

Schooling during COVID-19: Concerns and Solutions

Concerns about All Students

Concerns and Issues	Solutions
Districts are worried about students' mental health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a mental health survey weekly to all students. They survey can count for attendance for remote students. • Create a student advocate position whose sole job is to ensure student well-being. • Reach out to a local mental health provider to see if they are willing to provide students with supports. • Look into acquiring a therapy dog to provide emotional support to students and staff.
Districts are worried about losing track of high-risk students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a chart of past and future communications with high-risk students to ensure continuous communication. Communications include home visits to families. • Administrative team can take on a small caseload of the highest risk students who need additional support and accountability. Administrative team sets expectation that the student will check in with the admin every day whether remote, hybrid, or in-person learning is occurring.
Students and/or families attend school virtually when they should be in person. The school is not notified of this change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If students are logging in virtually when they should be in person, notify caregivers immediately. • Inform families of the issues that arise when their students do not attend school in their documented learning environment. If inconsistent attendance in documented learning environment is contributing to confusion tracking quarantines, be clear about the consequences of that with families.

Concerns about Remote Students

Concerns and Issues	Solutions
Districts struggle to engage and/or support remote students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching assistants/administrative staff are following up with unresponsive students and families instead of asking teachers to do the family follow up. • Offer stipends to teachers who work with online students in the evening or support student monitoring during the day.
Students are struggling to complete work in the remote environment when in-person learning is possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage synchronous remote learners as you would their in-person peers. For example, make sure you are calling on your remote learners to answer questions. • Ask the struggling remote student to come in person for a brief meeting to check-in with them. If the student is unwilling to come in person, ask for an individual virtual

	<p>meeting. Set goals with the student for completing their work remotely and hold student accountable for reaching those goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing caregivers about expectations increases the likelihood that caregivers will hold students accountable. • Require students who are failing to come back to in-person learning if possible.
Students lack access to internet/free internet is expired.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public libraries may have hotspots available for borrowing. • Reach out to the internet providers to ask for continuation of internet access for those families.
Teachers wish to track participation in real time but struggle to keep up with remote students' participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Jamboard or another online platform during live sessions to capture student work in real time instead of asking teachers to remember participation in real time or after the virtual meeting is complete.
Districts are struggling to create a sense of community and belonging with the remote students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use breakout rooms to group together in-person and remote students • Plan a virtual trivia night for students and families. • Coordinate a normal school schedule for remote kids (e.g. including a recess in the remote learner's day).

Concerns about Administrative Issues

Concerns and Issues	Solutions
Daily attendance tracking is taking up too much time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire ESC/BOCES staff to help track attendance, help with virtual students, or help connect with families. • Created an open-source master schedule to track period-by-period attendance.
Districts are struggling to take attendance consistently across learning environments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an option in the SIS to track if students are in-person or online. • Create multiple attendance codes to track absence/tardy across learning environments.
There are inconsistencies in how teachers are tracking attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate a discussion about what the purpose of in-person attendance is – i.e., attendance is a proxy for the safety and well-being of a student, not a measure of their engagement in class. • Encourage teachers wanting to measure engagement to capture participation/engagement and attendance in separate measures. • Create a district-wide or building-wide definition of online attendance (e.g. cameras must be on vs. do not have to be on).

Some teachers and staff are struggling with technology.

- Pay staff members to provide peer professional development on virtual learning tools. The PD sessions could be pre-recorded. Salary credits could be offered if the PD is occurring over school breaks.

Additional Considerations and Ideas

- **Districts have used newly available time to provide additional support to students in need.** Districts had to create another round of bus runs to prevent buses from being too crowded. This resulted in an extra block of time to provide students additional interventions during the school day.
- **Districts are using this school year to consider new educational models.** One district is attempting to adopt a competency-based model for their district. Another district saw skyrocketing rates of students becoming ineligible for extracurricular activities. As a response, they changed to a standards-based schooling model. They shifted from looking at grades to considering the character of the students.
- **Districts have been adjusting their attendance taking habits based on the needs of the students.** Some districts have provided additional flexibility for attendance options for students. For example, students could fill out a form by 3PM each day for their attendance, or teachers take attendance 3 times throughout the day and a student need only be present once to have attendance count for the day. Other districts have needed to be stricter with attendance. For example, daily attendance for remote students is taken in half day increments to hold students more accountable.