

Community Building and Extracurriculars: Recommendations and Key Points

Remote Learning Task Force Expert Advisory Panel 2:

Support to Address the Whole Child Experience

July 14, 2020

Recommendations

1. **Extracurriculars should be designed to be fluid between school and home**, so that an in-person activity can switch to being delivered remotely without notice and without loss of continuity. For instance, a crafts project could be started in person, but materials can be sent to the student's home to continue remotely, or a karate class could be designed so it can be conducted either in-person or over Zoom.
2. **Lower time and money barriers to entry for extracurriculars, because all students need the community and sense of identity that extracurriculars provide at this time.**
 - a. **Minimize need for parent involvement** in remote activities
 - b. **Minimize costs** by having volunteer leaders or by PTOs subsidizing materials costs.
3. **For community building, prioritize service learning (community service and social justice) for all students, both in-person and remote. This should include anti-racism initiatives.** Service learning builds empathy and helps students process negative emotions. It is critical to promote mental health and raise morale.

Key Points

1. Transitions during the school year are very possible, and there need to not be abrupt disruptions in children's extracurriculars as this further contributes to loss of community and student stress.
2. Parents have very limited bandwidth for remote extracurriculars or community activities.
3. Service learning benefits mental health and morale, builds empathy, and is especially important to create a space for processing when students are angry and frustrated. There are ways to do good at home.
4. In-person school with masks and social distancing cannot be assumed to have the same social development and peer interaction benefits as regular school. Extracurriculars and community building are especially important right now to create a sense of normalcy and an outlet for self-expression.
5. It is important to identify leaders for community and extracurricular activities. Could these be teens, through partnerships with Brookline Teen Center or BHS course credit? Could someone be hired, like a camp director, to lead these volunteers?