



COVID-19

GUIDANCE FOR A SAFE SCHOOL REOPENING



OUR MISSION

We affirm our commitment to providing quality learning opportunities for all students. We believe that the health and safety of students and staff must be a priority as districts design plans for the upcoming school year.

Prior to the Start of the School Year:

1) Acquire Necessary Materials

Districts should secure adequate and necessary materials for the upcoming school year, including personal protective equipment for all students and staff, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, and testing equipment.

2) Meet with Stakeholders

Districts should work with all community stakeholders, including staff, through state-mandated school district safety committee or other structures to finalize their preliminary plans for the 2020-2021 school year.

3) Prepare to Adjust to Changing Conditions

Districts should develop, in conjunction with health department officials, the criteria for transitioning district plans quickly and effectively as conditions warrant.

4) Considerations for Mental Health

Districts should develop plans to support staff mental health, evaluate the current mental health of their staff going into the school year, and ensure that adequate mental health resources exist to support students and staff during the school year.

During the Planning Process: Utilize these guidelines to help facilitate strong, robust policies.

1) Accessibility.....

- A. Electronic devices and internet access are equitably available for educators and student households.
- B. High-quality physical materials are available as alternatives to digital resources.

- C. If schools are in remote learning mode, families receive appropriate lessons for students to complete at home as well as information and support to assist households in facilitating student learning.

During the Planning Process:

2) Instruction

- A. Educators are included in the planning process, at the district and building level, for crafting and communicating learning plans for the upcoming school year.
- B. Schools are actively working with all educators and the families of students with special needs related to implementing plans for the continuation of services.
- C. Schools have plans in place to communicate procedures and expectations with all students – particularly those whose education progress, such as high school graduation, has the potential to be disrupted by policy decisions.
- D. Schools have multiple plans in place that are ready to be implemented if conditions surrounding the pandemic improve or worsen.

3) Student Safety

- A. Students have safe and reliable access to school counselors and social workers in all return-to-school scenarios and can safely report abuse and bullying during the pandemic.
- B. Students and families have safe, reliable, and affordable access to community healthcare and equitable access to supplemental assistance programs for food, transportation, and housing.
- C. All students have a timely, secure, and confidential way to ask educators or other trusted persons for help if their health, safety, or well-being is threatened.

4) Healthy Schools

- A. Schools are actively utilizing local health officials and organizations in the decision-making process to determine how instruction will look during the school year.
- B. All education support professionals, including custodians and maintenance workers, have resources and training needed to maintain clean school and campus facilities.
- C. Schools and campuses are being cleaned and disinfected by staff who have been appropriately trained in CDC guidelines.
- D. All educators, students and volunteers have access to proper training and personal protective gear.
- E. Districts are making necessary purchases of materials for all possible plans in the summer.

5) Supporting Educators

- A. On a regular basis, school districts must provide clear communication to all educators regarding options for the school year, from full return to closure of schools and the work expectations that would accompany those options. Training must also be provided on effective techniques to prepare and deliver successful remote learning.
- B. All educators have a secure way to submit feedback and grade reports to all students and families without compromising student data privacy or information security, including those students and families who may not have access to the internet.
- C. All educators are consulted on how to assign grades, keeping in mind factors such as student access to digital and/or alternative educational content or other extenuating circumstances.

WHAT SCHOOL SHOULD LOOK LIKE:



Yellow/Orange Conditions:

COVID-19 is still in the state with some hotspots; precautions are still needed to flatten the curve. Students may be in school depending on the infection status in their community. In order to best meet the priorities outlined in our checklist, and to protect the health and safety of staff and students to the best of our abilities, the following must be in place to return to school:

1) Testing, monitoring, and contact tracing:

- A. District has the ability to participate in robust testing and contact tracing.
- B. Sufficient nurses and trained professionals are available on every campus to monitor temperatures and screen for symptoms for people entering and leaving campus if needed, and to respond to individual cases of sickness in students and staff.
- C. Sufficient equipment for nurses and trained professionals to perform the needed services.
- D. Commitment to send home anyone displaying symptoms in the school setting.
- E. Implementation of screenings and contact tracing in a manner that maintains confidentiality and privacy.

2) Social Distancing:

- A. Enhanced social distancing measures must be in place for staff and students.
- B. Have plans in place for staff and students who are at higher risk, including offering virtual sections of courses.
- C. Provisions for staff to work remotely where applicable.
- D. Class size limits that allow needed social distancing.
- E. Ensure that students and staff groupings are as static as possible by scheduling the same group of students with the same staff as much as possible.

- F. Restrict interaction between groups as much as possible.
- G. Limit gatherings, events, and extracurricular activities to those that can maintain social distancing, support proper hand hygiene, and restrict attendance when necessary.
- H. Limit sharing, including providing individually labeled containers or areas for students to place their personal belongings.
- I. Space students six feet apart when at all possible.
- J. Enforcement of social distancing during entry and exit and passing times. Consider options such as staggered drop off and pick up times, one-way traffic down hallways, and requiring that certain grades enter/exit through specific doors to reduce crowd size.
- K. Closure of communal spaces (e.g. cafeterias, auditoriums) if possible; otherwise stagger use and disinfect between uses of space.
- L. Decentralized serving of meals when at all possible.
- M. Establish necessary social distancing guidelines on busses.
- N. Restriction of non-essential visitors, volunteers and activities.

3) Cleaning:

- A. Early and repeated training and reinforcement of proper personal hygiene, including hand washing.

WHAT SCHOOL SHOULD LOOK LIKE:

3) Cleaning Continued:

- B. Adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors.
- C. Close, easy access to supplies for staff.
- D. Built-in time for hand washing and other healthy hygiene behaviors, and for cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces.

4) PPE, Supplies, Equipment:

- A. District supplied availability of PPE including, but not limited to, masks for all students and staff where appropriate.
- B. Provide training in the use, removal and washing of cloth face coverings for all staff.
- C. Masks should be an expectation while on campus, barring medical exemption.
- D. Provide surgical masks and N95 masks for nurses and other health professionals who are working directly with potentially infected individuals.
- E. Adequate supplies necessary to support and assist students with special needs.

5) School Layout:

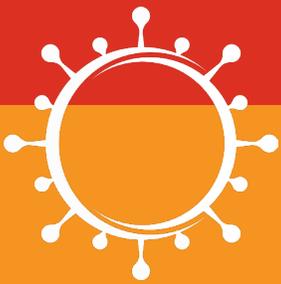
- A. Reconfigure classrooms, common areas, workspaces and hallways for optimum social distancing.
- B. Ensure that all classrooms have access to necessary sanitary facilities.

6) Behavior and Compliance:

- A. Procedures are in place to ensure that these expectations are closely monitored and enforced.
- B. Sufficient administrative staff is available in each building to ensure compliance with all health standards.
- C. Have designated administrators responsible for listening and responding to COVID-19 concerns from all stakeholders.
- D. Posted signs that clearly identifies expectations, how to stop the spread of COVID-19, proper hand washing expectations, and how to properly wear a face covering.

7) Rapid Response:

- A. Students and staff cannot physically be in the building unless a plan is in place when a staff member, student or visitor becomes sick or is identified as ill.
- B. Identified isolation rooms ready to separate anyone with COVID-like symptoms.
- C. Procedures must be ready to safely transport anyone who is sick to their home or a healthcare facility.
- D. Procedures in place to clean/disinfect facilities.



Orange/Red Conditions:

If conditions in the community worsen, or there are cases within a district building or buildings, districts should transition to full remote instruction to protect the health and safety of all staff and students.

1) Digital Infrastructure:

- A. Internet access and devices must be ready prior to transitioning to remote learning. Robust alternatives must be ready for students who cannot access remote learning.
- B. Additional remote devices should be purchased in advance.
- C. When possible, partner with ISPs or cell phone providers to assist families in setting up internet access.

2) Transition Plans:

- A. Districts should work with educators to establish a timeline for the transition from physical to remote instruction, focusing on minimal disruption of learning.
- B. Districts should identify the criteria that would enable staff and students to physically return to classrooms, and what that transition would look like.
- C. Stakeholders, including health officials, staff and parents, should be included in the development process for transition plans.

WHAT SCHOOL SHOULD LOOK LIKE:



Yellow/Green Conditions

If conditions improve to the point where only minimal health requirements are in place, or a vaccine is being administered broadly in the community, districts should be easing restrictions and phasing back to regular operations.

1) Maintaining Health Expectations:

- A. Heightened health and safety requirements should be gradually phased out rather than eliminated all at once.
- B. At a minimum, the testing, monitoring, and contact Tracing expectations should continue to be enforced throughout the 2020-21 school year.

(Parts of this guidance document were adapted from TSTA Standards for Safe Students, Schools, and Communities, and from the NEA - All Hands on Deck. Initial Guidance Regarding Reopening School Buildings.)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- NSEA Coronavirus Resources www.nsea.org/COVID19
- NEA All Hands on Deck: Initial Guidance Regarding Reopening School Buildings - <https://bit.ly/NEA-AllHandsOnDeck>
- Your Rights and Benefits During the Pandemic (NEA Podcast)- <https://bit.ly/NEAPodcast-YourRights>
- Launch Nebraska, a comprehensive guide, from the Nebraska Department of Education- <https://www.launchne.com/>
- NDE Executive Orders and Waivers - <https://bit.ly/2Z7TsUC>
- Nebraska Association of School Boards District Leadership Team Contingency Planning guidance - <https://bit.ly/382DxvI>
- Information on School Safety Committees - <https://bit.ly/2YB48MC>
- Safety committee; when required; membership; employee rights and remedies. Nebraska Revised Statute 48-443. - <https://bit.ly/3lecP13>