

Education Practice

COVID-19 learning delay and recovery: Where do US states stand?

While two decades of math and reading progress have been erased, US states can play an important role in helping students to catch up.

by Jake Bryant, Emma Dorn, Leah Pollack, and Jimmy Sarakatsannis



The impact of years of COVID-19 pandemic learning disruptions is coming into focus, and the picture is grim. According to the latest National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), or “The Nation’s Report Card,” some two decades of progress have been wiped out. Average math scores for fourth and eighth graders in 2022 fell by five and eight points, respectively, compared with 2019 levels, while average reading scores fell by three points.

One point on the NAEP scale represents roughly three weeks of an academic school year, according to Andrew Ho, a Harvard professor who served on the board that administers the assessments.¹ By that calculation, students in 2022 were on average about 15 to 24 weeks behind in math and nine weeks behind in reading compared with 2019, or a quarter to half a school year behind.²

If student performance improvement follows historical prepandemic trends, it could take decades for students to fully catch up. But resources are available to help students recover more quickly. The federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) allocates \$190 billion to the nation’s schools to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. How these funds are deployed will likely pivot on the unique needs of students within each state and district, because the COVID-19 pandemic did not impact every part of the country equally. Students in some areas are only a few weeks behind, while others are nearly a year behind. Initial recovery efforts are also in different stages. To date, some states have spent less than 20 percent of their share of ESSER funds (across both state and district spending)—placing them at risk of leaving funding on the table. Others have already spent over half of their share.³

Although many of the decisions affecting education are made at the local or district level, states do have an important role to play—by understanding the situation across the districts in their jurisdiction

and supporting recovery initiatives. Below is a breakdown of pandemic-related learning loss and ESSER fund deployment at the state level. Data is derived from multiple sources including NAEP assessments, pandemic schooling modality, prepandemic school funding, as well as ESSER allocations and spending to date.

If student performance improvement follows historical prepandemic trends, it could take decades for students to fully catch up. But resources are available to help students recover more quickly.

¹ Andrew Ho, Demetra Kalogrides, and Sean Reardon, *Linking U.S. school district test score distributions to a common scale*, Center for Education Policy Analysis working paper number 16-09, Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis, April 2016.

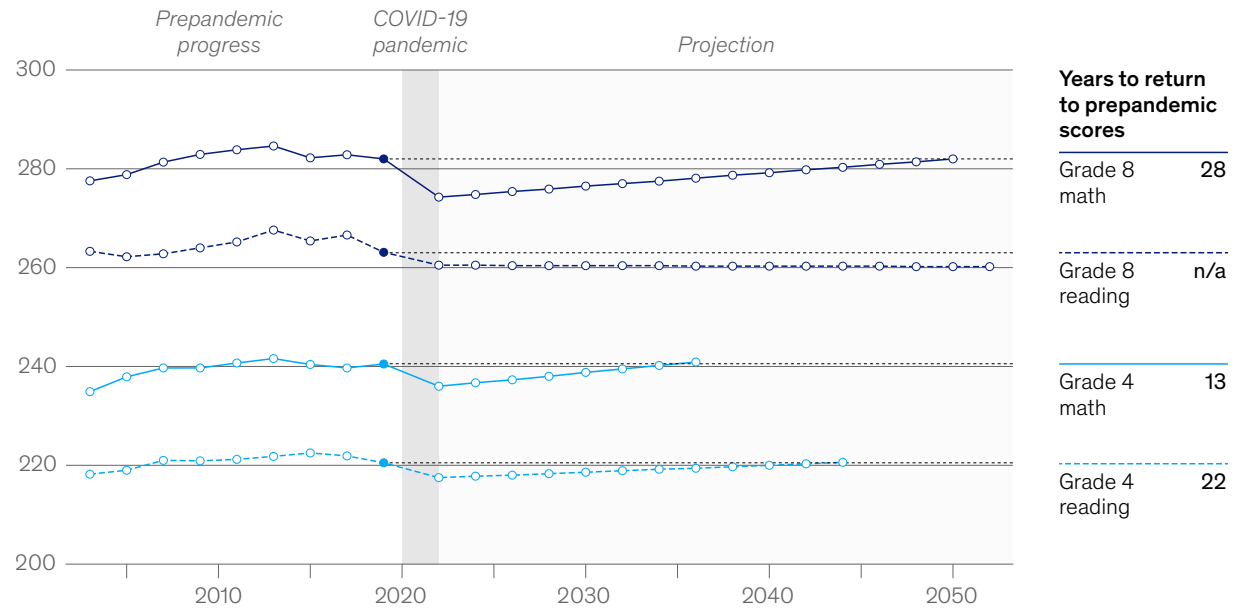
² NAEP assesses a sample of students in each cycle, rather than longitudinally tracking the same students. This means that analysis can only technically compare “a fourth grader in 2019” to “a fourth grader in 2022.” When we say that students are “half a year behind” or have “half a year of learning delay” across this interactive, we are therefore comparing them to the benchmark of similar sampled students in 2019, rather than their own historical performance: The Nation’s Report Card, National Center for Education Statistics, 2022.

³ Data based upon “Education stabilization fund,” US Department of Education, accessed January 3, 2023; note that this federal government data on ESSER spending to date may lag actual spending. Most states provide federal funds on a reimbursement basis, meaning local educational agencies will make a payment using local or state dollars and then request a reimbursement through the state grants management system. Furthermore, the federal dashboard does not cover future obligations (such as contracts and salaries that are paid out over time). While these numbers may thus underestimate the portion of fund committed, our survey data of more than 260 district administrators also suggest that only 26 percent of district funds have been spent, with large portions not yet budgeted.

The pandemic has erased more than 20 years of progress on NAEP assessments. Barring unforeseen disruptions, if student performance improves at rates similar to historical trends, fourth-grade students will not catch up to 2019 math levels until 2036, and reading levels until 2044, while eighth graders won't recover 2019 math levels until 2050.

If future National Assessment of Educational Progress score patterns reflect historical trends, it will take many decades to return to 2019 levels.

National Assessment of Educational Progress composite scores, by grade and subject



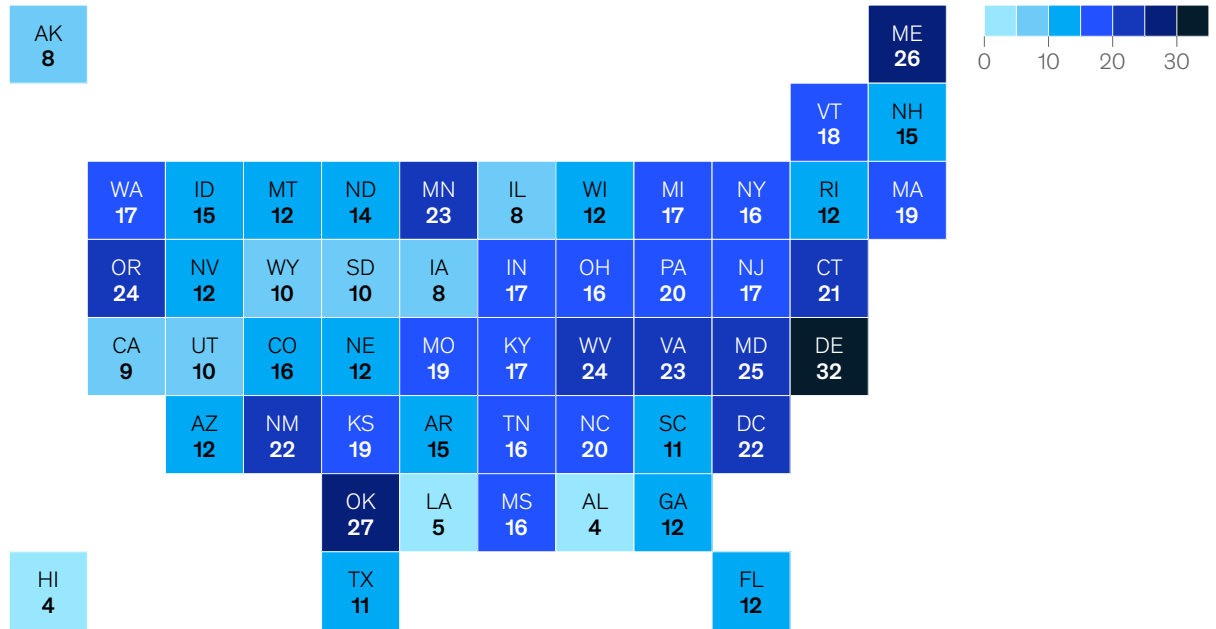
Note: Projections assume the 2003–19 CAGR of 0.10% for grade 8 math; 0.0% for grade 8 reading; 0.15% for grade 4 math; 0.06% for grade 4 reading.
Source: The Nation's Report Card

McKinsey & Company

The 2022 NAEP assessments showed an average four-point drop in learning nationally compared with 2019. That translates into an average of 12 weeks of learning delay, or about a third of a typical school year.⁴ But results vary significantly between states. Some saw only a one-point drop in learning, while the worst affected saw double-digit declines. In 17 states, students are more than half a year behind on average.⁵ In the worst-affected states, students may be almost a full school year behind.

National Assessment of Educational Progress evaluations by state reveal a wide range of student learning delays.

Weeks of learning delays¹



¹Every point reduction in National Assessment of Educational Progress score is equivalent to 3 weeks of learning delays. Source: National Center for Education Statistics; The Nation's Report Card

McKinsey & Company

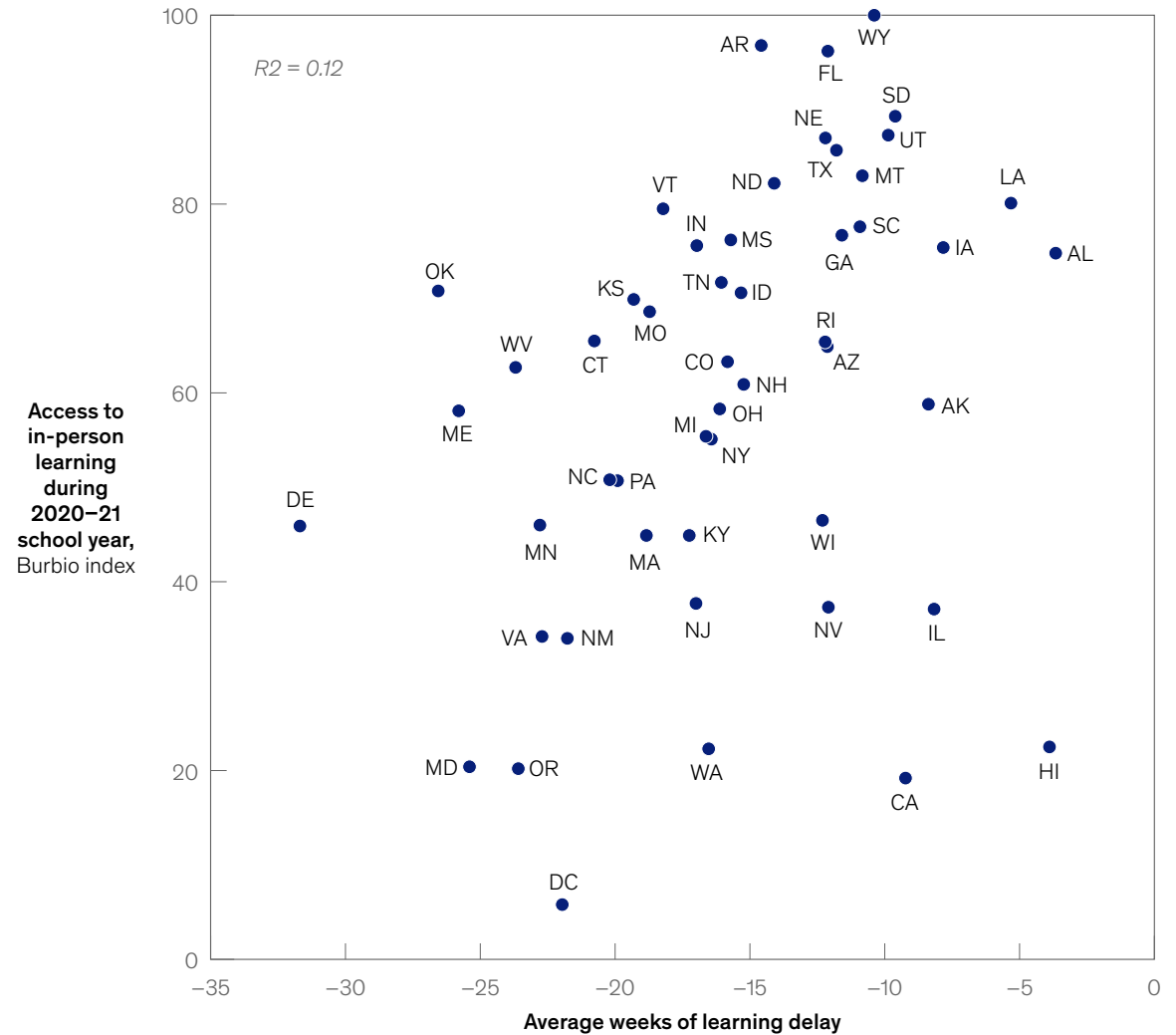
⁴ Assuming a typical school year of 180 days or 36 weeks. The Nation's Report Card, National Center for Education Statistics.

⁵ Seventeen states are 18 or more weeks behind, which is approximately half a year behind, based on a 36-week school year.

Several organizations measured student access to in-person learning during the 2020–21 school year, when state policies and practice varied tremendously. Plotting this data against the change in NAEP score by state reveals a weak correlation between access to in-person learning and pandemic-related learning delays—in contrast to previous studies at the district level or within states that showed a strong correlation over the same time frame. This difference suggests that substate factors such as uptake of in-person learning offerings, or other developments beyond the 2020–21 school year, may be influencing student learning trajectories measured by NAEP.

State-level access to in-person learning in the 2020–21 school year is weakly correlated with National Assessment of Educational Progress outcomes.

Access to in-person learning vs learning delays

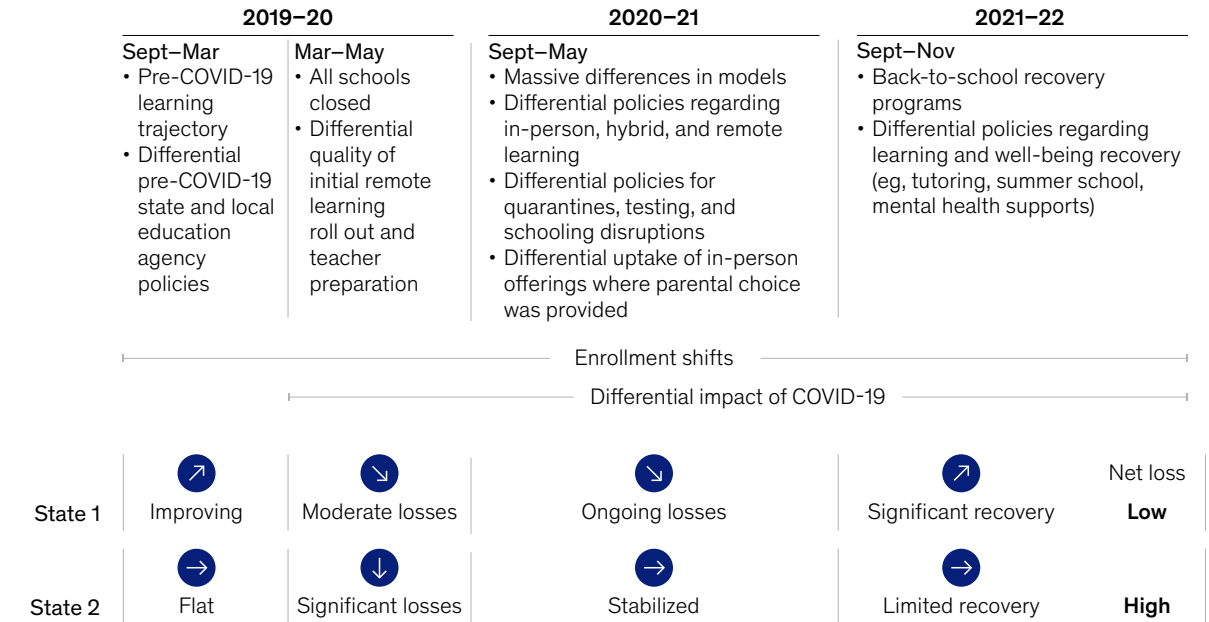


Note: National Assessment of Educational Progress learning delays were also compared with modality of schooling in 2020–21 data from two alternative sources (COVID-19 school data hub and Return to Learn Tracker). Resulting correlations and results were broadly consistent. Source: Burbio; COVID-19 School Data Hub; Return to Learn Tracker; The Nation's Report Card

Individual state policies for in-person versus remote learning during the 2020–21 school year is just one element that impacted NAEP math and reading scores during the pandemic. Other factors include pre-COVID-19 learning trends; the quality and deployment of remote-learning programs; quarantine and testing policies; shifts in enrollment demographics; and the launch of recovery efforts during the 2021–22 school year. There are also factors external to schools, including the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on historically marginalized communities. Upshot: each state has a unique learning loss trajectory. Understanding interrelated factors beyond NAEP data can therefore help inform and prioritize learning recovery efforts.

Many factors beyond learning modality in 2020–21 may have influenced the National Assessment of Educational Progress results.

Differential impact of COVID-19 pandemic on National Assessment of Educational Progress scores and illustrative state performance

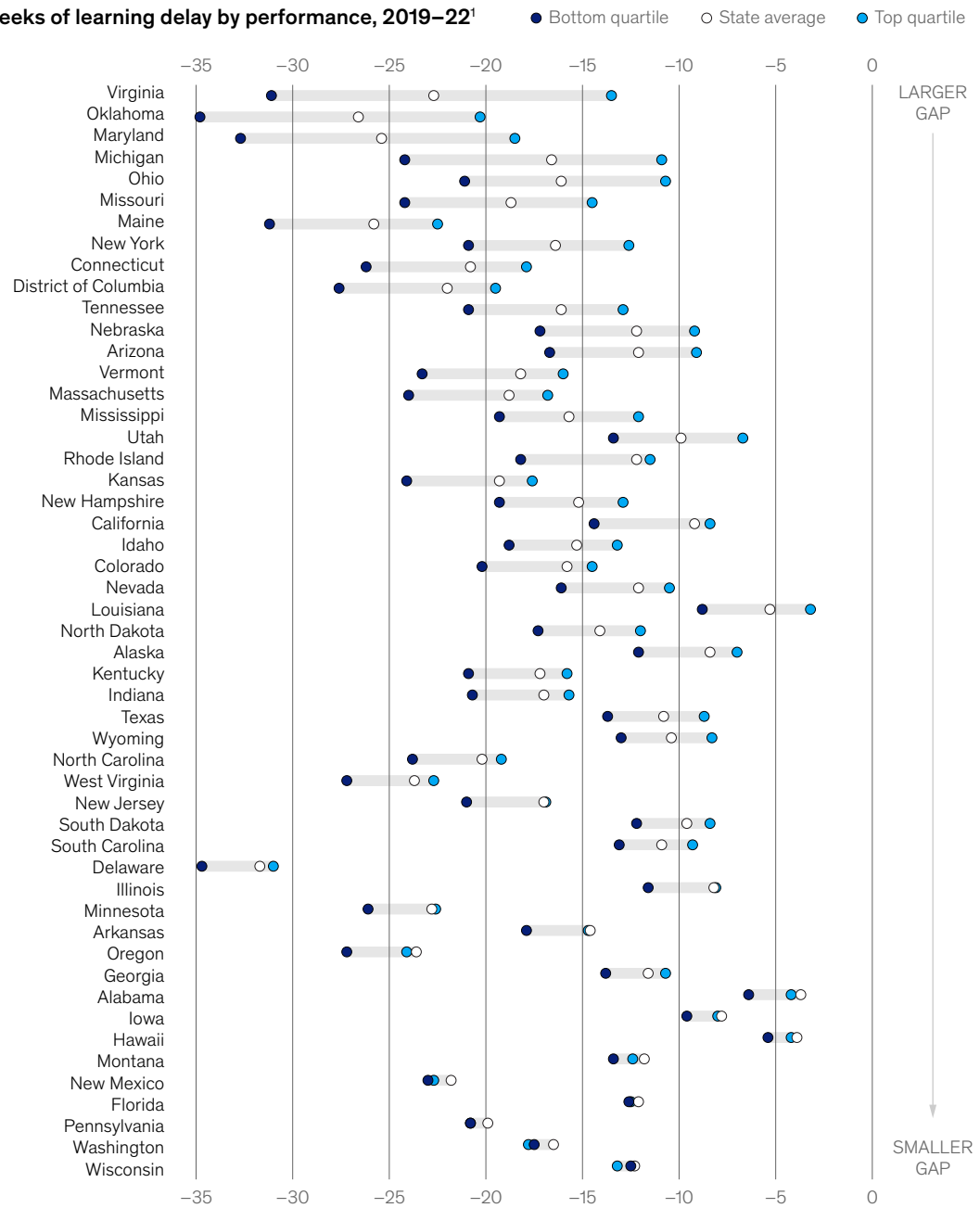


McKinsey & Company

NAEP scores also reveal widening gaps among students. While both high- and low-performing students lost ground, the pandemic disproportionately impacted those in the lowest-performance quartile, putting them more than six weeks behind their peers in the top-performance quartile. Move from a national to a state-by-state lens, and the gap is even more pronounced. In four states, students in the bottom quartile fell behind by 15 weeks more than their higher-performing peers. In 22 states, students from the bottom quartile suffered learning delays of more than 18 weeks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, equal to half a year or more of learning.

The pandemic widened learning gaps in some states more than others.

Weeks of learning delay by performance, 2019–22¹

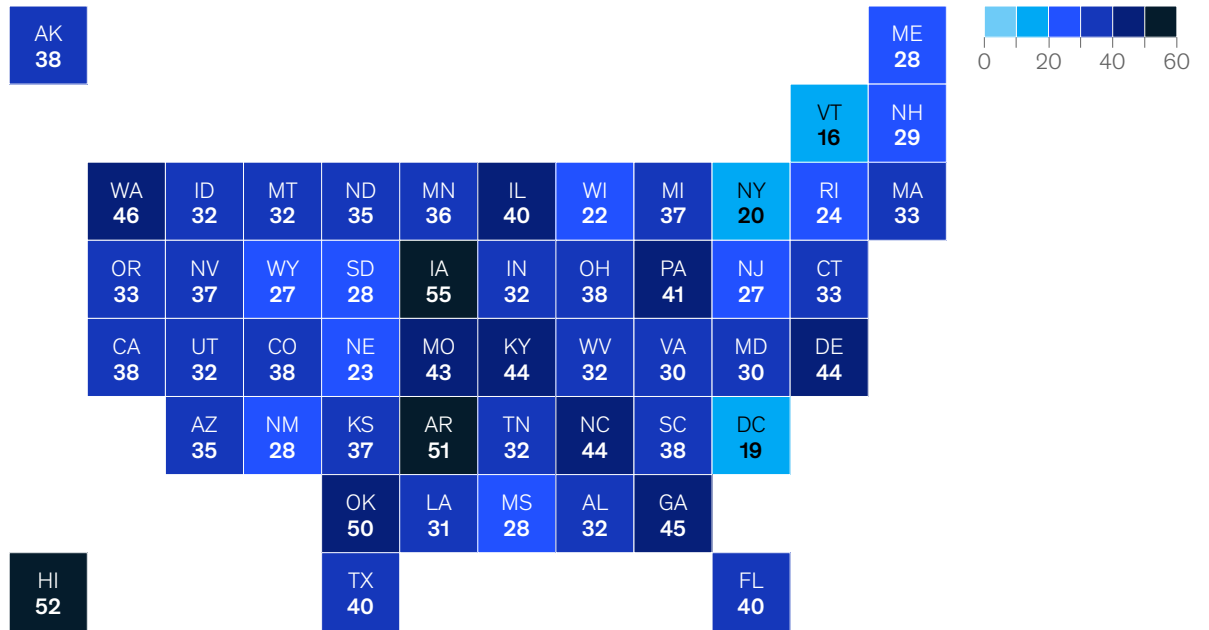


¹Quartiles are based on composite performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Source: The Nation's Report Card

Collectively, states and districts have received more than \$190 billion in federal ESSER funding to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on schools and students. ESSER funding was allocated based on Title 1 funding, which reflects roughly the number of disadvantaged students in each state.⁶ Local education agencies (LEAs, primarily school districts) received 90 percent of funds, with state education agencies (SEAs) retaining up to 10 percent. All funds must be obligated by September 2024. Approximately halfway through the funding window, states (and the districts within them) have spent varying portions of their ESSER allocations—from under a fifth in the District of Columbia and Vermont to just over half in Iowa and Hawaii.

States and districts have spent, on average, a third of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds.

Share of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds spent, %



Source: Education Stabilization Fund Transparency Portal (data as of Sept 30, 2022; accessed by McKinsey Jan 3, 2023)

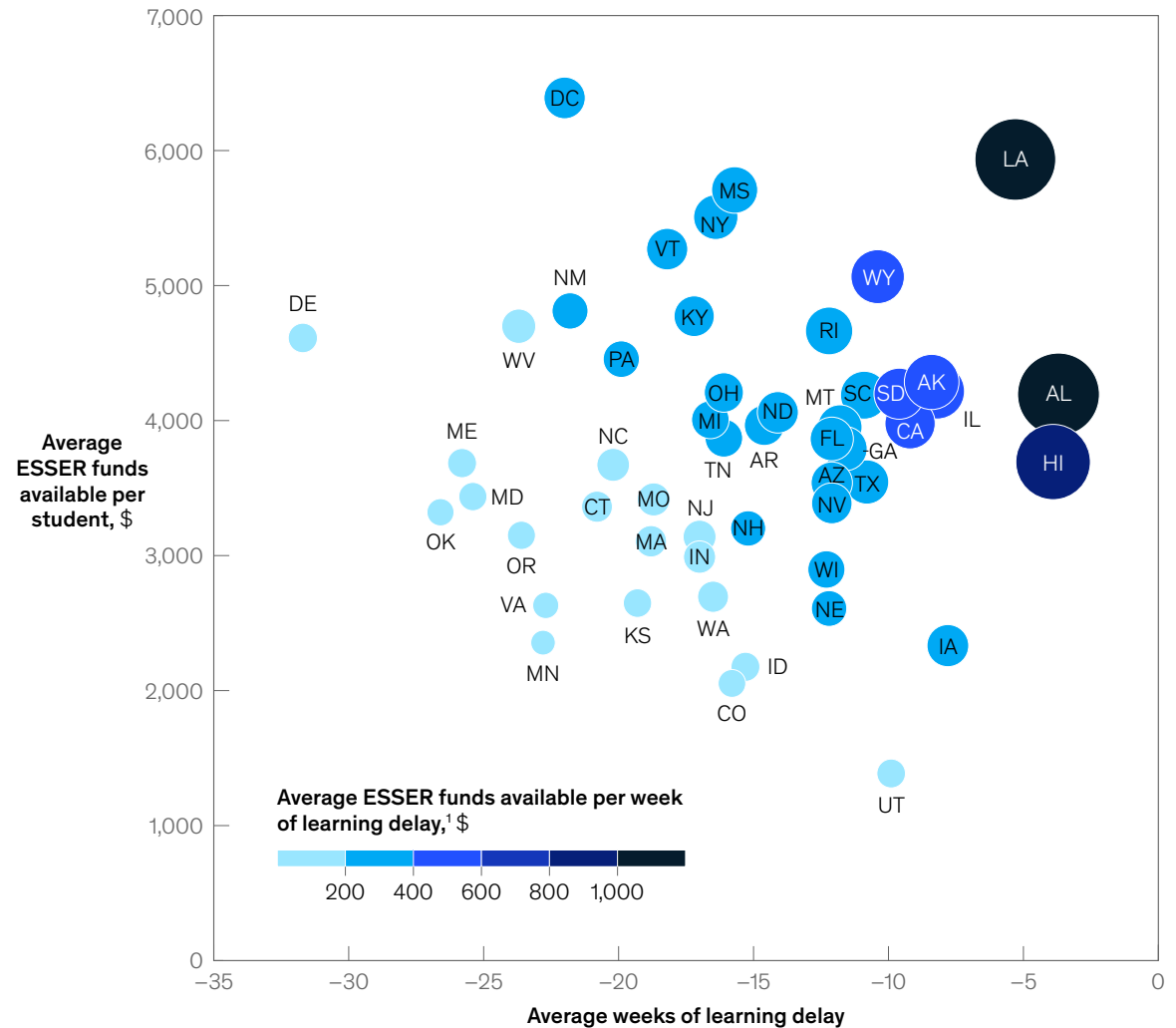
McKinsey & Company

⁶“Prepare my child for school: Improving basic programs operated by local educational agencies (Title I, Part A),” US Department of Education, accessed December 8, 2022. Title 1 is allocated according to four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state.

Since learning delays and the amount of federal funding available to help students catch up differs by state and district, there is no one-size-fits-all recovery strategy. ESSER funds are allocated to states based on Title 1 funding allocations, while learning delays are ten times greater in some states than in others. If we consider these two factors in tandem, on a per-student basis, some states have more than \$1,000 to address each week of learning delay, while others have under \$200.⁷

Some states have more money to address student learning delays than others.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund availability and average number of weeks of learning delay, by state



¹Assuming 3 weeks of learning per National Assessment of Educational Progress point; 36-week school year. Source: Education Fund Transparency Portal; The Nation's Report Card

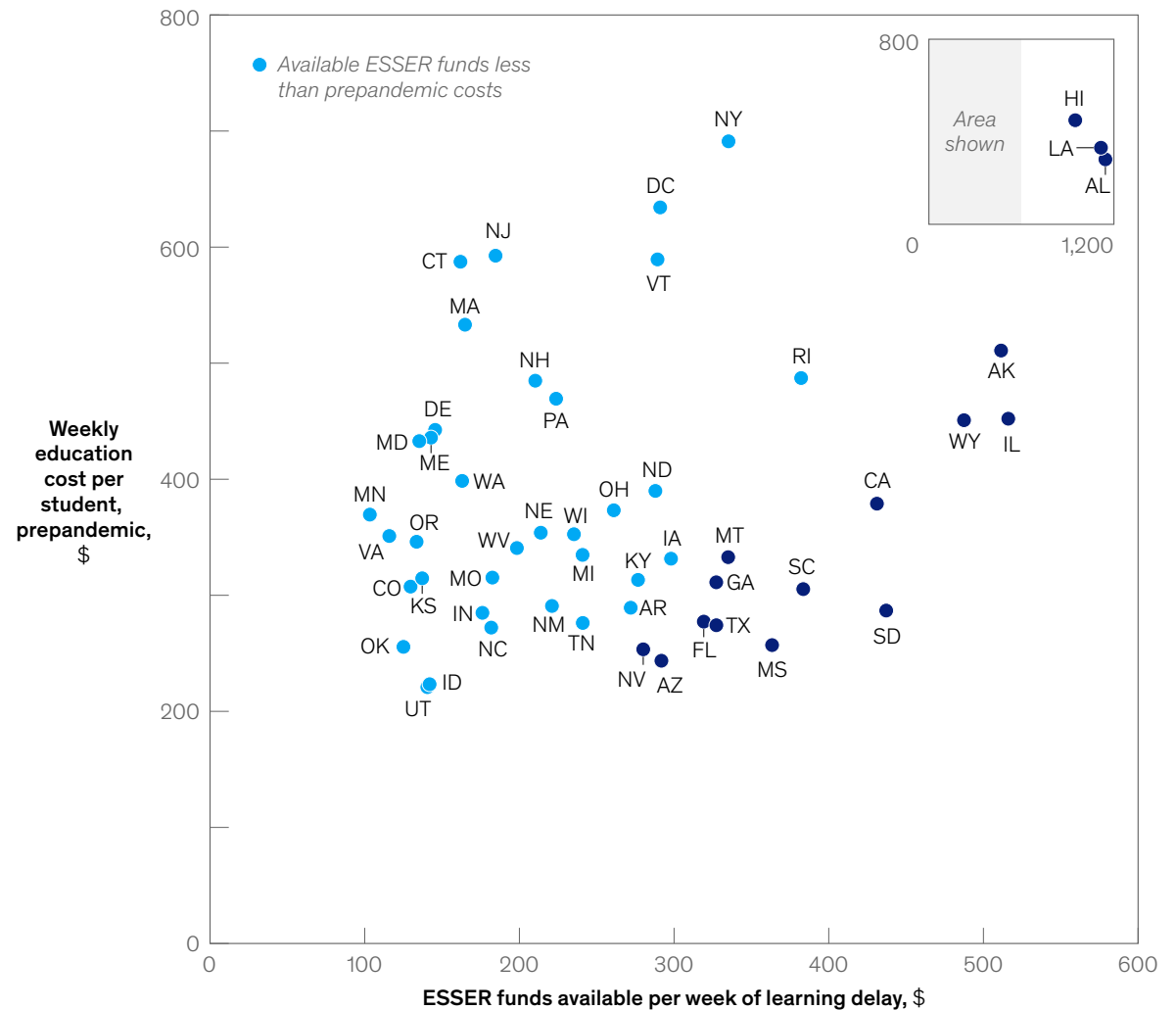
McKinsey & Company

⁷ Note that ESSER funding was not allocated on the basis of weeks of learning delay, but rather in the same proportion as each state received under Title I. This metric of "ESSER funding available per week of learning delay" is therefore just a calculation based upon best-available data from NAEP on learning delays, compared with average ESSER allocations on a per-student basis.

School systems were not designed to easily provide 12 or more additional weeks of learning during the year, so more cost-effective methods will likely be needed to help students regain lost ground. For example, if quality, intensive tutoring can be scaled effectively, it could cost under \$100 per student per week of additional learning gained.⁸ States can get an idea of potential resource gaps by comparing the ESSER funding available per week of learning delay to the average cost of educating a student for a week.⁹

Many states could run out of stimulus funds before all learning delays are addressed.

Prepandemic education costs vs available Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds



⁸ Assuming SAGA Innovations' (a math tutoring provider) results in Chicago could be scaled; these provided a year of additional learning for \$2,500 per student. Roseanna Ander, Jonathan Guryan, and Jens Ludwig, *Improving academic outcomes for disadvantaged students: Scaling up individualized tutorials*, Hamilton Project, March 2016.

⁹ Note that the cost of educating a student for a week also varies significantly within states, at the district level. Repeating this analysis at the district level would be a more accurate representation; however, data is not fully available across the United States for learning delays at the district level.

Source: Education Stabilization Fund Transparency Portal (data as of Sept 30, 2022, accessed by McKinsey Jan 3, 2023); National Center for Education Statistics (school year 2018–19)

McKinsey & Company

Supporting efforts to help students catch up

While 90 percent of ESSER funds go directly to LEAs (mostly districts) and many of the day-to-day decisions affecting students are made by districts, state leaders can consider three strategic steps to help support districts in their efforts to help students catch up: (1) assess current learning performance and recovery efforts across their state; (2) group districts according to the degree of support needed; and (3) engage a variety of mutually reinforcing levers at the state level to support districts.

Levers available to SEAs include the following:

1. *Putting policies in place.* For example, 28 states have passed some form of Science of Reading mandates¹⁰ requiring high-quality instructional materials or teacher professional development aligned to standards.
2. *Boosting financial resources for districts.* Additional funding could be allocated to districts that are advancing priority initiatives, in addition to the 90 percent of ESSER funds already allocated to LEAs—either from the ESSER state set-aside or other state funding sources.
3. *Providing information for districts to aid learning loss recovery.* States could support districts by providing tool kits and how-to guides for districts—for example, on implementing effective tutoring programs.
4. *Enhancing technical supports for districts.* States could fund communities of practice or direct technical assistance to districts through community partners or technical-assistance providers. These providers could help groups of districts strategically allocate ESSER dollars or accelerate priority initiatives such as tutoring or summer school.

5. *Delivering services directly to districts.* Occasionally, states can also directly purchase services for districts. For example, some states have purchased formative assessment or digital instructional software to support consistency across the state and capture economies of scale through state-brokered vendor negotiations.

With approximately two years left before remaining ESSER funds must be spent, states can play an important role in supporting districts by ensuring these funds deliver maximum impact and help students across the country overcome pandemic-related challenges, placing them on track for the bright futures they all deserve.

States can play an important role in supporting districts by ensuring Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funds deliver maximum impact for students.

¹⁰ Sarah Schwartz, "Which states have passed 'Science of Reading' laws? What's in them?," *EducationWeek*, July 20, 2022.

Appendix

Data tables

Table 1

**Historical and projected
National Assessment of
Educational Progress
composite scores by grade
and subject**

Test Year	Grade/Subject			
	Grade 8 Math	Grade 4 Math	Grade 8 Reading	Grade 4 Reading
2003	277.6	234.9	263.3	218.2
2005	278.8	237.9	262.2	219.0
2007	281.3	239.7	262.8	221.0
2009	282.9	239.7	264.0	220.9
2011	283.9	240.7	265.2	221.2
2013	284.6	241.6	267.6	221.8
2015	282.2	240.4	265.4	222.5
2017	282.8	239.7	266.6	221.9
2019	282.0	240.5	263.1	220.5
2022	274.3	236.0	260.5	217.5
2024	274.8	236.7	260.5	217.8
2026	275.4	237.3	260.4	218.0
2028	275.9	238.0	260.4	218.3
2030	276.5	238.8	260.4	218.6
2032	277.0	239.5	260.4	218.9
2034	277.5	240.2	260.4	219.2
2036	278.1	240.9	260.3	219.4
2038	278.7		260.3	219.7
2040	279.2		260.3	220.0
2042	279.8		260.3	220.3
2044	280.3		260.3	220.6
2046	280.9		260.3	
2048	281.4		260.2	
2050	282.0		260.2	
2052			260.2	

Table 2

Change in National Assessment of Educational Progress composite scores by grade and subject, 2019–22, points

State	Change in NAEP points								
	All/ all	All/ math	All/ reading	Grade 4/ all	Grade 8/ all	Grade 4/ math	Grade 8/ math	Grade 4/ reading	Grade 8/ reading
Alabama	-1	-2	0	1	-1	0	-4	2	-3
Alaska	-3	-5	0	-3	0	-6	-4	-1	0
Arizona	-4	-7	-1	-3	0	-6	-9	0	-1
Arkansas	-5	-6	-3	-4	-1	-5	-7	-3	-4
California	-3	-5	-1	-3	0	-4	-6	-2	0
Colorado	-5	-8	-3	-4	-1	-6	-10	-2	-4
Connecticut	-7	-8	-6	-6	-2	-7	-10	-5	-6
Delaware	-11	-13	-8	-12	-2	-14	-12	-9	-7
District of Columbia	-7	-11	-4	-10	0	-12	-10	-8	0
Florida	-4	-6	-2	-3	-1	-5	-7	0	-4
Georgia	-4	-5	-2	-2	-1	-3	-8	-2	-2
Hawaii	-1	-4	1	0	0	-2	-5	1	1
Idaho	-5	-5	-5	-7	-1	-6	-4	-8	-3
Illinois	-3	-4	-2	0	-1	0	-7	0	-3
Indiana	-6	-6	-5	-5	-2	-6	-7	-4	-5
Iowa	-3	-3	-3	-2	-1	-1	-5	-2	-3
Kansas	-6	-7	-6	-4	-2	-4	-10	-4	-7
Kentucky	-6	-7	-4	-5	-1	-6	-9	-4	-4
Louisiana	-2	-4	1	0	0	-3	-6	2	-1
Maine	-9	-9	-8	-8	-3	-8	-10	-8	-8
Maryland	-8	-11	-6	-9	-2	-10	-11	-7	-5
Massachusetts	-6	-8	-4	-5	-1	-6	-11	-4	-4
Michigan	-6	-6	-5	-5	-1	-4	-8	-6	-4
Minnesota	-8	-10	-5	-8	-1	-9	-11	-7	-3
Mississippi	-5	-8	-3	-5	-1	-7	-8	-2	-3
Missouri	-6	-7	-5	-5	-2	-6	-9	-5	-6
Montana	-4	-5	-3	-3	-1	-3	-7	-3	-4
Nebraska	-4	-4	-4	-3	-2	-2	-6	-4	-5
Nevada	-4	-5	-3	-6	0	-6	-5	-6	1

Table 2 (continued)

Change in National Assessment of Educational Progress composite scores by grade and subject, 2019–22, points

State	Change in NAEP points								
	All/ all	All/ math	All/ reading	Grade 4/ all	Grade 8/ all	Grade 4/ math	Grade 8/ math	Grade 4/ reading	Grade 8/ reading
New Hampshire	-5	-7	-3	-3	-2	-5	-9	-2	-5
New Jersey	-6	-9	-3	-6	0	-7	-11	-4	-1
New Mexico	-7	-10	-5	-8	-1	-10	-10	-5	-4
New York	-5	-8	-3	-8	0	-10	-6	-6	0
North Carolina	-7	-8	-6	-5	-2	-5	-10	-5	-6
North Dakota	-5	-5	-4	-3	-2	-3	-7	-4	-5
Ohio	-5	-7	-4	-3	-2	-3	-10	-3	-5
Oklahoma	-9	-10	-8	-8	-2	-8	-13	-8	-7
Oregon	-8	-9	-7	-8	-2	-8	-9	-7	-7
Pennsylvania	-7	-9	-5	-5	-2	-6	-11	-4	-5
Rhode Island	-4	-5	-3	-4	-1	-5	-5	-3	-3
South Carolina	-4	-5	-2	-1	-2	-3	-7	0	-5
South Dakota	-3	-4	-2	-3	0	-2	-6	-4	-1
Tennessee	-5	-6	-5	-4	-2	-3	-8	-5	-5
Texas	-4	-6	-1	-3	0	-5	-7	-2	-1
Utah	-3	-3	-3	-4	-1	-4	-3	-4	-2
Vermont	-6	-7	-5	-5	-2	-5	-10	-5	-5
Virginia	-8	-9	-6	-10	-1	-11	-8	-10	-2
Washington	-6	-7	-4	-4	-2	-5	-10	-3	-5
West Virginia	-8	-9	-7	-7	-2	-6	-12	-8	-6
Wisconsin	-4	-4	-4	-2	-2	-1	-8	-2	-5
Wyoming	-3	-4	-3	-2	-1	-3	-5	-2	-4

Table 3

State-level access to in-person learning during 2020–21 school year and average weeks of learning delay by grade and subject

State	Access (%) to in-person learning (SY 2020–21)	Average weeks of learning delay (weeks behind)								
		All/ all	All/ math	All/ reading	Grade 4/ all	Grade 8/ all	Grade 4/ math	Grade 8/ math	Grade 4/ reading	Grade 8/ reading
Alabama	75	-4	-6	-1	3	-3	1	-13	5	-8
Alaska	59	-8	-16	-1	-10	0	-19	-13	-2	1
Arizona	65	-12	-22	-2	-9	-1	-17	-28	-1	-3
Arkansas	97	-15	-19	-10	-12	-4	-15	-22	-9	-11
California	19	-9	-15	-3	-10	0	-13	-17	-6	0
Colorado	63	-16	-23	-9	-12	-4	-17	-29	-6	-12
Connecticut	66	-21	-25	-17	-18	-6	-21	-29	-16	-18
Delaware	46	-32	-39	-24	-35	-7	-41	-37	-28	-20
District of Columbia	6	-22	-32	-11	-29	0	-36	-29	-23	0
Florida	96	-12	-19	-6	-8	-4	-15	-22	0	-11
Georgia	77	-12	-16	-7	-7	-2	-8	-25	-6	-7
Hawaii	23	-4	-11	3	-1	1	-6	-16	4	2
Idaho	71	-15	-15	-16	-20	-3	-17	-13	-23	-9
Illinois	37	-8	-12	-5	-1	-3	-1	-22	-1	-8
Indiana	76	-17	-19	-15	-15	-5	-17	-21	-13	-16
Iowa	75	-8	-8	-8	-5	-3	-3	-14	-7	-8
Kansas	70	-19	-22	-17	-13	-7	-13	-31	-13	-20
Kentucky	45	-17	-21	-13	-15	-4	-17	-26	-13	-13
Louisiana	80	-5	-13	3	0	-1	-8	-18	7	-2
Maine	58	-26	-26	-25	-24	-8	-23	-29	-25	-25
Maryland	20	-25	-32	-19	-26	-5	-30	-34	-22	-15
Massachusetts	45	-19	-25	-13	-15	-4	-17	-33	-13	-13
Michigan	55	-17	-18	-16	-16	-4	-12	-23	-19	-12
Minnesota	46	-23	-30	-15	-24	-3	-28	-32	-21	-10
Mississippi	76	-16	-23	-8	-14	-3	-21	-24	-7	-10
Missouri	69	-19	-22	-15	-16	-6	-18	-26	-14	-17
Montana	86	-12	-14	-10	-8	-4	-8	-20	-9	-11

Table 3 (continued)

State-level access to in-person learning during 2020–21 school year and average weeks of learning delay by grade and subject

State	Access (%) to in-person learning (SY 2020–21)	Average weeks of learning delay (weeks behind)								
		All/ all	All/ math	All/ reading	Grade 4/ all	Grade 8/ all	Grade 4/ math	Grade 8/ math	Grade 4/ reading	Grade 8/ reading
Nebraska	87	-12	-12	-13	-9	-5	-7	-17	-11	-14
Nevada	37	-12	-16	-8	-19	1	-19	-14	-18	2
New Hampshire	61	-15	-21	-10	-10	-5	-15	-26	-5	-14
New Jersey	38	-17	-26	-8	-17	-1	-20	-33	-13	-2
New Mexico	34	-22	-29	-14	-23	-4	-30	-29	-16	-12
New York	55	-16	-24	-9	-24	0	-29	-18	-18	0
North Carolina	51	-20	-23	-17	-16	-6	-16	-30	-15	-19
North Dakota	82	-14	-15	-13	-10	-5	-9	-21	-11	-15
Ohio	58	-16	-20	-13	-10	-5	-10	-29	-10	-15
Oklahoma	71	-27	-30	-23	-24	-7	-23	-38	-25	-21
Oregon	20	-24	-26	-21	-23	-7	-24	-28	-22	-20
Pennsylvania	51	-20	-26	-14	-16	-5	-19	-32	-13	-15
Rhode Island	65	-12	-16	-9	-12	-3	-16	-16	-9	-8
South Carolina	78	-11	-15	-7	-3	-5	-8	-22	1	-15
South Dakota	89	-10	-12	-7	-9	-1	-7	-17	-12	-3
Tennessee	72	-16	-17	-15	-13	-5	-10	-24	-15	-15
Texas	83	-11	-18	-4	-10	-1	-15	-21	-6	-2
Utah	87	-10	-10	-9	-12	-2	-13	-8	-12	-7
Vermont	80	-18	-22	-14	-14	-5	-14	-30	-15	-14
Virginia	34	-23	-28	-18	-30	-2	-32	-24	-29	-7
Washington	22	-17	-21	-12	-11	-5	-14	-29	-9	-14
West Virginia	63	-24	-26	-21	-20	-6	-17	-36	-24	-19
Wisconsin	47	-12	-13	-11	-6	-5	-4	-23	-7	-15
Wyoming	100	-10	-12	-9	-7	-4	-8	-16	-6	-12

Table 4

**Average weeks of learning delay
by National Assessment of
Educational Progress assessment
performance quartile**

State	Weeks behind			Delta between top and bottom quartile
	Bottom quartile	State average	Top quartile	
Alabama	-6.4	-3.7	-4.2	-2.3
Alaska	-12.1	-8.4	-7.0	-5.2
Arizona	-16.7	-12.1	-9.1	-7.6
Arkansas	-17.9	-14.6	-14.7	-3.2
California	-14.4	-9.2	-8.4	-6.0
Colorado	-20.2	-15.8	-14.5	-5.6
Connecticut	-26.2	-20.8	-17.9	-8.3
Delaware	-34.7	-31.7	-31.0	-3.7
District of Columbia	-27.6	-22.0	-19.5	-8.1
Florida	-12.6	-12.1	-12.5	-0.1
Georgia	-13.8	-11.6	-10.7	-3.1
Hawaii	-5.4	-3.9	-4.2	-1.2
Idaho	-18.8	-15.3	-13.2	-5.6
Illinois	-11.6	-8.2	-8.1	-3.5
Indiana	-20.7	-17.0	-15.7	-5.1
Iowa	-9.6	-7.8	-8.0	-1.6
Kansas	-24.1	-19.3	-17.6	-6.5
Kentucky	-20.9	-17.2	-15.8	-5.1
Louisiana	-8.8	-5.3	-3.2	-5.6
Maine	-31.2	-25.8	-22.5	-8.6
Maryland	-32.7	-25.4	-18.5	-14.2
Massachusetts	-24.0	-18.8	-16.8	-7.2
Michigan	-24.2	-16.6	-10.9	-13.3
Minnesota	-26.1	-22.8	-22.6	-3.5
Mississippi	-19.3	-15.7	-12.1	-7.1
Missouri	-24.2	-18.7	-14.5	-9.7
Montana	-13.4	-11.8	-12.4	-1.0

Table 4 (continued)

Average weeks of learning delay
by National Assessment of
Educational Progress assessment
performance quartile

State	Weeks behind			Delta between top and bottom quartile
	Bottom quartile	State average	Top quartile	
Nebraska	-17.2	-12.2	-9.2	-8.0
Nevada	-16.1	-12.1	-10.5	-5.6
New Hampshire	-19.3	-15.2	-12.9	-6.4
New Jersey	-21.0	-17.0	-16.9	-4.1
New Mexico	-23.0	-21.8	-22.7	-0.3
New York	-20.9	-16.4	-12.6	-8.3
North Carolina	-23.8	-20.2	-19.2	-4.6
North Dakota	-17.3	-14.1	-12.0	-5.4
Ohio	-21.1	-16.1	-10.7	-10.4
Oklahoma	-34.8	-26.6	-20.3	-14.5
Oregon	-27.2	-23.6	-24.1	-3.2
Pennsylvania	-20.8	-19.9	-20.8	0.0
Rhode Island	-18.2	-12.2	-11.5	-6.7
South Carolina	-13.1	-10.9	-9.3	-3.8
South Dakota	-12.2	-9.6	-8.4	-3.9
Tennessee	-20.9	-16.1	-12.9	-8.0
Texas	-13.7	-10.8	-8.7	-5.0
Utah	-13.4	-9.9	-6.7	-6.7
Vermont	-23.3	-18.2	-16.0	-7.3
Virginia	-31.1	-22.7	-13.5	-17.6
Washington	-17.5	-16.5	-17.8	0.2
West Virginia	-27.2	-23.7	-22.7	-4.6
Wisconsin	-12.5	-12.3	-13.2	0.7
Wyoming	-13.0	-10.4	-8.3	-4.7

Table 5

**Elementary and Secondary
School Emergency Relief
(ESSER) funds awarded
by state and share of
funds spent**

State	ESSER awarded per state (\$)	% of ESSER funds spent
Alabama	3,137,931,001.00	31.7
Alaska	556,898,273.00	37.5
Arizona	4,011,082,408.00	34.9
Arkansas	1,940,896,007.00	50.8
California	23,436,636,090.00	37.7
Colorado	1,807,472,054.00	38.2
Connecticut	1,710,191,174.00	33.1
Delaware	637,239,246.00	43.6
District of Columbia	600,496,527.00	19.1
Florida	10,947,496,726.00	39.9
Georgia	6,601,694,161.00	45.4
Hawaii	639,510,652.00	51.6
Idaho	683,877,030.00	39.9
Illinois	7,878,874,043.00	40.4
Indiana	3,098,801,383.00	31.9
Iowa	1,191,543,114.00	55.0
Kansas	1,285,529,410.00	37.4
Kentucky	3,122,678,515.00	43.5
Louisiana	4,054,443,607.00	30.8
Maine	638,361,281.00	28.1
Maryland	3,029,144,388.00	30.2
Massachusetts	2,861,201,703.00	33.0
Michigan	5,768,583,528.00	37.3
Minnesota	2,049,737,960.00	35.6
Mississippi	2,522,781,986.00	27.6
Missouri	3,037,531,879.00	42.5
Montana	593,413,931.00	32.2

Table 5 (continued)**Elementary and Secondary
School Emergency Relief
(ESSER) funds awarded
by state and share of
funds spent**

State	ESSER awarded per state (\$)	% of ESSER funds spent
Nebraska	854,448,762.00	23.1
Nevada	1,667,290,672.00	37.4
New Hampshire	544,268,338.00	26.8
New Jersey	4,307,872,503.00	26.6
New Mexico	1,524,275,357.00	27.5
New York	14,034,709,665.00	19.9
North Carolina	5,600,682,958.00	43.9
North Dakota	474,560,121.00	34.9
Ohio	6,955,699,808.00	37.7
Oklahoma	2,320,636,280.00	50.2
Oregon	1,742,067,894.00	33.4
Pennsylvania	7,749,280,612.00	41.0
Rhode Island	646,287,850.00	23.8
South Carolina	3,270,299,467.00	37.7
South Dakota	593,413,931.00	28.1
Tennessee	3,856,970,583.00	32.3
Texas	19,242,961,540.00	39.5
Utah	957,822,487.00	32.1
Vermont	443,345,137.00	16.0
Virginia	3,288,868,661.00	30.3
Washington	2,895,532,761.00	46.2
West Virginia	1,187,632,662.00	32.3
Wisconsin	2,402,701,451.00	22.1
Wyoming	471,572,928.00	26.9

Table 6

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund availability and average number of weeks of learning delay by state

State	Weeks behind	ESSER available per student (\$)	ESSER available per week of learning delay (\$)
Alabama	-3.7	4,194	1,145
Alaska	-8.4	4,286	511
Arizona	-12.1	3,539	292
Arkansas	-14.6	3,965	272
California	-9.2	3,978	431
Colorado	-15.8	2,053	130
Connecticut	-20.8	3,362	162
Delaware	-31.7	4,612	146
District of Columbia	-22.0	6,390	291
Florida	-12.1	3,864	319
Georgia	-11.6	3,792	327
Hawaii	-3.9	3,693	950
Idaho	-15.3	2,176	142
Illinois	-8.2	4,217	516
Indiana	-17.0	2,989	176
Iowa	-7.8	2,333	298
Kansas	-19.3	2,648	137
Kentucky	-17.2	4,773	277
Louisiana	-5.3	5,934	1,116
Maine	-25.8	3,685	143
Maryland	-25.4	3,437	135
Massachusetts	-18.8	3,106	165
Michigan	-16.6	4,006	241
Minnesota	-22.8	2,355	103
Mississippi	-15.7	5,708	363
Missouri	-18.7	3,416	183
Montana	-11.8	3,951	335

Table 6 (continued)

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund availability and average number of weeks of learning delay by state

State	Weeks behind	ESSER available per student (\$)	ESSER available per week of learning delay (\$)
Nebraska	-12.2	2,608	214
Nevada	-12.1	3,387	280
New Hampshire	-15.2	3,201	210
New Jersey	-17.0	3,139	185
New Mexico	-21.8	4,812	221
New York	-16.4	5,507	335
North Carolina	-20.2	3,672	182
North Dakota	-14.1	4,061	288
Ohio	-16.1	4,208	261
Oklahoma	-26.6	3,321	125
Oregon	-23.6	3,150	134
Pennsylvania	-19.9	4,455	224
Rhode Island	-12.2	4,664	382
South Carolina	-10.9	4,188	384
South Dakota	-9.6	4,199	437
Tennessee	-16.1	3,870	241
Texas	-10.8	3,545	327
Utah	-9.9	1,386	140
Vermont	-18.2	5,270	289
Virginia	-22.7	2,631	116
Washington	-16.5	2,695	163
West Virginia	-23.7	4,699	198
Wisconsin	-12.3	2,897	235
Wyoming	-10.4	5,066	487

Table 7

Prepandemic education costs and available Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds per week of learning delay

State	Prepandemic cost to educate a student per week (\$)	ESSER available per week of learning delay (\$)
Alabama	(281)	1,145
Alaska	(511)	511
Arizona	(244)	292
Arkansas	(289)	272
California	(379)	431
Colorado	(308)	130
Connecticut	(587)	162
Delaware	(443)	146
District of Columbia	(634)	291
Florida	(277)	319
Georgia	(311)	327
Hawaii	(448)	950
Idaho	(223)	142
Illinois	(452)	516
Indiana	(285)	176
Iowa	(332)	298
Kansas	(315)	137
Kentucky	(313)	277
Louisiana	(331)	1,116
Maine	(436)	143
Maryland	(433)	135
Massachusetts	(533)	165
Michigan	(335)	241
Minnesota	(370)	103
Mississippi	(257)	363
Missouri	(315)	183
Montana	(333)	335

Table 7 (continued)

Prepandemic education costs and available Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds per week of learning delay

State	Prepandemic cost to educate a student per week (\$)	ESSER available per week of learning delay (\$)
Nebraska	(354)	214
Nevada	(253)	280
New Hampshire	(485)	210
New Jersey	(593)	185
New Mexico	(291)	221
New York	(691)	335
North Carolina	(272)	182
North Dakota	(390)	288
Ohio	(373)	261
Oklahoma	(256)	125
Oregon	(346)	134
Pennsylvania	(469)	224
Rhode Island	(487)	382
South Carolina	(305)	384
South Dakota	(287)	437
Tennessee	(276)	241
Texas	(274)	327
Utah	(221)	140
Vermont	(589)	289
Virginia	(351)	116
Washington	(399)	163
West Virginia	(341)	198
Wisconsin	(353)	235
Wyoming	(451)	487

Jake Bryant is a partner in McKinsey's Seattle office; **Emma Dorn** is an associate partner in the Bay Area office; and **Leah Pollack** is a partner in the Washington, DC, office, where **Jimmy Sarakatsannis** is a senior partner.

The authors wish to thank Stephanie McBride for her contributions to this article.

Find more content like this on the
McKinsey Insights App



Scan • Download • Personalize

