CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)[1]:
KEY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE CONSIDERATIONS

Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning for Education Agencies:
Ensuring Continuity of Teaching and Learning During Prolonged Absences, Dismissals, and Closures

COOP PLANNING – AN OVERVIEW

or schools, continuity of operations (COOP planning means preparing to support the whole school community in the event of **short- and long-term student and staff absences, school dismissals, and/or school closures**. he COOP plan — contained in what is nown as an "anne " within a school emergency operations plan (EOP — will descri e how a school or district will wor to provide for the **continuation of essential services during prolonged absences caused by emergencies** (e.g., an infectious disease out rea , natural disaster, or power outage .

As outlined in the Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans, the COOP Anne aligns and is integrated with the EOP, as it
- Promotes health and safety
- Strives to maintain mission-oriented activities, including teaching and learning for the whole school community in the conte t of **day-to-day operational disruptions**.

Effective COOP planning for schools is done in colla oration with community partners, since school systems often play ey roles in community preparedness plans, especially response and recovery initiatives. As a part of **COVID-19** planning, it is recommended that school planning teams create or update their COOP anne es.

Continuity of Teaching and Learning Action Items
- ✓ Recogni e the importance of planning for continuity of teaching and learning in the face of planned and unplanned disruptions and egin planning now.
- ✓ Integrate continuity of teaching and learning into your EOP's COOP Anne .

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[1] According to the .S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this novel coronavirus is named "SARS-CoV-2," while the disease it causes is named "coronavirus disease 2019" (COVID-19 .

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✓ Plan for continuing education strategies for students, ta ing into consideration varying grade levels, age levels, s ill levels, and access and functional needs.

✓ Consider incorporating varying tools, technologies, formats, and approaches to distance learning.

A critical component of a school system's COOP planning is the **continuation of teaching and learning services in response to planned and unplanned disruptions for individual students, staff, and the whole school community**. E amples of disruptions include prolonged individual a sences and roader school dismissals and school closures.

School closures cease active teaching and learning originating from school uildings and most school community services hosted on school grounds. A few personnel may continue wor ing to provide essential services, e.g., ongoing communications with the school community and preparing to reopen schools.

he term "school dismissals" typically connotes an in-service professional day, with the school system "open" and operating, while students are dismissed from school into the custody of their families, guardians, or prearranged care. School dismissals may factor into a school's **coronavirus** response. or e ample, if isolation and greater social distancing are recommended y pu lic health professionals (suggesting a restriction on activities or locations where large num ers of people congregate , or if a case of **COVID-19** is identified in a mem er of the school community, schools and their health partners may decide to dismiss students. In this situation, educators may still e a le to report to school to support the ongoing teaching and learning of students from there. or instance, teachers could e at the school developing, preparing, implementing, and monitoring 2-wee units with related lessons plans, student activities, and assessments.

In this scenario, and in locations where it is possi le, distance learning would ideally e sustained throughout the length of the closure. his may e accomplished through the administration of preplanned lessons and the use of alternative communication platforms, self-paced learning, and independent assessments.

REVIEW AND UPDATE PLANS TO PREPARE FOR CONTINUITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

School districts and schools are encouraged to **prepare** their distance education plans now so they are ready to e immediately activated in the event that **school closure, dismissal,** or the **prolonged absence of student and staff** is necessary.

P EASE O E he tools and resources identified in this document are not intended as endorsements and are merely offered as e amples that you may consider in your own COOP planning efforts.

he following pages provide details that can support school systems in developing a COOP Anne , along with e amples of types of comprehensive teaching and learning materials for use in support of the whole school community if an emergency causes prolonged a sences, school dismissals, and school closures.

CONTINUITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING: KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Prepare for short- and long-term school closures or absences and varying circumstances.

Should the need arise to close a school for an e tended period, or for students to have e tended a sences, it is ideal for education agencies to have distance learning options that can fulfill needs across a range of time frames. henever possi le, programs should e adapta le ased on changing needs and circumstances. Rather than creating a distance learning program solely for a short-term a sence (e.g., for a student missing days of school due to the flu , develop a fle i le program that may e scaled to allow for a change in circumstance (e.g., a student's -day a sence that is une pectedly e tended y the school closing for 2 wee s .

Schools can prepare for short- to long-term closures or a sences, individual a sences, prolonged school dismissal, or closure for up to 2 wee s or more. E tenuating circumstances that may arise during an e tended school dismissal and closure would also need to e accounted for within a COOP Anne . or e ample, families may have to travel to help ensure their well- eing or move closer to e tended family for additional support. his may cause inadvertent delays as families return to the school community. Schools can help mitigate the effects of this y activating the Communications and arning Anne and continually communicating status information, ongoing initiatives with partners, and health and safety policy changes to the whole school community.

Build from existing from people, curricula, programs, and resources.

School emergency management and continuity planning teams must include administrators, educators, and more in order to properly assess which tools wor est for their schools and or districts ased on the anticipated length of closure, current resources availa le, student access, and grade level.

District administrators and school educators will have a tremendous set of nowledge and insight for creating distance education programs. Special educators are one e ample, since they often design individual teaching and learning plans for students with health conditions lead e tended services curricula design and implementation and have e pertise in continually creating and providing accommodations and modifications to help ensure that all students grow and succeed academically.

Consider in-person and virtual programs and curricula across all grades to identify possi le resources. or e ample, many te t oo series include access to additional learning activities in multiple formats and multiple languages use them as a resource. Review materials from additional programs such as e tended school year services, tutoring, mentoring, and coordinated initiatives with afterschool learning centers. Some school systems are designing lended instructional models and personali ed learning programs in everyday school and classroom settings. lended learning programs that offer online and offline approaches will serve as ey models that education agencies can use.

Incorporate state policies and resources on online learning.

e also recommend that education agencies consider state and local policies and related resources and programming, as applica le. As schools and districts develop COOP anne es, it is important to consult respective state policies to ensure that plans are aligned.

Feature multiple formats.

hile technology plays a nota le role in classroom education today, distance learning programs should feature diverse instructional methodology or formats that account for students who may have limited or no access to the Internet, phone lines, V, radio, or other electronic device in the home environment. As general curriculum materials are created, it is also necessary to consider how they may e adapted so that the whole school community may access the materials, including students with disa ilities and special needs.

Incorporate assessments.

o ensure that distance learning programs are successful, uild assessment opportunities into all lessons. his will allow education agencies to monitor whether students are successfully meeting learning goals, while also demonstrating progress toward meeting academic re uirements for passing grades or graduation.

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Provide for the whole school community.

his includes oth ensuring accessi ility and serving all age groups and grade levels.

Ensuring Accessibility. hen planning distance learning tools, it is important to help ensure that the learning needs of all students are addressed. Educators can egin y reviewing the e isting accommodations and modifications that are descri ed in a student's Individuali ed Education Plan (IEP and Section 0 plan. Additional strategies can e identified and developed colla oratively with input from special educators. It is important to also consider Section 0 of the American Disa ilities Act, which provides accessi ility guidelines for individuals with disa ilities. his dictates when materials must e provided in alternative formats to ensure access for all.

Serving All Age Groups and Grade Levels. Instructional design, course design, and plans for support must e aligned with the s ill level of age groups. or e ample, those serving the elementary and middle school levels might have to consider creating instructional materials for oth students and parents, while high school students are li ely more capa le independent learners.

Support systems training.

raining is necessary for faculty, staff, students, and parents on the use of systems that will support continuity of teaching and learning. Ideally, training should occur at regular intervals during nonemergency times to ensure that full understanding of the systems e ists efore they need to e deployed. urther support may e provided with continued access to training or technical assistance throughout a dismissal.

As any online learning is considered, students, staff, and families should e given training materials to help ensure cy ersecurity and cy er safety throughout a possi le dismissal.

Key Questions to Ask When COOP Planning

- hat technologies do we already have availa le
- hat training materials will we need to create And for what audiences
- hat individuals will e involved in the training and tutoring process on technologies and systems selected
- hat role does cost play in determining short- and long-term solutions

Distance Education – Planning Principles Checklist	
Prepare for short- and long-term school closures or absences and varying circumstances	
Build from existing people, curricula, programs, and resources	
Incorporate state policies and resources on online learning	
Use multiple teaching and learning formats	
Incorporate assessments	
Include the whole school community	
Support systems training	

EDUCATOR TOOLS TO SUPPORT DISTANCE EDUCATION

he following list includes a range of tools and modalities for facilitating distance learning, including those with no, some, or great levels of technological sophistication. It is important to consider a variety of methods to allow for the possi ility of restricted access to technology and limited communication y educators, students, and families. As educators consider a diverse set of instructional methodology, they should also consider a diverse set of performance formats. o support families, related supplies should e included.

Printed Materials: *Textbooks, photocopies of reference materials, and assignments can be prepared in advance for distribution to affected students.*

Instructional Packets. In contrast to online instructional tools, hard-copy pac ets have the enefit of not re uiring technology for use.

In advance of a prolonged school closure or student a sence, teachers can prepare hard-copy instructional pac ets that students may use at home to continue their learning. Hard-copy pac ets may include written instruction content narrative wor sheets calendars or schedules of wor to e completed directions for homewor , pro ects, or written assignments e cerpts from te t oo s or other reading materials and sample assessments.

eachers may ta e two different approaches when developing pac ets, according to how much advanced notice they have efore a school closure or prolonged student a sence (1 generic pac ets that can e used at any point in the school year that promote student learning according to grade-level and su ect-specific standards, or (2 unit-specific pac ets that are ased on the planned curriculum and integrated with the lessons that students are currently learning in class.

Instructional pac ets can facilitate many of the everyday accommodations and modifications for students to help ensure access to the general, distance education environment. hen preparing instructional activities, educators can use pac ets to provide an alternate format and modified presentation (e.g., additional content further rea ing down the content, e amples, added formatting for clarity .

Instructional pac ets can include the necessary resources students will need to complete the instructional activities. or e ample, educators should consider including any necessary tools, such as mathematics tools (compass, protractor, and graph paper particular types of paper for handwriting assignments and materials for art pro ects and presentations.

If families will e re uested to su mit wor over time, pac ets should clearly outline e pectations and possi le methods for su mitting wor .

Teacher Check-ins and Tutorials: *A variety of technologies (telephone, email, Web conferencing) can be used to facilitate one-on-one and teacher-and-class interaction or lesson delivery between students and teachers, counselors, and other appointed adults (e.g., tutors) during prolonged absences or dismissals.*

Telephone and Video Calling. School leaders can use e isting conference call lines or set up lines in advance to continue communication with teachers. eachers can also use these lines to hold group and individual discussions, or even teach lessons, with students in a secure and private setting. Administrators can use telephone and video calling to support the distri ution of notifications and to provide information to students, faculty, and staff during a prolonged closure. School staff can also consider carving out a portion of the school day to conduct outreach to individual students and families, as well.

Email. Schools and school districts can use their e isting email service provider to send, receive, and trac messages. In the event this service provider is not operating, response teams can use other online systems that allow uic distri ution of multimedia content to a mass audience. A variety of free email service providers is on the e , including Google, ahoo, and Hotmail, most of which support document sharing, scheduling, and e chats.

Web Conferencing. A variety of free e conferencing services is availa le. Schools and school districts can consider setting up an account for use in cases of emergency, when distance learning methods are needed, and may consider hosting moc conference calls and meeting sessions via one of these services in the event of an emergency.

Social Media. any students, parents, faculty, and staff use social media on a daily asis for personal use, ut it can also serve as a vehicle to send announcements a out lessons, grade uploads, teacher a sences, and other information that supports COOP planning. Social media can e useful during oth short- and long-term closures, particularly ecause it can e easy to access on different devices, including cell phones, ta lets, and computers. Some schools may have e isting accounts with social media sites. witter, ace oo , in edIn, and Instagram are all e amples of free social media sites schools can use.

Wiki Sites. A wi i site is a e - ased application that supports data collection, information sharing, and content revision in a colla orative platform. Participants in a wi i site can add, delete, revise, or review content in cooperation with others. eachers might find these spaces useful, as they can store classroom lessons, grade papers, and communicate with students via wi i sites. urther, teachers can promote student colla orative learning with wi i sites y instructing students how to use these sites for pro ects. Some providers, such as i ispaces, even offer platforms for school districts to create a "campus" space in which they can trac the information from different schools, house information, and share it with students, faculty, staff, and parents.

Recorded Class Meetings: *Using audio or video technology, recorded class meetings can be given to some or all absent students via podcasts, live or on-demand television, DVD, captioned closed-circuit or public access television, or online.*

Public Broadcast Television Stations and Radio. In times of large-scale school closures or emergencies, schools may have the option of partnering with local and pu lic access television and radio stations to communicate with students and families. hese transmissions can provide distance learning lessons in themselves or information on how distance learning will continue (i.e., referrals to other systems or resources .

Digital Audio Recorders. eachers can use these devices to record segments of courses for electronic distri ution to students (e.g., as email attachments, through file sharing technology, or even as a podcast . Alternatively, digital audio recordings could e uploaded to S s, CDs, or DVDs if not all students have Internet accessi ility outside of school.

Online Materials or Other Aligned Content: *Digital copies of textbooks, reference materials, assignments, and audiovisual learning supports can be made available on the Internet using online learning platforms and Websites (e.g., school Websites).*

Slide Presentation Software. PowerPoint and other similar des top- ased software applications can e used to hold lesson content, audio recordings, and hyperlin s, in the event that students have access to the Internet. If students don't have access to the Internet or computer spea ers, teachers can distri ute supplemental materials and go over lessons over the phone.

Learning Management Systems (LMSs). hese ro ust systems allow teachers to share and store numerous instructional materials, including assignments, wor sheets, calendars, and assessments trac student progress and grade wor   send messages and notifications to students facilitate discussions with students using logs and or discussion oards conduct online class meetings and much more. our school or district may already have an   S in place that can e utili ed in the event of an emergency. lac oard, SharePoint, and oodle are all commonly used S types.

School-Specific Websites or Blogs. In the event of an emergency, a e site or log could serve as the main information center for a school or classroom. Educators could use e sites or logs to disseminate assignments and assessments to students, as well as to facilitate discussions among students. If such functions are normally ena led y an S (e.g., lac oard , a more asic e site or log could serve as a ac up service if a school's or

district's server goes down and the WBS hosted by that server is unavailable. The website or blog links could be distributed to students, faculty, staff, and parents via email, telephone, social media, or any other selected communication medium. Many free blog service providers are available on the web that require limited technological expertise, and/or the school's own website could serve as a well-known source for this type of information dissemination.

U.S. Department of Education's #GoOpen Initiative

The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Technology (OET) leads the #GoOpen initiative, which supports states and districts choosing to transition to the use of openly licensed educational resources to transform teaching and learning. The initiative brings to the forefront an array of teaching and learning materials, data, and educational opportunities available without restrictions imposed by copyright laws, access barriers, or exclusive proprietary systems that lack interoperability and limit the free exchange of information. Schools can learn more at by visiting the OET web page, https://tech.ed.gov.

Free Instructional Materials. Many

organizations offer free instructional materials on their websites that support teaching and learning. Many Federal and state government agencies and institutions make available free classroom materials, as well. From space to agriculture, there are agencies supporting classrooms nationwide. This is especially true as more partners are established to help grow STEM and STEAM programs — science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics programs. These readily accessible online materials may be helpful in the event of a prolonged school closure if teachers and students do not have access to classroom materials.

> ***Websites With Free Instructional Materials***
> - Smithsonian Learning Media
> - National Geographic Education
> - Smithsonian Education
> - National Education Association Lesson Plans
> - Stem Rising

Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance (TA) Center

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Free Online Courses for K-12 Students

- han Academy
- Ed
- Canvas etwor

Massive Open Online Course (MOOC). hese open-access and e - ased courses provide users with an interactive and immediate learning e perience that is focused on group colla oration and automated feed ac . Along with viewing and hearing learning content, users can participate in discussion forums and ta e assessments. here is no limit on user participation, and many of the OOCs availa le online are free.

KEY RESOURCES

ind a description of and lin to some of the ey resources referenced throughout this document elow

- **Biological Hazards Web Page.** Access the latest resources from the CDC, ED, and other ederal and national partners to support your response to COVID-19.

- **Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Summary.** Get the latest details from the .S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the ac ground, source and spread of the virus illness severity and ris assessment and the current situation in the nited States.
  Guide for Developing High-Quality School EOPs (School Guide). earn how to integrate the recommended si -step planning process for high- uality EOP development into your activities.

- **Tips For Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During An Infectious Disease Outbreak.** he Su stance A use and ental Health Services Administration created this tip sheet to answer common uestions related to social distancing, uarantine, and isolation.

- **Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Educational Services: Requirements and Best Practices**. his resource provides recommendations specific to student privacy in online settings.