

PUTTING OUR MONEY

Where Our Values Are

ALLIANCE FOR RESOURCE EQUITY

Uniting advocates and education leaders
to unlock excellence for every student



As students, families, and educators look toward the 2020-21 school year, America is grappling with several mounting crises — an ongoing pandemic, an economic recession, and a renewed national recognition of systemic racism. But long before the coronavirus reached America's shores, there was already an epidemic of educational inequity. Fueled by structural inequality, systemic racism, and discriminatory practices, for too long our educational system has failed to provide equal opportunity to Black, Latino, and Native students, and students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, English learners, and students experiencing homelessness, foster care or engaged in the juvenile justice system. The time to take action is now.

**Living our values means directing
resources where they are needed most.**

Studies show that missed or disrupted school can have a lasting impact. Initial estimates suggest that students [could lose roughly 30% of normal learning gains in reading and more than 50% of the normal learning gains in math](#). The challenge is exacerbated for students whose families lack the time, resources, and flexibility to support distance learning. Students of color and students from low-income communities are much likelier to lack the basics for distance learning — and to face stress and anxiety as family members disproportionately lose jobs, get sick, face food insecurity, or continue to work in situations that expose them to the virus. Black students are also confronted by regular reminders that our country devalues their lives and their success.

The work that schools and teachers will have to do to help the students hit hardest by these crises cannot be trivialized. But our nation can emerge stronger if schools, districts, and leaders act urgently to support students' academic, physical, and social and emotional needs by **rejecting a one-size-fits-all approach and directing resources where they are needed most.**

The COVID-19 crisis is affecting everyone, but it is not affecting everyone equally.

Latino Americans are nearly

**twice as
likely**

to have lost a job as
White Americans.

36%

Of lower income families say
lack of technology is likely
to prevent their students
from completing schoolwork
compared to just 4% of upper
income families.

The coronavirus is killing
Black Americans at

3x

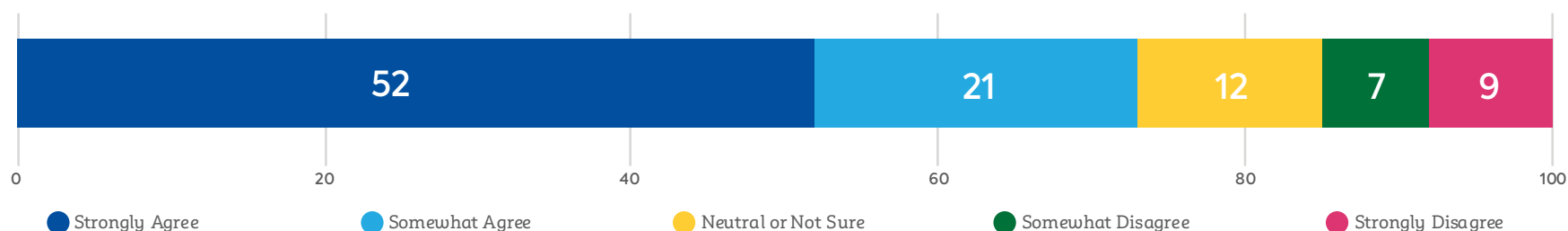
the rate of
White Americans.

Challenges Compounded

The COVID-19 pandemic has made a bad situation more visible and far worse. But the challenges are not new. Even before COVID-19, districts serving high populations of students of color spent [\\$1,800 per student](#) less than other districts. Students of color and students from low-income backgrounds frequently have the [least access to school counselors](#) and advanced coursework. And Black students are [disproportionately suspended, expelled, and arrested](#) at school despite studies showing they do not misbehave more frequently than other students. With the recession projected to cause K-12 budget [shortfalls of up to \\$230 billion](#), these problems will only get worse unless policymakers, education leaders, teachers, and communities move quickly and intentionally to counteract them.

Americans Agree: More Resources for the Students Hit Hardest

The coronavirus pandemic and its related impacts, economic and otherwise, are affecting everyone, but it is affecting some communities, including low-income communities and communities of color, more than others.



Protecting high-need school districts and schools from bigger budget cuts than other districts and schools.



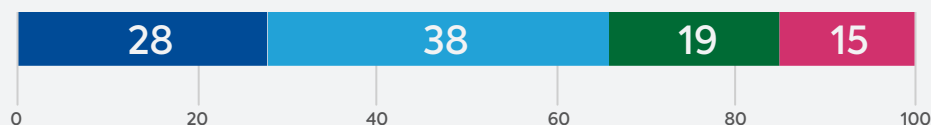
Protecting high-need school districts and schools from more teacher and staff layoffs than other districts and schools.



Targeting new funding toward support for those students that may need additional academic and social-emotional support as they return to school.



Extending the school day, week, or year to expand learning opportunities specifically for students from high-need schools to make up for the lost learning time.



● Strongly support ● Somewhat support ● Somewhat oppose ● Strongly oppose

Source: Poll of 2,256 likely voters nationally conducted by Change Research

An Agenda for Action

7 ways districts and schools can put their money where their values are in 2020–21

- 1 Shield the highest need schools from funding cuts and layoffs.
- 2 Prioritize instructional time and attention for students who need it most.
- 3 Provide additional social emotional, physical and mental health, and family supports for the students in greatest need.
- 4 Invest in professional learning, collaborative planning time, and better working conditions for educators in the highest need schools.
- 5 Close the digital divide to ensure all students have access to devices, high speed internet, and support they need to continue learning.
- 6 Ensure all students have access to a culturally relevant, rigorous, and engaging curriculum.
- 7 Identify and implement strategies to ensure all students, particularly students of color, return to a positive and inviting school climate.

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The Way Forward

Crises are decision points, and the decisions we make now will determine whether American education emerges stronger and more equitable than ever before. **Americans have never been more attuned to our nation's ongoing structural and systemic inequalities — or more willing to do something about it. This is our opportunity to back up words with action and resources.**

Ready to act? Get more information for:

[Districts](#)

[Schools](#)

[Community members and advocates](#)