National Center for Education Statistics

School Pulse Panel

Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology Conference
U.S. Department of Education
October 26, 2022

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Overview

- Purpose and Design
- Select Findings
- Dissemination
- Challenges
- Future Plans

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Purpose and Design of the School Pulse Panel

Purpose and Design of the School Pulse Panel (SPP)

- COVID-19 learning disruptions led to directives in Executive Order 14000 and the American Rescue Plan Act to conduct studies on those disruptions

- A key response was to start a monthly pulse study of public schools

- Coordinated with federal agencies and K-12 public schools and systems
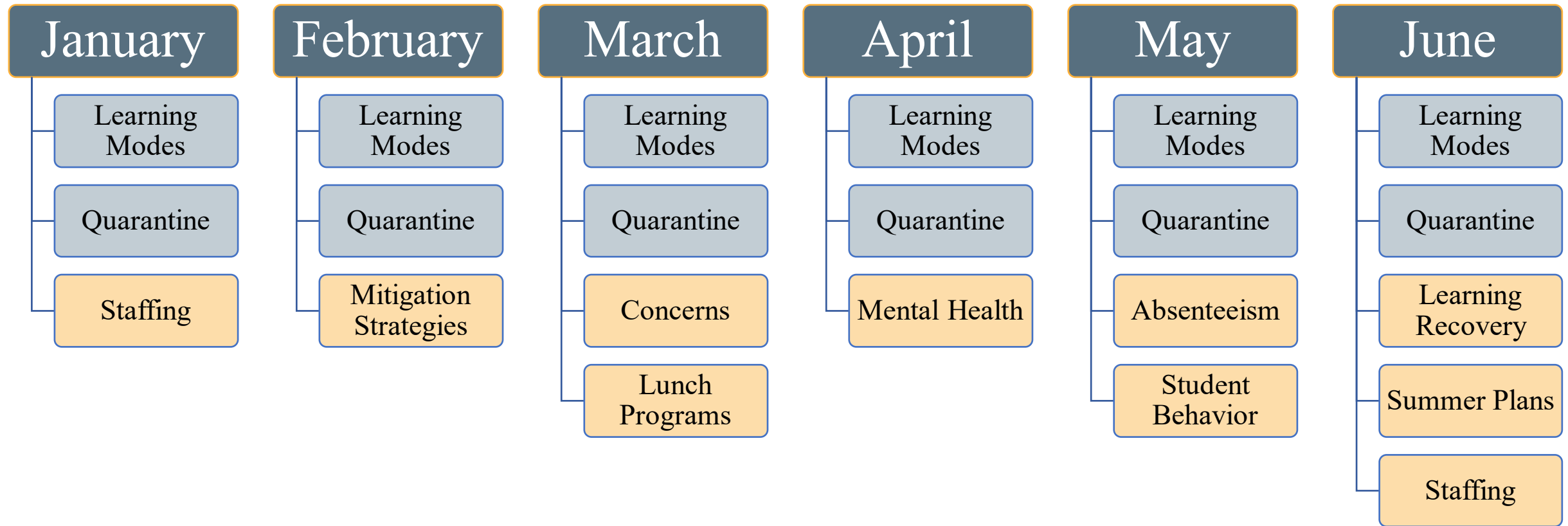
Original Study Design – June 2021

- 1,200 public elementary, middle/combined, and secondary/high schools
  - Two additional samples were drawn as reserve samples
    1) Reserve sample #1: sample to be used due to special district rejections (N = 1,200)
    2) Reserve sample #2: sample to be used due to within-district school rejection (N = 1,200)
- Intend for a committed panel of 1,000 schools
- 4–5-hour monthly survey sent electronically to principals or designated points of contact at the school
- Survey open for two weeks each month
- $5,000 reimbursement for commitment to participating for 12 months – loaded debit cards to be sent on a quarterly basis reflecting months of response
- Recruitment began in July 2021

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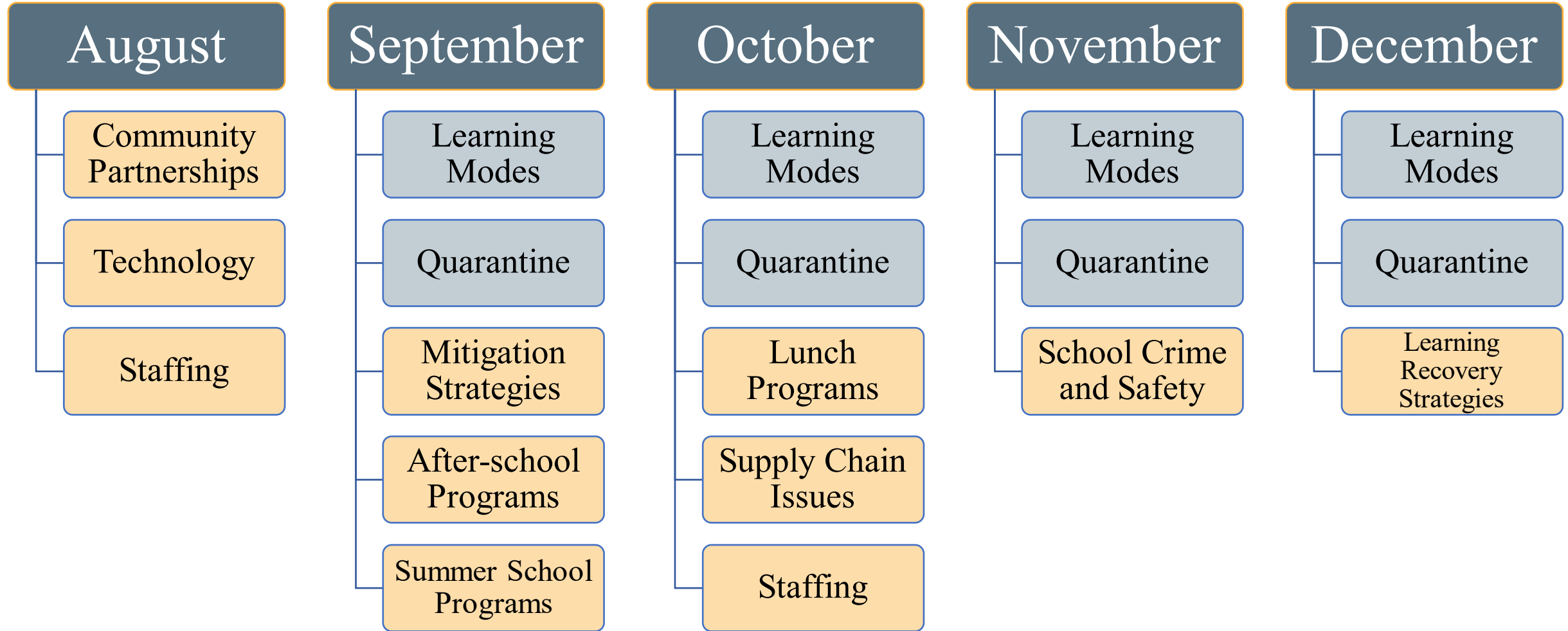Education Sciences

Redesigned Study Design – January 2022

- 2,400 public elementary, middle/combined, and secondary/high schools (Initial + 1st Reserve Sample)

- Intend for a committed panel of 1,000 schools

- Screener for updated point of contact information – Nov & Dec

- 30-minute monthly survey sent electronically to principals or designated points of contact at the school

- Survey open for two weeks each month

- $400 reimbursement for each month a completed survey is submitted – debits cards to be sent after each month

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Monthly Content: School Year 2021-22

January
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Staffing

February
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Mitigation Strategies

March
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Concerns
- Lunch Programs

April
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Mental Health

May
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Absenteeism
- Student Behavior

June
- Learning Modes
- Quarantine
- Learning Recovery
- Summer Plans
- Staffing

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Monthly Content: School Year 2022-23

August	September	October	November	December
Community Partnerships	Learning Modes	Learning Modes	Learning Modes	Learning Modes
Technology	Quarantine	Quarantine	Quarantine	Quarantine
Staffing	Mitigation Strategies	Lunch Programs	School Crime and Safety	Learning Recovery Strategies
	After-school Programs	Supply Chain Issues		
	Summer School Programs	Staffing		

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Select Findings

Learning Mode Offerings in Public Schools

Legend: In-person, Remote, Hybrid

End of 2020-21 SY: In-person 62%, Hybrid 44%, Remote 40%

2021 — September: In-person 100%, Remote 34%, Hybrid 4%

2022 — January: In-person 97%, Remote 40%, Hybrid 7%

February: In-person 99%, Remote 34%, Hybrid 10%

March: In-person 99%, Remote 33%, Hybrid 8%

April: In-person 100%, Remote 33%, Hybrid 9%

May: In-person 99%, Remote 33%, Hybrid 9%

June: In-person 98%, Remote 33%, Hybrid 10%

Estimates represent: All public schools

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10

Quarantine Prevalence

Are any students or staff at home and not allowed to attend school in person because they have been potentially exposed to COVID-19, displayed COVID-19 like symptoms, or have tested positive for COVID-19?

Legend:
- January
- February
- March
- April
- May
- June

Students

- 94%
- 74%
- 31%
- 30%
- 47%
- 34%

Average Number of Students in Quarantine in June (change from May)
4 (-4)

Staff

- 32%
- 8%
- 15%
- 35%
- 24%

Average Number of Staff in Quarantine in June (change from May)
2 (0)

Universe: All public schools
Public schools with at least 1 student/staff member quarantining
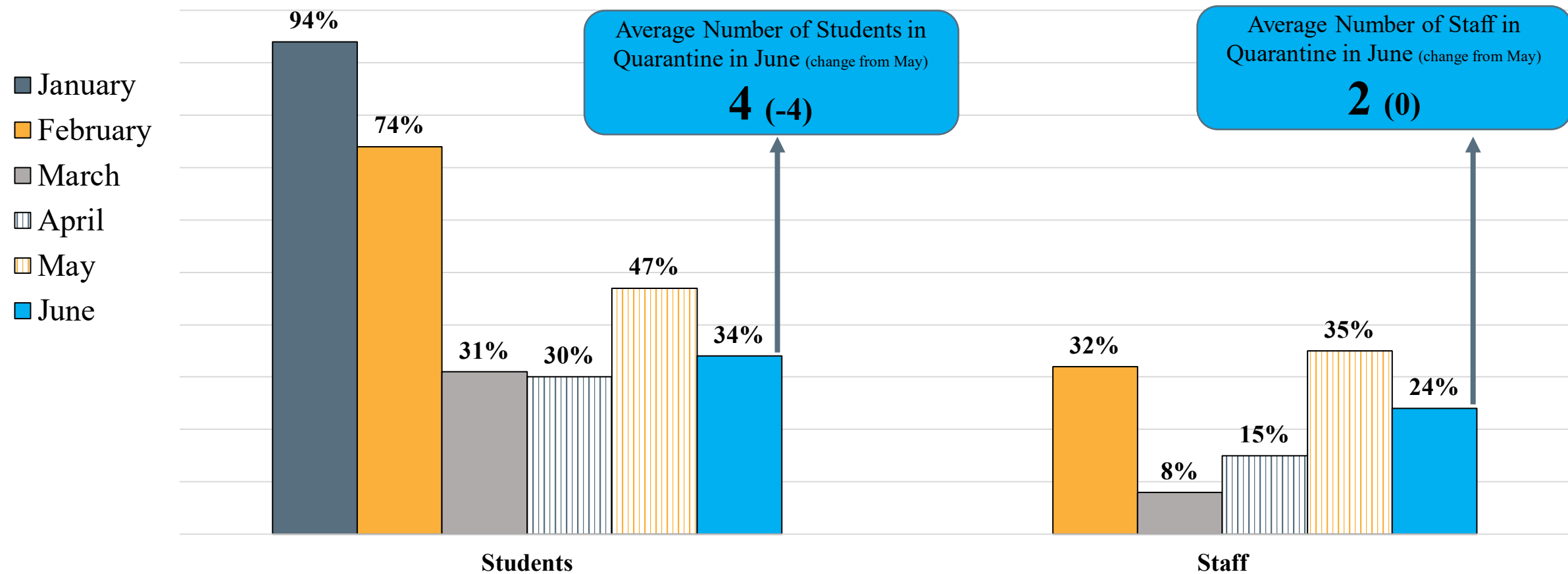
Chronic Absenteeism by Public School Characteristics

Average Percent of Chronically Absent Students in 2021-22
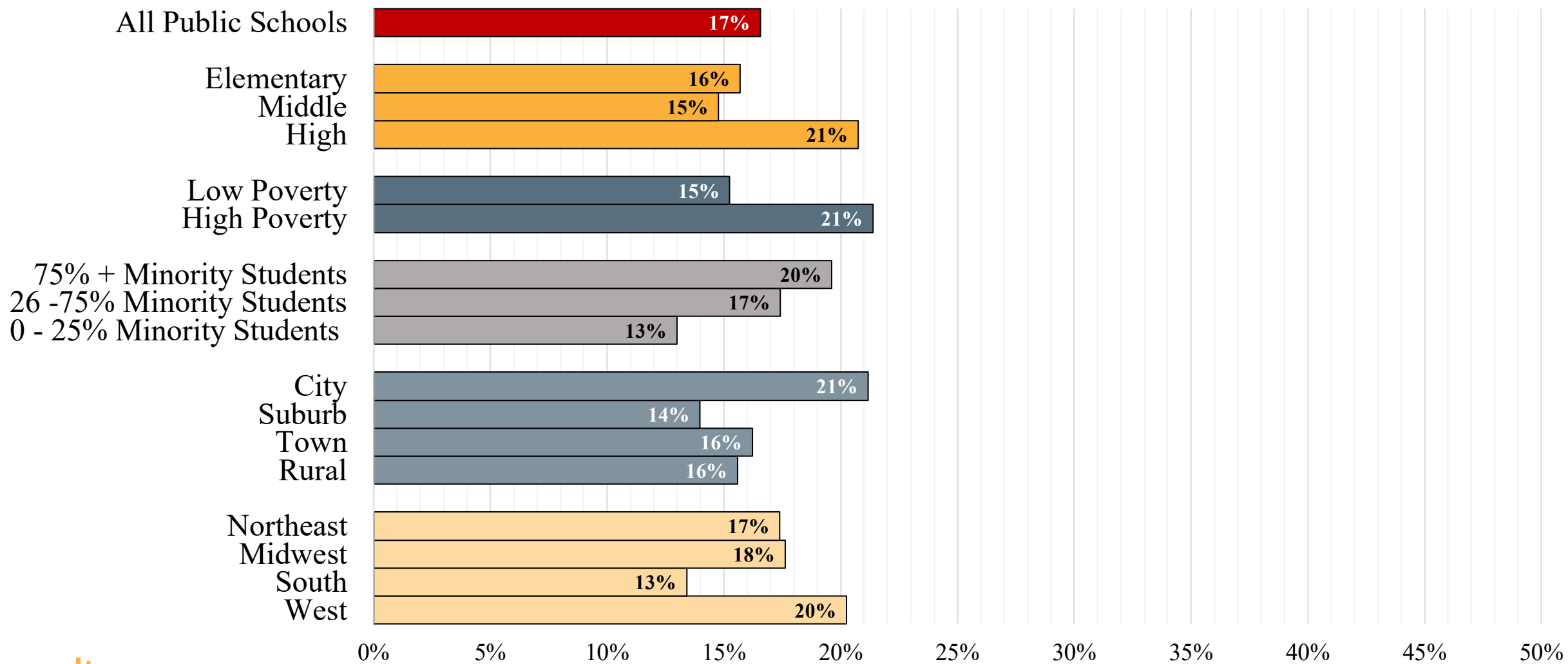
Estimates represent: All public schools (May 2022)

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Teacher and Staff Well-Being

Percentage of Public Schools Reporting the Following Concerns Related to Teaching and Staff as Becoming More Pressing during the 2021-22 School Year
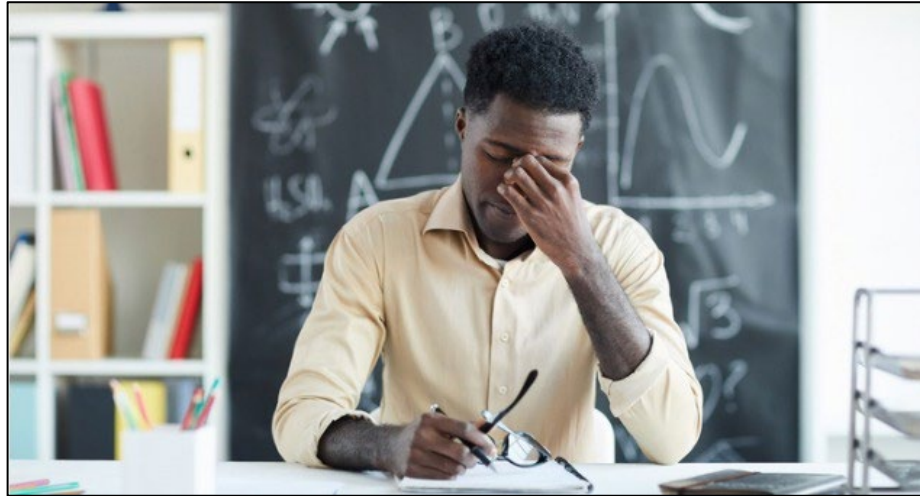
Well-being

Teacher and staff burnout	**88%**
Teacher and staff mental health	**82%**
Teacher and staff physical health	**50%**

Staffing

30%	Teachers and staff retiring early
42%	Teachers and staff leaving the profession
62%	Inability to fill vacant positions

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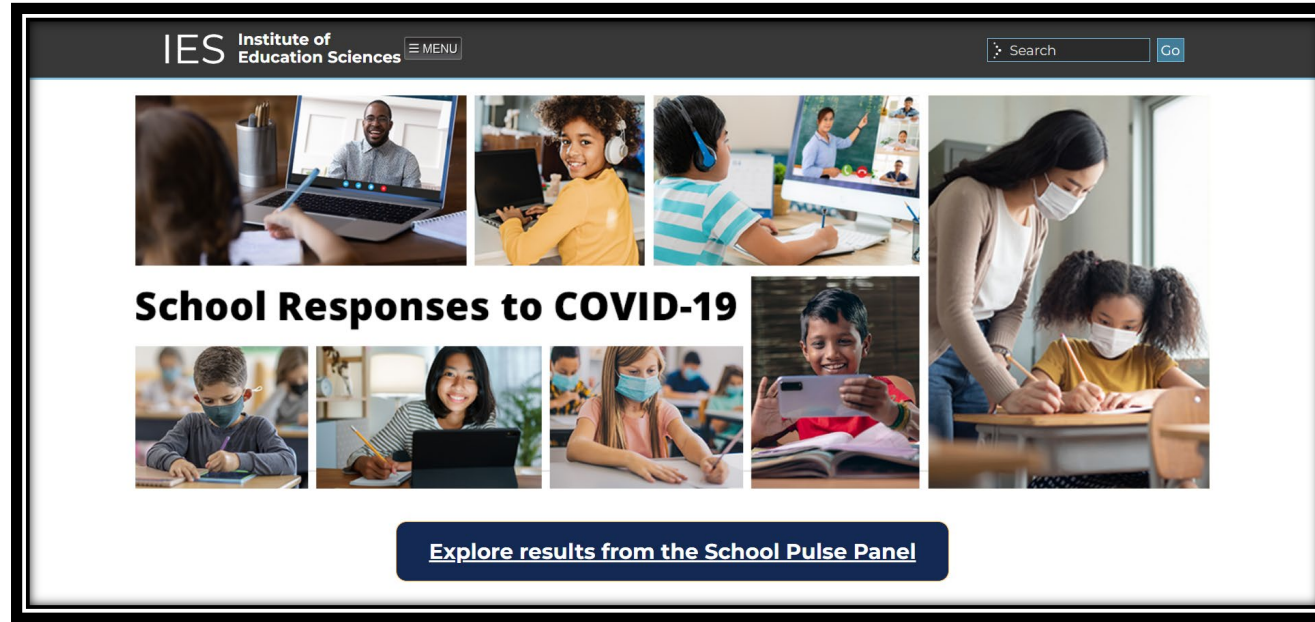
Estimates represent: All public schools (June 2022)

Teacher Vacancies to Fill for 2022-23 School Year

Average Number of Anticipated Teaching Vacancies per School, by School Characteristics

Category	Value
All Public Schools	3.4
Elementary	3.1
Middle	3.7
High	3.7
Low Poverty	3.1
High Poverty	4.2
75%+ Minority Students	4.4
26-75% Minority Students	3.2
0-25% Minority Students	2.6
City	4.1
Suburb	3.8
Town	2.5
Rural	2.5
Northeast	3.1
Midwest	3.0
South	4.2
West	2.7
0-299 students	2.7
300-499 students	3.2
500-999 students	3.6
1,000 or more students	5.3

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Estimates represent: All public schools (June 2022)

Disseminating Results

SPP Data Dissemination

- Estimates are released 5-6 weeks after each monthly collection on an interactive dashboard

- The dashboard is here - https://ies.ed.gov/schoolsurvey/spp/

- An Excel file with estimates and standard errors are released – microdata have not been distributed publicly

- The study and findings are considered experimental

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What does "experimental" mean?

Mental Health and Well-Being

DATA COLLECTION: April 2022
RELEASE DATE: May 31, 2022

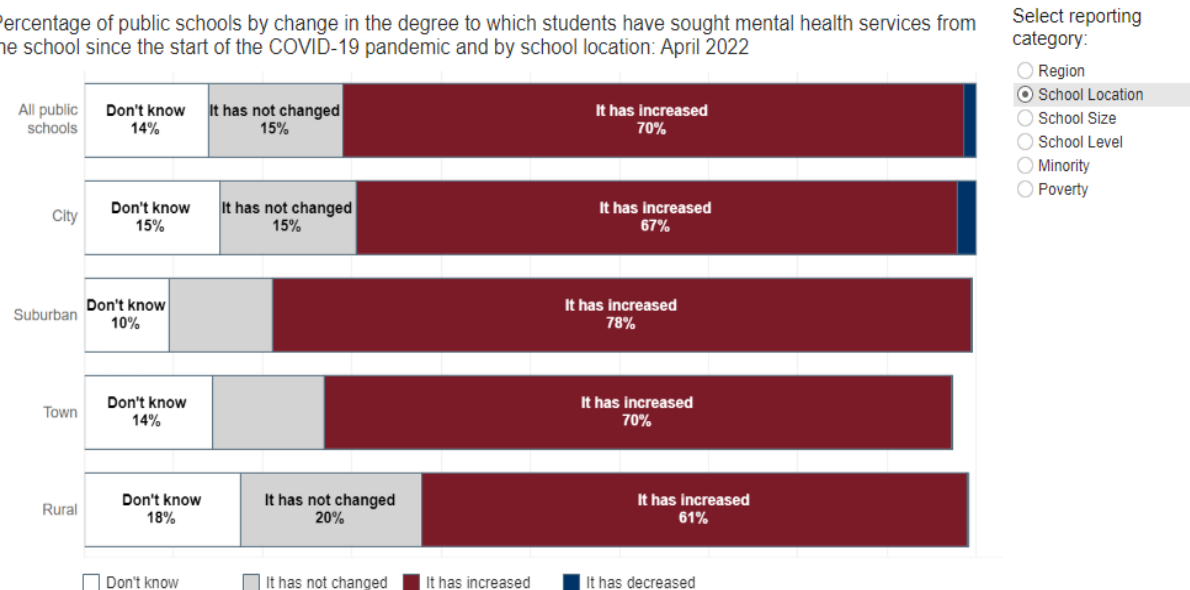Download Mental Health and Well-Being Summary (PDF)

Key Findings

- Seventy percent of public schools reported that the percentage of students who have sought mental health services increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Twenty-nine percent of public schools reported that the percentage of staff who have sought mental health services increased since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Fifty-six percent of public schools reported they moderately or strongly agree that their school is able to effectively provide mental health services to all students in need.

Additional Information:

- Full text of the April survey
- Full set of results

Percentage of public schools by change in the degree to which students have sought mental health services from the school since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and by school location: April 2022

Select reporting category:
- Region
- School Location
- School Size
- School Level
- Minority
- Poverty

All public schools: Don't know 14% | It has not changed 15% | It has increased 70%
City: Don't know 15% | It has not changed 15% | It has increased 67%
Suburban: Don't know 10% | It has increased 78%
Town: Don't know 14% | It has increased 70%
Rural: Don't know 18% | It has not changed 20% | It has increased 61%

Legend: Don't know | It has not changed | It has increased | It has decreased

Experimental data products are innovative statistical products created using new data sources or methodologies. Experimental data may not meet all NCES quality standards but are of sufficient benefit to data users in the absence of other relevant products. NCES clearly identifies experimental data products upon their release. While the results presented in the dashboard have been weighted and adjusted for non-response, these experimental data should be interpreted with caution.

- No imputation and only minor editing
- No microdata files released for disclosure avoidance
- Limited nonresponse bias analysis
- Excel files and dashboard have limited QC

Uses of SPP Findings: **News Outlets**

The Washington Post

Education Higher education Local Education The Answer Sheet Jay Mathews

Schools are struggling to meet rising mental health needs, data shows

By Laura Meckler
May 31, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. EDT

To date, SPP findings have been cited in around 200 news articles in 2022

- *The Washington Post*
- *The Wall Street Journal*
- *The New York Times*
- *NBC News*
- *Fox News*
- *K-12 Dive*
- *Politico*
- *MSN*
- *Education Week*
- *Chalkbeat*
- *PBS*

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Challenges

Challenges

Insufficient lead time for development of SPP 1.0

High monetary incentive did not garner anticipated participation relative to response burden

Rotating monthly content is resource intensive and limits pretesting the ability to reuse quality control procedures from month to month

Clearance challenges

Managing demand for content given high number of stakeholders with varying information needs

Continued experimental labeling

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SPP 2.0

Importance of School Pulse Post-Pandemic

- Many topics in the study are important to understand irrespective of COVID-19
  - Prevalence of students behind grade level
  - Problems due to staff vacancies
  - Approaches to address student mental health
  - School safety needs and policies
  - Availability and use of technology for learning
  - School infrastructure and transportation

SPP 2.0 Redesign

Extensive research on *SPP 1.0*

- Survey of school operations
- Focus group for district respondents
- Thorough nonresponse bias analyses
- Release of data files – disclosure review
- Summary reports

Redesign for *SPP 2.0*

- School and District surveys
- Smaller incentive – likely $100/response
- Longer lead-up time for recruitment
- 2-week data collection window
- Release of data in 5-6 weeks
- Content beyond pandemic

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Institutionalizing Fast-Turnaround Collections: Recommendations

- Carefully and regularly communicate with OMB to ensure proper clearance processes are applied

- Plan ahead with all parts of your agency product review units to get agreements in advance on key issues

    - Likely need new procedures for most quality control operations

- Consider new statistical standards for fast-turnaround studies

    - Balancing timeliness with quality – some standards have to be applied differently or retrospectively

Thank you!
Questions and comments are most welcome:
Rachel.Hansen@ed.gov

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