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## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION RELEASES 2020-2021 SCHOOL REOPENING GUIDANCE IN CONCERT WITH LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION

Jun 25, 2020

*Guidance outlines how systems can safely serve Louisiana's children amid various phases of COVID-19 pandemic*

BATON ROUGE, La. -- In partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and the Resilient Louisiana Commission, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) released guidance today for how schools across the state can reopen for the 2020-2021 school year by taking actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

While each district will ultimately decide how schools will operate, the guidelines offer best practices that encourage districts to prepare for three possible reopening scenarios: traditional, hybrid or distance/remote learning. In addition, they explain how health requirements will change based on the three reopening phases. The resource offers an outline for what to expect and how to respond to a COVID-19 positive or presumptive positive case on campus.

"We developed this guidance by engaging experts on the virus - public health officials - and experts on what this guidance looks like when put into practice - school leaders and educators," said State Superintendent of Education Dr. Cade Brumley. "We understand next year will be a new challenge for all of us as we educate through COVID-19. I have confidence in our collective talents to overcome these challenges. We will depend on each other for innovative ideas, best practices and the promise of a quality education for every child."

Strong Start 2020: Guidelines and Resources for School Reopening ([link to the guidelines here](#)) ([will open in new tab](#)) is available now on the LDOE website and includes a number of guidelines and best practices for districts including the following:

- Bus capacity and student group size
- Student symptom monitoring
- Face coverings
- Food prep and meal service

The LDH memorandum outlines baseline health and safety requirements for schools to follow when reopening facilities to students. The LDOE offers supportive guidance and resources for schools as they implement these health guidelines, as well as best practices for academic instruction. The resource also includes planning templates and reopening checklists for district leaders. The Department will also publish a running list of frequently asked questions and additional best practices on its website.

"Ensuring a strong start for students and educators this fall means equipping school districts with the resources they need to develop a solid reopening strategy," said Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education President Sandy Holloway. "The tools and guidance released today, created in partnership with state health officials, will help school systems expand their existing academic plans to accommodate the operational changes necessitated by COVID-19 and strengthen the foundation for continuous learning going forward."

**Collaborative Process**

The LDOE and LDH collaborated over the past month to develop these public health guidelines and best practices to support school reopening, building from [previously released guidance](#) ([will open in new tab](#)) for safely operating summer schools and camps. They earned approval from the Resilient Louisiana Commission and the LDH state health officer and assistant secretary.

The guidelines were developed with input from public health officials, education leaders, and other key stakeholders. That collaboration includes consultation with the Southern Regional Education Board, a superintendent's advisory group of 13 district leaders from across the state, and a 20-member public health response team of medical professionals, public health officials and education leaders.

**District and School Supports**

Along with the resources released today, schools and districts will have access to additional support. The LDOE previewed the guidance for system leaders yesterday and will offer another similar webinar next week.

The LDOE is also partnering with Children's Hospital New Orleans to offer a hotline and regular town hall webinars for educators. The hotline will be staffed by skilled nurses who can advise school staff on medical questions about students and team members related to COVID-19. School nurses and other school administrators can call 504-837-7760 weekdays from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. and weekends from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

In the town hall webinars, experts will discuss topics like COVID-19 transmission basics, preventative measures and sanitation best practices, and additional tips for guideline implementation. There will also be an opportunity for open Q&A. These will be offered every two weeks starting in July. While the hotline and town hall webinars are for education professionals, Children's Hospital New Orleans currently offers online [COVID-19 resources for families](#) ([will open in new tab](#)) and is developing additional family supports.

This is the latest resource the Department has provided districts to help ensure a Strong Start to the 2020-2021 school year for every student. A suite of resources were released in May, which ranged from diagnostic assessments and mental health supports to services for diverse learners and teacher training.

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