Meeting the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students.

It’s more important, and challenging, than ever to keep students engaged. Our Attendance Playbook Covid-19 edition recommends schools use these evidence-based practices:

- Nudges: Letters or texts to parents can help keep students attending and on track
- Home visits: These visits to student homes can improve family engagement and lead to better academic performance and attendance
- Mentoring: The caring relationships that develop with mentors can improve engagement, achievement and attendance
- Healthy school buildings: Improving air quality and keeping schools clean of mold and mildew can boost outcomes, especially for students with asthma and allergies.

Hybrid, virtual, and rotating school schedules have also made it difficult to track student attendance and engagement. We recommend that states:

- Avoid basing state aid on attendance this year
- Refrain from using attendance for high stakes accountability for the time being
- Move away from punishing students and parents for absenteeism with fines or court intervention
- Set consistent rules to ensure a common and meaningful approach to tracking attendance in a distance learning or hybrid setting

Addressing lost instructional time for students.

Effective education interventions are critical for helping students catch up, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. We propose:

- Scaling tutoring so high school students tutor elementary students, college work-study students tutor middle school students, adults tutor high school students, and paraprofessionals tutor special education students

Stabilizing a diverse and qualified educator workforce.

Schools should implement innovative staffing and scheduling strategies that play to teachers’ strengths and best support students. Our report highlighting these innovations suggests:

- Extending the reach of highly skilled teachers to both provide high-quality instruction to more students and increased support for teachers.
- Expanding co-teaching models and teaching teams to enable more small-group and individual support for students, enable joint planning, ensure students are known well, and distribute teaching responsibilities based on teacher strengths
● Using advisory and coaching models to provide social, emotional, and academic support for students and to build the relationships that research has shown are foundational to learning
● Employing flexible scheduling to provide time for teacher planning and collaboration, including rapid inquiry cycles to adjust and target instruction based on data
● Using flexible scheduling to address student needs, including more time for small-group and individual work, individual and group projects and assignments, and coaching

To build a stronger, more diverse educator workforce, our recommendations include:
● Creating a 21st Century teacher corps
● Prioritizing funding for teacher-preparation programs at minority-serving institutions
● Requiring teacher-preparation programs to report graduated and certification rates disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender and Pell Grant status and requiring them to report on outcomes like the percentage of their graduates teaching in Title I schools
● Developing internal talent pipelines and seeking out current employees who can make referrals

To recruit and support teachers of color, we suggest:
● Implementing grow-your-own programs
● Start hiring cycles earlier in school years
● Ensure that teachers of color have pathways for professional growth through career ladders and other structures

**Ensuring equitable access to broadband and the devices needed to participate in remote learning.**
Bringing broadband and devices to all students has been a priority. We propose:
● Equipping school buses with Wi-Fi, parking them around the district during school hours, and providing an interactive map so families can find them

**Supporting the effective use of technology for in-person learning and periodic shifts to remote learning.**
Before COVID, special educators were already using assistive technology. We recommend:
● Heeding their advice on technology for students with and without disabilities

It can be challenging to connect with students and command their attention in online teaching. We suggest:
● Keeping cameras on and in gallery view
● Being intentional about providing reinforcement for focus
● Cold calling

Periodic shifts to remote learning may become more common with climate change learning disruptions like hurricanes, wildfires, and flooding. While having students in the classroom is vital for achievement, we also propose:
● Continuing to strengthen hybrid and remote learning
Providing all students with access to a safe and inclusive learning environment.
A safe, welcoming school climate is essential to improving students’ academic and behavioral outcomes. To achieve this, we propose:

- Ending inequitable discipline policies and practices
- Using school climate surveys

Extending learning time.
Summer learning will be crucial for catching students up. We recommend:

- Partnering with community organizations for arts, literacy, STEM, sports, health, mental health, and more
- Use community-based settings for instruction, including YMCAs, parks and recreation departments, libraries, and public housing communities
- Mixing play and learning; like tying a sport or game you’re playing to a math concept