



The Quicksheet 06.03.2021

NATIONAL UPDATES

Early Look at District Plans to Spend Billions in Federal Relief Funds Shows Lack of Focus on Learning Recovery | The 74 Million

Across the nation, districts' early plans to spend billions in federal school funds are largely focused on one-time expenses like facilities upgrades, filling budget gaps, and rewarding educators - and not so much on strictly academic investments like high-dosage tutoring, expanded school years, or strategic changes to instruction and curriculum systems. Chad Aldeman, policy director at the Edunomics Lab, said many district plans made little mention of programs or investments geared towards the most vulnerable students. "The pandemic has affected different students differently, and we're seeing a lot of one-size-fits-all," he said.

According to the American Rescue Plan, districts will submit spending plans to states by August, though they'll have until September 2023 to spend the sums. After releasing [updated guidance](#) on how districts and states can spend the unprecedented amount of funding, assistant secretary for elementary and secondary education [Ian Rosenblum discussed the process and priorities](#) that states will be expected to follow with FutureEd. Rosenblum highlights the [multitude of ways schools will be allowed to spend funds](#), including on academic recovery programs like tutoring and summer school, expanded social-emotional supports and resources, and widespread efforts to identify and re-engage students who have become disconnected from school systems.

Forbidding Remote Learning: Why Some Schools Won't Offer a Virtual Option This Fall | Education Week

As this school year ends for most of the country, states and districts are sorting through the politics of remote learning to determine if students and families should continue to be offered a virtual learning option for the 2021-22 school year. Some families and advocates say that a simple "return to normal" won't work for all students and cite how [some thrived](#) in a remote environment or should be allowed to access the option for health or safety reasons. Despite that view, 16 states are expecting all students to be back in classrooms in the fall - with a handful taking additional steps to limit or completely remove virtual options. [New York City](#), the nation's largest district, announced there would be no virtual model for students next year, and similar decisions have been reached by officials in [New Jersey](#), the [District of Columbia](#), and in cities like [San Diego](#), California. Though they've experienced some pushback for cancelling remote options, officials say the majority of parents and [educators](#) are eager to get students back in school buildings and say they've struggled to make virtual classes work well, a sentiment backed

by [new data](#) from the RAND corporation that students who learning remotely this past school year were more likely to suffer academically.

STATE UPDATES

AL: A closer look at Alabama's \$7.7 billion education budget, largest in history | AL

The largest education budget in state history would boost teachers' base pay, create new incentives to attract science and math teachers, and prevent cuts due to enrollment changes. The budget proposal does not include an additional \$3 billion in federal school relief funding.

ID: Recent Idaho education data shows increase in graduation rates, but lower overall achievement |

Bonner County Daily Bee

Despite achieving an increase in graduation rates across the Gem State, Idaho education officials announced that fewer graduates pursued college or career training during the pandemic. The average SAT score for Idaho's graduates in 2020 also fell, though officials cite the pandemic, school closures, and other challenges as contributing to the decline.

IL: More details — and some questions — about Chicago's summer school menu | Chalkbeat Chicago

In Chicago, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Academy of Social Justice is preparing for a four-week intensive program in July that will help students from all grades address learning loss. Educators, politicians, and experts are hopeful that summer learning will help students catch up academically, address their mental health needs, and help prepare them for the transition back into school learning in advance of the return to full-time in-person learning in fall.

IN: Report: Fewer Indiana high school graduates choose to continue education | Local12

For the last five years, the number of Indiana students who are choosing to go to college has been trending down. In 2019 specifically, the number of high school graduates who chose to go to college saw the largest one-year drop on record. However, some schools are working to buck the trend. Ivy Tech in Lawrenceburg, for example, has seen an increase in enrollment due to its partnerships with 10 high schools in Southeast Indiana, which includes the attractive option to receive college credit for classes in high school. Officials say such higher-ed partnerships could be key in addressing declines exacerbated by the pandemic.

OK: State education department to help fund more school counselors statewide | Examiner-Enterprise

Oklahoma State Superintendent Joy Hofmeister has established a School Counselor Corps that will provide students with more mental health resources. The state Department of Education will spend \$35 million to provide districts with more school counselors, licensed school based mental health professionals, social workers and recreational therapists. Funded by the use of American Rescue Plan relief, the effort represents a key part of the state's recovery plan and will fund positions through the 2023-24 school year.

MA: Massachusetts education officials to lift all COVID restrictions for 2021-2022 school year | WWLP

Massachusetts' Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has confirmed that all COVID-19 health and safety requirements will continue for the remainder of this school year, excluding the

outdoor mask requirement, but will be lifted for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year. Additionally, districts will no longer offer remote learning as a standard learning model option in the fall, when students will return to in person learning five days a week.

MD: Md. education officials push for full return, report on attendance, failure rates | WTOP

Recent data from the Maryland State Board of Education has provided insight into how schools across the state performed during the pandemic. The data showed that most school systems had an attendance rate of 90% or greater, that high school students failed math and English at higher rates than science and social studies, and that many students experienced increased rates of anxiety and stress. Fortunately, the data also showed students were adjusting positively to in-person learning where schools had reopened and State Superintendent Dr. Karen Salmon said that she expects all schools to be back to in-person instruction on the first day of the 2021-22 school year.

NC: Gov. Cooper announces \$51.4 million in education grants, new financial aid program | WCNC

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper recently announced that he will allot \$51.4 million from the state's share of the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund towards education. These funds will assist students in accessing college, support health initiatives across the state's postsecondary institutions, and invest in equity-focused initiatives for K-12 and post-secondary students and families.

NJ: NYC charter schools take different paths on vaccine mandates, remote learning for fall | NY Daily News

New York City's various charter school networks are taking disparate paths on the matter of offering virtual learning options and requiring vaccines for staff this next school year. Though Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the district would not offer a virtual option next year, at least two of the city's largest charter networks have announced they will continue offering remote instruction to families who request it. Some charters, citing parent confidence and safety, are also requiring teachers and staff to be vaccinated before the beginning of the new school year; a requirement not set in the city's traditional schools.

NY: Advocates urge NYC Education Dept. to revamp approach to teaching reading in wake of pandemic | NY Daily News

With an influx of federal education dollars and an opportunity to reimagine teaching and learning after the pandemic, advocates in the nation's largest school district are pushing for a new approach to teaching reading. Of nearly \$500 million set aside for "academic recovery," advocates are urging officials to commit at least \$200 million to updated literacy curriculum and robust supports for struggling readers, including tutoring. The city's focus on literacy instruction in pandemic recovery echoes that of other cities and states, including [Florida](#), [Tennessee](#), and [Colorado](#).

TN: Tennessee raises teacher base pay to \$38,000 | Chalkbeat Tennessee

Tennessee is among a handful of states boosting the base salaries of educators as schools, parents, and officials emerge from the pandemic with a newfound respect for teaching. Teacher salaries in the state continue to trail neighboring states, though Gov. Bill Lee has made improving teacher working conditions, training, and pay a goal of his tenure.

[TX: Last-minute amendments could send millions of dollars from school districts to Texas Education Agency](#) | KXAN

Texas legislators are considering an unexpected proposal that would grant the state education agency the power to allocate and distribute over half a billion dollars in funding that districts typically control. As officials prepare to iron out details on a number of last-minute proposals, educators, parents, and advocates are raising concerns about a state “power grab.”

NEWS FLASH

[Present Danger: Solving the Deepening Student Absenteeism Crisis](#) | FutureEd

[Tens of Thousands of Students May Have to Repeat a Grade. Should They?](#) | Education Week

[Thousands of students with disabilities are set to ‘age out’ of school. After a pandemic year, they may get more time to prepare for what’s next.](#) | Chalkbeat

[Bus Driver Shortages Worsening for Many Districts as Schools Reopen](#) | Education Week

[New Data on the Ways Full-Time Remote Learners Lost Out](#) | Education Week

[What’s the Best Way to Address Unfinished Learning? It’s Not Remediation, Study Says](#) | Education Week

[Mental Health Problems Loom for the COVID Generation. Here’s What Schools Can Do](#) | Education Week

[Leaders detail approaches to assessing students' academic, mental health needs](#) | K12 Dive

[Early ILEARN results show expected academic declines from the pandemic](#) | Chalkbeat