and have been willing to change and adapt to these chaotic times. This has been a real blessing to watch, a silver lining in these times." —Philippines*