



SCHOLARS
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To Avoid Reopening Disasters, Real Engagement With Parents and Teachers Is Crucial

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As school districts across the state scramble to make final decisions on fall learning plans, parents and teachers take a front row seat as spectators in a process that will greatly impact their lives. I study the role of relationships on performance in multiple settings, including K-12 education. My research shows that while implementing a plan as complex as school re-opening during a pandemic, it is essential to carefully manage communication and relationships among key stakeholders – students, teachers, parents, administrators, other staff, and public health officials.

My experiences as a parent and as an advisory council member – both framed by my work as a social science researcher – indicate that many of Massachusetts' school districts are headed for failure. District leaders have neglected to meaningfully engage teachers and families as credible members of the school community.

These failures jeopardize everyone's safety because clear, honest, and open communication is essential for spotting and stopping the spread. Further, buy-in from teachers and parents is more critical to the successful implementation of learning plans than ever before. It is not too late to address these issues and to enter the school year with a foundation of meaningful engagement from the people who are most effected by and integral to successfully reopen.