

Mike DeWine, Governor
Paolo DeMaria, Superintendent of Public Instruction

May 12, 2020

A Letter to Ohio's Education Community:

Thank you! Since the ordered school-building closure began on March 12, you have stepped up to ensure a student-centered approach to *caring, teaching* and *learning*. You turned on a dime to meet the nutritional needs of the whole child through meal deliveries and grab-and-go sites. Simultaneously, you continue to provide remote teaching and learning opportunities that drive education continuity. We applaud your efforts to *challenge, prepare* and *empower* your students for future success—especially given the unparalleled challenges that accompany a pandemic.

The purpose of this letter is to share a coordinated and collaborative process currently underway for co-designing and framing the various considerations for a successful start to the 2020-2021 school year. The process will result in the launch of an *Education Reset and Restart Planning Guide*. This tool is intended to spur local-level, partnership-based discussions and decision-making in areas critical to the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

A broad, diverse group of stakeholders is working to co-design the planning guide. The group includes Ohio's major education associations, school leaders, educators, school counselors, school nurses and union representatives, among others. Officials from the Ohio Department of Health also are at the table, in addition to parents, students and business and philanthropic representatives. This cross-sector approach enables collective impact. To assure coherence, the group is considering tools and resources that have emerged locally across the state. The intent is to honor and build on those local-level efforts, respecting the importance of and need for local decision-making.

Based on advice from school leaders and educators, the planning guide will address actions to ensure the health and safety of students, educators and staff once school buildings reopen. This includes measures for assessing student health, practicing physical distancing, sanitizing surfaces, exercising good hygiene, wearing masks and other components relevant to a student's daily journey—from stepping on the school bus, to learning in the classroom and eating in the cafeteria. The planning guide also will discuss *caring*—considerations for ensuring equity, social-emotional learning and behavioral health; *teaching*—approaches for professional development and effective remote learning; and *learning*—ideas for assessing students' learning needs and meeting them where they are.

The planning guide will mirror the principles of [Each Child, Our Future](#). These include using a multi-sector, partnership-based (including local health departments) approach to resetting and restarting school; acknowledging that one size does not fit all; and understanding that success relies on the leadership of local schools and districts who work closely with educators, parents, caregivers and school staff.

We are poised to release an initial draft later in May, and we look forward to receiving your feedback to continuously improve the tool. We expect it to evolve given the number of unknown factors likely to remain over the summer and into the fall. Again, thank you for all you do for Ohio's students.

Sincerely,

Paolo DeMaria
Superintendent of Public Instruction