



## The Epidemic Behind the Mask: COVID-Related Education Inequities

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Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), recently announced strategies for reopening schools during the ongoing pandemic. Although hand-washing, physical distancing, mask-wearing and in-person schooling are important, these strategies alone will not ensure that children are healthy and learning. We also must consider their COVID-19-related experiences, particularly for children in low-resourced communities where infection and death rates have been higher, vaccination rates lower and inequities rampant.

In order to tackle such complexities in children's experiences, we simply cannot rely on teachers and schools to "go it alone." Instead, we must break out of our silos and harness community-wide resources that will address the needs of the "whole child," which include physical and mental health — and, for the children's sake, we must act now.