

Sample K-12 Demands for the Safe Return to In-Person Learning

Below are sample Bargaining for the Common Good demands for safely returning to in-person instruction. They can be helpful as you organize, plan, and negotiate the return to school buildings and campuses.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

- Plans for in-person instruction must involve all stakeholders in order to ensure the safety of students, educators, and communities.
- Continue remote learning for as long as necessary to ensure the health of students and staff.
- Fair, clear, and consistent expectations across districts related to COVID-19 mitigation strategies.
- Provide school leaders with clear guidance to establish procedures if students or staff become unwell. Guidance should include monitoring student and staff health, maintaining regular contact with local health authorities, and updating emergency plans and contact lists.
- Follow available guidance from the CDC on maximum gathering sizes and personal protective equipment.
- Provide educators and staff access to PPE and disinfectant items as well as sufficient training and clear guidelines for students and staff on how and when to use them safely and properly.
- Ensure that reliable, widespread COVID-19 testing, vaccination availability, effective tracing and social distancing have been used in the communities that are considering reopening their public schools for in-person learning.
- Ongoing, open communication with all stakeholders must continue.



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

- Hybrid delivery of instruction available – continued delivery of instruction no matter what.
- Seek policy waivers on number of student days, length of day, length of year, to allow for hybrid models or split scheduling for schools to ensure smaller class sizes and social distancing.
- Abeyance of all standardized tests.
- Additional availability of trained substitute teachers.
- Create a multi-language communication plan for all stakeholders and include parent/community input.
- Suspend requirements for fire drills, active shooter drills, and other planned emergency drills that disrupt student learning and could lead to large gatherings of students and staff.
- Modify attendance requirements so that students are held to the expectation of completing their work – not necessarily to “checking in” to class every day.
- Hold harmless arts and elective classes from funding cuts.

EQUITY

- Support in providing educational opportunities for special populations of students including students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, those who are medically fragile, and students experiencing homelessness.
- Increase investment in special education accommodations, such as IEPs and 504 plans.
- Bring back small groups of special education students for in-person learning before other students to give them extra attention and time.
- Utilize technology for occupational therapists and speech pathologists through distance learning or other mechanisms if available.
- Allow amendments to IEPs through distance learning plans.
- Reduce amount of work required for students who are easily overwhelmed.
- Design all online learning so it is accessible to students who may need larger font and/or more explanations to ensure success for all students, not just those with special needs.
- Establish a mechanism to communicate with non-English speaking parents and guardians to provide more access to up-to-date information.
- Create a system for providing food-insecure students with school meals, either through meal delivery or vouchers for grocery stores or restaurants.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Ensure all services are culturally responsive and include access to community-based providers/programs.
- Establish trauma training at the start of school year (and ongoing) to help to identify trauma in students.
- Expand crisis teams to every school building to monitor and assist with social/emotional health.

- Extend re-entry for students with a focus on social and emotional impacts of COVID-19 to prepare students for learning.
- Increase staffing of specialized instructional support personnel.
- Ensure mental health professionals are able to perform their job function instead of working on administrative duties.
- Partner with local medical and mental health professionals to provide full range of services for students.
- Track long-term effects of pandemic on students including changes in grades, test scores, graduation rates, and absenteeism.
- Prioritize stress counseling.

SAFE WORKING AND LEARNING CONDITIONS

- Provide sufficient funding for PPE for all staff and students.
- Extend and clarify paid leave provisions under state/federal law.
- Compensate all educators – full-time, part-time, hourly, and per diem workers, including teachers, secretaries, paraeducators, food service, transportation, and substitutes – during this time.
- Ensure employees are not required to use personal devices to conduct classes.
- Seek employee feedback about various digital platforms used to provide instruction to students including, but not limited to, ease of use, security, student interaction, and participation.
- Utilize COVID-19 response as an opportunity to review policies on use of school facilities during emergencies.
- Publicize state, district, and school plans in time for educators to prepare adequately.
- Assess teacher and staff workload to avoid burnout and ensure the work is distributed equitably and staff shortages are addressed to increase capacity as necessary.
- Declare a moratorium on all educator evaluations.

INVESTMENTS IN SCHOOLS

- Identify response and recovery financing for immediate investments in school water, sanitation, and hygiene.
- Direct education funding to schools and communities hit hardest by the crisis.
- Close the technological gap by providing as many devices as possible to all students.
- Waive school fees and other costs wherever possible and eliminate other barriers to entry.
- Ensure that educators have professional pay and healthcare benefits and fight against privatization of educators' jobs.
- Suspend all state funding of private schools that do not meet public school guidelines for safe and effective delivery of instruction.

RACIAL JUSTICE

- Acknowledge the pandemic was not experienced equally by all communities and populations, particularly in rural areas and communities of color. Listen and learn how different families handled the time out of school buildings.
- Provide and prioritize housing, food, health, dental, and job services in neighborhood schools because it is a common-sense way to begin to address these issues and the racial inequities they create and exacerbate.
- End attempts to funnel resources away from public schools and re-segregate our school communities with charters, vouchers, and other privatization schemes.
- Ensure school plans for in-person instruction are inclusive and equitable for all educators and students by humanizing learning environments and designing spaces that are situated in the experiences of communities of color, not just through white, cis-hetero, and ableist lenses.
- Ensure adequate time is provided for classroom-community-building activities and consider the paid time and additional staff to allow for the development of restorative practices in schools.
- Prioritize hiring, retaining, and promoting educators of color.

MORE INFO/RESOURCES

Navigating COVID-19 Pandemic
[EducatingThroughCrisis.org](https://www.educatingthroughcrisis.org)

Bargaining for the Common Good
[nea.org/bcg](https://www.nea.org/bcg) or
[BargainingForTheCommonGood.org](https://www.BargainingForTheCommonGood.org)



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