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MEPRI releases two reports on supports for students and teachers during COVID-19 pandemic

May 17, 2022

The Maine Educational Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) has published two new reports based on a study of the strategies and challenges involved in supporting preK–12 students and teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One report focuses on strategies for supporting the instructional and mental health needs of teachers, while the other examines supports for student learning, health and mental health. The Maine Legislature commissioned both reports to better understand how schools in the state and nationwide are supporting students and teachers during this challenging time when normal teaching and learning practices have been disrupted.

The reports are based on a fall 2021 survey of Maine school district curriculum directors, as well as a review of academic literature on national educational practices during the pandemic and American Rescue Plan Act applications that all states submitted to the federal government describing how they would use relief money to support elementary and secondary schools.

Both reports note that “Maine was better positioned than many states because of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative (MLTI) supporting 1:1 laptop or iPad access statewide for all middle school students and teachers and some secondary students and teachers over the past 20 years.” Still, teachers had to adapt curriculum, and both students and teachers had to learn new instructional technologies and platforms in a short period of time, especially early in the pandemic.

One finding that emerged from the survey of Maine curriculum directors was that 51 school districts, out of 66 that completed the survey, reported adopting at least one new online learning opportunity for students during the pandemic. The same number adopted some practices to support students such as tutoring, mentoring, home visits, counseling and other outreach to families. Just under half of the responding districts (29) adopted a four-day in-person and one-day asynchronous school schedule during the pandemic.

The reports are available on the [MEPRI website](#).

MEPRI is a partnership between the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development and the University of Southern Maine established by the Maine Legislature in 1995 to provide policymakers, including the legislature’s Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs and the Maine Department of Education, with objective data, policy research and evaluation of educational needs, services and impacts in Maine’s preK–12 schools.

MEPRI researchers will brief members of the legislature on the reports’ findings later this year.

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