

## **Reset and Restart-Education Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts**

### **Introduction**

**Important Note:** This document is designed to inform districts and schools in their decisions of how best to deliver and implement instruction. **While the daily health precautions are prescriptive, in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and Governor DeWine’s office, the remainder of the document does not constitute a requirement for any school or district. Instead, it should be used as a resource and starting point for school and district use in local decision making.** This document will be continuously revised ([LINK TO WEBPAGE](#)) over the coming weeks and months as we collaborate with health experts and receive feedback from our education stakeholders.

#### **1. Purpose**

This guide provides a framework for school and district use in restoring the educational achievement of each of Ohio’s students to ensure each student is on track to attain the One Goal in *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio’s Strategic Plan for Education. **This is a state-level tool for educators designed to prompt and inform thoughtful local conversations in the development of local plans for resetting and restarting school in the fall.** It has been developed with input from educators and several educator-related organizations, parents and students. As schools and districts develop their own plans for the 2020-2021 academic year, they should work closely with their local health departments and other community experts to engage in a collaborative effort to best meet the needs of their students, staff and communities within their local context. This guide is designed to be used in local planning and assessing the readiness to return to physical school buildings.

#### **2. Operating Assumptions**

The coronavirus remains with us, and Ohio will likely not return to normalcy until there is a vaccine or a cure. **A return to school will most likely look very different. Ohio’s education system will need to be flexible and nimble, understanding that the priority of protecting the health of Ohio’s citizens may require schools to operate in various modes at different times, with minimum advanced notice.** It is important to note that we simply do not know a great deal about the coronavirus, the future direction of the pandemic, and in turn, what that will mean for education in the way that we all know it. Schools should continue to partner with public health on their COVID-19 surveillance activities by tracking attendance and notifying local health officials of significant increases in student absenteeism. Under these circumstances, administration and staff will need to work together to determine how the operating plans for a district and its schools impact existing collective bargaining agreements. More than likely, a memorandum of understanding will be needed to account for the temporary change in operations during the coronavirus.

#### **3. Guiding Principles**

Returning to school will look different than it did before March 16, 2020. To best protect the health of Ohio’s students and citizens and to abide by recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health and local health departments, schools will need to change many practices. **Decisions on how to deliver instruction and any return to school buildings are**

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predicated on abiding by health guidelines of physical and social distancing, use of protective masks, and hygiene practices (hand washing). At the same time, we must share the moral responsibility of remaining committed to the vision laid out in Ohio's strategic plan, *Each Child, Our Future*, supportive of the Whole Child and the three core principles – *equity, partnerships, and quality schools*. Those fundamental components of the strategic plan should help guide Ohio's educators in our recovery efforts.

- **Principles for what we need to do:**

- Ensure local flexibility within state-defined parameters; reopening will look different across Ohio
- Simplify state-required procedures where practical
- Protect the health and safety of students, staff and visitors by supporting state and local efforts at controlling the spread of coronavirus. This is a top priority.
- Assess students to determine progress towards mastery of state standards and determine the best path forward for each student
- Support literacy, content literacy and numeracy by providing intervention and enrichment opportunities and support students in their continuing pursuit of their passions and/or career potential (music, art, other electives, industry credentials, etc.)
- Ensure educator support and training to aid children and families
- Support social, emotional and physical health of students and staff
- Prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable students, including students with disabilities, low income students, English learners, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care and justice involved youth and ensure equitable academic and social-emotional supports, etc.
- Create two-way communication with families and caregivers to assess students' and families' needs and communicate expectations and supports
- Assess schools and districts for their ability to reopen and remain open

- **Principles for the way in which we will work:**

- Promote collaboration (administrators, school counselors, teachers, other school personnel, families, communities, community partners, etc.) that involves co-design of strategies and high-quality planning and implementation processes.
- Leverage the power of quality continuous improvement processes (LINK to OIP) and the effective use of data-driven decision making. Ohio's education community should consider the attributes of an effective continuously improving school/district and implement processes that support a continuous improvement mindset.
- Embrace the use of **Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)**– Tier 1 for all; Tier 2 for some; Tier 3 for individuals. Within the MTSS system, focus not only on academics but the social emotional learning of students as well. Use multi-dimensional MTSS to address academics, behavior and emotional well-being.

**4. Role(s) of Associations, Educational Organizations (including Educational Service Centers), and Other State/Community Partners**

"Partnerships" is a key principle of *Each Child, Our Future* and is critical in moving forward in the 2020-21 school year. Everyone, not just those in schools, shares the responsibility of preparing

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children for successful futures. A collaborative effort of both education and community organizations is needed to ensure the effective delivery of appropriate instruction, while meeting the needs of the whole child, to each student in our schools. Education (pK-16) and community partners can support schools through the following means:

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

**Specific Operating Requirements for Schools to Reopen**

**Health and Safety and Related Logistical Requirements**

As Ohio develops the capabilities to safely diagnose, treat, and isolate COVID-19 cases and their contacts, we will continue the recovery phase of the pandemic and continue to resume some activities, including attending school. This will lead to some new COVID-19 infections, which is to be expected. The

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goal is to keep the number of COVID-19 cases below the hospital/health system’s capacity to handle them. Certain precautions **must** be observed on an ongoing basis during the pandemic recovery phase in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. Remember, as Governor DeWine has stated, “This isn’t forever...,” but we need to continue to take precautions for an indefinite time period to protect Ohio’s citizens. It is expected that there will be “flare-ups,” as determined by ODH and/or local health departments, in COVID-19 cases that may need to be addressed by implementing additional measures beyond ongoing precautions. **NOTE: This section is the most prescriptive section of the document, and represents measures required to best stop the spread of coronavirus. Should schools not be able to abide by these requirements, they should remain closed to in-person instruction and work towards a plan that meets the requirements.**

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- **A Student’s Daily Journey:**

In order to best understand the various health and safety needs of our students, we should all “put on a pair of our students’ shoes” and walk through the day in this manner. This includes waking up in the morning, transportation to the physical school building, waiting to enter the building, entering the building, waiting inside the building in designated areas, latchkey, locker visits, getting to class, taking into account any and all movement throughout the day (changing classes, using the restroom, lunch/cafeteria (breakfast and lunch), gym/PE, recess, etc.), dismissal and returning home.

- **Daily Precautions to Practice:**

**The Ohio Department of Education (Department)** has collaborated with the Ohio Department of Health and Governor DeWine’s Office to provide clear guidance below as to how schools will need to operate in all aspects of students’ and employees’ daily experience. The “Daily Precautions to Practice” below include physical and social distancing, daily health checks, use of personal protective equipment (face masks), daily hygiene habits, cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day and at the end of the day, attendance policies related to coronavirus symptoms, and teaching & learning from home whenever possible. **This section is the most prescriptive section in the guide, and exceptions to it should only be considered in coordination with a school’s local health department.**

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**Each local district and school is expected** to utilize the guidance contained in this document and work collaboratively with their local health department and stakeholders to implement a re-opening/re-entry plan. Schools and districts are encouraged to convene school health professionals (e.g. School Nurse, School Board Physician), health care providers and local health departments, among others, on re-opening/re-entry planning teams to develop plans and continue collaboration and information-sharing as the pandemic response changes and evolves. Re-opening/re-entry plans should be designed to complement other community mitigation strategies, minimize disruption to teaching and learning and protect students and staff from social stigma and discrimination. Any variability related to the significance of coronavirus in certain communities that allows for flexibility should be considered in collaboration with local health departments. Through partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, the following daily precautions **must** be practiced as outlined below.

- **Daily Health Assessments:** Request that students and personnel monitor their own temperatures before utilizing school transportation and reporting to school, and to remain home if above 100F or if experiencing other symptoms as outlined on the [Ohio Department of Health's coronavirus webpage](#). Schools should also consider the reality that not all students and staff will be able to self-monitor temperature or symptoms and should address disparities in the re-entry/re-opening plan. On-site temperature checks may be considered. Personnel and students who are ill must stay home from school and must be sent home if they become ill at school, particularly if they have COVID-19 symptoms as outlined on the [ODH coronavirus webpage](#). While waiting to go home, ill persons should continue to wear a face mask and be placed in a separate room monitored by school personnel maintaining physical distancing and utilizing appropriate PPE, separate from the nurses office where other students are seen daily.
- **Physical/Social Distancing:** Maintain physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) among all persons on school grounds and those utilizing school transportation at all times. Utilize visual cues (i.e. floor markings) and other strategies to reinforce (i.e. alternative units that are meaningful for students to understand 6' spacing). Create transition schedules that minimize the number of students and staff in common spaces including hallways, cafeteria, etc. The re-entry/re-opening plan should consider students and staff who cannot maintain physical distancing and provide alternate, equitable means for work and education.
- **Face Masks:** Require all persons on school grounds and utilizing school transportation to wear face masks. School personnel and students should wear clean cloth facemasks. Masks should be removed and replaced when wet or soiled. School nurses or personnel who care for sick persons should utilize appropriate PPE in accordance with [OSHA standards](#) and provided by their employer. Schools should consider how they will introduce the concept of face masks to students, particularly younger students and students with cognitive disabilities as they roll out the requirements. Schools should have extra masks for students that come to school without one. A face covering is not required if there is a practical reason one cannot be worn. There may be a number of reasons that students and staff cannot wear a mask, including but not limited to sensory processing issues and physical and behavioral health concerns. The re-entry/re-opening plan should consider students and staff that cannot wear face masks and provide alternative, equitable means for work and education.

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- **Alternatives:** Plexiglass and other dividers may be used in classrooms and other spaces as an alternative to distancing and face coverings. Any alternative measure should be implemented with the approval of the local health department.
- **Good Hygiene Practices:** Schools and districts should continue to reinforce good habits to stop the spread of germs, including covering sneezes and coughs and handwashing. Hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when visibly soiled, before eating and after using the restroom. Schools and districts should ensure soap is readily available in all restrooms and wash stations throughout the building. Schools and district should make hand sanitizer (minimum of 70% alcohol based) and sanitizing products available for personnel and students, especially in high traffic areas, including at each school entrance and in every classroom (See Guidelines for the Use of Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizers in Ohio Schools guidance document at: [https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/Use\\_of\\_Alcohol-based\\_Hand\\_Sanitizers\\_in\\_Ohio\\_Schools](https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/Use_of_Alcohol-based_Hand_Sanitizers_in_Ohio_Schools)).
- **Clean and Sanitize:** Frequently clean surfaces paying particular attention to high-touch areas (stair handrails, door handles, counters, desks, tables, chairs, lavatories, computers, books, etc.). Cleaning and disinfection should be done after each cohort of students leaves a facility or classroom, including between class changes (if applicable), between groups in the cafeteria (when utilized), and after each school day. Limit sharing of supplies and equipment and sanitize between student use. Minimize the amount of materials in the classroom to items that are essential to meet student academic and social-emotional needs. Internal doors should be propped open whenever possible to minimize commonly touched surfaces. For additional information on cleaning and sanitizing, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have put forth joint Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes. Schools and districts need to consider the appropriate level of staffing to accommodate the cleaning/sanitizing schedule.
- **Student Learning:** It is important to note that expected health practices will require new learned behaviors. Implement age-appropriate learning about COVID-19 control strategies for students. This should be on-going to reinforce the importance of handwashing, physical distancing, appropriate use of face masks, cough and sneeze etiquette, and the importance of staying home when sick or displaying symptoms. All schools and offices should display environmental print promoting infection control strategies (i.e. cough/sneeze etiquette, proper handwashing, appropriate use of face masks, physical distancing, importance of staying home when sick, etc.). Incorporate behavior expectations into Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports Tier I instruction and teach behaviors often and consistently. Find examples at [coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov).
- **Employee training:** Education and training for all employees must be provided on how to properly put on, use, take off, and dispose of PPE. Adequate education must be provided for all school personnel to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and how to protect employees and students from transmissions.
- **Showing Symptoms of COVID-19 at School:** Students exhibiting symptoms while physically attending school should continue to wear a face mask and be placed in a separate room, away from other students, monitored by school personnel maintaining physical distancing and wearing required PPE. Staff exhibiting symptoms while working in the school should also continue to wear a face mask and self-isolate in a separate



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room, away from other staff and students. Students and staff exhibiting symptoms should go home as soon as possible.

- **Visitors:** Prohibit visitors in schools, or limit to emergency situations and enrollment. Require temperature checks and symptoms checks for all visitors. Schools and districts may have partnerships with community organizations, health care providers and local government agencies, among others, to provide additional educational and wraparound services to students. Schools and districts should continue to work with these partners, allowing their staff into the building following the same precautions as school and district personnel. **NOTE:** There are many adults who are not employed by a school district, but who remain part of routine school life, such as student teachers, college faculty observing student teachers, delivery persons, etc. These individuals should be treated as school personnel.
  - **Diagnosed or Exposure to COVID-19:** Families, caregivers and staff must notify school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 and are quarantined, or if a member of the family or household has been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19 and/or is being isolated. Personnel and students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days; personnel or students who travel out of state or to a location with known community spread should consider self-quarantine at home for 14 days. Guidelines should be considered for holding students and personnel harmless for any quarantine period(s), and remote learning plans should be considered when a significant number of individuals are required or choose to be quarantined (classroom, school building or district levels). Schools and districts should work with their local health department on their COVID-19 monitoring activities by tracking attendance and notifying local health departments of significant increases in absenteeism. Local health departments must notify schools of any positive COVID-19 cases or quarantine requirements for school or district employees and students.
  - **Returning to School Following Quarantine:** Personnel and students with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 must meet conditions prescribed by ODH and local health departments prior to returning to school. These conditions may change frequently, and schools and districts should maintain frequent communication with their local health department regarding these requirements.
- **Additional Precautions Required During Flare-Ups (determined by ODH or local health departments):**
    - In the event of a flare-up, districts should follow additional precautions set forth by ODH and local health departments. These precautions may change frequently, and schools and districts should maintain frequent communication with their local health department regarding these requirements.
- **Professional Development Training to Address Health Safety Measures:**
    - ODE, in partnership with ODH and other health professionals, will provide general resources for use by school personnel. They will provide resources to all school personnel about COVID-19 infection control strategies and related school policies and procedures. Instruction should include, but is not limited to, appropriate handwashing, physical distancing, use of face masks, symptoms, staying home when sick, etc. and strategies to reinforce these concepts with students and parents.

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- LEAs should consider the time needed to ensure employees understand expectations of staff and students, protocols and changed policies and procedures. Staff will need face-to-face time to prepare for return to in-person settings. These meetings should occur before students return to the buildings in order to thoroughly manage all facets of prioritizing students' and employees' health needs. Schools/districts will need to consider their negotiated agreements and calendars and work collaboratively to ensure employees are well-prepared for the opening of the school year.
- **Should a School or District Reopen School?**  
Here (LINK to DECISION TREE) is a tool to help in the decision whether or not to reopen. It begins with the underlying premise that any reopening is consistent with state and local health requirements, that health and safety practices are able to be implemented, and that a plan to monitor students' and employees' health and attendance is in place.

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**Return to School Considerations in Three Areas**

**1. Educational Considerations**

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the education community to rethink instructional delivery. Not all students should or need to be in a physical building at all times. **It is worth repeating that if schools cannot meet the requirements for reopening (see previous section), they should remain working remotely until such time as they can meet the requirements.** There is an opportunity to work collaboratively with students, parents, community partners and educators to consider how to best meet students where they are. As districts consider the plan to return for the 2020-2021 school year, educational considerations should be made to ensure that each student is challenged, prepared and empowered for his or her future by way of an excellent prekindergarten through grade 12 (preK-12) education (*Each Child, Our Future*, 2019). As noted in *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio partners identified four equal learning domains that contribute to the holistic success of each child. These include foundational knowledge and skills, well-rounded content, leadership and reasoning skills and social-emotional learning. The four equal learning domains challenge, prepare and empower students for success beyond high school by giving them tools to become resilient, lifelong learners. This goal does not change with the current COVID-19 pandemic; rather, districts should consider how to maintain this goal although the environment may look different.



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The shift to remote learning is challenging for educators, parents and students. Considerations listed below build on the Remote Learning Guide released April 1, 2020. Educators should consider how to support students to ensure learning builds on previously gained knowledge. Using a data-driven approach to learning, instruction should meet the individual child's need. District-selected assessments or items from the Department toolkit (in development) will support educators in determining the knowledge gained by a student in the 2019-2020 school year. A growth mindset will serve students and educators well as they return in the fall. In addition, a focus on a coherent curriculum that is aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards will support Tier 1 instruction for most students. There may be students who will require Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction to meet their individual needs.

To support educators with a data-driven approach to instruction, the Ohio Department of Education encourages districts to use the Ohio Improvement Process as an organizational strategy. This strategy "brings educators together through collaborative team structures to learn from each other, and it facilitates communication and decision-making between and across levels of the system (district, central office, school, grade levels, content areas, classrooms)." Teacher-based teams can use formative assessment data at the classroom and team levels to discuss adult implementation of instructional strategies as well as student performance and mastery of learning targets. This collaborative approach provides teachers with collective team perspectives to ensure all students are challenged, prepared and empowered in instruction focusing on the three core principles of equity, partnerships, and quality schools. SSTs can provide assistance as districts utilize the OIP to address continuous improvement in a return to school. As districts and schools establish plans for operating during the coronavirus pandemic, administrators and staff will need to work together to account for those operating changes in memoranda of understanding to the respective collective bargaining agreements.

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- **Focus on Equity:**

*Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio's 5-year strategic plan for education identifies **Equity** as Ohio's greatest challenge. Equity in education means that **each child** has access to relevant and challenging academic experiences and educational resources necessary for success across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background and/or income.

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

- **Internet Accessibility:**

In keeping with a focus on equity, and to the extent that a district decides to continue remote learning – or *has* to continue remote learning – they will need to continue to address the need for internet access. They will also need to assess access to computers for students and educators, as well as options for non-digital remote learning where internet and computers will not be available. This will require appropriate training, and technical support. Districts will also need to assess staff accessibility to devices and internet service as well as whether current data plans are sufficient. Schools must help district personnel to be trained on use of internet tools and making resources accessible (e.g., teachers should not be taking photos of book pages or tests and sending them to children for use when they may not be accessible to visually impaired students or families without printers).

- **Assessment of Student Educational Levels:**

As students return to various school settings, educators will need to gauge progress towards mastery of state standards. A data-informed approach to this work will allow educators to meet students where they are, differentiate instruction and continue to set high expectations for all students. A combination of local data and state-generated resources can support this work.

- ODE will provide resources for diagnostic assessment of students, based on released test items to support identifying student needs, including students with an IEP. ODE will provide guidance in analysis of progress monitoring data to determine level of student acquisition and retention of knowledge and will leverage the collaborative partnerships of Educational Service Centers and State Support Teams for this support. ODE will also provide information on assessment and placement of new and returning English learners.
- LEAs will need to determine where students are in their acquisition and retention of knowledge; many schools have vendor or district-created assessment systems in place that they can use for this purpose. This understanding will then help inform their differentiated approach to instruction. Districts and schools will want to carefully consider the timing of diagnostic assessments, allowing educators to first focus on building relationships with students while still assessing educational needs relatively early in the school year. Assessing where students are within a 3-6 week window of starting school may provide appropriate balance. Schools may consider “looping” (a practice in which students have the same classroom teacher in a subject and/or grade level for two or more consecutive years) classroom teachers or co-teaching models where practical to maximize understanding of students’ current levels.

- **Assessment of Staff Capacity:**

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Different types of learning environments will require different types of staffing. In all scenarios (full return, hybrid and complete remote) it is likely that more staff will be needed in order to adequately meet identified needs. Students will likely be returning to schools with higher academic needs as well as increased social emotional learning needs. LEAs should collaboratively assess needs based upon information such as results of student assessments, types of learning environments, and health/safety concerns. Discussions should include how staff can be utilized in different ways to meet various needs.

- **Teaching Staff Levels: (NOTE – this is also included under #3 Operational Considerations)**

With so many unknowns regarding instructional delivery, planning for staff levels is important. As a result of HB 197, ODE will be offering a temporary supplemental license for next year, without the need for first taking and passing an examination. As a result, a temporary supplemental license will only require a current licensed teacher to apply, pay the fee, and that the district sign off on the application, verifying that the teacher will be working in the supplemental area for the 2020-2021 school year. One limitation to be aware of, is that an individual can only hold one supplemental license at a time.

- **Paraprofessionals:**

Employees should receive the same level of coronavirus training as classroom teachers or others in similar positions.

- **High-Risk Population:**

Develop and implement a plan for addressing needs for students and school personnel with special healthcare needs that place them at higher risk for medical difficulties related to exposure to COVID-19. “High-risk” persons will need to be identified for both students and staff. This may include enhanced modifications such as remote learning for high-risk and quarantined students and employees. Additional guidance may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>.

- **Data-Informed Approach to Continuous Improvement:**

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

- ODE will continue to support and encourage LEAs to apply the five-step [Ohio Improvement Process](#), or a similar continuous improvement framework, in developing local reset and restart plans. The department will supplement local data resources with state resources, including tools for assessing students’ learning that are built upon past state test items. State data that can inform LEA needs may also include non-education data (e.g., unemployment rates, healthcare access and outcomes data, and housing or food insecurity data).

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Further, the department will provide professional learning and coaching through Regional Data Leads, State Support Teams and communication to LEAs.

- LEAs should utilize district and school, building and teacher-based teams to review student data regularly to make adjustments to instruction and non-academic interventions and supports. Local data resources will be especially significant in identifying students' needs and developing plans for returning to school. These resources may include local assessment data, as well as data on remote learning implementation, school climate (including staff and student perception data) and data on student and family engagement. Districts can also engage with local partners to identify non-educational and community data that may inform needs (e.g., job loss, health data, food insecurity). Throughout the planning process, LEAs should reach out to educators, families and students and ask about their experiences with remote learning.

- **Summer Student Learning Opportunities:**

After using data to determine students' level of acquisition and retention of knowledge, set up targeted summer learning opportunities. This may include academic, as well as mental and behavioral health services. Existing regional summer school programming services should be considered as potential avenues for delivery.

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

- **Summer Professional Development for Educators:**

Many educators have learned a great deal very quickly during the school-building closure; if districts intend to continue blended learning or remote opportunities *or* if there is anticipation of future school-building closures, educators will need ongoing professional development. There will be an increased need for professional development to build and enhance education capacity to address the complex issues resulting from the pandemic. The professional development may need to be customized to meet the needs of students and educators within the building.

The Department is working with ESCs and SSTs, as well as other existing vendors for professional development to communicate about available opportunities.

LEAs should consider what platforms might be used, monitor implementation and fidelity, and reassess professional development needs in an ongoing fashion.

- **4<sup>th</sup> Quarter/1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Transition:**

This involves ideas like summer school, or early start (Jump Start) approaches.

ODE will develop multiple resources to support teachers in identifying standards that were not mastered before or during the ordered school-building closure. ODE will also provide guidance and resources aimed at schools supporting students facing a transition such as first-time preschool students, new kindergarten students, and students starting

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middle or high school. ODE will provide information on assessment and placement of new and returning English learners.

LEAs will need to determine the most appropriate manner in which to offer intervention opportunities prior to beginning the normal grade level and/or subject area curriculum.

- **Communication with and Assessing Needs for Vulnerable Youth:**

Communication with homeless, foster, or otherwise highly mobile youth may have been more challenging during the school-building closure and as districts transition back to school. At the same time, more students may experience high mobility as families deal with increased job and housing insecurity and the pandemic's impact on Ohio's foster-care system. Vulnerable youth may experience increased academic *and* non-academic needs. Districts can use data, guidance from the state and other trusted resources, as well as community partnerships to identify and address these increased needs.

- ODE will provide information and technical assistance to support districts and schools communicate with, engage and support their vulnerable youth population. ODE will collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to identify needs and align supports.
- LEAs – Schools and districts should collaborate with local agencies and organizations to identify needs and maximize supports of vulnerable youth. Districts and community schools will utilize their vulnerable youth liaisons to ensure vulnerable youth receive equitable academic services and non-academic supports.

- **Curriculum (broad or essential):**

An essential curriculum within individual subject areas might be most practical, based on the needs of students. There is a high likelihood to have literacy and math concerns, particularly for younger students. Resources for schools to use should be available. Districts are encouraged to implement processes and practices that will help students continue to move forward and develop the foundational skills and knowledge from the previous year. The use of concept mapping can support districts, teachers and parents make connections across the years. Additionally, districts should identify high-quality instructional materials that are conducive to remote learning of the essential curriculum. Subjects should not be narrowed as often it is the non-core classes that keep students engaged and motivated. Content within classes may need to be narrowed. In remote learning situations, expectations should be collaboratively developed and monitored. Resources for literacy and math may be found ([LINK to resource webpage – sub-committee resources](#))

- **Determine Appropriate Educational Setting:**

Flexibility is critical in the current environment. Choices of educational settings for a return to school buildings may include online, blended learning (a combination of in person and online), multi-modal learning (to be defined), ... **School will look different.** There may be new models of course and student scheduling as we rethink the way we use time and space. Consider the possibility of teachers moving, rather than large numbers of students doing so, in order to minimize the number of interactions (social distancing). Consider scheduling options that reduce number of students in each classroom, hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, on school transportation, etc. Each

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classroom should be analyzed for square footage, and then determine maximum number of students and staff at any given time to remain within health guidelines (6 feet of distance). A sample may be found here (provide link). Use of other non-classroom space may be considered for instruction purposes, such as using cafeteria, outdoor and other large spaces for instruction. Use of time may also be considered, such as later afternoon and/or evening instruction options, being mindful of needs of parents and employees. This might include placing students into cohorts and scheduling percentages of them on a given day and alternating the cohorts for attendance in conjunction with work that is completed at home. (Remote work can be accomplished in electronic or paper formats to best meet unique needs of students.)

Students from the Ohio Association of School Leaders indicated that a blended approach was preferential to meet the unique needs of individual students, allowing for flexibility for both students and teachers (time, space, socialization, etc.).

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

- **Personalized Learning:**

The delivery of instruction will more than likely need to become much more personalized. This is probably a good long-term practice to promote regardless – but especially given the variability that will exist among students. According to anecdotal observations, many students have prospered with remote learning. How can or should remote learning fit into the overall instructional approach going forward? Could a Project Based Learning approach be considered and implemented? Is the Future Ready framework an approach that can be embraced? More than ever before we need to focus on making learning joyful and engaging in a personalized manner. **LEAs should determine the level of needs of students and implement tiered interventions; they may consider providing time for students to receive additional help with assignments (advisory or tutoring times).**

- **Attendance:**

In-person attendance is important and conducive to learning. However, in the current pandemic environment, a focus on student attendance must be balanced with a priority for keeping students and employees safe and healthy. Rather than recognizing students for *perfect* attendance, consider a measure that encourages *consistent* attendance or consistent participation in schoolwork, but not at the expense of health. Some parents/guardians may not feel comfortable sending students to school and will require schools/districts to consider policies in this area.

- **Work-Based Learning, Internships, College Credit Plus, etc.:**

There are multiple non-building-based learning opportunities in which students participate. These types of opportunities are important for students and should be continued and promoted. How these programs and opportunities are impacted by the phased “opening” of Ohio’s economy will matter in providing opportunities for student participation. LEAs will need to determine and implement effective communication with employers, colleges/universities and other entities, in order to ensure students continue



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opportunities to earn credentials. Health protocols of off-site locations should be reviewed to ensure student safety at a level similar to that of the school building.

- **Collaboration Among Educational Agencies:**

Now more than ever, local districts and schools will need to collaborate in students' best interest with JVSDs, CTCs, juvenile detention centers, community schools and others in planning to afford students meaningful opportunities and experiences.

The Department encourages collaboration across agencies, seek help from ESCs and SSTs in this role, and provide information and technical assistance to the agencies. ODE will provide guidance to juvenile correction and detention centers to ensure students have a transition plan that ensures continuity of academic services and supports. LEAs should critically examine how best to provide opportunities in collaboration with their partners.

- **Extra-Curricular/Co-Curricular Activities (athletics, music, student groups):**

The Department continues to collaborate with ODH and OHSAA, OMEA and others to determine summer practice routines and fall sports routines to be implemented. LEAs should work with local health departments and stakeholders to determine the appropriateness and practical realities of whether to continue certain activities. Each activity will need to be determined based upon maintaining ODH, local health departments, ODE and OHSAA guidance. Alternative methods for practice, instruction, rehearsal, and performance should be considered in order to maintain maximum participation while minimizing health and safety risks.

- **Field Trips:**

Do not participate in field trips.

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## **2. Social Emotional Health Considerations**

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

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districts and schools are to be implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, a tiered model of prevention and intervention supports. Districts and schools will need to adapt their PBIS systems to include common behavior expectations specific to physical and social distancing. For children, that are already receiving mental health services, they may have adjusted to telehealth services or they may have experienced a disruption to those services during COVID-19 and need to be reconnected. It will be important for schools to assess the individual needs of children and assist in providing them with supports that meet universal and individual student needs. Schools must also recognize stress and anxiety experienced by staff and determine healthy ways to support them as well. Schools should engage with related services personnel such as counselors, school nurses, social workers and others regularly and on an ongoing basis to determine best practices to support students, personnel and families during this time.

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- **Student Supports:**

What do these supports look like in a time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety? In addition to other challenges students face, they may be scared that they might get sick if they even go to school or get close to other people. Many older students may be required to take on jobs to help support the family. There may be a rise in abuse/neglect that teachers, school counselors or other personnel will need to identify, and employees will need to remain current in their training in this area. School counselors and school social workers are instrumental in meeting emotional needs throughout the school day (one on one, classroom guidance, group support) and finding community supports for students and their families.

ODE is partnering with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (ODMHAS) to provide resources and key supports, remind schools of available funding sources to support their students' needs (e.g., Student Wellness and Success Funds, Prevention funds, etc.). Information and resources to support districts and schools in meeting students' social-emotional, safety and wellness needs are included on the Department's webpage for Reset, Restart.

LEAs are encouraged to utilize their school counselors and consider partnering with local ADAMH boards, ESCs, hospitals, and community-based providers to determine the

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community's needs and identify supports including professional development for educators.

- **Student Expectations:**

Students will be expected to implement and exhibit specific behaviors different from those prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and related to protecting the health of themselves, their classmates and Ohio's citizens. Student Codes of Conduct should be reviewed and updated to reflect these expectations. **NOTE: PERHAPS A LINK TO RELATED PBIS MATERIALS HERE**

- **Employee Supports:**

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

- **Family Engagement:**

Remote learning during the school-building closure created new opportunities for families to increase engagement in their students' education. Many teacher/family partnerships are now stronger because of more frequent engagement between teachers and parents/guardians. We should consider means to sustain this and leverage it for the benefit of students. Some parents may want to keep their student's out of school because of fears of illness. Schools and districts will need to consider the implications and policies to address this. At the same time, educators need to recognize that while all families want to support their children's learning, not all families will have the same resources or opportunity to support remote learning in a consistent manner. This includes families in which parents are returning to work, as well as families that are balancing school-related responsibilities with home conditions that will impact students' ability to learn. Teachers and families should build a strong partnership and alliance to support the child.

ODE will provide strategies and resources to help schools increase 2-way communication and family engagement. ODE will provide information and resources for families on strategies to help them stay engaged and support their child's learning, physical and social-emotional needs.

LEAs – Schools and districts are encouraged to create two-way communication with families and caregivers to assess students' and families' needs and communicate expectations and supports. Communication needs to be frequent, consistent and varied to ensure all families have access to information and school personnel.

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### **3. Operational Considerations**

The importance of thoughtfully and intentionally considering the roles, responsibilities and safety of each component of a typical school day involves numerous employee groups, practices and routines. Collaboration to address all areas of concern is critical, and relevant employee organizations can play a key role in identifying and implementing solutions to these concerns. Working with local health agencies, following Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidance, and other experts in each of the following areas will be important to address issues.

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- **Communication Plan:**

Each LEA should plan how all health, safety and logistical practices are communicated to students, parents, staff, and community members. Communication with parents/guardians is a critical component and schools should be diligent in informing parents about symptom onset and the importance of staying home when sick. Student expectations and routines should be shared with parents. Expectations and procedures regarding parent visits, pick up, drop off, and signing students out of school early need to be communicated. Communications plans should be developed in partnership with the local health departments.

- **Teaching Staff Levels: (NOTE – this is also included under #1 Educational Considerations)**

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With so many unknowns regarding instructional delivery, planning for staff levels is important. As a result of HB 197, ODE will be offering a temporary supplemental license for next year, without the need for first taking and passing an examination. As a result, a temporary supplemental license will only require a current licensed teacher to apply, pay the fee, and that the district sign off on the application, verifying that the teacher will be working in the supplemental area for the 2020-2021 school year. One limitation to be aware of, is that an individual can only hold one supplemental license at a time.

- **Transportation (health concerns):**

The transportation of students in a manner which is safe for students and employees is of highest importance. Implementing daily health routines will require new practices and protocols. Each bus will need to be analyzed for adherence to guidelines, keeping safety of students and drivers foremost. This will result in difficult decisions as to who is transported and how this works.

- **Taking Temperature** – Districts should consider whether they have the capacity/resources to take a student's temperature prior to having the student take a seat on the bus. They should minimally require a self-check prior to getting on a school bus (see previous section, "daily precautions to practice").
- **Masks** – drivers and all students are required to wear masks to ride the bus.
- **Hand sanitizer** – applied to hands by every driver/rider when boarding the bus.
- **Seating** – To the extent possible, an assigned seating arrangement should be designed and implemented in a way that prevents close contact between riders when loading/unloading, example: Morning pick up: load bus back-to-front (first student picked up sits in back, seats are filled in order back-to-front, last student sits in front seats); upon arrival at school: offload one seat at a time front-to-back to maintain distancing between students. Departing School: students load the bus in the order they will arrive at destination (students with longest route sit in the back, those with shortest route sit in front, etc.).
- **Alternatives:** Plexiglass and/or similar devices may be considered in place of distancing and/or face coverings. [Any alternative measure should be implemented with the approval of the local health department.](#)
- **Number of Riders** – Decrease # riders to allow for 1 student per seat (exception: members of same household may sit together).
- **Sanitizing** – Seats and high touch surfaces sanitized between each bus route.

- **Transportation (logistical concerns):**

Beyond the health concerns raised with transporting students, there are logistical concerns that should be discussed prior to and during implementation. The number of buses required to provide transportation following the health concerns listed above must be considered (this includes students receiving transportation to community schools, nonpublic schools and joint vocational schools). Districts should consider how they will collect information for any school that is part of the district's transportation plan and discuss how the needs of students can be met.

- **Custodial and Maintenance:**

- Masks and gloves must be worn and proper training for COVID-19 should be provided.

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- Each classroom needs to be properly disinfected after use by students. If schools are using a rotating schedule for students, then this may result in each classroom needing to be cleaned multiple times a day.
  - Like classrooms, all bathrooms and other common spaces will need to be properly disinfected on a frequent and regular basis.
  - Internal doors should be propped open wherever and whenever possible to minimize touching of surfaces.
  - LEAs to determine sanitizing schedules, protocols for cleaning surfaces in all areas of the building, checklists for before and after-school.
  - Depending on a district's plan, there may be a shortage in the number of staff needed to complete the custodial and maintenance tasks.
  - In addition, collective bargaining agreements will need to be reviewed and a memorandum of understanding will likely need to be put in place.
  - HVAC systems should be inspected, monitored, and cleaned, following indoor air quality recommendations from the EPA .
- **Secretarial/Clerical:**
    - The secretarial and clerical employees are often the most visible and most interactive with students, parents and community members. As a result, they should be provided with training and protocols and be prepared to answer many questions. Prior to re-occupancy, perform a detailed review of the configuration of your office workspaces. Consider eliminating reception seating areas and require that visitors phone ahead, and install a plastic partition at the reception area.
    - Review floorplans and remove or reconfigure seats, furniture and workstations as needed to preserve recommended physical distancing in accordance with ODH and local health guidelines. Reconfigure workstations so that employees do not face each other or establish partitions if facing each other cannot be avoided.
  - **Food Service/Cafeteria:**

Consider alternate approaches to breakfast/lunch service that provide for physical distancing and enhanced cleaning of surfaces between service times.

Like other areas of a school building, common surfaces will require following cleaning and sanitizing protocols between sessions of students.

- **Recess**

Playground equipment should not be used. Other health requirements are to be followed (physical and social distancing) for recess periods. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (2013), "Recess represents an essential, planned respite from rigorous cognitive tasks. It affords a time to rest, play, imagine, think, move, and socialize. After recess, for children or after a corresponding break time for adolescents, students are more attentive and better able to perform cognitively. In addition, recess helps young children to develop social skills that are otherwise not acquired in the more structured classroom environment." Perhaps some of the CDC tools for recess planning



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can be modified to meet the needs of schools as they attempt to plan for next school year. The tools are available here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/recess.htm>. See the following:

*Strategies for Recess in Schools* (January 2017)

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2019\\_04\\_25\\_SchoolRecess\\_strategies\\_508tagged.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2019_04_25_SchoolRecess_strategies_508tagged.pdf)

*Recess Planning in Schools*

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2019\\_04\\_25\\_SchoolRecess\\_planning\\_508tagged.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/2019_04_25_SchoolRecess_planning_508tagged.pdf)

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**Notes/Appendix/Attachments**

1. **Literacy** (to be attached mid-May)
2. **Writing** (to be attached mid-May)
3. **Numeracy** (to be attached mid-May)
4. **Essential Questions** (as companion document to this guide)
5. **Considerations for students with disabilities** (to be attached late May/early June)
6. **Supporting social and emotional learning needs** (to be attached late May/early June)
7. **Supporting English learners** (to be attached late May/early June)
8. **Transitioning from Early Intervention and/or Head Start into Preschool, including Inter-Agency Agreements in place** (to be attached late May/early June)
9. **Beginning Kindergarten, including registration, orientation, screenings, and completing the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment** (to be attached late May/early June)
10. **Preschool and School-Age Licensing and Step Up to Quality** (to be attached late May/early June)

**11. Derivative (Longer Term) Impacts of the 2020 Disruption:**

A number of local, state and possibly federal policies will need to be closely examined, and perhaps changed, in recognition of the disruption that took place in 2020. This might include the following:

- Assessments
- Accountability/Report Cards
- Graduation Requirements: Need to revisit graduation requirements for the current junior class (and likely even the current sophomore class). Impacts may be felt even by current year 8<sup>th</sup> graders (Class of 2024).
- Funding
- Sponsor evaluation
- Community school closure
- Voucher eligibility
- Third grade reading guarantee
- Attendance/Truancy
- Educator Licensure
- Educator Preparation
- Educator Evaluation
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Grading and progress reporting practices?

**12. Career Technical Associations**

**13. State Support Teams**

**14. Evaluation:** Need for training for evaluators on how to observe, document, and evaluate online instruction