

## SPOTLIGHT

### EdWeek Q&A: Miguel Cardona Talks Summer Learning, Mental Health, and State Tests | Education Week

After a [National Reopening Summit](#) hosted virtually by the White House, Education Secretary Miguel Cardona discussed a wide range of topics with the Education Week team, including outreach strategies for kids returning to classrooms, increasing access to mental health resources, and using student assessments wisely in a year unlike any other.

Though he urged state and school leaders to use a variety of data points in their decisions, Cardona underlined the Department's rationale for supporting the administration of spring summative assessments this school year. "As we're rolling out \$130 billion [in federal COVID-19 aid for schools], any data that can help state leaders think about policy and distribution of funds, to make sure that it's aimed at closing achievement gaps and [addressing] lack of access to quality learning, that's critically important," Cardona said.

Cardona's comments come as additional states clarify their plans or hopes for assessment, with officials in [Ohio](#) and [Kentucky](#) pausing accountability requirements typically tied to testing data and advocates in places like [New Mexico](#) continuing to call for tests to be administered, citing the need for data to identify where all students truly are academically. In [Mississippi](#), educators say the state's easing of accountability requirements tied to testing data won't impact their teaching, and that they're aiming to hold students to high expectations even as schools administer lower stakes tests than usual.



## IN THE NEWS

### Virtual Schools to be Increasingly Common After COVID-19 | Government Technology Magazine

According to new survey data from the RAND Corporation American School District Panel, nearly 20% of schools now plan to maintain virtual class offerings after the pandemic, citing a small but persistent population of families and students for whom online instruction has worked surprisingly well. Government Technology Magazine explores some of the states propping up statewide, permanent virtual learning options, while in Entrepreneur, Bryce Walker [poses some challenging questions of virtual systems](#) - and urges schools and educators to prioritize quality and innovation as they build out long-term plans for online education.



### NCES Data Highlights Pandemic Instruction Differences by Race, Region | K12 Dive

Findings from the monthly NAEP School Survey showed that, by January, just under a majority of white students were fully learning in-person, while students of color were much more likely to be fully remote. Further, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities did not receive higher rates of in-person learning through the pandemic, despite being prioritized in many schools' reopening plans. The survey data additionally describes reopening trends observed across various U.S. regions, as well as some nuance around school-level challenges with tracking instructional hours in hybrid or remote settings.



### **[The Acceleration Imperative: A Plan to Address Elementary Students' Unfinished Learning in the Wake of Covid-19](#) | The Fordham Institute**

The Fordham Institute has launched a new resource and platform for education practitioners looking to identify lessons learned from a year of pandemic instruction. The [Acceleration Imperative](#) is an “open-source, evidence-based document created with input from dozens of current and former chief academic officers, scholars, and others” that can be used to inform and plan actions around school culture, curriculum, instruction, and long-term academic recovery.



### **THE QUICK LIST**

**[Montgomery County Public Schools Speeds Up Final Phase of In-person Reopening by One Week](#) | WJLA**

**[Bipartisan Legislation Would Allow E-Rate Funding for School Bus Wi-Fi](#) | EdWeek Market Brief**

**[District Savings Are Running Dry Amid COVID-19, Putting Some Schools in Dire Straits](#) | Education Week**

**[The Coming Literacy Crisis: There's No Going Back to School as We Knew It](#) | Education Week**