



The Utah Education Association's Five Key Requirements for a Safe Return to In-person Learning:

ONE.

The Covid-19 pandemic must be under control locally.

Clear standards must be established for when safe in-person learning can occur. Leading public health experts agree that opening school buildings for in-person learning must wait until transmission rates in the community are both low and declining over at least the previous two weeks as measured by key indicators such as the rolling average of new cases, rolling average of percent positive tests, hospital capacity and access to testing. Otherwise, reopening school buildings may spur a resurgence of the virus in the community.

TWO.

Specific protections must be in place to keep the virus under control and protect students and staff.

1. Accommodations: high-risk students and educators are protected through appropriate accommodations such as remote learning and instruction arrangements.

2. Distancing: All necessary steps have been taken to maintain six feet of physical distance among all students, staff and visitors including class size reductions, reconfiguring classrooms and adjusting school schedules and traffic patterns. Safe school-sponsored transportation must also be provided including reconfiguring school buses and transportation schedules to allow for distancing.

3. Deterrence: Strong deterrence measures are in place, including:

- a) a requirement that everyone wear appropriate face coverings and that the employer provide those face coverings.
- b) a requirement that students and staff wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds several times a day and, where doing so is not possible, are provided with hand-sanitizer of at least 60% alcohol and trained how to appropriately clean with hand-sanitizer.
- c) Plexiglas protections installed where necessary.
- d) heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning [HVAC] systems inspected and, if necessary, retrofitted or modified to increase air flow, air filtration and the circulation of clean air.
- e) sufficient classroom supplies and consumables are provided so each student has their own.

4. Deep Cleaning: Thorough protocols are in place for daily cleaning and disinfecting of school buildings and buses, as well as more frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces and frequently used areas such as restrooms. Custodial staff are trained and provided the necessary PPE to perform the cleaning and disinfecting tasks safely.

5. Detection: Procedures are in place to detect COVID-19 cases among students and staff, including training on symptoms, requiring those who are sick to stay home, isolation of symptomatic individuals, and closing school buildings to contain potential outbreaks.

6. Quarantine, Isolation and Notification Procedures: Triggers for school closure to in-person instruction are clear to families and staff. A protocol is in place that provides for notification of individuals exposed in school to someone with COVID-19, for immediate isolation of that person, and quarantine of those who have been exposed. Robust plans exist for continuity of instruction through substitutes or other instruction when teachers must quarantine or when in-person instruction must be closed. During any such closure, continuity of instruction, nutrition and support services for students must be provided.

7. Educator and Family Involvement: Procedures are in place to ensure educators and families have a voice in how the return to in-person instruction occurs and how necessary protections function throughout the school year.

THREE.

Plans must be in place to protect school employee rights.

1. Provide options for working from home for educators at high risk for severe health consequences from COVID-19 or who are caretakers for family members at high risk.
2. Ensure fair workload expectations are maintained if schools implement staggered or alternative schedules or hybrid instruction.
3. Inform school employees of all leave benefits, including newly available leave benefits provided by the Family First Coronavirus Response Act (“FFCRA”).
4. Provide additional paid sick leave benefits so school employees do not report to work when they are symptomatic or if they have been exposed to COVID-19.
5. Guarantee the district’s health insurance plan will pay the employee for medical expenses related to COVID-19 treatment.
6. Any outbreaks requiring school closure, and where educators cannot work remotely, should be classified as paid administrative leave rather than FFCRA leave or applied to the educator’s district paid leave.
7. Reimburse documented out of pocket expenses to educators for costs related to technology to provide online instruction.

FOUR.

Plans must be in place to ensure continuous learning for all students.

1. There is a plan for instruction (whether in-person or virtual) that addresses racial and social equity in the provision of instruction and support services.
2. The plan includes training for educators, families and students on the processes and protocols in the event a COVID-19 outbreak necessitates returning, in whole or in part, to virtual instruction.
3. Educators are involved at each step of the planning process for any form of virtual teaching and learning, including adjusting the curriculum and methods of instruction.
4. The plan for continuous learning addresses device access for every student, high-speed internet access for every student and educator, and accommodates gaps in such services.

FIVE.

Clear policies must be established for how these measures will be enforced consistently.

1. Require the Utah State Department of Health to approve district reopening plans (whether in-person, on-line, or hybrid instruction) based on epidemiological data in the region and safety measures identified in the plan.
2. Require districts to create a transparent process for receiving and reviewing complaints when the adopted school safety plan is not adequately enforced. Ensure no retaliation of any kind against any employee who makes disclosures about an unsafe or unhealthy working environment.
3. Health and safety protections are independently enforced through regular, unannounced building inspections by local health authorities