Planning for Immediate Needs

Resource 1B: Facilitating District Planning (Three hour session)

Local Education Agency (LEA)
COVID-19 Rapid Response Transition Toolkit

Developed through a partnership between the
California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) and WestEd

CCEE
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Acknowledgments

WestEd is a nonpartisan, nonprofit research, development, and service agency that works with education and other communities throughout the United States and abroad to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults. WestEd has more than a dozen offices nationwide, from Massachusetts, Vermont, Georgia, and Washington, DC, to Arizona and California, with headquarters in San Francisco.

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Introduction

The public health crisis resulting from COVID-19 has caused schools and districts to rapidly shift to a distance learning environment while also attending to necessary services and operations that cannot be handled virtually. Shifting to distance learning requires infrastructure changes, new methods of teaching and learning, and adaptations to lesson delivery, assessment, collaboration, and family engagement. Furthermore, this transition has highlighted tremendous equity gaps, including wide disparities in students' access to necessary resources, including food, housing, digital devices, and the internet.

CCEE and WestEd have partnered to develop a toolkit to help school and district leadership understand, prioritize, and address their system's immediate needs through the end of the 2019-2020 school year and then plan for the 2020-21 school year. Each tool supports intentional systems-level planning and assessment of urgent priorities while applying an equity lens. The toolkit covers the following:

» **Resource 1: Planning for Immediate Needs**

   https://ccee-ca.org/documents/distancelearning/Planning-for-immediate-needs.pdf

» **Resource 1A: Facilitating District Planning Sessions**

   https://ccee-ca.org/documents/distancelearning/Facilitating-district-planning-sessions-1A.pdf

» **Resource 1B: Facilitating District Planning Sessions**

   https://ccee-ca.org/documents/distancelearning/Facilitating-district-planning-sessions-1B.pdf

» **Resource 2: Communicating with Stakeholders**

   https://ccee-ca.org/documents/distancelearning/Communicating-with-stakeholders.pdf

» *Note: This facilitator's guide can be used by a member of a district team or an external coach.*

Two options are included in the toolkit to allow the process of the Implementation Needs Assessment to take place during 90 minutes (option 1) or three hours (option 2). This guide addresses the three-hour option, which works best for larger groups.

Note: All included resources are active as of May 15th, 2020. Links to resources in these documents are meant to provide a starting point. Although the links have been reviewed, WestEd and CCEE will not be held responsible for any changes to information in those websites, including broken links.

Resource 1B: Three Hour Session

This extended meeting option may be used in situations such as:

- The Immediate Needs Assessment process is the beginning of a larger planning effort.

- The Immediate Needs Assessment process will include multiple stakeholder groups (district leadership team, site leadership team, bargaining unit leadership, etc.) to increase stakeholder input.

Before the meeting:

- Identify who will engage in the conversation. Aim for 3-10 participants.

  » This should include the superintendent, cabinet, district leadership team, and school level representatives (principal or teacher).

Other considerations for selecting participants:

- Are there existing leadership teams who can take on this work?

- Is there a need to develop a new team?

- After reading the questions listed in the Getting Started section of this guide, are there additional people who should be brought on to ensure diversity of thought and/or equity?

  » This option allows for a larger group to participate, but be mindful of the expanded circle of stakeholders necessary to ensure decisions are on target. (See guiding questions in Getting Started section).

- Decide on a platform for sharing collaborative documents (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet, etc.)

Meeting Pre-work

Ask participants to review the Implementation Assessment Tool and consider what types of data they will bring to support the conversation (e.g., the Director of Nutrition will bring data on meals served each day, the Director of Technology will bring survey data gathered on student access to devices, etc.)

Materials:

- Digital copy of Implementation Needs Assessment and Planning Tools for each participant

- Document-sharing platform

Roles:

- Facilitator

- Timekeeper
- On-Screen Recorder (via screen-share option)

1. Getting Started (10 minutes):

- Remind the group of the norms and note differences in virtual versus in-person sessions. Possible norms for consideration:

  » Focus and engage

  » Equity of voice

  » Assume good will

  » Trust the process

  » Prioritize agenda goals and limit on-screen distractions (email, chat, internet notifications, etc.)

- Review definitions of implementation levels and invite each participant to skim the entire document while previewing the flow of the session.

- Assign roles (i.e., timekeeper and recorder on screen)

- Preview the following **Guiding Questions** or adapt as appropriate. If your district has a mission or statement of values, consider consulting that in addition to these questions.

  a. How does this action address the immediate needs of our most impacted community members?

  b. Will this action, plan, or process positively address inequities in our district?

  c. Who is not present in this planning session who is directly impacted by the possible actions, and how can they be consulted/included in implementation?

These Guiding Questions can be used throughout the process to support anchoring the discussion, and they should be revisited in the final reflection.

Facilitation Tip: When planning for the consensus building and discussion, consider how well the group knows each other and whether group members have shared definitions of equity. If it is a new group, build in more time to ensure shared understanding of critical terms.

2. Completing the Implementation Assessment (30 minutes):

Invite group members to individually complete the Implementation Assessment. Each participant should answer as many of the questions as they can.

- For questions where participants brought data, include sources for the data (consider attaching the data to the document).

Note: While the resource links are included in the Implementation Assessment to inform and support planning and discussion, consider saving a deep dive into the resources for time outside of this session, given the limited time available with the group.

3.   Coming to Consensus (60 minutes):

- Invite group members to share their responses to each element in Parts 1 & 2.

    » The timekeeper should support the facilitator in managing the time to ensure each element is addressed.

- For each area, after everyone has shared their responses, move the group toward consensus on implementation levels.

    » For each element, ask participants to type in the level of implementation and supporting data or evidence into your video conference's chat box.

    » If responses are aligned, ask one or two participants to verbalize their thinking. If responses differ significantly, spend more time in discussion to reach consensus.

    » Recorder should document agreed-upon levels and evidence on a document that all participants can see on a shared screen.

4.   Rapid Response Planning (60 minutes):

- Invite each group member to review the group consensus with the goal of identifying one or two urgent needs to address.

- In the chat, have each group member indicate which element they believe should be the highest priority.

- Select the one or two areas that were most often mentioned; invite a brief discussion to confirm.

- As a group, respond to the following **(45 to 60 minutes)**:

    » What will our system look like three weeks from now?

    » Devise SMART goals based on our vision for three weeks from now.

    » Complete the action plan template.

Facilitator Option: If there are two urgent needs selected, consider using virtual breakout rooms and separate shared documents to divide up group members to work on the tasks bulleted above.

5.   Debrief/Next Steps: (20 minutes)

- Share SMART goals, next steps, and individuals responsible for each step.

- Reflect on the **Guiding Questions** and/or your district's mission/statement of values as appropriate. Do any of the actions need adjustment based on responses to these?

- Complete the Group Summary and ensure that the recorder sends it to each participant for follow up.
- Reference the Communication Guide (https://ccee-ca.org/documents/distancelearning/Communicating-with-stakeholders.pdf) to plan steps for follow up communication and identify the point person for developing key messages about the results of the meeting.

6.   Optional Process Debrief (5 to 20 minutes)

Engage in a plus/delta conversation to debrief the process.

- Ask each group member to think of one positive aspect of the process and one question.
- Have group members record their answers in the chat.
- Once all group members have recorded their thoughts, ask that they read what their colleagues have shared.
- Save the chat and add it to the materials from the meeting.

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