New report: How the pandemic compounds education pipeline challenges

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The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) has released new analysis based on updated data that suggests potentially greater long-term public school enrollment challenges, as well as

recommendations for educational leaders and policymakers as they continue to grapple with the impacts of COVID-19 on the K-12 pipeline. This new analysis focuses on public school enrollment changes since the pandemic and represents the most up-to-date examination of post-pandemic patterns.

Key takeaways:

- Approximately 833,000 fewer students enrolled in public schools than had been predicted, which was an unexpected 2% decline.
- The number of high school graduates in the first two graduating classes impacted by the pandemic—the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021—appeared relatively stable, but data about the Class of 2022 is only beginning to emerge.
- Elementary school student enrollment was close to predicted levels, which anticipated a decline, but public middle schools enrolled fewer students than predicted by pre-pandemic trends.
- Enrollment trends by public school student population race and ethnicity are examined, as well as non-public school sources of students such as homeschooling and private schools.

Additional state-level public school enrollment and high school graduate data obtained since the 10th edition of *Knocking at the College Door*, published in 2020, are also available with this release.

More information: Peace Bransberger, How the Pandemic Compunds Education Pipeline Challenges (2023)

Provided by Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)