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CoSN Issues Statement on White House Criticism of Distance Learning

Washington, D.C. (July X, 2020) – [CoSN](#) CEO Keith Krueger today issued the following statement on the recent criticism of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic by Trump Administration senior officials:

“During this COVID-19 emergency, distance learning saved school districts from having to cancel instruction altogether.

“While it has not been a flawless transition, the answer is not to end distance learning — it’s to properly fund it and combine it with in-person instruction. In fact, many districts that spent years preparing and implementing online learning in advance of the crisis have reported positive outcomes.

“Our country must quickly get serious about addressing broadband internet access and other digital equity gaps that students and teachers face at home. All signs point to a 2020-21 academic year in which millions of students will be required to once again learn partially, or fully, online.

“Education plans for the fall should be grounded in science and data, and made by local school leaders and school boards who know their communities’ needs best. Many will likely include leveraging remote learning to ensure social distancing and safe learning environments.”

Research [indicates](#) that four out of 10 school districts say they were unprepared to make the switch to remote learning. Millions of students and teachers lacked the broadband internet connections needed to access online lessons from home, particularly in rural areas and low-income, urban neighborhoods.

Many school leaders cite a lack of student and teacher devices as one of the greatest difficulties they faced during this transitional period. A short-term solution in these communities has been loaner laptops and tablets to bridge the persistent “Learning Gap.”

These issues have not gone away over spring. In fact, over 85 percent of respondents in a recent [CoSN back-to-school survey](#) said that off-campus internet connectivity was an urgent problem that must be solved. This may be because only seven percent expect their districts to return to a pre-pandemic situation this fall.

As we look to the 2020-21 school year, local leaders, informed by public health guidance, must be able to make their own decisions. This should include universal options to provide quality distance learning, whether that means in a blended environment with face-to-face

instruction or fully virtual learning. The federal government must provide the additional funding required to make this possible.

About CoSN

CoSN (the Consortium for School Networking) is the premier professional association for school system technology leaders. CoSN provides thought leadership resources, community best practices and advocacy tools to help leaders succeed in the digital transformation. CoSN represents over 13 million students in school districts nationwide and continues to grow as a powerful and influential voice in K-12 education. cosn.org

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