

**BUDGET CUTS AND LOST LEARNING:
ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF
COVID-19 ON PUBLIC EDUCATION**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
**COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND LABOR**
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, JUNE 15, 2020

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**BUDGET CUTS AND LOST LEARNING:
ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF
COVID-19 ON PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**Monday, June 15, 2020
House of Representatives,
Committee on Education and Labor,
Washington, D.C.**

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 12:02 p.m., via Webex, Hon. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott (Chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Scott, Davis, Grijalva, Courtney, Fudge, Sablan, Wilson, Takano, Adams, Norcross, Jayapal, Morelle, Wild, Harder, McBath, Schrier, Underwood, Hayes, Shalala, Levin, Trone, Stevens, Lee, Trahan, Foxx, Roe, Thompson, Walberg, Guthrie, Byrne, Grothman, Stefanik, Allen, Smucker, Banks, Comer, Cline, Wright, Meuser, Johnson, Kelller, and Murphy.

Staff Present: Tylease, Alli, Chief Clerk; Phoebe, Ball, Disability Counsel; Ilana, Brunner, General Counsel; Ramon, Carranza, Education Policy Fellow; Christian, Haines, General Counsel; Sheila, Havenner, Director of Information Technology; Ariel, Jona, Staff Assistant; Stephanie, Lalle, Deputy Communications Director; Andre, Lindsay, Staff Assistant; Jaria, Martin, Clerk/Special Assistant to the Staff Director; Richard, Miller, Director of Labor Policy; Katelyn, Mooney, Associate General Counsel; Max, Moore, Staff Assistant; Mariah, Mowbray, Staff Assistant; Jacque, Mosely, Director of Education Policy; Veronique, Pluiose, Staff Director; Lakeisha, Steele, Professional Staff; Loredana, Valtierra, Education Policy Counsel; Banyon, Vassar, Deputy Director of Information Technology; Cyrus Artz, Minority Staff Director, Courtney Butcher, Minority Director of Member Services and Coalitions; Amy Raaf Jones, Minority Director of Education and Human Resources Policy; Carlton Norwood, Minority Press Secretary; Chance Russell, Minority Legislative Assistant; Mandy Schaumburg, Minority Chief Counsel and Deputy Director of Education Policy; and Brad Thomas, Minority Senior Education Policy Advisor.

Chairman SCOTT. The Committee on Education and Labor will come to order.

I want to welcome everyone and note that a quorum is present. The Committee is meeting today for a hearing to hear testimony on, quote, “Budget Cuts and Loss Learning: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Public Education.”

This is a completely virtual hearing, and I will ask that all microphones, for Members and witnesses participating remotely, be kept muted as a general rule to avoid unnecessary background noise. Members and witnesses will be responsible for unmuting themselves when they are recognized to speak or when they wish to seek recognition.

Further, pursuant to House Resolution 965 and its accompanying regulations, Members are required to leave their cameras on the entire time they are in an official proceeding, even if they step away from the camera. This is an entirely remote hearing, and as such the Committee's hearing room is officially closed. Members who choose to sit in there—with their individual devices in the hearing room must wear headphones to avoid feedback, echoes, and distortion resulting from more than one person in the room on the software platform as has been reported by other committees.

They are also expected to adhere to social distancing and safe healthcare guidelines, including the use of masks, gloves, and wiping down their area both before and after their presence in the hearing room.

And while a roll call is not necessary to establish a quorum, in an official proceeding conducted remotely, whenever there is an official proceeding with remote participation, the clerk will call the role to help make clear who is present at the start of the proceeding.

At this time I will ask the Clerk to call the role.

Madam Clerk.

The CLERK. Chairman Scott?

Chairman SCOTT. Present.

The CLERK. Mrs. Davis?

Mrs. DAVIS. Present.

The CLERK. Mr. Grijalva?

Mr. Grijalva.

The CLERK. Mr. Courtney?

Mr. COURTNEY. Present.

The CLERK. Ms. Fudge?

Ms. FUDGE. Present.

The CLERK. Mr. Sablan?

Mr. SABLAN. Present.

Mr. CLERK. Ms. Wilson?

Ms. Bonamici?

Mr. Takano?

Mr. TAKANO. Present.

The CLERK. Ms. Adams?

Ms. ADAMS. Present.

The CLERK. Mr. DeSaulnier?

Mr. Norcross?

Mr. NORCROSS. Here.

The CLERK. Ms. Jayapal?

Ms. JAYAPAL. Present.

The CLERK. Mr. Morelle?

Mr. MORELLE. Present.

The CLERK. Ms. Wild?

Ms. WILD. Present.

The CLERK. Mr. Harder?

Mr. HARDER. Present.
 The CLERK. Mrs. McBath?
 Mrs. MCBATH. Present.
 The CLERK. Ms. Schrier?
 Ms. SCHRIER. Present.
 The CLERK. Ms. Underwood?
 Ms. UNDERWOOD. Present.
 The CLERK. Mrs. Hayes?
 Ms. Shalala?
 Ms. SHALALA. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Levin?
 Mr. LEVIN. Here.
 The CLERK. Ms. Omar?
 Mr. Trone?
 Mr. TRONE. Here.
 The CLERK. Ms. Stevens?
 Ms. STEVENS. Hello. I am here, present.
 The CLERK. Mrs. Lee?
 Mrs. LEE. Present.
 The CLERK. Mrs. Trahan?
 Mrs. TRAHAN. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Castro?
 Mrs. Foxx?
 Ms. FOXX. Present in the committee room.
 The CLERK. Mr. Roe?
 Mr. Thompson?
 Mr. THOMPSON. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Walberg?
 Ms. FOXX. Mr. Walberg is having difficulty with his sound, but he is present in the room.
 The CLERK. Mr. Guthrie?
 Mr. GUTHRIE. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Byrne?
 Mr. BYRNE. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Grothman?
 Ms. Stefanik?
 Ms. STEFANIK. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Allen?
 Mr. ALLEN. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Smucker?
 Mr. SMUCKER. Here.
 The CLERK. Mr. Banks?
 Mr. Walker?
 Mr. Comer?
 Mr. COMER. Present in the committee room.
 The CLERK. Mr. Cline?
 Mr. CLINE. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Fulcher?
 Mr. Watkins?
 Mr. Wright?
 Mr. WRIGHT. Here.
 The CLERK. Mr. Meuser?
 Mr. MEUSER. Present.
 The CLERK. Mr. Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. Johnson is present.

The CLERK. Mr. Keller?

Mr. KELLER. Here.

The CLERK. Mr. Murphy?

Mr. MURPHY. Present in the committee room.

The CLERK. Mr. Van Drew?

Chairman Scott, this concludes the roll call.

Chairman SCOTT. If people will all remute, there is still a lot of background noise, we would appreciate it.

Thank you.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(c), opening statements are limited to the Chair and Ranking Member. This allows us to hear from our witnesses sooner and provides all members with adequate time to ask questions.

I now recognize myself for an opening statement. But before I deliver opening remarks, let me first acknowledge the recent protest against police misconduct and in favor of racial equity and justice across the Nation. Times are demanding that we address this country's centuries-old challenges, and with today's hearing, we can be prepared to answer the calls for racial equity and justice in education.

I want to note that this hearing marks the Committee's first fully remote hearing, pursuant to House Resolution 965 and its accompanying regulations.

Today we are going to examine how COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted State and local government revenue and how projected State and local government shortfalls will further exacerbate educational inequities rooted around the country.

Nationwide school closures due to COVID-19 have had a profound effect on all students, especially in what has been called the summer slide; only this year the summer slide has started a few months earlier than usual.

Our country's history of educational inequity tells us which students will lose the most during these schools closures. Today the pandemic is exposing and worsening achievements gaps for students of color, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from low-income backgrounds.

Vulnerable students are less likely to attend schools that have the resources to rapidly establish high-quality distance learning programs. They are also less likely to have the basic technology, such as a personal computer and high-speed internet connections, and the support at home needed to access virtual learning.

Data suggests that only 60 percent of low-income students are regularly logging into online instruction compared to 90 percent of high-income students. Only 60 to 70 percent of students in schools serving predominantly black and Latino students are regularly logging in.

It is important to note that States and school districts entered this recession with already crumbling infrastructure, a teacher shortage, 77,000 fewer school workers, and about 2 million more public school students compared to prerecession levels. These setbacks have not been distributed equally. Our continued reliance on local property taxes to finance public education has ensured that public schools with the highest need are forced to do with less.

Unfortunately, the achievement gaps exacerbated by COVID-19 could widen even further.

This morning the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, or CBPP, revealed that States will face a \$615 billion revenue shortfall over the next 3 years due to the pandemic. States are required to balance their budgets every year and public education is usually one of the largest expenditures, about 40 percent of many State budgets on average.

Unless the Federal Government provides immediate relief, it won't be a matter of whether education funding will be cut but how deep the cuts will be. While wealthier districts will fall back on property taxes, low-income public schools will rely heavily on State funding. These districts, which are already disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, will suffer severe cuts in education and other areas at a time when they can least afford it.

We have already started to see the consequences of these shortfalls. Nearly 759,000 public school employees have lost their jobs since March.

In Colorado, State Legislature just passed the budget that cuts \$1 billion from its schools next year.

In Virginia, we ended our regular General Assembly session just as the pandemic was starting and then reconvened a few weeks later for the normal veto session where we consider the Governor's vetoes and amendments. Revenues had been reforecast during that period of time, and we learned a new word, unallocated. That is what happened to the 2 percent teacher raise. That is what happened to additional counselors in the schools. That is what happened to money going into low-income school districts. Because of the renewed revised revenue estimates, those expenditures were unallocated. Unless they get assistance from the Federal Government, those expenditures will just totally evaporate.

But regrettably the Department of Education has received \$31 billion to help fund the emergency education funding. That happened in the CARES Act. But, regrettably, the Department has mishandled those funds and has prevented States and school districts from quickly accessing those funds.

Specifically, the Department issued equitable service guidance, which has drawn bipartisan criticism and generated widespread confusion, by directing schools to divert funding relief away from low-income students in public schools to support wealthier students in private schools.

The Department also announced its intention to use the vast majority of the \$300 million in discretionary funds it received in the CARES Act which was intended to support public schools in their effort to respond to the virus, to fund a grant program that is virtually indistinguishable from private school vouchers.

Even if the Department had used CARES Act funds in accordance with the law, the initial emergency relief package would be insufficient to confront the scale of the problem. Researchers project that reopening schools could cost the average school district about \$2 million, with large urban districts obviously facing higher costs.

The American Federation of Teachers projects that schools nationwide will need as much as \$116 billion to safely reopen cam-

puses. Recent history foreshadows the consequences our educational system will face if we fail to act.

In response to the great recession in 2008, Congress provided approximately \$110 billion in funding for education, more than three times the funding we have secured in response to the pandemic so far, while helpful research shows that even that funding was insufficient and did not focus enough on school districts with the highest need. Consequently, schools across the country experienced massive budget cuts. 300,000 school employees lost their jobs, and unsurprisingly children in the poorest communities bore the brunt of these cuts.

This lesson from our past makes clear that school districts urgently need more relief, and to that end the House passed the Heroes Act last month. This legislative relief package dedicates nearly a trillion dollars to help States and localities address their budget shortfalls and to avert cuts in education.

Additionally, it provides \$60 billion in direct K through 12 emergency funding that schools can use to cover the costs of cleaning supplies and other expenses required to reopen, purchase educational technology like laptops and hot spots, sustain special education for students with disabilities, provide training and professional development for teachers, and support school counselors who are helping students tackle the trauma of this pandemic.

This is a pivotal and perilous moment in our fight for equity in education. The pandemic has already translated into a major setback with students across the country; but with all of us wanting to reopen the schools as quickly as possible, we cannot put the safety of students, teachers, and communities at risk or opening schools without providing the resources they need.

If we fail to give the States and local governments and the school districts these recourses, the impact of this unprecedented challenge on students will be felt long after it is over.

I want to thank our witnesses for being with us today, and I yield to the distinguished ranking member, Dr. Foxx, for the purpose of an opening statement.

Dr. Foxx.

[The statement of Chairman Scott follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert C. “Bobby” Scott, Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor

Before I deliver opening remarks, let me first acknowledge the recent protests against police misconduct and in favor of racial equity and justice across the nation and the world. The times are demanding that we address this country’s centuries-old challenge. With today’s hearing, we can be prepared to answer the calls for racial equity and justice in education.

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Our country’s history of educational inequity tells us which students lose the most during these school closures. Today, the pandemic is exposing and worsening achievement gaps for students of color, students with disabilities, English language learners, and students from low-income backgrounds.

Vulnerable students are less likely to attend schools that have the resources to rapidly establish high-quality distance learning programs. They are also less likely to have the basic technology, such as personal devices and high-speed internet, and the support at home needed to access virtual learning.

Data suggest that only 60 percent of low-income students are regularly logging into online instruction compared to 90 percent of high-income students. Only 60 to 70 percent of students in schools serving predominantly Black and Latino students are regularly logging in.

It's important to note that states and school districts entered this recession with already crumbling infrastructure; a teacher shortage; 77,000 fewer school workers; and about 2 million more public school students compared to pre-recession levels.

These setbacks have not been distributed equally. Our continued reliance on local property taxes to finance public education has ensured that public schools with the highest need are forced to do more with less.

Unfortunately, the achievement gaps exacerbated by COVID-19 could widen even further.

This morning, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, or CBPP, revealed that states will face a \$615 billion revenue shortfall over the next three years due to the pandemic.

States are required to balance their budgets every year, and public education is usually one of their largest expenditures, accounting for 40% of many states' budgets, on average.

Unless the federal government provides immediate relief, it won't be a matter of whether education funding will be cut, but how deep the cuts will be. While wealthier districts will fall back on property taxes, low-income public schools will rely heavily on state funding. These districts—which are already disproportionately impacted by COVID-19—will suffer severe cuts in education and other areas at a time when they can least afford it.

We have already started to see the consequences of these shortfalls. Nearly 759,000 public school employees have lost their jobs since March. In Colorado, the state legislature just passed a budget that cuts \$1 billion from its schools for next year.

In Virginia, we ended our regular General Assembly session just as the pandemic was starting and then reconvened a few weeks later for the normal veto session where we consider the governor's vetoes and amendments. Revenues had been reforecast during that period of time and we learned a new word: unallocated. That is what happened to the two-percent teacher raise; that is what happened to the additional counselors in schools; that is what happened to money going into low-income school districts. Because of the revised revenue estimates, those expenditures were unallocated.

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Regrettably, the Education Department has mishandled those funds and prevented states and school districts from quickly accessing these funds.

Specifically, the Department issued equitable service guidance, which has drawn bipartisan criticism and generated widespread confusion by directing schools to divert relief funding away from low-income students in public schools to support wealthier students in private schools.

The Department also announced its intention to use a vast majority of the \$300 million in discretionary funds it received in the CARES Act—which were intended to support public schools in their efforts to respond to the virus—to fund a grant program that is virtually indistinguishable from private school vouchers.

Even if the Department had used CARES Act funds in accordance with the law, the initial emergency relief package would be insufficient to confront the scale of the problem.

Researchers project that reopening schools could cost the average school district about \$2 million, with large urban school districts obviously facing far higher costs. The American Federation of Teachers projects that schools nationwide will need as much as \$116 billion to safely reopen campuses.

Recent history foreshadows the consequences our education system will face if we fail to act. In response to the Great Recession in 2008, Congress provided approximately \$110 billion in funding for education—more than three times the funding we've secured in response to the pandemic so far.

While helpful, research shows that even that funding was insufficient and did not focus enough on school districts with the highest need. Consequentially, schools across the country experienced massive budget cuts; 300,000 school employees lost

their jobs; and, unsurprisingly, children in the poorest communities bore the brunt of these cuts.

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To that end, the House passed the Heroes Act last month. This legislative relief package dedicates nearly \$1 trillion to help states and localities address their budget shortfalls and avert cuts in education.

Additionally, it provides nearly \$60 billion in direct K–12 emergency funding that schools can use to:

- Cover the cost of cleaning supplies and other expenses required to reopen;
- Purchase educational technology, like laptops and hotspots;
- Sustain special education for students with disabilities;
- Provide training and professional development for teachers; and,
- Support school counselors, who are helping students tackle the trauma of this pandemic.

This is a pivotal and perilous moment in our fight for equity in education. The pandemic has already translated to a major setback for students across the country.

But—while all of us want to reopen schools as quickly as possible—we cannot put the safety of students, teachers, and communities at risk by reopening schools without providing them the resources they need.

If we fail to give states, local governments, and school districts these resources, the impact of this unprecedented challenge on students will be felt long after it is over.

I thank our witnesses for being here today, and yield to the Ranking Member, Dr. Foxx, for the purpose of an opening statement.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Chairman Scott.

I want to thank our witnesses also for being here today, and I want to particularly recognize, as a former teacher, the teachers and schools for their herculean work this spring to stand up learning distance mechanisms for students and in some cases doing so almost overnight.

Educators at all levels should be celebrated for their dedication in responding to the coronavirus crisis and going far beyond their normal responsibilities to respond to the needs of their students and communities. Just as our teachers are working to overcome the many challenges this global pandemic poses, this Nation's elected officials must also step up and do the job they were elected to do. This means working from D.C. and being physically present, like our founders intended. That is why Committee Republicans are participating in today's hearing in person from our hearing room.

The Republican invited witnesses also are with us in the hearing room. We can and should be at work here in Washington, and I urge my Democrat colleagues to make that a priority moving forward.

The coronavirus pandemic has adversely impacted private and public schools alike. An estimated 94 percent of public and private schools closed this spring impacting approximately 97 percent of the country's students. All students, including those at traditional public schools, charter schools, and private schools, should have access to the tools they need for lifelong success.

That is why Congress responded swiftly and enacted the CARES Act, which provided more than \$30 billion in emergency education funding for students, schools, institutions, and States. There has been no evaluation of how \$30 billion in hardworking taxpayer money has been spent, yet here we are with Democrats pushing those same taxpayers to dole out more of their hard earned money

at a time when many Americans are being forced to tighten their belts.

Given the ever-evolving threat COVID-19 poses, it would be irresponsible to rush to throw additional funds at a problem we don't understand fully. Also, some schools have not yet spent the funds they received from the CARES Act. Despite these facts, Democrats are demanding we spend more money. Money is not a cure-all solution, and it is irresponsible to blindly throw more money at this situation.

Let's not forget that history has shown that more spending does not guarantee better outcomes. In fact, per pupil educational spending has increased significantly over the years, but high school seniors aren't performing any better than they were 30 years ago.

Congress must first evaluate the impact of the billions of dollars in Federal taxpayer education aid already provided through the CARES Act before rushing to further burden taxpayers with additional spending. Demanding additional funds at this time is premature and illogical.

As we continue to monitor the issues students and schools face, it is within this Committee's jurisdiction to explore opportunities for long-lasting reforms that will improve the education system for all families. For example, families experiences this spring illustrated the inadequacy of the status quo for providing all students the foundation they need for lifelong success.

I am looking forward to testimony today about what States and school districts are learning from the work done this spring, how they are identifying weaknesses in the educational offerings provided the students and how they are seeking to address those weaknesses.

Superintendent Johnson will talk about the need for more personalized learning so that students' needs can be identified quickly and instruction can be tailored to ensure each student is back on the path to success when school resumes.

I hope we hear from others about how they are using these current challenges to question long-held assumptions. We owe it to our educators and students to examine this carefully and legislate with meaningful reform.

I yield back.

[The statement of Ms. Foxx follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Labor

As a former teacher I want to begin by recognizing the teachers and schools for their herculean work this spring to stand up distance learning mechanisms for students, and in some cases, doing so almost overnight. Educators at all levels should be celebrated for their dedication in responding to the coronavirus crisis and going far beyond their normal responsibilities to respond to the needs of their students and communities.

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Chairman SCOTT. Thank you, Dr. Foxx.

And all other Members who wish to introduce written statements into the record may do so by submitting them to the Committee Clerk electronically in Microsoft Word format by Monday, June 29, by 5:00 p.m.

I will now introduce our witnesses.

Dr. Michael Leachman, Vice President of State Fiscal Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. He directs the center's State policy research, overseeing analysis of State policy needs, how Federal policy decisions affect States and State policy choices and improve equity and boost opportunity.

Becky Pringle is vice President of the National Education Association, the Nation's largest labor union and professional association for educators. Ms. Pringle served as a middle school teacher in science for 31 years. She has received numerous awards for her commitment to education equity, received her bachelor of science degree in elementary education from the University of Pittsburgh, master's degree in education from Pennsylvania State University.

I now yield to the Ranking Member, Dr. Foxx, to introduce Mr. Johnson.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.

I am thrilled to have my home State superintendent with us today. I have known Mark for several years, and he has done an incredible job at North Carolina. Mark was elected North Carolina State Superintendent in 2016. He has been involved in education in a variety of roles, including as a teacher at West Charlotte High School in Charlotte, North Carolina, and as a member of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board.

I thank Mark for being here today and look forward to his testimony. I think Mark's experience leading our State through these challenges will be helpful for our members.

I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you, Dr. Foxx.

Our fourth witness, Eric Gordon, was appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District in June 2011 after serve as the District's Chief Academic Officer for four years. He serves as a member of the Executive Committee for the Board of Directors for the Council of Great Cities Schools. Mr. Gordon owns a bachelor's degree in science in secondary mathematics education and driver education, and a master's degree in education administration and supervision from Bowling Green State University.

I appreciate the witnesses for participating today and look forward to your testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that we have read your written statements and they will appear in full in the hearing record.

Pursuant to Committee Rule 7(d) and Committee practice, each speaker is asked to limit your oral presentation to a 5 minute summary of your written testimony. Let me remind the witnesses that pursuant to the Code, it is illegally to knowingly and willfully testify—falsify any statement, any representation, or otherwise conceal or cover up material facts when presenting to Congress.

During your testimony staff will keep track of your time and use a chime to signal—they will use a short chime when there is 1 minute left in your 5 minutes and a longer chime when time is up. Please be attentive to the time and wrap up when your time is over and then remute your system.

If anyone is experiencing technical difficulties during your testimony or later in the hearing, you should stay connected on the platform and make sure you are muted with your mute button highlighted in red and use your phone to immediately call the committee's IT director whose number has been provided for you.

We will let all of our witnesses make their presentations before we move to member questions. When answering a question, please remember to unmute your system.

I will first recognize Dr. Leachman for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL LEACHMAN, Ph.D., VICE PRESIDENT FOR STATE FISCAL POLICY CENTER ON BUDGET AND POLICY PRIORITIES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

I am Michael Leachman, Vice President for State Fiscal Policy of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research and policy institute.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an extraordinary, unanticipated State fiscal crisis. States rely on sales and income taxes for 70 percent of their tax revenue, and with so many businesses closed and so many people laid off, these revenues have fallen off the table. Based on history and the economic projections from the Congressional Budget Office and the Federal Reserve, we project total State shortfalls of \$615 billion over the next three State fiscal years.

It is hard to exaggerate the magnitude of this crisis. The shortfalls that States will face in the upcoming fiscal year alone far exceed even the worst year of the great recession of a decade ago. Federal aid provided so far, while helpful, is much too small to allow States to avoid laying off teachers and other workers and taking other steps that would worsen the recession and delay recovery. States can use this aid to close roughly a hundred billion dollars of their budget gaps. Even with that aid and with all of the States' rainy day funds, they would still fall some \$440 billion short.

These estimates do not include States added costs due directly to the COVID-19 virus. School districts, for example, face substantial unanticipated costs, including costs for distance learning and expanded learning time to offset the learning loss caused by school closures.

Further, our shortfall estimates are for States only. As you know schools also depend heavily on revenue raised by school districts and other local government entities, and their revenues are falling, too. Unless States and school districts receive much more in Federal aid, they will lay off more and more teachers and other workers and cut spending in other ways that would further weaken the economy and delay the recovery.

When States last faced a budget crisis in the great recession a decade ago, emergency Federal aid closed only about one-quarter of State budget shortfalls, and school districts have never recovered from the layoffs they imposed back then.

When COVID-19 hit earlier this year, schools employed 77,000 fewer teachers and other workers than they did before the great recession took hold, even though they were teaching 1 1/2 million more children. These funding cuts and layoffs hurt our kids, and that hurts our future. They drove down test scores and college attendance rates, and the impact was particularly damaging for low-income students and students of color, adding to the substantial structural barriers these children must overcome.

Federal aid provided so far includes just \$13 billion in direct aid for K-12 schools. That is far too little to meet the extreme fiscal challenges that schools face. Roughly \$60 billion in additional direct aid for schools in the Heroes Act is a significant step in the right direction, but on its own, it is not enough. States and localities could use other forms of aid in the Act to protect schools, but it is not certain that they will, and as such, we would support a significant increase in the amount of direct aid for schools in the final package.

Besides aid for schools, States will need other forms of fiscal relief to avoid harmful layoffs, other cuts, and tax increases. Raising the Federal Medicaid matching rate that was under the Heroes Act

is a particularly effective form of broad State fiscal relief. It can be delivered quickly and, by providing direct savings to States, raising the matching rate, freeze up funds that they can reallocate to protect schools and other fundamental public services.

An adequate aid package will also need to include, direct flexible grants to States and localities like those in the Heroes Act. States and localities should have the flexibility to use these grants to make up for revenues lost during the pandemic. That revenue loss is the primary threat to school funding.

Finally, the best way to deliver aid during economic downturns is through permanent automatic stabilizers that trigger—that trigger on based on economic indicators that adjust depending on the state of the economy, ending sooner if the economy recovers quickly, but remaining in place as long as needed if the recovery is unexpectedly slow.

Thank you again for want opportunity to testify, and I will be happy to take questions when the time is—when that is time.

[The statement of Mr. Leachman follows:]



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June 15, 2020

To Support Education, Congress Should Provide Substantial Fiscal Relief to States and Localities

Testimony of Michael Leachman, Vice President for State Fiscal Policy, Before the House Committee on Education and Labor

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Michael Leachman, Vice President for State Fiscal Policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a nonpartisan research and policy institute in Washington, D.C.

My testimony will explain why it is crucially important for Congress to provide substantial additional fiscal aid to states and localities — soon — so they can properly fund our nation's schools.

Pandemic Crippling State and Local Finances

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused state revenues to fall off the table, creating a fiscal crisis unlike anything states have faced since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Because of the virus, millions of businesses closed and an extraordinary number of people lost their jobs within a very short period of time. As a result, businesses collected much less in sales tax and withheld much less in income taxes from their workers' paychecks. That created a stunning, sudden fiscal crisis for states, which rely on sales and income taxes for 70 percent of their revenue. Other state revenue sources also declined sharply; gas tax revenues plummeted, for example, because people were sheltering in place and not driving.

This happened all over the country. There's nothing partisan about the virus.

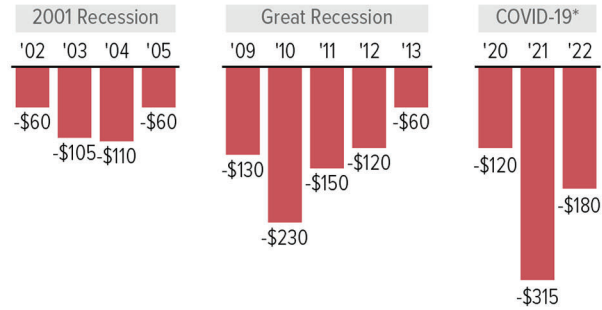
These revenue losses are largely permanent. People aren't going to get back the income they lost when they were laid off or furloughed, and states aren't going to receive the tax revenue they lost as a result. A sizeable share of the businesses that were shuttered aren't ever going to reopen, and the economy is going to take some time to fully recover. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects unemployment will still be over 8 percent at the end of *next* year. No one knows for sure how the economy will respond, but state revenues will very likely be depressed for quite a while.

Meanwhile, states face rising costs that are typical during any recession. Many workers who were laid off have turned to Medicaid and other forms of public assistance to get by, for example. Plus, states face highly unusual additional costs due to the pandemic, which I address below.

The sharp revenue losses combined with even the normal increased costs of entering a recession have created massive, and indeed unprecedented, state budget shortfalls. Based on history and economic projections from CBO and the Federal Reserve, we project these shortfalls will total \$615 billion over the next three state fiscal years. (See Figure 1.)

COVID-19 State Budget Shortfalls Could Be Largest on Record

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



* Estimated based on CBPP calculations

Source: Pre 2014: CBPP survey; 2020 and following: CBPP calculations

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The federal aid provided so far can close roughly \$100 billion of those gaps, leaving states \$515 billion short. Even if states use all of their “rainy day” funds (reserves designated for responding to unanticipated revenue declines or spending needs), which totaled \$75 billion heading into the downturn, they would still fall \$440 billion short.

Moreover, these estimates *do not include* states’ highly unusual added costs due to COVID-19. School districts, for example, face substantial, unanticipated costs, including access to devices and connectivity for distance learning, food assistance for students from low-income families, and expanded learning time to offset the learning loss caused by school closures. Expanded learning time

alone could cost districts \$36 billion in the coming year, the Learning Policy Institute estimates.¹ Some of these costs can be covered using federal aid provided under the CARES Act, but not all.

Further, our shortfall estimates are for *states only*. While local revenues tend to be more stable than state revenues because localities rely primarily on property taxes, reasonable estimates conclude that localities also face large shortfalls, as do tribal governments and U.S. territories, including Puerto Rico.

States and Localities Already Starting to Cut School Funding

The state and local fiscal crisis could have a severe impact on public education. Across the country, states provide 47 percent of K-12 funding, while localities provide 45 percent. And K-12 funding constitutes about a quarter of state budgets, making it a prime target for lawmakers looking to cut at a time of large shortfalls.

In the last two months, states and localities already have furloughed or laid off more than 1.5 million workers, twice the number they laid off in the aftermath of the Great Recession. About half of these workers — more than 750,000 people — were employed by school districts.

Most of these people were furloughed rather than fully laid off, so many of them may get their jobs back when schools return to session. But many won't — and many other school workers who haven't yet been furloughed, including many teachers, will lose their jobs permanently in the coming weeks, *unless the federal government provides substantially more fiscal aid*.

Several states have already announced large education cuts that will harm children and families. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has announced plans to cut \$300 million in K-12 funding and \$100 million in college and university funding for the current year. Meanwhile, Georgia's top budget officials told the state's schools to plan for large cuts for the fiscal year starting July 1, which will almost certainly force districts to lay off teachers and other school workers. More cuts are likely at the local level given localities' budget challenges.

Lessons From the Great Recession

Whenever our kids return to school, a severely diminished learning experience awaits them unless the federal government learns an important lesson from the past and acts soon to boost state aid significantly.

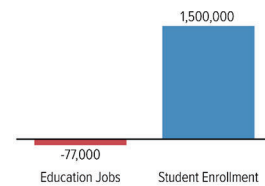
The last time states faced a budget crisis, in the wake of the Great Recession of a decade ago, emergency federal aid closed only about one-quarter of state budget shortfalls. Because the aid provided was too little, states cut funding to K-12 schools in order to help meet their balanced-budget requirements. By 2011, 17 states had cut per-student funding by more than 10 percent. Local school districts responded to the loss of state aid by cutting teachers, librarians, and other staff; scaling back counseling and other services; and even shortening the school year. Even by 2014 — five years after the recession ended — state support for K-12 schools in most states remained below pre-recession levels.

¹ Michael Griffith, "What Will It Take to Stabilize Schools in the Time of COVID-19?" Learning Policy Institute, May 7, 2020, <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/what-will-it-take-stabilize-schools-time-covid-19>

School districts have never recovered from the layoffs they imposed back then. When COVID-19 hit, K-12 schools employed 77,000 fewer teachers and other workers than they did when the Great Recession started forcing layoffs, even though they were teaching *1.5 million more* children, and overall funding in many states was still below pre-Great Recession levels.

K-12 Education Jobs Have Fallen as Enrollment Has Grown

Change third quarter 2008 to third quarter 2019



Source: CBPP Analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics
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School districts have not recovered from Great Recession-era cuts in other ways as well. State capital funding for schools — to build new schools, renovate and expand facilities, and install more modern technologies, among other things — was 15 percent lower in 2018 than in 2008 as a share of the economy. That's equivalent to a \$12 billion cut.

Education Cuts Hurt Kids, Especially Low-Income Children and Children of Color

These funding cuts and layoffs hurt our kids, and hence our future. Money matters in education. Adequate school funding helps raise high school completion rates, close achievement gaps, and make the future workforce more productive by boosting student outcomes. School funding cuts during the Great Recession, for example, drove down test scores and college attendance rates.² The impact was particularly damaging for low-income students.

Indeed, while classrooms across America are at risk, the danger is greatest for low-income kids and children of color, for whom an excellent K-12 education is vital in overcoming historical barriers to opportunity. State funding typically reduces disparities between wealthy and poor school districts, so cuts in that funding *magnify* those disparities. That's what happened with the Great Recession: state funding fell as a share of total school funding, increasing schools' reliance on local

² C. Kirabo Jackson, Cora Wigger, and Heyu Xiong, "Do School Spending Cuts Matter? Evidence from the Great Recession," NBER Working Paper 24203, revised August 2019, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w24203>

funding, which comes primarily from property taxes. These taxes are heavily based on property values, which — due largely to historical racism and ongoing forms of discrimination — are much higher in wealthier areas where more white people live, making it easier for these residents to raise revenue for schools.

Another reason why state funding cuts tend to fall particularly hard on low-income children and children of color is that state and local funding structures tend to underfund schools even in good times. Districts with larger shares of students of color receive some \$1,800 less per student than districts with smaller shares, a 2018 Education Trust report found. Those disparities add up: in a modest 5,000-student district, the cumulative gap is \$9 million, while for a moderate-sized 25,000-student district it's \$45 million.³

Funding disparities are apparent across class lines, too, though less starkly than across racial lines. Districts serving large shares of poor students receive \$1,000 less per pupil than the lowest-poverty districts, on average. And only about a third of states provide more funding to high-poverty school districts than to low-poverty ones, even though poor children need more support.⁴

Federal Aid for States and Localities Would Boost Economy at a Crucial Time

Aid for states and localities would protect not only protect kids' education, but also jobs and the economy now, as economists across the political spectrum have pointed out. For example:

- Economist Glenn Hubbard, former Chair of President George W. Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, recently said, "This is a critical time to provide additional assistance to state and local governments. . . . Just as in the CARES Act, [where] we wanted to avoid excessive layoffs in the private sector, so too do we want to in the public sector. The same economic logic ports over."
- As Christina Romer, former Chair of President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, described in detail just last year, a careful study of the 2009 Recovery Act's state fiscal relief found that states that received more aid produced more jobs as a result, at a lower cost per job than other forms of stimulus.
- Mark Zandi, Chief Economist at Moody's Analytics, testified that every dollar that the Recovery Act provided in general aid to state governments produced \$1.41 in economic activity, a strong "bang for the buck." Zandi recently said, "If states don't get additional support and my economic outlook holds, I would expect that state and local governments will shed another close to 3 million jobs over the next 12 to 18 months."

³ Ivy Morgan and Ary Amerikaner, "Funding Gaps: An Analysis of School Funding Equity Across the U.S. and Within Each State, 2018," The Education Trust, February 2018, https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/FundingGapReport_2018_FINAL.pdf.

⁴ Bruce D. Baker, Danielle Farris, and David Sciarna, "Is School Funding Fair? A National Report Card," Seventh Edition, Education Law Center and Rutgers Graduate School of Education, February 2018, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BTANZaqOs8pEGWW6oUBob6omYw1hUJI/view>.

- CBO estimated that the fiscal relief provisions in the 2009 Recovery Act delivered a “bang for the buck” of up to \$1.80. As former CBO director Doug Elmendorf recently said, “[L]aying off governmental workers means more people who can’t go out and buy things from small businesses. . . . And so we want to keep people at work in state and local governments . . . so that as the health conditions improve we can have people spending money to create a strong recovery.”
- The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s review of the economic literature suggests the Recovery Act’s boost to local government spending produced about a \$1.50 “bang for the buck.” In the current crisis, the Bank emphasizes, federal transfers to state and local governments will likely be spent quickly, maximizing the economic benefit.

Pandemic, Not State Fiscal Management, Is Responsible for the Crisis

Some argue that states’ financial management is responsible for the fiscal crisis, but the facts don’t support that claim.

States did a reasonable job of saving for a recession before the pandemic hit: states held much larger reserves when this crisis struck than when the last recession started. Heading into the current crisis, state rainy day funds equaled about 7.6 percent of state budgets, versus about 5 percent in 2006, the high point before the Great Recession. And *total* state reserves, which include general-fund ending balances, now equal about 13 percent of state budgets, also well above 2006. Similarly, in 38 states the trust funds that support state unemployment insurance programs were better prepared for the current crisis than for the Great Recession, and most state trust funds met the U.S. Labor Department standard for recession preparation. The problem is that state revenues have fallen so severely that the resulting shortfalls are swamping states’ reserves.

Nor have states been overspending. As a share of the economy, spending from state general funds (which support current operations, like schools, health care, the justice system, and public health) is well *below* its levels heading into the last downturn. In some key areas, in fact, states have been too frugal. As noted above, states still employ fewer teachers and other school workers than a decade ago, even though many more students are enrolled. Similarly, state funding for higher education per pupil is down 13 percent on average from roughly a decade ago, after adjusting for inflation, pushing up tuition and making college less accessible. And spending on infrastructure stands at historic lows as a share of the economy.

The claim that states would spend additional federal aid primarily on pensions also is mistaken. Emergency federal aid would go into state general funds, which are collapsing for the reasons noted above. States pay retirees’ pension benefits out of *separate* trust funds. While states (and localities) use general funds to make regular payments toward future pension obligations, these payments amount to only about 4.7 percent of state and local general fund spending, on average. And *every* state has adopted pension reforms over the last decade, leaving benefits for new employees in many states significantly weaker on average.

What's Needed Now

Congress has provided some state and local aid so far, but much too little to avoid teacher layoffs and other harmful spending cuts. While states alone face budget shortfalls of about \$615 billion (and localities face significant shortfalls), Congress has provided only roughly \$100 billion in fiscal aid that states will be able use to address their revenue shortfalls. This includes \$30 billion for education, of which only \$13 billion is dedicated to K-12 schools.

That's much less than the roughly \$160 billion Congress provided under the Recovery Act, which included \$60 billion primarily for education. And the Recovery Act's fiscal aid proved much too small and ended too soon. Congress simply must do better this time.

The House-passed Heroes Act provides significant state and local fiscal aid through multiple mechanisms. These include \$500 billion in direct grants for states, an increase in the federal Medicaid matching rate, about \$60 billion to support schools, additional aid for higher education, and aid for localities. In total, this amount of fiscal aid is appropriate to the extraordinary crisis states and localities face.

In designing an aid package, it's crucial that Congress *dedicate some of the funds specifically for schools* to protect school funding. The amount of aid provided directly to schools under the HEROES Act would not, on its own, allow states to avoid cuts that would result in teacher layoffs and other harm for schools. States and localities *could* use other forms of aid in the Act to protect schools, but it's not certain that they will given the many challenges they face. As such, we would support a significant increase in the amount of direct aid for schools in the final package.

School aid should be distributed in a way that prioritizes low-income districts, as the Heroes Act would accomplish by using the Title I funding formula. It also should include both a "maintenance of equity" requirement that states avoid funding cuts disproportionately affecting low-income districts and a "maintenance of effort" requirement that states continue support for schools at pre-crisis levels as a share of the state budget.

Besides aid dedicated to schools, states will need other forms of fiscal relief to avoid harmful layoffs, other cuts, and tax increases. *Raising the federal Medicaid matching rate*, as under the Heroes Act, is a particularly effective form of broad state fiscal relief because it can be delivered quickly, without complex guidance and unnecessary restrictions. Raising the matching rate is also especially compelling during the current downturn because it can include a provision that bars states from cutting Medicaid eligibility at a time when access to health care is especially important. By providing direct savings to states, raising the matching rate frees up funds they can reallocate to protect schools and other fundamental public services.

Finally, an adequate fiscal aid package will likely need to include *direct, flexible grants to states and localities*, like those in the Heroes Act. States and localities should have the flexibility to use these grants to make up for revenues lost due to the pandemic.

Ideally, some or all of this aid would be distributed based on economic indicators so it would adjust depending on the state of the economy, ending sooner if the economy recovers more quickly

than CBO and other forecasters predict but remaining in place as long as needed if the recovery is unexpectedly slow.

The pandemic has caused a severe state fiscal crisis. Without significant federal aid, soon, states and localities will lay off teachers and other workers and take additional steps that worsen the recession, delay the recovery, and weaken students' education. We can't let that happen.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.
Ms. Pringle?
You have to unmute.

**STATEMENT OF REBECCA PRINGLE, VICE PRESIDENT,
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, DC**

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the committee. My name is Becky Pringle, and I am a science teacher from Pennsylvania and Vice President of the National Education Association.

As NEA's vice president, I am honored to represent more than 3 million teachers, education support professionals, and specialized

staff who share the belief that all students in our public schools, no matter where they live or their race or ethnicity or family income, should have an education that prepares them to live into their brilliance. That is our fight, and it is a privilege to wage it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has deepened the disparities that already existed and prompted budget cuts that will devastate students, especially in Black and Brown, Native, and rural communities. The millions of students who lack access or connective devices were faced with this digital divide that denied them the opportunity to access remote instruction so they could continue their learning at home.

I met with educators in North Carolina. They talked to me about starting the school year knowing they had to not only determine where their students were academically, but they worried about meeting the emotional needs of their students who they knew were suffering from anxiety and fear because of uncertainty and tragic losses.

Layered on top of the pandemic is the crisis we face with policing in Black and Brown communities. We were not the only ones who witnessed the brutal murder of George Floyd. Our children were watching. Some have experienced themselves or seen their friends and loved ones subjected to racial profiling, humiliating and unlawful detention, or worse.

NEA members are so proud to see their students demanding justice for Black lives, but everything our students are seeing and feeling requires that educators are able to use trauma, inform practices as they engage with their students. That means we need enough teachers, counselors, and other educators to nurture every student.

The bottom line is that districts must spend more, not less, especially if we are to reopen schools safely, by providing protective equipment for students and staff and retrofitting classrooms and other spaces for social distancing. This task is more difficult because our school buildings on average are over 40 years old. The Rebuild America's Schools Act begins to tackle many long-standing infrastructure needs, but so much more must be done to keep our students safe.

No doubt these investments will be a major challenge, especially in districts that never recovered from the 2008 recession. Cutbacks from that recession caused 300,000 educators to lose their jobs. Already nearly 500,000 public education jobs have been lost because of the pandemic. And according to NEA's analysis, nearly 2 million educators could lose their jobs over the next three years. This will be devastating for students in schools that already are underresourced. These students desperately need to return to public schools with the resources to help them recover and thrive.

NEA has been listening to our members and allies and recently released reopening guidance, called all hands on deck, because we know reopening schools is also in the best interests of our Nation. But those decisions must be rooted in health and safety with input from educators who know the names of their students, professionals who have the experience to make good teaching and learning decisions, and they need the funding to reopen schools in the right way.

That is why the NEA supports the Heroes Act because it includes \$902 billion in direct relief for State and local governments and \$900 billion in additional revenue for education.

We thank the House for boldly taking action to pass the Heroes Act, and we call on Mitch McConnell and the Senate to demonstrate they care about the education of all students. Schools are already planning for the upcoming year, and they need that funding now.

My 30 years of experience makes me think and believe that we can learn from this moment, that we can finally provide the resources and support so every one of our students has access and opportunity. NEA members are an optimistic bunch. As educators it is our job requirement.

We know we can address the challenges not only of COVID-19 but we can and we must address the equity challenges that have plagued our schools forever. We stand ready to work with our members and to bring about the new day our students deserve.

Thank you.

[The statement of Ms. Pringle follows:]

**Written Statement of Rebecca Pringle
Vice President, National Education Association**

**Before the Committee on Education and Labor
United States House of Representatives
Full Committee Hearing:
Budget Cuts and Lost Learning: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Public Education
Monday, June 15, 2020**

Thank you Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Committee for this opportunity to provide testimony for today's hearing. My name is Becky Pringle and I am a science teacher from Pennsylvania and vice president of the National Education Association, NEA. I spent over 30 years teaching middle-schoolers, that wonderful group that can be delightful one minute, and give you serious attitude the next. During all those years with my babies, a deep love grew within me not only for teaching, but also for advocacy—for all students and educators, and for public education.

As NEA's vice president, I am honored to represent more than 3 million teachers and education support professionals across the nation, in K-12 public schools and on public college campuses. NEA also represents educators in Department of Defense schools, college students who plan to become educators, and retired educators.

My position puts me in constant contact with a wide range of educators—from those in rural towns, to educators in densely populated urban areas and the suburbs and exurbs that border them. While we are a very diverse group, we share many of the same experiences as well as the belief that all students in our public schools—no matter where they live or their race or ethnicity or family income—should have an education that prepares them to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world, be good citizens, and contributing members of their communities. That is our fight, and it is a privilege to wage it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made our fight much more urgent and much more difficult. It has deepened disparities and prompted state and local budget cuts that will devastate students in many public schools, severely restricting their opportunity for an education that sparks their curiosity, inspires their desire to learn, and sets them up for success.

The reality is that the fight for the opportunities that all students deserve has always been tough, whether our economy has been in boom or bust cycles. The pandemic, however, has underscored the vast inequities in educational opportunity, particularly in black and brown and rural communities, that have always existed. These inequities, the result of systemic racism and classism, and inadequate funding for public schools in low-income communities, were never far from view. But under the bright, flashing lights of COVID-19, we can no longer turn away from the fact that not all students have access to the educators, resources, and tools they need. The pandemic's continuing fallout could make inequities far worse.

It is urgent that we address the concerns directly stemming from COVID-19, and also finally come to grips with the disparities in school funding that have for too many years advantaged a

fortunate few students, while disadvantaging many, many others—particularly low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and rural students. These disparities were readily apparent from the very start of the pandemic.

When schools across the nation began closing, I don't know of any school district that was fully prepared for the abrupt shift to online learning. Yet, educators had to transition practically overnight. Teachers taught themselves new technologies and worked through all the hiccups involved. School counselors had one hand on their laptops, the other on their phones, and used email, text, Google Voice, and Zoom to reconnect with students. This was no one's first choice; online options are a supplement to—never a replacement for—in-person learning and support. But it was the best we could do under the circumstances. Educators partnered with families to help students—and parents—navigate the challenges, and some educators even organized car caravans through students' neighborhoods to get the message across that "Even if you're no longer in our classrooms, we are still here for you."

Wealthier districts in areas where just about everyone has internet at home could handle this transition most easily. In fact, some of those districts immediately distributed devices to the few students who didn't already have them. But for the estimated 12 million students—1 in 5—with no internet access and no connected devices at home, or for those who have to share one device with three or four school-age siblings, that transition was impossible to make. This Digital Divide is particularly acute in African American, Latino, Native American, and rural communities. The public libraries, community centers, Boys and Girls Clubs, and other places these students would turn to for internet access were closed, and many remain inaccessible. For these students, the past few months have been a time of isolation from educators and their classmates, and in some cases, from the sense of stability that only their schools gave them.

Even *with* internet access, we know that some students can only truly learn under the watchful eye of educators who know them well, and can tell with one look who's getting the lesson and who's getting lost. These students need the interaction that virtual platforms, no matter how fast the internet speed is at home, cannot provide.

We've coined a term for the loss of learning that typically occurs during the summer months: the "summer slide." Educators expect it, and we all have strategies for getting our students back on track. But when schools reopen, how do we respond to this slide when we know that for some students, online learning was as inaccessible as their closed school buildings? How do we meet the needs of students who, through no fault of their own, have fallen far behind their peers? For them, this is not a "slide"; it is a crash landing.

These are among the challenges our students and educators will be facing when they return to school. The gap in learning between students who had online access and those who did not, the jolt of suddenly being away from school communities that many students counted on for support and normalcy—educators must figure out where their students stand instructionally, and emotionally. Many students will have experienced the death or grave illness of loved ones, job losses that have pushed their families close to, or even into, financial disaster, the raw, always-present anxiety of this time of masks, gloves, and fear.

All of this calls out for trauma-informed practices throughout our schools. We must have enough teachers to assess where students are and to *meet* them where they are. We must have enough school counselors, school social workers, and other specialized instructional support personnel to deal with the emotional burdens and trauma many students will be carrying. Educators, too, are struggling with their own trauma and losses. Many education support professionals, for example, continued to work in school facilities, cleaning and maintaining buildings, preparing and delivering School Meals and the like. They have been in constant contact with students and families, often without the personal protective equipment (PPE) they needed. We lost some of these essential, frontline workers during this pandemic. Our schools will have to be supportive spaces for all members of school communities when they reopen.

And when it comes to reopening, let me make clear that educators, more than anyone, want our students back in classrooms for the 2020-21 academic year. We yearn to look into their eyes and reassure them and give them the dedicated time and attention they need. But we also insist that all decisions about when and how to reopen be rooted in health and safety, with input from frontline educators. We know we will need to provide PPE for students and educators; modify classrooms, cafeterias, gyms, auditoriums, playgrounds, and school buses for social distancing; provide disinfecting materials and sanitizing stations; intensify instruction and support for students traumatized by the impact of the coronavirus on their families and communities; and much, much more.

This task is made more difficult by the reality that our school buildings are, on average, more than 40 years old. We are grateful that the Rebuild America's Schools Act (RASA) begins to tackle many longstanding infrastructure needs. Thank you, Chairman Scott, for showing your commitment to improving our school buildings by making infrastructure a priority and not only introducing RASA, but making it the first bill that passed out of the Education & Labor Committee this Congress.

Ultimately, all of this will require significant investments at a time when schools are facing devastating budget cuts that are likely to far exceed those from the Great Recession. Keep in mind that some school districts have yet to recover from that recession and the downsizing and educator layoffs it spawned. Districts across the nation are still facing severe educator shortages, and now they face a brand new crisis.

Thanks to educators' advocacy in the massive RedforEd movement last year, we saw more resources for students from Arizona to West Virginia. More funding for public schools led to the hiring of additional teachers, school counselors, school nurses, and other staff. But COVID-19-prompted budget cuts are quickly eroding those gains.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, **nearly 500,000 public education jobs have already been lost because of the cuts.** By comparison, 300,000 education jobs were lost due to the Great Recession. In other words, COVID-19 has done more damage in three months than a recession that lasted for a year and a half. If this damage goes unchecked, nearly 2 million educators—one-fifth of the workforce—could lose their jobs over the next three years, according to NEA's analysis. **The "COVID-19" recession could be six times worse for education than**

the 2008 financial crisis.

As was the case during the Great Recession, the schools in wealthy communities are more likely to weather this storm. But schools in poorer communities, those already under-resourced, will barely stay afloat. Job losses in these schools would profoundly affect low-income students whose schools rely on Title I funding to reduce class sizes, hire specialists, and offer a rich curriculum. These job losses will also profoundly affect our students with special needs because the federal government has yet to fulfill its commitment under IDEA to pay 40 percent of the average per student cost for every special education student. This creates shortfalls that school districts must cover and it denies full opportunity to students with disabilities.

While educators were grateful for the support from the CARES Act's Education Stabilization Fund, those resources are simply not enough to meet the needs of students, educators, and schools. This is not something we alone say; other leading K-12 organizations agree. The funding was not sufficient even back in March when the legislation was signed into law. It is even less so now, given the huge fiscal crisis states and local governments face and their escalating COVID-related expenses. Matters are made worse by Education Secretary DeVos' attempt to use this pandemic to shift resources away from students in public schools, and direct resources to private schools. We must not allow anyone to exploit this time of pain and suffering to push a privatization agenda and further the inequities in our nation.

Instead, we must do all we can to strengthen the public schools that educate 9 out of 10 of America's students. The HEROES Act helps to do this because it includes \$915 billion in direct relief for state and local governments, and \$90 billion in additional education resources. These funds equate to an average of \$2,225 in additional funding per Title I student, money that could help pay the educators that teach and support our students and save more than 800,000 education jobs at all levels.

We thank the House for taking bold action to pass the HEROES Act, and we call on Mitch McConnell and the Senate to abandon their wait-and-see approach and act quickly. Schools are already planning for the upcoming school year and all of the new dilemmas—COVID-related and beyond—that it will bring. They need the certainty that this legislation can offer.

To stave off the elimination of thousands of critical educator positions, NEA urges Congress to provide at least \$175 billion more for the Education Stabilization Fund. In addition, we are advocating for at least \$56 million in directed funding for protective equipment, and at least \$4 billion to create a special fund, administered by the successful E-Rate program, to equip students with hot spots and devices to help close the homework gap. Even when schools do open, they will very likely need to incorporate online learning.

We've been listening to our members and allies and recently released guidance on reopening public schools called **All Hands on Deck** because we know that taking this step is not only the best thing for students; it is in the best interest of our nation. We cannot fully reopen our economy unless and until public schools reopen. Closed schools mean parents and guardians cannot go back to work, which means working people will have less to spend on goods and services in their communities. But just as importantly, public schools are hubs of activity in

many places, where people gather, meet, vote, and access important support services. It is imperative that they reopen—but decisions about how and when must be grounded in health experts' recommendations, with input from educators, and with access to PPE for students and educators. In all these decisions, it is crucial that we treat racial and social justice as an imperative, so that we don't inflict more harm on the students and communities that can least afford to bear it.

I will end by telling you that members of the NEA have not lost hope that we can come out of this time as a stronger nation, able to provide the opportunities that every student deserves. We can bring forth the fortitude and creativity that will address the fallout from COVID-19, and *also* address the equity challenges that have plagued us for generations. We know that we must do something, and we know too that the status quo was never the best we could provide for all students. The members of the National Education Association stand ready to work with this committee to bring about the new day that our students deserve.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.
Mr. Johnson.

STATEMENT OF MARK JOHNSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, RALEIGH, NC

Mr. JOHNSON. Good afternoon, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Committee.

I am State Superintendent Mark Johnson. It is my honor and privilege to serve the students, educators, and citizens of North Carolina. Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this hearing today, and thank you all for your swift, bipartisan efforts to

enact the CARES Act in order to use Federal taxpayer dollars to support our citizens, our communities, and our schools during this unprecedented pandemic.

Together we have faced the unbelievable challenges of COVID-19. This virus has threatened our health, our economy, our students' education, and even our way of life. Students, educators, parents, and caretakers across North Carolina and the Nation have made difficult sacrifices to confront this crisis, and it has shown that we have the resilience to overcome it. States ensure that child nutrition services continued, which meant keeping our meal services available no matter the obstacle. Schools kept cafeterias open, creating grab-and-go locations, and even delivered meals using school busses and the mail. In North Carolina, we have served over 30 million meals during this crisis.

States also led the switch to remote learning practically overnight. North Carolina is a leader in digital education strategies, but even as advanced and fortunate as we are, no State was ready for the switch from 0 percent remote learning to 100 percent remote learning over a weekend.

Teachers and school leaders connected students where they could, and if they couldn't, assignments were delivered by school bus, over the phone, and even through the United States Postal Service. Now we are able to switch from being reactive to being proactive, and the challenges we will face going into next school year will actually put on full display the resilience of students, parents, and educators. We should all be focused not just on coming back strong, but coming out of this pandemic stronger.

Thank you for helping those students of North Carolina with Federal taxpayer funds. We will use these funds to protect the health and safety of students and educators, and we will also use these funds to help innovate and spread strategies and tools that will truly help every child work hard in school and reach their American dream.

For example, we are investing in technology, strong digital curriculum options, and professional development for teachers. Even before this unparalleled moment in our history, North Carolina was making the monumental shift in education to empower teachers with tools that support personalized learning for all students.

Now this innovation is more important than ever. We are going to see a significant loss of learning as a result of this crisis. When students return in the fall, we will need to help all students catch up; but we don't have to do that with one size fits all strategy. The technology in curriculum options we are purchasing can also help teachers more easily meet students at their abilities and help students catch up at their own pace.

Make no mistake, teachers have been working hard for decades to individualize education for students, and this is not the remote learning that we have endured the past few months. The technology we are pushing for North Carolina will be another tool for teachers to help students.

Our youngest students can use this technology to catch up on their reading skills that they need to be successful for the rest of school and in life, and our older students can use this technology to discover the pathways to success that they decide work best for

them, whether that is a high-valued credential, military service, or a degree from a community college or a 4-year institution.

The challenges facing us next school year are enormous, but we must also use this moment to reach every single student with resources and strategies that help them work hard in school and succeed.

In North Carolina we have a State toast. We say that our State is where the weak grow strong and the strong grow great. Our Nation is enduring and rising above unprecedented challenges. We are strong. Let's grow great.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Johnson follows:]



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, Superintendent of Public Instruction
WWW.DPI.NC.GOV

Testimony of Superintendent Mark Johnson

June 15, 2020

Before the Committee on Education and Labor, United States House of Representatives

Good afternoon Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Committee. I am State Superintendent Mark Johnson, and it is my honor and privilege to serve the students, educators, and citizens of North Carolina.

Thank you for the opportunity to take part in this hearing today, and thank all of you for your swift, bipartisan efforts to enact the CARES Act in order to use federal taxpayer dollars to support our citizens, our communities, and our schools during this unprecedented pandemic.

Together, we have faced the unbelievable challenges of COVID-19. This virus has threatened our health, our economy, our students' education, and even our way of life.

Students, educators, parents, and caretakers across North Carolina and the nation have made difficult sacrifices to confront this crisis, and our nation has shown that we have the resilience to overcome it.

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Now, this innovation is more important than ever. We are going to see a significant loss of learning as a result of this crisis.

When students return in the fall, we will need to help all students catch up, but we don't have to do that with one-size-fits all strategies. The technology and curriculum options we are purchasing can also help teachers more easily meet students at their ability levels and help students catch up at their own pace.

Make no mistake – teachers have been working hard for decades to individualize education for students. And, this is not the remote learning we have endured for the past few months.

The technology we are purchasing for North Carolina will be another tool for teachers to help students. Our youngest students can use this technology to catch up on the reading skills they need to be successful through the rest of school and in life. Our older students can use this technology to discover the pathways to success that they decide works best for them after school – whether that is a high-valued credential, military service, or a degree from a community college or four-year institution.

The challenges facing us next school year are enormous, but we also must use this moment to reach every single student with resources and strategies that help them work hard in school and succeed.

In North Carolina, we have a state toast. We say that our state is where the weak grow strong and the strong grow great. Our nation is enduring and rising above unprecedented challenges. We are strong, let's grow great.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.
And Mr. Gordon.

**STATEMENT OF ERIC GORDON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT, CLEVELAND, OH**

Mr. GORDON. Good afternoon, Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and Members of the Education and Labor Committee.

My name is Eric Gordon. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District in Cleveland, Ohio. I am also proud to serve as the co-chair of the Ohio Urban 8 Coalition and as Chair of the Council of the Great Cities Schools. The Cleve-

land Metropolitan School District is the second largest school district in Ohio with an enrollment of nearly 38,000 students.

With over 42 percent of our children living below the poverty line, Cleveland has the highest child poverty rate of any major city in the country. With a median household income of just over \$26,000, Cleveland residents often lack basic necessities considered essential to today's America.

Our school community is 86 percent children of color. Over 17 percent of our students are English language learners, and nearly a quarter of our students are identified for special education services. Nearly 5 percent of our students, over 1,900 students, are homeless on any given day.

Despite these and other inequities, CMSD has gone from being the worst performing school district in Ohio to becoming one of Ohio's fastest improving school districts. On March 13, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine ordered the necessary closing of Ohio schools due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This had a significant impact on students across Ohio.

While my peers in more affluent districts in Ohio focused on switching from classroom to online instruction, the reality is that more than 40 percent of our families had no reliable access to high-speed internet in their homes and that 68 percent of our families had no device other than a Smartphone to even access that internet.

So CMSD operated 22 grab-and-go meal sites. We also established homework hotlines, delivered content that could be accessed by cellphone, like posting lessons on Instagram, created weekly grade level learning packages, along with supplemental packages to support students with disabilities, and English language learners, and to support social and emotional health which we then mailed to each child's home.

We created lessons broadcasts on local TV stations and established social emotional health hotlines for those who were experiencing high stress, feelings of isolation, or signs of neglect.

Over the shutdown period, we froze spending across the district to direct all available funds towards the purchase and distribution of over 9,000 hot spots with a 1-year subscription to the internet and over 16,000 devices. Those devices and hot spots which are now in place and will remain distributed throughout the summer ensure that my families are now able to apply for unemployment, apply for jobs, to access medical care through telehealth and to access other essential supports afforded to most Americans.

The inequities my families faced during this public health emergency have existed in Cleveland and in communities across the country for decades, and it is important to note that these inequities are most acute in communities of color.

Addressing these needs and preparing to return to school to both address nine weeks of lost learning and to create a more fair, just, and good system of personalized mastery learning must also be done within the context of the looming budget crisis brought on by the economic recession.

In my district, we are facing the very real threat of losing up to \$127 million in State and local revenue in the year ahead. That is nearly 25 percent of my district's net operating budget.

If this worst case scenario were to occur, I will have no choice but to make deep devastating cuts to my district this winter and implement those cuts for the second semester of the school year, essentially wiping out the 10 years of growth my team and I have generated in Cleveland. I have already received a \$5.6 million budget cut from the State of Ohio.

I urge Congress to provide the necessary resources to keep our Nation's school districts intact during the economic crisis that arose from this public health emergency. While this includes resources contemplated in the Heroes Act and future Stimulus and Stabilization Acts, this would also include additional resources in the years ahead to ensure adequate funding for America's most vulnerable children.

Including Title I, A, disadvantaged and at-risk youth; Title I, D for children who have been the victims of neglect; Title III for immigrant children; IDEA Part B for students with learning disabilities; and the McKinney-Vento Act for homeless and foster youth as school districts like mine work to recover the learning time that was lost for the most fragile among our youth.

Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and members of the Education and Labor Committee, on behalf of the 38,000 students of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District who I have the privilege of serving, along with the 192,000 students of the Ohio Urban 8 Coalition, and the 8.2 million students of the Council of the Great Cities Schools, thank you for letting me be with you today.

Thank you.

[The statement of Mr. Gordon follows:]



**Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020
Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer**

Good afternoon Chairman Scott and members of the Education & Labor committee. My name is Eric Gordon and I am proud to serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District in Cleveland, Ohio, where I have served for the past 13 years, including nine as the district's superintendent of schools. I am also proud to represent the Ohio Urban 8 Coalition, a coalition of superintendents and union presidents from Ohio's 8 large urban school districts, for whom I serve as co-chair, and to represent the Council of the Great City Schools, a coalition of the 76 largest urban education districts in our country, for whom I am serving as the 2019-20 chair of the Board of Directors.

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) is the second largest school district in Ohio with an enrollment of nearly 38,000 students. With over 42% of Cleveland's children living below the poverty line, U.S. census data indicates that Cleveland holds the distinction of having the highest child poverty rate of any major city in the country. With a median household income of just \$26,179, Cleveland residents often lack basic necessities considered essential in today's America. Our school community is 86% children of color (64% African-American, 16% Hispanic, 4% of other races). Over 17% of our students are English Language Learners (including those who have exited the formal status of Limited English Proficient) Due in part to a long-standing lead paint crisis in Cleveland's housing stock and limited service for students with disabilities in charter and voucher schools, nearly a quarter of our students are identified for special education services. Nearly 5% of our students are identified as homeless on any given day. That's over 1,900 students while hundreds more live in doubled-up housing not even knowing that it is considered homelessness.

Despite these and other inequities, CMSD has gone from being the worst performing school district in Ohio to becoming one of Ohio's fastest-improving districts. We have deeply invested in early education, increasing the number of children accessing high-quality preschool in our community by 71.6% in just six years. Our gains on Ohio's K-3 Literacy Improvement measure over the past five years place us among the top 15% of school districts in growth on this measure. On Ohio's Performance Index, Ohio's measure of reading and math, CMSD is among the top 4% of school districts in growth since Ohio's new state tests were introduced in 2016. And our on-time graduation rates have risen from just 52.2% for the class of 2011 to 80.1% for the class of 2019. That 27.9 percentage point gain makes CMSD the 4th fastest improving district in Ohio. More importantly, graduation rates for our district's African-American and Hispanic students exceed their respective state peer groups.

On March 13, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine ordered the necessary closing of Ohio's schools due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. This sudden and immediate closure had significant and immediate impacts on students across Ohio. But for my students and families in Cleveland, the impacts were devastating.

While my peers in more affluent districts in Ohio focused on switching from classroom to remote instruction, our focus in Cleveland and in other high poverty districts moved instead to how first to ensure meal sites were set up and transportation was provided for children whose families rely on their public schools for two meals a day. While we, too, scrambled to post information and learning opportunities online, and while we worked immediately to transition our staff and students to remote learning, we were forced to confront the reality that more than 40% of our families had no reliable access to high-speed internet in their homes.



**Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020
Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer**

As communities across Northeast Ohio launched one-to-one technology initiatives, COVID-19 laid bare the inequities that high poverty districts like Cleveland face and the challenges that befall students and families in high poverty districts like ours, where 68% of our families have no device other than a smart phone to access the Internet.

Responding to these deep inequities, CMSD operated 22 grab-and-go meal sites where, at our peak, we provided up to 10,000 meals per day (a sack lunch and a sack breakfast to take home), along with prepared instructional materials, free paperback books, and basic health and hygiene items. We also turned our attention to supporting our school and teacher teams to develop school-based plans that met students and families where they were. This included establishing homework hotlines, remote student, teacher, parent learning conferences, delivery of content that could be accessed by cell phone (e.g., lessons posted on Instagram) and other lower-tech solutions. Simultaneously, we created weekly grade-level learning packages, along with supplemental packages to support students with disabilities and English language learners and to support social emotional health. Because so many of our families had no way to access these materials from our website, we also mailed them to each child's home. These learning opportunities were further supplemented with classroom lessons that we created and broadcast on local TV stations and linked to our website. We also established social-emotional health hotlines for those who were experiencing high stress, feelings of isolation, or signs of neglect.

Over the shutdown period, we froze spending across the district to direct all available funds toward the distribution of over 9,000 hotspots with a one-year subscription to the Internet and over 16,000 devices. Many of the devices and nearly all of the hotspots were unplanned but necessary expenses for our district. Those devices and hotspots, which are now in place and will remain distributed throughout the summer, have temporarily closed the gap for many of my families and, because of this temporary solution, my families are now able, many of them for the first time, to connect to the many learning and enrichment resources on our internet site, as well as to the many of the tools that our students had already been using in school.

The vital connectivity we rushed to establish for our students not only made it possible for our students to access online learning like their more affluent peers, but also made it possible for our families to apply for unemployment, something that for a number of weeks Ohioans could only complete online. This distribution of devices and hotspots to the households of our students also enabled families to apply for jobs, to access medical care through telehealth, and to access other essential supports afforded to most Americans. Ohio's Stay At Home Order not only cut children and families off from their schools and workplaces, but illuminated the reality that the poorest segments of our communities lacked access to reliable high speed internet and therefore to the resources that are supposed to be available to support them. I point this out to say that the internet connectivity problem facing our urban and rural communities is critical not only for school but for so many other services that families rely on.

A number of people have said to me over the past several weeks how sorry they are to see the inequities, like food insecurity, lack of access to the internet, housing insecurity, job insecurity, and more, that were caused by COVID-19. I want to make it absolutely clear that these inequities were not caused by the coronavirus. Those inequities have existed in my community and in communities across the country for decades. All COVID-19 did was to starkly expose them for all to see. And the evidence is clear that these inequities are most acute in communities of color.



**Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020
Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer**

If we have learned anything in Cleveland, it is that from crisis comes opportunity. I believe COVID-19 presents an opportunity for all of us to finally address long standing inequities and, in my community, I am working aggressively to do so.

Even before COVID-19, my community introduced a program called Say Yes to Education that provides a family support specialist in every school to ensure that my students have their basic needs (food, hygiene, health and mental health services, legal services, supports for housing stability, etc.) with the intent of removing the barriers that poverty creates, so that my children can thrive in school against the odds. We had already implemented these services in 16 schools last fall and, even in the midst of the current public health emergency, my community will be implementing services in 26 more schools this coming year with all of our schools having these essential services in place by 2023.

Together with a number of community partners, my community is working to treat Internet access as a public utility, as essential for basic living as electricity, heat and water. Our goal is to move our families (and all Cleveland families) off of temporary hot spot internet access to low-cost reliable high-speed Internet. We've done this by creating a not-for-profit internet provider called Digital C that, with our school district as their largest customer, now has the resources they need to expand their footprint across Cleveland, making access to the internet available for \$16.00 per month.

We must be just as impatient to reject the status quo in education. Under the currently-proposed public health guidance for schools in Ohio and in most states, we will not return to "normal" when we open schools in the fall. And why would we want to? This crisis has created an opportunity to create a much more personalized system of learning that takes advantage of both remote and in-school learning to provide a more customized learning experience for our students. While we are still developing this plan for fall, we expect that we will likely operate three to five scenarios, some simultaneously, that support the varying needs of learners in multiple different ways. These include:

- a much more robust home school and online learning environment for students and families (as well as staff members) who, because of coronavirus, cannot or will not return to school or work
- a more flexible independent learning model for students who can accomplish a great deal of learning on their own (e.g., middle and high school students, gifted students, etc.) using resources like Kahn Academy, online coursework, etc. but who will need some limited level of support (perhaps once a week) from teachers in schools
- a blended model for students who need increased level of direct support (e.g. younger students, students with disabilities, English learners, foster and homeless youth, etc.) who can benefit from more time with teachers (perhaps two to three days a week) in smaller, more individualized group settings
- full, daily in school learning for some students with higher needs who need daily in person instruction
- a fully reopened but redesigned system that leverages all of the above personalization and flexibilities when schools can resume.

Some may question whether such radical changes in the way schools operate can actually be done. I'm not questioning it, because I know it can. My district has been developing and implementing these models for over a decade. These include individualized student learning experiences through online classes and



**Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020**

Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer

through the use of individualized learning tools like Kahn Academy, mastery-based learning experiences in which students conduct research using web-based tools, research databases, and in libraries, place-based learning in museums, art galleries, music venues, science centers, hospitals, and fortune 500 companies, workplace learning opportunities including internships, apprenticeships, and learn & earn opportunities, and exhibitions of learning including presentations to authentic audiences, juried exhibits, production of authentic work products, and awarding of credentials. All of these mastery-oriented learning opportunities already exist in some form in schools across our country.

The challenge now is not simply to show that learning models focused on personalized, mastery of rigorous content are effective, or that strategies in which learning is the constant and time is a variable can be done. We know they are effective and can be done, for all children as our primary learning strategy. These are, in fact the models often used in some of the most elite private schools. Our challenge in America's public schools is to take advantage of the opportunity that COVID-19 created to bring the type of high-quality learning options usually reserved for children of the most privileged among us to all students in my district and to students across the country. Only when we reject failed systems where time is the constant rather than the variable—only when we retire archaic strategies like agrarian calendars, rigid school hours, days and months designed for a different era, and only when we replace failed systems with ones that focus on strategies proven to close the achievement gaps between black and brown students and their white peers, can we truly say America's education system provides equal opportunity for every child to succeed.

We know it can be done. We just have to have the will to do.

And, the reality is, this moral imperative must be met within the context of the looming budget crisis brought on by the economic recession. In my district, we are facing the very real threat of losing up to \$127 million in state and local revenue in the year ahead. This includes: the potential of a \$23 million reduction in K-12 aid in the coming year; the elimination of \$12 million in state-provided student wellness funds that were originally designed to provide necessary wrap-around services for school-aged children; the potential loss of a \$67 million local tax renewal, slated for vote in November; and, the potential reduction of local tax collections of \$25 million if we return to recession era collection rates. That's nearly 25% of my district's net operating budget. And that's on top of the nearly \$23 million I had already cut from my budget prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. If this worst case scenario were to occur, I will have no choice but to make deep, devastating cuts to my district this coming winter and to implement those cuts for the second semester. Those cuts, including school building closures, reductions of force at all levels of the organization, elimination of student transportation, and all extra-curricular activities, elimination of art, music, physical education, and other classes from K-8 schools and of electives from high schools, would essentially wipe out the 10 years of growth my team and I have generated in Cleveland.

Do I think this worst case scenario will absolutely hit my district? I don't believe it has to. But I have already received a \$5.6 million budget cut from my educational state aid this year, so it's certainly quite possible that more budget cuts and revenue losses are to come. That's why your support with the HEROES Act and in future stimulus packages is going to be critical to K-12 education, as well as other public agencies.



Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020
Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer

Recessions often hit the private economy quickly and deeply before hitting the public sector economy shortly thereafter and for longer periods of time. I'm not an economist, but it seems to me, based upon my experience in the 2008-2010 recession, that focusing the CARES Act on getting the private economy restarted seems to have been a wise first step. Cleveland will receive between \$24 and \$26 million from the CARES Act. And I am grateful to Congress for these funds. Since COVID-19 struck, we have spent in excess of \$15 million in unplanned expenses and, together with the cut in state aid of \$5.6 million that I've already received, these dollars have made us whole for the last school year with about \$4-6 million remaining to tackle the looming needs of the coming year.

I want to speak specifically to the \$2 million delta in our CARES Act funding. This discrepancy is dependent on Ohio making a decision as to whether our state will follow the non-regulatory guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Education which defies Congress and pushes these precious resources into the hands of schools who are serving more wealthy students and families. While I want to be careful not to presume that I know the Secretary's intent, the notion that my poor minority children will receive \$2 million less in Federal aid while simultaneously more wealthy largely white students will get more is simply appalling to me and I will continue to advocate that Ohio and all of the country ignore this non-regulatory guidance and follow the letter of the law.

Further, the \$58 million in K-12 educational aid in the HEROES act is a significant, measured next step to head off immediate budget shortfalls that school districts are facing in the coming year. My experience from 2008-2010 tells me that more will be needed as the public sector recovers from this recession over time. In fact, the Council of the Great City Schools estimates that this recession will likely require \$200 billion in aid for K-12 education nationwide when it is all said and done.

There are many today that have called education "the civil rights issue of our time." I've never really liked that phrase, not because I don't believe it. Education has been my life's work *because* I believe that. I have never liked that phrase because for too long, people have used it too loosely, like a cliché, without taking seriously what it means to go beyond changing things for a moment, rather than mobilizing and creating change as part of a movement.

However, given the current climate in America today, it has probably never been more timely, more important, nor more urgent than now for us to truly address education as one of the many institutions in our country that must be systemically redesigned to address long standing inequities that are directly tied to race and class. COVID-19 has obliterated the existing education system as we know it. Next fall will not look like last fall. It couldn't, even if we wanted it to. However, that presents a great opportunity to systematically design educational systems that are more fair, just and good. Working together, we can ensure that our children, especially minority children and children of poverty, are not continually impacted by the inequities that deny them their right to a quality education and a safe and prosperous life.

Next fall in our nation's schools will not look like last fall. It couldn't, even if we wanted it to. However, the public health emergency that created this challenge also presents a great opportunity, an opportunity to systematically design educational systems that once and for all are fair, just and good. Working together, we can ensure that no children, especially minority children and children of poverty, are not



**Written Remarks for the Committee on Education and Labor
June 15, 2020
Eric S. Gordon, Chief Executive Officer**

continually impacted by the various wide inequities that collectively deny them their right to a quality education and a safe and prosperous life.

Congress can help, and already has. First, I urge Congress to provide the necessary resources to keep our nation's school districts intact during the economic crisis that arose from this public health emergency. While this includes resources contemplated in the HEROES Act and future stimulus and stabilization acts, it must also include additional resources in the years ahead to ensure adequate funding for America's most vulnerable children, including Title I-A for disadvantaged and at-risk youth, Title I-D for children who have been the victims of neglect, Title III for immigrant children, IDEA-B for students with learning disabilities, and the McKinney-Vento Act for homeless and foster youth, as school district's like mine work to recover the learning time that was lost for the most fragile among our youth.

Doing this will allow systems like mine to reinvent ourselves in ways that will free us from rules established in the 1700s that were never thoroughly and thoughtfully redesigned to meet the needs of a modern America and its widely diverse people. We have an extraordinary opportunity today to systemically redesign institutions that have too long perpetuated racial inequities, generated wide, long, and persistent opportunity and achievement gaps, and that have clearly failed to serve all children well. We can do better and Congress can use this public health emergency as a tool to create the environment for us to do so.

Chairman Scott and members of the Education & Labor committee, on behalf of the 38,000 students of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District who I have the privilege of serving, thank you for giving me the opportunity to give them a voice in Congress. Along with the 192,000 students of the Ohio Urban 8 Coalition and the 8.2 million students of the Council of the Great City Schools, I thank you for your time and more importantly for the positive actions I know you will take on behalf of America's children.



Eric Gordon
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Chief Executive Officer
Eric S. Gordon

July 9, 2020

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The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Chairman
Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2176 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6100

I am writing this letter to submit one correction to my oral testimony, provided to the Committee on Education and Labor's hearing entitled "*Budget Cuts and Lost Learning: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Public Education*" on Monday, June 15, 2020.

During the hearing, the Honorable Glen Grothman of Wisconsin asked me what the cost per pupil was for the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. I responded to Representative Grothman that while I did not know the exact amount I estimated it to be approximately \$11,000 per student. The actual cost per pupil for the District is \$12,391.

The difference in my original estimate and this actual number is that my initial estimate included my recollection of our general fund, made of state and local funding of \$11,030 per student. However, in the moment, I failed to consider the additional federal funds of \$1,361 per student that we also receive.

I apologize for this error in my oral testimony and wanted to submit this correction for the record.

Sincerely,

Eric S. Gordon
Chief Executive Officer
Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. And I thank all of our witnesses for your testimony.

And now we will begin with questions.

I will go last and start with the gentlelady from California, Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to our witnesses. I know all of you feel so strongly about what we are about to face here. It is really going to be as great a crisis as our schools have experienced, and I think the numbers show that.

I wonder—you know, we all maybe need to take our own test now and then, and I wonder if you could respond. I mean, is it pos-

sible for us to open the schools if we cannot avoid personnel cuts, if we cannot avoid layoffs of teachers?

Is it possible for us to open up our schools if we cannot compensate for learning loss, obviously, particularly in reading and math? And is it possible for us to open our schools if we cannot keep our students safe?

Now, if we are struggling with answering those questions, then we really have a very difficult decision to make with, as you have all expressed, I believe, that the increased costs that we are going to be seeing range somewhere, I think, in 20 percent, at least they certainly do for California and for San Diego City schools.

So I guess the question then is, if that is true and we are not able to reach a level where we are comfortable with any of those major three issues, what do we do? Where is it that we are going to be able to at least reach an appropriate level of service if we can't do that?

I wonder—perhaps, Mr. Gordon, you were just speaking, where do you go from there? And I want you to address, as you have done, the learning loss particularly for our most vulnerable students. If we can't provide the basics for each and every student in our school, how are we going to be able to do that? And does that mean having more students coming into school in those areas, longer time in school? What is it—what are you thinking about in Cleveland?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you to the Chairman. To the Congresswoman, thank you for the question.

As I provided in my written testimony, I think that this is both a crisis to face but an opportunity in education to really reinvent our systems of delivery of learning. And much like my colleague, Mr. Johnson, I am an advocate for moving to a very much personalized learning that is driven by mastery of content and not simply seat time.

In Ohio, we are not likely going to be able to bring all children back at exactly the same time for the whole school day because of the very strict public health guidance we have seen so far. So this means we are going to have to have multiple scenarios of who we can bring back and for how much time, and school districts are talking about things like A days and B days where we split classes in half, or a.m.-p.m. kinds of shifts, Monday-Tuesday class, meeting Wednesday, Thursday-Friday class. I am challenging my team to think even more nimbly and ask ourselves the question who are those children who need the most direct time with teachers? That would be students with disabilities, English learners, younger children, perhaps our foster and homeless.

And then who can be more self-sufficient in a proactive, high-quality learning environment that can be partially remote? That does require keeping our personnel intact. If I have to sustain a quarter of my budget cut, that will necessarily result in huge layoffs like we experienced in 2010 where we closed 23 school buildings and laid off 700 teachers all in a single moment.

And so, you know, we do—will we open? We have to. But will it be a high-quality learning system? That will be dependent upon whether we are able to keep educators intact.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. I believe my time is up.

Thank you.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Dr. Foxx, do you want to go now?

Ms. FOXX. Yes, sir. I will go ahead and ask my questions now.

Chairman SCOTT. The gentlelady, the ranking member is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Superintendent Johnson, you spoke in your testimony about some of the ways CARES Act money is being spent or that you expect CARES Act money to be spent. What is the status of the CARES Act money in North Carolina?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Representative Foxx.

The CARES Act funding in North Carolina, as you know, came through multiple sources. The \$95 million that is in the hands of the Governor, there has been no decision yet by the Governor on how that will support education.

The schools that will receive a pot of about \$400 million, the North Carolina State Board of Education has decided to hold back the maximum amount, \$40 million, to address equity issues across North Carolina, but that has not been determined yet what exactly that money will be used for.

The \$350, roughly, million that have been left after that for schools, that has now—all the application process has been done, but school districts have not started drawing down on that money yet. And, of course, there is the large sum that went to the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor. They have dedicated \$230 million of those funds to address summer learning loss, help with connectivity, and device purchases. But, again, we have not spent that money yet.

There was also on top of that, at the very beginning of this crisis, \$50 million from State funds that was repurposed for school districts to address the reactive measures of the crisis, and we have not yet spent all of those funds yet either. So we are in a very proactive phase right now with our schools in North Carolina.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Superintendent Johnson.

I can't imagine anyone in your shoes would turn down more Federal taxpayer funding from America's taxpayers. However, in light of the fact that the overwhelming majority of CARES Act money has not been spent, is now the right time to spend billions more in taxpayer funds and what steps do you think are needed before those decisions are made and what factors should Congress consider before determining if another round of aid is needed?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Representative Foxx.

I would say, as a citizen and educator, that it is important for Congress to balance the fact that there is a lot of debt being taken out, but also there are a lot of needs out there across the Nation.

I would encourage Congress to work with the State chief officers. In North Carolina, we are still waiting on what the plan will be for reentering school. Our Governor has set out potential plans, but we have not made a firm decision on whether or not we are going to have students back in school or remote learning. The metrics aren't going in the right direction in North Carolina.

Also, we don't have a State budget yet. So while we are concerned about budget cuts, just like everyone else, we do not know

exactly what those details will be just yet. And as mentioned earlier, we are being very proactive. We are very fortunate we are not being reactive with our CARES Act funding.

I would definitely encourage Congress to see where that money is spent in North Carolina, as I discussed in my opening testimony, focus on, of course, the health and safety of students but also using this moment, this opportunity, to transform how we meet every student at their ability level and help them proceed and excel at their own pace.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

One more question, Superintendent Johnson. There has been concern expressed from some about the Federal Department of Education's interpretation of the CARES Act equitable services provision. Without getting into the weeds of this debate, do you believe that each education sector, traditional public schools, charter schools, and private schools, deserve equitable support and why?

Mr. JOHNSON. The short answer would be yes. This is an unprecedented crisis that is affecting everyone, and Congress actually took those steps with the stimulus check. People who lost their jobs and needed help paying bills, they got a stimulus check; but also we had people who retired and didn't have income, they got a stimulus check as well.

I think it is important that, you know, if Congress wants to help every citizen, that is what they do. Not to get into the weeds of the debate, but it is Congress' job to be in charge of the purse strings, and I encourage the General Assembly, our legislative branch in North Carolina, to be clear on their intent and really be sure that they direct where they want the funding to go and not delegate too much power to the administrative branches.

Ms. FOXX. Well, thank you.

I am going to end with a comment, not exactly a direct question to you; but if you agree with me, I would appreciate, or disagree, you can say.

I am a student of the Constitution, and I have read it many, many times, and I fail to find the word "education" in there. Can you show me if you found that as a reason to—a responsibility of the Federal Government?

Mr. JOHNSON. Educators all over the Nation appreciate any funding that comes from the Federal Government; but we also appreciate not putting a lot of strings attached to it. So we appreciate the funding that comes.

It is in our Constitution in North Carolina; but you are correct, I don't believe it is in the Constitution for the United States.

But we appreciate the support. Thank you.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Mr. Grijalva.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

A couple of questions for Dr. Leachman; but a couple of things. You know, I think we are in a situation now that is unprecedented, and the threat to the future of public education is real, it is severe, and it is upon us.

And it is not a question of throwing money at a problem, and it is not a question of long-held assumptions being the rule of the day. But I think it is important that as we go forward talking about the Heroes Act and talking about the support that is needed at a State level but in particular with our public schools that we recognize that there is a legacy, a systemic legacy, preexisting conditions in public education, and those conditions revolve around the issue of inequity.

They revolve around the issue of income and the manifestations of those have been kids with disabilities, English learners, poor kids, digital divide, facilities conditions, class size, and the list goes on.

And I mention that because I think that the pandemic and the response to the pandemic has exposed that even more so in front of us, and so I think the role of the government is twofold.

To respond to this pandemic and to supplement both the public school systems and public education in our country so that the issue, the inequities that we know are there that are being agreed as we talk don't become the permanent legacy of this pandemic, both the inequities becoming permanent and the efforts to try to do something about them. So, you know, that is a priority. It should be a priority for this Committee to make sure that all kids get that.

Mr. Leachman, one of the things, you know, is that all States do things differently, you know, and not all States are proponents of public education in terms of their administration, so whoever happens to be the governor.

But given that, and given the fact that, you know, can the States afford regardless for the Federal Government to take kind of a wait-and-see approach to State and local fiscal relief and the urgency for that Federal relief, why is it a priority? And try to give your comments on that question.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you, Congressman.

No, I think it is really—this is very urgent that Congress act. States already are starting to cut their education budgets.

In Georgia they have—already the Governor and legislative leadership have called for substantial cuts across the board for the upcoming fiscal year, which starts July 1, in just a couple of weeks.

In Ohio the governor has asked for agencies to submit 20 percent cut budgets and has already implemented cuts from the current fiscal year.

States and localities have already furloughed or laid off about 1.5 million workers. And with their fiscal year beginning very soon, States are going to be making decisions that will result in teachers and other education workers being laid off at just the wrong time, when—it is never a good time, but when the economy is especially weak, the last thing we want is more layoffs.

So, in addition, to the impact on schools and kids, there is a full affect on the economy at a very important time.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Arizona is now one of the top States, if not the top State, in terms of the uptick in mortality, infection, and spread of the pandemic. And in the middle of this, our Governor is saying that the schools will be open in a month or less.

And the cost attendant to doing that right and protecting kids and staff, as you mentioned, that is not included in the overall need that schools are going to have in order to at least be held harmless for the coming school year, financially speaking.

So any response to that?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Congressman, that is an excellent point.

The revenue loss here that States are experiencing is unprecedented. It is an extraordinary fiscal crisis, and then on top of that, we have schools having to deal with substantial new costs to try to open safely.

Mr. GRIJALVA. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Let's see. The gentleman from Tennessee, Dr. Roe?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Thompson?

Mr. THOMPSON. Chairman, thank you so much. Chairman and Republican Leader Foxx, I really appreciate this. This is a movement towards getting—truly getting back to work and performing our duties and responsibilities. The needs of the Nation didn't stop, and they don't stop because of any pandemic or crisis or emergency. In fact, it probably intensifies the need for our work thanks to the members of the panel.

Superintendent Johnson, I want to thank you for making time today to join us today at the hearing. The spread of COVID-19 has caused significant disruption to educators and students across the country. We all know that. An estimated 124,000 public and private schools closed this spring, including more than 3,000 schools in my home State, the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Due to this pandemic, Congress responded swiftly, enacted the CARES Act, which delivered more than \$13 billion dollars in formally funding directly to States and school districts to help—yep? I went down? I don't know. No, I am still there. Thanks, Greg.

—in formally funding directly to States and school districts to help students respond to the coronavirus-related needs. I represent Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District. It covers 14 counties and nearly 25 percent of the land mass in Pennsylvania. During the outbreak, the number one issue I continually heard from my school districts, a very rural district in nature obviously, is a lack of broadband and technology access.

Now, these school districts have been creative on how they address these connectivity issues, like setting up drive-by Wi-Fi hotspots near school parking lots, and quite frankly, local libraries, different places. However, the need for improved broadband service to these areas is absolutely long overdue.

According to the census data, roughly 15 percent of the U.S. households with school-age children do not have high-speed internet connection at home. Either don't have it at all, or quite frankly, it is even larger than that. They don't have sufficient broadband to support the online learning platforms. And that number is much higher in my district because I work with all of my school districts throughout this time. It is unacceptable.

So Mr. Johnson, in your testimony, you touched briefly on this. Is North Carolina experiencing similar issues with access to

broadband technology, and if so, how are your school districts addressing the problem?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you Representative.

Yes, I believe every State is facing this same issue right now, including North Carolina. We were actually the first State in the Nation to connect every single classroom to high speed, wireless internet, which is a monumental task and a truly amazing accomplishment for our education system. But that does not help when students in rural North Carolina or students in urban North Carolina don't have that broadband connection.

We have immediately addressed this by making sure that we put money into hotspot devices and innovations that will help get wireless internet to students in rural communities. We also—we use school buses to get assignments, the phone, mail. But this is absolutely something that we would appreciate Congress very much helping with and looking at, how do we make sure that we innovate and get that broadband access to every student. Because we hope to be back in schools in North Carolina, but there is the chance that we will be back in remote learning like other States.

Mr. THOMPSON. Right. Well, I would just comment briefly and then to a quick question. My comment is on, I am just so appreciative of USDA and what they have done with the, you know, providing flexibility and waivers to our National School Lunch Program. I have participated personally with that, with the distribution of meals, and you know—and the team work and the collaboration between the community and the schools.

My final question though for you, Mr. Johnson, as I talked with my school districts, as early—as late as this morning on a county advisory committee meetings that I routinely have as school board member, the issues most of our schools are looking at are the transportation costs, you know, if there is implications given for social distancing, you know, especially in rural areas, they would have a tremendous amount of transportation.

And North Carolina is a lot—geographically a lot like Pennsylvania. Any quick thoughts on what you are anticipating in terms of transportation challenges come fall?

Mr. JOHNSON. It will absolutely be a challenge if social distancing is required in our schools. Again, our governor has set out three different plans. We hope to be under the plan that allows us to get as many students back as safely as possible, but if we are required to have 50 percent capacity on school buses and social distancing on school buses, we will be in the same situation. It will be very difficult.

We will probably come to look for more waivers and more help when it comes to getting more buses on the road to run more routes, or as has been mentioned, the very difficult reality of, we might switch to A days and B days and actually have to have some students stay at home one day while other students go to school and then they switch, but we know that is going to be a huge challenge for our communities as well.

Mr. THOMPSON. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from Connecticut, Mr. Courtney?

Mr. COURTNEY. Great. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and to the witnesses for, you know, this hearing today which is really extremely urgent. And I am actually speaking to you from Norwich, Connecticut, where my district office is. It is a community of about 42,000 people. A couple of nights ago, the Board of Education just voted to eliminate 45 positions in the K-through-12 system, which again is a huge hit in terms of just the size of the workforce there. Again, it is a relatively small community.

And the superintendent, when they were talking about her, she was quoted in the paper saying, at the end of the day, this is about revenue and the lack thereof, which is, again, precisely the problem which the coronavirus recession has created.

By the way, Connecticut has already distributed the Title 1 CARES Act funding, and Norwich is a Title 1 area here. Again, it was not enough to stop these layoffs. So Ms. Pringle, I just wanted to ask you, I mean, we are obviously weeks away from the schools reopening, and I know there is a lot of work being done about trying to plan for that. Reducing staff is really, isn't it the exact opposite of where we should be headed if we are trying to reduce class size and accommodate social distancing which CDC and all the public health officials are advising? Is that correct?

Is she still there?

Ms. PRINGLE. You know, I have been doing enough of these virtual calls and I know to unmute, but—thank you so much, Congressman Courtney, for that question.

I actually got a chance to talk with quite a few of your educators there in Connecticut last week, and you are absolutely correct. Without that additional funding, we know that other school districts, like the one you just talked about, will absolutely have to lay off hundreds and hundreds of educators.

Teachers, our support staff who nurture our students, bus drivers, we just heard that we will need more of those. We know that we cannot open our schools safely without these additional funds.

So imagine that we are sending our students back to school, and we are all saying that we want them to go back safely, but we are cutting—already have cut over 500,000 education jobs. And more are coming. Because we know that our States will be suffering, and we have already been down this road before. In 2008, what got cut first? Education. Education jobs, services for our students. Our students with special needs, in particular, need that additional assistance.

So for us to think that we are going to send our students back to school safely and provide them with the quality education that we believe they all deserve, we know that cannot happen. So we need the Senate to act right now. You know, I heard others say that, you know, some districts haven't started spending the money yet. Well, I would ask questions about why that didn't happen. I am so glad to hear you talk about yours, saying that we are already putting that money to good use.

Our educators are planning right now, as they should. We always do. By the time we are finishing school, we are starting to plan for the next year, before we even leave school. In June, usually. So they are already making plans.

If we know that we are going to aim to have our students come back to school safely, we have to change a lot of things. And so we are having those conversations right now.

If we don't know the amount of money that we are going to get to open our schools safely, if we don't know the changes we are going to have to make, or how we are going to provide the PPE for our students and our educators, then we can't do the kind of planning that is absolutely necessary so our students have what they need and what they deserve.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, thank you for that answer because the wait-and-see sort of approach which we have heard articulated here today and seems to still be in the Senate, obviously, you know, the opening of schools is happening really right now in terms of certainly the planning.

Mr. Leachman, real quick, the HEROES Act provided local aid, as well as State assistance, and again it targeted about half of that locally to communities of 50,000 or less, which normally kind of—it gets to the end—they get, kind of, pushed to the end of the buffet line. I mean, those communities in particular because they have no commercial tax space in most instances, they really need to get this direct assistance, and as Ms. Pringle said, sooner rather than later. Isn't that correct?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes, absolutely. States depend heavily on income and sales taxes, so their revenues have fallen off the table. But many localities depend heavily on sales taxes as well, and of course with—they are having similar kind of effects in that regard. So I share your concern for those communities as well.

Mr. COURTNEY. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, this morning's Washington Post had an article, Ripple Effects of Downturn Show Pandemic's Early Economic Toll Was Just the Beginning, by David Lynch. I would ask to submit it into the record, which again sort of just shows how we are really at the beginning of the ripple effect, and that is why we got to get it out there.

With that, I yield back.

[The information follows:]

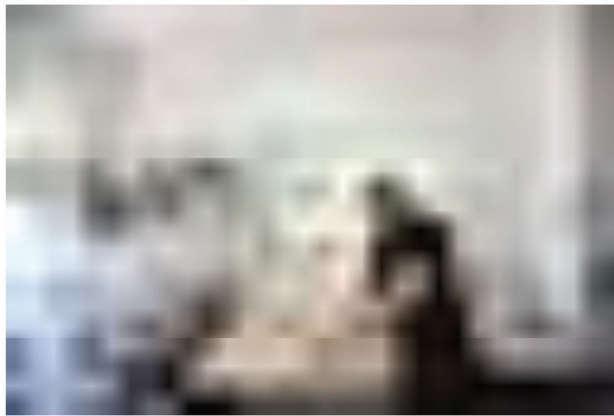
Ripple effects of downturn show pandemic's early economic toll was just the beginning

Plunging consumer and business spending spreading across the economy

By

[David J. Lynch](#)

June 14, 2020 at 6:31 p.m. EDT



John Dillivan prepares food in his sandwich shop, called Pekadill's, which he owns with his wife. (Kyle Monk for The Washington Post)

John Dillivan would normally be breaking in new employees at this time of year, preparing for western Michigan's summer tourist rush. Instead, for the first time in the 31 years he and his wife, Sue, have owned Pekadill's, a sandwich shop in Whitehall, Mich., he has no new waitresses or counter help to train.

At the neat white clapboard restaurant two blocks from White Lake, business is down about 20 percent. If the situation doesn't improve, Dillivan worries he may be forced to abandon year-round operations and put Pekadill's into hibernation this winter.

Sales have fallen because the town's biggest employer, Howmet Aerospace, recently laid off nearly one-quarter of its 2,800 employees. Howmet's commercial aerospace business

is a casualty of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic that has grounded thousands of airplanes and cast into doubt air carriers' hopes of quickly resuming normal operations.

Even as the White House celebrates tentative signs of a labor market rebound, the ripples from Howmet's decision show that the pandemic's imprint upon the U.S. economy is hardening into a scar. What began in China five months ago as a distant threat to U.S. factories' supply chains has evolved into a mammoth shortfall in consumer and business spending that could hobble the economy for years.

"We're just down the street from two of the biggest plants. Their business has been what keeps this place going on a year-round basis," Dillivan said. "We've already felt an impact. The days of bringing in lunch have really come to a stop. Corporate catering has all but dried up."

The plight of this cozy sandwich shop suggests that the economy's recovery from the fastest, deepest recession in U.S. history is likely to be a long, grinding affair.

Unemployment in Muskegon County is a staggering 29 percent — and the statewide figure for Michigan is only slightly better at a depression-caliber 22.7 percent. As states gradually reopen for business, many economists expect a swift but only partial healing that will leave millions of Americans jobless.

More than \$6.5 trillion in household wealth vanished during the first three months of this year as the pandemic tightened its hold on the global economy, the Federal Reserve said this week. That's roughly equivalent to the economies of the United Kingdom and France combined.

"This is the biggest economic shock in the U.S. and in the world, really, in living memory," Fed Chair Jerome H. Powell said Wednesday. "We went from the lowest level of unemployment in 50 years to the highest level in close to 90 years, and we did it in two months."

Almost 90 percent of the 20 million workers who lost their jobs in April said they had been laid off temporarily and expected to return to their jobs, a possible sign the economy might quickly return to normal.

When employers unexpectedly reported adding 2.5 million jobs in May, President Trump touted the labor market rebound as the start of a "rocket ship" recovery. In recent public appearances, the president has proclaimed a "transition to greatness" that will soon produce "spectacular" results.

Yet economists are far less sanguine. Roughly 9 million workers who believe they have been laid off temporarily will end up losing their jobs permanently, according to Oxford Economics.

After a quick initial bounce this year, the economy "will go largely sideways" until a coronavirus vaccine is developed, according to economist Mark Zandi of Moody's

Analytics. Without an additional \$1 trillion in federal rescue efforts, the economy later this year will relapse into a double-dip recession, he added.

Some of the damage that the pandemic has done to the economy will be lasting as business bankruptcies rise and the economy's long-run potential growth rate shrinks, according to Goldman Sachs.

"The bounceback isn't as quick as the downdraft," said Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at BNY Mellon.

The coronavirus recession has emerged as a distinctive blend of problems with both production and consumption. Initially, the outbreak of the disease in Wuhan, China, resulted in the closure of countless Chinese factories and interrupted international travel, threatening the ability of multinational companies to operate.

That break in the global economy's ability to supply products soon evolved into an unprecedented fall in demand, as shutdowns spread to companies that had not been directly affected at first, depressing total output and employment, according to a new paper by economists at the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University.

AD

"The pandemic shock is different from other shocks," said Veronica Guerrieri, an economist at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, and one of the authors.

The pandemic punched a hole in the U.S. economy that will measure nearly \$800 billion in the second quarter alone, according to the Congressional Budget Office. The shortfall is reflected in tens of millions of newly unemployed workers cutting back on purchases while companies such as Howmet reduce spending on plants and equipment.

Howmet is a major engine of the local economy in Whitehall, supporting eateries like Pekadill's, car dealers, hotels, and a number of tool and die shops.

Howmet employees are regular customers at Pekadill's, sitting at the wooden booths inside the building that dates to 1873 or in the well-tended garden out back. The company also was a steady source of catering orders for sales meetings and special functions, which sometimes meant more than 1,000 lunch orders.



Howmet was a major engine of the local economy in Whitehall, supporting eateries like Pekatills, car dealers, hotels, and a number of tool and die shops. (Kyle Monk for The Washington Post)

For Dillivan, the first domino tumbled at the end of January when United Airlines announced it was halting flights from the United States to China, after the coronavirus caused demand for tickets to evaporate.

AD

The next domino fell within weeks, as United — its revenue cratering — deferred orders for dozens of new Boeing aircraft and said it would be in no rush to buy the additional planes it once planned. Fewer new aircraft means fewer new jet engines, including those containing turbine frames and airfoils manufactured by Howmet.

That sent the final domino crashing into Whitehall — and Pekatill's — when Howmet this month announced its layoffs.

In a June 1 letter to the city, Amy Heisser, Howmet's human resources director, blamed "business circumstances the company could not reasonably foresee in the form of a sudden and recent reduction in customer orders related to the Covid-19 pandemic."

Indeed, Howmet has experienced an abrupt reversal in fortune since late February when it told investors it would benefit from steady growth in air travel over the coming decade. Airlines would add 17,000 new jets, driving demand for the company's engine parts and spares, company officials said in a February 25 briefing.

AD

Instead, in a matter of weeks, air travel collapsed as the pandemic spread from China to Europe, the Middle East and finally the United States. Airlines canceled new aircraft orders in droves and parked in the desert thousands of planes they already owned.

Major carriers now expect to take delivery of fewer than 1,000 new planes this year, 40 percent fewer than planned, according to the International Air Transport Association, an industry group.

"We felt the impacts from certain customer shutdowns and suspensions and disruptions within certain shifts within our plants during the last three weeks of the quarter," John Plant, Howmet's co-chief executive, said on a May 5 earnings call.

That day, Howmet reported first-quarter revenues of \$3.2 billion, down 9 percent from the same period one year earlier, blaming the pandemic and fallout from Boeing's troubled 737 MAX program.

AD

Howmet, headquartered in Pittsburgh, said it would temporarily stop paying dividends and cut annual overhead costs by \$100 million. Executives are also trimming capital expenditures by an additional \$100 million, which could hit planned projects in Whitehall.

Just last year the company spent \$100 million on a new engine parts factory down the road from Pekadill's, a move Plant called "a little bit unfortunate" in light of the shrinking market.

On April 3, Howmet began laying off 306 workers. An additional 319 union workers exercised their rights to temporarily accept a voluntary layoff, the company said in the June 1 letter, which was required under Michigan's Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act. Those union workers may now become permanent layoffs as well, the company said.

The company's shares are down more than 60 percent from the mid-February peak. Howmet declined an interview request.



The streets in Whitehall, MI are emptier than usual at the beginning of the summer seasons.
(Kyle Monk for The Washington Post)

In Whitehall, a city of about 2,800 residents, officials are bracing for aftershocks. The company is one of the largest local taxpayers, accounting for 15 percent of Whitehall's revenue and 57 percent of water and sewer funds, according to Scott Huebler, the city manager.

"As far as taxes, that would be a huge hit," he said. "They're a huge presence physically and economically in the community."

At Pekadill's, meanwhile, Dillivan feels fortunate his takeout business allowed him to navigate the pandemic restrictions better than some other establishments. But he frets about the months ahead.

Boaters have been slow to return to the local marina, and an annual electric music festival held in nearby Rothbury was canceled because of lingering coronavirus concerns.

During the 2008 financial crisis, Dillivan began driving a local school bus to earn extra money and obtain health insurance. A dozen years later, there are no easy answers if times get worse.

"I think we need to prepare for the worst-case scenario and be ready," he said. "This is definitely going to be the roughest patch."

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Walberg?

The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Walberg?

The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Guthrie?

Mr. GUTHRIE. Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair. You got that—okay, thanks so much.

Just a couple of questions, and I think we are kind of hitting the same themes because they are kind of equivalent of what everybody else, I think, we could say maybe across the aisle on both sides that we are all concerned about the same things. And one is what we call the summer loss.

I remember I was in grad school. I attended a talk or a presentation on education by a gentleman named Benno Schmidt, who had been President of Yale. I remember it striking me that he said that one of the correlation studies they have is the length of the summer—the length of the summer in terms of student performance. And essentially in Kentucky, and I think across most of the country, we have essentially had students out since spring break. So we have kind of added to that.

And so it gets to two things. One, to Mr. Johnson—and I think, Mr. Gordon, I would be interested in hearing you as well—is the quality of the time that you have had since you have gone online or since kids have been out of school, how are you able to maintain or try to understand the quality of that?

And number two is, I am also on Energy and Commerce, and we are looking at broadband deployment, and one is getting broadband to the homes. I have a—one of my county executive's number one priority was getting broadband into his rural county, Hancock County, in order to be able to have access. But I know Mr. Gordon talked earlier—and I appreciate your presentation—on a city like Cleveland that probably has ample broadband, but it is not just getting the pipeline to the home, it is getting the device in the home where people can have delivery.

So Mr. Johnson, if you would go first about your concern about the length of the summer and the quality, does school essentially end? I know that people were set on doing online classrooms after schools were shut down.

How did you manage the quality of education up until now? And then access to, as you go forward, because even if you don't open in the fall, you are not going to have broadband there at that exact moment, and exact time. How are you going to manage that moving forward? So Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gordon, I would be interested in your perspective. Thanks.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Representative. I will be brief to allow time for my colleague as well. It was extremely challenging to go to remote learning, and teachers have been amazing in stepping up and making sure they were doing everything they could for their students. My daughter is a first grader, now a rising second grader. So we are very fortunate. We had broadband, we had the device, but even for families that were well connected, this was still a struggle. And that doesn't even start for families that were not connected, didn't have the device, very challenging.

Teachers have done an amazing job, and what we will be doing is making sure that when we come back to school in the fall, whatever that is, we will be doing some formative diagnostic assessments of students to see how much learning they did lose, and then meet them at their ability levels.

When it comes to connecting the broadband, that is a challenge that every State and our Nation should take on. And, yes, we can put on some bandaids of hotspots, been putting wireless internet on school buses and driving out to rural North Carolina. That is helping, but it still makes it—it is still very difficult.

So we would encourage any help and thoughts you all have around that, and I know that is a concern for many education chiefs across the Nation. Thank you.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you.

Mr. Gordon, just the quality of your final half a semester and then how you are managing broadband going into the fall—or access going into the fall.

Mr. GORDON. Thank you to the chairman, to the Congressman. Thank you for the question. We know, because we surveyed our students from grades 3 through 12, and their parents, as well as our educators, that the quality was directly related to whether they had high speed, reliable internet in their home. Our students told us that those who had routine access were more effective in completing their work. They were more confident that they could complete their work. They were more focused. They spent more of the day in learning, they were less bored, and they were happier. So we know that there is a direct line.

Our educators also were able to share that kids who did not have those, despite all of the things we outlined in our written testimony, just weren't getting the same learning experience. We are—and again in my written testimony I have outlined this—we are working over the next year to create a nonprofit that exists here in Cleveland to deliver high speed, reliable internet to every family. And the district is going to be the customer for the time that they are a member of the district, so that we can get around hurdles like bad credit or other things that prevent families from accessing it.

And then like my colleague, we are going to assess where students are and use this opportunity to be much more personalized and get away from old constraints like Gregorian calendars or formal grade 2, grade 3, as opposed to multi-age group of where children actually are in their learning.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you very much. I appreciate you guys' responses and being here today. I appreciate it very much.

Thank you and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentle lady from Ohio, Ms. Fudge? Oops.

The gentle lady from Ohio, Ms. Fudge?

The gentleman from Northern Mariana Islands, Mr. Sablan?

Mr. SABLAN. Well, yeah, good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for holding this hearing, and thank you to our witnesses for their testimonies. The Government Accountability Office recently released a report on the state of public schools—public school units in the country.

Unfortunately, it confirmed that high poverty school districts like mine, and across the country, face challenges funding new school buildings or maintaining existing ones.

A 2013 report by the Army Corps of Engineers found \$177 million in deferred maintenance needs in schools in the Northern Marianas and other insular areas. The conditions of school campuses and facilities from the Nation is a matter that will be examined—that will be examined further in a full committee member briefing I will be leading later this month in my capacity as chairman of the subcommittee on early childhood, elementary, and secondary education.

So Mr. Gordon, if I may, given the State of Ohio's budget cuts and Cleveland's local levy prospects, how confident do you feel

about your city's ability to keep up with healthy schools for students in the coming years?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you to the chairman, to the Congressman, for that question. We are in the midst of a school reconstruction project here in the city that has been going on for the past 20 years, because in Ohio, the buildings have been built in the 1960s and 1970s and then not maintained because of budget constraints.

We get a large portion of those resources from the State of Ohio's capital budget, which we now believe the capital dollars will likely need to be diverted to other priorities and that school construction could be halted for the immediate future. I have actually found myself in the difficult space of advocating that the capital budget be used for the internet, infrastructure problem in rural and urban Ohio, at the expense of school construction, and have even signaled to our community that we may pause the new buildings that were expected to start our construction this fall.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you, Mr. Gordon. I don't mean to cut you off, but I have a—it is a decent area where Federal funding such as is proposed by our Rebuild America's Schools Act, the RAS Act, would help?

Mr. GORDON. Yes, sir, those acts would be very helpful for school districts like mine and across the country.

Mr. SABLAN. Okay. I have other questions that I will submit for the record, but I will continue. I have another question. Mr. Gordon, you said that many children in your district lack home internet access, so some students participated remote learning online while others use paper packets. Can you describe the impact this will have on achievement gaps, specifically for students with disabilities, students with economic challenges, and students of color impacted by the subpar educational experience?

Mr. GORDON. So my community is 100 percent poverty, 86 percent children of color, and over a quarter of our students are on an IEP, both because there is a lead health crisis in Cleveland and because of lack of resources in charter and voucher schools for students with disabilities. So students who already face gaps brought on by race and class in this city as one of the most segregated cities in the country are only going to be magnified by those 9 weeks' learning loss.

And when we compare them to their suburban peers—and again, using our own student data—as ineffective as online learning was, in every experience, it was still far more effective as reported by students and parents and teachers than the kinds of tools we were forced to use—mailing packages and those sorts of things.

We can't fully know the gap until the kids are back with us. I can guarantee you without seeing the data, it is going to be magnified.

Mr. SABLAN. Thank you. Thank you. Yes, we are also using the ACT learning system, but the CARES Act provided \$13 billion in Federal emergency relief for K-through-12 education. As Chairman Scott knows, I advocated early on that there should be language to limit the governor—our governors issue. Like in our example, the governor had 4, almost \$5 million of money he could have given to our K-through-12 education. While our community college needed \$1 million, the governor decided to give the community college the

entire almost \$5 million. They were happy, of course. They never asked for that money. They were very happy.

So let me ask Ms. Pringle at this time, looking at where we are today, how far will the CARES Act funding, which the Learning Policy Institute indicates is less than \$300 per student, will the student—go with helping students in your district? Or actually, Mr. Gordon, go ahead and answer that.

Mr. GORDON. So Cleveland's portion of the CARES Act direct funding is between \$24- and \$26 million, depending on whether Ohio chooses to follow the law or the guidance from the Department, and Ohio has not yet made that decision.

Of that \$24 million, we have already had \$15 million in unplanned expenses and a \$5.6 million State budget cut, so essentially \$20.6 million has been spent. We are able to start drawing down those dollars today, so they are finally arriving in our district.

Our governors have not made a decision about the balance. Although we are advocating for internet and for children with disability to get a compensatory—

Mr. SABLAN. Mr. Gordon, my time is up, but in my district, we had over 500 teachers furloughed, and now an additional 40 support staff have been furloughed also.

Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, I am sorry. I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentleman from Alabama, Mr. Byrne?

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity for you to bring us all together to talk about this very important topic. I was worried about this from the get-go, because I knew when we—

Mr. WALBERG. I am out of here.

Mr. BYRNE.—so abruptly ended school and then tried to put children in the circumstance where they would learn virtually, that none of us were prepared for that. Children weren't, teachers weren't, administrators weren't, mom and dads weren't. So the thing that bothers me now is that we marched into this thing without thinking through, and I am worried we are not thinking through what we got to do—

-- I have used it. I have see it be used very effectively.

Mr. BYRNE. So Mr. Johnson, here is the question I have—we can have all the great [Inaudible.]

Mr. GORDON. The short answer, Mr. Representative, is no, and I think you would find broad agreement from all spectrums of the political aisle that the best place for students to learn is in the classroom with a great, caring teacher. There is no replacement for it, and I think that has been magnified through this crisis when, again, I compliment the steps that North Carolina has taken to be a leader in digital education, but even in North Carolina, it is very glaring that we were not where we needed to be to switch from zero percent remote learning to 100 percent remote learning. And there is absolutely no replacement for students being in the classroom.

And I don't just say that as the State Superintendent. I say that as the father of a little girl who just finished her first grade year through remote learning. And we know that she is going to have

learning loss herself because as hard as her teachers tried, you could not just get through as much as when they are in the classroom. But also it took an emotional toll on my daughter, and I won't get into the details, but this has been very difficult, especially for our younger students.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman, I need to tell you that Mr. Byrne is not being shown as he is speaking and that you skipped over Mr. Walberg, unfortunately, because you could—he was speaking but you could not hear him.

And I would ask your indulgence, because Mr. Walberg needs to step out, after Mr. Byrne. But we need to get Mr. Byrne on the camera. This is the reason we ought to be in this room and ought not to be doing these things remotely. This is very troubling, so I would ask you to please see what you can do about getting Mr. Byrne on.

Chairman SCOTT. I have Mr. Byrne on my computer. I see him well. His voice went out briefly, but I see him on my computer. Is anybody else—can you nod your heads, can you see Mr. Byrne?

Ms. FOXX. I could not see him.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Some are seeing him, some are not. He is right in the middle of my screen.

Ms. FOXX. Okay.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay.

Ms. ADAMS. I am able to see him. I am able to see him, Mr. Chair. This is Alma Adams.

Looking good.

Chairman SCOTT. And I called on Mr. Walberg.

Ms. FOXX. And he answered, but you could not hear him.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Well, we will move him up on the list. If he is in a real crunch, if Ms. Wilson will defer, he can go next.

Ms. FOXX. We would appreciate that.

Chairman SCOTT. Have you completed your questions, Mr. Byrne?

I can't—I can't—you are right, we can't hear him.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Byrne is coming to my microphone.

Mr. SABLAN. Okay. I am not suggesting anything, but remember I had that bad experience. He should hold his mike up to his mouth. That works.

Chairman SCOTT. If you use Dr. Foxx's mic, I think that would be helpful.

Mr. BYRNE. The last comment I wanted to make is this. If we can make virtual education work as effectively as in-person education, we would only need one teacher for every subject, and we just blast out that great teacher to everybody in America. But we all know that is not enough. We have got to get these kids back in school this fall.

And I know it is up to the governors, that is not something we get to control. But if we think we are going to be able to substitute, with virtual education, the quality that these kids get when they are actually in school with the teacher, we are kidding ourselves.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for this. And if Ms. Wilson is willing to defer to Mr. Walberg, we would be very grateful.

Chairman SCOTT. I am going to recognize Ms. Wilson at this point. Ms. Wilson?

Ms. FOXX. We can't hear you.

Ms. WILSON. Mr. Walberg? Go ahead, Mr. Walberg.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. She has deferred, Mr. Walberg. Thank you, Ms. Wilson. The gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Walberg, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you Ms. Wilson.

Mr. WALBERG. I thank the gentle lady. Can you hear me?

Chairman SCOTT. Yes.

Mr. WALBERG. Can you hear me now?

Ms. FOXX. Yes, we can hear you.

Mr. WALBERG. I was asking if Bobby could hear me. I know you can hear me in the room. Again, it is a great hearing, but the reason we ought to have these hearings here is because of this stuff. It is difficult to be passed over because of technology, and I know it wasn't your fault.

I appreciate the fact that we have one of our witnesses here today. I appreciate you coming all the way from North Carolina to be here. And another reason why we ought to be here, we ought to open up our country again. One of the best things that can provide education funding is have an economy that is going, not shut down.

So another reason, to get the sales tax revenue, the property tax, all of that going, and provide the necessary funding for our schools.

Mr. Johnson, the CARES Act created the Education Stabilization Fund, which provided over \$30 billion for State schools and higher education to respond to the coronavirus. More specifically, the CARES Act states that local educational agencies may use the funding for purchasing educational technology, including hardware, software [Inaudible.] and connectivity.

In April the FCC and the Department of Education announced a partnership to promote the use of \$16 billion [Inaudible.] For the use of remote learning.

Mr. Johnson, a challenge that certainly exists in my district is a lack of broadband access. As co-chair of the 5G Caucus, expanding broadband connectivity is something of particular interest to me. So three questions I want you to discuss as I ask them to you.

The first is, how has your State utilized CARES Act resources to promote distance learning? Secondly, do you have best practices you can share with districts looking to better utilize technology in their schools? And third, are there any additional actions that you think Congress should consider to further promote connectivity between students and the classroom?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Representative. I will start again with urging Congress to look at the need for broadband access across our Nation, not just in my State, but this is an issue that all States are facing. We have dedicated a lot of our CARES Act funding with the idea of addressing these connectivity divides.

Again, there was a large sum that went to the North Carolina General Assembly. They have provided tens of millions of dollars for devices for students and teachers. They also have provided \$70 million of those funds to address summer learning loss, and I have encouraged local superintendents that if we are in a place where

students cannot come back in during the summer to have their learning loss addressed, we use that funding to buy really high quality, professional development for teachers, and digital curriculum options for teachers, and devices to help address that summer learning loss remotely.

Then finally, we are getting out the money from the CARES Act that go to the local districts and the schools there. That money is about \$400 million in North Carolina. We have just finished the application process for districts, and overwhelmingly districts are telling us that they want to use that to buy devices and ensure connectivity for students.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, Mr. Johnson. There has been a lot of discussion today about how the Federal Government needs to add assistance on top of the money that was allocated in the CARES Act. And while there may need be significant needs for greater assistance—and we have to look into that—are there ways the Federal Government can assist States and school districts in other ways? Are there flexibilities in Federal law that have not yet been used today that would be useful?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. Thank you. You have heard a lot today about this idea of personalized learning, being able to use these new tools to empower teachers to do what they have been doing for many, many years, individualizing education for students, but to actually be able to do that in a practical, easier-to-use way, by using technology and these good digital curriculum options.

Let's look at getting some flexibility from our accountability metrics so that we still have the accountability we need to ensure students are learning, but it doesn't have to be through high stakes, end-of-year testing. Let's start looking at a program—we are grateful we are part of an innovative assessment pilot put on by the U.S. Department of Education.

Let's maybe put that into overdrive and allow formative diagnostics throughout the year, to give us the accountability metrics but also help teachers inform their instruction of students.

Mr. WALBERG. Thank you, and I thank Representative Wilson for her help on this problem in allowing me the opportunity to ask the questions.

And I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. And Ms. Wilson will speak in the time previously reserved for Mr. Walberg. Ms. Wilson?

Ms. WILSON. Stay safe, Mr. Walberg.

I am a strong advocate for public schools, and if a district—if our districts don't already have enough to worry about, Betsy DeVos' misguided equitable service guidance threatens to redirect critical resources away from disadvantaged students in schools with high concentration of children from low-income families and towards wealthier private schools—

Now, in the midst of a pandemic and the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, she is seeking to strip desperately needed emergency funding from public schools, all while ignoring longstanding precedent, the intent of Congress, and the statutory requirements of the CARES Act.

I have a question for Ms. Pringle. Can you speak to your concerns regarding life outcomes for Black students and students with

disabilities, such as educational, career, socio, emotional, and health outcomes through the combination of the COVID-19 pandemic and the possibility of gaping holes in State education budgets for several years?

Ms. PRINGLE. First of all, I want to say thank you for making your comments that you made about Secretary DeVos ignoring the intent of Congress, specifically the guidance around this Every Student Succeeds Act. We know that money was designated to go to public schools, and to try to use it for private schools and voucher schemes is unacceptable.

And we thank you for, in the CARES Act, actually seeking to make sure that is limited, that what she is trying to do is limited, with the intent of that act. Thank you.

Absolutely, our students of color, our students with special needs already—already—were at a disadvantage because of the inequitable system that they have found throughout the years have not provided the resources they need, the supports they need to learn.

And we know that this pandemic, just like any other crisis, always impacts them first, and it impacts them the most. That is why we are coming together, our millions of educators all over the country are doing everything they can to push the Senate to concur with the actions of the House and provide the additional funding that our schools need. Because we absolutely know that our students with special needs, as well as our Black and Brown students, need that additional assistance with equitable funding in their schools.

We already heard that they are more likely to go to schools that are crumbling, that are suffering from poor air quality, which will predispose them to getting sick. Already. We need those additional funding—that additional funding to improve the conditions in our schools. We need that additional funding to make sure they have access to high quality educators. We need that additional funding to make sure that they have those resources and supports, especially now.

And Congresswoman, I can't thank you enough for raising up the emotional challenges that our students are coming back to school with. We have the twin pandemics, not only the COVID-19, but of the institutional racism in this country.

Our Black and Brown students are suffering, as they are watching these inequities all over this country show up in both pandemics. And so we absolutely need to make sure we have counselors and enough teachers to address their emotional needs when they come back to school.

Ms. WILSON. Thank you so much. Thank you, Ms. Pringle.

Dr. Leachman, does that mean my time is up? I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. You have 1 minute left.

Ms. WILSON. Okay. So Dr. Leachman, can you explain why it is important for State leaders to ensure high poverty school districts are not disproportionately harmed by the budget cuts? And how do we—can we explain how school budgets are set, when these decisions are made, or how—why it would benefit States and districts to know what Federal support they can rely on?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you, Congresswoman. Both excellent questions. Low-income children and children of color already face

enormous barriers to success. Cutting funding to their often already under resourced schools would just increase those already very significant barriers.

Talking about laying off teachers, counselors, nurses, librarians, limiting course offerings, extracurricular opportunities, putting off maintenance that needs to be done, because of the barriers placed in front of those children already, these sorts of cuts would be particularly damaging.

And then to your question about—I am sorry, Congresswoman, can you remind me your second question?

Ms. WILSON. How can we guide school districts to know that this money is coming so that they can—

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. WILSON. —address the budget crisis that they have and know that—

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you.

Ms. WILSON.—give us some information on when are these decisions made, why would it benefit States and districts to know what Federal support they can rely on—

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes.

Ms. WILSON.—as early as possible, considering the timelines they have in making—setting up budgets. It is important.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you. Almost all States start their fiscal year on July 1st. They are required to balance their budgets. So they need to know soon how much Federal aid they are going to get because they have to write those budgets.

And so they are going to be making decisions about cutting funding, which will result in layoffs and other crucial, very damaging school cuts, unless they get substantial Federal aid. So they need to know if that is coming so that they can avoid making those harmful cuts.

Ms. WILSON. Thank you. Thank you so much. I yield back.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. That time was previously reserved for Mr. Walberg. So we will go back in regular order, and I note the gentle lady from Ohio, Ms. Fudge, has returned. Ms. Fudge?

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and forgive me, I had to take a call, Mr. Chairman, doing the work that everybody thinks that we can't do unless we are in Washington. It is the work I do every day and all day.

Welcome to all of our witnesses today, and I especially want to welcome CEO Eric Gordon from the Cleveland Municipal School District, and my friend, Ms. Pringle, it is nice to see you as well.

Mr. Gordon, in your testimony, you talked about schools across the country and how desperately we needed funding. In your recent—in your written testimony, you state that 40 percent of families in Cleveland have no reliable access. What additional resources are needed for remote learning to be successful in Cleveland?

Mr. GORDON. Through you the chairman to my congresswoman, great to see you, and thank you for the question. We estimate that just for Cleveland to be connected alone is \$40 million, to get the infrastructure in place that would connect the kids and families that I serve in the district, and that estimate was created through

our nonprofit partnership, DigitalC. It is the way we are delivering the infrastructure here in the city.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you. You also mentioned a personalized system of learning. Can you just briefly tell me what that entails?

Mr. GORDON. So over the past decade, we have really tried to test and push against the system. We have changed calendars to year-round schools and longer days. We have moved learning into museums, Fortune 500 companies, hospitals. We have partnered with, you know, any number of nonprofit groups—glee for clee, which is our early childhood efforts, mentorships, student-organized learning, and remote content, which can be researched, can be using databases, can be using learning management platforms.

And so what we seek to do is to make the mastery of the content the goal, which all educators want it to be, and the time is one of the resources, as opposed to having 180 days dictate that is the amount of learning a child is supposed to have, but by using a much more flexible environment of all of those different resources, so that students move at the pace that they are able.

And what this would allow us to do is, instead of every teacher always having 25 children in a class, some who are bored because they could be moving faster, could be working more independently, and others that could benefit from having a small group setting with their teacher, we can then personalize how we assign kids, so that kids who are far behind get more personalized attention, and kids who are prepared to excel can keep moving.

Ms. FUDGE. Okay, thank you. Mr. Leachman, in your written testimony you say, an excellent K12 education for children of color is vital for overcoming historical barriers. I couldn't agree with you more, and that is the reason why Chairman Scott and I introduced the Strength in Diversity Act. And you know that act provides grants to schools to improve diversity.

Mr. Leachman, can you talk through the historical barriers to education for students of color?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Congresswoman, thank you for that question and raising this very important issue. It is crucial that we all understand the connections between historical racism and other—and ongoing forms of discrimination and bias on the opportunities that are available to families in the communities where these schools are located and on the kids themselves. Without understanding that history, it is difficult to devise policy that will really be effective in addressing—in creating opportunities and creating the kind of educational system that all of our children need.

Doing so would benefit all of us, because having all of those kids—helping all of those kids reach their full potential and overcoming finally these historical barriers, would benefit the economy, would make our community stronger.

Ms. FUDGE. Thank you so much. And I thank you all again for testifying. And just to a point that I heard earlier about education not being in the Constitution, there are a whole lot of things that are in the Constitution that my colleagues don't follow. With that, I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentleman from Wisconsin, Mr. Grothman?

Mr. GROTHMAN. Can you hear me now?

Chairman SCOTT. I can hear you now.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay, real good. I don't mean to beat a dead horse here, but I will just request of my good friend, the chairman, that I know next week we are going to be around here anyway, I think on Thursday and Friday, and I missed today not being able to talk with my Democrat colleagues.

I like to be all bipartisan, and I wish so much I could talk to some Democrats to my left, but I can't. So I would just ask you one more time, I wish you would reschedule it for, you know, next Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday when so many of us are around here anyway.

Second thing, as far as Mr. Gordon is concerned, he is very critical of schools that are 40 years old or older. And when I was at the district I went to today, not at the time, I think all the schools are over 40 years old, and is a very well respected school. Everything in my experience indicates the important thing is to have good teachers and good parents, and how old the bricks and mortar are is secondary.

But I will ask Mr. Gordon, who was complaining here—I tried to do a little bit of research—compared to the State of Ohio as a whole, how much they spend per pupil in the Cleveland public schools.

Mr. GORDON. Through the chair to the congresswoman—the Congressman, I am sorry—we spend about \$11,000 per pupil.

Mr. GROTHMAN. And how is that compared to Ohio as a whole?

Mr. GORDON. I don't know the State average. It is widely varied in the State. So for example, a neighboring school district charges about \$22,000 per child. So it is widely varied in the State of Ohio.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I am under the impression, just looking on the internet, that you are getting more than the average in the State of Ohio. Do you believe that is not true?

Mr. GORDON. That is likely true, yes.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay, okay.

A question for Ms. Pringle. One of the things I was thinking about, or one of the lessons we learned over the last few weeks from the tragedy of George Floyd—and again this is for Ms. Pringle—is that this horrible police officer should have been removed earlier. And I think around the country, unions are looking at this situation and maybe sometimes realizing they have done too much to protect the bad police officers. I hear from my school superintendents that until Scott Walker changed the rules in Wisconsin, that was a big problem for them as well. You know, sometimes, the unions were too powerful at protecting bad, bad teachers.

I know a lot of the—or some of the unions are recognizing maybe they protected some bad policemen. Do you regret your past stances on maybe protecting too many bad teachers?

Ms. PRINGLE. So unions don't protect bad teachers. Unions are there to ensure that employees' rights are followed, to make sure that we have the opportunity as we have, our members of the NEA, whose mission is to not only unite our members but the entire Nation to fulfill the promise of public education.

And it is our unions who are fighting to ensure racial and social and education justice. It is our unions who are fighting to diversify the teaching force. It is our unions who—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Can I take it to mean you are not going to change your policy?

Ms. PRINGLE.—making sure that our students and our schools get the resources they need—

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay.

Ms. PRINGLE.—and deserve.

Mr. GROTHMAN. I guess I got my answer. I will emphasize, teachers are important. And I think, say, a bad second grade teacher is particularly harmful to a student who comes from a difficult background and—but in any event, now we will switch to Mr. Johnson.

You answered questions before about internet in rural areas, but I would like to ask how quickly you are able to provide more internet and broadband access to people in rural North Carolina, and repeat again exactly how far long you are on that process.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you. We are able to do that quickly with hotspots and mobile devices on buses. We are closing that gap as quickly as possible. We have done that for actual physical school buildings. But we are still assessing exactly what that gap is and using those funds to close that, along with our General Assembly.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. About how—when you talk about access, though, at home, percentage wise, how many kids at home have broadband internet access in North Carolina, you think?

Mr. JOHNSON. Percentage wise, we are looking at about—we are doing this by devices. We are looking at a few hundred thousand devices would have to get out to students. So the percentages, we are better along than other States, but we are not where we want to be.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Like, you know, like percentage wise, where are you today, and percentage wise, where were you, say, 5 years ago?

Mr. JOHNSON. I would have to get that specific information to you, and I can. We are getting the hotspots out, and that is why I would hate to say something right now that is incorrect, where we actually are better than we were just 3 months ago, based on the hotspots we have done.

Mr. GROTHMAN. So you are making progress that quickly, significant—

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. GROTHMAN.—improvement over the last 3 months?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I can say that and we will get you that progress as the hotspots get out, but we do realize this is a major issue that many education chiefs in States are facing.

Mr. GROTHMAN. Okay. Thank you very much. I will maybe—because I do have a second here—no, I will let it be.

I will yield the rest of my time.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. And I thank the gentleman from Wisconsin, particularly for his opening comments about the desire to meet in person. I can assure you that if we are in session, any committee proceedings will be in person and not virtual, so we will follow through on your suggestion.

Next is the gentle lady from Oregon, Ms. Bonamici.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Takano.

Mr. TAKANO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question is directed to Mr. Johnson, the superintendent of schools.

Mr. Johnson, you know, I understand you are a strong proponent of charter schools and school choice, and I want to know if you believe that charter schools should be known as also public schools or whether there is a—I mean, should they be able to claim that moniker?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. In North Carolina, charter schools are public schools. They come out of the State's public-school funding.

Mr. TAKANO. I would like to highlight a New York Times article from this morning about charter schools. Unlike regular and traditional public schools, charter schools and private schools are eligible for PPP funds through the CARES Act. Charter schools are also eligible for the Education Stabilization funds. The ability for these schools to tap into PPP funds significantly disadvantages traditional public schools.

Should charter schools be allowed to tap into PPP funds while they are also benefitting from Stabilization funds?

Mr. JOHNSON. I know that relief funds from the United States Congress and the administration should help as broad a spectrum of students and citizens as possible. I am not personally aware of charter schools in North Carolina applying for the PPP fund. That is something that I would need to look into more with my colleagues.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, my understanding is that schools that are fairly well—charter schools that have fairly healthy balance sheets, that are funded by Mr. Bloomberg, who maximally donated to your campaign for State Superintendent, that these schools are potentially drawing PPP funds. If true, what do you think about this?

Mr. JOHNSON. I would say in North Carolina—

Mr. TAKANO. [Inaudible.] funds?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is a determination for Congress and for the Treasury Department. I would say that in North Carolina, you have charter schools that are struggling just as much as other public schools when it comes to the funding issue, because of the way they are funded in North Carolina. They are having to find resources for their own buildings. They find resources for their own transportation.

And I will say I have been a very strong advocate for charter schools but also for charter school accountability. And if there is a charter school that is not doing well, I want to make sure that it provides—

Choice for students. And there are definitely some excellent examples of charter schools in North Carolina that are providing education for—

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Johnson, I recall my time, please. So, you know, my concern is that the administration is refusing to disclose who is receiving PPP funds, but some groups out there have discovered that at least \$50 million has gone to charter schools from the PPP program. If there—that is why I asked you about why you regard them as public schools.

Because if they are receiving money from the PPP program, they are receiving it as sort of in this—with the understanding that they

are sort of nonprofit organizations. And schools, public schools specifically, are not allowed to receive PPP funds.

So do you think that the administration should disclose who the recipients of PPP funds are so we can understand which charter schools actually have been receiving PPP funds, including those that may have very healthy balance sheets and are backed by wealthy billionaires?

Mr. JOHNSON. I would support transparency in everything the Federal Government is doing.

Mr. TAKANO. So you would call upon the Trump administration to disclose, you know, whether or not charter schools have been receiving PPP funds in addition to stabilization funds?

Mr. JOHNSON. I won't go so far as to make that grandiose statement when we are here to talk about the public schools, and the PPP is out of my realm of expertise, self-admittedly. But, no, I absolutely agree with you; transparency in everything is very important for government.

Mr. TAKANO. Well, I thank you for that, sir. We are talking about funding the public schools. My concern is that currently charter schools, what you call public schools, are drawing from the stabilization program, which was intended for public schools under the CARES Act, yet they are also able to be nonpublic schools because public schools cannot—I would say the conventional public schools are not able to draw on PPP funds.

So I don't know what they really are. The public schools are not, but we should take advantage of this moment.

I yield back Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentlelady from New York, Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Chairman Scott. And thank you to all of our witnesses for your testimony today on an incredibly important subject.

In my district in New York's north country, we have been working very closely with our teachers, our superintendents, and our parents to get their feedback in real-time, and my district is one of the most rural districts east of the Mississippi River. It is certainly the most rural district in New York, and there are some school districts where up to 50 percent of the students do not have access to broadband. So I echo my colleagues sentiments on the importance of closing that digital divide.

In addition, I have heard from parents and families of students with special needs who have been woefully underserved during this crisis.

I wanted to ask you, Mark, what are the biggest lessons that you have learned in terms of where online learning does not meet the need of our students? Because we have learned a lot over the past few months. We have learned that many students have completely fallen out of contact with our school systems. We have learned that some students who have very hands-on parents have thrived or caregivers who are involved in helping them navigate this new technology.

So I would just like to hear from you, Mark, what your biggest lessons are, from your perspective, with a particular focus on rural students.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you for that question, Representative.

Absolutely we are making sure that we do everything we can to help students thrive; but, again, as the father of a young daughter myself, I can tell you, even with the connectivity, this is still a struggle for parents having to step in and especially parents who are educators themselves, parents who are first responders. I mean, they were on the frontlines educating and saving lives and still are during this crisis, while students also needed that extra help with the remote learning.

I think that is one of the biggest challenges. Obviously, there is the glaring, glaring issue of the lack of connectivity and the need for us to really help connect all students, especially if we are going to be relying on the no learning, but then also going into the proper professional development opportunities that we can afford for our teachers to support them in really best practices for remote learning and the digital curriculum options.

We have heard a lot about personalized learning today. Personalized learning is the idea that when our students come back, we can do a formative assessment on where they are and what their ability level is, how much learning they have lost. And then all of this technology we are buying, use that technology to help teachers meet them where they are in their ability, and they can progress at their pace.

As my colleague said, you know, my words are that we have a system that, you know, it is not any educator's fault, it is not any the leader's fault. We just have a system that was designed a hundred years ago for an agrarian industrial society.

We are now in the digital age, and we should use this moment to transform our education to digital age practices, but that is going to be a heavy lift, and it is definitely going to take support from States and school districts for our educators and students.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you.

And I just want to take this moment to thank all of the teachers and educators in my district who I have spoken with and those I haven't had an opportunity to speak with, they have just been tremendous in rising to this challenge as a community, and we couldn't be more proud of our teachers across this country and our students during this difficult time.

And with that, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Thank you.

Next is the gentlelady from North Carolina, Dr. Adams.

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And let me thank all of our witnesses here today. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you for your support of children.

I want to shout out to my district in CMS in Charlotte and my former district, Guilford County in Greensboro.

Mr. Johnson, thank you for joining the committee. It is always great to have an opportunity to talk policy with fellow North Carolinians, and because of my particular interest in the State of North Carolina and its public-school system. I was on the school board many, many years ago. And I am a 40-year retired teacher, but—or a professor.

But my questions will be very State specific, and so I would appreciate if we could have succinct answers because, you know, we are on a really short time limit.

We both know that the commitment our State made to public education dated all the way back to the Great Depression, and as many other States suffered rampant school closures, not one public school closed in North Carolina due to the depression. But since the depression of 2008, priorities have changed, and today North Carolina is only one of seven States where State investment in education has still not reached pre 2009 levels adjusted for inflation.

So the State is projecting a revenue shortfall of \$1.6 billion in 2019-2020, \$2.6 billion in 2020-2021. So given these facts, what is your plan as the State superintendent to ensure North Carolina students receive a sound basic education despite the anticipated shortfalls in revenue?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Representative. It is a pleasure to see you, and thank you for your questions on North Carolina specifically because you definitely know a lot about North Carolina, and we appreciate that and appreciate your service.

I would say that there are multiple plans in place. One, we are working very closely with the North Carolina General Assembly to make sure that we protect our education budget as much as possible. We should be hopefully seeing the education budget come out soon over the summer. That, plus the Federal relief that Congress was able to send to North Carolina, definitely putting all of that together to see how it helps and, quite frankly, getting into the weeds a little bit on just one particular thing, we are very fortunate in North Carolina that we do live in a State where teacher salaries have increased a lot just in a very short amount of time.

And in North Carolina last school year, the median teacher salary was actually more than the median household income, which is—it just reached it last year and we are very excited about that; but we have launched a teach-and-see program where we want to recruit great candidates to come and teach in our schools because it is such an amazing important career.

We are going to double down on that. Especially when you see all of the job losses in our economy and what that could mean, we really want to reach these amazing graduates who are just now graduating from college, put them in programs where they can come teach in our schools, but we will need to make sure we have the teaching places for them. And I believe we are on track for hopefully the North Carolina General Assembly to fund enrollment growth in North Carolina.

Ms. ADAMS. Well, thank you very much. And I served 20 years in that General Assembly. I know some of the players who are still there. I also know that Senate Bill 704, which set the August 17 date for schools to be open, like many of my colleagues, I am very concerned about how they can open safely. And in the plan that was put together, what was your involvement? Did you consult teachers or parents or community leaders in developing it?

Mr. JOHNSON. Oh, absolutely. The Governor came out with the plan that was in partnership with the education system, many diverse stakeholders, from teachers, to staff, to superintendents.

Right now the Governor's plan is the plan A, a plan B, and a plan C. And I will be very brief.

Plan A is getting as many students back into school as possible. Plan B is advance social distancing requirements. Plan C is remote learning. The Governor is going to make his call on what plan we will be in by July 1.

Ms. ADAMS. Okay. I am going to have to send you a question now in writing. But I just wanted to know what role you played in the plan. But you don't need to answer that right now.

But. Mr. Leachman, let me ask you, what is the best way for States and localities to spend CARES Act funds?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes, thank you. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Ms. ADAMS. I have got about 59 seconds.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes, ma'am.

So, first and foremost, it should be spent on dealing with the pandemic. If we don't do that, then the economy and everything that we care about is going to suffer. We do that first and foremost. The second thing is to address the harm on the people that have been hurt the most.

So I would say those two things, including—and including distance learning and doing as much as you can in the schools as part of those efforts.

Ms. ADAMS. What lessons, Mr. Leachman, can Congress learn from the Great Recession and support our States and school districts?

Mr. LEACHMAN. The aid provided during the Great Recession was helpful, but it was too small and it ended too soon, only covered about a quarter of State shortfalls. We had to make cuts that we are still feeling the effects of.

Ms. ADAMS. All right. I don't want the chairman to gavel me. I am out of time.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thanks very much.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Thank you.

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Allen?

The gentleman from Georgia, Mr. Allen?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Smucker.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Allen is on.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Okay. Mr. Allen.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I just wanted to share with everyone what I am hearing in the 12th District of Georgia is that we must open this economy and it is critical that we get schools open for the new school year, and I can't get anybody to tell me there is another option.

This is an important discussion that we are having today. In fact, it is critical that we, as a Congress and as a country, come together and try to decide exactly how we are going to move forward.

Mr. Johnson, you spoke of some concern as a citizen on the amount of Federal spending as a result of COVID-19 in your opening remarks. Since you are a teacher—I don't know if you are a math teacher, but I thought I would give you a little math that we have had to deal with here.

This year the Federal budget at the beginning of the year, October 1, was 300 billion above the previous year and 200 billion above

2018. Most of this was discretionary spending, which is about 30 percent of the total federal budget, which has increased from 1.2 trillion to 1.5 trillion in 3 years. In the last 3 months, it has tripled. It has gone from \$1.5 trillion to \$5.5 trillion, or four times that originally budgeted.

I have heard the Heroes Act mentioned here today which would double the accelerated level from 5.5 trillion to 8.8 trillion. The Heroes Act also includes a large tax cut for those who live in high tax States, known as the State and local tax deduction, SALT.

As a citizen and an educator, how would you explain this debt that we are putting on the backs of these very children that we are trying to figure out how to get back to school this fall, how would you explain this to them?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, again, I will emphasize that I am the father of a 7-year-old, and I agree with you, that is one of the balances that Congress has to, unfortunately, strike in this situation.

We absolutely are going to need resources for schools. There is no doubt about that. But we know that the amount of money coming from Congress is being done through debt, and while we absolutely want to connect every student, we owe it to every student to find the innovation to make sure we get them the tools and strategies they need to succeed; but we also don't want to burden them with even more of this debt that is being piled upon them that eventually they are going to have to pay.

So I would say it is a very hard balance that we are asking Congress to make; but that is one reason why I just bring the information from North Carolina about how we are still working through the funding that you all have so graciously given us so far.

Mr. ALLEN. Well, it is a very, very difficult situation, particularly when we are asking our educators and everyone across the State in Georgia, which has been mentioned earlier, to reduce expenses as a result of COVID-19, and here we have the Federal Government that has, I mean, almost six times, increased spending almost six times to deal with this, plus we have an economy that is currently being restricted because of the COVID and other reasons that are a little bit beyond our control.

But as far as the funding levels, assuming that we—I don't know how we are going to deal with this situation. We have put ourselves in a terrible situation. In other words, in Georgia we had a \$3 billion rainy day fund, and we are going to deal with it. But, you know, what have you got to have to, I mean, get your school system open this fall? I mean, can you get me a number and what you think it looks like for the rest of the country? Have you looked at any numbers there?

Mr. JOHNSON. No. And I know that there is actually the group of chief State school officers that is working on providing a number; but it is very important that we put everything together when we make these decisions because you are making some very difficult choices, everyone is.

And part of this is sometimes they are just really, really tough challenges that we face with this COVID-19 crisis. But I do believe that we will be able to work through it together and get through it together.

Mr. ALLEN. Well. We have done it this so far to save lives, and that is important; but we have got so many other things that are confronting us right now, and it is difficult. And we don't take this spending lightly; I don't, because it is going to be a tremendous impact on future generations. We don't even know what that impact is going to be.

So I thank you for your time.

And I will yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you, thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. DeSaulnier.

The gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Norcross.

Mr. NORCROSS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and to our ranking member. We appreciate you putting together this hearing. It is a remarkable time in our country given what has gone on over the course of the last few years.

Just a reflection, that when we look at our children, who are our future, this is why it is so important that when we do open, we open the right way. We have seen what happens across this country with this spike coming after what happens when you open the wrong way.

And to my colleague who suggested bricks and mortar don't matter, well, they certainly do to those children who would be in those facilities. The old schools had asbestos. They had PCBs. They had lead. Now they have COVID. So there is a smart way to reuse your buildings. That is why Mr. Scott and I have introduced a bill to address that.

But I just want to talk about what is going on today, this massive revenue loss, which is important when it is the children that is the primary goal for us to make sure that they don't do it. So I asked a number of teachers in my district how they are dealing with it. We now have physical distancing as we are communicating, but we know how important it is for a teacher in her classroom to physically see the children, that they can react and see difference nuances when a child is left behind.

Ms. Pringle, how are teachers dealing with this online when there is a disruption or there is an issue when you can't see it and sometimes you can't even hear it? How are teachers dealing with this?

Chairman SCOTT. Need to unmute.

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Congressman, for that question.

I cannot tell you how proud I am of our teachers all over this country who are, once again, standing in the gaps for our students.

So I talked with one of those teachers who told me that she actually spent almost a thousand dollars to get a device, technology, where she could do exactly what you were talking about, where she could actually see her students working through the math problems so she could identify where they were having problems. That is the kind of resource investment we need.

We need that now, and I will tell you that it is unacceptable, it is unacceptable, that we can find money to bail out billionaires, and millionaires, and corporations, and we cannot invest in our students right now and in their future. That is unacceptable.

So we have our teachers who are stepping up, but we need our government to step up, too.

Mr. NORCROSS. And also the one thing I hear time after time, different ages act in different ways. When you have a smaller child who has the guidance of their parent or guardian, that is one thing; but as they get into high school, something happens to students if we can all remember that. So that is a challenge we have to continue.

But, Mr. Gordon, I wanted to ask about reopening schools. The pandemic has changed normal. There will be a new normal. What that looks like will depend on how this pandemic and this virus reacts.

What steps have you taken—because traditionally the summer months which, we are right now, is the construction season, that opportunity to prepare schools for the next coming year, which is only a couple of months away.

What guidance have you had in preparing the physical schools for the pandemic and children that are coming back in September?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, sir.

We are very fortunate to have a very highly respected medical community in Cleveland, and so we have been working with University Hospitals, who has put together a team that is actually coming into our buildings and walking the buildings with us to let us know how we can safely implement Ohio's and the CDC's guidance. We also—

Mr. NORCROSS. Let me interrupt for a minute.

Mr. GORDON. Yes, sir.

Mr. NORCROSS. You say guidance. We have heard protocol. But these aren't standards. They are not enforceable by anybody. You are voluntarily accepting them; is that correct?

Mr. GORDON. Well, Governor DeWine has not yet released his guidance, so we do not yet know if it will be through an order or whether it will be guidance. Most of his releases have been mandates of how industries should run, then best practices. So right now I anticipate that we will have mandatory public health rules.

Mr. NORCROSS. Well, this is why we and Bobby Scott, again, has another bill that talks about these enforceable standards that are directly related to how employees and teachers, but, more importantly, our kids, are going back into these public institutions with guidelines. We need standards so people know what to follow.

With that, that is my call. But, again, this is an issue that is not going away. September is here.

And I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Smucker.

Mr. SMUCKER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your scheduling this hearing on this very important issue.

I would like to thank the witnesses, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Johnson, Ms. Pringle, for participating in this and for the work that you all are doing to ensure that our students can respond in the best way possible and can continue to learn through this unprecedented time.

I can tell you with conversations with administrators, superintendents in my area, as well as teachers, I am so proud of the work that is being done in PA 11. There was talk of internet access. You know, in my area, I have some rural communities in my

area, but we don't have a big problem with broadband access, but when schools switched to remote learning, they realized that many families still didn't have the internet access that they needed. And so it presented a lot of challenges in the rollout of those remote learning platforms.

And so one of the creative solutions in my area was that superintendents sent bus drivers out with hot spots on their buses, and they drove around throughout the community. It would stop at different areas creating mobile internet hubs. So that was just one example of creative solutions that were taken right here in our community.

My son was a junior, will now be a senior in Lampeter-Strasburg, the school district where we live, and I was so pleased to see the tremendous effort that the teachers took to ensure that learning continued, even—just one example of a teacher, you know, ran some sort of contest to keep the students engaged and online and took her own personal time to drop off some gift certificate to a local, I don't know, Starbucks, or whatever it was, for my son.

So it just showed the kind of commitment that teachers were making, I am sure all across the country, certainly I observed firsthand all across our district here. So we appreciate all the work.

This does obviously create a massive funding issue. Just one comment on that. You know, the longer we are closed down, the more additional revenue is lost. I have been disappointed in Pennsylvania that data has shown that the curve was literally crushed here, hospitals were never overwhelmed, but we are far behind other States in reopening.

And every day we do that, it is not only additional revenue that is lost that could be going to schools, but it is also additional businesses that may not come back to reinvigorate the economy when it does open. So I think it is urgent that we continue to safely reopen and allow businesses that can safely reopen to do so as quickly as possible.

And I was talking a long time and didn't get to a lot of questions. But, Mr. Gordon, in particular, I was very interested in one of your comments in regards to competency-based learning as opposed to measuring—I believe this was you, Mr. Gordon, but as opposed to measuring seat time, which I have always been an advocate of. I think we should move students along based on what they know, not necessarily the amount of time they were sitting in the seats.

But you said you have potentially learned some things through this that you might be able to apply. I wondered if you could just expand on that. I was curious what you meant by that.

Mr. GORDON. Certainly, Congressman. Thank you.

So I have long believed that we need to write our education system so that it focuses on the mastery of learning and not just a forced march. I say in my own community, there is no science that says 25 kids can only learn English language arts from 9:07 to 10:11 Monday through Friday. That is an efficiency of scheduling, not a design for learning. And we have a decade of work of trying to create more mastering of important models in Cleveland.

What we learned in this shutdown is—and you heard it from my colleague in North Carolina—is different kids respond in different

ways. Younger children struggled more with the digital platforms in general than older students with disabilities.

And then based on need, I have a parent who wrote to me very upset because she has three children. She is a single parent. She has two jobs, and both are considered essential. And I want her making sure her kids do all of this stuff, and she is overwhelmed. But even things like that add impact.

And so it is really pushed my team and I. I am proud of my teachers because we scheduled student-parent-teacher conferences at a schedule that met the family's need as opposed to everybody gets a call every day or everybody gets a call a week. That overwhelmed mom can't take a call every day. And I think we did more and better for our kids because of how much effort my educators made to find out where that family was and walk along with them.

Mr. SMUCKER. Well I am out of time already, but I do want again to say thank you for your leadership. And this has been tough in many different areas, including education; but, you know, perhaps we will learn a few things about how we could do things differently. I know that is true in telemedicine. It is going to change the way I think we work, but probably also see some positive changes in terms of how we approach education.

So thank you for those comments.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Washington, Ms. Jayapal.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to all of our witnesses for being here today.

This hearing is incredibly timely as demonstrators and activists across the country are calling on their elected leaders to correct long-standing funding inequities that disproportionately harm Black people. For far too long funding for militarized police forces in Black communities is prioritized instead of equitable public education for these same communities.

And I am deeply troubled that this pandemic will only further widen achievement gaps for Black students, low-income students, and students of color.

In Washington State, while 96 percent of K-12 funding is constitutionally protected, we are all incredibly concerned that it would still be subjected to cuts. With a \$7 billion budget shortfall projected over the next 3 years in our State, school employee hiring freezes and layoffs seem likely without Federal support, especially when staffing makes up about 85 percent of K-12 costs in my district.

Ms. Pringle, thank you so much for your testimony and for your work. How do staff cuts disproportionately hurt students of color and low-income students?

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Congresswoman.

Absolutely, we know this throughout history, that when we have a crisis, it will disproportionately impact our Black and Brown students, our students living in poverty, our students with special needs. We already are not providing the resources that they need when they need it, and this pandemic is just like every other crisis throughout history that has impacted them.

So we know that they already are in schools that have high class sizes so that those teachers cannot provide that individualized

learning. If we do not get the funds from the Heroes Act, we know that over 500,000 more teachers will be laid off, and that will increase class sizes.

Let's talk about the safety around COVID-19. We know that if we are going to try to practice those guidelines of social distancing, if we have fewer staff, we know that they are going to be impacted at a greater degree.

And then we also know—and this is what I have heard from teachers all over the country—that they know they need to prepare now for trauma informed practice. We cannot do that if we do not have enough teachers and counselors and support professionals to surround our students with the care and nurturing they need to try to help them with the emotional trauma that they have been experiencing over these 3 months.

So, absolutely, those students will need that additional support, and so we are asking everyone to ensure that we lift up our voice right now so they get what they need.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Incredibly important.

Let me ask you a follow-up question, Ms. Pringle. Secretary DeVos has stated that she plans to move ahead with a policy that would transfer CARES Act dollars from public schools to wealthier private ones, and that is a departure from the usual practice of how federal funding for equitable services is allocated under Title I.

So as an educator, knowing the amount of learning loss we have already seen among students of color due to the pandemic, can you tell us what impact such a policy decision would have on high poverty schools?

Ms. PRINGLE. Congresswoman, the same impact that Secretary DeVos's decisions have had throughout her tenure, it is why hundreds of thousands of educators all over this country rose up and said she should not be confirmed. She is not fit for her office. She is the most unqualified Secretary of Education we have ever had. And we see in the middle of this crisis, she is still trying to promote her schemes around privatization.

We are standing up and calling that out, and we thank you so much for including language in the Heroes Act to call that out, too.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you.

Dr. Leachman, very quickly, why is direct aid dedicated to K-12 so important? You have just got a very short period of time, but if you could.

Mr. LEACHMAN. Well, it is crucially important because our schools are so important, and we want to make sure that they are protected and the educations of our kids are protected. So we need a range of tools to provide physical relief; but a key part of that is direct aid to schools.

Ms. JAYAPAL. And what scale is needed to address the crisis? You know, we put nearly a trillion dollars—excuse me, an infusion of approximately \$58 billion and nearly a trillion in aid to state and local governments in the Heroes Act. What scale do you think is necessary?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Well, we are projecting over \$600 billion in overall shortfalls for States only, right. Schools account for roughly a third of that. So just on very rough terms, that gets you somewhere

around 200. Then you have got the additional shortfalls at the local level, plus the additional costs of dealing with COVID-19 and opening up safely. So, you know, it is a substantial sum that schools need.

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from Indiana, Mr. Banks.

Mr. BANKS. There we go, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me now?

Chairman SCOTT. I can hear you.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this hearing today because I believe it is the most important conversation that we should be having in America at the moment: How do we get our kids back in the classroom?

I am pleased to see a number of my colleagues in the hearing room. I do believe, Mr. Chairman, we have cheapened this conversation today by not having an in-person hearing, and I hope we will make up for it in the near future and perhaps have many more committee hearings in this important conversation in the days to come.

What is it going to take to get our kids back in the classroom? And, Superintendent Johnson, you and I have something in common. We both have young kids. I have a first grader, a second grader, and a fourth grader, and it has been tragic watching what they have gone through every single day through this, trying to get a good education through virtual learning.

All of the studies are showing that virtual learning has failed to provide an adequate educational opportunity to our kids. And the conversation today is about what is it going to take to get our kids the education that they deserve, America is the land of opportunity because we guarantee an educational opportunity to every kid in this great country, and we are about to leave a generation of kids behind if we don't do everything absolutely possible to get our kids back in the classroom in the fall.

Superintendent Johnson, from what you have already told us today, I think you and I agree that the education that kids have received through virtual learning is far inferior to what they would receive in the classroom; is that correct?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. I think we will have the actual analytics to prove that as well; but we definitely have the stories from not just students, not just parents, but also educators themselves and everything they are doing, and they truly have been champions during this crisis. But they even know that this is no replacement for having students in the classroom. Even when there is at least more in their control during this remote learning that they are putting in the efforts in towards, they know, they see the results every day. This is no substitution for being in the classroom.

Mr. BANKS. There is no doubt about it, our teachers are the super heroes in all of this trying to do whatever it takes to deliver that education to these kids. But I haven't spoken to a single teacher yet that tells me that kids don't deserve to be in the classroom in the fall, that they shouldn't be in the classroom in the fall, that they should be left to remain at home receiving an inferior edu-

cation, because our teachers understand better than anybody that experience in a classroom is far superior to what they have experienced over the last few months.

There has been a lot of talk, Superintendent Johnson, today about money, but what else do our schools need to accomplish the end goal of opening our classrooms in the fall? And on that note, can you talk about liability protection? I have had a lot of school leaders call me and say that liability protections are an important piece of the puzzle. Can you talk about that? And what else is it going to take to move this conversation toward doing whatever possible to get our kids in the classroom, in the fall?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you.

We are still awaiting the guidance from our Governor in North Carolina. That is going to be a very pivotal moment for our schools. Are we going to try to get as many students back in the school building as possible? Are we going to have to shift to strategies that promote social distancing? Which we know already the challenges that will bring with just trying to get students on the school bus, trying to get students in the classroom, it is going to be quite an uphill challenge.

For the liability, that is something that more and more educators are looking for action from their elected leaders. Whatever school looks like when we go back in the fall, we do not want educators to have to worry about being held liable if, heaven forbid, there is a spread of COVID-19, or even beyond that, just being liable for making sure that the student is keeping a face mask on.

In North Carolina it is not going to be a requirement for face masks, but that just shows how it is going to be different State by State. And anything the Federal Government can do to help with giving some reassurance to educators around the liability question would be very much appreciated.

Mr. BANKS. It has been suggested that liability protections are pro teachers, that our teachers are expecting liability protections?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I believe that is something that education leaders and educators would very much support.

Mr. BANKS. Let me move on to another question.

Have you read the CDC guidelines and the recommendations for reopening?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes.

Mr. BANKS. Are they reasonable?

Mr. JOHNSON. I do believe—I hope that they can be reasonably accommodating. We, again, in North Carolina, are looking at that as a baseline. We are hoping to get into a plan. We are going to get as many students back into school and as safely as possible. It is going to be very difficult.

One point under the CDC's guideline of screening students before they come into schools, that is something we are doing a lot of work on right now of how do you actually practically make that happen to ensure that guideline is met but you also cannot interrupt the school day.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you very much. You have given us a lot to think about.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from New York, Mr. Morelle.

Mr. MORELLE. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for your leadership throughout this crisis and for providing the Committee with a number of different ways, both through your briefings and this hearing virtually, to continue our vital work.

You know, the revenue shortfalls, which is the subject of this conversation, particularly for State and local governments as a result of COVID, are devastating, and I am very grateful we are having this opportunity to have this conversation about that.

The challenges and losses are obviously on an unprecedented scale. And, again, something like the virus, we have seen something like 21, 22 States are now seeing an increase in the number of cases, something that we experienced in New York some weeks ago.

Our numbers are down dramatically, and I am in Upstate New York, Rochester, where we have had a relatively flat curve in terms of number of hospitalizations, et cetera.

But even as we regain our footing, if that is the case, we have a real opportunity to be intentional about what we do in terms of revenues and about guarding against future fallout, and that is why I think this is such an important conversation. I have spent many years in the State Legislature in New York, in the State Assembly, so I am particularly keen and interested in the impact that this has on State governments.

I think as it was noted earlier, the revenue loss anticipated somewhere in the neighborhood of \$615, \$620 billion. Here in New York alone, we are expecting a \$14 billion shortfall. We provide, as a State government, I think more per capita to K through 12 than any State in the Nation; but our ability to do that is going to be dramatically impacted, and obviously the quality of education is going to be impacted as well.

And the other thing that this has pointed out—and I am just commenting on some things that have already been discussed—is the real digital divide when you go to and look at the disparities between some communities, particularly urban and rural, who don't have access to broadband, don't have access to devices. And the more and more that we try to compensate for the inability to be together by using distance learning, that divide, that disparity, grows worse and worse, particularly among communities of color.

I do want to say that I think the teachers throughout this country have done an amazing job, like our healthcare workers, have gone above and beyond whatever would have been expected of them to try to accommodate their students, and they are all going to work through the summers. I think, as has been said, teachers start thinking about the fall in June as the class year starts to end.

So I think perhaps Mr. Gordon could answer this. I suspect others could pitch in as well. But I wanted to go back a little bit to learning loss. The Northwest Evaluation Association said there will be at least a 30 percent learning loss in reading and a 50 percent learning loss in math as a result of the school closings. That is on top of the learning loss that we have already talked about.

So if we could just talk about the impact, Mr. Gordon, or maybe comment on the lack of access to quality remote learning which is

impacting vulnerable students and as a result they are falling further and further behind.

What could we do? What do you expect Congress should do to try and address that and to help students adapt to remote learning particularly in vulnerable populations?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congressman.

I think that Congress is going to need to take a long view of what recovery for most fragile communities looks like, and I think in my community it is not actually learning loss. We can still learn. Our children can still learn reading and math everything. It is learning time loss, and that is going to take time to make up.

You know, so immediately we are asking for support to keep our districts whole. Like my colleague in North Carolina, we are looking at how do we personalize and really start where each child is and assess where they are and how we move them forward. But I think my biggest fear, we know in past recessions, public institutions come out of recessions much more slowly. For Cleveland, it was 2012.

If the country is kind of up and humming and everybody kind of forgets that we have to make up this time for children over time and we don't adequately fund the Title programs, IDEA, McKinney-Vento, those programs that are designed for these children, that is where we will ultimately fail because our educators are going to need to work more deeply and with more time with these fragile communities than they would with a more typical peer.

Mr. MORELLE. And before I run out of time here, on that topic of time learning, you mentioned 12-month-a-year school years. Do you expect that is going to be the norm around the country as we try to get back that lost time?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congressman.

In Cleveland we already have several year-around schools, and the reason we moved to that is we know from the evidence that 3 weeks is about the length of break before you actually do start seeing regression in learning. And so we have 10 weeks on, 3 weeks off.

I would have the whole system there if I could afford it. It is a cost issue because you are bringing in your faculty, in our case, 8 more weeks to give them a learning time and students for 4 more weeks a year, but it is the right way to go and really lets us rethink the old agrarian calendar.

Mr. MORELLE. I yield back my time.

Thank you very much.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Walker. The gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Walker.

The gentleman from Kentucky, Mr. Comer.

Mr. COMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to begin by stating again for the record that I am here in the committee room. I believe that it is important for Congress to lead by example. I believe it is very important that we reopen our economy and that Congress should again lead by example, which takes me to my first question.

A lot of my colleagues have been stating the obvious that many school districts across America, if not every school district, is going

to be faced with huge budget challenges. These challenges are obviously a result of the COVID-19 and having to temporarily shut the economy down. That is why I think it is imperative that we get serious about reopening the economy.

Some States have done a much better job of safely reopening their economy than others, but I think that is something that is important to know as we talk about funding challenges in public education as we move forward.

One of the complaints that I have always had and heard from school superintendents, school board members, administrators, and school districts is that a lot of times they have adequate budgets, but they don't have flexibility to spend the money in programs that they see fit that work better in the local areas.

Mr. JOHNSON, are there flexibilities in the Federal law that have not yet been addressed today that would be useful for local school districts?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. I will just highlight, again, that we would appreciate flexibility around the high stakes assessments at the end of the year. There is work going on around that, but possibly we can put that into overdrive in order to have that be something that can help address the COVID-19 crisis as well.

And then I will speak on behalf of the professionals in my Exceptional Children's Department at the State agency in North Carolina. They would appreciate some flexibility on the timelines per their requirements.

Mr. JOHNSON. Not throwing out any requirements when it comes to serving our students who honestly need the most service from educators, but looking at the timelines for those requirements given just the unbelievable challenges that we will all face coming up this next school year.

Mr. COMER. Thank you very much for that.

And, Mr. Chairman, hopefully that is something that this committee can do in a bipartisan way to give our local school districts more flexibility as we move forward.

Speaking of bipartisan, at the beginning of the pandemic, I partnered with my Democrat colleague, Representative Bonamici, to introduce legislation which allows school officials to distribute food in any number of settings across our most crucial nutrition programs and allow for flexibility on meal components if food supply procurement is disrupted.

I am grateful that we took this step forward to prioritize families and children affected by the coronavirus and am very happy that President Trump signed it into law. However, having worked with the food service directors during my time as Commissioner of Agriculture in Kentucky and now as a member of this Committee and the Agriculture Committee, I know these issues don't go away as soon as students step back through the classroom doors and recognize the amount of planning that goes into the execution of our school meal programs. Some districts are even considering adopting modified schedules or other alternative education delivery methods for the fall semester.

Mr. JOHNSON, can you describe how the flexibility offered by the U.S. Department of Ag has been helpful in that, and are there any

waivers that could be extended that would be especially beneficial as you plan for the next school year?

Mr. JOHNSON. Absolutely. Thank you for that question.

This is something where the waivers have been very crucial for meal delivery services to our students in two main categories that you can think of: One, we were using school buses to deliver meals to students. You might have a group of students at the school bus stop, you might have parents there on behalf of their students, but the flexibility around the rostering and being able to hand out the meals is extremely helpful.

And then also we had cafeteria and food and nutrition workers who were in the at-risk category and were not able to go in and perform their services and being able to use other school employees to help fill in those roles was very helpful as well.

We would absolutely encourage the Federal Government to extend those waivers, and hopefully we can get back into schools as normal as possible but, heaven forbid, we are back in a place where it is remote learning and remote meal delivery, we will absolutely rely on those waivers again.

Mr. COMER. And, Mr. Chairman, one last question if I may.

Mr. JOHNSON, in your view, what has been the biggest challenge for districts trying to adapt to distance education, aside from the lack of broadband in many rural areas, like my congressional district that has already been discussed heavily in this committee hearing? What are the other challenges for school districts trying to adapt to distance education?

Mr. JOHNSON. People are social creatures by nature and that is how we learn as well. We don't learn well or meet well over our screens. That is very true for our younger students, and the impact a teacher has when they are physically in that classroom with students cannot be underestimated or ever undervalued.

Mr. COMER. Thank you.

And hopefully we can get our school districts open just after Labor Day and try to get things back to normal as quickly as possible. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

And I would say there was some feedback in that last exchange. We could hear okay, but there was a little echo. Okay. If people in the room would use earphones, that would cut most of that echo.

The young gentlelady from Pennsylvania, Ms. Wild.

Ms. WILD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to direct my first question to Ms. Pringle of the National Education Association. At the beginning of this pandemic, many schools moved instruction online and engaged students in remote learning, but because of the structural inequities that we know exist in public education systems, schools with more resources adjusted to remote learning much more quickly.

In my home State of Pennsylvania 7, the Lehigh Valley of Pennsylvania, school districts with more resources and higher income families were able to begin online instruction weeks before their neighboring school districts which received less funding and enrolled more low-income students.

The uneven transition to online learning I think exacerbates learning loss amongst students, meaning that students will lose the educational and academic progress that they have once achieved.

So I guess my question, first of all, to you is what academic effects do you expect to see as a result of these students' uneven transition to remote learning as we move forward and hopefully do get children back in the classroom, students back in the classrooms?

And also I want, as part of that, have some students been disproportionately left behind in the transition to remote learning?

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Congresswoman. Absolutely, we know that we could have anticipated it because we know that over 12 million of our students across the country did not have access to the internet or access to digital tools that allowed them to continue their learning.

And we saw things vary exactly the way you described it, based on whether or not those school districts, those families, those communities had resources or whether they did not. We have too many of our students who are living in poverty, are students of color who did not—not only didn't have those digital tools, but they had parents who had two and three jobs who were essential workers and couldn't sit down with them to actually make sure they were connected.

Ms. PRINGLE. Or those families might have had a device, but everyone in the family had to use the same device. And if that parent had to use those devices to continue to work, then we saw that our students weren't able to join. And so we saw—we heard from teachers all over the country where they had maybe only 50 percent of their students who were present in the classrooms.

They know that the learning for those students is interrupted, and so they are looking at ways right now that they can reach out, and they have been doing that after hours, reaching out to students and parents, and trying to make up for that, dropping off learning packets, going and sitting outside of students' homes, by the way. We have teachers who are doing that too.

But we know that these are issues. This digital divide is not new. In fact, we put together a homework gap collaboration back in February before our students were out, because we knew that gap existed. And so we are fighting hard to make sure that the Federal Government provides the resources to close that gap, and asking for that additional \$4 billion to do just that, to invest in the E-Rate program.

Ms. WILD. Thank you, and you anticipated my next question, but first let me say that I do believe that most teachers, even in good times, go above and beyond what is expected of them and required of them, to—that they really have a passion for helping students learn, and they are certainly to be commended.

So my next question is, how can schools start preparing to address the learning loss that the students have experienced as a result of this interrupted school year? What kind of challenges do you think that the students and the teachers are going to face? As we move into the fall, let's assume that everybody is back in school.

Ms. PRINGLE. So Congresswoman, let me tell you what we are talking about with our teachers in the country. That, you know, we

have a shared responsibility to meet the needs of all students. And so we are asking everyone to come together and do their part. So we are having those conversations right now, trying to make sure that everything our students need, including those social, emotional needs, are being met, and we are beginning that work before they go back to school.

But even when they get back to school, we need to make sure that they come back to school in safe environments. If our students don't feel safe and supported, they can't learn. So we are working hard with community members, with educators, with lawmakers, elected and appointed officials, to make sure that we have the resources our students need, our educators need, our parents need, to meet the needs of every one of our students.

Ms. WILD. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

My distinguished colleague from Virginia, Mr. Cline.

Mr. CLINE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to also echo the comments of everyone on this committee who praised the hard-working men and women in our educational systems at the local level for the great job they did in the spring, getting our kids educated back home, getting them the information they needed, and even now, preparing for the fall term. It is a really, really outstanding job that everyone has come together to do.

This committee has the important task of working on policy that can better allow future generations to flourish through having a quality education. We must remember that policy we implement in response to COVID-19 now will have lasting implications on students' opportunities in the future.

I am glad we are having a hearing today on the topic of budgeting as it relates to education, but I believe the focus needs to be on evaluating what we have already spent before rushing to put our Nation unnecessarily deeper in debt. We owe it to students to carefully examine our spending instead of blindly spending more hard-earned tax dollars.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Federal Government contributed \$59 billion to education. States spent \$362 billion, and localities spent \$332 billion. Additionally, almost \$79 billion came from other sources, mostly coming from private philanthropies. This comes to a total of \$832 billion.

As these numbers show, the majority of funding for education comes from States and localities. And from my time serving in the Virginia House of Delegates—and I know the chairman did as well—I know how important it is to maintain those strong fiscal ties as close as possible to the homes and schools they serve. Each State and district have unique needs and priorities, and government should be enabling those closest to it to serve them as they best see fit.

The CARES Act nearly doubled the amount of core Federal education funding provided to school districts for fiscal year 2020 by providing \$13.5 billion to State and school districts through the Educational Stabilization Fund. It provides \$3 billion to governors who to award grant to elementary and secondary schools, institutions of higher education, and other education-related entities, and

gave the Secretary the ability to allow for more flexibility in repurposing current funds for technology needs. And that is something that we want to focus on, that flexibility.

Mr. JOHNSON, there has been a lot of discussion today about how the Federal Government needs to spend billions more [Inaudible.] taxpayer funds, but how could the Federal Government use that flexibility to assist States and school districts in other ways? Are there flexibilities in Federal law that have not been yet—been used to help those States and localities that could be useful?

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you for the question. Again, I sound like a broken record, but we would love to have flexibility from the high stakes standardized assessments. Understanding that we are not going to replace accountability, because when the Federal Government invests in education, you want to make sure that students are getting the education that they so well deserve. That would be a true highlight.

And then beyond that, I think probably share the sentiments of many people testifying today that with Federal dollars that are coming for this crisis, do not put too many strings attached to them. Let districts spend that on the needs that they have.

Mr. CLINE. And to what extent are you engaging with businesses and other private sector entities to assist with school districts' responses to COVID-19?

Mr. JOHNSON. We actually have had a lot of educational vendors step up and offer their platforms for free. That has been a local district decision. We just want to make sure they are high quality. We have had the industries that help with the connectivity provide services for free during the crisis. Hopefully that is something that can continue.

And on another topic, you know, we are making sure that we connect the business and job world to what is going on in the classroom, so we better connect students to see all the pathways.

In North Carolina, a great example, even in the midst of this COVID-19, are the jobs that are available in some kind of computing or coding services. We have tens of thousands of jobs still open, even with this crisis, and that could be a high valued credential, or an associate's degree, or if students want a 4-year degree, we are making sure we are partner with business to make sure students know their path.

Mr. CLINE. Great. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentleman from California, Mr. Harder.

Mr. HARDER. Thank you. It is good to see you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for holding this hearing.

My first question is for Dr. Leachman. Dr. Leachman, it is clear that we are looking at the kind of strain on school districts that we haven't seen in a decade. How did States, families, and school districts cope with the massive fiscal strain of the Great Recession? And how do you expect this crisis to be similar or different than what we just went through the last decade?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Thank you, Congressman, I appreciate that question. As I briefly mentioned earlier, the Federal aid that was provided under the Recovery Act, during the Great Recession was

really important, but it only covered about a quarter of State budget shortfalls, and it ended too soon, when States were still struggling to meet their needs. As a result, States enacted lots of layoffs and cuts, and those layoffs and spending reductions slowed the economy's recovery in a significant way.

And the impact at the school level was pronounced, and so just to take a couple of examples, in Georgia, the school year was shrunk, there were reductions. Arizona ended its full-day kindergarten. Those kinds of effects were widespread, and in many cases are still with us today. I mentioned that there are, even heading into the pandemic, there were 77,000 fewer teachers and other school workers in our schools in this country than there were when the Great Recession took hold, and yet we are trying to teach one and a half million more kids.

Mr. HARDER. Thank you, Dr. Leachman. What lessons do you think we can learn from the Great Recession to better support States and school districts during this pandemic?

What did we do right, that we should do again, or what did we maybe not do that we should think about now?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Well, substantially, it is really crucial, the aid that was provided to States and localities made a big difference. Numerous economists across the political spectrum have looked at this issue and found significant bang for the buck in State and local aid because it keeps economic activity going. It makes sure that you are not laying off people at exactly the worst time.

But we should take a lesson from the Recovery Act in assuring that the aid that we provide is enough, so that States don't have to do those layoffs and make those cuts, and that it stays in place as long as it is needed. As I mentioned, the Recovery Act aid ended in 2011. In 2012, you can see it happen, you can see that States imposed cuts that year that are still with us today. So it needs to be enough, and it needs to stay on as long as it is needed.

Mr. HARDER. Thank you. My next question is for Ms. Pringle. Ms. Pringle, what actions can we take to make sure that we are protecting teachers and students, especially those who are in at-risk groups, from COVID-19? What can Congress do to help them out?

Ms. PRINGLE. Well, the language in the HEROES Act, Congressman, goes a long way to do just that. Making sure that we have PPE for our students, as well as our educators, making sure that we are addressing the needs that already existed in buildings that were not safe for our students, that had issues with rats and rodents, poor air quality, those kinds of issues need to be addressed, and we—

And the funding that is provided for in the HEROES Act can do some of that. It is not enough, as I said before, but at least it is taking the steps in the right direction.

We also need to make sure that we have enough educators, not only our teachers, but we need our support staff who support them, from school secretaries to para professionals, to bus drivers. We need to make sure that we have additional counselors and nurses. We have to be able to address [Inaudible.] as well. So we have got to make sure we have the funding to do those things.

Mr. HARDER. Thank you, Ms. Pringle.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Thank you.

The gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Fulcher? The gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Fulcher?

The gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Watkins? The gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Watkins?

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Wright? The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Wright?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Meuser?

Mr. MEUSER. Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Dr. Foxx. Appreciate all those testifying today being here with us on a very important subject. Certainly it is absolutely essential we safely and responsibly open our schools to all of those who can attend. It is equally as important as safely and responsibly opening our economy.

Mr. JOHNSON, the plans that you have outlined and work on and discuss and strategize, do they include funding for PPEs and other safety precautions, such as plexiglass and perhaps new areas for spacing out the students properly?

Mr. JOHNSON. The short answer is no, we have not gotten to that decision point yet. There is work for the North Carolina governor's Department of Health and Human Services to work on funding for the school nurses and PPE for them. But again under the governor's requirements, we are not looking at having the requirement for PPE.

The Federal CARES Act dollars that will be going to districts, that is something districts could use that money for if they decided to go beyond the guideline from our North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Mr. MEUSER. Right. Are you looking at what other States are doing? Are you having a good level of communication on seeing who might have some best ideas and doing comparisons?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, absolutely. We have been—a lot of education chiefs around the Nation have been in very frequent contact to share best practices. We also have been making sure that we listen to staff and teachers on the ground in North Carolina, and also we are watching other Nations who have already opened up schools to see how they are handling the situation.

Mr. MEUSER. Okay. Great. Are you beginning to figure out a budget estimate for that first tranche that I asked about, related to the PPEs and general safety within the classroom in school?

Mr. JOHNSON. We are at the very beginning stages of that. I would not be able to provide you a number now from North Carolina. What we are watching is, again, North Carolina, the State government gave \$50 million to districts, we are watching how that was spent. It has not all been spent yet.

And then we are watching very closely how the CARES Act funding is spent. The highest priority from the districts, that they note in their applications, are connectivity and devices, as well as the extra supply that would be needed for when students and teachers safely return to school in the fall.

Mr. MEUSER. Are you beginning to weight it somewhat by where a hotspot was versus a more rural area that had very few cases? Have you taken that into consideration in your equation?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. Yes, that will be taken into consideration. Our North Carolina State Board of Education will be making a determination on where the funds go that they have held back. And I do believe we will be addressing, with an eye towards equity and where the need is, especially when it comes to connectivity, in giving those dollars out.

And the governor of North Carolina has indicated that he wants his plan to be statewide, but it could be regional based on the metrics.

Mr. MEUSER. Liability comes up all the time in higher ed. It is a significant concern certainly within pre-K through 12. What are your thoughts there? A State solution is one thing, a Federal solution is probably better. What are your thoughts on liability?

Mr. JOHNSON. We would welcome any help that we can get on the Federal level. This is something we are looking at what already—already the protections in place in North Carolina State level, if we can do more, but the more we can do for our educators, the better, and any Federal help would be very welcomed.

Mr. MEUSER. Okay. Is there serious consideration being given to a safety officer in a school, for instance, to just assure and monitor that the safety standards continue?

Mr. JOHNSON. We have not had discussions about that on a State level. That is something that absolutely would be school by school, but it is an idea that is on the table. And local districts right now are in the process of making their plans, to plan for the governor's requirements and guideline, and they will be submitting those as they have been finalized.

Mr. MEUSER. Great. Well, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Thank you, and again, for people in the room, if you would use earphones, it would eliminate some of the feedback. We could hear all of the questions, so thank you. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

The gentle lady from Georgia, Mrs. McBath.

Mrs. MCBATH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for this timely and relevant hearing today, and I want to thank all of our witnesses for testifying, lending your time and your expertise. And I just want to say, you know, we are at a very critical point in our Nation's history. And 3 months ago we hit the coronavirus pandemic, and now in the midst of this pandemic, we are finally addressing another pandemic that has plagued our country for generations. We are talking about really the racism and the systemic inequities that causes this in our public school system.

So millions of jobs have been lost due to COVID-19, and States, we are seeing, are decreasing the revenue for the upcoming fiscal year. My own State of Georgia, we have just been made known that—it has been announced that about 11 percent of a reduction there will be in our budget for next year, which is just so devastating for us to undergo.

And unfortunately, as we all know, when States start cutting their budgets, education is one of the first areas to be cut, and you know, our students frankly really do deserve much better.

This fall school districts will be faced with how they are going to educate their students while staying socially distanced and how

to address the racial inequities in the school system and the lack of diversity in our teaching workforce. So all of which will be exacerbated by budget shortfalls. And I am glad that we are here today to really start talking about finding solutions to these problems.

And my first question is for Mr. Gordon. Mr. Gordon, there has been a lot of discussion about reopening schools and the normal, returning to normal, as we say, but you know it is really going to be a new normal. Given the health, education, and racial justice crisis in our country, what can Congress do to make sure that our students receive an education that meets or exceeds the standards that they deserve in the coming year? And we know that Mr. Leachman just kind of touched upon this a little bit earlier today, but could you expand on that, or do you have any thoughts?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congresswoman. I would just say that I think that this is a really important moment. Tamir Rice was my 12-year-old little boy in Cleveland who was shot 2 seconds after police got to a scene, so this is personal for me. What is different is that, in all of the past, we had to change the existing system. That is what I have been doing in Cleveland for the last 13 years is pushing against the existing system.

The current education system, as we know it, has been obliterated. So we not only can't go back there, as you have heard from my colleagues, but we don't have to. We can actually design systems that are more fair and just and good for our kids.

One of the things we know is that children who are living in deep poverty—Cleveland has the highest childhood poverty of any major city—it is not just education; it is the entire environment. I actually, for a period of time, left urban education and worked in one of the most affluent school systems in Ohio, almost exclusively white, and the learning that was happening was not just the time in my classroom, but it was the learning happening when they were with family, all of the enrichment experiences that they had, many of which my kids will never have access to. And so I think that Congress really has an opportunity to seize this, to say how do we, in the short-term—and that being the next several years—continue to support the most fragile children through the Federal programs that I mentioned earlier, but how do we do it with an eye on diversifying wealth in our communities, because that is the exit.

If you can't own a home, like many Black and Brown people simply cannot because they can't get a mortgage, you never have wealth to leverage against to send your child to college or to do the things that middle-income families have.

So, I would really urge Congress to take this opportunity to evaluate how do we start reintroducing wealth into communities so that these communities become self-sustaining and carry forward as opposed to simply continuing to fund the programming that has kind of reinforced the status quo. You can't log out until there is something else for it, so I think this is an opportunity unlike any other.

Mrs. MCBATH. But thank you so much for that answer.

And Ms. Pringle, according to the National Center for Education, both statistics, the teacher workforce is nearly 80 percent white, while a majority, and growing, of the public-school students are of color.

What are your thoughts to use this moment as a means to reboot, to diversify the teacher workforce? And what happens to students when they actually have the opportunity to be able to be taught by individuals and teachers that look like them?

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Congresswoman, and I want to thank the chairman, because he has been leading those efforts as well. We have known for far too long that our teaching workforce does not reflect our—what our students are coming to school facing from their communities, from their homes. We know there is a racial disparity in our teachers versus our students, and that has been for a long time.

So, we need to do something at this moment about that, and I want to say this. Not only does it impact in a positive way our students of color, but all students need to see teachers of color as well. It improves the learning of all of our students.

And so as we think about how we are allocating resources from the HEROES Act, which we know we will fight so hard to make sure we have those funds, that some of those funds will be used, not only to recruit Black and Brown teachers—and this is really important to remember—we have our teachers of color leaving the teaching profession at a disproportionate rate. So we have to focus on their retention. We know we can do that, if we have the resources to change what is happening in our schools.

Mrs. MCBATH. Thank you so much, and my time is up. Thank you for your answers.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson? The gentleman from South Dakota, Mr. Johnson?

The gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Keller?

Mr. KELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Glad to be able to be here in Washington to participate in this important hearing. And again, having gone toward the end here, many of my questions have been answered, but I do have a few things that did pop up. You know, in looking at what we have already done as far as CARES funding—and I will speak specifically to Pennsylvania—between the governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund, and the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, Pennsylvania has received over \$713 billion. And when we look at this—\$713 million, sorry. And when we look at all the money that has been received, it hasn't all been disbursed yet.

And when looking at what we are doing in going forward, I think it is a little premature to say we need to do more, because I think the point has already been made, that our kids are going to be the—our students, the ones we care so much about, are going to end up paying this debt back. So I think we need to make sure it is very well invested.

And my good colleague from Pennsylvania, Mr. Meuser, asked a couple questions regarding budgeting, and, you know, so do we know if the States or what percentage of the States—and I guess I will ask you, Mr. Johnson since you have been working with North Carolina—do you know how much of the money in North Carolina has already been distributed?

Mr. JOHNSON. It has not been much of the money. Again, \$95 million was to the governor. That has not gone out yet; \$230 mil-

lion came from the General Assembly through the large relief package. That is in the process of going out. Then the Education Stabilization Fund is roughly \$400 million in North Carolina. That has just finished through its applications, and districts will be applying, will be accessing those and drawing down, but that has not happened yet.

Mr. KELLER. So we think that many of the States are probably in the same situation where they have not driven all the money out yet?

Mr. JOHNSON. I can't answer for other States. It might be a State by State, but I can tell you, North Carolina, we have not done the governor's fund yet, we have not done the General Assembly's fund. All that is in the works, of allotments and getting it out, but also the school districts have not drawn down their funds yet either.

And the State relief funds, which is just North Carolina, the \$50 million, not all that has been spent yet either. And so we are watching that closely, but that will give us an indication of where districts are spending for their need.

Mr. KELLER. And I guess I would follow up on the need, because I have heard many people tell us that this isn't enough, but do we know what—any budget numbers for what districts think they are going to need moving forward for their plans, whether it is PPE, whether it is distance education, and those things? Do we have any idea what that might be costing?

Mr. JOHNSON. There are definitely estimates out there. I would say in North Carolina, we do not have hard numbers. We have plans that range from recommendations from the governor to requirements. At districts right now, we are trying to put together how they will respond to those plans. So we should have those numbers in the weeks ahead.

And then we also have the CARES Act funding that will help support those plans as they come closer to fruition.

Mr. KELLER. So would it be fair to say that some of the plans that are forthcoming would have funding through money already appropriated by Congress?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. That is absolutely fair to say for—especially I can say that for North Carolina, yes.

Mr. KELLER. Yeah, I think that might be a lot of the case, you know, across our Nation. In looking at Pennsylvania, in addition to the CARES funding—excuse me—the stuff for education, there was also the \$150 billion, and Pennsylvania got \$4.9 billion into the treasury. And they are still sitting on, you know, over \$1 billion of that money too.

So there has been a lot of things that have been done to help the States, and I think the biggest—or the best thing we can do as a Nation is safely reopen our economy. Because as been mentioned, many of the things are because of budget shortfalls.

And some States I would imagine have less of a budget shortfall because of the way they handled their reopening, their closing, their reopening, more so than other States. Because I know in Pennsylvania, it was a total mess. The governor didn't have a good plan and shut businesses and had waivers and a whole bunch of different, a lot of confusion on top of an already tenuous situation.

So wouldn't you think that reopening our economy safely might be helpful to our districts?

Mr. JOHNSON. Absolutely. We should reopen safely, and we should get students and teachers back to school as safely as we possibly can. That would be the ideal situation for—I believe everyone would agree that would be the ideal situation. We have to make sure we do it safely.

Mr. KELLER. I appreciate that. And that even goes even for our committee hearings, because I did hear some of our educators on the meeting here today mention about how it is good to be able to see the reaction of people where they are students, between the student and the teacher, and how they are interacting.

I think that is still valuable too when we are talking about Members of Congress communicating with one another or with the witnesses that are here in the room. I think there is a lot of value in making sure that we lead by example and we make sure that we are back doing the people's work. We are supposed to be meeting in Congress, not in our living rooms. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentlelady from Washington, Dr. Schrier?

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our witnesses for your compelling testimonies. I first just want to say that it is a joy to be able to do this safely from my home, to see your faces. If we were in person, we would be in masks, and I just appreciate this effort to be in the 21st Century.

I have two areas of questions. The first is a really quick one and just regards public education funding, and the second is about issues with the reopening of schools. And so education, no question, is one of the most important investments we make as a country.

Dr. Leachman, could you break down super quickly, in terms of percentage funding of K12 education, how much the Federal, State, and local governments contribute?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Yes, Congresswoman. States provide 47 percent, local governments, mostly school districts, provide 45 percent, and the remainder is from the Federal Government.

Ms. SCHRIER. And so given that data—I just want to really drive home this point that I know you want to make—what is the number one, single, most important thing Congress can do to support K12 education right now?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Provide aid to States and localities that they can get to schools, so they don't have to lay people off and make cuts that we know will hurt our kids.

Ms. SCHRIER. Thank you. I appreciate that. And, of course, the need for State funding is even more important for underserved communities because States can make up for differences that local governments can't get from property values, for example.

The second question is—I am a pediatrician. I like to make evidence-based decisions. My first question, by the way, will be for Ms. Pringle, but I first wanted to just say, there is a lot we still don't know about this virus. We do know that in the general population, 25 to 50 percent of the people with this infection don't have symptoms. We know they can still spread it. We know there are several days that they can spread. We know that masks are effec-

tive, and so I am surprised that North Carolina will not be requiring masks in the classroom.

We also know that children, at least acutely, are not so much affected and that this inflammatory syndrome is rare. And so the goal here is not necessarily to protect the children but to protect the teachers and the community at large and the families, and the families who are most at risk like the families in Cleveland are exactly the ones whose parents are more likely to die from this illness.

So I wanted to ask, Ms. Pringle, first of all, can we learn anything from other countries that have opened schools, who has done it successfully, and how have they managed to do that?

Ms. PRINGLE. So, Congresswoman, first of all, let me thank you for taking care of our babies. It is absolutely essential that we figure out how to open our schools safely. And there are a lot of lessons for those countries who have taken those safeguards, to protect their students. And by the way, you are right, all that you just said is correct.

But here is the thing, everything impacts learning. Everything. So if our students' families are not secure in their health, in housing, in economics, then that is going to impact their learning. So we can't only think about what is happening in schools, we have to think about what is happening in their communities.

And so when we look to other countries, they have those social safety nets in place already. And with the pandemic, they realize that is where they needed to invest. They needed to make sure that the entire, the whole family, was healthy and they got the support they needed. They needed to make sure that their families—that the parents were earning an income so they could feed their children. You know our babies can't learn if they are hungry. So there are all of those lessons to look at.

Ms. SCHRIER. Oh, I ran out of time. Okay, thank you. I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentleman from North Carolina, Dr. Murphy? Dr. Murphy?

Mr. THOMPSON. He is on. He is just trying to figure out how to unmute is all.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. He has to unmute.

Mr. THOMPSON. There we go.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Johnson for—I know it has been a long day for all our witnesses, and I appreciate you guys coming and sharing your expertise. Obviously we are in a very, very challenging time. None of us have lived through this before, and as I have said many times, we are kind of building a plane while we are flying it.

I think everybody in this committee room and everybody sitting at home shares in the belief that we should care about our children and their education. That is what their future is about, educating them. And I think we all share a deep concern in that. I think we have some different ideas about how that best can be achieved, but I think we are all together on the same page about how we get there.

You know, parents with kids being at home have been challenged. They are not trained teachers, and a lot of them don't want

to be after this episode, and are happy to give their kids back. We need to get those kids back into school because not only the education that comes from a book, but also the education that comes from socialization, and that is critical.

And you know, balancing these things, balancing their safety, balancing their welfare, is critical. It can be done. Other countries have demonstrated that it can be done. And I believe if we keep hiding under the sheet, we are not doing our children any good in the future. I do think that children do not learn nearly as well from online learning as they do in person. I don't believe they do—they learn from computers as well as they do from textbooks and writing those things down. Maybe I am old-fashioned that way.

But I think we are all on the same page, and I think we are really working towards the same goal. I appreciate what you guys are doing.

Just a couple questions because I know it has been a long day that I am going to direct towards Mr. Johnson. Thank you for the work that you are doing in North Carolina. Just, you know, I just want to clear up a few things about charter schools. Just if you don't mind answering these questions. Charter schools teach students, correct, Mr. Johnson?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. So they teach students. And in North Carolina, charter schools are open to any student that applies to them, correct?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, that is correct.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. So that would—that education in that charter school is provided by public sources, correct?

Mr. JOHNSON. That is correct.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. So charter schools in North Carolina are public schools?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. In North Carolina, we label schools traditional public schools and public charter schools, yes. We also have a menu of options of magnet schools and cooperative innovative high schools, a lot of school choice in North Carolina that ultimately helps students.

Mr. MURPHY. Okay. Well, great. I just didn't want some misconception that kids who are going to charter schools are privileged or something. Every opportunity is affordable to any student, and a lot of the burden is borne upon their parents to take the initiative—which some parents do, some parents don't—about educating their children. So I just wanted to clarify that.

You know, I feel like sometimes some of my colleagues want it both ways, where they want to get the kids educated, but they also want to keep them sheltered, which we all do, but understand the reality of things is that a lot of students—and we talk especially about minority students—either don't have access or don't have the social backing, you know, to get online learning.

So how do you, in your opinion, in just a very short time, how do we balance that moving forward? How do we do that for our children in North Carolina? What is the best move forward? Because I do believe that online learning, while it has its place, does not have—it should not take the priority place for our children.

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, what we are very much hoping to have a decision on by July 1, we are really hoping that our governor will implement his plan A, that is, getting students, as many as possible, as safely as possible, back into school buildings. That means that social distancing will be a part of that strategy, but it won't hamper any students from getting into the building. And there will be options for students who might be at high-risk, for teachers who might be at high risk to continue remote learning or to have other set-ups in the physical school building.

But we know that we really want to get our students and teachers back into the physical classrooms because that is where most learning occurs.

Mr. MURPHY. All right. I believe that is my time. I thank you, all the witnesses for coming today, and I appreciate the work that you guys all do.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I will yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. The gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Underwood?

The gentle lady from Illinois, Ms. Underwood?

The gentle lady from Illinois is recognized for 5 minutes to ask questions. Ms. Underwood, can you hear me?

Ms. UNDERWOOD. On a press conference.

Chairman SCOTT. Oh, okay.

The gentlelady from Connecticut, Mrs. Hayes?

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple things. Can you hear me okay? Wait, I can't hear you now.

Chairman SCOTT. I can hear you.

Mrs. HAYES. Oh, okay. I have heard many Members talk about the fact that we are doing this hearing remotely. I just would like to just make a statement that in the over a year since I have been in Congress, I have sat in hours' long committee hearings and markup, gavel to gavel, and seen empty chairs on both sides. I have seen hearings where Members weren't even there for testimony and just came in to vote, and I have always assumed that they were working remotely and listening from their offices or the anteroom. So I remind you that it is just geography, and we can still continue this work.

Thank you, everyone, for being here. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for holding this hearing.

Ms. Pringle, you brought up something earlier that I want to touch on, and you talked about we need to—we have invested in bailing out businesses and all these other things, and we need to do the same thing for public education.

I have heard my colleagues use terms like Herculean efforts that teachers have done or are referred to teachers as superheroes. Yet we are not willing to make those investments. And I think we all want to be good stewards over taxpayer money. We invested \$650 billion into the Payroll Protection Plan. Half of that was allocated, and then we went back with a second round of funding before that first round was even used up, because we anticipated that this money would be needed.

The Constitution says nothing about small businesses, last I heard, but we knew that because of the pandemic and what was

going on, that this was something that we needed to make an investment in, for the impending crisis.

So again, as I have said so many times before, we are always thanking teachers and talking about how wonderful they are and the Herculean efforts that they are making, yet fail to invest when teachers need us.

I would like for you to tell us just a little bit about—you talked about something that we haven't really talked a lot about—is those, the trauma that kids will have returning to the classroom. Can you talk a little bit about that and talk about why it is important to make those investments before we get to the bottom of the pot, when there is no money left, and it is empty? How can—since we already can anticipate what will happen.

You are muted.

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you. Congresswoman Hayes, it is so good to see you. This was an issue brought up by teachers within your own State that I talked with last week. And this is not new. We know that particularly in our vulnerable communities, our students with special needs, our Black and Brown students, our students living in poverty, that they come to us already with trauma. Food insecurity, housing insecurity, economic insecurity, all of those things are finding those ways into our schools anyway.

We know that too often they rely on schools for their meals, not just for themselves but their families, as well as healthcare. So that is already there.

Now on top of that, we have the pandemic. We know that our students are seeing family members get sick, some who have experienced tragic losses, and we know they will come back to us having the need for someone that is there, trained professionals, who will help to meet those needs. You are a teacher. You know if you don't meet those needs, they are not going to learn. It is not going to happen.

And so for us to be thinking about starting school with less teachers, less counselors, less nurses, are you kidding me? It is when we need more of those educators to surround our students with that support. This is what we need our Members of Congress to step up to. We need those additional supports for our students.

They are watching. Congresswoman Hayes, they are watching, right? They are already traumatized by what is happening with the uncertainty in the world. And now we are seeing killings in our communities of color, and they are wondering why, why is it happening, will they be next? We have got to create the space for them to have those conversations, and we have got to know that we have educators there to provide them with the individual attention they must have so they can learn.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, Ms. Pringle. You are absolutely right, I do know these things. It is just, I wanted it on the record for my colleagues to hear, because I questioned when we start our first COVID relief package, included airlines, and now we are talking about budget cuts for schools. Blows my mind.

My next question is for Mr. Gordon. How do you plan to address the needs of students who come from vulnerable—who themselves are vulnerable or come from households where they have members

of their family with health conditions and may not feel comfortable returning to school in the fall?

So even if the schools open, if kids or families don't feel safe, how do we address those needs?

Mr. GORDON. So in our district, we are anticipating having three to five different scenarios that we can turn on or off, dependent on the health and safety factors that are in our community, and one of those is those families that are either physically vulnerable and cannot return, or emotionally vulnerable and will not. And so we are planning to deepen our investments in homeschooling and E-school options. We used to have that in kind of a contract. We think we need our teachers trained to do that, as well as deepening our investments in social and emotional learning practices.

We have had over a decade of working with a collaborative of academic, social and emotional learning, so that we can help kids and families make these transitions safely and emotionally safely back into our school.

We are right now running remote hotlines where we are watching for signs of neglect or anxiety or those sorts of things, so that we can connect our students to social workers or mental health services, and we will keep deepening those practices as well.

So it is a blend of creating environments where students and families can be physically and emotionally safe, and then providing the support to move them into more open environments to the extent that it is reasonable and safe to do so.

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you, Mr. Chair. That is all I have.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Did the gentleman from South Dakota have an opportunity to ask questions?

Mr. Johnson of South Dakota. I have not yet, sir, no.

Chairman SCOTT. All right. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Johnson of South Dakota. Thank you very much. My question would be for Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Thompson, the gentleman from Pennsylvania, asked some questions about school lunch, but I was just curious, as we look forward, what should we—I mean, the next time we have this incredibly disruptive experience to onsite education, what do we make sure we do differently as far as the nutritional needs of the students?

Mr. JOHNSON. Well, this is surely something that has been amazing from school nutrition services in our State. We really have done an amazing job, and thank you for the Federal waivers that actually allowed us to get so many meals out to so many students.

One thing that we could do better is obviously as we know more about this virus and what we need to avoid, what we can do safely, getting students and families more access to the nutrition sites would be better.

I mean, it is great that we had the ability to deliver school bus meals, but obviously getting families, and entire families, meals, is something that would be very important as well.

Mr. Johnson of South Dakota. So I mean, I will be a little unfair to you, so feel free to beg off or dodge, because I am not asking just about your State but what you know about being involved, you know, nationally. Were there particular things that the Federal

Government didn't do, that we should have done, to provide your State or others the flexibility they needed to get this job done, feeding kids?

Mr. JOHNSON. You know, it is not in my wheelhouse of expertise, but like many other Americans, we did see that once the demand at restaurants started going down, there were the crops and the food that was not in the supply chain. I know there have been lots of efforts to get that supply chain focused on helping feed students and families that need it. That would be something to look at if, heaven forbid, we have to go into a shutdown again.

But again, we are all hoping that we are not going to be back in the same situation we were in March come this fall.

Mr. Johnson of South Dakota. Yeah. Very good, very helpful.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for doubling back and giving me an opportunity. I appreciate it.

You are muted, sir.

Chairman SCOTT. The gentle lady from Florida, Ms. Shalala?

Thank you.

Ms. SHALALA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for your leadership. I have sat through this whole thing. It has been a very substantive and I think very thoughtful hearing.

Mr. Gordon, I am a proud graduate of the Cleveland public schools. I grew up in Cleveland, and I know the schools very well, and I am very appreciative of your leadership. I am interested in data. Many national educational policy researchers are highlighting the importance of having accurate and publicly accessible data surrounding the at-home, virtual, and distance learning. They are doing this to shine a light on the inevitable gap that you talked about, that will disproportionately affect low income and minority students who are already struggling the most, particularly when it comes to attendance.

While we don't have national or a State database system, of the 82 or so school districts that have publicly shared some information on distance learning, only 19 are tracking attendance. And I am proud to say that one of those is my own Miami-Dade County public schools—I represent most of Miami-Dade, of Florida 27—and they are following up with a strategy to identify those young people.

This has resulted in data showing which students have made the least progress or spent the least amount of hours taking classes online, which they are going to use to build an enhanced summer school program to help them catch up. But again, this is not the case for every school district in the country.

How important is it that we collect this kind of data, and once we have it, how important is it to identify students and parents who haven't participated in virtual classes and target them with phone calls, emails, text messages, and actual visits to get the kids into these summer programs?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congresswoman. And I know you are a proud Cleveland graduate, so greetings from home.

I would say that it is absolutely critical, but we also, many of us across the country, did not have the infrastructure to do the kind of job that Miami-Dade did. I am very familiar with the work they have done. Fortunately, they had already made deep investments

in one-to-one technology and a single platform which made it a lot easier for them to do that.

We were not that far along in Cleveland. As an example, we had a much more autonomous system of choice, which means our students and families found themselves having multiple different platforms to work with, if they even had access to the platform.

We—you know, obviously much more difficult to measure how many students completed a learning package that we mailed into a home, than to monitor the dashboards of with these digital tools.

We are currently researching through, as I mentioned earlier, our student, teacher, and parent surveys. We have been harvesting dashboards from all of the platforms to get some estimates of performance. And when we are permitted to be back with students, which we are not yet permitted in Ohio, we expect it is going to be individual assessments to see exactly where each child is.

We did use some of our summer school resources, though, to extend learning, remote learning, for those students and families that we knew we had not reached effectively. And so, our teachers are still reaching out to those students and families, and we are still deploying all of our other enrichment activities that we did in the year, all summer, just so that we stay connected with those families until we can see them personally again.

Ms. SHALALA. Thank you very much.

Ms. Pringle, if we don't pass the money for State and local governments that can be passed on to the school districts, do you expect more layoffs of teachers? I think that is a yes or no question.

Ms. PRINGLE. Yes, Congresswoman. We already have had 500,000. We expect, within the next 3 years, probably about 2 million.

Ms. SHALALA. Thank you very much. And I resent any suggestion that the NEA or the AFT are not interested in the quality of education. My experience is just the opposite.

Mr. JOHNSON, a quick question. The CDC guidelines have not been followed in North Carolina. North Carolina still has an increase in COVID-19 cases. Why is North Carolina talking about opening schools when they are not following the CDC guidelines? Isn't it dangerous to open schools when you are still seeing increases in COVID-19?

Mr. JOHNSON. We are relying on the decisions by our North Carolina governor and his health advisers. We hope to get back to school as safely as possible, because we know that is where we want students and teachers. But obviously the metrics are going to determine the decisions that are made by his team.

Ms. SHALALA. But the metrics are showing the opposite, that it is not safe to reopen, according to the CDC. That is my concern. My concern is, it is hard to open up safely when you still have increases.

Thank you, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you. Dr. Van Drew of New Jersey—I understand Ms. Underwood is back.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much.

Our public schools in northern Illinois are the pride of our community, and like schools across the country, they are facing incredible financial and educational challenges from the coronavirus pan-

demic, which is why Congress prioritized emergency funding for K12 schools through the bipartisan CARES Act. And that was almost 3 months ago.

Schools and students are still hurting. They need all of that money, but Secretary DeVos is holding it hostage, blatantly violating the intent of the CARES Act. Instead, she is pushing new, quote, “equitable services,” end quote, guidance, that redirects that funding away from public schools, counter to decades of education law.

Under Secretary DeVos’ guidance, public schools in West Aurora School District, just down the road, will lose \$370,000 of their CARES Act funding. And the Woodstock Community School District will lose over \$75,000 in funds meant to support low-income students.

Mr. Gordon, these are not just numbers on a page. These are our kids and our teachers. You wrote in your testimony that your school district stands to lose a similar share of its CARES funds under this guidance. What would this mean for the students and teachers that you serve?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congresswoman.

In our estimate, it is up to \$2 million of money that would otherwise be going to my district which serves the highest childhood poverty in the Nation. I want to be clear that I am not opposed to equitable services. The Cleveland parochial system does serve a number of children in poverty, and those children deserve every bit of Congress’ support as my children do.

What this guidance is doing, though, is pushing dollars to children who do not live in poverty and away from those who do, and that is the problem with it.

I represent the Ohio 8 Coalition. Across our coalition is \$10 million in the State of Ohio’s eight large urbans alone, and we know from the national look that it is millions and millions more. So it is really critical that the dollars be distributed in the way that Congress intended because, as I mentioned, of the \$24 million that we believe will be—well, we know will be drawing down from Ohio, \$15 million will be going to already unplanned expenditures, another \$5.6 to my State cut that already occurred, leaving only \$4 million left to even begin thinking about investing in the next school year.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you so much.

Can you expand on—to Ms. Pringle, can you expand on just how unprecedented and harmful to public education Secretary DeVos’s actions are from a policy perspective?

Ms. PRINGLE. So from the beginning—thank you, Congresswoman Underwood.

From the beginning, Secretary DeVos has made clear that her goal is to destroy public education, by siphoning money away from our public schools, by putting it in the hands of those who are not interested in making sure that our public schools have the funds they need so they can successfully educate all of our students. And we know that it is an issue of equity.

We need to understand that for all of our students to be successful, we have to ensure that we provide the resources they need when they need it. And the Secretary is doing everything she can

to undermine the will of Congress. And so let me say again to you, thank you for underscoring that in the Heroes Act, that she is not given the authority to change what your intention is to direct those funds to public schools. Public education is the foundation of this democracy.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you.

Ms. PRINGLE. And that was the intent of that act.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. That is right.

I am also concerned about the facts of this pandemic on students' mental health, especially those who may be experiencing increased stress or trauma during this time. A number of educators in my district have reached out to me needing additional resources in order to fully support kids' mental health.

Ms. Pringle, can you tell us more about how you and other educators are seeing this pandemic affect students' mental health and any specific resources, personnel, or funds, or anything else, that the schools would need in order to best serve these students in the short and long term?

Ms. PRINGLE. Absolutely. Our students are experiencing trauma. They are experiencing loss. They are experiencing being away from their fellow students. They are experiencing a level of uncertainty that makes it very difficult for them to learn. And so we have got to make sure that we have the healthcare professionals, enough teachers, enough nurses and counselors. All of those things are important, but most especially they need to know that they are coming back to safe schools, safe schools. So, we have to make sure that when we welcome them back, they feel like they are safe and are prepared to learn.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Thank you so much for all you do. Thank you for the witnesses for being here.

And, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you very much.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Mr. Levin, the gentleman from California.

Mr. LEVIN. Yes. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, for holding this really important hearing.

I want to—I have been listening right along, and I have a feeling we may have some agreement on something.

Mr. Johnson, I read that according to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 300,000 students in North Carolina lack internet access at home. And you have mentioned, and I so agree with you, that we would all love to get kids back to the classroom as soon as we can do it safely. But even when we do, around the country there are likely to be outbreaks and kids will have to deal with this remote learning.

So, would you consider it a public policy priority to make sure everybody has access to the internet at home through high-speed access?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes, I think that is something that Congress should definitely look into. I will not, again, get out of my wheelhouse and claim to be the expert on this. How that is done can take many different forms.

Mr. LEVIN. Right.

Mr. JOHNSON. There are a lots of different ways now coming up—

Mr. LEVIN. But as an educator, you think it would be a priority. And, Mr. Gordon, you represent a large urban school district. Would you consider that to be a priority as well?

Mr. GORDON. Yes, not only for education, but for everything else that we rely on by accessing the internet.

Mr. LEVIN. Right. So I really hope that as we move forward on infrastructure, Republicans and Democrats will work together to provide all of our people, our rural and urban kids, access to broadband because, as Congresswoman Shalala said, we have a ways to go before we are going to have everybody in classrooms safely all around this country.

Ms. Pringle, let me turn to you. It is good to see you. You were talking with my colleague, Representative Underwood, about Secretary DeVos just a few minutes ago. You know, as a Michigander, I know all about Ms. DeVos and her long crusade to destroy public education in this country. But I want to talk about systemic racism.

You know, the rules she proposed would funnel money away from school districts and the students most impacted by COVID-19 to private schools. She claims all students are impacted by COVID-19 and so all students deserve funding. That is like yelling “All lives matter” in response to the Black Lives Matter Movement.

I wanted to ask you about this question. You know what, a 2016 study in Michigan by Bridge Magazine found that in the 2009-2010 school year, about 64 percent of choice students moved to a less diverse district, and that rate is now approaching 70 percent.

So, talk to me about Ms. DeVos’s policy and our effort at long last to deal with the systemic racism that has shaped this country since before we were a country.

Ms. PRINGLE. So, Congressman, you know all too well that Michigan was a canary in the mind, right—

Mr. LEVIN. Yes.

Ms. PRINGLE.—of what Ms. DeVos intends to do with public education throughout this Nation. There is no question that we have—the country has been wrestling with this issue and unsuccessfully addressing the inequities that have persisted, quite honestly, forever.

When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act was passed back in the sixties, the intent was for the Federal Government to step in and try to alleviate some of these inequities. We have gotten so far away from that.

With ESSA being passed a couple of years ago, we tried to re-center that conversation around equity and access and opportunities. I know right now, I could take a clipboard into our best public school and list all of the things those students have, from AP courses to healthy environments where they can learn.

I disagree, our public infrastructure—the infrastructure in our public schools must be addressed. It has always been there in the face of our students saying they don’t deserve better than that.

It is absolutely unacceptable that we have a Secretary of Education who doesn’t understand what equity means. This is an opportunity for us to actually change what is happening in our public school systems, to change how we fund them, to make sure that

when we say “every,” we mean every, that every one of our students has what they need.

Mr. LEVIN. Really we couldn’t say that we have taken on systemic racism in this country until we deal with the equity of funding in education, could we, in public education?

Ms. PRINGLE. We absolutely cannot, absolutely cannot. And, by the way, we need to be talking about structural racism because all of those systems from housing to healthcare to economics impact whether our students can learn, all of them. We must do better as a country.

Mr. LEVIN. Thank you so much.

It is certainly true, Mr. Chairman, that even if you have a good school, if you don’t have a home to live in, if you are hungry, you don’t have food in your belly, if you don’t have access to healthcare that you are not going to be able to thrive.

So with that, I know we have passed the 4 o’clock hour, Mr. Chairman. I yield back, and I thank you again so much for your leadership on this issue.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Let me see, the gentlelady from Minnesota, Ms. Omar.

The gentleman from Maryland, Mr. Trone.

Mr. TRONE. Mr. Chairman, am I coming through?

Chairman SCOTT. Yep, yep.

Mr. TRONE. Great. Thank you, Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Foxx, for holding this important hearing and a really big thank you for doing it remotely. I am right here on the Hill in my office safely and separated from the rest of the Members. So, it is great to be able to do this remotely, and thank you for your leadership and thinking about everybody’s safety.

The other thing I want to touch on was touched on by Member Levin, and I think we have seen this back and forth, Republicans, Democrats, we are all on the same page, but we have got to get something done on the broadband issue. It has hampered us here in tele-education, it has hampered us on telehealth, and it has hampered many areas like some of my counties on telework.

Up to 40 percent of my students got zero because they don’t have the broadband in certain counties. So, we have got to get this fixed. We owe it to the American people.

Ms. Pringle, when the schools reopen, States will need to invest in meeting the social, emotional, mental health needs of their students, ensuring support for trauma and for healthcare and social and emotional learning, including offering professional development. Redesigning schools for stronger relationships and providing curriculum support is so important so we can build the tools to help our students, our kids work through all of the stress. Children can be confined at home. The families experience job loss, COVID. Hospitals are seeing severe cases of child abuse.

So, building on what Member Underwood talked about, what is the percentage of schools that you think currently have enough counselors to help students cope with the trauma of this pandemic and how important is it that they get those resources? Give us a number.

Chairman SCOTT. Who did you address that question to?

Mr. TRONE. Ms. Pringle

Ms. PRINGLE. Thank you, Congressman. Thank you for that question.

I don't know what that percentage is, but this is what I know. Far too many of our students, especially our students of color, those living in poverty, attend schools that are understaffed, from teachers to support professionals, especially nurses and counselors, and we know those healthcare professionals, specifically those who are trained in mental health services, are going to be more needed now than before, and we already had that need for them.

We are so worried about the fact that even with the money that is allocated in the Heroes Act, that we are not going to have enough funds to meet the needs that are growing because of this pandemic. We are worried that we will not have the educators available to come into our schools and teach.

We talked earlier about the fact that it is so important to have a diverse work force. We know that our students graduating from college, particularly our students of color, have more debt and are less likely to go into teaching or stay in teaching because they are overburdened by that debt.

These are all issues we as a society must confront, and we are asking for our elected leaders to finally do something to change what is happening for our students. We know what they need. We need your support in giving them everything they need to be successful.

Mr. TRONE. I think we should add we need it now. We have got 2 months to go, and all of the trauma the Nation is going through now, on top of the financial collapse, on top of COVID, it is a trifecta that our kids are paying a price for. We have got 2 months to make some decisions and provide the assistance.

Ms. PRINGLE. Right now. Thank you.

Mr. TRONE. The stress and trauma of COVID-19 can be mitigated by trauma-informed practices, fostering trusting relationships. This is for you, Mr. Gordon. Strategies include keeping or looping teachers with the same students, doing grades and incorporating social and emotional learning and all of the school experiences digital and in person.

Mr. Gordon, how should the schools plan on meeting the social and emotional learning needs of students when they get reopened?

Mr. GORDON. Congressman, thank you for the question.

Fortunately, this is an area my district has been investing in for over a decade. There are great resources out there, from the collaborative of academic social and emotional learning that are guides for how we integrate social and emotional learning into every classroom experience so that our students are able to self-regulate, self-monitor, and participate. But it is also going to provide a lot more of the adult supports that you just were speaking of.

And just to answer your question very directly, we know we have far too little in this community or the high need our children had before COVID-19, so we have been investing through philanthropy and partnerships with our county in additional social workers that our schools don't have. We don't have enough nurses, enough guidance counselors, things that when I worked in an affluent suburb community, I had access so even though my kids had less need.

So it is got to be both integrating into the actual experiences, classroom experiences, the content development, but also having that support network in place, and that is why these resources are going to be so critical for us because, you know, communities like mine, our social and emotional learning work came out of a school shooting in 2007 where a young man took—shot two teachers, two students and took his own life. And we invested deeply in social and emotional learning, but we also invested in a hardening of security, and so we have more safety personnel in our district than we have counselors for social and emotional health.

Mr. TRONE. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you, thank you.

Next, the young lady from Michigan, Ms. Stevens.

Ms. STEVENS. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and greetings from my office in Livonia, Michigan. It has been a wonderful hearing. I have been here for all of it. Thank you so much to our witnesses for your testimony.

I will say I am so proud, I have been able to give the taxpayers a bang for their buck this morning. As part of my Manufacturing Monday Program, I visited Unified Business Technologies, which is a women-owned, minority-owned business in Troy, Michigan. It is owned by Michelle D'souza who came to this incredible country with \$500 in her pocket and has grown this incredible business that today is making masks, is fixing electronic circuit breakers for the FAA, and also they have used this pandemic period to create a new tool called IRRUPT.

IRRUPT is a machine that uses UV light to disinfect all types of surfaces. I don't know if any of you have yet had a chance to see the IRRUPT machine, but here is a picture of me using it today. It was just remarkable. I want to see this in our schools.

I know our schools want to see this piece of equipment in their schools. It also works the arms while you are using it, and it is about 700 bucks. That is how much IRRUPT costs. And, again, it cleans, it disinfects the surfaces using UV light. And it was made right here in Michigan. And we want our schools—

Ms. Pringle, I have heard you repeatedly. Mr. Gordon, thank you so much, safety, safety, safety, get back to certainty. And, Mark, I know—Mr. Johnson, you are at statewide superintendent. It has been nice to hear what is been going on in North Carolina.

Mark, do you have any idea how much Michigan's budget short-fall is for our schools projected for next year?

Mr. JOHNSON. I don't.

Ms. STEVENS. It is \$1.3 billion, Mark, \$1.3 billion for Michigan. And I got the Farmington School District, they are looking at a \$3.5 million cut alone just for this next year. And then I have got the Rochester School District. They put together this brilliant safety plan, and I am a product of these Rochester Public Schools. I saw the blueprint of my old middle school, 219 new buses if they are going to do this safely.

So, okay. Now, Mark, okay, are you familiar with this House—just on the off chance—State House Resolution No.

267? Are you familiar with it? Okay, I will tell you, it is a resolution, quote, a resolution to memorialize the Congress of the United States to not enact a Federal bailout for the States.

This came from the Michigan State House Republican conference, okay. This was introduced by Crawford, who is neighbors with Farmington, who represents Novi, Burmann of Commerce and West Bloomfield. I am just scratching my head because what does it mean for the state to reject the Federal assistance dollars?

Who can talk to me about this? Maybe Gordon or Leachman, just real quick, if you are going to reject Federal assistance dollars similar to CARES, would that get your schools back on track?

Ms. STEVENS. No

Mr. GORDON. Congresswoman, this is Eric Gordon. It wouldn't get our schools on track. We have already had a \$5.6 million cut this year from my State.

Ms. STEVENS. Yeah. So this is a big issue, and so we are wondering about this. And then I hear my colleagues, who I have got respect for. I respect all of my fabulous colleagues in this committee. You know, they are saying we want to get back to work, right? They are saying we want to get back to work, but we have got to do it safely.

So, tell me how an amazing company like the Unified Business Technologies gets this machine sold, right, it is getting people back to work, if our schools can't buy it? Do we have an answer for that? I don't think so.

So, we need to get back to robotics training. That is being cut. We need to get our guidance counselors secured, and we have got to get the people who have been funded by Betsy DeVos to stop making our laws in Michigan.

Thank you all so much.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you, thank you.

The gentlelady from Nevada, Mrs. Lee.

Mrs. LEE. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Ranking Member, for having this important hearing.

Also, I want to thank all of our witnesses today. First of all, thank you for your service to the students across this country and thank you for being here.

I have to give a special shout-out to all of the teaching professionals and support professionals who literally at the drop of a dime went from teaching in person to online learning, dealing especially in a state like Nevada where we saw almost a third of our students lacking devices to do distance learning.

And, you know, Nevada, like many States, we are planning for drastic reduction in our State revenues at a time when we are trying to plan to get back to school in an environment where we are already dealing with overcrowded classrooms.

We don't know how we are going to pay for additional transportation, continue to have high quality distance learning, which I believe needs to include some high quality professional development as well, additional school meals.

You know, our education shortfalls are running into the hundreds of billions of dollars, and we are already seeking cuts in Nevada where we have an \$812 million budget hole caused by coronavirus.

As a result of these closures to our local businesses and losses from crucial tax sources to pay for that budget, we are looking at an anticipated \$265 million projected shortfall K to 12 funding. We know many states across this country are planning for budget cuts in the 2020-2021 school year, but we have to be prepared to see continued shortfalls into the 2021-2022 school year, and it is clear that incredibly tough decisions are going to have to be made.

And I would like to ask Mr. Leachman and Mr. Gordon, can you please share with the Committee some of the cuts to the K to 12 education budgets that we can expect to see, including the likely impact of these cuts on programs and staff?

Mr. LEACHMAN. Sure. Thank you, Congresswoman.

The first thing is because teachers will be laid off, other school workers that are crucial to the experiences of our kids will be laid off, librarians, counselors, nurses, and others, and that will really affect the experiences of our kids.

That will be the first thing because labor costs are so important. You need those people in order to properly educate our kids; but there are other things, too. We won't be able to make equipment purchases that would help to improve the technology in our schools.

We won't be able to make building upgrades that would help or even keep up with maintenance that is needed in our school buildings. We talked earlier about some of the problems with asbestos and lead in some of our schools, those sort of things would be put off.

So all of those effects—and you can see them playing out—you saw them playing out during the Great Recession. Well, this is even worse.

Mrs. LEE. Thank you.

Mr. Gordon?

Mr. GORDON. Thank you, Congresswoman.

If we sell the 25 percent budget reduction that we could possibly see, we would cut like we did in 2010, where at that time we closed 23 schools, we laid off over a thousand educators at all levels of the system. We eliminated student transportation. We eliminated sports and extracurricular activities.

We cut art, music, physical education, and library media out of our K-8 schools and electives out of our high schools. And we would be forced to do exactly those things again, simply keeping the lights on, if we saw the worst of the cuts that we could forecast.

Mrs. LEE. Thank you.

Mr. Leachman, I just want to follow up on the issues I just brought up. We can look back to the Great Recession during which Congress provided \$160 billion under the Recovery Act to K to 12 - this included \$60 billion to K to 12 education. The CARES Act allocated \$13.2 billion primarily for K to 12.

Is this enough funding to meet the needs of States and school districts? And do you have any recommendations for this Committee on what the CBPP believes would be an appropriate response given the circumstances that we are facing?

Mr. LEACHMAN. No. \$13.2 billion is not remotely close to what will be needed. As I mentioned at the top of my testimony, we are projecting overall state only shortfalls of \$615 billion over the next

3 fiscal years. This is an extraordinary crisis, and providing way less funding than we provided during the last recession is not going to cut it.

You know, we believe that the additional amount that should be provided to states and local governments should be sufficient to meeting the shortfalls that states face. So 615—now, States have received some aid and they have some rainy day funds; but even after you use those things, overall States only face shortfalls of \$440 billion, and then you add on the local government shortfalls and the other needs that we have in terms of addressing the COVID crisis, and we need to get much higher than \$13 billion.

Mrs. LEE. Thank you.

Yeah, I think it is rather clear to us that the discussion about letting state and local governments go bankrupt is really bankrupting the future of our children.

So thank you.

And I yield. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

The gentlelady from Massachusetts, Ms. Trahan.

The gentleman from Texas, Mr. Castro.

I don't see anyone who hasn't been recognized, so I will recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. Gordon, can you say just very briefly what the difference is between equal and equitable in terms of providing educational services?

Mr. GORDON. Equitable is giving students what they need to create an equal experience. That is how I would say it, is that giving every child what they need so that they have an equal opportunity and that is different for each child.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Thank you.

And, Mr. Johnson, you indicated that you are trying to get devices to students that didn't have those, and I assume that would be consistent with an equitable distribution, not equal distribution; is that right?

Mr. JOHNSON. Absolutely.

Chairman SCOTT. And you said something nice about school meals. That is one of the first things that Congress recognized in the coronavirus response, making sure that we gave waivers and extra funding to make sure students could receive their school meals even though the schools were closed.

Can you say a word about why those meals are important and how the provision of meals is absolutely consistent with the educational experience?

Mr. JOHNSON. Oh, it is so important because you can't just nurture the mind, you have to nurture the body, and that is exactly what school nutrition does. And we all wish that we were not in a place where we relied so heavily on school meals for students to get their nutrition, but we are, and we have to make sure those students get what they need. And that is really where it has truly been amazing that the school nutrition services has stepped up in this crisis. Thank you all for your support and waivers. And we are using some of our CARES funding to even go beyond with school nutrition. It is so important for students to have that healthy meal as often as we can provide it from our schools.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Ms. Pringle, can you say something about the importance of summer programs and what kind of summer programs are needed? Everyone doesn't need a summer program, but some desperately do. What should we be looking at in terms of our summer experiences to deal with the summer slide?

Ms. PRINGLE. Your question—Congressman Scott, first of all, thank you for having this hearing. Your question earlier about equal versus equity comes into play here, too. We know forever that when our students are not with us during the summer, if they don't have the opportunities for enrichment, if they don't have the opportunities to continue to learn, they are going to experience a gap.

And so, we always try to provide them with either learning packets or provide them with extra services during the summer to meet those needs.

Of course, in this moment of COVID-19, that provides a lot of challenges for us because we can't do what we normally do. I would say that any kind of summer services, we would say the exact same thing, that we can't provide those unless we are ensuring that our students are safe. So the digital divide that we are experiencing right now while school is still in session will exist over the summer.

We need to have the funds that you provided in the Heroes Act right now so that we can begin to close that digital divide so that we can begin to make up any of those learning losses throughout the summer. That is exactly what I know you intended, and we hope that the Senate will act quickly to provide those resources.

Chairman SCOTT. Well, if you have a 2-month summer slide every summer, K through 12, that is a couple of years' worth of achievement gap. That is just normal. How do you—what kind of—how do you deal with that? What should we be looking at in terms of programs and funding to make sure it is not any worse?

Ms. PRINGLE. Well, we have to make sure we have educators available to provide the teaching that our students will need. So we know that with so many of our educators being laid off already, we have to make up that gap. So that is first of all. We know we need additional tools, digital tools for our students. So we need that additional \$4 billion for that funding for technology for our eWay Program.

We know that we need to ensure that our students have access to mental health professionals and counselors so that we can take care of their social and emotional needs. We need to do that right now so we can begin to try to fill those gaps today.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

And, Mr. Leachman, you indicated automatic stabilizers, automatic triggers. How does that work? Are there education specific stabilizers that you are talking about or is that just dealing with the unemployment compensation, food stamps, Medicaid? Anything specific that you were talking about?

Mr. LEACHMAN. No. I am describing here the way in which aid is generally distributed. It is best if it goes out based on economic conditions so that it stays in place as long as it is needed. And, you know, this situation is uncertain, so you set it up so that the aid provided matches how the economy evolves.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

And one final question to Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson, are you familiar with discounts that low-income families can get to get broadband services?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. We have had that offered in North Carolina during the height of this pandemic a few months ago, yes.

Chairman SCOTT. Are there general discounts that are available?

Mr. JOHNSON. Yes. And there were some services offered for free. One big question, obviously, is going to be how that continues going into next school year and over the summer.

Chairman SCOTT. Okay. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for your testimony. I think we are at the end of the questions, and I will call on the ranking member to see if she has closing comments.

Dr. Foxx, do you have a closing statement?

Ms. FOXX. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you very much.

I want to thank the witnesses again for their testimonies and particularly Superintendent Johnson for being with us here in person today.

There has been a lot of talk about the need for more funding. It is possible that after we have evaluated the impact of the CARES Act, we will consider whether or not additional aid from Federal taxpayers will be necessary; but first we must evaluate how the money that has been spent, what effect it has had.

But I want to make one important point. Mr. Cline talked earlier about the total amount of funding spent by private and public schools in 2018-2019 and the breakdown of that funding by source. Looking at just public schools, those schools spent \$726 billion nationwide in 2017-2018 according to the National Center for Education Statistics. If the worst projections do, in fact, occur and schools experience as much as the 25 percent cut to their budgets, that would be a \$181.5 billion loss.

That is significant, but that would leave schools 544.5 billion, 544.5 billion, or more than was spent in 1998-1999 calculated in 2017-2018 dollars. That needs to sink into people.

In other words, even if the worst happens, education 2 years from now will still be more expensive to taxpayers than it was nearly 25 years ago, and I think any of us would be okay with that if education was delivering better results than it was 2 decades ago.

But to pick one measure and one measure only, eighth graders scored 263 on the NAEP Reading Assessment in 1998. Let me repeat that. Eighth graders in 1998 scored 263 on the NAEP Reading Assessment. And in 2019, guess what? They scored 263, the exact same score for a lot more money. Only in the Federal Government do people ask for more and more money but make no pledges to improve delivery of services or to get better results.

This is unacceptable. So, as we rush to again throw more and more taxpayer money that taxpayers can't afford at the current challenges, we must pause for at least a moment to consider why all the money we have spent in the last two decades hasn't produced better results.

And we can go back even farther, Mr. Chairman, to all of the money being spent in other areas, and we will show the same thing: Lots of money spent; no better results.

I want our children to get the best possible education they can get. People know I came from very, very poor, very poor, disadvantaged background, and I got an excellent education. That isn't happening now, and we need to look at why, and maybe it is not just the result of what's happening in the schools.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman SCOTT. Thank you.

I, too, want to thank our witnesses for the information that they have brought to us. It is extremely important as we consider legislation to help students survive the COVID-19 pandemic. We have heard about the urgency to use equity to address this challenge because many students are showing up in school with more challenges than before.

We need to focus on achievement gaps, the summer slide starting months earlier than usual, and revenue challenges. And so we have a lot to work on, and I want to thank our witnesses for helping us today.

We have heard about the fact that we are incurring debt. That is true. Many experts have said that if we don't spend the money now, it could get even worse, we could go further in debt, because if we don't support the economy today, we could go so deep into a recession that it may take years and even decades to come out of.

The Great Depression of the 1930s really never ended until we went into World War II. We don't want that to be the case. So, we have to make the investments, and when we recover the economy, then we have to address the fiscal situation that we find ourselves in.

A lot has been made about the virtual hearing. Over the past few months, the Committee and Congress has demonstrated the ability to work in a virtual setting, using the directions of the CDC, the Attending Physician, and the Architect of the Capitol.

And we should focus, in my judgment, not on where we are doing the work, but the work that we are actually doing. Over the past few months, we've gotten a lot of work done. We passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the CARES Act, the CARES Follow-Up Act, because the money ran out, and the Heroes Act, all of that was done.

This committee has held briefings on remote learning, workplace safety, challenges facing aging Americans and individuals with disabilities, child care, contact tracing, union representation elections, and today's hearing on challenges that are caused by the pandemic in terms of education.

Unfortunately, some of our Republican colleagues have been invited to participate in all of these briefings and to offer expert panels to ensure that the conversation reflects a range of views, but, except for one previous hearing, they have declined to do so. But I think this hearing today shows the value of everybody working together.

And so, we have additional briefings planned, one additional briefing planned for Thursday on Work Force Investments, Re-launching America's Work Force Act which would provide critical

investment on our work force development, as we restart the economy. A lot of people have lost their jobs, over 40 million have filed initial unemployment compensation claims and, regrettably, a lot of them may think they are going back to their old job, but a lot of them aren't, and they will be looking for work force investment investments.

At this point, people should be comfortable with the virtual technology, and we've seen how this works. Most of the problems we have had in this have occurred because everybody tried to get into the same location, and the bandwidth in the committee room could only accommodate so many computers, so we had a little problem there. But we look forward to working with everyone in the briefings and hearings coming up.

And if there is nothing else to come before the Committee, we want to thank our witnesses again. This has been a great hearing. All of the witnesses have just been tremendous.

Is there is anything else to come before the Committee? If not, the committee hearing is now adjourned.

And thank you very much.

[Additional submission by Mr. Courtney follows:]

6/15/2020

Norwich Board of Education cuts staff, rejects closing schools for now - News - The Bulletin - Norwich, CT

The Bulletin

Norwich Board of Education cuts staff, rejects closing schools for now

By Matt Grahm

Posted Jun 10, 2020 at 2:55 PM

NORWICH — When looking at the Board of Education budget, Superintendent Kristin Stringfellow said Norwich Public Schools doesn't have the normal items schools can cut funding from, and is in a bare bones state.

"At the end of the day, this is about revenue, and the lack thereof," she said.

During a Board of Education Meeting on Tuesday night, discussion was mainly focused on budget cuts, since the Norwich City Council approved only a 3.95% increase in the budget on Monday, when the Board was looking for a 5.5% increase.

As a result, this means the Board of Education needed to make \$2,921,773 in cuts. This is after Norwich Free Academy was compensated by the Norwich Free Academy Foundation for the 2020-2021 tuition. The cuts that resulted include the reduction of dozens of non-certified staff. Board member Al Daniels hypothesized it would result in 32.5 positions cut, assuming each person is paid \$40,000. Stringfellow said the final number would likely range from 40-45, but could be even more.

The Connecticut Department of Labor reports unemployment in Norwich is currently at 18.5% , which is higher than the state average of 8%. Due to this, board member Christine Distasio would like the school district to disclose how many of the cut positions belonged to Norwich residents.

During the public comment period, Alderman Derell Wilson and Mayor Peter Nystrom acknowledged the difficulty of the cuts.

Another change made that evening is to have the City of Norwich pay for various supplies for the school, including maintenance and janitorial supplies. The Board would still have to compensate the city, meaning this isn't a cost

6/15/2020

Norwich Board of Education cuts staff, rejects closing schools for now - News - The Bulletin - Norwich, CT

reducing measure. However, Daniels said it's important as a way for the city to see how much the district needs the funding.

"They will know where each dollar was spent," he said. "We tried to explain to them that we need these funds, and apparently, they're not taking our word for it."

One option that has been taken off the table is closing schools or removing magnet status. However, it may be needed next year.

"If we get this same message again, then that's what I've got left," Stringfellow said.

During the public comment period, which was before the budget cuts were reluctantly approved, local parents voiced their concerns related to the possibility of cutting the magnet schools. Cory Fogarty said her daughter wouldn't be able to learn in a traditional setting since she has multiple developmental disorders and an individualized education program.

"Taking away the magnet schools is an unfair cut," she said. "Not only to children who don't have a choice and have attended for years, but also children like my daughter, who are supposed to start in the fall."

Stacy Weckworth, vice president of the Parent –Teacher Organization at Moriarty Magnet School, said the parents from Moriarty are concerned about the ability to support the magnet schools in this challenging time.

"My family is one of many that have remained in Norwich only because we are invested in our children receiving (a) magnet school education," she said.

[Questions submitted for the record and their responses follows:]

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Mr. Eric Gordon
 Chief Executive Officer
 Cleveland Metropolitan School District
 1111 Superior Avenue East, Suite 1800
 Cleveland, OH 44114

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I would like to thank you for testifying remotely at the June 15th Full Committee hearing entitled "*Budget Cuts and Lost Learning: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Public Education.*"

Please find enclosed additional questions submitted by Committee Members following the hearing. Please provide a written response no later than Thursday, July 16, 2020 for inclusion in the official hearing record. Your responses should be sent to Lakeisha Steele of the Committee staff. She can be contacted at 202-225-3725 should you have any questions.

I appreciate your time and continued contribution to the work of the Committee.

Sincerely,

ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
 Chairman

Enclosure

Committee on Education and Labor
Full Committee Hearing
"Budget Cuts and Lost Learning: Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 on Public Education "
Monday, June 15, 2020 12:00 p.m.

Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)

- Mr. Gordon, in your testimony you state this fall you will likely operate three to five types of learning models, some simultaneously and blending distance and in-person instruction, that support the varying needs of learners in multiple ways. What can be done at the local, state and federal level to ensure these models are successful and sustainable?



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Ms. Rebecca Pringle
Vice President
National Education Association
1201 16th Street NE
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Ms. Pringle:

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Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)

- Ms. Pringle, as a middle school science teacher, could you share your thoughts on the impact CARES funding has on STEM learning and related achievement gaps? What more should be done?

Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

- Ms. Pringle, the Alliance for Excellent Education did an [analysis](#) of the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act and found that historically underserved students are more highly concentrated than their peers in underperforming schools. What can we do to prevent COVID-19 from expanding equity gaps that prevent all children from achieving their full potential? What additional tools will school districts need that they don't have already?



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Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)

- Mr. Gordon, in your testimony you state this fall you will likely operate three to five types of learning models, some simultaneously and blending distance and in-person instruction, that support the varying needs of learners in multiple ways. What can be done at the local, state and federal level to ensure these models are successful and sustainable?
Representative Sablan,
Please find my response attached below on pages 3 and 4.
Thank you,
Eric Gordon

[Mr. Gordon response to questions submitted for the record follows:]

Representative Sablan,

I believe there are five important shifts in practice that must be made in order to ensure that these personalized learning models are successful and sustainable.

They are:

1. Moving away from traditional thinking of 9-week quarters, 18-week semesters and 36 week school years and shifting toward shorter (2-3 week) instructional cycles where students and teachers focus deeply on learning a few essential standards by engaging in group-worthy tasks that are sufficiently academically complex so that students productively struggle with the task and the learning of the task and, from which, they then are expected to demonstrate their learning in an authentic manner (e.g., presentation to a community group, juried exhibit of work, scientific poster presentations, performances, etc.);
2. Moving away from single high-stakes annual assessments and shifting toward formative assessments connected to these shorter cycles to identify what skills and knowledge students already possess as they enter the learning cycle and which skills and knowledge they will need to demonstrate mastery of at the conclusion of that cycle;
3. Shifting from whole-class lesson plans and toward pre-planned interventions and supports to meet the learning gaps identified for each student or for small groups of students (e.g., a short whole class lesson on a specific skill needed to solve the task, small group seminars, individual tutoring, peer-to-peer learning, etc.);
4. Moving away from each teacher making his or her own meaning out of learning standards and how those standards should be assessed and towards a common learning management and assessment system that describes what mastery looks like, what evidence is necessary to demonstrate mastery, and a way to record individual student progress or achievement of those learning standards; and,
5. Moving away from traditional school calendars that include lengthy summer breaks, which were designed to accommodate what was a largely agrarian society, to year round learning calendars that accommodate the learning cycles described above and have more frequent (e.g., 4 breaks per year), but shorter breaks (e.g., no more than three weeks). These kinds of calendars (e.g., four cycles of 9 weeks on, 3 weeks off) create more predictable learning cycles and diminish the effect of "learning loss" caused by lengthy summer breaks.

Local leaders will need to redesign our systems to accommodate these shifts and will need to educate families and communities as to the benefits of these kinds of practices, helping communities to shift their understanding of school from what they experienced to what is likely to produce better outcomes for many more students. COVID-19 is, by necessity, going to require local leaders to implement some of these practices and it is my hope that we would use this opportunity to implement each of these with fidelity to demonstrate the powerful impact these shifts in practice could have.

However, if these shifts are to be sustained, state and federal policy makers will need to reexamine laws and regulations that govern education. These laws were developed to support and shape the functions of the current system. That system emerged from an agrarian economy of the 1800s that then shifted to an industrial economy of the 1900s. Policies therefore still carry the vestiges of both. For example, the school year calendar which is now codified in law in most, if not all, states, is a function of the agrarian economy. The accumulation of Carnegie units, measured by passing classes based on a number of hours of instruction, emerged out of the industrial economy requiring an efficient system to provide a basic education to many with a select few needing and deserving a post-secondary education. Using these as just two examples it will be imperative that, in the short-term, state and federal policy makers create a flexible policy environment that allows local leaders like me to demonstrate the potential of these shifts. In the long-term, policy makers will then need to replace current laws (e.g., accountability, funding, etc.) with new ones that are built to support this type of more mastery-based personalized learning that is aligned with the knowledge economy that exists today.

[Ms. Pringle response to questions submitted for the record follows:]

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Ms. Rebecca Pringle
Vice President
National Education Association

Additional Questions & Responses

Representative Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-MP)

Ms. Pringle, as a middle school science teacher, could you share your thoughts on the impact CARES funding has on STEM learning and related achievement gaps? What more should be done?

ANSWER

As you know, we were grateful for the support from the CARES Act's Education Stabilization Fund. While it is a first step in the right direction for providing funding during this time of decreasing state tax revenue and increased need in our schools and communities, those resources are simply not enough to meet the increased needs of students, educators and schools. While this funding helps in all areas of education, achievement gaps will continue to persist. In terms of what more should be done, we need to not only look at the needs during this time of the COVID pandemic, but what will happen afterwards. We don't want to go back to a time of austerity. We need to look at long-term funding solutions for these schools—solutions that look at equitable funding; making sure ALL schools get the funding they need so students get the best education possible, regardless of zip code.

Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)

Ms. Pringle, the Alliance for Excellent Education did an analysis of the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act and found that historically underserved students are more highly concentrated than their peers in underperforming schools. What can we do to prevent COVID-19 from expanding equity gaps that prevent all children from achieving their full potential? What additional tools will school districts need that they don't have already?

ANSWER

COVID has already laid bare the equity gaps that have long existed, not just in our schools, but in our communities and larger society. From access to schools with modern infrastructure, to access to broadband and proper technology, among other things, Black and brown communities have been disproportionately affected. Systematic racism was the original violent pandemic that has plagued our nation since its very birth.

What we need to do is have sufficient funding to make sure schools are prepared to bring students and educators back safely. And for when and if lessons need to be done remotely, make sure there is sufficient funding, particularly in the broadband and digital learning space, so we can narrow the digital divide and close the homework/schoolwork gap.

All of this calls out for trauma-informed practices throughout our schools. We must have enough teachers to assess where students are and to meet them where they are. We must have enough school

counselors, school social workers, and other specialized instructional support personnel to deal with the emotional burdens and trauma many students will be carrying. This will be even more important in our underserved communities where trauma tends to be more acute.

While we need additional funding for all of these things, we must keep in mind that prior to COVID, many of these schools were already insufficiently funded. We need to look at long-term funding solutions for these schools—solutions that look at equitable funding; making sure ALL schools get the funding they need so students get the best education possible, regardless of zip code. What does that look like? It has smaller class sizes that allow for more individualized attention, it includes a curriculum that includes not just the core subjects, but music, art and extra-curricular activities; modern buildings with working heat and ventilation systems; school nurses, librarians, guidance counselors. Look at the best school in your district. Now replicate that for everyone. That's what it looks like.

[Whereupon, at 4:39 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

