Decision Making Guide for School Closure

Use this document to help determine whether your school and district meet the requirements to stay open during a power outage, weather event, or other unusual circumstance.

Name of School (A):

Name of School (B):

	School A	School B	District Office	Other Facilities
Safety & Operations				
Do students and staff have safe access to the school site?				
Will students have access to district/public transporation?				
Will the school be able to provide adequate supervision?				
Will the site's fire and life safety alarms work throughout the duration of the event? If not, is the school prepared to implement a fire watch protocol?				
Is the school prepared to implement an effective evacuation, which includes transportation, in the event of a wildfire or other emergency?				
Is backup power available or is there enough natural light in classrooms, restrooms, offices, and other shared spaces to ensure safety and support learning?				
If the district office is without power, is there a place for district staff to work at another site?				
Does the district have backup power for communication systems and/or redundant communication methods?				
Is the school able to adequately care for students with special needs?				
Health				
Will the school have safe drinking water?				
Does the school have adequate ventilation, whether through HVAC, portable air filter, or with open windows?				
Will the school be able to serve meals?				
Will the school be able to maintain a safe temperature for students?				
Does the school have the capacity to operate toilets that maintain proper levels of sanitation? If not, is there a backup plan that does?				
Will the school be able to maintain student support services (e.g., health and counseling)?				
Instruction				
Will classroom technology be available? If not, can instruction proceed without it?				

Additional Considerations & Guidance

	School A	School B	District Office	Other Facilities
Are teachers trained to understand and respond to the impact the event may have on their students?				
Are there sufficient substitutes should school staff need to stay home?				
Equity Considerations				
Schools provide safe and supportive environments for their students, and students who are the most vulnerable rely on them most.				
Families with limited financial resources may not have options for alternate child care.				
Working parents and guardians are disproportionately affected by school closures and could suffer significant professional or economic consequences as a result.				
Students receiving free or reduced-price meals may not have a reliable alternate source of healthy food.				
Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) may not have access to needed services during school closure.				
Communication Guidance				
Recognize that assigning homework and scheduling tests during a power outage can cause considerable stress for students.				
Continue to monitor communications about emergencies from the County Office of Education and the County Office of Emergency Services' SMC Alert system.				
Be sure to communicate with the County Office of Education, which tracks school closures and can provide communication guidance and support.				
In making the decision to close school, balance the desire to provide parents and guardians sufficient notice of a school closure with the potential of cancelling school prematurely.				
Prepare memos for staff, students, and families in advance, including a website emergency banner. Prepare messages in home languages of the community.				
Encourage families to create contingency plans in the event a school closure materializes.				
Have a plan to communicate often with students, parents and guardians, and employees.				

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