Ask the Experts Webinar:

*Return to School Special Series*

School Reentry Considerations:
Supporting Student SEL and MBH Amidst COVID-19
“Ask the Experts” Webinar

Return to School Special Series

• Special series of recorded webinars to be posted on the NASP website for NASP members only that provide more in-depth skill-based content to help school psychologists prepare for the return to school.

• Webinars are designed to offer support to school psychologists, interns, and practicum students as they navigate the delivery of school psychological services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

• Each webinar will be followed by the opening of a discussion thread on the NASP member exchange community.

• Each webinar will:
  – Address critical questions emerging as a result of the need to provide virtual telehealth school psychological services.
  – Provide advice and guidance from experts.
  – Offer suggested strategies and resources for addressing professional practice issues.
Expert Presenters

- Christina N. Conolly, PsyD
  Director, Psychological Services, Montgomery County Public Schools (MD)
  dedication10@gmail.com

- Amanda Fitzgerald, EdD
  Director of Public Policy, American School Counselor Association
  afitzgerald@schoolcounselor.org

- Eric Rossen, PhD
  NASP Director, Professional Development & Standards
  erossen@naspweb.org
Topics for Discussion

• Introduction
• Establishing Multidisciplinary Teams for Planning
• Addressing SEL and MH Needs of Students and Staff
• Relationships and Transitions
• Potential for Trauma
• Addressing Physical and Psychological Safety
• Discipline
• Staff Needs
• Family Engagement
• Access to SMH Professionals
• Contingency Planning
A Unified Voice on School Reentry

School Reentry Considerations
Supporting Student Social and Emotional Learning and Mental and Behavioral Health Amidst COVID-19
Establishing Multidisciplinary Team for Planning

Each school and/or school district should establish a team to support recovery:

- Administration
- School-employed mental health professionals
- Teachers
- Nurses
- Public Health Officials
- District and Community Stakeholders
  - Parents
  - Union
Establishing Multidisciplinary Team for Planning

Team Responsibilities Include:

- Reviewing local, state, and federal guidance
- Coordinating responses
- Communication of reentry, short and long-term recovery plans with stakeholders
- Resource mapping
- Determining common goals to streamline efforts and avoiding duplication
Addressing SEL and Mental Health Needs of Students and Staff

• Develop strategies for different phases of recovery
• Examine infrastructure to conduct universal screenings and informal check-ins with students
• Embed SEL into the core academic content areas to ensure they can be delivered in abbreviated school days and at-home learning
• Anticipate S/E regression and build off unique experiences students have had at home
Addressing SEL and Mental Health Needs of Students and Staff

Tier I
- Screening
- Evidence-based classroom lessons
- Morning meetings
- Advisory periods
- Peer-buddies

Tier II
- Ind & small group counseling
- Consult/collaborate with community providers, teachers/staff/parents

Tier III
- Wrap around support and referrals

ALL STUDENTS

SOME STUDENTS

FEW STUDENTS
Addressing SEL and Mental Health Needs of Students and Staff

The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors for Student Success: K-12 College- and Career-Readiness Standards for Every Student
Each of the following standards can be applied to the academic, career, and social/emotional domains.

**Category 1: Mindset Standards**
School counselors encourage the following mindsets for all students.

- M 1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
- M 2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
- M 3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
- M 4. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term career success
- M 5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
- M 6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

**Category 2: Behavior Standards**
Students will demonstrate the following standards through classroom lessons, activities and/or individual/small-group counseling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Strategies</th>
<th>Self-Management Skills</th>
<th>Social Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 1.</td>
<td>Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to make informed decisions</td>
<td>B-SMS 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 2.</td>
<td>Demonstrate creativity</td>
<td>B-SMS 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 3.</td>
<td>Use time-management, organizational and study skills</td>
<td>B-SMS 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 5.</td>
<td>Apply media and technology skills</td>
<td>B-SMS 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 6.</td>
<td>Set high standards of quality</td>
<td>B-SMS 6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-LS 7.</td>
<td>Identify long- and short-term academic, career and social/ emotional goals</td>
<td>B-SMS 7.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schedule</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Tiers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Now</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 month before</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Welcome back plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families</td>
<td>Share back to school plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>Provide PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 week before</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sugai (2020)-MTSS FEST Key Note; retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zRDNZlw14](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-zRDNZlw14)
Relationships and Transitions

• Challenge of transition will vary substantially
  – Particular challenges of those changing schools
• Lack of closure of relationships from previous year
• Opportunities to interact with classmates/teachers from previous year
  – “Looping”
• Need to teach and re-teach expectations & routines
• High likelihood of exhaustion, fatigue, sleepiness
Relationships and Transitions

Helping Students Reconnect

• Back to school events
• Virtual tours – virtual back to school events
• Live or virtual celebration for retired staff
• Matching peer-buddies
• Year long homerooms, advisory periods, or transition periods at the beginning of each day
Potential for Trauma

Recognize risk for higher rates of certain stressors or adversities

- Parental substance use and abuse
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Child maltreatment
- Homelessness
- Worsening of poverty and economic gaps
- Mental health problems in family (exacerbation of existing mental health problems)
- Family separation
- Grief/loss that could not be processed
Stigma and Racism

School Safety and Crisis

Countering Coronavirus Stigma and Racism
Tips for Teachers and Other Educators

Since the first cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) were identified in China, individuals of Chinese and Asian descent have been experiencing “coronavirus racism,” which includes anti-Chinese and anti-Asian scapegoating for the
Potential for Trauma

• Identify those at higher risk:
  – Those experiencing death or loss of someone
  – significant disruption to lifestyle
    • Food insecurity
    • Financial insecurity
    • Housing instability
    • Job loss of caregiver

• Those with a history of trauma and chronic stress

• Communities with previous history of educational disruption (e.g., California wildfires).
Addressing Physical and Psychological Safety

Strategies may include:

• Social distancing and sanitation/hygiene considerations
• Providing adequate space to conduct confidential sessions while maintaining social distancing rules
• Posting videos showing school leaders and other personnel showing what the school is doing to make the school safe.
• Clearly define the expectations on using masks and sanitation procedures.
Addressing Physical and Psychological Safety

Strategies may include:

• Develop virtual wellness spaces or consider changes to calm or mindfulness rooms

• Work with families for students with health considerations.
  – Immune-compromised, respiratory illnesses, or with family members that have tested positive for COVID-19
  – Increases to the nurse's office if students lack access to medical care

• Establish attendance and sanitation guidelines for COVID-19-related illness and exposures.
Discipline

• Expectations at home ≠ Expectations at school

• Avoid punitive/exclusionary discipline unless absolutely necessary
  – Implement culturally responsive, restorative practices

• Positive disciplinary practices more needed than ever

• View through trauma-informed lens

• Anticipate higher levels of resistance and defiance as demands increase
Effective School Discipline Policies and Practices: Supporting Student Learning

Effective school discipline policies and practices are critical to promoting students’ successful learning and well-being. They strengthen students’ behavioral skills by addressing the causes of their misbehaviors while preserving the integrity of the learning environment, ensuring the safety and dignity of all students and staff, and fostering progress toward long-term learning and behavioral goals. There are many barriers to effective school discipline, however, including the widespread use of punitive approaches and inconsistent policies and practices that students view as unfair and that often disproportionately impact minorities and students with disabilities.

DISCIPLINE AND DISCIPLINARY INFRACTIONS IN SCHOOLS

In the 2015–2016 school year, 2.3% of U.S. public schools reported widespread disorder in classrooms on a daily or weekly basis. 4.8% reported student verbal abuse of teachers, and 10.3% reported other student

https://www.nasponline.org/disciplineframework
Staff Needs

*When recovery planning, do not forget all staff.*

_They support all children._

Remember that staff may have:

- Experienced their own loss or stress during the pandemic.
- Seen negative comments about the school’s response from families
- Not been able to say goodbye to students or staff members who are not returning next year.
Staff Needs

Strategies for supporting staff:

• Experienced their own loss or stress during the pandemic.
• Develop systems for supporting all staff. Do not rely on self-referral.
• Address secondary traumatic stress and compassion fatigue
  – Tap In/Tap Out
  – Boundary Setting
• Communicate about Community Resources and EAP services for staff.
Family Engagement

- Include parent/family voice in multidisciplinary team
- Engage families frequently – provide activities to familiarize them with new protocols, back to school opportunities, etc.
- Identify needs the families in your community may have, provide resources and assistance to those who may need food, shelter and other basic needs.
Access to SMH Professionals

School psychologists: 1:500 students
School counselors: 1:250 students
School social workers: 1:250 students
School nurses: 1:750 students*

Ensure students have access to supports in instances of abbreviated school days and virtual learning.
Planning for the Evolving Pandemic

The only thing constant in life is change.

- As the crisis situation changes, learn from past experiences and be ready to evolve with growing needs.
- Ongoing professional development is needed for all staff.
- Leverage community resources to support changing needs for families.
- Constantly communicate with families to demonstrate transparency and trust.
Key Messages

• Establish an intentional focus on social and emotional skill building, mental and behavioral health, personal safety and self-regulatory capacity...all which likely regressed with a lack of social interactions.

• Avoid assuming that lack of demonstration of social skills represents willful disobedience or purposeful insubordination. This should take priority over academics.
Questions and Considerations
NASP Resources

- NASP COVID-19 Resource Center

- School Reentry Considerations: Supporting Student Social Emotional Learning and Mental Behavioral Health Amidst COVID 19 (ASCA & NASP)
  https://www.nasponline.org/x55418.xml

- Framework for Effective School Discipline
  https://www.nasponline.org/disciplineframework

- Equity Considerations During and After COVID-19 School Closures
  https://www.nasponline.org/x55210.xml
External Resources

ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors

https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/home/MindsetsBehaviors.pdf
References


Helping Children Thrive • In School • At Home • In Life