

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following partners will vet and review the COVID-19 Outbreak to Recovery Plan.

- » Office of Governor Jim Justice
- » West Virginia Board of Education

National Resources and Research Partners

- » Communities In Schools
- » Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)
- » Education Commission of the States (ECS)
- » Hanover Research
- » Hunt Institute
- » Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)
- » State Board Insight (NASBE)
- » United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- » United States Department of Education (USDE)

State Partners

- » Disability Rights of West Virginia
- » Early Childhood Education Advisory Council (ECAC)
- » The Education Alliance
- » Our Future WV
- » West Virginia Advisory Council for the Education of Exceptional Children
- » West Virginia American Civil Liberties (WVACLU)
- » West Virginia Association of School Administrators (WVASA)
- » West Virginia Association of School Business Officials (WVASBO)
- » West Virginia Association of School Nurses
- » West Virginia Broadband Council
- » West Virginia Council of Administrators of Special Education
- » West Virginia Council of School Nurses
- » West Virginia Economic Development Authority
- » West Virginia Department of Agriculture
- » West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History
- » West Virginia Department of Commerce
- » West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (WVDHHR)
- » West Virginia Education Association (WVEA)
- » West Virginia Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (WVAEMSP)
- » West Virginia American Federation of Teachers (AFT-WV)
- » West Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (WVASSP)
- » West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
- » West Virginia House and Senate Education Chairs
- » West Virginia National Guard
- » West Virginia Office of Technology (WVOT)
- » West Virginia Parent Teacher Association (WVPTA)
- » West Virginia Primary Care Association
- » West Virginia Professional Educators Association
- » West Virginia Public Broadcasting Service (WVPBS)
- » West Virginia Public Education Collaborative (WVPEC)
- » West Virginia School Boards Association (WVSBA)
- » West Virginia School Building Authority (WVSBA)
- » West Virginia School Counselors Association
- » West Virginia School Psychologists' Association
- » West Virginia School Service Personnel Association (WVSSP)
- » West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC)

For more information about West Virginia’s COVID-19 response, visit wvde.us/covid19.



State Superintendent of Schools W. Clayton Burch has commissioned the **COVID-19 2020: Outbreak to Recovery Advisory Council**. This reentry advisory group will address three phases to recovery for the public education community. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent national and state emergencies have served as a wake-up call regarding equity and access of remote learning, educational technology, and intervention resources. With each national, state or regional crisis, systemic challenges are always uncovered. The West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE), along with the rest of the state and the nation, witnessed this disparity first-hand and the impact it has had on the delivery of remote learning programs.

Most states have used their technology system as a crisis intervention to support their schools in reaching their students while buildings were on lockdown as they tried to mitigate the negative impact to learning COVID-19 had on students and educators. In West Virginia, the digital divide was more than a chasm; it was a canyon that has separated the technological haves and have-nots. The WVDE will address disparity and other challenges through the combined energy, research, expertise, commitment and intentionality of the members of the Outbreak to Recovery Advisory Council.

Purpose: To provide a reentry planning resource that is in line with the West Virginia Board of Education Strategic Plan and priorities.

- Goals:** To ensure student and educator needs are met during COVID-19.
- » Address learning needs for all students in different learning settings.
 - » Support county and school leaders and educators as we work toward solutions.
 - » Leverage national and state resources to provide the bandwidth and hardware needed by our students.

THREE PHASES TO REENTRY AND RECOVERY

Phase 1: Address the Essentials: The Current Situation

The WVDE has received clear direction provided by West Virginia Governor Jim Justice based on health, education, and other experts regarding social distancing. These measures have resulted in the continuation of remote learning for the remainder of the current school year. To support continuous learning and overall child well-being, West Virginia remained committed to remote student engagement and to providing millions of meals each week to students through the remainder of the school year. The WVDE also began to think about how to help counties provide continuous learning opportunities to students during the summer and is developing a plan throughout the 2020-2021 school year and beyond.

Phase 2: Reentry: Establishing a New Normal

The WVDE will provide a website that will inform and guide county school districts into the fall reentry into the school buildings if public health officials determine it is safe to lower social distancing measures. The WVDE will continue responding to the unique needs of individual students to ensure their successful transitions into school academics as well as their continued social/emotional wellness.

Phase 3: Beyond 2020

If education is truly to be the great equalizer, consistent, long-term aggressive focus must be given to the inequities in teaching and learning caused by the digital divide and technology gap. The remedy is larger than any one state agency, organization, or individual can construct, and it will require thinking and action beyond the bounds of tradition.

Timeline: This advisory council timeline will be available for public review June 10, 2020.

NINE FOCUSED AREAS

The WVDE has nine selected focus areas of information to include instruction, child nutrition, finance, extracurricular activities, special education, physical and social/emotional wellness, career technical education (CTE), safe schools and transportation, and technology requirements for all students and/or staff. The WVDE leadership will focus this reentry work around these targeted areas. Each focus area will include several subcommittee members to organize the work.



CLOSING THE GAP: EQUITY AND WELL-BEING EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

The study of current and emerging research regarding Achievement and Technology Gaps will guide us through the next five years and beyond. If education is to be the great equalizer, then special focus must be given to the teaching and learning inequities caused by the lack of access to technology. The WVDE expects that at every phase direct focus will be given to closing the achievement gaps as well as to the inequities further exacerbated by the state’s lack of broadband and hardware access for West Virginia learners and teachers. Nationally, one of the most concerning and provocative lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that states’ k-12 educational systems were caught without a consistent method to offer online learning to ensure the achievement gap does not widen in 2020. When several school districts throughout the country felt the odds were insurmountable, they discontinued remote instruction and concluded the school year in late April, early May. West Virginia teachers rose to the occasion and worked diligently to ensure every child had access to one caring adult.

Broadband and technology access have been the point of discussion and debate for more than 20 years. The salient point has never been made clearer; specifically, these inequities inflict severe academic limitations on populations already struggling to overcome the achievement gap.

