

WHAT WILL IT COST TO REOPEN SCHOOLS?

This document estimates some of the expenses school districts may incur in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and as they plan to reopen for the 2020–2021 school year. These calculations assume the statistics of an average* school district with 3,659 students, 8 school buildings, 183 classrooms, 329 staff members, and 40 school buses (transporting at 25% capacity, or 915 students, to comply with recommended social distancing guidelines).



ADHERING TO HEALTH MONITORING & CLEANING/DISINFECTING PROTOCOLS

Hand sanitizers for students in classrooms
\$39,517

Disinfectant wipes for classrooms
(four/day per classroom)
\$16,833

No-touch thermometer
(one per school)
\$640

Oximeter
(one per school)
\$360

Electrostatic disinfectant sprayers
\$33,600

Deep cleaning of school after a confirmed case
\$26,000



HIRING STAFF TO IMPLEMENT HEALTH & SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Additional custodial staff for increased cleaning/disinfecting of schools and buses to prevent spread
\$448,000

Ensuring at least one FT/PT nurse in every public school
\$400,000

Ensuring one aide per bus to screen student temperatures before boarding
\$384,000



PROVIDING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Gloves for custodial staff
(five pairs/day for two custodians per school)
\$1,440

Daily disposable masks for in-school staff
\$44,415

Disposable masks for students who do not bring masks from home
(est. 30% of students)
\$148,190



PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION & CHILD CARE

Resume before/after school childcare programs
(with social distancing and cleaning protocols)
\$168,750

Fog machines and cleaner for buses
(7 machines)
\$55,860

Hand sanitizer for buses
\$10,534

TOTAL ADDITIONAL EXPENSES AN AVERAGE* DISTRICT MAY INCUR TO REOPEN: \$1,778,139

*Costs will vary by district depending on many factors, including regional/market price as economy of scale (i.e., larger districts may have access to lower unit costs because they can buy in higher volumes), and the availability of labor and goods necessary to comply with recommended social distancing and cleaning protocols. Model assumes 25% transportation capacity to adhere to social distancing guidelines. (Bus fleets would need to quadruple in size to safely transport 100% of students under COVID-19 circumstances, which is financially unfeasible for districts.)

This list of costs is not intended to be exhaustive but illustrates how the overall cost of school operations will substantially increase to safely reopen as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on K-12 education, please contact [ASBO International](#) & [AASA](#).



External References:

"Now What? Navigating K-12 Reopening, A Collaborative Planning Process?" National Council on School Facilities, Working Document, May 2020.

"School Bus Driver Pay Rises as Shortage Worsens," Thomas McMahon, *School Bus Fleet Magazine*, November 2018.

"Total School Districts, Student Enrollment by State and Metro Area," *Governing The Future of States and Localities*, eRepublic. Accessed June 2020.