Presentation to:
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2 Crises Affecting Schools: Katrina and COVID

- Similarities:
  - Fundamentally man-made disasters
  - Students thrown out of school completely for weeks
  - Students isolated from friends, family, & teachers for a year
  - Health and economic crisis, inequitably distributed
- Differences:
  - In Katrina, students shifted into regular school buildings, not remote
  - In COVID, an ongoing crisis that threatened everyone

Preview: Lessons of Katrina/New Orleans for What Comes Next with Schools Post-COVID

- Leveraging the forced changes in educational habits
- Providing more options for students
- Improving education from the bottom up

Leveraging the Forced Change of Educational Habits

- After Katrina, the city was forced to adapt
  - Example: Most school buildings destroyed and families returned in unpredictable ways, so the city was forced to eliminate attendance zones
- Under COVID:
  - Students and teachers being forced to learn new technologies & new approaches to teaching and learning
  - Parents taking on new and more extensive roles

Providing More Options for Students

- After Katrina, again, we expanded choice

- Under COVID:
  - For the vast majority of students, in-person instruction is best
  - But some students might be better served with 2-3 days in person
  - And a (probably small) number of others might prefer remote learning
  - We can and should provide those options

- Note: Providing options is not cheap

Improving Education from the Bottom Up

- After Katrina, the reform process was top-down, outside-in
- Black voters and educators cut out of the process
- Almost no one liked the mix of schools available; partly because they didn't engage the community in choosing schools
- At this point under COVID, we don't know what's next—it's a process
  - Let's not make the same mistake

POSSIBLE POST-COVID FUTURES

Getting the Mix of Classroom Instruction and Online Technology Right

- We've now spent a year experimenting with new online technology

- Some of it's very good; some of its not; and some of it could be if we have more time to learn it

- This is where we can expect the most certain changes

- "Flipping" classrooms and making the best use of in-person time

Rethinking Policies

- At the district level…

  - Do we really want high school students to start at or before 8 am?

  - Should students be able to take online courses provided elsewhere?

  - Should all students come in person every day?

- At the state level…

  - How to define "attendance" and "course credits"?

  - How does all of this affect school finance?

Concluding Thoughts

- Experiencing something different is useful—let's learn from it.
- We can, and must, do better