



## News Release

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### **CED Report Details K-12 Remote Education Deficits During COVID, Offers Ideas to Effectively Harness Technology in Future Learning**

**Washington, DC, June 17, 2021...**K-12 schools struggled to quickly pivot to remote learning at the onset of the pandemic as lockdowns were imposed. But, while the transition was fraught with challenges, the response to the crisis offers a unique opportunity to rethink a more effective, engaging, and equitable education system. To that end, the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board (CED) has issued a new report, [\*Reimagining K-12: Emerging from Disruption with Insights for Reform\*](#). It highlights the benefits of continuing to use technology in K-12 education and offers policy recommendations to mitigate learning loss following more than a year of at-home instruction.

As detailed in the report – the latest in a series of Solutions Briefs on Sustaining Capitalism – even before the pandemic performance gaps between low- and high-income students were widening faster in the US than in other countries. School closures and remote learning mandates exacerbated the existing domestic disparities, with students of color and those in low-income households having suffered the largest setbacks. Failure to learn from the lessons of the past year could be catastrophic to the learning outcomes – and eventual workforce readiness – of future generations.

“Remote learning fundamentally changed the delivery of education, and now, the K-12 system is reaching a critical inflection point,” said Lori Esposito Murray, President of CED. “While difficult to incorporate under crisis conditions, schools have an opportunity to embrace and accelerate online learning technology by providing funding, focused instruction, and support for these learning models, which can be an effective educational supplement to traditional classroom experiences. Reverting back to a model that relies solely on physical presence in the classroom risks students missing out on an array of digital opportunities that are needed to succeed in an increasingly digital economy.”

In its new report, CED offers five proposals that business leaders and policymakers should implement to harness remote learning technology more effectively in the future. They include:

- **Narrow the digital divide:** Remote education cannot succeed without universal student access to high-speed internet and learning devices throughout the school year and during periods of remedial instruction outside of the regular academic calendar, and expanded internet access needs to be a federal priority. Until broadband is expanded nationally, states and school districts can replicate and scale interim strategies—such as computer device and Wi-Fi hotspot lending programs—to ensure connectivity across all communities. Business leaders can also step up to support creative, short-term solutions to bridge the pronounced digital divide, such as extending the reach of Wi-Fi and providing funding to support the necessary purchase of additional devices. These innovative partnerships could spell the difference between success and failure for vulnerable students.
- **Address learning loss.** Policymakers and educators should reengage students and accelerate learning through remedial education opportunities, such as adding additional instruction days to



the academic calendar. Trained tutors or teaching assistants to provide individualized instruction to struggling students will be critical, as well as summer school programs this year and beyond.

- **Improve student and teacher wellbeing.** The pandemic took a serious toll on the mental, physical, and emotional health of teachers and students alike. To reverse these adverse effects and avoid burnout, teachers should be provided counseling resources and time to prepare for hybrid or remote instruction. Additional counselors should also be on hand to provide social and emotional support as students reintegrate into a physical learning environment.
- **Improve online learning models and methodologies.** While many students, teachers, and parents struggled with remote learning, promising practices to deliver more effective blended learning settings have emerged. Effective digital curricula and assessment tools for remote and asynchronous learning on personal devices pose unique opportunities to tailor education to the individual student. Technology in and out of the classroom is imperative to building a digitally literate generation that can fill the jobs of the future. Building an advanced digital infrastructure that can support these efforts will require innovative partnerships among businesses, community organizations, K-12 schools, and colleges and universities.
- **Identify best practices.** To effectively drive education reform, as well as to prepare for the next crisis, policymakers should establish a National Task Force to sponsor research and comprehensively assess the lessons learned and best practices from remote learning undertaken during COVID-19. The team should also identify and codify the best methods for testing the effectiveness of online learning.

The new Solutions Brief, *Reimagining K-12: Emerging from Disruption with Insights for Reform*, can be accessed [here](#).

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#### **About CED**

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