



U.S. Department of Education Releases “Return to School Roadmap” to Support Students, Schools, Educators, and Communities in Preparing for the 2021-2022 School Year

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Today, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) released the “Return to School Roadmap,” a resource to support students, schools, educators, and communities as they prepare to return to safe, healthy in-person learning this fall and emerge from the pandemic stronger than before. The Roadmap provides key resources and supports for students, parents, educators, and school communities to build excitement around returning to classrooms this school year and outlines how federal funding can support the safe and sustained return to in-person learning. Over the course of the next several weeks as schools reopen nationwide, the Roadmap will lay out actionable strategies to implement the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) updated guidance for K-12 schools, so that schools can minimize transmission and sustain in-person learning all school-year long.

The Roadmap includes three “Landmark” priorities that schools, districts, and communities are encouraged to focus on to ensure all students are set up for success in the 2021-2022 school year. These include: (1) prioritizing the health and safety of students, staff, and educators, (2) building school communities and supporting students’ social, emotional, and mental health, and (3) accelerating academic achievement. As part of the Roadmap, the Department will release resources for practitioners and parents on each of these priorities, and will highlight schools and districts that are using innovative practices to address these priorities. The Department will also lift up ways that the American Rescue Plan and other federal funds can be used to address these priorities in schools and communities across the country, as well as outline additional investments from President Biden’s Build Back Better agenda that are needed to ensure our schools and communities can rebuild from the pandemic even stronger than they were before and address inequities exacerbated by the pandemic, particularly for students in underserved communities.

“Over the past year-and-a-half, as a nation, we experienced struggles like never before. Schools, teachers, students, and families were challenged in ways none of us ever imagined. But from that struggle, came resilience. Teachers, principals, school staff, parents, and – mostly importantly – our nation’s students rose to the occasion. They demonstrated what is possible if we follow key mitigation strategies to keep our students and school communities safe. Now, we must use our renewed strength to focus on what matters most: winning the fight against COVID-19, getting our students back in classrooms for full-time in-person learning – together – and making our education system better than ever before so that all students receive the excellent education they deserve,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “I’m proud to be releasing these tools to help make sure students, parents, schools, educators, and communities receive the communication and supports they need to make this academic year a success, and I want all schools this year to lead with a clear focus on health and safety, student wellbeing, and academic acceleration as students return to classrooms nationwide.”

The release of the Roadmap builds upon President Biden’s call to increase vaccinations among adolescents as students go back to school. Last week, the President called on school districts nationwide to host at least one pop-up vaccination clinic over the coming weeks, and the Administration directed pharmacies in the federal pharmacy program to prioritize this and to work with school districts across the country to host vaccination clinics at schools and colleges. Vaccination is our leading public health strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic – and it is our best way to prevent COVID outbreaks before they happen, so that schools and colleges can return to safe, in-person instruction all year long. To advance the President’s call to action, the Administration will release additional resources that school districts can use to increase vaccination rates among young people, and will continue to partner with communities nationwide to make sure parents and students have their questions answered and have easy access to the vaccine.

As part of the launch of the Return to School Roadmap, the Department released:

- A [fact sheet](#) for schools, families, and communities on the Return to School Roadmap, reviewing the three “Landmark” priorities, and elevating schools and districts that are addressing each in effective ways.
- A [guide](#) for schools and districts outlining what schools can do to protect the health and safety of students, including increasing access to vaccinations and steps for implementing the CDC’s recently updated K-12 school guidance.
- A [checklist](#) that parents can use to prepare themselves and their children for a safe return to in-person learning this fall, leading with vaccinating eligible children and masking up if students are not yet vaccinated.

As part of the launch of the Roadmap, the White House also released a [fact sheet](#) highlighting the Administration’s efforts to safely reopen schools and support our nation’s students, including how the historic investment in the American Rescue Plan is advancing this work.

Over the coming weeks, the Department will provide additional resources to schools, districts, and directly to parents and students as part of the Return to School Roadmap. This includes:

- Working with partners across the federal government to provide support to schools and districts and answer questions about expanding access to vaccinations for students 12+ and implementing CDC’s recently updated K-12 school guidance.
- Holding town halls with parents and parent organizations to highlight ways schools and districts are preparing to keep students safe during in-person learning and underscoring the importance of providing social, emotional, and mental health supports for students in addition to academic supports in our schools.
- Releasing implementation tools for schools, educators, and parents to address the three priority areas of health and safety; student wellbeing; and academics — in areas ranging from supporting schools in their efforts to address lost instructional and extracurricular time to providing information on how American Rescue Plan funds can be used to expand access to mental health supports for our nation’s students and educators, and provide additional academic supports.
- Updating Volumes 1 and 2 of the Department of Education’s COVID-19 Handbooks to reflect the recently updated CDC K-12 guidance.

Secretary Cardona and other Department officials will be traveling across the country to feature priorities from the Roadmap and highlight schools and communities as they prepare to welcome their students back this fall. The Secretary will also participate in a “Return to School Road Trip” in the fall, visiting schools and districts welcoming students back to in-person learning and successfully implementing the priorities within the Roadmap.

The Roadmap is part of the Department’s broader efforts to support schools and districts in the safe and sustained return to in-person learning since the beginning of the Biden Administration. In addition to releasing the Roadmap, the Department has:

- Issued three volumes of the COVID-19 Handbook to support K-12 schools and institutions of higher education in their reopening efforts.
- Prioritized the vaccination of educators, school staff and child care workers.
- Published a [Safer Schools and Best Practices Clearinghouse](#), which includes over 200 examples of schools and communities safely returning to in-person learning.
- Held a [National Safe School Reopening Summit](#).
- Provided \$122 billion in [support](#) through the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund for K-12 schools.
- Released over \$3 billion in IDEA [funds](#) within the American Rescue Plan to support children and families with disabilities impacted by the pandemic.
- Released \$800 million within the American Rescue Plan to support students experiencing homelessness who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- Released a report on the disparate impacts of COVID-19 on underserved students.
- Launched an Equity Summit Series focused on addressing school and district inequities that existed before, but were made worse by the pandemic.
- Provided nearly \$40 billion in [funding](#) for institutions of higher education within the American Rescue Plan, about half of which will provide direct aid to students at postsecondary institutions.

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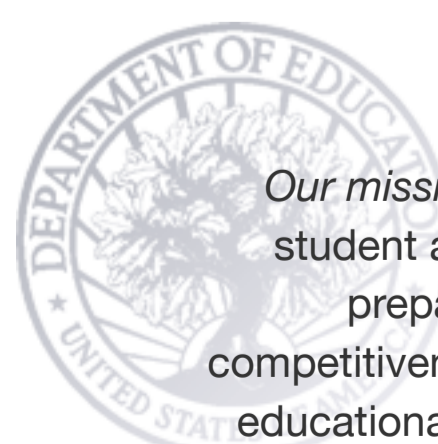
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