WA K-12 Learning Loss

Summary Document

DECEMBER 2020

Context for this document

COVID-induced learning loss, and its impact as an accelerant of existing inequities, has been well documented since the early days of the pandemic
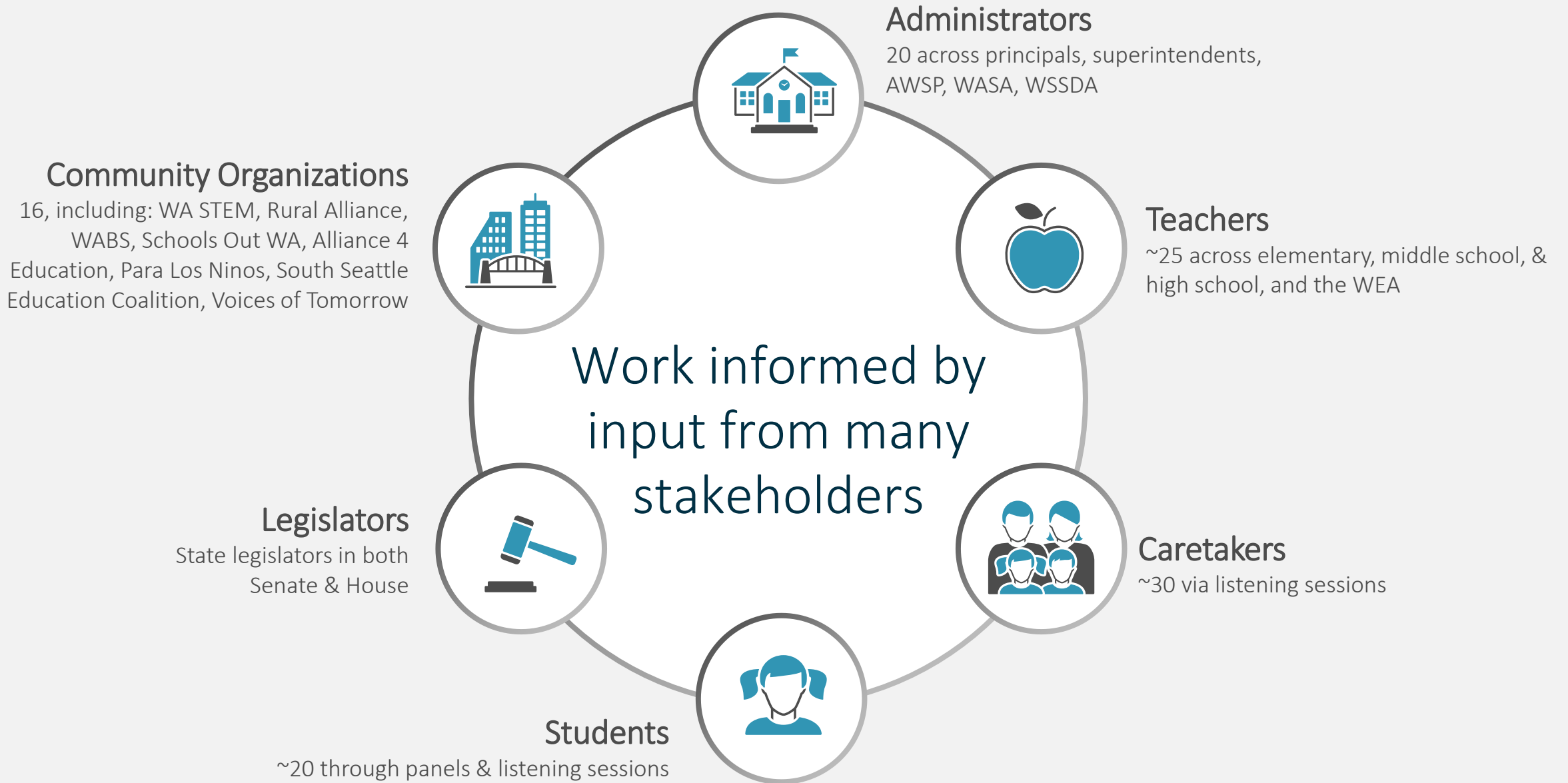
In October 2020, Challenge Seattle and the Washington Roundtable initiated a study on learning loss in Washington state with a three-fold purpose:

1. Document the existing research on COVID-induced learning loss and its impacts on students
2. Identify evidence-based strategies to halt the accumulation of learning loss, and then accelerate recovery
3. Broadly socialize and gather input on those strategies from key K-12 stakeholders throughout Washington state

This document reflects a summary outcome of that work

Boston Consulting Group led the study, in close partnership with Kinetic West

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Ballmer Group and Raikes Foundation provided additional funding support

Work informed by input from many stakeholders

Administrators
20 across principals, superintendents, AWSP, WASA, WSSDA

Teachers
~25 across elementary, middle school, & high school, and the WEA

Caretakers
~30 via listening sessions

Students
~20 through panels & listening sessions

Legislators
State legislators in both Senate & House

Community Organizations
16, including: WA STEM, Rural Alliance, WABS, Schools Out WA, Alliance 4 Education, Para Los Ninos, South Seattle Education Coalition, Voices of Tomorrow

Our remit: How should we mitigate and reverse COVID-induced learning loss in Washington State?

Executive summary

The evidence on COVID-induced learning loss – both quantitative and anecdotal – suggests this will be a substantial crisis facing our education system, potentially for years to come
- Academic impact for students is estimated to be range from 33-100+% of an academic year in math, and 22-100% in reading
- Longer-term the OECD estimates up to ~$14T in future earnings could be lost due to the education disruption

Students and communities are not feeling this equally – and differentiated support will be needed
- Low-income students are seeing less learning time, and their teachers felt more unprepared for online learning
- Parents are also seeing negative impacts on their child's mental health

This support first needs to focus on returning to in-person learning with safety measures in place, and prioritizing resources accordingly
- Most WA schools are still remote today, and could look towards how to safely reopen

However, just reopening schools will not be enough – additional support will need to be given for students most impacted today
- To effectively target resources, individualized student plans informed by diagnostic tools are needed
- With an individual plan, targeted strategies can then be pursued to improve student outcomes. These could include:
  - Tailoring learning time to student needs: Ensuring the most impacted students have the opportunity, and sufficient time, to accelerate learning
  - Personalizing learning progression: Recognizing students are returning to school in vastly different places, and creating a more equitable learning environment that will meet students where they are at academically
  - Supporting the whole student: Building a foundation for student engagement by addressing mental health needs and supporting social-emotional learning for impacted students
  - Mobilizing communities: This is the biggest problem our education system has faced in decades – and addressing this must be an "all hands on deck" effort, with diverse community support playing a vital role

While these actions help students today, they could also transform Washington's K-12 system for tomorrow

COVID-induced learning loss will have negative long-term repercussions for students, if not addressed

Estimated academic impact		Long-term impact, outside of solely academic outcomes		
Ranges from 33% to 100%+	**Ranges from 22% to 100%**	**3%**	**$14T**	**>50%**
Of an academic year lost in mathematics[1]	Of an academic year lost in reading[1]	Decrease in projected lifetime income for students experiencing COVID learning loss[2]	Forecasted potential financial loss due to COVID's disruptions to education[3]	Of students say they need mental health support following school closures[4]

This learning loss is felt differently by students & communities across the state

Low-income students are seeing less learning time
- Estimated ~3 hrs fewer hours of instructional activities per week in high-poverty districts[1]
- Majority low-income districts saw 50% attendance rates (at best) for half of students[2]

Teachers in low-income districts felt more unprepared for online learning
- 72% of teachers at majority low-income schools felt unprepared to facilitate online learning[3]

Some communities also have less access to digital learning
- WA Black, Latinx, and/or Indigenous students are 2x more likely to lack digital access[4]
- Nationally, rural students are 8 percentage points more likely to lack sufficient broadband[4]

Parents are seeing more negative impacts on their child's mental health
- Parents with less than a college degree are 9 percentage points more likely to report their child is "already experiencing harm to their emotional or mental health"[5]

1. American Institute of Research " The National Survey of Public Education's Response to COVID-19"; compared to high-income peers 2. LAUSD, majority low-income classified as districts with over 67% low-income students 3. Educators for Excellence, compared to 67% of all teachers 4. Common Sense Media, 29% of Black, Latinx, and/or Indigenous students lack access, vs 15% state average; 37% of all rural students lack sufficient broadband, vs 21% of students in urban areas 5. Gallup, 33% vs. 24% of parents with a college degree or higher

Communities will require nuanced action and support informed by many factors:

- ❯ Grade-level / Age

- ❯ Location

- ❯ Identity / race

- ❯ Income level

- ❯ Subject (e.g., math, reading)

Those who are impacted the most today, have also historically been most harmed by system inequities

> " *Children in poverty, English Language Learners, children of color, homeless children – the system was not set up for them before, it is going to hurt them even more now.* -COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

E.g.,

- Students of color
- Low-income students
- English Language Learners
- Rural students
- Students with disabilities
- Mobile students – those experiencing homelessness, or in foster care

Impact on students today

- › Nationally, districts with >40% Black/Hispanic students saw online engagement drop 74%, compared to 51% for others[1]

- › One estimate indicates staying remote until Jan. could create a 3.3% loss of potential earning power for Black students[2]

- › In one district, 75% of parents say their students with disabilities are showing signs of regression[3]

Learning loss, and its differing impacts, will exacerbate systemic inequalities
Now is the time to act, addressing learning loss as a key component of COVID response

1. "Increased Impacts of Digital Divide on Higher Minority Districts", Learn Platform   2. CNBC, compared to a 1.6% loss for white students   3. http://speakupparents.org/sped-survey-fall-2020-results

Response efforts need to focus on both stopping the slide and closing the gap

Stop the slide

- Emphasize **connectivity and engagement** within current remote (or hybrid) learning context
- **Return to in-person learning with safety measures in place,** and prioritize resources accordingly

Close the gap

- Focus on **long-term strategies** to remediate and accelerate student learning
- **Adapt hybrid and face-to-face models** to best address student needs

Reopening schools is critical for students, and increasing analyses indicate WA could reopen some schools safely

Analyses indicate some schools could have reopened sooner

September analysis indicated **all but 14 counties could have opened some schools**[1]

Another analysis of urban districts **classified WA districts as appearing to be 'overly cautious'**[2]

WA could learn from other examples - **New York City recently adjusted protocols to allow elementary schools to begin safely reopening**, despite recent surges of COVID-19

WA could take action to support school reopening[4]

Regularly reevaluate data, and **loosen re-opening guidelines where appropriate**

Prioritize distribution of public health resources in support of school reopening
- Early vaccine distribution for teachers & staff
- BINAX rapid tests for teachers and staff
- PPE and other safety resources

Leverage **existing guidance and resources** to quickly and safely make this transition[5]

1. New York Times   2. CRPE   3. IDM   4. Seattle Times   5. OSPI COVID-19 Resources

Recent study indicates countermeasures provide majority of benefit in decreasing transmission – which schools can do now
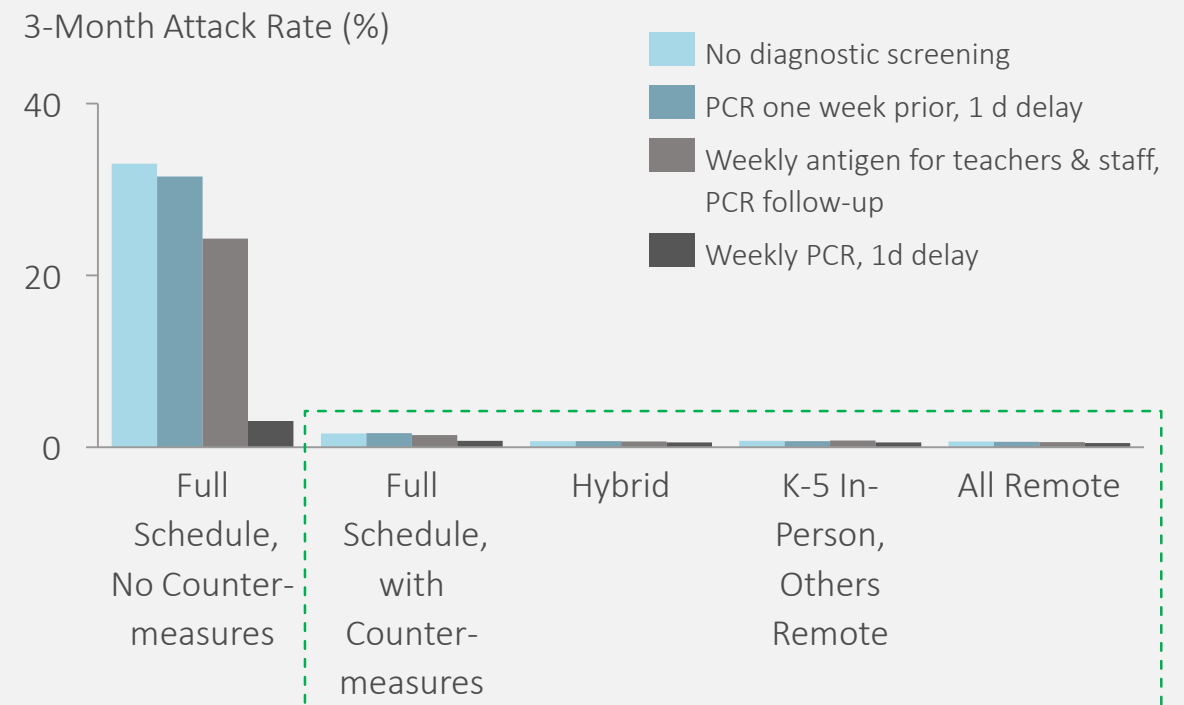
Study findings

1 "Reopening schools to in-person learning without countermeasures could result in significant COVID-19 burden"[1]; however, the report states "in-school countermeasures are highly effective in reducing school-based transmission"[1]

2 By using in-person mitigation strategies, "the risk of in-school transmission is low, and therefore routine diagnostic screening has limited benefit"[2]

3 Analysis also shows there is limited difference in risk between in-person learning with countermeasures and all remote learning

4 "School-based transmission did not significantly increase the community-wide reproduction number"[1] (in the IDM analysis for scenarios where school-based countermeasures were in place)

Note: these results are sensitive to IDM assumptions & scenarios, including current effective reproduction numbers

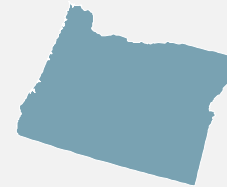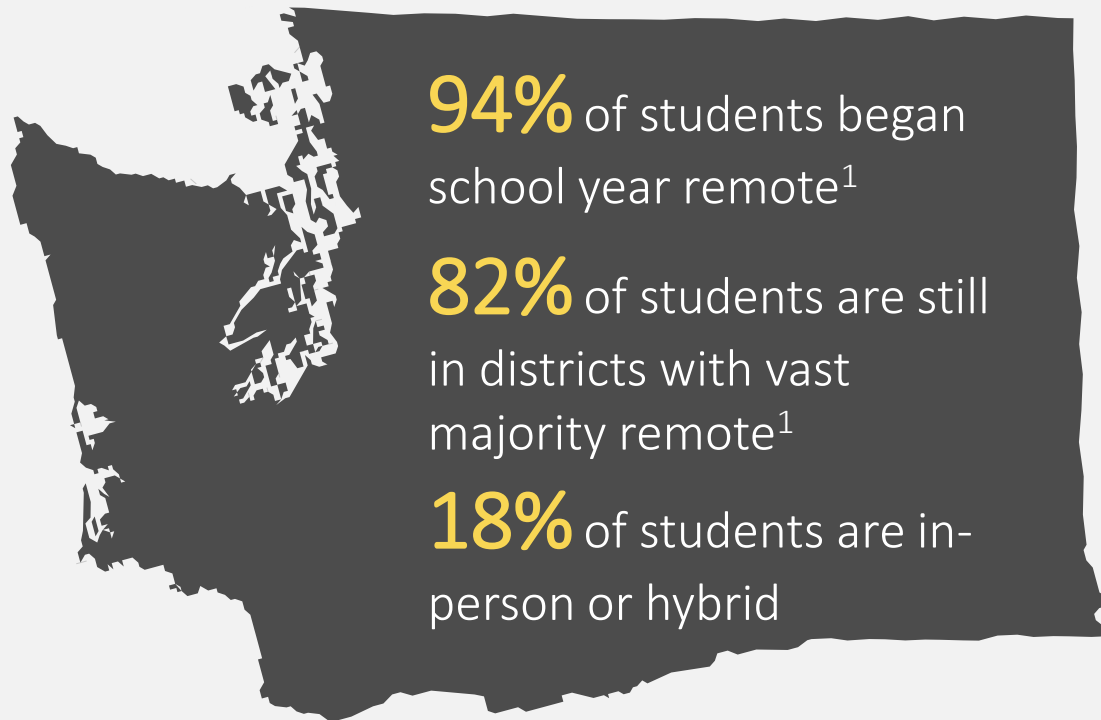## Attack rate in students varies based on reopening model
Student attack rates

3-Month Attack Rate (%)

Legend:
- No diagnostic screening
- PCR one week prior, 1 d delay
- Weekly antigen for teachers & staff, PCR follow-up
- Weekly PCR, 1d delay

Categories: Full Schedule, No Counter-measures | Full Schedule, with Counter-measures | Hybrid | K-5 In-Person, Others Remote | All Remote

While Washington is majority-remote, many other states have transitioned to on-site or hybrid learning models

94% of students began school year remote[1]

82% of students are still in districts with vast majority remote[1]

18% of students are in-person or hybrid

Oregon[2]
- ~30% only distance learning
- ~50% combination on-site & distance learning or in transition
- ~20% fully on-site

California[3]
- ~60% only distance learning
- ~40% in-person or hybrid

Massachusetts[4]
- 50-55% only distance learning
- ~45-50% in-person or hybrid

Students are also ready to be back in the classroom

" I want Governor Inslee to know how much we're struggling with remote learning.

Tell him we're willing to go back, we'll wear masks, we'll do whatever he tells us to. We just need to be in person again.

" I'm a good student. But even I am having a hard time engaging remote anymore. **I can't find motivation anymore.**

I don't blame my peers who just stopped turning on their computers a while back. Remote learning is really, really, hard.

" I don't want to go back until it's official and won't change. **I struggle when we change models every few weeks based on what the virus numbers are**.

I'd rather **wait it out for a few months and be miserable, then taste freedom and go back to remote.**

" Personally, I would do just about anything to get back into school. **I need human engagement.**

I am seeing changes in myself. I get anxious so easily these days.

Reopening schools is necessary but insufficient

Students have faced immense challenges over the past nine months

In-person learning needs to return to better support many of these students

Furthermore, in a world of scarce resources, targeting any effort towards those who need the most help is critical

To effectively target resources to those most impacted, individualized student plans informed by diagnostic tools are a necessary prerequisite

And if school continues as it always has, we will fail these students and their long-term potential

Four strategies, implemented as a portfolio, could focus on closing the gap for the most impacted students

Use of high-quality diagnostic tools / strategies and development of individualized student plans MUST happen (and be required or encouraged by the state), in order to equitably provide funding for students who have been hardest hit by the impacts of COVID learning loss

Tailor learning time to student needs

Ensuring the most impacted students have the opportunity, and sufficient time, to accelerate their learning

Personalize learning progression

Recognizing students are returning to school in vastly different places, and creating an equitable learning environment that will meet students where they are at academically

Support the whole student

Building a foundation for student engagement by addressing mental health needs and supporting social-emotional learning for impacted students

Mobilize communities to support our schools

This is the biggest problem our education system has faced in decades – and addressing this must be an "all hands on deck" effort, with diverse community support playing a vital role

Each strategy includes a set of specific interventions

	Tailor learning time to student needs	Personalize learning progression	Support the whole student	Mobilize communities to support our schools
State: *Defined and/or executed by the State*	Use of high-quality diagnostic tools / strategies and development of individualized student plans MUST happen (and be required or encouraged by the state), in order to equitably provide funding for students who have been hardest hit by the impacts of COVID learning loss			
	• **Pilot a balanced school calendar** to extend across full year (without adding additional instructional hours)	• **Temporarily prioritize state learning standards** to essential, core standards	• Promote use of **social emotional learning (SEL) concepts / curriculum** within schools, particularly among younger students	• **Rally community volunteers in support of our schools** – giving students additional access to adult mentorship and resources
District: *Enabled/ incentivized by the state & executed by the district*	• **Target evidence-based after school programs for low-income students,** enabling equitable academic & enrichment opportunities	• **Support the most impacted HS students towards graduation** with individual support and focused on achieving their High School and Beyond Plan	• **Provide resources to increase behavioral health support for students with mental and emotional health needs** – focusing on those that mirror the diversity of their community	• **Connect schools with local community organizations** to partner in ensuring all students needs (academic, mental, physical) are met
	• **Expand evidence-based summer 2021 programs for students who need additional time,** while pilot of balanced school year is implemented	• Provide support for **individualized classroom learning model**	• Enable professional development focused on **supporting students that have experienced trauma**	

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Summary: Tailor learning time to student needs

Potential actions

Target evidence-based after school programs

For '21-22: Bolster funding through targeted support focused on both academic and enrichment activities

- Prioritize **evidence-based programs,** that include enrichment in addition to core academics (either inside or outside of traditional school)

- Potentially **focus outside of existing ELA and Math programming (e.g., LAP)** – though low-income districts likely require additional support for existing programming to effectively continue

Expand summer 2021 programs

Expand 2021 summer programs to prevent large scale summer learning loss, after a tumultuous year

- **Bolster resources** to **expand high-quality summer** programs for low-income students (either inside or outside of traditional school)

- **Target funding towards evidence-based interventions**, enrichment-style programs, and staff training/coaching support (vs. large-scale, lecture focused programs)

Pilot a balanced school calendar

Prevent long-term summer learning loss by temporarily transitioning to year-round calendar

- Propose **state-level year-round calendar** aligned across state, which **districts could opt-in to** with additional funds

- Will **not increase over 180 instructional days**, rather **alter existing school year** to limit summer learning loss (assume not implementable until Fall '21)

Evidence-based findings

Can generate academic gains in core skills and increase the graduation rate[1]
- 3,000 low-income students saw 2 years of regular attendance drive math gains of ~10-20%
- 4-year students in 1 program had 90% graduation rates vs. 60% of nonparticipants

Programs can increase academic outcomes
- RI summer program saw average gains of ~30% for 1,000 students[2]
- NC reading program saw statistically significant gains 9-mo post-intervention[3]

Can address learning loss & reduce remediation
- May grow achievement by 10-20 learning days/year, without increasing school time[4]
- In evidence from one district[5]:
  - Class failure dropped 50% in middle schools and core skill mastery grew
  - Attendance increased by 2%

Note: See appendix for sources

Summary: Personalize learning progression

Prioritize core state learning standards

Individualized classroom learning model

Support most impacted HS students towards graduation and beyond

Potential actions

Prioritize a set of core learning standards to ensure teachers can bring all students up to grade proficiency

- **Define a core set of prioritized learning standards** within each subject/grade that teachers will adopt for the remainder of this school year
- **Give teachers the space and flexibility to tailor curriculum and instruction in line with core learning standards** to meet their students' needs
- Consider accounting for the impact of teaching prioritized standards when **setting Spring '21 summative assessments**

Incentivize districts to increase personalized learning (e.g., via paraeducators, adaptive learning software)

- **Provide a bank of formative assessments and resources** teachers can leverage to better understand student progress and mastery
- **Facilitate self-paced learning with adaptive digital tools** (with appropriate educator oversight)
- **Enable more targeted teacher attention by providing additional paraeducators** in the classroom
- **Share exemplar models with districts to support classroom implementation**

Support the most impacted students and ensure they are on track to accomplish graduation requirements

- **Engage individually with the most highly impacted students** to ensure they are on-track to graduate
- **Accelerate learning by supporting alternative course credit models** such as expanding equivalencies or work-based learning, **broadening the lens** on what counts as graduation credit
- **Focus time and energy on ensuring students pursue the necessary activities in their High School & Beyond Plan**, and do not close off postsecondary pathways they are looking to pursue

Evidence-based findings

States are currently prioritizing standards: Example from Illinois[6]
- Reduced number of standards by 20-60% depending on grade level & subject
- Board of Education published prioritized standards for each subject (incl. SEL)
- Determined by subject-specific teams of educators state-wide

Individualized models accelerate learning:

- Personalized learning has been shown to boost student annual growth rates by 3 percentile points in math and reading[7]
- One model found to double 6th Grade student proficiency rates in math & reading, after one year[8]

Mitigating dropouts can support students long-term:

- Dropout rate in WA for low-income students is three times higher than for non-low-income peers[9]
- 25-34-year-old dropouts earn ~20% less and have 2% higher unemployment vs those with HS diploma[10]

Note: See appendix for sources

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Summary: Support the whole student

Potential actions

Increase behavioral health support

Enable student & staff access to behavioral health support, especially for older students

- Provide incentives to **increase behavioral health professional access** (beyond solely counseling) – especially focusing on diverse organizations representing students most impacted today

- Consider **mandating a consistent reporting mechanism for districts** to report how they are ensuring students receive necessary support

Promote SEL concepts/curriculum

Support expansion of social emotional learning (SEL) concepts and curriculum, particularly within elementary schools

- Could consider **providing targeted fund for elementary schools to adopt SEL content** - either the WSSDA-developed model or OSPI-developed SEL standards and benchmarks

- If core state standards are prioritized, suggest schools to **spend additional time on SEL**

Support students experiencing trauma

Support trauma-informed teaching professional development to ensure student support

- Potentially **update existing teacher training requirements** to contain specific trauma-informed teaching standards, or add additional trauma-informed development

- Encourage **further partnership between organizations already leading teacher development** (e.g., WEA) and existing ACEs organizations (especially regional groups)

Evidence-based findings

Access links to improved attendance, reduced behavioral problems, and higher college readiness
- Daily counselor check-ins for students with 10+ absences seen to increase attendance[11]
- 12th graders in schools with more counselors per student scored higher on the College Admissions Knowledge Evaluation test (67% vs 46% correct)[12]

Potential to boost academic success, positive behaviors, and provide long-term benefits
- Analysis of 213 school-based programs saw an 11% increase in academic achievement[13]
  - Students noted decreased emotional distress and fewer behavioral incidents
- >97K student study noted potential long-term impacts with increased graduation rates[14]

Ability to drive positive behaviors and parent engagement, supporting academic success
- Elementary school serving a largely Latinx community developed staff through traumatic stress training and parent engagement training[15]
  - Became the first school in the community to reach CA's standardized test score benchmark

Note: See appendix for sources

Summary: Mobilize communities to support our schools

Rally community volunteers

Engage community organizations

Potential actions

Increase student access to adult support by rallying volunteers across the state

- Partner with Washington State School Retiree' Association (WSSRA) & Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (WSVP) to start a remote, volunteer tutor program
  - Credited teachers matched with students in content area of expertise
  - Potential to increase uptake with re-certification for teachers with lapsed credentials or temporary certification for new volunteers
  - Pursue a public comms campaign with 'all hands on deck' to increase volunteer participation
- Expand AmeriCorps WA to increase school volunteers, in addition to normal classroom paraeducators to help:
  - Run supplemental learning; small group/pod or 1:1 learning sessions
  - Pair with impacted students as "Navigator Buddy," providing accountability & support as they return to school
  - Develop program comms to encourage diverse stakeholder participation

Ensure schools partner with community organizations to provide holistic care

Add stipulation to any potential funding requiring engagement of parents/ caretakers and other community stakeholders (e.g., ELL parent advisory committee, required minimum number of MOUs with community partners)

Directly support community partnership model for schools with high-level of impacted students
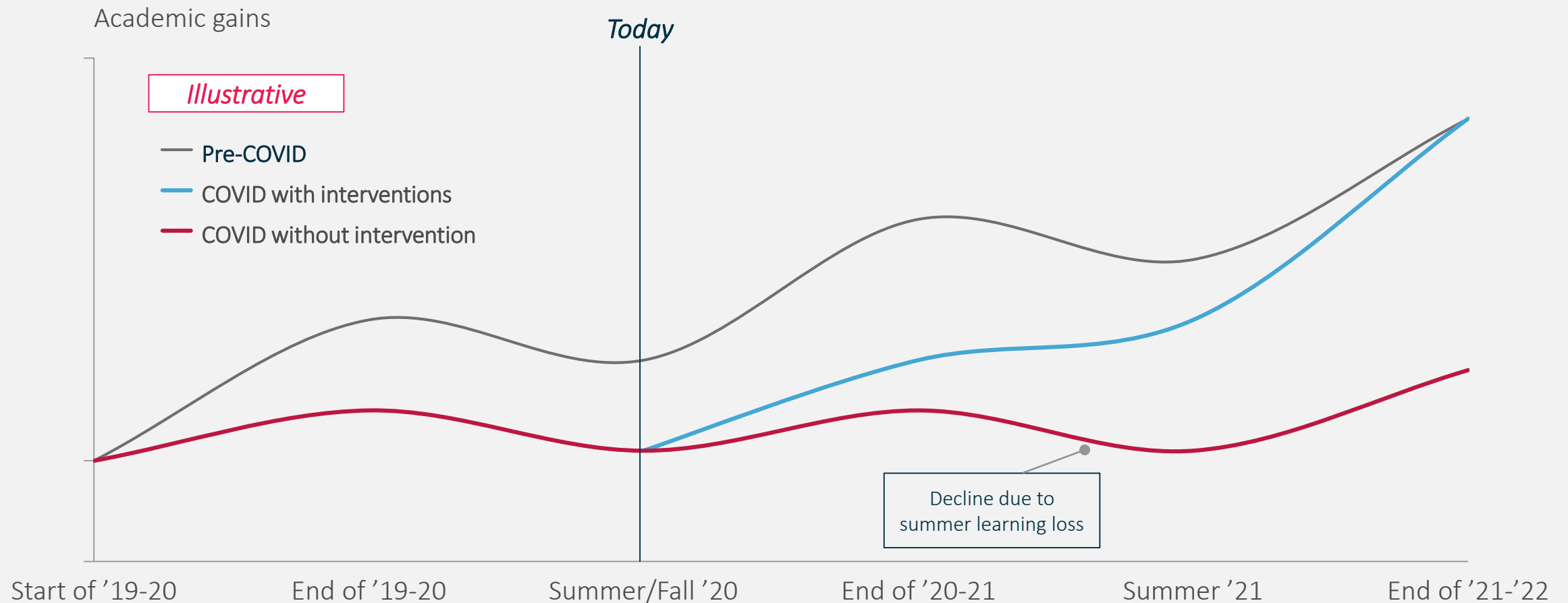
- Help schools provide more integrated student services through "wraparound specialist" to assess school needs, mobilize available community resources, and connect those resources with school leadership, staff, and most importantly students
- Communities in Schools is one example of a model in place across the US today that seeks to bring community support onto the school campus as a one-stop-shop for students in addressing all facets of student needs

Evidence-based findings

Benefits of adult relationships & mentoring proven to increase[16]:
- School engagement
- Likelihood of continuing to postsecondary education
- Attendance (e.g., youth in Big Brothers/Big Sisters skipped half as many days of school as the control youth in one study)

High ROI for quality mentoring programs: $3 for every $1 invested[17]

Schools that partner with their communities to meet these needs have proven to better close racial & economic achievement gaps
- City Connects narrowed the achievement gap between English learner & English proficient immigrant students by 75% in math and 50% in reading[18]

ROI is substantial for community engaged schools, impacting students, parents, and teachers alike, with ~$10 to $15 for every dollar invested[19]

By adapting the proposed portfolio of strategies, student academic outcomes would improve in the long-term

Academic gains

Today

Illustrative

—— Pre-COVID
—— COVID with interventions
—— COVID without intervention

Decline due to summer learning loss

Start of '19-20   End of '19-20   Summer/Fall '20   End of '20-21   Summer '21   End of '21-'22

Note: Highly illustrative, as support will be targeted and not standard across students

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While these actions help students <u>today</u>, they could also transform Washington's K-12 system for <u>tomorrow</u>

COVID was like a magic trick, exposing the wires of how broken our system is. We shouldn't just cover it back up again...we can't. It's time to do something about the brokenness.

- STUDENT

If we're going to use the word "unprecedented" for this year, can we not use this as an opportunity to do "unprecedented" things for our students? I wish we could pull the rug out from the agriculturally based, rote-learning system.

- TEACHER

This could be a once in a century opportunity to rethink the entire system — to move it from being adult-centered to student centered, to make it more personalized, to make grace & compassion core to our educational practice.
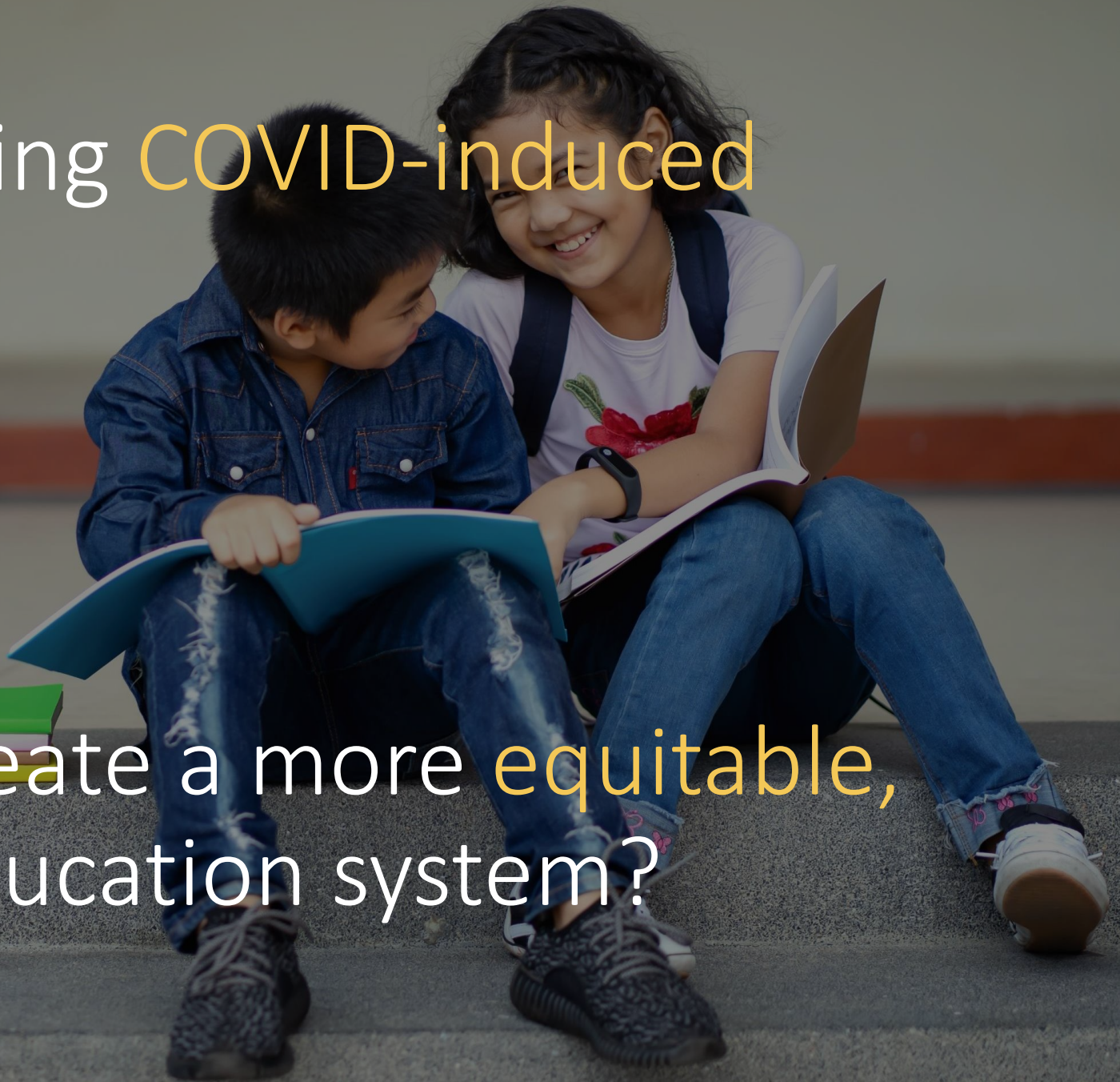
- DISTRICT HEAD

People keep talking about what it would take to go back to normal, but NO... Normal is the *last* thing we need to get back to. We need to step back and reframe education as a whole.

- ADMINISTRATOR

What if in addressing COVID-induced learning loss…

…we could also create a more equitable, student-centric education system?

Appendix

Sources

1. What does the research say about afterschool?
2. Rhode Island's Innovative Solutions to Summer Learning Loss
3. Making Summer Count: How Summer Programs can Boost Children's Learning
4. Ending Summer Vacation is Long Overdue—Here's How to Pay for It
5. Year-Round Education with Intersession Programs
6. Illinois Priority Learning Standards for the 2020-21 School Year
7. Personalized Learning: Lessons from Implementation
8. Student take ownership of learning in Fairview Park
9. Washington State Report Card
10. Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States; Dropping out of school and chronic disease in the United States
11. School Counselors Improving Attendance
12. ASCA National Model Implementation and Appropriate School Counselor Ratios Promote More Informed College Decision-Making
13. The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions
14. Society for Research in Child Development
15. Applying a Trauma Informed School Systems Approach: Examples from School Community-Academic Partnership
16. Making a difference: An impact study of Big Brothers/Big Sisters
17. The Impressive Effects of Tutoring on PreK-12 Learning: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of the Experimental Evidence
18. The Impact of City Connects: Annual report 2010
19. Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy

Thank you!

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