



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Dr. Miguel A. Cardona, Commissioner of Education 

DATE: July 21, 2020

SUBJECT: CSDE Reopen Schools Support Team 2020

We know that most important decisions in school districts are made by teams. Led by the superintendent of schools, teams of all sorts might include curriculum leaders, facilities personnel, union leaders, and perhaps a parent, student or Board member. This is particularly true as we all wrestle with the complexity of ensuring children are learning and are safe in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. With equal vigilance, we want our staff members (in every position) to be safe and able to complete their professional duties in a manner that promotes their health and wellbeing while permitting them to support the children we all serve.

In order to support this we have established the CSDE Reopen Schools Support Team. This group is meant to engage team-to-team with district teams in the spirit of dialogue and problem-solving. This team does not replace webinars, superintendent-only group or individual phone calls, or other modes of communication. As we near the date of submission of your plan, some districts have expressed a challenge meeting the requirements. We want to provide additional support.

It is simply a recognition that the decisions about reopening are dynamic and can benefit from team-to-team brainstorming.

The CSDE Team, coordinated by Special Advisor to the Commissioner and former superintendent, Dr. Chris Clouet, will include Legal Director Jessa Mirtle, Chief Financial Officer Kathy Demsey, Chief Academic Officer Irene Parisi, Chief Performance Officer Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Talent Officer Dr. Shuana Tucker, Special Education Division Director Bryan Klimkiewicz and Education Division Director Glen Peterson.

The team-to-team interactions are intended to support your work to meet the submission requirements of a plan that provides options for full in-person return, partial hybrid in-person return and full remote learning. The team is also available to discuss any other topics that may be of interest to you.

Superintendents should email Chris Clouet chris.clouet@ct.gov to initiate setting up a meeting or conversation. We would use a convenient platform (Zoom, TEAMS, or whatever is most accessible for the district) to conduct our dialogues.

We are hopeful this will be a useful and timely option for districts.