

Transition Plan

In-Person and Distance Learning

IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Updated October 1, 2020



This is a live working document that is subject to updates based on new guidance or regulations. Information and plans are subject to change at any time.

WYTHE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2020-2021

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INTRODUCTION

On March 13, 2020, the world of the students, staff, and families in Wythe County, and all over the nation, changed drastically. We all found ourselves adjusting to new routines, new habits, and new approaches to our everyday lives. Education was no exception.

Immediately after school systems shut down all across Virginia, our dedicated team of teachers, guidance counselors, instructional technology resource teachers, technicians, building level administrators, and central office administrators began their work on the WCPS Return-to-Learning Plan.

As a result of their hard work, combined with feedback provided by our families and staff, the Return-to-Learning Plan has become a reality for Wythe County Public Schools. This plan focuses on implementing an instructional program that is 100% Distance Learning. Components of this plan will also become permanent fixtures in educational scenarios for years to come as the world of education moves towards more remote and virtual learning.

This document will provide you with information about our Return-to-Learning Plan. We hope you find this document to be a helpful resource. Should you have any questions about the

contents of our plan, please do not hesitate to contact your school or the School Board office.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Return-to-Learning Plan has four primary Focus Areas:

1. Instructional Equity
2. Safety & Logistics
3. Student & Family Support
4. Teacher & Staff Support

In each of these Focus Areas, we considered a variety of factors. We needed to address topics and concerns such as the lack of internet connectivity, social and emotional supports, professional development, and best instructional practices.

This plan will provide highlights and information on our Focus Areas. This document is current, but please know that information is constantly changing. Please stay tuned for any additional changes and updates.

SECTION 1: SAFETY OF STUDENTS, STAFF, AND VISITORS

PHASES AND TIMELINES

Information and direction about the phases and timeline will be communicated to all employees, students, and parents before implementation. WCPS will follow the guidance based on the phase guidance communicated by the Governor.

EMPLOYEE AND STUDENT SAFETY

FACILITY, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

School Safety	Daily Procedures	Students & Parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor access to the building will be restricted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No classroom volunteers ◦ No parent lunch with students ◦ No guest speakers ◦ No use of facilities by any outside group • Meetings with parents/guardians will be arranged through the school. • Lockers will not be used • Schools will conduct on-line fundraisers only. Students will not be asked to sell or deliver in person. Additional outside traffic related to fundraisers will not be allowed on school property during school hours. • Each school will have a plan to monitor restrooms so that social distancing is maintained. • Floor social distancing decals will be placed in areas that can become congested (nurse's office, main office, etc.). • Nurse visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Teachers will assess individual needs before sending students to the nurse's office. ◦ Teachers will be provided with bandages and other acceptable items for their classrooms. ◦ Teachers will be provided strategies to reduce trips to the nurse's office. • Water fountains will not be used. If available, bottle fillers may be used following posted guidelines. • Classrooms will have no communal areas. • All faculty and staff should leave the building by 4pm for cleaning/disinfecting purposes. • Principals should limit the faculty and staff access to the building after hours. • Faculty and staff are not allowed to have personal deliveries made to the school. • Teachers are encouraged to disinfect their personal workspace and frequently touched areas/items in their classrooms throughout the day. Cleaning between class changes is essential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be socially distanced in the classrooms when possible. • Students will not share classroom items (scissors, glue, manipulatives, books, etc.). • Teachers will remove rugs, beanbags, and other fabric items from their classrooms. • Morning arrival: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All students will be health screened (students who refuse will be sent home). ◦ Students will report directly to their first assigned class. ◦ Breakfast will be served following individual school protocol. ◦ Teachers will need to be in their rooms to supervise students' arrival. • Each school will create a plan to dismiss students in small groups to report to buses, parent pick-up, or their vehicles. • Lunch will be served following individual school protocol in order to socially distance. • Elementary students will not change classes, teachers will. • In middle and high school, class changes may be staggered to limit the number of students in the hallways. • Physical Education classes will continue, but teachers will plan activities in which social distancing can be maintained and no equipment will be shared. • There will be no school dances, pep rallies, or other gatherings until further notice. • There will be no field trips until further notice. • Teachers and staff will not be allowed to order food deliveries or leave school during the day to purchase lunch when students are in the building. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To check-out students during the school day, parents should call the school office upon arrival at the school. Office staff will escort students outside and obtain the parent's signature. • To drop-off items for students, parents should contact the office and a staff member will meet them at the main entrance. • Students who do not follow the school's health and safety or procedural guidelines in the building or on busses, will be referred to administration. • Students will not be allowed to ride a bus other than their assigned bus. • Students who attend school in-person or ride the bus are required to wear face masks or face coverings. • Parents/Families – If your child is experiencing any symptoms related to a COVID-19 diagnosis, or is sick with any other illness, please keep your child at home. Please consult with your physician. Do not allow them to return to school until they are fever free without fever reducing medicine for at least 24 hours, improved respiratory symptoms, and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first occurred. • Students need to bring their WCPS provided electronic device, fully charged, every day in-person instruction is provided. Students need to take their electronic device home with them every afternoon as well.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

WCPS will discontinue staff travel to conferences and workshops until further notice unless pre-approved by the Personnel and Human Resource department and the office of the Superintendent.

REASONABLE EMPLOYEE HEALTH ACCOMMODATIONS

If an employee has a medical diagnosis of a health condition that defines the employee as at-risk, then the employee can request certain reasonable accommodations to perform their daily duties. Location reassignment, change in works hours, and additional job requirements are possible depending on each individual situation. Documentation, communication, and correspondence is required from the licensed medical provider to the office of Personnel and Human Resources. The office of Personnel and Human Resources can assist employees in this paperwork and process.

EMPLOYEE SCREENING AND PROTOCOLS

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and reduce the potential risk of exposure to our employees, employees should complete a self-screening which includes a temperature reading and evaluation of the following symptoms including:

- Temperature of 100° or greater
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

EMPLOYEE HEALTH PROTOCOL

All employees are required to self-check symptoms prior to arriving at work. Upon arrival, all employees are required to get their temperature checked. Employees must report a fever or other symptoms relating to a COVID-19 diagnosis immediately to their supervisor.

- If an employee becomes ill at work, he/she may be asked to leave work and go home or to the nearest health center.
- Employees returning to work from an approved medical leave should contact HR. You may be asked to submit a healthcare provider's note before returning to work.

If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you may return to work when all 3 criteria are met:

1. At least 24 hours have passed since recovery (no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and
 2. You have improved respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath, etc.); and
 3. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first occurred or since you tested positive.
- Required notification will be provided within 24 hours by WCPS to employees or families impacted by a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. Employees or students who test positive will not be identified by name, and their personal health information must be protected and kept confidential. The sharing of a co-worker's or student's personal health information without the individual's expressed written consent is subject to a privacy violation.
 - If you have symptoms that could be COVID-19, you are encouraged to get tested. If you do not get evaluated by a medical professional for COVID-19, it is assumed that you have COVID-19 and may not return to work until the three criteria listed above have been met.
 - A designated isolation room will be determined at each school.

GUIDANCE IF EXPOSED TO COVID-19

While we all hope to avoid exposure to illness from COVID-19, we need to be prepared for that possibility. If you or someone you've been in contact with has been exposed to the virus, our first concern is for your health and safety and those around you. In this rapidly changing situation, healthcare providers should have the most up-to-date information from the CDC. The local Health Department will contact trace individuals who may require a mandatory quarantine. If you are contacted by the Health Department, please notify your immediate supervisor.

See the following links for guidance:

- [**Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements**](#)
- [**Employee Rights**](#)

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Social distancing is an effective way to prevent potential infection. Based on recent, updated guidance from the CDC, WHO, AAP, and VDH, some procedures and recommended distances have changed. Based on current guidance, the Social Distancing procedures and recommendations will be as follows:

WCPS employees, students, parents, and visitors should practice staying approximately 6 feet away to the greatest extent possible from others and eliminating contact with others.

- Traffic Flow – Floors will be marked to indicate walking directions throughout the office, hallways, and cafeteria in order to maintain the social distancing of 6 feet when possible.
- Classrooms will be set up to observe social distancing when possible.

- Communal spaces will be used only to aid in social distancing.
- Face masks or face shields are required to be worn to protect yourself and each other.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

In order to minimize exposure to COVID-19, PPE is needed to prevent certain exposures. PPE can include:

Facial Coverings: The use of facial coverings (masks, shields) is an important part of employee and student protection, as well as personal hygiene, social distancing, and frequent cleaning routines. Face coverings are required.

Gloves: The use of gloves may be used in appropriate situations.

Please note that social distancing should still be practiced when gloves and facial coverings are both utilized.

In addition to using PPE, please remember to:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow

PERSONAL WORKSPACE

Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own personal workspace (teacher desk, phone, etc.) throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces.

SHARED WORKSPACE

Employees are encouraged to disinfect their own workspace multiple times throughout the day, giving special attention to commonly touched surfaces. WCPS has alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning supplies will be available to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards.

Please note that proper equipment such as acceptable disinfectant and PPE should be used when cleaning individual workspaces.

There will be limited access to certain workspaces to reduce exposure to risks and ensure employee safety. Workspace usage is as follows:

Capacity– WCPS will be monitoring the number of employees in the offices while the risk of infection exists and begins to diminish.

Breakrooms or Teacher Lounge/Multipurpose Room–Social distancing will apply. These spaces will be cleaned frequently.

Copy Room – There will be limited access to the copy room. Signage indicating restrictions will be posted.

Classroom - Classrooms will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each evening by the custodial staff. During the day, faculty and staff will disinfect as needed. There will be no communal areas in classrooms or sharing of supplies, items, or resources.

CLEANING PROTOCOL

- **Facilities Cleaning** - Safety is our first priority. Upon reopening, our schools will have been completely cleaned and disinfected, and we will continue to adhere to all necessary safety precautions. In addition to the deep clean of the office and school before employees and students return, there are additional cleaning steps outlined in the Cleaning Chart.**See [Appendix D. WCPS COVID-19 Health Response Plan](#)

SIGNAGE

Signage related to safety measures and logistics will be made available to all schools. See [Appendix D. WCPS COVID-19 Health Response Plan 2020-2021](#) for CDC signage.

- Wellness Check & Temperature Screening
- Maximum Occupancy of Each Room
- Hand Washing
- Symptoms of Coronavirus/COVID-19
- Stop the Spread of Germs
- When to Stay Home
- Face Covering & Social Distancing Instructions
- Water Fountain Closed/ Procedures for Bottle Fillers
- Social Distancing Floor Signs
- Hand Sanitizer Locations
- Floor Arrows for Flow of Traffic

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

- Parents are encouraged to transport their children to school.
- Students will sit in assigned seats as directed by their bus driver (seats will be marked appropriately).
- Students are required to wear face coverings when riding the bus.
- Siblings/students living in the same household will be required to sit together.

- **If a student is a car rider and needs to start riding the school bus, the parent/guardian must give the school at least one week's notice for transportation arrangements to be made.**

BUS DRIVERS/BUS PROTOCOLS

Bus drivers must disinfect the buses after each route.

Bus drivers will monitor that students are sitting in assigned seats, staying in their seats, and not turning around in their seats to talk to other students. Students not following the rules may be suspended from riding.

ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

If an employee or student displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at school, he/she will need to report to the school nurse, and they will then be directed to report to the school's **isolation room** and the case form will be completed.

See Appendix D: WCPS Health Response Plan 2020-2021

Once the employee or student arrives at the isolation room, they may be asked to wear additional PPE. Explain that this is to help protect other employees and students and prevent the spread of the potential virus.

- The school nurse must contact the WCPS Health Coordinator and the Director of Personnel and Human Resources. The Health Coordinator will communicate with the local health department.
- The school nurse and others attending the suspected infected person, should also wear a protective mask, shield, and gloves while working with the suspected infected person.
- The school nurse will direct the ill employee to leave work or call the parent of the student to be picked up and go home.
- The isolation area and suspected employee's or student's work area/classroom must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, in addition to all other common surfaces recently touched by the employee or student.

RESTROOM USAGE DURING THE WORK DAY

Establish maximum capacity for the facility that allows for social distancing. Signs will be posted that show the number of people allowed in the restroom at one time. Cleaning supplies will be available in all employee bathrooms.

CAFETERIA AND MEAL PERIODS

Pre-K – 12th grade students will be offered free daily breakfast and lunch through December 31, 2020.

Each school administration will determine if student meals will be served in either the cafeteria or classrooms (6ft. socially distanced).

Students are welcome to bring their own lunch.

FOOD & OTHER DELIVERIES

Staff:

- Sharing refreshments during meetings is prohibited in order to limit the risk of contamination.
- Food Catering needs to be individually prepared and packaged.
- Personal deliveries, such as packages should not be delivered to schools.
- We ask that there be no food delivered or ordered for pickup (when students are in the building), and that food be kept in your assigned space.

Students:

- Shared snack items, candy, and drinks will not be provided until further notice.
- Students are not to share any food or drink with other students.
- We ask that there be no restaurant food delivered or ordered for pickup.
- No classroom parties involving food.

CLASSROOM ARRANGEMENTS

Students will be socially distanced in the classroom as much as possible. The teachers and staff will be required to wear a face covering.

Avoid putting students in physical groups with close proximity.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF TEACHERS AND STAFF

Resources to support the Emotional and Physical Health of our Teachers and Staff are available in [Appendix A](#). Some of the contents covered in [Appendix A](#). include:

1. General Tips
2. Coping with Stress

3. Support of Loved Ones
4. Emotional Awareness
5. Relationship Building
6. Physical Wellness
7. Resources from Anthem Insurance
8. Tips for School Administrators

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES AND STUDENTS

Resources to support the emotional and social well-being of our students and their families are available in [Appendix C](#). Some of the contents covered in [Appendix C](#) include:

1. Student and Family Resources
 - a. Parents as Teachers
 - b. Establishing a Routine/Maintaining a Schedule
 - c. Tips for On-line Learning
 - d. Parent and Child Stress
 - e. Talking About Covid-19
 - f. Counseling and Community Resources
 - g. English Learners
2. Teacher Resources for Students
 - a. Student Emotional/Social Support
 - b. Reconnecting Students to Peers and Staff-Day 1 Forward Activities
 - c. PK-K Activities
 - d. 6th and 9th Grade Transition
 - e. Stress Reduction
 - f. English Learners

STAFF TRAINING

- All faculty and staff will be trained on safety protocols.
- All faculty and staff will be trained on cleaning protocols.
- Schools will follow a mandated cleaning schedule.
- Health screening protocols.

It is very important that all employees understand the safety requirements, protocols and expectations to ensure everyone and their communities stay safe and prevent the spread of the virus.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

- WCPS Website: <https://wythe.k12.va.us/>
- School Messenger
- Social Media (Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook)
- Email

II. ACADEMICS AND HOME-BASED LEARNING

WCPS developed a COVID-19 Return to Learning Team to organize and develop systems in place for the district's reopening. The committee members were selected from various departments and grade levels to get a diverse set of knowledge and skills. The team members were then divided out into sub-committees. As a whole, the team met regularly. Each sub-committee met one time a week as decided by the team. A committee chairperson was selected to be the spokesperson for the team and keep detailed notes for reporting.

1. Professional Development

Due to changes in how and where we teach, teachers will be required to provide instruction in a different manner. There will be a major focus on providing digital instruction for students who have internet capabilities and those who do not.

The professional development plan consists of **technology-based training**, including Google Classroom, Canvas/Virtual VA, Google Drive, and Apple Education.

A professional development needs survey was conducted to gain interests and needs from our staff.

[2020-2021 Professional Development](#)

2. Instructional Equity

Re-entry Plan: The WCPS re-entry plan will consist of Safety, Social and Emotional Learning as well as Academics. Time will be devoted to students to help them adjust to the new school routine and reconnect with friends and staff. Assessments to determine learning gaps will be administered in September. Instruction and remedial lessons will be designed to meet the needs of students.

Instructional Gaps: We will use the data from the Student Growth Assessments (SGA), baseline assessments, reading diagnostics, along with other data to determine where any learning gaps are with each student. Since students have been out for five months, we expect there to be larger gaps than if they were just out for the summer. See [2020-2021 Baseline Assessments & PBA's](#).

Pacing: Since we will not be starting out like a normal school year, our pacing will look a lot different. Through new instruction, we will need to integrate previous grade level Standards of Learning (SOL) with regular grade level or course instruction. We will use the data from Student Growth Assessments (SGA), Baseline Assessments, and Reading and Text levels to develop pacing guides to include pre-closure content as well as new standards. Formative assessments will be administered often to adjust pacing and plans.

Distance Learning and In-Person Learning: Instruction will be uniform across grade levels and schools. WCPS will provide all students in grades Pre-K through 12 a device to use at school and home. All teachers will use the same Learning Management System called CANVAS. Pre-K – 2nd grades will have iPads and grades 3-12 will have Chromebooks. Within the CANVAS learning management system teachers can use Google Suite, Apple Education, Virtual Virginia, or other learning programs to support students. For those without internet capabilities, please contact your school principal for available options.

Distance Learning: If WCPS is required to close and transition to Distance Learning, students will take devices home to participate in at-home lessons provided by teachers. Students without internet access will have lessons and activities uploaded onto their devices to use at home. If families choose all distance learning at any time, teachers will use the CANVAS platform to provide instruction.

In-Person Learning: Students will attend school in-person four days a week on an abbreviated schedule (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday). Wednesdays will be virtual for all students every week. Families may choose to continue full time Distance Learning. They may return to in-person learning at the mid-term and the beginning of each grading period.

WCPS Gap Plan: Teachers will blend remedial and new instruction. Student and school schedules have been adjusted to include dedicated remedial time.

- Elementary: students will have access to Title I support in grades K-5 and PALS support in grades K-3; students will have daily opportunities to remediate
- Middle: students are provided daily built in remedial or enrichment opportunities
- High: students will have continuous remediation built into all classes

Special Education/504:

- Special education teachers and other school staff will work with parents and students through the IEP/504 process to ensure accessibility and continuity of services for students with disabilities.

Gifted and Talented

- Teachers and GT Coaches will continue to provide challenging instruction to our identified GT students. Instruction and activities can be provided through Distance Learning and in-person. Teachers/schools will use CANVAS for GT students to access instruction/classes.

English Learners (EL)

- WCPS will continue to identify and provide support for our EL students during in-person and Distance Learning situations. Teachers will work with the EL Tutor to

provide students with appropriate instruction and remediation. Distance and in-person support will be provided.

3. Distance Learning Expectations

WCPS Central Office:

- Provide guidance about implementation and communication of the Transition Plan to Principals
- Update registration forms to reflect current needs
- Facilitate Principal access to online learning platforms
- Provide professional development
- Support the creation of technology training videos/handouts for parents and students (in conjunction with ITRTs)
- Monitor and adjust the WCPS Instructional/Health & Safety Program as needed and as guidelines change
- Maintain communication with all stakeholders
- Collaborate with State and VDH Officials

School Administration:

- Identify students who have inferior or no internet connectivity
- Label all devices (color-coded for each grade) with student names that will need to be delivered and picked up
- Manage distribution of WCPS provided electronic devices
- Identify two people in the building to receive teacher reports of technology issues and report them to WCPS Support
- Assist teachers in communicating with families and students
- Implement and communicate Transition Plan to faculty, parents, and students as directed by Central Office
- Monitor Distance Learning implementation
- Learn technology associated with Distance Learning
- Observe and evaluate teaching
- Keep central office updated regarding implementation and issues related to the Return to Learning Plan

Teachers:

- Provide quality instruction using the approved learning platforms (one week at a time)
- Create a Gap Pacing Guide to accompany WCPS/CIP Pacing Guides
- Follow WCPS/CIP Pacing Guides
- Utilize Google Meet (with call-in option) or Zoom and record all sessions with students to be included on the platform
- Offer live interaction with students daily
- Provide students a weekly schedule each Monday
- Set due dates
- Update grades/participation at least once a week
- Maintain consistent “office hours” for parent/student questions
- Plan and implement meaningful remediation strategies
- Create a Distance Learning Syllabus that includes:
 - Class procedures and expectations

- Pacing Guide
- Grading
- Routine/due dates
- “Office” hours/Contact info
- Internet Safety Tips
- WCPS Distance Learning Honor Code ** See [WCPS Distance and Blended Honor Code](#)

Parent/Student:

- Follow syllabus expectations
- Comply with device drop-off/pick-up options and schedules, if needed
- Create a scheduled “school day” at home for distance learning
- Expect students to participate in classes, live sessions, and complete assignments
- Ask teachers / principals for help if needed
- Monitor and assist students when able
- Be responsible with assigned device
- Screen students for any COVID-19 symptoms prior to sending them to school
- Keep students home if they are sick
- Ensure students bring fully-charged WCPS provided electronic devices every day to and from school
- For students attending school in-person, ensure they have either a face mask or face shield
- For students riding the bus, ensure they have either a face mask or face shield

4. Music & Band Instruction

The following general safety guidelines are suggested for all music and band educators:

Elementary:

- Instruments and sheet music should not be shared
- No shared equipment
- Social distancing of 6 feet or more should be practiced, while performing in a 6X6 ft. socially distanced area with face coverings

Middle/High:

- Instruments and sheet music should not be shared
- Students will be seated in a 6X6 ft. socially distanced area with all students facing in the same direction
- Students playing instruments while outside must be socially distanced in a 6X6 ft. area
- Students will play instruments no more than 30 minutes in one period
- Choir students must wear face coverings while singing and perform in a 6X6 ft. socially distanced area
- Large spaces will be provided for instruction
- Refer to [WCPS Band COVID-19 Guidelines](#)

GRADING POLICY

GRADING

In both Distance and In-person Learning, students will be required to complete assigned work and participate in classroom activities (whether distance or in-person) to receive credit/grades.

Teachers should be mindful that students are returning to school with a five month “gap” in learning. When grading new instruction, teachers need to make sure that students have had multiple and differentiated opportunities to develop a grasp of the content. Be mindful of the amount of workload assigned to students, and exercise appropriate discretion.

Grading scales for each level will remain the same as before closure.

PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

Distance Learners

For Distance Learners, participation will be the main tool in monitoring attendance.

- After 5 unverified absences with no interaction with a student, the teacher will notify school administration. Interaction is turning in assignments, participating in online meetings, and communicating with the teachers by phone or email.
- The administration will attempt to make contact with the parent/guardian by phone to address the attendance issue. The administration will also send a truancy letter. Both should be documented in PowerSchool.
 - If the student continues to have no interaction, the principal will refer the student to WCPS Educational Support Services
 - If the first 5 day issue is resolved and happens again, the principal will refer the students to WCPS Educational Support Services.

If students are unable to interact or attend for any reason, parents/guardians should contact the school and provide any relevant information.

In-person Learners

- After 5 unverified absences from school, the school will attempt to make contact with the parent/guardian by phone to address the attendance issue. The administrator should also look at the student's at-home participation. The administration will also send a truancy letter. Both should be documented in PowerSchool.
- If absences continue, the administrator will refer the student to WCPS Educational Support Services.

*Parents need to provide schools with appropriate documentation regarding their student's absences

15 Day Unenrollment

- If any student has a combination of not showing up to school in-person and/or no interaction during distance learning for 15 consecutive days, he/she will be unenrolled and referred to WCPS Educational Support Services.

RECEIVING AND RETURNING STUDENT DIGITAL WORK THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING

In the event that the schools have to return to 100% Distance Learning, the following guidelines will be followed:

In order to support our students instructionally while they are at home, we are providing devices for all Pre-K-12 students.

Students with internet access will receive digital lessons and assignments from teachers.

For families that do not have access to the internet, schools will provide assistance with uploading assignments on devices to use at home. This system will involve parents using one of our school access points to upload weekly assignments or contacting the school for assistance.

- All WCPS students in grades PK-12 will be issued a 1:1 device to use for distance learning.
- If students do not have the ability or means to gain daily internet or mobile access to their teacher, WCPS will provide access to the curriculum and distance learning using bus routes with the following schedule:
 - WCPS will pick up devices from students who have signed up for this service each Monday morning between the hours of 8:00 – 10:00 am.
 - Parents/Guardians may choose to drop their student's device off at the school themselves between the hours of 8:00 – 10:00am.
 - Once the devices are returned to the school, teachers will collect their students' devices to load the upcoming week's content onto the device.
 - WCPS will drop off devices each Monday morning to return students their device between the hours of 8:00-10:00am.
 - Parents/Guardians may choose to pick their student's device up at the school themselves between the hours of 8:00-10:00am.

*If families opt to participate in 100% Distance Learning, it will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to visit an access point to download completed work and upload new. Each school parking lot will have WiFi access for WCPS devices.

III. ATHLETICS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

WCPS will follow VHSL Return to Athletics Guidelines for students participating in athletics. Extra-Curricular activities will follow guidelines recommended by the CDC and VDH that also correlate with WCPS guidance.

- [WCPS Return to Athletics & Extra-Curricular Activities Letter](#)
- [VHSL PHASE III GUIDELINES](#)
- [WCPS Band Guidelines](#)
- [WCPS Athletic & Extra-Curricular Waiver](#)

Appendix

Appendix A.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS & STAFF

Addressing Emotional & Physical Wellness

<https://www.cultofpedagogy.com/distance-learning/>

GENERAL TIPS AND ADVICE FROM TEACHERS BEGIN AGAIN.

If distance learning has been introduced suddenly, where it takes the place of face-to-face learning rather than being the standard from the start, treat the beginning of the shift the same way you'd treat the beginning of a school year, by establishing routines and protocols before digging deeply into content, and giving extra energy to rekindling culture and relationships on the new platform even if they were already established in the face-to-face setting.

KEEP HOME RESPONSIBILITIES IN MIND.

When schools are closed district-wide, *all* children are out of school and under one roof. This means older kids may be shouldering some responsibility for caring for their younger siblings, and that could impact how well they are able to keep up with deadlines, log in for synchronous events, or respond to communication in a timely manner. Letting students know up front that you get this, and maintaining flexibility with deadlines, can go a long way toward keeping lines of communication open and avoiding misunderstandings.

MAKE SOCIAL INTERACTION A PRIORITY.

When we are kept apart from one another for whatever reason, our need for human interaction increases. So if you're teaching a distance learning course that was set up that way to begin with, it's important to build in structures to keep students interacting with each other and with you. This principle is even more vital in situations where distance learning is coupled with large-scale social isolation. Some of the tools and systems I mentioned earlier, like video conferencing and discussion boards, can meet this need; even your own outgoing video, audio, and written communication can be used for more "human connection" reasons. A good general rule to keep in mind is that you don't need to use 100% of your time for instructional purposes; allowing space for regular conversation, venting, and laughter can be incredibly important.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>

Take care of yourself and your community

Taking care of yourself, your friends, and your family can help you cope with stress. Helping others cope with their stress can also make your community stronger.

Ways to cope with stress

- **Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories**, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- **Take care of your body.**
 - Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate
 - [Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals.](#)
 - [Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.](#)
 - Avoid [alcohol](#) and drugs
- **Make time to unwind.** Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- **Connect with others.** Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

Need help? Know someone who does?

If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others:

- Call 911.
- Visit the Disaster Distress Helpline, call 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUs to 66746.
- Visit the National Domestic Violence Hotline, call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224.

Know the facts to help reduce stress

Understanding the risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful.

Learn and share the facts about COVID-19 and help [stop the spread of rumors](#). When you share accurate information about COVID-19, you can help make people feel less stressed, make a connection with them, and [help stop stigma](#).

Take care of your mental health

Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.

People with pre-existing mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Preparedness page. Learn more about [taking care of your emotional health](#) during a stressful event like the COVID-19 outbreak.

For people at higher risk for serious illness

People [at higher risk for severe illness](#), such as older adults, and people with underlying health conditions are also at increased risk of stress due to COVID-19. Special considerations include:

- Older adults and people with disabilities are at increased risk for having mental health concerns, such as depression.
- Mental health problems can present as physical complaints (such as headaches or stomachaches) or cognitive problems (such as having trouble concentrating).
- Doctors may be more likely to miss mental health concerns among:
 - People with disabilities due to a focus on treating underlying health conditions, compared to people without disabilities.
 - Older adults because [depression can be mistaken for a normal part of aging](#).

Common reactions to COVID-19

- **Concern about protecting oneself** from the virus because they are at higher risk of serious illness.
- **Concern that regular medical care or community services may be disrupted** due to facility closures or reductions in services and public transport closure.
- **Feeling socially isolated**, especially if they live alone or are in a community setting that is not allowing visitors because of the outbreak.
- **Guilt** if loved ones help them with activities of daily living.
- **Increased levels of distress** if they:
 - Have mental health concerns before the outbreak, such as depression.
 - Live in lower-income households or have language barriers.
 - Experience [stigma](#) because of age, race or ethnicity, disability, or perceived likelihood of spreading COVID-19.

Support your loved ones

Check in with your loved ones often. Virtual communication can help you and your loved ones feel less lonely and isolated. Consider connecting with loved ones by:

- Telephone.
- Email.
- Mailing letters or cards.
- Text messages.

- Video chat.
- Social media.

Help keep your loved ones safe.

- **Know what medications your loved one is taking.** Try to help them have a 4-week supply of prescription and over the counter medications, and see if you can help them have extra on hand.
- **Monitor other medical supplies** (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, wound care) needed and create a back-up plan.
- **Stock up on non-perishable food** (canned foods, dried beans, pasta) to have on hand in your home to minimize trips to stores.
- If you care for a loved one living in a care facility, monitor the situation and speak with facility administrators or staff over the phone. Ask about the health of the other residents frequently and know the protocol if there is an outbreak.

Take care of your own emotional health. Caring for a loved one can take an emotional toll, especially during an outbreak like COVID-19. There are ways to support yourself.

Stay home if you are sick. Do not visit family or friends who are at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Use virtual communication to keep in touch to support your loved one and keep them safe.

What health care providers can do?

- **Help connect people with family and loved ones** to help lower distress and feelings of social isolation.
- **Let older adults and people with disabilities know it is common for people to feel distressed during a crisis.** Remind them that asking for and accepting help is a sign of strength.
- **Have a procedure and referrals ready** for anyone who shows severe distress or expresses a desire to hurt him- or herself or someone else.

What communities can do

Community preparedness planning for COVID-19 should include older adults and people with disabilities, and the organizations that support them in their communities, to ensure their needs are taken into consideration.

- Many of these individuals live in the community, and many depend on services and supports provided in their homes or in the community to maintain their health and independence.
- **Long-term care facilities should be vigilant** to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19.

For people coming out of quarantine

It can be stressful to be separated from others if a healthcare provider thinks you may have been exposed to COVID-19, even if you do not get sick. Everyone feels differently after coming out of quarantine.

Emotional reactions to coming out of quarantine may include:

- Mixed emotions, including relief after quarantine.
- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones.
- Stress from the experience of monitoring yourself or being monitored by others for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Sadness, anger, or frustration because friends or loved ones have unfounded fears of contracting the disease from contact with you, even though you have been determined not to be contagious.
- Guilt about not being able to perform normal work or parenting duties during quarantine.
- Other emotional or mental health changes.

Children may also feel upset or have other strong emotions if they, or someone they know, has been released from quarantine.

<https://www.rulerapproach.org/managing-anxiety-around-covid-19/>

Tips for You and Your School Community

If you're noticing anxiety in yourself or those around you these days, you're not alone. With mention of COVID-19 (commonly known as coronavirus) filling radio and television news, social media feeds, and our email inboxes, it's no wonder we're all anxious. Between the uncertainty, the real health risks, and the hype, fear and anxiety are feelings that are both valid and common. We wanted to provide you with a few ideas for managing those feelings.

- **Start with yourself.** Before you help others with their feelings, make sure you are okay—that you are calm enough to validate, reassure, and support others. Practice your calming strategies. Practice self-care. Talk to others. Breathe.
- **Be aware of your own emotions and accept how you feel.** With widespread illness, real uncertainty exists. We may be worried about our own health and safety, the well-being of our family members, or even childcare or workplace issues. Remind yourself that a certain level of anxiety is grounded and normal. Seek professional help if you feel your anxiety or fear is getting in the way.
- **Focus on the facts.** Consult reliable and up-to-date sources of information such as the Center for Disease Control website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/summary.html> and your local news source for updates on closings, procedures, and guidelines.
- **Control the amount of information you take in.** In times like these, we may feel like we have no control. One thing we can control is how much information we seek out and how often we tune in. Take breaks as needed from the news, social media, and conversations that make you feel anxious.
- **Don't be afraid to say no.** If someone asks you to attend a social event or goes to hug you or shake your hand and you are not interested, this is not a time to push yourself past your comfort zone. Give yourself permission to say no, as your physical and mental

health is the most important thing. At a loss for words? Try something like, “With all the germs going around, I’ll take a raincheck.”

- **Respect others’ decisions but know what’s right for you.** We all handle the news differently. You may know someone stocking up on masks and paper goods; others may be continuing to host parties. Let them go about their business, and think about what you need to do for you and your own physical and emotional well-being.
- **Be your best self when dealing with stigma and fears.** If you hear rumors or notice suspicion around certain groups of people being sick, question ungrounded assumptions and do your best to protect those who are stigmatized or judged. Have compassion for those who are ill and those whose lives have been disrupted by the virus or society’s response to it, including having compassion for yourself.
- **Support others who are dealing with anxiety and uncertainty.** When helping others with their anxiety, particularly your colleagues, students, or children, we suggest you:
 - Manage your own anxiety first.
 - Don’t be afraid to discuss the situation—open communication sometimes is the best way to allay unpleasant emotions.
 - Don’t assume you know how others, and particularly children, are feeling or why they’re feeling that way. Ask.
 - Consider the age and developmental level of those with whom you speak. Take your cues from them on what to discuss.
 - Reassure children with facts. Remind them that adults, in particular capable scientists and health care workers, are working together to keep everyone safe. Discuss what you are doing and what they can do to stay safe and germ-free.

Dealing with the uncertainty of the current situation is difficult for everyone, and we want to support in any way we can. Please feel free to share the above with your school community, and do not hesitate to reach out to us if you have questions, suggestions, or seek additional guidance in this area. Below are links to other resources you may find helpful as you navigate this challenging time.

Additional Resources

Emotional Wellness

Stress management for educators: <https://ggie.berkeley.edu/collection/stress-management-for-educators/>

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

- <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/emotional-wellness-toolkit>
- <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/environmental-wellness-toolkit>
- <https://www.nih.gov/sites/default/files/health-info/wellness-toolkits/physical-wellness-checklist.pdf>

- <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/social-wellness-toolkit>
- <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/disease-prevention-toolkit>

Psychology Today

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-empowerment-diary/201910/what-is-emotional-wellness>

The National Center for Emotional Wellness

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

Making Caring Common Project - Harvard University

- <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

How-to Guide Relationship Mapping Making Caring Common Project - Harvard University

- https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b7c56e255b02c683659fe43/t/5bd7aaac419202e5d277e29d/1540860588805/relationship_mapping_strategy.pdf

Taking a Relationship-Centered Approach to Education - Edweek

- <https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/09/11/03thigpen.h33.html>

Relationship Building With Teacher Colleagues - Teach Hub

- <https://www.teachhub.com/relationship-building-teacher-colleagues>

Being a Good Colleague Will Do the Most Good for Your Teaching Career - Share

- <https://blog.sharetolearn.com/curriculum-teaching-strategies/being-a-good-colleague-helps-teaching-career/>

9 Ways to Build Strong Teacher Relationships with Your Colleagues - Beyond the Classroom

- <https://www.wgu.edu/heyteach/article/9-ways-to-build-strong-teacher-relationships-with-colleagues1909.html>

Physical Wellness

Library of exercise videos: <https://www.fitnessblender.com/videos>

Healthy eating tips: <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/how-to-eat-healthy-without-dieting>

Additional Physical Wellness Resources:

- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/joy-at-jhm/office-of-well-being/covid/physical-activities.html>
- <https://www.acsm.org/read-research/newsroom/news-releases/news-detail/2020/03/16/staying-physically-active-during-covid-19-pandemic>
- https://www.physio-pedia.com/Physical_Activity_and_COVID-19
- [exerciseismedicine.com](https://www.exerciseismedicine.com)
- [healthyathome.org](https://www.healthyathome.org)
- [shapeamerica.org](https://www.shapeamerica.org)

Health Insurance – Anthem – Resources

Anthem recently collaborated with leaders in technology, business, and government to deliver tools designed to help you build the right return-to-workplace strategy for your business, maintain focus on physical and mental health, and ensure access to care.

The suite includes:

- C19 Explorer - A new tool that provides interactive dashboards with current and predictive information about COVID-19, including hot spots, response and readiness, infection rates, and risk scores.
- C19 Navigator - Provides clinical insight and predictions to help organizations consider what to do next and how to re-engage their workforce and re-open while working to ensure their employees' safety.
- Sydney Care - Delivers real-time access to health information and includes telehealth services and symptom-based triage. The app also connects consumers with virtual primary care via text or video chat, a COVID-19 assessment, and testing locations.
- Biometric Passport - Evaluates possible COVID-19 symptoms through daily attestations and gives employers information for strategic planning. This tool collects user health information through a daily survey and generates an encrypted QR code. Responses stay on a user's phone, and employers only know whether the employee is granted entry based on their requirements.

These tools and other resources are assessable at: <https://www.anthem.com/recovery/>

Appendix B.

RESOURCES FOR ADMINISTRATORS

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/tips-principals-shifting-their-schools-distance-learning>

Tips for Principals Shifting Their Schools to Distance Learning

As teachers grapple with teaching remotely while schools are closed, principals can support their staff, students, and school communities in critical ways.

With schools closed for weeks—and in some states and districts, until the end of the school year—to slow the spread of the coronavirus, principals are leading their school communities into the uncharted territory of K–12 distance learning, writes [Denisa R. Superville for Education Week](#).

Many schools are working fast to attempt to offer students high-quality, equitable distance learning within a very short time. School leaders must not only support teachers figuring out how to translate classroom curricula into engaging virtual lessons, but also ensure that all students—including those who are tough to reach even on a regular school day and those who don't have access to a reliable internet connection—continue learning and connecting with their teachers and peers. At the same time, they must see to it that students who depend on schools for food and other critical supports continue to receive these services.

Here are four ways principals say they plan to lead their school communities and support teachers.

BE A 'CALM AND MOTIVATING PRESENCE'

Kelly Corbett, principal of Otsego Elementary School in Otsego, Minnesota, told Superville that principals and instructional leaders must remain level-headed: "We need to be prepared. We don't need to panic. We have the resources in front of us. We have great educators. We just need to plan.... There will be bumps in the road; there will be glitches. Things happen."

Day-to-day, Corbett is busy "working on making sure that teachers are developing high-quality lessons, answering questions about content and teaching, and helping troubleshoot along the way when teachers start using a digital platform they've really only used for short periods—mainly snow days." But beyond these everyday responsibilities, she said, "being that calming and motivating presence is essential."

BE A SOURCE OF INFORMATION

In addition to handling questions from teachers related to taking lessons online and troubleshooting tech issues, it's important that school leaders also take on the role of chief information officer for the school community.

Kerensa Wing, principal at Collins Hill High School in Gwinnett County, Georgia, tries to keep in touch daily with students and their families so that she's regularly communicating—in a calm and measured way—her expectations for students' learning. "We want to continue the learning. We want to keep it positive, be patient with folks," Wing told Superville. "We want them to be patient with the students' learning curve. This is the first time they will be online for more than two days in a row."

ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO CREATE A SENSE OF NORMALCY FOR STUDENTS

Corbett, the principal at Otsego Elementary, is guiding her teachers to recreate practices for their students that are similar to their previous ones, by doing things like greeting students each morning with a video message and building in mindfulness breaks. The goal is not to replicate the whole school day at home but to provide students with a sense that they are still connected to the school community.

To help students continue to benefit from some of the school's support structures, Corbett has asked teachers to brainstorm how to bring those structures into students' homes—giving kids access to a virtual "[calming corner](#)" like they have in classrooms, a cozy spot where kids can retreat for a few minutes to manage their emotions.

Corbett has asked her school counselors and social workers to come up with self-regulating exercises kids can do at home. "It could be everything from counting your breaths, different ways to regulate your breathing, physical activities. We'll have to figure out the best way to keep those experiences going when the students aren't here," says Corbett.

MAKE SURE TEACHERS FEEL SUPPORTED

When Paul Kelly, principal at Elk Grove High School in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, hosted an online staff meeting, his teachers peppered him with questions about how they could possibly meet all the different needs of their students. Kelly's message to them, after expressing his confidence that they would do their best for students, was that teachers needed to first take care of their own emotional health. "You are only going to be able to help the kids if you are in the right emotional space. Take care of the stresses in your home, with your family, and we will work together to make the e-learning work for kids," he told his staff.

As a principal, he told Superville, his responsibilities are evolving given the realities of life during a pandemic. "I think my role shifts completely into this symbolic keeper of hope," Kelly said. "My role in this family is to make sure that we know that we are trying to get them whatever they need, having staff members feeling like we care about them as humans and as families, and all of the details of their professional lives will get resolved."

<https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/05/08/how-principals-and-district-leaders-are-struggling.html>

How Principals and District Leaders Are Trying to Boost Lagging Teacher Morale During COVID-19

By [Catherine Gewertz](#)

Flexibility, Emotional Support, Setting Boundaries

In Education Week interviews with principals and district leaders, key themes emerged about the kinds of support strategies that have gotten appreciative feedback from teachers. Added to a solid base of instructional leadership, experts say they could provide important sustenance while teachers aren't together in their school buildings.

- **Offer scheduling flexibility.** Many school districts have [started dropping instruction on Fridays](#), using it instead for teacher collaboration and preparation. Others have shortened block-schedule classes and reduced their frequency. "The biggest thing we did is not to replicate the normal schedule," said Mat McClenahan, the principal of High Tech Los Angeles, a small charter high school. He told teachers they could do only a couple of hours of live instruction per day, and the rest could be asynchronous to fit better with the demands of their home lives, and spare them from sitting in front of computers all day.
- **Encourage teachers to set work boundaries.** Like a growing number of schools, Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall urged its teachers to establish "office hours" so they don't have to "make themselves available at all hours," said Kelly Walsh, the private Massachusetts high school's director of 9th and 10th grade programs. "We wanted to put in some parameters to protect teachers."
- **Be transparent and accessible.** Especially when they are navigating new ways to do their jobs, teachers need to know they can ask questions. McClenahan said his twice-weekly staff meetings have included open forums for tough questions like whether teachers will still have jobs in the fall.
- **Be a troubleshooter.** If teachers are struggling to get Chromebooks to all their students, hop in your car and become part of the delivery service. If your 12th grade English teacher hasn't heard from several students and they need that class to graduate, make a home visit to those kids. These are the kinds of things Aaron Newman and Jennifer Agresta did in Steubenville, Ohio. They're both assistant principals; Agresta at the district's one middle school, and Newman at the high school. They also completed students' individualized education plans for a teacher who had to be hospitalized. "Just having that empathy and knowing we're trying not to put undue pressure on them" is important, Agresta said. Newman said: "It's not just words. It's action."
- **Recognize that emotional support is as important as instructional support.** Leaders at several schools said they've repeatedly reminded teachers of the tele-therapy benefits available through their health-care plans or their own school-based counselors. Some set aside virtual meetings just for friendly chats and non-instructional support. Anu Ebbe, the principal of Shorewood Hills Elementary in Madison, Wis., opens staff meetings with mindfulness exercises led by trained staff members. She uses concepts and practices from the district's chosen social-emotional learning

framework, [Zones of Regulation](#), to help teachers reflect on their emotions, and access the same menu of self-care strategies they teach their students. For Ebbe, instructional coaching also doubles as emotional support; she drops into teachers' Zoom lessons, accompanied by a social worker or psychologist, so she can provide academic feedback and also follow up on signs of struggle in her teachers.

What teachers need most now, Ebbe said, is a multi-layered approach to support. They don't just need mindfulness support, they need a comprehensive virtual learning plan that offers clear guidance on things like the scope and sequence of instruction, and attendance and grading policies. They need a dedicated virtual space for "shout-outs" that recognize their hard work, but they also need a good shared-leadership structure so they can collaborate to plan instruction. They need coaching support to teach their students, but they also need explicit messages from administrators about taking care of themselves. "It's not just one thing," Ebbe said. "All of these things matter."

https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_to_support_teachers_emotional_needs_right_now

How to Support Teachers' Emotional Needs Right Now

Schools can develop a plan to help teachers who are feeling anxious and overwhelmed.

BY [CHRISTINA CIPRIANO](#), [MARC BRACKETT](#) | APRIL 30, 2020

At the end of March, our team at the [Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence](#), along with our colleagues at the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL), launched a [survey](#) to unpack the emotional lives of teachers during the COVID-19 crisis.

In the span of just three days, over 5,000 U.S. teachers responded to the survey. We asked them to describe, in their own words, the three most frequent emotions they felt each day. The five most-mentioned feelings among all teachers were *anxious*, *fearful*, *worried*, *overwhelmed*, and *sad*. Anxiety, by far, was the most frequently mentioned emotion.

The reasons educators gave for these stress-related feelings could be divided into two buckets. The first is mostly personal, including a general fear that they or someone in their family would contract COVID-19, the new coronavirus. The second pertains to their stress around managing their own and their families' needs while simultaneously working full-time from home and adapting to new technologies for teaching.

Once distance learning had gone into effect, we heard from one educator who shared:

My vision of finally having someone else take care of my own kids' education, even virtually, was smashed to smithereens. This requires 100 percent parent involvement, actually 200 percent because my kids are in two different grades!

Given the unexpected new demands our educators are facing, we might assume that how teachers are feeling now is entirely different from the emotions they were experiencing before the pandemic. But is it?

In 2017, our center conducted a similar survey on teachers' emotions. A national sample of over 5,000 educators answered the same questions about how they were feeling.

Back then, the top five emotions were *frustrated*, *overwhelmed*, *stressed*, *tired*, and *happy*. The primary source of their frustration and stress pertained to not feeling supported by their administration around challenges related to meeting all of their students' learning needs, high-stakes testing, an ever-changing curriculum, and work-life balance.

Our research findings are echoed across a growing body of research on teachers' stress and burnout.

In one [study](#), 85 percent of teachers reported that work-life imbalance was affecting their ability to teach. Other [research](#) has shown that at least 30 percent of teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching. Like our research, these studies found that the general causes of teacher stress and burnout are related to a lack of strong leadership and a negative climate, as well as increased job demands, especially around testing, addressing challenging student behaviors, a lack of autonomy and decision-making power, and limited to no training in social and emotional learning (SEL) to support educators' and students' emotional needs.

So, before the pandemic, America's teachers were already burning out. Add in new expectations of becoming distance-learning experts to support uninterrupted learning for all their students and caring for the ever-evolving demands of their families, and it's no surprise that 95 percent of the feelings they reported recently are rooted in anxiety.

We can't control what is happening to us and around us, but we [can control](#) how we respond to it.

Emotions matter

An anonymous teacher who filled out our most recent survey described the balancing act like this:

There is this huge dissonance right now between the messages such as "be well" and "take care of yourself" at the end of emails, and "in this time of uncertainty." Yet we have to partake in multiple seminars, read links related to online instruction, legal requirements in special ed, due process, timelines, etc. Everyone needs to be reminded again about how the brain works.

At the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, we study how emotions drive effective teaching and learning, the decisions educators make, classroom and school climate, and educator well-being. We assert that educators' emotions matter for five primary reasons:

- Emotions matter for attention, memory, and learning. Positive emotions like joy and curiosity harness attention and promote greater engagement. Emotions like anxiety and

fear, especially when prolonged, disrupt concentration and interfere with thinking. Chronic stress, especially when poorly managed, can result in the persistent activation of the sympathetic nervous system and the release of stress hormones like cortisol. Prolonged release of this and other neurochemicals impacts brain structures associated with executive functioning and memory, diminishing our ability to be effective educators and undermining student learning.

- Emotions matter for decision making. When we're overwhelmed and feeling scared and stressed, the areas of our brains responsible for wise decision making also can become "hijacked." In contrast, the experience of more positive states like joy and interest tend to help people evaluate individuals, places, and events more favorably compared to people experiencing more unpleasant emotions. Pleasant emotions also have been shown to enhance mental flexibility and creativity, which are key to navigating the novel and evolving demands of living through a pandemic.
- Emotions matter for relationships. How we feel and how we interpret the feelings of others send signals for other people to either approach or avoid us. Teachers who express anxiety or frustration (for example, in their facial expressions, body language, vocal tone, or behavior) are likely to alienate students, which can impact students' sense of [safety](#) in the classroom—and likely at home in a virtual learning environment—thereby having a negative influence on learning. Further, dysregulated emotions can undermine healthy relationships between teachers and parents. For most students, a successful distance-learning experience will require a solid partnership between teachers and families.
- Emotions matter for health and well-being. How we feel influences our bodies, including physical and mental health. Stress is associated with increased levels of cortisol, which has been shown to lead to both physical and mental health challenges, including depression and weight gain. Both the ability to regulate unpleasant emotions and the experience of more pleasant emotions have been shown to have health benefits, including fostering greater resilience during and after traumatic events.
- **Emotions matter for performance.** Chronic stress among teachers is linked to decreases in teacher motivation and engagement, both of which lead to burnout. Teachers who are burned out have poorer relationships with students and are also less likely to be positive role models for healthy self-regulation—for their students and their families. It's no surprise that teachers who are burned out are more likely to leave the profession, which impacts student learning and puts a huge drain on schools. You get the picture: When educators answer the question about how they feel at school—or, in our most recent study, as an at-home educator—we learn they spend a big part of their workday in a pretty dark place.

[Research](#) we and others have conducted has shown two possible protective factors for teachers' emotional well-being. First, teachers with more developed emotion skills tend to report less burnout and greater job satisfaction. These skills include the ability to recognize emotions accurately, understand their causes and consequences, label them precisely, express them comfortably, and regulate them effectively. But the challenge is that most teachers have not received a formal education in emotion skills.

Second, teachers who work in a school with an administrator with more developed emotion skills tend to experience fewer negative emotions and more positive emotions. These teachers

also are likely to have better-quality relationships with their students. When students have stronger connections with their teachers, they, in turn, are more engaged and committed to learning; they're also more willing to take risks and persist in the face of difficulty.

We need a greater focus on teachers' health and well-being now, so they can thrive through this pandemic and be psychologically ready to return to school after this has passed.

Supporting educators' well-being

We know how anxious teachers (and, really, everyone else) are feeling right now. But have we thought about how we *want* to feel?

Previously, we asked teachers how they *want* to feel at school, and they answered loud and clear. A few of the top hoped-for emotions were *happy, inspired, valued, supported, effective, and respected*.

The more sensitive we can be to our educators' emotional needs today, the better we'll be able to support them now and when schools reopen. The space between how we feel and how we want to feel presents an opportunity to work together to improve the emotional climate of our homes and schools. The emotional climate is the feelings and emotions a learning space evokes; that space includes both the physical one and the learning climate that is evoked through the interactions between and among educators and students. This can be applied to traditional school settings and to virtual ones.

Supporting Learning and Well-Being During the Coronavirus Crisis

We need to understand how our teachers *want* to feel, again, and then support them with what they'll need to experience these feelings.

In the same survey we conducted at the end of March, we asked teachers to share some reflections about what they need to have greater emotional balance. Responses included time to adjust to the new normal of online learning and ways to make virtual learning fun and engaging. Teachers also expressed a strong need for honesty, respect, kindness, flexibility, and patience from their school administrators. Further, they requested more realistic expectations, including boundaries around working around the clock. Among the top requests were strategies to support their own and their students' wellness and resilience.

Additional Resources

<https://www.teachforamerica.org/stories/principals-without-a-playbook-leadership-amid-the-pandemic>

<https://www.educationdive.com/news/lessons-in-leadership-administrators-advice-for-addressing-5-coronavirus/575559/>

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/20/04/harvard-edcast-school-leadership-during-crisis>

Appendix C.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF FAMILIES & STUDENTS

STUDENT AND PARENT RESOURCES

Parents as Teachers

Establishing a Routine

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zAsE7CsJNPr5yo2ow5EV9x1cyYnldutKY54puA5VBQs/edit?usp=sharing>

Chores and Children

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xXsD_NAJX6odkpV_LNPnrr0ZgZxtDoKnLEQckNHNq1M/edit?usp=sharing

Motivating Kids On-line

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/14jbWA-y-HVYsolilFcKiu72vxGcfVtPR/view?usp=sharing>

Tips for On-line Learning

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1m8aVSE8v7eK3xdv4h3j5W3hl7yfYr1Oa/view?usp=sharing>

Parent and Child Stress

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vPG1StAtXEQtJMts-A7zdPjNti4RHfXPAosrKsivGNc/edit?usp=sharing>

Community and Counseling

Community Resources 1

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jLmX72ijOUdyT_qdPIVV1vmxueasCXgR/view?usp=sharing

Community Resources 2

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uzcGjuc9MGg5ybN-CzXph2i8hmRi12Zx/view?usp=sharing>

Counseling

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GRBWAKQpsyO7L-iSmoJBDqbYRVxPNLTPNCDmLFp4q8o/edit?usp=sharing>

Emotional Support for Children

Talking to You Kids about Coronavirus

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TASsEAd7m5iXkgyYPhn6v3hdaIAW2hYQ5eA_tTJN0Ro/edit?usp=sharing

Separation and Grief During COVID-19

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1qifPHmJsV4nfKIU5Uuqslnm0wEO5qX8rwybOe34XfoM/edit?usp=sharing>

TEACHER RESOURCES

6th and 9th Grade Activities

6th and 9th Transition

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SkMEqHT8o5VqXILabQuhHsTC1tGuwjyoHWfsd1ZiRXw/edit?usp=sharing>

8 Questions for Freshmen

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IPD4PgS1Sh3SGhsRf8hXvYu48SvOpw63JQ_EdYTW-Cs/edit?usp=sharing

COVID-19

Student Support Reminders

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kygj3mgYaoeailITq5xlwcPKj4LcS4Q0XNO54nBfnx0/edit?usp=sharing>

Talking to Students about COVID-19

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BVOUyXm_c3x6mInJ8u0xtkDSh-iGsAer/view?usp=sharing

Day 1 Forward Reconnecting

5 Icebreakers for Middle and High School Students

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11AUycORTJIOTDWZGw8j-klbQb2BzSso4JZqYPw7glmg/edit?usp=sharing>

Day 1 Forward Activities K-12

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_RDPGekcehnWMHj08XPIAU12H7e2ZnxrfFvBK4TY9o/edit?usp=sharing

Day 1 Forward Activities Elementary

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CbugsbadMIAZy8YhBVt1Lf0SpgFix5id/view?usp=sharing>

Day 1 Forward Activities Middle School and High School

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Vc6Eu5cEAGVrwdPGvs0cwzCsVXuTXz9zfxk5g4r8U5c/edit?usp=sharing>

Day 1 Forward Activities High School

https://docs.google.com/document/d/19ha2mo7kBIKPf_9BpVOqABoOOY5sgJqvCjo7w4dqlBI/edit?usp=sharing

Day 1 Ice Breakers K-12

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16OyzCk_tHtd7ULFtTzKpSCoJCHqI9CrrbqV0oy2BHMY/edit?usp=sharing

PK-K Activities

Beginning School Activities

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_-GMz7MJbApLrV5VStLOEoUPCsTOiohsc9BX8oTEyQo/edit?usp=sharing

Elementary Face Mask

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1myLvMINJ8Bk4P9QyXgr7QTuYRAG5VfN/view?usp=sharing>

Coronavirus Activity

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jmPNfG99pDbh-PeYcBd_pzPwl7PvopfC/view?usp=sharing

Student Coping and Support

Why SEL Activities?

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lheyT0h257S6lZ9xzyZM-21UZX2pK8uk0--AajZYeQ/edit?usp=sharing>

Student Coping

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1javmzJOTJWLmZg5cA_Reros0o4Fy8Kz_NWBq9428yBE/edit?usp=sharing

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vwQrjcl1F9SMQgWC-vSsjTyjw2MKLVjRaAuU6aENHKL/edit?usp=sharing>

Hard Times (Middle and High School)

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1g4Q5a_GTP1_4GqKC8Jolv_cgZ62frYvv1obz8Xwy_m0/edit?usp=sharing

Stress Reduction Activities

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GMD-mr_-IEVfKY4QdHeZZm96AAimlj0LRgBxGQmW87g/edit?usp=sharing

Supporting English Learners

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/prevention/quick-guide-se-wellness-english-learners.pdf>

Appendix D.

WCPS WCPS HEALTH RESPONSE PLAN DOCUMENT

- [WCPS COVID-19 Health Response Plan 2020-2021](#)

Appendix E.

WYTHE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS DAILY HEALTH SCREENING

- ❑ **Students and staff should assess themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 before reporting to school; and/or may be asked the following by school personnel upon arrival:**

Check all boxes that apply:

- ❑ A new fever (100°F or higher) or a sense of having a fever?
- ❑ A new cough that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- ❑ New shortness of breath that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- ❑ New chills that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- ❑ A new sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition?
- ❑ New muscle aches (myalgia) that cannot be attributed to another health condition or specific activity (such as physical exercise)?

***If an individual answers YES to any of the screening questions before arriving, they should stay home and not enter the building.**

****If an individual reports COVID-19 symptoms upon arrival, the school should activate the emergency protocol for COVID-19**

Appendix F. COVID-19 CUSTODIAL CLEANING SCHEDULE

[illegible]

[illegible]

