Why Does Education Matter?

In 2018, the Prichard Committee published Community Profiles for all 171 Kentucky School Districts in an effort to start local conversations about the educational needs of each community to inspire change, one school at a time. Three years later, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken us backward in our academic progress, especially for low-income students, students of color, and students with special needs.

We have long held the position that state assessments are not a measure to punish schools, educators, or students, but a tool to provide data about student performance so administrators, policymakers, and communities can make informed decisions about improving academic outcomes. This position has never been more important than it is today.

Now is the time for communities to come together and share in the development of a new normal - one that responds to the needs elevated by the pandemic - like mental health and early childhood - and expands innovations that proved promising. A new normal also means we listen closely to the needs of parents and students now, as we are all still in the midst of balancing a COVID-safe life and new normal in our own lives and communities. Our public education system must respond to these needs in new and innovative ways to remain relevant and to deliver on the promise of public education.

Discuss the impact of COVID locally...

Take our survey and share it with others in your community. https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PCCOVIDImpact

1. What are the current barriers to learning? Consider the different perspectives of students, educators, families, & communities.

2. What are some best practices you are seeing locally that are reducing these barriers?

3. What do you feel is the best local use of federal COVID recovery dollars for education?
HOW ARE STUDENTS DOING ON THE PATH TO A SUCCESSFUL LIFE?

Due to the impact of COVID-19 on learning, academic outcomes have changed dramatically due to circumstances related to the pandemic.

- Over 85% of brain development occurs before age 5. The return on investment for preschool is $5 for every $1 invested.
- Kids who start kindergarten behind are less likely to do well in later school years.
- At this point, students increasingly need to "read to learn" so proficiency is critical.

- 62% of jobs in Kentucky require some level of education beyond high school.
- Achievement in 8th grade is a critical indicator of whether a student is prepared for the increased challenges of high school.
- High school graduation is a minimum and necessary step in the transition to college and a career.
- Not only do more jobs now require some education after high school, but earnings for those with bachelor's degrees are 50% higher than those without a degree.

Note: If a data point on a line is missing or part of a group's line does not appear, data for that student group is unavailable. This may be due to concerns for student privacy, typically due to small sample size or results for students being similar enough that individual students may be identifiable.
NOT ALL STUDENTS START AT THE SAME PLACE

In a perfect world, all groups would be represented by a single line at 100%. Over time, we should see improvement that moves the lines closer together and higher on the chart.

Gaps are already visible early in the education pipeline. Most gaps persist from kindergarten to graduation, confirming that improvement is needed at all grade levels.

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## Education Transforms Quality of Life

### Economic Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$45,244</td>
<td>$50,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Living Below 200% Poverty</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Health Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>County</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Birthweight</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor or Fair Health</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Births (Per 1,000 Females Age 15-19)</td>
<td>40.51</td>
<td>31.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Obesity</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Smoking</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premature Death (Years of Life Lost Per...)</td>
<td>11,152</td>
<td>9,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu Vaccine</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What Else Do We Know About Our School Community?

- **1,315 Students**
  - African American: 0.4%
  - Asian: 0.2%
  - Hispanic: 1.9%
  - Two or More Races: 3.0%
  - White: 94.4%
  - Students who qualify for free/reduced meals: 62.0%
  - Students with identified disabilities: 16.0%
  - English Learners: 0.0%

### Find More Information at PrichardCommittee.org