Learning Loss Recovery Strategy Guide

Introduction of Strategy

In this guide, we define Learning Loss Recovery as steps that research recommends schools and districts should take to recover learning loss that occurred due to extended and repeated school closures combined with remote learning. This definition applies to school-wide efforts for large groups of students. This definition does not include recovery of learning for individual or small groups of students.

Due to the recent nature of extended and repeated school closures, recommendations have relied on extrapolation and application of research from similar circumstances, such as absenteeism, summer learning programs, and the impact of and recovery from significant events in limited geographic areas, such as hurricanes and wars. The consolidation of research by educational experts has recommended that the following components support the recovery of learning loss in students. It is important to note that there is evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of each component (see research following each component), however research is currently being conducted on the effectiveness of these components when implemented together. The following components are derived from various articles and research that articulate that recovery of learning due to extended and repeated school closures should include:

1. **Determine and Address Immediate Needs**
2. **Make Decisions on School-Wide Logistics**
3. **Accelerate Learning**
4. **Provide Social-Emotional Support for Students and Staff**

Evidence Base

ESSA defines levels of research based on the quality of the study (Levels 1-4). CDE requires that schools and districts identify the research base for strategies that they select for their Unified Improvement Plans, and for applications for school improvement funds in the EASI application.

The research on com that is cited here meets the definition of Level 3 research. The research cited focused on the impact on student achievement when different learning loss recovery strategies were implemented.

Considerations

Potential impact of the Covid 19 Pandemic on students and schools
- Based on projections using research and literature on absenteeism and summer learning patterns, it is estimated that students may return to school with 63-68% of previous learning gains in reading and 37-50% of previous learning gains in math. This indicates a **greater loss of previous math learning compared to reading**. The extent of learning loss may be greater at higher grade levels.
- **Learning loss may not be universal**. Families with better access to resources, including financial resources, stable employment, flexible work from home and childcare arrangements may have allowed students to "weather the storm" more easily compared to peers with housing and family instability, food insecurity, and other traumatic events due to health or financial insecurity. Traumatic events around racial violence during school closures may also negatively impact learning for students of color and students in the geographical area where violence occurred. Based on research around learning losses and gains during summer months when students are not in school, there is the potential that about one-third of students made gains in reading during extended school closures.
- **The opportunity gap is likely to have expanded** for students during extended and repeated school closures. Using existing research on opportunity gaps, it is projected that students who have traditionally scored lower may have the most losses in learning, while students who traditionally scored higher may have fewer losses and perhaps even learning gains.
- There is the potential for schools to see behaviors that reflect an **increase in trauma**, either through an increased number of students who have experienced trauma, or an increase in degree of trauma. This may be due to increased stress, increased family and financial instability, worsening health conditions and/or loss of family members, racial violence and increased abuse. This increase in trauma may also be true for school staff, as well.
- It may take **several years for full recovery of learning losses** due to extended and repeated school closures.

Is this strategy a good fit for your district/school?
- Does this major improvement strategy focus on a priority performance challenge and associated root cause(s)?
- Are the expected outcomes of this major improvement strategy highly valued?
- Do key leaders support this major improvement strategy? Do key leaders have the capacity to lead the strategy ongoing?
- What are the skills and competencies needed to implement this major improvement strategy with fidelity? What support/professional development do staff members need to implement this strategy effectively?

- Are the time, effort and resources needed for implementation feasible for the staff involved?

Considerations for Strategy Implementation
- What is known about the impact of extended and repeated school closures on student achievement in your district and/or school?
- How will the school engage a wide range of stakeholders in providing input on the school's re-opening and recovery plans?
- Is there district and/or community support for developing site-specific plans to address student and staff needs?
- Are there resources and/or flexibility with resources to support increased services for students and staff?

Implementation Guide

Core Component 1: Determine and Address Immediate Needs

Elements	Description
Monitor and Address Students' and Families' Basic Needs	Learn more about families' current needs, such as food and housing, technology, internet, and resources to support at-home learning, in order to provide resources for families.Consider using available data such as participation in remote learning or other historical data about students, collecting staff knowledge of students' situations, administering a survey to families, and/or conducting family and student focus groups. Ensure partnerships and systems to communicate with partners are in place to support families' basic needs (food, housing, transportation, etc.), addressing the most pressing needs first.
Prioritize Students Based on Need	Use an equity lens to create a plan to identify and support students with the greatest needs first with the goal of returning these students to in-person schooling as quickly as possible. Consider prioritizing support for students according to the following characteristics: 1. Students who have been disengaged or missing during remote learning 2. Students who are English Learners and/or have Individual Education Plans or 504s 3. Students with limited or inconsistent access to technology, internet, a quiet place to learn at home, and/or adult support at home.

Core Component 2: Make Decisions on School-Wide Logistics

Elements	Description
Identify and Involve Stakeholders in Decision-Making	Engage the community in making decisions around school-wide logistics such as calendars, schedules, classes and safety, and the development of plans to implement the decisions.
Decide on School Calendar/Schedule Logistics	Consider extending the school day and/or school year. Consider offering Summer School for targeted students as defined in the Summer School Strategy Guide.
Determine Class Logistics to Accelerate Learning	Consider small class sizes, looping students and/or teachers
Plan to Ensure Safety	Create a plan to ensure physical safety of all staff and students taking students' developmental levels into consideration. Plans should include detailed information on hygiene and social distancing practices, including transitions to and from class(es) and other school spaces, use of school spaces including outside spaces when applicable, steps to be taken when a student or staff member tests positive, and what contact tracing steps will be taken. Communicate the plan to stakeholders clearly, broadly and repeatedly.

Core Component 3: Accelerate Learning

Elements	Description
Administer Diagnostic Assessments	Use rigorous, high quality diagnostic and formative assessments to determine each student's current academic needs.
Determine Strategies to Accelerate Learning for all Students	It is important to maintain grade level content as the instructional priority. Consider simplifying the curriculum to focus on priority standards and creating a flexible and personalized approach for instruction. Flexible and personalized approaches to instruction include instruction without age tracking, smaller groups, informal learning spaces, differentiation, and the ability to pivot topic(s) based on students' and staff academic and psycho-social needs.
Determine Regular Assessment Strategy	Create a plan to monitor student progress on a regular basis. See the Data-Driven Instruction Strategy Guide for more information on progress monitoring.
Determine Strategies to	Rather than provide remedial instruction for all standards, identify which standards are needed for students to access current grade level content.

Catch Identified Students Up	Consider 'spiraling', where teachers teach pre-requisite skills and content immediately before grade level content, for high school students. Consider high dosage tutoring or learning camps to support targeted students with identified needs based on assessment data. Consider offering Summer School for targeted students as defined in the Summer School Strategy Guide.
Provide Professional Development	Provide teachers and staff with regular professional development, coaching and support around adapted school priorities. This includes training on the use and interpretation of assessments, high quality instruction around priority standards, and flexible, personalized learning instructional strategies.

Core Component 4: Support for Students and Staff

Elements	Description
Intentional Transition to In-Person Learning	Students and staff are likely to have conflicting and changing emotions around returning to in-person learning. As students return to in-person learning, consider various aspects of trauma to plan for a supportive transition. Consider including activities over the first few weeks upon returning to in-person learning to relieve and address student anxiety. It is likely that schools may need extra time and effort to re-establish cultures and routines, reinforce expectations around appropriate behavior and engagement, and have regular opportunities to discuss physical and emotional safety. Consider implementing core components included in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBiS) strategies to positively support school culture.
Support for Students	Consider hosting transition meetings for students, family members and care-givers for teachers to learn about students' experiences during the Covid pandemic and listen to concerns and hopes as they transition back to school.
Social-Emotional Learning	Ensure that there is an evidence-based Social-Emotional Learning curriculum for all students that is being regularly implemented. Train all staff members around implementation of the SEL curriculum.
Addressing Student Issues	Consider regularly integrating Covid into the curriculum in order to help students make sense of what is happening around them. There are academic benefits when student learning is directly connected to their lived experiences.
Social-Emotional Support Staff	Maintain or increase the amount of staff that support students' social-emotional well-being and development. In addition to school staff, consider community partnerships that can provide social-emotional support for students during the school day.

Support for Staff	Ensure that staff are supported with basic needs, social-emotional support and training. Devise strategies to retain highly qualified staff.

Academic Studies Leading to ESSA Rating

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