

David Bloomfield podcast edited

>> TOCE: Hello, everyone. Welcome to "Disability, Inc.," INCLUDEnyc's podcast series. I'm Julianne Toce, a family educator here at INCLUDEnyc, and our guest today is David Bloomfield, attorney, author, and professor of Education Leadership, Law, and Policy at Brooklyn College, and the CUNY Graduate Center. Welcome, Professor Bloomfield. Thank you for joining us.

So you specialize in education law, school district management, school reform, and legislative matters. What brought you to this area of expertise?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I've always been interested in both teaching and in education policy and politics. When I was in college, I was doing a teacher preparation program. At the same time, I was working at Boston City Hall during the bussing crisis. When I was a teacher, I organized my private school faculty into a union chapter.

And so what I do now really is the same. I teach. I enjoy the teaching. I'm informed by the teaching in my policy work; but I do a lot of writing about the policy and political situation in New York City and elsewhere in the country.

>> TOCE: Wow, so that on-the-ground and classroom experience must give you a really valuable first-hand perspective in the policy work that you do?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I refer to it every day. My elementary school teaching, my middle school teaching, and my Master's and doctoral teaching. It gets me into the schools. I have field work students at Brooklyn College who I visit. And I learn so much from not only the students, but from the principals and teachers of the New York City public schools, and private schools as well.

>> TOCE: While we're on the subject of educational policy, let's dive right into school funding. People that are interested in public education know it's as important as it is complex. So thank you for breaking it down for us. This is especially helpful for us right now, as things get even

more complicated amidst COVID-19. Right now, the schools are closed. Many businesses are closed. People are out of work, and these factors all affect the education budget.

Let's start with the big picture here in New York City. There are three main funding streams -- federal, state, and city. Can you tell us about education funding at the federal level?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Federal spending on schools is a big, big deal. But strangely enough, it's not in terms of dollars. It's not as big a deal as state and local funding.

The federal government provides about 10 percent of the New York City public schools' budget. The influence, though, is greater than the money, because all of that money is tied to federal regulations, particularly in the area of special education, where the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is so important.

>> TOCE: Wow, so to an outsider, it would seem like the federal government, it has so much power. It's the biggest entity, but it's actually the smallest funding stream.

>> BLOOMFIELD: If you think about it, going back to 7th grade civics and the Constitution, the word "education" doesn't appear in that document. So what Congress does, it uses something called the Elastic Clause to provide for the general welfare for specific targeted education initiatives. That includes special education through IDEA, and services for low-income students through Title I. Those are the biggest funding streams for federal money coming into the New York City public schools.

>> TOCE: You just explained about how the federal budget, a big chunk of it goes to special education. Here at INCLUDEnyc, we're paying close attention to how special education is affected by COVID-19. How is the virus affecting the federal education budget?

>> BLOOMFIELD: The good news is that the feds have plenty of money. It may not be real money in the sense that they're going into deficit, and further deficit to provide those funds. But the worry, in terms of the federal government, is less about the money that's coming in -- although we can use a hell of a lot more because of difficulties with the state and local budgets.

But it's the regulations that assure a free, appropriate public education for our special needs students.

There's pressure on the federal government to lift some of those guarantees. They would be called waivers from federal law. And we're waiting for Betsy DeVos to make some sort of decision about waiving federal special education requirements. That's a matter of great worry.

>> TOCE: What would be the benefit of waiving some of those requirements? Would that save money that could be used elsewhere?

>> BLOOMFIELD: It's a two-fold pressure. One is to save districts money. Class size requirements, for example. Many instructional and support provisions through IEPs.

But there's a secondary issue, which is just a practical one, that so many of these requirements are based on on-site instruction. It really is very difficult at this point to provide, for example, the kind of related services to students -- occupational therapy, for example -- that tend to require one-on-one, in-person help, that we just can't provide at this point.

In many respects, school districts across the country, New York City included, are violating federal law as a practical matter, because they can't provide many of these services on-site.

>> TOCE: If the waivers were to happen, is that a threat to special education, or would the law just be reflecting what's actually happening as a result --

>> BLOOMFIELD: We want to make sure that any waivers, or maybe even just don't give the waiver, but give a wink, will permit the system to continue in a day-to-day fashion -- but not lose these protections, which for 30, 40 years, have made special needs a crucial responsibility of school districts. Which earlier, it wasn't.

These were children, who, let's not forget, were parents were asked to keep their kids home. They were asked to institutionalize their kids. The protections of IDEA and federal

regulations are extremely important to make sure that our special needs children along the broad spectrum of what disability means really are paid attention to by the school district, and these students aren't permitted to drift away.

>> TOCE: So with these waivers, it's like there's a threat that an already marginalized group, like students with disabilities, could become marginalized even further?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Exactly.

>> TOCE: You explained that about 10 percent of school funding comes from the federal government. What about the state level? Let's go to the next level. How much comes from the state government?

>> BLOOMFIELD: 90 percent to account for, and 40 percent of the local budget is provided through state aid from the governor, the legislature of New York state. That amounts to many, many millions of dollars through essentially foundation aid. That's the name of the general state aid that comes to New York City, and can be used really for any purpose.

So remember when I talked federal aid, it's targeted especially to low-income students and to students with disabilities. Foundation aid is discretionary, and can be used to pay general education teachers and are all those other expenses that the New York City DOE has responsibility for.

>> TOCE: You just mentioned foundation aid. That brings up the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, CFE. What is that and how has it affected the education budget?

>> BLOOMFIELD: CFE was a lawsuit, and I use the past tense. CFE is not alive anymore, even though many of us would like it to be alive -- where the New York State Court of Appeals, our highest court, determined that the State had responsibility to every school district in the state. There are over 730 school districts in New York state -- that state aid had to provide an adequate education for those students.

What foundation aid is supposed to do through the CFE suit is provide that level of funding. Unfortunately, the state government has never met the order of the New York State Court of Appeals to provide that degree of funding. So New York City constantly holds the CFE holding up, and say, "You have to provide us with a degree of funding that you're not giving us right now."

The State, unfortunately, turns its back on New York City, on the CFE decision, and we aren't getting the level of state aid that the Court of Appeals determined was necessary to provide that type of adequate funding.

>> TOCE: How is the funding determined? Is it based on the need of the school district?

>> BLOOMFIELD: There's a state aid formula. New York City, based on our need, student need, and our ability to fund our schools locally, gets a share of the foundation aid pot that the governor and legislature determine every year. We get about a third of the money in that pot. We have about a third of the number of students.

But we have a tremendous number of low-income kids. We have a tremendous number of students with disabilities; students who are home-insecure. We should be getting much more money, but it's really a political process, not a needs-based process. In the political hothouse of Albany, we are under-funded.

>> TOCE: Is it possible in the future, what do you think? Will foundation aid ever be fully funded? Will New York City get all of the money that it's supposed to?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I've argued in print that we have a fundamentally broken political system in Albany. New York City surprisingly doesn't have as much power as the suburbs, for example, in determining how that foundation aid pie is sliced up. I think that we're always going to be under-funded.

The more immediate problem is the COVID-19 epidemic. The revenues that are coming into the state, the revenues that are coming into the city through taxes, are going to be

insufficient to meet even our current level of foundation aid. The question right now is less about how to increase funding, rather than how to keep the cut as low as possible.

>> TOCE: The pandemic has really highlighted the disparity across school districts, I think even the need for more equitable funding even further.

>> BLOOMFIELD: True, the wealthier school districts -- again, there are over 700 in New York state. The wealthy school districts, because of our economically as well as racially segregated governance system, they have the ability to self-fund through property taxes. It doesn't look like the mayor is going to be increasing our property or income taxes, because in New York City, we get our schools' money from multiple tax streams. It doesn't look like we're going to have any more money. Again, it's going to be how we staunch the bleeding.

>> TOCE: The New York state government was in budget planning just as COVID-19 was beginning to spread. That causes schools to close. It drastically, like you said, affected state revenue. What impact will this have on the state budget for the forthcoming year?

>> BLOOMFIELD: The governor and the legislature agreed to a budget several weeks ago in early April. That gave the governor great discretion to play around with the budget. That's not only to deal with shifting projections of revenue, but where that money should go.

We don't only deal with education, even though education is actually the greatest share of the state budget. But whether it's state police or state parks or health care, we have a huge deficit in our Medicaid budget. How the governor decides to shift money around between sectors is going to be an area for lobbying by people engaged.

We're engaged in all sectors, right? If you take the subway, you're going to want the governor to be funding the subway system. (Chuckling) We all are dependent, whether we have kids in school or not, on a quality educational system. We want as much money going to education as well. How the governor deals with that political quandary and the pressures that he's under is an open question right now.

>> TOCE: Education right now is kind of competing with other sectors for the money that's available?

>> BLOOMFIELD: That's right.

>> TOCE: What is this going to mean for New York City, budget-wise?

>> BLOOMFIELD: New York City is up a creek. We are the epicenter of the worldwide pandemic. Health care is a big deal. Economic activity is another big deal. The sales tax is not healthy, because the economy isn't healthy. As a result, it's likely that we're going to see cuts not only in the state budget, but the city budget for education.

>> TOCE: The city budget is the biggest education funding stream in New York City. What percentage are we left with? What comes from the city funds?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Likely about 50 percent -- 10 percent from the feds, 40 percent from the state, 50 percent from the city budget. Because most school districts in the state and in the country raise their money from a designated property tax on residents, in New York City, we get our money from all sources -- property tax, sales tax, the income tax -- many other sources. It all goes into one big pot in the city treasury. That's the account that the mayor has to decide how much money is going to go to police, how much money is going to go to fire, sanitation.

And education is the biggest share of that. We have over 85,000 teachers who have to be paid. Other employees. We have to take care of school buildings, even though the school buildings are closed. Student transportation, even though they're not being transported at the moment. If that city treasury account goes down, the mayor and the city council have some hard choices to make as to where the cuts will fall.

>> TOCE: If education is the biggest chunk of the city's budget, does that mean that education is going to take the biggest hit right now?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I don't know if education is going to take the biggest hit. That's really a political decision. It's for all advocates to raise their voices and to say that there will be as few

cuts to education as possible. Understanding that there are hard choices to make among sectors, and we depend on all of them.

One piece of good news is that in the area of special education, because those are mandated services -- going back to the federal requirement and those waivers we talked about -- it's really important that we maintain those federal requirements for the IDEA money that comes to us from Congress, because special education as a mandated service can't be cut.

>> TOCE: Right now, with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the federal law that protects special education, we're protected, but if those waivers come into play, that's when we should start to worry?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I think we should be worried anyway --

[LAUGHTER]

about any waivers that come down from the feds.

>> TOCE: Big chunk of the New York City education budget goes to special education services. And all public schools in New York City are expected to provide special education. But we also have this separate public special education system known as District 75, or D-75. The students in D-75 programs have more significant needs. The majority of them are in full-time special education classes. How are the funds distributed between the general education schools and District 75? Is it equitable?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Before I get into District 75, I just want to at least mention that charter schools have some number of special needs children. Private schools have some number of special needs children. And those are required to be funded, too. Every sector, whether it's charter, traditional public, or private, needs the money, and it's public money to provide that free, appropriate education that is demanded by IDEA.

District 75 is a specialized district within the New York City public schools that are for our most involved special education students. Usually those students who require a

self-contained situation, not only as a classroom, but as an entire educational program. As an area where we have the most needy students, their IEPs drive the funding. If a one-to-seven student/teacher ratio is required by the IEP, New York City has to fund that one teacher for seven students, instead of a class size in a typical general education classroom of 30 or more.

So District 75 drives a lot of funding to it. Is it enough? No. But again, we have to make sure that we don't let this distance learning environment diminish the services to those children who are likely to see the steepest decline if they're not given those services over the course of six or more months.

>> TOCE: Even just in typical times, we kind of have this segregated system, where there is general education with special education services, and then there's District 75, where it's full-time special education. From your standpoint, does the separate system for students with more intense special education needs make sense, educationally and monetarily?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I'm not a big fan organizationally in terms of District 75. I think it tends to marginalize those students as "other." I would like to see the districts be responsible for all children, and not just the students apart from District 75.

On the other hand, District 75 requires a great deal of expertise. These children are the most involved. They often have emotional disturbance or other factors that require their segregation from other students. On the other hand, as I said before, I think that there is a tendency to forget about those kids as they orbit separate from the mainstream of the New York City public schools.

>> TOCE: How can we move toward a more inclusive system?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I would like to see that District 75 as an entity be disbanded, while at the same time recognizing that they have special needs and their educational needs have to be provided for. I would like to see more District 75 programs in regular public schools, allowing

for a certain movement of services, if not children, among the population of the regular public school and the District 75 school.

We talked earlier about how I'm informed by my teaching work. I was in a school which houses both a regular education program and a District 75 program. Kids from the general education program would go meet with counselors in the District 75 program, because those counselors are provided for in greater numbers in the District 75 program, because they're more needed there. But kids are kids, and kids should be able to move between programs where it suits their needs.

>> TOCE: The idea is we kind of have to be able to provide the same level of service that students can get in District 75, but integrate it into the general --

>> BLOOMFIELD: I would say so. It's a larger problem, because so often -- one reason we have District 75 is because those kids weren't provided for adequately within the mainstream. Families feel protected when they can go to the District 75 superintendent and make their needs known. Too often, when a District 75 parent goes to a general education person -- they don't, because of the governance system we have -- they get disregarded, because it takes a lot of work, time, and energy for those kids. It's not necessarily time and energy that those general education personnel have to provide.

So there are serious questions about how we provide for our District 75 kids, but we want to make sure that they don't essentially have to go through the poor door to get an education.

>> TOCE: Right. Lots of work to be done. We've talked about the federal, state, and city funding. Where does early childhood education fit in all of this?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Early childhood education fits in two respects. First, we need to talk about the 0 through 3 population -- that's their age -- and early identification. They actually are provided for by the city Department of Health and Mental Health, not by the DOE. Within the 3-K

program -- I forget what it's called -- 3-pre-K? Those children start to be provided for by the Department of Education. And we have to make sure that children with special needs are both identified and provided for under federal law and federal funding in a way that, right now, I don't think is adequate.

We have to make sure that not only the K through 12 population is provided for, but that 0 through 3 population, and the 3 through 5 population within a public education setting. There aren't enough seats for special need kids in our preschool programs. The mayor was under fire before the COVID-19 crisis to provide those seats, and that pressure has only increased. We have to make sure that with all the other worries that he may have, and that the DOE may have, that we don't forget our special needs pre-K population.

>> TOCE: The federal, state, and city funding streams come together and make up the New York City Department of Education's budget; and that goes for the pre-K, early childhood from 3 to 5, and then also K to 12.

Right now, the governor and the mayor are already making cuts. To zoom in a little bit more on special education just generally, not just with pre-K, at the student level, how will the education of students with IEPs be affected by the school closures? How does the special education supports and services that the budget is already set to pay for this year translate into the remote learning environment?

>> BLOOMFIELD: We don't know what's going on out there. That's the biggest problem. The biggest problem is we don't know what attendance is. All of our students don't have devices. They don't have the bandwidth necessarily within their homes. I'm worried, actually, about teachers who may not have the appropriate devices or bandwidth to provide distance instruction.

I think we have to start from a supposition that we have tens of thousands of children not being educated. That's from mid-March. We're looking at a situation where special

education kids in particular, since they have such great need, are going to go without formal instruction for six months. That's just a crisis of unimaginable proportions, with every kid being a different story.

Some kids have excellent provision of devices and bandwidth and well-educated, informed parents at home who may be working still from home, and the income is coming in. And we're going to have tons of kids who are in environments, not that it's fair fault or their parents' fault, that are less supportive of distance learning. How are we going to provide for those kids when they come back to school, or if they don't come back to school?

We don't really know -- a lot of special needs kids are on 12-year [sic] instructional plans. I don't know that the DOE has any idea about how they're going to provide instruction to those kids during those months of the summer -- let alone what happens in the fall.

I think money in some ways is the least of our worries. Just the day-to-day ability of teachers and parents to support the instruction of their children has multiple dimensions, money being only one.

>> TOCE: A big thing that we think about in special education is accessibility. You mentioned how there is varying levels of accessibility in terms of the devices or the WiFi that it takes to access remote learning. How else has remote learning affected accessibility for students with disabilities?

>> BLOOMFIELD: We had a huge problem of accessibility even before the crisis. Our school buildings tend to be old. In many cases, tend to not be accessible. Kids go to schools where they would prefer to go somewhere else, but that preferred school isn't accessible, so they're forced into environments that other kids, kids in the general education population, would have no problem attending.

We don't want to lose the focus that we had on the many, many problems that special needs kids had before the crisis started. Those problems have only increased because a lot of

our kids, as I said before, don't have the devices. It's hard to learn on your phone, if that's all you have. Maybe you're sharing a phone among three different kids in public school within a family, five kids, more. I think accessibility is a huge issue at this point, and that goes for the ability of many of these students and their parents to deal with the complexity of the technology. That can be a greater hurdle for special needs kids than kids in the general population.

I want to talk about assistive technology, which was a huge issue before we started in this pandemic. Assistive technology, which can be so important to kids if they can access it, was lacking before, and it's lacking now. I would like to see the DOE and, as I say, the charter schools and the private schools, looking into those issues of accessibility of technology and assistive technology, more than, I think, that they're capable of right now while they're doing so many other things.

>> TOCE: For those of our listeners that aren't aware, can you give a brief explanation of what assistive technology is?

>> BLOOMFIELD: In an IEP, an Individualized Education Plan -- and understand that federal law requires that every child in quote special education has an IEP. Very often -- I just talked about kids with IEPs. There are kids with disabilities throughout the system. Some happen to have IEPs. They've been referred for special education. It's been determined that they have specialized needs. That generates an IEP, and a placement.

So the IEP ought to call, in many cases, and sometimes it does and sometimes it doesn't, for the kind of specialized technologies that we've developed through the decades, and continue to make progress. The classic would be perhaps a wheelchair and maybe a keyboard that verbalizes writing for the student. It will input students' spoken words into written instructions. That can be hugely important. That's very expensive.

And it not only requires the ability to use the equipment, but to maintain the equipment. How in this environment can we be sending people into homes to make sure that the equipment is working on a periodic basis, not just once in a while? Assistive technology has become a more and more important part of the IEP. I think that that's probably pretty low on the priority scale when we're just trying to get kids connected.

>> TOCE: It's kind of something that's difficult to maintain in typical times, and it's just compounded right now.

[PHONE RINGS]

>> BLOOMFIELD: I think we have many situations where there might be assistive technology available that we don't even know about, so it's not included on the IEP, and the child goes without.

>> TOCE: To continue thinking about accessibility, we have IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, that protects a student's right to a Free and Appropriate Public Education, FAPE, and the Least Restrictive Environment, LRE. But is that even possible right now when everyone is learning at home? There's no choice over what the environment is.

>> BLOOMFIELD: In some very real way, it's not possible. We're all in the most restrictive environments right now, without physical classrooms to attend and that one-on-one, and more importantly, in some ways, social situation of a live classroom. In a real respect, the typical legal and instructional playbook has gone out the window while we try to provide for some sort of education in the most difficult of circumstances.

But the law is the law, and the DOE has to be making best efforts to maintain the requirement for a Free Appropriate Public Education, underlying "appropriate" as driven by the IEP, and the Least Restrictive Environment to make sure that students in inclusive situations are included by their teachers in the regular classroom dynamic. That becomes difficult when you

have an integrated situation with a special education teacher and a general education teacher in the same classroom. It just kind of ups the complexity of the instructional gain.

>> TOCE: It seems like with this immediate shift to remote learning, there's going to be certain budget allocations that will go unused, like bussing, since everyone is at home. Can this money be repurposed for maybe to support remote learning?

>> BLOOMFIELD: Some of the money can be repurposed. Other times not. There is a big controversy right now about using the transportation funds for direct instructional purposes. There are contractual issues. There are economic issues involved. You're going to lay off a whole bunch of bus drivers and matrons who need the income and who we're going to need, I hope, in September. Not have these people drift away into other jobs or retirement because we've cut off the funding. That may be a good idea.

The solution isn't as obvious as it might seem to simply repurpose that money. Other money just can't be, because it's provided to the DOE for targeted functions, like security or like transportation. In that respect, it would be illegal to repurpose it.

>> TOCE: Not as easy as just moving some money around.

>> BLOOMFIELD: Money is fungible. People are expert at moving the money around, but not always.

>> TOCE: We already saw shortages in special education before COVID-19. There was, like you mentioned before, not enough preschool special education seats. Not enough social workers, guidance counselors, school psychologists stretched too thin. And it seems like we're going to need even more resources when the schools reopen to make up for lost ground. How will we ever get the funding we need when now we'll be getting even less?

>> BLOOMFIELD: That's a quandary, I think, that everybody is facing now. Government is especially responsible for all of these different services at increased levels, when there's less money to pay for it.

Then we have to look at the social situation as well. People have died. How are we going to deal with the social and emotional cost of that situation? It's not a budgetary matter, it's a psychological matter. But we're going to have to deal in a situation which is changing day-to-day in quite dramatic ways, and where individual children will be most vulnerable.

>> TOCE: It's not just the academic ground that we lost, but we're also going to have higher need in terms of mental health, coping with what they went through. It sounds like mental health in schools could be a place where we're going to see some cuts.

>> BLOOMFIELD: Where services aren't mandated, they're likely to be cut. Class sizes are likely to go up. Mental health services have already been put on the cutting board by the mayor. That may not affect the special education population, where the IEP calls for counseling. But it will certainly affect the mainstream. Those are kids who are going to be needing those services as well. There's a situation where there's increased need and less money to pay for that.

>> TOCE: That brings us to this new normal. There's a lot of talk about how when the pandemic is over, things aren't just going to go back to how they were. We see that with cuts in funding, but also elsewhere. What do you see as the long-term effects on education and education funding?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I hope we all go back to live instruction. I think that's the biggest deal. It seems like people are pretty tired of Zoom meetings and being cut off from one another physically. Let's assume that we do go back to school in the fall. I think that's up in the air at this point.

If so, I think that we'll have larger class sizes. I think that we will have more pronounced deficits between kids who have been able to get the kind of supports needed for a semblance of education during these six months, and those who weren't. I think that a lot of compensatory program is going to have to be instituted. What's going to happen when a fourth-grader who

was out for six months is going to be taking a state test? It looks like those test scores will go down. Are we somehow going to blame the school for a huge fall-off in test scores?

Because of the nature of our schools, which are highly segregated by race and by income, some schools may look fairly unscathed, and others will look like they're failing. What are we going to do about that kind of distinction between our schools, and where the resource is going to go?

>> TOCE: You mentioned how there's a difference in the level of support that different families are able to lend to their children in remote learning, because of need, because of being at home or being at work. But it seems like across the board, everyone is frustrated with remote learning. Barring any sort of differences in support, could this experience sort of change the whole bar, where the learning standards for third grade change because everyone is coming in behind?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I think the governor is going to have a hard time changing the learning standards. But we certainly may have to -- I hate to say it this way -- lower our expectations for what children will know at a given grade level. We don't know what the effect is going to be, and there are going to be a lot of changes, I think just demographically. People have moved out of the city to get away from the epidemic. Are those kids going to be coming back? How is that going to fall off in terms of income?

I think our schools are going to be looking a lot different. We may have fewer teachers. We're already in a situation of dozens of deaths. But some people are going to retire. Are we going to be able to fill those slots with new teachers, and will those newer teachers be able to meet the challenges that their more experienced colleagues could have dealt with perhaps? Or maybe the newer teachers are going to be more flexible and not as put off by a new high-tech environment, as some of the older teachers?

>> TOCE: It really is uncharted territory. So many unknowns. The situation really has, like we mentioned before, highlighted even further the educational inequities that happen across the city, across the state, across the country. Could this experience result in a more equitable system?

>> BLOOMFIELD: I would hope that we all see that we're in the same boat together and that there is greater equity. On the other hand, in times of shortage, people jump into the nearest lifeboat, and we could see, in fact -- for example, more families moving into private schools, kind of putting up the barriers, and leaving a less financially able school system to fend for itself.

>> TOCE: Really could go either way.

>> BLOOMFIELD: And all different ways.

[LAUGHTER]

>> TOCE: Taking this all in, it's clear that even under typical circumstances, education funding is complicated. As we wrap up, I was hoping you could leave us with a goal for education funding when schools reopen, if and when we get back to business as usual, if that even exists anymore. What is the most pressing issue or change education funding needs to address?

>> BLOOMFIELD: We've got to address those kids who, for six months, were without the level of education that they were receiving in school. We are going to have to put a lot of money into compensatory programs, and that has to do with low-income kids. It has to do with special needs kids. It has to do with home-insecure kids. That's where we're going to have to put the most money, because those are going to be the kids who probably saw the greatest loss in terms of their educational needs.

>> TOCE: Right, and probably their emotional, mental health needs as well.

>> BLOOMFIELD: That's true.

>> TOCE: Thank you, Professor Bloomfield, for sharing this insight with us and teaching us about education funding, especially during these chaotic times. Thank you, everyone, for listening.

Take care.

>> BLOOMFIELD: Thank you.