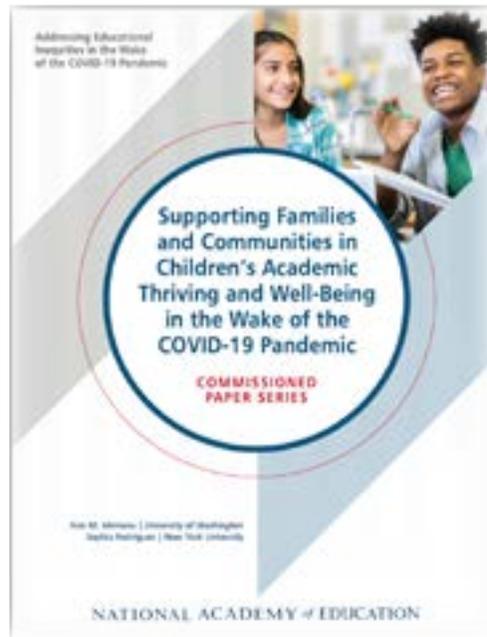




Educational Equity in a Post-Pandemic World. What's Next?



For some Americans, the pandemic has faded into a distant memory. For others, it continues to resonate throughout daily life.

As part of a new [series](#) of National Academy of Education essays focusing on educational equity in the wake of the pandemic, NEPC Fellow [Ann Ishimaru](#) of the University of Washington and her co-author [Sophia Rodriguez](#) of New York University [explore](#) how COVID impacted children and families in minoritized communities. Their essay gives particular attention to supports that can help improve learning and well-being.

The pandemic-era experiences of minoritized students were as diverse as the students themselves, Ishimaru and Rodriguez write. These students' lives were also impacted in ways that often differed from the experiences of white and affluent peers. For example, many Black, Asian and Latino families kept their children at home longer than did White families. While this led to lengthier disruptions to formal schooling, it also helped parents—who often observed that their children seemed happier, more relaxed and more open to learning during the shutdowns—identify the ways in which schooling itself had harmed their children by subjecting them to harsh and disproportionately applied discipline measures, microaggressions, and lowered expectations.

The authors write:

[T]he current priorities and experiences of youth, families, and communities in the wake of the pandemic suggest the need to address socioemotional well-being, cultural identity, history, economic stability, and academic success as integrated and connected parts of the broader, holistic development of children and young people.

To address these issues, Ishimaru and Rodriguez urge schools to approach families in minoritized communities as “fellow leaders/educational policy thinkers.” Specifically, the researchers propose that schools embrace four core principles:

1. Collaboration that begins with family and community priorities, interests, concerns, knowledge, and resources;
2. Transformation of power;
3. Construction of reciprocity and agency; and
4. The pursuit of change through collective inquiry.

What do these principles look like in real life? Examples include youth mental health partnerships that can provide services to the entire family; parent-teacher home visits that are voluntary (for families) and compensated (for educators); parent leadership training institutes; support for youth organizing; and opportunities for families to help design—rather than simply participate in—interventions and supports.

Of course, all this work requires resources that, at the federal level, are in a precarious state right now. Federal COVID emergency funding is ending at the same time that the Trump administration is chaotically dismantling the Department of Education. The removal of these supports, however, does not change the reality facing communities, as described by Ishimaru and Rodriguez.

NEPC Resources on Equity and Social Justice

This newsletter is made possible in part by support provided by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice: <http://www.greatlakescenter.org>

The National Education Policy Center (NEPC), a university research center housed at the University of Colorado Boulder School of Education, sponsors research, produces policy briefs, and publishes expert third-party reviews of think tank reports. NEPC publications are written in accessible language and are intended for a broad audience that includes academic experts, policymakers, the media, and the general public. Our mission is to provide high-quality information in support of democratic deliberation about education policy. We are guided by the belief that the democratic governance of public education is strengthened when policies are based on sound evidence and support a multiracial society that is inclusive, kind, and just. Visit us at: <http://nepc.colorado.edu>