

Proactive Leadership

Questions Superintendents Need to Think Through Right Now To Maintain Services to Students and Families

This past week, schools across Illinois stepped up in a big way and reimagined and recreated a new education system on the fly that provides meals to students and families while also maintaining some continuity of education. In Week 2 of this mandated school closure, there will likely be new challenges school leaders will have to confront. To help you navigate through this difficult time, the IASA COVID-19 Swat Team has assembled a checklist of questions to begin to think through, as well as resources to help guide leaders through this process.

QUESTIONS FOR YOUR DISTRICT



Who are the essential staff in your district?

School leaders should compile a list of essential staff. Be sure to collect phone numbers. Also, identify who are the rocks in your district? A team of trusted and service-oriented staff will be critical in helping your district respond to any challenge that lies ahead.



Have you established a chain of command if you or a member of your team becomes inaccessible?

Unfortunately, the odds are a staff member in your district—no matter in what part of the state you live—will become infected with COVID-19. For example, if a principal is sick and can't come to work, do you know who will step in and fill his or her shoes? Think deeply about this list because multiple people could get sick at the same time.



What is your staffing rotation?

This pandemic has created, and will continue to create, enormous stress on your school district's staff. Developing a balanced staffing rotation will help keep your staff safe by reducing exposure, as well as make it more feasible for your district to continue to feed and care for your community in the weeks ahead. It's a marathon—not a sprint.



Who is preparing and serving food?

The top priority for school leaders is to continue to feed needy students. Therefore, it's important your district has a plan in place if someone, or multiple staff members, becomes sick to continue preparing and distributing meals. In addition, it's important to prepare for the event your district has to extend its meal program to the community at-large. Do you have a plan in place to meet this challenge?



Are you communicating appreciation for the work your staff is doing as well as expectations you have for them to focus on wellness?

As mentioned above, it will be a marathon and not a sprint. Starting off staff meetings by saying thank you could go a long way. Also, superintendents will need to be attentive to the mental health of staff. They're going to need to manage their health and well being in order to continue to serve students at a high level.



What is your district's liability insurance?

Thinking about your district's insurance plan may not seem like a high priority, but it's possible your plan offers crisis management resources that could be helpful.

