

# Beyond the Hotspot: Supporting Equitable Distance Learning in San Diego County

## Contributors

This report would not have been possible without the work of the many organizations listed below in alphabetical order:

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[Sweetwater Union High School District](#)  
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The purpose of this report is to supply those interested in supporting equitable distance learning in the time of COVID with guidance on well-vetted, immediate investments to help families in the 2020-2021 school year. These recommendations are not sweeping changes to the education system, but are intended to help bolster a more equitable recovery and ultimately educational experience.

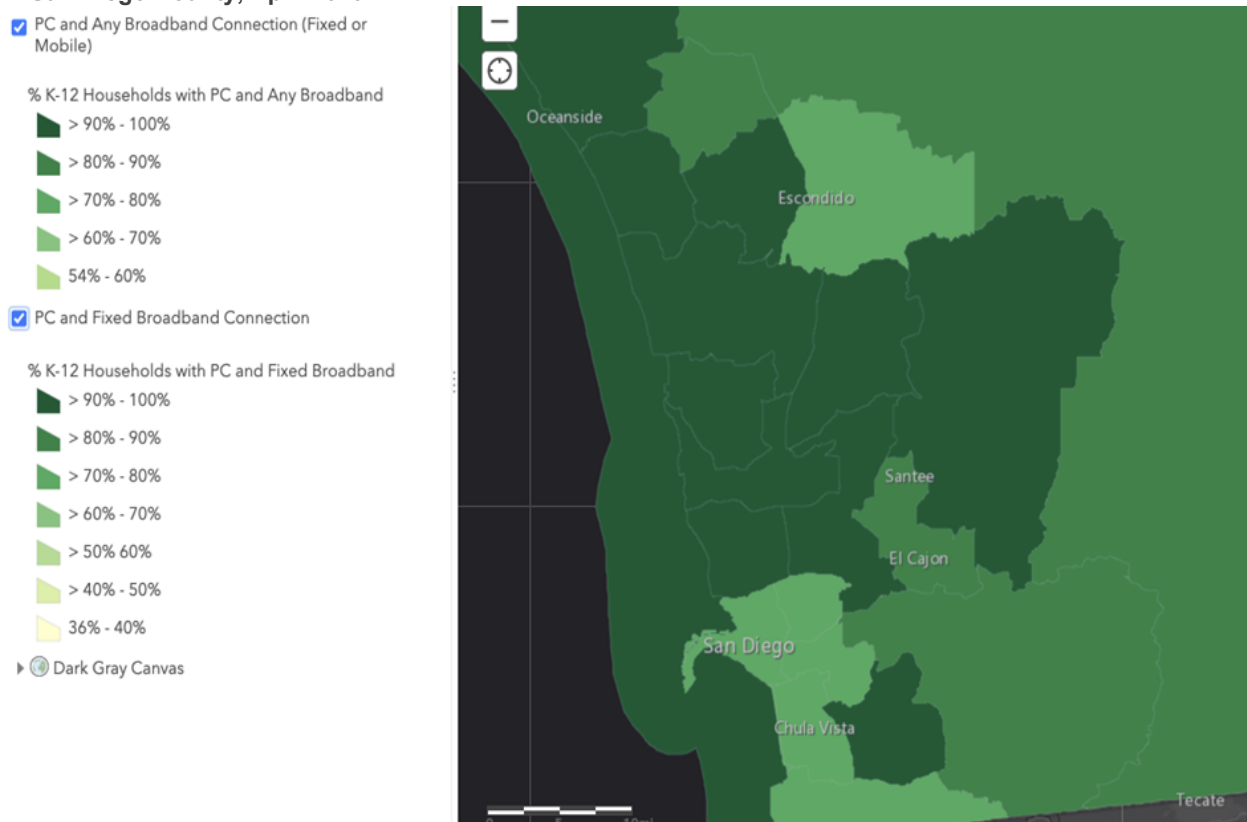
## Landscape Analysis

San Diego County families are struggling. Because of the uncertainties of COVID-19, schools are continuing to have to make the difficult decisions of online and in-person blended learning, or complete online learning, in the fall.<sup>1</sup> Regardless of income, the majority of San Diego families with school-age children, who rely on schools to care and educate their children while they are working, are in a bind.

But San Diego had stark inequality before this pandemic hit our community, and COVID-19 is impacting some families much more than others.

The San Diego region map at right (Figure 1) shows the number of households with PCs and any broadband internet access<sup>2</sup>. Coastal and north county communities have the highest percentage of households with access, while south county and rural areas have the lowest percentage of households with access.

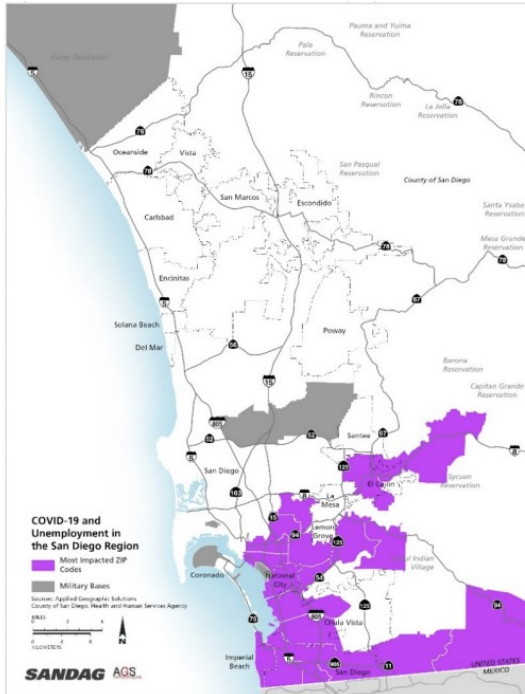
**Figure 1. Availability of PC/Any Broadband Internet Access among K-12 households (%) by PUMA, San Diego County, April 2020**



<sup>1</sup>Local educational agencies (LEAs) have created *Operations Written Reports*, and are in the process of creating *Learning Continuity Plans*. These are incredibly valuable resources when analyzing equitable distance learning, and a review of those is pending as part of this report.

<sup>2</sup> USC Annenberg Research Network on International Connection Policy Brief #6, April 30, 2020 (<https://arnicusc.org/publications/mapping-the-distance-learning-gap-in-ca/>)

**Figure 2. Hardest Hit ZIP Codes – Unemployment and COVID-19 Cases, San Diego Region, June 2020**



Source: Applied Geographic Solutions, Inc., Thousand Oaks, California, Weekly Release June 1, 2020; County of San Diego, Health and Human Services Agency.

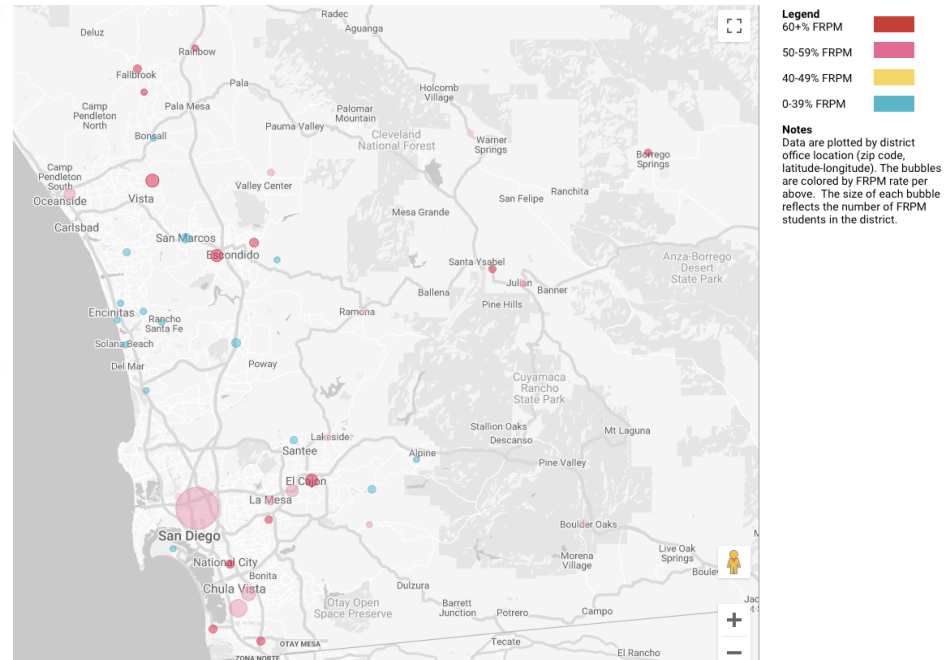
As displayed in Figure 2, SANDAG analysis shows the pandemic has mostly affected residents in the southern part of the county.

This map shows the areas most affected, with both the highest unemployment rates and highest percentage of COVID-19 cases in the region.

ZIP codes most affected:

- 91910 (Chula Vista N)
- 91911 (Chula Vista S)
- 91917 (Dulzura)
- 91932 (Imperial Beach)
- 91950 (National City)
- 91977 (Spring Valley)
- 91978 (Rancho San Diego)
- 92020 (El Cajon)
- 92021 (El Cajon)
- 92102 (Golden Hill)
- 92105 (City Heights)
- 92113 (Logan Heights)
- 92114 (Encanto)
- 92115 (College)
- 92139 (Paradise Hills)
- 92154 (Nestor)
- 92173 (San Ysidro)

**Figure 3. Percentage FRPM in K-12 School Districts, San Diego County, July 2020**



**Legend**  
 60+% FRPM  
 50-59% FRPM  
 40-49% FRPM  
 0-39% FRPM

**Notes**  
 Data are plotted by district office location (zip code, latitude-longitude). The bubbles are colored by FRPM rate per above. The size of each bubble reflects the number of FRPM students in the district.

To compound access issues, the pandemic has brought about additional hardship. Recent analysis and a map prepared by SANDAG<sup>3</sup> (Figure 2) displays the hardest hit zip codes in the San Diego region when accounting for the effect of unemployment and COVID-19 cases. We know that factors such as these can directly impact other important elements which can either help or detract from remote learning, such as housing stability, and family mental and physical health.

Another important indicator of families that may be struggling to make ends meet is the percentage of students who, due to family income constraints, are granted free and reduced-price meals at school (FRPM). Demonstrated (Figure 3) is California Department of Education FRPM rates for the 2019-2020<sup>4</sup>, predating COVID-19. Data are plotted by district office location, and the bubbles are colored by percentage of the district which qualify for FRPM. The size of each bubble reflects the number of students receiving a free or reduced-price meal in the district.

<sup>3</sup> “COVID-19 Impact on the San Diego Regional Economy.” SANDAG. June, 16, 2020.

[https://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid\\_4679\\_27578.pdf](https://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_4679_27578.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Source: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filsspfrpm.asp> | Map: [https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/e325545d-7580-4a19-be4a-78d70efe07bc/page/Mu4ZB?s=IjNP\\_uZS18](https://datastudio.google.com/u/0/reporting/e325545d-7580-4a19-be4a-78d70efe07bc/page/Mu4ZB?s=IjNP_uZS18)

An equitable distribution of resources does not equate to an equal distribution of resources. In fact, it means an intentionally unequal distribution, focusing on areas which are disproportionately impacted. Because of historic racial and socioeconomic inequities, the infrastructure for distance learning varies vastly across our region. The overlap of these maps demonstrates clearly the areas of geographic focus which should be at the forefront when considering expending resources to support distance learning.<sup>5</sup>

**The key finding is that connectivity and devices are necessary investments, but they are not sufficient. To support equitable distance learning, we must also ensure teachers have the training they need, parents and caregivers have the resources they need to support their child’s learning, and students have the safe, supportive environments which contribute to an enriching place to learn.**

“As much as we excel academically, [our ZIP codes still hold dominion over us and our families](#). Living in a noisy home with domestic responsibilities during a pandemic was already a challenge, but the death of a loved one sapped my hope for the future and brought closer the difference a few digits on my address can make.”  
- I.L., 12th grade student

The challenges of our education system—even when instruction occurs in-person—are complex and are innumerable. While acknowledging the structural and systemic changes—which are called for in how to better support the learning experience of all San Diego County students—this report offers a narrower scope. However, it has been thoughtfully crafted to help reinforce that ultimate vision. Considering school decisions to operate remotely—in part, if not fully—in the fall, this report offers recommendations that focus on how to equitably support students and their families with distance learning.

**These recommendations are in no way comprehensive. Though designed with the whole student in mind, the report will not address the other factors which we know other relief efforts are focused on that play an integral role in student success, like access to healthy food, stable housing, and reliable health care.**

These recommendations are focused on the upcoming 2020-2021 school year, and will be revisited as the situation evolves.

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<sup>5</sup> Lozano, Isaac. “Remote Learning Is Hard. Losing Family Members Is Worse.” The New York Times. August 13, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/opinion/covid-school-reopening-student.html>

## Funding Opportunities

	Immediate Investment		→	Long-Term Investment	
<b>Devices<sup>6</sup></b>	Devices to school districts and libraries for lending to families			Permanent devices for graduating students	
<b>Connectivity (Infrastructure)</b>	Hotspots	In-home internet service from broadband or satellite providers and connectivity vouchers		Municipal or school district bulk purchasing	Mesh network hardware and installation
<b>Connectivity (Digital Literacy)</b>	Multilingual, multi-modal (i.e. TV, videos, radio spots, SMS) trainings and support	Hotlines and chatlines for tech support to students, parents, and caregivers		Multilingual one-on-one or group digital literacy skills training	Dedicated culturally and linguistically appropriate IT support staff at district
<b>Capacity Building for Child Care and Out-of-School Time Providers</b>	<p align="center"><b>Flexible funding</b> for technology, training, extended operations, and facility adaptations.*</p> <p align="center">*When possible, CBO work should be in partnership with the local school district in order to augment capacity of the district and strengthen the district's connection to students, parents, and community.</p>				
<b>Parent/Caregiver Support</b>	Flexible funding to families for learning supplies, tutors, and digital literacy	Family scholarships for full-day care at licensed and licensed-exempt facilities, including internet services and data fees		CBO-run parent supports like navigator programs	A district-facilitated parent engagement network
<b>Educator Training<sup>7</sup></b>	Expanded capacity for training on technology and hybrid virtual, and in-person, learning practices	Expanded capacity for training on social-emotional, anti-bias, and trauma-informed care		Expanded capacity for training on individualized learning plans and student-interest programming	Investment in educator-informed peer-learning groups
<b>Mental Health Screening</b>	Regular county-wide wellness survey for K-12 students, utilized for resource deployment and revisited for effectiveness			Creation of a continuous inquiry cycle at SDCOE centered on mental health	

<sup>6</sup> Device, as defined by this taskforce, is a combination of hardware, outlined below, which equip a student to learn in environments outside of school: Screen with display of at least 10" with a minimum resolution of 1024 x 768; Headset or Earphones; Keyboard, Mouse/Pointer with which the student is familiar. For students experiencing homelessness, funding must also be flexible enough to include things like power packs for device charging. (<http://www.smarterbalanced.org/assessments/testing-technology/devices-and-browsers/>)

<sup>7</sup> Educator includes: teachers, administrators, counselors and other student support service staff, child care and expanded learning staff, and community-based organizations serving children and youth.

## Recommendations in Detail

Our communities face an unprecedented call to action to creatively problem solve for the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on the education of San Diego County's 502,785<sup>[1]</sup> students.

According to research done by the Parent Institute for Quality Education, in a survey of 661 parents,

- A quarter of the parents did NOT have email addresses.
- 30% of parents who received communication from school regarding distance learning did NOT understand the instructions.
- While many students are receiving equipment necessary to participate in online classes, 22% did NOT.
- 14% did not have internet in the home.
- 78% of the parents with students with special needs did not know if their child was meeting their distance learning requirements.

New research suggests that by fall, the disrupted school year will have caused most students to lose the equivalent of 1 year of academic gains. "When all of the impacts are taken into account, the average student could fall seven months behind academically, while Black and Hispanic students could experience even greater learning losses, equivalent to 10 months for Black children and 9 months for Latino children."<sup>8</sup>

The abrupt shift to distance learning in the spring has laid bare inequities that undermine the achievement of students from historically under-invested communities.<sup>9</sup> With distance learning continuing through the fall, these inequities will only be exacerbated. It is also important to note that the abrupt shift to distance learning and the expeditiousness with which school systems and community organizations have responded in support of students during the COVID-19 crisis, short-term pivots reveal a dedication to children's well-being that can be built upon to ensure success of all students in the 2020-21 school year.

That is to say, we have both ground to recover, and new opportunities to harness, in order to honor the potential of *every* San Diego County student. The scope of the following recommendations is to help stand up the most students possible to successfully engage in distance learning during the 2020-21 school year, with an

explicit equity lens. The challenges of this historical moment are many and complex, thus these recommendations should be implemented in concert with best practices and continued coordinated solutions addressing:

- Basic needs of families, such as housing, food, safety, healthcare (including access to mental health resources) and childcare
- Effective teaching and learning models and practices that apply equally to distance, hybrid and on-campus settings

This report intentionally does not make recommendations of whether, when, or how, schools should physically re-open. Rather, it lays out the conditions necessary to support *equitable* learning, whatever the school districts and public health officers decide.

<sup>8</sup> 'Research Shows Students Falling Months Behind During Virus Disruptions.' <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/05/us/coronavirus-education-lost-learning.html>

<sup>9</sup> Parent Institute for Quality Education, 'Lifting Up Voices.' <https://www.piqe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/FINAL-LIFTING-UP-VOICES.pdf>

## The Bottom Line:

Within the scope of successful distance learning, ensuring that students have ample and dedicated access to the internet and the devices necessary to engage online is a bare minimum requirement. If students will be primarily engaged in distance learning during the 2020-21 school year, we must specifically **build the capacity of trusted adults and messengers to support students in those distance learning environments**. This is a critical and shared responsibility that includes, but is not limited to, parents and caregivers, educators, community organizations, out-of-school providers, and employers. **We must ensure educators have the training they need, parents and caregivers are supported, and students have a safe place to learn.** This connected infrastructure is critical not only for COVID-19 response, but emergency preparedness in the future.

## Devices and connectivity have been a priority for school districts, but a more permanent 1:1 device ratio and reasonable, sustainable connectivity still remains an unmet need for schools and their surrounding communities.

The majority of San Diego County families have at least one device in the home. But that device is not always suitable for distance learning, it may have to be shared across multiple family members or housemates, and connectivity can be spotty and unreliable at best. *Regardless* of school decisions this fall, students and their families *require* connectivity<sup>10</sup> long-term. As of mid-August, the chief technology officer for the San Diego County Office of Education estimated that nearly 100,000 students in the county lack access to the internet at home or are under-connected.<sup>11</sup>

Here's how we can support digital connectivity:

- **Think beyond the hotspot:** True solutions support wired connection in the home, or zones of connectivity via meshed networks. Hotspots were a good stop-gap remedy, but packet loss with hotspots is common and can lead to frustration and a reluctance to reconnect. For some regions, hotspots will continue to be the temporary solution until there is a more substantial digital infrastructure; but hotspots should not replace the much needed investment of broadband connection in the home or the investment in mesh network modules connecting from public assets such as schools, libraries, parks, and public buildings to homes.

“Online school brings many new challenges that students are expected to deal with. I have a lot of people in my family and my Wi-Fi isn't very good so I have to constantly deal connection problems... Teachers also expect a lot from students even though students have to deal with a plethora of challenges while doing online school. Online school has to be better for students to be able to do well and be happy.”  
- A.A 11th grade student and UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council member

<sup>10</sup> Connectivity, as defined by this taskforce, means the regular and reliable access (a minimum of 5 days/week) to both a device sufficient for learning *and* internet connection with sufficient bandwidth.

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://www.voiceofsandiego.org/topics/education/rural-districts-still-lack-devices-internet-access-as-school-year-draws-near>

- **Take into account regional differences and reinforce existing stakeholders:** Ultimately, there is no singular solution for connectivity across the County. In more urban areas, using public assets--or even decommissioned school buses--to create a radius of connectivity or connecting more homes to wired solutions makes sense because the infrastructure is available. Funding must also be flexible enough to include things like power packs for device charging, for students experiencing homelessness. For Tribal Lands, augmenting the service of trusted partners already offering microwave solutions to families makes sense. For rural households with children not on Tribal Lands, reaching agreements with satellite internet providers makes sense. Because of these multitudes of options, any county-wide funding for connectivity should be flexible and maximize collective purchasing.
- **Invest in devices for graduating seniors to keep, rather than loaner devices from schools or libraries:** Schools and libraries across San Diego County have done a diligent job in getting devices to families, sometimes disassembling their own inventory for distribution. But youth moving into continuing education need long-term solutions, and helping them to secure devices for instruction at a 1:1 device to student ratio provides this.

## The stakes have never been higher for parents to know what their children are learning in school, and to help them make progress in that learning.

Parents want to support their children’s academic progress.<sup>12</sup> Empowering parents in this role during remote learning requires consistent, culturally, and linguistically appropriate communication and shared understanding of the expectations for children and for families.

Here’s how we can support parents during distance learning:

- **Provide information in the language and format they understand and access:** Approximately 1 in 5 students in San Diego county speaks a language other than English at home.<sup>[3]</sup> Invest in dedicated translators or translation services to provide plans, instructions, updates and training in the primary languages that parents speak. This investment is in addition to the translation services that the law requires of school districts, and could be directed to building capacity of other public institutions such as libraries and/or community based organizations to provide this support.

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<sup>12</sup> Parents, as defined by this task force, refers to the adult primary caregiver(s) of a child’s basic needs [e.g., feeding, safety]. Adult primary caregivers include biological parents; other biological relatives such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings; and non-biological parents such as adoptive, foster, or stepparents.



- **Deploy trusted messengers dedicated to family outreach:** Some school districts have dedicated parent engagement support staff, while others are struggling to find ways to adequately keep parents informed. Invest in additional engagement support capacity to allow for amplified outreach to families who lack connectivity or who have specialized needs. Because connectivity is proving an actionable yet stubborn obstacle, conduct said outreach via the means that those families identify as the most accessible for their circumstances, such as phone calls, text messages, socially distant home visits, or meet-ups where services are already being accessed. This could include investing in additional staff capacity, partnering or contracting with community-based organizations, activating volunteer networks, or reprioritizing workloads of existing staff to prioritize outreach. \*See list of exemplars.

“ There should be translation services available for those who may need it. We must work hard and help our most vulnerable families get the help they need, so that every student has a quality distance learning experience.”  
- S.A., 12th grade student and UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council member

- **Improve digital literacy:** Provide basic computer literacy training for parents and child care providers, and training specific to technologies that students will be using to complete their assignments. Basic computer literacy might include how to create and use an email address, as a recent statewide survey by the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE) found that 1 in 3 parents served in their programs did not have an email address where they could access messages sent by their child’s school or district.<sup>13</sup> Districts are using various platforms to conduct their classes and/or communicate with parents. Helping parents navigate these platforms or software is critical in accessibility to their child’s school. \*See list of exemplars.

“ We must work hard to provide students with getting a proper distance learning experience. This can be done by making accommodations for the tech issues some students may face. It is important to provide students with learning material they can access offline. Whether that’s through apps you can access without Wi-Fi or providing them with packets of coursework they can receive in the mail.”  
- S.A., 12th grade student and UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council member

<sup>13</sup> Source: <https://www.piqe.org/data/>

- **Create learning opportunities for families that do not require technology and target recruitment among families who lack connectivity:** Create opportunities for parents to support their children at home through hands-on activities by investing in programs, content, and/or tangible materials that do not require internet access to complete. This also includes investing in or contracting with community-based organizations with established programs to this end. Examples include books and/or guided-activity kits that build a family's in-home resources for learning. Where possible, saturate whole classrooms, grade levels, or schools to ensure teachers and campus leadership can leverage the additional materials that families have at their disposal to maximize distance learning lessons.
- **Off-set the cost of quality child care.** Invest in, and broaden eligibility for programs that help families cover the costs of child care resulting from school closures. A recent study by the American Journal of Public Health found that about 75% of American workers are in jobs that cannot be done from home during a pandemic, with workers most affected being significantly lower paid and/or from communities hardest hit.<sup>14</sup> This means parents of underserved students are more likely to be away from home during the school day while their wages and family budgets may not be sufficient to absorb additional child care costs. This investment should also consider the increase in cost of technology and internet data plans that will provide children with the high speed internet connectivity needed for virtual learning.

## Now more than ever, Community-Based Organizations, Out-of-School Time, and Child Care providers are needed to support the academic progress of students and family engagement.

Community-based organizations and Out-of-School Time providers have expertise in developing responsive programming, working with families and can leverage those relationships to target support where it's needed most.

Here's how we can support providers during distance learning:

- **Broaden the network of those prepared to disseminate information to families:** Widely communicate district plans, instructions, and updates so that providers can reinforce key messages with the families they serve, and/or use the topics to inform their program priorities. An example may be creating a means by which CBOs and OSTs can opt-in to receiving these updates from districts/schools so that they can be shared and reinforced with the families they serve.
- **Broaden the audience of critical training:** Extend opportunities for providers to attend training alongside education staff when the content is geared towards building parent capacity or student engagement in distance learning, with the intent that those providers help disseminate that information among families they serve. Conversely, tap community-based organizations with the desired expertise as content providers for educator and district training. In both instances, this includes redefining

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<sup>14</sup> Source: <https://www.washington.edu/news/2020/06/23/75-of-us-workers-cant-work-exclusively-from-home-face-greater-risks-during-pandemic/>

existing funding guidelines to broaden the scope of the training audience with particular attention to ensure training is accessible for multilingual staff.



In April, when my school started distance learning, I struggled to stay focused, bouncing from room to room in search of peace and quiet. In the morning, I settled in the kitchen table to attend online meetings while my family was asleep. By the afternoon, I fled to my parents' room to finish schoolwork but only until my father came home from work and ordered me out... In truth, I was angry that I lived in a coronavirus hot spot; that my immigrant parents could only provide me with so much; that my middle-class peers were ensconced in their own bedrooms while I remained confined to a skinny metal chair in my kitchen.”

- I.L., 12th grade student

- **Increase capacity of providers to step-in as co-educators:** Invest in culturally responsive programs and training provided by trusted community-based organizations that build parents' skill sets to support their children's learning and/or directly supplement student learning (such as tutoring, reading support, and/or STEM experiences). This includes investing in direct service or train-the-trainer models between CBOs and OSTs providers. \*See list of exemplars.
- **Create more safe learning environments<sup>1516</sup>:** Invest in the capacity of providers to offer spaces where students can go during “the school day” while parents are working. This may include expanding hours of before and after school programs, extending summer camp models into the school year, and creative use of alternative locations. This need extends beyond a child care age range to students of all grade levels, such as teens. It follows that these spaces will need additional funding for technology needs.



Now that organized sports are more restrictive than ever, it limits how and when students can go out to exercise. If we are not taking care of our bodies, it will quickly reflect in our work and the quality and effort in which we give it. I feel like there should definitely be a workout program available to all students so that we make sure everyone is getting their proper amount of physical activity in, to live healthily.”

- N.S., 12th grade student and UC San Diego Youth Advisory Council member

<sup>15</sup> Safe learning environments, as defined by this task force, refers to an environment focused on academic achievement, maintaining high standards, fostering positive relationships between staff and students, and encouraging parental and community involvement.

<sup>16</sup> Lozano, Isaac. “Remote Learning Is Hard. Losing Family Members Is Worse.” The New York Times. August 13, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/13/opinion/covid-school-reopening-student.html>

## We must protect our students' motivation to learn.

Students are navigating a months-long stint of isolation, uncertainty, and disruption to their learning and social routines, all factors which can increase risk for poor mental health outcomes. There is wide consensus in research showing how these factors can negatively impact student focus and how they “show-up” to learn.

Here's how we can cultivate student motivation and deepen engagement in remote learning:

- **Invest in intensive, ongoing professional development for educators:** Continued training on unconscious bias, racial microaggressions, culturally mediated behaviors, and teaching practices for Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other children of color is needed to ensure that *all* children are consistently engaged in positive methods to amplify their learning progress. While students are learning remotely, specific focus must be paid to how these topics may manifest and can be remedied in virtual environments.<sup>17</sup> \*See list of exemplars.
- **Proactively respond to the traumas students have faced during COVID-19 and before:** Embed trauma-informed, socio-emotional supports and healing-centered engagement<sup>18</sup> into student learning plans and supplemental programming to help students process their experiences of the pandemic, creating opportunities to heal and focus on learning. Use a universal screener and/or systemic and systematic surveys to assist County and District leaders in providing tiered mental health supports.
- **“Spark to thrive” programming:** Invest in access to programming inclusive of student interest and facilitated by subject matter experts that share a passion for the subject. Use individualized, competency-based and/or strengths-based learning models that allow students to progress at their own pace. \*See list of exemplars.



The hardest part of COVID-19 quarantine for me is not being able to make music... The studio [David's Harp Recording Studio] was my space to relieve stress. The studio got me through my hard moments. I miss going and all the support I got there. Being locked in the house is stressful because I have 9 brothers and sisters and the younger kids are always running around. We all had work to do and I sometimes I just feel stuck... Life is just really boring right now. It's hard to want to get on the computer to do school. With everything that I have to do, sometimes I just need something that I actually want to do.”

– A. M., 12<sup>th</sup> grade student

<sup>17</sup> Wood, J. L., Abdi, M., Essien, I. R., Harris III, F., & DeJohnette, M. (2019). When they teach us: The Education of Black children in San Diego. San Diego, CA: Community College Equity Assessment Lab.

<sup>18</sup> <https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

## Exemplars

It is time to leverage the rich expertise and best practices of innovative educators and community-based organizations that already exist here in San Diego County. Below is a sample of exemplars whose successes helped inform the listed alphabetically.

- [Center for Organizational Responsibility and Advancement \(CORA\)](#): An exemplar of a professional development provider with community knowledge and expertise tapped by the education community to advance skill sets and mindsets of the educator community, CORA provided professional development courses to San Diego Unified School District to help educators plan, self-assess, reflect, bolster teaching skills, and intervene with the right methods to counter acts of disparities both inside and outside the campus as well as make educational opportunities accessible to students of color.
- [David's Harp Foundation](#): As an exemplar of “spark to thrive” programming inclusive of student interest and facilitated by subject matter experts that share a passion for the subject, David's Harp Foundation uses the power of media creation as a platform to build mentoring relationships with opportunity youth to inspire, educate and empower their academic achievement. David's Harp Foundation is also an example of a provider exploring alternative use of their space to provide a safe learning environment for teens.
- [Family and Community Engagement at Cajon Valley Union School District](#): An exemplar of proactive and culturally responsive parent engagement, FACE at Cajon Valley Union School District has leveraged language liaisons at each turn during the pandemic to strengthen communication with parents who speak languages other than English, including offering IT support from native speakers.
- [Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation](#): An exemplar of community and economic development, the Jacobs Center for Neighborhood Innovation operates the Joe & Vi Jacobs Center, home to over a dozen non-profit organizations providing integrated programs to the Southeastern San Diego community. As a community hub that can offer community members a variety of services, the organization's reach extends beyond the Center through partnerships with a multitude of other community-based organizations. Recognizing that educational success is a foundation to economic opportunity and depends on supportive physical and social environments, as well as trusted networks that go beyond the digital connection or classroom, the Jacobs Center is working to leverage its space and partnerships for greater educational equity.
- [Orenda Education](#): An exemplar of a professional development provider that works in partnership with teachers, school administrators and district officials to help close the achievement and equity gaps in schools. Orenda's equity-grounded, data-informed approach turns numbers into real robust, long-term solutions, focusing on social justice and education equity, looking for intelligent, imaginative ways to transform systems and practices.
- [Pactful](#): An exemplar of a social good innovation curriculum and tool used globally by teens and teachers who want to build a better world. The digital platform and challenge events inspire users to actively engage in the design thinking process and develop an innovator's mindset to create solutions aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Pactful is created and supported by the Jacobs Institute for Innovation in Education at the University of San Diego.

- [Parent Institute for Quality Education](#) (PIQE): An exemplar organization empowering student achievement through parent involvement, PIQE's statewide survey contributed valuable data about the state of connectivity, digital literacy, and engagement with remote learning among parents participating in their programs. What they learned informed concentrated (and successful) efforts to help parents gain experience with and confidence using digital platforms such as ZOOM.
- [San Diego Refugee Communities Coalition](#): Is an exemplar for coordinating action within refugee communities throughout San Diego County to ensure that individuals and families are healthy, safe, and thriving.
- [The STEAM Collaborative](#): An exemplar in increasing equity in STEAM by focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math from an artistic perspective, The STEAM Collaborative develops presentations, workshops, camps, and tutoring--much of it in ready-access for families to leverage, including through platforms like FleetTV and UCTV.
- [UC San Diego Extension, Department of Education and Community Outreach](#) (ECO): As an exemplar organization dedicated to access, equity, and inclusion, the Department of Education and Community Outreach at UC San Diego Extension works cooperatively with schools, local education agencies, and community-based organizations to provide holistic support for students, teachers, and families. ECO offers cost-free trainings in effective remote/blended learning for teachers and public-facing case workers. In collaboration with faculty and community-based partners, the Department engages families through Parent University and University of California Television (UCTV). A wide variety of resources and workshops on education, socioemotional wellbeing, and healthcare are available on demand and offered in multiple languages.
- [Words Alive](#): An exemplar of a community based organization building the capacity of parents and fellow COBs via direct service and train-the-trainer models to support child engagement in and parent skill sets to support student reading achievement and family book-sharing habits at home.
- [YMCA of San Diego County](#): As an exemplar for supporting working families with child care solutions. Supporting families in referrals for childcare, while supporting our San Diego County network of childcare providers, and safely administering full day programming for thousands of children and youth, the YMCA of San Diego County strengthens communities by fighting for access to quality child care so parents can continue to earn wages that keep families strong.

## Background and Process

Commencing in May 2020, a county-wide group of school districts, education experts, non-profit organizations, and community leaders joined to form an Equitable Distance Learning Taskforce.

Initiated and led by the [Classroom of the Future Foundation](#) and [San Diego for Every Child](#), in conjunction with the San Diego County Office of Education, this Taskforce worked to regionally prioritize both technological and non-technological needs of school-age students and their families across our community.

The goals of the Taskforce are threefold:

- To identify, monitor, and prioritize the needs and opportunities around equitable distance learning across San Diego County in the midst and aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis;
- To create a concise message on the short, medium, and long-term priorities for funding entities that is informed by educators and impacted communities alike;
- To develop a model for recovery that can be used to address the digital divide and divergent access to resources in the coming months.

Meetings are held every Wednesday, and typically begin with a presentation on some exemplary practice/s addressing issues with which the Taskforce is grappling. Every meeting is started by recognizing the Indigenous land on which we reside and the sovereign Nations which are still impacted by that displacement. All conversations are centered on the acknowledgement that racial injustice persists in our society and that it is our collective responsibility to root our work in anti-racism.

The process of developing recommendations is very intentionally collaborative and transparent, with all document development occurring in Google Suite with open editing, and hyperlinks for contributions shared broadly. The process seeks to elevate community voice, broaden stakeholder engagement, and distribute decision-making power within funding for distance learning.

For more information, please contact [erin@sandiegoforeverychild.org](mailto:erin@sandiegoforeverychild.org).

## Common Terms

**Asynchronous learning:** Instruction which occurs in a flexible time-frame.

**Connectivity:** Regular and reliable access (a minimum of 5 days/week) to both a device sufficient for learning AND internet connection with sufficient bandwidth.

**Data/Bandwidth cap:** A provider-imposed limit on the amount of data a user can utilize during a set time frame (typically per month) for an agreed upon fee. Also known as: fair usage, fair access policies, usage based billing, band caps.

If user exceeds the data cap, results include:

- Higher price for further data usage;
- Slower bandwidth speeds likely unsuitable for video streaming (i.e. 4G speed lowered to 3G speed).

**Device:** A combination of hardware, outlined below, which equip a student to learn in environments outside of school:

- Screen (Display of at least 9" with a minimum resolution of 1024 x 768)
- Headset or Earphones
- Keyboard
- Mouse/Pointer

**Ideal learning bandwidth:** Symmetrical bandwidth (25 Mbps/25 Mbps), or a speed benchmark of 50 Mbps download/25 Mbps upload (50 Mbps/25 Mbps). This will allow for multiple users at the same time.

**Local educational agency (LEA):** A public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, school district, or other political subdivision of a State.

**Minimum bandwidth:** A speed benchmark of 25 Mbps download/3 Mbps upload (25 Mbps/3 Mbps). (This is insufficient with multiple users.)