

CAAASA presents:

Lifting Our Voices:



Field Guide #3: School Re-Engagement: In-person and Hybrid Learning



Presenter:
Dr. Michele Bowers
Superintendent
Lancaster Union
School District



Presenter:
Ms. Lorrie Owens
Member,
Board of Directors
California IT in Education
(CITE)



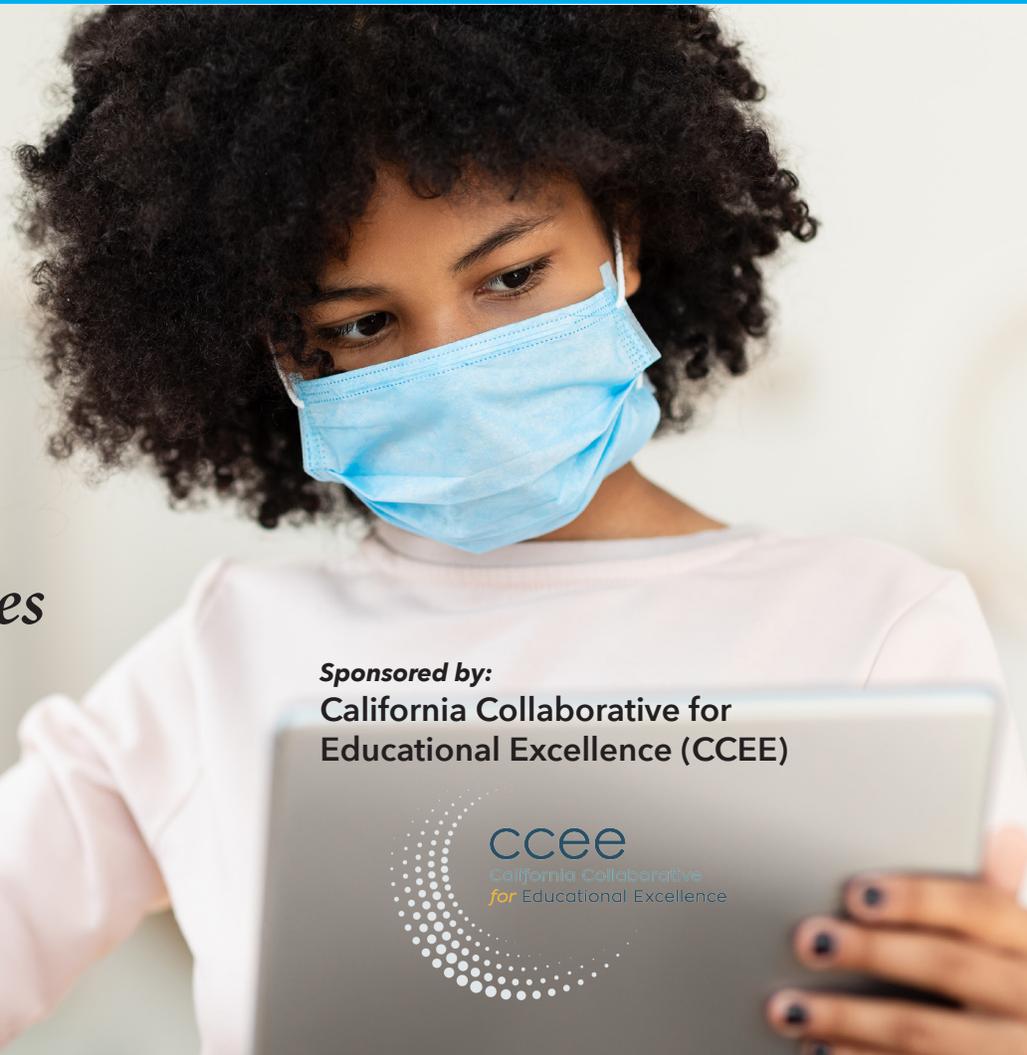
Presenter:
Dr. Sharla Berry
Educational Researcher



California Association of African-American
Superintendents & Administrators

School Re-orientation for Post-COVID Learning:

What to Know, Do, and Expect as In-Person Instruction Resumes



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Introduction to Field Guide #3
School Re-Engagement:
In-person and
Hybrid Learning
Dr. Michele **Bowers**
Superintendent
Lancaster Unified School District.
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The Why

For well beyond a full year, the COVID-19 pandemic not only dominated news reporting, but it literally changed the ways in which we transacted daily personal interactions, education, and overall, how we live. As our collective trauma from the pandemic begins to subside, we are now in a rare position to plan forward and re-imagine what schools should look like, what schools should offer, and how schools can meet the educational needs of every child.

At one time, returning to school and starting a new grade following a long summer vacation was considered mundane for most adults. For every child, it was an exciting milestone, but largely a routine event. However, the 2021-22 school year promises no positive correlations with school procedures of past years.

- Students can expect to have their temperatures checked before being ushered into their school building.
- Their hands must be sanitized throughout the day.
- Touching others (friends, classmates or teachers) will be prohibited.
- Handling learning materials that were customarily shared with other children in the classroom is no longer permitted.
- Playing together with equipment touched by others on the schoolyard will be banned.

Countless other characteristics of traditional school will not be subsumed into the “new school routine,” which will not correlate with the typical pre-pandemic school day. Instead, navigating in a post-pandemic school will be uneasy and feel unnatural for many students.

In March 2020, nearly all U.S. public schools shuttered their doors. As a consequence, remote learning became the primary alternative exercised by almost 51 million students. Although it was initially anticipated that schools would resume regular operations following a few weeks of

sheltering-in-place and strict quarantining, the rates of disease transmission and death tolls kept rising schools closed for well beyond an entire year.

As the pandemic continued to unfold, schools swung into crisis mode and all in-person instruction halted. Fortunately, the sudden turn towards distance learning was a practical option, although at the time, the only conceivable option to no school at all. In-class instruction was replaced with remote at-home learning for millions of unprepared students and under-trained teachers. We are now at a pivotal moment in educational history brought on by our nation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. To quantify the story of how schools have weathered the most disruptive period in modern education in over a century, we need to take a closer look at the data and the ways in which K-12 teaching and learning have been impacted, and how this single event, will continue to affect schools for years to come.

Back to school

As we prepare to welcome students, teachers, staff, and administrators back to school, thoughtful and cautious planning will be key to a positive experience for all involved. It is imperative that as we slowly return our students to schools, we intentionally and unapologetically work to create and ensure learning environments that are nurturing, supportive, and structured to equitably provide high quality teaching and learning experiences for all children, but especially our children of color.

While a majority of parents and educators support school re-openings and in-person instruction for students (and teachers) that meets all of the correct health and safety protocols with fidelity, a first priority is asking the question, "What emotional impact did the pandemic have on our students, teachers, administrators, staff members, and parents?"

Education Week conducted a survey to gauge the sway in morale for students, teachers, hourly employees, and administrators. When asked to approximate the morale in their schools at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to school morale nine months later (in mid-December 2020), the following significant shifts were noted:

- While 16% of students rated morale as "much lower" in March, by December 2020, that figure rose to 33%.
- In March, 16% of teachers indicated that morale was "much lower." By December, that figure had climbed to 41%.
- For administrators, the March to December figures were respectively, 10% and 17%.
- Hourly employees saw no change.



Teachers cited (1) the increase in the amount of work required for remote teaching, (2) the technology training needed to prepare them for effective instructional delivery for distance learning, (3) the decline in student engagement while learning remotely, and (4) the overall emotional and physical exhaustion, among their reasons for the sharp decline in morale.

Another Education Week survey published in April of 2021 found that 48% of middle and high school students were far less motivated to learn, and 33% were absent far more frequently during the pandemic. Unfortunately, contrary to the old adage, time did not heal all wounds caused by being displaced from the classroom – it opened new wounds instead. Reports of diminished student engagement, increased absenteeism, and glaring evidence indicating an unquestionable learning loss, were among the most often-cited consequences.

When one San Francisco high school reopened in the spring of 2021, the campus was nearly devoid of any senior classmen attending the first day of in-person instruction. In all candor, some students had taken on jobs to help support their families, while others remained home to assist younger siblings with online learning, because their parents were essential workers and first responders. However, these two conditions may not be the only factors in explaining away such a dismal turnout. In a June 7, 2021 article published by LAist, African American parents cited racism, bullying and low expectations specifically as factors that had dampened their enthusiasm for sending their children back to school. Similar factors may have played a role in San Francisco as well.

A hesitance to return to school

Although younger students are statistically least likely to die from the coronavirus, they can be unsuspecting carriers in disease transmission. It becomes more dangerous for many students of color whose parents work outside of the home and may be repeatedly exposed to the coronavirus. The age groups at greatest risk of contracting and succumbing to the coronavirus are seniors (70+) and the middle-aged. Bringing these two groups (young students and middle-aged teachers) together and confining them to a poorly ventilated classroom is the perfect recipe for a health crisis. The reluctance on the part of educators to return to campus without vaccinations and a host of other health precautions in place should hardly be surprising.

Parents in highly infected areas are disinclined to send their children back to school. Teachers, staff members, and administrators working in those locations are also reluctant to return. An April 2021 American Enterprise Institute analysis reported the following observations and opinions held by various racial groups on when and why schools should reopen:

- Nearly twice as many parents of color reported that their child's school was providing "virtual instruction only" in November 2020 compared to white families. These racial gaps persisted into the spring of 2021.
- While various racial groups have been impacted in different ways by the COVID-19 pandemic, personal experiences seemed to have little to do with the racial gap in preferences toward in-person learning at school.
- One of the strongest predictors of opinions towards face-to-face instruction was whether the school attended by one's own child had reopened or was planning to do so soon.

- Parents were more likely to be hesitant about sending their child to in-person instruction if the school attended by their own child had been closed for a longer period, which tended to highlight the health risk to their child.

Most parents believe that students generally benefit most by learning in the classroom, rather than remotely, although a significant number also feel that their own child would be better served by remaining safely at home exercising the distance learning option.

More than any other racial groups, Black and Brown parents preferred that their child's education continue to be exclusively remote for a wide range of reasons including decreasing the probability of a Coronavirus transmission. While these parents acknowledged that learning in-person would be more beneficial and that remote learning might tend to exacerbate educational inequalities, the survival of loved ones in the family took priority over learning for one family member.

Although schools were incentivized to reopen their classrooms for in-person instruction in April and May of 2021, families in communities hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic were wary of sending their children to schools where exposure to infection remained a credible possibility. For many parents, the haunting prospect of spreading the Coronavirus infection to family members eclipsed the advantages of attending class for the few remaining weeks of the school year. There was a justifiable fear of what children might bring home from school or take to school despite the assurances.

The statistics below captured in February of 2021 by the California Department of Public Health further explain parents' "school hesitancy," a new term coined to describe the surprisingly stable resistance to returning to in-class learning.

Race/Ethnicity	No. Cases	% Cases	Number Deaths	% Deaths	% CA population
Latino	1,639,126	55.8	28,133	46.5	38.9
White	596,511	20.3	18,929	31.3	36.6
Asian	203,190	6.9	7,325	12.1	15.4
African American	124,382	4.2	3,837	6.3	6.0
Multi-Race	51,288	1.7	841	1.4	2.2
American Indian or Alaska Native	10,010	0.3	221	0.4	0.5
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	16,295	0.6	320	0.5	0.3
Other	295,686	10.1	856	1.4	0.0
Total with data	2,936,488	100.0	60,462	100.0	100.0

All Cases and Deaths associated with COVID-19 by Race and Ethnicity

Further dampening the eagerness to return to brick-and-mortar schools, on the part of parents and students, were the pandemic mitigation guidelines for reopening schools including the following:

- (1) wearing protective masks and face shields throughout the day
- (2) social distancing at a minimum of 3 feet apart
- (3) the elimination of recess and any lunchtime group games
- (4) eating lunch alone rather than enjoying the company, conversations, and laughter of friends
- (5) walking down the school hallways strictly in one direction
- (6) remaining overly vigilant about touching other people or shared learning materials, and
- (7) co-horting practices, where a small group of students and staff stay together throughout the school day with no physical proximity to other cohort groups. These evidence-based procedures decrease opportunities for exposure or transmission of the coronavirus and simplify contact tracing should a person within the cohort become infected.

These draconian practices paint a gloomy image of what parents and students can expect in a child's interpersonal experiences at school, especially those students more predisposed to lively social interactions with classmates and friends.

The What



As we craft broad and comprehensive school reopening plans anticipating a return to “normal” as quickly as possible, it is vitally important to acknowledge that the old normal was not working

well for the majority of minoritized students. Decades of unequal access to high-quality instruction was exacerbated by the pandemic. Almost immediately, the widespread technology disparities commonly found throughout the state, both at school and at home, became far more evident.

Most students will return to school after experiencing:

- family tragedies,
- disillusionment from 12 to 18 months of inconsistent and unfinished learning,
- frustrations from technology catastrophes,
- emotionally draining isolation, and
- a wealth of other negative effects directly from the pandemic as well as its aftermath.

All re-opening plans require that educators, administrators, and parents become more considerate, flexible, and patient than ever before with the returning students.

One thing is clear, if we hope to bridge the digital divide and rebound from the pandemic, schools must be unburdened from strictly adhering to outdated models of education that were designed to address the demands of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Students from disadvantaged households often have limited or no access to the basic technology resources and tools in their homes including basic Internet connectivity with adequate bandwidths. Most Internet service providers (ISPs) aim at producing a profit. The residential data plans crucial in facilitating distance learning can often be too expensive for poor and budget-conscious households. When public schools closed, the cost of Internet access shifted from the school to the family to support remote learning. According to a 2017 survey, 34% of households “with children ages 3-18 and no Internet,” mentioned affordability as the primary reason why there was no Internet service in their home.

During the early stages of the pandemic, job losses were at levels not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Working-class families and hourly workers often eliminated Internet service in order to preserve the available funds for food and shelter. Homeless and highly mobile families could not subscribe to Internet service without a permanent address or six months residency at their current location. Others had no legal citizenship status.

Federal- and state-funded housing built in the 1940s and 50s were constructed well before any notion of high-speed Internet existed. Today, thousands of low-income students live in public housing without the appropriate cabling for wired Internet service, which is another factor contributing to “digital red-lining”. The simple equation for all too many students has been “no Internet connection = no remote learning,” and no ability to complete homework assignments (the “homework gap”), leading to lower grades in school and lower achievement.

Millions of K-12 students find themselves on the short end of the digital divide and the homework gap, which is no longer limited to completing homework assignments, but includes all of the

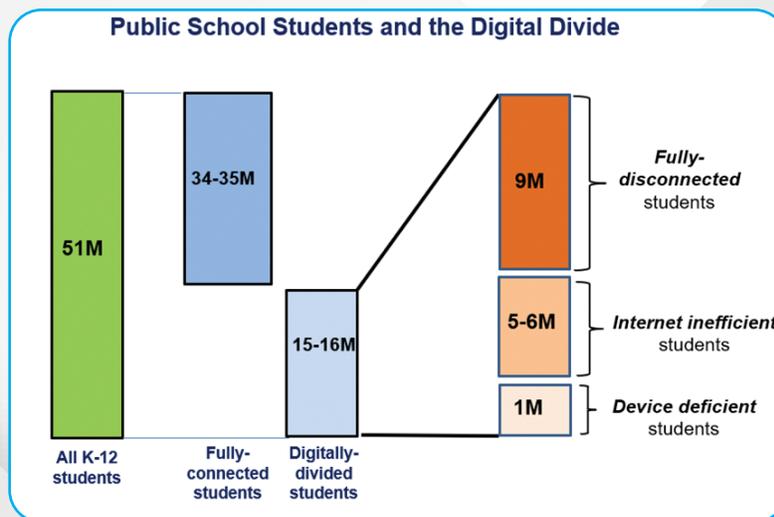
technology components needed to enable distance learning. The baseline technology requirements for a remote learning experience that allows students to (a) access the Internet, (b) link to the online school curriculum, and (c) support synchronous interactions with the teacher and classmates, include:

- (1) an Internet-enabled device (computer, laptop or tablet device, not a mobile phone)
- (2) a reliable high-speed Internet service
- (3) sufficient data plans for streaming video
- (4) access to online instructional content
- (5) digital literacy for the student
- (6) readily available tech support personnel who can communicate effectively with tech novices to troubleshoot challenges related to devices, online curricula, resources, tools and connectivity, and
- (7) a teacher with adequate technology training.



Today, we no longer merely have a homework gap, but an access and equity crisis that determines who can and who cannot fully participate in the daily delivery of remote education. While Chromebooks and hot spots were deployed in masse by many districts during the pandemic, we learned that these tools were not necessarily the best tools for students who are off campus. Hot spots work well in some areas depending on the carrier. Chromebooks work efficiently in the classroom located near the wireless access points. The antennas in Chromebooks are do not necessarily work well when accessing commercial broadband in homes or other non-school settings.

The inability to meet the minimal technology resources can significantly influence a student's capability of engaging with his/her teacher and peers for learning, which can also magnify the learning loss for students cut off from essential learning resources. In a deeper analysis of the digital divide affecting K12 public school students in the US conducted by Common Sense and the Boston Consulting Group, found that millions of students transitioned to remote learning last year. However, a significant percentage of them were (1) fully disconnected, (2) Internet inefficient, or (3) device deficient as reflected in the chart below.



9M Fully disconnected students who have neither the distance learning devices nor the adequate connectivity; includes students who have no high-speed Internet service and no digital device in their household.

5-6M Internet insufficient students who have distance learning devices but no adequate connectivity. In this group, 10%-15% do not have access to broadband infrastructure, restricting technology accessibility, and representing one determining factor in “disconnection” in spite of having a device.

1 M Device deficient students who have no distance learning devices, but do have some form of connectivity. Students in this category typically have a cell phone or other device (e.g., smart TV) to access the Internet, but do not have a device that is adequate for distance learning (i.e., laptop, computer, or tablet).

The digital divide (or the “digital desert” for some students) remains a substantial learning obstacle where “Internet insufficient students” relied on access to Wi-Fi in coffee shops, cafes, fast-food restaurants, and public libraries, which abruptly ended when the number of patrons allowed inside of commercial establishments was limited or reduced to zero.

Unfortunately, many digitally-divided children wait until a parent or caregiver returns home from work with the family’s cellular phone in order to complete their schoolwork, which is then accomplished on a device whose minuscule screen is woefully unsuitable for most distance learning assignments. The lack of adequate devices and Internet connections puts these students at risk of further learning loss. Family income inequalities seen in the American economy mirror the equally disturbing technology access inequities seen in education.

The most recent 2018 data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Education Statistics suggest that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, thirty percent of all public K-12 students lived in homes with neither an Internet connection nor a device adequate for remote learning. Twenty-five percent of all school-aged children lived in households without broadband access or a web-enabled device (such as a computer or tablet) increasing the existing inequities in education. It is no revelation that racial minority students enrolled in large urban school districts struggled with

Internet connectivity more frequently and more profoundly than their suburban peers in nearly every region of the country.

The segments of the school population most likely challenge to buy the minimum requirements for remote learning include California's most vulnerable students who:

- are from low-income families
- fall within any one of the various levels of poverty
- live in rural regions
- reside in areas with high population density (subsidized housing, older high-rise buildings, mobile home parks, etc.)
- have parents or caretakers experiencing housing insecurity
- must share devices and/or Internet resources simultaneously with other members of the household (which does not meet the goal of true 1-to-1 student-to-device accessibility)
- are English language learners
- are in Foster care
- are students with disabilities, and
- are students of color (32% of African American and 33% of Latinx students lack adequate Internet access).

California has 1.5 million digitally-divided students. Students from low-income families (that earn > \$50,000 annually), are only 30% percent of all students, but they represent 50% of those with connectivity problems. These statistics are disturbing but not surprising, since our educational systems have historically under-served children of color for centuries.

Although technology and high-speed Internet access were once considered family luxuries, they are essential educational requirements for school success today. According to a research study conducted by Michigan State University and the Quello Center, 42% of families of color lack sufficient devices at home to access distance learning fully. More telling, they also reported that:

- on average, students lacking access to the appropriate devices and broadband services have



GPA that are 0.4 points lower than their peers with reliable access at home,

- regardless of SES, students without access to the Internet at home (or if they are dependent on accessing the Internet via a cellular phone) perform worse in school and are less likely to attend college or a university later, and
- students with regular and consistent access to the Internet tend to perform better academically than those without comparable access.

Effective distance learning requires both adequate devices (Chromebooks, laptops, tablets, printers, headphones, etc.) and high-speed Internet connections. According to one study, the factors that impact the quality of at-home learning include the following:

- type and speed of the computer's processor
- amount of memory available
- Central Processing Unit (CPU) utilization
- number of applications running at a single time, and
- quality of Wi-Fi and signal strength.

While a majority of American families have some form of Internet access (if cellular phone access is included), not all services are robust enough to support distance learning. Internet service must meet the demanding download and upload speeds. One technology source defines an "adequate Internet connection" to support distance learning as Internet with minimum speeds of 25/3 Mbps (megabytes per second download/upload speeds). Many economical residential plans cannot support highly synchronous learning models, such as multiple hours of live stream video or several concurrent users in a single household, which can inhibit a student's connection to vital learning resources.

Among the findings of a research report on high-speed Internet connection hurdles are the following:

- Learning with video is essential for education. More than 85% of network traffic in remote learning is used for video, which requires relatively high upload and download speeds,
- More than 70% of students live in households with other students,
- Greater upload speeds are required for synchronous video, including videoconferencing apps,
- 92% of students use Wi-Fi rather than wired connections,
- Most students often use their own personal devices in addition to their school district-provided devices at the same time, increasing the bandwidth requirements, and
- The success of a remote learning experience hinges considerably on the quality of the device in usage. The value of remote learning to students depends on the age, type, quality, and configuration of the device placed into their hands.

African American, Latinx, and Native American students, are not only disproportionately disconnected, but they also often reside in homes that fail to meet the minimum high-speed Internet requirements. These three ethnic groups account for 40% of the public school student population, but they make up 54% of all disconnected students.

Digitally divided teachers

Students are not alone in lacking adequate access to technology at home. Lest we forget, teachers can also become snared in the technology gap, limiting their ability to teach remotely with any hope of instructional effectiveness. Nearly 400,000 teachers (approaching 10% of all educators) are without access to the Internet or Wi-Fi connections that meet the minimum requirements for distance teaching.



Most teachers are generally equipped with proper devices (usually district issued), though estimates show that more than 100,000 public school teachers lack at least one laptop or tablet device in their home that is adequate enough to support effective remote teaching. A significant number of these teachers must share technology devices with other family members who work or learn from home, which inhibits synchronous teaching.

Teacher technology readiness has surfaced as one of the primary impediments to successful remote learning, as thousands of teachers are not sufficiently trained to make the best use of the available digital resources that could significantly advance student learning in their classrooms.

COVID-19 was not responsible for the digital divide, but it has clearly exacerbated the technology gap. The digital divide became well-known when then-President Bill Clinton identified it as a crisis more than 20 years ago in his 2000 State of the Union address. Since then, the academic success for students of poverty continued to be undermined by the absence of access and equity in technology. This has recently garnered more attention in the pandemic era than at any previous time, putting a spotlight on an old problem, and giving it the much-needed visibility that it has long deserved.

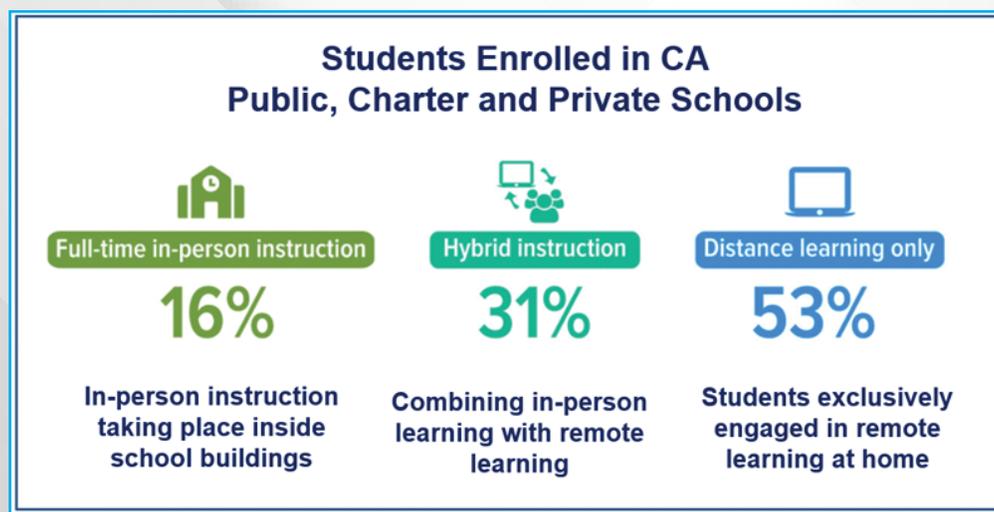
Ensuring equity for all students as we prepare for school re-engagement, we must do the following:

1. acknowledge the important role that technology plays as an educational necessity,

2. identify the benefits of effective utilization of technology both at school and in the home,
3. recognize the impact that technology has had in increasing active parent engagement,
4. reflect on and learn from what worked well, and on those areas where additional support is needed, and
5. develop a systems approach that embraces the integral role that technology will forever have in education moving forward.

The How

A May 2021 article on distance learning reported that 1/6 of California students are attending school full time, while 1/3 participate in a hybrid education model, and slightly more than half are solely engaged in distance learning.



In a national poll of parents, 55% percent agreed that, “Schools should be focused on rethinking how we educate students, coming up with new ways to teach children moving forward as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.” Prior to the pandemic, we saw thousands of flipped classrooms the school curriculum delivered through video lessons for students to watch at home. All in-person class time was reserved for student collaboration, applications of content, and collaborative group work.

At the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, “Zoom” became nearly synonymous with “remote learning at home” for students, as well as adults working remotely from home. Schools implemented an extensive menu of distance learning delivery models. Currently, those options are being refined and updated for the reopening of school. Following the shelter-in-place orders, we saw the implementation of various teaching and learning strategies. Today, we continue to investigate technology-centric configurations that will meet the educational needs of 100% of our students.

In addition to reexamining 2021-22 school year priorities for support services, instruction, and recommending evidence-based practices for the best uses of technology in the classroom and at home. One challenge is making the educational experience for all students more equitable and inclusive. Some California school districts have already announced a variety of blended instructional models for their COVID-Comeback which includes:

- Remote learning
 - Synchronous, and
 - Asynchronous
- Hybrid learning (scheduled days for in-person vs remote learning with daily rotations)
- Hyflex learning where students are allowed to shift from day-to-day among the choices of attending class in person, joining remotely or catching up later, asynchronously. Flexibility and fluidity are the keys to success with this model.
- Half-day instruction and half-day self-directed learning, assigned independent study, project work, group work, report, skills application and reinforcement, and
- Intentionally integrating technology 50%+ into daily classroom instruction and homework.

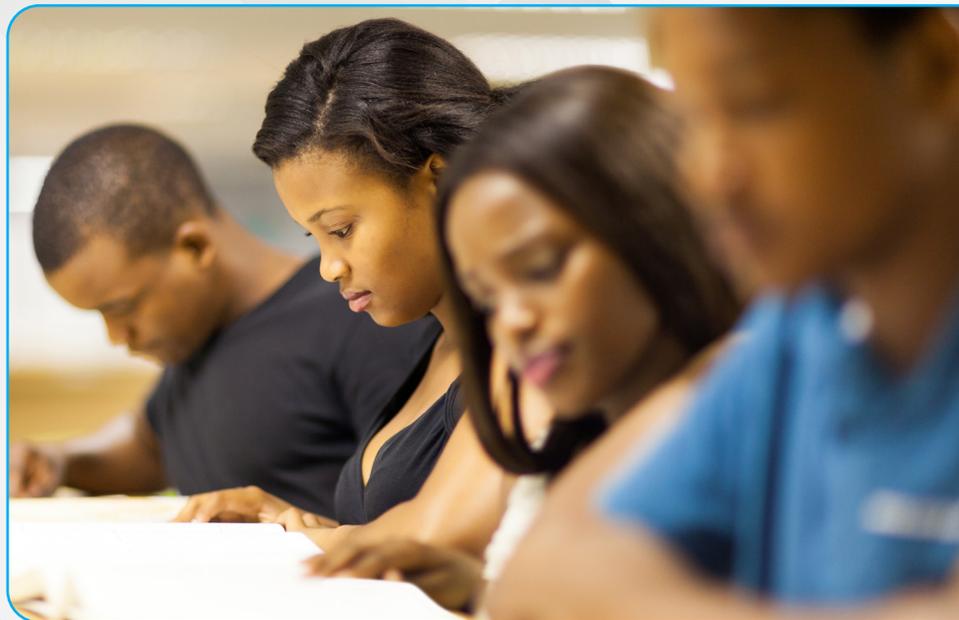
Schools should plan to create a menu of feasible options for families, students, and teachers that provide flexibility for not just what students learn, but where, when, and how they learn.

School scheduling:

Some schools plan to offer five days per week of in-person instruction, but doing so for fewer hours than a traditional full school day, at the beginning of implementation. Other campuses are moving towards an A/B hybrid schedule, where students attend their brick-and-mortar school for two days a week, followed by two days of remote learning. For students, one-half of the fifth day is reserved for tutoring, skills reinforcement, independent/collaborative projects, and homework. The other half is for recreational reading and/or extracurricular activities or physical education. For teachers, the final half day is reserved for planning, collaboration, and professional learning.

The proposed models include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. District wide remote learning for all students.
2. 100% in-person learning for 4-5 hours per day rather than six.
3. Daily school schedules accommodating all prioritized pupil groups including:
 - a. students with special needs,
 - b. English learners,
 - c. students who cannot participate in remote learning because their parents work daily, are essential workers or first responders,



- d. students most in need of an accelerated learning plan to counter-balance the unfinished learning from the past 12-18 months
- e. students in TK, K, and grades 1-2,
- f. students who were most academically vulnerable prior to the pandemic and fell furthest behind their peers in ELA and mathematics during the 2019-2020 and 2020-21 school years,
- g. students at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation if left at home,
- h. students who struggled the most academically prior to the pandemic, and those who are now substantially behind their classmates/age-mates, due to the pandemic,
- i. students who are in need an extra dose of SEL support, and
- j. students without computing devices or high-speed Internet that meet the requirements for participating in online instruction.

4. Rotating schedules:

- a. A/B days giving students with special needs and students with accelerated learning plans priority for in-person instruction for 4 days a week. Based on the amount of space remaining, other students will attend school in person for two days each week accompanied by two days of learning remotely.
- b. Fridays set aside for:
 - i. skills reinforcement
 - ii. practice and application
 - iii. 90-minute time blocks for learning acceleration in ELA or mathematics
 - iv. independent and peer-paired projects
 - v. homework assistance
 - vi. tutoring using both certified and non-certified staff
 - vii. individualized help from the teacher
 - viii. planning and collaboration for teachers. On Fridays, some students will either be remote or in study hall where assistance is available from teachers, tutors, or teachers' aides.

However, all of the above schedules should be designed around an equitable allocation of technology resources to guarantee that no child has any more or any less access to technology resources than the next. A February survey found that 68% of teachers expect their school districts to offer a variety of remote learning choices beyond the end of the pandemic involving asynchronous learning, self-paced lessons, personalized pathways, and additional one-on-one touch points, permitting students to learn together regardless of their physical location.

For all students, and particularly students of color, to be successful in a post-pandemic classroom, we must acknowledge and eliminate any technological inequities. Internet access is highly predictive of educational success and economic viability versus vulnerability in both areas. We also need to reframe how we think about “homework” and other external learning opportunities – especially in light of the fact that many school districts will be “2:1” with students having their own technology both at home and at school in the future.

Technology is not going away and will likely assume an even larger role in education. Teaching with technology should not just be viewed for its short-term benefits, but also for how it imparts vital skills to students who will be working in an ever-changing economy in the coming decades. More than half of the professional jobs that today’s students will compete for as adults do not exist yet. Meeting the in-school and at-home technology requirements for every student will ensure technology equity and access for all.

Field Guide #3: School Re-Engagement: In-class and Hybrid Learning

Field Guide Overview

Description and purpose:

Given what we currently know from both research and experience in working with K-12 students, learning is not an undertaking that occurs exclusively between the months of September and June, nor between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM each day. The human brain constantly encodes, evaluates, processes, and makes decisions about incoming information on a 24/7 basis. Children are learning all the time, whether they are in school or out. However, there are certain “experience-dependent” academic skills that can best be developed through the intentional efforts of a formal education.

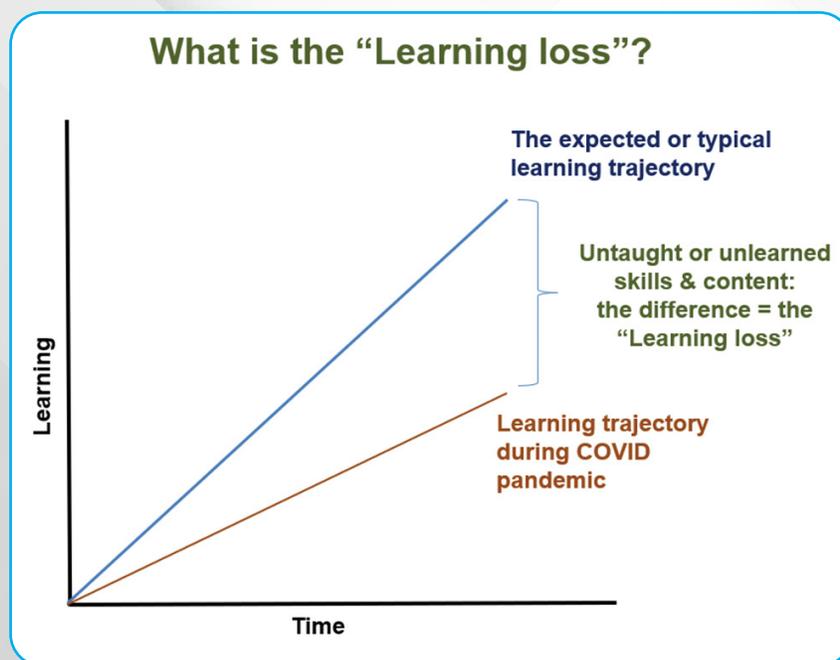
The “summer slide” is the degree to which content knowledge and academic skills are lost over the summer months.



It can be cumulative, rendering children who miss out on structured learning opportunities summer after summer at far greater risk of

- falling behind,
- not graduating, and
- missing those key learning experiences essential for remaining on a path towards college or a career.

A new term recently added to the educational lexicon is the “Covid slide,” referring to the difference between how well/poorly students are performing academically and where they would be if in-person instruction not been interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a visual representation of one view of the learning loss.



Whether it is referred to as the COVID slide, the “learning loss,” “unfinished learning,” “unfinished instruction,” or “untaught and unlearned content and skills,” educators are now charged with the responsibility to bring all students up to the achievement level expected for their grade. In an effort to respond to the learning gaps that became glaringly apparent, a multitude of resources were pushed out from federal, state, and local levels to assist districts in addressing inequities in access to technology and Wi-Fi that were barriers to their success in distance learning.

A national study from an assessment group found a COVID slide of up to 16% in the number of elementary school students performing at grade level in math, and a similar decline up to 10% in the number of students performing at grade level in reading. Another report projected that, by the beginning of the fall 2021 instruction, the average student may have lost up to one-third of his/her normally expected educational progress from the prior year in reading and half of the expected progress made in mathematics.

Most importantly, for many school districts, the pandemic has erased a significant percentage of the gains made over the past several years in closing the achievement gap between African American and Latinx students as compared to their Anglo and Asian counterparts.

Merging the COVID-slide with the revelations on just how deep the digital divide actually runs, we are in a unique position to plan the most meaningful educational transformation in recent history. To do so, we must plan the following:

- Re-imagine schooling that takes full advantage of the wide range of ways in which (a) students learn, and (b) technology can be best used to support learning both in schools and at home.
- Provide teachers with the necessary professional learning so every teacher can take advantage of the many ways in which technology can enhance student learning. (In many of the world's highest achieving nations, teachers spend 20% or more of their time engaged in professional learning to enhance their teaching effectiveness).
- Collaborate with ISPs and tech companies to assure that every student and parent has full access to high-speed Internet and adequate devices to take advantage of its potential to enhance student achievement.
- Plan for annual (1) school-wide, (2) district-wide, and (3) community-wide (county or regional) assessments of digital equity with strategies and incentives to assure greater digital access and equity for all students regardless of neighborhood or family income.

Learning objectives:

The learning objectives for Field Guide #3 School Re-Engagement: In-class and Hybrid Learning are as follows:

1. Be able to participate in/lead a school site discussion on factors to consider as your school/school district produces its master plan for reengaging students through in-person instruction.
2. Develop an understanding of what the data and the latest research are telling us about the breadth and depth of the digital divide and the "learning loss."
3. Understand that there is a wide range of strategies in which technology can be effectively deployed in multiple instructional delivery models.
4. Be able to advocate on behalf of parents impeded by "school hesitancy," but to also explain to them the benefits of in-person learning for most (although not all) students.
5. Understand the basic terminology that is useful in describing school site and at-home technology usage.
6. Be able to develop a list of talking points to promote digital access and equity for all students in your school district.

Components:

The School Re-Engagement: In-class and Hybrid Learning Field Guide is built around the following components:

- A. The verbatim “Voices” -- excerpts from interviews with students, parents, and teachers. The focus is on how their personal experiences intersected with remote learning, living under a pandemic, and adapting to the “new normal” of at-home learning via technology.
- B. Lessons learned – analyzing our experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic focusing on what worked, what did not work well, and how we can apply those lessons learned for a more promising future.
- C. Each of the above professional learning experiences will be accompanied by
 - Questions and written responses, to be completed individually or in small groups (with an opportunity to share responses with colleagues)
 - “Reflections and Applications.”
- D. Videotaped excerpts from the “Advancing Equity in an Era of Crisis” webinar conducted by distinguished California educational leaders.
- E. The recommendations of additional printed and video resources related to re-engaging students, re-opening schools and the role of educational technology.
- F. A survey tool to evaluate Field Guide #3.



Introduction to Field Guide #3

Introduction
to the
Voices
Videos

Dr. Sharla Berry
Educational Researcher

Click to Play

“Lifting our Voices” is about in person, online and hybrid learning.

Teaching and learning in Fall 2021 will occur in a range of different formats. Many schools will return to in-person instruction. Some schools will offer hybrid or hybrid-flex options. These learning options require schools to continue to commit to their technology integration efforts. Even in settings where learning is entirely in person, continuing to integrate technology into the classroom can support deeper learning and foster the development of digital literacy and other 21st century skills.

As we make plans for schools to resume in-person instruction at all school sites, below are some of the questions we should be asking.

- a. What were some of the most important lessons that you and your colleagues learned about the digital divide and how it can be reduced in your school/ school district?
- b. What did we discover about the benefits as well as the limitations of technology when it was used for remote instruction?
- c. What do you hope schools will do “more of” and “less of” when schools return to in-person classroom instruction based on what you have learned and experienced over the past 18 months?

The Interviewees



Rebecca **Purcell**
Teacher
(Instructional Coach)



Ghada **Moreno**
Teacher



Jacqueline **Valadez**
Teacher



Rachel **Mallory**
Parent



Kendra **James**
Parent



Linda **Chamberlin**
Grandparent



Breanne **Mallory**
6th grade student



Alaina **Baker**
8th grade student



Najriyah **Everidge**
6th grade student

The COVID-19 pandemic has taught educators many lessons that can be useful in the coming school year. This Field Guide offers professional development exercises that will lead to answering the following questions:

- What have we learned about children, educational technology, and learning from the pandemic?
- How have we grown wiser?

- What were some of the factors that helped us make progress?
- What obstacles did we encounter and how did we get beyond them? How do we prevent them from being barriers in the future?
- How do we get all students on a positive learning trajectory following the COVID-19 crisis?

To see and hear more about how much we have learned and how much we have grown while adapting to the pandemic, watch the videos of students, parents, and teachers below.

CLICK TO PLAY Video - <http://bit.ly/studentsreturnfieldguide3>

1. What strategies can we put into place to prepare students for a healthy and productive return to classroom instruction? What should all schools do to promote social emotional learning along with technology?

CLICK TO PLAY Video - <http://bit.ly/techchallengesfieldguide3>

2. What were the greatest challenges posed by technology when student learning could only be delivered remotely?

CLICK TO PLAY Video - <http://bit.ly/lessonslearnedfieldguide3>

3. Did your experiences over the past 12 months mirror those described in this video segment? Did your colleagues report similar observations being made? What comments instruct us on some possible changes that may be in order when schools resume in-person learning?

CLICK TO PLAY Video - <http://bit.ly/techadvantagesfieldguide3>

4. Can you comment on the impact that the absence of interpersonal experiences had on students and teachers during 12 months of remote learning? Did you and your colleagues have a similar assessment?

CLICK TO PLAY Video - <http://bit.ly/selneedsfieldguide3>

5. There was a social-emotional toll caused by the pandemic. Which comment was most meaningful to you personally and what provisions should schools make to address these SEL issues when in-person instruction resumes?



**Addressing
the
Digital
Divide**

Rebecca **Purcell**
Teacher
(Instructional Coach)

Click to Play

School Re-Engagement: In-class and Hybrid Learning

Professional learning: Participant Responses

- a. What were your two or three key “take-aways” from the interviewees concerning the ways in which technology impacted:
 1. Students
 2. Teachers
 3. parents and families
- b. What strategies have you or your school put into place to prepare students for a healthy and productive return to your campuses? What should all schools do?
- c. How were you, your school and your students impacted by the “digital divide” (the availability of technology devices, support services, software reliability, meaningful lessons, Internet access, etc.) when students were required to learn from home?
- d. What were some of the biggest challenges posed by distance learning?
- e. There are varying opinions about increasing or decreasing the role of technology in education when schools reopen. How might educators integrate technology more into daily classroom instruction?
- f. What did parents seem to learn most in their new role as a “teacher” for their own children during remote learning?
- g. Do you think students learned (a) more, (b) the same, or (c) less from remote learning as they did previously with face-to-face instruction? Explain your answer.
- h. If you were assigned the task of planning a daily instructional model for your school that included a role for technology, where would you see it fitting in best during student learning experiences?

- i. When in person instruction resumes, how might schools integrate more social emotional learning opportunities into the regular daily schedule for students?
- j. In the future, what additional resources would you like to see available at home that would make remote learning more successful for a greater percentage of students of color?

Reflections and applications

- a. What are some simple things that can be done in the classroom during the first 1-2 weeks of school that will help students readjust (1) to in-person school, (2) to one another, (3) to the teacher, and (4) to re-learning the regular protocols and daily rules that allow a classroom/school to function smoothly?
- b. What strategies have you and/or your school put into place to prepare students for a healthy and productive return to classroom instruction? What should all schools do?
- c. If you were given an opportunity to make the final decisions, describe what your educational day/week would look like when school resumes.
- d. What were some other positive contributions that technology made during the pandemic in support of student learning?
- e. What were some of the “lessons learned” about the importance of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic? Were there similar benefits at your school site?
- f. Professional development for teachers in classroom technology must be ongoing. What should be some of the basics for that professional development?
- g. How might you integrate more social emotional learning opportunities into your regular classroom day when school resumes?
- h. Aside from technology matters, some students struggled with distance learning while others thrived in it. What are some of the non-tech factors that cause students to fall into one category or the other?
- i. How do you think teachers can best address the crucial issue of “learning loss” when schools re-open for the new school year?



Technology
is *Essential* to
Education

Lorrie **Owens**
Past President, Board of Directors
CITE

Click to Play

Excerpts from Session # 18. Advancing Equity in an Era of Crisis. Establishing Protocols for Online Teaching and Learning for Urban and Rural Students conducted by Lorrie Owens - Past President, Board of Directors – CITE; Dr. Sharla Berry - Assistant Professor of Education, California Lutheran University, and; Dr. Michelle Bowers - Superintendent, Lancaster Unified School District.

Segment #1: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment1fieldguide3>

Supporting students and families at home in the future

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What made for some of the greatest challenges to parents in shifting from just supporting their child's in-school learning to supporting him/her with at-home learning?
- What role should schools play in assisting parents who have become increasingly responsible for supporting at-home learning?
- Taking time to examine how we might "reinvent" schools to better serve our students was mentioned by Dr. Bowers. How will schools need to reinvent themselves to align more with the some of the newly recognized needs of post-pandemic students and families?

Segment #2: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment2fieldguide3>

Technology and remote learning- a new way of doing the business of "school."

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What are some of the most critical new ways in which schools will be conducted in a post-pandemic world?
- How can you help your school and community prepare for those changes? How do you help students in your classroom?
- What will those changes mean for teacher training? How should schools address those professional learning needs?

Segment #3: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment3fieldguide3>

Teaching as a community enterprise

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- How does Dr. Berry define the term “community”? Why does it incorporate more than just the local schools?
- Are there any other significant factors in your local educational community that might be include in her definition? Why?
- How does the broader community promote a sense of belongingness for students? Is there be a more formal way to include more community stakeholders on a regular basis?

Segment #4: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment4fieldguide3>

Addressing bandwidth - one aspect of the digital divide

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What is “bandwidth” and why is it important during remote learning?
- How does low bandwidth effect a student’s ability to fully engage in distance education at home? What impact can this have on his/her achievement?
- What are some of the IT challenges caused by devices being distributed for at-home learning?
- Which student demographic groups are impacted most by bandwidth issues, and how can the wider community help them?
- Why is a “digital needs assessment” important for schools/school districts both now and in the future? What should be included in that assessment?

Segment #5: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment5fieldguide3>

Using technology to develop higher order thinking skills (HOTS)

Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- What unique aspects of technology allow it to contribute best to developing higher order thinking skills?
- How are higher order thinking skills taught in your classroom? If you made it transition to include digital tools, what Instructional changes would you make?
- In what ways does the focus on higher order thinking skills enhance student engagement?
- How high up on the digital taxonomy do your students go? Why?
- What are some of the creative ways that students in your class can use technology?

Segment #6: CLICK TO PLAY <http://bit.ly/segment6fieldguide3>

Listening to the stakeholders in our educational community

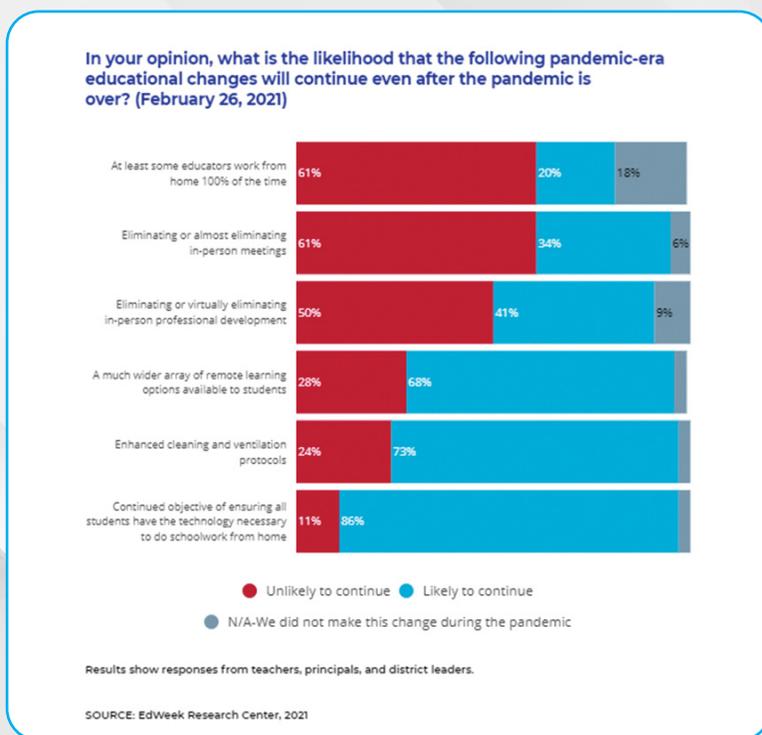
Synchronous Professional Learning: Discuss the following questions in your small group and report out to the larger body when you reconvene.

Asynchronous professional Learning: Write your individual answers to each of the following questions.

- Why should school be more inclusive when it comes to decision making for our students and schools?
- How did the pandemic highlight why we should view the broader community as a key resource in educational planning?
- If you were to craft a two-minute presentation on increasing the role of the community at your school, what would be your key bullet points?

Conclusion:

The chart below indicates that a majority of educators fully recognize that the ways in which they plan to educate children in the future has permanently changed. Teachers need to be trained differently. Classrooms need to look different to lend themselves to more collaboration and easily incorporate a variety of usages for technology. Our next important step is to make certain that the near-future goals of our educational institutions are also poised to change in ways that will better meet the needs of every student in every California school.



Evolutionary psychology tells us that the value of human memory was not so much for casually reminiscing about the past, but for planning to survive in the future, based on the lessons learned from the past. The COVID-19 pandemic laid bare the extent of the digital divide, and the adverse

impact that being digitally divided can have on student learning outcomes. Those lessons learned should instruct us on how to put a wide range of educational practices into perspective, particularly those related to meeting the technology needs of students of color.

As we visualize the possibilities that will lead towards technological equity, some of the measures that can be taken to enhance access for all students include the following:

1. Ongoing training in the use of technology tools must be provided to students and, depending on the age of the student, to parents as well, since parents will likely be assisting those students for years. Training must be available in the language spoken in the student's home.
2. Professional development in technology for teachers must be ongoing. It must not only cover basic technology skills, but the pedagogy and "best practices" in utilizing a specific technology tool for a specific audience of learners.
3. With the plethora of new tools and software currently deployed, and the technology used to implement all three modes of learning (in-person, hybrid and distance), technology staffs need continued training and support to adequately support teachers, students, administrators and families.
4. Student data privacy, filtering for student protection, and cybersecurity considerations are different when students are learning off-campus than they are when students are in classrooms. There must be adequate budgeting, continuous training, and support for all stakeholders.
5. Technology must be sustainable. Effective technology programs cannot be maintained on one-time grants. Technology purchases, repairs, upgrades, and training must be built into the annual school district budget and the state budget every year.
6. Planning is necessary, along with annually re-visiting technology plans, to ensure the appropriate technology is matched to each school district's long term learning goals. The latest technology is not always the most appropriate technology for all students.

Resolving the technology inequities in education cannot be seen solely as the responsibility of the same families who have been historically marginalized by social, economic, and educational systems. It should be a commitment made both by the state and the nation because it is in everyone's best economic interest.

Appendix: Definitions of terms for Field Guide #3.

- **Adequate Internet connection:** Refers to the forms of Internet connections that are suitable for online learning. Includes DSL, cable, fiber, and satellite, cellular LTE, or cellular hotspot Internet where mobile tethering is feasible.
- **Adequate device:** Devices suitable for online learning. Includes laptops, computers, and tablets. Does not include mobile or cellular phones.
- **Adequate Internet speeds:** Download and upload speeds suitable for online

learning – consensus standard is 25/3 Mbps (download/upload) speeds though this can vary based on the number of devices connected at one time. A 5/1 LTE speed is generally sufficient for certain use cases such as videoconferencing.

- **Cable Internet (or wired broadband):** A form of Internet access that uses a cable model on-premise and is connected to ISP's last mile infrastructure.
- **Chromebook:** A laptop running Chrome OS (developed by Google). These devices generally have information stored on the cloud versus in local memory and are often more affordable than traditional laptops.
- **Digital divide:** Students who do not have sufficient technology (connectivity or devices) to study, learn, and complete assignments remotely. Three segments of digitally divided audience include:
 - **Fully disconnected:** Students with no adequate connection or adequate device for online, distance learning
 - **Internet insufficient:** Students with an adequate device (laptop, tablet) but without adequate connectivity to link to school and other resources.
 - **Device deficient:** Students with access to an adequate connection (cable, DSL, fiber or satellite), but without adequate device available for use.
- **DSL Internet:** Form of Internet access that uses telephone networks to connect to ISPs but utilizes a different frequency and is independent of a phone line. Considered adequate for distance learning.
- **Homework gap:** term used to highlight the challenge that some K-12 students have in completing online homework assignments because they lack adequate Internet connectivity or Internet-enabled devices at home.
- **Hyflex** – a technology deployment strategy where students are allowed to decide daily whether to attend class in person, to join class remotely online, or to catch up with learning later asynchronously
- **ISP (Internet Service Provider):** The companies or organizations that offer Internet access services (e.g., Comcast, Charter, Verizon, T-Mobile, etc.)
- **Learning Acceleration:** Students with the most unfinished learning attend a half-day of intensive, small group support in Math and ELA each week. During this time, teachers reteach pre-requisite content from prior grades to fill in gaps “just in time,” pre-teach material for the upcoming week, and review new material from the past week. Students may cycle in and out of this intervention strategy during the school year.
- **Mbps:** Megabit per second – unit of speed measuring how fast data is transferred. Can measure either download or upload speed. 25/3 Mbps refers to 25 megabits downstream speed and 3 megabit per second upstream speed.
- **Mobile/Cellular tethering:** The practice of using a hotspot (either via a cell phone or wireless hotspot device) to allow nearby devices to connect to the cellular connection.

- **Operating system (OS):** Software installed on devices that allow the device to run, interact with user, and interact with installed applications. Education applications need to be configured to run on specific operating systems (e.g., iOS, Android, Windows, Chrome) – certain applications are incompatible for certain mobile operating systems and cannot be recognized by other devices.
- **Satellite Internet:** One form of Internet access provided through communication satellites. Speeds are generally fast, but coverage can be spotty due to changes in environmental conditions. Can provide access to areas that are not reachable by ISPs. Considered as an adequate support in distance learning but other forms (DSL, cable, fiber) are preferable..
- **Synchronous/asynchronous learning:** Synchronous learning occurs in real-time and requires a live Internet connection. Asynchronous learning involves using online materials and requires an Internet connection to initially obtain or submit materials, but no continuous connection is required.
- **Wired broadband:** Category of Internet access (includes DSL, cable, fiber) where a physical connection on-the-premises is made. Does not include cellular or satellite forms of Internet. Considered adequate for distance learning.

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Evaluation-Survey

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CAAASA presents:

Lifting Our Voices:



Field Guide #3: School Re-Engagement: In-person and Hybrid Learning



Presenter:
Dr. Michele Bowers
Superintendent
Lancaster Union
School District



Presenter:
Ms. Lorrie Owens
Member,
Board of Directors
California IT in Education
(CITE)



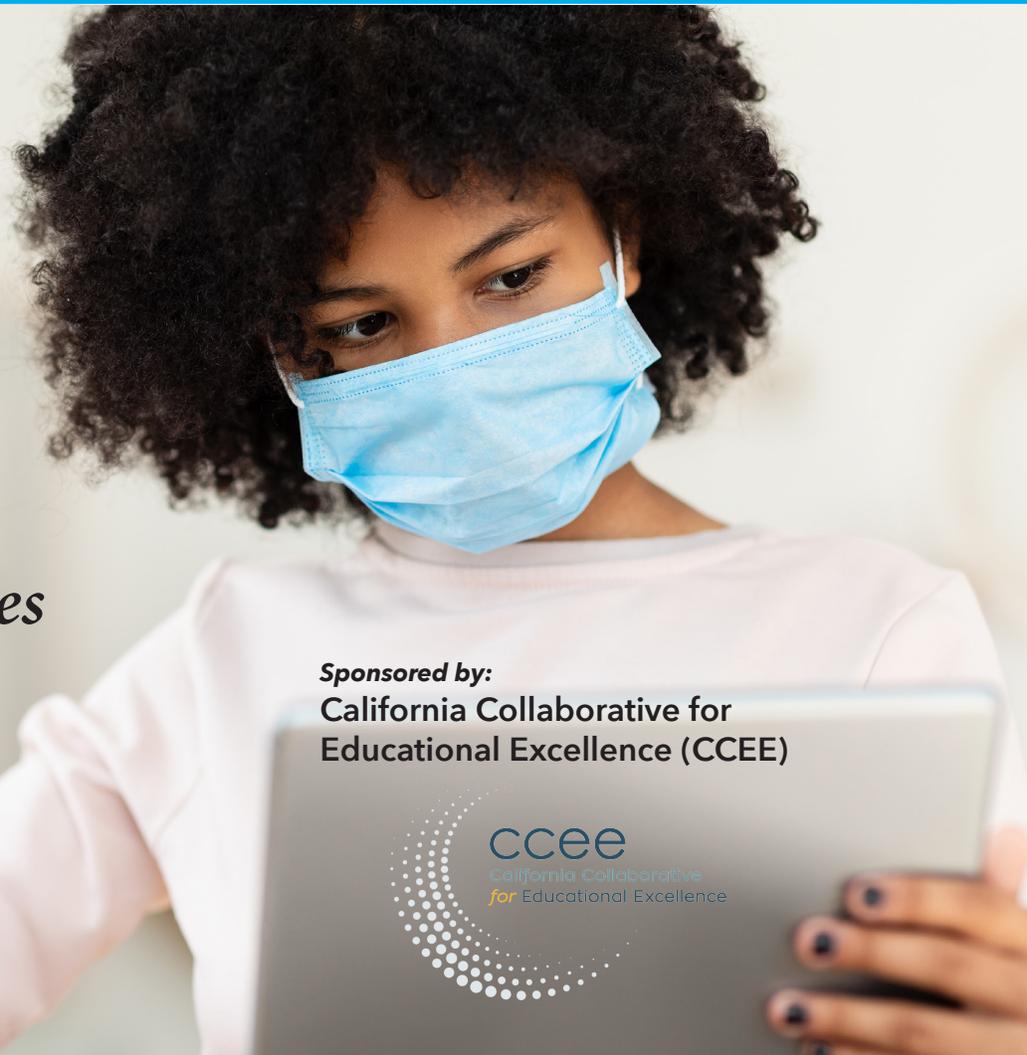
Presenter:
Dr. Sharla Berry
Educational Researcher



California Association of African-American
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School Re-orientation for Post-COVID Learning:

What to Know, Do, and Expect as In-Person Instruction Resumes



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