

June 5, 2020

Dear Collaborative members and guests,

I am looking forward to seeing you all on June 15-16 to dig into the challenges and opportunities as districts move to reopen schools. We are coming together at a time of great upheaval as both the safety and the fundamental values of our communities and our nation are being tested. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic will clearly be felt for years to come, particularly in those communities that have been hardest hit and for our children and young people who were already farthest from opportunity. Meanwhile, the racist murders of Black Americans over the past few months and the pent-up rage they have released remind us that the disparities that have been revealed and exacerbated by this health crisis are in fact deeply embedded in the very fabric of our schools and society.

This dual context—the health crisis on the one hand and persistent inequities and injustices on the other—will set the stage for this meeting. As you know, we will be meeting virtually in four sessions over the two days:

Monday June 15

Session I: Addressing the Complexity of Re-entry: District Approaches

Session II: Creating Equitable and Effective Instruction in Remote or Hybrid Settings

Tuesday, June 16

Session III: Ensuring Social and Emotional Well-Being as a Foundation for Learning

Session IV: Leading Through Crisis: Challenges, Lessons and Tools

The meeting agenda includes descriptions of the content and an indication of the format for each session. Throughout the meeting, we will ground our discussion in both practical and research-based expertise, in our commitment to equity and social justice, and in ongoing efforts to improve systems and services for both young people and the adults who support them.

Format

We have planned the agenda and the readings in recognition that many of you are busier than ever before and are likely feeling a little “zoomed out” lately. No session will last more than 2 hours (with most planned for 90 minutes), and there will be a break of 3 ½ to 4 hours between the morning and afternoon sessions of each day. We have also worked to build in a variety of formats, emphasizing time to work in smaller breakout groups to allow for more interaction than would be possible in full-group video format.

We request your patience and understanding, as this is our first foray into a full-on virtual Collaborative meeting. We are trying to anticipate all the tasks that need to be assigned and accomplished by staff to make your experience as seamless as possible, while we also plan for handling any breakdowns should they occur.

Please note that because staff will be engaged in additional administrative responsibilities for this meeting, we plan to record all the sessions but only to inform our summary and not to share out with anyone outside of staff. Our usual norms of confidentiality will apply to this meeting as well.

#### Preparation and Dropbox

On Dropbox (and next week on the website), you will find three folders. The “Important Meeting Information” folder contains this cover letter, the meeting agenda, a participant list (forthcoming), bios for our out-of-state guest presenters, and a list of norms for the meeting. ***Please look through these informational materials before arriving at the meeting.***

The “Readings” folder contains two sub-folders.

- Priority Readings: The first of these sub-folders comprises three broadly-focused readings on the re-entry process—one that outlines a set of principles that should underlie the planning process, a second that covers more specific aspects of the process and plan, and a final provocative piece that considers opportunities for deeper system changes to address underlying structures and patterns that help to perpetuate inequity in our schools. ***Please read these three short articles before the meeting.***
- Session-Specific Resources: The remaining subfolder contains one or two short readings to inform each of Sessions II-IV. We suggest you look through these as your time permits.

Finally, we have included a folder—“Additional Collaborative Resources”—with two recently-released Collaborative briefs and the summary of our December meeting in San Bernardino. (Recall that our March meeting was canceled due to shelter-in-place restrictions.)

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns. I can be reached by email ([joday@air.org](mailto:joday@air.org)) or phone/text (202-262-4987).

I wish you all a relaxed and hopeful weekend.

Warmly,



Jennifer O'Day  
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Institute Fellow, American Institutes for Research