



**CONSORTIUM**  
OF FLORIDA EDUCATION  
FOUNDATIONS



## **COVID Education Innovation in Florida**

### **Operation Back to School (Martin County)**

In August 2020, parents were strongly encouraged to send their students to in-person learning, but with continuing health concerns, an unknown percent of the student population would remain at home and attend school virtually. In order to implement a synchronous hybrid learning model that affords all students the same access to traditional high-quality teachers, instruction, and curriculum, the Martin County School District implemented a plan consisting of three initiatives that included technology, instructional and personnel support.

The Laptop for Learning program provides and supports a 1:1 device for high school students but needed immediate expansion of budget and personnel. Bus drivers not on routes and other staff set up distribution sites throughout the district for parents of grades K to 8 students to pick up a device, as well as a hotspot device if internet access was necessary in the home.

Requiring educators to teach simultaneously in-person and virtual students mandated a new paradigm. The Digital Learning Coordinator and team developed resources and conducted professional development to assuage teachers' concerns and empower their strengths.

Personal support was the critical factor for which the Back to School team had the least amount of information as to how it would play out. The Student Services Department implemented mental health initiatives to address student well-being. The Risk Department collaborated with the local Health Department to implement risk mitigation procedures and protocols. These steps provided parents and students peace-of-mind. Administrators and staff worked tirelessly to ensure the well-being of all students and their families. Additionally, information was disseminated to parents in the form of Parent University, a district-created online venue.

This initiative decreased the opportunity gap for underserved and under-resourced students and families by increasing access to necessary technology tools and materials. Home visits and video tutorials in multiple languages made it possible for some families and students to engage with their school. The synchronous hybrid model allowed for students to stay connected with their school community, rather than a virtual classroom model.

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The Consortium elevates the impact of Florida's local education foundations through advocacy and providing a collegial community for ongoing learning, shared resources and support. These nonprofit organizations are aligned with nearly every school district in our state and collectively they raise more than \$80 million annually to innovate learning, power potential and celebrate success.

We believe strong collaboration is essential to ensure school success. Our effort to capture, elevate and share education innovations discovered amid the disruption of the pandemic is offered in that spirit.

Our **Top 10 Takeaways: COVID Education Innovation** report can be accessed at [educationinnovationspotlight.com](https://educationinnovationspotlight.com)