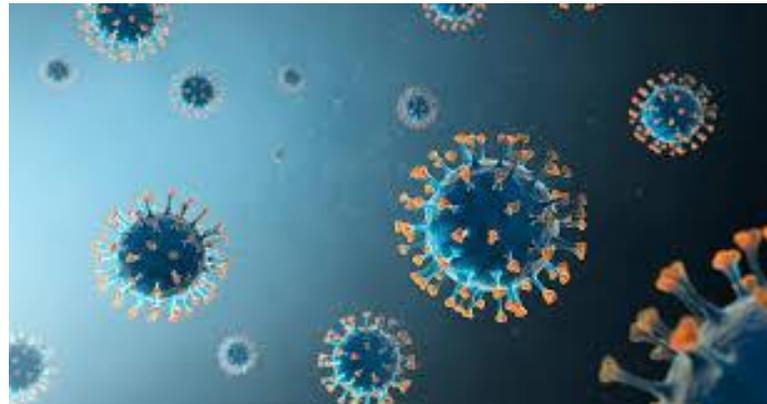


Assumptions and Recommendations: Operating Schools with COVID-19 in Circulation



April 28, 2020

Contingency vs. Certainty

The threat posed by the COVID-19 pandemic is evolving rapidly.

We cannot predict with certainty, the precise impacts on K-12 school operations or the timeframes in which they will occur.

We have enough information to make reasonable and prudent assumptions about the challenges that lie ahead, and to prepare.



Public Health Assumptions

The threat will remain until a vaccine is in wide use.

- 12 to 18 months.
- A second wave of infections is expected.
 - Could result school closures for up to four weeks.
 - If it coincides with flu season the impact will be worse.
- Broad stay-at-home orders and long-term school closures are not likely.
- Children and staff with significant health conditions will be especially vulnerable.
- Emphasis on teaching and reinforcing prevention behaviors.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces.



Many people will avoid preventative and routine healthcare out of concern that they may become ill.



- The number of students who are not fully immunized is likely to increase.
 - A growing number of parents will demand that the state suspend enforcement of vaccination requirements for enrollment ([SB 277. Pan](#)).
 - A greater percentage of students enrolled in home-based independent study programs (those with no on-campus components) may forego vaccinations.
- The number of people who receive vaccinations for seasonal influenza may decline.
- Increases in serious illnesses and health conditions will impact students, families, and employees.

School Operation Assumptions

Conditions are not likely to improve quickly enough to allow schools to resume normal (pre- pandemic) operations or modified operations during the 2019-20 school year.



- After the stay-at-home order is lifted...
 - Limits on group size may still be necessary and are likely to be stepped down in phases.
- Its unlikely traditional graduation and promotion ceremonies this summer.
 - Even if permissible, convening groups large during this time frame may still be inadvisable.

When schools are permitted to re-open, it is likely that operations will need to be modified to include:

- Limits on group size
- Social distancing in all settings
- Proactive screening of students, staff and visitors for symptoms



It will be safe for schools to return to normal (pre-pandemic) operations when all the following have occurred:



- The California state Stay-at-Home order has been lifted.
- The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the county has remained constant or declined for 28 consecutive days.
- The directive to physically distance has been removed.
- Limits on group gatherings have been lifted.

Economic Impact Assumptions

The economic impacts of the pandemic will have significant and lasting impacts on schools.



- **Reduced Funding:**

- Reductions in state tax revenues will make reductions in school funding likely.

- **Increased Expenses:**

- School nutrition programs will be needed by more students and will become a more significant portion of their access to food.
- The number of children experiencing homelessness and eligible for the support and protections required under the McKinney-Vento Act will increase.
- Structural changes (staggered schedules and/or blended learning configurations), and periodic school closures, will increase childcare needs for many families and create new challenges for before- and after-school programs.

The economic impacts of the pandemic will have significant and lasting impacts on schools. (continued)



• Declining Enrollment

- The high cost of housing in the county, coupled with high rates of unemployment will lead to movement out of the county.
- More parents will seek to enroll their students in distance learning programs, seeing them as safer and/or more stable than classroom-based instruction.

The economic impacts of the pandemic will have significant and lasting impacts on schools. (continued)

- **Decreased Attendance:**

- Students and staff with COVID-19, and those who are directly exposed, may miss two or more weeks of school. (Household spread.)
- We will require students and staff with symptoms to stay home.
- Fear and rumors will impact student and employee attendance rates.
- Temporary employees/substitutes will be in more demand as employee absences rise.



Educational Impact Assumptions

Student learning outcomes going into the next year will be uneven and vary broadly.



- Almost all students will begin the next year with deficits.
- The most able and advantaged are likely to better off.
- The most disadvantaged are likely to suffer regression.

Increases in special education due process filings and demands for extraordinary costs are likely.



Social Emotional Impact Assumptions

Deaths from COVID-19 are possible while the virus is in circulation.

- While group size is restricted, normal community support mechanisms will not be available.
 - No hospital visitors.
 - Funerals with fewer than 10.
- When schools reopen, COVID-19 deaths in the school community will still be possible.



Fear, loss, and isolation will result in the need for increased mental health supports.



- The strain of a 12 to 18-month duration will overwhelm the coping skills of many.
- Coping for people with pre-existing mental health concerns will be very difficult.
- Suicide attempts and completions will rise.
- Substance abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence are also likely to rise.

Social distancing requirements will impede schools' ability to engage students through athletics, the performing arts, and other extracurricular programs that involve close contact or large gatherings.



Community Assumptions

There will continue to be a broad spectrum of opinions in the community regarding government and school responses to COVID-19.



Impacts could include:

- Non-compliance with measures enacted by the school
- Increased contact with school leaders, superintendents, and board members
- Demonstrations

14. The challenges posed by COVID-19, and the duration of the threat, will make it more difficult for county school districts to make unified decisions.

Local decision-making will be impacted by:

- Resources
- Negotiations
- Community concerns
- Local conditions / county public health directives



General Recommendations

1. Carefully consider when to reopen schools.

- Weigh the potential risks and benefits of reopening during the current school year.
 - Many parents will resist the idea that it is safe to return their children to school.
 - Many others will be angry that they are being required to make this choice.
 - Many staff members will share these concerns.
- What are the district's or charter's goals for the remainder of the school year?
 - Are they substantial enough to warrant returning to full operations for a short period of time?
- Are we prepared to open with coronavirus in circulation?
 - What special accommodations are needed to protect vulnerable students and employees?
 - Do we have the supplies we need to maintain heightened prevention measures?
- Do we have a plan to prevent symptomatic and asymptomatic spread?
 - Ready to screen for symptoms?
 - Plans for social distancing and masks?
 - Labor agreements? What staffing changes will be required to support the operational changes?

PAIN SCALE



1. Carefully consider when to return schools to normal operations. (Continued)

- Do we have the physical capacity to reopen schools in the time remaining?
 - What are the impacts the closure has had on our readiness to return?
 - What supplies and equipment must be returned or replaced?
 - What activities must occur first?
 - What staffing issues have occurred while we've been out?
 - What staffing changes will be needed to support changes for next year?
- Are we prepared for our employees to return?
 - Have we identified all their concerns and are we prepared with responses?
- Could the time be put to better use?
 - Would using this time to work with our staffs on plans for 2020-21 be of greater benefit?



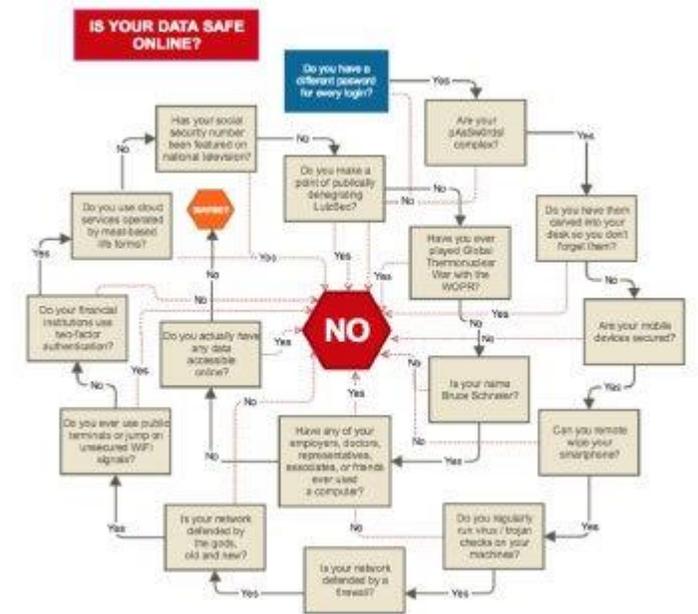


2. Create contingency plans for graduation and promotion ceremonies.

- If small physical ceremonies are permitted this summer, measures to limit spread (symptom checks, social distancing, and face coverings) will likely be required.
 - Maintaining these controls immediately before and after the event will be very difficult. (Teens will be teens.)
 - Many parents will refuse to allow their children to participate.
 - Many more will be angry that they are being required to make the choice.
- When planning physical ceremonies...
 - Hold off on scheduling events until there is greater clarity.
 - Webcast to allow family members who cannot attend to view.
 - Include plans to protect medically fragile students who are graduating.
 - Incorporate plans for student management before, during, and immediately after the event.
- Create contingency plans to hold virtual ceremonies.

3. Adapt all processes and timelines necessary to prepare for the new school year.

- Use job-a-like groups to examine all routines used to prepare for the next school year and develop alternative means for accomplishing the needed outcomes.
- Include adaptations that incorporate:
 - social distancing.
 - online alternatives.
 - accommodations for people who are at higher risk, and those who may be sick, or who must self-isolate.



4. Prepare for the possibility that the start of the 2020-21 school year may need to be delayed.

WHEN

All day Enter different end date

START DATE

Month	Day	Year	Hour	Minute
Aug	16	2011	12	00

END DATE

Month	Day	Year	Hour	Minute
Aug	16	2011	12	00

Modified

New

- Calendars with start dates earlier in the summer are more likely to be impacted than those that start in September.

5. Create plans to reopen in phases.

- Reopening schools will require careful identification of the...
 - Activities needed for return and
 - Order in which they should be implemented.
- Create timelines and communications plans to support each phase.



6. Consider the precautions necessary to protect students with special needs relative to the threat posed by COVID-19.



- What does a free and appropriate education (FAPE) look like for students who are immunosuppressed or who have significant health challenges?
- What special procedures will be necessary to protect students in classrooms that serve students with the most significant disabilities?
- What is our plan for determining appropriate placements, services, and accommodations for:
 - Students supported by IEPs
 - Students supported by 504 plans
 - Students supported by medical plans

7. Create plans to assess and respond to the uneven outcomes created by school closures.

- What formative assessment tools can we use to understand the individual and collective needs of our students?
- What is our plan to accelerate learning to close gaps? Special populations?





8. Develop a continuum of distance learning options.

- Develop robust independent study (IS) programs.
 - Include a variety of options that allow IS students to participate in campus life (electives, sports, dances, etc.).
- Support IS with weekly in-person and virtual appointments options.
- Consider interactive distance learning via classroom webcast for medically vulnerable students who cannot be at school.
- Provide Home and Hospital Instruction (EC 48206.3) via the internet for students who are ill, under quarantine, or in self-isolation.
- Anticipate in IEP and 504 meetings, the possibility that instruction and services may need shift formats during the next year in response to local conditions.

9. Develop a continuum of strategies for implementation if social distancing is required.

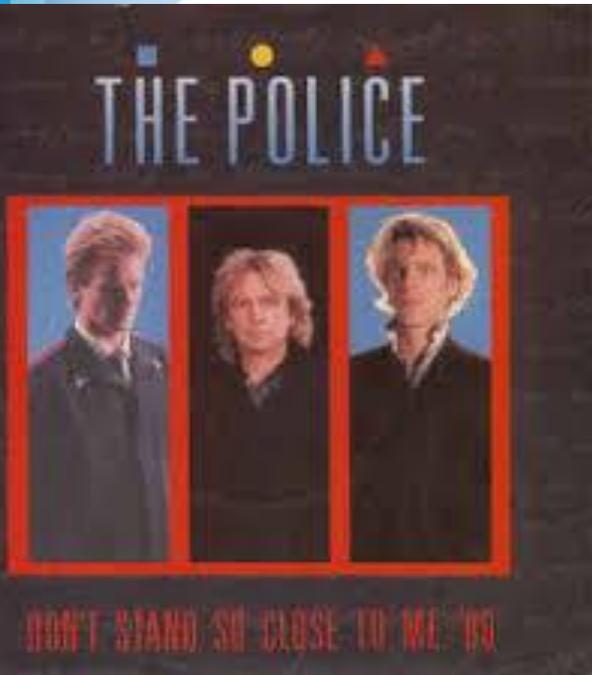
- Identify all locations and times where students are in close contact and create strategies to restructure those locations and activities. Consider...

- altering bell schedules
- staggering start and end times
- creating multiple recess and lunch periods
- creating multiple meal distribution points.
- implementing a block schedule to reduce student movement during the day
- include all LEA-operated child serving programs
- the impact of other changes on school provided transportation



10. Develop the policies, plans, procedures, communications and training needed to implement physical/social distancing in all settings, prior to re-opening.

- Identify all the settings and times where social distancing must occur.
- **Determine...**
 - the standards you will use to evaluate each setting.
 - the physical measures that will be needed for each setting.
 - the process that will be used to implement the physical measures needed in each setting.
 - the policies that will be needed to support and maintain these measures.
 - if job responsibilities or working conditions will be impacted by these measures.
 - how to communicate new policies to staff, students, parents, vendors, and visitors.
 - how to train students on new routines.



11. Create plans to limit symptomatic and asymptomatic spread.

- Screen all students, employees, and visitors for symptoms including fever
- Require all students and staff to wear face coverings
- Determine what supplies will be required (face covering, thermometers, personal protective equipment, etc.)



12. Develop plans to blend classroom and distance learning as an alternative to school closures.

Option 1: Limit the number of students on campus to 50% of normal.

- Divide all classes into two equal groups: one would come to school on Monday and Wednesday, the other on Tuesday and Thursday.

Option 2: Limit the number of students on campus to 20% of normal.

- All classes are divided into five equal groups: one for each day of the week.

Option 3: Pair Option 1 or 2 with a classroom webcast to provide direct instruction 5-days per week.

- Must ensure all students have equipment and connectivity.



13. Consider making work assignments and/or accommodations to protect employees in high risk groups.

- When possible and appropriate assign...
 - teachers in high risk groups to IS programs.
 - classified and other certificated employees in high risk groups to roles and environments where social distancing can be maintained.
- Add physical barriers in workspaces that cannot accommodate social distancing.

14. Develop and implement strategies to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

- Teach handwashing and cough and sneeze etiquette at all grade levels and reinforce on an ongoing basis.
- Schedule time and structure routines for handwashing at the start of each class period.
- Schedule frequent disinfection of high touch surfaces.

TEXAS CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION

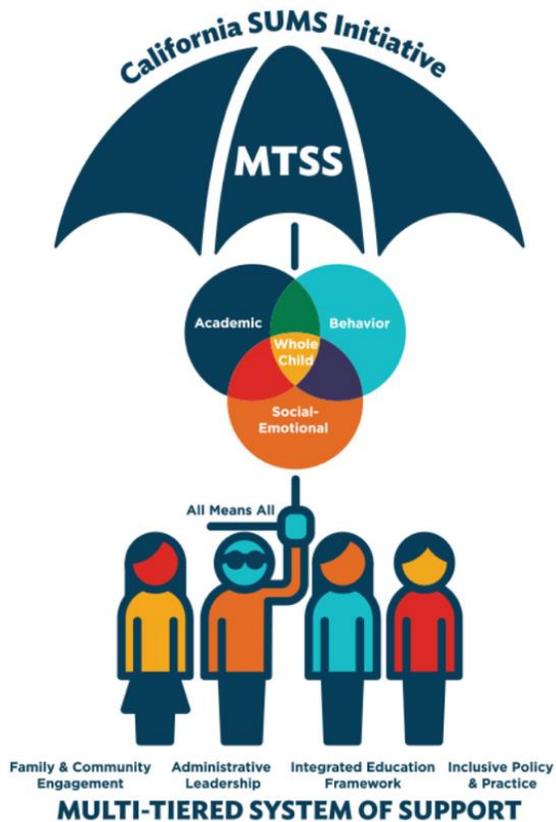
Wash your hands like you just got done slicing jalapeños for a batch of nachos and you need to take your contacts out.

(That's like 20 seconds of scrubbing, y'all)



15. Develop plans to support the mental health of students and families.

- Implement social-emotional learning lessons to develop strong coping skills.
- Adapt Multi-Tiered System of Support to work when schools are working under the modifications described above.
 - Make sure all students have positive, meaningful, and dependable contact with at least one employee each week.
 - Implement systems to identify students who are struggling and to provide appropriate support.
 - Ensure mental health supports are appropriate for students who have known challenges.
 - Incorporate regular check-ins with parents and offer supports and resources appropriate to their needs.



16. Develop plans to provide access school meal programs for qualifying students who are impacted by COVID-19.



- Develop procedures that allow that a parent or designated adult to pick-up meals for children who are absent due to illness or who are required to self-isolate.
- If classroom and distance learning will be blended, include procedures for students to take home meals for the days they will not be on campus.
- Develop procedures to provide access to meals for qualifying students enrolled in fulltime independent study programs.
- **NOTE: Advocacy with state and federal legislators will be required to support these recommendations.**

17. Develop procedures to identify and assist students who are experiencing homelessness.



- Develop strategies to mitigate the impact that site/office closures, limitations on walk-ins, and limited office hours, has on a school's ability to identify children who are eligible for McKinney-Vento support and protections.
- Develop procedures for regular contact with parents experiencing homelessness to prepare them for each shift in school operations.



18. Engage in a robust information campaign on the following school/public health issues:

- Begin messaging to parents now on the immunization requirements for school enrollment.
 - Encourage parents to contact their MD on the steps they're taking to ensure medical offices are safe for well child checks and mandated immunizations for school.
 - Consider partnering with an HCP to provide immunizations at a school or nearby clinic.
- Promote flu vaccination as a proactive measure parents and employees can take to lessen the likelihood of school closures due to the combined impact of seasonal influenza and COVID-19.
 - Consider partnering with an HCP to provide flu vaccinations at a school or nearby clinic when they become available.

19. Prepare for an increase in special education due process filings and demands for extraordinary costs.

- In the absence of clear guidance...
 - There should be no assumption that students were denied FAPE because of lack of instruction/service during school closures
 - when determining whether extraordinary services are needed, IEP teams should consider the student's overall progress during the entire IEP year and not just whether the student received services during a move to virtual learning



20. Develop contingency plans for extracurricular programs that involve close contact or large gatherings.



- Establish the criteria that will be used to evaluate and restructure activities.
- Analyze all aspects (practices, locker rooms, transportation, contests/performances) of each program to determine where/when social distancing will be a problem.
- Where possible, develop adaptations to include physical distancing.
- When necessary, develop alternative practices and contests using components of the original activity.
- Where possible, consider virtual contests/performances as an alternative to travel.
- Consider adding e-based extracurricular programs to engage more students.

21. Collaborate with employee associations when developing plans that impact the work of their members.

- **Employee Safety:** Cleaning Protocols, Personal Protective Equipment, High Risk Groups
- **Blended Working Models:** Telecommuting, Staggered Work Hours, Inventory of Equipment
- **Staffing Issues:** Reductions, Hiring Freeze
- **Use of Leave:** Childcare, Illness Related to Pandemic, Vulnerable Sub-groups,
- **Instructional Models:** Distance Learning / Blended / Face to Face / Independent Study



22. Include parent and student voice when developing plans for next year.

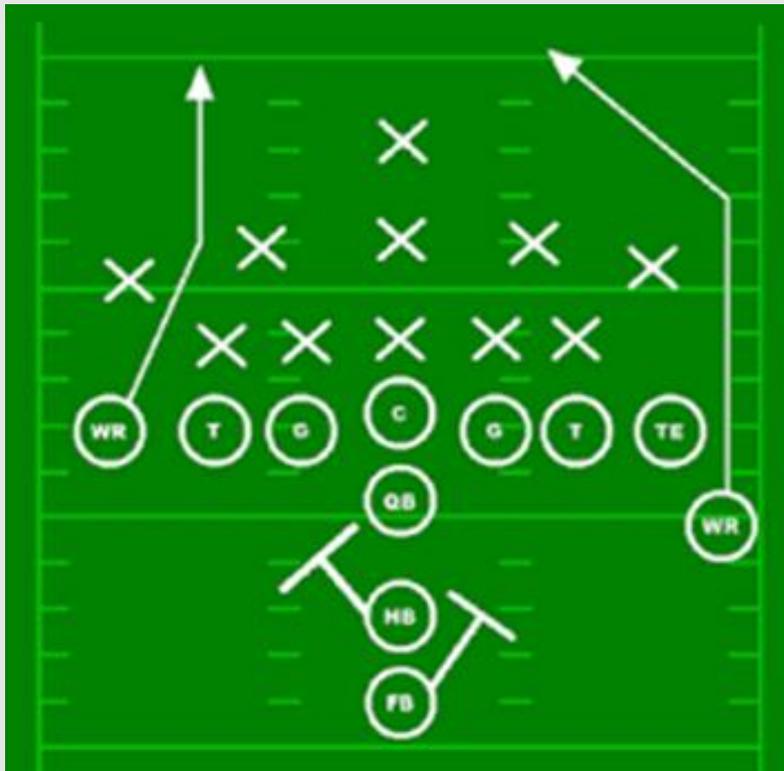
- Use focus groups and/or surveys to better understand needs and concerns.
- Incorporate strategies to query all parents on their family needs and schedule students accordingly.
 - Keep siblings on the same attendance schedule.
 - Be sensitive to childcare and transportation needs.
- Use youth development strategies to empower students and to engage them in problem solving and prevention activities.

23. Advocate with state legislators to provide funding to make summer acceleration programs available to all students.

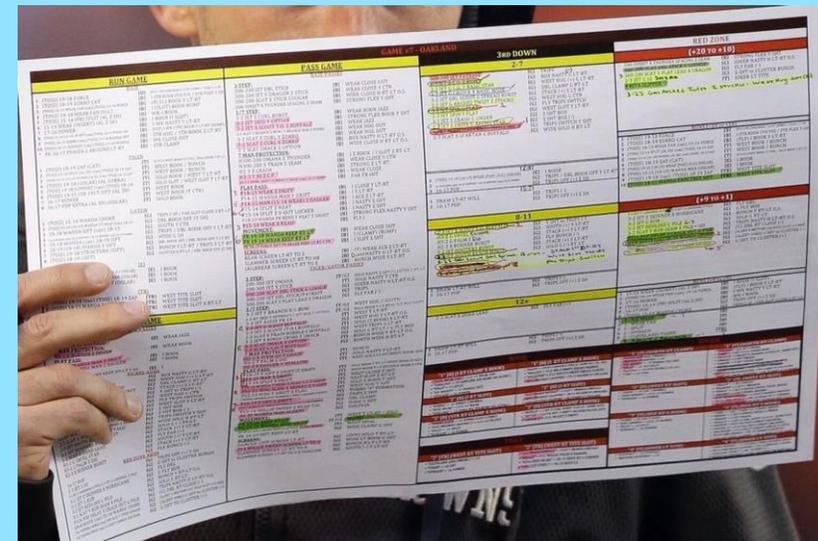


Game Plan for K-12 Schools

Before 2020...



After 2020...



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