



Tabletop Session Summary

August 12, 2021

Engaging Educators, Families, Students in Planning Summer and the Return to School

Presenters: Eric Gordon, [Cleveland Metropolitan School District](#); Shari Obrenski, [Cleveland Teachers Union](#)

This tabletop discussion examined innovations employed by the Cleveland Metropolitan School District and district partners for a “whole child, whole community” recovery from the pandemic.

Session Highlights

- » The pandemic has been a catalyst for significant innovations in education. Relatedly, Cleveland Metropolitan School District has developed a vision for post-pandemic learning that includes competency-based education, anytime/anywhere and whole human learning, along with personalized learner pathways.
- » This summer, Cleveland had the opportunity to implement some of these principles during their Summer Learning Experience. Teachers submitted creative ideas for projects to implement during two separate summer sessions. More than 8,000 students participated in the two sessions, which provided opportunities for students to finish learning that began during the school year and to deepen that learning. Students were also engaged in enrichment activities. The Summer Learning Experience took place inside school buildings but also in the community. At the end of each of the two summer sessions, demonstration of learning days allowed students to showcase and present their work.
- » Another area of focus in the district has been on reengaging students and families who have been disengaged from school over the last year. The district partnered with the Cleveland Teachers Union’s Family Engagement Leaders to connect with thousands of families face-to-face or through phone calls. The district has also hired parents as Parent Ambassadors. There will be one for each school to offer outreach and support to families. Students have also been hired as Student Ambassadors. This role provides an employment opportunity for students in need of work but also helps with outreach to their peers.
- » Schools will return to in-person instruction in the fall, with a new remote school option. The district is working diligently to create an experience that will make students want to be in school. They will have a more inclusive dress code, offer expanded enrichment and extracurricular activities (e.g., band, choir, orchestra, fitness, and pottery classes), along with the supports to make them accessible for students (e.g., new activity bus shuttles for students in grades K-8). At the high school level, they are converting their media centers into community, college, and career hubs and expanding extracurricular offerings to include activities like e-sports.

Shared Resources



- » [The CMSD Summer Learning Experience](#)
- » [Post Pandemic Learning Vision](#)
- » [Say Yes Cleveland](#)

Questions and Answers on Engaging Educators, Families, Students in Planning Summer and the Return to School

Could you provide further information on the professional learning communities?

Professional learning communities were based on the projects submitted to the district's administration for review and implementation during the summer. Groups of educators came together to come up with new curricula and other projects that they are now sharing with colleagues across the district.

Are there any instructional strategies or variations that you may want to incorporate when starting the traditional school year?

The district will implement accelerators to give educators an opportunity to carry out different projects and programs in their classrooms and schools. During the summer, teachers had the freedom to incorporate new things that they hadn't been able to do during the traditional school year. The educators felt like learners, as they were learning new skills and were able to implement them. Moving forward, the district wants to bring that joy and freedom into teaching and learning.

How many ambassadors (parent and student) are there per school? What will their roles be moving forward?

The district is starting with one Parent Ambassador per school in the fall. Parent Ambassadors are selected at the school level. The person selected is intended to be a champion for the school and have time to take families on tours, answer questions, and be involved in the community. The district's goal is to use ARP funds for the first two years. They want to make sure the model is sustainable so that Clevelanders will still support it in subsequent years.

There are 12 students from each school who make up the High School Student Advisory Board. This diverse group of students is selected to be representative of the student population. These students may be given the role of Student Ambassador as well during the school year.

