



**Tools and Resources for Educators
COVID-19: School Closings, AMI Assignments,
and Planning to Reopen Schools**

Developed by Arkansas Association of Curriculum & Instruction Administrators (AACIA)

"You may not have set out to be a leader during times of turmoil, but this is where circumstances have taken you. As the saying goes, anyone can hold the helm when the sea is calm."

Thomas Koulopoulos
Founder, Delphi Group

ANALYZING: WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

[SWOT Analysis](#)

A SWOT Analysis is a simple but useful framework for analyzing your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

[Force Field Analysis](#)

The Force Field Analysis is a tool that enables educators to visually map and analyze the driving and resisting forces behind a project or initiative.

[Urgent and Important Matrix](#)

The Urgent and Important Matrix is a tool that helps you decide on and prioritize tasks by urgency and importance, sorting out less urgent and important tasks which you should either delegate or not do at all.

[Small Wins](#)

The SMART Goal Planning Tool from Solution Tree will help your team determine next steps. This interactive tool provides action steps and small wins for teams.

Source: *Make It Happen: Coaching With the Four Critical Questions of PLCs at Work*

SURVEYS: REFLECTION

Take a moment to survey staff. Use a Google Form or other survey tool to assess the state of your school/school district. It is important to ask staff about the experience and to document lessons learned, along with recommendations for reopening schools.

Sample Staff Survey Questions:

1. What has been the hardest part of teaching online so far?
2. What new skills have you had to learn to be able to teach online?
3. What support, training or guidance would be needed to prepare to teach online or from a remote location in the future?
4. What is your perception of how your students are handling this change in schooling?
5. What concerns do you have for your at-risk students? These students may be SPED, 504, ELL, Economically Disadvantaged or have other factors that may cause you to be concerned.
6. Do you have a success story that you would like to share?
7. What support do you need as we begin a new school year?

EQ, IQ, and AQ

“Strong leaders quickly get comfortable with widespread ambiguity & chaos, recognizing that they do not have a crisis playbook. Instead, they commit themselves & their followers to navigating point-to-point through the turbulence, adjusting, improvising, and redirecting.”

[*Real Leaders Are Forged In Crisis*](#)

Nancy Koehn

The 3 Qs:

EQ - Emotional Quotient

IQ - Intellectual Quotient

AQ - Adaptability Quotient

In order to prepare for a new school year, teachers and administrators will need to be adaptable. How can your school adapt to the changing times? What lessons did we learn about adaptability during the school closings?

RETURNING TO NORMAL

“Many people look at a crisis as something to get through, until they can go back to business as usual. But “business as usual” never returns. Why not create the changes that move [teaching & learning] instead of waiting & reacting to the changes as they take place?”

Bill George

Questions For Reflection:

1. What lessons have we learned about equity during the school closings?
2. Do we need to return to “normal” or were some things not working for all students prior to the school closings?
3. How can we use this moment in our school's history for a reset or new beginning?
4. What were our strengths that we should consider building upon?
5. How can we adapt in order to make teaching and learning better for all students?
6. Are we attempting to return to normal?

DEFINING MOMENTS (Small Wins and Celebrations)

In a recent book, [Chip and Dan Heath describe the “Power of Moments.”](#) This book is timely for school leaders.

Powerful Moments For Students Include:

- Zoom Meetings (Whole Class - Community)
- Videos Created by Staff
- Virtual PE or Music Class with the Teacher
- Scavenger Hunt or Online Game
- Virtual Awards Ceremonies
- Virtual Graduation

As school staff plan for reopening schools, continue to plan powerful moments. Creating small wins gives everyone on the team something to aim for. Celebrating small wins supports school culture and climate, even if it is a virtual celebration. These celebrations will be important as we reopen schools and connect with students and staff!

COVID SLIDE

Teachers and parents are already discussing the COVID SLIDE.

Some adults fear the following:

- Gaps in key skills and concepts
- Missed opportunities during the 4th quarter
- Summer Learning Loss, combined with COVID SLIDE
- Lack of access to books during the summer break
- Mental Health and Traumatic Impact on students
- Behavioral Issues related to the COVID-19 closing of schools and community organizations
- Depression and Anxiety
- Wide Variety of Readiness Levels in each class

As professional educators, we can choose to approach the new school year from a Deficit-Mindset or a Strengths-Based Approach. A Deficit-Mindset focuses on what students don't know or learning gaps. A Strengths-Based Approach focused on the skills and abilities that students bring to the classroom on day one. A Strengths-Based Approach does not ignore the need to compact curriculum, provide interventions, work with last year's teachers, and make adjustments to the learning targets. Rather, a Strengths-Based approach avoids hyper-focusing on what students cannot do on the first day of school (See chart below: A Comparison Between Deficit & Strengths-Based Thinking).

We have professionals in our school district who do this every year.

What lessons can we learn from the following professionals who encounter a wide range of readiness levels each year?

- Kindergarten Teacher
- Special Education Teacher
- English as a Second Language Teacher
- Middle School Choir Teacher
- 7th Grade Basketball Coach
- Algebra I Teacher
- Spanish I Teacher
- Chemistry Teacher

**A Comparison Between
Deficit & Strength-Based Thinking**

Deficit-Based Thinking	Strength-Based Thinking
Focus on What's Broken	Focus on What's Working
Overcoming Weakness	Emphasizing Possibilities
Problem Solving	Co Constructing
Externally Driven	Internally Driven
Short-Term Solutions	Sustainable Solutions
Dependent Relationships	Independent Relationships
Reliance on Expert Knowledge	Reliance on Personal Strengths
Reform and Transition	Transform and Invent
Highlight Past Failures	Highlight Past Successes
Predict & Control	Discovery & Surprise

Strength-Based Thinking is a common sense idea which discovers the greatest qualities of what we do by combining:

- **Personal Strengths**
- **Positive Experiences**
- **Individual Initiative**
- **Personal Responsibility**
- **Independence**
- **Capacity to Act**

Priority Standards or “Safety Net Curriculum”

Source: Reeves, D. (2002). *The leader’s guide to standards: A blueprint for educational equity and excellence*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Ask the following questions to determine where to begin teaching in 2020-2021.

Endurance

Will this standard assessment provide students with knowledge that is of value beyond a single test?

Leverage

Will this standard provide students with knowledge that is of value in multiple disciplines?

Readiness

Will this standard provide students with knowledge that is required for the next level of learning?

Identifying What Every Student Needs To Know And Be Able To Do

[5 Ins and 5 Outs](#)

Interactive Tool - By Catlin Tucker

STORIES

“Once the storm is over, you won’t remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won’t even be sure, in fact, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm you won’t be the same person who walked in. That’s what this storm’s all about.” - Haruki Murakami

What Stories Will Your School Staff Share and Document?

[Document FOR Learning](#) (Reflective Questions)

By Sylvia Rosenthal Tolisano

Reflection Questions: What If Schools Are Closed Again?

Lessons Learned By Staff

Reflection Questions:

1. What did we do well during the school closings (for on-site instruction)?
2. How did we meet the needs of students in each sub-group?
3. Which barriers did we (teachers/staff) experience?
4. Which barriers did students experience?
5. Which barriers did families experience?
6. Which barriers can we remove for future AMI instruction/assignments?
7. What should we stop doing?
8. What should we start doing?
9. Do we need to make a purchase to support any of the student sub-groups?
10. What other considerations do we have as we continue to learn from our experience of no on-site teaching?

PLANNING FORWARD

[Planning Forward - Key Questions For School Leaders and Leadership Teams](#)

“Long-term visibility is impossible to come by right now, so focus yourself, your team, colleagues and other stakeholders on what you’re trying to solve for in the next 90 days.”

Scott Eblin

My Crisis Leadership Playbook

“At some point the crisis will pass. Will your organization be ready for that moment? Put a few of your bright minds to thinking about where you will be six months from now.”

Alexander Gelfand

The Crisis Leadership Playbook

Stanford Business