



# Mapping Student Needs during COVID-19

## An Assessment of Remote Learning Environments

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Staff, teachers, and students experienced rapid change as school buildings closed in March 2020 because of the spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19. As school districts scramble to deliver lessons remotely, particularly as they consider long-term strategies and solutions, it is important to understand variations in the challenges that students are facing across the country. Although school districts may be aware of some of these challenges, such as student disability or English language learner status, other issues may be harder to identify and assess, such as a student's crowded home conditions, her access to technology for remote learning, and her household's vulnerability to pandemic-induced economic hardship. In this brief, we use American Community Survey (ACS) data to highlight different types of challenges to remote learning and point to district and educator strategies that might mitigate harm to students as districts navigate long-term school closures.

Student needs during a period of remote learning are difficult to measure and do not all directly correlate with other student needs, such as the share of students living in poverty. States and districts need information on where different types of student need are greatest, so that new resources from the CARES Act<sup>1</sup> and other aid can be deployed to facilitate remote learning. The identification of districts and regions with similar needs can also facilitate the sharing of best practices for serving a particular need, whether it is reaching linguistically isolated students or providing school meals to families that are vulnerable to COVID-19 job loss.

## Data and Methodology

This brief describes conditions of school-age children, their parents, and their households that may render them uniquely vulnerable to the new learning environments suddenly imposed because of the novel coronavirus. Although many families will face unique circumstances and obstacles, this brief

focuses on six factors in addition to poverty: linguistic isolation, child disability status, parents in vulnerable economic sectors, single parents, crowded conditions, and lack of computer or broadband access.

We use 2014–18 data from the ACS, a nationally representative 1 percent survey conducted annually by the US Census Bureau, containing data on households, demographics, economic circumstances, education, housing conditions, and more.

We conduct two principal analyses, using two versions of ACS data. First, we use the last five one-year microdata samples (2014 through 2018) to create estimates for each public-use microdata area (PUMA).<sup>2</sup> PUMAs are the smallest geographic unit in the one-year ACS data, each containing at least 100,000 people. For the PUMA-level analyses, our sample includes school-age children only (ages 5 to 17). Second, we use the 2014–18 five-year estimates to create school district–level estimates along with their margins of error, based on aggregate estimates from the National Historical Geographic Information System.<sup>3</sup> Because school districts tend to be smaller, some have substantially large margins of error.<sup>4</sup> In addition, because of the nature of the five-year estimates, not all the school district–level metrics are perfectly comparable with those provided for the PUMAs. The sample for these estimates is not always school-age children, but we describe below where they differ.

We describe each of the metrics we examine in this brief in box 1. Each subsequent section details the difficulties each circumstance presents and potential solutions for school districts.

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## BOX 1

### Metrics of Remote Learning Challenges

Unless otherwise stated, measures are at the student level.

**Poverty.** A student is in poverty if her family income is at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level.

- District estimates are based on the US Census Bureau’s Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program and are defined as the share of children ages 5 to 17 living in poverty.

**Linguistically isolated.** A student is linguistically isolated if there is no one age 14 or older in the household who speaks English only or speaks it “very well.”

**Disability.** This measure includes students who have cognitive, ambulatory, independent living, self-care, vision, or hearing difficulties.

**Parents in vulnerable economic sectors.** Parents are defined as the householder and his or her spouse or unmarried partner. This may not capture all family relationships but should capture most situations. A student has a parent in a vulnerable economic sector if the parent earns less than \$800 a week and works in one of the industries most likely to be subject to layoffs, including many of those in the entertainment, service, or retail industries.<sup>a</sup>

- District estimates are the share of students in households where a household member age 16 or older works in wholesale trade; retail trade; arts, entertainment, and recreation and accommodation and food services; or other services, except public administration.

**Single parents.** This is defined as students in households with only one father or only one mother.

**Crowded conditions.** This is defined as students living in households with greater than one household member per room, excluding bathrooms, porches, balconies, foyers, halls, and unfinished basements.

- District estimates are calculated for all occupied housing units, including those without students.

**Lack of computer or broadband internet.** This refers to students living in households without a laptop or desktop computer or without a broadband internet connection.

- District estimates use a more expansive definition of broadband, including any household with non-dial-up internet, and a more expansive definition of computer, including smartphones, tablets or other computers.

<sup>a</sup>Vulnerable sectors include the following: retail trade (except grocery stores; specialty food stores; beer, wine, and liquor stores; and pharmacies and drugstores); transportation (except freight trucking and pipeline transportation); employment services; travel arrangement and reservation services; janitorial services; landscaping services; educational services; child day care services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services; and other services (except public administration, equipment repair and maintenance, and commercial and industrial machinery and equipment repair and maintenance). We follow the guidance suggested in Coalition for a Prosperous America, “[Statement from the U.S. Private Sector Job Quality Index \(“JQI”\) Team on Vulnerabilities of Jobs in Certain Sectors to the COVID-19 Economic Shutdown](#)” (Washington, DC: Coalition for a Prosperous America, n.d.).

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## Do These Measures All Capture the Same Thing?

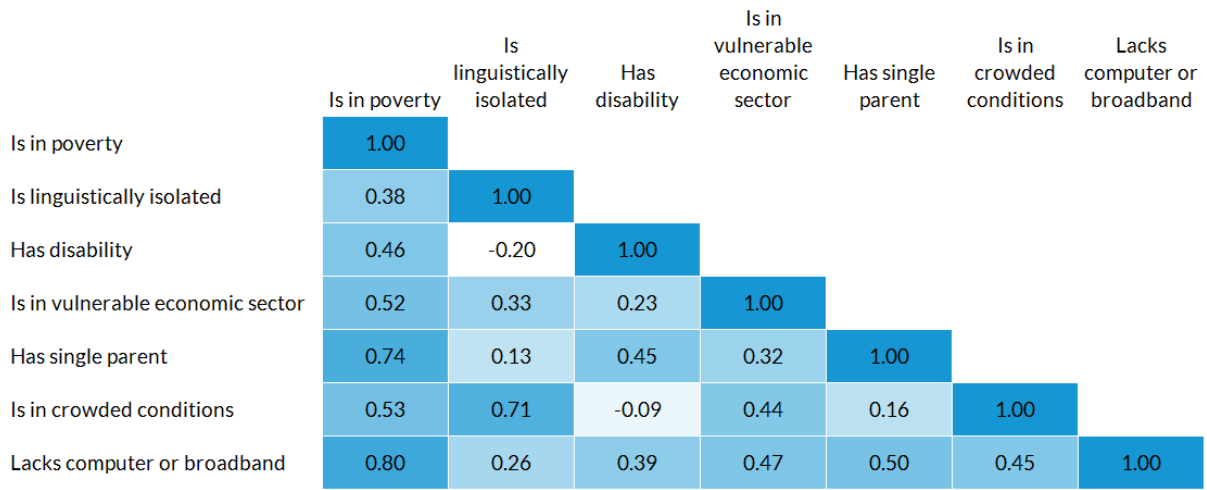
Economic downturns tend to exacerbate existing inequalities. Although this one will certainly hit students already struggling with poverty, measures of poverty alone do not capture the unique situations many students face. The potential solutions for each challenge differ. Moreover, although some districts will face combinations of these challenges, others will face one or none.

Poverty is correlated with each of these measures at the PUMA level, but the extent of this correlation varies (figure 1). Lack of a computer or a broadband connection is most closely tied to poverty (0.80), while linguistic isolation is least correlated (0.38). Single parenthood is also closely tied to poverty (0.74), as is working in an economically vulnerable sector (0.52). Students with disabilities is the only measure that is negatively correlated with any of the others, namely linguistic isolation (-0.20) and crowded conditions (-0.09), both of which are highly correlated with each other (0.71). Others are only weakly correlated with each other, such as crowded conditions and single parenthood (0.16) or working in an economically vulnerable sector and students with disabilities (0.23).

**FIGURE 1**

**Correlations between Measures of Vulnerability across PUMAs**

*Lack of internet or computer access is most correlated with poverty at the PUMA level*



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**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

**Note:** PUMA = public-used microdata area.

Understanding the unique challenges each community faces is the first step in identifying potential solutions. The following sections describe each of the challenges, and potential solutions, in more detail.

## Identifying and Serving Students in Need

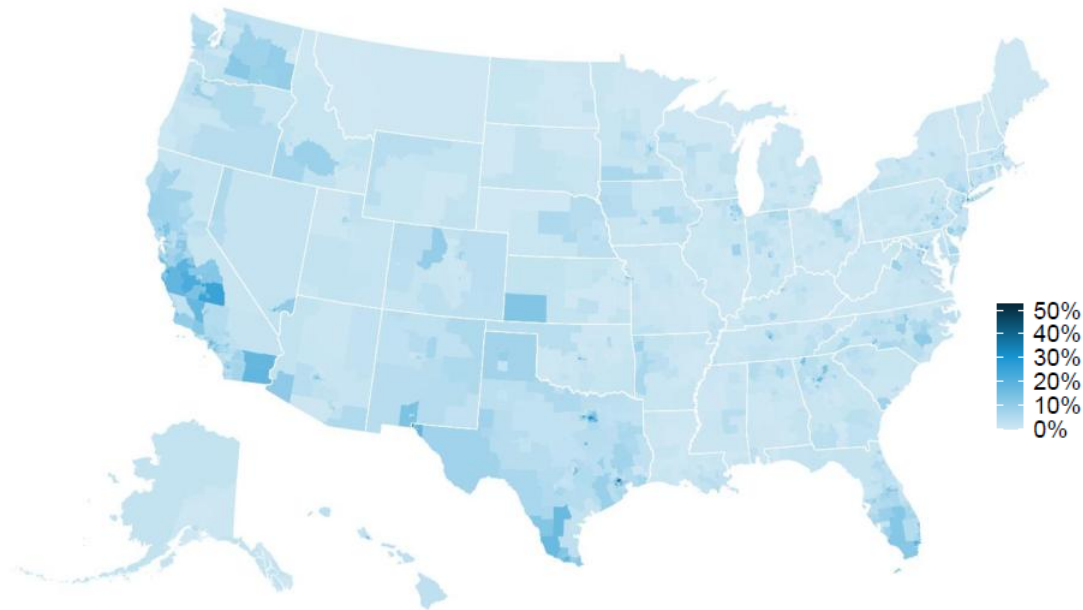
### Serving Linguistically Isolated Students

Schools are a crucial avenue for providing English language instruction for students who do not speak English at home. When schooling goes remote, students in households where adults do not speak English well will face higher barriers to completing schoolwork. Students who are English language learners may need additional language support to complete their classwork, but even students who speak fluent English, especially young students, will struggle if their parents or guardians do not speak sufficient English. For example, parents may not be able to understand communications from the teacher or school and may need communication in their native language to support their students. Students in urban areas, and those in broad swaths of the southwest United States, are more likely to live in linguistically isolated households.

FIGURE 2

### Share of Linguistically Isolated Students

*Households where no one older than 14 speaks English only or speaks it “very well”*



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Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

Supports for linguistically isolated students must account for communication to both the student and the adults in the household. School districts could employ the following practices:

**Assess the best mode for communication.** Many teachers use digital learning resources in their classroom to assist English language learners (PPSS 2019). Although some English language learners may not have access to these resources at home, teachers should not assume this is the case. The correlation between the share of linguistically isolated households and share of households without access to a computer and the internet is positive but weak. Nonetheless, teachers may need to explore alternate means of contacting students, such as through text or phone calls.<sup>5</sup>

**Maintain communication with families in their native language.** Families of English language learners need the same updates as other families. Schools should always develop translation for home communications. Platforms that have content in both English and the family’s native language may also be useful in engaging parents in their child’s learning (TNTP 2020).

**Consider alternative means of assessing progress.** Many states use assessments, such as the WIDA ACCESS assessment, to judge progress toward English learning goals. As states pull back on standardized assessments, teachers of English language learners may want to explore alternative ways of understanding student progress.

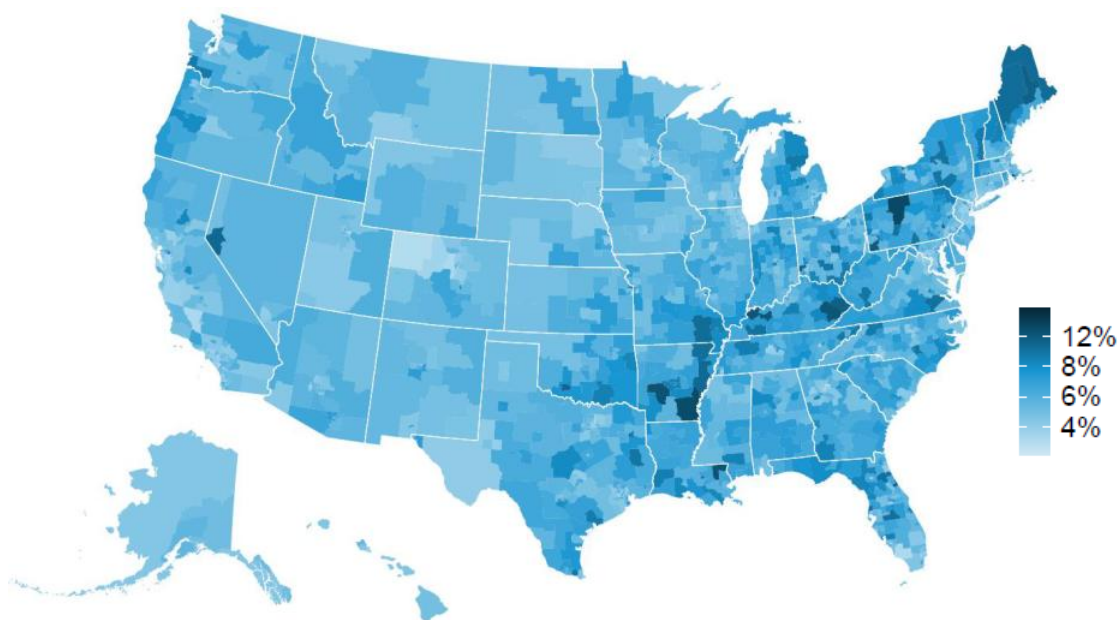
## Serving Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities often require special accommodations while in school. When learning at home, these students may lose access to the learning assistance supports they received, as well as other services, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling. Our data classify disability as having one or more hearing, seeing, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulty. Although physical and mental disabilities in children are prevalent across the nation, children with disabilities are more likely to live in families that experience financial insecurity (Hogan 2012). Further, differences in local exposure to environmental pollutants—such as fine-particulate air pollution and neurotoxic pollutants such as lead—could lead to geographic differences in disability levels (Landrigan 2018).

FIGURE 3

### Share of Students with Disabilities

*Households where children ages 5 to 17 have a disability*



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Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

Guidance from the US Department of Education indicates that school districts are to make “every effort to provide special education and related services to the child in accordance with the child’s individualized education program,” even while school is delivered remotely (US Department of Education 2020). Although these practices depend on the various types of disabilities that students may have, practices that school districts could employ include the following:

**Provide paper-based and virtual accommodations for remote coursework.** For students with disabilities who cannot learn remotely or who need additional support to stay on task, hard-copy versions of online lessons can provide additional support. These hard copies could be printed at home, delivered via mail, or picked up by families. Many online platforms have built-in accessibility features that families may need instructions on how to use.

**Develop plain-language explanations of COVID-19 disruption.** Students with intellectual disabilities may have difficulties with the change in routine that comes with remote learning. Documents that explain the situation in simple language or pictures can reassure students.

**Lend therapy equipment.** For students who require physical or occupational therapy, schools may want to consider lending equipment to families, such as school-themed augmentative and alternative communication boards and supportive equipment.

**Reach out to learn about additional difficulties.** Some students with disabilities may have health conditions that put them at higher risk from complications caused by COVID-19. Schools will need to consider the health of these students when weighing a return to in-person education.

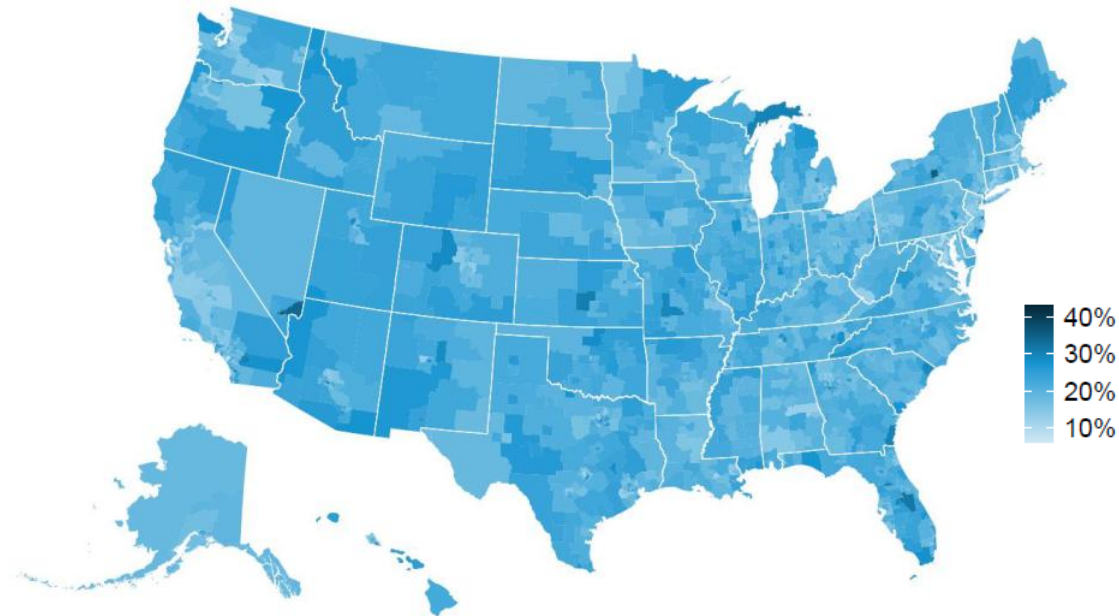
## **Serving Students with Parents Working in Economically Vulnerable Sectors**

The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have fallen disproportionately on workers in retail and service industries (Berube and Bateman 2020). In March 2020, more than 17 million people applied for unemployment insurance. Students with parents who work in affected sectors may be experiencing new financial hardships because of decreased hours or job loss. Vulnerable sectors are not evenly distributed across the United States. Areas that rely heavily on tourism, such as areas along popular beachfronts or near national parks, are more vulnerable. Districts with students in households that are more at risk of job loss could see a more substantial increase in economic need.

FIGURE 4

**Share of Students with Parents Working in Vulnerable Sectors**

*Households where parents work in an economically vulnerable sector*



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Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

Schools provide more than academics. School districts must maintain their role in providing meals to low-income students and providing other support services, such as counseling and referrals. When students' economic circumstances change, schools should identify students newly in need and allow access to these supports. School districts can do this through the following:

**Notify families about the free and reduced-price lunch application process.** Families may not know that they can apply for free and reduced-price lunch at any point during the school year.<sup>6</sup> Schools should provide a contact-free way to apply for these benefits so that newly eligible families can receive meals.

**Rerun direct certification matches.** Students are automatically eligible for free lunch if their household participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or other social safety net programs. School districts are required to match, or directly certify, these students for automatic free lunch at least three times a year, but more frequent updates could help find students who have new need (Food Research and Action Center 2018).

**Inform parents about additional resources.** Families may be eligible for access to other community resources, such as food pantries and the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program, if their state participates. School districts could play a key role in informing families about these options and transitioning to food delivery options that require less contact.



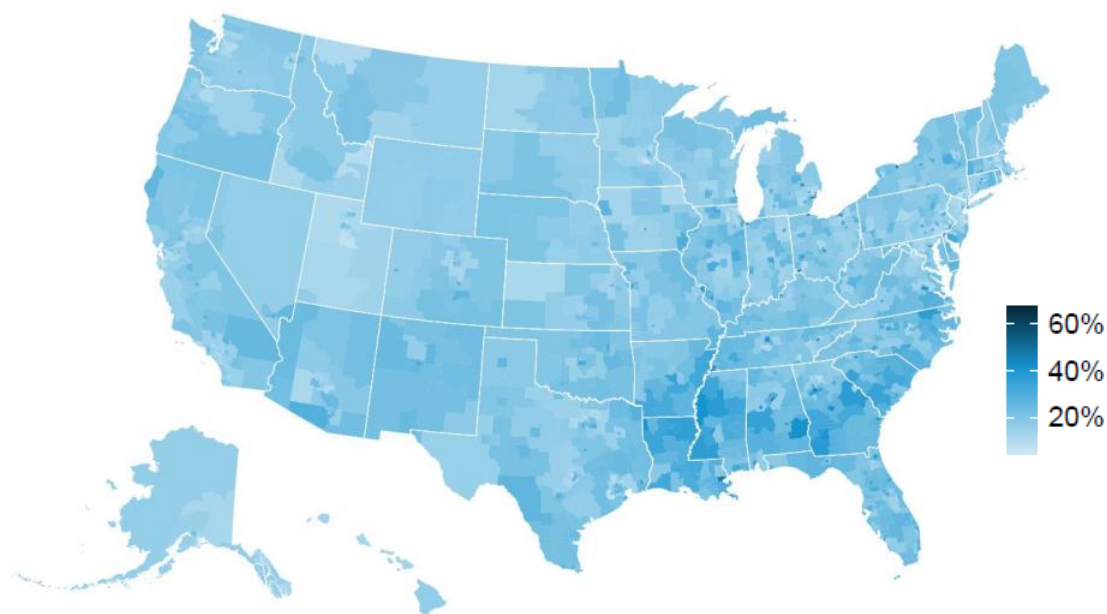
## Serving Children of Single Parents

Single parenting is always challenging, but it poses unique challenges during a period when most students are expected to learn from home. The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced or eliminated school and many of the stabilizing routines and supports that single parents depend on.<sup>7</sup> Even two-parent households struggle to balance jobs, child care, and, now, educational responsibilities; a single parent juggling all these responsibilities faces a greater burden. This is the case whether that parent has been deemed essential and is out of the house or they can work from home. Some families have been able to rely on extended family for child care, but not all. Students in these situations will suffer from increased household stress and may face a greater risk of falling behind on schoolwork, as parental attention may be limited because of other responsibilities (Ziol-Guest, Duncan, and Kalil 2015).

FIGURE 5

### Share of Students with Single Parents

*Households where school-age children have single parents*



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Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

Single parenthood is correlated with poverty (0.74) but is more likely to occur in urban centers than in rural areas. Poverty and single parenthood are both prevalent in the South, but rural areas (e.g., Arizona, New Mexico, and South Dakota) are less likely to have high shares of single parents than poverty.

**Emergency child care.** The chief policy action that can partially address the challenges of single parenting is increasing availability of emergency child care.<sup>8</sup> Some school districts have understandably prioritized these services for essential health care workers and might consider including single parents

in their priorities as well. Employers should also consider offering or expanding child care services. Although these solutions do not directly address educational challenges, they will alleviate some of the burden on single parents, providing them slightly more bandwidth to help their children with their schoolwork.

**Counselor outreach.** As students in single-parent households may be struggling more than ever, counselors or other school staff may consider additional outreach via email, phone, or video conferencing to check in on students and provide emotional support.

## **Serving Students Living in Crowded Conditions**

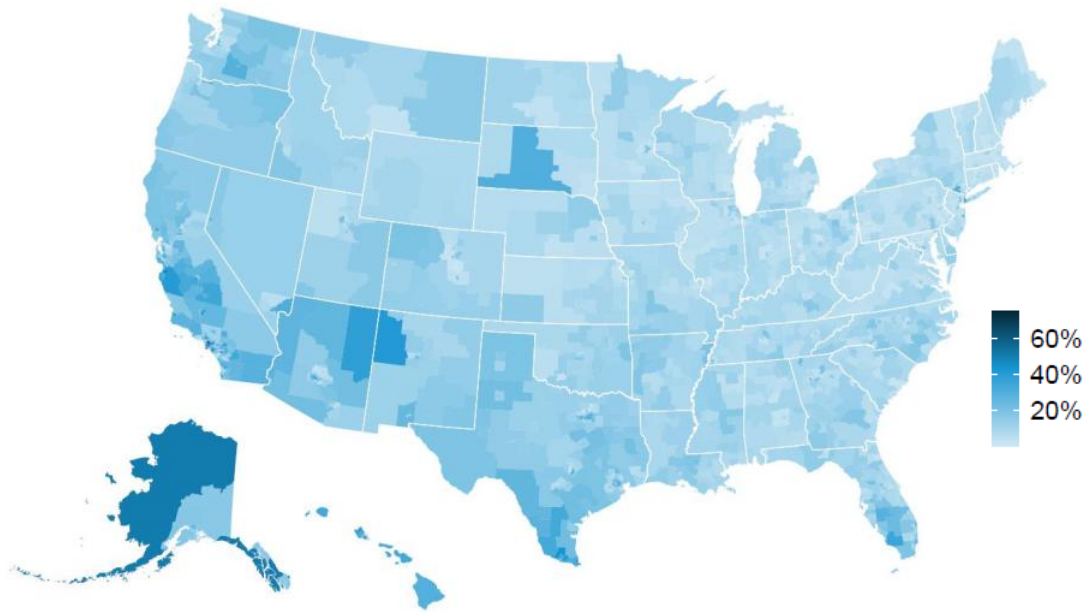
Even under normal circumstances, living in a crowded home can affect a child's academic achievement (Lopoo and London 2016; Solari and Mare 2012). Students living in overcrowded homes do not always have space to read, study, or complete their homework. As a result, children in crowded homes perform worse on standardized reading tests and attain less education than their peers (Fischer 2014). In addition, a crowded home can create stress and affect development (Evans et al. 2005), disrupt students' engagement with school (Saegert and Evans 2003), and diminish children's persistence in the face of challenges (Brown and Low 2008).

For this analysis, we have defined a crowded home as one that has more than one person per livable room. Although this is not the threshold of crowding that would raise concerns about child welfare, it creates a vulnerability for students who are expected to have quiet and controlled conditions for learning. On average, 14 percent of students in each PUMA live in homes with more than one person per room. Areas of Los Angeles and Orange County, New York City, and Houston have the highest shares (more than 50 percent) of students living in densely populated homes. In most of these places, housing costs prohibit spacious living arrangements.

FIGURE 6

### Share of Students Living in Crowded Conditions

*Households where school-age children live in homes with more than one person per room*



URBAN INSTITUTE

Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

School districts can do little to change students' living environments, but they can help students mitigate distractions.

**Noise-canceling headsets.** For students experiencing conditions at home in which space limitations or noise from other people affects their ability to learn, one of the most effective options is to distribute noise-canceling headphones or headsets for noise reduction and privacy.

**Guidance.** Districts can also help students and their families understand how to support their student given their living environments. For example, teachers can provide clear guidance about the learning environments that students need for their classes and help them communicate with family members about it.

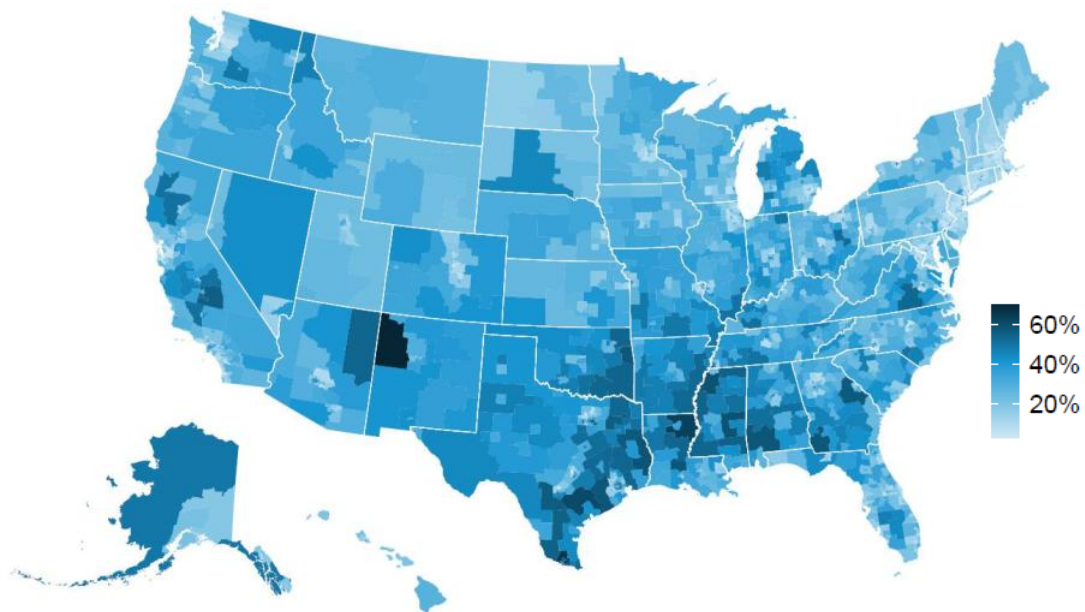
### Serving Students without Access to the Internet or a Computer

More than ever, students are using computers and the internet in school and at home to complete their work. But internet access can be spotty, with students living in areas where access is not available. Use of technology by school districts also varies, with some districts assigning devices to students and others offering a limited number of devices for students to use for particular classes. Because internet access and access to a device can be expensive, many students do not have access at home. Students who need access to complete their homework might ordinarily use the computer lab at their local

library or community center, but during a public health pandemic, when students are required to stay home, their access may be even more limited.

Recent research on internet access shows that school-age children who lack the connectivity they need to complete schoolwork at home are more likely to be black or Hispanic or be from low-income households.<sup>9</sup> In fact, about one in five teenagers ages 13 to 17 said they are often or sometimes unable to complete homework assignments because they do not have reliable access to a computer or internet connection.

**FIGURE 7**  
**Share of Students without Access to a Computer or Broadband Internet**  
*Households where school-age children are unlikely to access internet-based education*



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Source: Urban Institute analysis of 2014–18 American Community Survey data.

The share of students who do not have access to the internet or a computer is highly correlated with poverty (0.8), so high-poverty areas are likely to be dealing with this vulnerability. Rural communities in the Mississippi Delta and Native American communities across the country are among those with the most students without access. For example, the Navajo Nation in northwest New Mexico is the PUMA with the highest rates of students without internet or computer access (70 percent). But areas of cities like Dallas, Houston, Memphis, Phoenix, and San Antonio also have high rates of students without access (57 to 63 percent), driven primarily by a lack of computer access rather than lack of internet access.

Some school districts have launched their distance learning strategy in the following ways:

**Free devices and internet.** In areas where internet infrastructure is available, some districts are purchasing and distributing computing devices and hot spots for students to use. Others are partnering with internet providers to offer free or deeply discounted internet access to students.

**Professional development for teachers.** Importantly, teaching and learning via computer is new to most teachers and students, so school districts are providing professional development for teachers to learn these platforms and how to use them to share information with and collect information from students.

**Print packets.** Some districts are approaching remote learning by distributing print packets to students to avoid the equity issues that reliance on internet and computer access pose.

**Educational television.** Districts can engage students who do not have computer or internet access with learning materials available through public broadcast television programming like *Sesame Street*, an early childhood program linked to kindergarten readiness (Kearney and Levine 2015).

## Remote Learning Brings Diverse Challenges

COVID-19 has introduced challenges for students that layer on top of the ones that students may have already been facing. Some of these challenges are highly correlated with poverty, but others represent distinct vulnerabilities requiring distinct solutions and resources. In this brief, we explored the ways linguistic isolation, disability, economic vulnerability, single parents, crowded conditions, and digital access among students relate to poverty and how they vary across the country.

Although some of these conditions are correlated, their individual prevalences can inform the types of investments districts make to support remote learning, especially as districts assess the first few weeks of instruction. The CARES Act<sup>10</sup> includes \$13.5 billion for the Education Stabilization Fund, including \$3 billion that will go directly to states.<sup>11</sup> Districts' plans for continued distance learning should evolve with improved understanding of their students' situations and additional resources from the CARES Act and other federal aid. Monitoring implementation and take-up as new resources are made available will be crucial to ensuring that these investments end up serving their educational goals.

For the long term, it is critical for states and districts to develop more robust continuity of learning plans and student supports for public health crises, natural disasters, and other major disruptions to student learning. Developing and sharing best practices for serving student needs beyond poverty can inform future action.

## Appendix. Needs Estimates in Large School Districts

TABLE A.1

### Districts with the Highest Shares of Linguistically Isolated Children

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who are linguistically isolated	Margin of error
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	529,844	54%	64%	63%–65%
Texas	Aldine Independent School District	69,795	32%	34%	32%–36%
California	Alisal Union Elementary School District	14,257	25%	29%	26%–33%
California	Delano Joint Union High School District	14,174	27%	27%	23%–32%
Texas	Grand Prairie Independent School District	28,303	17%	27%	24%–31%
California	Coachella Valley Unified School District	15,792	28%	24%	21%–28%
California	Delano Union Elementary School District	10,501	33%	24%	19%–29%
California	Santa Maria-Bonita Elementary School District	23,318	20%	23%	20%–26%
New Jersey	Elizabeth City School District	24,340	19%	23%	20%–25%
Texas	Laredo Independent School District	19,213	43%	23%	19%–26%
Texas	Dallas Independent School District	197,267	26%	22%	21%–23%
California	Tulare Joint Union High School District	20,188	20%	22%	19%–25%
California	Los Banos Unified School District	10,453	23%	22%	16%–28%
California	Salinas Union High School District	37,904	18%	22%	20%–24%
Texas	Ysleta Independent School District	35,264	34%	21%	19%–24%
California	Pajaro Valley Joint Unified School District	21,216	17%	21%	17%–24%
New Jersey	Passaic City School District	15,772	28%	20%	17%–23%
California	Santa Ana Unified School District	51,390	21%	20%	18%–22%
Texas	Alief Independent School District	52,633	32%	19%	17%–21%
Massachusetts	Lawrence School District	15,312	27%	19%	16%–22%
California	Santa Maria Joint Union High School District	30,925	15%	19%	17%–22%
Texas	Duncanville Independent School District	15,847	18%	19%	15%–23%
New Jersey	Union City School District	10,946	28%	19%	16%–22%
Arizona	Isaac Elementary District	11,503	38%	19%	15%–23%
Texas	Clint Independent School District	10,128	34%	19%	14%–23%
Texas	Donna Independent School District	18,903	50%	18%	14%–23%
California	Salinas City Elementary School District	16,351	25%	18%	15%–22%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who are linguistically isolated	Margin of error
California	Hueneme Elementary School District	10,815	20%	18%	14%-22%
Pennsylvania	Reading School District	18,992	34%	18%	16%-21%
Texas	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District	30,241	38%	18%	15%-21%
Texas	Irving Independent School District	36,256	20%	18%	16%-20%
Illinois	Aurora East Unit School District 131	19,586	17%	18%	15%-21%
California	Porterville Unified School District	12,204	32%	18%	13%-23%
New Jersey	Perth Amboy City School District	10,185	24%	18%	14%-21%
Washington	Pasco School District	18,672	15%	17%	14%-21%
Connecticut	Danbury School District	12,281	18%	17%	13%-22%
Texas	Houston Independent School District	241,657	31%	17%	16%-18%
California	Franklin-McKinley Elementary School District	16,009	15%	17%	15%-20%
California	El Monte City School District	14,545	25%	17%	14%-20%
Texas	Sheldon Independent School District	10,172	22%	16%	8%-25%
Texas	Waco Independent School District	17,112	32%	16%	14%-19%
New Jersey	Trenton City School District	15,437	32%	16%	13%-19%
Texas	El Paso Independent School District	60,005	29%	16%	15%-18%
California	Centinela Valley Union High School District	26,690	19%	16%	14%-19%
Texas	Spring Branch Independent School District	36,401	23%	16%	14%-19%
Arizona	Alhambra Elementary District	20,530	34%	16%	12%-20%
Massachusetts	Lynn School District	15,607	21%	16%	13%-20%
California	Lynwood Unified School District	14,519	24%	16%	13%-19%
California	Hawthorne Elementary School District	13,475	24%	16%	12%-20%
California	Madera Unified School District	20,655	30%	16%	12%-20%
Texas	Manor Independent School District	10,530	18%	16%	11%-20%
California	Porterville Unified School District (9-12)	10,298	0%	16%	12%-19%
New Jersey	Paterson City School District	27,630	32%	16%	13%-18%
California	Tulare City Elementary School District	14,736	25%	16%	13%-18%
Illinois	Joliet Public School District 86	16,202	21%	16%	13%-18%
Texas	McAllen Independent School District	24,962	37%	16%	12%-20%
California	Kings Canyon Joint Unified School District	10,362	32%	16%	12%-19%
California	Garden Grove Unified School District	45,601	19%	16%	14%-17%
Texas	Mission Consolidated Independent School District	15,555	44%	15%	11%-20%
New Mexico	Gadsden Independent Schools	14,881	40%	15%	11%-19%
Massachusetts	Worcester School District	26,127	19%	15%	13%-18%
Texas	Fort Worth Independent School District	93,138	24%	15%	14%-16%
California	Oxnard Elementary School District	25,249	20%	15%	13%-18%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who are linguistically isolated	Margin of error
California	Glendale Unified School District	29,500	16%	15%	13%-17%
California	Central Union High School District	12,550	27%	15%	11%-19%
California	Hayward Unified School District	27,630	11%	15%	13%-17%
California	San Lorenzo Unified School District	13,528	11%	15%	11%-18%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

Note: SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

TABLE A.2

**Districts with the Highest Shares of Students with Disabilities**

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who have a disability	Margin of error
Massachusetts	Fall River School District	12,135	23%	15%	12%-18%
Pennsylvania	Allentown City School District	22,367	31%	14%	12%-16%
Massachusetts	Springfield School District	28,937	38%	14%	12%-16%
Pennsylvania	Reading School District	18,992	34%	13%	11%-15%
Pennsylvania	Lancaster School District	12,840	20%	13%	11%-16%
Texas	South San Antonio Independent School District	10,359	32%	13%	9%-16%
Louisiana	Tangipahoa Parish School District	22,685	23%	12%	10%-15%
New York	Rochester City School District	33,884	39%	12%	11%-14%
Michigan	Saginaw City School District	10,073	36%	12%	10%-14%
Alabama	Autauga County School District	10,106	19%	12%	9%-15%
Ohio	Cleveland Municipal School District	62,635	44%	12%	11%-13%
Pennsylvania	Erie City School District	15,953	33%	12%	10%-14%
Ohio	Toledo City School District	37,427	33%	12%	10%-13%
Michigan	Port Huron Area School District	10,874	25%	11%	10%-13%
Ohio	Youngstown City School District	10,600	41%	11%	9%-13%
Texas	Edgewood Independent School District	12,879	39%	11%	9%-13%
Texas	East Central Independent School District	10,568	19%	11%	9%-13%
New Jersey	Camden City School District	16,308	38%	11%	9%-13%
Texas	Southwest Independent School District	14,649	28%	11%	8%-13%



State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who have a disability	Margin of error
Texas	Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District	18,440	37%	11%	9%–13%
West Virginia	Harrison County School District	10,661	22%	11%	8%–13%
Michigan	Lansing Public School District	19,801	29%	11%	9%–12%
Virginia	Newport News City Public Schools	28,553	22%	11%	9%–12%
Ohio	Canton City School District	10,492	48%	11%	9%–12%
Louisiana	Acadia Parish School District	12,086	33%	10%	8%–13%
Michigan	Flint City School District	17,379	45%	10%	9%–12%
Indiana	Anderson Community School Corporation	10,296	27%	10%	8%–12%
Tennessee	Sullivan County School District	11,307	20%	10%	8%–12%
Arizona	Laveen Elementary District	12,490	19%	10%	8%–12%
Texas	Victoria Independent School District	15,377	20%	10%	8%–12%
Texas	Harlandale Independent School District	12,561	31%	10%	7%–13%
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	529,844	54%	10%	10%–10%
Virginia	Richmond City Public Schools	26,568	34%	10%	8%–11%
Massachusetts	Haverhill School District	10,173	15%	10%	7%–12%
Michigan	Pontiac City School District	11,978	32%	10%	7%–12%
New Jersey	Newark City School District	47,980	31%	10%	8%–11%
Rhode Island	Warwick School District	10,043	9%	10%	7%–12%
South Carolina	Darlington County School District	11,263	33%	10%	7%–12%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

Note: SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

TABLE A.3

**Districts with the Highest Shares of Those Working in an Economically Vulnerable Sector**

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of those 16 or older who work in an economically vulnerable sector	Margin of error
Tennessee	Sevier County School District	14,877	20%	47%	44%–49%
Nevada	Clark County School District	366,676	18%	46%	46%–47%
Florida	Osceola County School District	62,224	20%	46%	44%–48%
South Carolina	Horry County School District	44,099	23%	44%	43%–45%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of those 16 or older who work in an economically vulnerable sector	Margin of error
Arkansas	Bentonville Public Schools	19,332	6%	43%	41%-44%
California	Desert Sands Unified School District	28,046	17%	41%	39%-43%
California	Palm Springs Unified School District	24,904	25%	40%	38%-41%
California	Monterey Peninsula Unified School District	12,451	15%	39%	37%-41%
Florida	Orange County School District	214,565	22%	38%	37%-38%
California	Centinela Valley Union High School District	26,690	19%	38%	36%-39%
New Jersey	Greater Egg Harbor Regional School District	11,042	11%	37%	35%-40%
Florida	Lake County School District	48,727	17%	37%	36%-39%
Florida	Charlotte County School District	16,738	19%	37%	35%-38%
Georgia	Glynn County School District	13,906	24%	37%	34%-39%
California	Mountain View Elementary School District	11,299	30%	37%	35%-38%
Nevada	Washoe County School District	72,037	10%	36%	36%-37%
Florida	Collier County School District	47,601	17%	36%	35%-37%
Mississippi	Harrison County School District	18,089	24%	36%	34%-39%
California	Anaheim Elementary School District	37,965	21%	36%	35%-37%
Florida	Highlands County School District	12,826	38%	36%	33%-39%
South Carolina	Beaufort County School District	25,249	19%	36%	34%-38%
Florida	St. Lucie County School District	46,056	18%	36%	34%-38%
Florida	Polk County School District	110,465	22%	36%	35%-37%
Florida	Escambia County School District	46,210	22%	36%	35%-37%
California	Hawthorne Elementary School District	13,475	24%	36%	34%-38%
North Carolina	Onslow County Schools	27,057	21%	36%	34%-38%
California	South Bay Union School District	14,633	24%	36%	33%-38%
California	El Monte Union High School District	30,184	22%	36%	34%-37%
Texas	Alief Independent School District	52,633	32%	35%	34%-37%
California	Cajon Valley Union Elementary School District	29,397	27%	35%	34%-37%
California	El Monte City School District	14,545	25%	35%	33%-37%
Texas	Donna Independent School District	18,903	50%	35%	32%-39%
Florida	Bay County School District	27,978	20%	35%	34%-37%
Oregon	David Douglas School District 40	12,121	21%	35%	33%-37%
California	Jefferson Elementary School District	10,988	9%	35%	33%-37%
Texas	Laredo Independent School District	19,213	43%	35%	33%-37%
Texas	Del Valle Independent School District	13,171	22%	35%	33%-37%
California	Garden Grove Unified School District	45,601	19%	35%	34%-36%
Arkansas	Rogers Public Schools	17,650	13%	35%	33%-37%
Florida	Sarasota County School District	45,075	15%	35%	34%-36%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of those 16 or older who work in an economically vulnerable sector	Margin of error
Arizona	Creighton Elementary District	13,355	32%	35%	33%-37%
North Carolina	New Hanover County Schools	31,065	20%	35%	33%-36%
California	Coachella Valley Unified School District	15,792	28%	35%	33%-37%
South Dakota	Rapid City School District 51-4	16,135	17%	35%	33%-36%
Hawaii	Hawaii Department of Education	215,883	11%	35%	34%-35%
California	Magnolia Elementary School District	12,169	21%	35%	32%-37%
California	Anaheim Union High School District	72,224	17%	35%	34%-35%
California	Oceanside Unified School District	22,501	13%	35%	33%-36%
Tennessee	Sevier County School District	14,877	20%	47%	44%-49%
Nevada	Clark County School District	366,676	18%	46%	46%-47%
Florida	Osceola County School District	62,224	20%	46%	44%-48%
South Carolina	Horry County School District	44,099	23%	44%	43%-45%
Arkansas	Bentonville Public Schools	19,332	6%	43%	41%-44%
California	Desert Sands Unified School District	28,046	17%	41%	39%-43%
California	Palm Springs Unified School District	24,904	25%	40%	38%-41%
California	Monterey Peninsula Unified School District	12,451	15%	39%	37%-41%
Florida	Orange County School District	214,565	22%	38%	37%-38%
California	Centinela Valley Union High School District	26,690	19%	38%	36%-39%
New Jersey	Greater Egg Harbor Regional School District	11,042	11%	37%	35%-40%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

Note: SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

TABLE A.4

**Districts with the Highest Shares of Children Living with One Parent**

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living with one parent	Margin of error
Indiana	Gary Community School Corporation	12,943	49%	77%	73%-81%
New York	Rochester City School District	33,884	39%	76%	73%-79%
Ohio	Youngstown City School District	10,600	41%	73%	70%-77%
New Jersey	Camden City School District	16,308	38%	73%	68%-78%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living with one parent	Margin of error
Michigan	Flint City School District	17,379	45%	71%	68%-74%
New Jersey	East Orange City School District	10,859	25%	71%	66%-76%
Ohio	Cleveland Municipal School District	62,635	44%	71%	69%-73%
Ohio	Canton City School District	10,492	48%	71%	65%-77%
Connecticut	Hartford School District	21,065	35%	70%	66%-74%
Mississippi	Jackson Public School District	29,928	34%	69%	66%-73%
Virginia	Richmond City Public Schools	26,568	34%	69%	66%-71%
Michigan	Detroit City School District	120,016	46%	69%	67%-70%
Alabama	Birmingham City School District	29,129	35%	68%	65%-71%
Massachusetts	Springfield School District	28,937	38%	68%	64%-71%
Maryland	Baltimore City Public Schools	87,973	27%	67%	65%-68%
Michigan	Saginaw City School District	10,073	36%	65%	59%-71%
Georgia	Dougherty School District	15,927	38%	65%	61%-69%
New Jersey	Trenton City School District	15,437	32%	65%	60%-69%
Ohio	Dayton City School District	22,689	38%	65%	60%-69%
Missouri	St. Louis City School District	40,806	37%	64%	62%-67%
Illinois	Thornton Township High School District 205	21,860	21%	64%	60%-68%
Louisiana	Orleans Parish School District	55,290	34%	64%	62%-66%
Massachusetts	Lawrence School District	15,312	27%	64%	60%-68%
New Jersey	Newark City School District	47,980	31%	63%	61%-65%
Ohio	Toledo City School District	37,427	33%	63%	60%-65%
Ohio	Cincinnati City School District	48,913	32%	63%	61%-65%
New York	Syracuse City School District	21,954	40%	62%	59%-65%
Indiana	Warren Township Metropolitan School District	12,854	22%	62%	55%-69%
Connecticut	New Britain School District	12,088	30%	62%	57%-67%
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia City School District	237,858	34%	61%	60%-62%
Tennessee	Shelby County School District	131,700	34%	61%	59%-62%
Pennsylvania	Reading School District	18,992	34%	61%	57%-64%
New York	Albany City School District	11,538	30%	60%	56%-65%
Michigan	Pontiac City School District	11,978	32%	60%	54%-66%
Wisconsin	Milwaukee School District	110,320	32%	60%	58%-62%
New York	Buffalo City School District	40,903	37%	60%	57%-62%
South Carolina	Richland School District 1	25,889	26%	60%	56%-63%
Georgia	Atlanta City School District	61,673	28%	60%	57%-62%
Louisiana	Orleans Parish School District	55,290	34%	64%	62%-66%
Massachusetts	Lawrence School District	15,312	27%	64%	60%-68%
New Jersey	Newark City School District	47,980	31%	63%	61%-65%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living with one parent	Margin of error
Ohio	Toledo City School District	37,427	33%	63%	60%-65%
Ohio	Cincinnati City School District	48,913	32%	63%	61%-65%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

Note: SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

TABLE A.5

**Districts with the Highest Shares of Households with Crowded Conditions**

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of households with crowded conditions (estimate)	Margin of error
California	Santa Ana Unified School District	51,390	21%	31%	29%-32%
California	Alisal Union Elementary School District	14,257	25%	26%	24%-28%
California	Lynwood Unified School District	14,519	24%	25%	23%-27%
California	Santa Maria-Bonita Elementary School District	23,318	20%	25%	23%-27%
California	Mountain View Elementary School District	11,299	30%	24%	22%-26%
New Jersey	Passaic City School District	15,772	28%	22%	20%-24%
California	Hueneme Elementary School District	10,815	20%	21%	19%-24%
California	Anaheim Elementary School District	37,965	21%	20%	19%-21%
California	Baldwin Park Unified School District	13,371	20%	20%	18%-22%
California	Perris Elementary School District	11,764	23%	20%	17%-23%
California	Perris Union High School District	11,764	15%	20%	17%-23%
California	Hawthorne Elementary School District	13,475	24%	20%	18%-21%
California	Compton Unified School District	33,571	26%	20%	18%-21%
California	Magnolia Elementary School District	12,169	21%	19%	17%-22%
California	Centinela Valley Union High School District	26,690	19%	19%	18%-21%
California	Alum Rock Union Elementary School District	21,105	13%	19%	17%-21%
Texas	Donna Independent School District	18,903	50%	19%	16%-22%
California	El Monte Union High School District	30,184	22%	19%	18%-20%
California	Santa Maria Joint Union High School District	30,925	15%	18%	17%-20%
California	Montebello Unified School District	29,570	23%	18%	17%-19%
California	El Monte City School District	14,545	25%	17%	16%-19%
Arizona	Isaac Elementary District	11,503	38%	17%	15%-20%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of households with crowded conditions (estimate)	Margin of error
Texas	La Joya Independent School District	27,259	49%	17%	15%-19%
California	Salinas Union High School District	37,904	18%	17%	16%-18%
California	Franklin-McKinley Elementary School District	16,009	15%	17%	15%-18%
California	Paramount Unified School District	16,902	21%	17%	15%-18%
California	Fontana Unified School District	40,101	19%	17%	15%-18%
California	Greenfield Union School District	12,840	30%	16%	14%-19%
Texas	Laredo Independent School District	19,213	43%	16%	15%-18%
Arizona	Cartwright Elementary District	33,532	32%	16%	15%-18%
California	Anaheim Union High School District	72,224	17%	16%	15%-17%
California	San Bernardino City Unified School District	58,787	31%	16%	15%-17%
New York	East Ramapo Central School District (Spring Valley)	31,783	38%	16%	14%-17%
California	Garden Grove Unified School District	45,601	19%	16%	15%-16%
California	Pomona Unified School District	29,601	22%	15%	14%-16%
California	Oxnard Elementary School District	25,249	20%	15%	14%-17%
California	Jurupa Unified School District	20,797	18%	15%	14%-17%
California	Jefferson Elementary School District	10,988	9%	15%	13%-17%
California	Salinas City Elementary School District	16,351	25%	15%	13%-17%
California	South Bay Union School District	14,633	24%	15%	13%-17%
Arizona	Alhambra Elementary District	20,530	34%	15%	13%-17%
California	Rialto Unified School District	25,501	20%	15%	13%-16%

Source: Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

Note: SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.

TABLE A.6

**Districts with the Highest Shares of Children without Access to the Internet or a Computer**

*Geographic districts with more than 10,000 children ages 5 to 17*

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who have no internet or computer access	Margin of error
Texas	Laredo Independent School District	19,213	43%	56%	52%-60%
Texas	Brownsville Independent School District	44,293	41%	54%	50%-57%
New Mexico	Gallup-McKinley County Schools	13,388	45%	54%	48%-59%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who have no internet or computer access	Margin of error
New York	East Ramapo Central School District (Spring Valley)	31,783	38%	54%	50%-57%
New Jersey	Lakewood Township School District	30,530	32%	52%	48%-57%
Texas	La Joya Independent School District	27,259	49%	50%	45%-55%
Texas	San Benito Consolidated Independent School District	10,639	41%	50%	42%-58%
New Jersey	Perth Amboy City School District	10,185	24%	50%	43%-56%
Arizona	Isaac Elementary District	11,503	38%	49%	43%-55%
Arkansas	Rogers Public Schools	17,650	13%	47%	42%-52%
Texas	Pharr-San Juan-Alamo Independent School District	30,241	38%	43%	39%-47%
Texas	Donna Independent School District	18,903	50%	41%	35%-47%
California	Delano Joint Union High School District	14,174	27%	40%	36%-45%
California	Delano Union Elementary School District	10,501	33%	40%	34%-46%
North Carolina	Robeson County Schools	24,771	34%	38%	35%-40%
Texas	Port Arthur Independent School District	10,552	33%	37%	32%-43%
Michigan	Flint City School District	17,379	45%	37%	33%-42%
Indiana	Gary Community School Corporation	12,943	49%	37%	32%-42%
Florida	Polk County School District	110,465	22%	37%	35%-39%
Texas	Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District	12,103	29%	37%	31%-43%
New Mexico	Gadsden Independent Schools	14,881	40%	37%	32%-41%
Texas	Edgewood Independent School District	12,879	39%	36%	30%-41%
Texas	Edinburg Consolidated Independent School District	37,548	37%	35%	32%-39%
Michigan	Detroit City School District	120,016	46%	35%	33%-37%
Texas	Mission Consolidated Independent School District	15,555	44%	35%	30%-40%
Arizona	Alhambra Elementary District	20,530	34%	34%	30%-38%
California	Coachella Valley Unified School District	15,792	28%	34%	29%-39%
Kansas	Topeka Public Schools Unified School District 501	15,088	21%	32%	28%-37%
New York	Syracuse City School District	21,954	40%	32%	29%-36%
Texas	Harlingen Consolidated Independent School District	18,440	37%	32%	28%-36%
Puerto Rico	Puerto Rico	529,844	54%	32%	31%-32%
Texas	San Antonio Independent School District	57,332	35%	32%	29%-34%
Texas	Dallas Independent School District	197,267	26%	32%	30%-33%
Texas	Waco Independent School District	17,112	32%	31%	27%-35%
Texas	Beaumont Independent School District	21,252	28%	31%	27%-35%
Arizona	Creighton Elementary District	13,355	32%	31%	26%-35%
Texas	Eagle Pass Independent School District	12,867	35%	30%	25%-36%
New Jersey	Trenton City School District	15,437	32%	30%	26%-35%
Louisiana	Bossier Parish School District	22,691	18%	30%	26%-34%

State or territory	District	Children ages 5 to 17 (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children living in poverty (SAIPE estimate)	Share of children who have no internet or computer access	Margin of error
Indiana	Indianapolis Public Schools	49,434	33%	30%	27%-32%
Texas	Aldine Independent School District	69,795	32%	30%	27%-32%

**Source:** Urban Institute analysis of American Community Survey data from the National Historical Geographic Information System.

**Note:** SAIPE = Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, S.3548, 116th Cong. (2020).
- <sup>2</sup> We use five one-year samples rather than the five-year file because of a slight change in the question about high-speed internet access between 2015 and 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> Steven Manson, Jonathan Schroeder, David Van Riper, and Steven Ruggles, IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System, version 14.0 [Database]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS. 2019. <http://doi.org/10.18128/D050.V14.0>
- <sup>4</sup> Margins of error are calculated in accordance with the methods described in the US Census Bureau’s guide to 2018 ACS data (US Census Bureau 2018).
- <sup>5</sup> Lydia Breiseth, “Making the Connection: Communicating with ELLs and Their Families during School Closures,” Colorín Colorado!, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/coronavirus-ells-families>.
- <sup>6</sup> “Applying for Free and Reduced Price School Meals,” US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, last updated August 13, 2013, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals>.
- <sup>7</sup> “Stabilizing Children’s Lives: A Web of Stabilizing Supports,” Urban Institute, accessed April 16, 2020, <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/kids-context/projects/stabilizing-childrens-lives-web-stabilizing-supports>.
- <sup>8</sup> “COVID-19 Resources and Policy Considerations,” The Hunt Institute, accessed April 16, 2020, <http://www.hunt-institute.org/covid-19-resources/state-child-care-actions-covid-19/>.
- <sup>9</sup> Monica Anderson and Andrew Perrin, “Nearly One-in-Five Teens Can’t Always Finish Their Homework Because of the Digital Divide,” *FactTank* (blog), Pew Research Center, October 26, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/26/nearly-one-in-five-teens-cant-always-finish-their-homework-because-of-the-digital-divide/>.
- <sup>10</sup> Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, H.R.748, 116th Cong. (2020).
- <sup>11</sup> Rebecca R. Skinner, Cassandra Dortch, Joselynn H. Fountain, and Emma C. Nyhof, “Estimated State Grants under the Education Stabilization Fund Included in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act,” memorandum, March 27, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/states/f/?id=00000171-31b8-da0d-a17b-fffb32a90000>.

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