

Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond

Priority 6: Emphasize Authentic, Culturally Responsive Learning

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Across the United States, state education agencies and school districts face daunting challenges and difficult decisions for restarting schools as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. As state and district leaders prepare for what schooling will look like in 2020 and beyond, there is an opportunity to identify evidence-based policies and practices that will enable them to seize this moment to rethink school in ways that can transform learning opportunities for students and teachers alike.

Our current system took shape almost exactly a century ago, when school designs and funding were established to implement mass education on an assembly-line model organized to prepare students for their “places in life”—judgments that were enacted within contexts of deep-seated racial, ethnic, economic, and cultural prejudices. In a historical moment when we have more knowledge about [human development and learning](#), when society and the economy demand a more [challenging set of skills](#), and when—at least in our rhetoric—there is a greater [social commitment to equitable education](#), it is time to use the huge disruptions caused by this pandemic to reinvent our systems of education. The question is: How we can harness these understandings as we necessarily redesign school? How can we transform what has not been working for children and for our society into a future that carries us forward into a more equitable future?

This section is part of a larger report, *Restarting and Reinventing School: Learning in the Time of COVID and Beyond*, that focuses on how policymakers as well as educators can support equitable, effective teaching and learning regardless of the medium through which that takes place. The full report provides an overarching framework to inform the restart of schools while also providing a long-term vision that can guide leaders toward new and enduring ways to address educational quality and inequity. It illustrates how policymakers and educators can:

1. Close the digital divide
2. Strengthen distance and blended learning
3. Assess what students need
4. Ensure supports for social and emotional learning
5. Redesign schools for stronger relationships
6. Emphasize authentic, culturally responsive learning
7. Provide expanded learning time
8. Establish community schools and wraparound supports
9. Prepare educators for reinventing schools
10. Leverage more adequate and equitable school funding

This section provides research, state and local examples, and policy recommendations for how policymakers and educators can emphasize authentic, culturally responsive learning. For the full report, go to <http://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/restarting-reinventing-school-covid>.

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Reprioritize. This is the time to see if something can be different. To reset the system, we have to take a loss, but we can recoup the loss if we actually get kids excited about education and create a more positive space for them to learn.

—Michelle Among, Atlanta parent and school volunteer¹

Schools that have successfully motivated students to engage in learning even when schooling has been disrupted have been [connecting lessons to real-world applications](#), allowing students to explore the world around them and to demonstrate what they know through projects and presentations that display the products of their work. There may be a temptation when school resumes to set aside this kind of authentic work and double down on the kind of decontextualized learning that traditional transmission teaching typically offers—often in preparation for tests that measure learning in equally decontextualized ways.

However, many [innovative schools](#) have demonstrated that standards can be better taught and learned when students are motivated by the opportunity to dive deeply into serious questions, demonstrating what they have learned by showing and explaining the studies, products, and tools they have developed. Furthermore, in the blended learning world that is now a necessity, this kind of learning process can, with the right kind of teaching supports, help students develop the skills for planning, organizing, managing, and improving their own work and becoming more self-directed—skills that will be essential both for this more complex educational world and for the world of college and careers beyond.

What Students Need

Research from the learning sciences has shown that people learn by building on their prior knowledge and experiences, drawing on their cultural and community contexts, and connecting what they are learning to what they already understand.² In order to make meaning of new ideas, we need to apply them to new contexts. People are also motivated to learn by questions and curiosities they hold—and by the opportunity to investigate what things mean, and why things happen. Humans are inquiring beings, and the mind is stimulated by the effort to make connections and seek answers to things that matter.

A group of more than [400 researchers](#) offering advice about education during this time urged that schools “provide the most personalized and engaging instruction possible.” Learning opportunities are most effective when they start with meaningful questions; provide opportunities for inquiry in interaction with others; enable hands-on experiences and applications to meaningful contexts; and provide frequent, informative feedback on what students are doing and thinking in [identity-safe environments](#).

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This kind of learning is also more suited to the 21st-century demands in [knowledge-work jobs](#) for critical thinking and problem-solving skills; the capacity to find, analyze, synthesize, and apply knowledge to novel situations; interpersonal skills that allow people to work with others and engage effectively in cross-cultural contexts; self-directional abilities that allow people to manage their own work and complex projects; abilities to competently find resources and use tools; and the capacity to communicate effectively in many ways.

Learning also depends on strong, positive relationships between and among teachers and students in identity-safe learning environments that eliminate the social identity threats that undermine achievement for many students. Such threats—often identified as stereotype threats—occur when children encounter biases inside or outside of school that communicate negative views about one or more of the groups they are associated with.³ Social identity threats make students—especially students of color, students with disabilities, LGBTQ students, immigrant students, language-minority students, and students from low-income families—feel as if they cannot be seen and valued for who they actually are. Students under threat can experience acute anxiety born of fear of discrimination and uncertainty that their efforts will be positively received or produce positive outcomes—concerns that translate into lower performance when stereotype threats are activated.⁴

To address these threats, educators must eliminate sources of bias from the school environment and affirmatively communicate the value they hold for each child by creating strong, trusting relationships and offering culturally responsive instruction that connects to students' experiences, acknowledges cultural assets, and promotes cross-cultural relationships. Support for cultural pluralism that builds on students' experiences and intentionally brings students' voices into the classroom helps create an identity-safe and engaging atmosphere for learning to take place⁵ and enables a positive school climate, particularly for students of color.⁶

Elements of Identity-Safe Learning Experiences

Identity-safe learning experiences and communities promote student achievement and attachments to school.⁷ The elements of such experiences, found to support strong academic performance for all students, include:

- **Teaching** that promotes understanding, student voice, student responsibility for and belonging to the classroom community, and cooperation in learning and classroom tasks.
- **Cultivating diversity as a resource** for teaching through regular use of diverse materials, ideas, and teaching activities along with high expectations for all students.
- **Relationships** based on trusting, encouraging interactions between the teacher and each student and the creation of positive relationships among the students.
- **Caring, orderly, purposeful learning environments** in which social skills are proactively taught and practiced to help students respect and care for one another in an emotionally and physically safe classroom, so each student feels attached to the others.

Source: Darling-Hammond, L., & Cook-Harvey, C. M. (2018). *Educating the whole child: Improving school climate to support student success*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

To enable authentic, culturally responsive learning in identity-safe settings, students need opportunities for voice and agency. Engagement and effort are supported in settings where children feel they are respected and valued by their teachers and peers, where they see that they can improve with effort (for example, by receiving feedback and revising their work), and where they are working on things that matter to themselves and others—including projects they choose and pursue to accomplish improvements in their lives, families, and communities.

Finally, students need opportunities to demonstrate what they know and can do in ways that are as authentic and meaningful as the learning they have undertaken. In order to encourage and measure authentic learning, performance assessments that reflect how students acquire and use knowledge to solve real-world problems will increasingly be needed. Before the No Child Left Behind Act, many states used assessments like those common in high-achieving nations today that require students to solve complex real-world problems and defend their ideas orally and in writing. These assessments—which include research projects, science investigations, mathematical and computer models, and other products—are mapped to the syllabus and the standards for the subject and are selected because they represent critical skills, topics, and concepts. Research shows that schools that are using such assessments better prepare students for college and careers.⁸

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A growing number of districts and states, as well as innovative schools, are revisiting the possibilities of redesigning assessments to shape the curriculum in ways that stimulate more meaningful learning; that give teachers timely, formative information they need to help students improve; and that help students learn about how they learn.

What Policymakers and Educators Can Do

Given the shifts in schooling that will continue to occur, there is no better time to reinvent educational practices so that teaching is guided by the science of learning and supported through high-quality opportunities for authentic learning and assessment that can support meaningful, relevant, and complex learning experiences in the classroom and virtually. States and districts can consider several strategies to support this kind of learning.

Offer guidance for how schools can restart by focusing on authentic learning and assessment strategies

Oregon's guidance for the 2020–21 school year, *Ready Schools, Safe Learners*, indicates that districts should seek to “support student-centered project-based educational experiences that ignite student agency, identity, and voice.” The guidance asks educators to:

- Establish clearly stated learning goals and outcomes based on grade-level Oregon State Standards. Integrate quality, culturally sustaining instructional strategies and materials (e.g., Oregon's *Tribal History/Shared History* bill).
- Design curricular experiences that utilize authentic and deeper learning experiences to engage students. Provide opportunities for students to meet the standards in nontraditional ways, such as through student-driven projects that honor student identity and context.

- Implement opportunities for students to earn credit by proficiency.
- Design experiences using research-based design principles, such as universal design for learning (UDL), that improve access to learning for all participants.
- Use assessment to celebrate student strengths, identify needs, document learning as it progresses, and verify student performance in comparison to levels of expectation or proficiency.
- Implement assessments that are embedded in instructional practices to identify progression toward grade-level content knowledge and skills that need attention.
- Collect varied evidence of learning related to student strengths and interests.
- Provide multiple ways for students to show what they know.
- Prioritize descriptive feedback that provides students with actionable next steps.
- Evaluate goals and objectives based on progress markers for students supported through an individualized education plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.

This guidance may also include statements of goals and competencies at the state and district levels that prioritize higher-order skills that students need to solve problems and learn to learn, with processes to incorporate these skills more fully into curriculum, assessments, and professional development. For example, curriculum and assessments can include the skills students need to:

- **read for meaning** to use what they learn in other contexts, to discuss and debate ideas, and to solve problems of importance to them;
- **conduct research and evaluate information** to answer questions they care about;
- **collaborate to solve problems**, understand more deeply, and design tools;
- **conduct investigations** in which they collect evidence, observe phenomena, analyze data, and write up results to explain what they did and what they found; and
- **give and receive feedback** as they revise their work.

States can also offer supported opportunities to redesign schools to cultivate these competencies. One approach is demonstrated by the “Kansas Can” project, which is grounded in a graduate profile that redefined student learning competencies to emphasize not only academic and cognitive preparation but also technical skills, employability, and civic engagement through higher standards, a more student-focused system, and increased collaboration. The [Kansas Can School Redesign Project](#) invited districts to apply for funding and technical support to redesign selected elementary and secondary schools to support these competencies. The [Kansas Can Star Recognition Program](#) also recognized districts for accomplishing goals ranging from social and emotional growth and kindergarten readiness to high school graduation preparedness, civic engagement, and postsecondary success.

Similarly, Virginia provided high school innovation planning grants to school divisions to develop or implement programs that promote [Virginia’s 5 C’s](#)—critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and citizenship—while preparing students for careers and postsecondary education. The legislature defined the essential elements of high school program innovation as student-centered learning; progress based on proficiency; “real-world” connections aligned with local workforce needs and emphasizing transitions to college or career or both; and varying models for educator supports and staffing.

Provide curriculum tools and professional learning for educators to support more authentic learning and assessment

States and districts can also offer schools and educators opportunities to access standards-based curricula they can draw upon and adapt to develop authentic learning experiences for students, engage in professional learning opportunities, and join networks of schools that have created productive approaches to learning. These include public schools and districts that work with networks providing curriculum resources for project-based learning such as [New Tech Network](#) and [International Baccalaureate](#), as well as curriculum tools in particular subject areas, such as [EL Education](#) in English language arts and the [Mathematics Improvement Network](#) in math. Organizations such as [reDesign](#) and [inquirED](#) offer guidance on how to reshape curriculum around inquiry-based learning.

Recognizing the importance of this kind of learning, Chicago Public Schools offered standards-aligned [projects in every grade level](#) and subject that students could engage in during the time of school closures. The American Federation of Teachers also supported teachers nationwide with a virtual initiative on [capstone projects](#) that allow students to show what they have learned in innovative, meaningful ways at any grade level, linked to standards. Student work ranges from writing essays about a favorite book to researching a current issue to preparing and participating in online debates. California's [guidance](#) to educators includes platforms that can be used to demonstrate learning through the use of [performance-based assessments](#) that sharpen critical thinking and communication skills.

Schools that routinely engage in project-based learning were able to carry students' projects through to [virtual defenses](#) of students' completed research projects and portfolios at the end of the year. These initiatives—with teachers providing guidance and support—enabled students to develop greater agency and [metacognitive skills](#) that allow them to continue to learn strategically, [preparing them more fully](#) for the kind of work they will experience in college and in life.

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For example, before schools were closed, teachers at Oakland High School had [designed an authentic project](#) on safety issues related to commuting to school—a community challenge students had identified. Students addressed the question: How can we improve the journey to school for teachers and students? Their client was the City of Oakland Department of Transportation. They also worked with a community partner, Y-PLAN, a local initiative based out of UC Berkeley's Center for Cities and Schools. Students researched solutions to the logistical challenge of getting 1,600 people on and off campus safely every day. This required them to observe the many challenges in the areas around campus; conduct interviews; and develop, administer, and analyze a community survey. After schools were closed, students met virtually in teams to complete their research and to identify solutions, supported by teachers through Zoom sessions and telephone calls. At the end of the year, nearly 30 students made a virtual presentation, "A Competent, Convenient Commute (CCC)," to members of the Oakland Department of Transportation, Berkeley [SafeTREC](#) (the Safe Transportation Research and Education Center), Y-PLAN, and Oakland High's staff, in which they advocated for curb striping, crosswalk lights on the road, and pedestrian islands.

In the course of this project, students had to learn to identify and frame problems and questions; conduct research; evaluate evidence; develop arguments; explain and defend their thinking; communicate clearly in writing as well as orally, quantitatively, and graphically; plan a complex project; receive and incorporate feedback; revise their work; seek out resources; and overcome obstacles. The performance tasks supported these cognitive skills as well as extending and authenticating core academic activities.

COVID-19 hit as middle school students from the [School for Examining Essential Questions of Sustainability \(SEEQS\)](#) in Honolulu, HI, were embarking on self-directed projects as part of their yearlong interdisciplinary exploration of sustainability. The students had more autonomy to design and implement their projects at home while sheltering in place, and many students connected their work to the emotional, physical, and economic threats of COVID-19. Projects included rain catchers and irrigation systems to sustain home gardens, developing a Twitter bot to remind people to wash their hands to prevent COVID-19 infection, creating sidewalk art, and researching and engaging in healthy activities to alleviate stress. The [school's virtual exhibition](#) was presented to all of the SEEQS community members and many others beyond.⁹

Similarly, at the [UCLA Community School](#), one of the interdisciplinary projects students conducted on issues affecting their community was a 10-week inquiry process in which students investigated the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities of color and the responses of local students, teachers, and parents who have organized to [work for justice in and beyond schools](#). After reading articles and reviewing current data and the latest research on the virus, students reported on how these issues were affecting them, their families, and their communities. There was no difficulty getting students to participate because they were learning something they deeply cared about and could use to improve their own lives and those of their loved ones.

Recognizing the value of this kind of learning, school districts in Oakland, Los Angeles, and [Pasadena](#), have been working to incorporate project-based learning and performance assessments into graduation portfolios that students prepare and defend in high school. These districts have established policies focused on ensuring the tools, staffing, and professional development needed to support the quality of these efforts and greater student access to this work.¹⁰

Ensure that authentic learning is also culturally connected and culturally sustaining

Schools and districts can encourage educators to develop and use [culturally responsive pedagogies](#) as a means for engaging and deepening student learning by recognizing their students' experiences as a foundation on which to build knowledge.¹¹ This foundation is created when educators spend time getting to know their students' experiences and social identities as well as their strengths and needs, using this knowledge as a basis for choosing texts and representations of ideas and for drawing curriculum connections. Teachers can use discussions, regular check-ins, class meetings, conferencing, close observations of students and their work, and connections to families to learn about their students' experiences, interests, and concerns. They can also use dialogue journals and offer writing prompts that give students a chance to share their unique experiences (e.g., What did you think about the story we read today? Can you reflect on a time when you...?).

At Social Justice Humanitas Academy (SJHA) in Los Angeles, students engage in projects that help them learn concepts through the [lens of their personal identities](#). For example, in a 9th-grade ethnic studies course, students spend time analyzing their personal histories. One SJHA teacher [explained](#)

that the project allows students to move into later grades having “already looked at their history and their past, and the way that they see the world, and how [they can] become better for it.”¹² In a related assignment, students read the memoir *Always Running* by Luis Rodriguez, in which the author recounts his experience as a young Chicano gang member surviving the dangerous streets of East Los Angeles. Students were asked to reflect on and write an essay about how the author overcame adversity and setbacks and achieved self-actualization (a core value at SJHA that guides students’ own reflections).

These kinds of assignments allow students to engage diverse perspectives, exercise higher-level analytic skills, participate in respectful debate and discussion with their peers, grow their emotional intelligence, and reflect upon their own attitudes and identities in ways that also help them develop insights about how to survive and thrive, strengthening their attachment to school and their social and emotional reserves at the same time.

States and districts can also offer strong models and supports to develop and implement high-quality curricula that are culturally relevant. [Chiefs for Change](#) highlights how several districts, such as Baltimore, MD; Palm Beach County, FL; and Philadelphia, PA, were already developing such materials prior to the pandemic, noting [research](#) suggesting that culturally relevant curriculum has been found to increase student attendance, GPA, and course completion.

Additionally, school networks can be sources of such curriculum models. For example, the [Internationals Network for Public Schools](#), a network of 27 schools in public school districts across the nation that serve secondary school students who are recent immigrants and English learners, has demonstrated how to build capacity and put into place culturally responsive and culturally sustaining learning experiences along with rigorous instruction.¹³ The network expects that all of its students will graduate ready for college, career, and life, and that all students will be ready to pursue a meaningful postsecondary path. To meet these expectations, Internationals has developed a school model that emphasizes challenging academics offered through project-based learning, linguistic dignity, and bilingualism. In addition to strong cohort models, teaching teams, and an inclusive advisory culture that addresses students’ academic and social and emotional needs, the schools help educators develop cultural competency skills to work with immigrant youth from many different countries and cultures and pedagogical skills for teaching language and content through inquiry methods. The curriculum units developed over 30 years of successful practice are available across the network and are a continually growing source of support for effective teaching.

Build capacity for inclusive, identity-safe, culturally responsive practice

Personalizing structures are important to set the stage for the kinds of caring, consistent, continuous relationships children need to support their development, and thoughtful curricula help support engagement in learning. However, the messages students ultimately receive depend greatly upon the attitudes, beliefs, skills, and capacity of staff.

State and local leaders can help build the capacity of school staff by providing resources, time, and space for professional learning that includes the development of identity-safe schools and classrooms; strategies to address stereotype threat and implicit bias; and proactive approaches to anti-racist practice, cultural pluralism, and culturally responsive pedagogies.

Educators can use these tools as they plan [for a restorative opening of schools](#). A key starting point is learning about students and seeing them—and affirming them—for who they are. For example, educators can learn about how to start the year with [affirmation interventions](#) that guide students

to share their personal goals for learning with their teachers in notes to which teachers respond. Such strategies have been found in multiple studies to reduce the effect of stereotype threat among middle school students, resulting in higher academic performance for Black students as much as 2 years later.¹⁴

As described in guidance from New York University, [reopening schools in a culturally responsive–sustaining](#) manner should also include incorporating a set of regularly used healing practices, such as restorative circles, mindfulness, advisories that support social and emotional learning, and affinity groups. Equally important is a joyful curriculum connected to students’ interests alongside anti-bias, anti-racist practices.

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Educators can also learn how to create environments that are caring and purposeful by including students as active participants in classroom management and conflict resolution and by organizing classroom structure around communal responsibility, rather than compliance and punishment. For example, educators may engage students to help establish [classroom norms](#) that define their classroom’s rule and culture and have students take ownership of dozens of activities in the classroom that teachers might otherwise do by themselves, ensuring that all students have voice and membership in the classroom design, norms, and management.

Redesign assessments to emphasize applied learning and complex problem-solving

Students can also take agency in their learning through performance assessments that evaluate the inquiries they undertake. A number of schools and districts are working together in collaboratives to create equitable and high-quality performance assessment systems that are accompanied by clear criteria, expectations, and processes that drive teaching strategies and learning at the school level. Drawing on tools like the [Performance Assessment Resource Bank](#), schools and districts can help provide school-embedded learning opportunities for educators to work together to develop the different components of a performance assessment system (curriculum planning documents, rubrics, and student and teacher directions) that are aligned to goals for student learning.

These collaboratives include the [Quality Performance Assessment](#) initiative of the Center for Collaborative Education in New England, which supports, among other initiatives, the [Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment \(MCIEA\)](#)—a collaborative of eight districts with their local teacher unions that are working together to create a new accountability system that uses performance assessment instead of standardized testing. The districts’ accountability framework has been built around multiple measures, including academic, social and emotional, and school culture indicators, in order to provide a comprehensive picture of school performance.

Several networks of public schools—from [EL Education elementary schools](#) to high schools in networks such as the [New Tech Network](#), [Big Picture Schools](#), and the [Internationals Network for Public Schools](#)—have demonstrated significant gains in student learning as they have developed

and enacted authentic learning strategies grounded in curricula that teach students how to learn through guided inquiry; collaboration; connections to culture and community; and the production of complex papers, projects, and products.

Often these performance tasks are designed to illustrate core modes of inquiry in the disciplines, such as scientific investigation, mathematical modeling, literary analysis, social scientific inquiry, or artistic performances. Disciplines serve as the organizing principles for performance assessments for the schools associated with the [New York Performance Standards Consortium](#). The group of 38 schools associated with the Consortium are authorized to use these disciplinary performance assessments as part of a graduation portfolio accepted in lieu of Regents examinations by New York State, authorized by a waiver in effect since 1995. The Consortium's system asks students to exhibit their learning in rigorous defenses in front of panels that include external judges as well as teachers, students, and parents. This approach is one that will be highlighted in a report on diploma options that a Blue Ribbon Commission will make to the New York State Board of Regents in fall 2020.

Performance assessment collaboratives of schools and districts using systems of performance assessment for graduation and throughout the grades have also been launched in California and [Hawaii](#), among other places. As students are developing their performance tasks, they self-assess and receive feedback from teachers and peers against clear criteria, often expressed in a rubric, as comments rather than grades, with immediate opportunities to apply that feedback. Hundreds of studies have found that this kind of ongoing formative assessment process produces significant learning gains,¹⁵ especially when students have several opportunities to review and revise their work.¹⁶ This approach to [performance assessment](#) allows students to internalize standards, become self-aware of their learning strengths and needs, and take control of their own learning.

States and districts are increasingly supporting this work. When the [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) was adopted in 2015, states were instructed to implement assessments that measure higher-order thinking skills and understanding. Because traditional multiple-choice tests are insufficient for these goals, the law explicitly allows the use of portfolios, projects, or extended-performance tasks as part of state systems.

New tests that were developed to evaluate more challenging standards, such as the [Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium](#) and the [College and Work Ready Assessment](#), include some open-ended items and performance tasks that require students to engage in research, problem-solving, and analysis, and to explain their reasoning and conclusions.

ESSA invited states to apply for an innovative assessment pilot to develop and pilot new approaches to assessment, refine the assessments, and gradually scale them up across the state. Just this year several states joined New Hampshire in undertaking such pilots. The ambitious work in New Hampshire through the [Performance Assessment of Competency Education](#) program has been underway for several years, authorized by the federal pilot. It combines standardized assessments once in a grade span with a series of standards-based common performance tasks that engage students in inquiry. District and statewide performance assessments ask students to show what they know through projects and products scored reliably by trained teachers using common rubrics. Several other states are now developing performance assessments as part of [evolving systems](#) that emphasize feedback throughout the year.

More than 25 states have joined together as part of the [State Performance Assessment Learning Community](#) to create performance assessments as part of their overall systems of assessment, with initial collaborative efforts in science, in which investigation and problem-solving are key to the new standards and require hands-on inquiry.

This is the time for these efforts to accelerate and redefine curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability as focused on the ability to apply meaningful learning in deep and transferable ways.

Resources

- [California Performance Assessment Collaborative](#) (Learning Policy Institute). This website provides information, videos, and lessons captured from the educators, policymakers, and researchers in CPAC working to study and advance the use of authentic approaches to assessment that require students to demonstrate applied knowledge of content and use of 21st-century skills.
- [Mathematics Improvement Network Adaptable Tools for School and District Leaders](#) (Mathematics Network of Improvement Communities [Math NIC]). The Math NIC design team collaborated with district administrators, principals, mathematics coaches, and teachers representing 10 school districts and professional organizations to develop tools for improving in their mathematics programs.
- [Performance Assessment Resource Bank](#) (SCALE, SCOPE, CCSSO). The Performance Assessment Resource Bank is an online collection of performance tasks and resources—collected from educators and organizations across the United States and reviewed by experts in the field—to support the use of performance assessment for meaningful learning.
- [Reopening: Moving Toward More Equitable Schools](#) (EL Education). EL Education’s framework provides guidance and support for schools and districts to help them emphasize authentic learning and assessment regardless of whether school takes place in school buildings or through distance or blended learning. The framework is organized around five domains: empowering leadership, crew culture, compelling curriculum, students as leaders of their own learning, and deeper instruction.
- [Guidance on Culturally Responsive-Sustaining School Reopenings: Centering Equity to Humanize the Process of Coming Back Together](#) (NYU Metropolitan Center for Research on Equity and the Transformation of Schools). This guide poses questions and practices for policymakers, district and school leaders, and school personnel to consider for engaging in culturally responsive-sustaining school reopenings through an equity lens.
- [Ready Schools, Safe Learners: Guidance for School Year 2020–21](#) (Oregon Department of Education). Oregon’s state reopening guidance provides direction for districts to “support student-centered project-based educational experiences that ignite student agency, identity, and voice” that others can draw upon.

Endnotes

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