

To support K-12 districts during the COVID-19 pandemic, Hanover Research (Hanover) and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) have developed this resource to guide educators through the various considerations raised by school closures. Specifically, this resource notes key issues districts will need to address related to communications, academics, student and family supports, and operations. Hanover will update this resource periodically to incorporate lessons learned by districts as school closures continue.

## LEADERSHIP

### GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Monitor the **latest information**
- Establish **communication with relevant agencies** at the federal, state, and local levels
- Confirm **closure guidelines**
- Create **contingency plans**:
  - When to remain open*
  - When to close*
  - What to do if the district and schools remain closed for days, weeks, months, the remainder of the school year*
- Hold **regular meetings** with district- and building-level administrators to discuss developments and make plans

### SCHOOL BOARD

- Adopt **emergency board resolutions** as needed (e.g., to continue pay for non-contractual employees, fund emergency expenditures, suspend certain policies/procedures)
- Consider conducting public meetings via **videoconferencing**
- Make **recordings** of public meetings available
- Post board meeting **schedules, agendas, and resolutions** in advance
- Post board meeting **minutes** in a timely manner
- Determine the need to change any scheduled **board elections**

## COMMUNICATIONS

### MESSAGES

- Provide **information and updates** to students, families, staff, vendors, and the community on the:
  - Nature of the crisis*
  - District's and schools' efforts to keep students safe*
  - Preventive measures stakeholders can take to protect themselves*
  - Effects on district and school operations*
  - Anticipated timeline(s) for changes*
  - Where to find services and supports in the community to meet basic needs*
- Send reminders to **stay at home**, especially if ill
- Share instructions for **handwashing** and other forms of **proper hygiene** (e.g., covering mouths when coughing)
- Respond to **questions and other inquiries**

### METHODS

- Include key information and resources on **district and school webpages**
- Translate all communications and provide **translation** services as needed
- Survey stakeholders—especially families and staff—to learn **communication preferences**
- Leverage multiple **communication methods**:
  - Mail*
  - Email*
  - Phone calls*
  - Text messages*
  - Traditional media (e.g., television, radio, newspapers)*
  - Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)*

## EXPECTATIONS

- Set **expectations for staff communication** with students and families:
  - Frequency*
  - Methods*
  - Staff responsible*
  - Record-keeping mechanisms*

## ACADEMICS

### CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

- Ensure **continuity of learning**
- Support **virtual instruction** (e.g., learning platforms, video, email)
- Support **other instructional methods** (e.g., printed materials, phone contact)
- Consult with **labor unions** regarding:
  - Which content staff will be expected to teach
  - How staff will be expected to plan and deliver instruction
- Consider holding **virtual office hours** during which students can get assistance
- Maintain **equitable access** to learning
- Meet the needs of **special populations** (e.g., students with disabilities, English learners, migrant and homeless students, foster youth, socioeconomically-disadvantaged students)
- Use **specialized certificated personnel** to differentiate instruction and ensure accessibility
- Collaborate with postsecondary institutions to deliver **dual-credit courses**
- Consult with postsecondary institutions and/or local partners to deliver **career and technical education** (e.g., mentoring)

### GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

- Establish processes for collecting **assignments/work samples**
- Consider adjusting:
  - Grading periods** (i.e., start and end dates of terms, quarters, semesters)
  - Grading policies and practices** (e.g., pass/fail system, competency-based credit)
  - Grade point average calculations**
- Determine **promotion and retention criteria**
- Consult with state and federal education agencies regarding an **adjusted schedule or potential waiver** for end-of-grade, end-of-course, English language proficiency, and other assessments used for accountability or similar purposes
- Confirm status of **AP, IB, ACT, SAT, and similar assessments**, making alternate plans for administration as needed

### GRADUATING SENIORS

- Prioritize providing seniors the **content needed** to meet graduation requirements
- Determine the **classes/credits needed** for each senior to meet graduation requirements
- Explore **alternate methods** for seniors to meet graduation requirements (e.g., credit for work completed, scores on competency-based assessments, expanded course equivalency)
- Consider **credit requirement waivers** for seniors (e.g., non-core credits, emergency waivers for "on-track" students)
- Consider adjusting and/or waiving any **locally-mandated graduation requirements** (e.g., community service)
- Support seniors' **postsecondary transition plans**

### RESOURCES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Identify **available educational resources to support instruction**, including virtual (e.g., learning platforms) and print (e.g., textbooks, workbooks) materials
- Survey students, families, and staff about **access to virtual and print educational resources**
- Survey students, families, and staff about **additional instructional supports needed**
- Develop plans for **distribution of print educational resources** to students and families
- Identify options to **create additional educational resources internally or acquire materials** from publishers, vendors, etc.
- Determine process for staff to **document instructional time**
- Consult with state and federal education agencies regarding adjustments to or waivers of **mandated instructional days and/or hours**
- Consider adjustments to the **academic calendar** (i.e., school year and school day)

## STUDENT AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

### MEALS AND NUTRITION

- Decide whether to apply for a **U.S. Department of Agriculture waiver** for child nutrition programs
- Ensure continuity of meal services to **eligible students**
- Consider the need to provide meal services to:
  - All students** (regardless of family income)
  - Non-students** (e.g., families, staff, and other community members)
- Decide the **number of days per week** to provide meals
- If unable to meet demand, establish a **process for community referral** of families, staff, and other community members experiencing food insecurity
- Explore **delivery of meals** to students' homes
- Confirm whether **mileage for meal delivery** qualifies for reimbursement under federal, state, and/or local transportation allotments
- Explore creation of **sites for meal pick-up**
- Consider **bundling meals** (i.e., serving or delivering breakfast and lunch at the same time)
- Plan for **communication of meal arrangements** to students and families, staff, and the community
- Respect **social distancing** guidelines when delivering meals and/or maintaining meal pick-up sites
- Determine the **staff responsible** for preparing, serving, and/or delivering meals
- Establish **record-keeping processes** (e.g., number of meals served and to whom)

### CHILD CARE

- Confirm child care **licensing requirements**
- Determine **district capacity** to provide child care (e.g., which days, which hours, how many children)
- Establish **criteria for prioritizing requests** from:
  - Essential workers (e.g., health care providers, first responders, pharmacy employees, grocery store employees)*
  - Parents of district students*
  - Staff*
  - Other community members*
- Collaborate with relevant **state and local agencies**
- Collaborate with **community-based child care providers and other relevant organizations** (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America)
- If unable to meet demand, **provide referrals** to community-based child care providers and other relevant organizations with available capacity
- Manage **drop-off/pick-up schedules** to comply with social distancing
- Conduct **basic health screenings** as needed (e.g. taking temperatures, checking for symptoms)
- Have **contingency plans** in case of staff or child illness
- Comply with rules regarding **group sizes** (e.g., 10 or fewer)
- To limit opportunities for exposure, **avoid mixing groups** of children and/or adults
- Staff with **non-high-risk individuals** (e.g., based on age, medical condition)

### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Combat **bullying/harassment, bias, and discrimination** for any reason, including:
  - Race/ethnicity*
  - National origin*
  - Linguistic or cultural background*
  - Gender identity*
  - Sexual orientation*
  - Religion*
- Consider adjusting **student and staff attendance policies** (e.g., accounting for excused absences)
- Discuss how to monitor and address **student and staff attendance issues**
- Decide whether to **postpone or cancel events**, such as:
  - Sports and extracurricular activities*
  - Social events (e.g., dances, proms)*
  - Graduation*
- Offer **virtual support services** to students with concerns, especially students in crisis
- Consider creating **supervised virtual forums for students** to connect, share challenges and concerns, celebrate positive events, socialize, etc.
- Provide **targeted supports for seniors** related to:
  - Feelings of loss due to postponement or cancellation of senior-year activities and traditions*
  - Anxiety due to college applications and acceptance*

## OPERATIONS

### STAFFING

- Determine **which staff report and which work remotely** (e.g., based on role, exposure risk)
- Set **expectations** for remote work
- Specify **responsibilities** expected of staff during closure (e.g., essential functions)
- Establish processes for **non-contractual staff** to account for time worked during closure
- Develop contingency plans in event of **staff illness**
- Continue offering **professional learning opportunities** to staff
- Revise **principal and teacher evaluation processes** as needed (e.g., determine whether/how to adjust weights and/or acceptable forms of evidence; consider practices for evaluating tenured and non-tenured staff, as well as staff on probation or an improvement plan)
- Collaborate with labor unions on issues related to **collective bargaining agreements** (e.g., atypical duties)

### FACILITIES

- Specify the types of **meetings, events, and activities** district and school buildings can and cannot accommodate during closure
- Establish an **entry protocol** for district and school buildings
- Fully **clean and disinfect**:
  - All district and school facilities*
  - All buses and other vehicles used for district and/or school purposes*
- Maintain **supplies** of cleaning and disinfecting materials at all district and school facilities
- Confirm **room arrangements comply with social distancing** (e.g., ensure a minimum of six feet between persons)

### TECHNOLOGY

- Survey students, families, and staff about **access to technology** (e.g., devices, internet)
- Plan to distribute **necessary equipment** (e.g., devices, internet access):
  - To students and families for remote instruction*
  - To staff for remote work (including instruction)*
- Provide **training on educational technology** to students, families, and staff
- Provide **training on virtual instruction** to staff
- Set **security guidelines** for virtual instruction and remote work (e.g., no use of public Wi-Fi, use of VPN)
- Ensure **privacy and security of data and information** pertaining to students, families, and staff
- Require staff who need to use **personal devices** for remote work to deploy antivirus and other security software

### FINANCE

- Confirm with the relevant state and federal education agencies any changes in dates or formulas used to calculate **enrollment and average daily attendance** for funding purposes
- Investigate federal, state, and/or local sources of **emergency funds**
- Confirm types of **activities permitted or required** by various funding sources (e.g., in case of expanded child care, which funding sources mandate instructional time, enrichment time, etc.)
- Continue **payroll** for all employees
- Pay **vendors** as required under contract
- Document **closure-related expenditures**

### LEGAL AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Confirm with relevant federal, state, and/or local agencies any changes in plans for site visits, reviews, or other processes for **compliance or accountability purposes**
- Ensure **civil rights** dispute resolution activities continue, even if on an altered schedule
- Consult regularly with **labor unions** throughout the crisis