Fall 2020 School Reopening Guidance

MSBA

MINNESOTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Where School Boards Learn to Lead

Introduction

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose significant challenges for Minnesota's school districts and charter schools as they serve their students, families, and communities. The Minnesota School Boards Association developed this guidance to support school boards as they seek to meet these challenges. This guidance supplements the resources that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and other federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations have created. MSBA acknowledges and incorporates the work of these organizations and state school board associations across the nation.

Minnesota's school communities are facing unprecedented times. No school district policies or state statutes exist that can provide all the answers. While numerous factors lie beyond school boards' control, the element that school boards can control is how they lead.

Focusing on what is best for students' academic, social, and emotional well-being should always be top of mind, but is arguably now more important than ever before. School districts are undoubtedly hearing from students and families who are feeling anxious, scared, and unsure of what to do. During these times of such uncertainty, our students and families need and deserve a high-functioning, high-performing school board team that has a laser sharp focus on the needs of all learners.

Get back to the basics

1. *Trust one another* — This is not a time to doubt the decisions of fellow school board members, superintendents, and staff. School boards hire good people. School board members do not take on the position of school board member for fun (or the money!), but for the students and community.

2. *Put away the baggage* — We all have times of disagreement. Let's set it aside and work towards what's best for all. You don't have to hold hands and sing songs around the campfire, but decide what is most important right now and focus. For teams that have been struggling, this is going to test you and can bring out the best or worst in you. You decide

3. *Communicate, communicate, communicate* — Keep one another informed and, along with the superintendent, move forward with a consistent message. These times are confusing and uncertain for everyone. Clarity builds trust with your team, staff, and community.

School board leadership is being tested. Now is the time for all school board members to work with their superintendents in the most collaborative, supportive, and positive way possible. Let's set an example. Learn to Lead with the best YOU.

Your MSBA staff is here to assist you in any way we can. Thank you for the critical work you do for Minnesota's students.

COVID-19 and the 2020-21 School Year

Minnesota's three learning environment scenarios

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) announced that three learning environment scenarios will be prepared for the 2020-21 school year. The MDE 2020 Planning Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools (*MDE 2020 Planning Guidance*) describes the three scenarios in depth.

Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students	Scenario 2: Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity limits	Scenario 3: Distance learning for all students
This scenario will be implemented if public health data indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has sufficiently stabilized and/or improved to permit a reopening of schools. As students return to school, the school district should maximize the space between students and others, though it may not be feasible to enforce 6 feet of social distancing during classroom instructional time. Activities and extracurricular programming should continue to follow the COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults.	This scenario will be implemented when state officials determine that COVID-19 metrics have worsened at a local, regional, or statewide level or if a cluster of COVID-19 infections occur in a classroom or school. Under Scenario 2, schools **must** ✓ Limit the overall number of people in school facilities and on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy ✓ Ensure a minimum of 6 feet social distancing at all times. If this distancing cannot be achieved, the number of occupants must be reduced ✓ Plan for contactless pick-up and/or delivery of meals and school materials for days that students and staff are not in the building ✓ Implement a school-age care program for critical workers	This scenario will be implemented when state officials determine that COVID-19 metrics have worsened significantly enough at a local, regional, or statewide level to require suspension of in-person learning. Under Scenario 3, schools **must** follow federal and state requirements, ensure that students be able to participate equitably in their learning, and provide access for students to all relevant services and supports

Equity

The *MDE 2020 Planning Guidance* offers substantial information school districts and charter schools may use to enhance educational equity — "the condition of justness, fairness, and inclusion systems of education so that all students have access to the opportunities to learn and develop to their fullest potential."

Responding as health conditions change

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is the primary resource for COVID-19 information for school districts and charter schools. School leaders should follow the Minnesota Department of Health's 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools: Health Considerations for Navigating COVID-19 as a starting point for public health guidance specifically written for Minnesota's schools.

The Minnesota Department of Health has created two categories of health and safety practices — **required** and **recommended** — for Minnesota's schools:

> **Required health and safety practices** must be implemented by all Minnesota public schools. These practices are foundational to minimizing the risks of exposure to COVID-19 for students, staff, and families. These practices are considered the minimum level of implementation, and school districts may not be less restrictive.

> **Recommended health and safety practices** are additional strategies that schools may choose to use to minimize the spread of COVID-19. MDH and MDE recognize there are diverse learning environments that will require teams to use thoughtful strategies when applying guidance to meet the health and safety needs of all students and staff. Not all recommended practices will be possible in all settings, and therefore should be tailored as appropriate.

Requirements, recommendations, and local decisions

Minnesota's school districts and charter schools swiftly transitioned to distance learning in the spring. This experience provided key insights on serving students and enabling staff to identify and address the many challenges all school districts faced.

School boards and administrators asked whether the guidance from federal and state officials regarding COVID-19 was permissive or mandatory. It was not always clear whether schools could adopt local plans and decisions. The designation of **required** and **recommended** health and safety practices is intended to clarify the ways in which Minnesota's schools can exercise local discretion.

It may be inevitable that uncertainty will arise whether a school district is permitted to make a local decision or it must follow a federal or state directive. Public health data at a state, regional, and local level will significantly impact the degree of discretion that a school district can exercise.

MSBA will continue to serve as a clearinghouse of information and as a resource to help reduce uncertainty regarding local control and COVID-19. School districts are encouraged to use the wide range of MSBA resources dedicated to supporting their work during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- MSBA COVID-19 webpage
- MSBA informational materials
- MSBA sample documents and model policies
- MSBA Staff: Please use the links below to contact MSBA's lead staff person on each topic area

Academics/General Inquiries

Terence Morrow

Communications

Greg Abbott

Facilities

Gary Lee

Fiscal

Tiffany Gustin

Governance

Katie Klanderud

Health and Safety

Gary Lee

Human Resources

Amy Fullenkamp Taylor

Social and Emotional Health

Paula O'Loughlin

Transportation

Terence Morrow

How to use the MSBA *Guidance*

After working with many school board members, administrators, and state officials, MSBA recognized that practical, clear direction and resources would best serve Minnesota's schools and students.

This *Guidance* supplements the materials that the Minnesota Department of Education, the Minnesota Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, education associations across the nation, and other experts have created. MSBA is committed to updating this *Guidance* online as conditions change and new materials become available.

This *Guidance* sets up nine topic sections — including academics, facilities, health and safety, and transportation — with an understanding that some unavoidable overlap among sections will occur.

In each section, this *Guidance* provides

1. **Introductory information** about high-level considerations on the topic
2. **Action item checklists** that school districts should implement as relevant to the district
3. **Resources** that may assist in the planning and implementation stages

MSBA encourages school districts to establish collaborative teams of administrators and staff focused upon specific sections and, when feasible, subsections. These teams should reach out to public health officials, students, families, and others as needed to develop locally appropriate procedures, strategies, and options in the event that the public health situation changes.

Note

This *Guidance* presents recommendations and resources for the 2020-21 school year. The *Guidance* is designed to provide a starting point for local collaboration and decisions. The material in this *Guidance* will evolve as public health and safety conditions change. Please visit the MSBA COVID-19 Information and Resources webpage, which is updated regularly.

School districts are strongly encouraged to consult with legal counsel, local public health departments, and others.
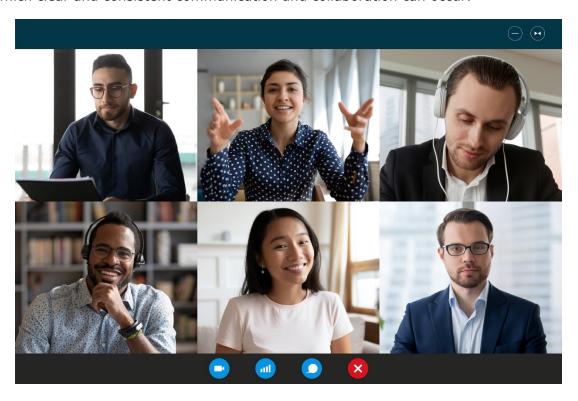
Table of Contents

Governance

The school board team (including the superintendent) plays a critical role in the oversight of plans involving the education of all students, especially during a pandemic. The school board determines policy and the school district's strategic priorities (the "what") while the administrative staff implements the plan (the "how"). The school board team should take time to understand roles and responsibilities during the COVID-19 pandemic and the ways in which clear and consistent communication and collaboration can occur.

Governance Action Items

☐ Focus on what is best for students' academic, social, and emotional well-being by modeling good governance and **student-centered leadership**

  o See MSBA: Standards for School Board Leadership

☐ Review and **approve plans for three learning scenarios**: in-school, hybrid, and distance learning
  o Facilities plans
  o Technology plans
  o Transportation plans
  o Professional development plans
  o Crisis management plans
  o Communication plans

- ☐ Determine **process for implementing hybrid or distance learning scenario**
  - o Work with local and state public health departments to support
    - ▪ Implementing hybrid learning scenario
    - ▪ Implementing distance learning scenario
    - ▪ Reopening a building
  - o Determine responsible party (school board or administration) who will decide whether to implement a hybrid learning or distance learning scenario
    - ▪ *Note*: State or local public health officials may exercise authority to close schools

- ☐ Determine **meeting**, **communication, and decision-making expectations and plans** between school board and administration

- ☐ Approve **alternative decision-making structure** if school board, superintendent, and/or key administrators are unable to work

- ☐ Review and revise **2020-21 budget**
  - o Prepare budget alternatives to reflect three learning scenarios
  - o Determine how to spend federal and state COVID-19 funding and grants

- ☐ Review and revise **2020-21 calendar**
  - o Prepare for potential implementation of hybrid and distance learning scenarios
  - o Prepare for potential delayed start to 2020-21 school year

- ☐ Review student **attendance policies**
  - o Provide flexibility
  - o Remove punitive measures

- ☐ Review **grading** policies with an understanding of the ways in which the three learning scenarios may create equity-related matters to resolve

- ☐ Review **graduation** requirements to determine whether the three learning scenarios may affect students' opportunity to fulfill requirements

- ☐ Adopt **resolution** suspending school district policies that conflict with Emergency Executive Orders, federal and state waivers, or other federal or state legislative or legal actions related to COVID-19

- ☐ Review **leave policies**
  - o Ensure conformity with federal and state COVID-related leave laws
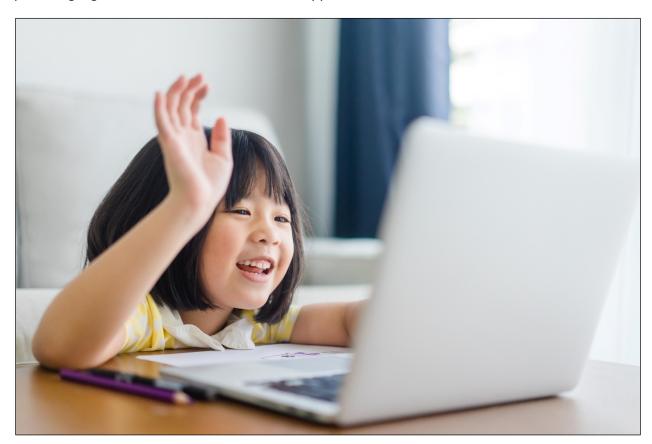 - o Provide clarity
  - o Reduce absenteeism

☐ Review **school board meeting** policies and procedures
- o Ensure compliance with public health and safety requirements and recommendations
- o Consider opportunities to enable community, families, staff, and students to monitor school board meetings remotely

☐ Review school district **facilities use** policies and procedures
- o Determine whether facilities are available for uses other than student instructional use
- o Determine which facilities, if any, should be restricted or prohibited for public use
- o Determine which facilities, if any, should be used as election polling places
- o Ensure that contracts, policies, and procedures for use of school district facilities allow the school district to cancel or modify public use as necessary due to public health and safety concerns

Academics

The 2020-21 school year may involve a combination of the three learning scenarios described above. In the event that the school district transitions to Scenario 2 or Scenario 3, the school district should turn to MDE's Minnesota Distance Teaching and Learning Implementation Guidance. Additional resources may be found on the MDE Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources webpage.

Academic matters will require substantial and sustained attention. Coordination and collaboration with families, staff, students, and the community offers the best prospect for providing rigorous academic services and support for all students.

Academic Action Items

☐ Prepare **student attendance estimate** for the Fall 2020

☐ Verify that school reopening plans include a **diagnostic assessment** component for all students upon their return to school to assist with transition back to in-school instruction, determine learning loss, to inform modifications to curriculum standards and expectations, to identify support services that may be required, and more

☐ Review Minnesota's **academic standards support** for distance learning
  - o See MDE: [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#) for information on the following:
    - ▪ *Physical Education in the 2020-21 School Year Recommendations and Resources*
    - ▪ *Arts Standards Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *English Language Arts Standards Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Mathematics Standards Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Physical Education Standards Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Physical Education Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Science Standards Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Social Studies Standards Support for Distance Learning*

☐ Create a plan for **supplemental instruction**
  - o Verify that plans include established procedures to meet and address student learning needs for all three scenarios

☐ Create procedures for **educator teams to meet and address** student learning needs under all three learning scenarios

☐ Create timeline for **progress reports** for each student, class, grade level, and building

☐ Review resources for **supporting students during distance learning**
  - o See MDE: [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#) for information on the following:
    - ▪ *Guidelines for Bilingual Seals Implementation during COVID-19*
    - ▪ *Equity Lens Reflection and Exploration Tool for Learning*
    - ▪ *Guidance for Using Distance Learning for Migratory Children*
    - ▪ *Working with Young, Multilingual Learners*
    - ▪ *Gifted Education Support for Distance Learning*
    - ▪ *Guidance for Using Distance Learning for English Learner Programming*
    - ▪ *Distance Learning Considerations*

☐ Review and adjust **special education services** for both hybrid and distance-learning scenarios
  - o IEP teams should review and update Individualized Education Plans
  - o Section 504 plans should be reviewed and updated
  - o Plan to deliver required compensatory services
  - o Review options for delivery of services via telehealth and other virtual options
  - o See MDE: [Special Education COVID-19 Resources](#) for information and resources

☐ Ensure that **equitable grading systems** are implemented
  - o See MDE: [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#)

◻ Review **building space and schedules** to ensure (as appropriate)
  o Additional time for student academic intervention and enrichment
  o Additional time for passing/transition periods and rest room usage

◻ Create **technology support team** to assist students, families, and staff facing technology issues
  o Identify steps to ensure equitable access to reliable devices and affordable internet access for all students
  o Identify supports for students with disabilities on online education and website accessibility
  o Develop measures to support students and families as they navigate this new educational environment
  o Create opportunities to assist families seeking technology support
  o See MDE: Strategies for Acquiring and Effectively Using Technology
  o See Alliance for Excellent Education: Future Ready Technology
  o See NSBA: Navigating Virtual Education with Calm, Connectedness, and Compassion
  o See U.S. DOE: Online Education and Website Accessibility for Students with Disabilities

◻ Create **student scheduling alternatives** that reflect social distancing and other health and safety considerations, transportation limitations (if any), meal-related constraints, and other matters
  o Allow time for academic intervention and enrichment
  o Allow time for hand hygiene, desk sanitizing, and other health and safety practices
  o Allow time for passing/transition periods and rest room usage

◻ Adjust school district **assessment plans and calendars** for the 2020-21 school year
  o Identify assessments that are necessary to determine mastery and retention
  o Identify assessments to be delayed or eliminated until relevant standards are taught
  o Collaborate with teachers on a plan for gathering and interpreting assessment results

◻ Review **student enrollment** procedures
  o Review open enrollment requirements
  o Work with local public health department to create a screening process for enrolling transfer students that conforms to state and local health and safety requirements
    ▪ Determine if a student is transferring from a COVID-19 hot spot or has recently visited a hot spot and has been exposed to the virus

- o Determine whether students may attend without all required immunizations, unless a legal exemption applies
- o Determine student access to internet and computer technology

- ☐ Teach age-appropriate **healthy habits** at all grade levels
  - o Educate students on viruses and signs of illness
    - ▪ Incorporate professional development for staff to assist in this effort
  - o Build in time for routine hand washing by students and staff
  - o Teach students to clean desks/workspaces at least once per day
  - o Prohibit sharing of pencils, pens, and other school supplies
  - o Teach students how to wear masks or cloth face coverings and when to use them
    - ▪ See CDC: COVID-19. Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19
  - o Reteach appropriate social skills to encourage minimal physical contact

- ☐ Follow public health and safety guidance for **activities and extracurricular programming** that may occur under Scenario 1: In-person learning and Scenario 2: Hybrid learning
  - o See MDH: COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs
  - o See MDH: COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults

- ☐ Review **participation and other academic fees** in light of economic disruption

- ☐ Review the school district's **acceptable use policies** related to use of devices and infrastructure, whether in school or remotely

- ☐ Review school **attendance policies**
  - o Request (do not require) a description of symptoms to determine if student or staff absence may be COVID-19 related
  - o Train/remind staff regarding privacy protections for students and staff
  - o Encourage teachers to create class norms to respect privacy
  - o Reconsider 'perfect attendance' and similar programs that may encourage ill students or staff to enter school buildings

- ☐ Prepare for **career and technical education courses** under the three learning scenarios
  - o See Association for Career & Technical Education. High-Quality CTE: Planning for a COVID-19-Impacted School Year and Planning Guide
  - o See MDE: Career and Technical Education Resources
  - o See MDE: Use of School Buildings for Technical Instruction

- ☐ Prepare for **child care program** reopening
  - o See CDC: Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open

Communications

Effective communication with a broad range of stakeholders — students, families, staff, the community, and others — will support COVID-19 planning and implementation.

School board members have significant responsibilities related to school district communication:

1. The school board member's responsibility is to direct questions to the right person for a response rather than attempting to respond.

2. To fulfill this responsibility, the school board member should know the school district staff who can answer questions, such as about what happens if a student is ill, if a classmate or teacher tests positive for COVID-19, how homework will be handled, and much more.

3. To keep the lines of communication open with the school district, the superintendent must ensure that all school board members know the point person for questions. Perhaps all questions will go to the superintendent. Maybe COVID-19 questions will be directed to the school nurse. The school district may have a communications officer who will have information on whether schools will close if a child is diagnosed with COVID-19.

4. School board members should support school district procedures. It is counterproductive for a school board member to express disagreement on public health and safety measures, such as wearing masks. Staff will be working hard to prepare three learning scenarios for the fall. Once the school board approves a learning scenario, all school board members must support the plan. Safety is not political. With a 6 or 7-member school board, safety plan directions cannot be interpreted 6 or 7 different ways.

Communications Action Items

☐ Develop an **effective communication plan**
- o Who: identify the person/department who will issue information to key stakeholders
- o What: determine the central and supporting messages
  - ▪ Keep constituents, stakeholders, and the media aware of the school district's planning efforts
  - ▪ Provide means for students, families, staff, and the community to provide feedback and input
  - ▪ Ensure that communications counter discrimination or stigma
- o When: determine when information will be shared
  - ▪ Ensure that communications are in stakeholders' languages and are appropriate for stakeholders with hearing and/or visual impairment
- o How: determine the communication tools that will be most effective in reaching key stakeholders
  - ▪ Means of communication
    - • Website
    - • Email
    - • Social Media
    - • Print mailings
    - • Voice messages
    - • Media outlets

☐ Maintain a **web-based clearinghouse** of communications and other information with active links

☐ Work with **local public health officials** to understand the notification process for reporting suspected and confirmed cases

☐ Create an **after-hours contact system** for students, families, and staff to contact the school district at any time if they have symptoms of or have been exposed to COVID-19

☐ Prepare **Fall 2020 letter to families** that addresses the following:
- o School start date
- o Health and safety measures that the school district is taking to enhance safety
- o Health and safety protocols for students, staff, and others entering a school district building
- o Basic information on COVID-19 and steps families can take to stay safe when not at school
- o Clear direction on when a student should remain home for health and safety reasons and the process for notifying the school
- o Importance of immunizations and flu vaccines

- o Information on trauma-informed processes and on helping students cope with stress and tragedy
- o Notification process if the school district determines that instruction at one or more schools will be changed to hybrid or distance learning
- o Available community resources
  - ▪ Mental health
  - ▪ Food security
  - ▪ Health care
  - ▪ Economic aid
  - ▪ Housing assistance

- ☐ **Maintain communication with families** throughout the school year

- ☐ Prepare **communications for students**
  - o Posters in buildings and other messages on handwashing, covering coughs and sneezes, and other measures
  - o See MDH: Materials and Resources for COVID-19 Response (video PSAs, print materials, signs, and translated documents)

- ☐ Prepare **communications for the public**
  - o Post reminders that visitors should not enter buildings if they are experiencing illness
  - o Review data privacy rules and proper procedure regarding COVID-19 infection information regarding students and staff

Facilities

Preparing and maintaining clean and safe facilities will call upon everyone who enters a school building to cooperate and assist. In addition to preparation and maintenance efforts, school districts should identify individuals in each building who will respond to immediate needs.

Facilities Action Items

- **Inspect all buildings** to determine readiness for re-entry
    - Inspect, test, repair, and clean the following building systems:
        - Fire/life safety systems
        - HVAC systems
        - Kitchen/food services systems
        - Security systems
        - Computer systems
        - Water/plumbing systems
    - Review building certificates for occupancy requirements
    - Identify, evaluate, and reallocate space (as necessary)
        - Lobby/entry areas as congregation points and for health check functions
        - Exit doors (emergency and otherwise)
        - Bus and car loading/unloading
    - Identify spaces within district and in the community that could be used for instruction if hybrid learning scenario raises the need
    - See OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

- ☐ Create **supply inventory** to enhance preventative measures and identify alternative suppliers
  - o Sufficient and accessible sinks
  - o Sufficient and accessible hand-sanitizing stations and mobile hand sanitizer
  - o Sufficient no-touch trash receptacles placed in areas that minimize exposure
  - o Cleaning and disinfecting supplies
  - o Swabs
  - o No-touch thermometers
  - o Sufficient linens and other materials and supplies for nurse's office
  - o No-touch hygiene products, such as soap and dispensers, paper towels, and tissues
  - o Cafeteria measures, including sneeze guards
  - o Protection devices (such as clear plastic barriers) for staff who regularly interact in person with the public
  - o See MDH: Recommended Supplies for Schools: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

- ☐ Thoroughly **inspect, test, repair, clean, sanitize, and ventilate** the following building equipment and related surfaces in compliance with CDC, MDH, and OSHA guidelines (when relevant)
  - o Floors, walls, windows, counters, desks, computers, utensils, drinking fountains, toilets/urinals, doors, door handles, instruments, screens, whiteboards, blackboards, curtains/shades, trash receptacles, paper towel/toilet paper dispensaries, and other school surfaces
  - o HVAC systems
    - ▪ See ASHRAE: COVID-19 Preparedness Resources (HVAC systems)

- ☐ Develop an **ongoing cleaning program** for disinfection and prevention of contamination
  - o Review and implement CDC, MDH, and OSHA guidelines
  - o See MDH: COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance for Schools & Child Care Programs
  - o See CDC: Cleaning & Disinfection for Community Facilities

- ☐ Thoroughly ventilate, clean, and disinfect all school district **buses and vehicles**

- ☐ **Maintain appropriate social distancing** census levels in all spaces in school buildings and facilities

- ☐ Develop and post appropriate **signage**
  - o See MDH: Materials and Resources for COVID-19 Response (video PSAs, print materials, signs, and translated documents
  - o See CDC: COVID-19 Print Resources (signs, posters, FAQs, and more in multiple languages)

- Develop **visitor** procedures
  - Develop **visitor screening** process, including location and time
  - Determine maximum number of visitors in one space at one time
  - Provide contactless pickup and delivery of items
  - See MDH: Visitor & Employee Health Screening Checklist
    - See MDH: Businesses and Employers: COVID-19 for health information in multiple languages
  - See Symptoms of Coronavirus (CDC)

- **Reconfigure physical space** to create social distancing
  - Prepare alternative space configuration if a hybrid-learning scenario is activated

- Prepare plans for opening school district **athletic facilities**
  - See Minnesota Stay Safe Guidance for Gyms, Studios, & Fitness Centers
  - See MDH: Reopening of Public Swimming Pool and Aquatic Facilities

- Prepare plans for **playground use** by schools and child care programs
  - See MDH: Playground Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs

- Create procedures for **non-school district use of school district facilities**
  - Prepare COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for use of facilities
    - See Minnesota Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment for template

Fiscal

School district and charter school leaders face significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Estimates suggest that school districts may face considerable additional expenses associated with each of the three learning scenarios. In addition to the resources provided in this *Guidance*, school district leaders may wish to review the Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) COVID-19 Resources Community page.

Budget Considerations

Health and Cleaning Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Under each of the three learning scenarios, school districts should anticipate elevated expenditures for health and cleaning supplies. Increased quantity and demand will increase costs. School districts should evaluate existing inventories of gloves, masks, and safety glasses, as well as hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels, tissue, toilet paper, and antibacterial wipes. If product shortages of preferred brands cause issues with obtaining an adequate supply and substitute brands are ordered, communicate with maintenance staff, as Safety Data Sheets (SDS) must be obtained for new products. Keep in mind that ingredients of cleaners could cause problems for students and staff with chemical sensitivities.

School districts may experience significant difficulties in obtaining personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE shortages led the Minnesota Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Health to base their guidelines on the assumption that schools may not have PPE.

Technology

The school district's technology plan should be reviewed and revised as needed to implement the three learning scenarios. Additional hardware, software, licenses, other supplies, or staffing may require budget changes.

Learning management systems (LMS) are frequently used for remote teaching and learning. If the school district does not have an LMS, the school district might research how an LMS system could be implemented.

If 1-to-1 devices are assigned to students and/or staff, the school district should ensure that resources are tracked and returned.

Federal Funding Sources

School districts are required to apply through SERVS for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding, which includes the Governor's Emergency Education Relief fund (GEER) and the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. When a school district's application is approved, the school district should use the required UFARS codes to track eligible expenditures.

See MDE CARES Act Funding Information and Use of Federal Funds during the COVID-19 Emergency for additional information and MDE contact information regarding funding matters.

Tracking COVID Expenses
The school district might track COVID-related expenses separately. Expenses covered by CARES funding have required coding structures. For expenses paid with local funds, school districts may choose to track expenses by using an available UFARS program code.

Cashless Payments

Concern over COVID-10 transmission has reduced use of cash or other forms of person-to-person payments. Online payment options for food service accounts, activity fees, fines, and other expenses could decrease exposure to germs and increase cash controls.

Fund Balance Transfers

Information on fund balance transfers is available on the MDE Financial Management webpage.

Equipment and Inventory

School districts should review the process for equipment, including a process for distributing and collecting school district assets from students and staff, especially those who do not return to the school building.

Careful and comprehensive cleaning procedures must be instituted, especially if in-person or hybrid instruction occurs.

Fiscal Action Items

☐ Conduct **full inventory** of equipment and other assets
  o Develop system to track district equipment and assets that students and families have in their possession
  o Inform students and families of school district equipment return procedure
  o Develop process for retrieving school district equipment if not returned

☐ Determine **additional equipment and asset needs** if hybrid or distance learning is instituted
  o Develop safe process for equipment and asset distribution

☐ Budget for additional **health and safety supplies**
- o Personal protection equipment (PPE)
- o Health room supplies (including thermometers)
- o Cleaning supplies, especially for COVID-19 disinfection
  - ▪ Consider supplies that are better for students and staff with asthma or chemical sensitivities
- o Hygiene supplies (including hand soap, sanitizer, paper towels, toilet paper, antibacterial wipes)

☐ Review and revise **technology plan**
- o Inventory existing devices, including tablets, laptops, and mobile hot spots
- o Conduct survey to determine student home access to reliable and affordable internet access and availability of devices within the home. Consider whether devices are shared among multiple people within the home
- o Procure hardware, software, licenses, and learning management systems to improve virtual instruction under hybrid and distance learning scenarios
- o Work with government, business, and community partners — especially local and regional internet providers — to assist students to access reliable and affordable internet access
- o Determine whether additional IT staff is needed
- o Determine whether additional staff training is needed
- o Review network security
- o See ENA: Education Network Security Checklist

☐ Prepare **nutrition plan options** linked to the three learning scenarios
- o Review lead time for securing food and non-food supplies
- o Consider whether reduced meal participation will negatively affect the school district's budget
- o Increase availability of information on free and reduced-price meal information and assist families with applications
- o Inventory existing food service equipment and supplies and identify equipment and supply needs for all forms of meal delivery, including in-class service, home delivery, and curb-side delivery
- o Consider whether ala carte food items are practical under each meal delivery option
- o Determine whether additional staff or staff hours will be needed
- o See MDE: Food and Nutrition COVID-19 Resources
- o See School Nutrition Association: Thought Starters for Reopening Schools for SY2020-21
- o See MDE: School Nutrition Program webinar series
  - ▪ July 7: Meal Distribution Models
  - ▪ July 14: Menu Planning
  - ▪ July 21: Equipment Considerations
  - ▪ July 28: Staffing
  - ▪ August 4: Financial Implications

- Review **vendor contracts**
  - o Contact the school district's legal counsel before executing revised agreements
  - o Review and restructure current contracts (if possible) to address possible implementation of the three learning environment scenarios, school closings, modified schedules, restricted facility access, changes in working conditions, and other factors
  - o Require proof of emergency plan from crucial vendors to prevent or minimize service disruption to students
  - o Ensure contracts require proper hygiene and health and safety protocols for persons or products entering school district buildings
  - o Carefully consider new contracts or purchases to ensure the products or services are a good fit for the school district's instructional plan and comply with required procurement processes

- Review **facility use agreements**

- Apply for **emergency aid** as appropriate

- Assess, approve, and track **COVID-19 recovery-related expenditures**

- Review active **construction contracts** for potential impact due to local COVID-19 outbreak, economic disruption, or disruption of supply chains or labor market

Health and Safety

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is leading public health efforts directed against COVID-19. This effort includes guiding the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) as guidance is written for school districts and school boards. MDH offers a wide range of materials that school districts should review. The School Nurses Organization of Minnesota offers a helpful resource webpage — COVID 2019 Toolkit for School Nurses — for school districts and charter schools to use. Three primary MDH documents also provide a good foundation for school districts' work:

- o 2020-21 Planning Guidance for Schools: Health Considerations for Navigating COVID-19
- o COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs.
- o Businesses and Employers: COVID-19

Health and Safety Action Items

☐ Review **guidance** for reopening schools
  - Train staff on following the guidelines in the three learning scenarios
  - See School Nurse Organization of Minnesota: COVID-19 Toolkit for MN School Nurses
  - See American Academy of Pediatrics: COVID-19 Planning Considerations— Guidance for School Re-entry
  - See Occupational Safety and Health Administration: Guidance on Returning to Work
  - See Marsh & McLennan: Returning People to the Workplace Safely: A Practical Guide for Managing COVID-19

☐ Work with **local and state health departments**
  - Verify where students and staff can be tested for COVID-19
  - Obtain current information and tools for students, families, and staff
  - Notify health officials when student or staff absences exceed a predetermined threshold

☐ Create **inventory** of health supplies
  - PPE (gloves, masks, gowns, etc.)
  - Touch-free thermometers
  - Sanitizer/cleansers, hand soap, towels, and tissues

☐ Provide **masks** pursuant to public health guidance, especially for the following:
  - Health staff
  - Staff working with a medically fragile student
  - Persons exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms
  - See MDH: Masking Recommendations for Child Care & Schools: COVID-19
  - See Minnesota Department Labor and Industry: PPE & Face-coverings

☐ Communicate **healthy habits** to students, staff, and visitors, including on use of masks and cloth face coverings and hand hygiene
  - Reinforce safe use of cloth face coverings and do not place cloth face coverings on children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
    - See CDC: Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19
  - See CDC: When & How to Use Hand Sanitizer in Community Settings
  - See CDC: When and How to Wash Your Hands
  - See MDH: Hand Hygiene
  - See MDH: Hand Hygiene Print Materials (signs, posters, and more)

- Create **procedure for confirmed and current cases** of COVID-19 infection of
  - Staff
    - Instructional staff
    - Food Service staff
    - Custodial staff
    - Office staff
    - Administration
  - Students
    - Specific to each grade level

- Notify **local health officials, staff, and families** immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and in accordance with state and local laws and regulations
  - See EEOC: Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act

- Update **student contact list** for use for potential COVID-19 infection
  - Encourage families to review and revise emergency contact lists, recommending that parents list persons who are not in the high-risk category for COVID-19

- Review **student health and safety plans**
  - Determine whether plans should be revised to minimize COVID-19 infection
  - Review care of students with respiratory illnesses and administration of nebulizer treatments or suctioning
  - Schedule medication schedules to minimize the number of students in the nurse's office at the same time

- Explore **telehealth options** for student, staff, and school district use
  - See CDC: Using Telehealth to Expand Access to Essential Health Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Prepare to provide **daily health reports** to the school district office
  - See U.S. Department of Labor: Guidance for Recording Cases of COVID-19

- Create a **COVID-19 space** where students/staff who may have COVID-19 or other communicable disease can await pickup
  - Ensure frequent disinfection
  - Use easily disinfected furniture and surfaces
  - Use no-touch trash receptacles
  - Examine equipment (including thermometers) to determine whether adjustments/new supplies are needed to increase sterilization and minimize chance of reinfection
  - Restrict room access

- o Do not rely on using nurse office and/or other space where students obtain other health support

- ☐ Develop **COVID-19 exposure response plan**
  - o Identify stay-at-home requirements
  - o Create isolation, containment, and contact tracing procedures in coordination with local public health officials
  - o See MDH: What to do if an employee has COVID-19

- ☐ Create **list of medical and dental resources** available to families
  - o See CDC: COVID-19—If You are Sick or Caring for Someone

- ☐ See *Academics* for instruction on healthy habits

- ☐ See *Communications* for information on contacting families regarding health and safety matters

Human Resources

Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)

The FFCRA requires certain employers, including all school districts, to provide Emergency Family and Medical Leave and Emergency Paid Sick Leave to eligible employees who are unable to work due to specific reasons related to COVID-19. Currently, school districts are not eligible for the payroll tax credits available under the FFCRA for providing these leaves. However, the school district's portion of Social Security taxes is exempted for leave payments under the FFCRA.

> o   See U.S. Dept. of Labor: COVID-19 and the American Workplace

Human Resources Action Items

Collaboration with Employees

- ☐ Collaborate and/or bargain as appropriate with **staff and bargaining units** to identify and plan for COVID-19 related matters, including

  - o   Changes to the approved school district calendar
  - o   Return-to-work procedures
  - o   Use of leave benefits and leave-of-absence policies
  - o   Payment for course overload, additional supervision, and additional responsibilities
  - o   Remote learning expectations
  - o   Adjustment and flexibility in employee work schedules, such as staggered start and end times, staggered breaks, split shifts, and compressed work weeks
  - o   Remote work considerations
    - ▪ Potential for staggered in-school/remote work
    - ▪ Needed technology and upgrades
    - ▪ Ability of staff at increased risk to work remotely (either entirely or at greater frequency than other staff)
    - ▪ Clear expectations regarding remote work
    - ▪ Consistent communication and engagement with staff working remotely
  - o   Transition to and from hybrid or distance learning scenarios
  - o   Job descriptions and responsibilities in light of potential COVID-19 related changes
  - o   Extracurricular stipends impacted by school closing or related events
  - o   Emergency communication procedures
  - o   Cleaning, access to handwipes and sanitizer, training on hygiene procedures and other safety procedures

- Collective bargaining agreement negotiations procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Consult the school district's legal counsel before modifying existing collective bargaining agreements or executing a memorandum of understanding with an affected bargaining unit**

Employee Contracts and Agreements

- ☐ Review **collective bargaining agreements** in anticipation of hybrid and distance learning scenarios and consider
  - Process for adjusting work schedules
  - Process for reducing hours
  - Furlough process

- ☐ Review existing **individual at-will letters of assignment** and **individual at-will employment contracts** of employees who are not part of a bargaining unit
  - Ensure that documents do not contain language that creates an implied contract
  - Ensure that the school district retains the right to make employment changes as necessary
    - Adjustment of work schedule
    - Reduction in hours
    - Other changes

Employee Compensation

- ☐ Review applicable **collective bargaining agreements, employee handbooks, and policies**
  - Note: Districts may not unilaterally alter/reduce compensation negotiated as part of collective bargaining agreements.

- ☐ Consider whether **additional compensation** related to COVID-19 will be offered to substitute employees and others
  - See MSBA *Letter of Agreement for Essential School Employees*

- ☐ Determine whether and how **coaches and advisors** will be compensated if the relevant activity is delayed or cancelled
  - See MSBA *Letter of Agreement for Coaches and Advisors*

- ☐ Determine how **exempt employees** (e.g., teachers) covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be compensated for working extended duty days or an extended duty year

- ☐ Review **pay equity**

- ☐ Review **workers' compensation** laws related to COVID-19

Employee Health

☐ Develop **staff health screening procedures**
  o Consider staff self-assessment of health
    ▪ See EEOC: What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws
    ▪ Minnesota: COVID-19 Employee Screening and Testing Recommendations by Industry

  o Review indicators for people who face higher risk of COVID-19 infection
    ▪ See CDC: People Who are at Increased Risk for Illness
    ▪ See CDC: Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces
    ▪ See MDH: Managing Chronic Conditions During COVID-19

☐ Establish a staff **self-report process** of COVID-19 symptoms or exposure consistent with privacy laws
  o See HHS: HIPAA and COVID-19
  o See MDH: 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools

☐ Establish procedures for cleaning, isolating, and closing buildings if a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19

☐ Establish **return to work guidelines**
  o See MDH: COVID-19 and When to Return to Work
    ▪ Available in multiple languages

☐ Ensure **COVID-19 federal leave information** is posted in all buildings

☐ Update **staff information**
  o Encourage staff to review emergency contact information
  o Communicate return-to-work plans

☐ Ensure that staff have **sufficient time and resources to complete health and safety activities**
  o Hand hygiene
  o Cleaning equipment and surfaces

☐ Inform staff of available **mental health resources**

☐ Follow MDH and MDE recommendations on wearing of **cloth facemasks** by staff and students

Changes in Staffing Levels

☐ Consider potential COVID-19 related needs for **additional staff**
   o Potential additional staff may likely include:
      ▪ Nurses
      ▪ Health care aides
      ▪ Substitute teachers (short-term and long-term)
      ▪ Transportation
      ▪ Custodial
      ▪ Food service
      ▪ Counselors
      ▪ Social workers
      ▪ School psychologist
   o Review process for acquiring required new hire/rehire human resources paperwork to reflect COVID-19 pandemic
   o Review staff orientation and onboarding processes for new hires and rehires to reflect COVID-19 pandemic
   o Develop budget projection and availability to add staff

☐ Plan for COVID-19 related **reduced staff** and delivery of educational and health/safety services and essential operations (such as payroll)
   o Cross train employees so that more than one employee is familiar with essential job functions
   o Recruit substitute employees (if feasible)
   o Employ full-time substitute employees who can be trained in a variety of positions (if feasible)
   o Contact neighboring districts for potential assistance with staff replacements as needed

☐ Plan for **increase in educational services** to provide compensatory services to special education students and to assist students experiencing challenges

Employee Leave and Benefits

☐ Review school district policies and handbooks on **staff leave**

☐ Create codes to track **hours of COVID-19 related activities and absences** for fund/grant purposes

☐ Examine processes for recording and reporting **staff absence**

☐ Review **school district benefits** in light of the COVID-19 pandemic
   o Determine availability of alternative health and safety services (including clinics or telehealth services) if doctor's office is not available

o Consider that staff may seek to add family members to school district health insurance in light of unemployment situation
o Check to see whether a COVID-19 illness would qualify if the school district offers short-term disability benefits
o Work with the school district benefit providers to communicate with employees

Unemployment Insurance

☐ Provide **notice to employees separated from employment** between April 6, 2020 and December 31, 2020. A conservative interpretation of 'separated' would be to provide notice to any employee who was fully or partially furloughed, laid off, or experienced a reduction in hours or pay.

☐ Review **factors used to determine unemployment insurance eligibility** in COVID-19 context

☐ Be aware of **potential imposters** posing as school employees who file unemployment insurance claims

Employee Professional Development

☐ Provide **relevant professional development** before school re-opening for the 2020-21 school year, which may include training on
  o COVID-19 symptoms, prevention techniques, and school district procedures to prevent and minimize exposure
  o Economic impact of COVID-19 on the local community, families, and students
  o Staff responsibilities under the three learning scenarios
  o Technology use for effective hybrid and distance learning
  o Cybersecurity
  o Professional boundaries with students, including electronic communications
  o Effective methods of cleaning and disinfecting work areas
  o Precautions when in contact with bodily fluids
  o Identifying learning deficits and responses
  o Signs of mental health stress in co-workers and relevant protocols
  o Signs of mental health stress in students and relevant protocols
  o Trauma-informed practices
  o Mandated reporter obligations
  o Suicide prevention
  o Anti-bullying

Social and Emotional Health

The cumulative effects of COVID-19 have impacted every student, every family, and every school district and charter school staff member across Minnesota. These universal impacts have heightened the need for learning environments that are welcoming to and supportive of all students. School districts can help students weather this crisis by recognizing and responding to their emotions and leaning on positive, prosocial relationships. Social emotional learning (SEL) is critical to re-engage students, support adults, rebuild relationships and school communities, and create equitable learning environments for all students.

Key Factors

Quality over quantity: School district leaders should carefully select specific and targeted initiatives that school staff can implement with fidelity and embrace. SEL initiatives hinge on manageability of implementation, teacher buy-in, and authenticity.

Comprehensive development: The goal of an SEL program is to foster the development of five emotional and behavioral competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making, according to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

Dedicated team: School districts may use existing teams focused on multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), student services, student support teams (SST), or SEL for planning and implementing social-emotional and wellness curriculum and supports. SEL teams should include administrators, teachers, non-instructional staff, after/before-school providers, other community partners, students, and families.

Valuing student voice: Including students in SEL action planning is key. School district teams must have meaningful conversations with students to understand their perceptions and gain feedback on current initiatives and future plans.

 Social emotional wellness: Social emotional learning and self-care starts with adults. Planning for supports for staff can increase the efficacy of the model and training. School district leaders should make resources available and build well-being activities into daily routines for staff. School district leaders should use their interactions with staff to model how they want staff to interact with students. Staff experiencing difficulties may need positive coping mechanisms, additional mental health services, or crisis support.

Prioritize two-way communication between families and school districts: Communication among school districts, families, and community organizations is critical to SEL, and is particularly front and center during this time of uncertainty and transition. To promote SEL, school districts and families need to work closely to learn from and support one another in creating the environments that support students socially and emotionally, which includes helping families address their own stresses, anxieties, and challenges and asking families to inform school district approaches to SEL.

Important Questions

o   How is the school district cultivating an emotionally safe and engaging learning environment that prioritizes relationship building?
o   What data sources can the school district use to examine the development, needs, and perspectives of our students, families, and staff so that the school district can purposefully select SEL initiatives that align with these needs?
o   Does the school district need to examine current staff roles and responsibilities to utilize effectively the school district's counselors and mental health specialists to enhance the delivery of the school district's SEL initiatives?
o   How can we value and foster staff SEL development through purposeful incorporation in meetings, routines, staff-expectations, and professional development?

Kathleen Minke, executive director of the National Association of School Psychologists, proposed the following four-point plan to help school districts address mental health needs when in-person instruction resumes:

- o **Develop a long-term recovery plan.** School districts should not rely on building principals or school psychologists to create and implement support plans. District leadership is needed to ensure that a multi-tiered system of support addressing academic skills and emotional and behavioral health is available to all students and adults in each building.

- o **Assess, do not assume.** All school districts face challenges. It is essential to conduct structured needs assessments to identify specific difficulties that students and staff face. Comprehensive universal supports and methods to identify those who require more intensive interventions should be undertaken. The assessment process should be ongoing, for some students (and adults) will appear fine at first only to experience setbacks later.

- o **Develop a resource map**. School districts should identify qualified mental- and behavioral-health service providers in each school and make sure their jobs are structured so that they have time to devote to such services. School psychologists, counselors, and social workers should identify gaps in needed services and seek community supports.

- o **Provide professional development and emotional care for adults.** School district staff must prepare to recognize signs of anxiety, depression, and trauma in students while also managing challenges in their own families. School districts should provide professional development on trauma-informed practices and a robust protocol for identifying and supporting students in need. Flexibility and support during the workday can help staff engage in effective self-care.

Mental Health Supports for School Staff

As school districts prepare to reopen, school district staff need significant support to ensure wellness and safety. A recovery plan that meets a range of professional and emotional needs will help school district staff prepare to return to teaching. School districts should address the following:

o School district staff may need comprehensive information, professional development, and training to prepare to meet evolving challenges.

o New operational procedures and instructional models, such as hybrid and distance learning strategies, may require ongoing school district staff education.

o To compensate for lost instructional time and anticipated increased student emotional distress, new practices and pedagogy should focus on academics and social emotional learning.

o Trauma-sensitive practices will be beneficial especially in supporting vulnerable students and reinforcing a positive school climate. Increased mental health knowledge will help school district staff to identify and respond to stress reactions from others.

o To respond to student and family needs, school district staff need readily available material to share, from basic needs to mental health resources.

Important Questions
o How will the school district provide a multi-tiered system of supports for staff and recognize when someone needs additional assistance? What resources or services, such as employee assistance programs (EAPs) and telehealth options, will be available to school district staff?

o How can the school district prioritize staff self-care to prevent compassion fatigue and burnout?

o What professional learning and training opportunities do school staff need? What types of collegial support, such as mentors or coaches, are available?

o What supports are available to teachers regarding classroom behavior management?

o What plans are in place to ensure staffing capacity? What school district policies or regulations should be updated to support staff?

Social and Emotional Health Action Items

☐ Establish and train a **crisis management team** to address psychological and emotion concerns
- o Work with local mental health services, including post-traumatic stress syndrome counseling
- o Review and update crisis response procedure
- o Develop process for screening students for mental health or trauma
  - ▪ Ensure appropriate school district staff are trained
- o Develop process for supporting students or staff who are COVID-19 positive
- o Conduct ongoing behavior/mental health monitoring and assessment
- o Select appropriate locations to confidentially administer psychological and emotional aid and support
- o Prepare lists of professional mental health services, including those who may provide services via telehealth

☐ Evaluate through **a trauma-informed lens** all communications and services available to students and families
- o Identify supports available to students and staff if they or a family member tests positive for COVID-19

☐ Evaluate **available mental health supports and services** for students and staff
- o Review school district policies and benefits for mental health services
- o See National Center for School Mental Health: COVID-19 Resources

☐ Review **suicide awareness and prevention policy**
- o Screen high-risk students
- o Ensure that an appropriate number of staff have been trained to respond to an incident

☐ Review school district's **anti-bullying policies**

☐ Review, develop and offer meaningful, sustained professional learning opportunities around **interrupting bias, discrimination, and racism**. School boards, administrators and educators need to lead through training and practice by eliminating barriers and increasing access for our underserved students.

☐ Plan **re-engagement activities** for return to instruction and school buildings
- o Contact all families of enrolled students to determine if concerns exist regarding a return to in-school education, verify contact information, and determine access to internet and computers

- o Provide activities for students and families to increase comfort with returning to school buildings before the 2020-21 academic year begins, including
  - ▪ Allow students transitioning to a new building to visit
  - ▪ Allow students to become familiar with new bus procedures
  - ▪ Allow students to meet with teachers and staff
- o Be mindful that family economic health may have changed
  - ▪ Review school supply lists to ensure that only necessary supplies are included
  - ▪ Provide multiple opportunities to apply for the free and reduced-price lunch program

- ☐ Prepare for **potential loss** of a student, staff member, or school community member
  - o Carefully plan appropriate messaging to the school community
  - o Provide an opportunity for recognition and grief
  - o Contact local mental health agencies and practitioners for grief resources
  - o Ensure counselor availability to students and staff

- ☐ Plan for **emotional closure** in the event the school district implements a hybrid or distance learning scenario
  - o Provide opportunities for students and staff to discuss the transition
  - o Provide safe opportunities for students and staff to retrieve personal items, instructional items, and other materials
  - o Collaborate with staff to hold social opportunities to allow for recognition, celebration, and connection
  - o Host milestone events

Transportation

Transportation guidance should be implemented regardless of whether the school district provides its own transportation services or it contracts with a third-party provider. School districts using third-party providers should confirm that the provider is taking all necessary steps related to COVID-19. See National Association for Pupil Transportation. COVID-19 Resources for additional guidance.

Scenario 1: In-person learning for all students

Systematically review and evaluate school transportation capacity with the goal of creating as much space between riders as possible, recognizing that it is not always feasible to have 6 feet of social distancing. Consider reducing capacity or adding routes to allow for more physical space between riders. Keep families in the same seat, if possible. Students load bus from back to front.

Scenario 2: Hybrid learning with strict social distancing and capacity requirements

Limit the number of people on transportation vehicles to 50% maximum occupancy. Ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6 feet between people at all times (e.g., one student per seat (households may sit together)), one seat between students). If distancing cannot be achieved, the number of occupants must be reduced.

Transportation Action Items

☐ Inventory and estimate **school district transportation needs and resources**
- Available number and sizes of buses and other vehicles that can be called into service
- Maximum number of students who will use school district transportation under in-person learning and hybrid learning
- Anticipated number of bus drivers
- Anticipated scheduling needs for vehicles and drivers
- Potential fluctuation in bus driver availability due to COVID-19
- Additional school staff with appropriate licenses to operate school buses and vehicles
- Potential staff who may be able to acquire appropriate license to operate school buses and vehicles

☐ Prepare **COVID-19 related bus procedures** and distribute to students, families, and staff
- Fill buses from back to front
- Limit seating to two students per bus row (one in a seat)
- Seat students in every other row
- Keep students seated next to windows
- Disembark from bus one at a time from front to back
- Separate bus drop-off/pick-up location from car location

☐ Create **transportation cleaning plan** for school district buses and vehicles that includes thorough ventilation, cleaning, and disinfection per CDC, MDH, and OSHA guidelines
- See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [Cleaning and Disinfection for Nonemergency Transport Vehicles](#)

☐ Create inventory of physical plant to enhance preventative measures
- Sinks and handwashing stations
- No-touch trash receptacles
- No-touch hygiene products, such as soap dispensers, paper towels, and tissues
- Cafeteria measures, including sneeze guards
- Determine need for protection devices (such as clear plastic barriers) for staff who regularly interact in person with the public

Resources

General Planning Information

State of Minnesota. COVID-19 Response Website

State of Minnesota. Stay Safe Plan

State of Minnesota. Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities

State of Minnesota. COVID-19 Preparedness Plan template and instructions

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz. Emergency Executive Orders

U.S. Department of Education. COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
Considerations for Schools
COVID-19: School Decision Tool

Minnesota School Boards Association. COVID-19 Information and Resources

National School Boards Association. COVID-19: Preparing for Widespread Illness in Your School Community

American Academy of Pediatrics: COVID-19 Planning Considerations—Guidance for School Re-entry

American Assn. of School Administrators (AASA). Guidelines for Reopening Schools from the AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force

American Federation of Teachers. A Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities

National Education Association. School Crisis Guide

Academics

Minnesota Department of Education

Guidance for Minnesota Public Schools: 2020-21 School Year Planning
Minnesota Distance Teaching and Learning Implementation Guidance
Special Education COVID-19 Resources

Minnesota Department of Health. COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs

U.S. Department of Education
Providing Services to English Learners during the COVID-19 Outbreak
Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 While Serving Migratory Children
Protecting Student Privacy FAQ
Online Education and Website Accessibility for Students with Disabilities

National School Boards Association. Navigating Virtual Education with Calm, Connectedness, and Compassion

National Assn. of School Psychologists. U.S. Department of Education Guidance for IDEA Service Delivery FAQ for School Psychologists

Texas Education Assn. Logistical Considerations for Paper-based Packet Pick-up to Mitigate Public Health Risks

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).: Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open

Minnesota Department of Education. Use of School Buildings for Technical Instruction

Association for Career & Technical Education. High-Quality CTE: Planning for a COVID-19-Impacted School Year

Cleaning

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities and COVID-19
COVID-19. Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility: Everyday Steps, Steps When Someone is Sick, and Considerations for Employers
Recommendations for Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities
How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu

Association of Physical Plant Administrators (APPA). COVID-19 Resources and Guidelines

Environmental Protection Agency. Disinfectants for Use Against COVID-19.

Communications

U.S. Department of Education. Managing Emergency Communications, Alerts, and Warnings /Notifications

Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication Resources
COVID-19 Communication Resources (Spanish)

Facilities

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation

Minnesota Department of Education. Strategies for Acquiring and Effectively Using Technology

ENA. Education Network Security Checklist (Technology)

ASHRAE. COVID-19 Preparedness Resources (HVAC systems)

Alliance for Excellent Education. Future Ready Framework (Technology)

Minnesota Stay Safe Guidance for Gyms, Studios, & Fitness Centers

Minnesota Department of Health

Reopening of Public Swimming Pool and Aquatic Facilities

Playground Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs

Minnesota Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment

Fiscal

Minnesota Department of Education.

CARES Act Funding Information

Financial Management

Use of Federal Education Funds during the COVID-19 Emergency

Minnesota Association of School Business Officials (MASBO).

COVID-19 Resources Community

U.S. Department of Labor. OSHA Safety Data Sheets

Food Service and Emergency Food

Minnesota Department of Education. Food and Nutrition COVID-19 Resources

U.S. Department of Agriculture. Food Service Guidelines in Response to COVID-19

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Food and Coronavirus Disease 2019

Minnesota Department of Human Services. COVID-19 Emergency Food Support

School Nutrition Association. Thought Starters on Reopening Schools for SY2020-21

Governance

Minnesota School Boards Association
COVID-19 Information and Resources
Leader Newsletter
Standards for School Board Leadership

Health and Safety

Minnesota Department of Health
Coronavirus Resource Page
COVID-19 Resources for Schools
COVID-19 Guidance for Schools and Child Care
COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Youth, Student, and Child Care Programs
COVID-19 Sports Guidance for Youth and Adults
What to do if an employee has COVID-19
Hand Hygiene Print Materials

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Interim Guidance for Administrators of US K-12 Schools and Child Care Programs
Considerations for Schools
Public Health Information and Resources
How COVID-19 Spreads
How to Protect Yourself
Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19
When and How to Wash Your Hands
Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Workplaces
People Who are at Increased Risk of Severe Illness
Considerations for Youth Sports
COVID-19 Print Resources (signs, posters, FAQs, and more in multiple languages)
COVID-19—If You are Sick or Caring for Someone

Using Telehealth to Expand Access to Essential Health Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic

American Academy of Pediatrics. COVID-19 and Healthy Children

School Nurse Organization of Minnesota. COVID-19 Toolkit for MN School Nurses

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Guidance on Returning to Work

Mayo Clinic. COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool

Johns Hopkins. COVID-19 Self-Checker

Minnesota COVID-19 Response. COVID-19 Testing Locations

Marsh & McLennan. Returning People to the Workplace Safely: A Practical Guide for Managing COVID-19

World Health Organization. Q & A on COVID-19

National Association of School Nurses. Coronavirus Disease 2019 Resources

FEMA. Continuity Plan Template & Instructions for Non-Federal Entities and Community-Based Organizations

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. School Safety

Mental, Social, and Emotional Health

Minnesota COVID-19 Response. Mental Health Support

Minnesota Department of Education. Social and Emotional Health Implementation Guidance

National Center for School Mental Health: COVID-19 Resources

National Association of School Psychologists
Helping Children Cope with Changes Resulting from COVID-19
Preparing for a Pandemic Illness: Guidelines for School Administrators and School Crisis Response Teams
Responding to COVID-19: Brief Action Steps for School Crisis Response Teams
Countering Coronavirus Stigma and Racism: Tips for Teachers and Other Educators
Virtual Service Delivery in Response to COVID-19 Disruptions

American School Counselor Association (ASCA).
School Reentry Considerations: Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19
School Counseling During COVID-19

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). Leveraging the Power of Social and Emotional Learning as You Prepare to Reopen and Renew Your School Community

Minnesota Department of Health. Resources in the Wake of Community Trauma and Beyond

Minnesota Department of Education. How to Talk About Traumatic Events and Tragedies

Child Welfare Information Gateway. Resources on Trauma for Caregivers and Families

Coalition to Support Grieving Students. Grief Support Modules for School Personnel

Teaching Tolerance. Teaching About Race, Racism and Police Violence

Wilder Foundation. Racial Equity Resource Directory

Housing

Minnesota Housing. COVID-19 and Minnesota Housing

Human Resources

COVID-19
Minnesota Department of Labor: Updates Related to COVID-19

U.S. Department of Labor.
COVID-19 and the American Workplace
COVID-19 & the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Questions & Answers
Fact Sheet #70: Furloughs & Other Reductions in Pay & Hours Worked Issues
COVID-19 FAQs for Participants & Beneficiaries
Continuation of Health Coverage (COBRA)

Minnesota Employer Preparedness Plan Requirements and Checklist

Minnesota Department of Health.
> [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19](#)
> [COBRA & How to Continue Your Health Care Coverage](#)
> [COVID-19 Employee Screening and Testing Recommendations by Industry](#)
> [COVID-19 and When to Return to Work](#)

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. [Coronavirus Disease-2019](#)

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
> [Guidance on Returning to Work](#)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC).
> [Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace & the ADA](#)
> [COVID-19 & the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, & Other EEO Laws](#)

Minnesota Department of Human Rights. [COVID-19 & Civil Rights](#)

Mayo Clinic. [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Johns Hopkins. [COVID-19 Self-Checker](#)

Job Accommodation Network (JAN). [Accommodation & Compliance: COVID-19](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)

Minnesota Management and Budget. [Local Government Pay Equity](#)

Families First Coronavirus Recovery Act (FFCRA)

[FFCRA Notice Poster Available in Multiple Languages](#)

[FFCRA Notice Poster FAQs](#)

[FFCRA Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[FFCRA Questions & Answers](#)

[COVID-19-Related Tax Credits for Required Paid Leave FAQs](#)

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

FMLA: General Guidance

The Employer's Guide to FMLA

COVID-19 & the FMLA Questions & Answers

ADA Leave Beyond FMLA

Minnesota Employment Law Chapter

Family & Medical Leave Act FAQs

Unemployment Insurance

U.S. Department of Labor. Unemployment Notice (UIPL 1-20)

Minnesota Unemployment Insurance

COVID-19 Information for Workers (MN Unemployment Insurance)

COVID-19 Information for Workers (MN Unemployment Insurance)

Report Unemployment Insurance Fraud

Transportation

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Cleaning and Disinfection for Nonemergency Transport Vehicles

National Association for Pupil Transportation. COVID-19 Resources