

# PSCA & ASPP Reentry Considerations - Companion Guide

August 2020



PENNSYLVANIA  
SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS  
ASSOCIATION



Association of School  
Psychologists of Pennsylvania  
Promoting best practices in school psychology.

*“... while the pandemic has had tremendous consequences for all Pennsylvanians, I urge you to keep equity in the forefront of your planning by prioritizing investments for vulnerable students and families, including those living in the deepest poverty, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.”*

- Pedro A. Rivera, Pennsylvania Secretary of Education

On March 13, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf announced that all K-12 schools in Pennsylvania were to be closed for 10 business days as a social distancing measure to combat the dangers of COVID-19. This order was extended for an additional week thereafter, and on April 9, 2020, the Governor extended the school closures through the end of the academic year. Also on April 9, 2020, the Governor declared that colleges and universities were not permitted to resume in-person instruction or reopen their physical locations until he permitted them to open or until he lifted the closure of non-life-sustaining businesses. The resulting impact on students and schools rippled through education.

Through the lens of school counseling and school psychology, the impact is expansive. The Pennsylvania Department of Education provided preliminary guidance to school entities regarding reentry and resources for districts. In June, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) and National Association of School Psychologist (NASP) released a reentry guide with considerations. School counselors and school psychologists are uniquely positioned to, not only help, but lead in the support of students and schools throughout the pandemic, past reentry and into the recovery.



The full ASCA & NASP Reentry Guide -

<https://bit.ly/ReentryASCA>

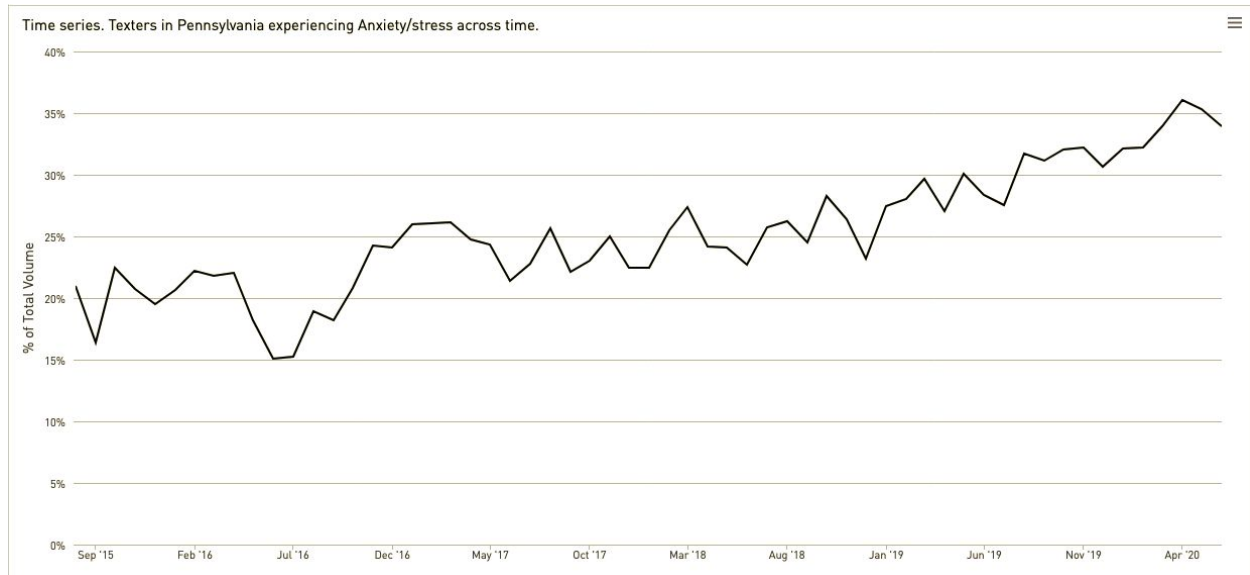


Pennsylvania's Department of Education's  
COVID-19 Resources -

<https://bit.ly/PDECovid>

Student mental health concerns have been present throughout stay-at-home orders during COVID-19. Prior to the rise of COVID-19 and school closures, there was a continued rise in reported depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation according to the recent PAYS Data (PAYS 2015, 2017). Depressive symptoms were reported by over 40% of participants' high school grades. Suicidal ideations, similar to national trends, grew in Pennsylvania youth, as well as suicide attempts, with highest rates of occurring in 12th grade respondents. The growing rates of reported Anxiety/Stress have shown to increase in real-time according to the CrisisTextLine Data (Graph 1).

Graph 1.



In a recent report, over 1,200 Chinese citizens were surveyed regarding their psychological state during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed over half of the respondents indicated the outbreak was causing moderate to severe psychological impact. Over one-third reported moderate to severe anxiety, and over 8% reported experiencing depressive symptoms (Wang et al., 2020). Within the same report, it was also found that individuals of student age reported higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. At the time of the study, all schools nationwide were mandated to close according to the Chinese Government, requiring children and families to be confined to their homes. Though schools and colleges have taken to online teaching to alleviate educational concern, evidence shows that home-confinement and environmental stressors can cause negative effects on mental health. (Wang, Zhang, Zhao, Zhang, & Jiang, 2020).

### **Tiered-Supports for Students**

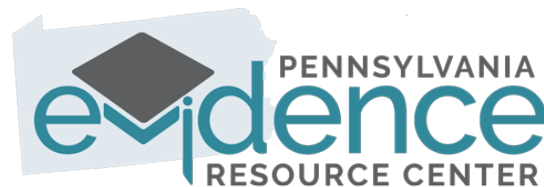
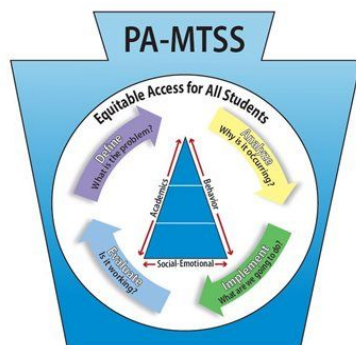
To meet the present and growing needs regarding anticipated academic learning gaps, social emotional needs, potential traumatic responses, and rebuilding school climate, establishing and or reexamining systems of support for students across domains is strongly recommended. The comprehensive, cross-discipline, standards aligned approach can be the key framework to support and enhance students' academics, behavior, and social emotional development; as well as structure the continuous monitoring and maintenance of school-wide improvement.

The tiered services are a diverse array of behavioral, social/emotional, and instructional supports based on data to support all students. The design of the system should be fluid, dynamic and responsive, with principles of equity rooted in the staff training and support and systems design. The interventions, primary and supplemental supports should be coordinated

through interdisciplinary teams focusing on both design and matching students to necessary resources.

To integrate equity into Universal, Additional and Intense Supports, guiding questions to be considered when evaluating a school's Multi-Tiered System to ensure that the systems are rooted and focused on equity (McCart & Miller, 2020).

1. Systems - is your system equitable? Design systems with intentionality and center the systems on the students' needs, rather than centering students within existing systems.
2. Tiered - Are the tiered supports designed to meet the diverse needs of ALL students? Articulate how the Universal, Additional and Intense systems meet the needs of ALL students.
3. Data - Are you using data as part of a continuous improvement process? Utilize data to inform strategic decisions on the use of resources, time, and personnel.
4. Timely - are the school resources being applied in a timely manner, or are resources being siloed in classrooms or departments? The use of resource mapping is a vital tool to understand the data sources, and school-based and community resources to support students in an equitable, efficient and timely manner.
5. ALL - does your school have a clear statement to guide and communicate the commitment to every student? Take deliberate steps to continuously evaluate and reflect on practice to further promote inclusion of all students across the dimensions of a school community.



More information regarding implementation and support for MTSS practices in schools can be found at the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)

<https://bit.ly/PATTANMTSS>

For Evidence-Based Resources -  
Visit Pennsylvania Evidence Resource  
Center:

<https://www.evidenceforpa.org/>

## EQUITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE

Following the murder of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor there was a rise of anti-racism protests across Pennsylvania. Dozens of protests emerged across the state. This was compounded by reports of disparate conditions for not only urban and rural districts but also pockets within districts across the state. In Mary Eddins et al., (2020) analysis of Allegheny County districts reported Continuity of Education of Plans, similar to national trend data, reflected entities that served predominately economically disadvantaged students and or students of color were less likely to:

- Start remote learning by March 31.
- Provide most students with 1:1 technology ratios.
- Provide family or community wireless hotspots.
- Have synchronous learning opportunities.
- Require/expect students to participate in distance learning.

As a result, school communities across the state are evaluating practices, including developing Equity school board policies, diversifying curricular materials, and providing direct instruction to students and staff regarding anti-bias and anti-racism practices. In a large national sample, student exposure to social justice curricula has been shown to mitigate a range of potential negative student experience regarding academics, persistence, and attendance (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2010). Social justice learning experiences help students consider individuals in a social context and engage in critical reflection in areas including but not limited to: global citizenship, stewardship, racism, sexism, and poverty (Harrell-Levy & Kerpelman, 2016).

Educators can develop and plan social justice oriented activities using the Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework (2019). The age-appropriate standards are anchored across four domains: identity, diversity, justice, and action. Such targeted activities can help students to: demonstrate higher levels of self-awareness; express with appropriate language comfort and joy with human differences; recognize and have language to understand and describe unfairness; and demonstrate the skills to act against prejudice or discrimination, respectively.

Additional support and guidance can be found in the Pennsylvania Equity and Inclusion Toolkit. Schools can proactively assess their climate and policies and develop responses to bias incidents as well. Through the three-tiered framework, schools can be prepared, respond and recover from incidents of bias while fostering inclusive communities.



For more information regarding the Teaching Tolerance Anti-Bias Framework  
<https://bit.ly/toleranceframe>



For more information regarding the Pennsylvania Equity and Inclusion Toolkit  
<https://bit.ly/PAEquityToolkit>

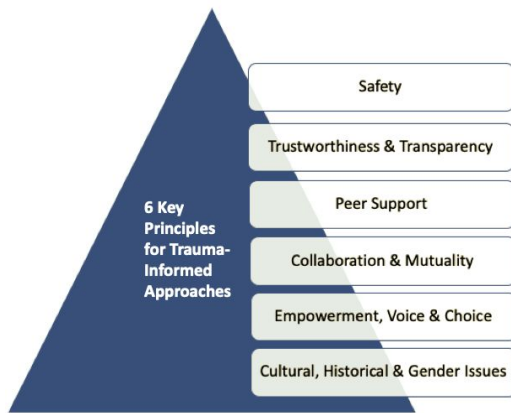
## **TRAUMA-INFORMED EDUCATION**

Trauma-informed education has been part of Pennsylvania education since 2019 as part of Act 19. Pennsylvania's definition for trauma-informed approaches:

"...includes a school-wide approach to education and a classroom-based approach to student learning that recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, professional learning, procedures and practices for the purposes of recognizing the presence and onset of trauma, resisting the reoccurrence of trauma and promoting resiliency tailored to a school entity's culture, climate and demographics and the community as a whole."

Training mandates reflect the 4Rs of trauma informed approaches: realization, recognize, respond, and resist re-traumatization. In addition to the 4 Rs, there are key principles schools should consider when engaging in trauma-informed approaches (SAMHSA, 2014). Engaging in equitable, trauma-informed practices should be a high priority of districts to promote a feeling of physical, academic, behavioral, and psychological safety in students. Operations and decisions by school entities should be conducted with transparency with a goal of building and maintaining trust amongst stakeholders. Student self-help and peer support can be enhanced through collaboration, utilization of lived experience stories, and establishing safety and hope. Building a sense of partnering between schools, staff, families and students should be prioritized; in order to foster a shared role in building a therapeutic environment. This can be used to further build upon and recognize the strengths and experiences of students. All this is done most effectively while organizations actively examine biases, honoring cultures, and implementing responsive policies and procedures.

Conceptualizing the potential impact of a student’s Covid-related experiences on their potential impact on a student’s reentry adjustment can be done through the NASP COVID-19 School Adjustment Risk Matrix (C-SARM) (2020). The matrix weighs a student’s Pre-Covid-19 school experiences against their experiences during Shelter-in-Place. Through the paradigm, students can be more effectively matched with appropriate resources in tiered systems. Specific school-based programs to address traumatic stress such as Cognitive Behavior Interventions of Trauma in Schools (CBITS), Bounce Back, and Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET) have demonstrated effective in addressing student trauma in schools, with the Alliance for Inclusion and Prevention(2020) noting application of the programs broadly during the pandemic would be appropriate as “many of these elements have been proven to be helpful for depressive and anxiety symptoms.”



Shelter-in-Place Environment	Pre-COVID-19 School Experiences		
	Positive	Variable	Negative
Positive	Low Risk	Low/Moderate Risk	Moderate/High Risk
Variable	Low/Moderate Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
Toxic	High Risk	High Risk	Extreme Risk

For more information about the NASP COVID-19 School Adjustment Risk Matrix (C-SARM)

<https://bit.ly/NASPMatrix>

### Social Emotional Wellness & Learning (SEL)

As defined in the Pennsylvania’ Creating Equitable School Systems A Roadmap for Education Leaders (2020), Social Emotional Wellness will, “Ensure students and staff feel connected to a safe and welcoming school community that supports their well-being, engagement, and success in the education process.” The State’s guide includes district and school-level tools for action planning in five key areas:

- Staff and Student Wellness Communication Plan
- Supporting Staff in a Tiered Model
- Supporting Students in a Tiered Model
- Enhancement of Social and Emotional Wellness in a Virtual Environment
- Alignment with Supplemental Student Services

As noted by the [Aspen Institute’s National Commission on Social Emotional and Academic Development’s](#) Council of Distinguished Scientists (2018), integrated SEL can have lasting



academic outcomes, as well as improvement to student behavior and life outcomes; specifically, regarding mitigating secondary adverse outcomes from Adverse Childhood Experiences. Implementing SEL strategies and curriculum through the lens of equity.

Critical to student social-emotional learning and development are 5 key domains as outlined by the Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). A student's SELF-AWARENESS, his or her ability to identify and process the complex emotions related to the pandemic and racial injustice, is key for self-reflection and growth. SELF-MANAGEMENT, regulating emotions, behaviors and thoughts, is central in the development of resilience as well as applying coping (and antiracism) strategies. Student SOCIAL AWARENESS fosters perspective taking and empathy to equip students with the tools to better understand historical and social context, including the multisystem impacts of COVID-19 and systemic structures of racism. Developing RELATIONSHIP SKILLS enhances student communication and cooperation skills, providing them with the tools to build and maintain healthy relationships with diverse groups of individuals; as well as support students working collaboratively towards new solutions. RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING helps students evaluate the consequences and outcomes of individual and institutional actions on people, health, safety, and well-being through their personal choices and social interactions.

These core SEL competencies can be achieved through a lens of equity by focusing on four critical practices:

- **Take time to cultivate and deepen relationships, build partnerships, and plan for SEL.** Communication strategies to share information and listen to all members of the school community should be adopted. Additional resources for Communication Plans can be found at the PDE's Support Social Emotional Wellness Guide. Not only will these tools be helpful in fostering relationships with students and families and building coalitions, but can help guide in the evaluation of previous SEL efforts.
- **Design opportunities where adults can connect, heal, and build their capacity to support students.** During this unprecedented time, there is opportunity for both innovation and integrating antiracist practices. Creating space for professional learning to build educator capacity, and space to connect/listen/heal for adults are critical. Identifying and ensuring access to mental health supports is essential. Pennsylvania-specific recommendations included, connecting to Intermediate Unit - Equity Points of Contact to obtain training and technical assistance regarding effective practices and anti-racism approaches. A tiered support for staff for mentoring and administrative support should be considered. School counselors and school psychologists can be key consults to identify available self-care supports.
- **Create safe, supportive, and equitable learning environments that promote all students' social and emotional development.** Structures should be built with intentionality promoting supportive peer to peer and adult to peer relationships. The structures should include embedded opportunities to explore the social emotional

competencies; and, the time to explore the impact of the pandemic and the dimensions of racial inequality.

- **Use data as an opportunity to share power, deepen relationships, and continuously improve support for students, families, and staff.** While exploring data, support educators in reflection on the intersection of data and their instructional practices, while elevating student voice to promote further engagement and learning.



For more information about the Pennsylvania Roadmap for Social Support and Emotional Wellness

<https://bit.ly/PASEL2020>



For more information regarding integrating SEL into school reentry as recommended by CASEL - SEL Roadmap for Reopen School

<https://bit.ly/SELROADMAP>

## **CAREER READINESS AND DEVELOPMENT**

Career Readiness continues to be one of the key outcomes for students both aspirationally and in the Future Ready PA Index. Regarding Career Readiness Benchmark reporting, the following guidelines were made for school year 2020-21 and after:

- By the end of grade 5, the student has produced six or more pieces of evidence accumulated within the K-5 grade span.
- By the end of grade 8, the student has produced six additional pieces of evidence beyond the K-5 band. One piece of evidence for the 6-8 grade band must be the student's individualized career plan.
- By the end of grade 11, the student has produced eight additional pieces of evidence beyond the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands. At least two of these pieces of evidence must demonstrate implementation of the student's individualized career plan.

Educators should also be mindful that the dimensions of Social Emotional Learning align with Pennsylvania's Career Readiness Skills. Self-awareness & Self-management, Establishing & Maintaining Relationships, and Social Problem-Solving Skills are the three key components of the Career Readiness Skills. The increased investment in student technology does allow for more virtual career exploration and exposure activities. The infusion of SEL activities serve not only to support students, promote resilience and school climate, but also to equip students with valuable 21st Century skills. Educators can utilize the State's implementation guide, which

includes grade-specific guides on student performance indicators, supportive practices and teaching strategies.



For more information about PDE Career Readiness see the FAQ -

<https://bit.ly/PDECareerFAQ>



For Implementation Guides for PA Career Readiness Skills -

<https://bit.ly/PACareerReadySkills>

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ENGAGEMENT:**

The REL Mid-Atlantic Report (Gill et al., 2020), providing models for school reentry, established a 20% student attendance loss due to parents simply keeping students home. An Education Week survey of educators reported approximately 33% of students did not participate in distance learning. Interdisciplinary teams including school counselors, school nurses, and social workers may be instrumental in targeted family outreach to address barriers to attendance. Consideration and support should be utilized for students with pre-existing conditions prior to school reentry, noting anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions, as well as a history of trauma and loss, are potentially pre-existing conditions (AAP, 2020). Also direct outreach for school entry grades (K, Middle, 9) should be considered as the students have no prior experience potentially with the school. The State Department of Education (2020) recommended the adoption of flexible attendance policies to address both physical health needs and other salient issues. In addition to leveraging technology to connect and communicate with families, flexible attendance practices can be supported through actively considering the student's situation while at home and academic engagement practices like gamification and peer-to-peer learning (Castelo, 2020).

### **IN CONCLUSION:**

As educator and researcher Dena Simmons (2020) noted, COVID-19 contrasted in two distinct directions. In the crisis of the virus and stay at home orders, past the direct impact of the virus, many existing problems became magnified. Disparity in resources and responses underscored broader systemic inequity both within and beyond the walls of the schoolhouse. Conversely, the

stay at home orders gave a communal pause, to allow educators to reflect, learn, and share a wealth of resources.

Marching forward towards school reentry and eventual recovery, five principles can be adapted from school policy leadership (Wiener, 2020) to guide school counselors and school psychologists:

1. EQUITY - a continued focus on equity, promoting equitable practice through engaging with students and families to use their lived experiences to guide the development of practice, supports and interventions.
2. TAKE A HOLISTIC VIEW TO PROMOTE COHERENCE - the societal impact of COVID-19 continues to have broad and rippling effects across the many systems of education. Understanding the many needs and strains on students and educators can promote the further alignment and coordination of programming leading to the best outcomes.
3. GROUND WORK IN THE SCIENCE OF LEARNING - student safety and connectedness is facilitated through the intricate web of relationship with other students and adults. The focus on relationships, as well as other aspects of school climate, will protect students through a range of potentially negative outcomes. Educators need to be equipped to provide diverse learning experiences to match the diversity of learners in the school community.
4. TAKE A LONG-TERM VIEW OF STUDENT SUCCESS - as much as COVID-19 will be a defining moment of the times, crisis is not how students are defined. Two specific areas will serve students moving forward. Binocular focus on the Future of Work and the dynamic skills of adaptability, team work, and communication across differences; as well as, Robust Conception of Equity promotes student agency and self-discovery while equipping them to honor diversity and respect pluralism.
5. EMBED AN INNOVATION AND LEARNING AGENDA - practices to support or impede student and school recovery are being developed. Designing and evaluating practices with intentionality, centering on student and parent lived experiences and be foundational in promoting equity and effectiveness. Those practices with promising results are shared out to the profession to serve and support students more broadly.

As it was pre-COVID-19 within the walls of school, we know school counselors and school psychologists provide a unique role in leadership and support for the best outcomes for students. Stories of how instrumental counselors and psychologists have continued to be echoed out of the stay at home orders. Through it all, PSCA and ASPP will continue to provide practical and rigorous professional development, support, advocacy and guidance for students, school and educators across Pennsylvania.

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## Resources:

- **Other re-opening**
  - **Miami - Dade - Plans**
    - <https://www.local10.com/news/local/2020/05/01/miami-dade-students-could-end-up-having-lunch-break-in-classrooms-during-pandemic/?fbclid=IwAR1UQ2sDIBXLfcZbvD3fXhhAh0V9RsnAoR1hZ5uRXnhyN0kpXXNsMbljbtg>
  - **OECD - Schools Reopen around the world -**
    - <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/339780fd-en.pdf?expires=1588766266&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=05D357A9734FA96D71E6BCA6789DB5DD>
  - **PSCA Coronavirus -**
    - <https://bit.ly/PSCAReentry2020>
  - **CDC Guidelines -**
    - **Considerations for Schools -**
      - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/schools.html>
    - **Interim Guidelines for Schools**
      - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-schools.html>
    - **Plan Prepare and Respond**
      - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
  - **Maryland Plan for Recovery**
    - <http://marylandpublicschools.org/newsroom/Documents/MSDERecoveryPlan.pdf>
    - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k5gD5grGSM4Jz3JM6RLohrgd3rdMOcwd/view>
  - **Iowa Plan**
    - <https://sites.google.com/iowa.gov/returntolearn/>
  - **Rethinking Learning - Accelerate Learning**
    - [https://tntp.org/assets/set-resources/TNTP\\_Learning\\_Acceleration\\_Guide\\_Final.pdf](https://tntp.org/assets/set-resources/TNTP_Learning_Acceleration_Guide_Final.pdf)
  - **CASEL**
    - [https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CASEL\\_Leveraging-SEL-as-You-Prepare-to-Reopen-and-Renew.pdf](https://casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CASEL_Leveraging-SEL-as-You-Prepare-to-Reopen-and-Renew.pdf)
  - **Heading Back to School - School Counselors for MTSS**
    - <https://youtu.be/0LBO3Zs3eoE>
  - **NASP - Considerations for Academics and Interventions Upon Return to School**
    - <https://www.nasponline.org/return-to-school-academic?fbclid=IwAR1RDT3rcgMbo7IFdYeZCuHO3ZNX0hQSAT2pWeLcFRh5teiG-Xd-S1HsCZc>
  - **10 Point Plan for Putting Equity at the Center -**
    - <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2020/04/how-to-reopen-schools-a-10-point-plan-putting-equity-at-the-center/>



- ASCA- NASP
  - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ItF6edk4zF-UtTt-q6LBCQJHjAltgqVt/view?usp=sharing>
- PDE - Preliminary Guidance
  - <https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Safe%20Schools/COVID/GuidanceDocuments/Pre-K%20to%2012%20Reopening%20Guidance.pdf>
- Reentry Lessons from Katrina -
  - <https://aftonpartners.com/2020/04/14/planning-re-entry-public-school-systems-can-learn-aftermath-hurricane-katrina/>
- Flexible Attendance -
  - <https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2020/05/how-k-12-schools-monitor-attendance-during-remote-learning>
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- Trauma informed School Strategies During Covid -  
[https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/trauma\\_informed\\_school\\_strategies\\_during\\_covid-19.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/fact-sheet/trauma_informed_school_strategies_during_covid-19.pdf)