

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

What are some examples of guidance for school reopening?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

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As districts prepare for possible school reopening in the Fall, several states, agencies, and organizations are providing guidance or organizing reopening task forces.

How are states and territories in the REL Northeast & Islands region preparing for school reopening?

Many states or territories have convened task forces to address school reopening or have released preliminary guidance.

State or territory	Task force or guidance	Stakeholders involved	Dissemination process
Connecticut	Gov. Lamont convened the Reopen Connecticut Advisory Groups , which includes an Education Committee and is discussing criteria and guidelines for schools. The Advisory Group will consult with the Lamont Administration and legislative leadership on reopening. The Education Committee will make recommendations, but districts will be able to make adjustments.	The Education Committee includes representatives from higher education, teachers' unions, and private schools, as well as the Commissioners of Education and the Office of Early Childhood.	There is a Reopen Connecticut page on the CT.gov website with links to guidance. Gov. Lamont also conducts news briefings with updates on COVID-19.
Maine	As described in the Maine Department of Education (DOE) Pending Guidance for Decision Making , the DOE has convened a cadre of 20 school nurses to work with DOE School Nurse Consultant Emily Poland to develop scientifically-based, school-specific guidelines, which will then be reviewed by partner state agencies and shared with the education community. The guidance topics are prioritized in the following order:	School nurses, partner state agencies, Mills Administration	Guidelines will be "shared swiftly with the education community" (from 5/4/20 priority notice from Maine DOE)

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Maine (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation/step up events • Summer programming • Start of school year 2020–2021 <p>Education Commissioner Pender Makin has said she is planning for different reopening scenarios in the fall.</p>		
Massachusetts	<p>Return to School Working Group will develop a K-12 summer and fall restart and recovery plan. This plan will include guidance in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and virtual learning environments • Teaching and learning • Operations and business services • Behavioral health and social and emotional learning 	Return to School Working Group is co-chaired by two SEA staff and includes parents, teachers, superintendents, students, representatives of professional associations, and state public health agencies.	The Return to School Working Group anticipates sharing a draft plan with key stakeholders for feedback before releasing a final document. Members of the public can email comments.
New Hampshire	<p>School Transition Reopening and Redesign Taskforce will provide recommendations to the Governor, the DOE, and local education agencies about the return to school.</p> <p>Return to Schools Facilities Guidance (NH State Emergency Operations Center, posted on NH DOE website)</p>	The taskforce is comprised of 6 workgroups (Instruction, Student Wellness, Operations, Technology, Student Voice, Associations) and is facilitated by the U.S. DOE Region 1 Comprehensive Center. It includes parents, teachers, administrators, students, mental and behavioral health representatives, and representatives of professional associations. The taskforce anticipates hearing from counterparts in Maine, Vermont, and Massachusetts.	The taskforce will complete preliminary summary recommendations by June 30, followed up with more detailed recommendations within 30 days.

State or territory	Task force or guidance	Stakeholders involved	Dissemination process
New York	<p>Gov. Cuomo’s office will release health and safety guidelines in early June for reopening school districts. Districts will submit reopening plans to the state in July, which will be approved or not that month.</p> <p>Gov. Cuomo also convened the Reimagine Education Advisory Council to help districts reimagine schools as they prepare to reopen.</p> <p>The state Board of Regents, Chancellor Rosa, and Interim Education Commissioner Tahoe will name a reopening schools task force the week of June 1. The task force will be broken into 4 regions and is expected to have a final report by mid-July.</p>	<p>The Reimagine Education Advisory Council is comprised of lower and higher education leaders from across the state and will work in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other experts.</p>	<p>Gov. Cuomo will release guidelines in early June. The Board of Regents will have a final report by mid-July.</p>
Puerto Rico	<p>Governor Wanda Vázquez Garced appointed a COVID-19 Medical Task Force, which recommended reopening in stages, with schools proposed for reopening in stage 4.</p>	<p>The Medical Task Force includes representatives from health care, hospitals, and the medical community.</p>	<p>The Task Force has a Facebook page.</p>
Rhode Island	<p>Rhode Island Department of Education released Reimagining RI Education: Fall Reopening Plan Framework</p>	<p>Framework developed by RIDE.</p>	<p>Framework is posted on the COVID-19 page of RIDE’s website and will be updated with additional guidance.</p>
U.S. Virgin Islands	<p>The U.S. Virgin Islands are currently in the Open Doors phase of their phased reopening.</p>		
Vermont	<p>The Vermont Agency of Education (VT AOE) is crafting guidance for reopening schools.</p>	<p>VT AOE is consulting the teachers union, state principals and superintendents association, and VT Department of Health</p>	

What other guidance is available related to planning for school reopening?

Guidance from other states and countries

- [SREB K-12 Education Recovery Task Force](#) “The SREB K-12 Education Recovery Task Force is convening leaders from 16 states to collaborate on strategies for reopening public schools....The group will seek solutions to prepare for a possible COVID-19 resurgence and future emergencies and tackle other key issues, including:
 - Students’ academic growth and any possible learning loss
 - Equity and opportunity for students during and after the crisis
 - Using federal stimulus funds effectively and managing state budget priorities
 - Access to broadband and use of technology”

Includes a link to the [Playbook in Progress](#).

- [Delaware School Resource Hub](#) is developing a [Reentry Leadership Toolkit](#)
- [Reopening Schools in the Context of COVID-19: Health and Safety Guidelines from Other Countries](#)
Learning Policy Institute
“This brief compiles preliminary information on health and safety guidelines from five countries that have continued or reopened schools during the COVID-19 outbreak: China, Denmark, Norway, Singapore, and Taiwan. (See “Selected Countries With Open Schools.”).... The brief focuses on guidelines in three areas: attendance, social distancing, and hygiene and cleaning.” *Includes a table of health and safety practices*

Guidance from federal and international agencies

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Reopening Guidance](#) (see page 45 for guidance related to schools) (May 2020)
“This guidance is meant to supplement the decision tools [see below] CDC released on May 14, 2020. It lists specific practices that employers may find helpful at particular stages of the COVID-19 outbreak. This guidance sets forth a menu of safety measures, from which establishments may choose those that make sense for them in the context of their operations and local community, as well as state and local regulations and directives.... CDC is releasing this interim guidance, laid out in a series of three steps, to inform a gradual scale up of operations. The scope and nature of community mitigation suggested decreases from Step 1 to Step 3. Some amount of community mitigation is necessary across all steps until a vaccine or therapeutic drug becomes widely available.”
- [CDC School Reopening Decision Tree](#) (May, 2020)
“The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.”
- [World Health Organization Key Messages and Actions for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Schools](#) (March 2020) “The purpose of this document is to provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection, and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. The guidance, while specific to countries that have already confirmed the transmission of COVID-19, is still relevant in all other contexts. Education can encourage students to

become advocates for disease prevention and control at home, in school, and in their community by talking to others about how to prevent the spread of viruses. Maintaining safe school operations or reopening schools after a closure requires many considerations but, if done well, can promote public health.”

- Pre-COVID-19 Guidance on responding to infectious diseases
 - [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools \(REMS\) Technical Assistance Center: Recovery Fact Sheet](#)
Four components of recovery:
 - Academics recovery
 - Physical and structural recovery
 - Business functions recovery
 - Social, emotional, and behavioral recovery
 - [U.S. Department of Education Emergency Response and Crisis Management \(ECRM\) Technical Assistance Center: Schools Respond to Infectious Disease](#)
See Step 4: Recovery (disinfection, period of adjustment, mental health issues)

Guidance from organizations and professional associations

- [An Initial Guide to Leveraging the Power of SEL as you Prepare to Reopen and Renew Your School Community](#)
The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
“In this guide, CASEL shares a framework with actionable recommendations to help school leadership teams plan for the SEL needs of all students and adults during the upcoming transition into summer and the beginning of the new school year. While this guidance is written for school leadership teams, states and districts will play critical roles in ensuring schools have the resources, support, and guidance needed to carry out these actions....CASEL is also working with many collaborators to produce comprehensive guidance, scheduled for release in late June, with additional recommendations, resources, and tools to help school leaders support and sustain SEL throughout and beyond the pandemic.”
- [Return to School Roadmap: An Opportunity Labs Initiative](#)
Opportunity Labs
A roadmap of essential actions to help district and school leaders plan and implement a safe, efficient, and equitable return to school. Includes sections organized by topic area (governance, wellness, instruction, postsecondary, facilities, school operations, and technology) addressing actions to “do first,” “do before school opens,” and to do “when schools are open and operating.” The roadmap is meant to be a companion to traditional school opening procedures and public health agency guidance.
- [American Enterprise Institute Blueprint for Back to School](#)
American Enterprise Institute
“Together with a task force of accomplished educational leaders—including former state chiefs, superintendents, federal education officials, and charter network leaders—this report sketches a framework that can help state policymakers, education and community leaders, and federal officials plan appropriately for reopening. As communities and public officials start to think about the problems ahead, states, districts, and schools should consider at least six different buckets of work: school operations, whole child supports, school personnel, academics, distance learning, and other general considerations.”

- [A Plan to Safely Reopen America's Schools and Communities](#)

American Federation of Teachers

“This document provides a roadmap for navigating the next steps. It provides specific guidance for transitioning from lockdowns to other public health tools to limit the transmission of COVID-19. It focuses on reopening school buildings in particular...We expect the plan to evolve and adapt over time.”

Guidance regarding school reopening addresses:

- School-based public health interventions
- School-based public health reorganization
- PPE and sanitization
- Mental health supports for students
- High quality instruction

**Please Note: New guidance continues to be released as more information becomes available. This document may not reflect the latest guidance from states or organizations, but includes what was publicly available on state, state education agency, organization, and news websites as of June 1, 2020.*

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