Contextualizing the Response to COVID-19 in St. Louis Schools

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What Challenges Accompanied the Shift to Remote Learning?
Remote Learning Challenges for Science Education in St. Louis

Source: ISP survey of K-8 teachers, May 2020 (n = 245)

Compared to last April & May, this year I spent or expected my students to spend:

- 83% Less time on science
- 10% The same amount of time on science
- 7% More time on science
## Distance Learning Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Teachers Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many of my students do not have parents/caregivers able to help them</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>complete activities or assignments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My students and I are stressed by the current situation beyond the bounds</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of school</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There are too many resources and it is overwhelming</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for children in my home or other family/household commitments</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of clear direction from leadership on learning goals or priorities</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ISP survey of K-8 teachers, May 2020 (n = 245)
Remote Learning Challenges for Science Education in St. Louis

“Many students do not have proper access to technology to complete assignments.”

“The amount of online resources is very limited.”

“The mySci curriculum is mostly hands-on which is impossible to teach online.”

Source: ISP survey of K-8 teachers, May 2020 (n = 245)
Who provides guidance & resources to address these challenges?
K-12 Education Policy in the United States

Federal Dept. of Ed.  Limited role, but crucial to funding schools with many low-income students

State Depts. of Ed.  Funding, standards, & accountability

Local School Districts  Day-to-day operations

Outside Organizations  Anything from nice “extras” to essential funding, services & curriculum

- Require annual summative testing:
  - Math & ELA: every year grades 3-8
  - Science: twice between grades 3 & 8
- Provide Title I funds to states & districts

- Establish learning standards
- Conduct summative testing
- Fund schools (local property taxes)
- Evaluate, rate, & accredit schools
- License & certify teachers

- Operate K-12 public schools
- Hire & manage teachers and school leaders
- Provide curricula, materials, instructional support, and professional development

- E.g., foundations, nonprofits, universities, businesses, and professional organizations
- Partner with schools, districts, states, and nationally to provide a variety of services & material support
13,500 school districts are largely left to make their own decisions about how to address COVID-19.

Federal Response to COVID

March – May 2020

School closures
- State-by-state or district-by-district decision

Some federal support
- Annual testing requirement waived for 2020 (but not 2021)
- Missouri receives $208.4 million in CARES Act for assistance with operations & transition to remote learning

3% of Missouri’s 2020 education budget
“If schools aren't going to reopen... they shouldn't get the funds.”

– Betsy DeVos, US Secretary of Education

“These kids have got to get back to school... And if they do get COVID-19, which they will... They’re going to go home and they’re going to get over it.”

– Mike Parson, Missouri Governor

Public pressure to reopen schools

Fall Reopening Plans

June – August 2020
Fall Reopening Plans

June – August 2020

Health and safety concerns

Source:
https://www.krcu.org/post/how-go-back-teachers-wrestle-thought-returning-school#stream/0
Fall Reopening Plans
June – August 2020

Little public health guidance on school reopening

- Federal gov, Missouri offer “no clear public health criteria to guide reopening decisions”
- Missouri releases suggestions/FAQs for cleaning, social distancing, PPE, screening protocols, and personal hygiene
- Contract tracing required in Missouri schools

Sources:
https://www.crpe.org/thelens/urgent-action-states-fed-needed-clarify-school-reopening-decisions,
https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/COVID-MO-K12-Reopening-Guidance.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0UGF4UhkR1e9gg-LgTeNBcHUWNwWxzz7dkRAMx5kaPeVcKObtlg18xX2o
Fall Reopening Plans

June – August 2020

Little guidance on remote learning

“I have spent this whole summer working on adapting the curriculum for my students preparing for the fall. No one was ready for what happened [in the spring]... The teachers were scrambling, the students were in a fog and I don't know how else to describe it other than chaos. I don't want that feeling again and have to work that much harder to prepare for them for what comes next.”

– 8th grade teacher
Missouri School Reopening Status By District

September 08, 2020

Number of LEAs
- Onsite: 179
- Onsite w/ Distanced Option: 257
- Blend Onsite/Distanced: 54
- Distanced: 66
- Closed: 0

2019-2020 K-12 Enrollment
- Onsite: 97,331
- Onsite w/ Distanced Option: 330,268
- Blend Onsite/Distanced: 220,313
- Distanced: 229,764
- Closed: 0

Pattern of Instruction Definitions
Missouri School Reopening Status By District

September 23, 2020

Day of Instruction

Number of LEAs
- Onsite: 176
- Onsite w/ Distanced Option: 254
- Blend Onsite/Distanced: 64
- Distanced: 63
- Closed: 0

2019-2020 K-12 Enrollment
- Onsite: 90,957
- Onsite w/ Distanced Option: 324,414
- Blend Onsite/Distanced: 243,433
- Distanced: 219,823
- Closed: 0

Pattern of Instruction Definitions