

THE MAGAZINE EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR

IAO

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# ACCREDITOR

FEATURED

## A BLUE PRINT FOR GETTING STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOLS

What does the future  
hold?

## BEST STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS TO ADAPT TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER

What steps to take?

- ➔ School Meal
- ➔ Transportation
- ➔ Whole Child Supports

EXCLUSIVE!

## 7 NEW CHALLENGES TEACHERS MIGHT FACE DURING FALL 2020



# Editor's Note

"When will the schools reopen?" is a million-dollar question that is keeping everyone, from parents and teachers to students and government representatives, up at night. Summer break has now officially ended and people are collectively looking at the news to find out when they will resume the "normal" learning process instead of living the dystopia of screen communication and static voice. The problem is that even if the number of corona cases goes down, the possibility of returning to schools like the pre pandemic era is just wishful thinking.

The threat of standing too close to your peers, not sanitizing your hands enough or exposing little kids to the virus will continue to loom over us and this is why it is important to see what would be the modified strategy for opening schools.

Looking at the whole scenario of 2020, we have come to the realization that the world did not just change physically- it also served as an emotional transformation globally. So, major changes in the educational curriculum are also taking place. Whether they are positive or not, you will find out by checking out the articles.

In our new issue, we have highlighted how different life would be for students and teachers when they will go back to schools and what challenges would the staff face to make schools safe enough to operate.

Jeff Wright, Editor in Chief

A person is holding a white sign with a blue border. The sign has the words "BACK TO SCHOOL" written in red marker. There are also some hand-drawn sun-like symbols in the corners. The person holding the sign is wearing a light blue shirt.

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## 01. **Featured**

### **A BLUE PRINT FOR GETTING STUDENTS BACK TO SCHOOLS**

Given the likelihood that reopened schools will have to incorporate many novel decisions regarding staffing, scheduling, and operations, there will inevitably be any number of incidents where the usual regulations do not make sense.

State policymakers will also need to scrutinize state privacy statutes to identify any potential barriers to this coordination. Schools need to review the apps and digital services used for remote learning to ensure they are consistent with privacy protections required under state and federal laws.



**19.**

## **BEST STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS TO ADAPT TO THE NEW**

### **WORLD ORDER**

All students need supportive relationships and nurturing learning environments, particularly students facing additional stress. Educating the “whole child” is not a single set of courses, policies or activities, but rather a mindset that should inform both school reopening plans and the support students receive. Schools should consider a needs assessment to understand the full range of student and faculty needs.



**25.** **Teachers**

## **7 NEW CHALLENGES TEACHERS MIGHT FACE DURING FALL 2020**

States should consider taking a page from how many of them handled medical students late in their training, issuing would-be graduates in good standing with expedited or provisional credentials. This would allow districts to hire these individuals if needed. Meanwhile, states can require individuals to pursue full certification and can revoke provisional certifications where appropriate.

# A Blue Print for Getting Students Back to Schools

## WHAT'S THE PLAN?

**“An immense challenge is determining what public health accommodations and adaptations ought to entail, what schools will require to make them practicable**

There is no one-size-fits-all approach for reopening schools. An immense challenge is determining what public health accommodations and adaptations ought to entail, what schools will require to make them practicable, how community organizations can provide support, and what the path to reopening will look like in practice.

Plans will also need to differentiate strategies based on school levels and student needs. For example, in instances of remote learning, more printed resources might be needed for elementary-age students, while online instruction might work best for high school students. Strategies might also look different for urban schools than rural schools.



# General Considerations For Students

There are at least four broad considerations when planning for reopening: coordination, communication, regulatory flexibility, and privacy protections. Schools will have to coordinate in new ways with state and local health officials to develop a unified public health strategy. They will need to communicate with stakeholders so that students, families, educators, and community members are clear on expectations for academics and public health. They will need flexibility as they adapt to unprecedented challenges. And we will need to review privacy policies to ensure that schools can engage with students and families in new ways with an eye to both remote learning and community health.

# COMMUNITY COORDINATION

A purple backpack is the central focus, filled with various items. In the foreground, a blue surgical mask and a clear bottle of hand sanitizer are visible. Behind the backpack, there are colorful notebooks (pink, green, blue), a pair of pink scissors, and a smartphone. The background is a solid light blue.

Reopening will require schools to work far more closely with public health authorities and other agencies than is the norm. This will require new routines and partnerships to allow schools to focus on their core competencies.

Schools must develop protocols and partnerships with public health authorities to effectuate **“contact tracing”** strategies—with the aim of knowing at any given point which students or teachers warrant special distancing protections or testing. Schools should also prepare for possible reporting of other health indicators, such as student absenteeism, students who present a fever, or students whose parents or guardians have been diagnosed with Covid-19.

# COMMUNICATION



Effective school reopening will require diligent efforts to communicate with parents, educators, and community members. Careful reopening plans will be for naught if parents or educators are not confident about the measures in place. Where schools open with significant modifications to schedules, classes, or logistics, minimizing chaos and confusion will depend on clear and consistent communication. Schools need comprehensive communication plans to reach teachers and parents that leverage local media outlets, text messaging, websites, and email. Among the most important considerations is the health and safety of students and school personnel. Schools need to provide clear guidance on steps the school is taking, including protocols for self-isolation.



# REGULATORY FLEXIBILITY AND PRIVACY PROTECTIONS

The events of this spring showed that many familiar rules and regulations—such as those governing attendance, seat time, instructional delivery, testing, procurement, and graduation requirements—were ill-suited for the challenges schools currently face. Given the likelihood that reopened schools will have to incorporate many novel decisions regarding staffing, scheduling, and operations, there will inevitably be any number of incidents where the usual regulations do not make sense.

Schools will also confront new tensions around student privacy that will need clear guidance from federal and state policymakers. One example is privacy issues that may emerge from increased information sharing among schools, local and state health officials, and health care providers. Schools should also review the privacy policies of their online learning providers.



# FINAL WORDS

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**State policymakers will also need to scrutinize state privacy statutes to identify any potential barriers to this coordination. ”**

The federal government needs to provide guidance clarifying that federal privacy laws, such as Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, will not prohibit necessary coordination between schools and health officials. State policymakers will also need to scrutinize state privacy statutes to identify any potential barriers to this coordination. Schools need to review the apps and digital services used for remote learning to ensure they are consistent with privacy protections required under state and federal laws.



# BEST STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOLS TO ADAPT TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER

## WHERE IS IT HEADED?

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**Schools will have to revamp their day-to-day operations to adhere to public health guidance.**

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Schools will have to revamp their day-to-day operations to adhere to public health guidance. This includes at least three areas of operations: public health accommodations, school meals, and transportation. With public health accommodations, schools will have to examine every aspect of the school day—from classroom spaces to class schedules—and adjust to address new public health guidance. Leaders will need to address gaps in meal service and distribution plans. As for transportation, schools will need to devise plans that conform with physical distancing protocols. All this will have obvious implications for staffing and costs and is a budget line that Washington should help address.

# PUBLIC HEALTH ACCOMMO- DATIONS



Schools will need to adapt to evolving guidance from health officials based on a better understanding of Covid-19 risks and the related mitigation strategies. Health officials may recommend reopening schools only when certain hygiene and distancing measures are in place, as we are seeing in parts of Asia and Europe.

Depending on local circumstances, schools will need to consider closing playgrounds, suspending nonessential activities, moving meetings online, limiting on-campus visitors, administering Covid-19 tests, and requiring temperature checks for students and faculty entering buildings. Classrooms, hallways, school buses, and other areas will need to undergo regular deep cleanings to minimize the spread of Covid-19.

Some of these items will require working with local health authorities, while others may be more widely available but will require unforeseen budgetary outlays. Schools should also develop plans that even if they open schools, some parents may decide to keep their child at home during a local outbreak.



State leaders should consider how to leverage the flexibility provided with Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer to provide additional benefits to children who normally receive free or reduced-price school meals. Districts need to assess which students cannot take advantage of school meal distribution sites and identify ways to address these gaps.

Some schools may continue to use buses to distribute meals to students. As students return to school, the burdens this will place on school staff and bus fleets may become prohibitive—requiring alternative strategies. Schools will need to assess whether to serve meals in the classroom or in smaller cohorts in the cafeteria or offer grab-and-go boxed meals.

# School Meals



# TRANSPORTATION

Schools will have to organize transportation to conform to physical distancing protocols health officials recommend. For instance, it is likely that schools may be advised to operate buses with a one-student-per-seat rule creating massive burdens for bus fleets and driver pools. There is an additional set of questions regarding transportation for the millions of students in urban centers who typically rely on mass transit.

Districts also need to anticipate issues regarding the health and safety of drivers and other transportation staff. Many drivers may be in a population that is vulnerable to Covid-19 or leery of the risks. Districts need to project what their situation will be for available drivers and plan accordingly.



# WHOLE CHILD SUPPORTS

Schools need to consider students' social and emotional (SEL) needs. Students are experiencing Covid-19 differently. Many are going through significant trauma because of school closures, potentially losing friends and family members and experiencing the insecurity created from parents losing jobs. SEL and trauma supports will be crucial not only during this period of remote learning but also in the next academic years. It is also important, however, to avoid stereotypes or stigmas and assess students as individuals with targeted support accordingly.



# SEL SUPPORTS

All students need supportive relationships and nurturing learning environments, particularly students facing additional stress. Educating the “whole child” is not a single set of courses, policies, or activities, but rather a mindset that should inform both school reopening plans and the support students receive. Schools should consider a needs assessment to understand the full range of student and faculty needs. Meeting those needs is not the school’s sole responsibility, but rather a shared responsibility among community partners including community health providers, food banks, counseling, and other resource providers.



# Final Words



Policymakers and school leaders should assess the need for additional counselors, social workers, school psychologists, and nurses. They should explore whether there are better opportunities to deploy staff, temporarily draw support from community organizations, partner with other community-based organizations, or sketch extraordinary 2021 funding demands for state and federal appropriators. Schools should take advantage of the new federal regulatory flexibility for telemedicine to quickly expand access to counseling services using online and videoconferencing systems.

**EXCLUSIVE!**

**FALL 2020**



# **7** **NEW** **CHALLENGES** **TEACHERS** **MIGHT FACE**



Many educators may be vulnerable to Covid-19, raising questions about how to protect them, whether they will be able to work in schools next year, and how to respond to any resultant personnel shortages. Meanwhile, districts and teacher unions should work together to revisit aspects of their labor agreements to help schools adapt to social distancing and to ensure that vulnerable teachers can work safely and productively. As school budgets, responsibilities, and models evolve, schools and districts must be prepared to evaluate their staffing needs.

# 1

## 1. COVID-19 SUSCEPTIBLE PERSONNEL

States and schools should consider early retirement incentives that align with individuals susceptible to Covid-19 based on age and adjust years of service requirements for retiree health insurance.



## 2. TEACHER CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

States should consider taking a page from how many of them handled medical students late in their training, issuing would-be graduates in good standing with expedited or provisional credentials. This would allow districts to hire these individuals if needed.

# 3

## 3. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

Whatever one thinks of collective bargaining agreements in ordinary circumstances, contractual constraints on class sizes, schedules, staff work hours, and more could make it difficult for schools to adapt in response to social distancing requirements—compromising their ability to educate students and potentially putting vulnerable educators' lives at risk. National unions can provide clear and necessary guidance to their local chapters to help expedite negotiations.

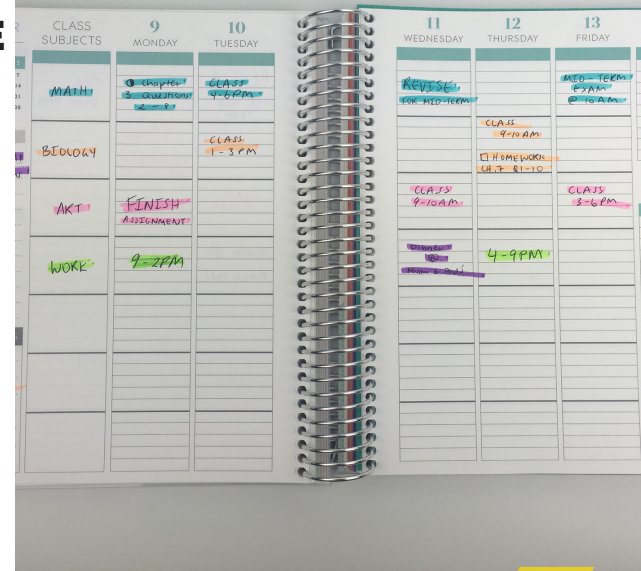


## 4. STAFFING CHALLENGES

As budgets, responsibilities, and models evolve over the next 18 months, schools and districts must be prepared to evaluate their staffing needs. Districts and schools are currently wrestling with chaotic budget projections, uncertainty with operations, and questions about how they will be using staff in 2020–21.

## 5. SCHEDULES AND LEARNING TIME

Based on preliminary health guidance, schools will not be able to reopen in ways that fill classrooms with students or create crowded hallways. Instead, districts will need to take into account how schedules affect the types of personal interactions that occur daily and redesign them so students and staff can meet health protocols.

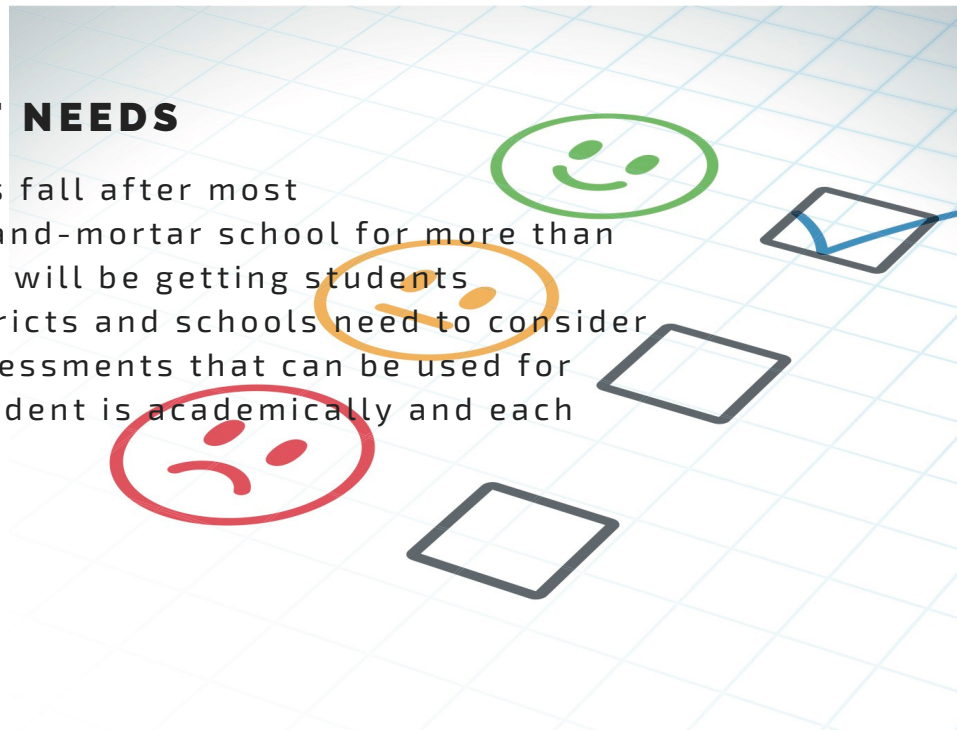


## 5. CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

If another wave of Covid-19 sweeps through a community, schools may once again be closed and have to return to remote learning. Schools will need to support teachers with managing class assignments, content, and assessments delivered remotely. This will include providing backup support for teachers who are themselves caring for kids or elderly parents or who are sick and cannot be quite attentive.

## 7. ASSESSING STUDENT NEEDS

Schools would be opening this fall after most students were out of a brick-and-mortar school for more than five months. The first priority will be getting students reintegrated into school. Districts and schools need to consider the variety of diagnostics assessments that can be used for understanding where each student is academically and each child's SEL needs.





## TO SUM IT UP...

Schools should work with their teachers to determine how best to use assessment and growth data as part of their evaluation frameworks, which for some teachers is crucial for career advancement. States should determine what constitutes attendance and a statutory school day in the context of remote learning and begin to assess how possibly reducing the total number of in-person class days or instructional hours might change how assessments are used in the schoolhouse. As accountability in many states and districts now includes attendance, state and district leaders will need to determine if adjustments in attendance policies should be made during the period transitioning back to school.

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