State Strategies for School Recovery

Nate Schwartz
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Agenda

Highlight emerging data on key challenges facing schools this fall

Consider the evidence on likely recovery strategies

Chart a path forward for state plans and investments
EdResearch for Recovery asks leading researchers to identify the strongest research evidence to address crowdsourced questions in key areas of practice.
Schools face three key challenges around the fall restart.

1. High levels of student disengagement

2. Extreme variation in academic progress

3. A demoralized and burned out workforce
The effects of this past year on students and schools have been large and unequally distributed.

In this typical district, almost one in three students missed more than 25% of the school year.
Even while working longer hours, teachers have felt singularly unsuccessful this year.

57%
The proportion of K-12 educators seriously worried about burnout in October 2020, up from 22% the previous May.

source: CRPE

25%
The percent of teachers who said they were likely to leave the profession when they finish the 2020-21 school year. This rate is more than triple the normal rate of attrition.

source: EdWeek
The first brief in our series focuses on supporting students who have fallen multiple grade levels behind peers.

Breaking Down the Issue

The students most likely to fall out of range for their grade include those who were already struggling and those in primary grades; losses are likely to be larger in math than ELA, but math losses will potentially be more responsive to intervention efforts.

Strategies to Consider

High-dosage tutoring that is directly tied to classroom content can substantially accelerate learning in both math and reading for the most struggling students.

Extended learning time interventions, including weeklong acceleration academies staffed with highly effective teachers and some double dose math structures, show strong evidence of effectiveness for older students; targeted support strategies for families make a difference for younger students.

Strategies to Avoid

Remedial offerings that crowd out core instruction (including some versions of RTI) tend to be ineffective.
Moving forward, recovery efforts should be built around two framing ideas.

1. Variation in academic and social success after a major school disruption is highly predicted by the strength of a student’s relationships with adults in the school.

2. The most effective academic interventions supplement strong grade-level material with small-group, “just-in-time” support delivered by a consistent, trusted adult.
What does this mean for investments and policies?

Ensure that the most vulnerable students receive targeted opportunities to take part in small-group, relationship-based learning.

Invest in additional personnel with an eye toward creating long-term pipelines.

Build a learning infrastructure to determine what works going forward.
An Example: California’s 6-Week “Restorative Restart”
Three key challenges:
- High levels of student disengagement
- Extreme variation in academic progress
- A demoralized and burned out workforce

Two framing lessons from research:
- Student sense of belonging is key to success
- The most effective interventions combine strong core instruction with relationship-based supplemental supports

Three core investments:
- Targeted supplemental support programs
- Personnel to create long-term pipelines
- Learning infrastructure to determine what works
Please feel free to reach out with follow-up questions - thank you!

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