

PROPOSED STUDY QUESTIONS

How Restricting In-Person K-12 Education Due to COVID-19 Impacted Racial Equity

State of Washington Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee

December 2021

Study will analyze whether restricting in-person K-12 education during the pandemic had different impacts across racial groups

On February 29, 2020, Governor Inslee declared a state of emergency for all counties in Washington due to COVID-19. Subsequent proclamations restricted in-person education for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

School districts were allowed to reopen their buildings in the early part of the 2020-21 school year if they met certain conditions. These included rules and guidance from local health officers, the Department of Health, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Department of Labor and Industries. Districts reopened on varied timelines and used different modes of instruction, including online learning and hybrid learning. All districts were required to offer at least some in-person instruction by mid-April 2021.



At its June 2021 meeting, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee directed staff to analyze how restricting in-person education impacted educational opportunities and outcomes across racial groups.

Districts are receiving additional federal funding to address the pandemic's impact on student learning

In response to the pandemic, the federal government provided \$2.9 billion to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to distribute to local school districts. The districts must use a percentage of this funding to address the potential disproportionate impact of the pandemic on learning for certain subgroups of students. Districts must spend the additional money by September 2024.

This study will address the following questions:

1. Did restricting in-person K-12 education due to the COVID-19 pandemic have different impacts across racial groups?
 - a. What educational opportunities did Washington's school districts provide between March 2020 and June 2021 (e.g. access to instruction and qualified teachers, rigorous coursework, learning tools such as laptops and internet)?
 - b. Which modes of instruction were used (e.g. online, in-person, hybrid)?
 - c. Were there impacts to K-12 educational outcomes, such as test scores, on-time grade-level progression, graduation rates, and drop-out rates?
2. How are school districts addressing any impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on racial disparities in education?

Districts did not administer annual statewide assessments at the end of the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years. This may limit JLARC staff's analysis of educational outcomes.

Study Timeframe

Preliminary Report: September 2022

Proposed Final Report: November 2022

Study Team

Team Lead	Aaron Cavin	(360) 786-5194	aaron.cavin@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst	Vivien Chen	(360) 786-5190	vivien.chen@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst	Scott Hancock	(360) 786-5193	scott.hancock@leg.wa.gov
Research Analyst	Joshua Karas	(360) 786-5298	joshua.karas@leg.wa.gov
Project Intern	Stephanie Seto	(360) 786-5689	stephanie.seto@leg.wa.gov
Project Coordinator	Eric Thomas	(360) 786-5182	eric.thomas@leg.wa.gov
Legislative Auditor	Keenan Konopaski	(360) 786-5187	keenan.konopaski@leg.wa.gov

JLARC Study Process

