



REOPENING SCHOOLS: OVERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEAs
TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Appendices: Toolkits (provided on as rolling basis beginning June 8, 2020)

- Academics
- Assessing Student Learning
- Childcare
- Communications
- Consolidated Funding Applications
- Counseling
- Access, Opportunity and Remediation
- Finance
- Governance and Management
- Health and Public Health
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- Policy and Legal Considerations
- Postsecondary Transitions
- Procedures and Social Distancing

Professional Development
Public Charter and Non-Public Schools
Safety and Operations: Emergency Operations, Pandemic, Post-recovery Evaluation
School Improvement
Special Populations
Staffing
Technology
Transportation
Wellbeing and Mental Health

Note: The information provided in this and related documents does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. This is intended to be a guidance document to support local districts and all information included is for reference only. Because local school board policy and unique facts make dramatic differences in analyzing any situation, the Tennessee Department of Education advises each school district to consult with the local school board attorney for specific legal advice regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on school operations. Additionally, the Tennessee Department of Education encourages districts to consult their local health departments to ensure that the health and safety of all students and staff are prioritized while working to provide a high-quality education to all students. The document contains links to other resources and sites. Those are provided for convenience only and do not constitute an endorsement. It is likely that evolving circumstances will necessitate changes to this document and local plans. While this guide is not comprehensive to all needs nor static in nature, it is intended to capture the most important components necessary for school planning as of the date of release.

MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

This has been a time unlike any other in our lives. COVID-19 has suddenly and significantly shifted education in the state of Tennessee. As educators and students across the state navigate a new distance learning environment, a need for innovative resources to support learning exists. The Tennessee Department of Education must support high-quality educational opportunities for the nearly one million students in our care, such that we can ensure no child is disadvantaged by the current COVID-19 pandemic and that our schools and districts are supported moving into and throughout next year and beyond. Ultimately, we must keep people safe.

The pandemic has elevated known gaps and we must accelerate a child-centered strategy.

During this crisis a number of challenges within our field have become apparent. In some cases, these are new challenges that we must face together. In others, they are challenges that have existed over decades and are now rapidly accelerating in greater public awareness and urgency. Frankly, these things are not new, but they have been brought to the forefront of the public consciousness and demand to be addressed in ways that may not have been so dire and so clear as we know them to be now.

- *Achievement Gaps:* Overall, Tennessee's achievement gaps have not closed in the last 15 years and school building closures will likely serve to widen those gaps further. This is not a new challenge, but the pandemic has served to more poignantly highlight existing gaps in student achievement and opportunity.
- *Rural Communities:* School building closures have continued to highlight the disparity that exists related to connectivity and broadband, access to more community resources, and opportunities to raise and use local funds in support of public schools in our rural communities.
- *Early Literacy:* In Tennessee, just over 33% of 3rd graders and 27% of 8th graders are reading proficiently. Reading proficiency in 3rd grade is one of the most important indicators for future success and must continue to be an area of focus. School building closures will likely exacerbate this challenge, especially for children in our youngest grades.
- *Mental Health:* The pandemic has highlighted the significant challenges that districts, schools, and educators face related to student mental health and behavioral needs. School building closures have brought this conversation to the forefront as children and families struggle with the anxieties associated with the pandemic, and in some cases additional familial struggles that would normally be identified and addressed earlier by schools.

Similarly, the pandemic has also highlighted challenges that we face in the broader work being done in our public schools. Over the last decade, there has been a focus on rigorous standards, assessment, accountability, and school improvement. These were – and are – important components of a broader education agenda rooted in excellence and equity for all children.

However, we have also seen persistent challenges. We absolutely know that our education community will work to support our students, and the focus needs to be on the “how.” That takes time and typically a tremendous amount of capacity and resource application to ensure the work will stick. By investing in high-quality materials and implementation of best practices as well as the necessary resources to support educators, we will continue to accelerate the work that moves our field forward. We must invest in both process and people.

Specifically, we are all now innovators. The very way in which we are rethinking and redesigning how we deliver education to our children during this pandemic, including how we run our school systems is innovative. Together, we must embrace this opportunity and what it means for our kids.

While there are some policy conversations that need to take place to address the impacts of the pandemic, we have also seen that educators will step-up to fill the space. However, merely stating the expectations does not mean people can meet them. We have seen that schools and districts are rapidly trying to pivot to address the current needs, with minimal time for development or meaningful support. We must create opportunities to provide resources and professional development opportunities to our educators and system leads. The guidance documents included and referenced in this guide will support that locally driven effort.

This is difficult work and I have been inspired day after day by the way that Tennesseans have come together and shown our collective love for children and commitment to their wellbeing. We must continue to pull together, work hard, and keep pace. Our commitment to our children is unwavering, and I also know that in many ways doing this is a marathon that we have all been running at a full sprint. I hope we are all able to appreciate what has been done, focus on what is left to do and remember what still lies ahead.

*“The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep...”¹*

We must take care of ourselves and one another so that we can be our best for our kids.

Better together.



Dr. Penny Schwinn
Commissioner of Education

¹ Robert Frost, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” from *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1923, © 1969 by Henry Holt and Company, Inc., renewed 1951, by Robert Frost.

APPRECIATION

The Tennessee Department of Education would like to thank our districts partners whose local resources were utilized in the development and/or who helped develop and give feedback on this guide²:

- Arlington Community
- Cheatham County Schools
- Clarksville-Montgomery Schools
- Cleveland City Schools
- Clinton City Schools
- Collierville Schools
- Dickson County Schools
- Gibson County Schools
- Hamilton County Schools
- Haywood County Schools
- Hickman County Schools
- Kingsport City Schools
- Lakeland School System
- Lauderdale County Schools
- Lenoir City Schools
- Manchester City Schools
- Roane County Schools
- Trousdale County Schools
- Wilson County Schools

Superintendent Priority Group: Academics

Russell Dyer, Cleveland City

Mike Frazier, Etowah City

Joey Hassell, Haywood County

Kelly Johnson, Clinton City

Jeff Moorhouse, Kingsport City

Eddie Pruett, Gibson County SSD

Clint Satterfield, Trousdale County

Joey Vaughn, Manchester City

Mike Winstead, Maryville City

Dr. Donna Wright, Wilson County

² The district names and officials listed here do not constitute an endorsement of the content. They have provided meaningful feedback, resources, or information to support the thinking and development of the contents of this document, along with our state and federal health agencies and officials.

Superintendent Priority Group: Whole Child

Steve Barnett, Johnson City
Dr. Linda Cash, Bradley County
Kurt Dronebarger, White County
Mark Florence, Benton County
Dr. Linda Gilbert, Murfreesboro City
Shane Johnston, Jefferson County
Gary Lilly, Collierville Schools
Kris McAskill, Houston County
Johnny McDaniel, Lawrence County
David Snowden, Franklin SSD

Superintendent Priority Group: Educators

Jennifer Fields, Campbell County
Norma Gerrell, Paris SSD
Dr. Jason Golden, Williamson County
James Bo Griffin, Millington County
Bill Heath, Lincoln County
Steve Starnes, Greeneville City
Pete Swafford, Sequatchie County
Jennifer Terry, Bledsoe County

INTRODUCTION

This is a framing document and not an implementation document. It is intended to provide broad questions and considerations for local districts. Implementation guidance with specific sample procedures or actions will be provided through the **School Reopening Toolkits** and supplemental resources listed in the appendix. Information contained in this document is consistent with national and state guidance as of the time of publishing and will be updated as guidance changes. We anticipate the need for flexibility and rapid adoption of best practice, which is evolving as we learn more about this disease.

As we engaged in conversations and solicited feedback related to the COVID-19 response, similar trends emerged. What we found from public feedback, individual meetings and conversations, and the needs assessments that have been conducted is that (1) the framework of the *Best for All* strategic plan appropriately addresses the major issues that we are seeing related to the pandemic, (2) many of the initiatives of the strategic plan address the needs named in the pandemic and now need to be accelerated, and (3) there are growing and emerging needs that should be addressed to support our school districts.

There are some specific themes emerging from this needs assessment that are worth highlighting in each bucket:

- **Academics:** The state and/or individual districts may need to close schools again or implement social distancing procedures that adjust the way schools are run. This will impact the ways in which schools are able to deliver high-quality academic programs for all students.
- **Whole Child:** Students and families may have additional non-academic needs as a result of the pandemic. We must also focus on equipping educators to help them address non-academic needs. All of these areas should be attended to, especially as schools reopen.
- **Educators:** Teachers are working hard and need support to reach all students. This is especially true for our most vulnerable students and those attending lower-performing schools. We must empower our educators to teach in varied settings and spaces so that all children can be reached.
- **Systems:** Local districts will need to adjust budgets to accommodate surplus and deficit line items but may still have local expenses that exceed budget forecasts.



	<p>instruction, services, and remediation to take place.</p> <p>Decisions related to health and safety should be in close consultation with state and/or local health agencies.</p> <p>This model allows businesses to reopen sooner as well.</p> <p>This model is the most straightforward should the district or school want to integrate additional learning time.</p>	<p>Different planning would need to occur as the remainder of the student body returns – so at-risk students would need to make an additional transition to mainstream classrooms in a relatively short (1-2 month) period of time.</p> <p>This model allows businesses to reopen sooner as well.</p>	<p>move forward with continued planning/prep for another outbreak of COVID-19 (part of the day would be remote or individually paced).</p>	<p>social distancing practices in classrooms and minimize the potential costs of expanding the number of classrooms or creating new staffing models.</p> <p>This model allows businesses to reopen sooner as well.</p>
Challenges	<p>Given higher density of students on location at one time, risk of viral transmission is higher.</p> <p>There may be more concerns/criticisms expressed by families because they do not like the local decision made.</p> <p>There may be students or staff who are unable to</p>	<p>The district and school would need to determine the best way to handle the differences in instructional delivery for a rolling group of students and ensure equitable access to learning for all students.</p> <p>The need to conduct “back to school” and “first month” activities for multiple groups of students</p>	<p>This model would be more difficult for working families to manage, as it relates to childcare and scheduling. Sibling schedules would need to be considered.</p> <p>Staffing structures would need to be considered, as determinations are made about whether the stagger is between or within grade levels.</p>	<p>All normal scheduling, sports, childcare issues typically associated with year-round scheduling would need to be considered.</p> <p>There may be community or staff resistance to the model and there are considerations related to staff and student culture. This could be positioned or</p>

	attend school in person due to health concerns and those stakeholders may not be as integrated into the daily instruction and life of the school, creating access gaps.	could create a strain on central office and school office resources.		considered as a temporary solution.
Flexible Options	<p>Districts may want to design elementary grades as flex-grades. In other words, a 5th grade class is really a 4th/5th grade class with students being placed based on proficiency, or to encourage same-grade students to receive review content before new grade-level content.</p> <p>Districts may also want to group students by grade-band based upon content taught. Different students would be in different groups/grade levels depending on the content they needed (likely math and reading only). This would require diagnostic assessments to ensure the appropriate placement of</p>	<p>A school might re-open by grade, welcoming back a few grades at a time over a 4-6 week period. In these cases, the youngest students should be welcomed back first.</p> <p>Similarly, openings could be staggered by need, so that vulnerable populations come back first.</p>	<p>The district may choose to run school with fewer hours in-person and more independent study hours from home. This could look like schools operating from 7:30am – 11:30am with 2.5 hours of distance instruction in the afternoon for some students and then 12:00 – 4:00pm with 2.5 hours of distance instruction in the morning for other students.</p>	<p>The year-round model might only be used for a limited 1-2 year period of time. This may reduce community or stakeholder stress or concern and still address the needs of full-time, in-person instruction (short-term only).</p>

	<p>students in different reading/math groups. This would require professional development and extensive family communication.</p> <p>This flexible approach could inform consideration for a mastery-based education model where students accelerate/ progress as they have mastered the material.</p>			
<p>Considerations: Health and Wellness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Health, Counseling, Social Distancing, and Wellbeing and Mental Health for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • In all cases, the health and safety of students and staff as they relate to the risk of direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 are paramount. Robust policies and procedures must be in place for the prevention, identification, and mitigation of spread of COVID-19 prior to consideration of in-person learning. • For all health and wellness procedures, create a clear communications document to help stakeholders understand what is happening and how the content is being delivered. • Consider conducting temperature or other related screens at the start of the day, and potentially at mid-day (as recommended by health officials). • Develop and reinforce personal sanitation guidelines like frequent handwashing, the use of hand sanitizer, and potentially wearing PPE (local decision). • Clarify the role of counselors and school nurses, especially related to identifying the impact of the virus on various populations, testing and screening procedures, supports that will be required for the physical and mental health impacts of the virus, and the extent to which existing staff should provide versus refer services. • Ensure that all students are accounted for and that there is an intake procedure in the first two weeks of school related to how they may be feeling and reacting to school reopening. 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for group and individual sessions to help students who are affected by the closures or pandemic in whatever ways are most appropriate. Consider this work in terms of staffing needs and resources that may need to be shared districtwide. • Ask students to share their thoughts and needs (older students may do this through surveys or writing, younger students through conversations) and provide ways to enhance peer leadership and support. • Identify ways to provide counseling and non-academic supports to students and staff, as needed. This includes resources that can be provided by the district itself, or through identified partners. Districts should plan for how to communicate those opportunities to staff and families, as well as provide multiple opportunities and vehicles for that support to take place (examples include telehealth, office hours, hotlines, virtual videos and resources, etc.). • Provide support for character and citizenship development, regardless of format, to ensure that students continue to build the skills identified in state standards and what would traditionally be expected in the normal course of K-12 education. • Provide opportunities for all stakeholders – including students – to actively participate in needs assessments, ongoing progress monitoring, and opportunities for support.
<p>Considerations: Academics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Academics, Assessing Student Learning, Childcare, Access Opportunity and Remediation, Professional Development, Special Populations, Post-secondary Transitions, and School Improvement for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Evaluate content that was covered in the previous year, tools that will be used to determine learning that was retained, gaps that may exist, and plans for what that learning recovery will look like for individual students. • Based on any identified needs for remediation, create a scope and sequence that integrates learning from the prior year into the current year in a way that provides ample remediation time for those learners that are far behind and acceleration time for those learners who are ready to progress to the next grade level. (Ideas might include mixed grades, a pre-unit of spring content or a zero period in high schools) • Identify the strategy or strategies that will be used to address any necessary remediation, significant differences in proficiency within a single classroom, etc. • Identify the assessments that will be used to evaluate student learning at the start of the year, and that will be used to track progress throughout the year. • Make determinations about calendars at the local level, including stakeholders in those conversations, and budget accordingly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially adjust traditional school day blocks to account for additional remediation time or small group instruction. Share staffing resources accordingly or rotate teachers in ways that allow for specialization or develop master schedules that reduce student transitions (such as moving an 8-hour block into four by four blocks). • Consider incorporating a character and citizenship development program for students as a way to ensure ongoing and consistent positive interactions. Please note that a free set of instructional materials will be available to all Tennessee districts in Spring 2021. • Plan for the needs of high school students who may have experienced significant disruptions: missed ACT or SAT, concerns with AP or IB courses and tests, disruption in dual credit and work-based learning opportunities, interruptions or other challenges with their selected pathways, etc. • Create plans for how remediation and review will occur at the start of the year and address the individual needs of students who may be advanced on grade level standards, on-track, or in need of additional support and remediation. Ensure that all plans include the ways that teachers and instructional leaders will support instruction. • Identify any extended learning opportunities that the school or district may provide, in what scenarios, and in what format. This might include supplemental virtual opportunities, various structures related to individual or small group settings, incorporating local service providers. • Develop clear procedures and expectations for how student-specific plans will be reviewed and updated (including those for students with disabilities, English learners, students with Section 504 accommodations, students with behavior support plans, etc.)
<p>Considerations: Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Staffing and Governance and Management for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Determine which staff have health risks or concerns and make adjustments (see Staffing Toolkit). • Review the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and create local processes to implement. • Consider professional development for staff related to online or distance teaching in the case a change is needed (this may also include training and support for families). • Develop policies for substitute teachers and how the school and district will appropriately train them on procedures. • Consider and create plans to support the natural stress that may exist for many staff members related to the end of last year and the potential adjustments in starting the new year. • Identify areas where professional learning is needed by staff (by roles and responsibilities), including what has been needed observationally, what has been requested, what additional resources may be required, how will follow-up and ongoing coaching occur, and how will the training be delivered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the model selected, determine what format professional learning will take place in and how that will impact professional development logistics, needs, etc. • Determine how staff will be able to engage effectively and meaningfully in professional development, and how that will be extended to various staff members.
<p>Considerations: Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Finance, Nutrition, Technology, Transportation, Consolidated Funding, and Communications for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • For any operational procedure, clear signage using both words and graphics will be necessary to reinforce and clarify expectations. • Consider and create plans for how people enter and exit the building, and who may be allowed in different parts of the building to reduce traffic and congestion. • Plan for limiting or reducing daily movement of students in non-classroom environments for meals, recess, one-way traffic or split lanes for hallways, bathroom use, etc. • Teachers rotate classrooms and allow students to remain in cohorts together • Review building capacity and space and consider layout, alternative space, etc. (as outlined in the appendix) to account for 6-foot distancing, all students facing the same way, and clear marking for routes and access. • If using buses, consider safety measures like how the bus is loaded, where students sit (every other seat and/or row), multiple routes, disinfection procedures, additional driver capacity and costs, etc. • Ways to account for extra-curricular activities (clubs, sports, band, etc.) and how social distancing measures may impact how they are managed. • Determine and clearly communicate visitor guidelines and protocols including family members to reduce crowding. • Develop a plan for more in-depth cleaning protocols and procedures for the facility, with a focus on heavily trafficked or used areas like light switches, handles, tables and chairs, materials and supplies, and other shared resources. • Provide professional development on any requirements within the operational plan including: school site staff related to training on personal hygiene and new or revised building procedures, health screens that may be required at the local level, disinfection of buses between routes, etc.. This should also be considered for temporary, new or substitute staff during the year. • Provide ample opportunities for stakeholders to learn about the operations, ask questions, and discuss impact and implications.

CATEGORY 2 – ALL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN VIRTUAL AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

All districts engaged in some form of distance education in Spring 2020. It will be critical for districts to conduct a thorough analysis for what did and did not work in those months.

	Fulltime Distance Education	Self-Paced or Semi-Independent
Description	Students are enrolled in a fulltime education program or school. This may be done either through an existing platform provided by the district or school or students are enrolled in a virtual school. As a note, full sets of instructional materials, with videos and assessments will be provided at no cost to all districts in Tennessee in order to provide an option for distance education, should it be needed.	Students are enrolled in a self-paced program of study, either through an existing platform adopted by local districts and schools or through recommended programs. This may also include packet-based instruction with virtual teacher support. If a district is interested, this option is best suited for schools that already use some version of self-paced instruction. There is a significant amount of support and onboarding necessary to implement this model well, so without experience, it would not be recommended broadly.
Strengths	Having a strong fulltime program in place is a necessity if a district is not able to physically return to school. A coherent set of instructional materials and practices will provide a significantly stronger learning experience.	This is the easiest model operationally, as it requires identifying work, assigning it, and checking in.
Challenges	Distance learning has not been shown to have the same effectiveness as in-person instruction when significant and intentional professional development and student supports are not in place. Districts should plan to provide such supports and include significant practice opportunities for students and staff.	Students will likely move at different paces based on non-academic factors such as familial oversight, ability for families to support student learning, access to resources, etc. This option is more likely to create greater gaps between groups of students.

<p>Considerations: Health and Wellness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Health, Counseling, Social Distancing, and Wellbeing and Mental Health for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Consider a rolling in-person or completely virtual back-to-school open house and welcome event. This will help stakeholders. • Find ways to have asynchronous and synchronous learning and engagement opportunities for students to talk with a staff member and/or with each other, or to engage in related content. Integrate some of these opportunities into academic programming. • Conduct activities to boost district and school culture (ex. virtual staff coffee breaks, spirit days, themed dress days, etc.). • Identify ways to provide counseling and non-academic supports to students and staff, as needed. This includes resources that can be provided by the district itself, or through identified partners. Districts should plan for how to communicate those opportunities to staff and families, as well as provide multiple opportunities and vehicles for that support to take place (examples include telehealth, office hours, hotlines, virtual videos and resources, etc.). • Use state health agency guidance to clarify the role of counselors and school nurses, especially related to identifying the impact of the virus on various populations, testing and screening procedures, supports that will be required for the physical and mental health impacts of the virus, and the extent to which existing staff should provide versus refer services. • Provide support for character and citizenship development, regardless of format, to ensure that students continue to build the skills identified in state standards and what would traditionally be expected in the normal course of K-12 education. • Provide opportunities for all stakeholders – including students – to actively participate in needs assessments, ongoing progress monitoring, and opportunities for support.
<p>Considerations: Academics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Academics, Assessing Student Learning, Childcare, Access Opportunity and Remediation, Professional Development, Special Populations, Post-secondary Transitions, and School Improvement for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Consider what resources will be used for online learning and include a clear schedule and set of expectations. Please see the Academics Toolkit and the Continuity of Instruction planning documents, when available. • Consider online or small-group in-person sessions to support families, staff, and students with the use of any technology or platforms/resources being developed. • Create strategies for student engagement, checks for understanding and academic feedback to students

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create individualized plans for all special populations to ensure that they have access and opportunity for high-quality instruction. This would include students with disabilities, English learners, students in foster care, students who are homeless or highly mobile, students with migrant families, etc. • Plan for additional resources needed to support students with enhanced or additional technology solutions, and the costs associated with those solutions.
Considerations: Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Staffing and Governance and Management for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Consider providing significant professional development for all staff members on how to effectively use any online platforms or tools being considered. • Consider subject-specific supports for transitioning high quality materials to a digital environment. • Identify clear and consistent ways for administrators to engage with stakeholders virtually (stopping into lessons, sending videos to families via email, etc.). • Support professional development and peer-driven networks related to the pedagogy of virtual learning and ways to plan and deliver content. • Consider the separate needs for school administrators related to a virtual set-up and provide the necessary professional development for those staff members related to supporting, coaching, monitoring, and adjusting their interactions with teachers in a virtual environment related to lesson planning, delivery, and communication. • Consider the use of mentoring and peer coaching. Potentially pair a technology-savvy teacher with less technology-savvy peers to provide support. • Working with staff, consider and clearly plan and communicate how staff observations and evaluations would take place, including any feedback and support that would be provided. • Consider the needs of substitute teachers in a virtual environment and how that would be facilitated related to student engagement and interaction, any video access, and monitoring. • Identify the plan for onboarding new staff in a virtual environment, including introductions, trainings, resources, school or district culture, etc. • Identify the ways in which staff will be supported during the year as they transition onto new teams and streams of work. • Identify areas where professional learning is needed by staff (by roles and responsibilities), including what has been needed observationally, what has been requested, what additional resources may be required, how will follow-up and ongoing coaching occur, and how will the training be delivered.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the model selected, what format will professional learning take place in and how will that impact session logistics, needs, etc. • Regardless of format, how will staff be able to engage effectively and meaningfully in professional development, and how will that be extended to various staff members? • How will all of these be adapted by roles and responsibilities? For example, how might school nurses, counselors, special education teachers, P.E. teachers, and others receive consistent and commensurate support?
<p>Considerations: Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Finance, Nutrition, Technology, Transportation, Consolidated Funding, and Communications for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • Nutrition: consider the needs of food distribution to students and the most cost-effective ways to conduct meal preparation and delivery. Consideration should also be given to staff health and districts should prepare for fully packaged meals, silverware, and seasoning. Please see Nutrition Toolkit when available. • Technology: Schools should have a clear plan for how technology and access will be distributed, monitored, and effectively used. This should include security and child protection protocols. This should be clearly communicated to all stakeholders, with appropriate training (which may include a brief “return to school” in very small, staggered waves for students and staff). It is strongly recommended that a Help Desk or Technical Assistance Center be provided for families and staff who have issues with the use of devices or the internet, need help navigating the technology, and/or who need to exchange a broken or damaged machine. Please see the IT Toolkit when available. • Districts should plan for any migration to long-term technology needs and platforms, including issues related to supply chain concerns with acquiring, distributing, accounting for and supporting technology. • Districts should consider bandwidth of their existing structure and what would need to be adjusted to meet a greater demand. • Online safety and security should be prioritized, and districts should consider what safeguards need to be in place for children to be protected.

CATEGORY 3 – SOME STUDENTS IN PHYSICAL BUILDINGS AND SOME STUDENTS VIRTUAL

	Split Days	Alternating Days	Physical Attendance Based on Need
Description	Students attend half days at school and half days virtually.	Students attend alternating days of instruction, typically on a 2-week cycle. For example, a student may be in school Monday, Wednesday, and Friday on Week A and then Tuesday and Thursday on Week B.	Schools allow for some students to be physically in school while others attend school virtually. Distance instruction can occur in synchronous format (livestream the class), through recordings, or similar.
Strengths	<p>Students are able to receive in-person instruction every day and in-person instruction can focus on core subject areas.</p> <p>While there are still challenges with family employment considerations, the consistency of the schedule may be more manageable for employers (or households with more than one adult).</p>	<p>It allows for children to be in school buildings and receive at least 50% of the year with direct, in-person instruction.</p> <p>It provides families with full-day coverage, which may help with work schedules.</p>	<p>Students with the greatest needs receive the core, in-person instruction.</p> <p>Students who require special services (IEPs, ESL, behavioral support, etc.) will have regular access to those services.</p>
Challenges	<p>Attending in half day increments may present challenges from a family employment perspective.</p> <p>Non-core areas will likely not be prioritized and may impact overall student learning and progress in those areas.</p>	<p>It may be difficult for families to manage fulltime work schedules and inconsistent childcare needs.</p> <p>There will still be the need to have distance or remote instruction on “off days,” which doubles the workload of some educators as they work to teach and may need to support students who are at home.</p>	<p>Students may receive different learning opportunities and some students who might be able to accelerate their learning will not be able to do so in a distance format.</p> <p>Schools will still be managing multiple set-ups, which may require more capacity.</p>

			It may be difficult for families with “at-home” students to manage fulltime work schedules and inconsistent childcare needs.
Flexibilities	Schools may look to allow for certain vulnerable populations to be permitted to be in school for the full day, pending space. This may require alternative classroom space or repeat instruction.	<p>Students may attend school on consistent alternating days such as Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays every week, and then either split Friday in half or attend every other Friday.</p> <p>Students could also have alternating weeks.</p> <p>Students could also be blocked into age groups, with younger students attending full time and older students learning from home.</p>	<p>Schools may allow some families to voluntarily opt to educate their students at home due to health considerations or the presence of full-time care. That may allow for more students to attend in-person.</p> <p>If there is capacity, there may be the opportunity to allow for students to rotate in-person instruction on pre-set schedules, so that some in-person instruction occurs.</p>
Considerations: Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. • Health and sanitation practices will need to be clearly articulated if different groups of students are rotating through shared spaces. 		
Considerations: Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please see related Reopening Toolkits on Academics, Assessing Student Learning, Childcare, Access Opportunity and Remediation, Professional Development, Special Populations, and School Improvement for additional guidance and resources related to this topic. • In all cases, the health and safety of students and staff as they relate to the risk of direct and indirect impacts of COVID-19 are paramount. Robust policies and procedures must be in place for the prevention, identification, and mitigation of spread of COVID-19 prior to consideration of in-person learning. • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. • Health, personal hygiene and disinfection practices will need to be clearly articulated if different groups of students are rotating through shared spaces. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that virtual instruction can be delivered in a flexible way throughout the day, to accommodate different family needs. • Ensure that the content, scope and sequence, and assessments for in person instruction mirror the instruction for digital learning • Consider the needs of children with disabilities and when/how services will be provided and what transportation may be necessary.
Considerations: Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. • Schedule staff to be placed in the environment and context to which they are best suited or the context where they should be placed due to health reasons. Where available, student achievement and staff satisfaction should be considered. • Ensure that all staff schedules and expectations are clear and include sufficient professional development and support. • Identify areas where professional learning is needed by staff (by roles and responsibilities), including what has been needed observationally, what has been requested, what additional resources may be required, how will follow-up and ongoing coaching occur, and how will the training be delivered. • Depending on the model selected, what format will professional learning take place in and how will that impact session logistics, needs, etc. • Regardless of format, how will staff be able to engage effectively and meaningfully in professional development, and how will that be extended to various staff members?
Considerations: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. • Consider what attendance policies may need to be adjusted and how attendance will be appropriately and accurately taken, aligned to State Board policy and approved plans from the department.

CATEGORY 4 – CYCLICAL OR INTERMITTENT PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL EDUCATION

	Staff and Family Choice	Emergency or Responsive Situations Only (ex. Virus Resurgence)
Description	Some districts may opt for families and staff members to select the form of education that they would like to use. This would mean that students may select to learn from home (while still being enrolled in the district). Similarly, teachers who are unable to return to work may be those teachers who also participate in distance instruction.	This is a contingency plan that would be immediately implemented by districts and schools based on the community, regional or state resurgence of the virus. This would need to be a plan that can be immediately implemented and should be clearly articulated through district continuity of instruction plans.
Strengths	Provides a more flexible option for families and staff to accommodate health and level of comfort with physical attendance.	A required component of the Continuity of Instruction Plans. Please see that guidance for more information.
Challenges	<p>The balance of students by grade (or teachers by grade or subject) may not operationally work, so districts would need to solidify family and teacher plans early enough to accommodate any gaps.</p> <p>For in-person instruction, the balance of students by grade level may still require the need for additional accommodations from Categories 1 and 2.</p>	A required component of the Continuity of Instruction Plans. Please see that guidance for more information.
Considerations: Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. 	
Considerations: Academics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. 	
Considerations: Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. 	
Considerations: Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please review the guidance from Category 1 and Category 2. • Develop a plan for how to quickly transition from in-person instruction to distance instruction. This may include regular use of technology in the classroom as if it were a virtual space so that teachers can support students using 	

	<p>the technology effectively (ex. do this for 2-3 hours every Friday, so that there is a normalcy and ease of transition for all stakeholders). It may also include a pre-developed inventory and check-out procedure, premade packets for “what to do” and “how to engage” with the district and school for all things needed (including academics, nutrition, other services, etc.)</p>
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APPENDIX

Toolkits

The Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) is producing a series of individual toolkits for school reopening. These toolkits will encompass the details and planning guidance referenced through the framing in this guide.

- Academics
- Assessing Student Learning
- Childcare
- Communications
- Consolidated Funding Applications
- Counseling
- Equitable Access and Opportunity
- Finance
- Governance and Management
- Health and Public Health
- Nutrition
- Policy and Legal Considerations
- Postsecondary Transitions
- Procedures
- Professional Development
- Public Charter and Non-Public Schools
- Safety and Operations: Emergency Operations, Pandemic, Post-recovery Evaluation
- School Improvement
- Social Distancing at Schools
- Special Populations
- Staffing
- Technology
- Transportation
- Wellbeing and Mental Health