

RESET AND  
**RESTART**  
education

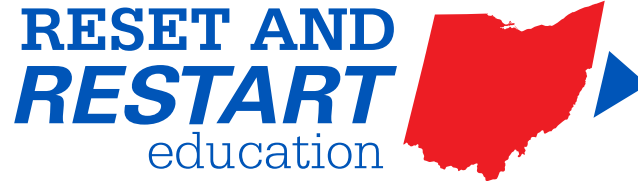


# Planning Guide

for Ohio Schools and Districts

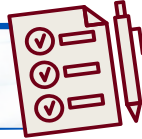


Built by Ohioans,  
for Ohioans.



**Planning Guide**  
for Ohio Schools and Districts

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## Introduction



**Un-prec-e-dent-ed** (*adj.*): Never done or known before; novel.<sup>1</sup>

Ohio's school buildings effectively have been closed to students, educators, parents and caregivers since March 17, 2020, because of the COVID-19 disease (coronavirus) pandemic. That's unprecedented. But in response, Ohio's local school board members, administrators, teachers, education support professionals, parents, caregivers, community partners and students have boldly navigated an extraordinary set of challenges to meet the caring, teaching and learning needs of Ohio's 1.7 million students. This also is unprecedented.

Ohioans have demonstrated an ability to collaborate, innovate and problem-solve to address these unprecedented challenges. It's in that spirit that Ohio's partners in education stand poised to plan for the 2020-2021 academic school year.

## Purpose

This *Reset and Restart Education Planning Guide* is designed to help schools and their partners understand **guidelines** and **considerations** for reopening school buildings during the continued presence of COVID-19<sup>2</sup> in a way that protects the health and safety of vulnerable members of school communities. Its intention: to spur local-level, partnership-based discussions and decision-making that will result in **locally developed** *Reset and Restart Education Plans*.

The planning guide is organized by three distinct, yet connected sections:

- 1. Health and Safety Guidelines for Schools to Reopen.** This section provides a link to the Ohio Department of Health and State of Ohio guidelines for school buildings to reopen in fall 2020.
- 2. Return-to-School CONSIDERATIONS for Local Planning.** This section includes considerations to help schools and their partners reopen in the most effective way in fall 2020.
- 3. Role CONSIDERATIONS for Associations, Educational Organizations (including Educational Service Centers) and Other State and Community Partners.** This section focuses on leveraging the support of partners to implement the health and safety guidelines and return-to-school considerations for local planning.

Together, these sections offer a comprehensive framework to help schools and partners plan to reopen and ensure each child is challenged to discover and learn, prepared to pursue a fulfilling post-high school path and empowered to become a resilient, lifelong learner who contributes to society.<sup>3</sup>

It is important to note the **health and safety guidelines** referred to in this document have been identified by the Ohio Department of Health and are intended to protect Ohioans. The **return-to-school considerations** outlined later in this guide are **not mandatory** and were co-designed with educators, educator-related organizations, education advocacy organizations, parents and students. In the coming weeks, the Ohio Department of Education will release additional tools and informational documents that also will support the reopening planning process. These will be available on the Ohio Department of Education's [Reset and Restart webpage](#). The Ohio Department of Education will continuously update resources over the coming weeks and months in collaboration with health experts and education stakeholders as new information becomes available.

<sup>1</sup> Definition from Oxford Languages.

<sup>2</sup> The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Ohio Department of Health predict the coronavirus disease will continue to be present in our state.

<sup>3</sup> Ohio's aspirational state-level vision for preK-12 education, as articulated in [Each Child, Our Future](#), Ohio's five-year strategic plan for education.

**How to use this planning guide.** The best plans are those that are developed collaboratively with the input and perspectives of those who will be involved in **implementing** the plan and who will be most **impacted** by its outcome. When individuals come together to tackle a challenge openly, goals and processes are more aligned and the approach has a higher chance of success. Planning teams should include school leaders, local health department officials, local school board members, educators, education support professionals, school health professionals, parents, students, community partners and local business leaders. Plans should be developed in a **transparent** manner that address the guidelines and considerations contained in this document but are customized to the local needs and attributes of the students, staff and community. Once complete, schools and their partners should have a firm understanding of the educational experience and return to school. Plans should be posted to school and district websites to promote awareness and shared understanding.

Governor DeWine’s catch phrase “In This Together” is as applicable to the education community as much as anywhere else. As schools and districts establish plans for operating during the COVID-19 pandemic, administrators and staff will need to work closely together to engage in creative problem-solving and co-design approaches that meet the needs of students, educators, staff, schools, districts and communities. Only through co-design are people truly invested in quality implementation and success. The necessary flexibility and changes in school and district operations should respect the collective bargaining process and be reflected in memoranda of understanding to collective bargaining agreements. A diversity of ideas, skills, experiences and opinions will result in a better plan for students. Association leaders from several diverse entities support this approach, as evidenced by their joint letter (see appendix).

Reopening plans should be designed to complement other community mitigation strategies, minimize disruption to teaching and learning, and protect students and staff from social stigma and discrimination; therefore, ongoing collaboration and communication among community stakeholders is critical to ensuring a meaningful year for students in which they remain engaged in learning.

## Operating Assumptions

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Ohio Department of Health indicate that COVID-19 will be present at the start of the 2020-2021 academic year. Also, as has been the experience over the past several months, conditions can change rapidly. District and school planning will need to contemplate various contingencies. As a result, this planning guide operates under the following assumptions:

- Ohio’s education system must be nimble, flexible and responsive to ensure the health and safety of all students and adults.
- Schools will need to have the capacity to operate in various modes at different times and, sometimes, with minimum advance notice.
- When schools are operating with students in the building, they will need to adhere to health and safety guidelines set forth by the Ohio Department of Health and local health departments. Guidelines may change as circumstances change, which most likely should lead to course corrections throughout the year.
- The traditional school experience as it was known prior to the onset of the pandemic will be different, as will many of the day-to-day practices of schools.





## Guiding Principles

This planning guide is driven by the following guiding principles:

### *Caring for students and adults—especially the most vulnerable*

- **Protect the health and safety of students, parents, caregivers, educators and the community.** This means adhering to health and safety guidelines specified below.
- **Support the social, emotional, physical and behavioral health** of students, educators and staff.
- **Prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable students and staff**, including those with disabilities, those with underlying health issues or other risk factors, low-income students, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care and justice-involved youth, and ensure equitable academic and social-emotional supports.
- **Create two-way communication with families and caregivers** to understand students' and families' needs and communicate changes in procedures, practices, expectations and supports.

### *Prioritizing student learning*

- Continue to value and use **Ohio's Learning Standards** as the basis for guiding instruction and student acquisition of knowledge and skills. Ensure opportunities for students to master **core subject areas** and pursue **well-rounded learning** (such as music, arts, other electives, career-technical education, industry credentials).
- Be driven by **Ohio's One Goal**<sup>4</sup> as the ultimate outcome for students and Ohio's education system. Support students in the continued identification and pursuit of their passions, aspirations and career interests.
- **Assess students** to determine progress toward mastery of state standards, and **identify the best approach** for each student.
- **Prioritize literacy, content literacy and numeracy**, especially in early grades, by providing focused and effective intervention and enrichment opportunities.

### *Ensuring effective teaching*

- Ensure all educators have access to support and training to facilitate the implementation of the plan and educator success in meeting the needs of children and families.
- Leverage the power of quality continuous improvement processes (for example, the [Ohio Improvement Process](#)) and the effective use of data-driven decision-making. Ohio's education community should consider the attributes of an effective, continuously improving school and district and implement processes that support a continuous improvement mindset.
- Use a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to meet the individual needs of each child, focusing not only on academics but the social-emotional needs of students as well.

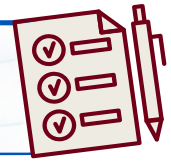
### *Operating efficiently, effectively and responsibly*

- **Ensure local flexibility within state-defined parameters.** This guide recognizes and respects the importance of local decision-making and anticipates that school reopening will look different across Ohio. There is no one-size-fits-all approach relative to the educational experience for students.
- **Promote collaboration** (including, administrators, school counselors, teachers, other school personnel, families, communities, community partners, students) that involves co-design of strategies and high-quality planning and implementation processes.
- **Allow for flexibility in education-related policies and requirements**, where practical (instructional delivery, school schedules, number of students in person, attendance, etc.).
- **Use this planning guide as a tool** to inform and assess a school's readiness to open.

<sup>4</sup> One Goal, as articulated in [Each Child, Our Future](#): Ohio will increase annually the percentage of its high school graduates who, one year after graduation, are: Enrolled and succeeding in a post-high school learning experience, including an adult career-technical education program, an apprenticeship and/or two-year or four-year college program; serving in a military branch; earning a living wage; or engaged in a meaningful, self-sustaining vocation.



# HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS TO REOPEN



According to the Ohio Department of Health, as the state develops the capabilities to safely diagnose, treat and isolate individuals who contract COVID-19 and their contacts, it will continue the recovery phase of the pandemic and begin to resume previously restricted activities, including reopening schools. The risk is that this uptick in activity could result in a surge of new cases. The goal of these health and safety guidelines defined by the Ohio Department of Health is to minimize the likelihood of such a surge and protect the health and safety of students and adults consistent with the best understanding of current conditions and effective mediation strategies.

**Given the continued presence of COVID-19, health and safety precautions must be paramount. Guidelines from the Ohio Department of Health for schools to open are available [HERE \(LINK\)](#).** While the death rate from COVID-19 is extremely low among children, they are capable of transmitting the disease even if they show no symptoms. While the guidelines prescribed for reopening serve to protect children, they are more significant for protecting adults in schools, at their homes and in communities. Each local district and school is expected to use the health guidance in collaboration with the local health department and stakeholders to develop and implement a plan for reopening. Should schools not be able to abide by these guidelines, they should remain closed to in-person instruction until an appropriate plan can be developed and implemented.

**Objective of Health and Safety Guidelines:** The number one goal throughout the reopening process is to save lives. There are school personnel and students who may be at a higher health risk because of their age and/or compromised medical conditions, and simply following the guidelines may significantly lower their risk of exposure. Following the guidelines will also keep the number of COVID-19 cases below health system's (including hospitals) capacity to handle them.. Specified precautions as set forth by the Ohio Department of Health and local health departments **must** be observed during the pandemic recovery phase to lower the rate of transmission and slow the spread of COVID-19. While any one precaution may not have significant impact on minimizing the spread of COVID-19, the use of multiple precautions is intended to have a cumulative effect on reducing the spread of the virus.

## A Student's Daily Journey:

To best understand the various health and safety needs of our students, let's "walk in a pair of one student's shoes" and journey through a typical day. This includes waking up in the morning, riding on a school bus to the physical school building, waiting to enter the building, entering the building, waiting inside the building in designated areas, attending adult supervised care visiting lockers, getting to class, taking into account any and all movement throughout the day (changing classes, using the restroom, lunch/cafeteria [breakfast and lunch], gym/physical education, recess, etc.), leaving school and returning home. It is only by looking at the day through a student's eyes that one can truly understand the opportunities and risks that exist for both the students and adults who create and provide the educational experience.



<sup>5</sup> Jones, Terry C. et al, An analysis of SARS-CoV-2 viral load by patient age.

[https://zoosenen.charite.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/microsites/m\\_cc05/virologie-ccm/dateien\\_upload/Weitere\\_Dateien/analysis-of-SARS-CoV-2-viral-load-by-patient-age.pdf](https://zoosenen.charite.de/fileadmin/user_upload/microsites/m_cc05/virologie-ccm/dateien_upload/Weitere_Dateien/analysis-of-SARS-CoV-2-viral-load-by-patient-age.pdf)

## Effective Practices to Strengthen Health and Safety Outcomes

To best implement the health guidelines and recommendations for reopening, schools and districts should plan to take additional actions to optimize the safe and successful experiences of students and staff members.

**Teaching Students Health and Safety Practices:** It is important to note that expected health practices will require new learned behaviors by students. Schools should provide specific, age-appropriate instruction regarding routine practices for students. This should be ongoing to reinforce the importance of handwashing, physical distancing, appropriate use of face masks, cough and sneeze etiquette and the importance of staying home when sick or displaying symptoms. All schools and offices should display printed materials promoting infection control strategies. Appropriate behavior expectations should be incorporated into Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports instruction. Examples can be found [here](#).

**Training for Employees:** Education and training for all employees also is essential. Such training must include how to properly put on, use, take off and dispose of personal protective equipment; appropriate handwashing; physical distancing; use of face masks, in line with requirements; identifying symptoms; staying home when sick; and strategies to reinforce these concepts with students and parents. Adequate education must be provided for all school personnel to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and how to protect employees and students from infection.

The Ohio Department of Education, in partnership with Ohio Department of Health and other health professionals, will make available general training resources for use by school personnel, including resources about COVID-19 infection control strategies and related school policies and procedures.

Schools should consider the time needed to ensure staff understand protocols and changed policies and procedures. Staff will need face-to-face time to prepare for a return to in-person instructional settings. These meetings should occur before students return to the buildings to thoroughly prepare all procedures for prioritizing students' and employees' health needs. Schools and districts will need to consider their negotiated agreements and calendars and work collaboratively to ensure employees are well prepared for the opening of the school year.

**Limiting Visitors:** The Ohio Department of Health recommends that schools should, as much as possible, prohibit visitors from entering school buildings. Visitations should be limited to those enrolling new students or for emergency situations. Temperature checks and symptom checks should be required for all visitors. In cases where schools and districts have partnerships with community organizations, health care providers and local government agencies that provide additional educational and wraparound services to students, staff of such partners should be allowed into buildings following the same precautions as school personnel.

**NOTE:** *There are many adults who are not employed by a school district but who remain part of routine school life, such as student teachers, college faculty observing student teachers, delivery personnel, etc. These individuals should be treated as school personnel.*

**Isolating Students Showing Symptoms of COVID-19 at School:** The Ohio Department of Health has stated that any student exhibiting symptoms while physically attending school should be placed in a separate room, away from other students, monitored by school personnel maintaining physical distancing and wearing personal protective equipment. Any staff member exhibiting symptoms while working in the school also should continue to wear a face mask and self-isolate in a separate room, away from other staff and students. Students and staff exhibiting symptoms should go home as soon as possible.



**Quarantine for Individuals Diagnosed or Exposed to COVID-19:** Pursuant to Ohio Department of Health guidelines, families, caregivers and staff should notify the school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 or if they, or any members of their households, have been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19. They also should notify the school if they are quarantined. Personnel and students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days. Personnel or students who travel to a location with known community spread may choose to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

Given the likelihood of increased absences due to illness or quarantine, school policies should be adjusted so as not to penalize students and personnel for required quarantine period(s). Remote learning plans should be considered for all students who are absent for a significant time period and able to continue engaging in learning. Even more significant shifting of instructional approaches most likely will be necessary when a significant number of individuals are required to be quarantined (classroom, school-building or district levels).

Schools and districts should work with their local health departments on COVID-19 surveillance activities by tracking attendance and notifying their local health departments of significant increases in absenteeism.

Personnel and students with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 must meet conditions prescribed by the Ohio Department of Health and their local health departments prior to returning to school. These conditions may change frequently, and schools and districts should maintain frequent communication with their local health departments regarding these guidelines.

## Addressing Potential Flare-Ups

It is expected there will be “flare-ups” of COVID-19 cases as determined by the Ohio Department of Health or local health departments. Flare-ups will need to be addressed by implementing additional measures beyond ongoing precautions. In some cases, entire school buildings may need to close for purposes of cleaning and sanitizing or in recognition of high levels of student or staff illness.

In the event of a flare-up, districts should follow additional precautions set forth by the Ohio Department of Health and their local health departments. These precautions may change frequently, and schools and districts should maintain frequent communication with their local health departments regarding these guidelines.



# RETURN TO SCHOOL CONSIDERATIONS FOR LOCAL PLANNING



In the context of the health precautions described above, local school districts and community schools, private schools, STEM schools and career-technical education centers will determine the educational experiences that will be offered to their students. This section is intended to provide a guide to the many issues and considerations that must inform the design process.

This section is divided into three parts as follows:

- Educational Considerations;
- Social-Emotional Health Considerations; and
- Operational Considerations.

## Educational Considerations

Schools were forced to transform teaching and learning when school buildings were ordered to be closed. Indeed, some of Ohio's most forward-thinking school leaders are signaling "they can't go back and don't want to go back" to what *was* normal. At the same time, others want to return, as much as possible, to the status quo pre-pandemic. Opinions vary greatly on the relative success or effectiveness of remote learning. Yet, more than ever, the education community has a better understanding that students learn in different ways and can prosper when learning is personalized to meet their preferences and needs.

## Four Learning Domains



### Foundational Knowledge & Skills

Literacy, numeracy and technology



### Well-Rounded Content

Social studies, sciences, languages, health, arts, physical education, etc.



### Leadership & Reasoning

Problem-solving, design thinking, creativity, information analytics



### Social-Emotional Learning

Self-awareness & management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making

Figure 1: Four Learning Domains from *Each Child, Our Future*

The reopening of school presents a unique opportunity: where it makes sense to do so, educators should rethink models for delivering the most effective instruction to students based on their individual needs and preferences and in ways that foster student engagement, interest and choice. *It also is worth repeating that if schools cannot meet the guidelines for reopening (see **Ohio Department of Health guidelines**), they should continue remote learning until they can meet the guidelines.*

**Expectations for Achievement:** As schools consider plans to return for the 2020-2021 school year, educational considerations should be made to ensure each student is *challenged, prepared* and *empowered* for his or her future by way of an excellent prekindergarten through grade 12 education. This means the commitment to Ohio's Learning Standards and the four learning domains (see *Figure 1*) described in Ohio's strategic plan for education, *Each Child, Our Future*, must continue to be strong. These domains include foundational knowledge and skills, well-rounded content, leadership and reasoning skills and social-emotional learning.

These expectations have not changed because of the pandemic; rather, schools should renew their commitments to upholding the four equal learning domains even though the learning environment may look different.

**Importance of Equity:** *Each Child, Our Future* identifies **equity** as Ohio’s greatest education challenge. Equity in education means **each child** has access to relevant and challenging academic experiences and educational resources necessary for success across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background and/or income.

COVID-19 did not create equity challenges in education. Those challenges *have been recognized in education for some time*, yet the pandemic *is* revealing and exacerbating deeply rooted social and educational inequities. Further, the global crisis highlights the equity connections across education and other social systems, such as health care, housing and the workforce. As educators, communities and policymakers rally together in a tremendous response to the pandemic, equity must remain at the forefront of Ohio’s short- and long-term responses and supports.

The process of reopening schools and defining what the future of education will look like is a perfect opportunity to address equity issues head-on. At every step of the planning process, proposed strategies, approaches and actions should be viewed through an equity lens, asking the question, “How does each element of our plan impact equitable access to a quality education and equitable achievement for those who have historically been underserved?”

Approaches to addressing the equity challenge include the following:

- **Leadership for equity:** We must develop the skills and abilities of leaders to understand the reality of inequities and foster the collaborative design work necessary to address it.
- **Equitable learning approaches:** We must be more tuned in to instructional settings and approaches that allow for more personalized and engaged learning. We need to ensure cultural relevancy and student choice. We need to embrace personalized learning that allows students to take greater roles in the acquisition of knowledge and skills for success. Project-based learning and mastery-based approaches (instead of seat-time approaches) can help create learning environments that are more engaging and responsive to student dispositions and desires. A well-developed multi-tiered system of supports can serve to help customize the learning approach to meet the individual needs of each child.
- **Student voice:** Amplify student voices, especially those of minorities and other underserved groups. Use student voice to better understand student needs and learning preferences to foster greater success.
- **Implicit bias:** Work to recognize the manifestations of implicit bias and eliminate or overcome it.

**Commitment to Continuous Improvement Processes:** Effective change requires attention to quality implementation and a data-informed process for monitoring progress, gauging impact and course correcting when necessary. Districts are encouraged to use the [Ohio Improvement Process](#) (or another similar *Plan-Do-Study-Act* continuous improvement process) to support quality implementation and continuous improvement. Improvement processes can bring educators together through collaborative team structures to learn from each other and facilitate communication and decision-making between and across levels of the system (district, central office, school, grade levels, content areas and classrooms). These processes support the goal of delivering a high-quality educational experience that meets students’ needs and results in student success.

Ohio’s regional state support teams can provide assistance as districts use the Ohio Improvement Process to support continuous improvement in the context of reopening schools and beyond.

## The Student Educational Experience and Learning

In designing the educational experience for the reopening of schools, the needs of students must be paramount. This section of the guide addresses those key aspects of the student experience that must be factored into each school and district plan.

### Assessment of Student Educational

**Levels:** As students return to various school settings, educators will need to understand where students are in terms of their mastery of state content standards and other skills and abilities. A data-informed approach to this work will allow educators to shape each child's learning experience to support advancement and progress. Teachers will be able to better differentiate instruction and continue to set high expectations for all students. A combination of local data and state-generated resources can support this work.



The Ohio Department of Education will make available tools and resources that can be used to support the diagnostic assessment of students. These resources will be based on released state test items and can serve to identify student achievement levels. The Ohio Department of Education can provide guidance in the analysis of formative assessment data to determine the level of student acquisition and retention of knowledge and will leverage the collaborative partnerships of educational service centers and state support teams for this purpose. The Ohio Department of Education also will make available information on assessment and placement of new and returning English learners.

Schools should use locally available resources to support understanding of where students are. Many schools have vendor- or district-created assessment systems in place that they can use for this purpose. This understanding then will help inform their differentiated approaches to instruction. Schools and districts will want to carefully consider the timing of diagnostic assessments, allowing educators to first focus on building relationships with students while still assessing educational needs relatively early in the school year. Assessing where students are within a three- to six-week window of starting school may provide appropriate balance.

**High-Risk Health-Vulnerable Students:** Continual academic progress must be a priority for all students. As part of the local restart plan, schools and districts should develop and implement a plan for addressing learning needs for students with special health care needs that place them at higher risk for medical difficulties related to exposure to COVID-19. The plan for these individuals may include enhanced modifications such as remote learning. Additional guidance may be found [here](#).



**Assessing and Addressing Needs for Vulnerable Youth:** Supporting the needs of homeless, foster, justice-involved or otherwise highly mobile youth may have been more challenging during the school building closure period and will continue to challenge schools and districts when reopening. In the short term, even more students may experience high mobility as families deal with increased job and housing insecurities and the pandemic's impact on Ohio's foster care system. Vulnerable youth may experience increased academic *and* nonacademic needs.

Districts should include in their reopening plans deliberate strategies and actions to connect with these students and their families and address their needs. Districts can use data, guidance from the state and other trusted resources, as well as community partnerships to identify and address these increased needs.

The Ohio Department of Education will provide information and technical assistance to support schools and districts in communicating with, engaging and supporting their vulnerable youth populations. The Department will collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to identify needs and align supports.

Schools and districts should collaborate with local agencies and organizations to identify needs and maximize supports of vulnerable youth. Districts and community schools should continue to utilize their vulnerable youth liaisons to ensure this student population receives equitable academic services and nonacademic supports.

**Curriculum (broad or essential) Approaches:** Fundamental to the district's reopening plan will be choices related to curriculum. The experience during the school-building closure period has helped to increase educators' understanding, as well as the understanding of students and families, of the various available technology-based curricular resources. Educators also have increased their understanding about how these resources can be used effectively as part of the educational experience for students. (In some cases, they also better understand the challenges and imperfections of these resources.) Local planning should involve discussions and decisions related to what curricular resources, whether traditional or online, will be included as part of the local district's educational approach.

Districts also will have the opportunity to reflect on the extent to which they want to support a more focused or streamlined curriculum. An essential curriculum — focused on the most essential concepts within individual subject areas — might be most practical, especially given the reality of the disruption to learning during the spring. In early grades, districts should be particularly attentive to meeting essential literacy and numeracy learning needs of students.

At the same time, more options for students may be appropriate to the increased personalization of the education experience (see the discussion below). Subjects should not be eliminated, as often is the case with non-core classes that keep students engaged and motivated.

A variety of tools should help districts in identifying the most suitable curricular approaches. The use of **concept mapping** can support districts, teachers and parents in making connections across the years. Also, districts should identify **high-quality instructional materials** that are conducive to remote learning of the essential curriculum.

**Use of Space and Time:** The impact of the health and safety guidelines will drive the need for creative and solutions-oriented approaches to planning the use of space and time. Schools and districts will be faced with identifying ways to schedule, group and transition students in ways that are consistent with health and safety restrictions. Flexibility will be critical in the current environment.

- **Building and classroom capacity:** The health and safety guidelines should be used to determine how many students can be accommodated in each classroom and how many can be accommodated in each building. Understanding classroom and building capacity will be fundamental to planning all other components of the educational experience.

Each classroom should be analyzed for square footage and then the maximum number of students and staff who can occupy it at any given time to remain within determined health guidelines. Use of other non-classroom space should be considered for instructional purposes, such as the cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, outdoor areas and other large spaces.

Scheduling and grouping: There may be new models of course and student scheduling and grouping as districts rethink the ways they use time and space. Districts may consider split scheduling or alternating days. Districts also may utilize space on weekends or evenings. Districts also may choose to rethink how each building is used and for which students. For example, an elementary school in one part of the district could be configured to also include some middle school students if such a configuration could help address transportation challenges.

Scheduling options that reduce the number of students in each classroom, hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, on school transportation, etc., also are worth reviewing. Students should be grouped in ways that minimize movement between rooms and into common spaces. This might include placing students into cohorts and scheduling percentages of them on a given day and alternating the cohorts for in-school learning with work that is completed at home. (Remote work can be accomplished in electronic or paper formats to best meet unique needs of students.) Also, teachers could move from classroom to classroom rather than students. Food could be delivered and consumed in classrooms instead of students congregating in the cafeteria.

Creative uses of time also should be explored. Later afternoon or evening instruction options can serve to expand “capacity,” being mindful of needs of parents and employees. Scheduling staggered start and stop times for staff and students might be considered.

- **Transitions:** The manner in which students and staff move throughout a building during the school day will be deserving of deliberate design. Schools should consider the possibility of teachers moving rather than large numbers of students doing so to minimize the number of interactions (consistent with promoting social distancing).

## NOTES:

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**Modes of Teaching and Learning:** The experience during the school building closure highlighted a fundamental question regarding the role of various modes of teaching and learning. The education system’s historical experience has largely been one of site-based or classroom-based learning. The closure caused a significant shift to more remote learning approaches. There are pros and cons to each type. The implication of this is that plans should be thoughtful in addressing modes of teaching and learning. Because of continuing uncertainty and the need for flexibility, a school or district’s plan likely will need to embrace multiple approaches. While classroom learning still may enjoy a preferred position, more discussions are underway about remote learning, blended learning (combination of online and site-based) and mixed-methods learning (online, self-directed, site-based, work-based, etc.) in the context of reopening. It is important to note that students from the Ohio Association of Student Leaders indicated a blended approach was preferential for meeting the unique needs of individual students, allowing flexibility for both students and teachers (including time, space, socialization).

- **Classroom Learning:** There are many who prefer a return to a traditional classroom experience. For many students, this is an appropriate and effective environment for teaching and learning. At the same time, there is recognition that what goes on in the classroom is already undergoing change and transformation. Approaches like “flipped” classrooms and student-directed learning approaches are seen as more effective classroom-based learning approaches.

Schools may consider “looping” classroom teachers (a practice in which students have the same classroom teacher in a subject and/or grade level for two or more consecutive years) or co-teaching models, where practical, to maximize understanding of students’ current levels of educational attainment.

- **Remote Learning:** The education community’s experience with remote learning over the past months has been eye-opening. Educators found themselves needing to learn how to use new technology and gaining an understanding of how technology can form a meaningful component of a child’s learning experience. Educators, students and families experienced the good and the bad. There were many significant discoveries and many successes. There also were many bumps in the road and notable challenges.

Remote learning will continue to play a role in the education experiences of Ohio’s students in some manner. At a minimum, should a school find it must close due to a flare-up of COVID-19, or should a student need to be quarantined, remote learning will be an important contributor to sustaining educational opportunities. Even prior to the pandemic, many districts had made significant investments in remote learning capabilities and technology and shifted fairly smoothly to a completely online provision of educational services.

Plans can be informed by and build on [Ohio’s Remote Learning Resource Guide](#). Educators also should reflect on their experiences during the school-building closure period and engage students in understanding which remote learning approaches are most effective. Schools and districts must consider how to support students to ensure learning builds on previously gained knowledge. Using a data-driven approach to learning, instruction should meet the individual student’s need.

**NOTE:** *Remote learning should be considered as an option for students and staff for the entire school year, as many families will have higher-risk health concerns and/or may not feel comfortable with in-person instruction until a vaccine is available.*

- **Personalized Learning:** More than ever before Ohio’s education community needs to focus on making learning joyful and engaging in a personalized way. Recognizing each child is different should motivate efforts to embrace those differences and create a learning experience that leverages a student’s aspirations, passions and interests, while also supporting them in tackling subject areas that may be more intimidating to them.

The delivery of instruction will need to become much more personalized. This is a good practice to promote in the long term regardless of the circumstance — especially given the variability that will exist among students returning to school. Student success and personalized learning go together in both traditional and online educational environments. This argues for a variety of flexible programs to ensure educators reach students where they are while providing them with a bridge back to a school-based environment. Personalized learning fits well with tiered interventions based upon individual needs.

Personalized learning can be enabled by [project-based learning](#) approaches or the [Future Ready](#) Framework. Competency- and mastery-based models also can include elements of personalization and student choice. Career-technical education, industry credentials and work-based learning (discussed in other parts of this section) are other potential components of a personalized approach. A well-designed and implemented multi-tiered system of supports can assist efforts to personalize learning to meet the needs of each child.

Personalized learning sometimes requires more active “management” of a student’s learning experience. Schools should consider assigning staff and/or volunteers as **academic coaches or mentors** for students who need additional academic support and advice. Coaches or mentors can serve the following purposes:

- o Nurturing a **growth mindset** by helping students overcome self-doubt and understanding that they can continue to grow in knowledge and understanding through persistence.
- o **Removing barriers to engagement** by assisting in transactional tasks like technology issues and exploring options for student choice in assignments.
- o **Monitoring students’ pace and progress across all courses** for attendance, participation and performance.
- o **Intervening** quickly to get students back on track.
- o **Helping students adapt to new learning environments**, including where to work, how to manage competing priorities and schedule conflicts, and how to build resiliency, among other strategies.

## NOTES:

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**Work-Based Learning, Internships, College Credit Plus, etc.:** There are multiple nonbuilding-based learning opportunities in which students can participate. These types of opportunities are important for students and should continue to be offered and promoted. In fact, these opportunities could become a more significant part of the educational experience, especially as part of a more personalized learning approach. How these programs and opportunities are impacted by the phased reopening of Ohio's economy will matter in determining the extent of student participation. Schools and districts will need to implement effective communication with employers, colleges and universities, and other entities to ensure students continue to have opportunities to earn credentials and college credit. Health protocols for off-site locations should be reviewed to ensure student safety at a level similar to that of the school building.

**Attendance, Participation and Engagement: In a traditional brick and mortar situation,** in-person attendance is important and conducive to learning. However, in the current pandemic environment, a focus on student attendance must be balanced with a priority for keeping students and employees safe and healthy. Rather than recognizing students for *perfect* attendance, consider a measure that encourages *consistent* attendance or consistent participation in schoolwork, but not at the expense of health. Some parents and guardians may not feel comfortable sending students to school, which will require schools and districts to consider policies in this area. Schools should shift their focus to finding ways to keep students engaged in their learning regardless of the instructional delivery method. Schools should continue to partner with their local health departments on COVID-19 surveillance activities by tracking attendance and notifying local health officials of significant increases in student and staff absenteeism.

**Summer Student Learning Opportunities:** After using data to determine students' level of acquisition and retention of knowledge, set up targeted summer learning opportunities. This may include academic, as well as mental and behavioral health services. Existing regional summer school programming services should be considered as potential avenues for delivery. Summer programming should be considered as an option to bridge the learning attainment gap between the fourth quarter of the 2019-2020 school year and the fall quarter of the 2020-2021 school year, utilizing the most appropriate manner to offer intervention opportunities prior to beginning the normal grade-level and/or subject-area curriculum.

Schools and districts should collaborate with personnel and stakeholders to determine which remote learning platforms will be used and how professional development will be delivered. Educators also should develop a list of trusted resources that can be used for remote learning.

**Extracurricular/Co-curricular Activities (athletics, music, student groups):** The Ohio Department of Education continues to collaborate with the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio High School Athletic Association, Ohio Music Education Association and others to determine summer practice routines and fall sports routines to be implemented. Schools and districts should work with their local health departments and stakeholders to determine the appropriateness and practical realities of whether to continue certain activities. Participation in each activity will need to be determined based upon maintaining Ohio Department of Health, local health department, Ohio Department of Education and Ohio High School Athletic Association guidance. Alternative methods for practice, instruction, rehearsal and performance should be considered to maintain maximum participation while minimizing health and safety risks.

**Field Trips:** At this time, true field trips present too many risks that could compromise the health of participants. Therefore, field trips that involve students being in close proximity to each other, navigating large crowds, increased interactions with strangers and unpredictable circumstances should be avoided. Highly managed outings to settings that allow for safe distancing (such as nature preserves or isolated outdoor locations) can be included as part of the educational experience. Virtual field trips are an option to broaden the student experience without taking undue risk.





**Data-informed Approach to Continuous Improvement:** Many schools and districts already use data-informed continuous improvement processes, either through deep engagement in the [Ohio Improvement Process](#) or through similar frameworks. These existing structures are crucial to supporting students' academic and whole-child needs, because they ensure educators, schools and districts are connecting dots across needs and resources. As educators plan for the coming school year, it is more important than ever to have a plan for student supports that is tightly aligned and targeted to meet students' and educators' highest needs.

- The Ohio Department of Education will continue to support and encourage schools and districts to apply the five-step [Ohio Improvement Process](#), or a similar continuous improvement framework, in developing local reset and restart plans. The Department can supplement local data resources with state resources, including tools for assessing students' learning that are developed using past state test items. State data that can inform school needs also may include non-education data (unemployment rates, health care access and outcomes data, and housing or food insecurity data). Further, the Department will make available professional learning and coaching relative to the use of data for improvement through regional data leads, state support teams and training opportunities for staff.
- Schools and districts should use district leadership teams, building leadership teams and teacher-based teams to review student data regularly to adjust instruction and nonacademic interventions and supports. Local data resources will be especially significant in identifying students' needs and developing plans for returning to school. These resources may include local assessment data, as well as data on remote learning implementation, school climate (including staff and student perception data), and student and family engagement. Districts also can engage with local partners to identify non-educational and community data that may inform needs (for example, job loss, health data, food insecurity). Throughout the planning process, schools should reach out to educators, families and students to ask about their experiences to inform improvement.

**Summer Professional Development for Educators:** Many educators learned a great deal very quickly during the school building closure. Additional formal, professional development should be provided based on district reopening plans. This training might relate to chosen curriculum options, instructional delivery methods, school culture issues, multi-tiered systems of supports and identifying and meeting student needs. If districts intend to continue blended learning or remote opportunities or if there is anticipation of future school building closures, educators will need ongoing professional development in those practices. There will be an increased need for professional development to build and enhance educators' capacities to address the complex issues resulting from the pandemic. The professional development may need to be customized to meet the needs of students and educators within each building.

The Ohio Department of Education is working with educational service centers and state support teams, as well as other existing vendors for professional development to communicate available opportunities.

Schools and districts should monitor fidelity of implementation and impact and reassess professional development needs on an ongoing basis.

**Collaboration Among Educating Entities:** Now more than ever, schools and districts will need to collaborate in students' best interests with joint vocational school districts, career-technical centers, juvenile detention centers, community schools, after-school programs and others in planning and delivering meaningful opportunities and experiences for students.

The Ohio Department of Education encourages collaboration across agencies. Schools and districts should seek help from educational service centers and state support teams and share their needs for technical assistance and support. The Department will provide guidance to juvenile correction and detention centers to ensure students have a transition plan offering continuity of academic services and supports.

## Social-Emotional Health Considerations

It is important to recognize that educators, children and families may experience stress, confusion, fear, anger, sadness or anxiety during the return to school. As a result, students may display increased negative and disruptive behaviors. For students to be successful, schools will need to address and support students' safety, social-emotional health and wellness needs.

All Ohio schools and districts are to be implementing **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**, a tiered model of prevention and intervention supports. Schools and districts will need to adapt their Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports systems to include common behavior expectations specific to student health guidelines. For children who already receive mental health services, they may have adjusted to telehealth services or they may have experienced a disruption to those services during COVID-19 and need to be reconnected. It will be important for schools to assess the individual needs of children and assist in providing them with supports that meet universal and individual student needs.

Schools also must recognize stress and anxiety experienced by staff and determine healthy ways to support them. Schools should engage with related services personnel such as school counselors, nurses, social workers and others regularly and on an ongoing basis to determine best practices to support students, personnel and families during this time.

**Student Supports:** Student supports are critical in a time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety. In addition to other challenges students face, they may be fearful of getting sick if they go to school or get close to other people. Many older students may be required to hold jobs to help support their families. There may be a rise in abuse and neglect that teachers, school counselors or other personnel will need to identify and report. School counselors, nurses and social workers are instrumental in meeting emotional needs throughout the school day (one on one, classroom guidance, group support) and finding community supports for students and their families. Effective partnerships with behavioral health providers and county boards of mental health also can be a valuable addition to a comprehensive student support strategy.

- The Ohio Department of Education is partnering with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to provide resources and key supports and remind schools of available funding sources to support their students' needs (for example, Student Wellness and Success Funds or Prevention funds). Information and resources to support schools and districts in meeting students' social-emotional, safety and wellness needs are included on the Ohio Department of Education's webpage for Reset and Restart.
- Schools are encouraged to utilize their school counselors and consider partnering with local ADAMH boards, educational service centers, hospitals and community-based providers to determine the community's needs and identify supports, including professional development for educators.

**Expectations of Students:** Students will be expected to implement and exhibit specific behaviors different from those prior to the COVID-19 pandemic related to protecting their own health, the health of their classmates and their communities. Student Codes of Conduct and the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework should be reviewed and updated to reflect these expectations. PBIS Resources are available [here](#).

**Employee Supports:** Employees will share similar concerns to those of students. They may have heightened concerns about where students and families have been in the evenings or weekends, then returning to school with the potential for "community spread." Schools should develop and use a common narrative to build safety in the school and reduce fear and always assume positive intent. Schools and districts should work with local agencies to ensure employees' social and emotional well-being.



## Operational Considerations

The importance of thoughtfully and intentionally considering the roles, responsibilities and safety considerations that impact each part of a typical school day involves numerous employee groups, practices and routines. Collaboration is critical to addressing all areas, and relevant employee organizations must play a key role in identifying, planning and implementing changes. Under the current pandemic circumstances, administration and staff will need to work together to determine how the operating plans for a district and its schools impact existing collective bargaining agreements. More than likely, a memorandum of understanding will be needed to account for the changes in operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Working with local health agencies, following guidance from the Environmental Protection Agency and Centers for Disease Control, and considering the advice of other experts in each of the following areas will be important for addressing potential issues.

**Internet Accessibility:** In keeping with a focus on equity and to the extent a district decides to continue remote learning — or *has* to continue remote learning — it will need to address students’ needs for internet access, if possible. Schools also will need to assess students’ access to computers. This will require appropriate technical support. Schools and districts should ensure compliance with the federal Children’s Internet Protection Act.

Districts will need to assess staff accessibility to devices and internet service, as well as whether current data plans are sufficient. Schools must provide training to district personnel on the use of internet tools and ensuring resources are accessible for students with disabilities. (For example, teachers should not take photos of book pages or tests and send them to children for use when they may not be accessible to visually impaired students or families without printers.) Teachers also should understand the privacy implications of online learning settings.

**Communication Plan:** Effective communication will be essential to a successful reopening experience. Each school and district should plan how all health, safety and logistical practices will be communicated to students, parents, staff and community members. Communication with parents and guardians to keep them informed about any and all reopening-related activity is critical. The “newness” of the reopening experience will require more than the usual level of communication and repetition. Student expectations and routines should be shared with parents. Communications should include expectations and procedures regarding parent visits, pick-up, drop-off, signing students out of school early and other specific aspects of the education experience.

**Transportation:** The transportation of students in a manner that is safe for both students and employees is of utmost importance. An effective transportation approach will require careful planning and additional procedures and should align to plans for the school building itself.

With regard to transportation by school bus, there are health considerations and logistical considerations.

- **Health and Safety Considerations for Buses:** The health and safety precautions prescribed by the Ohio Department of Health and local health departments have implications for routine practices on school buses. Implementing daily health routines will require new practices and protocols. Each bus will need to be analyzed for adherence to guidelines, keeping safety of students and drivers foremost. This will result in difficult decisions as to who is transported and how this works.
- **Logistical Considerations for Buses:** A district reopening plan should address school bus logistical issues. This includes the number of buses required to provide transportation in accordance with health guidelines (including students receiving transportation to community schools, nonpublic schools and joint vocational schools). **It is important that districts maintain close and frequent communication with community schools, nonpublic schools and joint vocational schools to ensure transportation arrangements are coordinated and disruptions are minimized.** Districts should be proactive in obtaining ridership and schedule information for each school participating in the district’s transportation plan to determine how best to meet the transportation needs of students.



**Custodial and Maintenance:** The pandemic has required that extra precautions be taken to protect the health of students and employees by ensuring regular cleaning and sanitizing. Custodial and maintenance personnel play key roles in ensuring a safe, clean environment for all. The Ohio Department of Health guidelines state the following:

- Masks and gloves must be worn by custodial and maintenance staff, and proper training for COVID-19 transmission and disinfection of facilities should be provided.
- Each classroom needs to be properly disinfected after use by students. If schools are using a rotating schedule for students, this may result in each classroom needing to be cleaned multiple times a day.
- Like classrooms, all bathrooms and other common spaces will need to be properly disinfected on a frequent and regular basis.
- Internal doors should be propped open wherever and whenever possible to minimize touching of surfaces.
- Schools should determine specific sanitizing schedules, protocols for cleaning surfaces in all areas of the building and checklists for before and after school.
- Depending on a district's plan, districts may have to consider the need for additional staff to complete the custodial and maintenance tasks.
- In addition, collective bargaining agreements will need to be reviewed and a memorandum of understanding likely will need to be put in place.
- HVAC systems should be inspected, monitored and cleaned following indoor air quality recommendations from the Environmental Protection Agency.

**Secretarial/Clerical:** Secretarial and clerical employees often are the most visible and most interactive with students, parents and community members. As a result, they should be provided with training and protocols and prepared to answer many questions. Prior to re-occupancy, perform a detailed review of the configuration of office workspaces. Consider eliminating reception seating areas, requiring visitors to phone ahead and installing a plastic partition at the reception area.

- Review floor plans and remove or reconfigure seats, furniture and workstations as needed to preserve recommended physical distancing in accordance with the Ohio Department of Health and local health guidelines. Reconfigure workstations so employees do not face each other or establish partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided.

**Food Service/Cafeteria:** Meeting the nutritional needs of students is of utmost importance during the pandemic. Thoughtful protocols for meeting these needs, while protecting students and staff from COVID-19, is a key component of the school experience — whether in a building or at another location. Due to the typical large-group gathering and transition times to and from breakfast or lunch periods, attention to detail will be important. Schools should consider alternate approaches to breakfast and lunch service that provide for physical distancing and enhanced cleaning of surfaces between service times. Creative approaches, such as delivering food to students in classrooms, staggering times and assigned seating should be considered in efforts to keep students and employees safe.

Like other areas of a school building, common surfaces will require cleaning and sanitizing between uses.

**Recess:** Health guidelines are to be followed (physical and social distancing) for recess periods. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), "Recess represents an essential, planned respite from rigorous cognitive tasks. It affords a time to rest, play, imagine, think, move and socialize. After recess, for children or after a corresponding break time for adolescents, students are more attentive and better able to perform cognitively. In addition, recess helps young children to develop social skills that are otherwise not acquired in the more structured classroom environment." Reopening plans should consider appropriate recess activities consistent with health guidelines. Tools are available [here](#). Also, see the following:

- [Strategies for Recess in Schools \(January 2017\)](#)
- [Recess Planning in Schools](#)



## ROLE OF ASSOCIATIONS, EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS (INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS) AND OTHER STATE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



“Partnerships” is a key principle of *Each Child, Our Future* and is critical in moving forward in the 2020-2021 school year. Everyone, not just those in schools, shares the responsibility of preparing children for successful futures. A collaborative effort of both education and community organizations is needed to ensure the effective delivery of appropriate instruction, while meeting the needs of the whole child, for each student in our schools. Partners can include after-school program providers, libraries, faith-based organizations, Boys and Girls Clubs, scouting organizations, philanthropies, chambers of commerce and business groups, health providers, social service organizations, local governmental agencies and many more.

Education (preK-16) and community partners can support schools in the following ways:

- Professional Development:** Education partners have always been great sources of professional development. During the school building closure, an increased need emerged for schools and districts to leverage partnerships to provide additional learning opportunities for educators. The need will remain for further training of school employees in a return-to-school environment.
- Convener/Organizer:** There will be an ongoing need for people to come together virtually to talk, discuss, share, learn and make decisions. Educational service centers, state support teams, community school sponsors, associations and other partner organizations can maintain needed momentum in the interest of the best experience possible for Ohio’s students, as well as easing the burden on individual schools and districts. Convening educators and others who support the education community to share best practices, participate in peer-to-peer activities, share application of innovations and other related events are affirming, heartening and help ensure continuous improvement in an unknown environment. Educational service centers may be able to partner with state organizations and experts to share best practices.
- Alignment and Sharing of Services and Resources; Networking:** It was not surprising to see a wide variety of education and community organizations embrace a “how can we help each other” approach as school buildings closed for the pandemic and learning continued. So many amazing examples have emerged of the education community stepping out beyond their usual roles (ironically, at a time of staying in) and sharing ideas, resources and approaches. Similarly, wonderful and deep partnerships emerged in the shared interest of doing everything possible to take care of students. By continuing to learn, convene and share, schools and partner organizations can keep this momentum moving forward.
- Communication and Resource Partners:** Community and other organizations can serve to both share community needs with school districts *and* help districts disseminate and share key information with students and families. Additionally, these partners can implement food distribution, address mental and physical health needs of students and families, and assist in meeting other ongoing needs. Schools can develop lasting relationships that make student and family services more accessible beyond the pandemic.

## APPENDIX A: Joint Statement on Labor Management Relations and Collective Bargaining



May 2020

As our nation and the global community have navigated an unprecedented set of challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's public education community has been required to adapt to new ways of meeting the needs of Ohio's 1.7 million school-age children and adolescents. Collectively, we have worked to keep students engaged in learning while ensuring the health and safety of the students, employees, families and communities we serve. We have devised creative solutions to supporting the fundamental nutrition and security needs of our students, attending to their social and emotional well-being, and providing them with essential supports to continue developing their knowledge and skills under very trying circumstances. Even though a public health crisis has forced the closing of our school buildings, our commitment to student success has never wavered.

Amidst uncertainty over the threat of a tenacious virus and its devastating impact on the economy, planning for the 2020-2021 academic year confronts school board members, administrators, teachers, education support professionals, and the organizations that advocate on their behalf with an extraordinary set of challenges: How do we address fundamental inequities in our education system tied to poverty, uneven access to technology, and varying levels of family support? How do we ensure the health and safety of the most vulnerable members of our school communities—particularly staff and students whose age or medical conditions put them at greatest risk of contracting and dying from the novel coronavirus? How do we meet the needs of students and protect the economic security of those who have committed their lives to serving them amid state and local revenue shortfalls? How do we ensure students are able to thrive in their educational experience in what is likely to be a changing and unpredictable learning environment? We will only be able to answer these questions through a shared commitment to problem-solving that is grounded in collaboration, flexibility, communication, and mutual respect.

As representatives of labor and management, we recognize that school districts across Ohio will be confronted with difficult challenges in trying to balance the wants and needs of the school employees, students, parents and communities we serve. We know there will be times when local unions and employers will have disagreements in advocating for the interests of their respective constituencies. There are tensions in labor-management relationships even under the best circumstances; there is little doubt our limits will be tested in the weeks and months ahead. Through these trials, we are confident that we will get through this together, and that our students and communities will thrive as a result.

As education leaders on both sides of the table, we commit to supporting the collective bargaining process as a means of creative problem-solving and collaboration. We will provide our constituencies with the resources and tools they need to bargain for the common good, and we will engage with one another and our partners in the Ohio Department of Education and other state leaders in a manner that models the kind of open communication, honesty, and esteem we hope to inspire at the local level.

Melissa Cropper, President, Ohio Federation of Teachers  
 Scott DiMauro, President, Ohio Education Association  
 Kirk Hamilton, Executive Director, Buckeye Association of School Administrators  
 Rick Lewis, Executive Director, Ohio School Boards Association  
 Jim Rowan, Executive Director, Ohio Association of School Business Officials  
 Joe Rugola, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Public School Employees

# APPENDIX B: Essential Questions for Review



## Essential Questions

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## Facility Preparations

- Are there cleaning protocols in place for the general building and grounds, classrooms/offices/large gathering spaces, materials, etc.?
- Which entries will be used?
- Are there visual directions posted in common areas for transitions or will there be transitions between classrooms and other locations?
- How will classrooms be arranged and will there be visual directions?
- Does the school building have the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)?
- What will libraries and media centers be used for?
- Have you reviewed all spaces, current usage, and the potential need caused by social distancing, specific student needs, and new medical needs?
- Do additional handwashing or hand-sanitizing stations need to be installed in the building?
- Will they need to be in all classrooms and what is needed to make this happen?
- Do additional protocols need to be explicitly part of orientation and practiced and modeled for all students?
- When should personal protective equipment be ordered to ensure it is received on time?
- Are there spaces in your district or schools that need to be structurally modified to help limit exposure/allow staff to complete tasks?
- How do you balance security with the expanded need for many entry points and staff to supervise these while processing entry of students, parents, contractors and students?

## Signs of Illness, Nurse's Office and Wellness Activities

- When should staff come to school or stay home based on symptoms?
- When should students come to school or stay home based on symptoms?
- What should staff and students do if they are sick?
- What if a student or staff member becomes ill while at school?
- How will students who are not sick but need medical attention in another way be treated (for example, medicine distribution, injury, cut, etc.)?
- Will medication administration happen at a site other than the clinic?
- Will the delegation of health care procedures still be done with staff, and will these still happen in classrooms?
- Where will sick students or staff be held until they leave the school?
- Will the nurse's office be a last option for students to request?
- Will the nurse/aide go to students instead of the students coming to the office?
- How will chronic health information be shared with the new staff and substitute staff who will be present in buildings next fall?

## Communications

- Has a district or school hotline been established?
- Does the district website have a webpage to provide information related to these changes?
- How will policy changes be shared?
- How will students be supported with the new procedures, processes and ways of doing school?
- What parent education programs need to be developed?
- As more student instruction, work products and assessments are moved online, do you need to review directory information designations to allow for a broader scope of items?
  - Does your current photo usage release cover the new reality?
- Have you prepared and communicated to staff and students the plans for fire, tornado and lockdown drills?
- Will you be mailing information to families?
- Are you sharing new schedules and transportation plans with other organizations (charter schools, career centers, etc.)?



## Visitor Procedures (including students and staff)

- How will schedule pick-up and student orientations occur in August 2020?
- Who will screen students, parents and staff who attempt to enter the building?
- Will staff who are screening utilize personal protective equipment?
- What procedures will be used in the screening, questioning, temperature taking, assessment of items individuals are bringing into the building?
- Will nontraditional entry points be explained to parents?
- What are the methods by which students will arrive at school?
  - What if they are alone and present with symptoms or other health issues?
- Will volunteers be permitted in the building?
  - Who will be responsible for screening and educating them on new procedures?
- What issues need to be addressed for the organizations, parent groups and other visitors coming to schools to support students and advance learning?

## Classroom Instruction and Learning Activities

- What will class sizes be?
  - Will you split classes and staff?
  - Will you rotate staff and have students stay in classrooms?
- Are you prepared to eliminate the use of community supplies in classrooms?
- Will blended learning or entire virtual courses take the place of some traditional classes?
- How will you schedule lab classes?
  - How will the equipment used in these courses be cleaned and ready for multiple groups of students in the same day?
- Will you allow students to leave their rooms to assist other staff or students?
- Will students be allowed to bring their own devices to school?
- Will you restrict items allowed to be brought to school daily?
- How will you structure school-to-work programs?
- Will progress report revisions be made based on the new assessment practices brought on by the pandemic?
- Will there be more instruction occurring outside of the school building, especially during the warmer months?
- Are there plans for virtual curriculum nights and back-to-school events?
- Will you schedule virtual teacher-parent conferences in the fall?
- Will you have recess and, if you do, what restrictions will be in place?
- How will you ensure inclusion of students with disabilities and meeting their needs (academic and physical)?
- How will you make online instruction similar in content and performance tasks to face-to-face instruction?
  - What materials and supplies will be necessary in this environment and how will they be purchased and delivered safely?

## Curriculum and Assessment

- What training will be needed for teachers and other staff if working remotely (learning management system, software, videoconferencing virtual platforms, etc.)?
- What assessments will be administered at the beginning of the school year to determine students' current levels and what interventions may be needed?
  - Is this something you have in your student information system (SIS) or do you need to acquire something new?
- What will happen to current or scheduled curriculum adoptions and material purchases?
- Are you using universal screening tools?
- Have you reviewed budget needs for online curricula, tools and subscriptions?

## Special Education, IEPs, 504s and Gifted

- Are you including students with special needs when planning the schedule and safety procedures?
- How will you complete an assessment of progress monitoring and documentation of services?
- How will you collaborate with parents?
- What platforms will be used for delivery of services?
- Will you provide assistive technology, access and options for support when technology is limited?
- How will you address IEPs and ETRs (referral process, compliance dates and times, development, guidance, testing)?
- How will instruction happen, and will it meet federal and state requirements (FAPE, LRE, AAC, general education and intervention specialist collaboration, staffing to support students who are no longer able to be supported in groups)?
- How are you supporting parents? Items to consider:
  - Collaboration, partnership
  - Increased communication
  - Parent training
  - Guidelines for home instruction/remote learning
  - Establishing a schedule for remote learning
  - Parent support/guidelines to engage students in remote learning
  - Access to technology
  - Flexibility of hours and availability of staff to support parents
- How will you determine if compensatory services are needed for each individual student with a disability?
- How will you consider needs of individual students with “re-entry” (adjusted schedules, mental health supports, etc.)?
- Will there be an option to go to homes for support if families practice social distancing protocols?
- Will gifted middle school students be going to high schools for courses?

## English Learners

- Are you planning for efficient screening of new English learners and any potential English learners who enroll in the spring?
- Are you planning to assess current English proficiency levels for all English learners?
- Are you using assessment data to create individual English learner plans with specific goals, especially to mitigate learning loss?
- Is there collaboration between ESL teachers and content area teachers to more effectively support English learners?
- Will there be professional learning for staff on how to support English learners in class and through remote learning?
- Are you rethinking ESL staffing for more impact?
- Are you considering hiring bilingual aides to support students and families?
- Are you considering additional English learning opportunities in person and online, utilizing technology?
- Are you creating a limited English proficiency family communication plan?
- Are you collaborating with community groups to support English learner students and families?

## Grade Promotions, Transitions and Transfers

- Do your student advancement policies need to be revised?
- What changes need to be made to career advising and the transition process based on changes and new college processes?
- Will educational option policies need revised?
- How will College Credit Plus students be impacted by schedule changes, especially for those students going back and forth between the colleges/universities and high school?

## Social and Emotional Learning Supports

- What informed practices will you use for assisting students/staff in dealing with uncertainty and stress?
- Will access to social-emotional learning supports need to be expanded?
  - If so, how will you expand them?
- Will you need additional social workers to support the growing needs of students and staff?
- How will you support students with “re-entry,” both as a whole and individually?

## Student Discipline

- What happens to students who do not comply with safety procedures?
- How will everyday disciplinary issues/office referrals be handled?
  - Will students be sent out of class, escorted, etc.?
- Do you need to amend discipline policies and practices?
- How will you conduct search and seizure?
- How will you deal with bus discipline?
- What implications are there to your current dress code?
- How do student and staff handbooks need to change before the 2020-2021 school year?
- Will new code of conduct items need to be added that are tied to the pandemic and the health guidelines?
- What implications are there for restraint procedures?

## Before- and After-School Programs

- What times will the building be open?
- Where will the programs be housed in the school?

## Enrichment Activities

- How will you decide what co- and extracurricular groups will continue to operate and what restrictions need to be implemented?
- Will you permit field trips?
  - If yes, who will supervise them?
- How will fundraising efforts be governed?
- Will school clubs be allowed to meet virtually?
- Will there be procedures for spectators of these events?

## School Culture and Activities

- What efforts will you undertake to recharge your culture?
- How will you conduct opening convocation activities?
- Will you delay the start of school until after Labor Day?

## Staff

- What will new teacher onboarding look like in the summer and fall of 2020?
- How will transition meetings between levels occur over the next several months to prepare for the 2020-2021 school year?
- Will teacher meetings be face-to-face or virtual?
  - If face-to-face, how will spacing be addressed?
- What new trainings will need to occur for various staff before school begins in the fall based on new pandemic policies and procedures?
  - How and when will these trainings occur?
  - Who will deliver the trainings?
- Who will welcome and orient substitute staff?
  - Will you give them access to the learning management system (LMS) and other district resources?
  - How will they become familiar with these systems?
- As sports seasons are canceled or modified, how will you direct athletic directors, coaches and volunteers in their actions with student athletes?
- Will you have to modify when you award supplemental contracts and the expectations for completion of these contracts?
  - What are the collective bargaining agreement implications?
- How can you better utilize your PTO/PTA as a support during these times?
- How will you support staff mental health and social-emotional well-being?

## Human Resources

- How will you virtually post for new positions if you are not currently doing so?
- How will you interview candidates for vacancies?
  - Will you conduct interviews online using Skype, Zoom, Facebook, etc.?
- Does your current collective bargaining agreement align with new guidelines?
- Does your collective bargaining agreement address traveling and/or sharing staff, virtual learning, working remotely, rules and behavior of staff?
- What are the implications of moving from OTES/OPES 1.0 to OTES/OPES 2.0 next year?
- What are the expectations of administrators while working from home?
- What will access to staff members be while working remotely?
  - Will it be limited to traditional school hours?
- What guidelines are in place for contacting students?
  - Must this be through board-owned equipment and software or can it be through personal equipment and software?
  - What if there is a concern regarding those communications?
- Are there ways to use retired teachers to support your staff or fill open positions?

## Paraprofessionals and Classified Staff

- How many paraprofessional and classified staff will be needed?
- What will be their current and future responsibilities?
- Will you need to revise maintenance or custodial job descriptions or work schedules with new responsibilities based on new guidelines regarding the virus?

## Information Technology

- How will devices be exchanged between staff/students and technology staff?
- Will there be a student-run helpdesk?
  - If yes, will there be hygiene training?
  - If no, how will this affect staffing?
- What is the effect on technology if most of your equipment is deployed to students and may not be returned?
  - What needs to be ordered and when will it be available to begin the year?
- Based on spring data, will you need to invest in more inventory (laptops, headphones, etc.)?
- Will you be able to take advantage of the “free” technology offerings?

*Please note: When the “free” periods expire, some have automatic renewal fees.*

## Transportation

- Are there bus drivers available for double or alternate routes?
- Do drivers have access to masks, gloves and sanitizer?
- Do students have access to masks and sanitizer upon entry?
- What is the impact of a maximum seating limit of one per seat?
- How will busing be adjusted for less ridership and social distancing?
  - Will more private transportation for special groups, such as medically sensitive students, be needed?
- What are the safe transportation procedures for walkers, parent drop-offs, bike riders, etc.?
- Will high school students be allowed to drive to school?
  - Will carpooling be permitted?
- Are you planning time for buses to be cleaned and sanitized each day?
- Will bus stops be monitored to ensure social distancing?

## Arrival and Dismissal

- Will you need to use cafeteria and auditorium seating to safely space students while waiting for classes to begin or will they be able to report directly to classrooms?
- Will drop-off and pick-up spots be modified to consider traffic flow?
- Will there be crossing guards, security and other staff who have traditionally been available to assist with arrival and dismissal?
- How will attendance be taken?
- Will you need to communicate new expectations with early release or late arrivals based on new class/school schedules?

## Breakfast and Lunch

- How many tables and seats in the cafeteria and/or other locations will be needed to meet social distancing guidelines?
- How will tables and desks be arranged?
- Will there be an alternate lunch rotation schedule?
- Can classrooms be used as eating spaces?
- Will you use partitions to provide separation?
- How will breakfast, lunch, snacks be served?
  - In lunchrooms, in classrooms, full lunch, boxed lunches?
  - Who will supervise?
- What will be the cleaning procedures for the areas where food is eaten by students and/or staff?
  - Will a complete cleaning occur between sessions?
  - Where will the cleaning supplies be located?
- Can the school schedule be changed so students can eat lunch at home?

## Restroom Procedures

- How many students or staff may enter at a time?
- How will access be granted?
- How will restrooms be monitored?
- Will water fountain use be permitted?

## Budgetary

- Are you looking at grant opportunities to support your general fund with the additional expenses?

## Main Office Visits Procedures

- Are individuals permitted to use office phones?
  - If yes, how will phones be sanitized?
- Will parents and students have access to the main office?
- Where will meetings and family conferences be held and how?
- Will new students follow your current new student enrollment policies?
- How will you collect required paperwork needed to begin the school year?
  - Will all paperwork become electronic?

## Resources

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic: Addressing PPE Needs in Non-Healthcare Setting](#) | Federal Emergency Management Agency

[Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs](#) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[MDH Guidance for Social Distancing in Schools](#) | Minnesota Department of Health

[National Coronavirus Response: A Road Map to Reopening](#) | American Enterprise Institute

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#) | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Return to School Post-COVID-19 Shutdown Brainstorming Session](#) | National Student Nurses' Association

[Supporting Learning at Home: A 5-Step Remote Learning Planning Guide for District Leaders](#) | Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

[Sharing What We've Learned: A Blueprint for Businesses](#) | The Kroger Co.

[What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws](#) | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission



