

FROM CRISIS TO RECOVERY: PREPARING FOR FALL AND THE LONG ROAD AHEAD

THURSDAY, JUNE 24 AND FRIDAY, JUNE 25

MEETING AGENDA

NOTE: DUE TO THE COVID-19 HEALTH CRISIS AND SHELTER-IN-PLACE GUIDELINES, THIS MEETING WILL BE HELD VIRTUALLY THROUGH FOUR 90-120 MINUTE SESSIONS

DAY I: THURSDAY, JUNE 24

8:30 am **Convene Meeting.** Joel Knudson will convene the meeting with opening remarks, introductions, and an overview of the agenda.

SESSION I

Understanding the Landscape for Returning to School

The journey that schools and districts have navigated over the past year has been unexpected and disrupted, and district leaders frequently made decisions in the context of constrained time, incomplete knowledge, and limited resources. Nevertheless, forced to respond to student and community needs under adverse circumstances, many districts and schools have developed and strengthened approaches to meeting student needs that might not otherwise have been considered or thought possible. At the same time, barriers that stand in the way of equity, social justice, and overall progress have come into sharper focus during this time of upheaval. This session will explore the context in which the work toward recovery is taking place, including the foundation of best practices from which district can build, the roadblocks that must yet be overcome, and the considerations for supporting educators to best serve students and their communities.

8:45 am **Individual Reflection.** The session will begin with an opportunity for meeting participants to reflect on the lessons that have emerged for them over the past 15 months, both the promising practices that should be maintained or expanded as well as the persistent obstacles that make progress difficult and exacerbate disparities among students.

9:00 am **Insights from School-Based Educators.** A panel of teachers will share their thoughts about lessons learned during the pandemic as well as the professional and personal dynamics that shape teachers' readiness for the return to school in fall 2020.

9:40 am **Small Group Discussion about the Current Context.** Small group discussion will enable participants to further explore what districts are building from as they prepare for the journey ahead.

10:30 am **Break until Session II** (3.5-hour break).

SESSION II

Balancing Priorities to Prepare for the Fall

A broad coalition of California organizations has come together to identify priorities and best practices for the return to school in fall 2021. Their work to date, captured in a May brief cosigned by 39 organizations across the state, draws on evidence from research and the work of schools. Although the number of signatories reflects broad consensus on priorities for healthy school systems, districts must also prepare for the fall on a constrained timeline and within the limits of individual and system capacity. Meeting participants will therefore have an opportunity to apply the lessons identified during Session I to a “do now, build toward” approach that prioritizes and sequences preparations for the upcoming school year while dismantling the longstanding barriers to progress for the most vulnerable youth in our school systems.

2:00 pm **Key Takeaways from Small Group Discussions.** Session II will begin with each of the Session I small groups sharing 1-2 key takeaways about what districts are building from as they approach transitions back to school.

2:15 pm **Restorative Restart: A Framework for Moving Forward.** To provide a common foundation for the discussion that follows, we will begin with a brief summary of the recommendations from *Reimagine and Rebuild: Restarting School with Equity at the Center* and the planned activities to support districts in embracing a “restorative restart” to school in fall 2021. A text-based discussion will enable breakout groups to more deeply examine the rationale and implications for each of the priorities laid out in the brief. Informed by the emerging practices of California districts and the perspectives of students, the groups will go on to explore strategies that districts are employing in preparation for fall 2021 (do now) as well as those that can set the stage for long-term improvement (build toward).

3:25 pm **Insights about Prioritization and Coherence.** Each of the five *Reimagine and Rebuild* domains is important to consider in its own right, but equally important is an understanding of how the full range of approaches to returning to school coheres in service of a broader district-wide vision. Meeting participants will therefore reconvene for a full group discussion of prioritization and coherence in creating the conditions for a restorative restart.

3:50 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day’s Discussion.**

4:00 pm **Adjourn for the Day.**

5:00 pm **Optional Happy Hour.** Log back into the Zoom meeting to join us for a virtual happy hour!

DAY 2: FRIDAY, JUNE 25

SESSION III

Making Strategic Use of Current and New Resources

Through federal and state relief funds, districts are experiencing an influx of money intended to support student needs in the response to the pandemic. However, these funds have a limited window of time during which they can be spent, as well as some parameters around the ways in which they can be used. There may be pressures from multiple stakeholders to spend money according to certain interests, but districts are best served in finding strategic ways to use the money to (a) address deep systemic priorities and barriers to equity while (b) avoiding the unintended consequences commonly associated with funding cliffs.

- 8:30 am **Orientation to Funding Streams.** The session will begin with an overview of federal and state recovery funds, the funding levels they entail, and the parameters that have been established for their use.
- 8:45 am **Strategic Resource Allocation in Hartford Public Schools.** A representative from Hartford Public Schools will join the meeting to describe their approach to integrating federal recovery funds with other resources to support an overall vision for the district and set the table for important systemic improvements. Following the initial presentation, participants will have an opportunity to pose questions and then meet in small groups to discuss takeaways and questions generated by the district's approach.
- 9:30 am **Approaching Resource Allocations with Appropriate Mindsets.** Having considered the concrete example of a specific district, meeting conversation will shift to a set of principles and possibilities for leveraging an influx of new one-time funding in ways that address disparities in opportunities among students. Karen Hawley Miles of Education Resource Strategies will share insights about key mindsets that should guide district thinking, followed by small group discussion about how districts can act strategically to make sound investments in the short term that help prepare them for long-term success.
- 10:30 am **Break until Session IV** (3.5-hour break).

SESSION IV

Defining and Using Evidence for Improvement and Equity

As districts look for ways to leverage the knowledge they have gained over the past year, as well as to apply new financial resources, they may develop new strategies, or apply proven strategies in novel contexts. Learning from these approaches and adapting as appropriate will be essential to a process of continuous improvement. However, many traditional measures of progress are unavailable, and district leaders must be sensitive to the burden they place on students and educators. At the same time, educators and other stakeholders are increasingly recognizing the value of more qualitative and experiential forms of data to better understand how specific strategies and practices are playing out for students and educators, especially those whose voices have historically been underrepresented in district decision-making. Meeting participants will consider how best to monitor progress and reflect on their approaches to foster an ongoing process of growth.

- 2:00 pm **Framing the Session: Considering Continuous Improvement in the Context of Pandemic Recovery.**
- 2:15 pm **Exploration of Evidence-Related Challenges.** In small groups, participants will explore challenges and opportunities related to capturing evidence of student needs and progress within specific domains of district practice. Drawing on the readings from the new book *Street Data*, discussions will focus on the opportunities and limitations of traditional sources of evidence, as well as forms of “street data” that can inform the processes of reflection and learning in schools and districts. In small group and full group discussion, participants will also explore the forms of evidence appropriate for demonstrating progress to audiences of policymakers and members of the general public.
- Details for this session are still under development. A more thorough description of activities is forthcoming.
- 3:50 pm **Summary and Reflection on the Day’s Discussion.**
- 4:00 pm **Adjourn Meeting.**