

A blue-tinted silhouette of a person with their hair in a bun, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The person's head is turned slightly to the right, and their hands are on the keyboard. The background is a solid blue color.

Education in a Pandemic

Learning from Illinois Students &
Caregivers to Plan for the Road Ahead



FEBRUARY 2021

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS



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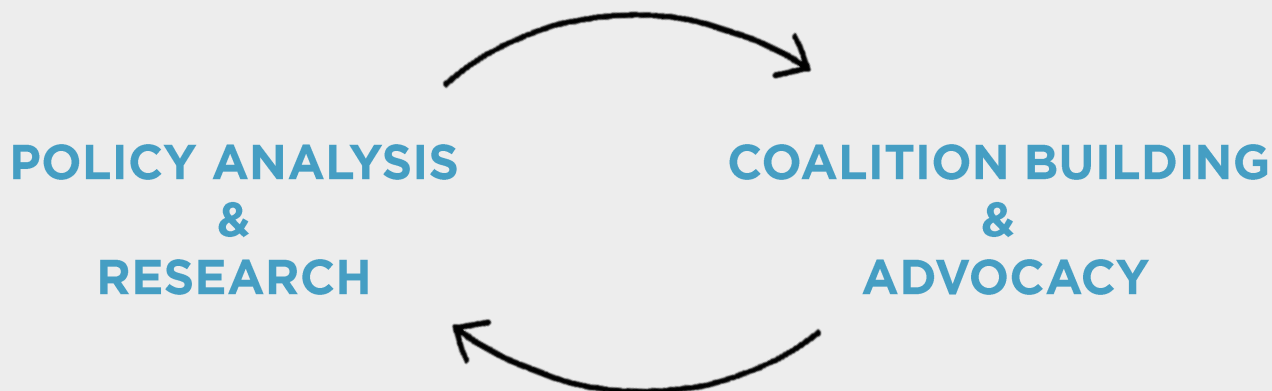
Chief of Schools, East St. Louis School District 189

THE CURRENT MOMENT DEMANDS THIS KIND OF LISTENING

In order to find ways state policy can empower and support Illinois' students and families to recover and rebuild from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we first needed to hear from those students and families.

OUR APPROACH

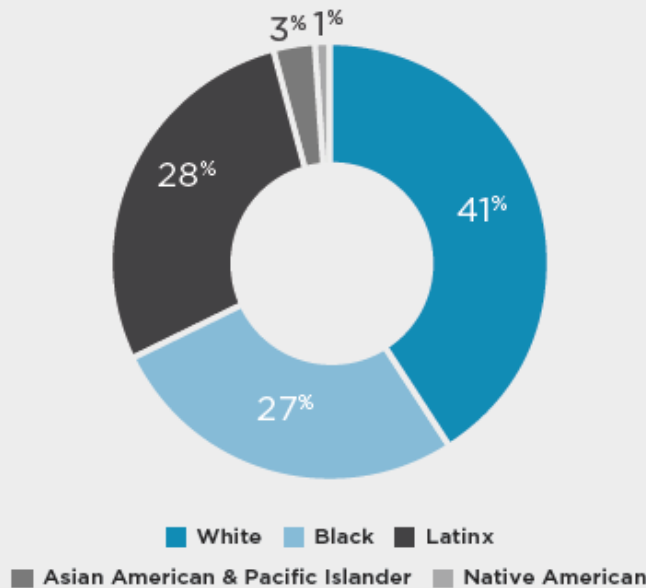
Blending research, data analysis, and community engagement to design student-centered solutions.



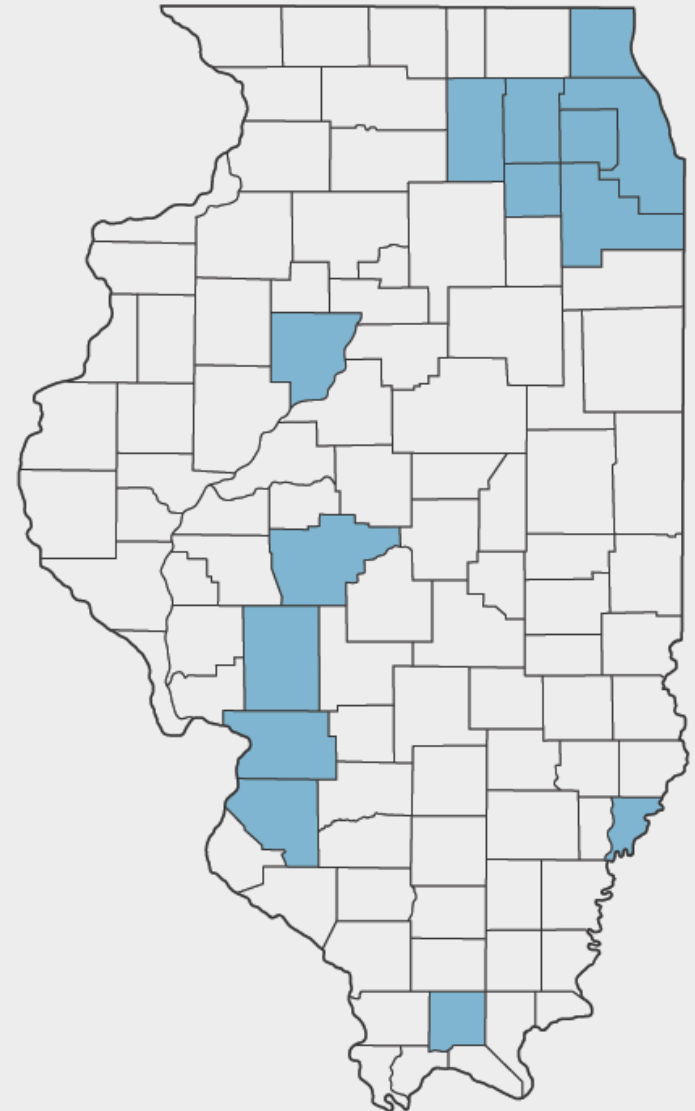
LEARNING FROM ILLINOIS' STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND CAREGIVERS

Throughout September and October of 2020, Advance Illinois hosted virtual focus groups in English and Spanish with more than 120 public school students, employees, parents, and caregivers in rural, urban, and suburban communities from across the state to better understand how their schooling experiences have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY OF ALL FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

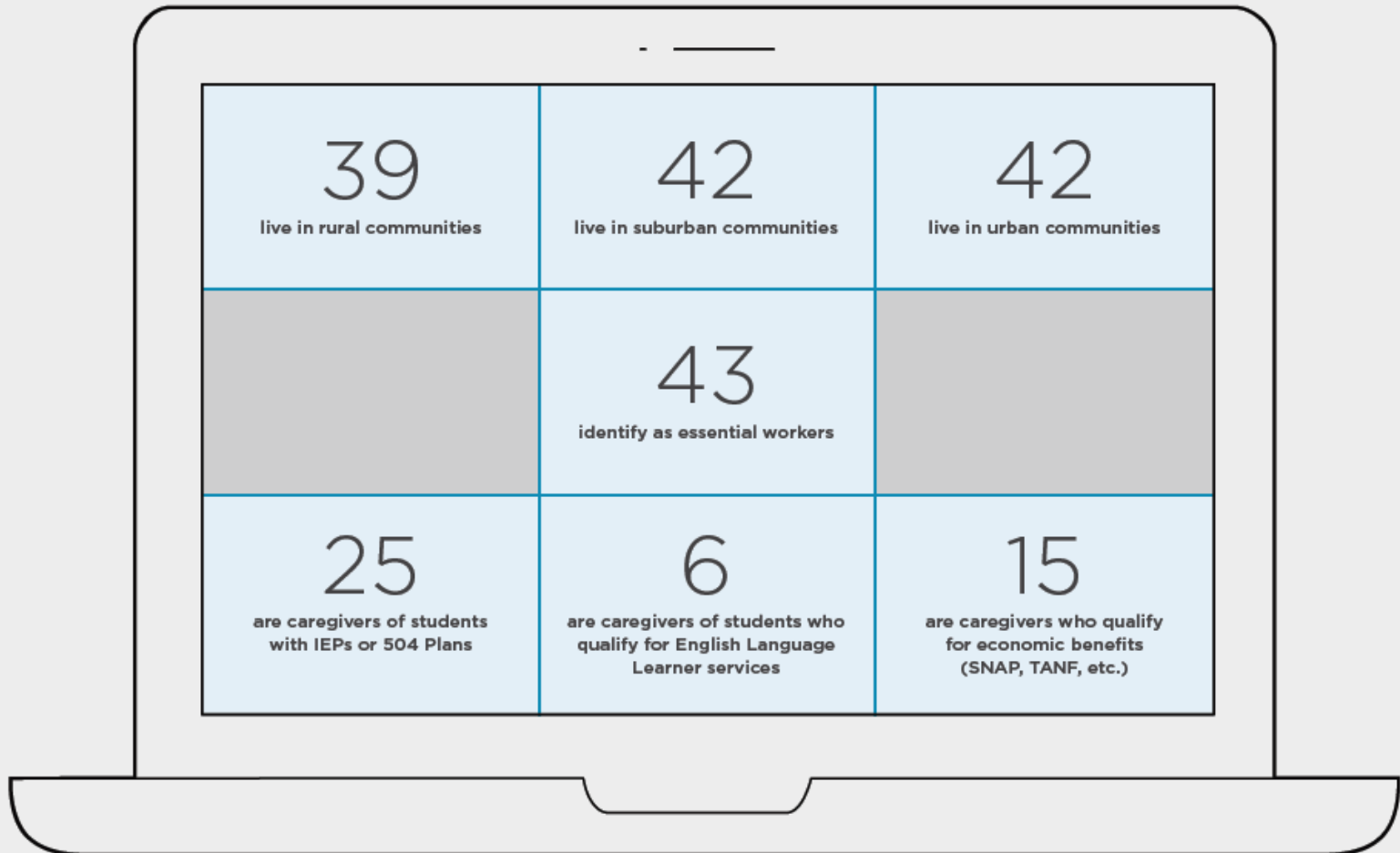


FOCUS GROUP COMMUNITIES ENGAGED



LEARNING FROM ILLINOIS' STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND CAREGIVERS

123 total participants



FINDINGS



HOW THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING
ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES



Lack of Access
to Child Care

“

I work in health care and my husband works in a prison—we couldn't take off. My kids' schools were closed, but we still had to work. We didn't want to expose my parents, and our daycare center closed but still required us to pay tuition. I didn't think we would survive the stress. It felt like panic every morning.

Suburban Caregiver

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES



Lack of Access
to Child Care



Increased Financial
Insecurity

“

Our community is hungry. There are a lot of people who don't know where to get help, where to get food. And then there are food pantries and organizations set up to help that don't know how to find the people (in need). It's like they don't know how to connect. They used to connect through schools—the social worker, the teachers, word of mouth. But now the connection is broken.

HOW THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IS IMPACTING ILLINOIS COMMUNITIES



Lack of Access
to Child Care



Increased Financial
Insecurity



Barriers to Accessing
Health Care & Mental
Health Services

“

A lot of people got the virus, and we saw how they lost their jobs, and people were very afraid of how much it would cost to go to the doctor. We can't get sick—you get a tickle in your throat, and you are just so scared because no one can afford the doctor.

GRATITUDE TO OUR EDUCATORS

- Participants highlighted the tireless efforts of educators working to meet unprecedented need
- Despite herculean efforts, additional state guidance and resources are needed to support educators and ensure equity



We have a teacher who puts the science labs out on her front porch for us to come pick up every other week. She has a list of students who can't get them, and she drives around drops them off. So, everybody does the labs, everybody has materials. No one has an excuse to not participate, and she makes sure everyone has what they need.

Urban Student

A person is shown in silhouette, sitting at a desk with their head buried in their hands, a common gesture of stress or despair. The background is a solid, muted orange color. The text is overlaid in white, sans-serif font.

NEED FOR SOCIAL,
EMOTIONAL & MENTAL
HEALTH SUPPORTS

NEED FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

- **Students feel socially distant and isolated**
- Students and caregivers identify an increased need for counselor and social worker support and capacity
- Participants recognize growing unmet social-emotional needs and concerns about delayed development of these vital skills

“

I'm not sure my teachers even know who I am. Before, I would have been in my classrooms before class to ask a question, and I would have known things about my teacher, and they would have known things about me.

Urban Student

“

I realize that when the teacher asks the people to answer something, it just takes forever for people to answer—students don't want to talk. When we are in person we have discussions, but now online, the teachers block us from being able to look up other things. So, she asks a question and everyone just sits there forever. And then she eventually just gives us the answer...Now you just watch the clock and wait for it to count down.

Suburban Student

NEED FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

- Students feel socially distant and isolated
- **Students and caregivers identify an increased need for counselor and social worker support and capacity**
- Participants recognize growing unmet social-emotional needs and concerns about delayed development of these vital skills

“

The kids are going to need support to process what has happened and how they have changed. They have been so isolated, they have missed out on so much, so much loss. And what about the kids? Some people are in homes that are falling apart, aren't safe, and aren't being fed. These kids will all need counseling.

Suburban Caregiver

“

I heard a kid in my class ask a teacher if he could go to the counselor, and the teacher said no. He couldn't miss class. I watched the kid cry in class, and they just ignored him. I think our teachers need to know kids are depressed and need someone to talk to. And that might be the only time you can talk to someone, is during the time you are at school.

Rural Student

NEED FOR SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

- Students feel socially distant and isolated
- Students and caregivers identify an increased need for counselor and social worker support and capacity
- **Participants recognize growing unmet social-emotional needs and concerns about delayed development of these vital skills**



This has all lowered their morale: they aren't seeing their friends. They don't have anyone to talk to, they didn't go to graduation, they aren't playing sports—I tried to encourage them, but they are missing everything they look forward to as teenagers—spending time with friends, going out and doing the things you get to do in high school.

Rural Caregiver



UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- **Adjusted schooling has impacted the quantity and quality of instruction and students' access to rigorous course work**
- Students and caregivers want to know if students are on track academically
- Caregivers rely on multiple data points to understand if their students are on track



I have advanced Chemistry class, and we're supposed to do a lab after each class, but we've never been able to do it this year. If you want to be a chemical engineer, or if you might want to find your career passion by doing the hands-on, you'll never get access the way it is now. We're doing an honors English class for college, and we just don't discuss the books. We only read them and write responses to them.

Rural Student



We have a Spanish class, but now we never speak Spanish to each other. We watch recordings and then record videos. In science, we do a worksheet at the end of a lesson with pictures of the lab on it instead of the lab.

Rural Student

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

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- **Students and caregivers want to know if students are on track academically**
- Caregivers rely on multiple data points to understand if their students are on track

“

I am a little concerned about academic loss because of the grading adjustments they are doing. At the end of last year they did a grading adjustment where they couldn't get a grade lower than the previous quarter regardless of what they did. So that doesn't tell me what [my child] learned.

Urban Caregiver

“

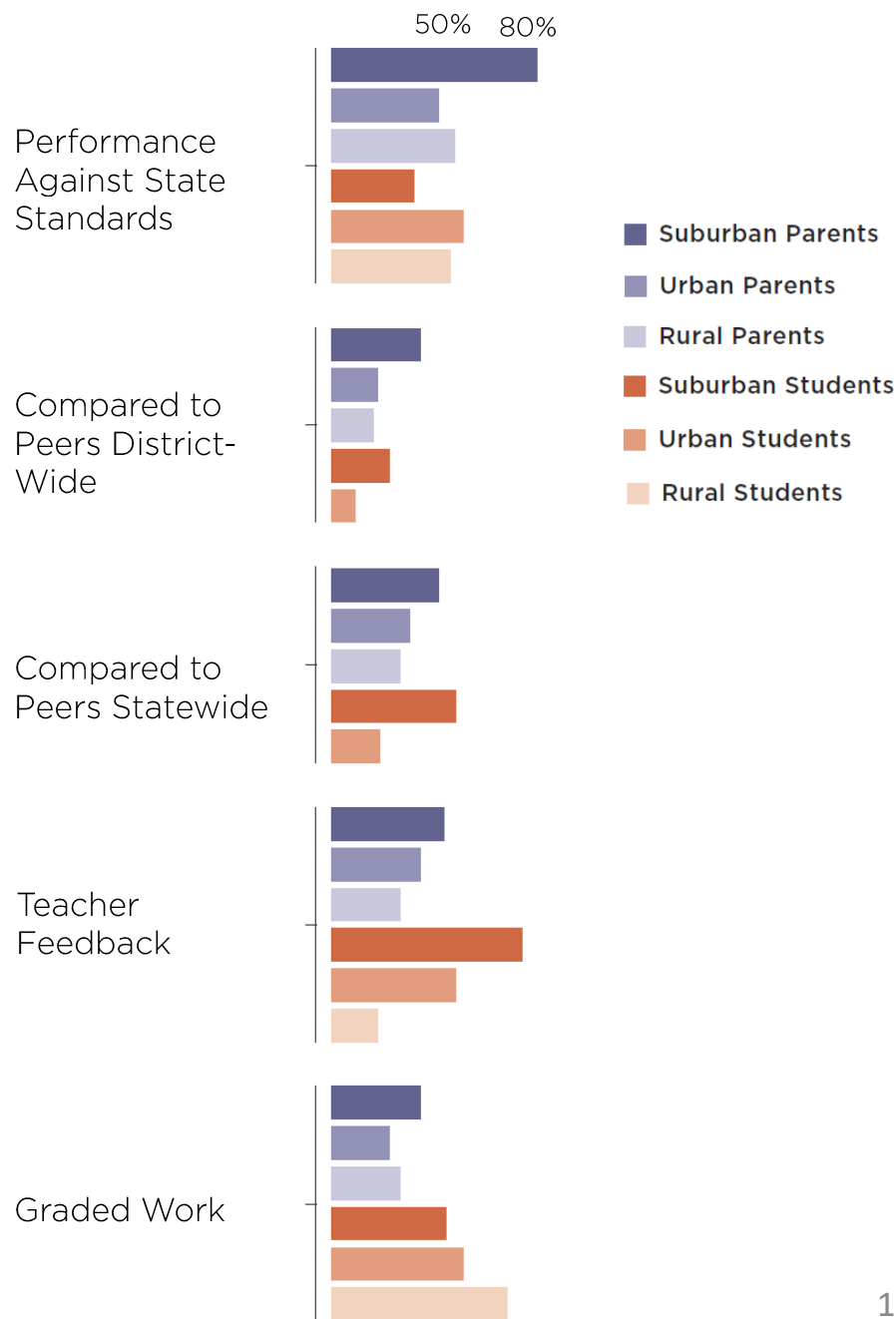
We asked the principal how grades this year would affect us for college, and they said they didn't know. We aren't sure now how to get ready for college. It just doesn't feel clear how our district is addressing our records and how that sets us up to compete against other students. Especially if one district is giving out As and easy work and another district is giving us six hours of homework and a zero when we can't get online.

Rural Student

UNDERSTANDING STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

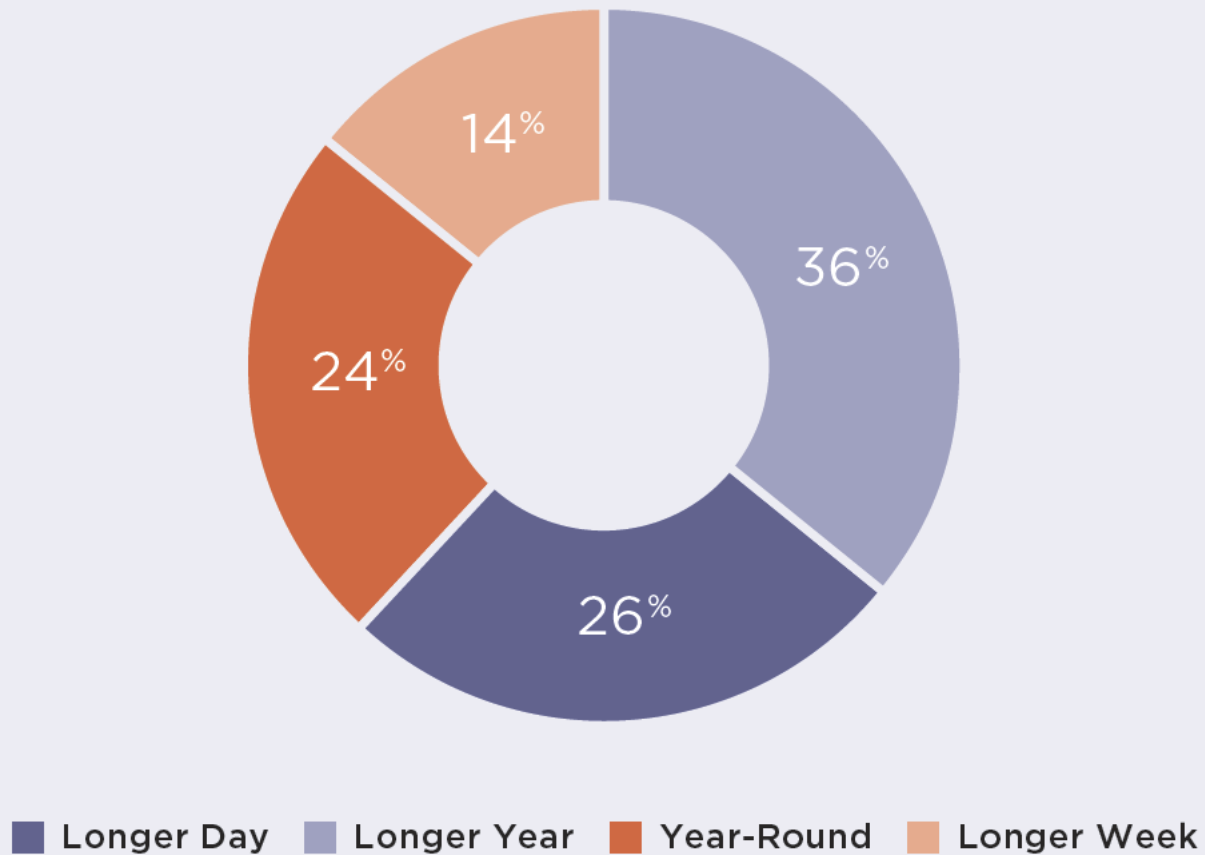
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- Caregivers rely on multiple data points to understand if their students are on track**

PREFERRED TYPES OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA



LOOKING AHEAD: EXTENDING IN-SCHOOL TIME

PREFERENCE FOR EXTENDED TIME IMPLEMENTATION
BY PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESPONDENTS





NEED FOR A
CONSISTENT FOCUS ON
EQUITY

NEED FOR A CONSISTENT FOCUS ON EQUITY

- **Impacts of the digital divide**
- Effects of funding disparities
- Inequitable access to rigorous and engaging coursework

“

The internet is okay where I live, but only one person can be on at a time. Other kids near us don't have access to internet at all. They have to drive to the church for the hotspot, and they had to buy a Chromebook. I had to show them how to use it. It wasn't something the school did.

Rural Student

“

All education needs to be equal—not where some areas don't have the proper technology and other areas have an abundance of technology. They need to make an equal playing field—like they are teaching some kids how to be laborers and some other kids how to program the robots or develop things...If we all pay our taxes, you need to invest in all these schools equally.

Urban Parent

NEED FOR A CONSISTENT FOCUS ON EQUITY

- Impacts of the digital divide
- **Effects of funding disparities**
- Inequitable access to rigorous and engaging coursework

“

We never have the dollars we are supposed to have. Our buildings are old, our textbooks are old. We are lacking so many things and lagging behind. We need equity in funding. I know it's a big city and there's only so far tax dollars go, but when you see how big the divide is between what kids have access to, it's not right.

Urban Caregiver

NEED FOR A CONSISTENT FOCUS ON EQUITY

- Impacts of the digital divide
- Effects of funding disparities
- **Inequitable access to rigorous and engaging coursework**

“

My friend is in a foundational course and she is struggling. They just watch the videos and there is no way to ask the teacher. They get no face time in that class—just one hour to check in each day. They need to be able to ask questions of the teachers.

Rural Student

“

School is to learn. Taking what's happening into consideration is good, but in some classes, it feels like I went back a few grades. I literally took 4 tests in under 10 minutes and still got 90s... But the students who are in AP classes, they are still piling the work on because they have to be ready for that test at the end no matter what.

Urban Student

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Our students and families deserve and need state level support and action that includes:

1. INVESTING IN RESOURCE EQUITY
2. TREATING ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING AS TWO HALVES OF THE WHOLE CHILD
3. CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY AND REBUILDING APPROACH THAT TAKES THE LONG VIEW
4. PRIORITIZING CLARITY AND CONSISTENCY
5. MAKING UP LOST TIME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chicago Urban League

Educator Advisory Council

Equity First Superintendents

Faith Coalition for the Common Good

Illinois 60 by 25 Network

Illinois PTA

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

...and all of the amazing students, parents, and
caregivers who participated.

DISTRICT DEEP DIVE

East St. Louis School District 189

Reflections on Education During a Pandemic
What Have We Learned?

Illinois 60 by 25 Network Conference for 2021

February 24, 2021

Keisa Garrett, Chief of Schools
Arthur R. Culver, Superintendent



Pre-COVID-19 Picture



East St. Louis District 189



EAST ST. LOUIS SD 189

@ estl189.com

VISION

Students in East St. Louis School District 189 are supported physically, socially, and emotionally in a safe and nurturing environment to achieve academic success that prepares them for college, the workforce, and citizenship in the 21st century.

MISSION

To cultivate the potential in every student to thrive as a global citizen by inspiring a love of learning and civic engagement, by challenging and supporting every student to achieve academic excellence, and by embracing the full richness of our community.

- East St. Louis SD 189 in East St. Louis, Illinois is located in Region 4, St. Clair County of southern Illinois, east of St. Louis, Missouri.
- East St. Louis SD 189 serves students in East St. Louis, Washington Park, Caseyville, French Village, and some portions of Cahokia Heights, Illinois.
- Approximately 5000 students from primarily low income families are serviced by East St. Louis SD 189 in 1 Pre-K Center, K-12 programs in 5 elementary, 2 middle schools, 1 high school and 1 alternative learning center.

East St. Louis SD Goals During Pandemic



Pre-COVID-19 Picture

1. Provide a safe and healthy teaching and learning environment for district leaders, teachers, staff, students, and families.
2. Ensure all students have daily opportunities to continue learning that focuses on critical Illinois Learning Standards.
3. Minimize instructional loss while maximizing resources available to students and teachers by aligning during and after-school activities to support specific strategies to address deficiencies in learning.
4. Provide students and families with routines, structures and supports to meet academic and social-emotional needs.



MOST PRESSING CHALLENGES

District/Schools

- How to best establish and maintain a safe in person environment for staff and students.
- How to best provide a high quality educational experiences for students in both modes of learning.
- How to best provide differentiated and evolving professional development
- How to best provide both universal and individual support for student and staff emotional well being.

Parents

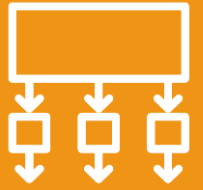
- How to best provide parents with updates and services to support virtual learning.
- How to best support parents' understanding of how to support students in both modes of learning without large group meetings.
- How to best garner parent support and temperance throughout the grade and social recovery process

Students

- How to best support the social emotional health, trauma and social recovery of students.
- How to best support and monitor grade recovery and academic loss.

Understanding Our Needs

@ estl189/estl189.com



We used two way communication with discussions and platforms for students, parents, teachers and community groups. This allowed for clear and consistent communication in all formats to all stakeholder groups via (Websites, Facebook, Twitter, Newspaper, meetings, etc.) In addition to these forums, we gather survey from stakeholder groups as needed.



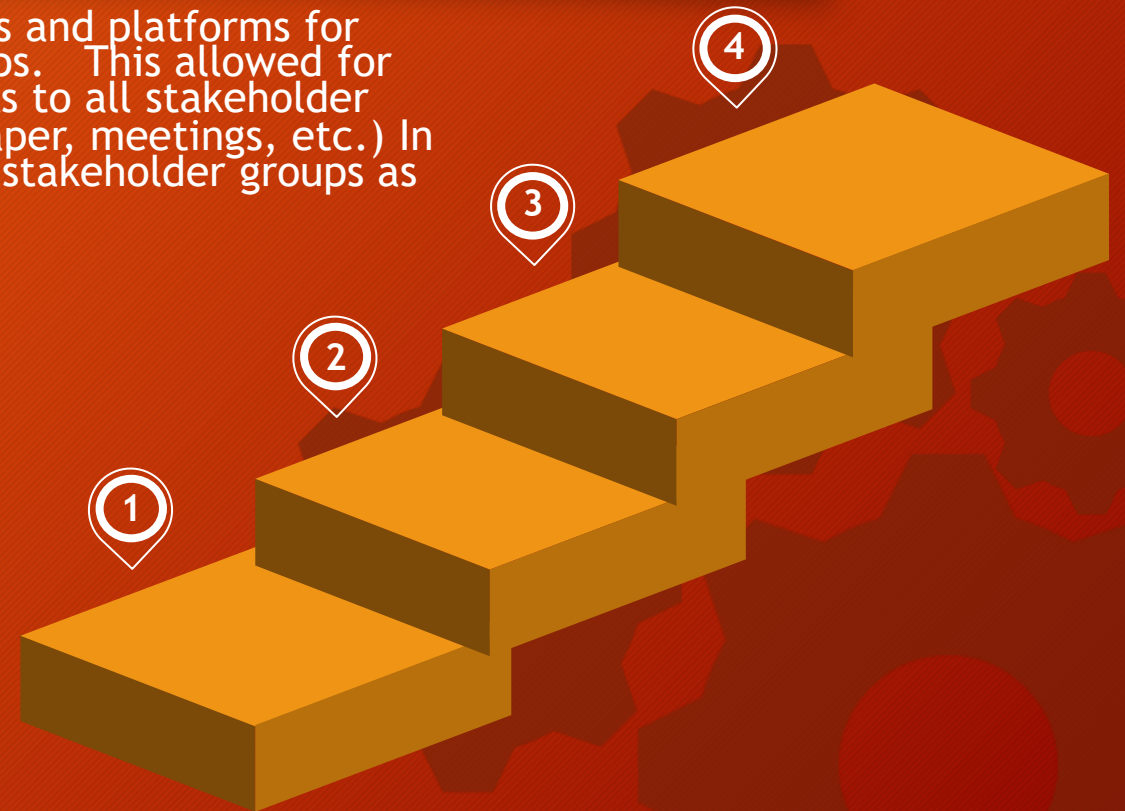
We monitored COVID-19 data for our serving ZIP Codes to help inform decision making



We continued throughout the pandemic period to support and provide food, resources and educational needs for families and community.



We provided evolving professional development for teachers and staff to meet academic and social emotional needs of families/students.



The Good Work Meeting the Needs of our Families

@estl189/estl189.com

COVID-19 Testing Sites

NO COST, NO APPOINTMENT CENTERS

Ill. National Guard
 11101 State Street, St. Louis, MO 63143
 314-425-2200

Walgreens
 300 North 8th Street, East St. Louis, IL 62208-0189
 314-425-2200

Health & Prevention Resources

STEPS TO EFFECTIVE HAND WASHING

Wet your hands with clean, warm water. Rub your hands together for at least 20 seconds. Use a palm-to-palm motion. Use the back of one hand to rub the palm of the other. Rub the backs of your hands against your palms. Rub the sides of your fingers against your palms. Rub your thumbs against your palms. Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

Develop communication platforms to reach all stakeholders

- We maintain and update specific communication logged from most to least recent on the school district website. This communication is connected to all social media platforms as well as the local papers. District departments meet with community groups weekly to ascertain community response and district website. The superintendent's platforms include meetings with all stakeholder groups (KCN, SSC, SSAC). In addition our parent services department conducts lead parent meeting.

Support parents so that they can support students

- Our technology integration department developed an online technology guide and telephone hotline for parents to call directly. We also converted the registration process to provide for electronic submission.
- Provide Grab and Go Food Services, community food and resource distribution at school campuses, and information for P-EBT qualification.

Support and monitor the overall well being of students, staff and community

- Our Parent and Student Services Director and SEL team developed a 24 hour crisis line for students to report any personal crisis.
- Our district SEL team provides a staff and parent "Wellness Wednesday" initiative.
- Our district cabinet and team update and monitor community and staff Covid-19 spread data in consultation with our local health department, county updates and IDPH data.
- Plan and organize staff vaccinations as well as staff and student COVID-19 testing.

UPDATE IMPORTANT STUDENT INFORMATION IN SKYWARD
 for Returning Students

During this pandemic it is extremely important to have updated contact, emergency and medical documentation and information.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN GET STARTED!

Step 1
 To begin that process, families will go to the District website at www.estl189.com

Step 2
 Locate and click the Skyward icon on the right.

Step 3
 On the Skyward login page, go to the Login Area and select Family/Student Access. Log into the system using your family access information and proceed to update your child's information.

Stay Connected!

Missouri/Illinois 2-1-1
 Get Connected. Get Answers.

ESLSD 189 Tech Support LINE
 for Students, Parents & Caregivers
 618-646-3322

Connect with a Tech Support Specialist
 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Technology Guide for East St. Louis School District 189 Students & Parents

Includes icons for ClassDigo, GoGuardian, and other educational tools.

Need Someone to Talk To? Let us help!

Do you need someone to talk with during the day?
 Do you need emotional support or counseling?
 Do you need substance abuse referral?
 Do you need assistance with your paperwork?
 Do you have a youth who has run away from home?
 Do you think a child needs to be referred to a specialist?
 Do you need children services?
 Do you need someone to help with a housing issue?
 Do you need help with a health issue?

For more information, call the Crisis Center at 314-425-2200 or visit www.estl189.com.

DISTRICT 189 STUDENT SUPPORT TEXT HELPLINE: 618-249-4443

Missing the help you usually get from your school social worker, nurse, or homeless worker? Worried about a friend? Kicked out of your home? District 189's Student Support Staff are only a text away during these stressful times.

Text 618-249-4443 and District 189 Student Support Staff will help you out.

PANDEMIC EBT (P-EBT) SNAP BENEFITS
 Need Help Buying Food for Your School Age Children?

Apply for P-EBT (SNAP) benefits. This is a government benefit that can help you buy food for your school age children (6 to 17 years old) and up to 12 additional household members who are school age children (6 to 17 years old) and up to 12 additional household members who are school age children (6 to 17 years old).

How Much Will My Family Receive?
 The amount received is based on the number of school days in the month for each eligible child in your home. For March, there were 17 school days. For April, there were 12 school days. For May and April, there were 10 school days. For June, there were 12 school days. For July, there were 12 school days. For August, there were 12 school days. For September, there were 12 school days. For October, there were 12 school days. For November, there were 12 school days. For December, there were 12 school days.

But My Family is Not Receiving SNAP Benefits.
 This benefit is based on household income and household size. If you are not receiving SNAP benefits, you may be eligible for P-EBT benefits. To apply for P-EBT benefits, you must be a resident of Missouri and have a valid Missouri driver's license or state ID card. You must also be a parent or guardian of a school age child (6 to 17 years old) and up to 12 additional household members who are school age children (6 to 17 years old).

How Do I Apply for P-EBT?
 These instructions are for you to follow if you are not already receiving regular SNAP benefits.

How Do I Get My P-EBT Benefits?
 You will receive P-EBT benefits on the first day of the month after you apply for P-EBT benefits. Your benefits will be loaded onto your P-EBT card. You will receive your P-EBT card in the mail with instructions on how to get it. You will also receive a text message with instructions on how to get it. You will also receive a text message with instructions on how to get it.

The Good Work @estl189/@estl189.com



DRIVE UP, POP YOUR TRUNK & RECEIVE YOUR FREE FOOD BOX!

FARM TO FAMILIES FOOD BOX

FRIDAY, JUNE 12
10:00AM - UNTIL SUPPLIES LAST

MASON CLARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
5510 STATE STREET
EAST ST LOUIS, IL 62203

Each 20 pound box is filled with delicious, nutritious, farm-fresh fruit and vegetables!

ALL ARE WELCOME TO BE SERVED!



East St. Louis School District 189
Dr. William E. Mason - Douglas W. Clark
Middle School Foodbank
MCMS MOBILE MART

St. Louis Foodbank donations may contain one or more fresh produce, frozen produce, dairy, or nonperishable products.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!! Stay in your car and POP your trunk!

NEW DATE!!!!
NEW DATE!!!!
↓
THIS FRIDAY,
February 19th
2021
10:00am

DRIVE UP, POP YOUR TRUNK & RECEIVE YOUR FREE FOOD BOX!

Distribution Address:
MASON CLARK MIDDLE SCHOOL
5510 STATE STREET, EAST ST. LOUIS, IL 62203
MRS. KIM JONES-RILEY, PRINCIPAL
618-646-3750

FIRST COME FIRST SERVED



The Good Work @estl189/@estl189.com

Support for schools and teachers to implement scheduling, safety measures, etc.

- Our stakeholder groups developed guidance for all three learning modes. This included the guidance for scheduling and learning as well as the safety protocols. This guidance was used to anchor professional development for all school staff. Administrators, teachers and staff receive training to understand safety protocol. All instructional staff receive ongoing training including supporting the learning within the adapted schedules, stakeholder responsibilities, engagement practices for each mode. Teachers and schools in all grade bands were provided grading guidance to support the pandemic and future time periods.



Support teachers in the classrooms so that they can support students

- Our technology integration department and curriculum content team provided specific support to teachers in the pandemic including adjusting curriculum pacing to match instructional schedules, providing timely group and individual professional development in the areas of technology for classrooms. Our district uses the google platforms.

Lessons Learned

- ISBE, and IDPH guidance and FAQ's are great foundational tools for forming local guidance for social emotional support, learning plans and safe environment for students. We formed local guidance after consulting with stakeholders.
- Include key members of all stakeholders groups when developing guidance. We started a Back to School Task force with over 50 members including parents, teachers, principals, directors, and district administrators.
- Align CARES Budget to safety and educational plans to ensure that goals for education are met.
- Connecting with remote families daily is necessary to sustain contact with students for safety and social and emotional support. We have had reported record higher levels of parent involvement in learning. In some cases elementary classroom teachers see contact of 90% to 95% of their parents daily.
- Second language families and students need additional support for outreach beyond those instructional staff in schools- We contracted with Hoyleton Youth Services to help us ensure that district and outreach resources were distributed specifically to our Spanish Speaking Families.

Lessons Learned

- Consult other school districts within your region and around the state along with monitoring local data. We learned that many converting to a Hybrid Model was risky as some districts experienced emergency reversion to the remote learning models. While we wanted to bring students back sooner we saw how area districts struggled and wanted predictability and five day face to face learning offered to students.
- Listening to your community about the mode of learning proves highly important data, as community anxiety and parent choice for learning selection go hand and hand. Currently 55% (2,326) of our students' families have elected for them to return.
- Monitor local data as it relates to the ZIP codes serviced by your schools, and the number of staff cases per week. Our district communities represented up to 30% of county cases during most of the months of the pandemic. November represented our highest number of staff (21) cases, while the average is 5 per month throughout the pandemic.

Lessons Learned

- Technology tools for communication and learning are essential during a remote learning period, and are a lifelines for low-income students. Have clear systems for distribution, accountability, loss/stolen, etc. Organize by family number within your student data system. All school administrators should have access to district equipment assigned to students from all schools . Chromebooks are other devices serve a dual mode as a student learning tool and a way to communicate with families. Students in our Pre-K through grades 12 have a digital device.
- Use the grading guidance from ISBE , along with the context and grading procedures of your local area. In Spring of 2021 we put systems in place to address Pre-K, K-2, 3-8 and 9-11 and 12 to ensure that credit bearing high schools to Pre-K students receive the needed feedback for reverting to a grading or feedback.
- Provide a 24 hour response system for parents, community, etc.. We enacted questions@estl189.com , and other direct email systems to send documents to various departments, and make requests.

Lessons Learned

- During a pandemic, developing a closer relationship with your local health department is key. We met or consulted our local health department often to support data analysis, testing and vaccination programs and reporting procedures. We joined phase 2 of the ISBE/IDPH Binax Now Rapid Testing Pilot, working with IDPH, ISBE, our local health department and an area health partner to organize and plan the program. East Side Health District supported our weekly data calls and other consultation, provided us with trace contact training and protocol as well as partnered to help give vaccinations to our staff. We also provided a clear and concise chart of expectation for reporting, quarantines and isolation of staff members.
- Job duties change for everyone. All team members must be willing, able and available to serve in the needed capacity. We had several staff including our security, teachers' aides and other team members who worked Grab and Go lunch programs, supported attendance and wellness calls and visited homes if necessary. This was an unwritten understanding with our unions, as we all worked together to serve our students and community.

The Month's Ahead

GRADE AND SOCIAL RECOVERY

Essential Question: How do we in the months ahead address the grade recovery and social recovery needed as a result of the school closure period in March 2020 and the subsequent remote learning period?

Social Recovery:

1. Continue to support school PBIS and SEL teams in the establishing and maintaining of universal practices within trauma-informed and positive school cultures. Refine and adjust group and individual interventions for students needing targeted or comprehensive support.
2. Maintain our partnerships with mental health providers as well as maintain our level of SEL supports to students.
3. Offer sports and special activities following all governing guidelines. Provide transition plans for developing and maintaining activities that allow for opportunities for groups. Gather data from students on their interest in school or other social activities.
4. Support embedded and ongoing professional development of staff to understand and meet the needs of learners in this time period.

Grade Recovery:

1. Continue to support the core instruction and viable curriculum goals. Vet and develop guidance on student learning regressions, and or needs in this time period.
2. Assess and analyze student growth data to provide actions for regression. In addition, analysis new gaps in learning based on national and state trends for the populations we serve.
3. Meet with bargaining units to extend school year and/or school hours through the next few years to address the additional instructional time to close gaps.

AUDIENCE Q&A

Thank You!