

Flexible Learning Preparedness Index – Rubric



Flexible learning preparedness can be assessed by rating school districts across 7 dimensions

Dimensions of the flexible learning preparedness index



What is flexible Learning?

Flexible learning is defined as a school district's ability to transition between in-person, hybrid, and remote learning environments in a way that maximizes academic growth for all students.

How can school districts assess their preparedness using this rubric?

This rubric is a tool that enables school districts to self-assess their preparedness for flexible learning across 7 key dimensions on a four-point scale, from 1 (poor preparedness) to 4 (great preparedness). A district exhibiting "great" preparedness across all 7 dimensions implies that they have laid a strong foundation to gracefully weather current or future disasters that may call for quick transitions between learning environments. We recommend convening a small, cross-functional group from your school to take this assessment together. A group approach ensures accurate assessment and helps create healthy conversations.

What are the dimensions of flexible learning?

1. **Communications** to articulate the "what" and the "how" to all stakeholder groups
2. **Family engagement** to guide parents/caregivers on how to best support the education of their children
3. **Digital access** for teachers and students to be sustained over time
4. **Professional development** to enable teachers and staff to transition among different learning environments
5. **Curricular resources, platforms, and data** for districts to provide high quality instruction in different learning environments and to track student engagement and progress
6. **Support for special populations** to address the learning needs of special populations (incl. students with learning disabilities, English language learners, low income students)
7. **Mental health** support for students and teachers to provide wellness practices and address mental health diagnoses and other conditions, such as trauma and distress

Communications

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Make communications accessible to all

- ❑ The district communicates only with school administrators but has not yet developed a communication plan for staff, teachers, parents, and students
- ❑ The district has developed a communication plan for each stakeholders group (school administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and students). The plan includes:
 - Clear messaging on the what, how, and why behind decisions
 - Defined channels for each stakeholder
 - Regular cadence of messages with consistent format (e.g. emails every Monday morning)
 - Informal feedback channels
- ❑ The district has developed a communication plan for each stakeholder group (school administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and students). The plan includes:
 - Clear messaging on the what, how, and why behind decisions, including messages to celebrate people and their successes
 - Defined channels for each stakeholder
 - Regular cadence of messages with consistent format (e.g. emails every Monday morning)
 - Communications translated into multiple home languages
 - At least one formal feedback channel for stakeholders
- ❑ The district has developed a communication plan for each stakeholders group (school administrators, staff, teachers, parents, and students). The plan includes:
 - Clear messaging on the what, how, and why behind decisions, including messages to celebrate people and their successes
 - Defined channels for each stakeholder
 - Regular cadence of messages with consistent format (e.g. emails every Monday morning)
 - Communications translated into all required home languages
 - Multiple formal feedback channels for all stakeholders including opportunities to connect with leadership face-to-face

Establish feedback loops and respond quickly

Addressing stakeholder feedback

- ❑ No feedback is received and is therefore not addressed or incorporated
- ❑ Feedback received from stakeholders is not addressed or incorporated
- ❑ Feedback received from stakeholders is selectively addressed and/or incorporated
- ❑ The district has established a system to visibly address stakeholder feedback and update the overall communication strategy based on feedback and data collected

Tracking reach of communications

- ❑ The district does not track reach of communications
- ❑ The district occasionally tracks reach of communications
- ❑ The district tracks reach of communications
- ❑ The district and school leadership are able to and regularly track reach of communications

Family engagement

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Connect and understand the context

- ❑ There is no plan in place to ensure that all families have 1:1 touch points with teachers, staff, or school administrators
- ❑ All families have at least one 1:1 touch points with teachers, staff, or school administrators in which families learn about the learning experience and expectations for their child
- ❑ There is a plan to ensure all families have continuous 1:1 touch points with teachers, staff, or school administrators in which families learn about the learning experience and expectations for their child and the school learns about the family context
- ❑ There is a plan to ensure all families have continuous 1:1 touch points at an established frequency with teachers, staff, or school administrators in which families learn about the learning experience and expectations for their child, the school learns about the family context, and trust is built between the school and family

Bring families in to the learning journey

Centralizing information

- ❑ The district does not have a centralized location (e.g., district website) for parents/caregivers to access information or additional support resources
- ❑ The district has a centralized location (e.g., district website) for parents/caregivers to access information but does not have additional resources to support parents
- ❑ The district has a centralized location (e.g., district website) for resources to support parents/caregivers in the education of their children (e.g., online resources for parents)
- ❑ The district has a centralized location (e.g., district website) for resources to support parents/caregivers in the education of their children (e.g., online resources for parents), with resources available in all relevant languages

Training parents and caregivers

- ❑ No training/education opportunities are provided for parents/caregivers on how their children will be learning
- ❑ Occasional training/education opportunities are provided for parents/caregivers on how their children will be learning
- ❑ Some training/education opportunities are provided for parents/caregivers on: tools their children will be using, educational strategy for their children (the "why" behind the current approach to learning), expectations for parents/caregivers
- ❑ Comprehensive training/education opportunities are provided for parents/caregivers on: tools their children will be using, educational strategy for their children (the "why" behind the current approach to learning), expectations for parents/caregivers

Provide continuous communication and support

Communications plan

- ❑ The district does not have a communication plan for families
- ❑ The district has a 1-way communication plan for families (e.g., emails, newsletters)
- ❑ The district has a clear 2-way communication plan for families
- ❑ The district has a 2-way communication plan for families with a wide variety of channels to ensure coverage (e.g., email, social media, phone calls, local parent groups) and feedback loops

Immediate communications

- ❑ The district does not have the ability to contact parents/caregivers if information needs to be received quickly
- ❑ The district has the ability to contact some parents/caregivers if information needs to be received quickly (e.g., mobile numbers for some parents)
- ❑ The district has a mode to contact parents/caregivers if information needs to be received quickly (e.g., mobile numbers for each parent)
- ❑ The district has set up a tool to directly contact parents/caregivers if information needs to be received quickly (e.g., text messaging, Remind app)

Community organizations

- ❑ The district is not aware of relevant local community organizations (e.g., food banks, libraries)
- ❑ The district is aware of relevant local community organizations (e.g., food banks, libraries)
- ❑ The district has relationships with and an understanding of some local community organizations (e.g., food banks, libraries) which is communicated to families
- ❑ The district has relationships with and an understanding of all relevant local community organizations (e.g., food banks, libraries, childcare) which is actively shared with families

Digital access

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Assess the baseline

- ❑ The district has limited to no understanding of the students' and teachers' technology access
- ❑ The district has a basic understanding of the students' and teachers' technology access
- ❑ The district has a clear, documented understanding of students' and teachers' technology access
- ❑ The district has collected and stored information on each students' and teachers' baseline level of technology access in a central location

Develop a plan

Develop digital strategy

- ❑ The district has no plan in place to ensure student and teacher access to devices or internet
- ❑ The district put in place a plan to deliver instruction to those without device and/or internet access by leveraging existing technology infrastructure (e.g. web based instruction, mailed lessons)
- ❑ The district has a plan to ensure technology access is not a barrier to delivering high quality instruction (e.g., distribution of devices, mailing lesson plans)
- ❑ The district has a digital access support strategy that guarantees sustainable device and internet access for all students (e.g. distribution of devices, mobile hotspots)

Continue tracking students' access

- ❑ <40% of students have access to devices and internet (either at home or through community solutions)
- ❑ 40-70% of students have access to devices and internet (either at home or through community solutions)
- ❑ 70-99% of students have access to devices and internet (either at home or through community solutions)
- ❑ Student devices are 1:1 and 100% of students have access to internet (either at home or through community solutions)

Continue tracking teachers' access

- ❑ Teachers are not provided any additional technology to help them teach in and outside of the classroom
- ❑ Teachers are provided devices and internet access to help them teach in and outside of the classroom
- ❑ Teachers have access to devices and internet as well as some additional technology needed to enable them to teach in and outside of the classroom
- ❑ Teachers have access to devices and internet as well as additional technology that enables them to teach in and outside of the classroom (e.g., microphones, tablets, high-quality video cameras)

Sustain access

- ❑ The district has no resources dedicated to tech support
- ❑ The district has some resources dedicated to tech support
- ❑ The district has the infrastructure set up for basic tech support (e.g., dedicated email to contact with questions/issues)
- ❑ The district has the infrastructure for sustainable tech support (e.g., 24/7 hotline to address technical issues to devices and internet)

Professional development

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Diagnose

❑ The district has no understanding of the learning/professional development needs of their teachers

❑ The district has some anecdotal understanding of the learning/professional development needs of their teachers

❑ The district has a basic understanding of the learning/professional development needs of their teachers

❑ The district has a clear understanding of the learning/professional development needs of their teachers including variation by school, grade, and subject

Design

❑ The district has not developed a plan for the professional development of their teachers

❑ The district has developed a basic plan for the professional development of their teachers

❑ The district has developed a plan for the professional development of their teachers with frequent touchpoints

❑ The district has developed a plan for the professional development of their teachers with multiple touch points, differentiation, feedback loops, and follow-up training

Deliver

❑ Teacher training does not support teachers to implement flexible learning

❑ Teacher training includes tools and resources to enable flexible learning

❑ Teacher training includes tools and resources to enable flexible learning, including:

- Teaching pedagogy across learning environments (remote, hybrid, in-person)
- Examples of best practices for lesson plans
- Guidance on differentiation, assessment, and projects/labs

❑ Teacher training includes tools and resources to enable flexible learning, including:

- Teaching pedagogy across learning environments (remote, hybrid, in-person)
- Examples of best practices for lesson plans
- Guidance on differentiation, assessment, and projects/labs
- Opportunities to observe best practices from other teachers
- How best to use synchronous and asynchronous learning tools
- How to increase student engagement during remote learning

Sustain

❑ The district does not have a system in place to understand the ongoing learning needs of teachers and provide additional support

❑ The district has a basic system to understand ongoing learning needs of teachers but is slow to provide additional support

❑ The district has a system in place to understand ongoing learning needs of teachers (e.g., teacher observations, surveys) and provides some additional support accordingly

❑ The district has a clear system in place to understand ongoing learning needs of teachers (e.g., teacher observations, surveys) and acts quickly to provide additional professional development

Instruction, curricular resources, platforms, and data (1/2)

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Instruction

High-quality instruction

- ❑ Students have inconsistent/limited opportunities to receive access to high-quality instruction

- ❑ Students have opportunities to receive access to high-quality instruction with inconsistency across schools/teachers

- ❑ Students have consistent opportunities to receive access to high-quality instruction with some variation across schools

- ❑ All students have consistent opportunities to receive access to high-quality instruction, including frequent opportunities for teacher-to-student interaction, peer-to-peer collaboration, relationship building, and problem solving during periods of remote learning

Teacher availability

- ❑ When teachers have circumstances preventing them from delivering instruction, the district does not have a plan to ensure continued education of the students

- ❑ When teachers have circumstances preventing them from delivering instruction, the district has some resources to ensure continued education of the students

- ❑ When teachers have circumstances preventing them from delivering instruction, the district has a clear plan in place to ensure continued education of the students

- ❑ When teachers have circumstances preventing them from delivering instruction, the district has a clear plan in place to provide continued access to high-quality learning opportunities for students

Curricular resources

- ❑ The district has not yet provided guidance on curricular resources to maximize student learning across different learning environments (in-person, hybrid, remote)

- ❑ The district has provided guidance on curricular resources to maximize student learning across different learning environments (in-person, hybrid, remote). Districts have not worked collaboratively with teachers to select curricular resources, and resources do not yet have breadth and depth across subjects and grades

- ❑ The district has collaborated with teachers to select curricular resources that maximize student learning across different learning environments (in-person, hybrid, remote). Districts have ensured that curricular resources have breadth and depth across subjects and grades

- ❑ The district has collaborated with teachers to select curricular resources that maximize student learning across different learning environments (in-person, hybrid, remote). Districts have ensured that curricular resources have breadth and depth across subjects and grades; and have been vetted against a comprehensive list of considerations, including:
 - Are easy to use
 - Enable teachers to assess both in-person and remotely each individual student and their progress
 - Provide students with the ability to learn at their own time and pace
 - Are free or affordable
 - Provide guidance and training on how to use
 - Engage and motivate students
 - Are downloadable for offline use
 - Are compatible on all type of devices
 - Protect data and privacy of students
 - Target students' zone of proximal development
 - Enable students to fill in gaps & accelerate preparedness
 - Are evidence-based
 - Are authentically standards-aligned

Instruction, curricular resources, platforms, and data (2/2)

1

Platforms and data tracking

- ❑ The district does not have a standardized Learning Management System (LMS) or centralized hub across all schools

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- ❑ The district has a Learning Management System (LMS) or centralized hub adopted by some or all schools. In the hub, the district has:
 - Provided guidance on some curricular resources that can be used across grades and subjects but the resources are not yet comprehensive
 - Not yet centralized rostering, log-ins, and passwords for all curricular resources to enable a seamless experience for students, teachers and parents/caregivers
 - Not yet developed a tracking mechanism to monitor engagement and progress across curricular resources and assignments.

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- ❑ The district has a learning management system (LMS) or centralized hub available for all schools. In the hub, the district has:
 - Provided guidance on a comprehensive list of curricular resources, organized by grades and subjects
 - Centralized rostering, log-ins, and passwords for all curricular resources to enable a seamless experience for students, teachers, and parents/caregivers
 - Developed a tracking mechanism to monitor engagement and progress across select curricular resources and assignments but the district has not yet used this information to adjust the approach to learning based on available data

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- ❑ The district has a learning management system (LMS) or centralized hub across all schools. In the hub, the district has:
 - A list outlining curricular resources for all grades and subjects. Resources are aligned with the curricular goals to be achieved at every point in time during the school year. The list allows for flexibility for teachers to tailor their lesson plan to their class context and needs
 - Centralized rostering, log-ins and passwords for all curricular resources to enable a seamless experience for students, teachers and parents/caregivers
 - Developed a tracking mechanism to monitor engagement and progress across critical curricular resources and assignments. The district uses this information to adjust the approach to learning based on available data

Support for special populations

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Connect and understand context

- ❑ The district does not have a clear view of the needs of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) nor their families in periods of remote or hybrid learning
- ❑ The district has a baseline understanding of the needs of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) via surveys and conversations with students and families
- ❑ The district has an understanding of the needs of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) and has established regular communication with families, including 1:1 calls and messages translated into home languages
- ❑ The district has a detailed understanding the specialized learning needs of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) and has established regular two-way communication with families, including 1:1 calls and messages translated into their home languages; and has created partnerships with local organizations to understand contextual realities in the students' community

Individualize, personalize, and tailor the response for each student

- ❑ The district has not provided any guidance on how teachers can best support special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) across different learning environments: remote, hybrid and in-person
- ❑ Some teachers have developed approaches to maximize learning of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) across different learning environments (remote, hybrid, in-person) but the school district has not provided guidance or resources
- ❑ The district has published a comprehensive plan to fully support special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) across different learning environments (remote, hybrid, in-person) but has not provided any additional support infrastructure
- ❑ The district has implemented a plan to support special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness) across all learning environments, including:
 - Staffing the required roles, incl. paraprofessionals, co-teachers and counselors
 - Setting up recurring meetings for all teachers, co-teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff to tailor education plans for each student
 - Training all teachers, co-teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff to best support these populations
 - Providing adequate educational resources that address the needs of these populations

Work closely with families as partners

- ❑ The district does not have a communication plan for families of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness)
- ❑ The district has a 1-way communication plan (e.g., emails, newsletters) for families of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness)
- ❑ The district has a clear 2-way communication plan for families of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness)
- ❑ The district has a clear 2-way communication plan for families of special populations (incl. students with disabilities, English Language Learners, low income students, and those experiencing homelessness), including regular touch-points to discuss students' progress, provide visibility on learning goals, and offer guidance on how to best facilitate activities at home

Mental health

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Staffing of multidisciplinary team

- ❑ The district has not provided guidelines on the staffing required to provide comprehensive mental health services for students, teachers, and other school staff
- ❑ Individual schools in the districts have made efforts to set up a team of professionals to provide mental health services for students, teachers, and other school staff. However, the district has not provided standardized guidelines on the staffing required nor the services to be provided
- ❑ The district has provided guidelines on the staffing of professionals trained to provide comprehensive mental health services for students, teachers, and other school staff, including diagnostic assessments and plans for treatment. The types of professionals staffed may include: psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors
- ❑ *(Budget permitting)* The district has ensured schools have implemented mental health staffing guidelines and therefore have the adequate staffing of professionals trained to provide comprehensive mental health services for students, teachers, and other school staff, including diagnostic assessments and plans for treatment. The types of professionals staffed may include: psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric/mental health nurse practitioners, psychiatric/mental health nurses, clinical social workers, and professional counselors

Communicate with stakeholders to provide resources and stay connected to understand needs

- ❑ The district has not communicated available mental health resources to parents, students, teachers, and other school staff
- ❑ As part of the communication strategy, the district has developed clear messages and channels to create awareness on available mental health resources across parents, students, teachers, and other school staff. The district has not yet created feedback loops to understand needs from stakeholders
- ❑ As part of the communication strategy, the district has developed clear messages, channels, and feedback loops to create awareness on available mental health resources across parents, students, teacher, and other school staff. The district has not yet implemented trainings on mental health for teachers and other school staff.
- ❑ As part of the communication strategy, the district has developed clear messages, channels and feedback loops to create awareness of available mental health resources across parents, students, teachers, and other school staff. The district has also implemented trainings for teachers and other school staff on how best handle common mental health scenarios and the best way to guide students to seek additional support

Assess and respond to the current emotional state of teachers and students

Student resources

- ❑ The district has not provided mental health services or resources to students
- ❑ The district has provided students with access to basic resources like school counselors
- ❑ The district has provided students with access to basic resources like school counselors as well as provided guidelines for teachers to support struggling students
- ❑ The district has a clear plan to support students including: access to counselors, guidelines for teachers, and supplemental resources

Teacher resources

- ❑ The district has not provided mental health services or resources to teachers
- ❑ The district occasionally checks in on the well being of their teachers
- ❑ The district has provided some basic mental health resources to teachers
- ❑ The district has a clear plan to support teachers including access to counselors, opportunities to create community with other teachers, and supplemental resources