



Dear Valued Partner,

Like many of you, we are still in shock from the events that took place in Washington, D.C. this week. We stand with our colleagues and community in our devotion to the principles of democracy and respect for the rule of law.

In early March, as schools tackled the difficult task of shifting to educate students during the pandemic, CREDO staff resolved to use our expertise to support policymakers and educators. In the absence of any actual assessments, CREDO recognized our unique position to offer information concerning the open question on the [academic impact of COVID on the students across the country](#). In partnership with 20 states, we calculated "COVID Slide" measures which were informed in part by the Northwest Evaluation Association's estimates of "summer slide" – the erosion of learning that typically happens from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next.

We recognize that the future of student assessments, accountability, and data in K-12 public education will remain uncertain in 2021 and beyond. We remain dedicated to supporting our partners and the larger policy audience with timely research reported quickly.

We shared the following considerations with President-Elect Joseph Biden's Review Team for the U.S. Department of Education and we look forward to finding opportunities to support the Biden administration and your organizations in the work to reshape U.S. K-12 education policy.

The researchers at CREDO at Stanford University extend congratulations to Miguel Cardona on the nomination of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education and express gratitude and appreciation to President-Elect Joseph Biden's Education Transition Team for their service and contributions to future education policy and practice.

We face a dire need for tough federal leadership that protects the futures of all students. This will require transformational attention to institutions and practices and policies that have actively diminished the learning of black and brown and poor kids. As you consider the policy and organizational changes to advance to the President and next Education Secretary, you face a fundamental choice. Do you have the welfare and interests of students at the center of your recommendations, or not? We believe the greatest contribution the Transition Team can make is to urge a shift away from adult-centered policies to student-centered ones.

We applaud President Biden for his commitment to rely on scientific evidence to guide our country out of the current pandemic crisis. We urge the Transition Team to recommend a similar approach for K-12 education; the regular and continued use of performance measurement and other empirical analyses should inform the education choices needed to address the serious impact the pandemic has had on students. We also urge the Transition Team to recommend greatly expanding the use of carefully designed and evaluated innovation pilots to accelerate learning at the organization and systems levels.

Our primary aim at CREDO is to support educators and policymakers in using the insights that come from sound research to shape program and policy development. As the Education Transition Team considers what guidance to offer to President Biden and his choice of Education Secretary, we hope the team will consider the current landscape in K-12 public education and the urgent necessity it signals for fundamental shifts in federal education policy, strategies and tactics.

- These extraordinary times and their impact on student learning require all federal education policies to make the top priority the academic and non-academic recovery of students. More than a catch-phrase, this standard should guide the review of the United States Department of Education and its programs.
- As more evidence emerges, including [work](#) done by CREDO, the magnitude of the learning losses and the dramatic disparities across communities paint a chilling [future](#) for our nation. If not corrected, the impacts of the pandemic and subsequent school disruptions will damage the life chances of millions of students and the economic and social well-being of our nation throughout the remainder of this century.
- The [depths of inequality](#) that preceded the pandemic have been exacerbated, leaving preponderant shares of minority and low-income students even further behind than before.

In our view, the Education Inequality Pandemic is even worse than Coronavirus. With no hyperbole or exaggeration, we believe the course of federal education policy over the next four years will determine the future of our country: will we foster an upward spiral or a downward spiral?

The CREDO team will continue its commitment to creating stronger and more equitable outcomes for all students. We look forward to finding opportunities to support the Biden administration in its work to reshape U.S.K-12 education policy.

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