

Introduction

MARGARET E. RAYMOND

Perhaps no issue is more important to American prosperity than the education of our citizens. Our nation's schools serve more than fifty-six million students each day, and their success is essential to our long-term economic progress, our national security, and our civic life.

Two years ago, several of the Hoover Institution's top education scholars joined forces to launch the Hoover Education Success Initiative. It is an innovative effort that focuses on providing state-level education leaders with sound research-based recommendations to improve the quality of education in their respective states and, therefore, across America. Made possible by generous support from the Koret Foundation, the initiative has sparked an education dialogue across many state capitals, which is where education policy is largely set.

Last spring, when the COVID-19 pandemic began and schools shut down across America, the education landscape changed, perhaps permanently. So too did the Hoover Education Success Initiative.

In *How to Improve Our Schools in the Post-COVID Era*, Hoover fellows have revisited and revitalized their long-run recommendations introduced in the pre-pandemic era for the post-pandemic world. This volume is rich with critical analysis of ways that education leaders and school teams across the country can direct effort and resources to solidify new directions for American K–12 public education. Recognizing that there is intense pressure to revert to prior institutional practices, this book presents ideas and recommendations for changes that would significantly improve our schools and, in turn, outcomes for our public school students.

The anthology contains several essays covering critical topics such as teacher compensation, school accountability, school choice, collecting student achievement data, managing school budgets in a crisis, graduation pathways, portfolio districts, and much more.



Of course, ideas must run the gauntlet of debate and be pushed to adoption to realize any impact in the policy landscape. In this book, the Hoover Education Success Initiative mobilized its Practitioner Council of more than twenty-five leading education policy makers representing twenty-plus states across America. The advisory council includes several current state education commissioners, state legislators, and state board of education members, whom we invited to pressure-test the book's ideas and recommendations. Throughout the chapters, their voices have been elevated and incorporated. The debates are vigorous and ongoing; the points of agreement and of caution provide a framework for moving forward with feasible improvements of our schools.

The ideas and recommendations in *How to Improve Our Schools in the Post-COVID Era* also deserve public consideration and dialogue. To that end, each chapter has a dedicated space on our website where members of the public can express their reactions and views, thus bringing more voices into a civil and reasoned conversation about the future of education.



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About the Author



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Margaret “Macke” Raymond is founder and director of the Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) at Stanford University. The CREDO team conducts rigorous and independent analysis and evaluation of programs that aim to improve public school outcomes for K–12 students. She serves as a regular source for local and national media and on multiple advisory boards, technical resource groups, and peer review panels.

Hoover Education Success Initiative

With passage in 2015 of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states are again in charge of American education policy. To support them in this undertaking, the Hoover Education Success Initiative (HESI), launched in 2019, seeks to provide state education leaders with policy recommendations that are based upon sound research and analysis.

HESI hosts workshops and policy symposia on high-impact areas related to the improvement and reinvention of the US education system. The findings and recommendations in each area are outlined in concise topical papers.

The leadership team at HESI engages with its Practitioner Council, composed of national policy leaders, and with interested state government leaders. HESI’s ultimate goal is to contribute to the ongoing transformation of the nation’s education landscape and to improve outcomes for our nation’s children.

For more information about the Hoover Education Success Initiative, visit us online at hoover.org/hesi.