Exploring COVID-19-Related Educational Disruption of Early Elementary Students and Their Families: A School Counselor Case Example

Amber L. Randolph1 and Kirsten J. Wirth2

Abstract
The COVID-19 pandemic has caused myriad issues for early elementary students and their families. Those early in their educational careers, particularly pre-K–2 students, are especially vulnerable developmentally to abrupt disruptions. School counselors, in turn, are being called upon to respond to crises and provide trauma-informed care for these students and their families, often virtually. This article explores COVID-19-related educational disruption of early elementary students, their families, and school counselors through the use of a case example.

Keywords
COVID-19, elementary, educational disruption, school counselors

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused myriad issues for early elementary students and their families. Early elementary school students, those at the critical beginning of their formal school careers, experienced abrupt shifts to their educational environment and routines. Families, likewise, have experienced the ripple effect of these educational disruptions within the home environment. School counselors are also being called upon to shift their traditional approaches to respond to crisis situations and provide trauma-informed care, often virtually. This conceptual article’s authors, a counselor educator and an elementary school counselor, explore the impact of COVID-19-related educational disruption on early elementary students, their families, and school counselors through an examination of relevant current literature and a case example. We conclude with implications for elementary school counselors.

COVID-19 and Pre-K–2 Students
Students in pre-K through second grade are at the beginning of their formal educational journey. Typically, these children range in age from 4 to 8 years old and many are entering the school environment for the first time during this important developmental period (Newman & Newman, 2012). Social and emotional development are of primary importance during these years (Newman & Newman, 2012), which makes the abrupt transitions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic particularly worthy of exploration. We present developmental considerations for this age range, followed by discussion on the academic and social/emotional impacts of COVID-19 on early elementary students.

Developmental Considerations
As part of the early school age psychosocial crisis of initiative versus guilt, students “attempt to discover the same kind of stability, strength, and regularity in the external world that they have discovered within themselves [during toddlerhood]” (Newman & Newman, 2012, p. 274). COVID-19 has caused great uncertainty for all of humanity, and particularly for young children with their developing minds (Bhamani et al., 2020). Self-theory and peer play are developmental considerations related to early elementary students.

Self-theory, which includes analysis of environmental experiences, is one of the key developmental tasks of early school age children (Newman & Newman, 2012). Essentially, early school age is the period when humans begin to make sense of the world and their place in it. Children of this age, however, are currently living in the midst of an unprecedented global crisis...
that has abruptly disrupted their normal activities, routines, and relationships. Developmentally, early school age children have difficulty understanding the current pandemic-related situation with its inherent uncertainties (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Peer play is another essential developmental task for early school age children (Newman & Newman, 2012). Students need to experience social interaction to learn about who they are and what they can do. The social interaction and experiences with other students at school often help them identify feelings of self-worth and confidence (Newman & Newman, 2012). The United States Census Bureau Household Pulse Survey results indicated that more than 90% of households with school-aged children reported engaging in distance learning because of school closures during the end of the 2019–2020 school year (McElrath, 2020). Without in-person interaction with peers, students potentially miss the nuances of a major developmental task, a situation that can potentially interfere with further social/emotional and academic development during the elementary school years.

**Academic Development**

Schools in the United States were not prepared for the abrupt halt to in-person instruction that occurred in March 2020. Districts and families alike were concerned about the implications of a switch to fully remote learning, including the possibility that students would not progress academically or would leave school entirely because of remote instruction (Azevedo et al., 2020; Dorn et al., 2020). Academic impacts for pre-K–2 students were still evolving when this article was written, entering the 18th month of the COVID-19 pandemic; we discuss potential impacts below.

Remote schooling in early elementary school requires computer technology, internet access, and availability of an adult in the supportive proctor role. Students have cited lack of computer or internet access and general technological difficulties as major remote learning challenges (Hippolito-Delgado et al., 2021). For early elementary students, academic success in a remote learning environment directly relates to the in-home adult support they receive. As highlighted below in the case example, the availability of an adult proctor and access to technology influence student learning and readiness for the next grade.

Technology access issues could result in a child losing school days and learning opportunities, which influences student success (Bhamani et al., 2020). Significant absenteeism sets the stage for failure for the student. The academic and social/emotional skills learned in pre-K–2 are the foundation for students’ future learning and study habits. With a weakened foundation, students often fail and are retained, which can lead to a higher risk of dropping out of high school (Dorn et al., 2020). The social/emotional development impacts of COVID-19 on early elementary students are also important, because self-theory and self-esteem relate to academic success (Newman & Newman, 2012).

**Social/Emotional Development**

COVID-19-related educational disruptions influenced the social/emotional development of early elementary students and the delivery of necessary mental health services provided in schools (Pincus et al., 2020). Zhang et al. (2020) studied psychological symptoms in school-aged children in China before and after pandemic-related school closures. They identified a relationship between COVID-19-related social isolation and potential pediatric mental health issues. Social interaction is essential for younger students in learning how to navigate the school environment, understand the rules and boundaries within the school setting, and feel a sense of competence in their work (Newman & Newman, 2012).

Connections to teachers, school staff, and classmates and access to the additional services provided in the school environment can serve as protective factors for healthy social/emotional development in early elementary school students. School counselors are essential to fostering the academic, career, and social/emotional development of all students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019). Below and throughout this article, one elementary school counselor (the second author) shares her professional observations from working with pre-K–2 students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Case Example: The Observed Impact on the PreK-2 Student**

I am an elementary school counselor at a Title 1 school in Florida. Our school demographic breakdown is 60.5% White, 19.6% Black or African American, 12.1% Hispanic or Latino, 6.5% two or more races, 1.1% Asian, 0.1% American Indian, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian. Economically disadvantaged students comprise 71% of the school’s student body, and 39.5% are considered minority. The student population is 44% female and 56% male. With 82 full-time teachers and three full-time school counselors, the recorded ratio of the classrooms is listed as 14:1, but that is a combination of total students with total number of teachers. The grades with which I work have approximately 16–18 students in each class. Although the area is listed as a “large suburban community,” many of the areas in which students reside are rural and on the edges of the district.

My district offered students a choice of face-to-face learning and a “real time” remote option during the 2020–2021 school year. My school solely utilized remote learning during the shutdown of spring 2020 and students were provided packets if they could not access the internet. The protocol for the grading at the end of the term was to “hold harmless” and many student grades were higher than normally assessed; lower scores simply did not count in order to assure that the student was not failing due to the extraordinary circumstances.

During the fall 2020 term, families had the choice of synchronous remote learning or face-to-face learning. The district expected remote learning students to attend online classes and
did not distribute packets this term. The district rearranged the schools to allow for social distancing and added mask requirements to the dress code.

I observed that remote learning was difficult for K–2 students because they needed an adult with them to assist with technology as they learned. If an adult was not available, students in these grades simply did not log on or do the work. Some creative parents in our school formed their own groups where one adult would host other children at their home and would help them during the day along with their own children. The children who participated in such an arrangement did better academically, as demonstrated by a lower retention rate than classmates who had to field remote learning on their own or with minimal guidance at home.

Absenteeism became a significant issue for K–2 remote students during the 2020–2021 academic year. If a parent or guardian was unable to assist the young student, they did not attend class or complete the online assignments. Some parents or guardians reached out for help from staff at school, while many students used the lack of technological skills or internet access as an excuse to simply not go to school. Some students in my school accrued more than 50 days of unexcused absences. In many of these cases, parents or guardians who chose not to seek help or respond to outreach efforts from the school expressed anger at the consequences. School counselors were often the target of this anger via phone or in person.

Many students in my school struggled to keep up with the academic classroom expectations when working remotely. Even the face-to-face students were slightly academically behind as the 2020–2021 school year started, due to the shutdown and lack of participation by many families in remote learning during the prior term. If a student remained remote, the continuing participation issues put those students even further behind in their academics.

In November, the district called families of students failing one or more subjects in the first quarter to suggest face-to-face learning and to offer help. The district called families with failing students again in January 2021 to recommend they return to in-person learning. If the families chose to remain remote, they had to sign a document acknowledging possible retention if grades did not improve.

Other remote learning families struggled with overparticipation by parents or guardians, meaning parents or guardians completed academic work for their student. Our school uses instruments, such as I-ready, to evaluate student ability level in both reading and mathematics. These evaluation results are skewed when adults overparticipate and inflate, for instance, their child’s reading level. This behavior only hurts the students, because when they returned to face-to-face learning their test scores significantly dropped. Student test scores generally need to show performance two grade levels below current grade for a student to receive services. Accurate testing happens when students return to school and, in many cases with our remote students, this did not occur.

One last academic issue for the students who remained remote and struggled academically was that the team of service providers were limited in their ability to provide help. Most of the preliminary testing, such as classroom observation and vision or hearing screenings happens in the academic setting and was fundamentally impacted by COVID-19. Access to technology, accurate evaluation, and services all affected students and their families because of COVID-19-related educational disruption.

**Impact on Families**

For caregivers of children, perhaps the biggest transition to navigate was the disruption to education and childcare caused by COVID-19. Caregivers of children in any sort of institutional care (daycare or K–12) likely saw some disruption to availability of care because of measures designed to slow the spread of COVID-19 within communities. One large public school district superintendent commented that “schools are not meant to be childcare,” and they are right, but we have set up our society in a way that is centered on children being in school during the daytime. Disrupting that structure causes a ripple effect. The closure of schools has affected families and warrants discussion (Bhamani et al., 2020).

**Caregiver Concerns for their Children**

Caregivers of early school age children were impacted in multiple ways by COVID-19-related educational disruptions. However, Bhamani et al. (2020) found that caregivers were primarily concerned with the well-being of their children during these disruptions. In their study, Bhamani et al. discovered that parents found the sudden disruption to education quite distressing, expressing concern about their child’s routine and the quality of education provided and citing that distance learning is an issue when even the teachers are unprepared by the rapid change in circumstances. They also observed that schools are hubs for children to interact socially and those hubs had been disrupted (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Results from Bhamani et al. (2020) indicate that parents were primarily concerned about children’s social development and mental health. Especially for early school age children, that loss of peer contact in school environments could negatively impact the development of peer play and social skills during this critical period (Bhamani et al., 2020; Newman & Newman, 2012). At the same time, most other options for social interaction, such as playgrounds, zoos, libraries, nature centers, pools, and restaurants, also were unavailable for at least part of the year 2020 and possibly into 2021, affecting not only children, but also their adult caregivers.

**Impact on Adult Caregivers of Children**

Adult caregivers of early school age children were clearly concerned with their children’s well-being during the COVID-19
pandemic. Over and above their many caregiver concerns, adults were also often in a position of trying to manage their own work responsibilities, both paid and unpaid, while taking responsibility for their child’s learning process. This balancing of roles, highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, exposed economic, mental health, and community structure equity issues that warrant discussion.

Although the additional financial unemployment support this past year was helpful to many, economic insecurity, or the threat of it, still affects many adults because of COVID-19. The pandemic has made the most impactful changes to the unemployment segment in the history of the United States (McIntyre & Lee, 2020). McIntyre and Lee (2020) linked potential suicide risk to unemployment rates and found that an increase in one relates to an increase in the other. They deemed this a “critical public health priority” (McIntyre & Lee, 2020, p. 251). Although we are not addressing suicide specifically, the threat of economic insecurity is stressful and has a ripple effect on relationships, work performance, and mental health.

In the absence of a supportive “village” or network, many caregivers struggle. Balancing multiple roles is difficult when caregivers are working from home or working outside of the home as an essential worker, following their own schedules, keeping their children on schedule, and managing the household without typical structural support (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Adults have been navigating these challenges with limited support due to social isolation, which has immediate and long-term impacts, particularly for at-risk communities (Bhamani et al., 2020). Communities, the groups of people with whom we spend the most time, have become smaller in many ways in the first 18 months of the pandemic. Many of the external supports, such as schools, have not been available in the same way even with creative use of technology. These changes have necessitated a restructuring of family life. For instance, changes to caregiver work environment or status, availability of extended family support, or lack of after-school programming can impact the daily life of a family unit.

**Impact on the Family Unit**

Some of the impacts of COVID-19-related education disruption are quite serious in nature. Dorn et al. (2020) found that school closures contribute to increased food insecurity, particularly for families of color. Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2021) cautioned that systemic inequities occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that the pandemic highlighted structural barriers to educational success for many communities. School counselors can act as advocates for at-risk populations and work toward increased access and equity.

Increased anxiety and stress among children because of the COVID-19 pandemic is another concern (Zhang et al., 2020), even once students returned to in-person learning. Young children in particular thrive on routine and school days provide such a routine; disruptions to it often result in displaced aggression (Pincus et al., 2020). Implementing a schedule can help both early school age children and their caregivers feel more industrious and less agitated (Bhamani et al., 2020).

Families, however, also realized that the COVID-19 pandemic presented an opportunity to increase family bonding and quality time together (Bhamani et al., 2020). Caregivers, through intentional bonding, can also act as a source of comfort to ease worry and alleviate anxiety in children (Bhamani et al., 2020). This intentional bonding restores a healthy connection between adult and child, allowing adults time to tend to other responsibilities.

In addition to bolstering systemic and societal supports for caregivers of early school age children, McIntyre and Lee (2020) advocate for implementing “individual resilience strategies” to promote mental health and serve as protective factors against suicidal ideation in adults. These strategies include basic wellness activities such as exercise, sleep hygiene, structured daily schedules, and better diets. School counselors can provide support and psychoeducation to help families implement intentional bonding activities and individual resilience strategies for the benefit of the entire family unit. Below, the second author shares her professional observations regarding supporting families of early elementary students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Case Example: The Observed Impact on Families**

Many of the families in our district live below the poverty level. The family issues we encounter in our school include addiction, incarceration of one or both parents, foster care, removal from home, no running water, and homelessness. Many of the parents do not have reliable transportation or adequate food supply. These are, of course, difficulties during non-COVID-19 times, but COVID-19-related educational disruptions exacerbated many of these issues. The implementation of remote learning was an unfortunate occurrence for some families, because broadband internet access does not extend throughout many of the outlying communities and the district-provided hot spots were not always reliable. Many families would seek out parks or other public areas to access Wi-Fi so that students could complete assignments.

Many students rely on food provided to them by the school. Along with lack of transportation when the school shut down, many families went without food in the absence of district assistance. Our district managed to bus the food to a central location in the more poverty-stricken areas to allow families the ability to obtain food for students. Food distribution points also provided school counselors the opportunity to check on families as they waited in line for food. With some high-risk familial situations, the student’s safe place is school. Monitoring safety is difficult when students are remote. Many of these students could not log on to the school accounts, so verifying that they were okay was nearly impossible, even via the school-issued tablet.

COVID-19 was especially difficult for the families in our school community. My district, along with many others,
experienced parents dying from COVID-19 in addition to suicide and mental health issues of students who were learning remotely. Our mental health, social work, and counseling team had to shift how to care for students, including mental health assessment over the phone or Zoom. Services for mental health counseling shifted from in-home or in-school to telehealth, if a family had internet access. If a student remained remote, services that the school counselor provided, such as threat or suicide assessment normally completed at school in person, were shifted to the mental health counseling or social work services because school counselors did not have access to a telehealth platform. Services for students with special needs, such as autism spectrum disorder, were suspended and families had to navigate the behavioral issues and Applied Behavior Analysis therapy on their own. Many of our students slipped back into behavioral patterns without proper services, adding additional strain on already struggling families.

In my district, the issues discussed above occurred concurrently. Mental health referrals for students, resources for families, and public assistance needs increased dramatically. My school is a full-service school and we provide mental health services for students, community referrals, clothing, showers, shoes, school supplies, hygiene items, and food to families in need. Parents often struggled with the decision to send students back to in-person learning, even those who discovered that remote learning was not working for their family and those who needed the resources that in-person learning provides. It was difficult watching parents or guardians sob as they dropped off students, having to trust that staff would do whatever we could to keep students safe. This has been a difficult but also rewarding year to be an elementary school counselor.

**Impact on School Counselors**

School counselors are often one of few mental health professionals in school buildings on a daily basis to work with students who are at risk emotionally (Pincus et al., 2020). COVID-19 has drastically changed the landscape in which school counselors are accustomed to serving. The personal and professional impacts of COVID-19 on school counselors are still emerging and are not well studied to date.

**Personal and Professional Impacts**

School counselors are highly trained advocates, leaders, and change agents. They also have the massive task of increasing educational outcomes for students, while collaborating with multiple stakeholders and holding many roles within the school building (ASCA, 2019; Mullen et al., 2021). School counselor perceptions of personal and professional well-being, and the presence or absence of burnout, affect their ability to serve students effectively (Mullen et al., 2021). Although researchers have not yet explored the personal and professional impacts of COVID-19-related educational disruption on school counselors, particularly elementary school counselors, we know that high caseloads, the inherent complications and inequities related to the transition to remote learning, and a lack of clarity regarding expected roles can lead to school counselor burnout (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2021; Mullen et al., 2021, Pincus et al., 2020).

Below, the second author reflects on the personal and professional impact of working as an elementary school counselor during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Case Example: The Impact on School Counselors**

Professionally, this has been an extremely challenging year. Families and volunteers were not allowed in the school building, leaving the staff shorthanded and causing my responsibilities to increase exponentially. On more than one occasion, I found myself with multiple students needing emergency assessments at the same time, while a teacher needed assistance with a student in class and an angry parent waited in the front office to see me unannounced. I found that I had to prioritize in new ways and some tasks went unfinished. It was a year of personal growth for this perfectionist.

I became a source of support for the teaching staff during COVID-19. Some frustrated teachers needed an outlet and, as the school counselor, I made myself a safe space for them. The stress on the teachers was overwhelming, especially those working classes that were hybrid with both remote and face-to-face students.

This year especially, I went out of my way to ensure students were getting what they needed. For instance, I would deliver things to families from school on my way home from work if they could not leave due to quarantine or illness. I also mentored students because our inability to utilize volunteers left many students without help. My relationship with my students, and the joy I found working with them, is something for which I cannot begin to express my gratitude. Although this year had myriad negative aspects in my professional life, I discovered that I work with an amazing team of professionals who care for this difficult population of students with a passion I have never seen. My job responsibilities increased, but so did everyone else’s. I was not alone in my frustration.

I have been exhausted this past school year, physically and emotionally, which forced me to set boundaries for the times I was willing to work and check my school email at home. I would come home each night and just sit in silence. I worked and continue to work with an outstanding team of professionals and I felt safe talking to them about my concerns and appreciated the support and validation from those conversations. I did not engage in any training or additional work during the summer of 2020, as I desperately needed a break and time to be home with my family and friends.

**Implications and Directions for Future Research**

Explored above are the impacts of COVID-19-related educational disruption on early elementary students, their families,
and elementary school counselors. We have provided information from the emerging scholarly literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and a case example from a current elementary school counselor. Next, we discuss the implications for elementary school counselors and directions for future research.

**Implications for School Counselors**

The multiple impacts of COVID-19 noted above make obvious that school counselors should be a critical part of assisting families with the return to fully in-person learning (Pincus et al., 2020). School counselors have the specific training to address concerns exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, including academic, social/emotional, leadership, and advocacy expertise (Pincus et al., 2020). As administrators and teachers plan for the academic success of students, school counselors can play a role as advocates for student holistic wellness in the academic, social/emotional, and career domains. School counselors are trained advocates and leaders promoting systemic change in their schools and communities (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2021). To be effective advocates, however, school counselors need to have presence in their buildings and communities (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity for school counselors to reach students and their families creatively. We provide some ideas for engagement with students and families in Table 1. Further recommendations from Hipolito-Delgado et al. (2021) include emails, social media outreach, virtual connection times, and continuing to implement the comprehensive school counseling program, virtually if necessary.

School counselors are advocates who also need to self-advocate (Hipolito-Delgado et al., 2021). This self-advocacy should pursue appropriate assignments of tasks, even during a pandemic, and an appropriate amount of time to do those tasks effectively. School counselors should also advocate for reasonable caseloads to increase job satisfaction (Mullen et al., 2021). Finally, as highlighted in the case example above, school counselors should notice when burnout is imminent and take measures to protect their personal health and wellness.

| Table 1. Action Items for Elementary School Counselors. |
|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Component                                               | Action Items Connected to ASCA National Model |
| Academics                                               |                                             |
| Assisting families with technology in person            | School counselors could meet with family at school property, food drop off, or at home to help families understand how to utilize devices and how to access learning platforms. |
| (B-SMS 8, M 3, M 2)                                     |                                             |
| Delivering hot spot devices to families to allow student to access internet. | If a family does not have access to transportation, hot spots could be dropped off at home to ensure students have every opportunity to learn and engage in classwork. |
| (M 2, M 3, M 5)                                         |                                             |
| Family                                                  |                                             |
| Webpage                                                 | School counselors can create webpages to provide resources and support for parents struggling with at-home learning, including resources for “virtual field trips,” stories, music, meditation activities, links to community resources, and supportive words for parents. |
| (B-SMS 10, B-SS-4, B-SMS 7, B-SMS 6, B-LS 5, M 1, M 4) |                                             |
| School-based online learning platforms                   | School counselors can use school-wide platforms for students to be able to access weekly online social/emotional lessons. Students could also interact with counselors and other students in class via discussions on lessons, and send photos of activity participation using these online platforms. |
| (B-SMS 2, B-LS 5, B-SS 6, B-SS 3, B-SMS 3, B-SMS 10, M 3, M 5) |                                             |
| School counselor                                        |                                             |
| Boundary setting                                        | School counselors need to take time when not at work to disengage from the stress/trauma of the work week. Setting strict boundaries on when to check email/phone/voice mail is critical. |
| (ASCA Ethical Standard B.3.f)                           |                                             |
| Virtual team meetings                                   | School counselors can engage with student services team and discuss needs of students and a safe place to discuss concerns, issues, problems, and connect “face to face.” |
| (ASCA Ethical Standard B.2.a)                           |                                             |
**Directions for Future Research**

Although we attempted to fill a noticeable gap in the literature through our case example in this article, research on the lived experiences of current elementary school counselors working through the COVID-19 pandemic is warranted. Elementary school counselors also could benefit from understanding the experiences of caregivers of children who experienced educational disruption as a result of COVID-19. Finally, research is necessary to understand the systemic inequities that have been exposed and exacerbated in relation to academic success as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to continue to advocate for change.

**Conclusions**

As of this writing, we were only 18 months into the pandemic and our understanding of the impact of educational disruptions on early elementary students, their families, and school counselors was still evolving. We have explored the current and relevant research on the topic, provided developmental considerations, and focused on early elementary student academic and social/emotional impacts. We have discussed the impacts of these educational disruptions on caregivers of early elementary students, including caregiver concerns, role balance issues, and the impact on the family unit. Finally, we have focused on the school counselor as a person and a professional, providing discussion of impacts and implications for practice. School counselors are uniquely trained to manage the myriad issues that COVID-19 has caused for early elementary students and their families and are prepared to respond to COVID-19-related crises and provide trauma-informed care for these students and their families.

**Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**Funding**

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

**ORCID iD**

Amber L. Randolph  [https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2833-1701](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2833-1701)

**References**

American School Counselor Association. (2019). *ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs* (4th ed.). American School Counselor Association.

Azevedo, J. P., Hasan, A., Goldemberg, D., Iqbal, S. A., & Geven, K. (2020). *Simulating the potential impacts of COVID-19 school closures on schooling and learning outcomes: Set of global estimates*. World Bank. [https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9284](https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-9284)

Bhamani, S., Makhdoom, A. Z., Bharuchi, V., Ali, N., Kaleem, S., & Ahmed, D. (2020). Home learning in times of COVID: Experiences of parents. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*. 7(1), 9–26. [https://doi.org/10.22555/jeed.v7i1.3260](https://doi.org/10.22555/jeed.v7i1.3260)

Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, E. (2020). COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime. McKinsey & Company. [https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/covid-19-and-student-learning-in-the-united-states-the-hurt-could-last-a-lifetime)

Hipolito-Delgado, C. P., Porras, L., Stickney, D., & Kirshner, B. (2021). Advocating for students during distance learning: The role of the school counselor. *Professional School Counseling*, 24(1_part_3), 2156759X21101118. [https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X211011895](https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X211011895)

McElrath, K. (2020, August 26). *Schooling during the COVID-19 pandemic*. United States Census Bureau. [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/08/schooling-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2020/08/schooling-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html)

McIntyre, R. S., & Lee, Y. (2020). Preventing suicide in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. *World Psychiatry*, 19(2), 250–251. [https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20767](https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20767)

Mullen, P. R., Chae, N., Backer, A., & Niles, J. (2021). School counselor burnout, job stress, and job satisfaction by student caseload. *NASSP Bulletin*, 105(1), 25–42. [https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636521999828](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636521999828)

Newman, B. M., & Newman, P. R. (2012). *Development through life: A psychosocial approach*. Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Pincus, R., Hannor-Walker, T., Wright, L. S., & Justice, J. (2020). COVID-19’s effect on students: How school counselors rise to the rescue. *NASSP Bulletin*, 104(44), 241–256. [https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636520975866](https://doi.org/10.1177/0192636520975866)

Zhang, L., Zhang, D., Fang, J., Wan, Y., Tao, F., & Sun, Y. (2020). Assessment of mental health of Chinese primary school students before and after school closing and opening during the COVID-19 pandemic. *JAMA Network Open*, 3(9), e2021482. [https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.21482](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.21482)

**Author Biographies**

Amber L. Randolph is an Associate Professor in the Department of Counseling at the University of the Cumberlands.

Kirsten J. Wirth is a School Counselor at Bunnell Elementary School in Bunnell, Florida.