The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee's Review of Remote Learning's Impact on South Carolina's Students, Part 1

SC EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Reporting facts. Measuring change. Promoting progress.

Key Questions: Review of Remote Learning

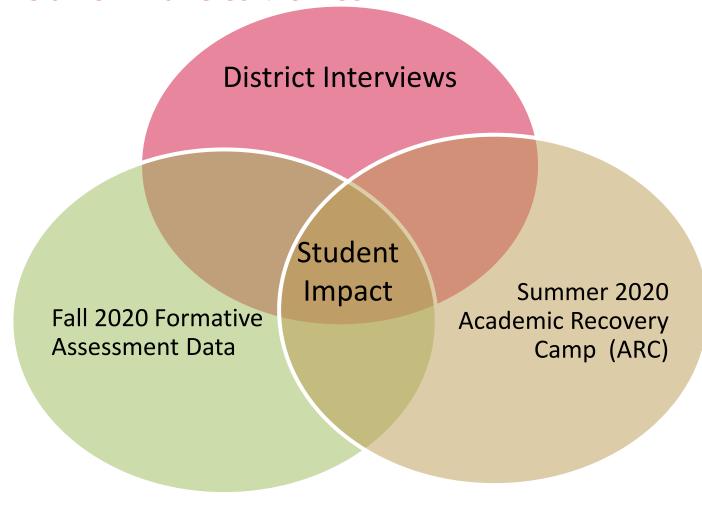**Obstacles and Innovations**

Impact to School Finance

Plans to Mitigate Lost Instructional Time

Best Practices

Review of Remote Learning's Impact on South Carolina Students

Districts Interviewed

- 15 Districts (75+ individuals)
    - Superintendents
    - District Staff
    - School Administration
    - Teachers
- Large / Small districts
- Rural / Suburban
- Across Geographic Regions
- Blend of Instructional Approach during Emergency Remote Learning (eLearning, Blended, Packets)

- July 2020 – November 2020
- Guaranteed Anonymity

Obstacles

1. Unequal distribution of internet access and 1:1 devices.

2. Lack of a digital ecosystem to support long-term virtual instruction.

3. Lack of clearly defined instructional strategies for forward progress in remote learning.

4. Challenge to navigate relationships in a virtual environment.

Impact on Student Learning

1. Lack of instruction in new material during spring 2020 emergency remote learning will have negative impact on student achievement.

2. Vulnerable student populations expected to be more negatively impacted.

3. No clearly articulated district plan to mitigate instructional loss.

Impact to School Finance

1. Some COVID expenses will be recurring.

2. With additional CARES funding, minimal impact on district general fund during spring 2020.

Emerging Issues

1. Many vulnerable students are opting for virtual instruction while more resourced students are opting for brick-and-mortar schooling.

2. Concerns with integrity of results from assessments delivered remotely.

3. Recognition that end-of-year state assessments should be given in spring 2021.

1. Accelerated student access to technology across South Carolina.

2. Investment in instructional technology resources by districts and SCDE.

3. Increased learning opportunities for students, flattening the classroom and providing a global perspective.

4. District virtual school offerings will remain, but state level guidance needed.

Best Practices

1. Focused professional development for staff to support students and families during remote learning.

2. Prioritized face-to-face instruction for students, particularly for elementary and vulnerable student populations, as soon as safely possible.

3. Provided access to high quality virtual curriculum, resources, and courses.

Summer 2020 Academic Recovery Camps

<u>Act 142</u> included authorization of reimbursable funding for districts to hold Academic Recovery Camps (ARC). Section 5 of Act 142 requires districts to administer student assessments in reading and mathematics to students who participate in Academic Recovery Camps and directs the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to evaluate the camp's impact on student learning:

B) The Department of Education is authorized to reimburse public school districts up to $210,700,000 for the cost of providing unbudgeted instructional support beyond the number of days and hours required by state law. The additional support is to focus on face-to-face instruction for (1) any at-risk students in kindergarten through third grade residing in the school district for Academic Recovery Camps in reading and mathematics during the summer and (2) students in 4K through eighth grade for five additional instructional days at the start of the school year.

(C) School districts utilizing Academic Recovery Camps will assess students at the beginning and end of the camp. The results of the pre- and post-assessments must be submitted to the Department of Education which, in turn, must provide the information to the Education Oversight Committee for evaluation of the impact the recovery camps had on student learning and the impact of the interventions on student learning.

Summer 2020 ARC Key Findings

1. Students began ARCs with significant learning deficits in reading and mathematics.

2. Students made statistically significant gains in both reading and math during ARCs.

3. Despite ARCs gains, students remained significantly behind expectations for grade level proficiency in reading and math after ARC.

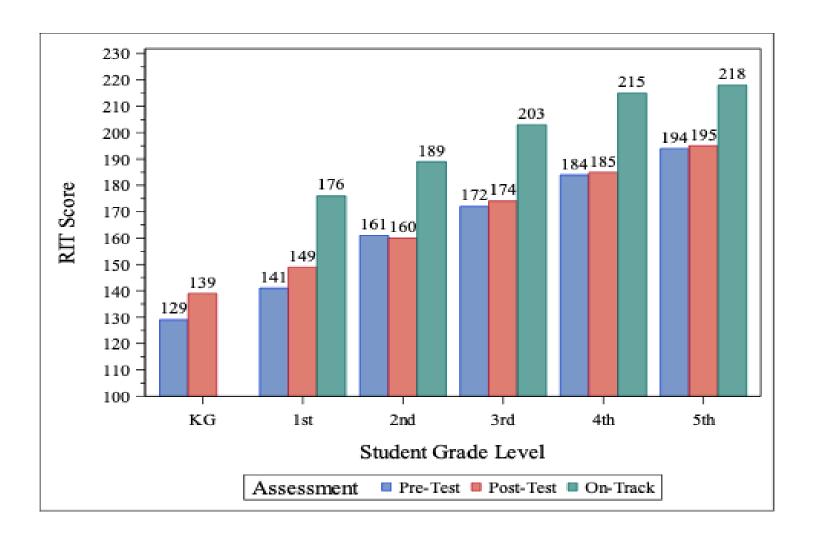4. There was overall low student enrollment in ARCs despite many students identified as in need of intervention.

Figure B3. Median ARC RIT Scores and On-Track RIT Scores for NWEA MAP Mathematics

Summer 2020 Academic Recovery Camps

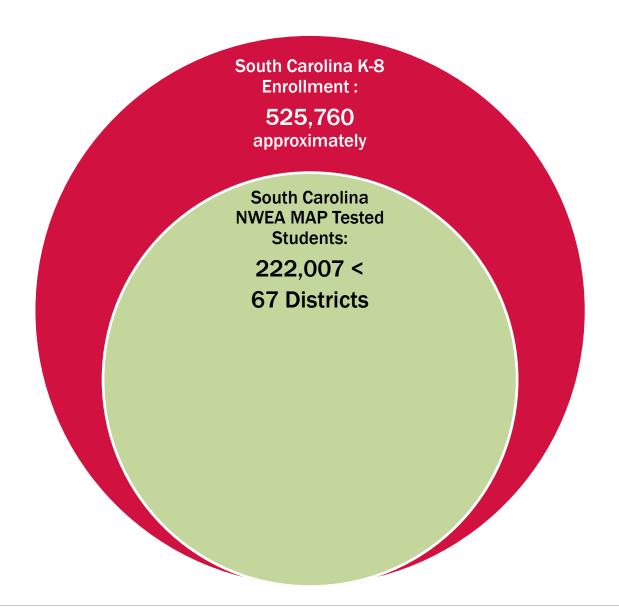| SUMMER ARC FINANCIALS AND ENROLLMENT	
EXPECTED ARC ENROLLMENT	21,000 STUDENTS IN MAY 9,406 STUDENTS IN JULY
ARC FUNDING ALLOCATED	50.7 MILLION
ACTUAL ARC ENROLLMENT	3,740 STUDENTS
ARC FUNDING EXPENDED	2.34 MILLION
DISTRICTS WITH SUMMER ARC	37

Academic Recovery Camp RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide reimbursement funding to districts only for students with a pre- and post- ARC assessment.

2. Consider lengthening the instructional day minimums during ARC.

3. Create a process to allow districts to develop and create innovative programs and/or community partnerships to provide after-school, summer, or Saturday ARCs in mathematics and reading/writing. Pre- and post-assessments should be required to measure and produce results in student performance.

Section 5 of Act 142 requires districts to administer student assessments in reading and mathematics and directs the SC Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to evaluate the pandemic's impact on student learning:

> (D)   School districts are required to utilize the additional instructional days and to assess each student enrolled in 4K through eighth grade in reading and mathematics. The assessment shall utilize a pre- and post-formative assessment from the state-approved list.

> (E)   All students will be assessed during the first two weeks of school to identify students needing additional support and the support to be provided. All students will be assessed again prior to the end of the 2020 Calendar Year to measure the impact of the intervention provided. The results of the pre- and post-assessments must be submitted to the Department of Education which, in turn, must provide the information to the Education Oversight Committee for evaluation of the pandemic's impact on student learning and the impact of the interventions on student learning.
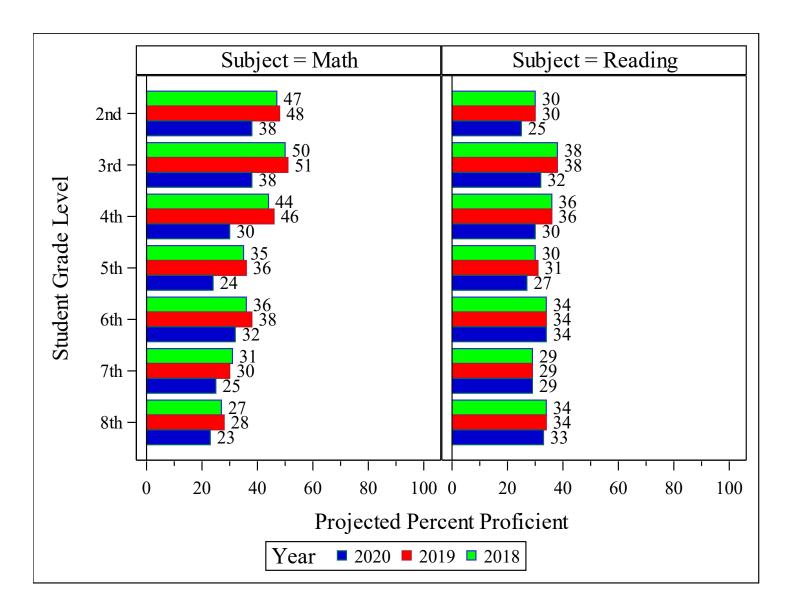
South Carolina K-8
Enrollment :

525,760
approximately

South Carolina
NWEA MAP Tested
Students:

222,007 <

67 Districts

Fall 2020 Formative Data Analysis

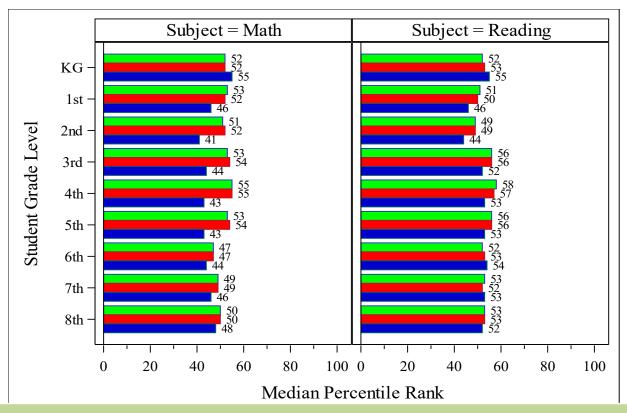*Figure C5.* Percentage of South Carolina Students Projected to be Proficient based on Fall Testing – 2018, 2019, and 2020
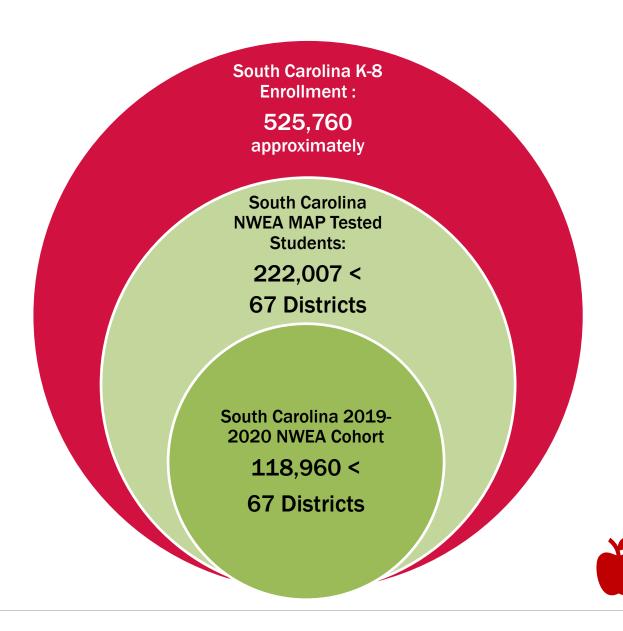
Fall 2020 Formative Data Analysis

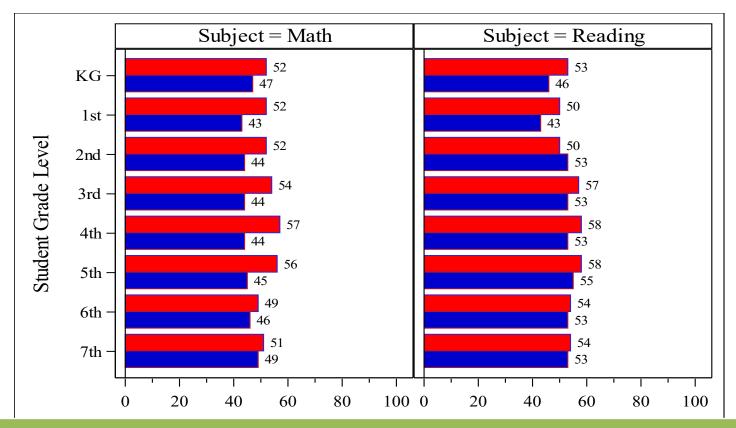## KEY FINDINGS: NWEA South Carolina Projected Proficiency

1. On average, 7 out of 10 South Carolina students in grades 2 through 8 are projected <u>not</u> to meet grade level proficiency standards in mathematics and English Language Arts in spring 2021.

2. In comparing fall 2019 to fall 2020 in mathematics, the COVID slide was most dramatic, with between 10% and 16% fewer South Carolina students expected to meet grade level proficiency in grades 2 through 5. Comparing this same period in grades 6 through 8, approximately 5% less students are projected to be proficient on grade level standards in mathematics: only 1 out of 4 South Carolina students is projected to be proficient in mathematics in grades 7 and 8.

3. In comparing fall 2019 to fall 2020 reading, South Carolina students demonstrated fewer declines in reading, with between 4% and 6% fewer students expected to meet grade level proficiency in grades 2 through 5 in spring 2021. In grades 6 and 7 there was no change in projected proficiency and only a 1% decrease in grade 8. However, despite scoring nearly the same as students last year, nearly 7 out of 10 South Carolina students are projected <u>not</u> to be proficient in reading.

Fall 2020 Formative Data Analysis
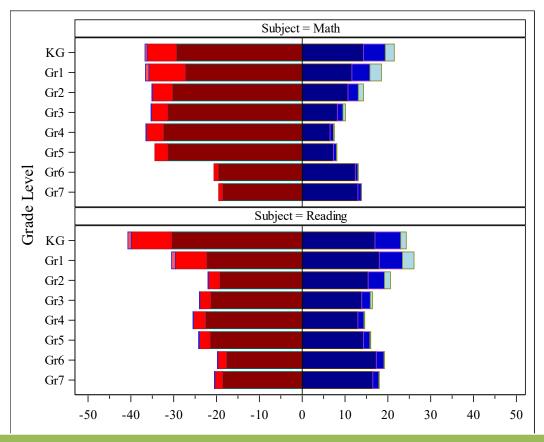

KEY FINDINGS: NWEA South Carolina Percentile Rank

4. South Carolina students declined in median percentile rank in all grades other than Kindergarten in mathematics compared to South Carolina students in the same grade in fall 2019. The largest percentile declines were in mathematics.

5. South Carolina students declined in median percentile rank in grades 1 through 5 for reading compared to South Carolina students in the same grade in Fall 2019.

Figure C6. Median South Carolina Percentile Ranks based on Fall Testing – 2018, 2019, and 2020

Fall 2020 Formative Data Analysis

South Carolina K-8 Enrollment :

525,760 approximately

South Carolina NWEA MAP Tested Students:

222,007 <

67 Districts

South Carolina 2019-2020 NWEA Cohort

118,960 <

67 Districts
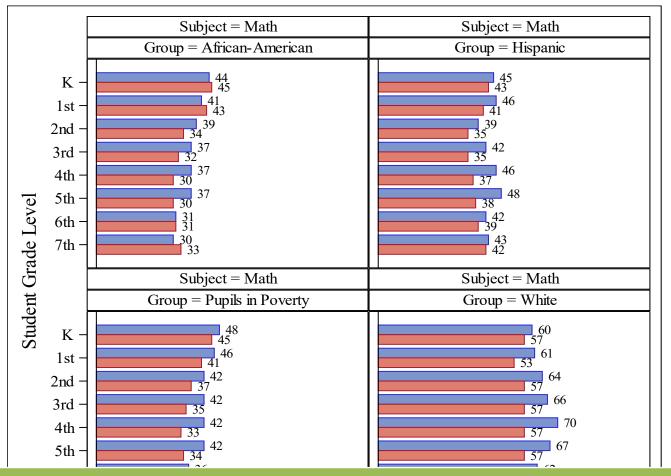
Fall 2020 Formative Data Analysis

KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort Median Percentile

6. The 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort declined in median percentile in all grades in mathematics

7. The 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort declined in median percentiles for reading in all grades other than the grade 2 cohort, but the largest percentile declines were in mathematics.

Figure C7. Median South Carolina Percentile Ranks in 2019 and 2020 for the 2019-2020 Cohort
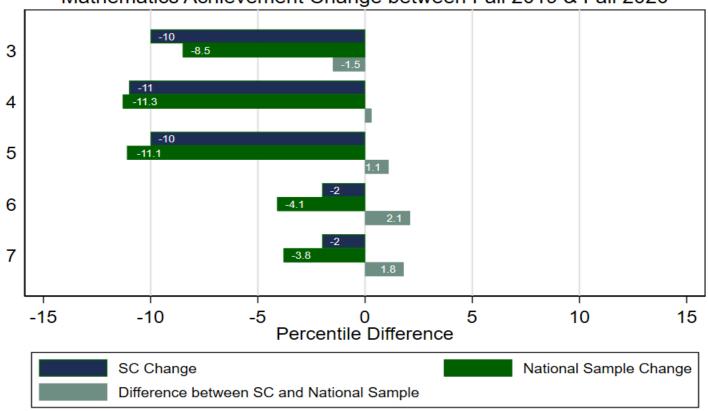
KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort

8. **Substantially larger percentages of South Carolina students decreased in their achievement quartile standing from 2019 to 2020, both for reading and for mathematics, though more so for mathematics.**

Figure C9. Analysis of Quartile Changes for South Carolina Students from Fall 2019 to Fall 2020

KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort

9. Significant achievement gaps among historically underachieving students and their higher achieving peers continue to exist but do not appear to have widened during emergency remote learning. However, vulnerable student populations may be missing from the sample.
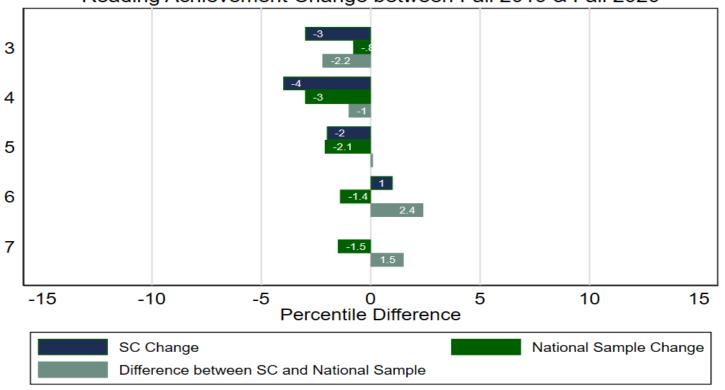
Figure C10. Median Math Percentile Rank by Student Subgroup For South Carolina 2019-2020 Cohort

Comparions of Change in Math Scores By Grade Over Time

Mathematics Achievement Change between Fall 2019 & Fall 2020
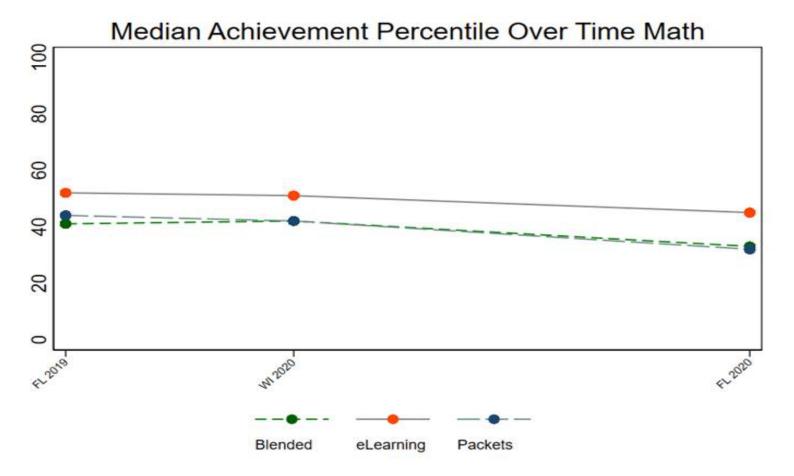
KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort

10. South Carolina students decreased in median percentile rank less in mathematics than their national peers in grades 4 through 7 during emergency remote learning.

Figure C12. Comparison of Math COVID Slide in South Carolina to National Sample

Comparions of Change in Read Scores By Grade Over Time
Reading Achievement Change between Fall 2019 & Fall 2020

Legend:
- SC Change
- National Sample Change
- Difference between SC and National Sample

KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort

11. South Carolina students decreased in median percentile rank more in reading than their national peers in grades 3 and 4 but decreased less than their national peers in grades 5 through 7 during emergency remote learning.

Figure C13. Comparison of Reading COVID SLIDE in South Carolina to National Sample

Median Achievement Percentile Over Time Math

Legend:
- Blended (green dashed line)
- eLearning (orange/red line)
- Packets (blue line)

X-axis: FL 2019, WI 2020, FL 2020
Y-axis: 0 to 100

KEY FINDINGS: 2019-2020 South Carolina Cohort

12. For South Carolina students in a sample of __14__ districts, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the COVID slide of students with respect to instructional method (eLearning, blended learning, and instructional packets) during emergency remote learning.

Figure C14. Comparison of Median Achievement Percentile by Instructional Approach of South Carolina Sample Districts

RECOMMENDATIONS

Impact on Student Learning

1. Strategically design and implement curriculum focused on student learning gaps and priority standards.
2. Better coordinate efforts to accurately track student attendance, completion of assignments, and mastery of grade level standards.
3. Require coordinated efforts and deploy strategies to establish communication with students who are not attending school or disengaging from instruction.
4. Continue regular assessment of all students, allowing for individual and system academic performance to be monitored, guiding instruction and policy decisions.
5. Conduct further research to determine the most effective instructional delivery method for remote learning.

Obstacles

1. Continue to address disparities in learning opportunities by ensuring that supports, such as access to the internet and a device, are in place for students.
2. Provide access to a robust virtual curriculum for students in remote learning.

Impact on School Finance

1. Continue to review and monitor district expenses related to COVID.
2. Continue to review and monitor student enrollment.

Plans to Mitigate Loss

1. Provide tutoring services and extra interventions for students identified at-risk.
2. Create a process to allow districts to develop and create innovative programs and/or community partnerships to provide after-school, summer, or Saturday ARCs in mathematics and reading.

Best Practices

1. Provide meaningful and responsive professional development to staff to address needs in remote learning.
2. Prioritize the return to face-to-face classrooms as soon as safely possible.

Executive Summary

KEY FINDINGS

Impact on Student Learning

1. South Carolina students declined in projected proficiency and in median percentile rank in both mathematics and reading. The decline was most dramatic in elementary and mathematics.
2. Significant achievement gaps among historically underachieving students and their higher achieving peers continue to exist but do not appear to have widened during emergency remote learning. However, vulnerable student populations may be missing from the sample.
3. For South Carolina students in a sample of 14 districts, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the COVID slide of student with respect to instructional method (eLearning, blended learning, and instructional packets) during emergency remote learning.

Obstacles

1. Unequal distribution of internet access and 1:1 devices.
2. Lack of a digital ecosystem to support long-term virtual instruction.
3. Lack of clearly defined instructional strategies for forward progress in remote learning.

Impact on School Finance

1. Some COVID expenses will be recurring.
2. With additional CARES funding, minimal impact on district general fund during spring 2020.

Plans to Mitigate Loss

1. Students made gains in both reading and mathematics in Academic Recovery Camps, but low overall student enrollment despite many students identified as in need of intervention.
2. No clearly articulated district plans to mitigate loss shared during interviews.

Best Practices

1. Focused professional development for staff to support students and families during remote learning.
2. Prioritized face-to-face instruction for students as soon as safely possible.
3. Provided access to high quality virtual curriculum, resources, and courses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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Questions?