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## **BOARD COMMUNICATIONS – May 08, 2020**

TO: Members of the Board of Education  
FROM: Superintendent, Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.

**SUPERINTENDENT – Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D.**

S-1 Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D. Superintendent Calendar Highlights

**ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES – Ruth F. Quinto, Deputy Superintendent/CFO**

AS-1 Kim Kelstrom School Services Weekly Update Report for May  
01, 2020

AS-2 Ruth F. Quinto Cost Saving Mitigating Actions

**EQUITY & ACCESS – Lindsay Sanders, Chief Equity & Access**

EA-1 Kristi Imberi-Olivares Student Connectivity Tool Update

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number S-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Robert G. Nelson, Superintendent  
Cabinet Approval:

Date: May 08, 2020

Phone Number: 457-3884

Regarding: Superintendent Calendar Highlights

The purpose of this communication is to inform the Board of notable calendar items:

- Held principal interviews
- Gave interview with Michael Kelly, ACSA, regarding the Superintendent's reading series
- Held meetings with Executive Cabinet
- Met with district staff and Dr. Tameka McGlawn regarding African American Academic Acceleration Taskforce
- Met with Fresno Teachers Association leadership and district leadership
- Attended Urban Education Dialogue virtual meeting
- Participated in Livestream with Fresno Teachers Association
- Participated in Fresno Unified Livestream
- Gave interview with Juanita Stevenson, Education Matters, regarding the #UnifiedAtHome campaign

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 05/08/2020

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number AS-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Kim Kelstrom, Executive Officer  
Cabinet Approval:



Date: May 08, 2020

Phone Number: 457-3907

Regarding: School Services Weekly Update Report for May 01, 2020

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board a copy of School Services of California's (SSC) Weekly Update. Each week SSC provides an update and commentary on different educational fiscal issues. In addition, they include different articles related to education issues.

The SSC Weekly Update for May 01, 2020 is attached and includes the following articles:

- Assembly Will Reconvene from Recess Next Week – May 01, 2020
- Governor Proposes Reopening Schools This Summer – April 29, 2020
- California Teachers Resist Newsome's 'Unrealistic' Call for July Start – April 29, 2020
- Federal Special Education Law Must Stay Intact During School Closures, Devos Says – April 27, 2020

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Kim Kelstrom at 457-3907.

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 05/08/2020



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[www.sscal.com](http://www.sscal.com)

DATE: May 1, 2020

TO: Robert G. Nelson  
Superintendent

AT: Fresno Unified School District

FROM: Your SSC Governmental Relations Team

RE: *SSC's Sacramento Weekly Update*

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### **Assembly Will Reconvene from Recess Next Week**

It has been over a month and a half since the Legislature took an unprecedented recess to do their part in flattening the COVID-19 curve. However, that all ends this upcoming Monday, May 4, 2020, as the Assembly will return to the Capitol to conduct floor session and policy committee hearings.

On Wednesday, the Assembly Education Committee, chaired by Assemblymember Patrick O'Donnell (D-Long Beach), will hold its only policy committee hearing on Assembly education bills for the year. This means that the 14 bills slated to be heard in Wednesday's hearing will be the only Assembly education bills that will be considered by the Legislature at this time. The significant reduction in bills is in response to legislative leadership requesting legislators to drastically reduce their bill workload and prioritize only their top issues for the year in order to accommodate the condensed legislative calendar.

One of the bills that survived the cut list and will be heard next Wednesday is Assembly Bill (AB) 1835 by Assemblymember Shirley Weber (D-San Diego). This bill requires local educational agencies (LEAs) to use their unspent supplemental and concentration dollars in subsequent years to increase and improve services for the unduplicated pupils who generated those funds. This bill was drafted in response to the Local Control Funding formula (LCFF) audit report released by the State Auditor's Office last November, which recommended any carryover supplemental and concentration dollars be used on unduplicated pupils in subsequent years.

Another timely bill that will be heard next week is AB 2052 by Assemblymember O'Donnell. AB 2052 would exempt an LEA from certain minimum school day requirements if it adds instructional minutes to existing instructional days or if the LEA can demonstrate that it could not meet the minimum instructional day requirements due to specified circumstances. This bill looks to provide some relief to LEAs during the COVID-19 pandemic and following the recurring spate of wildfires and public safety power shutoffs in different parts of the state.

A third significant bill that will be considered next week is AB 2022 by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento). This bill would establish the Advanced Placement (AP) Test Fee Reimbursement Program for purposes of covering the costs of AP examination fees for foster youth and low-income high school pupils. A similar bill made it through the Legislature last year but was vetoed by Governor Gavin Newsom.

You can find the rest of the bills being heard by the committee next week [here](#). We will be sure to let you know which bills make it out of the Assembly Education Committee in next week's *Sacramento Update*.

### **Senate Will Reconvene on May 11**

While the Assembly will return from their recess on Monday, the Senate is not scheduled to return until the following week on Monday, May 11. However, the Senate has not divulged their plans for policy committee hearings and whether any Senate bills will go through the legislative process this year.

*Leilani Aguinaldo*

## **Governor Proposes Reopening Schools This Summer**

By Kyle Hyland, Jamie Metcalf, and Leilani Aguinaldo  
School Services of California Inc.'s *Fiscal Report*  
April 29, 2020

At his daily press briefing on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom expressed cautious optimism that the state is weeks (not months) away from making meaningful modifications to the statewide stay-at-home order and floated the idea of physically reopening schools in late July or early August for an extended 2020–21 school year to make up for the “learning loss” caused by school closures.

The Governor made these comments as he unveiled the following four stage roadmap for how California will gradually reopen its schools, businesses, and economy:

- **Stage 1:** This is the stage that we are currently in where the state continues to build out testing, contact tracing, personal protective equipment, and hospital surge capacity. The focus of this phase is to make essential workplaces as safe as possible and to prepare sector-by-sector safety guidelines for an expansion of the workforce in future stages.
- **Stage 2:** The state gradually opens certain lower risk workplaces with adaptations—including schools, childcare facilities, retail (e.g., curbside pickup), manufacturing, offices (when telework is not possible), and other public spaces such as parks and trails.
- **Stage 3:** Allow higher-risk workplaces to open, such as gyms, nail and hair salons, movie theaters, sports venues (without live audiences), and churches.
- **Stage 4:** The Governor officially ends the stay-at-home order and includes a broad reopening of the highest-risk workplaces including concerts, convention centers, and live-audience sports.

This announcement comes two weeks after the Governor unveiled the [six key indicators](#) that are guiding his Administration’s thinking for when and how to modify the stay-at-home order. At Tuesday’s briefing, Governor Newsom emphasized that childcare facilities and schools are foundational in getting people back to work and that is why they are included among businesses in the fifth indicator, which reads “the ability for businesses, schools, and child care facilities to support physical distancing.”

It is encouraging that the Newsom Administration is becoming increasingly optimistic about schools physically reopening their doors within the next several months, but there are a number of implications to consider and additional resources that will be required in order to reopen schools under the vision that has been offered by the Governor (see “[Governor Newsom Offers Vision of How Schools Could Physically Reopen in 2020](#)“ in the April 2020 *Fiscal Report*).

State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) Tony Thurmond raised some of these considerations yesterday in a [press release](#) responding to the Governor’s remarks:

If this is going to work, there are some major questions we will have to answer. First and foremost: Can this be done in a way that protects the health and safety of our students, teachers, and school staff?

We also must consider the fiscal implications. Social distancing in schools may require smaller class sizes, but schools are going to need additional resources to make it happen—including the possibility of hiring more teachers. Additionally, teachers and school staff will need personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies so that our schools are sanitized. We expect that some form of social distancing will be with us through the summer, so if we start school early, we need resources to make it a reality.

The SPI has convened a task force to explore these and other considerations for the upcoming 2020–21 school year. The [Task Force on Re-opening Schools](#) includes the Governor’s Office, superintendents from around the state, the State Board of Education, the California Office of Emergency Services, the Department of Finance, California Health and Human Services, and labor organizations.

For now there seem to be more questions than answers as to the logistics of schools physically reopening their doors. In addition to the Governor and the SPI’s task force, the Legislature will also play a role in these discussions when they return from recess next month. We will continue to keep you apprised of these conversations as they unfold over the coming weeks.

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*Note: Governor Newsom’s suggestion to physically reopen schools in late July or early August has been met with resistance by the state’s teachers unions.*

## **California Teachers Resist Newsom’s ‘Unrealistic’ Call For July Start**

By MacKenzie Mays  
*Politico*  
April 29, 2020

California teachers unions are fighting Gov. Gavin Newsom’s suggestion that schools open this summer and making clear that they will have a say at the bargaining table.

The unions say teachers were stunned by Newsom’s suggestion Tuesday that schools could reopen in July in an attempt to help reduce learning gaps caused by the coronavirus and allow parents to return to work in a greater capacity.

In Oakland, the talk has actually been about the opposite: delaying the start of the school year — not opening schools weeks early, said Oakland Education Association President Keith Brown.

“We are very concerned about the governor’s comments. It really caught so many teachers by surprise,” Brown told POLITICO Wednesday. “The state has not issued any executive order around the opening of schools and that sort of thing must be negotiated between labor and school districts. We have heard of no such talk from the Oakland Unified School District of opening our schools earlier.”

School officials have been preparing for schools to look different in the fall due to the pandemic — likely with staggered classrooms and smaller, socially distanced student groups — but they were not prepared to rush toward a mid-summer reopening.

President Donald Trump urged governors this week to consider opening schools before the summer break to finish out the current academic year — an approach that runs counter to what state leaders and California

districts have already announced. The nation's biggest teachers unions said Tuesday they would consider strikes or major protests if schools reopen without the proper safety measures in place or against the advice of medical experts.

"It's insane. It's not safe to go back in July," said Jon Bath, political action chair for the Fresno Teachers Association. "Can you imagine being with 40 kids in a room that's 20 [feet] by 20 [feet]? As a teacher, you're going to get it."

Newsom has said that the state's health care capacity and hospitalizations are stabilizing, and the state is "weeks, not months" away from modifying a statewide order that has kept Californians in their homes for nearly six weeks.

But United Teachers Los Angeles said the state should meet more of the metrics Newsom has outlined in his reopening plan, including increasing testing sites, "before setting unrealistic timelines."

"California has led the way on flattening the curve of this deadly pandemic by prioritizing people's health and safety. As the fifth-largest economy in the world, our leaders understand that the economy should serve the people, and not the other way around. We urge our leaders to stay the course, and caution against prematurely lifting social distancing protections by opening schools in a way that would put students, teachers and families at risk," UTLA said in a statement.

The Sacramento City Teachers Association is also against the idea, and said that if Newsom wants to see districts open in "a timely and constructive way," he will have to work more closely with districts and provide more resources to ensure student and teacher safety.

"There are too many unknowns to think that schools can safely reopen in July," SCTA President David Fisher said. "And we have to let science guide our decisions about when it's safe to reopen schools. But no matter what happens, it's important for school districts to work constructively with teachers to produce the best outcomes for kids."

California School Boards Association spokesperson Troy Flint said that educators are eager to get back to serving students but there's an immense amount of planning that would need to occur before schools resume on an accelerated schedule — and health concerns abound.

"There hasn't been sufficient consultation down to the local level," Flint said. "There is not a clear plan for how this would take place or much of a plan at all."

Jesse Melgar, Newsom's press secretary, said that the governor is committed to working with local leaders on this, as well as the Legislature and Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond.

"The governor remains committed to transparency and early collaboration as we navigate this crisis. In that spirit, the governor started the next set of conversations about safely resuming in-person instruction in schools, through summer programs or an earlier start of the school year," Melgar said in an email Wednesday.

When asked about a potential summer school start date, Riverside County Health Officer Dr. Cameron Kaiser said Newsom's comments caught people off guard but that some level of instruction could be "entirely possible" in July. But Kaiser warned of the unknowns regarding how children may act as vectors for the coronavirus despite low numbers of pediatric cases.



“Even if instruction is able to start then — the governor hasn’t said for certain that would be the case — you would certainly need to keep in mind that things such as social distancing and other kinds of classroom precautions will need to be in place,” Kaiser said. “This will have important impacts as far as class size, level of instruction, school lunch times. We might have to stagger some classes and may have to stagger some recesses so we don’t have a whole bunch of kids out on the playfield all at once.”

Thurmond said that Newsom’s announcement on Tuesday was the first he had heard of schools potentially opening in the summer, but on Wednesday announced that he is asking state school chiefs across the country to “examine considerations and best practices” for reopening.

“We share the governor’s aspirations for re-opening our schools as soon as possible. If we are going to do this, it can only be done when we are sure we can protect the health and safety of everyone in our school communities,” Thurmond said.

*Colby Bermel contributed to this report.*

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*Note: U.S. Department of Education Secretary Betsy DeVos proposed minimal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) relief for LEAs as she sent her report to Congress recommending waivers of federal law to provide flexibility to the nation’s LEAs.*

## **Federal Special Education Law Must Stay Intact During School Closures, Devos Says**

*School districts had asked for temporary waivers to avoid lawsuits from parents*

By Carolyn Jones  
EdSource  
April 27, 2020

School districts must comply with federal special education laws during the school closures despite pleas from school administrators for flexibility, U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos announced Monday.

Responding to a request from Congress for recommendations on changes to special education requirements during the coronavirus pandemic, DeVos declined to waive the bulk of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, saying “learning must continue for all students during the COVID-19 national emergency.”

“We undertook this task acknowledging the reality that most students and teachers are at home today; yet, America’s teachers want to keep teaching and students need to keep learning,” DeVos said. “While the Department has provided extensive flexibility to help schools transition, there is no reason for Congress to waive any provision designed to keep students learning. With ingenuity, innovation and grit, I know this nation’s educators and schools can continue to faithfully educate every one of its students.”

Disability rights advocates were relieved at DeVos’ announcement. They had feared that even temporary waivers would be a gateway to broader or more permanent changes to the 1975 law, which guarantees a quality, appropriate education to all students, regardless of their abilities.

“We are thrilled the Department of Education is not recommending waiving these key protections,” said Miriam Rollin, director of the Education Civil Rights Alliance and an attorney for the National Center for Youth Law, a nonprofit law firm based in Washington, D.C. “We agree with the DoE that broad waivers are not necessary and would be harmful to children with disabilities.”

DeVos’ announcement came as a surprise to disability rights advocates as well as school district officials. Both groups lobbied the Department of Education heavily during the 30-day window Congress gave DeVos to recommend waivers. The request for recommendations was part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, which was signed in late March.

“I’m really surprised. It’s slim pickings. They’re not giving us a lot of wiggle room,” said Laura Preston, legislative advocate for the Association of California School Administrators, one of dozens of administrator and school board groups around the country that asked for temporary adjustments to special education laws while schools are closed.

Preston’s group as well as others said that districts need waivers for certain parts of the law, such as timelines for assessments, one-on-one therapy and deadlines for parent meetings to discuss a student’s education plan. In the shift to online learning, some of those services are almost impossible to deliver, they argued, opening districts to lawsuits from parents.

Some parents had been especially nervous about potential waivers, fearing their children would miss out on services such as occupational and speech therapy, one-on-one aides and behavioral therapy.

“I am so relieved,” said Jennifer Grinager, whose son Ben has autism and receives services at his school in Templeton near San Luis Obispo. “(DeVos’) decision helps towards addressing my concerns because it certainly gives me power to fight for my son.”

The issue is not completely resolved, though, Rollin said. Congress must accept DeVos’ recommendations and can still make changes of its own, although a previous attempt, during the CARES Act negotiations in March, was scratched.


“This is a very pleasant surprise, but the fight isn’t over,” Rollin said.

DeVos did recommend small changes to the law, including a waiver for the deadlines for children to transition from early childhood programs to regular schools. While schools are closed, DeVos is recommending that students continue receiving services through their early childhood programs until schools can conduct face-to-face assessments for placement in regular school.

The change makes sense for schools and students, Rollin said.

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number AS-2**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Ruth F. Quinto, Deputy Superintendent/CFO  
Cabinet Approval: 

Date: May 08, 2020

Phone Number: 457-6226

Regarding: Cost Saving Mitigating Actions

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding immediate mitigating actions implemented by the district:

- Purchasing and Hiring Exception Committee was reinstated in May 2018 for the 2019/20 fiscal year. This committee provides an additional layer of scrutiny of purchasing and hiring items. All purchases over \$5,000 must go through the Purchasing and Exception Committee. In addition, all travel over \$500 and all computer purchases. Since March 13, 2020, only two non-school personnel requisitions have been submitted.
- Savings for current year spending aligned with shutdown include utilities, transportation, travel, and school site funds.
- Accelerated timelines for this fiscal year included processes such as purchasing end dates and year-end site closing procedures.
- Ensuring that payments were made to vendors only for services rendered such as student outreach, support and direct virtual services.
- Sweeping ending balances and deferring utilization of one-time funds.
- Collaboration with department leaders resulted in reconsideration of all original 2020/21 department budget submissions.
- Automated efficiencies including outward facing Employee Self-Service, eliminating unnecessary printing of remittance advices, accessing of timesheets from any wireless connection, promoting of direct deposit (which reduced the number of checks printed by 50%) and implementation of a paperless personnel requisition system and accounts payable invoice system
- Applying for emergency grants and other application-based funding opportunities.

As a result of the above mitigating actions, the district has identified significant savings in the current year of approximately \$17.5 million.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Ruthie Quinto at 457-6226.

Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 05/08/2020

Fresno Unified School District  
Board Communication

**BC Number EA-1**

From the Office of the Superintendent  
To the Members of the Board of Education  
Prepared by: Kristi Imberri-Olivares, Director  
Cabinet Approval:

Date: May 8, 2020

Phone Number: 457-3896

Regarding: Student Connectivity Tool Update

The purpose of this communication is to provide the Board information regarding the plan to capture and monitor student connectivity with teachers. As Fresno Unified continues to navigate distance learning through school closures, we wanted to ensure that students are being connected with and having every opportunity to access their teachers and academic content to continue their learning. Our district recognized the need to determine which students are not interacting and engaging in opportunities available and wanted to be strategic about identifying why they are not participating and how we can encourage their engagement in distance learning. Using a common process to collect this data will centrally provide our system the opportunity to assist with student follow-up needs, actively pursue students who are not engaging, and communicate to parents and students more effectively.

A cross-departmental team was formed with Equity and Access, Curriculum and Instruction, School Leadership, Communication, and Information Technology (IT) to backwards map and plan how to help schools operationalize and collect teacher connection with students. After discussing and exploring viable options, ATLAS Gradebook was determined as a tool that the majority of teachers have access to and are familiar with. Additionally, information in Gradebook is populated in the student and parent portals, serving as another communication venue for our stakeholders.

Three assignment categories and scoring guides were created. Feedback on the assignment titles, scoring guides, and upcoming teacher communication was conducted in collaboration with Fresno Teachers Association (FTA). Beginning next week, teachers will receive the following three assignments each week:

- Assignment 1 – Teacher Outreach
- Assignment 2 – Student Interaction
- Assignment 3 – Student Follow-Up

Every Monday, these three weekly assignments will be created and distributed to teachers. Teachers will use the guiding rubric to enter numerical codes into the three assignments by the end of every week. Each week, we will gather the information to review and strategically plan how to target students who may not be connecting or students who have a need. The information gathered from Gradebook will be captured in a data visualization tool for district and school leaders to review every week to identify which students are not being reached and develop a plan to engage these students.

At the end of this week, the team sent out several communications to notify site leaders, teachers, students, and their families about the new ungraded assignments and process, which included the step-by-step guide and how-to webinar video for teachers. These resources will provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the score guide toward helping them learn how to navigate the “Student

Connectivity Tool” Category and three assignments in Gradebook. Additionally, drop-in virtual trainings will be available next week to support those teachers who are unfamiliar with Gradebook (preschool, TK, and Kinder).

Included in this communication is an infographic with the purpose and score guide for each of the assignments in more detail.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact Lindsay Sanders at 457-3471.

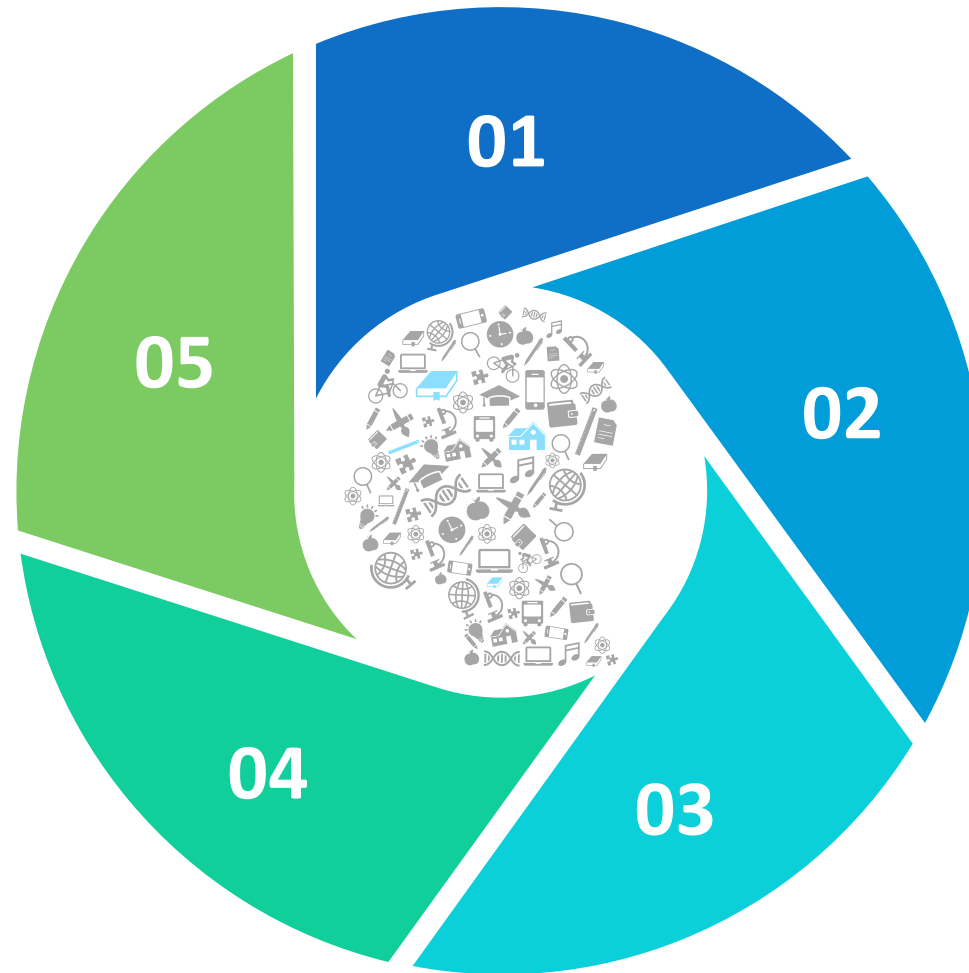
Approved by Superintendent  
Robert G. Nelson Ed.D.



Date: 05/08/2020

# Are Our Students Connecting During COVID 19?

Creating a process to gather student connectivity



## Analyze Data and Act

Data pulled at the end of the day on Friday can be summarized in order to take strategic action around student and teacher supports.

## New To Gradebook? (PS to K)

If you are new to gradebook, sites will have support teachers who can provide assistance and brief tutorials and a support line will be available.

## The Why

Using a common process to collect data centrally provides our system the opportunity to assist with student follow up needs, actively pursue students who are not engaging, and communicate to parents and students.

## Utilizing ATLAS Gradebook

ATLAS Gradebook can allow us to collect common basic information as efficiently as possible with the highest familiarity to most teachers, and the highest utility.

## 3 Weekly Assignments

3 weekly assignments will be created and pushed out in gradebook weekly, and teachers will use guiding rubrics to enter into those 3 assignments by the end of every week.

# What Do I Do Now?

## Recording Weekly Interactions with Students

Each week over the next five weeks, each teacher will have 3 assignments (ungraded and excluded) PUSHED into their class gradebook. Teachers do not have to create the assignments as it will be weekly; **DO NOT ALTER THE ASSIGNMENTS**. To have a centralized data system, teachers will utilize the provided score guides for each assignment below to enter in a score. All students should have a weekly score entered for the three assignments by **3pm on Friday**.

### 01 Assignment 1 Teacher Outreach

Teacher Outreach Score Guide	
No Outreach Attempted	0
Updated resources/assignments available to students (Teams, Classroom, website, etc.)	1
Sent a mass communication to all families/students (School Messenger, Email, Remind, etc.)	2
Called individual family/student and left a message	3
Conducted a contact opportunity (Teams Meeting, Zoom, Conference all, Etc.)	4
Conducted a contact opportunity (4) and one or more of the other outreach (1-3)	5

### 02 Assignment 2 Student Interaction

Student Interaction Score Guide	
Did not participate, respond, or engage	0
Completed resources, activities, assignments (Teams, Classroom, website, etc.)	1
Connected via phone with student or parent	2
Connected via email with student or parent	3
Participated in a contact opportunity (Teams meeting, Zoom, conference call, etc.)	4
Participated in a contact opportunity (4) and one or more of the other interactions (1-3)	5

### 03 Assignment 3 Follow-up

Follow-up Score Guide	
No follow-up needed or follow-up unknown	0
Phone disconnected or unavailable (busy, blocked, unanswered, etc.)	1
Translation Follow-up	2
Technology Follow-up	3
Counseling Follow-up	4