



## Reopening America's Schools: A Descriptive Look at How States and Large School Districts are Navigating Fall 2020

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### ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic forced America's public schools to close in the latter half of the 2019–20 school year. Schools' reopening plans vary for 2020–21. We reviewed the reopening plans for all 50 states, as well as the largest 120 school districts in the United States with a particular focus on reopening modalities, mask-wearing guidance, the treatment of vulnerable students and staff, and fall sports. Several states recommend that schools reopen based on viral spread, while others recommend a particular modality (in-person, hybrid, or remote instruction). States varied most in their treatment of fall 2020 athletics. This descriptive work represents a first step in understanding how schools are reopening amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. We conclude with implications for school choice policy.

### KEYWORDS

COVID-19; coronavirus; reopening; education policy; schools

The COVID-19 viral pandemic disrupted the lives of people around the globe. Schooling has been no exception to this. In the United States, all but two states closed schools between March 12–23, with Nebraska and Maine holding out until April 1 and 2, respectively (Ballotpedia, 2020). Schools across the country remained closed for in-person instruction for the balance of the school year. Regardless of what a school district's transition to remote instruction looked like, the job of an educator looked radically different and became increasingly difficult. Marshall, Shannon, and Love (2020) surveyed teachers between mid-March and early April 2020 and found that more than 90% of respondents had never taught online before COVID-19 intervened. Teachers reported that all aspects of their job were more challenging during the transition to remote instruction. Teachers cited a range of challenges, including the inability to hold students accountable, a lack of adequate time to do the job well, and the inability to communicate with students in real time. Those responding to the survey also described challenges their student faced outside of school, including access to reliable internet and adequate resources. Teachers similarly cited their own challenges outside of school, including balancing the educational needs of their own children with those of their students.

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This fall, states and school districts across the U.S. are making plans for how they are reopening their schools for the 2020–21 school year. COVID-19 has presented policymakers with a dilemma – keep schools open and risk the continued spread of the virus or close schools and realize the consequences of keeping children out of school. This dilemma extends beyond a pedagogical debate over learning modalities; there are a number of non-academic consequences related to school closures as well. These include sharp increases in child abuse (Sidpra, Abomeli, Hameed, Baker, & Mankad, 2020) and food insecurity (Wright & Merritt, 2020), as well as risks to mental health and wellbeing (Liu, Bao, Huang, Shi, & Lu, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). All of these issues are exacerbated for children living in poverty (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Van Lancker & Parolin, 2020). Students with disabilities also lose access to school-based resources, and many struggle with remote instruction without in-person supports (Masonbrink & Hurley, 2020). Reopening schools for in-person instruction does involve the risk of the virus spreading. However, early evidence suggests that COVID-19 is far less common in younger children, and the vast majority of children who are infected with the virus have mild symptoms (Lee, Hu, Chen, Huang, & Hsueh, 2020).

The U.S. Department of Education has a webpage devoted to providing resources related to COVID-19 for schools, students, and families (2020). Among the resources is a link to the Center for Disease Control's (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] 2020a) guidance on reopening schools, which notes that their guidelines and recommendations are not regulatory. Absent federal reopening requirements, each of the 50 states drafted their own guidance and recommendations. We present a snapshot of how state policymakers and, separately, how school district leaders were planning to reopen during this moment in time.

## Method and data sources

Our work sought to answer the following research questions:

- (1) What guidance are state-level education policymakers providing schools for reopening schools for the 2020–21 school year?
- (2) How are the largest school districts in the United States opting to reopen their schools for the 2020–21 school year?
  - (a) Do differences in reopening modalities exist in terms of total enrollment, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status?

To answer the first question, we examined the reopening guidance and plans for all 50 states between August 12–21, 2020. In the case of most states, a large document or two covered their guidance. Indeed, the Kansas State

Department of Education (2020) released the lengthiest such document at 1190 pages on August 17, 2020 that covers everything from kindergarten science instruction to health safety protocols. Other states, such as Missouri, opted to have a website with a plethora of links to smaller documents that offer much more limited and targeted guidance on reopening schools (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020b).

To answer the second research question, we examined the reopening modalities of the 120 largest school districts in the United States at two distinct time points: (1) August 5, 2020 and (2) August 21, 2020. As expected, some school districts amended their reopening plans between these two points in time. We acknowledge that August 21, 2020 is in some ways an arbitrary date; however, schools generally open in the United States anywhere between the first week in August and the day after Labor Day. August 21 represents a midway point between these two points in time and a point at which most reopening decisions were either beginning to be implemented or a couple of weeks away from being implemented. The purpose of this paper is to provide a snapshot of what reopening schools looked like amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **State reopening plans and guidance**

Our review of state reopening plans and guidance focused on a few key areas: (1) whether states had a recommended modality of learning; (2) the extent to which masks are going to be required; (3) how vulnerable populations will be treated; and (4) how sports will be handled for Fall 2020. See [Appendix A](#) to examine how all 50 states have handled these four issues.

### ***Modalities of learning***

There were several areas across state plans that were similar. Almost every state's plan allowed for decisions about reopening to be made at the local level and for decisions to vary across the state. Pennsylvania's plan is perhaps the most restrictive plan, as it is a phased reopening plan ordered by the governor (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2020). By contrast, Mississippi's plan is the least restrictive; the Mississippi Department of Education (2020) is explicit in stating that it has no authority to direct schools' reopening plans. A number of states directly tie reopening modality to COVID-19 data. For example, Minnesota determines the learning model that is deployed based on the number of cases per 10,000 residents over the past two weeks (Minnesota Department of Education, 2020). If there are fewer than 10 cases per 10,000, then all students will learn in-person. A spike to 50 or more cases per 10,000 will force distance learning for everyone. Gradations in between call for a mix of in-person and hybrid instruction, prioritizing in-person instruction for elementary students.

States were also similar in their guidance for what to do when a case is reported. Louisiana is an example of a state that ties reopening to its governor's reopening phase. As of this writing, Louisiana is in Phase 2 and most systems will begin the school year with remote instruction. Maine, by contrast, has a Red/Yellow/Green guidance framework. A county is considered "Red" if there is high risk of the virus, and remote instruction is recommended. The "Yellow" distinction indicates that there is an elevated risk and hybrid instruction is recommended. A "Green" distinction indicates that there is low risk of the virus and schools should reopen in-person or hybrid. As of this writing, every county in Maine is listed as "Green." Almost every state involves local and state public health officials, recommends following CDC (2020b) guidance, and has a protocol for deep cleaning spaces that were used by an individual who has tested positive for the virus.

States that do not directly tie reopening to coronavirus cases handle their guidance in several ways. Some states, like Alabama, do not offer a recommendation and leave that decision to individual school districts (Alabama State Department of Education, 2020a, 2020b). Several states, including Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, and Massachusetts make explicit that the goal is to have in-person instruction. Florida's plan opens with several pages that discuss achievement gaps, and the danger that these gaps may widen with remote instruction (Florida Department of Education, 2020). The Massachusetts reopening begins similarly, stating that "there is a clear consensus from both education and medical groups: we must keep in mind not only the risks associated with COVID-19 for in-person school programs, but also the known challenges and consequences of keeping students out of school" (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2020, p. 3). Idaho's recommended modality is either in-person or hybrid, with their plan noting, "Despite incredible advances in digital learning, you can never replace the value and impact of in-person interaction with a professional, dedicated teacher" (Idaho Department of Education, 2020, p. 2); Rhode Island's guidance is similar. Alaska and Maryland's plans recommend their school districts consider in-person instruction for elementary students and remote instruction for older students. At least eight states recommend schools reopen with some type of hybrid instructional mode, with California, Illinois, Kentucky, and Maryland's plans all devoting space to articulating several types of hybrid modalities that might work.

### **Masks**

Mask wearing is another area where state policies do not differ greatly. Almost every state either mandates mask wearing (either in their plan or via a governor's executive order) or strongly recommends individuals wear masks when at school. Several states, including Rhode Island and Wisconsin,

invoke CDC (2020b) guidance in their discussions of mask wearing. Nebraska and West Virginia tie mask-wearing policy to transmission levels (Nebraska Department of Education, 2020; West Virginia Department of Education, 2020). Michigan and Colorado offer different recommendations for elementary and secondary schools, with both requiring middle and high school students to wear masks and only recommending masks for younger students (Colorado Department of Education, 2020; Governor Gretchen Whitmer, 2020). Ohio is the lone state that offers different guidance for instructional staff and students, and custodial and maintenance staff, recommending masks for the former and requiring their use for the latter (Ohio Department of Education, 2020). The reopening plans for Massachusetts and New Hampshire both recommend that students be given mask breaks throughout the day when they are able to be socially distanced from others, ideally either outdoors or indoors with open windows (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020; New Hampshire Department of Education, 2020). Overall, policies for mask wearing were similar across state contexts.

### ***Vulnerable populations***

Overall, states are similar in how they handle students who may be more vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 and developing serious symptoms. For the sake of this discussion, *vulnerable populations* refers to students, family members, and staff members who are at greater risk of experiencing adverse health outcomes due to COVID-19. Some of the reopening plans also describe academically at-risk students as a vulnerable population; however, this is not what we intend here. Most states allow families to decide whether to return to in-person instruction for those who are uncomfortable with returning to school, and 36 state plans explicitly suggest offering remote learning alternatives for these families. In terms of vulnerable staff who may have underlying conditions, eight states' plans simply recommend that a plan be created for those who may be at greater risk for the virus. Some states do not seem to address this at all, but those are in the minority. Several states including Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, California, Nevada, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania suggest that districts should find ways to encourage vulnerable staff to telework or provide alternate work duties that allow them to work from home. Connecticut and Alaska call for districts to consider reassigning vulnerable staff to remote teaching duties. At least three states' plans are explicit about developing flexible leave plans so that employees are not forced to deplete their earned leave for virus-related absences (whether they are due to exposure, a positive test, or for precautionary purposes). The recommendations from the Arkansas Department of Education (2020) suggest that school districts might consider placing vulnerable staff on administrative leave as one option to avoid them using all of their earned leave. Idaho ties how they deal

with vulnerable staff to community transmission (Idaho Department of Education, 2020). If there is no community transmission in a county or municipality, staff are expected to come to work as usual. However, minimal community transmission triggers a reassignment process to allow them to work remotely. Hawaii and New Jersey's reopening plans recommend consulting with teachers' collective bargaining agreements when addressing the needs of vulnerable staff.

### ***Fall sports***

States vary widely in terms of how they intend to handle fall sports in 2020 (Stephens, 2020). Overall, states across the country are falling into one of four categories. A plurality of states are starting the fall with high school sports moving forward on schedule. A caveat to this is that there are districts within these states that are opting out of fall sports. For example, Pennsylvania has decided to move forward with fall sports; however, the School District of Philadelphia will not participate in football this fall (Anastasia, 2020). Several other states have decided to move forward with fall sports, albeit with a delayed start to the season and abridged schedules. A number of states have tabled all fall sports and have opted to move them to the spring semester. Finally, some states have moved football and volleyball to the spring, but are moving forward with low-risk sports like cross country, golf, and swimming. Perhaps the most interesting decision made around sports can be found in Vermont's guidance. Football as it is traditionally played will be replaced with seven-on-seven touch football. No decision has been made about whether to move traditional football to the spring. As of this writing, Maine has yet to decide about fall sports for the 2020–21 school year.

### ***Summary***

Overall, there are many similarities across state plans. Almost every state allows for alternative modalities of learning for vulnerable students, even if they attend school in a district that is reopening in-person. Almost all states allow local school districts to make decisions independent of the state bureaucracies, and almost all states either require or strongly recommend mask wearing during the pandemic. Perhaps most important, almost every state has made explicit overtures toward ensuring that instruction is equitable during this time of disruption. How that plays out across state lines might look very different between Florida and Pennsylvania, for example. However, ensuring equitable education is a stated value in almost every reopening plan. States differ the greatest in terms of their recommended modalities of learning and in terms of their decisions around fall sports.

## District reopening modalities

Our review of district reopening plans focuses on two points in time – August 5, 2020 and August 21, 2020. A review of the 120 largest school districts in the United States by enrollment found that as of August 5, 71 planned to reopen schools with remote instruction (Lips, 2020). Of the remaining 49 school districts, 12 districts indicated that they planned to reopen schools with five days of in-person instruction each week. Thirty-six districts indicated that they would reopen with a hybrid plan intended to reduce the number of students in the building at any given time. We treated the state of Hawaii as a single school district since there are no districts in the state; all public schools report directly to the Hawaii Department of Education. As of August 5, Greenville County Schools (South Carolina) had not announced their decision regarding modality.

We explored the extent to which enrollment size, race/ethnicity, and economic disadvantage influenced the modality choices of districts. See [Appendix B](#) for a list of school districts included in this review and the modalities they selected in their reopening plans. We ran logistic regression analysis, operationalizing the dichotomous outcome variable as (1) offering some form of in-person instruction (including hybrid plans) and (2) only offering remote instruction as of August 5. None of three variables we included in our model were found to be statistically significant predictors. However, trends are seen in the data. Districts with larger nonwhite student populations and the poorest 25% of districts we examined were more likely to start the 2020–21 school year with remote instruction. See [Table 1](#) for a comparison between districts offering in-person instruction and those offering remote instruction.

An examination of the largest school districts' reopening plans as of August 21 finds that several have shifted. Regardless of primary modality, every school district whose plan we examined was offering a remote learning option for families that wished to choose such an option. Eleven districts that initially announced they would reopen with a hybrid plan made the decision to open with remote instruction instead; Shelby County (TN), Dallas ISD (TX), and Boston Public Schools (MA) are examples of such districts. A Florida

**Table 1.** Comparing school district planned reopening modalities as of August 5, 2020.

| Modality           | Race (% Nonwhite) |               | Poverty*     |             | Enrollment** |           |           |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
|                    | 85±%              | Less than 85% | High Poverty | Low Poverty | 1–40         | 41–80     | 81–120    |
| Offering in-person | 2(6.5%)           | 10(11.4%)     | 1(3.3%)      | 11(12.2%)   | 5(12.5%)     | 4(10.3%)  | 3(7.5%)   |
| Hybrid             | 6(19.4%)          | 31(35.2%)     | 6(20.0%)     | 31(34.4%)   | 11(27.5%)    | 13(33.3%) | 13(32.5%) |
| All remote         | 23(74.2%)         | 55(62.5%)     | 23(76.7%)    | 47(52.2%)   | 24(60.0%)    | 22(56.4%) | 24(60.0%) |

Figures represent frequency counts with percentages in parentheses. Greenville Public Schools omitted from these figures. \*High poverty operationalized as the poorest 25% of the largest 120 school districts. Low poverty operationalized as a district not being among the poorest 25%. \*\*Districts are compared by enrollment. The largest 40 districts (1–40) are compared with the next largest 40 districts (41–80) and the 40 largest districts after that (81–120).



Department of Education Emergency Order mandates that schools in that state open fully<sup>1</sup> (Florida DOE Order No. 2020-EO-06, 2020). As such, nine Florida districts that initially announced they were opening with a hybrid option committed to opening school in-person by August 21. Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties sought waivers due to the high COVID-19 infection rates in South Florida. Most of the school districts that switched from a hybrid plan to in-person are located in Florida or Tennessee, with Detroit Public Schools (MI) being a notable exception. School districts offering hybrid instruction vary widely. For example, Greenville County Schools (SC) plans to reopen with one day of in-person instruction per week with the other four days of instruction being offered online. By contrast, Jordan School District in Utah will deliver in-person instruction Monday through Thursday; Friday is an optional day set aside for extension, remediation, and small group instruction that is delivered either in-person or online depending on teacher preference. Five districts whose plans were initially listed as hybrid are offering in-person instruction for elementary school five days a week, and are doing something different for middle and high school. Four of these five districts – Washoe County (NV), Cherry Creek (CO), Jefferson Parish (LA), and Capistrano Unified (CA) – are all offering secondary students hybrid instruction. Wichita Public Schools (KS) is opening school for elementary grades and starting the school year with secondary grades going remote.

An August 23, 2020 *Education Week* piece reported that “[a]s of August 21, 21 of the 25 largest school districts are choosing remote learning only as their back-to-school instructional model, affecting over 4.5 million students.” Their reporting is indeed accurate if one only examines the largest 25 districts. Our examination of the largest 120 districts indicates that the largest 25 school districts are substantially doing what other large school districts are doing across the United States. Orange County (FL), Duval County (FL), and Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (TX) plan to reopen in-person, and New York City’s public schools have announced a hybrid plan. However, some other district plans are more complicated. Hillsborough County Schools (FL) announced it would open remotely for the first week of school and give parents the option to have in-person instruction beginning in week 2. Hawaii is also difficult to categorize. Public schools in Hawaii on most islands are opening with in-person instruction; however, schools on the island of Oahu are reopening remotely. Oahu is where most Hawaiians live, and where the overwhelming majority of the state’s COVID-19 cases have been reported (Hawaii Public Schools, 2020b). See [Table 2](#) for a comparison of school districts by modality and by race, poverty, and enrollment for elementary grades as of August 21, 2020.

When we reran the same logistic regression model with an updated outcome variable reflecting district modality decisions made by August 21 for elementary-aged students, we found that race was a significant predictor. See



**Table 2.** Comparing school district planned reopening modalities for elementary as of August 21, 2020.

| Modality           | Race (% Nonwhite) |               | Poverty*     |             | Enrollment** |           |           |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
|                    | 85±%              | Less than 85% | High Poverty | Low Poverty | 1–40         | 41–80     | 81–120    |
| Offering in-person | 2(6.7%)           | 29(32.6%)     | 3(10.0%)     | 28(31.5%)   | 7(17.9%)     | 13(32.5%) | 11(27.5%) |
| Hybrid             | 0(0.0%)           | 5(16.7%)      | 1(3.3%)      | 4(4.5%)     | 1(2.6%)      | 2(5.0%)   | 2(5.0%)   |
| All remote         | 28(93.3%)         | 55(61.8%)     | 26(86.7%)    | 57(64.0%)   | 31(79.5%)    | 25(62.5%) | 27(67.5%) |

Figures represent frequency counts with percentages in parentheses. Hawaii's public schools are omitted from these figures. \*High poverty operationalized as the poorest 25% of the largest 120 school districts. Low poverty operationalized as a district not being among the poorest 25%. \*\*Districts are compared by enrollment. The largest 40 districts (1–40) are compared with the next largest 40 districts (41–80) and the 40 largest districts after that (81–120).

Table 3 for odds ratios and standard errors from this analysis. School districts serving student bodies that are 85% or more nonwhite were far more likely to reopen schools with remote learning than were districts with larger White student populations. Of the 30 districts with a student population that was greater than 85% nonwhite, only two are offering in-person instruction to start the 2020–21 school year.

**Summary**

Overall, more than two-thirds of the United States’ largest school districts are reopening remotely for the 2020–21 school year. Enrollment size does not seem to be a factor in these decisions; the New York City Department of Education is the largest school district by far in America, serving almost a million students, and it is reopening with a hybrid plan. School districts that serve larger proportions of students who are nonwhite and living in higher degrees of poverty seem more likely to open remotely, even if these

**Table 3.** Logistic regression findings for August 21, 2020 school district elementary reopening plans.

| Variable                       | OR(SE)            |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 85%+ Nonwhite District         | 0.153*<br>(0.126) |
| High Poverty District          | 0.597<br>(0.394)  |
| Large District                 | 0.704<br>(0.362)  |
| Constant                       | 0.705<br>(0.180)  |
| N                              | 119               |
| McFadden Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> | .095              |

\*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; High poverty districts were operationalized as the 40 highest poverty districts among those included in these analyses. Large districts were operationalized as the 40 largest districts among those included in these analyses. The State of Hawaii was excluded from these analyses.

are not statistically significant in every instance. Unlike the initial plans that school districts release, a handful of districts are moving forward with in-person instruction for elementary students and either hybrid or remote instruction for older learners.

## **Discussion and limitations**

The purpose of this paper was to describe what is happening in the 50 states and largest 120 school districts across the United States. Our examination revealed evidence of just how fluid these decisions are as schools grapple with a deadly pandemic while attempting to keep students' academic and athletic advancement on track. One of the biggest takeaways from this work is that despite the lack of a national blueprint for reopening, states made many similar decisions. For the most part, states offered school districts the latitude to make reopening modality decisions locally; offered similar guidance requiring or strongly recommending masks in schools; and recommend allowing families the ability to make the decision to begin the 2020–21 school year with remote instruction. There are areas in which they differ as well – including the recommendations whether to offer fall 2020 high school sports, as well as for how to approach protecting vulnerable adults working in schools. We begin here with an observation about school districts shifting from hybrid to in-person reopening plans, move to a discussion about younger learners, race and poverty, and sports, and conclude with implications for school choice and address limitations implicit in this work.

### ***Districts changing from hybrid to in-person instruction***

Between August 5 and August 21, 2020, several districts changed their stated modality from hybrid to in-person. Districts often explained that they selected hybrid instruction because it limits the number of students that are in school at any given time, making preventative measures like social distancing possible. Most of the districts we reviewed surveyed their parents and asked them about their reopening modality preferences. Although it was not explicitly stated in the plans that we reviewed, it is likely the case that several districts received a large enough response from those preferring remote learning that social distancing measures are possible with the remaining students whose families selected in-person instruction.

### ***Prioritizing elementary students***

Several states and school districts are explicit about the need to prioritize in-person instruction for younger learners. As previously mentioned, five school districts that initially opted for a hybrid model have moved toward

a reopening that includes in-person instruction for elementary school and either hybrid or remote instruction for secondary grades. Several other districts like Douglas County School District in Colorado are opting to start the year with remote instruction, but have phased in reopening plans that have elementary grades returning to campus first. Several states similarly place a priority on younger students returning to school; Alaska, Maryland, and Minnesota are examples of such. Future research should follow students longitudinally and compare those who learn remotely in the coming year to those who receive in-person instruction.

### ***Race, poverty, and reopening***

Our early analyses presented here found that race and poverty seem to map onto district reopening plans. It is worth noting that we believed we would find the opposite when we began this project, particularly in terms of socioeconomic figures. We initially thought we would find that school districts serving larger portions of students living in poverty might be more likely to reopen than their counterparts, in part reflecting child-care and food needs of low income working families. While we fall short of making causal claims in this paper, our prediction was clearly incorrect. Only four of the 30 poorest districts are opening the school year with in-person instruction – Horry (SC), New York City, Detroit Public Schools, and Aldine ISD (TX). The same is true for race. Only two of the 31 districts that serve student bodies that are 85% or more nonwhite are opening their campuses this fall – Aldine ISD and Detroit.

There could be several explanations for this. Early evidence suggests that COVID-19 disproportionately impacts people of color (Hooper, Napoles, & Perez-Stable, 2020; Tai, Doubeni, Sia, & Wieland, 2020; Wright & Merritt, 2020). Compared to their White counterparts, people of color are more likely to die from the virus, are more likely to have underlying medical conditions that exacerbate the effects of COVID-19, are more likely to be frontline workers, and often have reduced access to health care services. Members of racial and ethnic minority groups place less trust in the government's response to the pandemic (Jaiswal, LoSchiavo, & Perlman, 2020), which might explain the decision to not have in-person instruction in districts that largely educate nonwhite students. It is also true that large cities tend to educate larger proportions of nonwhite students and students living in poverty, and be more densely populated, making the spread of a virus like COVID-19 easier. Large urban school districts are also more likely to have teachers organized in strong unions (Moe, 2011), and early analyses have found that school districts in areas with stronger unions are less likely to reopen with in-person instruction (DeAngeles & Makridis, 2020). In late July 2020, the American Federation of Teachers threatened to strike if their members were forced to return to

schools they believed were unsafe (Will, 2020). Additional research should be conducted to better understand these trends.

### ***Reopening and sports***

The policy area where states varied the greatest in their reopening guidance is how fall 2020 sports are handled. Athletics, particularly high school football, play key roles in many U.S public schools. Sports teams unite school communities and facilitate information sharing, spreading social capital in part by helping connect students, parents, and taxpayers to local schools (Greene, 2013). On the other hand, athletics can detract from academics. Most male administrators are former athletic coaches, and may prioritize athletics over academics (Maranto, Carroll, Cheng, & Teodoro, 2018). In one of our states, it is widely believed that a key reason for reopening schools was the desire to have a fall football season, even though contact sports place students in closer proximity to one another than most classroom activities. Several states, including Texas and Iowa, are allowing students who are selecting remote instruction (presumably because they are at greater risk from the virus) to be eligible to play sports. Some entire districts, like Anchorage, AK, are fielding sports teams while their academic campuses are closed for in-person instruction. In some states, a tension exists between state guidance and local decisions. In states like Pennsylvania and Tennessee, fall sports are restarting on schedule with their largest school districts opting out of competition.

Our initial observations about which states were and were not moving forward with fall sports led us to wonder if politics played a role in these decisions. Accordingly, we collected data regarding whether states were having football season as usual, delaying it, or canceling it entirely (Stephens, 2020). The 19 states which are having high school football seasons proceed as usual in 2016 gave Donald Trump a mean of 54.73% of the vote, compared to 51.43% in the 14 states that are delaying football season for COVID-19, and just 40.93% for those that canceled fall football. States that are not playing football voted for Trump in fewer numbers than those that have announced plans to play high school football in 2020. Although this initial analysis yielded statistically significant results, it does not fully explain what is happening here. Indeed, Massachusetts – a state where less than one-third of the 2016 presidential vote went for President Trump – is moving forward with fall sports on schedule. Viral spread also does not seem to explain decisions about fall sports. According to the CDC (2020c), Vermont has a lower case rate (0.64 per 100,000 as of August 21, 2020) than all of the other 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam. Yet, Vermont has canceled the fall 2020 football season, replacing tackle football with seven-on-seven touch football. Of the 18 states with case rates under 10 per 100,000,

almost half ( $n=8$ ) have decided to forgo fall sports. Additional research should examine school reopening, sports, and factors that may explain the decisions that were made. It will be perhaps more important for medical researchers to help us understand the extent to which the virus spreads through contact sports and the impact that it has on high school athletes.

### ***Implications for school choice***

In many jurisdictions throughout the United States, few if any public school choice options exist for families. Their children attend schools based on their home address. Parents who are unsatisfied with their zoned school option and who have the means to do so can relocate to an address with more satisfactory schools or pay private school tuition (Marshall, 2017; Ryan, 2010; Sowell, 2020; Wells et al., 2009). Although some districts have magnet schools that parents can apply to (Wang & Herman, 2017), most traditional school systems offer parents few public choice options. The COVID-19 crisis has changed this. For school districts that are offering in-person instruction in some form, parents will have the choice to either enroll their child for in-person, or in some cases hybrid, instruction or to enroll their child in a remote learning option. Many of the plans we reviewed were explicit about families having the final decision regarding their child's education. We posit that the disruption caused by the pandemic represents a crossroads for public education in the United States. Will this be a watershed moment for school choice where parents seek increasingly diverse learning options for their children, including new options offered within traditional public school systems, a new wave of charter schools, or new approaches like micro schooling? Or, will this be a momentary disruption that finds most families returning to their traditional neighborhood schools and the status quo? Parents may emerge from this moment more empowered than ever before and ready to take greater responsibility over their children's education – or they may find themselves weary of the stress caused by the pandemic and ready for a return to what they were accustomed to prior to this disruption. It will be important to understand the decisions parents make in the wake of this moment in time and what the existence of new educational options (or lack thereof) means for student outcomes.

### ***Limitations***

This descriptive paper has several limitations. The reopening of America's schools in the fall of 2020 is a very fluid event. It is highly possible that districts that made one decision as of August 21, 2020 will choose differently before the school year begins, or that individual states' plans will have shifted since our review. Another limitation is that we only have policy decisions made at the state and school district level. Our analyses locate broad trends at the district

level. It is also worth noting the nature of the 120 largest school districts. Fifty-seven of these districts, almost half, are located in either Florida, Texas, or California. Some states with large populations like New Jersey are not represented in our analysis of the school districts because their districts are small and have low enrollments relative to other states.

Every school district we reviewed is offering an online learning option this fall. This creates the possibility for one to compare the outcomes of students who engage in in-person instruction, those who receive remote instruction, and those who return to school with or opt for a hybrid modality. It will be interesting to make note of the types of students who select each modality where a choice is offered, and how they fare – not just academically, but in terms of social development as well. Finally, it is obvious that our analysis raises more questions than answers. We call for additional research in several areas, including how students fare academically under the various modalities employed, and whether these academic outcomes – or mental, physical, and social health outcomes – vary according to racial and demographic characteristics.

## Note

1. As of this writing, this executive action is being challenged in court.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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**Appendix A.** State reopening plans – recommended modalities, masks, vulnerable populations, and sports.

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY   | MASK POLICY   | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS                                    | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| AL    | 23.77           | Up to local districts   | Required  | Alt. work assignments for staff; remove learning options for students  | On schedule                                    | Alabama State Department of Education (2020a, 2020b); Mackey (2020)  |
| AK    | 8.63            | In-person for elementary; Remote for secondary                                    | Recommended   | Staff should support students through remote learning. Parents can opt for remote learning                         | Some districts delayed with abridged schedules | Alaska Department of Education (2020); Alaska School Activities (2020)   |
| AZ    | 8.54            | Up to local districts   | Recommended   | Telework and alt. work assignments for staff. Remote learning options for students                                 | Delayed with abridged schedules                | Arizona Department of Education (2020)   |
| AR    | 29.01           | In-person; based on health<br><br>Arkansas Department of Education (2020)         | considerations  | Recommended  | Telework and alt. work assignments for staff   | On schedule  |
| CA    | 16.64           | In-person subject to local health clearance; Lists four examples of hybrid models | Required  | Telework and flexible leave plans for staff that do not deplete earned leave. Remote learning options for students | No fall sports                                 | California Department of Education (2020)  |
| CO    | 6.09*           | Up to local districts   | Required for adults and students 11 and up; Recommended for students up to age 10 | Provide alt. work duties that support working from home for staff; Remote learning options for students            | No fall sports                                 | Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (2020); Colorado Department of Education (2020); Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment/ Department of Education (2020) |

*(Continued)*



**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY   | MASK POLICY  | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS   | FALL SPORTS   | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|---|--|---|---|--|
| CT    | 2.36            | In-person   | Required   | Allow at risk teachers to teach virtually & develop PD; Remote learning options for students  | No fall sports  | Connecticut State Department of Education (2020a, 2020b) |
| DE    | 5.33            | Hybrid  | Required for staff and students 4 <sup>th</sup> grade and up; Recommended for students age 2–3 <sup>rd</sup> grade | Allow at risk adults to maintain distance from others; allow for telework; Remote learning options for students   | No fall sports  | Delaware Department of Education (2020)                  |
| FL    | 22.12           | In-person   | Recommended  | For at risk adults, take steps to reduce the no. of people they interact with; allow flexible leave options; Case-by-case accommodations for students       | Delayed start   | Florida Department of Education (2020)                   |
| GA    | 27.08           | Up to local districts   | Recommended  | Offer special accommodations for staff including alt. teaching assignments; Remote learning options for students  | All fall sports start on time except football. Delayed start for football with full season schedule | Georgia Department of Education (2020)                   |
| HI    | 15.33           | In-person or hybrid, except for Oahu which starts with remote for four weeks, then hybrid | Required   | Follow modified labor agreement; Students may opt for remote learning   | On schedule   | Hawaii Department of Education (2020a, 2020b)            |
| ID    | 14.64           | In-person or hybrid   | Recommended  | Normal operations if there is no community transmission; If there is minimal to moderate transmission, telework for adults and remote learning for students | On schedule   | Idaho Department of Education (2020)                     |

(Continued)

**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY  | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS   | FALL SPORTS  | SOURCES   |
|-------|-----------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| IL    | 16.93           | In-person  | Required for everyone over age 2                     | Recommends at-risk students consult with doctor   | Golf, girls tennis, cross country, girls swimming and diving on schedule; Football moved to 2021 | Illinois State Board of Education (2020a, 2020b); Illinois State Board of Education & Illinois Department of Public Health (2020) |
| IN    | 15.49           | Hybrid with students attending either half days or alternate days  | Recommended  | Staff at risk encouraged to telework; Allow flexible sick leave policies; Remote learning options for students                  | On schedule  | Indiana Department of Education (2020a, 2020b, 2020c)   |
| IA    | 25.49           | Guidance based on positive rate over 2 wk. period: 0–14% = In-person, hybrid as necessary; 15–20% = Hybrid, remote as necessary 21+% = Remote learning | Not recommended; Up to local districts               | Remote learning options for students  | On schedule with shortened seasons; Students attending via remote learning are eligible.         | Iowa Department of Education (2020); Iowa Department of Health, Iowa Department of Education (2020)                               |
| KS    | 33.27           | Up to local districts  | Language suggests “should be                         | recommended” but later in same section suggest “should be required” anytime social distancing or cohorting cannot be maintained | Put policies in place to protect privacy of individuals at higher risk for serious illness       | All sports suspended  |
|       | Kansas          | State Department of Education (2020)   |  |   |  |   |
| KY    | 14.18           | Suggests one of 4 models: scheduled rotations, synchronous opt-in, hybrid, fully online  | Recommended for adults and students grades 1 and up. | Suggests districts should create policy regarding vulnerable staff and students   | Delayed fall seasons   | Kentucky Department of Education (2020a; 2020b)   |

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**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY   | MASK POLICY  | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS   | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| MI    | 5.43*           | Guidance depends on phase. Phases 4–6 allow for in-person learning; phases 1–3 require remote learning. As of this writing Northern MI is in Phase 5 and the rest of the state is in Phase 4  | Required for staff and students in hallways, in common spaces, and during transit. Required in classrooms for grades 6–12. Strongly recommended in classrooms for grades K-5 | Allow alt. work assignments for staff; Remote learning options for students  | Football moved to spring 2021; rest of fall sports on schedule  | Governor Gretchen Whitmer, COVID-19 Task Force on Education, Return to School Advisory Council (2020)  |
| MN    | 14.82           | Guidance depends on local bi-weekly case rates per 10,000 cases. 0–9 = in-person for all 10–19 = in-person for elementary, hybrid for secondary 20–29 = hybrid for all 30–49 = hybrid for elementary, remote for secondary 50+ = remote for all | Required age 2 and up  | Have plan in place for alt. work assignments for staff. If adequate staffing is not possible, shift to an alt. learning model. Remote learning options for students. | Tennis, swimming/diving, and cross country on schedule. Football and girls volleyball allowed to practice, but competition moved to spring 2021 | Gov. Tim Walz with Departments of Health and Education (2020); Minnesota Department of Health (2020)   |
| MS    | 29.10           | Prioritize in-person for younger students   | Required   | Remote learning options for students   | On schedule   | Mississippi Department of Education (2020); Wood (2020)  |
| MO    | 20.34           | Districts must submit alternative plans of instruction  | Recommended  | Eligible students can request enrollment in remote learning options  | On schedule   | Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2020a, 2020b); Missouri School Board Association's Center for Education and Safety (2020) |

(Continued)

**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY  | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS   | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| MT    | 13.85           | Up to local districts  | Required   | Follow CDC guidance  | Dual events for golf, cross country; No fall football or volleyball | Montana Office of Public Instruction (2020); Beckman, M., Executive Director, Montana High School Association (2020) |
| NE    | 14.52           | Guidance based on risk, 4 categories: Green = in-person, Yellow, enhanced mitigation; Orange = hybrid, Red = Remote learning | Not required when Green; Recommended when feasible for Yellow and above                          | Allow vulnerable teachers to teach remotely; Mandates outreach to families with at-risk students                         | On schedule   | Nebraska Department of Education (2020)  |
| NV    | 26.41           | Hybrid   | Required   | Staff may be reassigned to work remotely; remote learning options for students   | No fall sports  | State of Nevada Executive Department, Governor Steve Sisolak (2020)  |
| NH    | 1.55            | Individuals choose between in-person, hybrid, and remote options   | Recommended  | Remote learning options for students   | On schedule   | New Hampshire Department of Education (2020); Governor's Economic Reopening Task Force (2020)                        |
| NJ    | 3.21            | Up to local districts  | Required for adults; Recommended for students<br><br>Interscholastic Athletic Association (2020) | Consider unique needs of each staff member and consult with local bargaining units; Remote learning options for students | Delayed and abridged seasons  | New Jersey Department of Education (2020a, 2020b); New Jersey State  |
| NM    | 6.59            | Hybrid   | Required   | Allow telework for staff; Remote options for students  | No fall sports  | New Mexico Public Education Department (2020); Groves (2020)   |
| NY    | 3.57            | Up to local districts  | Follow NY State Dept. of Health Guidelines   | District plans required to address this  | Delayed seasons with no state                                       | championships  |

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**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY  | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS  | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
|       |                 | New York<br>State<br>Department<br>of Health<br>(2020);<br>New York<br>State<br>Education<br>Department<br>(2020)  |  |  |  |  |
| NC    | 18.96           | Up to local<br>districts   | Required for<br>symptomatic<br>persons;<br>Recommended<br>for adults                               | Allow for alternative<br>work<br>arrangements for<br>staff and learning<br>arrangements for<br>students<br>including remote<br>learning  | Cross country,<br>girls<br>volleyball,<br>and<br>swimming<br>and diving<br>start in Nov.<br>All other<br>sports<br>delayed until<br>spring<br>2021 | Public schools of<br>North<br>Carolina<br>(2020)   |
| ND    | 32.76           | Guidance<br>depends on<br>health<br>authorities'<br>data with<br>phased<br>approach to<br>in-person<br>instruction | Not directly<br>addressed  | District level plans<br>should address<br>this   | On schedule  | North Dakota<br>Department<br>of Public<br>Instruction<br>(2020)                                       |
| OH    | 9.01            | In-person  | Recommended<br>for staff and<br>students;<br>Required for<br>maintenance<br>and custodial<br>staff | Guidance references<br>protecting<br>health/safety of<br>vulnerable staff/<br>students   | On schedule  | Ohio<br>Department<br>of Education<br>(2020); Ohio<br>High School<br>Athletic<br>Association<br>(2020) |
| OK    | 27.29           | Up to local<br>districts   | Recommended  | Should discuss<br>reentry with<br>health care<br>professionals   | On schedule  | Oklahoma State<br>Department<br>of Education<br>(2020)   |
| OR    | 6.35            | Up to local<br>districts   | Required   | High-risk staff may<br>meet criteria for<br>exclusion during<br>pandemic;<br>Districts directed<br>to support high-<br>risk personnel;<br>Remote learning<br>options for<br>students | No fall sports   | Oregon<br>Department<br>of Education<br>(2020)   |

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**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY   | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS   | SOURCES   |
|-------|-----------------|--|---|--|---|---|
| PA    | 5.58            | Phased reopening plan per governor: Red = remote; Yellow = in-person with restrictions; Green = in-person with most restrictions eased<br>As of this writing, all counties are Green; however, Allegheny and Philadelphia Counties have stricter guidance. | Required for everyone age 2 and up                                  | Flexible attendance policies for staff, encourage telework; Remote learning options for students | On schedule, with Philadelphia public and Catholic leagues opting out   | Pennsylvania Department of Education (2020); Anastasia (2020)                   |
| RI    | 14.46           | Reopening based on community outbreak level; hybrid  | recommended for MS/HS if everyone cannot return in-person every day | Recommended  | Remote learning options for students                                    | Delayed start with abridged season  |
|       | Rhode           | Island Department of Education (2020); Towne (2020)  |   |  |   |   |
| SC    | 20.97           | Up to local districts  | Required  | Plan discusses who might be at greater risk but offers no guidance                               | Delayed start with abridged season                                      | South Carolina Department of Education (2020); Beznak (2020)                    |
| SD    | 22.32           | In-person  | Up to local districts   | Schools should make decisions about at-risk staff; Remote learning options for students          | On schedule   | South Dakota Department of Education (2020)                                     |
| TN    | 24.81           | Up to local districts  | Required for everyone over age 2                                    | Districts should develop plans to address at-risk staff; Remote learning options for students    | On schedule with some districts like Shelby County (Memphis) opting out | Tennessee Department of Education (2020); Tennessee Department of Health (2020) |

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**Appendix A.** (Continued).

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY   | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS  | FALL SPORTS  | SOURCES  |
|-------|-----------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| TX    | 20.20           | Up to local districts, consider prioritizing in-person for elementary  | Required  | Allow staff to telework; remote learning options for students                        | Delayed seasons; Students enrolled in remote learning eligible   | Texas Education Agency (2020)                            |
| UT    | 14.71           | Up to local districts, recommends focus on individualized learning   | Recommended   | Identify high risk employees and mitigate risks; Alt. learning options for students  | On schedule  | Utah State Board of Education (2020)                     |
| VT    | 0.64            | In-person  | Required  | Staff should consult with health care provider; Remote learning options for students | Football replaced with 7-on-7 touch football; girls volleyball moved outdoors; other fall sports on schedule | Vermont Agency of Education (2020a, 2020b)               |
| VA    | 11.25           | Based on phase. Phase 1 – mostly remote; Phase 2 – P-3 in-person, others remote; Phase 3 – all in-person with social distancing, might involve hybrid<br>As of this writing, Va. is in Phase 3 | Recommended for staff and students when social distancing cannot be maintained; Recommended in public spaces including hallways                                 | Telework options for staff; Remote learning options for students                     | No fall sports   | Virginia Department of Education (2020); Kolenich (2020) |
| WA    | 4.26*           | Guidance based on cases per 100 k; Under 25 cases/ 100 k = in-   | person; 25–75/ 100 k = in-person for elementary, remote for secondary; Above 75/ 100 k = remote learning with limited in-person for students with highest needs | “Promote and ensure” for staff and students  | Schools should have plans in place to protect staff and students at higher risk                              | No fall sports   |
|       |                 | Washington State Department of Health (2020)   |   |  |  |  |

(Continued)

**Appendix A. (Continued).**

| STATE | CASES/<br>100 k | RECOMMENDED<br>MODALITY  | MASK POLICY   | VULNERABLE<br>POPULATIONS   | FALL SPORTS   | SOURCES   |
|-------|-----------------|--|---|---|---|---|
| WV    | 4.84            | Guidance based on cases per 100 k; Green (3 or fewer/100 k); Yellow (3.1–9.9/100 k); Orange (10–24.9/100 k) = in-person; Red (25+/100 k) = remote learning                       | Based on guidance per 100 k; Green – grades 3 and up on buses; Yellow – Grades 3–5 on buses; 6–12 at all times; Orange – Required grades 3 and up | Schools should have plans in place to protect staff; Remote learning options for students   | Delayed start   | West Virginia Department of Education (2020); West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (2020) |
| WI    | 14.05           | Up to districts; Guidance outlines a number of hybrid options  | Recommended, follow CDC guidance  | Develop flexibility for staff; plan to replace staff that are not returning for fall 2020; add positions for remote instruction; Remote learning options for students | Up to local districts; guidance allows for either delayed start with abridged fall seasons or moving fall sports to spring 2021 | Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (2020a, 2020b)   |
| WY    | 10.98           | Guidance based on viral spread; Tier I – in-person; Tier II – combination of in-person and intermittent closures; Tier III – remote learning<br>As of this writing, WY is Tier I | Recommended   | Remote and homebound learning options for students  | On schedule   | Wyoming Department of Education (2020); Associated Press (2020)   |

These data reflect our review of state plans between August 12–21, 2020. Case rates sourced from the Institute for Health, Measurement and Evaluation (2020) and reflect the data available for August 21, 2020. Three states denoted with (\*) are missing data from August 21 and the data presented reflect their numbers as of August 20, 2020.

**Appendix B.** District enrollments and reopening modalities.

| <u>District</u>           | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>8/5/20 Modality</u> | <u>8/21/20 Modality</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| New York City, NY         | 984,462           | Hybrid                 | Hybrid                  |
| Los Angeles Unified, CA   | 633,621           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| City of Chicago, IL       | 378,199           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Miami-Dade, FL            | 357,249           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Clark County, NV          | 326,953           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Broward, FL               | 271,852           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Houston ISD, TX           | 216,106           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Hillsborough, FL          | 214,386           | Hybrid                 | Remote*                 |
| Orange, FL                | 200,674           | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Palm Beach, FL            | 192,721           | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Fairfax County, VA        | 187,467           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| State of Hawaii           | 181,550           | In-person              | In-person/Remote**      |
| Gwinnett County, GA       | 178,214           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Wake County, NC           | 160,467           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Montgomery County, MD     | 159,010           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Dallas ISD, TX            | 157,886           | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC | 147,428           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Philadelphia, PA          | 133,929           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Prince George's CO, MD    | 130,814           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Duval, FL                 | 129,479           | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| San Diego Unified, CA     | 128,040           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, TX | 114,868           | In-person              | In-person               |
| Cobb County, GA           | 113,151           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Baltimore County, MD      | 112,139           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Shelby County, TN         | 111,403           | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Northside ISD, TX         | 106,145           | In-person              | Remote                  |
| <u>District</u>           | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>8/5/20 Modality</u> | <u>8/21/20 Modality</u> |
| Pinellas, FL              | 102,905           | In-person              | In-person               |
| Polk, FL                  | 102,295           | In-person              | In-person               |
| DeKalb County, GA         | 101,284           | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Jefferson County, KY      | 99,813            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Fulton County, GA         | 96,122            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Lee, FL                   | 92,686            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Denver, CO                | 91,138            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Albuquerque, NM           | 90,651            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Prince William County, VA | 89,345            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Fort Worth ISD, TX        | 87,428            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Jefferson County, CO      | 86,371            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Davidson County, TN       | 85,163            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Austin ISD, TX            | 83,067            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Baltimore City, MD        | 82,354            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Anne Arundel County, MD   | 81,379            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Alpine, UT                | 8,957             | In-person              | In-person               |
| Loudoun County, VA        | 78,348            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Greenville, SC            | 76,918            | TBD                    | Hybrid                  |
| Long Beach Unified, CA    | 76,428            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Milwaukee, WI             | 76,206            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Katy ISD, TX              | 75,428            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Fort Bend ISD, TX         | 74,146            | Remote                 | Remote                  |

*(Continued)*

**Appendix B.** (Continued).

| <u>District</u>            | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>8/5/20 Modality</u> | <u>8/21/20 Modality</u> |
|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Brevard, FL                | 73,444            | In-person              | In-person               |
| Fresno Unified, CA         | 73,356            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Guilford County, NC        | 73,059            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Davis, UT                  | 72,987            | Hybrid                 | Hybrid                  |
| Pasco, FL                  | 72,493            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Aldine ISD, TX             | 69,768            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Granite, UT                | 69,580            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Virginia Beach, VA         | 69,085            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Seminole, FL               | 67,808            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| North East ISD, TX         | 67,531            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Douglas County, CO         | 67,470            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Washoe County, NV          | 66,671            | In-person              | In-person/Hybrid***     |
| Mesa Unified, AZ           | 63,444            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Elk Grove Unified, CA      | 63,061            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Osceola, FL                | 63,031            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Volusia, FL                | 63,028            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Arlington ISD, TX          | 62,181            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Knox County, TN            | 60,372            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| San Francisco Unified, CA  | 60,133            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Chesterfield County, VA    | 60,060            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Conroe ISD, TX             | 59,764            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| El Paso ISD, TX            | 59,424            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Garland ISD, TX            | 57,133            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Mobile County, AL          | 56,628            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Pasadena ISD, TX           | 56,282            | In-person              | Remote                  |
| Frisco ISD, TX             | 55,923            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Howard County, MD          | 55,626            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Winston-Salem, NC          | 55,228            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Cherry Creek, CO           | 54,852            | Hybrid                 | In-person/Hybrid***     |
| Santa Ana Unified, CA      | 54,505            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Clayton County, GA         | 54,345            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Seattle, WA                | 54,215            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Plano ISD, TX              | 54,173            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Boston, MA                 | 53,640            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Capistrano Unified, CA     | 53,613            | Hybrid                 | In-person/Hybrid***     |
| Jordan, UT                 | 53,416            | Hybrid                 | Hybrid                  |
| Lewisville ISD, TX         | 53,257            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Corona-Norco Unified, CA   | 53,157            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| San Bernardino Unified, CA | 53,152            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| San Antonio ISD, TX        | 52,514            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Omaha, NE                  | 52,344            | In-person              | Remote                  |
| Atlanta, GA                | 51,927            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Klein ISD, TX              | 51,810            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Henrico County, VA         | 51,425            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Cumberland County, NC      | 51,194            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Wichita, KS                | 50,600            | Hybrid                 | In-person/Remote^       |
| Columbus City, OH          | 50,331            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Oakland Unified, CA        | 49,760            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| San Juan Unified, CA       | 49,255            | Remote                 | Remote                  |

(Continued)

**Appendix B.** (Continued).

| <u>District</u>             | <u>Enrollment</u> | <u>8/5/20 Modality</u> | <u>8/21/20 Modality</u> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Manatee, FL                 | 48,884            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Jefferson Parish, LA        | 48,668            | Hybrid                 | In-person/Hybrid***     |
| Charleston, SC              | 48,551            | In-person              | In-person               |
| District of Columbia        | 48,462            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Round Rock ISD, TX          | 48,321            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Anchorage, AK               | 48,238            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Portland, OR                | 48,173            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Tucson, AZ                  | 47,366            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Brownsville ISD, TX         | 46,880            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Sacramento City Unified, CA | 46,815            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Collier, FL                 | 46,416            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Alief ISD, TX               | 46,376            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Forsyth County, GA          | 46,238            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Detroit Public Schools, MI  | 45,455            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Socorro ISD, TX             | 45,238            | Hybrid                 | Remote                  |
| Hamilton County, TN         | 44,446            | Hybrid                 | Hybrid                  |
| Chandler Unified, AZ        | 44,352            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Garden Grove Unified, CA    | 44,223            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Rutherford County, TN       | 44,149            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |
| Horry, SC                   | 43,991            | In-person              | In-person               |
| Killeen ISD, TX             | 43,782            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| United ISD, TX              | 43,660            | Remote                 | Remote                  |
| Marion, FL                  | 43,032            | Hybrid                 | In-person               |

*Enrollment figures from National Center for Education Statistics (n.d.). Reopening modalities based on Lips (2020) and publicly available information found on each district's website. \* Hillsborough, FL reopening remote for one week, then offering in-person instruction; \*\* The island of Oahu is reopening remotely; the rest of Hawaii is reopening in-person; \*\*\* Elementary schools are reopening in-person; secondary schools reopening hybrid; ^ Elementary schools are reopening in-person; secondary schools are reopening remotely.*