Learning Over Logistics

Initial Planning Framework for Reopening Schools

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Purpose

The overarching hope and general educational recommendation of this advisory group is for the return to in-person learning. The intention of this document is to **provide a framework** for conversations and planning. Every district is unique and requires the appropriate autonomy to meet the demands of their given district and community. **This framework is intended to provide key questions from a broad perspective** and allow every district to go as narrow from that point as is appropriate given their opportunities and challenges.

This pandemic has caused an unprecedented disruption to our students and our traditional school delivery system. The full continuation of education has been everyone's priority. Since the pandemic began, school leaders have responded to innovate and transform the delivery of education.

We recognize that the COVID-19 novel coronavirus will remain with us until such time that there is a cure or vaccine. This planning framework is grounded in the belief that all students should be served in-person, where the relationship between teachers, students and families can flourish.

We recognize that with 852 school districts in 102 counties and four health regions per the Restore Illinois Plan, there will be localized needs that differ during this transition from COVID-19 to a post-COVID-19 world. **Flexibility, agility and autonomy are essential to facilitating the most educationally appropriate response given the diversity of Illinois.**

This document was designed collaboratively among the members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators, Illinois Association of School Business Officials, and Illinois Principals Association, with the whole student in mind to address the social, emotional and academic development needs of each student, as well as the operational capacity of our school districts. This document is intended to help school districts develop a strategic plan leveraging the information gleaned through this reflective process. The goal is to have a plan for communication and execution that will allow us to confidently return to school in the fall.

Planning

Our time for preparation is **NOW**. This messaging still holds true as we move from COVID-19 crisis education to preparation for 2020-21 education.

Recommended Priorities:
- Establish a transition team in each district that capitalizes on the perspective and leadership of those staff that represent our various instructional, operational, financial and political lenses within a school district. See IASA Toolkit Planning Reference
- Consider the operational issues of Restore Illinois Phase 3, Phase 4 and Phase 5 (in the absence of a vaccine/treatment) and determine if our schools can responsibly function in person given the various limitations established in guidance from IDPH or ISBE.
- Develop a communication strategy for the uniqueness of each school district and community, given the operational capacity or limitations discovered through this process.
- Ensure that all decisions are made with equity for all student needs, capacites, and circumstances in mind.

Immediate Considerations

Given the ever-changing conditions surrounding this crisis and the lessons learned over the past months, there are immediate considerations as we begin planning for the upcoming school year. These should be helpful in using with your transition team.

Questions for your planning teams to consider when planning for the 2020-2021 school year:
- How do we best promote good health and hygiene habits?
- How do we best communicate and reinforce the need for our students and staff to stay home when they are sick?
- What should cleaning protocols be in our building to minimize the transmission of illness in our buildings?
- What protocols are necessary in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 in our district?
- What are our "return to work/school" protocols?
- What is the position related to our plan of our legal council and our insurance company?

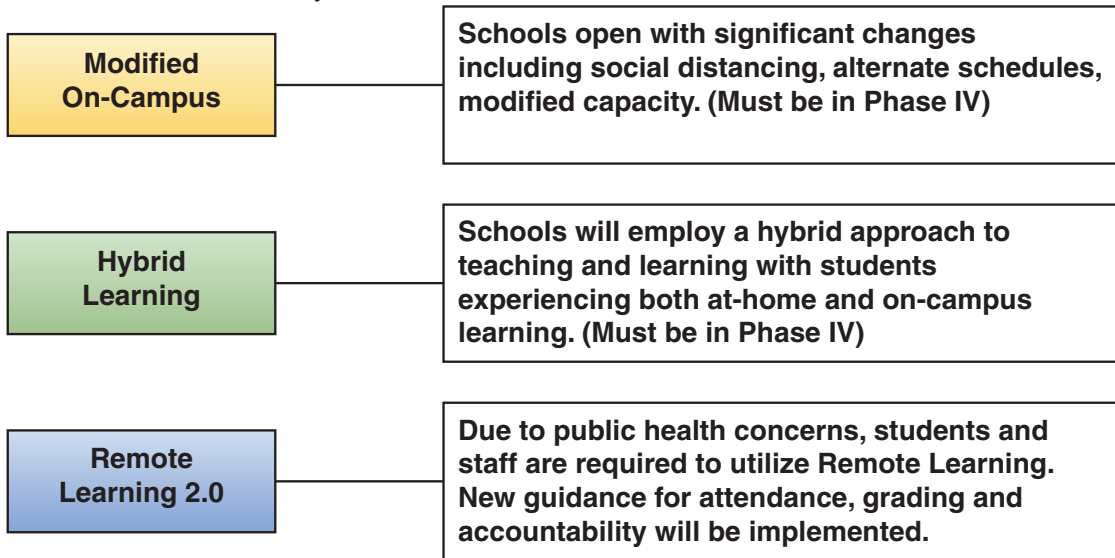**Planning for the Unknown Reality**
- Schools represent data driven decision makers. What data are necessary and what is our best source of data for our school to best advocate for a return to school?
- We need to recognize the fact that there are no "right" answers but rather best answers given the available data in the moment. With each set of critical questions, we should ask:
  — What is our **capacity** to execute given the conditions suggested by the State Agency?
  — **How** will we execute under those expectations?
  — Are these decisions in the **best social, emotional and academic interest** of our students?
  — **Equity**; do our decisions empower all students to access educational opportunities?
- Consider the following categories as you begin to work through operationalizing the various aspects of opening school:
  — Instruction - Regular Education, Special Education
  — Student Services
  — Transportation
  — Food Service
  — Extra & Co-Curricular
  — Personnel/Human Resources
  — Operations and Maintenance
  — Family and Community Engagement
- Understanding expectations and limitations is the first step in this planning process. What is the guidance for Phase 3? What is the guidance for Phase 4? What is the guidance for Phase 5?
  — Given the guidance in each phase consider the primary limiting factors to operationalizing school as we know it.
    ≫ Gathering limitation
    ≫ Social distancing
    ≫ Masks/ facial coverings

Critical Questions to Operationalize a School System

1. **Instruction**
2. **Student Services**
3. **Transportation**
4. **Food Service**
5. **Extra & Co-Curricular**
6. **Personnel/Human Resources**
7. **Operations and Maintenance**
8. **Family and Community Engagement**

1. Instruction

- How do we assess the impact of remote learning on student learning from the Spring of 2020?
- What innovations evolved through our remote learning experience that should remain a part of our educational programming going forward?
- How will we ensure equal access to remote learning if necessary?
- What content is most critical to cover essential learning standards?
- Where have professional development needs evolved as a result of our current reality?
- Consider the three potential models of instruction that may exist for SY2020-21, how would you deliver instruction within the given concepts? What if you had to move from one to another in the midst of the school year?

Modified On-Campus	Schools open with significant changes including social distancing, alternate schedules, modified capacity. (Must be in Phase IV)
Hybrid Learning	Schools will employ a hybrid approach to teaching and learning with students experiencing both at-home and on-campus learning. (Must be in Phase IV)
Remote Learning 2.0	Due to public health concerns, students and staff are required to utilize Remote Learning. New guidance for attendance, grading and accountability will be implemented.

- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Regular Education Instruction? Special Education Instruction?

2. Student Services

- How do we assess and address the social, emotional and mental health implications of our students given the challenges created through the COVID-19 experience?
- How do we best serve students if their parents are unwilling to allow them to return to school, or are unable to attend because of medical risk factors?
- Are there unique family services required to respond to the economic implications created through the COVID-19 experience?
- Do new protocols need to be developed for students reporting as ill to the office/nurse? Prior to being at school and when already at school?

- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Student Services?

3. Transportation
- What is our capacity to provide transportation given any health and safety restrictions established by IDPH?
- What is our, or our transportation provider's, ability to staff our reopening design for transportation to start the school year?
- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Transportation?

4. Food Services
- Consider the recommended restrictions:
  — Where is the best place for us to serve student meals?
    ≫ What should meal choice be given that decision?
    ≫ Are there any food safety (allergy) issues given that decision?
    ≫ What do cleaning protocols need to be given that decision?
- Are there any changes in process or procedures needed to accommodate changing meal times or distribution of meals?
- Are there implications to our free and reduced students given our solution?
- Are there contractual implications for third parties providers given our solution?
- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Food Service?

5. Extra and Co-Curricular
- How are we able to train, practice, rehearse, compete?
- If restrictions are placed on attendance at events, how will we communicate those restrictions and how will we prioritize attendance?
- How will we handle the use and access of our facilities to outside groups?
- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Extra/Co-Curricular Activities?

6. Personnel/Human Resources
- What professional development will be necessary for a new staff member to start the year in this environment?
- What change in process and procedures training will need to be shared with all staff to start the new school year?
- How will we create and maintain a positive culture among staff and students through remote, hybrid or in-person learning?
- How are we going to process the reporting of illnesses?
- How are the social-emotional needs of our staff best addressed?
- What implications exist within the Collective Bargaining Agreement?
- What implications exist pertaining to when staff members are unable to return to school because of conditions related to COVID-19 virus vulnerability?

- What challenges exist related to our ability to find substitute teachers?
- How do we communicate/train external service providers including substitutes to ensure they understand our procedures in this environment?
- What role do schools play in contact tracing illness?
- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Personnel/Human Resources?

7. Operations and Maintenance
- Personal Protective Equipment:
  — What PPE is necessary?
  — Who will be required to wear PPE?
  — What will accountability look like?
  — Who is responsible to provide PPE?
- How do we manage access by vendors, guests and guardians to our schools buildings?
- How will we manage the flow of adults and students in, out and within the building before, during and after the school day?
- What protocols will be implemented as people enter buildings?
- What should cleaning protocols be in our building to minimize the transmission of illness in our buildings?
- How will our decisions affect emergency response drills?
- After we learn what we "can" or "should" do - is this reasonable, practical, doable in our local setting?
- What regulatory relief is necessary for our district to operationalize in the area of Operations and Maintenance?

8. Family and Community Engagement
- Consider communication, partnership, and access to buildings with these stakeholder groups (this category will vary widely throughout the state)
  — Parent & Community Volunteers
  — Social Service Agencies
  — Career Centers
  — Dual Enrollment at Community Colleges
  — Student Teachers and Observers
  — Student Internships/Mentors
  — College/Military Recruiterss
  — Community and Business Leaders
  — Faith Leaders

In addition, the state's Restore Illinois document provides overarching guidance and a broad framework for the "reopening" of the state and a return to pre-COVID-19 functions. The ISBE Remote Learning Recommendations and Parts one, two and three of ISBE/IDPH Transition Guidance shall support and guide us prior to the reopening of schools in the fall.

Again, this document is intended to provide guidance on how to get started with planning for the 2020-21 school year. IASA, IASBO and IPA remain committed to supporting school leaders and will provide additional updates through the transition.

COVID-19 Resources

Find more resources and guidance to help you navigate COVID-19 within your district.

IPA Resources

https://ilprincipals.org/resources/covid-resources/

Illinois ASBO Resources

https://www.iasbo.org/tools/covid19

IASA Illinois Schools Step Up Toolkit

https://www.iasaedu.org/

ISBE Resources

https://www.isbe.net/Pages/covid19.aspx