

Forward Focus

Teaching and Leading in a
Post-Pandemic World

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the U.S. in March 2020, it changed education forever. Principals, faculty, and staff met the challenge with a laser focus on student learning and wellbeing. When parents were forced to play a bigger role in their child's learning at home, it showed them—and the rest of the country—what had been lacking in the nationwide education system. Inequities in education had gone under the radar for far too long, and the pandemic shone a bright light on these issues. With a new understanding of what schools should prioritize—and a boost in federal funding to get them started—it's time schools stop doing what wasn't working and focus instead on changing education for good.

So what does education look like as schools move on from the pandemic and work toward a new normal? As administrators close out one school year and look toward the next, school teams can use this guide to reflect on the lessons learned from the pandemic and map out a strategy to begin building schools for the future that focuses on the needs of all students, faculty and staff, and school families.

Determine Lessons Learned

The first step in building a strategy for moving forward is asking for input from all school stakeholders—teachers, administrators, students, and families. People experienced education during a pandemic in their own ways, and each experience is valuable in developing a plan to move forward.

The overall question is the same: What lessons did we learn during the pandemic? Overarching themes of equity, whole-child education, student growth, and preparation are sure to come up. Use these questions to dig deeper and find commonalities among responses before developing a plan to move forward.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1 What went well over the past year that would continue to serve students, staff, and families moving forward?

2 What didn't work well over the past year, and what were the major reasons for the lack of success?

3 What did the pandemic reveal about equity and accessibility in our school?

Highlight Urgent Priorities

Once you and your team get a better understanding of what priorities are important to your school community, it's time to prioritize what's most important and develop strategies to execute the plans to support those priorities.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1 What are our priority standards for the year? Consider options for each grade level.

2 How do we create a trauma-informed school? Take into consideration the differing needs of students, staff, and administrators?

3 How will we support equity and access for all learners? What policies and practices do we need to revise to reflect our beliefs about equity?

4 What professional development do teachers and administrators need to achieve these goals?
