



BRIEF

CDC report: Coronavirus mitigation efforts to reopen schools could cost up to \$442 per student

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Dive Brief:

- Coronavirus mitigation efforts in schools will cost about \$55 per student for materials and consumables, according to a recently released CDC report, and up to \$442 per student when additional custodial staff and transportation costs are factored in.
- There are approximately 50 million students enrolled in the U.S. K-12 public school system, according to the report, and since March, 270,000 students have tested positive for COVID-19. Younger students are less likely to experience serious complications from the virus, but teachers and staff members can fall into higher-risk categories.
- Using CDC data, coronavirus mitigation of \$442 per student multiplied by nearly 51 million students would be about \$22 billion total for all U.S. schools.

Dive Insight:

As more schools look to send students back to in-person learning, the extra expense of masks, hand sanitizer, space for social distancing and enhanced cleaning efforts looms.

This summer, AASA, The School Superintendents Association and the Association of School Business Officials International estimated the "average" district will need to spend \$1.8 million to safely reopen. The average district is defined as one that has 3,659 students, eight buildings, 183 classrooms, 329 staff members and 40 buses transporting students at 25% capacity.

Earlier in the year, the American Federation of Teachers estimated the total cost of reopening U.S. schools would be \$116.5 billion. The AFT estimated the average school would need to spend \$2,300 per student to safely reopen. The largest expenses were \$36 billion for additional academic support, \$35 billion for additional instructional staff and nearly \$10 billion for transportation.

David Petrash, co-owner of the building maintenance company City Wide in Tucson, Arizona, said the firm fielded dozens of calls from frantic district officials this summer hoping for equipment that would allow them to safely reopen in the fall. Petrash's firm offers electrostatic cleaning, which sanitizes high-use areas, such as buses, with a mist from an electrostatic spray gun. Electrostatic fogging spray units cost between \$1,700 and \$7,000, he told K-12 Dive this summer.

Meanwhile, CDC recommends schools hire one custodian per 18,000 to 20,000 square feet, especially for high-use areas such as bathrooms. The standard square footage per school custodian is 28,000 to 31,000 square feet.

Recommended Reading:

 CDC

Estimated Resource Costs for Implementation of CDC's Recommended COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 Public Schools — United States, 2020–21 School Year [↗](#)

