



# Positioning School Districts for Success Post- COVID

Presented by Grantmakers for Education  
and the Carnegie Corporation of New York

*July 29, 2020, 11:00 a.m. ET*

*The program will be starting shortly*



grantmakers<sup>for</sup> | education



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grantmakers <sup>for</sup> education

# Supporting schools and districts to address equity and excellence through the COVID crisis and beyond

## Grantmakers for Education Conversation

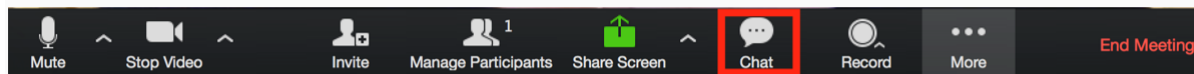
July 29, 2020



# How to engage in the discussion

## Chat

Click **Chat** in the meeting controls.



Mute Stop Video Invite Manage Participants Share Screen **Chat** Record More End Meeting

- This will open the chat on the right. Click on the drop down next to **To:** in order to send a message to a specific person.
- When new chat messages are sent to you or everyone, a preview of the message will appear, and **Chat** will flash orange.

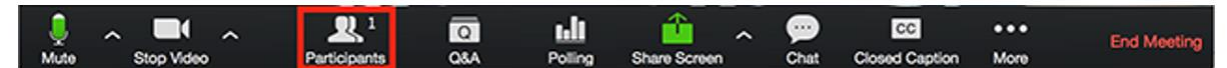
Chat

To: **Everyone** More

Type message here...

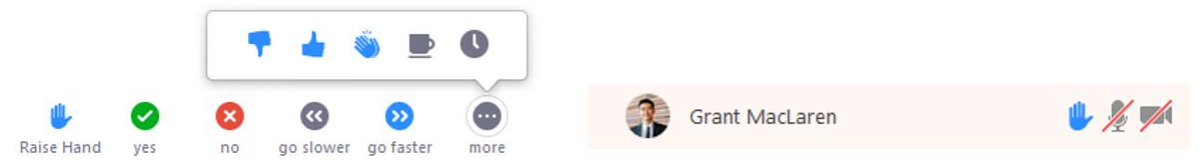
## Raise Hand / Lower Hand

Click the **Participants** button.



Mute Stop Video **Participants** Q&A Polling Share Screen Chat Closed Caption More End Meeting

Click the **Raise Hand** icon to simulate a hand raise and get involved in the discussion! Once clicked, the raise hand icon will appear beside your name in the participant list. After you have spoken, the host will lower your hand.



Raise Hand yes no go slower go faster more

Grant MacLaren

# Introductions and who's in the room?

## **In the chat:**

Tell us your name, role/organization,  
and what brings you here today

# Today's discussion

## Premise:

In responding to COVID-19, school and district leaders will need funder support to make investments that promote equity in the short and long term. Added to this, the coming budget crisis means districts must move toward new, more cost-effective ways of organizing resources to meet the needs of every child going forward.

## Questions we will address:

- What is the potential financial impact of the current crisis on school systems?
- Predominant Come-back models and challenges
- Where will districts need help to promote equity and transformation?
- How can funders engage in this work for the long haul?



**Every School. Every Child.  
Ready for Tomorrow.**

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ERS is a national nonprofit that **partners with district, school and state leaders** to transform how they **use resources** so that **every school prepares every child for tomorrow**, no matter their race or income.

# ERS “insights” drawing from lessons from...

- National networks of district Chief Financial Officers and Superintendents
- Created Comeback models with staffing, scheduling and budget implications
- Deeper support for 8 districts right now
- Equity guidance in partnership with Education Trust
- Tools and support to help plan for budget crisis and transformation.



# Today's discussion

- What is the potential financial impact of the current crisis on school systems?
- What are the predominant come-back models and challenges?
- Where will districts need help to promote equity and transformation?
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# Before the pandemic, school districts faced a *triple squeeze* that complicated transformation efforts

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**Flat or declining revenue**



**Unsustainable** cost structures



**A higher bar** for student learning and greater needs

# The pandemic is exacerbating these challenges many-fold

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**Flat or declining revenue**

**Even greater financial pressure** due to precipitous drops in tax revenue



**Unsustainable** cost structures

Ongoing constraints on service delivery from **physical distancing**



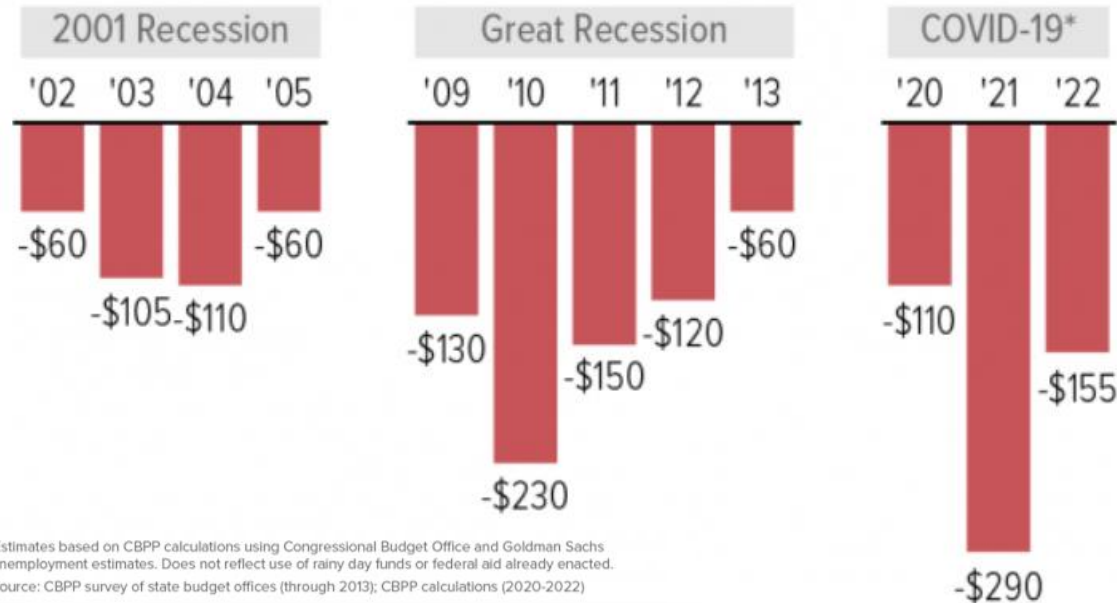
**A higher bar** for student learning and greater needs

Greater depth, breadth & inequity of **student need**

# Analysts are projecting up to 25% in reduction of state revenues

## COVID-19 State Budget Shortfalls Could Be Largest on Record

Total state budget shortfall in each fiscal year, in billions of 2020 dollars



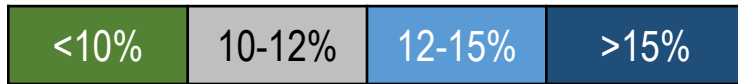
\* Estimates based on CBPP calculations using Congressional Budget Office and Goldman Sachs unemployment estimates. Does not reflect use of rainy day funds or federal aid already enacted.  
Source: CBPP survey of state budget offices (through 2013); CBPP calculations (2020-2022)

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With less revenue, state leaders must also contend with rising health care costs, poverty and unemployment – while addressing the need for education recovery

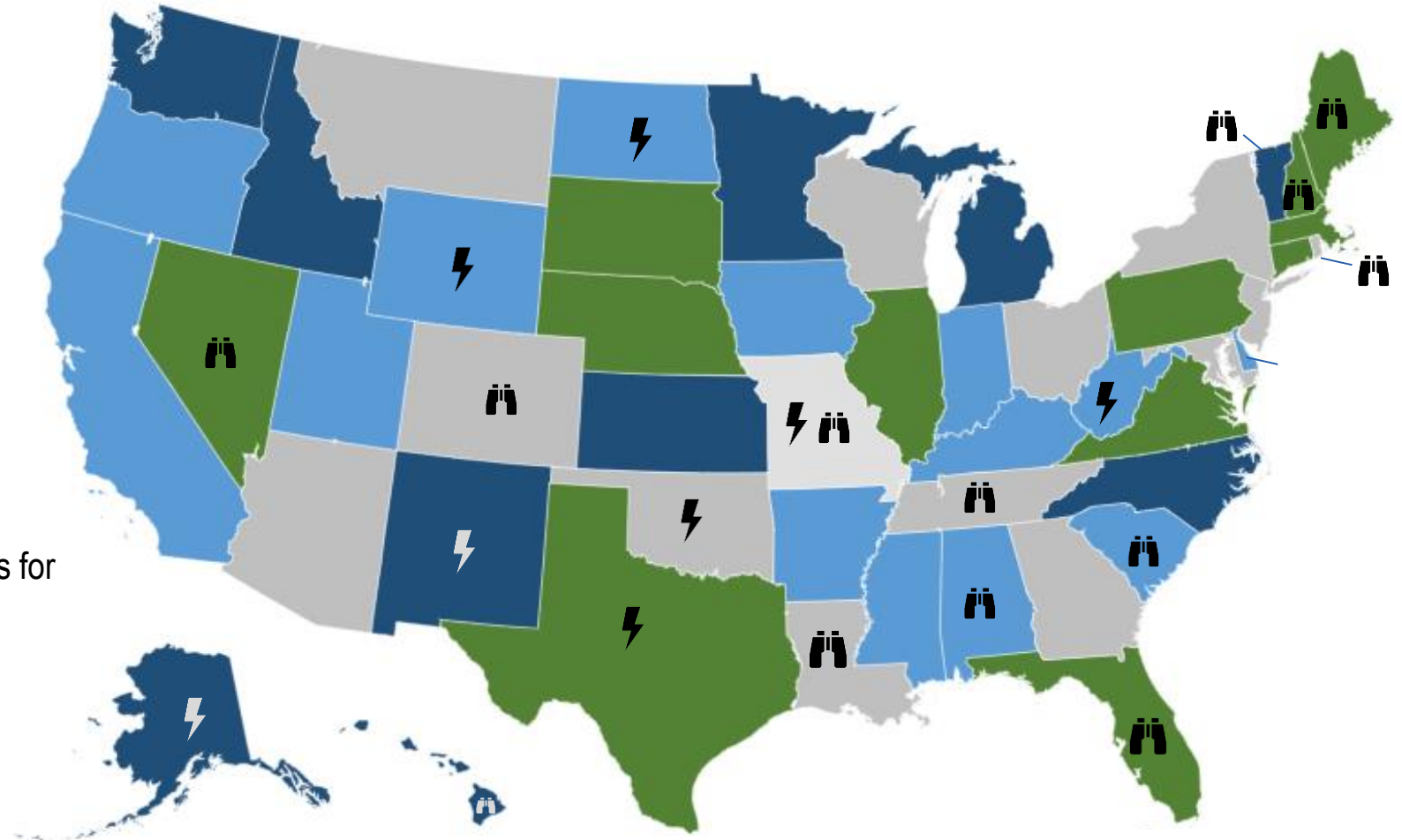
# ...which would have a deeper impact in certain states

Projected impact of a 25% decline in state revenue, *holding all other revenue constant\**



U.S. average = 11.7%

- ⚡ **Energy-reliant states:** Severance taxes comprise at least 5% of state revenue
- 🏠 **Tourism-reliant states:** Tourism accounts for at least 5% of state GDP



# Responding to greater student needs will require investment

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Assessing student learning & social-emotional needs



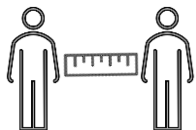
Providing extra time, staff & programming for education recovery



Providing social-emotional support



Ensuring 100% digital access



Costs of running school with social distancing imperatives

# In addition to lost revenue, districts need to manage the additional costs associated with reopening

Several organizations have taken different approaches to estimate the cost of re-entry:

### ASBO/AASA

**Includes Costs Associated With:**

- Adhering to health & cleaning protocols
- Hiring staff to implement health & safety protocols
- Personal protective equipment
- Transportation & child care

**\$490 per pupil**

### Learning Policy Institute

**Includes Costs Associated With:**

- Devices and connectivity
- Extra meals
- Expanded learning time

**\$810 per pupil**

### AFT

**Includes Costs Associated With:**

- Instructional staff
- Distance learning
- Transportation & child care
- Personal protective equipment
- Cleaning and health supplies
- Health staffing
- Custodial/cleaning staff
- Children's social/emotional needs
- Additional academic supports

**\$2,300 per pupil**

**The CARES Act only provides an average of ~\$270 per pupil or 3% of typical district budget**

Source: ASBO/AASA: What will it cost to reopen schools; Learning Policy Institute: What will it take to stabilize schools in the time of COVID-19; AFT: Reopening Schools During a Triple Crisis; Edunomics Lab: What will the financial turmoil mean for public education

# To account for the anticipated budget deficit, school districts will have to look beyond traditional cost saving measures

***SY2021 Scenario Planning:** Traditional budget reductions only get us so far – and some don't match our current reality*

Typical Reduction Options	Rough Magnitude	Watch-outs/Challenges
<b>Increase class sizes</b> by 3 across all grades	<b>3.9%</b>	May run counter to social distancing mandates; exceeds natural turnover so would require RIF
<b>Reduce employee benefit</b> costs by 10%	<b>2.0%</b>	Health costs may be going up; hard to negotiate quickly
<b>Cancel all contracts</b> for professional growth, curriculum development, research and school support	<b>2.0%</b>	Support to retool instruction may be needed now more than ever
<b>Freeze salary</b> step increases for one year for all employee contracts	<b>1.0%</b>	
<b>Raise special education class sizes</b> from 70% to 75% of target size	<b>0.6%</b>	Special Ed Maintenance of Effort requirement still in effect; remote learning for SpEd may warrant lower caseloads
<b>Reduce extra spending on very small schools</b> by 10% by changing staffing models and funding formulas	<b>0.3%</b>	
<b>Reduce school-based administrative</b> and clerical staff by 10%	<b>0.3%</b>	May run counter to lengthening school day
<b>Reduce transportation</b> costs by 10%	<b>0.3%</b>	May run counter to social distancing mandates
<b>Cut instructional materials/textbooks</b> by 10%	<b>0.3%</b>	

**Total: 10.7%**



# Leaders at all levels are feeling the pressure to meet basic student needs with limited resources

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“I know there is a silver lining, I just can’t work on it right now. I welcome help thinking about the future with open arms.”

“The same trauma our students were dealing with prior to COVID-19 is not only magnified but they are consistently being immersed in it. What will we do to triage and or find support for them?”

“Instruction will never look the same again given all we are learning and how we are empowering students, families and teachers with technology and agency over their learning.”

- *Superintendent*

“We were already operating with razor-thin margins.”

“I think it’s going to be really challenging to go back to a system that ties kids down to a classroom, to a seat, with the same-old, same-old we had in the past.”

- *Superintendent*

# Today's discussion

- What is the potential financial impact of the current crisis on school systems?
- What are the predominant come-back models and challenges?
- Where will districts need help to promote equity and transformation?
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# School systems have a variety of reopening models; guidance from states and health experts is mixed

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- Federal government and some states, including Texas, threatening to withhold funding from districts that do not fully reopen
- Other states, including Florida and Georgia, support but not ordering in-person school
- CDC and AAP have issued conflicting guidance on health and safety protocols; districts are releasing their own guidelines for cleaning, PPE, and testing protocols
- As of July 23, 26 of the top 50 announced fully remote reopening; others committed to hybrid or fully in-person, or still undecided
- Many systems sticking with fully remote models are in states currently experiencing surges in COVID-19 rates, including Arizona, California, and Texas
- Parents and teachers are deeply conflicted: worried about the logistics, effectiveness, and equity of remote learning; but also about the safety and feasibility of in-person school

# Districts need to get concrete with three “comeback” models this fall

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## **In-person**

Students attend school in a school building every day

## **Hybrid**

Students attend school both in-person and remotely based on an established, predictable schedule

## **Remote**

Students attend school from home or some other location via laptops and the Internet

Districts can operate more than one model at once and **need to plan to be able to transition from one delivery model to the next quickly**

# Process for developing COVID comeback models

Establish guiding principles

Identify students to be served in fully in-person and fully remote models

Gather operational data to identify constraints

Determine the combination of models to prioritize across the system

Design schedules and staffing models

Core beliefs that will shape decisions about return to school, developed in partnership with families, educators and other community stakeholders

Students who require in-person services

Students unable to participate in remote learning

Students who will opt out of in-person school

Physical distancing rules

Max class sizes based on school facilities

Transportation capacity

Assess the time required for students to enter and exit buildings,

Potential for fully in-person model

Need for fully remote model that serves students across schools

Trade-offs associated with hybrid models, including homeroom and split schedules

Including:

Structure of in-person and remote time

Teacher assignment, roles and collaboration

Longer school day/year

Additional staffing/time for some students

Safe space for students on remote days

# “Hybrid” can mean a lot of things

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## Schedules:

- A/B alternating days
- A/B alternating weeks
- Two-day cycles (M/T, Th/F) with a 5th day for planning and targeted intervention

## Student grouping:




- Homeroom - students stay with the same group on in-person and remote days
- Split - students have different schedules and grouping on in-person and remote days

## Teacher role:

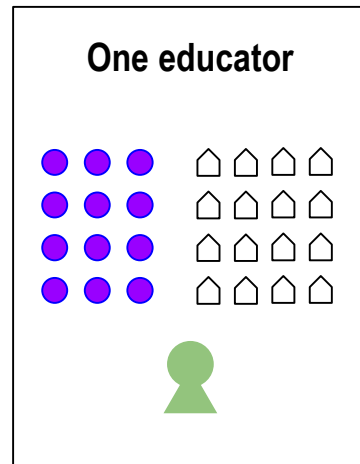
- Focus on in-person *or* remote teaching
- Teach in-person *and* remotely
- Teach in-person and remotely *simultaneously*

# Examples: Hybrid/homeroom and hybrid/split

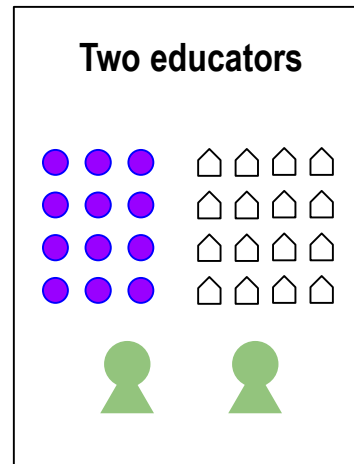
## Legend

-  In-person student
-  Remote student
-  Educator

## Hybrid model with traditional homeroom structure



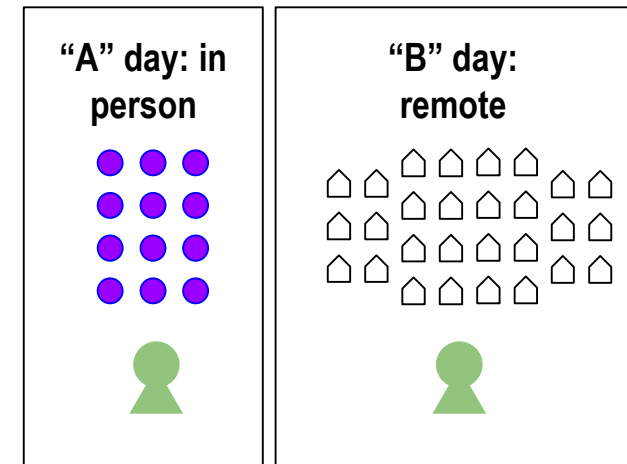
Requires a single educator to manage in-person and remote students



Second educator may not have to be a certified teacher

Can be implemented at lower cost if remote group size increases

## Hybrid model with split in-person and remote schedules



Students participate in different classes in-person and remotely.

Works well with remote class sizes that are larger than in-person class sizes.

Different teachers lead classes independently in both in-person and remote settings.

# Any model requires significant trade-offs and new roles for educators and other staff

- There are two realities about coming back to school
  - Remote instruction will be a part of every district plan – and we can do better than 19-20
  - In-person instruction cannot look the way it did before – smaller group sizes is a key variable to solve for
- Planning across both modalities must center on equity
- **Systems have realistic options that are better than fully remote or traditional in-person models:**

## Key design levers:

1. Increasing the student-teacher ratio for remote instruction
2. Rotating students in a hybrid model by days (or weeks)
3. **Using teacher and staff roles more flexibly**

*The tradeoffs associated with these levers will depend on system context and constraints (instructional staffing level, family preference, facilities/ transportation, etc.)*



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# Our current moment raises the urgency for key resource shifts that “strong schools” already employ...

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## Optimize and Differentiate Instructional Time and Attention

- Rethink rigid class sizes and one-teacher classroom models to target individual attention, especially for struggling students
- Optimize existing time to meet student needs and expand as needed
- Find much more time for teachers to learn and plan together
- Rethink the use of time outside the classroom for new modes of learning

## Organize and Hire for Teaching Quality and Diversity

- Create new teaching roles and teaming structures, paying more for jobs that have more responsibility and require more skill
- Change up who does what when for whom by exploring innovative ways of delivering instruction through technology and outside partners

## Integrate Student Supports and Interventions

- Create schedules that prioritize time for student connection and wellness
- Organize time and support for student support teams to organize targeted support

# New ways of working are emerging in the current crisis

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- District leadership teams actively using technology for communication
- Teachers using technology to delivery support and material to students
- Students helping each other via technology
- Parents accessing digital content and engaging with teachers over the internet
- Students and parents learning to create at-home learning schedules
- Teachers working part time to support learning in new ways
- Teacher leaders playing new roles
- Flexible uses of teaching and learning time
- Community organizations playing new support roles

# How can Funders...

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- Invest in: either short term emergency needs or building toward long-term transformation and **not** propping up or initiating unsustainable cost structures?
- Support the identification and learning from new and promising practices?
- Work within existing district context without being constrained by it?
- Support much broader and deeper community leadership?

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# Coming up next...



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