



# 10 Ideas for Investing Resources to Help Mitigate the Spread of COVID-19 in School Environments

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published its [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools through Phased Mitigation](#), guidance that provides high-level recommendations to enable schools to open safely, and remain open. Across the nation, school-system leaders are working diligently—through myriad challenges and their unique circumstances—to return their schools to in-person learning.

As these school districts consider how to safely operate, they will need to identify resources to implement school-based mitigation strategies to ensure schools reopen and remain open in the safest possible manner.

For more information about the ABC Science Collaborative, visit: [abcsciencecollaborative.org](http://abcsciencecollaborative.org)

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We offer the following ways school districts can invest resources to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

- 1** Boost staffing to track, monitor, and improve adherence of mask compliance.
- 2** Initiate a contact tracing program, if not already in place.
- 3** Initiate a program to record and transmit to the state and independent third parties (such as the ABC Science Collaborative) the numbers of community-acquired and school-acquired cases and the number of children and staff tested, along with all test results.
- 4** Purchase picnic tables, tents, shelters, and other accommodations for eating outside—most meals eaten at school should be eaten outside whenever possible. Consider adding outdoor education spaces for flexible use, weather permitting.
- 5** Allocate funds to participate in a lessons learned documentation process to mitigate transmission in school.
- 6** Invest in a case management system that encompasses all students and staff and that allows for a line of sight on staffing, school attendance, and quarantine based on vaccine status, exposure, and test results.
- 7** Plan for extra mitigation strategies—such as for PPE, ventilation, and testing—for the special needs learning environments when masking compliance is less than 90%.
- 8** Support COVID-19 mitigation strategies for school sports, especially close contact and/or indoor sports (wrestling, cheer, basketball, volleyball, football, lacrosse, and soccer). Potential strategies include masking (except for wrestling) and testing. Note that some school sports are particularly, and uniquely, influenced by community transmission rates. This is in contrast to the rest of the school environment. Some sports should not be offered in high-transmission settings; others may be helped by routine testing if community transmission is high.
- 9** Provide extra COVID-19 mitigation strategies for the arts and other extracurricular activities.
- 10** If your school district has addressed each of the above ideas, consider evaluation of COVID-19 screening tests and/or ventilation.