

GUIDANCE ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING SCHOOL REOPENINGS

Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together

**METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EQUITY
AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SCHOOLS**

Dr. David E. Kirkland
Executive Director

GUIDANCE ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING SCHOOL REOPENINGS

Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together

Contents

- 4 [What is the desired system or set of environments for students based in a radical re-imagining of how we do schools?](#)
- 5 [How should different stakeholders use the summer to prepare for fall re-openings?](#)
- [Healing practices](#)
 - [Curriculum and academics](#)
 - [Professional learning](#)
 - [Student and family engagement](#)
 - [Assessment](#)
 - [Data](#)
 - [Health](#)
 - [Scheduling](#)
 - [Physical space](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Modified schedule](#)
- 10 [What do district and school leaders need to know, think about and do when reopening schools?](#)
- [Healing practices](#)
 - [Curriculum and academics](#)
 - [Professional learning](#)
 - [School climate and discipline](#)
 - [Family engagement](#)
 - [Community partnerships](#)
 - [Health and COVID considerations](#)
- 15 [What do teachers need to know, think about and do when schools reopen?](#)
- 16 [What do students need to know and think about when schools reopen?](#)

GUIDANCE ON CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE-SUSTAINING SCHOOL REOPENINGS

Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together

by NYU Metro Center

The country is on the brink of beginning again. And as we restart our national engines, let's do so with a steady and cautious hand, not taking for granted the sobering lessons that COVID-19 is teaching us: that in a nation as fundamentally carved out of its differences as ours, equity matters. Thus, it would be a mistake to imagine the school reopening process absent an acknowledgement that something fundamentally has taken place in our world, that the thing that interrupted life for millions of Americans afflicted vulnerable populations in ways disproportionate to more privileged populations. In acknowledging this, we provide this document—a set of suggestions and topics to think about—for humanizing the school reopening process. In this document, we explore questions as to how we might engage in culturally responsive-sustaining school reopenings, leveraging elegant ideas that borne from the educational equity community. In doing so, we point to the broader social and emotional aspects of reopening—the ways that schools have been traumatizing spaces for vulnerable students: Reopening them may add to some students' anxieties, stress, depression, etc. Thus, we pose essential questions, such as: How might we conscript in our thinking around school reopening ideas that express not only an awareness of equity issues but also a caring response and deliberate commitment to reshaping schools that deserve our students? That is, how might a care-centered, joy-based, trauma-informed approach to school reopenings look?

Indeed, we encourage district and school leaders to consider a range of eventualities, chiefly that the COVID-19 challenge is not over. However, for many of us, it is hard to distinguish when COVID-19 began or whether it simply exacerbated existing conditions of inequity, which became heightened due to the spread of the virus. How might leaders leverage our many lessons about culturally responsive-sustaining education (CR-SE) to support staff, families, and students as whole, design plans that consider, perhaps reconsider, the most humane way to continue school? How might they think about the ways that communities gathered in the past and the ways that communities connected in the past to ensure that those practices are reimagined and recreated to support ongoing connection and community-building? Just as disparities have become exacerbated in society during this pandemic, we must assume that this will be the same for schools. Thus, heightened attention should be given to students of the global majority (BIPOC), students with dis/abilities, LGBTQIA+ students, undocumented students, immigrant students, multilingual students, less economically advantaged students, housing insecure students, and other vulnerable student groups. Likely facing current and

forthcoming financial challenges, how might we prepare to stand strong in our commitments to centering students, promoting equity, and advancing opportunities to learn regardless the geopolitical or social circumstances.

How might we decide, determine, reimagine, and recreate through an equity lens? How might we interrogate how our own experiences and positionalities have impacted and continue to impact our navigation through crises, whether and to what extent are we in alignment with students' intersectional needs and responsive to their culturally textured experiences? Each decision we make should involve one simple question: "How will this impact our most vulnerable populations?" They are the case study, the barometer, from which we navigate the space.

Finally, this document does not replace the safety advice from public health officials. It is not meant to offer a comprehensive school reopening plan, but is rather meant to provide guidance to policymakers, district and school leaders, and school personnel as we make plans to return to school. We know that health and safety are priorities right now. These are the right priorities. However, they do not, and must not, be seen in isolation of or as a replacement to important questions of equity, which is to say that equity, too, is a health and safety issue, particular for vulnerable students, families, and communities.

What is the desired system or set of environments for students based in a radical re-imagining of how we do schools?

We don't want to "go back" to normal; we want things to improve. Part of that improvement means envisioning a system or set of environments that are welcoming and affirming, where the least-desired or redundant components from the curriculum/activities are omitted. Foucault suggests that learning is erotic. Audre Lorde posits that "the erotic" can be used as a source of power, both to motivate and entice, to transmit, connect, and radically transform. However, too often, schooling, particularly for vulnerable youth, is constructed as a site of what Michael Dumas calls *suffering*. How might we, instead, imagine a system or set of environments that center joy, where one of the key outcomes of engagement and interaction, of learning itself, is pleasure?

A joy-based reimagining of schooling will involve more human-to-human interaction, collaborative learning, less or no homework, very few assessments that are continuous in nature and group assessments that feel less burdensome. A joy-based reimagining of schooling is one where we replicate spaces that center students of the global majority (BIPOC) and let go of anything that continues to marginalize, exclude, and harm them. Some examples include:

- Gatherings that occur in circles for all school community members (staff meetings, team meetings, class, family meetings, etc.).
- Being partners to families from the beginning of the school year in their children’s learning, leveraging opportunities that might have traditionally been called “conferences” or “back to school nights” that are transformed into spaces where teachers and staff listen to and learn about families and plan together about how they can best serve the student.
- Eliminating suspensions for all non-violent offences, shifting discipline to a model aimed at reconnecting students to learning when they have become disconnected for whatever reason.
- Embracing curricula driven by students and that elevates the past and living histories of the communities actually represented in the classroom. (Storytelling—which should happen across disciplines—is a one such method of leveraging community knowledge/history in the creation of connected curricula.)
- Using assessments to learn about students as opposed to ranking and punishing them; and in doing so seeking to understand their mastery of concepts and their levels of depth of mastery (which fails to be the goal of standardized test-driven instruments and benchmarks not tailored to individual students).
- Making homework a thing of the past.
- Rethinking scheduling to allow for (1) advisories where teachers and students connect on issues prevalent in their lives and on the current geo-sociopolitical climate and (2) free periods that are shared across grades so that student clubs, organizations, and teams can meet or students can connect with teachers as needed.
- Getting rid of metal detectors.

How should different stakeholders use the summer to prepare for fall reopenings?

Healing Practices

- Create a continuous space early on for collective community grieving, acknowledging (as opposed to ignoring) that something happened, allowing for students and staff to experience the feelings of loss and interruption together through the guidance of a community positioned to sustain its members.
- Set the expectation that all schools reopen with one or more healing methodologies and practices in place. This can be different for each school—restorative circles, mindfulness, peer support groups, advisories, etc.—but every school should be expected to create one.
- Structure a support system such that every single adult in the building has a group of students of whom they are responsible for keeping track, talking 1-1 regularly, building

relationships with families, identifying resources of support, etc. This could happen through the advisory model or other structures.

Curriculum and Academics

- Plan for ways to ensure each child experiences joy in learning every day. While the energy reflecting on feelings and emotions during this pandemic may be heavy, it is essential that teachers support students in lightening the heavy loads they bear by engaging in fun, creative, innovative spaces that foster joy in the community. Teachers might use some time during the summer to brainstorm these spaces, breaking from traditional notions of teaching and learning because joy for every child isn't implicit in that tradition.
- At the elementary level, principals should consider having staff loop to the next grade with their students to preserve continuity of relationship. This will require some support for staff to build capacity on the content of the curriculum for a grade they may not have taught before or in some time.
- Interrogate what is left in and what is taken out when curriculum maps are adjusted.
- Ensure STREAM (science, technology, reading [literacy], engineering, arts, and math) are fore fronted, not cut, if decisions must be made about instructional time usage. Art, drama, and role-playing can serve as an outlet for students and be incorporated richly across disciplines.
- Ensure that students spend a chunk of the day on some physical activity.
- Expand self-care activities for students, staff, and families.

Professional Learning

- Provide scheduled time (beginning in the summer and continuing through the school year) and space for teachers and staff to share out what they are thinking about, worried about, etc. This sharing can be the basis for a school-developed strategic plan that identifies achievable goals, resources, and time needed to accomplish the goals with the view of identifying how to best support the needs of students and adults in a school.
- Reimagine professional learning spaces that typically take place at the end of August right before school begins. Consider hosting a speaker for traditional kickoffs to the school year that can be virtual and potentially live-streamed into classrooms where teachers can gather in small groups. Use this time to train all staff—including operations, food service, technology, transportation—on safety protocols and provide them with protective gear.

Student and Family Engagement

- Conduct a poll or survey asking students what they want to do when they are back at school. They should be allowed the freedom to design their curriculum the initial few weeks. Building on what students feel comfortable with is helpful.
- Offer polls/surveys/empathy inventories for families to ask what they would like to see, what they are able to share, what they need, what they hope for, and what they expect.
- Pay attention to families who do not respond and attempt to connect in other ways with these families—i.e., through phone calls, in-person check-ins, emails, video conferences, etc.

Assessment

- Seek to understand mastery of concepts and the level of depth of mastery (as opposed to standardized test-driven goals and benchmarks that are not tailored to individual students).
- Evaluate the IEP services of students with disabilities to adjust and increase services based on students' potential regression and adjustment needs.
- Rethink grading and instead incorporate a more humanizing system to promote the growth, development, and life quality of students. This means fundamentally rethinking the design of how we do school, i.e., how we grade. One idea is moving away from credit-based models where the current system of grading thrives, to competency-based models that allow for systems of holistic assessment based in profit (i.e. "value added") perspectives rather than deficit perspectives.
- Eliminate failure as an option and opt, instead, for a set of performance-based indicators that allow students to showcase who they are, what they know, and what they know how to do.
- Incorporate assessment systems based on community and cultural logics such as a rites of passage system that ties assessment to broaden notions of community acceptance and celebration, rather than basing assessment in the current "conveyor belt model" that sees students as objects to either move along or scrap.
- Reclaim competency-based practices for developmental transition from stages of childhood to adult, tying assessment to social induction (e.g., a student's readiness to be fully functioning member of a broader community as an individual capable of participating in a pluralistic society on terms that are as humanizing as they are humanistic). Rites of passage models not only focus on academic competences (such as work skills), but also social intelligences such as the development of care and compassion. The goal of this model of assessment is to help students become whole and healthy human beings who are not only anti-racist, anti-sexist, and the assortment of other qualities required for full humanization, but also individuals who are critical creative, collaborative, loving, and emotionally complete.

Data

- Disaggregate data on engagement (behavioral, cognitive, affective) in technology-enhanced learning environments with heightened attention to our most vulnerable student populations. Provide additional support to students who experienced loss during the shutdown and in the months before school reopens.
- Work with field offices to review the school population to determine and address changes due to COVID-19 including relocation of housing insecure populations which will have implications for class makeup, school enrollment, support services, etc.

Health

- Work with local partner districts, regional authorities, foundations, and community organizations to ensure there is continuity of food and nutrition services offered to the community. In districts that have been offering 3 meals a day, this should continue. Leaders should seek to partner with local food banks and local health centers to offer meals and access to the health services on site.
- Where possible, have testing site listings available for both diagnostic and antibody testing should be readily available to the school community. We caution two things here: (1) Vulnerable communities often have the least amount access to things such as testing and vaccinations; thus, this should be part of the plan; and (2) schools should press healthcare authorities to prioritize their most vulnerable populations, otherwise these populations will be overlooked.

Scheduling

- Schedule to allow for advisories where teachers and students connect on issues prevalent in their lives and on the current sociopolitical climate.
- Schedule free periods that are shared across grades so that student clubs, organizations, and teams can meet or students can connect with teachers as needed. This space should be repurposed and emphasized as a space for healing, circling, checking in, building relationships, etc.
- Plan simple and clearly defined schedules for students, with the understanding that classes do not have to meet every day or last for the typically one-hour (50-55 min.) period allotments.
- Share opening and future schedules with all families/caregivers so they can help prepare their children for these changes and adjust their work and home schedules.
- Make plans for virtual continuity in the event of another shutdown, following NYU Metro Center's Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Remote Education guidance.

Physical Space

- Review patterns of movement throughout the school physical plant, modifying patterns to support social distancing such as locating lunch in classrooms and PE in outdoor spaces.
- If students will spend more time in classrooms, create breaks that involve movement.
- If halls are empty during class session, consider giving student options to work in the halls outside their classroom.
- Have specialist teachers (art, P.E., music) come into classrooms as opposed to having kids rotate spaces as much as possible. As an alternative, hold these classes outside whenever possible.
- Avoid too much shuffling of students as they might be more comfortable in the current set-up. Larger groups can be moved to larger spaces (if possible).
- Review typical PE activities and create alternatives to foster social distancing.

Events

- Remember that the year for seniors who graduated in 2020 ended abruptly with many missing celebrations and milestones that, because of COVID-19, did not take place. Once the physical buildings reopen, find ways that former seniors, now alumni, to return and celebrate what they missed.
- Determine how students (particularly vulnerable students) will still access social spaces that fulfilled them such as clubs, organizations, student equity leaders, etc. Plan for the logistics of this with social distancing and a split schedule model.

Modified Scheduling

- For early elementary, consider a staggered schedule coming back with gradually lengthening the day to respond to children needing time to adjust back into the rhythms of school. Plan for support for our youngest learners adjustment back to full-time school and not being at home. Plan for creative innovations of play for young children with social distancing.
- If school districts consider splitting the student body in half, some implications to consider in terms of scheduling:
 - Offer attention and support for staff who are also parents whose kids are on split schedules that might be out of alignment with their teaching schedule.
 - Consider how full particular bus routes are. Ensure that splitting the student body does not keep some bus routes packed and others empty.
 - Explore how you can continue your focus on CR-SE even if you have more limited time with students on a split schedule model.

- Consider older siblings who take care of younger ones and how they would need to be on the same schedule
- Consider how to continue providing food for kids/families during the week every day and more on Fridays
- Consider how you will continue providing services such as OT/PT/speech/therapy if students get less instructional time and are pulled out for those services
- If you do split half-day schedules that will mean double bus runs, as an alternative, try an every-other-day model where kids alternate the days they come in.
 - If students' attendance in school is on alternate days, consider time for professionals learning opportunities, reflective group work, etc.
- Consciously review the demographic breakdown should a split schedule be necessary. You want cohorts of students to mirror your overall demographics as much as possible.
- Consider how a split schedule might further exacerbate isolation of vulnerable students (i.e. when you have two Black students in an AP or college level course).
- Be attentive to the needs of students who have had to pick up work or increase their work hours during the crisis and how a split schedule might impact them (work with them to determine the best arrangements).

How should the first day/week/month of school look?

- The initial time back at school should be a celebration of sharing an in-person space, despite the restrictions that may likely exist to maintain social distancing or wearing protective face covers. For some community members, just seeing the visual of an entire class wearing face covers will be anxiety and fear inducing.
- Provide space for children to unpack, discuss, and share experiences.
- Rethink attendance, as some families will feel hesitant to return to school, at least in the near term; this rethinking might mean creating other channels for engagement and connection that might foster continued communication and a greater sense of safety.

What do district and school leaders need to know, think about, and do when reopening schools?

Healing Practices

- Gather in circles for all school community members (staff meetings, team meetings, class, family meetings).

- Consider how drop-in models can be offered for counseling staff to be available for students and staff, but also for student leaders to host drop in spaces for their peers. Any existing models can be expanded and used for all stakeholders to hold space for their thoughts/ideas/questions through an equity lens.
- Provide increased support for those who experienced parent/caregiver loss.
- Offer heightened attention/awareness/support of/from families and staff whose family members are first responders/health care workers. Ensure attention to increased bias and discrimination of these populations by those who enact harm because of fear of exposure.
- Offer attention and support for staff who are also parents experiencing anxiety about sending their children back to school.
- Offer support for staff with preexisting conditions or who live with older loved ones and are concerned about exposure.
- Ensure there is a mechanism to honor community members who have died during this pandemic.
- Offer affinity groups, restorative healing circles, mindfulness and meditation, yoga, and any required accompaniments for staff.
- Offer affinity groups, restorative healing circles, mindfulness and meditation, yoga, art therapy, and any required accompaniments for students.

Curriculum and Academics

- Enact student-driven curricula that elevate the past and living histories of the communities actually represented in the classroom.
- Leverage storytelling as the fore fronted pedagogical and learning practice.
- Consider using a shorter but deeper curriculum.
- Loop grade teachers with their students into the next grade while providing rigorous assistance to teachers deemed not too effective.
- Consider continuing practices you have instituted during technology-enhanced learning such as FB or IG Live sessions.
- Leverage partnership with parents by promoting student homes into hubs or labs for project-based or experiential learning, particularly in math and science, as technology-enhanced teaching would continue, to some extent.
- In mathematics, for example, use hands-on activities/manipulatives to deepen the learning of the curriculum, for example:
 - Supermarket flyers to expand on the notion of fraction, decimal, and percent investigating food budgets;
 - The rooms in the house to concretely study area and perimeter;

- Different sizes of coffee cans to deepen the understanding by comparing/contrasting volumes/capacities (a better buy);
- Using such household items (into a recipe) as lemon, sugar, water, and vanilla extract to leverage learning of ratio and proportion;
- Using cooking experiences to promote literacy, math, science learning, creative thought and independence.
- Family swap of recipes to underscores the various foods, meals typical of a range of home cultures and expands a student's view of and appreciation of the various cultures in the class.
- In science, students could plant beans, monitor growth, construct line graphing, and report observations. Students could also experiment with floating and sinking objects as well as the dissolution phenomenon, among others, using technology—cellphones and social media to share their observations and engage in community conversation.
- Maintain close contact between school and home, so teachers can preview the upcoming student tasks with the parent and provide necessary resources.
- Assuming that some learning will still be technology enhanced, ensure that all students can keep their devices, and provide tech support for families to fix or replace failing devices and navigate hurdles.

Professional Learning

- Plan logistics to maintain continuity for professional learning with social distancing and responsiveness to exhaustion and burnout.
- Use professional development offerings to support trauma-informed care practices, offering all staff members the opportunity to address the intersections of trauma with culture, history, race, gender, location, and language, and acknowledge the compounding impact of structural inequity.
- Use the National Child Traumatic Stress Network as a clinical resource to destigmatize students' individual responses and increase educator empathy.
- Ensure that any PD on SEL or trauma-informed teaching also employs an equity lens, which cannot be assumed.
- Offer exposure to ABAR (anti-bias, anti-racist) teaching practices with particular attention to anti-Asian discrimination and bias against students/staff who have had COVID-19 (and return from being sick).
- Preserve, if not expand, mentoring and coaching programs.
- Provide ongoing training to school staff in the new methodologies and practices that they will need to use, such as:
 - Student-directed learning
 - Restorative circles

- Advisories
- Building authentic relationships with families
- Performance-based, non-test-based assessments
- Culturally responsive-sustaining pedagogy

School Climate and Discipline

- Shift discipline to a model aimed at reconnecting students to learning when they have become disconnected for whatever reason.
- Review school discipline policies to provide space for students to adjust. Exclusionary practices should be replaced by more inclusionary practices.
- Any disciplinary referral and referral for special education services should be scrutinized with heightened attention as this time of crisis also creates an open door for the influence of biases in judging student behavior, communication style, presentation of emotion, etc. Additionally, there may be conflation of students' needs in terms of academics given the disruptions to instruction during technology-enhanced learning with the need for special education services. These biases and a lack of cultural understanding led us previously to the disproportionate exclusion of Black and Brown children from instruction and from community. Given all of the added stress and emotion during this crisis, heightened attention is warranted.
- Commit to editing climate surveys to include additional sections on impacts of COVID-19 and the strength of the district's efforts at supporting children, staff, and families.
- Get rid of metal detectors.

Family Engagement

- Enlist the input and wisdom of families and community partners in all discussions and decisions about reopening—*before* decisions are made—to learn from their expertise and perspective, and build the collaboration that will allow this next phase of schooling to succeed.
- Invite families from the beginning of the year as partners in their children's learning with opportunities that might have traditionally been called conferences or back to school nights to transform into listening spaces where teachers and staff listen and learn about the family and how they can best serve the child.
- Conduct targeted efforts to continuously assess family needs. Pay attention to your most vulnerable families (i.e. undocumented immigrants) who may be afraid to report sickness or ask for help in terms of food insecurity or access to health care.
- Form parent support groups specific to COVID-19 impacts. Host these in the community with plans for social distancing. Plan for the virtual continuity of these groups, should another shutdown be required.

- Delineate how district-level equity committee can work (logistically and substantively) so that there is a seamlessness.
- Continue and expand family engagement practices that acknowledge families as the centers of student learning, with schools as allies and partners to families.
- Conduct regular check-in calls from school staff to families—calls without any agenda except connecting and building relationships.
- Ensure that all communications to families are provided in their home language.
- Use multiple methods of outreach to communicate with families (phone calls, texts, WhatsApp, social media, fliers) with a priority on personal methods.
- Hold community meetings—either in person or virtually—to discuss how students, families, staff, and the school community are doing
- Gather ideas, share information, and decide ways to increase student support and learning.
- Continue to allow for technology-enhanced ways for families to engage with teachers, school staff, and community meetings.

Community Partnerships

- Regularly convene union leaders and representatives to be transparent and in dialogue about challenges and build solution collaboratively.
- Partner with agencies that are providing food assistance, financial assistance, help applying for public benefits, physical and mental health care, etc. to coordinate efforts to support students and families; ensure a smooth flow of information and referrals so that students' and families' survival needs are being met.
- Work with community leaders and organizations that have expertise in cultural healing practices and bring those practices into schools.
- Create partnerships with broadband providers.
- Reallocate funding and prioritize grant writing and partnership creation around mental health services, hiring additional counselors, social workers, and nurses.

Health and COVID Considerations

- If the requirement is that all people entering buildings must wear face coverings, ensure face coverings are provided and readily available to all staff, students, and families. Ensure there are readily available disposable face coverings for guests/visitors and that any vendor/guest/visitor is told of the safety protocols prior to visiting the school.
- If the requirement is that all people must have their temperature taken upon entering the building, ensure that thermometers are readily available, that staff who are checking temperatures feel comfortable and have the capacity to do this, and

acknowledge that this may be a jarring experience walking into the building every day for some community members.

- Plan for the potential of another shutdown so that your transition is seamless. Plan for disruptions to learning and community if the rule remains in effect that a school must shut down for cleaning if there is a person who tests positive for COVID-19.
- Commit to transparency in reporting new cases of COVID-19 in the community.
- Ensure all bathrooms in school buildings and offices are stocked with required supplies and have clear plans for daily replenishment. Measure the required distance to access restrooms and consider putting markings on the floor for where staff and students should wait, distancing as necessary, in lines.
- Make sure cafeterias, locker areas, drop-off/pick-up areas, the main office, entrance to the building, and library have clearly delineated markings for social distancing.
- Partner closely with families to ensure that illness-related absence does not impact students negatively.
- Acknowledge early on that a student who may not be sick may need to stay home for some time to care for a loved one who is. Some families will be hesitant to report illness for fear of stigma, so this will be important. Similarly, illness-related absence must not impact teachers and staff negatively. Again, even if the teacher or staff member is not sick, they may need to stay home to care for a family member who is.

What do teachers need to know, think about and do when schools reopen?

- Teachers need to forefront their own self-care, need to advocate for their needs and the needs of their students, and need to ensure points of connection are increased with families and the community. While the instinct, particularly under the conditions of social distancing, might be to stay apart, students and families will be looking to teachers for reassurance that they will use the same care and love to protect the children as was required before.
- Teachers also need to know that they won't be returning to spaces that existed before. There might be fewer opportunities to convene with colleagues and fewer spaces for professional learning and collaboration.
- Teachers must accept up front that their content has to shift and transform, particularly, if there are adjustments to scheduling and if there are ongoing requirements to maintain social distancing.
- Teachers can consider ways to prioritize community building spaces like circle practice to support the transformation. If circle practice was used before for restoration or content engagement, teachers should consider shifting pedagogical practices to allow for more of it. If it was not a practice used before in the space, teachers should consider

the benefits of bringing our whole selves into a circle space as a way to open up healing and recreate, rebuild, and foster community where it did not exist before.

- Teachers will need to modify methods of assessing students academically but also checking in with them socially and emotionally.
- Teachers will have to bring their whole selves and be authentically vulnerable about their own struggles during this crisis and under these new conditions. Teachers cannot forget all that they know about CR-SE, in fact, they must take this opportunity to leverage all of their learning in affirming the voices, experiences, and emotions of their most vulnerable students.
- Teachers need to know that some of their students picked up additional shifts and work, started new jobs, during the time of remote learning to support their families, and the need for their contribution to family income may not change when schools reopen. Additional grace, understanding, flexibility, and adjustments must be made for students who may be extremely tired during school or arrive late to school, or cannot keep up with homework assignments because of their responsibilities outside of school.
- Teachers need to be aware that students' academic and social emotional regression are an expected response to trauma and interrupted instruction and not an indication of a developmental disability.
- Teachers need to know that coming back to school, while familiar, might also be distressing for students in ways it never was, as many may have sick loved ones, have lost loved ones, and be worried for loved ones who work in healthcare in close proximity to the virus on a daily basis. Centering this reality, their humanity, and opening spaces for their emotionality is CR-SE.
- Teachers can orient students to the way school has changed and what they can expect. Be transparent with families. Share contingency plans for the event of an additional closure. Would we go back to technology-enhanced learning? Would there be a hybrid of synchronous and asynchronous learning? What are the rules of the district if someone in the community tests positive?
- Teachers can ensure that all academic and behavioral interventions are CR-S and examined with an equity lens.
- Teachers can hold space for students to design the options for demonstrating their learning.

What do students need to know/think about when schools reopen?

- Students should think about how they want to own and craft their educational spaces upon reopening; specifically, they should retain the beneficial experiences that they had while technology-enhanced learning occurred and use their voice to co-create new spaces for learning with their educators.

- Students should try to think of the ways that technology-enhanced/distance learning was **not** beneficial to them and consider alternatives for the foreseeable future. In short, students should use this as a time to own their educational spaces/experiences through the use of their voice and expertise as people very intimately involved in and familiar with the education process.