



**PRESS RELEASE**  
September 8, 2025

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**Nebraska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Releases Report on the Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on K-12 Education**  
*Report Analyzes Impacts to the Digital Divide and Youth Mental Health*

On September 8, 2025, the Nebraska Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (Committee) issued a [report on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on K-12 education](#) in the state. The report was issued after a series of public briefings where the Committee heard from academics, community organizations, school officials, and direct practitioners with specific knowledge of, and experience with, the conditions surrounding the field of education during the onset and duration of the pandemic.

Throughout this study, the Committee explored this topic through two main focus areas: the digital divide and youth mental health. The report includes analyses of how various social groups in Nebraska, such as immigrants, Native Americans, low-income households, rural students, and special education students, navigated the drastic changes to their learning environment. The Committee developed several findings that highlight the continued need for improvement in certain areas while also acknowledging that innovative efforts that were carried out locally can serve as models for broader responses going forward. The findings include:

- The Covid-19 Pandemic has had an Ongoing Detrimental Impact on the Mental Health of K-12 Students;
- Marginalized Communities in Nebraska Faced Compounded Mental Health Issues as a Result of the Covid-19 Pandemic;
- The Pandemic Exposed Gaps in the Digital Divide throughout Nebraska, although State and Local School Districts Continue Working to Address Them;
- The Digital Divide had a Significant Impact on Marginalized Communities;
- The Pandemic Caused Severe Disruptions in Vital School Services such as Workforce Shortages and Transportation.
- Special Education Students Faced Unique Challenges Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Including an Educator Shortage;
- Families Faced Increased Responsibilities and Challenges in Remote Learning;
- Schools and the Educational System in Nebraska Responded to the Pandemic with a Series of Innovative Policy and Governance Efforts.

*The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is an independent, bipartisan agency charged with advising the President and Congress on civil rights matters and issuing an annual federal civil rights enforcement report. The Commission, by Congressional mandate, establishes Advisory Committees in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories. For information about the Commission and our Advisory Committees, please visit [www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov) and follow us on Twitter and Facebook.*

The Committee also developed actionable recommendations directed at both the Commission and key stakeholders at the local, state, and federal levels. These are intended to encourage prioritization on mitigation efforts in case of future health emergencies that can ensure smoother transitions and support for the students who would need it most. Such actions can include earmarking resources and funds for both physical and virtual education, like the establishment of centrally located school support centers in rural or disadvantaged communities that can serve as alternative facilities in case of school closures.

The Committee further recommends that school districts throughout the state continue to address learning gaps that were exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, it is recommended that the state create a Childhood Mental Health and Learning Loss Task Force to lead on any state interventions that are necessary to ameliorate the impacts in these areas. The Committee also highlighted the need to maintain a sustainable education workforce throughout Nebraska and recommends state leaders fund targeted initiatives that recruit, train, and retain educators.

Committee Chair Nikitah Imani stated, “This report reflects the nuanced, lingering challenges that were brought on by the pandemic, including learning loss and the mental health decline among youth. My hope is that this report serves to provide a better understanding of how students and families in marginalized communities who were already experiencing specific hardships prior to the pandemic – such as chronic absenteeism, limited English proficiency, and limited access to Internet service and mental healthcare - can be better equipped to reach their educational potential now and while confronting possible emergencies in the future.”

Vice Chair Edmund Hamann stated, "This report is the product of a collaborative effort of our Committee, which is comprised of individuals who are committed to and care about positive school and mental health outcomes for Nebraska children and youth. This study would not have been possible without the contributions of the subject matter experts who shared their experiences and insights with us, and, on behalf of my colleagues and myself, I want to name and emphasize the Committee’s appreciation of them."

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