



Quebec English-Speaking Communities Research Network
Réseau de recherche sur les communautés québécoises d'expression anglaise



GUIDE: Resources for Organizing Educational Services Under Shutdowns Including COVID-19

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About this guide

This preliminary guide lists resources from scholarly journals, newsletters, newspapers, websites, and other sources organizing educational services under prolonged shutdowns caused by epidemics such as COVID-19 and other disasters.

Context

Rationale

The guide was created to support ILET and Quebec's educational sector in response to a time-sensitive request related to the COVID-19 pandemic. On April 23, 2020, QUESCREN received a request from a member of Quebec's English-language educational community for "resources that would be useful in organizing educational services under partial or complete shutdowns over prolonged periods or repeated cycles of opening and closing" with a particular focus on North American/Commonwealth examples. This request relates to challenges faced by the educational sector following shutdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020.

QUESCREN and ILET

Established in 2008, the Quebec English-speaking Communities Research Network (QUESCREN) is a collaborative network of researchers, stakeholders, and educational and other institutions that improves understanding of Quebec's English-speaking communities and promotes their vitality.

In 2017, QUESCREN created the Inter-Level Educational Table (ILET), which brings together representatives of Quebec's English-language educational institutions and associations, along with community groups and the public sector. ILET's mission: supporting Quebec's English-language education system through research, knowledge mobilization, and educational activities.

Resources on organizing educational services under coronavirus (SARS, MERS, COVID-19) and influenza outbreaks

Management/policy related issues

Ash, K., & Davis, M. R. (2009). [E-Learning's Potential Scrutinized in Flu Crisis](#). *Education Week*, 28(31), 1–12.

The closing of hundreds of U.S. schools in 2009 because of concerns about swine flu underscored the need for administrators to make plans for continuing their students' education during any extended shutdown. Some 726 public and nonpublic schools across the country were closed, according to the Education Department. The author reports on how various school districts in California, Texas, Iowa, and Montreal have implemented plans to educate students during extended school closures. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Organisation de la sécurité civile du Québec. (2008). [Plan gouvernemental en cas de pandémie d'influenza](#).

The purpose of the plan is to establish the foundations that will guide the Organisation de la sécurité civile du Québec in managing the consequences of an influenza pandemic, based on three strict rules of governance: protection against risk, solidarity and responsibility. (From the OSCQ website).

Organisation de la sécurité civile du Québec. (2006). [The Québec Pandemic Influenza Plan-Health Mission](#).

The *Québec Pandemic Influenza Plan—Health Mission* details the potential effects of an influenza pandemic on the health and psychosocial well-being of Québec's population and on the everyday workings of society. It also defines the strategies and activities to be put into action at the provincial level to deal with an influenza pandemic. The *Plan* covers five major areas: public health, physical health, psychosocial intervention, communication and the maintaining of services. (From the OSCQ website).

UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, World Food Programme. (2020, April). [Framework for reopening schools](#).

This 5-page document provides guidelines for policymakers and administrators in reopening schools.

UNICEF, WHO, IFRC. (2020, March). [Interim guidance for Covid-19 prevention and control in schools.](#)

The purpose of this document is to provide clear and actionable guidance for safe operations through the prevention, early detection and control of COVID-19 in schools and other educational facilities. (Adapted from article summary)

Uscher-Pines, L., Schwartz, H., Ahmed, F., Zheteyeva, Y., Meza, E., Baker, G., Uzicanin, A. (2018). [School practices to promote social distancing in K-12 schools: review of influenza pandemic policies and practices.](#) BMC Public Health, 18(1), 406.

The document review reveals limited literature on school practices to promote social distancing. The most frequently identified school practices are cancelling or postponing after-school activities, canceling classes or activities with a high rate of mixing/contact that occur within the school day, and reducing mixing during transport. (Adapted from article abstract)

Viner, R., Russell, S., et al. (2020). [School closure and management practices during coronavirus outbreaks including COVID-19: A rapid narrative systematic review.](#) *The Lancet, Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(5), 397-404.

Data from the SARS outbreak in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Singapore suggest that school closures did not contribute to the control of the epidemic. Modelling studies of SARS produced conflicting results. Recent modelling studies of COVID-19 predict that school closures alone would prevent only 2–4% of deaths, much less than other social distancing interventions. The [references](#) list for this article includes other resources. (Adapted from article abstract)

World Health Organization. (2019). [Non-pharmaceutical public health measures for mitigating the risk and impact of epidemic and pandemic influenza.](#)

This document provides recommendations for the use of non-pharmaceutical public health measures for mitigating the risk and impact of epidemic and pandemic influenza. **Note: the document addresses influenza and not COVID-19; some recommendations may be transferable, but not necessarily all.**

World Health Organization. (2009). [Reducing transmission of pandemic \(H1N1\) 2009 in school settings.](#)

This document outlines a framework for health and school authorities to consider when developing pandemic planning and decision-making guidance to reduce infections. **Note: the document addresses H1N1 and not COVID-19; some recommendations may be transferable, but not necessarily all.**

Mitigating psychological effects and addressing learning difficulties

Dalton, L., Rapa, E., Stein, A. (2020). [Protecting the psychological health of children through effective communication about COVID-19](#). *The Lancet, Child & Adolescent Health*, 4(5), 346-347.

This one-page commentary provides guidelines for communicating with children about COVID-19.

Danese, A., Smith, P., Chitsabesan, P., & Dubicka, B. (2019). [Child and adolescent mental health amidst emergencies and disasters](#). *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 216(3), 159–162.

The mental health of children and young people can be disproportionately affected and easily overlooked in the context of emergencies and disasters. Child and adolescent mental health services can contribute greatly to emergency preparedness, resilience and response and, ultimately, mitigate harmful effects on the most vulnerable members of society. (Adapted from article abstract)

Iqbal, S.A., Azevedo, J.P., Geven, K., Hasan, A., Patrinos, H.A. (2020). [We should avoid flattening the curve in education – Possible scenarios for learning loss during the school lockdowns](#). World Bank Blogs, Published on April 13, 2020.

This article looks at possible effects of COVID-19 on the “learning curve” to design better mitigation strategies for poorer children and those with learning difficulties. Three scenarios of how the learning curve may evolve in the coming months are presented: a lower average, a higher standard deviation, or a sharp increase in low learning at the bottom.

Kamenetz, A. (2020, April 2). [9 out of 10 children are out of school worldwide. What Now?](#) NPR.

This article and short broadcast summarizes what experts in the field known as “education in emergencies” have learned from past school shutdowns, and focuses largely on the effects on children. The following lessons are listed in the article:

- It can take years for students to recover the learning they've lost
- Continuity efforts won't reach everyone, but they are still necessary
- Children are at risk for toxic stress – but continuity efforts can help
- Expect high school graduation and college-going rates to take a hit
- School systems are sometimes entirely remade
- Media can be part of the solution

Lee, J. (2020). [Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19](#). *The Lancet, Child & Adolescent Health*, Reflections, published April 14, 2020.

This one-page editorial summarizes issues surrounding mental health and school closures.

UNICEF. (2020). [How to talk to your child about coronavirus disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Published March 10, 2020.

This short article and video gives “eight tips to comfort and protect children.”

Critical Perspectives on Distance Learning Platforms

Murphy, K. (2020, April 29). [Why Zoom Is Terrible](http://www.nytimes.com). The New York Times, Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com>

This article provide a critical perspective on current online videoconferencing systems and how to avoid so-called “Zoom fatigue”

Schoenenberg, K., Raake, A., Koeppel, J (2014). [Why are you so slow? – Misattribution of transmission delay to attributes of the conversation partner at the far-end](#). International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 72(4), 477-487.

This study addresses the question of how transmission delay affects user perception during speech communication over telephone systems. It aims to show that the occurrence of pure delay should not be neglected when planning a telephone or conferencing system even if no impact on the perceived quality of the call can be found. (Adapted from abstract)

Sklar, J. (2020, April 24). [‘Zoom fatigue’ is taxing the brain. Here's why that happens](http://www.nationalgeographic.com). National Geographic, Retrieved from <http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

This article provide a critical perspective on current online videoconferencing systems and how to avoid so-called “Zoom fatigue”

Distance Learning Resources

The following links compile resources for teachers, schools and school administrators to facilitate student learning:

- Quebec Community Groups Network has a [list of resources on education](#); frequent updates
- [LEARN](#) [Leading English Education and Resource Network] has resources for learning at home, a virtual campus, and many other resources
- UNESCO has compiled a [list of educational applications, platforms and resources](#)
- The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has a [list of resources for students and guides for teachers and administrators](#) related to distance learning
- The Canadian Commission for UNESCO has some Canadian examples on its [latest blog post](#)
- The Government of Quebec launched a platform called [Open School](#), and Ontario launched [Learn from Home](#), a similar platform.
- The [Keewatinook Internet High School](#) has been serving remote indigenous communities in northern Ontario for over 20 years; based on this experience, it may have advice on adapting to Internet-based models.

Resources on organizing educational services under wildfires in Fort McMurray, Alberta, 2016

The sources from academic journals, trade publications, and news outlets listed below address the **psychological and structural issues related to these wildfires on the educational sector**.

Ball, N. (2016). [Fort McMurray teachers thankful for support](#). *ATA News*, 51(2), 3–3.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Brown, M. R. G., Agyapong, V., Greenshaw, A. J., Cribben, I., Brett-MacLean, P., Drolet, J., Harker, C. M., Omeje, J., Mankowski, M., Noble, S., Kitching, D. T., & Silverstone, P. H. (2019). [Significant PTSD and other mental health effects present 18 months after the Fort McMurray wildfire: Findings from 3,070 grades 7–12 students](#). *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 10(AUG). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2019.00623>

Of the 3,070 students affected by the wildfires, 37% met criteria for probable PTSD; 31% met criteria for probable depression, and 17% for probable depression of at least moderate severity; 27% of students met criteria for probable anxiety, and 15% for probable alcohol or substance use disorder; 46% of all students met criteria for one or more probable diagnosis of PTSD, depression, anxiety, or alcohol/substance abuse, and this included students who were both present and not present in Fort McMurray at the time of the wildfire. These findings highlight the negative impact of disasters on youth mental health, particularly for those who directly experience wildfire, and the role of resilience on youth mental health, with lower resilience associated with substantially lower mental health outcomes. These results emphasize the need for long-term mental health supports for youth post-disaster, with specific focus on increasing youth resilience, which may serve as a protective factor against effects of disaster on mental health. (Adapted from article abstract)

Brown, M. R. G., Agyapong, V., Greenshaw, A. J., Cribben, I., Brett-Maclean, P., Drolet, J., McDonald-Harker, C., Omeje, J., Mankowski, M., Noble, S., Kitching, D., & Silverstone, P. H. (2019a). [After the Fort McMurray wildfire there are significant increases in mental health symptoms in grade 7-12 students compared to controls](#). *BMC Psychiatry*, 19(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-018-2007-1>

The results of this comparison demonstrate that mental health symptoms were statistically significantly elevated in the Fort McMurray population when compared to the control population in Red Deer. This occurred for scores consistent with a diagnosis of depression (31% vs. 17%), moderately severe depression (17% vs. 9%),

suicidal thinking (16% vs. 4%), and tobacco use (13% vs. 10%). Consistent with there being major mental health impacts from the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire, self-esteem scores and quality of life scores were also statistically significantly lower in Fort McMurray. While the rates of anxiety disorder were similar (15% vs. 16%), the mean scores on the anxiety scale were slightly higher, with this difference reaching statistical significance. There were no statistical differences in the rates or scores for alcohol or substance use. These findings highlight first, the need to identify adolescents most at risk of developing psychiatric symptoms after experiencing the trauma of disaster and second, the importance and necessity of implementing short and long term mental health intervention programs specifically aimed at adolescents, in order to help mitigate the negative effects of disasters on their mental health. *(Adapted from the article abstract; NOTE: see "Correction to" article below by same authors.)*

Brown, M. R. G., Agyapong, V., Greenshaw, A. J., Cribben, I., Brett-Maclean, P., Drolet, J., McDonald-Harker, C., Omeje, J., Mankowski, M., Noble, S., Kitching, D., & Silverstone, P. H. (2019b). [Correction to: After the Fort McMurray wildfire there are significant increases in mental health symptoms in grade 7-12 students compared to controls \(BMC Psychiatry \(2019\) 19 \(18\) DOI: 10.1186/s12888-018-2007-1\)](#). *BMC Psychiatry*, 19(1). Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-019-2074-y>

Information on a correction to the previous article by Brown et. al. listed above.

Dube, S. (2016). [PD day hits right note for Fort McMurray teachers](#). *ATA News*, 51(6), 6–6.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Dube, S. (2020). [Shared human experience provides comfort](#). *ATA News*, 54(11), 3–3.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Hare, C. (2016a). [Displaced Fort Mac teachers eager to return home](#). *ATA News*, 50(18), 4–4.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Hare, C. (2016b). [Returning to normal](#). *ATA News*, 51(2), 6–7.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Hare, C. (2016c). [Fort Mac teachers thankful once again](#). *ATA News*, 51(5), 4–4.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Hare, C. (2016d). [Researchers bring expertise to Fort McMurray](#). *ATA News*, 51(5), 4–4.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Hare, C. (2016e). [Hungry Hungry Hippos take a bite out of 'The Beast'](#). *ATA News*, 51(8), 5–5.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Harris, L. (2016). [Fort McMurray in need of substitute teachers](#). *ATA News*, 51(8), 5–5.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Markusoff, J., & Vautour, A. (2016). [After the fire](#). (Cover story). *Maclean's*, 129(26), 18–25.

Feature articles from Maclean's on the consequences of the wildfire (subscription required, article available from QUESCREN upon request).

Thomas, G. (2016). [I'm displaced; can I still teach?](#) *ATA News*, 50(18), 2–2.

Informal one-page article from the Alberta Teachers' Association.

Resources on organizing educational services under Hurricane Katrina, 2005

Alvarez, D. ["I Had to Teach Hard": Traumatic Conditions and Teachers in Post-Katrina Classrooms.](#) (2011). *High School Journal*, 94(1), 28–39.

Before Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, 121 schools in the public system were in the process of being transferred to the newly created, state run Recovery School District (RSD). On September 29, 2005, the New Orleans Parish School Board fired all 7500 employees, including every teacher. The disaster brought another layer of crises that would confront teachers as they tried to resume educating the returning students to the public schools. This research study examines the instructional practices of teachers following the disaster and explores the role written literacies played in their instructional adaptations. In this two-year study, the evidence revealed that a disaster event required teachers to make specific changes in disciplinary content and instructional practice. All the teachers acknowledged that teaching after Katrina's devastation brought unexpected challenges to the classroom. Teachers not only had to cope with their personal stresses but also had to manage unstable environmental conditions, changes in adolescent behavior, and school disciplinary changes that occurred during the recovery process. For the English Language Arts teachers, oral story telling and written narrative tasks became important tools for coping with the challenges. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Elliott, C. B., & Taylor, D. (2006). [Leading in the Worst of Times.](#) *Educational Leadership*, 64(1), 82–86.

On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina and the floodwaters from the breached levees destroyed all 14 schools in Louisiana's St. Bernard Parish. Although most residents had been evacuated before the hurricane hit, 1,500 men, women, and children rode out the storm in Chalmette High School. The district superintendent and the school leadership team managed the crisis for five days, rationing water and food and ensuring the residents' safety. In the aftermath of the hurricane, they plunged into the extraordinarily difficult work of rebuilding a community. They brought in modular classrooms, rehired staff, and provided hot meals and after-school support. The efforts and successes of these determined educators provide insights into the complexity of an effective emergency response to a catastrophic event. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Foster, K. M. (2006). [Bridging Troubled Waters: Principles for Teaching in Times of Crisis](#). *Penn GSE Perspectives on Urban Education*, 4(2).

This essay provides interrelated principles for teaching and learning in times of heightened awareness of wars, disasters and human suffering. Purposeful teaching in times of crisis should occur both with children directly impacted by catastrophic events as well as with those less directly impacted. The examples provided in this essay for teaching in times of crisis are drawn from the positive work of committed schoolteachers and others in Austin, Texas as they have been working with a student community that since September 2005 has come to include close to 10,000 new families and 1000 new students who came from New Orleans and other parts of Louisiana following Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunate counter-examples, against which this framework stands, also come from Austin educators, specifically teachers and administrators whose prejudices, fears or lack of proaction have outweighed their better selves and furthered the miseducation of children. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Gainey, B. S. (2009). [Crisis Management's New Role in Educational Settings](#). *Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 82(6), 267–274.

From natural disasters to the financial debacle, it is clear to the educational community that crises know no boundaries. Far from a passing fad, crisis planning must be an integrated part of effective school district leadership. Two studies explore the status of crisis management in selected public school systems and offer recommendations for enhancing the crisis-ready state of educational organizations. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Howat, H., Curtis, N., Landry, S., Farmer, K., Kroll, T., & Douglass, J. (2012). [Lessons from Crisis Recovery in Schools: How Hurricanes Impacted Schools, Families and the Community](#). *School Leadership & Management*, 32(5), 487–501.

This article examines school and school district-level efforts to reopen schools after significant damage from hurricanes. Through an empirical, qualitative research design, four themes emerged as critical to the hurricane recovery process: the importance of communication, resolving tension, coordinating with other services and learning from the past. School administrators must proactively plan for catastrophic events and balance the need for open communication within and outside the school district; to resolve tensions; and to coordinate with other public and private efforts to restore the community. Finally, they should use each experience as a learning opportunity. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)

Vail, K. (2006). [Rebuilding New Orleans Schools after Katrina](#). *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*, 71(9), 36–39.

In this article, the author talks about the rebuilding of the public school system in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. A group of local and state educators, community leaders, and business people, headed by Tulane University President Scott Cowen, recommended that New Orleans become a hybrid of traditional public schools and charter schools, trimming back the central office and giving principals the bulk of the decision-making authority. Equity was at the forefront of the committee's discussions about how the school system should look. One of the key recommendations is that the district operate under an educational network model in which schools are organized into small groups. The author talks about some assurances needed like those of the United Teachers of New Orleans, which wanted some assurance New Orleans teachers would be rehired first over teachers from other areas. Among other things, the author points out the eagerness of the committee to remake what has been one of the most dysfunctional school systems in the US. (Adapted from the abstract from the ERIC [Education Resources Information Center] website)