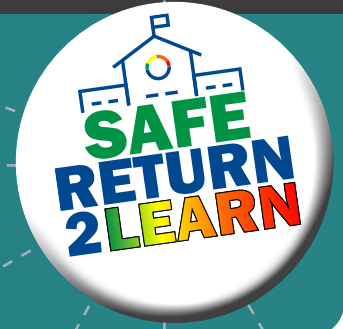


Guidance for a Safe & Sustainable School Year



1 Safety

1) Dashboards

Districts should establish COVID-19 dashboards to publicly report a district's total number of cases, current positive cases and the number of students and staff in quarantine. These dashboards should include district-wide numbers and cases for each individual school building, as well as quarantine information.

2) Rapid Testing

Districts should, in conjunction with health department officials and community stakeholders, develop and fund rapid, on-site testing for students and staff.

3) Directed Health Measure Protocols

School safety committees should work with state agencies to include stronger protocols within Directed Health Measures (DHM) that prohibit symptomatic students from returning to school unless one of the three criteria

are met: a negative COVID-19 test; a doctor's note indicating the symptoms are a result of another issue (e.g. allergies); or completion of a 14-day quarantine.

4) Additional Safety Needs:

- Districts should establish clear criteria for when in-person instruction should take place, and when they should move to remote instruction;
- Hire additional staff to help with contact tracing;
- Provide paid administrative leave for staff that need to quarantine from exposure;
- Buildings should utilize staggered arrival, dismissal, and passing period schedules to help minimize crowds and increase traffic flow.

Helpful Resource:
Nebraska Association of Health Directors:
<https://nalhd.org/covid-19/>

2 Time



1) Provide additional workdays to allow educators time to collaborate, meet additional expectations and plan for future lessons.



2) Provide an additional hour of plan time each day by utilizing early dismissal for students.



3) Postpone non-essential meetings to allow for additional plan time.

4) Preserve plan time by not requesting that teachers cover for others more than one time per week.

5) Work with the State Department of Education and the Board of Education to reduce or waive the instructional minute requirement for the 2020-21 school year. This change will provide educators time to adapt to full virtual or hybrid learning models.

IMPORTANT: *Nebraska Education Commissioner Dr. Matt Blomstedt has issued guidance that will allow teachers more time for planning and preparation due to significant disruptions in regular school operations caused by the pandemic. The commissioner has indicated each district can ask for additional time based on its specific need and circumstances. Guidance regarding instructional hours is posted at <https://launchne.com/commish/>*

3 Workload

1) Elementary Level

Distribute remote learning expectations over the team to fully utilize staff. Utilize reading coordinators and instructional coaches to focus on smaller, targeted groups of remote students. When possible, have teachers exclusively assigned to remote learners instead of using synchronous instruction, especially in the elementary grades.

2) Secondary Level

Distribute remote learning expectations over the team to fully utilize staff. Consider remote sections when possible, if numbers permit.

3) Testing Requirements

Districts should work with the Department of Education and the State Board of Education to reduce or eliminate testing requirements for the 2020-21 school year.

4) Staffing and Workload

Educators should not be required to cover others' classes. All certified staff who do not have any teaching responsibilities or student contact should be acting as substitutes (i.e. -- building and district administrative staff).

NOTE: In general, it is best to have assigned educators who work exclusively with remote learners.

Additional recommendations for a safe and sustainable school year



Evaluations and Appraisals: Districts should suspend all evaluations and appraisals for non-probationary teachers. Permanent teachers are not statutorily required to be evaluated; that is addressed in individual district school board policy. Read more here: <http://bit.ly/NDE-FAQ>



Remote Learning: Require a certain time period commitment for those parents choosing remote learning. Frequent changes creates extra work for teachers. Consider offering remote learning options to only students with health concerns.



Compensation: Consider increased compensation for educators who are doing synchronous learning.



Curriculum Adjustments: Districts need to focus on possible curriculum adjustments, as well as relaxed pacing. Lost instructional time may be due to cleaning, sanitizing, mask breaks and technical issues with remote learners.



PLC Release Time: Educators should be given some autonomy over professional learning community (PLC) release time.



Collect Suggestions from Members: Educators should share what additional duties can be taken off their plates. Districts should respond with adjustments they are willing to make. These changes will require monitoring.

4 Resources



Resources from NDE can be found at:
<https://www.launchne.com/>

Specific COVID-19 resources from NSEA can be found at: www.nsea.org/COVID19

NSEA Guidance on COVID-19 Directed Health Measures: www.nsea.org/COVID19

NSEA Virtual Learning FAQs
<http://bit.ly/VirtualLearningFAQs>

Look up your Local Health Department:
<https://bit.ly/HealthDeptContacts>

Map of Local Health Departments:
<http://bit.ly/NeHealthDepts-Map>