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**A Report from the Accessibility Education K-12 SDC,  
Planning for Emergencies & Safety Working Group**  
COVID-19 Barriers for Students with Disabilities  
& Recommendations

## Introduction

The COVID-19 Pandemic has tested emergency plans for all levels of government, businesses, agencies, education systems, communities, families, and citizens in the province of Ontario. Many risks have been identified and challenges have arisen because of the pandemic and more continue to be identified as we move through the stages of the emergency. Emergency plans, response and procedures need to be reviewed to address these risks and barriers immediately and to improve responses to emergencies in the future.

As the Ministry of Education was seeking feedback on barriers and emerging issues identified during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the [K-12 Standards Development Committee](#) formed the Planning for Emergency and Safety Working Group with a focus on students with disabilities with the following mandate:

Using experiential learning from the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Identify new and reoccurring accessibility barriers to learning for students with disabilities in the context of remote learning
- Develop an emergency plan framework (that covers the phases of preparing, planning, response and recovery) for a systematic response to an emergency.

## Methodology

The Planning for Emergencies & Safety Working Group gathered resources from experts including the [Framework for Reopening Schools developed by UNICEF](#), [SickKids recommendations to Reopening Schools](#), Letters to Minister Lecce from the Ontario Human Rights Commission of July 14, 2020; and various other resources and articles from educational partners within Ontario, other provinces and countries (See Resource Section). While reviewing the documents, the Working Group identified barriers and subsequently developed recommendations to address said barriers.

## Organizational Challenges and Barriers during COVID-19

Through a review of resources, feedback from parents and guardians, agencies, health professionals and educational stakeholders' opinions expressed, the Working Group found that students with disabilities have faced challenges compounded by COVID-19. Their needs have been inconsistently addressed or not at all. These are some organizational, policy and procedural barriers identified:

- Inconsistent or unclear messaging from varying levels of government, health agencies and school boards
- Lack of or unable to access consistent data from all regions and school boards to support data driven decisions and implement actions quickly and effectively.
- Policies and procedures outdated, non-existent, or inflexible to accommodate this type of emergency – COVID-19 pandemic.
- Emergency response teams not reflecting the different subject knowledge needed to support decision making and development of a plan that reflects the needs of students with disabilities.
- Inter-governmental, health service, service agencies and school board service agreements did not reflect the ability to provide services in a virtual learning environment

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- Service delivery models used by government, health services, service agencies and school boards not conducive to virtual service delivery.
- The extent to which Board's utilized or sought feedback from its SEACs in developing response or action plans to the COVID-19 pandemic varied from none to fully participated.
- Not all school boards have an Accessibility Standards Committee or for those school boards that do have members of the community or people with disabilities who have lived experience that can help plan and implement the Public Health Guidelines to mitigate risks of COVID-19 in schools for students with disabilities
- School board Accessibility Standards Committee can be helpful in helping to plan and implement the Public Health Guidelines to mitigate risks of COVID-19 in schools for students with disabilities. However, not all school boards have such committees, or committee membership that includes members of the community or people with disabilities who have lived experience that can inform planning and implementation.

### Key Recommendations for Planning for Emergencies

It is important in planning for return to school, the opportunity is taken to review and create structures, policy and procedures that can adapt and be more flexible for a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave or future emergencies.

*"By learning from innovations and emergency processes, systems can adapt and scale up the more effective solutions. In doing so, they could become more effective, more agile, and more resilient"* – (quoted from THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: SHOCKS TO EDUCATION AND POLICY RESPONSES, World Bank).

There are 5 known steps to Emergency Planning and Preparedness: 1) Know your risk, 2) Build your Team, 3) Make critical information accessible quickly, 4) Update alert and response procedure, 5) Test the plan and revise.

To eliminate barriers identified, that a return to school plan has input from end users, be designed through an inclusive process and not by one team or group. A team of subject expertise from across the organization is critical for developing a strong plan.

### Recommendations – Government

For the above reasons, it is recommended that

- 1) The Ministry of Education should establish a Central Education Leadership Command Table with responsibilities for ensuring that students with disabilities have access to all accommodations and supports they require during the present COVID-19 pandemic. The responsibilities of the Command Table shall include:
  - a) immediately develop a comprehensive plan to meet the urgent learning needs of students with disabilities during COVID-19 pandemic quickly and resolve issues for students with disabilities as they arise. The comprehensive plan should be shared for implementation by school boards. This plan should include and incorporate the three options for education:
    - normal school day routine with enhanced public health protocols

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- modified school day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternative day or week delivery, and,
    - at-home learning with ongoing enhanced remote delivery
  - b) collect and share data on existing and emerging issues as a result of COVID-19, the effective responses of other jurisdictions in supporting students with disabilities during the current emergency, using evidence base data collection method for people with disabilities
  - c) establish a fully accessible centralized hub, and share and publicize the hub, for sharing of effective practices about supporting students with disabilities
  - d) develop a rapid response team to receive feedback from school boards on recurring issues facing students with disabilities and to help find solutions to share with school boards
  - e) provide clear communication and guidance on school opening, health service delivery, etc. based on data collected.
- 2) The government/Ministry of Education shall establish a cross sectorial Partnership Table at provincial and regional levels with the responsibility to integrate, coordinate and foster cross sector planning and response to emergencies. Responsibilities of this table are to:
- a) enhance an interlinked, coordinated and inter-ministerial approach in providing a seamless service delivery model to provide services and supports to students with disabilities (Psychology, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Mental Health, etc.).
  - b) collect data now, from respective sectors, health services, education, service agencies, etc. to identify existing and emerging barriers, know exactly which students with disabilities and how they are impacted, their needs, and how to better direct resources to support them
  - c) provide clear communication and guidance on school opening, health service delivery, etc. based on data collected to ensure accessibility for students with disabilities.
- 3) The Ministry of Education provincial and regional partnership tables should include advisors that can provide insight on the needs and challenges of students with disabilities from lived experience and the collective experience of disability support groups, as well as students with disabilities.
- 4) The Ministry of Education should assign staff to assist the Central Educational Command Table by serving as a central rapid response team to receive feedback from school boards on recurring issues facing students with disabilities and to help find solutions to share with school boards.
- 5) The Ministry of Education should direct that each school board shall establish a similar Board Command table. (See recommendation 12 for School Boards).
- 6) The provincial government continue and enhance an interlinked, coordinated and inter-ministerial approach in providing a seamless service delivery model to provide services and supports to students with disabilities (Psychology, Physical Therapy, Speech Therapy, Mental Health, etc.).
- 7) The Ministry of Education should collect and aggregate International data, resources and information from other countries experiences for use in planning transitions between in-school and distance education, including continuation of virtual learning at home.
- 8) The Ministry of Education should developed comprehensive plans for students with disabilities that addresses the surge in demand and increase capacity to provide specialized disability supports, including enhanced staffing, for the return to in-class and distance learning (increase in in-class supports, social workers, psychologists, guidance counsellors)
- 9) The Ministry of Education should develop guidelines that provide for alternate or enhanced childcare opportunities to be made available to families of students with a disability, for students

required to stay home due to adapted model classroom scheduling. (Excludes childcare needs that are related to quarantine self-isolation for child or family due to exposure or a local outbreak of the virus.)

- 10) To get the most from the volunteer work of SEACs around Ontario, the Ministry of Education should:
  - a) Create and maintain a listserv or other virtual network of all Ontario SEACs, to enable them to share their efforts with all other SEACs around Ontario, and
  - b) Frequently gather input from SEACs around Ontario about the experiences of students with disabilities during the COVID-19 crisis to inform future policies and regulations and directions for school boards.
- 11) To promote transparency, accountability and identify trends, the Ministry of Education should immediately issue a policy direction for boards to create an exclusion policy, that imposes restrictions on when and how a principal may exclude a student from school, including directions that:
  - a) Does not impede, create barrier, or disproportionately increase burdens for students with disabilities the right to attend school for the entire day as do students without disabilities. The power to refuse to admit a student to school for all or part of the school day should not be used in a way that disproportionately burdens students with disabilities or that creates a barrier to their right to attend school.
  - b) Tracks exclusions and provide a transparent procedure and practice to parents/guardians, by requiring a principal who refuses to admit a student to school during the school re-opening process to immediately give the student and their parent/guardian written notice of their decision to do so, including written reasons for the refusal to admit, the duration of the refusal to admit and notice of the parent/guardian's right to appeal this refusal to admit to the school board.
  - c) Tracks exclusions, increases accountability and informs policies by requiring a principal who refuses to admit a student to school for all or part of the school day to immediately report this in writing to their school board's senior management, including the reasons for the exclusion, its duration and whether the student has a disability. Each school board should be required to compile this information and to report it on a regular basis to the board of trustees, the public and the Ministry of Education (with individual information totally anonymized).
- 12) The Ministry of Education should provide clear guidelines and expectations to school boards on the implementation of Public Health Guidelines to mitigate risks of COVID-19 to ensure that school buildings and grounds be fully accessible for students with disabilities.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 13) School Boards should establish a similar Board Command/Central table as the Ministry of Education's Central Education Command/Central Table, to receive and act on feedback from teachers, principals and families about problems they are encountering serving students with

disabilities during the COVID-19 period. The Table will quickly network with similar offices/Tables at other school boards and can report recurring issues to the Ministry's command table.

- 14) School Boards should utilize the expertise of the Special Education Advisory Committee members by directly involving members in the planning for the delivery of remote learning, other emergency plans, through regular meetings and frequent communications.
- 15) School Boards should enhance its hub of resources with successful practices, lesson plans, resources specific to students with disabilities in a virtual learning environment for ease of access and support teachers and students in their learning.
- 16) School Boards should involve their Accessibility Committee, or if there is no committee to establish an Accessibility Advisory Committee which will review all plans at the school board and school level for mitigating risk of COVID-19 meet the accessibility requirements of all students or people with disabilities.
- 17) School Boards should assign a leadership staff member responsible for ensuring that all changes at schools in response to COVID-19 maintain accessibility for all students with disabilities.

## Mental Health & Well Being

As found through the review of resources, student and family mental health & wellbeing needs have soared to due to the traumatic effects of COVID-19. Students wellbeing has suffered for a variety of barriers: effects of isolation from social distancing, increased rise in domestic violence, lack of access to school breakfast programs, lack of access to mental health & therapeutic services, and negative financial impact to family's income to name a few.

### Barriers

- Agencies, different levels of government and school boards developing plans and working on solutions to barriers with little or no coordination
- Support for parents with students with complex needs are insufficient
- Health services and supports not consistently or sufficiently prepared to provide health and mental health services in a virtual setting
- There is a flood of information and resources being presented to teachers, parents and students
- More inter-ministerial leadership and collaboration between Ministries of Education (MOE), Community, Children & Social Services (MCCSS) and Health (MOH) is required
- School Boards and staff must be equipped with appropriate PPE for their own health and wellbeing
- Need to safely deliver additional supports such and as breakfast & nutrition programs provided by community agencies
- Plans for the next phase include a return to in-class and virtual instruction, including adapted models whereby some students will be scheduled at home on an alternate day or alternate week basis. Having students at home for short or long periods (alternate day to full semester) will be a significant challenge for families and may prevent the return to work for many parents. Some parents of children with disabilities face barriers to employment, and many others are overburdened with providing 24-hour care to students with complex care needs.

## Recommendations – Government

- 18) The government should enhance the central hub of mental health & wellbeing information resources at provincial and regional levels with key messages and links to other resources. Ensure all resources are in an accessible digital format (as per [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#)), well publicised and shared with school boards.
- 19) Ministries should review and increase capacity of Ontario Telehealth Network (OTN) and other privacy protected health platforms to allow for boards to use (even in non-emergency times) and deliver services by regulated health care professionals that protect the privacy of the health services and IPRCs.
- 20) Ministries of Education, Health and Children, Community & Social Services should remove any cross-jurisdictional barriers related to the provision of health and education services to ensure students with disabilities can be provided with the mental health & wellbeing services they require to be delivered remotely. (For example, under Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 149, Protocol for Partnerships with External Agencies for Provision of Services by Regulated Health Professionals, Regulated Social Service Professionals, and Paraprofessionals permit electric consent for services and virtual access to services for students with disabilities).
- 21) The Ministry of Education should provide funding and clear guidelines on use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and protocols for detection and containment of COVID-19 for boards, staff and all students, including those with disabilities. Public health authorities should establish clear protocols for the detection and containment of COVID-19 (and other infectious diseases) for school boards. The guidelines and protocols should be flexible for school boards to react to local situations to mitigate risks.
- 22) The Ministry of Education's plan for school re-openings must include detailed directions on required measures to mitigate risk for students with disabilities from COVID-19 to maintain their health and wellbeing during any return to school. This requires additional planning in advance by school boards and additional funding to school boards to hire and train the additional Special Needs Assistants (SNA) and Educational Assistants (EA) they will need to ensure the safety of students with disabilities. It also requires safeguards to ensure that EAs or SNAs do not work at multiple sites and risk transmitting the COVID-19 virus from one location to another.
- 23) Ministries should review policies and regulations to continue to permit the virtual provision of therapy supports and services that have transitioned successfully to a virtual learning environment and where possible, permit and foster increased access to therapies and services to areas in province where a lack of services exists.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 24) Many students with disabilities volunteer at school events, in school daycares, kindergarten classes as part of their learning plan, IEP or fulfilling the 40 hours volunteer requirement. School Boards should develop/review guidelines for students with disabilities who volunteer in school to limits risk to health and safety but does not stop this valuable learning experience for students with disabilities.
- 25) Many adults with disabilities volunteer in schools and school daycares for the opportunity to exist as a valued contributing member within their community. School Boards should develop guidelines for

people with disabilities who volunteer within the school that limits risk to the health and safety but continues to have the opportunity to be a contributing member of the school community.

- 26) School Board should provide virtual learning opportunities for volunteering and co-op courses for students with disabilities. Resources and guidelines should be developed to create the opportunity for the student to complete volunteering hours or cooperative credits successfully.
- 27) School Boards should develop and/or review guidelines for transitions plans for students with disabilities to outline supports and accommodations that may be offered in a virtual learning environment or enhanced by online tools and resources to support the physical and emotions wellbeing of student with disabilities when transitioning back to school. Accommodations or strategies should be reviewed and adapted to the virtual learning environment to support transitions. (An example would be for students with disabilities have access to audio described (DV) and closed-captioned (CC) virtual tours of the school facilities, so students could familiarize themselves with the school prior to the start of school. *(See also Transition section)*).
- 28) In consultation with community agencies, School Boards should develop/revise procedures and protocols for volunteers and community agencies that support the health and wellbeing of students with disabilities continue to operate in the school (Example, Food nutrition programs, clothing exchanges, etc.)
- 29) In consultation with Public Health Regional Health, School Boards must develop clear protocols and procedures with accommodations for students with disabilities for the detection, isolation, tracing and follow up those students who develop symptoms for the virus, flu, respiratory infection, etc. For example: Ensure dedicated space to isolate students with disabilities who may need to return home is accessible and provides the accommodations required to meets the needs of any students with disabilities.

## Academic

The pandemic has had profound impacts to student's learning and staff's ability to provide a learning environment that promotes student success and achievement. Learning inequities for students with disabilities have increased throughout the pandemic due to barriers faced. Some of the barriers identified were:

### Barriers

- Ongoing accessibility issues with online and virtual learning resources provided for learning at home
- Wealth of resources, tools, etc. being developed by Boards, Agencies and Associations with limited sharing of resources. Resources developed may not be accessible.
- Virtual learning is not working for many students with disabilities
- Many students with disabilities were not effectively engaged in virtual learning for a variety of reasons, including accessibility challenges with the internet, computer software and hardware, nature of resources provided, individual challenges related to format, capacity of family, or behaviour.
- Closure of schools for 3 months has resulted in significant loss of learning for many students
- Special Education Advisory Committees meetings have been cancelled and some the skills and knowledge of SEAC members has not been fully utilized.



- Teachers, students and parents were not prepared for the sudden transition from in-class instruction to the virtual learning environment and planning for future interruptions of schools would benefit from proactive planning for education in a virtual instruction and learning environment.

## Recommendations – Government

- 30) The Ministry of Education should develop curriculum for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to enable students to develop the skills and knowledge they need for learning in a virtual learning environment. In the interim, the Ministry should share existing, accessible resources on this topic to teachers and School Boards (*Please see Training for additional recommendations*)
- 31) The Ministry of Education should collect and make readily available resources/information on practices, effective strategies in learning environment, and alternate approaches for students struggling with online learning, etc. from School Boards, agencies and disability specific associations.
- 32) Ministry of Education should provide clear expectations for teacher led instruction, synchronous learning, and weekly teacher student-teacher connections for students who are participating in virtual instruction and learning. Expectations should include monitoring if students with disabilities are fully participating, learning and benefiting from these activities; and if not, action to address barriers or issues identified.

## Recommendations – School Board

- 33) School Boards should assess and document accommodations, modifications, resources and supports for all students with disabilities to plan for transition back to school and continuation of virtual instruction and learning. (*Please see Transitions Recommendations for details*)
- 34) School Boards should develop and provide all resources for instruction and assessment materials, homework assignments in an accessible digital format (*See Communications & Technology section for recommendation on accessible digital format*).

## Secondary School

The secondary school experience is different from elementary school. It is where students develop, time management, organizational, advocacy skills, networking and social skills, become more aware of community and identify career paths. It is for this reason, the Working Group felt it was important to identify barriers and make recommendations specific to secondary students. Many of these recommendations can benefit the entire secondary school student population.

## Barriers

- Students with disabilities have experienced little to no personal contact with their school community social network supports (classroom teachers, Educational Assistants, custodians, administrative assistants, etc.), who rely on this contact to maintain their engagement within the school community and preserve their mental health.
- At any time, students with disabilities have very limited opportunity to fulfill the 40 hours of volunteering required for graduation and rely heavily on volunteering at their high school or

local elementary school events. All opportunities for volunteering were eliminated during the pandemic.

- Many students with disabilities take optional specialized courses such as Specialized High School Major (SHSM), cooperative credits, etc. which provide hands on and participation within the community. Hands on learning, skills in applicable to trades and life skills were significantly diminished during COVID-19.
- Clubs, councils, sports teams and extracurricular activities are a formative and important part of the high school experience. Often these extracurricular activities are the only opportunity students with disabilities has to socialize with their peers. Not having access to extracurricular activities has impacted their mental health and well-being.
- Many students with disabilities rely on in class instruction be it due to learning disability, anxiety, learning style, ADHD, or simply due to preference in the way they individually learn, among others. The loss of in-class instruction has significantly impacted their learning and future for success.
- Learning at home during school closure has been challenging for students in terms of academic achievement, mental health and wellbeing
- All four years of high school are an integral part of a young person's development and a multitude of students require and rely on in class instruction be it for specialized courses That require specialized equipment, trained staff;
- The experience of four years of high school are incredibly formative of a young person's social, emotional, mental and physical relationship with society, the world around them and indeed the values they will build their life around;
- Return to school planning must consider the impacts on minority & racialized students, students in abusive households, students with limited access to technology or broadband, students with disabilities and students with other complex learning needs;
- Many students rely on in class instruction be it due to learning disability, anxiety, learning style, ADHD, or simply due to preference in the way they individually learn, among others;

## Recommendations – Ministry

- 35) The Ministry of Education should allow high school in-class instruction to operate for the 2020-2021 school year, if authorized by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- 36) The Minister should direct School Boards to continue courses which require specialized forms of equipment, classrooms, teaching staff and/or resources (science labs, shops, media classrooms) continue to operate, in accordance with local public health advice.
- 37) As per the Canadian Mental Health Association, 70% of mental health challenges have their onset in childhood or youth and the Kids Help Phone Line has seen a increase in demand, The Ministries of Education and Health should increase capacity of mental health professionals and supports for School Boards, to ensure there is no waitlist for any secondary student requiring support.
- 38) The Ministry of Education should include student voice through student trustees' association or other student leaders, when developing a plan for return to school.
- 39) The Ministry of Education should waive the compulsory credit in Health & Physical Education for students who have entered secondary school in the 2020-21 school or whose timetable will be negatively impacted, should Physical Education classes not operate in the conventional manner.

- 40) If required by Public Health, the Ministry of Education should fund PPE for students and staff to mitigate risks of infection.
- 41) The Ministry should direct School Boards to develop a prioritization and execution plan for conducting clinical assessments (e.g., psycho-educational assessments) that students with disabilities require in order to access necessary supports and services as they transition from secondary to post-secondary destinations.

## Recommendations – School Board

- 42) School Boards and Schools should include student voice, including students with disabilities in developing the Board return to school plan, as well as, individual school return plans respectively.
- 43) School Boards and Schools should provide clear instruction on proper personal protection equipment (PPE) and safety measures to students, parents, and staff.
- 44) School Boards should follow or mirror Public Health protocols prescribed by the local Public Health. If PPE is not required by the local Public Health, student have the choice to wear PPE. If PPE is required, that school boards are funded appropriately to provide PPE for all students and staff.
- 45) Where local public health advice can be adhered to, Schools should continue to offer extracurricular activities such as clubs, councils, teams using proper social distancing and general safety protocols.
- 46) Where applicable, School Boards should waive parking fees for students to reduce financial burdens and help mitigate health risks for students by not riding on a crowded public transit bus.
- 47) School Boards should make decisions pertaining to cancellation of extracurricular activities in school mirror that of activities outside of school. (Example: If soccer clubs operate locally, then soccer clubs in schools should continue to operate).
- 48) School Boards should develop and offer online programming for students who cannot or wish not to attend school in person, but not be considered a long-term alternative to in class instruction.
- 49) School Boards and schools seek out the voice of students, including voices of students with disabilities, when they develop return to school plan options.
- 50) School Board should develop guidelines for clubs or programs that supplement or enhance education for students with disabilities so they can continue to operate upon return to school.
- 51) School Boards should continue to offer where possible, alternate classrooms, quiet workspaces, and other special education requirements prescribed in a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- 52) School Boards should research and investigate potential online coop placements that may be available for all students; including students with disabilities.
- 53) When permitted under local health advice, the School Board should review new health and safety protocols with student and the coop placement provider.

## Transitions

An impact of the pandemic for students with disabilities is that learning has been lost or stagnant. Learning recovery will be important when returning to school. This will mean targeted measures to reversing learning loss or closing gaps. There will be a need for clear system wide guidance for in-class and central assessments to inform and plan for curriculum delivery, supports and service upon return to school.

Transition planning will occur at the provincial, local and student level. The Ministry of Education will need to identify barriers and gaps from all educational stakeholders to develop an informed return to school plan. School boards will need to identify barriers and gaps at a system and individual student level to create an informed back to school plan as well as address the needs for students with disabilities.

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a tool for documenting student strengths and needs and the accommodations, programs and services they require to be successful. IEPs are a valuable tool in documenting the student's current level of achievement and transition plans for planned changes in grades, schools, and life after secondary school. The IEP can also be used to plan for return to school, full time or in an adapted model, or for continued virtual learning.

## Barriers

- During the school closure gaps in student skills and knowledge related to on-line and distance learning has been evident
- Planning for school year 2020-2021 will include in school and distance learning
- School staff will need to assess student's with disabilities to determine their accessibility and learning needs
- Students with disabilities individual IEPs and transitions plans need to be reviewed to address barriers and gaps to allow for student success.
- Student voice often forgotten in the planning process
- Students and prospective students cannot visit the physical environments of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and do not have the opportunity to check for physical accessibility and familiarize themselves with environment

## Recommendations – Government

- 54) The Ministry of Education should direct School Boards to develop a prioritization and execution plan for conducting clinical assessments (e.g., psycho-educational assessments) that students with disabilities require, in order to access necessary supports and services as they transition from secondary to post-secondary destinations.
- 55) The Ministry of Education, in partnership with MCCSS should work with school boards to identify their cohorts of students with intellectual and other disabilities who completed their school careers in June 2020 and identify and assess if barriers faced during COVID-19 did not allow for successful student transitions to their chosen pathway (Examples: to work, volunteer work, recreation/leisure programs, and post-secondary education) as outlined in their transition plans. Jointly, the Ministries and School Boards should develop plans to help this cohort of students with disabilities achieve their individual transition goals.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 56) School Boards should be independently collecting board wide data on gaps, barriers, emerging issues, transition challenges, technology challenges, additional students' needs and supports arising

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- or as a result of COVID-19 through assessment, student and parent feedback to address and plan for system wide supports and services required by students with disabilities upon return to school.
- 57) To help with successful transitions for student with disabilities in returning to school, School Boards shall contact parent/guardians, as soon as possible, to discuss and identify learning gaps, individual needs arising from school shutdown and distance learning, transition challenges, social and emotional needs to inform and revise/or create individualized transition plans for students with disabilities.
- 58) To help reduce stress and anxiety and prepare themselves for return to school, students with disabilities should be involved with discussions and decision made in developing their Transition Plan.
- 59) School Boards and Administrators shall ensure Individual Education Plans for students with disabilities are revised/created to reflect specific goals and activities to address the individual needs identified in Recommendation #3 to help increase academic and transition success for each student with a disability upon returning to school.
- 60) School Boards shall include the student when developing their individualized Transition and IEP. All
- 61) When School Boards develop the Individualized Transition Plans for each student, it should be:
- a) flexible to accommodate the stop and start of in class learning. All methods of instruction should be considered for learning to ensure students have access to an education (virtual instruction, in home instruction, etc.)
  - b) include a flexible and hybrid model for entry needs to accommodate the varying student needs. Any model developed for return to school shall be developed in consultation with parent/guardians and student
  - c) include strategies for students around social/physical distancing. Social distancing guidelines should be developed in consultation with parents/guardians and student.
  - d) Include steps for follow up and checking in with the student
  - e) All documentation or information be provided to the parent/guardian and student before the meeting with enough time to review. Documents should be provided in an accessible format.
- 62) School Boards should take more interactive approaches to collect on-going feedback from parents, students and staff (i.e. "Thought exchange") to guide and inform changes to policies and procedures impacted by COVID-19.
- 63) School Boards should develop a clear system wide plan to address increased classroom and school supports and services (Educational Assistants, Education Works, social workers, psychologists, guidance councillors) identified through assessments to help mitigate issues and support learning for students with disabilities.
- 64) School Boards should create audio described (DV) and closed-captioned (CC) virtual tours of their school. The virtual tour must be fully accessible and thoroughly provide information on accessibility and locations at the schools. Virtual tours should be made permanently available; not just during the pandemic.

## Communications & Technology

For our purpose, communication includes technologies, systems, protocols and procedures that enable an organization to effectively communicate to its employees, partners and community. During an emergency, communication is essential and should ensure all relevant personnel can quickly and

effectively communicate with each other during such crises, sharing information that will allow the organization to quickly rectify the situation, protect employees and assets, and allows the business to continue.

To relate this to Education – government, school boards, agencies, staff, students, parent/caregivers, should have the ability to communicate effectively during a crisis, while the business of providing learning continues.

## Barriers

- Ongoing accessibility issues with virtual learning environment or platform (Examples: no closed captions, compatibility issues with screen readers, lack of support or knowledge of accessibility features, no ASL interpretation)
- Ongoing accessibility issue with information and resources provided
- Conflicting guidelines provided by different ministries and level of government.

## Recommendations – Government

- 65) That a designated communication lead should be assigned at the provincial and regional level for consistent messaging.
- 66) For efficiency and elimination of duplication of effort for School Boards, The Ministry of Education should immediately engage an arms-length digital accessibility consultant to evaluate the comparative accessibility of different digital learning and virtual learning environments or platforms available for use in Ontario schools. This should involve end-user testing. The Ministry should immediately send the resulting report and comparison to all school boards and make it public. This should be revisited as the fall approaches, in case there have been changes to the relative accessibility of different virtual instruction environments or platforms.
- 67) The Ministry of Education should provide a list of acceptable accessible, cross platform virtual learning environments and synchronous teaching systems to be used by school boards.
- 68) The Ministry of Education should make public a plan of action to swiftly make its own online learning content accessible for people with disabilities, setting out milestones and timelines, and should report to the public on its progress.
- 69) The Ministry of Education should immediately direct TVO/TFO to make its online learning content accessible to people with disabilities, and to promptly make public a plan of action to achieve this goal, with specific milestones and timelines. The implementation of this recommendation has become urgent since Royal Assent was given to [Bill 197, COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020](#) as amends to the *Ontario Educational Communications Authority Act* broaden the mandates of both TVO and TFO to position them to provide centralized support for online learning in the English-language and French-language publicly-funded education systems, respectively.
- 70) The Ministry of Education should direct its entire staff and all School Boards that whenever making information public in a Portable Document Format (PDF), it must at the same time, make available a textual format such as an accessible Microsoft Word (MSWord) or accessible HTML document. Videos must be audio described (DV) and closed captioned (CC). Templates and technical guides should be developed and provided to school boards.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 71) For consistent messaging, that the School board should designate a communication lead for COVID-19 related issues.
- 72) School Boards should develop protocols and procedures to mitigate security risks for online and virtual learning platforms to help protect privacy of students with disabilities and staff. Online and virtual learning platforms should also be accessible for all students with disabilities.
- 73) That School Boards should provide clear communication around protocols and return to school plans. Boards should make written communications readily available and accessible by everyone in the community, parents and students.
- 74) School Boards should review and revise instructional videos for parents around virtual learning tools used in the school board. Videos must be clear and accessible.
- 75) School Boards should provide solely dedicated or designated staff, who are available to support technology including accessibility needs to parents who are supporting the learning needs of students with disabilities at home.

## Training

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed the way in which education is delivered. Students, parents/guardians, teachers, staff, school boards and government had to change the way they access, support or deliver education. The pandemic highlighted gaps in digital skills, adaptation of technology to teaching and learning. It has also increased demand for technology and the need to integrate technology effectively into teaching and learning. With this increased demand in the use of technology and the gaps in digital skills identified, it is imperative to train students, parent/guardians and staff in the use and integration of technology in teaching and learning.

### Barriers

- Teachers, students and parent/guardians unprepared for learning at home and use of virtual platforms such as google classroom, Microsoft teams, Zoom for individual and synchronous learning
- Teachers, ECEs, Staff need training in virtual online learning platforms
- Teachers, ECEs, Staff need training in strategies to support students with disabilities around transitions between education models, including preparation for changing environments and self regulation
- Teachers, ECEs lack training in strategies to support Public Health directed precautions, such as social distancing, sanitizing procedures and use of PPE when required to support students
- School closures have had a significant impact on the mental health and well being of students with disabilities and teachers, ECEs, staff will require training on child development and trauma informed practice to assist them in supporting students in transitioning back to school or continuation of virtual education.
- The expectation on parent/guardians to support students with learning at home were significant and parents need supports and training in virtual learning software and how they can effectively support their child's learning.

## Recommendations – Government

- 76) That Ministry of Education should model leadership to School Boards and provide accessible virtual learning webinars, templates for learning, etc. to be utilized in training administrators and teachers.
- 77) The Ministry of Education should direct School Boards to provide all staff training in child development, mental health and wellbeing to support the wellbeing and learning of students with disabilities.
- 78) The Government should provide direction to School Boards and Public Service agencies to develop a coordinated training delivery model to support parents of students with rehabilitation needs, mental health concerns or who have complex or significant medically needs, with the delivery of virtual care, including privacy protected health platforms such as OTN, ADcare.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 79) School Boards should provide focused, practical training for administrators and teachers to support students with disabilities' health, wellbeing and learning in a mixed or virtual environment.
- 80) School Boards should provide administrators training and guidelines on supporting students with disabilities through transitioning and change.
- 81) School Boards should develop parent training modules and resources to enable parent/guardians to develop the skills and knowledge required to support online and virtual learning at home for students with disabilities.
- 82) School Boards should provide training for teachers and staff on specific tips and solutions, successful and evidence based promising practices by disability to support teachers and students with disabilities learning. These should be made available as soon as possible or at the latest, during the first days of PD before school instruction begins.

## Transportation

School Bus operation and delivery of bus services is regulated and governed both federally and provincially. Transport Canada has consulted with the Public Health Agency of Canada to provide guidelines around bus operations during the pandemic. The National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) has also provided general guidelines for the provision of student (pupil) transportation services.

The Ministry of Education's Return to School Framework directs School Boards to follow these federal guidelines.

To accommodate Federal Transportation and Public health guideline that require social and physical distancing, School Boards will have to revise transportation services delivery that will impact bus routes, increase the number of buses and drivers required, increase ridership time, etc. to mitigate risks to students with disabilities while transporting to and from school.



## Barriers

- Lack of or reduced public transportation available for students with disabilities, particularly for secondary students who take public transit. Municipal governments eliminated routes or reduced schedules during COVID-19. Municipalities have not made public transportation plans for when students return to school.
- As School Boards and Consortiums plan transportation services to meet the Transport Canada guidelines, current challenges of inadequate buses, shortage of drivers and increasing fuel costs will be a barrier to boards.
- Changes to routine can have a significant impact to a student with disabilities' mental health, success for the start of school day and learning. Predictable changes to transportation for students with disabilities can include, increased ridership time, bus route, bus type (72-passenger, small bus), supports or accommodations required for a successful ride, etc. while maintaining safety and mitigating risks for infection.
- Many School Boards currently overspend the transportation grant, while still achieving a high efficiency rating from the Ministry of Education. The additional requirements defined under the Transport Canada Guidelines will increase cost pressures to provide transportation services to students with disabilities while maintaining safety and mitigating risk of infection.
- As students with disabilities require may require specific transportation accommodations such as a safety harness, seat belt, wheelchair accessible which cannot be accommodated in all vehicle types.

## Recommendations – School Boards

- 83) As many School Boards overspend its transportation grant while maintaining a high efficiency rating, the Ministry of Education should provide school boards with additional COVID-19 specific funding to follow the guidelines as provided by Transport Canada around:
- Measures to mitigate risk of exposure
  - Procedures to be taken before a trip, during a trip and at the end of the trip
  - PPE guidelines
  - Physical Distancing
  - Shield and Enclosure system guidelines (if bus operators choose to do so)
- 84) School Boards should review transportation accommodations and requirements, in consultation with parents and student, IEPs of students with disabilities who require transportation services to identify any change/modifications to accommodations required. The student's IEP shall be modified to reflect additional requirements to transport the student safely on the bus. The review for medically fragile students should include professionals, such as nurses, occupational therapists, as well as parents. All transportation requirements shall be relayed to the Bus Consortia and administrator of the school for implementation.

- 85) School Boards must create/revise a protocol for the safe gathering of all students and parent/guardians at bus stops and safety on the bus. It is important that student with disabilities be included and familiarized with these protocols with their peers.
- 86) School Boards and Bus Consortia should provide bus drivers with training on new health and safety protocols for students with disabilities on a regular bus, small bus and wheelchair accessible bus.
- 87) Bus Consortia should minimize changes to routes, vehicle type, and schedules for students with disabilities while developing changes to routes, to limit increased anxiety or behaviours as a result of the changes. When changes are considered, parents and student should be consulted about changes.
- 88) School Boards and Bus Consortia should review procedures and protocols for persons responsible for putting a student with disability's harness on/off or supporting a student on the school bus to mitigate health risks for the student, bus driver and support person.
- 89) School Boards and Bus Consortia should revise/develop, implement and disseminate bus safety protocol Information for parents needs to help mitigate health and safety risks and assuage parent's fears. This includes protocols around harnesses. All communications should be clear and made readily available on the Board and Bus Consortia website in an accessible digital format.
- 90) Students with disabilities should be included in any training that is provide for all students on enhanced safety rules on the bus.
- 91) As students with disabilities are statistically proven to be at a higher risk of infection, School Boards and Bus Consortia should implement enhanced student bus ridership attendance procedures to aid in tracing of COVID-19 and mitigating health risks.
- 92) Traffic volume, student and road safety is always a concern around schools. It is expected for vehicle traffic to increase when school returns, as parent/caregiver or a secondary student chooses to drive to school. School Boards should work collaboratively with Municipalities to develop safe arrival and departure awareness campaigns for students, parents/caregivers and buses. These campaigns could include guidelines for kiss & ride, audio described (DV) and closed captioned (CC) virtual or diagrams of vehicle traffic flows for entering and exiting school property from the street, identifying school bus only access areas, promote other methods of transportation, etc.

## Conclusion

The Planning for Emergencies are please to provide its draft recommendations related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Working Group will continue to review resources and information on barriers and issues arising from COVID-19 and as students return to school. It will start work on its mandate to develop an emergency plan framework focused on students with disabilities (that covers the phases of preparing, planning, response and recovery) for a systematic response to an emergency.

Thank you to all the members of the Planning for Emergencies Working Group for their dedication in developing this draft set of recommendations. Working Group members are:

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COVID-19 Barriers for Students with Disabilities & Recommendations - Planning for Emergencies & Safety Working Group

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## Glossary

**Accessibility:** a general term for the degree of ease that something (e.g., device, service, physical environment and information) can be accessed, used and enjoyed by persons with disabilities. The term implies conscious planning, design and/or effort to make sure something is barrier-free to persons with disabilities. Accessibility also benefits the general population, by making things more usable and practical for everyone, including older people and families with small children.

**Accessible:** does not have obstacles for people with disabilities – something that can be easily reached or obtained; facility that can be easily entered; information that is easy to access.

**Accessible digital format:** Information that is provided in digital form that is accessible such as HTML and MS Word.

**Synchronous learning:** is the kind of learning that happens in real time. This means that you, your classmates, and your instructor interact in a specific virtual place, through a specific online medium, at a specific time. In other words, it's not exactly anywhere, anyhow, anytime. Methods of synchronous online learning include video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chatting, and live-streaming lectures.

**Asynchronous learning:** happens on your schedule. While your course of study, instructor or degree program will provide materials for reading, lectures for viewing, assignments for completing, and exams for evaluation, you have the ability to access and satisfy these requirements within a flexible time frame. Methods of asynchronous online learning include self-guided lesson modules, streaming video content, virtual libraries, posted lecture notes, and exchanges across discussion boards or social media platforms.

**Distance Education Program:** Programs to provide courses of study online, through correspondence, or by other means that do not require the physical attendance by the student at a school. (From Bill 197)

**Special Education Services** - As defined in the Education Act, "facilities and resources, including support personnel and equipment, necessary for developing and implementing a special education program".

**Virtual learning:** is defined as learning that can functionally and effectively occur in the absence of traditional classroom environments (Simonson & Schlosser, 2006).

**Virtual education:** refers to instruction in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both, and the teacher provides course content through course management applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, videoconferencing, etc. Students receive the content and communicate with the teacher via the same technologies.

**Virtual learning environment:** refers to a system that offers educators digitally-based solutions aimed at creating interactive, active learning environments. VLEs can help educators create, store and disseminate content, plan courses and lessons and foster communication between student and educator. Virtual learning environments are often part of an education institution's wider learning management system (LMS).

**Virtual instruction:** is a method of teaching that is taught either entirely online or when elements of face-to-face courses are taught online through learning management systems and other educational tools and platforms. Virtual instruction also includes digitally transmitting course materials to student.

## Resources

### Mental Health

- School Mental Health <https://smho-smso.ca/> - a variety of resources for students, parents, educators
- Mental Health and Teachers [https://www.tes.com/news/will-fear-coronavirus-affect-your-teaching?utm\\_campaign=73103\\_20200608%20Editorial%20Daily%20Register&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Dot\\_Digital&utm\\_content=73103\\_20200608%20Editorial%20Daily%20Register&dm\\_i=5NNY,1KEN,M10WD,5U5E,1](https://www.tes.com/news/will-fear-coronavirus-affect-your-teaching?utm_campaign=73103_20200608%20Editorial%20Daily%20Register&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Dot_Digital&utm_content=73103_20200608%20Editorial%20Daily%20Register&dm_i=5NNY,1KEN,M10WD,5U5E,1)
- People for Education – Educational reading in a Pandemic - <https://peopleforeducation.ca/our-work/education-reading-in-a-pandemic/>

### Public Health Guidance and Safety

- Alberta – Public Health guidance for schools - <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=72576418BE34F-D428-6986-0F85E17B91BA2A40#toc-0>
- Centre for Disease Control - Case Investigation and Contact Tracing : Part of a Multipronged Approach to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/principles-contact-tracing.html>
- Canada Public Health -Updated: Public health management of cases and contacts associated with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) = <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/interim-guidance-cases-contacts.html#co>
- UNICEF- a framework to reopening schools - <https://www.unicef.org/documents/framework-reopening-schools>
- Government of Canada resources for parents - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/resources-parents-children.html>
- SickKids Recommendations for School Reopenings - <https://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-Reopening-SickKids.pdf>
- Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations during the COVID-19 Pandemic - <https://www2.tc.gc.ca/en/services/road/federal-guidance-school-bus-operations-during-covid-19-pandemic.html>).
- National Association for Pupil Transportation (NAPT) Guidelines - <https://www.napt.org/covid>
- Considerations for Wearing Cloth Face Coverings, Centre for Disease Control - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html#feasibility-adaptations>

### Tools/Best Practices

- York Catholic District School Board <https://sites.google.com/ycdsb.ca/ycdsb-ssd-distance-learning/home> - learning from home resource

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- Durham District School Board <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/distance-learning.aspx> – distance learning resources
- Durham District School Board <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/resources/Documents/Distance-Learning/IEPs-Documenting-Accommodation-and-Programming-During-Distance-Learning-05-2020.pdf> – IEPs documenting accommodations and programming during distance learning
- Durham District School Board - <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/programs-and-learning/resources/Documents/Distance-Learning/Distance-Learning--Identification-Placement-and-Review-Committee-IPRC-Process.pdf> – IPRC process during distance learning
- Thames Valley District School Board - <https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/our-board/learning-at-a-distance.aspx> – distance learning resources and more
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board - <https://ocdsb.ca/cms/one.aspx?portalId=55478&pageId=32163119> learning at home resources
- York Region District School Board has a variety of learning resources, resources for parents etc. - <http://www.yrdsb.ca/schools/Repository/NewsEvents/Pages/BoardNews/Coronavirus.aspx>
- Toronto District School Board <https://sites.google.com/tcdsb.ca/tcdsb-parents-at/home> - a guide to assistive technology for parents
- University of Toronto – Accessibility formats and communication supports <http://aoda.hrandequity.utoronto.ca/communications/>
- Best Practices for Collecting Data on Disabilities, Education Links - <https://www.edulinks.org/learning/best-practices-collecting-data-disabilities> -
- Accessibility for Ontario Disabilities Act, Integrated Guide, Section 12: Accessible Formats and Communication Supports - <https://www.aoda.ca/a-guide-to-the-integrated-accessibility-standards-regulation/#sect12>
- Ontario Human Rights Code Policies and Guidelines on Duty to Accommodate - <http://www3.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/policy%20and%20guidelines%20on%20disability%20and%20the%20duty%20to%20accommodate.pdf>
- Preparing K-12 School Administrators for a Safe Return to School in Fall 2020, Centre for Disease Control - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/prepare-safe-return.html>

## Stakeholder Reports and Information

- OHRC Letter to the Minister of Education about convening a return-to-school partnership table - [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/letter-minister-education-about-convening-return-school-partnership-table](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-minister-education-about-convening-return-school-partnership-table)
- OHC Letter to the Minister of Education, school leaders on respecting the rights of students with disabilities - [http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news\\_centre/letter-minister-education-school-leaders-respecting-rights-students-disabilities](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/news_centre/letter-minister-education-school-leaders-respecting-rights-students-disabilities)
- OHRC Letter to Ministers re: accessible education for students with disabilities - <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/letter-ministers-re-accessible-education-students-disabilities>
- Report of The Third Review Of The Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 By The Honourable David C. Onley - <https://files.ontario.ca/seniors-accessibility-third-review-of-aoda-en-2019.pdf>

## COVID-19 Barriers for Students with Disabilities & Recommendations - Planning for Emergencies & Safety Working Group

- AFT, American Federation of Teachers [https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/guide\\_reopen-america-schools.pdf](https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/guide_reopen-america-schools.pdf) - a guide to safely open schools
- AODA Alliance Final Brief to Ontario Government on Urgent needs of K-12 Students with Disabilities during COVID-19 Crisis - <https://www.aodaalliance.org/whats-new/download-in-ms-word-format-the-aoda-alliances-june-18-2020-finalized-brief-to-the-ontario-government-on-what-needs-to-be-done-to-meet-the-needs-of-students-with-disabilities-during-the-trans/>
- AODA Alliance - New Report Reveals that Majority of Ontario's School Boards, Each School Principal can Exclude a Student From School – Real Risk of a Rash of Exclusion of Some Students with Disabilities When Schools Re-Open - <https://www.aodaalliance.org/whats-new/new-report-reveals-that-at-majority-of-ontarios-school-boards-each-school-principal-is-a-law-onto-themselves-with-arbitrary-power-to-exclude-a-student-from-school-real-risk-of-a-rash-of-exclusio/>
- Wisconsin DPI releases guidelines for reopening schools this fall: Proactive approach - <https://fox6now.com/2020/06/22/wisconsin-department-of-public-instruction-releases-guidelines-for-reopening-schools-this-fall/>
- ASCD <http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/education-update/may20/vol62/num05/7-Ways-Educators-Can-Help-Students-Cope-in-a-Pandemic.aspx>
- Easter Seals <https://education.easterseals.org/supporting-learning-at-home-through-the-covid-19-crisis/> - online learning resources
- LD@Home – resources for parents - <https://www.ldathome.ca/>
- LD@school – resources for teachers - <https://www.ldatschool.ca/>
- People for Education – Effective e-learning need structures and supports - <https://peopleforeducation.ca/our-work/technology-in-schools-a-tool-and-a-strategy/>
- Accessibility Digital Office Project - <https://adod.idrc.ocadu.ca/>
- People for Education – Educational reading in a Pandemic - <https://peopleforeducation.ca/our-work/education-reading-in-a-pandemic>

## Additional Reading

- How brain research help retool our school schedule for remote learning - <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-06-10-how-brain-research-helped-retool-our-school-schedule-for-remote-learning>
- Ontario Developmental Services <https://www.dsontario.ca/resources/webcasts-podcasts> - podcast to Passport Funding
- Survey Place resources <https://www.surreyplace.ca/resources-publications/coronavirus-updates-resources/#parents>
- Statistics Canada Survey – parenting during pandemic - <https://surveys-enquetes.statcan.gc.ca/form-formulaire/q/en/egqs4b1d8328edfa4922aa915b5436328916/p0>
- Globe & Mail -Children being rendered invisible <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-children-being-rendered-invisible-by-province-former-ontario-child/>
- CTV News - Parents should 'respect custody arrangements' during COVID-19 pandemic - <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/parents-should-respect-custody-arrangements-during-covid-19-pandemic-1.4874720?cache=wcoseppn%3FautoPlay%3Dtrue%3FclipId%3D89680>

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- Top 10 - A New “New Deal” For Education: Top 10 Policy Moves For States In The COVID 2.0 Era - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lindadarlinghammond/2020/05/19/a-new-new-deal-for-education-top-10-policy-moves-for-states-in-the-covid-20-era/#203440f16266>
- UNESCO MGIEP Essential SEL Resources: COVID-19 - <https://mgiep.unesco.org/covid>
- Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies <https://inee.org/resources/inee-minimum-standards> Minimum Standards Handbook: Preparedness, Emergency, Recovery
- George Lucas Foundation [https://www.edutopia.org/article/schools-are-opening-worldwide-providing-model-us?utm\\_source=Edutopia+Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=9f50493399-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_052720\\_enews\\_schoolsare&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_f72e8cc8c4-9f50493399-78670447](https://www.edutopia.org/article/schools-are-opening-worldwide-providing-model-us?utm_source=Edutopia+Newsletter&utm_campaign=9f50493399-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_052720_enews_schoolsare&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_f72e8cc8c4-9f50493399-78670447) – article on school opening around the world
- Teacher Magazine- How teachers can help students transition back to school - <https://www.teachermagazine.com.au/articles/covid-19-how-teachers-can-help-students-transition-back-to-school>
- Tes – What 1 week after returning to school looks like - <https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-reopening-schools-one-week-back-what-has-return-school-been>
- How brain research help retool our school schedule for remote learning - <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-06-10-how-brain-research-helped-retool-our-school-schedule-for-remote-learning>