

5 EQUITY QUESTIONS FOR SCHOOL REOPENING PARENT MEETINGS

School reopening in the fall of 2020 is confusing for many parents. As you think through how your child will attend school — in-person, blended, or remote — there are a few things that matter most. We all want our children physically and psychologically safe, and no parent wants their child falling behind academically.

School districts have created school reopening plans that respond to many of the things that they learned from this spring’s school closures. The new school year will open as we all continue to grapple with dual pandemics: COVID-19 and systemic racism. School district reopening plans should address how schools will return students to equitable, nurturing, academically rigorous environments.

Governor Cuomo has called on all school districts to hold public parent meetings before schools reopen. Even with school being different than ever before, you should see these meetings as an opportunity to ensure that your school district is focused on health, safety, and educational equity as it prepares for the new school year. Here are five questions to help you learn more about your district’s reopening plans.

1 Will my child be taught by their teacher every day?

Whether it’s in-person or online, students need daily instruction in order to make progress on grade-level material. Teachers should maintain communication and interact with students each day. You can find out more by asking:

- Will there be live instruction during days when my child is learning remotely?
- What subjects will be taught daily? How frequently will there be instruction in reading/English language arts, math, art, science, social studies, world languages, and physical education?
- How will my school meet the unique academic and non-academic needs of my child — including students with disabilities, English language learners, students receiving Title I supplemental support, and students experiencing homelessness?

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Will my child have interactions with their teachers outside of full class learning time?



Student-teacher relationships are very important for student success. Your child should be able to contact their teacher for additional help or support. Learn what your district has planned by asking:

- How will my child receive extra help if they need it?
- Is there someone who will connect with my child each day?
- Will my child be able to reach someone if they do not understand an assignment?

3

What will my child be expected to learn, and how will I know that they are making progress?



Students complete lots of assignments, and it is important that they receive regular and timely feedback about their work. Students should know how they are doing in their classes and what they need to do to improve. You can learn about practices in your school by asking:

- How will I know what my child should be learning to meet grade-level standards?
- Will the teacher provide my child with feedback on their assignments?
- How will my child be graded? Will there be tests or exams?

4

Will the school provide technology to help my child learn at home?



Many students and families do not have technology readily available for blended or remote learning. Your district should be helping bridge the gaps. Ask:

- Will my child receive a device (laptop or tablet) for school work that is ready to use, and will we have access to technical support for our device and our school's learning platform in our home language?
- If we don't have internet, will my child receive a hotspot or internet-enabled device?
- If I have more than one child, will each of them receive devices and internet?

5

How will families be engaged regarding changes or new policies?



Parents know their child best and play a critical role in students' academic and social well-being. Your school district should include you in the critical decisions that affect your child and their school, and all information should be provided in your family's preferred language. Ask your district:

- As things change throughout the year, how will families receive information in their home language and be included in the decision-making process?
- Who can I talk to and where do I submit feedback about how things are going for our family?
- If school buildings need to close completely again, what is the plan to support families during remote learning?