



# Planning for Immediate Needs

## Resource 1A: Facilitating District Planning (90 minute 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

## Acknowledgments

The extended resources included in the links within this toolkit were not developed by WestEd or CCEE. The valuable work of many organizations and agencies are included here in order to address the range of challenges presented by COVID-19 for district and school planning. We would like to thank Entangled Solutions, the American Institutes for Research and their affiliated Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, the California Department of Education, the Tennessee Department of Education, The Education Trust–West, and others, for providing resources for local leaders to use during this time. Additionally, we would like to thank the local education agency (LEA) representatives who participated in a preview webinar and who provided feedback on the first iterations of these tools.

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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 90 minute option, which works best for a small group of participants (3-5 max).

# Resource 1A: 90 Minute Session

This 5-step guide structures the process of completing the Implementation Needs Assessment tool to take place during a shorter time period, possibly as a part of an existing meeting with a smaller group.

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

- The Immediate Needs Assessment process is used to review an existing draft plan.
- Time constraints make a longer meeting unfeasible.
- The Immediate Needs Assessment process might be utilized by multiple stakeholder groups (district leadership team, site leadership team, bargaining unit leadership, etc.) to increase stakeholder input.

## Before the meeting:

- Identify the 3-5 participants who will engage in the conversation.
  - » For example, 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?
- Keep the group small for this session option, but be mindful of the expanded circle of stakeholders necessary to ensure that decisions are on target. Decide on a platform for shared documents (e.g., Google Docs, Padlet, etc.) and ensure that participants and other relevant stakeholders have access.

## 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)

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## 1. Getting Started (10 minutes):

Remind the group of norms and note differences in virtual versus in-person sessions.

- Possible Norms:
  - » 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.)
- Provide the group with a brief overview of the process and assign roles.
  - a. Consider your group. Do they know each other well? If so, sharing out with the whole group can work well.
  - b. For a newly convened group, consider small group or elbow partner discussions.
- Review the definitions of implementation levels and invite each participant to skim the entire document while previewing the flow of the session.
- Preview the following **Guiding Questions** that will be used in the session or adapt as appropriate. If your district has a mission or statement of values, consider using that in addition to the 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 group members know each other and whether they have shared definitions of equity. If it is a new group, build in more time to ensure shared understanding of critical terms.*

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## 2. Completing the Implementation Assessment (15 minutes):

Invite the group to **individually** complete the Implementation Assessment. Each participant should answer as many of the questions as they can, including references to possible data sources as available.

*Note: While the resource links are included in the tool to inform and support planning and discussion, plan for a deep dive into the resources to take place outside of this session, given the limited time available with the group.*

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### 3. Coming to Consensus (20 minutes):

- Invite group members to share their responses to each element in Parts 1 & 2.
- As each row is shared, invite participants to note common themes and connections on actions taken and identified as needed.
- For each area, move the group toward consensus on implementation levels.
- The recorder should make note of implementation levels, as well as data collected, in a shared digital document.

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### 4. Rapid Response Planning (40 minutes):

- Invite each group member to review the group consensus with the goal of identifying one or two urgent needs to address.
- As a group, respond to the following:
  - » 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.

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### 5. Debrief/Next Steps (5 to 20 minutes):

- 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?
- Complete the Group Summary Take-away Table and ensure that the recorder sends it to each participant for follow up.
- Set a time for the next meeting.
- 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 this meeting.

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### 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.