

# REOPENING PLAN EQUITY ANALYSIS

As school districts prepare for the fall, it is essential to prioritize educational equity alongside the paramount health and safety requirements. The Education Trust–New York has reviewed school district reopening plans based on equity criteria drawn from the requirements and recommendations in state guidelines.

## OVERALL EQUITY NOTES

- **EQUITY HIGHLIGHT:** Buffalo's working draft plan describes a strategy that leverages community partners to provide a safe, supportive, culturally sustaining and inclusive learning environments for both students and adults.
- **EQUITY CONCERN:** Buffalo's working draft plan would delay the start of the school year for students and seek a waiver from the state's 180-day instruction requirement.
- **EQUITY CONCERN:** Buffalo's working draft plan would exclude students from state assessments for the 2020-21 school year.

## MAXIMIZING IN-PERSON INSTRUCTIONAL TIME WITHIN HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

**1** The district reopening plan returns students from **all grade levels to in-person instruction**.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**2** The district reopening plan indicates if certain students will be **prioritized to return to in-person instruction more frequently** based on educational needs.

**NO EVIDENCE**

**3** The district reopening plan leverages **collaborative community partnerships**, such as after-school program providers, to strengthen the district's initiatives and/or expand its capacity and reach.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district describes how community partnerships fit into the district's reopening plan and help meet students' academic and non-academic needs.*

## PROVIDING EQUITABLE INSTRUCTION AND ENGAGING ALL STUDENTS

**4** The district reopening plan demonstrates use of a **locally determined formative or diagnostic assessment** to determine individual student needs and target extra help to ensure academic needs are addressed.

**SOME EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan does not describe what assessments will be used or how they will inform instruction.*

**5** The district reopening plan provides **live daily instruction aligned with grade-level learning standards to all students** in all grade levels during blended or distance learning.

SOME EVIDENCE

**6** The district reopening plan describes how school districts will use a variety of creative methods to **reach out to students and their families who did not engage in distance learning**. School policies and procedures must focus on the academic consequences of lost instructional time and address absences before students fall behind in their learning.

NO EVIDENCE

**7** The district reopening plan describes how districts will **assign each student an “ally”** – such as counselors, coaches, social workers, psychologists, and other school staff in addition to teaching staff – who is responsible to check in on the student every day, whether instruction is in-person, remote, or through a hybrid model.

NO EVIDENCE

**8** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district will provide **multiple ways for students to participate in learning, which includes routine meaningful feedback on student assignments and support from an appropriately certified teacher** whether instruction is delivered in-person, remotely, or through a hybrid model.

SOME EVIDENCE

*Note: The district’s plan does not include clear and consistent expectations to support students and families in remote learning and provisions for instruction in multiple modalities.*

**9** The district reopening plan describes a mechanism to **collect and report daily teacher-student engagement** or attendance while in a remote or hybrid schedule.

SOME EVIDENCE

*Note: The district’s plan does not describe how it will track engagement, not just attendance, and use the data.*

## MEETING SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL NEEDS

**10** The district reopening plan proactively and regularly **identifies the social-emotional needs of returning students**, including by engaging parents and families.

SOME EVIDENCE

**11** The district reopening plan includes a strategy for **providing social-emotional assistance or referrals** to students and families.

**SOME EVIDENCE**

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH UNIQUE LEARNING NEEDS

**12** The district reopening plan specifies how it will address the learning loss experienced by many **English language learners (ELLs)**, in both their English language development and mastery of content area knowledge.

**NO EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan does not explicitly address learning loss for English language learners.*

**13** The district reopening plan describes how the district will ensure access to the necessary accommodations; modifications; supplementary aids, evaluations, and related services; and technology (including assistive technology) to meet the **unique disability-related needs of students**.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**14** The district reopening plan prioritizes equity and access for all students, including **students experiencing homelessness**, regardless of the instructional model implemented.

**NO EVIDENCE**

## PROVIDING ACCESS TO STRONG EDUCATORS

**15** The district reopening plan includes **regular substantive interaction between teachers and students**.

**SOME EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan does not describe daily student-teacher interaction.*

**16** The district reopening plan includes **professional learning that addresses staff's understanding of mental health, well-being, trauma-responsive and restorative practices**, and social-emotional learning to support students.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan describes professional learning opportunities for all staff on culturally and linguistically responsive-sustaining practices, implicit bias and structural racism, and facilitating difficult conversations about race.*

**17** The district reopening plan identifies and addresses any additional professional development needs for administrators, teachers, and teaching assistants for the upcoming school year, and particularly those needs related to **designing effective remote/online learning experiences and best practices for instruction in remote/online settings**.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan describes how the district will ensure that all teachers and administrators receive targeted professional learning for ELLs focused on utilizing technology to promote student independence and engagement, providing effective and meaningful feedback, and promoting peer-to-peer interaction.*

**18** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district will have knowledge of the level of **access to devices and high-speed internet all students have** in their places of residence.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**19** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district, to the extent practicable, will address the need to **provide a device for exclusive use to students** who currently do not have access regardless of whether an in-person, remote, or hybrid model is utilized.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**20** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district, to the extent practicable, will address the need to provide **consistent, reliable access to high-speed internet at a sufficient level to fully participate in remote/online learning (e.g., a hotspot) to students** who currently do not have sufficient access regardless of whether an in-person, remote, or hybrid model is utilized.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**21** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district, to the extent practicable, will address the need to **provide a device for exclusive use to teachers** who currently do not have access regardless of whether an in-person, remote, or hybrid model is utilized.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**22** The district reopening plan includes information on how the district, to the extent practicable, will address the need to provide **consistent, reliable access to high-speed internet at a sufficient level to fully participate in remote/online teaching (e.g., a hotspot) to teachers** who currently do not have sufficient access regardless of whether an in-person, remote, or hybrid model is utilized.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

## ADOPTING ANTI-RACIST POLICIES AND PRACTICES

**23** The district reopening plan describes **instructional experiences that are inclusive, culturally responsive**, consider the needs of all students, and adhere to all established state regulations and guidelines.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

**24** The district reopening plan describes how all grade 7-12 students will have **equitable access to high quality rigorous instructional opportunities** [consistent with NYSED guidance on access to advanced courses].

**NO EVIDENCE**

*Note: The district's plan does not describe policies, aligned to state guidance, that will achieve equitable enrollment in advanced courses.*

**25** The district reopening plan describes the **implementation of restorative practices** within the learning community.

**STRONG EVIDENCE**

## IMPROVING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

**26** The district reopening plan describes how districts will **engage with school stakeholders and community members** (e.g., students, parents/legal guardians of students, and others) in developing their reopening plan and identify those that participated in the reopening planning.

**SOME EVIDENCE**

**27** The district reopening plan describes a **clear communication plan available in multiple languages** and disseminated through multiple modalities (e.g., email, online platform, and/or by phone) for how students and their families/caregivers can contact the school and teachers with questions about their instruction and/or technology.

**SOME EVIDENCE**

**28** The district reopening plan describes **communication with families regarding school meal availability and access** through multiple means in the languages spoken by families.

**SOME EVIDENCE**