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Schools, COVID-19, and instructional plans

The context

- There are ~13,500 public school districts in the United States
- District size extremely variable; nearly half have fewer than 1,000 students
- Confused messages from the CDC and federal health agencies about schools
- Complete lack of U.S. Department of Education guidance

What did EdWeek do?

- Interactive map, updated daily, with sample of **districts'** decisions to close schools at pandemic's start. (Completed in May)
- Interactive map, updated daily, of **state'**s mandates or guidelines on reopening schools. (Ongoing)
- Reporting & **news coverage.** (Ongoing)
- Analyzed sample of **districts' reopening plans.** Sample included 900 school districts' plans, including the 100 largest, plus at least 5 from every state. (Completed in September)
- Periodic, nationally representative **surveys** of educators. (Ongoing)

What health data are districts using?

- Many permutations of this data. (7-day new-case rolling averages, testing issues, etc.)
- Districts frequently using just first two indicators, or sometimes only one (N.Y.C.)
- Little to no comparability
- Epi disagreements; lack of clarity on “upper end” measures
- District v. county problems

CDC indicators and thresholds for risk of introduction and transmission of COVID-19 in schools

INDICATORS	Lowest risk of transmission in schools	Lower risk of transmission in schools	Moderate risk of transmission in schools	Higher risk of transmission in schools	Highest risk of transmission in schools
CORE INDICATORS					
Number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days*	<5	5 to <20	20 to <50	50 to □ 200	>200
Percentage of RT-PCR tests that are positive during the last 14 days**	<3%	3% to <5%	5% to <8%	8% to □ 10%	>10%
<p>Ability of the school to implement 5 key mitigation strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Consistent and correct use of masks <input type="checkbox"/> Social distancing to the largest extent possible <input type="checkbox"/> Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning and disinfection <input type="checkbox"/> Contact tracing in collaboration with local health department <p>Schools should adopt the additional mitigation measures outlined below to the extent possible, practical and feasible.</p>	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented all 5 strategies correctly but inconsistently	Implemented 3-4 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented 1-2 strategies correctly and consistently	Implemented no strategies
SECONDARY INDICATORS					
Percent change in new cases per 100,000 population during the last 7 days compared with the previous 7 days (negative values indicate improving trends)	<-10%	-10% to <-5%	-5% to <0%	0% to □ 10%	>10%
Percentage of hospital inpatient beds in the community that are occupied***	<80%	<80%	80 to 90%	>90%	>90%

What **NON-HEALTH** factors influenced reopening decisions?

Logistics. Buses, hybrid plans, liability insurance, cleaning supplies, one-to-one devices ... etc.

Parents. Diversity of opinion, especially when broken out demographically

Politics. Some research evidence links reopening to gov's political party; some states pressured districts to stay open (FL, TX)

Staffing. Substitutes; staff quarantining affecting ability to keep doors open

Labor. Teaching is heavily unionized profession

The implications

National scope. It is VERY hard to draw conclusions absent a nationally representative sample of districts

Impacts/learning loss.

Remote learning. How do we improve remote learning for the students who have it?

Journalism. What are our ethical responsibility as journalists? How do we improve our coverage?

**Questions? Thoughts?
Cheers? Jeers?**

Write me:

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See instructs for overlay on slide 7

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Title Page (Alternate)

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Title Variation 3

Century Gothic



Topic Page

Overlay bw photo with high contrast.

Change Transparency to fade back by right clicking on image, format picture, and then select the image icon to adjust transparency. (Ask art for help if you need to)

Tip 2: Send photos to back to create the right layering. Image size: 1920x1080, 72dpi. Also, the art dept can help you with these higher touch pages.