

Reimagining Excellence

A blueprint for integrating social and emotional well-being and academic excellence in schools





Acknowledgments

This blueprint was adapted from the [Oklahoma State Education Department's \(OSDE\) Network of Learning Blueprint for High-Quality Virtual/Blended Programs](#) — led by Dr. Aaron Espolt and Karen Leonard from OSDE and Jennifer Folsom and Patrick Moyle from the [Region 13 Comprehensive Center](#) with input and feedback from collaborators at OSDE, Oklahoma school districts, [WestEd](#), the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#), and the [Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety](#). At the core of the OSDE Network of Learning initiative is the idea that leaders are champions of excellence, who deeply believe in one's own potential, the potential of students, teachers, and leaders, and the potential of educational systems. Aaron, Karen, Jennifer, and Patrick saw the potential in this guidance and have been dedicated champions of this work. This adaptation of the blueprint resulted from a collaborative effort between the [Region 13 Comprehensive Center](#), the [Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety](#), and the [National Center for Systemic Improvement](#). Jennifer Folsom, Patrick Moyle, Rebecah Busselle, Christina Pate, Natalie Walrond, Shazia Hashmi, and Kate Nagle contributed to the revisions and introduction, with graphic design by Jennifer Mendenhall and Christina Johnson as editor.



Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Blueprint Dimensions	
1. Equity	8
2. Responsive Relationships.....	11
3. Climate & Culture	13
4. Instruction.....	16
5. Instructional Materials	19
6. Professional Learning	21
7. Leadership.....	24
Resources & References.....	26

Introduction

Blueprint Vision

Just as constructing a well-designed school building requires a blueprint, so does designing an effective and equitable learning program that addresses the needs of the whole child. Success occurs through a cycle of strong planning, action, and continuous monitoring. This blueprint — designed with input from in-person and remote educators, leaders, researchers, professional learning providers, and technical assistance providers — strives to detail the indicators of learning programs that successfully integrate equity, well-being, and academics.

When schools reopen in the fall of 2021, communities will be navigating the fallout of two profound experiences: an unprecedented global pandemic and the social upheaval of a nation reckoning with a legacy of systemic racial oppression. And yet, the past year has not been a universal lived experience for all. Whether the past year has been marked by coping with personal grief, rage, and hardship; discovering new identities as activists, leaders, and caregivers; or thriving in healthy, caring homes, one constant is certain: school community members will return profoundly changed.

In this context, there is enormous urgency to actively develop sound plans that address equity, social and emotional well-being, and academic excellence in schools. This blueprint is founded on the belief that all students can succeed when learning is supported by

equitable systems. To achieve equity, individuals and systems must truly value all students and their communities; optimize conditions in which students, staff, and families develop; work across sectors to address factors that influence success; and identify and overcome the exclusionary beliefs and actions that create inequities in delivery and access to resources. The blueprint leverages an asset-based approach that values diversity in race, culture, language, ability, and ways of interacting with the world, rather than characterizing students and families by what they may need or lack.¹

The complex, holistic vision of learning programs that guides this blueprint is possible only with substantial, persistent efforts of school leadership teams who wish to build conditions for healing and learning. Some educators and leaders will choose to primarily focus their reopening efforts and learning program design on boosting academic performance by remediating learning gaps. This blueprint does not provide guidance for that approach. Instead, this blueprint establishes ambitious goals for comprehensively reimagining learning programs. The following sections describe how the blueprint approaches Equity, Well-being, and Continuous Improvement.

Equity

Historically, too many schools have not equitably served students who are immigrants, students learning English, students with

¹ NYU Steinhardt School of Education. (2018, October 29). *An asset based approach to education: What it is and why it matters*. <https://teachereducation.steinhardt.nyu.edu/an-asset-based-approach-to-education-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/>

disabilities, students from racial and ethnic minority groups, and students from under-resourced communities. This moment — when schools and communities are thinking critically about how to safely reopen schools — is an opportunity to reflect on how systems of oppression have harmed our students, families, and communities. And it's an opportunity to do better. An opportunity to employ systemic and sustainable approaches to teaching and learning that place equity at the center.

As schools systematically learn about the needs of students in their care, it is essential to acknowledge and address the harm inflicted when those in power hold biased perceptions of race, culture, gender, ability, and other identities. For example, without addressing bias in the implementation of a multi-tiered system of support, schools may misinterpret student behavior and over-identify students for intensive support that they do not need. To truly know, value, and serve all students, schools must embrace the primacy, strengths, and self-determination of the children and families they serve and the communities of which they are a part.

Engaging in culturally responsive practice as a means to equity requires leaders to ask, “Who is being well served, and who is left out or harmed by our policies and practices?”² Leaders should commit to interrupting policies, practices, and procedures that explicitly or implicitly perpetuate unequal outcomes for children who

are furthest away from opportunity. Luckily there is a broad swath of knowledge that school leadership teams can leverage to center equity in their programs.

Well-being

This blueprint is designed to refocus school communities on a key finding from a convergence of scientific evidence — that supporting well-being and connection is a prerequisite to academic excellence. Often, behaviors from children that are perceived as challenging or defiant are merely physical manifestations of a developing brain that is unready to engage with the cognitive tasks required for academic learning. When students are dysregulated or disconnected, their ability to engage in learning, thinking, and reflection are limited. In order to facilitate learning and activate the reasoning part of students' brains, we must first support them in regulating and calming their flight, fight, freeze, and fawn responses and move them to feeling seen, heard, and understood. Once students are regulated and feel support by those around them, they are ready to reason. These three Rs (regulate, relate, reason) underlie the Neurosequential Model of Education (NME) developed by Bruce Perry, a leading expert on child mental health.³ NME posits that brains develop sequentially, with the cortical brain, responsible for academic learning, developing and being activated only when the regions of

² National Association of Elementary School Teachers. (n.d.). *The principal's guide to building culturally responsive schools*. https://www.nyscommunityschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/NAESP_Culturally_Responsive_Schools_Guide.pdf

³ Perry, B. (n.d.). *The 3 Rs: Reaching the learning brain*. <https://beaconhouse.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Three-Rs.pdf>

the brain responsible for emotional regulation and human connection are thriving. Being prepared to engage in complex reasoning is not only valuable for learning in school; the social, emotional, and mental health and well-being of students is also foundational to their ability to thrive in their relationships, professions, communities, and our democracy.

Continuous Improvement

This blueprint promotes a data-driven cycle of inquiry. These continuous improvement efforts are intended to be a collaborative process of ongoing self-reflection where educators, leaders, students, and school communities question and adapt traditional methods based on input from, and co-construction with, students, families, and community stakeholders.⁴ Valuing students' and families' agency in education entails reimagining learning and co-creating services and supports with students and families rather than delivering services and supports to them. The issues identified by school teams and school communities as they undertake the work of implementing the guidance in this blueprint should be seen not as deficits, but as fertile ground for growth and opportunities to build inclusive strong school communities and learning programs.

As learning programs and school communities undertake these continuous improvement efforts, it is an ideal opportunity to be transparent with ourselves and our students, families, and communities about where we are trying new approaches and experimenting with innovative ideas. Embracing a culture of

continuous improvement means taking risks and inevitably needing to deal with failures. When a well-planned intervention or change doesn't work out (and, in all likelihood, at least some of them won't), it is an opportunity to demonstrate how to respond to failure and to recognize that we have learned things we didn't know before. The example of how people can productively respond to challenge and disappointment is a valuable gift we can give our students. And it is a gift we can only give when we fail at something and are confident enough to let them be part of the learning experience.

The blueprint itself embraces this belief in continuous improvement. It is emergent and will continue to change and grow as more is learned about effective integrated learning programs and insights from school programs who use the blueprint are collected. You can find the most recent version of the blueprint on the website of the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (selcenter.wested.org).

Blueprint Structure

Educational systems and support organizations have developed a wide range of programs ranging from 100 percent in-person to 100 percent remote, as well as countless formats of hybrid and blended programs. In many cases, the terminology used to describe a program in one region of the US differs from the terminology used to describe similar programs elsewhere. Complicating matters, programs also vary in how they describe the use of synchronous and asynchronous time. This blueprint was developed with the whole range of these learning environments in mind.

⁴ Stern, A., Guckenburg, S., Persson, H., & Petrosino, A. (2019). *Reflections on applying principles of equitable evaluation*. WestEd. <http://jprc.wested.org>

Practitioners should be able to see their own program described in the blueprint regardless of the format or language they use to describe their program. Where distinction between these programs is necessary, in-person is used to denote a traditional program where students and educators are in the same physical space, remote is used to describe programs where students and educators are not in the same physical space, and hybrid is used to describe programs that combine the two models.

The blueprint has seven overarching dimensions of quality that apply to all programs, and each dimension has specific indicators of success. The dimensions build upon each other, beginning with equity, and are interconnected with common themes and practices throughout. At the end of the blueprint, there are lists of related resources for each dimension that school leadership teams have found useful. We encourage you to share any additional resources you find helpful for making progress in a given dimension by emailing them to *Patrick Moyle* (pmoyle@wested.org).

Dimensions

1. Equity
2. Responsive Relationships
3. Culture & Climate
4. Instruction
5. Instructional Materials
6. Professional Learning
7. Leadership

Blueprint Use

We encourage the formation of a multidisciplinary leadership team who will embed themselves in the blueprint as a whole and then form several committees to lead specific improvement efforts. Due to the integrated nature of the blueprint, these committees will need to collaborate often and be unified by the leadership team. We advise against taking a divide and conquer approach to implementing the blueprint.

If you need technical assistance for using the blueprint to propel your learning program toward excellence, please contact the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety (selcenter@wested.org).

Equity

No learning program can achieve excellence unless all the students it serves have equitable access to services and equitable opportunities for success. Equity is the attainment of comparably positive outcomes for all groups within, or served by, a program. Equity exists when race, ethnicity, language, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, national origin, physical or cognitive ability, socioeconomic status, and other such characteristics are not predictors of outcomes for any group or individual. Equitable programs build from the unique strengths and aspirations of students and provide the necessary support to overcome challenges. Equity must be central to all aspects of a program — from leadership, professional learning, and instruction to digital inclusion, instructional materials, school culture, and relationships and realized in access to all program features including access to the highest quality teachers, specialized support, internet, hardware/software, graduation rates, ability grouping, disciplinary offenses, participation in college-readiness programs, tutoring, child nutrition, special education services, bilingual services, counseling, and extracurricular activities.

GOALS

1A

Vision

Form an equity committee of diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, staff, leaders, school resources officers, program coordinators, families, community members) that meets quarterly to establish a vision for program equity, lead the program's equity work, evaluate progress, and identify future priorities.

1B

Equity Audit

Leverage the equity committee to conduct an audit to assess the equity of services provided to student groups of interest (e.g., students of color, students with low socioeconomic status, students with disabilities, students who could be first-generation college bound, students with a non-English first language), as well as the services provided to teachers, staff, parents, and families. Incorporate a variety of areas to address in the audit, for example:

- Policies and procedures affecting student achievement, attendance, and discipline
- Program culture, classroom culture, and culture among teachers, staff, and leaders
- Instructional materials, assessments, and instruction
- Professional learning for teachers, staff, and leaders (e.g., equity, racial equity, implicit bias, culturally responsive teaching practices)
- Student, family, teacher, and staff perceptions of goals around equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and identity safety

CONTINUED 

GOALS

1C

Structures & Systems

Develop, implement, and monitor plans, policies, structures, and systems that support equity and address lagging or problematic issues, for example:

- Maintain and utilize a data collection system focused on the program's progress in prioritizing equity
- Include representatives from all stakeholder groups, including students and families, to interpret and analyze data used to inform the decision-making process
- Support teachers and leaders in addressing implicit bias that may influence how they interpret and use data for action planning
- Work with program leadership to design resource allocations that prioritize equity in the program

1D

Identity-safety

Create an identity-safe program that encourages students, teachers, and staff to explore and embrace their personal, gender, racial, linguistic, cultural, and academic identities and proactively dispel stereotypes, for example:

- Select instructional materials that include accurate, unbiased history, provide opportunities for students to engage in discourse about identity and equity, and feature people with diverse identities in positive, non-stereotypical ways
- Foster relationships based on responsive, trusting, encouraging interactions between teachers and students and among students
- Create classroom environments that are caring, orderly, and purposeful, with social skills proactively taught and practiced to help students respect and care for one another in an emotionally and physically safe environment
- Provide professional learning on the value of diversity, how to support the achievement of diverse learners, and how to support family engagement for diverse learners
- Welcome community members and experts with diverse racial, linguistic, and cultural identities into the program's learning community and activities
- Evaluate staffing and employ teachers, staff, and leaders with diverse gender, racial, linguistic, and cultural identities.

CONTINUED 

GOALS

1E

Multi-tiered Support

Implement a system of multi-tiered supports with interventions targeted to what individual students need, when the supports are needed (and not longer than needed), and with student and family voice prioritized, for example:

- *Tier 1* — provided to all students; is focused on acceleration, not remediation; includes culturally and linguistically responsive instruction grounded in universal design for learning (UDL), social and emotional learning models, positive behavioral support programs, and environments that are safe, supportive, equitable, and responsive
- *Tier 2* — provided to students at elevated risk as demonstrated by behavior (e.g., number of absences) or trauma (e.g., loss of caregiver); includes academic supports, family outreach, counseling, and behavioral supports, which can include small group strategies or partnerships with community-based organizations
- *Tier 3* — provided to students with particularly high levels of risk or whose needs are not met by Tier 2 supports; includes supports offered in collaboration with community organizations, one-on-one health or mental health supports, effective special education services, and social workers

1F

Digital Inclusivity

Develop a digitally inclusive program where all stakeholders have equitable access to necessary resources and feel competent within the learning environment, for example:

- Maintain current data detailing access to internet connectivity within the community
- Ensure equity in access to and maintenance of high-quality devices and the bandwidth needed to support student learning at school and home
- Ensure that devices are compatible with assistive technologies utilized by students with disabilities to access the learning environment (e.g., special switches, keyboards, pointing devices, screen readers, communication programs)
- Provide targeted assistance to students and families who transition into and out of the program, between grade bands, or between remote and in-person programs
- Allow students to engage in the program asynchronously, providing flexible use of space and time to accommodate for students' other, non-academic obligations
- Support the development of digital literacy in stakeholders through professional learning for technology hardware, assistive technologies, software and appropriate pedagogy; troubleshooting resources for teachers, families, and students; building stakeholder capacity to identify quality digital resources

2 Responsive Relationships

In order to effectively teach, learn, and thrive, humans must first feel physically and emotionally calm and settled and feel socially and emotionally connected through safe and responsive relationships. This means high-quality relationships are a prerequisite for student, teacher, leader, and family learning, engagement, and well-being. Prioritizing responsive relationships includes highlighting the unique role relationships play in learning and healthy development and emphasizing interactions that are equitable, sensitive, and responsive to student and family identities. These interactions are particularly critical in a remote/hybrid environment where stakeholders are often separated by distance and time.

GOALS	
2A	<p>Vision</p> <p>Form a committee of diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, staff, leaders, school resource officers, program coordinators, families, community members) that meets quarterly to establish a vision for prioritizing responsive relationships in the program, to evaluate progress, and to identify future priorities.</p>
2B	<p>Structures & Systems</p> <p>Develop, implement, and monitor plans, policies, structures, and systems that support frequent, high-quality relational interactions among program staff, between program staff and students/families, and among students, for example, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving families in determining the timing, tone (e.g., formal, informal), type (e.g., phone, video, text, social media, app, newsletter) of family-teacher and family-program connection • Providing group and individual counseling sessions and parent learning groups • Ensuring equitable access for appropriate school-family interactions (e.g., IEP meetings, parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights) • Implementing conflict resolution, restorative practices, peer mediation, and trauma-sensitive practices and environments • Hosting in-person and remote events, ceremonies, and cultural gatherings • Co-creating a range of protected time for grade-level and/or departmental professional learning communities, all-staff meetings, and opportunities for staff to get information from leadership

CONTINUED 

GOALS

2C

Community Learning Opportunities

Provide learning opportunities for families and caregivers so that they are able to give age-appropriate support to students, for example:

- Offer practical advice to support learning at home (e.g., establish a quiet place and consistent expectations for learning at home, model and encourage frequent reading, model and encourage respectful and responsible behaviors)
- Highlight the unique role relationships play in learning and healthy development, especially when interactions are separated by distance and/or time, and support families who want to engage their children in these types of relationships

2D

Professional Learning Opportunities

Provide professional learning opportunities that emphasize the importance of building responsive relationships, for example, professional learning that supports staff:

- Creating opportunities for interaction within and outside of all employed learning environments
- Ensuring all groups are aware of the parameters of healthy relationships within each employed learning environment (e.g., in-person, remote, physically-distanced in-person), including awareness of Title IX sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and appropriate use of cameras and screen captures
- Teaching students how to have healthy, age-appropriate peer interactions in a variety of settings including how to recognize and interpret nonverbal interactions
- Setting class routines (e.g., when delivering instruction, turning in assignments, receiving feedback, starting and ending class, small-group work, whole-class discussions, one-on-one conferences, group projects)
- Using effective practices in verbal interactions (e.g., clear and inclusive word choices, expressing care, encouraging growth, conveying positivity and a sense of possibility, avoidance of sarcasm, questions that encourage reflection, asking questions with unknown answers, providing sufficient time for discourse)
- Leveraging and honoring family engagement in ways that are respectful of family preferences, living arrangements, work schedules, and commitments
- Focusing on acceleration of student learning, not remediation of learning gaps

3

Climate & Culture

Program culture arises from the beliefs about teaching and learning, agreements about interacting, and values shared by all the stakeholders in a program. Culture describes how things work within a program. Program climate is how students, teachers, staff, and families feel in the learning program. Productive cultures often lead to safe, encouraging, and supportive climates.

GOALS	
3A	<p>Vision</p> <p>Form a committee of diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, staff, leaders, school resource officers, program coordinators, families, community members) that meets quarterly to establish a vision for program climate and culture, lead the program's equity work, evaluate progress, and identify future priorities.</p>
3B	<p>Climate & Culture Audit</p> <p>Leverage the climate and culture committee to conduct an audit of the program climate and culture, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct root-cause analyses of issues that can be related to poor climate and culture (e.g., absenteeism, suspensions, office referrals, substance abuse, bullying, low academic achievement, low motivation, poor psychological well-being) • Gather feedback from students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders about their experiences within each employed learning environment, share findings appropriately with stakeholders, and set goals for improvement
3C	<p>Systems & Structures</p> <p>Develop, implement, and monitor plans, policies, structures, and systems that support effective climate and culture among program staff, between program staff and students/families, and among students and address lagging or problematic issues.</p>

CONTINUED 

GOALS

3D

Teachers, Staff, & Leader Supports

Nurture a culture of high expectations, continuous improvement, and collective efficacy among teachers, staff, and leaders by:

- Using a broad range of disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data to monitor students' opportunities to learn and achieve academic success to inform the program's continuous improvement goals
- Providing sustained time for teachers, staff, and leaders to learn together and collaborate around improvement goals
- Investing in the well-being of the teachers, staff, and leaders in the learning program by providing training in adult wellness strategies, such as mindfulness practices and stress management.
- Providing ongoing professional learning that helps teachers, staff, and leaders
 - Build the belief that every child can learn and achieve at high levels and that their actions impact student engagement and success
 - Strengthen relationships with students and families
 - Contribute to the productivity of program culture

3E

Community Supports

Nurture a supportive, welcoming climate for the learning community that centers program decisions around achieving equity for all learners.

- Ensure systems, policies, and procedures are in place to prevent and/or address any discriminatory behaviors (e.g., racial, cultural, linguistic, or sexual harassment) that could undermine performance, confidence, and involvement in the program
- Encourage the practices of culturally responsive education and build from the assets students and families bring to the program
- Prioritize trust-based relationships among teachers, staff, leaders, students, and families that allow for continuity in relationships and consistency in practices across content areas and grade bands and foster a sense of psychological safety and security in all employed learning environments
- Provide individualized supports that enable healthy development, respond to student needs, and address learning barriers
- Focus on acceleration of student learning, not remediation of learning gaps

CONTINUED 

GOALS

3F

Inclusive Communication

Promote productive climate and culture with inclusive communication, for example:

- Celebrate the accomplishments of students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders in program communications and share those accomplishments with the broader education community
- Maintain accurate, up-to-date addresses/locations, contact numbers, and emails for all students, with special attention to families lacking stable housing
- Co-develop a bi-directional communications process with families, to gather feedback and share information about the program’s vision, goals, implementation plan, and outcomes; revise the process as needed
- Incorporate feedback from families as part of a data-driven cycle of improvement
- Provide all communication in print and digital form and in the most common languages used by students’ families

3G

Family and Community Engagement

Extend the community of learners beyond students, teachers, staff, and leaders to families and the community organizations that support the program.

- Celebrate the cultural traditions and career expertise of families and show gratitude for their support for program projects
- Host in-person “coffee hours,” meet families in their communities, and/or offer virtual “office hours” with the principal to build authentic relationships, share program news, and take questions from families about the program
- Engage families and community support organizations in making sense of the foundational beliefs and components of the learning program such as:
 - The rationale for restorative discipline policies and practices that are designed to support student learning and development and to repair community rather than to punish and disengage students
 - The purpose of metacognitive competencies (e.g., personal reflection on learning experiences and strategies) and how to help students achieve this competency
 - The purpose of motivational competencies (e.g., growth mindset, the value of mastery, connecting learning tasks with students’ personal aspirations and hopes for their futures) and how to help students achieve this competency
 - The purpose of social and emotional competencies (e.g., identity development, agency, tenacity and resilience, curiosity, self-direction, and civic identity) and how to help students achieve this competency

4

Instruction

Instruction is defined by the pedagogical actions and decisions of teachers and staff to deliver content to their students. High-quality instruction is best delivered through the use of evidenced-based instructional practices aligned to adopted academic standards. Excellent programs employ well-trained staff, stay current with emerging knowledge of best practices in learning, and implement instructional practices and policies that capitalize on the advantages of each learning environment.

GOALS

Vision

Form a committee of diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, staff, leaders, program coordinators, families) to establish the types of instruction students should experience in the learning program. High-quality instructional approaches include, but are not limited to:

- Having teachers deliver instruction and supplementing teacher-driven delivery with digital learning platforms and tools
- Strategically using synchronous and asynchronous instructional time; whole group, small group, and individual tutoring; digital, print, or hands-on instructional materials (e.g., use of e-books versus books and the special considerations of each); live student video feeds in remote learning
- Prioritizing student-driven experiences (e.g., project-based learning, designing investigations)
- Selecting specific formats, tools, and applications for content delivery and for collaborative and individual content processing and application
- Interweaving content-specific instruction with instruction in technology skills, digital literacy, and digital safety
- Providing opportunities for demonstrating learning that ensure students have appropriate access and choice (e.g., use a UDL approach)

4A

CONTINUED 

GOALS

4B

Authentic Assessment

Prioritize authentic assessment as a core instructional component of teaching and learning, for example:

- Use comprehensive, balanced, and non-traditional assessments, including formative, diagnostic, interim, and summative assessments of diverse types (e.g., informal discussion, formal diagnostic assessments, real-time feedback, performance-based assessments)
- Have teachers co-develop and collaboratively analyze assessments
- Encourage teachers to use student thinking to provide immediate and continual feedback throughout the learning process, as well as to plan instruction that builds on their knowledge and emerging understanding of a given topic
- Give students the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their own learning and to collaborate with teachers and peers to analyze assessment results and set personal academic goals
- Communicate with students and families about the purpose of assessments and examples of how assessments are used to guide academic goals and instruction

4C

Aligned & Accessible Technologies

Ensure stakeholders have the resources and skills they need to effectively engage in technology-enhanced instruction.

- Technologies (e.g., applications, hardware, devices, software, type of internet access, phone access) are needed and well-matched to learning goals
- Technologies required for teaching and learning are equitably accessible to students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders
- Students, families, teachers, staff, and leaders receive meaningful, easy-to-understand training on the use of the employed technologies, timely troubleshooting, and ongoing support for advanced use

CONTINUED 

GOALS

4D

Monitoring Students

Implement a process by which students who are not yet achieving academic goals or engaged at their highest potential (including in advanced coursework) are identified for and provided individualized acceleration and monitored for progress, for example, by:

- Adjusting individual pace
- Creating learning that is active, culturally responsive, collaborative, and fosters learning relationships
- Providing opportunities for individual learner supports that are matched to student individual learning styles
- Ensuring students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations, modifications, and supports as indicated in their individual IEPs
- Allowing students access to learning any place, any time, and with appropriate parameters and structure
- Providing flexibility for students to participate in a variety of opportunities (e.g., Advanced Placement classes, concurrent enrollment, work-based learning)

4E

Monitoring Teachers

Monitor teachers to ensure that they have the mindset, knowledge, and skills needed for facilitating learning in each employed learning environment and are identified for and provided professional learning if they need support in any of the following areas:

- Believing that every young person can achieve at high levels
- Building authentic relationships through a variety of synchronous and asynchronous opportunities both in-person and remotely
- Understanding the principles of UDL
- Employing strategies for supporting cultural and linguistic diversity
- Creating authentic and meaningful assessments that inform instruction
- Providing appropriate accommodations as listed on a student's IEP for students with disabilities
- Engaging students in developing intrinsic motivation, encouraging participation, inquiry, discourse, and respect for all learners
- Possessing adequate technology skills to design and deliver quality instruction that engages learners in a variety of technology-enhanced activities to achieve planned learning outcomes

5

Instructional Materials

The term instructional materials is used to describe the format and structure of the content delivered to students within the learning environment. The materials may be delivered through synchronous or asynchronous opportunities, through digital platforms or in-person, but it is necessary for the teacher to be the driver of the delivery.

GOALS

Vision

Form a committee of diverse stakeholders (e.g., students, teachers, staff, leaders, program coordinators, families) to select instructional materials that are aligned to adopted academic standards with proper scope, sequence, and rigor. High-quality instructional materials often:

- Include a range of subjects, activities, and experiences (e.g., the arts, sciences, engineering, and other enrichment experiences)
- Offer a substantial amount of innovative, project-based learning in a range of subjects grounded in the interests, knowledge, and experiences of students
- Support differentiation and personalization — with material appropriate to students' skill level, language ability, cognitive capability, and learning style
- Build from students' cultural and background knowledge in relevant ways
- Use diverse modalities, including whole group, small group, paired, and individual work; hands-on activities with movement and longer investigations
- Address social and emotional learning competencies
- Prioritize critical interactions, including students learning from their peers, formative assessments, and teacher-provided instruction
- Generate useful data, including usage metrics, formative assessments, progress monitoring, end-of-unit assessments, and summative assessments
- Meet the specific requirements of the program (e.g., learning environment, technology integration, hardware/software compatibility)

5A

CONTINUED 

GOALS

5B

Supporting Instructional Material Use

Offer teachers and staff a diverse portfolio of embedded, sustained professional learning opportunities relating specifically to the effective implementation of instructional materials, for example:

- Establish regular meetings of a site-based, learning program committee that includes teachers from various grade levels, content areas, and special education to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of adopted and supplemental materials
- Create pacing guides for each grade level and content area in the learning program and develop units of instruction that include adopted instructional materials and innovative replacement/supplemental learning materials as needed in grade level and/or content area teams
- Train teachers on the use of adopted and supplemental instructional materials (e.g., awareness level/logistics sessions, best practices workshops, pedagogical content knowledge deep dives, hands-on learning with technological tools, mentoring)
- Provide opportunities for collaboration among teachers (e.g., discussing the use of instructional materials, pacing guides, and instructional units; collaborative lesson studies; co-analyzing student work)

5C

Learning Management System

Require all teachers to use one common, school-wide Learning Management System (LMS) for any program that will use a remote learning environment.

6 Professional Learning

Professional learning refers to the personal learning that teachers, leaders, and staff do to improve their practice. Effective professional learning deepens the knowledge and skills that teachers, staff, and leaders need to ensure all students reach rigorous, equitable outcomes, and enables them to refine the practice across time.

GOALS

Vision

Develop a professional learning committee who will ensure professional learning offerings are high-quality and well-matched to the learning program's needs and the interests of teachers, staff, leaders, students, and families. High-quality professional learning typically:

- Is facilitated by people who have knowledge, skills, and mindsets that are aligned to the program
- Is delivered in a variety of ways (e.g., remote, physically-distanced in-person, in-person) that are well-matched to the goals and format of the professional learning
- Utilizes a variety of formats that are well-matched to the teacher needs (e.g., professional learning communities, coaching, awareness level/logistics sessions, hands-on learning, mentoring)
- Is school-based and job-embedded (e.g., in grade-level or discipline-specific professional learning communities where teachers learn new skills, observe and collaborate with peers, try new approaches, conduct virtual lesson studies, share lessons learned, celebrate successes, address challenges, and develop their collective efficacy)
- Focuses on student needs, instructional content, resources, and state standards
- Keeps adults current in effective practices specific to the environment of the learning program (e.g., remote, physically-distanced in-person, in-person).
- Uses appropriate research-based learning strategies, such as collaboration, reflection, and application

6A

CONTINUED 

GOALS

6B

Plans & Offerings

Establish a process by which the professional learning committee collaboratively refines and revises its professional learning plans and offerings, for example, by:

- Analyzing adult and student data strengths and needs
- Refining the vision for effective professional learning
- Creating professional learning goals and plans
- Evaluating progress
- Including the knowledge, experiences, and beliefs of stakeholders, as well as local contexts and critical school/district issues
- Utilizing a variety of strategies to build from the strengths and serve the needs of teachers and leaders and actively involves developing teacher leaders to be able to facilitate some types of professional learning.

6C

Professional Learning for Teachers, Staff, & Leaders

Provide teachers, staff, and leaders ongoing professional learning designed to help them identify specific, individual professional improvement goals and support them in achieving them, for example, they may need support with:

- Leading learning programs (e.g., operations, resource allocations, coaching and empowering staff, collaboration) specific to each employed learning environment
- Modeling the effective use of technology and pedagogy to build relationships with students and families
- Contributing to the productive climate and culture of the learning program
- Ensuring a culture and climate that is equitable, culturally responsive, and promotes the resilience and well-being of students
- Adopting a growth-mindset and continuous improvement approach to learning, teacher improvement, and/or program improvement

CONTINUED 

GOALS

6D

On-boarding New Teachers, Staff, & Leaders

Build a strategic process for on-boarding new teachers, staff, and leaders to the learning program, for example:

- Thoughtfully induct teachers, staff, and leaders into the program's vision, norms, values, culture, processes, technologies, and instructional materials
- Provide targeted support for working in each employed learning environment (e.g., remote, in-person, physically-distanced in-person)
- Match new teachers, staff, and leaders with mentors who are successful in the learning program
- Support teachers, staff, and leaders as they begin to engage in the program's continuous improvement efforts

6E

Monitoring Teachers, Staff, & Leaders

Ensure teachers, staff, and leaders incorporate their professional learning into their practice, for example by:

- Providing feedback from instructional leaders/coaches/peers, evaluations, and mentoring for using a collaborative coaching model
- Focusing monitoring and evaluation activities on helping teachers, staff, and leaders achieve specific, individual goals

Leadership

Leadership teams have the power to place a clear, cohesive vision for learning at the center of every decision and action, allowing for endless possibilities for innovation and improved student outcomes. Strong program leadership helps foster a positive climate and culture for students, staff, and families. Effective leaders understand that decisions are not made in isolation, but must include a variety of stakeholders to ensure their community is fully understood and engaged. The leadership team is also responsible for ensuring that specific policies and procedures are established and maintained to protect the safety and security of students and staff and that students' physical, mental, and emotional needs are met.

GOALS	
7A	<p>Vision</p> <p>Establish a leadership team of diverse stakeholders (e.g. leaders, teachers, staff, families, students, and community members) to review policies annually, clearly communicate expectations to all program stakeholders, promote high levels of stakeholder engagement, and broadly communicate the program's vision.</p>
7B	<p>Systems & Structures</p> <p>Develop, implement, and monitor policies, structures, and systems that support effective learning programs and address lagging or problematic issues, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish procedures to collect reliable and valid data multiple times per year to inform program planning, monitoring, and improvement (e.g., academics, attendance, behavior, culture, access, equity) • Convene and engage with various program improvement committees (e.g., equity committee, climate and culture committee, professional learning committee) • Allow stakeholders, including students and families, to co-design, co-lead, and co-refine the program and ensure that stakeholders have multiple ways to engage with program evaluation and improvement, by taking into account the structural, cultural, and financial challenges stakeholders might face in participating • Stay abreast of reliable emerging research in equity, the importance of responsive relationships, teacher collaboration, and safe and supportive schools • Ensure student attendance policies go beyond completion of assignments and include mechanisms to build engagement, motivation, and relationships between teachers and students, teachers and families, and students and their peers

CONTINUED 

GOALS

Supporting Digital Learning Environments

Establish and enforce policies that provide security to students and student data and records, including all digital records accumulated as part of remote learning, for example:

7C

- Follow all provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Follow all federal and state statutes and regulations pertaining to student privacy, the transmission or posting of images or other content on the internet, copyright of materials, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules pertaining to the public broadcasting of audio and video and other such issues
- Address the unique disciplinary needs within each employed learning environment, including cyberbullying, digital privacy violations, and cybersecurity

Supporting Special Populations

Provides all required services aligned with the assigned status of the special population within your program (e.g., students experiencing homelessness, students learning English, students with IEPs, students with exceptionalities, students with disabilities), for example:

7D

- Follow all provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to ensure policies, procedures, special education, and related services are followed and/or provided for students with IEPs in the least restrictive environment
- Ensure students learning English are provided formal services and support appropriate to their assessed level of English language proficiency and learning environment

Resource Allocation

Allocate human capital and program financial resources according to the needs of the learning program, for example, ensuring:

7E

- Teachers and staff are strategically allocated according to class size, certifications, skills, student needs, and the recommendations of program improvement committees
- Master schedules are designed to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders equitably
- Provide extended learning opportunities that allow the learning environment to go beyond current academic coursework (e.g., extracurricular opportunities, supplemental coursework) and ensure that these extended learning opportunities have equitable engagement and allow for the development of responsive relationships between providers and students
- Address the unique needs of PreK–2, 3–8, and 9–12 classrooms
- Policies around bullying, harassment, and discrimination are clear, appropriate, equitably enforced, and designed to contribute to a productive learning climate

References & Resources

Equity

The BELE Framework

The BELE Framework is a guide for building equitable learning environments with evidence-based practices and resources for teaching and learning, policymaking, and developing authentic partnerships.

The BELE Network. (2020). *The BELE Framework Executive Summary*. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J5req-r_TJEdqwuyAv2yNse1537SwcUU/view

Boston Public Schools Essentials for Instructional Equity

This resource outlines essential competencies for effective 21st century learning environments for students of color, students learning English, students with disabilities, and students of low socioeconomic status, as well as resources, tools, and professional learning opportunities that school teams and individual educators can draw upon to support implementation of the essentials.

Boston Public Schools. *BPS Essentials for Instructional Equity*. <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/6648>

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Framework

The guidelines in this tool support the implementation of Universal Design for Learning, a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn. Educators, curriculum developers, researchers, and other stakeholders can use these suggestions to ensure meaningful, challenging learning opportunities are accessible to all learners.

CAST (2018). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2*. <http://udlguidelines.cast.org>

CASEL's Refocus on the SEL Roadmap

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's (CASEL) SEL Roadmap provides strategies for refocusing on the academic, social and emotional development, and well-being of students and adults in planning for the transition back to school.

Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). (2021). *Refocus on the SEL Roadmap: Actions for a Successful Second Semester*. <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/SEL-ROADMAP.20.pdf>

Educating the Whole Child

In this brief, Learning Policy Institute details evidence-based recommendations grounded in a whole child approach to create schools that support healthy development for young people.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/educating-whole-child-brief>

A Restorative Approach for Equitable Education

This brief outlines how research-based practices in restorative practices and social and emotional learning can create supportive, equitable, and anti-racist learning environments.

DePaoli, J. L., Hernández, L. E., Furger, R. C., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2021). *A restorative approach for equitable education*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/wce-restorative-approach-equitable-education-brief>

Systemic Equity Review Framework

Education Development Center's three-phase Systemic Equity Review Framework guides education leaders in understanding inequities through studying and applying data into transformational actions that will promote educational equity systemwide.

Fabilar, E. (2018). *Systemic Equity Review Framework: A Practical Approach to Achieving High Educational Outcomes for All Students*. Education Development Center. <https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/Systemic%20Equity%20Review%20Framework.pdf>

The Importance of a Diverse Teaching Force

This Brookings Institution report summarizes research on the disparities between the racial composition of schoolchildren and the teacher workforce, emphasizing the importance of ensuring the teaching force reflects the demographics of the student body.

Figlio, D. (2017). *The importance of a diverse teaching force*. The Brookings Institution. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-importance-of-a-diverse-teaching-force/>

The Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) Tool

The Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool is a practical, accessible resource that helps districts conceptualize and organize systems-level equity work, including interrogating systems, setting equitable goals, and tracking progress

Hyler, M. E., Carver-Thomas, D., Wechsler, M., & Willis, L. (2020). *Districts Advancing Racial Equity (DARE) tool*. Learning Policy Institute. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/reln-districts-advancing-racial-equity-tool>

Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium Equity Audit

The MAEC, Inc. Equity Audit offers districts, schools, and teachers a way to develop a more concrete understanding of what it means to practice equity and reflect on whether current school policies, procedures and practices are equitable.

Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. (2021). *Equity Audit*. <https://maec.org/equity-audit/>

The Digital Inclusion Start-Up Manual

In this manual, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance provides guidance to increase access and use of technology in disadvantaged communities through digital literacy training, affordable home broadband, affordable devices, and tech support.

National Digital Inclusion Alliance. (2020). *The Digital Inclusion Start-Up Manual*. <https://www.startup.digitalinclusion.org/>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard G

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard G provides guidance on ensuring students have equitable access to these programs.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard G*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

Assessing Bias in Standards & Curricular Materials

This tool provides guidance in reviewing standards and curricular materials using equity-oriented domains. It also includes a scoring and analysis guide to assist with the evaluation process.

Nickie Coomer, M., Skelton, S.M., Kyser, T.S., Thorius, K.A.K., & Warren, C. (2017). *Assessing Bias in Standards & Curricular Materials*. Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. <https://greatlakeequity.org/resource/assessing-bias-standards-and-curricular-materials>

Teacher Digital Learning Guide

This guide provides important resources and recommendations to support teacher implementation of digital learning, as well as key considerations, guiding strategies, resources, and reflection questions to guide implementation of digital learning for the unique needs of communities.

Office of Educational Technology. (2021). *Teacher Digital Learning Guide*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://tech.ed.gov/files/2021/01/Teacher-Digital-Learning-Guide.pdf>

Including Voice in Education

This resource offers specific strategies and tips for educators looking to elevate student and family voice into learning.

Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. (2020). *Including Voice in Education: Addressing Equity Through Student and Family Voice in Classroom Learning*. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_PA_Including_Voice_in_Education_Addressing_Equity_Through_Student_and_Family_Voice_in_Classroom_Learning.pdf

Exploring Equity Issues

MAEC's Center for Education Equity put this paper together to offer strategies on how schools and communities can collaborate to support student achievement. Case studies describing successful examples of community engagement are included.

Schlanger, P. (2018). *Exploring Equity Issues: Community Engagement for Student Success*. Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium. <https://maec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Exploring-Equity-Community-Engagement-for-Student-Success.pdf>

Learning Acceleration Guide

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit offers specific goals and strategies to accelerate students back to grade level using any instructional format, with an emphasis on grade-appropriate assignments and strong instruction.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Learning Acceleration Guide*. <https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/TNTP-Learning-Acceleration-Guide-Updated-Nov-2020.pdf>

Minimizing Selection Bias

This training from the TNTP Teacher Talent Toolbox demonstrates how bias and identity influence selection decisions in the staffing process and provides questions for reflection and discussion.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Minimizing Selection Bias* [Powerpoint]. <https://tntp.org/teacher-talent-toolbox/view/minimizing-selection-bias>

Sharing Stakeholder Feedback Reflection & Planning Guide

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit will help schools collect and share stakeholder feedback with their communities in order to develop solutions.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Sharing Stakeholder Feedback Reflection & Planning Guide*. <https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/Stakeholder-Feedback-Reflection-and-Planning-Guide-TNTP.pdf>

Supporting Students with Diverse Learning Needs at Home

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit provides recommendations and resources to ensure online learning environments meet the needs of students learning English, students with disabilities, and students with learning and thinking differences.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Supporting Students with Diverse Learning Needs at Home*. <https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/At-Home-Support-for-Students-with-Diverse-Learning-Needs-TNTP.pdf>

Technology Resources for At-Home Learning

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit offers tips and resources to address the digital divide to ensure remote and hybrid learning models are accessible to all students.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Technology Resources for At-Home Learning*. <https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/Technology-Resources-for-Districts-TNTP.pdf>

Strategic Planning Toolkit For Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity

The Division of Equity & Inclusion at the University of California, Berkeley created this 6-step toolkit to guide and outline strategies for achieving transformative change in equity, inclusion, and diversity. Programs can adapt the planning tools, suggested activities, and resources to fit organizational needs, culture, and priorities.

University of California, Berkeley. (2015). *Strategic Planning Toolkit For Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity*. <https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/academic-strategic-toolkit-final.pdf>

Responsive Relationships

Family Engagement Toolkit

The toolkit contains practical planning and evaluation tools to support family engagement efforts, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented and underserved students.

Bodenhausen, N. & Birge, M. (2017). *Family Engagement Toolkit: Continuous Improvement Through an Equity Lens*. California Department of Education. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/fg/aa/lc/documents/family-engagement.pdf>

Effective Practices: Research Briefs and Evidence Ratings

The Center on Innovations in Learning published this review of the research base and strength of evidence for school improvement strategies.

The Center on Innovations in Learning. (2019). *Effective Practices: Research Briefs and Evidence Ratings*. <http://www.centeril.org/resources/EvidenceReviewandEffectivePracticesBriefs.pdf>

Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education

This Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific resource offers activities, tools and research on how to create an ongoing process of meaningful interaction between schools and families that involves two-way communication and a purposeful focus on supporting student learning.

Garcia, M. E., Frunzi, K., Dean, C. B., Flores, N., & Miller, K. B. (2016). *Toolkit of Resources for Engaging Families and the Community as Partners in Education. Part 1: Building an Understanding of Family and Community Engagement*. REL 2016-148. Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED569110.pdf>

Stages of Immigrant Parent Involvement

The authors describe stages of immigrant parent involvement to ensure educators can identify family challenges and needs.

Han, Y., & Love, J. (2015). *Stages of immigrant parent involvement — survivors to leaders*. Phi Delta Kappan, 97(4), 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0031721715619913>

Fostering a Strong Community in a Virtual Classroom

The different strategies needed to build a strong classroom community in a virtual context are described in this Edutopia article.

Henry, L. (2020, May 1). *Fostering a Strong Community in a Virtual Classroom*. Edutopia. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/fostering-strong-community-virtual-classroom>

Engaging Parents and Families to Support the Recovery of Districts and Schools

The authors of this brief provide insights, strategies, research, and resources for leaders looking to support families and build trust in order to facilitate student learning.

Hill, N. & Gayle, L. (2020). *Engaging Parents and Families to Support the Recovery of Districts and Schools*. EdResearch for Recovery. https://annenberg.brown.edu/sites/default/files/EdResearch_for_Recovery_Brief_12.pdf

Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships

This framework lays out the goals and conditions necessary for effective family engagement efforts that facilitate school improvement and student achievement.

Mapp, K. L. & Bergman, E. (2019). *Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships (Version 2)*. www.dualcapacity.org

Rising Up Together

This brief illustrates transformative SEL in practice, drawing on surveys with youth, interviews with teachers, and classroom observations during dedicated SEL instruction time in a predominantly Latinx school in a large urban district.

Rivas-Drake, D., McGovern, G., Rosario-Ramos, E.M., & Jagers, R. (2021). *Rising Up Together: Spotlighting Transformative SEL in Practice with Latinx Youth*. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). <https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SEL-Rising-Up-Together.pdf>

Community Conversation Planning Guide

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit outlines a step-by-step process for hosting effective community conversations while navigating the restrictions of remote learning and social distancing.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Community Conversation Planning Guide*. https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/Community_Conversation_Planning_Guide.pdf

Partnering with Families Virtually

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit highlights best practices in authentically engaging parents and families virtually as well as fostering a sense of community while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Partnering with Families Virtually*. https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/Virtual_Family_and_Community_Engagement-TNTP.pdf

Strategies to Build Relationships with Students

This toolkit provides educators with strategies they can use to build positive, trusting relationships with their students, including communication strategies to support positive interactions with students and integrate relationship-building into the classroom environment.

Turnaround for Children. (2020). *Strategies to Build Relationships with Students*. <https://turnaroundusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/BuildingRelationships-WestEd.pdf>

Climate & Culture

School Climate Assessment Instruments (SCAI)

The Alliance for the Study of School Climate provides a variety survey instruments for diverse stakeholders and school levels.

Alliance for the Study of School Climate. (2004). *School Climate Assessment Instruments - SCAI*. <https://web.calstatela.edu/centers/schoolclimate/assessment/>

From a Nation at Risk to a Nation at Hope

The Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development released this report on re-envisioning learning to encompass social, emotional, and cognitive dimensions with recommendations for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers.

Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, & Academic Development. (2018). *From a nation at risk to a nation at hope: Recommendations from the national commission on social, emotional, & academic development*. http://nationathope.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/aspen_final-report_full_webversion.pdf

Attendance Policy During the COVID-19 Pandemic

These attendance policy guidelines from Attendance Works recognize how both chronic absenteeism and punitive accountability policies can exacerbate educational inequities. Follow these recommendations to reduce the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on underserved students and families.

Attendance Works. (n.d.) *Attendance Policy During the Covid-19 Pandemic*. <https://www.attendanceworks.org/policy>

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System — Analysis Tools

This CDC tool can support schools in conducting root cause analyses on adverse health-related behaviors in youth and adolescents.

Center for Disease Control. (2010). *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System: Analysis Tools*. <https://nccd.cdc.gov/YRBSSanalysis/>

Returning to School During and After Crisis

This document provides guidance for state, district, and school leadership teams, as well as educators, in using multi-tiered systems of support to ensure students, families, and educators are supported during the return to school.

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, State Implementation and Scaling up of Evidence-Based Practices Center, National Integrated Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Research Network, National Center on Improving Literacy, & Lead for Literacy Center. (2020). *Returning to School During and After Crisis: A Guide to Supporting States, Districts, Schools, Educators, and Students through a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Framework during the 2020-2021 School Year*. University of Oregon. https://assets-global.website-files.com/5d3725188825e071f1670246/604285e7e3985105cbd0f14a_Returning%20to%20School%20During%20and%20After%20Crisis.pdf

The Challenge of Assessing School Climate

The authors describe the challenges, benefits, and dimensions of measuring school climate to educate the whole child.

Cohen, J., Pickeral, T., & McCloskey, M. (2009). *The Challenge of Assessing School Climate*. Educational Leadership, 66(4). <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/dec08/vol66/num04/The-Challenge-of-Assessing-School-Climate.aspx#:~:text=Schools%20can%20assess%20school%20climate,%2C%20staff%2C%20and%20family%20surveys>

Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching

This resource describes the research-based principles of culturally responsive teaching.

The Education Alliance at Brown University. (n.d.) *Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching*. <https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/teaching-diverse-learners/strategies-0/culturally-responsive-teaching-0>

Developing a Vision and a Mission

This book chapter provides an overview of developing a mission, vision, and action steps for school improvement.

Gabriel, J. G., & Farmer, P. C. (2009). *Developing a Vision and a Mission*. In *How to Help Your School Thrive Without Breaking the Bank*. ASCD. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/107042/chapters/developing-a-vision-and-a-mission.aspx>

A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus

This resource provides recommendations and resources for educators supporting students using trauma-informed practices during the COVID-19 crisis.

Learning for Justice. (2020). *A Trauma-Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus*. <https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/a-trauma-informed-approach-to-teaching-through-coronavirus>

Set a Shared Vision for Digital Learning

This module from the National AfterSchool Association demonstrates how to set a vision for digital learning in an OST setting.

National AfterSchool Association. (n.d.) *Set a Shared Vision for Digital Learning*. <https://naaweb.org/toolkit-set-a-shared-vision-for-digital-learning#what-will-you-learn>

Screening and Assessment Library

A searchable database of free and low-cost assessments of school mental health including academic, climate, and social, emotional, and behavioral focus areas.

National Center for School Mental Health. (n.d.) *Screening and Assessment Library*. University of Maryland School of Medicine. <https://www.theshapesystem.com/assessmentlibrary/>

School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Instructional Staff

This guide from the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments offers key action steps for instructional staff to contribute to an improved school climate.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (2017). *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Instructional Staff*. U.S. Department of Education. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED580909.pdf>

School Climate Improvement Implementation

This guide offers steps and resources for implementing interventions targeted at improving the school climate evaluation process.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (n.d.) *School Climate Improvement Implementation*. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/program-implementation>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard M

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard M provides guidance on addressing the varying levels of needs for learners and families.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard M*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

Project for Education Research that Scales (PERTS)

This professional learning tool uses a built-in survey engine to elevate student voice, ensuring educators can gather and incorporate student feedback on learning experiences.

PERTS (Project for Education Research that Scales). (n.d.) *Copilot-Elevate*. <https://www.perts.net/elevate>

Engaging Parents and Students from Diverse Populations in the Context of Distance Learning

This webinar provides state, district, and school-based strategies for student and family engagement in the context of distance learning.

Snipes, J., Jones, B., Stone, S., Birge, M., Crain, D., Medina, C. (2020, May 11). *Engaging Parents and Students from Diverse Populations in the Context of Distance Learning* [Webinar]. REL West. <https://www.wested.org/resources/engaging-parents-students-diverse-distance-learning-webinar/>

Instruction

Driving Systems Change and Equity Through Project-Based Learning — A Case Study

This case study demonstrates how to initiate deeper learning through PBL in geographically, politically, and socioeconomically diverse schools with concrete practices in professional learning, assessment, and continuous improvement.

Adams, J., & Duncan Grand, D. (2019). *New Tech Network: Driving systems change and equity through project-based learning*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Deeper_Learning_Networks_CS_New_Tech_Network_REPORT.pdf

Improving Distance Education in the Early Grades

Policy and practice recommendations for improved experiences of students, parents, and educators in TK-3 learning environments are highlighted in this PACE brief.

Cottingham, B. (2020). *Improving Distance Education in the Early Grades*. Policy Analysis for California Education, Stanford University. <https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/improving-distance-education-early-grades>

Equity and Access

The Digital Learning Collaborative offers recommendations for ensuring remote learning is equitable, accessible, engaging, and culturally responsive.

Digital Learning Collaborative. (2020). *Equity and access*. <https://www.digitallearningcollab.com/equity-and-access>

Using Performance Assessments to Support Student Learning

In this Learning Policy Institute research brief, researchers conducted interviews, focus groups, and observations to summarize conditions for and perceptions of performance assessments, as well as recommendations for policymakers on achieving positive outcomes through performance assessment.

Maier, A., Adams, J., Burns, D., Kaul, M., Saunders, M., & Thompson, C. (2020). *Using performance assessments to support student learning: How district initiatives can make a difference*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/CPAC_Performance_Assessments_Student_Learning_2_REPORT.pdf

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard C

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard C describes how school leaders should set and meet goals strategically to support their program's mission and vision statements.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard C*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard K

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard K specifies how to take a comprehensive, integrated approach to measuring and monitoring progress toward learning objectives.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard K*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

Instructional Strategies that Push Students to Own the Thinking

This guide from the TNTP Student Experience Toolkit describes seven instructional strategies for enabling students to build knowledge, skills, motivation, and deep engagement in learning.

TNTP, Inc. (2019). *Instructional Strategies that Push Students to Own the Thinking*. https://tntp.org/assets/set-resources/TNTP_Instructional_Strategies_that_Push_Students_to_Own_the_Thinking.pdf

Instructional Materials

How Teachers Judge the Quality of Instructional Materials

WestEd researchers conducted focus groups with teachers in six cities to develop a baseline understanding of how they obtain, judge the quality of, and select instructional materials.

Bugler, D., Marple, S., Burr, E., Chen-Gaddini, M., & Finkelstein, N. (2017). *How teachers judge the quality of instructional materials*. WestEd. <https://api.edreports.org/files/teachers-judge-quality-of-instructional-materials-brief.pdf>

Pacing Lessons for Optimal Learning

This article includes essential instructional tips for pacing when teaching in virtual settings.

Simmons, C. (2009). *Pacing Lessons for Optimal Learning*. *Educational leadership*, 77(9), 46-52.

Access to Varied and Customizable Content, Curriculum and Assessments

Details, steps, challenges, and guiding questions for schools looking to provide teachers with resources for curriculum, assessments, and professional learning to support strong content knowledge and pedagogy.

Future Ready Schools. (n.d.) *Access to Varied and Customizable Content, Curriculum and Assessments*. <https://futureready.org/implementation-guide/access-to-varied-and-customizable-content-curriculum-and-assessments/>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard I

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard I offers guidelines for implementing instructional design methods that enable effective online instruction.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard I*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

Instructional Materials Decision Guide

This decision guide from the TNTP Student Experience Toolkit directs educators through the process of finding high-quality, grade-appropriate instructional materials online.

TNTP, Inc. (2019). *Instructional Materials Decision Guide*. https://tntp.org/assets/set-resources/TNTP_Instructional_Materials_Decision_Guide.pdf

Professional Learning

Evaluating Professional Learning: A Tool for Schools and Districts

REL Northeast & Islands created this toolkit to introduce key concepts of professional learning evaluation, guiding users through developing evaluation plans with activities, tools, and other resources.

Breslow, N. & Bock, G. (2020). *Evaluating Professional Learning: A Tool for Schools and Districts*. REL Northeast & Islands. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/NE_5.3.5_Evaluation_PD_Brief_12-22-20_accessible.pdf

Preparing Educators for the Time of COVID ... and Beyond

The authors recommend policy and program suggestions for teacher preparation and professional learning opportunities, emphasizing the importance of mentoring and collaboration.

Darling-Hammond, L. & Hyler, M.E. (2020). *Preparing educators for the time of COVID ... and beyond*. European Journal of Teacher Education, 43(4). <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02619768.2020.1816961?needAccess=true>

Sample Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) Goals

This template can be used to create individual professional development plans based upon mandated standards or goals.

Educational Service Center of Lake Erie West. (2015). *Sample Individual Professional Development Plan (IPDP) Goals*. <http://www.eslakeeriewest.org/Downloads/Sample%20Goals%202015.pdf>

Develop a Professional Learning Plan

This tool provides examples of templates and formats for professional learning plans.

Killion, J. (2008). *Develop a Professional Learning Plan*. In *Assessing impact: Evaluating staff development* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press. <https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/School-Improvement-Services/Documents/Professional%20Learning/Develop%20a%20Professional%20Learning%20Plan-Learning%20Forward.pdf>

Professional Learning Plans: A Workbook for States, Districts, and Schools

This workbook provides tools and guiding questions within a seven-step guide for creating effective professional learning plans.

Killion, J. (2013). *Professional learning plans: A workbook for states, districts, and schools*. Learning Forward. <https://learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/professional-learning-plans.pdf>

Tools for Schools and District Leaders' Professional Learning Toolbox

The Region 9 Comprehensive Center describes how to use each phase of their evidence-based technical assistance model in designing and planning professional learning.

LaTurner, J. (2021). *Tools for Schools and District Leaders' Professional Learning Toolbox*. Region 9 Comprehensive Center. <https://region9cc.org/blog/school-and-district-leaders-professional-learning-toolbox>

Elementary School Principals' Professional Learning: Current Status and Future Needs

This Learning Policy Institute brief summarizes a study about professional learning for elementary school principals, emphasizing the need to increase access to high-quality opportunities.

Levin, S., Leung, M., Edgerton, A. K., & Scott, C. (2020). *Elementary school principals' professional learning: Current status and future needs*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/NAESP_Elementary_Principals_Professional_Learning_BRIEF.pdf

Supporting a Strong, Stable Principal Workforce

This brief summarizes findings from a 2020 NASSP-LPI study on principal turnover and recommends specific strategies to create a stable principal workforce.

Levin, S., Scott, C., Yang, M., Leung, M., & Bradley, K. (2020). *Supporting a Strong, Stable Principal Workforce: What Matters and What Can Be Done*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/NASSP_LPI_Supporting_Strong_Stable_Principal_Workforce_BRIEF.pdf

Things to Consider When Planning Professional Development

The author lists strategies for including teacher voice, choice, and active engagement in planning professional development.

Mancinelli, D. (2020, September 16). 6 *Things to Consider When Planning Professional Development*. Edutopia. Retrieved from <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-things-consider-when-planning-professional-development>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard L

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard L describes strategies for providing mentoring, technical assistance, and timely professional development for faculty and staff.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard L*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>

Virtual Onboarding and Cultivation Guide

This guide from the TNTP COVID-19 School Response Toolkit offers tips for the virtual onboarding process, including developing remote teacher onboarding plans and cultivating new hires.

TNTP, Inc. (2020). *Virtual Onboarding and Cultivation Guide*. https://tntp.org/assets/covid-19-toolkit-resources/Virtual_Onboarding_and_Cultivation_Guide_TNTP.pdf

Leadership

School Reentry Considerations

This document describes key considerations and resources for district and school leaders, educators, and school-employed mental health professionals who support student social and emotional well-being.

American School Counselor Association & National Association of School Psychologists. (n.d.) *School Reentry Considerations Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19*. <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/covid-19-resource-center>

Data and Privacy

Future Ready Schools provides guidance on how to create a personalized, learner-centered environment that uses technology to inform instruction while protecting student privacy.

Future Ready Schools. (n.d.) *Data and Privacy*. <https://futureready.org/ourwork/future-ready-frameworks/data-and-privacy/>

National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard E

The National Standards for Quality Online Programs provide a framework for schools, districts, state agencies, statewide online programs, and other interested educational organizations to improve online and blended learning programs. Standard E provides guidance on ensuring staff have resources needed to achieve personal and organizational goals.

National Standards for Quality. (2019). *National Standards for Quality Online Programs: Standard E*. <https://www.nsqol.org/the-standards/quality-online-programs/>



Reimagining Excellence

A blueprint for integrating social and emotional well-being and academic excellence in schools

This publication is in the public domain. While permission to reprint is not necessary, reproductions should be cited as: Folsom, J., Espolt, A., Moyle, P., Leonard, K., Busselle, R., Pate, C., and Walrond, N. (April 2021). Reimagining Excellence: A blueprint for integrating social and emotional well-being and academic excellence in schools. San Francisco, CA. Region 13 Comprehensive Center at WestEd, the Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd, and the National Center for Systemic Improvement at WestEd.

The contents of this publication were developed under cooperative agreement #S283B190031, #H326R190001, and #S424B180004 with the U.S. Department of Education. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, enterprise, curriculum, or program of instruction mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.