



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

Acting Collectively and Systemically for Equity in Pandemic Schooling

Erica Turner, University of Wisconsin-Madison

A few weeks ago, we stood on the shore of a local beach, breathing through our masks in 90-degree heat while watching our children (ages 7-11) on a physically distanced play date. Our conversation turned to the district's decision to go virtual through the end of October. We were simultaneously relieved and concerned.

We saw in the spring that even when children cannot attend school safely, employers demand parents work at full capacity and, with little in the way of state-supported child care, most families — across race and class — are left to make individual child care arrangements. Indeed, affluent, predominantly white families have already begun **looking into private schools, moving to less populated areas, hiring private tutors, shifting to home-schooling, and/or organizing "learning pods."** Yet, less affluent children — often children of color — have little access to these resources and may also rely upon schools for critical services like breakfast and lunch programs. With all that is going on, what is there to do about these inequities? As Black parents and professors of education, we feel these concerns and the related exhaustion deeply, and yet, we think collective, political action, or as we say to our kids — people power — is needed to move the dial on equity.