

A toolkit to assess learning changes after spring 2020 COVID-19 school closures

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Midwest created a toolkit providing districts with a step-by-step guide to assess learning changes after the suspension of in-person learning in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Who should use this toolkit?

The toolkit was designed for use by district teams conducting district-level assessments with varying levels of capacity to collect data and conduct analysis, including those with

- ▶ limited access to student testing data;
- ▶ limited capacity to conduct complex quantitative analyses;
- ▶ questions that can be answered with testing and administrative data; and
- ▶ questions about the needs and experiences of students, families, and district staff that can be answered with qualitative methods such as surveys and focus groups.

What does this toolkit provide?

The toolkit contains five modules designed to walk districts through the steps needed for analysis, data collection, and planning for next steps.

MODULE 1 guides districts in developing and defining appropriate, specific, and answerable guiding questions (research questions). It facilitates structured discussions about the next steps to gather data and conduct analyses.

MODULE 2 is designed for districts with appropriate research questions, data, and the capacity to conduct a quantitative analysis of learning changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This module walks districts through cataloging and assessing their data quality and capacity, as well as preparing for a quantitative analysis of learning changes.

MODULE 3 is designed for districts that complete module 2 and determine that they have sufficient high-quality data to conduct a quantitative analysis of learning changes. This module walks districts through deciding on an analytical approach and interpreting quantitative results.

MODULE 4 can be used independently or as a complement to modules 1-3. This module is appropriate for districts that want to understand needs and experiences or expand their understanding of quantitative results. It outlines considerations and best practices for new data collection activities, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

MODULE 5 is intended to be used by all districts as a last step in their investigation into post-COVID-19 pandemic learning changes. Module 5 includes developing additional research questions for future investigation, developing a dissemination plan, and planning for seeking out new resources.

The toolkit also provides

- ▶ guidelines for structured team discussions within each module,
- ▶ corresponding workbooks for users to record work and guide decisionmaking,
- ▶ a decision tree to aid districts in deciding next steps as they progress through the toolkit, and
- ▶ additional Institute of Education Sciences (IES) resources related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Where to access the toolkit and other resources

The toolkit is accessible to any district or school on the IES website. Visit the [Toolkit for Assessing Learning Changes After Spring 2020 COVID-19 School Closures](#) to access the toolkit along with a recording of a 3-hour virtual training session with REL Midwest providing detailed instructions on the use of the toolkit.

About REL Midwest

REL Midwest is part of a network of 10 regional educational laboratories funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. REL Midwest works in partnership with practitioners in seven Midwest states to conduct applied research and provide training, coaching, and technical support to create a more evidence-based education system. Visit the REL Midwest website at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/midwest/default.aspx> to learn more.