

**SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES
BEST PRACTICES
CLEARINGHOUSE**

Lessons from the Field: Safely Reopening and Sustaining In-Person Instruction

MARCH 31, 2021




NCSSLE Website

[HTTPS://SAFESUPPORTIVELEARNING.ED.GOV](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov)

View Resources by Topic GO SEARCH Stay Connected About

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
Safe Supportive Learning
Engagement | Safety | Environment

School Climate Improvement
Engagement Topics
Safety Topics
Environment Topics
Events, Products, and TA
States and Grantees



Get Guidance on Safely Operating K-12 Schools In Person

Upcoming Event
Lessons from the Field: Safely Reopening and Sustaining In-Person Instruction
March 31, 2021 - 03:00pm EDT
[Learn More](#)

[DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION?](#)

Welcome!

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) offers information and technical assistance to States, districts, schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning. We believe that with the right resources and support, educational stakeholders can collaborate to sustain safe, engaging and healthy school environments that support student academic success.

[More About Us](#)



School Climate Improvement Resource Package



ED School Climate Surveys



Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package



Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms



Human Trafficking in America's Schools



Improving Higher Education Learning Environment



Supporting Trauma Recovery



Promoting Mental Health



Responding to Covid-19



Logistics

Zoom Control Panel

Audio Settings ^



Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting

Technical Issues

For assistance during the webinar, please contact
Shoshana Rabinovsky at srabinovsky@air.org.

This webinar is being recorded and will be archived at the following location:
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/lessons-field-safely-reopening-and-sustaining-person-instruction>



Initial Polling Questions

1. Are you a:
 - Teacher
 - School staff
 - School administrator
 - Education agency staff
 - Public health professional
 - Other (Please specify in the chat.)
2. In your community, is instruction being delivered:
 - In-person
 - Hybrid
 - Virtually



Speakers



Christian Rhodes

Chief of Staff, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education



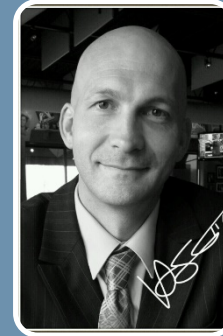
Neha Cramer

Lead, Schools Unit, Community Intervention and Critical Populations Task Force, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Dr. Diana Greene

Superintendent, Duval County Public Schools (FL)



Dr. Victor Simon

Superintendent, Gower School District 62 (IL)

Bios for the speakers are archived at the following location:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/lessons-field-safely-reopening-and-sustaining-person-instruction>



Agenda

1

Introduction and Logistics

2

Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation

3

Panel Discussion with District Leaders

4

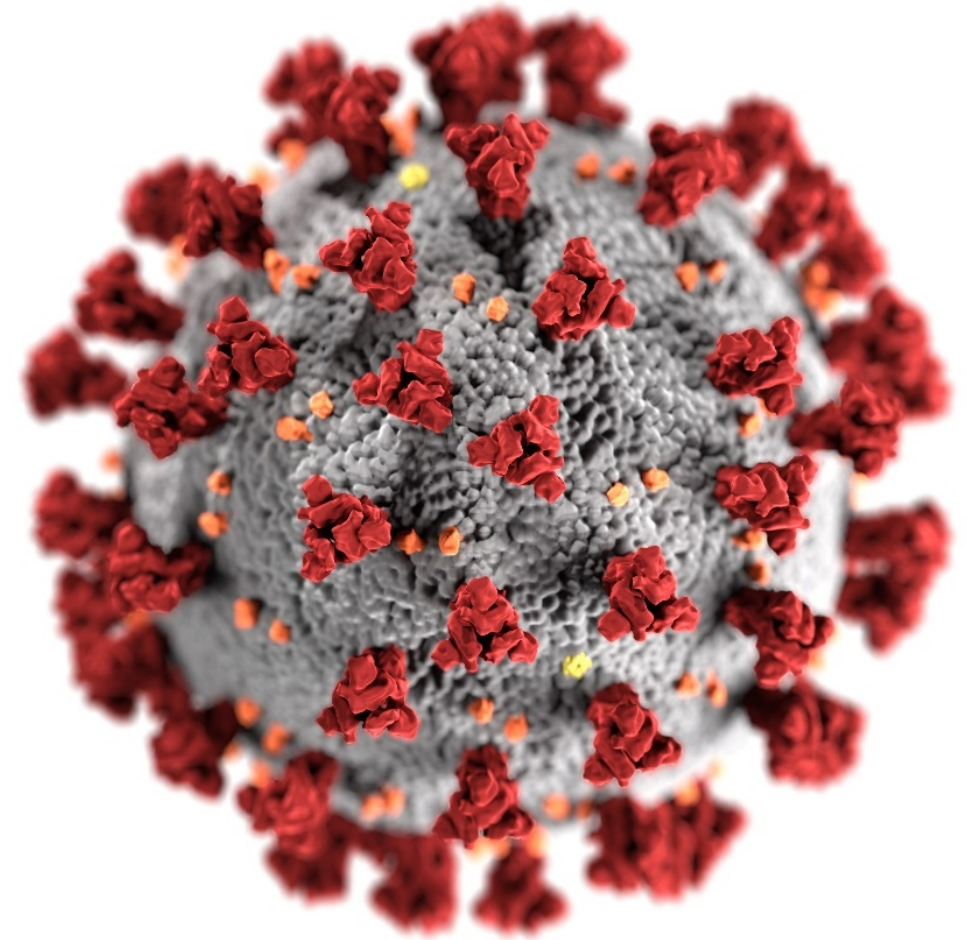
Questions and Answers

5

Wrap Up & Closing

Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation

Neha Cramer, MPH
CDC Community Interventions and Critical Populations Task Force



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Disclaimer

- This presentation is meant to convey critical information for K-12 administrators, school district administrators, and K-12 teachers to consider when developing plans for continuing school operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The information covered in this presentation is not exhaustive.
- For access to CDC's full suite of materials and resources for K-12 settings, please see Schools and Child Care Programs:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

The information in this presentation is current as of **March 31, 2021**.



Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools



Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Prevention

- Studies show that K-12 schools that used prevention strategies were able to safely open for in-person instruction and remain open with limited spread of SARS-CoV-2.
 - In-person instruction in schools should prioritize masking and physical distancing, along with other prevention strategies.
- Revised physical distancing recommendations on March 19
 - Use 3 feet between students in classrooms and use cohorting when possible.
 - In areas of high community transmission, middle and high schools that cannot use cohorting should place students 6 feet apart in classrooms.
- Maintain 6 feet: between adults and other adults and students; when masks cannot be worn; during activities when increased exhalation occurs; in common areas.
- Other changes:
 - Removed recommendation for physical barriers.
 - Added guidance on interventions when clusters occur in schools.
 - Added a consideration for schools to use screening testing for sports.

Essential Elements of Safe In-person Learning

- Consistent implementation of **layered prevention strategies** to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools
- **Indicators of community transmission** to reflect level of risk
- **Phased prevention** and learning modes based on levels of community transmission

Additional layers of COVID-19 prevention

- **Testing** to identify people with SARS-CoV-2 infection
- **Vaccination for teachers and school staff**



Core Concepts for Safe K-12 School Reopening

- Schools should be the **last setting to close and the first to reopen** when they can do so safely.
- At all levels of community transmission, there are **options for in-person instruction**.
- In-person learning for elementary school students might have less risk of in-school transmission than for middle school and high school students.
- Students, teachers, and staff who are at high risk of severe illness or who live with people at high risk should be provided virtual options.
- Schools are encouraged to use cohorting or podding of students, especially in moderate (yellow), substantial (orange), and high (red) levels.
- In-person instruction should be prioritized over sports, extracurricular activities, and school events.

Health Equity Considerations

- The absence of in-person education may disadvantage children from under-resourced communities (including those with large representation of racial and ethnic minority groups, English learners, and students with disabilities).
- In-person instruction in K-12 schools must consider efforts to promote fair access to healthy educational environments for students and staff.
- Health equity considerations built into all aspects of K-12 Operational Strategy
 - Prevention strategies
 - Phased mitigation
 - Testing
 - Vaccination



Prevention Strategies to Reduce Transmission

- All schools should use and layer 5 key [prevention strategies](#)
 - Universal and correct use of [masks](#)
 - [Physical distancing](#)
 - [Handwashing and respiratory etiquette](#)
 - [Cleaning](#) and maintaining healthy facilities
 - [Contact tracing](#) in combination with isolation and quarantine
- Two prevention priorities
 - Universal and correct use of **masks should be required for all.**
 - **Physical distancing** should be maximized to the greatest extent possible.



Levels of Community Transmission

Indicator ¹	Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
Total new cases per 100,000 persons in the past 7 days ²	0-9	10-49	50-99	≥100
Percentage of NAATs that are positive during the past 7 days ³	<5.0%	5.0%-7.9%	8.0%-9.9%	≥10.0%

¹If the two indicators suggest different levels, the actions corresponding to the higher threshold should be chosen. County-level data on total new cases in the past 7 days and test percent positivity are available on the County View tab in [CDC's COVID Data Tracker](#).

²Total number of new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 7 days is calculated by adding the number of new cases in the county/community in the last 7 days divided by the population in the county and multiplying by 100,000.

³Percentage of positive diagnostic and screening nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) during the last 7 days is calculated by dividing the number of positive tests in the county during the last 7 days by the total number of tests resulted over the last 7 days. Additional information can be found on the [Calculating Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 \(SARS-CoV-2\) Laboratory Test Percent Positivity: CDC Methods and Considerations for Comparisons and Interpretation](#) webpage.

Recommended Prevention in K-12 Schools

Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<p>All schools implement 5 key prevention strategies: masks required; physical distancing; handwashing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation</p>			
<p>Elementary Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms</p>		<p>Elementary Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms Cohorting recommended when possible</p>	
<p>Middle and High Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms</p>		<p>Middle and High Schools Physical distancing: at least 3 feet between students in classrooms Cohorting recommended when possible</p>	<p>Middle and High Schools <u>Schools that can use</u> <u>cohorting:</u> at least 3 feet <u>Schools that cannot use</u> <u>cohorting:</u> at least 6 feet</p>
<p>Sports and Extracurricular Activities Occur with at least 6 feet of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible</p>	<p>Sports and Extracurricular Activities Occur with at least 6 feet of physical distancing required</p>	<p>Sports and Extracurricular Activities Occur only if they can be held outdoors, with more than 6 feet of physical distancing</p>	

Testing Recommendations: K-12 Schools Operational Strategy

Low Transmission Blue	Moderate Transmission Yellow	Substantial Transmission Orange	High Transmission Red
<p>All schools implement 5 key prevention strategies: masks required; physical distancing; handwashing and respiratory etiquette; cleaning and maintaining healthy facilities; contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation</p> <p>Diagnostic testing:¹ symptomatic students, teachers, and staff and close contacts referred for diagnostic testing</p>			
<p>Screening testing²</p>			
<p>Screening testing of teachers and staff offered at least once per week</p>			
<p>No screening testing for students</p>	<p>Screening testing for students offered at least once per week³</p>		
<p>Testing for high-risk sports: testing recommended at least once per week⁴</p> <p>Testing for low and intermediate-risk sports: testing recommended at least once per week</p>		<p>Testing for high-risk sports: testing recommended twice per week</p> <p>Testing for low and intermediate-risk sports: testing recommended at least once per week</p>	

¹Diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2 is intended to identify occurrence of SARS-CoV-2 infection at the individual level and is performed when there is a reason to suspect that an individual may be infected, such as having symptoms or suspected recent exposure.

²Screening testing is intended to identify infected asymptomatic individuals who may be contagious so that measures can be taken to prevent further transmission.

³Schools may consider testing a random sample of at least 10% of students or may conduct pooled testing of cohorts/pods for screening testing in areas of moderate and substantial community transmission.

⁴Schools may consider using screening testing for student athletes and adults (e.g., coaches, teacher advisors) who support these activities to facilitate safe participation and reduce risk of transmission. For an example risk stratification for sports, see [NCAA Transmission Risk Summary](#).

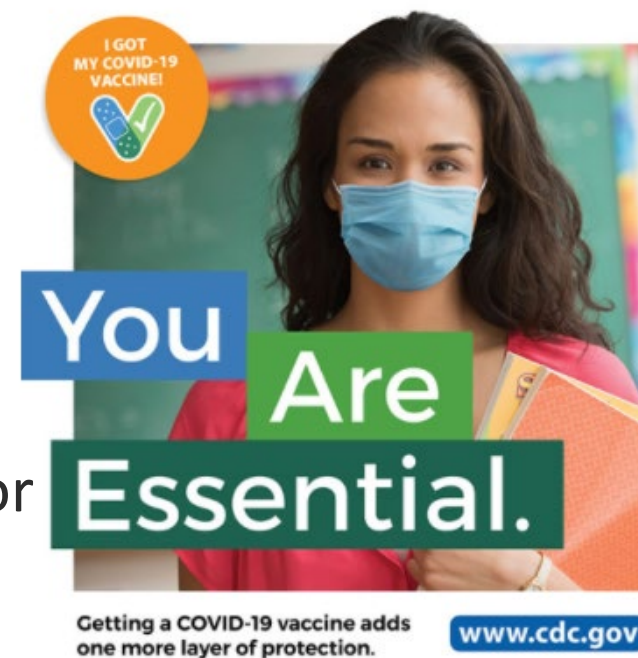
Considerations in Implementing Screening Testing in K-12 Schools

- Priorities for testing when applicable
 - Teachers and staff
 - High school students, then middle school students
 - Elementary school students
- Prioritize access to testing in **schools that serve populations who are disproportionately affected by COVID-19**
 - Communities with moderate or large proportions of groups that experienced disproportionately high rates of COVID-19
 - Geographic areas with limited access to testing



Teacher and School Staff Vaccination Month

- Added layers of prevention and protection
- The President Declared March as Teacher and School Staff Vaccination Month on March 2
- Eligibility for teachers and school staff will continue past the month of March
- Minimizing barriers to accessing vaccination for teachers and other frontline essential workers is critical. Vaccine clinics at or close to the place of work are optimal
- Access to vaccination should not be a precondition for reopening schools for in-person instruction
- Even after teachers and staff are vaccinated, schools need to continue prevention measures



CDC COVID-19 School Resources



Landing page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

For K-12 School Administrators:

- Operating schools during COVID-19: CDC's Considerations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
- FAQ for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/reopening-schools-faqs.html>
- Guidance for K-12 School Administrators on the Use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/cloth-face-cover.html>
- Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/symptom-screening.html>
- Interim Considerations for K-12 School Administrators for SARS-CoV-2 Testing: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-testing.html>

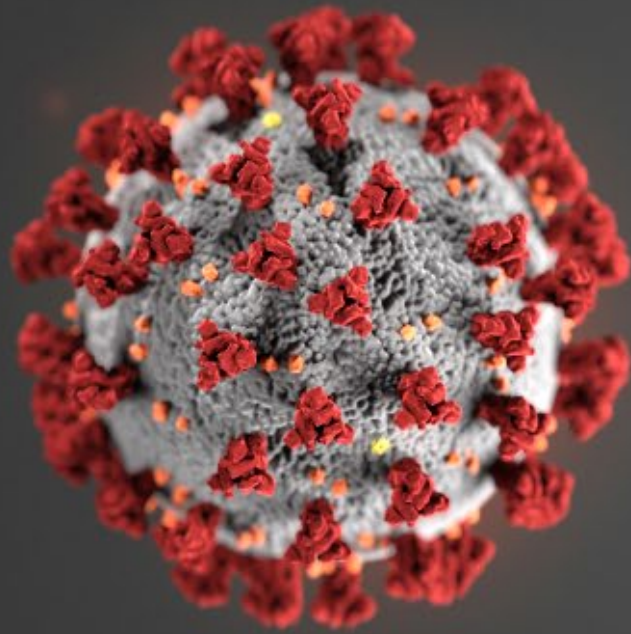
CDC COVID-19 School Resources



Landing page: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

For Parents, Guardians, Caregivers:

- Making Decisions about Children Attending In-person School During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Information for Parents, Guardians, and Caregivers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/decision-tool.html>
- Back to In-Person Learning: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/community/schools-childcare/back-to-school-decision-checklist.pdf>



For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.





**SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES
BEST PRACTICES
CLEARINGHOUSE**

Panel Discussion

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD



ABOUT US

Duval County Public Schools



DUVAL COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Large Urban School District

20th Largest School District in the Nation & 6th Largest in the state of Florida



Diverse Schools

Over 200 schools including comprehensive schools, charter schools, center schools, & a virtual school



Major Employer

With over 12,000 full-time employees and over 1,000 part-time employees, one of the largest employers in the city



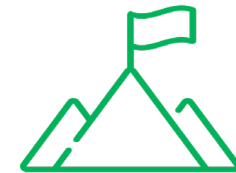
Our Scholars

Over 130,000 students are served through a variety of schools and programs



Our Vision

Every student is inspired & prepared for success in college or a career and life.



Our Mission

To provide educational excellence in **every school**, in **every classroom**, for **every student, every day.**



Planning Principles



The following parameters outline assumptions considered in the development of the district's Safer Reopening Plan:

District to implement guidelines from CDC and FLDOE where possible.

Input received from medical community, including consultation with the following:

- Wolfson's Children's Hospital
- UF Health
- Florida Department of Health
- Duval County Medical Society

Input from employees, labor organizations, students, parents, contract providers and other stakeholders

Core Classroom Sizes:

- Kindergarten – 3rd Grade: 18 students
- 4th grade – 8th Grade: 22 students
- 9th Grade – 12th Grade: 25 students

All materials must be purchased, delivered, and installed by August 10th.

Teachers, school-based staff and students will be provided personal protective equipment.

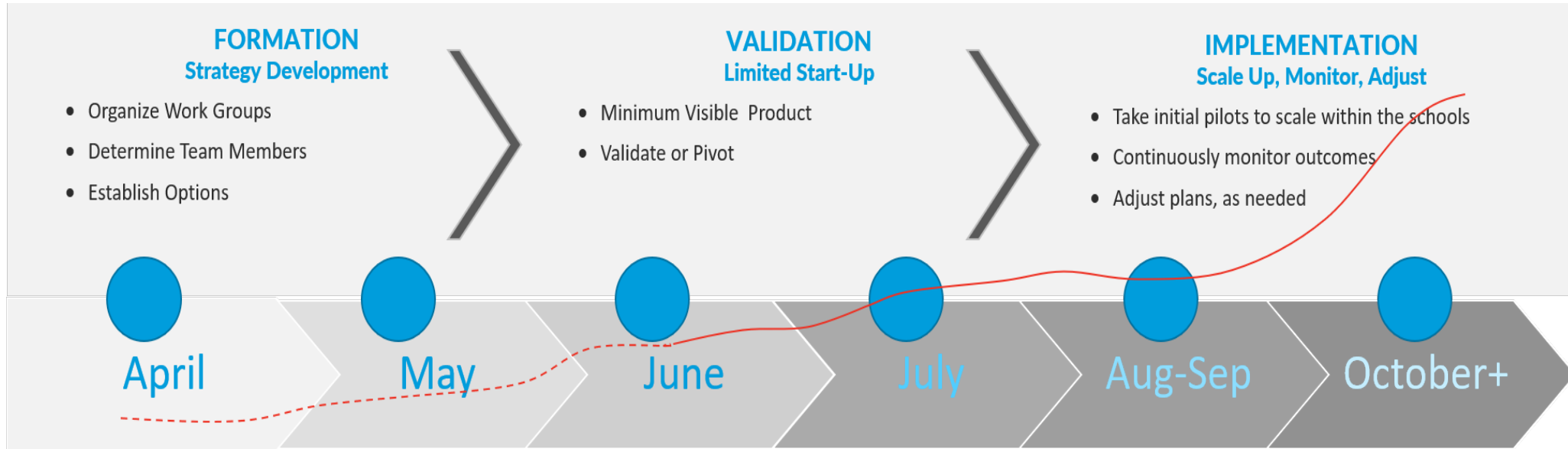
- Student learning stations (desks, tables, etc.) will be spaced 6 ft apart where possible.
- Pre-Kindergarten – 2nd grades students will be provided face shields.
- Upper elementary (4th – 5th grade) and secondary (6th – 12th grade) students will be provided cloth facial coverings.

The District will ensure enhanced sanitization requirements are in place and continue to promote and encourage healthy behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

- Intensified cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched areas
- Static groups at the elementary level and reduced student capacity at secondary levels
- Custodial staff scheduled will be adjusted to support frequent on ongoing sanitation throughout the day
- Early Release Days – Duval HomeRoom for deep cleaning of schools



Composition of the Re-Opening Process



Envisioning

- Acquiring Information
- Developing Partnerships with Partner agencies
- Mayor's Reopening Task Force

Concepting

- Formation of Re-opening Committee and Subcommittees
- Active participation in weekly local government and state task forces
- Surveying stakeholder input
- Procure resources necessary for plan implementation

Committing

- Development of Initial Plan
- Solicit feedback regarding draft plan

Validating

- Gradual phase-in of plan design through summer activities and athletics
- Schools and departments finalize installation of mitigation measures
- Committees finalize any outstanding requirements needed prior to reopening

Scaling

- School resumes with plan measures in place
- Continued engagement with local health officials to evaluate implementation

Monitoring

- Stakeholders surveyed to determine effectiveness
- Adjustments made as needed
- Mitigation measures reduced or removed once supported by data



Goal

Intentional Focus on Student Learning and Well-Being



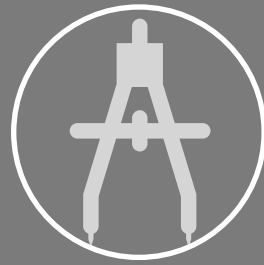
DUVAL COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Assess
Learning Loss



Attend to
Social &
Emotional
Needs



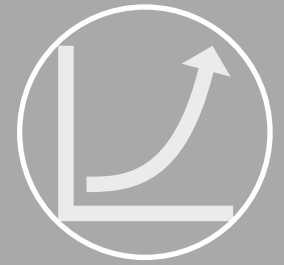
Address
Learning
Gaps



Spiral Back to
Missed
Content



Infuse New
State
Standards



Accelerate
Learning





Student Transportation



DUVAL COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The District currently contracts with 2 providers for a fleet of 856 buses.

Daily student ridership is approximately 48,500:

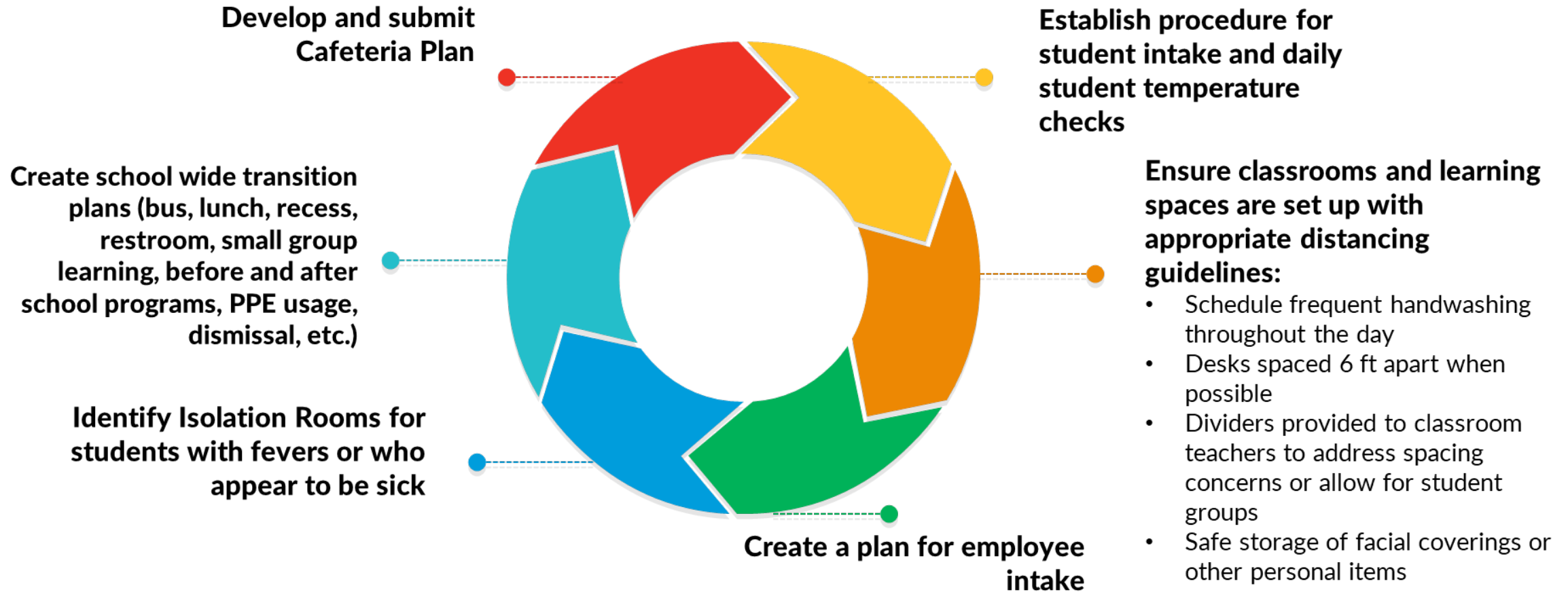
- **12,300** elementary students
- **21,600** secondary students
- **11,400** magnet students
- **3,200** ESE students

CDC guidelines recommend creating social distancing with 1 student per seat and every other row where possible, however fleet size and student ridership requires additional bus capacity to transport students at every level.

- Staggered loads and double runs will be utilized to mitigate against overcrowding. Bus capacity will be limited to 2 students per seat.
- Students will be required to wear facial coverings on the bus.
- Buses will be equipped with hand sanitizer for student use when boarding and departing the bus.
- Routes will be scheduled to allow time to disinfect buses between routes and at the end of each day.
- Elementary and middle student hours may be modified by 30 minutes (except Lowest 300 schools) to allow for adjusted routes. The school hours for select magnet schools may be adjusted to accommodate transportation schedules.



School Based Procedures





Lessons from the Field

GOWER SCHOOL DISTRICT 62 – DR. VICTOR SIMON



District Demographics/Overview

- PK-8 grade serving 900+ students. 10% FRL, 14% IEP, 8% EL with Racial/Ethnic Diversity: 59% White, 15% Asian, 12% Two or More Races; 11% Hispanic, 3% Black ([IL School Report Card](#))
- Like all school districts, Gower is a unique school community built to serve 100% of the students enrolled and to provide services to our families and community members
- *Our plan works for our community.* It is being shared as one of many successful and effective approaches for a safe return to school with specific elements/strategies that can be scaled up or down and replicated to best fit your school community. (Mentality required: *Okay, how? vs. Yeah, but...*)

Return to School Plan - Context

- Gower has been open for a full, in-person learning model since August 21, 2020.
- DuPage County, IL COVID-19 Transmission Rates were 'Substantial' (50-99 new cases/100,000/week) at the start of the school year and crossed the 'High Transmission' threshold (>100) in early Oct. 2020.
- Community Transmission level have remained 'High' (>100) since Oct. 2020 with rates >500 in Nov./Dec.
- 100+ individual cases of COVID-19, hundreds of close contacts this school year
- 135 Days of Instruction and ZERO cases/no evidence of in-school transmission
- Work made public at www.gower62.com: Return to School Plan [tab](#).



Return to School Plan - Overview



Initial plan was built through a series of committee drafts and online feedback/FAQ sessions.

Early coordination of effort between staff groups (Teachers, support staff, administrators) and BOE.

Early and ongoing communication with and engagement of parents and community.

- [Transition Updates](#) (June and July) and a critical [10-part Weekly Series of Updates](#) (July 16 – Sept. 17, 2020)

Non-negotiables/Commitments:

- **All means all. Close any gaps between *saying* and *doing* when it comes to meeting individual student needs.**
- **Layered Mitigation**
 - Universal masking, increased cleaning/sanitation, attention on hygiene, avoiding large groups/congregation
 - Physical Spacing observed as much as possible
 - Focus was on the instructional model first and a *best-fit use* of changing health recommendations
 - MERV-13 air filters, HVAC system settings, individual classroom air purifiers
 - Self-Certification, Contact-tracing, Isolation and Quarantine Guidelines
 - Point of Care Diagnostic Testing and Screening – a relatively unique, but important feature
- **Informed Parent Choice**
 - Parent choice was given at start of school year and remains to this day (75% in person in Aug., 90% today)
- **Maximize Instructional Flexibility**
 - Simultaneous Instructional Model (in-person and remote learners in the same setting)
- **Continuous Improvement Model (Plan – Do – Check – Act)**
 - Emphasis on 'check' and 'act' (survey and observational data continue to drive decisions)



Return to School Plan – Lessons Learned



Local needs and local context is paramount. Local capacity, readiness, resources, challenges, etc.

Defining success as doing the best you can, where you are, with what you have: Progress over Perfection

Making a *decision* vs. making the perfect decision. Choosing courage over comfort.

Crisis doesn't build character; it reveals it.

- From an organizational perspective, what has been revealed?
- What opportunities exist to emerge stronger?

Layered Mitigation: If the dial is turned down in one area it must be turned up elsewhere.

- POC testing and ventilation/air quality are important factors to consider in concert with other recommendations.

Point-of-Care Diagnostic Testing and Screening: A proactive and important part of the solution.

- It is clear to me that POC testing and an overall expansion of our school health office and responsiveness is something that will remain as we enter a post-crisis phase and for years to come

Learning Loss is a concern. Losing sight of potential Learning Gains is also a concern.

- Of course, we will need to respond to any learning loss indicated. We can also work to identify and replicate learning gains that we are finding at the individual and organizational levels.
- Simultaneous In-Person and Remote Learning Environment *can* be effective and *does* offer value.
 - Maximum flexibility and a sense of Classroom Community
- Efficiencies offered by responsible use of technology have been helpful.
- Cooperation, flexibility, resiliency, adaptability are all skills that have been called upon/required.
- This is not about a return to normal. It is about being better prepared for the future.



Questions and Answers





Closing Polling Question

3. Select the topic(s) for which you feel additional information is needed. (Select all that apply.)

- Consistent implementation of layered mitigation strategies to reduce transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in schools
- Indicators of community transmission to reflect level of community risk
- Phased mitigation and learning modes based on levels of community transmission
- Testing to identify individuals with SARS-CoV-2 infection to limit transmission and outbreaks
- Vaccination for teachers and school staff, and in communities, as soon as supply allows



Feedback Form

The screenshot shows a feedback form header with the Department of Education logo and the 'SAFER SCHOOLS AND CAMPUSES BEST PRACTICES CLEARINGHOUSE' logo. Below the header is a dark blue bar with the title 'Lessons from the Field: Safely Reopening and Sustaining In-Person Instruction'. A light blue bar below that contains a 'PAGE TITLE' button. The main content area has a thank-you message and two survey questions with radio button options.

Lessons from the Field: Safely Reopening and Sustaining In-Person Instruction

⌵ PAGE TITLE

Thank you for attending the webinar, *Lessons from the Field: Safely Reopening and Sustaining In-Person Instruction*, on March 31, 2021. To best serve you, we would greatly appreciate receiving your feedback on the webinar.

1. Prior to the webinar, how knowledgeable were you about the webinar's topic?

- Not At All Knowledgeable
- Somewhat Knowledgeable
- Very Knowledgeable

2. Overall this webinar was a good use of my time.

- Strongly Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEY
MONKEY.COM/R/LFTF S
SESSION1](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/lftf_session1)



Thank You!

Should you have any questions, please contact us at NCSSELE@air.org or 800-258-8413. We are happy to help!

NCSSELE Website

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

Best Practices Clearinghouse

<https://bestpracticesclearinghouse.ed.gov/>