“If there are not proper education resources, children are less likely to get a good job, healthcare, housing down the road. So much sits on the shoulders of education.”

Heather is a mother of four from Florida. Even though she homeschooled her children long before the pandemic, when businesses and public spaces began to close in the spring of 2020, so too did the way her kids learn. Most notably, she had to press pause on the many field trips she and her children would take to help bring learning to life.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Heather has dealt with two significant challenges in her household. For one, she is immunocompromised and must take extra precautions keeping her and her children home more often than other parents and kids in her circle. Additionally, her children have multiple learning disabilities, and when speaking to this point, Heather mentioned that she does not have her children in the public school system because she cannot trust that the system will support her children's learning needs.

Heather believes education plays a significant role in one's ability to get a quality job, afford housing, and access health care. She believes there is significant work to be done to improve teacher training and working conditions, specifically when working with children with disabilities. Heather believes reform can start once communities rethink where money goes; she believes politicians and district leadership receive too much money and don't care what happens in the district, as their financial situations are strong. Rethinking allocation of dollars, therefore, is the first step to reform.