



Supervisor Hillary Ronen

In the early stages of the pandemic, San Francisco and other counties across the state required the immediate closure of schools to slow the spread of coronavirus in the community. There was a universal fear that COVID-19 school closures would have an extremely adverse effect on K-12 learning and overall student well-being, especially among low-income students and students of color.

The ongoing school closures have substantially cut student learning time, limited the ability of educators to provide their usual level of support, diminished opportunities for students to develop their social and emotional skills, and increased rates of anxiety, depression, obesity, and other serious health conditions among students.

Now, as we approach the one-year anniversary since schools were forced to shut their doors, it is important that we begin to evaluate the true impacts that the COVID-19 school disruptions have had on student learning.

Recent data from SFUSD has confirmed our worst fears. In Fall 2020, SFUSD assessed students in both reading and math, and data from these assessments were used to measure pupil learning loss compared to a student's predicted growth based on three years of observed academic growth. According to these metrics, learning loss has been significant among elementary school students who are Pacific Islander, African American, Latinx, Middle Eastern, English Learners, homeless, or socio-economically disadvantaged. Each of these student groups has experienced a precipitous decline in their math and reading proficiency compared to prior years. As a stark and sobering contrast, White and Multi-Racial students were the only student groups that actually experienced learning gains and performed better than predicted during distance learning.

As we suspected, the COVID-19 school closures have caused students of color, and students from low-income and immigrant families to fall disastrously behind, even just compared to their prior standing. And to make matters worse, the student groups especially vulnerable to the impacts of the pandemic were more likely to be missing from this data, so it is probable that this already gut-wrenching data even understates the impacts of COVID-19 on student achievement and learning disparities. Our achievement gap has grown beyond comprehension. It is becoming as urgent a crisis as the pandemic itself, and we should be sounding every alarm.

I am calling a hearing to discuss the SFUSD Fall 2020 data measuring attendance and academic performance during the COVID-19 pandemic, what near-term academic remediation opportunities will be provided to students who have fallen significantly behind (e.g., summer learning, credit recovery, grade retention), and how this data could inform the actions and strategies that the proposed Students and Families RISE (Recovery with Inclusive and Successful Enrichment) Workgroup will use to create a citywide plan to expand enrichment and academic success services for students and families in SFUSD.

I am directing the Clerk of the Board to invite the School District, the Director of the Department of Children, Youth and their Families (DCYF), School Board members, and the United Educators of San Francisco to attend.