District Spending of One-Time Funds for Educational Recovery

July 11, 2023

Julien Lafortune, Laura Hill, Niu Gao, Joseph Herrera, Emmanuel Prunty, Darriya Starr, Bruce Fuller, Julian Betts, Karna Malaviya, and Jonathan Isler

Supported with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education, through R305X220028; the Stuart Foundation; and the Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute of Education Sciences, or the US Department of Education.
One-time funding for educational recovery was unprecedented

As of June 2023, **$60 billion** in state and federal funding allocated to public TK–12 schools

- Roughly half federal, half state funding
- Massive scale: total local, state, and federal TK–12 funding was **$102 billion** in 2018–19
- Through March 31, 2023: 63% of funding has been spent
We examined learning recovery dollars statewide

- Learning loss: how did test scores change?
- How were federal dollars spent; how much went to different districts?
- State spending through Extended Learning Opportunities Grant (ELO-G): we analyzed district ELO-G plans
- Case studies of three districts
  - Do innovative practices emerge? Constraints?
Test scores fell sharply across all grades

Note: Math SBAC exam scores. Dashed lines extrapolate trends based on pre-COVID test scores.
Stimulus funds came to districts via several programs

- Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)—$4.4 billion
- Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER I)—$1.6 billion
- Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER I)—$355 million
- GEER II—$341 million; ESSER II—$6.7 billion
- ESSER III—$15 billion
Stimulus funds came to districts via several programs
One-time funds have been targeted towards high-need students

- Most funding allocated to districts based on share low-income
- **Implication**: greatest funding for districts with lowest scores
  - But: weaker relationship between allocations and *learning losses*
After early focus on health/technology, federal spending shifted towards academic interventions
State ELO-G dollars were spent to accelerate learning, provide student supports

- Over 90% of districts used funding to accelerate learning
  - Small-group instruction
- 86% used funds for student supports
  - Meals, mental health, social-emotional learning (SEL)
- 84% used funding to extend instructional learning time
  - Extended school year, summer programs
Case studies show funds aided in-person return and efforts to support learning and well-being

Three districts (urban, suburban, rural)

- Innovative efforts to improve student learning and well-being
- Distribution varied: central office vs. site decisions
- Constraints: staffing, program restrictions, and reporting
Conclusion and policy implications

- Streamlining funding sources would lessen planning burdens
- More effective outreach and assistance could aid use of funding
- Funding more suited to address preexisting gaps than losses
  - Should ongoing recovery efforts target learning losses or preexisting gaps?
- Better and more consistent data needed to target and assess recovery practices
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Julien Lafortune (lafortune@ppic.org)
Laura Hill (hill@ppic.org)
Niu Gao (gao@ppic.org)

Thank you for your interest in this work.