

Dear Educator,

I join Secretary Rivera in commending each of you for your leadership and commitment to students during this unprecedented pandemic. One of your greatest challenges throughout this situation has been making strategic decisions despite great uncertainty. Balancing the competing demands of mitigating the spread of COVID-19, with providing as much in-person learning for students as possible, is exceptionally complex – which is why I am reaching out to you today with three additional resources.

A “Roadmap for Education Leaders,” is now available on the Department of Education’s (PDE) website. It identifies six key processes essential for ensuring systems and policies are flexible and responsive to the needs of students and school communities particularly in the rapidly changing environment of the pandemic.

Systemic inequities have exacerbated gaps in academic development, social and emotional wellbeing, and other outcomes among some of our most vulnerable students. In many cases, these gaps will persist and have lasting detrimental effects well into adulthood. As this framework is populated with additional resources, it will support school administrators in:

- Establishing a culture of collective responsibility for the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of all students (especially students who are economically disadvantaged, students of color, students with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable populations);
- Prioritizing effective instructional practice, including strong standards-based instruction, data-based planning, differentiation, and individualization;
- Maintaining a positive climate conducive to teaching and learning that supports social and emotional development and health and wellness; and
- Creating and supporting high levels of learning for all students through high-quality, embedded professional learning opportunities for school leaders, educators, and support staff.

Additionally, PDE posted a new School Reopening Instructional Planning Template in the Future Ready Comprehensive Planning Portal. This voluntary resource can serve as a companion tool to the Health and Safety Planning Template and assist school teams in instructional planning for the upcoming year.

Finally, attached is a memo addressing instructional time requirements under the law. This memo should provide greater clarity on the manner in which remote learning can be attributed to the 180-day, 900/990-hour requirements in the commonwealth.

As new research and information become available, PDE will continue to update and share resources and guidance. The road will not be easy, but we are committed to working with you to create and implement plans that support the education of your school communities. Do not hesitate to reach out to our team at RA-EDCONTINUITYOFED@pa.gov with any thoughts or questions.

Sincerely,



Matthew Stem
Deputy Secretary for the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education