

Transcript

*FedTalk: Education in a Post-COVID Era*

Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

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*Presentation*

**Introduction:** Margie Wright-McGowan, Executive Vice President for People, Culture, Communications, and Engagement, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

**Moderator:** Treye Johnson, Program Manager for Economic Inclusion, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland

**Panelists:**

- Heather Boughton, Director, Office of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics, Ohio Department of Education
- Lisa Gray, President, Ohio Excels
- Marilyn Sampilo, PhD, Center for Pediatric Behavioral Health, Cleveland Clinic
- Dr. Bill Wagner, Co-Director, First Ring Schools Collaborative, Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio

**Margie Wright-McGowan:** My name is Margie Wright-McGowan. And I'm the executive vice president and chief human resources officer for the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. And it is my pleasure to kick off this program, where panelists will discuss how COVID-19 has impacted education. Education is a personal passion of mine. It's a topic that I don't think we can talk about enough. And so I'm thrilled to hear the dialogue that's going to transpire today. As you know, education is the topic of economic inclusion and opportunity, and has also been noted in President Loretta Mester's [Reflections piece on education](#), and indeed can be transformational in communities to provide economic opportunities for all. As stated in that piece, a high-quality kindergarten experience has been shown to translate into higher educational attainment and economic benefits later in life.

When children fall behind early on, it's very difficult for them to catch up. The differences in access to high-quality education at the pre-K, kindergarten, and elementary school level can influence a person throughout his or her life. As an HR professional, education plays a vital role in ensuring that all people have the opportunity to develop the skills and the knowledge that's needed in our rapidly changing economy. I'm now thrilled to turn the program over to the moderator of our discussion, Treye Johnson. He's the program manager for the Cleveland Fed's Program on Economic Inclusion. Treye, over to you.

**Treye Johnson:** Thank you very much, Margie, for that introduction. And thank you everybody for being with us today. I'm really excited to be here for this discussion and happy that you all chose to join us today. So, like Margie said, my name is Treye Johnson, and I work on the Program on Economic Inclusion at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. The program is actually a fairly recently launched effort to utilize qualitative and quantitative research to help us better understand the barriers that prohibit people in communities from achieving economic inclusion and also to help us identify policies and practices that will help us overcome those obstacles.

So, a few housekeeping notes before we get started. As this is a Teams meeting, only our speakers will be on camera. So, if you are just an attendee viewing this, you will not be able to be on camera or to unmute yourself. That being said, we do hope that you will use the chat function to engage and ask questions. We will also be putting up links to various reports throughout our report and other research and resources throughout the event. We hope that you will click on those links. And like I said, be active through the chat. So, I guess we'll just jump in and get started.

One of the things personally that I really appreciate about the *FedTalk* series is the fact that it gives us a chance to highlight great work that's happening at the Cleveland Fed that, for the most part, people don't know is going on. This is something that also happens through community development. Recently about two months ago, we had our 2021 Policy Summit, which was focused on economic resilience and communities.

And over three days, we had 19 different sessions where we talked about issues related to housing, workforce and economic development, small business, racial equity, economic resilience. And one of the refrains that we heard quite often was that people were just like, "wow, I didn't know the Cleveland Fed cared about these issues." And I feel like education is another one of those issues. So, as Margie mentioned in her comments, this is something that for many of our staff is near and dear to our hearts, but it also is connected to the work we do. And Margie referenced President Mester's letter, but in that reflection that she wrote in May 2021, she talked about how education can change the economic path for individuals, as well as the future generations of their family, and then the community at large. And that in reality, access to education and all forms is essential for the Fed as we pursue our goal of reaching maximum employment. So, [I] just think it's important to point that out.

Today I'm pleased to be joined by four wonderful panelists who are coming to this conversation, each with a different approach, but I think is valuable in the discussion around education and particularly around the impact that COVID has had on education and how we are reacting and

plan to react in the future to make sure that we can remove the barriers that people are going to be facing as a result of that.

So, I'll jump in now, introducing our four panelists. I'm not going to read their bios. They were linked in the invitation to this event. So, I won't read them, but first we're going to have **Heather Boughton**, who is the director of the Office Of Research, Evaluation and Advanced Analytics at the Ohio Department Of Education. Thank you, Heather, for joining us today. Next, we have **Lisa Gray**, who is the president of Ohio Excels. Thank you, Lisa, for joining us. Third, we have **Dr. Marilyn Sampilo**, who works with the Center for Pediatric Behavioral Health at the Cleveland Clinic. Dr. Sampilo, thank you for being with us. And last, but certainly not least, we have **Dr. Bill Wagner**, who, starting on October 1, will be the co-director of the First Ring Schools Collaborative for the Educational Service Center of Northwest Ohio. So, thank you all for joining us.

I'm going to dive right in. There are many aspects to education and to the educational challenges that we're facing at this moment. There are also many ways to address those challenges. So, I'd love to hear about the work that each of you and your organizations are doing to help address those challenges. So, let's start with you, Heather.

**Heather Boughton:** Great. Thank you, Treye, and good afternoon, everyone. Very pleased to be here with you all for this conversation. So, at the department several years ago, the state launched Each Child Our Future, which is Ohio's strategic plan for education. And while that plan was launched before the pandemic started, it's really served as a north star for us in terms of helping us think through how we can support districts as they support our students through this pandemic. And that really is the key role of the department is to better understand our district's needs during this time. And rally our resources, create new resources, identify partnerships that can help districts meet their students' needs. One of the ways in which we do that is through data use. I work in the research world. And so of course I need to mention data use, and we've been able to use our data in a number of different ways to help support districts throughout this process.

We're able to use that to better understand needs, and that can range from very early on doing outreach with our districts to ask them what is it that you need in this moment? What's most top of mind for you? And back in March of 2020, that really, those needs focused on broadband access and technology needs. We're able to use that kind of information to drive conversations at the state level about resource allocation. But we can also use our data to understand the impact of the pandemic on students. And we'll get into that, I believe, a little bit more later. But we have a lot of information that can help us understand where students are after a year of going through this pandemic together. And again, can use that information to create necessary resources, make

connections to resources and partnerships and opportunities, and to help drive the conversation at the state level about the needs in the education sector.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. Thank you for that, Heather. Next, I guess we'll go to Lisa. Lisa, if you wouldn't mind sharing.

**Lisa Gray:** Sure. Thank you for having me. And thank you, especially to Margie, who is one of the board members at Ohio Excels. So, I appreciate being with you today. Ohio Excels is a relatively new organization. Many on the call may not be aware of us. We were created about three years ago by leaders of the business community to more consistently and deeply engage the business community's voice in improving educational outcomes for students. So, our role in all of this work is really to be a partner to communicate the needs of the business community. What is it that they need? What are the knowledge and skills that students need to have? And so we do a lot of work at the state policy level, have a very close working relationship with ODEE [the Office of Distance Education and eLearning] and the state board. Paolo DeMaria, the retiring state superintendent, has been very thoughtful in engaging the business community in education conversations.

We work a lot with the general assembly, the governor's office, and other business organizations. And our goal is really just to make sure that all kids are achieving at the levels they need to be successful, whether that's going immediately into the world of work, the military, going on to higher ed. And so I think that it's fair to say that perhaps in the past, the business community has stood on the sidelines, maybe, and criticized. It is our hope that we're going to gauge in a productive way, working with, through the business advisory councils, statewide policy, really just articulating and advocating for the supports and resources that students need.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. That's great to hear that the business community is taking such an active approach in this. So, Dr. Sampilo, would you be willing to share with us some of the work you're doing with the Center for Pediatric Behavioral Health and this other work that you're engaged with?

**Marilyn Sampilo:** Absolutely. Thank you again for having me for this event. I'm excited to be a part of it. So, at the Center for Pediatric Behavioral Health, we really are focused on the behavioral health and mental health of children in Cleveland and surrounding areas. And one of the things that we know in terms of mental health is just how closely linked it is to academic achievement and academic performance. And so really trying to help bridge some of the equity gaps by providing opportunities and programming, where we have mental health professionals being able to be more closely linked to children and their families by placing them in places like the primary care center or using a school-based mental health program, where we can sort of target and identify children early on, maybe struggling with some issues that could potentially

impact their school performance. So, from an equity lens, we're really trying to increase access to mental health providers in places where children are very comfortable, that they're used to, and that they have that level of trust already built in.

That's something that we're doing just from our service delivery platform. But in addition to that, we really are trying to focus on issues of equity broadly. So, really trying to partner with community agencies throughout Cleveland to see how we can help support the well-being and sort of uplift the wellness of children throughout Cleveland and the surrounding areas. We're really focused on working with community-based or minority-based, community-based organizations. We're already doing sort of that boots on the ground work. So, those grassroots organizations who are very familiar with these communities and seeing how best that we can support and sort of amplify their work.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. That's great. Thank you very much. Before I go to Bill, I do want to make a note. I know that I'm seeing a note here that some people are having a few technical issues. I do want to let everybody know that this event will be recorded and will be posted on the Cleveland Fed website. So, I do apologize if anybody has missed the start of the event. But you will have the ability to go back and watch the whole thing afterward. So, I wanted to make sure I announced that. Dr. Wagner, you care to weigh in on that opening question?

**Bill Wagner:** Absolutely. And certainly as a superintendent, we are the lucky beneficiaries of all of the work of all of the panelists here. And you can tell that the collaboration and cooperation of all of the different organizations that they represent certainly benefits the teaching and learning of the children K-12 and beyond that we represent as superintendents of schools. The Educational Service Center of Northeast Ohio, and the First Ring of Schools Collaborative are just two other organizations that really help bring school superintendents and school districts together to try to help the school personnel, the school administrators, to talk about the different things that are occurring in the schools and try and help come up with solutions. A lot of times, they are the individuals that are in the trenches and trying to make the decisions on a day-to-day, sometimes hour-to-hour, minute-to-minute basis. As things are unfolding very rapidly and trying to make the best decisions for the safety and welfare of their children and their staff and their families.

And a lot of times, you're dealing with conflicting information. You're dealing with things that are coming from a variety of different sources. And that's where we depend on a lot of information that is coming from these other panelists. So, the Educational Service Center and the First Ring Schools Collaborative and other organizations, the Ohio Department of Health, the local health departments, all of these organizations have been really beneficial in helping the school superintendents to really make those decisions and make them work. These organizations helped with masking mandates, quarantining, connecting with these organizations, legislative

updates, partnering with the Ohio Department of Education, certainly. And certainly working through best practices and sharing ideas between districts and really curating the research that was coming down the pipeline, as it was developed, to be able to go through the huge amount of information that was coming out, trying to whittle it down to the best information and share that, because time was limited for everyone. And being able to share that best with superintendents so they could make the best possible decisions.

### *Q&A*

**Trey Johnson:** Thank you very much. I understand that. And I do remember that. As a parent, I remember just recognizing how quickly my son's principal and the school administration had to make decisions. And it was an interesting thing to work on the fly like that. So, I guess it feels like a good transition to our next question. So we know that COVID impacted education in significant ways, but I guess I'd love to talk a little bit about like what the impact of the COVID disruption has been? So, what do we know about the way that, or about the impacts of the way that COVID has changed our education? Heather, I guess I'll kick it back to you for now.

**Heather Boughton:** OK. Thank you. So, we certainly have a lot of anecdotal information about what's happened with students, and we know that this has been a very disruptive year for teachers and students alike and cannot say enough about the great work that Ohio's teachers have done to meet their students' needs. And we do have some insights statewide into the impact. Last February, the department released a data insights report on the pandemic's impact on students. And that was our first statewide look using fall enrollment data, some limited attendance data, and then our kindergarten readiness assessments from fall 2019 and the fall third-grade English language arts test. And what we can tell you is that there are some concerns. So, in particular, participation in the kindergarten readiness assessment and the fall third-grade English language arts test was down.

And for those students who did participate, performance scores were lower. And that is attributable to the pandemic. Scores were particularly lower among those students who spent the most time in districts that were primarily remote. And then the other thing I want to note is I mentioned attendance and chronic absenteeism. We've not yet released our statewide chronic absenteeism rates from the past year, but the data that we do have from some of our partners tells us that absenteeism rates increased and especially so among our most vulnerable students. And this is really, really important because not only when students are in school, they have access to so many wonderful whole-child supports, but that this also gives them the opportunity to access the high-quality instruction that their teachers are receiving. And absenteeism does have a long-term impact on students' outcomes. And so when we see those rates increase and the absenteeism gaps increase across student subgroups, that's something that we want to pay close attention to.

**Trey Johnson:** Gotcha. So, if I can ask you another quick follow-up question. I know that you said limited data and working at the Fed, not being a researcher, but understanding that sometimes it's not as easy as just like, "oh, I want to research something." You have to have sources of data. Are there other data pieces that you are maybe paying more attention to now that weren't necessarily on your radar before the pandemic? Or are there pieces that you guys are looking for? I'd love to hear a little bit about data and what's available, what's not. What are you guys looking for?

**Heather Boughton:** Sure. I would love to talk about that. We actually have a wealth of information at the state about what's happening in schools and districts. And so we're really fortunate in that respect. The timing of the data is a little tricky for us. I'll say that really districts have even far more valuable data than what the state has because they have it in a much more timely fashion than we do. So, at the time that we released our first data insights report, we had relatively limited information. As I said, our attendance data, we did not have statewide attendance data. We had it from a sample of about 10 districts working with one of our partners. We will soon have statewide information on attendance and chronic absenteeism, as well as the results from the spring 2021 assessments. And so while those have always been very important for us to pay attention to, they really represent a way of capturing in very concrete terms, what the impact of the pandemic has been.

So, we're paying close attention to that. I also would like to note, though, that we try not to limit ourselves to just sort of the strictly education data points that we collect at the state level. We also have a partnership with the [Ohio] Department of Medicaid to help districts and schools understand their Medicaid enrolled students. Health outcomes and health supports, as Dr. Sampilo referenced. We have a lot of concerns about our students' mental health and well-being and physical well-being during this time. And so we are able to produce and use that health-oriented information to help districts better understand their students' needs. And we also started looking at unemployment data, especially in the spring of 2020, and tried to help the state policy makers and others understand that education does not exist in a vacuum. And the changes happening in other sectors will impact our students and their families as well. And so those are some of the sort of non-education data points that we like to pay close attention to as well.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. Thank you so much. So, Lisa, I'm going to come to you next. It looked like you were going to jump off, so I wasn't sure if you were ready. If you knew I was coming to you or if you just wanted to piggyback off of what Heather was saying, but I think it was interesting as you were talking about those non-education data points, and you talked about unemployment rates and things. So, I'd love to just hear, what's the business community's perspective on this? What is the business community hearing? What are your thoughts on the question?

**Lisa Gray:** Well, I think the business community has many of the same concerns that the education community has. We know that learning has been disrupted for all students, but we also know that the disruptions have had a disparate impact on some of our most vulnerable kids. And so it is something that we have to pay attention to. I think we're believers that while there has been disruptions, we can overcome those disruptions with really important interventions that are going to be provided by our local teachers, and districts, and local partners, whether that's mental health partners, whether that's the business community and community partners coming in and working with schools. The data is chilling. When we look at some of the chronic absenteeism data, especially in some of our big urban areas, I think it's not a surprise that some of our students were not in classrooms.

Many of them had to work to help support their families during the pandemic, but we've got to get those kids back into school. I think we have to be honest about the fact that some of our students are not necessarily going to be ready to graduate in 12 years like others. And so I think we need to begin socializing this notion that some of our students are probably going to require more time if they're going to graduate with the knowledge and skills that I think the business and education communities have identified are necessary for success. And so when you look at some of the numbers from the business community, I don't think we've yet seen the impact of the pandemic. Our businesses, especially our small businesses, are struggling to find employees. What they will say is it is the lack of necessary skills. But to be honest, those concerns were there pre-pandemic as well.

We expect that that's going to be exacerbated in the coming years. When you look at higher education enrollment, the numbers are down all across the board. Whether you look at white students, Black students, Native American students, Asian students. And if you look at that down the road, that is certainly going to have an impact on Ohio. We're already behind the rest of the country in terms of post-high school credentials or degrees. We were making terrific progress as a state before the pandemic hit. And so that's an area where I think we need to continue to focus. The business community, I think, is very interested in being partners at both the state level and the local level. We've been working a lot with the statewide business associations. So, think chamber business, roundtable, and NFIB [National Federation of Independent Business], to really help them think about how they can utilize the business advisory councils that every district is required to have so that they can engage at the local level with their schools in their districts.

So, we're very concerned. And we know that if we're being honest, that this is going to be a heavy lift for everybody. We cannot just expect our schools and our teachers to do it themselves. There are academic challenges, but as Heather, and Dr. Sampilo, and Dr. Wagner have indicated there are also significant mental health and behavioral health challenges. It is an area that we are



more and more getting involved in. How do we address some of the non-academic barriers that are in the way of student learning? And I think that those sorts of issues were problematic prior to the pandemic. We struggled to find the necessary resources.

I think Dr. Sampilo has talked about a lot of the work that they're doing, but those numbers have grown significantly with kids being isolated, and at home, and away from their peers, and away from their teachers. And I think we have to be really thoughtful about how we address those whole-child issues at the same time that we need to have a focus on academic success. And so how do we bring those two things together and really make sure that we're paying attention to sort of the whole child, not just the academic piece of it, but not forgetting the academic piece?

**Trey Johnson:** Gotcha. Thank you for that. So, I'm going to switch it up a little bit. So, I want to go to Dr. Wagner because I know we've talked about the schools and I think there were some points when Heather was making about school districts having data that maybe the state didn't have. And then also, just some of the things that schools, the importance and schools being on the front lines. So, I don't know if you'd like to, if you can talk a bit about kind of the impacts and what you're seeing and as a school administrator. And also if you could project as well about your role starting in the future.

**Bill Wagner:** Absolutely. I could not agree enough with what Lisa has said there is that we need to move away from the idea that teaching and learning is just simply about helping students consume data and be able to regurgitate it. It hasn't been that for a long, long time. And the concept that we were going to be able to just get them caught up by helping them learn more, faster, and caught up that way, that's not going to be the way it's going to happen. We're going to have to be far more creative. Our teachers are doing incredible work and trying to help our students re-engage, reconnect. But it's much more than just the intellectual and academic component of this. There's going to be some long-term work that's going to need to be done.

And it's not just academic. It's the whole child, it's psychological, it's mental, it's health-based, it's wellness. And if it's one thing that we've learned really deep down, at least from the K-12 perspective, is that we have to do a far better job at understanding how it's all interconnected in the learning process for our kids. From the very first time they walked through our doors to the point where they come through to the graduation stage, the health and the wellness and the physical well-being and how that impacts their academics. And I've always been a big advocate of each and all, every individual student has to be treated as a unique individual, and they have unique needs, and they have unique circumstances. And we can't treat kids as a group necessarily anymore.

You really have to treat them as individual people and deal with them and help them kind of learn how they learn best. And that's been one of the very clear messages that this pandemic has

taught us and that's helped us. I think, as that great big aha moment has become very clear for us that when we're able to connect with our individual, those relationships have become even more important. That's helped us with those attendance issues. If we can establish and strengthen those relationships with our kids, then that gets them to school. Even if it has to be in a remote scenario. That keeps them logged on, that keeps them plugged in, that keeps them engaged.

And that's what education is all about. That helps them keep going. And as Lisa had mentioned, this is going to take a long time and a lot of creativity, and this is not necessarily going to say the kids are going to make it through in 12 or 13 years. And we're going to have to change the system in order to help these kids transition into that next phase beyond high school and be successful. And we're going to as society and the business and legislature and all of the other organizations that help our kids make it into that next stage, we're going to have to be the creative ones that build those systems that allow them to make that transition.

**Trey Johnson:** So, much there that when I respond to, but I also want to get to Dr. Sampilo. So, I think we're going to come back. I'm making myself a couple of notes. We're going to circle back to some of this. I think this is so much rich stuff in that answer you had there. So, Dr. Sampilo, I'd love to hear about what we learned. In particular, the report that you coauthored on the impacts of COVID on Hispanic and Latinx communities. And then also I think that also allow the pivot a little bit as well to my next question was really going to be about how COVID has had an outside impact on communities of color and low-income communities. And so I see those as connected. So, hopefully you can kind of bridge those two questions and figure out what's there and I may have a few follow-ups as well.

**Marilyn Sampilo:** Of course, absolutely. So, definitely. So, we knew that from just a national landscape perspective that the COVID-19 pandemic was having a disproportionate impact on communities of color or marginalized or historically minoritized communities. What we wanted to do here in Ohio is just get a better glimpse or better sort of a snapshot of what that impact looked like on one particular community, with our Hispanic and Latinx community throughout Ohio. And we know there's a lot of diversity just within that community, but we wanted to just even begin to get some data as Heather and Lisa and Bill have alluded to. The importance of data.

Just to get some data on what this impact looked like, both from a quantitative standpoint, and then also a qualitative standpoint. So, starting in 2020, fall semester of 2020, we basically undertook a survey. We administered the survey, utilized our connections through various community-based organizations to disseminate a survey to Hispanic and Latinx individuals throughout Ohio, really targeting four main regions, the Toledo area, the Cleveland area, the Columbus area, and the Cincinnati area where a lot of our Hispanic and Latinx communities are housed.

And so in administering that survey, we wanted to get some quantitative data. And then we also held regional focus groups with Hispanic and Latinx individuals in these different communities to get more of the human side of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their families and on those communities. Overall, what we found is that for the majority of our families, their biggest concerns were really their children's well-being. And that really stemmed from feeling like their education was disrupted. And so of the respondents to our survey, 91 percent had stated that they experienced either a school closure or a childcare center closure that really had a significant impact on their family functioning and their child's functioning. And then 82 percent of respondents said that school just was disrupted in general for their children. And that is just the academic sort of the school side of things. But to Heather and Lisa and Bill's points earlier, the intent of the survey was to kind of capture the general impact of the pandemic.

So, not just academics, but also the economic impact on families, the healthcare impact in terms of morbidity and more even mortality, along with the COVID-19 pandemic. And the experience of that. And what we found is that very similar across all groups is that families experience an immense amount of stress with the pandemic, whether it was employment concerns, loss of employment, loss of insurance, not being able to get their basic essentials, sickness, and unfortunately sometimes death of family members or loved ones from the virus. And all of that had a significant impact on whether or not families could provide the needed help and support for the children's schooling and that ongoing virtual environment. If you have families that are really stretched thin, cannot take off from work, cannot be present during those virtual learning experiences because of that variety of circumstances, it allows children or provides an environment where children may not necessarily have as much of the support as they need in order to fully engage in those virtual learning experiences.

So really, just looking at totality of family stress, totality of household stress, and how would that then filter down to children's academic functioning, their mental health functioning. And what we also found in terms of the focus groups is really having a lot of concerns from families around unreliable access to broadband access or unreliable access to computers, tablets, things to even really engage to begin with in the virtual learning process. Families with limited English proficiency who had difficulty navigating sort of that transition to virtual learning.

You might've had children who were a little bit more fluent in English, but you had parents who had maybe more limited English proficiency, and then just struggling a little bit with how best to support their children and how best to connect their children to those virtual learning experiences. And so really, overall, what we found is just an immense amount of stress, which again, is sort of a general and a broad experience for a lot of families. But for our Hispanic and Latinx families who have been historically more vulnerable for a variety of reasons, experience more barriers, those barriers were just compounded or exacerbated by the pandemic, which then

led to more concerns with school functioning, mental health functioning, and just sort of overall physical functioning as well.

The other thing that really came out from that report was a really big emphasis on the mental health impact and the lasting mental health impact that will continue to evolve and continue to unfold as this pandemic continues. But as Lisa mentioned, prior to the pandemic, we already had sort of a looming behavioral health crisis just in terms of behavioral health workforce and behavioral health need, and that not necessarily matching up. And the pandemic has just sort of exacerbated that. So, we are seeing a tremendous amount of need from the behavioral health standpoint. I know behavioral health is very stretched in not just in Ohio, but nationally. And so really trying to be more creative and innovative on how can we provide more additional mental health support to these children and families, particularly in communities that are more vulnerable or that have historically had more risk factors that may be associated with more negative outcomes.

**Trey Johnson:** So, I want to throw out a follow-up question that was in the chat that I think relates to this, but I'll put it to everyone. So, if anyone has a response to this, feel free to share with this one. But there was some question about how the parents and caretakers, one, contribute to the healing and care for their students as they returned to school, but then also how can they best support educators during this year, which is going to be a challenging one? There's going to be a lot of emotion, but there's also going to be change for students, whether they were virtual or hybrid or all in person. And just how do parents and caretakers support both our children and the teachers and administrators? So, I'll put it out there to anyone. I feel like it's very relevant as we're talking about the whole child and not just the academic side. So, whoever feels the need to jump in. I would welcome you to do that.

**Lisa Gray:** This is Lisa. I guess I would just say that we need to have grace in all of this. I actually think that this year may be more difficult. There's so much pushback around going back to school or keeping kids at home or wearing masks or not wearing masks. And how do you social distance? I think that there is a lot of pressure from both sides on that argument. And I think we have to trust that our educators are making the best decisions for our students and our staff. I think as employers, we have to be very supportive of the parents and understand that it is not back to normal and that we may have to turn on a dime if this delta variant really picks up, if you know, kids going back to school who are not vaccinated, all of a sudden getting COVID or spreading COVID that schools and districts are going to have to make very quick decisions. And I think we have to be flexible and supportive. And how do we lean in collectively as community members to support our students and our teachers as they go through this?

**Marilyn Sampilo:** I would absolutely echo what Lisa just said in terms of making sure that we have appropriate resources and supports in place, not only for obviously our students, but obviously for the teachers and the staff as well, who will be providing that education. And as

well, ensuring that families themselves can get connected with resources too, that may help them in terms of navigating the ongoing stress. Because I think that's one of the things from the report is we had families who were immensely concerned for their children. And at the same time, we're also talking about their own impact from a behavioral health standpoint. Parents who were extremely stressed, extremely feeling like they were just overstretched and overwhelmed and not sure knowing what to do with that, but really just trying to put their needs aside because they really wanted to focus on their children.

And so just recognizing that to Lisa's point, just letting parents even just have that sense of compassion, self-compassion, and grace, that we're all doing the best that we can, but then also ensuring that if they need additional supports or resources, that we can link families to those resources and supports, and teachers and staff as well, because this is challenging for everyone. And I think that's important to normalize, like this is hard. We're all trying as best as we can, but we're all probably going to need some help and support along the way, too.

**Trey Johnson:** Sorry, go ahead.

**Bill Wagner:** I cannot agree more in the fact that a lot of the school districts have brought on additional positions or their school counselors have become very actively engaged. Family and community engagement coordinators, a variety of different positions that have been very specifically tasked with engaging families with this kind of support, and social workers, and trying to help everyone sort of understand that we're all in this together, and we're all struggling, and it's very challenging. And schools have not just been teaching kids, they haven't been just teaching kids for decades and the pandemic, if it's really proven anything, lately, it's proven that we're really trying to help, not just the children, but their families and the communities that are created by schools as well. And so I think that grace, Lisa, what a wonderful word to use compassion, caring.

Understanding, patience, I think is the greatest gift that the parents and everyone engaged in the process can give to each other in order to get through the next year or so. I mean, the topic of this webinar, Education in a Post-COVID Era, kind of made me giggle when it first came out, because we are not post-COVID yet. We're not out of this in a long stretch, and we've got a long road yet to go. And that grace, I think, is going to be very needed. As you mentioned, Lisa, for quite some time as we move forward.

**Trey Johnson:** Yes, you are correct, Bill. And the misnomer of the title has also not been lost on our staff that after we put this in like, "oh, we're not really post." But Heather, I know you were trying to jump in a few minutes ago. So, I want to make sure that we get to you because I know you had something to add to the question.

**Heather Boughton:** Really, actually, I just want to sort of build on what Bill was just sharing about one of the very positive things that we have seen happen over the last year is a real increase in the amount of family engagement that is happening and not just an increase, but districts are changing the way that they're engaging with families in adapting to our situation. And we've heard, just the other week, heard from several districts who said this is what we started doing the pandemic. We will never go back to doing it the way we did it before because it's better now, and we have greater family engagement. And so I think that's one of those silver linings that has come out of this that will hopefully continue to build upon as a community.

**Trey Johnson:** So, a question I'm wondering about that's kind of related to that. So, it sounds like it's great that schools are learning that they need to at least change the way that, and the types and the amount of support that we provide, not only to students, but to families. But I'm wondering about how quickly are schools able to do that? Are schools able to make those changes quickly? Are there other policies or practices that we need? I'm also thinking about just other resources that are there. I'm thinking about possible uses of art funding. So, I'd love to just figure out about, as we think about the start of a new school year and all that we're learning about the way that students and families need to be supported, do we feel like schools have the ability to make the changes they need to make, or are there other things that need to be put in place to be able to help schools make those kinds of shifts, including access to the information? I don't know who wants to take that one first.

**Heather Boughton:** I would share that I think we've, we saw over the last year that schools can shift very quickly under some circumstances. But I guess what I would like to say is that this is a we're sort of in it for the long haul here. This is a long game that we need to play. And so as we are thinking about the interventions and the changes that are needed, it's very important that we do take the time to understand what the data is telling us, the quantitative data, but also the qualitative data, what are our students saying? What are families saying that they need? Take the time to really authentically engage with them and understand those needs and then design interventions and supports to meet those needs. And pay close attention to how that's going over time and be willing to say this isn't quite working, we need to make adjustments, or we need to shift over time. Needs will evolve. Each individual student's needs may be different. So, I think that districts are quite capable of doing this. They are experts in their field. They know how to respond to these with the supports and the community supports that they have around them. But we just want to make sure we're creating space so that they aren't sort of have to have the right answer right this minute. And that's it. And we don't sort of evolve from there. That's one of my first thoughts.

**Bill Wagner:** I really have to jump on that too, Heather, because I would wholeheartedly agree. This pandemic has shown that when that fast pivot has to happen, school districts are capable of making those changes. We really didn't have much choice in this circumstance. However, one of the key things is I think people have to allow schools to evolve. They had to evolve in this

circumstance, because everybody has their mindset of what school is supposed to look like because we all went through it. And well, school is supposed to look like this because that's what it looked like when I went through school. And that's sometimes very difficult for parents to shift their understanding. And when things start to look different, they're like, whoa, wait a minute, that's not what school looked like when I went to school and there becomes some resistance.

So, that continuous understanding and willingness to allow that evolution to occur, I think, will be a function of learning that happens and continuous communication and partnership with, between the schools and the families and out of that based-need of changing and evolving. A lot of it will have to come from that constant collaboration between schools and families kind of working on that evolution together. And then another key part of that, the Ohio Department of Education has been a big part of that.

And then the legislature, there's always key pieces that are built into things that we can and cannot do based off of the law that guides us and directs us, that also needs to pivot. And sometimes that can't move all that quickly, but sometimes it also can. And so all of those cogs need to work together in concert, and we've seen it have the ability to do that. And I think if we can help pull all of those pieces together and continue to work in that direction, we can make some changes that can really help move 21st century learning. And here we are 21 years into it already. I hate to use that term, because we're already far into it, but we can really talk about shifting what education looks like to where we need it to be. And this pandemic can really be more of an opportunity for us moving forward.

**Lisa Gray:** So, just to piggyback on what Bill was talking about in terms of partnerships, I think that there's a lot that schools and districts need to do, but they can't do it alone. When we look at the needs of students and families, how do we utilize partnerships? How do we build relationships perhaps with organizations and individuals that we haven't worked with in the past? When we look at the work that that Marilyn is doing. How do we better utilize community resources? How do community partners lean in and in support the changes that need to happen? I think communication is critical. It's always critical, but I think even more so now, when you think about the pace of change and the fact that, as Bill said, the only thing I'm thankful for with COVID is that my four sons were in college, that I was not trying to homeschool my kids, and have a job at the same time.

I have a friend who is, I think, one of the most capable people in the world. And she broke down and cried and said, I cannot do this anymore. And so I think we have to understand that, but I also think that this is an opportunity for schools and the community to come together in ways that they haven't in the past. And we need to take advantage of that. And we need to make that the norm, not the exception. And so there are a lot of organizations and partners that have leaned

in during the pandemic. I know that they want to continue in that way. And those partnerships, the philanthropic community has been terrific. The business community has leaned in, in different ways, community organizations, parent organizations. And we need to continue that sort of collaboration, because if we really beyond the pandemic, the goal of education, the goal for all of us is that our kids are successful in whatever they choose to do.

And there were challenges before the pandemic, there are going to be challenges after the pandemic. And to ensure that all of our kids across Ohio have the opportunities that to be successful, it's going to require all of us to lean in and do this work together. So, I'm hopeful that one of the good things that comes out of this pandemic is really collaboration and partnership with organizations that perhaps haven't been at the table before. Our children's hospitals have been terrific, their association. So, how do we think about these sort of non-traditional partnerships?

And because I'm a big believer that no amount of funding in the school funding formula is ever going to be enough to meet all the needs of kids. We have got to be utilizing the Department of Health, the Department of Mental Health, job and family services, local community organizations. To ensure that Ohio's kids are successful, we've got to bring all of those partners, all of those resources, all of that expertise to the table. A teacher cannot teach, counsel, feed, and do all of those things. They can identify the kids that need that help, but we have to use the other supports that we have in the state to meet those needs.

**Trey Johnson:** So, I want to jump in with a question. So, I love that. And I love the idea of needing to be ... It's just the idea of it takes a village idea. It takes a village to raise a child. And I know there are comments in the chat about the collaboration. And so I'd love to just figure out. So, if I'm Treye who works in a workforce development program, like how do I plug into this? Am I just calling my local school? Am I calling my school district? What's the right way to do this? I'm imagining that people will be reaching out to the four of you after this event.

If I'm someone who says, "yes, yes, Lisa, I love everything you're saying, where do I sign up?" What's your recommendation? And not just you, and I think for all of you, what's the recommendation if I'm saying, hey, I believe in what you're saying, and I want to help, because I know that it's going to take all of us to solve these issues. What's your recommendation for folks who want to get involved?

**Bill Wagner:** One of the first things I would recommend is to reach out to the career technical education and adult education centers in your area. The Polaris Career Center, for example, or CVCC [Cuyahoga Valley Career Center] and ask them, go on their websites and see what sort of programming they have available. They have been doing a tremendous job of providing all types of adult education programming and retooling opportunities for individuals looking to shift their



skill sets and prepare them for new opportunities and new workforce development, trades, and skills. And if they're looking to go into a different line of work, those things are available for them, or if they need to get their GED, or if they need to finish up a diploma, those opportunities are readily available right there.

**Lisa Gray:** The other thing that I would encourage is business advisory councils. If you're a business and you want to figure out how to support your schools or your districts, every district is required to have a business advisory council. Call your district, find out who's the right person to connect with, and engage in those communications, and engage in those opportunities. We are really trying to elevate the business advisory councils across the state. We think it's a really great opportunity for the business community to engage with their schools. We think schools learn from that, but we also think businesses learn about what's going on and what are the challenges and the needs. So, I would suggest that as well.

**Marilyn Sampilo:** I would also suggest, especially for our communities, our marginalized communities, and our minoritized communities, often there are certain community agencies that they often feel very connected to and sort of like the hub that they go to, particularly for our Hispanic and Latinx population. In all of those regions, there is a community-based social services agency that really works very closely with that population. And they offer programming. And really during the pandemic, they sort of took on every role possible to try and meet the needs of their communities, but really even reaching out or even just looking at some of the programs and services that they currently offer and what are ways that you can either partner or potentially connect with some of those programs and services and potentially amplify or enhance some of their programming, I think is a great way to get connected to some of those communities, and some of the agencies that do a lot of the sort of boots-on-the-ground work with those communities. That's one way to look for partnerships. In terms of the mental health aspect, you could also reach out to your local mental health and substance abuse board. There is a board either for each county, or if there's like three counties and a tri-county area, there's a board that basically sort of is the like the linchpin to all of the different behavioral health agencies and organizations within their service area. And you can become familiar with some of those programs, some of those resources, and how then you could leverage those for those connections and partnerships as well.

**Trey Johnson:** Heather, I wonder if there's a connection, because I know you talked about data and I know you talked about some of the non-academic research that you're doing. Is there a way that if organizations have data, is there a way that they can plug in to the work that you and your office are doing?

**Heather Boughton:** Certainly, and really I would sort of echo of what the others said in that sort of that local outreach would be, I think, really valuable and important if an organization has information about the pandemic's impact or about students' needs, that might be valuable to their

local district by all means should reach out and find productive ways of sharing that. And I just, as others were talking, just wanted to sort of amplify what I think Lisa said earlier in that the hope is that this sentiment, this desire to help and support the school community continues well beyond just this moment in time. And then it just becomes part of our normal operations in terms of an education community.

**Lisa Gray:** The other thing that I would for any businesses that are listening and providing work-based learning opportunities for students whether or not that's mentorships, internships. ODE [Ohio Department of Education] has a lot of great information. And I know that the career tech centers do as well. We've seen a lot of the businesses and you can imagine why they sort of cut back on the internships and the student visits and that sort of thing during COVID, but we want to make sure that we're actually growing those opportunities for students, because we know that that is an opportunity outside of the classroom for students to connect what they're learning to see different opportunities.

And so that is a fairly simple way for businesses to get involved, and you can do it at very different levels. It can be a mentoring, it can be come into my plant, it can be internships. And there are a lot of opportunities for support in doing that kind of work. And so we should not lose sight of that as well that many of those opportunities got shut down for students. And it's a critical element for many students in connecting their learning. And so we really have to, as people become comfortable again in is business opens back up that, that needs to be a part of what needs to open back up along with it.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. Thank you for that. So, I'm going to ask my last question that I have lined up, because I know we want to get to some of the Q&A from the audience. So, I would encourage any of the audience please continue to submit your questions. I know we've been trying to work them in throughout the conversation, but I will ask probably one of my favorite questions. I love to ask you whenever I have this conversation, is just, it's along that idea of you don't know what you don't know. So, we're talking about some of the things that we're hearing, but I'm sure there's some issue that you are working on in your work action education that is kind of just off our radar or that needs a little bit more of attention. So, I'd love to figure out, love to hear each of you kind of mention, what's the one part of this conversation that needs elevating further? I'll start with you Heather.

**Heather Boughton:** Sure. No problem. Well, I can't say that this isn't something that we've touched on at least, but I do want to just reiterate this a little bit, because I think it's really important. We didn't talk in great detail about some of the inequities that we are seeing in the impact, but we did touch on them and they are there. And what I want to sort of remind folks is that those inequities existed before the pandemic. The pandemic exacerbated those inequities. And so a return to normal in this case won't necessarily help all of our students achieve their full potential. We need to be thinking creatively and very intentionally about how to support our

Black students, our Hispanic students, our economically disadvantaged students. Those students who have been historically underserved and deserve to have the highest quality education that we can provide to them.

And so I think it's really important that as an education community, we continue to be explicit about where the needs are and intentional in allocating resources and designing interventions that are meant to address those inequities that we have seen for generations and have been made worse by this pandemic. And finally, the other part of that, that I think is really important that we've touched on is this idea of engagement and student voice specifically. And so one of the ways in which we really want to make sure that we're meeting the needs of communities is by really actively and authentically engaging students in the design of their own education, families and community partners in designing the path forwards that we know that we're building something even stronger than what we had before.

**Trey Johnson:** Thank you. Lisa, or actually, Bill, go ahead. I don't know if you're off mute, so Bill, you can go ahead and then I'll go to Lisa.

**Bill Wagner:** Yeah. If I can piggyback on that, that would be great, because certainly one of the things that I've thought that we haven't really touched on, but it was really amplified by this is the shift from content to skills that the educational system really has been focused on content, content, content for so long with the industrial development and design of public education for so many decades. And it really has to make that shift to skills in order to appropriately prepare students for an unknown future. And that skills based is it like project-based learning, inquiry-based learning? And that really allows itself to give that student voice that was just mentioned. It really gives that opportunity for kids to get deeply engaged in taking those skills in the various content areas and mashing them together and solving real-world problems that they encounter and showing what they know in new and unique ways that are very different from what education perhaps looked like as we used to know it.

And although that looks very different, it's very messy. It's very unique. I think that ability for us to evolve education into a far more impactful way of delivering teaching and learning, I think this could be a great opportunity for us to really do a different and better job of helping our students be successful for a future that is pretty much unknown for them as things shift and change so quickly. Also, a thing that I think we haven't really touched upon yet is that shift from a place-based educational delivery model. I think we'll always have school centers in one way, shape, or form, but to always have kids always in school all day, every day as they get older, perhaps earlier on, certainly. But as they begin to get older, they might become more and more, and this is a little more of the radical thinking coming up, is they might become more like touch centers or collaborative work times where they then are going out and they're doing internships and they're doing a variety of other things, and then coming back together to have work sessions with teachers and mentors and support systems or to do collaborative work with their teams that

look more like work that they will do beyond the high school time. So, there is something that I think educators need to start looking at as a possible future of what education might look like. A lot of this is something that we have to look at the importance of digital access, because that's going to be the backbone of a lot of this shift and change and delivery of teaching and learning. And it's all underpinned by that focus on the individual. You can't deliver to large groups anymore. You can have certain areas of time where you might be delivering a direct instruction or a particular concept to a group of kids, but you always have to focus on what the individual's needs are and be catering specifically to those.

And I think this pandemic really emphasized that very strongly. And those are things that educators are going to have to focus in on and really get better and better and better on as we continue to move forward, because this pandemic has shown a very bright light on some things that we weren't doing well. And my heart broke for those families of very young children who struggled mightily and especially for those who had to work during the day hours. And it emphasized some very difficult times. And I think we learned a lot through that, and now we have a great opportunity to make things better.

**Trey Johnson:** Thank you for that. And I appreciate the mention of the skills-based learning. And I think that's something I would be remiss if I didn't put a plug in for the work of one of my colleagues at the Cleveland Fed, Kyle Fee, who has done a lot of work on an idea called [opportunity occupations](#), which I recommend that anybody look into, if you don't know what this is. But the short of it is that it's looking at jobs. It's an idea, it's based on looking at skills. And so it's as opposed to looking at diplomas for the way that you determine criteria, if somebody is qualified is really skill-based. And then it looks at the ideas. It looks at jobs that are available for students and how you can transition between jobs based on accumulation of skills as opposed to necessarily a four-year degree. So, like I said, definitely recommend that you look that up if you are not familiar with opportunity occupations. I do want to get back to Heather and Dr. Sampilo, though, on the question of what else we should be thinking about talking. Or sorry, Dr. Sampilo, on what we should be talking about more.

**Marilyn Sampilo:** Sure, definitely. And I'm going to piggyback off of what Heather mentioned. So, just in terms of issues, when it comes to equity, really thinking about those long-standing inequities and how do we go about addressing that. Because not only from the academic side, but really the pandemic sort highlighted that inequity is across the board. So, from healthcare to employment, to healthcare access, to education, there were a long-standing inequities that entire time, and then the pandemic just sort of exacerbated it. But what the pandemic has also laying bare those inequities, what it also has done is provide an opportunity for folks to re-imagine the different systems so that we can achieve more equity, so that we can promote more justice for everyone. We have certain populations that are more at risk, that are more vulnerable, because of historical and structural factors that contribute to barriers and perpetuate barriers, frankly.

We sort of live in this complex system of inequities. And so really trying to help address some of those structural barriers and the structural determinants is going to be really what changes the landscape for folks who are experiencing sort of the disadvantages and don't have as much of the equal outcomes that we would hope for them. So, really thinking about this from an educational standpoint. If you look at some of the national data, and certainly I think Heather and Lisa, and Bill will have more of the Ohio-related data. But nationally, if you look at some of the biggest concerns in terms of education, we had lower kindergarten enrollment, basically in the history of kindergarten enrollment, and the majority of where that lower enrollment occurred were in low-income communities, poor performing school districts, which represents children who were already sort of at a disadvantage.

And then those children may not be necessarily enrolling in kindergarten in the way that they had historically been. So, really we're sort of perpetuating or exacerbating children who already are at a disadvantage and then trying to figure out, OK, well with those children coming in now into the school system, how do we best address their needs? Because maybe they missed a year of kindergarten or to Lisa's point, how do we prepare them because maybe they're going to need more time over the course of their educational process. So, really trying to think of how do we reimagine school system and services to better meet the needs of some of those communities who have historically been at a disadvantage. I think that's something that I want to really highlight. And then the other thing is, I think, similar to what's been mentioned is really capitalizing on strengths.

So, I know we talk a lot about communities having more risk or having more risk factors or being at a disadvantage, but those same communities have a tremendous amount of strength and a tremendous amount of assets, and really trying to leverage those and identify those. And sometimes that starts with identifying what exactly those are. Working with those communities to identify what those strengths and assets are, and then leveraging those to help reimagine and reconstruct your system.

And then the last thing I just want to mention is when we talk about inequities, if you don't have an equity plan, if that's not something that exists in your organization or in your group, I would start there. That every organization we're really going to make headway reducing inequity and promoting equity. You have to have a plan. It has to be intentional and devising an equity plan or strategic plan to promote equity is really going to be incredibly important. It puts things down on paper, it hinges on data, and it promotes accountability. And I think really that's what we kind of want to work towards is really everyone sort of doing their part to try and help bridge those gaps.

**Lisa Gray:** Treye, the one thing that I would mention on that, that we've not talked about is the use of the federal dollars that are coming into Ohio. So, if anybody's been paying attention, there

are billions of dollars coming into the education system right now at different levels. There's state money, there's money that's going to local districts. Of course I have a tickle in my throat the minute I start talking. It's probably God's way of telling me to be quiet. And I think what we need to think about is how do we ... we've talked about all of the needs. We also know that to Marilyn's point, and I think Bill mentioned it earlier about best practices. We also know that there have been some great things that have been done that have really worked for different populations of kids and families.

How do we identify what those best practices are? How do we study those? How do we sustain and scale those? And for the needs that we've just identified, let's not let this pot of money that we're getting from the federal government go to waste. Let's figure out ways to use that money, to innovate, to allow some of these best practices to flourish, to focus on some of the inequities and inadequacies that we've had in the system over the past and use this as a way ... we've always said, if I have more money, I could do X or I could do Y. And so let's not use this money for business as usual. I think it's a real opportunity, and I get that some of the money needs to go to plug holes. But the learning plans that schools and districts need to focus on really are supposed to look at the learning loss and how they're going to address those needs of students.

And how as a community and how as parents and others do we work with the schools to be really thoughtful, creative, and innovative in the use of those dollars that are coming into the state? Schools are so busy right now, just trying to get kids in and social distancing, and getting them on buses safely, and all of those things that there's a ton on the plate of educators right now, but there's also an opportunity with these resources. And I think that's where the educational service centers come in. I think that's where the philanthropic community can come in. I think that there are a lot of partners that can work with districts to really think about how do we use these federal dollars in a way that is going to catch kids up, however long that's going to take. How do we address some of their non-academic barriers, but is there a way to use these dollars to really transform long-term the teaching and learning and the opportunities that we're providing to students. And I would love to have, that's a whole other conversation, but it's something that I think is worth discussing because there are, and Bill would know this and Heather better than I, but there are dates certain times that that money has to be spent, and let's not let it go to waste. Let us use it as an opportunity to really rethink what we're doing for kids and families.

**Trey Johnson:** Please let me know when that follow-up conversation happens, because I would love to be a part of it. So, if there's no ... I think we got to everybody on that. So, I'm going to ask, we have another question here. It's a little bit of a long one, so I'm going to read it, just I want to make sure I actually get the wording on it right. So, it's related to the social and emotional obstacles students will face now and will be facing over the next decade.

“How do you think the implementation of social emotional developmental education from the beginning of the educational journey should be emphasized from a continuum perspective?” It says, “For context, as younger students begin, they learn about how to conduct themselves in an educational social environment. But as they get older, there’s less emphasis placed on developing these skills, especially in middle-school ages when it may be more important that they’re preparing for adult.” And our folks have they follow the question to have answers to it. Bill, I saw you nod. So, I don’t know if you’re ready to take this question on. If you are, feel free to.

**Bill Wagner:** Absolutely. Yeah. There’s more and more emphasis on doing just that and really building those skills from the moment they enter our doors all the way through, into when they cross the stage for commencement and beyond. Because there is so much understanding that those soft skills that the students have to develop on into their adult life are so critical. And whereas that was never really long ago an understood part of the important curriculum. We learned many, many years ago that, that’s part of the hidden curriculum. I’m now dating myself with some of the terminology. That’s a much older term, but it’s really very, very important for our students to learn, our children to learn.

And as they grow up and they get, especially, they get in those middle school years and then into those high school years become more and more important. The terminology that we use to help them learn those skills and apply those skills evolves and develops into a more adult sort of focus. But that way we help prepare them for how to function as adults in a more cooperative, collaborative understanding, caring, compassionate way as human beings. And that has to become more conscious way of development that we do in our educational process. So, absolutely the individual put that up in the chat, I would wholeheartedly agree with.

**Lisa Gray:** Just to piggyback on that. And I tried to put it in the chat, but I have failed to do so. The Fordham Institute just came out with a study about social emotional learning (SEL) and how it’s supported by parents. And I think what you’ll see in this report is that it is overwhelmingly supported by parents. There is some pushback, frankly, from policy makers around calling it social emotional learning. I think that when you talk about life skills, it seems to resonate a little better. That said, I think that there is broad support for the notion that education is not just about academics. It’s about all of these other skills, to Bill’s point, skills that students need to have. When you ask the business community often what students are missing, they will say, look, if they can’t do math as well as we’d like, or if they can’t read as well as we’d like, we’ll teach them that we’ll teach them how to use our machinery.

Those sorts of things. They don’t want to have to do that, but they can do it if they need to. But what they struggle with is really some of these life skill kinds of tenants that we want students to have, and we want our workers to have. And so I think that more and more there’s going to be

conversations about how do we support the building of those kinds of skills. And Bill talked about it. It's not just ... let's sit down and do a unit on social and emotional learning. It's about team-based problem solving. It's about working collaboratively on project-based learning, it's being out and having experiences that are outside of the classroom. And so I think often people feel as if social emotional learning is we're going to teach kids specific characteristics or specific ways to think. And it's less about that. And it's more about how do you build these skills through the learning and the interactions in school, in classrooms, on sports teams, in the band, in debate club. It's all of those kinds of things.

**Marilyn Sampilo:** And definitely it's tied to better mental health outcomes as well. So, there's research that suggests that social emotional learning, if you look at sort of longitudinally outcomes for young people, it's tied to better mental health outcomes. So, again, when we think about the current demand on behavioral health and the current need that will continue to evolve, that's a great way or a great strategy to potentially offset some of the negative impact from the pandemic. And along with that, we also sort of in line with that team-based kind of problem-solving, those soft skills. It's really also emphasizing restorative justice practices as well within schools and how that can be associated with better mental health outcomes for students as well. So, programming, teaching skills, trying to utilize opportunities to teach skills that are not just content based that really focus on social, emotional development from a mental health standpoint is a very positive thing.

**Heather Boughton:** The only thing I would add, I wholeheartedly agree with everything everyone said. The only thing I would add would be the point on sometimes this conversation will be framed as an either or sort of social emotional skills versus academic skills. And it's really not. Those two things are so closely related that we should not think about them as being completely separate priorities, but rather one will most certainly support, SEL will most certainly support academic development as well.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. Thank you all for that. So, I know we're coming close to our time. So, if I had to give you all 45 seconds to a minute, if there was one last comment you want to make, as we're thinking about this conversation, understanding that these conversations will hopefully continue to happen. But I would just love to hear from each of you, if you had like a key takeaway that you think that you want the staff of the Fed and all of the people who are watching on this event to kind of take away from the event. I'd love to hear your top line takeaway. Bill, you look like you're ready to go already. So, I'm going to start with you, because you're top left on my screen.

**Bill Wagner:** OK. Yeah. If it's one thing that we've learned through all of this is that teaching and learning is so much more than a score. It's about the all-encompassing human being that lies behind that score. And the score is very, very important. It's both and as Heather had mentioned, but it's all about the individual and everything that makes that individual up. And that's the



evolution of education and where we really have to do a better job of focusing on that individual and moving forward in education and take that 360-degree look at that individual. And really not just the individual academic skills and knowledge and content and abilities of that individual, but helping the understanding the health, the wellness, all of the different pieces and components of that individual to help them be successful in the future.

**Treye Johnson:** Thank you. Thank you for that Bill. Marilyn, if you ....

**Marilyn Sampilo:** Yeah. I think a common theme throughout this conversation today is, is it really does take a village. And I think if people can just walk away knowing like understanding what your role might be in promoting children's wellness. And I say wellness, because again, we've talked about it being so broad, but how would you show up? How do you show up for children's wellness, whether that's within your own home, within your own classroom, within your job? But just everyone has a role to play and whatever that role might be for you, it's just determining what that is, because I think, again, it's going to take all of us to really promote those positive outcomes.

**Treye Johnson:** Yeah, Lisa.

**Lisa Gray:** I would echo what others have said. I'll go back to what I said when we first started. Have grace. I think we have to be honest about what the data is telling us. It is tough to see, but we've got to use that data to drive the decisions that we're making on behalf of students and families. And we have to be honest about that. And to Marilyn's point, how do we partner? How do we support our schools and our educators in doing this work? It is a monumental task. It is all of our responsibilities as community members, parents, grandparents. The kids, we have got to make sure that they come out of this OK. And it is probably going to require more effort than it has in the past. And we need to be a part that solution.

**Treye Johnson:** One hundred percent. Heather, would you like to bring us home?

**Heather Boughton:** Sure. I'll try to sort of actually summarize a little bit of what we've said. I think we do have to look at the data and it is heartbreaking. But we have cause for hope, because we have amazing resources right now, as a state. We have an amazing educator workforce who care about our kids. And I was thinking my own kids, as I was saying, they care about our kids so much, and they are willing to go to great lengths. We've seen that over the last year, the lengths they're willing to go to, to make sure that our kids are taken care of. And we have the community partners, we have the funding resources right now, as Lisa said. And so it really, it is a strangely exciting moment in a way that's awkward to say, because the challenges we face are so big, but I really have a lot of faith in us to be able to take those on and really learn from them and create an amazing system for our kids.

**Trey Johnson:** Awesome. Well, thank you. Thank you to the four of you. So, really appreciate you all taking time and sharing so much of your knowledge and wisdom with us. And I want to thank all of our attendees for spending time with us today. Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank all of the support staff from the Cleveland Fed. So, whether it was a *FedTalk* planning team to our AV team, to everybody who has helped make this event possible. So, I want to say thank you to everyone. I think this was a really important and informative conversation, and also really timely as you think about the fact that how many students have either are going back to school this week, or even like my son who will make today was his first day.

And we just thought it was an important time to have this conversation as we kick off a new school year. I want to remind everybody that all the information that is referenced will be sent out in a follow-up email. So, links to the report will be shared as well as, I mentioned this before, but a [recording](#) of the *FedTalk* will be available on our website on [clevelandfed.org](http://clevelandfed.org).

Lastly, I do want to remind everybody that our next *FedTalk* will be on September 30 and the topic of that *FedTalk* will be on supplier diversity. So, if you are interested in that, please [sign up](#) to get information about our *FedTalks*. And with that, I will close us out today. So, thank you everyone for joining us today. And we hope you have a great day.