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## Keeping Schools Open:

A Moderated Discussion  
about Minimizing Learning  
Loss in the Midst of  
Omicron

MONDAY, JANUARY 24TH, 2022



# Meet the Presenters



## Arne Duncan

**9th U.S. Secretary of Education;  
Former CEO of Chicago Public Schools**

Arne Duncan was one of the longest serving members of President Barack Obama's cabinet (2009–2016) and is among the most influential Secretaries of Education in history.

Prior to joining President Obama's Cabinet as Secretary of Education, Duncan served as the Chief Executive Officer for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Under his leadership, CPS saw significantly increased student performance on national and state tests along with increased graduation rates. During his time as CPS CEO, the number of teachers applying for positions almost tripled.



## Dr. Richard Wade

**Chief Scientist  
R-Zero**

A leading expert in toxicology, Dr. Richard L. Wade has spent the last 43 years in microbiological contamination, toxicology and risk management roles for the corporate and governmental sectors, including through his time as deputy chief for occupational health Cal/OSHA. He currently serves as Chief Scientist for R-Zero, the first biosafety company dedicated to making the spaces we all live, learn, work, and play safer and clinically clean. He is an advocate for making UV-C light disinfection a regular part of daily protocols in the COVID-19 era and beyond.



# School Disruptions

**1.6 billion children  
worldwide**

have been affected by  
COVID-related school closures

During the week of 1/10/22,  
**6,273 U.S. schools**  
were actively disrupted  
(not offering in-person learning)  
due to COVID



# Factors Pointing Toward School Closures

- Omicron represents **over 95% of all cases**, with U.S. case count peaking in mid-January at **825,000+ reported in a single day**
- COVID cases during the Omicron variant have increased among school-aged children: **1.51x–2.59x vs. Delta peaks in children ages 0–17**
- Teachers are demanding safer environments and greater protections for themselves and their students
- Teachers, staff, and substitutes are in such short supply that **parents are having to step in to help staff schools**
- COVID tests are in short supply: **the U.S. may need 3–5 million tests per day by February**, but **current daily testing capacity is closer to 1.6 million**



# Learning Loss

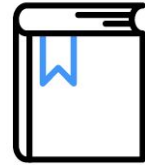
When comparing pre-pandemic and in-pandemic student performance, researchers found that:



Student performance declines were **larger in districts with less in-person instruction**

↓ **14.2%**

Math pass rates **declined by 14.2% on average**  
(Decline was 10.1% smaller for in-person districts)



Declines in language arts scores were **significantly larger in districts with large minority or low-income populations**



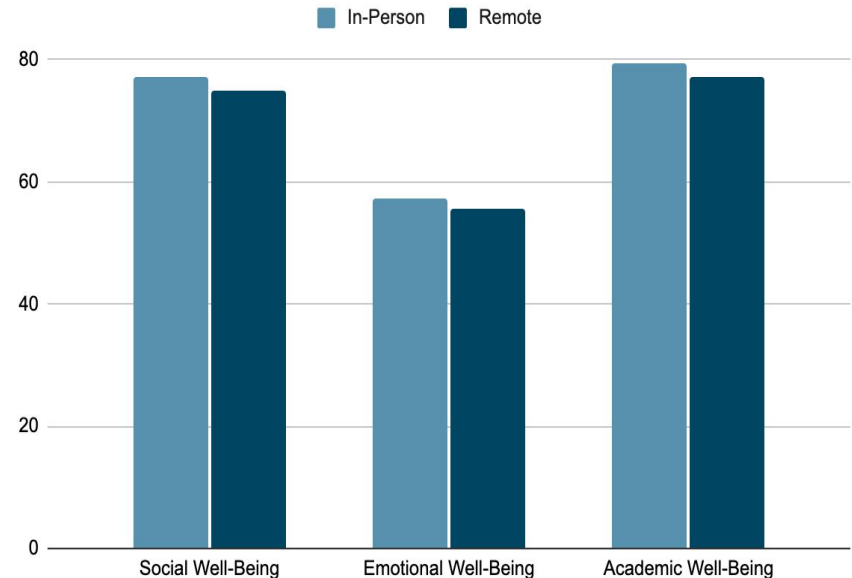
# Socialization Loss

The pandemic has taken a toll on adolescents' social development

In a study of 6,576 U.S. high school students, researchers found that on a 100-point scale, **in-person students were rated higher than remote students** on

- **social well-being** (77.2 vs. 74.8)
- **emotional well-being** (57.4 vs. 55.7), and
- **academic well-being** (78.4 vs. 77.3)

These differences, called “**thriving gaps,**” were more pronounced in 10th–12th graders than among 9th graders



Researchers believe that thriving gaps and social isolation brought on by COVID have contributed to a **31% increase in mental health-related ER visits by 12- to 17-year olds,** April-October 2020





“This is actually the third school year that’s been dramatically impacted by COVID. Kids that are 6, 7, 8 years old, they’ve never known a normal school year – they don’t know what that’s like. Our children have paid such a terrible price for this. Given that’s our reality... I think it is so important to try to do everything we can to keep our school buildings open.”

*Arne Duncan*



<https://www.msn.com/en-gb/money/video/schools-need-to-stay-open-arne-duncan/vi-AAStuge?MSCC=1605476065&c=5210369534641335884&mkt=en-us>

