

TEA



**Guidebook for
Back to School
Planning**



Disclaimer

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving on a daily basis. This document is not and is not intended to: (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response. As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take, using this document as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.

Outline



Guidebook overview and purpose



Leadership and planning considerations



Recommended action steps

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Guidebook overview

Purpose of this guidebook

This guidebook **aims to**:

- Assist LEAs in taking a data-driven approach to assessing their local context and engaging with stakeholders to identify the back-to-school scenario aligned to community needs and requirements of the state
- Assist LEAs in selecting/designing an informed model(s) for their context, and the subsequent development of detailed academic and operational plans for SY20-21
- Emphasize specific requirements and considerations by functional area relevant to planning

This guidebook **is not**:

- A set of requirements or mandates for LEAs
- Legal/medical advice or consultation
- An inclusive list of all actions or considerations an LEA may take in response to the COVID-19 crisis or its back-to-school planning

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Leadership and planning

An initial action in planning for school re-opening is to assemble a **dedicated task force**. This group of leaders will act as the primary unit to:

- Engage various stakeholders
- Methodically evaluate their current circumstances and needs of their community
- Set up the structures for the school system in the fall
- Establish key communication channels

In some LEAs, the existing leadership team may form the basis of this task force; in others, school leaders, educators, family members and community stakeholders may also be involved

Action items:

**1. Assemble a
“School Reopening” Task
Force at the LEA level**

**2. Create overarching
roadmap for school
re-opening**

**3. Monitor progress on
roadmap development and
implementation**



Leadership and planning

1. Assemble a “School Reopening” Task Force at the LEA level

2. Create overarching roadmap for school re-opening

3. Monitor progress on roadmap development and implementation

- Consider appropriate composition of your LEA’s task force
 - LEAs are encouraged to include civic and community leaders, parent representatives and other relevant stakeholders as task force members / participants
- Designate a point person on the School Re-opening Task Force for each aspect of school reopening (i.e. academics, communications, health and safety, facilities / operations, local health agency point person etc.)
 - It is important that this group understand state guidance related to public health, on-campus instructional requirements, and funding methods.
- Designate a Task Force Coordinator to serve as the project manager so that efforts are coordinated across functional leads and neither duplicative nor contradictory



Leadership and planning

1. Assemble a
“School Reopening” Task
Force at the LEA level

2. Create overarching
roadmap for school
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3. Monitor progress on
roadmap development and
implementation

- Determine guiding principles, working norms, decision-making frameworks, and meeting cadence
 - *See following page for sample guiding principles for a strong start to SY20-21*
- Define and establish metrics for staff and student outcomes as well as school performance
 - This includes linking any monitoring mechanisms to the progress monitoring measures that are included in your required reading, math, and College, Career and Military Readiness (CCMR) goals under HB3
- Develop a timeline for communication with various stakeholders
 - Create communication plan/templates; provide support to schools for implementation.
- Determine which policies may require adjustments for continued remote learning or long-term closures during SY20-21 (e.g., waivers, enrollments, transfers, grading, attendance, hiring, etc.)
- Develop protocols for schools to transition between in-person, hybrid, and fully remote scenarios depending on current state and local public health circumstances.

Sample guiding principles for consideration

Sample priorities – *LEAs should develop locally-appropriate guiding principles*

- **Protect the health** of all students and staff and incorporate public health guidance
- **Incorporate feedback and ideas** from stakeholders including students, families, educators, and staff
- **Identify and meet the needs of students**, especially those most in need of additional support (e.g., younger learners, at-risk students, special education students, English learners, those without technology access, and those in key transition years, among others)
- Implement **high-quality curriculum** and instructional delivery mechanisms that can transition between on-campus, hybrid and remote instruction for all students
- Provide **mental health and wellness supports** for students and teachers, whether they are on-campus or remote
- **Build for long-term, sustainable change** in how we “do school.” Seek transformative changes that could persist beyond the current crisis.
- **Assume the need for iteration and improvement** during the course of the school year.



Leadership and planning

1. Assemble a
“School Reopening” Task
Force at the LEA level

2. Create overarching
roadmap for school
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3. Monitor progress on
roadmap development and
implementation

- **Set a timeline and milestones for back-to-school re-opening plan development**
 - Consider finalizing plan four to six weeks before schools open to allow time to solicit feedback and communicate plan to stakeholders
 - Lock in the design of the district and schools two to three weeks before the start of school

- **Regularly collect feedback and revise plan for back-to-school as necessary based on community feedback, local and national health guidance, and other factors such as staffing, budget, etc.**
 - Develop metrics and track progress
 - Reflect after 6 weeks on the transition to back-to-school and make adjustments based on stakeholder feedback and learnings

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Recommended action steps

- Once a School Reopening Task Force is assembled and initial planning considerations are addressed, LEAs can move into more detailed design and action planning
- The **action steps** outlined on the following pages suggest an order of operations recommended by TEA to support a planning process that:
 - Accounts for state requirements, stakeholder preferences and school system constraints
 - Drives the development of school models that are responsive, flexible and enable rigorous instruction for all students regardless of setting
 - Addresses the wide range of operational considerations that differ for SY20-21
 - Accounts for the need to iterate and continuously improve over SY20-21

Recommended action steps

- 1 Understand student learning needs, especially special populations, and family preferences
- 2 Consider organizational capacity and operational constraints
- 3 Design for instructional quality, coherence and continuity
- 4 Determine and develop the set of school models that meet the community needs
- 5 Address district-wide core operational considerations
- 6 Develop a plan to review, iterate, and continuously improve during SY20-21

1

Understand student learning needs, especially students with special needs

Student academic needs



Overview

Gather and assess school performance data

- Use available assessment data to identify specific schools that struggled more than others with maintaining student learning

Gather and assess student performance

- Use available assessment data to identify specific grade level, subject areas, and student groups that are in most need of additional academic support
- Deeply analyze data related to special populations to identify trends and needs



Considerations

- What percentage of students fall into high-needs categories? (e.g. – special education, EL, At-Risk, below grade-level etc.)
- How do performance or progress metrics vary across schools/grades/student groups?
- Which schools, grade levels or student groups seemed to be best served by different modes of remote instruction (synchronous, asynchronous)?
- Which students can benefit most from on-campus instruction?
- Which student groups need the most academic support and how can you provide it?

Family preferences for future learning



Overview

Understand how families experienced Spring 2020

- Survey families to understand their experience with spring 2020 learning

Understand family preferences for school for SY20-21

- Over the remaining weeks survey families to better understand their schooling needs and preferences for SY20-21



Considerations

- What were the differences in experiences of different student groups?
- How do future preferences differ by student group, campus, or feeder pattern?
- How does campus safety and hygiene affect family preferences for on-campus instruction?
- Which families prefer or require on-campus instruction?
- Do families prefer synchronous or asynchronous remote instruction?



Resources

[TEA Survey Resource](#)

Recommended action steps

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Health and safety guidance and constraints



Overview

Read and understand available public health guidance and assess community health data

- LEAs should establish regular communication with local public health entities to assess status of COVID-19 in the local community
- LEAs should review state, local and federal health guidance



Considerations

Develop a plan for on-campus activities and instruction

- Determine district policies and procedures to Prevent, Respond to, and Mitigate COVID-19 spread, consistent with public health guidance.
- Post plan on district website
- Develop communications to share policies with district stakeholders, including parents, teachers and staff, as well as other local entities.
- Work closely with local public health entities to ensure that they are prepared to collaborate in the event Response activities are needed.



Resources

Public Health Operational Guidebooks coming soon

Technology access



Overview

Assess data on device access/deployment and connectivity for families

- Identify where gaps may have existed this spring, and implications for student learning in a hybrid or fully remote model in SY20-21
- Conduct an inventory of technology and devices; plan for device inventory, repair, and maintenance
- Develop plan for device distribution for fall and the rest of SY20-21
- Assess IT support system and gaps

More details found in Action Step 6: Technology



Considerations

- What percent of your families required support for access to device(s) or connectivity in the spring?
- How did your LEA provide IT services to students and educators who needed support?
- What additional technology needs does your LEA foresee if remote learning is required in SY20-21?
- How has assistive technology for students with disabilities been considered in planning?
- Are there investments that your LEA would need to make to support a more successful remote learning experience for students?



Resources

[TEA Survey Resource](#)

[TEA Reflection Tool](#)

Talent



Overview

Understand your talent and staffing pool circumstances

- Analyze your staff capacity using the 2x2 on the next slide

Identify staffing and staff deployment solutions

- Identify additional staff who can, if need be, be trained and deploying in support of instruction or intervention
- Identify educator training needs



Considerations

Leverage data collected via the educator survey and reflection resources to understand staffing constraints and opportunities *(See next slide)*

- Examine your staffing constraints to determine who is able to teach on-campus. Consider how many educators can / want to work on-campus, how many educators prefer to continue as remote instructors, and how many educators may be unable to teach on-campus due to health concerns
- Assess which educators may be better suited to teach in each modality (e.g., on-campus, remote and within remote instruction asynchronous or synchronous), such as who was most effective teaching remote and who better serves students on-campus



Resources

- [TEA Survey Resource](#)

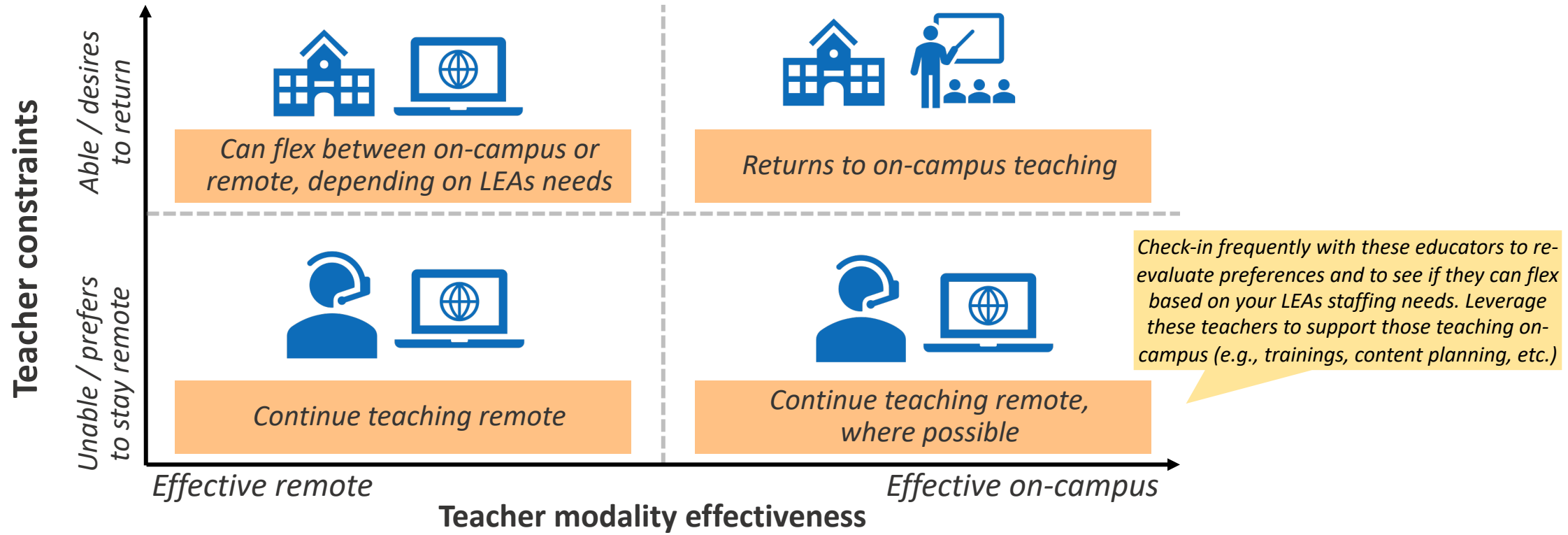
- [TEA Reflection Tool](#)

2

Consider organizational capacity and operational constraints

Talent

- Determine which of your educators fall into each quadrant, use the data to inform staff deployment and school model development



Space



Overview

Understand capacity constraints

- Review the footprint of existing school buildings to assess the impact of public health requirements or family preference on the allowable number of individuals (students, teachers, and staff) in each room
- Assess size and opportunity to use non-traditional spaces as classrooms when available (i.e. underutilized secondary buildings, churches, community centers)
- Identify specific space and building needs for students with disabilities or special needs
- Prepare for contingency plans in the event public health guidance changes



Considerations

Key datapoints to collect:

- How many buildings are available?
- How much square footage is available?
- How many classrooms do you have?

Key questions to address as an LEA:

- How might your LEA best utilize available space to meet the unique needs of your students and communities?
- How might your LEA consider the needs of students with specific disabilities who require access to particular physical equipment/space?
- What schedule / space adaptations might your LEA consider to improve the safety of students and staff in the fall (e.g., additional hand-washing stations, one-way hallways, etc.)?



Resources

[TEA Survey Resource](#)

[TEA Reflection Tool](#)

Recommended action steps

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3

Design for instructional quality, coherence and continuity



Recommendation

- To ensure a consistent and high-quality learning experience, despite the challenging circumstances LEAs, should address three key issues:

1

High-quality instructional materials

TEA recommends that instructional materials be designed for instructional continuity (able to be used on-campus and remote)

2

Diagnostics and student progress monitoring

TEA recommends a consistent method of diagnosing student learning needs and monitoring student progress

3

Build educator capacity

TEA recommends you build educator capacity for delivering instruction in different modes

All designs should prioritize the needs of high need student populations

3 High quality instructional materials



Recommendation

1

High-quality instructional materials

TEA recommends that instructional materials be designed for instructional continuity (able to be used on-campus and remote)

Deploy high-quality instructional materials

- Evaluate all instructional materials to ensure they are providing TEKS-aligned grade level content
- Where possible, and especially in Math and English Language Arts, select instructional materials that can be delivered on-campus or remotely without a break in instructional continuity
- If instructional materials are not designed to be delivered both on-campus and remotely, then quickly develop adaptations that allow for instructional continuity
- Consider different tools and software that can supplement synchronous teacher-led instruction



Resources

www.texasresourcereview.org
www.texaslearning.org

3 High quality instructional materials, designing for students with special needs



Recommendation

Ensure design for all students

1

High-quality instructional materials

TEA recommends that instructional materials be designed for instructional continuity (able to be used on-campus and remote)

- Deliver accommodations as detailed in individual student IEPs or 504s, and or mandated language services for English learners, regardless of the method of instructional delivery (remote synchronous, remote asynchronous, in person, hybrid)
- Provide and connect students in special populations with the relevant resources to access material (e.g. screen magnifiers, adapted keyboards etc.)
- Ensure that staffing decisions appropriately account for supporting the needs of special populations regardless of the scenario that a school or LEA is facing
- Train relevant staff on supporting special needs students in this unique and challenging time

3 Diagnostics and student progress monitoring



Recommendation

2

Diagnostics and student progress monitoring

TEA recommends a consistent method of diagnosing student learning needs and monitoring student progress

Ongoing Student Progress Monitoring

- Use frequent formative assessments to gauge student progress and to adapt curriculum pace to support students
- Use student assessment results (exit tickets, quizzes etc.) to track student progress and adjust
- Consider using curriculum-aligned formative assessments developed by your LEA to correspond to scope and sequence
- As much as possible, ensure this progress monitoring occurs in your Learning Management System

3

Diagnostics and student progress monitoring, design for students with special needs



Recommendation

2

Diagnostics and student progress monitoring

TEA recommends a consistent method of diagnosing student learning needs and monitoring student progress

Ensure design for all students

- Ensure that any diagnostic or related assessment is accessible to all students, including those who may have a disability, such as a visual or auditory impairment, and provide access to any assistive devices needed.
- Monitor student progress in special populations versus the general population for signs of discrepancy in order to course correct by realigning resources
- Maintain strong communication with the families of students in special populations, continuing to gather feedback and to support them and their students



Recommendation

3

Build educator capacity

TEA recommends you build educator capacity for delivering instruction in different modes

Develop educators for the new environment

- Offer immediate and ongoing professional development focused on effective remote instruction, including synchronous, asynchronous, and blended delivery
- Offer professional development on supporting students' mental health and wellness needs upon either a return to school on-campus or remotely, **especially for students with special needs**
- Define the scope and sequence of professional development that provides initial, on-going, and embedded curriculum specific training
- Establish a Professional Learning Community (PLC) or Community of Practice group to provide teachers teaching in different settings with a forum for sharing leading practices and supporting each other

Recommended action steps

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4

Determine and develop the right set of school models

- Once you have analyzed your student needs, organizational capacity, operational constraints, and developed a strong foundation for high quality instruction you will need to determine the set of school options that best meet the needs of your community.
- Those school options will fall into three categories:



On-campus

District develops option for students to participate on-campus instruction
100% of the time



Remote

District develops option for students to participate in remote learning
100% of the time



Hybrid

District develops option for students to participate in an intentionally-designed mix of on-campus and remote learning


4

Districts must provide a fully on-campus option



Requirement

- Districts must guarantee that daily on-campus instruction is available for every family and student who requests it.



On-campus

District develops option for students to participate on-campus instruction 100% of the time

4

Districts must provide additional options



Recommendation

- Once the district has fulfilled the requirement to provide daily on-campus instruction to every family and student who request it, the district can consider additional learning options.



Remote

District develops option for students to participate in remote learning 100% of the time



Hybrid

District develops option for students to participate in an intentionally-designed mix of on-campus and remote learning



Recommendation

First, identify the students who could most benefit from on-campus instruction

- *Students with special needs*
- *Students in early grades (PK-2)*
- *Students with significant learning losses (due to Spring 2020 experience) or learning gaps*
- *Students without reliable access to technology*
- *Students who reported struggling with remote/distance learning during spring 2020*
- *Students in key transition years (6th and 9th grade)*
- *Students whose family members hold jobs that cannot be worked remotely*

Second, encourage all families, but especially those with students listed above, to enroll for daily on-campus instructional options

- *Will specific, low student density schools/wings be necessary to support some of these students given family concerns?*

4 To determine the right set of schools, review data from Action Step 1 and Action Step 2



Recommendation

Third, identify all students who intend to attend daily on-campus instruction

- *As soon as possible, survey families on their preference for school model type, be sure to survey by campus*
- *Two weeks before school begins, ask your parents to register for a specific school model type*
 - *Reminder: districts must make daily on-campus instruction available for every family that requests it. There can be no caps or limits on the number or percentage of students accessing daily on-campus instruction.*
- *When requesting registration ensure the school model (on-campus, remote, hybrid) is clearly described so parents are fully aware of the option they are registering for*

Fourth, consider staff availability for daily on-campus teaching

- *See slide #20 for considerations*

Fifth, consider how many students and staff can be safely accommodated on district campuses

- *This will be dictated by evolving public health guidance from federal, state, and local health authorities*

Ensure your daily on-campus models are developed to be resilient and able

- On-campus models should be developed to ensure personalized learning plans that lead to accelerated student learning
- Resilient on-campus models ensure a mix of synchronous, asynchronous and small group instruction occurs
- Staff are deployed to their strengths, with some teachers specializing in lesson delivery, others as learning guides
- They are powered by high-powered digitally native instructional materials that can be deployed in multiple settings, aligned assessments, and student progress monitoring tools and Learning Management System
- They have extended days and extended years that allow for make-up days, if need be
- They are capable of quickly pivoting to remote learning, if circumstances require it

4

Overview of the dimensions of a resilient on-campus model



Student Population

- **All students** have the option to return to **on-campus learning**



Curriculum & Progress Monitoring

- **Digitally native** instructional materials
- Supplemented by **software designed for blended learning**
- Operationalized by a **Learning Management System**



Academic Delivery

- **Synchronous** instruction delivered by specialized teachers
- **Asynchronous** instruction facilitated by learning coaches
- Small groups and intervention supported by specialists



Schedule

- **Extended year**, affords make-up days
- **Extended day**
- Schools open from 6:30am-4:30pm
- Station rotation within class blocks
- Teachers rotate rooms



Staff Deployment

- **Teachers specialize** in synchronous instruction, asynchronous learning guides, or small group specialists
- Teacher strengths drive student progress



Space Utilization

- Creatively **utilize free spaces** (e.g., foyers, gyms, etc.) as classrooms
- Allows “classes” to be split between 2 rooms, reducing number of students in each space



Culture

- **Personalized learning plans** drive student engagement and interest
- Community will be fostered in student cohorts that are changed every quarter

4

Determine the remaining set of school options that you need to develop



Recommendation

Once districts have ensured that every family requesting daily on-campus instruction, you should turn your attention to considering and possibly developing alternative models:



Remote

District develops option for students to participate in remote learning 100% of the time



Hybrid

District develops option for students to participate in an intentionally-designed mix of on-campus and remote learning



Recommendation

Your survey data should help you determine what percentage of students will opt out of daily on-campus instruction and into full time remote learning or, if you offer it, hybrid learning

- *Even if you have a small percentage of students that opt for remote learning TEA recommends that you develop a remote model to be deployed in the event local circumstances change*

Your organizational capacity analysis should help you determine which teachers are able or desire to teach remotely

- *Within this pool of educators you should seek to identify which teachers are more capable remote instructors and which are better deployed as small group or 1:1 support for students*



Recommendation

The district must answer several first-order questions about the type of remote learning options provided:

1

Will you provide a remote option?

TEA recommends you develop a remote option for the families that request it. You can also enrollment out of boundary students in your remote school.

2

If so, will you provide a single district-wide remote school for all students in the district who indicate they will want fully remote instruction?

TEA recommends you consider a single remote option for the district, which allows you to focus talent and planning.

3

Or will you offer multiple fully remote options?

See the next slide for additional considerations.

The district must answer several first order questions about the type of remote learning options provided:

3

If you offer multiple options, how will you determine those options?

One remote option at every campus?

Affords students familiarity with teachers from zoned school but requires significant demand for it at each campus.

One remote option for each feeder pattern?

May make sense if feeder patterns have aligned curriculum & programming that can be designed to span model types.

One remote option for each specialty school?

If your district has multiple specialty schools (ex. IB), consider remote options to maintain the specialty offering.



Recommendation

Hybrid models are intentionally designed to offer students a mix of on-campus and remote learning experiences.

- *For example, a school that has groups of students on-campus at different times using AB schedules.*

You will need to balance demand for hybrid models with your ability to staff and operationalize such models.

- *Hybrid models have many dimensions and can be difficult to operationalize. Both staffing and curricular choices must be intentionally organized to ensure students can reach mastery in the hybrid setting.*

If you decide to offer a hybrid school model there are several key decisions to be made about the structure of that model:

1

How to group students into different “tracks”?

TEA recommends you consider student academic need in developing the groups.

2

How many tracks and how to structure the rotations?

TEA recommends that at least one of the tracks must include a 5-day a week on-campus option

3

Which hybrid staffing model to use?

TEA recommends you consider using the “split staffing” model described on the next slide

If you decide to offer a hybrid school model there are several key decisions to be made about the structure of that model:

3

Which hybrid staffing model to use?

Split Staffing Model

Students have different schedules for on-campus and remote days, with different educators in each environment

Allows educators to specialize in a delivery method (on-campus or remote). TEA recommends you consider this option for Hybrid models.

Homeroom Model

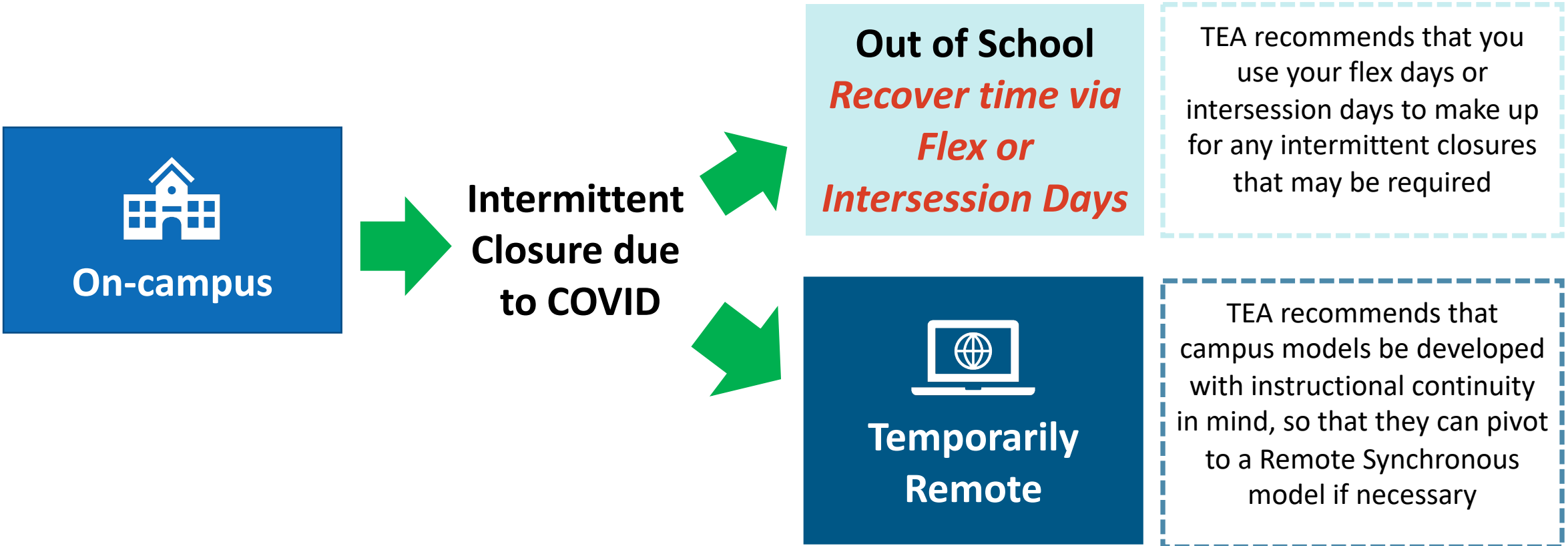
Students stay with the same educator (or team of educators) for their on-campus and remote experiences

More difficult for educators to design and manage but keeps student/teacher connection intact.

4

Some campuses will experience intermittent closures

On-campus instruction may experience intermittent closures requiring remote learning option





Consideration

Regardless of the set of school models and options that the district provides for SY20-21, there is likely to be student movement across models

This is true even for districts that plan to deliver only daily on-campus schooling

- *Every district should be prepared for instructional continuity in the event that 1) there is a COVID case on campus or 2) the local or statewide public health situation requires the intermittent or extended closure of schools*

Understanding the range of student movements can be useful in developing necessary plans for curricular coherence, instructional continuity and other district-wide supports

Students may transition between learning modalities throughout the course of the year

Example student: Alex



- Alex started SY20-21 year on-campus
- During the semester, the school was closed due to a case of COVID-19 detected on-campus, and Alex began remote learning
- Alex's family decided to continue learning remote for the remainder of the semester, though his school reopened

Example student: Diana




- Diana began SY20-21 learning remotely due to family concerns with the local public health situation
- As the semester went on, the local public health situation improved and Diana's family decided to return to on-campus learning
- Diana completed the SY20-21 school year on-campus

4

School design should account for the various scenarios by building a strong foundation

- TEA recommends you strongly consider the ensuring that instructional materials, student progress monitoring, and educator development be consistent



On-campus



Remote



Hybrid

Coherence and usability of instructional materials across models

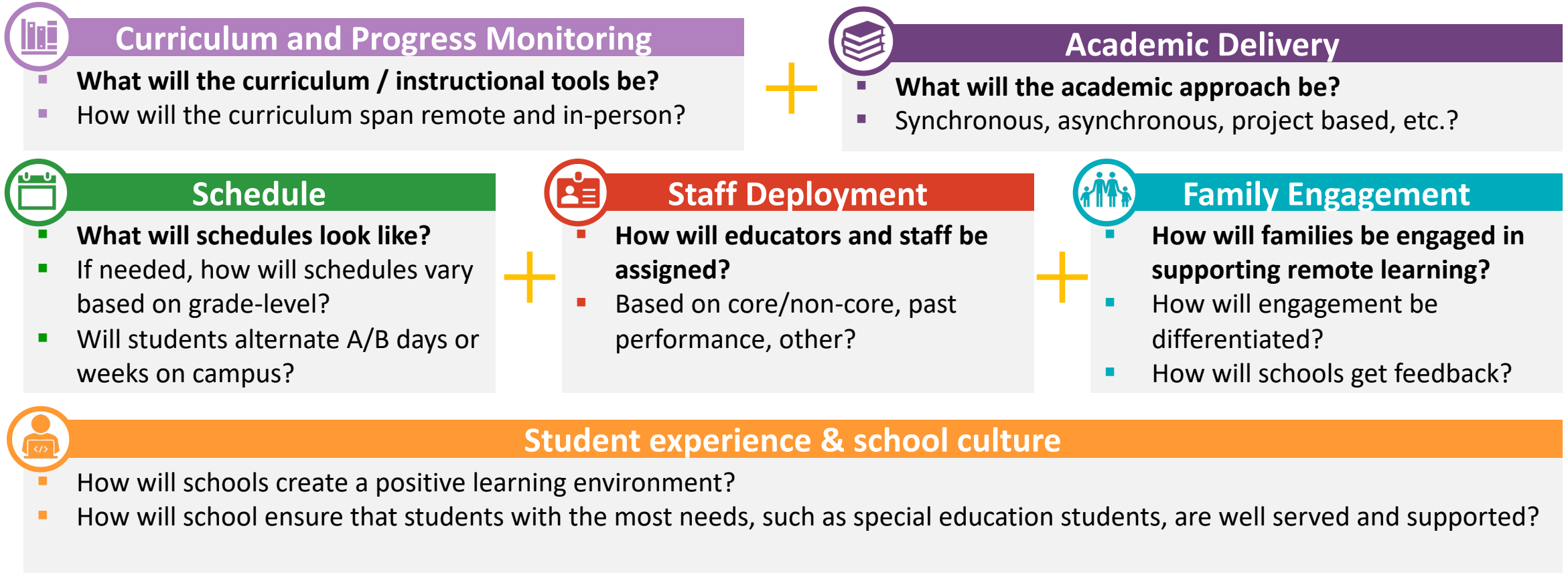
Consistent student progress monitoring across models

Support educator understanding and capacity to deliver across multiple options

4

After determining the mix of models provided, design the specific model

Every school model, whether on-campus, remote, or hybrid must address key design elements:



All designs should prioritize the needs of high need student populations

4

Sample school models

- On Thursday, July 16 TEA will release sample school models that include staffing models, schedules, and key aspects of curriculum and academic delivery. Sample school models will include:

1

Resilient Daily On-Campus Models

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School

These models are developed to be able to pivot to remote learning if circumstances require it

2

Remote Models

- Elementary School PK-2
- Elementary School 3-5
- Middle School, mostly synchronous
- High School, mostly synchronous
- High School, mostly asynchronous

These models are developed to be intentionally remote

3

Hybrid Models

- Elementary School Dual Track, including 5-day on campus
- Middle School Hybrid
- High School Hybrid

These models seeks to ensure as many students as possible attend on campus, even if it is on rotating days

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5

Address district-wide core operational considerations

- In addition to the instructional quality, coherence and continuity recommendations provided in Section 3, there are a set of district-wide processes that districts must plan for:
 1. Special Education
 2. Calendar
 3. Enrollment and registration
 4. Family communications
 5. Technology access
 6. Mental health and wellness
 7. Transportation
 8. Public health



Considerations

Continue convening all regularly scheduled IEP and progress monitoring meetings

- Use time in these meetings to review relevant goals and service delivery in the context of the current educational setting based on the school model and/or instructional delivery model for those specific students.

Document in detail any unavoidable deviations in providing FAPE due to extenuating or changing circumstances resulting from COVID-19, communicate proactively with families regarding such situations and make every reasonable effort to resume service provision.

- Use documentation to make any necessary decisions regarding compensatory services or extended school year options

Understand and account for student privacy requirements under HIPAA, IDEA and FERPA



Resources

- [TEA COVID-19 FAQ: Privacy and FERPA Considerations for Virtual Instruction](#)
- [TEA COVID-19 FAQ: Special Education in Texas](#)
- [US DOE Supplemental Fact Sheet: Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Pre-school, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities](#)
- [CDC Q&A on Providing Services To Children With Disabilities During The Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak](#)



Overview

School closures and the COVID-19 crisis could result in learning losses of up to a full year beyond what normally occurs during summer.



As such, an amended calendar may better support student learning and address learning losses, as well as offer time to teachers adapting their craft for unprecedented times.



Resources

- [2020-2021 Calendar Guidance and FAQs](#)
- [HB3 Additional Days School Year \(ADSY\) FAQs](#)
- [Intersessional Calendar Options for SY20-21](#)
- Example Texas ISD school calendars
 - [Example intersessional calendar with Additional Days School Year \(ADSY\)](#)
 - [East Chamber ISD](#)
 - [Clint ISD \(PK-5\)](#)
 - [Clint ISD \(6-12\)](#)



Considerations

Consider amending your school system's current calendar to account for learning loss, address the need for teacher professional development, and to provide flexibility in the event of a COVID-19 resurgence. This may include:

- Adding additional days that can be flexed for instruction, remediation, and/or teacher PD
- Starting the school year earlier or ending the school year later

Consider leveraging new calendar flexibilities allowed by TEA considering what is possible based on your LEA's agreements with educator and other collective bargaining units

- Assess how an intersessional calendar might support the needs of your community
- Evaluate the Additional Days School Year option for this year, or for future years
- Consider offering additional school days for students who need remediation (e.g., Saturday school)

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Enrollment and Registration



Overview

In order to appropriately plan for students learning modality and enable all families to register, new registration methods and policies may be considered





Considerations

Develop enrollment materials that clearly detail the options available to families

- To the extent the district or school is offering a mix of options between fully remote, hybrid and on-campus, provide enrollment information for each possibility so that families can make informed decisions
- Consider instituting a certain date by which students/families should register for the option they prefer, and the ability to select and move between options throughout the school year

Provide families with clear guidance on enrollment procedures

- Reach out to families, particularly in transition grades (K, 6th, 9th), via multiple channels (mailing, phone calls, email etc.) regarding the enrollment process for SY20-21
- Make sure that up to date enrollment information and FAQs are available via school and district websites as well as on-campus; consider posting visibly in other community spaces

Offer families both in-person and remote enrollment

- In the event that health considerations prevent a family from coming to a school or district office for enrollment, offer a remote enrollment via phone and/or online form **incorporating a mechanism for proof of residency (e.g. digital documents)**



Overview

During this time, when health guidance, news events, and plans are rapidly evolving, it is critical for districts to constantly communicate with their communities.



Effective communication is key in building trust and buy-in from stakeholders, and it can combat the anxiety of uncertainty by offering a sense of clarity. In addition, communication is a two-way street; districts should strive to continually collect community feedback and actively invite others to engage in on-going discussions.



Resources

- [CDC Communication Resources](#)
- [TEA Survey Resource](#)
- [TEA Closure Guidance & Communication](#)
- [TEA Internet Safety: Communication](#)
- [NCDHHS Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#)



Considerations

Develop a communication strategy for families and stakeholders including timeline on which documents to share, the schedule of release, and the appropriate audience, considering:

- Select mechanism(s) for communication:
 - Consider which communication channels are most effective for the community, and for what type of information (e.g. email, phone calls, webinars, video conference, text messages, social media, etc.)
 - Be clear about which channels you will use to share urgent news in the instance that an event such as a resurgence in COVID cases occurs
 - In addition to digital communication tools, consider distributing physical district / school communication flyers along with meal delivery / pick up in a remote/hybrid scenario
 - When communicating health guidance, use or link to information coming directly from reliable sources (official state websites, CDC, etc.)
- Determine frequency of communications:
 - Announce communication timeline to stakeholders so people know when to expect what information
 - Maintain consistent schedule of communication (i.e. weekly community update calls that occur on the same day at the same time)
 - Be conscious not to overwhelm families with information overload; instead, communicate necessary information as clearly and simply as possible



Considerations

Where possible, communicate new processes and/or process changes in advance

- For example, communicate to families your plan for addressing a resurgence in your local area or an infection on a campus

Be mindful of the audience in all communications

- Consider the audience range in all communications (i.e. families with students with disabilities, special needs, at-risk, etc.)
- Make sure to include multi-language / translated versions of key documents for households where English is not the primary language

Collect up-to-date student, teacher, and staff contact information (e.g., phone number, e-mail, address, etc.)



Overview

This crisis has highlighted that technology and internet connectivity are no longer “nice-to-haves,” but are necessities for K-12 education.



Many students, especially those from economically disadvantaged families, may lack access to the devices or internet required for effective distance learning. School districts play a critical role in addressing accessibility barriers and providing students and educators with the technology they need to engage in a hybrid or remote learning environment.



Resources

- [TEA Information Technology FAQ](#)
- [TEA Guidance to Districts on Providing Internet to Students](#)
- [TEA FERPA and Virtual Learning](#)
- [TEA E-Rate Program](#)
(Classroom Connectivity project)
- [Opportunity Labs Initiative Return to School Roadmap – “Technology”](#)
- [TEA Technology Standards](#)
- [Additional Technology Resources](#)



Considerations

Provide all students and staff with access to the necessary devices based on your LEA's back to school scenario, and accounting for the possibility of a transition to fully remote learning

- Assess feedback from stakeholder surveys on accessibility
- If there are still gaps in device access across student population:
 - Determine appropriate number of new devices needed to support a remote learning scenario, accounting for idle devices in school facilities that may be distributed
 - Create a plan to distribute and return devices
 - Plan should include bagging, transportation, sanitizing, maintenance, and inventory
- Select an issue-tracking approach and establish a process to return devices
- Create a plan for device monitoring along with use policies



Considerations

Provide students and staff access to broadband connectivity as needed

- If there are still gaps in Wi-Fi access:
 - Look into partnerships with broadband Wi-Fi providers
 - Review available TEA resources for broadband
- Establish hotspots and communicate with families on how to connect
 - Consider purchasing or partnering with providers to deploy hotspots to families in hard-to-reach areas or where full connectivity infrastructure does not currently exist
 - If relevant, post information on your LEA's website about how families can access the internet (for example: district-provided wi-fi access or mobile hotspots, any home device or hotspot programs your LEA has organized)



Considerations

Organize and centralize software required for instruction

- Aim to create one location to house communication channels, family portals, course-required applications, etc. In many LEAs, a learning management system (LMS) may be able to provide a centralized, single sign-on destination for students, educators and parent to access relevant information
- Consider leveraging Texas Home Learning 3.0 curriculum and/or learning resources if your LEA's curriculum design is not sufficiently flexible to support a hybrid learning model or transition to remote learning if required (*See Academics > Curriculum and content for additional information*)



Considerations

Review and implement data security and privacy measures

- Consider implementing a single sign on for ease of use for families and staff
- Develop and/or reinforce Acceptable Use (AUP) and Responsible Use (RUP) policies

Establish systems for students, families and staff to access IT support both for training and for issues that arise

- Deliver IT support to families, staff, and remote educators, accounting for equity considerations as it relates to access to devices and internet
 - If you have not already, establish IT help desk for schools
- Determine training needs for technology tools
- Create self-help videos / tutorials and post on centralized resource website



Overview

Our nation has suffered collective trauma due to events of this spring and summer, related to the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, and racial injustice. Many students, families, and communities experienced loss, disruption, and uncertainty.



LEAs have an increasing responsibility to address the needs of the whole child, especially their mental health and wellness, in order to support students in making educational gains this fall and make up for lost learning time. In addition, we must account for the well-being of educators and staff who, likewise, have experienced challenges and hardship during this time.



Resources

- [TEA Remote Counseling and Student Support Services](#)
- [TEA Mental & Behavioral Health Support Resources](#)



Considerations

Provide teachers and staff with on-going training on school re-entry, grief, and trauma identification (in order to refer students to mental health services)

Create clear protocols for staff to report trauma to relevant officials

- Offer a hotline or office hours with counselors, social workers, psychologists, and/or teachers where students can get help or speak with an adult
- Check-in with educators and staff to determine their mental health needs and work with Human Resources / Employee Assistance to identify appropriate supports needed

Increase support staff including school counselors, social workers, and school psychologists needed to support students' well-being

- Consider the need to hire additional social workers, psychologists, nurses, and counselors



Considerations

Communicate mental health services to families and the community, particularly the highest needs families

- Provide telehealth / tele-counseling services for those remote in-part or in-whole

Build mental health programming into the curriculum

- Implement a character development program attending to mental health and social skills and/or whole child programming that connects academics to character
- Create consistent opportunities for students to build school culture
- Consider planning school spirit events, regardless of re-opening scenario



Considerations

If the district decides to provide hybrid schools of choice (not at every campus) then the district will need to consider developing new bus routes

- Evaluate placement of any hybrid schools of choice creating them as central to the student population opting into these models as possible

To further decrease density of students on buses consider district and campus campaigns for multi-modal transportation:

- Walk to school
- Bike to school
- Family drop off



Resources

Two resources coming soon:

- Public Health Procedures and Communications Guide
- Public Health Planning Exercises

The situation surrounding COVID-19 is dynamic and rapidly evolving on a daily basis. This document is not and is not intended to: (i) constitute medical or safety advice, nor be a substitute for the same; nor (ii) be seen as a formal endorsement or recommendation of a particular response. As such you are advised to make your own assessment as to the appropriate course of action to take, using this document as guidance. Please carefully consider local laws and guidance in your area, particularly the most recent advice issued by your local (and national) health authorities, before making any decision.

Recommended action steps

- 1 Understand student learning needs, especially special populations, and family preferences
- 2 Consider organizational capacity and operational constraints
- 3 Design for instructional quality, coherence and continuity
- 4 Determine and develop the set of school models that meet the community needs
- 5 Address district-wide core operational considerations
- 6 Develop a plan to review, iterate, and continuously improve during SY20-21

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Develop a plan to review, iterate, and continuously improve during SY20-21



- It's important to plan now for evaluating early and often in SY20-21
- TEA recommends that LEAs conduct this process at the 6 and 12-week marks

**Survey students
/ families**

Consider asking student/families both qualitatively and quantitatively,

- How their experience has been with regards to content, instructional delivery, community/teacher engagement, mental health and well-being, and plans for learning location going forward

Survey teachers

Consider asking teachers both qualitatively and quantitatively,

- What challenges/successes they've faced in their current teaching environment, what professional development resources would be helpful, where they are experiencing hardship connecting with / engaging students, what their plans are for teaching location going forward

**Continuously
offer feedback
mechanisms**

- In addition to surveys, consider offering a hotline, web forum, and/or other feedback mechanisms for stakeholders
- Ensure that each family is contacted by staff at least once per six week period to assess their current needs and desires

Collect data

Collect data to inform plans going forward. This data may include, but is not limited to:

- Student performance, by and across campuses
- Student engagement, by and across campuses
- Local public health statistics (e.g., confirmed cases of COVID-19, deaths due to COVID-19, etc.)
- Technology access and needs
- Transportation usage
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), environmental sanitation, and hygiene supply use and needs
- Staffing vacancies or gaps

Review data

- Consolidate survey and other data
- Identify trends, needs, and gaps

Collect data

Deeply examine instructional quality, coherence and continuity of school models:

- Are instructional materials rigorous and challenging students?
- Are instructional materials designed to facilitate continuity between different education settings (on-campus and remote)?
- Do instructional materials require upgrading? If so, which grades and subjects?
- What additional development and support do educators need?

Review data

- Consolidate survey data
- Consolidate observation data (from classroom observations, whether on-campus or virtual)



Academic Delivery

- How are your school models – whether on-campus, remote or hybrid – meeting the needs of all students?
- How is the academic delivery model – whether synchronous, asynchronous or blended – meeting the needs of all students?



Curriculum & Progress Monitoring

- How are students progressing across TEKS with the current curriculum?
- Does the curriculum effectively transition across learning modalities (e.g., remote vs. on-campus)?



Schedule

- What adaptations can be made to the schedule to account for student learning losses?
 - To provide time for teachers to sufficiently plan?
 - To offer 1-on-1 and/or small group support to students?



Staff Deployment

- Are you leveraging your teachers to play to their strengths?
- Do all students have staff support / access?
- What trainings might educators benefit from?



Family Engagement

- What current supports are you providing to families? Do families find these sufficient / insufficient?
- What other supports would families benefit from?
- How are you addressing the needs of the whole child?

Leverage data and reflections to adapt and improve your LEAs and school strategies across these dimensions to support students and families

TEA

**STRONG
START**

2020-21

Thank you

