

COVID Constituency

Engaging Public Voices to Shape Tomorrow's Schools



“We have to promote the mental health piece, promote connectivity, and increase access to internet and tech.”

Dara is a mother of two kids from Georgia. Dara’s experience parenting her kids during the COVID-19 pandemic was mixed, as she spoke about her daughter, who excels academically, but dealt with loneliness, as she was unable to socialize with her friends.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed Dara the glaring educational and economic disparities in her community, noting that while her kids, and school in general, received Chromebooks and other up-to-date technology to keep up with their schoolwork, nearby districts did not have the resources to ensure students could have a quality remote learning experience. The COVID-19 pandemic showed Dara that the quality of education depends on one’s ZIP code and that equity must be a priority, as students must have the necessary resources to succeed.

Dara has also paid close attention to best practices in education and investing in teachers. Specifically, she lamented over how public education has yet to figure out how to scale best practices, pitching the idea that the best teachers should have their lessons taped to show other classes, and as the lesson is being delivered, other teachers work directly with students as the lesson is being delivered. Additionally, Dara highlighted the need to invest in teachers, using research on best practices in teacher policy and preparation to guide those investments.

While those investments are top of mind, Dara has been thinking about the whole child, calling for the need to invest in mental health services for students, as the COVID-19 has and continues to worsen an already proliferating nationwide mental health crisis.