Reopening Our Schools: Health & Safety Considerations for Board Members

Lisa Bartusek
Executive Director, IASB
Facilitator

Reopening Our Schools: Health & Safety Considerations for Board Members

Lisa Bartusek
Executive Director, IASB
Facilitator

IASB Staff

9:30–10:40 a.m.

Goals for Today

- Board’s eye view of health and safety factors in reopening schools
- Questions for board/superintendent discussion
- Overview of SF 2310/School Closures
QUICK POLL
BOARD MEMBERS:
Status of your overall knowledge of your reopening strategy
❑ Fully in the know
❑ Work in progress
❑ Not started yet/barely started

QUICK POLL
SUPERINTENDENTS:
What is your assessment of the district's readiness to reopen?
❑ Fully ready—strong plan in place.
❑ Work in progress — but on track.
❑ Heavy lift ahead—must be shored up.

QUICK POLL
EVERYONE ELSE:
What is your assessment of the district's readiness to reopen?
❑ Fully ready—strong plan in place.
❑ Work in progress—but on track.
❑ Heavy lift ahead—must be shored up.
❑ Don't know yet.
Effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.

From Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards, NSBA

It is better to know some of the questions than all of the answers.

James Thurber

Superintendent and Board Roles

**Accountability**: Clarity of importance and expectation of progress

**Support**: Ensure supports are provided for success
Planning Overview

Quick Guide: State Framework for Reopening

Return-to-Learn: Focus on Planning.

Reopening: Time-Specific Health Directives + Gubernatorial orders.

Legislative Direction—SF 2310: Parameters prefer in-person instruction; and authority of boards to close schools.

Handout: IASB Quick Guide for School Boards

Understanding Iowa's Framework for Reopening Schools

A Quick Guide for School Boards

State Framework for Reopening

Return-to-Learn Guidance: Focus on Planning

Return-to-Learn guidance sets a planning phase for learning opportunities to return in the fall. Districts are planning for:

• On-sight delivery: Schools are providing on-site education as long as is safely possible, following local health guidelines for in-person learning.

• Online delivery: Distance learning will occur for those following health guidelines for distance learning.

• Hybrid delivery:

Legislative Direction

State Framework for Reopening

A Quick Guide for School Boards

Handout: IASB Quick Guide for School Boards
Key Connections: Health & Legal

1. Students & Staff at High Risk
2. Mitigation Practices
3. Positive Cases & Exposure
4. School Closures & SF 2310

See handout for summary of topics and governing questions
coronavirus.iowa.gov

Is it legal?

- ADA
- FERPA
- OSHA
- FMLA
- HIPPA
- IDEA
- CARES ACT
- Section 504
- FLSA

Governing questions for the board

- Have we established communication with local health officials? How is that process going? (strengths and challenges)
- In what ways are we vetting changes with legal counsel or ensuring compliance with laws?
QUICK POLL

Status of Engagement of Your Local Health Officials

1. Productive planning discussions underway
2. Underway, but experiencing some challenges
3. Just getting started
4. Don’t know yet

Students and Staff at High Risk

- Refer those considered “high risk” or immunocompromised to healthcare provider to determine when school re-entry is recommended.
- **For students:** Must provide remote instruction upon written notice from parent/guardian that student or family member has health condition of increased risk (SF 2310).
- **For staff:** Consider assignments, schedules, leave, or accommodations, to reduce risk.
Governing questions for the board

• In what ways are we preparing to support the health and safety of our students and staff considered at high risk?

Mitigation Practices

• Hygiene/Handwashing
• Sanitation
• Social Distancing
• Reducing Use-Common Areas
• Cohort Groupings
• Masks/Face Coverings
• Screening
• Cancelling Events
• Staggered Schedules
• Blended Learning
• …and more

CDC Considerations for Schools, May 19, 2020

Sources of Guidance Vary: e.g., Masks

DE/IDPH Reopening: Requiring for all not recommended due to health, safety, legal, training considerations. Allow their use.

CDC/Schools: Teach and reinforce use; should be worn as feasible.

CDC/Businesses: Determine based on hazard assessment. Encourage workers to wear cloth face coverings if they do not require PPE.

OSHA: Conduct hazard assessment to determine PPE needs. Consider offering masks to all who do not require PPE.

ISEA: Require for all staff and students; schools must supply.
Health/safety procedures should be based on current federal or state guidance.

Document in writing an explanation for adopting or not adopting recommended procedures.

Generally, the more cautious guidance should be adopted.

Feasibility and fidelity of implementation matters. The best plans, poorly implemented, are not productive.

**IASB Recommendations**

- What practices are we implementing, and on what state or federal guidance are they based?
- Are they feasible to implement consistently? Resources, time, staffing, training?
- What measures may be controversial/ could benefit from greater board engagement?
- Which recommended practices are not being implemented? Why?

**Governing questions for the board**
Positive Cases and Exposure
- Quarantine
- Isolation

Governing questions for the board
- Have clear procedures been established for these situations?
- Are the appropriate staff trained to implement them consistently?
- What are the potential impacts on school operations?

Discussion Questions
What do boards need most from superintendents in the months ahead?
What do superintendents need most from boards?
School Closures Under Senate File 2310

SF 2310: Board authority for closure

DE Guidance Pending—FY 20-21 only
- Closure means transition to remote instruction.
- Requires public health proclamation by governor
  - Due to “outbreak” in district or attendance center
- Consult with local board of health and CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines.

• Instructional time met if remote learning is provided.
• Teachers must be available during regular contract hours.
• Boards may delegate closure authority to superintendent.
Governing questions for the board

• Under what circumstances can we predict the need to close a building? The district?
• Will the board authorize the action, or delegate authority to the superintendent?

Boards and Superintendents: Leading Together

Board President & Superintendent

Planning Meeting
• Information needs of the entire board
• Methods (agenda vs. work session)
• ‘Hot issues’ to predict
• Impact on other goals
Mentor Team Recap: Questions & Themes

Siobhan Schneider
Policy/Legal Services Director
sschneider@ia-sb.org
(515) 247-7028

Eric Howard
HR Services Director
ehoward@ia-sb.org
(515) 247-7030

Harry Heiligenthal
Associate Executive Director, Board Development
hheiligenthal@ia-sb.org
(515) 247-7062

Lou Ann Gvist
Board Development/Convention Director
lgvist@ia-sb.org
(515) 247-7064

Questions?

Contact the Presenter

Lisa Bartusek
Executive Director
lbartusek@ia-sb.org
(515) 247-7072