



Resources are Needed to Combat COVID-19’s Negative Impact on DC Student Achievement

To support DC’s public schools and our education decision makers, Education Forward DC commissioned a special analysis by EmpowerK12 on the potential impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency closures of school buildings. This analysis is intended to help schools prepare for the learning loss many students may experience heading into the 2020-2021 school year.

EmpowerK12 constructed a predictive model based on the best national and local research using representative samples of DC elementary and middle school students. The resulting analysis illustrates the **profound impacts that prolonged closures of the District’s public schools may have on student achievement rates**, measured by annual PARCC scores. While the findings are sobering, they provide us the ability to plan and prepare so that our city can tackle this challenge.

- **Students are much more than one test score and the effects of the loss of social supports, mentorships, friendships, and more are difficult to quantify.** However, learning loss resulting from extended closures of school buildings will be a significant challenge for DC schools and the students that they serve, the analysis shows.
- **If students are out for the remainder of the school year, districtwide math proficiency rates in 2021 could decline by more than 10 percent and English language arts (“ELA”) by more than 16 percent**, compared to the likely performance of DC students on next year’s PARCC assessment.
- **A decline of this magnitude is the equivalent of some 15,600 fewer students reading on grade level and more than 9,800 fewer students performing on grade level in math**, based on current student enrollment figures.

	MATH PARCC 4+	Students on Grade Level	ELA PARCC 4+	Students on Grade Level
<i>Most Recent 2019 PARCC Scores</i>	30.5%	28,854	37.1%	35,098
Predicted 2021 PARCC Scores: No COVID-19 Disruption	34.0%	32,165	44.0%	41,625
<i>Predicted 2021 PARCC Scores: April 27, 2020 Return</i>	29.6%	28,003	34.9%	33,017
<i>Predicted 2021 PARCC Scores: May 26, 2020 Return</i>	26.6%	25,164	31.1%	31,314
<i>Predicted 2021 PARCC Scores: August 30, 2020 Return</i>	23.6%	22,326	27.5%	26,016

* Model assumes that distance learning will have limited effect due to uneven implementation and other challenges.

- **Economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities are likely to experience more learning loss.** The impact of disconnection from vital services such as special education supports, behavior health resources and more are likely to be significant and enduring.
- **Students at homes with more learning resources and technology will fare better; those with fewer will be worse off.** The COVID-19 public health crisis has highlighted the District’s stark digital divide.
 - *To address this, schools and educators are making valiant efforts to get devices, internet access and other technologies to their students. **Schools with the resources and flexibility to respond quickly are likely to see better outcomes for their students.***

- **The DC Education Equity Fund**—a partnership between Education Forward DC, the DC Public Education Fund and the Greater Washington Community Foundation—is bringing philanthropic support **to support students’ basic needs and to help close the District’s digital divide**. The fund already has raised over \$1.7 million. More at www.dcedequity.org.

While there is much we don’t know, it is already clear that schools will need resources to overcome this unprecedented learning loss and the flexibility to adapt and change to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of their students, in the 2020-2021 school year and beyond. Understanding the full scope of the impacts of this period in education in the District will be vital for public officials and will require further research and analysis.

Read the full report at empowerk12.org/covid-19-impact.

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