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Leveraging Integrated Student Support to Identify and Address COVID-19-Related Needs for Students, Families, and Teachers

Courtney Pollack
Maria Theodorakakis
Mary E. Walsh
Boston College

As COVID-19 shuttered schools, it created widespread student and family needs and exacerbated challenges stemming from long-standing racial and economic inequities. Here, we examine how an evidenced-based, integrated student support intervention responded to systematically identify and address the academic and nonacademic needs of students and families in 94 high-poverty, urban schools. We conduct thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses about intervention personnel's work in spring 2020 and triangulate findings with descriptive analyses of service provision records and mid-spring estimates of crucial needs. We find that intervention schools developed specific processes to respond to immediate needs, which included resource, academic, and socioemotional support. To accomplish this, the intervention leveraged existing processes and relationships to maintain intervention-specific practices, facilitate referrals and connections to resources, and expand direct intervention for education stakeholders. Findings elucidate practices for meeting academic and nonacademic needs that affect student learning and that may arise in future schooling disruptions.

Keywords: *COVID-19, integrated student support, whole-child intervention, elementary schools, thematic analysis*

By late spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had forced U.S. school closures that affected 55.1 million students ("Map," 2020). With skyrocketing food insecurity (Bauer, 2020), housing insecurity (Aurand et al., 2020), and student and family stress (Bartlett et al., 2020; Modan, 2020; Preston, 2020), COVID-19 foregrounded and exacerbated student needs stemming from long-standing inequities and lack of systemic access to resources. The shift to remote learning brought new focus to existing unmet needs in home environments and highlighted the profound effect of out-of-school challenges on learning. The combination of out-of-school factors, projected COVID-19 learning loss (Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020), and preexisting societal inequities that cause achievement gaps (Hanushek et al., 2019; Reardon, 2011) suggests the potential for long-term disproportionate effects for families of color and families living in low-income environments. Beyond the regular curriculum, many schools shoulder the effects of inequality in society more broadly (Berliner, 2013). Given this additional responsibility, how did school personnel collaboratively respond to COVID-19's deleterious effects?

School leaders recognize that to address academic and nonacademic needs arising from COVID-19, schools need systems to organize support resources and to leverage relationships (Modan, 2020). However, student support in schools has historically been fragmented, often focusing only on high-needs students, and lacking the required infrastructure, data tracking, and resources (Walsh & DePaul, 2008). These limitations hinder schools' abilities to systematically understand, anticipate, and respond to student needs. Indeed, without physical structures and in-person interactions, schools lacking a preexisting systemic approach to student support struggled with coordinated responsiveness to widespread needs arising from COVID-19 (Bailey & Hess, 2020).

This study illuminates how a preexisting student support intervention responded to COVID-19-related school closures. City Connects (e.g., Walsh et al., 2014), which in 2019–2020 was implemented in 94 schools across six states, uses a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing students' academic and nonacademic needs. City Connects leveraged existing in-school systemic practices and educational stakeholder relationships to mitigate COVID-19's effects, by quickly identifying stakeholders' needs, meeting those needs, and supporting learning for all students.

Conceptual Framework

Academic and Nonacademic Impacts on Learning

We ground the present study in a dynamic and developmental systems framework, an emerging consensus view that children's development simultaneously occurs across

biological, cognitive, emotional/psychological, physical, and social domains (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Fischer & Bidell, 2006; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1995), with bidirectional impacts among domains (Rutter, 2007; Sameroff, 2009). Furthermore, ecological systems theory posits that child development occurs across different contexts, including home, school, and community; all contexts are integral to development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998, 2006). Every child has a unique developmental trajectory (Cicchetti & Sroufe, 2000; Masten & Cicchetti, 2010; Sroufe, 2013), which encompasses genetic factors, environmental circumstances, and co-occurring risk and protective factors (Ford & Lerner, 1992).

Traumatic events, poverty, and related environmental risk factors adversely affect students' developmental trajectories (Reardon, 2011; Yoshikawa et al., 2012). Resulting levels of toxic stress can hinder brain development, causing difficulties with self-regulation, executive function, and learning (AAP Council on Community Pediatrics, 2016). Material hardship, unemployment, income instability, and parental stress can produce negative developmental outcomes, jeopardizing students' school-readiness (Chaudry & Wimer, 2016; Conger et al., 1994, 2002; Dearing, 2008; Yoshikawa et al., 2012).

COVID-19 further entangles academic, health, socioemotional, and family domains of child development. Beyond academics, schools address nonacademic needs, providing children with food, exercise, social interaction, and emotional support (e.g., Hoffman & Miller, 2020). Therefore, developmental theory (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2020) suggests that COVID-19-related school closures would affect all developmental domains, highlight the importance of school–home–community relationships, and exacerbate or generate environmental factors that negatively affect student outcomes. How can schools' COVID-19 response support learning and address students' holistic needs?

A Systemic Approach to Student Support

To address each child's unique and interrelated set of strengths and needs, student support scholars argue that schools must shift from a problem-focused, reactive approach to a proactive approach that considers children's holistic development and serves every student (Adelman & Taylor, 2006, 2017; Gysbers, 2001; Martin, 2002). This requires a comprehensive and systemic approach to student support and a fervent commitment to addressing systemic inequity.

Integrated student support (ISS) interventions are a key strategy for providing this comprehensive, systemic student support (Moore & Emig, 2014). ISS is a "school-based approach to promoting students' academic success by developing or securing and coordinating supports that target academic and non-academic barriers to achievement" (Moore & Emig, 2014, p. 1). ISS initiatives take many forms (e.g., community schools, wraparound supports, integrated supports) but share a core goal: to connect struggling children with the supports and resources they need to thrive (Moore et al., 2017). ISS interventions are deeply rooted in child developmental theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Moore et al., 2017).

School-based student support staff, like school counselors and social workers, are uniquely positioned to lead ISS implementation in U.S. schools. They bring clinical training, a commitment to equity, and an ability to leverage existing school systems. Over the past two decades, student support has transitioned from crisis intervention and academic counseling services for a subset of students to a coordinated and comprehensive program that responds to the strengths and needs of every student (Gysbers, 2001; Martin, 2002). Professional organizations have created guidelines to systematize practices. For example, the American School Counselor Association offers a framework for designing and delivering programs that improve outcomes for all students and advocate for students who have historically been denied access to resources and opportunities (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Martin, 2002). School-based student support staff are especially well-equipped to assess and respond to needs amid the COVID-19 crisis by leveraging strong relationships with colleagues, students, and families and applying clinical skills and deep knowledge about academic and nonacademic factors that affect students' ability to thrive.

City Connects

One ISS intervention that student support professionals implement is City Connects. City Connects is a schoolwide, whole-child intervention in mostly urban K–8 schools with a large proportion of students who are economically disadvantaged (i.e., 47%–87% of students network-wide; City Connects, 2020). The intervention's core is a coordinator, a masters-trained school counselor or social worker who collaborates with education stakeholders to systematically identify every student's strengths and needs, and through community partnerships coordinates supports tailored to each student's developmental context across academic, socioemotional, health, and family domains. Coordinators document students' strengths and needs and service provision in a centralized database, monitor students' support plans, and work with teachers to modify plans as needed. We describe how schools implement City Connects, intervention-specific components, and a review of prior research showing the intervention's effectiveness in the Supplemental Appendix (available in the online version of this article).

ISS interventions like City Connects are well-positioned to illuminate schools' work during the pandemic because

they have existing systems of whole-child student support that address academic and nonacademic barriers to learning. City Connects provides an ideal window into schools' work during COVID-19 for three reasons. First, it enacts key ingredients for effective student support: support as a core function of the school (Adelman & Taylor, 2006), a comprehensive and coordinated approach (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Gysbers, 2001) that simultaneously addresses all developmental domains (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), and utilization of community partnerships (Adelman & Taylor, 2006). Second, through relationships with teachers, administrators, and community agencies, the coordinator weaves a web of support that extends outside of school. Third, City Connects pioneered many core elements of ISS (see the online Supplemental Appendix).

The Present Study

The present study examines how, as a systemic intervention, City Connects responded to COVID-19 from March through June 2020. Throughout COVID-19, the intervention continued to support students, families, and school staff, with coordinators on the front lines, uniquely positioning this study to illustrate the ways in which preexisting systems, service delivery, and relationships enable optimized and adaptable responses to COVID-19. Two research questions guide the study:

Research Question 1: What COVID-19-related needs arose for students, families, and school staff; how did they evolve during initial school closures from March to June 2020?

Research Question 2: How does an ISS intervention leverage existing systematic practice, service delivery, and community partnerships to meet changing COVID-19-related needs?

Method

Context and Participants

We invited 89 City Connects coordinators from 94 City Connects schools to submit weekly surveys in spring 2020. Eighty-one coordinators (female = 85%) from 89 schools participated. City Connects schools were in 11 districts in six U.S. states (i.e., Northeast, Midwest, Southern regions). Eight districts were composed of public schools and three were networks of urban private and charter schools. Years of City Connects implementation varied across districts (range: 1–20 years). Districts were responding to school closures amid several broader contextual factors. We discuss additional context for the districts, their student populations, and for broader contextual factors co-occurring with the present study in the online Supplemental Appendix. In 2019–2020, coordinators served over 30,000 students and their families. Data from 2018–2019 (most recently available) show that 23.4% of students who City Connects served were English learners (City Connects, 2020). Together, the variation in district location, years of implementation, and number of schools provide a broad examination of City Connects' COVID-19 response. We also collected estimates of need from 11 coordinator supervisors (91% female), who oversee coordinators' work at the district or network level (see the online Supplemental Appendix). The Boston College institutional review board approved the study.

Coordinators were the most appropriate stakeholders for primary data collection for four reasons. First, the study's central focus is the intervention's response to COVID-19, which suggests a focus on coordinator work. Second, because of robust preexisting relationships, coordinators would maintain regular contact with teachers and administrators in their schools. Coordinators also work closely with students and families, including families who experience more barriers to communicating with school staff, and are deeply familiar with available resources in their community. Third, since coordinators are representatives of their school, we could gather data quickly and efficiently, and lessen the burden of study participation during unprecedented levels of stress and uncertainty. These considerations were vital since conditions changed rapidly throughout spring 2020. Fourth, because the study involves an ongoing intervention, the intervention could use coordinator data to support coordinators' work.

Yet, we acknowledge the importance of stakeholders' own voices to share their lived experience and as a way for us to engage directly, fully represent perspectives, and mitigate unintended bias and inequities in the research process (Andrews et al., 2019; Chicago Beyond, 2019). Because the circumstances precluded data collection across all stakeholder groups, results represent coordinator (and coordinator supervisor) work and perceptions that are not intended to substitute for other education stakeholders' perceptions. In the discussion, we include suggestions for further research to incorporate stakeholders' voices.

Data Collection

We use three data sources. We focus data analysis on coordinators' weekly open-ended survey responses (n = 580), which we collected over thirteen weeks from the end of March through June 2020. We invited coordinators to submit weekly online surveys. Participation was voluntary. Figure A1 in the online Supplemental Appendix shows the distribution of response rates per week. We analyze responses to three prompts: (1) Over the past week, how have you worked directly with students and families to respond to the evolving crisis? (2) Over the past week, how have you worked with teachers, school leaders, and school staff to respond to the evolving crisis? (3) Over the past week, what

needs have you been seeing repeatedly? In the third prompt, we asked coordinators to share patterns of needs from families, students, teachers, and administrators.

Second, we use database records of coordinators' student-level service provision, organized by the intervention's preexisting service categories (see Table 1 for a list). Coordinators keep an ongoing record of every service for every student in the school. We report the number of services, by service type, that students and families received (and therefore needed). These data provide a broad and deep intervention-wide snapshot of need. For completeness, we include service records from March 15, 2020, after school closures, to August 15, 2020, prior to the 2020–2021 school year. Students received most services during the school year, but this time frame captures services that coordinators arranged for summer support based on school year needs.

Third, we draw on coordinator supervisors' estimates of the three most prevalent pandemic-related challenges that we observed in the weeks after school closures, to corroborate stakeholder needs and intervention response. Shortly after school closures, intervention implementers identified three prevalent challenges: unreachable students/families, food insecurity, and lack of access to technology (i.e., devices, internet). In mid-May 2020, coordinator supervisors provided estimates of the percentage of students/families experiencing each challenge at that time in each school in their district.

Analytic Approach

We conducted an essentialist/realist thematic analysis of survey responses using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach. The goal was to provide a rich description of the entire data set, an approach appropriate for underresearched areas (Braun & Clarke, 2006) such as the impact of pandemic-induced school closures. Two coders (first and second authors) familiarized themselves with the data by reading and rereading responses to generate initial ideas. Second, the coders generated initial codes of semantic content across the entire data set using bottom-up, data-driven coding. Coders generated initial codes iteratively by double-coding, memoing, and meeting to discuss codes, resolve discrepancies, and combine and separate codes. Once there were few discrepancies and the coders had double-coded and discussed 25% of the data, coders divided and independently coded the remaining data following an iterative process of coding, memoing, and meeting, to ensure coding was consistent and comprehensive. Third, coders reviewed data within each code and worked together to group codes into preliminary themes. Fourth, coders reviewed data within themes and reviewed themes against the whole data set. Fifth, coders iteratively defined and named themes and subthemes and completed the last step of final analysis and write-up.

To triangulate findings from the thematic analysis, we tabulated services across the intervention's predefined service categories (Table 1) in the intervention database. As examples, food support for families would belong to Family Assistance and Support and communication with families about a student's attendance during remote learning would belong to Attendance Support. Similarly, we also summarized coordinator supervisors' estimates of prevalent student/family challenges to triangulate findings of stakeholder needs and City Connects's response.

We used several methods to increase the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings (Saldaña, 2013). We first acknowledged our different positionality. One investigator, a researcher in psychology and education, has 2 years of experience studying the intervention on an independent evaluation team. Another investigator, a child psychologist with 14 years of experience with the intervention, facilitates connections between City Connects' research and practice efforts. The third investigator, a clinical developmental psychologist, co-created the intervention and has overseen the intervention's development and expansion for 20 years. As a team, we bring these differing perspectives, knowledge of on-the-ground practices and experiences in schools, and a deep and broad vision of school–community partnerships for student support. We employ a common lens, agreeing with theories of child development that recognize bidirectional interactions of children and their environment, across domains (e.g., Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Our experiences, backgrounds, and roles influence our understandings, and we used them to foster reflexive dialogue when conceptualizing the research questions and approach, and throughout coding, memoing, analysis, and interpretation. We used multiple sources of data to triangulate findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Descriptive analyses of service records from the intervention database evidence coordinators' systematic approach to service provision and levels of need for students and families, separate from coordinator perceptions. Coordinator supervisors' estimates of prevalent challenges provide perceptions from a separate stakeholder. Last, we conducted member checks by inviting feedback on preliminary themes with eight coordinator supervisors, who confirmed that findings aligned with their experiences.

Findings

We present findings by research question, by first describing the emergence and development of needs and second, explaining how existing systemic practice facilitated an effective and efficient response. Findings reflect thematic analysis of survey responses and triangulation with service delivery and estimates of prevalent challenges. Themes represent needs and City Connects responses that were relevant network-wide.

TABLE 1

Service Categories and Definitions That Are Used in the Intervention Database

Service category	Definition
Academic skills and interests	A program or service that is primarily academic in nature that develops a student's academic skills and interests (e.g., book club, Aquarium program).
Accommodations and adaptation	Accommodations made for a student by the school, either through a 504 plan (referring to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act) or due to illness, family issues, or other constraints (e.g., wheelchair ramps, blood sugar monitoring, extra set of textbooks).
Arts-based services	A program providing arts-based enrichment experiences.
Attendance support	Support for all school attendance issues (e.g., communications with family, interface with district truancy officers).
Behavioral support	Targeted behavioral support provided to a child aimed at addressing specific problematic behavior (e.g., behavior plans and/or teacher consultation provided by coordinators, regular check-ins with coordinators; targeted behavior support provided by staff or community-based program).
Classroom support	Academic classroom support delivered by one or more additional adults working with an entire class. Examples include classroom-based support provided by community agency representatives such as BUILD, local university volunteers, or READ Boston.
College and career assistance	A service to assist students with career decisions and/or college selection, application, scholarships, test prep, financial aid, etc., for any postsecondary educational opportunities, including 2- and 4-year colleges.
Counseling	Therapeutic/clinical counseling for a student to address social–emotional, family, and/or health issues outside of an IEP that hinder student achievement.
Crisis intervention	Individual support or attention for a student during a school incident (e.g., restraining a child, attending to a medical emergency, filing a CHINS).
Donations	Clothing, shoes, supplies, books, or other materials provided to students and/or families. It is typically a one-time service.
EL	English language (EL) services provided to students and/or families.
Family assistance and support	Direct support to families by coordinators or others (e.g., communication with parents or caregivers about a family's needs, food and fuel assistance, therapeutic counseling for a student's parent or caregiver).
Family conference/meeting	Parent, family, and/or caregiver meeting with district and/or intervention staff to comprehensively address the needs of a student.
Family engagement	Service that works with parents and families to focus on child development, what children are learning in schools, advocacy, parent leadership, and effective parenting skills (e.g., health fairs, math night, adult education programs).
Health programming	Health or social skills programming delivered to a whole class.
Health/medical intervention	A health/medical service provided by a school nurse, community-based health center, hospital, or clinic for a student and/or parent/caregiver.
Literacy support	Literacy support outside of the regular classroom.
Math support	Mathematics support outside of the regular classroom.
Mentoring	Mentoring through an organized or structured program (e.g., same-age or older-peer mentoring, teacher or community adult mentoring, therapeutic mentoring).
Occupational therapy/physical therapy	Occupational or physical therapy services.
Psychosocial group	Time-limited psychosocial group run by either a coordinator or another licensed person.
Screening—BMI	Body mass index (BMI) screenings.
Screening—Hearing	Screenings for hearing issues.
Screenings—Postural/scoliosis	Screenings for postural issues or scoliosis.
Screenings—Vision	Screening for vision issues.
Social skills	A classroom social skills lesson or intervention (e.g., healthy life skills curriculum).
Special education evaluation	Screenings, observations, and evaluations that take place before, during or after a special education referral (e.g., a diagnostic evaluation, independent evaluations for diagnostic or referral purposes).
Speech and language	Speech and language services.
Sports or physical activity	A service or program offering sports or physical activities.
Transition assistance	Support to students and/or families related to school transitions (e.g., meeting with new students and/or family members to give school tours, communicating with students, families, and school personnel to support grade-to-grade or school-to-school transitions).
Tutoring	Individualized instruction, coaching and/or guidance in an academic area, provided one-on-one or in a small group.
Youth development	An enrichment program that provides students with activities with peers that are general in nature or activities focused on youth development (e.g., leadership skills, service learning).

Note. All service categories existed prior to the onset of the pandemic. IEP = Individual Education Plans; CHINS = Child in Need of Services Cases.

TABLE 2
Themes and Subthemes of Needs Across Education Stakeholders With Example Quotes

Theme	Subtheme	Example quotes
Needs at the whole school level	Process needs	"We have established a high needs tracking system in which myself and a colleague are responsible for. We are meeting several times per week with the admin team, and have created a tiered system to illustrate the level of need that each family is in."
		"I also know that there has been a lot of discussion on our daily family communication log, and now there is concern about our communication log and how our school was tracking communications with families. So now for the district, our school needs to re-create a new form for tracking this data and resubmit all of their data from before."
	Communication needs	"Oftentimes parents are not responding to emails or class dojo messages being sent out and the teachers are unsure what to do. They don't know if the parents have been trying any of the activities sent or have follow through with suggested tasks. I have encouraged them to make direct phone calls as much as possible. It is helpful to directly call/text a parent and tell them—'Please let me know that you have received my message and give me direct feedback on the activity or lesson.'"
		"[Families] have been appreciating the contact and connection. Many of them had stated they did not know of certain resources within the community so they were happy to hear from me and have that contact. They need connection with teachers, they need communication from leaders and they need supportive resources for their families."
		"We still have families that no provider has been able to get in touch with yet and there are language barriers as well."
Individual needs across stakeholders	Essential resource needs	"I have been seeing food needs pop up repeatedly, both in terms of parents looking for food resources and issues with the meal delivery service and access to the meal site pick-ups (or simply not knowing about them)."
		"Families getting the food and other resources they need is also a very real issue."
		"This week I have had many families report to staff that they are worried about how they are going to pay rent/housing issues."
		"I also have seen issues with caregivers who are homeless or are worried about becoming homeless due to job loss in the current environment."
	Academic needs	"The families I am assigned to call are having trouble managing the technology (getting on the right app) with family schedules (families in health care overworked, parents at home are overwhelmed with zoom schedules with their work schedules."
	Socioemotional needs	"I think the theme of the past week has definitely been students wanting social engagement while burning out on distance learning."
		"Lots of stress. From everyone."
		"There has been many conversations with families that are expressing they are worried and anxious about the uncertainty of everything (work, school, housing, day-care, bills etc.)."

The Emergence and Development of Needs

Analyses showed widespread, persistent needs across stakeholders. Table 1 evidences that many needs predated COVID-19. Coordinator responses suggest that school closures exacerbated needs (e.g., food insecurity) and created new ones (e.g., Chromebook delivery). Needs occurred at the whole school level and at the individual level across stakeholders. We discuss each in turn.

Needs at the Whole School Level. Schools needed processes in order to respond to COVID-19 in a coordinated and comprehensive way and needed to facilitate consistent communication among stakeholders. Table 2 provides example quotations for themes of needs.

Process needs. COVID-19-related school closures necessitated new processes, whereby school staff organized to support students, families, and each other. One coordinator

reported how team discussions facilitated planning: "school leaders [and] teachers serve on [the COVID-19 implementation] team and we discuss all the many ways that the virus could affect our students, and we develop plans to combat them." School staff needed to identify and prioritize tasks, disseminate information to families, communicate among each other, and maintain consistent communication with students and families. Schools needed tracking processes to gather and document information from every student and family (Table 2). Schools also needed new processes to support remote learning, including criteria for tracking attendance, scales for grading, restrictions on Chromebook use, and managing assignment workload. One coordinator "chatted with administrators about the need for routine" for students to have daily, rather than weekly, assignments, to promote a "routine of doing work every day as opposed to cramming." Around late April, process needs focused on attendance, accommodation plans for struggling students, and student engagement. Some coordinators anticipated needing these new processes in the fall.

Schools needed to reflect on and improve processes and to refine ad hoc processes to align with emerging district guidance. One coordinator reported that her school was "improving [the] use of our new student reporting system so that our student outreach has few holes." Another described how her principal refined their communication process, asking that staff "go to one another first with questions" since he received "hundreds of inquiries every day." In mid-May, one principal created a "who to contact if" list. In another school, staff created shared documents to decrease email volume. Amid new and changing processes, coordinators needed to complete routine intervention tasks on time, such as Whole Class and Individual Student Reviews, re-tiering, end-of-year planning, and flagging students for fall (online Supplemental Appendix).

Communication needs. There was a need for information exchange between schools and families. Immediately after school closures, schools needed to disseminate districts' remote learning plans and expectations to families. One coordinator reported that her school was "trying to solve the communication problem" of reaching "several families with constant[ly] changing addresses, phone numbers, etc." The school was "far from being able to function over video" and was delivering or mailing printed packets of homework. Coordinators needed to share information with families about how to access critical resources (e.g., food, technology). Families who spoke a language other than English needed translation to access resource information. As the spring progressed, coordinator responses illustrated a shift in need from information dissemination to information collection. Coordinators needed to connect with hard-to-reach families, whom school staff had not reached successfully after several attempts. This became a source of stress, "burnout and a lot of frustration" for teachers (Table 2). As we show in Figure 1, coordinator supervisors' estimates suggest that by mid-May, coordinators had been able to contact most students and families in most schools.

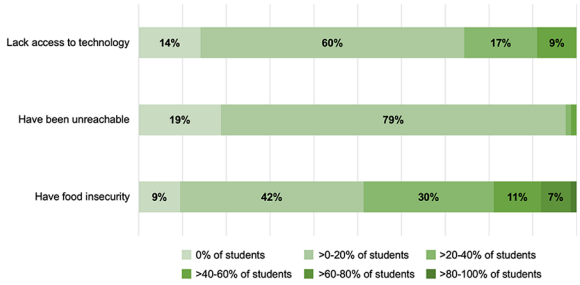

FIGURE 1. *In mid-May, coordinator supervisors (n = 11) estimated a range (legend) of the percentage of students in each school who lacked access to technology, who were unreachable, or who had food insecurity.*
Note. Stacked bars represent the percentage of schools that fall into each range. For example, coordinator supervisors estimated that in 14% of schools, 0% of students lacked access to technology (e.g., Chromebooks) and that in 60% of schools, >0% to 20% of students lacked access to technology.

Information sharing among stakeholders was a persistent need. After school closures, a coordinator "noticed a desire for communication and connection within my staff & a desire to connect with our administrator." Similarly, coordinators needed to communicate with community agency partners about which services and resources would be available (e.g., the "referral process during these times") and how students could access them. In sum, coordinators and school staff needed a coordinated and comprehensive response at the school level, which laid vital groundwork for staff to identify nonacademic and academic needs across stakeholders.

Individual Needs Across Stakeholders. Individual needs across stakeholders were extensive and spanned academic and nonacademic domains. Indeed, Figure 2 shows that 86,352 services across 94 schools were delivered to students and families in spring and early summer. Individual needs included essential resources for students and families, academic-related support for all stakeholders, and socioemotional support for all stakeholders. Table 2 provides example quotations.

Essential resource needs. Immediately after school closures, the proportion of families requiring a variety of critical resources appeared large. Students required technology (e.g., Chromebooks) and internet access. One coordinator reported, "technology and Wi-Fi" were among the most prevalent needs—she explained, "we have referred all families to the Wi-Fi spots the city has opened up and [asked] for technology which we have received and granted a computer

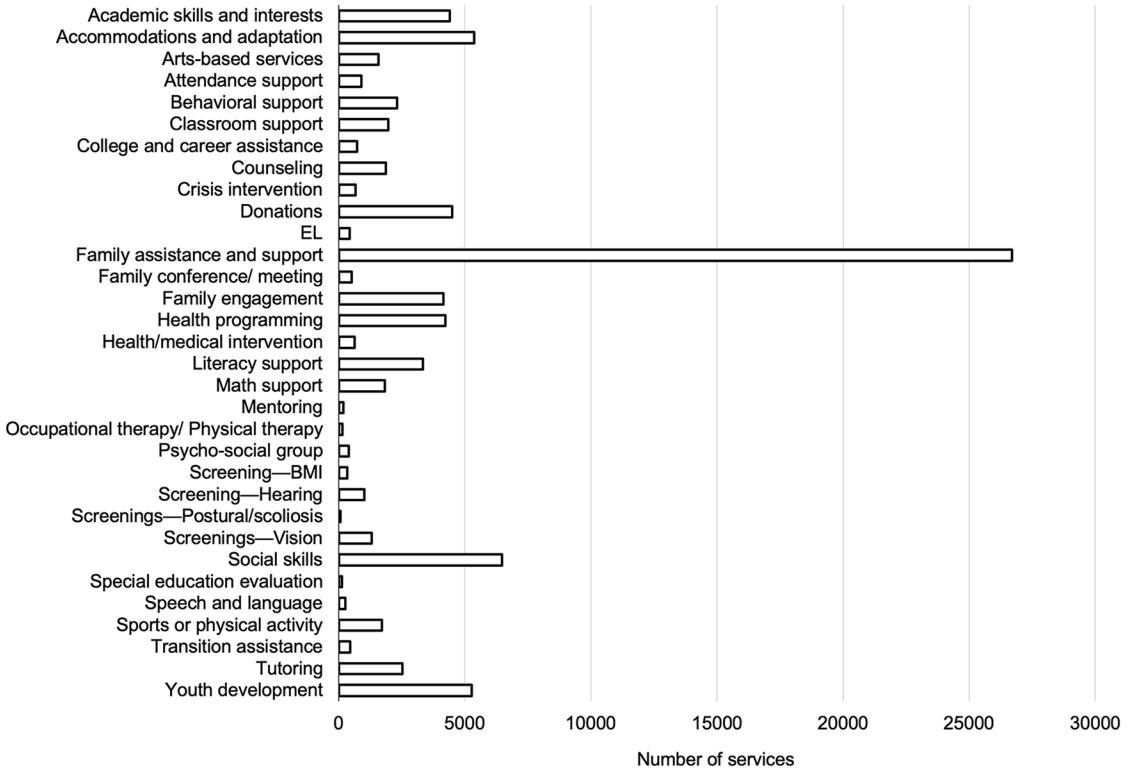

FIGURE 2. *Descriptive statistics of the 86,352 services that students and families received from March 15–August 15, 2020.*
Note. Almost all services were delivered during the school year with few in the summer (all prior to the 2020–2021 school year). Bar categories align with Table 1.

to those families." Some families needed multiple devices, for example, if "students are expected to do work on [the] computer but mom also needs her computer for work." Coordinator supervisors' estimates suggest that by mid-May, technology needs were met for the majority of students in the majority of schools (Figure 1).

Students and families needed supports for daily living. With schools closed, coordinators identified food access as a significant, persistent need among students and families (Table 2). In mid-May, coordinator supervisors' estimates suggested that food needs were still widespread and were severe in some schools (Figure 1). Families also needed other essential supplies like clothing, medications, and diapers. Many families needed "financial support" and "help paying bills." Families' need for rental assistance was prevalent throughout the spring, especially as eviction policies changed in various states around the beginning of May. Resources related to housing insecurity were critical (Table 2).

Academic needs. After COVID-19-related school closures, academic needs focused on the establishment and maintenance of at-home learning. Students and families needed to access, set-up, and navigate online learning and needed "a structure and schedule for finishing work." Many families needed "help to understand technology," like learning platforms (e.g., Google Classroom, Class DoJo). Without access to online platforms, many parents were "asking for student[s'] assignments," and many students were "not completing assignments." Some teachers were unsure how to teach using technology and found developing a structure challenging. About 3 weeks after school closures, many families had secured internet access, though technical difficulties and unreliable internet access persisted through June.

The need to support "involvement and engagement in virtual learning" was consistent. Many coordinators reported a "lack of virtual engagement," and teachers' concerns about student work. One coordinator noted that "the amount and quality of work continues to be an issue, even with many formerly strong students." Teachers were concerned that students used computers for nonlearning activities. Coordinators speculated about what may underlie lack of student engagement, including other issues at home, difficulty adjusting to online learning, or the inability to submit work amid technical difficulties. One coordinator reported that, "most parents that are still working are struggling with helping their young students get the work done because they feel they have no time." Some students needed learning support at home because their families did not read or write English. Needs for student engagement intensified toward the end of the

school year. Students who were submitting work in previous weeks were now turning in less. Coordinators hypothesized that nicer weather and student burnout may have contributed, as students were "done with distance learning."

Socioemotional needs. All stakeholders needed socioemotional support related to COVID-19's effects. Stress was pervasive and universal; sources of stress evolved over time. After school closures, being "overwhelmed" was common among stakeholders due to the quantity of information they received and the transition to online learning. One coordinator observed that "families are completely overwhelmed trying to work from home (or still be at a job for 'essential' employees), manage the economic fallout, be full time parents, and be full time substitute teachers (often for 3 and 4 kids)." Throughout spring, stakeholders needed support for anxiety and uncertainty. One coordinator stated, "There [have] been many conversations with families that are expressing they are worried and anxious about the uncertainty of everything (work, school, housing, day-care, bills etc.)." Another coordinator had similar observations, describing "uncertainty from parents and staff about how next year will work." Coordinators reported COVID-19-related stress among teachers and families that interfered with other supports. One coordinator noted that, "families who do not have food in the house/are too afraid to leave their house to get food."

As the spring progressed, socioemotional needs intensified. A major need was support for students who were feeling isolated and lonely. Some students presented as sad as they grieved a range of losses (e.g., death of a loved one from COVID-19, missing out on graduation ceremonies). Some students experienced behavioral dysregulation when struggling to manage stress and meet academic expectations. Coordinators identified burnout or fatigue for teachers and parents who had made significant efforts week after week to support students.

In sum, needs at the school level and the level of the individual stakeholder emerged and developed from March to June. Schools needed processes and constant communication. Individual stakeholders needed essential resources, academic support, and socioemotional support. This characterization of needs facilitates an understanding of how stakeholders responded to COVID-19.

Existing Systemic Practice Facilitated Effective and Efficient Support

Analyses show how the intervention's existing systemic practice facilitated an effective and efficient response to the pandemic. First, coordinators maintained core City Connects-specific practices and milestones. Second, school staff expanded their practice of facilitating referrals and connections to resources by creating and implementing new processes, drawing on relationships, identifying and coordinating resources, and compiling and distributing information. Third, coordinators expanded direct interventions to support families, students, and school staff. We discuss each in turn. Table 3 provides example quotations.

Maintaining and Leveraging City Connects-Specific Practices. Throughout spring, coordinators continued to complete City Connects-specific practices and planning (online Supplemental Appendix). Coordinators collaborated with teachers to conduct Whole Class Reviews and re-tiering. This year, the re-tiering process directly addressed the impact of COVID-19 on students' ability to learn and thrive. One coordinator reported that re-tiering provided "a brief snapshot of where some of our students and families are now." Another coordinator noted that re-tiering was "a great way to go through each student again, and really see what was going on pre- and post-COVID." As part of this work, coordinators facilitated and logged individual student reviews for students with more intensive needs. Coordinators updated student records and community partner information in the intervention database. They continued to facilitate service delivery by identifying needs, making service referrals, and following up to ensure service delivery. Coordinators completed administrative tasks in the school, such as joining hiring committees and winding down the school year through established end-of-year procedures.

Coordinators also adapted intervention-related practices to support their pandemic response. They sought remote resources for teachers and school counselors. They engaged in COVID-19 professional development by attending webinars and virtual sessions to learn more about supporting families. They identified families in need of resources and opportunities for summer. In June, coordinators were already actively planning for fall. One coordinator was "brainstorming for bettering my practice for now and next year" and another was "continuing to research and identify community partners to try and work with next year." Coordinators held meetings to discuss how to identify or "flag" students (online Supplemental Appendix) who would most need support in fall 2020.

Facilitating Referrals and Connections to Resources. Coordinators and school staff applied and expanded their collaborative processes to identify and meet needs. They created and implemented new processes, drew on and expanded relationships, identified and coordinated resources, and compiled and distributed information.

Creating and implementing new processes. Coordinators collaborated with others to create, implement, and adapt needed processes. Ad hoc teams, like the "food response team" and "COVID-19 implementation team" responded to immediate needs and facilitated the transition to online

TABLE 3

Themes and Subthemes That Describe How the Intervention Leveraged Systems, Practices, and Relationships to Respond to the Pandemic, With Example Quotes

Themes	Subthemes	Example quotes
Maintaining and leveraging [intervention]-specific practices		"Coordinators have launched Re-Tiering, which is the primary universal way we are going to get information on every student—not just in terms of re-tier, but concerns with summer and fall transitions. Our intention is to use this data to inform our summer recruitment lists (which we are doing differently and more nimbly this year) and who of our students we need to ensure are 'Flagged for Fall.'"
Facilitating referrals and connections to resources	Creating and implementing new processes	"We have developed a needs assessment. We contacted each family and completed the needs assessment. Questions were based on basic needs, technology resources for online learning (devices, internet access), food needs, child care needs if you are working in the medical field, if someone has lost financial income due to COVID-19 etc."
		"Our school is also getting more organized as to how to share who I need to contact. For the first time, teachers have completed a shared 'attendance/no show concerns' in a centralized place where I can see who is most in need of a direct contact."
	Leveraging and expanding relationships with stakeholders	"Additionally, I have been in communication with other community resources and checking-in with how they are servicing the students, and how we can support them further."
		"Well-being phone calls to students and families . . . have served as a venting session for some parents as I am an active listener and completely validate their feelings as this is something difficult that WE are ALL going through."
	Identifying and coordinating resources with others	"I worked with families on getting them food access through Fresh Box requests and through the Lewis Foundation, who provided 60 meal boxes to our school"
		"I have collaborated with teachers and administration to help provide resources to students"
	Compiling and distributing resource information	"I compiled and uploaded lots of resources for families on a variety of topics including: Crisis Support, Physical Activity, Stress Management & Self-Care, A guide to resolving conflict at home, a video of me where I highlight my favorite meditation and mindfulness app: Headspace, Strong Women/Strong Girls virtual lesson, Access to playworks handbook, daily reflection page, feelings bag, and sensory recipes shared through [Intervention]'s network of coordinators. This was emailed to every family in the school."
		"I maintain a guidance website that I post to regularly and upload resources to, which is shared out each day in the morning assembly email to all of our families."
Expanding direct intervention	Directly supporting families	"I have been contacting all of our homeless and highly mobile families weekly to address any of service they could potentially benefit from"
		"I am also a direct contact for parents in need of rental assistance, help applying for unemployment, utility assistance and other basic needs. I have worked with multiple families during this week to apply for rental assistance and other emergency financial supports.
	Providing students with socioemotional and academic support	"Have been hosting social emotional zooms with students in small groups to decrease sense of isolation and allow more processing of not returning to school this year."
		"Additionally, I have engaged in meetings with students to reflect upon how their week is going, and how they are doing during COVID-19."
	Directly supporting school staff	"We are currently making sure that all of student support is a presence at zoom classroom meetings. We are also ensuring that we are being supportive of teachers and what their needs are emotionally."
		"Conversing with teachers and serving as an active listener while supporting them and encouraging them to continue to do a great job. Attending webinar to gather information on how to best support my teachers."

learning. Teams prioritized communicating among stakeholders, disseminating information, and connecting students to resources and supports. School staff thought strategically, asking how best to use staff and spread information. New processes facilitated collaborative work to gather and organize information about family needs. For example, one school created a "needs assessment" and "contacted each family" to complete it. Other processes included a "high needs tracking system" for families, surveys to identify family needs and track teachers' attendance concerns, and a divide-and-conquer strategy for school staff to provide socioemotional support to students and families. Coordinators created tracking forms for up-to-date and shared understandings. This ability to create and implement new processes facilitated a structured response by mid-April:

> Our school has come up with a system for student and family outreach. Teachers and staff reach out to a "caseload" of students in their homerooms. They record this in our Aspen system and if a need or concern is reported staff use a Google Form to report the concern to our Wellness Team. At that point we, as the Wellness Team, discuss proper next steps and who is the best person to communicate that with the family.

Coordinators and school staff collaborated to adapt existing structures and practices. They adapted processes for online learning, including new conceptualizations of criteria for grading, attendance, retention, and assessing student engagement. A coordinator reported that she had "been advocating for students and families to our school leader/admin by suggesting a more flexible/equitable attendance policy that would allow more students to have success with distance learning." Coordinators and school staff also adapted processes that utilized existing teams. In April, one coordinator facilitated the repurposing of the Student Support Team (SST) to "be more resource-based and [do] family outreach." She created a survey for school staff "to learn about their classroom needs, concerns, and specific students/families in need." SSTs adapted in different ways to meet student, family, and school staff needs, such as aligning with new district guidelines or modifying processes so parents can refer children. Another school used their SST to have "equity meetings to discuss . . . marginalized students or students who may need extra support."

Leveraging and expanding relationships with stakeholders. Coordinators consistently drew on existing relationships with teachers and school staff, students and families, and community partners. Early on, coordinators had "constant contact" with school staff through emails, texts, and phone calls to keep communication channels open, to facilitate sharing of updates, and to discuss policies and procedures. Coordinators used established relationships with teachers to discuss teachers' own socioemotional well-being and "the students that [they] serve." Preexisting social connections facilitated proactive, bidirectional communication, with the coordinator as a go-between for teachers and students/families. Teachers sent coordinators a "list of students who have not logged into google classroom or are missing assignments and from there [the coordinator would] reach out to students and families." This communication elucidated barriers for hard-to-reach families, such as parents who "work long hours and have no internet or computer access at home," and supported student engagement. One coordinator reached "two students that we have been looking for in past weeks," adding "they have been engaged with distance learning this week." As summer approached, teachers and coordinators discussed potential student retention and logistics to prepare for fall.

Coordinators used existing relationships for family outreach. One coordinator reported, "I have contacted many families that I work closely with on a daily basis when school is in session" to provide supports and resources. Throughout spring, coordinators conducted "well-being phone calls" and "supportive phone calls" to families. Outreach was ongoing or triggered by a crisis event (e.g., unexpected hospitalization). Coordinators assisted families with learning, such as calling students to discuss grades and missing work "in hopes of raising the student's final grades." In June, coordinators and families discussed service provision and next steps for learning, including requirements to receive course credit and options for summer school.

Coordinators used relationships with community partners to meet student and family needs. Coordinators reached out to community partners to ensure they were "still providing families with supports," inquire if they could help with a specific issue, or ask if the community partner needed help. Community partners contacted coordinators to inquire about "students' needs and [the] school's needs." Coordinators leveraged their experience with forming community partnerships to expand relationships. One coordinator reported that she "found and reached out to new partners in order to provide groceries/food for families." By June, coordinators used relationships with community partners to bridge the school year and summer, to "discuss reengaging in the fall and thank them for their service."

Identifying and coordinating resources with others. Coordinators efficiently collaborated with school colleagues and community partners to identify and coordinate resources. This collaboration expanded established processes and contributed to the effectiveness of new processes. Early on, collaboration enabled coordinators to efficiently deliver food to families and coordinate mass distribution of Chromebooks and other technology/devices. One coordinator explained, "To meet family needs, teachers have mainly been communicating with me directly via email . . . [m]y principal and assistant principal have also been sending me lists of family needs as they hear from families." Coordinators were a point person or hub for collecting information about students' needs and

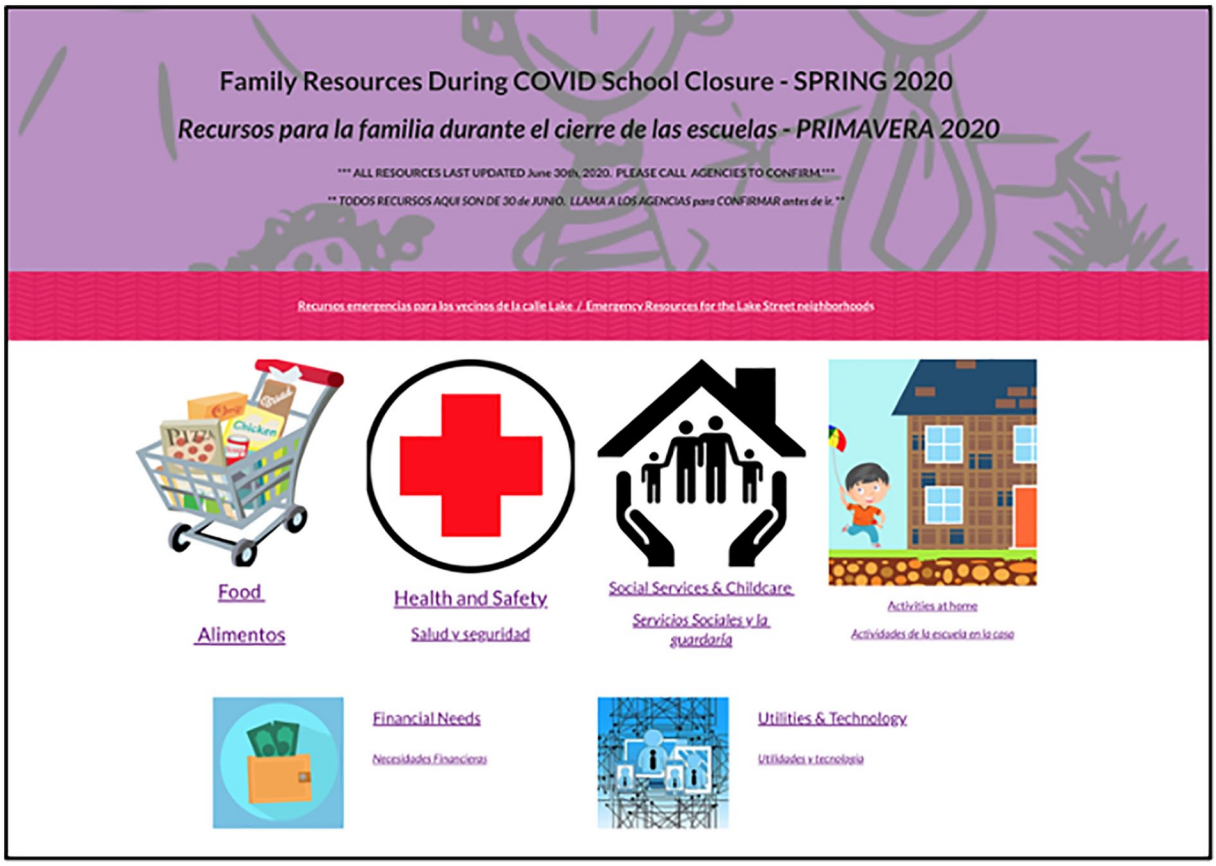

FIGURE 3. *Home page of a bilingual website of resource information created immediately after school closures.*

coordinating connections to resources. Several coordinators reported that teachers and other school staff contacted them directly to report needs so they could coordinate a response. One coordinator reported that, "teachers have been instructed to funnel indications of families' needs for resources through me. I met with my principal and school counselors to discuss students and how he would like us to proceed."

Later in spring, coordinators contacted community partners to connect families with therapy/mental health support, housing-related resources, and essential supplies such as clothing. Community partners also contacted coordinators, who "supported dissemination of donations from community donors to families in need." Coordinators sought out new resources (e.g., telehealth, remote after-school/summer programming) and worked at "creating new partnerships to provide our families the most support we can during these turbulent times."

Compiling and distributing resource information. Throughout spring, coordinators compiled resource information on pandemic-related needs, ranging from food distribution sites, internet access information, crisis response resources, coping tips, and how to talk to kids about COVID-19 to "fun things to do" like activities and virtual scavenger hunts. Coordinators distributed information directly to students, families, and school staff, and indirectly to families through teachers and administrators. Coordinators used emails, phone calls, and myriad online platforms. Some updated resource lists daily on learning platforms like Class DoJo or school websites. Coordinators sent resource information through weekly newsletters or emails. Several coordinators posted resource information on Facebook pages, including translations as needed. Some coordinators created repositories for resource information, including an Instagram account and websites. As one coordinator recounted, "The first week-and-a-half of closures was spent gathering and distributing resources for families, including creation of a bilingual website for families in our part of [City] (and focusing on resources for Latino populations)." Figure 3 shows the website's home page.

Coordinators also created new resources to meet student, family, and staff needs. Resources included encouragement videos, socioemotional learning packets, a fundraising site for children who had lost a parent, a parent guide to homeschooling, and guidance for teachers for how to respond in crisis situations like child abuse or suicidal ideation. By late April, coordinators shared and created more mental health resources alongside resources for essentials like food and

shelter. They posted yoga classes and breathing exercises, created videos for virtual end-of-year celebrations, and shared resource information for summer programming. In schools geographically close to where George Floyd was murdered, coordinators shared resources on the Black Lives Matter movement and collaborated with school staff to write letters to families about racism, police brutality, and racial justice.

Expanding Direct Intervention With Families, Students, and Staff. Coordinators used their training and unique position in the school to expand direct support to all stakeholders. To meet substantial need, they expanded efforts to connect families to resources, provide students with academic and socioemotional support, and directly support school staff, especially teachers.

Directly supporting families. Coordinators directly supported families by ensuring access to basic necessities, emotional support, and academic support. Records of service provision (Figure 2) show over 25,000 services for family assistance and support. Coordinators helped families complete housing vouchers; apply for gift cards, emergency rental assistance, unemployment and SNAP benefits; and obtain utility assistance and internet access. They also responded as needed to emergencies (e.g., death in family, fire). Coordinators expanded their role to hand deliver resources to families, including clothes, Chromebooks, food, donations, backpacks of supplies, and medicine. With ongoing phone calls and texts, coordinators inquired about general wellness, determined who needed basic resources, and connected with parents about technology challenges.

Coordinators provided families with wide-ranging emotional support through office hours, "venting sessions," and check-ins. Support included consultations, "everything from best learning practices during distance learning to kids struggling with their mood during this forced isolation from friends." After George Floyd's murder, some families asked for coordinator support about "race and police brutality issues going on in this country." One coordinator offered respite to a parent sick with COVID-19, to keep a child entertained by "reading to them, playing a game, or just chatting."

Coordinators provided families with academic support to facilitate remote learning. Logistically, coordinators problem-solved with families throughout the spring to facilitate internet access and proficiency with remote learning platforms. Coordinators assisted parents to create schedules, manage the stress of remote learning, and understand expectations for virtual classrooms. One coordinator reported, "This week we are doing 'wake up calls' at 9:40 to families who haven't been online yet and getting them to the computer in time for 'morning announcements.'" Some coordinators translated lesson plans and teacher instructions to help non-English-speaking families. Toward summer, coordinators supported transitions to summer school or programming, and looked ahead to fall.

Providing students with socioemotional and academic support. Survey responses and service provision data (Figure 2) show that throughout spring, coordinators prioritized providing students with socioemotional and academic support. Coordinators held individual virtual meetings that were student or coordinator initiated, and provided space to discuss time management, stress, and anger management; give pep talks; and provide emergency support. In middle-to-late spring, coordinators used check-ins to support students academically, to discuss learning engagement, attendance, motivation, and grades. To facilitate remote learning, coordinators provided technology and homework help so that students could stay on track. While explicitly for student support, check-ins were important connections for coordinators, too. One reported, "I miss students, so when I do have the rare chance to do a virtual check in or talk to the student on the phone—it makes my day."

Coordinators supported students' socioemotional and academic needs with group meetings, like Zoom office hours or virtual support groups. Through small group interventions like "lunch bunch," coordinators facilitated student interactions, reflections, and social skills development. By joining virtual classrooms, coordinators gauged student engagement and delivered socioemotional learning lessons. Toward summer, coordinators joined virtual classes to promote self-care and manage emotions for racial injustice issues stemming from George Floyd's murder.

Directly supporting school staff. Coordinators supported the school community by joining and convening phone and video meetings to plan, provide updates, and discuss needs of students, families, and staff. Coordinators participated in full staff, grade level, and common planning time meetings, and meetings to support specific teams and goals, such as student support (SST), Individual Education Plans, behavioral (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and other (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) interventions. A coordinator reported that during 1 week:

> I have had 10 SST meetings with teachers, 3 staff meetings, 5 admin meetings, and 4 grade band meetings, plus 1 supervisor call, 1 professional coach call, calls with 3 therapists re: their caseloads among my students, and 1 SPED reevaluation meeting.

Coordinators met with principals and other school leaders to discuss student support, teacher well-being, systems and processes for resource distribution, summer programming, reopening plans, and student support. Meetings were ongoing and frequent, with coordinators interacting with staff daily throughout spring.

Coordinators provided direct support to teachers. Coordinators were a go-to for teachers with concerns about their students throughout spring. One coordinator described, "Teachers typically reach out to me when students seem to be having a hard time (lonely, no set schedule, parent needs to apply for unemployment) and I reach out to families from there." Teachers asked coordinators for support with students who were hard to reach, who needed help accessing the internet, or whose families needed translation support during phone calls. Coordinators supported teachers by assisting with their work related to remote instruction. Coordinators prepared social–emotional learning lessons, helped prepare virtual classrooms, supported differentiation of lessons, and aided in classroom management. Coordinators directly supported teachers' mental health needs by providing encouragement and office hours or self-care check-ins. A coordinator reported that

> it's been helpful for teachers to have an open space to vent, express concerns, frustrations, and worries of their own, and to also bounce ideas off of each other on what self-care looks like and get ideas on how to incorporate it into their lives.

Taken together, analyses of the intervention's COVID-19 response surfaced the many ways that an existing systemic intervention enabled an effective response. Coordinators maintained and leveraged their intervention-specific practices, facilitated referrals and connections to resources, and expanded their direct interventions to families, students, and school staff.

Discussion

This study generated new knowledge about evolving stakeholder needs and schoolwide efforts to respond to COVID-19 from March to June 2020 in the United States. While the study does not support causal claims about City Connects's effectiveness or which needs COVID-19 caused, the preexisting ISS approach provided a unique window into education stakeholders' needs that occurred during early months of the pandemic and the ways that school staff worked together to respond. Results align with reports of COVID-19-related needs for employment stability and food (Harwin & Furuya, 2021), housing security (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2020), and equitable access to technology for remote learning (Ali et al., 2021; Bacher-Hicks et al., 2020; Harwin & Furuya, 2021). Socioemotional needs align with emerging details of mental/emotional health challenges for students (Calderon, 2020; Lee, 2020) and parents (Brenan, 2020; Davis et al., 2021). Social–emotional challenges for teachers parallel reports of teachers' burnout (Aperribai et al., 2020; Reich et al., 2020) and sense of loss from seeing exacerbated student inequities (Reich et al., 2020). COVID-19's effects have been broad and deep; results underscore that meeting such needs requires a systemic approach.

The Interrelationship of Needs

Particularly salient in coordinators' descriptions were the ways that needs were interwoven across domains. A family's need for translation support could affect their needs for rental relief or housing assistance. A family's need related to fear of catching COVID-19 could affect their ability to get food support. Student and family needs for socioemotional support to deal with being overwhelmed, adjust to and persist with remote learning, cope with isolation and depression, and persist despite uncertainty about the future affected academic needs related to student engagement and work completion.

Technology-related resource needs profoundly affected other needs. Students who are economically disadvantaged, and students of color, have historically been denied access to technology resources like high-speed internet or e-learning devices necessary for remote learning. This "digital divide" (Ali et al., 2021; KewalRamani et al., 2018) or "digital redlining" (Fishbane & Tomer, 2020; Tomer et al., 2020) may initiate a domino effect of inequities that jeopardize students' opportunity to learn. Students without access to computers or high-speed internet may require more time to get up-and-running with remote learning. They may need technical assistance to navigate online learning platforms and access assignments. Spotty internet access may affect attendance or the ability to submit work on time. Negative effects on learning may in turn affect child development (García & Weiss, 2020).

Schools with an existing system to identify students' strengths and needs are better positioned to interrupt this cascade. Coordinators collaborated with other stakeholders to account for every student and family. Through established practices, coordinators anticipated and mitigated preexisting barriers to access (e.g., hot-spots, Chromebooks, technical support) and created stopgap systems to support learning, like delivering paper-and-pencil work packets. While not exhaustive, these examples of the interconnectedness of needs across domains highlight the importance of a whole-child approach (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Ford & Lerner, 1992; Lerner, 1995; Rutter, 2007; Sameroff, 2009) and remind us that supporting a student in one domain can have a positive ripple effect on another.

Adapting Processes

The present study illuminated how schools leveraged existing processes and relationships to respond to COVID-19, and how preexisting relationships and structures adapted under increased demands and altered school functioning. An existing system of student support provides a blueprint for addressing school and community needs in times of crises or scarcity. For instance, coordinators maintained prior counseling support for students' socioemotional needs through check-ins and socioemotional learning groups and used their

expertise to develop new community partnerships to provide students with telehealth support. ISS's systemic approach may have mitigated the loss of mental health services (Lee, 2020) and intensive socioemotional support (Turner et al., 2021) that students around the country experienced. The ability to draw on established processes may additionally reduce reliance on outside (e.g., state) guidance, which may fall short of supporting the whole child (Fulks et al., 2021), and may have facilitated time to be forwarding looking. Coordinators reported discussions and planning during spring for fall 2020 that included potential reopening, a family survey of reopening preferences, and discussions of anticipated needs and supports. Without existing processes to facilitate response, school staff may have been consumed by the moment, without sufficient bandwidth to look ahead to summer and fall.

Prepandemic, the intervention used processes and relationships to create a web of student support that connected schools, families, and communities (online Supplemental Appendix). Findings illustrate how after school closures, schools leveraged this web to respond to education stakeholders' needs. As examples, the coordinator acted as a hub of constant communication among stakeholders and resource knowledge, worked with stakeholders to address needs through direct support, and worked collaboratively within and outside of the school to coordinate systems, resources, and service delivery. By coupling the ability to collaboratively coordinate supports with direct support, coordinators integrated individual competencies to contribute to schools' COVID-19 response.

Relationships

Established relationships may have been a crucial mechanism to meet communication needs and use processes to respond. Trusting relationships and bidirectional communication among school staff, families, and community agencies, like those our findings demonstrate, are vital for supportive learning communities (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2021). Existing relationships may have prompted teachers to seek direct support from coordinators (see Sibley et al., 2017) to vent and discuss self-care. This may lessen feelings of teacher burnout, which in turn may support student learning (McLean & Connor, 2015; Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Future studies of teachers' experiences can probe how existing relationships may have affected teachers' practice and effectiveness during COVID-19.

Existing relationships between coordinators, students, and families may have promoted an effective response. Coordinators leveraged trusted relationships to continue one-on-one check-ins, small group socioemotional learning sessions, and meaningfully connect with parents. Caring relationships with adults and opportunities to engage in socioemotional learning promote student resilience (Brophy, 1988; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015). Caring relationships also promote students' feelings of connectedness, which are associated with better learning outcomes (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009). Future studies can further examine student–coordinator relationships.

Finally, existing relationships between coordinators and community partners may have facilitated an efficient response, as school–community partnerships facilitate holistic student support (Sanders, 2005). Both parties used existing communication channels to check-in, offer help, and implement response plans. Rapid changes in needs and available services, capacity for new referrals, and format of service delivery (e.g., in-person, virtual) made this communication especially important. Findings suggest several next steps to examine relationships through the inclusion of both coordinator and stakeholder voices.

Conclusion

This study examined the COVID-19 response of an evidence-based ISS intervention. It produced a longitudinal, comprehensive, and multistate characterization of needs in schools that serve many economically disadvantaged students. It showed how an ISS approach can harness and adapt existing processes and relationships to support students and families outside of the school walls. As García and Weiss (2020) argue, education-in-emergencies benefits from preexisting contingency plans. We agree and similarly argue that during COVID-19, education stakeholders benefited from a preexisting, systemic approach. We hope that, postpandemic, ISS will likewise support education-as-reimagined to more equitably educate the whole child.

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ORCID iD

Courtney Pollack https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0144-5971

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Authors

COURTNEY POLLACK was a senior researcher at the Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support. She is currently a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a research affiliate at MIT. Her research interests focus on reducing challenges to learning in mathematical cognition and through whole-child student support interventions.

MARIA THEODORAKAKIS is a research associate with the City Connects intervention, housed in the Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support, an adjunct faculty member in the Boston College Lynch School of Education and Human Development's School Counseling Program, and a licensed child psychologist in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital. Her research interests center on addressing systemic inequality by increasing access to holistic supports for all youth and addressing the impact of nonacademic factors on children's learning.

MARY E. WALSH is the executive director of the City Connects intervention, housed in the Boston College Center for Optimized Student Support, and the Daniel Kearns Professor of Urban Education and Innovative Leadership at the Lynch School of Education and Human Development at Boston College. Her research interests focus on studying the impact of interventions that enhance the academic and healthy development of youth, and she has published and presented widely in the area of Integrated Student Support for schoolchildren and their families.