

Recommendations

- 1. Video messaging will help parents prepare their students for re-entry.** *For students returning to school buildings:* visuals of classrooms with socially distant layout, teachers and students in masks, etc. to help students visualize what it will be like. *For students learning remotely part or full time:* how home-based learning will be structured and how it will be different from spring remote learning, and show how to navigate remote learning platforms.
- 2. Flow chart for parents of who to contact and what to do about common concerns,** to be distributed at the start of the school year with instructions for what parents should do for concerns about their child that may arise during the year – e.g. school refusal, anxiety or depressive symptoms, attention difficulties, difficulty navigating learning platforms, etc. This is to avoid a time lag in getting help for students as problems arise.
- 3. For K-8, improved support for parents through automated reminders; video tutorials and video conferencing; and monthly meetings of each homeroom’s parents with teacher and/or guidance staff.** Parents need systematically increased social and logistical support.
- 4. For K-8, work with parents to develop and implement consistent, parallel behavioral expectations for school and home.** For example, when at school, raise hand before speaking; when at home, keep background noise to a minimum during online lessons.
- 5. For 9-12, enhance communication with students and parents around mental health via streamlined guidance newsletters, making the PSB website on counseling and mental health easier to navigate, and harnessing social media.**

Key Points

1. Young children’s biological stress systems are immature, and they rely on parents and caregivers to help them regulate stress. Too much biological stress interferes with their immune system, mental health, and ability to learn. Parents who are overly stressed or unavailable have less capacity to buffer their children from biological stress.
2. Parents are key partners in student education and well being, especially for partly or fully remote learners. Families have increased stress and many social supports have been reduced. Implementation of instruction and interventions is hard to sustain - any behavior change is difficult and can take many years to build fluency. Parents need more supports from PSB.
3. One effective strategy to support families is offering preprogrammed, automatic reminder emails or texts to provide support to the child. Another effective strategy is to offer brief video training modules or video coaching. Directions to families should be clear and concise.
4. Parents can prepare students to adjust to changes in the school environment, and/or to hit a “reset button” on remote learning after spring. They need help to facilitate this reentry process.
5. Improved, streamlined communication is essential for all ages. Information and resources for parents to access when concerned about student mental health exist but are hard to find, which can lead to lag time in identifying and getting help for student issues.