School administrators are coping with fires, storms, and floods on top of the deep disruption from COVID-19. Here are advice and resources from educators Tim Taylor (Executive Director, Small School Districts’ Association), Casey Taylor (Executive Director, Achieve Center), and Mike Walsh (Director-at-Large, California County Boards of Education) on how to manage a school community following a disaster based on their experiences during and after the 2018 Camp Fire in Paradise, CA.

**Prioritize caring for yourself and your staff.**
- Support traumatized teachers by hiring a full-time substitute to assist.
- Provide signing bonuses to every staff member who agrees to stay for the next school year.
- Give yourself permission to feel what’s going on

**Request and accept help.**
- Bring in help from outside your district, like firefighting teams do.
- Find a trustworthy coordinator to manage donations.
- Form a full mental health team: coordinator, crisis counselor, trauma counselor, school psychologist.
- Hire interim principals to share the work of getting schools back up and running.
- Ask your school district attorney how they can help.
- Hire a budget coordinator to manage purchases and pay bills for replacement items.

**Be strategic about communications.**

### For the community
- Make sure your students and staff are safe and communicate that regularly.
- Only say what is confirmed by official fire, law enforcement and emergency sources.
- Do a daily community update.

### With school board members
- Make sure they know where to see your daily updates.
- Longer term, have them help you tell your story.
- Ask them to focus on legislation for long-term aid for your schools.

**Streamline decision making.**
- Set up daily updates for school board members and ask them not to call school leaders unless absolutely necessary.
- Determine what school board resolutions need to be passed to make sure leaders have temporary authority to make all necessary decisions.
- Ask the board to focus on long-term issues: FEMA contracts, facility contracts, enrollment funding waivers.

**Access and leverage all relief money.**
- Designate a FEMA coordinator to identify needs, fill out forms, and chase funds.
- Use FEMA funds for people to help run schools or manage your district, not just for structures or supplies.
- Make full use of funding from the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for students.
- Access free meals and shelter benefits via the USDA’s child nutrition program.

**Prepare for the highs and lows.**
- Recovery and Restore phase: For the first year, everyone in the community is in various degrees of trauma. This could last up to two years with peaks and crashes.
- Reconstruction phase: Expect ten years, with new construction starting after nine or ten months.

**Watch our video for more:**
- [https://youtu.be/nBjiJ2oB3d9g](https://youtu.be/nBjiJ2oB3d9g)
- [https://youtu.be/lf9hQ74x0tc](https://youtu.be/lf9hQ74x0tc)
- [https://youtu.be/zzzDN9oK5Vkk](https://youtu.be/zzzDN9oK5Vkk)
- [https://youtu.be/p_PKg9OTzNA](https://youtu.be/p_PKg9OTzNA)
- [https://youtu.be/nLP0xwLigY](https://youtu.be/nLP0xwLigY)
- [https://youtu.be/Jc9d8X9tdgE](https://youtu.be/Jc9d8X9tdgE)
- [https://youtu.be/lf9hQ74x0tc](https://youtu.be/lf9hQ74x0tc)