

In order to ensure a strong start to 2020-2021, school systems should attend to the well-being of students and staff.

Addressing the well-being of students and staff will require that schools:

1. [Acknowledge and address the unique end and start of school](#)
2. [Prioritize positive, intentional relationships](#)
3. [Attend to individual students' needs](#)
4. [Respond to student behavior with appropriate support](#)

This guidance provides concrete steps to address each of these critical areas. The following documents (under development) are linked within this guidance to support implementation.

- [Transitioning School Years](#)
- [Mental Health Leadership Team Guidance](#)
- [Mental Health Screeners and Guidance](#)
- [Parental Consent Form for Mental Health Screener](#)
- [Self-Care Resources for School Staff](#)
- [School Culture and Climate Surveys](#)
- [Building Positive and Supportive Relationships in the Classroom and School](#)
- [Individual Academic Improvement Plan Template](#)
- [Student Engagement and Success Vendor Guide](#)

1. Acknowledge and Address The Unique End and Start of School: Support the well-being of staff and provide students and staff the opportunity to close out the previous school year and start the new year.

- Address the social and emotional well-being of school staff using a [Mental Health Leadership Team](#).
 - Identify who will be on the Mental Health Leadership Team both at the school system and school levels and how often the team will meet.
 - Facilitate weekly engagement of all staff with peers and/or supervisors. Include informal checks on staff well-being. Engage the Mental Health Leadership Team when needed.
 - Communicate available mental health support and resources through human resources, benefits packages and community partner organizations.
 - Share self-care resources with staff.
 - Regularly (2-3 times per year) assess the general climate and well-being of the school staff using a [survey](#).
- Support the transition of all students to their new classroom, whether that be a physical or virtual classroom.
 - Provide students and families dedicated time, prior to the start of the 2020-2021, to participate in [activities that close out the 2019-2020 year](#).

- Plan and publicize family and student [orientation activities and events](#), which may be virtual, to kick off the 2020-2021 school year.

2. **Prioritize Positive, Intentional Relationships:** Facilitate meaningful interactions to [develop sustaining, strong relationships](#) within the classroom and throughout the school.

- Build staff-to-student relationships¹
 - Assign each student a designated staff member (e.g., mentor, learning coach, advisor) who will maintain a relationship with the student and their primary caregiver during the full school year, particularly leaning in during transitions from in-person to distance learning.
 - [Determine structures](#) (e.g., advisory, check-ins with students, team meetings) through which staff and students will [regularly meet](#).
 - [Provide training](#) to school staff focused on building relationships with students and meeting facilitation.
- Build staff-to-staff relationships¹
 - Build community and connection among staff members through events that are virtual or in-person.
- Build student-to-student relationships¹
 - Provide students with frequent social engagement opportunities throughout the school year¹.
 - Continue to provide extracurricular activities, as possible. Consider virtual activities (e.g., virtual chess clubs, E-sports, virtual baseball team workouts, [virtual job](#) and [college fairs](#), [virtual college tours](#)) as necessary.
- Build staff-to-family relationships
 - Develop [processes and systems](#) that allow teachers to regularly communicate with families.¹
 - Provide general best practices for families to talk through [trauma with children](#).

3. **Attend to Individual Students' Needs:** Provide individualized supports and services to meet the social, emotional, mental health well-being of students, as students may return to school having experienced traumatic events (e.g. food insecurity, illness or death in the family, job loss, etc.).

- Set up a hotline for students and families. Report all calls and requests for support to the Mental Health Leadership Team.
- [Set up structures](#) for staff to regularly communicate about individual students.
 - Create structures (e.g., schedules, expectations, norms) for teacher teams to meet regularly to discuss students' academic, social, and emotional successes and challenges. Identify look-fors for students who need additional support.
 - Provide a process and reporting procedures for individual academic, social, emotional, behavioral student concerns that might arise [as educators connect daily with students](#); proactively support those concerns before significant intervention is needed.

¹ La. R.S. 17:81 requires each school system have a policy that addresses electronic communications between students and staff.

- Administer a [universal mental health screener](#)² to all students.
 - Identify the staff who will administer the screener.
 - Train those staff on the screener.
 - Administer the screener within 30 days of the first day of school.
- Write and implement [individualized plans](#) based on screener results and/or staff and family-initiated concerns.
 - Identify [Tier II and Tier III interventions](#).
 - Identify who will provide the interventions to students.
 - Train those staff on the interventions.
 - Identify [external service providers](#) (mental health professionals, behavioral counselors, social workers) who will provide additional services as needed.
 - Monitor and adjust the individualized plan as needed.

4. Respond to Student Behavior with Appropriate Support: Address policies and practices to ensure that students receive appropriate support, as behavior incidences are often a signal of need.

- [Train administrators and teachers](#) on trauma informed practices, impact of trauma on students, culturally responsive teaching, de-escalation strategies, and other strategies to support students.
- Leverage the student's designated staff member (e.g., mentor, learning coach, advisor) to problem solve and provide support.
- Ensure [policies](#) allow for appropriate support (i.e., counseling vs. suspension).

² The [Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment \(PPRA\)](#) requires parental notification prior to administration of a survey, analysis, or evaluation that concerns protected areas such as mental health.