



School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Round 2, Districts Are Up and Running

By Nat Malkus, Cody Christensen, and Lexi West

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Key Points

- This is the second report in the “School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic” series, covering changes that occurred in public school districts between March 27 and April 7, 2020.
- More than nine in 10 schools were in districts providing meal services to students, up from 82 percent of schools that offered meals by late March.
- In the span of 11 days, there was a dramatic increase in the percentage of schools with remote instructional programs in place, at 71 percent by April 7, up from 43 percent on March 27.
- Over half of schools are in districts encouraging one-on-one contacts with students, through either synchronous learning platforms or individual outreach via emails and phone calls.

Since mid-March, millions of schoolchildren have been stuck at home due to school closures brought on by the rapid spread of COVID-19. But in just three weeks after the majority of the nation’s schools closed, many schools and school districts have already transitioned to serving students remotely.

School districts’ initial responses were captured by the first wave of the American Enterprise Institute’s (AEI) COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS), a nationally representative survey of public school districts. This report, which is the second in the “School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic” series, provides an update to the previous report. (Hereafter, “Wave 1” refers to our first report and the data collected on March 26 and 27,

and “Wave 2” refers to our second round of data collected on April 6 and 7.)¹⁾ Using the most updated C-ERLS data, we describe how educational services have changed over the span of just 11 days.

As we wrote in the Wave 1 report, “In many respects, educators are trying to build the plane as it is going down the runway.”²⁾ Indeed, about only 43 percent of schools were in districts that had a plan for remote instruction in place by March 27, but another 30 percent described a plan that would be in place soon. The Wave 2 data capture this increase: By early April, most districts had plans to offer remote instruction that were up and running. The “plane” that many educators were assembling is now taking off.

AEI's COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey

C-ERLS was developed quickly amid the pandemic with the intention of being rapid, reliable, representative, and repetitive. AEI's education policy team developed this instrument to gather data that paint an early picture of school and district efforts.

The first wave of data was collected on March 26 and 27, and the second wave was collected April 6 and 7. Information was gathered exclusively from school district websites (and pages linked to them) on the assumption that these sites are the centralized communication hub for most districts and that they yield current information with an assuredly high response rate. We selected a nationally representative sample of 250 public school districts so the data would reflect the broader population of districts.³ Anticipating weekly changes, we kept the size of the survey manageable enough to collect data every seven to 10 days.

Although the C-ERLS sample is at the district level, we gathered information about what those districts are offering across all their schools. Thus, we present results as percentages of all schools. These percentages indicate the proportion of public schools⁴ whose districts are offering a given program, platform, or service.

Some districts we sampled contain charter schools, many of which will not extend the programs and platforms presented on district websites. Our survey method cannot account for this small percentage of district schools, which may bias the school-level estimates by small amounts. District-level percentages are presented in Appendix B.

Note the variance for this survey, with a margin of error of 6.1 percent, is relatively large, and even modest differences in estimates may not be statistically significant. Specific variance estimates are not included in this report, but they will be included in future analyses. C-ERLS includes information on 250 districts, or just under 2 percent of all regular school districts. Districts with more operational schools were more likely to be sampled. In total, C-ERLS contains information for 10,289 schools, or roughly 11 percent of all public schools.⁵

Each wave of C-ERLS data will be publicly available in a modified spreadsheet that masks the identity of small districts (those with six schools or fewer), and the entire dataset is available upon request.⁶ The data and additional details about the variable definitions and sampling design are available on the AEI website.⁷

Findings

This report documents how public school districts responded in the weeks after the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis.⁸ It details how schools offered meal services to students, the types of educational services and instruction that schools offered, and how districts worked to provide access to technology-based remote learning platforms.

Generally, we find that 100 percent of schools in the sample were closed by March 27, with 67 percent of closures occurring between March 16 and 18. All of these schools remained closed on April 7. At the time of our data collection, roughly 68 percent of schools were tentatively planning to reopen buildings later in the 2019–20 school year. Almost all—91 percent—of schools are providing meal services to students, up from 82 percent in Wave 1. Most schools are providing daily meals through school site pickup (68 percent) but with some plan for delivery for 30 percent of schools. Around 66 percent of schools list plans for addressing students' technological limitations,

mostly through getting devices to students or helping arrange internet access to connect them.

In the first week of April, 71 percent of schools were in districts with an instructional program in place. That demonstrates a dramatic increase from the 43 percent of schools that had programs in place by late March. The estimated percentage of schools in districts offering instructional packets increased by more than 75 percent, and the share of schools offering asynchronous instruction more than doubled. The estimated percentage offering synchronous instruction, which was quite small on March 27, increased dramatically by April 7. We discuss each area in more detail in the following subsections.

Closures. On April 7, all districts and schools we surveyed were closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These closures happened rapidly: 67 percent of closures took effect between March 16 and 18. By April 7, 68 percent of schools had a tentative date on their district website when buildings might

reopen this school year. This is approximately 14 percent less than what we found in the Wave 1 report, suggesting that an increasing number of schools are not planning to reopen this year.

State governments continue to issue statewide orders requiring schools to remain closed. By April 3, 10 states had issued blanket school closure orders for the remainder of the school year. As of April 13, 21 states had announced or recommended statewide closures for the remainder of the 2019–20 academic year, which covers 44 percent of schools in sampled districts.⁹

Food Service. Providing meals for students, many of whom qualify for and rely on free or reduced-priced school meals, was a priority for districts. By March 27, 82 percent of schools had plans on district websites for providing food to students during closures, and by April 7 that percentage increased to 91 percent.

By the first week of April, the majority of schools—68 percent—had meals available for daily pickup at school sites, the same percentage documented in Wave 1. Other means of meal provision increased in sampled districts. More than half of schools, 52 percent, offer multiple days to a week of meals at once for pickup at schools (including some offering daily pickup), compared to 45 percent in Wave 1. Meal delivery to students’ homes or at

school bus stops is provided by 30 percent of schools, up from 25 percent in Wave 1.¹⁰

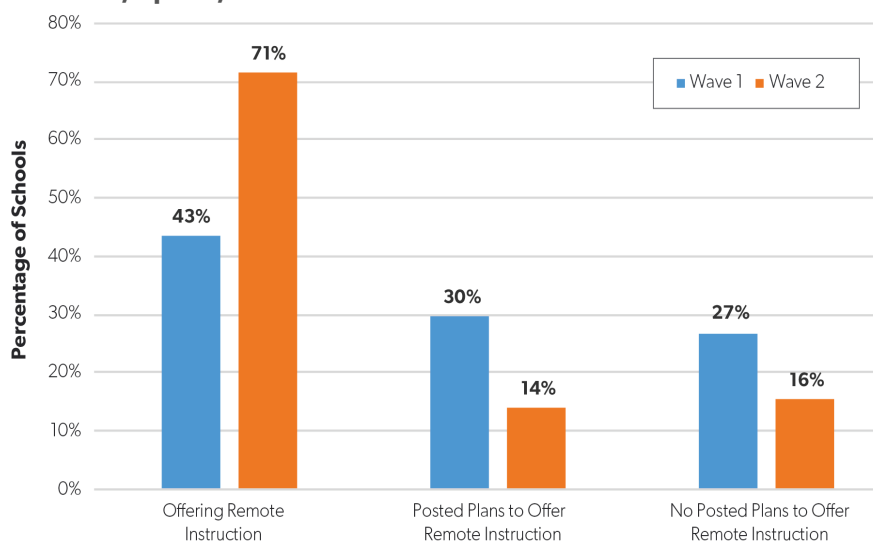
Technology Assistance. Providing students with access to technology for remote instruction was another immediate challenge for districts turning to online learning platforms in the wake of school closures. Some students lack the devices or internet access required to participate in remote instruction. By April 7, most districts had plans to address those needs.

Specifically, 66 percent of schools were in districts that offered some kind of technology assistance to families. About 13 percent of schools were fielding a technology survey to determine students’ needs.¹¹ Fifty-two percent of schools are in districts whose websites mentioned a program to provide devices to students who did not already have them at home. However, note that districts with existing one-to-one device programs may not be included in this percentage. Additionally, 53 percent of schools provided information on free or substantially discounted internet access. Twenty-four percent of schools were in districts that had established a “help desk” that families could call for help solving problems accessing instructional platforms. Additional details on technology provisions are in Appendix A.

Educational Programs. Not all the districts in our sample had posted concrete plans for providing some form of education to students. Some districts were still formulating plans, were in the midst of spring breaks or extended spring breaks, or were in states that postponed educational programming until a later date.

Specifically, 16 percent of schools had not articulated plans on district websites by April 7, well below the 27 percent found in Wave 1. Similarly, on March 27, 30 percent of schools had information on district websites about instructional plans that were not yet in place, and by Wave 2, that percentage dropped to just 14 percent. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1. Current Remote Instruction Offerings Posted on School District Websites, April 7, 2020



Source: Authors’ calculations using C-ERLS Waves 1 and 2 data. For more information, visit American Enterprise Institute, “COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS),” April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/covid-19-education-response-longitudinal-survey-c-erls/>.

By April 7, 71 percent of schools were in districts that had some sort of education program or offering available, far above the 43 percent offering educational programs on March 27. Again, note that individual schools or teachers may have offered educational resources through their school website, email, direct contact, or an open-access asynchronous platform. Such efforts might not have been captured on district websites during either wave.¹²

There was a wide spectrum of potential educational provisions in districts that had plans posted, ranging from basic materials to programs with more directed instruction. We classified instructional plans into five categories, defined by the increasing level of directed instruction they entail. From least to most directed instructional plans, these include virtual supplemental content, instructional packets, asynchronous directed instruction, synchronous directed instruction, and virtual schools.

Categories of Districts' Remote Educational Provisions

We categorized districts' remote instructional provisions into five possible categories, which differ in the amount of direction the provisions provided for students' instruction and work.

The most basic of these is virtual supplemental content, in which districts provide links to outside educational content providers without clear direction for students using them.

The second is instructional packets, in which districts or schools provide—either via hard copy or electronically—static, grade-appropriate packets or bundles of materials that students can complete at home.

The third and fourth categories include programs that use web-based platforms to enable asynchronous or synchronous directed instruction. Asynchronous directed instruction uses web-based platforms that allow districts or teachers to push out updated resources and assignments to students who are logged in to the platform and allow students to return completed work. These could include sites by outside providers, such as Google Classroom, and district and school websites.¹³ Synchronous directed instruction includes platforms that allow “live” (but not in-person) instruction to occur, in which students and teachers participate at the same time using conferencing systems such as Zoom or Google Hangouts.

The fifth category is the possibility that schooling might be transferred to a separate independent virtual school, with its own independent and preexisting curriculum.

When examining districts' educational provisions, we also looked for indications of whether students are broadly expected to participate or whether participation is recommended but essentially optional.¹⁴ By Wave 2, 12 percent of schools were in districts that expressed no expectation of student participation, while 42 percent did not mention participation expectations on the district website.¹⁵ On April 7, 46 percent of schools had some expectation for participation, which was well above the 18 percent with expectations at Wave 1. The Wave 2 expectations also roughly align with plans that were posted by Wave 1, in which 14 percent of schools were in districts that would begin to expect participation after March 27 but before April 5.

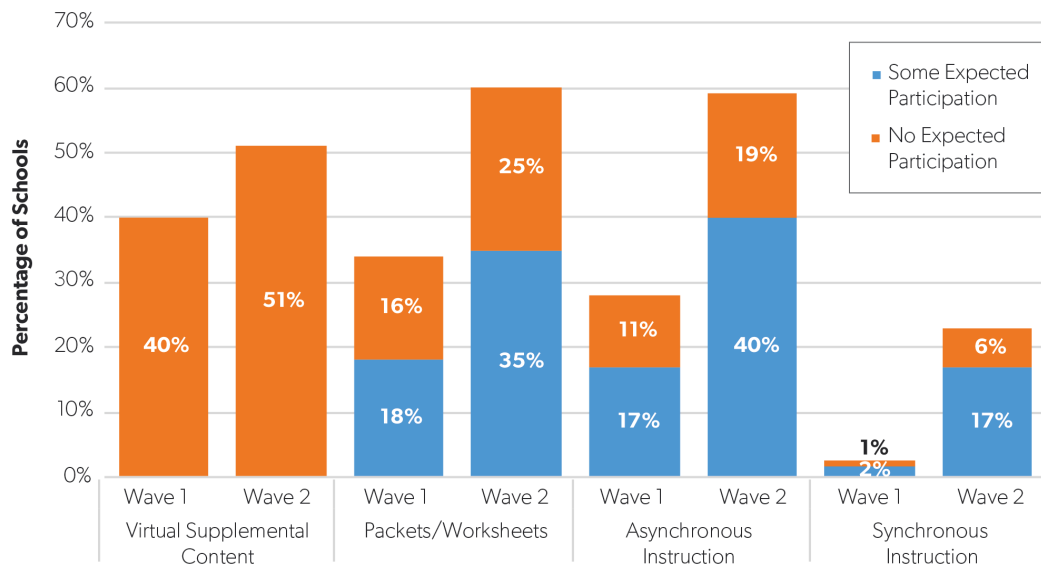
We also collected data on the grading policies mentioned on district websites in Wave 2. Slightly more than half of schools (53 percent) were in districts with no mention of grades. Seventeen percent

of schools were in districts that expressly stated that, at least as of April 7, work would not be graded. The remaining 30 percent of schools were evenly split between those that would grade work based only on its completion (16 percent) and those that were grading based on the quality of the work or the students' performance (14 percent).

Figure 2 displays nonexclusive percentages of different educational program offerings that were in place at the time of data collection. About 51 percent of schools are in districts that offer virtual supplemental content for students to access. Few districts, including just 4 percent of schools, offer only virtual supplemental content and no more directed instruction.¹⁶ (These data are not shown in Figure 2.)

As of Wave 2, packets of resources are currently offered in 60 percent of schools, up from 34 percent in Wave 1. That 60 percent of schools was split evenly by their expectation of student participation. Specifically, 25 percent of all schools offered packets without a clear expectation for or requirement

Figure 2. Current Remote Instruction Offerings by Participation Requirements, April 7, 2020



Source: Authors' calculations using C-ERLS Waves 1 and 2 data. For more information, visit American Enterprise Institute, "COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS)," April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/covid-19-education-response-longitudinal-survey-c-erls/>.

of participation, while another 35 percent offered packets and expressed some expectation for student participation. While the percentage of schools offering packets increased substantially from Wave 1 to Wave 2, there was more growth in those that expressed expected student participation.

Almost six in 10 schools were in districts that established asynchronous web-based platforms for more directed instruction. Asynchronous platforms, which allow students to engage with teacher-posted material at their own pace, were offered by 59 percent of schools on April 7, well above the 28 percent on March 27. Nineteen percent of all schools offered asynchronous platforms without expecting participation from all students, and far more, about 40 percent of all schools, had expectations for student participation.

The amount of synchronous instructional platforms, which allow students to engage directly with educators in real time, remained much less common than packets or asynchronous platforms did, but they also saw the largest growth. In Wave 1, just 3 percent of schools offered synchronous education platforms, and 23 percent offered them in Wave 2. Of these, the majority, 17 percent of all schools, had an expectation of instruction, and a minority, 6 percent, had expressed no expectations.¹⁷

As in Wave 1, none of the districts in our survey

explicitly offer an independent online virtual school as an educational platform for students.

Districts with Mechanisms for Direct Student Contact. We also gathered information on districts that explicitly encouraged their teachers to make direct contact with students. In total, 45 percent of schools were in such districts. The most common method of direct content, available in 32 percent of schools, was expected email communication between teachers and students. In 14 percent of schools, teachers were expected to schedule virtual office hours for students to contact them.

Asynchronous instructional platforms were discussed as the means of direct contact by 20 percent of schools, and phone calls were promoted for one-on-one contact in 14 percent of schools. A sizable portion of districts, including 23 percent of all schools, encouraged teachers to contact students through multiple means.

In addition to these methods of direct contact, students with access to synchronous education platforms are in direct contact with teachers. These platforms were available in 23 percent of schools, and when added to the schools in districts that expressly encouraged one-on-one contact, the percentage of schools providing for and expecting one-on-one contact between teachers and students totaled 51 percent.

Instructional Programs Planned for After Our Data Collection. Some districts have plans for instructional programs that were not in place by April 7. Eleven percent of schools are in districts planning to offer packets of material for students, but they were not offering them as of April 7. Adding that percentage to the 60 percent that are currently offering packets yields 71 percent, well above the 51 percent of schools we reported were either offering or planning to offer packets in the Wave 1 report.¹⁸ About 8 percent of schools are planning to offer asynchronous platforms, and when added to the number of schools currently offering asynchronous instructional platforms, it equals 67 percent of all schools. This percentage is also well above the 44 percent that we reported offering or planning to offer asynchronous platforms in the Wave 1 report. Two percent of schools are planning to offer synchronous platforms, which makes 25 percent when added to the 23 percent currently offering synchronous instructional platforms. These percentages far exceed the 6 percent offering or planning to offer synchronous instructional platforms in the Wave 1 report.

Conclusion

In late March, we collected data on school district responses soon after the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the nation's public schools. At that time, about six in 10 public schools were in districts

Acknowledgments

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without a plan in place to provide remote instruction. Less than two weeks later, only three in 10 schools were in districts without a plan in place. In our Wave 1 report, we provided an optimistic characterization on the state of the nation's schools, writing that schools' plans might "be fairly viewed as a swift response."¹⁹ This characterization is borne out in the findings of this report, which show that America's public schools are rapidly getting back to work amid the pandemic.

Further, many of the contours and details of educational services are beginning to show. For example, on April 7, more schools were in districts expecting student participation in remote instruction as had programs up and running just 11 days before (46 compared to 43 percent, respectively). Also, the early reliance on packets and worksheets appears to have diminished, now giving ground to increases in synchronous or asynchronous internet platforms, offered in 62 percent of schools. Long-term questions about the quality of instruction remain, but these data provide a clearer picture of what might dictate that quality.

America's education system continues to adapt to the unprecedented challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The next round of C-ERLS data collection was completed as this report was produced, and we will provide the public with another more up-to-date picture of the nation's schools in the near future.

Appendix A. Additional Questions and Data Collection

The following sections describe additional information that we gathered during the first wave of C-ERLS data collection. Specifically, we present findings by school level and district size. In addition, we provide more details about specific technologies and internet accommodations used in schools. Lastly, we describe how schools are approaching their responsibilities to serve specific student populations, such as English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

Do School Districts' Efforts Differ Across School Levels? Districts could differentiate the educational platforms they offer to elementary, middle, and high schools. For instance, middle and high schools may adopt synchronous or asynchronous platforms more easily than elementary schools do because older students are better able to log in to and negotiate more complex systems with less supervision at home. Therefore, C-ERLS disaggregates several data elements to capture districts whose programs differed across school level (elementary, middle, and high school).

Analysis of our first wave of data collection showed little difference across school levels, leading us to doubt our survey instruments' ability to capture these differences. After revising the survey approach, we are confident in our instrument and see minor differences. For instance, the percentage of schools in large districts offering packets was just 2 percentage points higher in elementary than middle and high schools, well within the margin of error for our survey. Differences for asynchronous provisions were similarly small, with 4 percent more middle schools and 2 percent more high schools than elementary schools offering asynchronous platforms. Percentages for synchronous platforms were nearly identical. We want to be explicit that the practice offered at different levels is likely different but that district offerings across levels are not.

What Online Platforms Are Districts Using for Asynchronous and Synchronous Instruction? We gathered data on the specific types of asynchronous and synchronous platforms that schools are adopting to identify if certain platforms, programs, and methods are more common than others. This might provide helpful information for other educators and school leaders who are still determining the types of remote instruction they plan to offer.

Of schools offering asynchronous instruction, about 32 percent of schools offered more than one platform, with about 11 percent using three or more. Google Classroom is, by far, the most common platform, and about 44 percent of all schools are in districts whose websites mentioned Google Classroom; this is a marked increase from the 24 percent reported in Wave 1. The next most common platforms were schools' or districts' own websites, in use in 27 percent of schools, up from 6 percent in Wave 1. Canvas was again the third most common platform, in use in 11 percent of schools, up from 4 percent.

In the offering of synchronous instruction on April 7 (23 percent of all schools), Zoom was the most common platform offered on district websites. Zoom was offered in about 13 percent of schools, and Google Hangouts was the second most common, mentioned for 8 percent of schools. About 6 percent of schools offered other synchronous platforms.

Do Districts' Responses Vary by District Size? Districts of different sizes may be expected to have different capacities to employ specific educational services in response to COVID-19 closures. For instance, small districts might have limited resources or infrastructure to rapidly adjust to the pandemic. Similarly, large districts might be challenged to develop unified or piecemeal plans that provide services across all their schools. Therefore, we sorted the responses of the 250 districts in our sample into three groups by size, measured by their number of schools.

We defined small districts as those with six or fewer operational schools. Medium districts have between seven and 24 operational schools. Lastly, large districts are defined as having 25 or more operational schools. This divides our sample into three groups that are roughly equal in size: 35 percent of schools are in small districts, 35 percent of schools are in medium districts, and 30 percent of schools are in large districts.

Meals. The estimated percentage of schools in small districts offering meals was again lower than those of medium and large districts in Wave 2. An estimated 78 percent of schools in small districts offered meals by April 7, up from 77 percent by March 27, compared to 96 percent of medium and 100 percent of large districts.

Daily meal pickup and multiday pickup of meals were the most common distribution mechanisms, available in 68 and 52 percent of schools, respectively. Schools in smaller districts offered both kinds of meal pickup less frequently, with 53 percent offering daily pickup, compared to 72 and 81 percent in medium and large districts. Forty-three percent of small districts offered multiday pickup, compared to 61 and 51 percent in medium and large districts. More schools in large districts provided meal delivery services—which included delivery via busses or drop-offs at students' homes—at 30 percent on April 7 (up from 18 percent in Wave 1). Delivery was available in 31 and 28 percent of schools in small and medium districts, respectively.²⁰

Grades. Large districts are more likely to mention grading policies on their websites, which includes if and how schools will handle scoring homework assignments for the remainder of the school year. About 42 percent of schools in large districts have posted plans for grades in Wave 2. Larger districts expected grading more often than the 28 percent of schools in small districts and the 22 percent in medium districts. The 42 percent of schools in large districts that were grading work consisted of 23 percent grading remote work based on performance and 19 percent grading based on completion. Of the schools in small and medium districts, 9 and 10 percent were grading work based on performance, respectively, while 18 percent of schools in small districts and 12 percent in medium districts were grading based on completion.

Participation. The percentage of schools in large districts that expected participation more than doubled from 24 percent in Wave 1 to 57 percent in Wave 2.²¹ In Wave 1, 24 percent of schools in both small and medium districts expected participation. By Wave 2, the percentages for small and medium districts, at 43 and 41 percent, respectively, had increased substantially.

Instruction, Overall and by Type. We found that higher percentages of schools in large districts had offered remote instructional plans by April 7. The percentage of schools in large districts offering remote instruction was 85 percent, higher than in both small and medium districts, at 66 and 64 percent, respectively. Few schools in large districts had no plans to offer instruction, just 3 percent, and the remaining 12 percent were planning to offer instruction after April 7.

Higher percentages of schools in small and medium districts had no posted plans for instruction, at 18 and 24 percent, respectively, while the percentages planning to offer plans in coming weeks were similar at 16 and 12 percent, respectively. Note that district websites in small districts, and perhaps even medium districts, may not be the means to communicate remote instruction plans, but we have no mechanism to assess this possibility.

Again, we found more schools in large districts listed virtual supplemental content on their district websites. Seventy-three percent of schools in large districts listed virtual supplemental content on their district websites by April 7, up from 61 percent in Wave 1.²² For schools in medium and small districts, the percentages were 41 and 43 percent, compared to 28 percent and 35 percent of small and medium districts, respectively, in Wave 1. The percentage of schools in districts offering only virtual supplementary content, and no other plans, was small, at just 4 percent. However, most of these schools were in medium districts, as 9 percent of schools in medium districts provided only virtual supplementary content to students.

We find that schools in small, medium, and large districts offer more directed methods of instruction at relatively equal rates. Sixty percent of schools in large districts provided students with packets, compared to 60 percent in small districts and 61 percent in medium districts.

Of districts that provide asynchronous instruction, we found roughly equal increases across small, medium, and large districts. Fifty-three percent of schools offered asynchronous platforms in small districts, up from 23 percent in Wave 1, with similar increases in medium districts from 25 to 56 percent and in large districts from 39 to 70 percent. By the second wave, a sizable proportion of districts were now offering synchronous instruction, allowing us to break out results by small, medium, and large districts. Synchronous platforms were offered in 26 percent of schools in large districts, 19 percent in medium districts, and 24 percent in small districts.

Technology and Internet Accommodations. Schools are finding new and creative ways to provide remote instruction to students, but they also have to ensure all students have devices and internet access. As of 2016, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that 89 percent of US households had a computer and 82 percent had internet access.²³

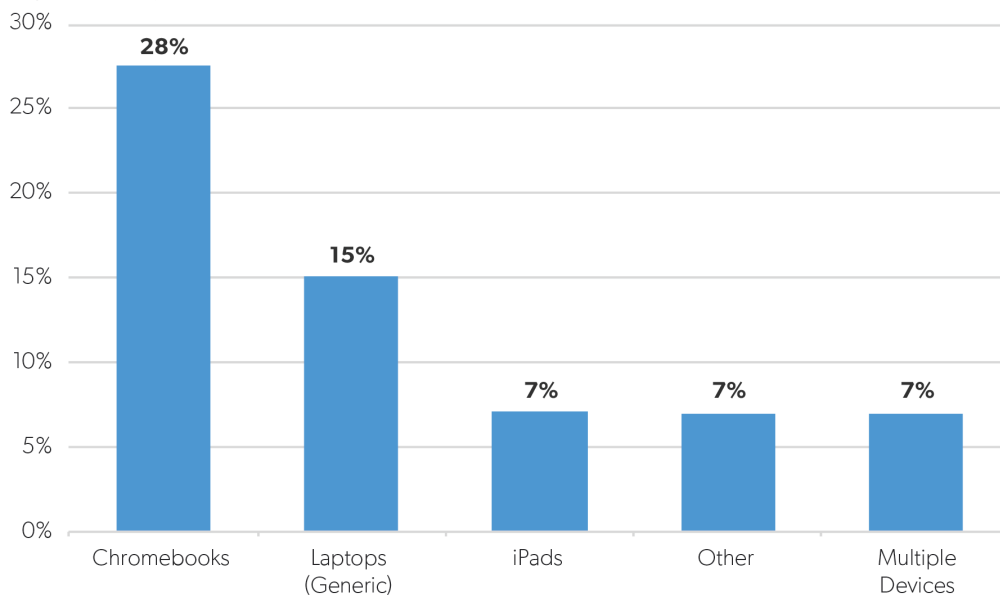
We find that 66 percent of schools are in districts that mentioned plans to offer any type of technological assistance, including help with devices and internet access. Specifically, 52 percent of districts mentioned plans to provide devices to students who are otherwise unable to access online instruction. Of these, the three most common specific devices were Chromebooks (in 55 percent of schools offering devices, 28 percent of all schools), generic laptops (29 percent of schools offering devices, 15 percent of all schools), and iPads (14 percent of schools offering devices, 7 percent of all schools). Additionally, some districts listed that they would provide more than one type of device, such as Chromebooks *or* iPads, which included 7 percent of schools (16 percent of those offering devices). The findings are expressed in Figure A1.

Similarly, many districts recognize that students may not have internet access at home and thus are discussing and implementing plans to address this challenge. By April, approximately 53 percent of schools were in districts that mentioned on their website the challenge of unequal access to internet, slightly more than in Wave 1 (46 percent). The majority of these, including 28 percent of all schools, offered corporate plans for discounted or free internet access, while some provided Wi-Fi hot spots to families (including 18 percent of schools).

ELLs and Special Education Students. Even in the middle of a pandemic, schools continue to have a responsibility to serve all students, including ELLs and those who participate in special education programs. Accordingly, we are interested in documenting how and if schools design plans to serve these specific types of students.

By April, 36 percent of schools were in districts that had mentioned the specific needs of students in special education programs, up from 20 percent in Wave 1. The majority of these, 28 percent of all schools, were in districts that did not mention limiting special education services, while just 8 percent of schools were in districts that discussed limitations on the special education services they could provide. Smaller percentages of schools were in districts whose websites mentioned services for ELLs. ELL service limitations were mentioned in districts containing 2 percent of all schools, while 15 percent discussed ELL services without mentioning limitations.

Figure A1. Types of Devices Offered in All Schools, April 7, 2020



Note: Percentages are out of *all* schools, rather than out of schools offering devices, as was presented in the Wave 1 report. These percentages include schools with plans to offer devices any time, as reported on district websites on April 7, 2020. Source: Authors' calculations using C-ERLS Wave 2 data. For more information, visit American Enterprise Institute, "COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS)," April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/covid-19-education-response-longitudinal-survey-c-erls/>.

Appendix B. Comparing School- and District-Level Estimates

Table B1 presents the school- and district-weighted percentages for the main findings described in the report. Visit the AEI website for a detailed description of the methodology and weighting process.

Table B1. School- and District-Weighted Percentages

	School-Weighted Estimates	District-Weighted Estimates
Closures		
% Closed	100%	100%
% District Closed First	42%	43%
% Tentative Plans to Reopen, as of April 7	68%	65%
% Closed for Remainder of School Year	20%	22%
Food Services		
% with Plan for Offering Meals on District Website	91%	76%
% Offering Daily Meal Pickup	68%	55%
% Offering Multiday Meal Pickup	52%	44%
% Offering Meal Delivery	30%	29%
Technology Assistance		
% Mentioning Device Support	52%	40%
% Mentioning Internet Support	53%	35%
Educational Programs		
% Offering Virtual Supplemental Content	51%	39%
% Currently Offering Packets	60%	59%
% Currently Offering Asynchronous Instruction	59%	50%
% Currently Offering Synchronous Instruction	23%	20%
Expectations of Participation		
% Not Expecting or Not Mentioning Expectations for Participation	54%	54%
% Some Expected Participation by April 7	42%	43%
% Some Expected Participation by April 15	3%	2%

Source: Authors' calculations using C-ERLS Waves 1 and 2 data. For more information, visit American Enterprise Institute, "COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS)," April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/covid-19-education-response-longitudinal-survey-c-erls/>.

Notes

1. Nat Malkus, Cody Christensen, and Lexi West, “School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Round 1, Districts’ Initial Responses,” American Enterprise Institute, April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/research-products/report/school-district-responses-to-the-covid-19-pandemic-round-1-districts-initial-responses/>.
2. Malkus, Christensen, and West, “School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic.”
3. We selected 250 school districts randomly and proportional to size, with size defined as the number of operational schools in the district. The sampling frame consisted of regular school districts in all 50 states and DC with at least one operational school, as listed in the universe district file from the National Center for Education Statistics’ Common Core of Data from the 2017–18 school year.
4. Even more specifically, public schools in the sample reflect all schools in regular school districts in all 50 states and DC that had operational schools as reported in the 2017–18 district universe data file from the Common Core of Data, collected by the National Center for Education Statistics.
5. Percentages for school districts can be calculated with the weights available on the complete dataset, but not from the single-wave spreadsheets. Raw percentages computed from the single wave spreadsheet do yield estimates on the percentage for schools. Variance estimates require additional analysis using the complete dataset, which is available upon request.
6. To request the latest data, contact Jessica Schurz at Jessica.Schurz@aei.org.
7. American Enterprise Institute, “COVID-19 Education Response Longitudinal Survey (C-ERLS),” April 7, 2020, <https://www.aei.org/covid-19-education-response-longitudinal-survey-c-erls/>.
8. This report has been updated to correct estimates in the original version. We identified errors in the original that stemmed from data that were recorded improperly for 21 of the 250 districts at the point of data collection.
9. As of April 13, 17 states—Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington—had announced statewide closures for the year, while four—California, Idaho, Maine, and South Dakota—had recommended closure for the year. See *Education Week*, “Map: Coronavirus and School Closures,” April 3, 2020, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html>.
10. Note that each of these changes is within the margin of error. However, since Waves 1 and 2 capture data on the same sample of 250 public school districts, these changes reflect real changes in the sample.
11. This percentage may not include schools that had already conducted and closed a technology survey. This question was added to the Wave 2 C-ERLS data collection, so we may have missed technology surveys that occurred before April 6–7.
12. For instance, in a national survey of teachers, *Education Week* found that far higher percentages of teachers were participating in synchronous platforms than our survey captured from districts’ offerings on their websites. Holly Kurtz, “National Survey Tracks Impact of Coronavirus on Schools: 10 Key Findings,” *Education Week*, April 10, 2020, <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/04/10/national-survey-tracks-impact-of-coronavirus-on.html?cmp=eml-enl-eu-news1&M=59369645&U=1660457&UID=86895c9110700fa8e53552838bdfa95>.
13. The distinction between packets and asynchronous platforms is that packets are single compilations of materials to be completed over time, whereas asynchronous platforms allow for continual updating and the transfer of work to and from students.
14. By “expected to participate,” we do not mean schools would not accept common extenuating circumstances but that they communicated a general expectation for participation. Those without an expressed participation issued the platform as an option, with the hope of participation and the possibility of expected participation in the future.
15. In Wave 1, 68 percent of schools had either explicitly not expected participation or had nothing stated on participation, but we were not confident we adequately distinguished between these two and reported them as a combined percentage. We took measures to sharpen our capture of this distinction and separate the estimates in Wave 2. This estimate differs substantively from the estimate published in the original version of this report. We previously estimated 50 percent of schools did not expect participation in Wave 2.
16. By “more directed educational programs,” we mean asynchronous and synchronous platforms, which are more directed than virtual supplemental content or packets are.
17. While not all the differences in participation expectations by platform are measureable, they are in line with an interesting pattern. In districts with more directed forms of instructional offerings, the share of schools expecting participation also increased. Among districts that offer packets, the ratio of schools with and without expectations was more than 50/50 (35 vs. 25 percent). For districts that offer asynchronous and synchronous platforms, it is about 2:1 (40 vs. 19 percent for asynchronous and 17 vs. 6 percent for synchronous platforms), with more districts having expectations. This may be sensible, as the higher expectations of participation might be more reasonable in schools prepared to deliver more directed instruction on more developed platforms. We will track these patterns over future waves to see if they hold as instructional programs evolve.
18. Detailed numbers do not add to total because of rounding. We did not distinguish virtual supplemental content based on future plans because, in general, the content was available on the internet.

19. Malkus, Christensen, and West, “School District Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic.”

20. As previously noted, this report has been updated to correct estimates in the original version. In most cases, these changes were relatively small, but the estimates in this paragraph changed appreciably.

21. These estimates differ substantively from those published in the original version of this report. We previously estimated that 37 and 38 percent of large school districts expected student participation in Waves 1 and 2, respectively.

22. These estimates differ substantively from those published in the original version of this report. We previously estimated that 55 and 62 percent of large school districts listed virtual supplemental content on their district websites in Waves 1 and 2, respectively.

23. US Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, “Table 702.60. Number and Percentage of Households with Computer and Internet Access, by State: 2016,” https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/tables/dt17_702.60.asp.

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