



THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
EDUCATION & SOCIETY PROGRAM

HOW GOVERNORS AND MAYORS CAN SUPPORT SCHOOLS SO SCHOOLS CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS

Schools are getting plenty of advice regarding reopening. What schools aren't getting is enough material support to meet the needs of students and families.

There is a growing recognition that **reopening schools is vital for students' well-being and academic learning, as well as parents' well-being and their ability to resume anything approaching normal work routines.** Whatever the mode of instruction next year — in-person, online, a hybrid approach — school systems urgently need more support to access the resources their students and families need so educators can do their essential work. As the needs of children and families continue to grow and compound — through the pandemic, the economic upheaval, and the racial reckoning gripping the country — addressing health and well-being are essential foundations for learning.

But schools cannot do it alone.

Governors and mayors are driving pandemic response. While they have varying levels of direct responsibility for schools, governors and mayors can use the power of their offices to support schools for the 2020-21 school year; this includes expanding and ensuring broadband access and addressing technical considerations around school operations and schedules to ensure health and safety. In addition to these areas of focus, governors and mayors play an important role in making sure wellness and health supports are as robust as possible for students and staff. This document suggests concrete actions state and local leaders can take now to make sure schools have access to money, people, and collaborative structures that ultimately benefit students, families, and society.

NOTE: For each action summarized in the table below, additional information and [online examples](#) are included in the appendices.

I. Foster cross-agency and community partner collaboration

Many agencies and partner organizations have responsibilities and resources to serve children and adolescents. Collaborative structures are needed to put the needs of children and families at the center of these efforts, and to optimize the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery. Schools can be helpful hubs and access points for other services when their work is put in the context of the whole, and when leaders from different agencies and partners are brought together so they can act in a coordinated fashion. Especially in the context of the coming year, when needs will be acute and budgets will be under immense strain, state leadership is essential to enable collaboration.

Actions to Take Now

- a) Task existing Children's Cabinet and/or create a 24-month task force to elevate the immediate needs of students and families and to clarify the role of schools in collaboration with other agencies and partners in addressing these needs.

Actions to Take Now

- b) Support and coordinate with local children’s cabinets, led by mayors and their teams. These cabinets can create a context for education leaders (e.g., district superintendents) to forge more direct and effective partnerships in meeting student and community needs.
- c) Facilitate data-sharing through dashboards and memoranda of understanding that allow inter-agency collaboration.
- d) Assign a mental health expert (from the department of health and human services, a local provider, or another partner) to serve on state school re-opening commissions.
- e) Forge partnerships with philanthropy and business to create “collective impact partnerships” in support of response and recovery.
- f) Consider the early grades and the unique challenges to coordinate transition between child-care, pre-k, and kindergarten services during the pandemic.

2. Fully leverage federal funds and streamline eligibility and reimbursement

As of July 2020, there was still active debate about how much and in what ways the federal government should provide more stimulus funding to schools, state leaders have actions they can take now to ensure schools, students, and families get every benefit to which they are entitled under existing federal law. Governors and other state leaders should scour federal funding streams for proactive ways to increase enrollment and maximize reimbursements.

Actions to Take Now

- a) Set up a team with the specific charge of supporting school systems to conduct outreach and proactive enrollment in Medicaid, which offers reimbursement for these activities. States can certify schools as remote locations of healthcare providers, allowing direct billing and reimbursement through insurance and Medicaid.
- b) Proactively enroll eligible students and families in the Children’s Health Insurance Program and give local school districts guidance on how to manage this process.
- c) Review effectiveness of tele-health protocols and reimbursement systems and codify updated rules for the next year.
- d) Proactively reach out to families to determine eligibility for SNAP/food stamp benefits.
- e) Re-allocate funds away from law enforcement in schools to provide counselors, social workers, and mental-health supports.

3. Identify additional human capital to support students and teachers

Among the many challenges schools will face in serving students and families is a shortage of personnel, both because of historic patterns (e.g., fewer graduates from educator preparation programs) and because some teachers and other school staff will not feel safe returning to school. At the same time, students will present needs that are more varied and more acute than in prior years, meaning that more capacity will be required. The ideas listed below offer a few suggestions for ways in which states can encourage adults to serve children and youth in the coming year, augmenting the capacity of schools.

Actions to Take Now

- a) Fund a full-time community school coordinator in every Title I school. Dedicated capacity can have a multiplier effect, structuring partnerships with local partners and businesses that bring additional resources to the school — while also ensuring the school building and faculty are accessible to families and community partners.
- b) Convene a task force or issue an executive order directing multiple state agencies to assist local school districts in mapping existing community healthcare and mental health resources, identifying needs that can be addressed with current resources and what needs require additional resources. The process of asset-mapping is likely to identify some untapped partners, in addition to identifying gaps in service.
- c) Arrange partnerships between school systems and institutions of higher education/specific programs that prepare psychologists, social workers, and counselors to provide support to students and educators through online mentoring, periodic check-ins, and data collection, etc.
- d) Enter into interstate medical licensure compacts and reciprocity agreements to ease the transfer of certification and licensure of behavioral and mental health professionals across state lines.
- e) Prioritize service corps positions through the Corporation for National and Community Service to connect near-peer mentors, seniors, and other supportive adults with schools. States can also fund their own service corps to advance multiple goals.
- f) Recruit parents, retirees (educators and others), recent graduates, and even high school upperclassmen to provide daily, structured tutoring

Schools are shouldering unprecedented responsibility during the pandemic and Americans have never been more aware of the roles we've assigned to schools — not only for academic learning, but social-emotional and character development, food security, accessing social services, protecting public health, spotting possible cases of child abuse and neglect, and much more.

Momentous decisions need to be taken over the coming year — starting now and continuing through the 2020-21 state legislative sessions. Schools, students, and communities do not exist in policy silos, and addressing their needs demands coordination and collaboration. State and local leaders are uniquely situated to support schools in this time, allowing educators to focus on conditions for learning and academic instruction that students urgently need. For more information on the need for strategic coherence in supporting schools, refer to Aspen Education's recent paper [Recovery and Renewal: Principles for Advancing Public Education Post-Crisis](#).

APPENDIX I

Resources and Examples to Foster Cross-Agency & Community Partner Collaboration

I(a) State Children's Cabinets

Task existing Children's Cabinet and/or create a 24-month task force to elevate the immediate needs of students and families, to focus on the role of schools in collaboration with other agencies and partners in addressing these needs, and to provide holistic coordination and planning for the state response. The cabinet or task force should have a direct line to the governor and a regular schedule of public engagements and updates on its work. Children's Cabinets can foster better collaboration and communication between the various state government agencies serving families and children. The Forum for Youth Investment has developed [resources for Children's Cabinets](#) with the National Governors Association. For funding issues, see also: [Children's Funding Project, Navigating New and Flexible Funding Streams for Kids During COVID-19](#).

I(b) Local Cabinets

State leaders can also facilitate local children's cabinets, led by mayors and their teams. These cabinets can create a context for education leaders (e.g., district superintendents) to partner with peers in meeting student and community needs. The Redesign Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Forum for Youth Investment, and the Children's Funding Project created a [toolkit for getting local children's cabinets up and running](#).

I(c) Data-sharing

- i. Create a [Student and School Wellness dashboard](#), with consistent and reliable data to identify areas of need as well as bright spots to learn from. The CDC's Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model brings together many dimensions of children's health and well-being -- and requires data and coordination across different agencies and actors.
- ii. ASCD has an [online toolkit](#) supporting schools to enact the WSCC model. In addition to physical and mental health, student and school wellness dashboards can incorporate data from school climate surveys and additional indicators that indicate the extent to which students, staff, and families experience schools as healthy places.
- iii. Create MOUs between SEA, state Medicaid agency, and other child and family agencies. [The National Neighborhood Indicators Project has collected model MOUs](#) between school systems and healthcare providers and other services.
- iv. Provide [model MOUs for LEAs and local health departments to be able to share data in FERPA and HIPAA compliant ways](#). The 2019 profile of data-sharing arrangements in Indiana can be a resource for other states.

I(e) Collective Impact

Governors can forge partnerships with local elected officials, philanthropy, and business to create “collective impact partnerships” in support of response and recovery. [Strive Together](#) provides examples of how these partnerships are mobilizing across the country.

I(f) Early Childhood

Although there are a variety of governance models in states, early childhood (birth-kindergarten) services are frequently governed and funded by a variety of different local, state, and federal agencies. Governors should consider the early grades and the unique challenges to coordinate transition between childcare, pre-k, and kindergarten services during the pandemic. The [National P-3 Center](#) can be a resource. Guidance on [how different early childhood agencies can work together](#).



APPENDIX 2

Resources and Examples to Fully Leverage Federal Funds and Streamline Eligibility and Reimbursement

2(a) Medicaid

- i. States need to set up a team with the specific charge of supporting school systems to conduct outreach and proactive enrollment in Medicaid, which reimburses for outreach and enrollment. Because many families will experience economic hardship over the next few years and hence become eligible for Medicaid coverage, states must expeditiously expand outreach and enrollment efforts, leveraging existing data and contacts to enable the process. For example, Minneapolis Public Schools generates automated calls and letters to families eligible for free- and reduced-price meals to determine if they are also eligible for Medicaid, resulting in significantly higher participation and reimbursement for the district. See [Center Budget and Policy Priorities' online guide to conducting outreach and enrollment campaigns](#).
- ii. Since 2014, Medicaid has allowed states to authorize schools to directly bill Medicaid for covered services to all Medicaid-enrolled students (previously, Medicaid only covered students with an IEP or another formal plan for individualized services). Many states have not acted to expand Medicaid eligibility to all eligible students or services provided in schools, which requires a proactive application process and sometimes requires legislative authorization within the state. In May 2020, Community Catalyst and Healthy Schools Campaign summarized [specific state actions for expanding school-based provision of services and billing](#), including links to state policies that can be used as models by other states.
- iii. States can certify schools as remote locations of healthcare providers, allowing direct billing and reimbursement through insurance and Medicaid.
- iv. Related resources:
 - [A Guide to Expanding Medicaid-Funded School Health Services](#) (Dec. 2019)
 - [Links to each state's school Medicaid website](#)
 - [Case Study of Massachusetts plan to expand Medicaid reimbursement for school-based health services](#)
 - [The School-Based Health Alliance collected links to effective state policies for streamlining Medicaid eligibility and reimbursement protocols](#)

2(b) CHIP

States can proactively enroll eligible students and families in the Children's Health Insurance Program and give local school districts guidance on how to manage this process. [Georgetown University researchers found positive impact](#) on student health and learning from proactive outreach and enrollment in Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program. The federal government hosts the [Insure Kids Now website](#), with toolkits and customizable forms.

2(c) Tele-health

States should review effectiveness of tele-health protocols and reimbursement systems and codify updated rules for the next year. By including local providers and local education leaders in the review and renewal

process, states can improve on the emergency measures that were enacted in Spring 2020, apply lessons learned to update the rules, and engage actors who will need to implement in the next school year. The National Health Law Program profiled [state actions to make telehealth accessible during COVID-19](#).

2(d) Food Benefits

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reimburses 50% of the cost of proactive outreach to families to determine eligibility for SNAP/food stamp benefits. The [Food Research Action Council \(FRAC\)](#) collects best practices for leveraging these funds.

2(e) Counselors and Social Workers

States can re-allocate funds away from law enforcement in schools to provide counselors, social workers, and mental-health supports. The Dignity in Schools Counselors Not Cops initiative has [model policies and links to additional research and resources](#).



APPENDIX 3

Resources and Examples to Identify Additional Human Capital to Support Students and Teachers

3(a) Community Schools

Fund a full-time community school coordinator in every Title I school. Dedicated capacity on the school leadership team can have a multiplier effect, structuring partnerships with local partners and businesses that bring additional resources to the school, including connections and coordination with child-care providers, medical and mental-health services, youth development/extended-day programming — while also ensuring the school building and faculty are accessible to families and community partners. RAND found benefits from New York City’s community schools initiative, which included a full-time community school director in each participating school.

- i. [Model job descriptions for community school coordinators](#)
- ii. Fund student success coordinators in Title I schools to establish supportive personal relationships with students; serve as an advisor, advocate, connector to services, and curator of experiences that meet each child’s goals and needs. The return to school after isolation is a critical time to shift away from a factory, one-size-fits all approach to a personalized model. The Education Redesign Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education has researched this approach extensively, with [profiles of existing roles and recommendations for policymakers](#). The City Connects program at Boston College supports a coordinator who works with each classroom teacher in an elementary school to create an [individual support plan](#) for every student in the school.
- iii. [Partnership for the Future of Learning, Community Schools Playbook](#)

3(b) Asset Mapping

Convene a task force or issue an executive order directing multiple state agencies to assist local school districts in mapping existing community mental health resources, identifying needs that can be addressed with current resources and what needs require additional resources. [The National Center for School Mental Health at University of Maryland offers guide](#); an additional resource speaks specifically to community-wide teams for addressing student mental health, with a specific [focus on engaging families and community partners](#).

3(d) Licensure

Enter into [Interstate Medical Licensure Compacts](#) and reciprocity agreements to ease the transfer of certification and licensure of behavioral and mental health professionals across state lines.

3(e) Service Partnerships

Identify additional youth development partnerships and personnel.

- i. Prioritize service corps positions through the Corporation for National and Community Service to connect near-peer mentors, seniors, and other supportive adults with schools. [AmeriCorps-funded programs in schools are cost-effective](#) ways to support student success academically and with vital so-

cial-emotional needs. [Evaluation of City Year impact.](#)

- ii. States can fund their own service corps to advance multiple goals: (1) direct support for educators and students; (2) investment in local community organizations, who need new revenue to remain viable; (3) expand social capital and on-the-job-training for recent graduates and other adults who need employment during economic tumult.

3(f) Tutors

Recruit parents, retirees (educators and others), recent graduates, and even high school upperclassmen to provide daily, structured tutoring. <https://hechingerreport.org/takeaways-from-research-on-tutoring-to-address-coronavirus-learning-loss/>



Resources

Aspen Education & Society Program Principles for Recovery and Renewal

- https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2020/05/AESP-Principles-for-Recovery-and-Renewal.pdf?_ga=2.155591538.878451297.1594677001-681723545.1588187313

The Forum for Youth Investment Resources

- <https://forumfyi.org/work/ccn/>

Children's Funding Project:

- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b75d96ccc8fedfce4d3c5a8/t/5ecfedd-3b686a432c76333ff/1590685140367/CFP+Emergency+Funding+Guide+V5+4.21+dyk.pdf>
- https://edredesign.org/files/childrens_cabinet_toolkit_a_roadmap_for_getting_started.pdf

CDC WSCC Model

- <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wsccl/model.htm>

ASCD Toolkit for Implementing WSCC Model

- <http://www.ascd.org/programs/learning-and-health/wsccl-implementation.aspx>

The National Neighborhood Indicators Project – Model MOUs

- <https://urbanorg.app.box.com/s/yvl5yunlq8d6z3xoo285dtcwnq7qd34c>

2019 Profile – Data Sharing Arrangements in Indiana

- <https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/HIPAAorFERPAIndianaMay-16-2017.pdf>

Strive Together Partnership Examples

- <https://www.strivetogether.org/insights/collective-impact-partnerships-in-the-time-of-covid-19/>

National P-3 Center Peer-to-Peer conversations

- https://nationalp-3center.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVIDPeerToPeers_PreK-3rd_19June2020.pdf

Guidance on How Early Childhood Agencies Can Work Together

- https://www.flpadvisors.com/uploads/4/2/4/2/42429949/flp_gettingtherefromhere_061120.pdf

Center Budget and Policy Priorities' Guide to Conducting Outreach and Enrollment Campaigns

- <https://www.cbpp.org/research/health/guide-to-school-based-outreach-for-health-coverage-enrollment>

Community Catalyst and Healthy Schools Campaign Summary specific of State Actions for Expanding School-Based Provision of Services and Billing

- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1u0jlso-se8ohhyI7AcHaaXIGX5I3s0PN2culDejXZQw/edit>

Guide to Expanding Medicaid-Funded School Health Services (Dec. 2019)

- <https://healthyschoolscampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/A-Guide-to-Expanding-Medicaid-Funded-School-Health-Services-12-19-19.pdf>

Links to each State's School Medicaid Website

- https://docs.google.com/document/d/15B3cVtH_MlxET6Tpmkn04Gt_7pdhvaPxRETz5BXcHEo/edit

Case Study of Massachusetts Plan to Expand Medicaid Reimbursement for School-Based Health Services

- https://www.communitycatalyst.org/resources/publications/document/2017/MA-SPA-Brief_FINAL_12-12-17.pdf

The School-Based Health Alliance Collected Links to Effective State Policies for Streamlining Medicaid Eligibility and Reimbursement Protocols

- <https://www.sbh4all.org/advocacy/medicaid-policies-that-work-for-sbhcs/>

Georgetown University Research on Impact of Proactive Outreach and Enrollment in Medicaid and Children's Health

- <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2018/03/28/new-study-shows-benefits-of-identifying-and-enrolling-uninsured-young-children-into-public-health-insurance-through-school-based-outreach/>

Insure Kids Now Website With Toolkits and Customizable Forms

- <https://www.insurekidsnow.gov/outreach-tool-library/index.html>

National Health Law Program State Actions to Make Telehealth Accessible During COVID-19

- <https://healthlaw.org/resource/fact-sheet-on-telehealth-and-medicare-during-covid-19/>

The Food Research Action Council (FRAC) Best Practices for Leveraging Funds

- <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/best-practice-creating-federally-reimbursable-snap-outreach-plan.pdf>

The Dignity in Schools Counselors Not Cops Initiative Model Policies and Resources

- <https://dignityinschools.org/take-action/counselors-not-cops/>

RAND Assessment of Impact of New York City's Community Schools Initiative

- https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR3245.html

Model Job Descriptions for Community School Coordinators

- <http://www.communityschools.org/leadership/coordinator.aspx>

Education Redesign Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education Success Plans Report

- <https://hwpi.harvard.edu/files/edredesign/files/success-plans-report.pdf>

City Connects Program at Boston College Approach

- <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/lynch-school/sites/cityconnects/our-approach.html>

Partnership for the Future of Learning, Community Schools Playbook

- <https://communityschools.futureforlearning.org/>

The National Center for School Mental Health at University of Maryland Guide

- <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Quality-Guides/Needs-Assessment-&-Resource-Mapping-2.3.20.pdf>

School Mental Health Quality Guide

- <http://www.schoolmentalhealth.org/media/SOM/Microsites/NCSMH/Documents/Quality-Guides/Teaming-1.27.20.pdf>

Interstate Medical Licensure Compacts

- <https://www.imlcc.org/>

AmeriCorps-funded programs in schools

- https://www.nationalservice.gov/sites/default/files/evidenceexchange/CNCS_Education_Evidence_Brief_112318_508.pdf

Report by The Everyone Graduates Center at the Johns Hopkins University School of Education

- http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/201200507_EGC_CityYearReport_BalfanzByrnesFINAL.pdf

Hechinger Report – Takeaways from the Research on Tutoring to Address Coronavirus learning loss

- <https://hechingerreport.org/takeaways-from-research-on-tutoring-to-address-coronavirus-learning-loss/>