TO:     AASA Members

FROM: Chris Rogers, Policy Analyst
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RE:     Report of Initial Findings: COVID Survey 2 Impact on Public Schools

DATE:  June 12, 2020

As a result of the continuation of nationwide school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, last May, AASA launched its second national coronavirus school response survey to provide federal, state and local policymakers with immediate data on how districts are adapting and responding to prolonged closings, the resources and information superintendents are relying on or still need, and the initial financial implications associated with the pandemic as well as re-opening schools this summer/fall. As an indication of this study, AASA garnered 501 responses from 48 states over the weeks of May 5 through June 8, 2020. This report represents the second iteration of a series that AASA will release about the impact of COVID-19 on school districts and only speaks to the preliminary effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on district operations. The initial findings are summarized below.

**COVID School Response and Operations**

- When asked whether their district announced when schools will re-open and resume in-person instruction, 94% of respondents replied "No, but we are closed for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year" compared to 5% who responded "Yes, we will re-open based on state and local health officials."(Q4)
- When asked how their district is providing distance learning while schools are closed due to COVID-19, respondents replied "district owned laptop, tablets and hotspots" (92%); "texts and phone calls home to students and families" (92%); "video casts/webinars" (89%); "work packets" (83%); "online test and quizzes" (71%); "interactive whiteboards & online platforms" (65%); "textbooks" (54%); "classroom blogs & wikis" (53%); "instant grading and feedback" (29%); and "podcasts" (23%). (Q9)
- When asked what, if anything, their district is doing to address the issue of equity during the COVID-19 Pandemic, respondents replied "pickup/delivery of free and reduced-price meals" (97%); "devices are provided for students who need them" (92%); "online/phone therapy" (73%); "additional online tutoring/assistance" (67%); "home internet access is provided for all students" (38%); "maintaining access to district/school-provided health services" (34%); "families can use phones/internet to request assistance with emergency housing, utility, etc." (22%); and "other" (10%).(Q5)
- When asked what, if anything, their district is finding hard to provide equitably during this time, respondents answered "special education and related services" (83%); "access to online learning that the district is providing through various platforms" (55%); "access to district health/school-provided health services'" (37%); "devices for all students who need them (28%); "childcare services for emergency personnel" (27%); "pickup/delivery of free and reduced-price meals" (13%); and "other" (12%). (Q6)
- When asked to describe how their district's summer learning will look prior to the 2020-21 school year, respondents replied "hybrid of virtual and in-person learning (depending on circumstances) for students who are at greatest risk of significant learning lost" (29%); "virtual programming for traditional summer school courses we offer" (24%); "other" (16%); "we are not offering summer learning" (14%); and "in-person instruction for students who are behind that is not optional" (1%).(Q13)
- When asked is your district planning to offer remedial learning for the 2019-20 school year, 43% of respondents replied "yes," 43% said "not yet decided," and 13% answered "no."  (Q11)

- When asked which of the following scheduling options has your district considered for the 2020-21 school year, respondents replied "blend/combination of onsite and remote learning" (76%); "traditional schedule" (72%); "alternating days/weeks" (61%); "half days" (38%); "extending the school day to allow for the full day while accommodating social distancing" (22%); and "none of the above" (3%). (Q16)
- When asked to describe their district's decision status as it relates to preparations for the 2020-21 school year (e.g., start times and scheduling), respondents replied "we intend to open on time" (57%); "we are considering a modified schedule" (32%); "we have not yet begun planning" (16%); "we intend to start on time with a modified schedule" (15%); "we anticipate a delayed opening" (13%); "we have started planning and are almost complete" (9%); and "we intend to start the school year early" (6%). (Q15)
- When asked to describe their district's capacity (in terms of physical space) to fully comply with recommended social distancing, respondents replied "very hard to do" (80%); "we do not have enough physical space to accommodate full enrollment and to comply with social distancing" (71%); "my district includes at least one school that enrolls more than 50 people (staff and students included), putting us at odds with CDC guidance" (66%); "my district has some capacity to repurpose space (like gymnasiums, libraries and cafeterias) to be used for classroom purposes" (34%); "my district could transition seamlessly to a social-distancing scenario" (1%), and "other" (1%). (Q25)

## Remote/Distance Learning & Homework Gap

- When asked to identify barriers that would prohibit their district from transitioning to a fully online-learning model, respondents answered "we lack adequate internet access at home (student homework gap)" (71%); "we do not have the instructional capacity for online learning (teacher technology proficiency, lack of online student learning portal/platform, etc.…)" (43%); "we lack the resources to purchase a comprehensive software program that could host all of our classes and data" (32%); "our educators and school personnel lack adequate connectivity and technology" (31%); "we offer one-to-one device programs in only certain grade spans/student clusters" (30%); "we do not have adequate bandwidth" (24%); "other" (18%); "we do not offer any one-to-one device programs in our district" (15%). (Q14)
- When asked what percentage of their students are unable to participate in remote learning because they lack either internet access or a device at home, respondents replied "less than 10%" (47%); "11-20%" (22%); "21-30%" (12%), "31-40%" (6%); "41-50%" (3%); and "51% or greater" (6%). (Q7)
- When asked how is their district paying for ed-tech services to deliver curriculum and instruction in the event of an extended COVID-19 outbreak, respondents replied "repurposing existing local funding" (61%); "repurposing existing state funding" (57%); "federal emergency education relief fund" (41%); "realize efficiencies within existing school budget" (41%); "federal E-rate program" (32%); "federal governors fund" (12%); "public-private partnerships" (12%); "private philanthropy or foundation" (10%); and "other" (6%). (Q20)

## COVID-19 Fiscal Impact & Policy Relief

- When asked what, if any, contracts their district has that are not being fully realized because of the pandemic, respondents reported "transportation/bus service" (47%); "student support services" (33%); "food/nutritional services" (21%); "janitorial" (20%); and "other" (9%). (Q17)
- When asked how their district is paying for ed-tech services to deliver curriculum and instruction in the event of an extended COVID-19 outbreak, respondents replied "repurposing existing local funding" (63%); "repurposing existing state funding" (59%); "federal emergency education relief fund" (43%); "realize efficiencies within existing school budget" (42%); "federal E-rate program" (33%); "federal governors fund" (12%); "public-private partnerships" (12%); "private philanthropy or foundation" (10%); and "other" (6%). (Q20)

- When asked what costs are you most concerned about due to COVID-19 (1=not concerned, 5 = very concerned), respondents were most concerned with "costs related to restructuring and or/staggering of student and staff schedules" (70%); "costs related to delivering special education and related services" (67%); "increased transportation costs (to allow physical distancing on buses)" (63%); "costs related to connectivity (hotspots, Wi-FI/MIFI for students without internet access at home)" (47%); "costs related to serving increased health, particularly mental health, needs of students and staff" (46%); "costs related to technology devices (laptops and personal devices to students who do not have them" (41%); "personal protective equipment for students and staff" (40%); "costs related to extended hours/contracts for teachers" (34%); "costs associated with building/facility cleaning" (33%); "costs associated with staff/student sanitization (soap, hand, sanitizer, etc.)" (31%); "increased use of paid time off (sick leave, vacation leave, personal leave)" (29%); "costs for additional staff to maintain new health/sanitization protocols in school buildings" (27%); "costs for additional tutors, substitutes, teachers, and assistants" (26%); "costs related to providing food services to students off-site" (22%); "costs related to serving increased number of homeless students and meeting McKinney Vento obligations" (17%); "costs related to construction and capital outlay projects" (8%); and "printing/disseminating paper learning materials" (6%). (Q22)

**Demographics**

- The survey response rate was above average for AASA and is nationally representative (38%). Data was not collected in a manner to support state-specific analysis. Responses were collected from 48 states, all but Kentucky and Deleware.
- Community Type: 61% of respondents described their community as "rural," compared to 30% responding "suburban" and 9% responding "urban."
- District Enrollment:

| Responses | Count | % |
|---|---|---|
| Fewer than 300 | 15 | 2.99% |
| 300 to 999 | 127 | 25.35% |
| 1,000 to 2,999 | 185 | 36.93% |
| 3,000 to 4,999 | 55 | 10.98% |
| 5,000 to 9,999 | 67 | 13.37% |
| 10,000 to 24,999 | 32 | 6.39% |
| 25,000 to 49,999 | 11 | 2.20% |
| 50,000 to 99,999 | 5 | 1.00% |
| 100,000 or more | 2 | 0.40% |
| (Did not answer) | 2 | 0.40% |
| **Total Responses** | 499 | 100% |

*AASA intends to re-issue elements of this survey again in three and six months along with additional relevant items, to benchmark the rolling impact of COVID on schools, as well as the impact of the pending economic slowdown/recession. Direct any questions to Noelle Ellerson Ng (nellerson@aasa.org) and Chris Rogers (crogers@aasa.org).*