

GUIDE



# SCENARIO PLANNING FOR LEARNING RECOVERY

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# Scenario Planning for Learning Recovery

## The National Comprehensive Center

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## Scenario Planning for Learning Recovery

Students have been greatly impacted both academically and socially-emotionally, particularly those that were struggling before the pandemic or have been historically underserved. While we have made strides in mitigating the COVID-19 virus with precautionary strategies, such as practicing social distancing, wearing masks, and now vaccinations, the threat will continue for some time.

Districts and schools have the opportunity to invest strategically in learning recovery and improvement, but it's also a daunting task. The amount of funds now available to states and districts to support student learning is more than we have ever seen before. The American Rescue Plan includes \$126 billion for K-12 schools to help with reopening and learning recovery. Districts must spend at least 20 percent of the money for learning recovery and acceleration. It is critical for states, districts, and schools to spend the funds wisely and in ways that enable sustainable improvement, while also avoiding a funding cliff at the end of the funding period.

Scenario planning is a valuable tool that can assist districts make critical decisions on how to provide the most effective, equitable learning recovery opportunities. Scenario planning is a process that organizations use to make long term flexible plans. Scenario planning expands thinking by asking "What is possible based on a realistic set of potential inputs/occurrences? And, what is the potential impact of how we could respond in each case? Scenario planning provides the planning needed to pivot when conditions change to continue meeting intended goals. Education leaders across the country used scenario planning throughout the height of the pandemic. It is a useful tool that can continue to support leaders with the response to the pandemic, as well as planning for future disruptions to education.

There are several ways to conduct scenario planning and much has been written about the various steps, which can vary from four to twelve steps. Figure 1 shows an eight-step process we recommend districts and schools follow.

**Figure 1. Eight-step scenario planning process**



The eight-step process is anchored in foundational principles:

- » The planning begins with and aligns to the organization's vision, mission, values, and goals.
- » Plausible scenarios need
  - › to further the organization's vision and mission;
  - › to represent the values held by the organization and its people;
  - › to include enough detail to allow for deep discussions of trade-offs; and
  - › to focus on strategies to prepare for reinvestment while mitigating harm.

Figure 2 describes each step in the process. For a more detailed look at each step, access the National Comprehensive Center's presentation on scenario planning [here](#).

**Figure 2. Scenario planning process**



Key questions to consider during scenario planning include:

- » What is the purpose or goal of the learning recovery initiative? And, how does this goal align with the district's overall strategic goals?
- » How will students be identified for learning recovery opportunities – how are learning needs determined (e.g., formative assessment data, teacher recommendation)?
- » Which possible evidence-based programs could be considered? What modifications are needed to effectively implement each? And, how could the impact of each be measured?
- » How can learning recovery programs be enriching and desired by students to increase participation (e.g. connecting more traditional academic learning to enrichment programs or extracurricular activities)?
- » What funding exists to cover the program budget, e.g., needing to back fill, or is there a surplus?
- » Which type of learning environment works best for which students? Are there safety requirements to follow? Which environments can meet those requirements? Are changes to

buildings needed? Are there IT needs to accommodate virtual learning? How are programs/providers communicating with families/caregivers?

- » How frequently will the learning opportunities occur (e.g., 6-week summer session, multiple 3-week intensive bootcamps, daily throughout the summer, weekly during the next school year)?
- » How are student learning needs being assessed at the beginning, throughout, and at the conclusion of the program? How are programs/providers communicating with classroom teachers about student needs and progress both before and after the program?
- » What is the length of each learning session (e.g., 7 hours, half-day, multiple 2-hour sessions)?
- » Who will provide the learning opportunities (e.g., school-based or community-based)? Are there existing partnerships that could be expanded to provide additional services? Are staff available? If not, who else can provide the learning (e.g., college student tutors, paraeducators)? What instructional and social emotional learning training is needed for the staff?

We have included an example of a scenario plan for learning recovery as well as a template, districts can use in their planning process. Critical to implementing scenarios and the planning process is staying true to the steps. This includes creating an evaluation of the planning process and the scenarios enacted. This will provide critical information on effectiveness and impact that can be used to for future planning.



## Appendix A: Example of scenario planning for learning recovery

Foundation	Key Elements	Scenario 1 (Remote)	Scenario 2 (Summer School)	Scenario 3 (Boot Camps)	Scenario 4 (Tutoring Sessions)
<p><b>Local Education Agency's (LEA's) Mission</b> <i>(insert mission)</i></p> <p><b>What are the non-negotiables (values)?</b> <i>(insert values)</i></p> <p><b>Focus Area</b></p> <p><b>How to provide equitable, effective learning recovery opportunities to those with the most significant learning gaps?</b></p>	Student Need	Students with the greatest learning loss who also responded positively to remote learning or whose caregivers want to continue remotely	Open to any student who wishes to enroll on a first-come basis, regardless of learning loss	Students with the greatest learning loss with a priority on students with disabilities, English learners, and those living in poverty	Students with the greatest learning loss with a priority on students with disabilities, English learners, and those living in poverty
	Budget	Budget is limited due to the use of reserves in keeping schools open or reopening early in the year and need to backfill	Summer school was already budgeted for and will run as planned	Budget has a surplus due to savings (subs, utilities, supplies, transportation, replacing staff that have left)	Budget has a surplus due to savings (subs, utilities, supplies, transportation, replacing staff that have left)
	Environment	Remote learning can maintain the safety requirements	By limiting enrollment to a registration first-come basis, we can cap the number to maintain safety requirements of social distancing	Each school will conduct in-person reading and math boot camps for each grade level based on being able to maintain safety requirements of social distancing	Each school will have in-person tutoring sessions in the morning and afternoon based on being able to maintain safety requirements of social distancing



Foundation	Key Elements	Scenario 1 (Remote)	Scenario 2 (Summer School)	Scenario 3 (Boot Camps)	Scenario 4 (Tutoring Sessions)
<p><b>Local Education Agency's (LEA's) Mission</b> <i>(insert mission)</i></p> <p><b>What are the non-negotiables (values)?</b> <i>(insert values)</i></p> <p><b>Focus Area</b></p> <p><b>How to provide equitable, effective learning recovery opportunities to those with the most significant learning gaps? (continued)</b></p>	Frequency	Daily for 6 weeks during the summer	Weekly: 5 days for 6 weeks	Weekly: 5 days for multiple 3-week sessions that are content focused, yet also include interdisciplinary or project-based learning activities (i.e., reading boot camp, math boot camp, STEM/ STEAM camp)	Weekly 5 days of morning and afternoon sessions followed by after-school sessions 3 days a week during the first semester of the 2021-22 school year
	Duration	Two 1-hour sessions in the am  Two 1-hour sessions in the pm	7.5-hour days	7.5-hour days	3 hours in the am 3 hours in the pm 1 hour after school
	Workforce	Teachers, substitutes, and paraprofessionals that are available and choose to work during the summer	Teachers, substitutes, and paraprofessionals that are available and choose to work during the summer	Teachers with college students as assistants	College students with a lead teacher for every 20 tutors



## Appendix B: Scenario planning for learning recovery template

Foundation	Key Elements	Scenario 1 (Remote)	Scenario 2 (Summer School)	Scenario 3 (Boot Camps)	Scenario 4 (Tutoring Sessions)
Local Education Agency's (LEA's) Mission <i>(insert mission)</i>					
What are the non-negotiables (values)? <i>(insert values)</i>					
Focus Area					
How to provide equitable, effective learning recovery opportunities to those with the most significant learning gaps?					

