catalyst:ed

Introduction: The pandemic and racial unrest of 2020-2021 highlighted and deepened long-held inequities in the US, exposing systems that have failed to prioritize the voices of BIPOC students, families, and teachers, and that struggle to adapt to changes and growth due to their rigidity. And yet, we also saw some bright spots that allowed us to dream of an alternate future, like schools and educators who adopted new educational models and those that adopted a "whole family" approach to education by providing food, health, and economic support.

This framework and self-reflection tool is intended to help schools and systems plan for reopening and identify their priorities for the new infusion of funding at the federal and state level. Underlying the framework is a critical decision that leaders will need to make: are we looking to get back to where we were pre-pandemic ("**Recover**") or do we want to use this moment to fundamentally reimagine school ("**Reinvent**")?

Framework Overview: The framework is organized around **seven domains**: Safe Reopening, Student and Staff Wellbeing, Student-Centered Teaching and Learning, Community and Culture, Talent, Technology and Data, and Systems Transformation. **"Look-fors"** within each domain articulate what it might look like for a school/system to focus on recovery vs. reinvention. Equity is embedded within each domain and many of the look-fors, guided by a liberatory mindset that aims to shift power to those most affected by the system, in this case students and families.

The **purpose** of the framework and tool is to allow leaders and teams to:
- Understand what "good" looks like in each category
- Critically reflect on where they are currently in each category
- Collectively identify aspirations for their work in each category in order to guide time, energy, and resources
- Get help and support tailored to their current capacity and aspirations

Get Started: The framework is best applied as a part of an interactive, reflective exercise. To have the Catalyst:Ed team walk you and your team through the accompanying exercise, please email us at si-k12@catalyst-ed.org.

Prefer to use the framework yourself? Go through each category and review the "look fors" under "Recover" and "Reinvent". After you've reviewed the look-fors, take a step back and ask yourself: How important is this category given our context? Where are we with respect to it? Where do we wish to be? Where do we need clarity or alignment? Where do we need help? Feel free to copy the Google docs version of the framework and mark it up or make edits as you do this.

REBUILDING SCHOOLS:
A FRAMEWORK AND REFLECTION TOOL FOR SCHOOL AND SYSTEM LEADERS

Category	Getting Back to Normal "Recover"	Going Beyond - Building Back Better "Reinvent"
1. Safe Reopening: Prepare for a safe, healthy, and orderly return to in-person learning	• We have a reopening plan that is evidence-based, reasonable, and flexible. • Our plans prioritize vulnerable (marginalized) community members to solve for inequities in access and resources • We have a system for regular health checks, symptom tracking, contact tracing, and minimizing exposure in the event of an outbreak. • We have increased our access to PPE and cleaning for staff and schools. • We communicate regularly with our school community about our processes, procedures, and decisions regarding health, safety, and scheduling.	• We have built our plans and protocols in tight collaboration with students, families, teachers, and local health officials, and have a process for revisiting these regularly. • We know which families and teachers have concerns about in-person learning and are engaging with them and actively working to address/mitigate those concerns. • We are providing culturally-responsive, proactive support to the full school community around vaccine awareness and delivery and new health concerns or considerations that may arise.
2. Student and Staff Wellbeing: Support the mental, social, emotional and physical health and wellbeing of students and staff	• We have aligned across leadership, instructional team, and support staff (e.g., social workers and guidance counselors) on our vision and guiding principles for supporting students, families, and staff at this time. • We have structures and routines in place to build connection and create an emotionally supportive learning environment, including under remote schooling scenarios. • We have identified and track core student engagement and wellness indicators. • We offer trauma-informed support services to meet the social, emotional, mental, and physical health and wellbeing needs of students and staff. • We have a system in place to assess and track the wellbeing of students and staff.	• Our commitment to supporting the mental, social, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing of students and staff is integrated within our model. • We affirm and support student and staff identities through an interwoven model of cultural and social emotional learning, undergirded by mutual respect and understanding. • Our approach to social-emotional learning includes measures of success reported by students, families, and staff, and works to consciously oppose white-dominant beliefs about behavior or self-regulation on students.

3. Student-Centered Teaching and Learning: Support students to stay on track to HS graduation and postsecondary success

- We have a plan to re-engage students who are disengaged with the education system and the learning process.
- We have a plan to do a robust post-pandemic assessment of all of our students to understand what kinds of differentiated supports students might need..
- We have programs and partnerships in place to provide differentiated supports in response to diverse learning needs.
- Our curriculum is aligned to standards, and differentiated to allow all students to both excel and receive extra support as needed.
- We have a proactive system for tracking student academic and behavioral needs, and clear protocols for responding when students are falling off-track or not progressing with intervention supports.
- We have conducted consultations with families with IEPs and other specialized learning plans to understand what modifications might be needed.

- Our schools and classrooms have equitable, inclusive, and personalized learning environments where every student feels intellectually engaged, empowered, supported, and cared for.
- Our curriculum is culturally-responsive and driven by a belief in student empowerment and inclusivity
- Every student has a personalized learning plan with goals set by students, that is developed with families, and is revisited regularly.
- We have a robust formative assessment system that is balanced, equitable, and aligned with our curriculum in order to help us identify and respond to student needs.
- Our MTSS system includes an equity lens throughout, and includes robust remediation and extra support opportunities that are provided in a variety of ways to meet diverse learning needs.
- Our teachers are trained in effective and culturally responsive pedagogical practices.
- We have systems in place (incl. including surveys, diverse planning meetings, and student-centered formative assessments) to continuously ensure that our curriculum, instructional practices, and support structures are meeting the needs of students and families,
- We have programs and partnerships that offer student-facing, wraparound supports that enhance and amplify existing learning opportunities and capabilities

4. Community and Culture: Build a strong, positive, equitable, and inclusive culture where students and families are true and fully-valued partners.

- We have a plan to re-engage and re-energize students, families, and teachers who are feeling disconnected from the school community, and tend to trauma and loss.
- We have strong structures in place like Advisory to ensure that students have a regular connection to a supportive community.

- Our culture and approach centers the identities, needs, contexts, and aspirations of all students, families, and staff.
- Our teachers leverage culturally relevant practices and model awareness of their own thoughts, emotions and identities.
- We seek ways to design and co-create with students, teachers, families, and community members.
- Students are proactively driving the agenda around most things in our community, including academic and social decisions, climate and culture, performance, and more.

	- We have structures like student government, ASB, or Leadership to get student input on key activities and decisions. - We have a diverse set of structures in place to communicate and connect with families, including those with language differences, internet access issues or inhibiting work schedules.	We engage families in authentic, meaningful, democratic ways. We are working toward actively shifting power dynamics and to respect, value, and understand families as experts on their own children and communities
5. Talent: Recruit and retain a diverse and talented workforce	- We have aligned across leadership on our vision and guiding principles for supporting staff at this time. - We have a plan for staff community building and connection that supports staff well-being and self-care. - We have plans and systems in place to recruit new teachers, particularly educators of color. - We have identified strategies for retaining current talent, who might be feeling the strains of last year.	- We have plans to recruit, support, advance, and retain exceptional talent, especially teachers of color, and have interrogated our processes to ensure they are equitable and transparent and counteract unconscious bias and dominant culture fit. - We have programs or partnerships in place to ensure our staff receive the support they need to heal from the stresses of the past and current year. - We have programs or partnerships in place to help our teachers collaborate with each other and lead in alignment with our vision for equitable schools and classrooms. - We have designed teacher-leader and manager "stretch roles" with appropriate stipends and release time to extend the impact and retain top performers, and use expanded leadership roles to address capacity gaps.
6. Technology and Data: Ensure the infrastructure needed to power a modern learning model	- All learning environments, including school building and student/teacher homes have secure access to devices, learning platforms, and broadband. - Instructional materials leverage high-quality digital tools as often as possible to allow for extra practice at home, learning in the community, and/or access during time of interrupted schooling. - We are able to reliably and securely collect, connect, manage, and report data from across our system, and we disaggregate data by schools, subgroups,	- We periodically evaluate and upgrade our technology, data systems, and processes (including back-end and front-end infrastructures) to ensure they are supporting high-quality student-centered learning models and continuous improvement. - We understand how data and evidence can be used in both culturally-responsive ways, and in ways that perpetuate systemic inequities, and we take action to ensure that data does not serve as a driver to uphold inequitable systems and structures.

	and other dimensions to identify variation within a group of schools and/or a group of students.	
7. Systems Transformation: Build the innovation and continuous improvement capacity needed to achieve excellent and equitable outcomes	- We have taken stock of the impact of the pandemic on our community, and reflected on our actions to see what worked and what didn't, in order to understand key priorities as well as possible paths forward. - We have identified some innovations from the pandemic that were effective for our students, teachers and families and have plans to continue them. - We have a thorough understanding of our new financial realities and are making adjustments to ensure we are being strategic with any new funds that may come our way. - We have or are currently implementing strong mechanisms for connecting and communicating with families.	- We have a clear, coherent, and energizing shared vision for student success that is centered around our commitment to equity and rooted in an understanding of our community and its assets. - We have identified and resourced strategies to translate our vision into reality and identified teams to lead the work. - We have continuous improvement processes in place to support the development and piloting of new practices and learning delivery models, and we scale up those that are found to be effective. - Our improvement processes, including our values and routines, ensure that we are continuously learning and incorporating new information into our system. - We have processes in place to support our staff through major changes, including scaffolded opportunities for learning, and clear decision-making and communication routines.

Notes:
- "Learning loss" is a legitimate concern, but research by TNTP and others has found that "The typical approach to remediation—providing work better suited for earlier grades—won't come close to catching students up and will likely compound the problem." Our framework addresses the academic needs of students at this time no differently than we would during any other incidence when we identify that students are struggling - through student-centered teaching and learning.
- The following resources helped guide our development of this framework:
    - The BELE Framework: Leading with Racial Equity, Centering Students, and Continuous Improvement
    - Catalyst:Ed's Innovative Learning Expert Hub, and The Learning Accelerator's Innovative Learning framework
    - Impact Public Schools, including their commitment to inclusivity and curricular values.
    - Parabola Project's Health and Safety principles