

# An Informed Road to COVID Recovery and Student Success

As people adjust to the realities of COVID-19, schools and districts need information to better the lives and experiences of their staff, students, and families. Now is a critical time to ensure that students, especially marginalized students and students of need, are receiving high-quality instruction and services tailored to their academic and emotional needs. Our team of education-focused research scientists and consultants can help support you as you strive to meet your community's needs during and after this unprecedented time of uncertainty.



## How can we help support your district and inform decision-making?



### Are distance/hybrid learning models being implemented effectively?

We can help your district answer pressing questions about how distance learning is being implemented, what common challenges teachers and students are encountering, and how these vary across school levels. With COVID-related school closures in place, potentially coming down the road, or implemented in a hybrid way (at some district schools but not others), district leaders need a way to monitor what is happening, learn from implementation, and share best practices. We can help answer questions such as:

- ▶ Does online instruction align with district expectations? How does alignment differ across grades and schools?
- ▶ How engaged are students in online-learning environments? Are there differences in behavioral engagement across student groups and grade levels?
- ▶ What best practices exist in your schools for engaging students and delivering high quality instruction, and can those practices be systematically replicated?

### What steps can you take to boost attendance and recover enrollment counts?

The pandemic has influenced student mobility with some families choosing to homeschool, others switching to private education, and others changing public school districts. Daily attendance has also changed given the myriad challenges facing students logging in to remote instruction from home and those returning to school building. Our team can help you understand how attendance and enrollment is changing in your district, what the consequences may be for funding, and provide suggestions to recapture those families that have unenrolled. We can help answer questions such as:

- ▶ Why did families unenroll? Where did families choose to enroll? Under what conditions do they plan to return?
- ▶ What are the patterns of daily attendance across grade levels and school buildings? Where and how can attendance be improved, particularly for remote learners?
- ▶ In what ways do families believe that districts could change/adjust to better meet their needs?

### How are students and staff managing during changing instructional environments?

Surveys enable districts to quickly collect timely information, but administering them and rapidly analyzing the data can be a heavy burden for staff. We can help collect, analyze, and turn around critical feedback from students, staff, or parents that provide insight into how teachers, parents, and children are experiencing distance learning. We can help you answer questions like:

- ▶ How is virtual learning going for students? How are they feeling about their education?
- ▶ How are your teachers coping with the added stresses of providing distance learning? What resources are they using? What supports do they need?
- ▶ Are there important differences in experiences, beliefs, satisfaction, or needs by student groups, and are district supports exacerbating or mitigating those differences?
- ▶ How are your students feeling about learning under COVID protocols? What are their challenges? What works well for them? What additional support do they feel that they need?

## Are online platforms being used effectively?

When students use online programs such as Schoology, Google Classroom, Canvas, iStation, Dreambox, or SeeSaw, their behavior and movement within these systems is captured. These systems may capture the number of logins, minutes of program usage, number of submitted assignments, as well as students' progress through a given lesson or module. Our analysts can explore a myriad of questions to inform school and teacher decision-making in terms of online learning platforms. For instance:

- ▶ How often are students logging into a particular program and what are their usage patterns?
- ▶ Are there differences across student groups in program use or access?
- ▶ Is program usage tied to student outcomes?

## Are students in special populations receiving the services they need?

The extent to which schools can deliver special education services, English language learner supports, gifted and talented programming, extra supports for struggling learners, and other services may be disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rates of enrollment and services delivered may change and those changes may vary by student group. Gibson can support you in answering questions such as:

- ▶ How have identification rates changed by student group, school building, or geographic area?
- ▶ Is the district following best practices in the identification of special populations and the provision of services to these students during and post the COVID-19 pandemic?
- ▶ How satisfied are families with the services their students are receiving? Are they seeking external supports more or less than before the pandemic?

## Are you able to sustain a reliable substitute teaching force?

Many schools are struggling to find enough substitute teachers to staff schools during a time period with higher rates of teacher absences than ever! Knowing why former substitutes may have stopped working and why current substitutes are persisting during these challenging times can help you staff your schools as needed when teachers are absent. We can support you in learning how to optimally leverage your existing substitute pool and also help recruit a larger pool. Some sample questions that guide this work include:

- ▶ What strategies could the district implement to fill more substitute jobs?
- ▶ What are characteristics of substitutes who pickup many substitute jobs?
- ▶ What changes can be made to help increase the rate at which substitutes accept substitute offers?

### Other Services

Our team is available to support you.

Other ways we can help include:

- Analysis of existing, administrative, or archival data
- Identification of cost-savings opportunities
- Objective and independent internal audit services to mitigate risk and improve processes
- Evaluation of education programs, interventions, or initiatives

### Who Are We?

Our team of applied education researchers and education consultants are exceptionally qualified to support districts and schools during challenging times. Experts in high-quality education research, and with over 30 years of experience supporting school districts, we are dedicated to providing research and consulting services that improve the lives of students and staff. Gibson has extensive experience working hand-in-hand with schools to evaluate programs, collect stakeholder feedback, and find solutions to pressing problems of practice.