

UEA Recommendations on School Reopening During COVID-19

Requirements

Before Opening Schools

- Prior to opening, all schools must complete a deep cleaning using CDC approved disinfectants, bleach solutions and alcohol.
- Prior to opening, all schools must obtain adequate PPE for students and employees; adequate washing or sanitizing stations.
- Prior to opening, all schools must prepare vehicles and transportation plans, including adequate cleaning before, during and after use and create a safe transportation plan consistent with CDC guidance.
- Prior to opening, all schools must install floor markings and other physical barriers and devices to establish minimal social distancing measures:
 - Minimal six-foot distance;
 - Single direction entry and exit;
 - Direct foot traffic throughout the building;
 - Minimize mixing and intermingling of classes/groups;
 - Restructure student meals to avoid communal snacks; provide individually plated meals and allow students to eat in their classrooms (avoid any practice that feels inequitable, unjust and discriminatory);
 - Adjust school schedules as needed without extending educator contract time or expectations;
 - Consider whether an assembly or field trip is essential and postpone as necessary;
 - Limit in-building attendance to asymptomatic staff and students only; allow essential visitors only after symptom questionnaire and temperature.
- Prior to opening, all schools establish plan and oversight of safe hygiene practices:
 - Follow CDC guidelines for washing hands upon entering and leaving school grounds, when changing tasks, before and after meals and throughout the school day;
 - Require all staff and students to wear masks, supplied by the school, of sufficient quality, unless there is a documented exception (asthma, claustrophobia, PTSD, etc.) and except for meals;
 - Require staff involved in preparing meals and custodial staff are supplied with sufficient and appropriate PPE including N95 masks and gloves;
 - Have a compliance team and plan in place to ensure enforcement.
- Prior to opening, all schools must have a mental and emotional support plan in place, including specifically trained and licensed staff to assist returning **and** non-returning students, educators, parents and administrators in grieving, healing, reconnecting (in a physically distant manner) and strengthening the community before instruction begins.
- Prior to opening, schools must have a plan in place to close the school including a plan to ensure all student homes have access to broadband internet and 1:1 devices at no cost to the student or make arrangements with local public television to broadcast educational classes and ensure those homes have a working television. The plan should include how to track, trace, and problem solve those students who are absent.

When Schools Open

- Schools should be reopened deliberately and slowly, relying on scientific data and in collaboration with local health departments:
 - The number of new cases in the county should be zero for two weeks; if that is not possible, new cases in the county must be declining for two consecutive weeks;
 - Transmission rate in the county should be 1.0 or less; and no greater than 1.2.
 - LEA and county must have adequate testing and contact tracing in place including the ability to test all students and employees before their first entry into the building and regularly thereafter, and daily tracking of symptoms and positive tests and contact tracing.
 - Locally-specific and state-specific virus data including positivity rate and new cases posted in an area accessible by the majority of the building population.
- Policy and training to demonstrate ability to close school deliberately and quickly with continuation of learning plan in place.
- Policy and protocol to identify and accommodate High Risk employees and students and make distance learning and education practical and possible.
- Regardless of the color of the county, masks are required of every person who enters the school building with the exception of those with a documented health condition.
- Designate and prepare a compliant space for conducting in-person parent/guardian visits with students and staff (e.g., IEP conferences), or agreement to conduct the same virtually.
- Designate and prepare at least one isolation room for any student or staff member who shows symptoms associated with COVID-19.
- Inform employees of all newly available leave benefits provided by the CARES Act and provide adequate assistance to help those who qualify use those benefits.
- Consider offering additional paid sick leave benefits so employees are encouraged to stay home when symptomatic.
- Identify and accommodate those students at the greatest risk for learning loss and open the school for those students first.
- Provide adequate PPE (at minimum mask and goggles or face shield) for those who are entering the building, including access to soap and water and sanitizer with minimum 60% alcohol based). For SPED students and educators, additional PPE as recommended by local health department.
- Restrict public use of the school building to essential use only for any county reporting positive cases in the last two weeks. Require check in, temperature, symptom report and limit time to essential time only.
- Provide sufficient training for employees, students and parents to understand new protocols (e.g., paid time for employees to practice new protocols prior to opening schools to students, model for students proper hygiene practices such as handwashing or alternatives to handshakes, proper disposal of personal protective equipment like face masks).
 - USBE develop age-appropriate and audience-appropriate training videos for staff, students and employees to ensure all understand how schools will look different, procedures for hand washing, temperature checks, etc.
 - Same for new emergency procedures.

- Design comprehensive school guidance for both current and future situations (e.g., protocols for rolling school closures and re-opening during COVID-19 resurgence).
- If schools implement staggered or alternative schedules, ensure that employment contract terms and conditions are maintained or include negotiated expectations.
- Ensure employee workspace provides for **minimum** six feet of physical separation between students and staff. Reduce and rearrange furniture in classrooms, dining areas, computer labs and other areas to ensure six feet of physical separation between students.
- Designate and train compliance team to educate students on importance of compliance and thereafter to remove from the building repeat compliance offenders.

Recommendations

- All students and staff complete a symptoms questionnaire before entering the building. Temperatures checked upon entry. Those who refuse are not allowed to enter the building.
- Consult educators in deciding policies and expectations regarding curriculum, grades, attendance and student progress.
- Consider delaying the commencement of instruction for the first 2-3 weeks to allow time to acclimate to new policy, procedures and protocol; to address trauma and recovery; to ensure safe and healthy in school environment.
- Provide guidance to parents and students to limit unnecessary items brought to school. Try not to use school lockers for storage, bring only what is necessary for that day.
- Provide educators with the time and staffing required to build relationships with students and families (e.g., manageable caseload for special educators, reimagined school conferences).
- Provide school-sponsored childcare if educators are required to report to work when daycare is not open.
- Limit any extracurricular responsibilities for educators, add aides and janitorial services as necessary (e.g., janitors sanitize the classroom between classes, additional aides as necessary to assist with contact and social distance).
- During the spring school closure some educators were required to update internet service or acquire devices like cameras, *at their own cost*, to provide online instruction. USBE should identify how LEAs can utilize CARES Act or other monies to ensure employees don't have out of pocket costs related to technology. Reimburse documented out of pocket expenses to employees required to purchase equipment during soft close.