

GEORGE: Good afternoon and welcome. I'm Robert George. I have the honor to be the Director of the James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions at Princeton University. And we're delighted in the Madison Program to be bringing you today's webinar. Today's event is part of the Madison Program's lecture series on America's Founding and Future. And you can find more information about this series and about the Madison Program and its events on our website. And that's at [jmp.princeton.edu](http://jmp.princeton.edu), JMP for James Madison Program, [jmp.princeton.edu](http://jmp.princeton.edu).

Today's event concerns America and American higher education and American K-12 education during this pandemic and in the future. The pandemic has hit our nation very hard. Many, many, many people have suffered and are suffering not only in terms of health, which of course is the most important thing, but also in terms of economics and psychology, our society has really been hurt. How are we dealing with it?

Well, education is one of the areas that's been hit very hard, plenty of others have as well. There's nothing distinctive about the field I'm in here. We're all in this together, but moms and dads have kids at home. Kids are home from school, college kids have been sent home from their universities. The dorms are empty. We've moved largely to online teaching. We've certainly done that here at Princeton University, and we've done that at colleges and universities around the country.

How's that going and what does it mean for the future? What will be the long-term effects for education, of the pandemic and its consequences? What can we learn from it? Have we discovered any opportunities that otherwise might have passed us by?

Well, we have a very, very distinguished panel to discuss these issues today, and it's my great privilege now to introduce them again. This program is entitled Education in America During and After the Pandemic. Our guests will be on the screen at a moment, in a moment.

They are William Damon of Stanford University, Michael Petrilli of the Fordham Institute, and Cecilia Rouse, the Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs here at Princeton.

So let me tell you a bit about each of our panelists.

William Damon. Bill Damon is a Professor of Education at Stanford. He's the Director of Stanford's Center on Adolescence, and he's a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. He's a leading researcher on the development of purpose in life and the author of *The Path to Purpose*. Professor Damon's books include *Greater Expectations*, which was winner of the Parent's Choice Book Award, *Some Do Care*, subtitled *Lives of Moral Commitment* and *Failing Liberty*, subtitled, *How Are We Leaving Young Americans Unprepared for Citizenship in a Free Society*. Bill, there you are on our screen. Welcome. It's such a pleasure to have you.

DAMON: Robby, it's delightful for me to be here and thank you for setting up this very important conversation.

GEORGE: Our pleasure.

Michael Petrilli is President of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute. He's a Research Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He's also Executive Editor of the journal *Education Next*. And he's a Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Education Commission of the States. Mister Petrilli is an award-

winning writer. He's the author of *The Diverse Schools Dilemma*, and he's editor of *Education for Upward Mobility*. He helped to create the United States Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. And he also helped to form the Policy Innovators in Education Network. Mike, it's great to have you with us today. Thanks for joining us.

PETRILLI: Great to be with you.

GEORGE: Cecilia Rouse is my friend and colleague here at Princeton, where she is the Dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs and serves as the Katzman-Ernst Professor in Economics and Education. Her research interests are in labor economics with a special emphasis on the economics of education. Dean Rouse has served as an editor of the *Journal of Labor Economics* and is currently a Senior Editor of *The Future of Children*. She's the founding director of Princeton University's education research section. And in 1998-1999, she served in the White House at the National Economics Council. Then in 2009, and from 2009 to 2011, she was a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers. She serves on the boards of the National Bureau of Economic Research and the Council on Foreign Relations. She's also an independent trustee and Director of the T. Rowe Price Funds and a member of the Executive Committee of the International Atlantic Economics Society. Ceci, thanks for joining us today.

ROUSE: It's a pleasure.

GEORGE: Well, welcome to all and Bill, if I can begin with, with you. You've spent your lifetime studying young people in schools, thinking about and learning about what works and what doesn't work in education. Now we're faced with an unprecedented crisis in K-12 education. How is our education system managing? How are our schools dealing with it? Are some doing better than others? What's proving to work and what isn't proving to work so well?

DAMON: I'll start with the students, actually, 'cause I think there are some favorable prospects and there's things to worry about. But I'd like to start by offering one thing that I am hopeful about, just maybe to set the panel off on a, on a possibly positive note. I think one thing that I'm very confident about is that students will be returning to school with increased levels of motivation. And that is very good news because the difference between students that learn a lot and students that don't, one of the main differences is whether the, whether the student feels fortunate to be in an environment where they can learn something, where they feel that they're being given an opportunity to improve their lives in some way. And as we know, lots of students don't feel this way for a lot of reasons. And it's very hard to get a student's attention if they feel put upon by, I have to go to school, I'm stuck in school, and so on. I think that this situation has actually improved the odds that students will feel, "I am so glad to be out of my house, back in school, for whatever reason, and it doesn't even have to be for noble reasons that, well, well I want to learn everything about Shakespeare or something like that. They just want to be active with their, with their friends, with their teachers and that type of appreciation for being in school is going to open a lot of ears, and they're going to become better listeners. So I think the motivational dimensions, which by the way, any good teacher will tell you that the most important thing is whether students want to learn.

If you get a student that wants to learn something, it's almost hard to stop them from learning. And if you have a student that's tuned out, it's very hard to get them to, to pay attention. So I think that's the, that's the best bet for some positive benefit of this horrible crisis that we're in is that lots of young

people are stuck at home and they're realizing, you know what, school is a lot better place to be than, than my parents' living room.

GEORGE: Let me remind folks, I should've mentioned this. We invite members of the audience to post your questions in the Q and A on Zoom. And I'll be putting some of those questions, as many as I can during our Q and A period, to our panelists. If we could keep the focus just for the moment on K-12 and then we'll shift to higher education. If we could keep it, keep it on K-12 for just a few more minutes.

Mike, I want to ask you about the fascinating article that you had out as an opinion piece in Bloomberg a couple of, a couple of days ago, like Bill Damon as he just expressed it, you see some hope here. You see some positive possibilities. And I'll, just before letting you run with it, sum up by oversimplifying your argument there. You talked about criticisms that you and others have had of K-12 and especially high school education, that often high-school education is drudgery. I think you even use the term "soul-crushing." Students find it soul-crushing. We're learning in this pandemic about other ways to engage students, grab their attention, and get them interested in things. And that points the way, you argued, to some possible changes in the way we structure and even the way we think about the role of high school, especially for students who are hoping to go on to college. In a way, what you're proposing is to import part of the, something much more like the college experience to high school life. Why don't you tell us some about that.

PETRILLI: And you know, it's ironic for me to call high-school soul crushing. I actually loved high school. I was Mr. Spirit at Park West High School way back when. But look, a lot of, a lot of kids out there don't like high school and it does feel like drudgery. And they spend their time six or seven hours a day in 45-minute increments in classes that are often very boring and not very interesting, and where they're not very engaged and not actually asked to do much. As Bill said, what matters is motivation. What matters is what students, what effort students put into their studies. And a lot of times in the traditional school setting, we don't ask them to do much.

So what if instead we had a model? It doesn't have to be for everybody. It can be an option. But we allow some high schools to experiment with maybe a day that only lasts half as long as the college day does for students where you take three hours of courses a day, five days a week, that's a full load. You can do that in high school as well. But, but in return, there'd be a whole lot more independent work, homework, students watching lectures at home. I think what we've learned from this experience is that, as Bill said, plenty of kids are eager to get back to school. Others are actually kind of enjoying it. That and not just because they get to play Fortnite all the time, but they're enjoying getting to work independently and not having to be bored out of their mind so much of the day, they can move at their own pace. I think particularly for motivated students who are more independent-minded, something like this could work well where they are asked to do more independent effort on their own. Could be at home, it could be at the school's library, but it could be a different model that maybe we can try. And hey, at the same time we can let teenagers sleep in a little bit more, which is what we need to do anyways, depending, you know, according to the science. They do their course time, they do their extracurriculars, and then they work on their own well into the wee hours of the night, more like college.

GEORGE: Well as a former high-schooler myself and someone who remembers my children's experience in high school. The first question I have is, are the kids up to it? Are they independent enough, are

they mature enough to, to do that? Or would we have to, we have to track them? Would this be an option for the, the high-achieving, highly-motivated students while the rest of the students maintain a traditional high school curriculum?

PETRILLI: Yeah, I think that's right. It would not be for everybody. I think it's more likely to work for those high-achieving, highly motivated kids. But look, it may also be that some lower-achieving kids right now are low-achieving because they're bored, and because the traditional model is not working for them. So I think we should allow other kids maybe to give it a try as well. And look, there's been plenty of innovation in high schools in recent years where we do ask young people to do more, including taking college courses while they're still in high school. And a lot of young people have done well with that. You know, Advanced Placement has expanded dramatically. And it used to be that we thought that only a handful of kids could do AP. And once we expanded it, we found, you know what, actually lots more kids can benefit and succeed in these courses than we once thought. So not for everybody, but maybe more, for more kids than, than you might imagine.

GEORGE: One of the things I didn't mention in Dean Rouse's very distinguished biography, is that she's a member of the board of a school here in the Princeton area, right? A couple of towns over, the Pennington School. So you have experience with high-schoolers, not only your own kids, but with a school. How do you think we're doing? What are schools doing right and what are schools doing wrong during this this time of challenge, Ceci?

ROUSE: Well, so yes. So I'm on the board of the Pennington School and my daughter is in the 11th Grade there. And I've been very impressed by what the school has managed to accomplish. What they, the transformation, the pivot that they made rather quickly from being very intensive on-campus experience to being online. They were very quick to innovate, even within what they set up. They have synchronous days, they have asynchronous days. But let's face it, this is a private school in a relatively affluent area. As part of this private school, every kid has given an iPad at the beginning when they first enroll and they're meant to keep it for four years. My daughter's pivoted to her own laptop. But the point is that the technology was there. They have the IT support in the school. They have the teachers who are trained to teach asynchrony, asynchronously, synchronously. So they have managed to pull it off. The problem is that not every school has such resources. Not every family has resources to support their students.

And so in this pivot to online we had, the digital divide is creating even more of an educational divide for those students and schools that were not able to accomplish that. I have been following other students in the Princeton High School, which is a wonderful high school. It does not sound like they are having the educational experience that they would nearly be having in class. So yes, I think that schools like the Pennington School illustrate, they are proof of concept, and show that it can be done. But that doesn't mean that everybody can accomplish it. And I think about those states where they even just cancel the rest of the school year because they couldn't guarantee an equal education for all students, since so many students wouldn't have access to the technology and the other resources that they need to get an adequate education. So it is certainly highlighting possibilities, but also highlighting what the inequalities are that are baked into our educational system.

GEORGE: Ceci, if we can stay with that a bit more and talk about the schools that are struggling most, one of the things that I find a terrible shame in our own country is that we do have schools that are not serving children at all well with people from different perspectives have different explanations of why that's the case and different criticisms of different people who are allegedly responsible for it. But we

have some very poorly-performing schools, schools that are not serving their kids. Critics often referred to what goes on in those schools as the warehousing of children. Well, now they're not even doing the warehousing. So what's happening to the kids? Often kids who are in the most dire circumstances anyway, socioeconomically struggling anyway, not being well-served often in larger communities that have problems with drugs and gangs and all kinds of negative influences. What's happening with those kids now? There's not even a school to go to.

ROUSE: I actually don't know, what I have, you know, like many of you I have what I have done and read, but what I worry about is, for example, there have been reports of increases in child, child abuse because the schools were the point of contact where teachers were the Mandatory Reporters. School, the school lunch program was where many students were getting a good meal in the day. And we know that from the food banks and from other data that's starting to evolve that a lot of students are, are at risk and are not getting, are not getting enough to eat. We know that in this COVID crisis, that it's our low-income communities that are hit with a double-whammy. That one, many of the people who are continuing to work as essential workers are continuing to work at their low-wage jobs. And they are being disproportionately affected by the disease itself. And so, you know, I think these communities are being ravaged. We have, for better, for worse, our K-12 institutions are anchor institutions in the community. Every community has a public school. As a result, from a public policy perspective, it becomes an institution where we can reach children, and we know we can reach them. And so when school is not in session, not only are they not getting whatever education they might be getting, and you highlight that some of it may not be spectacular, which I completely understand, but they're also not getting the other services for which, by which we serve these other students. So I think we will look in the rear-view mirror and we will look to see what has actually happened in these communities and there'll be a lot of work to be done to rebuild.

GEORGE: Well, I hope we can learn from this and maybe come out of it with a better idea of how to improve the situation for schools that were failing anyway.

ROUSE: I completely agree.

GEORGE: Bill, do you have a perspective? This is another thing, of course, you've spent literally a lifetime working on and studying; what's your perspective?

DAMON: Well, first of all, it's to everyone's advantage to open schools as soon as possible. As soon as it's safely possible. And I think the main barrier to that is to protect the teachers and the adults that the children are in contact with. And whatever, whoever is a genius about architecture or spatial arrangements or barriers or health protections, we need to have a task force to get the best possible minds at work on how we can get schools open as soon as possible. Because there's nothing like having kids there, with the teacher and with their peers. And following up on what Mike said a bit, I think we're certainly moving towards a model that would be somewhat blended. In other words, even when schools are open, then there would be a lot of work at home. And of course, with the schools being open, that gives educators a chance to give access to children without digital equipment and so on. It gives them a point of access to help the kids get that stuff and learn how to use it, and maybe even help parents understand how to guide children to do it. I think the, again, to look at the silver lining, or the positive opportunity, it does provide opportunities for students to do more independent work than they have been doing. In the old models where one-size-fits-all, you'd have No Child Left Behind, Race To The Top. They're all measured by the same measure. Their curriculum is supposed to be a Common Core curriculum.

And a lot of children, we learned, got lost by the wayside in that model because they have other interests. And I'd pick up on one of the things that Mike said about how some of the lower-achieving children may not be low-achieving because they're not intelligent, or because they're lazy or something like that. It may be because they did not find their own talents and interests reflected in what the school had to offer. And that has been the story of American education in the last 15 or 20 years, unfortunately, when in my view, it took a lot of wrong turns. And already it was turning around. People recognized that this model had failed and had begun to turn around to more personalized learning, individual learning. This is a chance to really do that in a way that respects every child's particular interests and talents. It does require the teachers to start paying a lot of attention to individual children and maybe even other people in the school, like guidance counselors supporting that so that no child gets lost. What that means is that every child find something of interest to use their great, every child has a spark and just need to find something to get that child going.

ROUSE: Yeah, I just completely agree that the independent work, having teachers who help motivate students find what really sparks their imagination is what distinguishes a school like Pennington from many other schools. And I feel like I'm the naysayer on this panel, but I would like to highlight that one of the challenges with the economic crisis is that our states are hemorrhaging money. The Center for Budget and Policy Priorities estimates that the state budget shortfall, combined shortfall will be on the order of \$500 billion. And so, if we don't have it, if the states don't have the funds to, to, to, to pay for the schooling. Most states have balanced budget agreements, balanced budget laws, which means that when they're hemorrhaging this money, they're either going to have to raise taxes or they're going to have to have spending cuts. And so while it's really nice for us to be imagining what a post-COVID educational system looks like. If the funds aren't there, there's, we don't even have the resources to try to implement these kinds of changes. Sorry to be the naysayer here.

DAMON: But I can I just ask you, let me ask you something, Cecilia, because I'm not an economist and so I am asking you, it seems to me though, just fundamental economic principles would be you'd have a lot of parents who aren't able to go to work because they're stuck at home with their kids. Wouldn't it be an economic advantage to get the kids out of the house, get the parents back at work, paying taxes, wouldn't that be a more of an economic kind of win-win? Or am I missing something there?

ROUSE: There's absolutely no question that we're going to have to learn to live with this virus before there's a vaccine. A friend of mine works at Merck the land speed record for developing a vaccine is four years. I know everyone keeps saying 12 to 18 months and, you know, let's hope we get there. But realistically, we are going to be living, we're going to have to restart our economy while living with this vaccine with, with this virus. The problem is we're going to have to do that with social distancing, which means that not everybody will be able to go back in the same way, our recovery is not going to be a snap-back recovery. You think about a restaurant, if they have to implement social distancing, their number of patrons are down. They're not going to bring back their entire staff. There are other jobs that will emerge. We're going to need contact tracers. We have online delivery. There will be other jobs that will emerge, but it takes some time with that kind of friction. And it's, there are going to be a lot of people who are in financial distress, parents who are feeling financially stressed are not going to be the best educators for their students, for their own kids. And so there's going to be more stress at home, mental illness, and all the other dysfunction that can happen within families. But so there's no question that we need to get back to business, but it's not going to be I think realistically, it's not going to be a snap back and we're going to have to be, you know, it's going to be costing us we will be in, economic distress for some time.

GEORGE: If, if the first step to the kind of individualized education that people are seeing as the way forward here is to get the technology into kids' hands and the training for the kids to be able to use it, would that, well obviously that there would be expense involved with that, right? I mean, you gotta give every kid a device and you're gonna add trainers and training so that kids know how to use the devices. That all costs money but are there cost savings on the other end. So Mike, if we went down your road, if we if we took the path that you're pointing us down, would there be cost savings to this?

PETRILLI: Sure, there could be down the road. You could certainly think about how you use teachers more effectively and if they're spending a lot less of their time teaching, because kids are spending less of their time in class, then maybe they've got more time to provide input and feedback, which is what you'd want them to be doing and working independently with students. You know, maybe they could serve more students than they do now, in some cases. Certainly, we didn't have to spend as much money in facilities as we do. Now, that's another possibility. Problem is when you make these changes in our huge education system, some of those benefits, they don't show up until a long time from now. It's not till you need to replace your high school that you say, well, we don't have to build a high school that's as big anymore. Well, that might not happen for 30 years, right? So and the expenses that are real show up right away. Look, in terms of its, by the way, expenses showing up right away is going to happen this fall. When, if it's true that we can only have students attending every other day, and we have to do social distancing and we have to clean more often, creates all kinds of new expenses.

Another reason that we really that the schools are going to need financial help. And by the way, if kids are only attending every other day, that doesn't help you get parents back to work. You know, we may need to think about, okay, if that is a goal, if getting parents back to work as a goal, the priority may need to be to get the younger students back in school every day, the elementary school students, because they cannot stay home alone. Maybe middle school and high school students, not ideal, but they're more, you know, it's more, it's easier for them to take care of themselves at home and do some independent learning at home. And so maybe the priority of getting them in every other day is not as high. Those are the sorts of things that, that school districts all over this country right now are really having to figure out, came out, as Bill said, getting smart minds to think about how is this going to work.

GEORGE: Dean Rouse, if, if our education comes out of this crisis with a better sense of how to use technology in a greater commitment to putting technology into the hands of students, could technology be the thing that brings greater equality and more opportunity to students on the low end. Kinda, can technology be an equalizer here? I know it's not going to mean that, that kids from really run-down, bad neighborhoods are going to be on a par with the kids who go to Phillips Academy, Andover, or Exeter. But would it make at least the kind of education available to people at different ends of the socioeconomic spectrum more similar.

ROUSE: So I've actually done a little work back in the day on, on using technology. Wasn't necessarily an online technology, but I've studied two different programs. And one thing I would remind everybody is when we went from a slide rule to a calculator, that was technology when we went, right? So we've had technological advances that in theory could have been equalizers along the way. So bringing in a computer and online brings some advances and some possibilities. But it's, it's, it's been a long history. I was actually in a, in a conference with somebody from Oxford who said we lived through printing press, we meant there's been all kinds of technological advances. What I discovered in my own research was that one, technology is, is really heterogeneous and we have to be more specific about what we're referring to. There are some programs that are really effective, some programs that are not so effective.

So I evaluated one reading program, wasn't any more effective than having the students work with a teacher, evaluated an algebra program, which did seem to relieve the teachers, so the students would go to a classroom. And it seemed to relieve the teachers. Where it did seem to make a difference was for students who were absent a lot, then they couldn't, you know, the rest of the class could progress. They could pick up where they had left off if they had missed class. For students in very heterogeneous classes. It allowed the students who were more advanced to excel. And the lowered, the students who are taking a little more time could take more time. So technology can be a leveler in some way, but we have to be a bit more specific about what we're talking about. It's not all created equal. And it's, it's, I think of it more as a tool that compliments great teaching. It, it may, in the long run, like Michael is saying, it might be able to reduce some of our labor costs. But in the end, some students need a lot of help. I'm talking to some of my colleagues who have young kids who are, who are spending a lot of time helping their kids with the online curriculum in their schools.

GEORGE: You know, it is.

ROUSE: Right. So we have to be a little bit more specific. It has the potential. But then you know that the kids who come from more advantaged, highly-educated parents are going to be able to have better help at home than the parents who don't have the same understanding capacity. So that that's not necessarily going to level. So Yeah.

GEORGE: Well, I certainly want to kids and I want the kids on the high end to get the best possible education, too. I just like the kids on the low end to come up.

ROUSE: Absolutely. Absolutely. We don't want to just bring up the top.

GEORGE: Mike, did you want to come in?

PETRILLI: Well, just to say one thing that has come out of this, I think the most important technology that we've discovered has been an old technology, is called a curriculum. Schools and school districts that actually have a curriculum as in a curriculum that they expect all teachers in a given subject to more or less use, that they've trained teachers on a curriculum that's high-quality. I mean, for example, Advanced Placement once we get into the high school years, but other curricula for the lower, they have done much better because they have been able to make this transition. We otherwise, you have individual teachers. Keep in mind, we've got 3 million teachers out there all across the country, individual teachers who suddenly have to figure out how to get all of their materials online and to make this huge switch. If you have a curriculum, sometimes the curriculum providers have been able to do it nationally. And then the teachers can really focus on how to support students, how to be, how to kind of help them access that curriculum rather than produce it, suddenly be a curriculum designer themselves. That makes an enormous difference. And that is one change. I hope, I hope switches. I hope the school districts that have continued to leave it up to individual teachers to not just teach, but design the instructional program themselves, that they move away from that because it's, it's crazy. I mean, it takes, takes any benefit of scale in a system we've got like this and just messes with it.

GEORGE: Bill, can you tell us anything about what lessons any of this has from, and for, alternative forms of education. The home schoolers have been in this business for a long time using online resources and so forth. What about the Christian classical schools, the Jewish day schools? The sort of small, private, often religiously-affiliated schools that have had to be creative because of the limited resources

available to them. And I think have been ahead of us, and they're ahead of other institutions in using technology as an expense, as a way of saving money.

DAMON: Well, not just technology, but also curricula. A lot of the most exciting school reform ideas in terms of working into curricula, some of the most exciting new ideas are coming from small, independent schools, religious schools, and so on, because they have the freedom to do that. Let me suggest one method that actually addresses, an experimental method that addresses a number of the questions that all of you have been raising about a number of the problems, and that is peer tutoring. Using children to help instruct other children, which addresses the problem that Mike raised about, well, what if you bring back the elementary school kids? What are you gonna do with the middle school kids? Well, one thing is you could put them to the task of helping to instruct the younger kids. That's a, that's a method that in experiments that we've done in our lab, shows there's increased learning both among the younger kids, and the kids that do the teaching. Because when they're tutoring a younger child in math, they're learning math better. It also addresses the question of how to deal with kids that might be better prepared or have more privileges. Well, these young people who maybe have access and have really learned how to use computers and so on. They would take, I believe, very passionately to the idea, I can help young people that haven't had this opportunity to do it. I'm going to take this youngster under my wing and teach him or her what I know about computers, thereby also learning more themselves. This, this could be an opportunity to actually put in practice on a real scale things that we've learned in our laboratory experiments work educationally. I'm just throwing that out, but wouldn't that be exciting?

GEORGE: Interesting. I'm always amazed at what kids can do with technology. How much they do know, and how much better they are at it than I am.

DAMON: Yeah.

GEORGE: If you want to learn how to use some of these technologies, you ask your nine-year-old and that's how you learn.

DAMON: So your, your nine-year-old is actually your peer.

GEORGE: At least.

DAMON: At least your peer.

GEORGE: Ceci, could we shift to higher education? And let me open that conversation this way. Long before we had the COVID-19 crisis, a lot of colleges and universities, a lot of private colleges and universities, for example, were really struggling financially. Those that are dependent on enrollments, those that don't have the blessing we at Princeton have and you at Stanford have, Bill, of a fantastic endowment, were trying to find ways to cut costs, more adjunct professors, fewer tenured lines and so forth, and often wondering whether the doors are going to open next year. I'm wondering whether this is going to accelerate that and exacerbate that process, and whether we've got say at the bottom, 20% in terms of financial stability, colleges and universities that are in real danger, often colleges and universities that have served communities and families by providing first-generation kids an opportunity to go to college. Giving kids an opportunity to be the first members of their families to receive a college degree. Am I right to worry about that?

ROUSE: I think you absolutely are. If we think about the 2008 financial crisis, where many of these schools phase-reduced revenues from their own endowments, from known resources, maybe not as many charitable contributions from donors, that was one kind of a crisis. Reduced revenues. This brings not only the challenge to their endowments or whatever revenue sources they have on that side. But in addition, they have increased costs that are directly related to COVID-19. If it was a residential college, having to send their students home, rebating, perhaps, room and board, having to invest very quickly in online technology, which as Michael pointed out, is an upfront cost, I would add, I am not sure we understand really the cost-benefit online in general, but we know at a minimum that there is a big cost upfront and that coming into the fall, they don't know, students don't understand what they would be buying in the fall.

So, you know, my daughter goes to college. It's a school that hasn't declared whether it's going to be online next year or not. Is she buying an online education, which she thought was okay this spring, but not great, it'll be better if they do it in the fall, or she getting or she buying the residential. And with that uncertainty, you have some students saying, I'm going to, I'm going to tap out, I'm going to take a year, I'm going to take a gap year if they're really committed to going to school. But we know that even if students take a gap, year, not all of them will come back. Some students are saying, I wasn't even sure I was going to go to college in the first place. Not certain I could afford it. So this is going to tip me to decide not to go. Now, one challenge for the students who opt not to go is that in this environment, it's not clear what they're going to do, because there aren't a lot of jobs and they're going to be a lot of older people who are going to compete for many of the jobs that those students would be trying to compete for. It's not like they can travel the world if they have the resources to travel the world, so if they're not going to college, it's not clear what they're doing. But nonetheless, I know a lot of schools are concerned. I think a number of schools have already announced that they haven't fully filled their incoming classes for next year.

So Robert Zemsky, who's at the University of Pennsylvania, has some analyses looking at some finances of institutions. He had a book that was just published this spring, where based on data that went through 2016, he was predicting that about 100 institutions might fail over the next five years. And he has updated that to being about twice that number as a result of COVID. So there's no question schools that have medical schools attached to them are particularly hurt. Those are not necessarily the very small liberal arts colleges that you referred to Robby, but they are if they've got a hospital attached to them, they're not doing the elective surgeries. I think Johns Hopkins announced a major shortfall for this year and into next year. So I think there's no question that our educational, our higher education system, is going to have to do some adjustment. Then it's coming to a reckoning.

GEORGE: Ceci, if I can stick with you for a couple of minutes here to talk about teaching online. As you know, my own teaching is in the area of Philosophy of Law and Moral and Political Philosophy, Constitutional Law, Civil Liberties, those kinds of subjects. Bioethics. And I rely heavily on student interaction. It's a discussion format. Most of that. I do some lecturing, but even my lecturing is interactive. So I'm on that side of University life in the arts and sciences. When we were told that the students were going to be sent home and we're gonna have to move to online teaching, I had a lot of trepidation. In part, I'm an old dog and worried about learning new tricks, but I also thought it just can't work given the kind of interaction I need with my students to do the kind of teaching I want to do, you need to be together. Well, let me tell you about what I've concluded now that I've done half a semester and finished up the semester with this teaching. First of all, it works better than I thought it would. Much better than I thought it would. I thought it wouldn't work at all. If you're teaching deep subjects, philosophical subjects, talking about the great existential questions of meaning and value. I thought you

needed to be together in a room to make that happen. Well, it turns out using these wonderful video conferencing technologies, it's possible, but it's also not ideal.

ROUSE: Yep.

GEORGE: I've concluded that it's better than I feared it would be, but it's still not the same thing as, as being there. And my, my guess is that a lot of colleges that are struggling, those that are heavily enrollment-dependent for tuition payments and so forth will say, yeah, in-class education is the ideal, but that's a luxury. And since it, you can still do pretty well online, and we can save a lot of money doing it this way, we're going to move in the direction of more and more online lessons, less in the actual classroom. And I worry about that because I think the education isn't as good. And I also worry about what our young, our young colleagues, I mean young academics, young academics are facing, and were facing before the COVID crisis, a bad enough employment situation the way it is. Now, I'm wondering if any of them are going to, are going to get jobs. Do you have a perspective on those issues? Ceci?

ROUSE: So the last I heard, and maybe either Bill or Mike know more recent research, I couldn't find any. We didn't really have an understanding of that true cost-benefit of going online. I know that Bill Bowen, our former president, President Bowen, that was one of the questions he was wrestling with when he passed away because we know that there was a very big upfront cost. You can keep the same lecture kind of for some period of time. You can't keep it always is, it's just not clear. You can certainly engage more students, at least in the consumption. You can broadcast to more students.

On the other hand, I know that Princeton, for example, is trying to contemplate if, if it has to go online next fall, would it engage more graduate students so that there's more teaching fellows to help in the smaller preceptor, because it's a lot to ask of the faculty to create that kind of engagement with students who are spread across the world in different time zones. That makes your day much longer. It's just much harder to engage as you, chop up the classes into smaller units. So I actually think that the jury is out, writ large, as to whether online actually is a cost savings. Although I know it will be tempting for many institutions, I actually think that the big public institutions are more likely to be shifting to online more quickly than the smaller liberal arts schools that are particularly dependent, tuition dependent. Those smaller institutions are more residentially-based. They need the students to be on campus. Some of them that are much smaller actually may be able to pull off having students on campus, if they can figure out how to keep them somewhat distant and keep the density down on campus. But there's going to be expense because students will have to be tested for their own safety, for the safety of the staff and the faculty. So I think that's I think that's where the rub will be. So I'm not sure that they will pivot whole, you know, a hard pivot to online. Realistically, in the short-term, we're all doing some hybrid. Some of the faculty, even if the students could come back, won't feel like they want to take the health risk of being in the classroom. Some students, international students, won't be able to get back just from visa restrictions. So I think realistically, in the short-term, we're all doing some kind of a hybrid anyway. I wouldn't say that the online is particularly the pivot for these institutions that were more vulnerable. But I do think they're gonna be more vulnerable.

GEORGE: Bill, have you yourself ever done any online teaching?

DAMON: I'm teaching my very first online class right now.

GEORGE: Well, how's it going for you? What's your experience?

DAMON: You expressed my experience exactly: much better than expected. But I had very low expectations. And there's a lot missing. It's a seminar and there's a lot missing. And just my being able to even perceive that student over to my right who's drowsing off a little bit and getting him to her to tell a story or there are things missing. I if I can say a general thing about the kinds of economic pressures that Cecilia just mentioned. One of the things that I'm worried about, I started with a positive note, but this is something I'm deeply worried about, at the higher education level, is that what we have known traditionally in higher education as liberal arts or liberal education, it goes all the way back to Cardinal Newman.

GEORGE: *The Idea of a University*.

DAMON: That's right. It's a great part of the educational tradition of our country and Western Civilization in general. It's going to take a big hit. I don't see any way that's going to be avoided. People are going to, people even before this crisis were questioning whether Humanities and so on really gets you a job. And whether it's a waste of money to take Anthropology or Moral Philosophy are any of these so-called peripheral subjects. So already people are worried about that for economic reasons. Now with more pressures, there's going to be even more of a squeeze. And liberal arts, liberal education is not only the subject matter, which is very important, Philosophy and Humanities and so on. It's also a method of teaching. And it's a method of teaching that benefits a lot from in-person seminars, tutorials, The kind of elbow teaching that we've been privileged to be able to do in colleges and universities in this country. And I'm very worried about this. There may be solutions to the economic problems of some universities by putting more stuff online or going to bigger classes, or cutting down the number of courses. But I'm worried about the, about that. There's a character development agenda that, that our universities have been following for over a century. And it's a precious thing that we need to find a way to preserve and sustain.

GEORGE: Mike, do you have thoughts about those.

PETRILLI: I do. I have to say, as somebody who focuses on K through 12 education, I'm feeling envious of, of these elite higher education institutions to imagine you get to have a Zoom class with Robby George or Bill Damon, or Cecilia Rouse. I mean, that's amazing. My sense is that most high schools are not doing any of this. They're not really even trying. You know, they are not doing live instruction or discussion in any meaningful way. They basically just cut the kids free and said, well, you still have to basically do your homework in the assignments, maybe some assignments that we would have given you in-class at times and you're on your own and maybe we'll have some Zoom office hours if you need help, if that. Now I do think that the teachers are able to provide much more rapid feedback. So when the kid turns in their homework, they get it back maybe right away. Or the teachers have more time to grade essays. And I think there's value in that, but I just, just to let you know that what you're describing here sounds wonderful compared to what most kids in K through 12 education seem to be getting right now, again, outside the private schools. And I would also say many of the high-performing high poverty charter schools.

And you think about as tough as it was right now. How does this work next year If you haven't even met those kids yet? Alright? You had relationships with the students that you're teaching online now. I think at least got to meet them in person a few times before the colleges is closed down. You know, you think about a kindergarten teacher next fall if she has to teach remotely to kids she's never met before and they're five years old. I mean, this is tough this is really, really tough.

GEORGE: Yeah. Well, I feel I've seen this movie before. I can remember 2008-2009. And in the wake of that, a lot of our students at Princeton, a lot of my students who would otherwise have been thinking about the possibility of majoring in English Literature or Philosophy or Anthropology, or Near Eastern Studies or Jewish Studies, or any of a range of humanistic disciplines or soft social science disciplines felt, or their parents felt, that that was a luxury they couldn't afford. And so we saw a movement away from the, from the humanities. And I fear we're going to see the same thing happening now where students, even at places like Princeton, or Swarthmore, Williams, or Stanford, these, these places with the big endowments and that have, provide their students with opportunities to study any of the range of subjects we'll see even at these places, transformation of liberal education into something more like vocational education. I think it's really important not just for the famous elite institutions, but for, you know, institutions across the, across the board and all the way into the community colleges to at least give their students an opportunity to get a liberal education. Maybe they're going to be majoring in something very practical that will get them a job when they walk out the door. But they should be exposed to some English Literature, some Philosophy, some History. And I'm just worried about them. The Humanities are also suffering from some self-inflicted wounds.

DAMON: Yeah.

GEORGE: But we were hurt pretty badly by that 2008-2009 financial crisis. And I see the same thing on the horizon here.

DAMON: Yeah, I think you're right, Robby, and I share your value you place on having everybody have access no matter what their vocation is, because life is more than just work. And this has to do with the kind of meaning you have in life. And we were doing studies of college-age students and their development of purpose in all ways in life. And, and certainly they draw a lot on the kinds of humanities courses that they've been able to take. I would just say one more thing about the practicalities, though. I'm hoping that, that folks that give students advice about job opportunities are broad-minded in an economic sense because there's a lot of vocational opportunities in areas having to do with media and entertainment. In fact the entertainment industry, I believe, somebody told me, some economist told me this, is I think the third-largest GDP contributor to our gross national product. And one of great import, and especially these days where everything is online and media, Zoom, there is a real practical opportunity for students who are interested in the arts, in media and communication and writing. So it's not only in the STEM fields or engineering that students can find, or in finance that students can find jobs. And I hope that message is getting out to students who do have these more, more artistic interests in them.

GEORGE: You know, Bill, some of the work that I do gives me opportunities to talk with people from the corporate world. And very often I ask them just because I'm so interested in their perspective on this, what they're looking for in people they hire, especially at the, at the entry level. Are they looking for people with technical training? Are they looking for Business majors? And you know, the, the, the, the story I get, what I hear from them. So very often the vast majority of times, is that they're looking for liberally-educated students who know how to think, who are critical thinkers, who were deep thinkers, who examine problems from different angles. They'd like to have that student. But if that's true, and I have no reason to think they're not telling me the truth, somehow that message is not getting through to students and not getting through to parents who seem to put a lot of pressure on their kids to major in these practical fields. Ceci?

ROUSE: Yeah, I was going to say is that this is something I have studied. And the economic benefit of almost every major is positive and relatively large. Just some pay more, especially right out after graduation than others. But almost any major that you can do and college students are going to do better than had they not gone to college at all. And I further point to the value proposition for the liberal arts education, I think in this day and age, is that the relationship that a worker has with any one employer is getting small, shorter and shorter. It's not like you started at IBM by the little door and then work your way up with one employer rather than moving from job to job. And furthermore, the skills that you need in any one profession are changing so rapidly that I actually worry when students, when our students get too practical in their training, And it's too specific for particular profession that they're not learning actually how to be generalists and how to learn in order to keep up. So I think that what we tend to see in the data is that short-term, you know, if you're an engineer, you're gonna do really well. But on the longer term, almost any major is going to catch up and you'll do pretty well. It is a message that's not getting out because it's scary for many parents, but it is one that should be said.

GEORGE: Yeah, well, we're now an hour into our conversation. That's gone by very quickly, we want to make sure that our participants have an opportunity, those who've tuned into us to ask some questions. And so I have a question from Margarita M.

Margarita asks, are parents who are motivated to help their children in school still able to do so, even if they themselves do not have a lot of formal education or a lot of expendable income. What are some examples? What can schools then do to leverage parents' motivation and ability to assist their children?

That one Bill, I think is for you.

DAMON: Well, I'll tell you one technique that we know works because again, this has been studied and it may surprise people. But one of the most effective ways to have parents help their children that the parent himself or herself has not had a lot of education is to do co-learning, is to actually for the parent to say, well, algebra, hey, you know I've always wanted to learn some algebra and my ninth-grader is trying to do it. Let's learn it together.

And this is a very powerful way of motivating the student of doing a kind of, in effect, virtual peer learning among the parent and the student. And it also gets the parents a benefit too. The parent has fun doing it too. And it also has another benefit that is not exactly, educational, it helps foster a very wonderful bond between the parent and the child that is very positive in a social-relational sense. And that's a very important thing in life too, improving the parent-child relationship so that there is a ready-made technique that's been studied. It works. It can be done anywhere.

GEORGE: Well, we have a question from an anonymous questioner. Here's what he or she says.

My son is in a school like Professor Rouse's daughter. But he has been very discouraged by the cheating going on, googling answers to calculus questions, et cetera, about which the boys apparently brag to one another. I don't know if it's an all-boys school or if this is something boys do more than girls, I don't know. And our questioner says, the teachers seem to be oblivious to this, suggesting perhaps that maybe teachers are looking the other way. The questioner goes on: I suppose this is something that has tech fixes of a sort, and teachers can be trained in those, in those tech, tech fix, fixes. But the absence of the moral community on campus, together with the essential orientation of technology, what can be done, will be done, seems to me a problem that has to be addressed. Can moral education take place online?

I have, I'll, I'll begin on this one myself. I'd been at Princeton for 35, just finished my 35th year at Princeton. I arrived back in the middle ages, that fall. And for more than three decades I've been involved, fortunately, not as a defendant, but as an advisor, an advocate in the university's disciplinary system, advising students who have been accused of wrongdoing, whether it's academic integrity issues or other behavioral issues. I've also represented in some cases, students who have been victims and it's a problem. And there's no question about that. It was a problem before we had technology. One of the that most concerns me is not something that the University, I think is in any way directly responsible for. It's so many kids coming to university, certainly to our university without an internal governor, without the kind of conscience that says, I don't want to be the kind of person who cheats. I know there's always been cheating, I know there was never a golden age, but I have a thought that perhaps there was a time when people felt guilty about it or when they felt the temptation sometimes resisted. But I see so little of that. So it all becomes a question of whether it's worth the risk, whether you can get away with it. And then technology just makes it easier to cheat, more tempting to cheat. It also, as we remind our students at Princeton, also makes it easier to catch you if you cheat. So if you have no conscience and you're just going to rely on the cost-benefit analysis as you consider whether to cheat, also consider that it's easier for us to catch you cheating. But it seems to me a big problem.

Ceci, you I'm sure both in your role as a professor and of course as a senior administrator in the university, have had to deal with this.

ROUSE: Yeah. And I really don't have much more to add. I know actually the University's worried about this. It should, Princeton, which has an honor code. And so, we rely very much on students understanding what the, what the values of the University, and that they're promising not to cheat. What that means if we go for next year. I think that the question's a really good one. I think about it from the side of accountability and what do grades mean this year. And I think that for this term, the whole world is going to say, yeah, you might call that an A. We know, we don't know what it's an "A." Many schools have gone pass-fail or had creative versions of a pass-fail for, I think not only because of the stress of COVID, but for the other side of this, which is, do we actually know whether the students are representing their work? It's interesting, the College Board is going is AP tests are starting next week. They're trying to do an online AP. They're gonna try to do an at-home SAT for the fall. I think colleges will look at those data and not have full faith that they're, that they, you know, there's always been cheating there too. But I think they're going to have even, they're going to be more skeptical than before. So I think, yeah, I think the question is an excellent one and I don't say that I have anything more than that. I think that everybody is aware of it, not fully sure how to handle it, except for the fact that we all understand that these grades are not quite what they might have been, had we not had this pandemic.

GEORGE: A few years ago, I was the departmental representative for the Department of Politics at Princeton. And we have a meeting at the beginning of each year for the new, for the new majors coming into the department. And I was asked to address that meeting in my role as departmental rep. And there was a Dean alongside. And we talked about all the different aspects of life. Now that you're moving into an actual major in a department. And one of the things we were required to talk about was, was cheating. And so we both warn the students against cheating. We did mention that with technology, now it's easier to cheat, but it's also easier for us to catch you. But then I said, even if we don't catch you, you should consider that if you cheat, even if you get away with it, even if you get a great grade, even if you get into a great law school or graduate school, you will know that you cheated. And I added, God will know that you cheated.

DAMON: That'll get their attention.

GEORGE: The Dean sitting next to me, pulled her chair back, tried to get away. But I do think on the question of moral education, the universities have to take greater responsibility for the moral education of, of our children, of our students. They're going to come in with what they're going to come in with. They either got some moral education, they don't have some moral education, but I think we've gotta be in part responsible for helping to form our students in certain virtues like honesty and personal integrity that are critical to what we do. We cannot run a university with students who are utterly lacking in those virtues. And where we're relying on fear, fear of punishment to do all the work. It doesn't work.

DAMON: Well, hear hear. And I completely agree that universities need to take this on. But as Mike knows, the problem starts earlier. I think the, the data of psychologist Don McCabe, studied this years ago and found over 80% of K through 12 students had cheated at some point in their lives. But, but you can see this and Robby, you actually said exactly the right thing in terms of the goal. The goal is not just to cut down the cheating behavior, but to get every child to think of himself or herself as caring about the truth and wanting to be seen as an honest person. And that actually makes cheating an opportunity if it's handled right. Because a lot of kids are going to cheat, 80%, we know at least, and if a school takes a moral position about it and doesn't just say, oh, this is cooperative behavior, or the test didn't mean that much to the kids, so what, but actually follows through with some consistent disciplinary response. Not highly punitive necessarily, but something that responds in a way that says you did the wrong thing. This is not the kind of person you want to be. It's to your benefit to learn how to have the habit of honesty. A habit is a virtue, the virtue of honesty of truthfulness, then, then you actually have achieved the moral development agenda. And then the problem, by the time the young person is in college, hopefully the temptation won't even come up. So I think this is very much a task for education earlier at all levels. And the task is to have a moral response to it. A moral response to it.

GEORGE: So we've got a question here from Rachel Alexander, Dr. Rachel Alexander, who's a post-doctoral fellow in the Madison program this year, and will be going to the University of Virginia next year. Rachel says, thank you for a wonderful panel.

I agree with that. I thank you all too.

You all had mentioned the digital gap between rich and poor children. In terms of rich children being advantaged by greater access to technology, what do you think of the argument that there is a digital gap in the opposite direction with richer children, including children of Silicon Valley's elite, benefiting from parents who limit their screen time and poorer children suffering from a lack of such limits. And if it's true that greater exposure to technology has its downside, how does the current crisis exacerbate those downsides? And how should a reform to K-12 education system respond to the dangers posed by too much screen time?

That one's for you, Michael.

PETRILLI: Yeah, sure no. Absolutely true. And this has been true a long time, you know, way back in the, when we just thought of screen-time meant television screens poor spend much more time watching TV than more affluent kids did. And now we see that as screens have, have multiplied, and in fact it's gotten worse. In just the last few years the gap has even widened. In other words, all kids are using more

screens than before, but it has really gone up dramatically for lower income kids. You know, one thing that's happening right now which is interesting, that will have to study and watch is that, of course, is what were those more affluent kids doing when they weren't on screens and they weren't at school. Well, they were most of them in a million structured activities. They were playing soccer and lacrosse and volleyball, and they were doing choir. And if they were older, they had other extracurricular activities. That's all stopped right now. And so it is interesting that this is a sort of a way of leveling, right? That suddenly all of that has gone away.

There's some positives. We, we keep hearing stories and we see it in the media stories of kids, oftentimes affluent kids who suddenly have taken up cooking, or they've suddenly found new interests that they didn't know they had because they finally have some free time that is not scheduled. And that can be a wonderful thing. But look, I think we also lost parents. I've got two boys, ten and twelve, and I know that our kids are also playing a lot more Fortnite than they used to. And so I think this is a real issue. And again, it's going to be with us probably for a while. If, if are we going to be able to do sports next year with social distancing or a choir? Choir seems very unlikely. Band, right? I mean, so that's going to be, that's going to be a big loss. And by the way, back to the other question, those are the activities where most young people do get a moral education, if they get it, is in those extracurriculars.

GEORGE: I'm, I'm being dishonest by pretending that I know what Fortnite is. I'm going to guess that it's a video game. Is it a video game?

PETRILLI: Robby George. I'm going to have to tweet the Robby George doesn't know what Fortnite is! It is a game. You, I guess we're not one of the 12 million people that saw a big concert on Fortnite. Just ten days ago as well. Yes, it's a game. And it has taken the world by storm. And it's a whole 'nother thing, I'll send you some, some, information.

GEORGE: We've got a question from Maura S.

Maura says, I'm concerned with the education system, being tempted to totalize education, to make education everything, both for teachers and for students. My sense is that the online format has caused a lot more work for teachers, not less, more work for teachers, not less. And it has blurred the boundaries between home life, leisure, and school for students such that they need to be available for much longer periods of the day. Could this be an opportunity for us to see what is truly essential in education and cut away what is unnecessary. If so, what might that look like?

Bill? Are schools doing a lot of stuff that's unnecessary? And should that time be directed to home life and other things? I know what Mike's answer to that question is because it's in the Bloomberg piece. But what's Bill's answer?

DAMON: If you mean schools right now, I'm not seeing that so much. I, I have to admit, I'm judging by just the people I happen to know with school-aged children, including my own children, who in other words, my grandchildren. And I would say that they have a pretty good balance. In other words, they're not they're not working in school ten hours a day now or anything like that. They, the schools are giving them a reasonable amount of work. I would say maybe even less than I would like to really see. And the families are playing board games, they're going on walks. Their families are doing very nice things together, cooking, they're doing a lot of cooking together. So if, if the question is what's happening right now, I can't agree that in my observations, children are spending too much time in school. If I try to generalize it beyond that, well, who knows what it's going to be like when we go back. No, my worry's in

the opposite direction, that, that there is not going to be enough school in children's lives. And I would like to promote as much possible re-engagement in school-based activities as we can get away with safely in the future. That would be my answer.

GEORGE: I've got a question that I think will be for Mike and then one for Ceci. The one for Mike, from anonymous. Could and should the crisis prompt a fundamental redesign of our current educational paradigm? For example, is it time to finally revisit the 180-day calendar with summers off? Or why should high school be four years and college be four years? Mike?

PETRILLI: Look, I think it's always a good time to ask ourselves those questions because this is the system we inherited. It doesn't mean that it's perfect. And for sure, I think reform is always necessary to ask what, what works and what doesn't. But I think when we do that, if you examine it, you'll find that some of these things make sense and some don't. You know, there's been efforts to reform the school year, the school calendar, for example, usually not by adding more days, but by spreading them around. And in most places where that's been tried, eventually families, you know, protest and don't like it that much. I think the other thing we have to really struggle with is, look, what works well for some kids, doesn't work well for other kids. I don't just mean you know, therefore we need to personalize learning.

I'll put a bigger point on it. What works for affluent kids, may not work for poor kids, and vice versa. We all know that we have these huge gaps in our society that have grown worse. And we may need to design certain things that really with poor kids in mind because they need a lot more, because Bill would say they need more school. They need more of everything to try to make up for some of those gaps. So do we need to find a way to give poor kids more time learning? Absolutely. And that could be more than a 180 days a year? Absolutely. I actually think it could mean more years in elementary school. A lot of rich parents these days, quote, "red shirt" their children especially their boys, so that they have extra time to get a little older. You know, why can't we give some kids in this country if they need it, an extra year of elementary school, if that's going to help them catch up. So yeah, we should think about all that.

GEORGE: Michael or anyone, are there things we can learn here from the experience of other countries? Have other countries successfully experimented with shorter or longer school years, shorter or longer school days, different approaches?

PETRILLI: You know, when you look overseas at the high-performing countries. Yes, they tend to have more time, especially days. Maybe the day itself is not as long. The biggest difference you see is how we think about teaching as a profession. You know, in other countries it tends to be better paid. But they do that by having larger classes, you know, and by having less support for those teachers. So in our system, what we've opted for is smaller class sizes, over 50 years, we keep driving those down, but especially hiring all these people who work in our schools who are not teachers. You know, 40% of educators in our schools are not teachers. They are people assisting teachers, sometimes with students with disabilities and specialists to help those kids. But oftentimes, not. Just a whole variety, an army of people to support that classroom teacher. And so if we want to learn from other countries, I think we could pay teachers a lot more, but we need fewer people in our schools.

GEORGE: Go ahead, yeah.

ROUSE: I mean, I think that's complicated as well because as I mentioned earlier, we think we turn to our K through 12 institutions as a way to reach kids in many other ways, so they provide a level of social support than many other countries is provided in another venue or another way. And so we've loaded.

So I, I completely agree that our schools are full of people who are not just classroom teachers, but I think as a society, I'm not so sure it'll cost us less because I think still those same supports will need to be provided to students in some other way, but maybe not through the school system.

GEORGE: Ceci, here's a question for you. Howard S. says, what about special education children, whose needs, by virtue of their disparate needs and disabilities require differential instructors or instruction. The challenge for educators and school systems appears to be all the more challenging and perhaps disheartening for the kids with special needs. Does that sound right to you?

ROUSE: I completely agree. And actually that is a lot of the reason why we have on average, smaller class sizes is because we have, we have an obligation to educate students who have special needs, which in other countries may not be educated in quite the same way. They require a teacher or a teacher's aide often. And sometimes school districts are providing it by sending the child to another school, which is very costly. So the provision of special-ed is very expensive for our country. We have decided as a country it's the right thing to do, especially if we're going to try to mainstream students, but they have special needs for a reason. So the one size fits all is not going to fit them. And we have to find other ways of helping them really reach their potential.

GEORGE: Emily S. says, some universities have not allowed Zoom as a teaching platform because it's a commercial platform that keeps a record of every meeting that is hosted on it. This is especially problematic in regard to the display of copyrighted images. Those are allowed through Blackboard, as that is designed, designated as an educational platform. Should universities be taking a lead in clarifying legal restrictions in regard to the digital platforms we often take for granted.

I know at Princeton we seem to be very heavily dependent on Zoom, but I'm just supposing without knowing that there must be a lot of competition. This is obviously a profitable area, one that suddenly become more profitable. Honestly, it becomes still more profitable. If the market system that I believe in works, that means quality should be going up and costs should be going down as the competition intensifies. Any responses to that question.

ROUSE: So Zoom, I think was the platform of convenience. And I, and I think there's no question that even Princeton is exploring other platforms. At the Woodrow Wilson School, we're looking at another platform that will allow for greater interaction for one of our larger classes, for our master's students. Princeton is working very hard to have the graduate students back on campus. But just because the students are there, the faculty don't necessarily want to be in the classroom with them. So we're still needing to think of an online platform. And so we've been trying to learn from other institutions and Zoom sort of fits the bill in a certain sense. I have to say my daughter's class this morning got Zoom-bombed and they had to shut down the class. I think it was the platform of convenience. Blackboard has got some capabilities here, Canvas has got capabilities. There are other companies, and I think as institutions are starting to plan for next fall, as I mentioned, even those institutions that are hoping to bring back students as residents are likely to need some sort of hybrid because some faculty aren't going to feel comfortable entering their classroom. Some students are going to have underlying health issues. I don't think everybody's going to be able to be on campus as we were before. The whole reason to start thinking about that now is to be able to explore a wider variety of platforms on which to provide this education.

GEORGE: Karen F. has a really interesting question. Online education done well, she says, may work for

certain disciplines, but how will science that requires access to labs be taught? How are we, how are our colleagues in science, Ceci, managing that?

ROUSE: That is a really good question. So I think that they're trying to be creative in different kinds of assessments. But Robby, as you know, Princeton requires a senior thesis for all of our graduating seniors. A lot of those students require lab work. So there's been some, you know, there's consideration, should we think about how might we use the summers to be able to have students make up courses? For being in the lab, not this summer, but maybe next summer. Or how can we try to find ways to help replace that time, as students are losing out of the lab, because they are, and there's not a really great way to substitute for that.

GEORGE: Ceci, here's one I have to put to you as well. This is right up your professional alley, scholarly alley. It happens to reference at the beginning our former colleague and your predecessor, Christine Paxton. Cristina Paxton, who was dean of the Woodrow Wilson School, is now the president of Brown University, who said in a New York Times op-ed that it's critical that colleges and universities open this fall. Karen John, the questioner or John K. says, well, it's easy to say that, but hard to implement if you believe that there is a nontrivial chance that colleges won't be able to open. And of course, none of us knows what the situation in terms of the health crisis is going to be, whether we're going to get another spike of the virus or what's going to happen. So John says, who should make the call whether to open each college's board of trustees or a state governor? Who has the authority to decide? Ceci?

ROUSE: Well, yeah. As it turns out, Robby, I was just appointed to the inaugural board of trustees for the University of Rhode Island. So we're having active conversations about that. Rhode Island happens to be a state that is probably leading the nation in terms of testing per capita. And it's a small state, so there may be more possibilities there. I think again, this is going to be no one size fits all. So when it comes to state institutions, that's going to have to be a conversation between the boards of trustees if the institutions have them, and likely the state legislatures who have some say, and the governors over whether it's safe to open. I'm sure they will work certainly in Rhode Island, working hand in glove with the public health institutions, public health authorities. Private institutions make that decision on their own. I have not yet met a university or college president who is not trying to work with the best science, to have the best information from whoever they can get the best information from, public, whether it's their own public health faculty or their state public health officials. Everyone that I know is working hand in glove with their local authorities, with the state authorities, because it's hard to get out in front of where the state, where the institution is located. So if you know, it will be a joint- decision making. Ultimately, whoever is the head of the campus is going to be making that decision.

GEORGE: I don't envy university presidents the, I've never aspired to be a university president, but today you couldn't pay me enough money to take the job. What a challenge they're facing.

Mike, this one I think is for you. It's about kids who are finishing up now in high school and looking forward, or were looking forward to going to college. It's from Arthur S.

What about the particular problems faced by incoming college freshmen? Will they have virtual roommates? What kind of an initial college experience will virtual learning afford? In what ways will college be different from their high school experience? All, all, all kids on their way in that summer between high school and college are looking forward to something really new and different and exciting and interesting and better. Do they have anything to look forward to?

PETRILLI: This is such a tough question. And I am also just, just as we feel bad for college presidents, I feel bad for those high school seniors and their parents as they grapple with this. I mean, it does seem like thinking of that gap year would make a lot of sense for young people, especially if the parents are, the families are going to be spending a lot of money at elite institutions to not get the full college experience. That that's a big loss. And you know, and so I think people ought to be really honest with themselves about what that experience they want is and what it may be this coming fall and whether maybe taking a year off makes some sense. Now, of course, the universities are going to have to decide, are they going to allow that to happen? And what does that mean? For next year's seniors if they have a pile up, right? So this is, this is really very tough. At the same time, look, it's also a lesson for people to say, look, this is an awful pandemic. People are getting hurt by it very badly all over the world. And, you know, sometimes we have to deal with disappointment. And so the freshman year of college may not be what you were hoping it would be, but you know, we'll all survive this if we stay healthy and that that won't be the worst thing in the world.

GEORGE: Bill, this one's for you. It comes from an anonymous questioner. Most K-12 teachers are woefully underpaid.

I certainly agree with that.

So often the best university students do not choose to go into teaching at the school level. I actually don't agree with that. I, I've been amazed at some of my best students who could have gone into much more high-paying jobs have gone into teaching, elementary teaching, in some cases high school teaching. Nevertheless, I'm not asking the question. Our anonymous questioner is.

How will the current situation affect those who choose to be teachers? Can teacher salaries be improved given the economic crisis? I know faculty salaries certainly at places like prints that are being frozen, but we, we have little to complain about when you think about how woefully underpaid teachers are, and the wonderful work that so many teachers do.

Well, what do you think? Bill? Will this, will this crisis make things even rougher financially for teachers and make teaching less attractive as a vocation?

DAMON: Sort of. That's a relative question because the crisis is making things tougher for lots of people, financially. In fact, practically for everybody. The young people who go into education are not necessarily taking down a vow of poverty. First of all, a lot of young people who go into education for a period of time, into teaching for a period of time. They may teach for ten years and then move on to something else, either within the field of education that offers more reward financially or in other fields. And, and there's Teach for America. I mean, there are a lot of, there are a lot of institutional ways of doing that. And remember, jobs are hard to find now, no matter where you work, education is, whatever happens to it, it's not going away as an industry. I think as somebody mentioned, maybe you mentioned this, you did Robby. The high school, or the elementary school, that's the mainstay of every community in the country. So there are jobs there. And the jobs will always be there and there's pathways to, within the field, beyond the field. So I would never discourage a college student from going into education as a field. Of course, it has wonderful benefits beyond the financial benefits in terms of the contributions you're making to society, spending time with young people, and especially in these uncertain conditions these days, it's anybody's bet as to where to where you're going to make a living. So I would, I would not take a pessimistic view of it.

PETRILLI: During the, during the Great Recession, we have some research from a colleague of mine, Marty West at Harvard, who was able to show that it actually helped improve teacher quality because teachers stayed in teaching more than they otherwise would have. So in downturns, education is considered one of those safer professions. And look, we do pay new teachers relatively well. It's really that the pay doesn't rise very much. And so, by the time their fifth year or tenth, your teacher, it's pretty bad. But in times like this, they might stick around an extra year or two. And that does help kids.

GEORGE: You know, I can think of very few experiences in my own life that are more wonderful than those I've had nurturing a student along, and seeing that student develop. And finally, the bird leaves the nest and flies. And you think back to where they were at the beginning, and where they are now. And it's, it's just, it's just lovely, and it's, and it's thrilling. And the, the, the, how can you get something better than the rewards of having been part of that and getting to getting to watch that happen and then take such great pride in what they, what they go on to do.

Well, Allison B., we're near the end, Allison B. has this to say, thank you for hosting another fascinating panel, Professor George and the James Madison Program, exclamation point.

Well, thank you. Allison B.

Particularly in higher education, the academic experience is not limited to the classroom. Much of student learning occurs during meals, social times and at club meetings. How can universities virtually maintain the collegial community, which is such a significant part of what makes higher education a special experience.

Allison B. is absolutely right. Part of what does make it so special is the stuff that goes on outside the classroom, including the learning. It's not just the extracurricular stuff that has to do with athletics and other fun things. I mean, so much of the learning that the professors aren't there for. It's those conversations late at night, it's meal time. How do we replace that? And now I can tell you what we in the James Madison Program we're doing for, for the students who are affiliated with us. We're trying to keep in touch with those students and bring those students together virtually. So for example, we have what we call our Forum Friday. Our wonderful Ch'nel Duke, from the Madison Program proposed this and manages it, and put it together. That gives the students affiliated with the program an opportunity every Friday to get together with a cup of coffee online and just talk about whatever is on people's minds. They may have to do with, may have to do with academic subjects. The conversation may have to do with public affairs, something in the culture, something in entertainment. It's not a set topic and the topic changes over the course of the two hours of conversation. So that's one experience that we've had in the Madison Program that's been very positive in trying to replicate to some extent, what Allison's talking about.

Do any of the panelists have any thoughts about that?

ROUSE: I will just volunteer that I'm seeing my daughter's institution attempt to do exactly that. She was assigned to a new dorm, and they have a French table. She joined the French table. She's, they're trying to cultivate the sense of community in a host of ways, whether it's Zoom meetings, a lot on social media, email, just trying to keep the community together. But Allison is exactly right that this is what makes a residential college so very special, and which is just very hard to replicate remotely.

GEORGE: Bill?

DAMON: Yeah. Well, I think this was a good call to arms. Should be on the list of the highest priorities of the office of the presidents of universities. And I've seen a bit of it, but not as much as could be done. And your, your program, Robby, is a great model. Get the word out, because I think that this is exactly what universities should be doing to cope with, cope with this. And as I said, I think there's a bit of it going on, but I don't I don't suspect it's high enough on the list of priorities of what the college administrators are doing. So that's a great idea, and you're absolutely right. It's essential to the college experience.

GEORGE: Okay. Well, we couldn't have asked for a better group of panelists. Thank you, Bill Damon, Cecilia Rouse, Michael Petrilli for your wonderful insights and for sharing your wisdom with us this afternoon. And thanks to everyone who joined us, and especially those who asked such great questions. Please keep an eye out going forward for future Madison Program virtual events like this one. We hope to have more in the summer and the fall. Even if we're back in the fall, we want to continue having these. Again, for more information, please visit JMP as in James Madison Program, [jmp.princeton.edu](http://jmp.princeton.edu). We appreciate the support that our friends out there have for the Madison Program. If people want to know more about the Madison program, please get in touch and follow us on Twitter at [@MadisonProgram](https://twitter.com/MadisonProgram). And with that, I want to again thank my panelists and say to everyone out there who's joined us. See you soon.

ROUSE: Thank you.

PETRILLI: Thank you.

DAMON: Thanks.