Back to School RI:

A Framework for Planning the Safe, Efficient, and Equitable Return to School

RIDE, in partnership with Opportunity Labs Foundation, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Ask any teacher, school principal, or district superintendent, returning to school under normal circumstances is hard. Doing so in the face of COVID-19, a public health pandemic with extreme uncertainty will be monumentally difficult. But the stakes could not be higher: an entire generation of students' academic, social-emotional, and mental health hangs in the balance.

This framework provides a roadmap for Rhode Island public and private schools to navigate the reopening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the most up-to-date information at our disposal, this framework replaces our previous *Reimagining RI Education: Reopening Framework*. It is a resource that is designed as a companion document to the Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools while LEAs complete their LEA Reopening Schools Template which is due to RIDE by July 17, 2020 for feedback.

Our hope is that this more comprehensive guide will assist and support LEAs as they plan to reopen in the fall. This comprehensive resource was based upon Opportunity Lab's "Return to School Roadmap". RIDE is grateful for the support of coauthors Dr. Mario Ramirez, Andrew Buher, and Juliette Cricket Heinze of the Opportunity Labs Foundation, Inc. who supported the creation of this guidance document. While the framework is focused on district-level planning, the Return to School Roadmap has specific tabs for school principals (under the heading 'school leaders') and district leaders.

Of course, the framework is not exhaustive, nor final; we know that the COVID-19 landscape is rapidly changing—this uncertainty will require us all to be flexible and to pivot quickly in the likely event that circumstances change. Guidance from the CDC regarding COVID-19 is changing regularly so please make sure you are using the most up to date guidance. We will continue to provide additional, specific resources to support reopening, and will update the information on RIDE's COVID-19 Updates and Resources webpage as necessary using national and local data, research, and publications. In addition, as districts plan, it is important to note that this work is heavily dependent upon, and responsive to, the public health conditions at any particular point in time. The most current health information and data will drive decision-making. This framework does not constitute medical advice, and will need to be adapted in real-time as the epidemic evolves. We encourage you to refer to the RI Department of Health (RIDOH) COVID-19 webpage for additional resources.
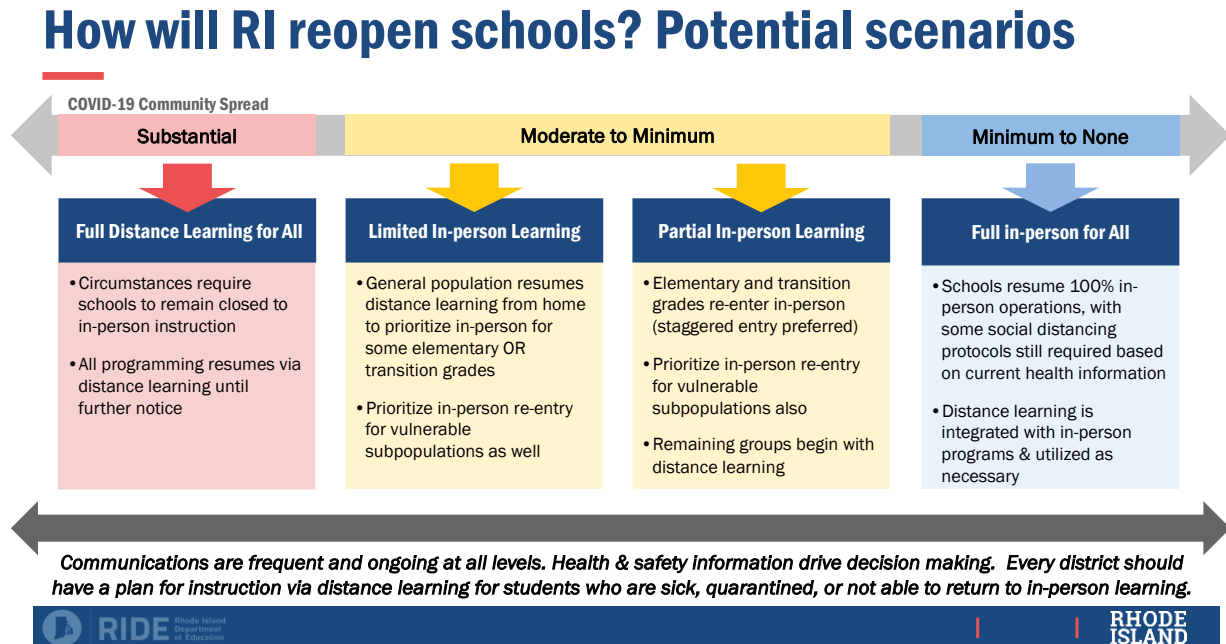
Preparing for Multiple Reopening Scenarios

Governor Gina Raimondo has stated her goal for reopening schools in the fall of 2020: full in-person learning for all students in RI. With this goal in mind, along with a consideration of the uncertainty of the spread of the disease and it's impact on the state and its different communities, we are asking that schools prepare for multiple scenarios to reopen in the school year: Full in-person, Partial in-person, and Limited in-person.

The framework is organized with tasks LEAs and schools can begin doing now and before school begins, as well as ones that should be done once schools reopen and if schools need to close again. We will provide additional planning guidance around topics including, but not limited to: curriculum and assessment, planning for subpopulations, and career and technology education (CTE).

The continuum below depicts starting scenarios which are dependent on the amount of community spread for COVID-19. The continuum spans full distance learning to full in-person learning in accordance with CDC and RIDOH guidance.

How will RI reopen schools? Potential scenarios

COVID-19 Community Spread

Substantial	Moderate to Minimum	Minimum to None

Full Distance Learning for All	**Limited In-person Learning**	**Partial In-person Learning**	**Full in-person for All**
• Circumstances require schools to remain closed to in-person instruction • All programming resumes via distance learning until further notice	• General population resumes distance learning from home to prioritize in-person for some elementary OR transition grades • Prioritize in-person re-entry for vulnerable subpopulations as well	• Elementary and transition grades re-enter in-person (staggered entry preferred) • Prioritize in-person re-entry for vulnerable subpopulations also • Remaining groups begin with distance learning	• Schools resume 100% in-person operations, with some social distancing protocols still required based on current health information • Distance learning is integrated with in-person programs & utilized as necessary

Communications are frequent and ongoing at all levels. Health & safety information drive decision making. Every district should have a plan for instruction via distance learning for students who are sick, quarantined, or not able to return to in-person learning.

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Challenges for Planning

It is important to remember that schools may have to adjust when and who engages in distance learning and in-person learning based upon the community spread levels. For example, schools may reopen in-person for populations of students or with a hybrid approach and are then forced to resume full distance learning due to outbreak levels rising.

Supports for Planning

To support LEAs in the development and implementation of plans, RIDE will continue a point of contact structure that allows every LEA in Rhode Island to have a designated individual who can respond to questions and provide direct support. If LEAs have questions or require additional support and guidance during this planning process, they should reach out to their Point of Contact and/or send inquiries to: Reentry@ride.ri.gov. DMGroup and RIDE are also partnering to provide additional supports for plan development.

Regardless of which scenario LEAs and schools return to, they should create a 'Reopening Schools Committee.' This committee should consider and confirm the following:

- Determine a leader with single-point accountability, meaning there is one person who is ultimately responsible.
- Determine who is needed on this committee so that a diverse group of perspectives and skill sets are represented. Key stakeholder groups may include, but are not limited to, central office staff, Director of Maintenance, Head of Human Resources, Special Education Director(s), Technology Director, Principal(s), Certified and Non-certified Staff, Union President, parent, School Committee Chairperson(s), Director of Food Services, mental health worker(s), and a school nurse representative.
- Select a representative from each school in the district or at least one from each educational level (i.e. elementary, middle, high).
- Determine which additional stakeholder groups need to be consulted with, but not necessarily serve as standing members of the Reopening Schools Committee (e.g. transportation, before/after school care).

Understanding Key Terms

- Distance learning: Any curriculum, materials, and teaching occurring during the school day but not in the school building. This can include physical materials, online materials and digital platforms. Distance learning curriculum and activities will continue to meet the expectations of grade-level standards and will be designed to meet the needs of all students, including multilingual learners and those who are differently abled.

- In-person learning: Any curriculum, materials, and teaching that occurs within the school building during the school day.

  - Full In-person: Students who are unable to attend in-person classes must be provided with distance learning. LEA plans should address how distance learning will be utilized for classes, groups of students, or individual students who are home sick, due to quarantine, or other health reasons.
  - Partial In-person: Some students attend classes in person while others participate in distance learning. LEA plans should address how distance learning will be utilized for classes, groups of students, or individual students who are home sick, due to quarantine or other health reasons.
  - Limited In-person: Many students participate in distance learning classes. LEA plans should address how distance learning will be utilized for classes, groups of students, or individual students who are home sick, due to quarantine, or other health reasons.

- Pod: a stable, or fixed, group of students that interact only within that group and a determined set or single staff member(s).

- Vulnerable groups: Any subpopulation of students whose educational needs cannot be adequately met through distance learning. (Examples include: students who are differently abled, multi-lingual learners, students who are homeless or live in temporary housing, migrant students, students 'at risk' for dropping out, students who live in poverty or whose families face other challenges, and students directly affected by COVID-19 due to a death or job loss in their family)

Full In-person Reopening

Social Emotional and Mental Health Support

Do Now

0 Establish a crisis response team at the LEA and/or school level focused on student and staff mental health and wellness. This could be a subgroup of the Reopening Schools Committee.

0 Provide resources for staff self-care, including resiliency strategies and RIDE's menu of mental health resources.

0 Assess natural resources (personnel, existing partners) to determine if there is a need for external support, and reach out to the existing vendor and/or community resources to assess the potential for expanded work. Evaluate staff mental health readiness utilizing questionnaires, surveys, and direct outreach.

0 Designate a mental health liaison (school-based) who will work with the district, RI Department of Health, and community partners.

Before School Opens

0 Liaise with the Rhode Island Department of Education to understand and access newly available resources for student and staff mental health and wellness support.

0 Develop and staff a direct communication channel for district stakeholders to address mental health concerns resulting from COVID-19 (this may be a telephone hotline, designated email, etc.).

◊ Communicate with parents, via a variety of channels, return to school transition information including:

  ◊ [De-stigmatization of SARS-CoV-2](#)[21]
  ◊ Understanding normal behavioral response to crises
  ◊ General best practices of talking through trauma with children

◊ Develop site-specific communication resources to help students and staff understand changes to normal operating procedures.

◊ Communicate need for daily home health screening.

When Schools are Open and Operating

◊ Encourage schools to implement a [mental health screening](#) for all students.

◊ Establish ongoing reporting protocols for school staff to evaluate physical and mental health status. Refer to the [RI Department of Health (RIDOH) COVID-19 webpage](#) for additional and updated resources.

◊ Maintain mental health supports via [on-going wellness assessments](#) of staff and students.

◊ Encourage schools to normalize feelings through forums and spaces for compassionate listening where students and school staff can share, discuss, and process their common experiences relative to COVID-19.

◊ Update and finalize student and staff health records.

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[21] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html

Instruction

Do Now:

Return-to-Instruction Workgroup

❑ Build a LEA Return to Instruction working group, potentially led by the Assistant Superintendent, Director of Curriculum, or the equivalent, and composed of a broad group of stakeholders on the district and school level, including principals, school leaders, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

❑ Assess and prioritize the capacity of structures outside of the regular school day, such as summer learning options, extended day, tutoring pools, and after school programming, to support students in need of learning recovery.

❑ Convene teachers & administrators to identify district-wide grading practices that will transcend the method(s) of instruction (i.e. from in-person to distance learning).

❑ Consider revising the LEA's 2019-20 distance learning plan to incorporate feedback and input from teachers, parents/families, students, and school leaders and improve its effectiveness. Share it with all educators , in case of a necessary return groups of students todistance learning.

Family & Community Engagement

❑ Systematically gather feedback from parents/families, teachers, students, and school leaders about their experiences with remote learning through using an online survey. Ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to voice concerns and offer input.

❑ Align expectations on the district and school levels around onboarding school communities, including students, teachers, school leaders, and parents/families, to prioritize the whole child, and emphasize a tone of safety, togetherness, and empathy. Acknowledge addressing the needs of students who need additional support as a priority.

❑ Clearly share, and adhere to, the local instructional plan for the upcoming year with school leaders, teachers, parents/families, and students, using various forms of communication.

❑ Communicate decisions and guidance around grading, report cards, and promotion policies with school leaders, teachers, and parents/families.

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❑ Disseminate a virtually-accessible comprehensive account of academic interventions and social-emotional and mental health support services that are available through the district and the ways through which students will be identified for these services and/or families request said services.

❑ Develop a two-way parent communication strategy to inform parents about their child's assessment data and progress, which could include grade-level and/or standards-specific activities they can use to provide additional support at home.

Remediation & Intervention

❑ Create a plan for assessing where all students are when they return.

❑ Inventory all intervention programs and services available to students to aid in closing identified gaps.

❑ Encourage schools to revise or build a process to identify students potentially in need of additional support, academically and/or socially and emotionally, to prioritize their needs upon the return to school. This should include the use of MTSS systems, etc.

❑ Ensure that all assessment systems, programs, and interventions are accessible to all students, particularly multilingual learners, differently abled students, and other diverse learners.

❑ Finalize an overall plan for assessment for when students return to school that includes timelines for giving assessments, analyzing data, and making adjustments to curriculum and academic goals.

❑ Use data from student work, assessments, as well as curriculum experts to make adjustments to curriculum and instruction in order to continue grade level instruction.

Instruction

❑ Develop an instructional plan, adhering to your district instructional vision, that accelerates student learning in grade level content, mitigates potential unfinished learning, and clearly articulates priorities for curriculum and instruction for the coming year.

❑ Ensure that schools and teachers are engaging in intentional curriculum planning and documentation, inclusive of curriculum maps, pacing plans and calendars, and lesson plans, to ensure continuity of instruction using high quality curriculum materials to capture what standards have and have not been taught and learned during distance learning.

❑ Revisit students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect each student's evolving needs based on time away from associated services including OT, PT, and Speech while schools were closed.

Staff Supports

❑ Secure resources and plan restorative support and professional learning offerings for teachers around COVID-19 and trauma, equity and implicit bias, Social Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Education, and the inclusion and effective use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support student learning and engagement.

❑ Support schools to sustain virtual structures for teacher teams to collaborate on curriculum planning and assessing student academic and social-emotional well-being when they return to school. Encourage teacher teams to:

   o Use your local Instructional Plan as a guidepost for decision making around curriculum and instruction.

   o Continually assess and analyze student work that is submitted from remote learning assignments, if available.

   o Review materials from curriculum writers/vendors for supports and supplements for unfinished learning and for prioritized standards or units for coming year.

   o Evaluate and share knowledge around the use and effectiveness of digital tools and online programs for remote learning.

   o Identify students in need of additional support to design targeted intervention plans for when they return.

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When Schools are Open and Operating

Return to Instruction Workgroup
❑ Procure any additional programs, tools, or materials to support differentiation, intervention, and distance learning, based on students' needs.

Family & Community Engagement
❑ Ensure schools are communicating through a variety of media on at least a monthly basis with parents/families about every student's progress and targeted intervention plans for students in need of additional support.

Remediation & Intervention
❑ Review assessment data gathered by schools to identify overall trends and gaps in student learning to design systemic supports and interventions.
❑ Implement structures and programming to support students who are in need of additional support, academically and/or socially and emotionally, and continually assess their efficacy against the goal of ensuring that every student is on track.

Instruction
❑ Conduct checkpoints with school leaders around curriculum pacing and ongoing monitoring of student progress, specifically honing in on the growth of students who are in need of additional support.
❑ Explore the inclusion and integration of select digital and online learning tools and practices at certain grade bands, in which they can be used appropriately, effectively, and sustainably.

Staff Supports
❑ Continue teacher PLCs to continue ongoing planning for instruction based on data gathered and prioritized high-quality curriculum.
❑ Study the standards throughout year-long scope and sequences. Then, determine when and how standards, and topics, will be covered.
❑ Identify prerequisite skills and content knowledge students need to access the grade-level content.

Reopening Operations

Facilities & Maintenance

Do Now

- 0 Audit necessary materials and supply chain for cleaning and disinfection supplies to determine where additional supplies may be obtained if necessary.
- 0 Audit any additional facilities that the district may have access to that could be utilized for learning.
- 0 Alert school-based custodial and infection control staff of any changes in recommended cleaning guidelines issued by OSHA and CDC. It is expected that this guidance will be updated in real-time based on the status of community spread local geographies.
- 0 Convene custodial and facilities staff to review and make actionable district guidance regarding cleaning and disinfection.

Before School Reopens

- 0 Audit all school building with a focus on:
  - · How many classrooms are available
  - · The size of each classroom
  - · Additional spaces that are available (e.g., gym, lunch room, auditorium, etc.
- 0 Establish procedures for school entry and exit to limit the numbers of persons entering and exiting the building at the same time.
- 0 Air filters should be changed regularly.
- 0 Signage about frequent handwashing, cough etiquette, and nose blowing[25] should be widely posted, disseminated, and encouraged through various methods of communication.
- 0 School leaders and/or principals should conduct and document a facility walkthrough with the custodial services team to ensure that the classrooms, common spaces, and the exterior are ready for staff and students.

[22] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

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    0   School leaders and/or principals should conduct and document a facility walkthrough with the custodial services team to ensure that the classrooms, common spaces, and the exterior are ready for staff and students.

When Schools are Open and Operating

- o Continue to refer to [Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) and [CDC guidance](#) for health, safety, and cleaning procedures.
- o Review updated plans and revise as needed.

Operations (Budget, Staffing, Scheduling, & Food Services)

Do Now

- 0 Support schools in conducting staff and student assessment policies to understand who is coming back.
  - 0 For staff, this should include a breakdown of the staff – administrators, licensed teachers, support staff with a teaching license, support staff without a teaching license, full-time nurses, part-time nurses, school counselors, etc. Where needed, develop a plan to replace and support teachers and staff who are not returning or are at risk (e.g., 65 years and older and may not return).
  - 0 For students, this should include pre-existing conditions that may compromise their immune systems.
- 0 Assess need for new or additional positions with a specific focus on student and staff wellness, but also including technology support.
- 0 Recruit, interview and hire new staff.
- 0 Communicate any student enrollment or attendance policy changes with school leaders and families.
- 0 Provide guidance and best-practices to district and school leaders for [recruiting, interviewing, and hiring staff remotely](#).[25]

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[25]https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html
[25]https://tntp.org/assets/documents/Virtual_Talent_Guide-TNTP.pdf

Before School Opens

O Provide staffing guidance to schools.

O Inventory how many substitutes are available.

O Engage school leaders in a budgeting exercise to help them plan for changing enrollment patterns, new staffing needs, and resource constraints or additional dollars. Determine budget revisions based upon [Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools](#) requirements and recommendations. Use Appendix B for planning.

O Build and send back to school communications to all relevant stakeholders (e.g., parents, school staff) and include updates across all workflows.

O Consult legal counsel to preemptively address liability questions, CBA concerns, and/or vendor issues relative to COVID-19 and socialize with school leaders.

O Verify that student and staff handbooks and planners are ready for distribution. Create a master list of any changes to distribute at or prior to the first staff meeting.

O Work with school leaders to orient new school staff to any operational changes.

O Create master teaching schedules, student and faculty arrival/dismissal schedules, bus schedules, lunch schedules for staff and students, and bell schedules with social distancing guidelines and facility access control in mind. LEAs should also refer to the [2020-21 statewide calendar found here](#).

O Collaborate with cafeteria staff to ensure any necessary food handling changes are implemented based on local public health guidance. In areas of minimal to no spread, dining operations are expected to resume normally (see Appendix A).

O Work with your food service director to create plans for serving meals to students who are in school, as well as to students who are distance learning (see Appendix A).

When Schools are Open and Operating

Continue normal school operations.

Transportation

Do Now

- 0 Inventory buses (including any vehicles used for transporting students to/from school or to other school events) and students riding busses including
  - ○ How many buses are or could be made available in the district?
  - ○ How much variation is there in the size and maximum capacity of buses in the district?
  - ○ How have the buses been currently or historically used (i.e., transportation to/from school, transportation for multiple schools, athletic events, food service delivery)?

Before School Opens

- 0 Identify bus procedures for bus drivers and students. Provide training for new procedures.

Technology

Do Now

- 0 Survey families to collect information about the numbers, types, and condition of devices used in their homes to support distance learning as needed in SY20-21.
- 0 Designate a single point of contact in each school to plan and communicate with district technology teams.
- 0 Develop a return to school technology plan for each school aligned to the district plan. If possible, include training and support for teachers to adapt distance learning skills for the classroom.
- 0 Identify a device and or general technology support person for each school. Consider elevating that position to a more formal role and providing additional support potentially with parent volunteers.
- 0 Ensure there is a process for collectiving and managing information specific to:
  - ○ Family/student device return
  - ○ Staff devices
  - ○ Device vendor management
  - ○ Internet/Intranet communication
  - ○ Technology Infrastructure needs and vendor information
  - ○ Tracking computer issues

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Before School Opens
- Appoint family technology liaisons to support communication regarding the use of technology (the existing parent organization may be able to fulfill this role).
- Develop district-wide procedures for return and inventory of district owned devices as part of a return to school technology plan. The procedures should include:
  - Safely bagging devices collected at schools
  - Transporting them to a central location
  - Sanitizing the devices prior to a repair or replacement evaluation[26]
  - Conducting prepared maintenance routines to remove malware and fix standard issues including, screen, keyboard, or battery replacement
- Develop a method to audit & maintain assets (i.e. equipment).
- Identify a vendor or staff member(s) to assist with processing, returning and maintaining devices, if needed.
- Develop on-site triage of staff and student devices to minimize the time that staff may be without a device.
- Prepare the Infrastructure Evaluation process. Every WiFi access point and wired network device should be tested.

When Schools are Open and Operating
- Organize and centralize online resources that were created, published or distributed by teachers and others during the closure period.   -
- Compile expectations, successes, and lessons learned from distance learning for inclusion in the district's updated distanc learning plan.
- Review issue tracking and inventory results frequently as a way of understanding the quality and progress of technology processes in your district.
- Continue infrastructure evaluations until all issues are resolved. Identify chronic technology issues that arose during the school closure period and use them to begin the development of a long-term technology maintenance plan

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[26] https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html

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Partial & Limited In-person Reopening

Social Emotional and Mental Health Support

Do Now:
- Prepare crisis response team for action should conditions worsen.
- Activate natural resources (personnel, existing partners) to support administrator, teacher, and student wellness.
- Continually monitor school community mental health and offer expanded access.

Before School Opens:
- Leverage Rhode Island Department of Education for resources for student and staff mental health and wellness support. Provide resources for staff self-care, including resiliency strategies and the mental health resources found on RIDE's webpage.
- Activate direct communication channel for district stakeholders to address mental health concerns resulting from COVID-19 (this may be a telephone hotline, designated email, etc.).
- Communicate with parents, via a variety of channels, return to school transition information including:
  - De-stigmatization of SARS-CoV-2
  - Understanding normal behavioral response to crises
  - General best practices of talking through trauma with children

When Schools are Open and Operating
- Encourage schools to implement a mental health & wellness screening for all students and staff members.
- Establish ongoing reporting protocols for school staff to evaluate physical and mental health status.

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Instruction

Do Now:

Return to Instruction Workgroup & Community Engagement
❑ Revise the LEA's distance learning plan to incorporate feedback and input from teachers, parents/families, students, and school leaders and improve its effectiveness. Share it with all involved stakeholders.

Remediation & Intervention
❑ Create a plan for assessment for when students are distance learning that includes timelines for giving assessments, analyzing data, and making adjustments to curriculum and academic goals.

Instruction
❑ Ensure that schools and teachers are engaging in intentional curriculum planning and documentation, inclusive of curriculum maps, pacing plans and calendars, and lesson plans, to ensure continuity of instruction, whether school buildings are open or closed.
❑ Identify and curate a bank of high-quality digital resources for the different grade bands to share with educators and families.
❑ Potentially procure digital tools and/or an online learning platform to support continuity of instruction when school buildings are closed.

Staff Supports
❑ Provide robust professional learning using PLC structures for teachers and school leaders on distance learning best practices and the inclusion and use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support effective teaching practices and pedagogy appropriate to different grade bands.
❑ Provide restorative support and professional learning offerings for teachers around COVID-19 and trauma, equity and implicit bias, Social Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Education, and the inclusion and effective use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support student learning and engagement.

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If Schools Are Instructed to Close:

Return to Instruction Workgroup
- ❑ Activate distance learning programs at scale and clearly communicate expectations around the duration of the closure and reopening to school leaders, teachers, parents/families, and students.
- ❑ Use RIDE Point of Contact to update RIDE about changes to curriculum or instruction plan.

Family & Community Engagement
- ❑ Develop two-way communication strategy to regularly inform families and students about changes to the duration of the closure.
- ❑ Support schools to communicate regularly with parents/families about their child's progress and the targeted plans for students in need of additional support.

Remediation & Intervention
- ❑ Activate any online and/or offline intervention and support services for students who are in need of additional support, such as those with special needs, multilingual learners and differently abled students.

Instruction
- ❑ Communicate expectations to school leaders and teachers around remote instruction that include best practices, grade-level goals, modes of assessment, and differentiated support for students.

Staff Supports
- ❑ Continue teacher PLCs to continue ongoing planning for instruction based on data gathered and prioritized high-quality curriculum.

When Schools Reopen:

Return to Instruction Workgroup
❑ Review steps from Minimal to No Spread; Continue communication strategy to ensure timely updates about timing and details of reopening are available to students and parents.

Family & Community Engagement
❑ Continue communication strategy to ensure timely updates about timing and details of reopening are available to students and parents.

Remediation & Intervention
❑ Ensure that all schools assess every student's academic and social-emotional well-being and make adjustments to curricula and academic goals based on the data.
❑ Conduct checkpoints with school leaders around curriculum and instruction and ongoing monitoring of student progress, specifically honing in on the progress of students in need of additional support.
❑ Encourage the implementation of targeted intervention plans for all students in need of additional support, as well as the continual assessment of the efficacy of those plans.
❑ Determine and activate structures outside of the regular school day, such as summer learning options, extended day, and after school programming, to potentially be leveraged to support students in need of additional support.

Instruction
❑ Ensure that schools and teachers are engaging in intentional curriculum planning and documentation, inclusive of curriculum maps, pacing plans and calendars, and lesson plans, to ensure continuity of instruction using high quality curriculum materials to capture what standards have and have not been taught and learned during distance learning.
❑ Revisit students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect each student's evolving needs based on time away from associated services including OT, PT, and Speech while schools were closed.

Staff Supports
❑ Continue teacher PLCs to continue ongoing planning for instruction based on data gathered and prioritized high-quality curriculum.

Reopening Operations

Facilities & Maintenance

Do Now:

- Audit necessary materials and supply chain for cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- Provide district guidance for cleaning and disinfecting all core assets, including school buildings and playgrounds. Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned after every classroom change.
- Alert school-based custodial and infection control staff of any changes in recommended cleaning guidelines issued by OSHA and CDC. It is expected that this guidance will be updated in real-time based on circulating levels of the virus in local geographies. Convene custodial and facilities staff to review and make actionable district guidance regarding cleaning and disinfection.
- Establish procedures for school entry and exit. Guidance should be based on CDC and local health officials.
- Continue to refer to Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools and CDC guidance for health, safety, and cleaning procedures.

If Schools are Instructed to Close:

- Activate school cleaning and disinfection protocols according to the CDC School Decision Tree.
- Custodial staff should wear face masks and special respirators when performing cleaning duties.

When Schools Reopen:

- Maintain facilities for resumption of school operations.
- Conduct a facility walkthrough with your custodial services team to ensure that the classrooms, common spaces, and the exterior are ready for staff and students.

Operations (Budget, Staffing, Scheduling, & Food Services)

Do Now:

- ◊ Prepare to implement distance learning programs.
- ◊ Prepare to implement distance hiring, evaluation, and other human resource programs.
- ◊ Stagger schedules, or make other necessary adjustments, to minimize mixing including staggering recess, entry/dismissal times.
- ◊ After school and extracurricular activities must be aligned to Back to School RI: Health and Safety Guidance to Reopen Rhode Island's Elementary and Secondary Schools and CDC considerations for youth athletics.
- ◊ Work with your food service director to create plans for serving meals to students who are in school, as well as to students who are distance learning (see Appendix A).

If Schools are Instructed to Close:

- ◊ Continue with distance human resource support.
- ◊ Maintain core operations virtually.

Technology

Do Now:

- ◊ Prepare to deploy devices that may be offered by the schools.
- ◊ Identify or inventory internet access options for each student during registration and back to school intake paperwork.
- ◊ Develop school based internet accessibility rosters to determine how many mobile hotspots will be needed if schools close.
- ◊ If using family owned devices, inform parents about how to access online learning platforms and school assignments.
- ◊ Ensure parents know who the point of contact will be for technology related complications or how to sort through software problems.

If Schools are Instructed to Close:

- ◊ Deploy devices and move to virtual learning.
- ◊ Communicate district-wide procedures for return and inventory of district owned devices as part of a return to school technology plan. The procedures should include:
    - ◦ Safely bagging devices collected at schools.
    - ◦ Transporting them to a central location.
    - ◦ Sanitizing the devices prior to a repair or replacement evaluation.
    - ◦ Conducting prepared maintenance routines to remove malware and fix standard issues including, screen, keyboard, or battery replacement.
- ◊ Ensure that school and community access points and wired network devices are functional.

When Schools Reopen:

- ◊ Return devices for servicing and updates as needed.

Full Distance Learning – No In-person

Social Emotional and Mental Health Support

Continue While Schools are Closed:

- Leverage [Rhode Island Department of Education resources for student and staff mental health and wellness support](#).
- Activate direct communication channel for district stakeholders to address mental health concerns resulting from COVID-19 (this may be a telephone hotline, designated email, etc.).
- Provide staff training on supporting students' social and emotional health during distance learning.
- Assign specific roles and expectations around supporting students' social and emotional health.
- Communicate with parents, via a variety of channels, return to school transition information including:
    - [De-stigmatization of SARS-CoV-2](#)
    - Understanding normal behavioral response to crises
    - General best practices of talking through trauma with children

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Instruction

If Schools are Instructed to Close:

Return to Instruction Workgroup

❑ Activate distance learning programs at scale and clearly communicate expectations around the duration of the closure and reopening to school leaders, teachers, parents/families, and students.

Family & Community Engagement

❑ Develop two-way communication strategy to regularly inform families and students about changes to the duration of the closure.

❑ Support schools to communicate regularly with parents/families about their child's progress and the targeted plans for students in need of additional support.

Remediation & Intervention

❑ Activate any online and/or offline intervention and support services for students who are in need of additional support, such as those with special needs, multilingual learners, and differently abled **nstruction**

❑ Communicate expectations to school leaders and teachers around remove instruction that includes best practices, grade-level goals, modes of assessment, and differentiated support for students.

Staff Supports

❑ Continue professional learning offerings for teachers including sustained planning for instruction based on data gathered and prioritized through high-quality curricula.

❑ Continue restorative support and professional learning offerings for teachers around COVID-19 and trauma, equity and implicit bias, Social Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Education, and the inclusion and effective use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support student learning and engagement.

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Continue While Schools are Closed:

Return to Instruction Workgroup
❑ Communicate expectations to school leaders and teachers around distance learning instruction that include best practices, grade-level goals, methods and amount of teaching vs. assigning work, modes of assessment, and differentiated support for students.

Community & Family Engagement
❑ Share revised distance learning plans with all involved stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, parents/families, and students. Create opportunities for ongoing feedback.
❑ Encourage schools to develop a communication strategy to consistently inform parents/families about expectations around instruction and learning that support students both academically and socially and emotionally, and the most up-to-date information about changes to the duration of closures and dates for reopening.

Remediation & Intervention
❑ Activate any online and/or offline intervention and support services for students who are in need of additional support, such as those with special needs, multilingual learners and differently abled students. .

Instruction
❑ Continue distance learning programs at scale that integrate synchronous and asynchronous learning and best practices in distance learning that promote student engagement and differentiation.

Staff Supports
❑ Continue restorative support and professional learning offerings for teachers around COVID-19 and trauma, equity and implicit bias, Social Emotional Learning, Culturally Responsive Education, and the inclusion and effective use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support student learning and engagement.
❑ Provide robust professional learning for teachers and school leaders on remote learning best practices and the inclusion and use of digital and online learning tools and systems to support effective teaching practices and pedagogy appropriate to different grade bands.

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Instruction

When Schools Reopen:

Return to Instruction Workgroup & Community Engagement
❑ Using the workgroup, continue communication strategy to ensure timely updates about timing & details regarding reopening are made available to students and parents.

Remediation & Intervention
❑ Ensure that all schools assess every student's academic and social-emotional well-being and make adjustments to curricula and academic goals based on the data.

❑ Conduct checkpoints with school leaders around curriculum and instruction and ongoing monitoring of student progress, specifically honing in on the progress of students in need of additional support.

❑ Encourage the implementation of targeted intervention plans for all students in need of additional support, as well as the continual assessment of the efficacy of those plans.

❑ Determine and activate structures outside of the regular school day, such as summer learning options, extended day, and after school programming, to potentially be leveraged to support students in need of additional support.

Instruction
❑ Ensure that schools and teachers engage in intentional curriculum planning and documentation, inclusive of curriculum maps, pacing plans and calendars, and lesson plans, to ensure continuity of instruction using high quality curriculum materials to capture what standards have and have not been taught and learned during distance learning.

❑ Revisit students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) in partnership with teachers and parents to reflect each student's evolving needs based on time away from associated services including OT, PT, and Speech while schools were closed.

Staff Supports
❑ Continue professional learning offerings for teachers including sustained planning for instruction based on data gathered and prioritized through high-quality curricula.

❑ Continue restorative support and professional learning offerings for teachers around as in previous iterations.

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Reopening Operations

Facilities and Maintenance

Continue While Schools are Closed:
- ◊ Audit necessary materials and supply chain for cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- ◊ Continue to maintain schools in good working order to prepare for the subsequent return of students.
- ◊ Execute school cleaning and disinfection protocols according to the CDC School Decision Tree.
- ◊ custodial staff should wear face masks and special respirators when performing cleaning duties.

Operations (Budget, Staffing, Scheduling, & Food Services)

Continue While Schools are Closed:
- ◊ Continue with distance human resource support.
- ◊ Maintain core operations virtually.
- ◊ Determine schedule changes that may be needed based upon distance learning plan.
- ◊ No on-site food services. Resume off-site food services options.

Technology

Continue While Schools are Closed:
- ◊ Continue to monitor device usage and compliance with online learning programs.
- ◊ Ensure that students are able to submit assignments and be evaluated accordingly.
- ◊ Provide support programs to ensure that students and parents can access online teaching, troubleshoot problems with access.

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CONCLUSION

This framework is designed to support LEAs in planning to implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school on August 31, 2020. Our hope is that this guidance document provides leaders with information needed to make the difficult decisions ahead in the safest and most informed manner possible.

As you continue your local planning, we encourage you to reach out to your point(s) of contact with RIDE and/or email inquiries to reentry@ride.ri.gov. RIDE intends to release additional guidance for specific focus areas pertaining to reopening schools safely on August 31, 2020.

As long as coronavirus continues to be transmitted, the risk cannot be driven to absolute zero. The steps outlined in the health and safety guidelines and in this document are designed to support LEA planning with the information we have today. More information and supports will become available during the summer months.

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APPENDIX A: Nutrition Planning for Re-opening Schools

Do Now:

- Include food service directors in re-opening plan schools committee. Create a sub-committee, if needed.
- Determine how meals will be served, both to students who are in school, as well as to students who continue distance learning. For distance learners, include possible serving locations and serving days and times.
- If students will be eating in the classroom, create a schedule for meal delivery. Determine how meals will be ordered. In addition, determine how the meals will be delivered to each classroom. A schedule and delivery plan is particularly important if the building has multiple floors.
- Identify who will be responsible for taking meal counts & how they will be collected.
- Ascertain:
  - Additional staffing needs;
  - Additional equipment needs;
  - Apply for grants available for equipment needs;
  - Calculate cost associated with additional equipment and other expenses (additional staffing?) necessary to implement this service model.
- Develop a communication plan. Have measures in place to communicate both internally with partners and externally with families regarding the availability of meals, as well as to inform them of changes in the meal service plans.
- Finalize logistics for staffing, set up, and meal schedule.
- Develop contingency plans in case of sudden closures or the need to otherwise abruptly change meal service.

Before School Opens:

- Develop a meal service plan to include the USDA and DOH requirements.
- Submit meal service plans to RIDE.
- Request waivers, as available per the USDA, and as needed by each school.
- Ensure all needed equipment is available.
- Ensure staffing needs are met.
- Conduct training for staff involved in the meal service, including teachers, to assure USDA training requirements are met.
- Meet with principals, custodians, and food service to discuss trash disposal.
- Order needed supplies: trash bags, disinfectant wipes, etc. for each classroom and establish a system for replenishing.
- Distribute the supplies to classrooms and ensure the process for reordering is understood.

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When Schools are Open and Operating:

- Monitor to assure USDA and DOH requirements are being adhered to.
- If adjustments to the meal service are needed that require a change to the original plan, submit a revised plan to RIDE.
- Make appropriate adjustments to the meal service.

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APPENDIX B: Budgeting for COVID-19 Operational Expenditures Required to Re-open Schools Safely

At this time, the US Department of Education (USED) has provided guidance for state education agencies (SEAs) to support local education agencies (LEAs) in the use of CARES Act funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic. School districts incurring expenditures related to the COVID-19 pandemic should account for these costs in a manner that can be easily identified and compiled for reporting purposes. Additionally, RIDE released a 'soft public release' of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund Local Education Agency (LEA) subgrant application on June 15, 2020 which is another opportunity to leverage funding to support re-opening schools within safety guidelines.

In order to continue the delivery of education services to students in an uncertain environment caused by COVID-19, the following school finance considerations should be reviewed by the district as part of the plans for reopening schools;

● Additional costs to implement health and safety requirements
● Costs related the provision of distance learning that is tied to a brick and mortar school
● Transportation cost adjustments that allows for an increased bus routes

Note: Not all expenditures by a LEA during the period of school closure are considered COVID19-related expenditures. Contracts, stipends being paid, and programs operating in a typical capacity, are not COVID-19 related expenditures; even though the tasks performed may be altered [see examples below].

LEAs should use the following protocol in support of a thorough fiscal planning process:

☐ Review Allowable & Unallowable expenditures with CARES Act funds:
  o Examples of Allowable COVID-19 Expenditures:
    ▪ Additional hours worked over the contracted hours may be COVID-19 related. For example, overtime and extra hours to clean facilities would be considered allowable.
    ▪ Additional supplies (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, etc.) purchased to prevent the spread of the virus may be COVID-19 related.
    ▪ Additional instructional materials provided for student learning/enrichment from home.
    ▪ Additional meals not reimbursed (meals on weekends) may be COVID-19 related.

- - - Additional time by a bus driver to deliver instructional materials and meals to home locations may be considered COVID-19 related.
    - Administrative leave provided to staff under the Governor's emergency instructions order.
  - Examples of Unallowable COVID-19 Expenditures:
    - Normal custodial duties and supplies.
    - Normal cleaning of facilities.
    - Normal employee hours and supplies necessary for the preparation of meals, even though schools are closed.
    - Reimbursable meals, even though schools are closed.
    - Regular staff time.
    - Staff time reassigned to perform other duties, in other programs, during the period of school closure.
    - A bus driver's regular contracted hours to perform "To and from" transportation of students.
- Procedure: Create procedures to prioritize (1) processing of purchase orders for health & safety supplies, (2) documenting, assessing, and approving COVID-related expenditures for 2020-21
- Contracts: Examine vendor contracts for alignment with purchases to meet health and safety requirements. Confirm availability of supplies & timetable for deliveries.
  - LEAs should also review related contracts for instruction & technology (i.e. licenses, software, hardware, and/or learning management systems)
- Budget: Monitor all related changes in federal, state and/or local funding streams. This includes considerations for changes in student enrollment and/or staffing.
- Emergency Relief Funds: Using the CARES Act fiscal guidance, apply for available emergency relief funding, when/if applicable
- Facilities: Review current, and future, LEA construction projects to assess any changes in timetable for design professionals or contractors
- Procurement: Estimate COVID-19-related costs & procure necessary health and safety supplies, as required:
  - Personal protection equipment (PPE)
  - Thermometers
  - Additional cleaning supplies (i.e. soap, paper towels, tissue, toilet paper, hand sanitizer, antibacterial wipes, etc.)
  - Infrastructure (i.e. IT, curriculum materials, etc.)
  - Human capital (i.e. mobilizing staff)
  - Any other relevant categories that may be impacted by COVID-19