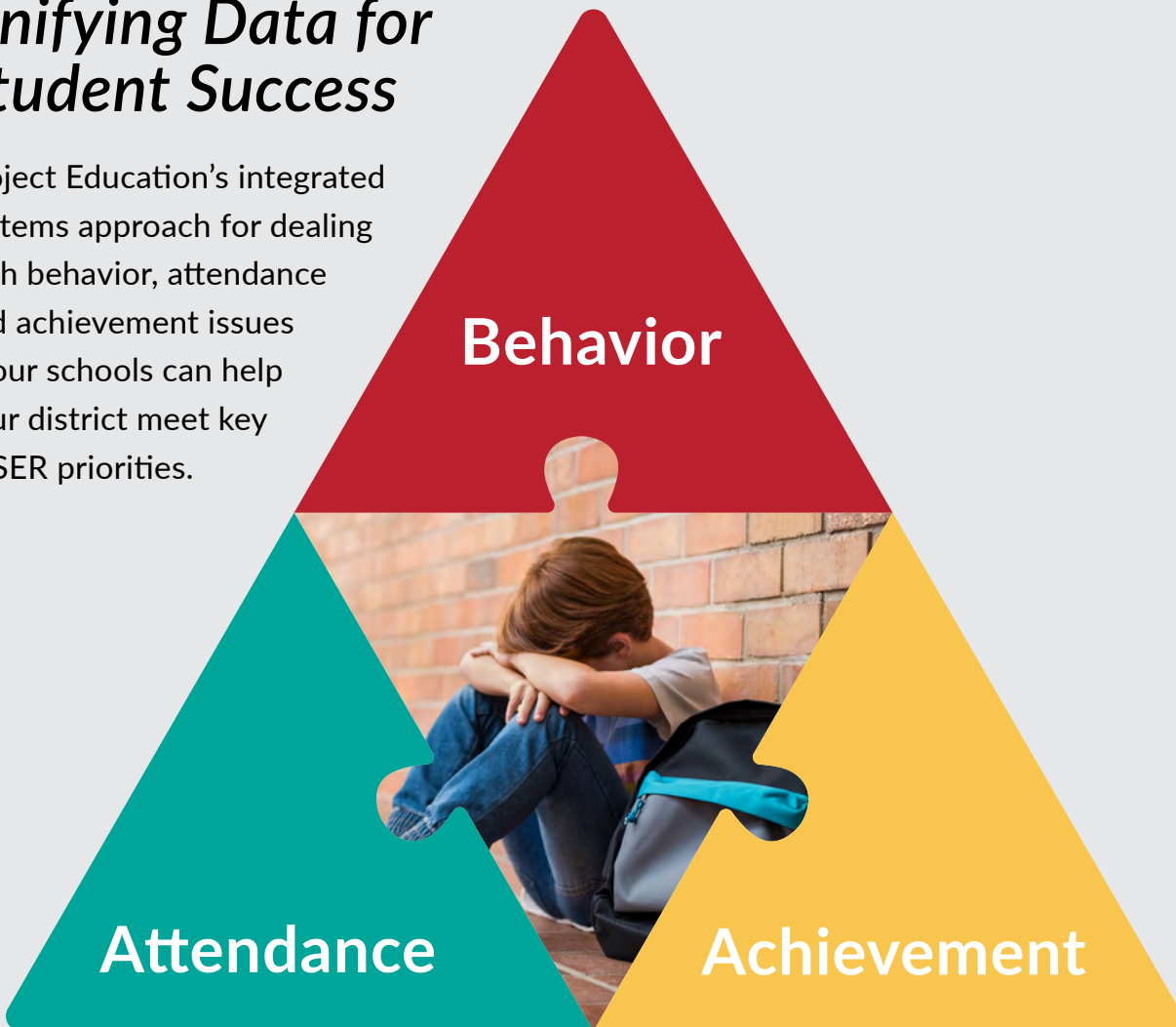


Unifying Data for Student Success

Project Education's integrated systems approach for dealing with behavior, attendance and achievement issues in our schools can help your district meet key ESSER priorities.



INTRODUCTION

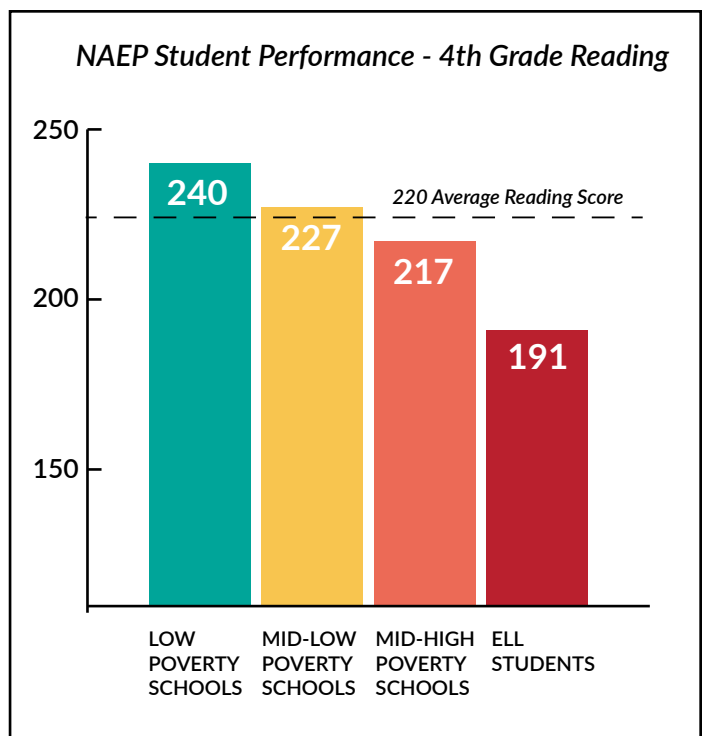
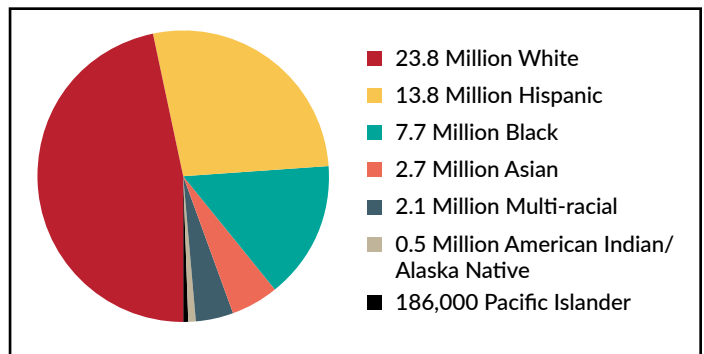
The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER) is part of 2021's American Rescue Plan, the federal program that provides direct aid to help America rebound from the COVID crisis. ESSER designates specific funding priorities for schools and districts to address students' academic and mental health needs. A thoughtful, user-friendly approach to data management – collection, aggregation, and analysis – is critical to ensure that teachers and administrators can track and respond to behavior, attendance, and achievement for every student.

OVERVIEW

The U.S. education system serves a diverse population of students across a variety of school settings. Of the 50.7 million students who were enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools (prekindergarten through grade 12) in fall 2018, some 23.8 million were White, 13.8 million were Hispanic, 7.7 million were Black, 2.7 million were Asian, 2.1 million were of two or more races, 0.5 million were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 186,000 were Pacific Islander. Among public school students, 7 percent attended public charter schools in fall 2018, reflecting a steady increase over the prior decade. Despite overall increases in K-12 enrollments in public schools, the number of students in traditional public schools decreased over this period.

The traditional K - 12 education structure, which typically emphasizes an interactive classroom environment, quickly transitioned to online education programs in the spring of 2020 to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Although online programs have enabled education activities to continue while schools have been physically closed, concerns have been raised about whether inequities in access to these online programs could further exacerbate gaps in student performance that existed prior to the pandemic.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assesses student performance in reading at grades 4, 8, and 12 in both public and private schools across the nation. In 2019, some 35 percent of 4th-grade students and 34 percent of 8th-grade students performed at or above NAEP Proficient. The average reading scores were 220 and 263 for 4th- and 8th-grade students, respectively. These scores can be disaggregated by the poverty level of the school students attended and by students' English language learner (ELL) status. In 2019, the average reading was lower than the scores for 4th-grade students in mid-high poverty schools (217), mid-low poverty schools (227), and low-poverty schools (240). In the same year, the reading score for 4th-grade ELL students (191) was 33 points lower than the score for their non-ELL peers. For mathematics, 41 percent of 4th-grade students and 34 percent of 8th-grade students performed at or above the NAEP Proficient level in 2019. The average mathematics score was 241 for 4th-grade students and 282 for 8th-grade.





During the 2017–18 school year, an estimated 962,300 violent incidents and 476,100 nonviolent incidents occurred in U.S. public schools nationwide. Seventy-one percent of schools reported having at least one violent incident, and 65 percent reported having at least one nonviolent incident.

Research discussed in Children and Youth Services Review notes that truancy rates remained constant between 2002 (10.8%) and 2014 (11.1%). Rates were highest among older youth, females, and Hispanic youth. For all groups, truancy was correlated with substance use, fighting, risk taking and lower academic engagement and grades. Some factors were differentially associated with racial/ethnic groups, suggesting different risk profiles. Truancy reduction efforts may need to move towards a more differentiated approach.

What School Superintendents Say

In April 2021, Project Education conducted a survey of superintendents representing 50 districts from across the United States who attended the DA Summit in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Superintendents were asked to share their thoughts about behavior, attendance, achievement and other issues in schools. Many expressed the myriad of concerns caused by the pandemic – the issues that “kept them up at night”. The COVID – 19 crisis escalated existing issues faced daily by teachers, administrators, and parents.

Superintendents posed some critical questions:

- 1 How do we make up for lost time?**
 Students have lost significant instructional time with resultant impact on achievement.
- 2 How do we find the “lost kids”?**
 Truancy rates, in some states have increased due to the refusal of some students to engage in virtual learning.
- 3 How do we deal with the achievement and opportunity gaps that do exist?**
 Significant attention is needed for our students of color and those with special needs.



With gaps increasing, school leaders look for ways to identify the gaps, how big the gaps are and, ultimately what to do about the gaps. Even with the COVID-19 issues, the inequalities in our school systems are unfortunately anything but new. In addition, superintendents seek answers as to how to best to support students’ social and emotional needs. Systems need to be implemented to adequately deal with the issues faced in schools today.



Data Management

All students deserve a great education, one that affords every opportunity for them to grow into knowledgeable and successful adults. But every student has a unique background, unique strengths, and a unique path to college and a career. Everyone who has a stake in education—especially families and educators—needs the right data in the right format at the right time to serve our students along their unique journeys.



86% of teachers said data was important to their effectiveness.

Data literacy is also essential, yet it's an area where many teachers struggle, according to research from the Data Quality Campaign. Its 2019 poll of teachers found that only 17 percent had learned to use data during their preservice training, and 45 percent reported teaching themselves about data on the job. Even so, the majority of teachers (86 percent) said data was important to their effectiveness. Automated tools can shorten the learning curve and create more time for analyzing student data. "It is nice to have a data management system so you're not bogged down in collating and disaggregating data by hand," says Mary Mann, principal of SUS D's Cedarcreek Elementary School.

Preventative Measures

A robust data management system is essential as a preventative measure. Besides tracking student behaviors in order to identify when intervention is necessary, an integrated system can also serve as a threat assessment tool to identify students who might be a potential risk for violent or harmful behavior. Regular attendance as well as truancy impacts student achievement. Attendance and achievement should be easily tracked in a data management system.

None of these issues stand alone. Behavior, attendance and achievement all interact and therefore cannot be treated in silos. An integrated data management system should allow for a holistic view of each student with the ability to intervene at early stages of issues that may manifest.



Prevention requires a TEAM approach – the “village” is required to support all students. An integrated data management system provides for teacher, campus and district level views so that patterns may be identified, and resources allocated as needed. It provides for communication among stakeholders not only in the district but also with parents.

Unifying Data for Student Success

Project Education provides a customizable data management platform and consulting services for Behavior, Truancy and RTI. Districts can choose to use a single program or any combination from our entire suite of products. Project Education's customizable platform can help districts and schools answer critical needs as our education system works to rebound from the disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic and other unprecedented socioeconomic stressors. These solutions present educators with the actionable data needed to make informed decisions and drive student success.

Project Behavior, Project Truancy and Project RTI from Project Education offer direct solutions to help schools qualify for ESSER funding by tackling serious issues.



Six Priorities that Drive ESSER Funding

The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund (ESSER) is part of 2021's American Rescue Plan. ESSER designates six specific funding priorities for schools and districts:

Special Populations

Providing resources and support for special populations – such as ELL, Special Education, 504, Title 1 and GT.

Actionable Data Insights

Using data appropriately and effectively to guide decisions, evaluate efficacy, and measure progress.

Comprehensive + Holistic Needs

Integrating non-academic skills and competencies across educational experiences to address social and emotional needs.

Academic Resources + Supports

Strong pedagogy, grade-level content, and tailored interventions available for all student populations.

Advancing Equity

Ensuring that equity and effectiveness are reflected in their processes and decision-making.

Whole Educator

Comprehensive support to teachers and administrators to serve students' vast, diverse needs.



Project Behavior provides support from the everyday classroom to Social/Emotional support and includes a customizable safety risk factor/threat assessment feature. The customizable behavior platform in Project Behavior can capture the experiences of the student allowing district personnel to support teachers and families. Data from teacher inputs, forms, discipline, and surveys can be compiled into reports to guide decision making and celebrate positive outcomes. The Anti-Bullying component further expands the Project Behavior product by adding in the awareness piece of instant alerts. Classroom and Social/Emotional tracking can be added on to any other program.



Project Truancy is a customizable web-based program, that allows districts to respond to and track attendance issues quickly and effectively. Trigger alerts let district personnel know when a student has accumulated a predetermined number of unexcused absences and pre-populates the required forms with critical information to save users time. Reports and dashboard graphs give districts the ability to see trends by grade level, student circumstances, and intervention plans as well as celebrate positive gains from the Truancy program.



Project RTI is a customizable web-based program that allows users to track interventions and outcomes at each stage of the Response to Intervention Process, guide decisions through trend analysis, fill out official documentation, print parent letters in home language, and provide collaboration to support student growth in academic, behavior, and language development.



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