Amplify.

Back to school 2020 and beyond

A guide to planning for the year ahead

Dear educators,

Your job has always been both difficult and essential. In the spring of 2020, it got incalculably harder, not to mention unpredictable. But while the ground may be shifting every day, your commitment to your students is unwavering.

We want to let you know that we are in your corner. We want to help you plan and adapt, and to stand with every student even as the ground shifts under their feet, too.

From our mission statement: *We share your goal of inspiring all students to think deeply, creatively, and for themselves*. We are here to support you and your students in success, as we enter this newest "normal," and always.

Sincerely,

Amplify

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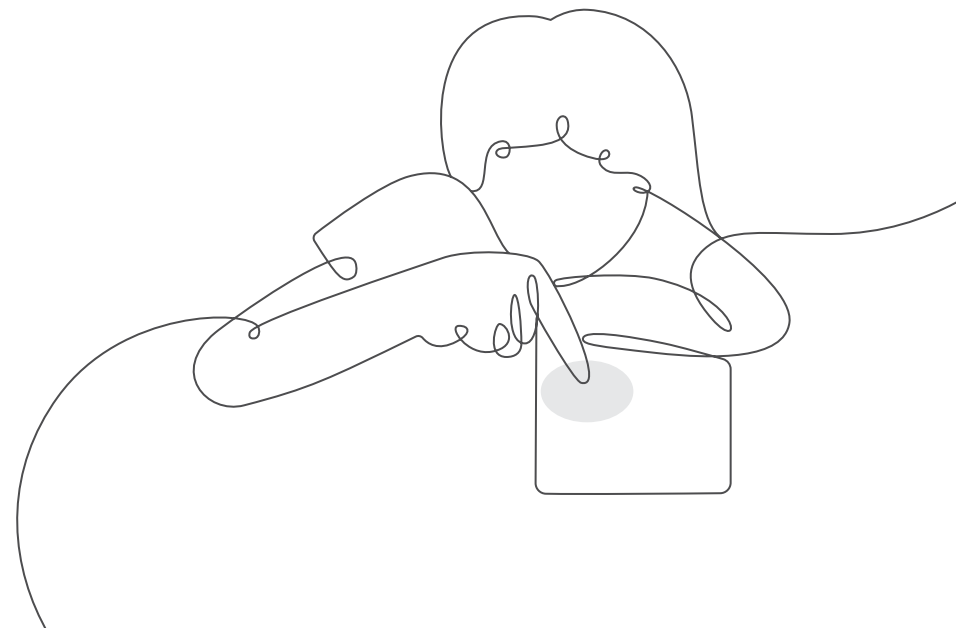
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What's inside

We don't know exactly what this school year will look like. But we do know this: We, as educators, will still serve as difference-makers in the lives of our students.

Also always true: Back to school demands months of planning. We are here to help you do that.

This tool kit is designed to help educators and leaders create thoughtful plans that adapt to changing learning environments, make strategic and actionable decisions around instruction and learning, and ensure that schools continue to support students' social-emotional needs. Our goal is that—even as we face uncertainty and break new ground—the upcoming school year will maintain the same promise and focus of those that came before.

This tool kit will help you prepare for different instructional scenarios by:

• Identifying the various instructional models that can be delivered through the school year

• Guiding the development of instructional goals and desired outcomes

• Highlighting the levers and actions that impact those goals and outcomes

• Building out action steps for each lever

This tool kit is not intended to be:

• a stand-alone document with a complete list of all the steps needed for back-to-school planning

• a resource for deciding when schools should be closed or re-opened

• a commentary on educational policy

• a guide to budgeting and resource allocation

Amplify is committed to partnering with you during this time and supporting your instructional efforts along the way.
Please visit **www.amplify.com** to contact your local representative and discuss ways in which we can help.

Getting started

At the heart of this guide are the key steps you will need to take to plan a successful year.

No matter who makes these decisions, two things must be determined before you can take those steps: **the model of your instructional delivery**, and the **makeup of your team**.

Instructional delivery models

For the upcoming year, it is likely that one or a combination of the following models will be employed:

In-person learning

Learning occurs face to face, in real time, and in a school building.

Remote learning

Teachers and students engage in learning while at different physical locations for an extended time period.

Instruction may be face to face, where learning/feedback takes place in **real time** through online mechanisms (e.g., computer, internet, smartphones) or **self-paced**, where students learn the same material at different times. Self-paced learning may occur with digital and/or printed materials.

Remote learning may also utilize a hybrid of real-time and self-paced instruction.

Hybrid learning

In-person and remote learning are both utilized within a defined schedule. Possible scenarios: alternating days between in-person and remote learning, half-day in-person models, or shifting among models based on evolving health and safety requirements.

Planning around this model will be especially important for districts as there are still many unknowns around the 2020–21 school year.

Selection of an instructional model will depend on community-wide health, educational, and operational policies. The following sections will guide your team through the planning framework for each instructional option.

Team

Who

Planning for back to school will require a range of stakeholders, from school staff to parents and beyond. Each will offer a different lens, skill set, and node of communication to other key actors in the community.

Below is a worksheet for building a task force with the access, input, and collective authority to lead your system through this period. Of course, you may also determine that other team members are needed to play roles specific to your circumstances.

Role	Area represented	Proposed members
Core leadership	• Project leadership • Project management	
Curriculum and instruction	• Scope and sequence • PD and educator support	
Social-emotional learning	• School psychologist • School nurse • PD and educator support • Student and family support	

Role	Area represented	Proposed members
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	• Cultural responsiveness • EL students • Gifted and talented • Learning differences	
Community and stakeholder engagement	• Students • Parents and guardians • Administrators and educators • Community	
Technology implementation	• Key systems (LMS, SIS) • Device infrastructure • Bandwidth access • Communication channel management	
Other		

How

Once you've identified your task force members, create a blueprint for how you will work together.

Questions for the lead to consider

How will each member's work be reviewed by the team?

When will the plan need to be ready for review by all stakeholders?

Questions for the team to consider

How often will this task force meet?

When and where will this task force convene?

How will the plan be published and shared?

The four key steps for planning a successful year

This planning framework helps leaders systematically set goals, make decisions, and realize their shared vision.
It's built on four key steps:

1 | Assess

- Gauge current state of student learning and well being
- Identify skills impacted by untaught standards
- Understand contributing key levers

2 | Set goals

Establish goals for school community

- Instruction
- Social-emotional learning
- School culture

3 | Plan

Define next steps including specific action items

4 | Communicate

- Identify stakeholders
- Clarify and prepare for their role in the plan

Assess

Students will start the school year with more academic, social, and emotional needs than usual—and perhaps new ones. It will be essential to assess and address these needs at the outset, and ongoingly.

Given the widespread school closures in spring of 2020, measures of student achievement will need to differentiate between the impact of interrupted learning and a true gap in skills. Unfortunately, since EOY testing was canceled and many spring benchmarks were not completed, less data is available than usual. Therefore, instructional leadership must first map the available data in each area.

Academic needs

Map the data

Items to consider:

• Expected student learning goals by the end of the previous school year:
  • Schoolwide
  • At each grade level

• Students who didn't have the opportunity to engage in remote learning

• Unfinished teaching of standards being integrated into grade level curriculum

• Attending to students identified as most vulnerable (SPED, ELLs, low SES, intervention students, etc.)

Helpful resources:

• Any historical data available (summative, formative, diagnostic)

• Assessment calendar for 2020–21

• Pacing guides

• Building surveys from teachers and leaders

• Parent feedback

Consider adaptations

WIth the above data in hand, and depending on your instructional model, you can now consider which adaptations will be necessary.

Adaptations for remote learning model

- Enhanced support systems for your most vulnerable students (SPED, ELLs, low SES, intervention students, etc.)

- Organization of curriculum and instruction materials that can be managed digitally and are remote learning friendly

- Remote assessment practices

- Expectations for real-time and self-paced instruction

- Plans for student access to instructional materials and teacher feedback in case of tech obstacles

- Identification of data dashboards for organizing student data and sharing with stakeholders

Adaptations for hybrid learning model

Review the adaptations for the remote learning model while also planning for:

- A reliable and consistent educational structure to help standardize and stabilize after a range of remote learning experiences

- Frequent pivoting between in-person and remote learning

- Assessment that will provide valid results for both remote and in-person learning

- Consistency and adaptability of practices between in-person and remote learning

Identify gaps and next steps

Now you can use this table to summarize and analyze available data, identify gaps, and determine next steps.

Analyzing data and determining next steps

Incoming grade level:	

1. Identify assessment data available.

	Assessment data available from 19–20	Is the data source available during 20–21 BOY?		Did the data source track progress during first semester?		Add any additional data available	Methods to organize data and share among staff and school leaders
ELA		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		

Analyzing data and determining next steps (continued)

1. Identify assessment data available.

	Assessment data available from 19–20	Is the data source available during 20–21 BOY?		Did the data source track progress during first semester?		Add any additional data available	Methods to organize data and share among staff and school leaders
Math		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		

Analyzing data and determining next steps (continued)

1. Identify assessment data available.

	Assessment data available from 19–20	Is the data source available during 20–21 BOY?		Did the data source track progress during first semester?		Add any additional data available	Methods to organize data and share among staff and school leaders
Social Studies		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		

Analyzing data and determining next steps (continued)

1. Identify assessment data available.

	Assessment data available from 19–20	Is the data source available during 20–21 BOY?		Did the data source track progress during first semester?		Add any additional data available	Methods to organize data and share among staff and school leaders
Science		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		
		Yes	No	Yes	No		

Analyzing data and determining next steps (continued)

	2. According to the assessment data, identify the gaps in learning.	**3.** What are instructional next steps?
ELA		
Math		
Social Studies		
Science		

Identify areas of unfinished learning with standards

Next, use this table to identify and plan to address standards that have not been completed.

Identifying areas of unfinished learning with standards				Incoming grade level:
1. Identify affected standards				
	Name key standards not completed prior to school closure.	Were standards taught during remote learning?	Will standards be reviewed in the next grade level?	Add any additional notes in reference to these standards.
ELA		Yes No	Yes No	
		Yes No	Yes No	
		Yes No	Yes No	
		Yes No	Yes No	
		Yes No	Yes No	

Identifying areas of unfinished learning with standards (continued)

1. **Identify affected standards**

	Name key standards not completed prior to school closure.	Were standards taught during remote learning?		Will standards be reviewed in the next grade level?		Add any additional notes in reference to these standards.
Math		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	

Identifying areas of unfinished learning with standards (continued)

1. Identify affected standards

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Social Studies		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	

Identifying areas of unfinished learning with standards (continued)

1. Identify affected standards

	Name key standards not completed prior to school closure.	Were standards taught during remote learning?		Will standards be reviewed in the next grade level?		Add any additional notes in reference to these standards.
Science		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	

Identifying areas of unfinished learning with standards (continued)

2. Identify critical learning skills associated with the unfinished standards.	3. What are instructional next steps?
ELA	
Math	
Social Studies	
Science	

Determine key levers

Now you will have a chance to identify the levers that will influence school progress in using data to inform classroom instruction and documenting student growth.

Key levers

	Culture	Data-driven practices	Curriculum and instruction
DISTRICT	• What's your district's attitude toward using data? • What actions could help build a stronger culture of using data?	• How do you organize student data? • How do you use data to analyze, plan, and monitor learning? • How do you share district-level data? • How could you make these practices more effective?	• What core curriculums are in use? • What implementation methods are in use? • What instructional practices are in place? • What curriculum and instruction improvements can be made?
SCHOOL	• What's your school's attitude toward using data? • What actions could help build a stronger culture of using data?	• How does your school organize data? • How do you use data to analyze, plan, and monitor ? • How do you share school-level data? • How could you make these practices more effective?	• What core curriculums are in use? • What implementation methods are in use? • What instructional practices are valued and supported? • What changes are needed to improve students' progress?
CLASSROOM	• What's your attitude toward using data in the classrooms? • What actions can you take to help build a stronger culture of using data?	• How do your classrooms organize student data? • How do you use data to analyze, plan, and monitor student learning? • How do you share student data? • How could you make these practices more effective?	• How are school-supported curriculum and instructional practices being implemented with fidelity? • What practices and methods can be improved?

Key levers (continued)

	Scheduling and time	Professional development
DISTRICT	• What role does your district play in leading master schedules? • How do you troubleshoot master schedule issues? • How are you innovative with scheduling? • What improvements can be made?	• How does your district provide professional learning? • How are decisions made regarding professional learning? • What educational strategies does your professional development support? • What improvements would increase impact on student learning?
SCHOOL	• How is master scheduling handled? • What are the essential elements of your master schedule? • In what ways is your school innovative with scheduling and time? • What improvements can be made?	• How does your school work to improve teachers' professional learning? • How are school decisions made regarding professional learning? • What classroom strategies does your district support through professional development?
CLASSROOM	• How are scheduling and time managed? • What essential learning blocks are on your schedule? • How are you innovative with scheduling? • What improvements can be made?	• What educational strategies professional development support? • What improvements would increase impact on student learning? • What improvements can be made regarding PD opportunities?

Social-emotional needs

Inventory tools for supporting student well-being

Students will return to school with a range of experiences related to the pandemic: feeling isolated, witnessing parent stress, even losing a family member. What they have in common is that they have all dealt with—and are likely still dealing with—an unprecedented and unpredictable event that impacted their daily lives.

Use this template to inventory the tools you have to support student well-being.

Student social, emotional, and mental well-being

Student level					
What teacher- and classroom-friendly mental health screener will be used?	What SEL and mental health guidance program/ curriculum will be used?	How will frequent checks be completed with all children to monitor progress or changes?	Which methods will be available for children to comfortably express upsetting emotions to school staff?	How is the school staffed to meet the psychological needs of students?	Is there a need to reach out to the community for support?

⌄ Continued on the next page ⌄

Student social, emotional, and mental well-being (continued)

School level					
What are your school's core values?	What are the challenges and/or opportunities around upholding these values for returning students?	What school-wide programs can be used to strengthen relationships among students and between teachers and students?	What school-wide initiatives can be implemented allowing the principal, school leaders, and other school adults to have a stronger engagement with students?	How can the community become more involved with the school to support positive well-being?	What community outreach programs can the school participate in that will improve students' well being?

Student social, emotional, and mental well-being (continued)

District level

Which staff members will form the SEL curriculum team leading the initiatives?

How will SEL practices be culturally considerate for all students?

How will your staff at all levels be educated about SEL practices and purpose?

In what way, will community partnerships be leveraged with district-wide SEL?

Immediate next steps

Evaluate the climate for student well-being

Finally, we will evaluate how each lever will support the climate for students social, emotional, mental, and overall well-being.

How will these levers support the climate for SEL initiatives?

	Culture	Data-driven practices	Curriculum and instruction	Scheduling and time	Professional development
DISTRICT					
SCHOOL					
CLASSROOM					

Set goals

Based on your assessments above of **student learning** and **social-emotional well-being**, and your evaluation of **key levers**, identify three goals for student achievement and social-emotional learning.

These goals need to be:

✔ **Specific.** Is the goal clearly written and well-defined? Specific direction must be provided.

✔ **Measurable.** How will you know you have met the goal? Add language to quantify progress and success. (*How much? How many? How often?*)

✔ **Achievable.** Is the goal possible to meet? Expected results must be truly realistic.

✔ **Relevant.** Will the goal make a significant difference? The goal must align with the outcome you envision.

✔ **Time-bound.** When do you need to complete the goal? A deadline is required.

Now consider the levers that will be the most important in order to meet your goals in the 2020–21 school year. Finally, write down these goals for your top three levers.

Goals for student achievement and social-emotional learning

Student achievement goal	Social-emotional learning goal
Lever goal 1	Lever goal 1
Lever goal 2	Lever goal 2
Lever goal 3	Lever goal 3

Plan

Once you have established goals for your particular instructional model, work with your task force members to create a detailed work plan. Begin by listing 3–5 of the most important concrete steps required to achieve each goal. Then, identify the resources, owners, and target dates needed for completion.

Goal	Action step	Owner(s)	Resources needed	Target date for completion	Status

Goal	Action step	Owner(s)	Resources needed	Target date for completion	Status

Goal	Action step	Owner(s)	Resources needed	Target date for completion	Status

Communicate

Now that you've created a detailed work plan, think about all of the important stakeholders in your school community: teachers, other school staff, families, students, community members, and maybe more.

Each stakeholder group will need specific information about your designated instruction model, your schoolwide goals, your detailed work plan, etc. based on their roles and responsibilities. Using the table below, identify key messages for each group, who will communicate these messages, and the frequency, format, and timeline for this communication.

Key stakeholders	What are the key messages that we need to convey about our instructional model?	What additional key messages do we need to convey to this stakeholder group?	Who will be communicating these key messages?	How often will we communicate?	In what format?	Timeline
Teachers						
Other school staff						

Key stakeholders	What are the key messages that we need to convey about our instructional model?	What additional key messages do we need to convey to this stakeholder group?	Who will be communicating these key messages?	How often will we communicate?	In what format?	Timeline
Families						
Students						
Community members						

Key stakeholders	What are the key messages that we need to convey about our instructional model?	What additional key messages do we need to convey to this stakeholder group?	Who will be communicating these key messages?	How often will we communicate?	In what format?	Timeline
Others						

Have a great year!

Additional recommended resources are provided below.

In this time of uncertainty with new challenges around every corner, a well-designed, flexible back-to-school plan provides clarity and a path forward for educators, students, and the community. And as planning moves into action, Amplify will be here to support you.

Suggestions for further reading

Planning for back to school 2020

SEL resources

For more information on Amplify programs and services, visit **amplify.com**.

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