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Guidance Generated from AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force

Alexandria, Va. – June 19, 2020 – AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the nation’s premier organization representing and supporting superintendents and other public school district leaders, is pleased to release today a consensus-driven set of guidelines for reopening schools effectively in the COVID-19 environment.

The ***AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Guidelines for Reopening Schools: An Opportunity to Transform Public Education*** is comprised of recommendations by superintendents throughout the U.S. who shared their leadership experiences and insights throughout the pandemic.

“Perhaps the most striking outcome of the task force discussions is a universal commitment to transform the crisis we are facing into the opportunity to transform public education as we know it,” said Daniel A. Domenech, executive director, AASA. “We will continue to update this report as changes occur at federal, state and local levels. As part of this process, we invite superintendents and staff to share their success stories and updates on emerging issues confronting them in this process of reopening and transforming public education.”

The **task force** was created in April to recommend solutions for our nation’s more than 13,000 school districts on how schools will reopen and what they will look like in the aftermath of the outbreak. As the group moved toward consensus, the following recurrent issues and concerns were evident among participants:

- Health and safety as essential priorities
- Addressing inequities
- The importance of social and emotional learning
- Ensuring that closure and traditional rituals and ceremonies are addressed
- The power and collaboration of teamwork

- The importance of leaders understanding the dynamics and unanticipated consequences of the change process

Upon the release of a [***Resolution in Support of a Safe, Healthy and District-Specific Reopening Process Informed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines***](#) last month, the following priority areas emerged as controlling ideas for reopening guidelines:

- Plan for multiple reopening scenarios and contingencies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of all students and staff
- Build a COVID-19 response for reopening infrastructure aligned with changing scenarios and needs
- Ensure students' and families' equitable access to technology required for virtual learning
- Provide continuing support to students and adults to address their immediate and long-term physical, psychological, and social and emotional needs
- Make certain that all schools are trauma-informed and trauma-skilled
- Prepare for COVID-19-related changes in human resource management and practices
- Offer ongoing personalized and differentiated professional learning
- Transform the teaching-learning-assessment process to ensure personalization, engagement and differentiation
- Anticipate COVID-19-related budget and fiscal management issues
- Embrace a new paradigm for public education

Based upon these 10 guiding principles, the task force has also generated specific recommendations for action steps that can help district leaders and staff operationalize these principles. These recommendations represent the consensus-driven opinions of participants, combined with additional recommendations from national and international frameworks related to ensure that the reopening of schools is as safe, efficient and personalized as possible.

“We acknowledge and deeply thank the superintendents and other participants who contributed to the ideas and recommendations in this report,” said Domenech. “This unprecedented era represents a startling new time in public education. It provides superintendents, staff, students and families the chance to revitalize education as a public institution—and incorporate strategies and processes proven effective in making education for all learners equitable, experiential, engaging and authentic.”

[Click here](#) to access the *AASA COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Guidelines for Reopening Schools*.

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About AASA

[AASA, The School Superintendents Association](#), founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to equitable access for all students to the highest quality public education. For more information, visit www.aasa.org.