

Back to School **Playbook**

Your guide to return to school with confidence

Leadership,
Governance,
and
Resources

Equity,
Systems, and
Communication

Instruction,
Wellness and
Mental
Health



Back to School Playbook

The Innovare Back to School Playbook provides education leaders with access to best practices to support a successful return to school amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. As you review the checklist below if you have any questions please contact info@innovaresip.com



Leadership, Governance, & Resources

What to do before you start the school year

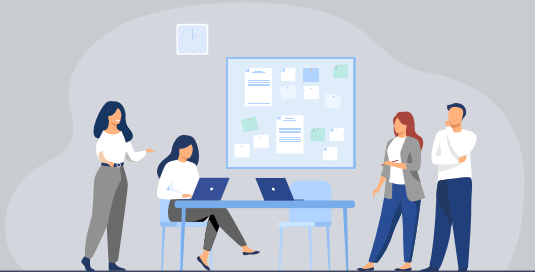
- Establish and model resilient leadership for your stakeholders
- Foster a distributive leadership model through the creation and implementation Back to School Committees
- Ensure tailored supports are in place for students
- Manage a continuous improvement cycle
- Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis
- Creating and providing high-quality professional learning opportunities

What to do as we return to school

- Establish and model resilient leadership for your stakeholders
- Ensure tailored supports are in place for students
- Manage a continuous improvement cycle
- Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis
- Creating and providing high-quality professional learning opportunities

What to sustain throughout the school year

- Ensure tailored supports are in place for students
- Manage a continuous improvement cycle
- Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis
- Creating and providing high-quality professional learning opportunities



Equity, Systems, & Communication

What to do before you start the school year

- Survey families to collect information about the numbers, types, and condition of devices used in their homes to support remote learning.
- Develop equitable scheduling scenarios
- Develop dependable systems and structures for technology and resource inventory management
- Identify key staff and roles that will be essential and assign school-based staff to each role
- Establish schedules of communication with district, teachers, and staff
- Create targeted online practice for all stakeholders (including family members) so that they become accustomed to remote learning models

What to do as we return to school

- Identify family technology liaisons
- Assess effectiveness and potential continued use of digital and online resources and tools
- Prepare the Infrastructure Evaluation process
- Facility preparation procedures
- Develop procedures for inventory management
- Prepare and troubleshoot technology and device access
- Develop equitable scheduling scenarios
- Update Communication Protocols

What to sustain throughout the school year

- Develop equitable scheduling scenarios
- Establish an improvement cycle focused on the quality of staff support
- Develop a system for ongoing facility access control and sanitation procedures
- Implement inventory review procedures
- Practice agency and prioritize engagement and communication with students and staff
- Gather feedback and analyze data from students and staff



Instruction, Wellness & MENTAL HEALTH

What to do before you start the school year

- Cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL
- Increase Learner Engagement in a Remote Classroom
- Develop remote instruction privacy protection expectations
- Integrate Social-Emotional Supports into curriculum
- Begin to incorporate mental health resources to support students
- Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students

What to do as we return to school

- Analyze data from student social emotional and academic assessments
- Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development
- Support the continuity of health services during COVID-19
- Support the mental health and wellness of students and families during COVID-19
- Create a virtual crisis response to loss and bereavement
- Provide support to students and families who have experienced loss

What to sustain throughout the school year

- Reconnect and Reassess
- Take a holistic approach to reentry for both students and staff
- Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff
- Continue to support students' mental and social emotional needs with the help of family and staff
- Provide support for teachers and leaders during COVID-19
- Continue to build an understanding of the effects of stress and trauma on youth



Leadership, Governance, & Resources

What to do before you start the school year



Establish and model resilient leadership for your stakeholders¹

- Assess for the impact of trauma on your staff**

Use multiple data sources to identify what healing needs to happen - to repair frayed relationships or to help people rejuvenate after the challenging experience.

- Re-create your narrative to use during summer communications and especially with the start of school**

Connect the experience people have gone through to who you are as an organization and who you are becoming. Try to find new ways to infuse your equity commitments and your values as you reform 2.0 remote structures and you reopen schools.

- Re-assess your communication structures, frequencies, and methods for summer and start of school**

If COVID-19 closures persist, recognize that you may need to communicate more than average for summer to help combat isolation and stress.

- Work with your leadership team to identify and communicate your Q1 priorities for the start of school**

As a leadership team, identify your key priorities as your return to school. It is essential that your stakeholders are well informed of your oath forward.

¹ [Catalyst:Ed - A Roadmap for Schools and Systems](#)

Identify and calendar key start of year communication forums

Think about events such as staff back to school PD, new staff orientation, new family welcome events, etc where you can share priorities and highlight key goals.

Develop a communication strategy for future crisis/closure moments

Identify your key learnings from this crisis to develop a communication strategy for future crises.

Evaluate the benefits of how you have operationalized this challenge

As a leadership team, assess the challenges and successes that your team has had using collaborative structures and distributed leadership during crisis management.

Identify your team's successes that you want to take into SY '20-21

Identify and communicate the successes your team will continue to build upon during the 20-21 school year.

Create and conduct ongoing listening forums for students, families, and staff

To help you keep a pulse on stakeholder needs, conduct ongoing sessions with your various stakeholder groups to communicate your strategies and assess their impact

Foster a distributive leadership model through the creation and implementation Back to School Committees²

Identify or develop a needs assessment survey for all stakeholder groups to gather organizational needs

While assessing the needs of your organization, focus on areas such as, but not limited to, Wellness, Logistics, Communication, Instruction, and Crisis Response.

Assess survey results and establish Back to School Committees

Conduct a basic data analysis protocol to assess survey results to create appropriate committees to address identified stakeholder needs.

Establish Back to School Committees expectations

With your Back to School Committees, develop expectations for communications, collaboration, meeting times, venue, etc.

□ **Develop and implement on-going cross-committee collaboration opportunities**

During these times, committee members should provide updates on the progress being made inside the committee while other team members can provide feedback and support.

Ensure tailored supports are in place for students ³

□ **Create a plan for targeted and intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) strategies**

Ensure that students who need more supports have the opportunity to thrive, regardless of background or circumstance

□ **Create a referral pathway for when student and family needs are identified**

Include procedures (e.g., follow-up assessment, communication with caregivers) for connecting students to more targeted, intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) supports matched to needs either within school or from identified community partners.

□ **Plan system to ensure two-way communication with families and students (when developmentally appropriate) on the plan for targeted support.**

Allow families and students to self-select or opt-in/out as they choose, and provide feedback on progress.

□ **Create a plan to collaborate with community partners to help ensure tailored student supports are implemented effectively and equitably.**

- Review the community outreach plan to ensure it includes the identification of external resources available (e.g., community providers, community mental health center) to increase the school's capacity to provide tailored student supports and ensure they are implemented effectively and equitably.
- Conduct outreach to local providers. Plan opportunities for regular communication between the school and community providers. Establish formal partnerships to provide services and ensure a data sharing agreement for student success. Recommend school systems do this in partnership with schools.

□ **Run an improvement cycle focused on ensuring schools have a plan in place to provide targeted and intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) strategies to each student who needs more support.**

Collect the relevant data to ensure schools have plans in place to provide targeted and intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) strategies to each student who needs more support. Analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Manage a continuous improvement cycle⁴

As a leadership team, identify your priority areas and set goals

For each prioritized focus area, identify the quality, implementation, and access goals, and decide those for which data collection will be prioritized.

Identify the team responsible for each prioritized goal and its associated data collection and analysis

It is important to identify the members who will manage data collection and analysis and also those who will act on the information.

Identify the specific data required for each goal

Be sure to account for how remote versus in-person instruction will affect data collection.

Ensure appropriate data access

Make sure that the team has the data that is needed and that data sharing agreements are in place with vendors, community partners, and others, where necessary.

Run an improvement cycle focused on access

Be sure to collect the relevant data to monitor access, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Build the system to collect and communicate the required data and the timeline for collection

This information should be used to develop a plan for how the data will be analyzed and reported.

Communicate to relevant stakeholders expectations around data collection and usage

This will ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the data that is being used to inform your improvement strategy

Collect data on set timelines

For more support on tools for using data to drive systems-level improvement, see this seminal report from the Carnegie Foundation on Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement

- **Determine gaps in the overall population, and disaggregate data to assess whether there are inequities to address**

As a leadership team, investigate the reasons for the gaps and address them

- **Rerun the cycle and monitor for improvement**

Prepare for your next learning cycle

Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis

- **Set (or adjust as appropriate) school level budgets and staff allocations**

Determine the impact of budget reductions and personnel opting out of returning in person to individual school staff allocations, minimizing negative impacts on schools with the highest concentrations of vulnerable students or high concentrations of more novice teachers.

- **Determine which staff intend to return**

Reach out to all school leaders and school staff to confirm their intent to return and identify any limitations on their ability to attend in person.

- **Identify key roles that will be essential and assign school-based staff to each role**

Determine the key student wellbeing, academic, and operations roles needed for every in-person, remote, and hybrid schedule to function. Identify which roles are new and which will require staff to operate outside of their normal expectations. Support school leaders to assign staff to these roles.

- **Determine any remaining vacancies and continue hiring and onboarding new staff**

Fill vacancies and onboard new staff, providing mentors to all novice teachers.

- **Plan observation, feedback, and coaching**

Develop a system of observation, feedback, and coaching anchored by clear expectations. Align it to broader system priorities and a coaching methodology that can function in remote or in-person settings.

- **Plan for teacher absences**

Strengthen substitute pools to address potential increases in teacher absenteeism.

Run an improvement cycle focused on providing access for staff to support

Collect the relevant data to monitor access to staff support, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Create and provide high-quality professional learning opportunities⁵

Complete a needs assessment and professional learning plan

Understand educators' learning needs and the resources (e.g., time, people, and money) available to be used to respond to these needs. Use this information to develop a yearlong plan for professional learning.

Plan traditional professional learning sessions

Develop system- and school-based professional learning sessions aligned to system professional learning priorities and available in remote or in-person settings.

Plan collaborative learning

Create a system of teacher collaboration focused on the system's professional learning priorities and guided by strong rationale and clear expectations that can function in remote or in-person settings.

Plan observation, feedback, and coaching

Develop a system of observation, feedback, and coaching anchored by clear expectations. Align it to broader system priorities and a coaching methodology that can function in remote or in-person settings.

Run an improvement cycle focused on access

Collect the relevant data to monitor professional learning access, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Develop clear and consistent communication channels

Establish a system of two-way communication that ensures all key stakeholders are informed about professional priorities, expectations, and practices, and ensures user feedback to drive improvement.

What to do before as we return to school



Establish and model resilient leadership for your stakeholders

- Identify where you have momentum from wins and what additional measures you can take to reinforce your upside opportunities.

Consistently look for opportunities to celebrate successes and continue to build upon them to meet the needs of your community.

- With your team, determine what supports and resources are needed to address ongoing existential risks.

During this session, your team should identify and begin to ideate solutions to things such as where the organization is being stretched thin or what areas are most sensitive to disruption in the building.

- Conduct rapid PDSA cycles to measure impact of strategies

You want to be sure to support your team through the PDSA cycle to evaluate the impact this crisis has had on the strategic plan and make adjustments as needed.

Ensure tailored supports are in place for students⁶

- Implement selected Tier 2/3 screening or assessment tools to guide decision-making, and identify students who need deeper supports.

If a universal screener is not used, it is essential to identify and train licensed professionals on more targeted, culturally-relevant assessments for identification of needs for Tiers 2/3 supports.

- Implement the system for identifying and responding to more targeted and intensive student needs (Tiers 2 and 3)

Connect the students who have demonstrated a need for more targeted or intensive supports with appropriate supports, leveraging the referral pathway

- **Ensure two-way communication with families and students (when developmentally appropriate) on the plan for support and progress.**

For detailed steps and aligned resources on running an improvement cycle focused on engagement access, see the [Managing and Improving](#) section.

Manage a continuous improvement cycle⁷

- **Run an improvement cycle focused on implementation**

Collect the relevant data to monitor for access (where remaining gaps exist) and to monitor implementation, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

- **Build the system to collect and communicate the required data and the timeline for collection**

This information should be used to develop a plan for how the data will be analyzed and reported.

- **Communicate to relevant stakeholders expectations around data collection and usage**

This will ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the data that is being used to inform your improvement strategy

- **Collect data on set timelines**

For more support on tools for using data to drive systems-level improvement, see this seminal report from the Carnegie Foundation on Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement

- **Determine gaps in the overall population, and disaggregate data to assess whether there are inequities to address**

As a leadership team, investigate the reasons for the gaps and address them

- **Rerun the cycle and monitor for improvement**

Prepare for your next learning cycle

Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis⁸

Provide training for staff in new roles.

Share new staff roles and expectations and provide training.

Conduct fall budget adjustments.

Conduct any necessary fall budget adjustments to minimize negative impacts on high-risk students. Determine any necessary changes to staffing as a result of the fall leveling or staffing adjustment process.

Develop training material for substitutes

Prepare a training for substitutes on procedures (e.g., taking attendance) technology, curriculum, and student connection/wellbeing needed to teach in remote, hybrid, and in-person settings

Run an improvement cycle focused on the implementation of staff support.

Collect the relevant data to monitor access to staff support (where remaining) and its implementation, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Implement traditional professional learning sessions

Implement school-based professional learning sessions aligned to system professional learning priorities and available in remote or in-person settings.

Create and provide high-quality professional learning opportunities⁹

Implement traditional professional learning sessions

Implement system- and school-based professional learning sessions aligned to system professional learning priorities and available in remote or in-person settings.

Implement collaborative learning opportunities

Implement a system of teacher collaboration focused on the system's professional learning priorities and guided by strong rationale and clear expectations that can function in remote or in-person settings.

8 [System Conditions -- Guidance](#)
9 [Academics -- Guidance](#)

□ **Run an improvement cycle focused on implementation:**

Collect the relevant data to monitor professional learning access (where remaining) and implementation, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

□ **Communicate professional learning opportunities updates to stakeholders**

Establish a system of two-way communication that ensures all key stakeholders are informed about professional learning priorities, expectations, and practices, and ensures user feedback to drive improvement.

What to sustain throughout the school year



Ensure tailored supports are in place for students¹⁰

- Run an improvement cycle focused on the quality of the targeted and intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) strategies provided to each student who needs more support.**
 - Collect the relevant data to ensure schools are providing high-quality, targeted, and intensive (Tiers 2 and 3) strategies to each student who needs more support. Analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.
 - For detailed steps and aligned resources on running an improvement cycle focused on access, implementation, and quality, see the Managing and Improving section. For support with goal-setting, see the Tailored Student Supports table.

Manage a continuous improvement cycle¹¹

- Run an improvement cycle focused on quality**

Collect the relevant data to monitor for implementation and quality, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

- Build the system to collect and communicate the required data and the timeline for collection**

Use this information to develop a plan for how the data will be analyzed and reported.

- Communicate to relevant stakeholders expectations around data collection and usage**

This will ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the data that is being used to inform your improvement strategy

10 [Wellbeing and Connection -- Guidance](#)

11 [3. System Conditions -- Guidance](#)

Collect data on set timelines

For more support on tools for using data to drive systems-level improvement, see this seminal report from the Carnegie Foundation on Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement

Determine gaps in the overall population, and disaggregate data to assess whether there are inequities to address

As a leadership team, investigate the reasons for the gaps and address them

Rerun the cycle and monitor for improvement

Prepare for your next learning cycle

Assess and adjust to school staffing needs on an ongoing basis¹²

Implement continuous observation, feedback, and coaching cycles

Implement a system anchored by clear expectations. Align it to system priorities and a coaching methodology that can function in remote or in-person settings.

Run an improvement cycle focused on the quality of staff support

Collect the relevant data to monitor the implementation and quality of staff support, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Create and provide high-quality professional learning opportunities¹³

Implement traditional professional learning sessions

Implement system- and school-based professional learning sessions aligned to system professional learning priorities and available in remote or in-person settings.

Implement collaborative learning

Implement a system of teacher collaboration focused on the system's professional learning priorities and guided by strong rationale and clear expectations that can function in remote or in-person settings.

12 [System Conditions -- Guidance](#)

13 [Academics -- Guidance](#)

Implement observation, feedback, and coaching

Implement a system of observation, feedback, and coaching anchored by clear expectations. Align it to broader system priorities and a coaching methodology that can function in remote or in-person settings.

Run an improvement cycle focused on quality

Collect the relevant data to monitor implementation (where remaining) and quality, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals.

Communicate professional learning opportunities updates to stakeholders

Establish a system of two-way communication that ensures all key stakeholders are informed about professional learning priorities, expectations, and practices, and ensures user feedback to drive improvement.



Equity, Systems, & Communication

What to do before you start the school year



Survey families to collect information about the numbers, types, and condition of devices used in their homes to support remote learning.¹⁴

- Conduct an initial survey to inquire about use of external displays, game consoles, smart watches, and electronic toys.
- Follow-up with a survey about software and apps
- Review school family technology survey results and present results to your staff

Develop equitable scheduling scenarios¹⁵

- Gather and review feedback from families on spring 2020 remote learning schedules to identify what did and did not work well

Review feedback from families and identify most important themes Use the feedback collected through family engagement to identify most common family needs and requests. Use these to guide schedule creation.

- Collect information about relevant system constraints

Collect relevant data to determine all physical and logistical constraints that will impact the schedules.

14 [Michigan's 2020-2021 Return to School Roadmap](#)
15 [3. System Conditions -- Guidance](#)

□ **Survey families to identify scheduling needs**

Identify which families will choose to have their students attend remotely and which siblings need to be on identical schedules (if feasible).

□ **Given academic priorities, make school system decisions about which grade levels and student groups will be on in-person, hybrid, and remote learning schedules**

Determine which groups of students the school system will serve entirely in person, in a hybrid setting, or entirely remotely.

□ **Design daily schedules for hybrid, in-person, and remote learning**

Design schedules that align to the instructional priorities and reflect student and family preferences. Try to ensure students within the same family have compatible in-school and out-of-school schedules.

□ **Establish criteria for shifting in and out of all-remote scenarios**

Consult with public health officials to identify school closure thresholds that will result in moving into or out of all-remote settings.

Develop dependable systems and structures for technology and resource inventory management¹⁶

□ **Identify an asset tracking tool**

Continue to monitor device usage and compliance with online learning programs.

□ **Assign technology process leaders to key efforts and publish their contact information on the district intranet and/or internet.**

Only the vendor management lead roles require any technology knowledge. All other lead roles are primarily communication and process roles, including:

- Family device return leader
- Staff device return leader
- Device vendor management leader
- Internet/Intranet communication leader
- Technology Infrastructure evaluation leader

- Infrastructure vendor management leader

□ **Create or identify an issue tracking system or tool¹⁷**

Technical processes are dependent on good documentation; ensure systems are in place to track and resolve issues that may arise using one a paid or conduct an online search for a free service, such as Google Sheets or others

□ **Identify technology liaison to plan and communicate with district technology teams**

- Schedule ongoing staff training on platforms and tools
- Review and update (as needed) relevant technology policies including data privacy policies, acceptable use policies, and policies related to accidental damage, theft, and loss of technology

Identify key staff and roles that will be essential and assign school-based staff to each role¹⁸

□ **Determine the key student wellbeing, academic, and operational roles needed for every in-person, remote and hybrid schedule to function, and identify which roles are new and which will require staff to operate outside of their normal expectations**

- Identify the strongest instructional planner at each grade level/content area to be the Instructional Content Lead
- Identify the teacher who is the most skilled with technology and engaging students through technology to be the Remote Learning Lead
- Identify the teacher with the most knowledge of trauma-informed instruction and social-emotional learning to be the Care Team Lead
- For the instructional content leads and remote learning leads, prioritize building in collaboration time for these individuals prior to the start of the school year and throughout the year
- Consider looping school teachers by grade level or subject area, particularly those with a strong record of student achievement, so teachers and students who were together last year are grouped together again this coming year. Since these groups know one another and have relationships

17 [Return to School Roadmap](#)

18 [CCSSO Supporting States Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

Establish schedules of communication with district, teachers, and staff

- **Create communication protocols for key procedural and operational components of your strategy:**

Ensure regular communication with stakeholders to maintain alignment

- **Establish virtual structures for teacher teams to collaborate and provide effective instruction, emphasizing frequency and focus**

Support Teachers to create feedback loops with your community to improve practice

Create targeted online practice for all stakeholders (including family members) so that they become accustomed to remote learning models¹⁹

- **Communication templates available [here](#)**

Leverage existing shareable communication templates for communicating with teachers, school leaders, and families to communicate potential updates and procedures as needed²⁰

What to do before as we return to school



Identify family technology liaisons

- Where practical given demands on parents or guardians, consider identifying family technology liaisons to support communication regarding using technology
 - Identified family liaisons can serve as a communication “help desk”
 - Existing parent organization may be able to fulfill this role, or perform a survey of family members²¹
- Assess effectiveness and potential continued use of digital and online resources and tools
- Arrange a frequency of gathering feedback to best support students and families with technology and resources

Review and assess feedback frequently, and make necessary updates

Prepare the Infrastructure Evaluation process²²

- Every WiFi access point and wired network device should be tested
 - Update WiFi access points and devices as needed
- Arrange a frequency of gathering feedback to best support students and families with technology and resources

Gather feedback from families to ensure connection is available and working

Facility preparation procedures

- Keep social distancing and hygiene in mind (for staff and students) when creating
 - Master schedules for arrival/dismissal

21 [Return to School Roadmap](#)

22 [Return to School Roadmap](#)

- Lunch Schedules
 - Bell Schedules
- **Audit all school areas and classrooms with a focus on²³:**
- How many classrooms are available
 - The size of each classroom
 - Additional spaces that are available (e.g., gym, lunchroom, auditorium); and
 - The ventilation in each school area and classroom
- **Update notices and signage throughout the facility**
- Signage about frequent handwashing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing should be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication
 - Ensure custodial staff distributes distributes wastebaskets, tissues, and CDC-approved soap to every office and classroom
- **Prepare to provide medical supplies to staff and students**
- If necessary, procure and distribute facial coverings, including those with a transparent front, for preK-5 teachers, low income students, and students with special needs
 - Procure level-1 surgical masks for cleaning and janitorial staff.

Develop procedures for inventory management²⁴

□ **Arrange the return and inventory of devices**

The procedures should include:

- Safely bagging devices collected at schools.
- Transporting them to a central location.
- Sanitizing the devices prior to a repair or replacement evaluation.
- Conducting prepared maintenance routines to remove malware and fix standard issues including, screen, keyboard, or battery replacement

23 [Michigan's 2020-2021 Return to School Roadmap](#)
 24 [Return to School Roadmap](#)

Identify an asset tracking tool for device inventory

Conduct an technology device inventory. If needed, identify a vendor to assist with this process.

Prepare and troubleshoot technology and device access²⁵

Develop on-site triage of staff devices to minimize the time that staff may be without a device

This repository of devices can be used by staff in times of need

Stage device processing areas as needed to run procedures.

- Supplies, instructions, and equipment should be moved to areas where work will take place to make school opening as smooth as possible
- The designated device-return lead should oversee this work

Place orders for replacement devices in advance

Utilize industry published device failure rates to estimate the number of devices that will need to be replaced

Develop equitable scheduling scenarios²⁶

Disseminate and communicate schedule information to all stakeholder groups.

Clearly communicate school schedules to students and families, community stakeholders, and staff.

Implement the schedules and adjust based on family, teacher, and school leader feedback.

Gather feedback from families, teachers, and school leaders on challenges and inefficiencies in the schedule, and make adjustments.

Connect families to partners that can provide safe places for students to learn when they have remote learning days and are not in the classroom.

Secure any necessary agreements with community partners and communicate partnerships to families, teachers, and school leaders.

25 [Return to School Roadmap](#)
26 [3. System Conditions -- Guidance](#)

Update Communication Protocols

- **Build all back to school communications with multiple stakeholders in mind, including:**

- Families
- Students
- Staff

- **Align school website with district website information**

Ensure all communication is up to date and aligned across the school and district to avoid uncertainty

- **Verify physical documents and copies of student and staff handbooks and planners are printed and ready for distribution**

Create a master list of any changes to distribute at the first staff meeting

- **Staff collaboration and communication of updates**

- Create master teaching schedules, student and faculty arrival/dismissal schedules, bus schedules, lunch schedules for staff and students, and bell schedules with social distancing guidelines and facility access control in mind
- Collaborate with cafeteria staff to ensure any necessary food handling changes are implemented
- Update new school staff to any operational changes

What to sustain throughout the school year



Develop equitable scheduling scenarios²⁷

- **Continue to adjust schedules based on feedback, and switch among schedules as necessary in the community.**

Be prepared to improve schedules based on feedback from families and staff and to switch to all-remote schedules—and back again—should local health conditions so require.

- **Adjust all schedules as needed based on public health guidance**

Ensure communication is sent to all stakeholders immediately to convey any potential scheduling or operational changes

Establish an improvement cycle focused on the quality of staff support²⁸

- **Build the system to collect relevant data to monitor the implementation and quality of staff support, analyze gaps, and address issues to reach goals**

Use this information to develop a plan for how the data will be analyzed and reported.

- **Communicate to relevant stakeholders expectations around data collection and usage**

This will ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the data that is being used to inform your improvement strategy

- **Collect data on set timelines**

For more support on tools for using data to drive systems-level improvement, see this seminal report from the Carnegie Foundation on Transforming Educational Systems Toward Continuous Improvement

27 [3. System Conditions -- Guidance](#)

28 [CCSSO Supporting States Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

- **Determine gaps in the overall population, and disaggregate data to assess whether there are inequities to address**

As a leadership team, investigate the reasons for the gaps and address them

- **Rerun the cycle and monitor for improvement**

Prepare for your next learning cycle

Develop a system for ongoing facility access control and sanitation procedures

- **Establish building entrance and exit protocols**

- Require visitors report through a single access point as standard school safety procedures remain critical
- After-school egress and exit points may be opened based on the pandemic alert level and in concert with local health official recommendations

- **Maintain infection control procedures based on pandemic alert level and public health guidance**

- Ensure school nurses wear surgical masks and maintain six feet of distance from potentially infected staff or students
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- If closer contact is required, N95 respirators and contact gowns should be used if available to help minimize any spread of disease to nursing staff

Implement inventory review procedures

- **Perform frequent reviews of issue-tracking and inventory results**

This will help to understand the quality and progress of technology processes in your building or district

- **Identify chronic technology issues that arose during the school closure period**

Use these issues to begin the development of a long term technology maintenance plan

- **Establish and implement a family device-return process**

Ensure all devices are accounted for, repaired, replaced, or dispatched

Practice agency and prioritize engagement and communication with students and staff²⁹

- Communicate frequently with families regarding student progress and technology use in the building**

If students are using their own devices make sure that communication includes the district's bring-your-own-device policy (if you don't have one, create it)

- Regularly provide student progress updates to families and parents to ensure students and families are aware of each student's current academic standing**

Engage with staff to obtain feedback and review to make any updates necessary

- Compile technology-facing lessons learned for inclusion in your school's updated learning continuity plan**

Build repository of technology-facing lessons and material and ensure all students have access to the material and can reference it as needed

Gather feedback and analyze data from students and staff³⁰

- Student-related:**

- Assess the percentage of students/families reporting feeling supported, engaged, and connected
- Assess the percentage of students meeting standards of progress and mastery on systemwide assessments
- Assess the percentage of tailored student supports being implemented with fidelity
- Assess the percentage of students with special needs receiving a strengths-based, developmentally appropriate response

29 [Return to School Roadmap](#)

30 [CCSSO Supporting States Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)

□ **Staff-related:**

- Assess the percentage of staff reporting they feel supported, engaged, connected, and effective in their practice
- Assess the percentage of teachers and leaders report satisfaction with remote professional learning and collaboration
- Assess the percentage of teachers exhibiting evidence that they are applying learning from training and collaboration



Instruction, Wellness & MENTAL HEALTH

What to do before you
start the school year



Cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL³¹

Foster new relationships that elevate student & family voice

Establish a focus on connecting with, caring for, and affirming the experiences of members of the wider school community.

Develop and implement two-way communication strategies

Be sure to create structures to communicate the importance of SEL in navigating upcoming transitions and be responsive to student & family concerns.

Examine the impact of SEL efforts

Take a data-centered approach to decision-making, work with your leadership team to identify the strengths and targeted strategies that best meet stakeholder needs..

Build a broad coalition and integrate SEL into plans

Establish structures to meaningfully involve community partners, families, and students in developing a vision, goals, and plans for the year.

Develop remote instruction privacy protection policies³²

- Prohibit the sharing of student images/videos, but teachers can share videos or podcasts of themselves

Create student privacy policies based on state guidelines and provide guidance to educators and families, as well as to help families understand their options regarding distance learning.

- Create strict guidelines of what platforms are approved and how to add additional levels of security among the platforms for maximum student protection

Review the independent policies of Zoom, Google, and other platforms used by your institution

Integrate Social-Emotional Supports into curriculum³³

- Establish school wide activities that encourage students to practice relevant SEL skills
 - Incorporate classroom activities like peer discussion circles, conversations and teacher modeling
 - Incorporate activities with classroom learning, like reflective or persuasive journal writing

Begin to incorporate mental health resources to support students³⁴

Use the [SHAPE](#) system to support school mental health and health quality improvement

- Evaluate strengths and areas of growth using the [School Mental Health Quality Guide Needs Assessment & Resource Mapping](#)
 - Use this needs assessment as a collaborative process to identify strengths and gaps, clarify priorities, inform quality improvement, and advance action planning
 - Document mental health services across tiers of support
 - Evaluate staff mental health readiness

32 [ColorinColorado - Distance Learning for ELLs: Privacy Considerations](#)

33 <https://www.prodigygame.com/blog/social-emotional-learning/>

34 <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/SHAPE/>

Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students³⁵

□ Allow space for connection & healing among adults

Create Self-Care circles that can be used with adults or students to center themselves and reflect on and share ways to practice self-care

□ Ensure access to mental health and trauma support

Support educators in gaining a greater awareness of how their current personal and professional context affects their levels of stress in the time of COVID-19

□ Identify opportunities for innovation & anti racist practices

Practice radical compassion, confront inequities, re-order our priorities to focus on our collective well-being, and lead human-centered, structural change. If sharing this article with staff as a launch for discussion, see this related [discussion guide](#).

□ Provide embedded professional learning

Create professional learning activities that leads staff to to reflect on their beliefs and then critically examine commonly held beliefs about how to meet the learning needs of racially and ethnically diverse students.

What to do before as we return to school



Analyze data from student social emotional and academic assessments³⁶

Identify the most vulnerable students

Develop a plan to assess student learning process and loss

Ramp up and continue focus on the mental health and wellbeing of all staff and community members

Plan around worst case scenarios and be sure to leave room for mental health days

Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development³⁷

Build adult-student and peer relationships

Cocreate a safe, supportive space where teachers and students can work together to explore values like empathy, patience, kindness, open-mindedness so people can be willing to share openly and honestly in circle.

Weave in opportunities for SEL practice and reflection

Recognize and respond to students' social and emotional needs as well as build in trauma-informed practices that will support all students

Implement a comprehensive system of supports

Create a trauma-informed learning environment as well as identifying, assessing, addressing and treating traumatic stress.

Discuss the impact of the pandemic & racial inequity

Encourage students to share their views, values and voices to strengthen the community as well as help educators, families, and other individuals talk about racism, racial identity, and the way these forces shape society

36 <https://returntoschoolroadmap.org/instruction/district/#first>

37 <https://casel.org/reopening-with-sel/>

□ Collaborate with families and partners

Build strong collaborative relationships between schools and community partners to align SEL practices and learn from one another

Support the continuity of health services during COVID-19³⁸

□ Provide access to school nurses with the use of technology

- Host open virtual office hours for nurses
- During school closures, school nurses should continue to practice care coordination for their students with chronic health conditions, students with IEPs and related services, and students who received medication while at school

Support the mental health and wellness of students and families during COVID-19³⁹

□ Find ways to promote the sharing and processing of emotions

- Consider having check ins with students and their families
- Provide connections to mental health services and needed supports for crisis response
- Develop consistent routines to help reduce stress and facilitate learning

Create a virtual crisis response to loss and bereavement⁴⁰

□ Communicate information about the death to your school community

- The crisis response lead should call those closely connected to the loss to inform them of the death
- Be simple and straightforward, be brief and patient, you may have to repeat key information to ensure understanding
- Discuss death appropriately using the words “death” and “died” instead of “they went away” or “passed away” since they are confusing, especially for young children

38 https://ccsso.org/sites/default/files/2020-06/06.25.20_CCSSO_Supporting_Continuity-v4.pdf

39 https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/Documents/Considerations_for_Mental_Health_Wellness.pdf

40 https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/Documents/KDE_Virtual_Crisis_Response_Guidance.pdf

Provide support to students and families who have experienced loss⁴¹

- **Create opportunities for students, staff, and families to connect with one another**
 - Schedule and host drop-in virtual meetings for those who want to share their feelings with others
 - Mental health staff should proactively check with individuals to see how their doing since people may be reluctant to reach out for help
 - Suggest, teach, and practice coping techniques, especially ways to cope during social distancing, ideas to overcome and and ways to adjust to life after loss

What to sustain throughout the school year



Reconnect and Reassess⁴²

Understand every students academic and emotional health

- Maintain mental health supports via assessments
- Utilize the Educator Self-Assessment & Planning Tool to determine strengths and weaknesses when supporting student well-being
- Use the data collected on students and staff well being to perform data analysis on the different emotional states of both parties to identify common themes.

Take a holistic approach to reentry for both students and staff⁴³

Continue to provide support for all members of the school community

- Normalize feelings through forums and spaces for compassionate listening
- Identify additional needs and challenges students may encounter
- Constantly determine what is working and what is not for those being served

Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff

Elevate student voice in reflecting and acting on data

Have students take a short survey to learn how they are experiencing school, review results to see how experiences are promoting or hindering equitable learning, learn new practices to try with students, and track improvement over time

42 https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Supporting_Student_Resilience_Well-Being_Self-Assessment_Planning_Tool.pdf

43 https://education.ky.gov/curriculum/Documents/Considerations_for_Mental_Health_Wellness.pdf

Support Educators in reflection on instruction & environment

Use the “[SEL Look Fors in Blended Learning](#)” tool to reflect on a learning activity you have designed or led after it has taken place, or ask a colleague to use it as they observe you

Partner with families & community members to Improve

Work with families and community members so that they are able to help deepen and improve relationships between all three parties (students, families, staff)

Continue to support students’ mental and social emotional needs with the help of family and staff⁴⁴

Staff providing support to students’ well being

- Integrate school psychologists and into online learning.
- Utilize virtual approaches to consultation, intervention, assessment, and counseling are possible through video conference
- Ensure educators maintain a consistent pattern of communication and share hopeful messages

Families providing support to students’ well being

- Support families in looking for ways of balancing facts with appropriate measures, as well as letting their children drive the conversation and reassuring them of their safety
- Help families normalize anxiety, especially in teenagers, and model a calm, positive outlook to ensure they feel safe

Provide support for teachers and leaders during COVID-19⁴⁵

Understand the importance of awareness

- Be observant and recognize your signs of stress
- Practice mindfulness techniques that strengthen self-awareness, such as mindful breathing, body scans, compassion exercises
- Monitor your thinking and practice positively reframing negative self-talk and beliefs

44 [FAQ COVID-19 MH and SEL Support for Students](#)

45 https://gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/Webinar1_Self-Care_FinalDeck.pdf

□ Understand the importance of balance

- Limit your media consumption/exposure and ask yourself if what you're engaging in is fueling fuel or providing useful information
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle by developing healthy eating habits and staying physically active
- Create some separation between work and home

Continue to build an understanding of the effects of stress and trauma on youth⁴⁶

□ Assess and understand the stress of you students

- Figure out the spectrum of student stressors from low stress to high stress with the changes that occur in the school environment (Disruption of normal routines, food insecurity, loss of family members, etc.)
- Pay close attention to students who are at an increased risk for stress such as those who have anxiety, depression, or suicidal ideation as well as those who have a loved one who is particularly vulnerable to COVID-19

□ Assess and understand the trauma of you students

- Pay close attention to students who have a lower energy level than their peers and appear emotionally disconnected
- Support the students and provide individualized interventions for students who have been affected by trauma

Sources

- [Opportunity Labs - Return to School Roadmap](#)
- [Getting Smart - How to Reopen Schools](#)
- [AEI - A Blueprint for Back to School](#)
- NESN - Guidance for Reopening Schools
- [NYC Leadership Academy – Leading an Equity-Focused Response Through and Beyond COVID-19](#)
- [Catalyst:Ed - A Roadmap for Schools and Systems](#)
- [How Can Educators Tap Into Research to Increase Engagement During Remote Learning?](#)
- [Michigan’s 2020-2021 Return to School Roadmap](#)
- [ColorinColorado - Distance Learning for ELLs: Privacy Considerations](#)
- [SEL Roadmap for Reopening School](#)
- [Return to School Roadmap](#)
- [RESTART & RECOVERY: Considerations for Teaching & Learning](#)
- [CCSSO Supporting States Amid Coronavirus Outbreak](#)