

TOOLKIT

RETURNING TO SCHOOL

A Toolkit for Principals

In the Classroom, at Home, or Both

Reuniting and Moving Forward Together

CCNETWORK National Center

STAT Systemic Technical Assistance Team

Returning to School Toolkit for Principals

The National Comprehensive Center

The National Comprehensive Center (NCC) is one of 20 technical assistance centers supported under the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Centers program from 2019 to 2024. The NCC focuses on helping the 19 Regional Comprehensive Centers and state, regional, and local education agencies throughout the country to meet the daunting challenge of improving student performance with equitable resources.

This publication is one of eight in a series of resources Return to School from the National Comprehensive Center. See www.nationalcompcenter.org

- Guide to After-Action Reviews
- Better Together: A Coordinated Response for Principals and District Leaders
- Mitigating Harm for Vulnerable Populations
- Rapid Response: Informational Resources on Improving Social and Emotional Learning and Outcomes
- Scenario Planning
- Budgeting in a Crisis
- Considerations for supporting a successful start to the 2020-2021 school year for students with disabilities

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Dear Principal,

Returning to school each fall brings its own mix of challenge and excitement for a principal, and this year that is true more than ever. You are returning after a long and unwanted separation, and your return may mean everyone is again in their classrooms, a new year begins with digital learning at home, or you are blending home and school learning. Every year, you, the principal, are deluged with information about changes in procedures and schedules, new policies, and new expectations. Each year, you absorb the information, sort through it, and incorporate it into your planning for your school. This year, the inflow of information takes on a very different character, and you greet it with a heightened sense of concern. There is much to get right for the students, teachers, families, and staff within your direct circle of responsibility.

This toolkit is meant to help you structure your thinking about the return to school, in whatever form that takes. Realizing that you are receiving an avalanche of information from many directions, we have attempted to keep to the point and direct you to where you can find more help. We offer context for the use of the tools and tip sheets, and suggestions for actions you might consider.

The Returning to School: A Toolkit for Principals is organized around four sections:

- Change
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Care

These sections of the *Toolkit for Principals* are not meant to be sequential; one is not more important than the others. Scan the four sections and consider how they might support your preparation for a successful return to school, and your transition to schooling in this new reality. Make use of what fits your needs.

Change. Some changes come from the outside—states, Federal Government, school boards, districts, community organizations, and for schools located in tribal communities, their tribes. You are getting information about these changes every day. The trick is to stay current in understanding them, to take them into account in your planning but not be overwhelmed by them. Other changes are ones that you and your school may want to make for the betterment of the school and the benefit of your students.

Communication. Plan how to welcome back your students, families, teachers, and staff, whether in person or by other means. Learn from them how they are doing and what they see ahead so that you can plan how to meet their needs. Let them know about changes the school is making, reassure them, inform them, and convey excitement about the changes and opportunities.

Collaboration. Consider how decisions are made in your school and how different groups are involved, especially teachers, staff, families, and students, but also vested stakeholders and community groups. Engage them in your preparation for the return to school. Working together is especially important at this time, and you may be establishing new ways to collaborate, which will carry your school through this difficult transition and continue to serve as effective methods for shared leadership and decision making.

Care. Care requires “collaboration” and “communication” as you prepare to meet the needs of your students, families, teachers, and staff under the peculiar circumstances of this year’s return to school. Caring is not an emotion, it is an action, and effective action takes careful planning, communication, and working together. It requires close attention to each group and individual within your care.

We hope the suggestions and resources offered here are helpful to you.

Wishing your school the best!

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Change

As schools begin to reopen, with everyone returning to classrooms, or restarting school with digital learning at home, or a blend of both home and school, at least one constant will be clear: The K–12educational system as we have known it for decades has changed. While brick and mortar structures remain, teaching practices and the delivery of educational services within those structures will look and feel different. Some changes will come from the outside—state, Federal Government, and for schools located in tribal communities, from the tribal governments. You are getting information about these changes every day. The trick is to stay current in understanding these changes and to take them into account in your planning, and not be overwhelmed. There will be other changes you choose to make for the betterment of the school and the benefit of students.

One of the most trusted voices on managing change and transitions in the workplace is William Bridges. In his bestselling book, *Managing Transitions*, Bridges (2016)[1] reminds us that to deal successfully with change, the leader must be crystal clear during the transitional phase, precisely defining changes that are expected to existing practices.

A. Things That May Have Changed

Things have changed since everyone left their school building a few months ago. Initially, you were challenged to triage the situation. Teachers and staff may have responded by continuing to provide nutritious meals to students in non-traditional ways; creating packets of instructional materials for distribution to students; expanding access to electronic devices and internet services; developing distance learning lessons; rethinking grading policies and longstanding traditions such as proms and graduation ceremonies; and employing innovative technological applications to allow face-to-face communication with students, faculty, staff, and families. These responsive, early actions to this unexpected disruption served to reassure and promote a sense of normalcy.

As shelter-in-place or safer-at-home orders may remain in some of our communities, guidance from state officials and public health leaders continues to emerge, requiring new administrative actions from the principal. Keeping students, as the lens through which all change is considered, initiated, and supported will remain your North Star.

The Need for Social Distancing

Social distancing is one of the most precisely defined components within pandemic guidance resources. Minimum "people spacing or seating" requirements, limitations on the size of group gatherings, and intensified sanitation precautions (e.g., personal protective equipment–PPE, gloves, handwashing stations), will significantly affect schools.

As principal, you have many things to contemplate about what may need to be changed to accommodate social distancing.

[1] Bridges, W. (2016). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change.* MA: Da Capo Lifelong Books.

1. Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

Hygiene and cleaning protocols are critically important in response to COVID-19. You will need answers to a few basic questions, including:

- Are students and staff required to wear a face covering or mask?
- What hygiene practices will students and staff follow?
- What protocols will staff follow for cleaning and disinfecting classrooms, restrooms, sports equipment, cafeterias, playgrounds, and buses?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides resources to support school leaders in reopening schools, including protocols for cleaning and disinfection, frequently asked questions, tips for talking with children, and other useful tools that are updated often.

Please consider actions you can take to support good hygiene and cleaning protocols as suggested in Table 1.

Table 1. Hygiene and Cleaning Suggestions

☐	Remind staff and students to consistently use good hygiene practices to stay healthy and avoid spreading the disease: ☐ Avoid close contact with people who are sick. ☐ Stay home when you are sick. ☐ Cover your cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. ☐ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. ☐ Wash hands often with soap and water (20 seconds). ☐ If you don't have soap, use hand sanitizer (60–95% alcohol based). ☐ Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
☐	Team up with school nurses and local health providers to review your school wellness policies and procedures. Modify them as needed to reflect best practices in preventive health measures.
☐	Place hand washing (or sanitizing) stations in all publicly accessible areas—building entrances, classrooms, restrooms, hallways, cafeterias, libraries, school offices, buses. Be sure that hand washing (or sanitizing) stations are well maintained and stocked.
☐	Determine if any PPE will be required for staff and students. Will the school provide PPE such as face masks for students, staff, and visitors?
☐	Ensure that all janitorial, maintenance, cafeteria, and transportation staff are trained in disinfection protocols and equipped with necessary PPE.
☐	Clean and sanitize high-traffic areas and multi-use items multiple times during the day (e.g., restrooms, computer labs, buses, copy machines, phones, drinking fountains, door handles).

Table 2 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 2. Suggested Resources for Hygiene and Cleaning

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Reopening Schools Scenarios	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet is designed to be used with the Four Scenarios for Instructional Delivery and the Instructional Planning Guide for 2020-2021 produced by the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching. It provides school teams with a structure to determine what "opens," what will be required, and what restrictions will be in place in each of the operational areas.
Social Distancing Guidelines	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet provides practical suggestions and ideas for ways schools can establish and implement the social distancing practices advocated by the CDC.
Implementing Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet provides practical suggestions for how schools can establish appropriate hygiene and cleaning protocols to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus according to CDC guidelines.
Opening and Ending Day Routines	Tip Sheet	Routines and rituals are important activities that can help children, students, and staff feel safe and secure. This tip sheet provides suggestions for opening/ending day rituals and routines that teachers can easily implement in their classrooms.
Four Scenarios for Instructional Delivery Instructional Planning Guide for 2020-2021	Tool Tool	As any teacher, school principal, or district superintendent can tell you, returning to school in periods of normalcy is hard. Doing so in the face of COVID-19, a public health epidemic with extreme uncertainties, will be monumentally difficult. These tools are intended to be used as guides for school administrators as they design their reopening plans for the 2020–21 school year.
Return to School Roadmap | Where Public Education and Public Health Meet	Tool	The roadmap is produced by Opportunity Labs and is informed by evidence-based practices and the direct feedback of epidemiologists, child infectious disease physicians, psychologists, district superintendents, leaders of public charter school management organizations, and school leaders. The tool provides a roadmap of essential actions to help district and school leaders plan and implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Blueprint for Back to School	Document	With many decisions to make, this document provides helpful suggestions and ideas for prioritizing those decisions as schools plan for reopening in six different buckets of work: school operations, whole child supports, school personnel, academics, distance learning, and general considerations.
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Tool	During times of trauma and stress, the creation of a positive culture is critically important. This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.
Considerations for Schools	Website	The CDC website provides suggestions and considerations for ways in which schools can help protect students, teachers, administrators, and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19.
CDC Cleaning Disinfection Tool: Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes	Document/Tool	From the CDC, this document/tool provides a general framework for cleaning and disinfection practices.

2. Use of Public Spaces (Cafeteria, Library, Classrooms, Gymnasium, Buses)

The essence of social distancing is limiting proximity between people. School facilities and activities were not designed for social distancing, yet, that is the reality that everyone must now face. Here are some important questions to answer:

- How many people will be allowed in the cafeteria, library, and auditorium at the same time?
- What are maximum class size numbers, and how will desks and seating in classrooms be reconfigured?
- What effect will social distancing have on arrival and dismissal routines, deployment of personnel, academic clubs or organizations, special ceremonies, and extracurricular activities?

Please consider actions you can take to manage your public spaces as suggested in Table 3.

Table 3. Suggestions for Use of Public Space

☐	Convene a Reopening School Leadership Team to distribute the work of preparing for the return of teachers, staff, and students.
☐	Understand and implement seating/spacing capacity guidelines. Communicate and post in a highly visible manner.
☐	Develop procedures for arrival and dismissal of students. Consider if you will employ a staggered schedule for arrival and dismissal. Be sure to include information about students transported to and from school via multiple modes: school bus, public transit, car, or pedestrian.
☐	Review your School Safety Plan. Will you have to change procedures for fire, severe weather, or intruder drills? Update your plan as warranted to reflect public health officials and the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) guidance.
☐	Design recess and physical education activities to allow sufficient spacing between students. This may involve securing additional recreational equipment and modifying equipment cleaning practices.
☐	Collaborate with organization sponsors, the athletic director, physical education coaches, transportation director, and cafeteria manager to design alternative "people – spacing" arrangements and schedules. For example, modifying the practice schedule for the sports team or band so that fewer students are together at once, hosting virtual programs using video or digital solutions.
☐	Establish policies for extracurricular and athletic events. Address how you will handle practice events, spectator participation, physical contact sports, and equipment disinfection procedures.

Table 4 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 4. Suggested Resources for Use of Public Space

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Blueprint for Back to School	Document	With many decisions to make, this document provides helpful suggestions and ideas for prioritizing those decisions as schools plan for reopening in six different buckets of work: school operations, whole child supports, school personnel, academics, distance learning, and general considerations.
CDC Community-Schools-Childcare FAQs	Website	This site is updated regularly by the CDC and provides answers to frequently asked questions for administrators, teachers, and parents about COVID-19.

3. Campus Visitors – Parents, Visitors, Volunteers

During a typical day, many people cross the threshold of the school door. What will be different when school reopens? For example, will parents still be allowed to visit classrooms and under what conditions? What about visitation protocols for volunteers, student teachers, and vendors?

Please consider actions you can take to prepare for your visitors as suggested in Table 5.

Table 5. Suggestions for Preparing for Visitors

☐	Work with your Reopening School Leadership Team and a representative group of parents to develop clear procedures for campus visitors. Include information that aligns with your school safety plan and addresses social distancing guidance.
☐	Design an alternate process, if needed, for conducting phone or virtual parent-teacher conferences. It is important to keep in close contact with families during the reopening of school transition. They will need frequent updates on their child's adjustment both academically and socially. Remember, students and their families may still be uncertain and fearful about the reopening of schools.
☐	Communicate your desire for continued partnerships with existing volunteers and community partners. Collaborate with these partners to explore new, innovative support roles. For example, hosting a virtual job fair, virtual field trips, recorded book readings, online study, or tutorial groups.
☐	Conduct product reviews or vendor meetings either by phone or virtually.

Table 6 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 6. Suggested Resources to Prepare for Visitors

Suggested resource	Type	Description
National Association of School Nurses and National Association of School Psychologists Publication	Tool	Children and students will have many questions about the pandemic and COVID-19. This resource provides suggestions for how to talk to children and answer their questions about COVID-19. While it is designed for use by parents, the suggestions are applicable for school personnel as well.

4. Schedules and Curriculum

When students across the nation departed their beloved alma mater for the joys of spring break, many had no foreshadowing of the inevitable closure of schools for the remainder of the academic year. As days progressed to weeks, and weeks to months, concern about the loss of opportunity to learn also escalated. As principal, it is your responsibility to determine and execute short-term solutions that have a long-term, significant effect on academic outcomes for students. As your school rallies to reopen, there are many considerations to drive your thinking about what may have changed within the instructional realm, especially schedules and curriculum.

Please consider actions you can take to adjust schedules and curriculum as suggested in Table 7.

Table 7. Suggestions for Adjusting Schedules and Curriculum

☐	Work with teachers, parents, students, and colleagues to implement innovative approaches for scheduling. Consider: » Will all students return to school at once or in a phased approach? » Will students attend on alternative days? How will this be designed? » Will there be a split daily schedule – morning or evening classes? How will this be designed? » Will there be an A/B schedule or year-round or split sessions for students needing in-person supports for a hybrid setting and let others be fully online? » Which students get to come to the building – specific grades, students with disabilities (SWD)? » Will you shift to more distance learning or online course offerings? » Will the school use online curriculum already developed? » Does the school only have students who take a specific number of classes, for example, take three classes at a time to better manage the number of interactions and assignments the school is asking students to do? » How does the school keep parents and students up to date with choices teachers make? » How do you limit the platforms and apps teachers are choosing to use so everyone is familiar?
☐	Review guidance provided from the state/district education departments that relates to course offerings and scheduling. For example, many states and accreditation agencies require a defined number of days and/or hours to assign course credit or to define the academic year. » Determine what flexibilities are available **and** what waivers your school or district may request to modify the academic day, week, term, or year.
☐	Collaborate with university and community colleges to seek additional opportunities for dual credit and distance learning.
☐	Initiate robust, extended year, and/or day learning programming for students, grounded in state standards and individualized student learning pathways.
☐	Review new and revised policies to ensure your school handbook is aligned, keeping in mind that changes should remain grounded in what is best for students.

Table 8 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 8. Suggested Resources for Adjustments to Schedules and Curriculum

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Blueprint for Back to School	Document	With many decisions to make, this document provides helpful suggestions and ideas for prioritizing those decisions as schools plan for reopening in six different buckets of work: school operations, whole child supports, school personnel, academics, distance learning, and general considerations.
Best Practices in Engaging the Next Generation of Students	Document	Online course delivery quickly became the reality for many schools, and may still be a component of return to school plans. This document provides information on best practices in instruction, support services, and student engagement strategies for online course delivery.
Best Practices in Flexible Instructional Days	Document	Flexible school day schedules may be a part of the reopening for schools. This document provides reviews of current literature and best practices on flexible instructional days (FID) to identify challenges that districts commonly face during FID implementation and provides recommendations for solutions and strategies to address these challenges.

5. Instructional Delivery and Approaches

Instructional delivery is no longer limited to face-to-face or paper-pencil delivery modes. Many students are digital natives and may prefer online and digital learning methods that allow for independent, self-paced learning. As principal, you must ensure that your teachers and students are equipped to transition to a more digitally based, remote learning format.

Please consider actions you can take to adjust instructional delivery and approach as suggested in Table 9.

Table 9. Suggestions for Adjusting Instructional Delivery and Approach

☐	Collaborate with technology leaders to design, disseminate, and analyze the availability and accessibility to online learning for both teachers and students. » Assess the equitable access to reliable internet services and devices » Assess the knowledge, skill, and comfort level of staff/students to transition to online learning
☐	Assess the current state of delivery for all courses and all grade-level content. What courses are offered or can be offered through remote learning, distance learning, blended learning, or hybrid formats?
☐	Design, in collaboration with teacher teams, a transition plan to shift to a more online delivery format. This will likely require the revision of course lessons, course syllabi, handbooks, and policies. » Identify priorities for personnel (technicians, instructional designers, support) » Identify technology priorities to support implementation of distance learning opportunities, including devices, network equipment, learning management systems, and digital content
☐	Identify and provide professional development, training, and support to enhance effective daily use of instructional technology by general education teachers, special education teachers, and career and technical education (CTE) teachers, including online or electronic professional development.

Table 10 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 10. Suggested Resources to Adjust Instructional Delivery and Approach

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Four Scenarios for Instructional Delivery Instructional Planning Guide for 2020-2021	Tool Tool	As any teacher, school principal, or district superintendent can tell you, returning to school in periods of normalcy is hard. Doing so in the face of COVID-19, a public health epidemic with extreme uncertainties, will be monumentally difficult. These tools are intended to be used as guides for school administrators as they design their reopening plans for the 2020–21 school year.
Maintaining Student Engagement	Document	Remote learning presents challenges for students and teachers in terms of engagement. This document serves as a resource for teachers seeking to understand best practices and identify strategies for maintaining student engagement during remote learning.
Professional Development Needs Assessment–Survey Instrument	Tool	This tool is a questionnaire that can be used to survey school staff about perceptions of professional development needs and current offerings.
Continuity of Learning Plan Example (Miami) Digital Access Continuum Example of Distance Learning Guidance (Mississippi)	Document	The purpose of these documents is to support local efforts to leverage the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds to implement digital learning programs, and it outlines a broad array of topics related to digital learning.
Resources for Online Learning	Document	To support districts in exploring online learning options, Hanover Research prepared a research review. This review includes links to prior Hanover reports as well as recent resources examining outcomes of online learning and best practices for implementing online learning.
Personalized Learning Handbook	Document	The handbook provides a guide for schools interested in clarifying and organizing the many aspects of personalized learning. Each of the chapters in the book includes a list of action principles for states, districts, and schools to be used as a resource for implementation and sustainability of the principles of personalized learning.

6. The Need for Learning Recovery

One ever-present and very real concern of both educators and families is that of recovering "lost learning." One of the first things teachers will need to do when students return to school is assess their students' current performance levels by content area.

Please consider actions you can take to address the need for learning recovery as suggested in Table 11.

Table 11. Suggestions for Addressing the Need for Learning Recovery

☐	Build in dedicated time for teachers to collaboratively adapt curriculum pacing guides based on priority grade-level expectations and objectives while keeping at the forefront mitigation for the "loss of learning" that may have occurred.
☐	Inventory sources of data that document student academic work while out of school (e.g., parent feedback, submitted assignments, submitted projects).
☐	Administer and analyze diagnostic assessment results by content area and student.
☐	Determine actions that will be implemented immediately to target learning gaps for the most vulnerable or significantly affected groups of students (e.g., SWD, English-language learners (ELLs), homeless students, children in poverty).
Once academic strengths and learning deficits or opportunities are identified, there will be additional decisions you and your teachers will make regarding instruction.	
☐	Schedule time each day for teachers to meet with colleagues in a structured manner to design lessons, analyze student work, develop individualized student learning plans, and leverage their collective expertise.
☐	Work with special education staff and Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to determine assistive technology needed to meet the individual needs of SWD.
☐	Identify students who are on track academically and provide them with accelerated learning programming.
☐	Identify current intervention supports available to students in your school. Are these interventions evidence based, standards aligned, and appropriate for the identified students? Determine additional material and human resources needed to bridge learning gaps.
☐	Keep equity at the forefront as you leverage various funding streams to secure needed intervention support such as tutorial services, extended day/year programs, online course access, computer-based programs, specialized instruction, or a combination of any of these.
☐	Work with teachers and community partners to design innovative, individualized learning pathways for students that link in-school and out-of-school intervention services (e.g., Boys and Girls Clubs, faith-based programs, 21st Century).
☐	Review updated guidance from the state and district officials regarding annual assessment requirements and reporting.

Table 12 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 12. Suggested Resources to Address the Need for Learning Recovery

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Response to Intervention Network	Website	The Response to Intervention website provides valuable information for schools on the essential components of response to intervention: tiered instruction/intervention, ongoing student assessment, and family involvement.
Intervention Central High Leverage Practices		The primary purpose of High-Leverage Practices in Special Education is to provide those involved in special education teacher preparation and professional development with a set of critical practices that every K–12 special education teacher should master.
Personalized Learning Handbook	Document	The handbook provides a guide for schools interested in clarifying and organizing the many aspects of personalized learning. Each of the chapters in the book includes a list of action principles for states, districts, and schools to be used as a resource for implementation and sustainability of the principles of personalized learning.
Learning Loss Discussion Guide	Document	This document is a resource guide designed to help district leaders and others educate stakeholders about how COVID-19 has created new learning gaps for students. The document includes a discussion guide for district and school leaders to use with various working groups, task forces, administrative meetings, etc.

B. Things You May Want to Change

School is a safe haven for children where vast worlds of learning open up to them, and in a post-pandemic world, school rituals and routines may stay the same, may change, and may even improve out of necessity. Children will continue to learn and play surrounded by friends and with the example and guidance of teachers. In *School Culture Rewired: How to Define, Assess, and Transform It*, Gruenert and Whitaker (2015)[2] say routines are things that leaders do to help schools run efficiently, while rituals are the "stylized expressions of …values and beliefs." Routines, performed daily with fidelity, become rituals that followers come to expect and rely upon. The rituals and routines of the school day give students and staff a sense of order, belonging, and common experience with their peers. Students connect with the values, rituals, traditions, and practices that are distinctly their school's very own. How does the school's curriculum teach and honor the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary lives of their students' communities? Each classroom contains its own cues that put students in a mind to learn, to let go of burdens, to thrive. Beginnings and endings each day are great opportunities for common experiences, for happy rituals. The techniques listed below may prompt ideas for how to strengthen your students' common experience and ready them to learn! Practice them with joy!

1. Schoolwide Routines and Practices

Like getting out of and getting into bed on the right side, good days in good schools start and end with good routines. Daily, predictable practices like schoolwide morning greetings, be it in person or over the PA system, can have a comforting, calming effect on students and staff. The same applies to morning announcements, standing and saying in unison the pledge of allegiance, reciting school mottos, and in some cases a daily learning challenge inspires students to do their best, knowing that their teachers and principal are there to help. Students look forward to that routine of a midday lunch break from their learning where they have a chance to refuel not only their bodies, but their friendships and their stamina so that they are ready to return to an afternoon of more learning. And perhaps as important as getting the school day off to a good start are the culminating or ending of the day routines. Maybe end the day with special traditions or ceremonies that reinforce important community or tribal values and norms as well as remind students that they worked hard in school, they have gained new knowledge and skills, strengthened their learning habits, and have lots to share with their families when they get home. The daily routines and practices in your school can be the conduits for reinforcing essential knowledge about the community, and for schools located in tribal communities, sharing and strengthening tribal values and cultural attributes.

[2] Gruenert, S., & Whitaker, T. (2015). School culture rewired: How to define, assess, and transform it. VA: ASCD.

Please consider actions you can take to renew schoolwide routines and practices as suggested in Table 13.

Table 13. Suggestions to Renew Schoolwide Routines and Practices

☐	Identify and/or establish a predictable, done with fidelity, schoolwide morning routine/ritual such as announcements, the pledge of allegiance, flag raisings, morning greetings, reciting your school motto, etc.
☐	Define and adhere to a procedure to smoothly usher in staff and students to the building and their respective classrooms.
☐	Revisit curriculum to ascertain those lessons that uphold the culture and values of the students and families represented in your school and community.
☐	Develop and implement lunchtime routines that simultaneously meet student dietary, social, and safety standards in a post-pandemic world.
☐	Strengthen your school's positive culture by adopting and infusing routines and rituals that represent and honor the uniqueness of the community the school serves.
☐	Implement an end of the day routine that celebrates the day and/or certain groups or individual accomplishments.

Table 14 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 14. Suggested Resources for Renewing Schoolwide Routines and Practices

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Tool	This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.
Routine, Ritual, and School Community	Website	Routines and rituals are important activities that can help children, students, and staff feel safe and secure. This website provides examples of ways that school and classroom leaders can build a sense of community through the use of routines.
Inspirational Good Morning Messages: Motivational Quotes and Wishes	Website	This site provides lists of motivational quotes and inspiring messages that teachers and others can use to support positive school/classroom environments.
Essential Understandings Framework | Native Knowledge 360°	Website	The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) *Native Knowledge 360° Essential Understandings About American Indians* is a framework that offers new possibilities for creating student learning experiences. Building on the 10 themes of the National Council for the Social Studies' national curriculum standards, the NMAI's *Essential Understandings* reveal key concepts about the rich and diverse cultures, histories, and contemporary lives of Native Peoples. These concepts reflect a multitude of untold stories about American Indians that can deepen and expand your teaching of history, geography, civics, economics, science, engineering, and other subject areas.
Smooth, Swift and Efficient Classroom Transitions – Why Are They Important?	Website	This site provides information on why transitions are important for the efficient functioning of classrooms and provides practical suggestions for teachers to build smooth transitions into their classrooms.
The Top 10 List for Creating a Positive School Culture	Tool	This tool is a list of 10 ideas for creating a positive school culture.

2. Classroom Routines and Practices

What would Harry Wong say? He and his wife in their highly acclaimed book, *The First days of School; How to be an Effective Teacher* (Wong & Wong, 1998),[3] offer practical, evidence-based advice to teachers on how to establish classroom management through the use of practiced routines and procedures. Poor behavior is often the byproduct of the absence of routines. Most important, teachers have to TEACH procedures that will eventually become routines. First, they explain, model, or demonstrate the procedure. Next, teachers must rehearse and practice the procedure with the class, and finally, when students get reinforced with praise and lots of practice, the procedure will become the routine.

Wong believes classrooms must have norms; agreed upon and accepted, expected behavior. Norms must be reinforced and consequences applied if disregarded. Consistency is key.

Another precursor to classroom misbehavior can be traced to a lack in student engagement. How can active student engagement be increased? A few successful strategies that teachers can employ are active student response methods like choral response, using response cards, and guided notes.

Discussion is the heart of learning.

- What student discussion protocols do teachers use to promote civil discourse and help classmates listen to and build upon each other's thinking?
- Do teachers ask higher order thinking questions, ones that require more than a yes or no response and require students to go back to the text to defend their reasoning?
- What procedures are in place to smoothly handle classroom materials as well as orderly transitions between content and/or classrooms?

Technology cannot replace the teacher as we were all reminded during the stay-at-home orders that closed many of the nation's schools.

- Upon return to school, is technology use appropriate and does it serve as a vehicle for learning rather than a replacement for the teacher?

Classrooms can and should be incubators for success. A hallmark of a classroom environment that breeds success is frequent and timely feedback from the teacher. Teachers need to let students know when they are succeeding and just what skills are contributing to that success. Teachers, through reflective feedback, support students to mastery.

[3] Wong, J. K., & Wong, R. T. (1998). *The first days of school: How to be an effective teacher*. CA: Harry K. Wong Publications.

Please consider actions you can take to renew classroom routines and practices as suggested in Table 15.

Table 15. Suggestions to Renew Classroom Routines and Practices

☐	On the first day students return to classrooms, seek their input on establishing post-pandemic norms that support safety and successful learning.
☐	Commit to modeling, practicing, and reinforcing the agreed upon classroom norms so that they become standard operating routines.
☐	Respond quickly and consistently to students who disregard the norms.
☐	Discontinue asking yes/no questions and instead ask higher order questions that promote critical thinking.
☐	Build transition procedures into your norms.
☐	Continue to use available technologies as vehicles for learning, not as a replacement for the teacher.
☐	Create a safe classroom environment that supports students through their struggles and celebrates their successes.
☐	Circulate the classroom giving reflective, frequent, timely feedback that lets students know when they are "getting it" and lets students know when they are not "getting it" with the reassurance of added support until they do "get it."

Table 16 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 16. Suggested Resources to Renew Classroom Routines and Practices

Suggested resource	Type	Link (URL)
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Tool	This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.
Classroom Routines and Schedules for Teachers	Tool	This tool provides teachers with practical suggestions for setting up routines and procedures on the first day back. New teachers will find this resource particularly valuable.
Back-to-School Resources, Lessons & Printables	Website	This website has multiple resources, including lesson plans, activities, and advice ranging from assisting students in learning the school's layout and taking attendance, to learning names. There are suggestions for icebreakers for getting to know students' personalities, advice on seating charts and arranging the classroom, teacher timesavers, behavior management tips from veteran teachers, advice for communicating with parents, and much more.
Higher Order Thinking Skills Question Templates	Document	This document provides question starters for the higher order thinking categories of recall, analysis, comparison, inference, and evaluation.
Harry Wong Characteristics of an Effective Teacher — The Busy Educator	Website	This website provides a summary of major concepts covered by Harry Wong in his book, *The First Days of School*. Additional links are included that allow users to hear actual interviews with Harry Wong on the topics of classroom management, behavior problems, discipline, and more.
Norming: A Practice That Encourages Social/Emotional Competency	Document	This document provides information on norming as an important factor in developing positive classroom and school culture. The document provides direction for teachers on how to establish norms in the school/classroom.
Enhancing Motivation Through Active Student Response	Document	This document provides information and specific suggestions for how to incorporate active student response during instruction. Procedures are clearly described for choral responding, response cards, and guided notes. Additional strategies are also briefly discussed.
37 Classroom Rules for Student Success	Document	This document lists 37 rules as a way to help teachers get started with creating classroom rules of their own. The list is downloadable.

Communication

Everyone wants to feel informed, and no one likes to be the last to know. Even during a regular school year, the school may face challenges in communicating with students and their families. Given the current pandemic, providing clear and consistent communication in a timely manner is extremely vital. Therefore, a plan to communicate with all school stakeholders becomes paramount when delivering information and ensuring that the information is communicated in a manner for all to receive and understand. In consideration of dual language or monolingual communities, including for schools located in tribal communities, efforts should be made to identify individuals or groups who can translate messages from English to families' home language(s).

There are universal steps inherent in an effective communication plan to ensure systematic information sharing within and outside the school. For example, communication can take many forms, but should take the form that is most easily and readily received by the staff and students and families. These approaches might occur verbally; one-on-one; in person; in a group; at the school; before, during, or after the school day; out in the parking lots; via telephone; robocalls; special events; open houses; or even with a visit to a home. For schools located in tribal communities, there may be extended family members who reside inside the student's home, so include all members of the tribal home when communicating about school-related matters.

A. Creating (or Revising) Your Communication Plan

Communication involves more than the sharing and collection of information. It is the foundation for a healthy relationship, which establishes trust through listening, collaboration, and partnership. Communication is a two-way street. As you are eager to reopen school to returning students, staff, families, and community, you will also want to hear from them. Developing an effective communication plan will ensure everyone is receiving information and is also able to submit feedback in a timely manner.

In the absence of an internal and external school communication plan, critical and impactful information may be missed or misconstrued. Principals can strengthen connections and relationships within the school building between adults and students as well as outside the building with families and the larger community when addressing the social fabric within a student's home and their community.

Building the communication capacity of those you lead should be part of the plan. Communicating within your school to the teachers and staff is as important as communicating outside the school. Good practices include being a champion and good role model for clear and consistent communication. Being a model for good communication is key and develops your integrity as a leader. We all understand that actions speak louder than words. One clear sign to model good communication is to be a good listener. Build time in the communication plan to listen to teachers, students and families, and staff. Now that you have included and dedicated time to listen to key stakeholders in the plan, what is it you wish to hear, to learn, and to know that will best serve your school?

Getting information you need and want will be dependent on another communication skill; that of asking the right questions. Asking questions that focus on the teachers, staff, student and family well-being should also be considered in an effort to help all feel at ease and be open to continued communication. In addition, now that you have a plan that supports internal communication, consider a school communication plan that requires teachers and other support staff to contact students at minimum intervals to strengthen school-to-home and home-to-school connections. A schedule for those school-to-home contacts and a predeveloped script could be used for all staff to keep the messages the same. In the early days of a return to school, sensible starting questions include: How are you and your family doing? Is everyone staying safe and healthy? Encourage communications that promote questions to show concern for the student and family, which will build better community relationships and help put everyone at ease. Before the teacher launches into any curriculum/lesson questions, encourage instructors to avoid invasive, very personal questions, and opt for those that show appropriate concern.

Remember that old saying, if you want to catch fish, fish where the fish swim? If your stakeholders were fish and you wanted to catch them, or at least catch their attention, you need to fish where they swim. The internet and social media provide huge ponds of opportunities that cannot be ignored in your communication plan.

What about your school website? First impressions last, and in today's world, a school website can be the first impression your school makes with students and their families. Chances are, after this stay-at-home period, parents and students have relied on a school website as a primary information and communication source.

But to be an effective communication resource, there are several important factors that the best school websites maintain. Plan to keep it current and accurate, as incorrect, old, and obsolete information will serve to usurp your credibility. Stakeholders will not return to the website if they sense it is unreliable and not kept up. Plan to keep the school website a shrine for information not a technology showcase. It can become the one-stop shop for information seekers and a primary communication vehicle, so, plan carefully what information is and will be housed on it. Peruse other school websites in your area and "borrow" ideas on what sorts of information are valuable. Better yet, ask parents and students what information they would most like to find on the school website. Building it with easy navigation, attractive branding, and valuable information ensures that more stakeholders will come back to a trusted place for current communication.

Plan to find out at what levels students and their families are engaged in and using social media technologies. Social media vehicles can be powerful tools to capture the attention of students and parents and can serve as "ticklers and teasers" for more in-depth information housed on the school website. Used wisely and well, social media messages can serve to engage those who previously had not been part of the school's communication plan.

Please consider actions you can take to develop a communication plan as suggested in Table 17.

Table 17. Suggestions for Developing a Communication Plan

☐	Identify how information is currently shared and received, and determine which communication systems work, which do not, and which can be strengthened.
☐	Communicate the rationale supporting school reopening.
☐	Identify school and community ready **access** and **barriers** to receiving and sending information.
☐	Identify which languages are spoken in and outside the school. Work to secure translators/interpreters to assist in relaying all communications.
☐	Design and implement a systems approach for an effective communication plan/process.
☐	Identify the target audience and the mode to best use for information dissemination.
☐	Remember that your school may open, close, and reopen, so your communication plan should be based on these contingencies.
☐	Your communication plan should take into account that you may begin or continue virtual learning. The plan should include the method(s) that your staff will communicate with their students and families. Scripted school messages will ensure that a unified and collective message is provided to the student and their family.
☐	Questions that focus on the student and family well-being should also be considered in an effort to help the student and family feel at ease and be open to continued communication.
☐	You will want a school plan that requires teachers and other support staff to contact students at minimum intervals, such as weekly.
☐	Plan on employing a variety of in-school communication strategies for different audiences, including teachers, administrators, support staff, residential staff, specialists, cafeteria, office, custodial, facilities, ancillary, and volunteers.
☐	When using the telephone: » Make person-to-person calls as opposed to sending pre-recorded messages. » Use your emergency phone tree only as a tool to ensure all staff have received communication from your office
☐	When using email: » Use email to communicate with staff, but be cognizant that not all staff may have access to the internet. Perhaps, when sending emails, use your email function that asks for a "Read Receipt," which will help you to identify if the staff member has received your email » Monitor e-mails; your staff may provide you with ideas and tools via email to help improve communication
☐	When using an in-person staff meeting: » This method should be implemented only after consulting or referencing your school's expectations and standard procedures as a result of the pandemic
☐	When using direct mail: » While an effective method to communicate, timeliness may affect the receipt of communication

- ☐ When using online meeting platforms:
  - » There are several platforms to conduct online meetings; select a platform that meets your school's safety requirements and is compatible with your school's technology devices
  - » Training will need to be completed to ensure all parties are confident in using the selected meeting platform
- ☐ Plan on employing a variety of out-of-school communication strategies for different audiences.

Table 18 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 18. Suggested Resources to Develop a Communication Plan

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Communication Considerations for Schools in Tribal Communities	Tip Sheet	Schools serving tribal communities maintain special relationships with the tribes, tribal councils, tribal elders, and Tribal Education Agencies (TEAs). This tip sheet reminds the principal of appropriate and respectful means of communication.
Template: Develop a Communication Plan in Nine Steps	Tool	A communication plan defines the approach that a program will use to communicate with communities. It helps ensure systematic information sharing and two-way communication. The nine steps in this template address the key aspects that programs should consider.
Chapter 6. Communications to Promote Interest | Section 1. Developing a Plan for Communication | Main Section	Tool	Developing a communication plan can help focus your message and reach your target audience. A plan can also influence the efficiency and simplicity of your communication methods. This tool looks at what a communication plan entails, how and when to create one, and how to use a communication plan to raise awareness about the issues facing your school community.
Resources: Coronavirus Communications	Website	PRNEWS put together a list of resources for easy access, along with links to all of their COVID-19 coverage.
How to Create a Communications Plan for Reopening		PRNEWS has information about creating a communication plan for reopening work sites, but it contains exclusive content that requires activating a subscription for access.
Tribal Communications Resources	Website	The National Congress of American Indians has multiple resources on this website to help strengthen communications efforts throughout tribal communities.
Working Effectively With Tribal Governments	Document	This document is a pdf of a webinar that outlines how employees of the Environmental Protection Agency can work effectively with tribal governments.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
COVID-19 Crisis Communications: Long-Term Planning	Document	Many governmental agencies and other sources are predicting that the COVID-19 pandemic may last for many more months and the long-term cultural effects of the pandemic have yet to be seen, and as a result, many organizations may need to adopt longer-term crisis communications strategies that address their ability to weather this extended period of adversity while communicating a hopeful vision for the future. This document provides observations on how crisis management teams should adjust their strategic communications plans in the wake of COVID-19.
Communications Best Practices During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Document	Building robust communications plans is not always top of mind for schools, particularly those with smaller staffs where people wear many hats. However, in times of crises it can become apparent how important being able to communicate with your stakeholders really is. This document provides some helpful tips for building a proper communications plan in the midst of a crisis and constructing effective, audience-specific messages.

B. Welcoming Everyone Back

Experience with major disruptions and natural disasters has taught us that everyone returns to school changed from when they left—teachers, students, parents, staff, and, yes, principals and administrators. For most of us, school is a place of safety, security, happiness, activity, friendship, and joy. You want to be sure that is even truer this year. But some return also with a degree of confusion over what has happened, what caused school to close, what will happen now. Those anxieties deserve your attention, to lead everyone back to secure ground. Many of us have rediscovered family warmth and fun and did well with our time at home. But for others, close quarters with other people for days on end led to conflict and even abuse. For a few of us, closeness to death or disruptive, unhealthy behavior by those close to us has affected us in ways that need healing.

The principal's communication with staff, students, families, and the school community at this time, should focus on facts and discussions that provide reassurance that the school is prioritizing the safety and health of everyone. Some staff and students/families will need time to re-acclimate to the school setting and will have many questions regarding safety and health measures the school has taken and will promote when schools reopen.

Within your communication plan, you will want to anticipate how teachers, as a whole faculty, may want to communicate with families, and how individual teachers may want to communicate with their students and students' families. Again, communication is not only the outflow of information, but also opportunities to hear from and learn from others.

Table 19 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 19. Suggested Resources for Welcoming Everyone Back

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Gathering Feedback From Students, Families, Teachers	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet was designed to provide principals and other school leaders with examples of practical ways to gather feedback from students and families and staff in preparation for the reopening of schools. The questions provided are examples of the kinds of questions each school might want to ask and can be modified and adapted to fit each school's needs. The tip sheet also provides suggestions for how to analyze and share the feedback with the broader school community.
Developing a Message Map (see Appendix)	Tip Sheet	A method that is recognized and recommended for developing consistent messages during an emergency is the use of message maps. Message maps are a useful tool that provide factual information about the emergency that can be shared quickly. This tip sheet provides information on how to create a message map to address questions and concerns that may arise as schools reopen.
Engaging ELL Families: Tips for School Leaders	Tool	School leaders are in a unique position to create a culture of success within their school community. As with other students, an important aspect of ELL success is family engagement. This guide offers twenty big ideas to help principals create a comprehensive ELL family engagement plan.
Making the Connection: Communicating With ELLs and Their Families During School Closures	Document/Tool	Connecting with ELLs and their families at this moment can pose big challenges due to language and technology access. This document includes multiple tools, resources, and tips for collaboration.
COVID-19 Communications Plan – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)	Document/Tool	Health news can change rapidly, so schools will need to be vigilant about communicating information that is vital to parents in a number of different ways. This document is an example of a communications plan from a school district in Texas with a large ELL population.

C. Connecting With Students and Their Families

Communication with all school stakeholders will be paramount, and must include the school staff, students, students' families, and the school community. For schools located in tribal communities, principals should reach out and engage the social fabric of the tribal community. While schools seek to open, in classrooms, at home, or both, there may be hesitation from the students, their families, and staff members.

John Hattie (2009)[4] tells us that learners want to know two things about their teachers. Students want to believe that their teachers know them and that their teachers care about them. If kids care that teachers know them, how do teachers learn about their students in disruptive times like this? Channels and methods of communication now must be planned and provided that allow students to let their teachers know them, their interests, passions, dreams, dislikes, fears, successes, and challenges. This learning about the student is imperative because a teacher cannot help a learner overcome a barrier to learning if the teacher does not see and understand that obstacle. It is in the learning *about* that fosters the relationship *between*.

Please consider actions you can take to connect with students and families as suggested in Table 20.

Table 20. Suggestions for Connecting With Students and Their Families

☐	Gather feedback about your students and their stay-at-home learning experience, successes, and struggles.
☐	Plan to get to know and care about your students so they will be confident in you, their teacher, and in the learning you support them through.
☐	Plan to learn and understand every student's interests, passions, dreams, motivations, fears, hesitations, and challenges to better prepare for their learning experience.
☐	Gather feedback from families regarding their digital teaching and learning stay-at-home experiences.
☐	Gather feedback from teachers about their remote, digital online teaching experience.
☐	Develop a list of Frequently Asked Questions With Answers to help relieve hesitations and anxiety.
☐	Provide opportunities for students and their families to share expectations and hopes for the reopening of school and the coming academic year.

[4] Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Table 21 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 21. Suggested Resources for Connecting With Students and Their Families

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Gathering Feedback From Students, Families, Teachers	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet was designed to provide principals and other school leaders with examples of practical ways to gather feedback from students and families and staff in preparation for the reopening of schools. The questions provided are examples of the kinds of questions each school might want to ask, and can be modified and adapted to fit each school's needs. The tip sheet also provides suggestions for how to analyze and share the feedback with the broader school community.
Effective Communication – ELL Considerations	Tip Sheet	Prepared by The National Content Center and based on information from Colorín Colorado!, this tip sheet provides suggestions for communicating with families to position students who are ELLs and their families for success during this time.
Supporting Students With Disabilities and Their Families	Tip Sheet	Prepared by The National Content Center and based on information from the National Center for Learning Disabilities, this tip sheet provides some suggestions for communicating with families to position your students with disabilities and their families for success during this time.
Communication Resources	Website	This is the CDC website and the link connects to the page of a variety of communication resources including guidance documents, videos, social media toolkit, digital press kit, and Spanish communication resources.
School Community Network	Website	The School Community Network website is loaded with materials for engaging families, students, and teachers in a school community focused on learning. See especially resources on communication.
CDC Communication Toolkit for Limited English	Website	This CDC toolkit is especially helpful for communication among migrant families, refugees, and other limited-English-proficient populations.

Collaboration

Collaboration. "Co" = together and "labor"= work.

Collaboration is the way in which we work together and learn together. Collaboration is different from cooperation or coordination in that, together, people direct their thinking and energies around a shared vision, and together *something new* and improved emerges as a result of that combined effort. If the notion that ***every child returns to a school that is even better than the one the student left*** becomes your school's shared vision, what system is in place to promote a culture of collaboration in your school? W. Edwards Deming (1993)[5] reminds us that a bad system will beat a good person every time. In a good system where the principal, teachers, staff, students, and families embrace a culture of collaboration that becomes the common, routine practice in your school, it can be the connecting tissue of your community. Collaboration that focuses on practices in your school will aid in improving those practices. The *Jump-Starting Instructional Transformation for Rapid School Improvement: A Guide*, (Redding, 2019)[6] tells us that the intent of practice-focused collaboration is not just to improve implementation of a given practice, but to begin to socialize a collegial, productive, and nonthreatening process for examining and continuously improving so that collaboration might become a norm at your school.

A. Making Decisions and Working Together

When thinking about how best to work together to make informed decisions about reopening schools after a longer than usual time apart, here are some questions to consider.

- What if this was a brand-new school and we were all new leaders, teachers, and staff?
- How would you get to know each other?
- How would you make decisions about your school? How would you handle problems that arise?
- How would you work together to keep improving your professional practices for the benefit of your students?
- How would you collaborate around a shared vision, outcome, or goal, to create something new, something better, together?
- Will you consider how decisions are currently made in your school and how different groups are involved, especially teachers, staff, families, and students, but also vested stakeholders like community groups?
- How will you begin to engage with this population, now, in your preparation for a return to school?

There is lots to think about, and **before** school reopens, is the time to think and prepare.

[5] Deming, W. E. (1993). Seminar speech, Phoenix, AR.
[6] Redding, S. (2019). Jump-starting instructional transformation for rapid school improvement: A guide for principals. CA: Center on School Turnaround at WestEd.

1. Envisioning New Ways to Work Together

Collaboration does not occur in a silo with one person making important decisions. Productive collaboration occurs in teams of people inputting their best thinking and energy to work together toward the same output. If the team does "x," then "y" should be the result.

Please consider actions you can take to work together in new ways as suggested in Table 22.

Table 22. Suggestions to Envision New Ways to Work Together

☐	Collaborate and decide when, why, and where teams will meet. For instance, ask, Are the teams meeting regularly over data analysis, instructional planning, by grade level and vertically, by content area and department?
☐	Choose a common template for team meeting agendas that include required minutes/notes to keep a history of the work done in and by teams.
☐	Collaborate and decide on success metrics for teamwork.
☐	Adopt a structure for teachers to give each other reflective feedback on their plans and on their instruction.

Table 23 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 23. Suggested Resources for Envisioning New Ways to Work Together

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Planning a Collaborative Meeting	Tip Sheet	Effective collaborations, including meetings, require planning and structure, especially in situations where there is urgency to arrive at the best decisions. This tip sheet provides school administrators with a step-by-step process that can be used to set up effective meetings.
Tools & Training Modules Getting Better in Teams	Tool	School improvement takes teams of people working together toward the same goals. This tool is a professional development training module that includes a PowerPoint, activities, and a quiz to assess learning.
Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: Indicators of Effective Practice	Document	Rapid school improvement, known most commonly as school turnaround, has emerged as a focus of dramatic and systemic efforts aimed at giving students better schools. The indicators presented in this document are expressed in plain language by design so school, district, and state teams can identify with greater certainty whether a relevant practice from the four domains is standard and routinely operational in their part of the education system or whether more work is needed.
Jump-Starting Instructional Transformation for Rapid School Improvement: A Guide for Principals – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Document/ Tool	This guide rests on the research and practice base of Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement described above. This guide includes tools and other resources that may be used to support principals in transforming their schools.
Indicators in Action	Tool	Indicators in Action provides an explanation and videos of indicators of effective instructional and leadership practices. The tool can be used for professional development, faculty meetings, workshops, and for individual educator development.
Principals: Our advice and resources for establishing instructional leadership teams	Website	Based on the research and experiences from the field, it is evident that without effective leaders who are able to focus on instruction and instructional leadership, meeting the needs of all students remains out of reach. The Center for Educational Leadership provides some helpful information for how to establish and support the development and growth of an effective instructional leadership team.

2. Getting a Grip on Data

So much data, so little time. Generally, most schools collect a lot of data. So much in fact that it is sometimes helpful to conduct a data inventory that reveals what is assessed and collected, when is it assessed and collected, when do results arrive, who gets those results, what do they respond to or how do they act upon the results? Often, teams spend much of their time analyzing and strategizing over the data, but the rubber meets the road when those teachers ACT upon or respond to the data by adjusting instruction. Is the data summative or formative? Doing a data inventory now can help teams collaborate and make decisions about current and future assessments. Collaboration can help teams determine what data is worth collecting and why, and eliminate obsolete or duplicative assessments.

Please consider actions you can take to get a grip on data as suggested in Table 24.

Table 24. Suggestions to Get a Grip on Data

☐	Conduct a data inventory to make collaborative decisions about what data should be analyzed and why. The inventory will help establish when data is collected, when it is available for review, if any assessments are duplicative in the data that is gained, and what data is missing that should be collected.
☐	Establish protected, dedicated time for team meetings to analyze, strategize, and act upon the data.
☐	Develop a plan for assessing students' learning progress — both losses and gains when students return.
☐	Focus data conversations on multiple forms of assessment like diagnostics, formative assessments, student work, conferences, advisories, and parent feedback to gauge student progress.
☐	Collaborate to decide how, post pandemic, teachers will honor and account for data from any student work that was submitted during remote learning, along with feedback from parents.

Table 25 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 25. Suggested Resources for Getting a Grip on Data

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Conducting a Data Inventory	Tip Sheet	Gathering and analyzing student and school data will be important to determine the effect of the long absence from school for many students. This tip sheet provides simple guidelines for conducting a data inventory and provides a template for use.
NESA NOTES Handout October 20-21, 2011	Document	This document is a pdf of a presentation made by Victoria Bernhardt and describes a variety of processes by which schools can make sense of the data available for school improvement and decision making.
Data Driven Dialogue	Tool	This dialogue tool was created by the School Reform Initiative and can be used to facilitate discussion around databased facts, examine patterns and trends of performance indicators, and generate "root cause" discussions that move from identifying symptoms to possible causes of student performance. To effectively use this tool, educators will need to have grade level, school, or district data reports.
https://www.nasdse.org/idea_data_center_idc.php	Website	The IDEA Data Center (IDC) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to provide technical assistance to build capacity within states for collecting, reporting, analyzing, and using high-quality IDEA Part B data. The website has links that provide a variety of information for effectively serving students with disabilities.

3. Making up for Lost Time—Planning, Providing, Adjusting, and Enhancing Instruction

While your school will care for the whole person of the child and set goals to ensure that every student is on track for success socially and emotionally, learning as a result of teaching is the main business of schools.

In the Return to School Roadmap, the Opportunity Labs Foundation recommends that teachers practice intentional curriculum planning in alignment with curriculum maps, pacing guides, schedules, and calendars. Beyond shoring up the school's instructional blueprint, collaborative discussion can help teachers make planning decisions to onboard returning and new students, re-establish the classroom environment, particularly in a post-pandemic setting, reset routines according to new guidance, and reinforce the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships with students and families.

Practice-focused collaboration can assist schools in jumpstarting school transformation. Once you establish a routine for collaborating with teachers (and teachers with each other) to focus on everyone's professional practices, any existing outstanding instructional strategies seem to spread from classroom to classroom and teachers collectively begin to invest in strengthening all aspects of their instruction. A good instructional system operates on four stages:

- PLANNING by instructional teams and individual teachers based on standards alignment and lesson design that includes a clear objective, success metrics, sound instructional strategies, and preparation of materials.
- PROVIDING the planned lessons, giving special attention to the classroom culture and the norms students adhere to that maximize learning, delivering the lesson using a variety of instructional modes such as whole group, small group, guided practice, independent practice, and close consideration of interactions between teachers and students as well as among students.
- ADJUSTING the lesson plans based on formative assessment data, self-reflection, and collaborative peer feedback, to always improve the lessons for the next time they are provided.
- ENHANCING basic lesson plans to include instructional strategies for personalizing the content and skills for learners, differentiating the lesson to match individual student needs and interests, and strengthening the students' skills as learners and building their habits of learning.

Please consider actions you can take to make up for lost time as suggested in Table 26.

Table 26. Suggestions to Make Up for Lost Time

☐	Decide reasonable academic expectations for your students by the end of the 2020-2021 school year.
☐	Decide on your school's system of instruction with stages for planning, providing, adjusting, and enhancing instruction.
☐	Revisit the current lesson plan template to ensure it provides fields for all instruction modes.
☐	Decide how planning is accomplished: In teams or by individuals, within grade levels, departments, or across grades and departments. When? What is expected? Who is the leader? What is documented, turned in, and inspected?
☐	Consider how you will "inspect for your expects" so that expectations become the accepted and respected norm.
☐	Decide how to best ascertain that anchor content and skills were not overlooked during the school closure period.
☐	Plan to assess content and skill retention and mastery when learners return to the classroom.
☐	Be ready to implement, to whatever extent allowed, extracurricular offerings.
☐	Determine which digital and online learning experiences during the stay-at-home orders seem to have been most effective and may still be useful when school reopens or if school recloses.

Table 27 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 27. Suggested Resources to Make Up for Lost Time

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Return to School Roadmap | Where Public Education and Public Health Meet	Tool	The roadmap is produced by Opportunity Labs and is informed by evidence-based practices and the direct feedback of epidemiologists, child infectious disease physicians, psychologists, district superintendents, leaders of public charter school management organizations, and school leaders. The tool provides a roadmap of essential actions to help district and school leaders plan and implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school.
Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: Powerful Framework Bolsters Turnaround Efforts	Document	To support educators in creating cohesive systems that support school turnaround, WestEd, in collaboration with the Academic Development Institute and University of Virginia, developed this document. The framework outlines four domains that research has shown to be central to rapid, significant, and sustainable school improvement: *Turnaround Leadership*, *Talent Development*, *Instructional Transformation*, and *Culture Shift*. Geared toward administrators and educators, the framework offers examples of how staff at each level of the system, state, district, and school can implement strategic practices to address each of these critical domains.
Jump-Starting Instructional Transformation for Rapid School Improvement: A Guide for Principals – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Document/ Tool	This guide rests on the research and practice base of *Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement* described above. This guide includes tools and other resources that may be used to support principals in transforming their schools.
Indicators in Action	Tool	Indicators in Action provides an explanation and videos of indicators of effective instructional and leadership practices. The tool can be used for professional development, faculty meetings, workshops, and individual educator development.
Teacher Collaboration During a Global Pandemic - Educational Leadership	Website	Millions of families around the world and the many dedicated educators who continue to serve them are navigating school closures and sudden shifts to new ways of learning due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. This article from *Educational Leadership* provides 5 key ideas for how teachers and others can continue to connect with each other, plan around diverse student needs, and figure out what works in virtual environments.

B. Building a Strong School Community

Think of a school community as the people who have an intimate association with a school. Who would that be? Students and their families, teachers, administrators, other staff, and volunteers who are closely connected to the school. They are also connected with one another, and the stronger the connections, the more "social capital" is available to the students. Social capital is an asset, like human capital (what people know and can do) and physical capital (buildings and equipment). Social capital resides in the bonds among people, their obligations to one another, what they can expect from each other. A strong school community generates strong social capital, and it is a very valuable asset for everyone, especially the students. A strong school community also requires planning, management, shared responsibilities, and lots of communication. The time is right to strengthen connections. You, the principal, are the key.

1. Identifying What (Still) Makes Your School Community Unique

Why do schools have mascots? Why do schools have names and aren't just numbers, as they are in some big cities—PS107, for example? Names and mascots and school colors are ways to connect the people in a school community to the school and to each other. It is what they have "in common." It differentiates them from any other school, and any other group of people connected to a school. How else is your school unique? Its history, the history of the people who surround it, its values, what it excels at, its customs, its rituals, its traditions are all part of your school's uniqueness. The shared uniqueness is what students, years after graduating from a school, look back on with fondness in their memories—the experiences they had in common. So do teachers.

How much is everyone in your school community aware of what they have in common? Just making a list of the ways the school is unique, what the members of its community have in common, is a start toward emphasizing these elements and intentionally building everyone's understanding of them.

Please consider actions you can take to identify what makes your school community unique as suggested in Table 28.

Table 28. Suggestions to Identify Your School Community's Unique Qualities

☐	Construct a list of your school's unique qualities, characteristics, traditions, and practices with a group of teachers and parents (and in high schools, some students). This is a healthy, community-building activity.
☐	For each of the items in your list of school's unique qualities, characteristics, traditions, and practices, work with your group to write statements to clarify values, add customs and rituals, and create new "common experiences" to share.

Table 29 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 29. Suggested Resources to Identify Your School Community's Unique Qualities

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action	Tool	Community schools have always rooted their work in a solid body of research about what it takes to promote student success, including parental involvement in children's education, rich and engaging out-of-school experiences, student wellness, and family stability. The National Center for Community Schools produced this guide to provide schools with a structure to create a plan to develop an array of partnerships in the areas of health, social services, academics for children and adults, sports, recreation, and culture.
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Tool	This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.
Communities In Schools	Website	Communities In Schools is a national dropout prevention organization. For 40 years, Communities In Schools has used a case management approach to confront the numerous road blocks keeping vulnerable students from graduation. The website provides information on a variety of topics for how schools can bring community resources into schools to empower success for all students by removing barriers for students at risk of dropping out, keeping kids in school and on the path to graduation and leveraging evidence, relationships, and local resources to drive results.
School Community Network	Website	The School Community Network (SCN) website provides resources, training, and tools to build strong school communities focused on student learning.
Handbook on Family and Community Engagement	Document	This handbook is intended to provide educators, community leaders, and parents with a succinct survey of the best research and practice accumulated over the years on the various topics related to family and community engagement.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: Powerful Framework Bolsters Turnaround Efforts	Document	Rapid school improvement known most commonly as school turnaround has emerged as a focus of dramatic and systemic efforts aimed at giving students better schools. The indicators presented in this document are expressed in plain language by design so school, district, and state teams can identify with greater certainty whether a relevant practice from the four domains is standard and routinely operational in their part of the education system or whether more work is needed.
Four Domains for Rapid School Improvement: Indicators of Effective Practice	Document	Rapid school improvement known most commonly as school turnaround has emerged as a focus of dramatic and systemic efforts aimed at giving students better schools. The indicators presented in this document are expressed in plain language by design so school, district, and state teams can identify with greater certainty whether a relevant practice from the four domains is standard and routinely operational in their part of the education system or whether more work is needed.
Indicators in Action – School Community	Tool/Video	Indicators in Action provides an explanation and videos of indicators of effective instructional and leadership practices. The tool can be used for professional development, faculty meetings, workshops, and individual educator development.

2. Engaging Your Families

In a previous section, Communication, we discussed why communication is so critical at this time, given everyone's uncertainties about a world that has changed so abruptly. Families of students harbor great hesitations and anxieties now because the safety of their children is at stake. Teachers and staff may have their own children to be concerned about in addition to the students they so deeply care about. Beyond communication about the condition of schooling in this new reality, members of a school community are eager for connection and engagement, and this is particularly true of families. As we know, the family is, in any time, critical to their children's learning and success in school. So, beyond communication about the new reality, how will you strengthen the engagement of families with their children, with each other, and with their children's teachers?

When guidelines for safe gathering permit, conduct home gatherings, where a teacher meets in the home of a student with several parents invited to attend. These gatherings are low-cost, easily organized activities that enable people to get to know each other. Preparing the host families and teachers for the experience is key. They need a simple agenda to guide the discussion and some ground rules for the conversation so that individual grievances can be channeled toward a later meeting with appropriate school personnel. Parents love to hear from teachers about how the teachers plan their instruction, how children learn to read, and how study skills are built. Most of all, teachers and parents learn to appreciate each other's roles.

Please consider actions you can take to identify what makes your school community unique as suggested in Table 30.

Table 30. Suggestions for Engaging Your Families

☐	Think of the three types of engagement and plan to strengthen each of them: ☐ Families engaged with their own children, especially to support their learning; ☐ Families engaged with their children's teachers to better support their children's progress and to provide teachers with insights about their children; and ☐ Families engaged with each other, connecting with the families of their children's schoolmates.
☐	Consider how you select, train, mentor, and provide opportunities for service for parent (family) leaders. What more can you do?
☐	Plan home gatherings (when health and safety standards indicate it is safe to do so) as a way to reach out to families and connect them with each other and with teachers and staff.

Table 31 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 31. Suggested Resources for Engaging Your Families

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Handbook on Family and Community Engagement	Document	This handbook is intended to provide educators, community leaders, and parents with a succinct survey of the best research and practice accumulated over the years on the various topics related to family and community engagement.
School Community Network	Website	The School Community Network (SCN) website provides resources, training, and tools to build strong school communities focused on student learning.
Communities In Schools: Home	Website	Communities In Schools is a national dropout prevention organization. For 40 years, Communities In Schools has used a case management approach to confront the numerous road blocks keeping vulnerable students from graduation. The website provides information on a variety of topics for how schools can bring community resources into schools to empower success for all students by removing barriers for students at risk of dropping out, keeping kids in school and on the path to graduation and leveraging evidence, relationships, and local resources to drive results.
Building Community Schools: A Guide for Action	Tool	Community schools have always rooted their work in a solid body of research about what it takes to promote student success, including parental involvement in children's education, rich and engaging out-of-school experiences, student wellness, and family stability. The National Center for Community Schools produced this guide to provide schools with a structure to create a plan to develop an array of partnerships in the areas of health, social services, academics for children and adults, sports, recreation, and culture.
Community Schools	Website	A Community School is a strategy that coordinates relationships and resources through a public school to accelerate equitable outcomes in health, education, and employment. This website provides information on a variety of topics related to creating a community school.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Parents and Learning	Document	Research on the curriculum of the home isolates specific patterns of family life that correspond with a child's success in academic learning. Studies have positively linked certain family practices with a child's learning. This document was produced by the International Academy of Education (IAE) and is intended to provide parents with suggestions for how they can help their children do well in school.
Indicators in Action	Tool/Video	Indicators in Action provides an explanation and videos of indicators of effective instructional and leadership practices. The tool can be used for professional development, faculty meetings, workshops, and for individual educator development.
(PDF) Families and Schools Together: An experimental analysis of a parent-mediated multi-family group program for American Indian children	Document	This is an article concerning the results of a randomized intervention study with Indian children participating in a multi-family group program called Families and Schools Together (FAST).
Welcome to the NAPTAC Library | Center for Parent Information and Resources	Website	The NAPTAC library includes many useful resources in print and video format. Each product contains current information about the traditional culture and contemporary issues important to Native families, written from the unique perspective of American Indians and Alaska Natives. NAPTAC's materials were created expressly for Parent Centers, to inform the services they offer to American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) families with children who have disabilities.

3. Identifying Family Needs and Connecting to Resources

In all times, some families have needs for the basics of shelter, food, and clothing. Some families need access to medical, dental, visual, or mental health care. Some families are isolated and would benefit from association with a church, an organization, a circle of friends. In a time of disruption such as the one brought on by COVID-19, more families will need more assistance than usual. A school can't provide all that families need, but a school can establish a referral process to be alert to a specific family's needs and take action by referring the family to a service or organization that will help.

Please consider actions you can take to identify family needs and connect the families with resources as suggested in Table 32.

Table 32. Suggestions to Identify Family Needs and Connect Families to Resources

☐ Create and keep updated an inventory of local organizations and services that can help meet family needs. Note in the inventory what each group provides, the name of a contact person, and contact information.
☐ Basic family needs (clothing, food, housing, childcare)
☐ Health needs (vaccination, examination, dental care, vision care)
☐ Behavioral therapy, psychological testing, early intervention
☐ Recreation, social connection
☐ Tutoring, mentoring
☐ Equipment for disabilities, respite care
☐ Opportunities relative to special talents or interests (scientific, musical, artistic, athletic, literary)
☐ College application and finance
☐ Establish a process by which teachers and staff directly refer to a central point (a person or a small team) in the school when they are aware of a family's needs.
☐ Establish that the central point (person or team) reviews referrals daily and connects the family with an available service or organization.
☐ Follow up with the service groups to see what services and supports are actually delivered to the referred families.

Table 33 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 33. Suggested Resources for Identifying Family Needs and Connecting to Resources

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Building Community Schools: A Guide	Tool	Community schools have always rooted their work in a solid body of research about what it takes to promote student success, including parental involvement in children's education, rich and engaging out-of-school experiences, student wellness, and family stability. The National Center for Community Schools produced this guide to provide schools with a structure to create a plan to develop an array of partnerships in the areas of health, social services, academics for children and adults, sports, recreation, and culture.
Youth Program Observation Tool	Tool	This tool was created by the National Center for Community Schools and is intended to provide an objective analysis of youth programs' strengths and areas in need of improvement.
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams	Tool	This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.

4. Supporting Mentoring and Students-Helping-Students

In a strong school community, students help students in many ways. Student mentors from a high school might build relationships with middle schoolers to prepare them for their next step on the school ladder. Peer-to-peer, in-class learning opportunities are good for both parties. Upper-grade mentoring of lower grade students is a wonderful experience for both. Even when learning is virtual, peer-to-peer opportunities can be provided if students are trained in the procedures and the exchanges are monitored by teachers.

Please consider actions you can take to support mentoring and students helping students as suggested in Table 34.

Table 34. Suggestions for Supporting Mentoring and Students Helping Students

☐	Provide sharing sessions for teachers to share their experiences with mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, and cooperative learning methods. These methods advance the connections among students that contribute to a strong school community.
☐	Organize cross-grade associations of students, with older students trained and supported to assist younger students in their classrooms or virtually.
☐	Train teachers in the most effective methods for peer-to-peer learning in the classroom and also virtually, and ask them to share their experiences with their colleagues.

Table 35 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 35. Suggested Resources to Support Mentoring and Students Helping Students

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Building Effective Peer Mentoring Services	Tool	Cross-age peer mentoring programs are an increasingly popular choice for educators and youth development professionals hoping to create positive outcomes for youth. Produced by the Mentoring Resource Center, this guidebook is intended to provide an introduction to best practices associated with cross-age peer mentoring programs. It draws on research and observed program practices that can lead to successful outcomes, mostly for programs that take place at a school site.
Shifting School Culture to Spark Rapid Improvement: A Quick Start Guide for Principals and Their Teams – Center for School Turnaround & Improvement	Tool	This tool provides helpful suggestions for how to move a school from a negative culture to a positive one that fosters student learning and success.
Youth Program Observation Tool	Tool	This tool was created by the National Center for Community Schools and is intended to provide an objective analysis of youth programs' strengths and areas in need of improvement.

5. Encouraging Sharing by Teachers Across the Grades

Within your school is an abundance of expertise and experience residing in your faculty. The principal plays a big role in how their skill and knowledge is shared.

Please consider actions you can take to encourage sharing by teachers as suggested in Table 36.

Table 36. Suggestions to Encourage Sharing by Teachers

☐	Store instructional materials in a common location, with the materials contributed by all teachers and teams of teachers, each marked for subject, objective, and grade level. Then teachers can borrow from the common materials room, across classrooms and grade levels.
☐	Organize your school's server to store teachers' materials, with a standard folder-naming protocol to designate subject, standard, grade level, and topic so teachers can conveniently share and borrow materials.
☐	Include teacher sharing in each faculty meeting, including virtual meetings.
☐	Assign pairs of teachers to become experts on a particular teaching method and then arrange for them to share what they know with the others. This is particularly powerful now, for teachers to share the successful virtual methods they are creating.
☐	Ask teachers to each write a brief reflection on one lesson each week and swap it with another teacher. At the next faculty meeting, ask a few teachers what they learned from each other.

Table 37 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 37. Suggested Resources to Encourage Sharing by Teachers

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Observation Video	Tool	Professional development for teachers includes observations by the principal, by peers, and self-assessment related to indicators of effective teaching and classroom management. This is a video from a professional development series and describes the importance of observations.
Teachers Observing Teachers: A Professional Development Tool for Every School	Document	Typically evaluative by nature, teacher observation is usually linked to classroom performance. More and more schools, however, are having teachers observe each other as a form of professional development that improves teaching practices and student performance. This article from *Education World* provides information on the benefits of this emerging professional development strategy and suggests five different observation models.

Care

Returning to school this year is like no other. We have all experienced great disruptions to our lives, and some of us have experienced great personal loss. Your students (and, indeed, your staff), are bound to be confused, harboring fears and anxieties, and in need of assurance. Some students have spent several months in homes with families under great stress, and some have lost loved ones. Their families and your teachers and staff have endured their own stresses, and they come back with their own anxieties. Not everyone has experienced "trauma," but some people have. Your goal is to prepare to meet different levels and kinds of need, and to be able to identify which students, which families, which personnel need which kind of support. Take that into consideration in your communication plan because you need to know these things even before people return to school.

A. Addressing Common Fears and Anxieties

The idea of returning to school can evoke mixed feelings in students and staff. While it may be a reunification with friends and peers for some, it may also elicit fears and anxieties for many, with the added uncertainty, or the fear of not knowing what to expect, not knowing what the new rules are, and what the "new normal" is. Students may also have anxieties over contracting the disease themselves, question whether the school is safe for them, worry over how much distance to maintain from their teachers and peers, and even worry about lagging behind in academics and not being able to enjoy school as much as they used to.

1. Communicating to Allay Common Fears and Anxieties

In the Communication section, ideas are offered for your communication with various stakeholder groups to assure a safe and orderly return to school, whether in classrooms, at home, or both. Some communication needs to be more targeted to the purpose of allaying common fears and anxieties, and this may require a separate communication plan or a special section in your overall plan. Social workers are especially helpful in crafting the most appropriate communication messages.

Please consider actions you can take to communicate to allay common fears and anxieties as suggested in Table 38.

Table 38. Suggestions for Communicating to Allay Common Fears and Anxieties

☐	Send a few targeted emails prior to reopening the schools to school staff and parents to let them know you share their concerns and the preparations to start instructions, whether online, in person, or a blend of the two.
☐	Create core messaging. It is important that your stakeholders receive clear and consistent guidance from you across all communications and outreach channels. Creating a set of central and cohesive messages will ensure that parents and teachers are receiving messages that reinforce each other.
☐	Ensure accessibility for your outreach materials and translate all messaging into the languages spoken by your school's families. Messaging should include the proactive and preventive steps the school/district is taking, information about where updates will be posted, and who to reach out to if families need more information.
☐	Maintain and communicate predictable routines to help students maintain a sense of psychological safety—a sense that they can manage stress or connect with someone who can help them manage stress.
☐	Plan a whole school and individual classroom back-to-school virtual "open house" or "meet & greet" for sharing mission and vision.
☐	Post resources and signs around the school to alleviate fears and anxieties about COVID-19 and promote a sense of community and belonging where issues such as racial biases related to COVID-19, online bullying, and so on, will be taken seriously.

2. Understanding Student Behaviors

Student coping mechanisms will differ, with some students being in denial that things are any different, some students keeping to themselves and internalizing their fears and anxiety or externalizing by reacting negatively or engaging in disruptive behavior in the classroom. Some may alternate between all of these coping mechanisms! Younger children may experience psychosomatic symptoms, especially if they are not able to verbalize their fears and worries.

It is important to recognize that these feelings are normal reactions to a stressful situation and to acknowledge it together with the students and staff and the school community. As discussed in the section on Communication, it is critical to communicate with the school community your understanding, acknowledgment, and acceptance of the current situation and preemptively take steps to address it. The goal is to re-establish a culture of learning but with extra supports for students and teachers. Students will fare best if they know their teachers care about their well-being just as much as their behavior and assignment compliance. How do you maintain communication, infuse a sense of safety in a school environment, and prepare students for learning?

Please consider actions you can take to understand student behaviors as suggested in Table 39.

Table 39. Suggestions for Understanding Student Behaviors

☐	Restructure class time, at least for the first few weeks, to set aside brief instructional time for teachers to engage in discussion with students.
☐	Prepare the school counselor and teachers to expect disruptions in class and solicit feedback and ideas on how to deal with it. Even students themselves may have good suggestions.
☐	Provide a virtual forum for teachers, students, and the greater school community to voice concerns and make suggestions. Students themselves will have good suggestions.
☐	Routinely relay updates from the CDC and local government officials to the school community about health and education.
☐	Encourage students and teachers to use mental health resources that are available within the school and in the community.
☐	Consider how best to use the online medium to assess the current socioemotional status of students and teachers. If you think it is appropriate, you can have a brief weekly online survey sent out to the families (see examples). This can help teachers identify students who need extra support as well as have a pulse on the community.
☐	Create a student body or a committee of teachers, staff, and students, who can serve as liaisons between the students and school.
☐	Encourage students to reach out to teachers and other school staff for help.
☐	Monitor and plan for absenteeism. It is possible that there are students, especially high school, who will not come back, have decided to drop out, or have generally disengaged from school.

Table 40 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 40. Suggested Resources for Addressing Common Fears and Anxieties

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Helping Children Cope	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet provides practical suggestions for how to talk to children about COVID-19 and other suggestions for easing children's fears and anxieties.
Self-Care Tips for Teachers	Tip Sheet	This tip sheet provides some practical suggestions and ideas for ways teachers can acknowledge the work that they did during the closure of schools, and can care for themselves as they transition back into a more regular teaching routine.
Self-Care Strategies for Educators During the Coronavirus Crisis: Supporting Personal Social and Emotional Well-Being	Document	Self-care isn't just a buzz word; it's a professional and ethical imperative. This brief is written for educators who face the stresses of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting school closures, online service provision, and quarantine conditions. The brief offers practical information and guidance on self-care in these challenging times.
Community-Care Strategies for Schools During the Coronavirus Crisis: Practical Tips for School Staff and Administrators	Document	While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed so much about how schools work, the social and emotional needs of students, staff, families, and the overall community remain. This brief offers practical guidance for schools to ensure that their communities remain effective, cohesive, collaborative, healthy, and sustainable.
Strategies for Trauma-Informed Distance Learning	Document	To help educators use trauma-informed teaching practices in distance learning contexts, this brief offers some general strategies, with specific examples, for how to recognize and respond to students' social and emotional needs while teaching remotely. The strategies are organized using neuroscientist Bruce Perry's "3 Rs" approach to intervention: Regulate, Relate, and Reason.
Mindfulness in Education: An Approach to Cultivating Self-Awareness That Can Bolster Kids' Learning	Document	This brief introduces mindfulness as a strategy for facilitating social and emotional learning in school, explains the potential benefits for both students and educators, provides examples of mindfulness strategies, and lists resources for learning more about mindfulness.
The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS) website	Website	The Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (CISELSS) serves as a hub for social and emotional learning (SEL) and has current resources and information from the Center and partners as they serve students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
COVID-19 Support Resources	Document	CISELSS compiled a list of resources/links for a variety of information, tools, etc. on issues related to serving schools and students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
COVID-19 website		This WestEd site offers an evolving selection of timely, evidence-based resources and guidance, designed to help schools continue to make a positive difference in the lives of children, youth, and adults during these difficult times. Additional distance learning resources, including strategies to support ELLs and SWD are included here.
Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet [see Table 2]	Document	This fact sheet was produced by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and provides basic information on pandemic flu. It will help parents and others think about how pandemic flu might affect your family, both physically and emotionally, and what you can do to help your family cope.
How to Ease Children's Anxiety About COVID-19	Document	COVID-19 has changed our lives in ways we never would have imagined. This document, produced by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, provides some simple steps parents/teachers can follow to ease COVID-19 anxiety for yourself and your kids.
Trauma-Informed Approach to Support Students	Document	Experts from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network share their recommendations for educators in this document on how to support students during the COVID-19 crisis.
Guidelines for Addressing the Coronavirus Outbreak	Document	Students need a chance to share their thoughts and feelings about the coronavirus, even if classes have gone online. This document, created by the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility, provides some guidelines for creating a supportive space for this conversation.
(CalSCHLS) System - Learning from Home Survey	Tool	With school buildings around the nation closed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and districts shifting to distance learning, it is more important than ever to assess students' connectedness to school to help build an online community that fosters student wellness and learning. The California Department of Education is providing a free online *Learning from Home Survey* to a nationwide audience to assess students' and parents' remote learning experiences. The student survey measures students' home educational routines, engagement and motivation in educational activities, quality of relationships with teachers and peers, and social-emotional well-being.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
SEL Center – Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety COVID-19 Resources – SEL Center	Website	The Center has compiled resources to support states, districts, and schools as they serve students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

B. Addressing the Needs of Students Experiencing Chronic Stress and Trauma

Students who experience chronic stress or traumatic events are at a higher risk for developing serious and long-term problems across multiple areas of development. Even before the pandemic, about half of the U.S. population of children (0–17 yrs.) experienced trauma through ongoing exposure to abuse, neglect, homelessness, domestic violence or violence in their communities.[7] Due to the health-related and financial stresses of COVID-19, and the associated stress of sheltering at home, many more will have experienced heightened stress or traumatic events in the months prior to coming to school. This is more so for children who were already vulnerable, such as children with special needs, children from families experiencing homelessness, extreme poverty, children of essential workers, and so on. Because of lack of access to their regular supports such as community behavioral health services, and not being able to access school counselors and other services that schools provide, there may be more students now than ever before, who need additional support.

Children with identified histories of trauma may be especially vulnerable to the significant changes in schedule, routine, and expectations that come with social distancing, canceled classes, remote learning, not having teachers or other protective adults, and reliance on caregivers for academics. Supporting students who have experienced trauma can be difficult in the best of times; and this is not the best of times. Trauma is particularly challenging for educators to address because kids often do not express the distress they are feeling in a way that is easily recognizable.

This underscores the importance of school staff making a concerted effort to connect with the child and make the available mental health resources easily accessible. If school staff is aware of particular students who have dealt with past traumas, there needs to be processes and mechanisms wherein they can regularly check-in with this population of students and have strategies if the problems escalate.

The good thing is, children are more likely to exhibit resilience to childhood trauma when the institutions and programs they come in contact with understand the impact of childhood trauma, share common ways to talk and think about trauma, and integrate practices and policies to address

[7] https://www.cahmi.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/aces_brief_final.pdf

it—an approach often referred to as trauma-informed care (TIC).[8] While educators may not be in a position to deal with the trauma directly, they can do a great deal to build a supportive and sensitive environment where students feel safe, comfortable, take risks, learn, and even begin to heal. However, children who have been neglected or abused have difficulty forming relationships with teachers, which is a necessary first step in a successful classroom experience. In addition, as severity can be difficult to determine—with some children becoming avoidant or appearing to be fine (i.e., a child who performs well academically no matter what)—it might be better to let a mental health professional evaluate the likelihood that the child could benefit from some type of intervention.

Please consider actions you can take to address needs of students experiencing shock and trauma as suggested in Table 41.

Table 41. Suggestions to Address Needs of Students Experiencing Shock and Trauma

☐	Provide staff with a refresher session (or initial training) in implementing trauma-informed practices, such as the welcoming routines,[9] this might be a good time to consider a refresher training and reinforce the practices. At the heart of these approaches is the belief that students' actions are a direct result of their experiences, and when students act out or disengage, the question educators should ask is not "what's wrong with you," but rather "what happened to you?"
☐	Increase screening of students for exposure to traumatic events. However, it is important to establish structures in advance of the screening to support children who screen positive.
☐	Provide students with multiple opportunities – office hours and hotline options – for getting help or talking to an adult or teacher.
☐	Encourage teachers to provide virtual forums and one-on-one conferences with students to have candid conversations on their mental health and well-being.
☐	Use data to identify students with high needs and provide extra outreach to check-in on their states of well-being.
☐	Create a forum to allow concerned parents to express concerns regarding their child's mental health.
☐	Regularly update teachers and parents of mental health services available by your school district.
☐	Encourage virtual social gatherings and team building events within classrooms.
☐	Create guidelines and recommendations for counseling staff and/or school nurses to develop individual and group support plans for staff, family, and students for the school year.
☐	Encourage school mental health professionals to regularly check-in with students who have established trauma-related behavioral or academic issues.
☐	Use peer mediators to mitigate in-class conflicts and disturbances.

[8] Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. *SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach*. HHS publication no. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

[9] https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B2DcKbJpERRRNVhxNmJzRUdqRFk

Table 42 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 42. Suggested Resources for Addressing the Needs of Students Experiencing Shock and Trauma

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Child Trauma Toolkit	Toolkit	This toolkit was produced by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network and provides information and suggestions for educators and parents on how to deal with and support children through traumatic events.
Trauma-Informed Practice & Resilience	Website	The enduring effects of childhood trauma are widespread. Many educators and other child- and youth-serving professionals see the effects of trauma in their environments every day. This website contains resources, videos, and other information to support trauma-informed practice.
How to Implement Trauma-Informed Care to Build Resilience to Childhood Trauma	Document	This brief summarizes current research and promising practices for implementing trauma-informed care to support the well-being of children exposed to trauma and help them reach their full potential. In addition, the brief presents a framework for understanding and implementing trauma-informed care in programs and service systems for children and their families.
Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms and Transformational Schools	Document	This document published by the Education Law Center discusses the effect of trauma on learning and what schools and educators can do to create a trauma-informed learning environment.
National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement	Website	This center is dedicated to helping schools support students through crisis and loss and contains links to resources specific to COVID-19.
Coalition to Support Grieving Students: Home Page Contact us at 877-53-NCSCB (877-536-2722) or info@grievingstudents.org	Website	This website is designed to provide educators with the information, insights, and practical advice they need to better understand and meet the needs of grieving kids in classrooms. The website has also included links to resources specific to COVID-19.
Center for Health and Health Care in Schools	Website	Schools play a critical role in helping to prevent and slow the spread of infectious diseases within communities and in ensuring that students and staff are able to function within safe, healthy environments. This website has compiled some of the latest resources and guidelines from various government and nongovernmental organizations to help school leaders, educators, staff, parents and caregivers to respond appropriately to COVID–19.

C. Preparing Personnel to Meet Various Student Needs

Especially during the initial phase, teachers and school counselors or social workers can perform a critical role in combating trauma and anxiety. While academics are important, the immediate task is to support the mental health of students, especially the most vulnerable students. By maintaining connections, teaching key coping strategies, listening and responding to students' behavior, and helping students feel in control, adults can help them come through this challenging time feeling resilient and supported.

However, in addition to the general stress related to the current situation, educators have had to manage their own and their families' needs while simultaneously working full-time from home and adapting to new technologies for teaching. In a recent survey of teachers,[10] the five most-mentioned feelings among all teachers were: anxious, fearful, worried, overwhelmed, and sad. It is important to emphasize self-care for staff, and that teachers and counselors need to first take care of their own emotional health to be able to help students.

Principals are in a position to make a concerted effort to support teachers' efforts to create supportive and nurturing classroom environments. In the coming weeks and months, teachers should be encouraged to acknowledge and validate students' emotions, as well as offer and explain available supports to students. If feasible, teachers should be trained and/or refreshed in integrating trauma-informed practices, which will be beneficial for self-care as well. It may be best to provide a few selected resources related to social and emotional learning, without overwhelming them as an additional task they have to do. To support teachers in this effort, it would be important to involve other administrative and support staff (lunch personnel, bus drivers) given that children may feel less inhibited in talking to them. It is important to ensure that student's feelings of security and safety extend outside of the physical school building. In addition, it would be critical to mobilize school mental health professionals who may have had more rigorous training in trauma-informed care and are in a better position to handle extreme instances.

Educators can set up individual conferences via computer or phone to check in with students and ask about their safety and worries.

[10] Conducted by Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, and Collaborative for Social Emotional and Academic Learning (CASEL) in March 2020.

Please consider actions you can take to prepare personnel to meet various student needs as suggested in Table 43.

Table 43. Suggestions to Prepare Personnel to Meet Various Student Needs

☐	Re-establish a culture of learning but with extra supports to help students maintain a sense of psychological safety—a sense that they can manage stress or connect with someone who can help them manage stress.
☐	Make an effort to understand teachers' circumstances and how to support them. Connect with teachers to find out what challenges they are facing.
☐	Call (including video call) every teacher or send an email. Explain that you would like to know how best to support them, and it would be helpful to know what challenges they are facing. Make sure teachers know they can come to you with challenges and receive support.
☐	Communicate priorities and expectations clearly with teachers. Identify the absolute top priorities for your school, your teachers, and your students. Set a limited number of expectations and clearly communicate these with teachers.
☐	Equip and support teachers in discussing the pandemic and shelter-in-place experience with students so that they can correct student misinformation and encourage positive action. In addition, educators need to be prepared to respond to difficult questions from students who are stressed or need to understand the situation in ways that are more concrete. In the initial few weeks, teachers can provide structure but undemanding assignments; encourage expression through discussion and conversation.
☐	Think about whether you want any assessment, how they are going to catch-up, think about remote learning, and think about academic gaps. Every student will likely experience some degree of learning loss over the 4- to 6-month absence from school, and have an even greater "slide" due to additional loss of in-school instruction.
☐	Offer students a way to connect. It's OK to focus on re-establishing relationships between teachers and students, between students, between students-school community initially.
☐	Provide an avenue for teachers to express concerns with capacity and workload. If teachers are struggling, consider mobilizing school mental health staff or other support staff.
☐	Give school staff a chance to meet and share their information about what has happened, as well as their feelings and concerns about the coronavirus and students' reactions to it. One format for doing this is the Listening Circle (https://www.edutopia.org/blog/bring-listening-circles-to-class-shane-safir).
☐	Monitor and plan for addressing fear, racial bias, and bullying related to COVID-19 and have a plan in place to protect these vulnerable students. Enlist students' help in educating their fellow students and advocating for respect.
☐	Support teachers in engaging students in developmentally appropriate conversations and lessons to discuss the news around COVID-19. This can include assessing facts from misinformation, as well as opportunities for students to develop and suggest strategies for their school or community to prevent the spread of disease.

☐	Designate a school social worker to serve as a trusted point of contact between students and their families, teachers, and school administrators. School social workers can work with students to identify, address, and overcome these obstacles.
☐	Ask school counselors/social workers to address socioemotional concerns by visiting classrooms or inviting students to have lunch on a rotating basis.
☐	Develop school-specific resources on trauma-related supports.

Table 44 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 44. Suggested Resources for Preparing Personnel to Meet Various Student Needs

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Self-Care	Document	This document provides suggestions for educators who may have to offer support for grieving children to ensure that educators know how to take care of themselves during this difficult time.
Addressing Grief: Tips for Teachers and Administrators	Document	School-based support and increased understanding are essential when a student experiences the death of a friend or loved one. This document, produced by the National Association of School Psychologists, provides some strategies that can be helpful in supporting bereaved students.
Maintaining Connections, Reducing Anxiety While School Is Closed - Educational Leadership	Document	Teachers can play a huge role in helping students with anxiety or trauma histories feel safe right now, even from a distance. This article published in *Educational Leadership* provides suggestions for teachers and others on how to connect with students.
Secondary Traumatic Stress for Educators | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network	Document	This document describes risk factors for and signs of secondary traumatic stress in educators, as well as techniques for prevention and self-care.
Psychological First Aid for Schools	Document	This document is a pdf of a webinar presented by the Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Technical Assistance Center. It provides basic information on the concept of psychological first aid, based on understanding that disaster survivors and others affected will experience a broad range of early reactions and feelings.
Professional Self-Care	Tool/Video	This is a professional development module prepared by the Coalition to Support Grieving Students. This module underscores the important role of professional self-care for school personnel as they provide support to grieving students.

D. Preparing Social Service Agencies for Work With School Personnel, Students, Families

You can plan to prepare for the heightened demand for socioemotional support for students, school personnel, and families through a community of professionals who work with the school. Although this may require more effort depending on the extent of social distancing in place at that time, it is possible to figure out ways to get around those using online, synchronous methods.

Trauma-informed care also means attending to the psychological and physical safety and well-being of the adults who care for children who have experienced trauma. Some of the ways school professionals meet their self-care needs is through the community of professionals within the school, but that requires more effort due to social distancing.

Outside social service, organizations are well suited to provide additional behavioral, mental health, or academic support to families with children who have experienced trauma. It is important for school staff to have contact information for various social service organizations available, or have some other efficient system in place, so that they are able to promptly refer students, peers, and families.

Familiarize yourself with the prominent national and local organizations that focus on social and emotional well-being and trauma-informed care and take time and effort to develop relationships with local service providers. While it is helpful for you and your school staff to be aware of the organizations, it is equally important for the organizations to be familiar with your school/district. It might even be possible to have a liaison from the community organizations, or from your staff, to coordinate the communication. Having established modes of communication with the organization will build rapport and expedite the referral process. Internally, it is important to identify social and emotional learning needs and supports and reconfigure teacher and paraprofessional roles to maximize high-quality instruction and connections with individual students. Try to be strategic and organize your staff in a way that will place your students and schools on better footing, not just in the immediate but in the long-term as well. This might even take some pressure off the staff if they know there are places they can safely rely on to support the school community.

Because you have already developed a trusting relationship with the families, it may be a good idea to make a “warm handoff” when introducing a new organization to them. After the family begins working with the organization, make yourself available to answer follow-up questions and listen to concerns. These practices will help the family feel more comfortable, improving the likelihood the family follows through and receives the necessary support.

Please consider actions you can take to prepare social service agencies to work with your school personnel, students, and families as suggested in Table 45.

Table 45. Suggestions to Prepare Social Service Agencies to Work With Personnel, Students, Families

☐	Reach out to a diverse set of organizations that provide a wide range of services (e.g., mental health; nutrition; behavioral support; Women, Infants, and Children [WIC]) in equitable and culturally sensitive ways.
☐	Anticipate questions that the social service organizations may have regarding the needs of your school district. It is helpful to prepare sociodemographic data and other information and documentation about your school or school district.
☐	Keep in mind that due to hardships associated with COVID-19, these organizations may have delayed response times and a decreased level of capacity.
☐	Help families determine their eligibility for services and completing paperwork required to enroll in services.
☐	Arrange for families with parents who have limited English proficiency to receive assistance with translation services when you are making referrals.
☐	Prepare school staff to be persistent and send follow-up messages. Due to hardships associated with COVID-19, families may be less responsive to your messaging.
☐	Encourage parents to choose the organization they believe will be most beneficial to them.
☐	Provide parents with the option to conduct their own research on the organizations you are in contact with.
☐	Tap into your network of school leaders from other districts to see if they have recommendations for social service organizations they have collaborated with or processes that are efficient and sensitive.

Table 46 describes additional resources that expand upon this topic.

Table 46. Suggested Resources to Prepare Social Service Agencies to Work With Personnel, Students, Families

Suggested resource	Type	Description
SMHRP Toolkit (PDF)	Tool	The School Mental Health Referral Pathways (SMHRP) Toolkit was funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to help state and local education agencies and their partners develop effective systems to refer youth to mental health service providers and related supports. The toolkit provides best-practice guidance and practical tools and strategies to improve coordination and collaboration both within schools and between schools and other youth-serving agencies.
New Approaches to the Organization of Health and Social Services in Schools - Schools & Health	Document	Research and evaluation findings demonstrate that low-income families and their children gain access to needed health services through school-based programs. The document starts with a description of programs and models and provides examples (and costs where known). It also includes a summary of major findings from research and evaluation, and discusses major issues as they apply to organizing comprehensive school health programs.
Community Schools Playbook	Document/ Tool	This guide provides tools for advancing community schools as a strategy to improve schools, provide more equitable opportunities, and prepare students for success in life and as citizens.
COVID-19: Preparing For Widespread Illness in Your School Community	Document	This document is produced by the National School Boards Association and is intended to inform school district leaders about the federally identified risks associated with the COVID-19 virus and provide a checklist of issues school leaders should consider as they plan for any such crisis in their communities.
Trauma-informed care: What it is, and why it's important - Harvard Health Blog	Document/ Blog	The CDC statistics on abuse and violence in the United States are sobering. They report that one in four children experiences some sort of maltreatment (physical, sexual, or emotional abuse). The blog provides some information on trauma-informed care and additional links to other sources on the topic.
Topics of Impact - Student Mental Health	Website	Schools can lay a protective foundation for a lifetime of mental health by guiding the development of social and emotional competencies. This website provides a wealth of information on a variety of topics related to supporting students' mental health.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
A Teacher's Basic Guide to Making a Referral	Document	A referral is the process or steps taken by a teacher to get extra assistance for a student with whom they directly work. This document suggests key questions that teachers should consider when making a referral for additional support services.
Special Education: The Referral and Evaluation Process	Document	This document is written for parents and provides an overview of what happens when a parent refers their child to be evaluated for special education services. The document contains additional links for information on a variety of related topics (IEP's, special education regulations, 504 plans, etc.).

And finally, ensure that you also look after yourself! Make sure you are connecting with others for support. Know your own priorities and try not to expect too much of yourself.

Appendix

A. Change Tip Sheets

Re-Opening School Scenarios Planning Template

Implementing Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

Social Distancing Guidelines

Implementing Opening/Ending Day Rituals and Routines

B. Communication Tip Sheets

Developing a Message Map

Gathering Feedback

Communication Considerations for Schools in Tribal Communities

C. Collaboration Tip Sheets

Conducting a Data Inventory

Preparing for Collaborative Meetings

Collaboration Considerations for Schools in Tribal Communities

D. Care Tip Sheets

Addressing Fears and Anxieties

Teachers' Self-Care Tips

A. Change Tip Sheets

Re-Opening School Scenarios Planning Template

Implementing Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

Social Distancing Guidelines

Implementing Opening/Ending Day Rituals and Routines

Tip Sheet—RE-OPENING SCHOOL SCENARIOS PLANNING TEMPLATE

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on the information from the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching.

Why: Schools need to be ready to reopen as soon as public health officials signal it is safe. Education leaders must begin planning now based on the best current understanding of COVID-19 and what is required for continued containment and mitigation.

How: The planning template that follows this tip sheet is designed to be used in conjunction with the *National Institute for Excellence in Teaching's Planning Guide Scenarios and Considerations for 2020-2021.* The planning template provides schools with a graphic organizer that focuses on the broad areas of school operations that must be considered under each of the four reopening scenarios. Reopening schools' leadership teams and others can work together (remotely if necessary and required under current regulations) to discuss each of the areas to determine what areas/parts of each can open, what areas/parts must still be restricted, and what will be required in each to meet safety precautions related to COVID-19.

- **Step 1:** School principals with their reopening leadership teams and other staff as appropriate should meet to begin planning for the reopening of their school campuses and buildings. The four scenarios in the NIET Planning Guide are possibilities for the reopening of schools, and the planning template provides a structure for teams to document their thinking and plans. The three guiding questions are intended to help focus the planning and decision making around the most critical components of school operations in each of the areas to make clear how the school can safely reopen under each scenario.
- **Step 2:** As plans develop, they should be widely disseminated to the school community and stakeholders to seek feedback and further guidance prior to the reopening of school campuses and buildings.
- **Step 3:** Final plans should be widely disseminated to the school community and stakeholders.
- **Step 4:** Once the plans are finalized, determinations for restrictions and requirements for various campus/building locations should be made into signage that can be prominently displayed to serve as consistent guidance and reminders for students, staff, and the school community.

[See Planning Templates for Three Scenarios below.]

Planning Template for Use With NIET Planning Guide Scenarios and Considerations for 2020–2021

Scenario 1: School opens with full COVID-19 safety and cleaning precautions

SCHOOL: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
DORMITORY: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
BUS TRANSPORTATION: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
PARENT/FAMILY TRANSPORTATION: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
NUTRITION SERVICES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC USE: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
EMPLOYEE WORK SPACES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
HEALTH/NURSING SERVICES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?



Scenario 2: Some students on campus with full COVID-19 safety precautions; some students virtual

SCHOOL: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
DORMITORY: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
BUS TRANSPORTATION: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
PARENT/FAMILY TRANSPORTATION: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
NUTRITION SERVICES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC USE: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
EMPLOYEE WORK SPACES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?
HEALTH/NURSING SERVICES: What opens?	What is restricted?
	What is required?

Scenario 3: Continuous online/virtual learning

Revised Continuous Online Learning Plan with the following considerations (*bullets are examples only and are not all-inclusive of strategies that may be implemented):

Strategies for students who are showing delays because of the change in learning format:

- Tutors
- School during breaks

Equity issues:

- Training for staff on cultures, family systems, and trauma
- Structured check-in with families
- Ensure that the same level of technology is available to everyone or devise alternative strategies for students to receive work
- Use transportation services to deliver items students need
- Implement a structured approach/resources for addressing trauma experienced by children
- Develop strategies for connection with the tribal community
- Assign staff/department to ensure technology functions appropriately and handles connectivity issues

Structure and schedules including:

- Move from a regular schedule with mixed level groupings to same level groupings and smaller class sizes
- Train students on technology (several platforms in case one fails)
- Plan for student and staff help desk or hotline to address virtual learning needs
- Provide additional tutoring support
- Consider the core class structure
- Adjust electives to be more compatible with home learning resources
- Address strategies for encouraging physical fitness
- Modify grading scales using guidance from BIE to appropriately fit student population

Family Support:

- Train parents on technology (several platforms in case one fails)
- Plan for family help desk or hotline to address virtual learning needs
- Administer periodic surveys to gather feedback from families – what's working, what's not



Scenario 4: Intermittent Virtual

What opens? (Consider decisions from Scenarios 1 & 3 that will be in effect with this scenario)	What is restricted?
	What is required?

Tip Sheet—IMPLEMENTING HYGIENE AND CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center, and is based on guidance and advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

WHY: Before COVID-19, we all took cleanliness for granted. Consider the last time you thought about how clean a surface was, or if the facilities you work in have clean door handles, tables, or counters. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, these were things we didn't think much about, or at least too often. We've entered a new era where cleanliness has become paramount. Educators can encourage students to become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses. Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations and, if done well, can promote public health.

HOW: Establishing a new mindset around preventive maintenance for cleaning and sanitation protocols is the first step toward safe and clean facilities. There are 5 key activities that help define how to tackle this new mindset.

- **Create protocols -** Protocols are the proactive processes and procedures you put into place that define what gets done. It sets a baseline for the rest of your preventive maintenance processes, and without them, everything else is reactive.
- **Conduct inspections -** Inspections help you understand what needs to be done and the priority level.
- **Detection -** Detecting issues and needs can come from anyone, including teachers, staff, students, or the general public. Everyone can be your "eyes and ears" to ensure safety and cleanliness is put first**.**
- **Correction -** Correction includes the detailed measures you outline to resolve the problem or complete the work order.
- **Prevention -** Prevention includes the steps you take to ensure the issue or problem doesn't happen again, happens much less frequently, or can be otherwise prevented from causing significant impact.

This tip sheet provides practical suggestions for how schools can establish appropriate hygiene and cleaning protocols to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Practical Suggestions

- Make it easy for students to practice healthy hygiene. Have spray bottles of disinfectant and/or disinfectant wipes readily available.
- Teachers/principals can make announcements before each class period, encouraging students to wash their hands.
- Have each class appoint a designated student "chief disinfectant officer" who applies disinfectant from a spray bottle to surfaces that need it.

- Place alcohol-based hand rub (hand sanitizers) in each classroom, at entrances and exits, and near lunchrooms and toilets.
- Post signs encouraging good hand hygiene practices.
- Have teachers create lessons around the science of handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and why students should not touch their faces.
- Work with local health professionals and organizations to get the word out to students and their families about what they can do to keep themselves and others safe.
- Develop new ways to report incidents, notify leaders of unclean conditions, and help be the "eyes and ears" across the organization to effectively respond.
- Develop time-based or usage-based cleaning schedules for high-use areas (restrooms, cafeterias, etc.).
- Following each school day, the school should be thoroughly ventilated and cleaned.
- Cleaning staff should be trained on disinfection and equipped with personal protection equipment to the extent possible.

Tip Sheet—SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

WHY: Schools will need to find ways to restrict where and when students, staff, and the school community can gather in order to stop or slow the spread of infectious disease.

HOW: This tip sheet provides practical suggestions for implementing recommended "social distancing" guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our schools. It is recognized that each program setting is unique, and it may be difficult for the proposed strategies to be implemented in every setting. Administrators are encouraged to think creatively about ways to increase the physical space between students and staff and limit interactions in large group settings.

Practical Suggestions

- Adapt practices to allow physical distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible.
- Limit mixing between classes/groups if possible.
- Rearrange desks and common seating spaces to maximize the space between participants.
- Turn desks to face in the same direction (rather than facing each other) to reduce transmission caused from virus-containing droplets (e.g., from talking, coughing, sneezing).
- Consider using visual aids (e.g., painter's tape, stickers, signs on the wall, arrows on floors,) to illustrate traffic flow and appropriate spacing to support social distancing.
- Stagger meal times to minimize the number of people dining inside at one time and keep people 6 feet apart. Serve meals outside as weather allows or in alternative indoor areas.
- Allow students to eat breakfast and lunch in their classrooms rather than mixing in the cafeteria.
- Consider staggering playground use rather than allowing multiple classes to play together.
- Whenever and wherever possible, hold activities outdoors and encourage participants to spread out.
- Restrict hallway use through homeroom stays or staggered release of classes.
- Avoid taking multiple classes to bathrooms at once. Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.
- Have students make posters and signs that display the seating and spacing guidelines and post them in highly visible areas around the school.
- Create distance between children on school buses (e.g., seat children one child per row, skip rows) when possible.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations by grade/class, or put in place other protocols to limit contact between students and staff and direct contact with parents as much as possible.
- **Teach staff, students, and their families to maintain distance from each other in the school.** Educate staff, students, and their families at the same time and explain why this is important.

Tip Sheet—IMPLEMENTING OPENING/ENDING DAY RITUALS AND ROUTINES

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and is based on information from Edutopia.

WHY: Social and emotional learning are important for students' well-being and development in the best of times. During a stressful event like a pandemic, they're absolutely critical. Opening and ending day routines provide students with a sense of stability and predictability, and can help make students feel safe. By adopting and infusing routines and rituals that represent and honor the uniqueness of the tribe(s) and the community, you can develop and strengthen your school's positive culture.

HOW: With social distancing requirements, schools should help each teacher develop opening/ending day routines for their classroom rather than all classes gathering in school gymnasiums or cafeterias as may have been the previous practice. Teachers should be encouraged to continue routines that were in place when schools unexpectedly closed in the spring (e.g., saying the Pledge of Allegiance, school song/motto, chants, etc.), and establish new rituals and routines to help acknowledge the changes that have happened as a result of the pandemic. This tip sheet provides some suggestions for rituals and routines that can be added to the school day.

Suggestions for Opening the School Day

Greet Your Students: The school day begins for your students the moment the bell rings, so be sure to make their first few minutes count. Greeting students at the door with positive verbal or non-verbal interactions can improve their engagement and motivation. Handshakes, high fives, and other physical ways to greet students **should be avoided** until the virus is no longer a concern. Here are some ways you can still greet students without touching:

- Just say, "Good Morning – so glad to see you here today!" Greet students using their home language.
- Wave
- Do fist bump without bumping - Go in for the bump, but pull away before you actually touch skin. Maybe "blow it up"
- Do some kind of salute
- Use a hand signal that the students create
- Give the peace sign
- Share a squirt of welcoming hand sanitizer

Taking the time to individually acknowledge each of your students also shows them that you care and this type of bonding is integral to healthy teacher-student relationships.

Create a New Hand Welcome Sign: Since we won't be shaking hands or doing high-fives for a while, have students create a new hand sign that they will use to say "hi" to each other and to be used during welcoming and greetings.

Share One Word: Ask students to share one word about how they are feeling that day. This is whole-child stuff that tends to the emotional aspect of the student, bringing balance to the academic and intellectual focuses that typically drives the school day. It also builds emotional intelligence. This activity can also be used to increase students' emotional vocabulary in both English and students' Native language. Teach them new words for those most commonly used by students (i.e., happy, sad, mad, afraid). The feelings chart at the following link is a helpful resource.

https://www.rewardcharts4kids.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/feelings-chart6.jpg

Quote of the Day: Students love to share their opinions—who doesn't? As an opening routine, find a quote from a singer, actor, politician, or famous dead person and have it displayed on the board as students walk in. Students sit down and begin writing a response to any of the following prompts: What does it mean to you? How can you relate to it? What connection does it have to your world?

Suggestions for Closing the School Day

Challenge Students to Reflect: Take some time at the end of each day for students to reflect. When you have about 15 minutes or so before it's time to send the children home, ask students to take a moment and think about their day. They can either write it down in a reflection journal, share with a partner, or take turns sharing with the whole class. The ultimate goal of self-reflection for students is to help them gain some insight about their day. Self-reflection is a great way to end the day because it allows students to analyze not only themselves, but what happened throughout the day and make any changes they see fit for the next day.

Closing Circles: Keep in mind that your choices for closing circle activities should leave students feeling calm and positive, with renewed energy and enthusiasm for school. Consider using a three-part structure for closing circles: a reflection, a celebration, and a closing. These components build on each other:

- Reflection—the teacher cues students to reflect on their learning for the day or set goals for the next day. This can be as simple as going around the circle to answer an open-ended question, such as "What's one thing you want to work on tomorrow?" It might also be an activity that involves reflective thinking.
- Celebration—the whole group does a quick, lively song, chant, or cheer celebrating the community's effort and accomplishments that day. You can celebrate hard work and learning, living up to class rules, working to solve problems together—there are many possibilities.
- Closing—the group does a brief activity that ends the gathering and makes the transition to dismissal. This activity could be a song sung while putting on winter coats, hats, and boots or a fun way to send students to line up a few at a time.

Rate the Learning or Lesson: This exit slip can be accomplished in a matter of minutes. Ask students to rate—on a scale of 1 to 10—how well they understood a specific lesson from that day.

If they rate their understanding low, ask them to write down what they may need (more time, more explanation, a graphic organizer, a tutor, etc.). Collect the slips, and after your students leave, make piles of similar ratings. If you have a lot of 8, 9, and 10 ratings, the lesson went well. If you have lower numbers, it might be time to probe for further information from the whole class the next day, and then review or reteach.

B. Communication Tip Sheets

Developing a Message Map

Gathering Feedback

Communication Considerations for Schools in Tribal Communities

Effective Communication – ELL Considerations

Supporting Students With Disabilities and Their Families



Tip Sheet—DEVELOPING A MESSAGE MAP

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on information obtained from Social and Behavior Communication Kit.

Why: During this emergency, we've been inundated with information from a variety of sources and authorities. It comes to us all day, every day, and has become overwhelming. One method that is recognized and recommended for developing consistent messages during an emergency is the use of **message maps.** Message maps are a useful tool that provide factual information about the emergency that can be shared quickly with partners and the media to ensure that information is delivered in a consistent, clear and concise manner.

How: Message maps describe hierarchically organized information in three levels to anticipated or actual questions and concerns from audiences about the emergency. This tip sheet provides information on how to create a message map to address questions and concerns that may arise as your school reopens.

6 Steps in Developing a Message Map

- **Step 1: Identify audiences (or stakeholders):** Stakeholders include the general public as well as other interested parties who are in some way affected by the emergency (teachers and staff, students and families, etc.).
- **Step 2: Identify anticipated questions and/or concerns of stakeholders:** A list should be developed of potential questions and concerns relating to the emergency that each major group of stakeholders is likely to have.
- **Step 3: Identify frequent concerns:** From the list of questions and concerns produced under point 2, select the most common categories of underlying concerns for each stakeholder. These common concerns will form the first level of the message map.
- **Step 4: Develop key messages:** For each concern, identify a maximum of three key messages that respond to it. These key messages make up the second layer of the message map.
- **Step 5: Develop supporting information:** For each key message identified in step 4, identify key supporting facts. This is level 3 of the message map.
- **Step 6: Share and deliver the maps:** The maps need to be shared and distributed among partners and parties involved in communication to promote delivery of harmonized messages from all sources of information.

Here are some **DO's** and **DON'T's** to consider when developing a message map.

DO's	DON'T's
» Provide simple, doable actions that the public can perform to reduce risk. » Acknowledge the emotions (fear, anxiety, and sadness) that people may be experiencing as a result of the emergency. » Keep key messages short and concise and limit the number of messages to the most important. » If there is uncertainty linked to the emergency and its evolution, acknowledge it. » Only provide known facts and avoid speculation. » Ensure that messages instill confidence. » Use simple language that can be understood by the intended audiences. » Develop messages taking into consideration the communication channels used to disseminate them. » Use evidence-based data to inform messages. » Link messages to available services and resources when appropriate.	» Fuel fear and anxiety, they are likely to be already elevated. » Provide background information as this may distract audiences from the key messages. » Develop long messages addressing more than one issue at once. » Deny uncertainty if it exists, as this affects credibility. » Speculate about any issue relating to the emergency. » Provide information that is dishonest or factually incorrect. » Use technical jargon and complex words. » Blame individuals, organizations, or institutions for the emergency. » Use language that can be interpreted as judgmental or discriminatory. » Offer promises that cannot be guaranteed. » Use humor.

A message map template is illustrated below.

Audience:		
Question/Concern:		
Key Message 1	**Key Message 2**	**Key Message 3**
Supporting Facts	**Supporting Facts**	**Supporting Facts**

Message maps are live documents that need to be reviewed and updated regularly as the emergency evolves and new information needs to be addressed.

Tip Sheet—GATHERING FEEDBACK

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center, and based on a prototype submitted by Joe Simpson, Region 11 Comprehensive Center, from his interviews with his granddaughters about their distance learning experience.

WHY: As schools move from crisis response to planning for reopening, it will be important to gather feedback from students, families, and teachers to reflect on what worked with virtual/distance learning and what did not, and consider the implications for their plans to reopen.

HOW: The tools that follow this tip sheet are intended to provide principals and other school leaders with examples of practical ways to gather feedback from students and families and staff in preparation for the reopening of schools. Each tool can be used in the same step-by-step manner. The questions are examples of the kinds of questions each school might want to ask and can be modified and adapted to fit each school's needs.

- **Step 1:** Principal asks each teacher in the school to schedule and conduct a short interview with a few students and families from their classrooms within a given time frame. Teachers record the answers and share the results with the principal.
- **Step 2:** Principal schedules and conducts a short interview with several teachers from their school within an identified time frame. Principal (or designated interviewer) records the answers.
- **Step 3:** Principal (with the reopening team) summarizes the responses from all the interviews, with brief descriptions. The table provided here is a sample of how responses can be summarized and shared with the school community.

Interviewees	What they liked	What didn't go well	What they suggest to improve	What they missed and look forward to
Students				
Families				
Teachers				

- **Step 4**: Share the summaries of the information gathered with the school community. Ask for their suggestions for the school's Next Steps. Give time for them to respond. Then, with your school reopening team, prepare a list of the Next Steps you plan to take and share it with the school community so that they know you listened to their suggestions.

Virtual / Distance Learning
Questions for Students About Their Experience

Student Name _____

Teacher (Interviewer) Name _____

Date of Interview : _____

Learning at home has been an entirely new way of doing school, and I want to hear how it has been working for you. I am asking you to answer just a few questions to help the school collect feedback about your experience with virtual/distance learning. Your answers will help the school better prepare for your return. Your voice is important, so thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences.

1. What do you like about distance learning?

2. What do you think could be improved?

3. What do you miss most about going to your school?

4. When you think about coming back to school, what is most important to you?

Virtual / Distance Learning
Questions for Parents About Their Experience

Parent/Family Name_____

Teacher (Interviewer) Name _____

Date of Interview : _____

Learning at home has been an entirely new way of doing school, and I want to hear how it has been working for you. I am asking you to answer just a few questions to help the school collect feedback about your experience with virtual/distance learning. Your answers will help the school better prepare for your student's return. Your voice is important, so thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences.

1. What parts of distance/virtual learning worked well for your family?

2. What things did not go well?

3. What could the school have done differently or better to support you and your child during this time?

4. When you think about the school reopening, what is most important to you?

Virtual / Distance Learning
Questions for Teachers About Their Experience

Teacher Name_____

Interviewer Name _____

Date of Interview: _____

Providing distance/virtual teaching has been an entirely new way for you to provide instruction, and I want to hear how it has been working for you. I am asking you to answer just a few questions to help me collect feedback about your experience with virtual/distance teaching. Your answers will help me know what worked well, what did not, and your answers will be used to support the school's plans for reopening.

1. What aspects of virtual/distance education worked well for you and your students?

2. What aspects of virtual/distance education were problematic?

3. What support did you receive from your school during this time?

4. What could the school have done better or differently to support your efforts?

5. When you think about the school reopening, what is most important to you?

Tip Sheet—COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center.

- Remember that tribal communities are often divided into villages/clans/communities based on geographic boundaries.
- When using village/clan/community signage:
  - Tribal communities will often maintain community signage boards that allow tribal citizens to read and collect information from different agencies/organizations/groups that serve their tribal community.
- When using village/clan/community meetings and facilities:
  - Tribal communities will hold community meetings that are often attended by tribal government officials and representatives. Schools can ask to be placed on the agenda to present information, or ask to place correspondence such as flyers and letters for all to read and take with them as they attend the meeting.
  - Tribal communities will often have a central location that tribal citizens visit to pay utility bills, receive social services, etc. Schools can place flyers and letters in these locations as well; you must ask for permission prior to doing so.
- When using social media:
  - Tribal communities operate and manage social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram; schools may communicate with appropriate tribal representatives and ask how they can post information on these platforms.
- When using direct mail:
  - Traditional method of mailing a letter or flyer; while effective, takes time and will require that tribal families have an updated address within the school file.
- When using tag-a-long communication:
  - Tribal government representatives and agencies will often distribute materials to tribal homes and families; the distribution is a team effort that will include various tribal government offices. Schools can request that they be allowed to place flyers or letters inside those boxes or packages that are scheduled to be disbursed to tribal homes.
  - Remember that effective communication includes information about the school's intent and goals with local tribal governmental officials. To communicate with tribal government representatives, administrators, or departments, it is best to identify a specific person or group that connects you to the governing bodies.
  - One key contact is with the local Tribal Education Department/Agency (TED/TEA) to assist with the school's communication with the tribe. The Tribal Education Director will identify the best method for distributing information and garnering support and assistance for the school on behalf of the tribe.

- Social media can be an effective tool, and most tribes operate community social media pages. Schools should reach out to the appropriate department such as a Public Information Office in the tribe or TED/TEA to ascertain how they can place a school message on the social media pages.

Tip Sheet—EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION - ELL CONSIDERATIONS

Prepared for The National Content Center and based on information from Colorín Colorado!

WHY: It is critical to keep the effect of school responses to COVID-19 on English-language learners (ELLs) and immigrant students in view so that they can be included in all responses and plans.

HOW: Schools should look for ways to partner with families throughout this time of uncertainty and draw upon the expertise of ELL educators, family liaisons, and community partners who work closely with these student populations and communities. They can serve as an important bridge and source of continuity during a time of tremendous uncertainty.

This tip sheet provides some suggestions for communicating with families to position your students who are English Language Learners and their families for success during this time.

Practical Suggestions

- Use the family's preferred language for all communication. Many COVID-19 resources have already been translated into other languages. Check with your local public health office to see if they have information serving the immigrant families in your community. You may also wish to see if there are existing multilingual resources online.
- Find/use a fully bilingual interpreter when necessary.
- Conduct regular check-ins with students and their families to learn more about factors related to students' distance learning options and to determine what is working and what is not.
- Share contact information so that students can stay in touch with you and others and also look for ways to practice conversation remotely.
- Provide access to essential COVID-19 information. When students return to school, encourage teachers to use visuals, videos, and demonstrations with ELLs on steps like handwashing, and ensure that students understand the information.
- Collaborate with community networks and media outlets that can provide valuable two-way benefits both in sharing information and learning more about families' questions, concerns, and ideas.
- Provide updates to ELL families in their language if schools are closed or closing due to COVID-19. Make certain that families fully understand the closing plan(s).
- Families may have a wide range of questions and concerns related to this crisis based on their own perspective and experience. Ask cultural/family liaisons or family members who are active in the school community to flag any cultural considerations that schools or districts should be aware of.

Tip Sheet—SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Prepared for The National Content Center and based on information from the National Center for Learning Disabilities.

WHY: IDEA mandates that all eligible students have a right to a free and appropriate public education (i.e., FAPE as articulated in an IEP) even in times of crisis. Through this entire process, it is crucial that schools work closely with families to think and plan about how best to meet the needs of their children in what may be a chaotic and constantly changing environment. Clear communication with parents, families, and students will be critical.

HOW: Schools and districts will need to be intentional in their planning to fulfill obligations under IDEA. If the IEP team is unable to meet in person, they should meet by teleconference or other remote methods to make determinations about how a student's needs can be met under whatever conditions now exist due to school closure and any quarantine that might be imposed on the student due to localized health considerations. In the absence of a clear path for serving students in this crisis, the best approach may be to consider every available option and communicate often with families.

This tip sheet provides some suggestions for communicating with families to position your students with disabilities and their families for success during this time.

Practical Suggestions

- Communicate early and often with students and parents. Send separate messages to your students and their parents. The two groups need different types of reassurance from the school.
- Notify parents or guardians of students with disabilities of the school's individualized plan for that student to access continued educational opportunities. Include the input of parents or guardians and the student, as appropriate, when discussing the plan.
- Provide parents with multiple options for communication, such as videoconferences, phone calls, emails, or message board posts in the appropriate language.
- Determine a student's family situation and readiness to learn from home. Educators should reach out to families to find out what capabilities they have and whether they are ready for virtual learning.
- Share with parents the best ways to communicate with the school when their children are struggling.
- Determine who the point persons will be for ongoing communication so expectations are met and messages from the school are consistent and clear.
- Collaborate creatively to continue to meet the needs of children with disabilities and their families.
- Provide families with a list of additional resources that can be easily accessed to support the unique needs of their child/family situation.

C. Collaboration Tip Sheets

Conducting a Data Inventory

Preparing for Collaborative Meetings

Collaboration Considerations for Schools in Tribal Communities



Tip Sheet—CONDUCTING A DATA INVENTORY

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and is based on information from WestEd.

WHY: Many schools do not know what types of data they have, the data format, or who has the data. The data inventory is an important step in knowing what types of data should be considered for use in decision making and school improvement planning, as well as which are available and ready for analysis.

HOW: Principals and school leaders should form databased decision-making teams to support the use of data as a tool for improving instruction and student achievement. Using the attached data inventory template, data teams can begin the work of completing a school level data inventory. Data inventories are not a one-time task that gets filed away, but rather something that is built on, returned to and used in different ways in each school's particular context. The sample data identified on the template is not intended as an exhaustive list, but serves as examples of data schools should consider as they begin the work of completing their inventories.

- **Step 1:** Principals form the school's databased decision-making team. Data teams often include a school's principal, instructional leader(s), and several teachers representing grade levels or grade level bands (e.g., K-3, 4-6, etc.).
- **Step 2:** Provide a copy of the data inventory template to each member of the team. Review the document as an introduction to the process and why it is important.
- **Step 3:** Start with one of the data sources identified on the sample template (e.g., student achievement), and discuss how each data source may involve several more specific kinds of data. Have the team identify the specific kinds of data that are available, and discuss the headings of each of the columns.
- **Step 4:** Record decisions on the template and discuss patterns that may emerge to begin making decisions about strengths and weaknesses in current data collection and use and for development of a school improvement plan.
- **Step 5:** Establish protected, dedicated time for team meetings to analyze, strategize, and act upon the data.

Template:School Data Inventory(blank)

Data source	When was data collected?	Who has access? Where is data stored?	How is data currently being used?	How can data be used more effectively?

Template:School Data Inventory(sample)

Data source	When was data collected?	Who has access? Where is data stored?	How is data currently being used?	How can data be used more effectively?
Demographics				
Student achievement				
Curriculum and Instruction				
Program				
Behavior referrals/reports				
Attendance reports				
School climate				

Tip Sheet—PREPARING FOR COLLABORATIVE MEETINGS

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on information and resources from the Academic Development Institute.

WHY: A meeting agenda helps you and your colleagues prepare for a meeting and guides you through the items you need to discuss. Time spent in planning an agenda will likely save time for all meeting participants by providing a clear set of topics, objectives, and time frames.

HOW: This tip sheet provides suggestions for how to create an effective agenda for team meetings and a sample of an agenda that schools can use as is and/or modify and adapt to meet the needs of a particular team function.

Practical Suggestions for Creating a Team Agenda

- Create a clearly written agenda for every meeting to ensure the team remains on task and on schedule throughout the meeting.
- Agendas should be distributed at least 24 hours prior to meetings to help ensure team members come to each meeting prepared.
- Facilitators are generally responsible for preparing the agenda, so they will need to gather general input from members prior to creating the agenda. Information can be gathered through informal conversations, emails, anonymous drop box. Always request a due date for input.
- Only put items on the agenda that need to be addressed in a face-to-face format.
- Ensure that each agenda item has sufficient time for meaningful discussion and problem solving.
- Agendas ideally focus on similarly related items connected to the meeting's purpose. Too many different topics prevent a team from going in-depth on the topic and causes confusion about the purpose of the meeting.
- Agenda topic(s) should be broken down into manageable sections for discussion and actions.
- Strategically order the agenda topics to ensure the meeting runs smoothly.
- Place agenda items that need creative or energetic thought near the beginning of the agenda, if appropriate. Place "hot" topic items strategically on the agenda.
- Use a verb associated with each agenda item to help the team understand the purpose for the agenda item (i.e., make a final decision on…; review and discuss….; brainstorm….; develop…).
- Include an outcome expectation associated with each agenda item.

An example of a team meeting agenda format follows.

Team Meeting Agenda

Location:_____

Date:	**Time:**	
Assigned Roles:		
Facilitator:	**Timekeeper:**	
Note Taker:	**Process Observer:**	
Team Members:		
(First name of each person here)	**(Last name of each person here)**	**(Position of each person here)**

Time	**Person Responsible**	**Agenda Item**	**Minutes (Summary of Key Points)**	
		***Action Items Review**	**Completion Date**	**Person(s) Responsible**
		Next Meeting Reminder **Date and Time:**		

***Action Items Review:** Note Taker reviews all action items, with dates of completion and person responsible. These items are added during the note taking process during the meeting then entered here and reviewed during this part of the agenda.

Tip Sheet—COLLABORATION FOR SCHOOLS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center.

Reconnecting With Your Tribes

Returning to school after a disruptive separation may mean mending several fences and reconnecting with different people and groups within the school community and within the broader community. That broader community includes the tribes with whom your students and their families are affiliated and which, in some cases, are responsible for operating your school. They need to know what has changed and in what ways the school experience will be different from in the past. Reconnection means direct connection between the principal and tribal elders, councils, boards, as appropriate to each school setting. It means connecting with tribes with whom families are affiliated that might not be the same tribe(s) responsible for the school. It means purposeful connection with the tribes, for which the principal is prepared to inform them of changes, itemize needs, describe plans, and listen, listen, listen.

Please consider**:**

» Make a list of items to discuss with tribes. Include an agenda for each call or meeting, which will make the best use of time and achieve the best results.

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Tribal Leaders Toolkit	Tool	NCAI Tribal Leaders Toolkit: Education Choice for Indian Country
Tribal Consultation	Doc	FAQs for Tribal Consultation
Best Practices for Tribal Consultation	Web	NIEA Consultation Guides

Honoring Your Community's History and Culture

Some school communities consist of members of a single tribe, some a few tribes, and some people from a multitude of tribes. Tribal histories and cultures, therefore, can be complex. So can the history and culture more immediate to the surroundings of the school and its geographic region. The Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE's) principals are always cognizant of the importance of people's ties to tribal history, language, and culture, but returning after a disruptive separation is a time to reflect upon the school's policies and practices that emphasize Native history and culture, tribal history and culture, and the history and culture of the school's locality and region.

Please consider:

- Exactly how does your school ignite knowledge of history, culture, and language for your students, but also for all members of the school community? Is there more to be done? Are there plans to do it? Outline a quick personal plan for yourself to move this forward and tape it to your computer.
- How are you engaging tribes through use of elders, speakers, culture and language experts to teach students, their families, and your teachers and staff?
- As an assignment for students, teach them interviewing skills and have them interview tribal members, record the stories, and then collect the stories for a school publication.
- How, especially, are new faculty and non-Native faculty given a thorough training on history and culture that will bring them up-to-speed in better understanding their students?

Suggested resource	Type	Description
Native Knowledge 360°	Web	Home | Native Knowledge 360° - Interactive Teaching Resources
Culture-Based Curriculum Repository	Web	NIEA Resource Repository: Culture-Based Education Curriculum
Becoming Visible – NCAI	Web	NCAI-Becoming Visible Report 2019

D. Care Tip Sheets

Addressing Fears and Anxieties

Teachers' Self-Care Tips



Tip Sheet—ADDRESSING FEARS AND ANXIETIES

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Association of School Psychologists.

WHY: It is very important to remember that children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events. Acknowledging some level of concern, without panicking, is appropriate and can result in taking the necessary actions that reduce the risk of illness. Children and teens react, in part, on what they see from the adults around them. When teachers and school staff deal with the COVID-19 calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for children.

HOW: Teach children positive preventive measures by talking with them about their fears, and giving them some sense of control over their risk of infection. This is also a tremendous opportunity for adults to model for children problem-solving, flexibility, and compassion.

This tip sheet provides suggestions for how to talk with children about COVID-19 and other suggestions for easing children's fears and anxieties.

Practical Suggestions

- Remain calm**.** Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them and with others. Watch both your words and tone.
- Ask what they know. Start by asking what they know about the disease. For older students and teenagers, ask what they've seen on social media. Correct any misinformation.
- Talk to children about what is happening in a way that they can understand. Keep it simple and appropriate for each child's age.
- Provide information on COVID-19 that is truthful and age appropriate. Offering developmentally appropriate facts can reduce fears.
- Carefully listen and have them draw or write out their thoughts and feelings.
- Let them know what to expect when changes happen in their environments.
- Help students recognize the things they *can* control, like having good hygiene. Give them some control over helping to keep their classrooms clean and safe – take a 2-minute break every 2 hours and wipe down desks, chairs, doorknobs, etc.
- Model the behavior you want to see.
- Explain that the government, the tribes, schools, doctors, researchers, and many more really smart adults are doing everything they can to help prevent the spread and find a treatment.
- Demonstrate deep breathing. Deep breathing is a valuable tool for calming the nervous system. Do breathing exercises with your students.



Tip Sheet—TEACHERS' SELF-CARE TIPS

Prepared for the Principal Leadership Academy at the Bureau of Indian Education, supported by the Region 13 Comprehensive Center and based on information from a variety of self-care sources.

Why: Around the country, teachers have begun to return to classrooms after the curveball that was COVID-19. While the beginning of the school year can be stressful even at the best of times, 2020 has served up more challenges than anyone could've predicted. For teachers, it has been a time of serious uncertainty, requiring quick thinking and perseverance as the entire student body shifted to online learning. While heading back to campus may be a welcome relief, it's normal to feel a little unsettled.

How: While heading back to school will feel familiar, there will be plenty of changes as students and teachers adjust to learning in a post-COVID environment. It will undoubtedly take time for everyone to come to grips with the new normal, but there are ways to ensure the re-entry process goes as smoothly as possible.

This tip sheet provides some practical suggestions and ideas for ways teachers can acknowledge the work that was done, and care for themselves as they transition back into a more regular teaching routine.

Practical Suggestions and Ideas

Own the appreciation: Celebrate what you and your peers achieved when dealing with an unprecedented situation. If parents express their gratitude to you, accept their thanks graciously, and remind yourself (and your colleagues) of what a world-class effort you all put in.

Self-care: If the virus has taught us anything, it's that taking care of ourselves is essential. Put aside five minutes at the start of each day to check-in with yourself, whether it's chilling out with a pre-class cup of coffee or taking a few deep breaths before the bell rings.

Maintain your routines: Routines increase feelings of safety and security, which is something we're all craving after so much destabilization. Maintaining your routines – whether it's daily exercise, walking the dog, or listening to a podcast before work – will help you to regain a sense of control.

Stay calm and focused: Mindfulness practices can reduce emotional reactivity and support decision making. Mind-body strategies include sitting or walking in nature, physical exercise, or talking with a good friend.

Stay connected: Use this time to connect with people, whom you have not been able to connect with due to distance, lack of time, etc. Sharing concerns with trusted others will have significant positive psychological benefits. Therefore, try to contribute to a sense of togetherness by sharing your feelings and helping others to cope with similar emotions that you too are experiencing.

Recognize what is and isn't in your control: Consider using a simple T-chart to write down what is and isn't in your control. Find a trusted colleague and discuss. An example of a T-Chart is depicted below.

Things I Can Control	Things I Cannot Control

Acknowledge moments of gratitude or joy: Look for moments of joy and connection and hold on to them. Try writing down humorous moments, something that made you smile, or something you are thankful for. You can write these moments in a journal or jot them down on a note to put near your workstation. You can also share these moments with your students and ask them to share their own.

Demonstrate compassion: Take time to get to know colleagues. Show kindness by offering to help how/when you can. Offer words of encouragement and notice verbal and nonverbal indicators of emotional well-being. Ask colleagues how they are taking care of themselves.