

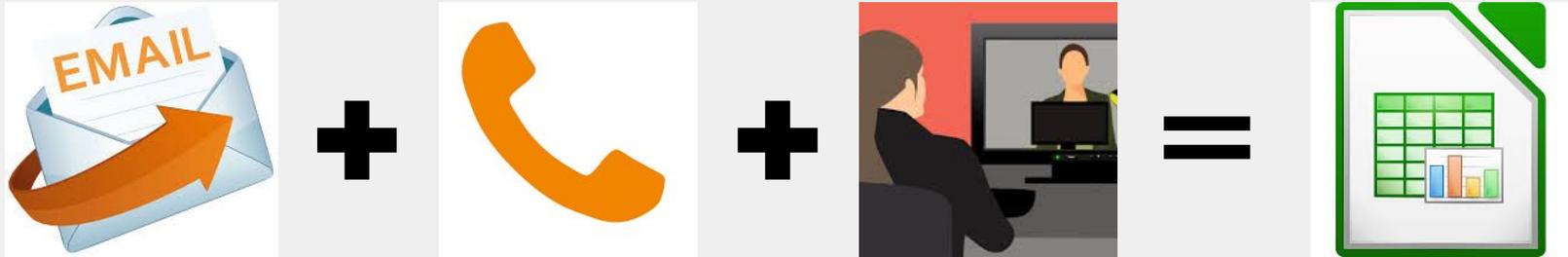


COVID-19

Student Challenges & Partner Responses

Initial Crisis Phase March - April, 2020
(updated 5.13.20)

Backbone Team: Deep Listening + Rigorous Tracking



Rapid response meetings that the Backbone Team has either hosted or supported:

- Distance Learning
- The Impact of COVID-19 on College Enrollment
- Coordinating Communications in West Marin
- Filling Internet (HotSpot) Connectivity Gaps

**Please note - this is a rapidly emerging situation and much of the information presented has been collected through word of mouth conversations and verbal meeting updates. We have very likely missed or misrepresented some things. Please feel free to contact us info@marinpromisepartnership.org if you have any updates or corrections.*

STUDENT CHALLENGES

Key Factors Impacting Distance Learning

TOOLS TO LEARN

- Sharing a computer
- Hotspot or Wifi
- Computer, Printer, Headphones etc.
- Broadband internet: service cost, limited data, shared with other family members
- Poor cell service
- Have to learn how to use different tools and portals (no standard)
- Too many apps, logins, and passwords to keep track of

SPACE TO LEARN

- Crowded Families
- Shared Bedrooms
- Noise
- Distractions
- Multiple kids “in class” all at the same time
- Not comfortable sharing video of living space



TO LEARN

- Anxiety, Emotional & Mental Health Issues
- Confusion, Trauma & Loss of Control
- Motivation & Executive Functioning

TIME TO LEARN

- New/More family responsibilities
- Helping younger siblings with their on-line school
- Working to backfill lost income
- Fragmented class schedules mix synchronous and asynchronous expectations
- Open/Drop-in “Office Hours” not as effective as individualized, set-time teacher meetings

PARTNER RESPONSES

Initial Crisis Phase March - April, 2020

NEW RAPID RESPONSE COLLABORATIONS

- Human Needs - Food, Shelter, & Health Services
- Coordinated Communications
- Essential Worker Emergency Childcare
- Addressing the Digital Divide - HotSpot Lending Library
- Funding Coordination

Bright-spot Overview: Schools, nonprofits, public/government agencies, and citizen volunteers are working together in new ways to support student needs.

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE-CHILD

- Priority Focus on Basic Needs
- Case Management & Wrap-around Approaches
- Virtual Mental Health and Wellness Supports
- Distance Learning & Grading Policies that Prioritize Student Wellness

Bright-spot Overview: Partners are prioritizing students' social, emotional and mental health needs in addition to academic performance concerns.

CENTERING EQUITY IN DISTANCE LEARNING

- 100% contact/support goals
- Addressing the Digital Divide
- Equity lens on Distance Learning & Grading Policies
- Teams are focusing extra support to student populations traditionally impacted by structural inequity

Bright-spot Overview: Despite the complexity of the situation, most districts report that there are less than a handful of students who they have not been able to connect with to provide basic need and on-line connectivity assistance.

NEW RAPID RESPONSE COLLABORATIONS

Basic Needs - Food, Shelter, Mental Health

- All Districts continue to provide school meals.
- Bridge the Gap, Performing Stars, PlayMain!, Conscious Kitchens, SF-Marín Foodbank, and SMCS D partner to provide school meals, dinners, “bags of love” and pop-up pantries.
- SUSD is using their school buses to distribute food to K-12 and preschool students.
- Gift Cards: Dine11 = Canal Alliance, Bahia Vista School and Be the Influence, and Adopt-a-family distributed \$150 to all Title 1 students in 7 districts.
- Dominican loaned gym to Red Cross for blood drive.
- Mask-up Marin City campaign to promote wearing masks

Coordinated Communications

- West Marin Collaborative is exploring ways to coordinate outreach among formal communication channels (Community Commons Connect, KWMMR, West Marin Feed, SGVCC.org etc.) as well as integrate informal channels, especially ones in Spanish. West Marin Fund is contracting an interim project coordinator. *(BBT Support)*
- Larkspur/Corte Madera District created a Parent Buddy System
- Backbone Staff is communicating cross-sector, cradle to career COVID-19 Response

Essential Worker Emergency Childcare

County of Marin, the Marin County Office of Education, the Marin County Free Library, the City of San Rafael, the North Bay Children’s Center, Community Action Marin, North Bay Community Services, and Marin YMCA have collaboratively developed a program to provide emergency “pop-up” childcare services. Click [HERE](#) to read more

HotSpot Lending Library

Marin County Free Libraries (MCFL) convened a working group to assess student internet connection needs so that funding could be pooled to efficiently match needs with resources in closing the digital divide for students across Marin. *(BBT Support)*

Funding Coordination

- Backbone Staff is communicating with Partnership Funders
- MCF and HHS have partnered to set up a Rental Assistance Fund
- Canal Alliance is partnering to distribute a direct needs fund
- WM Fund is partnering with local Preschools to assess & distribute direct family support
- MCFL is coordinating with funders for student HotSpots
- PSP, Canal Alliance, Multicultural Center strengthen partnership through joint funding

First responses have mainly focused on meeting basic needs and distributing resources. Innovative partnerships leveraging schools as community hubs have jumped into action as nonprofits, schools, volunteers and government agencies come together in new ways. While matching needs with resources (food, hotspot equipment etc.) is on one level just a technical inventory management challenge, what makes it complicated is figuring out how to coordinate among the county’s 18 school districts, 3 Independent Charter Schools and dozens of nonprofit education support services in 27 different cities, towns and unincorporated areas across Marin. Add to this the challenge of navigating relationship dynamics and overlapping areas of interdependent interactions (for example, some families have students in more than one district and receive services from more than one community agency) and the challenge moves from complicated to complex.

SUPPORTING THE WHOLE-CHILD

In addition to coordinating basic needs and internet connection resources, many Partners are trying to focus their responses on other “whole-child” learning supports. Many of these supports have changed or disappeared with the closure of campuses. Social, emotional, and mental health support through wellness centers, counselors, on-campus mental health services, peer resources, student-run clubs, uplifting flyers and posters on campus hallways, and informal supportive relationships with athletic coaches, attendance clerks, and security personnel have all either disappeared from student life or have taken a back-seat to other immediate, more tangible needs. In addition to losing these on-campus student services, many youth found respite at school, away from difficult home-life circumstances.



Virtual Mental Health & Wellness Supports

- TUHSD launched a district-wide Virtual Counseling & Wellness Center for all students to access and stay connected to Counseling & Wellness staff and programs. Some of the unique aspects of this initiative include a peer-resource supported Wellness Community Zoom Room to foster peer support, guided self-care and connection activities and free viewing of the movie Angst (featuring TUHSD students) through April 28th.
- North Marin Community Services is working with NUSD to provide family case management and mental health services.

Case Management & Wrap-Around Support Approaches

A number of Partners are adopting and/or strengthening their case management or wrap-around support approaches focused on students and families most impacted by structural inequity.

- Canal Alliance, has reallocated staff resources to triage and provide case management support to thousands of incoming requests for assistance.
- THS Success Network is meeting weekly instead of monthly, to ensure that 100% of the students on the team’s focus population list are regularly connected to support resources.
- SMCSO Community Schools Manager has set up 7 response teams to help coordinate community resource connections.

Additional Whole-Child Responses (mentioned elsewhere)

- Meeting basic needs for food, health services and direct assistance for rent, utilities etc.
- Equity-based Distance Learning and Grading Policies that prioritize student wellness

CENTERING EQUITY IN DISTANCE LEARNING

Equitable responses to the COVID-19 crisis include a focus on proactively connecting with 100% of students, adopting a “do no harm” philosophy, and ensuring that students who are most impacted by structural inequity receive the support and resources they need to achieve common goals and outcomes set for all students.

Just as [COVID-19 health impacts are disproportionately impacting people of color](#), so too will it likely have disproportionate educational impacts on Marin students. Well documented disparities in things like “Summer Slippage,” grading policies, transportation access to programs and resources, and differentiated learning supports may all play an amplified role in the impact of COVID-19 on student outcomes.

Higher proportions of first-gen dreamers may never make it to college. ELL kindergarteners just learning to read and 9th graders struggling with math may find it hard to catch up to their privileged white neighbors.



Equity-based Distance Learning and Grading Policies

Districts are reporting that their Distance Learning Plans and emerging Grading Policies have been developed with a clear focus on equity and a “do no harm” approach.

- NUSD has adopted a “pass/fail” grading policy
- TUHSD has adopted a “Universal Pass” grading system. For students in good standing, their March R4 grades will be averaged out with an A in the final distance learning grading period.
- SRCS is hosting community Town Halls in english and spanish to finalize their grading policy approach.

Physical and Transportation Barriers Removed

With COM hosting College Success Saturday and SummerBridge on-line they will be increasing access for students who may not have participated because of transportation barriers.

Interagency Student Support Coordination Remains a Challenge

Although great effort is being made by both schools and community organizations to contact and support 100% of their students, the experience has revealed possible areas for future improvement. Without a mechanism to coordinate contact and assessment efforts across districts and between schools and nonprofits, some efforts are not as efficient as they could be and information about students is fragmented and siloed (especially where families have students in multiple districts and are served by multiple community agencies).

ONGOING CHALLENGES - What can we learn from this crisis to shift the system for good?

How might schools and nonprofits learn from each other about the different approaches they've taken in coordinating student contact and outreach?

How might short term COVID-19 responses that solve immediate equity issues (such as digital divide, grading, one-size-fits all assessments etc.) be adapted to long-term systemic shifts?

How might some of the new COVID-19 cross-sector and inter-district partnership practices be adapted to address ongoing student support inequities? (consider things such as student-level data and information sharing, funding mechanisms that link school/public sources with CBO services, inter-district cooperation and linkages with ECE practitioners)?

Despite all of the awesome, caring, best intentions and actions already put in place, it's pretty safe to assume that "Learning Loss," "COVID Catch-up," and "Spring/Summer Slippage" is going to happen. Based on existing data in this area, the impact is very likely going to inequitably impact low-income students and students of color. How might this experience shift the conversation from mitigating "slippage" inequities to completely eliminating loss-factors all together?

Student challenges outside of school don't just happen during a pandemic. How might the COVID-19 holistic approach shift the system toward greater degrees of ongoing integration of social, emotional, and mental wellness as well as integrating basic-needs supports into the education ecosystem? How might these cross-sector coordination efforts evolve into long-term educational success networks, wrapping students in a web of support that extends beyond the school yard?

How might the HotSpot lending library efforts be expanded and sustained to eliminate the Digital Divide for students in Marin (consider both coordination practices and equipment needs - printers, multiple devices for larger families, and cellular signal boosters for dead zones in rural areas)?