To the Extent Feasible: Learning from District Responses to COVID-19

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Welcome!

- 20 min presentation + Q-and-A
- Listen-only mode
- Submit panelist questions via Q-and-A box
- Submit technical questions via chat box
Research Approach

What We’ve Learned

District and CMO Examples

Considerations

Discussion
Research Approach

We have been studying district and charter responses to school closure and approaches to remote learning.

We reviewed 82 districts and 18 charter management organizations across the country, collectively serving over **9 million students**.

We used their websites and social media channels to track progress, and we update our findings each week.
### By the numbers

**Districts**
- # districts: 82
- # states: 34
- Smallest: 1,300 students
- Largest: 980,000 students
- # students average: 110,000

**CMOs**
- # CMOs: 18
- # states: 17
- Smallest: 3,600 students
- Largest: 43,000 students
- # students average: 12,000
What we’ve seen across the country

→ Almost all districts are providing educational resources to families; about half provide **formal curriculum, instruction, and progress monitoring**.

→ **Attendance and grading** are just beginning to take shape.

→ Districts are stepping up on providing access to devices, but still figuring out **internet connectivity**.

→ **Supports for students with special needs** are superficial and not clear.
What we’ve seen across the country (cont’d)

- Remote learning plans **differ by age groups**, with older students typically getting more time and resources.

- About a third of districts are **delegating responsibility to schools**, with varied levels of expectation.

- The majority of students’ learning continues to **fall on parents**.
More than half of districts now provide comprehensive learning plans

District Remote Learning Changes Over Past Month

- No Academic Resources: March 26 - 6%, May 6 - 0%
- General Resources: March 26 - 46%, May 6 - 1%
- Curriculum: March 26 - 38%, May 6 - 33%
- Curriculum and Instruction: March 26 - 5%, May 6 - 7%
- Curriculum, Instruction, and Progress Monitoring: March 26 - 5%, May 6 - 59%
Attendance tracking is a critical tool to track student access to remote learning

- Just 29% of districts and 56% of CMOs reviewed communicate that they are tracking attendance.

- 5 of 6 Florida districts reviewed monitor attendance. They are using it to identify and provide outreach to missing students.

- **States play a role:** Some are directing districts to count all students as present. Others are waiving attendance policies or penalties. Still others recommend, but do not require, attendance. A few require it.

  Miami-Dade rolled out attendance on April 6, measured by student logins to online learning platforms, and publishes weekly attendance data.

  Strategies for absent students include contacting students by phone and, in some cases, home visits; delivering devices or wifi; working with community organizations to locate students.
School systems take different approaches to grading

- 49% of districts and 50% of CMOs reviewed provide grades for all of their students.

- Most Florida districts and CMOs reviewed who are grading continue to use standards-aligned, mastery-based grading systems.

- Other districts have revised their grading approaches.
  - Chicago Public Schools will count completed assignments “only if they improve a student’s grade”
  - Seattle Public Schools will allow high school seniors to get either an A or an “incomplete”
Some systems are redefining teacher roles and responsibilities

- **Teachers divide and conquer tasks**
  - Teacher pairs split instruction and student check ins/grading. (Success)
  - One teacher per grade level leads instruction; others lesson prep/check in/grade. (Achievement First)
  - Advisors are responsible for weekly check ins. (DSST)

- **Teachers collaborate across teams and sites**
  - Teacher leaders record example lessons and lead PD on effective practices. (Rocketship)
  - Teachers create grade-level instruction channels on YouTube. (Uncommon)

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**Achievement First** clearly outlines expectations for teachers, including:

- Max “required on” time, staff meeting time, and flexible prep/check in time
- Flexibility for teachers with demanding home responsibilities
- Lead staff create website material and model videos
- Non-core teachers assigned to student check ins and support
Operators have stepped up on providing access to devices, but are still figuring out internet connectivity.

Hillsborough surveyed all families to determine need for a mobile device at home. The district offered one device per family household that could be picked up from the child's school. 51,000 devices that are usually used in school were redeployed as loaner devices.

Note: Based on approaches communicated on district and CMO websites and social media channels.
Special education information is still sparse

- While districts are expected to continue to provide FAPE, details on special education are scarce.
- Some districts state a commitment to serving special populations and refer to 1:1 follow up with families, but most just provide general resources or nothing at all.
- State guidance to districts falls into 3 categories: **legal guidance**, **requiring special education to be included** in remote learning plans, and “**ready to use**” **resources** aimed at helping special educators carry out remote learning plans.
- We have not seen extensive or innovative approaches to working with special populations.

*San Diego Unified* has special education access at the center of their plan. The superintendent addressed it head on via Facebook live, there is a comprehensive Remote Learning Special Education page, and special education is acknowledged throughout the district’s remote learning plan.
The burden of students’ learning still falls on parents

- Despite all the efforts to provide access to remote learning, most students’ educational options fall far short of a typical school day, placing responsibility on parents to execute and often design their children’s learning experiences.

- Parents lack access to their children’s academic data, making it difficult to modify assignments.

- Some parents have officially “closed” home school for the year; others are looking for new school options.

https://www.today.com/parents/some-parents-refuse-remote-learning-will-there-be-consequences-t178188; https://twitter.com/missyanderik
Examples

Miami-Dade County, FL

Success Academy, NY

Boulder Valley School District, CO
Miami-Dade County, FL
392 schools, 345,000 students

- Launched immediately after closure (the proceeding calendar school day)
- District distributed 114,000 devices, including phones with enabled wifi
- Utilizes online curricula like iReady, Edgenuity
- Shared clear teacher, family, and student expectations with staff and families
- Teachers should:
  - Develop standards-aligned lessons; 45-60 min/day recommended
  - Use office hours to facilitate online lessons and answer student questions
  - Utilize an online platform (Teams, etc.) to upload materials and send messages
  - Communicate expectations, grades, and student progress monitoring regularly
- Teachers track attendance daily; district deploys staff to find missing students and troubleshoot access issues
- 99% of students have logged in; 92% ADA
- Plans underway for virtual summer school and early school start for students with special needs, students behind standard, and 9th graders
Success Academy, NY
45 schools, 18,000 students; 99% proficient in math, 90% in ELA

- Launched one week after closure; builds on an established school and professional culture
- Full day schedule
  - Middle school: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.; high school: 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.
- Day begins with small-group advisory
- Live, synchronous instruction
- Existing curriculum is unchanged
- One-to-many teaching (1 “best” teacher teaches 125 students)
- Immense focus on what students are producing, in real time (via Kami)
- Frequent use of online polls, pop questions in game-like structure (e.g. Kahoot)
- Attendance taken, regular daily assignments, full grading
Boulder Valley School District, CO
56 schools, 31,282 students

- Began remote learning on March 30, after Spring Break.
- One of the first districts to roll out a comprehensive plan that included instruction for elementary and secondary using Schoology or Google Classroom.
- In mid-April, began summer and fall planning for intervention strategies.
- Gave guidance about how learning will be introduced and parent role. One of the first to mention special education - website stated “Unique Times Call for Unique Measures” with flexibility is at the core.
- Teachers should:
  - Provide instruction and 4 hours homework/day
  - Hold at least 1 video conference each week
  - Monitor engagement
Considerations for Summer and 20-21 Planning

Schools should expect to move between various scenarios of remote, in-person, and hybrid schooling during virus cycles.

- Clear teaching and learning expectations, operational strategies, staff roles and responsibilities for each scenario
- Clear decision-making protocols, communication norms, and communication platforms
- Common diagnostic and assessment platforms
- Increased training and job-embedded support to staff in diagnostics and virtual learning
Considerations for Planning (cont’d)

Operators will need to consider new policies, likely in partnership with state guidance.

- Health and safety policies: PPE expectations for staff, PTO policy adjustments, student/staff temperature checks, conditions for closing school or classes when symptoms present
- Attendance tracking and truancy responses
- Grading and credit recovery
Considerations for Planning (cont’d)

Operators may have to do more with less, which means creative use of resources is paramount.

- What are the most critical academic courses and staffing? Will students need “double dosing”?
- How can non-critical staff roles be redefined to support priority academic and socio-emotional learning gaps?
- What are creative remote learning solutions for younger students who need more direction?
- What will teacher instructional coaching look like?
Considerations for Planning (cont’d)

This is no time to lower expectations of students or educators.

● Time on task continues to matter: Districts that bargain to a 3-4 hour day are abdicating their responsibility to teach.

● Critical components of effective distance learning
  ○ Daily synchronous, engaging instruction
  ○ A cumulative, sequential, and ambitious curriculum that builds domain knowledge
  ○ Daily feedback on student work
  ○ Daily 1:1 check-ins with students (minimum of 10 minutes)

● Both staff and student accountabilities must be preserved.
  ○ Attendance-taking, assignments and grading
  ○ There is no compassion in low expectations of students.

● Extensive time for teacher grade team meetings and PD is essential.
Please visit crpe.org for our latest data & research
Thank you!
Appendix
San Diego Unified, CA
181 schools, 105,793 students

- Initially provided a combination of high-level lesson plans with district endorsed online resources by grade level.
- On April 27, launched distance learning. Grading to begin May 11.
- New plan gives teachers 3 options: 1) district provided instructional materials with educator support, 2) educator-led hybrid instruction, or 3) educator-led blended instruction.
- Communications include a family-facing website and weekly superintendent Facebook live sessions. Special education is at the core of their plans.
- Teachers should:
  - Determine which approach they prefer.
  - Track attendance and grade assignments.
  - Work with families to identify connectivity and other family needs.
  - Provide differentiated, small-group support through phone calls or online office hours.
Impact Public Schools, WA
K-2, 1 school, 300 students

- 9 a.m.-2:10 p.m. school day M/W/Th; shortened day Tu/F
- Group welcome, 2 online literacy blocks, recess and snack, third literacy block, enrichment, lunch, math, project-based learning, closing, recess and movement
- “Impact at home” radio reminds students when to go from one activity to the next
- Lexia and Amira for literacy, Dreambox for math, Brainpop Jr. for science, Duolingo for foreign language, Chess Kid, Cosmic Kids Yoga
- Small-group reading and math instruction with immediate feedback
- Daily SEL time provided via small mentor groups
- Project boxes mailed to all students
- Virtual project showcases for family members and the community
- Provides virtual real-time coaching to teachers
- Provides grades and tracks attendance; 92% daily attendance rate
Research Typology Framework

- Curriculum
  - Resources provided by the district
  - Resource coverage
- Instruction
  - Instruction from teachers
  - Synchronous teaching
  - Synchronous student engagement
  - Students with disabilities supports
- Progress Monitoring
  - Feedback on student work
  - Grading
  - Teacher check ins
- Learning Time
  - Attendance tracking
  - Instructional minutes recommendations
- Technology
  - Device distribution
  - Internet/wifi access
- Centralization
  - Delegates remote learning decision-making to schools or teachers

CRPE: Reinventing Public Education
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<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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<td>Resources provided by the district</td>
<td>None = District provides no resources or expectations about curriculum, lessons, or activities.</td>
<td>None = District website says schools are on break or closed until XYZ date with no information about learning expectations.</td>
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<td>General = District provides a menu of learning resources (not sequential lessons). This could be a general list of resources or it could be a list organized by grade-level. This is essentially the most passive option.</td>
<td>General = District provides a list of homepage links to Khan Academy, the local library system, kidsreads.com, etc. District provides paper or digital packet of optional activities (things to do) that are not part of a curriculum or sequence of learning.</td>
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<td>Specific = District provides (or expects schools to provide) curated/directive curriculum, placing each student in a specific position in a resource and prescribing their pacing through that resource, lessons/activities/units that are associated with a grade-level and a subject area (at least ELA and mathematics), or daily or weekly physical or downloadable packets that are distinct from the previous day or week's packet. These may be created by the district, schools, teachers, or a 3rd party.</td>
<td>Specific = District communications/plans explain that teachers are expected to provide students with assignments during the week or district makes work packets by grade level and subject available.</td>
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<td>Resource coverage</td>
<td>None = no grades covered</td>
<td>Partial = District is only providing resources for grades 6-12.</td>
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<td>All = resources for all grades (at least K-12)</td>
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<td>Partial = resources for some grades</td>
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## Research Typology: Instruction

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| Instruction from teachers | District expects teachers to engage with students to help them access and understand content. There may be different approaches taken, but there must be strategies in place to help students understand content and assignments. Students are not expected to rely primarily on themselves or parents to understand content or assignments. This could happen via live instruction, pre-recorded video, online platforms, one on one conversations that are tied to content, or other strategies that ensure that students receive structured guidance on concepts. | **All** = District communications/plans explain that teachers will post video lessons or provide other instructional resources on Google Classroom or other platforms along with assignments, beyond just uploading assignments and offering office hours. Or, teachers will provide "real-time" instruction for students over video conference at scheduled times. Or, teachers will assign virtual instruction via online instructional platforms like Edgenuity, iReady, or Khan Academy. These assignments must be directed by teachers and tied to classwork or assignments, not offered as general resources. Or, students receive daily calls from a teacher to talk through their understanding of work assigned in packets.  
**Partial**: Middle and high school students receive synchronous instruction or are directed to instruction on a platform while elementary students receive work packets only. Do not count districts where some teachers choose to provide instruction, but it is not an expectation for all as ‘partial’.  
**None** = Teacher office hours or real-time video chat that isn’t attached to a lesson. Teacher uploading weekly curricular assignments without accompanying instruction. |
## Research Typology: Instruction

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<td><strong>Synchronous teaching</strong></td>
<td>District expects some synchronous (&quot;real time&quot;) teaching. Offering office hours does not count as synchronous teaching.</td>
<td>District communications/plans explain that teachers will provide &quot;real-time&quot; instruction for students over video conference.</td>
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|                                    | - **None** = no synchronous teaching  
  - **All** = synchronous teaching for all grades  
  - **Partial** = synchronous teaching for some grades                                                                                                                     | District communications/plans explain that teachers will facilitate whole-group sessions among students in their class (e.g., video conference). Or, teachers are expected to assign collaborative group projects that require students to work together virtually with or without the teacher present. |
| **Synchronous student engagement** | District expects teacher to facilitate some student-to-student synchronous engagement.                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                       |
|                                    | - **None** = no synchronous student engagement  
  - **All** = synchronous student engagement for all grades  
  - **Partial** = synchronous student engagement for some grades (must explain what partial arrangement is in "coverage note" column).                                 |                                                                                       |
| **Students with disabilities supports** | District webpage specifically does or does not mention how schools and/or the district will support students with disabilities.                                                                                                                                                   | This indicator captures a range of possibilities. The lowest bar: a district communicates that IEP meetings will be virtual or that specialists will be reaching out directly to families to talk about supports for student learning; others might have more elaborate resources or plans. |
## Research Typology: Progress Monitoring

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| Feedback on student work          | District expects teachers to provide feedback on student work, monitor the academic progress of students, or issue grades. This measure captures multiple points on this continuum. The next indicator (formal grading flag) identifies the subset of districts that require some student work completed during the shutdowns to contribute to their final course grade.  
  - **None** = no feedback  
  - **All** = feedback for all grades (K-12)  
  - **Partial** = feedback expected for some grades | **All** = District communications/plans explain that teachers should request that students submit work, provide students with feedback on their work, monitor student progress, and/or grade students work for contribution to the student's grade.  
  
  Note that the lowest bar for an affirmative answer (All or Partial) is students are asked to submit some of their work to their teachers.                                                                 |
| Grading                           | The formal grading flag identifies the subset of districts that require some student work completed during the shutdowns to contribute to their final course grade.  
  - **None** = no grading of student work  
  - **All** = grading of student work for all grades (e.g., ELM, MS, HS)  
  - **Partial** = grading of student work expected for some grades | **All/Partial** = District communications/plans explain that teachers will be recording grades on student work. Pass/Fail and Extra Credit only count as a formal grade.  
  
  **None** = District communications/plans mentions that teachers may be grading or scoring assignments but that these scores won't contribute to the final course grade |
## Research Typology: Progress Monitoring

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| Teacher Check Ins          | This indicator captures whether teachers are maintaining contact and connection with students outside of instruction and regular class settings.  
                            | - **Yes** = District communicates an expectation that teachers will check in with students, via phone call, email or virtual platform  
                            | - **No** = No expectations communicated for teachers to check in with students | District communicates that teachers will be calling students 1:1 to check in. Or, teachers will hold office hours if students or families have questions.  
                            |                                                                            | Advisors hold advisory class. Teachers hold morning meetings or weekly wellness meetings. |