

Reset & Restart-Education Planning Guide for Ohio Schools and Districts

Introduction

1. Purpose

This guide provides a framework for schools and districts to use, as appropriate, for restoring educational achievement of each of Ohio’s students, so that each student is on track to attain the One Goal in *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio’s Strategic Plan for Education. **This is a tool for educators to prompt and inform thoughtful local conversations and plans for resetting and restarting school. It has been developed with input from educators and educator-related organizations, parents and students.**

Important Note: This document is designed to inform districts and schools in making decisions about how best to deliver and implement instruction. While the daily health precautions are necessarily prescriptive, developed in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Health and Governor DeWine’s office, the remainder of the document does not constitute a requirement for any school or district. Instead, it serves as a resource and starting point for schools and districts to use in local decision making. It will be continuously revised over the coming weeks and months as we collaborate with health experts and receive feedback from our education stakeholders.

2. Operating Assumptions

The coronavirus remains with us, and Ohio will likely not return to normalcy until there is a vaccine or a cure. A return to school will look very different. Ohio’s education system will need to be flexible and nimble, understanding that the priority of protecting the health of Ohio’s citizens may require schools to operate in various modes at different times, with minimum advanced notice.

3. Guiding Principles

Returning to school will look different than it did before March 16, 2020. To best protect the health of Ohio’s students and citizens, and to abide by recommendations from the Ohio Department of Health, schools will need to change many practices. However, we remain committed to the vision laid out in Ohio’s strategic plan, *Each Child, Our Future*, supportive of the Whole Child and the three core principles – *equity, partnerships, and quality schools*. Those fundamental components of the strategic plan should help guide Ohio’s educators in our recovery efforts.

- **Principles for *what we need to do*:**

- Ensure local flexibility within state-defined parameters. (No one-size-fits-all.)
- Protect the health and safety of students, staff and visitors by supporting state and local efforts at controlling the spread of coronavirus.
- Assess students academically to determine where they are starting from (in the context of state standards) and determine the best path forward for each student.
- Support literacy, content literacy and numeracy by providing intervention opportunities, and support students in their continuing pursuit of their passions and/or career potential (music, art, other electives, industry credentials, etc.).
- Ensure educator support and training to support children and families.

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- Support social, emotional and physical health of students and staff.
 - Prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable students including students with disabilities, low income students, English learners, homeless, foster care and justice involved youth, etc.
 - Create two-way communication with families and caregivers to assess students’ and families’ needs and communicate expectations and supports
- **Principles for the way in which we will work:**
 - Promote collaboration (administrators, teachers, all school personnel, families, communities, community partners, etc.) that involve *co-design* of strategies and high-quality planning and implementation processes.
 - Leverage the power of quality *continuous improvement processes* and the *use of data*. Ohio’s education community should consider the attributes of an effective continuously improving school/district, and implement processes that support a continuous improvement mindset.
 - Embrace the use of *Multi-Tiered System of Supports* – Tier 1 for all; Tier 2 for some; Tier 3 for individuals.
- 4. Role(s) of Associations, Educational Organizations (including Educational Service Centers), and Other State/Community Partners**
- “Partnerships” is a key principle of *Each Child, Our Future*, and is critical in moving forward in the 2020-21 school year. A collaborative effort of both education and community organizations is needed to ensure the effective delivery of appropriate instruction to each child in our schools.
- **Professional Development:**

Partner organizations have always been great sources of professional development. During the school-building closure there emerged even more need for schools and districts to leverage partnerships to provide additional learning opportunities for educators. There will remain a need for further training for school employees in a return to school environment
 - **Convener:**

There will be an ongoing need for people to come together virtually to talk, discuss, share, learn and make decisions. ESCs, associations and partner organizations can maintain needed momentum in the interest of the best experience possible for Ohio’s students, as well as easing the burden on individual schools and districts. Convening educators to share best practices, participate in peer-to-peer activity, share the application of innovations, and other similar activities are affirming, heartening and help to ensure continuous improvement in an unknown environment.
 - **Sharing of Resources/Networking:**

The education community has embraced a “how can we help each other” approach – not surprising. We’ve seen so many amazing examples of the education community stepping out beyond their usual roles (ironically, at a time of staying in) and sharing ideas, sharing resources, sharing approaches, etc. How do we keep this going?
 - **Communication Partners:**

Community organizations (and others) can serve both to share community needs with school districts *and* to help districts share key information with students and families.

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Additionally, these partners can implement food distribution, address mental health needs of students and families and help meet other ongoing needs.

Return to School Considerations in Four Areas

1. Health and Safety and Related Logistical Considerations

As Ohio develops the capabilities to safely diagnose, treat, and isolate COVID-19 cases and their contacts, we will enter the recovery phase of the pandemic and begin to resume some activities, including schools, with a phased-in approach over time. This will lead to some new COVID-19 infections, which is to be expected. The goal is to keep the number of COVID-19 cases below the hospital/health system’s capacity to handle them. Certain precautions must be observed on an ongoing basis during the pandemic recovery phase in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. It is expected that there will be “flare ups”, as determined by ODH and local health departments, in COVID-19 cases that may need to be addressed by implementing additional measures beyond ongoing precautions.

• **A Student’s Daily Journey:**

We should all “put on a pair of our students’ shoes” and walk through the day in this manner. This includes waking up in the morning, transportation to the physical school building, waiting to enter the building, entering the building, waiting inside the building in designated areas, latchkey, locker visits, getting to class, taking into account any and all movement throughout the day (changing classes, using the restroom, lunch/cafeteria (breakfast and lunch), gym/PE, recess, etc.), and returning home.

• **Health Safety Measures (physical distancing, handwashing, sanitizing, masks, etc.):**

- **ODE** has collaborated with the Ohio Department of Health to provide clear guidance as to how schools will need to operate in all aspects of students’ and employees’ daily experience. The “Daily Precautions to Practice” below include physical and social distancing, daily health checks, use of personal protective equipment (face masks), daily hygiene habits, cleaning and sanitizing throughout the day and at the end of the day, attendance policy related to coronavirus symptoms, and teaching and learning from home whenever possible. This section is the most prescriptive section in the guide, and exceptions to it should only be considered in coordination with a school’s local health department.
- **Each local district and school is expected** to utilize the guidance contained here and work collaboratively with their local health departments and stakeholders to implement. Any variability related to the significance of coronavirus in certain communities that allows for flexibility should be considered in collaboration with local health departments.

• **Daily Precautions to Practice:**

Through partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, the following daily precautions to practice are outlined below.

- **Daily Health Assessments:** Require students and personnel to take their own temperature before reporting to school and to stay home if above 100F or if experiencing other symptoms. Schools should also consider the reality that all students

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will not be equally supported in a self-assessment and should be aware of those students with higher needs (single-parent, both parents working, etc.). Personnel and students who are ill must stay home from school and must be sent home if they become ill at school, particularly if they have COVID-19 symptoms – cough or shortness of breath without any other explanation, or fever. While waiting to go home, ill persons should continue to wear a facemask and be placed in a separate isolation room overseen by school personnel who is also wearing a mask.

- **Physical/Social Distancing:** Maintain physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) among all persons on school grounds and those utilizing school transportation. Utilize visual cues (i.e. floor markings) and other strategies to reinforce (i.e. alternative units that are meaningful for students to understand 6' spacing). Create transition schedules that minimize the number of students and staff in common spaces including hallways, cafeteria, etc.
- **Face Masks:** Require all persons on school grounds and utilizing school transportation to wear facemasks. School nurses or personnel who care for sick persons should utilize appropriate PPE. Will this be provided by districts/schools? Will employees be expected to have their own? What standards must be met?
- **Good Hygiene Practices:** Make hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol based) and sanitizing products available for personnel and students, especially in high traffic areas, including at each school entrance and in every classroom (See *Guidelines for the Use of Alcohol Based Hand Sanitizers in Ohio Schools* guidance document at: https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/school-nursing-program/media/use_of_alcohol-based_hand_sanitizers_in_ohio_schools).
- **Clean and Sanitize:** Frequently clean surfaces paying particular attention to high-touch areas (stair handrails, door handles, counters, desks, tables, chairs, lavatories, computers, books, etc.). Cleaning and disinfection should be done after each cohort of students leaves a facility or classroom, including between class changes (if applicable), between groups in the cafeteria (when utilized), and after each school day. Limit sharing of supplies and equipment and sanitize between student use. What is the appropriate level of staffing to accommodate additional needs?
- **Student Learning:** It is important to note that expected health practices will require new learned behaviors. Implement age-appropriate learning about COVID-19 control strategies for students. This should be on-going to reinforce the importance of handwashing, physical distancing, appropriate use of facemasks, cough and sneeze etiquette, and the importance of staying home when sick or displaying symptoms. All schools and offices should display environmental print promoting infection control strategies (i.e. cough/sneeze etiquette, proper handwashing, appropriate use of facemasks, physical distancing, importance of staying home when sick, etc.). Find examples at coronavirus.ohio.gov.
- **Employee Training:** Education and training for all employees must be provided on how to properly put on, use, take off, and dispose of PPE. Adequate education must be provided for all school personnel to know and recognize the most likely symptoms of COVID-19 and how to protect employees and students from transmissions.
- **Showing Symptoms of COVID-19 at School:** Should students or employees exhibit symptoms while physically attending school in-person, they should report to a quarantine room, be required to wear a face mask and any adults interacting with them

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should be required to wear a face mask. Those showing symptoms should be required to go home at the earliest convenience.

- **Visitors:** Prohibit visitors in schools, or limit to emergency situations and enrollment. Require temperature checks and a symptoms check for any visitors.
- **Diagnosed or Exposure to COVID-19:** Families and staff must notify school if they have been exposed to COVID-19 and are quarantined, or if a family member has been diagnosed with or presumed to have COVID-19 and/or is being isolated; Personnel and students with known exposure to someone with diagnosed or presumed COVID-19 must self-quarantine at home for 14 days; Personnel or students who travel out of state or to a location with known community spread must self-quarantine at home for 14 days. Guidelines should be considered for holding students and personnel harmless for required quarantine period(s).
- **Returning to School Following Quarantine:** Personnel and students with confirmed or presumed COVID-19 must meet these conditions prior to returning to school: Persons with confirmed COVID-19 may return to work/school after fever is resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication **AND** respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) improve **AND** they have two negative COVID-19 test results; Persons with presumed COVID-19 may return to work/school when at least 7 days have passed since symptom onset **AND** 72 hours after fever resolves without use of fever-reducing medication **AND** respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) improve.
- **Additional Precautions Required *During Flare-Ups* (determined by ODH or local health departments):**

Through partnership with the Ohio Department of Health, the following additional precautions required during COVID-19 flare-ups are outlined below.

 - Partner with local health departments to determine precautions necessary.
 - Playground equipment cannot be used.
 - Prohibit gatherings of 10 or more.
 - Increased cleaning procedures must be implemented for all objects shared by students or personnel.
 - Take temperatures of personnel and students upon arrival and send them home if 100F or above or if employee/student is experiencing other symptoms.
 - Utilize remote learning (electronically or paper format). Provide take-home meals for students who participate in free/reduced lunch programs.
- **Communication Plan:**
 - **ODE** to communicate updates via gov delivery email, website postings and social media.
 - **LEA** to plan how all health, safety and logistical practices are communicated to students, parents, staff, and community members. Communication with parents/guardians is a critical component and schools should be diligent in informing parents about symptom onset and the importance of staying home when sick. Student expectations and routines should be shared with parents. Expectations and procedures regarding parent visits, pick up, drop off, and signing students out of school early need to be communicated. (Parents remain in vehicles).
- **Professional Development Training to Address Health Safety Measures:**

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- **ODE**, in partnership with ODH, will provide general resources for use by school personnel. They will provide resources to all school personnel about COVID-19 infection control strategies and related school policies and procedures. Instruction should include, but not limited to, appropriate handwashing, physical distancing, use of facemasks, symptoms, staying home when sick, etc. and strategies to reinforce these concepts with students and parents.
- **LEA:** Staff will need face-to-face time to prepare for return to in-person settings. These meetings should occur before students return to the buildings in order to thoroughly manage all facets of prioritizing students’ and employees’ health needs. Schools/districts will need to consider their calendars and work collaboratively to ensure employees are well-prepared for the opening of the school year.

2. Educational Considerations

The coronavirus pandemic has forced the education community to rethink instructional delivery. Not all students should or need to be in a physical building at all times. There is an opportunity to work collaboratively with students, parents, community partners and educators to consider how to best meet students where they are.

- **Focus on Equity:**

Each Child, Our Future, Ohio’s 5-year strategic plan for education identifies **Equity** as Ohio’s greatest challenge. Equity in education means that **each child** has access to relevant and challenging academic experiences and educational resources necessary for success across race, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, family background and/or income.

The coronavirus did not create equity challenges in education. Those challenges *have long been recognized in education*, yet, the pandemic *is* revealing and exacerbating deeply rooted social and educational inequities. Further, the global crisis highlights the equity connections across education and other social systems, such as healthcare, housing and the workforce.

As educators, communities and policymakers rally together in a tremendous response to the pandemic, equity must remain at the forefront of Ohio’s short- and long-term responses and supports.

- **Assessment of Student Educational Levels:**

As students return to various school settings, it will be important to gauge where they are in terms of standards, and this should be informed by data. Many schools have vendor or district-created assessment systems in place.

- **ODE** will provide resources for diagnostic assessment of students, based on released test items to support identifying student needs, including students with an IEP. ODE will provide guidance in analysis of progress monitoring data to determine where students are in their acquisition and retention of knowledge and will leverage the collaborative partnerships of Educational Service Centers and State Support Teams for this support. ODE will also provide information on assessment and placement of new and returning English learners.
- **LEAs** will need to determine where students are in their acquisition and retention of knowledge. This understanding will then help inform their differentiated approach to instruction. Schools may consider “looping” (a practice in which students have the same classroom teacher in a subject and/or grade level for two or more

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consecutive years) classroom teachers where practical to maximize understanding of students' current levels.

- **High-Risk Population:**
Develop and implement a plan for addressing needs for students and school personnel with special healthcare needs that place them at higher risk for medical difficulties related to exposure to COVID-19. How will “high-risk” be identified for both students and staff? This may include enhanced modifications such as remote learning for high-risk and quarantined students and employees.
- **Data Use:**
Districts may need guidance in using data to determine where students are in their acquisition and retention of knowledge. They may *also* need guidance in using data for other purposes (e.g., assessing non-academic needs, school climate, determining what worked/didn't work with remote learning, determining what worked/didn't work with family engagement); non-education factors impacting education (e.g., job loss, health concerns), etc.
 - **ODE** to provide resources, professional learning, and coaching through RDLs, SSTs and communication to LEAs.
 - **LEAs** will utilize district and school, building and teacher-based teams to review student data regularly to make adjustments to instruction and non-academic interventions and supports.
- **Summer Student Learning Opportunities:**
After using data to determine where students are in their acquisition and retention of knowledge, set up targeted summer learning opportunities. This may include academic, as well as mental and behavioral health services as well.
 - **LEAs** will collaborate with personnel and stakeholders to determine which remote learning approaches will be used by schools/districts and how professional development will be delivered. Educators may also develop a list of trusted resources to use for remote learning.
- **Summer Professional Development for Educators:**
Many educators have learned a great deal very quickly during the school-building closure; if districts intend to continue blended learning or remote opportunities *or* if there is anticipation of future school-building closures, educators will need ongoing professional development. Focused professional development that relates to the whole range of issues will be fundamental, including based on needs of students within the school.
 - **ODE** will work with ESCs and SSTs, as well as other existing vendors for professional development to communicate about available opportunities.
 - **LEAs** will identify the most appropriate methods to ensure staff and educator sufficient professional development to ensure readiness for the resumption of school.
- **4th Quarter/1st Quarter Transition:**
This involves ideas like summer school, or early start (Jump Start) approaches.

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- **ODE** will develop multiple resources to support teachers in identifying standards that were not mastered before or during the ordered school-building closure. ODE will also provide guidance and resources aimed at schools supporting students facing a transition such as first-time preschool students, new kindergarten students, and students starting middle or high school. ODE will provide information on assessment and placement of new and returning English learners.
- **LEAs** will identify the most appropriate strategies within their capacity that make the most sense for their particular students, staff and community.

- **Communication with and Assessing Needs for Vulnerable Youth:**

Communication with homeless, foster or otherwise highly mobile youth may have been more challenging during the school-building closure and as districts transition back to school. Additionally, they may face increased needs that are not strictly ‘achievement needs’. Districts will need continued support in using data to identify increased need and community partnerships to address the need.

 - **ODE** will provide information and technical assistance to support districts and schools as they communicate with, engage and support their vulnerable youth population. ODE will collaborate with other state agencies and organizations to identify needs and align supports.
 - **LEAs** will collaborate with local agencies and organizations to identify needs and maximize supports of vulnerable youth. Districts and community schools will utilize their vulnerable youth liaisons to ensure vulnerable youth receive equitable academic services and non-academic supports.

- **Curriculum (broad or essential):**

An essential curriculum within individual subject areas might be most practical, based on the needs of students. There is a high likelihood to have literacy and math concerns, particularly for younger students. Resources for schools to use should be available. Districts are encouraged to implement processes and practices that will help students continue to move forward and develop the foundational skills and knowledge from the previous year. The use of concept mapping can support districts, teachers and parents make connections across the years. Additionally, districts should identify high-quality instructional materials that are conducive to remote learning of the essential curriculum. Subjects should not be narrowed as often it is the non-core classes that keep students engaged and motivated. Content within classes may need to be narrowed. In remote learning situations, expectations should be collaboratively developed and monitored.

- **Determine Appropriate Educational Configuration:**

Flexibility is critical in the current environment. Choices of educational settings for a return to school buildings may include online, blended learning (a combination of in person and online), multi-modal learning (to be defined). School will look different. Will we need new models of course and student scheduling? How do we rethink the way we use time? Consider the possibility of teachers moving, rather than large numbers of students doing so, in order to minimize the number of interactions (social distancing). Consider scheduling options that reduce number of students in each classroom, hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, on school transportation, etc. This might include placing students into cohorts and

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scheduling half day or alternating days for attendance in conjunction with work that is completed at home. (Remote work can be accomplished in electronic or paper formats to best meet unique needs of students.)

- **Personalized Learning:**
The delivery of instruction will more than likely need to become much more personalized. This is probably a good long-term practice to promote regardless – but especially given the variability that will exist among students. According to anecdotal observations, many students have prospered with distance learning. How can or should distance learning fit into the overall instructional approach going forward? Could a Project Based Learning approach be considered and implemented? Is the Future Ready framework an approach that can be embraced? More than ever before we need to focus on making learning joyful and engaging in a personalized manner.
- **Attendance:**
In-person attendance is important and conducive to learning. However, in the current pandemic environment, a focus on student attendance must be balanced with a priority for keeping students and employees safe and healthy. Rather than recognizing students for *perfect* attendance, consider a measure that encourages *consistent* attendance, but not at the expense of health. Some parents/guardians may not feel comfortable sending students to school and will require schools/districts to consider policies in this area.
- **Work-Based Learning, Internships, College Credit Plus, etc.:**
There are multiple non-building-based learning opportunities in which students participate. How these programs and opportunities are impacted by the phased “opening” of Ohio’s economy will matter in providing opportunities for student participation. How will students continue opportunities to earn credentials?
- **Collaboration Among Educational Agencies:**
Now more than ever, local districts and schools will need to collaborate in students’ best interest with JVSDs, CTCs, juvenile detention centers, community schools and others in planning to afford students meaningful opportunities and experiences.
 - **ODE** will encourage collaboration across agencies, seek help from ESCs and SSTs in this role, and provide information and technical assistance to the agencies. ODE will provide guidance to juvenile correction and detention centers to ensure students have a transition plans that ensure continuity of academic services and supports.
 - **LEAs** will ensure that effective collaboration takes place with other organizations or entities for and with whom the LEA is a partner or provider. This includes JVSDs, CTCs, residential placement arrangements, juvenile detention centers, etc.

3. Social Emotional Health Considerations

It is important to recognize that educators, children and families may experience stress, confusion, fear, anger, sadness, or anxiety during the return to school. As result, students may display increased negative and disruptive behaviors. For students to be successful, schools will need to address and support students’ safety, social-emotional, health and wellness needs. Many districts and schools are implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, a

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tiered model of prevention and intervention supports. Districts and schools will need to adapt their PBIS system to include common behavior expectations specific to physical and social distancing. For children, that are already receiving mental health services, they may have adjusted to telehealth services or they may have experienced a disruption to those services during COVID-19 and need to be reconnected. It will be important for schools to assess the individual needs of children and assist in providing them with supports that meet universal and individual student needs. Schools must also recognize stress and anxiety experienced by staff and determining healthy ways to support them as well.

- **Student Supports:**

What do these supports look like in a time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety? In addition to other challenges students face, they may be scared that they might get sick if they even go to school or get close to other people. Many older students may be required to take on jobs to help support the family. There may be a rise in abuse/neglect that the school counselor or other personnel will need to identify, report and provide supports for the student and family. School Counselors are instrumental in providing student emotional support throughout the school day (one on one, classroom guidance, group support, etc.).

- **ODE** will partner with ODMHAS to provide resources and key supports, remind schools of available funding sources to support their students' needs (e.g., Student Wellness and Success Funds, Prevention funds, etc.). ODE will create information and resources to support districts and schools in meeting students' social-emotional, safety and wellness needs.
- **LEAs** will partner with local ADAMH boards, ESCs, and community based providers to determine the community's needs and identify supports including professional development for educators.

- **Employee Supports:**

Employees will share similar concerns to those of students, and may have heightened concerns about where students and families have been in the evenings or weekends, then returning to school with the potential for "community spread". Schools should consider having personnel develop and use a common narrative to build safety in the school and reduce fear and always assume positive intent. Schools/districts should work with local agencies to ensure employees' social and emotional well-being.

- **Family Engagement:**

It has been observed that in many cases families have been more engaged in their students' education during the school-building closure. There have also been representations that the teacher/family partnerships have been stronger because of more frequent engagement between teachers and parents/guardians. How do we sustain this and leverage it? Some parents may want to keep their student's out of school because of fears of illness. What are the implications? At the same time, educators need to recognize that as parents return to the workplace, they may not be able to support remote learning in a consistent manner. Teachers and families should build a strong partnership and alliance to support the child.

4. Operational Considerations

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The importance of thoughtfully and intentionally considering the roles, responsibilities and safety of each component of a typical school day involves numerous employee groups, practices and routines. Organizations such as OAPSE can play a key role in identifying and implementing solutions to these concerns in several areas listed below. Working with local health agencies, following EPA and CDC guidance, and other experts in each of the following areas will be important to address issues.

- **Transportation (health concerns):**
 - The transportation of students in a manner which is safe for students and employees is of highest importance. Implementing daily health routines will require new practices and protocols. *(Additional guidance under development.)*

- **Custodial and maintenance:**
 - ODE to offer general guidance. *(See health practices section above. Additional under development.)*
 - LEAs to determine sanitizing schedules, protocols for cleaning surfaces in all areas of the building, checklists for before and after-school consistent with established health and safety protocols.

- **Secretarial/Clerical:**
(Secretarial/Clerical content under development)

- **Food Service/Cafeteria:**
Consider alternate approaches to breakfast/lunch service that provide for physical distancing and enhanced cleaning of surfaces between service times.

- **Field Trips:**
Do not participate in field trips.

- **Extra-Curricular Activities (athletics, music, student groups):**
 - **ODE** to collaborate with ODH, OHSAA, OMEA and others to determine summer practice routines and fall sports routines to be implemented.
 - **LEA** to work with local health departments and stakeholders to determine the appropriateness and practical realities of whether to continue certain activities. Decisions regarding each activity will need to be determined based upon maintaining ODH, ODE and OHSAA guidance.

- **Internet/Technology Accessibility:**
To the extent that a district decides to continue remote learning – or *has* to continue remote learning – they will need to address the need for internet access, as well as access to computers for students and educators. A school or district may also need to have options for non-digital remote learning where internet and computers will not be available. Effective preparation will require appropriate training, and technical support. Districts will also need to assess staff accessibility to devices and internet service as well as whether current data plans are sufficient. Schools must ensure district personnel are trained on use of internet tools and making resources accessible (e.g., teachers should not be taking photos of book

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pages or tests and sending them to children for use when these may not be accessible to visually impaired students or families without printers).

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