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A SURVEY ON HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

➔ What are the results?

➔ What do the experts say?

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THE COSTS OF CUTTING SCHOOL SPENDING

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HOW TO COPE WITH SCHOOL-RELATED STRESS

TOP 7

MUST-HAVE GADGETS FOR TEACHERS IN 2020



Editor's Note

Corona is a hectic time for everyone alike. Not being able to go out has had severe impacts on everyone, especially young children who need nourishment and exposure to grow.

The field of education has faced some of the worst problems and experts in academia are still trying to figure out how to deal with them. One common after-effect of corona is stress and this is causing many students to lag behind, without comprehending the rapidly-changing dynamics of the world.

Some schools are also facing budget cuts which is resulting in them shutting down, adding to the distress of students and teachers who see no other source of learning other than online.

In this issue of IAO's Accreditor, we have highlighted all the mental health problems that students are facing during the pandemic and what are some of the best ways to cope with them.

“In times of stress, the best thing we can do for each other is to listen with our ears and our hearts and to be assured that our questions are just as important as our answers.”

Jeff Wright, Editor in Chief

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Featured

A SURVEY ON HOW THE PANDEMIC HAS AFFECTED THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS GOING THROUGH DURING THE PANDEMIC?

A new survey found students had difficulty accessing mental health care and experienced higher rates of depression after the pandemic began, prompting calls for a broad response from colleges.

Sixty percent of college students say the pandemic has made it harder to access mental health care, even as financial stresses and prevalence of depression increased among them, according to a new survey on the impact of COVID-19 on student well-being.

The survey by the Healthy Minds Network for Research on Adolescent and Young Adult Mental Health and the American College Health Association garnered results from 18,764 students on 14 campuses. Researchers say much of what they found is more confirmatory than surprising, but having the hard data will help colleges make decisions about providing mental health and well-being services to students.



WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?

Among the results:

- Sixty-six percent of students report the pandemic has caused them more financial stress -- “a known predictor of student mental health,” according to the report on the survey results -- and 35.7 percent say they’ve moved to a new living situation as a result of the pandemic.
- Prevalence of depression among college students increased since the pandemic caused the closure of campuses this spring compared to fall 2019, while prevalence of substance abuse decreased (see chart below). A higher proportion of students -- 30.5 percent compared to 21.9 percent the prior fall -- reported that their mental health negatively affected their academic performance on at least six days during the prior four weeks.
- About 15 percent of students report having a probable case of COVID-19, though less than 1 percent of students said the diagnosis was confirmed with a test. Among students who reported having confirmed or probable cases, 5.5 percent describe their symptoms as severe, 35.1 percent as moderate, 55.3 percent as mild and 4.1 percent said they were asymptomatic.
- Students express high levels of concerns about how long the pandemic will last. About a quarter of students -- 25.8 percent -- say they are “very” or “extremely” concerned about contracting the virus, while 64.4 percent say they are “very” or “extremely” concerned about a person they care about contracting COVID-19.
- Five and a half percent of students reported experiencing discriminatory or hostile behavior based on their race or ethnicity as a result of the pandemic, and 41 percent reported witnessing discriminatory behavior online or in person.



WHAT DO THE EXPERTS SAY

Mary Hoban, chief research officer for the American College Health Association, stressed that the data were collected during a fairly narrow window between March and May when colleges that hadn't used telehealth before the pandemic had to quickly put new telehealth systems in place. She said college counseling centers also struggled initially with state-level licensure regulations that prohibited providing mental health services across state lines; many of those regulations have been relaxed for the duration of the public health emergency.

Hoban expects the picture for mental health access and college counseling center capacity will improve in the fall.

"Not to say that all the challenges will have been addressed, but we'll have better systems in place for the cross-state licensure regulations and for establishing a new client, a new patient," she said. "Those were things that were bigger challenges in the beginning."

At the same time, Hoban expressed concern about the potential for colleges to cut spending on mental health services as they struggle with broader financial challenges. About 20 percent of institutions responding to a separate ACHA survey reported having unexpected staff reductions this summer.



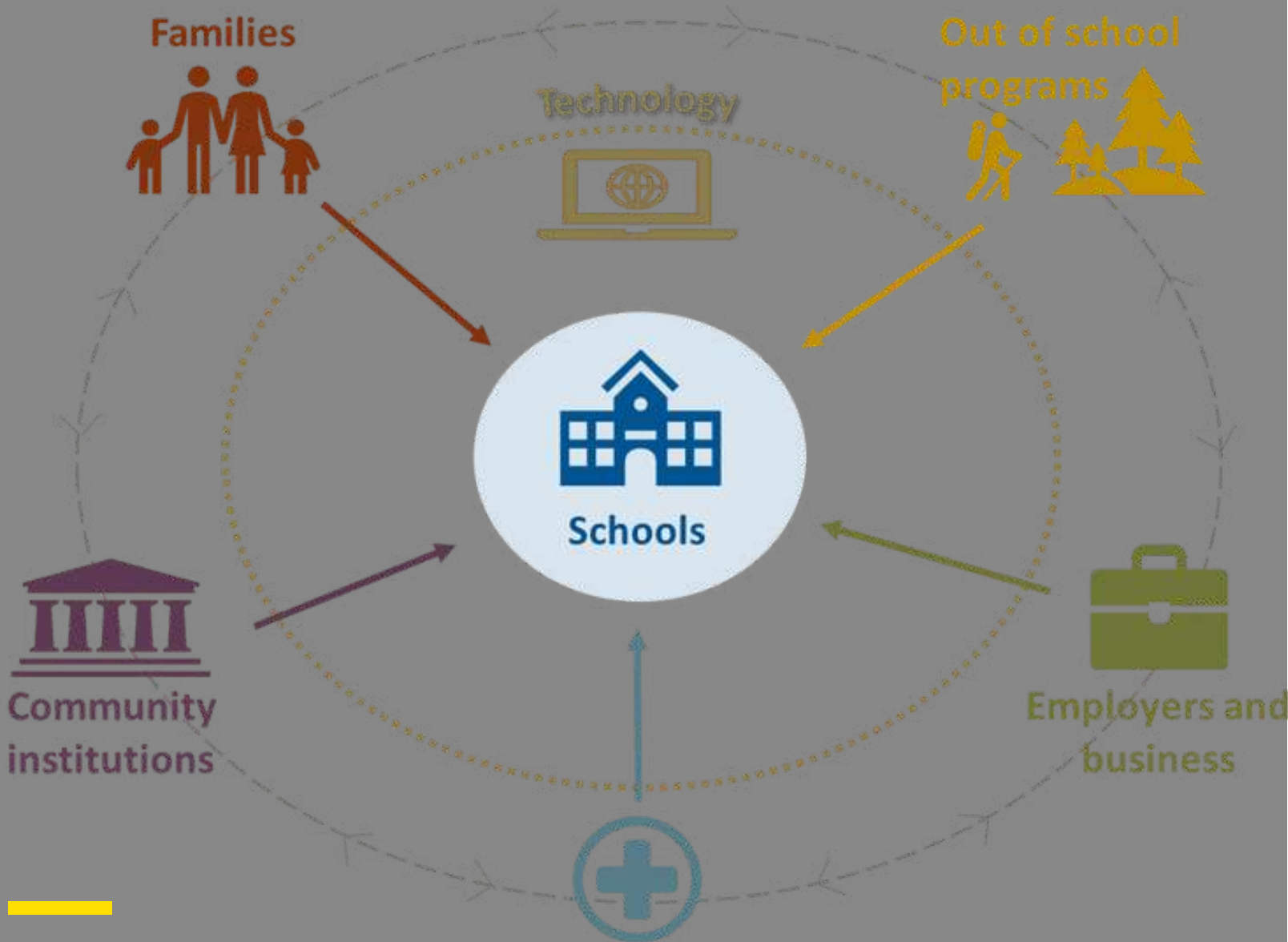
SARAH KETCHEN LIPSON

Sarah Ketchen Lipson, co-principal investigator of the national Healthy Minds Study and assistant professor of health law, policy and management at Boston University, said the results highlight a need to protect budgets for mental health support and to make sure that students are aware of the resources available to them, including telehealth resources.

"The challenge before us is what can we do to increase access, increase students' understanding of the mental health service landscape, which looks very different than how it looked before," she said.

Lipson said faculty have a heightened role to play in caring for students' well-being and referring them to mental health services as needed. With students having fewer interactions with peers, athletic coaches and student life staff, she said that faculty have a heightened gatekeeping role. She suggested that faculty should put information about mental health and wellness resources in their syllabi and take time to mention those resources in their first class and at stressful points of the semester, such as during midterms and finals.

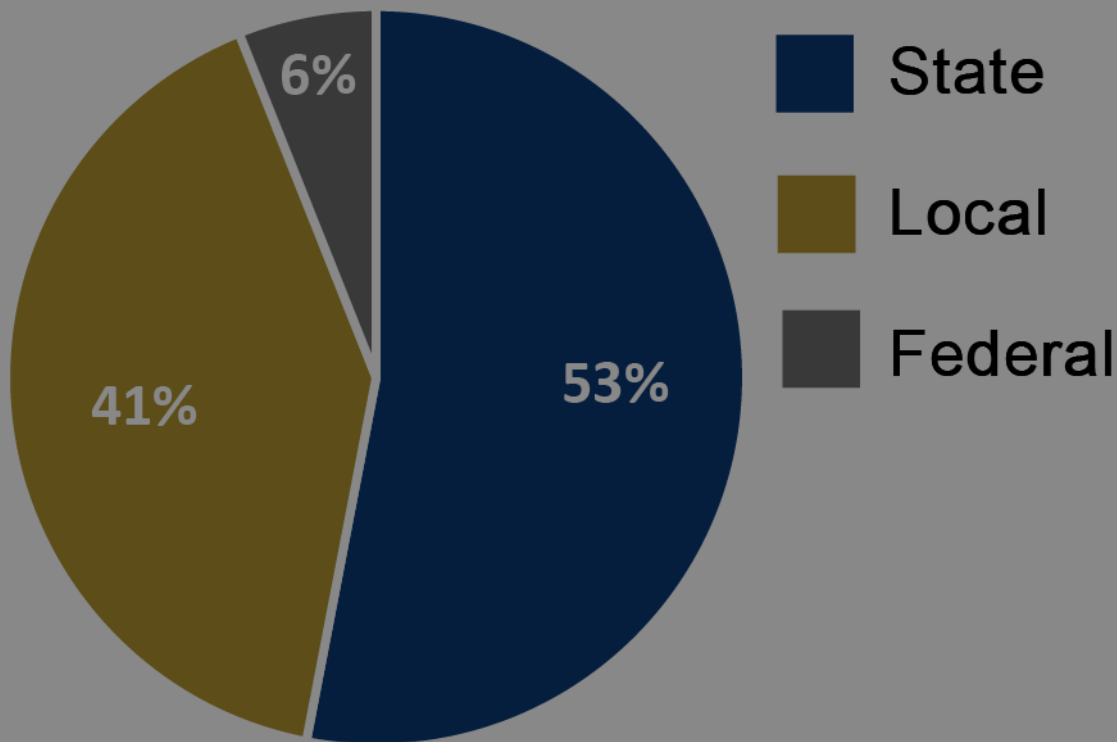
Lipson also highlighted a need for partnerships between on-campus counseling centers and financial aid offices in light of the financial stressors many students are facing.



THE COSTS OF CUTTING SCHOOL SPENDING

State budgets are in trouble due to the Covid-19 pandemic, with tax revenues in freefall and steep increases in spending on unemployment insurance, social-welfare programs, and emergency services. That spells budget trouble for schools, since states contribute about half of all public-school funding nationwide.

State Funding Makes Up 53% of School Budgets (FY 2019)



TRACING THE IMPACT OF STATE BUDGETS

Source: Analysis of School System Financial Reports FY 2019.

The relationship between education spending and learning outcomes has been a matter of debate for decades. In the search for a cause of the persistent gap in academic achievement between wealthy and poor students, budget disparities are a frequent nominee. Advocates for poor students have used this argument to overturn school-funding formulas that relied on local dollars in favor of state-based funding mechanisms, based on the assumption that state funding would direct more dollars to low-income communities and bring per-pupil spending up to equitable levels.

This move brought school spending in some poor communities in line with that of wealthier districts, and it has contributed to better outcomes for students, such as higher high-school graduation rates and adult wages. But it has also made education budgets more vulnerable to overall economic conditions.

data

WHAT DOES THE DATA SAY?

We link information from several data sources. School finance data come from the U.S. Census Bureau's Annual Survey of School System Finances, which contains financial data for all 13,500 public school districts in the United States. On average, roughly 85 percent of all K–12 education spending goes to current spending—expenses for instruction and support services delivered that year. About 10 percent goes towards capital expenses, which include construction, land, and equipment. Employee salary and benefits are the largest single budget item, accounting for 67 percent of total spending.

Our college-going measure is the number of first-time college enrollees divided by the average of the number of 17-year-olds and 18-year-olds in the state the year before enrollment. We use additional data on postsecondary institutions to compute college-going rates by school type, such as two- and four-year schools.



WHAT IS THE METHOD?

In order to determine the effect of school spending levels on student outcomes, we need to identify the effect of recession-induced spending declines separate from the effect of the recession itself. We do this by looking at states that relied heavily on state funding for local education budgets before the recession. Those states were more likely to experience declines in school spending for reasons unrelated to the intensity of the recession in the state or other policy changes that may have occurred at that time. This basic pattern holds true for two related, but distinct, reasons.

First, as the labor market worsened, demand for state-funded services such as unemployment insurance and Medicaid increased. To cover these additional costs, many states cut their education budgets—a crowd-out effect.

The second reason is related to the tax base for state funding. In general, state tax collections are more sensitive to economic conditions than local taxes. State taxes mostly come from income and sales tax collections, which are directly tied to residents' paychecks and spending.



HOW TO COPE WITH SCHOOL-RELATED STRESS

Your classes may now be hybrid or entirely virtual. You may have returned home, where you're missing friends and finding studying difficult or maybe you are on campus worrying about your family. Perhaps you're juggling your children's educational needs as well as your own. You might have lost funding or your job. Whether you're a graduate student, an undergrad or a teacher, you're probably feeling anxious, sad and uncertain. These feelings are normal and there are ways to lessen your stress.

PRACTICE SELF-CARE



Basic self-care will keep your immune system strong and your **emotion** reserves full. Get enough sleep. Exercise regularly. Eat well. Try mindfulness apps.

1. Find activities that engage different parts of yourself.
2. Do something physical like dancing.
3. Occupy your mind with puzzles.
4. Engage your senses with hot baths or fragrant candles.
5. Look for tasks you can postpone or simply eliminate from your to-do list.



STUDY

FIND WAYS TO FOCUS

You might feel unmotivated now. Recognize that the current circumstances are hard for everyone. Don't judge yourself; just do the best you can. Establish a routine. Get up, go to bed and do your work at the same time every day. Frequent breaks can help you re-engage in your work.

Try to create a separate work space, although you should reserve your sleeping area for sleeping. If family members are distracting you, use "I statements" to explain the problem--"I'm worried about my exam next week"—and work together to develop solutions.



SEEK OUT SOCIAL SUPPORT

Your classmates have probably scattered. And having to stay home can be lonely. To combat isolation, come together with your dorm-mates or graduate school cohort via technology. Even something as simple as turning on your webcam during virtual classes can help you and others feel more connected.



HELP OTHERS COPE

Your classmates and family members are anxious, too. You don't have to fix their problems. It's enough to let them know they're not alone. If you're a psychology graduate student on a clinical track, you're probably helping patients manage the same anxieties you're facing yourself. Be sure to address your own concerns separately so you can focus on patients during sessions. Ask your supervisor for help.



FIND WAYS TO MANAGE DISAPPOINTMENT

Whether it's an internship, dissertation defense or graduation ceremony, important events may not happen this year.

Grieve those losses, then reframe how you think about these life events. Think about how you can honor what you've achieved. Find new ways to celebrate. Consider recreating important events once it's safe.

LIMIT YOUR MEDIA CONSUMPTION

Of course, it's good to stay informed, especially about what's happening in your area. But too much news — especially social media — can add to your anxiety. To avoid being overwhelmed, set limits on your media consumption and smartphone use. Cut through misinformation by relying on reputable sources like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Health Organization.





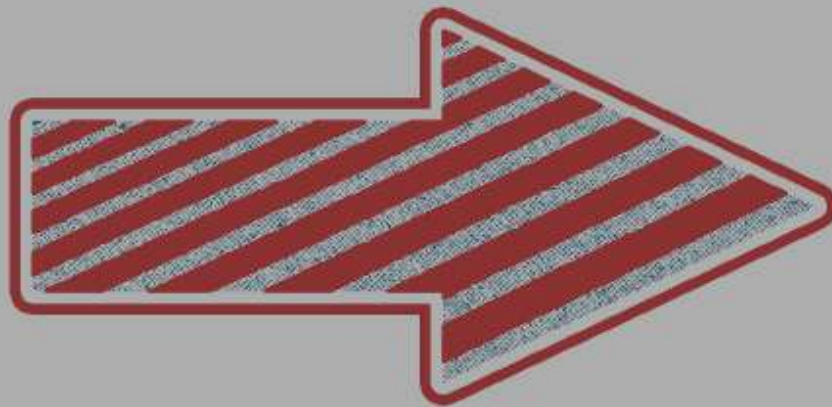
FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL

Your classmates, friends or family members may be disobeying the rules about physical distancing or doing other things that add to your stress.

While modeling good behavior and staying safe yourself, recognize that you can't control what other people do. You can only control your own thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Another thing you can't control? The uncertainty about what comes next.

Instead of worrying about our ambiguous future, focus on solving immediate problems.

Top 7 MUST-HAVE GADGETS FOR TEACHERS



From the newest technology gadgets for the classroom to the classic tried-and-true devices, here is our list of top picks for the must-have tech gadgets for teachers in 2020-2021.

1. iPad Air

The iPad Air is our top pick for teachers. With the iPad Air, teachers gain unrivaled flexibility, tools, and mobility in the teaching experience. Teachers can easily control all of their lessons, content, schedules, and educational apps from a single device, whether in the classroom or out. Apple's simple connectivity controls also let teachers easily connect and present on other classroom devices with a simple swipe and tap. And with the Apple App Store always handy, teachers can easily find new apps and tools to extend their educational toolbox.



2. Document Camera

Sometimes you just need to display a document, drawing, or non-digital piece of content to the entire class. Rather than print out 20 copies, project it on screen with a document camera. The document camera lets you easily display any physical piece of content on screen without any fuss or complexity.

The camera's wide-angle viewing lets you easily and clearly capture your entire paper or work area, and the added video and audio capabilities let you record and stream your lesson content. This is a must have for teachers in today's connected classrooms and takes our number two spot.



3. Mini Wireless Keyboard

Even though touchscreen devices often have on-screen keyboards —many users want to be mobile around the room and still control their panel.

This innovative mini wireless keyboard from Clear Touch Interactive gives you all of the benefits of a physical keyboard with the enhanced mobility of a tablet. You can easily connect it to your device and carry it around the classroom freely. The helpful shortcut keys on the sides also let you access the most useful functions of your connected devices on the fly.



4. Wireless Teacher Microphone

Sometimes it can get difficult for students to hear you in the classroom, whether it's because you're teaching in a larger classroom or in a room with poor acoustics. Rather than strain your voice, check out this wireless microphone and receiver from AVerMedia. Now everyone can hear you with crystal clear audio.





5. Pen Pad

Are you looking for additional control and precision in your writing and drawing on screen? With 8,192 levels of instant pen pressure sensitivity, this pen pad from XP-Pen delivers next-level control and precision in your writing and drawing. This is an ideal solution for art and writing classes (or any class where you want precise writing, drawing, and annotating capabilities).

6. Kindle E-Reader

Gone are the days of carrying lots of heavy books to class thanks to today's e-readers. Topping the list here is the Amazon Kindle, which allows you to easily carry all of your textbooks, references, and lesson materials in the palm of your hand. With unparalleled battery life, the Kindle is an extremely reliable option with a single charge often lasting for weeks on end.



7. Web Camera



Today's connected classrooms often blend online and in-person teaching, and this web camera from Clear Touch Interactive® lets you easily record and share video of class on-screen or online. The web camera features wide-angle viewing and a built-in microphone to ensure both clear audio and video. This web camera earned the number eight spot on our list.

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