



NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

# **North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance**

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## Introduction

This pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to our students and our traditional school delivery system. The full continuation of education has been North Dakota's priority. Record amounts of innovation and transformation in education have been produced during a short period of time. North Dakota has led the nation in demonstrating agility and effectiveness in moving rapidly across all districts in delivering education with distance teaching and learning.

**Mission:** We will continue to lead the nation as we transition back into school buildings while maintaining the innovation and creativity that has been developed for distance education delivery. We do this by Building Relationships, Cultivating Opportunity, and Inspiring Growth.

**Purpose:** This guidance was designed collaboratively with the whole student in mind to address the social, emotional and academic development needs of each student.

**Values:** North Dakota commits to graduating all students Choice Ready with the knowledge, skills, and disposition to be successful by aligning all efforts to achieve the student outcomes in ND's PK-12 Education Strategic Framework.

### **Re-Entry Components**

The *North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance* aligns to the [Opening Up America Again](#) Phase 1-3 guidance and includes four main re-entry components: Health & Safety Logistics; Funding; Academic Support; and Social, Emotional Learning (SEL).

Although plans were required to be submitted to NDDPI for approval of distance learning, there is no submission requirement to DPI for school building re-entry. However, there will be an assurance required in ND STARS that validates schools have met the Health & Safety Logistics and have planned their reentry based on the *North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance*. In addition, school board approval is recommended for school building re-entry.

- The Component of Health & Safety Logistics includes crucial elements that educational leaders **must address** before opening their schools.
- The Components of Academic Support, SEL, and Funding offer district and school personal questions they should ask themselves and address before school opening occurs.
- In addition, guidance regarding these components is provided that may help school buildings re-open. You will find detailed descriptions and guidance of the four components in the following sections.

**Partners & Acknowledgements**



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## **North Dakota K12 Coordination Council**

*The K12 Education Coordinating Council would like to extend its thanks to the multiple agencies who created guidance for (North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance). The Council mobilized quickly to provide feedback on the Reentry Plan to provide perspective from each of the representative stakeholder groups to ensure a robust set of guidance, considerations, questions, and clarifications for school reentry.*  
~ Luke Schaefer, K12 Coordination Council Chair

### **North Dakota K12 Coordination Council Members**

The Honorable Doug Burgum, North Dakota Governor

The Honorable Kirsten Baesler, State Superintendent

The Honorable Kyle Davison, State Senator

The Honorable Erin Oban, State Senator

The Honorable Pat Heinert, State Representative

Luke Schaefer, NDREA President

Brian Duchscherer, State Board of CTE

Nick Archuleta, North Dakota United Executive Director

Aimee Copas, North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders Executive Director

Brandt Dick, North Dakota Small Organized Schools

Holly Stromsodt, North Dakota School Boards Association

Melissa Vollmer, Peace Garden Special Education Unit

Jen Weber, Statewide Longitudinal Data System Committee

Rupak Ghandi, Fargo Public Schools Superintendent

Phil Leitner, North Dakota School Counselor Association

Wayne Fox, Tribal School Representative

Kevin Hoherz, Public School Principal Representative

## **General Guidance for North Dakota K-12 Schools**

- As communities consider reopening school facilities for such things as K-12 schools, summer school, extended school year, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Summer Student Center, and Headstart, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers the following recommendations to keep communities safe while resuming peer-to-peer learning and providing crucial support for parents and guardians returning to work. These recommendations depend on community monitoring to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.
- All decisions about following these recommendations should be made in collaboration with local health officials and other State and local authorities, who can help assess the current level of mitigation needed based on levels of COVID-19 community spread and the capacities of the local public health and healthcare systems, among other relevant factors. The 4 Scenarios and the School Decision Tree listed below should be considered.
- Check State and local health department notices daily about confirmed cases and spread in your area and adjust operations accordingly. The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) provides confirmed cases by county each day on their [website](#). School districts are responsible for monitoring the cases in their area and determining their level.
- North Dakota guidance aligns with Phase 1-3 of [“Opening Up America Again”](#)

## **School Decision Scenarios**

### **Scenario One: Zero cases in your community.**

The NDDoH does not recommend school closures. Follow guidelines provided in *North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance*.

### **Scenario Two: Case(s) in your community but not in your school.**

The NDDoH does not recommend school closures if ongoing spread is not identified in your school community. Again, school leaders should follow the procedures outlined in the *North Dakota K-12 Smart Restart Guidance*. The NDDoH may recommend that schools close to reduce spread. In this event, the NDDoH will work closely with school and community leaders.

### **Scenario Three: Case in your school.**

The NDDoH will notify the school. If the school becomes aware of a COVID-19 case before it is contacted by the NDDoH, the school should contact the NDDoH immediately. The school should close for at least 72 hours following a confirmed COVID-19 case in a school employee or student. This will allow the NDDoH to conduct contact tracing and discover which close contacts of the case should be quarantined, isolated, and excluded from the school. This will also allow school personnel to conduct environmental cleaning.

### **Scenario Four: Second COVID-19 case occurs in your school within 14 days of the first.**

The NDDoH recommends the school close for 14 days to reduce the spread and conduct environmental cleaning.



## School Decision Tree

### SCHOOLS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



The purpose of this tool is to assist administrators in making (re)opening decisions regarding K-12 schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to check with state and local health officials and other partners to determine the most appropriate actions while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community.

#### Should you consider opening?

- ✓ Will reopening be consistent with applicable state and local orders?
- ✓ Is the school ready to protect children and employees at **higher risk** for severe illness?
- ✓ Are you able to screen students and employees upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure?

**ANY NO**



#### Are recommended health and safety actions in place?

- ✓ Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing and employees wearing a cloth face covering, as feasible
- ✓ Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation
- ✓ Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
- ✓ Train all employees on health and safety protocols

**ALL YES**

**ANY NO**



#### Is ongoing monitoring in place?

- ✓ Develop and implement procedures to check for signs and symptoms of students and employees daily upon arrival, as feasible
- ✓ Encourage anyone who is sick to stay home
- ✓ Plan for if students or employees get sick
- ✓ Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
- ✓ Monitor student and employee absences and have flexible leave policies and practices
- ✓ Be ready to consult with the local health authorities if there are cases in the facility or an increase in cases in the local area

**ALL YES**

**ANY NO**



**ALL YES**



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus)

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## **Health & Safety Logistics**

### **Throughout *Opening Up America Again* Phases 1-3**

- Establish and continue communication with local and State authorities to determine current mitigation levels in the community.
- Support and protect staff and students who are at [higher risk for severe illness](#), such as providing options for telework and virtual learning.
- Follow CDC's Guidance for [Schools and Childcare Programs](#), listed above.
- Provide teachers and staff from high community spread areas telework and other options as feasible to eliminate travel to schools in low community spread areas and vice versa.
- Ensure external community organizations that use the facilities also follow this guidance.

### **Safety Actions**

- Promote [healthy hygiene practices](#).
- Teach and reinforce [washing hands](#) and covering coughs and sneezes among children and staff.
- Teach and reinforce use of [cloth or disposable face coverings](#) among all staff and students. Face coverings are *most essential* in times when physical distancing is not possible. For staff of the hard of hearing and deaf, face visors may be an alternative consideration. Staff and students should be frequently reminded not to touch the face covering and to [wash their hands](#) frequently.
- Limit unnecessary staff and visitors from foodservice areas.
- Consider using disposable plates, cups, cutlery, etc.
- Information should be provided to all staff and students on [proper use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings](#).
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Post signs on how to [stop the spread](#) of COVID-19, [properly wash hands](#), [promote everyday protective measures](#), and [properly wear a face covering](#).

### **Intensify Cleaning, Disinfection, and Ventilation**

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces within the school and on school buses at least daily (for example, playground equipment, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains) and shared objects (for example, toys, games, art supplies) between uses.
- To clean and disinfect school buses, see guidance for [bus transit operators](#).
- Ensure [safe and correct application](#) of disinfectants and keep products away from children.
- Sanitize cookware, plates, cups, cutlery and food preparation stations and service areas regularly, and plan for distribution that minimizes handling.
- Sanitize table surfaces between eating shifts.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk (e.g., allowing pollens in or exacerbating asthma

symptoms) risk to children using the facility.

- [Take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.

### **Limit Sharing**

- Keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high touch materials to the extent possible (art supplies, equipment etc. assigned to a single student) or limit use of supplies and equipment by one group of children at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing of foods and utensils.
- Meal counting systems that reduce contact, such as name checklists or scanned bar codes are encouraged where possible.
- Schools may consider temporarily limiting certain foods or foodservice processes they think may lead to enhanced germ distribution.
- Prohibit students sharing their food with each other, or a community share table.
- Avoid sharing electronic devices, toys, books, and other games or learning aids.

### **Train All Staff**

- Train all teachers and staff in the above safety actions. Consider conducting the training virtually, or, if in-person, ensure that social distancing is maintained.

### **Checking for [Signs and Symptoms](#)**

- Implement screenings safely, respectfully, as well as in accordance with any applicable privacy laws or regulations.
- Confidentiality should be maintained.
- School administrators may use examples of screening methods in the NDDoH [Decision Tree for Symptomatic Individuals in Child Care Programs](#) or CDC's [Guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open](#) as a guide for screening children and CDC's [General Business FAQs](#) for screening staff.
- Encourage staff or children who are sick to stay at home.

### **Plan for When a Staff Member, Student, or School Visitor Becomes Sick**

- Work with school administrators, nurses, and other healthcare providers to identify an isolation room or area to separate anyone who exhibits COVID-like symptoms. School nurses and other healthcare providers should use [Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions](#) when caring for sick people. See: [What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection](#).
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick home or to a healthcare facility.
- Notify state and local health officials, staff, and families immediately of a possible case while maintaining confidentiality as required by the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#).
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use before cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24

hours before environmental staff [clean and disinfect](#). If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct application](#) of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.

- Advise sick staff members not to return until they have met CDC [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- Inform those exposed to a person with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, and follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop. Provide options for virtual learning.

### **Maintain Healthy Operations**

- Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices, if feasible.
- Monitor absenteeism for students and staff. Report any unexpected increases to state and local health officials.
- Monitor school nurse office traffic. School nurses and other healthcare providers play an important role in monitoring school nurse office traffic and the types of illnesses and symptoms among students.
- Designate a staff person to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. Employees should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Create a communication systems for staff and families for self-reporting of [symptoms and notification of exposures and closures](#).
- The district or school has communicated the re-opening plans to parents, students and community members and has elicited feedback from those stakeholders.
- The district or school has created communications strategies for keeping parents, students and teachers informed.
- Must solicit input on school re-entry plans from teachers, families, students and community members. Districts and schools may consider school board approval to re-open.

## **Social Distancing**

### **Social Distancing *Opening Up America Again* Phases 1 and 2**

- Ensure that student and staff groupings are static by having the same group of children stay with the same staff (all day for young children and as much as possible for older children).
- Group sizes will be a maximum of 15 people.
- Restrict mixing between groups.
- Cancel all field trips, inter-group events, and extracurricular activities.
- Limit gatherings and events to persons that can maintain social distancing, support proper hand hygiene, and restrict attendance of those from higher spread.
- Restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities involving other groups at the same time
- Space seating/desks to at least six feet apart.
- Close communal use spaces such as gymnasiums and playgrounds if possible; otherwise stagger use and disinfect in between use.
- If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, serve meals in classrooms instead. Serve individually plated meals and hold activities in separate classrooms.
- Stagger arrival and drop-off times or locations or put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible.
- Create social distance between children on school buses where possible.

### **Social Distancing *Opening Up America Again* Phase 3**

- Consider keeping classes together to include the same group of children each day and consider keeping the same teachers with the same group each day.
- Group size maximum will default to local school board policies regarding class size recommendations for each grade level.
- Allow minimal mixing between groups. Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain social distancing, support proper hand hygiene, and restrict attendance of persons from higher spread areas
- Continue to space out seating to six feet apart, if possible.
- Consider keeping communal use spaces closed, such as gymnasiums, or game rooms if possible; if this is not possible, stagger use and disinfect in between uses.
- Consider continuing to serve meals in classrooms. Serve individually plated meals.
- Consider staggering arrival and drop-off times or locations or put in place other protocols to limit direct contact with parents as much as possible. Continue to stagger arrival and drop-off times and plan to continue limiting direct contact with parents as much as possible

## **Academic Support**

Learning is the primary purpose of schools, and the ability to resume place-based academic activities is essential to a school district's system recovery. The resumption of in-person teaching, and learning begins to restore normalcy to the school environment, which can be very important to the psychological and emotional health of students, educators, staff, and administrators.

When developing school district building re-entry plans, districts should use these guiding questions and resources to develop programs, systems, and supports to address the unique needs of each school community. Districts are encouraged to establish a planning team—in collaboration with community partners—to consider how the school district will approach re-entry.

More information and guidance on restart service to students with disabilities, compensatory education and Extended School Year can be found at [NDDPI Covid 19 Updates and Guidance Special Education](#).

### **District-Level Considerations**

#### **Staff, Student, and/or Classroom Restructuring – Guiding Questions**

1. Has the district explored strategies to help students and educators learn remotely, in the event of future restructuring or disruptions?
2. Has the school board approved policies and reviewed new operating procedures to respond to future disruptions to building access?
3. What options for new configurations might the district consider due to social distancing guidelines? (examples to explore are blended learning, staggered reopening, alternate days (A/B day, am/pm rotation, etc.), scheduling options, class size, etc.)
4. How will the district provide additional support for student learning and transition? (examples to explore: "Acceleration Academies", or "Jump Starts" for the 2020-2021 school year, summer programming, extended school day, before/after school programming, tutoring, etc.)
5. How can the district rethink the use of staff that do not have classroom responsibilities to support student re-entry and meeting individual student needs? (examples to explore: paraprofessionals, specialists, support staff, administration, counselors, etc.)
6. What planning needs to occur in order to meet the needs of courses with large populations and/or have close contact? (examples to explore: physical education, band, choir, extra curriculars, CTE, etc.)
7. What does the re-entry plan for the district staff look like (educators, staff, administration, paraprofessionals, etc.)?

#### **Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations – Guiding Questions**

1. How will the district ensure it is meeting the needs of students with special needs and those requiring accommodations?
2. Has the district identified sub-populations of students needing specialized supports? How are these needs being identified and met? (examples to explore: students living in poverty, special education, 504, English learners, new enrollees, Title I, health concerns, migrant, homeless, prekindergarten, etc.)

3. What supports or interventions are provided to those students who were not responsive to the distance learning instructional model?
4. How will educational support be provided to vulnerable populations that continue to be high risk (or have family members who are high risk) and cannot physically reconvene? What might this alternate education programming look like?
5. How will policies and the system support education staff that fall into a vulnerable population? (examples to explore: allow to teach remotely, utilize larger classroom space where social distancing can be maintained)
6. What accommodations will be made for students or staff who are required to quarantine due to exposure or potential exposure?

### **Family and Community Engagement – Guiding Questions**

1. What strategies will the district take to build and/or maintain connections with families and the community?

## **Classroom-Level Considerations**

### **Relationships, Connections, and Transitions – Guiding Questions**

1. How will the school intentionally plan staff connections with students? What regular, frequent interactions can be facilitated between educators and students? (examples to explore: mentoring, advisory, group sessions, etc.)
2. What frameworks exist for educators to monitor how students are readjusting to school? How will they readily identify those having difficulty? What student-centered supports can be provided to aid those with minor adjustment problems? What specialized assistance may be needed for those who have major adjustment problems?
3. Based on the distance learning experience, what classroom practices might be obsolete? What new practices are promising or have contributed to learning? (examples to explore: meaningful feedback on student learning, active student engagement, etc.)
4. How will the district determine if students excelled or fell behind during distance learning? (examples to explore: formative and summative diagnostic assessments, screeners, progress monitoring tools, etc.)
5. How will student progress continue to be measured? How will this be communicated with fellow educators? (examples to explore: special education, Title I, EL, other specialists, consecutive grade levels or subject areas, etc.)
6. How will these results inform student-centered approaches to instruction and learning?
7. How will distance learning experiences influence change in current assessment practices?

### **Special Considerations for Vulnerable Populations – Guiding Questions**

1. What interventions are in place for all students? What interventions are in place for struggling students? What interventions are in place for vulnerable populations? Where do gaps exist?
2. What is the individualized intervention plan for each student? How will focused individual education be provided, especially for vulnerable populations? (examples to explore: curricular tools, enhanced learning opportunities, support to address unfinished learning, supports for

early grade reading, supports for students with specific needs, emotional, behavioral, mental health screeners and services, etc.)

### **Family and Community Engagement – Guiding Questions**

1. What communication tools exist for educators to stay connected with families? How will these resources be used to share information about school programming and expectations?
2. How can each classroom support parents with continued student learning? What tips and instruction strategies can be given to families?

### **Resources**

- [North Dakota Resource Center for Educators](#)
- [ND CTE Distance Education Resources](#)
- [ND MTSS Framework](#)
- [North Dakota Family Cabinet Resource Kit](#)

## **Social Emotional Learning (SEL)**

This section will provide guidance regarding Social Emotional Learning (SEL). SEL is the process through which youth and adults identify and regulate emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain meaningful relationships, and make responsible decisions. SEL provides a teaching and learning process where youth and adults develop the necessary skills and attitudes that helps them to engage in learning more successfully, build supportive relationships, engage civically, and have a positive mental health. Thus, SEL provides a foundation for all students to thrive, where some students may need additional support (tier 2 and tier 3) to achieve positive mental health.

Considerations have been made for what is appropriate for all, some, or few, based on the unique experiences of how people experienced the pandemic, recognizing that each student possesses a unique combination of skills and environments which influence their development and well-being. Stakeholder layers include staff, students, families, and the community at large.

### **Curriculum and Materials**

1. What instructional curriculum/supplements are available to explicitly teach social and emotional competencies? To integrate with content domains? What is the evidence surrounding those materials, and for whom)?
2. What instructional curriculum/supplements are needed to explicitly teach student social and emotional competencies? To integrate with content domains?
3. How will the school district balance the social and emotional needs of youth to engage in learning with academic learning?
4. What additional resources for SEL are needed?

### **Resources**

- [ND MTSS SEL Goals](#)



- [Aspen Institute SEAD](#)
- [Aspen Institute SEAD Fact Sheet](#)
- [School Guide Essentials](#)
- [CASEL Competencies](#)
- [Determining Who Needs Additional Support - Universal Screening Tool](#)

## Classroom and Instruction

### Classroom Environment – Guiding Questions

1. What classroom routines and procedures are in place/can be integrated to support SEL needs in the classroom? (ex. classroom meetings, classroom management strategies)
2. How do routines and procedures need to be modified to maintain physical safety and psychological safety while developing empathy and compassion for others?
3. What instructional practices support SEL in the classroom (ex. classroom discussions, cooperative learning, and assessment and feedback)? How might those practices need to be modified per health and safety guidelines?
4. How will teachers create a calm and supportive environment for students?

### Student Needs and Behaviors – Guiding Questions

5. How will school district leaders help students reconnect with their peers in a learning environment? Socially? With their teachers? What will that look like in the “new normal”? (Especially students that are more introverted)
6. How will teachers be prepared to address a potential increase in anxiety, PTSD, etc. as a result of the disruption to the students’ regular routine?
7. How will teachers be prepared to handle a potential increase in student behavioral issues as a result of the disruption to the students’ regular routine?
8. How will teachers address potential bullying related to stigma associated with COVID-19 (ex. individuals who are sick (COVID-19 or other) and return to school, general coughing/sneezing, ethnicity, etc.)?
9. How will staff members identify students that may need immediate counseling?
10. How will the teachers assure that students are able to reconnect socially with their peers? (Especially students that are more introverted)

### Resources

- [Teaching the Whole Child](#)
- [CASEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook](#)
- [CDC Tips to Helping Students Cope](#)
- [Trauma Informed Approach to Teaching through Coronavirus](#)
- [SEARCH Institute Building Developmental Relationships During the COVID Crisis](#)
- [Helping Children with Traumatic Separation or Grief During COVID-19](#)
- [Addressing Barriers to Learning](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](#)
- [Psychological First Aid](#)

## Adult Social Emotional Learning

### Adult Self-Care Needs – Guiding Questions

1. What types of supports do staff (certified and classified) need to re-engage in the working environment? To feel physically and psychologically safe?
2. What types of school structures need to be put into place to support adults' social and emotional development?
3. How will the school district ensure that adults are modeling good social and emotional competencies?
4. What employee assistance programs will be available for staff members experiencing mental health issues as a result of the COVID-19 situation?

### Supports Needed by Adults to Serve Students – Guiding Questions

5. What types of training do adults need to fully support students? To identify signs of trauma and grief in students?
6. What types of school structures do adults need to fully support students?
7. How do we create an environment in which adults feel connected and engaged with one another? With their students? With the families?

### Resources

- [Addressing Barriers to Learning](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](#)
- [Psychological First Aid](#)
- [Helping Children with Traumatic Separation or Grief during COVID-19](#)
- [Strengthening Adults Social and Emotional Needs](#)

### School-Wide Procedures – Guiding Questions

1. Who will serve as the school lead for SEL? Mental/behavioral health services?
2. Which data will inform decisions regarding social-emotional needs of stakeholders?
3. How will the district ensure the mental health and well-being/promote self-care for staff?
4. How will the district ensure that school counselors are only being asked to do what they are trained for? (Example: school counselors may do short term counseling or small group counseling but should NOT be doing long-term counseling.)
5. How will the district ensure coordination and collaboration between counselors, social workers, teachers and other staff?
6. How will counseling and/or psychological first aid be provided for those that need it?
7. How is the district ensuring that ALL STAFF (certified and classified staff) are prepared to be aware of students social and emotional well-being?
8. What long-term plans will the district have for social emotional recovery as a result of the disruption to the regular routine? (for some, it may take months or years to recover)

### Resources

- [Supporting and Responding to Behavior](#)

- [CASEL Guide to Schoolwide Data Reflection Protocol](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](#)
- [Psychological First Aid](#)
- [Appropriate vs. Inappropriate Roles for School Counselors](#)

### **Family and Community Partnerships – Guiding Questions**

1. How will the school district ascertain what helps stakeholders feel safe at school?
2. What partnerships are needed/available to support student needs? Staff?
3. How will the school district ensure stakeholders are informed and accounted for in the decision-making process?
4. How will the school district provide emotional support to students and families that might have been directly impacted by COVID-19 (they or someone they know tested positive, had health issues, etc.)?
5. How will the school provide emotional support to students and families that have experienced non-health related impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? (job loss, increase in domestic violence, etc.)
6. How will immediate, short-term, and long-term counseling options and outside referrals be addressed?

### **Resources**

- [NCTSN Coping in Hard Times: Fact Sheet](#)
- [Supporting Children during COVID-19](#)
- [Addressing Barriers to Learning](#)
- [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](#)
- [National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#)

## **Funding**

The federal government has recognized the need for funding K-12 education during and after the times of this current COVID-19 pandemic. The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security](#) (CARES) Act provided an economic stimulus to individuals, businesses, and schools.

Considering COVID-19, below is the most recent information we have about:

- Use of U.S. Department of Education (ED) grant funds for employee compensation and cancelled activities or travel,
- CARES Act funding, and
- Waivers of certain fiscal requirements.

LEAs should make informed and strategic decisions about the use of available funds.

## **ED Grant Funds for Employee Compensation and Cancelled Activities or Travel**

As authorized by the federal Office of Management and Budget, on April 8, 2020 the U.S. Department of Education (ED) offered relief in two key areas as described in this [fact sheet](#).

### **Overview of CARES Act Funding**

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was signed into law on March 27, 2020. It includes two grant programs to help educational entities prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus:

1. The Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), and
2. The Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER).

### **ESSER Overview**

Under ESSER Fund authority, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) will award grants for the purpose of providing Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) with emergency relief funds to address the impact that Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across the state. The use of funds under this program are broad and flexible, consistent with the federal government's goal of preventing, preparing for, and responding to COVID-19. For more information including district allocations and FAQ, visit

<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/essser-funding>.

### **EDGAR and UGG**

ESSER funds are subject to both the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) and the Uniform Grant Guidance (UGG).

### **Considerations/Guiding Questions**

1. Does the school system's budget from local and state funding align with CARES Act funding plans and priorities maximizing opportunities?
2. Does the school district's planned use of funds help to support a robust distant learning plan including curriculum, versatile delivery methods, learning management systems, devices, and other infrastructure?
3. Will school districts use of funds help support professional development for distance learning including pedagogy for teachers and school leaders?
4. Will the funds help to support social emotional and academic development?
5. Are school districts planning for future unknown needs by reserving some funds to be utilized later as other needs may arise?
6. Has the school district analyzed opportunities to reevaluate your end of year budget to leverage any financial savings as a result of distance learning plans?
7. Is the school district using funds to address the plans for every student's academic needs including identifying any potential learning gaps?
8. Has the school district considered the anticipated reduction of next year's transportation reimbursements due to lower ridership in spring 2020?