



Education Policy Innovation Collaborative

Instructional Delivery Under Michigan Districts' Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans – December Update

Overview

On August 20, 2020, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a series of three “Return to Learn” bills into law. The Return to Learn legislation amended the State School Aid Act in two key ways: first, by providing greater flexibility for districts to meet instructional requirements as they adapt their programs and operations to ensure the safety of their students and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic, and second, by outlining new requirements for the 2020-21 school year to ensure that students’ needs are adequately met despite these changes.

Under the Return to Learn legislation, each districtⁱ is required to develop an **extended COVID-19 learning (ECOL)** plan which must include a description of the mode through which instruction will be delivered (e.g., in-person, remote). After the initial ECOL plan is submitted, each district must **reconfirm the mode of instructional delivery** each month.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) are collecting data monthly from districts about their ECOL plans for instructional delivery. The Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC), as the state’s strategic research partner, is working closely with MDE and CEPI to provide a summary and

analysis of the ECOL plans that were submitted and reconfirmed by Michigan school districts each month. The current report includes data for district plans for the months of September, October, November, and December, and updates selected findings presented in EPIC's November ECOL report, which can be found here: <https://epicedpolicy.org/ecol-reports/>. EPIC's ECOL reports are intended as a complement to the public-facing dashboard CEPI releases each month, which can be found here: <https://mischooldata.org/covid-dashboard/>. We note that this report and the CEPI dashboard use districts' reports of their ECOL plans uploaded by a certain date and time each month. However, given the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, districts' plans can be fluid and are apt to change after they have submitted their reports. The results below represent districts' planned instructional modalities for each month.

Data and Methods

This report primarily relies on districts' submissions to the Reconfirmed COVID-19 Learning Plan Monthly Questionnaire. Given the current health crisis and the challenges it presents when educating students across Michigan, educators' time is at a premium. EPIC, MDE, and CEPI thank the Michigan school districts that provided these valuable data through the Reconfirmed COVID-19 Learning Plan Monthly Questionnaire. We also incorporate data from several public sources to examine relationships between ECOL plan content and characteristics of school districts and communities.

ECOL PLAN DATA

The Reconfirmed COVID-19 Learning Plan Monthly Questionnaires for the months of September, October, November, and December were administered through MDE's GEMS-MARS application and district submissions were accepted through 4:00pm on December 9, 2020. Districts were asked to indicate if they plannedⁱⁱ to instruct students in a fully in-person, fully remote, or hybrid format for each of these four months. These three instructional modalities are defined as follows:

- **Fully in-person:** Students receive 100% of their instruction in person.
- **Fully remote:** Students receive 100% of their instruction remotely.
- **Hybrid:** Students attend school in person for part of the week and participate in remote instruction for part of the week.

In a previous analysis of the Return to School plans that Michigan districts submitted to MDE in August of 2020, EPIC researchers found that the majority of districts planned to give families a choice between two or more modes of instruction.ⁱⁱⁱ In order to capture similar details from districts' monthly ECOL plans, the reconfirmation questionnaire allowed districts to select more than one modality.

Districts were also asked follow-up questions about each mode of instruction they planned to provide. For all three modalities, follow-up questions included details such as the percentage of students in the district to whom they planned to provide this mode of instruction (asked in ranges of less than 24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75-99%, and 100%) and the grade level(s) or special population(s) of students to whom they planned to provide this mode of instruction.

Table 1 provides details about the number of districts – both Local Education Agencies (LEAs, which are traditional public-school districts) and Public School Academies (PSAs, or charter schools) – that provided their ECOL reconfirmation plans for each month. This update to our November analysis not only incorporates new plans submitted for the month of December, but also incorporates several September through November plans that had not yet been submitted at the time of our November analysis. As of December 10, 2020, approximately 98% of districts submitted plans for the months of September, October, and November (100% of LEAs and 95% of PSAs), decreasing slightly in December with 97% of districts submitting ECOL plans (98% of LEAs and roughly 95% of PSAs). Eight hundred and six districts (97%) submitted plans across all four months (98% of LEAs and 94% of PSAs). Overall, 16 districts did not submit ECOL plans in any month. These districts are all PSAs, of which at least 12 were operating as virtual schools before the pandemic and are not required to submit ECOL plans each month.^{iv}

Table 1. September-December ECOL Plans Submitted by Michigan Districts

	Number of Districts
All Districts	833
Districts that Submitted September ECOL Plans	817
Districts that Submitted October ECOL Plans	817
Districts that Submitted November ECOL Plans	816
Districts that Submitted December ECOL Plans	808
Districts that Submitted ECOL Plans All 4 Months	806

Notes: Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. Data was collected from school districts' monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC.

AUXILIARY DATA SOURCES

This report draws from several auxiliary data sources to provide additional context about school districts and the local communities they serve. District plans are linked with publicly available characteristics from the Educational Entity Master (EEM) database to compare ECOL plan content and instructional modality across types of districts (e.g., LEA districts

and PSA districts) and locations across the state. Aggregate student enrollment data from the 2019-20 MI School Data Student Headcount report are also incorporated to estimate the proportions of Michigan students^v whose districts offer each mode of instruction. We also use estimates of the proportions of households in each district with broadband internet subscriptions from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey^{vi}.

Results

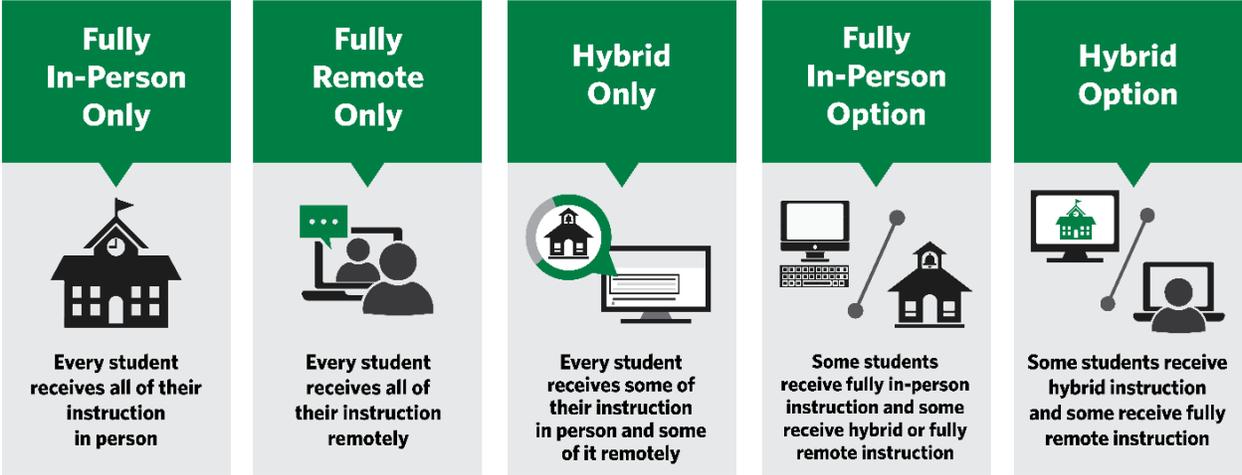
Instructional Modality

As in our November analysis, districts are grouped into five mutually exclusive categories based on the type of instruction districts planned to offer K-12 general education students each month: fully in-person only, fully in-person option, hybrid only, hybrid option, and fully remote only.

Fully in-person only districts indicated that they planned to offer in-person instruction to all students. **Fully in-person option** districts indicated that they planned to provide fully in-person instruction to some students and hybrid or fully remote instruction to others. Similarly, **hybrid only** districts planned to provide hybrid instruction to all students, and **hybrid option** districts planned to provide hybrid instruction to some students and remote instruction to others. Finally, **fully remote only** districts planned to provide all instruction remotely.

Each month, between 1% and 2% of districts submitted Re-Confirmed COVID-19 Learning Plan Monthly Questionnaires but did not specify how instruction would be provided for general education students. These districts could not be classified into one of the five mutually exclusive categories described above and are labeled “No Modality Data” in the tables and figures that follow. As noted above in Table 1, between 2% and 3% of districts did not submit responses to the questionnaire. We label these districts “No Plan Submitted.”

Modes of Instruction Districts are Planning to Provide in Fall 2020



DECEMBER PLANS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY

In December, 48% of school districts planned to offer some amount of in-person instruction (either fully in-person or hybrid, shown in Table 2). Nearly all of these districts planned to provide multiple options; just 1% of districts planned to offer only fully in-person instruction^{vii} and 1% planned to offer only hybrid instruction. Of the 46% of districts that planned to provide more than one mode of instruction, most (39%) planned to offer fully in-person instruction to some of their students and 7% planned to offer hybrid instruction. Almost half of all Michigan districts (48%) planned only to offer fully remote instruction.

The second panel in Table 2 provides the number of students enrolled in districts planning to offer each of these modalities for the month of December. Fifty-five percent of Michigan students are enrolled in districts that planned to offer only remote instruction, and less than 43% are enrolled in districts that planned to offer some amount of in-person instruction.

Discrepancies between the percentages of districts and students represented in each modality category reflect differences in the average size of districts providing each mode of instruction. As we show below in Figures 9 and 10, districts offering only fully remote instruction tend to be urban and larger than the state average whereas districts offering a fully in-person option tend to be rural and smaller.

Table 2. Distribution of Districts and Share of Student Population by Planned Instructional Modality, December 2020

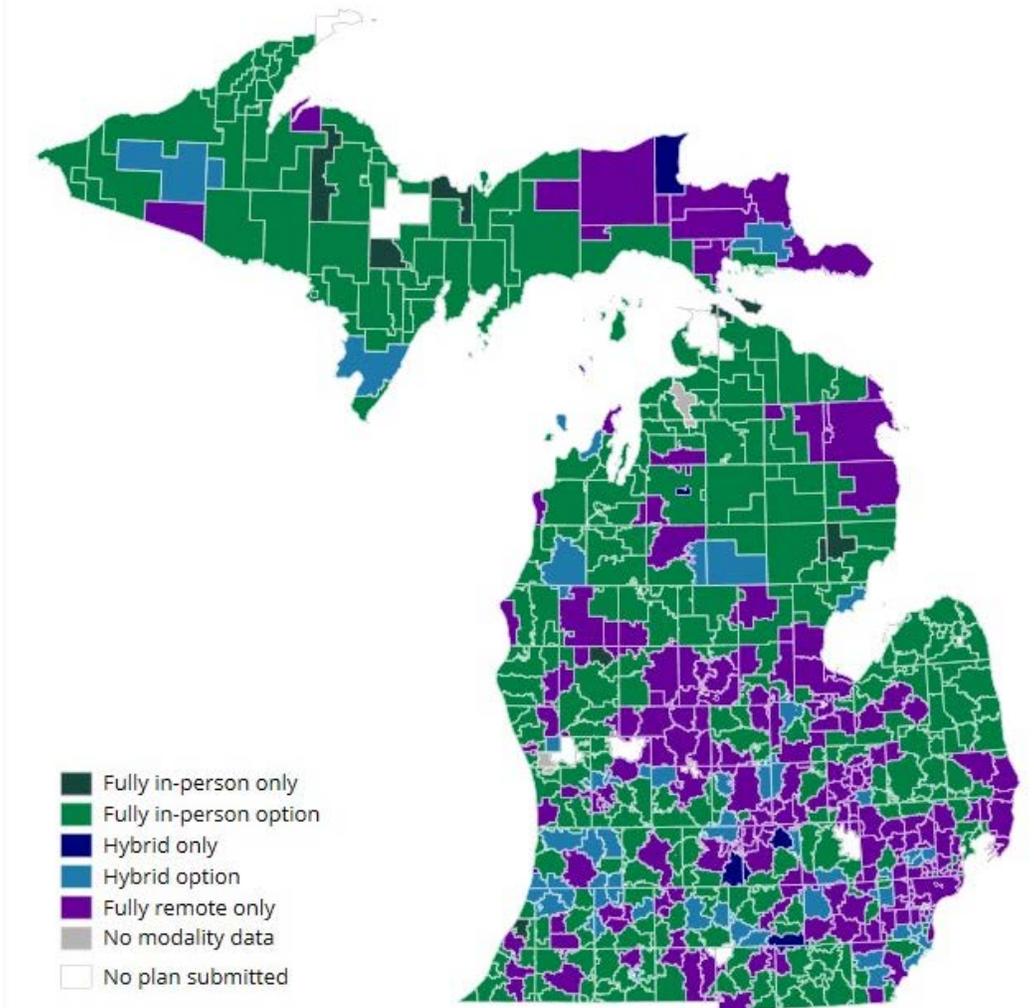
Modality	Districts	% of Districts	Students	% of Students
Fully In-Person Only	11	1%	2,333	<1%
Fully In-Person Option	322	39%	453,281	31%
Hybrid Only	6	1%	5,902	<1%
Hybrid Option	58	7%	144,800	10%
Fully Remote Only	398	48%	800,291	55%
No Modality Data	13	2%	12,387	1%
No Plan Submitted	25	3%	29,136	2%

Notes: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020). <https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles2/StudentInformation/StudentCounts/StudentCount2.aspx>

Figure 1 shows the geographic boundaries of each LEA district in the state, where the color of each region represents the planned instructional modality reported for the month of December. This map does not depict the locations or instructional modalities of PSAs, as PSA districts do not have geographic boundaries.

LEAs offering only remote instruction (purple) are represented in every region of the state and are heavily concentrated in and around large urban areas (e.g., Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Flint). Almost all LEAs that planned to offer only in-person instruction (dark green) are located in the northern part of the state, and nearly all are in the Upper Peninsula.

Figure 1. Districts by Planned Instructional Modality, December 2020 (*Traditional Public Schools Only*)

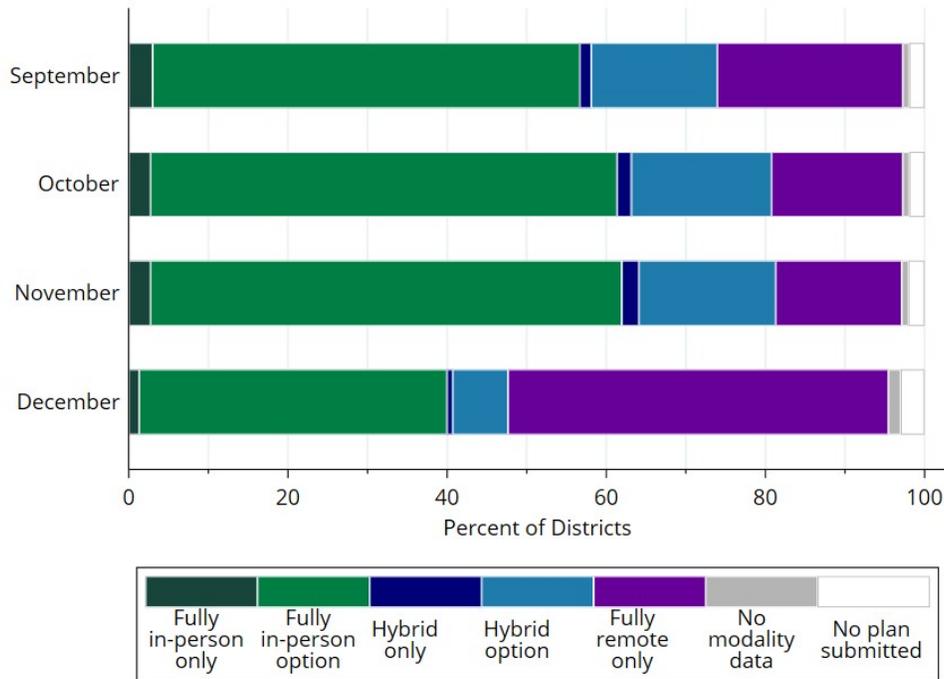


Notes: Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The map only includes data from traditional public school LEAs and not PSAs. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC.

TEMPORAL CHANGES IN INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY

Figure 2 shows the distribution of districts’ planned instructional modalities for the first four months of the 2020-2021 academic year. In September, nearly three quarters of all Michigan school districts (74%) planned to offer some amount of in-person instruction (either fully in-person or hybrid). This share increased to roughly 81% in both October and November. At the same time, nearly one-quarter (23%) of districts planned to provide fully remote instruction in September, and that share decreased by well over a third (14%) through November.

Figure 2. Distribution of Districts by Planned Instructional Modality and Month



Notes: Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A1 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC.

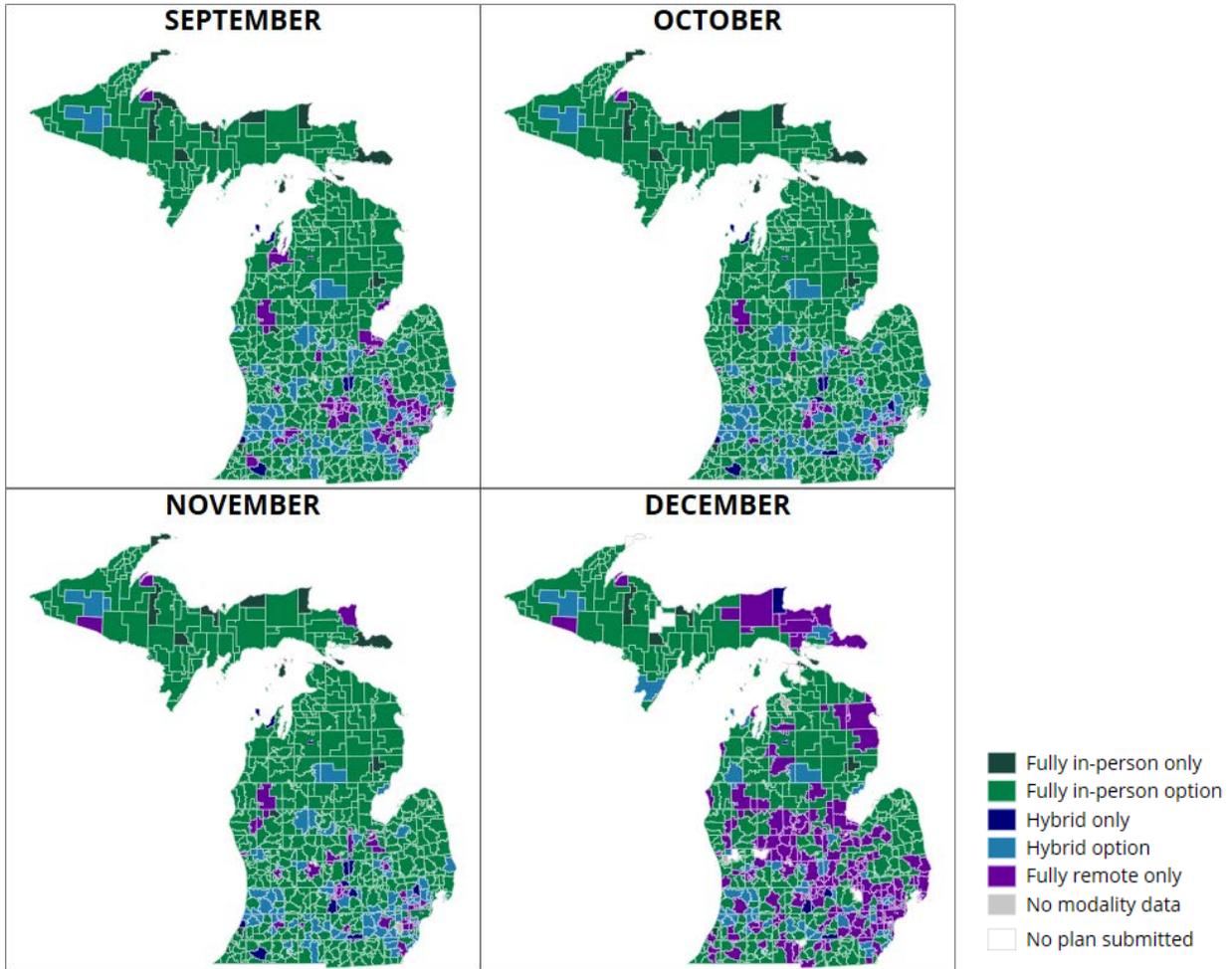
However, Michigan experienced a dramatic rise in COVID-19 infections over the course of the fall and especially into November.^{viii} On Sunday November 15th, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services issued a new Emergency Order under MCL 333.2253 that mandated all high schools halt in-person instruction for three weeks starting November 18th, 2020. The order was subsequently extended through December 20th, 2020.

While the order only pertained to instruction at the high school level, many districts altered their December planned instructional modality for all grade levels. The share of districts that planned to offer only fully remote instruction in December tripled compared to the previous month (48% up from 16%).^{ix} Conversely, the share of districts that planned to offer fully in-person only, fully in-person option, hybrid only, and hybrid option instructional modalities decreased by roughly two, 20, one, and 10 percentage points, respectively.

Figure 3 shows how these changes over time were reflected in the state’s geography. Between September and November, an increasing number of traditional public school LEAs in urban areas switched from only offering fully remote instruction to a modality that included more in-person instruction. The remaining districts offering fully remote or hybrid instruction in November were clustered near the largest urban areas in the state.

December’s 200% increase in “fully remote only” districts lead to a more equal distribution of this modality across the state.

Figure 3. Districts by Planned Instructional Modality and Month (*Traditional Public Schools Only*)

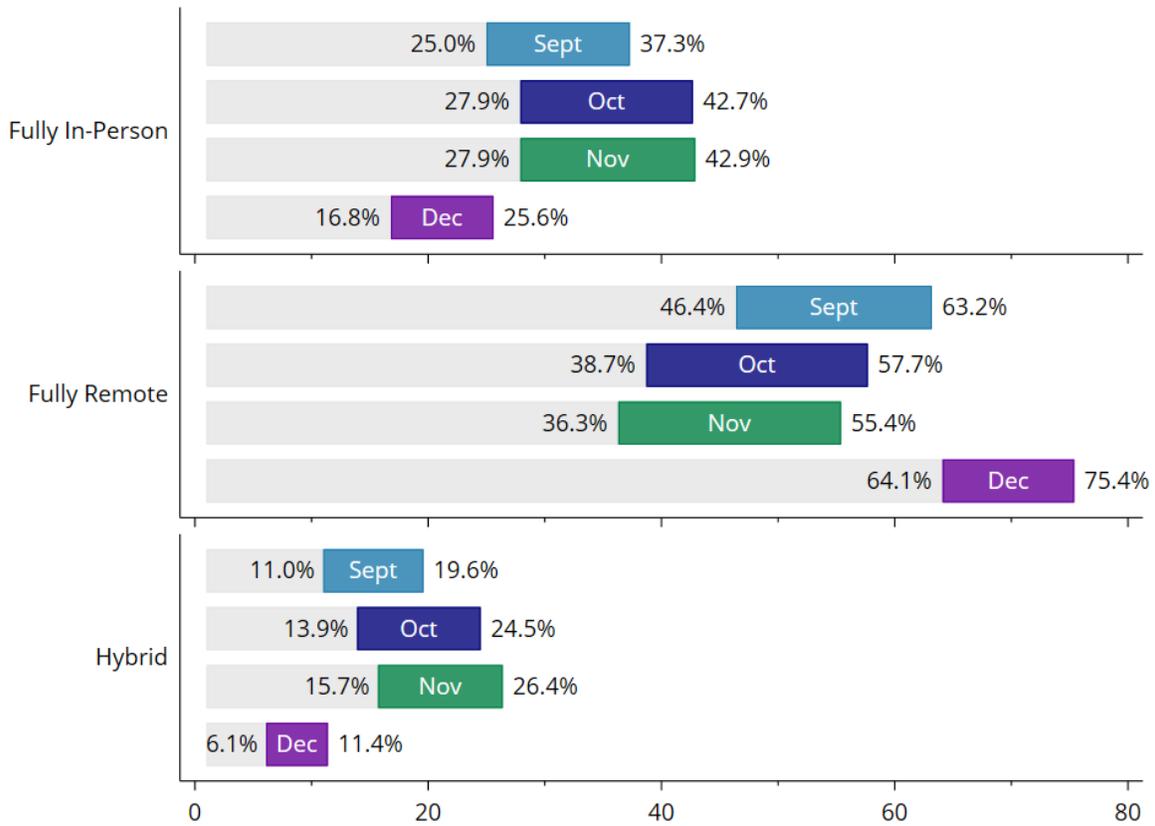


Notes: Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The map only includes data from traditional public school LEAs and not PSAs. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC.

The dramatic shift toward remote instruction in December guarantees that a smaller share of Michigan students is educated using in-person instruction. Districts were asked to specify the approximate percentage of students that received each modality offered by the district in each month (in ranges of less than 24%, 25-49%, 50-74%, 75-99%, and 100%). We combine these responses with district-level student enrollment counts to estimate the share of Michigan students that received each instructional modality. For districts that

indicated 100% of students received a single instructional modality, we count their entire enrollment in the selected modality. For districts that planned to provide different modes of instruction to different subsets of their student population, we divide total district enrollment based on the indicated percentage range of students receiving each modality. Figure 4 shows the estimated share of all students in the state by modality for each month. The ranges depicted on the graph represent the total student shares based on the low-end and high-end of the percentage ranges indicated by each district.

Figure 4. Estimated Percentage of Students by Planned Modality (Ranges based on district reports)



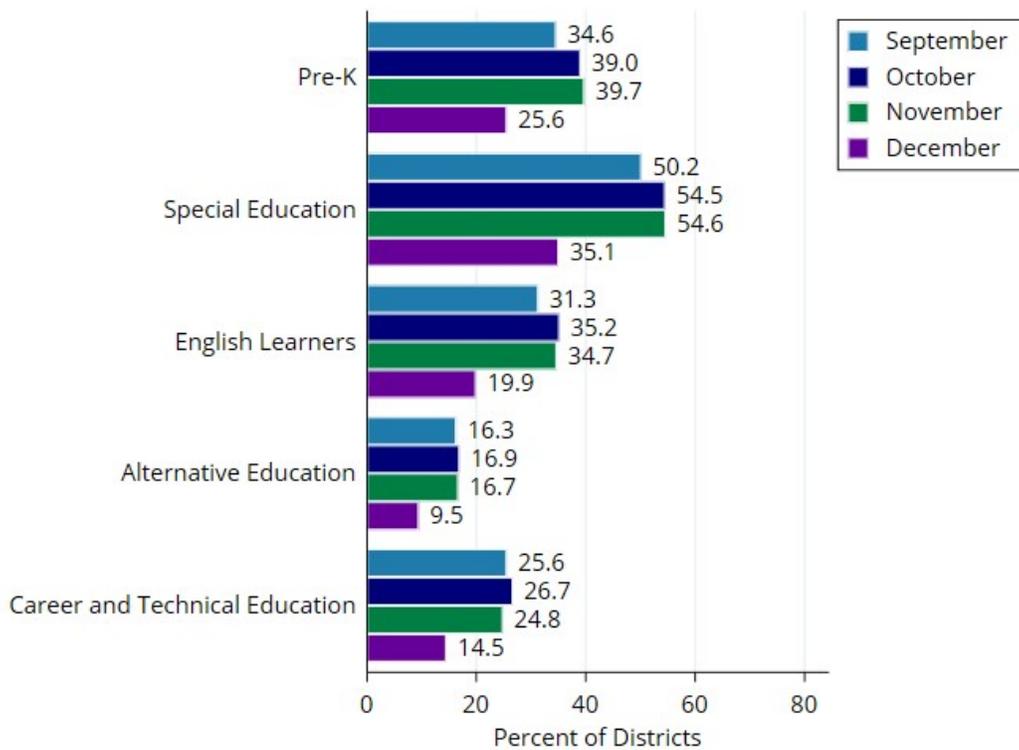
Notes: We calculate the percent of students by multiplying district-reported ranges of plans for students to be served by each instructional modality by their total student counts and then summing across all the districts offering each modality. For example, the top bar for September Fully In-Person can be interpreted as “Between 25.0 and 37.3 percent of Michigan students were receiving fully in-person instruction in September.” Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020). <https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles2/StudentInformation/StudentCounts/StudentCount2.aspx>

For December, districts estimated that between 17% and 26% of all Michigan students planned to receive fully in-person instruction. This is less than the 32% of students who were enrolled in districts that offered at least the option of fully in-person instruction in December, and represents a steep decrease in the estimated share of students receiving fully in-person instruction since November (28 to 43% of Michigan students). By contrast,

the share of students estimated to be receiving fully remote instruction jumped substantially from a low of 36 to 55% in November to 64 to 75% in December. The share of students estimated to be learning in a hybrid model of instruction fell to between 6 and 11% in December.

Districts that indicated they would provide fully in-person instruction were also asked to identify which student populations would receive fully in-person instruction. Figure 5 describes the share of districts that planned to provide fully in-person instruction to Pre-K, special education, English learners, alternative education, and career and technical education (CTE) students between September and December.

Figure 5. Changes in the Share of Districts Planning to Provide In-Person Instruction for Special Populations of Students



Notes: Bars represent the proportion of districts in each month that reported providing in-person instruction to each subgroup of students. Districts that did not provide data are not counted in the percentage figures. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. Source: Data collected from school districts' monthly reconfirmation of Extended COVID-19 Learning Plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC.

Across the first three months of the school year, more than half of all Michigan school districts planned to offer fully in-person instruction to students with disabilities, and roughly a third of districts offered the same to Pre-K and English learners. Similarly, between 16% and 27% of districts planned to offer fully in-person instruction to CTE and alternative education students. These shares were relatively consistent through November, however, the increase in districts planning to offer fully remote instruction in December decreased the availability of in-person instruction for all five of these student populations.

Overall, the share of districts offering in-person instruction to Pre-K, students with disabilities, English learners, alternative education, and CTE students dropped between 36% and 43% across all groups.

Differences in the Planned Provision of Instructional Modalities Across Districts

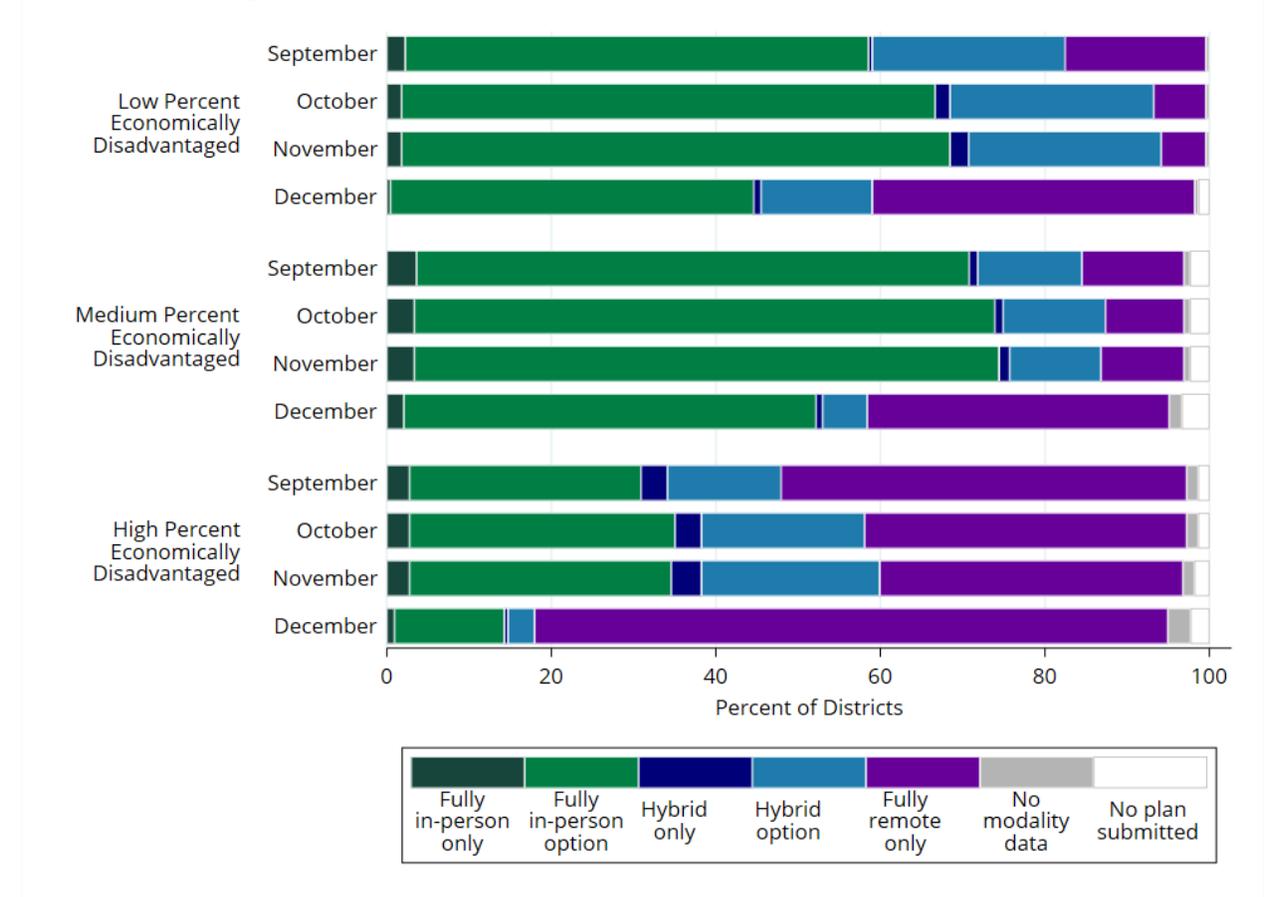
The remaining analyses examine differences in instructional modalities offered across districts with different demographic characteristics and district and community characteristics.

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION

We classify districts into “low,” “middle,” and “high” categories based on the distributions of district-level percentages of economically disadvantaged, Black, and Latinx students across the state of Michigan. We then compare across districts in the lowest quartile (“low”), the middle two quartiles (“middle”), and the highest quartile (“high”) for each student demographic group.

Figure 6 shows how planned instructional modalities differ according to the proportions of economically disadvantaged students enrolled in each district. Across all four months, districts with the greatest shares of economically disadvantaged students were far more likely to be offered only fully remote instruction. More specifically, in December, almost 80% of districts with “high” proportions of economically disadvantaged students planned to offer fully remote instruction only, while only 37% and 39% of districts with “middle” and “low” proportions of economically disadvantaged students planned to offer the same modality. Conversely, districts with “low” and “middle” proportions of economically disadvantaged students were consistently more likely to plan to offer students the to learn fully in person.

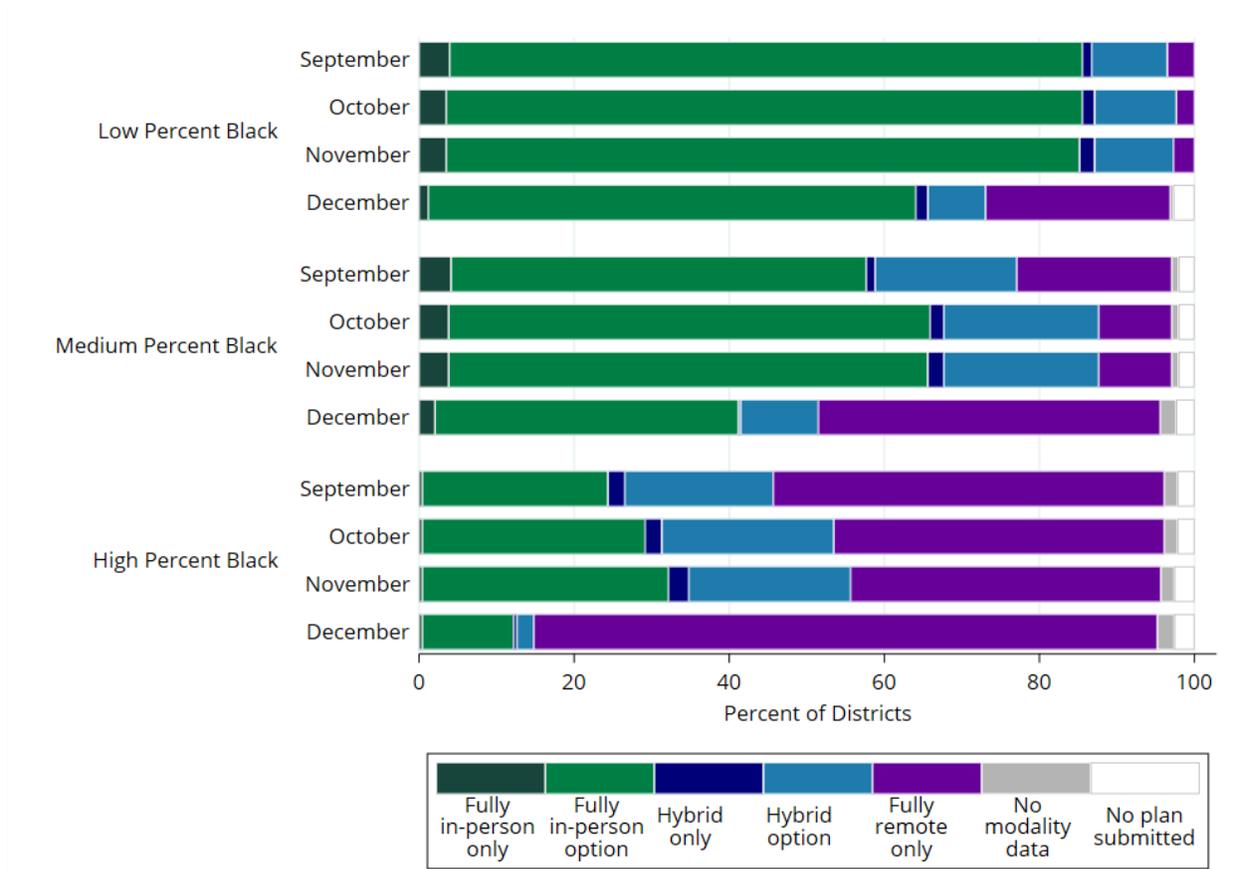
Figure 6. Share of Districts by Economically Disadvantaged Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 222 districts in the “Low” group ($\leq 46\%$ economically disadvantaged), 387 in “Middle” ($47\text{--}78\%$ economically disadvantaged), and 217 in the “High” group ($>78\%$ economically disadvantaged). A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A2 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Figure 7 shows how planned instructional modalities differ across districts with greater or lesser proportions of Black students. The patterns are similar to those shown in Figure 6 for economically disadvantaged students. In December, districts with the most Black students were roughly twice as likely as “middle” districts to plan to offer fully remote instruction and almost four times as likely compared to districts with the lowest proportion of Black students. These disparities were more severe in October and November; districts with the greatest proportion of Black students were approximately four times as likely as those in the middle of the distribution to plan to provide only remote instruction, and between 12 and 18 times as likely relative to districts with the fewest Black students. Across all four months, only one district in the “high” category planned to offer only fully in-person instruction.

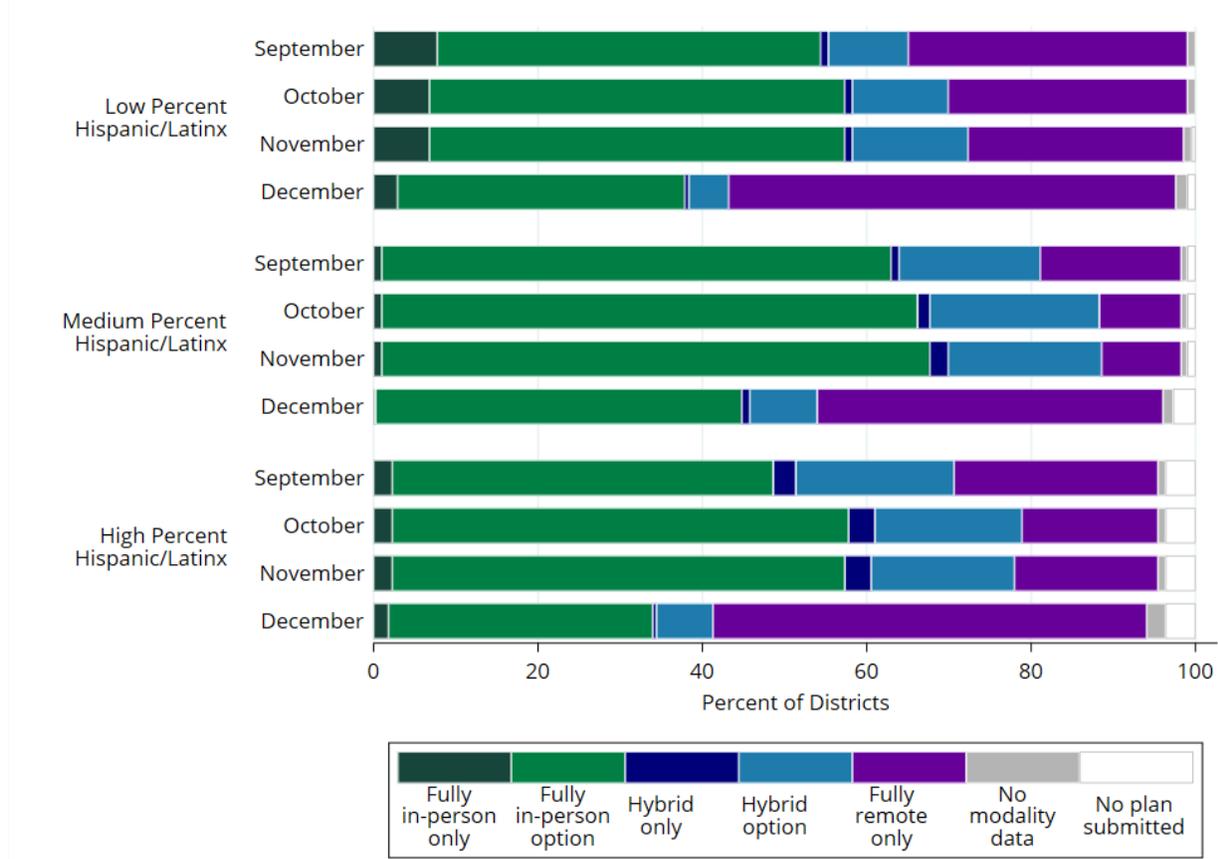
Figure 7. Share of Districts by Black Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 256 districts in the “Low” group ($\leq 1\%$ Black students), 340 in “Middle” (2-20% Black students), and 230 in the “High” group ($> 20\%$ Black students). A full table of values corresponding to this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not upload information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A3 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Figure 8 shows how planned instructional modalities differ across districts with larger and smaller populations of Hispanic/Latinx students. In December, after 32% of all Michigan districts altered modality plans to only offer fully remote instruction, the distribution of instructional modalities across districts with varying Hispanic/Latinx populations are generally similar. Between 42% and 54% of districts with “low,” “middle,” and “high” proportions of Latinx populations plan to offer only fully remote instruction, and between 34% and 45% plan to offer some amount of in-person instruction. Districts with the lowest share of Hispanic/Latinx students remain the most likely to offer only fully in-person instruction.

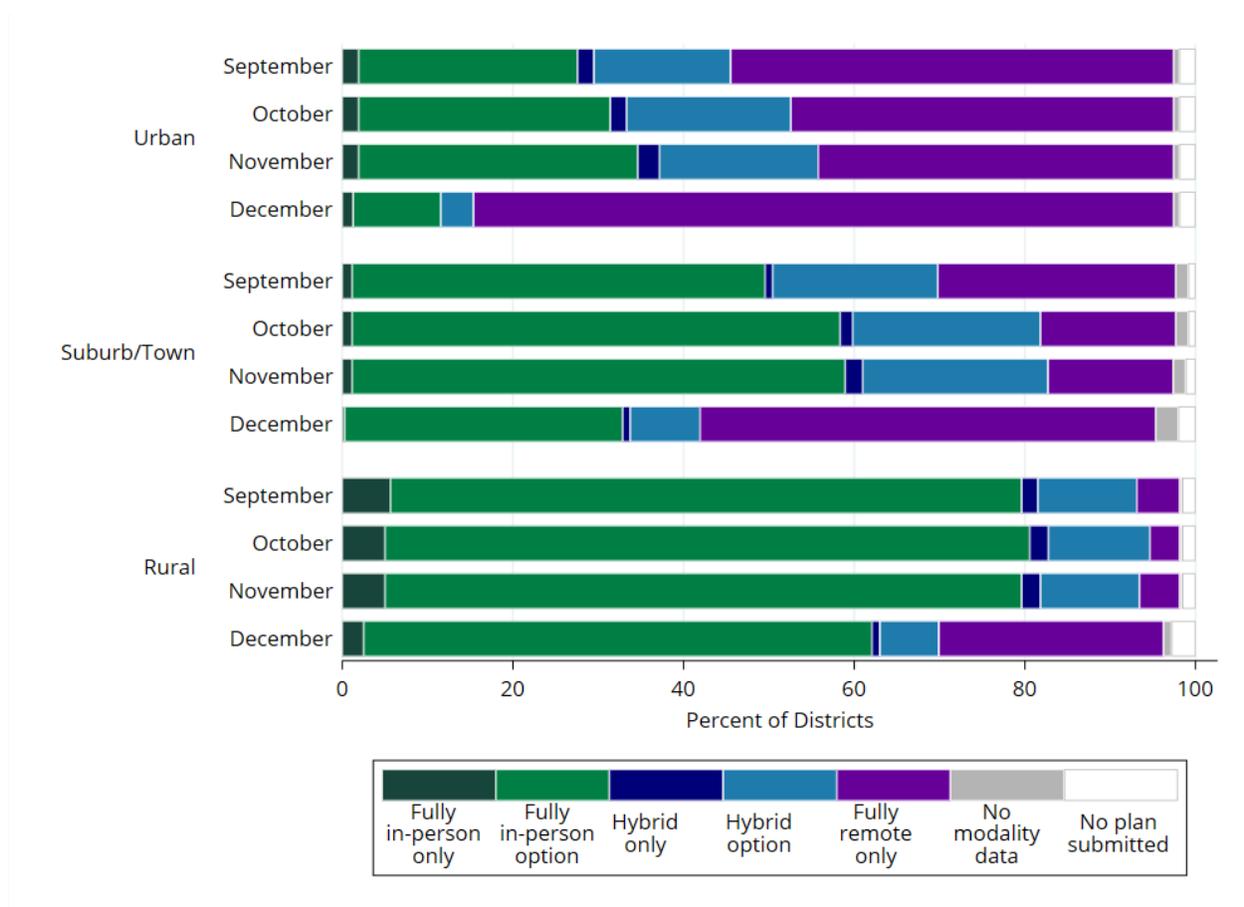
Figure 8. Share of Districts by Hispanic/Latinx Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 206 districts in the “Low” group (≤2% Hispanic/Latinx students), 402 in “Middle” (2-8% Hispanic/Latinx students), and 218 in the “High” group (>8% Hispanic/Latinx students). A full table of values corresponding to this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A4 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Figure 9 shows the distribution of planned instructional modalities by urbanicity. In December, urban districts in the state were almost twice as likely as suburban districts and almost four times as likely as rural districts to plan to provide fully remote instruction. Conversely, rural districts were at least three times as likely as urban or suburban districts to plan to offer only fully in-person instruction. All three district types also saw decreases in the share planning to offer any type of in-person instruction.

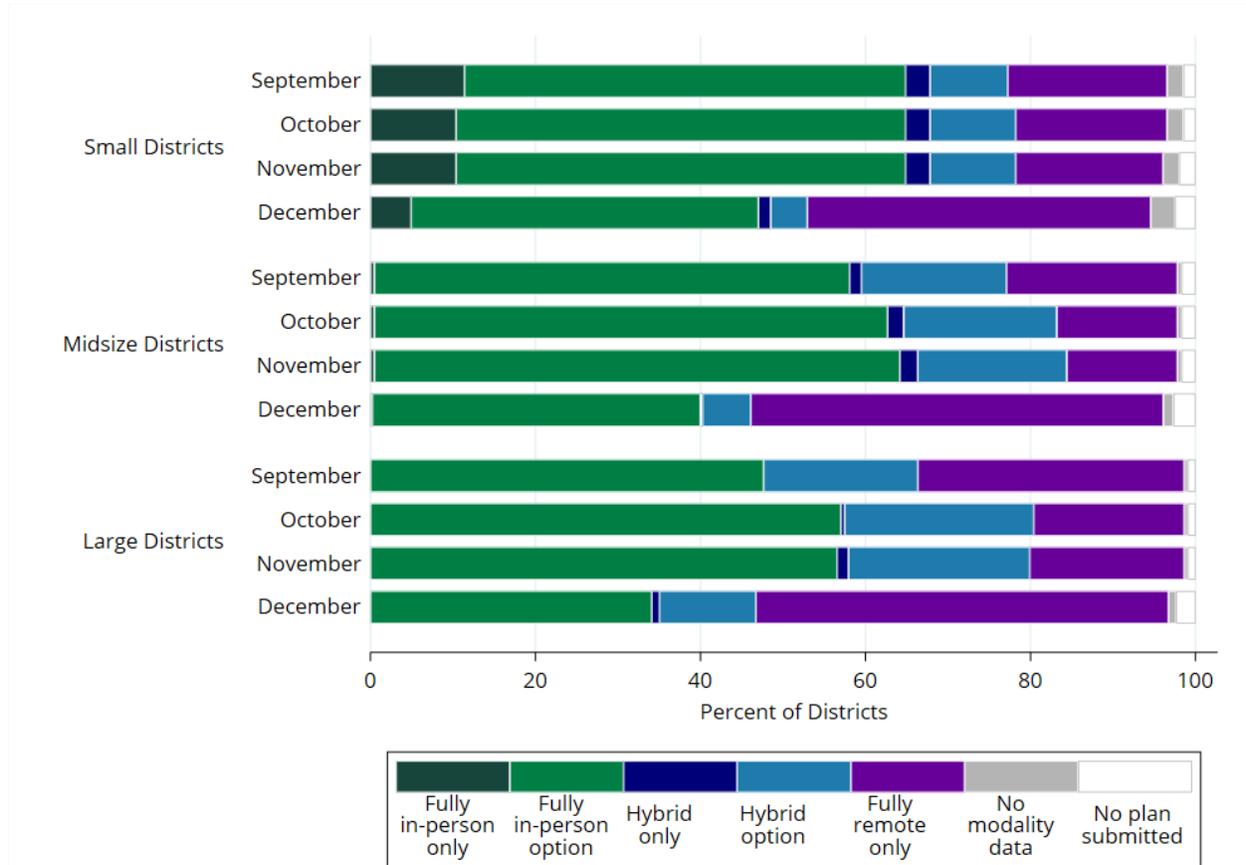
Figure 9. Share of Districts by Urbanicity, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 156 districts in the “Urban” group, 341 in “Rural,” and 319 in the “Suburb/Town” group. A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A5 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Figure 10 shows the distribution of planned instructional modalities by district size. Across all four months, small districts were the only group where a significant number of districts planned to offer only fully in-person instruction. In fact, just two medium districts and no large districts have planned to offer only fully in-person instruction since the start of the school year. Small districts were also more likely to offer an option of fully in-person instruction in all four months. Similar to the distribution of planned instructional modalities across districts with larger and smaller populations of Latinx students, the December share of districts planning to offer fully remote instruction is relatively similar between small, medium, and large districts.

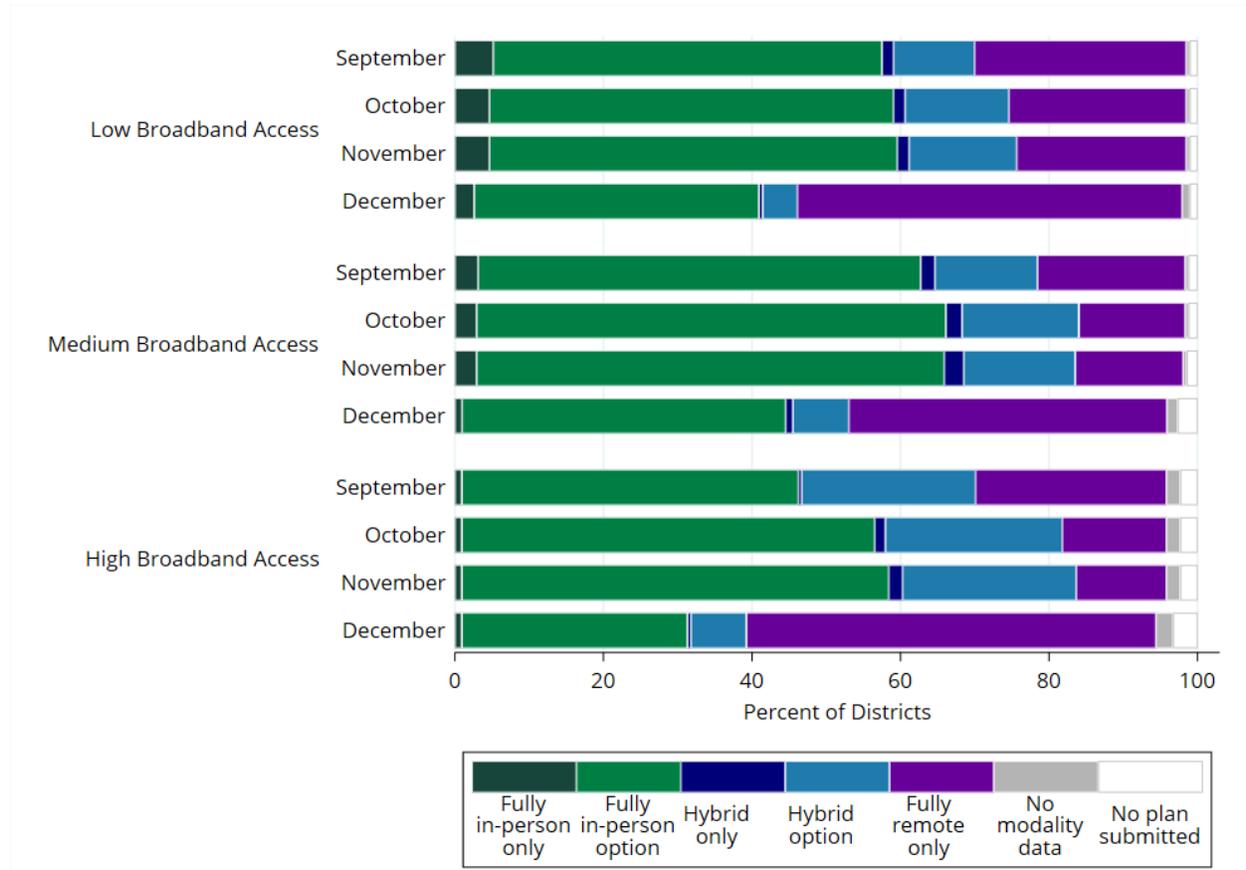
Figure 10. Share of Districts by Total Enrollment, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 202 districts in the “Small” group (≤ 352 students), 410 in “Midsize” (352-1879 students), and 214 in the “Large” group (> 1879 students). A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A6 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Finally, Figure 11 shows how planned instructional modalities differ across districts where more and fewer households have broadband internet subscriptions. In the first three months of the school year, districts in the low broadband group were consistently more likely to plan to offer only fully remote instruction. These disparities are less prominent in December, and districts in the high broadband group are now the most likely to plan to offer only fully remote instruction. Across all four months, districts in the low broadband group consistently remained the most likely to plan to provide fully in-person instruction.

Figure 11. Share of Districts by Broadband Internet Access, Planned Modality, and Month



Notes: There are 193 districts in the “Low” grouping (≤68% of households), 413 in “Middle” (68%-83% of households) and 214 in the “High” grouping (>83% of households). A full table of values corresponding with this figure are provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Appendix Table A7 provides the percentages behind this figure. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; household broadband access data from the American Community Survey (ACS) obtained from IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org.

Key Takeaways

This report provides additional nuance and context to the [data](#) provided by the Center for Educational Performance and Information and the Michigan Department of Education. There are several main takeaways from this report that can inform policy conversations

about the ways students are learning in schools in Michigan during the 2020-21 school year.

- The dramatic shift toward remote instruction in December is the most significant change in how Michigan students receive instruction this school year. Thirty-two percent of all school districts switched from planning to offer some amount of in-person to fully remote instruction only, representing a 200% increase in the share of districts providing fully remote instruction. In December, more than half of all Michigan students are being educated using fully remote instruction only.
- Districts planning to offer fully remote instruction are no longer concentrated in large urban areas. While the far majority – 82% – of all urban districts planned to offer fully remote instruction in December, over half of suburban and over a quarter of rural districts and also planned to do so.
- Pre-K students, students with disabilities, English learners, alternative education, and CTE students are all less likely to attend schools in districts that plan to offer fully in-person instruction in December compared to any month since the start of the school year.
- While some disparities have been reduced, there are still significant differences in who is being offered the option to learn in-person. In particular, Black and low-income students and students located in urban areas are by far the most likely to be enrolled in districts that did not plan to offer the opportunity to learn in-person. Differences among Hispanic and Latinx students, small and large districts, as well as districts where more and fewer households have broadband internet subscriptions have attenuated since September.

Together, these results suggest that the choices to provide schooling through different modalities are complex and can change quickly. Unfortunately, the data continues to point to disparities by race, income, and geographic context in ways that are likely shaped by the realities of the pandemic and its spread. Thus, not only are certain populations of students more affected by the pandemic's health and economic implications, they are also more impacted by the educational opportunities provided as a result. It will be critical to keep these equity considerations at the fore as policymakers continue to consider the best ways to support districts, educators, and students as the pandemic continues to spread throughout the state.

APPENDIX

Table A1. Distribution of Districts by Planned Instructional Modality and Month

Instructional Modality	September	October	November	December
Fully In-Person Only	3%	3%	3%	1%
Fully In-Person Option	54%	59%	59%	39%
Hybrid Only	1%	2%	2%	1%
Hybrid Option	16%	18%	17%	7%
Fully Remote Only	23%	16%	16%	48%
No Modality Data	1%	1%	1%	2%
No Plan Submitted	2%	2%	2%	3%

Notes: Columns may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between the Michigan Department of Education, the Center for Educational Performance and Information, and the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative.

Table A2. Share of Districts by Economically Disadvantaged Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Low				Middle				High			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	2%	2%	2%	0%	4%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	3%	1%
Fully In-Person Option	56%	65%	67%	44%	67%	71%	71%	50%	28%	32%	32%	13%
Hybrid Only	0%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	4%	0%
Hybrid Option	23%	25%	23%	14%	13%	12%	11%	5%	14%	20%	22%	3%
Fully Remote Only	17%	6%	5%	39%	12%	10%	10%	37%	49%	39%	37%	77%
No Modality Data	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%
No Plan Submitted	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%

Notes: There are 222 districts in the “Low” group (≤46% economically disadvantaged), 387 in “Middle” (47-78% economically disadvantaged), and 217 in the “High” group (>78% economically disadvantaged). A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Table A3: Share of Districts by Black Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Low				Middle				High			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	4%	4%	4%	1%	4%	4%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fully In-Person Option	82%	82%	82%	63%	54%	62%	62%	39%	24%	29%	32%	12%
Hybrid Only	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	0%	2%	2%	3%	0%
Hybrid Option	10%	11%	10%	7%	18%	20%	20%	10%	19%	22%	21%	2%
Fully Remote Only	4%	2%	3%	24%	20%	9%	9%	44%	50%	43%	40%	80%
No Modality Data	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
No Plan Submitted	0%	0%	0%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%

Notes: There are 256 districts in the “Low” group ($\leq 1\%$ Black students), 340 in “Middle” (2-20% Black students), and 230 in the “High” group ($> 20\%$ Black students). A full table of values corresponding to this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not upload information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Table A4. Share of Districts by Latinx Student Population, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Low				Middle				High			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	8%	7%	7%	3%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Fully In-Person Option	47%	50%	50%	35%	62%	65%	67%	45%	46%	56%	55%	32%
Hybrid Only	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	3%	3%	0%
Hybrid Option	10%	12%	14%	5%	17%	21%	19%	8%	19%	18%	17%	7%
Fully Remote Only	34%	29%	26%	54%	17%	10%	10%	42%	25%	17%	17%	53%
No Modality Data	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
No Plan Submitted	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Notes: There are 206 districts in the “Low” group ($\leq 2\%$ Latinx students), 402 in “Middle” (2-8% Latinx students), and 218 in the “High” group ($> 8\%$ Latinx students). A full table of values corresponding to this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Table A5: Share of Districts by Urbanicity, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Urban				Suburban				Rural			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	6%	5%	5%	3%
Fully In-Person Option	26%	29%	33%	10%	48%	57%	58%	33%	74%	76%	75%	60%
Hybrid Only	2%	2%	3%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Hybrid Option	16%	19%	19%	4%	19%	22%	22%	8%	12%	12%	12%	7%
Fully Remote Only	52%	45%	42%	82%	28%	16%	15%	53%	5%	3%	5%	26%
No Modality Data	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%
No Plan Submitted	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Notes: There are 156 districts in the “Urban” group, 341 in “Rural,” and 319 in the “Suburban” group. A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Table A6. Share of Districts by Total Enrollment, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Small				Medium				Large			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	11%	10%	10%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fully In-Person Option	53%	54%	54%	42%	58%	62%	64%	40%	48%	57%	57%	34%
Hybrid Only	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%
Hybrid Option	9%	10%	10%	4%	18%	19%	18%	6%	19%	23%	22%	12%
Fully Remote Only	19%	18%	18%	42%	21%	15%	13%	50%	32%	18%	19%	50%
No Modality Data	2%	2%	2%	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
No Plan Submitted	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	2%

Notes: There are 202 districts in the “Small” group (≤352 students), 410 in “Medium” (352-1879 students), and 214 in the “Large” group (>1879 students). A full table of values corresponding with this figure is provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; enrollment data from the Center for Educational Performance and Information, Student Count Report (2019-20, Statewide, accessed July 30, 2020).

Table A7: Share of Districts by Broadband Internet Access, Planned Modality, and Month

Instructional Modality	Low				Middle				High			
	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Fully In-Person Only	5%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Fully In-Person Option	52%	54%	55%	38%	60%	63%	63%	44%	45%	56%	57%	30%
Hybrid Only	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	3%	1%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Hybrid Option	11%	14%	15%	5%	14%	16%	15%	8%	23%	24%	23%	7%
Fully Remote Only	28%	24%	23%	52%	20%	14%	15%	43%	26%	14%	12%	55%
No Modality Data	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
No Plan Submitted	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Notes: There are 193 districts in the “Low” grouping ($\leq 68\%$ of households), 413 in “Middle” (68%-83% of households) and 214 in the “High” grouping ($> 83\%$ of households). A full table of values corresponding with this figure are provided in the appendix. Data reflect plans submitted by 4:00pm on 12/9/2020. The “No Modality Data” category includes districts that submitted plans but did not provide information about their planned instructional modality for general education students. The “No Plan Submitted” category includes districts that did not submit any information in the MDE/CEPI data collection instrument for the month. Source: Data collected from school districts’ monthly reconfirmation of ECOL plans through a collaboration between MDE, CEPI, and EPIC; household broadband access data from the American Community Survey (ACS) obtained from IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org.

ENDNOTES

ⁱ These requirements apply to most local education agency (LEA, or traditional public school) districts and public school academy (PSA, or charter) districts. Districts that were providing virtual education only prior to the pandemic are exempt from the ECOL plan requirements. Some intermediate school districts (ISDs) submitted ECOL plans as well. However, schools run by ISDs typically do not offer general education services, so we excluded these plans from our analyses.

ⁱⁱ Although districts were asked about their “plans” for a given month, the submission form for September through November was not available until October 26, 2020. Thus, responses for September were completed after the month had already ended, and responses for October were completed after the month had already started. The November and December submissions, and submissions for all future months, reflect how districts are planning to deliver instruction during the upcoming month.

ⁱⁱⁱ Education Policy Innovation Collaborative. (2020, August 28). *Return to Learn: How Michigan School Districts Plan to Reopen in Fall 2020* (Research report). https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/EPIC_return_to_learn.pdf

^{iv} Only four PSA districts failed to report ECOL plans in any month, two PSAs did not respond for one month (one in November and one in December), and nine LEAs did not respond in December.

^v Because student enrollment counts for fall 2020 are not yet available, we use student enrollment counts from the 2019-2020 school year as estimates.

^{vi} ACS data were obtained from IPUMS NHGIS, University of Minnesota, www.nhgis.org

^{vii} This one percent represents 11 Michigan districts. Of these, seven serve only kindergarten through eighth or kindergarten through sixth grades. Four of these districts (all traditional public-school districts) are K-12 and should have been impacted by the Department of Health and Human Services’ Executive Order. We assume that these four districts submitted their plans before the extension of the Executive Order with the plan of offering only in-person instruction for the majority of December.

^{viii} On November 12, 2020 – the Thursday prior to Department of Health and Human Services’ Executive Order – Michigan reported a one-day record of 6,940 new cases and 45 new deaths, as well as a record 7-day moving average for daily cases with 5,313 and the highest 7-day death average since June 2020 (46 deaths, on average). Source: Bartkowiak, D. (2020, November 12). Coronavirus in Michigan: Here's what to know Nov. 12, 2020. Retrieved December 16, 2020, from <https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/michigan/2020/11/12/coronavirus-in-michigan-heres-what-to-know-nov-12-2020/>

^{ix} It is important to note that district responses to the ECOL questionnaire represent a snapshot of instructional modality decisions and those plans can change quickly. It is likely that districts shifted instructional modality mid-November after the Executive Order, but those changes are not captured in their November plans.